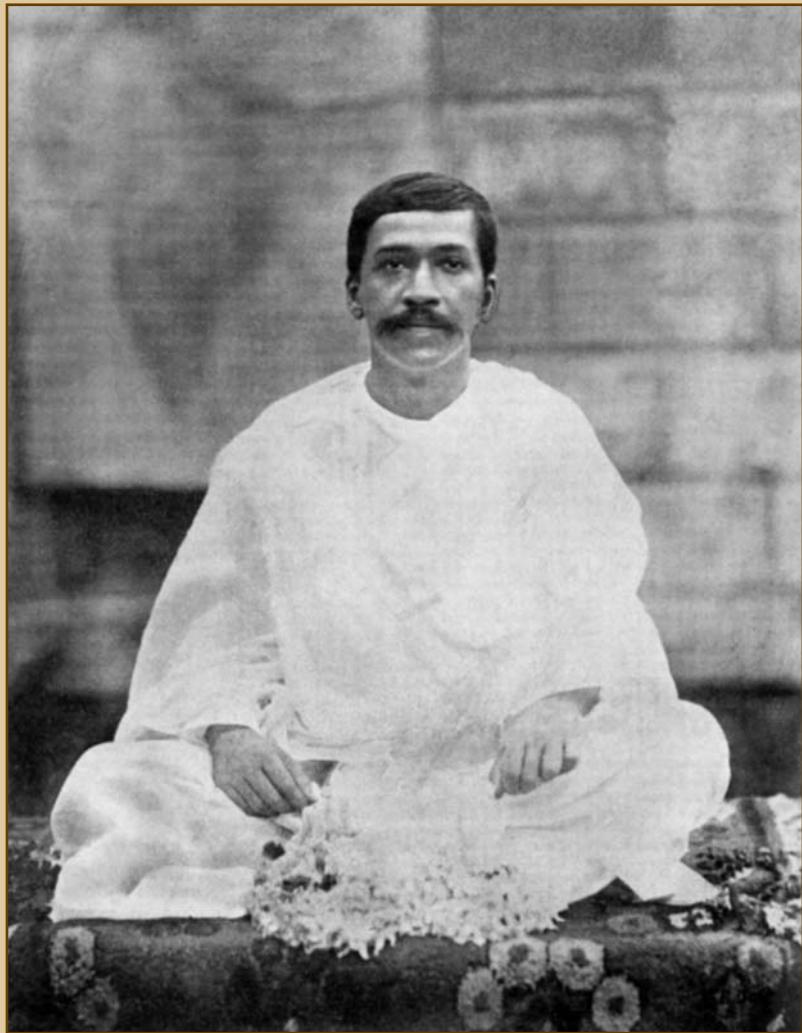


Hymns to the Mystic Fire



Sri Aurobindo

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Hymns To
The Mystic Fire

Publisher's Note

The present volume comprises Sri Aurobindo's translations of and commentaries on hymns to Agni in the Rig Veda. It is divided into three parts:

Hymns to the Mystic Fire: The entire contents of a book of this name that was published by Sri Aurobindo in 1946, consisting of selected hymns to Agni with a Foreword and extracts from the essay "The Doctrine of the Mystics".

Other Hymns to Agni: Translations of hymns to Agni that Sri Aurobindo did not include in the edition of *Hymns to the Mystic Fire* published during his lifetime. An appendix to this part contains his complete translations of the first hymn of the Rig Veda, showing how his approach to translating the Veda changed over the years.

Commentaries and Annotated Translations: Pieces from Sri Aurobindo's manuscripts in which he commented on hymns to Agni or provided annotated translations of them.

Some translations of hymns addressed to Agni are included in *The Secret of the Veda*, volume 15 of THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO. That volume consists of all Sri Aurobindo's essays on and translations of Vedic hymns that appeared first in the monthly review *Arya* between 1914 and 1920. His writings on the Veda that do not deal primarily with Agni and that were not published in the *Arya* are collected in *Vedic and Philological Studies*, volume 14 of THE COMPLETE WORKS.

The translations and other texts in this book have been checked against the relevant manuscript and printed materials.

Guide to Editorial Notation

Most of the material in Parts Two and Three of this volume was not prepared by Sri Aurobindo for publication. Some of it has been transcribed from manuscripts that present certain textual problems. These have been indicated by means of the notation shown below.

Notation	Textual Problem
[<i>note</i>]	Situations requiring textual explication; all such information is printed in italics.
[]	Blank left by the author to be filled in later but left unfilled, which the editors were not able to fill.
[word]	Word(s) omitted by the author or lost through damage to the manuscript that are required by grammar or sense, and that could be supplied by the editors.
[.....]	Word(s) lost through damage to the manuscript.
[?word]	Doubtful reading.

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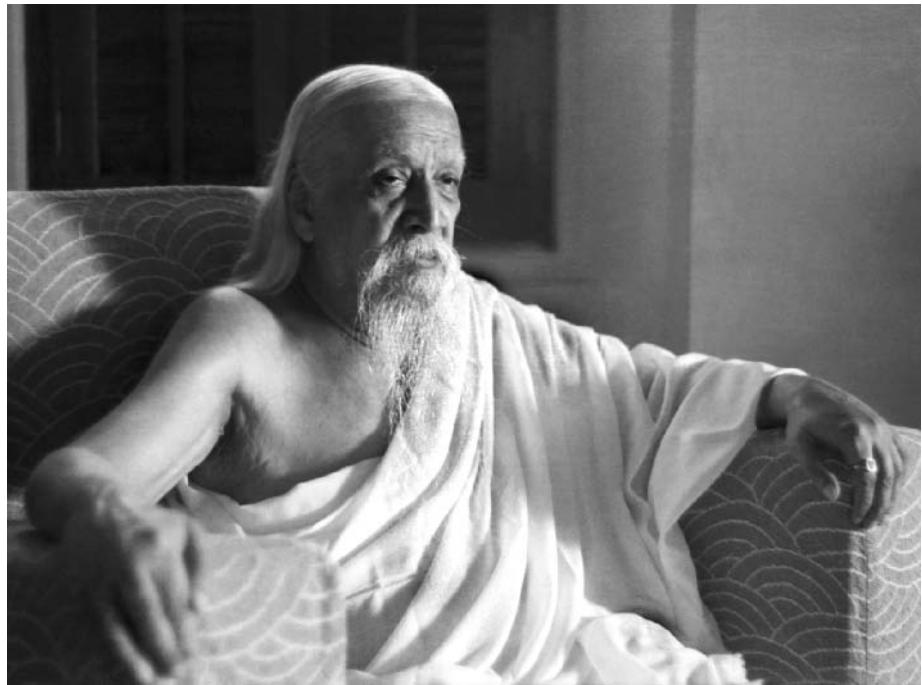
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Sri Aurobindo, 1950

Part One

Hymns to the Mystic Fire

Hymns to Agni from the Rig Veda

Translated in their Esoteric Sense

Foreword

IN ANCIENT times the Veda was revered as a sacred book of wisdom, a great mass of inspired poetry, the work of Rishis, seers and sages, who received in their illumined minds rather than mentally constructed a great universal, eternal and impersonal Truth which they embodied in Mantras, revealed verses of power, not of an ordinary but of a divine inspiration and source. The name given to these sages was Kavi, which afterwards came to mean any poet, but at the time had the sense of a seer of truth,—the Veda itself describes them as *kavayah satyaśrutah*, “seers who are hearers of the Truth” and the Veda itself was called *śruti*, a word which came to mean “revealed Scripture”. The seers of the Upanishad had the same idea about the Veda and frequently appealed to its authority for the truths they themselves announced and these too afterwards came to be regarded as Sruti, revealed Scripture, and were included in the sacred Canon.

This tradition persevered in the Brahmanas and continued to maintain itself in spite of the efforts of the ritualistic commentators, Yajnikas, to explain everything as myth and rite and the division made by the Pandits distinguishing the section of works, Karmakanda, and the section of Knowledge, Jnanakanda, identifying the former with the hymns and the latter with the Upanishads. This drowning of the parts of Knowledge by the parts of ceremonial works was strongly criticised in one of the Upanishads and in the Gita, but both look on the Veda as a Book of Knowledge. Even, the Sruti including both Veda and Upanishad was regarded as the supreme authority for spiritual knowledge and infallible.

Is this all legend and moonshine, or a groundless and even nonsensical tradition? Or is it the fact that there is only a scanty element of higher ideas in some later hymns which started this

theory? Did the writers of the Upanishads foist upon the Riks a meaning which was not there but read into it by their imagination or a fanciful interpretation? Modern European scholarship insists on having it so. And it has persuaded the mind of modern India. In favour of this view is the fact that the Rishis of the Veda were not only seers but singers and priests of sacrifice, that their chants were written to be sung at public sacrifices and refer constantly to the customary ritual and seem to call for the outward objects of these ceremonies, wealth, prosperity, victory over enemies. Sayana, the great commentator, gives us a ritualistic and where necessary a tentatively mythical or historical sense to the Riks, very rarely does he put forward any higher meaning though sometimes he lets a higher sense come through or puts it as an alternative as if in despair of finding out some ritualistic or mythical interpretation. But still he does not reject the spiritual authority of the Veda or deny that there is a higher truth contained in the Riks. This last development was left to our own times and popularised by occidental scholars.

The European scholars took up the ritualistic tradition, but for the rest they dropped Sayana overboard and went on to make their own etymological explanation of the words, or build up their own conjectural meanings of the Vedic verses and give a new presentation often arbitrary and imaginative. What they sought for in the Veda was the early history of India, its society, institutions, customs, a civilisation-picture of the times. They invented the theory based on the difference of languages of an Aryan invasion from the north, an invasion of a Dravidian India of which the Indians themselves had no memory or tradition and of which there is no record in their epic or classical literature. The Vedic religion was in this account only a worship of Nature-Gods full of solar myths and consecrated by sacrifices and a sacrificial liturgy primitive enough in its ideas and contents, and it is these barbaric prayers that are the much vaunted, haloed and apotheosized Veda.

There can be no doubt that in the beginning there was a worship of the Powers of the physical world, the Sun, Moon, Heaven and Earth, Wind, Rain and Storm etc., the Sacred Rivers and a

number of Gods who presided over the workings of Nature. That was the general aspect of the ancient worship in Greece, Rome, India and among other ancient peoples. But in all these countries these gods began to assume a higher, a psychological function; Pallas Athene who may have been originally a Dawn-Goddess springing in flames from the head of Zeus, the Sky-God, Dyaus of the Veda, has in classical Greece a higher function and was identified by the Romans with their Minerva, the Goddess of learning and wisdom; similarly, Saraswati, a river Goddess, becomes in India the goddess of wisdom, learning and the arts and crafts: all the Greek deities have undergone a change in this direction — Apollo, the Sun-God, has become a god of poetry and prophecy, Hephaestus the Fire-God a divine smith, god of labour. In India the process was arrested half-way, and the Vedic Gods developed their psychological functions but retained more fixedly their external character and for higher purposes gave place to a new pantheon. They had to give precedence to Puranic deities who developed out of the early company but assumed larger cosmic functions, Vishnu, Rudra, Brahma — developing from the Vedic Brihaspati, or Brahmanaspati, — Shiva, Lakshmi, Durga. Thus in India the change in the gods was less complete, the earlier deities became the inferior divinities of the Puranic pantheon and this was largely due to the survival of the Rig Veda in which their psychological and their external functions co-existed and are both given a powerful emphasis; there was no such early literary record to maintain the original features of the Gods of Greece and Rome.

This change was evidently due to a cultural development in these early peoples who became progressively more mentalised and less engrossed in the physical life as they advanced in civilisation and needed to read into their religion and their deities finer and subtler aspects which would support their more highly mentalised concepts and interests and find for them a true spiritual being or some celestial figure as their support and sanction. But the largest part in determining and deepening this inward turn must be attributed to the Mystics who had an enormous influence on these early civilisations; there was indeed almost

everywhere an age of the Mysteries in which men of a deeper knowledge and self-knowledge established their practices, significant rites, symbols, secret lore within or on the border of the more primitive exterior religions. This took different forms in different countries; in Greece there were the Orphic and Eleusinian Mysteries, in Egypt and Chaldea the priests and their occult lore and magic, in Persia the Magi, in India the Rishis. The preoccupation of the Mystics was with self-knowledge and a profounder world-knowledge; they found out that in man there was a deeper self and inner being behind the surface of the outward physical man, which it was his highest business to discover and know. "Know thyself" was their great precept, just as in India to know the Self, the Atman became the great spiritual need, the highest thing for the human being. They found also a Truth, a Reality behind the outward aspects of the universe and to discover, follow, realise this Truth was their great aspiration. They discovered secrets and powers of Nature which were not those of the physical world but which could bring occult mastery over the physical world and physical things and to systematise this occult knowledge and power was also one of their strong preoccupations. But all this could only be safely done by a difficult and careful training, discipline, purification of the nature; it could not be done by the ordinary man. If men entered into these things without a severe test and training it would be dangerous to themselves and others; this knowledge, these powers could be misused, misinterpreted, turned from truth to falsehood, from good to evil. A strict secrecy was therefore maintained, the knowledge handed down behind a veil from master to disciple. A veil of symbols was created behind which these mysteries could shelter, formulas of speech also which could be understood by the initiated but were either not known by others or were taken by them in an outward sense which carefully covered their true meaning and secret. This was the substance of Mysticism everywhere.

It has been the tradition in India from the earliest times that the Rishis, the poet-seers of the Veda, were men of this type, men with a great spiritual and occult knowledge not shared by

ordinary human beings, men who handed down this knowledge and their powers by a secret initiation to their descendants and chosen disciples. It is a gratuitous assumption to suppose that this tradition was wholly unfounded, a superstition that arose suddenly or slowly formed in a void, with nothing whatever to support it; some foundation there must have been however small or however swelled by legend and the accretions of centuries. But if it is true, then inevitably the poet-seers must have expressed something of their secret knowledge, their mystic lore in their writings and such an element must be present, however well-concealed by an occult language or behind a technique of symbols, and if it is there it must be to some extent discoverable. It is true that an antique language, obsolete words,—Yaska counts more than four hundred of which he did not know the meaning,—and often a difficult and out-of-date diction helped to obscure their meaning; the loss of the sense of their symbols, the glossary of which they kept to themselves, made them unintelligible to later generations; even in the time of the Upanishads the spiritual seekers of the age had to resort to initiation and meditation to penetrate into their secret knowledge, while the scholars afterwards were at sea and had to resort to conjecture and to concentrate on a mental interpretation or to explain by myths, by the legends of the Brahmanas themselves often symbolic and obscure. But still to make this discovery will be the sole way of getting at the true sense and the true value of the Veda. We must take seriously the hint of Yaska, accept the Rishi's description of the Veda's contents as "seer-wisdoms, secret words", and look for whatever clue we can find to this ancient wisdom. Otherwise the Veda must remain for ever a sealed book; grammarians, etymologists, scholastic conjectures will not open to us the sealed chamber.

For it is a fact that the tradition of a secret meaning and a mystic wisdom couched in the Riks of the ancient Veda was as old as the Veda itself. The Vedic Rishis believed that their Mantras were inspired from higher hidden planes of consciousness and contained this secret knowledge. The words of the Veda could only be known in their true meaning by one who

was himself a seer or mystic; from others the verses withheld their hidden knowledge. In one of Vamadeva's hymns in the fourth Mandala (IV.3.16) the Rishi describes himself as one illumined expressing through his thought and speech words of guidance, "secret words"—*ninyā vacāmsi*—"seer-wisdoms that utter their inner meaning to the seer"—*kāvyāni kavaye ni-vacanā*. The Rishi Dirghatamas speaks of the Riks, the Mantras of the Veda, as existing "in a supreme ether, imperishable and immutable in which all the gods are seated", and he adds "one who knows not That what shall he do with the Rik?" (I.164.39) He further alludes to four planes from which the speech issues, three of them hidden in the secrecy while the fourth is human, and from there comes the ordinary word; but the word and thought of the Veda belongs to the higher planes (I.164.45). Elsewhere in the Riks the Vedic Word is described (X.71) as that which is supreme and the topmost height of speech, the best and the most faultless. It is something that is hidden in secrecy and from there comes out and is manifested. It has entered into the truth-seers, the Rishis, and it is found by following the track of their speech. But all cannot enter into its secret meaning. Those who do not know the inner sense are as men who seeing see not, hearing hear not, only to one here and there the Word desiring him like a beautifully robed wife to a husband lays open her body. Others unable to drink steadily of the milk of the Word, the Vedic cow, move with it as with one that gives no milk, to him the Word is a tree without flowers or fruits. This is quite clear and precise; it results from it beyond doubt that even then while the Rig Veda was being written the Riks were regarded as having a secret sense which was not open to all. There was an occult and spiritual knowledge in the sacred hymns and by this knowledge alone, it is said, one can know the truth and rise to a higher existence. This belief was not a later tradition but held, probably, by all and evidently by some of the greatest Rishis such as Dirghatamas and Vamadeva.

The tradition, then, was there and it was prolonged after the Vedic times. Yaska speaks of several schools of interpretation of the Veda. There was a sacrificial or ritualistic interpretation,

the historical or rather mythological explanation, an explanation by the grammarians and etymologists, by the logicians, a spiritual interpretation. Yaska himself declares that there is a triple knowledge and therefore a triple meaning of the Vedic hymns, a sacrificial or ritualistic knowledge, a knowledge of the gods and finally a spiritual knowledge; but the last is the true sense and when one gets it the others drop or are cut away. It is this spiritual sense that saves and the rest is outward and subordinate. He says further that “the Rishis saw the truth, the true law of things, directly by an inner vision”; afterwards the knowledge and the inner sense of the Veda were almost lost and the Rishis who still knew had to save it by handing it down through initiation to disciples and at a last stage outward and mental means had to be used for finding the sense such as Nirukta and other Vedangas. But even then, he says, “the true sense of the Veda can be recovered directly by meditation and tapasya”, those who can use these means need no outward aids for this knowledge. This also is sufficiently clear and positive.

The tradition of a mystic element in the Veda as a source of Indian civilisation, its religion, its philosophy, its culture is more in consonance with historical fact than the European scouting of this idea. The nineteenth-century European scholarship writing in a period of materialistic rationalism regarded the history of the race as a development out of primitive barbarism or semi-barbarism, a crude social life and religion and a mass of superstitions, by the growth of outward civilised institutions, manners and habits through the development of intellect and reason, art, philosophy and science and a clearer and sounder, more matter-of-fact intelligence. The ancient idea about the Veda could not fit into this picture; it was regarded as rather a part of ancient superstitious ideas and a primitive error. But we can now form a more accurate idea of the development of the race. The ancient more primitive civilisations held in themselves the elements of the later growth but their early wise men were not scientists and philosophers or men of high intellectual reason but mystics and even mystery-men, occultists, religious seekers; they were seekers after a veiled truth behind things and not of

an outward knowledge. The scientists and philosophers came afterwards; they were preceded by the mystics and often like Pythagoras and Plato were to some extent mystics themselves or drew many of their ideas from the mystics. In India philosophy grew out of the seeking of the mystics and retained and developed their spiritual aims and kept something of their methods in later Indian spiritual discipline and Yoga. The Vedic tradition, the fact of a mystical element in the Veda fits in perfectly with this historical truth and takes its place in the history of Indian culture. The tradition of the Veda as the bed-rock of Indian civilisation — not merely a barbaric sacrificial liturgy — is more than a tradition, it is an actual fact of history.

But even if an element of high spiritual knowledge, or passages full of high ideas were found in the hymns, it might be supposed that those are perhaps only a small factor, while the rest is a sacrificial liturgy, formulas of prayer and praise to the Gods meant to induce them to shower on the sacrificers material blessings such as plenty of cows, horses, fighting men, sons, food, wealth of all kinds, protection, victory in battle, or to bring down rain from heaven, recover the sun from clouds or from the grip of Night, the free flowing of the seven rivers, recovery of cattle from the Dasyus (or the Dravidians) and the other boons which on the surface seem to be the object of this ritual worship. The Rishis would then be men with some spiritual or mystic knowledge but otherwise dominated by all the popular ideas proper to their times. These two elements they would then mix up intimately in their hymns and this would account at least in part for the obscurity and the rather strange and sometimes grotesque jumble which the traditional interpretation offers us. But if on the other hand a considerable body of high thinking clearly appears, if there is a large mass of verses or whole hymns which admit only of a mystic character and significance, and if finally, the ritualistic and external details are found to take frequently the appearance of symbols such as were always used by the mystics, and if there are many clear indications, even some explicit statements in the hymns themselves of such a meaning, then all changes. We are in the presence of a great scripture of

the mystics with a double significance, one exoteric, the other esoteric; the symbols themselves have a meaning which makes them a part of the esoteric significance, an element in the secret teaching and knowledge. The whole of the Rig Veda, a small number of hymns perhaps excepted, becomes in its inner sense such a Scripture. At the same time the exoteric sense need not be merely a mask; the Riks may have been regarded by their authors as words of power, powerful not only for internal but for external things. A purely spiritual scripture would concern itself with only spiritual significances, but the ancient mystics were also what we would call occultists, men who believed that by inner means outer as well as inner results could be produced, that thought and words could be so used as to bring about realisations of every kind,—in the phrase common in the Veda itself,—both the human and the divine.

But where is this body of esoteric meaning in the Veda? It is only discoverable if we give a constant and straightforward meaning to the words and formulas employed by the Rishis, especially to the key-words which bear as keystones the whole structure of their doctrine. One such word is the great word, Ritam, Truth; Truth was the central object of the seeking of the mystics, a spiritual or inner Truth, a truth of ourselves, a truth of things, a truth of the world and of the gods, a truth behind all we are and all that things are. In the ritualistic interpretation this master word of the Vedic knowledge has been interpreted in all kinds of senses according to the convenience or fancy of the interpreter, “truth”, “sacrifice”, “water”, “one who has gone”, even “food”, not to speak of a number of other meanings; if we do that, there can be no certitude in our dealings with the Veda. But let us consistently give it the same master sense and a strange but clear result emerges. If we apply the same treatment to other standing terms of the Veda, if we give them their ordinary, natural and straightforward meaning and give it constantly and consistently, not monkeying about with their sense or turning them into purely ritualistic expressions, if we allow to certain important words, such as *śravas*, *kratu*, the psychological meaning of which they are capable and which

they undoubtedly bear in certain passages as when the Veda describes Agni as *kratur hr̥di*, then this result becomes all the more clear, extended, pervasive. If in addition we follow the indications which abound, sometimes the explicit statement of the Rishis about the inner sense of their symbols, interpret in the same sense the significant legends and figures on which they constantly return, the conquest over Vritra and the battle with the Vritras, his powers, the recovery of the Sun, the Waters, the Cows, from the Panis or other Dasyus, the whole Rig Veda reveals itself as a body of doctrine and practice, esoteric, occult, spiritual, such as might have been given by the mystics in any ancient country but which actually survives for us only in the Veda. It is there deliberately hidden by a veil, but the veil is not so thick as we first imagine; we have only to use our eyes and the veil vanishes; the body of the Word, the Truth stands out before us.

Many of the lines, many whole hymns even of the Veda bear on their face a mystic meaning; they are evidently an occult form of speech, have an inner meaning. When the seer speaks of Agni as "the luminous guardian of the Truth shining out in his own home", or of Mitra and Varuna or other gods as "in touch with the Truth and making the Truth grow" or as "born in the Truth", these are words of a mystic poet, who is thinking of that inner Truth behind things of which the early sages were the seekers. He is not thinking of the Nature-Power presiding over the outer element of fire or of the fire of the ceremonial sacrifice. Or he speaks of Saraswati as one who impels the words of Truth and awakes to right thinkings or as one opulent with the thought: Saraswati awakes to consciousness or makes us conscious of the "Great Ocean and illumines all our thoughts." It is surely not the River Goddess whom he is thus hymning but the Power, the River if you will, of inspiration, the word of the Truth, bringing its light into our thoughts, building up in us that Truth, an inner knowledge. The Gods constantly stand out in their psychological functions; the sacrifice is the outer symbol of an inner work, an inner interchange between the gods and men,—man giving what he has, the gods giving in return the horses of power, the

herds of light, the heroes of Strength to be his retinue, winning for him victory in his battle with the hosts of Darkness, Vritras, Dasyus, Panis. When the Rishi says, "Let us become conscious whether by the War-Horse or by the Word of a Strength beyond men", his words have either a mystic significance or they have no coherent meaning at all. In the portions translated in this book we have many mystic verses and whole hymns which, however mystic, tear the veil off the outer sacrificial images covering the real sense of the Veda. "Thought", says the Rishi, "has nourished for us human things in the Immortals, in the Great Heavens; it is the milch-cow which milks of itself the wealth of many forms"—the many kinds of wealth, cows, horses and the rest for which the sacrificer prays; evidently this is no material wealth, it is something which Thought, the Thought embodied in the Mantra, can give and it is the result of the same Thought that nourishes our human things in the Immortals, in the Great Heavens. A process of divinisation, and of a bringing down of great and luminous riches, treasures won from the Gods by the inner work of sacrifice, is hinted at in terms necessarily covert but still for one who knows how to read these secret words, *nīnyā vacāṁsi*, sufficiently expressive, *kavaye nivacanā*. Again, Night and Dawn the eternal sisters are like "joyful weaving women weaving the weft of our perfected works into the form of a sacrifice." Again, words with a mystic form and meaning, but there could hardly be a more positive statement of the psychological character of the Sacrifice, the real meaning of the Cow, of the riches sought for, the plenitudes of the Great Treasure.

Under pressure of the necessity to mask their meaning with symbols and symbolic words—for secrecy must be observed—the Rishis resorted to fixed double meanings, a device easily manageable in the Sanskrit language where one word often bears several different meanings, but not easy to render in an English translation and very often impossible. Thus the word for cow, *go*, meant also light or a ray of light; this appears in the names of some of the Rishis, Gotama, most radiant, Gavishthira, steadfast in the Light. The cows of the Veda were the Herds of the Sun, familiar in Greek myth and mystery, the rays of the Sun of Truth

and Light and Knowledge; this meaning which comes out in some passages can be consistently applied everywhere yielding a coherent sense. The word *ghṛta* means ghee or clarified butter and this was one of the chief elements of the sacrificial rite; but *ghṛta* could also mean light, from the root *ghṛ* to shine, and it is used in this sense in many passages. Thus the horses of Indra, the Lord of Heaven, are described as dripping with light, *ghṛta-snu*,¹ — it certainly does not mean that ghee dripped from them as they ran, although that seems to be the sense of the same epithet as applied to the grain of which Indra's horses are invited to partake when they come to the sacrifice. Evidently this sense of light doubles with that of clarified butter in the symbolism of the sacrifice. The thought or the word expressing the thought is compared to pure clarified butter, expressions like *dhiyam ghṛtācīm*, the luminous thought or understanding occur. There is a curious passage in one of the hymns translated in this book calling on Fire as priest of the sacrifice to flood the offering with a mind pouring *ghṛita*, *ghṛtapruṣā manasā* and so manifest the Seats ("places", or "planes"), the three heavens each of them and manifest the Gods.² But what is a ghee-pouring mind, and how by pouring ghee can a priest manifest the Gods and the triple heavens? But admit the mystical and esoteric meaning and the sense becomes clear. What the Rishi means is a "mind pouring the light", a labour of the clarity of an enlightened or illumined mind; it is not a human priest or a sacrificial fire, but the inner Flame, the mystic seer-will, *kavi-kratu*, and that can certainly manifest by this process the Gods and the worlds and all planes of the being. The Rishis, it must be remembered, were seers as well as sages, they were men of vision who saw things in their meditation in images, often symbolic images which might precede or accompany an experience and put it in a concrete form, might predict or give an occult body to it: so it would

¹ Sayana, though in several passages he takes *ghṛta* in the sense of light, renders it here by "water"; he seems to think that the divine horses were very tired and perspiring profusely! A Naturalistic interpreter might as well argue that as Indra is a God of the sky, the primitive poet might well believe that rain was the perspiration of Indra's horses.

² This is Sayana's rendering of the passage and rises directly from the words.

be quite possible for him to see at once the inner experience and in image its symbolic happening, the flow of clarifying light and the priest god pouring the clarified butter on the inner self-offering which brought the experience. This might seem strange to a Western mind, but to an Indian mind accustomed to the Indian tradition or capable of meditation and occult vision it would be perfectly intelligible. The mystics were and normally are symbolists, they can even see all physical things and happenings as symbols of inner truths and realities, even their outer selves, the outer happenings of their life and all around them. That would make their identification or else an association of the thing and its symbol easy, its habit possible.

Other standing words and symbols of the Veda invite a similar interpretation of their sense. As the Vedic "cow" is the symbol of light, so the Vedic "horse" is a symbol of power, spiritual strength, force of tapasya. When the Rishi asks Agni for a "horse-form cow-in-front gift" he is not asking really for a number of horses forming a body of the gift with some cows walking in front, he is asking for a great body of spiritual power led by the light or, as we may translate it, "with the Ray-Cow walking in its front".³ As one hymn describes the recovery from the Panis of the mass of the rays (the cows, — the shining herds, *gavyam*), so another hymn asks Agni for a mass or abundance or power of the horse — *aśvyam*. So too the Rishi asks sometimes for the heroes or fighting men as his retinue, sometimes in more abstract language and without symbol for a complete hero-force — *suvīryam*; sometimes he combines the symbol and the thing. So too the Rishis ask for a son or sons or offspring — *apatyam* — as an element of the wealth for which they pray to the Gods, but here too an esoteric sense can be seen, for in certain passages the son born to us is clearly an image of some inner birth: Agni himself is our son, the child of our works, the child who as the Universal Fire is the father of his fathers, and it is by setting the steps on things that have fair offspring that we create or

³ Compare the expression which describes the Aryan, the noble people as led by the light — *jyotir-agrāḥ*.

discover a path to the higher world of Truth. Again, “water” in the Veda is used as a symbol. It speaks of the inconscient ocean, *salilam apraketam*, in which the Godhead is involved and out of which he is born by his greatness; it speaks also of the great ocean — *maho arṇas*, the upper waters which, as one hymn says, Saraswati makes conscious for us or of which she makes us conscious by the ray of intuition — *pra cetayati ketunā*. The seven rivers seem to be the rivers of Northern India but the Veda speaks of the seven Mighty Ones of Heaven who flow down from Heaven; they are waters that know, knowers of the Truth — *ṛtajña* — and when they are released they discover for us the road to the great Heavens. So too Parashara speaks of Knowledge and universal Life, “in the house of the waters”. Indra releases the rain by slaying Vritra, but this rain too is the rain of Heaven and sets the rivers flowing. Thus the legend of the release of the waters which takes so large a place in the Veda puts on the aspect of a symbolic myth. Along with it comes the other symbolic legend of the discovery and rescue, from the dark cave in the mountain, of the Sun, the cows or herds of the Sun, or the Sun-world — *svar* — by the Gods and the Angiras Rishis. The symbol of the Sun is constantly associated with the higher Light and the Truth: it is in the Truth concealed by an inferior Truth that are unyoked the horses of the Sun, it is the Sun in its highest light that is called upon in the great Gayatri Mantra to impel our thoughts. So too the enemies in the Veda are spoken of as robbers, *dasyus*, who steal the cows, or Vritras and are taken literally as human enemies in the ordinary interpretation, but Vritra is a demon who covers and holds back the Light and the waters and the Vritras are his forces fulfilling that function. The Dasyus, robbers or destroyers, are the powers of darkness, adversaries of the seekers of Light and the Truth. Always there are indications that lead us from the outward and exoteric to an inner and esoteric sense.

In connection with the symbol of the Sun a notable and most significant verse in a hymn of the fifth Mandala may here be mentioned; for it shows not only the profound mystic symbolism of the Vedic poets, but also how the writers of the Upanishads

understood the Rig Veda and justifies their belief in the inspired knowledge of their forerunners. "There is a Truth covered by a Truth," runs the Vedic passage, "where they unyoke the horses of the Sun; the ten hundreds stood together, there was That One;⁴ I saw the greatest (best, most glorious) of the embodied gods."⁵ Then mark how the seer of the Upanishad translates this thought or this mystic experience into his own later style, keeping the central symbol of the Sun but without any secrecy in the sense. Thus runs the passage in the Upanishad, "The face of the Truth is covered with a golden lid. O Pushan, that remove for the vision of the law of the Truth.⁶ O Pushan (fosterer), sole seer, O Yama, O Sun, O Child of the Father of beings, marshal and gather together thy rays; I see the Light which is that fairest (most auspicious) form of thee; he who is this Purusha, He am I." The golden lid is meant to be the same as the inferior covering truth, *rtam*, spoken of in the Vedic verse; the "best of the bodies of the Gods" is equivalent to the "fairest form of the Sun", it is the supreme Light which is other and greater than all outer light; the great formula of the Upanishad, "He am I", corresponds to That One, *tad ekam*, of the Rig Vedic verse; the "standing together of the ten hundreds" (the rays of the Sun, says Sayana, and that is evidently the meaning) is reproduced in the prayer to the Sun "to marshal and mass his rays" so that the supreme form may be seen. The Sun in both the passages, as constantly in the Veda and frequently in the Upanishad, is the Godhead of the supreme Truth and Knowledge and his rays are the light emanating from that supreme Truth and Knowledge. It is clear from this instance—and there are others—that the seer of the Upanishad had a truer sense of the meaning of the ancient Veda than the mediaeval ritualistic commentator with his gigantic learning, much truer than the modern and very different mind of the European scholars.

There are certain psychological terms which have to be taken consistently in their true sense if we are to find the inner or

⁴ Or, That (the supreme Truth) was one;

⁵ Or it means, "I saw the greatest (best) of the bodies of the gods."

⁶ Or, for the law of the Truth, for vision.

esoteric meaning. Apart from the Truth, Ritam, we have to take always in the sense of “thought” the word *dhī* which constantly recurs in the hymns. This is the natural meaning of *dhī* which corresponds to the later word Buddhi; it means thought, understanding, intelligence and in the plural “thoughts”, *dhiyah*. It is given in the ordinary interpretation all kinds of meanings; “water”, “work”, “sacrifice”, “food” etc. as well as thought. But in our search we have to take it consistently in its ordinary and natural significance and see what is the result. The word *ketu* means very ordinarily “ray” but it also bears the meaning of intellect, judgment or an intellectual perception. If we compare the passages in the Veda in which it occurs we can come to the conclusion that it meant a ray of perception or intuition, as for instance, it is by the ray of intuition, *ketuṇā*, that Saraswati makes us conscious of the great waters; that too probably is the meaning of the rays which come from the Supreme foundation above and are directed downwards; these are the intuitions of knowledge as the rays of the Sun of Truth and Light. The word *kratu* means ordinarily work or sacrifice but it also means intelligence, power or resolution and especially the power of the intelligence that determines the work, the will. It is in this latter sense that we can interpret it in the esoteric rendering of the Veda. Agni is a seer-will, *kavi-kratu*, he is the “will in the heart”, *kratu hr̥di*. Finally the word *śravas* which is constantly in use in the Veda means fame, it is also taken by the commentators in the sense of food, but these significances cannot be fitted in everywhere and very ordinarily lack all point and apposite force. But *śravas* comes from the root *śru* to hear and is used in the sense of ear itself or of hymn or prayer—a sense which Sayana accepts—and from this we can infer that it means the “thing heard” or its result, knowledge that comes to us through hearing. The Rishis speak of themselves as hearers of the Truth, *satyaśrutah*, and the knowledge received by this hearing as Sruti. It is in this sense of inspiration or inspired knowledge that we can take it in the esoteric meaning of the Veda and we find that it fits in with a perfect appositeness; thus when the Rishi speaks of *śravāṁsi* as being brought through

upward and brought through downward, this cannot be applied to food or fame but is perfectly apposite and significant if he is speaking of inspirations which rise up to the Truth above or bring down the Truth to us. This is the method we can apply everywhere, but we cannot pursue the subject any further here. In the brief limits of this foreword these slight indications must suffice; they are meant only to give the reader an initial insight into the esoteric method of interpretation of the Veda.

But what then is the secret meaning, the esoteric sense, which emerges by this way of understanding the Veda? It is what we would expect from the nature of the seeking of the mystics everywhere. It is also, as we should expect from the actual course of the development of Indian culture, an early form of the spiritual truth which found its culmination in the Upanishads; the secret knowledge of the Veda is the seed which is evolved later on into the Vedanta. The thought around which all is centred is the seeking after Truth, Light, Immortality. There is a Truth deeper and higher than the truth of outward existence, a Light greater and higher than the light of human understanding which comes by revelation and inspiration, an immortality towards which the soul has to rise. We have to find our way to that, to get into touch with this Truth and Immortality, *sapanta rtam amṛtam*,⁷ to be born into the Truth, to grow in it, to ascend in spirit into the world of Truth and to live in it. To do so is to unite ourselves with the Godhead and to pass from mortality into immortality. This is the first and the central teaching of the Vedic mystics. The Platonists, developing their doctrine from the early mystics, held that we live in relation to two worlds,—a world of higher truth which might be called the spiritual world and that in which we live, the world of the embodied soul which is derived from the higher but also degraded from it into an inferior truth and inferior consciousness. The Vedic mystics held this doctrine in a more concrete and pragmatic form, for they had the experience of these two worlds. There is the inferior truth here of this world mixed as it is with much falsehood and error, *anṛtasya bhūreḥ*,⁸

⁷ I.68.2. ⁸ VII.60.5.

and there is a world or home of Truth, *sadanam ṛtasya*,⁹ the Truth, the Right, the Vast, *satyam ṛtam brhat*,¹⁰ where all is Truth-conscious, *ṛtacit*.¹¹ There are many worlds between up to the triple heavens and their lights but this is the world of the highest Light — the world of the Sun of Truth, *svar*, or the Great Heaven. We have to find the path to this Great Heaven, the path of Truth, *ṛtasya panthāḥ*,¹² or as it is sometimes called the way of the gods. This is the second mystic doctrine. The third is that our life is a battle between the powers of Light and Truth, the Gods who are the Immortals and the powers of Darkness. These are spoken of under various names as Vritra and Vritras, Vala and the Panis, the Dasyus and their kings. We have to call in the aid of the Gods to destroy the opposition of these powers of Darkness who conceal the Light from us or rob us of it, who obstruct the flowing of the streams of Truth, *ṛtasya dhārāḥ*,¹³ the streams of Heaven and obstruct in every way the soul's ascent. We have to invoke the Gods by the inner sacrifice, and by the Word call them into us, — that is the specific power of the Mantra, — to offer to them the gifts of the sacrifice and by that giving secure their gifts, so that by this process we may build the way of our ascent to the goal. The elements of the outer sacrifice in the Veda are used as symbols of the inner sacrifice and self-offering; we give what we are and what we have in order that the riches of the divine Truth and Light may descend into our life and become the elements of our inner birth into the Truth, — a right thinking, a right understanding, a right action must develop in us which is the thinking, impulsion and action of that higher Truth, *ṛtasya presā*, *ṛtasya dhīti*,¹⁴ and by this we must build up ourselves in that Truth. Our sacrifice is a journey, a pilgrimage and a battle, — a travel towards the Gods and we also make that journey with Agni, the inner Flame, as our path-finder and leader. Our human things are raised up by the mystic Fire into the immortal being, into the Great Heaven, and the things divine come down into us. As the doctrine of

⁹ I.164.47; also IV.21.3. ¹⁰ Atharva XII.1.1. ¹¹ IV.3.4.

¹² III.12.7; also VII.65.3. ¹³ V.12.2; also VII.43.4. ¹⁴ I.68.3.

the Rig Veda is the seed of the teaching of the Vedanta, so is its inner practice and discipline a seed of the later practice and discipline of Yoga. Finally, as the summit of the teaching of the Vedic mystics comes the secret of the one Reality, *ekam sat*,¹⁵ or *tad ekam*,¹⁶ which became the central word of the Upanishads. The Gods, the powers of Light and Truth are powers and names of the One, each God is himself all the Gods or carries them in him: there is the one Truth, *tat satyam*,¹⁷ and one bliss to which we must rise. But in the Veda this looks out still mostly from behind the veil. There is much else but this is the kernel of the doctrine.

The interpretation I have put forward was set out at length in a series of articles with the title “The Secret of the Veda” in the monthly philosophical magazine, *Arya*, some thirty years ago; written in serial form while still developing the theory and not quite complete in its scope or composed on a preconceived and well-ordered plan it was not published in book-form and is therefore not yet available to the reading public.¹⁸ It was accompanied by a number of renderings of the hymns of the Rig Veda which were rather interpretations than translations and to these there was an introduction explanatory of the “Doctrine of the Mystics”. Subsequently there was planned a complete translation of all the hymns to Agni in the ten Mandalas which kept close to the text; the renderings of those hymns in the second and sixth Mandalas are now published in this book for the first time as well as a few from the first Mandala.¹⁹ But to establish on a scholastic basis the conclusions of the hypothesis it would have been necessary to prepare an edition of the Rig Veda or of a large part of it with a word by word construing in Sanskrit and English, notes explanatory of important points in the text and justifying the interpretation both of separate

¹⁵ 1.164.46. ¹⁶ X.129.2. ¹⁷ III.39.5; also IV.54.4 and VIII.45.27.

¹⁸ *The writings on and translations of the Veda that Sri Aurobindo published in the Arya are now published in The Secret of the Veda with Selected Hymns, volume 15 of THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO. — Ed.*

¹⁹ *The 1946 edition of Hymns to the Mystic Fire, containing the translations referred to here, is reproduced in Part One of the present volume. — Ed.*

words and of whole verses and also elaborate appendices to fix firmly the rendering of key-words like *ṛtam*, *śravas*, *kratu*, *ketu*, etc. essential to the esoteric interpretation. This also was planned, but meanwhile greater preoccupations of a permanent nature intervened and no time was left to proceed with such a considerable undertaking. For the benefit of the reader of these translations who might otherwise be at a loss, this foreword has been written and some passages from the unpublished "Doctrine of the Mystics" have been included.²⁰ The text of the Veda has been given for use by those who can read the original Sanskrit. These translations however are not intended to be a scholastic work meant to justify a hypothesis; the object of this publication is only to present them in a permanent form for disciples and those who are inclined to see more in the Vedas than a superficial liturgy and would be interested in knowing what might be the esoteric sense of this ancient Scripture.

This is a literary and not a strictly literal translation. But a fidelity to the meaning, the sense of the words and the structure of the thought, has been preserved: in fact the method has been to start with a bare and scrupulously exact rendering of the actual language and adhere to that as the basis of the interpretation; for it is only so that we can find out the actual thoughts of these ancient mystics. But any rendering of such great poetry as the hymns of the Rig Veda, magnificent in their colouring and images, noble and beautiful in rhythm, perfect in their diction, must, if it is not to be merely dead scholastic work, bring at least a faint echo of their poetic force,—more cannot be done in a prose translation and in so different a language. The turn of phrase and the syntax of English and Vedic Sanskrit are poles asunder; to achieve some sense of style and natural writing one has constantly to turn the concentrated speech of the Veda into a looser, more diluted English form. Another stumbling-block for the translator is the ubiquitous *double entendre* marking in

²⁰ "The Doctrine of the Mystics" is now published in its entirety in The Secret of the Veda with Selected Hymns, pages 370–84. The excerpt from it included in the first edition of Hymns to the Mystic Fire is reproduced after this foreword.—Ed.

one word the symbol and the thing symbolised, Ray and Cow, clear light of the mind and clarified butter, horses and spiritual power; one has to invent phrases like the “herds of the light” or “the shining herds” or to use devices such as writing the word horse with a capital H to indicate that it is a symbolic horse that is meant and not the common physical animal; but very often the symbol has to be dropped, or else the symbol has to be kept and the inner meaning left to be understood;²¹ I have not always used the same phrase though always keeping the same sense, but varied the translation according to the needs of the passage. Often I have been unable to find an adequate English word which will convey the full connotation or colour of the original text; I have used two words instead of one or a phrase or resorted to some other device to give the exact and complete meaning. Besides, there is often a use of antique words or turns of language of which the sense is not really known and can only be conjectured or else different renderings are equally possible. In many passages I have had to leave a provisional rendering; it was intended to keep the final decision on the point until the time when a more considerable body of the hymns had been translated and were ready for publication; but this time has not yet come.

²¹ The Rishis sometimes seem to combine two different meanings in the same word; I have occasionally tried to render this double sense.

The Doctrine of the Mystics¹

THE IMAGE of this sacrifice is sometimes that of a journey or voyage; for it travels, it ascends; it has a goal—the vastness, the true existence, the light, the felicity—and it is called upon to discover and keep to the good, the straight and the happy path to the goal, the arduous yet joyful road of the Truth. It has to climb, led by the flaming strength of the divine will, from plateau to plateau as of a mountain, it has to cross as in a ship the waters of existence, traverse its rivers, overcome their deep pits and rapid currents; its aim is to arrive at the far-off ocean of light and infinity.

And this is no easy or peaceful march; it is for long seasons a fierce and relentless battle. Constantly the Aryan man has to labour and to fight and conquer; he must be a tireless toiler and traveller and a stern warrior, he must force open and storm and sack city after city, win kingdom after kingdom, overthrow and tread down ruthlessly enemy after enemy. His whole progress is a warring of Gods and Titans, Gods and Giants, Indra and the Python, Aryan and Dasyu. Aryan adversaries even he has to face in the open field; for old friends and helpers turn into enemies; the kings of Aryan states whom he would conquer and overpass join themselves to the Dasyus and are leagued against him in supreme battle to prevent his free and utter passing on.

But the Dasyu is the natural enemy. These dividers, plunderers, harmful powers, these Danavas, sons of the Mother of division, are spoken of by the Rishis under many general appellations. There are Rakshasas; there are Eaters and Devourers, Wolves and Tearers; there are hurters and haters; there are dualisers; there are confiners or censurers. But we are given also

¹ This excerpt is reproduced from the 1946 edition of Hymns to the Mystic Fire. The complete essay which appeared in the Arya is published in The Secret of the Veda with Selected Hymns, Part Three.—Ed.

many specific names. Vritra, the Serpent, is the grand Adversary; for he obstructs with his coils of darkness all possibility of divine existence and divine action. And even when Vritra is slain by the light, fiercer enemies arise out of him. Shushna afflicts us with his impure and ineffective force, Namuchi fights man by his weaknesses, and others too assail, each with his proper evil. Then there are Vala and the Panis, miser traffickers in the sense-life, stealers and concealers of the higher Light and its illuminations which they can only darken and misuse,—an impious host who are jealous of their store and will not offer sacrifice to the Gods. These and other personalities—they are much more than personifications—of our ignorance, evil, weakness and many limitations make constant war upon man; they encircle him from near or they shoot their arrows at him from afar or even dwell in his gated house in the place of the Gods and with their shapeless stammering mouths and their insufficient breath of force mar his self-expression. They must be expelled, overpowered, slain, thrust down into their nether darkness by the aid of the mighty and helpful deities.

The Vedic deities are names, powers, personalities of the universal Godhead and they represent each some essential puissance of the Divine Being. They manifest the cosmos and are manifest in it. Children of Light, Sons of the Infinite, they recognise in the soul of man their brother and ally and desire to help and increase him by themselves increasing in him so as to possess his world with their light, strength and beauty. The Gods call man to a divine companionship and alliance; they attract and uplift him to their luminous fraternity, invite his aid and offer theirs against the Sons of Darkness and Division. Man in return calls the Gods to his sacrifice, offers to them his swiftnesses and his strengths, his clarities and his sweetneses,—milk and butter of the shining Cow, distilled juices of the Plant of Joy, the Horse of the Sacrifice, the cake and the wine, the grain for the God-Mind's radiant coursers. He receives them into his being and their gifts into his life, increases them by the hymns and the wine and forms perfectly—as a smith forges iron, says the Veda —their great and luminous godheads.

All this Vedic imagery is easy to understand when once we have the key, but it must not be mistaken for mere imagery. The Gods are not simply poetical personifications of abstract ideas or of psychological and physical functions of Nature. To the Vedic seers they are living realities; the vicissitudes of the human soul represent a cosmic struggle not merely of principles and tendencies but of the cosmic Powers which support and embody them. These are the Gods and the Demons. On the world-stage and in the individual soul the same real drama with the same personages is enacted.

* * *

To what gods shall the sacrifice be offered? Who shall be invoked to manifest and protect in the human being this increasing godhead?

Agni first, for without him the sacrificial flame cannot burn on the altar of the soul. That flame of Agni is the seven-tongued power of the Will, a Force of God instinct with Knowledge. This conscious and forceful will is the immortal guest in our mortality, a pure priest and a divine worker, the mediator between earth and heaven. It carries what we offer to the higher Powers and brings back in return their force and light and joy into our humanity.

Indra, the Puissant next, who is the power of pure Existence self-manifested as the Divine Mind. As Agni is one pole of Force instinct with knowledge that sends its current upward from earth to heaven, so Indra is the other pole of Light instinct with force which descends from heaven to earth. He comes down into our world as the Hero with the shining horses and slays darkness and division with his lightnings, pours down the life-giving heavenly waters, finds in the trace of the hound, Intuition, the lost or hidden illuminations, makes the Sun of Truth mount high in the heaven of our mentality.

Surya, the Sun, is the master of that supreme Truth,—truth of being, truth of knowledge, truth of process and act and movement and functioning. He is therefore the creator or rather the manifester of all things — for creation is out-bringing,

expression by the Truth and Will — and the father, fosterer, enlightener of our souls. The illuminations we seek are the herds of this Sun who comes to us in the track of the divine Dawn and releases and reveals in us night-hidden world after world up to the highest Beatitude.

Of that beatitude Soma is the representative deity. The wine of his ecstasy is concealed in the growths of earth, in the waters of existence; even here in our physical being are his immortalising juices and they have to be pressed out and offered to all the gods; for in that strength these shall increase and conquer.

Each of these primary deities has others associated with him who fulfil functions that arise from his own. For if the truth of Surya is to be established firmly in our mortal nature, there are previous conditions that are indispensable; a vast purity and clear wideness destructive of all sin and crooked falsehood,— and this is Varuna; a luminous power of love and comprehension leading and forming into harmony all our thoughts, acts and impulses,— this is Mitra; an immortal puissance of clear-discerning aspiration and endeavour,— this is Aryaman; a happy spontaneity of the right enjoyment of all things dispelling the evil dream of sin and error and suffering,— this is Bhaga. These four are powers of the Truth of Surya.

For the whole bliss of Soma to be established perfectly in our nature a happy and enlightened and unmaimed condition of mind, vitality and body are necessary. This condition is given to us by the twin Ashwins; wedded to the daughter of Light, drinkers of honey, bringers of perfect satisfactions, healers of maim and malady they occupy our parts of knowledge and parts of action and prepare our mental, vital and physical being for an easy and victorious ascension.

Indra, the Divine Mind, as the shaper of mental forms has for his assistants, his artisans, the Ribhus, human powers who by the work of sacrifice and their brilliant ascension to the high dwelling-place of the Sun have attained to immortality and help mankind to repeat their achievement. They shape by the mind Indra's horses, the chariot of the Ashwins, the weapons of the Gods, all the means of the journey and the battle. But as giver

of the Light of Truth and as Vritra-slayer Indra is aided by the Maruts, who are powers of will and nervous or vital Force that have attained to the light of thought and the voice of self-expression. They are behind all thought and speech as its impellers and they battle towards the Light, Truth and Bliss of the supreme Consciousness.

There are also female energies; for the Deva is both Male and Female and the gods also are either activising souls or passively executive and methodising energies. Aditi, infinite Mother of the Gods, comes first; and there are besides five powers of the Truth-consciousness,— Mahi or Bharati, the vast Word that brings us all things out of the divine source; Ila, the strong primal word of the Truth who gives us its active vision; Saraswati, its streaming current and the word of its inspiration; Sarama, the Intuition, hound of heaven who descends into the cavern of the subconscious and finds there the concealed illuminations; Dakshina, whose function is to discern rightly, dispose the action and the offering and distribute in the sacrifice to each godhead its portion. Each god, too, has his female energy.

All this action and struggle and ascension is supported by Heaven our Father and Earth our Mother, Parents of the Gods, who sustain respectively the purely mental and psychic and the physical consciousness. Their large and free scope is the condition of our achievement. Vayu, master of life, links them together by the mid-air, the region of vital force. And there are other deities,— Parjanya, giver of the rain of heaven; Dadhikravan, the divine war-horse, a power of Agni; the mystic Dragon of the Foundations; Trita Aptya who on the third plane of existence consummates our triple being; and more besides.

The development of all these godheads is necessary to our perfection. And that perfection must be attained on all our levels,— in the wideness of earth, our physical being and consciousness; in the full force of vital speed and action and enjoyment and nervous vibration, typified as the Horse which must be brought forward to upbear our endeavour; in the perfect gladness of the heart of emotion and a brilliant heat and clarity of the mind throughout our intellectual and psychical being; in the coming

of the supramental Light, the Dawn and the Sun and the shining Mother of the herds, to transform all our existence; for so comes to us the possession of the Truth, by the Truth the admirable surge of the Bliss, in the Bliss infinite Consciousness of absolute being.

Three great Gods, origin of the Puranic Trinity, largest puissances of the supreme Godhead, make possible this development and upward evolution; they support in its grand lines and fundamental energies all these complexities of the cosmos. Brahmanaspati is the Creator; by the word, by his cry he creates—that is to say he expresses, he brings out all existence and conscious knowledge and movement of life and eventual forms from the darkness of the Inconscient. Rudra, the Violent and Merciful, the Mighty One, presides over the struggle of life to affirm itself; he is the armed, wrathful and beneficent Power of God who lifts forcibly the creation upward, smites all that opposes, scourges all that errs and resists, heals all that is wounded and suffers and complains and submits. Vishnu of the vast pervading motion holds in his triple stride all these worlds; it is he that makes a wide room for the action of Indra in our limited mortality; it is by him and with him that we rise into his highest seats where we find waiting for us the Friend, the Beloved, the Beatific Godhead.

Our earth shaped out of the dark inconscient ocean of existence lifts its high formations and ascending peaks heavenward; heaven of mind has its own formations, clouds that give out their lightnings and their waters of life; the streams of the clarity and the honey ascend out of the subconscious ocean below and seek the superconscious ocean above; and from above that ocean sends downward its rivers of the light and truth and bliss even into our physical being. Thus in images of physical Nature the Vedic poets sing the hymn of our spiritual ascension.

That ascension has already been effected by the Ancients, the human forefathers, and the spirits of these great Ancestors still assist their offspring; for the new dawns repeat the old and lean forward in light to join the dawns of the future. Kanwa, Kutsa, Atri, Kakshiwan, Gotama, Shunahshepa have become types of

certain spiritual victories which tend to be constantly repeated in the experience of humanity. The seven sages, the Angirasas, are waiting still and always, ready to chant the word, to rend the cavern, to find the lost herds, to recover the hidden Sun. Thus the soul is a battlefield full of helpers and hurters, friends and enemies. All this lives, teems, is personal, is conscious, is active. We create for ourselves by the sacrifice and by the word shining seers, heroes to fight for us, children of our works. The Rishis and the Gods find for us our luminous herds; the Ribhus fashion by the mind the chariots of the gods and their horses and their shining weapons. Our life is a horse that neighing and galloping bears us onward and upward; its forces are swift-hoofed steeds, the liberated powers of the mind are wide-winging birds; this mental being or this soul is the upsoaring Swan or the Falcon that breaks out from a hundred iron walls and wrests from the jealous guardians of felicity the wine of the Soma. Every shining godward Thought that arises from the secret abysses of the heart is a priest and a creator and chants a divine hymn of luminous realisation and puissant fulfilment. We seek for the shining gold of the Truth; we lust after a heavenly treasure.

The soul of man is a world full of beings, a kingdom in which armies clash to help or hinder a supreme conquest, a house where the gods are our guests and which the demons strive to possess; the fullness of its energies and wideness of its being make a seat of sacrifice spread, arranged and purified for a celestial session.

Such are some of the principal images of the Veda and a very brief and insufficient outline of the teaching of the Forefathers. So understood the Rig Veda ceases to be an obscure, confused and barbarous hymnal; it becomes the high-aspiring Song of Humanity; its chants are episodes of the lyrical epic of the soul in its immortal ascension.

This at least; what more there may be in the Veda of ancient science, lost knowledge, old psycho-physical tradition remains yet to be discovered.

Hymns of Gritsamada

MANDALA TWO

SUKTA 1

त्वमग्ने द्युभिस्त्वमाशुशुक्षणिस्त्वमद्भ्यस्त्वमश्मनस्परि ।
त्वं वनेभ्यस्त्वमोषधीभ्यस्त्वं नृणां नृपते जायसे शुचिः ॥१॥

1. O Fire, thou art born with thy lights, flaming out on us in thy effulgence; thou art born from the waters and around the stone, thou art born from the forests and born from the plants of the earth. Pure art thou in thy birth, O Master of man and his race.

तवाग्ने होत्रं तव पोत्रमृत्वियं तव नेष्टुं त्वमग्निदृतायतः ।
तव प्रशास्त्रं त्वमध्वरीयसि ब्रह्मा चासि गृहपतिश्च नो दमे ॥२॥

2. O Fire, thine are the call and the offering, thine the purification and the order of the sacrifice, thine the lustration; thou art the fire-bringer for the seeker of the Truth. The annunciation is thine, thou becomest the pilgrim-rite:¹ thou art the priest of the Word and the master of the house in our home.

त्वमग्न इन्द्रो वृषभः सतामसि त्वं विष्णुरुरुगायो नमस्यः ।
त्वं ब्रह्मा रथिविद् ब्रह्मणस्पते त्वं विधर्तः सच्चसे पुरन्ध्या ॥३॥

3. O Fire, thou art Indra the Bull of all that are and thou art wide-moving² Vishnu, one to be worshipped with obeisance. O Master of the Word, thou art Brahma, the finder of the

¹ Or, thou art the priest of the pilgrim-rite:

² Or, wide-sung

Riches: O Fire who sustainest each and all, closely thou companionest the Goddess of the many thoughts.³

त्वमग्ने राजा वरुणो धृतव्रतस्त्वं मित्रो भवसि दस्म ईङ्ग्यः ।
त्वमर्यमा सत्पतिर्यस्य संभुजं त्वमंशो विदथे देव भाजयुः ॥४॥

4. O Fire, thou art Varuna the king who holds in his hands the law of all workings and thou art Mitra the potent and desirable Godhead. Thou art Aryaman, master of beings, with whom is complete enjoying; O Godhead, thou art Ansha who gives us our portion in the winning of the knowledge.

त्वमग्ने त्वष्टा विधते सुवीर्यं तव ग्नावो मित्रमहः सजात्यम् ।
त्वमाशुहेमा ररिषे स्वश्वं त्वं नरां शर्धो असि पुरुषसुः ॥५॥

5. O Fire, thou art Twashtri and fashonest fullness of force for thy worshipper; thine, O friendly Light, are the goddess-Energies and all oneness of natural kind. Thou art the swift galloper and lavishest good power of the Horse; thou art the host of the gods and great is the multitude of thy riches.

त्वमग्ने रुद्रो असुरो महो दिवस्त्वं शर्धो मारुतं पृक्ष ईशिषे ।
त्वं वातैररुणैर्यासि शंगयस्त्वं पृष्ठा विधतः पासि नु त्मना ॥६॥

6. O Fire, thou art Rudra, the mighty one of the great Heaven and thou art the army of the Life-Gods and hast power over all that fills desire. Thou journeyest with dawn-red winds to bear thee and thine is the house of bliss; thou art Pushan and thou guardest with thyself thy worshippers.

त्वमग्ने द्रविणोदा अरंकृते त्वं देवः सविता रत्नधा असि ।
त्वं भगो नृपते वस्त्र ईशिषे त्वं पायुर्दमे यस्तेऽविधत् ॥७॥

7. O Fire, to one who makes ready and sufficient his works thou art the giver of the treasure; thou art divine Savitri and a founder of the ecstasy. O Master of man, thou art Bhaga

³ Or, the Goddess tenant of the city.

and hast power for the riches; thou art the guardian in the house for one who worships thee with his works.

त्वामग्ने दम आ विश्पतिं विशस्त्वां राजानं सुविद्वन्मृज्जते ।
त्वं विश्वानि स्वनीक पत्यसे त्वं सहस्राणि शता दश प्रति ॥८॥

8. O Fire, men turn to thee the master of the human being in his house; thee they crown, the king perfect in knowledge. O strong force of Fire, thou masterest all things; thou movest to the thousands and the hundreds and the tens.

त्वामग्ने पितरमिष्टिभिर्नरस्त्वां भ्रात्राय शम्या तनूरुचम् ।
त्वं पुत्रो भवसि यस्तेऽविधत् त्वं सखा सुशेषः पास्याधृषः ॥९॥

9. O Fire, men worship thee with their sacrifices as a father and thee that thou mayst be their brother by their achievement of works when thou illuminest the body with thy light. Thou becomest a son to the man who worships thee; thou art his blissful friend and guardest him from the violence of the adversary.

त्वमग्न ऋभुराके नमस्यस्त्वं वाजस्य क्षुमतो राय ईशिषे ।
त्वं वि भास्यनु दक्षि दावने त्वं विशिक्षुरसि यज्ञमातनिः ॥१०॥

10. O Fire, thou art the craftsman Ribhu, near to us and to be worshipped with obeisance of surrender; thou hast mastery over the store of the plenitude and the riches. All thy wide shining of light and onward burning is for the gift of the treasure; thou art our instructor in wisdom and our builder of sacrifice.

त्वमग्ने अदितिर्देव दाशुषे त्वं होत्रा भारती वर्धसे गिरा ।
त्वमिला शतहिमासि दक्षसे त्वं वृत्रहा वसुपते सरस्वती ॥११॥

11. O Divine Fire, thou art Aditi, the indivisible Mother to the giver of the sacrifice; thou art Bharati, voice of the offering, and thou growest by the word. Thou art Ila of the hundred

winters wise to discern; O Master of the Treasure, thou art Saraswati who slays the python adversary.

त्वमग्ने सुभृत उत्तमं वयस्तव स्पाहें वर्ण आ संदृशि श्रियः ।
त्वं वाजः प्रतरणो बृहन्नसि त्वं रथिर्बहुलो विश्वतस्पृथुः ॥१२॥

12. O Fire, when thou art well borne by us thou becomest the supreme growth and expansion of our being, all glory and beauty are in thy desirable hue and thy perfect vision. O Vastness, thou art the plenitude that carries us to the end of our way; thou art a multitude of riches spread out on every side.

त्वामग्न आदित्यास आस्यं त्वां जिह्वां शुचयश्चक्रिरे कवे ।
त्वां रातिषाचो अध्वरेषु सशिचरे त्वे देवा हविरदन्त्याहुतम् ॥१३॥

13. O Fire, the sons of the indivisible Mother made thee their mouth, the pure Gods made thee their tongue; O Seer, they who are ever close to our giving are constant to thee in the rites of the Path; the Gods eat in thee the offering cast before them.

त्वे अग्ने विश्वे अमृतासो अदृह आसा देवा हविरदन्त्याहुतम् ।
त्वया मर्तासः स्वदन्त आसुति त्वं गर्भो वीरुधां जग्निषे शुचिः ॥१४॥

14. O Fire, all the Gods, the Immortals unhurtful to man, eat in thee and by thy mouth the offering cast before them; by thee mortal men taste of the libation. Pure art thou born, a child of the growths of the earth.

त्वं तान्त्सं च प्रति चासि मज्जनाऽग्ने सुजात प्र च देव रिच्यसे ।
पृक्षो यदत्र महिना वि ते भुवदनु द्यावापृथिवी रोदसी उभे ॥१५॥

15. O Fire that hast come to perfect birth, thou art with the Gods and thou frontest them in thy might and thou exceedest them too, O God, when here the satisfying fullness of thee becomes all-pervading in its greatness along both the continents, Earth and Heaven.

ये स्तोत्रम्यो गोअग्रामश्वपेशसमग्ने रातिमुपसृजन्ति सूरयः ।
अस्माज्ज्ञ तांश्च प्र हि नेषि वस्य आ बृहद्देम विदथे सुवीराः ॥१६॥

16. When to those who chant thee, the luminous Wise Ones set free thy gift, O Fire, the wealth in whose front the Ray-Cow walks and its form is the Horse, thou leadest us on and leadest them to a world of greater riches. Strong with the strength of the heroes, may we voice the Vast in the coming of knowledge.

SUKTA 2

यज्ञेन वर्धत जातवेदसमग्निं यजध्वं हविषा तना गिरा ।
समिधानं सुप्रयसं स्वर्णरं द्युक्षं होतारं वृजनेषु धूष्ठदम् ॥१॥

1. Make the Fire that knows all things born to grow by your sacrifice; worship him with thy offering and thy body and thy speech. Worship in his kindling Fire with whom are his strong delights, the male of the sun-world, the Priest of the Call, the inhabitant of Heaven⁴ who sits at the chariot yoke in our battles.

अभि त्वा नक्तीरुषसो ववाशिरेऽग्ने वत्सं न स्वसरेषु धेनवः ।
दिव इवेदरतिर्मानुषा युगा क्षपो भासि पुरुचार संयतः ॥२॥

2. The Nights and the Dawns have lowed to thee as the milch-cows low towards a calf in their lairs of rest. O Fire of many blessings, thou art the traveller of Heaven through the ages of man and thou shonest self-gathered through his nights.⁵

तं देवा बुधे रजसः सुदंससं दिवस्पृथिव्योररतिं न्येरिरे ।
रथमिव वेद्यं शुक्रशोचिष्मग्निं मित्रं न क्षितिषु प्रशंस्यम् ॥३॥

3. The Gods have sent into the foundation of the middle world this great worker and pilgrim of earth and of heaven, whom

⁴ Or, who dwells in the Light,

⁵ Or, self-gathered thou illuminest his nights.

we must know, like our chariot of white-flaming light, Fire whom we must voice with our lauds like a friend in the peoples.

तमुक्षमाणं रजसि स्व आ दमे चन्द्रमिव सुरुचं द्वार आ दधुः ।
पृश्न्याः पतरं चितयन्तमक्षभिः पाथो न पायुं जनसी उभे अनु ॥४॥

- They have set in the crookedness, set pouring his rain like gold in the beauty of his light,⁶ in the middle world and in his own home, the guardian of the dappled mother who awakens us to knowledge with his eyes of vision, the protector of our path along either birth.

स होता विश्वं परि भूत्वध्वरं तमु हव्यैर्मनुष ऋग्जते गिरा ।
हिरिशिंग्रो वृधसानासु जर्मुरद द्यौनं स्तृभिश्चितयद्रोदसी अनु ॥५॥

- Let Fire be the priest of your call, let his presence be around every pilgrim-rite; this is he whom men crown with the word and the offering. He shall play in his growing fires wearing his tiara of golden light; like heaven with its stars he shall give us knowledge of our steps along both the continent-worlds.

स नो रेवत् समिधानः स्वस्तये संददस्वान् रयिमस्मासु दीदिहि ।
आ नः कृणुच्च सुविताय रोदसी अग्ने हव्या मनुषो देववीतये ॥६॥

- O Fire, opulently kindling for our peace, let thy light arise in us and bring its gift of riches. Make Earth and Heaven ways for our happy journeying and the offerings of man a means for the coming of the Gods.

दा नो अग्ने वृहतो दा: सहस्रिणो दुरो न वाजं श्रुत्या अपा वृधि ।
प्राची द्यावापृथिवी ब्रह्मणा कृधि स्वर्ण शुक्रमुषसो वि दिद्युतः ॥७॥

- O Fire, give us the vast possessions, the thousandfold riches; open to inspiration like gates the plenitude; make Earth and

⁶ Or, like a thing of delight in his shining beauty,

Heaven turned to the Beyond by the Word. The Dawns have broken into splendour as if there shone the brilliant world of the Sun.

स इधान उषसो राम्या अनु स्वर्णं दीदेदरुषेण भानुना ।
होत्राभिरग्निर्मनुषः स्वध्वरो राजा विशामतिथिश्चारुरायवे ॥८॥

8. Kindled in the procession of the beautiful Dawns, he shall break into roseate splendour like the world of the Sun. O Fire, making effective the pilgrim-rite by man's voices of offering, thou art the King of the peoples and the Guest delightful to the human being.

एवा नो अग्ने अमृतेषु पूर्व्यं धीर्षीपाय वृहद्विवेषु मानुषा ।
दुहाना धेनुवृजनेषु कारवे त्मना शतिनं पुरुरूपमिषणि ॥९॥

9. O pristine Fire, even thus the Thought has nourished our human things in the immortals, in the great Heavens. The Thought is our milch-cow, of herself she milks for the doer of works in his battles and in his speed to the journey the many forms and the hundreds of the Treasure.

वयमग्ने अर्वता वा सुवीर्यं ब्रह्मणा वा चितयेमा जनाँ अति ।
अस्माकं द्युम्नमधि पञ्च कृष्टिषूच्चा स्वर्णं शुशुचीत दुष्टरम् ॥१०॥

10. O Fire, let us conquer a hero-strength by the War-Horse, or let us awake to knowledge beyond men by the Word;⁷ let our light shine out in the Five Nations high and inviolable like the world of the Sun.

स नो बोधि सहस्यं प्रशंस्यो यस्मिन्त्सुजाता इषयन्त सूरयः ।
यमग्ने यज्ञमुपयन्ति वाजिनो नित्ये तोके दीदिवांसं स्वे दमे ॥११॥

11. Awake, O forceful Fire, one to be voiced by our lauds; for thou art he in whom the luminous seers come to perfect

⁷ Or, wake in ourselves a strength of heroes beyond men's scope by the power of the War-Horse or by the Word;

birth and speed on their way. O Fire, thou art the sacrifice and to thee the Horses of swiftness come there where thou shinest with light in the eternal son and in thy own home.

उभयासो जातवेदः स्याम ते स्तोतारो अग्ने सूरयश्च शर्मणि ।
वस्वो रायः पुरुश्चन्द्रस्य भूयसः प्रजावतः स्वपत्यस्य शग्धि नः ॥१२॥

12. O Fire, O God who knowest all things born, may we both abide in thy peace, those who hymn thee and the luminous seers. Be forceful for the opulence of the Treasure with the multitude of its riches and its many delights and its issue and the offspring of the Treasure.

ये स्तोतृभ्यो गोअग्रामश्वपेशसमग्ने रातिमुपसृजन्ति सूरयः ।
अस्माऽच्च तांश्च प्र हि नेषि वस्य आ बृहद्देम विदथे सुवीराः ॥१३॥

13. When to those who hymn thee the luminous Wise set free, O Fire, the gift in whose front the Ray-Cow walks and whose form is the Horse, thou leadest us on and leadest them to a world of greater riches. Strong with the strength of the Heroes, may we voice the Vast in the coming of the knowledge.

SUKTA 3

समिद्धो अग्निर्निहितः पृथिव्यां प्रत्यङ्ग विश्वानि भुवनान्यस्थात् ।
होता पावकः प्रदिवः सुमेधा देवो देवान् यजत्वग्निरह्न् ॥१॥

1. The Fire that was set inward in the earth is kindled and has arisen fronting all the worlds. He has arisen, the purifying Flame, the priest of the call, the wise of understanding, the Ancient of Days. Today let the Fire in the fullness of his powers, a god to the gods do sacrifice.

नराशंसः प्रति धामान्यज्जन् तिस्रो दिवः प्रति महा स्वर्चिः ।
घृतप्रुषा मनसा हव्यमुन्दन् मूर्धन् यज्ञस्य समनक्तु देवान् ॥ २ ॥

2. Fire who voices the godhead, shines revealing the planes, each and each; high of ray he reveals, each and each, the triple heavens by his greatness. Let him flood the oblation with a mind that diffuses the light and manifest the gods on the head of the sacrifice.

ईळितो अग्ने मनसा नो अर्हन् देवान् यक्षि मानुषात् पूर्वो अद्य ।
स आ वह मरुतां शर्भो अच्युतमिन्द्रं नरो बर्हिषदं यज्ञध्वम् ॥ ३ ॥

3. O Fire, aspired to by our mind, putting forth today thy power do sacrifice to the gods, O thou who wast of old before aught that is human. Bring to us the unfallen host of the Life-Gods; and you, O Powers, sacrifice to Indra where he sits on the seat of our altar.

देव बर्हिवर्धमानं सुवीरं स्तीर्णं राये सुभरं वेद्यस्याम् ।
घृतेनाक्तं वसवः सीदतेदं विश्वे देवा आदित्या यज्ञियासः ॥ ४ ॥

4. O Godhead, strewn is the seat on this altar, the hero-guarded seat that ever grows, the seat well-packed for the riches,⁸ anointed with the Light. O all Gods, sit on this altar-seat, sons of the indivisible Mother, princes of the treasure, kings of sacrifice.

वि श्रयन्तामुर्विया हूयमाना द्वारो देवीः सुप्रायणा नमोभिः ।
व्यचस्वतीर्वि प्रथन्तामजुर्या वर्णं पुनाना यशसं सुवीरम् ॥ ५ ॥

5. May the divine Doors swing open, wide to our call, easy of approach with our prostrations of surrender; may they stretch wide opening into vastnesses, the imperishable Doors purifying the glorious and heroic kind.

⁸ Or, made strong to bear for the riches,

साध्वपांसि सनता न उक्षिते उषासानक्ता वय्येव रण्विते ।
तन्तुं ततं संवयन्ती समीची यज्ञस्य पेशः सुदुघे पयस्वती ॥६॥

6. Milch-cows, good milkers, pouring out on us may Night and Dawn, the eternal and equal sisters, come like weaving women full of gladness, weaving out the weft that is spun, the weft of our perfected works into a shape of sacrifice.

दैव्या होतारा प्रथमा विदुष्टर क्रज्जु यक्षतः समृचा वपुष्टरा ।
देवान्यजन्तावृतुथा समञ्जतो नाभा पृथिव्या अधि सानुषु त्रिषु ॥७॥

7. The two divine Priests of the call, the first, the full in wisdom and stature, offer by the illumining Word the straight things in us; sacrificing to the Gods in season, they reveal them in light in the navel of the Earth and on the three peaks of Heaven.

सरस्वती साधयन्ती धियं न इळा देवी भारती विश्वतूर्तिः ।
तिस्रो देवीः स्वधया बहिरेदमच्छद्रं पान्तु शरणं निषद्य ॥८॥

8. May Saraswati effecting our thought and goddess Ila and Bharati who carries all to their goal, the three goddesses, sit on our altar-seat and guard by the self-law of things our gapless house of refuge.

पिशङ्गरूपः सुभरो वयोधाः श्रृष्टी वीरो जायते देवकामः ।
प्रजां त्वष्टा वि ष्यतु नाभिमस्मे अथा देवानामप्येतु पाथः ॥९॥

9. Soon there is born a Hero of golden-red form, an aspirant to the Godheads, a mighty bringer of riches and founder of our growth to wideness. Let the Maker of forms loosen the knot of the navel in us, let him set free the issue of our works; then let him walk on the way of the Gods.⁹

⁹ Or, let the way of the Gods come to us.

वनस्पतिरवसृजनुप स्थादग्निर्हविः सूदयाति प्र धीभिः ।
त्रिधा समक्तं नयतु प्रजानन् देवेभ्यो दैव्यः शमितोप हव्यम् ॥१०॥

10. The Plant is with us streaming out the Wine. Fire speeds the oblation by our thoughts. Let the divine Achiever of works, understanding, lead the offering triply revealed¹⁰ in his light on its way to the Godheads.

घृतं मिमिक्षे घृतमस्य योनिर्घृते त्रितो घृतमस्य धाम ।
अनुष्वधमा वह मादयस्व स्वाहाकृतं वृषभ वक्षि हव्यम् ॥११॥

11. I pour on him the running light; for the light is his native lair, he is lodged in the light, the light is his plane. According to thy self-nature, bring the Gods and fill them with rapture. O Male of the herd, carry to them our offering blessed with *svāhā*.¹¹

SUKTA 4

हुवे वः सुद्योत्मानं सुवृक्तिं विशामग्निमतिथिं सुप्रयसम् ।
मित्र इव यो दिधिषाय्यो भूद् देव आदेवे जने जातवेदाः ॥१॥

1. I call to you the Fire with his strong delights and his splendours of light, Fire who strips all sin from us, the guest of the peoples. He becomes like a supporting friend, he becomes the God who knows all things born in the man with whom are the Gods.¹²

इमं विधन्तो अपां सधस्ये द्वितादधुर्मृगवो विक्ष्वायोः ।
एष विश्वान्यन्यस्तु भूमा देवानामग्निररतिर्जीराश्वः ॥२॥

2. The Bhrigus worshipping in the session of the Waters set him a twofold Light in the peoples of Man. May he master all planes prevailing vastly, Fire the traveller of the Gods with his rapid horses.

¹⁰ Or, triply anointed

¹¹ Or, made into *svāhā*.

¹² Or, in all from men to the Gods.

अग्निं देवासो मानुषीषु विक्षु प्रियं धुः क्षेष्यन्तो न मित्रम् ।
स दीदयदुश्तीरूप्या आ दक्षाय्यो यो दास्वते दम आ ॥३॥

3. As men who would settle in a home bring into it a beloved friend, the Gods have set the Fire in these human peoples. Let him illumine the desire of the billowing nights, let him be one full of discerning mind in the house for the giver of sacrifice.

अस्य रण्वा स्वस्येव पुष्टिः संदृष्टिरस्य हियानस्य दक्षोः ।
वि यो भरिप्रदोषधीषु जिह्वामत्यो न रथ्यो दोधवीति वारान् ॥४॥

4. Delightful is his growth as if one's own increase, rapturous is his vision as he gallops burning on his way. He darts about his tongue mid the growths of the forest and tosses his mane like a chariot courser.

आ यन्मे अभ्वं वनदः पनन्तोशिगम्यो नामिमीत वर्णम् ।
स चित्रेण चिकिते रंसु भासा जुजुवाँ यो मुहुरा युवा भूत् ॥५॥

5. When my thoughts enjoying him chant his mightiness, he shapes hue of kind as if to our desire. He awakes to knowledge in men that have the ecstasy by the rich diversity of his light; old and outworn he grows young again and again.

आ यो वना तातृषाणो न भाति वार्ण पथा रथ्येव स्वानीत् ।
कृष्णाध्वा तपू रण्वशिचकेत द्यौरिव स्मयमानो नभोभिः ॥६॥

6. Like one who thirsts he lifts his light on the forests; his roar is like the cry of waters on their path, he neighs like a chariot war-horse. Black is his trail, burning his heat; he is full of rapture and awakes to knowledge: he is like Father Heaven smiling with his starry spaces.

स यो व्यस्थादभि दक्षदुर्वी पशुर्नैति स्वयुगोपाः ।
अग्निः शोचिष्माँ अतसान्युष्णान् कृष्णव्यथिरस्वदयन्न भूम ॥७॥

7. He starts on his journey to burn through all wide earth and moves like a beast that wanders at will and has no keeper; Fire with his blazing light and his black affliction assails the dry trunks with his heat as if he tasted the vastness.

नू ते पूर्वस्यावसो अर्धीतौ तृतीये विदथे मन्म शंसि ।
अस्मे अग्ने संयद्वीरं बृहन्तं क्षुमन्तं वाजं स्वपत्यं रयिं दाः ॥८॥

8. Now in our mind's return on thy former safeguarding, our thought has been spoken in the third session of the knowledge. O Fire, give us the treasure with its children; give us a vast and opulent plenitude where the heroes assemble.

त्वया यथा गृत्समदासो अग्ने गुहा वन्वन्त उपराँ अभि ष्युः ।
सुवीरासो अभिमातिषाहः स्मृत् सूरिभ्यो गृणते तद् वयो धाः ॥९॥

9. To the luminous Wise Ones and to him who voices thee, O Fire, be the founder of their growth and expansion, that the Gritsamadas strong with the strength of the Heroes and overcoming the hostile forces may conquer the higher worlds by thy force and take delight of¹³ the secret inner spaces.

SUKTA 5

होताजनिष्ट चेतनः पिता पितृभ्य ऊतये ।
प्रयक्षञ्जेन्यं वसु शकेम वाजिनो यमम् ॥१॥

1. A conscious Priest of the call is born to us; a father is born to his fathers for their safeguard. May we avail to achieve by sacrifice the wealth that is for the victor,¹⁴ and to rein the Horse of swiftness.

¹³ Or, win

¹⁴ Or, the wealth that has to be conquered,

आ यस्मिन्त्सप्त रश्मयस्तता यज्ञस्य नेतरि ।
मनुष्वद् दैव्यमष्टमं पोता विश्वं तदिन्वति ॥२॥

2. The seven rays are extended in this leader of sacrifice; there is a divine eighth that carries with it the human. The Priest of the purification takes possession of¹⁵ That All.

दधन्वे वा यदीमनु वोचद् ब्रह्माणि वेरु तत् ।
परि विश्वानि काव्या नेमिश्चक्रमिवाभवत् ॥३॥

3. When a man has firmly established this Fire, he echoes the Words of knowledge and comes to¹⁶ That: for he embraces all seer-wisdoms as the rim surrounds a wheel.

साकं हि शुचिना शुचिः प्रशास्ता क्रतुनाजनि ।
विद्वाँ अस्य व्रता ध्रुवा वया इवानु रोहते ॥४॥

4. Pure, the Priest of the annunciation is born along with the pure will. The man who knows the laws of his workings that are steadfast for ever, climbs them one by one like branches.

ता अस्य वर्णमायुवो नेष्टः सचन्त धेनवः ।
कुवित् तिसृभ्य आ वरं स्वसारो या इदं ययुः ॥५॥

5. The milch-cows come to and cleave to the hue of Light¹⁷ of this Priest of the lustration, the Sisters who have gone once and again to that Supreme over the three.¹⁸

यदी मातुरुप स्वसा घृतं भरन्त्यस्थित ।
तासामध्वर्युरागतौ यवो वृष्टीव मोदते ॥६॥

6. When the sister of the Mother comes to him bringing the yield of the Light, the Priest of the pilgrim-sacrifice rejoices in her advent as a field of barley revels in the rain.

¹⁵ Or, travels to (reaches)

¹⁶ Or, and comes to know

¹⁷ Or, the hue of kind

¹⁸ The fourth world, Turiyam above the three, so called in the Rigveda, *turiyam svid*.

स्वः स्वाय धायसे कृणुतामृत्विगृत्विजम् ।
स्तोमं यज्ञं चादरं वनेमा ररिमा वयम् ॥७॥

7. Himself for his own confirming let the Priest of the rite
create the priest; let us take joy of the laud and the sacrifice,
for then it is complete, what we have given.¹⁹

यथा विद्वाँ अरं करद् विश्वेभ्यो यजतेभ्यः ।
अयमग्ने त्वे अपि यं यज्ञं चकृमा वयम् ॥८॥

8. Even as one who has the knowledge let him work out the
rite for all the lords of the sacrifice. On thee, O Fire, is this
sacrifice that we have made.

SUKTA 6

इमां मे अग्ने समिधमिमामुपसदं वनेः ।
इमा ऊ षु श्रुधी गिरः ॥९॥

1. O Fire, mayst thou rejoice in the fuel I bring thee, rejoice in
my session of sacrifice. Deeply lend ear to my words.

अया ते अग्ने विधेमोर्जो नपादश्वमिष्टे ।
एना सूक्तेन सुजात ॥२॥

2. O Fire, who art brought to perfect birth, Child of Energy,
Impeller of the Horse, we would worship thee with this obla-
tion, we would worship thee with this Word well-spoken.

तं त्वा गीर्भिर्गिर्वणसं द्रविणस्युं द्रविणोदः ।
सपर्येम सपर्यवः ॥३॥

3. We would wait with our Words on thy joy in the Word; O
Treasure-giver, we would wait on the seeker of the Treasure.
Let us serve thee, all whose desire is thy service.

¹⁹ Or, for then it is complete, we have moved (on the way). Or, let us take full joy of
the laud and the sacrifice; for we have given.

स बोधि सूरिमधवा वसुपते वसुदावन् ।
युयोध्यस्मद् द्वेषांसि ॥ ४ ॥

4. O Wealth-Lord, Wealth-giver, awake, a seer and a Master of Treasures; put away from us the things that are hostile.

स नो वृष्टि दिवस्परि स नो वाजमनवाणम् ।
स नः सहस्रिणीरिषः ॥ ५ ॥

5. For us, O Fire, the Rain of Heaven around us! for us, O Fire, the wealth immovable,²⁰ for us, O Fire, the impulsions that bring their thousands.

ईळानायावस्यवे यविष्ट द्रूत नो गिरा ।
यजिष्ठ होतरा गहि ॥ ६ ॥

6. O Messenger, O youngest Power, come at our word for him who aspires to thee and craves for thy safeguard; arrive, O Priest of the call, strong for sacrifice.

अन्तर्घग्न ईयसे विद्वाञ्जन्मोभया कवे ।
द्रूतो जन्येव मित्रः ॥ ७ ॥

7. O Fire, O seer, thou movest within having knowledge of both the Births;²¹ thou art like a messenger from a friendly people.²²

स विद्वाँ आ च पिप्रयो यक्षि चिकित्व आनुषक् ।
आ चास्मिन्तस्तिस वर्हिषि ॥ ८ ॥

8. Come with thy knowledge, O Conscious Fire, and fill us; perform the unbroken order of the sacrifice. Take thy seat on the sacred grass of our altar.

²⁰ Or, free from all littleness,

²¹ Or, as one who has knowledge between both births;

²² Or, like a friendly universal messenger.

SUKTA 7

श्रेष्ठं यविष्ट भारताऽग्ने दुमन्तमा भर ।
वसो पुरुस्पृहं रथिम् ॥१॥

- O Fire, O Youngest Power! Fire of the Bringers, Prince of the Treasure, bring to us a wealth, the best, made all of light and packed with our many desires.

मा नो अरातिरीशत देवस्य मर्त्यस्य च ।
पर्षि तस्या उत द्विषः ॥२॥

- Let not the Force that wars against us master the God and the mortal;²³ carry us beyond that hostile power.

विश्वा उत त्वया वयं धारा उदन्या इव ।
अति गाहेमहि द्विषः ॥३॥

- And so by thee may we plunge and pass beyond all hostile forces as through streams of rushing water.

शुचिः पावक वन्द्योऽग्ने वृहद् वि रोचसे ।
त्वं घृतेभिराहुतः ॥४॥

- O cleansing Fire, thou art pure and adorable; vast is the beauty of thy light fed with the clarities.

त्वं नो असि भारताऽग्ने वशाभिरुक्षभिः ।
अष्टापदीभिराहुतः ॥५॥

- O Fire of the Bringers, thou art called by²⁴ our bulls and our heifers and by our eight-footed Kine.²⁵

²³ Or, against us, God and mortal, overmaster us;

²⁴ Or, fed with

²⁵ Or, by our bulls and by our barren and pregnant kine. *Aṣṭāpadī*, literally eight-footed.

द्रवन्नः सर्पिरासुतिः प्रलो होता वरेण्यः ।
सहस्र्पुत्रो अङ्गुतः ॥६॥

6. This is the eater of the Tree for whom is poured the running butter of the Light; this is the Desirable, the ancient Priest of the call, the Wonderful, the son of Force.

SUKTA 8

वाजयन्निव नू रथान् योगाँ अग्नेरुप स्तुहि ।
यशस्तमस्य मीङ्कुषः ॥१॥

1. As if to replenish him²⁶ chant now the chariots of Fire and his yokings, Fire the lavish and glorious Godhead.

यः सुनीथो ददाशुषेऽज्युर्यो जरयन्नरिम् ।
चारुप्रतीक आङ्गुतः ॥२॥

2. He brings his perfect leading to the man who has given; he is invulnerable and wears out with wounds the foe. Fair is the front of him fed with the offerings.

य उ श्रिया दमेष्वा दोषोषसि प्रशस्यते ।
यस्य व्रतं न मीयते ॥३॥

3. He is voiced in his glory and beauty at dusk and dawn in our homes. Never impaired is the law of his working.

आ यः स्वर्ण भानुना चित्रो विभात्यर्चिषा ।
अञ्जानो अजरैरभि ॥४॥

4. He shines rich with diverse lustres like the heavens of the Sun²⁷ in his illumining splendour, shines wide with his ray, putting forth on us a revealing light with his ageless fires.

²⁶ Or, as one seeking for plenitude

²⁷ Or, like the Sun

अत्रिमनु स्वराज्यमग्निमुक्थानि वावृधुः ।
विश्वा अधि श्रियो दघे ॥ ५ ॥

5. Our words have made the Fire to grow, made the Traveller to grow in the way of self-empire; he holds in himself all glory and beauty.

अग्नेरिन्द्रस्य सोमस्य देवानामूतिभिर्वयम् ।
अरिष्यन्तः सचेमह्यभि व्याम पृतन्यतः ॥ ६ ॥

6. May we cleave to the safeguardings of the Fire and Soma and Indra and of the Gods, meeting with no hurt overcome those that are embattled against us.

SUKTA 9

नि होता होतृषदने विदानस्त्वेषो दीदिवाँ असदत् सुदक्षः ।
अदब्धव्रतप्रमतिर्वसिष्ठः सहस्रंभरः शुचिजिह्वो अग्निः ॥ १ ॥

1. The Priest of the call has taken his seat in the house of his priesthood; he is ablaze with light and vivid in radiance, he is full of knowledge and perfect in judgment. He has a mind of wisdom whose workings are invincible and is most rich in treasures: Fire with his tongue of purity is a bringer of the thousand.

त्वं द्वृतस्त्वमु नः परस्पास्त्वं वस्य आ वृषभ प्रणेता ।
अग्ने तोकस्य नस्तने तनूनामप्रयुच्छन् दीद्यद बोधि गोपाः ॥ २ ॥

2. Thou art the Messenger, thou art our protector who takest us to the other side; O Bull of the herds, thou art our leader on the way to a world of greater riches. For the shaping of the Son and the building of the bodies²⁸ awake in thy light, a guardian, and turn not from thy work, O Fire.

²⁸ Or, in the offspring of the son of our bodies

विधेम ते परमे जन्मन्नग्ने विधेम स्तोमैरवरे सधस्ये ।
यस्माद् योनेरुदारिथा यजे तं प्रत्वे हर्वीषि जुहुरे समिद्धे ॥३॥

3. May we worship thee in thy supreme Birth, O Fire; may we worship thee with our chants in the world of thy lower session: I adore with sacrifice thy native lair from which thou hast arisen. The offerings have been cast into thee when thou wert kindled and ablaze.

अग्ने यजस्व हविषा यजीयाञ्छृष्टी देष्णमभि गृणीहि राधः ।
त्वं ह्यसि रथिपती रथीणां त्वं शुक्रस्य वचसो मनोता ॥४॥

4. O Fire, be strong for sacrifice, do worship with my oblation; swiftly voice my thought towards the gift of the Treasure. For thou art the wealth-master who hast power over the riches, thou art the thinker of the brilliant Word.

उभयं ते न क्षीयते वसव्यं दिवेदिवे जायमानस्य दस्म ।
कृधि क्षुमन्तं जरितारमग्ने कृधि पतिं स्वपत्यस्य रायः ॥५॥

5. Both kinds of wealth are thine, O potent Godhead and because thou art born from day to day, neither can waste and perish. O Fire, make thy adorer one full of possessions; make him a master of the Treasure and of wealth rich in progeny.

सैनानीकेन सुविदत्रो अस्मे यष्टा देवाँ आयजिष्ठः स्वस्ति ।
अदब्धो गोपा उत नः परस्पा अग्ने द्युमद्गुत रेवद् दिदीहि ॥६॥

6. O Fire, shine forth with this force²⁹ of thine in us, one perfect in knowledge, one who worships the Gods and is strong for sacrifice. Be our indomitable guardian and our protector to take us to the other side; flame in us with thy light, flame in us with thy opulence.

²⁹ Or, form

SUKTA 10

जोहूत्रो अग्निः प्रथमः पितेवेळस्पदे मनुषा यत् समिद्धः ।
श्रियं वसानो अमृतो विचेता मर्मजेन्यः श्रवस्यः स वाजी ॥ १ ॥

- Fire is to us as our first father and to him must rise our call when he is kindled by man in the seat of his aspiration. He puts on glory and beauty like a robe; he is our Horse of swiftness full of inspiration to be groomed by us, he is the immortal wide in knowledge.

श्रूया अग्निश्चत्रभानुर्हवं मे विश्वाभिर्गीर्भिरमृतो विचेताः ।
श्यावा रथं वहतो रोहिता वोतारुषाह चक्रे विभृतः ॥ २ ॥

- May Fire in the rich diversity of his lights, the immortal wide in knowledge, hearken to my cry in all its words. Two tawny horses bear him or two that are red or ruddy in glow. Oh, one widely borne has been created.

उत्तानायामजनयन्त्सुषूतं भुवदग्निः पुरुपेशासु गर्भः ।
शिरिणायां चिदक्तुना महोभिरपरीवृतो वसति प्रचेताः ॥ ३ ॥

- They have given him birth in one laid supine who with happy delivery bore him; the Fire became a child in mothers of many forms. This thinker and knower by the greatness of his lights dwells³⁰ even in the destroying Night unenveloped by the darkness.

जिघर्म्यग्निं हविषा धृतेन प्रतिक्षियन्तं भुवनानि विश्वा ।
पृथुं तिरश्चा वयसा वृहन्तं व्यचिष्टमन्नै रभसं दृशानम् ॥ ४ ॥

- I anoint the Fire with my oblation of light, where he dwells fronting all the worlds; wide in his horizontal expansion and vast, he is most open and manifest by all he has fed on, seen in the impetuosity of his force.³¹

³⁰ Or, shines

³¹ Or, in the violence of his rapture.

आ विश्वतः प्रत्यञ्चं जिघर्ष्यरक्षसा मनसा तज्जुषेत् ।
मर्यश्रीः स्पृहयद्वर्णो अग्निर्नाभिमृगे तन्वा जर्भुराणः ॥ ५ ॥

5. I anoint him where he moves fronting all things on every side; let him rejoice in That with a mind that withholds not the riches.³² None can touch the body of the Fire where he plays in his desire of the hues of light,³³ in his strong and glorious beauty.

झेया भागं सहसानो वरेण त्वाद्वृतासो मनुवद् वदेम ।
अनूनमग्निं जुह्वा वचस्या मधुपृचं धनसा जोहवीमि ॥ ६ ॥

6. Mayst thou take knowledge of thy portion putting forth thy force with thy supreme flame; may we speak as the thinking human being with thee for Messenger. I am one who would conquer the Treasure and I call to the Fire with my power of speech and my flame of offering, Fire in whom is no insufficiency and he brings to us the touch of the sweetness.³⁴

³² Or, with a mind without the will to injure.

³³ Or, with his desire-waking hue,

³⁴ Or, he fills us with the wine of sweetness.

Hymns of Bharadwaja

MANDALA SIX

SUKTA 1

त्वं ह्यग्ने प्रथमो मनोताऽस्या धियो अभवो दस्म होता ।
त्वं सीं वृषन्नकृणोर्दुष्टरीतु सहो विश्वस्मै सहस्रै ॥१॥

1. O potent Fire, thou wert the first thinker of this thought and the priest of the call. O Male, thou hast created everywhere around thee a force invulnerable to overpower every force.

अधा होता न्यसीदो यजीयानिलस्पद इषयन्नीड्यः सन् ।
तं त्वा नरः प्रथमं देवयन्तो महो राये चितयन्तो अनु गमन् ॥२॥

2. And now strong for sacrifice, thou hast taken thy session in the seat of aspiration, one aspired to, a flamen of the call, an imparter of the impulse. Men, building the godheads, have grown conscious of thee, the chief and first, and followed to a mighty treasure.

वृतेव यन्तं बहुभिर्वसव्यैस्त्वे रयिं जागृवांसो अनु गमन् ।
रुशन्तमग्निं दर्शतं बृहन्तं वपावन्तं विश्वहा दीदिवांसम् ॥३॥

3. In thee awake, they followed after the Treasure as in the wake of one who walks on a path with many possessions, in the wake of the vast glowing visioned embodied Fire that casts its light always and for ever.

पदं देवस्य नमसा व्यन्तः श्रवस्यवः श्रव आपन्नमृक्तम् ।
नामानि चिद् दधिरे यज्ञियानि भद्रायां ते रणयन्त संदृष्टौ ॥४॥

4. Travellers with surrender to the plane of the godhead, seekers of inspired knowledge, they won an inviolate inspiration,

they held the sacrificial Names and had delight in thy happy vision.

त्वां वर्धन्ति क्षितयः पृथिव्यां त्वां राय उभयासो जनानाम् ।
त्वं त्राता तरणे चेत्यो भूः पिता माता सदमिन्मानुषाणाम् ॥५॥

5. The peoples increase thee on the earth; both kinds of riches of men increase thee. O Fire, our pilot through the battle, thou art the deliverer whom we must know, ever a father and mother to human beings.

सपर्येण्यः स प्रियो विक्ष्वग्निहर्ता मन्द्रो नि षसादा यजीयान् ।
तं त्वा वर्यं दम आ दीदिवांसमुप ज्ञुबाधो नमसा सदेम ॥६॥

6. Dear and servable is this Fire in men; a rapturous priest of the call has taken up his session, strong for sacrifice. Pressing the knee may we come to thee with obeisance of surrender when thou flamest alight in the house.

तं त्वा वर्यं सुध्यो नव्यमग्ने सुम्भायव ईमहे देवयन्तः ।
त्वं विशो अनयो दीद्यानो दिवो अग्ने बृहता रोचनेन ॥७॥

7. O Fire, we desire thee, the god to whom must rise our cry, we the right thinkers, the seekers of bliss, the builders of the godheads. O Fire, shining with light thou leadest men through the vast luminous world of heaven.

विशां कविं विश्पतिं शश्वतीनां नितोशनं वृषभं चर्षणीनाम् ।
प्रेतीषणिमिषयन्तं पावकं राजन्तमग्निं यजतं रथीणाम् ॥८॥

8. To the seer, the Master of creatures who rules over the eternal generations of peoples, the Smiter, the Bull of those that see, the mover to the journey beyond who drives us, the purifying Flame, the Power in the sacrifice, Fire the Regent of the Treasures!

सो अग्न ईजे शशमे च मर्तो यस्त आनट् समिधा हव्यदातिम् ।
य आहुतिं परि वेदा नमोभिर्विष्वेत् स वामा दधते त्वोतः ॥९॥

9. O Fire, the mortal has done his sacrifice and achieved his labour who has worked out the gift of the oblation with the fuel of thy flame and wholly learned the way of the offering by his prostrations of surrender; he lives in thy guard and holds in himself all desirable things.

अस्मा उ ते महि महे विधेम नमोभिरग्ने समिधोत हव्यैः ।
वेदी सूनो सहसो गीर्भिरुक्थैरा ते भद्रायां सुमतौ यतेम ॥१०॥

10. O Fire, O Son of Force, may we offer to thy greatness that which is great, worshipping thee with the obeisance and the fuel and the offering, the altar and the word and the utterance. For we would work and strive in thy happy right thinking, O Fire.

आ यस्ततन्य रोदसी वि भासा श्रवोभिश्च श्रवस्यस्तरुत्रः ।
बृहङ्गिर्वाजैः स्थविरेभिरस्मे रेवङ्गिरग्ने वितरं वि भाहि ॥११॥

11. O thou who art filled with inspiration and a passer of barriers, O thou who hast extended earth and heaven by the wideness of thy light and thy inspired discoveries of knowledge, shine wider yet in us with thy large and solid and opulent amassings, O Fire.

नृवद् वसो सदमिद् धेद्यस्मे भूरि तोकाय तनयाय पश्वः ।
पूर्वीरिषो बृहतीरारेअघा अस्मे भद्रा सौश्रवसानि सन्तु ॥१२॥

12. O Prince of Riches, fix always in us that in which are the Gods, settle here many herds for the begotten son. In us may there be the happy things of true inspiration and the multitude of the large impulsions from which evil is far.

पुरुण्यग्ने पुरुधा त्वाया वसूनि राजन् वसुता ते अश्याम् ।
पुरुणि हि त्वे पुरुवार सन्त्यग्ने वसु विधते राजनि त्वे ॥ १३ ॥

13. O King, O Fire, let me enjoy by thee and thy princedom of the riches many riches in many ways; for, O Fire of many blessings, there are many treasures for thy worshipper in thee, the King.

SUKTA 2

त्वं हि क्षैतवद् यशोऽग्ने मित्रो न पत्यसे ।
त्वं विचर्षणे श्रवो वसो पुष्टिं न पुष्पसि ॥ १ ॥

1. O Fire, thou travellest like a friend to the glory where is our home. O wide-seeing Prince of the Treasure, thou nurturest our inspiration and our growth.

त्वां हि ष्मा चर्षणयो यज्ञेभिर्गीर्भिरीळते ।
त्वां वाजी यात्यवृको रजस्तूविश्वचर्षणः ॥ २ ॥

2. Men who see aspire to thee with the word and the sacrifice. To thee comes the all-seeing Horse that crosses the mid-world, the Horse that no wolf tears.

सजोषस्त्वा दिवो नरो यज्ञस्य केतुमिन्धते ।
यद्ध स्य मानुषो जनः सुम्नायुर्जुद्दे अव्वरे ॥ ३ ॥

3. The Men of Heaven with a single joy set thee alight to be the eye of intuition of the sacrifice when this human being, this seeker of bliss, casts his offering in the pilgrim Rite.

ऋधद् यस्ते सुदानवे धिया मर्तः शशमते ।
ऊती ष बृहतो दिवो द्विषो अंहो न तरति ॥ ४ ॥

4. The mortal should grow in riches who achieves the work by the Thought for thee, the great giver; he is in the keeping of the Vast Heaven and crosses beyond the hostile powers and their evil.

समिधा यस्त आहुतिं निशितं मर्त्यो नशत् ।
वयावन्तं स पुष्ट्यति क्षयमग्ने शतायुषम् ॥५॥

5. O Fire, when mortal man arrives by the fuel of thy flame to the way of the oblation and the sharpening of thy intensities, he increases his branching house, his house of the hundred of life.

त्वेषस्ते धूम ऋण्वति दिवि षम्भुक्र आततः ।
सूरो न हि द्युता त्वं कृपा पावक रोचसे ॥६॥

6. The smoke from thy blaze journeys and in heaven is outstretched brilliant-white. O purifying Fire, thou shinest with a flame like the light of the sun.

अधा हि विक्षीड्योऽसि प्रियो नो अतिथिः ।
रण्वः पुरीव जूर्यः सूनुर्न त्रययाय्यः ॥७॥

7. Now art thou here in men, one to be aspired to and a beloved guest; for thou art like one delightful and adorable in the city and as if our son and a traveller of the triple world.

कृत्वा हि द्वोणे अज्यसेऽग्ने वाजी न कृत्यः ।
परिज्मेव स्वधा गयोऽत्यो न द्वार्यः शिशुः ॥८॥

8. O Fire, thou art driven by the will in our gated house like a horse apt for our work; thou art by thy nature like a far-spreading mansion and like a galloper of winding ways and a little child.

त्वं त्या चिदच्युताऽग्ने पशुर्न यवसे ।
धामा ह यत् ते अजर वना वृश्चन्ति शिक्वसः ॥९॥

9. O Fire, thou art like a beast in thy pasture and devourest even the unfallen things; the lustres of thy blaze tear to pieces the woodlands, O ageless Flame.

वेषि ह्याव्यरीयतामग्ने होता दमे विशाम् ।
समृधो विश्पते कृषु जुषस्व हव्यमङ्गिरः ॥१०॥

10. O Fire, thou comest a priest of the call into the house of men that do the Rite of the Path. Make us complete in the treasure, O Master of men! O Angiras flame-seer, rejoice in our oblation.

अच्छा नो मित्रमहो देव देवानग्ने वौचः सुमतिं रोदस्योः ।
वीहि स्वस्तिं सुक्षितिं दिवो नृन् द्विषो अंहासि दुरिता तरेम
ता तरेम तवावसा तरेम ॥११॥

11. O Fire, O friendly Light, O Godhead, turn to the Godheads, mayst thou speak for us the true thought of Earth and Heaven; move to the peace and the happy abode and the men of Heaven. Let us pass beyond the foe and the sin and the stumbling; let us pass beyond these things, pass in thy keeping through them safe.

SUKTA 3

अग्ने स क्षेषदृतपा ऋतेजा उरु ज्योतिर्नशते देवयुष्टे ।
यं त्वं मित्रेण वरुणः सजोषा देव पासि त्यजसा मर्तमंहः ॥१॥

1. The mortal who longs for the Godhead shall take up his home with thee, O Fire, he is born into the Truth and a guardian of the Truth and comes to thy wide Light,—he in whom thou being Varuna takest with Mitra a common delight and thou guardest that mortal, O God, by thy casting away from him of evil.

ईजे यज्ञेभिः शशमे शमीभिर्कृधद्वारायाग्नये ददाश ।
एवा चन तं यशसामजुष्टिर्नाहो मर्त नशते न प्रदृष्टिः ॥२॥

2. He has sacrificed with sacrifices, he has achieved his labour by his works, he has given to the Fire whose boons grow

ever in opulence. And so there befalls him not the turning away of the Glorious Ones; evil comes not to him nor the insolence of the adversary.

सूरो न यस्य दृश्तिररेपा भीमा यदेति शुचतस्त आ धीः ।
हेषस्वतः शुरुधो नायमक्तोः कुत्रा चिद् रण्वो वस्तिर्वनेजाः ॥ ३॥

3. Faultless is thy seeing like the sun's; terrible marches thy thought when blazing with light thou neighest aloud like a force of battle. This Fire was born in the pleasant woodland and is a rapturous dweller somewhere in the night.

तिग्मं चिदेम महि वर्पो अस्य भसदश्वो न यमसान आसा ।
विजेहमानः परशुर्न जिह्वां द्रविर्व द्रावयति दारु धक्षत् ॥ ४॥

4. Fiery-sharp is his march and great his body,— he is like a horse that eats and champs with his mouth: he casts his tongue like an axe to every side, like a smelter he melts the log that he burns.

स इदस्तेव प्रति धादसिष्यज्ञिशीत तेजोऽयसो न धाराम् ।
चित्रप्रज्ञिररतिर्या अक्तोर्वर्णं दृषद्वा रघुपत्मजंहाः ॥ ५॥

5. He sets like an archer his shaft for the shooting, he sharpens his power of light like an edge of steel. He is the traveller of the night with rich rapid movements; he has thighs of swift motion and is like a bird that settles on a tree.

स ई रेमो न प्रति वस्त उम्राः शोचिषा रारपीति मित्रमहाः ।
नक्तं य ईमरुषो यो दिवा नृनमत्यो अरुषो यो दिवा नृन् ॥ ६॥

6. This friendly Light is like a singer of the word and clothes himself with the Rays, he rhapsodises with his flame. This is the shining One who journeys by night and by day to the Gods, the shining Immortal who journeys through the day to the Gods.

दिवो न यस्य विधतो नवीनोद् वृषा रुक्ष ओषधीषु नूनोत् ।
घृणा न यो ध्रजसा पत्मना यन्ना रोदसी वसुना दं सुपत्ती ॥ ७ ॥

7. The cry of him is like the voice of ordaining Heaven;¹ he is the shining Bull that bellows aloud in the growths of the forest. He goes with his light and his race and his running and fills Earth and Heaven with his riches; they are like wives happy in their spouse.

धायोभिर्वा यो युज्येभिरकैर्विद्युत्त दविद्योत् स्वेभिः शुष्मैः ।
शर्धो वा यो मरुतां ततक्ष ऋभुर्न त्वेषो रमसानो अद्यौत् ॥ ८ ॥

8. He flashes like the lightning with his own proper strengths, his own founding and helpful illuminations. As if heaven's craftsman he has fashioned the army of the Life-Gods and lightens ablaze in his exultant speed.

SUKTA 4

यथा होतर्मनुषो देवताता यज्ञेभिः सूनो सहसो यजासि ।
एवा नो अद्य समना समानानुशन्नग्न उशतो यक्षि देवान् ॥ १ ॥

1. O Son of Force, O priest of the call, even as always in man's forming of the godhead thou sacrificest with his sacrifices, sacrifice so for us to the gods today, O Fire, an equal power to equal powers, one who desires to the gods who desire.

स नो विभावा चक्षणिर्व वस्तोरग्निर्वन्दारु वेद्यश्चनो धात् ।
विश्वायुर्यो अमृतो मत्येषूष्मुद् भूदतिथिर्जातवेदाः ॥ २ ॥

2. He is wide in his light like a seer of the Day; he is the one we must know and founds an adorable joy. In him is universal life, he is the Immortal in mortals; he is the Waker in the Dawn, our Guest, the Godhead who knows all births that are.

¹ Or, the cry of him in his worship of sacrifice is like the voice of Heaven;

द्यावो न यस्य पनयन्त्यभ्वं भासांसि वस्ते सूर्यो न शुक्रः ।
वि य इनोत्यजरः पावकोऽश्वस्य चिञ्छश्वथत् पूर्वाणि ॥ ३॥

3. The heavens seem to praise his giant might; he is robed in lustres and brilliant like the Sun. Ageless the purifying Fire moves abroad and cuts down even the ancient things of the Devourer.²

वदा हि सूरो अस्यद्वाचके अग्निर्जनुषाज्मान्नम् ।
स त्वं न ऊर्जसन ऊर्जधा राजेव जेरवृके क्षेष्यन्तः ॥ ४॥

4. O Son, thou art the speaker, thy food is thy seat; Fire from his very birth has made his food the field of his race. O Strength-getter, found strength in us! Thou conquerest like a king and thy dwelling is within, there where there comes not any render.

नितिक्ति यो वारणमन्नमत्ति वायुर्न राष्ट्रयत्येत्यक्तून् ।
तुर्याम यस्त आदिशामरातीरत्यो न हृतः पततः परिहृत् ॥ ५॥

5. He eats his food and sharpens his sword of defence; he is like the Life-God a master of kingdoms and passes beyond the nights. O Fire, may we pierce through the foe, O thou who breakest like a galloping steed all that battle against thy appointments, hurting around thee our hurters as they fall upon us.

आ सूर्यो न भानुमङ्गरकैरग्ने ततन्थ रोदसी वि भासा ।
चित्रो नयत् परि तमांस्यक्तः शोचिषा पत्मनौशिजो न दीयन् ॥ ६॥

6. O Fire, thou art like the Sun with thy splendid illuminations and hast wide extended Earth and Heaven with thy light. Smeared with lustre,³ rich in brilliance he shepherds away the darknesses and like a son of the desire of the Gods rushes onward in his march.

² Or, the Enjoyer.

³ Or, anointed with light,

त्वां हि मन्दृतममर्कशोकैवृमहे महि नः श्रोष्यग्ने ।
इन्द्रं न त्वा शवसा देवता वायुं पृणन्ति राधसा नृतमाः ॥ ७ ॥

7. We have chosen thee most rapturous with the flaming lights of thy illuminations; O Fire, hear for us that which is great. O Godhead of Fire, the most strong Gods fill thee like Indra with might and like the Life-God with riches.

नू नो अग्नेऽवृक्षभिः स्वस्ति वेषि रायः पथिभिः पर्ष्यहः ।
ता सूरिभ्यो गृणते रासि सुम्नं मदेम शतहिमाः सुवीराः ॥ ८ ॥

8. O Fire, thou journeyest happily to the treasures by paths where the wolf rends not, and carriest us beyond all evils. These high things thou givest to the luminous wise; thou lavishest the bliss on him who voices thee with the word. May we revel in the rapture, strong with the strength of the Heroes, living a hundred winters.

SUKTA 5

हुवे वः सूनुं सहसो युवानमद्रोघवाचं मतिभिर्यविष्टम् ।
य इन्वति द्रविणानि प्रचेता विश्ववाराणि पुरुवारो अध्रुक् ॥ १ ॥

1. I call to you by my thoughts Fire, the youngest of the gods in whose words is no bale, the Youth, the Son of Force. He is a mind of the knowledge free from all that hurts; his gifts are many and he journeys to the riches where all boons are.

त्वे वसूनि पुर्वणीक होतर्दोषा वस्तोरेरिरे यज्ञियासः ।
क्षामेव विश्वा भुवनानि यस्मिन्त्सं सौभगानि दधिरे पावके ॥ २ ॥

2. O Priest of the call, priest with thy many flame-forces,⁴ in the night and in the light the Lords of sacrifice cast on thee their treasures. As in earth are founded all the worlds, they founded all happinesses in the purifying Fire.

⁴ Or, forms of flame,

त्वं विश्वु प्रदिवः सीद आसु कृत्वा रथीरभवो वार्याणाम् ।
अत इनोषि विधते चिकित्वो व्यानुषगजातवेदो वसूनि ॥ ३ ॥

3. Thou art the Ancient of Days and hast taken thy seat in these peoples and becomest by the will their charioteer of desirable things. O Conscient, O thou who knowest all births that are, thou walkest wide for thy worshipper in unbroken order to the Treasures.

यो नः सनुत्यो अभिदासदग्ने यो अन्तरो मित्रमहो वनुष्यात् ।
तमजरेभिर्वृषभिस्त्व श्वैस्तपा तपिष्ठ तपसा तपस्वान् ॥ ४ ॥

4. O Fire, O friendly Light, O most burning Power, the enemy who is hidden and would destroy us, the enemy who is within us and would conquer, leap fiery-forceful with thy affliction of flame and consume him with thy male and ageless fires.

यस्ते यज्ञेन समिधा य उक्थैरर्केभिः सूनो सहसो ददाशत् ।
स मर्त्येष्वमृत प्रचेता राया द्युम्नेन श्रवसा वि भाति ॥ ५ ॥

5. When man gives to thee with the sacrifice and the fuel and with his spoken words and his chants of illumination, he becomes, O Immortal, O Son of Force, a mind of knowledge among mortals and shines with the riches and inspiration and light.

स तत् कृधीषितस्तूयमग्ने स्पृधो बाधस्व सहसा सहस्वान् ।
यच्छस्यसे द्युभिरक्तो वचोभिस्तज्जुषस्व जरितुर्घोषि मन्म ॥ ६ ॥

6. Missioned create that swiftly, O Fire. Force is thine, resist with thy force our confronters. When revealed by thy lights, thou art formulated by our words, rejoice in the far-sounding thought of thy adorer.

अश्याम तं काममग्ने तवोती अश्याम रयिं रयिवः सुवीरम् ।
अश्याम वाजमभि वाजयन्तोऽश्याम द्युम्भमजराजरं ते ॥७॥

7. O Fire, may we possess in thy guard that high desire,—possess, O Lord of the treasures, that Treasure and its heroes, possess replenishing thee thy plenitude, possess, O ageless Fire, thy ageless light.

SUKTA 6

प्र नव्यसा सहसः सूनुमच्छा यज्ञेन गातुमव इच्छमानः ।
वृश्चद्वनं कृष्णामं रुशन्तं वीती होतारं दिव्यं जिगाति ॥१॥

1. Man turns with a new sacrifice to the Son of Force when he desires the Way and the guard. He arrives in his journeyings to the heavenly priest of the call, the priest shining with light, but black is his march through the forests he tears.

स शिवतानस्तन्यतू रोचनस्था अजरेभिर्नानदद्विर्यविष्टः ।
यः पावकः पुरुतमः पुरुष्णि पृथून्यग्निरनुयाति भर्वन् ॥२॥

2. He grows white and thunderous, he stands in a luminous world; he is most young with his imperishable clamouring fires. This is he that makes pure and is full of his multitudes and, even as he devours, goes after the things that are many, the things that are wide.

वि ते विष्वग्वातजूतासो अग्ने भामासः शुचे शुचयश्चरन्ति ।
तुविम्रक्षासो दिव्या नवग्वा वना वनन्ति धृष्टा रुजन्तः ॥३॥

3. O Fire, thy lights range wind-impelled on every side, pure as thou art pure. Many things they violate and break in their rashness and enjoy the forests of their pleasure, heavenly lights, seers of the ninefold ray.

ये ते शुक्रासः शुचयः शुचिष्मः क्षां वपन्ति विषितासो अश्वाः ।
अथ भ्रमस्त उर्विया वि भाति यातयमानो अधि सानु पृश्चेः ॥४॥

4. O Fire of the burning purities, pure and flaming-bright are these thy horses that loosed to the gallop raze the earth. Then wide is thy wandering and its light shines far as it drives them up to the dappled Mother's heights.

अथ जिह्वा पापतीति प्र वृष्णो गोषुयुधो नाशनिः सृजाना ।
शूरस्येव प्रसितिः क्षातिरग्नेर्द्वर्वतुर्भीमो दयते वनानि ॥५॥

5. Then the tongue of the Bull leaps constantly like the thunderbolt loosed of the God who fights for the herds of the Light. The destruction of Fire is like the charge of a hero; he is terrible and irresistible, he hews the forests asunder.

आ भानुना पार्थिवानि ज्यायांसि महस्तोदस्य धृष्टा ततन्थ ।
स वाधस्वाप भया सहोभिः स्पृधो वनुच्यन् वनुषो नि ज्ञर्व ॥६॥

6. Thou hast spread out the earthly speed-ranges by thy light and the violence of thy mighty scourge. Repel by thy forceful powers all dangerous things; turn to conquer those who would conquer us, shatter our confronters.

स चित्रं चित्रं चितयन्तमस्मे चित्रक्षत्रं चित्रतमं वयोधाम् ।
चन्द्रं रथं पुरुषीरं बृहन्तं चन्द्रं चन्द्राभिर्गृणते युवस्व ॥७॥

7. O rich in thy brilliances, Fire with thy manifold luminous mights, rivet to us the rich and various treasure, most richly diverse, that awakens us to knowledge and founds our expanding growth. O delightful God, to him who voices thee with delightful words the vast delightful wealth and its many hero keepers!

SUKTA 7

मूर्धानं दिवो अरति पृथिव्या वैश्वानरमृत आ जातमग्निम् ।
कविं सम्राजमतिथिं जनानामासन्ना पात्रं जनयन्त देवाः ॥१॥

1. Head of heaven and traveller of the earth a universal Power was born to us in the Truth, a Guest of men, a seer and absolute King; the Gods brought to birth universal Fire and made him in the mouth a vessel of the oblation.

नाभिं यज्ञानां सदनं रथीणां महामाहावमभि सं नवन्त ।
वैश्वानरं रथ्यमध्वराणां यज्ञस्य केतुं जनयन्त देवाः ॥२॥

2. All they together came to him, a navel knot of sacrifice, a house of riches, a mighty point of call in the battle. Charioteer of the Works of the way, eye of intuition of the sacrifice, the Gods brought to birth the universal Godhead.

त्वद् विप्रो जायते वाज्यग्ने त्वद् वीरासो अभिमातिषाहः ।
वैश्वानर त्वमस्मासु धेहि वसूनि राजन्त्पृहयाय्याणि ॥३॥

3. O Fire, from thee is born the Seer, the Horse and of thee are the Heroes whose might overcomes the adversary. O King, O universal Power, found in us the desirable treasures.

त्वां विश्वे अमृत जायमानं शिशुं न देवा अभि सं नवन्ते ।
तव क्रतुभिरमृतत्वमायन् वैश्वानर यत् पित्रोरदीदेः ॥४॥

4. O Immortal, all the Gods come together to thee in thy birth as to a new-born child. O universal Power, they travelled to immortality by the works of thy will when thou leapedst alight from the Father and Mother.

वैश्वानर तव तानि ब्रतानि महान्यग्ने नकिरा दधर्ष ।
यज्जायमानः पित्रोरुपस्येऽविन्दः केतुं वयुनेष्वह्नाम् ॥ ५ ॥

5. O Fire, universal Godhead, none could do violence to the laws of thy mighty workings because even in thy birth in the lap of the Father and the Mother thou hast discovered the light of intuition of the Days in manifested things.⁵

वैश्वानरस्य विमितानि चक्षसा सानूनि दिवो अमृतस्य केतुना ।
तस्येदु विश्वा भुवनाधि मूर्धनि वया इव रुरुहः सप्त विस्तुहः ॥ ६ ॥

6. The heights of heaven were measured into form by the eye of this universal Force, they were shaped by the intuition of the Immortal. All the worlds are upon his head; the seven far-flowing rivers climbed from him like branches.

वि यो रजांस्यमिमीत सुक्रतुर्वैश्वानरो वि दिवो रोचना कविः ।
परि यो विश्वा भुवनानि पप्रथेऽदब्धो गोपा अमृतस्य रक्षिता ॥ ७ ॥

7. The Universal mighty of will measured into form the kingdoms of middle space; a Seer, he shaped the luminous planes of Heaven. He has spread around us all these worlds; he is the guardian of immortality and its indomitable defender.

SUKTA 8

पृक्षस्य वृष्णो अरुषस्य नू सहः प्र नु वोचं विदथा जातवेदसः ।
वैश्वानराय मतिनव्यसी शुचिः सोम इव पवते चारुरग्नये ॥ १ ॥

1. Now have I spoken aloud the force of the brilliant Male who fills the world, the discoveries of knowledge of the god who knows all things that are. A new and pure and beautiful thought is streaming like sacramental wine to Fire, the universal Godhead.

⁵ Or, in all sorts of knowledge.

स जायमानः परमे व्योमनि व्रतान्यग्निर्वतपा अरक्षत ।
व्यन्तरिक्षममिमीत सुक्रतुर्वैश्वानरो महिना नाकमस्पृशत् ॥ २ ॥

2. Fire is the guardian of the laws of all workings and he kept safe the laws of his action and motion even in the moment of his birth in the supreme ether. The Universal mighty of will measured into shape the middle world and touched heaven with his greatness.

व्यस्तभ्राद् रोदसी मित्रो अहूतोऽन्तर्वावदकृणोज्ज्योतिषा तमः ।
वि चर्मणीव धिषणे अवर्तयद् वैश्वानरो विश्वमधत्त वृष्ण्यम् ॥ ३ ॥

3. The Wonderful, the Friend propped up earth and heaven and made the darkness a disappearing thing by the Light. He rolled out the two minds like skins; the Universal assumed every masculine might.

अपामुपस्थे महिषा अगृभ्नत विशो राजानमुप तस्युऋग्मियम् ।
आ हृतो अग्निमभरद् विवस्वतो वैश्वानरं मातरिश्वा परावतः ॥ ४ ॥

4. The Great Ones seized him in the lap of the waters and the Peoples came to the King with whom is the illumining Word. Messenger of the luminous Sun, Life that expands in the Mother brought Fire the universal Godhead from the supreme Beyond.

युगेयुगे विदथ्यं गृणदभ्योऽग्ने रथिं यशसं धेहि नव्यसीम् ।
पव्येव राजन्नघशंसमजर नीचा नि वृश्च वनिनं न तेजसा ॥ ५ ॥

5. Found for those who from age to age speak the word that is new, the word that is a discovery of knowledge, O Fire, their glorious treasure; but cut him in twain who is a voice of evil, cast him low by thy force of light like a tree with the thunderbolt, imperishable⁶ king.

⁶ Or, ageless

अस्माकमग्ने मधवत्सु धारयाऽनामि क्षत्रमजरं सुवीर्यम् ।
वयं जयेम शतिनं सहस्रिणं वैश्वानर वाजमग्ने तवोतिभिः ॥ ६ ॥

6. O Fire, uphold in our masters of the treasure their indestructible⁷ hero force and unbending might of battle. O universal Fire, may we by thy safe-keepings conquer the plenitude of the hundreds and the plenitude of the thousands.

अद्व्येभिस्तव गोपाभिरिष्टेऽस्माकं पाहि त्रिष्ठस्थ सूरीन् ।
रक्षा च नो ददुषां शर्धो अग्ने वैश्वानर प्र च तारीः स्तवानः ॥ ७ ॥

7. O our impeller,⁸ holder of the triple session, shield our luminous seers with thy indomitable guardian fires. Keep safe, O Fire, the army of those who have given, O Universal, hearing our hymn to thee deliver to its forward march.

SUKTA 9

अहश्च कृष्णमहर्जुनं च वि वर्तेते रजसी वेद्याभिः ।
वैश्वानरो जायमानो न राजाऽवातिरज्ज्योतिषाग्निस्तमांसि ॥ १ ॥

1. A day that is black and a day that is argent bright, two worlds revolve in their different paths by forces that we must know. Fire, the universal Godhead, like a king that comes to birth has thrust the Darknesses down by the Light.

नाहं तन्तुं न वि जानाम्योतुं न यं वयन्ति समरेऽत्मानाः ।
कस्य स्वित् पुत्र इह वक्त्वानि परो वदात्यवरेण पित्रा ॥ २ ॥

2. I know not the woof, I know not the warp, nor what is this web that they weave moving to and fro in the field of their motion and labour. There are secrets that must be told and of someone the son speaks them here, one highest beyond through his father lower than he.

⁷ Or, unaging

⁸ Or, O doer of sacrifice,

स इत् तन्नुं स वि जानात्योतुं स वक्त्वान्यृतुथा वदाति ।
य ईं चिकेतदमृतस्य गोपा अवश्चरन् परो अन्येन पश्यन् ॥ ३ ॥

3. He knows the warp, he knows the woof, he tells in their time the things that must be spoken. This is the guardian of immortality who wakes to the knowledge of these things; walking here below he is one highest beyond who sees through another.

अयं होता प्रथमः पश्यतेममिदं ज्योतिरमृतं मर्त्येषु ।
अयं स जडे ध्रुव आ निष्ठोऽमर्त्यस्तन्वा वर्धमानः ॥ ४ ॥

4. This is the pristine priest of the call, behold him! this is the immortal Light in mortals. This is he that is born and grows with a body and is the Immortal seated and steadfast for ever.

ध्रुवं ज्योतिर्निहितं दृशये कं मनो जविष्टं पतयत्स्वन्तः ।
विश्वे देवाः समनसः सकेता एकं क्रतुमभि वि यन्ति साधु ॥ ५ ॥

5. An immortal Light set inward for seeing, a swiftest mind within in men that walk on the way. All the Gods with a single mind, a common intuition, move aright in their divergent paths towards the one Will.

वि मे कर्णा पतयतो वि चक्षुर्वीदं ज्योतिर्हृदय आहितं यत् ।
वि मे मनश्चरति द्वरआधीः किं स्वद्वक्ष्यामि किमु नू मनिष्ये ॥ ६ ॥

6. My ears range wide to hear and wide my eyes to see, wide this Light that is set in the heart; wide walks my mind and I set my thought afar; something there is that I shall speak; something that now I shall think.

विश्वे देवा अनमस्यन् भियानास्त्वामग्ने तमसि तस्थिवांसम् ।
वैश्वानरोऽवतृतये नोऽमर्त्योऽवतृतये नः ॥ ७ ॥

7. All the gods were in awe of thee when thou stoodest in the darkness and bowed down before thee, O Fire. May the Universal Godhead keep us that we may be safe, may the Immortal keep us that we may be safe.

SUKTA 10

पुरो वो मन्द्रं दिव्यं सुवृक्तिं प्रयति यज्ञे अग्निमध्वरे दधिध्वम् ।
पुर उक्थेभिः स हि नो विभावा स्वध्वरा करति जातवेदाः ॥ १ ॥

1. When the pilgrim-rite moves on its way, set in your front the divine, ecstatic Fire, place him in front by your words, the Flame of the good riddance;⁹ he is the Knower of all things born; his light shines wide, and he shall make easy for us the progressions of the sacrifice.

तमु द्युमः पुर्वणीक होतरग्ने अग्निभिर्मनुष इधानः ।
स्तोमं यमस्मै ममतेव शूषं घृतं न शुचि मतयः पवन्ते ॥ २ ॥

2. O Fire, kindled by man's fires, priest of the call who comest with thy light, priest of the many flame-armies, hearken to the anthem our thoughts strain out pure to the godhead like pure clarified butter,¹⁰ even as Mamata chanted to him her paean.

⁹ The word Suvrakti corresponds to the Katharsis of the Greek mystics — the clearance, riddance or rejection of all perilous and impure stuff from the consciousness. It is Agni Pavaka, the purifying Fire who brings to us this riddance or purification, “Suvrakti”.

¹⁰ Here we have the clue to the symbol of the “clarified butter” in the sacrifice; like the others it is used in its double meaning, “clarified butter” or, as we may say, “the light-offering”.

पीपाय स श्रवसा मर्त्येषु यो अग्नये ददाश विप्र उक्थैः ।
चित्राभिस्तमूतिभिश्चत्रशोचिर्वजस्य साता गोमतो दधाति ॥३॥

3. He among mortals is fed on inspiration, the illumined who gives with his word to the Fire, the seer whom the Fire of the brilliant illuminations settles by his luminous safeguardings in the conquest of the Pen where are the herds of the Light.

आ यः पप्रौ जायमान उर्वा द्वैरदृशा भासा कृष्णाच्चा ।
अध बहु चित् तम ऊर्म्यायास्तिरः शोचिषा ददृशे पावकः ॥४॥

4. Fire of the blackened trail in his very birth has filled wide earth and heaven with his far-seeing light. Now has Fire that makes pure been seen by his bright flame even through much darkness of the billowing Night.

नू नश्चत्रं पुरुवाजाभिरुती अग्ने रथ्यं मघवदभ्यश्च धेहि ।
ये राधसा श्रवसा चात्यन्यान्तसुवीर्येभिश्चाभि सन्ति जनान् ॥५॥

5. Found, O Fire, for us and the masters of plenty by thy safeguardings packed with the plenitudes a treasure of richly brilliant kinds; for these are they who surpass all others in their opulence and inspiration and hero-mights.

इमं यज्ञं चनो धा अग्न उशन् यं त आसानो जुहुते हविष्मान् ।
भरद्वाजेषु दधिषे सुवृक्तिमवीर्वजस्य गध्यस्य सातौ ॥६॥

6. O Fire, yearn to the sacrifice that the bringer of the offering casts to thee; found the rapture. Hold firm in the Bharadwajas the perfect purification; guard them in their seizing of the riches of the quest.

वि द्वेषांसीनुहि वर्धयेतां मदेम शतहिमाः सुवीराः ॥७॥

7. Scatter all hostile things, increase the revealing Word. May we revel in the rapture, strong with the strength of the Heroes, living a hundred winters.

SUKTA 11

यजस्व होतरिषितो यजीयानग्ने बाधो मरुतां न प्रयुक्ति ।
आ नो मित्रावरुणा नासत्या द्यावा होत्राय पृथिवी ववृत्याः ॥१॥

1. Missioned and strong to sacrifice, offer the sacrifice, Priest of the call; O Fire, put away from us as if by the applied force of the Life-gods all that opposes. Turn in their paths towards our offering Mitra and Varuna and the twin Lords of the journey and Earth and Heaven.

त्वं होता मन्द्रतमो नो अधुगन्तर्देवो विदथा मर्त्येषु ।
पावकया जुद्धा वह्निरासाऽग्ने यजस्व तन्वं तव स्वाम् ॥२॥

2. To us thou art our priest of the invocation, harmless and perfect in ecstasy; thou art the god within in mortals that makes the discoveries of knowledge; thou art the carrier with the burning mouth, with the purifying flame of oblation. O Fire, worship with sacrifice thy own body.

धन्या चिद्धि त्वे धिषणा वष्टि प्र देवाञ्जन्म गृणते यजध्यै ।
वेपिष्ठा अङ्गिरसां यद्ध विप्रो मधु च्छन्दो भनति रेम इष्टौ ॥३॥

3. In thee the understanding is full of riches and it desires the gods, the divine births, that the word may be spoken and the sacrifice done, when the singer, the sage, wisest of the Angirases chants his honey-rhythm in the rite.

अदिद्युतत् स्वपाको विभावाऽग्ने यजस्व रोदसी उरुची ।
आयुं न यं नमसा रातहव्या अञ्जन्ति सुप्रयसं पञ्च जनाः ॥४॥

4. He has leaped into radiance and is wise of heart and wide of light; O Fire, sacrifice to the largeness of Earth and Heaven. All the five peoples lavish the oblation with obeisance of surrender and anoint as the living being Fire the bringer of their satisfactions.

वृन्जे ह यन्नमसा वर्हिरग्नावयामि सुग्वृतवती सुवृक्तिः ।
अम्यक्षि सद्य सदने पृथिव्या अश्रायि यज्ञः सूर्यो न चक्षुः ॥५॥

5. When the sacred grass has been plucked with prostration of surrender to the Fire, when the ladle of the purification full of the light-offering has been set to its labour, when the home has been reached in the house of Earth and the sacrifice lodged like an eye in the sun,—

दशस्या नः पुर्वणीक होतर्देवेभिरग्ने अग्निभिरिधानः ।
रायः सूनो सहसो वावसाना अति म्रसेम वृजनं नांहः ॥६॥

6. O Son of Force, O Fire, kindling with the gods thy fires, Priest of the call, priest with thy many flame-armies, dispense to us the Treasures; shining with light let us charge beyond the sin and the struggle.

SUKTA 12

मध्ये होता दुरोणे वर्हिषो राळगिनस्तोदस्य रोदसी यजध्यै ।
अयं स सूनुः सहस ऋतावा द्वरात् सूर्यो न शोचिषा ततान् ॥१॥

1. In the midmost of the gated house Fire, the Priest of the call, the King of the sacred seat and the whip of swiftness, to sacrifice to Earth and Heaven! This is the Son of Force in whom is the Truth; he stretches out from afar with his light like the sun.

आ यस्मिन् त्वे स्वपाके यजत्र यक्षद् राजन्त्सर्वतातेव नु द्यौः ।
त्रिषधस्थस्ततरुषो न जंहो हव्या मघानि मानुषा यजध्यै ॥२॥

2. When a man sacrifices in thee, O King, O Lord of sacrifice, when he does well his works in the wise and understanding Fire like Heaven in its all-forming labour, triple thy session; thy speed is as if of a deliverer, when thou comest to give the sacrifice whose offerings are man's human fullnesses.

तेजिष्ठा यस्यारतिर्वनेराट् तोदो अध्वन् न वृधसानो अद्यौत् ।
अद्रोघो न द्रविता चेतति त्मन्नमत्योऽवर्तं ओषधीषु ॥ ३ ॥

3. A splendour in the forest, most brilliant-forceful is the speed of his journeying; he is like a whip on the path and ever he grows and blazes. He is like a smelter who does hurt to none; he is the Immortal who wakes of himself to knowledge: he cannot be turned from his way mid the growths of the earth.

सास्माकेभिरेतरी न शूषैरग्निः ष्टवे दम आ जातवेदाः ।
द्रवन्नो वन्वन् क्रत्वा नार्वेस्मिः पितेव जारयायि यद्गैः ॥ ४ ॥

4. Fire, the knower of all things born, is hymned by our paeans in the house as if in one that walks on the way. He feeds on the Tree and conquers by our will like a war-horse; this shining Bull is adored by us with sacrifice like a father.

अध स्मास्य पनयन्ति भासो वृथा यत् तक्षदनुयाति पृथ्वीम् ।
सद्यो यः स्यन्द्रो विषितो धर्वीयानृणो न तायुरति धन्वा राट् ॥ ५ ॥

5. And now his splendours chant aloud and he hews with ease and walks along the wideness of the earth. He is rapid in his race and in a moment is loosed speeding to the gallop: he is like a thief that runs; his light is seen beyond the desert places.

स त्वं नो अर्वन् निदाया विश्वेभिरग्ने अग्निभिरिधानः ।
वेषि रायो वि यासि दुच्छुना मदेम शतहिमाः सुवीराः ॥ ६ ॥

6. O War-horse, us from the bondage deliver, kindling, O Fire, with all thy fires; for thou travellest to the Riches and scatterest the forces of affliction and sorrow. May we revel in the rapture, strong with the strength of the Heroes, living a hundred winters.

SUKTA 13

त्वद् विश्वा सुभग सौभगान्यग्ने वि यन्ति वनिनो न वयाः ।
श्रुष्टी रयिर्वाजो वृत्रतूर्ये दिवो वृष्टिरीड्यो रीतिरपाम् ॥१॥

- O felicitous Fire, of thee are all felicities and they grow wide from thee like branches from a tree. For quickly come, in the piercing of the Python adversary, the Riches and the desirable plenty and the Rain of Heaven and the flowing of the Waters.

त्वं भगो न आ हि रत्नमिषे परिज्ञेव क्षयसि दस्मवर्चाः ।
अग्ने मित्रो न बृहत ऋतस्याऽसि क्षत्ता वामस्य देव भूरेः ॥२॥

- Thou art Bhaga of the felicities and thou pourest on us the ecstasy and takest up thy house in us, a pervading presence and a potent splendour. O divine Fire, like Mitra thou art a feeder on the vast Truth and the much joy and beauty.

स सत्पतिः शवसा हन्ति वृत्रमग्ने विप्रो वि पणेर्भर्ति वाजम् ।
यं त्वं प्रचेत ऋतजात राया सजोषा नम्रापां हिनोषि ॥३॥

- O Fire born of the Truth, O thinker and knower, when consenting with the Child of the Waters thou takest pleasure in a man and speedest him with the Treasure, he becomes a master over beings and in his might slays the Python adversary and becomes a seer and carries out with him the riches of the Dweller in the Cave.

यस्ते सूनो सहसो गीर्भिरुक्त्यैर्ज्ञैर्मर्तो निश्चितं वेद्यानद् ।
विश्वं स देव प्रति वारमग्ने धत्ते धान्यं पत्यते वसव्यैः ॥४॥

- O Son of Force, the mortal who has reached to the intensity of thee by the word and the utterance and the altar and the sacrifice, draws to him sufficiency of every kind of wealth, O divine Fire, and walks on the way with his riches.

ता नृभ्य आ सौश्रवसा सुवीराइग्ने सूनो सहसः पुष्पसे धाः ।
कृणोषि यच्छ्रवसा भूरि पश्वो वयो वृकायारये जसुरये ॥५॥

5. O Fire, O Son of Force, found for men, that they may grow, happy riches of inspiration with strength of its hero keepers, — many herds, thy creation in thy might, but now a food for the wolf and the foe and the destroyer.

वदा सूनो सहसो नो विहाया अग्ने तोकं तनयं वाजि नो दाः ।
विश्वाभिर्गर्भिरभि पूर्तिमश्यां मदेम शतहिमाः सुवीराः ॥६॥

6. O Son of Force, become the vast speaker within us; give us the Son of our begetting, give us all that is packed with the plenitudes; let me enjoy by my every word satisfaction of fullness. May we revel in the rapture, strong with the strength of the Heroes, living a hundred winters.

SUKTA 14

अग्ना यो मर्त्यो द्वुवो धियं जुजोष धीतिभिः ।
भसन्नु ष प्र पूर्व्य इषं वुरीतावसे ॥१॥

1. When mortal man by his musings comes to take pleasure of work and thought in the Fire, he shines with light and is one supreme; he receives the impulsion that leads him to safety.

अग्निरिद्धि प्रचेता अग्निर्वेधस्तम् ऋषिः ।
अग्निं होतारमीळते यज्ञेषु मनुषो विशः ॥२॥

2. The Fire is the thinker and knower, the Fire is a mightiest disposer of works and a seer. To Fire the priest of the invocation the peoples of men aspire in their sacrifices.

नाना ह्यग्नेऽवसे स्पर्धन्ते रायो अर्यः ।
तूर्वन्तो दस्युमायवो व्रतैः सीक्षन्तो अव्रतम् ॥३॥

3. Of many kinds are they who seek thy safeguard and strive

with the foe for his riches; men breaking through the Destroyer seek to overcome his lawless strength by the order of their works.

अग्निरप्सामृतीषहं वीरं ददाति सत्पतिम् ।
यस्य त्रसन्ति शवसः संचक्षि शत्रवो भिया ॥४॥

4. The Fire gives to man a Master of beings, a Warrior who overbears the charge of the foe and wins the Waters; the enemies are afraid at his very sight and scatter in panic from his puissance.

अग्निहि विद्धना निदो देवो मर्तमुरुष्यति ।
सहावा यस्यावृतो रथिर्वाजेष्वृतः ॥५॥

5. The Fire is the godhead who rescues mortal man by knowledge from the Binder. A forceful thing is the treasure of his riches, unencircled by the adversary, unbesieged in its plenitudes.

अच्छा नो मित्रमहो देव देवानग्ने वोचः सुमतिं रोदस्योः ।
वीहि स्वस्ति सुक्षितिं दिवो नृन् द्विषो अंहांसि दुरिता तरेम
ता तरेम तवावसा तरेम ॥६॥

6. O Fire, O friendly Light, O Godhead turn to the Godheads, mayest thou speak for us the true thought of Earth and Heaven; march in peace to the happy abode and the Men of Heaven. Let us pass safe beyond the foe and the sin and the stumbling.

Let us pass beyond these things, pass in thy keeping through them safe.

SUKTA 15

इमम् शु वो अतिथिमुषबुधं विश्वासां विशां पतिमृज्जसे गिरा ।
वेतीद्विवो जनुषा कच्चिदा शुचिज्योक् चिदत्ति गर्भो यदच्युतम् ॥१॥

- Thou must crown with the word the guest who wakes from sleep with the dawn, Master of all these peoples. He is pure from his very birth and surely he comes to us from heaven in his time; long too, a child from the womb, he feeds on all that is unfallen.

मित्रं न यं सुधितं भृगवो दधुर्वनस्पतावीङ्यमूर्धशोचिषम् ।
स त्वं सुप्रीतो वीतहव्ये अङ्गुत प्रशस्तिभिर्महयसे दिवेदिवे ॥२॥

- The Bhrigus set in the Tree the godhead of our aspiration with his high flame of light like a friend well-confirmed in his place. And now, O Wonderful, well-pleased in him who has cast to thee the offering, thou art magnified by wordings of thy power from day to day.

स त्वं दक्षस्यावृको वृधो भूर्यः परस्यान्तरस्य तरुषः ।
रायः सूनो सहसो मत्येष्वा छुर्दिर्यच्छु वीतहव्याय सप्रथो
भरद्वाजाय सप्रथः ॥३॥

- Be in us the one whom the wolf cannot rend, the god who makes grow the discernment, makes grow the supreme inner Warrior who delivers.¹¹ O Son of Force, extend in mortals the Riches, the wide-spreading House, for the caster of the offering, for Bharadwaja the wide-spreading House.

द्युतानं वो अतिथिं स्वर्णरमणिं होतारं मनुषः स्वधरम् ।
विप्रं न द्युक्षवचसं सुवृक्तिभिर्व्यवाहमरतिं देवमृज्जसे ॥४॥

- Crown must thou the guest shining with light, the Male of the Sun-world, the priest of man's invocation who makes

¹¹ Or, be our deliverer from the enemy beyond and within us.

perfect the Rite of the Path. Crown with your acts of purification the Seer whose speech has its home in the Light,¹² the Carrier of offerings, the Traveller, the Godhead of Fire.

पावकया यश्चित्यन्त्या कृपा क्षमन् रुरुच उषसो न भानुना ।
तूर्वन् न यामन्त्रेतशस्य नूरण आ यो धृणे न ततृषाणो अजरः ॥५॥

5. He shines with the light that makes pure, the light that awakens to knowledge, shines in beauty on the earth as if with a splendour of Dawn. He is as if one hewing his way in the march and battle of the shining Horse; he is like one athirst and luminously blazing, the ageless Fire.

अग्निमग्निं वः समिधा दुवस्यत प्रियं प्रियं वो अतिथिं गृणीषणि ।
उप वो गीर्भिरमृतं विवासत देवो देवेषु वनते हि वार्य
देवो देवेषु वनते हि नो दुवः ॥६॥

6. Fire and again Fire set to work with your fuel, chant with your speech the dear, the beloved Guest. Approach and set the Immortal alight with your words; a god he enjoys in the gods our desirable things,—a god, he enjoys our works in the gods.

समिद्धमग्निं समिधा गिरा गृणे शुचिं पावकं पुरो अध्वरे धृवम् ।
विप्रं होतारं पुरुवारमद्युहं कविं सुन्नैरीमहे जातवेदसम् ॥७॥

7. I chant the Fire that is kindled with the word for fuel, the Fire that is pure and makes pure; Fire that is steadfast for ever and marches in front in the Rite of the Path. We desire with his felicities the Illumined, the priest of the call, the harmless, rich with many blessings, the Seer who knows all births that are.

¹² Or, has its home in the Heaven, or, houses the Light,

त्वां द्रूतमग्ने अमृतं युगेयुगे हव्यवाहं दधिरे पायुमीड्यम् ।
देवासश्च मर्तासश्च जागृतिं विभुं विश्पतिं नमसा नि षेदिरे ॥८॥

8. O Fire, they have set thee here the Messenger, the Immortal in generation after generation, the Carrier of offerings, protector of man and the Godhead of his prayer. Gods alike and mortals sit with obeisance before the all-pervading Master of the peoples, the ever-wakeful Fire.

विभूषन्नग्न उभयाँ अनु व्रता द्रूतो देवानां रजसी समीयसे ।
यत् ते धीति सुमतिमावृणीमहेऽध स्मा नस्त्रिवरुथः शिवो भव ॥९॥

9. O Fire, according to the laws of thy works thou pervadest either race; thou art the messenger of the Gods and rangest both the worlds. Since we have accepted thy thinking and the right understanding that is thine, be to us our triple armour of defence and benignant helper.

तं सुप्रतीकं सुदृशं स्वज्ञमविद्वांसो विद्वष्टरं सपेम ।
स यश्छद् विश्वा वयुनानि विद्वान् प्र हव्यमग्निरमृतेषु वोचत् ॥१०॥

10. May we who know not come into touch with this great knower with his true front and just walk and perfect vision. May he who knows all manifested things¹³ do sacrifice for us, may Fire voice our offering in the world of the Immortals.

तमग्ने पास्युत तं पिपर्षि यस्त आनट् कवये शूर धीतिम् ।
यद्ग्रस्य वा निश्चिं वोदितिं वा तमित् पृष्णक्षि शवसोत राया ॥११॥

11. O heroic Fire, thou guardest and bringest safe to the other side the man who has reached to the Thought for thee the Seer and achieved the intensity of the sacrifice or its ascending movement; thou fillest him with might and riches.

¹³ Or, all kinds of knowledge

त्वमग्ने वनुष्यतो नि पाहि त्वमु नः सहसावन्नवद्यात् ।
सं त्वा ध्वस्मन्वदभ्येतु पाथः सं रयिः स्पृहयाय्यः सहस्री ॥१२॥

12. O Fire that hast the Force, guard us from fault, guard from one who would subject us. May there come to thee along the path full of destructions the thousandfold delectable treasure.

अग्निहर्षेता गृहपतिः स राजा विश्वा वेद जनिमा जातवेदाः ।
देवानामुत यो मर्त्यानां यजिष्ठः स प्र यजतामृतावा ॥१३॥

13. Fire, the priest of the invocation, is a king and the Master in our house; all the births he knows, he is of all things born the Knower. He is strong to sacrifice and the Truth is in him; let him do sacrifice for gods and mortals.

अग्ने यदद्य विशो अध्वरस्य होतः पावकशोचे वेद्धं हि यज्चा ।
ऋता यजासि महिना वि यद् भूर्हव्या वह यविष्ठ या ते अद्य ॥१४॥

14. O Fire, O Light that makest pure, O summoning priest of man's sacrifice, today when thou comest as a doer of worship, today when thou growest all-pervading in thy greatness and offerest the things of the Truth for sacrifice, today carry with thee our offerings, O ever-youthful Fire, even the truths that are thine.

अभि प्रयांसि सुधितानि हि ख्यो नि त्वा दधीत रोदसी यजध्यै ।
अवा नो मघवन् वाजसातावग्ने विश्वानि दुरिता तरेम
ता तरेम तवावसा तरेम ॥१५॥

15. Open thy manifesting eye on our firm-based pleasant things; let a man set thee within him to sacrifice to Earth and Heaven. Protect us, O King of Riches, in our conquest of the plenitudes; O Fire, may we pass safe through all the stumbling-places.

Let us pass beyond these things, pass in thy keeping through them safe.

अग्ने विश्वेभिः स्वनीक देवैरुर्णावन्तं प्रथमः सीद योनिम् ।
कुलायिनं घृतवन्तं सवित्रे यज्ञं नय यज्जमानाय साधु ॥१६॥

16. O Fire with thy strong armies of flame, sit with the gods, first of them all, in the wool-flecked lair where the Nest is ready and the light-offering; lead for the doer of the rite, for the presser of the wine rightly on its paths the sacrifice.

इममु त्यमर्थवदग्निं मन्थन्ति वेधसः ।
यमङ्ग्लयन्तमानयन्नमूरं श्याव्याभ्यः ॥१७॥

17. This is that Fire whom the ordainers of works churn out like Atharvan of old; a Power unbewildered, they led him in his zigzag walk from the dusky Nights.

जनिष्वा देववीतये सर्वताता स्वस्तये ।
आ देवान् वक्ष्यमृताँ ऋतावृथो यज्ञं देवेषु पिस्पृशः ॥१८॥

18. Be born to us in our all-forming labour for the coming of the Gods, for our peace. Bring the gods to us, the Immortals, the builders of the growing Truth; give to our sacrifice touch on the gods.

वयमु त्वा गृहपते जनानामग्ने अकर्म समिधा वृहन्तम् ।
अस्थूरि नो गार्हपत्यानि सन्तु तिग्मेन नस्तेजसा सं शिशाधि ॥१९॥

19. O Fire, O man's master of the house, we have fed thee with our fuel and made thee a vastness; let the works of the house-master be unhalting, make us utterly keen with thy intense force of light.

SUKTA 16

त्वमग्ने यज्ञानां होता विश्वेषां हितः ।
देवेभिर्मानुषे जने ॥१॥

1. O Fire, thou art set here in all as the priest of the call in the sacrifice, set by the gods in the human being.

स नो मन्द्राभिरध्वरे जिह्वाभिर्यजा महः ।
आ देवान् वक्षि यक्षि च ॥२॥

2. Offer worship with thy rapturous tongues in the Rite of the Path to the Great Ones. Bring the gods to us, do them sacrifice.

वेत्था हि वेधो अध्वनः पथश्च देवाञ्जसा ।
अग्ने यज्ञेषु सुक्रतो ॥३॥

3. O ordainer of works, mighty of will, by thy revealing light¹⁴ in the sacrifice thou knowest the tracks of the gods and their highways.

त्वामीळे अध द्विता भरतो वाजिभिः शुनम् ।
ईजे यज्ञेषु यज्ञियम् ॥४॥

4. Now has the Bringer of the Treasure with his horses of swiftness aspired to thee for a twofold bliss; he has sacrificed in the sacrifices to the king of sacrifice.

त्वमिमा वार्या पुरु दिवोदासाय सुन्वते ।
भरद्वाजाय दाशुषे ॥५॥

5. O Fire, for the Servant of Heaven¹⁵ who presses the wine, for Bharadwaja the giver of the offering, the multitude of these desirable things!

त्वं द्रूतो अमर्त्य आ वहा दैव्यं जनम् ।
शृण्वन् विप्रस्य सुष्टुतिम् ॥६॥

6. Thou art the Immortal Messenger; lend ear to the laud of the seer and bring the Divine People.

¹⁴ Or, with thy straight going

¹⁵ Divodasa

त्वामग्ने स्वाध्यो मर्तासो देववीतये ।
यज्ञेषु देवमीळते ॥७॥

7. Men deeply meditating aspire to thee that the godheads may come to them; mortals they aspire to the God in the sacrifice.

तव प्र यक्षि संदृशमुत क्रतुं सुदानवः ।
विश्वे जुषन्त कामिनः ॥८॥

8. Bring into sacrifice thy perfect sight and thy will; rich are thy gifts and in thee is the joy of all who desire.

त्वं होता मनुर्हितो वह्निरासा विद्विष्टः ।
अग्ने यक्षि दिवो विशः ॥९॥

9. Thou art the priest of the call set here in thinking man, his carrier with mouth of flame wiser in knowledge than he. O Fire, sacrifice to the people of heaven.

अग्न आ याहि वीतये गृणानो हव्यदातये ।
नि होता सत्स बर्हिषि ॥१०॥

10. Come, O Fire, for the advent; voiced by the word, come for the gift of the oblation: sit, the priest of our invocation, on the grass of the altar.

तं त्वा समिद्धिरङ्गिरो घृतेन वर्धयामसि ।
बृहच्छोचा यविष्ट्य ॥११॥

11. O Angiras, we make thee to grow by our fuel and our offering of the clarity; flame into a vast light, O ever-youthful Fire.

स नः पृथु श्रवाय्यमच्छा देव विवाससि ।
बृहदग्ने सुवीर्यम् ॥१२॥

12. O God, O Fire, thou illuminest towards us a wide light of inspired knowledge and the vastness of a perfect force.

त्वामग्ने पुष्करादध्यर्थवा निरमन्धत ।
मूर्धो विश्वस्य वाघतः ॥ १३ ॥

13. O Fire, Atharvan churned thee out from the Lotus,¹⁶ from the head of every chanting sage.

तमु त्वा दध्यङ्ग्लिः पुत्र ईघे अर्थवणः ।
वृत्रहणं पुरंदरम् ॥ १४ ॥

14. And Dadhyang too, the Seer, Atharvan's son, kindled thee a slayer of the Python adversary and shatterer of his cities.

तमु त्वा पाथ्यो वृषा समीधे दस्युहन्तमम् ।
धनंजयं रणेरणे ॥ १५ ॥

15. Thee the Bull of the paths set full alight, most mighty to slay the Destroyers, a conqueror of riches in battle upon battle.

एह्यु षु ब्रवाणि तेऽग्न इत्येतरा गिरः ।
एभिर्वर्धास इन्दुभिः ॥ १६ ॥

16. Come to me and let me voice to thee, O Fire, true other words; for thou growest by these moon-powers of the Wine.

यत्र क्व च ते मनो दक्षं दधस उत्तरम् ।
तत्रा सदः कृणवसे ॥ १७ ॥

17. Wheresoever is thy mind and thou plantest that higher-discernment, there thou makest thy house.

नहि ते पूर्तमक्षिपद् भुवनेमानां वसो ।
अथा दुवो वनवसे ॥ १८ ॥

18. O Prince of Riches, the fullness of thy treasures meets not the eye and it is for the few;¹⁷ take then joy in our work.

¹⁶ Or, on Pushkara; or, the Lotus of the head of every chanting sage.

¹⁷ Or, let not the fullness of thy treasures meet the eye only of the few;

आग्निरगामि भारतो वृत्रहा पुरुचेतनः ।
दिवोदासस्य सत्पतिः ॥ १९ ॥

19. Fire of the Bringers is approached by us, the slayer of the Python adversary conscious with a multiple knowledge, the Servant of Heaven's Fire, master of beings.

स हि विश्वाति पार्थिवा रथिं दाशन्महित्वना ।
वन्वन्नवातो अस्तृतः ॥ २० ॥

20. This is he that unconquered, unoverthrown shall by his greatness win and give to us a treasure beyond all earthly things.

स प्रलवन्नवीयसाऽग्ने द्युम्बेन संयता ।
वृहत् ततन्य भानुना ॥ २१ ॥

21. O Fire, by a new illumination like the old and joining it, thou hast stretched out the Vast with thy light.¹⁸

प्र वः सखायो अग्नये स्तोमं यज्ञं च धृष्णुया ।
अर्च गाय च वेधसे ॥ २२ ॥

22. O friends, offer to the impetuous violence of Fire the hymn and the sacrifice; sing the illumining verse, chant to the Ordainer of works.

स हि यो मानुषा युगा सीदद्वोता कविक्रतुः ।
द्रूतश्च हव्यवाहनः ॥ २३ ॥

23. This is he that must sit through the human generations, man's Priest of the call with the seer-will, the Messenger, the Carrier of the oblation.

¹⁸ Or, built the Vast with thy light.

ता राजाना शुचिव्रताऽदित्यान् मारुतं गणम् ।
वसो यक्षीहूँ रोदसी ॥ २४ ॥

24. O Prince of the Treasure, do worship here with sacrifice to the Two Kings who are ever pure in their works, to the sons of the Indivisible Mother, to the company of the Life-Gods, to Earth and Heaven.

वस्वी ते अग्ने संदृष्टिरिषयते मर्त्याय ।
ऊर्जो नपादमृतस्य ॥ २५ ॥

25. O Fire, O Child of Energy, full of riches is thy vision for the mortal, the vision of the immortal, and it imparts to him its impulse.

कृत्वा दा अस्तु श्रेष्ठोऽद्य त्वा वन्वन्त्सुरेक्णाः ।
मर्त आनाश सुवृक्तिम् ॥ २६ ॥

26. Let the giver be the best by work of the will; today winning thee let him become one overflowing with affluence: a mortal, he shall taste the perfect purification.

ते ते अग्ने त्वोता इषयन्तो विश्वमायुः ।
तरन्तो अर्यो अरातीर्वन्वन्तो अर्यो अरातीः ॥ २७ ॥

27. These are thy men whom thou guardest, O Fire, and they find the speed of thy impulse and move to universal Life, fighters piercing through the armies of the enemy, fighters conquering the armies of the enemy.¹⁹

अग्निस्तिग्मेन शोचिषा यासद् विश्वं न्यत्रिणम् ।
अग्निर्नौ वनते रथिम् ॥ २८ ॥

28. Let the Fire with his keen energy of light overwhelm every devourer; Fire conquers for us the riches.

¹⁹ Or, piercing through the enemies who war against them, conquering the enemies who war against them.

सुवीरं रथिमा भर जातवेदो विचर्षणे ।
जहि रक्षांसि सुक्रतो ॥ २९ ॥

29. O wide-seeing Fire, God who knowest all births that are, bring to us the treasure with its strength of the Heroes; O mighty of will, slay the demon keepers.

त्वं नः पाह्यंहसो जातवेदो अघायतः ।
रक्षा णो ब्रह्मणस्करे ॥ ३० ॥

30. O God who knowest all births that are, guard us from sin and from him that worketh calamity; O Seer of the Word, protect us.

यो नो अग्ने दुरेव आ मर्तो वधाय दाशति ।
तस्मान्नः पाह्यंहसः ॥ ३१ ॥

31. The mortal of evil movements who gives us over to the stroke, guard us, O Fire, from him and his evil.

त्वं तं देव जिह्वया परि बाधस्व दुष्कृतम् ।
मर्तो यो नो जिघांसति ॥ ३२ ॥

32. O God, repulse on every side with thy tongue of flame that doer of wickedness; oppose the mortal who would slay us.

भरद्वाजाय सप्रथः शर्म यच्छ सहन्त्य ।
अग्ने वरेण्यं वसु ॥ ३३ ॥

33. O forceful Fire, extend to Bharadwaja the peace with its wideness;²⁰ extend to him the desirable riches.

अग्निर्वृत्राणि जड्बनद् द्रविणस्युर्विपन्यया ।
समिद्धः शुक्र आहुतः ॥ ३४ ॥

34. Let Fire the seeker of the treasure kindled and brilliant and

²⁰ Or, the wide-spreading house of refuge;

fed with our offerings slay with his flame of illumination the encircling Adversaries.

गर्भे मातुः पितुष्पिता विदिवृतानो अक्षरे ।
सीदन्नतस्य योनिमा ॥ ३५ ॥

35. Let him become the father of the Father in the womb of the Mother; let him break out into lightnings in the Imperishable, let him take his seat in the native home of the Truth.

ब्रह्म प्रजावदा भर जातवेदो विचर्षणे ।
अग्ने यद् दीदयद् दिवि ॥ ३६ ॥

36. O wide-seeing Fire, God who knowest all births that are, bring us the Word with its issue, the Word whose light shines in Heaven.

उप त्वा रण्वसंदृशं प्रयस्वन्तः सहस्रृत ।
अग्ने ससृज्महे गिरः ॥ ३७ ॥

37. O thou who art made by our force, we come to thee of the rapturous vision bringing our offerings for thy pleasure and let forth towards thee, O Fire, our words.

उप च्छायामिव धृणेरगन्म शर्म ते वयम् ।
अग्ने हिरण्यसंदृशः ॥ ३८ ॥

38. Like men that take refuge in the shade, we have arrived to the refuge of thy peace, there where thou blazest with light and art a vision of gold, O Fire.

य उग्र इव शर्यहा तिग्मशृङ्खो न वंसगः ।
अग्ने पुरो रुरोजिथ ॥ ३९ ॥

39. Thou art like a fierce fighter shooting arrows and like a sharp-horned Bull; O Fire, thou breakest the cities.

आ यं हस्ते न खादिनं शिशुं जातं न विप्रति ।
विशामनिं स्वध्वरम् ॥ ४०॥

40. They bring him like a beast of prey, like a new-born child they bear him in their hands, Fire that effects the Rite of the Path for the peoples.

प्र देवं देववीतये भरता वसुवित्तमम् ।
आ स्वे योनौ नि षीदतु ॥ ४१॥

41. Bring to us this great discoverer of riches, bring the god for the coming of the gods; let him take his seat in his own native home.

आ जातं जातवेदसि प्रियं शिशीतातिथिम् ।
स्योन आ गृहपतिम् ॥ ४२॥

42. In the felicitous Fire that knows all things born the Master of your House is born to you; sharpen to his intensity the beloved guest.

अग्ने युक्ष्वा हि ये तवाऽश्वासो देव साधवः ।
अरं वहन्ति मन्यवे ॥ ४३॥

43. O God, O Fire, yoke those horses of thine that do well the work and can bear thee sufficient for our passion.

अच्छा नो याह्या वहाऽभि प्रयांसि वीतये ।
आ देवान्त्सोमपीतये ॥ ४४॥

44. Come to us, bear towards us the Gods that they may eat of²¹ our pleasant offerings and drink our Soma wine.

²¹ Or, come to

उदग्ने भारत द्युमदजस्त्रेण दविद्युतत् ।
शोचा वि भाह्यजर ॥ ४५ ॥

45. O Fire of the Bringers, luminously lightening with thy incessant flame upward burn; spread wide thy light, O ageless²² power.

वीती यो देवं मर्तो दुवस्येदग्निमीळीताध्वरे हविष्मान् ।
होतारं सत्ययजं रोदस्योरुत्तानहस्तो नमसा विवासेत् ॥ ४६ ॥

46. Let the mortal who would serve with his works the God in the advent, aspire bringing his offering to the Fire in the Rite of the Path; let him with uplifted²³ hands and with obeisance of surrender make shine the summoning Priest of Earth and Heaven, the fire of true sacrifice.²⁴

आ ते अग्न क्रचा हविर्हदा तष्टं भरामसि ।
ते ते भवन्त्क्षण क्रषभासो वशा उत ॥ ४७ ॥

47. We bring to thee, O Fire, by the illumining word an offering that is shaped by the heart. Let there be born from it thy impregnating bulls and thy heifers.

अग्निं देवासो अग्नियमिन्धते वृत्रहन्तमम् ।
येना वसून्याभृता तुङ्गा रक्षांसि वाजिना ॥ ४८ ॥

48. The Gods kindle, most strong to slay the Python adversary, the supreme Fire, the Horse of swiftness by whom the Riches are brought and pierced the demon keepers.

²² Or, imperishable

²³ Or, outstretched

²⁴ Or, who worships the Truth with sacrifice.

Hymns of Parashara

MANDALA ONE

SUKTA 65

पश्वा न तायुं गुहा चतन्तं नमो युजानं नमो वहन्तम् ।
सजोषा धीरा: पदैरनु ग्मन्त्रप त्वा सीदन् विश्वे यजत्राः ॥१॥

1. He hides himself like a thief with the cow of vision in the secret cavern, he takes to himself our adoration, and thither he carries it.¹ The thinkers take a common joy in him, they follow him by his footprints; all the Masters of sacrifice come to thee, O Flame, in the secrecy.

ऋतस्य देवा अनु ब्रता गुर्भुवत् परिष्ठिर्यौर्नि भूम ।
वर्धन्तीमापः पन्वा सुशिश्वमृतस्य योना गर्भे सुजातम् ॥२॥

2. The Gods follow after him the law of the workings of Truth. He stands encompassing all as heaven the earth. The Waters make him grow increasing in his bulk by their toil,² the Flame well-born in their womb, in the abode of the Truth.

- पुष्टिर्न रण्वा क्षितिर्न पृथ्वी गिरिर्न भुज्म क्षोदो न शंभु ।
अत्यो नाज्मन्त्सर्गप्रतक्तः सिन्धुर्न क्षोदः क ई वराते ॥३॥
3. He is as if a delightful thriving, he is like the earth our wide dwelling-place. He is enjoyable like a hill and bliss-giving like fast-running water. He is like a charger in the battle rushing to the gallop and like a flowing river,³ who shall hedge in his course?

¹ Or better, he takes to himself our surrender, he carries with him our surrender.

² Or, by their chant,

³ Or, like a sea in its motion,

जामिः सिन्धूनां भ्रातेव स्वस्मामिभ्यान् राजा वनान्यत्ति ।
यद् वातजूतो वना व्यस्थादग्निर्ह दाति रोमा पृथिव्याः ॥४॥

4. He is the close comrade of the Rivers as is a brother of his sisters. He devours the earth's forests as a king his enemies. When driven by the breath of the wind he ranges around the forests, the Flame tears asunder the hairs of Earth's body.

श्वसित्यप्सु हंसो न सीदन् क्रत्वा चेतिष्ठो विशामुष्मुर्त् ।
सोमो न वेधा क्रतप्रजातः पशुनं शिश्वा विभुद्वरेभाः ॥५॥

5. He breathes in the Waters like a seated swan. Waking in the dawn he has power by the will of his works to give knowledge to the peoples. He is like the God of the Wine, born of the Truth and a creator. He is like a cow with her new-born. He is wide-spreading and his light is seen from afar.

SUKTA 66

रथिनं चित्रा सूरो न संद्वगायुर्न प्राणो नित्यो न सूनुः ।
तक्वा न भूर्णिर्वना सिषक्ति पयो न धेनुः शुचिर्विभावा ॥१॥

1. He is like a wealth richly diverse and like the all-seeing of the Sun. He is as if life and the breath of our existence, he is as if our eternal child. He is like a galloper bearing us. He clings to the forests: he is like a cow with her milk. He is pure-bright and wide is his lustre.

दाधार क्षेममोको न रण्वो यवो न पक्वो जेता जनानाम् ।
ऋषिर्न स्तुभ्वा विक्षु प्रशस्तो वाजी न प्रीतो वयो दधाति ॥२॥

2. He holds all our good like a pleasant home; he is like ripe corn. He is a conqueror of men and like a chanting Rishi; there is word of him among the folk: he is as if our exultant steed of swiftness; he upholds our growth.

दुरोक्षोचिः क्रतुर्न नित्यो जायेव योनावरं विश्वस्मै ।
चित्रो यदप्राट् छ्वेतो न विक्षु रथो न रुक्मी त्वेषः समत्सु ॥३॥

3. He is light in a house difficult to inhabit;⁴ he is as a will ever active in us; he is like a wife in our abode and sufficient to every man. When he blazes wonderfully manifold, he is like one white in the peoples: he is like a golden chariot; he is a splendour in our battles.

सेनेव सृष्टामं दधात्यस्तुर्न दिव्युत् त्वेषप्रतीका ।
यमो ह जातो यमो जनित्वं जारः कनीनां पतिर्जनीनाम् ॥४॥

4. He is like an army running to the charge and puts strength in us: he is like the flaming shaft of the Archer with its keen burning front. A twin he is born, a twin he is that which is to be born: he is the lover of the virgins and the husband of the mothers.

तं वश्चराथा वयं वसत्याऽस्तं न गावो नक्षन्त इद्धम् ।
सिन्धुर्न क्षोदः प्र नीचीरैनोन्नवन्त गावः स्वर्दृशीके ॥५॥

5. We by your movement, we by your staying, come to him when his light is kindled as the cows come home to their stall. He is like a river running in its channel and sends in his front the descending Waters: the Ray-Cows move to him in the manifesting of the world of the Sun.⁵

SUKTA 67

वनेषु जायुर्मर्तेषु मित्रो वृणीते श्रुष्टिं राजेवाजुर्यम् ।
क्षेमो न साधुः क्रतुर्न भद्रो भुवत् स्वाधीर्होता हव्यवाट् ॥१॥

1. He is the conqueror in the forests; in mortals he is a friend: he chooses inspiration as a king an unaging councillor. He

⁴ Or, he is a light difficult to kindle;

⁵ Or, when the Sun appears.

is as if our perfect welfare;⁶ he is like a happy will just in its thinking and becomes to us our priest of the call and the bearer of our offerings.

हस्ते दधानो नृमणा विश्वान्यमे देवान् धाद् गुहा निषीदन् ।
विदन्तीमत्र नरो धियंधा हृदा यत् तष्टान् मन्त्राँ अशंसन् ॥ २ ॥

2. He holds in his hands all mighty: sitting in the secret cave he upholds⁷ the gods in his strength. Here men who hold in themselves the Thought come to know him when they have uttered the Mantras formed by the heart.

अजो न क्षां दाधार पृथिवीं तस्तम्भ द्यां मन्त्रेभिः सत्यैः ।
प्रिया पदानि पश्वो नि पाहि विश्वायुरग्ने गुहा गुहं गाः ॥ ३ ॥

3. As the unborn he has held the wide earth, he has up-pillared heaven with his Mantras of truth. Guard the cherished footprints of the Cow of vision; O Fire, thou art universal life, enter into the secrecy of secracies.⁸

य इं चिकेत गुहा भवन्तमा यः ससाद धारामृतस्य ।
वि ये चृतन्त्यृता सपन्त आदिद् वसूनि प्र ववाचास्मै ॥ ४ ॥

4. He who has perceived him when he is in the secret cave, he who has come to the stream of the Truth, those who touch the things of the Truth and kindle him,—to such a one he gives word of the Riches.

वि यो वीरुत्सु रोधन्महित्वोत प्रजा उत प्रसूष्वन्तः ।
चित्तिरपां दमे विश्वायुः सद्येव धीराः संमाय चक्रः ॥ ५ ॥

5. He who in the growths of earth holds up his greatnesses, both the progeny born and what is in the mothers, he is Knowledge in the house of the Waters, and life universal; the

⁶ Or, a perfecting good;

⁷ Or, establishes

⁸ Or, the secrecy of the secret Cave.

thinkers have measured and constructed him like a mansion.

SUKTA 68

श्रीणन्नुप स्थाद् दिवं भुरण्युः स्थातुश्चरथमक्तुन् व्यूर्णोत् ।
परि यदेषामेको विश्वेषां भुवद् देवो देवानां महित्वा ॥१॥

1. The carrier, burning, he reaches heaven. He unravels the nights and uncovers the stable and the moving; for this is the one God who envelops with himself the grandeur of all the Gods.

आदित् ते विश्वे क्रतुं जुषन्त शुक्षाद् यद् देव जीवो जनिष्ठाः ।
भजन्त विश्वे देवत्वं नाम क्रतुं सपन्तो अमृतमेवैः ॥२॥

2. All cleave to⁹ thy will of works when, O God, thou art born a living being from dry matter. All enjoy the Name, the Godhead; by thy movements they touch Truth and Immortality.

ऋतस्य प्रेषा ऋतस्य धीतिर्विश्वायुर्विश्वे अपांसि चकुः ।
यस्तुभ्यं दाशाद् यो वा ते शिक्षात् तस्मै चिकित्वान्नयिं दयस्व ॥३॥

3. He is the urgings of the Truth, the thinking of the Truth, the universal life by whom all do the works. He who gives to thee, he who gains from thee,¹⁰ to him, for thou knowest, give the Riches.

होता निष्ठो मनोरपत्ये स चिन्न्वासां पती रयीणाम् ।
इच्छन्त रेतो मिथस्तनूषु सं जानत स्वैर्दक्षैरमूराः ॥४॥

4. He is the priest of the sacrifice seated in the son of Man: he verily is the lord of these riches. They desire the seed mutually in their bodies; the wise by their own discernings come wholly to know.

⁹ Or, take joy in

¹⁰ Or, learns from thee,

पितुर्न पुत्राः क्रतुं जुषन्त श्रोषन् ये अस्य शासं तुरासः ।
वि राय और्णेदि दुरः पुरुक्षुः पिपेश नाकं स्तृभिर्दमूनाः ॥५॥

5. Those who listen to his teaching, those who are swift to the journey, serve gladly his will as sons the will of a father. He houses a multitude of riches and flings wide the doors of the Treasure. He is the dweller within who has formed heaven with its stars.

SUKTA 69

शुक्रः शुशुक्वाँ उषो न जारः पप्रा समीची दिवो न ज्योतिः ।
परि प्रजातः कत्वा बभूथ भुवो देवानां पिता पुत्रः सन् ॥१॥

1. Blazing out brilliant as the lover of the Dawn, filling the two equal worlds¹¹ like the Light of Heaven, thou art born by our will and comest into being all around us; thou hast become the father of the Gods, thou who art the Son.

वेधा अदृसो अग्निर्विजानन्वृधनं गोनां स्वादा पितृनाम् ।
जने न शेव आहूर्यः सन् मध्ये निषत्तो रण्वो दुरोणे ॥२॥

2. The Fire having the knowledge is a creator¹² without proud rashness; he is as if the teat of the Cows of Light, the sweetener of the draughts of the Wine.¹³ He is as one blissful in a man, one whom we must call in; he is seated rapturous in the middle of the house.

पुत्रो न जातो रण्वो दुरोणे वाजी न प्रीतो विशो वि तारीत् ।
विशो यदद्वे नृभिः सनीळा अग्निर्देवत्वा विश्वान्यश्याः ॥३॥

3. He is born to us as if a son rapturous in our house; like a glad horse of swiftness he carries safe through their battle the peoples: when I call to the beings who dwell in one

¹¹ Or, the two Companions

¹² Or, ordainer of things

¹³ Or, taster of all foods.

abode with the Gods,¹⁴ the Flame attains all godheads.

नकिष्ट एता व्रता मिनन्ति नृभ्यो यदेभ्यः श्रुष्टिं चकर्थ ।
तत् तु ते दंसो यदहन्त्समानैर्भिर्यद् युक्तो विवे रपांसि ॥ ४ ॥

4. None can impair the ways of thy workings when for these gods¹⁵ thou hast created inspired knowledge. This is thy work that yoked with the Gods, thy equals, thou hast smitten,¹⁶ that thou hast scattered the powers of evil.

उषो न जारो विभावोस्मः संज्ञातरूपश्चिकेतदस्मै ।
त्मना वहन्तो द्वरो व्यृणवन् नवन्त विश्वे स्वर्दृशीके ॥ ५ ॥

5. Very bright and lustrous is he like the lover of Dawn. May his form be known and may he wake to knowledge for this human being, may all bear him in themselves, part wide the Doors and move into the vision of the world of the Sun.¹⁷

SUKTA 70

वनेम पूर्विर्यो मनीषा अग्निः सुशोको विश्वान्यश्याः ।
आ दैव्यानि व्रता चिकित्वाना मानुषस्य जनस्य जन्म ॥ १ ॥

1. May we win the many Riches, may the Fire, flaming high with his light, master by the thinking mind, take possession of all things that are, he who knows the laws of the divine workings and knows the birth of the human being.

गर्भो यो अपां गर्भो वनानां गर्भश्च स्थातां गर्भश्चरथाम् ।
अद्रौ चिदस्मा अन्तर्दुरोणे विशां न विश्वो अमृतः स्वाधीः ॥ २ ॥

2. He is the child of the waters, the child of the forests, the child of things stable and the child of things that move. Even in

¹⁴ Or, with men,

¹⁵ Or, these men

¹⁶ Or, thou hast slain,

¹⁷ Or, come to the seeing of the Sun.

the stone he is there for man, he is there in the middle of his house,—he is as one universal in creatures; he is the Immortal, the perfect thinker.

स हि क्षपावाँ अग्नी र्यीणां दाशद् यो अस्मा अरं सूक्तैः ।
एता चिकित्वो भूमा नि पाहि देवानां जन्म मर्तांश्च विद्वान् ॥३॥

3. The Fire is a master of the nights, he gives of the Riches to him who prepares for him the sacrifice with the perfect words. O thou who art conscious, guard, as the knower, these worlds, and the birth of the Gods, and mortal men.

वर्धान्यं पूर्वीः क्षपो विरूपाः स्थातुश्चरथमृतप्रवीतम् ।
अराधि होता स्वर्निष्टतः कृष्णन् विश्वान्यपांसि सत्या ॥४॥

4. Many nights of different forms have increased him, the Fire who came forth from the Truth, who is the stable and the moving: the priest of the call, he is achieved for us, seated in the sun-world,¹⁸ making true all our works.

गोषु प्रशस्तिं वनेषु धिषे भरन्त विश्वे बलिं स्वर्णं ।
वि त्वा नरः पुरुत्रा सपर्यन्नितुर्न जिव्रेवि वेदो भरन्त ॥५॥

5. Thou establishest word of thee in the Ray-Cow and in the forests; it is as if all were bringing the sun-world as offering. Men in many parts serve thee and gather in knowledge as from a long-lived father.

साधुर्न गृधूरस्तेव शूरो यातेव भीमस्त्वेषः समत्सु ॥६॥

6. He is like one efficient in works and hungry to seize, heroic like one shooting arrows, terrible like an assailant charging, he is a splendour in our battles.

¹⁸ Or, the sun,

SUKTA 71

उप प्र जिन्वन्तुशतीरुशनन्तं पतिं न नित्यं जनयः सनीळाः ।
स्वसारः श्यावीमरुषीमजुप्रज्ञिवत्रमुच्छन्तीमुषसं न गावः ॥१॥

1. The Mothers who dwell in one abode, desiring came to him who desired them and gave him pleasure as to their eternal spouse: the sisters took joy in him as the Ray-Cows in the Dawn when she comes dusky, flushing red, then shining out in rich hues.

वीलु चिद् दृक्ष्वा पितरो न उक्थैरदिं रुजन्नद्विरसो रवेण ।
चकुर्दिवो बृहतो गातुमस्मे अहः स्वर्विविदुः केतुमुस्ताः ॥२॥

2. Our fathers by their words broke the strong and stubborn places, the Angiras seers shattered the mountain rock with their cry; they made in us a path to the Great Heaven, they discovered the Day and the sun-world and the intuitive ray and the shining herds.

दधन्तं धनयन्नस्य धीतिमादिदर्यो दिधिष्वो विभृत्राः ।
अतृष्णन्तीरपसो यन्त्यच्छा देवान्जन्म प्रयसा वर्धयन्तीः ॥३॥

3. They held the Truth, they enriched the thought of this human being; then indeed had they mastery and understanding bearing wide the Flame; unthirsting, the powers at work go towards the gods making the Birth to grow by delight.

मथीद् यदीं विभृतो मातरिश्वा गृहेगृहे श्येतो जेन्यो भूत् ।
आदीं राज्ञे न सहीयसे सचा सन्ना दूत्यं भृगवाणो विवाय ॥४॥

4. When the Life-Breath borne pervadingly within has churned him out in house and house he becomes white and a conqueror. Then indeed he becomes the Flaming Seer and companioning us goes on an embassy as for a powerful king.

महे यत् पित्र ईं रसं दिवे करव त्सरत् पृशन्यश्चकित्वान् ।
सृजदस्ता धृष्टा दिव्यमस्मै स्वायां देवो दुहितरि त्विषिं धात् ॥५॥

5. When he had made this sap of essence for the great Father Heaven, he came slipping downward, one close in touch, having knowledge. The Archer loosed violently on him his arrow of lightning, but the god set the flaming energy in his own daughter.

स्व आ यस्तुभ्यं दम आ विभाति नमो वा दाशादुशतो अनु दून् ।
वर्धो अग्ने वयो अस्य द्विवर्हा यासद् राया सरथं यं जुनासि ॥६॥

6. He who kindles the light for thee in thy own home and offers obeisance of surrender day by day and thy desire is towards him, mayst thou in thy twofold mass increase his growth, he whom thou speedest in one car with thee, may he travel with the riches.

अग्निं विश्वा अभि पृक्षः सचन्ते समुद्रं न स्रवतः सप्त यद्वीः ।
न जामिभिर्विं चिकिते वयो नो विदा देवेषु प्रमतिं चिकित्वान् ॥७॥

7. All satisfactions cleave to the Fire as the seven mighty rivers join the ocean. Our growth of being has not been perceived by thy companions, but thou who hast perceived, impart to the gods thy knowledge.¹⁹

आ यदिषे नृपतिं तेज आनट् छुचि रेतो निषिकं दौरमीके ।
अग्निः शर्धमनवद्यं युवानं स्वाध्यं जनयत् सूदयच्च ॥८॥

8. When a flame of energy came to this King of men for impelling force, when in their meeting Heaven was cast in him like pure seed, the Fire gave birth to a might,²⁰ young and faultless and perfect in thought and sped it on its way.

¹⁹ Or, gain for us knowledge in the Gods.

²⁰ Or, a host. It may mean the army of the life-gods, *marutām śardhaḥ*.

मनो न योऽध्वनः सद्य एत्येकः सत्रा सूरो वस्व ईशे ।
राजाना मित्रावरुणा सुपाणी गोषु प्रियममृतं रक्षमाणा ॥९॥

9. He who travels the paths suddenly like the mind, the Sun, ever sole is the master of the treasure: Mitra and Varuna, the Kings with beautiful hands, are there guarding in the Rays²¹ delight and immortality.

मा नो अग्ने सख्या पित्र्याणि प्र मर्षिष्ठा अभि विदुष्कविः सन् ।
नभो न रूपं जरिमा मिनाति पुरा तस्या अभिशस्तेरधीहि ॥१०॥

10. O Fire, mayst thou not forget²² ancient friendships, thou who art turned towards us as the knower and seer. As a mist dims a form, age diminishes us; before that hurt falls upon us, arrive.²³

SUKTA 72

नि काव्या वेधसः शश्वतस्कर्हस्ते दधानो नर्या पुरुणि ।
अग्निर्भुवद् रयिपती रयीणां सत्रा चक्राणो अमृतानि विश्वा ॥१॥

1. He forms within us the seer-wisdoms of the eternal Creator holding in his hand many powers²⁴ of the godheads. May Fire become the treasure-master of the riches, ever fashioning all immortal things.²⁵

अस्मे वत्सं परि षन्तं न विन्दन्निच्छन्तो विश्वे अमृता अमूरा: ।
श्रमयुवः पदव्यो धियंधास्तस्युः पदे परमे चार्वग्नेः ॥२॥

2. All the immortals, the wise ones, desired but found not in us the Child who is all around; turning to toil on his track,

²¹ *Gosu*, in the Ray-Cows, the shining herds of the Sun

²² Or, neglect or wipe out

²³ Or, give heed, before that assault comes upon us.

²⁴ Or, many strengths

²⁵ Or, fashioning together all immortal things.

upholding the Thought, they stood in the supreme plane,
they reached the beauty of the Flame.

तिस्रो यदग्ने शरदस्त्वामिच्छुचिं धृतेन शुचयः सपर्यान् ।
नामानि चिद् दधिरे यज्ञियान्यसूदयन्त तन्वः सुजाताः ॥ ३ ॥

3. When for three years, O Fire, they worshipped thee, the pure ones thee the pure, with the clarity of the light, they held too the sacrificial Names, their bodies came to perfect birth and they sped them on the way.

आ रोदसी बृहती वेविदानाः प्र रुद्रिया जप्त्रिरे यज्ञियासः ।
विदन्मर्तो नेमधिता चिकित्वानग्निं पदे परमे तस्थिवांसम् ॥ ४ ॥

4. The masters of sacrifice discovered and in their impetuous might bore the Vast Earth and Heaven, then the mortal knew them and by his holding of the upper hemisphere²⁶ perceived the Fire, standing in the supreme plane.

संजानाना उप सीदन्नभिन्नु पत्नीवन्तो नमस्यं नमस्यन् ।
रिरिक्वांसस्तन्वः कृण्वत स्वाः सखा सख्युर्निमिषि रक्षमाणाः ॥ ५ ॥

5. Utterly knowing him they with their wives came and knelt before him and adored with obeisance the adorable. They made themselves empty and formed their own bodies guarded in his gaze, friend in the gaze of friend.

त्रिः सप्त यद् गुह्यानि त्वे इत् पदाविदन्निहिता यज्ञियासः ।
तेभी रक्षन्ते अमृतं सजोषाः पशूञ्च स्थातृञ्चरथं च पाहि ॥ ६ ॥

6. When the masters of sacrifice have found hidden in thee the thrice seven secret planes, by them they guard with one mind of acceptance Immortality. Protect the Herds, those that stand and that which is mobile.

²⁶ *Nema*, the half, referring apparently to the Great Heaven, *bṛhad dyauḥ*, the upper half beyond which is the supreme plane.

विद्वाँ अग्ने वयुनानि क्षितीनां व्यानुषक् छ्रुरुधो जीवसे धाः ।
अन्तर्विद्वाँ अध्वनो देवयानानतन्द्रो दृतो अभवो हविर्वाट् ॥७॥

7. O Fire, thou art the knower of our knowings, ordain for the people an unbroken succession of strengths that they may live. The knower within of the paths of the journey of the gods, thou hast become a sleepless messenger and the carrier of the offerings.

स्वाध्यो दिव आ सप्त यद्गी रायो दुरो व्यृतज्ञा अजानन् ।
विदद् गव्यं सरमा दृव्यमूर्वं येना नु कं मानुषी भोजते विट् ॥८॥

8. The seven mighty Rivers from Heaven, deep-thinking, knowers of the Truth, knew the doors of the treasure; Sarama discovered the mass of the Ray-Cow, the strong place, the wideness, and now by that the human creature enjoys bliss.

आ ये विश्वा स्वपत्यानि तस्युः कृण्वानासो अमृतत्वाय गातुम् ।
महा महद्विः पृथिवी वि तस्ये माता पुत्रैरदितिर्धायसे वेः ॥९॥

9. These are they who set their steps on all things that have fair issue, making a path towards immortality. Earth stood wide in greatness by the Great Ones, the Mother infinite with her sons came to uphold her.

अधि श्रियं नि दधुश्चारुमस्मिन् दिवो यदक्षी अमृता अकृण्वन् ।
अध क्षरन्ति सिन्धवो न सृष्टाः प्र नीचीरग्ने अरुषीरजानन् ॥१०॥

10. When the immortals made the two eyes of Heaven, they set in him the splendour and the beauty. Then there flow as if rivers loosed to their course; downward they ran, his ruddy mares, and knew, O Fire.

SUKTA 73

रथिनं यः पितृवित्तो वयोधाः सुप्रणीतिश्चकितुषो न शासुः ।
स्योनशीरतिथिनं प्रीणानो होतेव सद्म विधतो वि तारीत् ॥१॥

1. He is like an ancestral wealth that founds our strength, perfect in his leading like the command²⁷ of one who knows, he is like a guest lying happily well-pleased, he is like a priest of invocation and increases the house of his worshipper.

देवो न यः सविता सत्यमन्मा क्रत्वा निपाति वृजनानि विश्वा ।
पुरुप्रशस्तो अमतिर्न सत्य आत्मेव शेवो दिधिषाय्यो भूत् ॥२॥

2. He is like the divine Sun true in his thoughts and guards by his will all our strong places; he is like a splendour manifoldly expressed, he is like a blissful self and our support.²⁸

देवो न यः पृथिवीं विश्वधाया उपक्षेति हितमित्रो न राजा ।
पुरःसदः शर्मसदो न वीरा अनवद्या पतिजुषेव नारी ॥३॥

3. He is like a God upholding the world and he inhabits earth like a good and friendly king; he is like a company of heroes sitting in our front, dwelling in our house; he is as if a blameless wife beloved of her lord.

तं त्वा नरो दम आ नित्यमिद्वमग्ने सचन्त क्षितिषु ध्रुवासु ।
अधि द्युम्नं नि दधुर्भूर्यस्मिन् भवा विश्वायुर्धरुणो रथीणाम् ॥४॥

4. Such art thou, O Fire, to whom men cleave, kindled eternal in the house, in the abiding worlds of thy habitation. They have founded within upon thee a great light; become a universal life holder of the riches.

²⁷ Or, the teaching

²⁸ Or, he is one to be meditated on (upheld in thought), blissful like the self.

वि पृक्षो अग्ने मघवानो अश्युर्विं सूरयो ददतो विश्वमायुः ।
सनेम वाजं समिथेष्वर्यो भागं देवेषु श्रवसे दधानाः ॥५॥

5. O Fire, may the masters of wealth enjoy thy satisfactions, the illumined wise Ones givers of the whole of life: may we conquer the plenitude from the foe in our battles²⁹ holding our part in the Gods for inspired knowledge.

ऋतस्य हि धेनवो वावशानाः स्मद्दीर्घीः पीपयन्त द्युभक्ताः ।
परावतः सुमतिं भिक्षमाणा वि सिन्धवः समया ससुराद्विम् ॥६॥

6. The milch-cows of the Truth, enjoyed in heaven,³⁰ full-uddered, desiring us, have fed us with their milk: praying for right-thinking from the Beyond the Rivers flowed wide over the Mountain.

त्वे अग्ने सुमतिं भिक्षमाणा दिवि श्रवो दधिरे यज्ञियासः ।
नक्ता च चक्रुरुषसा विरूपे कृष्णं च वर्णमरुणं च सं धुः ॥७॥

7. O Fire, in thee praying for right-thinking, the masters of sacrifice set³¹ inspired knowledge in heaven: they made night and dawn of different forms and joined together the black and the rosy hue.

यान् राये मर्तान्त्सुषूदो अग्ने ते स्याम मघवानो वयं च ।
छायेव विश्वं भुवनं सिसक्ष्यापत्रिवान् रोदसी अन्तरिक्षम् ॥८॥

8. The mortals whom thou speedest to the Treasure, may we be of them, the lords of riches and we. Filling earth and heaven and mid-air thou clingest to the whole world like a shadow.

²⁹ Or, warriors in the battles may we conquer the plenitude

³⁰ Or, shared by heaven,

³¹ Or, upheld

अर्वद्विरग्ने अर्वतो नृभिर्नृन् वीरैवीरान् वनुयामा त्वोताः ।
ईशानासः पितृवित्तस्य रायो वि सूर्यः शतहिमा नो अश्युः ॥९॥

9. O Fire, safeguarded by thee may we conquer the war-horses by our war-horses, the strong men by our strong men, the heroes by our heroes; may our illumined wise ones become masters of the treasure gained by the fathers, and possess it living a hundred winters.

एता ते अग्न उच्यानि वेधो जुष्टानि सन्तु मनसे हृदे च ।
शकेम रायः सुधुरो यमं तेऽधि श्रवो देवभक्तं दधानाः ॥१०॥

10. O ordainer of things, O Fire, may these utterances be acceptable to thee, to the mind and to the heart; may we have strength to control with firm yoke thy riches, holding in thee the inspired knowledge enjoyed by the gods.³²

³² Or, distributed by the gods.

Hymn of Paruchchhepa

MANDALA ONE

SUKTA 127

अग्निं होतारं मन्ये दास्वन्तं वसुं सूनुं सहसो जातवेदसं
विप्रं न जातवेदसम् ।
य ऊर्ध्वया स्वध्वरो देवो देवाच्या कृपा ।
घृतस्य विभ्राष्टिमनु वष्टि शोचिषाऽजुद्धानस्य सर्पिषः ॥१॥

1. I meditate on the Fire, the priest of the call, the giver of the Treasure, the son of force, who knows all things born, the Fire who is like one illumined and knowing all things born.

The Fire who perfect in the pilgrim-sacrifice, a God with his high-lifted longing¹ hungers with his flame for the blaze of the offering of light, for its current poured on him as an oblation.

यज्ञिष्ठं त्वा यजमाना हुवेम ज्येष्ठमङ्गिरसां विप्र मन्मभि-
विप्रेभिः शुक्र मन्मभिः ।
परिज्मानमिव द्यां होतारं चर्षणीनाम् ।
शोचिष्केशं वृषणं यमिमा विशः प्रावन्तु ज्ञृतये विशः ॥२॥

2. Thee most powerful for sacrifice, as givers of sacrifice may we call, the eldest of the Angirases, the Illumined One, call thee with our thoughts, O Brilliant Fire, with our illumined thoughts, men's priest of the call,² who encircles all like heaven, the Male with hair of flaming-light whom may these peoples cherish for his urge.

¹ Or, high-uplifted lustre seeking for the Gods

² Or, the priest of the call for men who see,

स हि पुरु चिदोजसा विरुक्षता दीद्यानो भवति द्रुहन्तरः
परशुर्ण द्रुहन्तरः ।
वीलु चिद् यस्य समृतौ शुवद् वनेव यत् स्थिरम् ।
निष्ठहमाणो यमते नायते धन्वासहा नायते ॥३॥

3. Many things illumining with his wide-shining energy he becomes one who cleaves through those who would hurt us, like a battle-axe he cleaves through those who would hurt us, he in whose shock even that which is strong falls asunder, even what is firmly fixed falls like trees; overwhelming with his force he toils on and goes not back, like warriors with the bow from the battle he goes not back.

दृष्ट्वा चिदस्मा अनु दुर्यथा विदे तेजिष्ठाभिररणिभिर्दृष्ट्वसे
उग्नये दाष्ठवसे ।
प्रयः पुरुणि गाहते तक्षद् वनेव शोचिषा ।
स्थिरा चिदन्ना नि रिणात्योजसा नि स्थिराणि चिदोजसा ॥४॥

4. Even things strongly built they give to him as to one who knows: one gives for safeguarding by his movements of flaming-power, gives to the Fire that he may guard us. Into many things he enters and hews them with his flaming light like trees, even things firmly fixed he tears by his energy and makes his food by his energy even things firmly fixed.

तमस्य पृक्षमुपरासु धीमहि
नक्तं यः सुदर्शतरो दिवातरा -
दप्रायुषे दिवातरात् ।
आदस्यायुर्ग्रभणवद् वीलु शर्म न सूनवे ।
भक्तमभक्तमवो व्यन्तो अजरा अग्नयो व्यन्तो अजराः ॥५॥

5. We meditate on³ that fullness of him on the upper levels, this Fire the vision of whom is brighter in the night than in the day, for his undeparting life brighter than in the day. Then does his life grasp and support us like a strong house

³ Or, we hold

of refuge for the Son,—ageless fires moving towards the happiness enjoyed and that not yet enjoyed, moving his ageless fires.

स हि शर्धो न मारुतं तुविष्वणिरप्नस्वतीषूर्वरास्विष्टनि -
रात्नास्विष्टनिः ।
आदद्व्यान्याददिर्यज्ञस्य केतुरहृणा ।
अध स्मास्य हर्षतो हृषीवतो विश्वे जुषन्त पन्थां
नरः शुभे न पन्थाम् ॥ ६ ॥

6. He is many-noised like the army of the storm-winds hurrying over the fertile lands full of our labour, hurrying over the waste lands.⁴ He takes and devours the offerings, he is the eye of intuition of the sacrifice in its due action; so all men follow with pleasure the path of this joyful and joy-giving Fire, as on a path leading to happiness.

द्विता यदीं कीस्तासो अभिद्वावो नमस्यन्त उपवोचन्त भृगवो
मथनन्तो दाशा भृगवः ।
अग्निरीशे वसूनां शुचिर्यो धर्णिरेषाम् ।
प्रियाँ अपिधौर्विनिषीष्ट मेधिर आ वनिषीष्ट मेधिरः ॥ ७ ॥

7. When in his twofold strength, bards with illumination upon them, the Bhrigu-flame-seers have made obeisance and spoken to him the word, when they have churned him out by their worship,—the Flame-Seers, the Fire becomes master of the riches, he who in his purity holds them within him, wise he enjoys the things laid upon him and they are pleasant to him, he takes joy of them in his wisdom.

विश्वासां त्वा विशां पतिं हवामहे सर्वासां समानं दम्पतिं भुजे
सत्यगिर्वाहसं भुजे ।
अतिथिं मानुषाणां पितुर्न यस्यासया ।
अमी च विश्वे अमृतास आ वयो हव्या देवेष्वा वयः ॥ ८ ॥

⁴ Or, in the esoteric sense, the army of the Life-Powers moving with fertilising rain over our tilled and our waste lands.

8. We call to thee, the Lord of all creatures, the master of the house common to them all for the enjoying, the carrier of the true words for the enjoying,— to the Guest of men in whose presence stand, as in the presence of a father, all these Immortals and make our offerings their food — in the Gods they become their food.

त्वमग्ने सहसा सहन्तमः शुभ्मिन्तमो जायसे देवतातये
रयिर्न देवतातये ।
शुभ्मिन्तमो हि ते मदो द्युमिन्तम उत क्रतुः ।
अध स्मा ते परि चरन्त्यजर श्रुष्टीवानो नाजर ॥९॥

9. O Fire, thou art overwhelming in thy strength, thou art born most forceful for the forming of the Gods, as if a wealth for the forming of the Gods; most forceful is thy rapture, most luminous thy will. So they serve thee, O Ageless Fire, who hear thy word serve thee, O Ageless Fire!

प्र वो महे सहसा सहस्वत उर्षबुधे पशुषे नागनये
स्तोमो बभूत्वगनये ।
प्रति यदीं हविष्मान् विष्वासु क्षासु जोगुवे ।
अग्ने रेभो न जरत क्रष्णां जूर्णिहौत क्रष्णाम् ॥१०॥

10. To the Great One, the Strong in his force, the waker in the Dawn, to Fire as to one who has vision, let your hymn arise. When the giver of the offering cries towards him in all the planes, in the front of the wise he chants our adoration, the priest of the call of the wise who chants their adoration.

स नो नेदिष्टं ददृशान आ भराऽग्ने देवेभिः सचनाः सुचेतुना
महो रायः सुचेतुना ।
महि शविष्ट नस्कृधि संचक्षे भुजे अस्यै ।
महि स्तोतृभ्यो मघवन्त्सुवीर्यं मथीरुग्रो न शवसा ॥११॥

11. So, becoming visible, most near to us bring, O Fire, by thy perfect consciousness, the Riches that ever accompany the Gods, by thy perfect consciousness the Great Riches. O most

strong Fire, create for us that which is great for vision, for the enjoying; for those who hymn thee, O Lord of plenty, churn out a great hero-strength as one puissant by his force.

Part Two

Other Hymns to Agni

Mandala One

MADHUCHCHHANDAS VAISHWAMITRA

SUKTA 1

अग्निमीळे पुरोहितं यज्ञस्य देवमृत्विजम् ।
होतारं रक्षधातमम् ॥१॥

1. The Fire I pray, the divine vicar of the sacrifice and ordinant of the rite, the Summoner (or, priest of the offering) who most founds the ecstasy.

अग्निः पूर्वेभिर्द्विभिरीड्यो नूतनैरुत ।
स देवाँ एह वक्षति ॥२॥

2. The Fire, desirable to the ancient seers, so even to the new, — may he come to us with the gods.

अग्निना रथिमश्वत् पोषमेव दिवेदिवे ।
यशसं वीरवत्तमम् ॥३॥

3. By the Fire one obtains a wealth that increases day by day, glorious and full of hero-powers.

अग्ने यं यज्ञमध्वरं विश्वतः परिभूरसि ।
स इद् देवेषु गच्छति ॥४॥

4. O Fire, the pilgrim sacrifice which thou encompassest on every side, reaches the gods.

अग्निहृता कविक्रतुः सत्यश्चत्रश्वस्तमः ।
देवो देवेभिरा गमत् ॥५॥

5. Fire, priest of the call, the seer-will rich in brilliant inspirations, may he come to us, a god with the gods.

यदङ्ग दाशुषे त्वमग्ने भद्रं करिष्यसि ।
तवेत् तत् सत्यमङ्गिरः ॥६॥

6. O Fire, the happy good that thou wilt create for the giver, is That Truth of thee, O Angiras.

उप त्वाग्ने दिवेदिवे दोषावस्तर्धिया वयम् ।
नमो भरन्त एमसि ॥७॥

7. To thee, O Fire, day by day, in the dawn and in the dusk, we come bringing to thee by the thought our obeisance,

राजन्तमध्वराणां गोपामृतस्य दीदिविम् ।
वर्धमानं स्वे दमे ॥८॥

8. To thee, who rulest the sacrifices of the Way, the shining Guardian of the Truth, growing in thy own home.

स नः पितेव सूनवेऽग्ने सूपायनो भव ।
सचस्वा नः स्वस्तये ॥९॥

9. O Fire, be easy of access to us like a father to his son; cleave to us for our weal.

MEDHATITHI KANWA

SUKTA 12

अग्निं द्रूतं वृणीमहे होतारं विश्ववेदसम् ।
अस्य यज्ञस्य सुक्रतुम् ॥१॥

1. We choose Agni, the summoner, the all-knowing, the messenger, the will effective of this sacrifice.

अग्निमग्निं हवीमभिः सदा हवन्त विश्पतिम् ।
हव्यवाहं पुरुप्रियम् ॥२॥

2. To the Lord of the creatures, the bearer of our offerings, the beloved of Many, to every flame the sacrificers ever call with hymns that summon the Gods, One in whom are many dear things.

अग्ने देवाँ इहा वह जग्नानो वृक्तवर्हिषे ।
असि होता न ईडयः ॥३॥

3. O Fire, thou being born hither bear the Gods for the sacrificer who spreads the holy seat, thou art our desirable summoning priest.

ताँ उशतो वि बोधय यदग्ने यासि द्रृत्यम् ।
देवैरा सत्सि बर्हिषि ॥४॥

4. O Fire, when thou goest as our envoy, awaken them up who desire our offerings. Take thy seat with the Gods on the holy grass.

घृताहवन दीदिवः प्रति ष्म रिषतो दह ।
अग्ने त्वं रक्षस्विनः ॥५॥

5. O Fire, thou who art called by the offerings of clarity, thou shining one, do thou oppose and burn down the haters that confine.

अग्निनाग्निः समिध्यते कविर्गृहपतिर्युवा ।
हव्यवाड् जुह्वास्यः ॥६॥

6. By the fire is the fire perfectly kindled, the seer, the lord of the house, the youth, the bearer of offering whose mouth receives the offerings.

कविमग्निमुप स्तुहि सत्यधर्माणमध्वरे ।
देवममीवचातनम् ॥७॥

7. To the divine flame, the seer, him whose law of being is the Truth, the shining one, the destroyer of all evils, approach and chant the hymn of praise.

यस्त्वामग्ने हविष्टिर्द्वतं देव सपर्यति ।
तस्य स्म प्राविता भव ॥८॥

8. O Flame, O divine messenger, the lord of the offerings who waits on thee, of him become the protector.

यो अग्निं देववीतये हविष्माँ आविवासति ।
तस्मै पावक मृल्य ॥९॥

9. He who with the offerings approaches the divine force, for the Birth of the Gods, O Purifier, on him have grace.

स नः पावक दीदिवोऽग्ने देवाँ इहा वह ।
उप यज्ञं हविश्च नः ॥१०॥

10. O shining flame, thou who purifiest, hither bear the Gods to our offerings and to our sacrifice.

स नः स्तवान आ भर गायत्रेण नवीयसा ।
रथिं वीरवतीमिष्म् ॥११॥

11. Thou adored by our fresh Gayatri rhythms bring for us the felicity and force full of hero's strength.

अग्ने शुक्रेण शोचिषा विश्वभिर्देवहृतिभिः ।
इमं स्तोमं जुषस्व नः ॥१२॥

12. O Fire, with thy lustres white, and all thy divine hymns that summon the Gods, come and accept this hymn that we affirm.

SUKTA 13

सुसमिद्धो न आ वह देवाँ अग्ने हविष्मते ।
होतः पावक यक्षि च ॥१॥

- O Fire! perfectly kindled, bear the gods to him who has the offerings, O Thou who purifiest! Thou summoner! sacrifice to the gods.

मधुमनं तनूनपाद् यज्ञं देवेषु नः कवे ।
अद्या कृषुहि वीतये ॥२॥

- O son of the body! Now make the sacrifice honied for the gods (or full of honey among the gods) for their enjoyment, O seer.

नराशंसमिह प्रियमस्मिन् यज्ञ उप हृये ।
मधुजिद्धं हविष्कृतम् ॥३॥

- Him, the beloved, I call hither to this sacrifice, he who creates the offerings, possessed of honied tongue.

अग्ने सुखतमे रथे देवाँ ईळित आ वह ।
असि होता मनुहितः ॥४॥

- O Fire! Thou who art adored, bring here the gods in thy happiest car; (for) thou art the summoner established by man.

स्तृणीत वर्हिरानुषग् घृतपृष्ठं मनीषिणः ।
यत्रामृतस्य चक्षणम् ॥५॥

- O Thinkers! spread you the holy seat continuous and true in order, sprinkled with clear offerings (of clarified butter), to where is the vision of immortality.

[Incomplete]

SUKTA 14

ऐभिरग्ने दुवो गिरो विश्वेभिः सोमपीतये ।
देवेभिर्याहि यक्षि च ॥१॥

- With all these gods, O Agni, thou who art the activity of speech, arrive and do thy work.

आ त्वा कण्वा अहूषत गृणन्ति विप्र ते धियः ।
देवेभिरग्न आ गहि ॥२॥

- On thee, O Agni, the Kanwas have called, for thee, O master of wisdom, their movements of understanding become articulate; arrive, O Agni, with the gods.

इन्द्रवायू बृहस्पतिं मित्राग्निं पूषणं भगम् ।
आदित्यान् मारुतं गणम् ॥३॥

- On Indra and Vayu, Brihaspati, on Mitra and Agni, Pushan, Bhaga, the Adityas and the Marut host.

प्र वो भ्रियन्त इन्दवो मत्सरा मादयिष्वः ।
द्रप्सा मध्वश्चमूषदः ॥४॥

- For you the nectar streams are filled in, rapturous and maddening, dripping sweetness, into their vessel they settle down.

ईळते त्वामवस्यवः कण्वासो वृक्तबर्हिषः ।
हविष्मन्तो अरंकृतः ॥५॥

- Thee the Kanwas protected adore, when they have manifested the flame, hold the offering and have set their array.

घृतपृष्ठा मनोयुजो ये त्वा वहन्ति वह्यः ।
आ देवान्त्सोमपीतये ॥६॥

- Shining of flank, yoked to the mind are the bearers that bear thee and bear to us the gods to drink the Soma-wine.

तान् यजत्राँ कृतावृधोऽग्ने पत्नीवतस्कृधि ।
मध्वः सुजिह्वा पायय ॥७॥

7. Make them active to the Yajna, O Agni, they increase by truth, they have with them their female powers; make them drink the sweetesses, O keen of tongue.

ये यजत्रा य ईड्यास्ते ते पिबन्तु जिह्वया ।
मधोरग्ने वषट्कृति ॥८॥

8. Those that are active to Yajna, those that are adorable, let both of them drink with thy tongue, O Agni, the heady sweetness of the wine.

आकीं सूर्यस्य रोचनाद् विश्वान् देवाँ उष्वुधः ।
विप्रो होतेह वक्षति ॥९॥

9. From the world of the lustre of the sun the seer, the priest of the offering bringeth the gods that wake to the dawn.

विश्वेभिः सोम्यं मध्वग्न इन्द्रेण वायुना ।
पिवा मित्रस्य धामभिः ॥१०॥

10. With all of them, O Agni, drink thou the sweetness of the Soma-wine, with Indra and Vayu and Mitra's lustres.

त्वं होता मनुर्हितोऽग्ने यज्ञेषु सीदसि ।
सेमं नो अध्वरं यज ॥११॥

11. Thou, the priest of the oblation, thinker and friend, O Agni, sittest at the Yajnas, therefore do thou set thyself to this action of sacrifice of ours.

युक्ष्वा ह्यरुषी रथे हरितो देव रोहितः ।
ताभिर्देवाँ इहा वह ॥१२॥

12. Yoking, O God, in thy chariot the rosy and the green and the crimson, by these bear hither the gods.

SHUNAHSHEPA AJIGARTI

SUKTA 26

वसिष्ठा हि मियेध्य वस्त्राण्यूर्जा पते ।
सेमं नो अध्वरं यज ॥१॥

1. Gird on thy robes, O thou adorable one,—master of all abounding mighty, conduct this our oblation.

नि नो होता वरेण्यः सदा यविष्ट मन्मभिः ।
अग्ने दिवित्मता वचः ॥२॥

2. Settle down,—for thou art the supreme offerer of sacrifice, O young, strong and brilliant Agni,—by the thoughts of my meditation into my speech.

आ हि ष्मा सूनवे पिताऽपिर्यजत्यापये ।
सखा सख्ये वरेण्यः ॥३॥

3. Because he doeth sacrifice as a father for his son, as a lover for his lover, as a comrade for his comrade, therefore is he the supreme offerer.

आ नो बहीं रिशादसो वरुणो मित्रो अर्यमा ।
सीदन्तु मनुषो यथा ॥४॥

4. May the destroyers of the foe, Varuna, Mitra and Aryaman, sit down on the sacred rushes as human friends might sit.

पूर्व्य होतरस्य नो मन्दस्व सख्यस्य च ।
इमा उ षु श्रुधी गिरः ॥५॥

5. O ancient Priest of the offering, rejoice in this our friendship, hearken to these my words.

यच्चद्वि शश्वता तना देवंदेवं यजामहे ।
त्वे इद्युते हविः ॥६॥

6. For whatsoever with lasting substance we sacrifice to god and god, always 'tis on thee that the offering is cast.

प्रियो नो अस्तु विश्पतिहर्ता मन्द्रो वरेण्यः ।
प्रियाः स्वग्नयो वयम् ॥७॥

7. May this master of the peoples be dear to us, the delightful and supreme offerer of sacrifice, and to him may we be dear and full of the strengths of Agni.

स्वग्नयो हि वार्यं देवासो दधिरे च नः ।
स्वग्नयो मनामहे ॥८॥

8. For when the gods are full of the strengths of Agni, then they hold firmly for us the supreme good; full of the strengths of Agni may we be in our meditation.

अथा न उभयेषाममृतमत्यनाम् ।
मिथः सन्तु प्रशस्तयः ॥९॥

9. Then should both exchange their full expressions of being, the immortals giving to mortal men, man to the deathless gods.

विश्वेभिरग्ने अग्निभिरिमं यज्ञमिदं वचः ।
चनो धाः सहसो यहो ॥१०॥

10. O Agni, enrich with all thy strengths and confirm, thou masterful user of force, this my sacrifice, this my speech, this delight.

SUKTA 27

अश्वं न त्वा वारवन्तं वन्दध्या अग्निं नमोभिः ।
सम्राजन्तमध्वराणाम् ॥१॥

- As the swift strength that bringeth blessings I adore thee with obeisances, the strong Agni, supreme and king over all below.

स धा नः सूनुः शवसा पृथुप्रगामा सुशेवः ।
मीढ्वाँ अस्माकं बभूयात् ॥२॥

- May he be always full of loving kindness to us, auspicious, happy, moving out by his flashing brilliance far and wide.

स नो द्वाराच्चासाच्च नि मत्यादघायोः ।
पाहि सदमिद् विश्वायुः ॥३॥

- Far and near do thou protect us continuously by the universal vitality from mortal sickness of our life.

इममूषु त्वमस्माकं सनिं गायत्रं नव्यांसम् ।
अग्ने देवेषु प्र वोचः ॥४॥

- Speak forth perfectly, O Agni, among the gods this our chant new-framed of saving power.

आ नो भज परमेष्वा वाजेषु मध्यमेषु ।
शिक्षा वस्वो अन्तमस्य ॥५॥

- Cleave to us in our higher stabilities and in our middle, teach us thy utmost reach of being.

विभक्तासि चित्रभानो सिन्धोरूर्मा उपाक आ ।
सद्यो दाशुषे क्षरसि ॥६॥

- O richly-lusted, thou art he who dwellest over against the swelling waters of the ocean and distributest them, thou flowest down immediately on the giver.

यमग्ने पृत्सु मर्त्यमवा वाजेषु यं जुनाः ।
स यन्ता शश्वतीरिषः ॥७॥

7. Whomso, though a mortal, O Agni, thou impellest in his struggles, whomso in his holdings, he attaineth to enduring masteries.

नकिरस्य सहन्त्य पर्येता कयस्य चित् ।
वाजो अस्ति श्रवाय्यः ॥८॥

8. O god of force, there is a substance of plenty that is of the Inspiration and it embraces in its circuit any plane whatsoever of being;

स वाजं विश्वचर्षणिरवर्द्धिरस्तु तरुता ।
विप्रेभिरस्तु सनिता ॥९॥

9. Therefore do thou, the universal strength that labours, bring by thy strong fighters that richness of plenty to its goal (of fullness) and by thy wise seers hold it safe.

जराबोध तद् विविडिद् विशेविशे यज्ञियाय ।
स्तोमं रुद्राय दृशीकम् ॥१०॥

10. O thou who awakenest to thy wooers, do thou pervade towards Rudra to whom one doeth all sacrifice, for each and every people, a hymn full of vision.

स नो महाँ अनिमानो धूमकेतुः पुरुश्चन्द्रः ।
धिये वाजाय हिन्वतु ॥११॥

11. May he be to us great and boundless, passionate in perception, wide and full of charm,—so may he favour our understanding and the plenty of our substance.

स रेवाँ इव विश्पतिदैव्यः केतुः शृणोतु नः ।
उक्थैरग्निर्बृहद्गानुः ॥१२॥

12. May he, as one full of impetuosity, the master of these peoples who is divine perception, hearken to us, even Agni who burneth into greatness with the prayers of our desire for his fuel.

नमो महद्भ्यो नमो अर्भकेभ्यो नमो युवभ्यो नम आशिनेभ्यः ।
यजाम देवान् यदि शक्वाम मा ज्यायसः शंसमा वृक्षि देवाः ॥१३॥

13. Obeisance to the Great Gods! obeisance to the lesser! obeisance to the young! obeisance to them who are (old?) keen and swift! may we do sacrifice to the gods to the utmost of our capacity, may our self-expression not be mutilated, O ye elder-gods.

KANWA GHAURA

SUKTA 36

प्र वो यद्हुं पुरुणां विशां देवयतीनाम् ।
अग्निं सुक्तेभिर्वचोभिरीमहे यं सीमिदन्य ईळते ॥१॥

1. The master of many peoples who labour towards the god-head, we seek for you with words of perfect expression, Agni whom others also everywhere desire.

जनासो अग्निं दधिरे सहोवृधं हविष्मन्तो विधेम ते ।
स त्वं नो अद्य सुमना इहाविता भवा वाजेषु सन्त्य ॥२॥

2. Men hold Agni in them as the increaser of strength. With offerings we dispose the sacrifice for thee, do thou then become today to us perfect-minded and our keeper here in our havings, O thou who art of the truth of being.

प्र त्वा द्रूतं वृणीमहे होतारं विश्ववेदसम् ।
महस्ते सतो वि चरन्त्यर्चयो दिवि स्पृशन्ति भानवः ॥ ३ ॥

3. Thee we choose out for our messenger, the priest of offering who hast universal knowledge; when thou art greateated in thy being thy flames range wide, thy lustres touch the heavens.

देवासस्त्वा वरुणो मित्रो अर्यमा सं द्रूतं प्रलभिन्धते ।
विश्वं सो अग्ने जयति त्वया धनं यस्ते ददाश मर्त्यः ॥ ४ ॥

4. The gods even Varuna and Mitra and Aryaman light thee utterly, the ancient messenger; all wealth that mortal conquers by thee, O Agni, who to thee has given.

मन्द्रो होता गृहपतिरग्ने द्रूतो विशामसि ।
त्वे विश्वा संगतानि ब्रता ध्रुवा यानि देवा अकृष्णत ॥ ५ ॥

5. Thou art the rapturous priest of the sacrifice and master of this house and the envoy of creatures; in thee are met together all the steadfast laws of action which the gods have made.

त्वे इदग्ने सुभगे यविष्ट्य विश्वमा हूयते हविः ।
स त्वं नो अद्य सुमना उतापरं यक्षि देवान्तसुवीर्या ॥ ६ ॥

6. It is in thee, O Agni, young and mighty, because thou art rich in joy that every offering is cast, therefore do thou today and hereafter, perfect of mind, offer to the gods perfected energies.

तं धेमित्था नमस्विन उप स्वराजमासते ।
होत्राभिरग्निं मनुषः समिन्धते तितिर्वासो अति स्मिधः ॥ ७ ॥

7. He it is, whom as the self-ruler men who have attained submission adore; by the queens of the oblation men light entirely Agni when they have broken through their opposers.

घन्तो वृत्रमतरन् रोदसी अप उरु क्षयाय चक्रिरे ।
भुवत् कण्वे वृषा दुम्न्याहुतः क्रन्ददश्वो गविष्टु ॥ ८ ॥

8. They smite Vritra the Coverer and pass beyond the two firmaments, they make the wide kingdom their home. May the mighty One become in Kanwa a luminous energy fed with the offerings, the Steed of Life neighing in the stations of the kine.

सं सीदस्व महाँ असि शोचस्व देववीतमः ।
वि धूममग्ने अरुषं मियेध्य सूज प्रशस्त दर्शतम् ॥ ९ ॥

9. Take thy established seat; wide art thou, shine in thy purity revealing utterly the godhead; pour forth, O thou of the sacrifice, thy red-active smoke of passion, thou wide-manifested, that full of vision;—

यं त्वा देवासो मनवे दधुरिह यजिष्ठं हव्यवाहन ।
यं कण्वो मेध्यातिथिर्धनस्पृतं यं वृषा यमुपस्तुतः ॥ १० ॥

10. Even thou whom the gods have set here for man most strong for the sacrifice, O bearer of the offering, whom Kanwa Medhyatithi has established as a seizer for him of his desired wealth, whom the mighty Indra and all who establish him by the song of praise;

यमग्निं मेध्यातिथिः कण्व ईध क्रतादधि ।
तस्य प्रेषो दीदियुस्तमिमा क्रचस्तमग्निं वर्धयामसि ॥ ११ ॥

11. Even that Agni whom Medhyatithi Kanwa has kindled high upon the Truth, may his impulses blaze forth, him may these fulfilling Words, him, even Agni, may we increase.

रायस्पूर्धि स्वधावोऽस्ति हि तेऽग्ने देवेष्वाप्यम् ।
त्वं वाजस्य श्रुत्यस्य राजसि स नो मृल महाँ असि ॥ १२ ॥

12. Complete our felicities, O thou who hast the self-fixity; for with thee, O Agni, is effectivity in the gods; thou rulest over

the wealth of inspired knowledge. Show thou then favour to us, great art thou.

ऊर्ध्वं ऊ षु ण ऊतये तिष्ठा देवो न सविता ।
ऊर्ध्वो वाजस्य सनिता यदञ्जभिर्वाघङ्गिर्विह्न्यामहे ॥१३॥

13. Utterly high-uplifted stand for our growth, like the god Savitri; 'tis from these heights that thou becomest the saviour of our store when we call on thee with []

ऊर्ध्वो नः पाहूंहसो नि केतुना विश्वं समत्रिणं दह ।
कृधी न ऊर्ध्वाञ्चरथाय जीवसे विदा देवेषु नो दुवः ॥१४॥

14. High-raised protect us from the evil by the perceiving mind, burn utterly every eater of our being; raise us too on high for action, for life; distribute among the gods our activity.

पाहि नो अग्ने रक्षसः पाहि धूर्तेररावः ।
पाहि रीषत उत वा जिधांसतो वृहङ्गानो यविष्ट्य ॥१५॥

15. Protect us, O Agni, from the Rakshasa, protect us from the harm of the undelight, protect us from him who assails and him who would slay us, O vast of lustre, O mighty and young.

घनेव विष्वग् वि जह्न्यरागास्तपुर्जम्भ यो अस्मधुक् ।
यो मर्त्यः शिशीते अत्यक्तुभिर्मा नः स रिपुरीशत ॥१६॥

16. As with thick falling blows scatter utterly (or scatter like clouds to every side) all the powers of undelight, O devourer of their force (or O destroyer of affliction), and him who would do us harm; whatsoever mortal being exceeds us in keenness by his actions, may he not as our enemy have mastery over us.

अग्निर्वदे सुवीर्यमग्निः कण्वाय सौभग्म् ।
अग्निः प्रावन् मित्रोत मेध्यातिथिमग्निः साता उपस्तुतम् ॥१७॥

17. Agni has won perfected energy for Kanwa and has won perfected enjoyment; Agni protects for him all friendly things, Agni keeps ever in safe being Medhyatithi who has confirmed him by the song of praise.

अग्निना तुर्वशं यदुं परावत उग्रादेवं हवामहे ।
अग्निर्नयन्नववास्त्वं वृहद्रथं तुर्वीतिं दस्यवे सहः ॥१८॥

18. By Agni we call Turvasha and Yadu from the upper kingdoms; Agni has led to a new dwelling Brihadratha and Turviti (or Turviti of wide delight), a power against the foe.

नि त्वामग्ने मनुर्दधे ज्योतिर्जनाय शश्वते ।
दीदेथ कण्व ऋतजात उक्षितो यं नमस्यन्ति कृष्टयः ॥१९॥

19. Man establisheth thee within, O Agni, as a light for the eternal birth; mayst thou burn brightly in Kanwa manifested in the Truth and increased in being, thou to whom the doers of action bow down.

त्वेषासो अग्नेरमवन्तो अर्चयो भीमासो न प्रतीतये ।
रक्षस्विनः सदमिद् यातुमावतो विश्वं समत्रिणं दह ॥२०॥

20. Impetuous, O Agni, and forceful are thy flames, terrible and not to be approached; always thou do burn utterly the powers who detain and the powers who are vessels of suffering, yea, every devourer.

NODHAS GAUTAMA

SUKTA 58

A hymn to Agni of the woodlands, the Flame that feeds on and enjoys the pleasant things of the earthly being and when the emotional and vital being is offered to the gods becomes a creator of the divine birth and a giver of the supreme bliss and the immortal rapture.

नू चित्सहोजा अमृतो नि तुन्दते होता यद् दृतो अभवद् विवस्तः ।
वि साधिष्ठेभिः पथिभी रजो मम आ देवताता हविषा विवासति ॥१॥

- Now again he has become the envoy of the illumined one; the Immortal born of force tramples on his way and by most effective paths, the middle world has measured out into form. He illuminates by the power of the food-offering in the creation of the gods.

आ स्वमद्य युवमानो अजरस्तृष्वविष्वन्नतसेषु तिष्ठति ।
अत्यो न पृष्ठं प्रुषितस्य रोचते दिवो न सानु स्तनयन्नचिक्रदत् ॥२॥

- The ageless Flame is embracing his own proper food. When he means to give increase, he stands up swiftly on the fuel. The back of the burning god shines like a galloping horse. He shouts aloud as if making to thunder the peak of heaven.

क्राणा रुद्रेभिर्वसुभिः पुरोहितो होता निषत्तो रथिषाळमर्त्यः ।
रथो न विक्ष्वृज्जसान आयुषु व्यानुषग् वार्या देव क्रणवति ॥३॥

- He is the doer of the work with the Rudras and the Vasus, the vicar of sacrifice and seated offering priest, the Immortal, the conqueror of treasures. The godhead shining among the peoples of these living beings is like our chariot and moves uninterruptedly to desirable things.

वि वातजूतो अतसेषु तिष्ठते वृथा जुहूभिः सृण्या तुविष्वणिः ।
दृषु यदग्ने वनिनो वृषायसे कृष्णं त एम रुशद्वर्मे अजर ॥४॥

4. Many-voiced, urged by the breath of the wind, he stands abroad easily among the trunks with the series of his mouths of flame. Black is thy trail, O ageless Flame, when swiftly thou puttest forth thy male might upon the woodlands, O wave of lustrous fire.

तपुर्जम्भो वन आ वातचोदितो यूथे न साद्धाँ अव वाति वंसगः ।
अभिव्रजन्नक्षितं पाजसा रजः स्थातुश्चरथं भयते पतत्रिणः ॥५॥

5. He ranges like a conquering bull ranges among the herd. Impelled by the blast he is blowing like a storm down in the wood with his burning jaws even while he travels with the mass of his might the unwasted middle world. Then the winged things of heaven are afraid and all that stands and all that moves.

दधुद्धा भृगवो मानुषेष्वा रथं न चारुं सुहवं जनेभ्यः ।
होतारमग्ने अतिथिं वरेण्यं मित्रं न शेवं दिव्याय जन्मने ॥६॥

6. The Bhrigus set thee, O Fire, among human beings like a beautiful treasure, one swift to the call of men, an offering priest and desirable guest, like a happy friend for the divine birth.

होतारं सप्त जुह्वो यजिष्ठं यं वाघतो वृणते अध्वरेषु ।
अग्निं विश्वेषामरतिं वसूनां सपर्यामि प्रयसा यामि रत्नम् ॥७॥

7. The Flame is a priest strong for sacrifice and the seven offering energies choose him in the rites of the path for the singer of the word. He is one who wins by battle all riches. I serve him with my delight and travel to the ecstasy.

अच्छिद्रा सूनो सहसो नो अद्य स्तोतृभ्यो मित्रमहः शर्म यच्छ ।
अग्ने गृणन्तमंहस उरुष्योर्जो नपात् पूर्भिरायसीभिः ॥८॥

8. O Son of Force, O friendly greatness, give on this day to men who hymn thee, the joys of a bliss in which there is no wound or fissure. O Flame, Child of Might, keep thy singer far from evil with thy iron walls.

भवा वस्थं गृणते विभावो भवा मघवन् मघवद्भ्यः शर्म ।
उरुष्याग्ने अंहसो गृणन्तं प्रातर्मक्षु धियावसुर्जगम्यात् ॥९॥

9. O wide-lustrous Flame, become an armour to thy singer. King of Riches, become that bliss to the lords of the riches. Keep far from evil thy singer, O Fire. At dawn may he quickly come rich with thought.

SUKTA 59

A hymn to Agni Vaisvanara, the universal Force in all the worlds and in all beings who conducts the action of the universe and getting rid of the powers of darkness manifests to men the supreme heavenly world of light and truth and true being.

वया इदग्ने अग्नयस्ते अन्ये त्वे विश्वे अमृता मादयन्ते ।
वैश्वानर नाभिरसि क्षितीनां स्थूणेव जनाँ उपमिद् ययन्थ ॥१॥

1. Other flames are only branches of thy stock, O Fire. All the immortals take in thee their rapturous joy. O universal Godhead, thou art the navel-knot of the earths and their inhabitants; all who are born, thou controlllest and supportest like a pillar.

मूर्धा दिवो नाभिरपिनः पृथिव्या अथाभवदरती रोदस्योः ।
तं त्वा देवासोऽजनयन्त देवं वैश्वानर ज्योतिरिदार्याय ॥२॥

2. The Flame is the head of heaven and the navel of the earth

and the power that moves at work in the two worlds. O Vaisvanara, the gods brought thee to birth a god to be a light to Aryan man.

आ सूर्ये न रश्मयो ध्रुवासो वैश्वानरे दधिरेऽग्ना वसूनि ।
या पर्वतेष्वोषधीष्वप्सु या मानुषेष्वसि तस्य राजा ॥३॥

3. As firm rays sit steadfast in the Sun, all treasures have been placed in the universal godhead and flame. King art thou of all the riches that are in the growths of the earth and the hills and the waters and all the riches that are in men.

बृहती इव सूनवे रोदसी गिरो होता मनुष्यो न दक्षः ।
स्वर्वते सत्यशुभ्राय पूर्वींश्वानराय नृतमाय यद्गीः ॥४॥

4. Heaven and earth grow as if vaster worlds to the Son. Then the offering priest sings the sacred words even as might a man of discerning skill. To Vaisvanara, for this most strong god who brings with him the light of the sun-world the many mighty waters because his strength is of the truth.

दिवश्चित् ते बृहतो जातवेदो वैश्वानर प्र रिरिचे महित्वम् ।
राजा कृष्णानामसि मानुषीणां युधा देवेभ्यो वरिवश्चकर्थ ॥५॥

5. O universal godhead, O knower of all things born, thy excess of greatness overflows even the Great Heaven. Thou art king of the toiling human peoples and by battle makest the supreme good for the gods.

प्र नू महित्वं वृषभस्य वोचं यं पूरवो वृत्रहणं सचन्ते ।
वैश्वानरो दस्युमग्निर्जघन्वाँ अधूनोत् काष्ठा अव शम्बरं भेत् ॥६॥

6. I have spoken the greatness of the Bull to whom the Purus cling and he slays for us the covering Vritras. The universal Godhead and Flame has slain the Destroyers and hastened the waters on the way and broken down Shambara.

वैश्वानरो महिमा विश्वकृष्टभरद्वाजेषु यजतो विभावा ।
शातवनेये शतिनीभिरग्निः पुरुणीथे जरते सूनृतावान् ॥७॥

7. This is the universal godhead who by his greatness labours in all the peoples, the lustrous master of sacrifice, the Flame with the hundredfold treasures is uttering the hymn of adoration among the Bharadwajas in Purunitha son of Shatavana. This is he who has the word of Truth.

SUKTA 60

वह्नि यशसं विदथस्य केतुं सुप्राप्य दृतं सद्योर्थम् ।
द्विजन्मानं रथिमिव प्रशस्तं रातिं भरद भृगवे मातरिश्वा ॥१॥

1. The Lord of Life who breathes in the Mother brought to the Bhrigu like a treasure expressed by the word, a lavish felicity, a twice-born god, a glorious upholder, a thought-vision of the knowledge, a messenger who makes good advance and comes in a moment to the object of his journey.

अस्य शासुरभयासः सचन्ते हविष्मन्त उशिजो ये च मर्ता: ।
दिवश्चित् पूर्वो न्यसादि होताऽपृच्छ्यो विश्पतिर्विक्षु वेधाः ॥२॥

2. Two are the races who cling to this teacher; the gods who desire in heaven and men who are mortals bring him the food-offering. One who was before heaven has sat down as the priest of sacrifice, one to be questioned, a lord of the peoples among the peoples, a creator.

तं नव्यसी हृद आ जायमानमस्मत् सुकीर्तिर्मधुजिह्वमश्याः ।
यमृत्विजो वृजने मानुषासः प्रयस्वन्त आयवो जीजनन्त ॥३॥

3. Our new glory-song of him enjoys the honey-tongued god in his birth from the heart of man, whom human living beings beget in the strength, delight for their offering, sacrificers in the seasons.

उशिक् पावको वसुर्मानुषेषु वरेष्यो होताधायि विक्षु ।
दमूना गृहपतिर्दम आँ अग्निर्भुवद् रयिपती रयीणाम् ॥४॥

4. A desirable priest was set in the peoples, a desiring god, a purifying Vasu in men, a dweller in the home, a master of the house in the mansion; the Flame becomes a lord of many treasures.

तं त्वा वयं पतिमग्ने रयीणां प्र शंसामो मतिभिर्गोत्तमासः ।
आशुं न वाजंभरं मर्जयन्तः प्रातर्मक्ष धियावसुर्जगम्यात् ॥५॥

5. O Flame, we the Gotamas making thee clear and bright like a swift horse who brings our plenty give expression to thee by our thoughts, to the lord of treasures. At dawn may he quickly come rich with thought.

GOTAMA RAHUGANA

SUKTA 74

उपप्रयन्तो अध्वरं मन्त्रं वोचेमाग्नये ।
आरे अस्मे च शृणवते ॥१॥

1. As we move forward to the path of the sacrifice let us speak out the word of our thought to Agni who hears us from afar and from within.

यः स्त्रीहितीषु पूर्व्यः संजग्मानासु कृष्टिषु ।
अरक्षद् दाशुषे गयम् ॥२॥

2. He who supreme (ancient, first) in the worlds of our action that pour forth the clarity meeting together (or, when our labours that drip their fruit combine together), protects for the giver his attaining (or movement).

उत ब्रुवन्तु जन्तव उदग्निर्वृत्रहाजनि ।
धनंजयो रणेरणे ॥३॥

3. Yea, let *all* creatures born (be able to) say, “Up Agni comes into being, slayer of Vritras, conqueror of our wealth in battle after battle.”

यस्य द्रूतो असि क्षये वेषि हव्यानि वीतये ।
दस्मत् कृणोष्यध्वरम् ॥४॥

4. He whose messenger thou art to his home, thou takest his offerings on their journey (or, takest his offerings *on thy journey* to be eaten by the gods, or comest to the offerings); thou makest effective his path of sacrifice.

तमित् सुहव्यमंगिरः सुदेवं सहसो यहो ।
जना आहुः सुबर्हिषम् ॥५॥

5. Him men call the man complete in his offering, complete in his gods, complete in his base of sacrifice, O Angiras, O Son of Force.

आ च वहासि ताँ इह देवाँ उप प्रशस्तये ।
हव्या सुशचन्द्र वीतये ॥६॥

6. Thou bringest both those gods here that we may express them and bearest, O rich in delight, the offerings on their journey (or, to be expressed and to eat the offerings).

न योरुपद्विरश्व्यः शृण्वे रथस्य कच्चन ।
यदग्ने यासि द्रृत्यम् ॥७॥

7. No tramp is heard of the horses of thy chariot in its going when thou goest on thy embassy, O Agni.

त्वोतो वाज्यह्योऽभि पूर्वस्मादपरः ।
प्र दाश्वाँ अग्ने अस्थात् ॥८॥

8. By thee fostered the horse of *life* goes undeviating, each one after that which preceded it, and the giver of sacrifices progresses, O Agni.

उत द्युमत् सुवीर्यं वृहदग्ने विवाससि ।
देवेभ्यो देव दाशुषे ॥९॥

9. Yea, and thou lodgest throughout *his being* for the giver and his gods, O God, Agni, a vast and luminous completeness of energy.

SUKTA 77

कथा दाशेमाग्नये कास्मै देवजुष्टोच्यते भासिने गीः ।
यो मत्येष्वमृतं ऋतावा होता यजिष्ठ इत् कृणोति देवान् ॥१॥

1. How shall we give to Agni? For him what Word accepted by the Gods is spoken, for the lord of the brilliant flame? for him who in mortals, immortal, possessed of the Truth, priest of the oblation strongest for sacrifice, creates the gods?

यो अध्वरेषु शंतम् ऋतावा होता तम् नमोभिरा कृणुध्वम् ।
अग्निर्यद् वेर्मताय देवान्तस चा बोधाति मनसा यजाति ॥२॥

2. He who in the sacrifices is the priest of the offering, full of peace, full of the Truth, him verily form in you by your surrenders; when Agni manifests¹ for the mortals the gods, he also has perception of them and by the mind offers to them the sacrifice.

स हि क्रतुः स मर्यः स साधुर्मित्रो न भूद्भुतस्य रथीः ।
तं मेधेषु प्रथमं देवयन्तीर्विश उप ब्रुवते दस्ममारीः ॥३॥

3. For he is the will, he is the strength, he is the effector of perfection, even as Mitra he becomes the charioteer of the Supreme. To him, the first, in the rich-offerings the people seeking the godhead utter the word, the Aryan people to the fulfiller.

¹ Or “enters into the gods”.

स नो नृणां नृतमो रिशादा अग्निर्गिरोऽवसा वेतु धीतिम् ।
तना च ये मधवानः शविष्ठा वाजप्रसूता इषयन्त मन्म ॥४॥

4. May this strongest of the Powers and devourer of the destroyers manifest² by his presence the Words and their understanding, and may they who in their extension are lords of plenitude brightest in energy pour forth their plenty and give their impulsion to the thought.

एवाग्निर्गोत्तमेभिर्कृतावा विप्रेभिरस्तोष्ट जातवेदाः ।
स एषु द्युम्नं पीपयत्स वाजं स पुष्टिं याति जोषमा चिकित्वान् ॥५॥

5. Thus has Agni possessed of the Truth been affirmed by the masters of light,³ the knower of the worlds by clarified minds. He shall foster in them the force of illumination, he too the plenty; he shall attain to increase and to harmony by his perceptions.

KUTSA ANGIRASA

SUKTA 94

इमं स्तोममर्हते जातवेदसे रथमिव सं महेमा मनीषया ।
भद्रा हि नः प्रमतिरस्य संसद्युग्ने सख्ये मा रिषामा वयं तव ॥१॥

1. This is the omniscient who knows the law of our being and is sufficient to his works; let us build the song of his truth by our thought and make it as if a chariot on which he shall mount. When he dwells with us, then a happy wisdom becomes ours. With him for friend we cannot come to harm.

² Or “enter into the words and the thinking”.

³ *Gotamebhīḥ*. In its external sense “by the Gotamas”, the family of the Rishi, Gotama Rahugana, the seer of the hymn. But the names of the Rishis are constantly used with a covert reference to their meaning. In this passage there is an unmistakable significance in the grouping of the words, *gotamebhīr ṛtāvā, viprebbhir jātavedāḥ*, as in verse 3 in *dasmam ārīḥ*.

यस्मै त्वमायजसे स साधत्यनर्वा क्षेति दधते सुवीर्यम् ।
स तूताव नैनमश्चोत्यंहतिरग्ने सख्ये मा रिषामा वयं तव ॥२॥

2. Whosoever makes him his priest of the sacrifice, reaches the perfection that is the fruit of his striving, a home on a height of being where there is no warring and no enemies; he confirms in himself an ample energy; he is safe in his strength, evil cannot lay its hand upon him.

शकेम त्वा समिधं साधया धियस्त्वे देवा हविरदन्त्याहुतम् ।
त्वमादित्याँ आ वह तान् ह्यश्मस्यग्ने सख्ये मा रिषामा वयं तव ॥३॥

3. This is the fire of our sacrifice! May we have strength to kindle it to its height, may it perfect our thoughts. In this all that we give must be thrown that it may become a food for the gods; this shall bring to us the godheads of the infinite consciousness who are our desire.

भरामेधं कृणवामा हर्विषि ते चितयन्तः पर्वणापर्वणा वयम् ।
जीवातवे प्रतरं साधया धियोऽग्ने सख्ये मा रिषामा वयं तव ॥४॥

4. Let us gather fuel for it, let us prepare for it offerings, let us make ourselves conscious of the jointings of its times and its seasons. It shall so perfect our thoughts that they shall extend our being and create for us a larger life.

- विशां गोपा अस्य चरन्ति जन्तवो द्विपच्च यदुत चतुष्पदकृमिः ।
चित्रः प्रकेत उषसो महाँ अस्यग्ने सख्ये मा रिषामा वयं तव ॥५॥
5. This is the guardian of the world and its peoples, the shepherd of all these herds; all that is born moves by his rays and is compelled by his flame, both the two-footed and the four-footed creatures. This is the rich and great thought-awakening of the Dawn within.

त्वमध्वर्युरुत होतासि पूर्वः प्रशास्ता पोता जनुषा पुरोहितः ।
विश्वा विद्वाँ आर्तिवज्या धीर पुष्यस्यग्ने सख्ये मा रिषामा वयं
तव ॥ ६ ॥

6. This is the priest who guides the march of the sacrifice, the first and ancient who calls to the gods and gives the offerings; his is the command and his the purification; from his birth he stands in front, the vicar of our sacrifice. He knows all the works of this divine priesthood, for he is the Thinker who increases in us.

यो विश्वतः सुप्रतीकः सद्गुसि दूरे चित् सन् तद्विदिवाति रोचसे ।
रात्र्याश्चिदन्धो अति देव पश्यस्यग्ने सख्ये मा रिषामा वयं तव ॥ ७ ॥

7. The faces of this God are everywhere and he fronts all things perfectly; he has the eye and the vision: when we see him from afar, yet he seems near to us, so brilliantly he shines across the gulfs. He sees beyond the darkness of our night, for his vision is divine.

पूर्वो देवा भवतु सुन्वतो रथोऽस्माकं शंसो अभ्यस्तु दूदयः ।
तदा जानीतोत पुष्यता वचोऽग्ने सख्ये मा रिषामा वयं तव ॥ ८ ॥

8. O you godheads, let our chariot be always in front, let our clear and strong word overcome all that thinks the falsehood. O you godheads, know for us, know in us that Truth, increase the speech that finds and utters it.

वधैर्दुःशंसाँ अप दूदयो जहि दूरे वा ये अन्ति वा के चिदत्रिणः ।
अथा यज्ञाय गृणते सुगं कृथग्ने सख्ये मा रिषामा वयं तव ॥ ९ ॥

9. With blows that slay cast from our path, O thou Flame, the powers that stammer in the speech and stumble in the thought, the devourers of our power and our knowledge who leap at us from near and shoot at us from afar. Make the path of the sacrifice a clear and happy journeying.

यदयुक्था अरुषा रोहिता रथे वातजूता वृषभस्येव ते रवः ।
आदिन्वसि वनिनो धूमकेतुनाइग्ने सख्ये मा रिषामा वयं तव ॥१०॥

10. Thou hast bright red horses for thy chariot, O Will divine,
who are driven by the stormwind of thy passion; thou
roarest like a bull, thou rushest upon the forests of life, on
its pleasant trees that encumber thy path, with the smoke of
thy passion in which there is the thought and the sight.

अध स्वनादुत विभ्युः पतत्रिणो द्रप्सा यत् ते यवसादो व्यस्थिरन् ।
सुगं तत् ते तावकेभ्यो रथेभ्योइग्ने सख्ये मा रिषामा वयं तव ॥११॥

11. At the noise of thy coming even they that wing in the skies
are afraid, when thy eaters of the pasture go abroad in their
haste. So thou makest clear thy path to thy kingdom that
thy chariots may run towards it easily.

अयं मित्रस्य वरुणस्य धायसेऽवयातां मरुतां हेळो अङ्गुतः ।
मृत्ता सु नो भूत्वेषां मनः पुनरग्ने सख्ये मा रिषामा वयं तव ॥१२॥

12. This dread and tumult of thee, is it not the wonderful and
exceeding wrath of the gods of the Life rushing down on us
to found here the purity of the Infinite, the harmony of the
Lover? Be gracious, O thou fierce Fire, let their minds be
again sweet to us and pleasant.

देवो देवानामसि मित्रो अङ्गुतो वसुर्वसूनामसि चारुरध्वरे ।
शर्मन्त्स्याम तव सप्रथस्तमेऽग्ने सख्ये मा रिषामा वयं तव ॥१३॥

13. God art thou of the gods, for thou art the lover and friend;
richest art thou of the masters of the Treasure, the founders
of the home, for thou art very bright and pleasant in the
pilgrimage and the sacrifice. Very wide and far-extending is
the peace of thy beatitudes; may that be the home of our
abiding!

तत् ते भद्रं यत् समिद्धः स्वे दमे सोमाहुतो जरसे मृलयत्तमः ।
दधासि रत्नं द्रविणं च दाशुषेऽग्ने सख्ये मा रिषामा वयं तव ॥१४॥

14. That is the bliss of him and the happiness; for then is this Will very gracious and joy-giving when in its own divine house, lit into its high and perfect flame, it is adored by our thoughts and satisfied with the wine of our delight. Then it lavishes its deliciousness, then it returns in treasure and substance all that we have given into its hands.

यस्मै त्वं सुद्रविणो ददाशोऽनागास्त्वमदिते सर्वताता ।
यं भद्रेण शवसा चोदयासि प्रजावता राधसा ते स्याम ॥१५॥

15. O thou infinite and indivisible Being, it is thou ever that formest the sinless universalities of the spirit by our sacrifice; thou compellest and inspirest thy favourites by thy happy and luminous forcefulness, by the fruitful riches of thy joy. Among them may we be numbered.

स त्वमग्ने सौभगत्वस्य विद्वानस्माकमायुः प्र तिरेह देव ।
तन्मो मित्रो वरुणो मामहन्तामदितिः सिन्धुः पृथिवी उत द्यौः ॥१६॥

16. Thou art the knower of felicity and the increaser here of our life and advancer of our being! Thou art the godhead!

SUKTA 95

द्वे विरूपे चरतः स्वर्थं अन्यान्या वत्समुप धापयेते ।
हरिरन्यस्यां भवति स्वधावाञ्छुको अन्यस्यां ददृशे सुवर्चाः ॥१॥

1. Day and Night have different forms, but are travellers to one perfect goal; they suckle alternately the divine Child. In our day he becomes the brilliant Sun and is master of the law of his nature; through our night he is visible in the purity of his brightness and the energy of his lustres.

दशेमं त्वष्टुर्जनयन्त गर्भमतन्द्रासो युवतयो विभूत्रम् ।
तिग्मानीकं स्वयशसं जनेषु विरोचमानं परि षीं नयन्ति ॥ २ ॥

2. Ten powers of the Thought, young and sleepless goddesses, gave birth to this child of the Maker who is carried very variously and widely. They lead him abroad through the world in a flaming splendour, his keen power of light self-lustrous in all things born.

त्रीणि जाना परि भूषन्त्यस्य समुद्र एकं दिव्येकमप्सु ।
पूर्वामनु प्र दिशं पार्थिवानामृतन् प्रशासद् वि दधावनुष्टु ॥ ३ ॥

3. There are three births of him that seek to come into being around us, one is in the ocean of the infinite, one is in the heavens, one is in the waters that descend from the heavens. In the supreme region of mind, the eastern direction of earthly beings, he declares the seasons of their sacrifice and ordains them in their succession.

क इमं वो निष्यमा चिकेत वत्सो मातृजनयत स्वधामिः ।
बद्धीनां गर्भो अपसामुपस्थान्महान् कर्विनिश्चरति स्वधावान् ॥ ४ ॥

4. Which of you has awakened to the knowledge of this secret thing, that it is the Child who gives birth to his own mothers by the right workings of the law of his nature? Born in the womb of many waters, he comes forth from their lap a vast Seer, possessed of the law of his being.

आविष्यो वर्धते चारुरासु जिह्वानामूर्ध्वः स्वयशा उपस्थे ।
उमे त्वष्टुर्बिभ्यतुर्जयमानात् प्रतीची सिंहं प्रति जोषयेते ॥ ५ ॥

5. Very bright and pleasant he increases in them and is made manifest; in the lap of their crooked windings, he is straight-exalted and self-lustrous. Heaven and earth both had fear of their Maker in his birth; they are driven trembling towards the young lion and woo him to their love.

उभे भद्रे जोषयेते न मेने गावो न वाशा उप तस्युरैवैः ।
स दक्षाणां दक्षपतिर्बभूवाऽज्जन्ति यं दक्षिणतो हविर्भिः ॥ ६ ॥

6. They woo him to their love like women and both grow full of happiness. The thoughts of the Light come voiceful to him in all their movements like lowing cows and he becomes the master of all judgments and discernings whom men anoint with their offerings on the right hand of the altar.

उद्यंयमीति सवितेव बाहू उभे सिचौ यतते भीम ऋज्जन् ।
उच्छृङ्कमत्कमजते सिमस्मान्नवा मातृभ्यो वसना जहाति ॥ ७ ॥

7. Like the creating Sun he lifts up his arms to heaven and terrible in his force, adorning both his wives, he labours working into brightness both these fields of his outpouring; he drives upward the shining veil of thought from all that is; he plucks off their new robes from his mothers.

त्वेषं रूपं कृणुत उत्तरं यत् संपृज्ञानः सदने गोभिरङ्गिः ।
कविर्बुद्धं परि मर्मज्यते धीः सा देवताता समितिर्बभूव ॥ ८ ॥

8. When he joins himself in his seat and home to the rays of the Truth and to its streams, when he makes for himself that higher flaming form of his, then as the seer and thinker he delivers into a bright clearness that divine foundation. In our forming of the godheads, it is he that is their union and coming together.

उरु ते ज्ञयः पर्येति बुद्धं विरोचमानं महिषस्य धाम ।
विश्वेभिरग्ने स्वयशोभिरिद्वोऽदब्धेभिः पायुभिः पात्प्रस्मान् ॥ ९ ॥

9. The speed of thee encompasses the wideness, the foundation, the far-shining abode of the vast Godhead. O Flame, lit into thy full height guard us with all thy universal self-illuminings, guards invincible.

धन्वन्त्स्रोतः कृषुते गातुमूर्मि शुक्रैस्मिभिरभि नक्षति क्षाम् ।
विश्वा सनानि जठरेषु धत्तेऽन्तर्नवासु चरति प्रसूषु ॥१०॥

10. He creates on our desert earth the stream, the moving billow, and by its shining waves of light he ascends to the heavens; he holds all old and lasting things in his bellies and moves in all new births.

एवा नो अग्ने समिधा वृथानो रेवत् पावक अवसे वि भाहि ।
तन्मो मित्रो वरुणो मामहन्तामदितिः सिन्धुः पृथिवी उत द्यौः ॥११॥

11. So, O Flame, increase by the fuel that we heap for thee; and, O purifier, shine wide and opulently that we may possess inspired knowledge. That may the Lords of Harmony and Wideness increase in us, the Mother infinite and the great ocean and earth and heaven.

SUKTA 96

स प्रत्यथा सहसा जायमानः सद्यः काव्यानि बलधत्त विश्वा ।
आपश्च मित्रं धिषणा च साधन्देवा अग्निं धारयन् द्रविणोदाम् ॥१॥

1. As of old by force he is born and in his very birth infallibly he lays his hands on all seer-seeings and wisdoms; the Thought and the heavenly waters bring to perfection this friend of beings. The godheads hold the Flame that gives the treasure.

स पूर्व्या निविदा कव्यतायोरिमाः प्रजा अजनयन्मनूनाम् ।
विवस्वता चक्षसा द्यामपश्च देवा अग्निं धारयन् द्रविणोदाम् ॥२॥

2. By the supreme and original inmost knowledge of the being, the knowledge that does the works of the seer, he brought into being these children of men, the thinkers, and by his wide-shining eye of vision created heaven and its waters. The godheads hold the Flame that gives the treasure.

तमीळत प्रथमं यज्ञसाधं विश आरीराहुतमृज्जसानम् ।
ऊर्जः पुत्रं भरतं सूप्रदानुं देवा अग्निं धारयन् द्रविणोदाम् ॥ ३ ॥

3. Him desire and adore, for he is the first and chief who brings to perfect accomplishment your sacrifice, since he takes all offering of the Aryan peoples and makes them to shine with light; he is the son of Energy, the bringer of boons, the flood of strength. The godheads hold the Flame that gives the treasure.

स मातरिश्वा पुरुषारपुष्टिर्विदद गातुं तनयाय स्वर्वित् ।
विशां गोपा जनिता रोदस्योर्देवा अग्निं धारयन् द्रविणोदाम् ॥ ४ ॥

4. He is Life that swells in the mother of things, the Life-god who nurses in his bosom many blessings, finds the path for the Son of men and discovers the country of Light, protector of the peoples, father of earth and heaven. The godheads hold the Flame that gives the treasure.

नक्तोषासा वर्णमामेष्याने धापयेते शिशुमेकं समीची ।
द्यावाक्षामा रुक्मो अन्तर्वि भाति देवा अग्निं धारयन्द्रविणोदाम् ॥ ५ ॥

5. Night and Dawn are working to shape that highest hue of things, different, they suckle one child, they are united equals; between our earth and heavens are born the wide-nesses of his golden light. The godheads hold the Flame that gives the treasure.

रायो बुधः संगमनो वसूनां यज्ञस्य केतुर्मन्मसाधनो वे: ।
अमृतत्वं रक्षमाणास एनं देवा अग्निं धारयन् द्रविणोदाम् ॥ ६ ॥

6. He is the foundation of the opulence of the beatitude, the bringer together of its treasures; he is the conscious eye of our sacrifice who accomplishes and perfects the thought in the word of man. The godheads, guarding immortality, hold the Flame that gives the treasure.

नू च पुरा च सदनं रथीणां जातस्य च जायमानस्य च क्षाम् ।
सतश्च गोपां भवतश्च भूरेदेवा अग्निं धारयन् द्रविणोदाम् ॥७॥

7. Now and of old he is the seat of all felicities, continent of all that is born and all that is coming into birth, guardian of that which is and the much that becomes,—the godheads hold the Flame that gives the treasure.

द्रविणोदा द्रविणस्तुरस्य द्रविणोदाः सनरस्य प्र यंसत् ।
द्रविणोदा वीरवतीमिषं नो द्रविणोदा रासते दीर्घमायुः ॥८॥

8. May this giver of treasure extend to us treasure which hastens to its home, and the treasure which is lasting and eternal; he is the giver of treasure and he shall give to us heroic energy of impulsion and lavish on us long existence.

एवा नो अग्ने समिधा वृधानो रेवत् पावक श्रवसे वि भाहि ।
तन्मो मित्रो वरुणो मामहन्तामदितिः सिन्धुः पृथिवी उत द्यौः ॥९॥

9. So, O Flame, increase by the fuel that we heap for thee; and, O purifier, shine wide and opulently that we may possess inspired knowledge. That may the Lords of Harmony and Wideness increase in us, the Mother infinite and the great ocean and earth and heaven.

SUKTA 97

अप नः शोशुचदघमने शुशुग्ध्या रयिम् ।
अप नः शोशुचदघम् ॥१॥

1. Burn away from us the sin, flame out on us the bliss. Burn away from us the sin!

सुक्षेत्रिया सुगातुया वसूया च यजामहे ।
अप नः शोशुचदघम् ॥२॥

2. For the perfect path to the happy field, for the exceeding

treasure when we would do sacrifice,— burn away from us the sin!

प्र यद् भन्दिष्ठ एषां प्रास्माकासश्च सूरयः ।
अप नः शोशुचदधम् ॥३॥

3. That the happiest of all these many godheads may be born in us, that the seers who see in our thought may multiply, — burn away from us the sin!

प्र यत् ते अग्ने सूरयो जायेमहि प्र ते वयम् ।
अप नः शोशुचदधम् ॥४॥

4. That thy seers, O Flame divine, may multiply and we be new-born as thine,— burn away from us the sin!

प्र यदग्नेः सहस्रतो विश्वतो यन्ति भानवः ।
अप नः शोशुचदधम् ॥५॥

5. When the flaming rays of thy might rush abroad on every side violently,— burn away from us the sin!

त्वं हि विश्वतोमुख विश्वतः परिभूरसि ।
अप नः शोशुचदधम् ॥६॥

6. O God, thy faces are everywhere! thou besiegest us on every side with thy being. Burn away from us the sin!

द्विषो नो विश्वतोमुखाऽति नावेव पारय ।
अप नः शोशुचदधम् ॥७॥

7. Let thy face front the Enemy wherever he turns; bear us in thy ship over the dangerous waters. Burn away from us the sin!

स नः सिन्धुमिव नावयाऽति पर्षा स्वस्तये ।
अप नः शोशुचदधम् ॥८॥

8. As in a ship over the ocean, bear us over into thy felicity.
Burn away from us the sin!

DIRGHATAMAS AUCHATHYA

SUKTA 140

वेदिषदे प्रियधामाय सुद्युते धासिमिव प्र भरा योनिमग्नये ।
वस्त्रेणेव वासया मन्मना शुचिं ज्योतीरथं शुक्रवर्णं तमोहनम् ॥१॥

1. Offer like a secure seat that womb to Agni the utterly bright who sits upon the altar and his abode is bliss; clothe with thought as with a robe the slayer of the darkness who is pure and charioted in light and pure-bright of hue.

अभि द्विजन्मा त्रिवृदन्मृज्यते संवत्सरे वावृधे जग्धमी पुनः ।
अन्यस्यासा जिह्वया जेन्यो वृषा न्यन्येन वनिनो मृष्ट वारणः ॥२॥

2. The twice-born Agni moves (intense) about his triple food; it is eaten and with the year it has grown again; with the tongue and mouth of the one (or with his tongue in the presence of the one) he is the strong master and enjoyer, with the other he engirdles and crushes in his embrace his delightful things.

कृष्णप्रुतौ वेविजे अस्य सक्षिता उभा तरेते अभि मातरा शिशुम् ।
प्राचाजिह्वं ध्वसयन्तं तृषुच्युतमा साच्यं कुपयं वर्धनं पितुः ॥३॥

3. He gives energy of movement to both his mothers on their dark path, in their common dwelling, and both make their way through to their child (or following their child), for his tongue is lifted upward, he destroys and rushes swiftly through and should be cloven to, increasing his father.

मुमुक्ष्वो मनवे मानवस्यते रघुदृवः कृष्णसीतास ऊ जुवः ।
असमना अजिरासो रघुष्यदो वातजूता उप युज्यन्त आशवः ॥ ४ ॥

4. For the thinker becoming man his swift-hastening impulsions dark and bright desire freedom; unequal, active, rapid-quivering, they are yoked to their works, swift steeds and driven forward by the Breath of things.

आदस्य ते ध्वसयन्तो वृथेरते कृष्णमभ्वं महि वर्पः करिक्रतः ।
यत् सीं महीमवनिं प्राभि मर्मशदभिश्वसन्त्स्तनयन्नेति नानदत् ॥ ५ ॥

5. They for him destroy and speed lightly on (or speed and pervade) creating his dark being of thickness and his mighty form of light; when reaching forward he touches the Vast of Being, he pants towards it and, thundering, cries aloud.

भूषन् न योऽधि बभूषु नम्नते वृषेव पनीरभ्येति रोरुवत् ।
ओजायमानस्तन्वश्च शुभ्मते भीमो न शृङ्गा दविधाव दुर्गृभिः ॥ ६ ॥

6. He who when he would become in the tawny ones, bends down and goes to them bellowing as the male to its mates, — putting out his force he gives joy to their bodies (or he makes blissful the forms of things) and like a fierce beast hard to seize he tosses his horns.

स संस्तिरो विष्टिरः सं गृभायति जानन्नेव जानतीर्नित्य आ शये ।
पुनर्वर्धन्ते अपि यन्ति देव्यमन्यद् वर्पः पित्रोः कृष्वते सचा ॥ ७ ॥

7. He whether contracted in being or wide-extended seizes on them utterly; he knowing, they knowing the eternal Agni lies with them, then again they increase and go to the state divine; uniting, another form they make for the Father and Mother.

तमगृवः केशिनीः सं हि रेभिर ऊर्ध्वास्तस्युर्मृषीः प्रायवे पुनः ।
तासां जरां प्रमुञ्चन्नेति नानददसुं परं जनयन्नीवमस्तृतम् ॥८॥

8. Bright with their flowing tresses they take utter delight of him, they who were about to perish, stand upon high once more for his coming. For he loosens from them their decay and goes to them shouting high, he creates supreme force and unconquerable life.

अधीवासं परि मातृ रिहन्नह तुविग्रेभिः सत्वभिर्याति वि ज्ञयः ।
वयो दधत् पद्मते रेरिहत् सदाइनु श्येनी सचते वर्तनीरह ॥९॥

9. Tearing about her the robe that conceals the Mother he moves on utterly to the Delight with the creatures of pure Being who manifest the Force; he establishes wideness, he breaks through to the goal for this traveller, even though swiftly rushing, he cleaves always to the paths.

अस्माकमग्ने मघवत्सु दीदिद्याध श्वसीवान् वृषभो दमूनाः ।
अवास्या शिशुमतीरदीदर्वर्मेव युत्सु परिज्ञुराणः ॥१०॥

10. Burn bright for us, O Agni, in our fullnesses, be henceforth the strong master and inhabit in us with the sisters; casting away from thee those of them that are infant minds thou shouldst burn bright encompassing us all about like a cuirass in our battles.

इदमग्ने सुधितं दुर्वितादधि प्रियाद्व चिन्मन्मनः प्रेयो अस्तु ते ।
यत् ते शुक्रं तन्वो रोचते शुचि तेनास्मभ्यं वनसे रक्षमा त्वम् ॥११॥

11. This, O Agni, is that which is well-established upon the ill-placed; even out of this blissful mentality may there be born to thee that greater bliss. By that which shines bright and pure from thy body, thou winnest for us the delight.

रथाय नावमुत नो गृहाय नित्यारित्रां पद्मतीं रास्यग्ने ।
अस्माकं वीराँ उत नो मघोनो जनाँश्च या पारयाच्छ्रुम् या च ॥१२॥

12. Thou givest us, O Agni, for chariot and for home a ship travelling with eternal progress of motion that shall carry our strong spirits and our spirits of fullness across the births and across the peace.

अभी नो अग्न उक्थमिज्जुगुर्या द्यावाक्षामा सिन्धवश्च स्वगूताः ।
गव्यं यव्यं यन्तो दीर्घाहिषं वरमरुण्यो वरन्त ॥१३॥

13. Mayst thou, O Agni, about our Word for thy pivot bring to light for us Heaven and Earth and the rivers that are self-revealed; may the Red Ones reach to knowledge and strength and long days of light, may they choose the force and the supreme good.

Mandala Three

VISHWAMITRA GATHINA

SUKTA 1

सोमस्य मा तवसं वक्ष्यग्ने वह्निं चकर्थ विदथे यजाध्यै ।
देवाँ अच्छा दीद्यद् युज्जे अदिं शमाये अग्ने तन्वं जुषस्व ॥१॥

1. Bear me that I may be strong to hold the Wine, O Fire, for thou hast made me a carrier-flame of sacrifice in the getting of knowledge: I shine towards the gods, I put the stone to its work, I accomplish the labour;¹ O Fire, take delight in my body.

प्राञ्चं यज्ञं चकृम वर्धतां गीः समिद्धिरग्निं नमसा दुवस्यन् ।
दिवः शशासुर्विदथा कवीनां गृत्साय चित् तवसे गातुमीषुः ॥२॥

2. We have made the sacrifice with its forward movement, may the Word increase in us; with the fuel, with the obeisance they have set the Fire to its work. The heavens have declared the discoveries of knowledge of the seers and they have willed a path for the strong and wise.

मयो दधे मेधिरः पूतदक्षो दिवः सुबन्धुर्जनुषा पृथिव्याः ।
अविन्दन्तु दर्शतमप्स्वन्तर्देवासो अग्निमपसि स्वसृणाम् ॥३॥

3. Full of understanding, pure in discernment, close kin from his birth to earth and heaven he has founded the Bliss. The gods discovered the seeing Fire within in the waters, in the work of the sisters.

¹ Or, I attain to the peace;

अवर्धयन्त्सुभगं सप्त यद्गीः श्वेतं जज्ञानमरुषं महित्वा ।
शिंशुं न जातमभ्यारुरश्वा देवासो अग्निं जनिमन् वपुष्यन् ॥४॥

4. The seven mighty rivers increased the blissful flame,² white in his birth, ruddy glowing in his mightiness: the Mares went up to him as to a new-born child; the gods gave body to Agni in his birth.

शुक्रेभिरङ्गे रज आततन्वान् क्रतुं पुनानः कविभिः पवित्रैः ।
शोचिर्वसानः पर्यायुरपां श्रियो मिमीते वृहतीरनूनाः ॥५॥

5. With his bright limbs he has built wide the mid-world purifying the will by his pure seer-powers; wearing light like a robe around the life of the waters he forms his glories vast and ample.

वद्राजा सीमनदतीरदब्बा दिवो यद्गीरवसाना अनग्नाः ।
सना अत्र युवतयः सयोनीरेकं गर्भं दधिरे सप्त वाणीः ॥६॥

6. He moved all round the seven mighty Ones of heaven: undevouring, inviolate, neither were they clothed nor were they naked: here young and eternal in one native home the seven Voices held in their womb the one Child.

स्तीर्णा अस्य संहतो विश्वरूपा घृतस्य योनौ स्रवथे मधूनाम् ।
अस्थ्युरत्र धेनवः पिन्वमाना मही दस्मस्य मातरा समीची ॥७॥

7. Wide-strewn, compact, taking universal forms are his energies in the womb of the light, in the streaming of the sweetesses: here the milch-cows stand nourished and growing; two great and equal companions³ are the mothers of the Doer of works.

ब्राणः सूनो सहसो व्यद्यौद् दधानः शुक्रा रभसा वपूषि ।
श्चोतन्ति धारा मधुनो घृतस्य वृषा यत्र वावृधे काव्यन ॥८॥

² Or, increased him in his beauty,

³ Or, vast and whole

8. Upborne, O Son of Force, thou shonest out wide holding thy bright and rapturous bodies; there drip down streams of the light and the sweetness, there where the Bull has grown by the seer-wisdom.

पितुश्चद्वधर्जनुषा विवेद व्यस्य धारा असृजद् वि धेनाः ।
गुहा चरन्तं सखिभिः शिवेभिर्दिवो यद्गीभिर्न गुहा बभूव ॥९॥

9. At his birth he discovered the teat of abundance of the Father, he loosed forth wide his streams, wide his nourishing rivers;⁴ he discovered him moving in the secrecy with his helpful comrades, with the mighty Rivers of Heaven, but himself became not secret in the cave.

पितुश्च गर्भं जनितुश्च बम्रे पूर्विको अधयत् पीप्यानाः ।
वृष्णे सपत्नी शुचये सबन्धू उभे अस्मै मनुष्ये नि पाहि ॥१०॥

10. He carried the child of the father who begot him; one, he sucked the milk of many who nourished him with their overflowing. Two who have one lord and kinsman, for this pure male of the herds guard both in the human being.

उरौ महाँ अनिबाधे ववर्धाऽपो अग्निं यशसः सं हि पूर्वीः ।
ऋतस्य योनावशयद् दमूना जामीनामग्निरपसि स्वसृणाम् ॥११॥

11. Vast was he in the unobstructed wideness and grew, for the waters many and glorious fed the flame; in the native seat of the Truth the Fire lay down and made his home, in the work of the companions, the sisters.

अक्रो न वध्रिः समिथे महीनां दिदृक्षेयः सूनवे भाक्रजीकः ।
उद्गुम्निया जनिता यो जजानाऽपां गर्भो नृतमो यद्गो अग्निः ॥१२॥

12. Like a height upbearing all⁵ in the meeting of the great

⁴ Or, he loosed forth the milch-cows;

⁵ Or, like one moving and upbearing all

waters, eager for vision for the Son, straight in his lustres,
he is the Father who begot the shining Ray-herds, the child
of the Waters, the most strong and mighty Fire.

अपां गर्भं दर्शतमोषधीनां वना जजान सुभगा विरूपम् ।
देवासश्चिन्मनसा सं हि जग्मुः पनिष्ठं जातं तवसं द्रुवस्यन् ॥ १३ ॥

13. One desirable and blissful gave birth to him in many forms,
a visioned child of the waters and a child of the growths of
earth: the gods too met with the Mind the Fire, strong at his
birth and powerful to act⁶ and set him to his work.

बृहन्त इदं भानवो भाक्षजीकमग्निं सचन्त विद्युतो न शुक्राः ।
गुहेव बृद्धं सदसि स्वे अन्तरपार ऊर्वे अमृतं द्रुहानाः ॥ १४ ॥

14. Vast sun blazings cleave like brilliant lightnings to this Fire,
straight in his lustres, growing as in a secret cave within in
his own home in the shoreless wideness, and they draw the
milk of immortality.

ईळे च त्वा यजमानो हविर्भिरीळे सखित्वं सुमतिं निकामः ।
दैवरवो मिमीहि सं जरित्रे रक्षा च नो दम्येभिरनीकैः ॥ १५ ॥

15. Making sacrifice with my offerings for thee I pray, and pray
for thy friendship and true-mindedness with an utter desire.
Fashion with the Gods protection for thy adorer and guard
us with thy flame-forces that dwell in the house.

उपक्षेतारस्तव सुप्रणीतेऽग्ने विश्वानि धन्या दधानाः ।
सुरेतसा ऋवसा तुञ्जमाना अभि ष्याम पृतनायूर्देवान् ॥ १६ ॥

16. We who come to thee to dwell with thee in thy home, O
perfect leader of the way, holding all opulent things, may
we, overflowing⁷ them with the full stream of inspiration,
overwhelm the hostile army of the undivine powers.

⁶ Or, most admirable

⁷ Or, smiting

आ देवानामभवः केतुरग्ने मन्द्रो विश्वानि काव्यानि विद्वान् ।
प्रति मर्तानवासयो दमूना अनु देवान् रथिरो यासि साधन् ॥ १७ ॥

17. O Fire, thou comest in us the rapturous ray of intuition of the gods that knows all seer-wisdoms; established in thy home thou settlest mortals in that dwelling-place, as their charioteer achieving their aim thou journeyest in the wake of the gods.

नि दुरोणे अमृतो मर्त्यानां राजा ससाद विदधानि साधन् ।
घृतप्रतीक उर्विया व्यद्यौदगिनर्विश्वानि काव्यानि विद्वान् ॥ १८ ॥

18. In the gated house of mortals the immortal sat as King accomplishing the things of knowledge: the Fire shone out in his wideness with his luminous front, knower of all seer-wisdoms.

आ नो गहि सख्येभिः शिवेभिर्महान् महीभिरुतिभिः सरण्यन् ।
अस्मे रथिं बहुलं संतरुत्रं सुवाचं भागं यशसं कृधी नः ॥ १९ ॥

19. Come to us in a rapid approach with thy happy befriendings, mighty, come with thy mighty protectings; in us the abundance of the delivering riches, for us our glorious high-worded portion create.

एता ते अग्ने जनिमा सनानि प्र पूर्व्याय नूतनानि वोचम् ।
महान्ति वृष्णो सवना कृतेमा जन्मन्जन्मन् निहितो जातवेदाः ॥ २० ॥

20. O Fire, these are thy eternal births which I have declared to thee, ever new births for the ancient flame: great are the offerings of the Wine we have made for the mighty one. He is the knower of all births set within in birth and birth.

जन्मन्जन्मन् निहितो जातवेदा विश्वामित्रेभिरिध्यते अजस्रः ।
तस्य वयं सुमतौ यज्ञियस्याऽपि भद्रे सौमनसे स्याम ॥ २१ ॥

21. The knower of all births set within in birth and birth is kindled by Vishwamitra, an unceasing flame; in the true

thinking of this lord of sacrifice, in a happy right-mindedness
may we abide.

इमं यज्ञं सहसावन् त्वं नो देवत्रा धेहि सुक्रतो रराणः ।
प्र यंसि होतर्बृहतीरिषो नोऽग्ने महि द्रविणमा यजस्व ॥ २२ ॥

22. O forceful god, O strong will, establish this sacrifice of ours in the gods and take in it thy delight: O priest of the call, extend to us the vast impulsions; O Fire, bring to us by sacrifice the great Treasure.

इळामग्ने पुरुदंसं सनिं गोः शश्वत्तमं हवमानाय साध ।
स्यान्नः सूनुस्तनयो विजावाऽग्ने सा ते सुमतिभूत्वस्मे ॥ २३ ॥

23. O Fire, achieve at my call the Revealing Speech, the many-actioned, the lasting conquest of the Light. May there be for us a Son of our begetting pervading in his birth;⁸ O Fire, may there be created in us that true thinking of thine.

SUKTA 2

वैश्वानराय विषणामृतावृथे घृतं न पूतमग्नये जनामसि ।
द्विता होतारं मनुषश्च वाघतो विया रथं न कुलिशः समृण्वति ॥ १ ॥

1. We create an understanding like pure light for the Fire that makes the Truth to grow, for the universal godhead. The priests of the word fashion twofold by the thought of the human being⁹ this priest of the call, as the saw carves a chariot, and join him into a whole.

स रोचयज्जनुषा रोदसी उभे स मात्रोरभवत् पुत्र ईङ्ग्यः ।
हव्यवालग्निरजरश्चनोहितो द्वूलभो विश्वामतिथिर्विभावसुः ॥ २ ॥

2. He from his birth illuminated both the firmaments, he became

⁸ Or, himself a begetter;

⁹ Or, the human priests of the word by their thought

the desirable son of the Father and Mother. The ageless and inviolable Fire, firmly founded in bliss, with his riches of the Light, is the carrier of offering and the guest of the peoples.

कृत्वा दक्षस्य तरुषो विधर्मणि देवासो अग्निं जनयन्त चित्तिभिः ।
रुरुचानं भानुना ज्योतिषा महामत्यं न वाजं सनिष्ठन्तुप ब्रुवे ॥ ३ ॥

3. By the will, in the order and law of a delivering discernment, the gods brought the Fire into being by their perceptions of the Knowledge. In his greatness shining forth with his blazing light I invoke him as the Horse so that I may conquer the plenitude.

आ मन्दस्य सनिष्ठन्तो वरेण्यं वृणीमहे अह्यं वाजमृग्मयम् ।
रातिं भृगूणामुषिजं कविक्रतुमग्निं राजन्तं दिव्येन शोचिषा ॥ ४ ॥

4. To conquer the supreme bliss of the rapturous godhead, the undeviating plenitude full of the word of illumination, we accept the gift of the Flame-Seers,¹⁰ the Fire that aspires, the Seer-Will shining with heavenly light.

अग्निं सुम्नाय दधिरे पुरो जना वाजश्रवसमिह वृक्तबर्हिषः ।
यतस्तुचः सुरुचं विश्वदेव्यं रुद्रं यज्ञानां साधदिष्टिमपसाम् ॥ ५ ॥

5. Having gathered the sacred grass, stretching out the ladle of offering, men have set here in their front the Fire for the happiness, in his plenitude of inspiration, the Violent, the universal in godhead, the bright and beautiful, one who accomplishes the seekings of sacrifice of the doers of the works.

पावकशोचे तव हि क्षयं परि होतर्यज्ञेषु वृक्तबर्हिषो नरः ।
अग्ने द्रुव इच्छमानास आप्यमुपासते द्रविणं धेहि तेभ्यः ॥ ६ ॥

6. O Fire, O purifying light, O priest of the call, men in their sacrifices having gathered the sacred grass, desiring

¹⁰ Or, the Bhrigus,

the work, sit around thy house which we must obtain as ours; found for them the Treasure.

आ रोदसी अपृणदा स्वर्महज्जातं यदेनमपसो अधारयन् ।
सो अच्चराय परि णीयते कविरत्यो न वाजसातये चनोहितः ॥७॥

7. He filled the two firmaments, he filled the vast sun-world, when he was born and held by the doers of the work. He is led around for the pilgrim sacrifice, the Seer founded in the Bliss, as the Horse for the conquest of the plenitude.

नमस्यत हव्यदातिं स्वध्वरं द्वुवस्यत दम्यं जातवेदसम् ।
रथीऋतस्य बृहतो विचर्षणिरग्निर्देवानामभवत् पुरोहितः ॥८॥

8. Bow down to the giver of the offering, set to his work the perfect in the pilgrim-rite, the knower of all the births who dwells in the house: for he is the all-seeing charioteer of the vast Truth, the Fire has become the priest of the gods set in front.

तिस्रो यद्ग्रस्य समिधः परिज्ञमनोऽग्नेरपुनन्नुशिजो अमृत्यवः ।
तासामेकामदधुर्मत्ये भुजमु लोकमु द्वे उप जामिमीयतुः ॥९॥

9. Triple is the fuel of the mighty and pervading Fire purified by the aspiring immortals; one of three they have set in the mortal, the fuel of the enjoyment, two have gone to that companion world.

विशां कविं विशपतिं मानुषीरिषः सं सीमकृण्वन्त्स्वधितिं न तेजसे ।
स उद्गतो निवतो याति वेविषत् स गर्भमेषु भुवनेषु दीधरत् ॥१०॥

10. This seer and lord of creatures human impulsions have perfected everywhere like an axe for sharpness. He goes overrunning the high and the low places; he holds the child to be born in these worlds.

स जिन्वते जठरेषु प्रजश्चिवान् वृषा चित्रेषु नानदन्न सिंहः ।
वैश्वानरः पृथुपाजा अमर्त्यो वसु रक्ता दयमानो वि दाशुषे ॥११॥

11. The male of the herds has been born in different wombs and he stirs abroad like a roaring lion, the universal godhead, the immortal wide in his might bestowing the riches and the ecstasies on the offerer of sacrifice.

वैश्वानरः प्रत्यथा नाकमारुहद् दिवस्पृष्टं भन्दमानः सुमन्मभिः ।
स पूर्ववज्जनयञ्जन्तवे धनं समानमज्जं पर्येति जागृविः ॥१२॥

12. Universal godhead as in the ancient days has ascended glad by high thoughts to the firmament, to the back of heaven, even as of old he creates the riches for the creature born; wakeful he travels ever over the same field of movement.

ऋतावानं यज्ञियं विप्रमुक्थ्यमा यं दधे मातरिश्वा दिवि क्षयम् ।
तं चित्रयामं हरिकेशमीमहे सुदीतिमग्निं सुविताय नव्यसे ॥१३॥

13. The sacrificial Fire whose home is in heaven and who possesses the Truth, the illumined seer with his utterance of the word, whom life that grows in the mother has set here, him with his diverse journeying, his tawny hair of flame we desire, the deep-thinking Fire for a new and happy movement.

शुचिं न यामन्निषिरं स्वर्वद्वां केतुं दिवो रोचनस्थामुषबुधम् ।
अग्निं मूर्धानं दिवो अप्रतिष्कुतं तमीमहे नमसा वाजिनं वृहत् ॥१४॥

14. Pure-bright, rapid of impulsion in his journeying, Fire that looks upon the sun-world, heaven's ray of intuition, standing in the luminous planes, waking in the Dawn, Fire, head of heaven, whom no darkness can cover, him we desire with obeisance of surrender, the Fire of the plenitudes who is the Vast.

मन्द्रं होतारं शुचिमद्वयाविनं दमूनसमुक्थं विश्वचर्षणिम् ।
रथं न चित्रं वपुषाय दर्शतं मनुर्हितं सदमिद् राय ईमहे ॥३५॥

15. The pure and rapturous priest of the call in whom is no duality, the dweller in the house, the speaker of the word, the all-seeing, the visioned Fire set in the thinking human being who is like a many-hued chariot in his embodiment, him ever we desire and his riches.

SUKTA 3

वैश्वानराय पृथुपाजसे विपो रक्ता विधन्त धरुणेषु गातवे ।
अग्निर्हि देवाँ अमृतो दुवस्यत्यथा धर्माणि सनता न द्वद्वष्ट ॥१॥

1. For the universal godhead, wide in his might, his illuminations¹¹ create the ecstasies to make a path on the foundations of things: because the immortal Fire sets the gods to their work none can corrupt the eternal Laws.

अन्तर्दूतो रोदसी दस्म ईयते होता निषतो मनुषः पुरोहितः ।
क्षयं बृहन्तं परि भूषति द्युमिदेवभिरग्निरिषितो धियावसुः ॥२॥

2. He travels as the Messenger between earth and heaven, the doer of works, man's priest of the call, seated within him, the vicar set in his front; with his light he envelops the Vast Home, the Fire missioned by the gods, rich with the Thought.

केतुं यज्ञानां विदथस्य साधनं विप्रासो अग्नं महयन्त चित्तिभिः ।
अपांसि यस्मिन्नधि संदधुर्गिरस्तस्मिन्त्सुम्नानि यजमान आ चके ॥३॥

3. Ray of intuition of their sacrifices, effective means of the finding of knowledge, the illumined seers greatened the Fire by their awakenings to Wisdom; the Fire in whom his words have built into a harmony his works, in him the doer of sacrifice desires the things of his happiness.

¹¹ Or, the illumined Ones

पिता यज्ञानामसुरो विपश्चितां विमानमग्निर्वयुनं च वाघताम् ।
आ विवेश रोदसी भूरिवर्पसा पुरुप्रियो भन्दते धामभिः कविः ॥४॥

4. The Fire is the father of sacrifice, the Mighty Lord of the wise, he is the measure and the manifestation of knowledge for the priests of the word: he enters into earth and heaven with his manifold shape, many delightful things are in him, he is the seer who has gladness of all the planes.

चन्द्रमग्निं चन्द्ररथं हरिव्रतं वैश्वानरमप्सुषदं स्वर्विदम् ।
विगाहं तूर्णि तविषीभिरावृतं भूर्णि देवास इह सुश्रियं दधुः ॥५॥

5. The gods have set in this world in his beauty and glory the delightful Fire, with his chariot of delight, luminous in the way of his workings, the universal godhead, who is seated in the waters, who is the discoverer of the sun-world, who enters into the depths and is swift to cross beyond, who is wrapped in his mights, who bears in himself all things.

अग्निदेवेभिर्मनुषश्च जन्तुभिस्तन्वानो यज्ञं पुरुपेशसं धिया ।
रथीरन्तरीयते साधदिष्टभिर्जरो दमूना अभिशस्तिचातनः ॥६॥

6. The Fire with the gods and creatures born builds by the thought of man the sacrifice in its many forms, he moves between earth and heaven as their charioteer bearing them to the achievement of their desires; he is the swift in motion and he is a dweller in the house who drives off every assailant.

अग्ने जरस्व स्वपत्य आयुन्धूर्जा पिन्वस्व समिषो दिदीहि नः ।
वयांसि जिन्व बृहतश्च जागृत उशिग्देवानामसि सुक्रतुर्विपाम् ॥७॥

7. O Fire, come near to us in a life rich with offspring, nourish us with energy, illumine our impulsions, animate in us the expanding powers of the Vast, O wakeful flame; thou art the aspirant strong in will for the gods and the illumined seers.

विश्पतिं यद्गमतिथि नरः सदा यन्तारं धीनामुशिजं च वाघताम् ।
अध्वराणां चेतनं जातवेदसं प्र शंसन्ति नमसा ज्ञूतिभिर्वृद्धे ॥ ८ ॥

8. Men ever with obeisance, with swift urgings, give expression for their growth, to the knower of all births, the mighty one, the lord of the peoples, the Guest, the driver of our thoughts, the aspirant in those who speak the word, the wakener to consciousness in the pilgrim sacrifice.

विभावा देवः सुरणः परि क्षितीरग्निर्बभूव शवसा सुमद्धथः ।
तस्य ब्रतानि भूरिपोषिणो वयमुप भूषेम दम आ सुवृक्तिभिः ॥ ९ ॥

9. Fire, the wide-shining godhead, joyful in his happy chariot, has enveloped in his might our abodes;¹² with complete purification may we obey¹³ in the house the laws of work of this giver of our manifold increase.

वैश्वानर तव धामान्या चके येभिः स्वर्विदभवो विचक्षण ।
जात आपृणो भुवनानि रोदसी अग्ने ता विश्वा परिभूरसि त्मना ॥ १० ॥

10. O universal godhead, I desire thy lights¹⁴ by which thou comest, O all-seeing,¹⁵ the knower of the sun-world: born, thou hast filled the worlds and earth and heaven, thou art there enveloping them all with thyself, O Fire.

वैश्वानरस्य दंसनाभ्यो वृहदरिणादेकः स्वपस्यया कविः ।
उभा पितरा महयन्नजायताऽग्निर्द्यावापृथिवी भूरिरेतसा ॥ ११ ॥

11. Fire the One Seer by his seeking for perfect works¹⁶ released out of the actions¹⁷ of the universal godhead, the Vast: the

¹² Or, the worlds of our habitation;

¹³ Or, may we approach with reverence

¹⁴ Or, seats or planes

¹⁵ Or, clear-seeing,

¹⁶ Or, by his skill in works

¹⁷ Or, detached from the actions

Fire greatening both the parents, earth and heaven, was born from a mighty seed.¹⁸

SUKTA 4

समित्समित् सुमना बोध्यस्मे शुचाशुचा सुमतिं रासि वस्वः ।
आ देव देवान् यजथाय वक्षि सखा सखीन्त्सुमना यक्ष्यग्ने ॥१॥

1. Aflame and again aflame in us awake with thy truth of mind, with light upon light grant us right understanding from the shining One. A god, bring the gods for the sacrifice; right-minded, a friend do sacrifice to the friends, O Fire.

यं देवासस्त्रिरहन्नायजन्ते दिवेदिवे वरुणो मित्रो अग्निः ।
सेमं यज्ञं मधुमन्तं कृधी नस्तनूनपाद् घृतयोनिं विधन्तम् ॥२॥

2. O thou whom the gods, even Varuna, Mitra and the Fire, thrice in the day worship with sacrifice from day to day, O Son of the body, make this sacrifice of ours full of the sweetness, so that it may create the native seat of the light.

प्र दीधितिर्विश्ववारा जिगाति होतारमिळः प्रथमं यजच्यै ।
अच्छा नमोभिर्वृषभं वन्दच्यै स देवान् यक्षदिष्टिं यजीयान् ॥३॥

3. The Thought in which are all desirable things comes to this first and supreme priest of the call to offer our aspirations as a sacrifice, towards the mighty one to adore him with our prostrations; missioned, strong to sacrifice, may he do worship to the gods.

ऊर्ध्वो वां गातुरध्वरे अकार्यध्वा शोचींषि प्रस्थिता रजांसि ।
दिवो वा नाभा न्यसादि होता स्तूणीमहि देवव्यचा वि बहिः ॥४॥

4. In the pilgrim sacrifice a high path for you both has been made which departs to the high lustres, the mid-worlds;

¹⁸ Or, the Fire was born greatening both the parents, earth and heaven, with his mighty stream.

the priest of the call has taken his seat in the navel-centre of heaven. We spread wide the sacred grass, a space of wideness of the gods.

सप्त होत्राणि मनसा वृणाना इन्वन्तो विश्वं प्रति यन्मृतेन ।
नृपेशसो विदथेषु प्र जाता अभीमं यज्ञं वि चरन्त पूर्वीः ॥५॥

5. Accepting with the mind the seven invocations, taking possession of all that is by the Truth, they went towards their goal. Many powers born in the finding of knowledge and wearing the forms of gods move abroad to this sacrifice.

आ भन्दमाने उषसा उपाके उत स्मयेते तन्वा विरूपे ।
यथा नो मित्रो वरुणो जुजोषदिन्द्रो मरुत्वाँ उत वा महोभिः ॥६॥

6. May night and dawn differently formed in their body be joined close and smile upon us in their gladness, so that Mitra may take pleasure in us and Varuna or with his greatness Indra too with the life-gods.¹⁹

दैव्या होतारा प्रथमा न्यृज्जे सप्त पृक्षासः स्वधया मदन्ति ।
ऋतं शंसन्त ऋतमित् त आहुरनु व्रतं व्रतपा दीध्यानाः ॥७॥

7. I crown the two supreme Priests of the invocation. The seven pleasures take their rapture by the self-law of their nature; the Truth they express, the Truth only they speak, guardians of the law of its action according to that law they shine.

आ भारती भारतीभिः सजोषा इळा देवैर्मनुष्येभिरग्निः ।
सरस्वती सारस्वतेभिरवाक् तिस्रो देवीर्बहिरेदं सदन्तु ॥८॥

8. In unison may Bharati with her Muses of invocation, Illa with gods and men, and Fire, Saraswati with her powers of inspiration come down to us, the three goddesses sit upon this seat of sacrifice.

¹⁹ Or, may they so shine with their lights that Mitra may take pleasure in us and Varuna and Indra with the life-gods.

तन्नस्तुरीपमध पोषयितु देव त्वष्टर्वि रराणः स्यस्व ।
यतो वीरः कर्मण्यः सुदक्षो युक्तग्रावा जायते देवकामः ॥९॥

9. O divine maker of forms who hast the utter rapture, cast upon us that supreme transcendence, cause of our growth, from which is born in us the hero ever active with wise discernment, the seeker of the gods who sets to work the stone of the wine-pressing.

वनस्पतेऽव सृजोप देवानग्निर्हविः शमिता सूदयाति ।
सेद्गु होता सत्यतरो यजाति यथा देवानां जनिमानि वेद ॥१०॥

10. O tree, release thy yield to the gods; Fire the achiever of the work speeds the offering on its way. It is he who does worship as the priest of the call, the more true in his act because he knows the birth of the gods.

आ याह्यने समिधानो अर्वाङ्गिन्द्रेण देवैः सरथं तुरेभिः ।
बहिर्न आस्तामदितिः सुपुत्रा स्वाहा देवा अमृता मादयन्ताम् ॥११॥

11. Come down to us, O Fire, high-kindled, in one chariot with Indra and swiftly journeying gods; let Aditi, mother of mighty sons, sit on the sacred grass, let the gods, the immortals, take rapture in *svāhā*.

SUKTA 5

प्रत्यग्निरुषसश्चेकितानोऽबोधि विप्रः पदवीः कवीनाम् ।
पृथुपाजा देवयद्धिः समिद्धोऽप द्वारा तमसो वह्निरावः ॥१॥

1. The Fire is awake fronting the dawns; one illumined, he becomes aware of the paths of the seers: kindled into a wide might by the seekers of godhead, the upbearing flame opens the gates of the Darkness.

प्रेद्वग्निर्वावृधे स्तोमेभिर्गार्भिः स्तोतृणां नमस्य उक्थैः ।
पूर्वीर्त्मतस्य संदृशश्चकानः सं द्वतो अद्यौदुषसो विरोके ॥ २ ॥

2. Ever the Fire increases by the lauds, the words of those who hymn him by their utterances, one to be adored with prostrations; the Messenger who desires the many seeings of the Truth has shone out in the wide flaming of the Dawn.

अधाय्ग्निर्मानुषीषु विक्ष्वपां गर्भो मित्र ऋतेन साधन् ।
आ हर्यतो यजतः सान्वस्थादभूदु विप्रो हव्यो मतीनाम् ॥ ३ ॥

3. The Fire has been set in the human peoples, child of the Waters, the Friend who achieves by the Truth; luminous, a power for sacrifice,²⁰ he has risen to the summits; he has become the illumined seer who must be called by our thoughts.

मित्रो अग्निर्भवति यत् समिद्धो मित्रो होता वरुणो जातवेदाः ।
मित्रो अध्वर्युरिषिरो दमूना मित्रः सिन्धूनामुत पर्वतानाम् ॥ ४ ॥

4. The Fire when he has been kindled high becomes Mitra, the Friend—Mitra the priest of the call, Varuna, the knower of the births, Mitra, the friend, the priest of the pilgrim sacrifice, one rapid in his impulsions, the dweller in the house, the friend of the Rivers, the friend of the Mountains.

पाति प्रियं रिषो अग्रं पदं वेः पाति यद्यश्चरणं सूर्यस्य ।
पाति नाभा सप्तशीर्षाणमग्निः पाति देवानामुपमादमृष्टः ॥ ५ ॥

5. He guards from hurt the beloved²¹ summit-seat of the being, mighty, he guards the course²² of the Sun; Fire guards in the navel-centre the seven-headed thought, sublime, he guards the ecstasy of the gods.

²⁰ Or, beloved and adorable,

²¹ Or, delightful

²² Or, movement

ऋभुश्चक्र ईङ्गयं चारु नाम विश्वानि देवो वयुनानि विद्वान् ।
ससस्य चर्म घृतवत् पदं वेस्तदिदग्नी रक्षत्यप्रयुच्छन् ॥ ६ ॥

6. A skilful craftsman, a god knowing all the manifestations of knowledge, he forms the beautiful and desirable Name, the luminous seat of the being in the movement of the peace; that the Fire guards, not deviating from his work.

आ योनिमग्निर्घृतवन्तमस्थात् पृथुप्रगाणमुशन्तमुशानः ।
दीद्यानः शुचिर्घृष्वः पावकः पुनःपुनर्मातरा नव्यसी कः ॥ ७ ॥

7. Desiring it as it desired him, the Fire entered into that luminous native abode wide in its approach; shining forth, pure, purifying, sublime, again and again he makes new the father and the mother.

सद्यो जात ओषधीभिर्वक्षे यदी वर्धन्ति प्रस्वो घृतेन ।
आप इव प्रवता शुभ्माना उरुष्यदग्निः पित्रोरुपस्थे ॥ ८ ॥

8. Suddenly born he is carried by the growths of the earth when the mothers who bore him make him grow by the light. The Fire in the lap of the father and the mother is as one who defends the waters gliding happily²³ down a slope.

उद्ग षुतः समिधा यद्हो अद्यौद वर्षन् दिवो अधि नाभा पृथिव्याः ।
मित्रो अग्निरीड्यो मातरिश्वाऽऽ दूतो वक्षद् यजथाय देवान् ॥ ९ ॥

9. Praised by us mighty he shone with his high flaming in the largeness²⁴ of heaven, in the navel-centre of earth. The Fire is Mitra the friend, the desirable one, he is life growing in the mother;²⁵ may he as our messenger bring the gods for the sacrifice.

²³ Or, gliding brightly

²⁴ Or, height

²⁵ Or, life that breathes in the mother;

उदस्तमीत् समिधा नाकमृष्वोऽग्निर्भवन्नुत्तमो रोचनानाम् ।
यदी भृगुभ्यः परि मातरिश्वा गुहा सन्तं हव्यवाहं समीधे ॥१०॥

10. The Fire with his high flaming up-pillared, sublime, the firmament and became the highest of the luminous kingdoms,²⁶ when for the flame-seers life, that grows in the mother, kindled all around the carrier of the offerings who was hidden in the Secrecy.

इळामग्ने पुरुदंसं सनिं गोः शश्वत्तमं हवमानाय साध ।
स्यान्नः सूनुस्तनयो विजावाऽग्ने सा ते सुमतिर्भूत्वस्मे ॥११॥

11. O Fire, achieve at my call the Revealing Speech, the many-actioned, the lasting conquest of the Light. May there be for us a Son of our begetting pervading in his birth;²⁷ O Fire, may there be created in us that true thinking of thine.

SUKTA 6

प्र कारवो मनना वच्यमाना देवद्वीचीं नयत देवयन्तः ।
दक्षिणावाङ् वाजिनी प्राच्येति हविर्भरन्त्यग्नये घृताची ॥१॥

1. The Doers of the work, seekers of godhead, who find expression by the thought, lead it on turned godwards; full of the plenitude, luminous, carrying the Understanding, it journeys moving forwards, bringing the offering to the Fire.

आ रोदसी अपृणा जायमान उत प्र रिक्था अध नु प्रयज्यो ।
दिवश्चिदग्ने महिना पृथिव्या वच्यन्तां ते वह्यः सप्तजिह्वाः ॥२॥

2. Even in thy birth thou hast filled earth and heaven, and now thou hast exceeded them, O Flame that carriest on the sacrifice; by the greatness of earth and heaven may thy seven tongues find utterance, carriers of the word, O Fire.

²⁶ Or, highest of all lights,

²⁷ Or, himself a begetter;

द्यौश्च त्वा पृथिवी यज्ञियासो नि होतारं सादयन्ते दमाय ।
यदी विशो मानुषीर्देवयन्तीः प्रयस्वतीरीक्षते शुक्रमर्चिः ॥३॥

3. Heaven and earth and the lords of sacrifice set thee within
as the priest of the call for the house when human beings,
seeking godhead, having the delight, ask for the resplendent
Ray.

महान्त्सधस्ये ध्रुव आ निषत्तोऽन्तर्द्यावा माहिने हर्यमाणः ।
आस्के सपली अजरे अमृक्ते सवर्दुघे उरुगायस्य धेनू ॥४॥

4. Mighty, he is seated steadfast in the world of his session,
rejoicing between the two mightinesses of earth and heaven,
the united wives of one wide-moving lord, ageless and inviolate,
the two milch-cows giving their rich yield of milk.

ब्रता ते अग्ने महतो महानि तव क्रत्वा रोदसी आ ततन्ध ।
त्वं द्रूतो अभवो जायमानस्त्वं नेता वृषभ चर्षणीनाम् ॥५॥

5. Great art thou, O Fire, and great the law of thy workings,
by thy will thou hast built out earth and heaven; in thy very
birth thou becamest the Messenger, O mighty lord, and thou
the leader of men that see.

ऋतस्य वा केशिना योग्याभिवृतस्तुवा रोहिता धुरि धिष्व ।
अथा वह देवान् देव विश्वान्त्स्वध्वरा कृषुहि जातवेदः ॥६॥

6. Set under the yoke with the straps of the yoking the two
maned steeds of the Truth red of hue, dripping Light: thou,
O God, bring all the gods; O knower of the births, make
perfect the ways of the pilgrim sacrifice.

दिवश्चिदा ते रुचयन्त रोका उषो विभातीरनु भासि पूर्वीः ।
अपो यदग्न उशधग्वनेषु होतुर्मन्द्रस्य पनयन्त देवाः ॥७॥

7. From heaven itself thy lights blazed forth, thou shiniest in the

wake of many outshinings of the Dawn²⁸ when, O Fire, passionately burning²⁹ in the woods, the gods set the waters³⁰ to their work for the rapturous priest of the call.

उरौ वा ये अन्तरिक्षे मदन्ति दिवो वा ये रोचने सन्ति देवाः ।
ऊमा वा ये सुहवासो यजत्रा आयेमिरे रथ्यो अग्ने अश्वाः ॥८॥

8. The gods who take their rapture in the wide mid-world, or those who are in the luminous world of heaven, or those lords of sacrifice who are helpful and ready to the call, them thy chariot-horses have borne towards us.

ऐभिरग्ने सरथं याह्यर्वाङ् नानारथं वा विभवो ह्यश्वाः ।
पत्नीवतस्त्रिंशतं त्रींश्च देवाननुष्वधमा वह मादयस्व ॥९॥

9. Come down to us with them in one chariot or in many chariots for thy horses pervade and are everywhere; according to thy self-law bring here with their wives the gods thirty and three and give them to drink of the rapture.

स होता यस्य रोदसी चिदुर्वी यज्ञयज्ञमभि वृथे गृणीतः ।
प्राची अध्वरेव तस्थतुः सुमेके कृतावरी कृतजातस्य सत्ये ॥१०॥

10. He is the priest of the call for whose growing even wide earth and heaven speak the word at sacrifice on sacrifice; facing each other, fixed like two ends of the pilgrim-way, the Truth they keep in his truth who from the Truth was born.

इळामग्ने पुरुदंसं सनिं गोः शश्वत्तमं हवमानाय साध ।
स्यान्नः सनुस्तनयो विजावाङ्ग्ने सा ते सुमतिर्भूत्वस्मे ॥११॥

11. O Fire, achieve at my call the Revealing Speech, the many-actioned, the lasting conquest of the Light. May there be for

²⁸ Or, in the wake of many wide-shining dawns

²⁹ Or, flaming as dawn

³⁰ *Apas*, "work" would make a clearer sense; it would then mean "set in action the work of the rapturous priest of the call."

us a Son of our begetting pervading in his birth;³¹ O Fire, may there be created in us that true thinking of thine.

SUKTA 7

प्र य आरुः शितिपृष्ठस्य धासेरा मातरा विविशुः सप्त वाणीः ।
परिक्षिता पितरा सं चरेते प्र सर्वाते दीर्घमायुः प्रयक्षे ॥१॥

- They who have climbed from the dark-backed foundation have entered the Father and Mother, have entered into the seven voices. The Father and Mother who dwell encompassing all move abroad and go forward to give by sacrifice long-extended the Life.

दिवक्षसो धेनवो वृण्णो अश्वा देवीरा तस्थो मधुमद् वहन्तीः ।
ऋतस्य त्वा सदसि क्षेमयन्तं पर्येका चरति वर्तनिं गौः ॥२॥

- He reached the milch-cows that dwell in heaven, the Mares of the male, the divine rivers that carry in their flow the sweetness. The one Light moves on the way around thee when thou seekest thy dwelling in the house of the Truth.

आ सीमरोहत् सुयमा भवन्तीः पतिश्चकित्वान् रयिविद् रयीणाम् ।
प्र नीलपृष्ठो अतसस्य धासेस्ता अवासयत् पुरुधप्रतीकः ॥३॥

- On every side he ascends them and they become easy to control, he awakes to knowledge and is the lord and discoverer of the riches. Fire with his blue back and many diverse faces brings them from the ever-moving foundation to a settled dwelling.

महि त्वाष्ट्रमूर्जयन्तीरजुर्य स्तभूयमानं वहतो वहन्ति ।
व्यङ्गेभिर्द्वृतानः सधस्य एकामिव रोदसी आ विवेश ॥४॥

- The rivers energise and bear his mighty force of formation

³¹ Or, himself a begetter;

firmly fixed and undecaying; he shines out wide with his limbs in the world of his session and has entered earth and heaven as if they were one.

जानन्ति वृष्णो अरुषस्य शेवमुत ब्रह्मस्य शासने रणन्ति ।
दिवोरुचः सुरुचो रोचमाना इठा येषां गण्या माहिना गीः ॥५॥

5. They know the bliss of the ruddy-shining bull and they rejoice in the rule of the Great One; they are the lights of heaven luminously blazing and the Word of Revelation is their mighty common speech.

उतो पितृभ्यां प्रविदानु घोषं महो महद्भ्यामनयन्त शूषम् ।
उक्षा ह यत्र परि धानमक्तोरनु स्वं धाम जरितुर्ववक्ष ॥६॥

6. And great by the knowledge of the great father and mother they led his strength in the wake of its proclaiming call, where the bull bears his worshipper round the hold of night towards its own seat.

अध्वर्युभिः पञ्चभिः सप्त विप्राः प्रियं रक्षन्ते निहितं पदं वेः ।
प्राञ्चो मदन्त्युक्षणो अजुर्या देवा देवानामनु हि व्रता गुः ॥७॥

7. Seven illumined seers guard by the five priests of the pilgrim-rite the beloved³² seat of the being that is set within: moving forward the imperishable bulls take joy; the gods move according to the law of the workings of the gods.

दैव्या होतारा प्रथमा न्यृज्जे सप्त पृक्षासः स्वधया मदन्ति ।
ऋतं शंसन्त ऋतमित् त आहुरनु व्रतं व्रतपा दीध्यानाः ॥८॥

8. I crown the two supreme Priests of the invocation. The seven pleasures take their rapture by the self-law of their nature; the Truth they express, the Truth only they speak, guardians of the law of its action according to that law they shine.

³² Or, delightful

वृषायन्ते महे अत्याय पूर्वीवृषो चित्राय रशमयः सुयामाः ।
देव होतर्मन्दतरश्चिकित्वान् महो देवान् रोदसी एह वक्षि ॥९॥

9. The many Rays well governed in their course, grow passionate for the great Horse, the many-hued Bull. O divine priest of the call, rapturous, awaking to knowledge, bring here the great gods and earth and heaven.

पृक्षप्रयजो द्रविणः सुवाचः सुकेतव उषसो रेवद्वृषुः ।
उतो चिदग्ने महिना पृथिव्याः कृतं चिदेनः सं महे दशस्य ॥१०॥

10. The swift-running dawns have shone opulently bringing us our satisfactions, with their true speech, their rays of intuition. And do thou, O Fire, by the greatness of the earth cut away for the Vast even the sin that has been done.

इळामग्ने पुरुदंसं सनिं गोः शश्वत्तमं हवमानाय साध ।
स्यान्नः सूनुस्तनयो विजावाऽग्ने सा ते सुमतिभूत्वस्मे ॥११॥

11. O Fire, achieve at my call the Revealing Speech, the many-actioned, the lasting conquest of the Light. May there be for us a Son of our begetting pervading in his birth;³³ O Fire, may there be created in us that true thinking of thine.

SUKTA 9

सखायस्त्वा ववृमहे देवं मर्तास ऊतये ।
अपां नपातं सुभगं सुदीदितिं सुप्रतूर्तिमनेहसम् ॥१॥

1. Mortals we have chosen thee, a god, for our comrade to protect us, the Child of the Waters, full of happiness and light, victorious,³⁴ to whom no hurt can come.

³³ Or, himself a begetter;

³⁴ Or, strong to break through,

कायमानो वना त्वं यन्मातृरजगन्पः ।
न तत् ते अग्ने प्रमृषे निवर्तनं यद् द्वारे सन्निहाभवः ॥ २ ॥

2. When leaving the woods thou goest to thy mother waters,
that retreat turns not to oblivion of thee,³⁵ O Fire, for even
though thou art far thou hast come into being here.

अति तृष्णं ववक्षिथाऽथैव सुमना असि ।
प्रप्राञ्ये यन्ति पर्यन्य आसते येषां सम्ब्ये असि श्रितः ॥ ३ ॥

3. When thou hast carried beyond the rough ground³⁶ then
hast thou truth of mind: some depart,³⁷ others remain seated
around thee in whose comradeship thou art lodged.

ईयिवांसमति स्त्रिधः शश्वतीरति सश्चतः ।
अन्वीमविन्दन् निचिरासो अदृहोऽप्यु सिंहमिव श्रितम् ॥ ४ ॥

4. When he has passed beyond the forces that make to err,
beyond those that cling perpetual, the long-lasting who have
no hurt have followed and found him like a lion who has
taken refuge in the Waters.

ससृवांसमिव त्मनाऽग्निमित्या तिरोहितम् ।
ऐनं नयन्मातरिश्वा परावतो देवेभ्यो मथितं परि ॥ ५ ॥

5. As if one who of himself has sped away and utterly disappeared,
this Fire Life growing in the mother led from the
Beyond, churned out on every side, for the gods.

तं त्वा मर्ता अगृभ्णत देवेभ्यो हव्यवाहन ।
विश्वान् यद् यज्ञाँ अभिपासि मानुष तव क्रत्वा यविष्ट्य ॥ ६ ॥

6. This is thou upon whom mortals have seized for the gods, O
carrier of the offerings, because thou guardest all sacrifices
by thy will, O Flame in man, O most youthful god!

³⁵ Or, to thy destruction,

³⁶ Or, beyond thirst

³⁷ Or, move forward,

तद् भद्रं तव दंसना पाकाय चिच्छदयति ।
त्वां यदग्ने पशवः समासते समिद्धमपिशर्वे ॥७॥

7. O Fire, thy action covers That Bliss from the ignorant when the Animals sit together around thee, kindled against the night.

आ जुहोता स्वध्वरं शीरं पावकशोचिष्म् ।
आशुं द्वृतमजिरं प्रक्षमीड्यं श्रुष्टी देवं सपर्यत ॥८॥

8. Offer the oblation to the Fire intense with its purifying light, who does perfectly the pilgrim-rite, the swift messenger, with his rapid pace; wait soon upon the ancient and desirable godhead.

त्रीणि शता त्री सहस्राण्यग्निं त्रिंशच्च देवा नव चासपर्यन् ।
औक्षन् घृतैरस्तृणन् बर्हिरस्मा आदिद्वोतारं न्यसादयन्त ॥९॥

9. Gods three thousand and three hundred and thirty and nine waited upon the Fire. They anointed him with streams of the clarity, they spread for him the seat of sacrifice, and seated him within as priest of the call.

SUKTA 10

त्वामग्ने मनीषिणः सम्राजं चर्षणीनाम् ।
देवं मर्तास इन्धते समध्वरे ॥१॥

1. Thee, O Fire, men who have the thinking mind kindle in the sacrifice, an emperor over those who see, mortals set alight a godhead.

त्वां यज्ञेष्वृत्विजमग्ने होतारमीळते ।
गोपा ऋतस्य दीदिहि स्वे दमे ॥२॥

2. Thee, O Fire, they pray in the sacrifices as the sacrificant of the rite, the priest of the call; shine out the guardian of the Truth in thy own home.

स घा यस्ते ददाशति समिधा जातवेदसे ।
सो अग्ने धत्ते सुवीर्यं स पुष्यति ॥३॥

3. He who gives to thee with the fuel, to the knower of the births, holds the hero-energy, he ever grows.

स केतुरध्वराणामग्निर्देवेभिरा गमत् ।
अञ्जनः सप्त होतृभिर्हविष्मते ॥४॥

4. He is the ray of intuition in the sacrifices; may he, the Fire, come with the gods, anointed by the seven priests of the oblation, to him who holds the offerings.

प्र होत्रे पूर्व्यं वचोऽग्नये भरता बृहत् ।
विपां ज्योतीषि विभ्रते न वेदसे ॥५॥

5. Bring forward for the Fire, for the priest of the call, the vast and supreme³⁸ Word as for the creator, the bearer of the lights of the illuminations.

अग्निं वर्धन्तु नो गिरो यतो जायत उक्थ्यः ।
महे वाजाय द्रविणाय दर्शतः ॥६॥

6. May our words make the Fire to grow when he is born, the Fire that carries the utterance, visioned for the great plenitude, for the treasure.

अग्ने यजिष्ठो अध्वरे देवान् देवयते यज ।
होता मन्त्रो वि राजस्यति स्त्रिधः ॥७॥

7. O Fire, most strong to sacrifice in the pilgrim-rite, worship the gods for the seeker of the godhead; as the rapturous priest of the call thou shonest wide, beyond the forces that make us err.

³⁸ Or, ancient

स नः पावक दीदिहि द्युमदस्मे सुवीर्यम् ।
भवा स्तोतूभ्यो अन्तमः स्वस्तये ॥८॥

8. So, do thou, O purifying Flame, kindle in us the luminous hero-energy, to those who laud thee become most close for their weal.

तं त्वा विप्रा विपन्यवो जागृवांसः समिन्धते ।
हव्यवाहममर्त्यं सहोवृधम् ॥९॥

9. This is thou whom the illumined seers who have the light, ever wakeful, kindle, the immortal bearer of the offering, increaser of our force.

SUKTA 11

अग्निर्होता पुरोहितोऽध्वरस्य विचर्षणिः ।
स वेद यज्ञमानुषक् ॥१॥

1. Fire is our all-seeing priest of the call, our vicar set in front in the pilgrim-rite; he knows the uninterrupted course of the sacrifice.

स हव्यवाळमर्त्यं उशिगद्वतश्चनोहितः ।
अग्निर्धिया समृणवति ॥२॥

2. He is the immortal, the carrier of the offering, the aspirant, the messenger settled in the rapture; the Fire joins with our Thought.

अग्निर्धिया स चेतति केतुर्यज्ञस्य पूर्व्यः ।
अर्थं ह्यस्य तरणि ॥३॥

3. Agni wakes to knowledge companioning our Thought, he is the supreme³⁹ ray of intuition in the sacrifice; it is he who crosses through to man's goal.

³⁹ Or, ancient

अग्निं सूनुं सनश्रुतं सहसो जातवेदसम् ।
वह्निं देवा अकृष्णत ॥ ४ ॥

4. Fire, the Son of Force, who hears the things that are eternal,⁴⁰ knower of the births, the gods created as a carrier flame.

अदाभ्यः पुरएता विशामग्निर्मानुषीणाम् ।
तृणी रथः सदा नवः ॥ ५ ॥

5. The inviolable who goes in front of the human peoples, the Fire is a swift chariot that is ever new.

साह्वान् विश्वा अभियुजः क्रतुर्देवानाममृक्तः ।
अग्निस्तुविश्वस्तमः ॥ ६ ॥

6. Overpowering all assailants the Fire is the will of the gods never crushed, filled with the multitude of his inspirations.

अभि प्रयांसि वाहसा दाश्वाँ अश्वोति मर्त्यः ।
क्षयं पावकशोचिषः ॥ ७ ॥

7. By this bringer of delights the mortal who gives, reaches and possesses the house of the purifying light.

परि विश्वानि सुधिताऽग्नेरश्याम मन्महिः ।
विप्रासो जातवेदसः ॥ ८ ॥

8. May we by our thoughts possess around us well-established all the things of the Fire, may we be illumined seers who know all things born.⁴¹

आग्ने विश्वानि वार्या वाजेषु सनिषामहे ।
त्वे देवास एरिरे ॥ ९ ॥

9. O Fire, we shall win all desirable things in thy plenitudes, in thee have moved towards us the gods.

⁴⁰ Or, who has the inspired knowledge of things eternal,

⁴¹ Or, in whom knowledge is born.

SUKTA 12

इन्द्राग्नी आ गतं सुतं गीर्भिर्नभो वरेण्यम् ।
अस्य पातं धियेषिता ॥१॥

- O Indra, O Fire, come to the offering of the wine,— by our words your supreme desirable ether; drink of it you who are missioned by the Thought.

इन्द्राग्नी जरितुः सचा यज्ञो जिगाति चेतनः ।
अया पातमिमं सुतम् ॥२॥

- O Indra, O Fire, the conscious sacrifice journeys taking with it the worshipper: by this word drink of this offered wine.

इन्द्रमणिं कविच्छदा यज्ञस्य जूत्या वृणे ।
ता सोमस्येह तृम्पताम् ॥३॥

- I choose by the swift impulse of the sacrifice Indra and the Fire whose pleasure is in the seer; take here your content of the Soma wine.

तोशा वृत्रहणा हुवे सजित्वानापराजिता ।
इन्द्राग्नी वाजसातमा ॥४॥

- The smiters, the slayers of the coverer I call, the unvanquished, the companions in victory, Indra and the Fire, most strong to win the plenitudes.

प्र वामर्चन्त्युक्थिनो नीथाविदो जरितारः ।
इन्द्राग्नी इष आ वृणे ॥५॥

- Your adorers, speakers of the word, they who know the ways of the guidance hymn you: O Indra, O Fire, I accept your impulsions.

इन्द्राग्नी नवतिं पुरो दासपत्रीरधूनुतम् ।
साकमेकेन कर्मणा ॥ ६ ॥

6. Indra and Fire shook down the ninety cities possessed by the destroyers, together by one deed.

इन्द्राग्नी अपसस्पर्युप प्र यन्ति धीतयः ।
ऋतस्य पथ्या अनु ॥ ७ ॥

7. O Indra, O Fire, all around our work our thoughts go forward towards you along the paths of the Truth.

इन्द्राग्नी तविषाणि वां सधस्थानि प्रयांसि च ।
युवोरसूर्यं हितम् ॥ ८ ॥

8. O Indra, O Fire, your mighty ones are companions and your delights; in you is founded all swiftness in the work.

इन्द्राग्नी रोचना दिवः परि वाजेषु भूषयः ।
तद् वां चेति प्र वीर्यम् ॥ ९ ॥

9. O Indra, O Fire, you encompass the luminous kingdom of heaven in the plenitudes; it is your strength that is manifested there.⁴²

RISHABHA VAISHWAMITRA

SUKTA 13

प्र वो देवायाग्नये वर्हिष्टमर्चास्मै ।
गमद् देवेभिरा स नो यजिष्ठो वर्हिरा सदत् ॥ १ ॥

1. Sing out some mightiest hymn to this divine Fire; may he come to us with the gods and, strong to sacrifice, sit upon the sacred grass.

⁴² Or, that is your strength which wakes to knowledge.

ऋतावा यस्य रोदसी दक्षं सचन्त ऊतयः ।
हविष्मन्तस्तमीळते तं सनिष्यन्तोऽवसे ॥२॥

2. He is the possessor of the Truth to whom belong earth and heaven and their guardings accompany his mind of discernment; for him the givers of the oblation pray, for him for their protection when they would win the riches.

स यन्ता विप्र एषां स यज्ञानामथा हि षः ।
अग्निं तं वो दुवस्यत दाता यो वनिता मघम् ॥३॥

3. He is the illumined seer and regent of these sacrifices, he and always he; that Fire set to his work who shall win and give the plenitude.

स नः शर्माणि वीतयेऽग्निर्यच्छतु शन्तमा ।
यतो नः प्रुणवद् वसु दिवि क्षितिभ्यो अप्स्वा ॥४॥

4. May he, the Fire, give us all happy peace for our journeying there whence are rained the riches in heaven, from all the planes, in the Waters.

दीदिवांसमपूर्वं वस्वीभिरस्य धीतिभिः ।
ऋक्वाणो अग्निमिन्चते होतारं विश्पति विशाम् ॥५॥

5. Men who have the light kindle into his flaming, incomparable, by the opulent thinkings of this being, Fire the priest of the call, the lord of all the peoples.

उत नो ब्रह्मविष उक्थेषु देवहूतमः ।
शं नः शोचा मरुद्वधोऽग्ने सहस्रसातमः ॥६॥

6. Do thou, strong to call the gods, protect us in the Word, in all our utterances; increasing the life-powers, powerful to win the thousands, flame out blissfully for us, O Fire.

नू नो रास्व सहस्रवत् तोकवत् पुष्टिमद् वसु ।
द्युमदग्ने सुवीर्यं वर्षिष्ठमनुपक्षितम् ॥७॥

7. Now give us a thousandfold riches bringing the Son, bringing our growth, luminous, a hero-strength, abundant, inexhaustible.

SUKTA 14

आ होता मन्द्रो विदथान्यस्थात् सत्यो यज्वा कवितमः स वेधाः ।
विद्युद्ग्रथः सहस्रसुत्रो अग्निः शोचिष्केशः पृथिव्यां पाजो अश्रेत् ॥१॥

1. The rapturous priest of the call has reached the things of knowledge; he is the true, doer of sacrifice, a great seer, a creator. Fire the son of force, with his chariot of lightning and his hair of flaming light, has attained to a massive strength on the earth.

अयामि ते नमउक्तिं जुषस्व ऋतावस्तुभ्यं चेतते सहस्रः ।
विद्वाँ आ वक्षि विदुषो नि षत्सि मध्य आ बर्हिरुतये यजत्र ॥२॥

2. I come to thee, accept my word of obeisance, O master of Truth and strength, to thee who givest knowledge. As the knower, bring those who know and sit in the midst on the sacred grass, O lord of sacrifice.

द्रवतां त उषसा वाजयन्ती अग्ने वातस्य पथ्याभिरच्छ ।
यत् सीमञ्जन्ति पूर्व्यं हविर्भिरा वन्धुरेव तस्थतुर्दुरोणे ॥३॥

3. Let dawn and night full of their plenitude come running towards thee on paths of the wind, O Fire; when all around they anoint with oblation thee, the first and supreme, as if two sides of a chariot-front they enter into the gated house.

मित्रश्च तुभ्यं वरुणः सहस्रोऽग्ने विश्वे मरुतः सुम्नमर्चन् ।
यच्छेचिषा सहस्रसुत्रं तिष्ठ अभि क्षितीः प्रथयन्त्सूर्यो नृन् ॥४॥

4. To thee, O Forceful Fire, Mitra and Varuna and all the life-

powers chant a hymn of bliss, when with thy flame of light,
O son of Force, thou standest as the sun above the peoples
shining wide upon men.

वयं ते अद्य ररिमा हि काममुत्तानहस्ता नमसोपसद्य ।
यजिष्ठेन मनसा यक्षि देवानस्रेधता मन्मना विप्रो अग्ने ॥५॥

5. Today we give to thee thy desire, approaching thee with outstretched hands and with obeisance; worship the gods with a mind strong for sacrifice, an illumined seer, with thy unerring thought, O Fire.

त्वद्धि पुत्र सहसो वि पूर्वदिवस्य यन्त्यूतयो वि वाजाः ।
त्वं देहि सहस्रिणं रथ्य नोऽद्रोधेण वचसा सत्यमग्ने ॥६॥

6. For, from thee, O son of Force, go forth the many protections of the godhead, and his plenitudes. Do thou give us the thousandfold treasure, give by the word that betrays not the truth, O Fire.

तुभ्यं दक्ष कविक्रतो यानीमा देव मर्तासो अध्वरे अकर्म ।
त्वं विश्वस्य सुरथस्य बोधि सर्वं तदग्ने अमृत स्वदेह ॥७॥

7. O understanding mind, O seer-will! now that all these things we who are mortals have done for thee, O god, in the pilgrim-sacrifice, do thou awake to the whole well-charioted action and taste all That here, O immortal Fire.

UTKILA KATYA

SUKTA 15

वि पाजसा पृथुना शोशुचानो बाधस्व द्विषो रक्षसो अमीवाः ।
सुशर्मणो वृहतः शर्मणि स्यामग्नेरहं सुहवस्य प्रणीतौ ॥१॥

1. Flaming out in a wide mass of strength press back the hostile

powers that hurt and afflict. May I abide in the bliss of the all-blissful Vast, in the leading of the Fire who is swift to our call.

त्वं नो अस्या उषसो व्युष्टौ त्वं सूर उदिते बोधि गोपाः ।
जन्मेव नित्यं तनयं जुषस्व स्तोमं मे अग्ने तन्वा सुजात ॥२॥

2. Thou in the dawning of this dawn, thou when the Sun has arisen wake for us and be our protector. Take pleasure in the Son as if in an eternal birth. Accept my affirmation of thee, O Fire, perfectly born in thy body.

त्वं नृचक्षा वृषभानु पूर्वीः कृष्णास्वग्ने अरुषो वि भाहि ।
वसो नेषि च पर्षि चात्यंहः कृषी नो राय उशिजो यविष्ट ॥३॥

3. Thou art the male with the divine vision, in the wake of many dawns shine out luminous in the black nights, O Fire. O prince of the riches, lead and carry us over beyond the evil; O youthful god, make us aspirants for the treasure.

अषाढ्हो अग्ने वृषभो दिदीहि पुरो विश्वाः सौभगा संजिगीवान् ।
यज्ञस्य नेता प्रथमस्य पायोर्जातवेदो वृहतः सुप्रणीते ॥४॥

4. Shine out, O Fire, the invincible male, conquering all the cities, all the felicities; thou art the knower of the births, O perfect guide on the way, thou art the leader of the first, the vast all-protecting sacrifice.

अच्छिद्रा शर्म जरितः पुरुणि देवाँ अच्छा दीद्यानः सुमेधाः ।
रथो न सस्त्रिरभि वक्षि वाजमग्ने त्वं रोदसी नः सुमेके ॥५॥

5. O Fire of worship, towards homes of bliss many and without a gap, towards the gods shining out wise in understanding, like a conquering chariot bring the plenitude; O Fire, do thou make earth and heaven firmly established for us.

प्र पीपय वृषभ जिन्व वाजानग्ने त्वं रोदसी नः सुदोघे ।
देवेभिर्देव सुरुचा रुचानो मा नो मर्तस्य दुर्मतिः परि षाट् ॥ ६ ॥

6. O Bull of the herds, nourish us, move towards us with plenitudes, make heaven and earth good milk-cows for us, O Fire; O god, come with the gods glowing in the beauty of thy splendour. Let not the evil mind of the mortal besiege us.

इळामग्ने पुरुदंसं सनिं गोः शशवत्तमं हवमानाय साध ।
स्यान्नः सूनुस्तनयो विजावाऽग्ने सा ते सुमतिर्भूत्वस्मे ॥ ७ ॥

7. O Fire, achieve at my call the Revealing Speech, the many-actioned, the lasting conquest of the Light. May there be for us a Son of our begetting pervading in his birth;⁴³ O Fire, may there be created in us that true thinking of thine.

SUKTA 16

अयमग्निः सुवीर्यस्येशो महः सौभगस्य ।
राय ईशो स्वपत्यस्य गोमत ईशो वृत्रहथानाम् ॥ १ ॥

1. This is the Fire that is lord of the hero-energy and the great felicity, lord of the wealth of the shining herds, and of good progeny, who has power for the slaying of the coverers.

इमं नरो मरुतः सश्चता वृधं यस्मिन् रायः शेवृधासः ।
अभि ये सन्ति पृतनासु द्वद्यो विश्वाहा शत्रुमादभुः ॥ २ ॥

2. O gods, O life-powers, you cleave to this Fire of increase, in whom are the treasures that make our happiness to grow. Through all the days they have destroyed the enemies, the evil-thoughted who attack us in our battles.

⁴³ Or, himself a begetter;

स त्वं नो रायः शिशीहि मीढ्वो अग्ने सुवीर्यस्य ।
तुविद्युम् वर्षिष्ठस्य प्रजावतोऽनमीवस्य शुभ्मिणः ॥ ३ ॥

3. So do thou, O bounteous Fire, with thy many lights bestow on us the greatest and griefless wealth, full of the hero-strength, of progeny and of force.

चक्रियो विश्वा भुवनाभि सासहिश्चक्रिदेवेष्वा द्रुवः ।
आ देवेषु यतत आ सुवीर्य आ शंस उत नृणाम् ॥ ४ ॥

4. He who puts forth his force and is the doer in all the worlds, he who is the doer of works in the gods, labours in the gods and in all mighty and in the self-expression of men.

मा नो अग्नेऽमतये मावीरतायै रीरधः ।
मागोतायै सहस्रस्युत्र मा निदेऽप द्वेषांस्या कृधि ॥ ५ ॥

5. O Fire, deliver us not to unconsciousness, nor to the lack of the strength of the hero, nor to the absence of the Light,⁴⁴ nor to the bondage,⁴⁵ O son of force, put away from us the hostile powers.

शग्धि वाजस्य सुभग प्रजावतोऽग्ने बृहतो अध्वरे ।
सं राया भूयसा सृज मयोभुना तुविद्युम् यशस्वता ॥ ६ ॥

6. O felicitous Fire, have power in the pilgrim-rite for the fruitful plenitude, for the Vast; O thou of the many lights, join us to the large and glorious riches that create the Bliss.

⁴⁴ Literally, “the Cow”

⁴⁵ Or, to the Censurer,

KATA VAISHWAMITRA

SUKTA 17

समिध्यमानः प्रथमानु धर्मा समक्तुभिरज्यते विश्ववारः ।
शोचिष्केशो घृतनिर्णिक् पावकः सुयज्ञो अग्निर्यजथाय देवान् ॥१॥

- He is kindled and blazes out according to the first and supreme laws and is united with the Rays, he in whom are all desirable things, Fire with his tresses of flame and his raiment of light, the purifier, perfect in sacrifice, for sacrifice to the gods.

यथायजो होत्रमग्ने पृथिव्या यथा दिवो जातवेदश्चकित्वान् ।
एवानेन हविषा यक्षि देवान् मनुष्वद् यज्ञं प्रतिरेममद्य ॥२॥

- O Fire, as thou hast accomplished in sacrifice thy priesthood for the earth,⁴⁶ awaking to knowledge, O knower of the births, as thou hast accomplished it for heaven,⁴⁷ so with this oblation do sacrifice to the gods, carry yet further beyond the sacrifice with the human being today.

त्रीण्यायूंषि तव जातवेदस्तिस्त्र आजानीरुषसस्ते अग्ने ।
ताभिर्देवानामवो यक्षि विद्वानथा भव यजमानाय शं योः ॥३॥

- Three are thy lives, O knower of all things born, three are the dawns that are thy births, O Fire;⁴⁸ by them win through sacrifice the protection of the gods, thou as the knower become for the doer of sacrifice the peace and the movement.

अग्निं सुदीतिं सुदृशं गृणन्तो नमस्यामस्त्वेऽयं जातवेदः ।
त्वां दूतमरतिं हव्यवाहं देवा अकृणवन्नमृतस्य नाभिम् ॥४॥

⁴⁶ Or, as thou hast offered in sacrifice the oblation of the earth,

⁴⁷ Or, as thou hast offered the oblation of heaven,

⁴⁸ Or, that gave thee birth, O Fire;

4. We hymn thee by our words, O knower of all things born, as the Fire perfect in light, perfect in vision, the object of our prayer and offer to thee our obeisance; thee the gods made the Messenger, the Traveller, the carrier of offerings, the navel-centre of Immortality.

यस्त्वद्वोता पूर्वो अग्ने यजीयान् द्विता च सत्ता स्वधया च शंभुः ।
तस्यानु धर्म प्र यजा चिकित्वोऽथा नो धा अध्वरं देववीतौ ॥५॥

5. O Fire, he who was before thee and was the priest of the call and mighty for sacrifice and was dual entity and by the law of his nature the creator of the Bliss, by his law of action carry on the sacrifice, thou who art awake to knowledge, thou establish our pilgrim-rite in the advent of the gods.

SUKTA 18

भवा नो अग्ने सुमना उपेतौ सखेव सख्ये पितरेव साधुः ।
पुरुद्धृहो हि क्षितयो जनानां प्रति प्रतीचीर्दहतादरातीः ॥१॥

1. O Fire, in our coming to thee become right-minded accomplishing our aim as a friend to a friend, as father and mother to their child; for these worlds of beings born are full of harm: burn to ashes the hostile forces that come against us.

तपो अग्ने अन्तराँ अमित्रान् तपा शंस्मररुषः परस्य ।
तपो वसो चिकितानो अचित्तान् वि ते तिष्ठन्तामजरा अयासः ॥२॥

2. Wholly consume our inner foes, consume the self-expression of the enemy who would war against us, O lord of the riches, consume, conscious in knowledge, the powers of ignorance; let them range wide, thy ageless marching fires.

इधेनाग्न इच्छमानो घृतेन जुहोमि हव्यं तरसे बलाय ।
यावदीशे ब्रह्मणा वन्दमान इमां धियं शतसेयाय देवीम् ॥३॥

3. I desire and offer the oblation, O Fire, with the fuel, with

the pouring of the clarity, for speed, for strength. Until I have the mastery,⁴⁹ adoring with the Word I lift to thee for the conquest of the hundreds this thought divine.

उच्छ्रोचिषा सहसस्पुत्र स्तुतो वृहद् वयः शशमानेषु धेहि ।
रेवदग्ने विश्वामित्रेषु शं योर्मर्मज्ञमा ते तन्वं भूरि कृत्वः ॥४॥

4. Affirmed by our lauds rise up with thy flame of light, O son of force, found the vast expansion in us who labour at the work, found opulently in the Vishwamitras the peace and the movement, O Fire. We make bright many times over thy body.

कृधि रत्नं सुसनितर्धनानां स वेदग्ने भवसि यत् समिद्धः ।
स्तोतुर्दुरोणे सुभगस्य रेवत् सृपा करस्ता दधिष्ठे वपूंषि ॥५॥

5. O conqueror of the riches, create for us the ecstasy, such thou becomest when thou art high kindled. Opulently in the gated house of thy felicitous adorer thou upholdest thy gliding bodies streaming their radiance.

GATHIN KAUSHIKA

SUKTA 19

अग्निं होतारं प्र वृणे मियेषे गृत्सं कविं विश्वविदम्मूरम् ।
स नो यक्षद् देवताता यजीयान् राये वाजाय वनते मघानि ॥१॥

1. Fire I choose, the priest of the call in the sacrifice, the wise, the seer, the omniscient, free from ignorance: he shall do worship for us strong for sacrifice, in the formation of the godheads; for the wealth, for the plenitude he wins all kinds of amassings.

⁴⁹ Or, as long as I have the power,

प्र ते अग्ने हविष्मतीमियर्प्यच्छा सुद्युस्तां रातिनीं घृताचीम् ।
प्रदक्षिणिद् देवतातिमुराणः सं रातिभिर्वसुभिर्यज्ञमश्वेत् ॥२॥

2. O Fire, I mission towards thee a power of giving bearing my oblation, luminous, full of lustres. May he come to the sacrifice with his givings, with his treasures turning round it and widening the formation of the godheads.

स तेजीयसा मनसा त्वोत उत शिक्ष स्वपत्यस्य शिक्षोः ।
अग्ने रायो नृतमस्य प्रभूतौ भूयाम ते सुष्टुतयश्च वस्वः ॥३॥

3. So am I guarded by thee with a mind of shining energy; then do thou teach us of the riches that teach and that give us good children of our works. O Fire, may we become affirmers of thee by our lauds and rich in the power of a wealth most full of the strength of the gods.

भूरीणि हि त्वे दधिरे अनीकाङ्गने देवस्य यज्यवो जनासः ।
स आ वह देवतातिं यविष्ट शर्धो यदद्य दिव्यं यजासि ॥४॥

4. For, many flame-forces they have founded in thee, O Fire, men who have the will to sacrifice to the godhead. So, bring to us the formation of the godhead, O youthful god, when thou worshippes with sacrifice the divine host today.

यत् त्वा होतारमनजन् मियेधे निषादयन्तो यजथाय देवाः ।
स त्वं नो अग्नेऽवितेह बोध्यधि श्रवांसि धेहि नस्तनूषु ॥५॥

5. Since the gods seating thee for sacrifice have anointed thee as priest of the call in the rite, so do thou, O Fire, awake here as our protector and found thy inspirations in our bodies.

SUKTA 20

अग्निमुषसमश्वना दधिक्रां व्युष्टिषु हवते वह्निरुक्तैः ।
सुज्योतिषो नः शृण्वन्तु देवाः सज्जोषसो अध्वरं वावशानाः ॥१॥

1. Fire and dawn and the two riders of the horse and Dadhi-kravan the Carrier of the offerings calls by his words in the dawnings. May the gods full of the Light hear us; may they desire and accept with a common pleasure our sacrifice.

अग्ने त्री ते वाजिना त्री षधस्था तिस्रस्ते जिह्वा ऋतजात पूर्वीः ।
तिस्र उ ते तन्वो देववातास्तामिनः पाहि गिरो अप्रयुच्छन् ॥२॥

2. O Fire, three are thy steeds, three the worlds of thy session; three are thy tongues, O thou born from the Truth, they are many: three too are thy bodies desired by the gods, with them protect undeviatingly our words.

अग्ने भूरीणि तत्र जातवेदो देव स्वधावोऽमृतस्य नाम ।
याश्च माया मायिनां विश्वमिन्च त्वे पूर्वीः संदधुः पृष्ठबन्धो ॥३॥

3. Many are the names of thee, the Immortal, O Fire, O knower of the births, O god who bearest with thee the self-law of nature; all the manifold magic of the Lords of magic they have combined in thee, O all-ruler, O builder of the levels.

अग्निनर्ता भग इव क्षितीनां दैवीनां देव ऋतुपा ऋतावा ।
स वृत्रहा सनयो विश्ववेदाः पर्षद् विश्वाति द्वुरिता गृणन्तम् ॥४॥

4. The Fire is as the Enjoyer the leader of the divine worlds, he is the divine guardian of the fixed time of things, and with him is the Truth. He is the slayer of the Coverer, the eternal, the omniscient; may he carry one who hymns him with the word beyond all the difficulty and stumbling.

दधिक्रामग्निमुषसं च देवीं बृहस्पतिं सवितारं च देवम् ।
अश्विना मित्रावरुणा भगं च वसून् रुद्राँ आदित्याँ इह हुवे ॥५॥

5. Dadhikravan I call here, and the Fire, and the divine Dawn, Brihaspati and the god Savitri, the two riders of the horse, and Mitra and Varuna and Bhaga, the Vasus, the Rudras, the Adityas.

SUKTA 21

इमं नो यज्ञममृतेषु धेहीमा हव्या जातवेदो जुषस्व ।
स्तोकानामग्ने मेदसो घृतस्य होतः प्राशान प्रथमो निषद् ॥१॥

1. Found this our sacrifice in the immortals, accept these offerings, O knower of things born. O priest of the call sitting as first and supreme, taste of the drops of understanding⁵⁰ and light.

घृतवन्तः पावक ते स्तोकाः श्चोतन्ति मेदसः ।
स्वधर्मन् देववीतये श्रेष्ठं नो धेहि वार्यम् ॥२॥

2. O purifying Fire, full of light there drip for thee drops of understanding; give us the supreme desirable thing in thy self-law for the advent of the gods.

तुम्यं स्तोका घृतश्चुतोऽग्ने विप्राय सन्त्य ।
ऋषिः श्रेष्ठः समिध्यसे यज्ञस्य प्राविता भव ॥३॥

3. To thee, the illumined seer, come these drops dripping light, O right and true, O Fire; then thou blazest up as the supreme Rishi. Become the protector of our sacrifice.

तुम्यं श्चोतन्त्यध्रिगो शचीवः स्तोकासो अग्ने मेदसो घृतस्य ।
कविशस्तो बृहता भानुनागा हव्या जुषस्व मेधिर ॥४॥

4. On thee they fall, the drops of understanding and light,

⁵⁰ Or, strength

O unseizable⁵¹ Ray! O thou with whom is the puissance!
Declared by the seers of truth thou hast come with the vast
light. Accept our offerings, O wise intelligence!

ओजिष्ठं ते मध्यतो मेद उद्धृतं प्र ते वयं ददामहे ।
श्चोतन्ति ते वसो स्तोका अधि त्वचि प्रति तान् देवशो विहि ॥५॥

5. Most full of energy is the understanding held up in the middle for thee, this is our gift to thee. The drops drip over thy skin, O shining one,⁵² take them to thee in the way of the gods.

SUKTA 22

अयं सो अग्निर्यस्मिन्त्सोममिन्दः सुतं दधे जठरे वावशानः ।
सहस्रिणं वाजमत्यं न सति ससवान्त्सन्त्सूयसे जातवेदः ॥१॥

1. This is that Fire in which Indra, desiring the wine, held it in his belly; our laud rises to thee because thou hast won the thousandfold plenitude as if a steed of swiftness, O knower of all things born!

अग्ने यत् ते दिवि वर्चः पृथिव्यां यदोषधीष्पस्वा यजत्र ।
येनान्तरिक्षमुर्वाततन्थ त्वेषः स भानुर्णवो नृचक्षाः ॥२॥

2. O Fire, that splendour of thine which is in heaven and which is in the earth and its growths and its waters, O lord of sacrifice, by which thou hast extended the wide mid-air, it is a brilliant ocean of light in which is divine vision.

अग्ने दिवो अर्णमच्छा जिगास्यच्छा देवाँ ऊचिषे धिष्या ये ।
या रोचने परस्तात् सूर्यस्य याश्चावस्तादुपतिष्ठन्त आपः ॥३॥

3. O Fire, thou goest towards the ocean of the sky, thou

⁵¹ Or, uncontrollable

⁵² Or, Lord of riches,

speakest towards the gods who are masters of knowledge,⁵³
towards the waters that abide above in the luminous world
of the sun and the waters that are below.

पुरीष्यासो अग्नयः प्रावणेभिः सजोषसः ।
जुषन्तां यज्ञमदृहोऽनमीवा इषो महीः ॥४॥

4. Let thy Fires that dwell in the waters joining with those that descend the slopes accept the sacrifice, mighty impelling forces, in which there is no harm nor any distress.

इळामग्ने पुरुदंसं सनिं गोः शश्वत्तमं हवमानाय साध ।
स्यान्नः सूनुस्तनयो विजावाऽग्ने सा ते सुमतिर्भूत्वस्मे ॥५॥

5. O Fire, achieve at my call the Revealing Speech, the many-actioned, the lasting conquest of the Light. May there be for us a Son of our begetting pervading in his birth;⁵⁴ O Fire, may there be created in us that true thinking of thine.

DEVASHRAVAS AND DEVAVATA BHARATA

SUKTA 23

निर्मथितः सुधित आ सधस्थे युवा कविरध्वरस्य प्रणेता ।
जूर्यत्वग्निरजरो वनेष्वत्रा दधे अमृतं जातवेदाः ॥१॥

1. Churned out and well-established in the house of his session, the Youth, the Seer, the leader of the pilgrim-sacrifice, imperishable in the perishing woodlands, the Fire, the knower of all things born, has founded here immortality.

⁵³ Or, the gods of the planes (seats),

⁵⁴ Or, himself a begetter;

अमन्धिष्ठां भारता रेवदग्निं देवश्रवा देववातः सुदक्षम् ।
अग्ने वि पश्य बृहताभि रायेषां नो नेता भवतादनु द्वृन् ॥२॥

2. The sons of the Bringer, god-inspired and god-beloved, have churned out Fire of the perfect discernment. O Fire, look widely on us with the vast riches, become the leader of our impulsions throughout the days.

दश क्षिपः पूर्व्यं सीमजीजनन्त्सुजातं मातृषु प्रियम् ।
अग्निं स्तुहि दैववातं देवश्रवो यो जनानामसद् वर्णी ॥३॥

3. The ten who throw the Light have brought to birth all around the Ancient One well-born in his mothers and well-beloved. Affirm with lauds, O god-inspired, the Fire lit by the god-beloved, that he may be the controller of men.

नि त्वा दधे वर आ पृथिव्या इळायास्पदे सुदिनत्वे अद्वाम् ।
दृषद्वत्यां मानुष आपयायां सरस्वत्यां रेवदग्ने दिदीहि ॥४॥

4. One has set thee in the supreme seat of the earth, in the seat of the Word of Revelation, in the happy brightness of the days: O Fire, opulently shine in the human being, in the river of rocks, in the stream of flowing waters, in the stream of inspiration.⁵⁵

इळामग्ने पुरुदंसं सनिं गोः शश्वत्तमं हवमानाय साध ।
स्यान्नः सूनुस्तनयो विजावाऽग्ने सा ते सुमतिभृत्वस्मे ॥५॥

5. O Fire, achieve at my call the Revealing Speech, the many-actioned, the lasting conquest of the Light. May there be for us a Son of our begetting pervading in his birth;⁵⁶ O Fire, may there be created in us that true thinking of thine.

⁵⁵ Or, in the river Drishadwati, in Apaya and in Saraswati.

⁵⁶ Or, himself a begetter;

VISHWAMITRA GATHINA

SUKTA 24

अग्ने सहस्रं पृतना अभिमातीरपास्य ।
दुष्टरस्तरन्नरातीर्वर्चो धा यज्ञवाहसे ॥१॥

- O Fire, overpower the hostile armies, hurl them from us; hard to pierce, pierce the enemy-powers, found thy splendour in him who carries through the sacrifice.

अग्न इळा समिथ्यसे वीतिहोत्रो अमर्त्यः ।
जुषस्व सू नो अध्वरम् ॥२॥

- O Fire, thou art kindled by the word of revelation, the immortal who comes to the offering, accept wholly our pilgrim-sacrifice.

अग्ने द्युम्नेन जागृवे सहसः सूनवाहुत ।
एदं बहिः सदो मम ॥३॥

- O Fire, ever-wakeful with thy light, O son of force, invoked sit on my seat of sacrifice.

अग्ने विश्वेभिरग्निभिर्देवभिर्मह्या गिरः ।
यज्ञेषु य उ चायवः ॥४॥

- O Fire, with all thy divine fires greater in our sacrifices the word that has sight.

अग्ने दा दाशुषे रथ्यं वीरवन्तं परीणसम् ।
शिशीहि नः सूनुमतः ॥५॥

- O Fire, give to the giver a wealth full of hero-strengths enclosing us; intensify the force in us having with us the Son.

SUKTA 25

अग्ने दिवः सूरसि प्रचेतास्तना पृथिव्या उत विश्ववेदाः ।
ऋधर्गदेवाँ इह यजा चिकित्वः ॥१॥

- O Fire, thou art the son of heaven by the body of the earth, the conscious knower, even the omniscient. Sacrifice to each god in turn, O thou who knowest.

अग्निः सनोति वीर्याणि विद्वान्त्सनोति वाजममृताय भूषन् ।
स नो देवाँ एह वहा पुरुक्षो ॥२॥

- Fire the knower wins the hero-energies, wins the plenitudes striving towards immortality. So do thou bring to us the gods, O giver of the manifold plenty.

अग्निर्द्यावापृथिवी विश्वजन्ये आ भाति देवी अमृते अमूरः ।
क्षयन् वाजैः पुरुश्चन्द्रो नमोभिः ॥३॥

- The Fire, free from all ignorance, illumines Earth and Heaven the divine and immortal mothers of all things; possessing all he is manifold in his delights by his plenitudes and his dispensations.

अग्न इन्द्रश्च दाशुषो द्वुरोणे सुतावतो यज्ञमिहोप यातम् ।
अमर्धन्ता सोमपेयाय देवा ॥४॥

- O Fire, and O Indra, here in the gated house of the giver who offers the wine, come to the sacrifice, gods unforgetting, for the drinking of the Soma-wine.

अग्ने अपां समिध्यसे द्वुरोणे नित्यः सूनो सहसो जातवेदः ।
सधस्थानि मह्यमान ऊती ॥५॥

- O Fire, thou shinest high, eternal in the house of the waters, O son of force, O knower of all things born, greatening under thy guard the worlds of thy session.

SUKTA 26

४३
वैश्वानरं मनसाग्निं निचाय्या हविष्मन्तो अनुषत्यं स्वर्विदम् ।
सुदानुं देवं रथिरं वसूयवो गीर्भि रणं कुशिकासो हवामहे ॥ १ ॥

1. We the Kushikas, bringing the offering, desiring the Treasure, call by our words Fire, the universal godhead, discerning him by the mind, as the follower of the truth, who finds the world of the sun, the great giver, the divine and rapturous charioteer.

४४
तं शुभ्रमग्निमवसे हवामहे वैश्वानरं मातरिश्वानमुक्थ्यम् ।
वृहस्पतिं मनुषो देवतातये विप्रं श्रोतारमतिथिं रघुष्यदम् ॥ २ ॥

2. We call to guard us that brilliant Fire, the universal godhead, who grows in the mother, the master of the word, the speaker and the hearer, for the human being's forming of the godhead, the illumined Seer, the guest, the swift Traveller.

४५
अश्वो न क्रन्दञ्जनिभिः समिध्यते वैश्वानरः कुशिकेभिर्युग्युगो ।
स नो अग्निः सुवीर्यं स्वश्वं दधातु रत्नममृतेषु जागृतिः ॥ ३ ॥

3. As if the neighing Horse by the mothers, the universal godhead is kindled high by the Kushikas from generation to generation; may that Fire wakeful in the Immortals give to us the hero-strength and good power of the Horse and the ecstasy.

४६
प्र यन्तु वाजास्तविषीभिरग्नयः शुभे संमिश्लाः पृष्ठतीरयुक्षत ।
वृहदुक्षो मरुतो विश्ववेदसः प्र वेपयन्ति पर्वताँ अदाभ्याः ॥ ४ ॥

4. Let them go forward, the plenitudes with the strengths, thy Fires; they have yoked the dappled mares mingled together to reach bliss and make the mountains tremble, before them the life-gods, omniscient, pouring the Vast, inviolable.

अग्निश्चियो मरुतो विश्वकृष्टय आ त्वेषमुग्रमव ईमहे वयम् ।
ते स्वानिनो रुद्रिया वर्षनिर्णजः सिंहा न ह्येषक्रतवः सुदानवः ॥५॥

5. The life-gods with their glory of fire, universal in the peoples,⁵⁷ we desire as our brilliant and forceful guard; great givers are they, thunderous and terrible, clothed as if in raiment of rain, they are like roaring lions.

ब्रातंब्रातं गणंगणं सुशस्तिभिरनेर्भामं मरुतामोज ईमहे ।
पृष्ठदश्वासो अनवभ्राधसो गन्तारो यज्ञं विदधेषु धीराः ॥६॥

6. Host upon host, troop upon troop with their proclaimings of the Fire we desire the luminous energy of the life-gods; they come to the sacrifice driving their dappled horses, their achievement cannot be taken from them, they are wise thinkers in the discoveries of knowledge.

अग्निरस्मि जन्मना जातवेदा घृतं मे चक्षुरमृतं म आसन् ।
अर्कस्त्रिधातृ रजसो विमानोऽजस्रो घर्मो हविरस्मि नाम ॥७॥

7. I am the Fire, I am from my birth the knower of all things born; light is my eye, in my mouth is immortality; I am the triple Ray, I am the measurer of the mid-world, I am the unceasing illumination, I am the offering.

त्रिभिः पवित्रैरपुणोदर्थ्यर्कं हृदा मतिं ज्योतिरनु प्रजानन् ।
वर्षिष्ठं रत्नमकृत स्वधाभिरादिद् द्यावापृथिवी पर्यपश्यत् ॥८॥

8. He has purified through the three filters the Ray, following the thought with the heart he has reached knowledge of the light; he has created by the self-laws of his nature the supreme ecstasy and his sight has embraced earth and heaven.

⁵⁷ Or, dragging all with them,

शतधारमुत्समक्षीयमाणं विपश्चितं पितरं वक्त्वानाम् ।
मेलिं मदन्तं पित्रोरुपस्थे तं रोदसी पिपृतं सत्यवाचम् ॥९॥

9. He is a fountain with a hundred streams that is never exhausted, with his illumined consciousness he is the father and accorder of all that must be spoken; he takes his rapture in the lap of the Father and Mother and earth and heaven fill him full, the speaker of truth.

SUKTA 27

प्र वो वाजा अभिद्युवो हविष्मन्तो घृताच्या ।
देवाञ्जिगाति सुम्भुः ॥१॥

1. Forward move the luminous plenitudes bearing the offering with the ladle of light; the seeker of bliss travels to the gods.

ईळे अग्निं विपश्चितं गिरा यज्ञस्य साधनम् ।
श्रुष्टीवानं धितावानम् ॥२॥

2. I pray by the word the Fire with its illumined consciousness, who accomplishes the sacrifice, who has the inspiration, who has the firm holding.

अग्ने शकेम ते वयं यमं देवस्य वाजिनः ।
अति द्वेषांसि तरेम ॥३॥

3. O Fire, may we have the power to rein thee, the divine steed of swiftness, may we cross through the hostile forces.

समिध्यमानो अध्वरेऽग्निः पावक ईङ्यः ।
शोचिष्केशस्तमीमहे ॥४॥

4. Fire high-blazing in the rite of the path, Fire whom we must pray, who purifies, with his tresses of flame — him we desire.

पृथुपाजा अमर्त्यो धृतनिर्णिक् स्वाहुतः ।
अग्निर्यज्ञस्य हव्यवाट् ॥५॥

5. He is the immortal, wide in might, clothed in raiment of light; well-fed with the oblation, Fire is the carrier of the offerings in the sacrifice.

तं सबाधो यतस्तुच इत्था धिया यज्ञवन्तः ।
आ चक्रुरग्निमूतये ॥६॥

6. Assailed by the opponent the doers of sacrifice, setting to work the ladle, keeping the true thought, have made the Fire to guard them.

होता देवो अमर्त्यः पुरस्तादेति मायया ।
विदथानि प्रचोदयन् ॥७॥

7. The immortal, the godhead, the priest of the call goes in our front with his mage wisdom, impelling the discoveries of knowledge.

वाजी वाजेषु धीयतेऽध्वरेषु प्रणीयते ।
विप्रो यज्ञस्य साधनः ॥८॥

8. He is held as the Horse in the plenitudes, he is led along in the rites of the path, he is the illumined seer who accomplishes the sacrifice.

धिया चक्रे वरेण्यो भूतानां गर्भमा दधे ।
दक्षस्य पितरं तना ॥९॥

9. He was made by the Thought, one Supreme,⁵⁸ it held the child of beings, the father of the Understanding in the body.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Or, the desirable one;

⁵⁹ Or, the daughter of the Understanding set him in us the child born from creatures and their father.

नि त्वा दधे वरेण्यं दक्षस्येता सहस्रृत ।
अग्ने सुदीतिमुशिजम् ॥१०॥

10. The word of revelation born from the understanding sets thee within, one supreme, O thou forcefully created, O Fire, the perfect thinker and the aspirant.

अग्निं यन्तुरम्बुरमृतस्य योगे वनुषः ।
विप्रा वाजैः समिन्धते ॥११॥

11. Fire the swift in motion, who crosses through the waters, the illumined seers desiring to conquer in the union with the Truth set ablaze by the plenitudes.

ऊर्जो नपातमध्वरे दीदिवांसमुप द्यवि ।
अग्निमीळे कविक्रतुम् ॥१२॥

12. I pray Fire, the seer-will, the Son of Energy flaming out in heaven in the rite of the path.

ईळेन्यो नमस्यस्तिरस्तमांसि दर्शतः ।
समग्निरिध्यते वृषा ॥१३॥

13. One to be prayed, to be worshipped with obeisance, one who sees⁶⁰ through the darkness, the Fire is kindled high, the male of the herd.

वृषो अग्निः समिध्यतेऽश्वो न देववाहनः ।
तं हविष्मन्त ईळते ॥१४॥

14. Mighty and male the Fire is kindled high, he is like a horse that carries the gods, him they pray who bring the offerings.

⁶⁰ Or, is seen

वृषणं त्वा वयं वृषन् वृषणः समिधीमहि ।
अग्ने दीद्यतं बृहत् ॥३५॥

15. Thee, mighty and male, we male and mighty kindle high, O Bull of the herds, O Fire, and thou illuminest the Vast.

SUKTA 28

अग्ने जुषस्व नो हविः पुरोलाशं जातवेदः ।
प्रातःसावे धियावसो ॥१॥

1. O Fire, accept our offering, the frontal oblation in the dawn pressing of the wine, O knower of the births, O rich in thought.

पुरोला अग्ने पचतस्तुभ्यं वा धा परिष्कृतः ।
तं जुषस्व यविष्ट्य ॥२॥

2. O Fire, for thee is the frontal offering prepared and dressed, that accept, O youthful god.

अग्ने वीहि पुरोलाशमाहुतं तिरोअह्यम् ।
सहसः सूनुरस्यध्वरे हितः ॥३॥

3. O Fire, come to⁶¹ the frontal offering that is cast to thee with the disappearance of day; O son of force, thou art established in the rite of the path.

माध्यंदिने सवने जातवेदः पुरोलाशमिह कवे जुषस्व ।
अग्ने यद्ग्रस्य तव भागधेयं न प्र मिनन्ति विदथेषु धीराः ॥४॥

4. In the noonday pressing of the wine, O seer, knower of all things born, accept the frontal offering. O Fire, the wise thinkers in their discoveries of knowledge impair not thy portion, who art the mighty one.

⁶¹ Or, devour

अग्ने तृतीये सवने हि कानिषः पुरोळाशं सहसः सूनवाहुतम् ।
अथा देवेष्वध्वरं विपन्न्यया धा रत्नवन्तममृतेषु जागृविम् ॥५॥

5. O Fire, in the third pressing also thou hast desire of the frontal offering cast to thee, O son of force; do thou by the illumination establish in the gods the pilgrim sacrifice full of ecstasy and wakeful in the immortals.

अग्ने वृथान आहुतिं पुरोळाशं जातवेदः ।
जुषस्व तिरोऽह्न्यम् ॥६॥

6. O Fire, increasing accept the frontal offering, the oblation cast with the disappearance of the day, O knower of all things born.

SUKTA 29

अस्तीदमधिमन्थनमस्ति प्रजननं कृतम् ।
एतां विश्पलीमा भराऽग्निं मन्थाम पूर्वथा ॥१॥

1. This is the churning out, this the bringing to birth that is done; bring the Queen of the peoples, let us churn out the Fire as of old.

अरण्योर्निहितो जातवेदा गर्भ इव सुधितो गर्भिणीषु ।
दिवेदिव ईड्यो जागृवद्विर्हविष्मद्विर्मनुष्येभिरग्निः ॥२॥

2. The knower of all births is set in the two tinders, like an unborn child well-placed in the womb of the mothers, Fire who is to be prayed from day to day by men wakeful and bearing their offering.

उत्तानायामव भरा चिकित्वान्त्सद्यः प्रवीता वृषणं जजान ।
अरुषस्तूपो रुशदस्य पाज इळायास्पुत्रो वयुनेऽजनिष्ट ॥३॥

3. Waking to knowledge bring him down in her lying supine; at once penetrated she has brought to birth the male of the

herd: a ruddy pile of strength his might shines forth, the son of the Word of revelation is born in the manifestation of knowledge.

इलायास्त्वा पदे वयं नाभा पृथिव्या अधि ।
जातवेदो नि धीमह्यग्ने हव्याय वोळ्हवे ॥४॥

4. We in the seat of the Word of revelation, on the navel-centre of the earth, set thee within, O knower of all things born, for the carrying of the oblations.

मन्थता नरः कविमद्वयन्तं प्रचेतसममृतं सुप्रतीकम् ।
यज्ञस्य केतुं प्रथमं पुरस्तादर्जिनं नरो जनयता सुशेवम् ॥५॥

5. Churn out, O men, the seer who creates no duality, the immortal thinker and knower with his fair front; Fire who is the supreme intuition in the sacrifice, the blissful one, bring to birth in your front, O men.

यदी मन्थन्ति बाहुभिर्वि रोचतेऽश्वो न वाज्यरुषो वनेष्वा ।
चित्रो न यामनश्चिवनोरनिवृतः परि वृणक्त्यश्मनस्तृणा दहन् ॥६॥

6. When they churn him out by the strength of their arms wide he shines, he is like a horse of swiftness, he is luminous in the woodlands; he is like a richly hued chariot in the journeying of the two riders, none can impede him; burning around the rocks he tears the grasses.

जातो अग्नी रोचते चेकितानो वाजी विप्रः कविशस्तः सुदानुः ।
यं देवास ईङ्गयं विश्वविदं हव्यवाहमदधुरध्वरेषु ॥७॥

7. Agni when he is born shines waking to knowledge, he is the Horse, the illumined who is declared by the seers, the great giver, whom the gods have set in the pilgrim sacrifices as the carrier of the offerings, the one to be prayed, the omniscient.

सीद होतः स्व उ लोके चिकित्वान्त्सादया यज्ञं सुकृतस्य योनौ ।
देवावीर्देवान् हविषा यजास्यग्ने बृहद् यजमाने वयो धाः ॥८॥

8. Sit, O priest of the call, in that world which is thy own waking to knowledge, accomplish the sacrifice in the native seat of deeds well done; manifesting the godheads⁶² thou sacrificest to the gods with the offering,— O Fire, found in the sacrificer the vast expansion.

कृणोत धूमं वृषणं सखायोऽस्रेभन्त इतन वाजमच्छ ।
अयमग्निः पृतनाषाट् सुवीरो येन देवासो असहन्त दस्यून् ॥९॥

9. O Friends, create his mighty smoke, go with unerring steps towards the plenitude; this is the Fire conqueror in the battle, by whom the gods overcame the destroyers.

अयं ते योनिर्घृत्वियो यतो जातो अरोचथाः ।
तं जानन्नग्न आ सीदाऽथा नो वर्धया गिरः ॥१०॥

10. This is thy native seat where is the order of the Truth whence born thou shonest forth, know it and take there thy session, then give increase to our words.

तनूनपादुच्यते गर्भ आसुरो नराशंसो भवति यद् विजायते ।
मातरिश्वा यदमिमीत मातरि वातस्य सर्गो अभवत् सरीमणि ॥११॥

11. A mighty child in the womb he is called the son of the body; when he is born he becomes one who voices the godhead: when as life who grows in the mother he has been fashioned in the mother he becomes a gallop of wind in his movement.

सुनिर्मथा निर्मथितः सुनिधा निहितः कविः ।
अग्ने स्वधरा कृणु देवान् देवयते यज ॥१२॥

12. Churned out with the good churning, the seer set within with a perfect placing,— O Fire, make easy the paths of the sacrifice, offer sacrifice to the gods for the seeker of godhead.

⁶² Or, bringing the gods

अजीजनन्नमृतं मत्यासोऽस्रेमाणं तरणं वीक्षुजम्भम् ।
दश स्वसारो अग्नुवः समीचीः पुमांसं जातमभि सं रमन्ते ॥१३॥

13. Mortals have brought to birth the Immortal, Fire with his strong tusk, the unfailing deliverer.⁶³ The ten sisters who move as companions passion over the male that is born.

प्र सप्तहोता सनकादरोचत मातुरुपस्थे यदशोचद्वधनि ।
न नि मिषति सुरणो दिवेदिवे यदसुरस्य जठरादजायत ॥१४॥

14. He shone out from the eternal with his seven priests of the call when he blazed on the lap of the mother, in her bosom of plenty. He is full of joy and closes not his eyes from day to day, once he has been born from the belly of the Almighty One.

अमित्रायुधो मरुतामिव प्रयाः प्रथमजा ब्रह्मणो विश्वमिद् विदुः ।
द्युम्नवद् ब्रह्म कुशिकास एरिर एकएको दमे अग्निं समीधिरे ॥१५॥

15. Fighting down the unfriendly powers like the marching hosts of the life-gods the first-born of the Word come to know all that is: the Kushikas have sent forth the luminous word, one by one they have kindled the Fire in the house.

यदद्य त्वा प्रयति यज्ञे अस्मिन् होतश्चकित्वोऽवृणीमहीह ।
ध्रुवमया ध्रुवमुताशमिष्ठाः प्रजानन् विद्वाँ उप याहि सोमम् ॥१६॥

16. Because here today in the going forward of this sacrifice we have chosen thee, O Priest of the call, O thou who wakest to knowledge, thou hast moved to the Permanent, thou hast achieved by thy toil the Permanent; knowing, come as one possessed of knowledge to the Soma-wine.

⁶³ Or, one who unfailing crosses through all.

Mandala Four

VAMADEVA GAUTAMA

SUKTA 1

त्वां ह्यग्ने सदमित् समन्यवो देवासो देवमरतिं न्येरिर
इति क्रत्वा न्येरिरे ।
अमर्त्यं यजत मर्त्येष्वा देवमादेवं जनत प्रचेतसं
विश्वमादेवं जनत प्रचेतसम् ॥१॥

1. Thee, O Fire, ever with one passion the gods have sent inwards, the divine Traveller;¹ with the will they sent thee in; O master of sacrifice, they brought to birth the immortal in mortals, the divine who brings in the divinity, the conscious thinker, they brought to birth the universal who brings in the divinity, the conscious thinker.

स भ्रातरं वरुणमग्न आ ववृत्स्व देवाँ अच्छा सुमती यज्ञवनसं
ज्येष्ठं यज्ञवनसम् ।
ऋतावानमादित्यं चर्षणीधृतं राजानं चर्षणीधृतम् ॥२॥

2. Then do thou, O Fire, turn towards the godheads with the right thinking Varuna, thy brother who delights in the sacrifice, the eldest who delights in the sacrifice,—even him who keeps the truth, son of the infinite Mother who upholds seeing-men, the king who upholds seeing-men.

¹ Or, worker. This root seems to have indicated originally any strong motion, action or work.

सखे सखायमभ्या ववृत्स्वाशुं न चक्रं रथेव रंह्यास्मभ्यं दस्म रंह्या ।
अग्ने मृळीकं वरुणे सचा विदो मरुत्सु विश्वभानुषु ।
तोकाय तुजे शुशुचान शं कृध्यस्मभ्यं दस्म शं कृधि ॥३॥

3. O Friend, turn towards and to us in his motion the Friend as two rapid chariot-horses turn a swift wheel, for us, O strong worker, like galloping horses; O Fire, mayst thou be with us and find for us bliss in Varuna and in the Life-powers who carry the universal light; for the begetting of the Son, O thou flaming into lustre, create for us peace, for us, O strong worker, create the peace.

त्वं नो अग्ने वरुणस्य विद्वान् देवस्य हेळोऽव यासिसीष्टाः ।
यजिष्ठो वद्वितमः शोशुचानो विश्वा द्वेषांसि प्र मुमुग्ध्यस्मत् ॥४॥

4. Do thou, O Fire, for thou knowest, labour away from us the wrath of divine Varuna; flaming into lustre, strongest to sacrifice, mightiest to bear, unloose from us all hostile powers.

स त्वं नो अग्नेऽवमो भवोती नेदिष्ठो अस्या उषसो व्युष्टौ ।
अव यद्यन्व नो वरुणं रराणो वीहि मृळीकं सुहवो न एधि ॥५॥

5. Do thou, O Fire, be most close to us with thy protection, be most near in the dawning of this dawn: rejoicing in us put away from us Varuna² by the sacrifice; reach the bliss, be ready to our call.

अस्य श्रेष्ठा सुभगस्य संदृग् देवस्य चित्रतमा मर्त्येषु ।
शुचि घृतं न तप्तमद्यायाः स्पार्हा देवस्य मंहनेव धेनोः ॥६॥

6. Most glorious is the vision of this Godhead, most richly bright in mortals; as if the pure and warm butter of the

² I.e. the pressure of the wrath of Varuna against our impurity.

The prayer to put Varuna away sounds strange. But if the inner sense is grasped it becomes cogent and apposite. The sacrificer — the seeker — is praying Agni to be close to him, to protect him. He is aspiring that the Divine Fire should be his protector when the Dawn of the higher light comes to his soul, Varuna being the Lord of wisdom.

milch-cow that cannot be slain, her desirable gift is the vision of the Godhead.³

त्रिरस्य ता परमा सन्ति सत्या स्पाहा देवस्य जनिमान्यग्नेः ।
अनन्ते अन्तः परिवीत आगाच्छुचिः शुक्रो अर्यो रोरुचानः ॥७॥

7. Three are they, his supreme truths, the desirable births of the divine Fire; within in the infinite he is spread wide everywhere and has come to us pure and brilliant and noble, shining in his beauty.⁴

स दूतो विश्वेदभि वष्टि सदा होता हिरण्यरथो रंसुजिह्वः ।
रोहिदश्वो वपुष्यो विभावा सदा रणः पितुमतीव संसत् ॥८॥

8. He is a messenger, a priest of the call, whose yearning is towards all the planes, golden is his chariot, red are his horses, ecstatic his tongue of flame, beautiful his body,⁵ wide his lustre, ever is he rapturous like a banquet hall full of the wine.⁶

स चेतयन्मनुषो यज्ञबन्धुः प्र तं मद्या रशनया नयन्ति ।
स क्षेत्यस्य द्व्यासु साधन् देवो मर्तस्य सधनित्वमाप ॥९॥

9. He makes men conscious of the knowledge and is the friend of their sacrifice; they lead him on with a mighty cord; he

³ Here the connection between Fire and Ray-Cow and Aditi comes out; so also the psychological nature of the clarified butter and its connection with the vision of the Sun.

Who is this cow that “cannot be slain” if not the cow *aditi*—the Infinite Mother—the supreme Divine Consciousness creative of the cosmos, of the gods and the demons, of men and of all that is?

⁴ These three births of Fire are not, as usually explained, its three physical forms—which even if accepted shows the Vedic people far from the mere primitive barbarian—his birth is connected with Truth—his births are “within in the Infinite”—*sac-cidānanda*. These are the three levels of the earthly evolution on each of which this Divine Fire takes his birth, *parivitah*, on the plane of matter and life and mind.

⁵ Or, great is his body,

⁶ Or, well-stored with food.

dwells in the gated house of the being accomplishing his aims; divine, he accepts companionship in the riches of the mortal.

स तू नो अग्निर्नयतु प्रजानन्नच्छा रत्नं देवभक्तं यदस्य ।
धिया यद् विश्वे अमृता अकृणवन् द्यौष्पिता जनिता सत्यमुक्षन् ॥१०॥

10. Let this Fire taking knowledge of all things lead us towards the ecstasy that is enjoyed by the Gods, which all the immortals created by the thought and Father Heaven was its begetter raining the truth.⁷

स जायत प्रथमः पस्त्यासु महो बुधे रजसो अस्य योनौ ।
अपादशीर्षा गुहमानो अन्ताऽयोयुवानो वृषभस्य नीळे ॥११॥

11. He was born first and supreme in the Rivers,⁸ in the foundation of the vast mid-world, in his native seat; without head, without feet, concealing his two ends he joins them in the lair of the Bull.⁹

प्र शर्द आर्ति प्रथमं विपन्याँ कृतस्य योना वृषभस्य नीळे ।
स्पाहो युवा वपुष्यो विभावा सप्त प्रियासोऽजनयन्त वृष्णे ॥१२॥

12. He came forth with a vibrancy of light, the first and supreme force, in the native seat of Truth, in the lair of the Bull, desirable and young and beautiful of body¹⁰ and wide in lustre; the seven Beloved brought him to birth for the Bull.¹¹

⁷ This joy — *ratna* — in its origin is created by the immortals with the help of their “thought” — and it was the raining down upon the lower hemisphere of the Truth that gave birth to the joy here.

⁸ Or, in our habitations,

⁹ The same Fire joins his two extremities — of the superconscious and the spirit and inconscient matter — in the lair of the Bull. This is the Bull which represents the Purusha. The lair of the Bull is the original status of Him called at other places, *viṣṇoh paramāṁ padam, sadā paśyanti sūrayah*.

¹⁰ Or, great in body

¹¹ Or, brought to birth the Bull (but the case is the dative).

अस्माकमत्र पितरो मनुष्या अभि प्र सेदुर्कृतमाशुषाणाः ।
अश्मवजाः सुदुधा वव्रे अन्तरुदुधा आजन्मुषसो हुवानाः ॥१३॥

13. Here our human fathers went forward on their way towards the Truth desiring to possess it; they drove upwards the luminous ones, the good milk-cows in their stone (rocky) pen within the hiding cave, calling to the Dawns.¹²

ते मर्मूजत दद्वांसो अद्विं तदेषामन्ये अभितो वि वोचन् ।
पश्वयन्नासो अभि कारमर्चन् विदन्त ज्योतिश्चकृपन्त धीभिः ॥१४॥

14. They rent the hill, they made themselves bright and pure, others around them proclaimed that work of theirs; drivers of the herd,¹³ they sang the chant of illumination to the Doer of the work; they found the Light, they shone with their thoughts.¹⁴

ते गव्यता मनसा दृध्रमुब्धं गा येमानं परि षन्तमद्विम् ।
दृच्छं नरो वचसा दैव्येन व्रजं गोमन्तमुशिजो वि वन्नः ॥१५॥

15. By a mind seeking the Rays they rent the firm massed hill which encircled and repressed the shining herds, men desiring laid open the strong pen full of the Ray-Cows by the divine word.

ते मन्वत प्रथमं नाम धेनोस्त्रिः सप्त मातुः परमाणि विन्दन् ।
तज्जानतीरभ्यनूषत ब्रा आविर्भुवदरुणीर्यशसा गोः ॥१६॥

16. They meditated on¹⁵ the first name of the Milk-cow, they discovered the thrice seven supreme planes¹⁶ of the Mother; That knowing the herds lowed towards it, the ruddy Dawn became manifest by the glory of the Cow of Light.

¹² This Rik makes the connection between the hidden cows and the Truth, also the Cows and the Dawn.

¹³ Literally, having the control over the animal or animals, or, the “instruments of control”.

¹⁴ Or, they did work by their thoughts. This is Sayana’s interpretation.

¹⁵ Or, held in their thought

¹⁶ Or, names

नेशत् तमो दुधितं रोचत व्यौरुद् देव्या उषसो भानुर्त ।
आ सूर्यो बृहतस्तिष्ठदज्ञाँ क्रजु मर्तेषु वृजिना च पश्यन् ॥१७॥

17. The darkness was wounded and vanished, Heaven shone out, up arose the light of the divine Dawn, the Sun entered into the fields of the Vast, looking on the straight and crooked things in mortals.

आदित् पश्चा बुबुधाना व्यख्यन्नादिद् रत्नं धारयन्त द्युभक्तम् ।
विश्वे विश्वासु दुर्यासु देवा मित्र धिये वरुण सत्यमस्तु ॥१८॥

18. Then, indeed, they awoke and saw all behind and wide around them;¹⁷ then, indeed, they held the ecstasy that is enjoyed in heaven. In all gated houses were all the gods. O Mitra, O Varuna, let there be the Truth for the Thought.

अच्छा वोचेय शुशुचानमग्निं होतारं विश्वभरसं यजिष्ठम् ।
शुच्यूधो अतृणन्न गवामन्धो न पूतं परिषिक्तमंशोः ॥१९॥

19. May my speech be towards the upblazing Fire, the priest of the call, the bringer of all things, strong to sacrifice. It is as if one drank from the pure udder of the cows of light, the purified juice of the Plant of Delight poured on all sides.

विश्वेषामदितिर्यज्ञियानां विश्वेषामतिथिर्मनुषाणाम् ।
अग्निर्देवानामव आवृणानः सुमृढीको भवतु जातवेदाः ॥२०॥

20. The indivisibility of all the gods, the guest of all human beings, may the Fire draw to us the protection of the gods and be blissful to us, the knower of all things born.

SUKTA 2

यो मर्त्यस्वमृत क्रतावा देवो देवेष्वरतिर्निधायि ।
होता यजिष्ठो मद्मा शुच्यै हव्यैरग्निर्मनुष ईरयध्यै ॥१॥

1. He who is immortal in mortals and with him is the Truth,

¹⁷ Then, indeed, and after waking they wholly saw;

who is the God in the gods, the Traveller,¹⁸ has been set within as the priest of the call, most strong for sacrifice, to blaze out with the might of his flame, to give men speed on the way by the power of their offerings.

इह त्वं सूनो सहसो नो अद्य जातो जाताँ उभयाँ अन्तरग्ने ।
द्वृत ईयसे युयुजान क्रष्ण क्रज्जुमुष्कान् वृषणः शुक्रांश्च ॥२॥

2. O Son of Force, here today art thou born for us and movest as a messenger between those born of both the Births yoking, O sublime Flame, thy males straight and massive and bright in lustre.

अत्या वृधसू रोहिता धृतसू कृतस्य मन्ये मनसा जविष्टा ।
अन्तरीयसे अरुषा युजानो युष्मांश्च देवान् विश आ च मर्तान् ॥३॥

3. I hold in thought with my mind thy two red gallopers of the Truth, swiftest, raining increase, raining light; yoking the ruddy-shining pair thou movest between you Gods and the mortal peoples.

अर्यमणं वरुणं मित्रमेषामिन्द्राविष्णु मरुतो अश्विनोत ।
स्वश्वो अग्ने सुरथः सुराधा एद्व वह सुहविषे जनाय ॥४॥

4. Aryaman for them and Mitra and Varuna, Indra, Vishnu and the Maruts and the Ashwins do thou well-horsed, well-charioted, great in the joy of achievement, bring now, O Fire, for the giver of good offerings.

गोमाँ अग्नेऽविमाँ अश्वी यज्ञो नृवत्सखा सदमिदप्रमृष्टः ।
इळावाँ एषो असुर प्रजावान् दीर्घो रथः पृथुबृः सभावान् ॥५॥

5. O Fire, ever inviolable is this sacrifice and with it is the Cow, the Sheep and the Horse, it is like a human friend,¹⁹ and

¹⁸ Or, fighter or worker,

¹⁹ Or, it is a comrade with whom are the gods,

with it, O mighty Lord, are the word and the offspring; it is a long felicity of riches with a wide foundation, and with it is the hall.

यस्ते इधमं जभरत् सिष्विदानो मूर्धनं वा ततपते त्वाया ।
भुवस्तस्य स्वतवाँः पायुरग्ने विश्वस्मात् सीमघायत उरुष्य ॥ ६ ॥

6. To him who brings to thee thy fuel with the sweat of his labour and heats his head with thee, be a protector in thy self-strength, O Fire, and guard him from all around that would do him evil.

यस्ते भरादन्नियते चिदन्नं निशिष्वन्मन्द्रमतिथिमुदीरत् ।
आ देवयुरिनधते दुरोणे तस्मिन् रथिर्घुवो अस्तु दास्वान् ॥ ७ ॥

7. He who when thou desirest thy food brings thy food to thee, who whets thy flame and sends upwards the rapturous guest, he who as seeker of the godhead kindles thee in his gated house, in him may there be the abiding and bounteous riches.

यस्त्वा दोषा य उषसि प्रशंसात् प्रियं वा त्वा कृणवते हविष्मान् ।
अश्वो न स्वे दम आ हेम्यावान् तमंहसः पीपरो दाश्वांसम् ॥ ८ ॥

8. He who in the dusk, he who in the dawn would give expression to thee, or bringing his offering makes thee a beloved friend, as the Horse with golden trappings in his own home mayst thou carry that giver beyond the evil.

यस्तुभ्यमग्ने अमृताय दाशद् दुवस्त्वे कृणवते यतस्तुक् ।
न स राया शशमानो वि योषन्नैनमंहः परि वरदघायोः ॥ ९ ॥

9. He who gives to thee, O Fire, to the Immortal, and does in thee the work outstretching the Ladle, may he not in his labour be divorced from the riches, let not the sin of one who would do evil surround him.

यस्य त्वमग्ने अध्वरं जुजोषो देवो मर्तस्य सुधितं रराणः ।
प्रीतेदसद्ब्रोत्रा सा यविष्टाऽसाम यस्य विधतो वृधासः ॥१०॥

10. He in whose pilgrim-rite thou takest pleasure and, divine, takest delight in the well-founded work of a mortal, may the Power of the Call be pleased with him, O most young Fire, of whom worshipping may we bring about the increase.

चित्तिमचित्तिं चिनवद् वि विद्वान् पृष्ठेव वीता वृजिना च मर्तन् ।
राये च नः स्वपत्याय देव दितिं च रास्वादितिमुरुष्य ॥११॥

11. Let the knower discriminate the Knowledge and the Ignorance, the straight open levels and the crooked that shut in mortals; O God, for the riches, for the right birth of the Son,²⁰ lavish on us the finite and guard the Infinite.²¹

कविं शशासुः कवयोऽदब्धा निधारयन्तो दुर्यास्वायोः ।
अतस्त्वं दृश्याँ अग्न एतान् पडिभः पश्येरङ्गुताँ अर्य एवैः ॥१२॥

12. Seers unconquered proclaimed the seer, they established him²² within in the gated house of the human being. Then, O Flame, mayst thou reach with thy journeying feet and, exalted, see those transcendent²³ ones who must come into our vision.²⁴

त्वमग्ने वाघते सुप्रणीतिः सुतसोमाय विधते यविष्ट ।
रत्नं भर शशमानाय घृष्णे पृथु श्चन्द्रमवसे चर्षणिप्राः ॥१३॥

13. O Fire, ever most young, mayst thou giving thy good leading to the singer of the word who has pressed the wine and performed the sacrifice, bring to him in his labour, O luminous one, an ecstasy wide in its delight, filling the seeing man for his safeguard.

²⁰ Or, for the riches with the fair offspring,

²¹ Diti and Aditi, the divided and the undivided Consciousness, the Mother of division and the Indivisible Mother.

²² Or, commanded the seer, they upheld him

²³ Or, wonderful

²⁴ Or, made visible; the word means either “visible” or “to be seen”.

अधा ह यद् वयमग्ने त्वाया पङ्गिभर्हस्तेभिश्चकृमा तनूभिः ।
रथं न क्रन्तो अपसा भुरिजोक्तं येमुः सुध्य आशुषाणाः ॥१४॥

14. O Fire, as we have done with our hands, with our feet,
with our bodies in our desire of thee, like men who make a
chariot with the toil of their two arms, so, the wise thinkers
have laboured out the Truth and possess it.²⁵

अधा मातुरुषसः सप्त विप्रा जायेमहि प्रथमा वेधसो नृन् ।
दिवस्पुत्रा अङ्गिरसो भवेमाऽद्विं रुजेम धनिनं शुचन्तः ॥१५॥

15. Now may we be born as the seven illumined seers of the
Dawn, the mother, supreme creators creating the Gods
within us; may we become the Angirasas, sons of Heaven
and, shining with light, break the hill that has within it the
riches.

अधा यथा नः पितरः परासः प्रत्वासो अग्न ऋतमाशुषाणाः ।
शुचीदयन् दीधितिमुक्थशासः क्षामा भिन्दन्तो अरुणीरप ब्रन् ॥१६॥

16. Now, too, O Fire, even as our supreme and ancient fathers,
desiring to possess the Truth, speakers of the word, reached
the very purity, reached the splendour of the Light;²⁶ as they
broke through the earth and uncovered the ruddy herds.

सुकर्माणः सुरुचो देवयन्तोऽयो न देवा जनिमा धमन्तः ।
शुचन्तो अग्निं ववृधन्त इन्द्रमूर्वं गव्यं परिषदन्तो अग्मन् ॥१७॥

17. Perfect in action, perfect in lustre, desiring the godhead,
becoming gods, they smelted and forged the Births as one
forges iron, flaming with light they made the Fire to grow,
surrounding Indra they reached the wide mass of the Ray-
Cows.

²⁵ Or, desiring to possess it.

²⁶ Or, entered into meditation and reached the very purity;

आ यूथेव क्षुमति पश्वो अख्यद् देवानां यज्जनिमान्त्युग्र ।
मर्तानां चिदुर्वशीरकृप्रन् वृथे चिदर्य उपरस्यायोः ॥१८॥

18. There was seen as if herds of the Cows in an opulent place, that which, seen near, was the birth of the gods,²⁷ O Forceful Fire; they both illumined the widenesses²⁸ of mortals and were aspirants²⁹ for the growth of the higher being.

अकर्म ते स्वपसो अभूम ऋतमवस्थृष्टसो विभातीः ।
अनूनमग्निं पुरुधा सुश्चन्द्रं देवस्य मर्मजतश्चारु चक्षुः ॥१९॥

19. For thee we worked and became perfect in our works, the Dawns shone out and illumined the Truth; we lit the unstinted Fire in the multitude of its kinds, in the fullness of his delight, brightening the beautiful eye of the Godhead.

एता ते अग्न उच्थानि वेधोऽवोचाम कवये ता जुषस्व ।
उच्छ्रोचस्व कृणुहि वस्यसो नो महो रायः पुरुवार प्र यन्मि ॥२०॥

20. These are the utterances, O creator, O Fire, we have spoken to thee the seer, in them take pleasure. Flame upwards, make us more full of possessions; O thou of many boons, give us the Great Riches.

SUKTA 3

आ वो राजानमध्वरस्य रुद्रं होतारं सत्ययजं रोदस्योः ।
अग्निं पुरा तनयिक्तोरचित्ताद्विरण्यरूपमवसे कृणुध्वम् ॥१॥

1. Create for yourselves the King of the pilgrim-rite, the Terrible, the priest of the invocation who wins by sacrifice the Truth in earth and heaven,³⁰ create Fire golden in his

²⁷ Or, there was seen like herds of the Cow in an opulent place that which is near to the birth of the godheads,

²⁸ Or, achieved the wide illuminations

²⁹ Or, warriors

³⁰ Or, who worships with sacrifice the Truth for earth and heaven,

form for your protection before the outspreading of the Ignorance.³¹

अयं योनिश्चकृमा यं वयं ते जायेव पत्य उशती सुवासाः ।
अर्वाचीनः परिवीतो नि षीदेमा उ ते स्वपाक प्रतीचीः ॥२॥

2. This is thy seat which we have made for thee, even as, desiring, a wife richly robed for her lord; thou art turned towards us and wide-extended around, sit here within: O once far distant Fire,³² these are now fronting thee.

आशृण्वते अदृष्टिराय मन्म नृचक्षसे सुमृलीकाय वेधः ।
देवाय शस्तिममृताय शंस ग्रावेव सोता मधुषुद् यमीळे ॥३॥

3. O ordainer of sacrifice, to Fire that hears, inviolate, the strong in vision, the happy, the immortal Godhead speak the Thought, the word expressing him, whom I pray as with the voice of the stone of the pressing when it presses out the honey-wine.

त्वं चिन्नः शम्या अग्ने अस्या ऋतस्य बोध्यृतचित् स्वाधीः ।
कदा त उक्था सधमाद्यानि कदा भवन्ति सख्या गृहे ते ॥४॥

4. Thou, too, O Fire, turn towards our labour, become aware of this word, in perfect answer of thy thought, Truth-conscious, become aware of the Truth. When shall there be thy utterances that share in our ecstasy, when thy acts of companionship in the house?

कथा ह तद् वरुणाय त्वमग्ने कथा दिवे गर्हसे कन्न आगः ।
कथा मित्राय मीक्खुषे पृथिव्यै ब्रवः कदर्यम्णे कद् भगाय ॥५॥

5. How dost thou blame it, O Fire, to Varuna, to Heaven, what is that sin we have done? How wouldst thou speak of us to Mitra, the bountiful, how to earth? What wilt thou say to Aryaman, what to Bhaga?

³¹ Or, before the thunder-crash from the unknown.

³² Or, O Fire, perfect in wisdom,

कद् धिष्यासु वृधसानो अग्ने कद् वाताय प्रतवसे शुभंये ।
परिज्ञने नासत्याय क्षेब्रवः कदग्ने रुद्राय नृद्वे ॥ ६ ॥

6. What, O Fire, growing in thy abodes, wouldest thou say for us, what to the wind most forceful, to the seeker of the Good, the all-pervading, to the lord of the journey, to the earth? What, O Fire, to Rudra the slayer of men?

कथा महे पुष्टिभराय पूष्णे कद् रुद्राय सुमखाय हविर्दे ।
कद् विष्णव उरुगायाय रेतो ब्रवः कदग्ने शरवे वृहत्यै ॥ ७ ॥

7. How wilt thou speak of us to Pushan, the mighty bringer of increase, what to Rudra great in sacrifice, giver of the offering? What seed of things to wide-striding Vishnu, or what, O Fire, to vast doom?

कथा शर्धाय मरुतामृताय कथा सूरे वृहते पृच्छ्यमानः ।
प्रति ब्रवोऽदितये तुराय साधा दिवो जातवेदश्चकित्वान् ॥ ८ ॥

8. How when they question thee wouldest thou answer to the host of the Life-Gods in their Truth, or to the Sun in his vastness, to the mother indivisible, to the swift traveller? O knower of all things born, thou knowest the Heaven, for us accomplish.

ऋतेन ऋतं नियतमीळ आ गोरामा सचा मधुमत् पक्वमग्ने ।
कृष्णा सती रुशता धासिनैषा जामर्येण पयसा पीपाय ॥ ९ ॥

9. I ask for the truth governed by the Truth, together the unripe things of the Cow of light and that of her which is sweet and ripe, O Fire. Even black of hue, she nourishes with a luminous supporting, with a kindred milk.³³

³³ The Cow (the Vedic symbol of knowledge) even in the Ignorance where it is black still nourishes us with a truth which is still luminous and governed by the Greater Truth which is hers on higher levels where she is the radiant Cow of Light.

ऋतेन हि ष्मा वृषभश्चिदक्तः पुमाँ अग्निः पयसा पृष्ठयेन ।
अस्पन्दमानो अचरद् वयोधा वृषा शुक्रं दुदुहे पृश्चिस्थः ॥१०॥

10. For the Fire, the Bull, the Male, is inundated with the Truth, with milk of the heights: unstirred he ranges abroad establishing the wideness, the dappled Bull has milked out the bright udder.

ऋतेनाद्रिं व्यसन् भिदन्तः समझ्निरसो नवन्त गोभिः ।
शुनं नरः परि षदन्त्रुषासमाविः स्वरभवज्जाते अग्नौ ॥११॥

11. By the Truth the Angiras-seers broke the hill, they parted it asunder, they moved³⁴ together with the Ray-Cows; men sat happily around Dawn, the Sun-world³⁵ was manifested when the Fire was born.³⁶

ऋतेन देवीरमृता अमृक्ता अर्णोभिरापो मधुमङ्गिरग्ने ।
वाजी न सर्गेषु प्रस्तुभानः प्र सदमित् स्रवितवे दधन्युः ॥१२॥

12. By the Truth the divine and immortal, inviolate Waters with their honied floods, like a steed of swiftness pressing forward³⁷ in its gallopings, raced ever on to their flow.

मा कस्य यक्षं सदमिद्धुरो गा मा वेशस्य प्रमिनतो मापेः ।
मा भ्रातुरग्ने अनृजोर्क्षणं वेर्मा सख्युर्दक्षं रिपोभुजेम ॥१३॥

13. Mayst thou never pass over to the Power³⁸ of one who is a thief, or of a neighbour or one intimate who would do us injury,³⁹ mayst thou not incur the debt of a brother who is

³⁴ Or, came

³⁵ Or, the Sun

³⁶ Or, in the birth of the Fire.

³⁷ Or, urged forwards

³⁸ The word means supernatural or occult Power which captures the force of Agni, the lord of Tapasya, to use it for harm.

³⁹ Or, diminishes us,

crooked, may we not suffer by evil thought from⁴⁰ friend or foe.

रक्षा णो अग्ने तव रक्षणेभी रारक्षाणः सुमख प्रीणानः ।
प्रति ष्फुर वि रुज वीडवंहो जहि रक्षो महि चिद् वावृधानम् ॥१४॥

14. O Fire, strong in sacrifice, protect us ever guarding us with thy keepings, taking pleasure in us; burst out in flame, break the strong evil, slay the (Rakshasa) demon even when he is increasing into greatness.

एभिर्भव सुमना अग्ने अर्कैरिमान्त्स्पृश मन्मभिः शूर वाजान् ।
उत ब्रह्माण्यद्विरो जुषस्व सं ते शस्तिदेववाता जरेत ॥१५॥

15. O Fire, become great of mind by these hymns of illumination, by our thinkings touch these plenitudes, O heroic Flame, so take joy in the words of knowledge, O Angiras, let our speech expressing thee come close to thee, enjoyed by the gods.

एता विश्वा विदुषे तुम्यं वेधो नीथान्यग्ने निष्या वचांसि ।
निवचना कवये काव्यान्यशंसिषं मतिभिर्विप्र उक्थैः ॥१६॥

16. Thus have I, an illumined sage, by my thoughts and utterances spoken to thee, who knowest, O Fire, O creator, secret words of guidance, seer-wisdoms that speak out their sense to the seer.⁴¹

SUKTA 4

कृणुष्व पाजः प्रसितिं न पृथ्वीं याहि राजेवामवाँ इभेन ।
तृष्णीमनु प्रसितिं द्वाणानोऽस्तासि विद्य रक्षसस्तपिष्टैः ॥१॥

1. Make thy mass like a wide marching, go like a king full of

⁴⁰ Or, by the skill of; here, again, it is skill in an occult working, or an occult and hostile direction of thought that is feared.

⁴¹ Or, all these in my thoughts and utterances I have spoken to thee, I, an illumined sage, to thee the knower, O Fire, O creator, words of guidance, secret words, seer-wisdoms that speak out their meaning to the seer.

strength with his following, running in the rapid passage of thy march; thou art the Archer, pierce the demons with thy most burning shafts.

तव भ्रमास आशुया पतन्त्यनु स्पृश धृषता शोशुचानः ।
तपूर्ष्यग्ने जुद्धा पतङ्गानसंदितो वि सृज विष्वगुल्काः ॥२॥

2. Swiftly rush thy wanderings; blazing up follow and touch with thy violence; O Fire, spread by thy tongue thy burning heats and thy winged sparks; unleashed, scatter on every side thy meteors.

प्रति स्पशो वि सृज तूर्णितमो भवा पायुर्विशो अस्या अदब्धः ।
यो नो दूरे अघशंसो यो अन्त्यग्ने माकिष्टे व्यथिरा दधर्षीत् ॥३॥

3. Swiftest to act, spread abroad thy scouts to their places, and become the indomitable protector of this being: he who would bring evil by speech against us from afar or one from near, let not any such bringer of anguish do violence to thee, O Fire!

उदग्ने तिष्ठ प्रत्या तनुष्व न्यमित्राँ ओषतात् तिग्महेते ।
यो नो अरातिं समिधान चक्रे नीचा तं धक्ष्यतसं न शुष्कम् ॥४॥

4. Arise, O Fire, spread out towards us, consume utterly the unfriendly, O sharp-missiled Flame; O high-kindled! whoever has done enmity against us burn him down like a dry log.

ऊर्ध्वो भव प्रति विध्याध्यस्मदाविष्कृणुष्व दैव्यान्यग्ने ।
अव स्थिरा तनुहि यातुजूनां जामिमजामिं प्र मृणीहि शत्रून् ॥५॥

5. High-uplifted be, piercing through reveal in us the things divine, O Fire; lay low what the demon forces⁴² have established: companion or single, crush the foe.

⁴² Or, demon impulsions

स ते जानाति सुमतिं यविष्ट य ईवते ब्रह्मणे गातुमैरत् ।
विश्वान्यस्मै सुदिनानि रायो द्युम्नान्यर्यो वि दुरो अभि द्यौत् ॥६॥

6. He knows thy right-mindedness, O youngest of the Gods, who hastens the journey⁴³ for the Word in its march. For him the high doer of works has made to shine about his doors all brightnesses of the day, all treasures and splendours of the light.

सेदग्ने अस्तु सुभगः सुदानुर्यस्त्वा नित्येन हविषा य उक्थैः ।
पिप्रीषति स्व आयुषि दुरोणे विश्वेदस्मै सुदिना सासदिष्टः ॥७॥

7. May he, O Fire, be fortunate and munificent who with the eternal offering, who with his utterances, seeks to satisfy thee in his own life, in his gated house; may there be for him all brightnesses of the day, may such be his sacrificing.⁴⁴

अर्चामि ते सुमतिं घोष्यर्वाक् सं ते वावाता जरतामियं गीः ।
स्वश्वास्त्वा सुरथा मर्जयेमाऽस्मे क्षत्राणि धारयेरनु दून् ॥८॥

8. I make to shine thy right thought in me, may this word diffused in its peal approach close to thee. Rich in horses and chariots may we make all bright and pure for thee, mayst thou hold up thy mights in us from day to day.

इह त्वा भूर्या चरेदुप त्मन् दोषावस्तर्दीदिवांसमनु दून् ।
क्रीळन्तस्त्वा सुमनसः सपेमाऽभि द्युम्ना तस्थिवांसो जनानाम् ॥९॥

9. Here in this world should one largely act from one's self in the presence of thee as day by day thou shinest out in morn and in dusk: right-minded may we touch thee as we play, taking our stand on the luminous inspirations⁴⁵ of men.

⁴³ Or, who drives the path

⁴⁴ Or, may all that sacrifice of his be bright in its days.

⁴⁵ Or, luminous energies

यस्त्वा स्वश्वः सुहिरण्यो अग्न उपयाति वसुमता रथेन ।
तस्य त्राता भवसि तस्य सखा यस्त आतिथ्यमानुषग् ज्ञजोषत् ॥१०॥

10. He who comes to thee, O Fire, with strong horses, with fine gold, with his chariot full of riches, thou becomest his deliverer, his friend and comrade,— he who takes joy in thy uninterrupted guesthood.

महो रुजामि बन्धुता वचोभिस्तन्मा पितुर्गोत्तमादन्वियाय ।
त्वं नो अस्य वचसश्चकिद्वि होतर्यविष्ट सुक्रतो दमूनाः ॥११॥

11. I break great ones by my words, by my friendship with thee; that came down to me from Gotama, my father: domiciled in the house do thou become conscious of this word of ours, O youngest God! O priest of the call! O strong Will!

अस्वप्नजस्तरणयः सुशेवा अतन्द्रासोऽवृका अश्रमिष्ठाः ।
ते पायवः सञ्च्यज्ञवो निषद्याऽग्ने तव नः पान्त्वमूर ॥१२॥

12. Undreaming, ever in movement, blissful, undrowsing, untorn, untired may thy guardian powers sitting linked together guard us, O thou untouched by ignorance, O Fire!

ये पायवो मामतेयं ते अग्ने पश्यन्तो अन्धं दुरितादरक्षन् ।
ररक्ष तान्त्सुकृतो विश्ववेदा दिप्सन्त इद् रिपवो नाह देमुः ॥१३॥

13. Thy guardian powers, O Fire, which protected the son of Mamata from evil, for they saw and he was blind, the Omnipotent guarded them in their good work; the foe who would have hurt him could not hurt.

त्वया वयं सधन्यस्त्वोतास्त्व प्रणीत्यश्याम वाजान् ।
उभा शंसा सूदय सत्यतातेऽनुष्टुया कृणुद्द्व्याण ॥१४॥

14. By thee as thy companions, guarded by thee, by thy leading, may we win the plenitudes; impel to their way both annunciations, O builder of Truth: straightway, confident, create.

अया ते अग्ने समिधा विधेम प्रति स्तोमं शस्यमानं गृभाय ।
दहाशसो रक्षसः पाह्वस्मान् दृहो निदो मित्रमहो अवद्यात् ॥ ३५ ॥

15. With the fuel may we do thee worship, O Fire, accept the hymn which we utter, burn the demons who speak not the word of blessing, guard us from the doer of harm, from the censurer and his blame, O friendly Light!

SUKTA 5

वैश्वानराय मीच्छुषे सजोषाः कथा दाशेमाग्नये वृहङ्गाः ।
अनूनेन वृहता वक्षथेनोप स्तमायदुपमिन्न रोधः ॥ १ ॥

1. How should we give, one in our joy in him, vast in light,⁴⁶ to the bounteous Universal Fire? With his vast and ample upbearing he props up the firmament like a pillar.

मा निन्दत य इमां मह्यं रातिं देवो ददौ मर्त्याय स्वधावान् ।
पाकाय गृत्सो अमृतो विचेता वैश्वानरो नृतमो यद्धो अग्निः ॥ २ ॥

2. Blame not him who in his self-law has given this gift, divine to me the mortal, the wise to the ignorant, the immortal, the wide in consciousness, the most strong and mighty Universal Fire.

साम द्विबर्हा महि तिग्मभृष्टिः सहस्रेता वृषभस्तुविष्मान् ।
पदं न गोरपगृच्छं विविद्वानग्निर्मह्यं प्रेदु वोचन्मनीषाम् ॥ ३ ॥

3. In his twofold mass⁴⁷ may the puissant Bull with his thousandfold seed, with his keen blaze discovering the great Possession, the deeply hidden seat of the Cow, declare to me that Mind of wisdom.

⁴⁶ Or, shining with the light of the vast,

⁴⁷ Or, force

प्र ताँ अग्निर्बभसत् तिग्मजम्भस्तपिष्ठेन शोचिषा यः सुराधाः ।
प्र ये मिनन्ति वरुणस्य धाम प्रिया मित्रस्य चेततो ध्रुवाणि ॥४॥

4. May the Fire sharp-tusked with his most burning flame of light, he who is full of felicity,⁴⁸ consume them, they who impair the domain of Varuna and the beloved and abiding things of Mitra the conscious knower.

अग्रातरो न योषणो व्यन्तः पतिरिपो न जनयो द्वेरेवाः ।
पापासः सन्तो अनृता असत्या इदं पदमजनता गभीरम् ॥५॥

5. Going on their way like women who have no brothers, like wives⁴⁹ with evil movements who do hurt to⁵⁰ their lords, sinful are they, untrue and full of falsehood, who brought into being this profound plane.

इदं मे अग्ने कियते पावकाऽमिनते गुरुं भारं न मन्म ।
बृहद् दधाथ धृषता गभीरं यद्धं पृष्ठं प्रयसा सप्तधातु ॥६॥

6. For me who howso small, impair not the heavy burden of this thought, O purifying Fire, uphold with the violence of thy delight this vast and profound and mighty sevenfold plane.⁵¹

तमिन्न्वेव समना समानमभि क्रत्वा पुनती धीतिरश्याः ।
ससस्य चर्मन्नधि चारु पृश्चेरग्रे रूप आरुपितं जबारु ॥७॥

7. Him now may the purifying Thought reach and possess by the will, like attaining to its like, in the movement⁵² of the peace, over the form of the dappled Mother figured out on the summit in its might and its beauty.

⁴⁸ Or, he who is ever happy in achievement,

⁴⁹ Or, mothers

⁵⁰ Or, deceive

⁵¹ Or, plane with its seven layers.

⁵² Or, the action

प्रवाच्यं वचसः किं मे अस्य गुहा हितमुप निणिग् वदन्ति ।
यदुस्त्रियाणामप वारिव ब्रन् पाति प्रियं रूपो अग्रं पदं वेः ॥८॥

8. What of this word do they say to me, what that has to be declared and is mysterious and hidden in the secrecy?⁵³ What was as if a covering defence of the rays⁵⁴ they have uncovered,— he guards the beloved form, the summit plane of the being.⁵⁵

इदमु त्यन्महि महामनीकं यदुस्त्रिया सचत पूर्व्यं गौः ।
ऋतस्य पदे अधि दीद्यानं गुहा रघुष्यद् रघुयद् विवेद ॥९॥

9. This which is that great front of the Great Ones to which as its supreme place adheres the shining Cow, he came to know flaming in the plane of the Truth, hastening in its speed in the secrecy.⁵⁶

अधि द्युतानः पित्रोः सचासाऽमनुत गुह्यं चारु पृश्चेः ।
मातुष्पदे परमे अन्ति षद् गोर्वृष्णाः शोचिषः प्रयतस्य जिह्वा ॥१०॥

10. Now shining in union with the two Parents, close to him, he perceived the beautiful and secret abode of the dappled Cow. There was the tongue of the Bull of flame intent on its action, it was near the Cow of Light, in the supreme plane of the Mother.

ऋतं वोचे नमसा पृच्छ्यमानस्तवाशसा जातवेदो यदीदम् ।
त्वमस्य क्षयसि यद्दु विष्वं दिवि यद्दु द्रविणं यत् पृथिव्याम् ॥११॥

11. Asked with obeisance I voice the Truth, this which I have won by thy declaring of it,⁵⁷ O knower of all things born; thou possessest all this that is, the treasure which is in heaven and that which is on the earth.

⁵³ Or, cave?

⁵⁴ Or, the shining Cows

⁵⁵ Or, the Bird.

⁵⁶ Or, cave.

⁵⁷ Or, by thy wish,

किं नो अस्य द्रविणं कद्म रत्नं वि नो वोचो जातवेदश्चकित्वान् ।
गुहाध्वनः परमं यन्मो अस्य रेकु पदं न निदाना अगन्म ॥१२॥

12. What is the treasure of this Truth, what the delight of it, wholly declare to us, O knower of the births, for thou art aware. That supreme plane in the secrecy which is the highest goal of our path, which is over and above all, that we have reached, free from bondage.

का मर्यादा वयुना कद्म वाममच्छा गमेम रघवो न वाजम् ।
कदा नो देवीरमृतस्य पत्नीः सूरो वर्णेन ततननुषासः ॥१३॥

13. What is its boundary, its manifestation of knowledge, what the joy of it towards which we must move like gallopers towards the plenitude? When have the divine Dawns, wives of the immortal, woven it into shape by the hue of light of the sun?

अनिरेण वचसा फल्वेन प्रतीत्येन कृधुनातृपासः ।
अधा ते अग्ने किमिहा वदन्त्यनायुधास आसता सचन्ताम् ॥१४॥

14. Those who live undelighted with the word that is languid and scanty, narrow and dependent on their belief, what now and here can they say to thee, O Fire? Uninstrumented let them remain united with the unreal.

अस्य श्रिये समिधानस्य वृष्णो वसोरनीकं दम आ रुरोच ।
रुशद् वसानः सुदृशीकरूपः क्षितिर्न राया पुरुवारो अद्यौत् ॥१५॥

15. For the glory and beauty of the Bull in his high burning the flame-force of the master of riches glowed in its splendour; clothing himself with brilliance in his form of perfect vision, he has shone out full of many boons like a dwelling with its treasure.

SUKTA 6

ऊर्ध्वं ऊ षु णो अध्वरस्य होतरग्ने तिष्ठ देवताता यजीयान् ।
त्वं हि विश्वमन्यसि मन्म प्र वेधसश्चित् तिरसि मनीषाम् ॥१॥

- O Fire, summoner priest of the pilgrim-rite, stand up very high for us, strong for sacrifice in the forming of the gods: thou art the ruler over every Thought and thou carriest forward the mind of thy worshipper.

अमूरो होता न्यसादि विक्ष्वग्निर्मन्दो विदथेषु प्रचेताः ।
ऊर्ध्वं भानुं सवितेवाश्रेन्मेतेव धूमं स्तभायद्वप द्याम् ॥२॥

- Free from ignorance, Fire, the rapturous priest of the call has taken his seat in creatures, the conscious thinker in their findings of knowledge. He enters into a high lustre like a creator Sun, like a pillar he makes his smoke a prop to heaven.

यता सुजूर्णी रातिनी घृताची प्रदक्षिणिद् देवतातिमुराणः ।
उदु स्वरूनवजा नाकः पश्वो अनक्ति सुधितः सुमेकः ॥३॥

- A luminous force of giving, swift and put forth into action, he widens the formation of the gods as he turns round it; new-born he stands up high⁵⁸ like an arrow-shaft well-planted and firm⁵⁹ and shows by his light the herds.

स्तीर्णं बर्हिषि समिधाने अग्ना ऊर्ध्वो अध्वर्युजूज्जुषाणो अस्थात् ।
पर्यग्निः पशुपा न होता त्रिविष्ट्येति प्रदिव उराणः ॥४॥

- When the sacred grass is strewn and kindled burns the flame, the leader of the pilgrim-rite stands up high rejoicing in his work; Fire, the priest of the call, like a guardian of the herds thrice moves round them, the Ancient of days, ever widening his circle.

⁵⁸ Greek *akros*.

⁵⁹ Or, a sun-beam fixed and constant. Or, it may possibly mean, a pole, a banner well-planted and firm he shows (the place of) the herds.

परि त्मना मितद्रूरेति होताऽग्निर्मन्द्रो मधुवचा ऋतावा ।
द्रवन्त्यस्य वाजिनो न शोका भयन्ते विश्वा भुवना यदभ्राट् ॥५॥

5. He goes round in his self-motion with measured run, Fire, the rapturous priest of the call, sweet of word, possessing the Truth; his flames gallop like horses, all the worlds are in fear when he blazes.

भद्रा ते अग्ने स्वनीक संदृग् धोरस्य सतो विषुणस्य चारुः ।
न यत् ते शोचिस्तमसा वरन्त न ध्वस्मानस्तन्वी रेप आ धुः ॥६॥

6. O Fire of the fair front! happy is thy vision; even when thou art terrible and adverse great is thy beauty: for they hem not in thy flame with the darkness, for the destroyers cannot set evil in thy body.

न यस्य सातुर्जनितोरवारि न मातरापितरा नू चिदिष्टौ ।
अधा मित्रो न सुधितः पावकोऽग्निर्दीदाय मानुषीषु विक्षु ॥७॥

7. He is the begetter of things and his conquest cannot be held back, not even the father and the mother can stay him any longer in his impulsion. Now like a friend well-established, the purifying Fire has shone out in the human peoples.

द्विर्यं पञ्च जीजनन्तसंवसानाः स्वसारो अग्निं मानुषीषु विक्षु ।
उषर्वुधमथर्यो न दन्तं शुक्रं स्वासं परशुं न तिग्मम् ॥८॥

8. The twice five sisters who dwell together have given birth to the Fire in the human peoples, the waker in the dawn, like a tusk of flame, brilliant and fair of face, like a sharp axe.

तव त्ये अग्ने हरितो घृतस्ता रोहितास ऋज्वञ्चः स्वञ्चः ।
अरुषासो वृषण ऋजुमुष्का आ देवतातिमहन्त दस्माः ॥९॥

9. Bay-coloured are those horses of thine, dripping light, or they are red, straight is their motion, swift is their going, males, ruddy-shining, straight and massive, great in their deeds they are called to our forming of the Gods.

ये ह त्ये ते सहमाना अयासस्त्वेषासो अग्ने अर्चयश्चरन्ति ।
श्येनासो न द्रुवसनासो अर्थं तुविष्वणसो मारुतं न शर्धः ॥१०॥

10. These are thy rays, O Fire, that put forth overwhelming force, moving, impetuous in their blaze, they move towards the goal like hawks in their action, with many voices of storm like an army of the life-god.

अकारि ब्रह्म समिधान तुभ्यं शंसात्युक्थं यजते व्यु धाः ।
होतारमग्निं मनुषो नि षेदुर्नमस्यन्त उशिजः शंसमायोः ॥११॥

11. O high-kindled Fire, the Word has been formed for thee, one voices the utterance, one sacrifices,— now ordain: men set the Fire within as the priest of the call, making to him their prostration of surrender, aspirants to the self-expression of the human being.

SUKTA 7

अयमिह प्रथमो धायि धातृभिर्हीता यजिष्ठो अध्वरेष्वीड्यः ।
यमप्नवानो भृगवो विरुचुवनेषु चित्रं विन्वं विशेषिष्ठे ॥१॥

1. This is he who was established as chief and first by the Founders of things, the priest of the call, most strong for sacrifice, to be prayed in the pilgrim-rites,— he whom the doer of works and the flame-seers⁶⁰ set shining wide in the forests, rich in light, all-pervading, for man and man.

अग्ने कदा त आनुषग् भुवद् देवस्य चेतनम् ।
अथा हि त्वा जगृत्प्रेरे मर्तासो विक्ष्वीड्यम् ॥२॥

2. O Fire, when shall the conscious waking of thy godhead become uninterrupted? For now mortals have laid hold on thee as one desirable in human creatures.

⁶⁰ Apnavan and the Bhrigus

ऋतावानं विचेतसं पश्यन्तो द्यामिव स्तृभिः ।
विश्वेषामध्वराणां हस्कर्तारं दमेदमे ॥ ३ ॥

3. For they see thee, possessor of the Truth and wide in knowledge like waking heaven with its stars, the smile of light of all these pilgrim-sacrifices in house and house,—

आशुं द्रूतं विवस्वतो विश्वा यश्चर्षणीरभि ।
आ जघ्नः केतुमायवो भृगवाणं विशेविशे ॥ ४ ॥

4. The swift messenger of the illumining Sun who comes to all the seeing people; men hold him as the ray of intuition and he shines as the Bhrigu-flame-seer for each being.

तमीं होतारमानुषक् चिकित्वांसं नि षेदिरे ।
रण्वं पावकशोचिषं यजिष्ठं सप्त धामभिः ॥ ५ ॥

5. This is the priest of the call whom they set within, who uninterruptedly wakes to knowledge, rapturous with his purifying flame, most strong to sacrifice by his seven seats.⁶¹

तं शश्वतीषु मातृषु वन आ वीतमश्चित्तम् ।
चित्रं सन्तं गुहा हितं सुवेदं कूचिदर्थिनम् ॥ ६ ॥

6. Him in the many mothers linked together, wide-spread and unapproached in the forest, abiding in the secret Cave and rich with many lights, full of knowledge or moving to some unknown goal.

सप्तस्य यद् वियुता सस्मिन्दूधनृतस्य धामन् रणयन्त देवाः ।
महाँ अग्निर्नमसा रातहव्यो वेरध्वराय सदमिदृतावा ॥ ७ ॥

7. When in the separation from sleep the Gods have joy in that udder of the Cow, in the plane of the Truth, great becomes the Fire by the offering given with prostration and journeys for the pilgrim-sacrifice and the Truth is ever with him.

⁶¹ Or, with his seven lights.

वेरध्वरस्य द्रूत्यानि विद्वानुभे अन्ता रोदसी संचिकित्वान् ।
द्रूत ईयसे प्रदिव उराणो विदुष्टरो दिव आरोधनानि ॥८॥

8. He journeys knowing the embassies of the pilgrim-sacrifice between both the firmaments, utterly awakened to knowledge. A messenger, the Ancient of days, ever widening, ever greater in knowledge, thou travellest the mounting slopes of heaven.⁶²

कृष्णं त एम रुशतः पुरो भाश्चरिष्वर्विर्पुषामिदेकम् ।
यदप्रवीता दधते ह गर्भं सद्यश्चज्जातो भवसीदु द्रूतः ॥९॥

9. Black is the path of thy shining, thy light goes in front, a journeying ray, the one supreme of all thy bodies; when one unimpregnated bears thee as the child of her womb, in the sudden moment of thy birth thou art already the messenger.

सद्यो जातस्य ददृशानमोजो यदस्य वातो अनुवाति शोचिः ।
वृण्कित तिग्मामतसेषु जिह्वां स्थिरा चिदन्ना दयते वि जम्मैः ॥१०॥

10. The moment he is born his might becomes visible when the wind blows behind his flame; he turns his sharp tongue round the trunks and tears his firm food with his jaws of flame.

तृषु यदन्ना तृषुणा ववक्ष तृषुं द्रूतं कृणुते यद्धो अग्निः ।
वातस्य मेळिं सचते निजूर्वन्नाशुं न वाजयते हिन्वे अर्वा ॥११॥

11. When quickly he carries his foods on his rapid tongue, this mighty Fire fashions himself into a swift messenger; consuming all he clings to the mad course⁶³ of the wind, as a driver a swift horse he sets it to gallop for the seeker of the plenitude.

⁶² Or, thou travellest to the inmost places of heaven.

⁶³ Or, to the roar

SUKTA 8

द्रूतं वो विश्ववेदसं हव्यवाहममर्त्यम् ।
यजिष्ठमृञ्जसे गिरा ॥१॥

1. Array with your word the messenger, the carrier of your offerings, most strong to sacrifice, the omniscient, the Immortal.

स हि वेदा वसुधितिं महाँ आरोधनं दिवः ।
स देवाँ एह वक्षति ॥२॥

2. For he knows the place of the possession of the riches, he knows the ascending slope of heaven, he shall bring here the gods.

स वेद देव आनमं देवाँ ऋतायते दमे ।
दाति प्रियाणि चिद् वसु ॥३॥

3. A God, he knows for the seeker of the Truth his way of submission to the gods in the house of Truth, and he gives the beloved treasures.

स होता सेदु द्रूत्यं चिकित्वाँ अन्तरीयते ।
विद्वाँ आरोधनं दिवः ॥४॥

4. He is the priest of the call, it is he who travels between, aware of his embassy, knowing the ascending slope of heaven.

ते स्याम ये अग्नये ददाशुर्हव्यदातिभिः ।
य इं पुष्यन्त इन्धते ॥५॥

5. May we be of those who have given to the Fire with the gift of their offerings, who kindle him and increase.

ते राया ते सुवीर्यैः ससवांसो वि शृण्वरे ।
ये अग्ना दधिरे द्रुवः ॥६॥

6. They by the treasure, by the hero-strengths have conquered

and have heard who have upheld their work in the Fire.

अस्मे रायो दिवेदिवे सं चरन्तु पुरुस्पृहः ।
अस्मे वाजास ईरताम् ॥ ७ ॥

7. In us may the riches move from day to day bringing the multitude of our desires, may we receive the impulsion of the plenitudes.

स विप्रश्चर्षणीनां शवसा मानुषाणाम् ।
अति क्षिप्रेव विध्यति ॥ ८ ॥

8. An illumined seer, by the might of seeing human beings he pierces beyond like a swift arrow.

SUKTA 9

अग्ने मृळ महाँ असि य ईमा देवयुं जनम् ।
इयेथ बर्हिगसदम् ॥ ९ ॥

1. O Flame, be gracious, for great art thou who comest to the seeker of the godheads to sit on his seat of sacrifice.

स मानुषीषु द्रूढभो विक्षु प्रावीरमर्त्यः ।
द्रूतो विश्वेषां भुवत् ॥ २ ॥

2. He becomes manifest in human beings,⁶⁴ invincible,⁶⁵ immortal, the messenger of all.

स सद्य परि णीयते होता मन्द्रो दिविष्टिषु ।
उत पोता नि षीदति ॥ ३ ॥

3. He is borne round the house, a rapturous priest of the call in our heavenward urges; he takes his seat as the priest of the purification.

⁶⁴ Or, he becomes in human beings a protector,

⁶⁵ Or, indestructible,

उत ग्ना अग्निरध्वर उतो गृहपतिर्दमे ।
उत ब्रह्मा नि षीदति ॥४॥

4. The Fire is the Goddess-powers in the pilgrim-rite and he is the master of the house in his home, he sits too as the priest of the word.

वेषि ह्याध्वरीयतामुपवक्ता जनानाम् ।
हव्या च मानुषाणाम् ॥५॥

5. Thou comest to the offerings as the speaker of the sanction for human beings when they would perform the pilgrim-sacrifice.

वेषीद्वस्य द्रूत्यं यस्य जुजोषो अध्वरम् ।
हव्यं मर्तस्य वोऽहवे ॥६॥

6. Thou comest to be his envoy to him in whose sacrifice thou takest pleasure to carry the offerings of the mortal.

अस्माकं जोष्याध्वरमस्माकं यज्ञमङ्गिरः ।
अस्माकं शृणुधी हवम् ॥७॥

7. Take pleasure in our pilgrim-rite, in our sacrifice, O Angiras, hear our call.

परि ते द्रूढभो रथोऽस्माँ अश्नोतु विश्वतः ।
येन रक्षसि दाशृषः ॥८॥

8. Let thy invincible car reach us and move round us on every side by which thou guardest the givers of the offering.

SUKTA 10

आने तमद्याऽश्वं न स्तोमैः क्रतुं न भद्रम् ।
हृदिस्पृशमृध्यामा त ओहैः ॥१॥

1. O Fire, let us today make thee affluent with our lauds as thy

vehicles to bear thee,—even that of thee which is as if the Horse, as if a happy will touching the heart.

अधा ह्यने क्रतोर्भद्रस्य दक्षस्य साधोः ।
रथीर्घतस्य वृहतो बभूय ॥ २ ॥

2. For now, O Fire, thou hast become the charioteer of a happy Will, of an all-accomplishing Discernment, of the Vast Truth.

एभिन्नो अर्कैर्भवा नो अर्वाङ् स्वर्णं ज्योतिः ।
अग्ने विश्वेभिः सुमना अनीकैः ॥ ३ ॥

3. Become close to us, O Fire, by these hymns of illumination, right-minded with all thy flame-powers, thy light like the sun-world.

आमिष्टे अद्य गीर्मिगृणन्तोऽग्ने दाशेम ।
प्रते दिवो न स्तनयन्ति शुभ्माः ॥ ४ ॥

4. Today uttering thee with these utterances may we give to thee, O Fire; thy strengths thunder forth like the heavens.⁶⁶

तव स्वादिष्टाऽग्ने संदृष्टिरिदा चिद्गूह इदा चिदक्तोः ।
श्रिये रुक्मो न रोचत उपाके ॥ ५ ॥

5. Most sweet is thy vision, now in the day, now in the night; it shines out close to us like gold for its beauty and splendour.

घृतं न पूतं तनूररेपाः शुचि हिरण्यम् ।
तत् ते रुक्मो न रोचत स्वधावः ॥ ६ ॥

6. Free from evil is thy body; it is like pure clarified butter, it is pure gold; that in thee is golden in its shining, for such is thy self-law.

⁶⁶ Or, like the strength of heaven.

कृतं चिद्धि ष्मा सनेमि द्वोषोऽग्न इनोषि ।
मर्तादित्था यजमानादृतावः ॥७॥

7. Even the lasting hostility done, O thou who possessest the Truth, thou drivest away perfectly from the mortal sacrificer.⁶⁷

शिवा नः सख्या सन्तु भ्रात्राग्ने देवेषु युष्मे ।
सा नो नाभिः सदने सस्मिन्नधन् ॥८॥

8. O Fire, auspicious may be all our friendship and brotherhood with you Gods. That is our centre, where is our home, where is that udder of the Cow of Light.

SUKTA 11

भद्रं ते अग्ने सहसिन्नीकमुपाक आ रोचते सूर्यस्य ।
रुशद् दृशे ददृशे नक्तया चिदरूक्षितं दृश आ रूपे अन्नम् ॥१॥

1. Happy is that flame-power of thine, O forceful Fire; it shines close to the Sun, glowing to vision it is seen even in the night, it is as if in its beauty⁶⁸ there were an unarid feast for the eye.

वि षाघ्ने गृणते मनीषां खं वेपसा तुविजात स्तवानः ।
विश्वेभिर्यद् वावनः शुक्र देवैस्तन्नो रास्व सुमहो भूरि मन्म ॥२॥

2. O Fire, O thou with thy many births, even as we hymn thee force open the heavens⁶⁹ with thy quivering lustre⁷⁰ for him who utters the mind of wisdom; O brilliant, O glorious Flame, what thou with all the gods hast won, that give to us, that mighty thought.

⁶⁷ Or, away from the mortal who is exact in his sacrifice.

⁶⁸ Or, in its form

⁶⁹ Or, the door or entrance

⁷⁰ Or, with thy lustre of knowledge

त्वदग्ने काव्या त्वन्मनीषास्त्वदुक्था जायन्ते राध्यानि ।
त्वदेति द्रविणं वीरपेशा इत्थाधिये दाशुषे मर्त्याय ॥३॥

3. O Fire, from thee are born the seer-wisdoms, from thee the mind of knowledge, from thee the utterances that achieve; from thee come the riches that take the hero's form to the mortal giver who has the true thought.

त्वद् वाजी वाजंभरो विहाया अभिष्टिकृज्जायते सत्यशुष्मः ।
त्वद् रयिर्देवजूतो मयोभुस्त्वदाशुर्जूवाँ अग्ने अवा ॥४॥

4. From thee is born the steed of swiftness that carries the plenitude, that has the force of Truth, that makes the great approach, that has the vastness; from thee is the treasure sent by the gods that creates the bliss, from thee the rapid speeding war-horse, O Fire.

त्वामग्ने प्रथमं देवयन्तो देवं मर्ता अमृत मन्द्रजिह्वम् ।
द्वेषोयुतमा विवासन्ति धीभिर्दमूनसं गृहपतिममूरम् ॥५॥

5. Thee, O Fire, O immortal, first and chief of the godheads, mortals who are seekers of the godheads illumine by their thoughts, Fire with the rapturous tongue who pushest away the hostiles, the one domiciled within, the master of our house untouched by ignorance.

आरे अस्मद्मतिमारे अंह आरे विश्वां दुर्मतिं यन्निपासि ।
दोषा शिवः सहसः सूनो अग्ने यं देव आ चित् सच्चसे स्वस्ति ॥६॥

6. Far from us all unconsciousness, sin and evil mind when thou art on guard, a benignant Power in the night, O Fire, O son of force, over him to whom thou cleavest for his weal.

SUKTA 12

यस्त्वामग्न इनधते यतस्तु क्रिस्ते अन्नं कृणवत् सस्मन्नहन् ।
स सु द्युम्नैरभ्यस्तु प्रसक्षत् तव क्रत्वा जातवेदश्चकित्वान् ॥१॥

1. He who kindles thee, O Fire, and with his ladle in action creates food for thee thrice in the day, may he, awakened to knowledge, be ever with thy illuminations and wholly put forth his force and overcome by thy will, O knower of all things born.

इधं यस्ते जभरच्छश्रमाणो महो अग्ने अनीकमा सपर्यन् ।
स इधानः प्रति दोषामुषासं पुष्यन् रथं सचते द्वन्नमित्रान् ॥२॥

2. He who labours and brings to thee thy fuel serving the flame-force of thy greatness, O Fire, he kindling thee every day and night ever grows and cleaves to the Treasure slaying the unfriendly Powers.

अग्निरीशे बृहतः क्षत्रियस्याऽग्निर्वाजस्य परमस्य रायः ।
दधाति रन्नं विधते यविष्टो व्यानुषद्गत्याय स्वधावान् ॥३॥

3. The Fire is master of the vast might, the Fire is master of the supreme plenitude and riches; ever young, faithful to his self-law, he finds wholly, uninterruptedly the ecstasy for the mortal who worships him.

यच्चद्वि ते पुरुषत्रा यविष्टाऽचित्तिभिश्चकृमा कच्चदागः ।
कृधी ष्वस्माँ अदितेरनागान् व्येनांसि शिश्रथो विष्वगग्ने ॥४॥

4. If at all in our humanity by our movements of ignorance we have done any evil against thee, O Fire, make us wholly sinless before the mother indivisible; O Fire, mayst thou loosen from us the bonds of our sins to every side.

महश्चिदग्न एनसो अभीक ऊर्वाद् देवानामुत मर्त्यानाम् ।
मा ते सखायः सदमिद् रिषाम यच्छा तोकाय तनयाय शं योः ॥५॥

5. Even though our sin be great before gods and men, even though it be wide, O Fire, may we not come ever to harm from it who are thy friends and comrades; give to our Son, our begotten, the peace and the well-doing.

यथा ह त्यद् वसवो गौर्यं चित् पदि षिताममुञ्चता यजत्राः ।
एवो ष्वस्मन्मुञ्चता व्यंहः प्र तार्यग्ने प्रतरं न आयुः ॥६॥

6. Even as that was done when the Masters of Riches, the Lords of sacrifice released the bright cow tethered by her foot, so release us utterly from evil; mayst thou carry forward our life so that it crosses beyond, O Fire.

SUKTA 13

प्रत्यग्निरुषसामग्रमत्यद् विभातीनां सुमना रत्नधेयम् ।
यातमश्विना सुकृतो द्वरोणमुत् सूर्यो ज्योतिषा देव एति ॥१॥

1. The Fire facing the front of the dawns as they shine out has revealed the founding of the ecstasy; the two riders are coming to the gated house of the doer of good works; the divine Sun is rising up with the Light.

ऊर्ध्वं भानुं सविता देवो अश्रेद् द्रृप्सं दविध्वद् गविषो न सत्वा ।
अनु ब्रतं वरुणो यन्ति मित्रो यत् सूर्यं दिव्यारोहयन्ति ॥२॥

2. The divine creator Sun has reached his high shining, he is like a warrior seeker of the Light brandishing his flag. There is Varuna, there is Mitra, all follow the working of the Law when they make the Sun to rise up in heaven.

यं सीमकृण्वन् तमसे विपृचे ध्रुवक्षेमा अनवस्थन्तो अर्धम् ।
तं सूर्यं हरितः सप्त यद्वीः स्पृशं विश्वस्य जगतो वहन्ति ॥३॥

3. Him whom, firm in their foundation, never ceasing from

their aim they have made for the removing of the darkness,
this Sun seven mighty brilliant mares bear as the scouts of
the whole world.

वहिष्ठेभिर्विहरन् यासि तन्तुमव्ययन्नसितं देव वस्म ।
दविध्वतो रश्मयः सूर्यस्य चर्मेवावाधुस्तमो अप्स्वन्तः ॥४॥

4. O God, thou goest with steeds most strong to bear, separating the weft woven, unweaving the black garment; the streaming rays of the Sun cast the darkness like a covering skin down within the waters.

अनायतो अनिबद्धः कथायं न्यडङ्गुत्तानोऽव पद्यते न ।
कया याति स्वधया को ददर्श दिवः स्कम्भः समृतः पाति नाकम् ॥५॥

5. Unextended, unbound, facing downwards, facing upwards, how does he not sink? By what self-law does he go on his journey? Who has seen when he joins heaven and is its pillar and guards the firmament?

SUKTA 14

प्रत्यग्निरुषसो जातवेदा अख्यद् देवो रोचमाना महोभिः ।
आ नासत्योरुगाया रथेनेमं यज्ञमुप नो यातमच्छ ॥१॥

1. Fire, the godhead has been revealed, the knower of all things born, fronting the dawns as they gleam with the greatness of their lustres; wide-moving lords of the journey come moving in their chariot towards this our sacrifice.

ऊर्ध्वं केतुं सविता देवो अश्रेज्ज्योतिर्विश्वस्मै भुवनाय कृष्णन् ।
आप्रा द्यावापृथिवी अन्तरिक्षं वि सूर्यो रश्मिभिश्चेकितानः ॥२॥

2. The creator Sun is lodged in his high ray of intuition fashioning the light for the whole world; the Sun in his universal knowledge has filled earth and heaven and the mid-world with his rays.

आवहन्त्यरुणीज्योतिषागान्मही चित्रा रश्मभिश्चेकिताना ।
प्रबोधयन्ती सुविताय देव्युषा ईयते सुयुजा रथेन ॥ ३ ॥

3. The Dawn bearing him has come with the Light, Dawn vast and rich in her lustres, knowing all by her rays; the divine Dawn awakening to the happy path is journeying in her well-yoked chariot.

आ वां वहिष्ठा इह ते वहन्तु रथा अश्वास उषसो व्युष्टौ ।
इमे हि वां मधुपेयाय सोमा अस्मिन् यज्ञे वृषणा मादयेथाम् ॥ ४ ॥

4. May these horses and chariots, strong to bear, bring you both in the shining out of the dawn: for, here for you are the juices of the Wine for the drinking of the sweetness; O strong Ones, may you take rapture of them in this sacrifice.

अनायतो अनिबद्धः कथायं न्यङ्गुत्तानोऽव पद्यते न ।
क्या याति स्वधया को ददर्श दिवः स्कम्भः समृतः पाति नाकम् ॥ ५ ॥

5. Unextended, unbound, facing downwards, facing upwards, how does he not sink? By what self-law does he go on his journey? Who has seen when he joins heaven and is its pillar and guards the firmament?

SUKTA 15

अग्निहोता नो अध्वरे वाजी सन् परि णीयते ।
देवो देवेषु यज्ञियः ॥ १ ॥

1. The Fire is our priest of the call in the pilgrim-sacrifice; he is led around as the horse, he is the godhead in the gods who is lord of the sacrifice.

परि त्रिविष्टध्वरं यात्यग्नी रथीरिव ।
आ देवेषु प्रयो दधत् ॥ २ ॥

2. The Fire goes thrice around the pilgrim-sacrifice and is like one driving a chariot, he founds our delight in the gods.

परि वाजपतिः कविरग्निर्हव्यान्यक्रमीत् ।
दधद् रत्नानि दाशुषे ॥३॥

3. The Fire moves around the offerings, a seer, a master of the plenitudes and founds for the giver the ecstasies.

अयं यः सृज्जये पुरो ईववाते समिध्यते ।
द्युमाँ अमित्रदम्भनः ॥४॥

4. This is he who is kindled in the front in Srinjaya, son of Devavata, he is luminous and a destroyer of foes.

अस्य धा वीर ईवतोऽग्नेरीशीत मर्त्यः ।
तिग्मजम्भस्य मीच्छः ॥५॥

5. The mortal who is a hero can have mastery over the Fire in its march, the sharp-tusked bountiful Fire.

तमर्वन्तं न सानसिमरुषं न दिवः शिशुम् ।
मर्मृज्यन्ते दिवेदिवे ॥६॥

6. They make him bright from day to day like a conquering war-horse, like a shining babe of heaven.

बोधद् यन्मा हरिभ्यां कुमारः साहदेव्यः ।
अच्छा न हूत उदरम् ॥७॥

7. When the prince, the son of Sahadeva, woke me with his two bay horses, though called towards him I was not ready to rise.

उत त्या यजता हरी कुमारात् साहदेव्यात् ।
प्रयता सद्य आ ददे ॥८॥

8. Even so, I took at once from the prince, the son of Sahadeva, those two sacred horses he gave.

एष वां देवावश्विना कुमारः साहदेव्यः ।
दीर्घायुरस्तु सोमकः ॥९॥

9. O divine Riders, here before you is the prince Somaka, son of Sahadeva; long-lived may he be!

तं युवं देवावश्विना कुमारं साहदेव्यम् ।
दीर्घायुषं कृणोतन ॥१०॥

10. Even him the prince, the son of Sahadeva, O divine Riders, make long of life.

Mandala Five

The Atris

BUDHA AND GAVISHTHIRA

SUKTA 1

अबोध्यग्निः समिधा जनानां प्रति धेनुमिवायतीमुषासम् ।
यद्गा इव प्र वयामुज्जिहानाः प्र भानवः सिस्रते नाकमच्छ ॥१॥

1. Fire is awake by the kindling of the peoples, he fronts the dawn that comes to him like a fostering milch-cow; like the mighty ones casting upward their branching his lustres spread towards heaven.

- अबोधि होता यजथाय देवानूर्ध्वो अग्निः सुमनाः प्रातरस्थात् ।
समिद्धस्य रुशददर्शि पाजो महान् देवस्तमसो निरमोचि ॥२॥
2. The priest of the call is awake for sacrifice to the gods, Fire with his right thinking has stood up high ablaze in the dawn. He is kindled, the red-glowing mass of him is seen: a great god has been delivered out of the darkness.

- यदीं गणस्य रशनामजीगः शुचिरङ्गक्ते शुचिभिगोभिरग्निः ।
आद् दक्षिणा युज्यते वाज्यन्त्युत्तानामूर्ध्वो अधयज्जुहूभिः ॥३॥
3. When he has put out the long cord of his troop, Fire in his purity reveals all by the pure herds of his rays; the goddess of understanding grows in plenitude and is yoked to her works; she supine, he standing high, he has drunk from her breasts with his tongues of flame.

अग्निमच्छा देवयतां मनांसि चक्षूंशीव सूर्ये सं चरन्ति ।
यदीं सुवाते उषसा विरूपे श्वेतो वाजी जायते अग्रे अद्भाम् ॥ ४ ॥

4. The minds of men who seek the godhead converge towards the flame even as their seeings converge in the sun; when two dawns of different forms give birth to this Fire the white Horse is born in front of the days.

जनिष्ट हि जेन्यो अग्रे अद्भां हितो हितेष्वरुषो वनेषु ।
दमेदमे सप्त रत्ना धधानोऽग्निहर्ता नि षसादा यजीयान् ॥ ५ ॥

5. He was born victorious in front of the days, established in established things, ruddy-bright in the woodlands of our pleasure; in house and house founding the seven ecstasies the Fire took up his session as a priest of the call strong for sacrifice.

अग्निहर्ता न्यसीदद् यजीयानुपस्थे मातुः सुरभा उ लोके ।
युवा कविः पुरुनिःष्ट ऋतावा धर्ता कृष्णीनामुत मध्य इद्वः ॥ ६ ॥

6. Fire the priest of the call has taken his seat strong to sacrifice in the lap of the Mother, in that rapturous other world, the youth, the seer, manifold in his fixed knowledge, possessed of the Truth, the upholder of the peoples; in between too is he kindled.

प्र ण त्यं विप्रमध्वरेषु साधुमणिं होतारमीळते नमोमिः ।
आ यस्तान रोदसी ऋतेन नित्यं मृजन्ति वाजिनं घृतेन ॥ ७ ॥

7. Men pray with their prostrations of surrender that illumined seer, who achieves perfection in the pilgrim-sacrifices, Fire, the priest of the call, for he has extended earth and heaven by the Truth, they rub bright with the Light the eternal Horse of power.

मार्जाल्यो मृज्यते स्वे दमूनाः कविप्रशस्तो अतिथिः शिवो नः ।
सहस्रशङ्को वृषभस्तदोजा विश्वाँ अग्ने सहसा प्राप्यन्यान् ॥८॥

8. The purifier he is rubbed bright and pure, he who is proclaimed by the seers, one who is the dweller in his own house, and is our benignant guest; the bull of the thousand horns because thou hast the strength of That, O Fire, thou precedest in puissance all others.

प्र सद्यो अग्ने अत्येष्टन्यानाविर्यस्मै चारुतमो बभूथ ।
ईळेन्यो वपुष्यो विभावा प्रियो विशामतिथिर्मानुषीणाम् ॥९॥

9. At once thou goest forward, O Fire, and overpaskest all others in whomsoever thou hast become manifest in all the glory of thy beauty; adorable, great of body, wide of light thou art the beloved guest of human beings.

तुम्यं भरन्ति क्षितयो यविष्ट बलिमग्ने अन्तित ओत द्वरात् ।
आ भन्दिष्टस्य सुमतिं चिकिद्धि वृहत् ते अग्ने महि शर्म भद्रम् ॥१०॥

10. To thee, O ever youthful Fire, all the worlds and their peoples bring the offering from near and from far; awake to that right-mindedness of man's happiest state: vast and great and happy is that peace of thee,¹ O Fire.

आद्य रथं भानुमो भानुमन्तमग्ने तिष्ठ यजतेभिः समन्तम् ।
विद्वान् पथीनामुवन्तरिक्षमेह देवान् हविरद्याय वक्षि ॥११॥

11. Today, O luminous one, mount the luminous wholeness of thy car with the lords of sacrifice; thou knowest the wide mid-world with all its paths, bring here the gods to partake of our sacrifice.

¹ Or, is thy house of refuge,

अवोचाम कवये मेध्याय वचो वन्दारु वृषभाय वृष्णे ।
गविष्ठिरो नमसा स्तोममग्नौ दिवीव रुभमुरुव्यज्ञमश्रेत् ॥१२॥

12. To the seer, the understanding one, we have uttered the word of our adoration, to the Bull, the male; the Steadfast in Light has taken refuge in his laud as in a far-reaching mass of gold.

KUMARA ATREYA OR VRISHA JANA

SUKTA 2

कुमारं माता युवतिः समुद्भं गुहा बिभर्ति न ददाति पित्रे ।
अनीकमस्य न मिनज्जनासः पुरः पश्यन्ति निहितमरतौ ॥१॥

1. The young Mother carries the boy suppressed in the secret cavern and she gives him not to the father; his force is undiminished, men see him in front established inwardly in the movement.

कमेतं त्वं युवते कुमारं पेषी बिभर्षि महिषी जजान ।
पूर्वीहि गर्भः शरदो ववर्धाऽपश्यं जातं यदसूत माता ॥२॥

2. Who is this boy, O young mother, whom thou carriest in thyself when thou art compressed into form, but when thou art vast thou hast given him birth? Through many years grew the child in the womb, I saw him born when the mother brought him forth.

हिरण्यदन्तं शुचिवर्णमारात् क्षेत्रादपश्यमायुधा मिमानम् ।
ददानो अस्मा अमृतं विपृक्वत् किं मामनिन्द्राः कृणवन्ननुक्थाः ॥३॥

3. I saw him in a distant field, one golden-tusked and pure-bright of hue shaping his weapons: to him I am giving immortality in my several parts and what shall they do to me who possess not Indra and have not the word?

क्षेत्रादपश्यं सनुतश्चरन्तं सुमद् यूथं न पुरु शोभमानम् ।
न ता अगृष्टन्नजनिष्ट हि षः पलिक्षीरिद् युवतयो भवन्ति ॥४॥

4. In that field I saw ranging apart what seemed a happy herd in its many forms of beauty; none could seize on them, for he was born, even those of them who were grey with age became young again.

के मे मर्यकं वि यवन्त गोभिर्न येषां गोपा अरणश्चिदास ।
य ईं जगृभुरव ते सृजन्त्वाजाति पश्व उप नश्चकित्वान् ॥५॥

5. Who were they that divorced my strength from the herds of light? Against them there was no protector nor any fighter in this war. Let those who seized them release them back to me, he has become aware and is driving back to me my herds of vision.

वसां राजानं वसति जनानामरातयो नि दधुर्मत्येषु ।
ब्रह्माण्यत्रेरव तं सृजन्तु निन्दितारो निन्द्यासो भवन्तु ॥६॥

6. The hostile powers have hidden within in mortals the king of those who dwell in creatures in whom all creatures dwell; let the wisdom-words of Atri release him, let the binders themselves become the bound.

शुनश्चिच्छेपं निदितं सहस्राद् यूपादमुञ्चो अशमिष्ट हि षः ।
एवास्मदग्ने वि मुमुग्ध पाशान् होतश्चकित्व इह तू निषद्य ॥७॥

7. Shunahshepa too was bound to the thousandfold post of sacrifice, him didst thou release and he attained to calm;² so do thou take thy seat here in us, O conscious knower, O priest of the call, and loose from us the cords of our bondage.

² Or, he achieved the work;

हृणीयमानो अप हि मदैये: प्र मे देवानां व्रतपा उवाच ।
इन्द्रो विद्वाँ अनु हि त्वा चचक्ष तेनाहमग्ने अनुशिष्ट आगाम् ॥८॥

8. Mayst thou not grow wroth and depart from me: he who guards the law of working of the gods declared it to me; Indra knew and sought after and saw thee and taught by him, O Fire, I have come to thee.

वि ज्योतिषा बृहता भात्यग्निराविर्विश्वानि कृषुते महित्वा ।
प्रादेवीर्माया: सहते दुरेवा: शिशीते शृङ्गे रक्षसे विनिक्षे ॥९॥

9. This Fire shines with the Vast Light and makes all things manifest by his greatness. He overpowers the workings of knowledge that are undivine and evil in their impulse, he sharpens his horns to gore the Rakshasa.

उत स्वानासो दिवि षन्त्वग्नेस्तिग्मायुधा रक्षसे हन्तवा उ ।
मदे चिदस्य प्र रुजन्ति भामा न वरन्ते परिबाधो अदेवीः ॥१०॥

10. May the voices of the Fire be sharp weapons to slay the Rakshasa. In his ecstasy his angers break down, all the undivine obstructions that besiege us cannot hem him in.

एतं ते स्तोमं तुविजात विप्रो रथं न धीरः स्वपा अतक्षम् ।
यदीदग्ने प्रति त्वं देव हर्याः स्वर्वतीरप एना जयेम ॥११॥

11. O thou of the many births, I the sage, the thinker, the man of perfect works have fashioned for thee this laud like a chariot. If, indeed, O god, thou shouldst take an answering joy in it, by this we could conquer the waters that carry the light of the sun-world.

तुविग्रीवो वृषभो वावृथानोऽशत्र्वर्यः समजाति वेदः ।
इतीममग्निममृता अवोचन् वर्हिष्मते मनवे शर्म यंस -
द्विष्मते मनवे शर्म यंसत् ॥१२॥

12. The bull with the neck of might, whom no enemy can

oppose, grows and comes driving from the foe the riches of knowledge. So have the immortals spoken to this Fire that he may work out peace for man when he prepares the sacred seat, work out peace for man when he brings the offering.

VASUSHRUTA

SUKTA 3

त्वमग्ने वरुणो जायसे यत् त्वं मित्रो भवसि यत् समिद्धः ।
त्वे विश्वे सहसस्पुत्र देवास्त्वमिन्द्रो दाशुषे मत्याय ॥१॥

1. Thou art Varuna, O Fire, when thou art born, thou becomest Mitra when thou blazest high; in thee are all the gods, O son of force, thou art Indra for the mortal giver.

त्वमर्यमा भवसि यत् कनीनां नाम स्वधावन् गुह्यं विभर्षि ।
अज्जन्ति मित्रं सुधितं न गोभिर्यद् दम्पती समनसा कृणोषि ॥२॥

2. O holder of the self-law, thou becomest Aryaman when thou bearest the secret name of the Virgins; they reveal thee with the Rays as Mitra firmly founded when thou makest of one mind the Lord of the house and the Spouse.

तव श्रिये मरुतो मर्जयन्त रुद्र यत् ते जनिम चारु चित्रम् ।
पदं यद् विष्णोरुपमं निधायि तेन पासि गुह्यं नाम गोनाम् ॥३॥

3. For the glory of thee, O Rudra, the life-powers make bright thy birth into a richly manifold beauty. When that highest step³ of Vishnu is founded within, thou guardest by it the secret name of the Ray-Cows.

³ The supreme plane of the three.

तव श्रिया सुदृशो देव देवाः पुरु दधाना अमृतं सपन्त ।
होतारमग्निं मनुषो नि षेदुदर्शस्यन्त उश्जजः शंसमायोः ॥४॥

4. By the glory of thee who hast the true seeing, O godhead, the gods hold a multiple completeness and taste⁴ immortality; men take up their session with Fire, the priest of the call, aspiring, making a gift of the self-expression of the human being.

न त्वद्वोता पूर्वो अग्ने यजीयान् न काव्यैः परो अस्ति स्वधावः ।
विशश्च यस्या अतिथिर्भवासि स यज्ञेन वनवद् देव मर्तान् ॥५॥

5. There is none who precedes thee as priest of the call, O Fire, none mightier for sacrifice, there is none supreme over thee in the seer-wisdoms, O master of the self-law, and of whatsoever man thou becomest the guest, he conquers by sacrifice, O godhead, those who are mortals.

वयमग्ने वनुयाम त्वोता वसूयवो हविषा बुध्यमानाः ।
वयं समर्ये विदथेष्वह्नां वयं राया सहसस्पुत्र मर्तान् ॥६॥

6. May we who seek the Riches win them by the offering, we guarded by thee and awakened, O Fire,— we in the clash of the battle, in our discoveries of knowledge through days, we by the Treasure overcome mortal men, O son of force.

यो न आगो अभ्येनो भरात्यधीदघमघर्णसे दधात ।
जही चिकित्वो अभिशस्तिमेतामग्ने यो नो मर्चयति द्वयेन ॥७॥

7. He who brings sin and transgression upon us, on him who gives expression to evil, on himself may there be put that evil; O thou who art conscious, slay this hostile assault, O Fire, even him who oppresses us with the duality.⁵

⁴ Or, touch

⁵ The division, or the twofoldness of the nature divided between good and evil.

त्वामस्या व्युषि देव पूर्वे द्वृतं कृणवाना अयजन्त हव्यैः ।
संस्थे यदग्न ईयसे रथीणां देवो मर्तैर्वसुभिरिध्यमानः ॥८॥

8. Thee in the dawning of this night, O godhead, the ancients made their messenger and gave sacrifice with their oblations; for thou art the godhead kindled by mortals who have the light⁶ and thou travellest to the House of the Treasures.

अव स्पृधि पितरं योधि विद्वान् पुत्रो यस्ते सहसः सून ऊहे ।
कदा चिकित्वो अभि चक्षसे नोऽग्ने कदाँ ऋतचिद् यातयासे ॥९॥

9. Rescue thy father, in thy knowledge keep him safe, thy father who becomes thy son and bears thee, O son of force. O conscious knower, when wilt thou look upon us? When with thy Truth-Consciousness wilt thou set us to our journey?

भूरि नाम वन्दमानो दधाति पिता वसो यदि तज्जोषयासे ।
कुविद् देवस्य सहसा चकानः सुम्भमग्निर्वनते वावृधानः ॥१०॥

10. The father adores and establishes the mighty name because thou, O shining one, bringest him to accept and take pleasure in it; once and again, the Fire increases and desiring the bliss of the godhead he conquers it by force.

त्वमङ्ग जरितारं यविष्ट विश्वान्यग्ने दुरिताति पर्षि ।
स्तेना अदृश्न रिपवो जनासोऽज्ञातकेता वृजिना अभूवन् ॥११॥

11. O youthful god, thou, indeed, carriest safe thy adorer beyond all stumblings, O Fire; for the hostile beings are seen, the thieves, even they who know not the light of intuitive knowledge and turn to crookedness.

इमे यामासस्त्वद्विग्भूवन् वसवे वा तदिदागो अवाचि ।
नाहायमग्निरभिशस्त्ये नो न रीषते वावृधानः परा दात् ॥१२॥

12. These journeys have turned towards thee, that evil in us has

⁶ Or, the riches

been declared to the Shining One, O this Fire as he grows
will not deliver us to the assailant and the hurter.

SUKTA 4

त्वामग्ने वसुपतिं वसूनामभि प्र मन्दे अध्वरेषु राजन् ।
त्वया वाजं वाजयन्तो जयेमाऽभि व्याम पृत्सुतीर्मत्यानाम् ॥१॥

- O Fire, O king, towards thee the Wealth-master of the riches I turn and delight in thee in the pilgrim-sacrifice; replenishing thee may we conquer the plenitude, may we overcome the battle-hosts of mortals.

हव्यवाळग्निरजरः पिता नो विभुविभावा सुदृशीको अस्मे ।
सुगार्हपत्याः समिषो दिदीद्यस्मद्ग्रक् सं मिमीहि श्रवांसि ॥२॥

- The ageless Fire that carries the offering is the father of us, he in us is pervasive in his being, extended in light, perfect in vision. Accomplished in the works of the master of the house blaze out thy forces, form and turn towards us thy inspirations.

विशां कविं विश्पतिं मानुषीणां शुचिं पावकं घृतपृष्ठमग्निम् ।
नि होतारं विश्वविदं दधिध्वे स देवेषु वनते वार्याणि ॥३॥

- The seer, the master of men, lord of the human peoples, Fire, pure and purifying with its back of light set within you as the omniscient priest of the call; he shall win our desirable things in the godheads.

जुषस्वाग्न इळया सजोषा यतमानो रश्मिभिः सूर्यस्य ।
जुषस्व नः समिधं जातवेद आ च देवान् हविरद्याय वक्षि ॥४॥

- Of one mind with the goddess of revelation take pleasure in us, O Fire, labouring with the rays of the sun; accept with pleasure our fuel, O knower of all things born, and bring the gods to us to partake of our sacrifice.

जुष्टो दमूना अतिथिरुरोण इमं नो यज्ञमुप याहि विद्वान् ।
विश्वा अग्ने अभियुजो विहत्या शत्रूयतामा भरा भोजनानि ॥५॥

5. A cherished guest domiciled in our gated house come to this sacrifice of ours as the knower; O Fire, slaying all who assail us bring to us the enjoyments of those who make themselves the enemy.

वधेन दस्युं प्र हि चातयस्व वयः कृणवानस्तन्वे स्वायै ।
पिपर्षि यत् सहसस्पुत्र देवान्त्सो अग्ने पाहि नृतम् वाजे अस्मान् ॥६॥

6. Drive away from us the Destroyer with thy stroke making free space for thy own body; when thou carriest the gods over safe, O son of force, us, O Fire, strongest godhead, guard in the plenitude.

वयं ते अग्न उक्थैर्विधेम वयं हव्यैः पावक भद्रशोचे ।
अस्मे रयिं विश्ववारं समिन्वाऽस्मे विश्वानि द्रविणानि धेहि ॥७॥

7. O Fire, may we worship thee with our words, thee with our offerings, O purifier, O happy light; into us bring the treasure in which are all desirable things, in us establish substance of every kind of riches.

अस्माकमग्ने अध्वरं जुषस्व सहसः सूनो त्रिष्ठस्थ हव्यम् ।
वयं देवेषु सुकृतः स्याम शर्मणा नस्त्रिवरूथेन पाहि ॥८॥

8. Accept our pilgrim-sacrifice, O Fire, accept, O son of force, O holder of the triple world of thy session, our offering. May we be doers of good deeds before the godheads, protect us with a triple armour of peace.

विश्वानि नो दुर्गहा जातवेदः सिन्धुं न नावा दुरिताति पर्षि ।
अग्ने अत्रिवन्नमसा गृणानोऽस्माकं बोध्यविता तनूनाम् ॥९॥

9. O knower of all things born, carry us through all difficult passages, through all calamities as a ship over the ocean. O Fire, voiced by us with our obeisance even as did Atri, awake and be the guardian of our bodies.

यस्त्वा हृदा कीरिणा मन्यमानोऽमर्त्यं मर्त्यो जोहवीमि ।
जातवेदो यशो अस्मासु धेहि प्रजाभिरग्ने अमृतत्वमश्याम् ॥१०॥

10. I think of thee with a heart that is thy bard and mortal I call to thee immortal; O knower of all things born, establish the glory in us, by the children of my works, O Fire, may I win immortality.

यस्मै त्वं सुकृते जातवेद उ लोकमग्ने कृणवः स्योनम् ।
अश्विनं स पुत्रिणं वीरवन्तं गोमन्तं रथिं नशते स्वस्ति ॥११॥

11. The doer of great deeds for whom thou shalt make that happy other world, O knower of all things born, reaches in peace a wealth in which are the Horses of swiftness, the Ray-Cows, the Son, the Heroes.

SUKTA 5

सुसमिद्धाय शोचिषे घृतं तीव्रं जुहोतन ।
अग्नये जातवेदसे ॥१॥

1. On the high-kindled flame pour as offering a poignant clarity, to Fire, the knower of all things born.

नराशंसः सुषूदतीमं यज्ञमदाभ्यः ।
कविर्हि मधुहस्त्यः ॥२॥

2. The spokesman of the godhead, the inviolable hastens the sacrifice on its way, for this is the seer who comes with the wine of sweetness in his hands.

ईळितो अग्न आ वहेन्द्रं चित्रमिह प्रियम् ।
सुखै रथेभिरुतये ॥३॥

3. O Fire, we have sought thee with our adoration, bring hither Indra the rich in light, the beloved with his happy chariots to protect us.

ऊर्णप्रदा वि प्रथस्वाऽभ्यर्का अनूषत ।
भवा नः शुभ्र सातये ॥ ४ ॥

4. Spread wide, O seat, soft as wool, the songs of illumination sound high; O bright one, be with us for the conquest.

देवीद्वारो वि श्रयध्वं सुप्रायणा न ऊतये ।
प्रप्र यज्ञं पृणीतन ॥ ५ ॥

5. Swing wide, O divine doors; be easy of approach that you may be our guard: lead further further and fill full our sacrifice.

सुप्रतीके वयोवृधा यही ऋतस्य मातरा ।
दोषामुषासमीमहे ॥ ६ ॥

6. Dawn and night we seek with desire the two mighty Mothers of the Truth with their fair front to us who increase our being's space.

वातस्य पत्मनीळिता दैव्या होतारा मनुषः ।
इमं नो यज्ञमा गतम् ॥ ७ ॥

7. O worshipped twain, O divine priests of man's call, arrive on the path of the wind to this our sacrifice.

इला सरस्वती मही तिस्रो देवीर्मयोभुवः ।
बर्हिः सीदन्त्वस्त्रिधः ॥ ८ ॥

8. May Ila, Saraswati and Mahi,⁷ the three goddesses who create the bliss sit on the sacred seat, they who never err.

शिवस्त्वष्टरिहा गहि विमुः पोष उत त्मना ।
यज्ञेयज्ञे न उदव ॥ ९ ॥

9. O maker of forms, hither benignant arrive all-pervading in

⁷ Ila, goddess of revelation; Saraswati, goddess of inspiration; Mahi, goddess of the Vast Truth, Mahas or *ṛtaś br̥hat*.

thy fostering to us and in thyself; in sacrifice on sacrifice us upward guard.

यत्र वेत्थ वनस्पते देवानां गुह्या नामानि ।
तत्र हव्यानि गामय ॥१०॥

10. O Tree,⁸ there where thou knowest the secret names of the gods make rich our offerings.

स्वाहाग्नये वरुणाय स्वाहेन्द्राय मरुदभ्यः ।
स्वाहा देवेभ्यो हविः ॥११॥

11. Swaha to the Fire and to Varuna, Swaha to Indra and the Life-powers, Swaha to the gods be our offering.

SUKTA 6

अग्निं तं मन्ये यो वसुरस्तं यं यन्ति धेनवः ।
अस्त्तमर्वन्त आशवोऽस्तं नित्यासो वाजिन इषं स्तोतृभ्य आ भर ॥१॥

1. I meditate on the Fire who is the dweller in things,⁹ to whom the milch-cows go as to their home, to their home the swift war-horses, to their home the eternal steeds of swiftness.¹⁰ Bring to those who laud thee the force of thy impulse.

सो अग्निर्यो वसुर्गृणे सं यमायन्ति धेनवः ।
समर्वन्तो रघुद्रुवः सं सुजातासः सूरय इषं स्तोतृभ्य आ भर ॥२॥

2. This is the Fire who is the dweller in things voiced by me, in whom meet the milch-cows, and in him the swift galloping war-horses and in him the illuminates who have come to the perfect birth. Bring to those who laud thee the force of thy impulse.

⁸ Or, O master of delight,

⁹ Or, who is the Shining One,

¹⁰ Or, steeds of the plenitude.

अग्निर्हि वाजिनं विशे ददाति विश्वचर्षणः ।
अग्नी राये स्वामुवं स प्रीतो याति वार्यमिषं स्तोतृभ्य आ भर ॥३॥

3. The all-seeing Fire gives the steed of the plenitude to man,
Fire the horse that comes swiftly to him for the riches; when
he is pleased he journeys to the desirable good. Bring to
those who laud thee the force of thy impulse.

आ ते अग्न इधीमहि द्युमन्तं देवाजरम् ।
यद्ध स्या ते पनीयसी समिद् दीदयति द्यवीषं स्तोतृभ्य आ भर ॥४॥

4. O Fire, we kindle thy luminous and ageless flame; when the
fuel of thee becomes more effective in its labour, it blazes
up in heaven. Bring to those who laud thee the force of thy
impulse.

आ ते अग्न ऋचा हविः शुकस्य शोचिषस्पते ।
सुशचन्द्र दस्म विशपते हव्यवाट तुभ्यं हूयत इषं स्तोतृभ्य आ भर ॥५॥

5. O Fire, O Master of the brilliant Light, the offering is cast to
thee with the word of illumination, O bearer of the offering,
O master of the creature, achiever of works, O delightful
flame. Bring to those who laud thee the force of thy impulse.

प्रो त्ये अग्नयोऽग्निषु विश्वं पुष्यन्ति वार्यम् ।
ते हिन्विरे त इन्विरे त इषण्यन्त्यानुषगिषं स्तोतृभ्य आ भर ॥६॥

6. In thy fires those greater fires of thee nurse every desirable
good; they, they race, they run, they drive on in their impulse
without a break. Bring to those who laud thee the force of
thy impulse.

तव त्ये अग्ने अर्चयो महि ब्राधन्त वाजिनः ।
ये पत्वभिः शफानां ब्रजा भुरन्त गोनामिषं स्तोतृभ्य आ भर ॥७॥

7. O Fire, those rays of thine, thy steeds of plenitude greateren
the Vast; they gallop with tramplings of their hooves to the

pens of the Ray-Cows. Bring to those who laud thee the force of thy impulse.

नवा नो अग्न आ भर स्तोतृभ्यः सुक्षितीरिषः ।
ते स्याम य आनृच्छस्त्वाद्गतासो दमेदम इषं स्तोतृभ्य आ भर ॥८॥

8. Bring to us who laud thee, O Fire, new impelling forces that lead to happy worlds; may we be of those who with thee for their messenger sing the hymn of illumination in home and home. Bring to those who laud thee the force of thy impulse.

उभे सुशचन्द्र सर्पिषो दर्वी श्रीणीष आसनि ।
उतो न उत् पुपूर्या उक्थेषु शवसस्पत इषं स्तोतृभ्य आ भर ॥९॥

9. O delightful flame, thou turnest both the ladles of the streaming clarity towards thy mouth; then mayst thou carry us high beyond in the utterances, O master of might. Bring to those who laud thee the force of thy impulse.

एवाँ अग्निमजुर्यमुग्रीर्भिर्यज्ञेभिरानुषक् ।
दधदस्मे सुवीर्यमुत त्यदाशवश्वमिषं स्तोतृभ्य आ भर ॥१०॥

10. Thus have they driven and controlled the Fire without a break by their words and their sacrifices; may he found in us the perfect hero-might and the perfect power of the Horse. Bring to those who laud thee the force of thy impulse.

ISHA

SUKTA 7

सखायः सं वः सम्यञ्चमिषं स्तोमं चाग्नये ।
वर्षिष्ठाय क्षितीनामूर्जो नस्ते सहस्वते ॥१॥

1. O comrades, in you an integral force and complete laud to

Fire the most powerful among the peoples, to the mighty child of energy.

कुत्रा चिद् यस्य समृतौ रण्वा नरो नृषदने ।
अर्हन्तश्चिद् यमिन्धते संजनयन्ति जन्तवः ॥२॥

2. Whom wheresoever they come into contact with him men who have the power rapturously set alight in this house of man and all beings born strive to bring to birth.

सं यदिषो वनामहे सं हव्या मानुषाणाम् ।
उत द्युम्नस्य शवस क्रृतस्य रश्मिमा ददे ॥३॥

3. Whenso we win completely the impulsions of force, completely the offerings human beings must give, then he gathers to himself the Ray of the light and the might and the Truth.

स स्मा कृणोति केतुमा नक्तं चिद् दूर आ सते ।
पावको यद् वनस्पतीन् प्र स्मा मिनात्यजरः ॥४॥

4. Yea, he creates the light of intuition even for one who is far off in the night, the purifying and imperishable Fire ravages the trees of the forest.

अव स्म यस्य वेषणे स्वेदं पथिषु जुह्वति ।
अभीमह स्वजेन्यं भूमा पृष्ठेव रुरुहुः ॥५॥

5. When in his service men cast down their sweat on the paths, they ascend to a self-born ground as if to wide levels.

यं मर्त्यः पुरुस्पृहं विदद् विश्वस्य धायसे ।
प्र स्वादनं पितूनामस्ताति विदायवे ॥६॥

6. Him mortal man must come to know as one who holds the multitude of his desires so that he may establish in him all; he moves towards the sweet taste of the draughts of the wine and to the building of the house for man.

स हि ष्मा धन्वाक्षितं दाता न दात्या पशुः ।
हिरिष्मश्चुः शुचिदवृभुरनिभृष्टतविषिः ॥ ७ ॥

7. Pure and bright, verily, is he and he tears our desert dwelling place,¹¹ like a beast who tears, a Beast with golden beard and tusks of bright purity, he is like a smith whose force is unafflicted by the heat of the Fire.

शुचिः ष्मा अत्रिवत् प्र स्वधितीव रीयते ।
सुषूरसूत माता क्राणा यदानशो भगम् ॥ ८ ॥

8. Yes, he is pure and bright and he is as one whose axe is like an eater and ever enters deeper; with a happy delivery his mother bore him, for he is an achiever of the work and wins enjoyment of the bliss.

आ यस्ते सर्पिरासुतेऽग्ने शमस्ति धायसे ।
ऐषु द्युम्नमुत श्रव आ चित्तं मत्येषु धाः ॥ ९ ॥

9. O Fire, to whom is poured the running stream of the offering of light, the man who is a happy ground for establishing thee,—in such mortals found the light, and the inspiration and the knowledge.

इति चिन्मन्युमध्रिजस्त्वादातमा पशुं ददे ।
आदग्ने अपृणतोऽत्रिः सासद्याद् दस्यूनिषिः सासद्यान्तृन् ॥ १० ॥

10. Even so, irresistible born, I receive the force of mind, the cow of vision given by thee. O Fire, then may Atri overcome the destroyers who satisfy thee not, may he overcome forces and men.

¹¹ Or, the solid ground on which we dwell,

SUKTA 8

त्वामग्न ऋतायवः समीधिरे प्रत्नं प्रत्नास ऊतये सहस्रृत ।
पुरुश्चन्द्रं यजतं विश्वधायसं दमूनसं गृहपतिं वरेण्यम् ॥१॥

- O Fire, created by our force, thee the Ancient One the ancient seekers of Truth set blazing for their guard, the master of sacrifice with his many delights who establishes all, Fire who dwells in the house, master of the house, the supremely desirable.

त्वामग्ने अतिथिं पूर्व्यं विशः शोचिष्केशं गृहपतिं नि षेदिरे ।
बृहत्केतुं पुरुरूपं धनस्पृतं सुशर्माणं स्ववसं जरद्विषम् ॥२॥

- Thee, O Fire, men seated within as the ancient guest, the master of the house with his tresses of light,— vast is his intuition, many are his forms, he brings out the riches, he is a giver of perfect peace and protection and a destroyer of the foe.

त्वामग्ने मानुषीरीक्षते विशो होत्राविदं विविचिं रक्खधातमम् ।
गुहा सन्तं सुभग विश्वदर्शतं तुविष्वणसं सुयजं घृतश्रियम् ॥३॥

- Thee the human people pray, O Fire, who knowest the word of invocation, who hast the just discernment, who art strongest to found the ecstasy,— thee who dwellest in the secret cave, O happy flame, and hast the vision of all things, the perfect sacrificer with the multitude of thy voices and the glory and beauty of thy light.

त्वामग्ने धर्णसिं विश्वधा वयं गीर्भिर्गृणन्तो नमसोप सेदिम ।
स नो जुषस्व समिधानो अङ्गिरो देवो मर्तस्य यशसा सुदीतिभिः ॥४॥

- Thee, O Fire, who upholdest all things in every way we voicing thee with our words have approached with obeisance; so do thou accept us, O Angiras, a godhead kindled by the glory of a mortal and by his high illuminings.

त्वमग्ने पुरुरूपो विशेषिशे वयो दधासि प्रलथा पुरुष्टत ।
पुरुण्यन्ना सहसा वि राजसि त्विषिः सा ते तित्विषाणस्य नाधृषे ॥५॥

5. O Fire, thou takest many forms for man and man and thou foundest for him his growth as of old, O thou lauded by many voices; many are the things on which thou feedest and thou illuminest them all with thy force, and none can do violence to the fury of thy blaze when thou blazest up in thy might.

त्वामग्ने समिधानं यविष्ट्य देवा द्रूतं चक्रिरे हव्यवाहनम् ।
उरुज्जयसं घृतयोनिमाहृतं त्वेषं चक्षुर्दधिरे चोदयन्मति ॥६॥

6. Thee, O youthful Fire, in thy high kindling the gods have made a messenger and a carrier of the offerings; thee of whom light is the native seat and wide are the spaces through which thou movest, they have set when thou hast received the offerings as a keen burning eye that urges the thought.

त्वामग्ने प्रदिव आहृतं घृतैः सुम्नायवः सुषमिधा समीधिरे ।
स वावृथान ओषधीभिरुक्षितोऽभि ज्यायांसि पार्थिवा वि तिष्ठसे ॥७॥

7. Thee, O Fire, fed with offerings of light from the higher heaven¹² the seekers of bliss kindled with an entire kindling, so now growing on the herbs to thy full might thou spreadest over wide earth-spaces.

GAYA

SUKTA 9

त्वामग्ने हविष्मन्तो देवं मर्तस्स ईळते ।
मन्ये त्वा जातवेदसं स हव्या वक्ष्यानुषक् ॥१॥

1. Thee, O Fire, men bringing offerings pray, mortals the

¹² Or, from of old; or, the ancient seekers of bliss

godhead; I meditate on thee as the knower of all things born
and as such thou carriest our offerings without a break.

अग्निहर्ता दास्वतः क्षयस्य वृक्तवर्हिषः ।
सं यज्ञासश्चरन्ति यं सं वाजासः अवस्यवः ॥२॥

2. Fire is the priest of the call in the house of the giver who
has plucked the grass for the seat of sacrifice and in him our
sacrifices meet and our plenitudes of inspired knowledge.

उत स्म यं शिशुं यथा नवं जनिष्टारणी ।
धर्तारं मानुषीणां विशामग्निं स्वध्वरम् ॥३॥

3. Verily, the two tinders have brought to birth as if a new-born infant Fire who does aright the pilgrim-sacrifice, to be
the upholder of the human beings.

उत स्म दुर्गृभीयसे पुत्रो न द्वार्याणाम् ।
पुरु यो दग्धासि वनाऽग्ने पशुन् यवसे ॥४॥

4. Verily, thou art hard to seize like a son of crookednesses;
many are the trees of the forest thou consumest, O Fire, like
a beast in his pasture.

अध स्म यस्यार्चयः सम्यक् संयन्ति धूमिनः ।
यदीमह त्रितो दिव्युप धातेव धमति शिशीते धातरी यथा ॥५॥

5. Now, verily, his rays with their smoke meet perfectly together when Trita, the triple one, blows upon him in heaven
like a smelter, it is as if in the smelter that he whets his flame.

तवाहमग्न ऊतिभिर्मित्रस्य च प्रशस्तिभिः ।
द्वेषोयुतो न द्वरिता तुर्याम मर्त्यानाम् ॥६॥

6. I by thy guardings, O Fire, and by thy utterances as the
friend — like men beset by hostile powers, so may we pass
beyond the stumbling-places of mortals.

तं नो अग्ने अभी नरो रथं सहस्र आ भर ।
स क्षेपयत् स पोषयद् भुवद् वाजस्य सातय उतैधि पृत्सु नो वृधे ॥७॥

7. O forceful Fire, bring to us, to men, the treasure; may he cast his shafts, may he foster us, may he be with us for the conquest of the plenitude. Be with us in our battles that we may grow.

SUKTA 10

अग्न ओजिष्ठमा भर द्युम्नमस्मभ्यमधिगो ।
प्र नो राया परीणसा रत्सि वाजाय पन्थाम् ॥१॥

1. O Fire, bring to us a light full of energy, O unseizable Ray; for us by thy opulence pervading on every side cut out in our front a path to the plenitude.

त्वं नो अग्ने अङ्गुत क्रत्वा दक्षस्य मंहना ।
त्वे असुर्यमारुहत् क्राणा मित्रो न यज्ञियः ॥२॥

2. O Fire, O Wonderful, come to us with thy will and the growth of the judgment; in thee the sacrificial Friend, achiever of the work, can climb to almighty ness.

त्वं नो अग्न एषां गयं पुष्टिं च वर्धय ।
ये स्तोमेभिः प्र सूरयो नरो मधान्यानशुः ॥३॥

3. Increase for us, O Fire, the acquisition and the growth of these who are men that are illuminates and by their laudings of thee have attained to the plenitudes of the riches,—

ये अग्ने चन्द्रं ते गिरः शुभ्मन्त्यश्वराधसः ।
शुष्मेभिः शुष्मिणो नरो दिवश्चद्येषां बृहत् सुकीर्तिर्बोधति त्मना ॥४॥

4. Who, O delightful Fire, have achieved the power of the horse and make beautiful their words of thee, strong men with their strength whose is the Vast that is greater even than heaven, for in them that glory by itself awakes.

तव त्ये अग्ने अर्चयो भ्राजन्तो यन्ति धृष्णुया ।
परिज्ञानो न विद्युतः स्वानो रथो न वाजयुः ॥५॥

5. These are those flaming rays of thine, O Fire, and they go blazing and violent, like lightnings that run over all quarters, like the voice of a chariot seeking the plenitude.

नू नो अग्न ऊतये सबाधसश्च रातये ।
अस्माकासश्च सूरयो विश्वा आशास्तरीषणि ॥६॥

6. Soon, O Fire, may alike those of us who are opposed and obstructed attain to protection and the giving of the riches and our illuminates break through all directions and beyond.

त्वं नो अग्ने अङ्गिरः स्तुतः स्तवान आ भर ।
होतविभ्वासहं रयिं स्तोतृभ्यः स्तवसे च न उतैधि पृत्सु नो वृधे ॥७॥

7. Thou, O Fire, O Angiras, after and during the laud bring to us riches of a far-reaching force, O priest of the call, for those who laud thee and for our further laud. Be with us in our battles that we may grow.

SUTAMBHARA

SUKTA 11

जनस्य गोपा अजनिष्ट जागृविरग्निः सुदक्षः सुविताय नव्यसे ।
घृतप्रतीको बृहता दिविस्पृशा द्युमद् वि भाति भरतेभ्यः शुचिः ॥१॥

1. Fire the guardian of men has been born, wakeful and discerning for a new happy journey; luminous is his front and with his heaven-touching vast he shines out full of light and brilliant in his purity for the Bringers.

यज्ञस्य केतुं प्रथमं पुरोहितमग्निं नरस्त्रिष्ठस्थे समीधिरे ।
इन्द्रेण देवैः सरथं स बर्हिषि सीदत्रि होता यजथाय सुक्रतुः ॥२॥

2. Fire the supreme intuition of the sacrifice, the representative priest, men have kindled high in the triple world of his session; let him come in one chariot with Indra and the gods and take his seat on the sacred grass, the priest of the call, strong in will to sacrifice.

असंमृष्टो जायसे मात्रोः शुचिर्मन्द्रः कविरुदतिष्ठो विवस्वतः ।
घृतेन त्वावर्धयन्नग्न आहुत धूमस्ते केतुरभवद् दिवि श्रितः ॥३॥

3. Unoppressed thou art born brilliant-pure from the mothers twain, a rapturous priest of the call thou hast risen up from the sun; they have increased thee with the offering of light, O Fire, fed with the oblation and thy smoke has become a ray of intuition lodged in heaven.

अग्निर्नो यज्ञमुप वेतु साधुयाऽग्निं नरो वि भरन्ते गृहेगृहे ।
अग्निर्दूतो अभवद्व्यवाहनोऽग्निं वृणाना वृणते कविक्रतुम् ॥४॥

4. May the Fire come to our sacrifice with power to accomplish, men carry the Fire severally in house and house; the Fire has become the messenger and carrier of our offering; when men accept the Fire it is the seer-will that they accept.

तुभ्येदमग्ने मधुमत्तमं वचस्तुभ्यं मनीषा इयमस्तु शं हृदे ।
त्वां गिरः सिन्धुमिवावनीर्महीरा पृष्णन्ति शवसा वर्धयन्ति च ॥५॥

5. For thee, O Fire, this word most full of the honey-sweetness, for thee this Thinking, let it be a happiness to thy heart; thee our words fill with force as the great rivers fill the sea and make thee grow.

त्वामग्ने अङ्गिरसो गुहा हितमन्वविन्दज्ञश्रियाणं वनेवने ।
स जायसे मथ्यमानः सहो महत् त्वामाहुः सहसस्पुत्रमङ्गिरः ॥६॥

6. Thee, O Fire, the Angiras sought and found hidden in the secrecy lodging in tree and tree; by our pressure on thee thou art born a mighty force, the Son of Force they call thee, O Angiras!

SUKTA 12

प्राग्नये वृहते यज्ञियाय ऋतस्य वृष्णे असुराय मन्म ।
वृतं न यज्ञ आस्ये सुपूतं गिरं भरे वृषभाय प्रतीचीम् ॥१॥

1. To Fire, the vast sacrificial flame, to the Bull of the Truth, to the mighty lord I bring my thought as if the offering of light in the sacrifice, purified in the mouth; I bring the word turned to meet him for the master of the herds.

ऋतं चिकित्व ऋतमिच्चकिद्ध्यृतस्य धारा अनु तृन्धि पूर्वीः ।
नाहं यातुं सहसा न द्वयेन ऋतं सपाम्यरुषस्य वृष्णः ॥२॥

2. O thou conscious of the Truth, of the Truth alone be conscious, cut out in succession many streams of the Truth; I know not how to travel by force or by division to the Truth of the shining lord.

क्या नो अग्न ऋतयन्तेन भुवो नवेदा उच्चथस्य नव्यः ।
वेदा मे देव ऋतुपा ऋतूनां नाहं पतिं सनितुरस्य रायः ॥३॥

3. By what thought of ours seeking the Truth by the Truth shalt thou become for us, O Fire, a new discoverer of the word? The god who is guardian of the order and laws of the Truth knows me but I know him not, the master of the conquering riches.

के ते अग्ने रिपवे बन्धनासः के पायवः सनिषन्त दुमन्तः ।
के धासिमग्ने अनृतस्य पान्ति क आसतो वचसः सन्ति गोपाः ॥४॥

4. O Fire, who are these that are binders of the Adversary, who are the guardians, the luminous ones that shall possess and conquer? who keep the foundation of the Falsehood, O Fire? who are the guardians of the untrue Word?

सखायस्ते विषुणा अग्न एते शिवासः सन्तो अशिवा अभूवन् ।
अधूर्षत स्वयमेते वचोभिर्घज्यते वृजिनानि ब्रुवन्तः ॥५॥

5. These were thy comrades, O Fire, who have turned away from thee, they were benignant and have become malign; they have done violence to themselves by their words speaking crooked things to the seeker after straightness.

यस्ते अग्ने नमसा यज्ञमीद्व ऋतं स पात्यरुषस्य वृष्णः ।
तस्य क्षयः पृथुरा साधुरेतु प्रसर्णाणस्य नहुषस्य शेषः ॥६॥

6. But he, O Fire, who desires with obeisance the sacrifice, guards the Truth of the luminous lord; let there come to him his wide and perfect habitation, the last state of man as he advances on his journey.

SUKTA 13

अर्चन्तस्त्वा हवामहेऽर्चन्तः समिधीमहि ।
अग्ने अर्चन्त ऊतये ॥१॥

1. Singing the word of illumination we call to thee, singing the word of illumination we kindle, singing the word of illumination, O Fire, that thou mayst be our guard.

अग्नेः स्तोमं मनामहे सिद्धमद्य दिविस्पृशः ।
देवस्य द्रविणस्यवः ॥२॥

2. Seekers of the riches we meditate today the all-achieving laud of the divine, heaven-touching Fire.

अग्निर्जुषत नो गिरो होता यो मानुषेष्वा ।
स यक्षद् दैव्यं जनम् ॥३॥

3. May Fire accept our words, he who is the priest of the call in men; may he sacrifice to the divine kind.

त्वमग्ने सप्रथा असि जुष्टो होता वरेण्यः ।
त्वया यज्ञं वि तन्वते ॥४॥

4. Great is thy wideness, O Fire, our priest of the call, beloved and supremely desirable; by thee men carry out the sacrifice.

त्वामग्ने वाजसातमं विप्रा वर्धन्ति सुषुप्तम् ।
स नो रास्व सुवीर्यम् ॥५॥

5. Thee high-lauded, O Fire, the strong conqueror of the plenitudes, the illumined wise increase; so do thou give us the gift of a complete hero-might.

अग्ने नेमिरराँ इव देवाँस्त्वं परिभूरसि ।
आ राधश्चित्रमृज्जसे ॥६॥

6. As the rim of a wheel the spokes, so dost thou encompass the gods; thou shalt arrange for us our rich achievement.

SUKTA 14

अग्निं स्तोमेन बोधय समिधानो अमर्त्यम् ।
हव्या देवेषु नो दधत् ॥१॥

1. Awake by the laud the Fire, let the immortal be kindled and let him set our offerings in the godheads.

तमध्वरेष्वीळते देवं मर्ता अमर्त्यम् ।
यजिष्ठं मानुषे जने ॥२॥

2. Him they pray in the pilgrim-sacrifices, mortals the divine and immortal who is strong for sacrifice in human kind.

तं हि शश्वन्त ईळते सुचा देवं घृतश्चुता ।
अग्निं हव्याय वोद्धवे ॥ ३ ॥

3. Him, the divine Fire, the perpetual generations pray with the ladle dripping the clarity for the carrying of their offerings.

अग्निर्जातो अरोचत ब्रन् दस्यूज्ज्योतिषा तमः ।
अविन्दद् गा अपः स्वः ॥ ४ ॥

4. Fire at his birth has shone out slaying the destroyers, darkness by the light, he found the Ray-Cows, the Waters, the Sun-World.

अग्निमीलेन्यं कविं घृतपृष्ठं सपर्यत ।
वेतु मे शृणवद्धवम् ॥ ५ ॥

5. Serve Fire the supremely desirable, the seer with his back of Light; may he come, may he hear my call.

अग्निं घृतेन वावृधुः स्तोमेभिर्विश्वचर्षणिम् ।
स्वाधीभिर्वचस्युभिः ॥ ६ ॥

6. The Fire they have made to grow by the light, the all-seeing by their lauds that place rightly the thought, that seek for the word.

DHARUNA ANGIRASA

SUKTA 15

प्र वेधसे कवये वेद्याय गिरं भरे यशसे पूर्व्याय ।
घृतप्रसत्तो असुरः सुशेवो रायो धर्ता धरुणो वस्वो अग्निः ॥ १ ॥

1. I bring my word to the creator and seer, him whom we must know, the glorious, the ancient one; Fire the Mighty One

seated in the light, full of bliss, the holder of the Treasure,
the continent of the Riches.

ऋतेन ऋतं धरुणं धारयन्त यज्ञस्य शाके परमे व्योमन् ।
दिवो धर्मन् धरुणे सेदुषो नृज्जातैरजाताँ अभि ये ननक्षुः ॥२॥

2. By the Truth they held the Truth that holds all, in the might
of the sacrifice, in the supreme ether, they who reached
the gods seated in the law that is the upholder of heaven,
reached by the godheads born the unborn.

अंहोयुवस्तन्वस्तन्वते वि वयो महद् दुष्टरं पूर्व्याय ।
स संवतो नवजातस्तुर्यात् सिंहं न कुद्धमभितः परि षुः ॥३॥

3. They weave bodies that reject evil, they weave a vast ex-
pansion hard to cross for the ancient one; he new-born can
cross through the regions¹³ though they stand around him
as around an angry lion.

मातेव यद् भरसे पप्रथानो जनंजनं धायसे चक्षसे च ।
वयोवयो जरसे यद् दधानः परि तमना विषुरूपो जिगासि ॥४॥

4. When growing wide thou bearest like a mother birth after
birth for firm foundation, for vision, when thou holdest and
wearest out manifestation after manifestation, taking many
forms thou encompassest all things with thyself.

वाजो नु ते शवसस्पात्वन्तमुरुं दोघं धरुणं देव रायः ।
पदं न तायुर्गुहा दधानो महो राये चितयन्नत्रिमस्यः ॥५॥

5. May thy plenitude guard the last limit of thy force, the
wide continent of the riches that milks out its abundance, O
godhead: like a thief thou holdest in the secrecy that plane,
awakening him to the consciousness of the great riches thou
hast rescued Atri.

¹³ Or, breaks through his converging hunters

PURU

SUKTA 16

बृहद् वयो हि भानवेऽर्चा देवायाग्नये ।
यं मित्रं न प्रशस्तिभिर्मर्तासो दधिरे पुरः ॥१॥

1. Create by the illumining word a wide expansion for the Light, for the divine Fire, whom mortals by their proclaimings of him set in their front as Mitra the friend.

स हि शुभिर्जनानां होता दक्षस्य बाह्नोः ।
वि हव्यमर्गिनरानुषग्भगो न वारमृणवति ॥२॥

2. He is men's priest of the call who by his illuminations carries in his two arms of the Understanding the offerings wholly in a continuous order; as Bhaga, the enjoyer, he reaches our desirable good.

अस्य स्तोमे मघोनः सख्ये वृद्धशोचिषः ।
विश्वा यस्मिन् तुविष्वणि समर्ये शुष्मादधुः ॥३॥

3. In the lauding of this master of plenty, in his friendship as his light grows, for all things are in this Fire of the many voices, men have founded their strength in him, the Noble One.

अधा ह्यग्न एषां सुवीर्यस्य मंहना ।
तमिद् यद्दुं न रोदसी परि श्रवो बभूवतुः ॥४॥

4. Now, indeed, O Fire, these have reached a plenitude of heroic strength, around him as around one mighty, earth and heaven have become an inspired knowledge.

नू न एहि वार्यमग्ने गृणान् आ भर ।
ये वयं ये च सूरयः स्वस्ति धामहे सचोतैधि पृत्सु नो वृधे ॥५॥

5. Now, voiced by our word, come to us and bring to us our

desirable good; we here and the illumined seers, let us together found our blissful state. And do thou be with us in our battles that we may grow.

SUKTA 17

आ यज्ञैर्देव मर्त्य इत्था तव्यांसमृतये ।
अग्निं कृते स्वध्वरे पूरुरीळीतावसे ॥१॥

1. Mortal man should pray thee, O god, by the sacrifices because thou hast the right strength for his guard; when well-done is the pilgrim-sacrifice man must pray the Fire that he may protect him.

अस्य हि स्वयशस्तर आसा विधर्मन् मन्यसे ।
तं नाकं चित्रशोचिषं मन्द्रं परो मनीषया ॥२॥

2. By his mouth, in his complete law, thou becomest greater in the self-glory and holdest in mind that rapturous heaven manifoldly brilliant in its light beyond the thinking mind.

अस्य वासा उ अर्चिषा य आयुक्त तुजा गिरा ।
दिवो न यस्य रेतसा बृहच्छोचन्त्यर्चयः ॥३॥

3. This, indeed, is he who by the ray of this Fire has become possessed of the force and the word and whose rays by the seed of heaven blaze into a vast light.

अस्य क्रत्वा विचेतसो दस्मस्य वसु रथ आ ।
अथा विश्वासु हव्योऽग्निर्विक्षु प्र शस्यते ॥४॥

4. By the will of this completely conscious achiever of works the riches are there in his car; so now is the Fire the one to be called and he is proclaimed in all the peoples.

नू न इद्वि वार्यमासा सचन्त सूरयः ।
ऊर्जो नपादभिष्टये पाहि शंधि स्वस्तय उतैधि पृत्सु नो वृधे ॥५॥

5. Now, indeed, by the mouth of the Fire, can the luminous
seers cleave to that desirable good; O son of energy, protect
us that we may enter in, have power for the happy state.
And do thou be with us in our battles that we may conquer.

DWITA MRIKTAVAHAS

SUKTA 18

प्रातरग्निः पुरुप्रियो विशः स्तवेतातिथिः ।
विश्वानि यो अमर्त्यो हव्या मर्तेषु रण्यति ॥१॥

1. Let the Fire with his multitude of delightful things, the guest
of man, receive the laud at dawn, he who is immortal in
mortals and takes joy in all their offerings.

द्विताय मृक्तवाहसे स्वस्य दक्षस्य मंहना ।
इन्दुं स धत्त आनुषक् स्तोता चित् ते अमर्त्य ॥२॥

2. The plenitude of his own understanding for the twofold
power that carries the purified offering; he holds uninter-
ruptedly the moon-wine and he too who lauds thee, holds
it, O immortal.

तं वो दीर्घायुशोचिषं गिरा हुवे मघोनाम् ।
अरिष्टो येषां रथो व्यश्वदावन्नीयते ॥३॥

3. I call him by the word who is the light of long-extended life
for you the lords of plenty, you whose chariot goes abroad
without hurt, O giver of the Horse,—

चित्रा वा येषु दीधितिरासन्नकथा पान्ति ये ।
स्तीर्ण बर्हिः स्वर्णरे श्रवांसि दधिरे परि ॥४॥

4. In whom is the richly brilliant light of thought and they guard the utterances in their mouths; spread is the sacred seat and they found the inspirations all around it in the Godhead of the sun-world.

ये मे पञ्चाशतं ददुरश्वानां सधस्तुति ।
द्युमदाने महि श्रवो वृहत् कृधि मधोनां नृवदमृत नृणाम् ॥५॥

5. They who have given me in the moment of the laud the fifty steeds of swiftness, create for those lords of plenty a great and luminous inspired knowledge, create for those gods the Vast, with its gods, O Immortal, O Fire.

VAVRI

SUKTA 19

अभ्यवस्थाः प्र जायन्ते प्र वक्रेवं व्रिश्चकेत ।
उपस्थे मातुर्विं चष्टे ॥१॥

1. State upon state is born, covering upon covering has become conscious and aware, in the lap of the mother he sees.

जुहुरे वि चितयन्तोऽनिमिषं नृमणं पान्ति ।
आ दृढ्छां पुरं विविशुः ॥२॥

2. Awaking to an entire knowledge they have called and guard a sleepless strength, they have entered the strong fortified city.

आ श्वैत्रेयस्य जन्तवो द्युमद् वर्धन्त कृष्टयः ।
निष्क्रीवो वृहदुक्थ एना मध्वा न वाजयुः ॥३॥

3. Creatures born, men who people the earth have increased

the luminosity of the son of the white mother; his neck wears the golden necklace, he has the utterance of the Vast, and with his honey-wine he is the seeker of the plenitude.

प्रियं दुर्गं न काम्यमजामि जाम्योः सचा ।
घर्मो न वाजजठरोऽदब्धः शशवतो दभः ॥४॥

- He is as if the delightful and desirable milk of the mother, he is that which is uncompanioned abiding with the two companions; he is the blaze of the light, and the belly of the plenitude, he is the eternal invincible and the all-conqueror.

क्रीळन् नो रश्म आ भुवः सं भस्मना वायुना वेविदानः ।
ता अस्य सन् धृषजो न तिग्माः सुसंशिता वक्ष्यो वक्षणेस्थाः ॥५॥

- O Ray, mayst thou be with us and play with us, unifying thy knowledge with the shining of the breath of life; may those flames of him be for us violent and intense and keenly whetted, strong to carry and settled in the breast.

THE PRAYASWATS

SUKTA 20

यमग्ने वाजसातम त्वं चिन्मन्यसे रयिम् ।
तं नो गीर्भिः श्रवाय्य देवत्रा पनया युजम् ॥१॥

- O Fire, O thou who art most strong to conquer the plenitudes, the wealth which thou holdest in mind, that make full of inspiration by the words and set it to work in the gods as our ally.

ये अग्ने नेरयन्ति ते वृद्धा उग्रस्य शवसः ।
अप द्वेषो अप द्वरोऽन्यन्त्रतस्य सश्चरे ॥२॥

- They have grown on thy forceful strength, O Fire, yet impel

us not on the way, they fall away and cleave to the hostility,
cleave to the crookedness of one who has a law alien to
thine.

होतारं त्वा वृणीमहेऽग्ने दक्षस्य साधनम् ।
यज्ञेषु पूर्व्यं गिरा प्रयस्वन्तो हवामहे ॥ ३ ॥

3. Thee, O Fire, the ancient one, we choose in our sacrifices
as the priest of the call, one who accomplishes a discerning
knowledge, and bringing the pleasant offering we call thee
by the word.

इत्था यथा त ऊतये सहसावन् दिवेदिवे ।
राय ऋताय सुक्रतो गोभिः ष्याम सधमादो
वीरैः स्याम सधमादः ॥ ४ ॥

4. So rightly make it that we may live in thy protection and
that we may grow towards the Truth day by day, O forceful
Fire, O strong in will, together rejoicing in the light of the
Ray-Cow, together rejoicing in the strength of the Heroes.

SASA

SUKTA 21

मनुष्वत् त्वा नि धीमहि मनुष्वत् समिधीमहि ।
अग्ने मनुष्वदङ्गिरो देवान् देवयते यज ॥ १ ॥

1. As the human we set thee within us, as the human we kindle
thee; O Fire, O Angiras, as the human offer sacrifice to the
gods for the seeker of the godheads.

त्वं हि मानुषे जनेऽग्ने सुप्रीत इध्यसे ।
सुचस्त्वा यन्त्यानुष्कु सुजात सर्पिरासुते ॥ २ ॥

2. O Fire, thou art kindled in the human being and well-

satisfied; unceasing ladles go to thee, O perfect in thy birth,
O thou who receivest as oblation the stream of his clarities!

त्वां विश्वे सजोषसो देवासो द्रूतमक्तत ।
सपर्यन्तस्त्वा कवे यज्ञेषु देवमीळते ॥ ३ ॥

3. Thee all the gods with one mind of acceptance made their envoy; men serving thee pray thee as the godhead in their sacrifices, O seer.

देवं वो देवयज्ययाऽग्निमीळीत मर्त्यः ।
समिद्धः शुक्र दीदिहृतस्य योनिमासदः ससस्य योनिमासदः ॥ ४ ॥

4. Let mortal man with will to the divine sacrifice to you, pray to the divine Fire; O brilliant Flame, high-kindled shine; mayst thou take thy seat in the native home of the Truth, take thy seat in the native home of the peace.

VISHWASAMAN

SUKTA 22

प्र विश्वसामन्नत्रिवदर्चा पावकशोचिषे ।
यो अध्वरेष्वीड्यो होता मन्द्रतमो विशि ॥ १ ॥

1. O thou of the universal peace, as the Atri sing the word of illumination to Fire of the purifying light who is to be prayed in the pilgrim-sacrifices, the priest of the call, most rapturous in man.

न्यग्निं जातवेदसं दधाता देवमृत्विजम् ।
प्र यज्ञ एत्वानुषगद्या देवव्यचस्तमः ॥ २ ॥

2. Set within you Fire, the knower of all things born, as the divine ordainer of the rite; let your sacrifice march forward today most strong to bring the epiphany of the gods.

चिकित्विन्मनसं त्वा देवं मर्तास ऊतये ।
वरेण्यस्य तेऽवस इयानासो अमन्महि ॥ ३॥

3. Mortals we fix our minds on thee the godhead who hast the mind of conscious knowledge for the protection as we journey, for the guardian supremely desirable.

अग्ने चिकिदध्यस्य न इदं वचः सहस्य ।
तं त्वा सुशिप्र दम्पते स्तोमैर्वर्धन्त्यत्रयो गीर्भिः शुभन्त्यत्रयः ॥ ४॥

4. O Fire, become conscious of this in us, this is our word, O forceful Flame: O strong-jawed master of the house this is thou whom the Atris magnify with their lauds, whom the Atris glorify with their words.

DYUMNA VISHWACHARSHANI

SUKTA 23

अग्ने सहन्तमा भर द्युम्नस्य प्रासहा रयिम् ।
विश्वा यश्चर्षणीरभ्यासा वाजेषु सासहत् ॥ १॥

1. O Fire, bring by the force of the light a forceful wealth which shall overcome by thy mouth in the plenitudes all the peoples.

तमग्ने पृतनाषहं रयिं सहस्व आ भर ।
त्वं हि सत्यो अङ्गुतो दाता वाजस्य गोमतः ॥ २॥

2. O forceful Fire, bring that wealth which overcomes armies, for thou art the true, the wonderful, the giver of the plenitude of the Ray-Cows.

विश्वे हि त्वा सजोषसो जनासो वृक्तवर्हिषः ।
होतारं सदसु प्रियं व्यन्ति वार्या पुरु ॥ ३ ॥

3. All men who have plucked the sacred grass with one mind of acceptance approach thee, the beloved priest of the call in their houses and reach in thee the multitude of desirable things.

स हि ष्मा विश्वचर्षणिरभिमाति सहो दधे ।
अग्न एषु क्षयेष्वा रेवनः शुक्र दीदिहि द्युमत् पावक दीदिहि ॥ ४ ॥

4. Surely he is all-seeing and holds an assailing force. Shine out in these houses of our habitation with thy riches, O white radiance of Fire; O thou who makest pure, shine out in thy light.

GAUPAYANAS OR LAUPAYANAS

SUKTA 24

अग्ने त्वं नो अन्तम उत त्राता शिवो भवा वरुणः ।
वसुरग्निर्वसुश्रवा अच्छा नक्षि द्युमत्तमं रयिं दाः ॥ १ ॥ २ ॥

- 1-2. O Fire, be one inmost to us and our deliverer, one benignant and helpful and with defences to shield us. Fire is a prince of treasures and has the inspiration of the riches; bring to us, give us that wealth of deepest light.

स नो बोधि श्रुधी हवमुरुष्या णो अघायतः समस्मात् ।
तं त्वा शोचिष्ट दीदिवः सुम्नाय नूनमीमहे सखिभ्यः ॥ ३ ॥ ४ ॥

- 3-4. Awake and listen to our cry; deliver us from all that works sin and evil. O luminous pure-flaming Fire, we yearn to thee for friend and comrade that they may receive thy bliss.

VASUYUS

SUKTA 25

अच्छा वो अग्निमवसे देवं गासि स नो वसुः ।
रासत् पुत्रं कृष्णामृतावा पर्षति द्विषः ॥१॥

1. Bring to you by your anthem the divine Fire that he may guard you; he comes to us a Prince of the Treasures. He is a son of the Sages, let him lavish his riches; the Truth is in him and he bears men across beyond the powers that are hostile.

स हि सत्यो यं पूर्वे चिद् देवासश्चिद् यमीधिरे ।
होतारं मन्दजिह्वमित् सुदीतिभिर्विभावसुम् ॥२॥

2. This is the True whom the men of old kindled and the gods set aflame. With their high burnings of his light they kindled the Prince of the Treasures of Light, the Priest of the call with his tongue of rapture.

- स नो धीती वरिष्ठया श्रेष्ठया च सुमत्या ।
अग्ने रायो दिदीहि नः सुवृक्तिभिर्वरेण्य ॥३॥
3. By a supreme thinking, by a best right understanding, by thy perfect purification set alight in us those riches, O Desirable, O Fire.

- अग्निदेवेषु राजत्यग्निर्मर्तेष्वाविशन् ।
अग्निर्नो हव्यवाहनोऽग्निं धीभिः सपर्यत ॥४॥
4. The Fire shines in the gods, the Fire enters into mortals and his light is in them; Fire is the Carrier of offerings. Wait with your thoughts on the Fire.

अग्निस्तुविश्रवस्तमं तुविब्रह्माणमुत्तमम् ।
अतूर्तं श्रावयत्पतिं पुत्रं ददाति दाशुषे ॥ ५ ॥

5. Fire gives to the giver that highest unpierced Son in whom are many inspirations and the multitude of the Words of Knowledge, the Son who opens the hearing of the Truth to his possessor.

अग्निर्ददाति सत्पतिं सासाह यो युधा नृभिः ।
अग्निरत्यं रघुष्यदं जेतारमपराजितम् ॥ ६ ॥

6. Fire gives the Master of beings who overcomes by men¹⁴ in the battle, Fire gives the swift-galloping horse conquering and unconquered.

यद् वाहिष्ठं तदग्नये वृहदर्चं विभावसो ।
महिषीव त्वद् रथिस्त्वद् वाजा उदीरते ॥ ७ ॥

7. For the Fire that which is most wide to bear! Sing one word that is vast, O thou who hast light for thy riches. Thine is as if a mighty treasure; thine ascend the plenitudes.

तव द्युमन्तो अर्चयो ग्रावेवोच्यते वृहत् ।
उतो ते तन्यतुर्यथा स्वानो अर्तं त्मना दिवः ॥ ८ ॥

8. Thy rays are full of light, there is a voicing of the Vast like the noise of the Stone. The sound of thee has arisen like thunder by the self of heaven.¹⁵

एवाँ अग्निं वसूयवः सहसानं ववन्दिम ।
स नो विश्वा अति द्विषः पर्षन्नावेव सुक्रुतुः ॥ ९ ॥

9. Seekers of the Treasure, thus have we worshipped when he put forth his strength the Fire. Wise of will, may he carry us across as in a ship beyond all the powers that are hostile.

¹⁴ Or, by the gods

¹⁵ Or, came like thunder of itself from heaven.

SUKTA 26

अग्ने पावक रोचिषा मन्द्रया देव जिह्या ।
आ देवान् वक्षि यक्षि च ॥१॥

- O God, O Fire, bring the gods and to them sacrifice with the purifying light of thy tongue of rapture.

तं त्वा वृत्सवीमहे चित्रभानो स्वर्द्धशम् ।
देवाँ आ वीतये वह ॥२॥

- Fire with the many-hued lights, Fire that drippest the clarities, we desire thee whose eyes behold the world of the Sun. Bring the gods for the advent.

वीतिहात्रं त्वा कवे द्युमन्तं समिधीमहि ।
अग्ने वृहन्तमध्वरे ॥३॥

- The Pilgrim of the Way who voyages with our offerings, O Seer, we set thee ablaze in thy light and thy vastness.

अग्ने विश्वेभिरा गहि देवेभिर्व्यदातये ।
होतारं त्वा वृणीमहे ॥४॥

- O Fire, come with all the gods for the gift of the oblation. We choose thee the priest of our call.

यजमानाय सुन्वत आग्ने सुवीर्य वह ।
देवैरा सत्सि बहिंषि ॥५॥

- O Fire, bring to one who sacrifices, one who offers the wine a hero force. Sit with the gods on the grass of the altar.

समिधानः सहस्रजिदग्ने धर्माणि पुष्टसि ।
देवानां द्रूत उक्ष्यः ॥६॥

- O Fire, in thy kindling thou art a conqueror of the thousands; thou nourishest the Laws with thy blaze. Thou art the messenger of the gods and their word is with thee.

न्यग्निं जातवेदसं होत्रवाहं यविष्ट्यम् ।
दधाता देवमृत्विजम् ॥ ७ ॥

7. Set within you the Fire that knows all things born, the Fire ever young, the Carrier of the offerings, the divine Priest who does sacrifice in its season.

प्र यज्ञ एत्वानुषगद्या देवव्यचस्तमः ।
स्तृणीत वर्हिरासदे ॥ ८ ॥

8. Let our sacrifice uninterruptedly march on most strong today to reveal the gods. Strew, strew the grass of the altar for the session.

एदं मरुतो अश्विना मित्रः सीदन्तु वरुणः ।
देवासः सर्वया विशा ॥ ९ ॥

9. Let the Life-Gods sit there and the twin Drivers of the Horse and Mitra and Varuna and the gods with all the divine People.

TRYARUNA TRAIVRISHNA, TRASADASYU
PAURUKUTSYA, ASHWAMEDHA BHARATA

SUKTA 27

अनस्वन्ता सत्पतिर्मामहे मे गावा चेतिष्ठो असुरो मधोनः ।
त्रैवृष्णो अग्ने दशभिः सहस्रैश्वानर व्यरुणश्चकेत ॥ १ ॥

1. The Master of beings, the Holder of Plenty, the mighty Lord most awake to knowledge has made me largesse of two Ray-Cows that draw the Wain. Let the Triple Dawn-lord son of the Triple Male awake to knowledge by the ten thousands of the Ray-Cows, O universal Fire.

यो मे शता च विंशतिं च गोनां हरी च युक्ता सुधुरा ददाति ।
वैश्वानर सुषुतो वावृथानोऽग्ने यच्छ्र अरुणाय शर्म ॥२॥

2. A hundred and twenty of the Ray-Cows he founds for me and the two shining Horses, good yoke-bearers yoked together. High-chanted, increasing, O Fire, universal God-head, extend to the Triple Dawn-lord peace and bliss.

एवा ते अग्ने सुमतिं चकानो नविष्टाय नवमं त्रसदस्युः ।
यो मे गिरस्तुविजातस्य पूर्वीर्युक्तेनाभि अरुणो गृणाति ॥३॥

3. Even thus the Terror of the Destroyers and Triple Dawn-lord, desiring thy mind of right thought, O Fire, a newest power for one born most new, repeats after me my words with an understanding yoked to mine, repeats the many words of my many births.

यो म इति प्रवोचत्यश्वमेधाय सूरये ।
दददृचा सनिं यते ददन्मेधामृतायते ॥४॥

4. His utterance of truth answers “yes” to mine. May he give to the Illuminate, the Sacrificer of the Horse, give by the word of light to one who marches towards possession, found understanding for one who builds in himself the Truth.

यस्य मा परुषाः शतमुद्धर्षयन्त्युक्षणः ।
अश्वमेधस्य दानाः सोमा इव आशिरः ॥५॥

5. His are the hundred fierce bulls that lift up my joy. The gifts of the Sacrificer of the Horse are like juices of the rapture-wine with triple blendings.

इन्द्राग्नी शतदाव्यश्वमेधे सुवीर्यम् ।
क्षत्रं धारयतं वृहद् दिवि सूर्यमिवाजरम् ॥६॥

6. O Indra, O Fire, sustain in the Sacrificer of the Horse, in the giver of the hundreds the force of the Heroes. Uphold in him a vast strength of battle like the ageless Sun in heaven.

VISHWAVARA

SUKTA 28

समिद्धो अग्निर्दिवि शोचिरश्वेत् प्रत्यङ्गुषसमुर्विया वि भाति ।
एति प्राची विश्ववारा नमोभिर्देवाँ ईळाना हविषा घृताची ॥१॥

1. The Fire is kindled, his flaming light is lodged in heaven;¹⁶ he faces towards the Dawn and wide is his lustre. Lo, she comes with all desirable things in her, turned to the Beyond, moving to the Light, aspiring to the gods with the offering and obeisance.

समिध्यमानो अमृतस्य राजसि हविष्कृणवन्तं सचसे स्वस्तये ।
विश्वं स धत्ते द्रविणं यमिन्वस्यातिथ्यमग्ने नि च धत्त इत् पुरः ॥२॥

2. When thou blazest high, thou becomest a king of Immortality and thou art close to the man who makes oblation to give him bliss and peace. He to whom thou comest, holds every kind of riches; O Fire, he finds thy guesthood within him and in front.

अग्ने शर्ध महते सौभगाय तव द्युम्नान्युत्तमानि सन्तु ।
सं जास्पत्यं सुयममा कृषुष्व शत्रूयतामभि तिष्ठा महांसि ॥३॥

3. O Fire, put forth thy strength for a vast felicity; let there be in us thy highest lights. Create in us thy lordship of the spouse reined with a strong control; trample on the lustres of those that turn to enmity against us.

समिद्धस्य प्रमहसोऽग्ने वन्दे तव श्रियम् ।
वृषभो द्युम्नवाँ असि समध्वरेष्विध्यसे ॥४॥

4. I adore the glory and beauty of thee, O Fire, when thou art ablaze in the greatness of thy light. Thou art the Bull full of illuminations and high thou art kindled in men's pilgrim sacrifices.

¹⁶ Or, he has entered into a flaming light in heaven;

समिद्धो अग्न आहुत देवान् यक्षि स्वध्वर ।
त्वं हि हव्यवाळसि ॥५॥

5. O Fire perfect in the pilgrim rite, Fire fed with our oblations,
kindled do sacrifice to the gods; for thou art the Carrier of
offerings.

आ जुहोता दुवस्यताऽग्निं प्रयत्यध्वरे ।
वृणीध्वं हव्यवाहनम् ॥६॥

6. When the pilgrim sacrifice moves on its way, serve the Fire,
cast the oblation, accept the Carrier of offerings.

Mandala Seven

VASISHTHA MAITRAVARUNI

SUKTA 1

अग्निं नरो दीधितिभिररण्योर्हस्तच्युती जनयन्त प्रशस्तम् ।
द्वारेदृशं गृहपतिमर्थर्युम् ॥१॥

1. Men have brought to birth from the two tinders by the hands' fall the Fire voiced by the light of their meditations,¹ Fire that sees afar, the flaming master of the house.

तमग्निमस्ते वसवो न्यृणवन्त्सुप्रतिचक्षमवसे कुतश्चित् ।
दक्षाय्यो यो दम आस नित्यः ॥२॥

2. The Shining Ones² have set within in our dwelling-house — closely regarding all to guard us from whatever side — that Fire which in his home sits eternal and all-discerning.

प्रेद्धो अग्ने दीदिहि पुरो नोऽजस्रया सूर्या यविष्ट ।
त्वां शशवन्त उप यन्ति वाजाः ॥३॥

3. Verily shine out in front of us, O Fire, with thy perpetual radiance; to thee continuous come plenitudes.

प्र ते अग्नयोऽग्निभ्यो वरं निः सुवीरासः शोशुचन्त द्युमन्तः ।
यत्रा नरः समासते सुजाताः ॥४॥

4. Fires come blazing out supremely from thy Fires, luminous, full of hero-might, there where are assembled men born to the perfect birth.

¹ Or, by the scintillations of their thought the Fire voiced by them,

² Or, the lords of the riches

दा नो अग्ने धिया रथ्यं सुवीरं स्वपत्यं सहस्य प्रशस्तम् ।
न यं यावा तरति यातुमावान् ॥५॥

5. Give us, O Fire, O Forceful One, by the thought the wealth full of hero-power, full of progeny high-proclaimed which the Assailant with his demon magic cannot pierce.

उप यमेति युवतिः सुदक्षं दोषा वस्तोहविष्मती घृताची ।
उप स्वैनमरमतिर्वसूयुः ॥६॥

6. He to whom there comes in the light and in the dusk the young Damsel, luminous bearing the offering — it is his own dynamic thought that comes to him desiring the Riches.

विश्वा अग्नेऽप दहारातीर्येभिस्तपोभिरदहो जरुथम् ।
प्र निस्वरं चातयस्वामीवाम् ॥७॥

7. O Fire, burn away from us all hostile powers with the consuming flames with which thou didst burn the affliction demon, destroy Pain so that no voice of her is left.

आ यस्ते अग्न इधते अनीकं वसिष्ठ शुक्र दीदिवः पावक ।
उतो न एभिः स्तवथैरिह स्याः ॥८॥

8. O bright and most opulent, O Fire, who shonest and purif-est, as with whosoever kindles thy flame-forces, so with us too, by those lauds abide.

वि ये ते अग्ने भेजिरे अनीकं मर्ता नरः पित्र्यासः पुरुत्रा ।
उतो न एभिः सुमना इह स्याः ॥९॥

9. As with those who have turned to thy flame-force, mortal men, our forefathers in many lands, with us too by these lauds in thy right-mindedness abide.

इमे नरो वृत्रहत्येषु शूरा विश्वा अदेवीरभि सन्तु मायाः ।
ये मे धियं पनयन्त प्रशस्ताम् ॥१०॥

10. May these men, heroes in the slayings of the Coverer, who

work out the thought I have voiced, overcome all undivine
image-knowledge.

मा शूने अग्ने नि षदाम नृणां माशेषसोऽवीरता परि त्वा ।
प्रजावतीषु द्वयसु द्वय ॥१॥

11. O Fire, may we not dwell in the emptiness, nor in houses of men where there is no son³ and the hero is not, but around thee may we dwell in homes where there is good progeny, O dweller in the home.

यमश्वी नित्यमुपयाति यज्ञं प्रजावन्तं स्वपत्यं क्षयं नः ।
स्वजन्मना शेषसा वावृधानम् ॥१२॥

12. This is the eternal sacrifice to which there comes the Rider of the Horse, to our house full of progeny and good offspring, our house increasing with the self-born Son.

पाहि नो अग्ने रक्षसो अजुष्टात् पाहि धूर्तेररुषो अघायोः ।
त्वा युजा पृतनायूँरभि व्याम् ॥१३॥

13. Protect us, O Fire, from the abhorred Rakshasa, protect from the harm of one who would war against us and do us evil; with thee as ally may we overcome those who would battle against us.

सेदग्निरग्नीरत्यस्त्वन्यान् यत्र वाजी तनयो वीढुपाणिः ।
सहस्रपाथा अक्षरा समेति ॥१४॥

14. May that Fire go beyond all other fires where is the Horse and the Son with the strong hand; traveller of the thousand paths reaches the imperishable things.

सेदग्निर्यो वनुष्यतो निपाति समेद्वारमंहस उरुष्यात् ।
सुजातासः परि चरन्ति वीराः ॥१५॥

15. This is that Fire who guards those who would conquer, he

³ Or, where no remainder is left

protects from evil the man who sets him ablaze; the heroes of the perfect birth move around him.

अयं सो अग्निराहुतः पुरुषा यमीशानः समिदिन्वे हविष्मान् ।
परि यमेत्यधरेषु होता ॥१६॥

16. This is that Fire who is called⁴ in many lands, whom the giver of the offering sets ablaze and has lordship, round whom moves the priest of the call in the rites of the path.

त्वे अग्न आहवनानि भूरीशानास आ जुहुयाम नित्या ।
उभा कृष्णवन्तो वहत् मियधे ॥१७॥

17. In thee, O Fire, we cast many offerings gaining lordship, creating in the sacrifice both the eternal Travellers.

इमो अग्ने वीततमानि हव्याऽजस्रो वक्षि देवतातिमच्छ ।
प्रति न इं सुरभीणि व्यन्तु ॥१८॥

18. O Fire, these offerings most desired, incessantly bring to our formation of the godhead; to us may there come all delightful Powers.

मा नो अग्नेऽवीरते परा दा द्वुर्वाससेऽमतये मा नो अस्यै ।
मा नः क्षुधे मा रक्षस ऋतावो मा नो दमे मा वन आ जुहूर्थाः ॥१९॥

19. Deliver us not, O Fire, to strengthlessness, nor to the ill-clad mindlessness, nor to hunger, nor to the Rakshasa, O thou with whom is the Truth, lead us not astray in the house or in the forest.

नू मे ब्रह्माण्यग्न उच्छशाधि त्वं देव मघवदभ्यः सुषूदः ।
रातौ स्यामोभयास आ ते यूयं पात स्वस्तिभिः सदा नः ॥२०॥

20. Now, O Fire, teach to us the Words, do thou, O God, speed them to the lords of plenty, may both we and they abide in thy grace, do you protect us ever with all kinds of weal.

⁴ Or, given offering

त्वमग्ने सुहवो रण्वसंदृक् सुदीती सूनो सहसो दिदीहि ।
मा त्वे सचा तनये नित्य आ धद्गा वीरो अस्मन्नर्यो वि दासीत् ॥२१॥

21. Thou, O Fire, art swift to our call and rapturous is thy vision; O son of force, shine with a bright light. Burn us not since in thee and with thee is the eternal Son, let not the strength of the hero in us break us to pieces.

मा नो अग्ने दुर्भृतये सचैषु देवेष्ट्रिभिनषु प्र वोचः ।
मा ते अस्मान् दुर्मतयो भृमाच्चिद् देवस्य सूनो सहसो नशन्त ॥२२॥

22. Mayst thou not, who art with us in these god-kindled fires, denounce us for difficulty to bear thee; may not wrong thinkings from thee, O son of force, even by error come to us.

स मर्तो अग्ने स्वनीक रेवानमर्त्ये य आजुहोति हव्यम् ।
स देवता वसुवनिं दधाति यं सूरिरर्थी पृच्छमान एति ॥२३॥

23. O Fire, O thou with thy flame-force, rich with Treasure, become the mortal who casts his offerings in the immortal; that godhead finds in him the conquest of the riches to whom comes questioning the illumined seer, the seeker.

महो नो अग्ने सुवितस्य विद्वान् रयिं सूरिभ्य आ वहा बृहन्तम् ।
येन वयं सहसावन् मदेमाऽविक्षितास आयुषा सुवीराः ॥२४॥

24. O Fire, thou art the knower of the great and happy path, bring to the illumined seers the vast Treasure by which, O forceful one, with a life unwasting, heroic in strength we may take rapture.

नू मे ब्रह्माण्यग्न उच्छशाधि त्वं देव मघवदभ्यः सुषूदः ।
रातौ स्यामोभयास आ ते यूयं पात स्वस्तिभिः सदा नः ॥२५॥

25. Now, O Fire, teach to us the Words, do thou, O God, speed them to the lords of plenty, may both we and they abide in thy grace, do you protect us ever with all kinds of weal.

SUKTA 2

जुषस्व नः समिधमने अद्य शोचा वृहद् यजतं धूममृण्वन् ।
उप स्पृश दिव्यं सानु स्तूपैः सं रश्मभिस्ततनः सूर्यस्य ॥१॥

1. Cleave to our fuel, O Fire, today, illumine the vast⁵ pouring thy smoke of sacrifice, touch the peak celestial with thy up-piled masses, then stretch them out to unite with the rays of the Sun.

नराशंसस्य महिमानमेषामुप स्तोषाम यजतस्य यज्ञैः ।
ये सुक्रतवः शुचयो धियंधाः स्वदन्ति देवा उभयानि हव्या ॥२॥

2. Let us invoke, by the sacrifices of the lord of sacrifice who voices the godheads, the greatness of these who are pure, who are perfect in will, who are founders of the Thought—gods, they take the taste of both kinds of offerings.

ईळेन्यं वो असुरं सुदक्षमन्तर्द्वृतं रोदसी सत्यवाचम् ।
मनुष्वदग्निं मनुना समिद्दं समध्वराय सदमिन्महेम ॥६॥

3. Fire who is to be prayed by you the mighty, the wise of understanding, the messenger between earth and heaven, whose speech is truth kindled as the human by the thinking man, let us greater ever for the pilgrim-sacrifice.

सपर्यवो भरमाणा अभिज्ञ प्र वृञ्जते नमसा वर्हिरग्नौ ।
आजुद्वाना घृतपृष्ठं पृषद्ददध्वर्यवो हविषा मर्जयध्वम् ॥४॥

4. Desiring to serve, bringing the offering, kneeling with prostration they pluck the sacred grass; O priests of the pilgrim-sacrifice, casting it into the Fire speckled, with luminous back, brighten him with the offering.

⁵ Or, blaze out vastly

स्वाध्यो वि दुरो देवयन्तोऽशिश्रयू रथयुदेवताता ।
पूर्वी शिशुं न मातरा रिहाणे समग्रुवो न समनेष्वञ्जन् ॥५॥

5. The seekers of the godhead perfected in their thinking have come with yoked chariots and flung wide open the doors in their formation of the godheads, they have anointed him as if the two ancient Mothers caressing their child, as if rivers moving through level spaces.

उत योषणे दिव्ये मही न उषासानकता सुदुधेव धेनुः ।
बर्हिषदा पुरुहूते मधोनी आ यज्ञिये सुविताय श्रयेताम् ॥६॥

6. May too dawn and night, matrons great and divine, like good milch cows, queens of sacrifice, queens of plenty called by many seekers, sit on the sacred grass and lodge with us for our happiness.⁶

विप्रा यज्ञेषु मानुषेषु कारू मन्ये वां जातवेदसा यजध्यै ।
ऊर्ध्वं नो अध्वरं कृतं हवेषु ता देवेषु वनथो वार्याणि ॥७॥

7. I meditate on you, O ye two illumined Seers, doers of the work in our human sacrifices, knowers of all things born, for sacrifice; make high our pilgrim-sacrifice when we call: you win our desirable things in the gods.

आ भारती भारतीभिः सजोषा इळा देवैर्मनुष्येभिरग्निः ।
सरस्वती सारस्वतेभिरवाङ् तिस्रो देवीर्बहिरेदं सदन्तु ॥८॥

8. In unison may Bharati with her Muses of invocation, Ila with gods and men, and Fire, Saraswati with her powers of inspiration come down to us, the three goddesses sit upon this seat of sacrifice.

तन्नस्तुरीपमध पोषयितु देव त्वष्टर्वि रराणः स्यस्व ।
यतो वीरः कर्मण्यः सुदक्षो युक्तग्रावा जायते देवकामः ॥९॥

9. O divine maker of forms who hast the utter rapture, cast

⁶ Or, be with us for our happy journey.

upon us that supreme transcendence, cause of our growth, from which is born in us the hero ever active with wise discernment, the seeker of the gods who sets to work the stone of the wine-pressing.

वनस्पतेऽव सृजोप देवानग्निर्हविः शमिता सूदयाति ।
सेद्गु होता सत्यतरो यजाति यथा देवानां जनिमानि वेद ॥ १० ॥

10. O tree, release thy yield to the gods; Fire the achiever of the work speeds the offering on its way. It is he who does worship as the priest of the call, the more true in his act because he knows the birth of the gods.

आ याह्यग्ने समिधानो अर्वाडिन्द्रेण देवैः सरथं तुरेभिः ।
बर्हिर्न आस्तामदितिः सुपुत्रा स्वाहा देवा अमृता मादयन्ताम् ॥ ११ ॥

11. Come down to us, O Fire, high-kindled, in one chariot with Indra and swiftly journeying gods; let Aditi, mother of mighty sons, sit on the sacred grass, let the gods, the immortals, take rapture in Swaha.

SUKTA 3

अग्निं वो देवमग्नभिः सजोषा यजिष्ठं द्रूतमध्वरे कृणुध्वम् ।
यो मत्येषु निध्रुविर्कृतावा तपुर्मूर्धा घृतान्नः पावकः ॥ १ ॥

1. Create for yourselves in the sacrifice with a common joy in him the divine Fire along with all the fires, the strong for sacrifice, the messenger who is in mortals the possessor of Truth, inwardly permanent, whose food is Light, with his head of burning flame, the purifying Fire.

प्रोथदश्वो न यवसेऽविष्यन् यदा महः संवरणाद् व्यस्थात् ।
आदस्य वातो अनु वाति शोचिरध स्म ते व्रजनं कृष्णमस्ति ॥ २ ॥

2. He neighs in his desire like a horse in his pasture, when he breaks out from a mighty encirclement the wind blows in the wake of his flame; now black is thy marching.

उद् यस्य ते नवजातस्य वृष्णोऽग्ने चरन्त्यजरा इधानाः ।
अच्छा द्यामरुषो धूम एति सं दूतो अग्न ईयसे हि देवान् ॥ ३ ॥

3. O Fire, when are kindled the imperishable flames of thee, the new-born Bull, and they journey upwards, thy smoke mounts ruddy to heaven, for thou travellest, O Fire, as a messenger to the gods.

वि यस्य ते पृथिव्यां पाजो अश्रेत् तृषु यदन्ना समवृक्त जम्मैः ।
सेनेव सृष्टा प्रसितिष्ट एति यवं न दस्म जुद्धा विवेक्षि ॥ ४ ॥

4. The might of thee moves wide over earth, when swiftly thou tearest thy food with thy jaws, the movement of thy march is like a charging army; O strong doer, with thy tongue of flame thou art like one sifting grain of barley.

तमिद् दोषा तमुषसि यविष्टमग्निमत्यं न मर्जयन्त नरः ।
निशिशाना अतिथिमस्य योनौ दीदाय शोचिराहुतस्य वृष्णः ॥ ५ ॥

5. Him in the dusk, him in the dawn, the ever youthful Fire men groom like a horse whetting the strength of the guest in his native seat; when the offerings are cast to him there shines out the light of the Bull.

सुसंदृक् ते स्वनीक प्रतीकं वि यद् रुक्मो न रोचस उपाके ।
दिवो न ते तन्यतुरेति शुभ्मश्चित्रो न सूरः प्रति चक्षि भानुम् ॥ ६ ॥

6. O thou of the bright flame-force, fair to vision is thy front when nearest thou shinest out like gold, thy strength moves like the thunder of heaven, rich in thy brilliance thou showest thy light like a Sun.⁷

यथा वः स्वाहाग्नये दाशेम परीळाभिर्घृतवद्विश्च हृव्यैः ।
तेभिर्नो अग्ने अमितैर्महोभिः शतं पूर्भिरायसीभिर्नि पाहि ॥ ७ ॥

7. So that we may give for you, with Swaha, to the Fire we

⁷ Or, like the light of the Sun.

stand around him with the words of revelation and luminous offerings; do thou, O Fire, guard us with those measureless greatnesses, with thy hundred iron cities.

या वा ते सन्ति दाशुषे अधृष्टा गिरो वा यामिनृवतीरुरुच्चाः ।
ताभिर्नः सूनो सहस्रो नि पाहि स्मत् सूरीज्जरितृज्जातवेदः ॥८॥

8. The inviolate powers which are there for the giver, the Words with which thou guardest the powers that are human, with these protect us, at once illumined seers and thy adorers, O son of force, O knower of all things born!

निर्यत् पूतेव स्वधितिः शुचिर्गात् स्वया कृपा तन्वा रोचमानः ।
आ यो मात्रोरुशेन्यो जनिष्ट देवयज्याय सुक्रतुः पावकः ॥९॥

9. When he goes out pure like a bright axe shining with his own light for his body, he who was born from two mothers for sacrifice to the gods, strong of will, the desirable purifying Fire.

एता नो अग्ने सौभगा दिदीह्यपि क्रतुं सुचेतसं वतेम ।
विश्वा स्तोतम्यो गृणते च सन्तु यूयं पात स्वस्तिभिः सदा नः ॥१०॥

10. O Fire, light up for us these happinesses; let us wake to an understanding of thy perfectly conscious will; let all be there for those who laud thee, for him who utters thee; may you protect us always with all kinds of weal.

SUKTA 4

प्र वः शुक्राय भानवे भरध्वं हव्यं मतिं चाग्नये सुपूतम् ।
यो दैव्यानि मानुषा जनून्यन्तर्विश्वानि विश्वा जिगाति ॥१॥

1. Bring forward for the Fire, for the brilliant Light, thy mind and thy purified offering, the Fire who travels with knowledge between all the divine and human births.

स गृत्सो अग्निस्तरुणश्चिदस्तु यतो यविष्टो अजनिष्ट मातुः ।
सं यो वना युवते शुचिदन् भूरि चिदन्ना समिदत्ति सद्यः ॥ २ ॥

2. May Fire be the wise one and the deliverer when he is born the youngest from the mother, he who pure-bright of tooth clings to the forests, many foods he devours in a moment.

अस्य देवस्य संसद्यनीके यं मर्तासः श्येतं जगृप्रे ।
नि यो गृभं पौरुषेयीमुवोच द्वरोकमग्निरायवे शुशोच ॥ ३ ॥

3. In the rendezvous of this god in his flame-force, one whom mortals have seized, a white flame, and he has proclaimed that strong human grasp, Fire has illumined that which is ill-lit to the human being.

अयं कविरकविषु प्रचेता मर्तेष्वग्निरमृतो नि धायि ।
स मा नो अत्र जुहुरः सहस्वः सदा त्वे सुमनसः स्याम ॥ ४ ॥

4. This is the seer, the conscious thinker in those who are not seers, Fire has been set as the Immortal in mortals; then lead us not here astray, O forceful Fire, may we be ever right-minded in thee.

आ यो योनिं देवकृतं ससाद क्रत्वा ह्यग्निरमृताँ अतारीत् ।
तमोषधीश्च वनिनश्च गर्भं भूमिश्च विश्वधायसं विभर्ति ॥ ५ ॥

5. He who has come to his native seat made by the gods, Fire delivered the gods by his will; the plants and the trees and the earth bear him who is the foundation of all.

ईशे ह्यग्निरमृतस्य भूरेरीशे रायः सुवीर्यस्य दातोः ।
मा त्वा वयं सहसावन्नवीरा माप्सवः परि षदाम मादुवः ॥ ६ ॥

6. Fire has power for a large Immortality, he is master of a wealth bounteous and full of hero-strength; O thou who hast strength with thee, let us not sit around thee shapeless, actionless, without hero-force.

परिषद्यं ह्यारणस्य रेकणो नित्यस्य रायः पतयः स्याम ।
न शेषो अग्ने अन्यजातमस्त्यचेतानस्य मा पथो वि दुक्षः: ॥७॥

7. To be rejected is the abundance of the riches that bring no delight, let us be the masters of a wealth that is eternal; that which is born from another is not the Son; O Fire, turn not to wrong the paths of one who knows not.

नहि ग्रभायारणः सुशेवोऽन्योदर्यो मनसा मन्तवा उ ।
अधा चिदोक्तः पुनरित् स एत्या नो वाज्यभीषाळेतु नव्यः: ॥८॥

8. Not to be accepted even though blissful is the son of another womb, not to be thought of even by the mind, for he brings with him no delight, soon even he returns to his home, let rather the new Horse come to us, the all-conquering.

त्वमग्ने वनुष्यतो नि पाहि त्वमु नः सहसावन्नवद्यात् ।
सं त्वा ध्वस्मन्वदभ्येतु पाथः सं रथिः स्पृहयाय्यः सहस्री ॥९॥

9. Do thou, O Fire, protect us from one who would conquer us, protect us thou, too, O forceful Fire, from blame; may there come to thee on a path full of destruction, come utterly a wealth thousandfold and desirable.

एता नो अग्ने सौभगा दिदीह्यपि क्रतुं सुचेतसं वतेम ।
विश्वा स्तोतृभ्यो गृणते च सन्तु यूयं पात स्वस्तिभिः सदा नः ॥१०॥

10. O Fire, light up for us these happinesses; let us wake to an understanding of thy perfectly conscious will; let all be there for those who laud thee, for him who utters thee; may you protect us always with all kinds of weal.

SUKTA 5

प्राग्नये तवसे भरध्वं गिरं दिवो अरतये पृथिव्याः ।
यो विश्वेषाममृतानामुपस्थे वैश्वानरो वावृधे जागृवद्धिः ॥१॥

1. Bring to the Fire in his strength a Word for the traveller of earth and heaven who, in the lap of all the Immortals, the universal godhead, grows by those who are ever wakeful.

पृष्ठो दिवि धाय्यग्निः पृथिव्यां नेता सिन्धूनां वृषभः स्त्त्यानाम् ।
स मानुषीरभि विशो वि भाति वैश्वानरो वावृधानो वरेण ॥२॥

2. Fire, sought for, was set in heaven and in earth, the leader of the rivers, the Bull of things that are stable; he shines upon the human peoples, the universal godhead growing by that which is supreme.

त्वद् भिया विश आयन्नसिङ्गीरसमना जहतीर्भेजनानि ।
वैश्वानर पूरवे शोशुचानः पुरो यदग्ने दरयन्नदीदेः ॥३॥

3. In fear of thee the black Tribe, creatures unharmonious, came away casting behind them their enjoyments, when O Fire, O universal godhead, thy light shone upon man when thou torrest them and flamedst forth in his front.

तव त्रिधातु पृथिवी उत द्यौर्वैश्वानर ब्रतमग्ने सचन्त ।
त्वं भासा रोदसी आ ततन्थाऽजस्रेण शोचिषा शोशुचानः ॥४॥

4. O Fire, O universal godhead, earth and heaven and the mid-realm clove to the triple law of thy workings; shining with thy uninterrupted flame thou hast spread out the two firmaments by thy light.

त्वामग्ने हरितो वावशाना गिरः सचन्ते धुनयो धृताचीः ।
पतिं कृष्टीनां रथ्यं रथीणां वैष्वानरमुषसां केतुमहाम् ॥५॥

5. To thee, O Fire, the Words, thy shining horses, impetuous

and luminous cleave in their desire, to the universal godhead, lord of the peoples, charioteer of the Riches, ray of intuition of the dawns and the days.

त्वे असुर्यं वसवो न्यूणवन् क्रतुं हि ते मित्रमहो जुषन्त ।
त्वं दस्यूँरोक्सो अग्न आज उरु ज्योतिर्जनयन्नार्याय ॥६॥

6. Into thee, the Shining Ones⁸ cast the Mightiness, for they clove to thy will, O friendly Light; O Fire, thou threwest the Destroyers out from the house bringing to birth a wide Light for the Aryan.

स जायमानः परमे व्योमन् वायुर्न पाथः परि पासि सद्यः ।
त्वं भुवना जनयन्नभि क्रन्नपत्याय जातवेदो दशस्यन् ॥७॥

7. As thou camest to birth in the supreme ether at once as Vayu thou didst guard the path, thou criest aloud bringing to birth the worlds, according them as a gift to the Son, O knower of all things born!

तामग्ने अस्मे इषमेरयस्व वैश्वानर द्युमतीं जातवेदः ।
यया राधः पिन्वसि विश्ववार पृथु श्रवो दाशुषे मत्याय ॥८॥

8. O Fire, O universal godhead, O knower of all things born, send into us that luminous impulsion by which, O thou in whom are all desirable things, thou nourishest the achievement of a wide inspired knowledge for the mortal giver.

तं नो अग्ने मघवद्भ्यः पुरुक्षुं रथिं नि वाजं श्रुत्यं युवस्व ।
वैश्वानर महि नः शर्म यच्छ रुद्रेभिरग्ने वसुभिः सजोषाः ॥९॥

9. O Fire, join to us within, to us made masters of the riches a plenitude of the knowledge inspired wide in its store; O universal godhead, do thou in union with the Rudras and the Vasus extend to us a vast peace.⁹

⁸ Or, the Lords of the riches

⁹ Or, a vast refuge.

SUKTA 6

प्र सम्राजो असुरस्य प्रशस्तिं पुंसः कृष्टीनामनुमाद्यस्य ।
इन्द्रस्येव प्र तवस्स्कृतानि वन्दे दारुं वन्दमानो विवक्तम् ॥१॥

1. I adore the Render, adoring I proclaim by my speech the deeds of the all-ruler, the almighty, the male, as Indra strong and to be rejoiced in by the peoples.

कविं केतुं धासिं भानुमद्रेहिन्वन्ति शं राज्यं रोदस्योः ।
पुरंदरस्य गीर्मिरा विवासेऽग्नेवतानि पूर्व्या महानि ॥२॥

2. Him they send the seer, the ray of intuition, the foundation, the light on the hill, the kingdom of peace in earth and heaven; I illumine with my words the great and ancient laws of working of Fire who rends the cities.

न्यक्ततून् ग्रथिनो मृध्रवाचः पणीरश्रद्धाँ अवृधाँ अयज्ञान् ।
प्रप्र तान् दस्यूर्गिनर्विवाय पूर्वश्चकारापराँ अयज्यून् ॥३॥

3. The traffickers who have not the will for the work, the binders in knots, who have the speech that destroys, who have neither faith nor growth in the being, nor sacrifice, these the Destroyers Fire has scattered before him; supreme he has made nether in their realm those who will not to do sacrifice.

यो अपाचीने तमसि मदन्तीः प्राचीश्चकार नृतमः शचीभिः ।
तमीशानं वस्वो अग्निं गृणीषेऽनानतं दमयन्तं पृतन्यून् ॥४॥

4. The powers that rejoice in the darkness behind, he most mighty in his godhead has made by his energies powers in front; that Fire I proclaim, lord of the Treasure, who is never bowed, who tames those that make battle against him.

यो देहो अनमयद् वधसैर्यो अर्यपतीरुषसश्चकार ।
स निरुद्धा नहुषो यहू अग्निर्विशश्चक्रे बलिहृतः सहोभिः ॥५॥

5. He bent down the walls by his showering blows, he who has made the dawns wives of the Noble Ones; he the mighty Fire has put his restraint upon men and made the peoples bringers to him of his taxes by his forceful mights.

यस्य श्रमन्नुप विश्वे जनास एवैस्तस्युः सुमतिं भिक्षमाणाः ।
वैश्वानरो वरमा रोदस्योराग्निः ससाद पित्रोरुपस्थम् ॥६॥

6. He to whose peace all beings come by their movements praying for a right mind, the universal godhead came to that which is supreme above earth and heaven, Fire to the lap of the father and mother.

आ देवो ददे बुध्या वसूनि वैश्वानर उदिता सूर्यस्य ।
आ समुद्रादवरादा परस्मादाग्निददे दिव आ पृथिव्याः ॥७॥

7. The god took to him the riches of the Foundation, the universal godhead in the rising of the Sun gathered wealth from the nether and the upper ocean, Fire took to him the riches of earth and heaven.

SUKTA 7

प्र वो देवं चित् सहसानमग्निमश्वं न वाजिनं हिषे नमोभिः ।
भवा नो दृतो अध्वरस्य विद्वान् त्मना देवेषु विविदे मितदृः ॥१॥

1. Even though a god putting forth his force, I drive him forward as my steed of swiftness by my prostrations of surrender; become the messenger of our pilgrim-sacrifice, one who has knowledge; of himself in the gods he becomes known in his measured race.

आ याह्यग्ने पथ्या अनु स्वा मन्द्रो देवानां सख्यं जुषाणः ।
आ सानु शुष्मैर्नदयन् पृथिव्या जम्भेभिर्विश्वमुशधग्वनानि ॥ २ ॥

2. O Fire, come to us along thy own paths, rapturous, taking pleasure in the comradeship of the gods; making the high plateaus of earth to roar with his rushing strengths, with his tusks of flame he burns the woodlands, all he burns in his desire.

प्राचीनो यज्ञः सुधितं हि बहिः प्रीणीते अग्निरीढितो न होता ।
आ मातरा विश्ववारे हुवानो यतो यविष्ट जग्निषे सुशेवः ॥ ३ ॥

3. In front is the sacrifice, well-placed is the sacred grass, pleased is the Fire; one prayed, thou art like a priest of the call, calling to the two mothers in whom are all desirable things, whence thou art born most young and blissful.

सद्गो अध्वरे रथिरं जनन्त मानुषासो विचेतसो य एषाम् ।
विश्वामधायि विश्पतिर्द्वुरोणेऽग्निर्मन्द्रो मधुवचा ऋतावा ॥ ४ ॥

4. Men accomplished in conscious knowledge have brought at once into birth the charioteer who has been set as master of the peoples in their house, Fire the rapturous, the sweet of speech, one who has with him the Truth.

असादि वृतो वह्निराजगन्वानग्निर्ब्रह्मा नृषदने विधर्ता ।
द्यौश्च यं पृथिवी वावृभाते आ यं होता यजति विश्ववारम् ॥ ५ ॥

5. He has come and taken his seat in the house of Man, the chosen bearer of the offering, Fire, the priest of the Word, he who upholds all things, he whom earth and heaven increase, to whom the priest of the call sacrifices for in him are all desirable things.

एते द्युम्नेभिर्विश्वमातिरन्त मन्त्रं ये वारं नर्या अतक्षन् ।
प्र ये विश्वस्तिरन्त श्रोषमाणा आ ये मे अस्य दीधयन्नृतस्य ॥६॥

6. These have crossed beyond all by their lights, the men of strength who have fashioned excellently the Word, human beings who have gone forward eager to hear and have illumined for me something of this Truth.

नू त्वामग्न ईमहे वसिष्ठा ईशानं सूनो सहसो वसूनाम् ।
इषं स्तोतृभ्यो मघवद्भ्य आनङ्ग यूयं पात स्वस्तिभिः सदा नः ॥७॥

7. Now we desire thee, O Fire, O son of force, as the master of the Riches, we the Vasishthas; thou hast obtained the impulsion for those who laud thee, those who have the plenty. Do you always guard us with all kinds of weal.

SUKTA 8

इन्धे राजा समर्यो नमोभिर्यस्य प्रतीकमाहुतं घृतेन ।
नरो हव्येभिरीलते सबाध आर्द्धिनरग्र उषसामशोचि ॥१॥

1. The King, the Noble One is kindled high with prostrations of surrender, he whose front receives the oblation of the Light; men oppressed and opposed pray with offerings and the Fire is born in front of the dawns.

अयमु ष्य सुमहाँ अवेदि होता मन्दो मनुषो यद्वो अग्निः ।
वि भा अकः ससृजानः पृथिव्यां कृष्णपविरोषधीभिर्वक्षे ॥२॥

2. He verily is that great one whom one knew, the rapturous priest of man, the mighty one, the Fire; he has formed wide his lustres when he is let loose on the wide earth, black is the rim of his wheel when he is declared by her growths.

क्या नो अग्ने वि वसः सुवृक्तिं कामु स्वधामृणवः शस्यमानः ।
कदा भवेम पतयः सुदन्त्र रायो वन्तारो दुष्टरस्य साधोः ॥ ३ ॥

3. By what law of thee, O Fire, dost thou illumine our purification? To what self-law of thee dost thou move when thou art proclaimed aloud? O great giver, when may we become the lords and conquerors of a wealth that is all-accomplishing¹⁰ and unassailable?

प्रप्रायमग्निर्भरतस्य शृण्वे वि यत् सूर्यो न रोचते बृहद् भाः ।
अभि यः पूरुं पृतनासु तस्थौ द्युतानो दैव्यो अतिथिः शुशोच ॥ ४ ॥

4. The voice of the Fire of the bringer is heard more and more when he shines like a sun, a vast light; Fire who stands over man in his battles has broken flaming into a blaze, the divine guest.

असन्नित् त्वे आहवनानि भूरि भुवो विश्वेभिः सुमना अनीकेः ।
स्तुतश्चिदग्ने शृण्वषे गृणानः स्वयं वर्धस्व तन्वं सुजात ॥ ५ ॥

5. In thee were our many callings and thou becamest right-thoughted with all thy flame-forces. When thou art proclaimed by the word, thou hearest, O Fire; perfect in thy birth, thyself increase thy body.

इदं वचः शतसाः संसहस्रमुदग्नये जनिषीष्ट द्विवर्हाः ।
शं यत् स्तोतृभ्य आपये भवाति द्युमदमीवचातनं रक्षोहा ॥ ६ ॥

6. This is the word that rose into birth for the Fire, it is a conqueror of the hundreds and with it are the thousands, it is twofold in its greatness when it creates the bliss for those who laud him for the friend; it is luminous, a driver away of evil, a slayer of the Rakshasa.

¹⁰ Or, perfect

नू त्वामग्न ईमहे वसिष्ठा ईशानं सूनो सहसो वसूनाम् ।
इषं स्तोतृभ्यो मधवद्भ्य आनङ् यूयं पात स्वस्तिभिः सदा नः ॥७॥

7. Now we desire thee, O Fire, O son of force, as the master of the Riches, we the Vasishthas; thou hast obtained the impulsion for those who laud thee, those who have the plenty. Do you always guard us with all kinds of weal.

SUKTA 9

अबोधि जार उषसामुपस्थाद्वोता मन्द्रः कवितमः पावकः ।
दधाति केतुमुभयस्य जन्तोहव्या देवेषु द्रविणं सुकृत्सु ॥१॥

1. He awoke from the lap of the dawns, their lover, the rapturous priest of the call, the great seer, the purifying Fire; he finds the ray of intuition for both kinds of being born, the offerings in the gods, the riches in the doers of good.

स सुक्रतुर्यो वि द्वरः पणीनां पुनानो अर्कं पुरुभोजसं नः ।
होता मन्द्रो विशां दमूनास्तिरस्तमो ददृशे राम्याणाम् ॥२॥

2. Strong in will this is he who has flung wide the doors of the Traffickers purifying for us the illumining ray which gives the many enjoyments; the rapturous priest of the call, who dwells in the house of men, is seen through the darkness of the nights.

अमूरः कविरदितिर्विवस्वान्त्सुसंसन्मित्रो अतिथिः शिवो नः ।
चित्रभानुरुषसां भात्यग्रेऽपां गर्भः प्रस्व आ विवेश ॥३॥

3. The seer free from ignorance, the boundless, the luminous, a friend happily met,¹¹ our benignant guest, rich in his lustres he shines in front of the dawns, a child of the waters he enters into his mothers.

¹¹ Or, happy in thy sessions, our friend,

ईळेन्यो वो मनुषो युगेषु समनगा अशुच्ज्जातवेदाः ।
सुसंदृशा भानुना यो विभाति प्रति गावः समिधानं बुधन्त ॥ ४ ॥

4. One to be prayed by you in the generations of man, equal in his rays shone out the knower of all things born; Fire who dawns with his light of perfect vision, the rays woke into his high blazing.

अग्ने याहि द्रूत्यं मा रिषण्यो देवाँ अच्छा ब्रह्मकृता गणेन ।
सरस्वतीं मरुतो अश्विनापो यक्षि देवान् रत्नधेयाय विश्वान् ॥ ५ ॥

5. O Fire, go on thy embassy and fail not towards the gods with the company of those who fashion the Word: sacrifice to Saraswati and the life-powers, and the two riders of the horse and the waters and to all the gods for the giving of the ecstasy.

त्वामग्ने समिधानो वसिष्ठो जरुर्थं हन् यक्षि राये पुरंधिम् ।
पुरुणीथा जातवेदो जरस्व यूयं पात स्वस्तिभिः सदा नः ॥ ६ ॥

6. Vasishtha kindles thee, O Fire, slaying the destroying demon, sacrifice for the Wealth to the many-thoughted goddess:¹² many are the roads of thy approach, O knower of all things born. Do you always guard us with all kinds of weal.

SUKTA 10

उषो न जारः पृथु पाजो अश्रेद दविद्युतद् दीद्यच्छोशुचानः ।
वृषा हरिः शुचिरा भाति भासा धियो हिन्वान उशतीरजीगः ॥ १ ॥

1. As the lover of dawn he has reached to a wide strength shining, flaming out with his play of lightnings; the Bull pure and resplendent he shines on us, illumining with his light our thoughts he wakes our dawnings.

¹² Or, to her who is the tenant of the city:

स्वर्णं वस्तोरुषसामरोचि यज्ञं तन्वाना उशिजो न मन्म ।
अग्निर्जन्मानि देव आ वि विद्वान् द्रवद् दूतो देवयावा वनिष्ठः ॥२॥

2. It is as if the sun-world shone out from the day and the dawns; they are forming the sacrifice as aspirants the Thought: Fire the godhead knowing the births runs wide to his goal, the Messenger, the Traveller to the godheads, strong to conquer.

अच्छ्रा गिरो मतयो देवयन्तीरग्निं यन्ति द्रविणं भिक्षमाणाः ।
सुसंदृशं सुप्रतीकं स्वञ्चं हव्यवाहमरतिं मानुषाणाम् ॥३॥

3. Our words are thoughts seeking for godhead. Come to the Fire asking for the Treasure, Fire the carrier of offerings, fair of front, perfect in vision, true in movement, the traveller of the ways for men.

इन्द्रं नो अग्ने वसुभिः सजोषा रुद्रं रुद्रेभिरा वहा बृहन्तम् ।
आदित्येभिरदितिं विश्वजन्यां बृहस्पतिमृक्वभिर्विश्ववारम् ॥४॥

4. O Fire, companioning the shining ones bring to us Indra, companioning the Rudras bring vast Rudra, with the Adityas bring the boundless and universal Mother, with those who have the illumined word bring the master of the word in whom are all desirable things.

मन्दं होतारमुशिजो यविष्टमग्निं विश ईळते अधरेषु ।
स हि क्षपावाँ अभवद् रथीणामतन्द्रो दूतो यजथाय देवान् ॥५॥

5. Men who are aspirants pray in the pilgrim-rites to Fire the youthful and rapturous priest of the call; for he has become the ruler of the earth and the Riches, a sleepless messenger for sacrifice to the gods.

SUKTA 11

महाँ अस्यध्वरस्य प्रकेतो न कृते त्वदमृता मादयन्ते ।
आ विश्वेभिः सरथं याहि देवैर्न्यग्ने होता प्रथमः सदेह ॥१॥

- Thou art the great conscious perception of the pilgrim-sacrifice, without thee the immortals have no rapture; come in one chariot with all the gods, take thy seat within, O Fire, as the supreme priest of the call.

त्वामीळते अजिरं द्रूत्याय हविष्मन्तः सदमिन्मानुषासः ।
यस्य देवैरासदो बहिर्गनेऽहान्यस्मै सुदिना भवन्ति ॥२॥

- Men who bring the offering ever pray for thee, the swift in movement, for their envoy; when thou sitst with the gods on a man's seat of sacrifice, happy for him become the days.

त्रिश्चिदकतोः प्र चिकितुवसूनि त्वे अन्तर्दशुषे मत्याय ।
मनुष्वदग्न इह यक्षि देवान् भवा नो द्रूतो अभिशस्तिपावा ॥३॥

- Even thrice in the night within thee they woke to the knowledge of the Riches for the mortal giver; as the human here sacrifice to the gods, become our messenger and protector from the assailant.

अग्निरीशे बृहतो अध्वरस्याऽग्निर्विश्वस्य हविषः कृतस्य ।
कर्तुं ह्यस्य वसवो जुषन्ताऽथा देवा दधिरे हव्यवाहम् ॥४॥

- The Fire has power for a vast pilgrim-sacrifice, Fire is a master of every offering made, for to his will cleave the Shining Ones, so the gods established him as the carrier of the offerings.

आग्ने वह हविरद्याय देवानिन्द्रज्येष्ठास इह मादयन्ताम् ।
इमं यज्ञं दिवि देवेषु धेहि यूयं पात स्वस्तिभिः सदा नः ॥५॥

5. O Fire, bring the gods to eat of the offerings, may they with Indra as their eldest take here their rapture, establish this sacrifice in heaven in the gods. Do you always guard us with all kinds of weal.

SUKTA 12

अगन्म महा नमसा यविष्टं यो दीदाय समिद्धः स्वे दुरोणे ।
चित्रभानुं रोदसी अन्तर्वर्वी स्वाहुतं विश्वतः प्रत्यञ्चम् ॥१॥

1. We have come with a great prostration of surrender to the ever-young Fire who has shone out blazing in his own home rich of lustre between the wide firmaments and filled with the offerings cast in him he moves facing every side.

स मद्भा विश्वा दुरितानि साद्वानग्निः एवे दम आ जातवेदाः ।
स नो रक्षिष्द दुरितादवद्यादस्मान् गृणत उत नो मघोनः ॥२॥

2. He overcomes all evils by his mights: the Fire is affirmed by the lauds in the home, the knower of all things born; may he guard us from stumbling and from blame, us when we speak the words and us when we are lords of the plenty.

त्वं वरुण उत मित्रो अग्ने त्वां वर्धन्ति मतिभिर्विस्थाः ।
त्वे वसु सुषणनानि सन्तु यूयं पात स्वस्तिभिः सदा नः ॥३॥

3. Thou art Varuna and thou art Mitra, O Fire, thee the Vasishthas make to grow by their thoughts, in thee may the riches be easily won. Do you always guard us with all kinds of weal.

SUKTA 13

प्राग्नये विश्वशुचे धियंधेऽसुरघ्ने मन्म धीतिं भरध्वम् ।
भरे हविर्न वर्हिषि प्रीणानो वैश्वानराय यतये मतीनाम् ॥१॥

1. To Fire all-illumining, founder of the thought, slayer of the Asuras, bring your thinking and the thought formed; glad I bring to our sacrificial seat the offering for the universal godhead who has mastery over minds.

त्वमग्ने शोचिषा शोशुचान आ रोदसी अपृणा जायमानः ।
त्वं देवाँ अभिशस्तेरमुञ्चो वैश्वानर जातवेदो महित्वा ॥२॥

2. Thou, O Fire, illumining with thy light fillest earth and heaven even in thy birth: thou hast released the gods from the Assailant by thy might, thou the universal godhead, the knower of all things born.

जातो यदग्ने भुवना व्यस्यः पशून् न गोपा इर्यः परिज्मा ।
वैश्वानर ब्रह्मणे विन्द गातुं यूयं पात स्वस्तिभिः सदा नः ॥३॥

3. When born, O Fire, thou lookest on the world as a herdsman on his cattle, one to be missioned, pervading everywhere, as the universal godhead thou foundest the Path for the Lord. Do you always guard us with all kinds of weal.

SUKTA 14

समिधा जातवेदसे देवाय देवहृतिभिः ।
हविर्भिः शुक्रशोचिषे नमस्त्विनौ वयं दाशेमानये ॥१॥

1. To the godhead knower of all things born, by our fuel, by our invocations of the god, by our offerings may we give making prostration, to the Fire of the brilliant light.

वयं ते अग्ने समिधा विधेम वयं दाशेम सुषृती यजत्र ।
वयं घृतेनाध्वरस्य होतर्वयं देव हविषा भद्रशोचे ॥ २ ॥

2. May we worship thee, O Fire, with the fuel, may we give to thee with the laud, O master of sacrifice, we with the oblation, O priest of the call of the pilgrim-sacrifice, we with the offerings, O god of the happy flame.

आ नो देवेभिरुप देवहूतिमग्ने याहि वषट्कृतिं जुषाणः ।
तुभ्यं देवाय दाशतः स्याम यूयं पात स्वस्तिभिः सदा नः ॥ ३ ॥

3. Come, O Fire, with the gods to our invocation of the gods taking pleasure in the cry “Vashat”, to thee, O god, may we be givers of the offerings. Do you guard us always with all kinds of weal.

SUKTA 15

उपसद्याय मील्हुष आस्ये जुहुता हविः ।
यो नो नेदिष्टमाप्यम् ॥ १ ॥

1. To the bounteous, one to be approached with worship, cast in the mouth the offering, who brings to us closest alliance.

यः पञ्च चर्षणीरभि निषसाद दमेदमे ।
कविर्गृहपतिर्युवा ॥ २ ॥

2. He who comes to the five peoples of seeing men and takes his seat within in house and house, the seer, the master of the house, the youth.

स नो वेदो अमात्यमग्नी रक्षतु विश्वतः ।
उतास्मान् पात्वंहसः ॥ ३ ॥

3. May that Fire guard the knowledge that is our inmate from every side, may he protect us from evil.

नवं नु स्तोममग्नये दिवः श्येनाय जीजनम् ।
वस्वः कुविद् वनाति नः ॥४॥

4. Now have I brought forth a new laud to Fire, the Hawk of Heaven; he wins for us repeatedly the Riches.

स्पाहा यस्य श्रियो दृशे रथिर्वरिवतो यथा ।
अग्ने यज्ञस्य शोचतः ॥५॥

5. He whose glories are desirable for vision and are like the Riches with their hero-powers, for he flames in front of the sacrifice.

सेमां वेतु वषट्कृतिमग्निर्जुषत नो गिरः ।
यजिष्ठो हव्यवाहनः ॥६॥

6. May he take knowledge of this cry of “Vashat”, may the Fire cleave to¹³ our words who is the carrier of the offerings and most strong for sacrifice.

नि त्वा नक्ष्य विश्पते द्युमन्तं देव धीमहि ।
सुवीरमग्न आहुत ॥७॥

7. O Lord of the peoples to whom we must reach, to whom the offerings are cast, we have set thee within luminous in thy hero-force, O godhead, O Fire.

क्षप उम्रश्च दीदिहि स्वग्नयस्त्वया वयम् ।
सुवीरस्त्वमस्मयुः ॥८॥

8. Shine through the nights and the days, by thee may we be well-armed with fire; a hero-force art thou and thy desire is towards us.

¹³ Or, take pleasure in

उप त्वा सातये नरो विप्रासो यन्ति धीतिभिः ।
उपाक्षरा सहस्रिणी ॥९॥

9. To thee men illumined come with their thinkings for the conquest, to thee the imperishable One with her thousands.

अग्नी रक्षांसि सेधति शुक्रशोचिरमर्त्यः ।
शुचिः पावक ईड्यः ॥१०॥

10. The Fire repels the Rakshasas, the immortal with its brilliant light, one to be prayed, the pure and purifying flame.

स नो राधांस्या भरेशानः सहसो यहो ।
भगश्च दातु वार्यम् ॥११॥

11. Bring us our effectuations for thou hast the mastery, O son of force, and may the lord of enjoyment give us the object of our desire.

त्वमग्ने वीरवद् यशो देवश्च सविता भगः ।
दितिश्च दाति वार्यम् ॥१२॥

12. Thou, O Fire, givest us heroic glory and the divine Creator-Sun and Lord of enjoyment and the Mother of the finite gives us the object of our desire.

अग्ने रक्षा णो अंहसः प्रति ष्म देव रीषतः ।
तपिष्ठैरजरो दह ॥१३॥

13. O Fire, guard us from evil, against the doer of harm protect us, O god; imperishable, burn him with thy most afflicting fires.

अधा मही न आयस्यनाधृष्टो नृपीतये ।
पूर्भवा शतभुजिः ॥१४॥

14. Now unviolated become to us a mighty iron city hundred-fortressed for the protection of men.

त्वं नः पाह्यंहसो दोषावस्तरधायतः ।
दिवा नक्तमदाभ्य ॥१५॥

15. Do thou guard us from evil in dusk and in dawn from the bringer of calamity — thou art by day and night inviolable.

SUKTA 16

एना वो अग्निं नमसोर्जो नपातमा हुवे ।
प्रियं चेतिष्ठमरतिं स्वध्वरं विश्वस्य द्रूतममृतम् ॥१॥

1. With this prostration I invoke for you Fire the son of Energy, the beloved, the traveller most awake to knowledge who carries out well the pilgrim-sacrifice, the immortal messenger of every man.

स योजते अरुषा विश्वभोजसा स दुद्रवत् स्वाहुतः ।
सुब्रह्मा यशः सुशमी वसूनां देवं राधो जनानाम् ॥२॥

2. He yokes the two shining steeds that bring all enjoyments, well-fed with the offerings swiftly may he run; to be worshipped with sacrifice he of the perfect Word, accomplisher of the riches, the divine achievement of men.

उदस्य शोचिरस्थादाजुह्वानस्य मीळ्हुषः ।
उद धूमासो अरुषासो दिविस्पृशः समग्निमिन्धते नरः ॥३॥

3. Up stands the flame of light of this bounteous One when to him are cast the offerings, his ruddy smoke goes up and touches heaven; men kindle high the Fire.

तं त्वा दूतं कृष्णहे यशस्तमं देवाँ आ वीतये वह ।
विश्वा सूनो सहसो मर्तभोजना रास्व तद् यत् त्वेमहे ॥४॥

4. Thou art that most glorious messenger whom we create, bring to us the advent of the gods, O son of force, give us all mortal enjoyments, give us that which from thee we desire.

त्वमग्ने गृहपतिस्त्वं होता नो अध्वरे ।
त्वं पोता विश्ववार प्रचेता यक्षि वेषि च वार्यम् ॥५॥

5. Thou, O Fire, art the master of the house, thou art the priest of the call in our pilgrim-sacrifice, thou art the purifying priest, he in whom are all desirable things, the conscious thinker; sacrifice and reach the object of our desire.

कृधि रन्वं यजमानाय सुक्रतो त्वं हि रन्धा असि ।
आ न ऋते शिशीहि विश्वमृत्विजं सुशंसो यश्च दक्षते ॥६॥

6. O strong in will, create the ecstasy for the doer of the sacrifice for thou art the founder of ecstasy: sharpen in the Truth for us every doer of the rite and whosoever is perfect in expression and skilful in thought.

त्वे अग्ने स्वाहूत प्रियासः सन्तु सूरयः ।
यन्तारो ये मघवानो जनानामूर्वान् दयन्त गोनाम् ॥७॥

7. O Fire fed with the offerings, let them abide in thee, the beloved, the illumined wise and those lords of plenty among men who are they that travel to and allot to us the wide-nesses of the Rays.

येषामिद्धा वृत्तहस्ता दुरोण आँ अपि प्राता निषीदति ।
ताँस्त्रायस्व सहस्य दृहो निदो यच्छा नः शर्म दीर्घश्रुत् ॥८॥

8. Those within whose gated house the goddess of Revelation with her hands of light sits filled with her fullnesses, them deliver from the doer of harm and the Censurer,¹⁴ O forceful Fire; give to us the peace that hears the Truth from afar.

स मन्द्रया च जिद्धया वह्निरासा विदुष्टरः ।
अग्ने रयिं मघवद्भ्यो न आ वह हव्यदातिं च सूदय ॥९॥

9. Do thou then with thy rapturous tongue, for thou art the

¹⁴ Or, from betrayal and from bondage,

bearer of the oblation with thy mouth and great is thy knowledge, bring to our lords of the plenty the riches and hasten on its way our gift of the offering.

ये राधांसि ददत्यश्वा मघा कामेन श्रवसो महः ।
ताँ अंहसः पिपृहि पर्तुभिष्टं शतं पूर्ण्यविष्ट्य ॥१०॥

10. They who give to us the achieving plenitudes of the power of the Horse because of our desire of the great inspired knowledge, them, O most young godhead, bring safe out of all evil by thy hundred fortresses of rescue.

देवो वो द्रविणोदाः पूर्णा विवश्चासिचम् ।
उद् वा सिञ्चन्नमुप वा पूर्णध्वमादिद् वो देव ओहते ॥११॥

11. The divine giver of your Treasure desires from you the full pouring of the oblations; pour out and fill: then the godhead carries you on your way.¹⁵

तं होतारमध्वरस्य प्रचेतसं वह्निं देवा अकृण्वत ।
दधाति रन्नं विधते सुवीर्यमग्निर्जनाय दाशुषे ॥१२॥

12. The gods have made him the priest of the call of the pilgrimage-sacrifice, the conscious thinker, the carrier of flame; Fire finds the ecstasy and the heroic strength for the man who performs the sacrifice for the giver.

SUKTA 17

अग्ने भव सुषमिधा समिद्धु उत बहिरुर्विया वि स्तृणीताम् ॥१॥

1. O Fire, become high kindled with the plenty of thy fuel, let the sacred grass be spread wide.

¹⁵ Or, brings to you the Riches.

उत द्वार उशतीर्वि श्रयन्तामुत देवाँ उशत आ वहेह ॥२॥

2. Let the doors of aspiration swing open; bring here the aspirant gods.

अग्ने वीहि हविषा यक्षि देवान्त्स्वधरा कृणुहि जातवेदः ॥३॥

3. Go, O Fire, sacrifice to the gods with the offering; make good the ways of the pilgrim-sacrifice, O knower of all things born.

स्वधरा करति जातवेदा यक्षद् देवाँ अमृतान् पिप्रयच्च ॥४॥

4. He makes good the ways of the pilgrim-sacrifice, the knower of all things born; he sacrifices and gladdens the immortal gods.

वंस्व विश्वा वार्याणि प्रचेतः सत्या भवन्त्वाशिषो नो अद्य ॥५॥

5. Conquer all desirable things, O conscious thinker, may our yearning today become the Truth.

त्वामु ते दधिरे हव्यवाहं देवासो अग्न ऊर्ज आ नपातम् ॥६॥

6. Thee they have established as the carrier of offerings, O Fire, the gods have founded thee, the Son of Energy.

ते ते देवाय दाशतः स्याम महो नो रक्ता वि दध इयानः ॥७॥

7. Those may we be who give to thee, the godhead, go vast upon thy way and found for us the ecstasies.

Mandala Eight

VATSA KANWA

SUKTA 11

त्वमग्ने व्रतपा असि देव आ मर्त्येष्वा ।
त्वं यज्ञोष्वीङ्ग्यः ॥१॥

1. O Fire, thou art the guardian of the law of all workings, thou art the divine in mortals; thou art one to be prayed in the sacrifices.

त्वमसि प्रशस्यो विदथेषु सहन्त्य ।
अग्ने रथीरध्वराणाम् ॥२॥

2. O forceful one, it is thou who art to be expressed in the findings of knowledge; O Fire, thou art the charioteer of the pilgrim-sacrifices.

स त्वमस्मदप द्विषो युयोधि जातवेदः ।
अदेवीरग्ने अरातीः ॥३॥

3. So do thou remove away from us the enemies, O knower of all things born, even the undivine and hostile forces, O Fire.

अन्ति चित् सन्तमह यज्ञं मर्तस्य रिपोः ।
नोप वेषि जातवेदः ॥४॥

4. Even when it is near, O surely thou comest not to the sacrifice of our mortal foe, O knower of all things born.

मर्ता अमर्त्यस्य ते भूरि नाम मनामहे ।
विप्रासो जातवेदसः ॥५॥

5. Mortals illumined we meditate on the many names of thee
the immortal, the knower of all things born.

विप्रं विप्रासोऽवसे देवं मर्तास ऊतये ।
अग्निं गीर्भिर्हवामहे ॥६॥

6. We call the Fire with our words, illumined we call the
illumined for our guard, mortals we call the god for our
protection.

आ ते वत्सो मनो यमत् परमाच्चित् सधस्थात् ।
अग्ने त्वांकामया गिरा ॥७॥

7. Vatsa compels thy mind even from the supreme world of
thy session, O Fire, by his Word that longs for thee.

पुरुत्रा हि सद्गुणसि विशो विश्वा अनु प्रभुः ।
समत्सु त्वा हवामहे ॥८॥

8. Thou art the equal lord of all peoples in many lands; we call
to thee in the battles.

समत्स्वग्निमवसे वाजयन्तो हवामहे ।
वाजेषु चित्रराधसम् ॥९॥

9. We call to the Fire to guard us in our battles, we who
seek the plenitudes; in the plenitudes richly manifold is his
achievement.

प्रलो हि कमीड्यो अध्वरेषु सनाच्च होता नव्यश्च सत्पि ।
स्वां चाग्ने तन्वं पिप्रयस्वाऽस्मभ्यं च सौभगमा यजस्व ॥१०॥

10. For thou art of old one to be prayed in the pilgrim-sacrifices,
and from time eternal thou sittest as the ever-new priest of
the call; O Fire, gladden thy own body and bring happiness
to us by the sacrifice.

SOBHARI KANWA

SUKTA 19

तं गूर्धया स्वर्णरं देवासो देवमरतिं दधन्विरे ।
देवत्रा हव्यमोहिरे ॥१॥

- Affirm that godhead of the sun-world, the gods set the divine traveller to his race, they brought the offering to the world of the gods.

विभूतरातिं विप्र चित्रशोचिषमग्निमीळिष्व यन्तुरम् ।
अस्य मेधस्य सोम्यस्य सोभरे प्रेमध्वराय पूर्व्यम् ॥२॥

- O illumined seer, pray the Fire opulent in his gifts, rich in his lustres; the guide of this Soma sacrifice pray, O Sobhari, for the rite of the path, the ancient one.

यजिष्ठं त्वा ववृमहे देवं देवत्रा होतारममर्त्यम् ।
अस्य यज्ञस्य सुक्रतुम् ॥३॥

- We have chosen thee the mightiest for sacrifice, the divine in the divine, the immortal as the priest of the call of this sacrifice, the strong of will,—

ऊर्जो नपातं सुभगं सुदीदितिमग्निं श्रेष्ठशोचिषम् ।
स नो मित्रस्य वरुणस्य सो अपामा सुम्नं यक्षते दिवि ॥४॥

- The Son of Energy, the Fire, happy and radiant and most glorious in his light; may he win for us by sacrifice the bliss in heaven of Mitra and Varuna and the bliss of the waters.

यः समिधा य आहुती यो वेदेन ददाश मर्तो अग्नये ।
यो नमसा स्वध्वरः ॥५॥

- The mortal who with the fuel and the oblation, with knowledge and with surrender has given to the Fire, who is perfect in the pilgrim-rite,—

तस्येदर्वन्तो रंहयन्त आशवस्तस्य दुम्नितमं यशः ।
न तमं हो देवकृतं कुतश्चन न मर्त्यकृतं नशत् ॥६॥

6. Swift gallop his war-horses, most luminous is his glory, neither calamity wrought by the gods nor evil wrought of men can come to him from any part.

स्वग्नयो वो अग्निभिः स्याम सूनो सहस ऊर्जा पते ।
सुवीरस्त्वमस्मयुः ॥७॥

7. High of fire may we be with your fires, O son of force, O lord of Energies! for thou hast the hero-strength and thy desire is towards us.

प्रशंसमानो अतिथिर्न मित्रियोऽग्नी रथो न वेद्यः ।
त्वे क्षेमासो अपि सन्ति साधवस्त्वं राजा रयीणाम् ॥८॥

8. As our friendly guest finding our expression for us Fire must be known, and as our chariot; in thee are all-accomplishing foundations of ease, thou art the king of the Treasures.

सो अद्वा दाशवध्वरोऽग्ने मर्तः सुभग स प्रशंस्यः ।
स धीभिरस्तु सनिता ॥९॥

9. That mortal is sure in the giving of his pilgrim-sacrifice, O happy Fire, he is one to be proclaimed, may he be a conqueror by his thoughts,—

यस्य त्वमूर्धो अध्वराय तिष्ठसि क्षयद्वीरः स साधते ।
सो अर्वद्विः सनिता स विपन्नुभिः स शूरैः सनिता कृतम् ॥१०॥

10. One for whom thou standest high exalted over his pilgrim-sacrifice, he is a master and hero and accomplishes,—he conquers by the war-horses, by the luminous seers, by the heroes, wins his work achieved.

यस्याग्निर्वपुर्गृहे स्तोमं चनो दधीत विश्ववार्यः ।
हव्या वा वेविषद् विषः ॥११॥

11. He in whose house Fire, in whom are all desirable things, maintains his body and his affirming laud and his delight and the offerings, he occupies the field of his occupancy.

विप्रस्य वा स्तुवतः सहसो यहो मक्षतमस्य रातिषु ।
अवोदेवमुपरिमत्यं कृधि वसो विविदुषो वचः ॥१२॥

12. O son of force, for the illumined seer who lauds thee and is most swift in his givings, create for that seeker of knowledge, O Shining One,¹ the word in which the mortal is above, the godhead below.

यो अग्निं हव्यदातिभिर्नमोभिर्वा सुदक्षमाविवासति ।
गिरा वाजिरशोचिषम् ॥१३॥

13. He who by his gifts of the oblations or by prostrations of surrender, or by his word illuminates the Fire, who brings his right judgment, and the swift action of his light,—

समिधा यो निशिती दाशददितिं धामभिरस्य मत्यः ।
विश्वेत् स धीभिः सुभगो जनाँ अति द्युम्नैरुद्ध इव तारिषत् ॥१४॥

14. He who with his stimulation by the fuel serves with the seats of the session of the Fire, the Boundless, that happy mortal exceeding men by his thoughts and by his lights passes beyond all things as one who crosses over waters.

तदग्ने द्युम्नमा भर यत् सासहत् सदने कं चिदत्रिणम् ।
मन्युं जनस्य द्वद्यः ॥१५॥

15. Bring, O Fire, that light which overcomes in the house whatever devourer or wrath of any being with evil thoughts.

¹ Or, O lord of the Riches,

येन चष्टे वरुणो मित्रो अर्यमा येन नासत्या भगः ।
वयं तत् ते शवसा गातुवित्तमा इन्द्रत्वोता विधेमहि ॥१६॥

16. The light by which Mitra sees and Varuna and Aryaman, by which lords of the journey and Bhaga, that light may we worship, we made by thy force perfect knowers of the path guarded by the lordship of the Puissant.

ते घेदग्ने स्वाध्यो ये त्वा विप्र निदधिरे नृक्षसम् ।
विप्रासो देव सुक्रतुम् ॥१७॥

17. O Fire, those are perfect in their thought who, themselves illumined, have set thee within them, O illumined seer, thee, O godhead, divine in vision and strong in will.

त इद् वेदिं सुभग त आहुतिं ते सोतुं चक्रिरे दिवि ।
त इद् वाजेभिर्जिग्युर्महद् धनं ये त्वे कामं न्येरिरे ॥१८॥

18. They have made their altar and their offering, O happy Fire, and their libation of the wine in heaven, they have conquered by their plenitudes a mighty wealth who have cast into thee their desire.

भद्रो नो अग्निराहुतो भद्रा रातिः सुभग भद्रो अध्वरः ।
भद्रा उत प्रशस्तयः ॥१९॥

19. O felicitous god, happy to us art thou fed with the offerings, happy thy giving, happy the pilgrim-sacrifice, happy our utterances.

भद्रं मनः कृणुष्व वृत्रतूर्ये येना समत्सु सासहः ।
अव स्थिरा तनुहि भूरि शर्धतां वनेमा ते अभिष्ठिभिः ॥२०॥

20. Create for us a happy mind in the piercing of the Coverers by which thou mayst overcome in the battles; lay prostrate many firm positions of those who challenge us, may we conquer them by thy attacks.

ईळे गिरा मनुहितं यं देवा द्वूतमरतिं न्येरिरे ।
यजिष्ठं हव्यवाहनम् ॥ २१॥

21. I pray with the word the Fire set in man whom the gods sent in as the messenger and traveller, the carrier of offerings, strong to sacrifice.

तिग्मजम्भाय तरुणाय राजते प्रयो गायस्यगनये ।
यः पिंशते सूनृतामिः सुवीर्यमग्निर्धृतेभिराहुतः ॥ २२॥

22. To the ever-young Fire shining with his sharp tusks of flame thou singest delight, Fire who fed with the offerings of light forms by true words a great strength.

यदी धृतेभिराहुतो वाशीमग्निर्भरत उच्चाव च ।
असुर इव निर्णिजम् ॥ २३॥

23. When he is fed with the offerings of light the Fire like one full of might works his blade upwards and downwards and carves for himself a shape.

यो हव्यान्यैरयता मनुहितो देव आसा सुगन्धिना ।
विवासते वार्याणि स्वध्वरो होता देवो अमर्त्यः ॥ २४॥

24. The godhead set in man who speeds the offerings in its fragrant mouth, perfect in the pilgrim-sacrifice illuminates all desirable things, the divine and immortal priest of the call.

यदग्ने मर्त्यस्त्वं स्यामहं मित्रमहो अमर्त्यः ।
सहसः सूनवाहुत ॥ २५॥

25. O Fire, fed with the offerings, O son of force, O friendly light, if thou wert the mortal and I the immortal,—

न त्वा रासीयाभिशस्तये वसो न पापत्वाय सन्त्य ।
न मे स्तोतामतीवा न द्विहितः स्यादग्ने न पापया ॥ २६॥

26. I would not give thee over to the Assailant or to sinfulness, O benignant, O shining one; he who lauded me would not

be one without understanding or miserable nor one plagued by guilt, O Fire.

पितुर्नं पुत्रः सुभूतो द्वुरोण आ देवाँ एतु प्र णो हविः ॥ २७ ॥

27. He is like a son well nourished in the house of his father; may our offerings reach the gods.

तवाहमग्न ऊतिभिर्नेदिष्टाभिः सचेय जोषमा वसो ।
सदा देवस्य मर्त्यः ॥ २८ ॥

28. O Fire, O shining one, by thy closest guardings may I, the mortal, be ever companioned by the favour of the god.

तव क्रत्वा सनेयं तव रातिभिरग्ने तव प्रशस्तिभिः ।
त्वामिदाहुः प्रमतिं वसो ममाऽग्ने हर्षस्व दातवे ॥ २९ ॥

29. By thy will may I conquer, O Fire, by thy gifts, by thy revealing utterances; for of thee they speak as the guiding Thought in me. O Fire, have joy for the giving.

प्र सो अग्ने तवोतिभिः सुवीराभिस्तिरते वाजभर्मभिः ।
यस्य त्वं सख्यमावरः ॥ ३० ॥

30. By thy guardings in which is the strength of the heroes and the bringing of the plenitudes, he drives forward on his way with whom thou hast chosen friendship, O shining one.

तव द्रप्सो नीलवान् वाश कृत्विय इन्धानः सिष्णवा ददे ।
त्वं महीनामुषसामसि प्रियः क्षपो वस्तुषु राजसि ॥ ३१ ॥

31. The blue stream of thee with its cry is faithful to the law of its Truth, even as it is kindled it takes what is cast in it; thou art beloved of the great Dawns and thou shinest in the dwelling places of the night.

तमागन्म सोभरयः सहस्रमुष्कं स्वभिष्ठिमवसे ।
सप्राजं त्रासदस्यवम् ॥ ३२॥

32. We the sons of Sobhari have come to the Fire with its thousandfold mass of flame, strong in its approach for protection, imperial, the Fire of the Terror of the Destroyer.²

यस्य ते अग्ने अन्ये अग्नय उपक्षितो वया इव ।
विपो न दुम्ना नि युवे जनानां तव क्षत्राणि वर्धयन् ॥ ३३॥

33. O Fire, other fires dwell dependent on thee as on a tree its branches; I annex to me the illuminations of men and their lights, increasing so thy warrior forces.

यमादित्यासो अदूहः पारं नयथ मर्त्यम् ।
मघोनां विश्वेषां सुदानवः ॥ ३४॥

34. O sons of the boundless mother, you who betray not, great givers, the mortal whom out of all possessors of riches you lead to the other shore,—

यूयं राजानः कं चिच्चर्षणीसहः क्षयन्तं मानुषाँ अनु ।
वयं ते वो वरुण मित्रार्थमन्त्स्यामेदृतस्य रथः ॥ ३५॥

35. For you, the kings, who have power over seeing men, choose one or another to have mastery in the human ways,—such may we be, O Varuna, O Mitra, O Aryaman, charioteers, indeed, of the Truth.

अदान्मे पौरुकुत्स्यः पञ्चाशतं त्रसदस्युर्धूनाम् ।
मंहिष्ठो अर्यः सत्पतिः ॥ ३६॥

36. The Terror of the Destroyers, son of the master of wide vision, has given me the brides five hundred, he is a bounteous giver, the noble, a lord of beings.

² Or, Fire of Trasadasyu.

उत मे प्रयियोर्वयियोः सुवास्त्वा अधि तुगवनि ।
तिष्ठृणां सप्ततीनां ऊयावः प्रणेता भुवद् वसुर्दियानां पतिः ॥ ३६ ॥

37. And so, for me at the ford of the river Suvastu, the wide-flowing and forward streaming river of the happy dwelling places, came the bay horse, leader of the three seventies. May he become an opulent master of the things that are to be given.

VISHWAMANAS VAIYASHWA

SUKTA 23

ईक्षिष्वा हि प्रतीव्यं यजस्व जातवेदसम् ।
चरिष्णुधूममगृभीतशोचिष्म ॥ १ ॥

1. Pray the Fire as he fronts you, worship with sacrifice the knower of all things born, Fire with his driving smoke and his unseizable light,—

दामानं विश्वचर्षणेऽग्निं विश्वमनो गिरा ।
उत स्तुषे विष्पर्धसो रथानाम् ॥ २ ॥

2. Fire who is like the string of speeding chariots to a competitor in the race; O all-seeing universal mind, laud him with the word.

येषामावाध ऋग्मिय इषः पृक्षश्च निग्रमे ।
उपविदा वह्निर्विन्दते वसु ॥ ३ ॥

3. Those on whom he presses, possessor of the word of illumination and seizes on their impulsions and their satisfactions, by their approach to knowledge the Fire finds the Treasure.

उदस्य शोचिरस्थाद् दीदियुषो व्यजरम् ।
तपुर्जम्मस्य सुद्युतो गणश्रियः ॥ ४ ॥

4. Up stands his ageless light as he flames out with his burning tusks, in his beautiful splendour, in the glory of his companies.

उद्धु तिष्ठ स्वध्वर स्तवानो देव्या कृपा ।
अभिष्व्या भासा वृहता शुशुक्वनिः ॥ ५ ॥

5. Even so, stand up as they laud thee, O doer of the pilgrim-rite, shining out with thy divine light, with thy vast all-regarding lustre.

अग्ने याहि सुशस्तिभिर्हव्या जुद्धान आनुषक् ।
यथा दूतो बभूथ हव्यवाहनः ॥ ६ ॥

6. Go, O Fire, with perfect utterances of the word offering uninterruptedly the oblations, since thou hast become the messenger and the carrier of the offerings.

अग्निं वः पूर्व्यं हुवे होतारं चर्षणीनाम् ।
तमया वाचा गृणे तमु वः स्तुषे ॥ ७ ॥

7. I call for you the ancient Fire, the priest of the call of seeing men; him with this word I declare, him for you I laud.

यज्ञेभिरङ्गुतक्रतुं यं कृपा सूदयन्त इत् ।
मित्रं न जने सुधितमृतावनि ॥ ८ ॥

8. Fire whom with the sacrifices, with the light verily they speed like a friend firmly established in the man who possesses the Truth.

ऋतावानमृतायवो यज्ञस्य साधनं गिरा ।
उपो एनं जुजुषुन्मसस्पदे ॥ ९ ॥

9. To Fire the possessor of the Truth, the accomplisher of the sacrifice, the seekers of the Truth have come with the word and cleave to him in the seat of the adoration.

अच्छा नो अङ्गिरस्तमं यज्ञासो यन्तु संयतः ।
होता यो अस्ति विद्ध्वा यशस्तमः ॥ १० ॥

10. Let our sacrifices go towards him united in their effort, to him most fiery-wise of the Angirasas who is the priest of the call in men and most glorious.

अग्ने तव त्ये अजरेन्धानासो वृहद् भाः ।
अश्वा इव वृषणस्तविषीयवः ॥ ११ ॥

11. O ageless Fire, those lights of thine kindling the Vast are like male and mighty horses;

स त्वं न ऊर्जा पते रथ्यं रास्व सुवीर्यम् ।
प्राव नस्तोकं तनये समत्स्वा ॥ १२ ॥

12. So do thou, O Lord of Energies, give us the wealth, hero-might; protect us in our battles, in the Son of our begetting.

यद् वा उ विश्पतिः शितः सुप्रीतो मनुषो विश्णि ।
विश्वेदग्निः प्रति रक्षांसि सेधति ॥ १३ ॥

13. Since, indeed, the lord of the peoples, keen and glad in the house of man, wards off all demon-powers,—

शुष्घ्ने नवस्य मे स्तोमस्य वीर विश्पते ।
नि मायिनस्तपुषा रक्षसो दह ॥ १४ ॥

14. O Fire, with thy hearing of my new laud, with thy burning flame, consume utterly the demon magicians, O hero, O lord of the peoples.

न तस्य मायया चन रिपुरीशीत मर्त्यः ।
यो अग्नये ददाश्च हव्यदातिभिः ॥१५॥

15. Not even by magic can the mortal foe master the man who offers worship to the Fire with his gifts of the oblation.

व्यश्वस्त्वा वसुविदमुक्षण्युरप्रीणादृषिः ।
महो राये तमु त्वा समिधीमहि ॥१६॥

16. [Not translated.]

उशना काव्यस्त्वा नि होतारमसादयत् ।
आयजिं त्वा मनवे जातवेदसम् ॥१७॥

17. Thee Ushana of the inspired wisdom set within for men as the priest of the call, the doer of sacrifice, the knower of all things born.

विश्वे हि त्वा सजोषसो देवासो दूतमक्रत ।
श्रुष्टी देव प्रथमो यज्ञियो भुवः ॥१८॥

18. For all the gods with one mind made thee the messenger; O godhead, thou becamest by inspired knowledge supreme and a lord of sacrifice.

इमं धा वीरो अमृतं दूतं कृष्णीत मर्त्यः ।
पावकं कृष्णवर्तनिं विहायसम् ॥१९॥

19. Him immortal let the mortal hero make his envoy, the purifying Fire with his black path, vast in his wideness.

तं हूवेम यतस्तुच्चः सुभासं शुक्रशोचिषम् ।
विशामग्निमज्जरं प्रत्नमीड्यम् ॥२०॥

20. Him let us call putting forth the ladle, the luminous, the brilliant in light, one to be prayed by men, the ancient and unaging Fire.

यो अस्मै हव्यदातिभिराहुतिं मर्तोऽविधत् ।
भूरि पोषं स धत्ते वीरवद् यशः ॥ २१॥

21. For the mortal who performs sacrifice to him by his gifts of the offering he finds much increase and a glory of his hero-strengths.

प्रथमं जातवेदसमर्पिनं यज्ञेषु पूर्व्यम् ।
प्रति सुगोति नमसा हविष्टती ॥ २२॥

22. To the Fire, the ancient, the first and supreme, the knower of all things born in the sacrifices with the obeisance comes the ladle full of the oblation.

आभिर्विधेमाग्नये ज्येष्ठाभिर्व्यश्ववत् ।
मंहिष्ठाभिर्मतिभिः शुक्रशोचिषे ॥ २३॥

23. May we offer sacrifice as did Vyashwa with these greatest and richest thinkings to Fire, the brilliant in light.

नूनमर्च विहायसे स्तोमेभिः स्थूरयूपवत् ।
ऋषे वैयश्व दम्यायाग्नये ॥ २४॥

24. O Rishi, son of Vyashwa, now sing the word of illumination as did Sthurayupa, to the Fire, vast in his wideness, the dweller in the house.

अतिथिं मानुषाणां सूनुं वनस्पतीनाम् ।
विप्रा अग्निमवसे प्रलमीळते ॥ २५॥

25. The guest of men, the son of the Trees, the illumined seers praise for his protection, the ancient Fire.

महो विश्वाँ अभि षतोऽभि हव्यानि मानुषा ।
अग्ने नि षत्स नमसाधि बर्हिषि ॥ २६॥

26. Turned towards all the great beings, turned towards our human offerings, by our obeisance, O Fire, thou takest thy seat on the sacred grass.

वंस्वा नो वार्या पुरु वंस्व रायः पुरुस्पृहः ।
सुवीर्यस्य प्रजावतो यशस्वतः ॥ २७ ॥

27. Conquer for us many desirable things, take possession of the wealth that brings us our many longings and hero-energy and the offspring and the glory.

त्वं वरो सुषाम्णेऽग्ने जनाय चोदय ।
सदा वसो रातिं यविष्ट शश्वते ॥ २८ ॥

28. [Not translated.]

त्वं हि सुप्रतूरसि त्वं नो गोमतीरिषः ।
महो रायः सातिमग्ने अपा वृधि ॥ २९ ॥

29. Thou art he who breaks through,³ thou openest to us the luminous impulsions; open to us the conquest of the great Riches, O Fire.

अग्ने त्वं यशा अस्या मित्रावरुणा वह ।
ऋतावाना सम्राजा पूतदक्षसा ॥ ३० ॥

30. O Fire, thou art the glorious one; bring to us Varuna and Mitra, the all-rulers who possess the Truth and have the purified judgment.

SHYAVASHWA ATREYA

SUKTA 38

यज्ञस्य हि स्थ कृत्विजा सस्ती वाजेषु कर्मसु ।
इन्द्राग्नी तस्य बोधतम् ॥ १ ॥

1. You (two) are the ritual-priests of the sacrifice, conquerors in our plenitudes and our works; to this awake, O Indra, O Fire.

³ Or, he who overcomes,

तोशासा रथयावाना वृत्रहणापराजिता ।
इन्द्राग्नी तस्य बोधतम् ॥ २॥

2. O smiters who journey in the chariot, slayers of the coverer,
ever unconquered — to this awake, O Indra, O Fire.

इदं वां मदिरं मध्वधुक्षन्नद्रिभिर्नः ।
इन्द्राग्नी तस्य बोधतम् ॥ ३॥

3. Men have pressed out for you by the stones this rapturous
honey-wine — to this awake, O Indra, O Fire.

जुषेथां यज्ञमिष्ट्ये सुतं सोमं सधस्तुती ।
इन्द्राग्नी आ गतं नरा ॥ ४॥

4. Take pleasure in the sacrifice, for the sacrifice come to the
Soma wine pressed out, gods to whom rises the common
laud, O Indra, O Fire.

इमा जुषेथां सवना येभिर्हव्यान्यूहथुः ।
इन्द्राग्नी आ गतं नरा ॥ ५॥

5. May you take pleasure in these Soma-pressings by them who
have the offering, — O gods, come to us, O Indra, O Fire.

इमां गायत्रवर्तनिं जुषेथां सुष्टुतिं मम ।
इन्द्राग्नी आ गतं नरा ॥ ६॥

6. May you take pleasure in this laud of mine, this path of
song, — O gods, come to us, O Indra, O Fire.

प्रातर्यावभिरा गतं देवेभिर्जन्यावसू ।
इन्द्राग्नी सोमपीतये ॥ ७॥

7. Come for the drink of the Soma wine with the gods who
arrive at dawn, you who have the victor-riches,⁴ O Indra, O
Fire.

⁴ Or, you who have the riches which are for the victor, or the true riches,

श्यावाशवस्य सुन्वतोऽत्रीणां शृणुतं हवम् ।
इन्द्राग्नी सोमपीतये ॥ ८॥

8. Hear the call of the Atris, of Shyavashwa⁵ pressing the wine,
come for the drinking of the Soma, O Indra, O Fire.

एवा वामद्व ऊतये यथाहुवन्त मेधिराः ।
इन्द्राग्नी सोमपीतये ॥ ९॥

9. Thus have I called you for protection as the wise have ever
called you, for the drinking of the Soma (wine), O Indra, O
Fire.

आहं सरस्वतीवतोरिन्द्राग्न्योरवो वृणे ।
याभ्यां गायत्रमूच्यते ॥ १०॥

10. I choose the protection of Indra and the Fire with Saraswati
at their side, for whom the sacred song breaks into light.⁶

NABHAKA KANWA

SUKTA 39

अग्निमस्तोष्यैग्नियमग्निमीळा यजस्यै ।
अग्निर्देवाँ अनक्तु न उभे हि विदथे कविरन्तश्चरति द्रूत्यं
नभन्तामन्यके समे ॥ १॥

1. To Fire I give laud, the possessor of the illumined word, to
worship the Fire with the speech of revelation; let the Fire
reveal the gods to us, for he is the seer who goes on his
embassy between the two worlds in the knowledge,—let
all that are hostile be rent asunder.

⁵ He who has the bay-horse.

⁶ Or, is chanted.

न्यग्ने नव्यसा वचस्तनूषु शंसमेषाम् ।
 न्यराती रराव्यां विश्वा अर्यो अरातीरितो युच्छन्त्वामुरो
 नभन्तामन्यके समे ॥ २॥

2. O Fire, destroy with a new word the expression of these within in the bodies, destroy within us the beings hostile to those who give thee, let all the enemy forces, the hostile spirits depart from here who would do hurt to us,— let all that are hostile be rent asunder.

अग्ने मन्मानि तुभ्यं कं घृतं न जुह्व आसनि ।
 स देवेषु प्र चिकिद्धि त्वं ह्यसि पूर्वः शिवो दूतो विवस्ततो
 नभन्तामन्यके समे ॥ ३॥

3. O Fire, to thee I offer my thoughts as if an offering of light⁷ cast into thy mouth; so do thou awake to knowledge in the gods, for thou art the ancient and benign messenger of the Sun,— let all that are alien be rent asunder.

तत्तदग्निर्वयो दधे यथायथा कृपण्यति ।
 ऊर्जाहृतिर्वसूनां शं च योश्च मयो दधे विश्वस्यै देवहूत्यै
 नभन्तामन्यके समे ॥ ४॥

4. He finds growth upon growth of the being even as one⁸ desires; offered the oblation of offered energy for every call to the gods he finds both the peace and the movement of the Shining Ones, he finds the bliss,— let all that are alien be rent asunder.

स चिकेत सहीयसाऽग्निश्चत्रेण कर्मणा ।
 स होता शश्वतीनां दक्षिणाभिरभीवृत इनोति च प्रतीव्यं
 नभन्तामन्यके समे ॥ ५॥

5. He awakes to knowledge by his forceful and many-sided works; he is the priest of the call of many powers surrounded

⁷ *Gṛtam*, clarified butter or light.

⁸ Or, he

by lights of discernment and he takes possession of all that faces him,— let all that are alien be rent asunder.

अग्निर्जाता देवानामग्निर्वेद मर्तानामपीच्यम् ।
अग्निः स द्रविणोदा अग्निर्द्वारा व्यूर्णुते स्वाहुतो नवीयसा
नभन्तामन्यके समे ॥ ६ ॥

6. The Fire knows the births of the gods and the secret thing of mortals; this is the Fire that gives the treasures, the Fire when there is cast into him as offering that which is new uncovers the hidden doors,— let all that are alien be rent asunder.

अग्निर्देवेषु संवसुः स विश्व यज्ञियास्वा ।
स मुदा काव्या पुरु विश्वं भूमेव पुष्पति देवो देवेषु यज्ञियो
नभन्तामन्यके समे ॥ ७ ॥

7. Fire is the companion dwelling in the gods, dwelling in the beings who are masters of sacrifice; he increases by his rapture many seer-wisdoms, even as all that is large, he is a god in the gods and a lord of sacrifice,— let all that are alien be rent asunder.

यो अग्निः सप्तमानुषः श्रितो विश्वेषु सिन्धुषु ।
तमागन्म त्रिपस्त्यं मन्धातुर्दस्युहन्तमग्निं यज्ञेषु पूर्व्य
नभन्तामन्यके समे ॥ ८ ॥

8. Fire is the sevenfold human, he is lodged in all the rivers; to him we have come, the dweller in the triple abode, the Fire of the thinker, slayer of the Destroyers, ancient and supreme in the sacrifices,— let all that are alien be rent asunder.

अग्नस्त्रीणि त्रिधातून्या क्षेति विदथा कविः ।
स त्रीरिकादशाँ इह यक्ष्यच्च पिप्रयच्च नो विप्रो दूतः परिष्कृतो
नभन्तामन्यके समे ॥ ९ ॥

9. Fire is the seer who takes up his dwelling in his three abodes

of knowledge of three kinds; may he sacrifice to the Three and Thirty and satisfy us, perfected, the illumined thinker and messenger,— let all that are alien be rent asunder.

त्वं नो अग्न आयुषु त्वं देवेषु पूर्व्य वस्व एक इरज्यसि ।
त्वामापः परिस्रुतः परि यन्ति स्वसेतवो नभन्तामन्यके समे ॥१०॥

10. O ancient and supreme Fire, thou art in us who are mortals, thou in the gods, one and sole thou rulest over the Treasures; around thee the wide-flowing waters go each with its own bridge,— let all that are alien be rent asunder.

SUKTA 40

इन्द्राग्नी युवं सु नः सहन्ता दासथो रयिम् ।
येन दृढ्हा समत्स्वा वीढु चित् साहिषीमह्यग्निर्वनेव वात इन्
नभन्तामन्यके समे ॥१॥

1. O Indra, O Fire, forceful you give to us the treasure by which we shall overcome in our battles even all that is firm and strong, as Fire the trees in a wind,— let all that are alien be rent asunder.

नहि वां वव्रयामहेऽथेन्द्रमिद् यजामहे शविष्टं नृणां नरम् ।
स नः कदा चिदर्वता गमदा वाजसातये गमदा मेधसातये
नभन्तामन्यके समे ॥२॥

2. May we not shut you away from us, then may we truly worship Indra with sacrifice, the god most potent of the gods; may he sometime come to us with the war-horse, may he come to us for the winning of the plenitudes, for the winning of the purity,⁹— let all that are alien be rent asunder.

⁹ Or, for the getting of sacrifice,

ता हि मध्यं भराणामिन्द्राग्नी अधिक्षितः ।
 ता उ कवित्वना कवी पृच्छ्यमाना सखीयते सं धीतमश्वतं नरा
 नभन्तामन्यके समे ॥ ३ ॥

3. For they, Indra and Fire, dwell in the midst of mellays; gods, seers, questioned, they by their seerhood gain for one who seeks their friendship the knowledge won by the thought,— let all that are alien be rent asunder.

अभ्यर्च नभाकवदिन्द्राग्नी यजसा गिरा ।
 ययोर्विश्वमिदं जगदियं द्यौः पृथिवी महुपस्थे विभृतो वसु
 नभन्तामन्यके समे ॥ ४ ॥

4. To Indra and the Fire sing the illumined chant even as Nabhaaka, doing them homage with sacrifice and speech, whose is all this world and this heaven and great earth bear for them in their lap the treasures,— let all that are alien be rent asunder.

प्र ब्रह्माणि नभाकवदिन्द्राग्निभ्यामिरज्यत ।
 या सप्तबुध्मर्णवं जिह्वावारमपोरुत इन्द्र ईशान ओजसा
 नभन्तामन्यके समे ॥ ५ ॥

5. Even as Nabhaaka direct towards Indra and Fire the Words who uncovered the sea of the seven foundations with its dim¹⁰ doors,— even Indra ruling all by his might,— let all that are alien be rent asunder.

- अपि वृश्च पुराणवद् व्रततेरिव गुष्ठितमोजो दासस्य दम्भय ।
 वयं तदस्य संभृतं वस्त्विन्द्रेण वि भजेमहि नभन्तामन्यके समे ॥ ६ ॥
6. Even as of old cleave like clustering mass of a creeper, crush the might of the demon; that wealth amassed by him may we by Indra share,— let all that are alien be rent asunder.

¹⁰ Or, oblique

यदिन्द्रागनी जना इमे विहृयन्ते तना गिरा ।
 अस्माकेभिर्नभिर्वयं सासद्याम पृतन्यतो वनुयाम वनुष्यतो
 नभन्तामन्यके समे ॥ ७ ॥

7. When, O Indra, O Fire, these who are here call you with speech and act, may we overcome by our men those who battle against us, may we conquer those who would conquer us,— let all that are alien be rent asunder.

या नु श्वेताववो दिव उच्चरात उप द्युभिः ।
 इन्द्रागन्योरनु व्रतमुहाना यन्ति सिन्धवो यान्तर्सीं बन्धादमुञ्चतां
 नभन्तामन्यके समे ॥ ८ ॥

8. White gods are they who from below ascend to the heavens by their lights; according to the law of the working of Indra and Fire, flowing move the Rivers whom they loosed from bondage to every side,— let all that are alien be rent asunder.

पूर्वीष्ट इन्द्रोपमातयः पूर्वीरुत प्रशस्तयः सूनो हिन्वस्य हरिवः ।
 वस्त्रो वीरस्यापृचो या नु साधन्त नो धियो नभन्तामन्यके समे ॥ ९ ॥

9. O Indra, O thou of the bright horses, O begetter of the shining hero, the shooter who strikes into his mark, many are thy measurings of things, many thy expressions of the truth which accomplish¹¹ our thoughts,— let all that are alien be rent asunder.

तं शिशीता सुवृक्तिभिस्त्वेषं सत्वानमृग्मयम् ।
 उतो नु चिद् य ओजसा शुण्णस्याण्डानि भेदति जेषत् स्वर्वतीरपो
 नभन्तामन्यके समे ॥ १० ॥

10. Intensify him by your purifications, the brilliant warrior with the illumined word, even him who with might breaks

¹¹ Or, bring to perfection

the serpent-eggs of Shushna, may he conquer the waters that bear the light of the Sun-world,— let all that are alien be rent asunder.

तं शिशीता स्वध्वरं सत्यं सत्वानमृत्वियम् ।
उतो नु चिद् य ओहत आण्डा शुष्णास्य भेदत्यजैः स्वर्वतीरपो
नभन्तामन्यके समे ॥१॥

11. Intensify him who is perfect in the rite of the path, the true warrior who follows the law of the Truth; it is he who observes, who breaks the serpent-eggs of Shushna, conquers the waters that bear the light of the Sun-world,— let all that are alien be rent asunder.

एवेन्द्राग्निभ्यां पितृवन्नबीयो मन्धातृवदङ्गिरस्वदवाचि ।
त्रिधातुना शर्मणा पातमस्मान् वयं स्याम पतयो रयीणाम् ॥१२॥

12. So has the new word been spoken to Indra and to Fire, even as by my father, by Mandhata, by the Angiras; protect us with triple peace, may we be masters of the riches.

VIRUPA ANGIRASA

SUKTA 43

इमे विप्रस्य वेधसोऽग्नेरस्तृतयज्ज्वनः ।
गिरः स्तोमास ईरते ॥१॥

1. Him pray our words, even these lauds of Fire, the illumined seer, the creator, invincible in his sacrifice.

अस्मै ते प्रतिहर्यते जातवेदो विचर्षणे ।
अग्ने जनामि सुष्टुतिम् ॥२॥

2. Such art thou for whom I bring to birth perfect laud and glad is thy response, O seeing Fire, O knower of all things born!

आरोका इव घेदह तिग्मा अग्ने तव त्विषः ।
दद्धिर्वनानि बप्सति ॥३॥

3. Oh, like jets of light thy keen energies of flame devour with their teeth the woods.

हरयो धूमकेतवो वातजूता उप द्यवि ।
यतन्ते वृथगग्नयः ॥४॥

4. Bright, with smoke for their flag against heaven, urged by the winds, labour separate thy fires.

एते त्ये वृथगग्नय इद्वासः समदृक्षत ।
उषसामिव केतवः ॥५॥

5. These are those separate fires of thine that kindled are seen like rays of the Dawns.

कृष्णा रजांसि पत्सुतः प्रयाणे जातवेदसः ।
अग्निर्यद् रोधति क्षमि ॥६॥

6. Black is the dust under his feet in the march of the knower of all things born when Fire sprouts upon the earth.

धासिं कृण्वान ओषधीर्वप्सदग्निर्न वायति ।
पुनर्यन् तरुणीरपि ॥७॥

7. Making his foundation, consuming the herbs Fire wearies not but goes even to the young shoots.

जिह्वाभिरह नन्नमदर्चिषा जञ्जणाभवन् ।
अग्निर्वनेषु रोचते ॥८॥

8. Oh, laying all low with his tongues of flame, flashing out with his ray Fire shines in the woodlands.

अप्स्वगने सधिष्ठव सौषधीरनु रुध्यसे ।
गर्भे सन्जायसे पुनः ॥९॥

9. In the waters, O Fire, is thy seat,¹² thou besiegest the plants;
thou becomest a child in the womb and art born again.

उदगने तव तद् घृतादर्ची रोचत आहुतम् ।
निंसानं जुद्धो मुखे ॥१०॥

10. O Fire, that ray of thine fed with the oblation rises up shining
from the offering of light,¹³ licking the mouth of the ladle.

उक्षान्नाय वशान्नाय सोमपृष्ठाय वेधसे ।
स्तोमैर्विधेमाग्नये ॥११॥

11. May we ordain sacrifice with the lauds to Fire, the ordainer
of things, Fire who makes the ox and the cow his food and
he bears on his back the Soma wine.

उत त्वा नमसा वयं होतर्वरेण्यक्रतो ।
अग्ने समिद्धिरीमहे ॥१२॥

12. O Fire, we come to thee with prostration and with the fuel,
O priest of the call, O supreme will!

उत त्वा भृगुवच्छुचे मनुष्वदग्न आहुत ।
अङ्गिरस्वद्वामहे ॥१३॥

13. O pure Flame, fed with offerings we call thee as did Bhrigu,
as did Manu, as did Angiras.

त्वं ह्यग्ने अग्निना विप्रो विप्रेण सन्त्सता ।
सखा सख्या समिध्यसे ॥१४॥

14. For thou art kindled, O Fire, by the fire, thou who art the
illumined seer art kindled by one who is illumined, as a
comrade thou art kindled by thy comrade.

¹² Or, goal,

¹³ Or, clarified butter,

स त्वं विप्राय दाशुषे रयिं देहि सहस्रिणम् ।
अग्ने वीरवतीमिषम् ॥१५॥

15. So do thou to the illumined who gives to thee give the thousandfold wealth and the hero-force.

अग्ने भ्रातः सहस्रृत रोहिदश्व शुचिव्रत ।
इमं स्तोमं जुषस्व मे ॥१६॥

16. O Fire, my brother, created by my force, drawn by thy red horses, pure in the law of thy workings, take pleasure in this laud of mine.

उत त्वाग्ने मम स्तुतो वाश्राय प्रतिहर्यते ।
गोष्ठं गाव इवाशत ॥१७॥

17. My lauds reach thee, O Fire, as to the calf lowing in glad response the cows reach their stall.

तुभ्यं ता अङ्गिरस्तम विश्वाः सुक्षितयः पृथक् ।
अग्ने कामाय येमिरे ॥१८॥

18. For thee, O most luminous Angiras, all those worlds of happy dwelling, each in its separate power, labour for thy desire, O Flame.

अग्निं धीभिर्मनीषिणो मेधिरासो विपश्चितः ।
अन्नसद्याय हिन्विरे ॥१९॥

19. The thinkers, the wise, the illumined seers urged by their thoughts the Fire to dwell in their house.

तं त्वामज्मेषु वाजिनं तन्वाना अग्ने अध्वरम् ।
वह्निं होतारमीढते ॥२०॥

20. So thee as the horse in its gallopings performing the pilgrim-sacrifice, O Fire, they desire as the carrier of the offering and the priest of the call.

पुरुत्रा हि सदृङ्गसि विशो विश्वा अनु प्रभुः ।
समत्सु त्वा हवामहे ॥ २१॥

21. Thou art the lord who looks with equal eyes on all the peoples in many lands; we call to thee in our battles.

तमीळिष्व य आहुतोऽग्निर्विभ्राजते घृतैः ।
इमं नः शृणवद्ववम् ॥ २२॥

22. Pray the Fire who fed with the pouring of the clarities blazed wide; may he hear this our call.

तं त्वा वयं हवामहे शृणवन्तं जातवेदसम् ।
अग्ने घृन्तमप द्विषः ॥ २३॥

23. Such art thou whom we call, Fire, the knower of all things born who hears our cry and smites away from us the foe.

विशां राजानमङ्गुतमध्यक्षं धर्मणामिमम् ।
अग्निमीळे स उ श्रवत् ॥ २४॥

24. I pray this Fire, the marvellous king of the peoples who presides over the laws of their action, may he hear.

अग्निं विश्वायुवेपसं मर्य न वाजिनं हितम् ।
ससिं न वाजयामसि ॥ २५॥

25. Fire who illumines the universal life like a male horse urged to its gallop, we speed like a racer to the goal.

घन् मृत्राण्यप द्विषो दहन् रक्षांसि विश्वहा ।
अग्ने तिग्मेन दीदिहि ॥ २६॥

26. Smiting away the foes and things that hurt, burning the Rakshasas on every side, O Fire, shine out with thy keen flame.

यं त्वा जनास इन्धते मनुष्वदङ्गिरस्तम् ।
अग्ने स बोधि मे वचः ॥ २७ ॥

27. Thou whom men kindle as the human thinker,¹⁴ O most luminous Angiras, O Fire, become aware of my word.

यदग्ने दिविजा अस्यप्सुजा वा सहस्रूत ।
तं त्वा गीर्भिर्हवामहे ॥ २८ ॥

28. Because, O Fire, created by our force thou art the flame born in heaven, or the flame born in the waters, as such we call thee with our words.

तुभ्यं घेत् ते जना इमे विश्वाः सुक्षितयः पृथक् ।
धासिं हिन्वन्त्यत्तवे ॥ २९ ॥

29. To thee, verily, these beings born and these worlds of a happy dwelling each separately in its place, lay a foundation where thou canst devour thy food.¹⁵

ते घेदग्ने स्वाध्योऽहा विश्वा नृचक्षसः ।
तरन्तः स्याम दुर्गहा ॥ ३० ॥

30. O Fire, may we be those who have the right thought and the divine vision, and through all the days, pass safe beyond the danger.

अग्निं मन्दं पुरुप्रियं शीरं पावकशोचिषम् ।
हृङ्गिर्मन्त्रेभिरीमहे ॥ ३१ ॥

31. We seek with rapturous hearts Fire, the rapturous, in whom are many things that are dear to us,—Fire with his intense and purifying light.

¹⁴ Or, like Manu,

¹⁵ Or, cast nourishment for thy eating.

स त्वमग्ने विभावसुः सृजन्त्सूर्यो न रश्मिभिः ।
शर्धन् तमांसि जिघ्रसे ॥ ३२ ॥

32. O Fire, shining with thy light, loosing forth thy lustre like the sun with its rays, thou puttest forth thy force and slayest the darknesses.

तत् ते सहस्व ईमहे दात्रं यन्नोपदस्यति ।
त्वदग्ने वार्यं वसु ॥ ३३ ॥

33. We seek from thee, O forceful Fire, that gift of thine,—the desirable wealth which never fails.

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समिधाग्निं द्रुवस्यत घृतैर्बोधयतातिथिम् ।
आस्मिन् हव्या जुहोतन ॥ १ ॥

1. Set to his action by the fuel, awaken the guest by the offerings of the clarities; cast in him the offerings.

अग्ने स्तोमं जुषस्व मे वर्धस्वानेन मन्मना ।
प्रति सूक्तानि हर्य नः ॥ २ ॥

2. O Fire, take pleasure in my laud, grow by this thought; let thy joy respond to our utterances.

अग्निं द्वूतं पुरो दधे हव्यवाहमुप ब्रुवे ।
देवाँ आ सादयादिह ॥ ३ ॥

3. I set in front Fire, the messenger, and speak to the carrier of the offerings; may he bring to their session here the gods.

उत् ते बृहन्तो अर्चयः समिधानस्य दीदिवः ।
अग्ने शुक्रास ईरते ॥ ४ ॥

4. O luminous Fire, vast and bright thy rays upwards ascend as thou art kindled high.

उप त्वा जुद्धो मम घृताचीर्यन्तु हर्यत ।
अग्ने हव्या जुषस्व नः ॥५॥

5. O joyful Flame, to thee may my ladies go bright with the clarities; O Fire, take pleasure in our offerings.

मन्दं होतारमृत्विजं चित्रभानुं विभावसुम् ।
अग्निमीळे स उ श्रवत् ॥६॥

6. I pray the Fire, the rapturous priest of the call, the sacrifice, shining with his light, rich in his lustres, may he hear.

प्रनं होतारमीड्यं जुषमग्निं कविक्रतुम् ।
अध्वराणामभित्रियम् ॥७॥

7. The ancient priest of the call, desirable and accepted, Fire the seer-will, joiner of the pilgrim-rites.

जुषाणो अङ्गिरस्तमेमा हव्यान्यानुषक् ।
अग्ने यज्ञं नय क्रतुथा ॥८॥

8. O most luminous Angiras, taking pleasure in these offerings lead the sacrifice uninterruptedly in the way of the Truth,¹⁶ O Fire.

समिधान उ सन्त्य शुक्रशोच इहा वह ।
चिकित्वान् दैव्यं जनम् ॥९॥

9. High-kindled, O Right and True, O brilliant light, awakened to knowledge bring here the divine people.

विप्रं होतारमद्गुहं धूमकेतुं विभावसुम् ।
यज्ञानां केतुमीमहे ॥१०॥

10. The illumined seer and priest of the call, free from harms,

¹⁶ Or, according to the rule of the rites,

shining with light, carrying his banner of smoke, him we seek, the ray of intuition of the sacrifices.

अग्ने नि पाहि नस्त्वं प्रति ष्म देव रीषतः ।
भिन्धि द्वेषः सहस्रृत ॥११॥

11. O Fire, made by our force, protect us against the doers of harm, pierce the hostile power.

अग्निः प्रत्येन मन्मना शुभ्मानस्तन्वं स्वाम् ।
कविर्विप्रेण वावृधे ॥१२॥

12. Fire by the ancient thought making beautiful his own body, a seer, grows by each illumined sage.

ऊर्जो नपातमा हुवेऽग्निं पावकशोचिषम् ।
अस्मिन् यज्ञे स्वध्वरे ॥१३॥

13. I call to me the Child of Energy, Fire of the purifying light in this sacrifice which is a perfect rite of the path.

स नो मित्रमहस्त्वमग्ने शुक्रेण शोचिषा ।
देवैरा सत्सि बर्हिषि ॥१४॥

14. So do thou, O Fire, O friendly light, with thy brilliant flame sit with the gods on the sacred grass.

यो अग्निं तन्वो दमे देवं मर्तः सपर्यति ।
तस्मा इदं दीदयद् वसु ॥१५॥

15. The mortal who serves the divine Fire in the house of the body, to him he gives the Riches.

अग्निर्मूर्धा दिवः ककुत् पतिः पृथिव्या अयम् ।
अपां रेतांसि जिन्वति ॥१६॥

16. Fire is the head and peak of heaven and lord of earth and he sets moving the waters.

उदग्ने शुचयस्तव शुक्रा भ्राजन्त ईरते ।
तव ज्योतींष्यर्चयः ॥ १७ ॥

17. O Fire, upward dart blazing thy pure and brilliant tongues;
make to shine out thy lights.

ईशिषे वार्यस्य हि दात्रस्याग्ने स्वर्पतिः ।
स्तोता स्यां तव शर्मणि ॥ १८ ॥

18. Thou art the lord of the Sun-world, O Fire, and hast power
for the gifts desirable; may I who laud thee abide in thy
peace.

त्वामग्ने मनीषिणस्त्वां हिन्वन्ति चित्तिभिः ।
त्वां वर्धन्तु नो गिरः ॥ १९ ॥

19. Thee, O Fire, the thinkers urge on thy road, thee by their
perceivings of knowledge; may our words increase thee.

अदब्धस्य स्वधावतो द्रूतस्य रेभतः सदा ।
अग्नेः सख्यं वृणीमहे ॥ २० ॥

20. We choose the comradeship of the Fire inviolate in the law
of his nature, the ever-chanting messenger.

अग्निः शुचिव्रततमः शुचिविंप्रः शुचिः कविः ।
शुची रोचत आहुतः ॥ २१ ॥

21. Most pure in his workings is the Fire, he is the pure illumined
sage, the pure seer of Truth; pure he shines out fed by our
offerings.

उत त्वा धीतयो मम गिरो वर्धन्तु विश्वहा ।
अग्ने सख्यस्य बोधि नः ॥ २२ ॥

22. So thee may my thinkings and my words increase always;
O Fire, awake to the comradeship between us.

यदग्ने स्यामहं त्वं त्वं वा घा स्या अहम् ।
स्युष्टे सत्या इहाशिषः ॥ २३ ॥

23. O Fire, if I were thou and thou wert I, then would thy longings here become true.

वसुर्वसुपतिर्हि कमस्यग्ने विभावसुः ।
स्याम ते सुमतावपि ॥ २४ ॥

24. O Fire, thou art the shining one, shining with thy lustres, lord of the shining riches; may we abide in thy right thinking.¹⁷

अग्ने धृतव्रताय ते समुद्रायेव सिन्धवः ।
गिरो वाश्रास ईरते ॥ २५ ॥

25. O Fire, to thee holding firmly the law of thy workings move my words like lowing cattle, as rivers move towards the sea.

युवानं विश्पतिं कविं विश्वादं पुरुवेपसम् ।
अग्निं शुभ्मामि मन्मभिः ॥ २६ ॥

26. Fire the youth, the lord of the peoples, the seer, the all-consuming, Fire of the many illuminations I glorify with my thoughts.

यज्ञानां रथ्ये वयं तिग्मजम्भाय वीळवे ।
स्तोमैरिषेमाग्नये ॥ २७ ॥

27. May we strive towards the Fire by our lauds, the charioteer of the sacrifices, Fire with his solid strength, his sharp tusks of flame.

¹⁷ Or, thy grace.

अयमग्ने त्वे अपि जरिता भूतु सन्त्य ।
तस्मै पावक मृद्धय ॥ २८॥

28. May this thy worshipper, O Fire, abide in thee; on him have grace, O Right and True, O purifying Flame.

धीरो ह्यस्यसद् विप्रो न जागृविः सदा ।
अग्ने दीदयसि द्यवि ॥ २९॥

29. For thou art the wise thinker seated in the house, like an illumined sage ever awake; O Fire, thou shinest out in heaven.

पुराग्ने द्विरितेभ्यः पुरा मृद्रेभ्यः कवे ।
प्रण आयुर्वसो तिर ॥ ३०॥

30. Before the stumblings come, O Fire, before the spoilers arrive, O seer, carry forward our life, O Shining One.

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अग्न आ याह्यग्निमिहोतारं त्वा वृणीमहे ।
आ त्वामनकतु प्रयता हविष्मती यजिष्ठं बर्हिरासदे ॥ १॥

1. Come, O Fire, with thy fires, we choose thee as the priest of the call, may the ladles extended, full of the offering anoint thee, strongest for sacrifice when thou sittest on the sacrificial seat.

अच्छा हि त्वा सहसः सूनो अङ्गिरः सुचश्चरन्त्यध्वरे ।
ऊर्जो नपातं घृतकेशमीमहेऽग्निं यज्ञेषु पूर्व्यम् ॥ २॥

2. For, towards thee, O Son of force, O Angiras, the ladles move in the rite of the path; we seek the child of Energy with his hair of light, the supreme fire in the sacrifices.

अग्ने कविर्वेधा असि होता पावक यक्ष्यः ।
मन्द्रो यजिष्ठो अध्वरेष्वीड्यो विप्रेभिः शुक्र मन्मभिः ॥३॥

3. O Fire, thou art the seer and the ordainer, the priest of the call, the purifier to whom must be given sacrifice, rapturous, strong for sacrifice, one to be prayed in the pilgrim-rites with illumined thoughts, O brilliant Flame!

अद्रोघमा वहोशतो यविष्ट्य देवाँ अजस्र वीतये ।
अभि प्रयांसि सुधिता वसो गहि मन्दस्व धीतिभिर्हितः ॥४॥

4. Bring to me who betray not, O youngest, O unceasing Flame, the gods that desire for the advent; come to our well-founded pleasant things, O shining One, rejoice established by our thinkings.

त्वमित् सप्रथा अस्यग्ने त्रातर्क्षतस्कविः ।
त्वां विप्रासः समिधान दीदिव आ विवासन्ति वेधसः ॥५॥

5. O Fire, O deliverer, thou art very wide, the true, the seer, thou who shinest out, O high-kindled Fire, thee the sages, the ordainers illumine.

शोचा शोचिष्ठ दीदिहि विशे मयो रास्व स्तोत्रे महाँ असि ।
देवानां शर्मन् मम सन्तु सूरयः शत्रूषाहः स्वगनयः ॥६॥

6. Flame out, O most luminous Flame, shine out for man, give to him who lauds thee the bliss, for thou art great; may my luminous seers abide in the peace of the gods, high in fire may they overcome the foe.

यथा चिद् वृद्धमतसमग्ने संज्ञर्वसि क्षमि ।
एवा दह मित्रमहो यो अस्मधृग् दुर्मन्मा कश्च वेनति ॥७॥

7. As, O Fire, thou consumest old dry wood on the earth so burn, O friendly Light, whosoever comes with evil mind, our hurter.

मा नो मर्ताय रिपवे रक्षस्विने माघशंसाय रीरधः ।
अस्मेधद्विस्तरणिभिर्यविष्ट्य शिवेभिः पाहि पायुभिः ॥८॥

8. Deliver us not to the mortal foe, to the demoniac, to him who gives expression to evil; guard us with thy unfailing and benignant, guardian and rescuer fires, O ever-youthful Flame!

पाहि नो अग्न एकया पाह्युत द्वितीयया ।
पाहि गीर्भिस्तिसृभिरुर्जा पते पाहि चतसृभिर्वसो ॥९॥

9. Guard, O Fire, with the single word, guard with the second, guard with the words that are three, O master of Energies; O shining One, guard with the fourth.

पाहि विश्वस्माद् रक्षसो अराण्यः प्र स्म वाजेषु नोऽव ।
त्वामिद्वि नेदिष्टं देवतातय आपि नक्षामहे वृधे ॥१०॥

10. Guard us from every hostile demon, protect us in the plenitudes; for we come to thee as the closest of the gods and our ally for our increase.

आ नो अग्ने वयोवृधं रथ्यं पावक शंस्यम् ।
रास्वा च न उपमाते पुरुस्पृहं सुनीती स्वयशस्तरम् ॥११॥

11. O purifying Fire, bring to us and give a wealth that increases our growth, the wealth that has to be expressed in us, O measurer of our formations, by thy right leading a wealth full of many longed-for things and very great in its self-glory,—

येन वंसाम पृतनासु शर्धतस्तरन्तो अर्य आदिशः ।
स त्वं नो वर्ध प्रयसा शचीवसो जिन्वा धियो वसुविदः ॥१२॥

12. By which we may conquer those who challenge us in our battles, breaking through the designs of the foe; so do thou increase us with thy delight, O luminous in might, speed on their way the thoughts that find the treasure.

शिशानो वृषभो यथाऽग्निः शृङ्गे दविध्वत् ।
तिगमा अस्य हनवो न प्रतिधृषे सुजम्मः सहसो यहुः ॥१३॥

13. Fire is like a bull that sharpens its horns and tosses its head, his flaming jaws are too bright and keen to gaze at; strong-tusked is the Son of force.

नहि ते अग्ने वृषभ प्रतिधृषे जम्मासो यद् वितिष्ठसे ।
स त्वं नो होतः सुहुतं हविष्कृधि वंस्वा नो वार्या पुरु ॥१४॥

14. O Fire, O Bull, thy tusks of flame cannot be challenged by the gaze when thou rangest abroad; so do thou, O priest of the call, make that our offering is well cast, conquer for us many desirable things.

शेषे वनेषु मात्रोः सं त्वा मर्तास इन्थते ।
अतन्द्रो हव्या वहसि हविष्कृत आदिद् देवेषु राजसि ॥१५॥

15. In the forest thou sleepest in the two mothers, mortals kindle thee into a blaze; then sleepless thou carriest the offerings of the giver of the oblation and now thou shinest in the gods.

सप्त होतारस्तमिदीलते त्वाऽग्ने सुत्यजमह्यम् ।
भिनत्स्यद्विं तपसा वि शोचिषा प्राग्ने तिष्ठ जनाँ अति ॥१६॥

16. Thee pray the seven priests of the call, thee the unhesitant, shooting well thy shafts; thou breakest asunder the hill with thy heat and thy light: O Fire, go forth beyond men.

अग्निमग्निं वो अधिगुं हुवेम वृक्तबर्हिषः ।
अग्निं हितप्रयसः शश्वतीष्वा होतारं चर्षणीनाम् ॥१७॥

17. The Fire, the fire let us call for you having placed the sacred grass and placed the gifts of our pleasure, on day after day, Fire of the unseizable ray, priest of the call of seeing men.

केतेन शर्मन्त्सचते सुषामण्यग्ने तुभ्यं चिकित्वना ।
इषण्यया नः पुरुरूपमा भर वाजं नेदिष्टमूतये ॥१८॥

18. O Fire, to thee constant in the peace of a deep calm I come with the intuition that awakes to knowledge; by our impulsion bring to us for our protection wealth of many forms that is most close.

अग्ने जरितर्विश्पतिस्तोपानो देव रक्षसः ।
अप्रोषिवान् गृहपतिर्महाँ असि दिवस्पायुद्धरोणयुः ॥१९॥

19. O Fire, O god, for thy adorer thou art the lord of creatures, thou art the master of his house who departs not from him, afflicting the demons; great art thou, the guardian of heaven who comes to his gated home.

मा नो रक्षा आ वेशीदाघृणीवसो मा यातुर्यातुमावताम् ।
परोगव्यूत्यनिरामप क्षुधमग्ने सेध रक्षस्विनः ॥२०॥

20. O blazing light, let not the demon enter into us; let not the witchcraft of the goblin sorcerers take possession; O Fire, push calamity and hunger far beyond the pastures of our herds, ward the demon-possessed away from us.

SUDITI AND PURUMILHA ANGIRASA

SUKTA 71

त्वं नो अग्ने महोभिः पाहि विश्वस्या अरातेः ।
उत द्विषो मर्त्यस्य ॥१॥

1. O Fire, guard us by thy lights¹⁸ from every hostile force and from mortal foe.

¹⁸ Or, by thy greatnesses

नहि मन्युः पौरुषेय ईशे हि वः प्रियजात ।
त्वमिदसि क्षपावान् ॥२॥

2. O beloved in thy birth, mortal wrath has no power over you: thou art master of the nights.

स नो विश्वेभिर्देवेभिरुर्जो नपाद् भद्रशोचे ।
रथं देहि विश्ववारम् ॥३॥

3. So do thou with all the gods, O child of Energy, O happy light, give us the wealth in which are all boons.

न तमग्ने अरातयो मर्तं युवन्त रायः ।
यं त्रायसे दाश्वांसम् ॥४॥

4. The hostile forces, O Fire, cannot divorce from the Riches the mortal giver whom thou rescuest.

यं त्वं विप्र मेधसातावग्ने हिनोषि धनाय ।
स तवोती गोषु गन्ता ॥५॥

5. O Fire, O illumined seer, he whom thou in the winning of the purity speedest towards the Riches, by thy protection reaches among the Ray-Cows.

त्वं रथं पुरुषीरमग्ने दाशुषे मर्ताय ।
प्रणो नय वस्यो अच्छ ॥६॥

6. Thou bringest, O Fire, the wealth in which are the many strengths to the mortal giver; lead us towards greater riches.

उरुष्या णो मा परा दा अघायते जातवेदः ।
दुराध्ये मर्ताय ॥७॥

7. Protect us, deliver us not, O knower of all things born, to the mortal, the evil-thoughted who would bring on us calamity.

अग्ने माकिष्टे देवस्य रातिमदेवो युयोत् ।
त्वमीशिषे वसूनाम् ॥८॥

8. O Fire, let none undivine take away from us what was given by thee, the divine; thou hast power over the riches.

स नो वस्व उप मास्यूर्जो नपान्माहिनस्य ।
सखे वसो जरितृभ्यः ॥९॥

9. Thou art the measurer to us, thy adorers of a mighty wealth, O child of Energy, O Friend, O shining One.

अच्छा नः श्रीरशोचिषं गिरो यन्तु दर्शतम् ।
अच्छा यज्ञासो नमसा पुरुषसुं पुरुप्रशस्तमूतये ॥१०॥

10. May our words go towards thee with thy keen light and thy vision, our sacrifices to thee with surrender for our protection, thee the widely proclaimed, the master of many riches,—

अग्निं सूनुं सहसो जातवेदसं दानाय वार्याणाम् ।
द्विता यो भूदमृतो मर्त्येष्वा होता मन्दतमो विशि ॥११॥

11. To the Fire, the Son of force, the knower of all things born, for the gift of our desirable things; twofold he becomes the immortal in the mortals, the rapturous priest of the call in man.

अग्निं वो देवयज्ययाऽग्निं प्रयत्यध्वरे ।
अग्निं धीषु प्रथममग्निमर्वत्यग्निं क्षैत्राय साधसे ॥१२॥

12. Fire for you by the worship to the gods, Fire in the journeying of the pilgrim-sacrifice, Fire in the thoughts first and chief, Fire in the war-horse, Fire for perfection in our field.

अग्निरिषां सर्वे ददातु न ईशे यो वार्याणाम् ।
अग्निं तोके तनये शश्वदीमहे वसुं सन्तं तनूपाम् ॥१३॥

13. May the Fire give us force in his comradeship, he who has

power for the desirable things; Fire we seek continually in the son of our begettings as the shining one and the guardian of the body.

अग्निमीळिष्वावसे गाथाभिः शीरशोचिष्म् ।
अग्निं राये पुरुमीळह श्रुतं नरोऽग्निं सुदीतये छृदिः ॥१४॥

14. Pray with your chants Fire of the keen flame for the protection, O Purumilha! Fire for the Treasure,—the Fire men pray for the inspired knowledge, a house for a splendid light.

अग्निं द्वेषो योतवै नो गृणीमस्यग्निं शं योश्च दातवे ।
विश्वासु विक्ष्ववितेव हव्यो भुवद् वस्तुर्क्षृणाम् ॥१५॥

15. Fire we hymn with our words that he may remove from us the hostile power, Fire to give to us the peace and the movement; he is in all men like a protector to whom they may call, he is the daylight of the wise.

HARYATA PRAGATHA

SUKTA 72

हविष्कृणुध्वमा गमदध्वर्युर्वन्ते पुनः ।
विद्वाँ अस्य प्रशासनम् ॥१॥

1. Do you make the offering, the priest of the pilgrim-rite has come and he conquers again, for he knows the commandment of the Fire.

नि तिग्ममभ्यंशुं सीदद्वोता मनावधि ।
जुषाणो अस्य सख्यम् ॥२॥

2. Let him sit within close to the keen burning ray, the priest of the call in thinking man, accepting the comradeship of the Fire.

अन्तरिच्छन्ति तं जने रुद्रं परो मनीषया ।
गृभन्ति जिह्वया ससम् ॥३॥

3. Within they wish him to be in a man the “terrible one”, beyond the thinking mind; by his tongue they seize the peace.

जाम्यतीतपे धनुर्वयोधा अरुहद् वनम् ।
दृषदं जिह्वावधीत् ॥४॥

4. High burnt the companion bow, a founder of the growth he climbed the woodland, he smote the rock with his tongue.

चरन् वत्सो रुशन्निह निदातारं न विन्दते ।
वेति स्तोतव अम्ब्यम् ॥५॥

5. He is the shining calf who wanders and finds none to bind him here, to one who lauds him he manifests the mother.¹⁹

उतो न्वस्य यन्महदश्वावद् योजनं वृहत् ।
दामा रथस्य ददृशे ॥६॥

6. And now is the great and vast yoking as if of the Horse, the rope of the chariot is seen.

दुहन्ति सप्तैकामुप द्वा पञ्च सृजतः ।
तीर्थे सिन्धोरधि स्वरे ॥७॥

7. Seven milk the one, two let loose the five at the ford of the River upon the cry of the waters.

आ दशभिर्विवस्वत इन्द्रः कोशमचुच्यवीत् ।
खेदया त्रिवृता दिवः ॥८॥

8. By the ten of the sun Indra made fall the covering sheath of heaven with his triple mallet.

¹⁹ Or, for one who lauds him he goes to the mother.

परि त्रिधातुरध्वरं जूर्णिरेति नवीयसी ।
मध्वा होतारो अञ्जते ॥९॥

9. A new adoration moves round the triple pilgrim-sacrifice,
the priests of the call anoint with the honey-wine.

सिञ्चन्ति न मसावतमुच्चाचक्रं परिज्मानम् ।
नीचीनबारमक्षितम् ॥१०॥

10. With surrender they pour out the inexhaustible pervading
well whose wheel is on high and its opening below.

अभ्यारमिदद्रयो निषिकं पुष्करे मधु ।
अवतस्य विसर्जने ॥११॥

11. Close by are the stones and the honey-wine is poured in the
lotus in the discharging of the well.

गाव उपावतावतं मही यज्ञस्य रप्सुदा ।
उभा कर्णा हिरण्यया ॥१२॥

12. O Ray-Cows, come to the well; here is the great wine-jar of
the sacrifice, here are both the golden handles.

आ सुते सिञ्चत श्रियं रोदस्योरभिश्रियम् ।
रसा दधीत वृषभम् ॥१३॥

13. Pour into the wine that is pressed, a joining splendour, the
glory of earth and heaven; by the juice of the wine sustain
the Bull.

ते जानत स्वमोक्यं सं वत्सासो न मातृभिः ।
मिथो नसन्त जामिभिः ॥१४॥

14. They know their own home; like calves with their mothers
they met with each other as companions.

उप स्रक्वेषु बप्सतः कृणवते धरुणं दिवि ।
इन्द्रे अग्ना नमः स्वः ॥१५॥

15. In the jaws of the eater they made their foundation in heaven, their prostrations of surrender to Indra and the Fire made the Sun-world.

अधुक्षत् पिप्युषीमिष्मूर्ज सप्तपदीमरिः ।
सूर्यस्य सप्त रश्मिः ॥१६॥

16. The warrior milked out the seven-planed nourishing force and energy by the seven rays of the sun.

सोमस्य मित्रावरुणोदिता सूर आ ददे ।
तदातुरस्य भेषजम् ॥१७॥

17. O Mitra and Varuna, in the rising of the moon he received it on the sun; it is the healing draught for him who suffers.

उतो न्वस्य यत् पदं हर्यतस्य निधान्यम् ।
परि द्यां जिह्वयातन्त् ॥१८॥

18. And now let him stretch out²⁰ with his tongue of flame around heaven that plane of him in his full delight which is to be laid as a foundation.

GOPAVANA ATREYA

SUKTA 74

विशोविशो वो अतिथिं वाजयन्तः पुरुप्रियम् ।
अग्निं वो द्वर्यं वचः स्तुषे शूषस्य मन्मभिः ॥१॥

1. All kinds of beings replenish the guest domiciled in your house in whom are the many pleasant things; I laud him with my thoughts with the word of bliss.

²⁰ Or, form

यं जनासो हविष्मन्तो मित्रं न सर्पिरासुतिम् ।
प्रशंसन्ति प्रशस्तिभिः ॥२॥

2. He to whom men bringing the offering pour the stream of the libation and by their words that give expression to him proclaim as the friend,—

पन्यांसं जातवेदसं यो देवतात्युद्यता ।
हव्यान्यैररयद् दिवि ॥३॥

3. The wonderful,²¹ the knower of all things born, who in the formation of the godheads sends up the offerings uplifted in heaven,—

आगन्म वृत्रहन्तमं ज्येष्ठमग्निमानवम् ।
यस्य श्रुतर्वा वृहन्नाक्षो अनीक एधते ॥४॥

4. We have come to the Fire, strongest to slay the Coverers, eldest and ever new in whose force of flame Shrutarvan, son of Riksha, grows to vastness.

अमृतं जातवेदसं तिरस्तमांसि दर्शतम् ।
घृताहवनमीड्यम् ॥५॥

5. The immortal, the knower of all things born who is seen²² across the darkness, one to be prayed to, one to whom are offered the clarities.

सबाधो यं जना इमेऽग्निं हव्येभिरीळते ।
जुद्धानासो यतस्त्रुचः ॥६॥

6. The Fire whom men here oppressed pray with their offerings casting their libations with the ladles at work.²³

²¹ Or, the great doer,

²² Or, who sees

²³ Or, with outstretched ladles.

इयं ते नव्यसी मतिरग्ने अधाय्यस्मदा ।
मन्द्र सुजात् सुक्रतोऽमूर दस्मातिथे ॥७॥

7. Thine, O Fire, is the new thought founded in us, O rapturous and well-born guest, strong of will, wise and powerful for action.

सा ते अग्ने शंतमा चनिष्ठा भवतु प्रिया ।
तया वर्धस्व सुष्टुतः ॥८॥

8. May that thought, O Fire, become pleasant and full of peace and gladness; grow by it, well-affirmed by our lauds.

सा द्युम्नैर्द्युम्निनी वृहदुपोप श्रवसि श्रवः ।
दधीत वृत्रतूर्ये ॥९॥

9. May it be luminous with many lights, and uphold in its inspiration a vast inspired knowledge in the piercing of the Coverers.

अश्वमिद् गां रथप्रां त्वेषमिन्द्रं न सत्पतिम् ।
यस्य श्रवांसि तूर्वथ पन्यंपन्यं च कृष्टयः ॥१०॥

10. He is the Horse of power and the Cow of light, it is he who fills our chariots, he is brilliant and like Indra the lord of beings; you shall cross through his inspirations, O men! and find each wonderful.

यं त्वा गोपवनो गिरा चनिष्ठदग्ने अङ्गिरः ।
स पावक श्रुधी हवम् ॥११॥

11. Thou whom Gopavana gladdens with his word, O Fire, O Angiras, O purifying Flame, hear his call.

यं त्वा जनास ईळते सबाधो वाजसातये ।
स बोधि वृत्रतूर्ये ॥१२॥

12. Thou whom men oppressed pray for the winning of the plenitudes, awake in the piercing of the Coverers.

अहं हुवान आक्षें श्रुतर्वणि मदच्युति ।
शर्धासीव स्तुकाविनां मृक्षा शीर्षा चतुर्णाम् ॥१३॥

13. As if calling armed forces in Shrutarvan, son of Riksha, from whom drips the rapturous inspiration, I comb the shaggy-maned heads of the four.

मां चत्वार आशवः शविष्टस्य द्रवित्वः ।
सुरथासो अभि प्रयो वक्षन् वयो न तुग्यम् ॥१४॥

14. Me the swift and galloping four of that most strong one, well-charioted, bore²⁴ towards the delight as if birds flying to water.²⁵

सत्यमित् त्वा महेनदि परुष्यव देविशम् ।
नेमापो अश्वदातरः शविष्टादस्ति मर्त्यः ॥१५॥

15. O great river Parushni, I have marked out (with them) thy true course. O waters, than this most strong one no mortal man is a greater giver of the Horses of power.²⁶

VIRUPA ANGIRASA

SUKTA 75

युक्ष्वा हि देवहूतमाँ अश्वाँ अग्ने रथीरिव ।
नि होता पूर्व्यः सदः ॥१॥

1. O Fire, yoke like a charioteer the horses most powerful for the calling of the gods; take thy seat, O ancient Priest of the call!

²⁴ Or, let them bear me

²⁵ Or, as the birds carried Tugrya.

²⁶ Note on Riks 13, 14 and 15:

As is shown by the “Shravansi”, “Turvatha” and the name “Shrutarvan”, the Rishi is giving a symbolic turn to the name as well as to the horses and the waters.

उत नो देव देवाँ अच्छा वोचो विदुष्टरः ।
श्रद् विश्वा वार्या कृधि ॥२॥

2. And now, since thou hast the knowledge, speak for us towards the gods, make true to our aspiration all desirable things.

त्वं ह यद् यविष्ट्य सहसः सूनवाहुत ।
ऋतावा यज्ञियो भुवः ॥३॥

3. For thou, O Fire, O most youthful son of force, thou in whom are cast the offerings, art the possessor of the Truth to be worshipped with sacrifice.

अयमग्निः सहस्रिणो वाजस्य शतिनस्पतिः ।
मूर्धा कवी रथीणाम् ॥४॥

4. This Fire is the lord of the hundredfold and thousandfold plenitude, the seer who is the head of the treasures.

तं नेमिमृभवो यथाऽऽ नमस्व सहृतिभिः ।
नेदीयो यज्ञमङ्ग्निरः ॥५॥

5. O Angiras, by words which bear in them the invocation, bring down nearer that sacrifice as the heaven's craftsmen brought down the rim of the wheel.

तस्मै नूनमभिद्यवे वाचा विरूप नित्यया ।
वृष्णो चोदस्व सुष्टुतिम् ॥६॥

6. To him now, O Virupa, by the eternal word give the impulse of the high laud to the luminous Bull.

कमु ष्विदस्य सेनयाऽग्नेरपाकचक्षसः ।
पणिं गोषु स्तरामहे ॥७॥

7. By the army of the Fire who has the eye that sees from afar²⁷

²⁷ Or, who has the eye of wisdom

may we lay low whatever miser Trafficker and enter among the shining herds.

मा नो देवानां विशः प्रस्त्रातीरिवोस्त्राः ।
कृशं न हासुरझ्याः ॥८॥

8. May the peoples of the gods abandon us not, even as the unslayable luminous herds full of milk leave not a calf that is lean.

मा नः समस्य द्वृद्धयः परिद्वेषसो अंहतिः ।
ऊर्मिन्द नावमा वधीत् ॥९॥

9. Let not calamity from every evil-thoughted hostile around smite us like a billow smiting a ship.

नमस्ते अग्न ओजसे गृणन्ति देव कृष्टयः ।
अमैरमित्रमर्दय ॥१०॥

10. O divine Fire, men declare their prostration of surrender to thee that they may have force; crush by thy might the foe.

कुवित् सु नो गविष्टयेऽग्ने संवेषिषो रथिम् ।
उरुकृदुरु णस्कृधि ॥११॥

11. Once and again for our search for the Ray-Cow thou hast entered wholly into the riches, O Fire; O maker of wideness, make for us a wideness.

मा नो अस्मिन् महाधने परा वर्गं भारभृद् यथा ।
संवर्गं सं रथिं जय ॥१२॥

12. Abandon us not in the winning of this great wealth as if one who bears a heavy burden; conquer this massed treasure.

अन्यमस्मद् भिया इयमग्ने सिषक्तु दुच्छुना ।
वर्धा नो अमवच्छ्रवः ॥१३॥

13. O Fire, may this mischief cling to another than us for his terror; increase for us a forceful might.

यस्याजुषन्नमस्विनः शमीमदुर्मखस्य वा ।
तं घेदग्निर्वृधावति ॥१४॥

14. The man in whose work he takes pleasure, one who offers the prostration of surrender and is not poor in sacrifice, him the Fire protects with increase.

परस्या अधि संवतोऽवराँ अभ्या तर ।
यत्राहमस्मि ताँ अव ॥१५॥

15. From thy place in the supreme region break through²⁸ to those who are below; here where I am, them protect.

विद्मा हि ते पुरा वयमग्ने पितुर्यथावसः ।
अभा ते सुम्नमीमहे ॥१६॥

16. For we know from of old of thy protection like a father's, O Fire, now we seek thy bliss.

USHANAS KAVYA

SUKTA 84

प्रेष्ठं वो अतिथिं स्तुषे मित्रमिव प्रियम् ।
अग्निं रथं न वेद्यम् ॥१॥

1. Your guest most beloved I laud who is like a beloved friend, Fire who is as if the chariot of our journey, the one whom we must know.

²⁸ Or, descend

कविमिव प्रचेतसं यं देवासो अध द्विता ।
नि मर्त्येष्वादधुः ॥२॥

2. He whom as the seer and thinker the gods have now set
within twofold in mortals.

त्वं यविष्ट दाशुषो नृः पाहि शृणुधी गिरः ।
रक्षा तोकमुत त्मना ॥३॥

3. O thou ever-young, guard men who give, hear our words;
protect the son by the Self.

क्या ते अग्ने अङ्गिर ऊर्जो नपादुपस्तुतिम् ।
वराय देव मन्यवे ॥४॥

4. O divine Fire, O Angiras, O child of energy, by what word,
the laud, for thy supreme thinking?

दाशेम कस्य मनसा यज्ञस्य सहस्रो यहो ।
कदु वोच इदं नमः ॥५॥

5. By the mind of what master of sacrifice shall we give,
O son of force; how shall I word this prostration of my
surrender?

अधा त्वं हि नस्करो विश्वा अस्मभ्यं सुक्षितीः ।
वाजद्रविणसो गिरः ॥६॥

6. Mayst thou thyself create for us all worlds of a happy
dwelling, make our words a source of the plenitude and
the riches.

कस्य नूनं परीणसो धियो जिन्वसि दंपते ।
गोषाता यस्य ते गिरः ॥७॥

7. In whose wide-moving thought dost thou take delight, O
master of the house; thou from whom come our words in
the conquest of the Light?

तं मर्जयन्त सुक्रतुं पुरोयावानमाजिषु ।
स्वेषु क्षयेषु वाजिनम् ॥८॥

8. Him they make bright, the strong of will, and he goes in front in the race;²⁹ he is a master of plenitude in his own abodes.

क्षेति क्षेमेभिः साधुभिर्नकिर्य द्वन्ति हन्ति यः ।
अग्ने सुवीर एधते ॥९॥

9. He dwells safe on perfect foundations and there are none to slay him, it is he who slays; O Fire, he is a mighty hero and prosperous.

PRAYOGA BHARGAVA

SUKTA 102

त्वमग्ने बृहद् वयो दधासि देव दाशुषे ।
कविर्गृहपतिर्युवा ॥१॥

1. Thou, O divine Fire, foundest a vast expansion for the giver, thou art the seer, the youth, the master of the house.

स न ईळानया सह देवाँ अग्ने दुवस्युवा ।
चिकिद् विभानवा वह ॥२॥

2. Do thou, O Fire of the wide light, who art awake to knowledge, go with our word of prayer and of works and call the gods.

त्वया ह स्विद् युजा वयं चोदिष्ठेन यविष्ट्य ।
अभि ष्मो वाजसातये ॥३॥

3. With thee indeed as an ally, most strong in thy urge, we overcome for the conquest of the plenitude.

²⁹ Or, in the contests;

और्वभृगुवच्छुचिमनवानवदा हुवे ।
अग्निं समुद्रवाससम् ॥४॥

4. Even as the Flame-Seer, Son of the Wideness, even as the Doer of Works I invoke the pure ocean-dwelling Fire.

हुवे वातस्वनं कविं पर्जन्यक्रन्द्यं सहः ।
अग्निं समुद्रवाससम् ॥५॥

5. I call the force which has the sound of the wind and the cry of the rain, the ocean-dwelling Fire.

आ सवं सवितुर्यथा भगस्येव भुजिं हुवे ।
अग्निं समुद्रवाससम् ॥६॥

6. I call like the creation of the Creator-Sun, like the delight of the Lord of Delight, the ocean-dwelling Fire.

अग्निं वो वृधन्तमध्वराणां पुरुतमम् ।
अच्छा नम्ने सहस्रते ॥७॥

7. For the forceful offspring of the pilgrim-sacrifices towards Fire as he grows in his multitudes,—

अयं यथा न आभुवत् त्वष्टा रूपेव तक्ष्या ।
अस्य क्रत्वा यशस्वतः ॥८॥

8. So that he may come to be with us like the Form-Maker coming to the forms he has to carve, us made glorious by his will at work.

अयं विश्वा अभि श्रियोऽग्निर्देवेषु पत्यते ।
आ वाजैरूप नो गमत् ॥९॥

9. This Fire travels in the gods towards all glories; may he come to us with the plenitudes.

विश्वेषामिह स्तुहि होतृणां यशस्तमम् ।
अग्निं यज्ञेषु पूर्व्यम् ॥१०॥

10. Laud here the most glorious of priests of the call, the supreme³⁰ Fire in the sacrifices.

शीरं पावकशोचिषं ज्येष्ठो यो दमेष्वा ।
दीदाय दीर्घश्रुत्तमः ॥११॥

11. The intense Fire with its purifying light who dwells eldest in our homes, shines out as one who hears from afar.

तमर्वन्तं न सानसिं गृणीहि विप्र शुभ्मिणम् ।
मित्रं न यातयज्जनम् ॥१२॥

12. Declare him, O illumined sage, as the powerful and conquering war-horse, as the friend who takes man to the goal of his journey.

उप त्वा जामयो गिरो देदिशतीर्हविष्कृतः ।
वायोरनीके अस्थिरन् ॥१३॥

13. Towards thee come the words of the giver of the offerings marking thee out and stand firm as companions in the might of the wind.

यस्य त्रिधात्ववृतं बर्हिस्तस्थावसंदिनम् ।
आपश्चिन्नि दधा पदम् ॥१४॥

14. Thou whose triple seat of sacrifice is untied and unconfined and the waters also have established thy abode,—

पदं देवस्य मील्हुषोऽनाधृष्टाभिरुतिभिः ।
भद्रा सूर्य इवोपदृक् ॥१५॥

15. The abode of the bounteous godhead with its inviolate safeties, like a happy regard of the Sun.

³⁰ Or, the ancient

अग्ने घृतस्य धीतिभिस्तेपानो देव शोचिषा ।
आ देवान् वक्षि यक्षि च ॥ १६ ॥

16. O divine Fire, by our thinkings of the light, burning with thy flame, bring to us the gods and do them sacrifice.

तं त्वाजनन्त मातरः कविं देवासो अङ्गिरः ।
हव्यवाहममत्यम् ॥ १७ ॥

17. The mothers bore thee, the gods brought thee to birth as the seer, the immortal, the carrier of offering, O Angiras.

प्रचेतसं त्वा कवेऽग्ने दूतं वरेण्यम् ।
हव्यवाहं नि षेदिरे ॥ १८ ॥

18. O Fire, O seer, they set thee within as the thinker, the desirable messenger, carrier of the offerings.

नहि मे अस्त्यद्धा न स्वधितिर्वनन्वति ।
अथैताद्वग् भरामि ते ॥ १९ ॥

19. Mine is not the cow unslayable, I have no axe at hand, so I bring to thee this little that I have.

यदग्ने कानि कानि चिदा ते दारूणि दध्मसि ।
ता जुषस्व यविष्ट्य ॥ २० ॥

20. What we place for thee, a few chance logs, them accept, O ever-young Fire.

यदत्युपजिद्धिका यद् वम्रो अतिसर्पति ।
सर्वं तदस्तु ते घृतम् ॥ २१ ॥

21. What is eaten by the ant, what the white ant overruns, let all that be to thee as if thy food of light.³¹

³¹ Or, as if clarified butter.

अग्निमिन्यानो मनसा धियं सचेत मर्त्यः ।
अग्निमीधे विवस्वभिः ॥ २२॥

22. Kindling the Fire let mortal man cleave with his mind to the Thought; by things luminous³² I kindle the Fire.

SOBHARI KANWA

SUKTA 103

अदर्शि गातुवित्तमो यस्मिन् व्रतान्यादधुः ।
उपो षु जातमार्यस्य वर्धनमग्निं नक्षन्त नो गिरः ॥ १॥

1. He is seen, the great path-finder in whom they have founded the laws of our action; to the Fire well-born, increaser of the Aryan, go our words.

प्र दैवोदासो अग्निर्देवाँ अच्छा न मज्जना ।
अनु मातरं पृथिवीं वि वावृते तस्यौ नाकस्य सानवि ॥ २॥

2. Fire lit by the Servant of Heaven travels in his might towards the gods along our mother earth and on heaven's peak he takes his stand.

यस्माद् रेजन्त कृष्टयश्चर्कृत्यानि कृष्वतः ।
सहस्रां मेधसाताविव त्मनाऽग्निं धीभिः सपर्यत ॥ ३॥

3. Fire because of whom men doing the works that have to be done, grow luminous, him conqueror of the thousands as if in the winning of the purities they serve by the self,³³ by their thoughts.

³² Or, by the shining ones

³³ Or, of themselves,

प्र यं राये निनीषसि मर्तो यस्ते वसो दाशत् ।
स वीरं धत्ते अग्न उक्थशंसिनं तमना सहस्रपोषिणम् ॥४॥

4. He whom thou willst to lead to the Riches, the mortal who gives to thee, O shining One, he holds in himself, O Fire, the hero, who utters the word, who increases the thousands.

स दृष्ट्वे चिदभि तृणति वाजमर्वता स धत्ते अक्षिति श्रवः ।
त्वे देवत्रा सदा पुरुषसो विश्वा वामानि धीमहि ॥५॥

5. He rends open the plenitude even in the strong place by the war-horse, he finds an imperishable inspired knowledge; O thou of the many riches, in thee we ever hold in the godheads all beautiful things.

यो विश्वा दयते वसु होता मन्द्रो जनानाम् ।
मधोर्न पात्रा प्रथमान्यस्मै प्र स्तोमा यन्त्यग्नये ॥६॥

6. He who gives to us all treasures, men's rapturous priest of the call, to him our lauds go forth as if supreme vessels of the honey-wine.

अश्वं न गीर्भी रथ्यं सुदानवो मर्मज्ज्यन्ते देवयवः ।
उभे तोके तनये दस्म विश्पते पर्षि राधो मधोनाम् ॥७॥

7. The lavish givers, the seekers of the godhead, make him bright by their words as if currying a chariot-horse. O powerful for action, O lord of peoples, in the son of our begettings thou carriest achievement of the possessors of riches beyond both the firmaments.

प्र मंहिष्ठाय गायत ऋतावे वृहते शुक्रशोचिषे ।
उपस्तुतासो अग्नये ॥८॥

8. Chant to the most bounteous, the possessor of the Truth, the brilliant in light, coming with the laud, to the Fire.

आ वंसते मघवा वीरवद् यशः समिद्धो द्युम्न्याहुतः ।
कुविन्नो अस्य सुमतिर्नवीयस्यच्छ्रा वाजेभिरागमत् ॥९॥

9. High-kindled, fed with the offering full of light, the lord of riches conquers a heroic glory; often may his new right-thinking come towards us with the plenitudes,—

प्रेष्टमु प्रियाणां स्तुह्यासावातिथिम् ।
अग्निं रथानां यमम् ॥१०॥

10. O thou who presest the wine, laud the Fire, the guest most beloved of the beloved, the controller of the chariots,—

उदिता यो निदिता वेदिता वस्वा यज्ञियो ववर्तति ।
दुष्ट्रा यस्य प्रवणे नोर्मयो धिया वाजं सिषासतः ॥११॥

11. The master of sacrifice who turns towards us the hidden treasures now risen and known, he in whose downward descent is a rush as of waves hard to cross, when he conquers by the thought the plenitudes.

मा नो हृणीतामतिथिर्वसुरग्निः पुरुप्रशस्त एषः ।
यः सुहोता स्वध्वरः ॥१२॥

12. May not Fire, the guest, the shining One widely proclaimed, be wroth with us; this is he who is the perfect priest of the call perfect in the pilgrim-rite.

मो ते रिषन् ये अच्छोक्तिभिर्वसोऽग्ने केभिश्चिदवैः ।
कीरिश्चिद्द्वि त्वामीट्वे द्रृत्याय रातहव्यः स्वध्वरः ॥१३॥

13. May they not come to harm by any of their movements who approach thee with invocation, O Fire, O shining One; for the singer of the hymn³⁴ who has given the offering and does well the pilgrim-rite demands of thee the office of the messenger.

³⁴ Or, the doer of works

आग्ने याहि मरुत्सखा रुद्रेभिः सोमपीतये ।
सोभर्या उप सुषुप्तिं मादयस्व स्वर्णरे ॥१४॥

14. Come, O Fire, with the Rudras, comrade of the life-gods for the drinking of the Soma wine, to the laud of Sobhari and take thy rapture in the godhead of the Sun-world.

Mandala Ten

TRITA APTYA

SUKTA 1

अग्रे वृहन्तुषसामूर्धो अस्थान्निर्जगन्वान् तमसो ज्योतिषागात् ।
अग्निर्भानुना रुशता स्वज्ञ आ जातो विश्वा सद्वान्यप्राः ॥१॥

1. High and vast the Fire stood in front of the dawns; issuing out of the darkness he came with the Light: Fire, a perfect body of brilliant lustre, filled out at his very birth all the worlds.

स जातो गर्भो असि रोदस्योरग्ने चारुर्विभृत ओषधीषु ।
चित्रः शिशुः परि तमांस्यक्तून् प्र मातृभ्यो अधि कनिकदद्वाः ॥२॥

2. Thou art the child born from earth and heaven, the child beautiful carried in the growths of earth; an infant many-hued, thou goest forth crying aloud from the mothers around the nights and the darknesses.

विष्णुरित्था परममस्य विद्वाऽज्ञातो वृहन्नभि पाति तृतीयम् ।
आसा यदस्य पयो अक्रत स्वं सचेतसो अभ्यर्चन्त्यत्र ॥३॥

3. Vishnu knowing rightly the supreme plane of this Fire, born in his vastness, guards the third (plane); when in his mouth they have poured the milk (of the cow), conscious they shine here towards his own home.

अत उ त्वा पितुभृतो जनित्रीरन्नावृधं प्रति चरन्त्यन्नैः ।
ता ई प्रत्येषि पुनरन्यरूपा असि त्वं विश्वु मानुषीषु होता ॥४॥

4. Hence the mothers who bear that draught come with their

food to thee, and thou growest by the food: to them the same, but other in their forms, thou comest (returnest) again, then art thou priest of the call in human beings.

होतारं चित्ररथमध्वरस्य यज्ञस्ययज्ञस्य केतुं रुशन्तम् ।
प्रत्यर्थि देवस्यदेवस्य मङ्गा श्रिया त्वग्निमतिथिं जनानाम् ॥५॥

5. The priest of the call of the pilgrim-rite with his many-hued chariot, in the brilliant ray of intuition of sacrifice on sacrifice, Fire the guest of man who takes to himself the half of each god in might and glory.

स तु वस्त्राण्यध पेशनानि वसानो अग्निर्नाभा पृथिव्याः ।
अरुषो जातः पद इळायाः पुरोहितो राजन् यक्षीह देवान् ॥६॥

6. Putting on robes, putting on forms, Fire in the navel-centre of the earth is born a ruddy flame, in the seat of Revelation. O King, as the priest set in front sacrifice to the gods.

आ हि द्यावापृथिवी अग्न उभे सदा पुत्रो न मातरा ततन्थ ।
प्र याह्यच्छोशतो यविष्टाऽथा वह सहस्येह देवान् ॥७॥

7. Ever, O Fire, thou hast stretched out earth and heaven, as their son thou hast built up thy father and mother: O ever young, journey towards the gods who desire thee; then bring them to us, O forceful Flame!

SUKTA 2

पिप्रीहि देवाँ उशतो यविष्ट विद्वाँ ऋतूँर्क्षतुपते यजेह ।
ये दैव्या ऋत्विजस्तेभिरग्ने त्वं होतृणामस्यायजिष्ठः ॥१॥

1. Satisfy the desire of the gods, O thou ever young, do sacrifice here, a knower of its order and its times,¹ O master of the order and time of things; with those who are divine priests

¹ In the exoteric sense, *rtu* seems to mean the rites of the sacrifice.

of the order of the work thou, O Fire, art the strongest for sacrifice.

वेषि होत्रमुत पोत्रं जनानां मन्धातासि द्रविणोदा ऋतावा ।
स्वाहा वयं कृणवामा हर्वीषि देवो देवान् यजत्वग्निरह्न् ॥२॥

2. Thou comest to men's invocation, thou comest to the purification, thou art the thinker, the giver of the riches, the possessor of the Truth: may we make the offerings with *svāhā*; may Fire, availing, do the sacrifice, a god to the gods.

आ देवानामपि पन्थामगन्म यच्छक्वाम तदनु प्रवोळ्हम् ।
अग्निर्विद्वान्त्स यजात्सेद्दु होता सो अध्वरान्त्स ऋतून् कल्पयाति ॥३॥

3. We have come to the path of the gods, may we have power to tread it, to drive forward along that road. The Fire is the knower, let him do sacrifice; he verily is the priest of the call, he makes effective the pilgrim-sacrifices and the order of our works.

यद् वो वयं प्रमिनाम ब्रतानि विदुषां देवा अविदुष्टरासः ।
अग्निष्टद् विश्वमा पृणाति विद्वान् येभिर्देवाँ ऋतुभिः कल्पयाति ॥४॥

4. Whatever we may impair of the laws of your workings, O gods, we in our ignorance maiming your workings who know, all that may the Fire who is a knower make full by that order in time with which he makes effective the gods.

यत् पाकत्रा मनसा दीनदक्षा न यज्ञस्य मन्वते मर्त्यासः ।
अग्निष्टद्वोता क्रतुविद् विजानन् यजिष्ठो देवाँ ऋतुशो यजाति ॥५॥

5. What in the sacrifice mortals in the ignorance of their minds, poor in discernment, cannot think out, that the Fire knows, the priest of the call, the finder of the right-will, strongest of sacrificants and does the sacrifice to the gods in the order and times of the truth.

विश्वेषां ह्याध्वराणामनीकं चित्रं केतुं जनिता त्वा जजान ।
स आ यजस्व नृवतीरनु क्षाः स्पाहा इषः क्षुमतीविश्वजन्याः ॥ ६ ॥

6. The father brought thee to birth, the force of all pilgrim-sacrifices, the many-hued ray of intuition; so do thou win for us by sacrifice in the line of the planes with their godheads, their desirable and opulent universal forces.

यं त्वा द्यावापृथिवी यं त्वापस्त्वष्टा यं त्वा सुजनिमा जजान ।
पन्थामनु प्रविद्वान् पितृयाणं द्युमदग्ने समिधानो वि भाहि ॥ ७ ॥

7. Thou whom heaven and earth, thou whom the waters, thou whom the form-maker, creator of perfect births, have brought into being, O Fire, luminously along the path of the journey of the Fathers, knowing it beforehand, high-kindled blaze.

SUKTA 3

इनो राजन्नरतिः समिद्धो रौद्रो दक्षाय सुषुमाँ अदर्शि ।
चिकिद्वि भाति भासा बृहताऽसिङ्गीमेति रुशतीमपाजन् ॥ १ ॥

1. He is seen high-kindled, the master ruling all, the traveller, the terrible, he who creates perfectly right understanding, awake to knowledge he shines wide with a vast lustre; driving the ruddy bright cow he comes to the dark one.

कृष्णां यदेनीमभि वर्पसा भूज्जनयन् योषां बृहतः पितुर्जाम् ।
ऊर्ध्वं भानुं सूर्यस्य स्तभायन् दिवो वसुभिररतिर्वि भाति ॥ २ ॥

2. When he overspreads with his body the black night and the dappled dawn bringing to birth the young maiden born from the great Father, pillarating the high-lifted light of the sun, the traveller shines out with the riches² of heaven.

² Or, the shining ones

भद्रो भद्रया सचमान आगात् स्वसारं जारो अभ्येति पश्चात् ।
सुप्रकेतैर्द्युभिरग्निर्वितिष्ठन् रुशङ्गिवर्णैरभि राममस्थात् ॥ ३ ॥

3. He has come closely companioning her, happy with her happy, a lover he follows behind his sister; Fire spreading out with his lights full of conscious knowledge overlays her beauty with his ruddy shining hues.

अस्य यामासो बृहतो न वग्नूनिन्धाना अग्नेः सख्यः शिवस्य ।
ईड्यस्य वृष्णो बृहतः स्वासो भामासो यामनक्तवश्चकित्रे ॥ ४ ॥

4. His movements flaming send forth as if vast callings of Fire the beneficent comrade; in the march of this mighty and adorable flame, the vast and beautiful, his radiances blazing have waked to knowledge.

स्वना न यस्य भामासः पवन्ते रोचमानस्य बृहतः सुदिवः ।
ज्येष्ठेभिर्यस्तेजिष्ठैः क्रीलुमङ्गिवर्षिष्ठेभिर्भानुभिर्नक्षति द्याम् ॥ ५ ॥

5. His blazings as he shines stream like sounds of bright heaven in its vastness; with his greatest, most splendid and opulent lights at play he travels to heaven.

अस्य शुष्मासो ददृशानपवेर्जेहमानस्य स्वनयन् नियुङ्गिः ।
प्रवेभिर्यो रुशङ्गिर्देवतमो वि रेभङ्गिररतिर्भाति विभ्वा ॥ ६ ॥

6. His strengths are those of a thunderbolt seen in the hurling, they neigh aloud in their teams; he, the traveller, most divine, shines wide-pervading with his ancient ruddy chanting fires.

- स आ वक्षि महि न आ च सत्सि दिवस्पृथिव्योररतिर्युवत्योः ।
अग्निः सुतुकः सुतुकेभिरश्वै रमस्वङ्गी रमस्वाँ एह गम्याः ॥ ७ ॥
7. So carry for us, so take thy seat, the mighty traveller of the young earth and heaven, Fire the swift and vehement with his swift and vehement horses,— so mayst thou come to us here.

SUKTA 4

प्र ते यक्षि प्र त इयर्मि मन्म भुवो यथा वन्द्यो नो हवेषु ।
धन्वन्निव प्रपा असि त्वमग्न इयक्षवे पूरवे प्रत्व राजन् ॥१॥

1. To thee I sacrifice, to thee I send forth my thought so that thou mayst manifest thyself adorable at our call; thou art like a fountain in the desert to longing men, O ancient king, O Fire.

यं त्वा जनासो अभि संचरन्ति गाव उष्णमिव ब्रजं यविष्ट ।
दूतो देवानामसि मत्यानामन्तर्महाँश्चरसि रोचनेन ॥२॥

2. O ever-young flame, towards thee men move, like herds that go to a warm pen; thou art the messenger of gods and mortals, thou movest between them vast through the luminous world.

शिशुं न त्वा जेन्यं वर्धयन्ती माता बिभर्ति सचनस्यमाना ।
धनोरधि प्रवता यासि हर्यञ्जिगीषसे पशुरिवावसृष्टः ॥३॥

3. The mother bears thee like an infant child clinging cherishingly to thee, increasing thee to be a conqueror; headlong down over the dry land he goes rejoicing, he is fain to go like an animal let loose.

मूरा अमूर न वयं चिकित्वो महित्वमग्ने त्वमङ्ग वित्से ।
शये वक्षिश्चरति जिह्वादन् रेरिह्वते युवतिं विश्पतिः सन् ॥४॥

4. O thou who art conscious and free from ignorance, ignorant are we and we know not thy greatness, thou only knowest. Covert he lies, he ranges devouring with his tongue of flame, he licks the young earth and is the master of her creatures.

कूचिज्जायते सनयासु नव्यो वने तस्यौ पलितो धूमकेतुः ।
अस्त्रातापो वृषभो न प्र वेति सचेतसो यं प्रणयन्त मर्ताः ॥५॥

5. Anywhere he is born new in eternal wombs; he stands in the

forest hoary-old with smoke for his banner: a bull unbathed he journeys to the waters and mortals who are conscious lead him on his way.

तनूत्यजेव तस्करा वनर्ग् रशनाभिर्दशभिरभ्यधीताम् ।
इयं ते अग्ने नव्यसी मनीषा युक्ष्वा रथं न शुचयद्विरङ्गैः ॥६॥

6. Two robbers abandoning their bodies, rangers of the forest, have planted him in his place with ten cords. This is thy new thinking, O Fire, yoke thyself to it with thy illumining limbs like a chariot.

ब्रह्म च ते जातवेदो नमश्चेयं च गीः सदमिद् वर्धनी भूत् ।
रक्षा णो अग्ने तनयानि तोका रक्षोत नस्तन्वो अप्रयुच्छन् ॥७॥

7. Thine is this wisdom-word, O knower of all things born, and this prostration, this utterance is thine; may it have ever the power to make thee grow. Guard all that are offspring of our begetting, guard undeviatingly our bodies.

SUKTA 5

एकः समुद्रो धरुणो रयीणामस्मद्दूदो भूरिजन्मा वि चष्टे ।
सिषक्त्यूधर्निण्योरुपस्थ उत्सस्य मध्ये निहितं पदं वेः ॥१॥

1. One sole ocean holding all the riches, born in manifold births from our heart it sees all; there cleaves to the teat in the lap of the two secret ones in the midst of the fountain-source the hidden seat of the being.

समानं नीळं वृषणो वसानाः सं जग्मिरे महिषा अर्वतीभिः ।
ऋतस्य पदं कवयो नि पान्ति गुहा नामानि दधिरे पराणि ॥२॥

2. The stallions inhabiting a common abode, the great stallions have met with the mares. The seers guard the seat of the Truth, they hold in the secrecy the supreme Names.

ऋतायिनी मायिनी सं दधाते मित्वा शिशुं जग्नतुर्वर्धयन्ती ।
विश्वस्य नाभिं चरतो ध्रुवस्य कवेश्चित् तनुं मनसा वियन्तः ॥ ३ ॥

3. The two mothers in whom is the Truth, in whom is the mage-wisdom, formed him and brought to birth like an infant child, they have put him firm in his place and make him grow. Men found in him the navel-centre of all that is moving and stable and they weave by the mind the weft of the seer.

ऋतस्य हि वर्तनयः सुजातमिषो वाजाय प्रदिवः सचन्ते ।
अधीवासं रोदसी वावसाने घृतैरन्नैर्वावृथाते मधूनाम् ॥ ४ ॥

4. Him well-born the routes of the Truth and its ancient impulsions close companion for the plenitude. Heaven and earth give lodging to him whose dwelling is above them,³ they make him grow by the lights and foods of their sweetenesses.

सप्त स्वसूररुषीर्वावशानो विद्वान् मध्व उज्जभारा दृशे कम् ।
अन्तर्यमे अन्तरिक्षे पुराजा इच्छन् वत्रिमविदत् पृष्णस्य ॥ ५ ॥

5. Desiring the seven shining sisters, the knower bore on high their sweetenesses that he might have vision; he who was born from of old laboured within in the mid-world, he wished for and found the covering of the all-fostering sun.

सप्त मर्यादाः कवयस्ततक्षुस्तासामेकामिदभ्यंहुरो गात् ।
आयोर्ह स्कम्भ उपमस्य नीळे पथां विसर्गे धरुणेषु तस्थौ ॥ ६ ॥

6. The seers fashioned the seven goals,⁴ towards one of them alone goes the narrow and difficult road. A pillar of the supreme being in its abode, he stands at the starting-out of the ways, in the upholding laws.

³ Or, as their inhabitant,

⁴ Or, the seven frontiers,

असच्च सच्च परमे व्योमन् दक्षस्य जन्मन्नदितेरुपस्थे ।
अग्निर्ह नः प्रथमजा ऋतस्य पूर्वं आयुनि वृषभश्च धेनुः ॥७॥

7. He is the being and non-being in the supreme ether, in the birth of the Understanding in the lap of the indivisible mother. Fire comes to us as the first-born of the Truth, he is the Bull and milch-Cow in the original existence.

SUKTA 6

अयं स यस्य शर्मन्नवोभिरग्नेरधते जरिताभिष्ठौ ।
ज्येष्ठभिर्यो भानुभिर्क्षूणां पर्येति परिवीतो विभावा ॥१॥

1. This is he in whose peace,⁵ and in his approach to it, grows by his guardings the worshipper of the Fire, who encompasses all and is spread everywhere luminous with the largest lights of the wise.⁶

यो भानुभिर्विभावा विभात्यग्निदेवेभिर्द्वितावाजस्तः ।
आ यो विवाय सख्या सखिभ्योऽपरिहृतो अत्यो न सतिः ॥२॥

2. Fire, who shines perpetual, possessor of the Truth, luminous with divine lights, he who follows out the works of a comrade for his comrades like a courser running straight to his goal.

ईशे यो विश्वस्या देववीतेरीशे विश्वायुरुषसो व्युष्टौ ।
आ यस्मिन् मना हवींच्यग्नावरिष्टरथः स्कन्धाति शृष्टैः ॥३॥

3. He who has power for every advent of godhead, who has power for the outbreak of the dawn and is the life of all, Fire in whom our thinkings are cast as offerings, his chariot goes unhurt and he supports all by his strengths.

⁵ Or, house of refuge,

⁶ Or, with his largest lights for the wise.

शूषेभिर्वृधो जुषाणो अकैर्दिवाँ अच्छा रघुपत्वा जिगाति ।
मन्द्रो होता स जुह्वा यजिष्ठः संमिश्लो अग्निरा जिधर्ति देवान् ॥४॥

4. Increasing by his strengths, rejoicing in his illuminations he goes a swift galloper towards the gods; he is the rapturous priest of the call strong to sacrifice with his tongue of flame; inseparable from the gods the Fire sheds on them his light.

तमुस्मिन्दं न रेजमानमग्निं गीर्भिर्नमोभिरा कृणुष्वम् ।
आ यं विप्रासो मतिभिर्गृणन्ति जातवैदसं जुह्वं सहानाम् ॥५॥

5. Him fashion for you with your words and your obeisances as if Indra quivering at the dawn-ray, him whom illumined sages voice with their thoughts, the knower of all things born, the overpowering Flame.

सं यस्मिन् विश्वा वसूनि जग्मुर्वाजे नाश्वाः सप्तीवन्त एवैः ।
अस्मे ऊतीरिन्द्रवाततमा अर्वाचीना अग्न आ कृणुष्व ॥६॥

6. Thou in whom all the Riches meet together in the plenitude like horses by their gallopings in their speed towards the goal, the protections most desired by Indra to us make close, O Fire.

अथा ह्यग्ने महा निषद्या सद्यो जडानो हव्यो बभूय ।
तं ते देवासो अनु केतमायन्नधावर्धन्त प्रथमास ऊमाः ॥७॥

7. Now, indeed, taking thy seat in thy greatness, O Fire, in thy very birth thou hast become the one to whom we must call; the gods walked by the ray of thy intuition, then they grew and were the first and supreme helpers.

SUKTA 7

स्वस्ति नो दिवो अग्ने पृथिव्या विश्वायुर्धेहि यजथाय देव ।
सचेमहि तव दस्म प्रकेतैरुरुष्या ण उरुभिर्देव शंसैः ॥१॥

1. Found for us felicity of earth and heaven and universal life

that we may worship thee with sacrifice, O god; O doer of works, may we keep close to thy perceptions of knowledge; guard us, O god, with thy wide utterances.

इमा अग्ने मतयस्तुभ्यं जाता गोभिरश्वैरभि गृणन्ति राधः ।
यदा ते मर्तो अनु भोगमानङ् वसो दधानो मतिभिः सुजात ॥२॥

2. For thee these thoughts are born, O Fire, towards thee they voice our achievement of riches with its horses of power and herds of light when the mortal upheld by his thoughts following thee attains to thy enjoyment, O Fire, perfectly born, O shining One.

अग्निं मन्ये पितरमग्निमापिमग्निं भ्रातरं सदमित् सखायम् ।
अग्नेरनीकं वृहतः सपर्य दिवि शुक्रं यजतं सूर्यस्य ॥३॥

3. I think of the Fire as my father, my ally, my brother, ever my comrade; I serve the force of vast Fire, his bright and worshipped force of the Sun in heaven.

सिद्धा अग्ने धियो अस्मे सनुत्रीर्य त्रायसे दम आ नित्यहोता ।
ऋतावा स रोहिदश्वः पुरुक्षुद्युभिरस्मा अहभिर्वाममस्तु ॥४॥

4. O Fire, effective in us are thy thoughts and conquerors of our aims: he whom thou deliverest, thou the eternal priest of the call in the house, who art that driver of the red horses, possessed of the Truth, possessor of the much store of riches, may happiness be his through the shining days.

द्युभिर्हितं मित्रमिव प्रयोगं प्रलमृत्विजमध्वरस्य जारम् ।
वाहुभ्यामग्निमायवोऽजनन्त विक्षु होतारं न्यसादयन्त ॥५॥

5. The Fire founded by the heavens⁷ as our friend and the means for our works, the ancient priest of the pilgrim-rites, the lover men brought into being by the strength of their two arms and seated within as the priest of the call in beings.

⁷ Or, with his lights

स्वयं यजस्व दिवि देव देवान् किं ते पाकः कृणवदप्रचेताः ।
यथायज ऋतुभिर्देव देवानेवा यजस्व तन्वं सुजात ॥६॥

6. Thyself sacrifice in heaven to the gods, for what shall man immature in thought and unconscious of the knowledge do of thy work? Even as thou didst sacrifice in the order and times of the Truth, a god to the gods, O perfectly born Fire, so sacrifice to thy body.

भवा नो अग्नेऽवितोत गोपा भवा वयस्कद्वुत नो वयोधाः ।
रास्वा च नः सुमहो हव्यदातिं त्रास्वोत नस्तन्वो अप्रयुच्छन् ॥७॥

7. O Fire, become our guardian and protector, become the creator of our growth and of our growth the upholder, O mighty One, give to us what we shall give as offerings to the gods, and unfailing our bodies deliver.

TRISHIRAS TWASHTRA

SUKTA 8

प्र केतुना बृहता यात्यग्निरा रोदसी वृषभो रोरवीति ।
दिवश्चिदन्ताँ उपमाँ उदानल्पामुपस्थे महिषो ववर्ध ॥१॥

1. The Fire journeys on with his vast ray of intuition, the Bull bellows to earth and heaven; he has reached up to the highest extremities of heaven, the mighty one has grown in the lap of the waters.

मुमोद गर्भो वृषभः ककुदानस्त्रेमा वत्सः शिमीवाँ अरावीत् ।
स देवतात्युद्यतानि कृष्णन्त्वेषु क्षयेषु प्रथमो जिगाति ॥२॥

2. The Bull of the heights,⁸ the new-born rejoiced, the unfailing child worker rejoiced and shouted aloud; in the formation of the gods he does his exalted works and comes the first in his own abodes.

⁸ Or, the humped-Bull,

आ यो मूर्धानं पित्रोररब्य न्यध्वरे दधिरे सूरो अर्णः ।
अस्य पत्मन्नरुषीरङ्गवृद्धा ऋतस्य योनौ तन्वो जुषन्त ॥ ३ ॥

3. He who grasps the head of the father and mother they set within in the pilgrim-sacrifice, a sea from the Sun-world; in his path are the shining rays that are the foundations of the Horse of Power and they accept embodiment in the native seat of the Truth.

उषउषो हि वसो अग्रमेषि त्वं यमयोरभवो विभावा ।
ऋताय सप्त दधिषे पदानि जनयन् मित्रं तन्वे स्वायै ॥ ४ ॥

4. O shining One, thou comest to the front of dawn after dawn, thou hast become luminous in the Twins; thou holdest the seven planes for the Truth bringing Mitra to birth for thy own body.

भुवश्चक्षुर्मह ऋतस्य गोपा भुवो वरुणो यद्वताय वेषि ।
भुवो अपां नपाज्जातवेदो भुवो द्वृतो यस्य हव्यं जुजोषः ॥ ५ ॥

5. Thou becomest the eye of the vast Truth; when thou journeyest to the Truth thou becomest Varuna, its guardian; thou becomest the child of the waters, O knower of all things born, thou becomest the messenger of the man in whose offering thou hast taken pleasure.

भुवो यज्ञस्य रजसश्च नेता यत्रा नियुद्धिः सच्चे शिवामिः ।
दिवि मूर्धानं दधिषे स्वर्षा जिह्वामग्ने चक्षे हव्यवाहम् ॥ ६ ॥

6. Thou art the leader of the sacrifice and leader to the mid-world to which thou resortest constantly with thy helpful team of mares; thou upholdest in heaven thy head that conquers the Sun-world, thy tongue thou makest, O Fire, the carrier of our offerings.

अस्य त्रितः क्रतुना वत्रे अन्तरिच्छन् धीतिं पितुरेवैः परस्य ।
सचस्यमानः पित्रोरुपस्ये जामि ब्रवाण आयुधानि वेति ॥७॥

7. By his will Trita in the secret cave desiring by his movements the thinking of the supreme Father, cherished in the lap of the Father and Mother, speaking the companion-word, seeks his weapons.

स पित्राण्यायुधानि विद्वानिन्द्रेषित आस्यो अभ्ययुध्यत् ।
त्रिशीषाणं सप्तरश्मिं जघन्वान् त्वाष्ट्रस्य चिन्निः ससृजे त्रितो गाः ॥८॥

8. Trita Aptya discovered the weapons of the Father and missioned by Indra went to the battle; he smote the Three-headed, the seven-rayed and let loose the ray-cows of the son of Twashtri the form-maker.

भूरीदिन्द्र उदिनक्षन्तमोजोऽवाभिनत् सत्पतिर्मन्यमानम् ।
त्वाष्ट्रस्य चिद्विश्वरूपस्य गोनामाचक्राणस्त्रीणि शीर्षा परा वर्क् ॥९॥

9. Indra, the master of beings, broke that great upstriving meditating force and cast it downward and making his own the ray-cows of Twashtri's son of the universal forms he took away from him his three heads.

HAVIRDHANA ANGI

SUKTA 11

वृषा वृषो दुदुहे दोहसा दिवः पयांसि यद्हो अदितेरदाम्यः ।
विश्वं स वेद वरुणो यथा धिया स यज्ञियो यज्ञतु यज्ञियाँ ऋतून् ॥१॥

1. Mighty from the mighty, strong and inviolable, he milked by the milking of heaven the streams of the Indivisible; Varuna knew all by his right thought. A lord of sacrifice, may he perform the order of the rites of the sacrifice.

रपद् गन्धर्वारप्या च योषणा नदस्य नादे परि पातु मे मनः ।
 इष्टस्य मध्ये अदितिर्नि धातु नो
 भ्राता नो ज्येष्ठः प्रथमो वि वोचति ॥२॥

2. May the Gandharvi speak to me and the Woman born from the Waters, may her protection be around my mind midst the roar of the river; may the indivisible mother establish us in the heart of our desire: my brother the greatest⁹ and first declares it to me.

सो चिन्मु भद्रा क्षुमती यशस्वत्युषा उवास मनवे स्वर्वती ।
 यदीमुशन्तमुशतामनु क्रतुमग्निं होतारं विदथाय जीजनन् ॥३॥

3. She the happy and opulent and glorious, Dawn has shone out for man bringing the Sun-world with her when they gave birth to this Fire, an aspirant doing the will of the aspirants for the discovery of knowledge.

अध त्यं द्रप्सं विभ्वं विचक्षणं विराभरदिषितः श्येनो अध्वरे ।
 यदी विशो वृण्ते दस्ममार्या अग्निं होतारमध धीरजायत ॥४॥

4. Now the Bird, the missioned Hawk, has brought the draught of the great and seeing wine to the pilgrim-sacrifice. When the Aryan peoples chose the doer of works, Fire the priest of the call, then the thought was born.

सदासि रण्वो यवसेव पुष्यते होत्राभिरग्ने मनुषः स्वध्वरः ।
 विप्रस्य वा यच्छशमान उक्थ्यं वाजं ससवाँ उपयासि भूरभिः ॥५॥

5. Ever art thou delightful like grasses to that which feeds on them, O Fire, doing well with thy voices of invocation the pilgrim-sacrifice for man; when thou givest utterance to the plenitude of the word of the illumined sage, as one who has conquered, thou comest with thy multitude.

⁹ Or, the eldest

उदीरय पितरा जार आ भगमियक्षति हर्यतो हृत्त इष्यति ।
विवक्ति वह्निः स्वपस्यते मखस्तविष्यते असुरो वेपते मती ॥ ६ ॥

6. Upward lift the Father and Mother; the lover aspires to his enjoyment, rejoicing he obeys the urgings from his heart: a bearer of the word he speaks and jocund longs for the good work, the Mighty One puts forth his strength and is illumined by the Thought.

यस्ते अग्ने सुमतिं मर्तो अक्षत् सहसः सूनो अति स प्र शृण्वे ।
इषं दधानो वहमानो अश्वैरा स द्युमाँ अमवान् भूषति द्यून् ॥ ७ ॥

7. O Fire, O son of Force, the mortal who attains to thy right thinking goes forward and hears the truth beyond; holding the impelling force, borne by the horses of power, luminous and mighty he seeks to possess the heavens.

यदग्न एषा समितिर्भवाति देवी देवेषु यजता यजत्र ।
रत्ना च यद् विभजासि स्वधावो भागं नो अत्र वसुमन्तं वीतात् ॥ ८ ॥

8. When, O Fire, takes place that sacrificial assembly, O master of sacrifice, the assembly divine among the gods, when thou distributest the ecstasies, O lord of nature, an opulent portion bring to us.

श्रुधी नो अग्ने सदने सधस्ये युक्ष्वा रथममृतस्य द्रवित्तुम् ।
आ नो वह रोदसी देवपुत्रे माकिर्देवानामप भूरिह स्याः ॥ ९ ॥

9. Hear us, O Fire, in thy house, in the hall of thy session, yoke the galloping car of the Immortal; bring to us heaven and earth, parents of the gods; let none of the gods be away from us and mayst thou be here.

SUKTA 12

द्यावा ह क्षामा प्रथमे ऋतेनाऽभिश्रावे भवतः सत्यवाचा ।
देवो यन्मर्तान् यजथाय कृण्वन्त्सीदद्वोता प्रत्यङ्ग स्वमसुं यन् ॥१॥

- Heaven and earth are the first to hear and by the Truth become possessed of the true speech when the god fashioning the mortal for the sacrificial act takes his seat as his priest of the call and turned towards its own force moves towards it.

देवो देवान् परिभूर्वतेन वहा नो हव्यं प्रथमश्चकित्वान् ।
धूमकेतुः समिधा भाक्षजीको मन्त्रो होता नित्यो वाचा यजीयान् ॥२॥

- A god encompassing the gods with the Truth, carry our offering, the first to awake to the knowledge; erect, thy light rises by the kindling with smoke for thy banner; thou art the rapturous eternal priest of the call strong by speech for the sacrifice.

स्वावृगदेवस्यामृतं यदी गोरतो जातासो धारयन्त उर्वी ।
विश्वे देवा अनु तत् ते यजुर्गुरुद्वहे यदेनी दिव्यं घृतं वाः ॥३॥

- When perfectly achieved is the immortality of the godhead, the immortality of the Light, men born in this world hold wide earth and heaven; all the gods follow in the track of that sacrificial act¹⁰ of thine when the white cow is milked of her stream of divine Light.

अर्चामि वां वर्धयापो घृतस्त्रू द्यावाभूमी शृणुतं रोदसी मे ।
अहा यद द्यावोऽसुनीतिमयन् मध्वा नो अत्र पितरा शिशीताम् ॥४॥

- O earth and heaven, I sing to you the word of illumination, pouring your light make my work grow, may the two firmaments hear me; when the days and the heavens have come by the guidance of the force, may the Father and Mother quicken us here with the sweetness of the wine.

¹⁰ Or, sacrificial word

किं स्वन्नो राजा जगृहे कदस्याऽति ब्रतं चक्रमा को वि वेद ।
 मित्रशिचद्वि ष्मा जुहुराणो देवाञ्छ्लोको न यातामपि
 वाजो अस्ति ॥५॥

5. On something in us the king has laid hold; what have we done that transgresses his law who can know? Even if the Friend is dealing crookedly with the gods there is as if a call to us as we go, there is upon us a plenitude.

दुर्मन्त्वामृतस्य नाम सलक्ष्मा यद् विषुरुपा भवाति ।
 यमस्य यो मनवते सुमन्त्वग्ने तमष्व पाह्यप्रयुच्छन् ॥६॥

6. Hard to seize by the mind in this world is the name of the immortal because he puts on features and becomes divergent forms; he who grasps perfectly with his mind and his thought seizes its controlling law, him, O Fire, O mighty One, undeviatingly protect.

यस्मिन् देवा विदथे मादयन्ते विवस्वतः सदने धारयन्ते ।
 सूर्ये ज्योतिरदधुर्मास्यकृत् परि द्योतनिं चरतो अजस्मा ॥७॥

7. The discovery of knowledge in which the gods find their rapture they hold in the house of the radiant sun; they have set in the sun its light, in the moon its rays and both circle unceasingly around its illumination.

यस्मिन् देवा मन्मनि संचरन्त्यपीच्ये न वयमस्य विद् ।
 मित्रो नो अत्रादितिरनागान्त्सविता देवो वरुणाय वोचत् ॥८॥

8. The thought in which the gods meet together, when it is occult we know not of it. May Mitra and the indivisible mother and the godhead of the creative sun declare us sinless to Varuna.

श्रुधी नो अग्ने सदने सधस्ये युक्ष्वा रथमृतस्य द्रवित्तुम् ।
आ नो वह रोदसी देवपुत्रे माकिर्देवानामप भूरिह्व स्याः ॥९॥

9. Hear us, O Fire, in thy house, in the hall of thy session,
yoke the galloping car of the Immortal; bring to us heaven
and earth, parents of the gods; let none of the gods be away
from us and mayst thou be here.

VIMADA AINDRA OR PRAJAPATYA
OR VASUKRIT VASUKRA

SUKTA 20

भद्रं नो अपि वातय मनः ॥१॥

1. Bring to us a happy mind.

अग्निर्मीळे भुजां यविष्टं शासा मित्रं दुर्धरीतुम् ।
यस्य धर्मन्त्स्वरेनीः सपर्यन्ति मातुरूधः ॥२॥

2. I pray the Fire, the friend who is irresistible in his own com-
mand, in whose law the white rays attend on the Sun-world,
serve the teat of the mother.

यमासा कृपनीळं भासाकेतुं वर्धयन्ति ।
भ्राजते श्रेणिदन् ॥३॥

3. Fire whom face to face a home of light, one who brings the
ray of intuition by his lustre they increase; he blazes with
his row of flaming tusks.

अर्यो विशां गातुरेति प्र यदानड् दिवो अन्तान् ।
कविरभ्रं दीद्यानः ॥४॥

4. He comes to us as a noble path for men when he travels to
the ends of heaven; he is the seer and he lights up the sky.¹¹

¹¹ Or, the cloud.

जुषद्व्या मानुषस्योर्ध्वस्तस्थावृभ्वा यज्ञे ।
मिन्वन्त्सज्ज पुर एति ॥५॥

5. Accepting the oblation of man he stands high exalted in the sacrifice, a skilful craftsman; he goes in our front building our home.

स हि क्षेमो हविर्यजः श्रृष्टीदस्य गातुरेति ।
अग्निं देवा वाशीमन्तम् ॥६॥

6. He is our secure foundation, he is our offering, he is the sacrifice; his path goes swiftly to its goal: the gods call Fire with its adze.

यज्ञासाहं दुव इषेऽग्निं पूर्वस्य शेवस्य ।
अद्रेः सूनुमायुमाहुः ॥७॥

7. I desire from the Fire, powerful for the sacrifice the work of the supreme bliss;¹² they speak of him as the living son of the stone.¹³

नरो ये के चास्मदा विश्वेत् ते वाम आ स्युः ।
अग्निं हविषा वर्धन्तः ॥८॥

8. Whatever men are with us may they in all ways abide in happiness making the Fire to grow by the offerings.

कृष्णः श्वेतोऽरुषो यामो अस्य ब्रह्म ऋज्ञ उत शोणो यशस्वान् ।
हिरण्यरूपं जनिता जजान ॥९॥

9. Black is his movement and white and luminous and crimson-red, it is large and straight and glorious; golden of form the father brought into being.

¹² Or, the work that brings the supreme bliss;

¹³ Or, of the Rock, or the Peak.

एवा ते अग्ने विमदो मनीषामूर्जो नपादमृतेभिः सजोषाः ।
गिर आ वक्षत् सुमतीरियान इषमूर्जं सुक्षितिं विश्वमाभाः ॥१०॥

10. So, O Fire, rapturous thou bearest thy thinking mind, O son of energy, companioning the immortals, coming to us thou bearest thy words and thy right thinkings, thou bringest impelling force, energy, happy worlds of habitation, all.¹⁴

SUKTA 21

आग्निं न स्ववृक्तिभिर्होतारं त्वा वृणीमहे ।
यज्ञाय स्तीर्णबहिषे वि वो मदे शीरं पावकशोचिषं विवक्षसे ॥१॥

1. By our self-purifications we elect thee, the Fire as our priest of the call, for the sacrifice where strewn is the grass — in the intoxication of your rapture — intense with thy purifying light of flame — and thou growest to greatness.

त्वामु ते स्वाभुवः शुभ्मन्त्यश्वराधसः ।
वैति त्वामुपसेचनी वि वो मदे क्रज्जीतिरग्न आहुतिर्विवक्षसे ॥२॥

2. Those who have achieved possession of the Horse, are very close to thee and glorify thee; the ladle goes to thee — in the intoxication of your rapture — direct, carrying the oblation, O Fire — and thou growest to greatness.

त्वे धर्माणं आसते ज्ञुह्नभिः सिञ्चतीरिव ।
कृष्णा रूपाण्यर्जुना वि वो मदे विश्वा अधि श्रियो धिषे
विवक्षसे ॥३॥

3. In thee the upholding laws reside; sprinkling out their contents as with ladles black forms and white — in the intoxication of your rapture — all glories thou holdest — and thou growest to greatness.

¹⁴ Or, Vimada, the rapturous one, coming carries to thee, O Fire, his thinking mind, to thee his words and his right thinkings, brings etc.

यमग्ने मन्यसे रथं सहसावन्नमर्त्यं ।
तमा नो वाजसातये वि वो मदे यज्ञेषु चित्रमा भरा विवक्षसे ॥४॥

4. O forceful and immortal Fire, whatever wealth thou deemest fit, that for the winning of the plenitudes—in the intoxication of your rapture—bring to us, a wealth of various lights in the sacrifices—and thou growest to greatness.

अग्निर्जातो अर्थवणा विद्द विश्वानि काव्या ।
भुवद् द्वूतो विवस्वतो वि वो मदे प्रियो यमस्य काम्यो विवक्षसे ॥५॥

5. The Fire born from Atharvan knows all seer-wisdoms, he becomes the messenger of the luminous sun—in the intoxication of your rapture—dear and desirable to the lord of the law—and thou growest to greatness.

त्वां यज्ञेष्वीळतेऽग्ने प्रयत्यध्वरे ।
त्वं वसूनि काम्या वि वो मदे विश्वा दधासि दाशुषे विवक्षसे ॥६॥

6. Thee they pray in the sacrifices, O Fire, as the pilgrim-sacrifice goes on its way; all desirable treasures—in the intoxication of your rapture—thou foundest for the giver—and thou growest to greatness.

त्वां यज्ञेष्वृत्विजं चारुमग्ने नि षेदिरे ।
घृतप्रतीकं मनुषो वि वो मदे शुक्रं चेतिष्ठमक्षमिर्विवक्षसे ॥७॥

7. Thee as the priest of the rite in the sacrifices men have seated, O Fire, beautiful, luminous of front—in the intoxication of your rapture—bright and, with thy eyes, most conscious of knowledge—and thou growest to greatness.

अग्ने शुक्रेण शोचिषोरु प्रथयसे वृहत् ।
अभिक्रन्दन् वृषायसे वि वो मदे गर्भं दधासि जामिषु विवक्षसे ॥८॥

8. O Fire, with thy bright light of flame thou spreadest the wide Vast, clamouring thou becomest the bull—in the intoxication of your rapture—and settest the child of the womb in

the sisters — and thou growest to greatness.

VATSAPRI BHALANDANA

SUKTA 45

दिवस्परि प्रथमं जङ्गे अग्निरस्मद् द्वितीयं परि जातवेदाः ।
तृतीयमप्सु नृमणा अजस्रमिन्धान एनं जरते स्वाधीः ॥१॥

1. Above heaven was the first birth of the Fire, over us was his second birth as the knower of all things born, his third birth was in the waters, a god-mind; him continuously one kindles and with one's thought perfectly fixed on him adores.

विद्या ते अग्ने त्रेधा त्रयाणि विद्या ते धाम विभृता पुरुत्रा ।
विद्या ते नाम परमं गुहा यद् विद्या तमुत्सं यत आजगन्थ ॥२॥

2. O Fire, we know the triple three of thee, we know thy seats borne widely in many planes, we know thy supreme Name which is in the secrecy, we know that fount of things whence thou camest.

समुद्रे त्वा नृमणा अप्स्वन्तर्नृचक्षा ईधे दिवो अग्न ऊधन् ।
तृतीये त्वा रजसि तस्थिवांसमपामुपस्थे महिषा अवर्धन् ॥३॥

3. He of the god-mind kindled thee in the Ocean, within the Waters, he of the divine vision kindled thee, O Fire, in the teat of heaven; the mighty ones made thee to grow where thou stoodest in the third kingdom, in the lap of the waters.

अक्रन्ददग्निः स्तनयन्निव द्यौः क्षामा रेहिहृ वीरुधः समञ्जन् ।
सद्यो जडानो वि हीमिद्वो अख्यदा रोदसी भात्यन्तः ॥४॥

4. Fire cried aloud like heaven thundering, he licked the earth revealing its growths: when kindled and born, at once he saw all this that is; he shines out with his light between earth and heaven.

श्रीणामुदारो धरुणो रथीणां मनीषाणां प्रार्पणः सोमगोपाः ।
वसुः सूनुः सहसो अप्सु राजा वि भात्यग्र उषसामिधानः ॥५॥

5. An exalter of glories, a holder of the riches, a manifester of thinking mind, a guardian of the wine of delight, a shining One, the son of force, the king in the Waters, he grows luminous as he burns up in the front of the dawns.

विश्वस्य केतुर्भुवनस्य गर्भ आ रोदसी अपृणाज्जायमानः ।
वीलुं चिददिमभिनत् परायज्जना यदग्निमयजन्त् पञ्च ॥६॥

6. The ray of intuition of the universe, the child in the womb of the world, in his coming to birth he filled earth and heaven; going beyond them he rent even the strong mountain when the peoples of the five births sacrificed to the Fire.

उशिक् पावको अरतिः सुमेधा मर्तेष्वग्निरमृतो नि धायि ।
इर्यति धूममरुषं भरिप्रदुच्छुक्रेण शोचिषा द्यामिनक्षन् ॥७॥

7. An aspirant and traveller and wise of mind, a purifying flame, the Fire who is set within as the immortal in mortals, he sends forth and carries a ruddy smoke striving with his bright flame of light to reach heaven.

दृशानो रुक्म उर्विया व्यद्यौद् दुर्मर्षमायुः श्रिये रुचानः ।
अग्निरमृतो अभवद् वयोभिर्यदेनं द्यौर्जनयत् सुरेताः ॥८॥

8. Visible, golden of light, widely he shone; resplendent in his glory he is life hard to violate: the Fire by his expandings became immortal when heaven with its strong seed had brought him to birth.

यस्ते अद्य कृणवद् भद्रशोचेऽपूर्पं देव घृतवन्तमग्ने ।
प्रतं नय प्रतरं वस्यो अच्छाऽभि सुम्पं देवभक्तं यविष्ट ॥९॥

9. O god, O happy light, O Fire, he who has prepared for thee the luminous honeycomb¹⁵ him lead forward towards

¹⁵ Or, the cake of light

a more opulent state, O youthful godhead, even to the bliss enjoyed by the gods.

आ तं भज सौश्रवसेष्वग्न उकथउकथ आ भज शस्यमाने ।
प्रियः सूर्ये प्रियो अग्ना भवात्युज्जातेन भिनददुज्जनित्वैः ॥१०॥

10. O Fire, bestow on him his share in the things of inspired knowledge, in word upon word as it is spoken: he becomes dear to the sun, dear to Fire; upward he breaks with what is born in him, upward with the things that are to be born.

त्वामग्ने यजमाना अनु दून् विश्वा वसु दधिरे वार्याणि ।
त्वया सह द्रविणमिच्छमाना ब्रजं गोमन्तमुशिजो वि वन्तुः ॥११॥

11. O Fire, men who sacrifice to thee day after day hold in themselves all desirable riches; desiring the treasure in thy companionship, aspiring, they burst open the covered pen of the Ray-Cows.

अस्ताव्यग्निर्नरां सुशेवो वैश्वानर ऋषिभिः सोमगोपाः ।
अद्वेषे द्यावापृथिवी हुवेम देवा धत्त रयिमस्मे सुवीरम् ॥१२॥

12. The Fire has been affirmed in their lauds by the sages, he who is full of bliss for men, the Universal Godhead, guardian of the wine of delight. Let us invoke earth and heaven free from hostile powers; found in us, O gods, a wealth full of hero-mights.

SUKTA 46

प्र होता जातो महान् नभोविनृषद्वा सीददपामुपस्थे ।
दधिर्यो धायि स ते वयांसि यन्ता वसूनि विधते तनूपाः ॥१॥

1. The great priest of the call has been born; the knower of the heavens, he who is seated in man, may he take his seat in the lap of the waters: he who upholds us and who is held in us, rules for thee his worshipper thy expandings and thy riches and is the protector of thy body.

इमं विधन्तो अपां सधस्ये पशुं न नष्टं पदैरनु गमन् ।
गुहा चतन्तमुशिजो नमोभिरिच्छन्तो धीरा भृगवोऽविन्दन् ॥ २॥

2. They worshipped him in the session of the waters, as if the cow of vision lost they followed him by his tracks; where he hid in the secret cavern, aspiring with obeisance the Flame-Seers, the wise thinkers desired and found him.

इमं त्रितो भूर्यविन्ददिच्छन् वैभूवसो मूर्धन्यद्यायाः ।
स शेवृधो जात आ हर्म्येषु नाभिर्युवा भवति रोचनस्य ॥ ३॥

3. Him greatly desiring Trita,¹⁶ son of the master of wide riches, found on the head of the light unslayable; he is born the youth who increases the felicity in our mansions and becomes the navel-centre of the luminous world.

मन्दं होतारमुशिजो नमोभिः प्राञ्चं यज्ञं नेतारमध्वराणाम् ।
विशामकृण्वन्नरतिं पावकं हव्यवाहं दधतो मानुषेषु ॥ ४॥

4. In their aspiration they created him by their obeisance and set him in men as the rapturous priest of the call, the sacrificer ever-moving forward, the leader of the pilgrim-sacrifices, the traveller, the carrier of the offering, the purifying Flame.

प्र भूर्जयन्तं महां विपोधां मूरा अमूरं पुरां दर्माणम् ।
नयन्तो गर्भं वनां धियं धुर्हिरिश्मश्चुं नार्वाणं धनर्चम् ॥ ५॥

5. He has come into being and leading him like a golden-maned war-horse, the great, the victorious, the founder of the Light, men ignorant one who is free from ignorance, the render of the cities, the child of the forests, whose wealth is the illumined word¹⁷—they established the thought.

¹⁶ Trita the triple born from the All-pervading Substance.

¹⁷ Or, the illumination

नि पस्त्यासु त्रितः स्तभूयन् परिवीतो योनौ सीददन्तः ।
अतः संगृभ्या विशं दमूना विधर्मणायन्वैरीयते नृन् ॥६॥

6. May Trita in the homesteads holding all firmly¹⁸ take his session in his native seat within and all-encompassing; thence, a dweller in man's home, taking all into his grasp, by a wide law of his action, by unrestrained movements he journeys to the gods.

अस्याजरासो दमामरित्रा अर्चदधूमासो अग्नयः पावकाः ।
श्वितीचयः श्वात्रासो भुरण्यवो वनर्षदो वायवो न सोमाः ॥७॥

7. His ageless and purifying fires are the defenders of our homes, lifting their luminous smoke; white-flaming, dwellers in the Tree, they are our strengtheners and supporters and like winds and like wine.

प्र जिह्वा भरते वेपो अग्निः प्र वयुनानि चेतसा पृथिव्याः ।
तमायवः शुचयन्तं पावकं मन्द्रं होतारं दधिरे यजिष्ठम् ॥८॥

8. Fire carries with his tongue the illumination of wisdom, he carries in his consciousness earth's discoveries of knowledge; him men hold the illuminating and purifying rapturous priest of the call most strong for sacrifice.

द्यावा यमग्निं पृथिवी जनिष्टामापस्त्वष्टा भृगवो यं सहोभिः ।
ईळेन्यं प्रथमं मातरिश्वा देवास्ततक्षुर्मनवे यजत्रम् ॥९॥

9. This is the Fire to whom earth and heaven gave birth; and the waters, the form-maker and the Flame-Seers by their strengths and life that grows in the mother and the gods have fashioned for man desirable, first and supreme, a master of sacrifice.

¹⁸ Or, setting himself firmly

यं त्वा देवा दधिरे हव्यवाहं पुरुस्पृहो मानुषासो यजत्रम् ।
स यामन्नग्ने स्तुवते वयो धाः प्र देवयन् यशसः सं हि पूर्वीः ॥१०॥

10. Thou art he whom the gods have set as the carrier of the offerings and men with their many desires as the lord of sacrifice; so do thou, O Fire, found in thy journeying wide expansion for him who lauds thee and making him divine gather in him many glorious things.

DEVAS AND AGNI SAUCHIKA

SUKTA 51

महत् तदुल्बं स्थविरं तदासीद्येनविष्टिः प्रविवेशिथापः ।
विश्वा अपश्यद् बहुधा ते अग्ने जातवेदस्तन्वो देव एकः ॥१॥

1. Large was the covering and it was dense in which thou wert wrapped when thou didst enter into the waters; one was the god who saw thee but many and manifold were thy bodies which he saw, O Fire, O knower of all things born.

को मा ददर्श कतमः स देवो यो मे तन्वो बहुधा पर्यपश्यत् ।
क्वाह् मित्रावरुणा क्षियन्त्यग्नेर्विश्वाः समिधो देवयानीः ॥२॥

2. Which of the gods was he who saw everywhere my bodies in many forms? O Mitra and Varuna, where then dwell all the blazings of the Fire which are paths of the gods?

ऐच्छाम त्वा बहुधा जातवेदः प्रविष्टमग्ने अप्स्वोषधीषु ।
तं त्वा यमो अचिकेच्चित्रभानो दशान्तरुष्यादतिरोचमानम् ॥३॥

3. We desire thee, O Fire, O knower of all things born, when thou hast entered manifoldly into the growths of the earth and into the waters; there the lord of the law grew aware of thee, O thou of the many diverse lights, shining luminous beyond the ten inner dwelling-places.

होत्रादहं वरुण बिभ्यदायं नेदेव मा युनजन्त्र देवाः ।
तस्य मे तन्वो बहुधा निविष्टा एतमर्थं न चिकेताहमग्निः ॥४॥

4. O Varuna, fearing the sacrificants' office that so the gods might not yoke me to that work, so my bodies entered manifoldly, for I, Fire, was not conscious of this goal of the movement.

एहि मनुर्देवयुर्ज्ञकामोऽरंकृत्या तमसि क्षेष्यने ।
सुगान् पथः कृषुहि देवयानान् वह हव्यानि सुमनस्यमानः ॥५॥

5. Come to us; the human being, god-seeking, is desirous of sacrifice, he has made all ready but thou dwellest in the darkness, O Fire. Make the paths of the journeying of the gods easy to travel, let thy mind be at ease, carry the offerings.

अग्नेः पूर्वे भ्रातरो अर्थमेतं रथीवाध्वानमन्वावरीवुः ।
तस्माद् भिया वरुण द्वूरमायं गौरो न क्षेप्त्रोरविजे ज्यायाः ॥६॥

6. The ancient brothers of the Fire chose this goal to be reached as charioteers follow a path; therefore in fear I came far away, O Varuna. I started back as a gaur from the bowstring of the archer.

कुर्मस्त आयुरजरं यदग्ने यथा युक्तो जातवेदो न रिष्याः ।
अथा वहासि सुमनस्यमानो भागं देवेभ्यो हविषः सुजात ॥७॥

7. Since we make thy life imperishable, O Fire, O knower of all things born, so that yoked with it thou shalt not come to harm, then with thy mind at ease thou canst carry their share of the offering to the gods, O high-born Fire.

प्रयाजान् मे अनुयाजाँश्च केवलानूर्जस्वन्तं हविषो दत्त भागम् ।
घृतं चापां पुरुषं चौषधीनामग्नेश्च दीर्घमायुरस्तु देवाः ॥८॥

8. Give me the absolutes that precede and follow the sacrifice as my share of the oblation packed with the energy; give me the light from the waters and the soul from the plants and let there be long life for the Fire, O gods.

तव प्रयाजा अनुयाजाश्च केवल ऊर्जस्वन्तो हविषः सन्तु भागाः ।
तवाग्ने यज्ञोऽयमस्तु सर्वस्तुभ्यं नमन्तां प्रदिशश्चतसः ॥९॥

9. Thine be the absolutes, precedents and consequents of the sacrifice, the portions packed with energy of the oblation; thine, O Fire, be all this sacrifice; may the four regions bow down to thee.

SUMITRA VADHRYASHWA

SUKTA 69

भद्रा अग्नेवध्यश्वस्य संदृशो वामी प्रणीतिः सुरणा उपेतयः ।
यदीं सुमित्रा विशो अग्ने इन्धते घृतेनाहुतो जरते दविद्युतत् ॥१॥

1. Happy are the seeings of the Fire of the gelded Horse, pleasurable his guidance, delightful his approaches; when the friendly peoples set him ablaze in their front, fed with the oblations of the Light he flames up for his worshipper.

घृतमानेवध्यश्वस्य वर्धनं घृतमन्तं घृतम्बस्य मेदनम् ।
घृतेनाहुत उर्विया वि प्रथे सूर्य इव रोचते सर्पिरासुतिः ॥२॥

2. The Light is the increasing of the Fire of the gelded Horse, Light is his food, Light is his fattening: fed with the oblation of the Light wide he spread; he shines as the Sun when there is poured on him its running stream.

यत् ते मनुर्यदनीकं सुमित्रः समीधे अग्ने तदिदं नवीयः ।
स रेवच्छोच स गिरो जुषस्व स वाजं दर्षि स इह श्रवो धाः ॥३॥

3. The force of flame which thinking man, which the friendly one, set ablaze, this is that new force, O Fire; so opulently shine, so accept our words, so take the plenitude by violence, so found here the inspired knowledge.

यं त्वा पूर्वमीठितो वध्यश्वः समीधे अग्ने स इदं जुषस्व ।
स नः स्तिपा उत भवा तनूपा दात्रं रक्षस्व यदिदं ते अस्मे ॥४॥

4. That flame of thine of old which the gelded Horse, when prayed, set blazing high, O Fire who art that flame, this too accept; as that flame, become the protector of our stable erections and the protector of our bodies, guard this giving of thine which is here in us.

भवा दुम्ही वाध्यश्वोत गोपा मा त्वा तारीदभिमातिर्जनानाम् ।
शूर इव धृष्णुश्च्यवनः सुमित्रः प्र नु वोचं वाध्यश्वस्य नाम ॥५॥

5. Become full of light, O gelded Horse, and become our protector, let not the assault of men pierce thee; thou art like a hero, a violent overthrower and the good Friend: lo, I have uttered the names of the Fire of the gelded Horse.

समज्ञ्या पर्वत्या वसूनि दासा वृत्राण्यार्या जिगेथ ।
शूर इव धृष्णुश्च्यवनो जनानां त्वमग्ने पृतनायूरभि ष्याः ॥६॥

6. Thou hast conquered the riches of the plains and the riches of the mountain, the destroyer foemen, and the Aryan freemen: like a hero art thou, a violent overthrower of men, O Fire, mayst thou overcome those who battle against us.

दीर्घतन्तुर्वृहदुक्षायमग्निः सहस्रस्तरीः शतनीथ क्रह्मवा ।
द्वामान् द्वामत्सु नृभिर्मृज्यमानः सुमित्रेषु दीदयो देवयत्सु ॥७॥

7. This Fire is the long Thread, the vast Bull, one with a thousand layers and a hundred leadings, he is the Craftsman; luminous in men luminous, made bright by the hands of men, may he flame out in the strivers after godhead, in the friendly people.¹⁹

¹⁹ In the Sumitras, the name of the Rishi; but throughout the hymn there is a double or symbolic meaning in the names.

त्वे धेनुः सुदृधा जातवेदोऽसश्चतेव समना सवर्धुक् ।
त्वं नृभिर्दक्षिणावद्विरग्ने सुमित्रेभिरिध्यसे देवयद्विः ॥ ८ ॥

8. In thee is the good milch-cow, O knower of all things born,
as if unstayingly equal in its yield, giving its nectar-milk.
O Fire, thou art set alight by men who have the intuitive
judgment, strivers after godhead, the friendly people.

देवाश्चित् ते अमृता जातवेदो महिमानं वाध्यश्व प्र वोचन् ।
यत् संपृच्छं मानुषीर्विंश आयन् त्वं नृभिरजयस्त्वावृथेभिः ॥ ९ ॥

9. Even the immortal gods proclaim thy greatness, O knower
of all things born, O Fire of the gelded Horse. That which I
sought by questioning, coming to the human peoples, thou
hast conquered by men who grow by thee.²⁰

पितेव पुत्रमबिभरुपस्थे त्वामग्ने वध्यश्वः सपर्यन् ।
जुषाणो अस्य समिधं यविष्टोत पूर्वानवनोर्वाधतश्चित् ॥ १० ॥

10. Thee as the father carries his son in his lap so the gelded
Horse carried and tended thee, O Fire; O youthful god,
accepting his fuel thou didst conquer even the supreme and
mighty.

शश्वदग्निर्वध्यश्वस्य शश्वन् नृभिर्जिगाय सुतसोमवद्विः ।
समनं चिददहश्चित्रभानोऽव ब्राधन्तमभिनद् वृधश्चित् ॥ ११ ॥

11. Fire has ever conquered the enemies of the gelded Horse by
men who have pressed the Soma wine; O thou of the bright
diverse lights, thou hast broken and cast down the foe that
was equal and the foe that was mighty and thou hast given
him increase.

अयमग्निर्वध्यश्वस्य वृत्रहा सनकात् प्रेद्वो नमसोपवाक्यः ।
स नो अजामीरुत वा विजामीनभि तिष्ठ शर्धतो वाध्यश्व ॥ १२ ॥

12. This Fire is the slayer of the enemies of the gelded Horse, lit

²⁰ Or, who make thee grow in them.

from of old and to be invoked with obeisance; so do thou assail those who attack him, both the unaccompanied and the one with many companions, O Fire of the gelded Horse.

SUKTA 70

इमां मे अग्ने समिधं जुषस्वेलस्पदे प्रति हर्या घृताचीम् ।
वर्षन् पृथिव्याः सुदिनत्वे अह्मूर्ध्वो भव सुक्रतो देवयज्या ॥१॥

1. O Fire, accept the fuel I give thee; in the seat of revelation take joy in the luminous Thought: on the high top of earth, in the brightness of the days, become high uplifted by worship of sacrifice to the gods, O strong of will!

आ देवानामग्रयावेह यातु नरांशंसो विश्वरूपेभिरश्वैः ।
ऋतस्य पथा नमसा मियेधो देवेभ्यो देवतमः सुषूदत् ॥२॥

2. May he who travels in front of the gods, he who voices the godhead, come here with his horses of universal forms; pure and most divine, may he hasten with our obeisance on the path of the Truth to the gods.

शश्वत्तममीळते दूत्याय हविष्मन्तो मनुष्यासो अग्निम् ।
वहिष्टैरश्वैः सुवृता रथेनाऽऽ देवान् वक्षि नि षदेह होता ॥३॥

3. Men bringing their offerings ask for the Fire everlasting to be their envoy: so do thou with thy horses strong to bear and thy swiftly moving car bring to us the gods; take here thy seat as the priest of the call.

वि प्रथतां देवज्ञुष्टं तिरश्चा दीर्घं द्राघ्मा सुरभि भूत्वस्मे ।
अहेळता मनसा देव बर्हिरिन्द्रज्येष्ठाँ उशतो यक्षि देवान् ॥४॥

4. May the seat acceptable to the gods spread wide in us and all its long horizontal length become fragrant. Occupy that seat, O god, with a mind not inclining to wrath, and to the gods with Indra for their greatest offer sacrifice.

दिवो वा सानु स्पृशता वरीयः पृथिव्या वा मात्रया वि श्रयध्वम् ।
उशतीद्वारो महिना महद्विदेवं रथं रथयुर्धारयध्वम् ॥५॥

5. Touch either heaven's superior peak or swing wide open with all the extent of earth, O doors of aspiration, who desire the chariot of the gods, hold in your greatness and by the great the divine car.

देवी दिवो द्विहितरा सुशिल्पे उषासानकता सदतां नि योनौ ।
आ वां देवास उशन्त उरौ सीदन्तु सुभगे उपस्थे ॥६॥

6. Let the two divine daughters of heaven, formed beautifully, dawn and night, sit in their native seat; O dawn and night, O you who aspire, may the gods aspiring sit on your wide lap, O blissful ones.

ऊर्ध्वो ग्रावा वृहदग्निः समिद्धः प्रिया धामान्यदितेरूपस्थे ।
पुरोहितावृत्विजा यज्ञे अस्मिन् विदुष्टरा द्रविणमा यजेथाम् ॥७॥

7. High stands up the stone of the pressing, high the Fire is kindled, may it touch the vast and the seats dear to us in the lap of the infinite mother; O you who are vicars and ordinants of the rite in this sacrifice, you twain who have greater knowledge, may you win for us by sacrifice the Treasure.

तिस्रो देवीर्बहिर्दिं वरीय आ सीदत चक्रमा वः स्योनम् ।
मनुष्वद् यज्ञं सुधिता हर्वीषीला देवी घृतपदी जुषन्त ॥८॥

8. O ye three goddesses, sit on the superior seat which we have made delightful for you; may the mother of Revelation and the two goddesses with the luminous feet accept our firmly placed offerings and our human worship of sacrifice.

देव त्वष्टर्यद्व चारुत्वमानद् यद्विरसामभवः सचाभूः ।
स देवानां पाथ उप प्र विद्वानुशन् यक्षि द्रविणोदः सुरतः ॥९॥

9. O divine maker of forms, since thou hast reached beauty in

thy works, since thou hast become companion in thy being to the Angiras seers, forward then to the goal of the journeyings of the gods, for thou knowest it! Aspiring, perfect in ecstasy, sacrifice to the gods, O giver of the treasure.

वनस्पते रशनया नियूया देवानां पाथ उप वक्षि विद्वान् ।
स्वदाति देवः कृणवद्धवींष्यवतां द्यावापृथिवी हवं मे ॥१०॥

10. O Tree, knowing the goal of the journeyings of the gods, bear us to it binding with the radiant cord. May the godhead fashion the offerings in which he takes pleasure: may heaven and earth protect our call.

आग्ने वह वरुणमिष्टये न इन्द्रं दिवो मरुतो अन्तरिक्षात् ।
सीदन्तु बर्हिर्विश्व आ यजत्राः स्वाहा देवा अमृता मादयन्ताम् ॥११॥

11. O Fire, bring Varuna to our sacrifice, Indra from heaven, the Life-Gods from mid-air; may all the lords of sacrifice sit on our sacred seat, may the immortal gods take rapture in the *svāhā*.

AGNI SAUCHIKA OR VAISHWANARA
OR SAPTI VAJAMBHARA

SUKTA 79

अपश्यमस्य महतो महित्वममत्यस्य मर्त्यासु विक्षु ।
नाना हनू विभृते सं भरेते असिन्वती बप्सती भूर्यत्तः ॥१॥

1. I have seen the greatness of this great one, the Immortal in the mortal peoples. The jaws of this abundant eater, separate and held apart, are brought close together, devouring, insatiable.

गुहा शिरो निहितमृधगक्षी असिन्वन्नति जिह्या वनानि ।
अत्राण्यस्मै पडिभः सं भरन्त्युत्तानहस्ता नमसाधि विक्षु ॥२॥

2. His head is in the secrecy, his eyes wide apart, insatiable he eats up the forest with his tongue of flame. They bring together his foods for him with the pacings of their feet, their hands of obeisance are outstretched in the peoples.

प्र मातुः प्रतरं गुह्यमिच्छन् कुमारो न वीरुधः सर्पदुर्वीः ।
ससं न पक्वमविदच्छुचन्तं रिरिह्यांसं रिप उपस्थे अन्तः ॥३॥

3. Desiring the secret place of the mother farther beyond he crawls like a child over the wide growths of earth. One finds him shining like ripe corn, licking away the hurts, within in her lap.

तद्वामृतं रोदसी प्र ब्रवीमि जायमानो मातरा गर्भो अत्ति ।
नाहं देवस्य मत्यश्चिकेताऽग्निरङ्ग विचेताः स प्रचेताः ॥४॥

4. O heaven and earth, I declare to you that Truth of you, —in his very birth the child of your womb devours his parents. I am mortal and know not of the godhead; Fire is the all-conscious knower and he is the thinker.

यो अस्मा अन्नं तृष्णादधात्याज्यैर्घृतैर्जुहोति पुष्यति ।
तस्मै सहस्रमक्षभिर्विचक्षेऽग्ने विश्वतः प्रत्यङ्गसि त्वम् ॥५॥

5. He who sets swiftly for him his food casts on him the outpourings of light by which he is nourished, for him he sees with a thousand eyes: O Fire, thou frontest us on every side.

किं देवेषु त्यज एनश्चकर्थाऽग्ने पृच्छामि नु त्वामविद्वान् ।
अक्रीलन् क्रीलन् हरिरत्तवेऽदन् वि पर्वशश्चकर्त गामिवासिः ॥६॥

6. What omission or sin hast thou done before the gods, I ask thee, O Fire, for I know not. In his play unplaying a tawny lion, eating only to devour, he has cut all asunder limb by limb, as a knife cuts the cow.

विषूचो अश्वान् युयुजे वनेजा ऋजीतिभी रशनाभिगृभीतान् ।
चक्षदे मित्रो वसुभिः सुजातः समानृधे पर्वभिर्वृधानः ॥७॥

7. He who is born in the forests has yoked his horses tending all ways but caught back by straight-held reins. Mitra, well-born, has distributed to him the treasures and he has grown to completeness increasing in every member.

SUKTA 80

अग्निः सप्ति वाजंभरं ददात्यग्निर्वीरं श्रुत्यं कर्मनिःष्टाम् ।
अग्नी रोदसी वि चरत् समञ्जन्नग्निर्वीरीं वीरकुक्षिं पुरंधिम् ॥१॥

1. Fire gives to us the Horse that carries the plenitude, Fire gives the Hero who has the inspired hearing and stands firm in the work; Fire ranges through earth and heaven revealing all things, Fire gives the Woman, the tenant of the city,²¹ from whose womb is born the hero.

अग्नेरप्नसः समिदस्तु भद्राऽग्निर्मही रोदसी आ विवेश ।
अग्निरेकं चोदयत् समत्स्वग्निर्वृत्राणि दयते पुरुणि ॥२॥

2. May there be a happy fuel for Fire at his labour, Fire enters into the great earth and heaven: Fire urges on one who is all alone in his battles, Fire cleaves asunder the multitude of the enemy.

अग्निर्हृत्यं जरतः कर्णमावाऽग्निरदम्यो निरदहज्जरूथम् ।
अग्निरत्रिं धर्मं उरुष्यदन्तरग्निर्नृमेधं प्रजयासृजत् सम् ॥३॥

3. Fire has protected the ear²² of the worshipper,²³ Fire burnt out the Waster²⁴ from the waters; Fire delivered Atri within

²¹ Or, the many-thoughted,

²² *Tyam*, “that other” ear, the inner ear which listens to inspired knowledge.

²³ Sayana takes the two words *jarataḥ karṇa* as if they were one indicating the name of the Rishi “Jaratkarna”.

²⁴ Sayana renders *jarūtha* “a demon”.

the blaze,²⁵ Fire united man's sacrifice with its progeny.²⁶

अग्निर्दाद् द्रविणं वीरपेशा अग्निर्कृषिं यः सहस्रा सनोति ।
अग्निर्दिवि हव्यमा ततानाऽग्नेर्धमानि विभृता पुरुत्रा ॥४॥

4. May Fire in the hero's shape give us the Treasure, may Fire give us the sage who wins the thousands; Fire has extended the offering in heaven, his are the planes upheld separately in many spaces.

अग्निमुक्तैर्कृषयो वि द्वयन्तेऽग्निं नरो यामनि बाधितासः ।
अग्निं वयो अन्तरिक्षे पतन्तोऽग्निः सहस्रा परि याति गोनाम् ॥५॥

5. Fire the sages with their utterances call to every side, to Fire men call who are opposed in their march, to Fire the Birds flying in mid-air; Fire encircles the thousands of the Ray-Cows.

अग्निं विश ईळते मानुषीर्या अग्निं मनुषो नहुषो वि जाताः ।
अग्निर्गान्धर्वी पथ्यामृतस्याऽग्नेर्गव्यूतिर्घृत आ निषत्ता ॥६॥

6. Fire the peoples pray who are human, Fire men of different birth who dwell as neighbours, Fire brings the Gandharvi to the path of the Truth, the Fire's path of the Ray-Cows is settled in the Light.

अग्नये ब्रह्म ऋभवस्ततक्षुरग्निं महामवोचामा सुवृक्तिम् ।
अग्ने प्राव जरितारं यविष्टाऽग्ने महि द्रविणमा यजस्व ॥७॥

7. The divine craftsmen have fashioned the Wisdom-Word for the Fire, the Fire we have declared as a vast purification. O ever-youthful Fire, protect thy worshipper; O Fire, win for him by sacrifice the great Treasure.

²⁵ Sayana renders “in the hot cauldron in the earth”.

²⁶ Sayana renders “gave progeny to the Rishi Nrimedha”.

PAYU BHARADWAJA

SUKTA 87

रक्षोहणं वाजिनमा जिघर्मि मित्रं प्रथिष्ठमुप यामि शर्म ।
शिशानो अग्निः क्रतुभिः समिद्धः
स नो दिवा स रिषः पातु नक्तम् ॥१॥

- I set ablaze Fire of the plenitude, the slayer of the Rakshasas,
I approach him as a friend and the widest house of refuge;²⁷
the Fire has been kindled and grows intense by the workings
of the will, may he protect us from the doer of hurt, by the
day and by the night.

अयोदंष्ट्रो अर्चिषा यातुधानानुप स्पृश जातवेदः समिद्धः ।
आ जिह्व्या मूरदेवान् रमस्व क्रव्यादो वृक्त्यपि धत्स्वासन् ॥२॥

- O knower of all things born, high-kindled, iron-tusked,
touch with thy ray the demon-sorcerers; do violence to them
with thy tongue of flame, the gods who kill,²⁸ the eaters of
flesh, putting them off from us shut them into thy mouth.

उभोभयाविन्द्रुप धेहि दंष्ट्रा हिंस्तः शिशानोऽवरं परं च ।
उतान्तरिक्षे परि याहि राजञ्जम्भैः सं धेद्यभि यातुधानान् ॥३॥

- Destruction, whetting set upon them both thy tusks, the
higher and the lower, O thou who art of both worlds,²⁹
thou circle in the mid-air, O king, and snap up in thy jaws
the demon-sorcerers.

यज्ञैरिषूः संनममानो अग्ने वाचा शल्याँ अशनिभिर्दिहानः ।
ताभिर्विध्य हृदये यातुधानान् प्रतीचो बाहून् प्रति भड्येषाम् ॥४॥

- Turning on them by our sacrifices thy arrows, O Fire, by our

²⁷ Or, a widest peace;

²⁸ Or, the gods of ignorance,

²⁹ Or, O thou who hast both,

speech thy javelins, plastering them with thy thunderbolts
pierce with these in their hearts the demon-sorcerers who
confront us, break their arms.

अग्ने त्वं यातुधानस्य भिन्धि हिंसाशनिर्हरसा हन्त्वेनम् ।
प्र पर्वाणि जातवेदः शृणीहि क्रव्यात् क्रविष्णुर्विं चिनोतु वृक्षणम् ॥५॥

5. O Fire, tear the skin of the demon-sorcerer; let the cruel thunderbolt slay him in its wrath; rend his limbs, O knower of all things born; hungry for its flesh let the carrion-eater pick asunder his mangled body.

यत्रेदानीं पश्यसि जातवेदस्तिष्ठन्तमग्न उत वा चरन्तम् ।
यद् वान्तरिक्षे पथिभिः पतन्तं तमस्ता विद्य शर्वा शिशानः ॥६॥

6. Wherever now thou seest him, O knower of all things born, whether standing or walking, or flying on the paths in the mid-air, a shooter sharpening his weapon, pierce him with thy arrow.

उतालब्धं स्पृणुहि जातवेद आलेभानादृष्टिभिर्यातुधानात् ।
अग्ने पूर्वो नि जहि शोशुचान आमादः क्षिवङ्गास्तमदन्त्वेनीः ॥७॥

7. Rescue from the assault of the demon-sorcerer with his spears the man touched by his grasp, O knower of all things born, O Fire, blazing supreme slay these devourers of the flesh; let the brilliant birds of prey eat him up.

इह प्र ब्रह्म यतमः सो अग्ने यो यातुधानो य इदं कृणोति ।
तमा रभस्व समिधा यविष्ट नृचक्षसश्चक्षुषे रन्धयैनम् ॥८॥

8. Here proclaim which is he, O Fire, what demon-sorcerer, who is the doer of this deed? To him do violence with thy blaze, O youthful god, subject him to the eye of thy divine vision.

तीक्ष्णेनाग्ने चक्षुषा रक्ष यज्ञं प्राज्ञं वसुभ्यः प्रणय प्रचेतः ।
हिंस्रं रक्षांस्यभि शोशुचानं मा त्वा दम्भन् यातुधाना नृचक्षः ॥९॥

9. O Fire, guard with thy keen eye the sacrifice, lead it moving forward to the Shining Ones, O conscious thinker; O thou of the divine vision, when thou blazest fierce against the Rakshasas let not the demon-sorcerers overcome thee.

नृचक्षा रक्षः परि पश्य विक्षु तस्य त्रीणि प्रति शृणीह्यग्रा ।
तस्याग्ने पृष्ठीर्हरसा शृणीहि त्रेधा मूलं यातुधानस्य वृश्च ॥१०॥

10. Divine of vision, see everywhere the Rakshasa in the peoples, cleave the three peaks of him; his flanks, O Fire, cleave with thy wrath, rend asunder the triple root of the demon-sorcerer.

त्रिर्यातुधानः प्रसितिं त एत्वृतं यो अग्ने अनृतेन हन्ति ।
तमर्चिषा स्फूर्जयज्जातवेदः समक्षमेन गृणते नि वृद्धिः ॥११॥

11. Triply may the demon-sorcerer undergo thy onrush, he who slays the Truth by falsehood; him overspreading with thy ray, O knower of all things born, fell down in front of him who hymns thee.

तदग्ने चक्षुः प्रति धेहि रेमे शफारुजं येन पश्यसि यातुधानम् ।
अथर्ववज्ज्योतिषा दैव्येन सत्यं धूर्वन्तमचितं न्योष ॥१२॥

12. Set in thy singer, O Fire, the eye with which thou seest the trampler with his hooves, the demon-sorcerer; even as did Atharvan, burn with the divine Light this being without knowledge who does hurt to the Truth.

यदग्ने अद्य मिथुना शपातो यद् वाचस्तृष्टं जनयन्त रेभाः ।
मन्योर्मनसः शरव्या जायते या तया विध्य हृदये यातुधानान् ॥१३॥

13. The cursing with which today couples revile each other, the curses which are born in the imprecations of the singers, the arrow which is born from the mind of wrath, with that pierce through the heart the demon-sorcerers.

परा शृणीहि तपसा यातुधानान् पराग्ने रक्षो हरसा शृणीहि ।
परार्चिषा मूरदेवाञ्छ्रणीहि परासुतृपो अभि शोशुचानः ॥१४॥

14. Away from us cleave by thy burning energy the demon-sorcerers, away from us cleave by the heat of thy wrath the Rakshasa, O Fire, away from us cleave by thy ray these slayer gods,³⁰ blazing away from us cleave these who glut themselves with men's lives.

पराद्य देवा वृजिनं शृणन्तु प्रत्यगेनं शपथा यन्तु तृष्टाः ।
वाचास्तेनं शरव ऋच्छन्तु मर्मन् विश्वस्यैतु प्रसितिं यातुधानः ॥१५॥

15. May the gods cleave away today the crooked one, may harsh curses come to confront him, may the shafts enter into the vital part of one who thieves by speech, may he undergo the onset of each and every one, the demon-sorcerer.

यः पौरुषेयेण क्रविषा समङ्कते यो अश्व्येन पशुना यातुधानः ।
यो अस्याया भरति क्षीरमग्ने तेषां शीर्षाणि हरसापि वृश्च ॥१६॥

16. The demon who feeds on the flesh of human beings, who feeds on horses and on cattle, the one who carries away the milk of the Cow unslayable, cut asunder their necks with the flame of thy anger, O Fire.

संवत्सरीणं पय उप्नियायास्तस्य माशीद् यातुधानो नृचक्षः ।
पीयूषमग्ने यतमस्तितृप्सात् तं प्रत्यञ्चर्चिषा विध्य मर्मन् ॥१७॥

17. O thou who hast the divine vision, let not the demon-sorcerer partake of the yearly milk of the shining cow; O Fire, whichever of them would glut himself on the nectar him pierce in front in his vital part with thy ray of light.

विषं गवां यातुधानाः पिबन्त्वा वृश्च्यन्तामदितये दुरेवाः ।
परैनान् देवः सविता ददातु परा भागमोषधीनां जयन्ताम् ॥१८॥

18. May the demon-sorcerers drink poison from the Ray-Cows,

³⁰ Or, the gods of ignorance,

may they be cloven asunder who are of evil impulse before
the infinite mother, may the divine sun betray them to thee,
may they be deprived of their share of the growths of earth.

सनादग्ने मृणसि यातुधानान् न त्वा रक्षांसि पृतनासु जिग्युः ।
अनु दह सहमूरान् क्रव्यादो मा ते हेत्या मुक्षत दैव्यायाः ॥१९॥

19. Ever dost thou crush the demon-sorcerer, O Fire, never have
the Rakshasas conquered thee in the battles; burn one by
one from their roots the eaters of raw flesh, may they find
no release from thy divine missile.

त्वं नो अग्ने अधरादुदक्तात् त्वं पश्चादुत रक्षा पुरस्तात् ।
प्रति ते ते अजरासस्तपिष्ठा अघशंसं शोशुचतो दहन्तु ॥२०॥

20. O Fire, do thou guard us from above and from below, thou
from behind and from the front; may those most burning
ageless flames of thine blazing burn one who is a voice of
evil.

पश्चात् पुरस्तादधरादुदक्तात् कविः काव्येन परि पाहि राजन् ।
सखे सखायमजरो जरिम्णेऽग्ने मर्तानमत्यस्त्वं नः ॥२१॥

21. From behind and from in front, from below and from above,
a seer by thy seer-wisdom protect us, O king; a friend protect
thy friend, ageless protect from old age, immortal protect
us who are mortals, O Fire.

परि त्वाग्ने पुरं वयं विप्रं सहस्य धीमहि ।
धृषद्वर्णं दिवेदिवे हन्तारं भङ्गरावताम् ॥२२॥

22. O forceful Fire, let us think of thee, the illumined sage as a
fortress around us, one violent of aspect, slayer from day to
day of the crooked ones.

विषेण भङ्गरावतः प्रति ष्म रक्षसो दह ।
अग्ने तिग्मेन शोचिषा तपुरग्राभिर्द्विष्टिभिः ॥ २३ ॥

23. Consume with poison the crooked Rakshasas; O Fire, burn them with thy keen flame, with thy fiery-pointed spears.

प्रत्यग्ने मिथुना दह यातुधाना किमीदिना ।
सं त्वा शिशामि जागृद्यदब्धं विप्र मन्मभिः ॥ २४ ॥

24. Burn the bewildered demon couples; I whet thee to sharpness, inviolate, with my thoughts, O illumined sage; awake.

प्रत्यग्ने हरसा हरः शृणीहि विश्वतः प्रति ।
यातुधानस्य रक्षसो बलं वि रुज वीर्यम् ॥ २५ ॥

25. O Fire, cleave asunder their wrath with thy flame of wrath to every side; break utterly the strength, the energy of the Rakshasa, of the demon-sorcerer.

ARUNA VAITAHAVYA

SUKTA 91

सं जागृवद्विर्जरमाण इध्यते दमे दमूना इषयन्निळस्पदे ।
विश्वस्य होता हविषो वरेण्यो विभुर्विभावा सुषखा सखीयते ॥ १ ॥

1. Adored by those who are wakeful, the dweller in the house is kindled in the house aspiring in the seat of revelation, the sacrificant of every offering, one Supreme,³¹ wide of being, wide in light, a perfect friend to the man who seeks his friendship.

³¹ Or, one desirable,

स दर्शतश्रीरतिथिगृहेगृहे वनेवने शिश्रिये तक्षवीरिव ।
जनंजनं जन्यो नाति मन्यते विश आ क्षेति विश्यो विशंविशम् ॥२॥

2. In his visioned glory he lodges as the guest in every house,
as a bird in forest and forest; he despairs not the peoples,
universal he dwells in being and being, common to all he
dwells in man and man.

सुदक्षो दक्षैः क्रतुनासि सुक्रतुरग्ने कविः काव्येनासि विश्ववित् ।
वसुर्वसूनां क्षयसि त्वमेक इद द्यावा च यानि पृथिवी च पुष्टयः ॥३॥

3. Thou art discerning in thy judgments, strong of will in thy
workings of will, O Fire, an omniscient seer in thy seer-
wisdoms; a possessor of riches thou rulest sole over all the
riches nourished by earth and by heaven.

प्रजानन्नग्ने तव योनिमृत्वियमिळायास्पदे घृतवन्तमासदः ।
आ ते चिकित्र उषसामिवेतयोऽरेपसः सूर्यस्येव रश्मयः ॥४॥

4. Thou hast known and reached thy luminous native seat
where is the order of the Truth in the plane of revelation; free
from stain of evil have come thy perceptions of knowledge
like the white brilliances of the dawns,³² like rays of the sun.

तव श्रियो वर्ष्यस्येव विद्युतश्चित्राश्चिकित्र उषसां न केतवः ।
यदोषधीरभिसृष्टो वनानि च परि स्वयं चिनुषे अन्नमास्ये ॥५॥

5. Thy glories like lightnings from a storm cloud break into
light of knowledge brilliant like the rays of intuition of the
dawns; when loosed on the growths of earth and woods of
pleasance thou seekest out thyself the food for thy mouth.³³

तमोषधीर्दधिरे गर्भमृत्वियं तमापो अग्निं जनयन्त मातरः ।
तमित् समानं वनिनश्च वीरुधोऽन्तर्वतीश्च सुवते च विश्वहा ॥६॥

6. Him the growths of earth held as a child in the womb in

³² Or, like the advents of the dawns,

³³ Or, heapest food in thy mouth.

whom was the order of the Truth, the Waters become the mothers of that Fire who gave him birth; he is the common child with whom the pleasance-woods and the plants of earth are pregnant and they are delivered of him always.

वातोपधूत इषितो वशाँ अनु तृषु यदन्ना वेविषद् वितिष्ठसे ।
आ ते यतन्ते रथ्यो यथा पृथक् शर्धास्यग्ने अजराणि धक्षतः ॥ ७ ॥

7. Missioned, fanned by the wind when swiftly entering into thy food thou spreadest wide after thy desire, thy ageless hosts, as thou burnest, toil like chariot-warriors far apart.

मेधाकारं विदथस्य प्रसाधनमग्निं होतारं परिभूतमं मतिम् ।
तमिदर्भे हविष्या समानमित् तमिन्महे वृणते नान्यं त्वत् ॥ ८ ॥

8. Fire the creator of wisdom, the accomplisher of the discovery of knowledge, Fire the priest of the call, the all-embracing thinker, him they choose universal in the little offering, him in the great,—not another, O Fire, than thou.

त्वामिदत्र वृणते त्वायवो होतारमग्ने विदथेषु वेधसः ।
यद् देवयन्तो दधति प्रयांसि ते हविष्मन्तो मनवो वृक्तबर्हिषः ॥ ९ ॥

9. The ordainers of the work, they who desire thee, choose thee as priest of the call in their discoveries of knowledge when the seekers of the godhead hold thy delight,³⁴ human beings who have plucked for thee the sacred grass of thy seat and have brought their offerings.

तवाग्ने होत्रं तव पोत्रमृत्वियं तव नेष्टुं त्वमग्निदृतायतः ।
तव प्रशास्त्रं त्वमध्वरीयसि ब्रह्मा चासि गृहपतिश्च नो दमे ॥ १० ॥

10. O Fire, thine are the call and the offering, thine the purification and the order of the sacrifice, thine the lustration; thou art the fire-bringer for the seeker of the Truth. The

³⁴ Or, set before thee the things of thy delight,

annunciation is thine, thou becomest the pilgrim-rite:³⁵ thou art the priest of the Word and the master of the house in our home.

यस्तुभ्यमग्ने अमृताय मर्त्यः समिधा दाशदुत वा हविष्कृति ।
तस्य होता भवसि यासि द्रूत्यमुप बृषे यजस्यध्वरीयसि ॥११॥

11. [Not translated.]

इमा अस्मै मतयो वाचो अस्मदौ क्रत्वा गिरः सुष्टुतयः समग्रमत ।
वसूयवो वसवे जातवेदसे वृद्धासु चिद् वर्धनो यासु चाकनत् ॥१२॥

12. For him these thoughts and utterances go forth from us, these words high and hymns of illumination and these high lauds and meet together seeking the riches for the master of riches, for the knower of all things born, and his desire is towards them.

इमां प्रत्नाय सुष्टुतिं नवीयसां वोचेयमस्मा उशते शृणोतु नः ।
भूया अन्तरा हव्यस्य निस्पृशे जायेव पत्य उशती सुवासाः ॥१३॥

13. I would speak to the ancient One a laud new to his desire, may he hear us; may it avail to touch his heart deep within like a wife beautifully robed for her lord's desire.

यस्मिन्नश्वास क्रष्णास उक्षणो वशा मेषा अवसृष्टास आहुताः ।
कीलालपे सोमपृष्ठाय वेधसे हृदा मतिं जनये चारुमग्नये ॥१४॥

14. Fire to whom are loosed and offered our horses, our bulls and oxen and heifers and our rams, to Fire the nectar-drinker who bears on his back the Soma wine, to the ordainer of things, I beget a thinking full of beauty from my heart.

अहाव्यग्ने हविरास्ये ते सुचीव घृतं चम्वीव सोमः ।
वाजसनिं रथिमस्मे सुवीरं प्रशस्तं धेहि यशसं बृहन्तम् ॥१५॥

15. An oblation has been offered into thy mouth, O Fire, as if

³⁵ Or, thou art the priest of the pilgrim-rite:

clarified butter in a ladle, as if Soma wine in a bowl. Found in us the treasure in which are the heroes and which wins for us the plenitudes,— the treasure excellent³⁶ and glorious and vast.

JAMADAGNI BHARGAVA
OR RAMA JAMADAGNYA

SUKTA 110

समिद्धो अद्य मनुषो दुरोणे देवो देवान् यजसि जातवेदः ।
आ च वह मित्रमहश्चकित्वान् त्वं द्रूतः कविरसि प्रचेताः ॥१॥

1. High-kindled today in the house of the human being, thou doest sacrifice a god to the gods, O knower of all things born; bring them to us as one who has knowledge, O friendly Light; for thou art the messenger, the seer, the thinker.

तनूनपात् पथं क्रतस्य यानान् मध्वा समञ्जन्त्स्वदया सुजिह्व ।
मन्मानि धीभिरुत यज्ञमृन्धन् देवत्रा च कृणुद्याध्वरं नः ॥२॥

2. O son of the body, revealing the paths of our journeyings to the Truth make them sweet with the Wine of Delight, O thou with thy high tongue of flame; enriching with our thoughts the mantras and the sacrifice set our pilgrim-sacrifice in the gods.

आजुद्धान ईडयो वन्द्यश्चाऽऽ याह्यग्ने वसुभिः सजोषाः ।
त्वं देवानामसि यद्गु होता स एनान् यक्षीषितो यजीयान् ॥३॥

3. One prayed and adored, O Fire, calling them to us arrive, companioned by the Shining Ones, O mighty One, thou art the summoner of the gods, so, missioned, strong to sacrifice, do them sacrifice.

³⁶ Or, high-proclaimed

प्राचीनं वर्हिः प्रदिशा पृथिव्या वस्तोरस्या वृज्यते अग्ने अह्नाम् ।
व्यु प्रथते वितरं वरीयो देवेभ्यो अदितये स्योनम् ॥४॥

4. An ancient seat of sacred grass is plucked this morn, in the direction of this earth, in front of the days, wide it spreads beyond a supernal seat of happy ease for the gods and the mother infinite.

व्यचस्वतीर्विया वि श्रयन्तां पतिभ्यो न जनयः शुभ्ममानाः ।
देवीद्वारो बृहतीर्विश्वमिन्वा देवेभ्यो भवत सुप्रायणाः ॥५॥

5. Widely expanding may they spring apart making themselves beautiful for us as wives for their lords; O divine doors, vast and all-pervading, be easy of approach to the gods.

आ सुष्वयन्ती यजते उपाके उषासानकता सदतां नि योनौ ।
दिव्ये योषणे बृहती सुरुके अधि श्रियं शुक्रपिंशं दधाने ॥६॥

6. Let night and day come gliding to us and queens of sacrifice, sit close together in their place of session, the two divine women, great and golden, holding a supreme glory of brilliant form,—

दैव्या होतारा प्रथमा सुवाचा मिमाना यज्ञं मनुषो यजध्यै ।
प्रचोदयन्ता विदथेषु कारु प्राचीनं ज्योतिः प्रदिशा दिशन्ता ॥७॥

7. The two divine priests of the call, also, the first and perfect in speech building the sacrifice of man that he may do worship, doers of the work impelling to the discoveries of knowledge, pointing by their direction to the ancient Light.

आ नो यज्ञं भारती तूयमेत्विला मनुष्वदिह चेतयन्ती ।
तिस्रो देवीर्वहिरेदं स्योनं सरस्वती स्वपसः सदन्तु ॥८॥

8. May Bharati come swiftly to our sacrifice, Ila awakening to knowledge here like a human thinker, and Saraswati, the three goddesses,— may they sit, perfect in their works, on this sacred seat of happy ease.

य इमे व्यावापृथिवी जनित्री रूपैरपिंशद् भुवनानि विश्वा ।
तमद्य होतरिषितो यजीयान् देवं त्वष्टारमिह यक्षि विद्वान् ॥९॥

9. He who fashioned in their forms this earth and heaven, the Parents, and fashioned all the worlds, him today and here, O missioned priest of the call, do thou worship, strong for sacrifice, having the knowledge, even the divine maker of forms.

उपावसृज त्मन्या समज्जन् देवानां पाथ ऋतुथा हवींषि ।
वनस्पतिः शमिता देवो अग्निः स्वदन्तु हव्यं मधुना घृतेन ॥१०॥

10. Revealing by thy self-power the goal of the gods, release towards it in the order of the Truth our offerings. Let the tree and the divine accomplisher of the work and the Fire take the taste of the offering with the sweetness and the light.

सद्यो जातो व्यमिमीत यज्ञमग्निर्देवानामभवत् पुरोगाः ।
अस्य होतुः प्रदिश्यृतस्य वाचि स्वाहाकृतं हविरदन्तु देवाः ॥११॥

11. As soon as he was born Fire measured out the shape of the sacrifice and became the leader who goes in front of the gods. In the speech of this priest of the call which points out by its direction the Truth, may the gods partake of the oblation made *svāhā*.

UPASTUTA VARSHTIHAVYA

SUKTA 115

चित्र इच्छशोस्तरुणस्य वक्षथो न यो मातरावप्येति धातवे ।
अनूधा यदि जीजनदधा च नु ववक्ष सद्यो महि दूत्यं चरन् ॥१॥

1. Marvellous is the power to upbear of this young, this infant god, for he goes not to his two mothers to drink their milk, even though one without teats of plenty brought him to birth

then as now, from the first he did his carrying, performing his mighty embassy.

अग्निर्हं नाम धायि दन्तपस्तमः सं यो वना युवते भस्मना दता ।
अभिप्रमुरा जुद्धा स्वध्वर इनो न प्रोथमानो यवसे वृषा ॥ २॥

2. Fire, verily, is established, a giver and mighty doer of works, he clings to the trees with his blazing tusks achieving the pilgrim-sacrifice with his besieging tongue of flame, he is like a snorting bull, master in his pasturage.

तं वो विं न दृषदं देवमन्धस इन्दुं प्रोथन्तं प्रवपन्तमर्णवम् ।
आसा वह्निं न शोचिषा विरप्तिं महिव्रतं न सरजन्तमध्वनः ॥ ३॥

3. He is to you like a bird settled on a tree, like the divine moon-flow of the Soma plant, like a clamorous spreading ocean; he is as one who carries in his mouth of flame, exuberant in strength, mighty in the way of his works, rushing on his paths.

वि यस्य ते ज्ययसानस्याजर धक्षोर्न वाताः परि सन्त्यच्युताः ।
आ रण्वासो युयुधयो न सत्वनं त्रिं नशन्त प्र शिषन्त इष्टये ॥ ४॥

4. O ageless Fire, when thou rangest the spaces in thy will to burn, there are all around thee as if unsinking winds like joyful fighters, having the command for the seeking they march towards the warrior of the triple world.³⁷

स इदग्निः कण्वतमः कण्वसखार्यः परस्यान्तरस्य तरुषः ।
अग्निः पातु गृणतो अग्निः सूरीनग्निर्ददातु तेषामवो नः ॥ ५॥

5. This is the Fire, friend of the seer, himself the greatest of seers, who delivers from the inner foe; may Fire guard the speakers of the word, Fire the illumined seers, may he give his protection to them and to us.

³⁷ Or Trita the warrior.

वाजिन्तमाय सह्यसे सुपित्र्य तृषु च्यवानो अनु जातवेदसे ।
अनुद्रे चिद् यो धृषता वरं सते महिन्तमाय धन्वनेदविष्टते ॥ ६ ॥

6. O high-born, thou art he who moves swiftly in the wake of the knower of all things born, the Fire forceful and most full of the plenitude and even in the waterless desert for him who is there and desires it and is full of greatness, winnest by the violence of thy bow that which is supreme.

एवाग्निर्मर्तैः सह सूरिभिर्वसुः इवे सहसः सूनरो नृभिः ।
मित्रासो न ये सुधिता ऋतायवो
द्यावो न द्युम्नैरभि सन्ति मानुषान् ॥ ७ ॥

7. This is the Fire who is lauded accompanied by mortal illumined seers, the Shining One,³⁸ strong and glad by men, they who are seekers of the Truth, and like well-established friends, like the heavens with their lights have power on human beings.

ऊर्जो नपात् सहसावन्निति त्वोपस्तुतस्य वन्दते वृशा वाक् ।
त्वां स्तोषाम त्वया सुवीरा द्राघीय आयुः प्रतरं दधानाः ॥ ८ ॥

8. “O son of energy, O forceful One,” so adores thee the mighty speech of Upastuta, thee let us laud, by thee may we be armed with the heroes, holding more and more an ever longer life.

इति त्वाग्ने वृष्टिहव्यस्य पुत्रा उपस्तुतास ऋषयोऽवोचन् ।
ताँश्च पाहि गृणतश्च सूरीन् वषड्वषळित्यूर्ध्वासो अनक्षन्
नमो नम इत्यूर्ध्वासो अनक्षन् ॥ ९ ॥

9. Thus have extolled thee, O Fire, the sons of Vrishtihavya, the Upastuta Rishis;³⁹ protect them and the illuminates who speak the word, rising on high they have attained with the cry of “Vashat”, “Vashat”, with the cry of obeisance.

³⁸ Or, the master of riches,

³⁹ Or, sages, extolled;

CHITRAMAHAS VASISHTHA

SUKTA 122

वसुं न चित्रमहसं गृणीषे वामं शेवमतिथिमद्विषेण्यम् ।
स रासते शुरुधो विश्वधायसोऽग्निर्होता गृहपतिः सुवीर्यम् ॥१॥

1. I voice the Shining One with its richly varied lights,⁴⁰ the fair and happy, the guest in whom is nothing hostile; Fire, the priest of the call, the master of the house gives the healing forces that sustain the world, he gives us the hero-energy.

जुषाणो अग्ने प्रति हर्य मे वचो विश्वानि विद्वान् वयुनानि सुक्रतो ।
घृतनिर्णिंग् ब्रह्मणे गातुमेरय तव देवा अजनयन्ननु व्रतम् ॥२॥

2. O Fire, take pleasure in my word, let thy joy respond to it, for thou knowest all discoveries of knowledge, O strong will! Robed in light, put out a path for the Word, the gods have begotten all according to thy law of works.

सप्त धामानि परियन्नमत्यो दाशद् दाशुषे सुकृते मामहस्व ।
सुवीरेण रथिणाग्ने स्वाभुवा यस्त आनट् समिधा तं जुषस्व ॥३॥

3. Encompassing the seven planes, O immortal, giving to the giver, to the doer of good deeds, grow great;⁴¹ O Fire, with riches full of hero-strength crowding on him, accept the man who has come to thee with the fuel.

यज्ञस्य केतुं प्रथमं पुरोहितं हविष्मन्त ईळते सप्त वाजिनम् ।
शृण्वन्तमग्निं घृतपृष्ठमुक्षणं पृणन्तं देवं पृणते सुवीर्यम् ॥४॥

4. The seven givers of the offering pray the lord of plenitudes, the supreme Ray of intuition, the vicar of the sacrifice, Fire, the Bull with the luminous back who hears our words, the god who on him who satisfies him with gifts bestows fullness of heroic might.

⁴⁰ Or, greatnesses;

⁴¹ Or, exalt him;

त्वं द्वृतः प्रथमो वरेण्यः स हूयमानो अमृताय मत्स्व ।
त्वां मर्जयन् मरुतो दाशुषो गृहे त्वां स्तोमेभिर्भृगवो वि रुचुः ॥५॥

5. Thou art the first and supreme messenger, as such when thou art called be rapturous for immortality: thee the life-powers make resplendent in the house of the giver, thee with their lauds the flame-seers made to shine out wide.

इषं दुहन्त्सुदुधां विश्वधायसं यज्ञप्रिये यजमानाय सुक्रतो ।
अग्ने घृतस्त्रिर्कृतानि दीद्यद् वर्तिर्यज्ञं परियन्त्सुक्रतूयसे ॥६॥

6. In one to whom sacrifice is dear, for the giver of sacrifice, milking the force that is a good milch-cow, the force that founds all, O strong will, O Fire, thrice pouring light, illumining the Truths, circling round our house and our sacrifice thou puttest forth thy strength of will.

त्वामिदस्या उषसो व्युष्टिषु द्वृतं कृणवाना अयजन्त मानुषाः ।
त्वां देवा महयास्याय वावृधुराज्यमग्ने निमृजन्तो अध्वरे ॥७॥

7. Thee, O Fire, making their messenger men have offered sacrifice in the outshining of this dawn; thee the gods have increased for their growing to greatness making bright the oblation of light in the pilgrim-sacrifice.

नि त्वा वसिष्ठा अद्वन्त वाजिनं गृणन्तो अग्ने विदथेषु वेधसः ।
रायस्पोषं यजमानेषु धारय यूयं पात स्वस्तिभिः सदा नः ॥८॥

8. The Vasishthas called thee within them, full of plenitude, voicing the Fire, ordainers of works in the discoverings of knowledge; uphold the increasing of the riches in the doers of the sacrifice, do you ever guard us with all kinds of weal.

AGNI PAVAKA

SUKTA 140

अग्ने तव श्रवो वयो महि भ्राजन्ते अर्चयो विभावसो ।
वृहङ्गानो शवसा वाजमुक्यं दधासि दाशुषे कवे ॥१॥

1. O Fire, thy inspiration and thy growth and thy lights blaze in their greatness, O thou who shinest out with thy lustres; O great luminousness, O seer, thou foundest by thy strength for the giver a plenitude of utterance.

पावकवर्चा: शुक्रवर्चा अनूनवर्चा उदियर्षि भानुना ।
पुत्रो मातरा विचरन्तुपावसि पृणक्षि रोदसी उभे ॥२॥

2. Purifying is thy flaming energy, bright is thy energy, insufficient is thy energy as thou ascendest with thy light — a son thou rangest and protectest the Parents and thou joinest together earth and heaven.

ऊर्जो नपाज्जातवेदः सुशस्त्तिभिर्मन्दस्व धीतिभिर्हितः ।
त्वे इषः सं दधुभूरिवर्पसश्चत्रोतयो वामजाताः ॥३॥

3. O son of energy, O knower of all things born, well-founded rejoice in our perfect utterances and our thinkings; in thee they have joined together impelling forces of many forms, richly varied in their prospering, born to charm and beauty.

इरज्यन्नग्ने प्रथयस्व जन्तुभिरस्मे रायो अमर्त्य ।
स दर्शतस्य वपुषो वि राजसि पृणक्षि सानसिं क्रतुम् ॥४॥

4. O immortal Fire, ruling over creatures born, spread in us thy Riches; thou art master of ⁴² thy body of vision and thou satest thy conquering will.

⁴² Or, thou shinest out from

इष्टर्तारमध्वरस्य प्रचेतसं क्षयन्तं राधसो महः ।
रातिं वामस्य सुभगां महीमिषं दधासि सानसि रथिम् ॥५॥

5. A thinker, an arranger of sacrifice, a master of great achievement thou foundest a bounty of delight and a great and fortunate impulsion and conquering Riches.

ऋतावानं महिषं विश्वदर्शतमग्निं सुम्भाय दधिरे पुरो जनाः ।
श्रुत्कर्णं सप्रथस्तमं त्वा गिरा दैव्यं मानुषा युगा ॥६॥

6. Men have set in front this great Truth-posse ssing and all-seeing Fire for the bliss; thee who hast the ear that hears our words voice, wide-extended, one divine throughout the human generations.

MRIDIKA VASISHTHA

SUKTA 150

समिद्धश्चित् समिध्यसे देवेभ्यो हव्यवाहन ।
आदित्यै रुद्रैर्वसुभिर्ने आ गहि मृलीकाय न आ गहि ॥१॥

1. Already kindled thou art kindled again for the gods, O carrier of the offering, come along with the sons of Aditi and with the Rudras and with the Shining Ones, come to us for grace.

इमं यज्ञमिदं वचो जुजुषाण उपागहि ।
मर्तासस्त्वा समिधान हवामहे मृलीकाय हवामहे ॥२॥

2. Accepting this sacrifice, this word come to us, we who are mortals call thee, O high-kindled Fire, we call thee for grace.

त्वामु जातवेदसं विश्ववारं गृणे धिया ।
अग्ने देवाँ आ वह नः प्रियव्रतान् मृलीकाय प्रियव्रतान् ॥३॥

3. Thee I voice with my thought, the knower of all things born,

in whom are all desirable things, O Fire, bring to us the gods whose law of working is dear to us, dear to us for their grace.

अग्निर्देवो देवानामभवत् पुरोहितोऽग्निं मनुष्या क्रषयः समीधिरे ।
अग्निं महो धनसातावहं हुवे मृलीकं धनसातये ॥ ४ ॥

4. Fire, the god, became the vicar priest of the gods, Fire the human Rishis have kindled, Fire I call in the conquest of the riches of the vast, gracious for the conquest of the riches.

अग्निर्निं भरद्वाजं गविष्ठिरं प्रावन्नः कण्वं त्रसदस्युमाहवे ।
अग्निं वसिष्ठो हवते पुरोहितो मृलीकाय पुरोहितः ॥ ५ ॥

5. Fire protected Atri and Bharadwaja and Gavishthira, protected for us Kanwa and Trasadasyu in the battle, Fire Vasishtha the vicar priest calls, the vicar priest calls him for grace.

KETU AGNEYA

SUKTA 156

अग्निं हिन्वन्तु नो धियः सस्माशुमिवाजिषु ।
तेन जेष्ठं धनंधनम् ॥ १ ॥

1. May our thoughts speed the Fire on his way like a swift galloper in the battles, by him may we conquer every kind of wealth.

यथा गा आकरामहे सेनयाग्ने तवोत्या ।
तां नो हिन्व मघत्तये ॥ २ ॥

2. The army by which we may make ours the Ray-Cows under thy guard, that army send to us⁴³ for the getting of plenty.

⁴³ Or, speed for us

आग्ने सूरं रयिं भर पृथुं गोमन्तमश्वनम् ।
अङ्गिध खं वर्तया पणिम् ॥ ३ ॥

3. Bring to us, O Fire, a stable wealth of the Ray-Cows and the horses of power, reveal heaven, turn away from us the evil Trafficker.

अग्ने नक्षत्रमजरमा सूर्य रोहयो दिवि ।
दधज्ज्योतिर्जनेभ्यः ॥ ४ ॥

4. O Fire, make to ascend the ageless traveller-star, the sun in heaven upholding the Light for men.

अग्ने केतुविंशामसि प्रेष्टः श्रेष्ठ उपस्थसत् ।
बोधा स्तोत्रे वयो दधत् ॥ ५ ॥

5. O Fire, thou art the ray of intuition in creatures, most dear, most glorious, seated in the centre.⁴⁴ Awake, founding his expansion who lauds thee.

VATSA AGNEYA

SUKTA 187

प्राग्नये वाचमीरय वृषभाय क्षितीनाम् ।
स नः पर्षदति द्विषः ॥ १ ॥

1. Send forth the word to the Fire, the bull of the worlds,⁴⁵ may he carry us through beyond the hostile forces.

यः परस्याः परावतस्तिरो धन्वातिरोचते ।
स नः पर्षदति द्विषः ॥ २ ॥

2. He who shines beyond the desert across the supreme Beyond, may he carry us through beyond the hostile forces.

⁴⁴ Or, in the lap of the mother.

⁴⁵ Or, of the peoples,

यो रक्षांसि निजूर्वति वृषा शुक्रेण शोचिषा ।
स नः पर्षदति द्विषः ॥ ३ ॥

3. He who destroys the Rakshasas, the bull with the brilliant light, may he carry us through beyond the hostile forces.

यो विश्वाभि विपश्यति भुवना सं च पश्यति ।
स नः पर्षदति द्विषः ॥ ४ ॥

4. He who looks upon all the worlds and sees them wholly, may he carry us through beyond the hostile forces.

यो अस्य पारे रजसः शुक्रो अग्निरजायत ।
स नः पर्षदति द्विषः ॥ ५ ॥

5. Fire who is born brilliant on the further shore of this world, may he carry us through beyond the hostile forces.

SAMVANANA ANGIRASA

SUKTA 191

संसमिद् युवसे वृषन्नग्ने विश्वान्यर्य आ ।
इळस्पदे समिध्यसे स नो वसून्या भर ॥ १ ॥

1. O Fire, O strong one, as master thou unitest us with all things and art kindled high in the seat of revelation; do thou bring to us the Riches.

सं गच्छध्वं सं वदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानताम् ।
देवा भागं यथा पूर्वे संजानाना उपासते ॥ २ ॥

2. Join together, speak one word, let your minds arrive at one knowledge even as the ancient gods arriving at one knowledge partake each of his own portion.

समानो मन्त्रः समितिः समानी समानं मनः सह चित्तमेषाम् ।
समानं मन्त्रमभि मन्त्रये वः समानेन वो हविषा जुहोमि ॥३॥

3. Common Mantra have all these, a common gathering to union, one mind common to all, they are together in one knowledge; I pronounce for you a common Mantra, I do sacrifice for you with a common offering.

समानी व आकृतिः समाना हृदयानि वः ।
समानमस्तु वो मनो यथा वः सुसहासति ॥४॥

4. One and common be your aspiration, united your hearts, common to you be your mind,— so that close companionship may be yours.

Appendix to Part Two

The following translations of the first hymn of the Rig Veda are reproduced from Sri Aurobindo's manuscripts to illustrate the development of his interpretation of the Veda. They are arranged as far as possible in chronological order.

Translations of the First Hymn of the Rig Veda

[1]

Hymns of the First Cycle

I.

A hymn of praise, welcome and prayer to Agni, Lord of Tejas, composed when the mind of the Yogin Madhuchchhanda was full of sattwic energy and illumination.

-
1. Agni the brilliant I adore who standeth before the Lord, the god that has the ecstasy of the truth, the fighter that fulfilleth utter bliss.
 2. Agni adorable to the sages of old, adorable to the new, holds up the gods with force & might.
 3. By Agni one enjoyeth strength, one enjoyeth increase day by day and a mastery full of force.
 4. O Agni, the Lord below about whom thou art on every side a flame encompassing, came by the gods into this world.
 5. Agni the fighter, the strong in wisdom, the true, the manifold, the high of fame, has come to us, a god meeting with gods.
 6. O beloved, that to the foe who would destroy thee thou, O Agni, doest good, this is the Truth of thee, O Lord of Love.
 7. O Agni, to thee yearning if day by day we embrace thee with our mind and bear the law, then thou growest in mastery and might:—
 8. To thee the shining one of the gods below who guardest the energy of the nectar and increasest in thy home.
 9. Do thou therefore, O Agni, become lavish of thy approach to us as a father to his child; cleave to us for our heavenly bliss.

[2]

Agni I desire who standeth before the Lord, the god who knoweth all the law, the warrior who disposeth utterly delight.

Agni whom the ancient seers desired, the modern too adore; for in his strength he beareth all the Gods.

By Agni one getteth substance, yes, and increase day by day, and glorious success.

O Agni, that Lord here below whom thou encompassest on every side, is he that moveth in the Gods.

Agni, the warrior whose strength is wisdom, he of the Truth who has the knowledge rich, cometh, a God attended by the Gods.

O beloved, O Agni, that thou desirest to do good to him who seeks to hurt thee, this is utterly thy nature, O Lord of Love.

To thee, O Agni who protectest us in darkness day by day, if with hearts full of self-surrender we come, then thou towerest to thy height,

To thee, controller and protector of all things below, of the Immortal brilliant force, ever increasing in thy home.

So be thou easy to our approach as a father to his child, abide with us for our bliss.

[3]

१

1. अग्निमीळे पुरोहितं यज्ञस्य देवमृत्विजं । होतारं रक्षधातमं ॥ १ ॥

Agni I adore who stands before Yajna, the god that seeth right, the offerer of the oblation, chief disposer of delight.

2. अग्निः पूर्वेभिर्ऋषिभिरीड्यो नूतनैरुत । स देवानेह वक्षति ॥ २ ॥

Agni, adorable to the former sages, adorable to those of today, he brings here the gods.

3. अग्निना रथिमश्वत्पोषमेव दिवे दिवे । यशसं वीरवत्तमं ॥३॥
By Agni one getteth delight (or force) and increase too day by day, & widest victory (or most manifest or most forceful).
4. अग्ने यं यज्ञमध्वरं विश्वतः परिभूरसि । स इद्वेषु गच्छति ॥४॥
O Agni, the Yajna here below which thou encompassest on every side is that that moveth in the gods (or goeth to the gods).
5. अग्निहोता कविक्रतुः सत्यश्चित्रश्वस्तमः । देवो देवेभिरागमत् ॥५॥
Agni, the Hota, the strong in wisdom, the true, the varied in inspired knowledge, comes a god with the gods.
6. यदंग दाशुषे त्वमग्ने भद्रं करिष्यसि । तवेत्तस्त्यमङ्गिरः ॥६॥
That thou, O beloved, doest good to the giver, O Agni, this is the truth in thee, O lord of love.
7. उप त्वाग्ने दिवे दिवे दोषावस्तर्धिया वयं । नमो भरन्त एमसि ॥७॥
To thee, O Agni, day by day because thou protectest in the dimness, we with the understanding (come) bearing salutation and thou growest to thy strength.
8. राजन्तमध्वराणां गोपामृतस्य दीदिविं । वर्धमानं स्वे दमे ॥८॥
Ruling over things below, O protector of immortality, a splendour increasing in its home.
9. स नः पितेव सूनवे अग्ने सूपायनो भव । सचस्वा नः स्वस्तये ॥९॥
Therefore do thou, O Agni, be accessible to us as a father to his child, cleave to us for our bliss.

[4]

Rigveda
Hymns of Madhuchchhandá Vaisvámitra
Mandala I. Hymns I–XI.

I

Agni I adore, the representative priest of the sacrificial act, the god who is the Adept of the sacrifice, the offerer of the action

who disposeth utterly delight. Agni adorable to the seers of old, is adorable always to the new, he beareth here the gods. By Agni one getteth energy and increase also day by day and effective strength of highest forcefulness. O Agni, whatso material action of sacrifice thou encompassest on every side, that verily moveth in the gods. Agni, the offering priest whose might is knowledge, the true, the exceeding rich in inspiration, cometh a god with the gods. That thou, O friend, O Agni, wilt surely effect the weal of the giver, that is the nature & truth of thee, O lord of love. To thee, O Agni, day by day, O dweller in the twilight, we with the discerning mind bring our submission when thy strength is at its height, to thee the ruler of all here below, guardian of Immortality, a high splendour increasing in its home. Therefore do thou be easy of approach to us as a father to his son; be thou strong for our felicity.

[5]

A Hymn to Agni. I.1.

Agni I adore, the representative priest of the Sacrifice, the god who sacrifices aright, the priest of the offering who disposes utterly delight. Agni adorable to the seers of old, is adorable also [to the] new, for he brings hither the gods. By Agni one gets him energy and an increase day by day full of success and full of power. Agni, the material sacrifice which thou encompassest with thy being on every side, that indeed goeth to the gods. Agni the priest of the offering, who has the force of the wisdom, the true, the full of rich inspiration, comes to us a god with the gods. That thou, O beloved Agni, wilt do good to the giver, this is the truth of thee, O lord of love. To thee, O Agni, day by day, by night & by day, we by the understanding come bringing to thee our submission, who governest all things below, protector of the Truth, a brilliant flame increasing in its home. Therefore do thou be easy of approach to us as a father to his child, cleave to us for our weal.

[6]

Rigveda.
Mandala I, Hymns of Madhuchchhandá Vaisvámitra.

I Hymn to Agni

1. Agni I adore, the priest who stands forward for the sacrifice, the god who acts in the truth of things, the giver of the oblation who disposes utterly delight.
2. Agni adored by the ancient seers is adorable still to the new, for he brings here the gods.
3. By Agni one gets day by day energy & increase victorious and full of force.
4. O Agni, whatsoever material sacrifice thou encompassest with thy being on every side, that goes to the gods.
5. Agni, he that offers the oblation, whose strength is in wisdom, the true, the rich in various inspiration, comes a god with the gods.
6. That thou, O Agni, wilt surely bring about good for the giver, that is the truth of thee, O lord of love.
7. To thee, O Agni, day by day, in darkness and in light we come in our minds bearing our submission,—
8. To thee, who rulest over all below, guardian of immortality, a brilliance increasing in its home.
9. Therefore do thou be easy of approach to us as a father to his child, cleave to us for our weal.

[7]

I.1

The Strength I seek who is set in front as our divine representative in the sacrifice and offers in the order of the Truth, the priest of our oblation who disposes utterly delight. The Strength [was] desirable to the ancient sages and they of today

must seek him too, for 'tis he that brings hither the gods. By the Strength one attains a wealth of felicity that increases from day to day and, full of hero mights, victoriously attains. O Strength, the sacrifice in its march that thou encompassest with thy being on every side, that reaches to the gods. Strength is the priest of our oblation, he has the seer-will and is true in his being and is rich in varied inspirations; may he come to us, a god with the gods. O Strength, that thou wilt create for the giver of the offering his weal, that is the truth in thee, O Puissance. To thee, O Agni, we approach day after day, in the light and in the darkness, bringing thee submission by the thought, To thee that rulest the march of the sacrifices, the protector of the Truth and its outshining, increasing in thine own home. Therefore be easy of approach to us, O Strength, as a father to his child; cleave to us for our blissful state.

[8]

I.1

1. The God-will I seek with adoration, divine priest of the sacrifice who is set in front and sacrifices in the seasons of the Law, giver of oblation who most ordains the ecstasy.
2. The Flame adored by the ancient finders of knowledge must be sought also by the new, for it is he that shall bring hither the godheads.
3. By the flame of the Will man enjoys a treasure of felicity that grows day by day and is a splendour of attainment and rich in hero-energies.
4. O Will, around whatsoever sacrifice travelling to its goal thou comest into being on its every side, that reaches truly the gods (or goes truly to the gods).
5. God-will is the priest of the oblation, for his is the Seer-will (or who has the will of the seer) true in its being, with a most rich and varied inspiration; let him come to us, a god with the gods.

6. The Good that thou wilt create for the giver of the sacrifice, thine is that Truth, O Will, O Seer-Puissance.
7. To the God-will we come day by day, in the night & in the light, carrying by our thought our offering of submission,
8. To the Ruler of our pilgrim sacrifices and shining guardian of the truth, increasing in his own home.
9. Therefore do thou, O Will, be as easy of approach to us as a father to his child, cleave to us for that happy state of our being.

[9]

I.1

The Will I seek with adoration, divine priest of our sacrifice who is set in its front and sacrifices in the seasons of the Truth and offers the oblation and establishes in us wholly the Bliss;

Will, the object of their adoration to the seers of old and to the seers who are now, for he brings into this world the godheads.

By the Will man attains to wealth of the felicity and it increases day by day and is victorious in attainment and full of hero powers.

That sacrifice which in its journey on the path thou encompassest with thy being on its every side, that travels to the gods.

Will the priest, the seer-will, the true in being, richest in his shining inspirations of the truth, may he come divine with all the divine powers.

O Will, in that thou wilt surely create his good for the giver of the sacrifice, thine is that truth, O Seer-Puissance.

To thee, O Will, day by day, we come both in the light and in the night bringing the offering of our submission by the thought;

To thee, who rulest our sacrifices in their march, to the shining guardian of the Truth who increases in his own home.

Do thou be easy of access as is a father to his child, cleave to us for the bliss.

[10]

Hymns of Madhuchchhandas
son of Viswamitra.

A Hymn to Agni, the Divine Flame

A hymn to Agni the divine Flame, priest of the sacrifice, bringer of the gods to man, giver of the treasures, protector and leader and king of the sacrifice of the path, inspired seer will in works, giver of the supreme good and truth and its shining guardian.

I adore the Flame, divine vicar of sacrifice, Ritwik and offering priest who most founds the Delight.

The Flame adored by the ancient sages is adorable too by the new. He brings on earth the gods.

Man can get by the Flame a treasure that increases day by day, splendid and full of heroes' strengths.

O Flame, alone the sacrifice of the path which thou surroudest with thy being on every side, goes among the gods.

The Flame is a priest, a seer will to acts, true and rich in many lights of inspiration, and shall come to us a god with the gods.

O Flame, that happiness thou wilt create for the giver of sacrifice, is thine only and is that Truth, O Angiras.¹

To thee day by day, O Flame, in night and in light we come carrying to thee by the thought our adoration,

To the ruler of the sacrifices of the path, the luminous guardian of the Truth, who increases in his own home!

O Fire, be thou easy of access to us like a father to his son, cling to us for our happy ease.

¹ The seven Angiras seers, sons of the Flame, discovered, says the Veda, that Truth, the sun that was lodged in the darkness. This unconscious darkness is figured as the cave of the Panis; Indra and the Angiras seers enter and find the shining cows of the Dawn, the Dawn herself, the Day, the Sun, the vision of knowledge and man's path to immortality. This is the day said in the next hymn to be discovered or known by the adorers of Vayu. The name Angiras is given also to the gods as finders of the Truth.

[11]

Mandala 1, Sukta 1

1. I adore the Flame, the Vicar, the divine Ritwik of the sacrifice, the summoner who most founds the ecstasy.
2. The Flame, adorable by the ancient sages, is adorable too by the new; he brings here the gods.
3. By the Flame one enjoys a treasure that verily increases day by day, glorious, most full of hero-powers.
4. O Flame, the pilgrim sacrifice on every side of which thou art with thy environing being, that truly goes among the gods.
5. The Flame, the Summoner, the Seer-Will, true and most full of richly varied listenings, may he come, a god with the gods.
6. O Flame, the happy good which thou shalt create for the giver is That Truth and verily thine, O Angiras!
7. To thee, O Flame, we day by day, in the night and in the light, come carrying by our thought the obeisance,
8. To thee who reignest over our pilgrim sacrifices, luminous guardian of the truth, increasing in thy own home.
9. Therefore be easy of access to us as a father to his son; cling to us for our happy state.

[12]

First Mandal
I.

1. Fire I pray, the priest set in front of the sacrifice, the god Ritwik, the flamen of the call, who gives most the ecstasies.
2. Fire, desirable by the ancient sages and by the new, is he that brings here the gods.
3. By the Fire man enjoys a treasure that grows day by day, riches glorious, (most) armed with the heroes (to which most are joined the heroes).

4. O Fire, the pilgrim sacrifice around which thou comest into being on every side, that alone goes to the gods.
5. May the Fire, the priest of the call, the Seer Will true and most full of rich inspirations, come to us a god with the gods.
6. The happiness that thou wilt make for him that gives is That Truth of thee, O Flame-Seer.
7. To thee, O Fire, day by day, in the light and in the night we come bearing by the thought our surrender,—
8. To the luminous guardian of the Truth ruling over the (pilgrim) rites increasing in his own home.
9. Then be thou easy of approach to us like a father to his son, O Fire,—cling to us for our weal.

[13]

1. The Flame I pray, the divine vicar of the sacrifice, the ordinant of the ritual, the Summoner who founds the ecstasy.
2. The Flame, desirable by the ancient seers and by the new, may he come hither with the gods.
3. By the Flame is won an energy that surely increases day by day, glorious and full of warrior-power.
4. O Flame, the pilgrim sacrifice that thou encompassest from every side, goes to the gods.
5. The Flame is our priest of the call, the seer-will true and brilliant in inspiration; may he come, a god with the gods.
6. The good that thou wilt create for the giver, O Flame, is that truth of thee, O Angiras.
7. To thee we come, O Flame, day by day in the dark and in the light bringing by the thought our obeisance;—
8. To thee, the ruler of our pilgrim-sacrifices, the shining Guardian of the Truth, growing in thy own home.
9. O Flame, be easy of access to us like a father to his son, cleave to us for our weal.

[14]

Hymns of Madhuchchhandas
I. Hymn to the Fire.

1. The Fire I pray, the divine vicar of the sacrifice and ordinant of the rite, the Summoner (or, priest of the offering) who most finds the ecstasy.
2. The Fire, desirable to the ancient seers, so even to the new, — may he come to us with the gods.
3. By the Fire one obtains a wealth that increases day by day, glorious and full of hero-powers.
4. O Fire, the pilgrim sacrifice which thou encompassest on every side, reaches the gods.
5. Fire, priest of the call, the seer-will rich in brilliant inspirations, may he come to us, a god with the gods.
6. O Fire, the happy good that thou wilt create for the giver, is That Truth of thee, O Angiras.
7. To thee, O Fire, day by day, in the dawn and in the dusk, we come bringing to thee by the thought our obeisance,
8. To thee, who rulest the sacrifices of the Way, the shining Guardian of the Truth, growing in thy own home.
9. O Fire, be easy of access to us like a father to his son; cleave to us for our weal.

Part Three

Commentaries and Annotated Translations

Mandala One

[1]

[RV I.1]

The Rigveda

Translated into English with an etymological reconstruction of the Old Sanscrit or Aryan tongue in which it was rendered in the Dwapara Yuga and an explanation of the Yogic phenomena and philosophy with which it is mainly concerned.

Hymns of the First Cycle

I.

A hymn of praise, welcome and prayer to Agni, Lord of Tejas, composed when the mind of the Yigin Madhuchchhanda was full of sattwic energy and illumination.

1. Agni the brilliant I adore who standeth before the Lord, the god that has the ecstasy of the truth, the fighter that fulfilleth utter bliss.
2. Agni adorable to the sages of old, adorable to the new, holds up the gods with force & might.
3. By Agni one enjoyeth strength, one enjoyeth increase day by day and a mastery full of force.
4. O Agni, the Lord below about whom thou art on every side a flame encompassing, came by the gods into this world.
5. Agni the fighter, the strong in wisdom, the true, the manifold, the high of fame, has come to us, a god meeting with gods.

6. O beloved, that to the foe who would destroy thee thou,
O Agni, doest good, this is the Truth of thee, O Lord of Love.

7. O Agni, to thee yearning if day by day we embrace thee
with our mind and bear the law, then thou growest in mastery
and might: —

8. To thee the shining one of the gods below who guardest
the energy of the nectar and increasest in thy home.

9. Do thou therefore, O Agni, become lavish of thy ap-
proach to us as a father to his child; cleave to us for our heavenly
bliss.

=====

Linguistic.

अग्निम्. The word Agnis is composed of the root अग्, the suffix नि and the case-ending स्. The root अग् occurs in two other words of this hymn, अंग and अंगिरः. Its most common meaning is love, force or excellence. The original root अ of which it is a primary derivative meant existence. The addition of ग् adds the sense of force or power. To exist in force or power is अग् in its initial sense and all other meanings are derivative or deductive from the initial sense. The sound न् is added to roots with an adjectival force as in रत्व from रत्, यज्ञ from यज्. It may have adherent to it either अ, इ or उ, and may be pure or preceded by the enclitics अ, इ, उ or their prolonged forms आ, ई, ऊ. Thus करण, शयान, बलिन्, राजन्, वरुण, इष्णु, विष्णु etc. अग्नि means one who exists in force or power. Cf the Greek ἄγαν, exceedingly, ἀγαθός, good, originally meaning strong, powerful, brave. From the same sense of power, force, excellence come various senses of ἄγω, the Latin *ago*, lead, drive, act, etc. On the other hand the insertion of the nasal sound between अ and ग् gives the sense of love, sweetness, softness, beauty, as the particular kind of force or excellence implied in the root.

ईळे. The root ईल्, dialectically ईळू, also takes by a slight modification of sound the form ईड्. It is a primary derivative of the original root इ, implying motion towards. The addition of ल् gives the sense of approaching with love and gives rise to the signification, *adore, worship*. It has a strong sense of *bhakti*,

emotional worship.

पुरो हितम्. Two separate words, adverb and participle, “set before”. The participle is generally treated as belonging to धा, but it is originally the past verbal adjective of हि. The sound हृ conveys contact, motion or emission with force. Thus the root हृ is to throw, strike, kill and in its derivatives to leap, dance etc. The root हृ is similarly to attack, fight, throw from one, drag away etc. The root हि means to pierce, penetrate, adhere, be set in and actively to strike away, wear away, impair with other meanings. From the sense of adherence, we get a deductive sense of fondness, clinging, love, friendliness, the classic significance of the adjective हित.

यज्ञस्य. This word is of the utmost importance in the Veda. Its subsequent meaning of sacrifice has overclouded the sense of the Scriptures ever since the later half of the Dwapara Yuga; but originally and in the age of Madhuchchhanda it had no shade of this meaning. It is the root यज् with the suffix न adjectival, as explained under अग्निं. यज् is a primary derivative from the initial root य which had a sense of control, restraint, persistence, preservation. This we find in its derivatives यम् to order, control, regulate; यत् to use force upon, strive, practise; यक्ष् the habituative, to keep carefully from which यक्ष् the guardians of wealth, the *ganas*, hosts of Kuvera; यच्छ् to importune, entreat, supplicate; यच् to control, to regulate, distribute, give. यज् means to regulate, rule, order, govern. यज् is He who does these things, the Lord, Governor, Master, Provider, Giver, and in the Veda it is applied to the Supreme Being, Parameshwara, who governs the universe as the Master of Nature, the Disposer of its Laws, the Almighty Providence, the Master of the Dharma. It has a similar sense to the word यमः applied to the single god of Dharma, Yama. There is an echo of this use in the Vishnu Purana when it is said that Vishnu is born in the Satya Yuga as Yajna, in the Treta as the Chakravarti Raja, in the Dwapara as Vyasa. In the Satya Yuga mankind is governed by its own pure, perfect and inborn nature spontaneously fulfilling the *dharma* under the direct inspiration of God within as Yajna, the Lord of the Dharma. In the Treta the Dharma is maintained by the sceptre and the sword guarding

the unwritten law. In the Dwapara the Dharma is supported by codes, Shastras, a regulated and written system.

देवम्. From the root दिव् conveying the idea of active, rapid or brilliant energy. It means to shine, to play, (cf दीव् to gamble), to be bright, clear, strong, swift or luminous. The Devas are strictly speaking the sattwic and rajasic powers of the sukshma worlds, Swar and Bhuvan, who govern or assist the operations of intelligence and energy in man; but it came to be applied to all beings of the other worlds without distinction, even to the tamasic forces, beings and powers who hurt and oppose these very operations. It is in this latter sense that the Persians used it after the teachings of Jarad-drashta (Zaruthrusta, Jaratkaru) had accustomed them to apply other terms to the beneficent and helpful powers.

ऋत्विजम्. The word ऋत्विक् like the word पुरोहितम् only latterly came to mean a sacrificial priest. It is composed of two words ऋत् and विज्. In Old Sanskrit ऋ and रि were used interchangeably like ठ and ड. The root ऋ conveyed the idea of fixity, constancy, ऋत् or रित् is the old verbal noun forming the roots ऋत् and रित् and conveys the ideas [of] fixity, persistence, constancy, truth, steadfastness, wisdom, धैर्य, सत्यं. From the same root is formed ऋषिः, the root ऋष् being a habituative form of ऋ and meaning to be constant, wise, true, steadfast, calm and still. It was the old word answering to the धीर of the Upanishads. Similarly ऋतम् means truth, law etc, ऋतु is the fixed period or season, the habitual menstruation etc. The word विज् is a derivative of the initial root वि to open, manifest, from which are formed विद् to see, the root विल् conveying the idea of publicity, light, etc common in Tamil and Latin, and विज् meaning also to see. The ऋत्विज् is the drashta, seer or rishi, the one who has vision of spiritual truth.

[2]

[RV I.1.1–3]

ओम्

॥ १ ॥ मधुच्छन्दा वैश्वामित्रः ॥ अग्निः ॥ गायत्री ॥

अग्निमीळे पुरो हितं यज्ञस्य देवमृत्विजं । होतारं रत्नधातमं ॥ १ ॥
 अग्निः पूर्वेभिर्क्रष्णभिरीडयो नूतनैरुत । स देवाँ एह कक्षति ॥ २ ॥
 अग्निना रथिमश्ववत्पोषमेव दिवे दिवे । यशसं वीरवत्तमं ॥ ३ ॥
 अग्ने यं यज्ञमध्वरं विश्वतः परिभूरसि । स इदं देवेषु गच्छति ॥ ४ ॥
 अग्निर्होता कविक्रतुः सत्यश्चत्रश्ववस्तमः । देवो देवेभिरा गमत् ॥ ५ ॥
 यदग दाशुषे त्वमग्ने भद्रं करिष्यसि । तवेतत् सत्यमणिरः ॥ ६ ॥
 उप त्वाग्ने दिवे दिवे दोषावस्तर्धिया वयं । नमो भरन्त एमसि ॥ ७ ॥
 राजन्तमध्वराणां गोपामृतस्य दीदिविं । वर्धमानं स्वे दमे ॥ ८ ॥
 स नः पितेव सूनवेऽग्ने सूपायनो भव । सचस्वा नः स्वस्तये ॥ ९ ॥

Analysis.

॥ १ ॥ अग्निम् ।

Agni is a devata, one of the most brilliant and powerful of the masters of the intelligent mind. Man, according to Vedic psychology, consists of seven principles, in which the Atman cases itself,—annam, gross matter; prana, vital energy; manas, intelligent mind; vijnanam, ideal mind; ananda, pure or essential bliss; chit, pure or essential awareness; sat, pure or essential being. In the present stage of our evolution ordinary humanity has developed annam, prana and manas for habitual use; and well-developed men are able to use with power the vijnanam acting not in its own habitation, स्वे दमे, nor in its own rupa, vijnanam, but in the mind and as reasoning faculty, buddhi; extraordinary men are able to aid the action of manas and buddhi proper by the vijnanam acting in the intelligent mind indeed and so out of its proper sphere, but in its own form as ideal consciousness—the combination of manasic and vijnani action making what is called genius, pratibhanam, a reflection or luminous response in the mind to higher ideation; the Yогin

goes beyond to the vijnanam itself or, if he is one of the greatest Rishis, like Yajnavalkya, to the ananda. None in ordinary times go beyond the ananda in the waking state, for the chit and sat are only attainable in sushupti, because only the first five sheaths or panchakosha are yet sufficiently developed to be visible except to the men of the Satya Yuga and even by them the two others are not perfectly seen. From the vijnanam to the annam is the aparardha or lower part of existence where Vidya is dominated by Avidya; from the ananda to the sat is the parardha or higher half in which Avidya is dominated by Vidya and there is no ignorance, pain or limitation.

In man as he is at present developed, the intelligent mind is the most important psychological faculty and it is with a view to the development of the intelligent mind to its highest purity and capacity that the hymns of the Veda are written. In this mind there are successively the following principles: sukshma annam, the refinement of the gross annam out of which the physical part of the manahkoshha or sukshma deha is made; sukshma prana, the vital energy in the mind which acts in the nadis or nervous system of the sukshma deha and which is the agent of desire; chitta or receptive consciousness, which receives all impressions from without and within by tamasic reaction, but, being tamasic, does not make them evident to the sattvic consciousness or intelligent awareness which we call knowledge, so that we remember with the chitta everything noticed or unnoticed, but that knowledge is useless for our life owing to its lying enveloped in tamas; hrit or the rajasic reaction to impressions which we call feeling or emotion, or, when it is habitual, character; manas or active definite sensational consciousness rendering impressions of all kinds into percept or concept by a sattvic reaction called intelligence or thought which men share with the animals; buddhi or rational, imaginative and intellectually mnemonic faculty, observing, retaining, comparing, reasoning, comprehending, combining and creating, the amalgam of which functions we call intellect; manasa ananda or the pure bliss of existence manifesting through the impure mind, body and prana impurely, ie mixed with pain of various kinds, but in

itself pure, because disinterested, ahaituka; manasa tapas or the pure will-power acting towards knowledge, feeling and deed, impurely through the impure mind, body and prana, ie mixed with weakness, dull inertia and ignorance or error; but in itself pure because ahaituka, disinterested, without any ulterior purpose or preference that can interfere with truth of thought, act and emotion; ahaituka sat or pure realisation of existence, operating through the impure organs as ahankara and bheda, egoism and limitation, but in itself pure and aware of unity in difference, because disinterested, not attached to any particular form or name in manifestation; and, finally, Atman or Self seated in mind. This Atman is Sat and Asat, positive and negative, Sad Brahma and Sunyam Brahma; both positive and negative are contained in the Sa or Vasudeva and Tat or Parabrahman, and Sa and Tat are both the same. The Buddhi again is divided into understanding (medha), which merely uses the knowledge given by sensation and like manas, chitta, hrit and prana is adhina, anisha, subject to sensation; reason or buddhi proper, (smriti or dhi, also called prajna), which is superior to sensation and contradicts it in the derived light of a higher knowledge; and direct jnanam, satyam or sattwam which is itself that light of higher knowledge. All these faculties have their own devatas, one or many, each with his ganas or subordinate ministers. The jiva or spirit using these faculties is called the hansa, he who flies or evolves upward; when he leaves the lower and rises to the sacchidananda in the mind, using Sat, chit and ananda only, and reposing in the Sad Atma or in Vasudeva, then he is called the Paramhansa, one who has gone or evolved to the highest in that stage of evolution. This is the fundamental knowledge underlying the Veda, the loss of which, aided by the corruption of nirukta, has led to the present confusion and degradation of its meaning.

Chandra is the devata of the smriti or prajna; Surya of the satyam; Indra of the understanding and manas; Vayu of the sukshma prana; Mitra, Varuna, Aryama and Bhaga are the four masters of the emotional mind or character; Brihaspati of the sahaituka chit or tapas of knowledge; Brahma of the sahaituka sat; Agni of the sahaituka tapas etc. This is only an indication.

The various characteristics and energies of the gods are best developed by an examination of the Veda itself. The gods strive to function perfectly for the Lord or Yajna, the Isha, Master of the adhara or sevenfold medium of manifestation; the Titans or Daityas, equally divine, try to upset this perfect functioning. Their office is to disturb that which is established in order to push man below or give him an opportunity of rising higher by breaking that which was good and harmonious in itself but imperfect, and in any case to render him dissatisfied with anything short of perfection and drive him continually to the Infinite, either by the uttama gati to Vasudeva or, if he will not have that, by the adhama gati to Prakriti. The Vedic Aryans sought to overcome the Daityas or Dasyus by the aid of the gods; afterwards the gods had themselves to be overcome in order that man might reach his goal.

Agni in the sphere of material energies is the master of tejas, the third and central material principle in the five known to Vedic science. Tejas itself is of seven kinds, chhaya or negative luminosity which is the principle of the annakosha; twilight or dosha, the basis of the pranakosha being tejas modified by chhaya; tejas proper or simple clarity and effulgence, dry light, which is the basis of the manahkosha; jyoti or solar light, brilliance which is the basis of the vijnanakosha; agni or fiery light, which is the basis of the chitkosha; vidyut or electrical illumination, which is the basis of the anandakosha; and prakasha which is the basis of the satkosha. Each of the seven has its own appropriate energy; for the energy is the essential reality and the light only a characteristic accompaniment of the energy. Of all these Agni is the greatest in this world, greater even than Vidyut — although the God of the vaidyuta energy is Vishnu himself who is the Lord of the ananda, the vaidyuto manavah, electrical Man, of the Upanishads. In the vijnana, Surya as well as Vishnu is greater than Agni, but here he and Vishnu both work under the dominant energy of Agni and for the satisfaction of Indra, — Vishnu in the Upanishads being younger than Indra, — Upendra. Translated into the language of physics, this means that Agni, commanding as he does heat and cold, is the fundamental

active energy behind all phenomena of light and heat; the Sun is merely a reservoir of light and heat, the peculiar luminous blaze of the sun being only one form of tejas and what we call sunlight is composed of the static energy of prakasha or essential light which is the basis of the satkosha, the electrical energy or vaidyutam, and the tejas of agni modified by the nature of Surya and determining all other forms of light. The prakasha and vaidyutam can only become active when they enter into Agni and work under the conditions of his being and Agni himself is the supplier of Surya; he creates jyoti, he creates tejas, he creates, negatively, chhaya. Right or wrong, this is the physics of the Veda. Translated into the language of psychology, it means that in the intelligent mind, which now predominates, neither jnanam nor ananda can be fully developed, though essentially superior to mind; not even Soma, the rational buddhi, can really govern; but it is Indra full of Soma, the understanding based on the senses and strengthened by the buddhi, who is supreme and for whose satisfaction Soma, Surya, Agni and even the supreme Vishnu work. The reason on which man prides himself, is merely a link in the evolution from the manas to the vijnanam and must serve either the senses or the ideal cognition; if it tries to work for itself it only leads to universal agnosticism, philosophic doubt and the arrest of all knowledge. It must not be thought that the Veda uses these names merely as personifications of psychological and physical forces; it regards these gods as realities standing behind the psychological and physical operations, since no energy can conduct itself, but all need some conscious centre or centres from or through which they proceed. A doubt will naturally arise, how Vishnu, the supreme Lord, can be the Upendra of the Vedas. The answer is that, whatever energy is of supreme importance at a particular stage of the evolution, is taken up by Vishnu-Virat as his especial care. We have seen that the Ananda is now highest in the developed evolution. Vishnu is therefore now preeminently the Lord of the Ananda and when he comes down into the material world he stands in the Sun as the supreme electrical force involved in Agni and evolving out of him, which is the physical counterpart of Ananda and without

which no action in the world can proceed. He is not inferior, he only subordinates himself, pretending to serve, while really by service he commands. But Upendratwa is not the highest plane of Vishnu's manifestation, the param dharma; rather it is a special function here in the lowest dharma. Upendratwa is not Vishnutwa, but only one of its workings.

Agni, therefore, is master of tejas, especially fiery tejas, and the agent of the sahaituka tapas in the mind. In the language of modern psychology, this sahaituka tapas is Will in action,—not desire, but Will embracing desire and exceeding it. It is not even choice, wish or intention. Will, in the Vedic idea, is essentially knowledge taking the form of force. Agni, therefore, is purely mental force, necessary to all concentration. Once we perceive this Vedic conception, we realise the immense importance of Agni and are in a position to understand the hymn we are studying.

The word Agni is formed from the root अग् with the nominal addition नि. The root अग् is itself a derivative root from the primitive अ meaning "to be", of which traces are found in many languages. The नि gives an idea of force and अग् therefore means to exist in force, preeminently — to be splendid, strong, excellent and Agni means mighty, supreme, splendid, forceful, bright. We find the same root in the Greek ἀγαθός, *agathos*, good, meaning originally, strong, noble, brave; ἄγαν, *agan*, excessively; ἄγω, *ago*, I lead; Latin, ago; ἀγλαός, *aglaos*, bright; the names Ἄγις, Ἀγαμέμνων, Agis, Agamemnon, and in the Sanskrit अग्न, अगस्ति. It is interchangeable with its brother root अज् from which some of the meanings of अग्ने derived. It seems also to have meant to love, from the idea of embracing, cf Greek ἀγάπη, *agape*, but in this sense the old Sanscrit preferred अंग्. For the connection between the two roots, cf अगति, in the sense of fire, अगिरः as a name of Agni, अंगारः, a live coal.

ईळे ।

The root like all simple Sanscrit roots has two forms इळ् and ईळ्. The original root was इल् to love, embrace, flatter, praise, adore; the cerebral ङ is a later form,— a dialectical peculiarity

belonging to some of the dominant races of the Dwapara Yuga, which established itself for a time but could not hold its own and either resolved itself back into ल or was farther transformed into the soft cerebral ड with which it was interchangeable. So we have the form ईङ्ग in precisely the same sense. There is no idea necessarily involved of adoration to a superior, the dominant ideas being love, praise and desire. The meaning here is not “praise” or “worship”, but “desire”, “yearn for”.

पुरो हितम् ।

The words are two and not one. The sense of “priest, purohit”, put on the compound word in the later ceremonial interpretation of the Veda, is entirely absent in this hymn. The word पुरः was originally the genitive of पुर् used adverbially. पुर् meant door, gate, front, wall; afterwards, house or city; cf the Greek πύλη, pule, a gate, πύλος, pulos, a walled city or fort, πόλις, a city; so in front. हितम् is the participial adjective from the root हि in the sense of to cast down, throw down, plant, place, which appears in Greek as χέω, cheo, I pour (हया). पुरो हितम् means therefore set or planted before.

यज्ञस्य ।

The word यज्ञ is of supreme importance in the Veda. In the ceremonial interpretation यज्ञ is always understood as sacrifice and no other conception admitted. The Veda cannot be understood as the source of all Indian spirituality and divine knowledge, if this materialistic interpretation is accepted. In reality यज्ञ is the name of the Supreme Lord Vishnu himself; it also means धर्म or योग, and by a later preference of meaning it came to signify sacrifice, because sacrifice in the later Dwapara Yuga became the one dharma and yoga which dominated and more and more tended to replace all others. It is necessary to recover the proper meaning of this important word by Nirukta, and, in order to [do] so, to lay down briefly the principle of Nirukta.

The Sanscrit language is the devabhasha or original language spoken by men in Uttara Meru at the beginning of the Manwantara; but in its purity it is not the Sanscrit of the

Dwapara or the Kali, it is the language of the Satyayuga based on the true and perfect relation of vak and artha. Every one of its vowels and consonants has a particular and inalienable force which exists by the nature of things and not by development or human choice; these are the fundamental sounds which lie at the basis of the Tantric bijamantras and constitute the efficacy of the mantra itself. Every vowel and every consonant in the original language had certain primary meanings which arose out of this essential shakti or force and were the basis of other derivative meanings. By combination with the vowels, the consonants, and, without any combination, the vowels themselves formed a number of primary roots, out of which secondary roots were developed by the addition of other consonants. All words were formed from these roots, simple words by the addition again of pure or mixed vowel and consonant terminations with or without modification of the root and more complex words by the principle of composition. This language increasingly corrupted in sense and sound becomes the later Sanscrit of the Treta, Dwapara and Kali Yuga, being sometimes partly purified and again corrupted and again partly purified so that it never loses all apparent relation to its original form and structure. Every other language, however remote, is a corruption formed by detrition and perversion of the original language into a Prakrit or the Prakrit of a Prakrit and so on to increasing stages of impurity. The superior purity of the Indian language is the reason of its being called the Sanscrit and not given any local name, its basis being universal and eternal; and it is always a rediscovery of the Sanscrit tongue as the primary language that prepares first for a true understanding of human language and, secondly, for a fresh purification of Sanscrit itself.

This particular root यज् from which यज्ञ is formed, is a secondary root on the base of the consonant य, the gunas of which are strength and tenderness applied to action, motion, formation and contact. The primary roots are य, वि� and यु, with their lengthened forms या, यी and यू,—the original devabhasha recognising only three pure vowels, the rest being either modified or mixed vowels. The primary root of यज् is य, which means

essentially to go quietly and persistently, to act or apply oneself quietly and with force and persistence, to master (knowledge or any thing or person) by steady application, to come or bring into contact with gently or lovingly and effectively, to form or express clearly etc. The first sense appears, with its colour rubbed out, in the lengthened form या, in यक्ष्, in one of the meanings of यम् etc; the second in यत् & यस्; the third in यज्, यम् and यन्त्; the fourth in यज् and याच् which is originally a causal of यच् to give, now lost except in certain conjugational forms of यम्; the fifth in one of the meanings of यम् (to show), etc. Besides यच् there are other lost roots यत् to seek after, love, desire (Greek ἵλλω), यश् with a similar meaning, from which we have यशः which was originally an adjective meaning lovely, charming, and a noun meaning sometimes an object of love or pursuit, sometimes beauty, ambition, fame etc, or love itself, favour, partiality. This is a brief example of the method followed by the original tongue as it can now be observed with its distinctions and shades confused and the colours of the words expunged.

In the root यज् the force of the consonant ज् determines the meaning. Its essential nature is swiftness, decisiveness, rapid brilliance and restlessness. It has therefore a frequentative and intensitive force. It means to love habitually and fervently, so to worship, to adore. It means to give freely, wholly or continuously; from these shades comes the meaning of sacrifice. It means to master thoroughly, habitually, with a continual repetition of the act of mastery; the word यत् means endeavour, but यज् can never have meant endeavour, it is too decisive and triumphant and must imply possession of mastery, action sure of its result. It means therefore to rule, govern, order, possess. That is why यज् is Vishnu, in the sense of the Almighty Ruler, the Master of man's action, body, thought, the supreme Lord ruling from the higher faculty in man, the parardha or Sacchidananda.

यज्ञः is formed by the addition of न्, a nominal suffix which has the sense of action. It may be adjectival or nominal. It may convey the actor, the instrument, the manner or the sufferer of the action. यज्ञः therefore came to mean, he who rules, the governor or master; loving, adoring, also he who is loved; the means

of mastery and so Yoga, in its processes, not in its realisations; the manner of mastery and so dharma, a rule of action or self-government; adoration or an act of worship, though this sense was usually kept for यज्ञः, giving, offering, sacrifice. As the name of Vishnu it meant, predominantly, the Master who directs, compels and governs; but the idea of the Lover and Beloved, the Giver and the object of all action, ritual and worship, of all karma also entered into it in the associations of the worshipper and sometimes became prominent.

The Vishnu Purana tells us that Vishnu in the Satya Yuga incarnates as Yajna, in the Treta as the conqueror and king, in the Dwapara as Vyasa, the compiler, codifier and lawgiver. It is not meant that He incarnates as sacrifice. The Satya Yuga is the age of human perfection when a harmonious order is established, the perfect or chatuspad dharma, whose maintenance depends on the full and universal possession of Yoga or direct relation to God and that again on the continual presence of incarnate Vishnu as the Adored, the Master and centre of dharma and yoga. The chatuspad dharma is the perfect harmony of the four dharmas, Brahmanyam, Kshatram, Vaishyam and Shaudram; for this reason separate castes do not exist in the Satya Yuga. In the Treta the Brahmanyam begins to fail, but remains as a subordinate force to help the Kshatram which then governs humanity. Mankind is maintained no longer by viryam or tapas easily sustained by inherent Brahmajnanam, but by viryam or tapas sustaining the Brahmajnanam with some difficulty and preventing its collapse. Vishnu incarnates as the Kshatriya, the incarnate centre of viryam and tapas. In the Dwapara, the Brahmanyam farther fails and turns into mere knowledge or intellectuality, the Kshatram becomes a subordinate force supporting the Vaishyam which has its turn of supremacy. The main qualities of the Vaishya are kaushalam, order and method, and therefore the Dwapara is the age of codification, ritual, Shastra, external appliances to maintain the failing internal spirituality; danam, and therefore hospitality, liberality, the sacrifice and the dakshina begin to swallow up other dharmas — it is the yuga yajniya, — the age of sacrifice; bhoga, and therefore the Veda

is used for procuring enjoyment in this world and the next, bhogaishwaryagatim prati. Vishnu incarnates as the lawgiver, ritualist and Shastrakara to preserve the knowledge and practice of the dharma by the aid of the intellect and abhyasa, customary practice based on intellectual knowledge. In the Kali all breaks down except love and service, the dharma of the Shudra by which humanity is maintained and from time to time purified; for the jnanam breaks down and is replaced by worldly, practical reason, the viryam breaks down and is replaced by lazy mechanical appliances for getting things done lifelessly with the least trouble, dana, yajna and shastra break down and are replaced by calculated liberality, empty ritual and tamasic social forms and etiquette. Love is brought in by the Avatars to break down these dead forms in order that the world may be rejuvenated and a new order and a new Satya Yuga emerge, when the Lord will again incarnate as Yajna, the supreme Vishnu in the full manifestation of the chatuspad dharma, knowledge, power, enjoyment and love.

It has been said that Vishnu in our present stage of evolution is preeminently the Lord of the Ananda, but he is also the Sanmay Brahman and the Tapomay. It is as the Sanmay that He is Yajna — the Sat containing in it the Chit or Tapas and the Ananda. It must be remembered that while in the Aparardha we envisage Brahman through thought, feeling, action etc, in the Parardha we envisage Him through essential realisation superior to thought, feeling and action. In the Ananda we realise essential delight; in the Chit, essential energy, intelligence and will; in the Sat, essential truth or be-ness. The Sat is therefore called the Mahasatyam and Mahakaranam, the highest truth in the manifestation, out of which everything proceeds. It is by this Mahasatyam — distinguished from the ordinary satyam or karanam called objectively mahat and subjectively vijnanam, the fourth of the seven bhumis, — that Vishnu as Yajna supports the dharma and yoga in the Satya Yuga. He is the Sad Brahma in manifestation. We shall see when we deal with the word ऋत्विजम् in what sense Agni stands before the Lord.

देवम्।

A god. From the secondary root दिव् to flash, gleam, vibrate, play. On the basis of the consonant द् of which the gunas are force, heavy violence, density, dense penetration, dense movement, we get दा to cut, दि to vibrate and दु to trouble and from दि we get द्यु and दिव् or दीव् meaning to vibrate shiningly, gleam, scintillate or play. The Devas are those who play in light. Their proper home is in the vijnanam, महर्लोक or karanajagat, where matter is jyotirmay and all things luminous स्वेन धास्ता, by their own inherent lustre and where life is an ordered lila or play. Therefore when the Bhagawat speaks of the power of seeing the life of the gods in Swarga, it calls that particular siddhi देवक्रीडानुदर्शनम्, watching the sports of the gods, because all life is to them a sport or lila. The Gods, however, dwell for us in the lower Swarloka, ie, Chandraloka of which the summit is Kailas and the basis Swarga with Pitriloka just above Swarga. Nevertheless even there they keep their jyotirmay and lilamay nature, their luminous bodies and worlds of self-existent bliss free from death and care.

ऋत्विजम्।

This word is taken in the ceremonial interpretation of the Veda in the later sense of Ritwik, a sacrificial priest, and it is explained by separating as ऋतु + विज् one who sacrifices seasonably. In reality, ऋत्विज् is a very old word compounded in ancient Sanscrit before the creation of the modern rules of Sandhi, and is composed of ऋत् truth and विज्, ecstasy or ecstatic. It means one who has the ecstasy of the truth or satyam.

ऋत् is an abstract noun formed from the root ऋ whose essential meaning was to vibrate, shake, dart, go straight; and its derivate meanings to reach, acquire, or else attack, hurt, injure, or to be erect, rise or raise; to shine; to think, realise truth etc. From the sense of going straight in the secondary verb ऋज् with its adjective ऋजु straight, cf Lat. rego, rectus; ऋत straight, right, true; ऋतम्, truth, right, established law or custom,—सत्यम् applied to the Supreme Brahman as the satyam or mahakaranam; ऋतु, rule, fixed order, fixed time or season;

ऋषि, a thinker, direct seer of truth, cf Lat. reor, I think, ratio, method, order, reason, proposition, etc. The obsolete word ऋत् meant directness, truth, law, rule, thought, सत्यम्.

विज् is noun or adjective from the verb विज् meaning to shake, be troubled, excited, tremble, to be ecstatic, joyous, full of rapture, felicity or ecstatic energy. Cf Latin vigeo and vigor, from which comes the English vigour. ऋत्विज् is therefore one who is ecstatic with the fullness of the truth or satyam. Agni, it has been pointed out, is the god of the tapas or energy at work disinterestedly on the intellectual plane, one of the higher gods working on the lower level in the service of the lower deity Indra. He proceeds straight from the chit, which, when active, is known as mahatapas or chichchakti, the energy of the essential intelligence in the Sad Brahman, Yajna or Vishnu. The Shakti begins creation by kshobha or ecstatic vibration in the calm Sad Atma and this ecstatic vibration or विज्, वेगः goes out as speed, force, heat, तपः or अग्निः, the basis of life and existence. This tapas born of the Chichchakti (Shakti, Devi, Kali, Prakriti) is full of the ecstatic movement of the Sat or Mahasatyam manifesting itself. For this reason Agni is called ऋत्विज्, vibrating, ecstatic with the सत्यम्. For the same reason he is called जातवेदाः, he from whom the higher knowledge is born, because he holds in himself the Veda or Satyam and manifests it; tapas is the basis of all concentration of chit, awareness (the sanyama of Patanjali) and it is by sanyama or concentration of awareness either on the object of awareness (rajayoga) or on itself (jnanayoga and adhyatmayoga) that satyam and Veda become directly self-manifest and luminous to the Yогin. Without this sanyama no Yoga is possible, no effective action of any kind is possible. When Brahma turned his mind to creation, it was the cry of “tapas, tapas” that was heard on the waters of the karan samudra (Mahakaranam or Sad Brahma). The immense importance of Agni as the Ritwij to the Yогin, therefore, becomes manifest; and it is also clear why he is पुरोहितं यज्ञस्य for it is the tapas which stands before the Satyam, which we reach before we can get the Sat. It is the Chichchakti which takes us to the Sat,— the Devi, Shakti or Kali who brings us to Brahman, to Vasudeva,

and Agni, her especial agent for tapas in the mind, is therefore a special intermediary between us and Yajna, who, as has been seen, is Vishnu, Vasudeva or Brahman, in the Sacchidananda or Parardha on the intellectual plane, which is all man in the average has yet reached. This is the reason why Agni was so great a god to the Rishis. To mere sacrificers and ritualists he was great only as the god of fire indispensable in all their ritual, but to the Yogen he has a much greater importance, as great as that of Surya, the lord of illumination, and Soma, the lord of Amrita. He was one of the most indispensable helpers in the processes which the Veda illumines and assists.

होतारम्।

Hota is another word of great importance in the Veda. In all existing interpretations of the Veda hota is interpreted as the priest who offers the libation, हविः as the libation and हु in the sense of pouring the offering. So fixed is this notion born of the predomination through several millenniums of the ceremonial meanings attached to all the important words of the Veda, that any other rendering would be deemed impossible. But in the original Veda होता did not mean a sacrificial priest, nor हविः an offering. Agni may by a metaphorical figure be called a purohit of the sacrifice, though the figure will not have any very great Sanscritic exactness, but he can in no sense be the one who pours the libation. He devours the libation, he does not offer or pour it. Hota, therefore, must have some other signification which, without outraging fact and common sense, can be applied to Agni.

The root हु, like the roots हा and हि, is based on the consonant ह, the essential gunas of which are aggression, violent action, impetuosity, loud breathing, and so challenge, summons etc. The verb हु originally like हा and हि meant to strike or throw down, attack, slay, the vowel उ adding a sense of pervasiveness which easily brought the idea of battle. We find, therefore, that this root meant to attack, fight, as in आहूः battle; to call, shout, summons, as in ह्वे (originally हवे) etc; to throw, overthrow, destroy; to throw, pour, offer. From the last sense it came to have

its more modern meaning. The transference from the sense of battle to the sense of sacrifice is paralleled by the Greek word μάχη, battle, which is certainly the same as the Sanscrit मत्सः, sacrifice. It must be remembered that the Yoga was to the old Aryans a battle between the Devas and Daityas, the gods being the warriors who fought the Daityas for man and were made strong and victorious by the क्रियाः or effective practices of Yoga, the Daityas being the Dasyus or enemies of Yajna and Yoga. This will become clearer and clearer as we proceed. This view of life as well as Yoga, which is only the sublimation of life, as a struggle between the Devas & Daityas is one of the most fundamental ideas of Veda, Purana, Tantra and every practical system in Hinduism. Agni is par excellence the warrior whom the Daityas most dread, because he is full of the ahaituka tapas, against which, if properly used and supported by the Yajamana, the Yогin, no evil force can prevail. The Ahaituka Tapas destroys them all. It is the mighty effective and fighting force which once called in prepares perfect siddhi and an almost omnipotent control over our nature and our surroundings. Even when ashuddha, impure, tapas fights the enemy tamas; when shuddha, when the very action of Agni, it brings viryam, it brings jnanam, it brings Ananda, it brings mukti. Hotaram means therefore the warrior, the destroyer of the Daityas, Agni jatavedas; havis and hava mean battle or strength in violent action; hu to fight.

रत्नधातमम् ।

Superlative of रत्नधा, joy-giving, the disposer of delight. We have the root रत् as a derivative from the primary root र. The three roots र, रि, रु are themselves variations of the elemental shabda र् whose essential significance is tremulous continual vibration. र means essentially to vibrate, shake, quiver abroad, the vowel अ conveying essentiality, absoluteness, wideness, want of limitation as opposed to the vowel इ which gives a sense of relation and direction to a given point. From this essential sense come the derivative meanings, to play, to shine; as in रतम्, रत्न a jewel, रतिः, रम्, रञ्ज्, रजतम् silver, रजः dust, रजनी, रात्रि, night etc. From the former meaning there comes the sense, to

please, delight, love, adore, etc. as in रामा, रामः, राध्, रज्, रजः, (rajoguna) etc. The word रत्न in ancient Sanscrit, from the root रत्, had two sets of senses, delight, ananda, pleasure, play, sexual intercourse, a thing of delight, mistress, etc, and splendour, light, lustre, brilliance, a brilliant, a jewel, — the modern sense. At first sight it would seem that lustre, brilliance is more appropriate to Agni, and it would apply well to the warrior who destroys the darkness of the mind, but the central idea of the hymn is not Agni as the master of light, — that is Surya, — but as the master of force, tapas, which is the source out of which comes delight. The three terms of the parardha are sat, chit and ananda. In sat, chit abides and emerges from sat. As soon as it emerges, it generates the energy of chichchhakti which plays throughout the universe; this play, रत्न, is ananda in chit and it emerges from chit. All tapas therefore generates ananda, and the pure sahaituka tapas generates pure sahaituka ananda which being universal, self-existent and by its nature incapable of any admixture of sorrow, is the most sure, wide, and intense. Therefore Agni is most joy-giving, a great disposer of delight. The word धृ means to set, create, give, arrange; here it is the old Aryan substantive expressing the agent and often used adjectively.

॥ २ ॥ अग्निः पूर्वेभिर्ऋषिभिरीड्यो नूतनैरुत ।

There is nothing in these words that needs special explanation, since all the words and their senses are modern. The Rishi indicates Agni, master of the ahaituka tapas, as adorable in all ages by all seers ancient or modern, because to all seekers and at all times, ahaituka tapas is the condition and agent of suddhi, mukti, bhukti and siddhi, the fourfold aim of Yoga. The word Rishi means a knower of truth, one who attains, from क्र to go straight, attain the goal, reach the object, know, think. Originally it had something of the sense of साधक, the ण giving a habitual force; one who continually goes straight (by knowledge or inspired thought) to the truth. The force of उत is here, “much more”, “as a matter of course”. The idea is that not only is Agni the great object of desire and worship to the high sadhaks of these days, but in all times he has occupied the same place in

the sadhan, even when man was in a different stage of evolution and walked in other paths of Yoga. Whatever Yoga is adopted, sahaituka tapas is of the first importance to full siddhi.

स।

Sa is here used much in the sense of “who”,—it is the Greek ὁς (originally σός though by a common law in Greek the σ has been worn into an aspirate), and it gives the reason for the adoration of Agni.

देवान्।

The gods of the lower functions in the body, prana, mind and vijnana are all borne up by the impartial strength of Agni and the delight, रत्न, which it generates. Ananda is the condition of all existence and persistence,—को ह्येवान्यात् कः प्राण्यात् यदेष आकाश आनन्दो न स्यात्॥ Tapas is the stay, the supporter of ananda. Therefore Agni bears up the gods.

एह-

From root इह्, an adverb meaning forcefully, with strength. The root इह् meant originally to put forth strength in a given direction, so to will, wish, desire. Cf for this sense of derivatives from the primary root इ, Greek ἵψει, ἵψθιμος, ἵψ (ἵψα), इन्द्र, ईर् to utter, force out, etc. The adverb used is especially appropriate to the action of the god of tapas; it is in strength, by the force of tapas that he supports all the gods.

वक्षति।

The root is वह् + ष, and ष in old Sanskrit gave a habituative or desiderative sense, the two being kin to each other, cf the Greek φιλεῖ, meaning both “loves” and “is wont to”. Cf also the previous note about ऋषि. We shall meet this habituative form frequently. Agni is wont to bear up, that is his perpetual office.

॥ ३ ॥ अग्निना रयिम्।

The word रयिम् (Latin res) means substance. It comes from the root र to vibrate + इः, an ordinary nominal termination which, when feminine, usually gives the idea of quality or

abstract existence. In ancient Sanscrit the semivowels य & व were used to bridge over the gap between two vowels, as in म्रिये, जाये, हुवे, and this usage has been faithfully preserved in one of its surviving daughters of an elder group, Tamil. रयिः therefore means vibration, stir, play, motion, and, because all substance is merely Prakriti or Shakti in motion, it comes to mean substance. The word and the meaning are among the oldest in Sanscrit. By Agni, by sahaituka tapas is got or enjoyed substance, body. Into whatever that stream of force flows, however unsubstantial it may be at the time, it grows in body, being and solidity; it tends to establish itself, to become a *res* or established actual thing.

अस्त्रवत् ।

The word अश् is a secondary root from अ to be, one of the most important of all old Sanscrit roots. From this root we have अस् to be, breathe, live, be strong; अद् to be (annam, substance, matter), to eat (अन्नं food); अह् to breathe (अहीं, प्राह्); अन् to breathe, live, be (अनिलः, प्राणः, अनु); अर् to be, be strong, excel, fight, rule (अरि:, आर्य, अर्यमा, Gr. ἀρετή, Ἀρῆς) and a number of others. Every Aryan primary root was capable of being used either transitively or intransitively, and in its transitive sense अ meant “to have”, whence we get अश् to have, possess, enjoy, eat, get, acquire. अश् becomes in Greek ἔχω. Here both the senses of “get”, and “enjoy”, must be taken together. The root is one of those which still preserves the old verbal enclitics न, ना, नु. The verbal termination वत् is here used impersonally; one gets, there is got.

पोषमेव ।

The sense of पोषम् is “increase”. The word completes the sense of रयिमस्त्रवत् which, without the addition of पोषम्, might only imply a single and immediate accretion of substance, but the Rishi refers to the steady action of sahaituka tapas in the Yoga, by which once the stream of Agni is set flowing on the guna, vritti or jnanam to be obtained, it inevitably proceeds to get actuality and to increase in substance and power from day to day until it acquires यशसं वीरवत्तमम्, the utmost manifestation of splendour.

The root पृ is important in Vedic etymology. The letter पृ has the signification of sharp, swift and decisive movement, contact, formation etc. The roots based upon it give us variations of the ideas, “to rush, fall, dart, strike, leap, soar; to seize, master, own, be lord of; to enjoy, take, take in, devour, drain, drink, fill oneself, fill; to strike out, forge, do, make, effect; to produce, bring to being or fulfilment; increase, advance” and others developing from the elementary idea of the vocable. We get from the root पृ, पुत्र one produced, cf Latin pullus, a son; पृ to perfect, पूतः, पूता: (Vedic), पुण्यं perfection, virtue, merit; पवनः the wind, (the rushing one); पूषा the Sun, he who fosters, develops and perfects; पोषः increase; पूज् to foster, cherish, adore, worship; पुर् increase, advance, forwardness, front (पुरः, पूर्वः, पुरा, before, O.S. पुरा (Gr. πύλη) door, gate, पुर्, पुरः, पुरी front, wall, fortified town, Gr. Πύλος, πόλις) etc.

एव in later Sanscrit means “indeed”, giving emphasis, or has a limiting and restricting sense, eg Isha Upanishad कुर्वन्नेव कर्माणि, “Thou shalt verily do actions (and not refrain from them).” But in old Sanscrit its original force was that of एवम्, so, this, thus; and then “and, also”. In the latter sense एवम् is still used in literary Bengali, for the spoken Sanscrit of the provinces often preserved forms and meanings the literary language lost and these, more or less corrupted, have passed into our modern vernaculars.

दिवे दिवे।

From day to day. By the mere lapse of time, without effort on our part, the mere action of Agni being sufficient. This is an important principle of Yogic psychology which will be explained in the Commentary. The word दिवः is from दिव् to shine and may mean either “day”, दिवः कालः the bright period, or “heaven”, दिवो लोकः, the bright world. It has both senses in the Veda.

यशस्मि।

The word यशस् is from the root यश्, a secondary root from the primary य.

[3]

[RV I.1]

First Mandala.

I

अग्निमीळे पुरो हितं यज्ञस्य देवमृत्विजं । होतारं रत्नधातमं ॥ १ ॥

अग्निम् ।

The stem is अग्नि, the root अग्, with the addition of न् combined with इ.

The suffix न् is nominal, adjectival and verbal, and as an adjectival or nominal suffix denotes substance or actuality; it uses, like all other such suffixes, the enclitics अ, इ, उ to connect it with the root or with the termination or additional suffix or with both or neither.

The root अग् is a secondary formation from the primary old Aryan root अ which means essentially to be or, transitively, to have. अ expresses being in its widest and barest sense without any idea of substance or attribute. The sound ग् suggests application, contact or a gentle force or insistence. Combining with अ it gives the sense of being or having with an application of force to action, to men, to things and easily acquires significations on the one hand of strength, force, excellence, preeminence, brilliance, on the other of gentle contact, love, possession. Illustrative derivates are Latin and Greek ago, ἄγω, to lead, drive, act; stir; move; ἀγαθός, excellent, good; S. अग्र, foremost, in front, Gr. ἀκρος, top, ἀκμή, extreme height, ἀκτή, extreme limit, border, coast; ἄγαν, excessively (O.A. अगाम्); ἀγανός, brilliant, graceful, gentle; ἀγλαός, brilliant; Ἀγις, Ἀγαμέμνων; ἀγαπάω, I love, prefer; ager, a possession, field; अगस्ति, and with the nasal, अंग्, making the root अंग्, to stir, move, walk; अंग, beloved, distinguished; afterwards used only, from the two senses, as a respectful, yet affectionate mode of address; अंगति, fire (also a conveyance, cf ago, अंग्), अंगारः, a live coal, अंगिरः, from the sense of brilliant, forceful, distinguished, preeminent, foremost. The word Agni therefore means the strong, brilliant, mighty,

and may always suggest along with this, its proper signification as determined by usage, an allusion to its other possible sense of “loving” or “loveable”. Afterwards, it was confined to the sense of fire, Latin ignis.

ईळे ।

Dialectical form of ईले, also ईडे. Root ईळ् with the addition of the verbal suffix ए (composed of the connective enclitic अ and the personal termination इ).

The root ईळ् is a secondary formation from the primary root ई, ई which means essentially to be in relation to some thing, person, time or direction, so to go, drive, press towards, master, study, approach, etc and also means to produce, arise, come into being, as opposed to the idea in अ of static existence. The sound ल् is the shabda of love, desire, entreaty, gentle and wooing touch; it expresses softness, sweetness, desire, and by a development passion, intensity, force of the heart. Combining with ई it gives the sense of close adherence, to embrace, cling to, love, adore, approach with love or adoration; of pressure, to crowd, press, pack, press together, make compact or strong; of maternal production, motherhood, to bear, produce, give birth to. It has also the primary senses of motion, to go, move, cast, strike; and by a development from the sense of clinging or persistence in a given place, the opposite idea of motionlessness, rest, — to rest still, lie, sleep. Its derivates are ईला meaning mother and applied to the earth, a cow, Speech; ईलिका, earth; ईती, a short sword or stick; and from the almost identical root ईङ् or ईड्, the nouns ईङ् and ईडा having the same meanings, and also the meaning “libation, offering, that which is cast or thrown on the altar or earth”, “a draught, ie what is taken down at a cast into the throat”, “heaven”, the place of bliss, love and delight; (ईङ् also means people or subjects, from another sense, to control, master, rule, cf ईश्); ईडः as an epithet of Agni; ईडा, love, desire, prayer or praise; ईडनम्, adoration; ईङ्य or ईडेन्य, adorable, desirable. Greek derivatives are Ἰλαδόν, in a close throng, pressed together, εἱληγ, a crowd, troop; εἱλέω, press together, gather, assemble, hem in; εἱλαρο, a stronghold, fortification.

The word here means not to praise or hymn as taken by the commentators and Europeans, but to love, desire, adore, as is evident from the use of ईड्यः in a later verse. ईडः as applied to Agni means the adored, loved or loving, from the other meaning of the root अग् noted under the word अग्नि above.

पुरो हितम् ।

Two words, not one. पुरो in front, originally fifth case (genitive) of पुर्, meaning door, gate, wall, front; then city or house — cf Greek πύλη, gate; πύλος, walled fort; πόλις, town. Rt पु with the nominal suffix त्, in the sense of “cover, protect”, common to primary प् roots, as in प्, पट्, पा, पाल्, पति, पुस् (originally husband, protector, then male), पुमान्, पुट् (cup, sheath, covering), पुष्, to protect, nourish; पिटः (roof, house, basket), पिठरं, etc. Lat. pudor, shame.

हितम् fixed, stationed, put. Rt हि with adjectival suffix त्, in the sense of to cast, throw down, strike in, fix, plant, common to the primary ह् roots; afterwards the sense of striking predominated, the other being preferably expressed by धा and other roots. Gr. χέω (O.S. ह्या), I pour, ἵγμι (O.S. हियामि), I throw, cast, send.

पुरो हितम् means him who stands before or in front of and was afterwards applied to the purohita or chief priest at the sacrifice.

यज्ञस्य ।

Root यज् with the nominal suffix न्.

यज् is a derivative from the primary root य which has the essential significances of motion to or from, yearning, contact and union. The sound ज् adds to it the idea of sharply applied and decisive or effective force in the motion, desire or contact. Hence it gets the meaning of effort, seeking after, wooing, application to, adhesion, or strongly maintained union or contact. The sense of successful effort gives that of mastery. Cf यम्, यत्, यस् (आयासः, प्रयासः, यमः, नियमः, यत्त, यति). It means in its nominals labour, action, control, mastery, Yoga, and when used transitively, ruler, master, Yogin. The word यमः had the same significance. In another sense, to cast before, hand over to, cf यच्छृ, it means to give,

offer, sacrifice. A third sense is to woo, court, worship, adore, cf Gr. ὁλλω, to desire. यज्ञः may therefore mean either, the Master, the Almighty, the Lord, Vishnu, Ishwara; or, action, or yoga; or, sacrifice. All three senses have to be taken into consideration in the Veda. Here and ordinarily it means Ishwara, the Lord.

देवम् ।

Root दिव् compounded after modification with the nominal and adjectival suffix अ, which gives simply and vaguely the sense of being.

The root दिव् or दीव् has two common senses, to play or sport and to shine, besides some of the significances common to द् roots, viz, to strike, throw; hurt, cause to suffer, vex, torment, harass; destroy; squander, give (द, दा, दान). The sense of to play, gamble, to sport, gambol, rejoice, etc is its most characteristic significance. The sense of shining comes from the sense of coruscation, brilliance caused by light playing brilliantly, vibrating powerfully. The Gods are therefore primarily those who rejoice, to whom life is play, lila or ananda — their occupations being described in the Smriti by the significant expression देवानुक्रीडनम्. Deva subsequently came to have the sense, luminous or flashingly brilliant, jyotirmaya, attached to it; also, heavenly, from दिव् the shining or blissful regions, and was used in the ancient language in all these senses, the associations of which have come down to us in the modern sense of देव. The gods are the jyotirmaya beings of the tejomaya, luminous Chandraloka or Swar and jyotirmaya, brilliant Suryaloka or Mahar, the two heavens attainable by mortals.

ऋत्विजम् ।

An ancient compound word ऋत् and विज् formed in the early childhood of the language before the modern laws of Sandhi were applied.

ऋत् is the root ऋ with the verbal and nominal suffix त् expressing either action or quality. ऋ signifies essentially to move or go vibrantly straight or swift to a mark. It means to go, to go straight; to attempt, attack; reach, acquire; master, know; think. Hence various meanings for its derivatives, eg ऋक्षं acquisitions,

wealth; कृध् to flourish, prosper; कृद्धिः; कृष्टिः a weapon, sword; कृक्षण wounded, etc; but the common meaning is based on the idea of straightness, fixity, directness, truth, knowledge, as in कृज्ञ, कृतम् (truth, law, rule), कृतु (fixed time, season; order, rule); कृषि, knower, thinker, Latin reor, I think, ratio, reason, etc; कृभु, wise, adept, expert. The word कृत् here means truth or law.

विज् is a derivative root from the important primary root वि, which has essentially the significance of coming into existence, so to appear, open, separate, be discerned. These meanings can be traced through a host of derivatives in Sanskrit, Latin and Tamil. From the sense of appearing, being open, we get transitively the meaning to see, know, Latin video, Greek εἶδον, οἶδα, ισθί, etc; (cf Tamil விளங்கு to give light, shine; விழி eye); Sanscrit विद्. The form विज् implies successful, decisive, complete or spontaneous sight or knowledge. कृत्विज् is therefore the knower of truth, the drashta of the Veda, Agni jatavedas, or the adept in law and rule. In the latter sense it came to mean a sacrificial priest versed in the rules of the sacrifice. The later Nirukta, fixing on the sense of priesthood, the only one then known, very naturally derived it from कृतु and इज्, sacrificing in season, which is the only possible combination by modern rules and arrives at the right meaning by another road.

होतारम्।

Root हृ after modification with the verbal termination त्.

The essential significance of हृ roots, हा, हि and हु, is violent contact, movement, application of force. Their primary meanings are to strike, dash, hit, destroy, slay; then, to cast, throw, hurl, fling; then, to hurl forth the voice, shout, call. The sense of abandonment, the sense of casting a libation on the altar, and other derivate senses are of later origin. होता in the old Aryan tongue meant a slayer, striker, destroyer, warrior; हवः and आहवः meant slaughter, battle, war; हविः slaying, strife; हु to hurl, fight, shout, call, invoke assistance (cf Grk βοή, βοηθέω). The sacrificial application is of later origin and belongs to the Dwapara Yuga, the age of sacrifice and ceremonial.

रत्नधातमम् ।

रत्न and धा with the superlative termination तम्.

The word रत्न is the word रत् with the adjectival & nominal suffix न expressing quality or substance. The root is र् which has as its essential significance vibration, swift repeated action, tremulous, eager or impetuous contact, shock or motion, and its characteristic significance, to play, enjoy, sport, take delight; to love, embrace etc; also, to shine, coruscate, shed lustre. It and its derivatives also mean to rule, govern, protect; to fight, attack; set to, begin; to move rapidly, shout loud, make a noise. The word रत् had several of these meanings, but chiefly delight, enjoyment, love, sexual pleasure, passion, lustre, brilliance, and रत्न therefore means delightful, brilliant, and as a noun delight, ananda, or lustre. It is in later Sanscrit that it took the sense of jewel, from the adjectival sense, brilliant.

धा is the root धा to arrange, place, dispose, used as an adjective or noun. रत्नधा therefore means disposer of delight, रत्नधातमम्, mightiest disposer of delight.

॥ २ ॥ अग्निः पूर्वेभिर् ऋषिभिर् ईडयो नूतनैर् उत । स देवाँ एह वक्षति ॥

पूर्वेभिः ।

Root पुर्, पूर् previously explained under the first sloka and the suffix व् which indicates substance, possession or being. Originally the word meant protecting, covering, in front, anterior, and by transference from place to time former, ancient, पुरातन. It had also the sense of first, foremost, best, leading, chief. Here the sense is ancient, those that were before.

ऋषिभिः ।

Root ऋ् to think, reach, know forming the intensitive derivative ऋष्, to know, reach or acquire thoroughly or finally, with the nominal suffix इ expressing action or possession. The rishi is one who knows, possesses, has reached or acquired knowledge, an adept, आस, master. (Cf the German word reich, English rich, O.S. ऋश्). See under ऋत्विजम् in the first sloka.

ईङ्गयोः।

Root ईङ्ग् to love, desire, with the possessive or qualitative suffix य used either actively or passively; here passively = desirable, adorable. See under ईङ्गे in the first sloka.

नूतनैः।

Root नु or नू with the suffix तनः from root तन् meaning to hold, possess, contain (tenere, terra, तनुः) and therefore expressing a quality.

The root नु means to come forward, appear, come into being, come in, enter, penetrate, push in or forward, move forward, sail, walk etc. It belongs to the न् family of roots, whose essential signification is birth, manifestation, presence, appearance, entry, motion forward, progress (cf नः, nos, nascere, nare, natare, नौः, nauta, नट् meaning in Tamil to walk, नि, नुह्, नदः) and from the sense of birth or new appearance or arrival acquires the sense of newness, in नवः, Latin *novus*, Gr. νέος. The adverb नु or नू, meaning now, (cf the particle नु, Grk νω, Latin *nunc*, which properly means now, now then, then) takes the adjectival suffix तन to signify the quality of newness; — like पुरा of old, पुरातन old, चिरं long, चिरन्तनः lasting, eternal.

उत्

Also. This is a particle which has survived from the ancient Aryan tongue. It belongs to the class represented [by] the Latin *et*, *ut*, *at*, Sanscrit इद्, उ, उत्, अति, Greek οι at the end of a word for emphasis, ούτοσί, Bengali এ, ও, (জুমিছি, জুমিও). They are all based on the original particles अ, इ and उ, meaning, “this here”, “this there”, “that”, and used for distinction, emphasis, addition, connection; with the addition of the definitive sound त्, they formed अत्, इत्, उत्, which again by the addition of the emphatic अ, इ, formed अति, इति, उति, अत्, इत्, उत्. From these words a number of pronouns, adverbs, suffixes, affixes, conjunctions and prepositions are descended in the Aryan languages.

उत् has the force as an adverb of also, in addition, verily, much more, quite as much, indeed, or of course, according to the context and spirit of the passage or phrase in which it occurs.

स।

The static root स, signifying existence in rest, used as a pronoun, expresses a fixed object resting before the eyes. It is the original of the Greek article, ὁ, ἡ, τό, the Greek relative ὃς, ἡ, ὁ, (O.S. सः, सा, स), cf ऋति because, and in the old Aryan and Vedic languages had not only the demonstrative force, but also when connecting two clauses, the relative or copulative. Here it is the causal relative who, because, and connects ईड्यो and वक्षति. वक्षति gives the reason for ईड्यो. Adorable or desirable because he habitually bears.

देवाँ।

The nasal at the end of a word in old Aryan tended always to be a pure nasal, anuswara, as in French, just as s final tended to become a pure aspiration, visarga. This is the reason for the metrical peculiarity by which final s in old Latin and final m both in old and classical Latin become silent and are elided before a vowel or do not affect the quantity of the syllable in the prosody of a verse. The later tendency was to materialise the sound.

एह।

The spirit of the sound इ is a certain narrowness and intensity. The root accordingly easily acquires an association of force and strength in action; it easily forms derivatives like ईर् to force out, utter, इरस्यति to be angry, hostile, Latin ira, anger, Gr. ἤγω, I throw, ὕσχω, to control, rule, and in certain forms compounded with strong sounds like ह, प, भ or even with soft sounds like न and ल it has the pure idea of strength, cf S. इन्द्रः, इन्द्रियम्, Gr. ἵψιος, ἵψιμος, ὕσχυς, ἵς (ἵνος G.), इष्, इश्वरः. From this sense of the root इह् is formed इह्, एह्, substantives meaning strength, force, with an old form of the dwitiya or accusative case एह् used adverbially to mean strongly, forcibly, with strength. (The derivation of इह्, here, is different and it was by an error that this sense was extended to the archaic word एह् by the later grammarians on the analogy of इव, एव etc.)

वक्षति।

Root वह् in the derivative वक्ष् (वह् + स), to bear habitually.

The suffix स or क्ष added to a root gave three senses, intention or futurity, desire, or frequency and habit. It is in the last sense that it occurs here and forms words like वस् to dwell (be or occupy habitually), वक्षः breast, लक्ष् to notice, observe; ऋक्ष star, constellation, etc, इरस्यति. In the former sense स् forms the future in Greek and Sanscrit.

The root वह् is derivative from the primary root व in its sense of “be in space & substance, hold matter, contain, bear”. It also means to bring, carry, sweep, lead.

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॥ ३ ॥ अग्निना रयिम् अश्वुवत् पोषम् एव दिवे दिवे । यशसम् वीरवत्तमम् ।

रयिम् ।

From the sense of vibration and motion in the root व, the word being the root व + the nominal suffix इ, य a merely connective semivowel between two vowels as in जाये, मिये, मन्ये (मँये). Sanscrit has lost, Tamil has preserved this connective use of the semivowels य and व as a constant rule of its system of euphony. रयिः is that which vibrates, moves, is in constant play; it comes therefore to signify substance, matter, force, energy, strength, prosperity, play, delight, laughter, with other kindred or derivative senses. It is the Latin res, “thing, affair, object, matter, fact”. In the sense of substance or matter it is constantly used in the Veda. In this passage it means substance or force of substance.

अश्वुवत् ।

Root अश् to have or enjoy, with the connective verbal affix नु and the impersonal adjectival or participial termination वत्. We find this general use of व in Tamil with the verbal stem to indicate a verbal adjective, “one who enjoys”. The root अश् is a secondary root from अ in its transitive sense “to have”. It is the same word as the Greek ἔχω, I have (अश्वा), and from the sense of possession develops other significances, to eat, enjoy, etc. अश्वुवत् is in this passage “one enjoys.”

पोषम् ।

Stem पुष् modified with the nominal suffix अ. पुष् is a habitual, frequentative or desiderative form from पु, to produce, beget,

possess, protect (see under पुरो in the first sloka) and develops the sense “to nourish, rear, increase”. It also means “to perfect, develop”, and “to cherish, foster, love”. Cf पुत्र, Latin, pullus; पूषा the Sun; पूज् to worship, adore, developed from the sense of cherishing or loving. The substantive पोषः means, therefore, “increase, development, increasing, perfection”.

एव।

The pronominal and adverbial particle व (still used for the second personal pronoun plural as न is used for the first) meant originally “a substantial object, a thing before the eyes”. It came to mean, especially when compounded with अ, इ, उ, thus, this way, in that direction; cf इव, originally meaning, “so”, then, “as”; अव in that direction, in the direction of, then, down to, down; है, so indeed, verily, वा “or”, originally meaning “so”, “and”, “or”. एव is merely a variant of इव giving a vaguer and more comprehensive sense. It was used formerly with its other form एवम् to mean, “so, and”, the latter significance surviving in the Bengali এবং, and only afterwards came to mean “indeed, verily, that and no other, so and not otherwise”. In this passage it has the significance of “and, also”.

दिवे।

Root दिव् to shine, be bright, with the nominal suffix अ, “the bright period, day”, or “the bright world”, “heaven”. Here दिवे दिवे means “from day to day”.

यशसम्।

Root यश् with the nominal suffix अस् “enjoyment, satisfied possession”.

यश् is an intensitive derivative from य, to reach, join or embrace entirely, (see under यज्ञः in the first sloka) and meant “success, fame, glory, possession, mastery”. It also meant “enjoyment, a thing enjoyed or enjoyable, love, beauty, charm, splendour,” (cf योषा, योषित्, from युष्) which it subsequently lost, and “seat of enjoyment, the vital organs, heart, liver etc,” Latin, jecur.

वीरवत्तम् ।

वीर्, manifestation from Root वी, with the adjectival suffix वत् and the superlative suffix तमः, from त in the sense of to stretch, extend; cf तन्, ततः, तालः etc. तमः means extensive, extreme, very, so “most”.

The roots वि and वी mean to open, expand, manifest, a sense chiefly found in the roots विद्, विल् (Tamil, Sanscrit, Latin), cf also आविः, वियत्, the open sky, B. विजनि, lightning, Lat. verus, true etc, etc. From this sense it developed the idea of full and forceful manifestation, strength, energy, courage, heroism, Lat. vis, vir, virtus, Sanscrit वीरः, वीर्यं. The word वीर् is here plainly used as a substantive since it needs वत् to give it the adjectival sense. वीर् means either “strength, force”, or “manifestation, splendour, openness, fullness”. With यशः in the sense of enjoyment goes most suitably the latter signification, “fullest, most expanded, unstinted”; but “forceful” would also not be inappropriate to the character and function of Agni.

॥४॥ अग्ने यम् यज्ञम् अध्वरम् विश्वतः परिभूः असि । स इद् देवेषु गच्छति ॥

यम् ।

The demonstrative relative in the old Aryan tongue, यः, implies motion or direction from one point to another as opposed to the static force of सः. यः means the one who is yonder, सः the one who is here.

यज्ञम् ।

Yajna (the Lord, Isha) here refers to the Jivatman; the distinction from the universal Yajna is indicated in the epithet अध्वरम्.

अध्वरम् ।

This word is an adjective formed by the addition of the common adjectival suffix र् to अध्व (रुचिर् from रुचि, असुर from असु, मधुर from मधु). अध्व itself is a substantive formed by the root अध् by the direct addition of the nominal suffix व. Kindred vocables are अधस्, below, अध्वन्, path, distance, sky, attack, time, place, अधम्, lowest, अधर्, lower, अधि, originally meaning

towards, down to, so from above, above, concerning (Gr. *κατά*), अधिक, more, आधिः, pain, अधिः, pain, misfortune. अध्वर itself is used in later Sanscrit to mean, “lasting, uninterrupted, attentive, the sky or air, and a sacrificial ceremony”. All these significations are recognisable as developments from the original Aryan root अध्, a secondary formation from अ, to be. The sound ध् signifies dull contact, downward motion or pressure from above, rest, finality with an idea of tamasic condition, establishment, etc. अध् therefore means to oppress, cover, rest, descend and rest, reach and end, attack, etc. The air or atmosphere covering or pressing on the earth, place, Time and distance, as continents, grief as a dull tamasic condition, are early derivative meanings. The same relation viewed from two different standpoints creates the opposite senses of “down, lower”, अधः and “above, towards, more”, अधि, अधिक.

अध्वरः means lower, relative, individual, from the lost word अध्व which signified philosophically the lower planes of the universe, the aparardha, τὸ ἔνερθεν. In relation to the word यज्ञः, adhwara signifies the Purusha, Lord or Ishwara manifesting in the aparardha and attached to an individual adhara; the Jivatman, not bound but relative in his manifestation.

विश्वतः ।

विश्व, root श्व to lie, remain, be spread out, with the prefix वि meaning open, outspread, diverse, manifold, and the suffix तः which expresses possession, relation or origin, commonly used to form adverbial expressions. On all sides.

परिभूः ।

पर, परि or प्र, all signifying in front, beyond, above, from in front, and afterwards variously for, to, towards, around, about, are kindred words from the root प to cover, protect. In the old language परि as preposition governs the second case even when it is part of a compound verb, adjective or noun; it had not at that time either become otiose or lost its separate existence in the compound, but was easily detachable and always bore its especial significance and power. भूः means “existent or in being”, परि “round about or in relation to”.

असि ।

Thou art. Root अ with the personal termination सि. In the old language there were two forms अस्सि and असि from the secondary अस् (अस्मि, अस्ति) and the primary अ; but the latter alone has survived.

इदृ ।

The old enclitic इत्, kindred to अत् (Latin et) and उत् (Latin ut) and signifying that (Latin id), also, and, indeed, verily, the same (Lat. idem). Cf the use of इति answering to English “that”. “He, the same Yajna whom you surround as the individual soul, is also beyond that relation and universal.”

देवेषु ।

The gods, as masters of the forces and functions, physical, mental and spiritual which surround with their activities and minister to the individual knowledge and action of the Jiva.

गच्छति ।

The secondary root गच्छ from ग is used to form certain tenses of the verb गम् which has replaced both ग and गच्छ. Cf यच्छ and यम् from the primary root य. ग means originally to move softly or steadily, or continuously. It is the characteristic root for general motion as opposed to the more specific senses of इ, ऋ, या, and conveys here the same sense of primary cosmic motion as in जगत्, जगती, गा (the world or earth).

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॥ ५ ॥ अग्निः होता कविक्रतुः सत्यश्चित्रश्चवस्त्मः । देवो देवेभिरागमत् ॥

कविक्रतुः ।

कवि. Root कृ modified before a vowel with the nominal suffix इ. This root is only found in later Sanskrit in the modified form कव्, to praise or describe, to compose a poem, to paint a picture. The कृ roots are among those of the widest scope in the Aryan language. Primarily, they convey the idea of any kind of violent, strong or masterful contact, action or relation to any thing, person or action. The root कृ was used in the more ancient language in the sense of do, act, form, make, design, create. को in कोविदः is the substantive, meaning “art, practice”. It also meant

to desire, enjoy (Lat. cupio, and from the idea of any strong passion connected with love कृपा to be angry, cf कम्, कामः, *χυνέω*, to kiss, कुमारः etc), to master, seize, hold, contain, shut, confine, protect, imprison (कवचः, कवसः, कवषः, armour, a shield; कवकः, कवलः, कवडः, a mouthful; कवरकी, a prisoner; कव्यं, a handful, then the oblation to the Manes; कुटं, कुटी, कुटीरः; cf कोशः, कोलः, कोरकः, कोशः, कोटः, कोटरः, कूलं, कूपः, कुक्षिः, कृः, earth). Various ideas of calling, crying, crying on or at, praising, reviling (कृ, कू, कूज्, कूट, कूत्स �etc). The idea of curve or crookedness derived from the sense of the circle (Gr *κύκλος*, *κυλίνδω*, कुलं, the circle, society, herd, race, family, कुटिलः, कुह्, to deceive, कुच्, कुटी, को in कोदण्डः etc) is fairly common. On the other hand, the root very rarely accepts the more strong and violent senses common to the forms क् and कृ, but it has them sometimes as in कुरु a master, ruler or priest, कुट्टि to cut, pound, burn etc. In the word कवि the sense of perfect creative action is dominant. कवि meant a poet, artist, scientist, craftsman, sage, anyone who was कोविद्, who could deal perfectly with his material physical or intellectual. It also meant the art or science itself and so, wisdom, skill, mastery, proficiency. It is in this latter sense that it is used in the compound कविक्रतुः, “whose strength is in the mastery of knowledge”.

ऋतु is the Root ऋत्, a tertiary formation from कृ by modification of the vowel to ऋ. The root कृ expresses action, work, mastery, strength, rule or any strong, violent or mastering activity, to cut, pierce, slaughter, hurt etc. ऋतुः meant strength, action, force, power of any kind mental or physical. It often meant the Will or any activity of the will. Cf Greek *χράτος*, *χάρτος*, *χαρτερός*. The word शतऋतु as a name of Indra meant not “he of the hundred sacrifices”, but he whose force was that of a hundred.

सत्यम्।

True; free from the dwandwa of truth and falsehood. The root स् to be in a fixed state or state of rest, to lie, rest, remain, be fixed, gives to सत् and सत्य the idea of that which is or is true, fact, reality, abidingness. सत्य is formed by the adjectival य from

the old substantive सत् existence, truth, reality.

चित्रश्वस्तमः ।

चित्र, Rt चि with the verbal suffix श्व. चि indicates fundamentally any action that cuts, splits, divides, separates or distinguishes. Its characteristic significance is to discern, distinguish, analyse, group, arrange and collect. Its verbal adjective चित्र means that which discerns, groups, arranges in a collection or that which is so discerned, grouped and arranged. It has the sense of various, variegated, decorative or decorated, well-arranged and assorted.

श्वः, from the Root श्रु, to hear, modified, before the nominal suffix अस्. The word is the same as the Greek χλέος, (χλύω, श्रुया, I hear) and had in early times the sense of “fame, repute, renown”, but the sense “to move vibrating, react with a strong harmonious contact”, developing the sense, “to resort to, take refuge with, join” in श्री and “to be heard, to hear” in श्रु are a yet more essential and original association. श्वः means the thing heard, the thing received by revelation, knowledge, learning, belief, faith (cf श्रद्धा).

चित्रश्वस् means “analysed and grouped knowledge of great variety” or one who possesses such knowledge. Agni is he among the gods who possesses most such knowledge, proper to the vijnanam, ideal or purely ideative consciousness. He is जातवेदाः, the one who has the revealed knowledge, in whom and by whom it is born.

आगमत् ।

Root गम् to go, move, properly with a sense of direction, finality or intended or accomplished arrival. The preposition आ originally conveyed the idea of general relation; in this compound the sense of approach and arrival predominates. The preposition has no relation to the instrumental देवेभिः, which by itself implies union or accompaniment; divus cum divis, a god with the gods. The form आगमत् does not convey the idea of past time, but of general action, the time being vague, “arriveth”, whether now or habitually or as a past experience we have of him. It was from this vagueness that the form afterwards

acquired an imperfect or habitual significance with regard to the past.

॥ ६ ॥ यद् अंग दासुषे त्वम् अग्ने भद्रं करिष्यसि । तव इत् तत् सत्यम्
अंगिरः ॥

यद् ।

That. The demonstrative यत् like स was originally used either as a demonstrative pronoun or a relative and in the neuter as a conjunction; the transition from the relative to the conjunctive use is seen in this construction, where यत् is really the relative to the correlative तत्. यत् is a hanging introductory relative vaguely referring to the idea of the sentence भद्रं करिष्यसि and not a relative pronoun qualifying भद्रम्.

अंग ।

See under अग्निम् in the first sloka.

दासुषे ।

Root दास् with the verbal suffix ण् preceded by enclitic उ, in a desiderative sense, the one who wishes to hurt, the enemy. The root द with its congeners दा, दि, दी, दु, द्, दृ, दृृ, expressed always effective, rapid and aggressive movement, contact, action etc. It had predominatingly an aggressive sense, in the beginning to cut, slay, tear, bite, divide; to destroy, ruin, waste, squander; to burn, pillage, havoc. Its most important derivatives as well as its less important, दंश् to bite, दशनं, दत्, दन्तः tooth; दक्ष् to act quickly, hurt, kill (also to act or think ably); दच् to kill, hurt; दंध् to abandon (also, protect, cherish); दंड् to chastise; दंभ् to injure, hurt, deceive, drive; दम् to conquer, crush, tame; दय् to hurt, divide, as well as to love or pity; दल् to burst open, split, divide; दवः fire, heat, pain; दस् to toss up, destroy, perish; दहर् wasted, thin; small and so young; दह् to burn, destroy, torment; दत् to cut, divide, then, to give, its later though still ancient use; दात्रम् a sickle, दाश् to hurt, kill, give, grant, are all instances of the predominating frequency of this use. The same tendency may be found in the roots दृृ, दृृ, etc, but other significances were developed in them more frequently, and by a not infrequent irony

of transmutation, the sense of loving, cherishing, protecting was developed from the sense of hurting, crushing, taming, and we find such words of tender import as दमः; house, Gr. δόμος, दानं, the Persian दिल् (cf the name दिलीप), दयिता, दया, दाराः, etc as descendants of this root of violent or baleful significance. The word दस्यु in the Veda, meaning enemy, afterwards robber, दासः, a captured enemy, slave, (Gr. δοῦλος from दसुल) are from the roots दस्, दास्, meaning to hurt, afflict. दासुषे bears the same sense. There is no reason to take it in the later sense of “giver”.

त्वम्

Thou. तु, Lat. tu, Gr. σύ, with the old definitive particle अम्. Cf अहम्, इदम्, Lat. idem, वयम् from व, यूयम् from यु etc. The word तु is demonstrative, that there, like the plural यु (cf यः, the one who yonder) and was used by itself or with the suffix व (त्व) to indicate the second person.

भद्रम्

The word भद्र from the root भ compounded with the noun द्र. It originally meant household wealth, from भ (भवनं, भुवनम्) being, a house, place, world, sky, etc, and द्र (द्रव्य) spoil, plunder, substance, possessions, wealth. From this sense it came to mean ease, happiness, good condition etc. Here it means simply “good”, its latest sense.

करिष्यसि।

Thou intendest or desirest to do. The future sense was originally one conveying the significance of intention, purpose, will, all conveyed by the sibilant suffixes स्, ष. Cf “I will do” in English.

तव।

Originally possessive adjective from तु, thou.

सत्यम्।

Here in the sense of “nature”, “essential quality”, from सत् being with the adjectival य, belonging to the being, essential, real. It may also be taken in the sense of truth, which will have the same significance. The sense “oath, vow, promise”, would be

out of place in the early language, though it would make good verbal sense, if the line stood by itself in some other context.

अंगिरः ।

Root अंग् to love with the adjectival suffix इर्, makes अंगिर् the lover, loving, and from the adjectival sense loving, is formed a secondary substantive अंगिरस्, again meaning lover or one who loves. Agni as Angiras is the lord of love.

॥ ७ ॥ उप त्वाग्ने दिवे दिवे दोषावस् तर् धिया वयम् । नमः भरन्तः एमसि ॥

उप ।

उ with the sense to cover, pervade, उप, over, above, through, under, and from the sense of over, in the direction of, towards; from the sense of under, in subjection to, up to. उप has here the sense of approach by an inferior to a superior.

दोषावस् ।

दोषा darkness, tamas, from दुष्, to assail, attack, overcome, oppress, cover, darken, eclipse. दोषा or दोः also means the striking part of the arm, the forearm.

अवस् Root अव् with the nominal suffix अस्. अव्, a secondary formation from अ, to be in substance, (व् conveying the idea of substance, solidity, patent or objective existence), to be strong, strengthen, maintain, keep, cherish, protect, confirm, desire, love; to rise, soar, fly, be exalted.

दोषावस् he who strengthens, maintains or protects in the darkness.

तर् ।

An old adverbial form still preserved in तर्हि and the Mahratti तर्, “so”; it meant there, then, thus, इति. Here it is used almost as a vocative “O!”

धिया ।

The essential meaning of the roots ध, धा, धि, is to set down, fix, place, settle, keep, hold. धि is that operation of the intellect which fixes, arranges and retains, the buddhi or discerning and judging intellect.

वयम्।

व with the definitive particle अम् connected by the semivowel य; cf त्वम्, यूयम् (see under त्वम् in the sixth sloka). व was used for the plural of the pronoun both in the first and the second persons with a distinguishing prefix which was afterwards lost or replaced the व, न वः or नु वः, we, Latin, nos; य व or यु वः, you. When यूयम् replaced the second form, वयम् came to be restricted to the first pronoun.

नमो।

The root नम् means originally go or bring to an end or conclusion. To lead, guide, control, dispose, distribute, mark off, arrange, shape, bend, are its more common later meanings. The Greek νόμος, law, νέμω, to distribute, give, arrange, regulate, occupy or to pasture, graze; νέμος, an apportioned ground or enclosure, so grove or pasturage; νέμεσις (O.A. नमतिः) the goddess who arranges, controls, rewards, punishes, avenges; δνομα, designation, name, (S. नाम), Lat. nemus, are survivals of these significations. In later Sanskrit only the intransitive sense of submission, being governed, ruled, subject, to bend, submit, bow, salute has left traces except in the sense, “to give”, attached to नम्, in the particle नाम, “granted”, “allowed”, “certainly”, and the substantive नाम, name. नमो means submission, self-surrender, नतिः; the later sense of salutation, obeisance does not apply to this passage.

भरन्तः।

The participle used in place of the finite verb; the use is almost that of a loose nominative absolute or an anacoluthon. Rt भृ (Gr. φέρω, Lat. fero) with the verbal adjective or participial form of अ, to be. भृ means to occupy, fill, hold, uphold, bear, carry, contain, convey, bestow, be full of, feel within. It is used in this passage in the latter sense, to be full of.

एमसि।

There are two words, the locative of एमस् (Rt इ modified with the nominal suffix मस् signifying, “way, path”) and the second person of the verb ईम् or एम्, a final derivative from

इ॒, to reach, to culminate, to grow to full strength. From this root comes ई॑म्, the intensive particle, meaning, utterly, actually, indeed, at once, now, and इ॑मथा, as things actually are, now, under present circumstances, Lat. imus, uttermost, last, lowest. ए॑मसि means, “thou culminatest, risest to thy full force”.

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॥ द ॥ राजन्तम् अध्वराणाम् गोप अमृतस्य दीदिविम् । वर्धमानम् स्वे दमे ॥

राजन्तम् ।

Rt राज् intensive form of रा, as रज् of र in the participial form. Like र, रा has chiefly the cognate senses of play, enjoyment, satisfaction, bounty, love, (रागः, राधु, रात्रिः, रामः, रासः, etc) and, to shine, glitter, colour etc. A third set of significations depend on the idea of darting on, seizing, pouncing on,— to seize, ravish, plunder, hold and keep, squeeze, subdue, rule, regulate, conquer, oppress, strike, rend etc (रक्ष, रद्, रध्, रसः, रक्षाः, रावण etc, Lat. rapio, rego). We find राज् itself used in two senses, to shine or to rule, (cf राजी, a shining streak, line etc, राजीव, coloured blue lotus). He who rules, controls.

अध्वराणाम् ।

τῶν νερπέρων. Of things or beings in the lower planes or aparardha.

गोप ।

Not a vocative, but the old accusative of गोप्, root गूप् modified and forming a noun, both substantive and adjective. Cf Grk. γύψ, γύπα. The secondary root गूप् is a strongly active, sometimes causal form of गृ, to seize, swallow up, hold, contain, screen, hide, protect, embrace. The Grk. γύψ, vulture, is literally the seizer, the bird of prey. It also means, to hide from, fear, shun, loathe (जुगुप्सा). In this passage, as in most, it means “protector”.

अमृतस्य ।

अ॒, negative, with मृतः mortal, liable to death, Greek βροτός. The word is not अमृतम् but अमृतः, used like अक्षरः, to connote the Divine Personality, the imperishable being who is not subject to life or death, who as eternal, unchangeable Sat is the source of the principle of Immortality in the world.

दीदिविम्।

Reduplication from दिव् to shine, with the nominal termination इ. The reduplication gives the idea of intensity, frequency or variety. “A shining force, brilliance, fiery energy.”

वर्धमानम्।

Rt वृध्, secondary root from वृ to be, extend, cover, be in force, excel, be in activity, act, operate etc. The sound ध् always adds the idea of solid or heavy strength and persistence,—to spread, increase, be exalted.

स्वे।

Own. स with the suffix वं conveying the idea possession, makes either स्व (Lat. suus) or सव (Greek ἐός) as in तव.

दमे।

दम् to conquer entirely, crush, tame, possess as entirely one's own, with the nominal suffix अ. Possession, personal property, home. (Lat. domus, Grk. δόμος.) His own home, ie, the parardha planes as opposed to the Aparardha which he protects.

॥९॥ स नः पिता इव सूनवे अग्ने सूपायनो भव । सचस्व आ नः स्वस्तये ॥

स।

Again the causal relative sense used loosely to mean therefore.

नः।

The demonstrative न, used generally to indicate the person here, I, we.

पिता।

The प roots mean principally to reach, obtain, make, do, produce, protect, cherish, strike, strike out. From the sense “to produce” in पि and पु, come पिता, the begetter, and पुत्र, the begotten.

इव।

So, as. इ, this and वं. See under एव in the third sloka.

सूनवे।

The roots सु, सू are found chiefly in three senses, to press out, distil, pour out, create, beget, from which we have सूनुः, son or daughter, सू with the nominal नुः (न, नि); to besiege, strike, attack, wound, (सूद, सूर, सूना, सूच् to pierce); and to be at rest, ease, firm, to confirm, ascertain, teach etc, सु, सुखं, सुष्टु, सूच्, सूत्र, सूरिः etc. The last is the primary meaning of the roots in स, but the addition of उ, gives as often an idea of violence, pressure etc, from which comes originally the sense, to press, squeeze, besiege, encroach on, insist, confirm and afterwards all the derivative meanings, even to the most remote from the original idea of rest, eg Greek οἴω, I shake (साया from सि, सी), and the sense of siege and battle common in the Veda. See the next hymn.

सूपायनो।

The adverb सु, well or very and उपायनो, Rt इ with आ (making the verb ए to go, come, approach) and उप towards, with the idea of submission or inferiority, prefixed and followed by the nominal suffix न preceded by the enclitic अ. One who can easily be approached, accessible, open.

भव।

Root भू, Grk. φύω, Lat. fui, to be, become, from the sense of substantial containing existence essential in the sound भू. Cf भुवन, भवन, भ, भू etc.

सचस्व।

Imperative of Root सच्. स means to be in a state of rest, to lie, lie with, adhere to, be with, embrace. सच् and सज् are intensitive and decisive, to be entirely with, cling, adhere utterly. It means to resort to, follow, love, serve, aid, also to enjoy physically. सचस्व means “Be with us, adhere to, abide with us.”

आ।

Expressing relation, emphasises the idea of adherence in सच्.

स्वस्तये।

सु and अस्ति, substantive from अस् to be, with the common nominal suffix ति, “happiness, welfare, prosperity, increase”.

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Translation.

Agni I desire who standeth before the Lord, the god who knoweth all the law, the warrior who disposeth utterly delight.

Agni whom the ancient seers desired, the modern too adore; for in his strength he beareth all the Gods.

By Agni one getteth substance, yes, and increase day by day, and glorious success.

O Agni, that Lord here below whom thou encompassest on every side, is he that moveth in the Gods.

Agni, the warrior whose strength is wisdom, he of the Truth who has the knowledge rich, cometh, a God attended by the Gods.

O beloved, O Agni, that thou desirest to do good to him who seeks to hurt thee, this is utterly thy nature, O Lord of Love.

To thee, O Agni who protectest us in darkness day by day, if with hearts full of self-surrender we come, then thou towerest to thy height,

To thee, controller and protector of all things below, of the Immortal brilliant force, ever increasing in thy home.

So be thou easy to our approach as a father to his child, abide with us for our bliss.

Rishi — Madhuchchhanda Vaisvamitra.

Metre — Gayatri.

[4]

[RV I.1.1]

First Mandala

First Hymn

अग्निमीळे पुरोहितं यज्ञस्य देवमृत्विजम् । होतारं रत्नधातमम् ॥ १ ॥

“Agni I adore who stands before the Lord, the god who seeth Truth, the warrior, strong disposer of delight.”

So the Rigveda begins with a song to Agni, with the adoration of the pure, mighty and brilliant God. “Agni, he who excels and is mighty,” cries the Seer, “him I adore.” Why Agni before all the other gods? Because it is he that stands before Yajna, the Master of things; because he is the god whose burning eyes can gaze straight at Truth, at the satyam, the vijnanam, that which is the Seer’s aim and desire and the thing on which all Veda is based; because he is the warrior who wars down and removes all the crooked attractions of ignorance and desire, *juhuranam enas*, which stand in the way of the Yojin, because as the vehicle of Tapas, the pure divine energy which flows from the higher concealed hemisphere of existence, he more than any develops and disposes Ananda, the divine delight.

In order to look into the words of the inspired writing and comprehend, so far as mere intellectual exposition can help us to comprehend, their profound meaning, we must begin with the Vedanta, the great fundamental body of truth which all Veda assumes; for it is by the passing into oblivion of this fundamental knowledge that we have lost the key to the meaning of the Vedas, and it is only by a return to the knowledge that we can recover it. There are two states of being in consciousness, the divine Brahmi sthiti of blissful unity, from which we descend, and the divided state of the Jivatman into which we have descended. Parabrahman reveals himself first as Yajna, the Supreme Soul and Master of Things, Atman and Iswara; He is utterly one as Atman, He is both One and Many as Iswara, but always

without losing His unity, always one without a second, ekam evadwitiyam, because the Many, both in their individuality and totality, are nothing but the One. Nothing is but God; we too are God, each one of us is He, and that which we dwell in is God. The fundamental sayings, So Aham; Tattwamasi, Svetaketo; sarvam khalu idam Brahma, are the sum of all Veda and Vedanta. All is merely the manifestation of Him for the sake of various delight; for Ananda the worlds are, from Ananda they proceeded, by Ananda they abide, to Ananda they return. Anandaddhyeva khalvimanī bhutani jayante, anandena jatani jivanti, anandam prayantyabhisanvishantiti. In this manifestation He as the Universal God pervades, governs, surpasses all. He is the master of the play,—यजति, He controls, rules and arranges it. This is Yajna. He again as the manifold individual God, ourselves, attaches Himself to every created thing (sarva-bhuteshu) and limits not Himself but His manifestation in each adhara, arranging and perpetually developing in each a particular nature or law of life, a swabhava, a dharma. So 'rthan yathatathyato vyadadhacchaśvatibhyah samabhyah. When we identify ourselves with the play of this various Nature reflected upon our consciousness and lose sight of our godhead, then we resort too utterly to the principle of Avidya, God's power of not knowing Himself, we become its servants, we are subject to Apara Maya, we stumble about buffeted by grief and error and all sorts of vikaras and viparita vruttis, we know ourselves as the Jivatman and other than the Paramatman, we make division where there is no division; we turn play into bitter earnest and love and joy into hatred and weeping and gnashing of teeth. Nevertheless, this forgetfulness is allowed in order that our secret souls in the Parardha and Brahman in them may enjoy the viparita ananda, the contrary or perverse delight, of the dualities. When we forget the play of Nature on our consciousness, shut our consciousness to it, refuse to reflect it, then we resort too utterly to the principle of Vidya, God's power of knowing His essential unity, we become subject to the Maya of Knowledge, we seem to baffle and bring to nought for ourselves the joy of the Lila, and disappear into some principle of Oneness, Prakriti,

Asad Brahman, Sad Brahman, Nirvana or Sacchidananda. It is, or seems, an unnecessary movement; for the world remains just as before so long as God chooses that it shall remain and we cannot end it by our precipitation, and for ourselves we always were Brahman, we always will be Brahman and we are not any the more Brahman by our flight into the Absolute. Nevertheless, this withdrawal too is allowed in order that certain select spirits may help the joy of the manifest world from behind the veil by their immanent blessedness. For we have no need of laya and no need of lila, no need of freedom and no need of bondage, but all things are for delight and not from necessity. But when we remember always and continually our oneness with the Supreme, our eternal and indefeasible Godhead, and at the same time allow Nature to reflect its movements on our souls as on a magical canvas according to His eternal purpose, then we have inalienable joy, then we bring heaven upon earth, then we fulfil the highest purpose of existence. We are then free even when we seem to be bound, and even if we are born again, we are janmasiddha and janmashuddha, nityamukta, and wear the temporary limitations of Nature as children allow themselves to be bound in a game with bonds which the Yajna, Master of the Revels looses Himself when we have given Him and ourselves the intended and perfect satisfaction.

It is in the spirit of this knowledge that the hymns of the Rigveda have been written. The Isha Upanishad is the Upanishad of the Rigveda and it is there that its spiritual foundations are revealed. To make of Avidya a bridge to immortality and of Vidya the means of keeping our grasp on immortality, is the common aim of the Rigvedic Rishis. This is the keynote, this is the one great tone swelling through its thousand undertones. And as our fingers fall on string after string of this mighty and many-stringed harp of God, they return always one cry, the cry of joyous battle, of war between Deva and Daitya, between mortality and immortality, between man's temporary imperfection and his eternal perfectibility.

In this holy war the Gods are our chief helpers. There are seven planes of cosmic consciousness on which the soul of man

plays with the love and wisdom and power of God. When first the unknowable Parabrahman turns towards knowability in this partial manifestation, — for utterly That allows itself not to be known, — the Absolute first becomes — to the possibility of knowledge, not to its actuality — the Eternal Being or Paratpara Purusha, paro 'vyaktad avyaktah sanatanah, who beyond the uttermost darkness of the Asat, Sunyam Brahma or eternal nothingness which is the ultimate negation of this manifest existence shines ever with the light unknown of which seven rays are sufficient to illuminate all these universal systems. He is that perceivable but unknowable glory seated for ever beyond the darkness that swallows up the worlds, tamashah parastat. Out of Him the Asad Brahma appears, the general negation, through which this mighty manifestation in the seven universes passes back into the unknowability of Parabrahman; and out of the Asad, the Sat, the general affirmation which we know as pure Atman, Self of itself, not yet of things, where nothing is yet differentiated and even Chit and Ananda are involved in mere featureless existence. Asad va idam agra asit, tatah sad ajayata. Atman is featureless, unconnected, inactive, alakshanam avyavaharyam akriyam. It must be featureless in order to contain all possible feature; it must be unconnected with the play of the worlds in order that Chit may play upon Sat with perfect freedom and put forth into the worlds without limitation whatever name, form or being the Lord commands Her to put forth; it must be inactive in order that there may be illimitable possibilities for Her action. For Atman is the foundation and continent of our worlds and if Atman had any definite feature or any bondage of connection or any law of activity, the world play which it supports and contains would be limited by that feature, by that connection or by that activity and God in His manifestation would be bound and not free. Therefore it is that as the featureless, free, inactive Sad Atman the Eternal first manifests Himself on this side of the darkness of Asat. Next, in Atman, He appears to His self-knowledge as the Nirgun Brahma, the Being without quality of the Parabrahman, manifesting an impersonal self-existence, an impersonal self-awareness and an impersonal self-delight, Sat,

Chit, Ananda. This too is Tat or That, but being unlike Parabrahman Tat in manifestation can be described, defined, cognised, not as anything else but as Atman and as Sacchidanandam. Tat in manifestation can be aware or unaware of the worlds and It can be both aware and unaware, but its cognition is without relation. It has no connection with the worlds in which it cognises and perceives activity merely as the play of a dream on the surface of its imperturbable quiet. On the calm of the Nirgunam God next imposes Himself (adhyaropayati) as the Personality of the Eternal, the Paratpara Purusha manifest in relation to the world. Here first we get relation, quality, activity. At first, the Personality merely contains and informs the activity which plays in it not as unrealised dream, but as realised though not binding actuality and truth, as an infinite active blissfulness of the Chit in the Sacchidananda in place of an infinite passive blissfulness. The indifference of the Impersonal to the play of the Personal does not make the play an unreality or an immense cosmic falsehood with which Brahman amuses Himself or distresses Himself for a season, any more than the featurelessness of the Sad Atman makes feature a lie and an impossibility. On the contrary just as that featurelessness is the necessary condition for features to manifest truly, infinitely, divinely — for Truth, infinity and Deity are one, — so the detachment of the Impersonal is simply the condition for the security of the soul when it plunges into the myriad-billed ocean of manifest existence. The Impersonal is detachment from guna and it is as detached from guna that God possesses and enjoys guna, otherwise He would be bound by and could not rightly enjoy it. It is because the tranquillity and indifference of the Nirguna is concealed within us that our souls can with impunity play at being bound, at being ignorant and at being sorrowful without being really bound by our bonds or darkened by our ignorance or destroyed by our sorrow. For being omnipotent God within us can always go back to the tranquillity within Him and look upon these things as a dream that falls away from Him the moment He cares to wake. It was a dream, but not a dream, just as when we are aware of sights and sounds without attending to them or remember the

past and it is to us dreamlike, swapnamaya. The world has a reality, but the Impersonal does not interest Itself in that reality, not attending to it; it does not properly recognise it except as a thing that is and yet is not, the Maya of Shankara. This also is not a lie but truth, not a foolish, blissful dream, but a perfect reality. Because it was avyakta in the Nirguna, it is not therefore false when it becomes vyakta any more than an apple hidden is an apple non-existent. The world is not utter reality because it is thing in manifestation, not thing in itself. Yet it is real because it is a manifestation of God in Himself and God who is satyam conceives nothing that is not satyam, nothing that is not Himself. He is not a seer of falsehoods. Anritam is merely a vikara or perversion of satyam. All ignorance is really partial or misplaced knowledge, all bondage a concealment of freedom, all evil good in the making, all sorrow a veiled delight. This the Saguna Brahman perceives and knows and as Vasudeva, or tranquil Personality, He utterly enjoys without any distinction of pleasure and grief, good and evil, the infinite play of the world within Himself. The Saguna is Sacchidananda envisaging cosmic activity. On the tranquillity [of] Vasudeva God by a new adhyaropa manifests Himself to Himself as the Sarvam Brahman in all things; He becomes the Lilamaya, the eternal Child frolicking in the Universe, the Playmate, Lover, Master, Teacher and Friend of all His creations; He is Hari, He is Srikrishna, He is the Personal God whom we love and adore and whom we pursue and seize through the Ages. Then, descending a step farther, avatara, He is known to Himself not only as the universal Lord of the Lila, but as the individual, Narayana concealed in Nara, playing through him, different from him, one with him. Many Adwaitins of the Kaliyuga insist that God is a myth and only the Sad Atman is a reality, just as many Buddhists deny the Sad Atman as well and say that only the Asad is a reality, but if we know only the Sad Atman or only the Asad, if we follow after only the Nirguna or only the Saguna, if we only embrace Vasudeva-Krishna-Narayan, then we know not the Eternal except in an aspect and we fall under the censure of the Upanishad, dabhrām evapi twam vettha Brahmano rupam. We must shut

our eyes upon nothing, renounce nothing as absolutely false or illusive if we would know the All and be perfectly liberated. Only when we gaze we must gaze aright and see God in all things, not things as aught but God. Our fathers did not commit the error of sectarianism or a partial philosophy. They were mighty as Gods or Titans, not like the men of the Kali Yuga who shout and quarrel over their imperfect philosophies and little bounded religions; their souls were spacious enough to take in all truth for their portion.

In this Brahman then, on the sure foundation of this free and disinterested Atman, in the joy and infinity of this Lila consciousness manifests its sevenfold nature and its sevenfold regions. We are already aware in our human progress of the three lower levels of consciousness; the vyahritis of the Veda, Bhur, Bhuvar and Swar, planes in which we wander in the shadow of the Ajnanam lighted by a broken sunlight from above, erring under the control of Avidya who separated from her eternal companion and playmate Vidya and at strife with that glorious friend and helper stumbles about among the appearances of the world, ourselves always dissatisfied, always struggling, always seeking a good that we cannot grasp and crying out at the end, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity & vexation of spirit." But in that too we cannot rest; for God condemns us to our own good and spurs us on ever to seek until we find the missing element [that] can complete the incompleteness of our existence. Meanwhile the soul imagining itself irrevocably bound, contents itself with the things of its prisonhouse and wears its chains as ornaments or else, touched by God and uplifted, delights to struggle upward to freedom. For above the three Vyahritis is the fourth, Mahas, where the soul is one with God, yet separate, free, yet consciously plays with bondage,— Mahas, the link between the Parardha and Aparardha, pouring the glory of the higher hemisphere into the lower,— Mahas which we enjoy and possess in the golden ages of our humanity, love and seek for in the iron. For to Mahas we rise, through Mahas we aspire to the perfect oneness of Sacchidananda.

Brahman at first becomes involved in gross matter,— he

becomes or seems to become Annam, the conscious principle of Bhu. In pure Annam consciousness is involved, implicit, latent; from annam it has to develop or manifest the other six principles and this development or manifestation is the evolution of the modern Jadavadins. It develops them here, under the law of the universal harmony, in annam and the Jadavadins perceiving this principle of evolution, imagine not unnaturally that it is annam which is evolving and suppose the other six, even Mind, to be mere changes and movements of annam. At first prana or vitality which is latent in the metal, manifests in the tree; then mind which is latent in the tree manifests in the animal, first as chitta or mere receptive consciousness, then as manas or sensational consciousness without any self-conscious centre of individuality, then as the discriminatory faculty or buddhi with its companion Ahankara, egoism, the self-conscious principle. In the animals reason is awake, but elementary and has to be largely replaced by vijnanam, intuitive faculty manifesting not in intellect but in sensational & vital consciousness. Then in man discriminative reason takes the lead, for discriminative reason is the shadow of the vijnanam, the link between the animal and the god and it is not till a fit body is formed for the works of reason that the spiritual evolution begins and the development of the higher states of consciousness is possible. Man is that fit body, sukritam eva, well indeed and beautifully made as a habitation for the gods. His business is to raise the animal in him and develop beyond manomaya being, transcending & subordinating even its crown and glory which he considers his peculiar privilege, the discriminative and imaginative reason. For he has to develop vijnanam or ideal thought on which all Veda is based, he has to develop Ananda, Chit and Sat, the higher hemisphere of cosmic consciousness. In the present stage of his evolution he can only develop consciously as far as Ananda with Sat & Chit implicit in Ananda; to Chit & Sat proper he cannot arrive in his waking state, but only in the deep trance of Sushupta Samadhi, concentration of consciousness in a state of illuminated Sleep. He began his task as the supreme animal, Pashu, Vanara, Nrisingha, developing all these potentialities purely in the annamaya kosha

or physical sheath of his being in Annam & Prana; he went on as the mixed animal, first the Pishacha or scientific, curious animal, then the Pramatha or aesthetic, curious animal; and from these levels climbed to the condition of the Rakshasa or animal-god who satisfies egoism through his sensational and emotional impulses; he is now the Asura, Titan or demi-god satisfying in the heart & buddhi his emotional and intellectual egoism. He has eventually to become the whole god; he must learn to satisfy himself without egoism through ideal knowledge and blissful spirituality. But always being in the annamaya world, in Bhu, resting always on the Anna Atma, he is compelled to base himself on the body even when rising above the body. The individual may leave the body, but the race has to keep it; it has not to leave the animal in humanity behind in its progress but to raise the animal until it is divine. It is his first business therefore to be conscious not only in the physical sheaths of the Annakosha and Pranakosha,—this he normally is,—but in the mental sheath or manahkosha, and there in his normal condition he is only partially active. Once awake in the mental body, he has to extend his waking consciousness,—whoever can so far develop,—into the Vijnana and Anandakoshas.

What are these bodies and these Atmas? The Vedantins of old recognised that divine consciousness on whatever level always creates for itself through Prakriti or Chit, its active creative knowledge, a world to live in & a body for its habitation in the world, and in that world and in that body manifests as a part of the Atman reflecting their conditions. If therefore there are seven distinct states of consciousness, there must equally be seven conditions of the Atman, seven distinct worlds with their denizens and seven kinds of bodies. These seven states are Annam, Prana, Manas, Vijnanam, Ananda, Chit and Sat; these seven worlds are Bhuloka, Bhuvarloka, Swarloka, Maharloka, Janaloka, Tapoloka and Satyaloka; these seven conditions of the Atman are the Visva Atma, Prana Atma, Buddha Atma, Mahan Atma, Mahajana Atma, Chaitanya Atma and Satya Atma; these seven bodies are the Annakosha, Pranakosha, Manahkosha, Vijnanakosha, Anandakosha, Chitkosha and Satkosha. In each

world the denizens, although living predominatingly in the body proper to their own element of conscious existence, also live latently or consciously in the other six, and all have therefore seven bodies, each in communication with its proper plane or world & containing its proper principle of consciousness. Man, living here in the Bhu, has, he too, his seven bodies. He has for instance the Manahkosa containing his pure mental consciousness and, although mind can & does play in the other sheaths, it can only be by becoming awake & living in his mental body as well as his physical that he can realise the utmost potentialities of pure mental activity. It is because he has these other bodies, that he can, if he will, communicate with the other worlds and have relations with the Gods.

This then is the arrangement of the created universe, and the world we live in is its base, not only earth but all these sidereal systems, Bhuloka, the material universe, our present inheritance. Being the lowest of the Aparardha worlds, it is according to a common action of God's love and wisdom, at once the least and the most privileged, the least privileged because here alone grief and pain are utterly felt, here alone is the whole pain and struggle of evolution,—the most privileged because here alone is the evolution eventually complete in all the potentiality of its parts and heaven perfectly realised in a sevenfold blissfulness. Above us are the six other worlds, homes of the gods who change not ever, except by entering human bodies. First, there is Bhuvar, the Pranamaya world, where Prana is at its height, vitality is stupendous, grief and pain are felt but enjoyed, sensuous enjoyment is perfect and prolonged. Then there is Swar, lower & higher, Swarga and Chandraloka, where Indra and the greater gods reside, manas is at its height, sensation, emotion, aesthetic pleasure and intellectual joy are of a mighty intensity, grief and pain are not felt except as another kind of pleasure and rapture, mental enjoyment is perfect and prolonged. Above there is Mahas or Suryaloka where vijnanam is at its height, intuitive ideal perception, inspiration & revelation are the normal processes of knowledge and the joys of ideal and direct knowledge unmixed with falsehood and error are perfect and

prolonged. It is this state of consciousness which is so often called in the Veda, satyam, ritam, brihat and technically termed Bhuma, Mahas or Mahat, the abundant, full or mighty. These are the worlds of the lower hemisphere and of these states of consciousness we can have some conception, we can imagine and even realise or almost realise the condition of the beings who reside in these worlds, to the very highest. But what of the three supreme states of consciousness? what of the three worlds of the higher hemisphere? It is more difficult to conceive of them or to realise what man himself will be or is when he develops them—is, for even now by Yoga he can develop the Ananda. Still, because, debarred though we are from the actual tread of these infinite heavens, we can experience them indirectly and as conditioned by our existence on these lower levels, therefore some idea of them, not altogether inadequate, may be formed by those of us who have a touch of the ideal faculty.

[5]

[RV I.1.1]

First Mandala

First Hymn

Madhuchchhanda Vaisvamitra's Hymn to Agni written in the Gayatri metre in which the first verse runs in the devabhasha,

“Agnim île puro hitam Yajnasya devam ritvijam,
hotaram ratnadhatamam”

and in English,

“Agni I adore, who stands before the Lord, the god who
seeth Truth, the warrior, strong disposer of delight.”

So the Rigveda begins with an invocation to Agni, with the adoration of the pure, mighty and brilliant God. “Agni (he who excels and is mighty),” cries the Seer, “him I adore.” Why

Agni before all the other gods? Because it is he that stands before Yajna, the Divine Master of things; because he is the god whose burning eyes can gaze straight at Truth, at the satyam, the vijnanam, which is the Seer's own aim and desire and on which all Veda is based; because he is the warrior who wars down and removes all the crooked attractions of ignorance and limitation (asmajjuhuranam eno) that stand persistently in the way of the Yogin; because as the vehicle of Tapas, the pure divine superconscious energy which flows from the concealed higher hemisphere of existence, (avyaktam, parardha), he more than any develops and arranges Ananda, the divine delight. This is the signification of the verse.

Who is this Yajna and what is this Agni? Yajna, the Master of the Universe, is the universal living Intelligence who possesses and controls His world; Yajna is God. Agni also is a living intelligence that has gone forth, is *srishta*, from that Personality to do His work and represent His power; Agni is a god. The material sense sees neither God nor gods, neither Yajna nor Agni; it sees only the elements and the formations of the elements, material appearances and the movements in or of those appearances. It does not see Agni, it sees a fire; it does not see God, it sees the earth green and the sun flaming in heaven and is aware of the wind that blows and the waters that roll. So too it sees the body or appearance of a man, not the man himself; it sees the look or the gesture, but of the thought behind look or gesture it is not aware. Yet the man exists in the body and thought exists in the look or the gesture. So too Agni exists in the fire and God exists in the world. They also live outside of as well as in the fire and outside of as well as in the world.

How do they live in the fire or in the world? As the man lives in his body and as thought lives in the look or the gesture. The body is not the man in himself and the gesture is not the thought in itself; it is only the man in manifestation or the thought in manifestation. So too the fire is not Agni in himself but Agni in manifestation and the world is not God in Himself but God in manifestation. The man is not manifested only by his body, but also and much more perfectly by his work and

action, thought is not manifested only by look and gesture, but also and much more perfectly by action and speech. So too, Agni is not manifested only by fire, but also and much more perfectly by all workings in the world,— subtle as well as gross material,— of the principle of heat and brilliance and force; God is not manifested only by this material world, but also and much more perfectly by all movements and harmonies of the action of consciousness supporting and informing material appearances.

What then is Yajna in Himself and what is Agni in himself? Yajna is Being, Awareness and Bliss; He is Sat, with Chit and Ananda, because Chit & Ananda are inevitable in Sat. When in His Being, Awareness and Bliss He conceals guna or quality, He is nirguna Sat, impersonal being with Awareness and Bliss either gathered up in Himself & passive, they nivritta, He also nivritta or working as a detached activity in His impersonal existence, they pravritta, He nivritta. Then He should not be called Yajna, because He is then aware of himself as the Watcher and not as the Lord of activity. But when in His being, He manifests guna or quality He is saguna Sat, personal being. Even then He may be nivritta, not related to His active awareness and bliss except as a Watcher of their detached activity; but He may also by His Shakti enter into their activity and possess and inform His universe (pravishya, adhisthita), He pravritta, they pravritta. It is then that He knows Himself as the Lord and is properly called Yajna. Not only is He called Yajna, but all action is called Yajna and Yoga, by which alone the process of any action is possible, is also called Yajna. The material sacrifice of action is only one form of Yajna, which, when man began to grow again material, took first a primary and then a unique importance and for the mass of men stood for all action and all Yajna. But the Lord is the master of all our actions; for Him they are, to Him they are devoted, with or without knowledge (avidhipurvakam) we are always offering our works to their Creator. Every action is therefore an offering to Him and the world is the altar of our lifelong session of sacrifice. In this worldwide karmakanda the mantras of the Veda are the teachers of right action (ritam) and it is therefore that the Veda speaks of Him as Yajna and not by another name.

This Yajna, who is the Saguna Sat, does not do works Himself, (that is by Sat), but He works in Himself, in Sat, by His power of Chit,— by His Awareness. It is because He becomes aware of things in Himself by some process of Chit that things are created, brought out, that is to say, srishta from His all-containing non-manifest Being into His manifest Self. Power & awareness, Chit and Shakti are one, and though we speak for convenience' sake of the Power of Chit, & call it Chichchhakti, yet the expression should really be understood not as the Power of Chit, but as Chit that is Power. All awareness is power and all power conceals awareness. When Chit that is Power begins to work, then She manifests Herself as kinetic force, Tapas, and makes it the basis of all activity. For because all power is Chit subjectively, therefore all power is objectively attended with light; but there are different kinds of light, because there are different manifestations of Chit. Seven rays have cast out this apparent world from the Eternal Luminousness which dwells like a Sun of ultimate being beyond its final annihilation, adityavat tamasah parastat, and by these seven rays in their subjectivity the subjective world and by these seven rays in their objectivity the phenomenal world is manifested. Sat, chit, ananda, vijnanam, manas, prana, annam are the sevenfold subjectivity of the Jyotirmaya Brahman. Prakasha, agni, vidyut, jyoti, tejas, dosha and chhaya are His sevenfold objectivity. Agni is the Master of the vehicle of Tapas. What is this vehicle of Tapas of which Agni is the master? It is fiery light. Its Master is known by the name of his kingdom. Strength, heat, brilliance, purity, mastery of knowledge and impartiality are his attributes. He is Yajna manifest as the Master of the light of Tapas, through whom all kinetic energy of consciousness, thought, feeling or action is manifested in this world which Yajna has made out of His own being. It is for this reason that he is said to stand before Yajna. He or vidyut or Surya full of him is the blaze of light in which the Yogins see God with the divine vision. He is the instrument of that universal activity in which Yajna at once reveals and conceals His being.

Agni is a god—He is of the devas, the shining ones, the

Masters of light — the great cosmic gamesters, the lesser lords of the Lila, of which Yajna is Maheswara, the one Almighty Lord. He is free and unbound or binds himself only in play. He is inherently pure and he is not touched nor soiled by the impurities on which he feeds. He enjoys the play of good & evil and leads, raises or forces the evil towards goodness. He burns in order to purify. He destroys in order to save. When the body of the sadhak is burned up with the heat of the tapas, it is Agni that is roaring and devouring and burning up in him the impurity and the obstructions. He is a dreadful, mighty, blissful, merciless and loving God, the kind and fierce helper of all who take refuge in his friendship.

Knowledge was born to Agni with his birth — therefore he is called jatavedas.

[6]

[RV I.1]

1. अग्निमीळे पुरोहितं यज्ञस्य देवमृत्विजम् । होतारं रत्नधातमम् ॥

अग्निम् । The primitive root अ, to be, when combined with certain consonants क्, ग्, ज्, र्, contracted a sense of existence in the superlative, क् giving more the sense of height & intensity, ग् of strength, solidity or quantity, ज्, र्, of rapidity, vigour, activity, command. All strong action or quality could be denoted by अग्, as in अग्रः, Gr. ἄκρος, topmost, first, foremost; ἄγω, ago, I lead, act; ἀγαθός, good, brave; ἄγαν, excessive; names like Agis, Agamemnon, Agamedes (cf Sanscrit अजः, अजमीढः); ἀγλαός, brilliant; etc. In Sanscrit the root अर् is much preferred to the guttural combination. There can be no doubt, however, that अग् in अग्निः meant strong, brilliant, forceful. Nasalised, we have it in अंगति fire (also a conveyance, cf अग्नि & S. अंग्), अंगारः a live coal, अंग् to stir, move; and in अंगिरः and अगस्ति, — the former term often applied to Agni. There was another signification, to cling, embrace, love, which we find in the Greek

ἀγάπη, love, ἀγανός, tender, gentle, charming, which seems to have been another meaning of अगिरः, loving, and appears in the mode of address अंग, in अंकः, अंगम् etc, & in अनंग the god of love. Agni is the bright and strong, the bright god of fire, the strong, burning god of Tapas, heat and force.

ईळे। The root is इल् or ईल्, ल् being a modification which now survives only in the Southern Aryan tongues, Marathi, Tamil etc. इल् is itself a secondary root from इ to go, move, go after, wish for, desire, go to, reach, embrace, possess, control (cf ईह्, ईच्छा, ईशा). The liquid increases the closeness of contact, steadiness of action, or soft intensity of feeling. ईल् is to love, woo, desire, adore, embrace, press upon physically or mentally urge, crowd. The meaning, praise, is of later development from the sense of wooing or adoration. In words like इला, the earth, इल् has the original sense of motion. I adore or desire, or I praise will equally fit the first line, but in view of the second, where the coincident root ईङ् means obviously desirable or adorable, not praiseworthy, the more primitive meaning must be preferred.

पुरोहितं। Not Purohit, but placed in front. Unless we take Yajna in the sense of sacrifice, there is no need to take पुरोहितम् in any but its original and primitive sense. Agni may be described as the Purohita or representative of the gods in the sacrifice, he is in no sense a sacrificer at the ceremony, in no sense either Purohit or Ritwik. He is the eater of the sacrifice not its priest. Even if Yajna is taken to mean sacrifice, Agni cannot rightly be called its priest, and पुरोहितम् will still have to mean standing in front, but with the idea of the Gods supplied and the genitive यज्ञस्य understood of general relation without any idea of possession, “who stands forth for the gods at the sacrifice”. But the language of the Vedas is always precise and sufficient and no such omission of a word need be supplied.

यज्ञस्य। यज्ञ is acknowledged to be a name for Vishnu, for the Supreme Lord, and the Supreme is not a sacrifice. We must find some other meaning for यज्ञ in the etymology of the word. We find the kindred यमः which means he who controls, governs,

as in नियन्ता and other members of the य family of roots. The sense of force put forth to reach, obtain or control is a common significance in this group. “Restraint” is a sense of the word यः, “obtaining” of या; “effort, control, mastery” is found in यत्, यतः, यतिः, यत्र, यन्ता, यन्त्र्, यम्, यमः (नियमः, संयमः), यामः; ययी is a name of Shiva; यज्ञः itself is a name of Agni, the master of तपः or force in action and exertion; यशः is fame, glory, beauty, wealth,—in Bengali, success, attainment, probably a survival of its original sense; in यविष्ट youngest, from a lost यवः, not lost to the Veda, युवन् youth etc, & in यव barley, यवसः grass, the root sense is “strong, flourishing, vigorous”; यस्, यासः (आयासः, प्रयासः) bring us back to the idea of effort and labour. These significations arise [as] developments from the sense of “going”, (combined with effort or an original impetus), with its common, almost invariable development of going after, seeking, striving, desiring, (या, याच्), also reaching, meeting, mixing, acquiring, joining, embracing, enjoying (यु, युज्, योगः, यामी, योषा, युध, योनि) and the sense of reaching to, joining to or handing, from which we have the idea of giving, यच्छ्, यज् in the sense of sacrifice, cf याजयति. The sense of strong one, master, controller, lord is established for यज्ञः by the application to Vishnu and Agni, continued at a time when the etymological justification had been lost; the sense of sacrifice is established by the universal later use. But it is also capable of the same senses as योगः, यत्र or the lost यत् from which we have यतिः, यतः etc; it could mean effort, action, tapasya, Yoga; this sense is the basis of the idea attached to the word यज्ञः in the Gita and of the meaning of adhiyajna there as the One in whom all action, tapasya and Yoga rest and to whom they are consciously or unconsciously devoted. The modern form of the Gita is there trying to assimilate an older form in which यज्ञः had its natural meaning,—Yoga, action, tapasya.

देवम्। The root दिव्, दीव् commonly means either “to shine” or “to play”. It is the former sense that gives us देवः, the shining ones, referring to the luminous tejomaya bodies proper to the inhabitants of the Swarloka where tejah is the primary element

in all forms. देव by detrition of the व gives Latin deus and Greek θεός; from the long root दीव we have divus and diva.

ऋत्विजम्। For a reason already alleged, this word need not & should not be taken in the modern sense. The modern derivation ऋतु & इज्, sacrificing in season, is a forced etymology, imposed after the word had contracted its modern meaning. The Ritwik was not a sacrificer in season any more than the Purohit, Hota, Brahma or Adhwaryu. The word meant originally “seer or knower of the truth, the right, the law, the Ritam”, and in this sense it was applied to the priest whose duty it was to see that everything was done according to the fixed rule and rationale of the sacrifice. But originally it had no such narrow significance. It meant “the seer of the ritam” and as applied to Agni it had the same sense as “jatavedah”, he to whom the Veda or direct vision of truth has appeared,—for *jata* in this word has nothing to do with birth. Even if we take the etymology to be ऋतु + इज्, this sense is perfectly possible, ऋतु will then be used in its original sense of established truth, ascertained thought, fixed law (from which the sense of “proper time, season” arose) and इज् in the sense “obtain, acquire, know”, common to the groups of roots which have the sense of motion towards. I suggest, however, that the combination is ऋत् truth, and विज् to see perfectly or decisively. The combination is not contrary to the old laws of sandhi, eg वर्त् + म = वर्त्म, पत् + नी = पत्नी etc. The liquid and nasal consonants did not originally call for the modification of the preceding hard consonant in composition.

The root ऋत् contracts the sense of truth from the original force of ऋ to go, move, go to, to reach, find, know, think, fix. We find in Sanscrit ऋजु, fixed, straight, honest; ऋत्, right, proper, true; ऋतम्, rule, law, truth, right; ऋतु, a fixed time, season, period, a fixed order or rule; ऋभु, ऋच्य, wise, skilful; ऋषि, thinker, knower, sage; ऋशु, wise. In Latin we have reor, I think, judge; ratus, thought, fixed, settled, valid; ratio, rule, method, reason, view, principle; also calculation, account etc; rectus, straight, right; regula, a rule.

The root विज् usually means an intense state of existence,

as in Latin *vigor*, strength, vigour; *vigere*, to flourish; cf *vireo*, to flourish, be green, *vir*, a hero, S. वीरः from a brother root; S. विज् to be excited (उद्देगः), वेगः speed, intensity; but it has other meanings, eg to discriminate, decide, judge. The primary वि means to appear, burst out, be divulged, to split open, separate, and, transitively, to see, know, discriminate, separate, divulge, expose, etc. A great regiment of words in Tamil & a few in Latin bear evidence to this sense, especially the Tamil for eye वीटி and the root वीनं with its numerous derivatives; a number of words meaning open, public, sale, auction, publication etc; Latin *vile*, common, cheap; *villa*, open place, country place, county seat; *vendo*, I sell; *venalis*, to be sold; but especially *video*, I see. In Sanscrit we have विद् to know; विज् to separate, discriminate; विच् in the same sense; वि itself always implying in some form division or separation; विना, except, without, from the same sense; विष् and विप्र a wise man, seer; आविर् manifest; विल् to divide, break, & in the causal form to send forth, throw out (originally, to divulge, manifest); विलम् (विलम्) a hole, fissure; विश् to enter in, penetrate; विष् to separate, disjoin; वी to be born or produced, appear; shine, produce; वीपा lightning; वियत् the open sky; and others. विज् may therefore mean either to see, or to separate and discriminate.

होतारम्। The word होता again means a sacrificial priest, and it is curious, if these senses are to be taken, that three different words meaning different kinds of sacrificial priests, should be applied to Agni in the course of a short line composed of eight words and not one with any definite appropriateness either to Agni himself or to the context. We must seek a more appropriate meaning.

The root हु like all हु roots must have had originally the sense of “to use force violently or aggressively, to come into aggressive contact, to throw, throw out, strike, kill”. This sense we find in हा to throw away, abandon; हत् from ह, slain, killed; हन् to strike, injure, kill; हिस्; हिंसा injury, slaughter; हेति: a weapon; हंसः a swan (one who flies flapping the wings); हठः violence, force, rapine; हद् to discharge (excrement), (cf Bengali শাঙা); हनुः

weapon, disease, death, (Greek θάνατος, death, θνητός, mortal); हथः a blow, killing, death; हयः to be weary; हयः horse (galloper); हूः to seize, ravish; हरिः anything strong, swift, brilliant, bright coloured (cf हरिणः, हरितः); हल् to plough, move strongly (we find traces of the idea of moving strongly in the vernaculars, cf हिल्, हिलोल, हल्); हस् to ridicule, originally to insult, slight, humiliate; cf हिण्डः to disregard, slight; हि to cast, shoot; हिङ्कः to hurt, injure, kill; हुण्डः a tiger; हुल् to injure, kill; हुडः a ram (butter, fighter); हेडः, हेल् to slight; हेट् to vex, hurt; होडः a robber; होइ, हौइ to slight; हुः to rob, take away; ह्रस् to waste, diminish; ह्राद् & ह्रेष् to sound loudly, roar, neigh; ह्री to be put to shame. So insistent are these senses of this violent root that it is impossible to believe that हु alone, unlike its secondary roots, हुण्डः, हुडः & हुल्, should not have shared in them. As a matter of fact we find that the sense of sacrifice comes from the idea of throwing; to throw in the fire, hence to sacrifice. We have also the sense of calling, हवः a cry, call; ह्वे to call, where the idea is of the violent throwing out of the sound from the throat (cf ह्राद्, ह्रेष्, हेष् etc) and finally आहवः, battle. It is in this word आहवः that we get the key to the ancient sense of हु to slay, strike, fight. If it had this sense in the time of the Veda we may take होता as slayer, fighter, हवः as meaning both battle & cry, call, होत्रं as war, battle. On this supposition Agni hota is the slayer, the warrior, the smiter of the foe.

रत्नधातमम्। Again we have a word we cannot take in its modern sense. रत्न in the sense of jewel comes from the idea of glittering, coruscating which is an original sense of the root र & its derivatives. This root र & its brother root रा, meant originally to vibrate, to be intense in movement, contact, feeling, so to coruscate, glitter, break up, play, rush, shout, rejoice, feel ecstasy. We have रः in the sense of fire, heat, love, desire, speed; रा gold; रं brightness, lustre; रंह् to go swiftly; रंहतिः, रंहस् speed, impetuosity; रकः the sunstone, crystal or a hard shower; रक् to taste, (take delight of); रक्त painted, brilliantly coloured, impassioned, playful; रघु swift; रंगः colour, amusement, passion; रजतं silver; रजस् originally strength, swiftness, passion, force; the dancing of broken dust, etc, cf रद्, रन्ध्रं; रंज् to colour, be

enamoured, delighted; रट् to shout, call out; रणः (literally a charge), war, combat, ringing sound; रथः a chariot, a hero or fighter (महारथः, अतिरथः, अधिरथः where the sense is evidently a fighter and has nothing to do with chariot); ecstasy, delight; रभ् to clasp, embrace; start off, begin; रमस् impetuosity, vehemence, in Bengali, violent delight or ecstasy; cf S. रामस्यं delight, violence; रम् to play, rejoice, delight; रंभ् to bellow; रय् to stream, go; रश्मिः ray, beam; रस् to cry out, scream; taste, relish; रसः delight, taste, liquid, (from “to flow”). Cf also रागः, राधा, राम, रामा, रावः, रवः etc. The root रत् from which रत् may come (unless we compound र + त्, but this is contrary to the evidence of यत्रः, पत्री etc) is not found except in रात्रिः and रातिः where it is significant that राति means a friend, a gift, ready or generous, which may all have come from the sense of delight, play etc; रात्रिः & रजनी may also mean the time of enjoyment. We have too रतिः, delight, which is usually derived from रम्. In any case the evidence of the other roots gives as the most probable meanings of a root रत्, delight, light or vehemence of feeling, motion or action. In this passage the two first alone will enter naturally into the sense of the verse. Agni is addressed either as the giver of light, ritwij and jatavedas—for physically Agni is the disposer of light only through Surya—or as the giver of delight, because tapas is the basis of all ananda. But this metaphorical sense of “light” is a doubtful use and for other reasons as well, foreign to the etymological considerations, I prefer the sense of “delight” to the other and more obvious significance.

Translation.

Agni I desire, who stands before the Lord, the god who seeth truth,—the warrior, who disposeth utterly delight.

2. अग्निः पूर्वेभिः क्रष्णभिरीड्यो नूतनैरुत । स देवाँ एह वक्षति ॥

ईड्यो । ड and ल are often interchangeable in Sanskrit; cf हुड् & हुल्, हेड् and हेल्. There is no difference of force or use between इड् & इल्.

नूतनैर्। नु or नू is evidently an old Aryan word for “now” used both of time & logical sequence and in asking questions; this is evident from the adverbs formed from it — Sanscrit नु, Greek νῦ, Latin num, nunc. Hence नवः in the sense of new, lit. “belonging to now”, नवीन = तत्कालीन. न, नि, नु seem to have pointed out an immediate object; whence the Sanscrit नि of close relation, Lat. in, Gr. ἐν (from इ-नि, अ-नि, the इ and अ being expletive for the sake of more exact demonstration); also the use of नः to mean us, and of நாம், நம் in Tamil to mean I, us.

उत .. इद्।¹ In the old Aryan language अ, इ, उ were evidently used as demonstrative pronouns, इ being this here near me, अ this a little farther off, उ that. We have precisely this use in Tamil; அவன், இவன், உவன், the demonstrative pronouns where வ is euphonic & அன் honorific; so too அது, இது. The three are liberally used to define other pronouns and adverbs, eg अप्पोतु, इप्पोतु, etc. We have similarly in Sanscrit अयम्, इयम्, where य् is euphonic and अम् definitive (as in वयं, यूयं); अव, इव, अति, इति, अतः, इतः etc. We have in Latin the two forms ille and olle, to say nothing of the suggestions in aliquis etc; we have is, ea, id, for the ordinary demonstrative pronoun. अः, इः, उः appear to have been the masculine forms, अत्, इत्, उत् or अद्, इद्, उद् the neuter. These neuter forms were used latterly only as emphatic adverbs, prepositions or conjunctions. We find similarly अ, इ, उ used by themselves as emphatic particles, or compounded with the adverbial neuters as in इति, अति. We have in Sanscrit इत्, उत्, अति & इति; in Latin at, et, ad, ut, uti; in Greek εἴτι which is evidently the Sanscrit अति, in the sense of still, besides, “encore”. उत् here is emphatic with something of the sense “of course”. इत् corresponds to the later एव. स इत् = स एव. इत् is also found in इत्था, इदा, इदानीम्. इति is इत् further emphasised and used to mark off reported speech or to fill the place taken in English by inverted commas.

¹ When Sri Aurobindo wrote out the second verse above (evidently from memory), he initially substituted sa id deveṣu gacchati from the fourth verse for sa devān eha vakṣati. This paragraph on *uta* and *id* was written before the mistake was corrected. — Ed.

एह॑। The word is undoubtedly an adverb, but it is a question whether it is a mere variation of इह्, as एव or एवम् undoubtedly were variations of इव. There is another possible signification. I suggest that the root इह् was used in the ancient tongue to signify “strength, force”. That this sense of strength was inherent in the इ roots is evident from the Sanscrit इन्द्रः, इन् to invigorate, force, compel, इनः: able, mighty, lord, master, इम्य wealthy, opulent, rich, a king, इषः: full of sap or strength, इश् to rule, master, Greek ἵψι, ἵψιμος. एह॑ would be an adverb formed from इह् by gunation to एह॑ and the addition of अ either adverbially or as an accusative termination and would mean strongly, forcibly, with strength.

वक्षति। I take वक्ष् as a habituative or intensive form tertiary from वह् = वह् + स्, like रक्ष् from रह्, दक्ष् from दह्, जक्ष् from जस् & a lost जह् (जहकः, जहत्), नक्ष् from नस्. Agni ever bears up the gods with strength.

Translation.

Agni desirable to the seers of old no less than to those of today, mightily he beareth up the gods.

3. अग्निना रथिमश्वत् पोषमेव दिवे दिवे। यशसं वीरवत्तमम् ॥

रथिम्। We have seen that the र roots have a strong sense of swift motion. To the instances already alleged may be added री going, motion; रु to go, move; रंच् to hasten; रन्तु a way, road, river (cf रस्ता); रय् to go, move; रयः a current, river; speed, vehemence; रहस् swiftness; Gr. ῥέω, I flow; ῥόος, stream; ῥεῦμα, flow; Lat. rivus, a river. We have seen also that it bears the frequent sense of light and of delight. रथिः from रय् may mean either light, delight, motion or anything that moves, or from the old identification of substance with motion, it may mean matter, substance, wealth, force, substantial object. Compare the Latin res, thing, matter, affair. रथिः certainly has the sense of Matter in the Upanishad.

अश्वत्। Rt अश् to have, get, enjoy. Greek ἔχω. I have, hold.

एव। Literally “so”; here evidently used to mean, “so also, also, as well”.

वीरवत्तम्। The word वीर here is a noun adjectivised by the addition of वत्. There must therefore have been a noun वीरः meaning not only hero, strong man, but strength, like vis, viris, in Latin. See under ऋत्विज् in the first shloka. Another possible meaning of वीर would be manifest, intense, splendid, shining. See the same. In either case यशः means not fame but either mastery or strength. See under यज्ञः: ibid. We may translate it either strength most glorious or strongest, most vigorous mastery. The latter seems more probable.

Translation.

By Agni one getteth substance and increase too day by day,
yea, mightiest mastery.

4. अने यं यज्ञमध्वरं विश्वतः परिभूरसि । स इद् देवेषु गच्छति ॥

अध्वरम्। Not sacrifice, but an adjective from अध् a secondary root of अ to be. The sounds ध & व appear to have given an idea of weight, solidity and dullness, with which the ideas of dense matter or downward motion were easily associated. We have अव of descent. We have अधः, a formation from अध् by the addition of the nominal अस् used in the neuter adverbially; we have अधरः & अधमः, lower & lowest from some lost adjective अधः low; we have अध्वन् a path, originally perhaps a way of descent, a path down, but this is not certain as we have अट् to wander and there are other proofs of a sense of motion in अ roots. Given a word अध्व descent, as we have इत्वन् & इत्वरः formed from a lost इत्व, so we shall have अध्वन् & अध्वरः formed from this lost अध्व, & meaning descending or descended, lower. अध्व must also have been capable of the sense substantial or material being, like अन्नम् a kindred root, but अध्वर in the Veda evidently refers to more than the annamaya existence. It embraces the whole aparardha or lower hemisphere of existence believed in by the Vaidic thinkers. It is the opposite of उत्तरः.

गच्छति। In the original sense of moving, not of going towards a particular direction. Cf गा the moving earth, जगती etc.

Translation.

O Agni, the Lord below whom thou encompassest with thy being on every side, is the same that moveth in the gods.

5. अग्निर्होता कविक्रतुः सत्यश्चत्रश्वस्तमः । देवो देवेभिरागमत् ॥

कविक्रतुः: क्रतुः again has nothing to do with a sacrifice. It meant activity, mastery, strength, doing, action, or the adjectives of these significations. It also meant like केतुः: a word of the same root family Will or Force. Cf Greek χράτος, χρατερός, χραταιός, χρείστων (क्रतीयान्), χράτιστος. The Vedic शतक्रतुः does not mean Indra of a hundred sacrifices, but Indra of destroying strength. It is notable in how many cases the obsession of the idea of sacrifice has perverted the original sense of words. The perversion is beyond doubt. The only question is whether it was done before or after the composition of the Vedic hymns.

कविः: The root कृ from the initial sense of curve, hollow, took the derivative idea of containing, holding, knowing, or forming, constructing, writing, drawing etc (cf the similar association of ideas in the म् roots). We have, therefore, the double idea of a sage and a poet or artist, familiar throughout Sanscrit literature. But for कविः in this passage we must suppose the sense not of the knower, but of knowledge. The addition of the nominal इः had always this double utility of indicating the agent or the state or action. कविः means the comprehensive knowledge, the art or science of a subject. Cf कोविदः.

चित्रश्वः: श्वः from श्रु to hear may indicate either fame, Gr. κλύω, κλέος or knowledge gained by श्रुति. We must take it in the latter significance when it is applied in a poem where all the words and circumstances are designed to show the principal qualities and activities of the god Agni, the jataveda. Sruti is one of the three processes of ideal knowledge by which Veda is conveyed.

देवेभिः: देवो देवेभिरागमत् ॥ The third case used not to indicate the instrument, but the accompaniment.

Translation.

Agni, the warrior, the strong in knowledge, the true, the rich in revelation, has come a god with the gods.

6. यदंग दाशुषे त्वमग्ने भद्रं करिष्यसि । तवेत्तत्सत्यमंगिरः ॥

अंग्. From अग् to cling, embrace, love, nasalised. Originally “dear”, answering to the Greek φίλος or πέπων, it became a familiar style of address, “ὦ φίλε”, “ὦ πέπων”, and lost its original shade.

दाशुषे । This is a word of considerable importance. In the sacrificial interpretation of the Vedas it must mean a giver, sacrificer; in the religious interpretation it means an enemy, one who hurts or kills or desires to hurt or kill. Both significances are possible etymologically, both give a good sense in this verse. The ceremonial interpretation will run, “That thou wilt do good to the sacrificer, this is that truth of thee, O Agni Angiras”; the religious, “O beloved, that thou, O strong Agni, meanest to do good to him that would hurt thee, this is that truth in thee, O lord of might & love.” *Satyam* refers us back to the “satya” in the last shloka and indicates like every other epithet there used the truth to the right nature of things, the ritam, in the vijnana, the ideal or spiritual plane of existence, where hatred ceases and evil ceases, because these are asatyam, perversions and misunderstandings of the play of God in the universe.

अंगिरः । When applied to Agni, this epithet means etymologically the brilliant or mighty, like अग्निः itself, but there is an unmistakable allusion here to the other significance of “loving, tender, attached”, deduced from अग् to love. In अनंग, the other notable Sanscrit word denoting this sense of अंग्, the अन् is obviously intensive or reduplicative, not privative. Cf अनर्च from अर्च् etc for reduplication; दीदिविः etc for its intensive force. When the idea of the true Nirukta was lost, the false idea of “bodiless” was conveyed into this name of Kamadeva and the story of the Kumarasambhava brought in to explain so inapt an epithet.

Translation.

That thou, O beloved, O strong Agni, meanest to do good to him that would hurt thee, this is that truth of thee, O lord of might and love.

7. उप त्वाग्ने दिवे दिवे दोषावस्तर्धिया वयम् । नमो भरन्त एमसि ॥

उप । The preposition expresses relation or subjection.

दोषावस् । दोषा is twilight or darkness; अवः, protector.

तर् । An old adverb still preserved in the compound form तह्यि and the Mahratti तर्. It seems here to have the force of “if”.

धिया । Used throughout the Veda of the Buddhi, the discerning reason. The reference in this line is to the buddhiyoga and yogic atmasamarpanam enjoined afterwards in the Gita.

नमो । Rt नम् to bend, submit. नमो means submission or obeisance (cf Grk. νόμος, rule, law, custom, that to which one is subject). But भरन्तः from the root भृ does not mean here to fill, but is used in the older sense of to bear (cf भारः, Greek φέρω, Lat. fero). We may therefore more appropriately take नमो in the active sense of that which bends, controls; as in the Greek νόμος,—law, rule, mastery. The participle here used as a verbal adjective dispenses with the necessity of a finite verb.

एमसि । We have seen that the इ roots develop the idea of strength; this sense is particularly appropriate to the combination with म् which means limit, extreme; cf Latin imus, originally extreme, farthest, afterwards lowest. एमसि means, on this supposition, thou growest to thy full or extreme strength.

Translation.

O Agni who protectest us in the darkness day by day, if under thee we bear by the discerning mind the law of thy full control, then growest thou to thy perfect strength.

8. राजन्तमध्वराणां गोपामृतस्य दीदिविम् । वर्धमानं स्वे दमे ॥

राजन्तम् । Either shining, brilliant or ruling, governing. In

connection with अध्वराणाम् we must take it in the latter sense, which is, besides, especially appropriate after the नमो भरन्तः of the last line.

अध्वराणाम्। of all things here below.

गोप। Protector, from गुप् to embrace, shelter, protect. There can be no doubt that this is the significance. The introduction of a vocative, however, is out of place in a series of accusatives. I suggest that गोप is an old form of the accusative preserved by tradition. That there was such an accusative form appears from the Greek γύψ, γύπα etc, where there is no trace of a terminal m. The nominative then would be not गोपः but गोप्.

दीदिविम्। A strong reduplicated form from दिव् to shine, meaning tejas, force, energy, brilliance, splendour. There is a doubt here as to the relation of अमृतस्य. If it is with गोप, it must be taken to mean nectar or immortality and Agni is the protector of the amrita in the body or of the immortality of the body; if with दीदिविम्, it must mean the Immortal, God, and Agni is a splendid energy of the Immortal. The general sense of the verse will be the same, since अमृतस्य दीदिविम् in the latter interpretation explains how Agni has the force to be the protector of all creatures here below.

दमे। house, home, territory. Greek δόμος house; cf also δῆμος people or deme. The root is दम् to master, conquer, own, from which we have the Greek δημῶες (दमायाः), servants, δέμας (दमस्), body, δάμαρ, δάμαρτος, wife (दमस्), δῆμος, territory or people conquered or owned, the Latin domus, house, dominus, master. In all probability दमः, δόμος, domus, originally meant the people of the household, the slaves etc, or the whole family as subject to the master, and was afterwards transferred to the house itself.

Translation.

Thee, the ruler and protector of all creatures here below, a splendour of the Immortal increasing in its home.

9. स नः पितेव सूनवेऽग्ने सूपायनो भव । सचस्वा नः स्वस्तये ॥

स has the force of therefore and sums up the hymn, but with special reference to the last line.

सूपायनो । Rt इ to go and उप to, with the idea of subjection or inferiority; easy to approach.

सचस्व । Cleave, in the ordinary sense of the root.

Translation.

Therefore be thou easy of approach to us as a father to his child, cleave to us for our bliss.

[7]

[RV I.1]

Rigveda.

Mandala I, Hymns of Madhuchchhandá Vaisvámitra.

I Hymn to Agni

1. Agni I adore, the priest who stands forward for the sacrifice, the god who acts in the truth of things, the giver of the oblation who disposes utterly delight.

2. Agni adored by the ancient seers is adorable still to the new, for he brings here the gods.

3. By Agni one gets day by day energy & increase victorious and full of force.

4. O Agni, whatsoever material sacrifice thou encompassest with thy being on every side, that goes to the gods.

5. Agni, he that offers the oblation, whose strength is in wisdom, the true, the rich in various inspiration, comes a god with the gods.

6. That thou, O Agni, wilt surely bring about good for the giver, that is the truth of thee, O lord of love.

7. To thee, O Agni, day by day, in darkness and in light we come in our minds bearing our submission,—

8. To thee, who rulest over all below, guardian of immortality, a brilliance increasing in its home.

9. Therefore do thou be easy of approach to us as a father to his child, cleave to us for our weal.

ऋत्विजं	ऋतु = law, truth, fixed arrangement, season.
रयिः	motion; so energy, matter, wealth. Cf Prasna Upanishad.
पोष	more probably noun than adjective.
वीर	in the Veda means 1. a hero. 2. force, strength.
यज्ञमध्वरं	3. manifest, vigorous, in full force, ví to open. a passage conclusive showing that adhwara does not mean sacrifice except by transition from an earlier meaning.
कवि	one of the passages which show that कवि like ऋषि, सूर etc, is used of knowledge as well as of the knower. Another possible meaning would be “who is the strength of the seer or the strength of Wisdom”.
चित्रश्रवस्तमः	श्रवः = inspired knowledge, the result of the vijnanamaya process of sruti; coming with कवि & सत्य it cannot mean fame. Cf राजानो अमृतस्य in a hymn of Kakshivan Dairghatamasa.
गोपामृतस्य	
सचस्व	सच् means 1. to cling. 2. to be strong.

[8]

[RV I.1.1–5]

Rig Veda, First Mandala

Notes.

1. अग्निं । ईळे । पुरोहितं । यज्ञस्य । देवं । ऋत्विजं । होतारं । रत्नधातमं ॥

ईळे. To praise, in the ritualistic sense; but ईङ् is a secondary

root of इ॒ and means to seek, go towards, attain, desire, adore, pray to, ask for (cf मातरमन्नमैद्व). The former senses have been lost and only “to desire”, “pray” or “ask for” are left in later Sanskrit; but the other senses must have existed, as the idea of desiring, asking is never a primary sense of any root, but derived figuratively from the physical sense “to go, seek, approach”. We may therefore render इ॒ either “seek”, “desire”, “adore” or “pray to”.

पुरोहितं. Sayana, “Purohit”, or else “placed in the front of the sacrifice as the Ahavaniya fire”. The Purohita of the Veda is the representative power in the sacrifice who stands in front of the consciousness and the action and conducts it. This is always the force of the “placing in front” which is so common an idea in the hymns. Normally this place belongs to Agni who leads the sacrifice.

देवं. Sy. दानादिगुणयुक्तं. Sayana’s dealing with the word देव is peculiar; sometimes he renders it simply “god”, sometimes he gives it some root value, दान, देवन, sometimes he makes it mean the priest. There is not a single passage in the Veda where the ordinary sense “god”, “divine being” does not give a clear and sufficient & the best sense. No doubt, the Vedic poets never left out of sight its root meaning; the gods are the Shining Ones, the Lords of Light as are the Dasyus the Dark or Black Ones, the sons of Darkness.

ऋत्विजं. “He who sacrifices at the right season” is the outward or ritualistic sense; but ऋतु in the Veda, as we shall see, is the order of the truth, its arranged law, time, circumstance. Agni is the representative priest who sacrifices according to the law, order, season of the Ritam.

होतारं. Sy. “because he utters the Mantra” and he quotes अहं होता स्तौमि; but he renders it sometimes आह्राता, sometimes होमनिष्पादकः, sometimes gives us the choice. Undoubtedly होता is the priest of the oblation, who gives the offering, हूँ to offer, and not हूँ to call. The hymn was an attendant circumstance of the offering, therefore the invocation or praise might also fall to

the part of the होता; but in the system of the Rigveda the proper name for the reciter of the Mantra is ब्रह्मा. Agni is the Hotri, Brihaspati the Brahma.

रत्. Sy. यागफलरूपाणां रत्नानामतिशयेन धारयितारं पोषयितारं वा.
धा to hold and धा to nourish (cf धात्री nurse). But in other passages he takes रत् = रमणीयं धनं which shows that he took it to mean literally “that which is delightful” and made it = wealth, as he makes द्युम्भं = “that which is shining” and renders it “wealth”. We need not follow him. रत् means “delight” or Ananda (cf रम्, रतिः, रण्, रण्व, राध्, रंज् etc) just as द्युम्भं means “light”. धा is to hold or else to place.

Ritualistic sense

I praise Agni the Purohit (or, who is set in front) of the sacrifice, the god (or, bountiful), the Ritwik, the Hota who holds very much wealth.

Psychological

I seek the God-Will, the priest set in front of our sacrifice, the divine offerer who sacrifices in the order of the truth, who disposes utterly the delight.

2. अग्निः । पूर्वेभिः । क्रषिभिः । ईङ्यः । नूतनैः । उत । स । देवाँ । इह । वक्षति॥

क्रषिः: Lit. “seeker, attainer” so “knower” from क्रष् to go.

इह देवाँ — the divine powers into the mortal life and mortal being.

वक्षति. वह् + स् + ति. This स seems to have been either frequentative in force, “he constantly or habitually bears”, or intensive, “he entirely bears”, or desiderative, “he wills or intends to bear”. From the latter sense we have the use of स for the future, cf S. नी, नेष्यामि, Greek luo, I loose, luso, I shall loose, and English, I *will* go, where the desiderative will = wish, intend, has acquired the sense of a simple future.

“The God-Will is desirable as to the ancient sages, so to the new, for 'tis he that bringeth here the gods.”

3. अग्निना । रयिं । अश्वत् । पोषं । एव । दिवे । दिवे । यशसं । वीरवत्तमं॥

अश्वत्. Sy. प्राप्नोति—but the form gives a certain semi-imperative sense or the idea of a rule of action or law of occurrence. “He shall attain.” अश्, to possess, have, obtain, enjoy — Gr. echo, I have.

यशसं. Sy. दानादिना यशोयुक्तं — so famous; but “a famous and man-fullest wealth” seems an absurd way of talking. यश् is literally to go, strive towards, attain; here it means success, fame; also from another sense “to shine” = splendour. It is connected in sense with या, यत्, यस्. We have in the Veda रयि, wealth or felicity, often described as expansive, pervading, breaking down obstacles on the way. There is therefore no inappropriateness or violence in rendering it “enjoyment that attains” or “a victorious riches”.

वीरवत्तमं. Sy. अतिशयेन पुत्रभृत्यादिवीरपुरुषोपेतं. It is absurd to take वीर = पुत्र as Sayana does; it means “men, heroes, strengths” and is often the equivalent of नृ which is never used for servants in the Rigveda.

रयिं. There are two words रयि, from रि to go and from रि to attain, enjoy. The latter means “enjoyment” or the things enjoyed, “felicity, prosperity, riches”. The former sense is found in the Upanishad where रयि movement or matter is opposed to प्राण life.

Ritualistic

By Agni one attains a wealth daily increasing, famous and most full of men.

Psychological

By the God-Will one shall enjoy a felicity that shall increase day by day, victorious, fullest of hero-powers.

4. अग्ने । यं । यज्ञं । अध्वरं । विश्वतः । परिभूः । असि । स । इद् । देवेषु । गच्छति॥

अध्वरं. Sy. हिंसारहितं because it is not destroyed by the Rakshasas, from अ privative + ध्वर (ध्वृ to hurt). But अध्वर is used

by itself to mean sacrifice and it is quite impossible that the word “unhurt” used by itself can have come to mean sacrifice. It must express some essential quality of the sacrifice or it could not thus have been singled out. It is a notable fact that अध्वर is continually used for the sacrifice when there is a question of the sacrifice travelling or moving on the path towards the gods, as here. I therefore take अध्वर from an original Rt अध् to move, & connect it with अध्वन् path; it means the moving or travelling sacrifice, the sacrifice regarded as a pilgrimage of the soul or its gifts towards the gods.

Ritualistic

O Agni, the unhurt sacrifice that thou encompassest on all sides, that goes to the gods.

Psychological

O God-Will, whatsoever sacrifice on the path thou encompassest with thy being on every side, that indeed arrives to the gods.

5. अग्निः । होता । कविक्रतुः । सत्यः । चित्रश्रवस्तमः । देवो । देवेभिः । आगमत् ॥

कविक्रतुः: Sayana takes कवि here = क्रांत and क्रतुः = either knowledge or work. It means then “the priest whose work or whose knowledge moves”. But there is absolutely no reason to take कवि in any other than its natural & invariable sense. कवि is the seer, the one who has the divine or supramental knowledge. क्रतु from कृ or rather old root क्र to divide, to do, make, shape, work. From the sense “divide” comes that of the discerning mind, Sy’s प्रज्ञान; cf Grk. krites, judge etc; and this is the sense of karuttu in Tamil which means mind. But from the sense “to do”, क्रतु means (1) work, (2) power of work, strength, cf Grk. kratos, strength, (3) will or working force of the mind. For this last sense, cf Isha Upanishad क्रतो कृतं स्मर where the collocation क्रतो कृतं shows that that power of the mind is meant which conducts or dictates the work or action. Agni is the divine Seer-Will that works with the perfect supramental knowledge.

सत्यः: Sayana explains “true in its fruits”; but the collocation

of “seer will” and श्रवः: inspired knowledge indicates rather the sense “true in his being” & therefore true in knowledge श्रवः: and in will क्रतुः. श्रवः: is the supramental knowledge called the Truth, कृतं, the vijnana of the Upanishads; कविक्रतुः: means having the will that is full of that knowledge, the vijnanamaya will, the divine Ājnana; सत्यः: means “vijnanamaya in his substance”.

चित्रश्रवस्तमः: Sy. having most varied kinds of fame,—an insipid & meaningless epithet for a god. श्रवः: is used like श्रुतिः to indicate the inspired hymn; it must therefore be capable of meaning inspired knowledge. There are two kinds of supramental knowledge, दृष्टि & श्रुतिः, sight & hearing, revelation and inspiration, but श्रवः: is usually used to indicate the knowledge gained by the supramental faculties.

Ritualistic

Agni, the priest, who sets in motion the knowledge (or work), true in his fruit, very varied in his fame, may he come a god with the gods.

Psychological

The God-Will, priest of our offering, true in his being, with the will of the seer, with richest variety of inspired knowledge, may he come to us divine with the powers divine.

[9]

[RV I.1.8, 5–7]

I will cite first a passage in the first hymn of the first Mandala, the invocation to Agni with which the Rig Veda opens. Agni the god of the sacred flame, ruler of the sacrifice, is described there as the “shining guardian of the Truth increasing in his own home”, *gopām ritasya didivim*. If we wish to render this verse ritualistically and take Agni as nothing but the physical fire we must interpret *rita* otherwise, “king of the sacrifices, the shining guardian of the rite”, and if he increases in his own home, it must be in the house of sacrifice or on his own place on

the altar. Or if “*rita*” is the cosmic Law Agni is the god of fire who is the guardian of the Law—in what sense?—and who is manifested in the sacrificial flame on the altar. Now, if we take the rik by itself, there is no means by which we can decide among these and other possible interpretations. But in the first place the idea of the guardian of the *rita* is a common thought of the Vedic Rishis and it occurs in passages where *rita* cannot well mean the sacrifice; even the phrase *gopām ritasya* occurs elsewhere with this clear significance. The gods generally are said to be born in the *Rita*, *ritejah*, *ritajātabh*; they are increasing the *rita*, *ritāvridh*, protecting the *rita*, *ritapā*, *ritasya gopā*, touching the *rita*, *ritaspriç*, sending down streams of the *rita*, knowing the *rita*, *ritam id chikiddhi*, rita-conscious, *ritachid*. It is evident even at a first glance, and we shall be able to establish it conclusively enough, that *rita* must mean in these phrases some kind of truth and not the ritual of the sacrifice. Moreover this rik is preceded by three others in which there is repeated mention of the ideas of truth and thought and knowledge. Therefore in the absence of convincing reasons to the contrary we are justified in supposing that Agni is described as the shining guardian of the Truth and it must then immediately occur to us that if he is spoken of here in a psychological function and the Truth is a psychological not a physical conception, then he is described as its “shining” guardian because his light is necessary to that guardianship. The light of the god must therefore be an image for a psychological and not a physical illumination. Equally, the own home of such a deity increasing in the exercise of such a function should be rather a psychological region than the house of ritual sacrifice or a place on a sacrificial altar.

Let us examine the three Riks more minutely. The fifth verse runs: “Agni, the priest of the oblation (or, of the summoning), the seer-will (or he whose work, whose sacrifice or whose power-of-works is a seer’s), the true, who has most richly-varied (inspired) knowledge, may he come, a god with the gods.” In this verse we have two words of doubtful meaning, *çravas* and *kratu*. Sayana wherever he can, renders *çravas* food, elsewhere fame, or where neither of these will do, *çravas* (also *çrushti*) is for him wealth

or rarely hymn. But there is the word *satya*, true! That he forces to mean “giving true or right results of the sacrifice”, evidently a meaning which the text itself does not suggest and read into the word from the commentator’s mind. Again there is the phrase कविक्रतुः and we cannot fit this into the ritualistic interpretation unless we destroy the Vedic significance of the word Kavi. Well then, we have two words *satya* and *kavikratu* which suggest a profound psychological character for the god Agni, the shining guardian of the Truth. It does not matter how we take *kratu*. Kavi is the seer, one who has vision of the revealed Truth and receives the inspired word, the *drashtâ* of the Vedic mantra with the inspired mind of knowledge. If *kratu* is sacrifice — Sayana often prefers “work” — then Agni is the priest whose sacrifice is that of the seer, therefore the sacrifice over which he presides is that over which the divine knowledge presides; if work, then he is the god of the inspired workings; if power of workings, then the god whose power for works is guided by divine knowledge. I suggest that *kratu* which Sayana sometimes interprets [as] knowledge and which has for one of its senses “mind”, is in a psychological sense the mental power that presides over all action, that is to say the will or the volitional mind. The two words *kavikratuh satyah*, coming together in this intimate way, cannot be disconnected; the phrase must mean therefore that Agni is guided in his will or his works by the seer’s vision of the Truth because he is himself true in his being, free from the cosmic falsehood. What then of *chitraçravastamah*? Has it no connection at all with the two preceding words or does it mean that because Agni is true in being and has the seer-will, therefore he gives man all sorts of food or all sorts of wealth? I suggest that *çravas* means hearing or that which is heard (this is the root of its other sense fame) and is used by the mystics for the inspired knowledge which is contained in the Vedic mantra or else simply the inspirations that come from the divine Truth of which Agni is the seer. We have then a clear connection and interdependence of sense in the three epithets of Agni, he is the Truth in his being, therefore his will or works are those of the seer of the Truth and he receives all the varied inspirations of the

knowledge that comes from the Truth; for that reason he is the *hotā* in the sacrifice which the soul of man offers to the Lords of the Truth. We see at once in these three illuminative epithets all that is meant by the description of Agni as the shining guardian of the Truth.

The next verse runs, “O Agni, the good which thou wilt create for the giver, thine verily is that truth, O Angiras.” This is interpreted ritualistically, “The good that thou wilt do to the giver, that (good) is *thine*, (this statement is) true (and not false).” But it is hardly possible on any rational law of poetic composition that *satyam* here should have no relation to *satya* immediately preceding it in the last verse. At any rate, the phrase *tat satyam* is used elsewhere in the Veda to mean “that truth” and is applied to the hidden sun or imprisoned light which the Angirases find as the result of their sacrifice & seeking in the cave of the Panis. Here too in connection with the same phrase *tat satyam*, Agni is described as the Angiras. The coincidence can hardly be fortuitous. Now the Angiras of the Veda, we shall find, is precisely the seer-puissance or seer-will, *kavikratuh*. So the good which Agni, the Angiras or seer-will, is to create for the human soul, giver of the sacrifice, is that divine Truth now withheld from man, the hidden light, the lost Sun which the powers of the seer-will find for man. We see in another hymn that Bhaga, a Sun God, creates this good or *bhadram* for man by getting rid of the evil dream to which the darkness or falsehood of existence belongs. We shall find too that in the Vedic idea the divine bliss or immortality of beatitude was held to be a result of the winning of the supramental Truth and this is evidently the idea which the verse indicates. It is indeed the central conception of the Vedic doctrine.

The next verse introduces and is connected in syntax with the rik which speaks of Agni as the guardian of the Truth; the two have to be taken together. “To thee, O Agni, we come day by day, in the night and the light, bringing with (or, by) the thought the obeisance; to thee ruling over the sacrifices, shining etc.” This in the ritualistic sense must mean that the priests offer sacrifice daily both during the day and during the night by means of the

hymn or the work (Sayana interprets *dhî* sometimes in one sense, sometimes in the other according to his pleasure, but sometimes admits the significance “thought” or “understanding”), bringing, that is to say, doing obeisance or perhaps bringing the food or portion to the god.² But if Agni is the god of an inner Flame, then we must interpret the verse differently. We see that the obeisance is brought, carried (*bharantah*, Latin *ferentes*, Gr. φέροντες) by the thought; therefore, the obeisance must be an inner bowing down or submission to an inner flame. *Namas*, the obeisance, implies also obedience; the verb is used in the Veda in the sense of subduing. Now Agni kavikratuh is the luminous force or will-power of the Divine Existence, *ekam sat*; the force is the flame, the light of the flame is the knowledge; therefore he is the shining guardian of the Truth, for his unified power and knowledge protect all the workings of the divine Truth in the universe. The sacrifice offered by Man is a sacrifice offered for the conquest and conscious possession of this Truth at present concealed from him by ignorance and darkness. Therefore he is the ruler of the sacrifice; therefore the seekers come to him from day to day bringing to him submission in their thought so that the divine Will may govern their mentality and their action and lead it to the Truth. Day and night are, we shall see, symbols of the dark and illumined states of the human mind; the former is our ordinary consciousness, the latter that on which there comes the dawn, the light and power from the supramental Truth. Moreover this Agni increases in his own home. We shall see hereafter whether the own home of Agni is not the plane of the supramental Truth itself on which the divine powers dwell and from which they descend to the aid of the seeker. We must also understand the weal or “good state of being” [in] the closing verse, “Be easy of approach to us as a father to his child; cleave to us for our happy being”, as the state of bliss, the good, *bhadram*, which comes by the possession of the Truth. The Rishi is obviously not asking physical fire to allow him to approach

² Sayana interprets “*namas*” sometimes as food, a sense which he gives to a host of Vedic words, even to *brahma*, *dyumna* etc. I do not see why he should avoid it here, where it goes so well with भरतः.

and embrace it as a son with his father or pleading to fire to cleave to him for his welfare; the fulfilment of such a prayer would be slightly inconvenient and hardly lead to welfare. It is to the godhead, the Divine, that he prays, not the sacrificial flame on the altar, and what can be meant by the cleaving of a godhead to man,—not, be it noted, merely its succour or nearness—if Agni does not represent some divine power which must embrace the human being as a father his child and whose constant presence leads, not to the possession of herds and slaves and gold, but to a spiritually perfect state, *svastaye*? It is because the words of the Veda are not given their proper force, because we shirk their precise and evident meaning, preferring to think that the Rishis wrote loosely, clumsily and foolishly rather than to admit that they had other and profounder & subtler thoughts than ours—it is for this reason that we miss constantly the true sense of the Veda.

[10]

[RV I.1.1]

1. I adore Agni the god, the Purohit of the sacrifice, the Ritwik, the Hota, most delight-placing.

I seek with adoration the God-Will, divine priest of the sacrifice placed in front, sacrificer in the seasons, offerer of the oblation, who most ordains the ecstasy.

Agni (अग्नि and अज्) is the brilliant, the strong, the preeminent, he who moves, leads, drives, acts. He is the Flame, at once Heat and Light, Force and self-possessing Consciousness in the Force, Will with perfect revealing and intuitive knowledge in the will and its acts,—the Seer-Will of the one & infinite Divine Conscious-Existence at work in the universe.

The Rishi, seeker and finder of knowledge, adores and seeks this divine Seer-Will as the priest of the inner sacrifice by

which man seeks the godhead. He is the priest in the three chief functions of that divine priesthood. The divine Seer-Will is the Purohit, that power which is placed in front of our consciousness to act for the human being; replacing the fallible human will this divine force as soon as it is kindled conducts the sacrifice; he leads it in its journey through the stages by which the sacrificer rises to the supramental divine consciousness; he is its vanguard and front-fighter in the battle of the divine with the undivine and the march of man to his goal, पुराणता, प्रणेता. The Seer-Will is the Ritwik, he sacrifices in the order, the right seasons, the right periods, the twelve months, the hundred years of the sacrificial session: he knows the time, place, order by which the Swadha, the self-arranging self-movement of the divine Nature in man that is developing itself, progresses till it turns itself into the Swaha, the luminous self-force of the fulfilled divine Nature of the gods. This order of the sacrificial seasons is called ऋतु and represents the progressive movement of development of the hidden truth of things in man. The Seer-Will is also the Hota, the power that brings the divine powers into the physical consciousness of man by his flaming force in the revealed Word, manifests & forms them there and offers to them the whole activity of the being as a sacrifice of the lower human to the higher divine. The result of this progressive action is the divine delight or ecstasy, the Ananda of the infinite & divine Consciousness, brought into man, there established, held, expanding till it possesses the whole being and occupies all the energies. The Seer-Will is the godhead in us which is most powerful thus to establish, hold, order the action of the Delight in us. This delight is represented as the wealth of the divine existence, by the words रथिः, राधः, राः, रत्न, each of which has a different connotation. रथिः is simply the accumulation of the riches, the mass of the felicity; राधः its riches as affecting the mental, emotional heart-consciousness, its vital and sensible abundance; राः is the bliss, the higher joy of these riches, more than mental in its touch on man; रत्न is its pure ecstasy of the Ananda. This last aspect, as it is the culmination of the Vedic वेदस्, the finding, conscious possession of the Divine, is rightly put here in front in the first

rik of the Veda. The Seer-Will is the first means, the Ananda of the divine riches the ultimate aim and last achievement of the Vedic Yoga.

[11]

[RV I.12.1]

[A]

Annotations
of
Hymns to Agni

Medhatithi Kanwa. I.12

अग्निं दूतं वृणीमहे होतारं विश्ववेदसं ।
अस्य यज्ञस्य सुक्रतुं॥

अग्निं दूतमस्य यज्ञस्य विश्ववेदसं (सर्वविदं) सुक्रतुं होतारमिति वृणीमहे ।

Agnim, the Fire *vrinîmahe* we choose *dûtam* (as) the Messenger, *asya yajnasya hotâram* the summoning priest of this sacrifice, *viśvavedasam* all-knowing, *sukratum* well-working or well-willed.

अग्निं तपोदेवतां वृणीमहे संभजामः । दूतं दूतरूपं दौत्ये नियोजयामहः इति भावः । अस्य यज्ञस्य विश्ववेदसं सर्वविदं सुक्रतुं सुकर्माणं यथार्थकर्मबुद्धिसमेतं वा ।

अग्निहिं तपोदेवतांतरस्य तपोबलस्य प्रतीकरूपोऽयमग्निः । स च साधकानां दूतो भूत्वा देवानाहृयति । यदा हि देवकामः साधकस्तपसा देवान् प्रत्युन्मुखचित्तो भवति तदैव तपसः सोऽग्निरूद्घगामी भूत्वा तान् देवान् तस्य चेतनायामानीय स्थापयति । सोऽपि साधकस्य हृदये देवानामाहृता ।

[B]

Hymns to Agni

अग्निं दूतं वृणीमहे होतारं विश्ववेदसं ।
अस्य यज्ञस्य सुक्रतुं॥ १॥

We choose (वृणीमहे संभजामः) Fire (अग्निं) the messenger (द्वृतं), the summoning priest of this sacrifice (अस्य यज्ञस्य होतारं), all-knowing (विश्ववेदसं सर्वविदं), well-working or well-willed (सुकृतुं सुकर्माणं सुकर्मप्रज्ञं वा).

We choose Fire as the messenger and summoning priest of this sacrifice, all-knowing, right-willed.

विश्ववेदसं. Sayana सर्वधनोपेतं. विद् = to find, know, get. वेदः = knowledge or the thing got or possessed. Hence it may mean either knowledge or possession. The exoteric sense may be “having all wealth”; the esoteric is omniscient.

कृतुः: See I.1 under कविकृतुः. Sayana सुकर्माणं सुप्रज्ञं वा. Rather सुकर्मप्रज्ञं.

The right-willed or rightly working omniscient Fire is evidently the inner Flame of power and aspiration, the divine Will-Force that takes up the sacrifice, योगयज्ञ. It rises up to the heavens above the mental consciousness and brings down the divine power into the being. It is man's messenger to the gods, the priest of the call. It leads aright all the inner and outer actions because it is the Divine Knowledge-Will, all-knowing, unlike the ignorant mind and therefore unerring, unlike the stumbling mental will. For that reason it is chosen, वृणीमहे.

[12]

[RV I.31.1, 2, 4, 5]

I.31

1. त्वमग्ने प्रथमो अङ्गिरा ऋषिर्देवो देवानामभवः शिवः सखा ।
तव व्रते कवयो विद्वनापसोऽजायंत मरुतो भ्राजदृष्टयः॥

Say.

अङ्गिराः because their father जनकत्वात्, cf Brahmana येऽङ्गिरा आसंस्तेऽङ्गिरसोऽभवन्।

व्रते = कर्मणि Vrata (वर्तन) must mean more = motion, habitual

action, law of works, act & motion.

विद्वनापसो. So compounded Say. विद ज्ञाने विद्वो वेदनं — विद्वनान्यपांसि येषां ते विद्वनापसः। ज्ञानेन व्याप्तुवाना ज्ञातकर्मणो वा. Rather, whose works are governed by knowledge.

O Fire, thou becamest the first of the sages, a flame seer, a god and benignant comrade of the gods; in thy act and motion the Maruts with their blazing lances were born, seers whose works are by knowledge.

2. त्वमग्ने प्रथमो अङ्गिरस्तमः कविर्देवानां परि भूषसि ब्रतं ।
विभुविश्वस्मै भुवनाय मेधिरो द्विमाता शयुः कतिधा चिदायवे॥

कवि. S. मेधावी

परि भूषसि S. परितोऽलंकरोषि. Rather भूषसि from भू like वक्षसि from वह्.

विभुः S. बहुविधः

द्विमाता. द्वयाररण्योरुत्पन्नः यद्वा द्वयोर्लोकयोर्निर्माता

भुवनाय. Here S. समस्तलोकानुग्रहार्थ

O Fire, thou art the first seer, the most full of thy Angiras flame-force and thou encompassest with thy being all the works of the gods; pervading thinker of every world, builder (or child) of earth and heaven, in how many ways thou liest ready for man!

4. त्वमग्ने मनवे द्यामवाशयः पुरुरवसे सुकृते सुकृतरः ।
श्वात्रेण यत्पित्रोमुच्यसे पर्या त्वा पूर्वमनयन्नापरं पुनः॥

अवाशयः S. शब्दितवान् पुण्यकर्मभिः साध्यो द्युलोक इति प्रकटितवान्।

पुरुरवसे S. etym. पुरु रौतीति पुरुरवाः।

सुकृते सुकृतरः S. तव परिचरणं कुर्वते .. शोभनफलकारी।

श्वात्रेण क्षिप्रमथनेन

पूर्वं .. अपरं eastern (Ahavaniya) .. western (Garhapatya)

O Fire, thou madest heaven voiceful to man the mind of many cries (lit. to Manu Pururavas); good his works but thou a worker of better things. When by pressure (?) thou art loosed abroad, the gods brought thee here the pristine and again the later fire.

5. त्वमग्ने वृषभः पुष्टिवर्धन उद्यतसुचे भवसि श्रवाय्यः ।
य आहुर्ति परि वेदा वषटकृतिमेकायुरग्रे विश आविवाससि ॥

वृषभः । कामानां वर्षिता
श्रवाय्यः मंत्रैः श्रवणीयः
वषटकृतिं । वषटकारयुक्ताम् (आहुर्ति)
परि वेद । परितौ जानाति समर्पयतीति ।
एकायुः । मुख्यान्नः ।
अग्रे विशः । प्रथमं तं यज्ञमानं तदनुकूलाः प्रजाः ।
आविवाससि प्रकाशयसि ।

O Fire, thou art the Bull of inspired knowledge that increasest his growth to man when he lifts to thee the ladle of the libation, when he wholly knows the way of the offering and the benediction, and thou standest in front, the one life, and illuminest the peoples.

[13]

[RV I.74]

1. As we move forward to the path of the sacrifice let us speak out the word of our thought to Agni who hears us from afar and from within.
2. He who supreme (ancient, first) in the worlds of our action that pour forth the clarity meeting together (or, when our labours that drip their fruit combine together), protects for the giver his attaining (or movement).
3. Yea, let *all* creatures born (be able to) say, “Up Agni comes into being, slayer of Vritras, conqueror of our wealth in battle after battle.”
4. He whose messenger thou art to his home, thou takest his offerings on their journey (or, takest his offerings *on thy journey* to be eaten *by the gods*, or comest to the offerings); thou makest effective his path of sacrifice.
5. Him men call the man complete in his offering, complete in his gods, complete in his base of sacrifice, O Angiras, O Son of Force.

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6. Thou bringest both those gods here that we may express them and bearest, O rich in delight, the offerings on their journey (or, to be expressed & to eat the offerings).
 7. No tramp is heard of the horses of thy chariot in its going when thou goest on thy embassy, O Agni.
 8. By thee fostered the horse of *life* goes undeviating, each one after that which preceded it, and the giver of sacrifices progresses, O Agni.
 9. Yea, and thou lodgest throughout *his being* for the giver and his gods, O God, Agni, a vast and luminous completeness of energy.

The Hymn is a hymn of the Adhwara Yajna, the Sacrifice of the Path. Agni, the Divine Will-Force or Power of Consciousness, is the deity.

1. The Gotamas, illumined minds, are to proceed to the path of the sacrifice; let them then give voice to the thought in them which is to be the governing word of their progress for the Divine Will-Force to use; that Force hears the word and responds whether as the deity realised within or as the deity of the universe seated in the highest and most distant worlds.

2. The Divine Will-Force is the first and supreme among divine powers; it protects our movement in the sacrifice from plane to plane and all the planes of our being on which the Work proceeds come together in a conscious harmony and stream forth their riches in response to our giving.

3. Let this Divine Force manifest itself so that all shall say, “It is born and rises on high, slaying all the hostile powers that obstruct our progress and winning wealth on new wealth for the soul in battle after battle.”

4. These results are attained, because the Divine Will-Force becomes a compelling envoy who carries our offerings on their journey to the goal which is our home and the home of the gods, the divine plane of the Truth, thus it makes the sacrifice of the path effective; the worlds meet together and drip their riches under the compulsion of the all-creative, all-manifesting Truth of Surya Savitri.

5. The man then becomes perfect in his sacrifice; the offering is effective, the godheads are completely manifested, the base of sacrifice in the soul includes all the various planes of our being. The Divine Force, the Angiras, the puissance of Seer Will and the Son of Strength overpowering the Panis and Vritras, effects this completeness.

6. He is the envoy & effects the great commerce between earth & heaven, bringing the gods down from the higher planes so that they may be manifested in man in the terrestrial and taking our offerings, the fruits of our terrestrial life upwards to be divinised, transformed into the divine essence, eaten, in the Vedic image, by the gods. That transformation is effected in the perfect bliss of the Divine Will-Force.

7–8. This great going & coming is effected in a silent spiritual rapidity; there is no rumour or clamour at all of the trampling hooves of the Vital Forces in their swiftness; but the chariot of the movement gallops swiftly.

9. Finally, the Divine Will-Force lodges in all our being for the benefit of the soul itself and of the gods who work in him, a complete and utter heroic energy, vast with the vastness of the Truth & luminous with its light.

1. अध्वरं. According to Sayana, the word is अ-ध्वरं from ध् to hurt, and means unhurt by the Rakshasas etc. But the word unhurt thus used could never have become by itself a synonym for sacrifice, as अध्वर has done. Throughout the Veda अध्वर is associated with the idea of movement on the path to the goal, and it is therefore more reasonable to connect it with अध्वन् a path; the adhvara is the sacrifice that travels on the paths of the divine journey (अध्वनो देवयानान्) and reaches the heavens of the gods. We have the words अध्वन्, sky, and अध्वर, sky; which show that the two words are from the same root and of a similar formation. That root is evidently an old root अध्, no longer formed as a verb, which must have had the same sense as अत्. We have also a lost root अथू surviving in अथर्यति, to move constantly and अथर्यु, moving. For the Adhwara Yajna see Appendix I.

उपप्रयंतो अध्वरं. Coming to the sacrifice of the path with

the progressive movement which belongs to the sacrifice, प्रयति अच्चरे.

आरे अस्मे च. Sayana takes च rather unnaturally with the whole phrase because he could not understand the distinction “afar and in us”. There is always the distinction in the Veda between the far and the near, दूरे .. अंति in the planes of our being, the क्षेत्र or field of conscious existence, and the nearest, नेदिष्ट, is within ourselves, अंतः.

शृणवते. The hearing of the mantra by the gods always implies a response, the divine accepting the human thought and replying to it by its own vibrations. See I.10.4, एहि स्तोमाँ अभि स्वर। अभि गृणीद्यारुव। ब्रह्म च नो वसो सचा। इन्द्र यज्ञं च वर्धय॥ which gives in a few words the theory of the divine acceptance of the Mantra.

2. स्त्रीहितीषु. Sayana takes as “slaying”, “those who slay” and he explains that Agni protects the sacrificer’s wealth गय when the peoples who hurt come together in the battle to destroy or plunder. His note is वधकारिणीषु — जिह्वा स्नेहने। स्नेह्यतीति वधकर्मसु पठितः। स्नेहांते हिंस्यन्ते प्रजा आभिरिति स्त्रीहितयः॥ The ordinary senses of स्निह् are (1) to be moist, wet, fluid; (2) to be thick, dense; (3) to be thickly fluid, so viscous, oily, greasy, fat; (4) by figure, to be full of love, affection, kindness; (5) to flow or make flow thickly, or continuously, anoint etc. We may compare स्नु to ooze, trickle, flow, stream & स्निट् to go, where the sense of motion comes out more clearly. स्नेहः in the Veda seems to be used for the thick-flowing ghrita. स्त्रीह् here may mean then to drip the richness of the ghrita, cf the घृतस्नु of Indra’s horses etc,— or to move in a dense mass or to adhere together; the कृष्टयः come together and become cohesive or come together and move in a mass.

कृष्टिषु. This latter sense of स्त्रीहितीषु = शश्वत्सु would apply if कृष्टि means either people or the powers that labour in us; the sense of cohesion, if कृष्टि means the worlds which are the field of the working. For the sense of कृष्टि see Appendix II.

पूर्व्यः. Literally first or pristine. But in the Veda पूर्व्यः, प्रथमः often mean first also in the sense of supreme. Agni is the original power of the world and therefore the supreme power.

गयं. S. takes the word sometimes as wealth, sometimes as house. गयः must have meant originally movement, the mover or

the goal of movement. If it is the object of movement, it may mean क्षयः, the home to which we go; but it would more naturally be either the thing attained by the movement, the spiritual wealth, or that which comes to us, still meaning the wealth; or else the movement itself.

[14]

[RV I.74–76]

Hymns of Gotama Rahugana
74

1. उपप्रयन्तो अध्वरं मंत्रं वोचेम अग्नये । आरे अस्मे च शृणवते॥

उपप्रयंतः: S. उपेत्य प्रकर्षेण गच्छन्तः: which he considers equivalent to beginning and carrying out perfectly. I take अध्वरः: in the sense of the sacrifice that travels to the gods by the divine path, that of the Truth; the offerings also so travel & the sacrificer. Therefore उपप्रयंतो अध्वरं यज्ञः means “entering upon (उप) and proceeding forward (प्र) with the sacrifice on its journey”. The right performance of the sacrifice is a right progress to the godhead and the Truth.

मंत्रं. S. मननीयं स्तोत्रं; rather वचनीयं मननं. त्र expresses either the action or the means. “Let us express (by the word) the thought in our minds,” ie the thing we are meditating, the truth of the godhead we are seeking to express (शास, उक्थ, गी:, वचः, प्रशस्ति) and to fix in ourselves (स्तोम, धी).

आरे अस्मे च. Far (from a distance) and in us. Sayana gets rid of the idea by taking च = अपि and attaching it to आरे, who hears us even from afar. I prefer to take the natural order and the plain sense of the words. The distinction of far and near or far and within is common enough in the Veda; Agni is also constantly spoken of as in mortals, विक्षु, मत्येषु; that this does not mean simply among — or here “from far and from among us” — is shown by I.60.2 where Agni is described as विश्पतिर्विक्षु वेधाः and the विक्षु is explained by 3, तं .. हृद आ जायमानं. Agni

created by the human Ritwiks and born from the heart cannot be the sacrificial fire or lightning, but must be the inner flame, the godhead within, who is also the cosmic godhead who hears from without, आरे.

शृण्वते. What is meant by the god hearing the thought? Not merely that he hears physically the Vedic hymn and comes to the sacrifice. As we see from other Suktas, this hearing is a response; it is the turning of the Godhead to the God-seeker; it is the answer of the Truth, सत्यमृतं, to the thought and word in the mind of man. The god hearing the *mantra* means that the divine truth it seeks to express comes and illumines and dwells in the mentality; the Word becomes a chariot of the godhead, रथं न्, a robe that he wears, वासः, a dwelling he inhabits, ओकः. So long as the Word is not heard by the god, does not call him into itself to manifest his status and working in the mental realisation it produces, it is not effective, nor is the realisation a true seeing.

Sayana's rendering.

Approaching and carrying on the sacrifice let us speak the hymn to Agni who hears us even from a distance.

Psychological rendering.

Advancing on the journey of the sacrifice let us express the thought to the Flame who heareth us from afar and heareth from within.

2. यः स्त्रीहितीषु पूर्व्यः संजग्मानासु कृष्टिषु । अरक्षद् दाशुरे गयं॥

This rik is full of difficulties; we are in doubt about the meaning of three important words, स्त्रीहितिः, कृष्टिः & गयः. Sayana renders “when the killing peoples come together (to attack), he guards the wealth for the sacrificer.” The one strong objection to this version is that it has absolutely nothing to do with what comes before or what goes after and this is contrary to the rule of Vedic construction.

कृष्टिषु. This is rendered “people”, but it is doubtful whether it has fundamentally or always that sense. कृष् is originally a derivative of कृ, like वक्ष् from वह्, स्पृश् from स्पृ etc and only

intensifies its sense. कृ is, originally, do, make, hurt, cut, divide (कृत्, कृ); कृष् is to do any strong or forceful labour, eg to drag, draw (कर्षण), plough (कृषि) — senses which survive, and to hurt, waste with the various results of being hurt, killed, wasted still preserved in various significances of words like कृष्ण. If कृष्टि means people, it must be from the original sense of cultivator or labourer. In the Veda it seems to me that it meant (like चर्षणि, intensive of चर्), one who does the works of sacrifice; but also it means in certain passages, earths, worlds, places where work (of cultivation or other) is done, — just as क्षिति means sometimes an earth or world inhabited or the people dwelling in it or those possessing it. It is this sense of earths or worlds which obtains here; कृष्टयः means the worlds in which the five human peoples, पञ्चकृष्टीः, labour at the work of the Aryan. These worlds are described as coming together, meeting so as to become one. The idea of the seven rivers, various earths, different planes coming together is common enough in the Veda; eg कथा न क्षोणीः समारत, “How should not the earths come together (at the command of Indra)?” They unite their various movements or workings, welding their distinct laws and types into a harmony.

स्त्रीहितीषु. S. वधकारिणीषु. षिंह स्तेहने — स्तेहयतीति वधकर्मसु पठितः. But is it so? That sense is very doubtful. स्त्रीहृ like स्त्रीट् means to love, but that sense cannot be certainly proved in the Veda; स्त्रीट् means to go, move (cf सू to flow) and स्तेहः means in the Veda a thick, fat or oily dropping or flowing; finally स्त्रीहृ means to stick, cleave, be thick, compact etc. It is possible that स्त्रीहितयः means (the worlds) that move compactly together or adhere to each other and it will then describe the result of the coming together and moving together संजग्मानासु.

गयं. गय may mean either “movement, march” or “that which is attained” = धनं or “that which is reached” = आश्रयः, शर्म, गृहं, in which case it will be equivalent in sense to the Vedic क्षयः. It is easy to see that any of these might be threatened whether by a banded attack of hostile people or in the psychological sense by the disturbance of a new combined movement of the “earths”. If the latter is the sense of the first two padas, then गय must mean either movement or abiding-place: in the former case, the

Seer-Will, Agni, guards the movement of the sacrificer travelling to the Truth-plane and harmonises it with the new-combined general movement; in the latter he keeps for him his abiding-place or his goal, which has practically the same sense. If it is “the peoples assembling to slay”, then the psychological sense is that the powers (people) of the regions which the divine traveller seeks to overpass unite to oppose and destroy him and the Seer-Will protects his march or his goal or his spiritual gains and possessions from their attack. We have then in this phrase the basis of the image of ten nations combined against the Tritsus, “those who seek to pass beyond”.

3. उत ब्रुवंतु जंतव उदग्निर्वृत्रहाजनि । धनंजयो रणे रणे॥

जंतवः: Sayana जाताः सर्वे ऋत्विजः. “Agni has risen, let people (priests) speak (hymn him).” Sayana’s glosses are always those of the pedant; जंतवः, “creatures, those born”, is a most general term and obviously intended to be quite wide in its connotation, not confined to a particular class of men. No one says “let men say”, when he means “let the priests chant”. The sense is “let all men born see and declare that Agni the Vritra-slayer has risen up into birth”. The manifestation of the Flame is to be so great that the whole world will bear witness to it. There is no idea of chanting the hymn in ब्रुवंतु. Cf I.4.5, उत ब्रुवंतु नो निदो निरन्यतश्चदारत.

वृत्रहा. Sayana, bound by his rendering of कृष्णु as men, has to take वृत्रं = आवरकाणां श्रूणां; but वृत्रहा applied thus formally to the gods can mean only slayer of Vritra or at the most slayer of Vritra and his hosts. That Agni is, like Indra, Saraswati and others, a slayer of Vritra and releaser of the waters, there are several passages of the Veda to show, eg I.59.6, यं पूरवो वृत्रहणं सचंते । वैश्वानरो दस्युमिनर्जघन्वाँ अधूनोत्काष्ठा अव शंबरं भेत्. If, therefore, the कृष्णः of the last verse are the assailing peoples who attack on the path & the same battles are referred to here, they cannot be men, but must be Vritra-powers. The Dasyus are called दासीर्विशः, but not thus vaguely कृष्णः. उत probably brings in a new idea; not only is the sacrificer to be guarded in his march to the goal of the

Truth, but Vritra the Coverer and his hosts who withhold the wealth of the Truth must be slain so that wealth on new wealth may be won in battle after battle.

Sayana's rendering.

Let all the born (ritwiks) declare (praise) him, Agni has been born, slayer of the enveloping enemies, conqueror of (the enemy's) wealth in all battles.

Psychological rendering.

Yea and let men say, “The Flame that slays the Coverer has risen into birth, conqueror of our wealth in fight after fight.”

4. यस्य दूतो असि क्षये वेषि हव्यानि वीतये । दस्मत् कृणोषि अध्वरं॥

क्षये. S. the house of sacrifice. It is rather the house generally, not here the goal or habitation to which he is proceeding, but that in which he is at present lodged, the *advara* or dwelling-place of the soul,—the body with life and mind. This is the house of sacrifice, the triple सधस्थ. It is possible however that दूतः क्षये may be “messenger to the home” of Agni and the gods, the Truth-plane, which is also the goal of the pilgrim sacrifice.

वेषि. S. गमयसि, though elsewhere in a similar context, he renders it कामयसे. वीतये he takes as भक्षणाय. “Thou carriest the offerings to the gods for their eating.” वेषि often means to go or come, but it cannot be here “thou comest to eat his offerings”, हव्यानि accusative after वीतये, because that is not the office of the messenger. It is to carry the offering to the gods and to bring the gods to the sacrifice. वेषि .. वीतये suggests that वीतये may also have here the sense of motion, “thou comest (or, goest) for the taking thither of the offerings.” Either interpretation is possible and it is difficult to choose.

दस्मत्. S. सर्वदर्शनीयं, visible to all; but this has no sense and no connection with the rest of the context. There must be some connection between the taking of the offerings and the making दस्मत् the sacrifice. I have taken दस्म consistently = effective, achiever, from दस् to do, perform, cf दंसः action, दास a slave, and दस्मत् must be taken in the same sense; “thou makest effective

the journeying sacrifice". It is evident that the carrying of the offerings to the gods is the first necessary effectivity of the अध्वर; the various offerings first, ie all human powers and activities directed Godwards, are lifted to the Truth and return as enriched being and power,—this is the first achievement and effectivity: next, the whole sacrifice reaches the godhead, man's entire being, power, consciousness is accepted by the divine Truth,—this is the second achievement and effectivity: last, the man himself attains that plane and lives upon it, divine, स्वराट्, सम्राट्, immortal; this is the क्षयः, the third and last effectivity, completing the अध्वर यज्ञ. The suffix मत् to a verbal stem is a peculiar and early form unless indeed दस् was originally a noun = action as well as a verb.

5. तमित् सुहव्यमंगिरः सुदेवं सहसो यहो । जना आहुः सुबर्हिषं॥

अंगिरः. S. अंगनादिगुणयुक्ताग्ने; he treats it as equivalent in meaning to the name अग्नि itself. But Angiras has a special sense in the Veda; Agni is the original Angiras and the seven seers are the powers of the luminous Flame, his children. The Angiras is the Seer who seeks the Light by the force of the will and finds first the Word as the mouths of Brihaspati, then the Light itself as the army of Indra. Agni Angiras is the Seer-Puissance; that as the messenger makes the human activities acceptable to the Truth and the sacrifice effective.

यहो. S. पुत्र. Has this sense of यहु any other reality than the idea of the commentators and grammarians that the phrase सहसो यहो in which alone it occurs must be equivalent to सहसः सूनो? यद्धु, यद्धी in the Veda means mighty, puissant; should not यहु be kin in sense, the puissant, the master? On the other [hand] the connection between the epithet Angiras, Seer-Puissance, and the description "Son of Force" is very close, eg V.11.6, त्वामग्ने अंगिरसो गुहा हितमन्वविदञ्चश्रियाणं वने वने । स जायसे मथ्यमानः सहो महत्त्वामाहुः सहसस्पुत्रमंगिरः॥

सुबर्हिषं. S. शोभनयज्ञं. I cannot accept Sayana's frequent rendering of बर्हिः as यज्ञ. It means figuratively the seat of sacrifice and literally, from बृह्, the extension, the outspreading, the wide

fullness of the inner state upon which the work of the sacrifice is founded and on which the gods take their seat. It is, in the physical sacrifice, the thing outspread, स्तीर्ण वर्हिः; and, this being the sacred doorva grass, it came to mean the doorva. It is connected in sense with वृहत्, वर्हणा and often means a mass, stream, crest of light or force etc, anything spread wide or streaming out, thus the wide ether, the outstreaming peacock's tail, water flowing in a mass, a stream of flame, the वर्हसि of Agni, radiating light. All its senses can be traced back to the one original sense of extension or wide fullness. So also the verbal senses of वर्हू come from the idea of a heavy pervading pressure; it means to cover, spread, crush, overtop and so be preeminent or excel; to give in the sense of lavishing, cf रात्; to speak, from the sense of outbreathing. वर्हिः as a seat comes, like all the rest, from this sense of spreading widely and thickly or fully.

There are three elements given here for the sacrifice, the perfect offering, the effective godhead, the entire purity and fullness of the seat on which the godhead shall base himself and his working — psychologically, a pure, wide state of the soul.

Sayana's rendering.

He in whose house thou art a messenger, whose offerings thou carriest to be eaten (by the gods) and whose sacrifice thou makest to be seen by all, him indeed, O Angiras, son of Force, all men speak of as having good offerings, a good godhead and a good sacrifice.

Psychological rendering.

When in man's dwelling-place thou art the envoy, thou tak-est his offerings to be enjoyed by the gods (or thou comest to carry his offerings) and thou makest effective the journey of his sacrifice; him verily men speak of as perfect in his oblations, perfect in his godheads present, perfect in the wide seat of his sacrifice.

6. आ च वहासि ताँ इह देवाँ उप प्रशस्तये । हव्या सुशचंद्र वीतये॥

सुशचंद्र. S. शोभनाल्लादन. चंद्र has two senses, "shining" and

“delightful”, both present in all the names of the Soma, चंद्र, सोम, इन्दु; but it is the sense “delight” which it usually carries in the Veda.

वहासि. In the early Aryan tongue the long and short syllable were entirely interchangeable and traces of this linger in the Veda — चरथ, चराथ; भवसि, भवासि; पथः, पाथः. Sayana takes as imperative, but it is obviously a continuation of the statements वेषि, कृषोषि, and now आवहासि.

प्रशस्तये. The प्रशस्ति is the expressing or manifesting of the god by the word, not yet his birth or creation, but a temporary mental realisation by the thought. It is not merely praise; there is no need for the gods to be carried to the sacrifice to be praised; but certainly the word must be an assertion of the powers, functions, characteristics of the godhead.

हव्या .. वीतये. Sayana takes आगतेभ्यो हव्यानि भक्षणाय प्रापय; but there is no प्रापय and we cannot extract one from आवहासि which gives the quite different idea of bringing from heaven. हव्यानि is an accusative governed by the verbal force in वीतये, a common Vedic construction, eg चक्रिं विश्वानि चक्रये. I.9.2.

ताँ. The gods there in heaven of whom you are the envoy.

वीतये. Here it seems necessary to take as “eating” or “enjoying”, otherwise we shall have to translate the last pada separately, “Come, O perfect in delight, for the carrying of the oblations”; but this gives an insufficient coherence.

There are always two aspects of Agni’s embassy which seem to be inconsistent with each other, one the bringing of the gods to eat of the oblations in the house of the sacrificer, the other the taking of the oblations to be eaten by the gods in mid-air or heaven. In the physical sacrifice it may be said that the fire first carries the consumed offerings into the air to be eaten in their subtle parts by the gods of heaven and mid-air, then the gods are attracted by the voice and light of the flame and come to eat the rest of the offerings at the sacrifice itself. But this is not satisfactory. And what is meant by the fire carrying the gods from heaven to the place of sacrifice, — *vahasi, vevis?* That corresponds to no possible physical fact. Psychologically, the sense is clear enough. The Seer-Will first bears man’s activities to the higher planes by

his purified consecration of them to the Godhead. This is the first part of the embassy. Then comes the time for the descent of the divine Powers into the human mind & body, at first temporary, to enjoy there the activities offered to them, each activity to its proper god, then permanent by the creation, birth, growth (तातिः, वीतिः, अवः) of the divinities in the human being, each conducting his own proper activity first मनुष्यत् in the human type, then in the human divine, as Usha is described देवि मानुषि, O divine and human. In all these stages it is Will-with-Knowledge that leads. That summons and brings, in a way carries the gods in their descent, supports them in their workings.

Sayana's rendering.

O thou of the good delighting, bring hither those gods for the praise and give them the oblations for their eating.

Psychological rendering.

And thou bringest hither those gods for their expression by the word, O perfect in delight, for the enjoying of the oblations.

7. न योरुपद्विरश्वः शृण्वे रथस्य कच्चन । यदग्ने यासि द्रूत्यं॥

Sayana explains that this absence of sound is due to the swiftness of the chariot. This cannot be the explanation: a swift chariot is likely to make a greater noise than a slow one. Either the phrase means simply that it is not a physical, but figurative or immaterial horses & chariot that are meant; or else the emphasis is on अश्वः. Aćwa, the horse, is the Pranic power and swiftness of Pranic activity brings with it usually a disturbance and tumult pleasant or unpleasant in the being, but Agni's being the horses of the purified Prana, there is no disturbing sound of their gallop. उपद्विः is, I think, an ear-oppressing clamour, din. That this is the sense is proved, I think, by the next verse where the image of the horse is again taken up and the idea varied. The horse of Agni is वाजी अहयः, the undeviating horse, that which does not go crookedly, that is the Pranic energy not stumbling into sin, error, false desire, but galloping on the straight path कर्जुना पथा of the Truth.

कच्चन. Sayana कदाचन; more probably “at all”, “in any way”.

यासि द्रृत्यं. S. देवानां द्रृतत्वं प्राप्नोषि, but I think this is a purely Vedic construction meaning practically यासि द्रृतयात्रा, the द्रृत्यं being loosely made the object of यासि as a sort of cognate accusative, not because it is strictly so, but from a general idea of its sense, because the द्रृत्य here is in its essence यान or यात्रा, a going.

Sayana's rendering.

O Agni, no sound of thy moving car is ever heard made by horses when thou becomest the (gods') envoy.

Psychological rendering.

No sound of horses is heard at all from thy chariot in its motion, when O Agni, thou goest on thy embassy.

8. त्वोतो वाजी अह्यो अभि पूर्वस्मादपरः । प्र दाशवाँ अग्ने अस्थात्॥

In the metre of this verse त्वोतः has to be taken as a trisyllable and अह्यः separated from वाजी.

त्वोतः — see Appendix for अव् = foster, increase. Even with Sayana's rendering of the rest of the verse “fostered” gives a better sense than “protected from harm”.

अह्यः: Sayana's लज्जारहितः is absurd. ह् is used in the sense of crookedness as well as हृ in the Veda, cf जुहुराण crooked. If not, we must take ह् not in the sense of shame, but of a violent emotion; it means joy and wrath as well as shame, or any disturbance of the emotional being. अह्यः must then be taken with दाशवान्, the sacrificer becomes full of the divine plenitudes, free from all violent emotions and so goes forward on his journey प्र अस्थात्.

अभि पूर्वस्मादपरः: S. यः पुरुषः पूर्वस्मात् स्वस्मादधिकारादपरो निकृष्टो भवति; he now becomes rich in food and free from shame. This is one of those forced & ingenious interpretations which illustrate the learning of the commentator, but not the text. पूर्वस्मादपरः can only mean “a later after the former” or if पूर्व means superior, a lower after the higher, but never an inferior to the former, because then the sense-correlation of पूर्व & अपर is entirely lost;

nor is there any hint of any अधिकार in the text. There must be either a later वाजी (or दाश्वान्) opposed to a former or an inferior दाश्वान् opposed to a superior दाश्वान्. In the latter case, the sense may be “the sacrificer inferior to the supreme sacrificer advances when fostered by thee and becomes वाजी like the one who was superior to him.” But this is very forced and clumsy. More naturally it would mean, if we suppose only one clause, “The later sacrificer after the former”, that is, “one sacrificer after another goes forward (प्र) fostered by thee to the goal (अभि), full of plenitude, straight in his course.” It is possible, however, to take वाजी in the sense of horse, the Pranic अश्व and अभि will stand for a verb; “fostered by thee, one steed of thine following its leader, undeviating, reaches the goal; the sacrificer (as the result of Agni's journeying) passes forward on his journey.”

प्र अस्थात्. Sayana takes अभि = ऐश्वर्यमभिप्राप्य and प्रास्थात् = प्रतितिष्ठति सर्वोत्कृष्टो भवति. Neither can stand. Too much is read by him into अभि and the second preposition is प्र not प्रति; the verse speaks of प्रस्थान not प्रतिष्ठा. Sayana quite missed the Vedic image of the sacrificial journey or ascent to Swar and is therefore always at a loss when this idea becomes prominent.

Sayana's rendering.

The man that has become lower than his former position, now giving thee offerings and being protected by thee becomes rich in food and free from shame and thus attaining is established.

Psychological rendering.

Fostered by thee, steed following after steed undeviating reaches the goal, (so), O Flame, the giver of the sacrifice goes ever forward.

or

Fostered by thee, the later sacrificer following him who went before (or simply sacrificer after sacrificer) goes forward undeviating, rich in the plenitudes.

9. उत द्युमत्सुवीर्यं बृहदग्ने विवाससि । देवेभ्यो देव दाशुषे॥

सुवीर्यं. Sayana takes शोभनवीर्येपितं धनं. I see no धनं anywhere in the verse, and therefore take सुवीर्यं as a noun, सु + वीर्यं as in सुनयः, सुप्रयोगः, सुपथ् etc. Even when सुवीर्यं occurs entirely by itself as in I.94.2, Sayana renders it as शोभनवीर्येपितं धनं; yet nothing is commoner in the Veda than the idea of strength and the prayer for strength. Here the vast and luminous energy is the pranic force made a vastness by the vastness of the Truth-will, ऋतं बृहत् and full of the light of the supreme knowledge, ऋतं ज्योतिः.

विवाससि. Sayana abandons his favourite परिचरसि and interprets गमयितुमिच्छसि — प्रापयसीति यावत् basing himself on the sense of वा to go. वास् (वस्) means either to dwell or to shine. विवाससि means either thou makest to dwell or thou makest to shine widely in all the being. It is difficult to decide, for द्युमत् favours “shine” and बृहत् favours “dwell”.

देव. Sayana द्योतमानाग्ने. Sayana feels that an importance is attached to the appellation, but misses the equal importance of the collocation देवेभ्यो देव. To him who gives to the godheads, the Seer-Will representing the divine existence responds with the gift of light, of power, of vastness.

Sayana's rendering.

Also, O shining Agni, to him who gives to the gods, thou bringest a shining wealth endowed with good energy.

Psychological rendering.

Yea, and for him who giveth to the divine Ones, thou, O divine, O Flame, lodgest wide in all his being a perfect forcefulness vast and illumined.

1. जुषस्व सप्रथस्तमं वचो देवप्सरस्तमं । हव्या जुद्धान आसनि॥

सप्रथस्तमं. S. अतिशयेन विस्तीर्णं स्तोत्रलक्षणमस्मदीयं वचनं. But what is meant by a very wide or extended word? A long hymn? but the hymn is one of the briefest. It is clear that वचः is some-

thing more than mere speech; it is the word and all its contents, the thing expressed, an expression of a new state of wideness, प्रथस्, in the being of the god-seeker. It is because it carries this wideness. Therefore it is देवप्सरस्तमं, a great enjoyment for the gods, the children of the Infinite whose home is in the vastness. It is the wideness of the seeker's being growing towards this vastness that is the cause of their enjoyment and not the hymn itself as mere speech or praise.

प्सरः: Sayana's attribution of this noun to the root सूर् is bad philology. There is no reason why the easier sound स्प should corrupt into the more difficult sound प्स. We should rather suppose an old root सूर्. The initial प्स sound must have been common enough in the original Aryan tongue, since it figures so largely in Greek, but it has left few traces in Sanscrit. We have besides प्सरः, प्सु form, प्सुर् lovely, beautiful, having a form, which points to a root प्सु, and प्सा to eat with its derivatives. Possibly all these three roots had a similar sense to encompass, contain (whence form), embrace, enjoy and then प्सा to eat; cf अश् which means to pervade, to enjoy and to eat.

2. अथा ते अंगिरस्तम अग्ने वेधस्तम प्रियं । वोचेम ब्रह्मा सानसि ॥

अंगिरस्तम. S. अतिशयेनांगनादिगुणयुक्त — यद्वा अंगिरसां वरिष्ठ. Obviously “O most Angiras” cannot mean merely the best of the Angirases, it must mean one who has most the qualities of the Angiras. We know what those qualities are, among them is the possession of the word of power and light, ब्रह्मा सानसि, the word of the seven-mouthed Angiras Brihaspati which wins the Sun, the Dawn, the Herds etc, सूर्यं सनत्, therefore ब्रह्मा सानसि.

वेधस्तम. S. वेधा इति मेधाविनाम. वेधा: does not mean मेधावी but विधाता and especially the disposer, right ordainer (विध्, विंध्) of the sacrifice and its parts, prominently the hymn स्तोम. Cf I.7.7, न विंधे अस्य सुष्टुतिं, I cannot succeed in arranging (composing, putting in right order of speech and thought, cf in Bengali the use of रचना for style) his perfect affirmation. The epithets are not chosen at random; because Agni is the most Angiras, has most power of seer-will for the word that conquers the desired luminous

wealth, because being the most Vedhâ (also a characteristic of the Angirases), that is most skilful by his right knowledge and right force to order rightly the hymn in relation to the stages of the sacrifice, therefore he can help the Rishis to speak the ब्रह्म सानसि.

प्रियं refers us back to the idea in देवप्सरस्तमः; it means pleasing प्रीतिकरं, that which brings with it the satisfaction of the soul,— here, because of its right expression of that which the soul (ब्रह्म) seeks to express.

सानसि. S. संभजनीयं and he gives वन् षण संभक्तौ; but सन् also means to win, possess and only secondarily to enjoy. As we have ब्रह्म सानसि in conjunction with the epithet अंगिरस्तम it can only mean the brahma that conquers, wins and takes possession of the wealth as did the hymn of the Angirases in connection with whose achievement the word सन् is continually used.

अथा ते. S. तुम्यं. I think it is here rather तव, otherwise there is no sense in अथ = अनन्तरं. In the first verse Agni is invited to cleave with love, ज्ञाषस्व = सप्रीत्या सेवस्व, to the word; and now the Rishi says “then may we speak the satisfying, conquering soul-word that is thine”. It is only after Agni has embraced the वचः and made it his that it becomes not only सप्रथस्तमः & therefore देवप्सरस्तमः but also सानसि; therefore अथ. The word is frequently spoken as being the gods’, especially in connection with Agni and Indra.

Sayana's rendering.

O best of the Angirases, O very intelligent one, then may we speak to thee a pleasing and enjoyable hymn.

Psychological rendering.

Then, O most puissant in the seer-will, O most skilful Ordainer, O Flame, may we speak a soul-thought that is thine, that satisfies, that conquers.

3. कस्ते जामिर्जनानाम् अन्ने को दाश्वध्वरः। को ह कस्मिन्नसि श्रितः॥

जामिः: Who is thy companion? That is to say, thou art alone and transcendent, अङ्गतः; what creature born (जनः) can boast of

being a necessary twin of thy being? जामिः is more than वंधुः (S.), it gives the idea of constant companion and closeness in kinship or in being, eg जामिः सिंधूनां भ्रातेव स्वस्मां. I.65.4.

दाश्वध्वरः: S. दत्तो यज्ञो येन .. कर्मण्युप्रत्ययः: I am sceptical of this passive sense for दाशु. S. thinks the phrase means that there is no one capable even of sacrifice to Agni, "Who is there that has given thee sacrifice?"; but surely this is to read more sense into the word than it will bear. Anyhow, the Rishis constantly giving sacrifice to Agni would hardly say "Who is there that has ever given thee sacrifice?", they would use some phrase which would at least hint the idea of unfitness. दाशु means naturally giver or fit to give, and we may take दाश्वध्वरः as an inverted compound = अध्वरदाशु, and the question asked is "Who is really able to give sacrifice that will reach the gods, being thy जामिः, companion and equal in being? It is really thou that speakest the word and doest the sacrifice, thou art the only वेधा: and होता and without thee man's hymn and offering have no force or power." Otherwise it is the अध्वर that is दाशु, and the question is "Whose sacrifice is able to reach the gods and give them the offering? Only Agni is able to carry the offering to the gods and lead the sacrifice to the goal." None else is his जामिः and therefore none else has the same power.

को ह. S. कथंभूतस्त्वं ie all cannot know what you are like. This is both fanciful and feeble. को हासि means *who* thou art, ie what wonderful and transcendent being, अङ्गुत. Agni is not this nor that person, not one of the जनानां, but the Deva himself, eternal and supreme.

कस्मिन्. S. कस्मिन्स्थाने. No one knows thy abode; but if Agni is the physical flame everyone knows his abode, the वन, अरणि, अप्सु etc. कस्मिन् must mean either in what object or in what person; there is nothing to indicate place. "In whom art thou lodged?" None can contain and bind to him Agni, because he is the transcendent and infinite in whom are all the gods and all the worlds.

Sayana's rendering.

Who among men is thy (fit) friend? Who is there that has

given the sacrifice? What art thou (in thy nature)? In what place art thou lodged?

Psychological rendering.

Who of creatures born can companion thee? O Flame, who can give sacrifice? Who art thou? In whom is thy abode?

4. त्वं जामिर्जनानाम् अग्ने मित्रो असि प्रियः । सखा सखिभ्य ईङ्गयः॥

जामिः: Thou, being beyond all, unborn and transcendent, yet makest thyself the companion of all these human creatures, stooping to their humanity, **अमृतो मर्त्येऽु.**

मित्रो .. प्रियः: S. प्रीणयिता यजमानानां प्रमीतेस्त्रायकोऽसि. This explanation of **मित्र** is extravagant philology and poor sense. **मि** is to embrace, enjoy, love (also to contain, put together, form) and **त्र** here expresses the agent of the action; it means therefore friend or else giver of delight; Agni is the divine Friend and Lover, God as Mitra, **प्रियतमो नृणां**; therefore **प्रियः**, dear especially because of the satisfying principle of harmony he brings into thought, feeling, act and state. He is not only **जामिः** but **मित्रः**, a dearer word of love, since the first only expresses closeness in being, companionship in life and action, the other the embrace of love and the companionship of the heart. The answer here is to को ह & को दाशवध्वरः. This Infinite is He who comes to man as his friend and lover and sets and helps him on his path, for Mitra जनान्यातयति, sets them moving पथिभिः साधिष्ठैः; by the most effective paths of the Truth which accomplish perfectly the sacrifice, अध्वर, and carry it and the sacrificer to their divine goal.

सखा. Although not lodged in any as his abode, yet is this infinite deity a comrade to be sought by adoration by men, his comrades, **मनुष्वत्**, humanly and in a human relation.

Sayana's rendering.

O Agni thou art the friend of all men, thou art the deliverer from harm and satisfier (of the sacrificers), and a friend to the sacrificing priests who is worthy of praise.

Psychological rendering.

Thou art the companion of all beings; O Flame, thou art

the beloved Friend, a comrade to be sought with adoration by comrades.

5. यजा नो मित्रावरुणा यजा देवाँ कृतं बृहत् । अग्ने यक्षि स्वं दमं॥

मित्रावरुणा. Varuna because he gives the प्रथः, the wideness, Mitra because he is the प्रिय who by his harmonising principle of light and love gives the प्सरः. The last line goes back in thought to the first; it prays for the divine fulfilment through Agni of that which has been expressed by the aspiring thought of humanity, of the सप्रभस्तमं देवप्सरस्तमं वचः.

देवाँ. All the gods, constituting the whole Divine Birth, the कृतं बृहत्.

कृतं बृहत्. The vast Truth. This is either in a sort of apposition to देवाँ, “sacrifice to (all) the gods, to the vast Truth” which is the being of the infinite Godhead; or else there is a double accusative of the person and the object: “win for us from the gods by sacrifice the vast Truth”. Sayana takes कृतं = true, and explains it as सत्यं यथार्थफलं यज्ञं, which is unnatural enough, as no one would say “sacrifice for us the true” when he means “sacrifice for us a sacrifice”, — ritam may mean sacrifice, or it may mean truth; but it cannot mean “true” in the sense of “a sacrifice”, — but astonishingly enough he does not take कृतं बृहत् = “a great sacrifice”, as he does elsewhere, but separates the neuter बृहत् from the neuter कृतं to which it belongs by grammar, by verse-movement and by syntactical form & structure, — for यज .. यज .. यक्षि each naturally introduces its own clause, — and attaches it to the masculine दमं to which it has no conceivable right to belong. This is one of those purposeless and awkwardly floundering ingenuities hostile to grammar & syntax, to the evidence of parallel passages, to all literary sense and to poetic fitness, in which Sayana’s commentary abounds.

यक्षि. S. makes यक्षि = यज संगच्छस्व. He thinks that it means पूजय, “worship thy own big house”, but it is only when Agni is within it that the sacrificial house becomes worshipable, त्वय्यंतविद्यमाने सति हि यज्ञगृहं पूज्यते, therefore to ask Agni to worship his own house amounts to asking him to get into it!

Comment on such an absurdity is hardly needed.

स्वं दम्. The **ऋतं वृहत्** in the form of the world called **स्वः**; **उलोकः**, **उरुलोकः** is the own home of Agni and all the gods.

Sayana's rendering.

Worship for us Mitra and Varuna, worship the gods, sacrifice a true (fruitful sacrifice), worship (ie enter) thy own big house.

Psychological rendering.

For us sacrifice to Varuna and Mitra, win for us by sacrifice from the gods the vast Truth; O Flame, win for us by sacrifice thine own home.

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1. का त उपेतिर्मनसो वराय भुवदग्ने शंतमा का मनीषा।
को वा यज्ञैः परि दक्षं त आप केन वा ते मनसा दाशेम॥

वराय. S. तव मनसो निवारणायास्मास्ववस्थापनाय. This is a most improbable sense for वर. It is much better to take वर (= that which is वरणीय) in its ordinary Vedic significance of good, boon, thing desired, with a shade which makes it amount to “supreme good”, and मनसः with उपेतिः, ie, How shall the mind approach thee so that it may gain its desirable good? Or मनसो वराय may be taken together, “for the supreme state or desirable good of the mind”. In the one case the phrase anticipates & leads up to केन वा ते मनसा; in the second it anticipates and leads up to यजा महे सौमनसाय of v. 2. ते मनसो no more goes together here than ते मनसा in the fourth pada of this verse.

मनीषा. S. स्तुतिः, “How shall our praise be most happiness-giving to thee”, ie there is no praise even suitable to thee, and he thinks the answer to को वा is न कोऽपि. It certainly does not mean that any more than केन वा मनसा means that no one has the right mentality in the sacrifice. The series of questions merely express the seeking of the mind for the right way of approaching Agni, the right thought, मनीषा, the right mentality in the self-giving, मनस्, the power to embrace in the human mind the right

judgment and discernment of the divine seer-will. मनीषा does not mean स्तुति in the Veda, but either the intellectual mind as distinguished from the wider मनस् which embraces the emotional mentality and sense-mind also, or else the intellectual thought that seeks for the Truth. Cf इमं स्तोमं .. सं महेमा मनीषया (I.94.1) which certainly does not mean “we will form the hymn [of] praise by the hymn of praise.” There is no reason for assigning different meanings to मनीषा here and in that passage. But Sayana can seldom forego an opportunity of making a word mean “hymn” or “food”.

श्रतमा, not तव सुखकरी, but full for *us* of the bliss.

दक्षं. S. वृद्धिं बलं वा. Neither, but the judgment, discerning thought. ते must go surely with दक्षं not with यज्ञैः.

परि .. आप. परि gives the idea of “all round”, ie an embracing possession of the whole दक्ष.

Sayana's rendering.

O Agni, what kind of approach should there be for stopping thy mind (keeping it with us)? what kind of hymn most gives thee happiness (there is probably none); who can get strength (or increase) by sacrifices to thee? or with what mind should we give to thee?

Psychological rendering.

How shall the mind of man approach thee for his supreme good? what thought, O Flame, must that be which carries with it the extreme bliss? who hath by sacrifices embraced all thy discerning? or with what mind shall we give to thee the offerings?

2. एह्यग्न इह होता नि षीद अदब्धः सु पुरएता भवा नः।
अवतां त्वा रोदसी विश्वमिन्वे यजा महे सौमनसाय देवान्॥

एहि होता takes up the idea of हवींषि implied in दाशेम. The answer to the questions of the first rik is that Agni, the Seer-Will, must himself come as the होता, the होमनिष्पादक (Sayana takes it wrongly here as देवानामाहूता) and bring about the right mentality by his sacrifice, महे सौमनसाय.

पुरएता, the leader in the march of the sacrifice towards the

gods and the vast Truth, a leader who at once guides on the right path, पथिभी रजिष्टः and slays the besetters of the way, विश्वान्नक्षसः (v. 3). The यज्ञ of which Agni is the होता is the अध्वरो यज्ञः.

अवतां. Not “protect”; Agni is अदब्धः पुरएता who burns all the Rakshasas; what need has he of protection who protects all? अवतां means “foster, increase” the Seer-Will. Let the earth and heaven, the physical and mental being, attain their full, all-embracing wideness, विश्वमिन्ने and by that wideness give full scope to the increase of the Seer-Will.

सौमनसाय. Perfect or right mentality including मनीषा, right thought enlightened by the दक्ष and not only the emotional part of the मनः. The सौमनस is vast, महे, as a result of the wideness of the Rodasi, the mental and physical being, which prepares the manifestation of the vast Truth; this wideness of the Rodasi is always a feature of the ascent of the gods, Agni or Indra, in that upward progress to the plane of the Truth, Swar, of which Agni here is the पुरएता, he who goes in front.

Sayana's rendering.

Come, O Agni, sit here as the summoning priest; because thou art beyond the injury (of the Rakshasas) be well he who goes in front of us. May all-pervading earth and heaven protect thee; worship with sacrifice the divine ones for great grace.

Psychological rendering.

Hither come, O Flame, and take thy seat within as the priest of our oblation; be the unconquerable power that marches (leading and defending us) aright in our front; may our heaven and our earth, all-embracing, foster thee; sacrifice for a vast right-mindedness to the gods.

3. प्र सु विश्वान्नक्षसो धक्षयग्ने भवा यज्ञानामभिशस्तिपावा ।
अथा वह सोमपति हरिभ्याम् आतिथ्यमस्मै चकृमा सुदाव्रे॥

Indra, the Divine Mind-Power, is to be brought, after the path has been cleared of all Rakshasas, all wealth-detaining and destroying agencies, who prevent the सौमनस and break (अभिशस्ति) the uninterrupted progress of the अध्वर यज्ञ. Indra

comes with his two bright powers to drink the purified wine of the Ananda offered in the clear and happy state of the mind (सौमनस) and to give in return the wealth of his world, स्वः (सुदाद्वे).

सोमपतिं. S. सर्वेषां सोमानां पालकं. Rather, lord of the Somas as he is of the गिरः, not in the sense that Soma is of the wine or Brihaspati is master of the ब्रह्माणि, because to him all speech and all outpourings of the intoxicating wine go as rivers to their sea, as herds to the bull, as women to their lord, अजोषा वृषभं पतिं.

चक्रम्. Possibly = we have prepared; ie the Soma is ready for the divine guest.

Utterly burn before thee all the Rakshasas, O Flame; become the protector of our sacrifices against the destroyer; then bring to us the master of our Soma-pourings with his two shining steeds; for him we have prepared guest-honour, for the perfect giver.

4. प्रजावता वचसा वह्निरासा आ च हुवे नि च सत्सीह देवैः।
वेषि होत्रमुत पोत्रं यजत्र बोधि प्रयंतर्जनितर्वसूनां॥

प्रजावता. प्रजा here seems not to be अपत्य in the technical Vedic sense, but to refer to all fruits of the sacrifice; S. दातव्यापत्यादिफलोपेतेन.

वचसा. S. स्तुतः सन्. I cannot accept such a clumsy construction; it means that Agni upbears the sacrifice (वह्निः) by means of the word and by his flaming mouth. That is to say, if वह्निः really refers to Agni and आसा to his flame, आस्यस्थानीयया ज्वालया as S. suggests. In that case we have to understand असि with the first pada. But the natural rendering would be to take वह्निः as referring to the Rishi. “I, upholder of the word by the breath of my mouth, call thee by the fruitful word and do thou at once take thy seat with the gods.”

वह्निः. “Upholder, maintainer” either of the word (cf सखायः स्तोमवाहसः, गिर्वाहः etc) which is most appropriate here,—“as the sustainer of the divine chant by his breath he calls him with the fruitful word”,—or else of the whole sacrifice, the inspired word of the hymn and therefore the breath of the mouth being the means by which the वह्नि upholds the course and strength of the sacrifice. Cf I.3.11, यज्ञं दधे सरस्वती.

आसा. 1. breath. 2. mouth. The first seems to me the appropriate sense; it is the Pranic force, मुख्यः प्राणः, by which the ब्रह्म is uplifted from the heart where it has been shaped and held in the mind, हृदा तष्ट्.

आ च .. नि च, gives importance to the prepositions; there are two immediately successive actions, the motion of the Rishi drawing the Seer-Will to him by the word, the motion of Agni and the Gods entering and taking their settled station within him, नि.

वेषि. S. कामयस्व. I think it is यासि, the verb used in its pure indicative sense, “’tis thou takest upon thee the office of होता and the office of पोता, O master of sacrifice, (therefore) awake.”

यजत्र. S. यजनीय. Rather त्र here seems to express the agent as in मित्र. Agni is here the sacrificer (होतः .. यजस्व v. 5) and not the god to whom sacrifice is given.

प्रयंतः. S. प्रकर्षेण नियंतः। वसून्यस्मदायत्तानि कुर्वन्।

जनितः. S. आहुतिद्वारा सर्वस्य जनयितरग्ने. I presume S. means सर्वस्य धनस्य.

प्रयंतर्जनितः. जनितः: he who brings the spiritual wealth into being in man. प्रयंतः: he who brings it by his labour into right use or possession by man.

बोधि. S. अस्मान्वोधय. There is no reason to take transitively a verb usually intransitive.

Psychological rendering.

By the fruitful word I, bearer of the sacrifice by the force of my breath, call thee to me and, thou, take thy seat here within with the gods; ’tis thou takest on thee the oblation and the purifying; wake, O bringer into being, O bringer into use of our riches.

Sayana's rendering.

(Hymned) by a fruitful word (he who is) the bearer of the offerings to the gods, him I call; and, thou,—sit down here with the gods, desire that which is done by the Hota and the Pota; wake us, O thou who entirely controllest riches and producest (all things).

5. यथा विप्रस्य मनुषो हविर्भि- देवाँ अयजः कविभिः कविः सन्।
एवा होतः सत्यतर त्वमद्य अग्ने मंद्रया जुह्वा यजस्व॥

मनुषः. S. मनोः — मन ज्ञाने. मनुषः does indeed mean the thinker, but the mental being generally, not Manu.

विप्रस्य. S. मेधाविनः; from विप् to be luminous — cf सूरिः which like सूर्यः means also luminous; men of knowledge are in the R.V. frequently called द्युमतः; luminous.

अयजः: probably an aoristic past; “as thou hast always sacrificed”.

कविभिः कविः: S. renders कविः = क्रांतदर्शी, & कविभिः = मेधाविभिः. He makes a difference between the two senses in a note on I.79.5, कविः क्रांतदर्शनो मेधावी वा. I presume that the former means a seer, one whose vision is active, the other merely an intelligent man or thinker. Perhaps S. is unwilling to attribute omniscient seerhood to men. But why should there be a difference of meaning between कविभिः कविः? I cannot understand this remarkable principle of composition attributed to the Rishis of putting the same word together in different cases or with different governing words in order to convey quite different ideas and with nothing to show the difference! It is only in Bedlam or else in Pundit-land that such a rule can stand. Mark that sometimes S. makes कवि mean simply क्रांत! As a matter of fact there is no reason to suppose that कवि ever means anything in the Vedas but a seer. Who are the कविः here? Not I think men, but the divine powers who assist the Seer-Will.

होतः: S. होमनिष्पादक. This passage होतः .. जुह्वा यजस्व and others show clearly enough that होता meant originally the priest who conducted or made the offering; the other sense देवानामाहूता is, in the R.V., extremely doubtful.

सत्यतर. S. अतिशयेन सत्सु साधो! An extremely clumsy and unnecessarily philological antic. Agni is frequently called सत्य, eg I.1.5, होता कविक्रतुः सत्यश्चत्रश्चवस्त्मः. Here also Agni is the होता, कविः & सत्यतरः. In I.1.5 S. interprets सत्य giver of true results of the sacrifice, here in a precisely similar context, where the same words and ideas are repeated, he gives quite another and fantastic explanation. सत्य means true, full in his being of

the truth of the **ऋतं बृहत्** of which the **कवि** is the knower, and therefore no doubt a giver of the riches of the truth to the sacrificer; but the latter idea cannot justly be read into **सत्य** when that word is divorced by Sayana from all idea of the **ऋत** & the **काच्य**. The comparative means ever growing in truth.

मंद्रया जुह्वा. S. **हर्षयित्रा होमसाधनभूतया सुचा.** The **जुह्वा** is the flame of Agni by which he gives the offering to the gods, as Sayana's explanation would lead us to believe; but perhaps he means the fire-tongue by **सुच्**. It is the flame or uplifting movement of the Will that lifts the Soma etc from the mind upward to the divine Superconscious with a motion of rapture—the rapturous will-movement, not, I think, the joy-giving will. The rapture comes from the state of **सौमनस**, clear of the Rakshasas etc, which Agni's priesthood, the conduct of the Yoga by the divine Will, brings to man.

[15]

[RV I.77.1–2]

Hymns of Gotama Rahugana

1. कथा दाशेम अग्नये का अस्मै देवजुष्टा उच्यते भामिने गीः ।
यो मत्येषु अमृतो ऋतावा होता यजिष्ठ इत् कृणोति देवान्॥

कथा. This ancient form follows the analogy of **सर्वथा**, **अन्यथा** etc. Sayana thinks that **कथा दाशेम** is a confession of incompetence. This is possible but not necessary. The question may simply express the seeking, naturally with a sense of difficulty, for the right manner of giving and the sufficient word.

भामिने. भा is **ज्योतिः**; भाम is rather **तेजः**.

देवजुष्टा. S. **सर्वैदैवैः सेवितव्या वाक्**. The gods have to be created by Agni in the mortal, therefore a revealing word is needed to which the cosmic deities will attach themselves, making it their dwelling-place, so that through its instrumentality Agni may create the corresponding godheads in the individual. **गीः** like

शंसः is the word which expresses, which brings out, makes प्रशस्त what is unexpressed in the state of अशस्ति and therefore latent.

मत्येषु अमृतः: The usual description of Agni, the divine Will; he is the precondition of man's immortality, always present even in his mortality, always shining though smoke-obscured even in his state of night; it is this Will that wakened to greatness and clarity by the Dawn rises up heavenward and calls the gods to take their seat in the human soul that sacrifices to them.

ऋतावा. It is the Seer-Will and possesses the Truth, therefore it is the priest of the offering most powerful for sacrifice. In other words it will know the right way to sacrifice and find the right word for creating the Truth-powers.

कृणोति. S. हविर्भिर्युक्तान् करोत्येव. Prodigous! By what alchemy of the mind are we to find in the plain phrase "makes the gods", the meaning "makes them have the offering"? The mystic idea of the creation of the godheads in man is necessarily beyond the understanding of the ritualist; but what gymnastic feats are needed to wriggle out of the plain sense of a plain phrase!

Sayana's rendering.

How should we give to Agni, what praise that can be accepted by the gods is spoken to the shining one, who, Hotri immortal and possessed of sacrifice, a great sacrificer, dwelling in (among?) mortals makes the gods possessed of the offering?

Psychological rendering.

How shall we give unto the Flame? What word is spoken to the lord of fiery light to which the gods shall cleave, the Flame who immortal in mortals, possessed of the Truth, a priest of the offering most mighty indeed for sacrifice, forms the gods?

2. यो अध्वरेषु शंतम् ऋतावा होता तम् नमोभिरा कृषुध्वं।
अग्निर्यद्वेमर्ताय देवान् स च बोधाति मनसा यजाति॥

शंतम् ऋतावा. Always in Veda there is the same connection, the Truth is the way to the bliss, its cause, foundation, support; through Vijnana we arrive at Ananda.

आ कृषुध्वं. S. अभिमुखीकुरुत. आ भू & आ कृ have a special sense

in Veda. आ भू is to become in, enter into another's being, to cast oneself into his, as the god manifests himself in the man, the man lifts his being into the divine consciousness. Cf I.56.2–3 where the phrase आभूषु is applied to those who ascend upon Indra, इंद्रमधि रोह तेजसा and range in that divine Mind as on an ocean, तं गूर्तयः .. परीणसः समुद्रं न संचरणे. आकृ is the converse action of man bringing the godhead into him and forming it there in his human being.

नमोभिः: Agni is first to be brought into man and formed there, so that he may form the other godheads; it is true that he is already there, but veiled; he has to be brought in in his own divine form from the Truth, his own home. How is this to be done? by what manner of sacrifice? by what word? Simply by the sacrifice of submission, the word of adoration and surrender. He will do the rest.

वैः: S. गच्छति. It may mean “goes”, “desires”, “manifests”. गतिप्रजननकांतिषु. This is the difficulty of fixing the sense of देववीति; we have to choose between “going to the gods” and “manifesting the gods” for the mortal.

बोधाति. S. जानाति or “wakes to the knowledge”. This is the answer to the question in the first rik. The Seer Will once awake and formed in the man by submission and adoration of the human to the divine Will itself knows the godheads aright and sacrifices through the mind to them in the right manner of the Truth which he possesses and with its right word.

[16]

[RV I.94.1–10]

Hymns of Kutsa Angirasa
I.94–98 .. 101–115

A Critical Edition, with Notes & Translation,
establishing the symbolic and Vedantic
meaning of the Rigveda.

I

Text.

॥९४॥ इमं स्तोममर्हते जातवेदसे रथमिव सं महेमा मनीषया ।
भद्रा हि नः प्रमतिरस्य संसदि अग्ने सख्ये मा रिषामा वयं तव ॥१॥
यस्मै त्वमायजसे स साधति अनर्वा क्षेति दधते सुवीर्य ।
स तूताव नैनमश्चोति अंहतिरग्ने सख्ये मा रिषामा वयं तव ॥२॥
शकेम त्वा समिधं साधया धियस्त्वे देवा हविरदन्ति आहुतं ।
त्वमादित्यानावह तान्हि उशमसि अग्ने सख्ये मा रिषामा वयं तव ॥३॥
भरामेधं कृणवामा हवीषि ते चितयन्तः पर्वणापर्वणा वयं ।
जीवातवे प्रतरं साधया धियो अग्ने सख्ये मा रिषामा वयं तव ॥४॥

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1. स्तोमम्. The hymn of praise is the central note of the Rigveda. Praise and prayer are the two outward expressions (गी:) of the soul founded on the heart, which awaken the consciousness there (प्रचेतयन्ति) to the force or the presence of the god. They establish the god in the heart and increase him there, सादयति बहिषि, वर्धयति. The word स्तोम is from the root स्तु which means to set or be set firmly, closely or solidly; from this original sense there come the senses to pile, accumulate, erect, raise, of स्तूप with its noun स्तूपः which means a heap, pile, monument or pyre and also strength, power; the significance, to stop or stupefy of स्तुभ and स्तुंभ with the noun स्तोभः obstruction, a stop, a pause. From स्तु or स्तुच् we have स्तुकः a bunch of hair, braid or knot, स्तुका in the same sense, but also meaning the hip or thigh and स्तोकः a drop or small quantity collected, hence little, short, few. स्तोमः itself has the sense of mass, collection, group; स्तोमं means

the head, riches, wealth, grain; स्तवकः means a cluster of flowers or bouquet, as well as praise. The root can mean also to push (स्तुभः & स्तुनकः: a goat, स्तुंभ् to expel, स्तोभः: disrespect, spurning contumely). The significance hymn, praise, eulogy belonging to the verb and its nouns स्तुति, स्तोम, स्तोत्रं, स्तवः: as also to स्तुभ् and its noun स्तोभः: (cf स्तुच् to be pleased, propitious) must come by transition from the same original force as all the other derivatives. Stoma is, therefore, the praise which supports, the praise which nourishes & increases or the praise which impels and gives force. It was, in other words, to the Vedic Rishis that which establishes & increases the god, supports him and gives him force for effective action. But the literal meaning must have been support and from this sense the idea of laudation, praise must in the first instance have risen. That the etymological sense must have been present to the mind of the singer is shown by the verb महेम and the simile रथमिव. The hymn is to be strongly compacted, a real erection, stoma or stupa, on which Agni is to take his seat as in a chariot. Cf other families of this root. The same meanings will be found to persist. स्तक्, स्तनः:, स्तंभ्, स्तंभः:, स्तम्, स्तंबः:, स्तिभिः:, स्तिम्, स्तिमित, स्तृ to spread, cover, strew, स्था, स्थानं, स्थूणा, स्थूल.

अर्हते. The word अर्हत् is generally taken to mean worthy or deserving, from the later and derived sense of the root अर्ह्, to deserve, to owe, which replaced the earlier & simpler senses in classical Sanskrit. “Let us forge strongly a hymn for Agni who deserves it” will make a good grammatical sense, but very poor poetry & no philosophical significance. The Buddhist Arhat certainly did not mean merely a deserving person; it meant one extremely exalted, or one who had risen high above the world. Agni, the high exalted, meaning ultimately one of those who dwell in the Parardha, will be a more probable, as well as a more forcible rendering. See Rt ar in the Aryan Word Book.

सं महेम. I am certain the word here must mean to make great in the sense of “to compact, to construct laboriously or solidly”, with something of the force of the Latin moliri. From the idea to make strong or great, such a sense would naturally

arise; the idea of strong or laborious action, work or construction is characteristic of the M roots and no other sense will go so well with रथमिव. Otherwise we must translate “Let us strengthen the hymn with or by the intellect,” ie let us put our minds to it to give it greater force; but this is a good sense by itself, but it leaves रथमिव in the air. One does not strengthen a chariot with the intellect or indeed by any other means [unless] it is ramshackle or broken down, which cannot be the Rishi’s meaning. For the construction of a chariot with the mind for the tool of the worker, cf Rigveda I.20, Medhatithi’s hymn to the Ribhus, the heavenly artificers, य इन्द्राय वचोयुजा ततक्षुर्मनसा हरी .. तक्षनासत्याम्यां परिज्ञानं सुखं रथं, “who fashioned, by the mind, yoked to speech, for Indra his yoke of steeds, and fashioned for the Aswins a spacious car of ease.”

प्रमतिः: Throughout the Veda I take प्रमतिः in its simple and obvious etymological sense of प्रज्ञा, mental knowledge. The Greek & Latin sense of प्र, beforehand, need not be premised of the Sanscrit particle. The force of प्र in प्रमतिः and प्रज्ञा comes from the idea of the object of knowledge standing before the mind & the mind moving out to embrace it in its scope.

Translation.

This hymn for the Exalted One to whom Knowledge appeareth let us construct with the intellect as if it were a chariot (for him); for auspicious is his mind of thought to us in the assembly. O Agni, (secure) in thy friendship may we come not to harm.

2. आयजसे etc. The Atmanepada expresses the vague and general idea of inner action applied to any ends of the soul. The yajna of the Veda is the yoga of the soul or of any of its faculties, mental, spiritual, vital or bodily, its preparing and bringing into action for growth towards peace, perfection, plenty (vajas), joy, strength, immortal godhead. The Yajamana, for whom Agni is the agent of the yajnic action, the hota, perfects himself in these things, sadhati; he gets his habitation, firmly establishes himself in the objects of the Yoga or in some state of the soul which is

the object of the Yoga, ksheti, holds & confirms for himself the full Yogic force, suviryam, increases & prospers, tutava, and is guarded by Agni from all evil, internal or external, anhati.

साधति. We see the early use of the word which has played so great a part in the spiritual thought and practice of India ever since. Sadhaka, the yogic seeker of perfection, sadhana, his spiritual effort & discipline, siddhi, his success and attainment whether in particular faculty or general soul-condition, sadhu, the man in his state of perfection, remain to this day current & familiar words in our vernaculars and colour the thoughts of a nation.

अनर्वा. The exact sense of अनर्वा has, I think, been missed; it is “not fighting” & hence sometimes “without an enemy”, not अन् + अर्वन्, an enemy. The root अर् expresses excellence, force or preeminence of any kind, whether (1) in being, state & position, (2) in action, (3) in movement, (4) in light & splendour. From (1) we have the idea of excellence, virtue, nobility, lordship, honour, lifting, leading, height in अर्य, आर्य, अर्ष, अर्च, अहं. The Tamil aran, aram (virtue), the Greek ἄριστος, ἀρέω, ἀρχω, ἀρχομαι, ἀρετή, ὄρος a mountain; from (2) the sense fight, slay or hurt, oppress, in अर्, अर्व, अर्द, अरि, Ares, अराति, arma, अररः; and plough, work, row, propel in अर्, aro, arvum, अर्पोω, ἀρπότρον, ἀρπουρा, अरित्रं, अरर्यति; from (3) the sense of swift motion in अर, अर्द.

The idea in anarvá ksheti is that the sadhaka for whom Agni, master of pure tapas, works out all the actions of the Yoga, the inner sacrifice, gets firm establishment in the siddhi (sadhati) and dwells established in it (ksheti) without any need of fighting; Agni destroys all the inimical forces, the amivas, and prevents by his protection (avas) farther attack.

क्षेति. क्षय and क्षेति are technical words of the Vedic Yoga. क्षय is established dwelling or habitation in a fixed condition of consciousness or that condition so fixed and inhabited. क्षेति describes such an established condition. Cf such phrases as उरु क्षयाय चक्रिरे, they make the Vast (mahat) their habitation. I.36.8.

सुवीर्य. The word virya in the Veda, derived from वी to open,

expand, display, open into full vigour, includes in the forms वृ, वीर etc the idea of excellence, full or superior force etc. Hence the later idea of strength, energy or heroism. दधते means here to hold firmly. सुवीर्य, the thing held firmly by this sadhaka, is usually in the Veda the fullness of force, knowledge & being-manifestation, sat-tapas, on any plane of the being, although sometimes the idea of knowledge is almost suppressed in the more general and radical idea of manifestation, sometimes it predominates & almost conceals the idea of force. Sometimes both are combined equally. Ila, for instance, in I.40.4, is described as devi sunrita & Ilam suviram, supraturtim anehasam, clear & strong (suvira) going swiftly forward (supraturti) but not hurtful by excessive force (anehasam). There is here no reference to knowledge. The idea is that of a safe & seated fullness of forceful being.

तूताव. Again the idea of strength, vigour, always contained in the root *tū* where it keeps its radical force. So far as the context of the single line goes, it is quite possible & appropriate to take the word in the sense “he attains safety”, cf Lat. *tutus*, *tueor* etc, but it is more likely to be “he attains vigour” or “is in full force, prospers”.

अश्रोति. अश्र् is the Greek *ἐχω*. It means to have, possess, & so to enjoy, to eat. This instance of its use shows how these meanings developed out of each other. “Evil cannot have him or hold him, cannot possess him” with a strong trace of the idea of enjoying & devouring.

अंहतिः. अंह् like अह् means to put out force against, so to attack, hurt, kill, wound. अंहति means defect, flaw, sin, evil, calamity. It means here evil with the special idea of defect or flaw in the siddhi.

Translation.

For whom thou, O Agni, workest at the Yoga, he attains fulfilment, he sits established free from enemies, who finds the full force of being; he flourishes and evil cannot enjoy possession of him. O Agni, secure in thy friendship may we come not to harm.

3. शकेम with the accusative means “May we be equal to, able to bear”. It is the dharana-samarthya, the power to hold the force, delight or vast expansion pouring into the system without either suffering injury or letting the flood escape from the system by exhaustion of or rejection from the latter,— it is this Yogic fitness of the adhara or receptacle that is indicated in shakema twa samidham.

समिधं. From idh to attain fullness, increase, flourish & sam expressing completeness.

साधया धियस्. Perfect the movements or faculties of the understanding. The plural is constantly used in this sense. Dhi is the discerning mind which holds and places perceptions. They are to be perfected so that they may hold & place rightly the knowledge that streams in when Agni or pure tapas increases in the system.

हविराहुतं. The offering cast. Havis in the Veda is anything spiritual, mental, vital or material offered to the gods so as to strengthen them each in their proper activity. The base of the Vedic system is this idea of the interchange of offices between god & man, man surrendering his inner & outer gains to the gods so that they by their activity in him & his concerns may repay him, as is their habit, a thousandfold.

अदन्ति. The gods eat or enjoy the offering cast into Agni, into the pure tapas. In other words, speaking psychologically, all the faculties are strengthened by the surrender of actions, thoughts, feelings into the hands of the pure energy which distributes them to the proper centres.

आदित्यान् .. तान् हि. Hi is here simply emphatic, not causal & the tan refers back to देवा of the last line. The Adityas, sons of Aditi, the infinite existence in the paravat, parardha or higher being of man & the world.

उश्मसि. The word is from the root उश् and must therefore mean “desire, wish, yearning out, aspiration”. But these words do not exactly express the Vedic idea. It is that state of the Yогin

when existence reaches out after an effect or a fulfilment (*lipsa*); there is no corresponding word in English. The gods are often represented as ushatas, when they are called to the sacrifice. It is the movement towards a stronger existence or activity which we are conscious of in the faculties when the system has been brought into a fit state for the sacrificial action.

Translation.

May we have power to bear thee in the fullness of thy increase; perfect the faculties of our understanding; in thee when the offering is cast, it is enjoyed by the gods. Do thou bring hither those sons of Infinite Being in the self-extending aspiration of the soul. O Agni, secure in thy friendship may we come not to harm.

4. भरामेधं कृणवामा हर्विषि ते. May we bring or may we load on the altar the fuel of thy burning — idhma, that by which thou increasest, may we make the offerings to thee. The idea of the inner sacrifice in the Veda is that what we possess, mentally, vitally, physically etc, our dhanani, have all to be offered to the divine force, Agni, to grow in us by devouring it. This is the idhma. To him who thus makes, havinshi, offerings to Agni, he returns tenfold the strength & joy that is given him, for, as Madhuchchhanda says in the first hymn of this Mandala, that is his satyam, his truth or vow to do good to the giver. In other words, whatever we surrender to the Divine Force, it returns to us in an increased wealth, in viryam, sahas, posha etc. Te with both इधं & हर्विषि.

चितयन्तः:.. The word may mean either to pile up (cf चिता) or become aware of, take into cognizance (cf चित्तं).

पर्वणापर्वणा. The word is from the root पृ, to fill, by gunation and the addition of the compound suffix वण. पर्व & पर्वन् are the brother forms. In the sense of holy day पर्वन् must have originally meant either the same as पूर्णिमा or else a filling up day, a connecting day; so it means also the connecting joint. पर्व in the sense of chapter means a “completed” part. In I.9.1. the expression सोमपर्वभिः must mean with the fullnesses of the

nectar. चितयन्तः must certainly mean heaping here, and पर्वणापर्वणा describes the offerings that are heaped on the altar. Does it mean then “Heaping up all our inner possessions alike, complete and incomplete, perfected and imperfected”?

जीवातवे. For increase of life, of vitality & perhaps length of days — a frequent prayer of the Vedic Rishis who followed unhesitatingly the rule of the Isha Upanishad, jijivishech chhatam samah.

प्रतरं swiftly, or else forcibly.

साधया धियो. The same prayer as in the third verse. There is no reason to interpret धियो otherwise than faculties of धी, the discerning mind. As every Yогin knows, length of life can be assured by liberation of the mental movements from the sanskaras of disease and death.

Translation.

May we heap the fuel of thee and make the offerings heaping them up both complete and incomplete; forcefully for the life perfect the faculties of our understanding; O Agni, secure in thy friendship may we come not to harm.

5. He is the protector of the peoples, by his drivings all living beings range whether the two-footed or the four-footed; thou art the various perception of the Dawn, mighty art thou; O Agni, secure in thy friendship may we come to no harm.

विशां ie the various kinds of creatures. From चि to come into being, appear, be born.

अक्तुभिः. From अज् to act forcibly, work, drive. Gr. ἄγω & Latin ago. Aktu must therefore mean either workings, cf ago, I act, or drivings, cf ἄγω, I drive; and, since the verb is चरन्ति, the latter must be accepted. Agni is the Master of Tapas or World-force. It is by the drivings, the impulsions of that Force that all creatures move.

चित्रः. The word has the sense of various, but with the idea of curiosities or richness, from चि meaning to divide & to

accumulate. It is the Greek ποικίλος.

प्रकेतः केतः is perception, प्रकेतः perception going forward to the object that presents itself. In Usha, the Dawn of Knowledge, Being or Joy objects of experience present themselves and Agni as Force that is Awareness dwells on all of them & knows them minutely & perfectly. He is not only Force of Action but also Force of Knowledge, jatavedas.

महान्. There is an evident reference to महस्, the ideal knowledge. It is because Agni is great with the wideness of Mahas or vijnana, ideal knowledge, that he is chitra, so rich & various in his perception in the prajnana, mental knowledge.

6. Thou art the Adhwaryu and the Hota also from of old, the controller & purifier of beings, the Purohita; thou knowest, O wise one, all the functions of the Ritwik & (by that knowledge) increasest; O Agni, secure in thy friendship, may we come not to harm.

अध्वर्यु. We find here the names of different priestly functions in the sacrifice applied to Agni, the master of Tapas. He is usually spoken of as the Hota, he who offers the sacrifice, and often as the Purohita, he who stands in front as the personal representative of the sacrificer. In I.1.1. he is spoken of in addition as the Ritwik — देवमृत्विजं.ऋत्विक् is usually derived from ऋतु + इज् and supposed to mean one who sacrifices in season. But this would apply equally to every priest in the sacrifice. The names Purohita, Hota, Brahma, Udgata etc all apply to particular functions & bear that function on their face. It must be the same with Adhwaryu & Ritwik. ऋत्विक् is either from ऋतु + इज् in the sense of one who knows the laws, rules or rituals of the sacrifice; or from ऋत् + विज् in the sense of Knower of truth, Knower of the law. Both the इ roots & the वि family bear the significance of knowledge. In the former the sense is comparatively rare & has been handed over to other verbs expressing motion, गम् in its compounds & या; but we still have इक्ष् & इष् in the sense of seeing, & the goddess इळा in the Vedas is the power of Revelation. Similarly अध्वर्यु from अध्वर was originally the priest especially

in charge of the materials of the oblation. प्रशास्ता and पोता also refer to sacrificial functions, the direction by controlling word of the ritual and the purification of the offerings. We can see how these functions are all combined in Agni. He is the hota, for Tapas is the chief agent both of action and of surrender to the divine power. He is adhwaryu, because he is dravinoda, it is Tapas which supplies all forms in the Universe & all forces and maintains them. He is prashasta; tapas controls & directs the actions of all creatures. He is pota, is pavaka; tapas of Chit supplies the knowledge & moral force which purify. He is purohita; Tapas is the agent of all our activity, which stands in front for the Purusha & does his works. He is ritwik; as jatavedas, tapas of Chit knows & arranges all action in its proper place and season.

जनुषा. From जन्, as मनुष् from मन्. All things born, all creatures: the accusative after प्रशास्ता and पोता. The word shows that Kutsa is regarding all world-existence as one great sacrifice to the divine powers.

आत्मिज्या. Accusative after विद्वान्. The functions of knowledge which are the basis of action.

धीर. From धा to hold & arrange. Connected with धी, the mind as that which holds & arranges stuff of knowledge. Dhira indicates a steady & discerning knowledge. By this steady & discerning frame of mind tapas or pure force increases in the soul (पुष्यसि).

7. Thou who art everywhere in thy beauty and hast vision, discerning afar, shinest exceedingly like the lightning, thou seest, O god, beyond the darkness of the night. O Agni, secure in thy friendship may we come not to harm.

सुप्रतीकः. With a beautiful face. सदृशः. With the sight of the higher vision, drishti. प्रतीक is that which faces or confronts—so a face or figure. Agni as divine Tapas is everywhere, a thing of beauty & delight behind all being in activity. Agni as force of knowledge is like a flash of lightning brilliantly illuminating

everything, speeding to the utmost distance, flashing through & beyond the thickness of the night.

अंधस्. The अ roots signify intrinsically general existence, being. अंध्, अद्, अध्, the dental combinations give the idea of firm consistency, substantial existence & easily come to give such meanings as density, gross existence, matter, food. We have from अद्, अन्नं in the sense of gross matter, as well as अदिति, Existence; from अध् a lost अधस् matter, food, still found in Greek ἔθος, ἔθος, pasture (अधस्, आधस्), hence the lower or material world, अच्वर्, the material oblation, material, the material existence; from अंध्, अन्ध्य blind (originally thick, dark), अन्धस् thickness, thick darkness, food, matter.

8. May ours, O ye gods, be the pristine delight of him who expresses (the nectar), may strong self-expression be with us; that word do ye know & in that word increase. O Agni, secure in thy friendship, may we come to no harm.

रथः. It is evident that रथः here is not chariot, since there can [be] no meaning in praying to the gods for an old chariot; on the other hand ratha in v. 10, where the sense of a chariot is evident, clearly recalls the रथः of this verse. This passage is, therefore, an excellent indication of the symbolic nature of the divine chariots in the Veda. रथः may mean etymologically either swift motion, from which the sense, chariot, arises, or strong emotion esp. delight, ecstasy, cf रति, राति (pleasure, delight), रायः, रा॒ः (felicity), रः (love, desire), रंसु (delightful); रंज्, रक्त etc, रंगः, रागः; रजस् (rajoguna); रणः: delight, joy; रम्, राम, रत etc; रस pleasure, taste, delight; रासलीला; रभस which still keeps in Bengali its original sense of ecstasy; रक्ष & राधस् in the Veda have the same sense, as will be shown elsewhere. रक्षस्, राक्षस, the name रावणः had originally the same sense & meant indulgence in violent aggressive satisfaction of the impulses. Other common senses of the र root family are strong dazzling light, and loud thrilling or piercing sound. The root is a violent root, expressive of strong vibrations of all kinds in being but not of the most violent. The sense of Ananda seldom leaves it, the sense of force & vibration

never. रथ has other meanings, eg reed, fighter & must have meant also fighting, etc, but “ecstasy, delight” and “chariot” are its common Vedic senses. This ratha or strong vibrating ananda is the chariot of Agni, the vehicle of the divine Tapas. For Tapas in the Vedic system descends through Ananda and it is in Ananda that it pours itself through the world. Therefore there is no action which has not as its basis some kind of pleasure, the stronger the delight, the greater the force of action, provided always that the system can bear the vibration. The Purva ratha may mean either full, supreme delight or the pristine delight of the soul before it is stained by imperfections, when it enjoys its Brahma-state avraman, unwounded. In any case, the sense is full or supreme delight.

सुन्वतो. Throughout the Veda in connection with the word सोम, the wine symbolic of the joy of immortality, the nectar or ichor that flows in the bodies of the gods in place of blood, the root सु is used in a double sense of production, distilling and of good, pleasure, happiness as in सु, सोम्य, सोमन्, सुवन etc. We find both senses in सोम, सूनुः, etc.

शंसो. Another fundamental word of Vedic psychology. The proper meaning of शस् is to cut, pierce; it is used of sharp, swift & trenchant motion, action, pressure, feeling etc. We have शश् to leap, शष् to hurt, injure, kill; शक्तिः the orifice of the ear; शस्प loss of intellect; शस् to cut, kill, destroy, शसनं, शस्ति, शस्त्रं etc; शास् to punish, hence to rule, govern, tame, subdue, to teach. From this fundamental sense came the idea of shooting out, piercing one's way into appearance, like a plant; eg शस्य corn, grain; and so it came to mean expression,—expression in speech, praise etc, expression in being, self-expression, & from these last senses gave such meanings as शस्ति excellence, happiness, best, right; शस्तं the body. The nasal form शंस् had the same senses; to hurt, injure, revile; to praise, express, declare, show; etc. These roots also indicate wish, desire. The tradition of the old Vedic meaning “expression” of anything in the being, has been lost to tradition, but it still remains stamped on the Veda. It would be possible here to translate शंसो as praise and

दुःशंसौ in the next verse as evil-speakers, especially in view of the तद् वचः in the second line of this shloka. The Rishi must then be supposed to say, “May I have the former or old delight, may our energetic praise (of Agni?) attain it; know that word of praise & increase by it. By blows, kill energetically the evil speakers and opponents & the devourers”, — a comprehensive massacre! It is not that these translations cannot be made, but that they make no coherent sense, have no inherent plausibility to make up for their random & rambling character & only succeed in making a mass of barbarous nonsense out of the Veda. The real sense is, “Give me the old perfect ecstasy; let there be with it an energetic or forceful expression of the divine being in me; do you, the gods, know that expression (that is to say, embrace it in your consciousness) & by it increase. All who oppose destroy & so make the path to the fulfilment of this inner yajna easy, swift & safe.” This is a coherent sense & well in touch with what comes before & what follows.

दूद्यः: is either a verbal adjective like कार्य from a root दूद् or a nominal adjective from a noun दूदः. Its use twice in this passage is of a kind favourable to the nominal force. The root दू has as its common and characteristic force the idea of a violent, impetuous or troubling activity and taken in connection with रथः and जहि in the next verse we may suppose it to mean “forcible, impetuous, strong or overpowering”. It is a chanda and not a saumya ecstasy & expansion of being that Kutsa demands from Agni, one violently overcoming all Asuric opposition of the spiritual enemies of the Yoga.

वचो. The roots वच् and उच् as also उद् and वद् mean properly, expression, expansion like शंस्, for this is the fundamental object of the U family of roots, wide or widening but unfinished being. Hence the sense of high swelling in उद् and उच्चः, of dawning in व्युच्छ्, the idea of wish, yearning in उश् and other roots. If we suppose वचस् here to preserve its original sense, we shall get an appropriate & coherent meaning, “Know ye this expression and increase.” Take cognisance of the shansa referred to in the previous line and make it your own by this

mental reception, enter into it & be nourished by it, increase in it.

9. Drive away with thy smitings impetuously those who are opposed to expansion, or such as from afar (stand) against me or all such as are devourers, then make an easy path for the sacrifice to express itself. O Agni, secure in thy friendship, may we come not to harm.

दुःशंसान्. This verse describes those Asuric forces which are opposed to our divine growth & manifestation. The **दुःशंसा:** are those who are identified with self-division & self-limitation, the sons of Diti who stand in the way of Aditi or infinite being & oppose the **शंस** referred to in the last verse.

जहि is, in the usage of later Sanscrit, the imperative of **हन्** but in origin it is evidently the imperative of **ज** to slay, strike. **अप जहि** means to strike away, to drive off by blows from the path.

अंति. Greek **ἀντί**, against.

अत्रिणः. From **अत्** to eat, devour — the devourers. The **दुःशंसा:** oppose self-expression by entering the system & limiting it; those who oppose from far-off try to prevent the action of the **शंसः**; the **अत्रिणः** go farther and seek to devour & destroy the **शंस** once gained. All these are enemies of the yajna.

यज्ञाय गृणते. This is an important passage for the sense of these two words. **यज्ञ** here is evidently the internal Yoga or tapas which is seeking with the help of the Gods who [are] fostered by its activities to express itself. **गृ** like many words used to mean “speech”, like **शंस्**, **वच्** & **वद्** means properly expression. Hence the easy confusion by which afterwards all these words were taken in the sense of “praise, prayer, speech”. If we take **गृणते** as “speaking”, we shall have to separate it from **यज्ञाय** with which it evidently goes and translate “a good path for the sacrifice for him who speaks”. Like all the ceremonialist interpretations it is highly awkward in expression & almost criminally feeble & disjointed. The idea is evidently of Yogic tapas in action expanding & moving to its goal over a path beset by hostile

forces. Agni is to drive them from the path & make the शंस smooth & easy.

10. When thou hast yoked the rosy and scarlet-red to the car driven by the Wind, thy cry is like a bull's; thou ravagest the forest-places of delight with thy flag of smoke, O Agni, secure in thy friendship may we not come to harm.

अरुषा. The rose-red horses of Agni are physically the red flames, psychically the movements of love. In the Yogic signs rose is the colour indicative of love, scarlet, the colour of physical passion, kama. When Tapas pours itself out in prema and kama, yokes there its steeds of speed & strength to the car of delight, then the cry of its force & joy is like a bull's bellowing in the ananda of its strength.

वनिनः: forest-places, understanding देशान् in the image; delightful things or persons in the fact imaged. The idea is that of Ananda enjoying the delight of love & beauty of all beautiful things & people with the full ecstatic force of the strong universal love & delight, आदिन्चसि, there is the idea in दि of breaking up to enjoy, ravaging with the soul's kisses of love so as to enjoy every detail of the enjoyable.

धूमकेतुना. Ketu is perception or a means of perception, a badge, signal or flag. धूमः: from धू to trouble, shake, agitate, be agitated, vehement, move excitedly or with gusts, meant not only smoke, incense, but also wind and passion (Gr. θυμός). From the sense of wind it came to mean prana as the seat of passion & desire. The Greek θυμός meant originally prana or the emotional mind, then the movements of the prana & chitta, passion, anger, feeling. For the same reason smoke is the sign in Yoga of the prana in the human system. The horses of love & kama are driven by Vata or Vayu, the force of prana, वातजूता; the signal of Agni's enjoyment is the smoke or strong movement of prana in physical delight.

[17]

[RV I.140]

Dirghatamas' Hymn to Agni I.140.

1. Offer like a secure seat that womb to Agni the utterly bright who sits upon the altar and his abode is bliss; clothe with thought as with a robe the slayer of the darkness who is pure and charioted in light and pure-bright of hue. (शुक्र = a white brightness.)

2. The twice-born Agni moves (intense) about his triple food; it is eaten and with the year it has grown again; with the tongue & mouth of the one (or with his tongue in the presence of the one) he is the strong master & enjoyer, with the other he engirdles & crushes in his embrace his delightful things. (मृश् is used of the sexual contact; वारणः from वृ to cover, surround.)

3. He gives energy of movement to both his mothers on their dark path, in their common dwelling, and both make their way through to their child (or following their child), for his tongue is lifted upward, he destroys and rushes swiftly through and should be cloven to, increasing his father.

(Explanation. Heaven & earth, Mind & body dwelling together in one frame or in one material world move in the darkness of ignorance, they pass through it by following the divine Force which is born to their activities. कृपये is of doubtful significance. The father is the Purusha or else Heaven in the sense of the higher spiritual being.)

4. For the thinker becoming man his swift-hastening impulsions dark & bright desire freedom; unequal, active, rapid-quivering, they are yoked to their works, swift steeds and driven forward by the Breath of things.

5. They for him destroy & speed lightly on (or speed & pervade) creating his dark being of thickness and his mighty form of light; when reaching forward he touches the Vast of Being, he pants towards it and, thundering, cries aloud. (महीमवनि might mean the vast earth, but अवनि & even पृथिवी are not used in the Veda invariably, the former not usually, to mean earth,

but stray or return to their original sense — सप्त अवनयः.)

6. He who when he would become in the tawny ones, bends down and goes to them bellowing as the male to its mates,— putting out his force he gives joy to their bodies (or he makes blissful the forms of things) and like a fierce beast hard to seize he tosses his horns. (बभूषु, the cows, अरुणयः of a later verse — knowledge in the mortal mind.)

7. He whether contracted in being or wide-extended seizes on them utterly; he knowing, they knowing the eternal Agni lies with them, then again they increase and go to the state divine; uniting, another form they make for the Father & Mother.

8. Bright with their flowing tresses they take utter delight of him, they who were about to perish, stand upon high once more for his coming. (ममृषीः is uncertain. It may be dead or dying. रेमिरे = delight is here perfectly proved.) For he loosens from them their decay and goes to them shouting high, he creates supreme force and unconquerable life.

9. Tearing about her the robe that conceals the Mother he moves on utterly to the Delight with the creatures of pure Being who manifest the Force; he establishes wideness, he breaks through to the goal for this traveller, even though swiftly rushing, he cleaves always to the paths. (रिहन्, रेरहत् are uncertain.)

10. Burn bright for us, O Agni, in our fullnesses, be henceforth the strong master and inhabit in us with the sisters; casting away from thee those of them that are infant minds thou shouldst burn bright encompassing us all about like a cuirass in our battles. (श्वसि: is the Greek χάσις and an old variant of श्वसृ — wife or sister. Therefore it is coupled with वृषा — like पत्नी.)

11. This, O Agni, is that which is well-established upon the ill-placed; even out of this blissful mentality may there be born to thee that greater bliss. By that which shines bright & pure from thy body, thou winnest for us the delight.

12. Thou givest us, O Agni, for chariot & for home a ship travelling with eternal progress of motion that shall carry our strong spirits and our spirits of fullness across the births and across the peace.

13. Mayst thou, O Agni, about our Word for thy pivot bring to light for us Heaven & Earth and the rivers that are self-revealed; may the Red Ones reach to knowledge and strength & long days of light, may they choose the force and the supreme good.

Mandala Two

[18]

[RV II.4.1–5]

II.4.

Hymn to Agni attributed to Somahuti Bhargava.

1. सुवृक्तिः. Sayana gives his two alternatives, “released from sins” (सुवर्जितं पापैः) or “having good praise”. Both of these senses are artificial. सुवृक्तिः (not वृक्तिः as Sayana’s interpretation would demand) is undoubtedly used for a hymn, but in a special aspect of the hymn. The word may come either from वर्च् or वर्ज् and must either be equivalent to सुवर्चः or to सुवृजन. The present passage in which it is connected with सुद्योत्मानं seems to point to the former sense.

सुप्रयसं. Sy. “having good food”. प्रयः from प्री to be pleased = pleasure, satisfaction and is coupled with मयः: bliss, happiness. Agni is the प्रिय अतिथि because he is अतिथिः सुप्रयाः, a force of work inhabiting us that gives perfect pleasure as the result of the working. Because he is सुप्रयाः, therefore he is मित्र इव. All these expressions must be taken in sequence. Agni is a force of will resident in man that gives a perfect light (सुद्योत्मानं) and therefore perfect energy of light (वर्चः = तेजः) and therefore perfect pleasure (सुप्रयसं); because he has these three qualities he is like Mitra, the Friend of Creatures, the lord of light, love & harmony, who has the capacity of holding (दिधिषाय्यो) all things in their proper place & relation, & this he does on each plane of man because he is जातवेदाः, knower of all the planes of the soul on which it is successively born. Or else दिधिषाय्यो means who has to be held in man as Mitra. This is better as it gives a better connection in sense with the verses that follow.

देव आदेवे जने. Divine in man who reflects the divinity. Sayana says “in all creatures up to the gods”; but cf IV.1.1. मत्येष्वा देवमादेवं जनत प्रचेतसं विश्वमादेवं जनत प्रचेतसं, “They gave being in mortals to the god as the reflected divinity who has the *prajnana*, the universal reflected divinity conscious in knowledge.” This is the sense of आ in आ कृ & आ भू as applied to the gods who are formed or become in mortals; that is to say, they throw there their reflected image or being which is shaped in himself by man.

Sayana. I call for you Agni, the well-shining, well-praised or, *well-abandoned* (by sin), well-fooded guest of people,— the god who as a friend, or, as the Sun becomes the holder in (all) beings up to the gods, the knower of things born.

For you I call on the God-Will, guest of the peoples with his perfect light, his perfect energy, his perfect pleasures, he who becomes as the Lord of Love & Harmony, and has to be held in man as the god in the creature born who reflects in him the godhead and knows all his births.

2. अपां सधस्थे. Sy. सहस्थाने — the place where the waters are together = the antariksha. सधस्थे = place of session & is used in the sense of world. This सधस्थ is the world or seat of the waters and may refer either to the upper or lower ocean. Here, however, it must necessarily indicate the upper ocean.

द्विता doubly, in their manifest human & their secret divine parts.

भृगवः. Sy. The Maharsis who preceded us. These are the Ancestors (the Gritsamadas are Bhargavas); as the Angirasas are powers of Agni, so the Bhrigus are powers of Surya.

आयोः. Sy. man = yajamana & vikshu = प्रजासु = his offspring = the ritwiks! Obviously विक्षु आयोः = मानुषीसु विक्षु in the next line and means mankind in general, not the Ritwiks.

विश्वानि भूमा. Sy. takes विश्वानि = all enemies and भूम = भूम्ना = अत्यर्थ. All this learned ingenuity is entirely wasted. भूम either = all the worlds or all the largenesses, that is the divine worlds from महस् upwards.

अरतिः. Sy. ईश्वरः or शीघ्रमरणशीलः. अरणशीलः (there is no शीघ्रं) is correct, but the idea of the root अर् includes not only

movement, but battle, aspiration & labour. Agni has been set by the gods in man as the worker & fighter to raise him up to immortality. Cf IV.1.1. देवमरतिं न्येरिरे .. मत्येष्वा देवं जनत प्रचेतसं.

जीराश्वः जृ has three senses, 1. rapidity, 2. waste, destruction as in जरा old age, and 3. enjoyment, love, adoration as in जारः, जरिता.

Sayana's rendering. The Bhrigus serving him held him in the meeting place of the waters (antariksha) in the people (the Ritwiks) of the man (the Yajamana) and from the place of the two; may he, swift-horsed, the lord of the gods (or, the swift-mover among the gods) overcome very much all (enemies).

I confess I cannot make any sense of Sayana's rendering. I render:

"Him setting in the order of the sacrifice the Shining Ancestors established in the session of the waters and doubly in the peoples of man. May this (flame) with his rapid steeds, the toiler for the gods, take possession of all the vast worlds."

The sense is that the Ancestors who incarnated or typified the powers of the luminous Truth have established him in his right place in the sacrifice in such a way that he pervades the upper ocean, to the superconscious existence, and occupies two places in man, his conscious mortal being and his secret divine being. In the mortal man he drives the rapid swiftnesses of the vital strength upwards to the ocean of the superconscious, for he is the aspiring toiler set here to that end by the gods. Let him then so rise and take possession for man of all the vastnesses, the different worlds of the divine existence.

3. क्षेष्यंतो. S. takes in a double sense, first, as applied to the gods = when about to go to their home, then as proper to the simile = as men going for wealth leave a friend to guard their house. प्रियं S. says = giving pleasure to the gods. This is ingenious; but the Rishi is merely taking up the idea already given in verse 1, सुप्रयसं मित्र इव यो दिधिषास्यः. The gods have set him in man as a power of love or a power that satisfies because they mean by him to set Mitra in his home; that is to say this Force contains the secret Power of Love & Harmony and as it rises to the Truth,

the home of that Power, reveals itself as that. Cf VI.2.1. त्वं हि क्षेतवद्यशोऽर्ने मित्रो न पत्यसे — cf VI.3.1. यं त्वं मित्रेण वरुणः सजोषाः पासि. Meanwhile he shines in the Nights, the states of human ignorance,— the Rishi goes on to say,— because he has Mitra's light of Truth as well as his power of Love; these darkened states are full of desire which Agni satisfies by his pleasantness which increases with his light. Being a power of light, it is full of the power of discernment, दक्षाय्यः, which belongs to "Mitra of the purified discernment".

दीदयत्. S. shines in the Nights that desire or else "illuminates the Nights".

दक्षाय्यः. S. समर्धयिता or दाता. दक्ष means discernment, cf Greek δόξα, δοκεῖω etc, skill, capacity, cf दक्ष, दक्षिण or else strength. The original sense is to "divide", & from this we can get the sense of discerning, that of destruction and therefore of martial strength, and that of giving which S. here very unnecessarily suggests.

दमे. S. the यागगृह. Rather the human system, the house of the soul.

Sayana's rendering. The gods established Agni who satisfies them among the human peoples when they were about to seek their home as men departing to seek wealth establish a friend; he shines in (or, illuminates) the desiring nights, who is a giver for the giver of the offering in his house (of sacrifice).

I render. "Agni the gods have set in the human peoples, a satisfying friend, as seeking to bring Mitra to his home; he illuminates the desire of the billowing Nights, he who for the giver of the sacrifice dwells in his house as a power of discernment."

The purpose of the gods and the action of Agni thus expressed explain verse 2. The vast worlds are the home of Mitra; in taking possession of them Agni is fulfilling the purpose of the gods in setting him here as well as the arrangement made by the Bhrigus; he is bringing Mitra to his home. And he is able to do this because he has the light & joy of those worlds in him; he is the intermediary who brings that light from the divine into the human; he shines illuminating with it our dark states of ignorance and for the sacrificer who makes him his envoy to the gods, he bridges the gulf and turns this light of obscurity into

the very divine discernment even here in this mortal body (दमे). He also turns, as we see in the next verse, the mortal satisfaction & pleasure (प्रिय, प्रयः) into the divine delight.

4. रण्वा. S. रमणीया or शब्दयुक्ता. It is difficult to understand why S. suggests this alternative meaning which makes sheer nonsense of the verse. रण्वा, delightful, takes up & develops the idea in प्रियं & सुप्रयसं. The increase of the Force is a delight and as it were the increase of one's own self.

संदृष्टिः: Either “the vision of him is of one speeding & burning” or “his vision is that of one speeding to his goal and seeking to discern”. दक्षोः seems to refer back to दक्षाय्यः in the last line & in that case must have a kindred sense.

भरिभ्रद्. S. विहरति = कंपयति. It is rather the “carrying” (भृ) forward & backward of the flame; the complete reduplication suggests this constant or repeated motion; the word is a contraction for भरिभरत्.

दोधवीति वारान्. S. shakes his tail (hairs) to get rid of biting flies; but this makes a meaningless ornament. धू (धव) means any violent & impetuous movement; shaking, pouring, streaming, running. The root धाव् to run was originally no independent root, but only a modified form of धू. When the language became less fluid, धू was fixed in the sense of shaking, धाव् in that of running, but in the Veda the community of significance has not yet been lost. दोधवीति = runs & takes up the idea in हियानस्य which already suggests the figure of the horse so constantly applied to Agni & Soma. वार will then = वारं, supreme boons, blessings, the desirable things of the Vedic discipline. In the Veda the fluid variation between masculine & neuter is sufficiently common.

Sayana's rendering. Delightful is his increase as of the sacrificer himself and his appearance as he spreads & burns, he who shakes his tongue of flame among the plants (logs), as a chariot-horse shakes his tail.

Note that in Sayana's rendering the स्वस्येव is absolutely forced & inappropriate. What is meant by saying that the increase & appearance of the fire on the logs is as pleasant (or as resonant) as that of the sacrificer himself? I render:

“Delightful is his increasing and is as that of one’s own being and he has the vision of one hastening (on his path) and seeking to discern; when he darts to & fro his tongue upon the growths of earth (lit. heat-holders) he is as the galloping chariot-horse and is running towards the supreme boons.”

The sense is that the growth of the Force is a delight & is as if the growth of one’s own being; his light, his vision is that of a power in us hastening like a horse towards a goal,—the kshaya of Mitra, the viçvani bhuma,—and seeking to discern. This force is constantly satisfying our desires & increasing its own heat by enjoying the objects of our material life imaged as the growths of earth, the plants that hold the heat of life and by eating which we get that vital heat & force into us; but in all this action of devouring desire the Force acts as the Steed of Life yoked to our chariot and is hastening always towards the supreme boons, the objects of a higher desire. This mortal enjoyment is to be strengthened & purified till the Strength is ready to convert it into the immortal. This is done, as the Rishi goes on to state in the next two verses, by the Power lifting itself from vital desire into mental knowledge. The capacity & the attempt to discern (दक्षाय्यः, दक्षोः) has to arrive at pure mental knowledge (चिकिते .. चिकेत द्यौरिव).

5. यत्. S. says यत् = यस्य. Such a violent conversion is wholly unnecessary. यत् means, as so often, “when” or “because”.

अभ्यं. S. महत्त्वं. अभ्य means anything vast, vague, chaotic as in अभ्यविहित, “covered up in chaos”. द्यावो न यस्य पनयन्त्यभ्यं भासांसि वस्ते सूर्यो न शुक्रः VI.4.3.

वनदः. Sayana connects this with मे and says this means either the enjoyers connected with me (an awkward construction only possible to the most bungling & incompetent writers) or else वनदः = अवनदः, that is, those who make a big noise = the praisers! It means obviously either the seekers or the givers of enjoyment, probably the former, and refers either to the gods or to the powers in man that aspire to the bliss (वारान्).

आ पनंत. S. praised from all sides. I take पन् in the Veda to mean “do, deal, work, labour”, cf Gr. πόνος, पणि dealer,

trafficker, Tamil *pañ*, to do, act. Although this sense is not preserved in Sanscrit, it certainly existed in the root and may have still existed in the Vedic times. “Praise” in many passages gives no appropriate sense.

उशिग्भ्यो नामिमीत वर्णः. Sayana takes न = च, उशिग्भ्यः = those who desire my form, वर्णः = a form like his own, मिमीत = निर्मिते. We get then “whose greatness my makers of a big sound (praisers) praise and he makes a form like his own for those who desire my form.” I confess that I can make no shadow of sense out of this rendering.

वर्णः. This word seems to me to be used in two different senses, first, colour, appearance, (lit. surface from वृ to cover), secondly, as here, the supreme world or heaven, whether from वृ to cover, spread as in वरुण (sea or ether) or from वृ to choose, as in वार. In the latter case it means “the supreme desirable state” or “desirable world”. उशिग्भ्यो न, as to them desiring = according to their desire, and the sense will be, “Because or when the seekers of delight laboured at my chaotic being, he forms (in it) according to their desire its supreme desirable state.” The last verse describes the labour of Agni hastening through mortal desire to the supreme delight; this verse gives the transformation, the attainment.

रंसु. Sayana takes as locative plural, in the pleasant things, ie ghee, etc; this seems to me forced & improbable. I believe रंसु must be taken as an adjective, formed from the root रस् nasalised + उ or the root रम् + सु = that which is delightful as प्रियं is used for pleasure in general.

चिकिते. Sayana takes as passive, “he is distinguished by his many-coloured light in the pleasant things”, — a clumsy way indeed of expressing the sense. I take as the middle voice = he comes to knowledge of that which is delightful by his varied light.

Mandala Three

[19]

[RV III.1.1–12]

Rigveda. Mandala III.

I. Viswamitra's Hymn to Agni.

1. सोमस्य मा तवसं वक्षि अग्ने वह्निं चकर्थ विदधे यजच्छै।
देवानच्छा दीद्यदुंजे अद्रिं शमाये अने तन्वं जुषस्व॥१॥

Sayana renders the sloka — O Agni, since thou for sacrificing in the sacrifice hast made me the bearer of the Soma, therefore desire me who am powerful. O Agni, I shining towards the gods apply the stone (for pressing the Soma) and become calm (or praise). O Agni, cleave to my body (for protection) or cleave to me who am carrying out works.

A confused & incoherent rendering. Moreover सोमस्य introducing the sentence मा तवसं वक्षि cannot be shunted into the later sentence वह्निं चकर्थ from which it is entirely divided by the verb वक्षि; nor is there anything in the text to justify the construction यन्मां चकर्थ तन्मां वक्षि. The rendering of वक्षि as कामयस्व makes no good sense and is needless since वक्षि can be as well from वह्नि to bear as from वश् to desire. There is no connection of sense between the application of the stone to its work of Soma-pressing and the resultant calmness of the sacrificer. “Praise” for शमाये, Sayana’s alternative rendering, makes a better sense. Then, what sense has the cleaving of Agni to the body of the sacrificer in a physical sacrifice? Therefore Sayana does well to suggest another rendering. But तन्वं always means body in the Rigveda.

शमाये. For his alternative rendering “praise”— note how every word has to be forced into a ritualistic sense, praise, food,

priest etc, which it does not naturally bear,—Sayana quotes Rigveda VI.1.9 सो अग्न ईजे शशमे च मर्तः; but there the sense of acquiring stillness is as possible & better than the ritualist rendering, O Agni, therefore I sacrifice and become thereby still in my mortal being.

अद्वि. Sayana's rendering connects well with the idea of the physical Soma offering, but अद्वि occurs in a host of passages where it cannot mean the stone of the Soma-distilling.

The final phrase अग्ने तन्वं जुषस्व points clearly to a moral sense for the sacrifice, since only as the god of pure tapas can Agni cleave to the body of the sacrificer and not as the god of physical fire. I render:—

“Sustain me, O Agni, with strength for the Soma; thou hast made me the bearer of it in the knowledge (Vidya) for action of sacrifice; flaming up towards the gods I yoke to them my (material) being and grow still within. Cleave, O Agni, to my body.”

The sense is clear and each word bears the unvarying sense I give it in the theosophic rendering of the Veda. Soma is the symbol of Ananda, विद्या is Vidya, the higher knowledge; the sacrifice is the offering of the realised Ananda to the gods of the higher life. Every other word, also, bears its plain & natural sense.

Agni, the pure tapas, has made the sacrificer, Viswamitra, by establishing him in the higher knowledge, a fit vessel for the divine Ananda which is to be offered up in Yogic action & enjoyment to the gods. He calls upon the god to sustain his lower parts and maintain him in full strength for that divine burden. Then, sustained by Agni, his whole nature flames up in divine force from its natural mortality towards the divinity of the gods and he attains that pure stillness of the mind & life-energies which is the foundation of the higher life. He prays to Agni to cleave to his body, that is, to dwell constantly as pure divine tapas in his corporeal & mortal being so as to sustain permanently that higher life.

2. प्रांचं यज्ञं चकृम वर्धतां गीः समिद्धिरग्निं नमसा दुवस्यन्।
दिवः शशासुर्विदथा कवीनां गृत्साय चित्तवसे गातुमीषुः॥२॥

Sayana renders the mantra — O Agni, we have performed a sacrifice which goes entirely; may my hymn of praise increase; our people served Agni with fuel and the oblation. The gods came down from heaven and taught knowledge (or hymns) to the praisers and to Agni praiseworthy and increased the praisers desire also to sing.

Comment on this is superfluous; it is sheer incoherent futility. Grammatically also, it is impossible that there should be three different unexpressed subjects for the verbs दुवस्यन्, शशासुः and ईषुः. Note that in this verse Sayana is compelled to take विदथा in a different sense from his rendering of it in the first verse; he is compelled to give the natural meaning knowledge, but still cannot forsake his ritualism & at once offers his usual rendering for every word he can press into that sense, स्तोत्राणि. He takes कवि in the sense of “praisers”, “makers of hymns”, approaching to its modern sense, poets; but कवि in the Veda means a seer and not a poet,— a seer, that is to say, one who has the direct ideal knowledge of the vijnana, as distinguished from those who have mentally acquired knowledge, manishí. विदथा कवीनां can only mean the realisations of (ideal) knowledge possessed by the seers.

In my rendering I take, as usual, प्रांचं in the sense of “higher, supreme” = परांचं, दुवस्यन् in the sense of “made active”, नमस् of submission or adoration, गृत्साय of “eager, desirous to acquire”. गीः is the goddess Vak who expresses the विदधा, समित् the activities by which pure Tapas is fed, दिवः the realm of pure mind. दिवः may be a locative genitive, from the heaven of pure mind or depend on vidatha. The past tenses here I take as having the sense of habitual action always done in the past & still done.

“We have offered the high sacrifice, let Speech increase in us; by the fuel of their activities, by devout submission men have set Agni to his workings, they have taught the realisations of heaven of the seers, yea, they have had power to chant them to the man who hungers after them & has strength (to bear their force).”

Viswamitra has offered the supreme sacrifice of the Ananda to the gods; he prays that as a result the power of divine speech by which men chant the Vedic knowledge in these inspired poems may grow in him; for it is so that men have always prevailed (ishuh) to sing the Veda in the past. They have given the activities of their being to the divine & infinite Force of God as its fuel, they have submitted themselves devoutly to that Force not interfering by the lower egoistic personal effort, then has it worked in them & done its miracles; then they have taught to mankind those realisations of the ideal planes which have been revealed in or from the pure heaven of mind to the Vedic sages and have had power to express them in divine song for the soul which hungers after the Vedic knowledge and has the force to receive and assimilate it.

3. मयो दधे मेधिरः पूतदक्षो दिवः सुबंधुर्जनुषा पृथिव्याः ।
अविंदन्तु दर्शतमप्स्वंतर्दवासो अग्निमपसि स्वसृणाम् ॥ ३ ॥

Sayana: — Intelligent, pure in strength, a good friend from his birth, Agni, who disposes bliss of heaven & earth, the gods found that beautiful Agni within the waters of the flowing streams in (for?) the work (of bearing the sacrifice). अपसि & स्वसृणाम् obviously go together and there is no necessity or room for Sayana's rendering of the latter, सरणशीलानाम्; the sense "sisters" is proved by युवतयः स्यानीः of the sixth mantra.

I render: — "Wide in mental capacity, purified in discernment he, the perfect friend, has established Beatitude by his birth in heaven & on earth; within the waters the gods found Agni of glorious beauty (or, the seer), in the work of the sisters."

Pure divine tapas in man, says Viswamitra, equipped with the full capacity of the mind and a power of discernment purified from the errors & disorder of the lower mortality, establishes, as soon as it can manifest, the divine bliss of Sachchidananda both in the purified mind & in the purified body of this mortal. Viswamitra then enlarges the word जनुषा by the usual Vedic symbolisms which recur almost in the same language in so many hymns. This divine tapas is hidden, not born, not manifested, in

the waters of our sevenfold being, in the working of the seven sisters, the seven states of our consciousness which begin from Sat the pure state of conscious being & descend to Bhuh, its material state. The gods, that is to say, the great powers which work in our being to uplift the mortal to divinity, find the hidden Force of God concealed in the secret working of these sisters & bring him to light in our waking consciousness.

4. अवर्धयन्त्सुभगं सप्त यद्वीः श्वेतं जज्ञानमरुषं महित्वा ।
शिंशुं न जातमभ्यारुरश्वा देवासो अग्निं जनिमन्वपुष्यन् ॥ ४ ॥

Sayana:— The seven flowing great (rivers) increased Agni of good wealth born bright and shining by his greatness. As mares(?) go to a child that is born, so did they; also the gods made Agni a brightness in his birth (or in the water).

I confess I do not understand the sense of Sayana's rendering and doubt if it has any.

सुभगं. भग means either enjoyment or splendour or what is enjoyed, & in the latter significance has various derivate meanings. We may take it either as describing Agni, the pure tapas, to be also full of Ananda or as referring back to दर्शत, if दर्शत means beautiful, in the sense of “shining gloriously”.

अरुषं. अरुष in the Veda means bright, and especially rosy-bright or rosy-red or simply bright red. We should then take the words of the text to mean, “white in his birth, rose red (or red) by (ie after) his growth to greatness”. We must remember that in Indian yoga which has all its roots in the Veda, there is a fixed symbolism of colours. White is the symbol of purity; the pure Sat, the inactive luminous Brahman is imaged in the Vedanta as of a white lustre, शुभ्रं, शुक्रं; Shiva is white; sattwaguna is white; on the other [hand] red is the colour of Brahma, the creator, of the rajoguna and symbolic of action, force, desire etc. The rose brings in the idea of love & delight into the idea of action. Agni is सुबन्धुः, सुभगः. If we accept, as we have already accepted in hypothesis, this Yogic symbolism as already formed in the times of Viswamitra, the sense of the image will be that Agni, the divine force, comes out white & pure from the state of non-

manifestation, but as it grows and casts itself on its object it assumes the hue & lustre of enjoyment and action. In the next verse we see a distinction drawn between the brightness of the body of Agni and the brightness which he wears as a robe which probably refers back to this distinction between श्वेतं and अरुषं, for, there, it is by his bright white limbs that he purifies the strength in man; it is when he wears his brilliant robe that he acts and builds up the glories of life.

आरुः. It is difficult to fix the meaning of this word. The sense of अर् is strong energy in being, action, motion, light etc; it means to lift, be high (Gr. αἴρω, ἄρδην, arduus), to plough, ἄροω, to fight, (Ares, arete, etc), to excel, to be swift, bright, as in अरुष. We must fall back on its connection with अश्वाः to determine its meaning in this passage. If अश्वाः could mean horses, Sayana would be right in taking आरुः as expressive of motion, “galloped towards”. But to take अश्वाः in the sense [of] horses results in this as in some other passages of Veda, in sheer futility. We must take अश्वाः in the sense of “strong ones, lords of force” and as an epithet of देवाः the gods. आरुः will then mean laboured over, increased or reared to strength. वपुष्यन् also means “gave him body, increased his substance”. A perfectly good sense then emerges.

I render, “The seven great currents increased him in his splendours, born white but rosy-red in his growth; the lords of strength laboured over him as over a newborn child, yea, the gods increased Agni in his body at his very birth.”

Again we have the familiar images. All the seven streams of consciousness give of the milk of their udders to increase this pure force of God that has been born in man, born white in its utter purity, but as it grows, it assumes the rosy hue of pure enjoyment & action; as soon as it is manifested, all the other divine powers are at work over it and increase it immediately in its substance. For it is said that Agni as soon as born grows at once to his full strength; divine force takes possession of its world & springs at once to maturity of power & action, unlike the hampered & slow growth of our limited mortal capacities.

5. शुक्रेभिरंगै रज आततन्वान् क्रतुं पुनानः कविभिः पवित्रैः ।
शोचिर्वसानः पर्यायुरपां श्रियो मिमीते बृहतीरनूनाः ॥५॥

Sayana:— Agni with his bright lustres pervading the mid-air, purifying the doer of works (the sacrificer) with intelligent (or praiseworthy) and purifying lustres, wearing brightness about him as a dress creates for the active performers of ritual food and large & perfect prosperities.

I object to this rendering that अंगैः means limbs and not lustres and should be so rendered, क्रतुं may mean mind (cf Tamil karuttu, thought) or will or strength, (cf Gr. kratos) but hardly a doer, the rendering praiseworthy or hymnable for कविः is an unnecessary violence and कांतप्रज्ञैस्तेजोभिः lustres with intelligence imparted to them is an absurdity. I cannot accept आयुः in the sense of food; आयुः from the ancient root आ to be, means life or being and nowhere in Veda is it necessary to take it in any other than its natural sense. Otherwise, the rendering is more coherent than is Sayana's wont. It means that the sacrificial fire when it pervades the air with its flames purifies the sacrificer & brings him great prosperity,— a simple & natural, if shallow sense, suitable to the ritualistic interpretation of Veda. Unfortunately, while intelligible in itself as a separate verse, the mantra so understood, sheds no light on its context with which it seems to have no earthly connection.

I take कविभिः in the sense of ideal illuminations. The words कृषि & कवि in the Veda mean a seer, but I think they are capable also of bearing the sense of the “knowledge” & this seems best to suit the context in several passages. The termination इ added to a root may give the sense of the action or state implied in the root or of the doer or instrument of action or possessor of the state, eg जनिः birth or a mother, छिदिः axe and cutting etc etc. So कविः the seer or the knowledge.

क्रतुः: That which does, the force, or in the mind, the mind-force or will, or the mind which possesses the force or will. “Mind” here gives the most obvious sense, but I think, in spite of this apparent probability, it is the will or strength in a man which is supposed to be purified by the divine force entering

it & illuminating its otherwise blind or half blind action with illuminations of ideality.

अपाम् अप् may mean “creative forces” or “works, actions” or “doers of works or actions” or else “waters”. I take परि as governing आयुः which gives us a better construction than the awkward coupling of आयुः & श्रियः as objects of मिमीते. “Throughout the being of the doers of works” or “throughout the being of the waters”, ie the seven streams of world-consciousness. As the whole passage is concerned with the working of Agni in these waters the latter sense seems to me, in spite of the tradition of Vedic scholars, far the more probable, although it makes a less superficially simple & attractive sense than the other rendering. Both however make good sense and fit into the context.

रजः is taken by Sayana = अंतरिक्षं. It means properly either light or kingdom.

श्रियः. I take श्री as equivalent in Veda to शक्ति. This, I think, was its original sense.

I render then:— “Extending himself through this kingdom with his pure bright limbs & purifying our strength with pure illuminations, wearing a robe of brilliance over all the being of the waters he builds up (measures out) vast & undefective powers.”

Agni, the divine Tapas, growing to fullness of body, extends himself in that body of bright purity through this kingdom of our mortal being and in doing so purifies our human strength by the illuminations of ideality which are pure of the disorder & errors of the mortal mind. He wears brilliance like a robe,— the various brilliance of Tapas poured into many kinds of workings, and builds up throughout the whole range of our sevenfold conscious being powers which are vast as proceeding from the infinity of the ideal consciousness, that mahas which is satyam ritam brihat, and not like our human & mental powers subject at every step to defect, narrowness, insufficiency & limitation.

6. वत्राजा सीमनदतीरदब्धा दिवो यहौरवसाना अनग्नाः ।
सना अत्र युवतयः सयोनीरेकं गर्भं दधिरे सप्त वाणीः ॥ ६ ॥

Sayana. Agni went from every side to the waters which are children of heaven, which neither devour him (as water quenches fire) nor are hurt by him (as fire evaporates water), are neither clothed nor naked; these seven rivers who are immortal & young (immortally young, always grown up) and have one place of residence (the mid-air) held one Agni in their wombs.

Sayana thinks the Rishi means that the rivers do not need to wear any dress because they are clothed with water & therefore not naked! I take वाणी here as equivalent to वनिता or वना.

He went all about the mighty streams of heaven, & they devoured not nor were overcome, clothed they were not, yet were they not naked; here the eternal damsels born of a common womb held, seven women, their one common child.

The divine force pervading this mortal kingdom with its bright limbs goes all about the sevenfold conscious being manifested in the heaven of pure mind, it fills our whole purified & liberated mentality with itself. Then these activities in us of mentalised infinite being, mentalised infinite force, mentalised infinite beatitude, mentalised ideality, mind pure in itself, mentalised life-energy, mentalised material being work perfectly & without harm to us or deficiency in themselves; they do not devour & break up the life & body by their unharmonised intensities, neither are they dominated by the lower energies (adabdhah); they are not revealed in their sheer nakedness of self-being, for all of them are rendered in the mental values proper to this existence of mind in material life, neither are they covered & concealed by the obscurations of the lower & false values given by our present tainted & muddied perceptions. The truth of them shines through the thin mental veil they wear. Here, in this lower kingdom, the seven in their eternal youth & vigour, children of one universal mother Prakriti, are as seven women with a common child; all of them, that is to say, enjoy the possession of this divine force, Agni, which they formerly kept concealed in their workings, but now hold manifested as if

a child born to them in the world of human life. The imagery of Veda only seems to us confused & unintelligibly mystic so long as we have not the clue; once the clue is in our hands there is an admirable force, clearness & sublimity in every word & image of the sacred writings. The idea is that of the existence of the mental being man in this world made absolutely full in all its parts & harmonious by the completest power, range & complexity possible to our beings; this is the great result of the waking & working of divine Tapas in the human soul.

7. स्तीर्णा अस्य संहतो विश्वरूपा घृतस्य योनौ स्रवथे मधूनाम् ।
अस्थुरत्र धेनवः पिन्वमाना मही दस्मस्य मातरा समीची ॥ ७ ॥

Sayana — In the womb of water (the mid-air) the massed many-formed and spreading rays of this Agni stand in the flow of waters. Here the waters becoming full became pleasers of all. The shining great earth & heaven became the mothers of beautiful Agni.

Sayana's rendering is sufficiently incoherent and barren of sense but to arrive at it he has to do some extraordinary violences to language & reason which are very characteristic of his method. We have seen him already suggesting that जनिमन् which naturally & in its context can mean nothing but birth should be taken as equivalent to water; here he insists on taking two words घृत & मधु in the wholly foreign & inappropriate sense of water. This he has to do because he is taken aback by the idea of clarified butter & honey flowing from the sky. Equally violent is his transference of अस्युः the natural verb of धेनवः to an unexpressed रश्मयः in the first line, his rendering of धेनवः as an adjective with an understood अभवन्, & his gloss upon समीची that it is equivalent to समंचंत्यौ, as if it were derived from the root अंच्, and consequently signified shining or beautiful. In my rendering I take संहतो for a noun, as it is obviously intended, not an adjective, स्तीर्णा as its predicate, घृत & मधु in their usual symbolic sense, धेनवः in its ordinary sense of the seven rivers with the usual double entendre of rivers & cows. समीचि is an adjective formed from सम on the system explained in my Origins of Aryan Speech,

like घृताच, पिशाच, पराच, वरुच, दधीच, प्रतीच from घृत, पिश्, पर, वर, दध, प्रति. The meaning is easy to fix; we have समीचः in the sense of the level expanse of ocean, समीचक signifying sexual union, समीचीन meaning fit, & so right, proper or true. समीच, समीचीन are therefore merely secondary adjectives, (cf likely, whitish etc in English) modifying temperamentally the original senses of सम in same, equal, level, joined, harmonised, fit, true. Earth & heaven, the two mothers of Agni, are मही liberated from limitation and समीची harmonised with each other, सम.

I render: — The gathered substances of Agni taking all forms are spread in the womb of richness, in the outflow of sweetneses; here the Rivers stand growing fat therewith; the two mothers of the bounteous god become vast & equal.

Viswamitra pursues his free but consistent strain of ancient symbolic imagery. As the divine Tapas grows, as it pervades the harmonised consciousness of the purified nature, it begins to gather its masses of force into definite forms, into all the forms of life & thought and action and these spread themselves in the mind which becomes a womb of rich faculty, a flowing river of sweetness & delight; with this richness and delight the seven streams of our being, force, bliss, ideality, mind, life, body are all fattened & nourished; they stand here अत्र in this lower kingdom, receiving these life-giving nectars. Mental being & bodily being become harmonised in us, each answering to the calls of each other, not at discord, their mutual vibrations equalised, not harmful by one unevenly dominating, the other suffering; they are now मही, wide & vast, partaking of the infinity of the higher realms. They are the two mothers of Agni, like the rivers, because in them & out of them the force manifests.

8. ब्राणः सूनो सहस्रो व्यद्यौद् दधानः शुक्रा रभसा वपूषि।
श्चोतंति धारा मधुनो घृतस्य वृषा यत्र वावृधे काव्येन॥८॥

Sayana. O son of force, held by all, thou shonest holding bright & speedy rays. Where (for whatever sacrificer) Agni increases by the hymn, there streams of very sweet water flow out. Sayana explains the passage to mean that when Agni is pleased with

the hymn of the sacrificer, then it rains. Possibly; but that is not what Viswamitra says. He says that when Agni increases, then streams of घृत flow out. The pluvial interpretation of the Agni & Indra legends (they are not legends but symbols & metaphors) suffers always from this defect that a few words or slokas here & there acquire a false clearness & aptness; but all the rest becomes hopelessly muddled, inapt, strained, words have to be tortured out of their plain significance and the writers convicted of such a hopeless anarchy & licence of language & chaotic confusion of imagery that the Veda becomes capable of meaning anything & everything which its interpreter pleases. There is no straightforwardness, no honesty or efficiency in their language, no consistency of ideas, no coherence, no logical development.

I take वध्राणः here as a middle like दधानः, not a passive. मधुनो घृतस्य might mean sweet butter, if we had not had in the preceding verse घृतस्य .. मधूनाम् which binds us to take मधुनो in this passage also as a noun. शुक्रा वपूषि recalls शुक्रैरंगैः; but the sense of वपूषि is not limbs, it is bodies, — the संहृतो विश्वरूपा of the last verse.

I render:— O son of Force, bringing (all this wealth) thou hast lightened forth upholding thy bright & rapturous forms; the streams of sweetness & richness flow down where he as the strong lord increases by the ideal knowledge.

Agni, born of the might of God, has blazed out in the whole range of our being, illuminating it with strength whose substance is knowledge & knowledge whose force is strength, the Chit-Tapas from which he sprang; in that blaze of strength & light he holds up all the bright & rapturous formations of thought & action & life & physical self-expression with which the ways of our existence are now strewn; for it is when Agni as the vrisha, the master & lord with all our capacities, the ज्ञातः, the वृहतीः त्रियः, as his paramours, increases in us by the growth of ideal truth & knowledge that all these streams of richness & sweetness, glad force & utter delight, begin to drip, to trickle & to stream out upon our exalted mortal nature.

9. पितुश्चद्वधर्जनुषा विवेद व्यस्य धारा असृजद् वि धेनाः ।
गुहा चरंतं सखिभिः शिवेभिर्दिवो यद्गीभिर्न गुहा बभूव ॥९॥

Sayana:— Agni of himself knows the region of water which is as the udder of his father the mid-air; he poured out the streams from that udder & the middle words(?); this Agni living in the cave with his beneficent friends the winds and the waters, children of mid-air, no one situated in the cave was able to get.

This rendering is merely a confession that Sayana could make nothing of the verse and may be dismissed without comment.

पितुः:— the father must be taken in the absence of other indication in its ordinary sense, the world-Purusha, father of all. **ऊधः**: used of a male being shows that the Vedic Rishis still used words with the freedom of their early life when they had not crystallised into their derived significances. **ऊधः**: means teat, udder; but this is certainly not the pure original significance. It means obviously anything raised or swollen or holding in itself swelling contents,— so the continent, womb, teats, breasts, bosom — & into the latter senses it has crystallised. (The sense given by the lexicographers, “a secret place to which only friends are admitted”, may be rejected at once as a gloss & nothing to the purpose.) The real difficulty of the passage lies in the accusative **गुहा चरंतं**. न गुहा बभूव obviously refers to Agni,— he who had been concealed in the secrecy of our sevenfold consciousness did not in this action, though he went into the secret places of the Purusha to draw out these streams, relapse into the unmanifest state. The general meaning is clear. But if **चरंतं** is correct, & we are forced to accept it, there is an ellipse somewhere in the sentence. We have to take then **गुहा चरंतं** as referring to an understood **पितरं**,— that is easy & natural,— and governed by **विवेद** understood from the first pada,— which is not easy, though just possible, & far from natural. I cannot help suspecting an original **गुहा चरन् सं सखिभिः शिवेभिः**.

I render:— He knew from his birth the secret hold of the Father, of that he poured out the showers, the rivers; him dwelling in secrecy he found, (yet) by the help of friendly comrades and

the mighty ones of heaven he became not hidden.

Agni, the divine force, is able to pour out these liberated rivers of being, these showers of richness & sweetness, because he manifests himself in man with the inborn knowledge of the divine Purusha and the secret hold from which he pours out this sevenfold stream of the workings of Prakriti with all its riches; he knows at once where to go for the enrichment of our life & nature, to the Spirit's secret hold whence all things are produced; instead of the little powers & pleasures of our mortal life he pours out thence the full richness. To bring it he has to plunge into that higher secret place far above the mortal mind, but supported by his comrades the gods & the liberated action of our sevenfold consciousness he himself does not again become unmanifest, but is able to enter into the secrecy & yet remain active on the lower plane. For when we are full of the divine force, when our nature is liberated, then the higher principles of Sat, Chit, Ananda & Tapas, the four great rivers, are active on the plane of mind and in free touch with their secret sources. The Force in us is able therefore to draw power & delight & knowledge thence without the danger of losing itself in the higher planes so difficult for us to be in touch with — they being sushupta in us, — that we also in our ordinary state must become sushupta in the trance of Samadhi to reach them and cannot command them in our waking consciousness.

10. पितुश्च गर्भं जनितुश्च वभे पूर्वरिको अधयत्तीप्यानाः ।
वृष्णे सपत्नीं शुचये सबधू उभे अस्मै मनुष्ये नि पाहि॥१०॥

Sayana. This Agni bears the world (herbs etc) of the Brahman, father of the whole world, which is the offspring (by rain) of the father (the mid-air); one Agni eats many which have grown; Heaven & Earth co-wives (of the Sun) & beneficent to men are friends to this raining & pure Agni. O Agni, protect them.

The rendering of this verse also may be dismissed without comment. The difficulty in पितुश्च जनितुश्च is that two words are used with an identical meaning “father” to express two different

persons. There is no meaning in the words “the child of the father & also of the begetter”. I suggest that पिता च जनिता च is an ancient pre-Vedic phrase preserved in Vedic Sanscrit with the force of father & mother. The termination त् with a feminine force is still preserved in very ancient words like माता, दुहिता, but it was afterwards replaced by the later feminine form त्री, which obviously grew up by analogy & could not have been originally native to the त् forms. जनित् in the oldest Sanscrit must have been masculine, feminine & neuter and borne equally the sense of father & mother; & as in जनिः, जानिः, जामिः the feminine sense may originally have been preferred.

अधयत्. धे to suck, suck the milk of, drink. Agni drinks of the rivers, the streams & showers of honey which he has himself set flowing; they are nourished by him, he by them.

मनुष्य. मनुष्य from मनुष् a man is originally an adjective, human, belonging to man; but it cannot mean, surely, good for man. This is a strained and far-fetched interpretation resorted to by the grammarians in order to avoid a difficulty created by their own ignorance, because not having the clue they could not understand how Heaven & Earth could be described as human. I take मनुष्ये with नि पाहि. It will make equally good sense in the preceding clause, but the other rendering is simpler in construction & idea.

I render: — He bore the issue of the father & the mother; he being one, drank of the many whom he nourished. Both heaven & earth are common wives to his mastery, common friends to his purity. Them in man do thou protect.

The garbha, that which was contained in the secret hold of the father & which now comes forth as the child of Purusha & Prakriti, Agni bears & brings to man, all this higher fruit of their union upon the levels of purified mind. Agni, alone possessing the whole of our nature as Force divine manifested in many forms, drinks the joy of all these many rich streaming rivers of our conscious being which he has nourished with the streams of richness & sweetness, of glad force & delight. He increases all our being & capacities & uses them again for his own increase. Thus divine force continues ever increasing in our

purified mentality. To heaven and earth in man, manushye, mind & matter manifesting in this mortal world & in human nature, Agni stands in two relations. Divine force in us is purity & to the soul that is pure both mental & physical nature become harmonious, amical, like two friends and helpful playfellows. Divine force in us is also mastery & enjoyment; to the strong soul mental & physical nature become like wives submitted to its command for action and demand on their delight. They are his common wives, common friends — not discordant or incompatible. He is not divine & lord & pure in mind, fallen or struggling in body, but in both supreme, great & holy. Protect, O Agni, cries Viswamitra, these thy two wives & friends in our human totality.

11. उरौ महाननिबाधे वर्वर्ध आपो अग्नं यशसः सं हि पूर्वीः।
ऋतस्य योनावशयद्मूना जामीनामग्निरपसि स्वसृणाम्॥ ११॥

Sayana:— This great Agni increases in the unhampered wide mid-air,— for many foodful waters increase him; he, thus increased, situated in the place of water (the mid-air) lies down with a controlled mind in the water of the self-moving sisters.

Again, I pass from this rendering without comment; for comment is superfluous. उरौ is the common word in the Rigveda for mahas, the realm of vijnana. यशसः I take in the sense of victorious, successful, who have attained their end. The word द्मूना is a little difficult to fix. It is obviously connected with the दम्यभिरनीकैः of a later verse, & both are, I think, adjectives from दमः, house. In that case, द्मूना will mean, dwelling in the house or in his own house स्वे दमे. जामि means properly associated, companion. I render:—

Huge in the free Vast he increased, for many waters victorious increased Agni; in the womb of Truth he lay down in his home, even Agni in the working of the companions & sisters.

Viswamitra now passes on to the final stage of this great movement in the Vedic Yoga, for the object of the awakening of divine Force in our mortal nature is not the perfection of our bodily & mental being on their own levels, but, as a result of

that perfection, the arising of our human life out of that mortal & materialised mentality which is now our seat & centre into the ideal plane, ऋतस्य योनौ, of the pure truth, the spontaneous law, the vast & unhampered being. Agni is now released into the Vast, mahas, satyam ritam brihat; in the wideness of the ideal self where there is no limit, hindrance or wall of enclosing consciousness, where the soul is vast, universal & free, Agni, mahán, wide & great in the nature of mahas increases yet farther; for the seven streams of being, now full & victorious, all in their multitude increase him so that he may take them up with him into those ideal vasts. There he arises, there in that womb of the realised & actualised truth, ऋतं, he reposes in his own home of ideal force,—calm & still in the free & effortless working of the seven sisters, always companions, but here revealed in their perfect harmony & sisterhood.

12. अक्रो न बन्धिः समिथे महीनां दिवृक्षेयः सूनवे भात्रजीकः ।
उदुस्मिया जनिता यो जज्ञान अपां गर्भो नृतमो यद्वो अग्निः ॥ १२ ॥

Sayana:— Agni who, father of all the worlds, child of the waters, a perfect leader (a great protector) of men & great, is the assailant of his foes (or unassailable by them) & in the battle the bearer (or master) of his great armies visible to all & self-luminous, he created the waters for the giver of the oblation.

Sayana's renderings of अक्रो as आक्रमिता, महीनां as great with सेनानाम् understood & भात्रजीकः as self-luminous seem to me astonishing rather than convincing. अक्र is an old Vedic word to the meaning of which our one clue is the Greek ἄκρος. If that identity holds, अक्र means supreme, highest or on a height. But it may also mean not acting, अ negative and क्र = कर from कृ to do. This will give a better sense, though both are possible.

समिथे is “coming together” either friendly in the sense of union or hostile in the sense of battle.

महीनाम्. The seven rivers, described now as all great & full, like Agni himself, उरौ महाननिबाधे ।

दिवृक्षेयः. दिवृक्षा must mean either the desire of seeing or the power of seeing, दिवृक्षेयः I take as an adjective from दिवृक्षा, the

sight referred to being the ideal दृष्टि of the Rishis, or सत्यदृष्टि, which belongs to the vijnana & is referred to in the Isha Upani-shad, सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये ।

सूनवे. सूनुः means son, “that which is produced or begotten”; it means “producer of Soma”, “Soma-sacrificer” & “sacrificer” generally. But it may also bear another sense, [incomplete]

[20]

[RV III.1.1–12]

1. Viswamitra’s hymn to Agni.

1. O divine Strength, bear me up, thou who hast made me strong to bear in the knowledge the Soma for life’s sacrifice; brightening towards the gods I yoke to them my settled being and tranquillise it; cleave, O Agni, to my body.

वक्षि Sayana. कामयस्व — but elsewhere [वह]
 अदिं " ग्रावाणं युंजे । अभिष्वणाय युनज्जिम ।
 श्रमाये " शाम्यामि च । तथा च मंत्रांतरं । ऋतेन देवः सविता
 शमायते । ऋग् द.द६.५ । यद्वा स्तौमि । शशमानो जरतीति स्तुतिकर्मसु
 पाठात् । तथा च मंत्रांतरं । सो अग्न ईजे शशमे च मर्तः । But these
 can be otherwise interpreted, “By truth the god Savitri attains calm”, “tranquillising his heart he adores or desires”, “That mortal, O Agni, sacrifices & becomes calm.”

तन्वं. Say. शरीरं । यद्वा कर्माणि तन्वंतं मां ।

2. We have turned towards the supreme our sacrifice, may our expression increase! By fuel of his burning, by worship of submission they have set Agni to his workings, they have declared in the heaven of mind the perceptions of the seers and for the strong desiring soul they yearn towards their farther journey.

प्रांचं । प्रकर्षेण गच्छन्तं । But प्रांचं is परांचं । पर supreme — पराच,
 परांच् belonging or tending to the supreme.

नमसा दुवस्यन् । हविषा .. अस्मदीयाः परिचरेयुः । but he says देवाः
 शशासुः ।

दिवः । द्युलोकादागत्य । I take it as rather a genitive of vague & general locality.

गृत्साय । गृणातेरिदं रूपं । स्तोतव्यायाग्नये । or from गृध् + स, cf वत्स.

गातुम् । स्तोतुं .. स्तोतार इच्छन्ति च ।

3. With his containing brain, with his pure discernings he established the divine Beatitude, from his birth the good friend of earth and heaven; Agni the gods found revealed in the waters of being, in the working of the sisters.

पूतदक्षः । शुद्धबलः ।
मयः । सुखं ।
दर्शनं । दर्शनीयं ।
स्वसृणां । सरणशीलानां नदीनामप्स्वंतर्गृदं स्थितमपसि यज्ञवहनरूपे कर्मणि ।

This is one of Sayana's impossible pedantic clumsinesses; the dissociation of अपसि from स्वसृणां & the addition of स्वसृणाम् as a sort of afterthought far away from the words with which it is connected & separated from them by a parenthetical अपसि is not only impossible to any sound literary style, but needless, when a simple & straightforward construction & rendering make excellent sense. It is equally needless and pedantic to take स्वसृणाम् as सरणशीलानाम् when the metaphor of the Sisters, स्वसृ, जामि for the seven rivers pervades the Veda.

4. The seven great goddesses increased him in his rich enjoyings, white of purity in his birth, red of action in his growing; as on a child that is born the powers of Life worked at him, the gods in his very birth increased the body of Agni.

शिशुं न । यथा जातं शिशुमश्वा वडवा अभ्यारुः । अभिगच्छन्ति तथा नद्य उत्पन्नमग्निमभिजग्मुः ।
जनिमन् । जन्मन्युदके वा ।
वपुष्यन् । वपुर्दीप्तिमकुर्वन् ।

I see no reason for taking janiman in the sense of water, when the whole talk is about Agni's birth, जनुषा, जज्ञानं, जातं, or वपुस् = light, when the whole talk is about the growth of a child that is born. अवर्धयन् — महित्वा, वपुष्यन्, अंगैराततन्वान् ।

5. With his limbs of brightness he extended this kingdom of Life purifying the will in it by the pure powers of ideal knowledge, wearing light like a robe he throughout the being of the waters holds in his embrace powers that are wide and void of defect and limitation.

आततन्वान् । व्याप्तुवन् ।
कर्तुं । कर्मणां कर्तारं यजमानं ।
कविभिः । क्रांतप्रज्ञैः स्तोतव्यैर्वा तेजोभिः ।
परि. Say. takes with वसानः and constructs आयुर(न्नं) श्रियः
संपदश्च मिमीते ।
मिमीते । करोति ।
अपाम् । अपस्यतां कर्मवताम् ।

6. He went all about the great goddesses of heaven (or the rivers of heaven) and lo! they devoured not neither were they over-powered, they were not clothed, neither were they naked; the seven Words of Life, eternal, young, daughters of one womb, held in our world that single Birth.

अनदतीरदब्बाः । अग्निरपां शोषकः तं चापः शमयन्ति तदुभयमिह
नास्तीत्युक्तं ।
दिवो यद्ग्रीः । अंतरिक्षस्यापत्यभूताः ।
अवसानाः । वस्त्रमनाच्छादयन्त्यः वस्त्रस्थानीयस्य जलस्य विद्यमान-
त्वात् । अत एवानग्नाः । सनाः सनातन्यो युवतयो नित्यतरुण्यः । नित्यवृद्धा
इत्यर्थः ।
सयोनीः । समानमंतरिक्षं स्थानं यासाम् ।

7. At once wide extended & gathered in masses, wearing universal shapes, they stood here in the womb of richness, in the flowing stream of sweetenesses, his cows of plenty, and were nourished; equal & vast were the two mothers of that Lord of bounty.

घृतस्य योनौ । उदकस्य गर्भस्थानेऽतरिक्षे ।
स्तीर्णाः संहतः । पुंजीभूताः सर्वत्र प्रसृता अस्याग्ने रश्मयः ।
मधूनाम् । उदकानाम् ।
धेनवः । सर्वेषां प्रीणियित्य आपः ।
दस्मस्य । दर्शनीयस्य

8. O Son of force, thou bearest them up and shinedst wide abroad holding many bodies of brightness and rapture; streams of honey & richness come dripping out wherever the Mighty One has been greatened by divine knowledge.

बन्नाणः । सर्वैर्धर्यमाणः ।
रभसा । वेगवंति ।
काव्येन । स्तोत्रेण ।
मधुनो घृतस्य । अत्यन्तं मधुरस्योदकस्य धाराः । यदा यजमानस्तोत्रेणा -
गिनस्तुष्टो भवति तदानीं वृष्टिर्भवतीत्यर्थः ।

9. From his birth he knew the fullness of the father also, wide he poured out his streams, wide his rivers; with comrades beneficent, with the great goddesses of heaven he knew him though moving in the hidden places and himself became not hidden.

पितुर् । अंतरिक्षस्य ।
ऊधर् । ऊधःस्थानीयं जलप्रदेशं ।
धेना । माध्यामिका वाचः ।
सखिभिः । सखिभूतैर्वायुभिः ।
चरंतं । एनमनिन् ।
न गुहा बभूव । गुहा चित् गुहायां स्थितः कोऽपि प्राप्नुं समर्थो नाभवत् ।

10. He bore the child of his father and his creator (or and of his mother); he was one and drank of the fullness of many; the two powers of our human being had the pure one, the strong master for their common husband and friend; them protect.

गर्भं । वृष्टिद्वारा गर्भभूतं लोकमोषध्यादिकं ।
बभ्रे । बिभर्ति ।
पूर्वीर् । वह्नीः .. ओषधीरधयत् भक्षयति ।
वृष्णो । वर्षित्रे ।
मनुष्ये । मनुष्येभ्यो हिते ।

11. In the unobstructed vast he grew to greatness, many waters victoriously increased Agni; in the womb of truth he lay down, he made it his home, Agni in the working of the consorts and sisters.

यशसो । यशोऽन्नं तद्वत्यः ।

ऋतस्य । उदकस्य ।
अपसि । पयसि ।
दमूना । दांतमनाः ।

12. As one on his summit, bearing up all in the coming together of the mighty sisters, he becomes the impulse to vision in the giver of the nectar; straight are his lustres; this is the creator who made to appear on high the daughters of light, child of the waters, Agni most strong, the Master.

नृतमो । नेतृतमो ।
यद्ग्रो । महान् ।
समिथे । संग्रामे महतीनां स्वसेनानां भर्ता ।
दिदृक्षेयः । सर्वैर्दर्शनीयः ।
भाक्षजीकः । स्वदीस्या प्रकाशमानः ।
उत्प्रिया । अपः ।

Mandala Four

[21]

[RV IV.1.1]

त्वां ह्यग्ने सदमित्समन्यवो देवासो देवमरति न्येरिर इति क्रत्वा
न्येरिरे। अमर्त्यं यजत मर्त्येष्वा देवमादेवं जनत प्रचेतसं विश्वमादेवं
जनत प्रचेतसं॥

IV.1 Thee it is, O Flame, whom the gods with one passion have ever sent in as the divine worker; therefore by the will they sent thee in; O Lord of sacrifice, (or they sacrificed), the divine and immortal in mortals they brought to birth as the conscious knower divine within, they brought to birth the universal, the conscious knower divine within.

त्वां हि thee indeed, अग्ने O Agni, समन्यवो देवासो the gods together-minded or like-passioned सदमित् ever indeed न्येरिरे sent in देवं the god, अरति the striver, इति therefore न्येरिरे they sent him in क्रत्वा by the will or the work. यजत O sacrificial one, मर्त्येषु आ in mortals, जनत they brought to birth अमर्त्यं the immortal, देवं the god, आदेवं the in-divine, प्रचेतसं the wise knower, विश्वं the universal, आदेवं जनत प्रचेतसं —as before.

अग्ने, त्वां हि सदमित् समन्यवो देवासो देवमरति
सर्वदैव समानहृदया देवाः देवम्
इति क्रत्वा न्येरिरे। यजत, मर्त्येषु अमर्त्यं देवे प्रचेतसमादेवं जनत विश्वं
प्रचेतसं आदेवं जनत

समन्यवः: S. मन्यु = स्पर्धा vying with their equals. मन्यु means passion, especially wrath; in the Veda it seems to vary between the general significance of mind, the particular significance, “emotional mind” and the still more particularised sense “anger”. Cf मानः = mind, wrath, resentment (अभिमानः), pride. मनः is the mind generally, but more the sensational, emotional and

perceptive than the thought mind; the termination यु giving the idea of motion, effort, tendency, desire tends naturally to stress the word towards the emotional significances.

देवासो देवं. S. द्योतमानं. The gods are certainly the Shining Ones as opposed to the dark Titans, but I see no reason in this passage, or in any other, to give it its etymological sense of shining to the exclusion of its natural sense. S. seems to think it means, “they shining him shining”. Rather it is “they godheads him a godhead”.

अरतिं. S. शीघ्रं गंतारं. There is nothing to indicate swiftness. अर् may mean to move, travel, to fight, to strive, to labour, to plough, to lead, to excel. I take it as connected in sense in the Veda with the words अर्य, अरि, आर्य and since the text immediately adds इति कृत्वा = कर्मणा I understand it in the sense of “worker”, or rather “striver”. Agni is the divine worker or warrior.

इति. S. says “the gods send him to war, therefore men send him to call the gods or carry the oblation”. This seems to me sufficiently pointless and incoherently antithetical to satisfy even the most learnedly ingenious taste. There is nothing in the text to indicate that gods are the subject of the first न्येरिरे, men of the second; on the contrary since we have देवासः as subject of first न्येरिरे and no other noun in the clause of repetition, we must take it as subject also of the second. Neither is it indicated that there is a different object for each sending. On the contrary इति indicates a common idea between the clauses; because they sent him as देवमरतिं the divine worker, therefore it was कृत्वा by the work (of the Aryan?) or by the working power, strength or the will that they sent him. In other words Agni is the divine and immortal force that labours in the mortal, brought in, created either by the sacrificial work, the तपस्या of the mortal himself or by the will-force of the gods pouring itself into the mortal.

न्येरिरे. S. always takes नि = नितरां. It certainly means in the Veda “in”, “within” or “into”, cf निहित, निष्य, निधि. “Send in” is here most appropriate because of जनत in the next line. The bringing to birth & the sending in are one action differently described or rather two stages of one action.

यजत्. S. यजनीय. But यजत् like यजत्र may also be active = यज्यु.

Cf भरत which has an active sense. I am not sure that यजत here is not a verb, like जनत.

मत्येषु आ. आ gives here the sense of place.

आदेवं. Cf देवान् आ कृ, आ भू in the Veda. आ gives the idea of the divine element entering into and occupying and being possessed by the mortal. I do not understand S's आगंतारं.

विश्वं. S's व्यासं = present all over the world in various sacrifices is a ritualist ingenuity. विश्व simply means all-pervading or universal.

प्रचेतसं. Sayana thinks this means “knowing the ritual”. प्रचेताः is the later प्रज्ञः. Agni is the Wise One, the Knower or Perceiver of all objects of knowledge. There is nothing in the text or in the Veda to limit its sense to that of ritualistic expertness.

[22]

[RV IV.1]

1. Hymn to Agni.

Subject. The final siddhi and liberation by true knowledge into the triple fullness of Sachchidananda.

1. Thee verily, O Agni, have the gods, thee too a god, ever & always (सदमित्) in their activity of mind sent down into the world (ni) as the worker (in man), by the force of their will they have sent thee down; immortal in mortal men & everywhere divine they gave thee being, O sacrificer, as the god who perceives consciously in the mind (prachetasam), they gave being to the universal, the utterly divine perceiver in the mind.

Text. Twám hyagne sadam it samanyavo, deváso devam aratim
nyerire, iti kratwá nyerire;

Amartyam yajata martyeshu á, devam ádevam janata prachetasam, vishvam ádevam janata prachetasam.

Sy. अरति—शीघ्रं गंतारं. Arati from ar to fight, to labour, to drive on (Ashti)—Agni is the divine worker & fighter who pushes

man on in his journey. इतिशब्दो हेत्वर्थः — therefore men too send thee by the work (hymn). नि = नितरां according to Sy.; rather = in = into the strife & labour of the lower world. आदेवं — नानादेशवर्तिषु यज्ञेषु व्याप्तं.

2. So do thou, O Agni, by right thinking turn towards the gods Varuna thy brother who delights in the sacrifice, thy eldest who delights in the sacrifice, Varuna who has the Truth, the son of the Infinite who upholds our works, the King who sustains our works.

Text. Sa bhrātaram Varuṇam Agna á vavṛitswa deván achchhá
sumatí yajnavanasam jyeshṭham yajnavanasam;
Ṛitavánam Ádityam charshaṇídhṛitam rájánam charsha-
ṇídhṛitam.

Sayana takes deván = देवनशीलान्स्तोतृन्, सुमती with चर्षणीधृतं, ṛitavánam = उदकवंतं and explains charshaṇídhṛitam as मनुष्याणा - मुदकप्रदानेन धारकं. सुमती can by its order in the sentence belong either to vavṛitswa or to yajnavanasam, but it is against all the laws of style and decent literary structure to take it with so distant a word as charshaṇídhṛitam.

3. O friend, turn thy friend hither for us, O creative actor, even as two impetuous coursers speed forward a swift wheel. Agni, thou in company with Varuna win (for us) a gracious mood in the Maruts, they who are the play of light in all existences; O burning pure for the protection of that which we create, do thou make for us peace, O maker, do thou make for us peace.

Text. Sakhe sakháyam abhyá vavṛitswa áshum na chakram
rathyeva ranhyá, asmabhyam dasma ranhyá;
Agne mrīḍikam Varuṇe sachá vido Marutsu vishvabhánu-
shu;
Tokáya tuje shushuchána sham kṛidhi, asmabhyam dasma
sham kṛidhi.

Sy. दस्म — दर्शनीय. This rendering has no appropriateness in the context and brings in an otiose epithet. दस्म may be either “bounteous” or “active, formative”, cf दंस् in दंसना, दंसः etc.

Sy. मृतीकं—सुखकरं हविः. There is no mention of any havir. Sayana gets it from verse 5, मृतीकं वीहि. The prayer for a gracious mood in the gods, मृतीकं or मार्तीकं and not wrath, हैळः, is a common feature of the Veda.

Sy. तोकाय—तुज्यते पीड्यते माता गर्भवासेनेति तोकं पुत्रः. An absurd derivation. तोक is from obsolete root तुच् to cut, shape, form, create, cf तिच् & तच् in Greek τόκος, τίκτω; it may mean anything formed or created or formation or creation. The image is that of the putra or apatyam, the creation of our works.

तुजे—गच्छत्यनेनानृणं पितेति तुक् पौत्रः—a still more wildly impossible derivation. तुज् (also तुंज) means to strike, hurt, push, drive, also to screen, guard, protect. I take तोकाय तुजे as the ordinary Vedic construction of the double dative, one dependent on the other, तोक being in the dative because it is the beneficiary of the action expressed in तुज्.

4. Thou, O Agni, know and put away from us by thy workings the wrath of Varuna, the god; mightiest in the act of the sacrifice and in its upholding, burning bright, do thou deliver us from all hostile powers.

Text. Twam no Agne Varuṇasya vidván, devasya heđo ava
yásisíshṭháh;

Yajishṭho vahnitamah shoshucháno, vishvá dweshánsi
pra mumugdhi asmat.

5. So, O Agni, do thou with protection (or with growth in us) down in this lowest world become very close to us in the wide-shining of this dawn; taking thy delight in us, work away from us Varuna, manifest his grace, increase as our good helper.

Text. Sa twam no Agne avamo bhavotí, nedishṭho asyá ushaso
vyuṣṭau;

Ava yakshva no Varuṇam raráṇo víhi mṛilíkam suhavo na
edhi.

Say. takes *avamo bhavotí* as either come down to us with protection or become our protector by thy coming (útyá). He explains *ava yakshva varuṇam* as “get rid of the dropsy Varuna has

given me” and *víhi mṛilíkam* as “eat this pleasant oblation”. I see no mention of dropsy anywhere. *Varuṇam ava yakshva* obviously means “work off from us by the sacrifice Varuna in his anger” and *víhi mṛilíkam*, manifest his gracious form in place of the angry Varuna. I take *ví* in its ancient sense of “coming or bringing into being, manifestation, widening, outspreading” as in *vayas*, *vayunam* etc.

6. Best and most richly varied in mortals is the vision of this god who is perfect in delight, desirable even as the pure & warm ghee (ghritam) of the Cow indestructible, yea, as the thick fullness of the Cow of God.

Text. Asya shreshṭhá subhagasya sandṛig, devasya chitratamá martyeshu;
Shuchi ghṛitam na taptam aghnyáyáh, spárhá devasya manhaneva dhenoh.

Sy. *chitratamá*. पूजनीया. मंहना. दानं। मंहतिर्दानकर्मा. With *sandṛig* chitra must surely mean bright, rich or curious. मंह् means to be great, full or to greater; there is no reason why we should take it in the sense of giving; the gift of the cow would be at least a strange expression.

7. Three are those supreme, true and desirable births of the god Agni; manifested pervasively within the Infinite may he come pure and bright and noble and shining.

Trir asya tá paramá santi satyá, spárhá devasya janimáni
 Agneh;
 Anante antah parivítá ágách, chhuchih *shukro aryo roru-*
chánah.

त्रिः: अग्निवायुसूर्यात्मना. परिवीतः. स्वतेजसा परिवेष्टिः. I find nothing in the text suggesting स्वतेजसा; and “surrounded within the infinite may he come” makes no intelligible sense. वी in the sense of “manifestation” or परिवीतः in the sense of pervading, from *ví*, to go, suits best with the phrase anante antah. अर्यः as in अरति = one fit to do the work of अरण्, the fight, journey or ascension from mortality to the divine existence.

8. He, the messenger, controlleth all habitations, the priest of the offering with his chariot of gold, with his tongue of delight; red are his steeds, full of body is he and wide-shining and ever rapturous like an assembly-hall where the wine faileth not.

Sy. takes *rānsu* and *raṇva* in the sense of beautiful, but they are rather “delightful, rapturous, joyful”. *पितृ* may mean either food or drink.

9. He is the builder of the sacrifice (or the friend in the sacrifice) and awakens the minds of men; him with a great cord they lead forward, he dwells perfecting in the houses of this being, a god he has become the means of perfection to the mortal.

Martasya must be taken, obviously, with *sadhanitwam*; *asya* with *duryásu* means simply this being here on earth. *Sadh* & *sádh*, *sadhan* & *sádhana* are different forms of one word, cf *bhavati* & *bhaváti*, *charatha* & *charátha*, *rati* & *ráti*.

Text. 8-9. Sa dúto vishved abhi vashṭi sadmá, hotá hiraṇyaratho
rānsujihvah;

Rohidashwo vapushyo vibhává sadá raṇvah pitumatíva
sansat.

Sa chetayan manusho yajnabandhuh, pra tam mahyá
rashbanayá nayanti;

Sa ksheti asya duryásu sádhan, devo martasya sadhani-
twam ápa.

10. So may that Agni lead us on in his knowledge to that bliss of his which is enjoyed by the gods, which all the Immortals made by Thought and father Dyaus begot it increasing Truth.

Sa tú no Agnir nayatu prajánann, achchhá ratnam deva-
bhaktam yad asya;

Dhiyá yad vishve amṛítá akriṇvan, Dyaushpitá janitá
satyam ukshan.

Sy. takes यद् = यमस्ति. But the neuter can only refer to ratnam. Sy. also takes satyam = true Agni and उक्षन् = the adhwaryu sprinkled the true Agni (with ghee & other oblations).

11. He was born the first in the waters in the foundation of

the kingdom of the vastness, in the womb of the Truth (asya); without head or feet, concealing his ends, setting himself to his works in the lair of the Bull of Heaven (vṛishabhbhasya).

Text. Sa jāyata prathamah pastyāsu, maho budhne rājaso asya
yonau;
Apádaśírshá guhamáno antá, áyoyuváno vṛishabhbhasya
níle.

Sy. पस्त्यासु — गृहेषु or नदीषु. रजस् either “kingdom” or from A.R. रज् to shine = रोचन & दिव्, in the sense of heavenly world, Sy. रजसः = तेजसः. वृषभस्य — Sy. वर्षणसमर्थस्य मेघस्य. Rather Bull, Male, Mighty One, Master, a common epithet, like उक्षन्, नृ, of the gods, but specially applicable to Indra or to the Purusha. Cf वृष्यानि = mighty, masteries, mighty actions, वृषन्, वृषभ = वीर strong, mighty, heroic; both from A.R. वृ्य to be strong, luxuriant, abundant. नीळ, nest, means probably in Veda no more than lair, stall, home.

12. Forward he moved, a supreme force, by illumined knowledge, in the womb of Truth, in the lair of the Bull, desirable and young and great of body and widely shining. Seven Masters of Love gave him being for the Mighty One.

Pra shardha árta prathamam vipanyan, ṛitasya yoná
vṛishabhbhasya níle;
Spárho yuvá vapushyo vibhává, sapta priyáso 'janayanta
vṛishne.

विपन्न्यः. P.P. विपन्न्या = विपन्न्यया by the illumination, by knowledge. Say. स्तुत्या — but Sy. interprets even अजनयंत = स्तोत्रमकुर्वन्! ऋतस्य he takes = उदकस्य.

13. Here our human fathers attained (अभि प्र) & have their seat enjoying the Truth. The bright kine of plenteous milk were shut within in a strong pen; the Dawns drove them upward at the call.

वत्रे I take to be a verbal form from वृ, the passive correspondent to the active वत्रुः. Sy. says वृणोत्याच्छादयतीति वत्रं पर्वतविलांतर्वर्ति तमः, and explains, “The Angirasas surrounded by the mountains in the cavern darkness drove up out of the cleft

the cows of plenteous milk, calling the Dawns who destroy the darkness.” It is not clear why the Dawns should or how they could destroy the natural darkness in the bowels of the hills. हुवानाः means called by the fathers.

Text. Asmákam atra pitaro manushyá, abhi pra sedur ṛtam
áshusháñáh;

Ashmavrajáh sudughá vavre antar, ud usrá ájann ushaso
huvánáh.

14. Cleaving the hill asunder they put forth their strength (or shone in brightness); to that knowledge of theirs others all around gave expression; with the vision for their engine (or, driving the Cow of Light or controlling the Animal) they sang the hymn of realisation to the master of the action, they found the light, they fulfilled the fruit of the sacrifice by their thoughts.

Text. Te marmrijata dadṛivánsó adrim, tad eshám anye abhito
vi vochan;

Pashwayanráso abhi káram archan, vidanta jyotish
chakripanta dhíbhih.

मर्मजत्. Sy. अग्निं पर्यचरन्, the idea apparently being that they shampooed Agni. मृ & its derivatives mean to put out force, as in मृ to strike, kill, मृद् to crush, मृज् to rub, मृण् to kill, slay, मृध् battle, मृष् to touch, rub, मृष् to bear, suffer, cf सह्. Cf also म्रक्, म्रद्, मर्य (which does not mean mortal, but male). मर्मजत् means therefore to put forth strength in action &, in sense, prepares the कार & चकृपंत that immediately follow. On the other hand मृ also means to shine intensely, glitter etc, eg मरीचिः a ray, Gr. marmairo, to shine, marmareos, shining, Lat. marmor, marble, & the sense may possibly extend to मृज्.

चकृपंत्. कृप् to do completely, fulfil, succeed, get or bear fruit, cf Grk. χαρπός fruit.

पश्वयंत्रासः: Sy. पशुनिर्गमनार्थानि यंत्राण्युपायो येषां ते. If यंत्र = engine or means of action then पश्व cannot mean animal = पशु, but must = विपन्न्या, दृष्टि from पश् to see; if पशु means the cow, the animal, then यंत्र must mean either driving or controlling as in गा येमानं in the next rik.

15. Te gavyatá manasá dṛidham ubdham, gá yemánam pari
shantam adrim;
Dṛidham naro vachasá daivyena, vrajam gomantam
ushijo vi vavruh.

They with the light-seeking mind the firm-closed & massive hill surrounding and keeping in by force the cows opened, men with the word divine opened for their joy the firm pen full of the herds of light.

उशिजः: कामयमानाः. But it is doubtful if उशिज् & उश् in Veda always mean precisely desire. The word is used = देव, & “the desirers” has hardly sufficient force by itself to be equivalent to the idea of godhead. उश् may mean also to shine or burn like वश् (in the consension of the grammarians उश् is only a form of *vash*), like उष् & उस् (eg उस्त्र, उषः) and that is its sense in उशिज् fire & उशिज् ghee (cf धृत from धृ to shine); then उशिज् & देव become equivalent in sense; or उश् = enjoy & उशिज् may mean “joyous, rapturous”. Cf उशना, joyfully, willingly, वशा a woman, wife, daughter, sister (cf जाया, जनि, वनिता which all originally mean an object of enjoyment or companion in enjoyment, so woman, the general words for woman being afterwards applied to particular feminine relationships).

16. Te manvata prathamam náma dhenos, trih sapta mátuḥ
paramáṇi vindan;
Taj jánatír abhyanúshata vrá, ávir bhuvad arunír yashasá
goh.

They conceived the first (supreme) name of the Cow, yea, they found the thrice seven highest seats (or names) of the Mother; that knowing the Brides dawned towards it, the rosy Morn was manifested by the victorious arrival of the Cow of Light.

Sy. takes प्रथम् = first; but प्रथम् here means rather first in the sense of supreme, chief or original & qualifies nama. परमाणि he explains as the 21 metres. I do not see in the Vedic text any warrant for this gloss; परमाणि must mean either परमाणि पदानि (धामानि) or परमाणि नामानि, referring back to नाम in the first pada, but it is usually the पदं or धाम to which the word विद्न् is applied.

उष् in अनूष्टत I take to have the same sense as in the word उषः; वरा, the bride, refers often to उषः or to the sisters उषासः or to the rays of light themselves otherwise imaged as the cows of Usha. यशः means literally arrival, attaining, winning, so success, victory, glory, splendour or the results of winning, things won, wealth, etc. I take it here to mean by a sort of double association the victory & arrival of the herd driven by the Fathers to the thrice seven seats of the Mother, the seats of Sachchidananda.

17. Neshat tamo dudhitam rochata dyaur, ud devyá ushaso
bhánur arta;

Á Súryo brihatas tishṭhad ajrān, ríju marteshu vríjiná cha
pashyan.

Vanished darkness oppressed, Heaven shone out, up the lustre of the divine Dawn arose; the Sun entered the fields of vastness beholding in mortals their straight things & their crooked.

दुधितं Sayana takes in the sense of “driven; propelled”. The sense of the दु roots is, more often, to press, hurt, crush, compress, push; eg du, to hurt, torment, afflict, burn; also to grieve; दुःख pain; दुध् to kill, hurt; or to push, drive; दुर्व् to hurt, kill; दुल् to swing; दुष् to damage, spoil; दुह् to squeeze out, milk. Darkness disappears under the conquering pressure of Dawn, but it is not clear that the precise sense of the pressure is that of driving.

अज्ज I take to be akin in sense to अज्जि a court, open space, field of exercise or action, and equivalent to the Greek agros, Lat. ager, a field.

18. Ád it pashchá bubudháná vyakhyan, ád id ratnam
dháravanta dyubhaktam;

Vishve vishvásu duryásu devá Mitra dhiye Varuṇa satyam
astu.

Then indeed they were awoken in mind to the beyond and saw perfectly, then indeed they held the bliss that is enjoyed in Heaven. May all the gods be in all the gated homes, may there be, O Mitra, Truth, and thou, O Varuna, for the thought.

पश्चा. Sy. पृष्ठयदेशेषु. **रत्नं.** If ratnam does not mean delight, it is curious that it should be so frequently associated with the word

भक्तं especially in such phrases as द्युभक्तं; the wealth enjoyed in heaven or enjoyed by the gods, रत्नं यदस्य देवभक्तं, has no meaning; it is a bizarre & senseless phrase; bliss enjoyed in heaven or by the gods is natural and makes a good and simple sense.

19. Achchhá vocheya *shushuchánam* Agnim, hotáram vi-
shvabharasam yajishṭham;
Shuchi údho atriṇan na gavám, andho na pútam pari-
shiktam anshoh.

I would speak the mantra towards Agni as he burneth pure, the offerer strong in sacrifice who bringeth us all boons; he presses out as if the pure udder of the cows, as if the pure & wide-poured liquid of the Soma-creeper.

Sy. takes *na* = not, & explains, “he did not milk the cows, the Soma was not purified nor sprinkled; the yajaman only offered praise.” I see no sense or appropriateness to the context in this rendering. *Na* simply conveys, as in other passages, that the cows & the Soma are symbolic figures not material cows or the intoxicating juice of a material plant.

20. *Vishveshám aditir yajniyánám, vishveshám atithir mánu-*
sháṇám;
Agnir devánám ava ávriṇánah, sumṛilíko bhavatu játa-
vedáh.

The infinite being of all the sacrificial Powers, the guest of all human beings, may Agni, taking to himself the being of the gods, become gracious to us, the knower of all births.

अवः = अन् says Sayana, & देवानाम् = स्तोतृणाम्. अवः certainly here does not mean protection and this passage throws doubt upon the sense of protection ascribed to the word in other passages where we have the phrase अव आवृणे and it is rendered “I choose the protection”. अव् or ऊ means to bring into being, increase, keep in being, be, have; to protect, to cover etc, eg अवि, originally, a creature, beast, afterwards particularised as bird or sheep; even, a rat, also a master (to have); *avis*, an extender, enlarger; *avas*, wealth, provision (to have). Latin *avus*, forefather. *Avas* may, therefore, mean the birth & presence of

the gods in man all drawn into the totality of the divine Tapas,
Agni, who is the aditir yajniyánám, that infinite from which they
took their birth.

[23]

[RV IV.2]

2. Vamadeva's second hymn to Agni.

1. Yo martyeshu amṛito ṛtavá, devo deveshu aratir nidháyi;
Hotá yajish्ठo mahná *shuchadhyai*, havyair agnir manu-
sha írayadhyai.

He who was established immortal in mortals as the possessor
of the Truth, a god in the gods as the worker of our perfection,
Agni, priest of the offering strong in sacrifice by his might to
purify, by the offerings of man to impel him on the path;

2. Iha twam súno sahaso no adya, játo játán ubhayán antar
Agne;
Dúta íyase yuyujána ḫishva, ḫijumushkán vṛishanah
shukránshcha;

Here born today, O child of Force, thou, O Agni, goest as our
messenger between the births of either world, yoking, O swift
attaining, thy strong stallions straight and full-bodied and bright
of hue.

ऋष्य. Sy. gives two renderings, दर्शनीय and महत्, neither of
which am I able to accept. ऋ means to go, move, ऋष् to reach,
attain as probably in ऋषि or simply to go, flow etc as in ऋष्, ऋष्य
an antelope. Its other sense is to pierce, injure, hurt, burn, shine
as in ऋष्, ऋषिः a sword or lance, ऋषु fire, brand, sunbeam. ऋष्य
may mean therefore either speedy, swift, or warlike, powerful,
valiant or like ऋषि and ऋषु wise. In all probability ऋष्य as applied
to Indra & Agni means swift on their journey, or swiftly attaining
the Vedic goal, with a covert sense of knowledge as in ऋषि, ऋत्
etc, or simply “swift in their action”.

ऋजुमुष्कान्. Sy. takes ऋजु = प्रसाधक & मुष्क = मांसल. We must await a better interpretation.

3. अत्या वृधसू रोहिता घृतसू ऋतस्य मन्ये मनसा जविष्टा ।
अंतरीयसे अरुषा युजानो युष्मांश्च देवान्विश आ च मर्तान् ।

Red coursers of the Truth (or of the True One) dripping increase, dripping brightness swiftest by the mind in my mind I hold; yoking those rosy steeds thou movest between thy divine peoples (lit. you the gods) and the race of men.

वृधसू घृतसू. Sy. interprets, dripping food, dripping water. This, I suppose, Max Muller would call part of Sayana's clear & rational method & spirit; but if horses can drip food & water I do not see why they should not drip increase & brightness quite as easily. But सू here = सनू, procuring or giving abundantly, and I use dripping concretely as a figure of abundant giving. ऋतस्य is for Sy. सत्यभूतस्य तव. It is possible. मन्ये = स्तौमि says Sayana. I demur. There is an obvious connection in sense between मन्ये & मनसा which necessitates some such rendering as I have given. It means really I meditate on in my thought so as to possess in mental faculty.

4. Aryamaṇam Varuṇam Mitram eshám, Indravishṇú Maru-
to Ashwinota;
Svashwo Agne surathah surádhá, edu vaha suhavishe
janáya.

Aryaman, Varuna & Mitra of these, Indra & Vishnu, the Maruts and the Aswins, do thou, O Agni, good in thy steeds, good in thy chariot, good in thy delight, bear hither to men good in their offerings.

5. Gomán Agne avimán ashwí yajno, nṛivatsakhá sadam id
apramṛishyah;
Iláván esho asura prajáván, dírgho rayih pṛithubudhnah
sabháván;

Rich in the cows of light, in the flocks of sight, in the horses of strength the Sacrifice is like a human friend ever inviolable; long (or long-enduring) is this felicity, O mighty one, wide of

foundation in the house of the sacrifice and attended with the revealed knowledge & the human fruit.

Sy. takes एष = यज्ञः & रयि as an adjective = धनवान्, but the epithets are all suitable & most of them common epithets of the noun रयिः, not of यज्ञः. रयि may be masculine as well as feminine.

6. Yas te idhmam jabharat sishwidáno, mûrdhánam vá ta-tapate twáyá;

Bhuvas tasya swataváñh páyur, Agne vishvasmat sím agháyata urushya.

He who has brought to thee thy fuel with sweat of his body, he who has heated his head with his desire for thee, mayst thou become to him a protector self-strong; O Agni, protect him on all sides from every power of evil.

Sy. explains स्वतवान् = धनवान्. I take it as स्व self & तवान् strong from तु meaning strength as in tavisha, tavishí, tavas.

7. Yas te bharád anniyate chid annam, nishishan mandram atithim udírat;

Á devayur inadhate duroṇe, tasmin rayir dhruvo astu dásván.

He who bringeth food of matter to thee although rich in matter, intensifies and sends upward his rapturous guest, he who desiring the godhead kindles thee in the gated house, in him may felicity be firm-enduring and creative (or bounteous).

अन्नियते. Sy. takes = अन्नमिच्छते & चिद् = and, apparently with the next clause. The interpretation I have selected avoids this difficulty & gives a natural sense to the words. निशिष्टत्. Sy. takes निशिष्टत् मंद्रं = मद्करं सोमं नितरां प्रयच्छति. But it is absurd to take मंद्र by itself = सोम, esp. when both निशिष्टत् & उदीरत् can apply to मंद्रमतिथिं, supposing always that the Padapatha is right in reading निशिष्टत्. It takes शिष् as a strengthened form of शि to be sharp, sharpen, excite, intensify in force or keenness etc; this is as good & possible a sense as प्रयच्छति. दास्वान् like दस् may mean either bounteous or active, creative, formative. Cf also दानु eg दानुमद्दसु. Sy. interprets रयिः here as पुत्र; but anything is possible in his system.

8. Yas twá doshá ya ushasi prashansát, priyam vá twá
 kṛīavate havishmán;
 Ashwo na swe dama á hemiyáván, tam anhasah píparo
 dāshwánsam.

He who expresses thee at night, who at dawn, or makes thee glad with the oblation in his hands, thou like a steed impetuous in thy own home bring that giver safe beyond all evil.

अंहसः: Sy. पापरूपाद् दारिद्र्यात् (!)—& he interprets बहु धनं प्रयच्छेत्यर्थः! हेम्यावान्. Sy. सुवर्णनिर्मितकक्ष्यावान्. In that case the image must be that as a horse adorned in its own stable with a golden ornament rewards his master's kindness by carrying him through some danger, so should Agni, similarly pleased by the praises & gifts of the sacrificer, carry him beyond evil or calamity. I suggest that हेम्, हेम्या is from हि to rush, throw & when used of a horse in Veda, akin in sense to हयः, the charger, the swift charger. हेम्या will then mean impetuous in speed. स्वे दमे हेम्यावान् refers directly to Agni, not to अश्व, although the idea of the horse is preserved in the choice of the epithet.

9. Yas tubhyam Agne amṛitáya dásbad, duvas twe kṛīavate
 yatasruk;
 Na sa ráyá shashamáno vi yoshañ, nainam anhah pari
 varad agháyoh.

He who giveth, O Agni, to thy immortality and doeth in thee the action of sacrifice with managed ladle, let him not in attaining calm be divorced from joy, him let not the evil of the evil-wisher ring around.

स्रुक्—“a pourer” (it means also a spring or cascade)—& in its implied psychological sense the motive force or motor instrument of action fulfilling the internal or external act, यत् well-guided in one case, in the other well-controlled and regulated. In the latter sense, it is equivalent in a way to यतेन्द्रिय.

10. Yasya twam Agne adhwaram jujosho, devo martasya su-
 dhitam raráṇah;
 Prítá id asad dhotrá sá yavishṭha, asáma yasya vidhato
 vridhásah.

Of whomsoever thou, O Agni, cleavest to the sacrifice, a god the sacrifice of a mortal, that well-established, thou full of delight, glad indeed becometh that Lady of the offering, O young & vigorous god, of whom disposing the action may we be the increasers.

Sayana with startling coolness explains the feminine सा होता as स होता! यस्य surely refers to Agni, who is alone mentioned in this line & to whom & not to a man the expression वृधासः could appropriately be used. विधतः may be either in agreement with यस्य or with वयं implied in असाम.

11. Chittim achittim chinavad vi vidván, प्रिष्ठेवा वित्ता
व्रीजिना च मर्तान्;
राये च नह श्वपत्याया देवा, दिति च रास्वा अदिति
उरुश्या.

In his wisdom may he distinguish the Knowledge and the Ignorance like wide open levels and those that hamper mortals; and, O god, for our felicity fruitful of its works enrich for us the divided being and widen the undivided.

Sayana explains “like the beautiful backs of horses & those that are unfit to carry”, takes मर्तान् = पुण्यकृतोऽपुण्यकृतश्च मनुष्यान् after विचिनवद्,— a stupendous extension,— creates a कुरु after राये & interprets दिति & अदिति as the giver & the non-giver. All this incoherence is unnecessary. वीता is, like ऋजूनि, as wide, open & flat, opposed to वृजिन = crooked or uneven, lit. shutting off by bends or undulations, पृष्टा means any level, surface, not the back of a horse. मर्तान् is the objective after the verbal idea in the adjective वृजिना, a frequent type of construction in the Veda, राये expresses the purpose of the action रास्व & उरुश्य, दिति & अदिति are the fixed terms expressing in Diti the broken & divided consciousness (*bheda*) of the Avidya (*achittim*) & in Aditi the infinite unbroken consciousness of the Vidya. Sayana is driven to ignore the fixed sense of अदिति in the Veda, because he cannot see any other sense in उरुश्य except ward off, get rid of, protect from. But उरुश्य can mean also to desire or give wideness, to widen. The thought & language are perfectly

simple, connected & logical. चित्तं, पृष्ठेव वीता, अदितिम् also refer to the free unity consciousness proper to Vidya, achittim, vrijiná, ditim to the multiple divided consciousness proper to Avidya. The verse expresses briefly what is expressed at greater length in three slokas of the Isha Upanishad — 9–11.

12. Kavim *shashásuh* kavayo adabdhá, nidháravanto duryásu
áyoh;
Atas twam *dṛishyán* Agna etán, paḍbhīh *pashyer* ad-
bhután arya evaih.

The seer the Seers unconquered expressed, establishing him in the gated houses of being, (or of the creature), — therefore do thou behold all these wondrous ones, the objects of vision, with rangings of thy feet.

Note that the kavi is here the drashtā.

13. Twam Agne vághate supraṇítih, sutasomáya vidhate
yavishṭha;
Ratnam bhara *shashamánáya* ghṛishve, pṛithushchan-
dram avase charshaṇipráh.

Thou, O vigorous Agni, art a perfect guide to the sacrificer who has pressed out the soma & disposes the rites, O vigorous god; O bright god, bring to his self-expression a delight wide-extended in its pleasurableness, filling his action with thyself.

सुप्रणीतिः: Sy. सुष्टुतरवेद्यां प्रणयनीयस्त्वं. But it means more naturally leading the sacrifice or the sacrificer to his goal. पृथुश्चंद्रः. The Padapatha reads पृथु चंद्र — the sense will be almost the same, wide & pleasurable; but I take पृथुश्चंद्र as a compound as in other passages.

14. Adhá ha yad vayam Agne twáyá, paḍbhīr hastebhish
chakrimá tanúbhīh;
Ratham na kranto apasá bhurijor, ḥitam yemuh sudhya
áshusháñáh.

And now in truth by what we, O Agni, in our desire of thee have

done with our feet and hands and bodies, making as it were a chariot by the work of the two worlds (or of the arms), they of wise-understanding have laboured & mastered enjoying the Truth.

चक्रम्. Sy. interprets त्वामुपपादयामः. This is possible, but there is no त्वाम्. **भुरिजोः**: विभूतः कर्मकरणसामर्थ्यं पदार्थान्वेति भुरिजौ वाहूः. I take भुर् here in the ordinary sense we have in भुरण्युः etc & suppose it to be equivalent to भूमि, अवनि, but especially applied to the रोदसी, heaven & earth, mind & body. **ऋत्तमा** शुषाणाः must have the same significance as in v. 16 where it is certainly “the Truth” gained by breaking the hill & freeing the cows of knowledge.

15. Now may we supreme & with the seven illuminations of Dawn the Mother give being to the strong Ones who dispose, may we become Angirasas, sons of heaven, being purely bright may we break the hill full of substance.

Adhá móatur ushasah saptaviprá, jáyemahi prathamá ve-
dhaso nrín;
Divas putrá angiraso bhavema, adrim rujema dhaninam
shuchantah.

सप्तविप्रा: I take as a single word & विप्र in the sense of knowledge, not of knower or else if knower, then in the sense, “knowers of the seven”. Otherwise the prayer must mean, “Let us become the seven Rishis & give being to the gods”. This is possible, if the rik be taken by itself without any connection with its context. **अंगिरसो**. The sense seems to be, “Let us, Angirasas in bodily birth, be truly Angirasas in our spiritual being.” Sy. says भूतिमंतः स्याम् for which I see no justification, nor for his rendering of the plain & straightforward दिवस्पुत्राः as meaning physical children of the Sun. The Sruti when it says दिवस्पुत्रा अमृतस्य पुत्राः is using a plain & simple expression which we have every right to take in its natural significance,— emphasised as it is & brought out by the देवयंतो देवाः of the 17th Rik.

16. Adhá yathá nah pitarah parásah, pratnáso agna ṛitam
 áshusháñah;
*Shuchíd ayan dídhitim ukthashásah, kshámá bhindanto
 aruṇír apa vran.*

Now as when the ancient supreme fathers, O Agni, enjoying Truth by the expression of the word reached the purity, the light, breaking their two worlds (or their earth) they uncovered the red (herds of the Dawn).

क्षामा. The Padapatha reads क्षामा. It is more natural to take it as it stands, the dual क्षामा = द्यावाक्षामा or रोदसी. Sy. takes us ten miles out of the way to interpret क्षयकारणं तमः पापं वा.

17. Sukarmáñah surucho devayanto, ayo na devá janimá
 dhamantah;
*Shuchanto Agnim vavṛidhanta Indram, úrvam gavyam
 parishadanto agman.*

Perfect in action, perfect in light, desiring the godhead, they, grown gods, working out the births as one works the iron ore, making Agni pure-bright, increasing Indra, they went on their way & made their [home] in all the wideness that is the world of the Light (of the Herds).

शुचंतो, not merely दीपयंतः ; the repeated शुचंतः (15), शुचि (16), शुचंतः (17) shows that it is the idea of the pure light of knowledge, the pure mental & moral state, which is intended.

18. Á yútheva kshumati pashvo, akhyad devánám yaj janimánti ugra;
Martánám chid urvashír akripnan, vṛidhe chid arya uparasya áyoh.

Like herds in the dwelling (or field) of the Cow, thou didst behold, O forceful god, the births of the gods in front of thee; they both fulfilled the wide enjoyments of mortals and were strong in high activity for the increase of the higher life.

अन्धोऽस्यत्. Sy. takes अन्धोऽस्यत्, reading in Indra from the last line. It is just possible, but very forced. Agni is the jatavedas, it

is Agni who is addressed in उग्र. अस्यद् is really a form of the Rt र्व्य lost, like all the short अ roots in later Sanscrit; cf अति र्व्य etc; it is an old survival & therefore keeps more easily than other verbs the old tendency to have the same characteristic consonant for the second & third persons.

उर्वशीः: Yaska उर्वभ्यामशुते & this we are to take as equivalent to प्रजाः! There is no need to drag in the human thighs & to argue lightly that “those who enjoy with the thighs” must naturally mean children! उर्वशीः may mean either wide being, wide possession, wide enjoyment or wide desire or even desire of wideness; but the चिद् .. चिद् shows that a contrast is intended between the ordinary mortal life & the higher existence; human enjoyment in its widest largeness & an increased divine nature & bliss are possessed in harmony by the siddha. अर्यः, अरिः always suggests the high tapasya of the seeker after godhead or the exalted nature which is the result of तपस्या. No single English word can express the Vedic sense. Sy. takes अर्यः = स्वामी, but अर्यः is also the plural of अरिः & the balanced rhythm & structure चिदकृपन् .. चिदर्यः demand the same subject for both clauses.

आयोः: may mean either existence or the being who exists, either life or man. We may take “the higher man” as opposed to मर्तानाम्, but the expression would be a little forced & “existence” is more natural & gives the same sense more easily & straightforwardly.

19. Akarma te svapaso abhúma, ṛtam avasrann ushaso
vibhátih;
Anúnam agnim purudhá sushchandram, devasya mar-
mrijatashcháru chakshuh.

We do actions for thee & become perfected in works & the outshining dawns make their dwelling in the Truth (or clothe themselves with the Truth); we give strength to (or put to strong action, or brighten) Agni in his unstinted being & full delight, the bright vision of the God.

ऋतमवस्थन्. तेजो .. आच्छादयन्ति. Sy. चक्षुः. Sy. तेजः. This is just possible; but चक्षुः also & more commonly means sight or eye; it

may also mean that which is seen. Agni is the sight or the eye of the divine life & existence, through him it sees the births or worlds hidden from the mortal vision.

20. Etá te agna uchatháni vedho, avocháma kavaye tá
jushasva;
Uchchhochasva kṛīnuhi vasyaso no, maho ráyah pu-
ruvára pra yandhi.

We have uttered these words to thee, O Agni, Disposer, who art the seer, to them do thou cleave; shine bright & pure, make us richer in being; the great felicities do thou effect for us, O lord of many boons.

[24]

[RV IV.3]

3. Vamadeva's third hymn to Agni.

1. आ वो राजानमध्वरस्य रुद्धं
होतारं सत्ययजं रोदस्योः ।
अग्निं पुरा तनयित्वोरचित्ता-
द्विरण्यरूपमवसे कृषुध्वं॥

The fierce king of the sacrifice, the offerer, who effects by sacrifice truth in the two firmaments, Agni for yourselves before the extending ignorance set in his brilliant form for your growth (or for your protection).

तनयित्वोः. Say. renders “before that thunder death”, अचित्त being death because in death there is no sense-consciousness. This far-fetched learned scholastic ingenuity is typical. तन् means to extend as well as to thunder, & in Vedic Sanscrit the different possible senses of a root had not been so rigidly distributed between its various forms & derivatives as afterwards in the classical tongue. Moreover तनयित्वु is here obviously an adjective & not the noun thunder.

2. अयं योनिश्चकृमा यं वयं ते
 जायेव पत्य उशती सुवासाः ।
 अर्वाचीनः परिवीतो नि षीद
 इमा उ ते स्वपाक प्रतीचीः ॥

Here is the place of thy joy we have made for thee as a wife for her lord passionate, beautifully-robed; descended, widely-manifest take there thy seat; lo these (thy energies), O perfect worker, move to thy encounter.

योनिः: There is here the double sense, the woman's yoni & the receptacle, symbolically the altar, psychologically the human heart. परिवीतो: Not "surrounded by the gods" as Sayana would have it, but either "widely manifested" or "encompassing, going all round, pervading" = परिणीतः. इमा: either "these energies" of action in the human being or these mantras expressing the sense of that action; in either case Agni is to take & fulfil them in energies of divine activity.

3. आशृण्वते अदृपिताय मन्म
 नृचक्षसे सुमृद्धीकाय वेधः ।
 देवाय शस्तिममृताय शंस
 ग्रावेव सोता मधुषुद्यमीळे ॥

O disposer of the sacrifice, express thy thought to the kindly one, the puissant of vision, who responds to the mantra & is beyond all harms (or is not violent), a means of expression for the god in his immortality; like the stone of the distilling he bringeth out the wine of sweetness whom I adore.

अदृपिताय — “who hears & is not arrogant” is Sayana’s rendering. दृप् is of the दृ family, admits the sense of hurting, tearing; it is from this sense that the idea of violence, then of insolence — in action, manner or feeling — is derived. Cf also द्रापिः etc. दृपित may be either passive or active, either “unhurt” or “violent, hurtful” as opposed to सुमृद्धीकाय. ग्रावेव. Sy. interprets “Agni whom the Yajaman praises pressing out Soma as the stone presses it out”. Applied to the Yajaman the image is wholly needless & becomes a stupid & inappropriate ornament; for what is meant by the Yajamana producing Soma with the stone just as the stone

produces it by itself? The simile has force & propriety only if applied to Agni who produces the Ananda as the stone of the grinding produces the Soma wine.

४. त्वं चिन्नः शम्या अग्ने अस्या
 ऋतस्य बोधि ऋतचित् स्वाधीः।
 कदा त उक्था सधमाद्यानि
 कदा भवति सख्या गृहे ते॥

Do thou verily, O Agni, waken in us to this peace, waken to the Truth with the Truth-consciousness, perfectly putting thought to its work. When shall there be thy hymns of the joy of fulfilment, when in this house the works of thy friendship?

शम्याः Sy. कर्मनाम. But it may mean, like शमः, the peace or inner quiet of the mind in which the vijnâna manifests. सधमाद्यानि. सध् & साध् have one sense in Vedic Sanskrit, eg सधनित्वं, सधन for साधन etc.

५. कथा ह तद्वरुणाय त्वमग्ने
 कथा दिवे गर्हसे कन्न आगः।
 कथा मित्राय मीढ्हुषे पृथिव्यै
 ब्रवः कदर्यम्पो कङ्गाय॥

How hast thou declared that to Varuna, O Agni, how to Heaven? what sin in us dost thou rebuke? How to Mitra bounteous or to the earth hast thou said it or what to Aryaman & what to Bhaga?

6. कद धिष्यासु वृधसानो अग्ने
कद्राताय प्रतवसे शुभंये ।
परिज्मने नासत्याय क्षे
ब्रवः कदग्ने रुद्राय नष्टे ॥

What hast thou said in the seats of being, O increasing Agni? what to Wind who driveth forward in his force, the giver of bliss, or to the wide-extending Nasatya & to earth? Or what didst thou declare, O Agni, to Rudra the slayer of men?

परिज्मन्. Sy. परितो गंत्रे. I take it = capacious, Rt जम.

7. कथा महे पुष्टिंभराय पूष्णे
 कदुद्राय सुमखाय हविर्देः।
 कद्विष्व उरुगायाय रेतो
 ब्रवः कदग्ने शरवे बृहत्यै॥

How to Pushan great, bringing increase or what to Rudra the good sacrificer, the giver of the oblation? what offence to Vishnu wide-striding hast thou told? what to Sri of the Vastness (or Sri who is mighty)?

सुमखाय. I accept provisionally “sacrifice” for मख, sin for रेतः (from री to injure, offend). उरुगाय I take to be wide-moving—त्रिविक्रमाय—from O.A. गा to move, & शरु = श्री, lit. Movement or Force, the Energy of Vishnu.

8. कथा शर्धाय मरुतामृताय
 कथा सूरे बृहते पृच्छयमानः।
 प्रति ब्रवो अदितये तुराय
 साधा दिवो जातवेदशिचकित्वान्॥

How to the strength of the Maruts that is true in its paths, how to Surya vast when he questioned thee? or what didst thou reply to Aditi & Tura? Know & perfect the heavens in us, O world-Knower.

9. ऋतेन ऋतं नियतमीळ आ गोर्
 आमा सचा मधुमत्पक्वमग्ने।
 कृष्णा सती रुशता धासिनैषा
 जामर्येण पयसा पीपाय॥

By the truth I seek continually the truth of the Cow of Light, together the unripe fruits and that which is ripe & full of sweetness, O Agni; she being black nourishes with milk that is bright and firm and full of substance.

ईळे. We get here the true meaning of ईळ— to seek (इ to go), desire, & so love, adore & to pray rather than to praise. धासिना. धासि is firm settlement, firm place etc, धासिन् should be that which is firm or that which makes firm. Sy. प्राणिनां धारकेण. जामर्येण. Sy. makes a wild guess at the sense; I take it from the sense of body, substance in the ज roots which we find in जम्ब

mud, mire, in the Persian, & the vernaculars, in परिज्ञा (as I interpret it = capacious). We must be content with uncertainty.

10. ऋतेन हि ष्मा वृषभश्चदक्तः
पुमाँ अग्निः पयसा पृष्ठयेन।
अस्पन्दमानो अचरद्वयोधा
वृषा शुक्रं दुदुहे पृश्चिरुधः॥

For by truth as his mover he too, Agni, the Bull, the Male, by the water from the levels, unmoving ranged establishing wide being; the dappled Bull milked a pure-bright udder.

Sy. takes वृषभः as फलवर्षकः, but वृषा as अपां वर्षकः सूर्यः. Obviously both must have a single meaning & allusion, if we are to credit Vamadeva with the least scintilla of the literary faculty. The image is of Agni, the bull calf, sucking the pure-bright teats of the Cow of Knowledge.

11. ऋतेन अद्विं व्यसन्भिदंतः
समग्निरसो नवंत गोभिः।
शुनं नरः परि षदन्तुषासम्
आविः स्वरभवज्जाते अग्नौ॥

By truth the Angirasas broke the hill and parted it asunder and they moved forward with the herds of light; men, they entered into the blissful dawn (the bliss, the dawn), Heaven was revealed because Agni was born.

शुनं. Sy. सुखेन. It means properly सुखं & may be either a noun or an epithet qualifying उषासं or as Sayana takes it an adverb. स्वर्. Sy. सूर्यः. It suits Sayana's naturalistic & ritualistic theory to take स्वर्, wherever possible, as the Sun; I take स्वर् always = Heaven, the third vyahriti, & सूर् or सूर्य only as the sun.

12. ऋतेन देवीरमृता अमृक्ता
अणोभिरापो मधुमङ्गिरग्ने।
वाजी न सर्गेषु प्रस्तुभानः
प्र सदमित् स्रवितवे दधन्तुः॥

By truth the divine, immortal and undammed rivers with their

streams of honey, O Agni, as a horse that sets its breast against the wind when loosed to its gallopings, so have ever & always grown in mass for the flowing.

आपः: It is difficult to say why Sy. renders आप्तव्याः सत्यः—देवीरापः is a common enough expression in the Veda. अमृक्ताः—rendered usually unhurt. Sy. अबाधिताः: It is, I think, unopposed, unobstructed. Cf मर्चयति द्वयेन, limits by division or duality. दधन्युः: Sy. प्रगच्छंति. But “ran to flow” would be a curious tautology; moreover धन् means either sound or mass & substance, धन, धनुः a sandy shore, धन्वन् desert, shore, dry land, sky, or sometimes perhaps hurt, injury. In the whole ध् clan, it is only the ध् roots, a few derivatives like ध्रज्, etc, & धेनः, धेना ocean, river, which retain the sense of motion. Probably, then, दधन्युः means either sounded, neighed like a horse for its gallop or to get mass, volume. The latter agrees best both with the image in प्रस्तुभानः & the stress on ऋतेन.

13. मा कस्य यक्षं सदमिद् धुरो गा
मा वेशस्य प्रमिनतो मा आपेः।
मा भ्रातुरग्ने अनृजोऋणं वे-
र्मा सख्युर्दक्षं रिपोर्मुजेम॥

Go not thou ever to the control (or the sacrificial activity) of any who would rob us, nor of the neighbour or the friend who seeks to limit us; manifest not in us, O Agni, the knowledge (or the journeying) of a brother who goes not straight, nor suffer us to enjoy as our own the thought (or the share) of friend or of foe.

हुरो. Sy. हिंसकस्य. But cf जुहुराणमेनः: It means that which takes us out of our straight path or else that which robs us of knowledge: the idea is always drawing, seizing, ravishing. ऋणं. Sy. ऋणवद् देयं हृतिः: This is absurd. ऋणं = motion, the root ऋ implies straight or forward motion and often attains to the sense of knowledge, rule or right—eg ऋतं, ऋषिः, ऋभु, ऋजु. It may mean here either the knowledge attained or the progress on the Vedic journey. वैः may mean either “enter into”, “resort to” or “manifest in us”. The last is most probable. दक्षं, either “share”, cf दश् to distribute, or discernment, cf Gr. doxa, dokeo — idea.

14. रक्षा णो अग्ने तव रक्षणेभी
रारक्षाणः सुमख प्रीणानः ।
प्रति ष्कुर वि रुज वीडु अंहो
जहि रक्षो महि चिद्वावृधानं॥

Guard us, O Agni, with thy protections, putting forth thy vehemence, O full of substance, in thy gladness (or revelling in thy delight); break forth, shatter strong-piled evil, slay the Rakshasa, huge though he be, in his increase.

रारक्षाणः: It is hardly likely that the idea of protection should be thrice repeated. रह् means to separate, screen, cover, conceal, hence the sense of protection or keeping in रक्ष; but, also, like रभ्, it means swiftness, violence, vehemence & may mean passionate delight like रभस्. The three closing words will then be connected & complementary in sense in the true Vedic style.

15. एभिर्भव सुमना अग्ने अर्कै-
रिमान्स्पृश मन्मभिः शूर वाजान् ।
उत ब्रह्माणि अंगिरो जुषस्व
सं ते शस्तिदेववाता जरेत॥

By these hymns of realisation become gracious to us, O Agni, & touch by their thoughts, O Agni, these riches; cleave too to the soul-mantras, O Angiras, & let that expression of thee manifesting thy godhead (manifested by the gods) woo thee for us.

अंगिरः: Sy. ये अंगारा आसंस्ते अंगिरसोऽभवन्निति ब्राह्मणं । ये अंगिरसः सूनवस्ते अग्नेः परि जङ्गिरे । कृ. १०.६२.५. अग्निः, अंगति, अंगार, अंगिर, अंगिरस् all come from आग् & its nasal form अंग्, to be strong in being, forceful in motion, action, heat or brilliant in light. These are the ideas contained in the Vedic idea of Agni, the divine Lord of Tapas, who is अंगिरः full of strength & force, heat & brilliance. सं जरेत्. Sy. संवर्धयतु. But the sense of जूँ in the Veda is fixed & there is no ground here for departure from its ordinary significance.

16. एता विश्वा विदुषे तुम्यं वेधो
नीथान्यग्ने निण्या वचांसि ।
निवचना कवये काव्यानि
अशंसिषं मतिभिर्विप्र उक्षैः॥

Lo, all these secret words that guide us in the journey, for thee, O Agni, Disposer, who hast the knowledge, I illumined in the thoughts of the mind, in the expressions of the speech have uttered forth,— secrets of seers' wisdom expressive for the seer.

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[RV IV.4]

4. Vamadeva's fourth hymn to Agni.

1. कृणुष्व पाजः प्रसितिं न पृथ्वीं
 याहि राजेव अमवानिभेन।
 तृष्णीमनु प्रसितिं दूरानो
 अस्तासि विध्य रक्षसस्तपिष्टैः॥

Make the mass of thy strength like a wide marching, go like a king strong with his army; charging in the line of thy swift march,— an Archer art thou,— pierce the Rakshasas with thy most burning strengths.

पाजः— strength, but with the idea of mass, bulk, cf Gr. pagos, a hill, pegnumi etc, पंजि a ball (mass) of cotton, पाजस्य footing (firm ground for the feet) etc. प्रसितिं may mean a path, but literally it seems to mean an assault or a march & that sense is most appropriate here. In any case the sense of the rik is perfectly lucid & simple & it is painful to see Sayana stumbling about it under a clumsy load of laborious & inapplicable learning.

2. तव भ्रमास आशुया पतंति
 अनु स्पृश धृषता शोशुचानः।
 तपूर्षि अग्ने जुद्धा पतंगा-
 नसंदितो वि सृज विष्वगुल्काः॥

Swiftly gallop thy ranging steeds, follow & attain by violence burning bright & pure; unfettered pour forth by thy force on every side, O Agni, thy heats and thy flying sparks and thy streaming flames.

जुहू. Sy. हृयंतेऽस्यामाहुतय इति जुहूज्ञाला. This learnedly fanciful derivation cannot be accepted. हृ is to cast, pour forth; it expresses any violent motion or action; जुहू must be either the act or the force of the casting or the thing cast, not the thing into which the object is cast.

3. प्रति स्पशो वि सृज तूर्णितमो
भवा पायुर्विशो अस्या अदब्धः ।
यो नो दूरे अघशंसो यो अंति
अग्ने माकिष्टे व्यथिरा दधर्षात्॥

Send forth thy éclaireurs in thy great swiftness, become the protector indomitable of this people; he who would express evil in us from afar, he who from near, let no troubler do violence to thee, O Agni.

स्पश् is exactly expressed by the French éclaireur,— they are the flaming illuminations of Agni Jatavedas which help us to distinguish friend & enemy, Arya & unArya, truth & falsehood.

4. उदग्ने तिष्ठ प्रत्या तनुष्व
न्यमित्राँ ओषतात्तिगमहेते ।
यो नो अरातिं समिधान चक्रे
नीचा तं धक्षि अतसं न शुष्कं॥

Rise up high, O Agni, spread thyself against them, scorch our unlovers, thou with the sharp missiles; he who hath done to us undelight, burn him to the roots like a dry trunk.

अराति. Sy. शात्रवं. There is always the ambiguity in अराति, which may mean either enemy or undelight, राति being the long form permissible in the early Aryan tongue of रति. The enemies denounced are the यातुज्ज्, यातुधान, यातुमावत्, the impellers of pain & trouble, vessels of torture, holders in the body & mind of the activity of pain. Therefore “undelight” is the most probable sense of अराति in this passage.

5. ऊर्ध्वो भव प्रति विघ्याधि अस्म-
दाविष्कृणुष्व दैव्यानि अग्ने ।
अव स्थिरा तनुहि यातुज्जूनां
जामिमजामिं प्र मृणीहि शत्रून्॥

Be high-exalted, smite them in our march from above us, reveal the things divine, O Agni; lay low the established things of the impellers to anguish; whether sole or companioned he be, crush before us our enemies.

Sy's gloss अस्मदधि — अस्मत्तोऽधिकान् — is both improbable & unnecessary. प्रति & अधि-अस्मद् express the two ideas of piercing the foe in front & smiting them from above, — therefore ऊर्ध्वे भव.

यातुज्जनां. Sy. प्राणिनः क्लेशयितुं ये जर्वं कुर्वति तेषाम्.

6. स ते जानाति सुमतिं यविष्ट

य ईवते ब्रह्मणे गातुमैरत् ।

विश्वानि अस्मै सुदिनानि रायो

द्युम्नानि अर्यो वि दुरो अभि द्यौत् ॥

He knoweth the perfected mind in thee, O young & strong Agni, who has sent forth the chant of fulfilment (or has sent thee forth on the road) for the soul in its march; the worker & uplifter illumines for him about all the doors of his being all brightnesses of his days & felicities and shining energies.

गातुम् often means a road or to go and ईवते seems to demand the latter sense; on the other hand the idea of the गायत्र or गाथ is usually closely connected with the idea of ब्रह्म in the Veda & we have the mention of उक्थ in a similar context. Possibly the ambiguity is intentional in order to maintain the secrecy of the निष्यं वचः about the soul. I cannot accept Sayana's interpretation of ब्रह्मणे = परिवृद्धाय तुभ्यं. ब्रह्मणे in Veda means either to the mantra, or to the soul, or to Brahma; we need not embarrass ourselves with a fourth & unnecessary choice.

7. सेदग्ने अस्तु सुभगः सुदानु-

यस्त्वा नित्येन हविषा य उक्थैः ।

पिप्रीषति स्व आयुषि दुरोणे

विश्वेदस्मै सुदिना सासदिष्टः ॥

May he, O Agni, be perfect in enjoyment and activity who thee with constant oblation, who with expressive mantras seeketh to satisfy in his own being, in its gated house, may that sacrifice of his be in all its scope attended with brightness of its days.

दुरोणे. Sy. दुरवने कृच्छ्रलभ्ये शतवर्षास्ये जीवने. I take दुरोणे as usual = दुर्या. Sy. takes सुदिना = सुदिनानि, & सासदिष्टः a separate sentence, अस्तु = फलसाधनसमर्थौ भवतु, — a tall order. I take सुदिना simply as an adjective to इष्टिः, cf सुदिनत्वमहाम्.

8. अर्चामि ते सुमतिं घोषि अर्वाक्
सं ते वावाता जरतामियं गीः ।
स्वश्वास्त्वा सुरथा मर्जयेम
अस्मे क्षत्राणि धारयेनु दून् ॥

I effect by the rik the perfect mind in thee; with sound descend; may this word woo thee entirely to me by its wide force of manifestation (or this word that I have uttered); may we with perfect steeds, in a perfect chariot put forth strength towards thee. Mayst thou uphold all mighty in us from day to day.

Sy. वावाता — going to thee. घोषि — Sy. घोषयुक्तं यथा भवति & अर्वाक् = त्वदभिमुखं. क्षत्राणि — Sy. धनानि.

9. इह त्वा भूर्या चरेद्वपु त्मन्
दोषावस्तर्दीदिवांसमनु दून् ।
क्रीळतस्त्वा सुमनसः सपेम
अभि द्युम्ना तस्थिवांसो जनानाम् ॥

In this world one can direct one's works by the self & with largeness towards thee shining in darkness & by light all man's days; perfected in mind and at play may we possess thee prevailing in our force over the energies of creatures.

Sy. दोषावस्तर् day & night or O coverer of night, rather shiner in the darkness. सपेम. Sy. परिचरेम. सप् means to be wise — सप्त, sapio, sapiens — or to possess, enjoy, taste — sapor etc. सपर्या means seeking to possess, keep up or enjoy, so courting, wooing, tending. Sy. द्युम्ना = धनानि.

10. यस्त्वा स्वश्वः सुहिरण्यं अग्नं
उपयाति वसुमता रथेन ।
तस्य त्राता भवसि तस्य सखा
यस्त आतिथ्यमानुषग् जुजोषत् ॥

He who cometh to thee with perfect steeds, with wealth of gold, O Agni, and his car full of substance, to him deliverer thou

becomest and to him friend, who accepts thy uninterrupted hospitality (or thee with un- etc).

जुजोषत्. Sy. प्रापयति — app^d = जोषयेत्. This is wholly improbable; it would ignore the ते & give an unusual force to the simple जुष्.

11. महो रुजामि बंधुता वचोभि-
स्तन्मा पितुर्गोतमादन्वियाय ।
त्वं नो अस्य वचसश्चकिद्द्वि-
होतर्यविष्ट सुक्रतो दमूनाः ॥

With my narrow strength I break down great opposers by the words of the mantra; for that power has come to me from Gotama my father. Housed in my being do thou take knowledge of this word of ours, O young & vigorous, O perfect in force, O offerer.

बंधुता. Sy. बंधुतया — by friendship with thee won by my praises. I take बंधुता from बंध् to confine, limit — or as in बंधुर = crookedness, in either case referring to the limitations of the mental being.

12. अस्वन्जस्तरणयः सुशेवा
अतंद्रासो अवृका अश्रमिष्ठाः ।
ते पायवः सश्यंचो निषद्
अग्ने तव नः पांतु अमूर ॥

Unsleeping that carry us over & are full of felicity, undrowsing, unrent, ever most unwearied, may those protecting powers of thine continuously seated in us, O Agni, shield us, O illimitable Agni.

अवृकाः: Sy. not tearing. अमूर — अमूढ सर्वज्ञ । यद्वा अमूर अप्रति-हतगते ।

13. ये पायवो मामतेयं ते अग्ने
पश्यन्तो अंधं दुरितादरक्षन् ।
ररक्ष तान्सुक्रतो विश्ववेदा
दिप्संत इद्विपवो नाह देभुः ॥

Thy protecting powers, O Agni, which guarded the son of Matá from stumbling; the Omniscient guardeth them in their

right doing and the foe that strive to do us hurt cannot overcome them.

मामतेयं. A long story is told to explain this allusion— उच्चथस्य गर्भिणी ममतानामधेयां भार्या तदनुजो वृहस्पतिरचकमत् । तस्यां रेत आधित्सुं तं वृहस्पतिं गर्भस्थं रेतोऽब्रवीत् । रेतोऽत्र मा सैक्षीरहमत्र वसामीति । एवमुक्तो वृहस्पतिर्निरुद्धरेतस्कः सन् रेतोरुपं गर्भं शशाप । जात्यंधत्वरूपं दीर्घं तमः प्राप्नुहीति । ततस्तस्यां दीर्घतमा अजनिष्ट । स चांध्यपरिहारायाग्निं स्तुत्वा चक्षुरलभतेति । This story like other myths of the Brahmanas seems to be a Vedantic parable. In any case the blindness of the text is obviously a spiritual blindness. दुरितं, false going, stumbling = sin or misfortune, here sin, as we have सुकृतः.

14. त्वया वयं सधन्यस्त्वोता-
स्तव प्रणीती अश्याम वाजान् ।
उभा शंसा सूदय सत्यताते
अनुष्टुया कृणुह्याह्याण ॥

By thee may we effecting our perfection, by thee increased in being (or protected), by thy leading taste all substantial possessions; impel both the divine and human self-expressions, O builder of Truth; O thou undeviating, accomplish each step successively.

सधन्यः. Sy. सधनाः. It may, however, be सधनिः from सध् to effect, accomplish. सूदय. Sy. (आसन्नविप्रकृष्टौ) पापानां शंसितारौ जहि. This is forced & unnatural & has no connection with सत्यताते. अह्याण. Sy. अलज्जतगमन. Again far-fetched & improbable. It may be from हृ to attract out of the way, cf जुहुराण & हुरः IV.3.13, or to be troubled in heart, disturbed by passion, cf हृष्, हृणानः etc.

15. अया ते अग्ने समिधा विधेम
प्रति स्तोमं शस्यमानं गृभाय ।
दहाशसो रक्षसः पाहि अस्मान्
द्वुहो निदो मित्रमहो अवद्यात् ॥

With this fuel, O Agni, we would dispose the sacrifice for thee, do thou take to thyself the hymn of thy confirming as it is

expressed, burn the Rakshasas who would take its enjoyment (or who would devour us), protect us, O thou might of Love, from harm and limitation and fault.

समिधा. Sy. दीस्या स्तुत्या! मित्रमहः. Sy. मित्रैः पूजनीय. A sufficiently absurd explanation. अवद्यात्. Sy. परिवादात्. अवद्य is either non-expression or insufficient expression, fault of शंस or positively fault or defect, that which should not be spoken or expressed.

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[RV IV.5]

5. Vamadeva's fifth hymn to Agni.

1. वैश्वानराय मीच्छुषे सजोषाः
कथा दाशेम अग्नये बृहङ्गाः।
अनूनेन बृहता वक्षथेन
उप स्तभायदुपमिन्न रोधः॥

Together how shall we give to Agni Vaishvanara in his bounty, who have gained the wide light (of the Truth); with a vast & illimitable upbearing he supporteth verily the firmament from below like a pillar.

बृहङ्गाः. Sy. महते भासमानायाग्नये! वक्षथेन. Sy. वोढव्येन स्वशरीरेण.

2. मा निंदत य इमां मद्यां रातिं
देवो ददौ मत्याय स्वधावान्।
पाकाय गृत्सो अमृतो विचेता
वैश्वानरो नृतमो यद्वो अग्निः॥

Confine not (or blame not) the god who in his self-fixity has given to me, to a mortal this felicity, seizer of things immortal & wise in knowledge he has given it to my ripeness — the lord of universal strength, the mighty & mastering Agni.

Sy. मा निंदत। स्तुतेत्यर्थः! पाकाय — परिपक्वज्ञानाय. गृत्सो. Sy. मेधाविनामैतत्.

3. साम द्विबहा महि तिगमभृष्टः
 सहस्रेता वृषभस्तुविष्मान्।
 पदं न गोरपगूळ्हं विविद्वा-
 नग्निर्मह्यं प्रेदु वोचन्मनीषाम्॥

May the Bull of Force with his thousandfold seed of delight, fiery in his burning strength, express in me, he who has fullness of the two worlds, mighty Sama; may Agni express in me in speech the Intelligence as it were finding perfectly in knowledge the hidden place of the Cow of Light.

द्विबहा. Sy. द्वयोः स्थानयोः परिवृढः. **तुविष्मान्.** Sy. बहुधनः — तुविः, तवस्, तविषी etc have all one meaning, strength, force.

4. प्र तानग्निर्वभसत्तिगमजंभ-
 स्तपिष्ठेन शोचिषा यः सुराधाः।
 प्र ये मिनंति वरुणस्य धाम
 प्रिया मित्रस्य चेततो ध्रुवाणि॥

Them may he sharp-tusked (or fiery-weaponed) burn with his most afflicting lustre (or most energetic), he who is perfect in delight, who awaken in consciousness to the glad & enduring seats of Varuna, of Mitra, & then seek to limit them.

प्र मिनंति. Sy. प्रकर्षेण हिंसंति. मि like मा (cf मन् & also मु in murus, muh etc) means literally to confine, comprehend, limit, diminish, measure, embrace, contain, hold. It may also mean to injure.

5. अभ्रातरो न योषणो व्यंतः
 पतिरिपो न जनयो दुरेवाः।
 पापासः संतो अनृता असत्या
 इदं पदमजनता गमीरं॥

Moving about like women who have no protector, like women of evil impulses who do hurt to their husbands, they, though themselves evil & wandering from the truth & the right have brought to birth (in our consciousness) this deep world of knowledge.

पदं. Sy. नरकस्थानं but see 6. **रिपो.** Sy. द्वेषिण्यः.

6. इदं मे अग्ने कियते पावक
 अमिनते गुरुं भारं न मन्म ।
 वृहद् दधाथ धृष्टा गभीरं
 यद्हुं पृष्ठं प्रयसा सप्तधातु॥

When, O Agni, I who am so little, O purifier, could not contain my thought as one who cannot hold a heavy load, this vast & deep & controlling level thou didst establish for me violently by thy endeavour in all its seven principles.

Sy. अमिनते — अहिंसतेऽत्यजते. This is merely a scholastic ingenuity. मन्म — मननीयं धनं! Another.

7. तमिन्नवेव समना समान-
 मभि क्रत्वा पुनती धीतिरश्याः ।
 ससस्य चर्मन्नधि चारु पृश्ने-
 रग्ने रूप आरुपितं जवारु॥

Him indeed in his pervading equality may my thought too purifying and pervadingly equal even now by its power (or the will) attain; in the action of the bliss is reflected on high, bright and firm(?), the form of the dappled Cow of Light.

रूपः: Sy. takes as 6th case of रूप = earth. आरोपयति स्वात्मनि सस्यादीनि रुविति भूमिरुच्यते, पृश्नि = द्युलोक, आरुपितं = आरोपितं, जवारु = जवमानरोहि (Yaska). All these are forced derivations & forced senses. चर्मन् — Sy. चर्मणे चरणाय & ससस्य = निश्चलस्य.

8. प्रवाच्यं वचसः किं मे अस्य
 गुहा हितमुप निणिगवदंति ।
 यदुस्त्रियाणामप वारिव ब्रन्
 पाति प्रियं रूपो अग्रं पदं वेः॥

What of this word must I declare in speech? That which is established in the hidden places they speak of secretly (or as a secret) and that which they unveil as the sea of the bright ones, yet one guardeth its form of bliss & the supreme place of the manifest being.

निणिक्. नितरां नेनेक्ति शोधयतीति निणिक् क्षीरमुच्यते. Sy. ignores the murdhanya nasal. It is from निण् — cf निण्यं. प्रियं रूपः: भूस्याः प्रियं स्थानं.

9. इदमु त्यन्महि महामनीकं
 यदुप्रिया सचत पूर्वं गौः ।
 ऋतस्य पदे अधि दीद्यानं
 गुहा रघुष्यद्रघुयद्विवेद॥

This verily is that mighty & pristine force of the great ones to which cleaveth the Cow of brightness; shining in the seat of Truth I knew it whether turning to swift motion towards the hidden places or thither swiftly moving.

रघुष्यद् is clearly a desiderative form of the nominal रघुयद्.

10. अध द्युतानः पित्रोः सचासा
 अमनुत गुह्यं चारु पृश्चेः
 मातुष्पदे परमे अंति षड्ग-
 वृष्णाः शोच्चिषः प्रयतस्य जिह्वा॥

Now he shines with the Father & Mother & near to them and has knowledge in mind of the bright & secret thing of the dappled Cow; opposite us (or near) in the highest place of the Mother, of the Cow of Being, is the tongue of the flaming-bright Lord in His activity.

आसामनुत्. Sy. आस्येन पानायावुध्यत!

11. ऋतं वोचे नमसा पृच्छ्यमान-
 स्तवाशासा जातवेदो यदीदं ।
 त्वमस्य क्षयसि यद्भु विश्वं
 दिवि यद्भु द्रविणं यत्पृथिव्याम्॥

With obeisance of submission & by thy command, O Knower of the worlds, I declare to the questioner this truth that I have; thou art its inhabitant, yea, of all this that is substance in heaven and all that is substance on the earth.

नमसा. Sy. takes with पृच्छ॑°, I take with वोचे. आशासा. Sy. स्तुत्या. क्षयसि. ईश्वरो भवसि.

12. किं नो अस्य द्रविणं कद्भु रत्नं
 वि नो वोचो जातवेदश्चकित्वान् ।
 गुहाध्वनः परमं यन्नो अस्य
 रेकु पदं न निदाना अगन्म॥

What is the substance of this Truth, what its delight, perceive & declare to us, O Knower of all births; that which is its last secret seat at the farthest end of the path, over & above all other, may we reach & avoid (or refuse) all bondage & limitation.

रेकु. रिक्तं ie अतिरिक्तं beyond the four other padas.

13. का मर्यादा वयुना कद्द वाम-
 मच्छा गमेम रघवो न वाजं ।
 कदा नो देवीरमृतस्य पत्नीः
 सूरो वर्णेन ततनन्मुषासः॥

What are its confines, what its wideness, what its delightfulness towards which we must go like swift steeds to their goal? What for us have the divine wives of the Immortal One, the Dawns, extended by the light of the Sun?

कदा I take = कद् आT contrary to Padapatha. वाजं from वाज् to go, वाजी a horse, goer (goal or perhaps stable). वर्णेन. Sy. प्रकाशेन.

14. अनिरेण वचसा फल्वेन
 प्रतीत्येन कृधुनातृपासः ।
 अधा ते अग्ने किमिहा वदंति
 अनायुधास आसता सचंताम्॥

Unsatisfied any longer with a Word that is unadvancing & slight and easily assailed and petty what now may men express of thee here, O Agni; unweaponed let them cleave to thy seated being.

अनिरेण. इरान्नं तद्रहितेन! I take “without impetus or force” = unable to carry man forward. फल्वेन. Sy. उक्थेन. Simply फल्नु. कृधुना. कृध्विति द्वस्वनाम कृधुको वप्रक इति तन्नामसूक्तत्वात्. आसता. P.P. असता. Sy. दुःखेन. It may mean, if from आस् either “seated” or “near”, if from अ = आ + सता, then “near” or in sense of आभू.

15. अस्य श्रिये समिधानस्य वृण्णो
 वसारनीकं दम आ रुरोच ।
 रुशद्वसानः सुदृशीकरूपः
 क्षितिर्न राया पुरुवारो अद्यौत्॥

For opulence of our being shineth out in its home (or in this our house) the force of this Lord & king of substance blazing high;

he wears his robe of redness and with a form gloriously visible (or of perfect vision) as one who has made his home with the felicity he shines out rich in blessings.

श्रिये. श्रेयसे. पुरुवारः. बहुभिर्द्विग्मिर्वरणीयः. क्षितिः. राजादिः
क्षितिरिति मनुष्यनाम्.

[27]

[RV IV.6.1–3]

6. Vamadeva's sixth hymn to Agni.

1. ऊर्ध्वं ऊ षु णो अध्वरस्य होत-
रग्ने तिष्ठ देवताता यजीयान्।
त्वं हि विश्वमभ्यसि मन्म-
प्र वेधसश्चित्तिरसि मनीषाम्॥

Perfectly high do thou stand for us, O offerer of our sacrifice, more mighty for its workings in the extending of the gods; for thou art about every thought and thou carriest forward on its way (or givest) the intellect of the disposer.

देवताता. देवास्तायते विस्तीर्यतेऽत्रेति देवतातिर्यज्ञः. प्रतिरसि. प्रवर्ध-
यसि Sy. मनीषां. मतिं स्तुतिं.

2. अमूरो होता न्यसादि विश्व-
अग्निर्मद्वो विदथेषु प्रचेताः।
ऊर्ध्वं भानुं सवितेव अश्रेन्
मेतेव धूमं स्तभायद्वुप द्याम्॥

The priest illimitable of the oblation has taken his seat in the peoples (creatures), Agni rapturous in the movements of knowledge, he who in the mind perceiveth; like the sun may he move to his high lustre, like a pillar may he set his smoke (of temperamental force) to support heaven (within us).

3. यता सुजूर्णी रातिनी घृताची
प्रदक्षिणिद् देवतातिमुराणः।
उद्दु स्वरूनवजा न अक्रः
पश्वो अनक्ति सुधितः सुमेकः॥

Rich & bright, full of impetus, full of delight it is governed & directed (or, it is in action); moving to the right, increasing the divine extension he drives upward the herds of vision, on the heights like an active driver (or a high pole) manifested in the nine, well-established, perfect in capacity.

घृताची ie मनीषा. **उराणः**. Sy. उरु कुर्वाणः. **स्वरुः**. यूपशकलवाची स्वरुरत्र यूपं लक्षयति। चषालवंतः स्वरवः पृथिव्याम्. R.V. 3.8.10. स्वरुणा पशुमनक्तीति श्रुतेः. Therefore it can hardly be यूप. Perhaps सु + अरुः. **सुमेकः**. मेकः must be from either मि, मिक् [or] मिच्. Lat. mico, Grk. μικρός, S. मेकः do not help us.

[28]

[RV IV.6]

1. ऊर्ध्वं ऊ षु णो अध्वरस्य होतरग्ने तिष्ठ देवताता यजीयान्।
त्वं हि विश्वमभ्यसि मन्म प्र वेधसश्चित्तिरसि मनीषां॥

S. [Sayana:] **देवताता** देवास्तायते विस्तीर्यतेऽत्रेति देवतातिर्यज्ञः: **मन्म** मननीयं शत्रूणां धनं **वित्** पूजायां **अभ्यसि** अभिभवसि **प्रतिरसि** प्रवर्धयसि

(**देवताता** Agni on high as Hotri of the Adhwara in the Devatati. Agni overpowers every **मन्म** and carries forward the intelligence of the Vedhâ.)

S. High, very high for us stand, O summoner (or, performer of offering), O Agni, a great sacrificer in the sacrifice (in which the gods are extended).

Tr. [Translation:] High, yea, very high, stand, O Flame, O offering priest of the journeying sacrifice, be very mighty for sacrifice in the forming of the gods. For thou comest over every thought and thou carriest on its way the thinking mind of the orderer of the work.

2. अमूरो होता न्यसादि विक्ष्वग्निर्मदो विदथेषु प्रचेताः।
ऊर्ध्वं भानुं सवितेवाश्रेन्मेतेव धूमं स्तभायदुप द्यां॥

अमूरः अमूढः प्रगल्भ इत्यर्थः **मुद्रः** मदनीयो मादयिता वा **मेता** स्थूणा

उप द्यां द्युलोकस्योपरि

S. The intelligent offering priest, the enrapturing Agni of great knowledge is settled among the peoples (the priests) in (for) the sacrifices; he resorts upward to his lustre like the sun; like a pillar he supports his smoke above the heaven.

Tr. The offering priest inspired of mind has taken his seat in the peoples, Agni, the rapturous, the wise thinker in the gettings of knowledge; he has risen high into light like the all-creating Sun; like a pillar he holds up his smoke against the heavens.

3. यता सुजूर्णी रातिनी घृताची प्रदक्षिणिदेवतातिमुराणः ।
उद्ग स्वरूनवजा नाक्रः पश्वो अनक्ति सुधितः सुमेकः ॥

यता संयता सुजूर्णी शोभनजवा सुष्टु जीर्णा पुराणी वा घृताची घृतमंचतीति ज्ञुहः: रातिनी रातिर्धनं हविलक्षणधनवती आज्यपूर्णा भवतीति उराणः उरु कुवोणः प्रदक्षिणिद् प्रदक्षिणगमनः: (प्रदक्षिणमेति) अकारलोपश्छांदसः स्वरुः यूपशकलः=यूपः: (cf चषालवंतः स्वरवः पृथिव्यां Rv. III.8.10 etc) न समुच्चये=अपि उद्गु उन्नतो भवति or उत्कृष्टः अक्रः आक्रमिता सुमेकः सुदीपः सुधितः स्वधितिरित्यर्थः अनक्ति गच्छति. स्वरूणा पशु-मनक्तीति श्रुतेः

S. The (ghee-giving) flame (or ladle?) controlled and very swift (or very old) is wealthy (ie full of ghee); he (Agni or the Adhwaryu) becomes or goes (round from left) to right, widening the sacrifice; and also the new-born post becomes high; approaching, very bright, the axe(?) goes to the animals (or the post excellent etc and well placed goes to the animals).

अक्रः: Gr. ἄκρος high, or अज् moving. सुमेकः cf Gr. μῆκος = long, or bright, L. *micare*.

Tr. The clear-shining flame of him is reined and swift and opulent (or, delightful), he on his right hand circling widens the extension of the gods; high like a post of sacrifice, new-born, moving, firm on his base and bright he brings the (seeing) herds.

4. स्तीर्णे बहिषि समिधाने अग्ना ऊर्ध्वे अध्वर्युजुञ्जाणो अस्थात् ।
पर्यग्निः पशुपा न होता त्रिविष्येति प्रदिव उराणः ॥

जुजुञ्जाणः देवान्तीणयन् प्रदिवः पुरातनः उराणः increases (that is, though little, makes them fit for the gods) यद्वै देवैर्जोन्यते हविस्तद्विरमात्रं वर्धत इति श्रुतेः त्रिविष्टि पर्येति पशून् त्रिरावृत्य पर्येति

त्रिर्हि पर्यग्निः क्रियते

S. The altar spread, the fire kindled, the leader of sacrifice pleasing the gods stands high; the offering priest ancient, greatening (the offering), goes like a herdsman thrice round (the cattle).

5. परि त्मना मितद्वूरेति होताग्निर्मद्रो मधुवचा ऋतावा।
द्रवंत्यस्य वाजिनो न शोका भयंते विश्वा भुवना यदभ्राट्॥

**मितद्वूः परिमितगतिः ऋतावा यज्ञवान् वाजिनः हविष्मतः न अपि or
वाजिनो न = अश्वा इव**

S. Limited in motion he goes round himself (in his own form), the offerer Agni enrapturing, sweet-voiced, having sacrifice; his lustres run fooded (or like horses); all beings fear when he blazes.

Tr. He encompasses with himself in his measured motion, the Flame, the offering priest, rapturous, honey-worded, master of truth; his lustres run like horses; all the worlds are in awe when he blazes forth.

6. भद्रा ते अग्ने स्वनीक संदृग् धोरस्य सतो विषुणस्य चारुः।
न यत्ते शोचिस्तमसा वरंत न ध्वस्मानस्तन्वी रेप आ धुः॥

**विषुणस्य सर्वतो व्याप्तस्य भद्रा स्तुत्या कल्याणी वा मूर्तिः संदृक् संदृष्टिः
सम्यग्दृश्या भवतीत्यर्थः**

S. O fair-flaming Agni, the delightful, praisable (or auspicious image) of thee terrible, pervading on every side, is full-seen, because they (the nights) do not stop thee with darkness nor the destroyers put (create) sin in thy body.

Tr. O thou Flame of great force (or, fair of face), though thou art terrible as thou goest abroad over the regions, happy and beautiful is the vision of thee; for the nights envelop thee not with darkness nor have the destroyers cast sin into thy body.

7. न यस्य सातुर्जनितोरवारि न मातरा पितरा नू चिदिष्टौ।
अधा मित्रो न सुधितः पावकोऽग्निर्दीदाय मानुषीषु विक्षु॥

**जनितुः creator of rain सातुः सनिः पश्वादिलक्षणं दानं दीसिर्वा इष्टौ
प्रेषणे नू चित् क्षिप्रमेव न प्रभवतः अधा अपि च सुधितः सुतृप्तः**

S. Of whom, father (of rain), his giving (or, lustre) is not

stopped (by anybody); and in whose sending the father and mother (heaven & earth) do not quickly prevail, the purifier like a well-pleased friend shines among the peoples of Manu.

Tr. The gettings of this begetter of things (or the light of this begetter and getter of things) cannot be shut in; nor our Father and Mother when he urges. Then shines the purifying Flame as the Friend, well-based, in the human peoples.

8. द्विर्यं पञ्च जीजनन्त्संवसानाः स्वसारो अग्निं मानुषीषु विक्षु ।
उषर्बुधमथर्यो न दन्तं शुक्रं स्वासं परशुं न तिग्मम्॥

S. Whom the ten sisters coming together (the fingers) bore, Agni, among the peoples of Manu, like women (अथर्यः, स्त्रिय इव), the waker at dawn, the eater (of offerings), bright, fair-faced, like a sharp axe (killing the Rakshasas).

Tr. Twice five sisters who dwell together gave birth to this Flame in the human peoples; they like women(?) gave birth to the brighter eater who awakes with dawn, whose face is beautiful; and he is like a keen axe.

9. तव त्ये अग्ने हरितो धृतस्ता रोहितास ऋज्वंचः स्वंचः ।
अरुषासो वृषण ऋजुमुष्का आ देवतातिमद्भूंत दस्मा:॥

अद्भूंत आद्भूयंते धृतस्ताः नासापुटादिस्थानेभ्य उदकं क्षरंतः वृषणः युवानो
वर्षितारो वा ऋजुमुष्काः साधनमुष्काः दस्माः दर्शनीयाः

S. Those horses of thine, Agni, streaming water, red, straight-moving, well-going, shining, young (or rainers), well-formed and beautiful, are called to the sacrifice.

Tr. Those bright steeds of thine, O Flame, who stream clear brightness (ghrita), and are red and straight and fair of motion, shining potent stallions, are called in their power to the extending of the godheads.

10. ये ह त्ये ते सहमाना अयासस्त्वेषासो अग्ने अर्चयश्चरंति ।
श्येनासो न द्रुवसनासो अर्थं तुविष्वणसो मारुतं न शर्धः॥

द्रुवसनासः: परिचरणीयाः श्येनासः: अश्वाः

S. Those rays of thine, O Agni, overcoming, moving, bright, to be served, go like horses to their goal; they are great-sounding like the Marut host.

Tr. Those illuminings of thee, O Flame, they overpower, they travel, they are keen in brightness, they are active, they move like eagles to the goal, they are many-voiced like the host of the Life-gods.

11. अकारि ब्रह्म समिधान तुभ्यं शंसात्युक्थं यजते व्यू धाः ।
होतारमर्मिनं मनुषो नि षद्गुर्नमस्यंत उशिजः शंसमायोः॥

शंसं शंसनीयं

S. O thou who art being kindled, for thee the praise is made; one (the Hota) speaks the praise, one (the Yajamana) sacrifices; give (wealth). Men desiring (wealth) serve worshipping Agni the caller of the gods speakable (praisable) of man.

Tr. The soul-thought is formed, O kindling Flame, for thee; for thee one speaks the word and sacrifices; ordain. Men, the desirers, take refuge in the flame, the priest of sacrifice, with obeisance to the expresser of the human being.

[29]

[RV IV.7.1–3]

The Vama Deva Hymns to Agni

Introduction

The interpretation of the Rigveda is perhaps the most difficult and disputed question with which the scholarship of today has to deal. This difficulty and dispute are not the creation of present-day criticism; it has existed in different forms since very early times. To what is this incertitude due? Partly, no doubt, it arises from the archaic character of a language in which many of the words were obsolete when ancient Indian scholars tried to systematise the traditional learning about the Veda, and especially the great number of different meanings of which the old Sanskrit words are capable. But there is another and more vital difficulty and problem. The Vedic hymns are full of figures and symbols, — of that there can be no least doubt, — and the question is

what do these symbols represent, what is their religious or other significance? Are they simply mythological figures with no depth of meaning behind them? Are they the poetic images of an old Nature-worship, mythological, astronomical, naturalistic, symbols of the action of physical phenomena represented as the action of the gods? Or have they another and more mystic significance? If this question could be solved with an indubitable certitude, the difficulty of language would be no great obstacle; certain hymns and verses might remain obscure, but the general sense, drift, purport of the ancient hymns could be made clear. But the singular feature of the Veda is that none of these solutions, at least as they have been hitherto applied, gives a firm and satisfactory outcome. The hymns remain confused, bizarre, incoherent, and the scholars are obliged to take refuge in the gratuitous assumption that this incoherence is a native character of the text and does not arise from their own ignorance of its central meaning. But so long as we can get no farther than this point, the doubt, the debate must continue.

A few years ago I wrote a series of articles in which I suggested an explanation of the ambiguous character of the Veda. My suggestion hinged on this central idea that these hymns were written in a stage of religious culture which answered to a similar period in Greece and other ancient countries,—I do not suggest that they were contemporary or identical in cult and idea,—a stage in which there was a double face to the current religion, an outer for the people, *prophanum vulgus*, an inner for the initiates, the early period of the Mysteries. The Vedic Rishis were mystics who reserved their inner knowledge for the initiates; they shielded it from the vulgar by the use of an alphabet of symbols which could not readily be understood without the initiation, but were perfectly clear and systematic when the signs were once known. These symbols centred around the idea and forms of the sacrifice; for the sacrifice was the universal and central institution of the prevailing cult. The hymns were written round this institution and were understood by the vulgar as ritual chants in praise of the Nature-gods, Indra, Agni, Surya Savitri, Varuna, Mitra and Bhaga, the Aswins, Ribhus,

Maruts, Rudra, Vishnu, Saraswati, with the object of provoking by the sacrifice the gifts of the gods,— cows, horses, gold and other forms of wealth of a pastoral people, victory over enemies, safety in travel, sons, servants, prosperity, every kind of material good fortune. But behind this mask of primitive and materialistic naturalism, lay another and esoteric cult which would reveal itself if we once penetrated the meaning of the Vedic symbols. That once caught and rightly read, the whole Rigveda would become clear, consequent, a finely woven, yet straightforward tissue.

According to my theory the outer sacrifice represented in these esoteric terms an inner sacrifice of self-giving and communion with the gods. These gods are powers outwardly of physical, inwardly of psychical nature. Thus Agni outwardly is the physical principle of fire, but inwardly the god of the psychic godward flame, force, will, Tapas; Surya outwardly the solar light, inwardly the god of the illuminating revelatory knowledge; Soma outwardly the moon and the Soma-wine or nectarous moon plant, inwardly the god of the spiritual ecstasy, Ananda. The principal psychical conception of this inner Vedic cult was the idea of the Satyam Ritam Brihat, the Truth, the Law, the Vast. Earth, Air and Heaven symbolised the physical, vital and mental being, but this Truth was situated in the greater heaven, base of a triple Infinity actually and explicitly mentioned in the Vedic riks, and it meant therefore a state of spiritual and supramental illumination. To get beyond earth and sky to Swar, the Sun-world, seat of this illumination, home of the gods, foundation and seat of the Truth, was the achievement of the early Fathers, *pûrve pitarah*, and of the seven Angiras Rishis who founded the Vedic religion. The solar gods, children of Infinity, Adityah, were born in the Truth and the Truth was their home, but they descended into the lower planes and had in each plane their appropriate functions, their mental, vital and physical cosmic motions. They were the guardians and increasers of the Truth in man and by the Truth, *ritasya pathâ*, led him to felicity and immortality. They had to be called into the human being and increased in their functioning, formed in him, brought in or

born, *devavîti*, extended, *devatâti*, united in their universality, *vaisvadevya*.

The sacrifice was represented at once as a giving and worship, a battle and a journey. It was the centre of a battle between the Gods aided by Aryan men on one side and the Titans or destroyers on the opposite faction, Dasyus, Vritras, Panis, Rakshasas, later called Daityas and Asuras, between the powers of the Truth or Light and the powers of falsehood, division, darkness. It was a journey, because the sacrifice travelled from earth to the gods in their heaven, but also because it made ready the path by which man himself travelled to the home of the Truth. This journey opposed by the Dasyus, thieves, robbers, tearers, besiegers (*vritras*), was itself a battle. The giving was an inner giving. All the offerings of the outer sacrifice, the cow and its yield, the horse, the Soma were symbols of the dedication of inner powers and experiences to the Lords of Truth. The divine gifts, result of the outer sacrifice, were also symbols of inner divine gifts, the cows of the divine light symbolised by the herds of the Sun, the horse of strength and power, the son of the inner godhead or divine man created by the sacrifice, and so through the whole list. This symbolic duplication was facilitated by the double meaning of the Vedic words. *Go*, for instance, means both cow and ray; the cows of the dawn and the sun, Homer's *boes Eelioio*, are the rays of the Sungod, Lord of Revelation, even as in Greek mythology Apollo the Sungod is also the Master of poetry and of prophecy. *Ghrita* means clarified butter, but also the bright thing; *soma* means the wine of the moon plant, but also delight, honey, sweetness, *madhu*. This is the conception, all other features are subsidiary to this central idea. The suggestion seems to me a perfectly simple one, neither out of the way and recondite, nor unnatural to the mentality of the early human peoples.

There are certain *a priori* objections which can be brought against this theory. One may be urged against it from the side of Western scholarship. It may be objected that there is no need for all this mystification, that there is no sign of it in the Veda unless we choose to read it into the primitive mythology, that it

is not justified by the history of religion or of the Vedic religion, that it was a refinement impossible to an ancient and barbaric mind. None of these objections can really stand. The Mysteries in Egypt and Greece and elsewhere were of a very ancient standing and they proceeded precisely on this symbolic principle, by which outward myth and ceremony and cult objects stood for secrets of an inward life or knowledge. It cannot therefore be argued that this mentality was non-existent, impossible in antique times or any more impossible or improbable in India, the country of the Upanishads, than in Egypt and Greece. The history of ancient religion does show a transmutation of physical Nature-gods into representatives of psychical powers or rather an addition of psychical to physical functions; but the latter in some instances gave place to the less external significance. I have given the example of Helios replaced in later times by Apollo. Just so in the Vedic religion Surya undoubtedly becomes a god of inner light, the famous Gayatri verse and its esoteric interpretation are there to prove it as well as the constant appeal of the Upanishads to Vedic riks or Vedic symbols taken in a psychological and spiritual sense, eg, the four closing verses of the Isha Upanishad. Hermes, Athena represent in classical mythology psychical functions, but were originally Nature gods, Athena probably a dawn goddess. I contend that Usha in the Veda shows us this transmutation in its commencement. Dionysus the wine-god was intimately connected with the Mysteries; I assign a similar role to Soma, the wine-god of the Vedas.

But the question is whether there is anything to show that there was actually such a doubling of functions in the Veda. Now in the first place, how was the transition effected from the alleged purely materialistic Nature-worship of the Vedas to the extraordinary psychological and spiritual knowledge of the Upanishads unsurpassed in their subtlety and sublimity in ancient times? There are three possible explanations. First, this sudden spirituality may have been brought in from outside; it is hardly suggested by some scholars that it was taken from an alleged highly spiritual non-Aryan southern culture; but this is an assumption, a baseless hypothesis for which no proof has

been advanced; it rests as a surmise in the air without foundation. Secondly, it may have developed from within by some such transmutation as I have suggested, but subsequent to the composition of all but the latest Vedic hymns. Still even then it was effected on the basis of the Vedic hymns; the Upanishads claim to be a development from the Vedic knowledge, Vedanta repeatedly appeals to Vedic texts, regards Veda as a book of knowledge. The men who gave the Vedantic knowledge are everywhere represented as teachers of the Veda. Why then should we rigidly assume that this development took place subsequent to the composition of the bulk of the Vedic mantras? For the third possibility is that the whole ground had already been prepared consciously by the Vedic mystics. I do not say that the inner Vedic knowledge was identical with the Brahmanava. Its terms were different, its substance was greatly developed, much lost or rejected, much added, old ideas shed, new interpretations made, the symbolic element reduced to a minimum and replaced by clear and open philosophic phrases and conceptions. Certainly, the Vedic mantras had already become obscure and ill-understood at the time of the Brahmanas. And still the groundwork may have been there from the beginning. It is, of course, in the end a question of fact; but my present contention is only that there is no *a priori* impossibility, but rather a considerable probability or at least strong possibility in favour of my suggestion. I will put my argument in this way. The later hymns undoubtedly contain a beginning of the Brahmanava; how did it begin, had it no root origins in the earlier mantras? It is certain that some of the gods, Varuna, Saraswati, had a psychological as well as a physical function. I go farther and say that this double function can everywhere be traced in the Veda with regard to other gods, as for instance, Agni and even the Maruts. Why not then pursue the inquiry on these lines and see how far it will go? There is at least a *prima facie* ground for consideration, and to begin with, I demand no more. An examination of the actual text of the hymns can alone show how far the inquiry will be justified or produce results of a high importance.

Another *a priori* objection comes from the side of orthodox

tradition. What it amounts to is an objection to go behind the authority of Sayana, who belongs to an age at least two or three thousand years later than the Veda, and of Yaska, the ancient lexicographer. Besides, the Veda is currently regarded as *karmakânda*, a book of ritual works, the Vedanta only as *jñânakânda*, a book of knowledge. In an extreme orthodox standpoint it is objected that reason, the critical faculty, the historical argument have nothing to do with the question; the Vedas are beyond such tests, in form and substance eternal, in interpretation only to be explained by traditional authority. That attitude is one with which I am not concerned; I am seeking for the truth of this matter and I cannot be stopped by a denial of my right to seek for any truth contrary to tradition. But if in a more moderate form the argument be that when there is an unbroken and consistent ancient tradition, there is no justification in going behind it, then the obvious reply is that there is no such thing. Sayana moves amidst a constant uncertainty, gives various possibilities, fluctuates in his interpretations. Not only so, but though usually faithful to the ritualistic and external sense he distinguishes and quotes occasionally various ancient schools of interpretation, one of which is spiritual and philosophic and finds the sense of the Upanishads in the Veda. Even he feels himself obliged sometimes, though very rarely, to follow its suggestions. And if we go back to the earliest times we see that the Brahmanas give a mystically ritualistic interpretation of the Veda, the Upanishads treat the Riks as a book not of ritual, but of spiritual knowledge. There is therefore nothing fantastically new or revolutionary in an attempt to fix the psychological and spiritual purport of the Rig Veda.

A last objection remains that the interpretation of the Veda has been a field for the exercise of the most extraordinary ingenuity, each attempt arriving at widely different results, and mine is only one ingenuity the more. If it were so, then I stand in good company. The interpretations of Sayana are packed with the most strained and far-fetched ingenuities, which not unoften light-heartedly do violence to grammar, syntax, order, connection, on the idea that the Rishis were in no way restrained by

these things. Yaska is full of etymological and other ingenuities, some of them of a most astonishing kind. The scholarship of Europe has built up by a system of ingenious guesses and deductions a new version and evolved the history, true or imaginative, of an Aryan invasion and a struggle between Aryan and Dravidian which was never before suspected in the long history of Vedic interpretation. The same charge has been brought against Swami Dayananda's commentary. Nevertheless, the universality of the method does not make it valid, nor have I any need to take refuge in this excuse, which is not a justification. If my or any interpretation is got by a straining of the text, a licentious or fantastic rendering or a foreign importation, then it can have no real value. The present volume, which I hope to make the first of a series, is intended to show my method actually at work and dispel this objection by showing the grounds and justification.

I hold that three processes are necessary for a valid interpretation of the Veda. First, there must be a straightforward rendering word by word of the text which shall stick to a plain and simple sense at once suggested by the actual words no matter what the result may be. Then, this result has to be taken and it has to be seen what is its actual purport and significance. That meaning must be consistent, coherent with itself; it must show each hymn as a whole in itself proceeding from idea to idea, linked together in sequence, as any literary creation of the human mind must be linked, which has not been written by lunatics or is not merely a string of disconnected cries. It is impossible to suppose that these Rishis, competent metrists, possessed of a style of great power and nobility, composed without the sequence of ideas which is the mark of all adequate literary creation. And if we suppose them to be divinely inspired, mouthpieces of Brahman or the Eternal, there is no ground for supposing that the divine wisdom is more incoherent in its Word than the human mind; it should rather be more luminous and satisfying in its totality. Finally, if a symbolic interpretation is put on any part of the text, it must arise directly and clearly from suggestions and language of the Veda itself and must not be brought in from outside.

A few words may be useful on each of these points. The first rule I follow is to try to get at the simplest and straightforward sense to which the Rik is open, not to strain, twist and involve. The Vedic style is terse, but natural, it has its strong brevities and some ellipses, but all the same it is essentially simple and goes straight to its object. Where it seems obscure, it is because we do not know the meaning of the words or miss the clue to the idea. Even if at one or two places, it seems to be tortured, that is no reason why we should put the whole Veda on the rack or even in these places torture it still worse in the effort to get at a sense. Where the meaning of a word has to be fixed, this difficulty comes either because we have no clue to the true meaning or because it is capable in the language of several meanings. In the latter case I follow certain fixed canons. First, if the word is one of the standing terms of the Veda intimately bound up with its religious system, then I must first find one single meaning which attaches to it wherever it occurs; I am not at liberty to vary its sense from the beginning according to my pleasure or fancy or sense of immediate fitness. If I interpret a book of obscure Christian theology, I am not at liberty to interpret freely the constantly recurring word grace sometimes as the influx of the divine favour, sometimes as one of the three Graces, sometimes as charm of beauty, sometimes as grace marks in an examination, sometimes as the name of a girl. If in one it evidently bears this or that sense and can have no other, if it has no reference to the ordinary meaning, then indeed it is different; but I must not put in one of these other meanings where the normal sense fits the context. In other cases I may have greater freedom, but this freedom must not degenerate into licence. Thus the word *ritam* may signify, we are told, truth, sacrifice, water, motion and a number of other things. Sayana interprets freely and without obvious rule or reason according to any of them and sometimes gives us two alternatives; not only does he interpret it variously in different hymns, but in three different senses [in] the same hymn or even in the same line. I hold this to be quite illegitimate. *Ritam* is a standing term of the Veda and I must take it consistently. If I find truth to be its sense in that standing significance, I must

so interpret it always, unless in any given passage it evidently means water or sacrifice or the man who has gone and cannot mean truth. To translate so striking a phrase as *ritasya panthâh* in one passage as “the path of truth”, in another “the path of sacrifice”, in another “the path of water”, in another “the path of the one who has gone” is a sheer licence, and if we follow such a method, there can be no sense for the Veda except the sense of our own individual caprice. Then again we have the word Deva, which undoubtedly means in ninety-nine places out of a hundred, one of the shining ones, a god. Even though this is not so vital a term as *ritam*, still I must not take it in the sense of a priest or intelligent man or any other significance, where the word god gives a good and sufficient meaning unless it can be shown that it is undoubtedly capable of another sense in the mouth of the Rishis. On the other hand a word like *ari* means sometimes a fighter, one’s own champion, sometimes a hostile fighter, assailant, enemy, sometimes it is an adjective and seems almost equivalent to *arya* or even *ârya*. But mark that these are all well-connected senses. Dayananda insists on a greater freedom of interpretation to suit the context. *Saindhava* he says means a horse or rocksalt; where it is a question of eating we must interpret as salt, where it is a question of riding, as horse. That is quite obvious; but the whole question in the Veda is what is the bearing of the context, what are its connections? If we interpret according to our individual sense of what the context ought to mean, we are building on the quicksands. The only safe rule is to fix the sense usually current in the Veda and admit variations only where they are evident from the context. Where the ordinary sense makes a good meaning, I ought to accept it; it does not at all matter that that is not the meaning I should like it to have or the one suitable to my theory of the Veda. But how to fix the meaning? We can evidently do it only on the totality or balance of the evidence of all the passages in which the word occurs and, after that, on its suitability to the general sense of the Veda. If I show that *ritam* in all passages can mean truth, in a great number of passages but not by any means all sacrifice, in only a few water, and in hardly any, motion, and

this sense, truth, fits in with the general sense of the Veda, then I consider I have made out an unanswerable case for taking it in that significance. In the cases of many words this can be done; in others we have to strike a balance. There remain the words of which frankly we do not know the meaning. Here we have to use the clue of etymology and then to test the meaning or possible meanings we arrive at by application to the passages in which the word occurs, taking into consideration where necessary not only the isolated riks, but the context around, and even the general sense of Veda. In a few cases the word is so rare and obscure that only a quite conjectural meaning can be attached to it.

When we have got the rendering of the text, we have to [see] to what it amounts. Here what we have to do is to see the connection of the ideas in the verse itself, next its connection with the ideas in the verses that precede and follow and with the general sense of the hymn; next parallel passages and ideas and hymns and finally the place of the whole in the scheme of ideas of the Veda. Thus in IV.7 we have the line अग्ने कदा त आनुषग् भुवद् देवस्य चेतनं, and I render it, “O Flame, when may there be in uninterrupted sequence the awakening (to knowledge or consciousness) of thee the god (the shining or luminous One)?” But the question I have to put is this, “Does this mean the constant burning of the physical fire on the altar and the ordered sequence of the physical sacrifice, or does it mean the awakening to constant developing knowledge or ordered conscious action of knowledge of the divine Flame in man?” I note that in the next rik (3) Agni is described as the possessor of truth (or of sacrifice?), the entirely wise, ऋतावान् विचेतसं, in 4 as the vision or knowledge perception shining for each creature, केतुं भृगवाणं विशे विशे, in 5 as the Priest who knows, होतारं चिकित्वांसं, in 6 as the bright one in the secrecy who has perfect knowledge, चित्रं गुह्यं हितं सुवेदं, in 7 as coming possessed of the truth for the sacrifice when the gods rejoice in the seat of the Truth, [in 8] as the messenger विद्वान् सचिकित्वान् विदुष्टरः. All this is ample warrant for taking Agni not merely as a physical flame on the altar, [but] as a flame of divine knowledge guiding the sacrifice and mediating between man and the gods. The balance is also, though not

indisputably, in favour of taking it as a reference to the inner sacrifice under the cover of the outer symbols; for why should there be so much stress on divine knowledge if the question were only of a physical sacrifice for physical fruits? I note that he is the priest, sage, messenger, eater, swift traveller and warrior. How are these ideas, both successive and interwoven in the Veda, connected together? Is it the physical sacred flame that is all these things or the inner sacred flame? There is sufficient to warrant me in provisionally taking it for the inner flame; but to be sure I cannot rely on this one rik. I have to note the evolution of the same ideas in other hymns, to study all the hymns dedicated to Agni or in which he is mentioned, to see whether there are passages in which he is indubitably the inner flame and what light they shed on his whole physiognomy. Only then shall I be in a position to judge certainly the significance of the Vedic Fire.

This example will show the method I follow in regard to the third question, the interpretation of the Vedic symbols. That there are a mass of figures and symbols in the hymns, there can be no doubt. The instances in this 7th hymn of the Fourth Mandala are sufficient by themselves to show how large a part they play. In the absence of any contemporary evidence of the sense which the Rishis attached to them, we have to seek for their meaning in the Veda itself. Obviously, where we do not know we cannot do without a hypothesis, and my hypothesis is that of the outer ritual form as a significant symbol of an inner spiritual meaning. But this or any hypothesis can have no real value if it is brought in from outside, if it is not suggested by the words and indications of the Veda itself. The Brahmanas are too full of ingenuities; they read too much and too much at random into the text. The Upanishads give a better light and we may get hints from later work and even from Sayana and Yaska, but it would be dangerous at once to read back literally the ideas of a later mentality into this exceedingly ancient Scripture. We must start from and rely on the Veda to interpret the Veda. We have to see, first, whether there are any plain and evident psychological and spiritual conceptions, what they are, what clue they give us, secondly, whether there are any indications

of psychological meanings for physical symbols and how the outer physical is related to the inner psychological side. Why for instance is the Flame Agni called the seer and knower? why are the rivers called the waters that have knowledge? why are they said to ascend or get into the mind? and a host of other similar questions. The answer again must be found by a minute comparative study of the Vedic hymns themselves. In this volume I proceed by development. I take each hymn, get at its first meaning; I see whether there are any psychological indications and what is their force and what their interweaving and relation to the other surrounding ideas. I proceed thus from hymn to hymn linking them together by their identical or similar ideas, figures, expressions. In this way it may be possible to arrive at a clear and connected interpretation of the Veda.

This method supposes that the hymns of the Rigveda are one whole composed by different Rishis, but on the basis of a substantially identical and always similar knowledge and one system of figures and symbols. This, I think, is evident on the very surface of the Veda. The only apparent exceptions are certain hymns, mostly in the tenth Mandala, which seem to belong to a later development, some almost purely ritualistic, others more complex and developed in symbol than the body of the Riks, others clearly enouncing philosophical ideas with a modicum of symbol, the first voices which announce the coming of the Upanishads. Some hymns are highly archaic, others of a more clear and relatively modern type. But for the most part throughout we find the same substance, the same images, ideas, standing terms, the same phrases and expressions. Otherwise the problem would be insoluble; as it is, the Veda itself gives a key to the Veda.

The hymns I have chosen for a beginning are the fifteen hymns of Vamadeva to Agni. I take them in the order that suits me, for the first few are highly charged with symbol and therefore to us obscure and recondite. It is better to proceed from the simple to the difficult; for so we shall get better a preliminary clue which may help us through the obscurity of the earlier hymns.

Agni, the Lord of Fire, is physically the god of the sacrificial flame, the fire found in the tinders, in the plants, in the waters, the lightning, the fire of the sun, the fiery principle of heat and light, *tapas, tejas*, wherever it is found. The question is whether he is also the same principle in the psychical world. If he is, then he must be that psychological principle called Tapas in the later terminology. The Vedic Agni has two characteristics, knowledge and a blazing power, light and fiery force. This suggests that he is the force of the universal Godhead, a conscious force or Will instinct with knowledge,—that is the nature of Tapas,—which pervades the world and is behind all its workings. Agni then in the psychical and spiritual sense of his functions would be the fire of a Will doing the works of its own inherent and innate knowledge. He is the seer, कविः, the supreme mover of thought, प्रथमो मनोता, the mover too of speech and the Word, उपवक्ता जनानां, the power in the heart that works, हृदिस्पृशं क्रतुं, the impeller of action and movement, the divine guide of man in the act of sacrifice. He is the priest of the sacrifice, Hotri, he who calls and brings the gods and gives to them the offering, the Ritwik, who sacrifices in right order and right season, the purifying priest, Potri, the Purohita, he who stands in front as the representative of the sacrificer, the conductor of the sacrifice, Adhwaryu; he combines all the sacred offices. It is evident that these functions all belong to the divine will or conscient power in man which awakes in the inner sacrifice. This Fire has built all the worlds; this creative Power, Agni Jatavedas, knows all the births, all that is in the worlds; he is the messenger who knows earth, knows how to ascend the difficult slope of heaven, आरोधन् दिवः, knows the way to the home of the Truth,—he mediates between God and man. These things apply only with difficulty to the god of physical fire; they are of a striking appropriateness if we take a larger view of the divine nature and functions of the god Agni. He is a god of the earth, a force of material being, अवमः; but he seems too [to] be a vital (Pranic) force of will in desire, devouring, burning through his own smoke; and again he is a mental power. Men see him यामिव स्तृभिः, heaven and the midworld and earth are his portion. But again he is a god

of Swar, one of the solar deities; he manifests himself as Surya; he is born in the Truth, a master of Truth, a guardian of Truth and Immortality, a getter and keeper of the shining herds, the eternal Youth, and he renews the youth of these mystic cattle. He is triply extended in the Infinite. All these functions cannot be predicated of the god of physical fire; but they are all just attributes of the conscient divine Will in man and the universe. He is the horse of battle and the horse of swiftness and again he gives the white horse; he is the Son and he creates for man the Son. He is the Warrior and he brings to man the heroes of his battle. He destroys by his flame the Dasyu and the Rakshasa; he is a Vritra-slayer. Are we to see here the slayer only of mortal Dravidians or of the demons who oppose the sacrifice? He is born in a hundred ways: from the plants, from the tinder, from the waters. His parents are the two Aranis, but again his parents are Earth and Heaven, and there is a word which seems to combine both meanings. Are not the two Aranis then a symbol of earth and heaven, Agni born for mortals from the action of the diviner mental on the material being? The ten sisters are his mothers,—the ten fingers, says the scholiast; yes, but the Veda describes them as the ten thoughts or thought-powers, दश धियः. The seven rivers, the mighty ones of heaven, the waters that have knowledge, the waters of Swar are also his mothers. What is the significance of this symbolism, and can we really interpret it as only and solely a figurative account of natural phenomena, of the physical principle or works of Fire? There is at least here, to put the thing in its lowest terms, a strong possibility of a deeper psychological functioning of Agni. These are the main points for solution. Let us see then how the physiognomy of Agni evolves in the Riks; keeping our minds open, let us examine whether the hypothesis of Agni as one of the Gods of the Vedic Mysteries is tenable or untenable. And that means, whether the Veda is a semi-barbaric book of ritual hymns, the book of a primitive Nature-worship or a scripture of the seers and mystics.

I

Sukta VII. Metre 1 Jagati. 2–6 Anushtup. 7–11 Trishtup.

Rik 1. अयमिह प्रथमो धायि धातृभिर्होता यजिष्ठो अध्वरेष्वीङ्ग्यः।
यमप्जवानो भृगवो विरुचुर्वनेषु चित्रं विम्बं विशे विशे॥

अयं this (before you) होता Hotri, प्रथमः first or supreme, यजिष्ठः (यष्टतमः) most strong for sacrifice, अध्वरेषु ईङ्ग्यः adorable in the (pilgrim) sacrifices इह धायि has here been set धातृभिः by the Ordainers (of things), यं he whom अप्जवानो भृगवः Apnavana and the Bhrigus विरुचुः made to shine, वनेषु चित्रं luminous (or variegated) in the woods (or in the logs), विम्बं pervading, विशे विशे for creature and creature ie for each (human) being.

Critical Notes

धातृभिः. S. explains धातृ as one who does action for the sacrifice, therefore a priest. But धातारः here would more naturally signify the gods, creators and ordainers of things, — though it is possible to take it as the arrangers of the sacrificial action. The close collocation धायि धातृभिः can hardly be void of all significance. The gods are those who place or arrange the order of creation, set each thing in its place, to its law and its function; they have set Agni here, इह. “Here” may mean in the sacrifice, but more generally it would mean here on earth.

होता. Sayana takes sometimes as “the summoner of the gods”, sometimes the performer of the Homa, the burned offering. In fact it contains both significances. Agni as Hotri calls the gods to the sacrifice by the mantra and, on their coming, gives to them the offering.

अध्वरेषु. The word अध्वर is explained by the Nirukta as meaning literally अहिंस्रः “unhurting”, अ + ध्वर from ध्व्, and so, the unhurt sacrifice, and so simply sacrifice. Certainly, it is used as an adjective qualifying यज्ञ, अध्वरो यज्ञः. It must therefore express some characteristic so inherent in the sacrifice as to be able to convey by itself that significance. But how can “the unhurting” come to mean by itself the sacrifice? I suggest that as in असुर it is a

mistake to take अ as privative. असुर comes from असु (rt अस्) and means strong, forceful, mighty. अध्वर is similarly formed from अध्व path, journey. It means the pilgrim sacrifice, the sacrifice which travels from earth to heaven, led by Agni along the path of the gods. If we must take the word from धृ, it is better to take the ordinary sense of धृ, not crooked, straight, and then it would still mean the sacrifice which goes straight undeviating by the straight path to the gods, क्रज्जुः पंथा अनृक्षरः.

ईड्यः. S. “who is praised or hymned” by the Ritwiks. But it must then mean “worthy to be hymned”. इङ्ग्, इड् must have meant originally to go, approach; it came to mean to pray to, ask for, desire, मातरमैष्ट्. I take it in the sense of “desirable” or “adorable”.

वनेषु. वन means in the Veda tree, wood, but also log, timber.

चित्रं. S. takes चित्र sometimes = चायनीय = पूज्य, sometimes विचित्र, varied or wonderful, sometimes []. Here “variedly beautiful”. It is in this last sense of varied light or beauty that I take it in all passages in the Veda as in इङ्ग् चित्रभानो. I can see no reason for taking it anywhere as पूजनीय.

विभ्वं. S. “lord”. But विभु in R.V. means certainly “widely becoming” or “wide in being” or “pervading, abundant, opulent”. I find no passage in which it must mean lord, the later classical sense. विभ्व must bear the same sense as विभु.

Tr. Lo, here has been set by the Ordainers the priest of the offering, the supreme, the most mighty in sacrifice, one to be adored in the pilgrim sacrifices, whom Apnavana and the Bhrigus made to shine out all-pervading, rich in hues, in the woods, for each human creature.

This is the first rik; it contains nothing of an undoubtedly psychological significance. In the external sense it is a statement of the qualities of Agni as priest of the sacrifice. He is pointed to in his body of the sacrificial fire kindled, put there in his place or sent by the priests. It amounts to an obvious statement that this sacred flame is a great power for the sacrifice; that he is the chief of the gods who has to be hymned or adored, that Apnavana and other Bhrigus first discovered the (sacrificial?) use of fire

and caused it to be used by all men. The description here of the forest fire seems inappropriate unless it is meant that they got the idea by seeing Agni burning widely and beautifully as a forest fire or that they discovered it by seeing the fire produced by the clashing of boughs or that they first lit it in the shape of a forest fire. Otherwise it is an ornamental and otiose description.

But if we assume for the moment that behind this image Agni is hinted at as the Hotri of the inner sacrifice, then it is worth seeing what these images mean. The first words tell us that this flame of conscient Will, this great thing within us, अयमिह्, has been set here in man by the Gods, the creators of the order of the world, to be the power by which he aspires and calls the other divine Forces into his being and consecrates his knowledge, will, joy and all the wealth of his inner life as a sacrificial action to the Lords of the Truth. These first words then amount for the initiate to a statement of the fundamental idea of the Vedic mysteries, the meaning of the sacrifice, the idea of a God-will in man, the Immortal in mortals, अमर्त्यं मत्येषु. This flame is spoken of as the supreme or first power. The godward will leads all the other godward powers; its presence is the beginning of the movement to the Truth and Immortality and the head too of the march. It is the greatest power in the conduct of the mystic discipline, यजिष्ठ, the most mighty for sacrifice. Man's sacrifice is a pilgrimage and the divine Will its leader; therefore it is that which we must adore or pray to or ask for its presence in each sacrificial action.

The second line of the Rik gives us a statement of the first discovery or birth of this Flame among men. For the spirit is there concealed in man, *guhâ hita* as it is said in Veda and Upanishad, in the inner cave of our being; and his will is a spiritual will, hidden there in the spirit, present indeed in all our outward [being] and action,— for all being and action are of the spirit, but still its real nature, its native action is concealed, altered, not manifest in the material life in its true nature of a spiritual force. This is a fundamental idea of Vedic thinking; and if we keep it well in mind, we shall be able to understand the peculiar imagery of the Veda. Earth is the image of the material being; material being, delight, action etc are the growths of earth; therefore their

image is the forests, the trees, plants, all vegetation, वन्, वनस्पति, ओषधि. Agni is hidden in the trees and plants, he is the secret heat and fire in everything that grows on earth, वनेषु. All that we take pleasure in in the material life, could not be or grow without the presence of the secret flame of the spirit. The awakening of the fire by the friction of the Aranis, the rubbing together of the two pieces of tinder-wood is one way of making Agni to shine out in his own form, रूपे, but this is said elsewhere to have been the work of the Angiras Rishis. Here the making of Agni so to shine is attributed to Apnavana and the Bhrigus and there is no indication of the method. It is simply indicated that they made him to shine out so that he burned with a beauty of varied light in the woodlands, a pervading presence, वनेषु चित्रं विम्बं. This must mean in the esoteric symbolism a rich and varied manifestation of the flame of divine will and knowledge in the physical life of man, seizing on its growths, all its being, action, pleasure, making it its food, अन्नं, and devouring and turning it into material for the spiritual existence. But this manifestation of the spirit in the physical life of man was made available by the Bhrigus to each human creature, विशे विशे,—we must presume, by the order of the sacrifice. This Agni, this general flame of the divine Will-force, was turned by them into the Hotri of the sacrifice.

The question remains, who are the Bhrigus of whom we may suppose that Apnavana is in this action at least the head or chief? Is it simply meant to preserve a historical tradition [that] the Bhrigus like the Angiras Rishis were founders of the esoteric Vedic knowledge and discipline? But this supposition, possible in itself, is contradicted by the epithet भृगवाण् in verse 4 which evidently refers back to this first Rik. Sayana interprets there, “acting like Bhrigu” and to act like Bhrigu is to shine. We find this significant fact emerge, admitted even by the ritualistic commentator in spite of his attachment to rational matter of fact, that some at least of the traditional Rishis and their families are symbolic in their character. The Bhrigus in the Veda (भृज् to burn) are evidently burning powers of the Sun, the Lord of Knowledge, just as the Angiras Rishis are very evidently the

seven lustres of Agni, सप्त धामानि—S. says the live coals of the fire, but that is a mere etymological ingenuity—the hints are everywhere in the Veda, but it is made quite clear in the tenth Mandala. The whole idea, then, comes out with a convincing luminosity. It is the powers of the revelatory knowledge, the powers of the seer-wisdom, represented by the Bhrigus, who make this great discovery of the spiritual will-force and make it available to every human creature. Apnavana means he who acts or he who attains and acquires. It is the seer-wisdom that scales and attains in the light of the revelation which leads the Bhrigus to the discovery. This completes the sense of the Rik.

It will at once be said that this is an immense deal to read into this single Rik, and that there is here no actual clue to any such meaning. No actual clue, indeed, only covert hints, which it is easy to pass over and ignore,—that was what the Mystics intended the *profanum vulgus*, not excluding the uninitiated Pundit, should do. I bring in these meanings from the indications of the rest of the Veda. But in the hymn itself so far as this first Rik goes, it might well be a purely ritualistic verse. But only if it is taken by itself. The moment we pass on, we land full into a mass of clear psychological suggestions. This will begin to be apparent even as early as the second verse.

Rik 2. अग्ने कदा त आनुषग् भुवदेवस्य चेतनं।
अधा हि त्वा जगृप्तिरे मर्तासो विक्षीडयं॥

अग्ने O Agni कदा when ते देवस्य चेतनं the awakening to knowledge (consciousness) of thee the god आनुषक् भुवत् may it be continuously (in uninterrupted sequence). अधा हि for then (or, now indeed) मर्तासः mortals त्वा जगृप्तिरे have seized (taken and held) thee विक्षु इडयं adorable in (human) beings (or among the peoples).

Critical Notes

देवस्य. Sayana takes देव sometimes in the sense of god, sometimes as equivalent simply to an epithet “shining”. The Gods are called देवाः because they are the Shining Ones, the Children of Light;

and the word may well have recalled always that idea to the Rishis; but I do not think देव is ever in the Veda merely a colourless epithet; in all passages the sense “god” or “divine” gives excellent sense and I see no good reason for taking it otherwise.

चेतनं. S. takes = तेजः, but चित् does not mean to shine, it means always “to be conscious, aware, know”, चेतति, चेतयति = knows, causes to know, चेतस् = heart, mind, knowledge, चैतन्यं, चेतनं consciousness, चित्तं heart, consciousness, mind. To take it here = light, except by figure, is deliberately to dodge without any justification the plain psychological suggestion.

अधा. अ-धा = in this or that way, thus, but also then or now. S. takes it = therefore with भुवत्, preparing for हि = because (“For this reason when should thy light be continuous? because...”), a very forced structure absolutely unnatural and contrary to order, movement and the plain sequence of sense.

जगृत्प्रिरे. A Vedic form, taken by the grammarians as derived from ग्रह् to seize, by change of ह् to भ्, more probably an old root गृभ् and a peculiar archaic formation. Cf [] The force is “For him they seize”, the perfect giving the sense of an already completed action; in English one would [say] “will have seized”, ie “when thou knowest continuously”. Or take अधा = now, “Now indeed they have seized” but have not yet the आनुषक् चेतनं. But this does not make so good a sense and brings in besides an awkward inversion and ellipse.

Tr. O Flame, when shall thy awakening to knowledge be a continuous sequence? For then shall men have seized on thee as one to be adored in creatures.

Here we get the first plain psychological suggestion in the word चेतनं. But what is the sense of this continuous knowing or awaking to knowledge of Agni? First, we may try to get rid of the psychological suggestion, take चेतनं = consciousness, and the consciousness of the fire as simply a poetic figure for its burning. But against this we have the repetition of the phrase आनुषक् चेतनं in the आनुषक् चिकित्वांसं of v. [5] which certainly means continuous knowledge and not merely burning, next verse 3 in which the idea of अग्नेदेवस्य चेतनं is taken up and the word itself echoed

in the two opening words *ऋतावानं विचेतसं*, possessed of truth, complete in knowledge (wisdom) applied to the god. To shut one's eyes to this emphatic indication and take *चेतनं* = merely *ज्ञानं* would be a mere dodge. Does it then mean the continuous burning of the flame of the physical sacrifice, but with this idea that the flame is the body of the god and indicates the presence of the conscious deity? But in what then does the knowledge or wisdom of Agni consist? It may be said that he is wise only as the *होता*, a seer, *कविः*: who knows exactly how to take the offerings and get the sacrifice rightly done or one who knows the way to heaven (verse 8). But what then of the *ऋतावानं विचेतसं*? That must surely refer to some greater knowledge, some great Truth which Agni possesses. Does it at all refer to a god of physical Fire alone or to the knowledge and wisdom of an inner Fire, the flame of the God-Force or God-Will in man and the world, *देवस्य* the Shining One, the Guest, the Seer, *अतिथिः कविः?*

I take it in this sense. The Rishi cries to this inner Flame, "when wilt thou shine in me continuously, on the altar of my sacrifice, when wilt thou be a constant force of knowledge to give all the uninterrupted sequence, relation, order, completeness of the revelations of wisdom, speaking always and wholly its words, *काव्यानि?*" If it refers at all to the inner flame, this must be the sense. We must remember that in the Vedic symbolism it was by the continuous sacrifice all round the symbolic year, the nine or the ten months of the sacrifice of the Angirases, that the Sun, Master of the Truth, the Wisdom, was recovered from the cave of darkness. The repeated single sacrifice is only a preparation for this continuity of the revealing Flame. It is only then that men not only awake Agni from time to time, by repeated pressure, but have and hold continuously the inner flame of will and knowledge, a present godhead, the one whom we then see and adore in all conscious thinking beings. Or we may take the last two padas in the sense "now indeed they seize" etc and we will have to take it in the opposite sense, ie, that for the present men do not have this continuous flame, but only lay hold of him for the actual duration [of] the effort of sacrifice. This is possible, but does not make so natural a sense; it arises

less simply and directly from the actual words. It is in the next two riks (3, 4) that the present action of Agni before his आनुषक् चेतनं is described, while in Rik 5 the Rishi returns to the idea of the greater continuous flame of knowledge, repeating the आनुषक् चेतनं still more significantly in the आनुषक् चिकित्वांसं of that verse. This seems to me the evident natural order of the thought in the Sukta.

Rik 3. ऋतावानं विचेतसं पश्यन्ति द्यामिव स्तृभिः ।
विश्वेषामध्वराणां हस्कर्तारं दमे दमे॥

पश्यन्ति They see him ऋतावानं (ऋतवंतं) having the truth, विचेतसं completely wise द्यामिव स्तृभिः like heaven with stars, हस्कर्तारं the maker to shine विश्वेषामध्वराणां of all (pilgrim) sacrifices दमे दमे (गृहे गृहे) in house and house.

Critical Notes

ऋतावानं. ॠत + वन् = ॠतावन्. The Vedic suffix वन् has the same force as the classical वत्. ॠतावा = ॠतावन्. ॠत from root ॠ to go. Hence the sense “water”. The sense “truth” may = what is learned, literally what we go in search of and attain or what we go over and so learn (cf ॠषि); but it may also come from the idea of straightness, Lat. rectum, ॠजु. How it comes to mean sacrifice is not so clear, perhaps from the idea of rite, observance, rule, विधि, or a line followed, cf Latin regula, rule; or again action, कर्म and so the sacrificial action; verbs of motion often bear also the sense of action, cf चरितं, वृत्तं. ॠतावा says S. often may mean possessed of truth or possessed of sacrifice. But here he takes it = truthful, free from deceit, अमायिनं. Elsewhere he takes सत्य used as an epithet of Agni = सत्यफल, giving a true fruit of the sacrifice. Oftenest he takes ॠत = यज्ञ. But it is perfectly evident here that ॠतावानं must mean truth-having, in whatever sense we may take the truth of Agni.

विचेतसं. S. विशिष्टज्ञानं having a special, a great knowledge. In Veda प्रचेताः and विचेताः are distinguished very much as प्रज्ञान and विज्ञान in the Upanishads and later Sanscrit; चेतः or चित्ति stands for ज्ञान, the latter word being classical and not Vedic. प्र

gives the idea of knowledge directed towards an object, प्रचेता: = intelligent, wise in a general sense (thus S. takes प्रकृष्टज्ञानः and makes no distinction between the words). वि means widely, pervadingly or else in high degree; विचेता: means then having a complete or great or perfect knowledge, knowledge of the whole and the parts.

हस्कर्तारं. हस् to shine, shining (from which comes the sense, to smile) and कृ to make. S. says प्रभासकं illuminer of the sacrifices.

दमे. The Vedic word (G. domos, Lat. domus) means always “house”; it is not used in the later classical sense of “subduing, control”, etc.

Tr. They see the master of truth, the complete in wisdom like a heaven with stars, the illuminer of all pilgrim sacrifices in house and house.

In this rik the word विचेतसं evidently takes up the चेतनं of the last verse; it means complete in knowledge and is coupled with ऋतावानं truth-having, possessed of truth. It is the god Agni, not the physical fire who is described by these epithets. Therefore ते चेतनं in the last verse must mean Agni “awakening to knowledge” or Agni’s awakening of man to knowledge, — for चेतयति means either to know or to cause to know, and cannot mean the burning of the physical flame. But what is this truth and knowledge of Agni? It is associated again in the next verse with his function of illuminating the sacrifice, अध्वराणं हस्कर्तारं. What is the illumination he gives to the sacrifice? And what is meant by saying that he is seen “like a heaven with stars”? Sayana with much scholastic ingenuity, but a characteristic disregard of all good taste and literary judgment, says that the scattering sparks of the fire are like stars and therefore Agni is like heaven — though there is no reason to suppose that the स्तुभिः here are shooting stars; I cannot imagine any poet with eyes in his head and a judgment and sense of proportion in his brain so describing a fire burning on an altar. But if it does mean that, then we have here a purely ornamental description and very bad, exaggerated and vicious ornament at that. All that the verse will then mean is that men see this wise and truthful Agni in the physical form

of the sacrificial fire shedding light by its flames on the whole business of the sacrifice. The two epithets are also then otiose ornament; there is then absolutely no connection between the idea of Agni's wisdom and the image of the heaven with stars or the illumination of the sacrifice which is the main idea of the verse.

I go on the hypothesis, not, I think, an unfair one, that the Vedic Rishi Vamadeva like other poets wrote with some closer connection than that between their ideas. We must remember that in the last verse he has desired, what he has not yet, the continuous knowledge of Agni and said that then indeed men hold and possess him. But how do they see him before that continuity, though after the Bhrigus have found him for the utility of each human being? They see him as the master of truth, the complete in knowledge, but — we must suppose — they do not yet possess him in all his truth or his complete knowledge; for he is seen only as a heaven with stars and as an illuminer of their sacrifices. A heaven with stars is heaven at night without the light of the sun. Agni in the Veda is described as shining even in the night, giving light in the night, burning through the nights till there comes the dawn, — which too is brought by him aiding Indra and the Angirases. If the meaning of Agni is the inner flame, this gets a striking, appropriate and profound meaning. In the Veda darkness or night is the symbol of the ignorant mentality, as is the day and its sunlight of the illumined mentality. But before there is the day or the continuous knowledge, the illuminations of Agni are like stars in the nocturnal heavens. Heaven is the mental as earth is the physical being; all the truth and knowledge of Agni is there, but hidden now by the darkness of night. Men know that the Light is there pervading the skies but see only by the stars which Agni has kindled as his fires of illumination in those heavens.

Mandala Five

[30]

[RV V.1]

Fifth Mandal.
Translation and Explanation.

1. Agni by the fuel heaped by the peoples has awokened towards the coming Dawn as towards the Sun-cow coming; like the waters spouting up for wide flowing, his flames move towards the heaven.

2. The Priest of the offering awoke for sacrifice to the gods, Agni stood up high in the dawn and perfect-minded; the gathered force of him was seen reddening when he was entirely kindled; a great god has been released out of the darkness.

3. When so he has put forth the tongue of his multitude, pure is the activity of Agni with the pure herd of his rays; then is the goddess discerning yoked to her works in a growing plenty; she upward-straining, he high-uplifted, he feeds on her with his flaming activities.

4. Towards Agni move the minds of the seekers after the Godhead, as their eyes move in Surya; when the two unlike Dawns bring him forth, he is born a white steed of being in the van of the days (or, at the head of our forces).

5. He is born full of delight at the head of the days helpful in the helpful gods, active in those that take their joy; in each of our homes establishing his seven ecstasies Agni, priest of the offering, takes seat in his might for the sacrifice.

6. Mighty for sacrifice Agni of the offerings takes his seat in the lap of the Mother, in that rapturous middle world, young and a seer, seated in many homes of his dwelling, full of the Truth, upholding our actions and therefore kindled in the mid-spaces.

7. Verily, it is this Agni, the illumined seer who perfects us in these lower activities, the master of offering, that they adore with obeisances and submission; who stretched out the double firmament by the force of the Truth; him they strengthen (or brighten) with the rich droppings, the eternal master of substance.

8. Strong ever, he grows stronger housed in his own seat in us & home, our guest auspicious to us; master-bull with the thousand horns of thy flame, strong with that Strength, O Agni, by thy might thou art in front of all others.

9. At once, O Agni, thou passest beyond all others in him to whom thou makest thyself manifest in thy splendid beauty, adorable and full of body and widely luminous, the beloved guest of the human peoples.

10. To thee, O vigorous Agni, the continents (or the peoples) bring their oblation from near and bring from afar; perceive the perfected mind in one most happy, for wide and mighty is the blessed peace of thee, O Agni.

11. O luminous Agni, mount today thy perfect and luminous chariot with the masters of the sacrifice; thou knowest those paths, bring then hither through the wide mid-world the gods to eat of our offerings.

12. Utterance have we given to the word of our delight for the seer who hath understanding, for the lord who is mighty; firm in the light one by submission to him reaches in Agni a fixity, even as in heaven, so here golden bright and vast-expanding.

Explanation.

The awakening of the divine Force and its action in a man is in this hymn rather indicated than described. The súkta is purely lyric in its character, vacho vandáru, an expression of delight and adoration, a stoma or stabilising mantra intended to fix in the soul the sevenfold delight of Agni, dame dame sapta ratná (Rik 5), and assure that state of perfected and happy mentality, pure in perception, light and calm in the emotional parts,—the bhan-dishthasya sumatim of the tenth rik,—which the divine force dwelling in us abidingly assures to our conscious being. The

image of the physical morning sacrifice is maintained throughout the first two riks, but from its closing phrase, mahán devas tamaso niramochi, the Rishi departs from the ritualistic symbol and confines himself to the purely psychological substance of his thought, returning occasionally to the physical aspects of Agni but only as a loose poetical imagery. There is nothing of the close symbolic parallelism which is to be found in some hymns of the Veda.

Abodhi Agnih samidhá janánám, Prati dhenum iváyatím
ushásam,
Yahvá iva pra vayám ujjihánáh, Pra bhánavah sisrate
nákam achchha.

Force, pure, supreme & universal has, in man, awakened; divine power is acting, revealed, in the consciousness of creatures born into matter, janánám. It wakes when the fuel has been perfectly heaped, abodhi samidhá,—that power, plenty and richness of being on which this cosmic Force in us is fed and which minister to its intensity and brightness. It wakes towards the coming dawn of illumination, as to the Sun-cow, the cow of Surya, the illumination of the ideal life & the ideal vision entering the soul that works imprisoned in the darkness of Matter. The flames of the divine activity in us are pointing upwards towards heaven, mounting up from the lower levels of our being to the heights of the pure mind, sisrate nákam achchha, and their rising is like the wide gushing up into manifestation of waters that have been hidden. For it is a great god that has been released out of the darkness, mahán devas tamaso niramochi.

The two familiar images in dhenu & in yahvá are intended to convey directly in one, suggest obliquely by the simile in the other, the inseparable companionship of divine power with the divine light and the divine being. All the gods are indeed ushar-budhah; with the morning of the revelation all divine faculties in us arise out of the night in which they have slept. But the figure here is that of awakening towards the coming dawn. The illumination has not yet touched the mortal mind, it is on its way, approaching, áyatím, like a cow coming from the distance to its

pasture; it is then that the power divine stirs in its receptacle, seizes upon all that is available in the waking consciousness of the creature and, kindled, streams up towards the altitudes of the pure mind in the face of the coming divine knowledge which it rises to meet. Divine knowledge, revealing, inspiring, suggesting, discerning, calls up the godlike ideal activity in us which exceeds man's ordinary motions,—wakes it even before it actually occupies this mortal system, by its far-off touch and glimmer on the horizon; so too divine, inspired and faultless activity in us rises heavenward & calls down God's dawn on His creature.

This great uprush of force is in its nature a great uprush of divine being; for force is nothing but the power of being in motion. It is the secret waters in us that released, gush up openly & widely from their prison & their secrecy in our mortal natures; for in vitalised matter, in mind emmeshed in material vitality, the ideal & spiritual self are always concealed and await release and manifestation; in this mortal that immortal is covered & curtained in and lives and works behind the veil, martyeshu devam amartyam. Therefore is the uprush of divine force in the great release felt to be the wide uprush of divine being & consciousness, yahvá iva pra vayám ujjihánáh.

Abodhi hotá yajatháya deván, Úrdhwo Agnih sumanáh
prátar asthát,
Samiddhasya ruśad adarší pájo, Mahán devas tamaso
niramochi.

The purpose of the waking is next emphasised. It is for divine action in man that God's force awakes in us. It is the divine priest of the offering who stands up in the dawn of the illumination to offer to the gods, to each great god his portion, to Indra a pure & deified mentality, to Vayu a pure & divine vital joy & action, to the four great Vasus, Varuna, Mitra, Bhaga & Aryamá the greatnesses, felicities, enjoyments & strengths of perfected being, to the Aswins the youth of the soul & its raptures & swiftnesses, to Daksha & Saraswati, Ila, Sarama & Mahi the activities of the Truth & Right, to the Rudras, Maruts & Adityas, the play of

physical, vital, mental & ideative activities. Agni has stood up in the dawning illumination high uplifted in the pure mentality, úrdhwa, with a perfected mind, sumanáh. He purifies in his rising the temperament and fixes on it the seal of peace & joy; he purifies the intellectuality & makes it fit to receive the activity of the illuminating Truth & Infinite Rightness which is beyond intellect. Great is the god who has been released out of the darkness of this Avidya, out of this our blind bodily matter, out of this our smoke-enveloped vital energy, out of this our confused luminous murk of mortal mind and sense-enslaved intelligence. Mahán devas tamaso niramochi. For now that he has been perfectly kindled, it is no longer God's occasional flamings that visit our nature, but His collected and perfect force, pájah, is seen reddening in our heavens.

The first verse is preoccupied with the idea of the self-illumination of Agni, the bhánavah, the flames of Force manifesting Knowledge as its essential nature — for Force is nothing but Knowledge shaped into creative energy & the creations of energy & veiled by its shape, as a man's soul is veiled by his mind & body which are themselves shapes of his soul. In the words abodhi, vayám, nákam, in the relation of Agni to Usha and the emphasis on the illuminative character of Usha as the Sun Cow, this aspect of illumination & manifestation is stressed & enlarged. In the second verse the native aspect of the divine Force as a mighty power of action, consummating & purifying, is brought out with an equal force and insistence. It is as the hotá that Agni awakes; in this illumination of the dawn that comes with him to man, práyah, he stands up with the intellect and emotional temperament perfected & purified, sumanáh, for the great offering of man's whole internal & external life & activity to God in the gods, yajatháya deván, fulfilling the upward impulse, úrdhwa, which raises matter towards life, life towards mind, mind towards ideality & spirit, and thus consummating God's intention in the creature. In the next verse the nature of this human uplifting, this upward straining of the mind through heart & intellect to ideal Truth & Love & Right, is indicated & particularised in an image of great poetical force and sublimity.

Yad ím gaṇasya raśanám ajígah, Šucir ankte śuchibhir
 gobhir Agnih,
 Ád dakshiná yujyate vájayantí, Uttánám úrdhwo adha-
 yaj juhúbhīh.

When so he has put forth the tongue of enjoyment of his host, yad ím gaṇasya raśanám ajígah, Agni has put forth his collected power for an uplifted and perfect activity, ruśad adarśi pájo,— for redness is always the symbolic colour of action and enjoyment. This pájas, Agni's force or massed army, is again described in the gaṇasya raśanám, but while the idea in the second verse is that of their indistinctive mass, here the ganah or host of Agni's powers, the devatás of his nature who apply themselves to his particular works, are represented as brought out in their individuality collected in a mass,— for this is always the force of gaṇah,— each with his tongue of flame licking the mid-air, (surabhá u loke .. madhye iddhah in v. 6), enjoying that is to say the vital energies & vital pleasure (áswa and ghritam), which support this higher action. Supported by this vital joy & force Agni acts, ankte agnir; but the enjoyment is not the impure & unilluminated enjoyment of the unuplifted creature,— he is śuchih, purely bright, not smoky with the unpurified Pranic impulses, and his flames of action are in their nature pure flames of illumination, śuchibhir gobhir. In modern diction, when the divine force has so far purified us, our activities & enjoyments are not darkened and troubled with striving & clouded vital desires which strain dimly towards a goal but, not being ritajna, know not what they should seek, how they should seek it, in what force & by what method and stages; our action becomes a pure illumination, our enjoyment a pure illumination; by the divine illuminations, as their motive force, essence & instrument, our actions & enjoyments are effected. We see the just, curious and delicate literary art of the Vedic style in its symbolism, by this selection of the great word, go, in this context, in preference to any other, to describe the flames of Agni. In the next line, with an equally just delicacy of selection juhú is used for the same flames instead of bhánu or go.

It is in this state of pure activity & enjoyment that the characteristic uplifting action of Agni is exercised; for then, ád, the discriminative intellect, dakshiná, growing in the substance of its content and havings, vájayantí, is yoked or applied to its work under these new conditions. Dakshina the discriminative intellect is the energy of Daksha, master of the viveka or unerring right discernment, but unerring in the ideality, in mahas or vijnána, his and her own home, not unerring in the intellect, but only straining towards the hidden truth & right out of the mental dualities of right & wrong, truth & falsehood. This deputy & messenger of the Ritam brihat seated in manas as reason, discernment, intellect, can only attain its end and fulfil its mission when Agni, the divine Force, manifests in the Prana and manas and uplifts her to the ideal plane of consciousness. Therefore in this new activity she is described as straining & extending herself upwards, uttánám, to follow & reach Agni where are his topmost flames, úrdhwa, in the ideal being. From there he leans down and feeds on her, adhayaj, through the flames of his divine activity, juhúbhih, burning in the purified and upward aspiring activities of the intellectual mind. This essential relation of the divine force and the purified mind is brought out in a more general thought and figure in the first line of the succeeding rik.

Agnim achchhá devayatám manánsi, Chakshúnshíva
 Súrye san charanti,
 Yad ím sváte ushasá virúpe, Śweto vájí jáyate agre
 ahnám.

Iva in the Veda is not always a particle of similitude and comparison. Its essential meaning is truly, verily, so, thus, and it is from this sense that it derives its conjunctive uses, sometimes meaning *and* or *also*, sometimes *as, like*. Its force here is to distinguish between the proper activity of Agni & Surya, of manas and chakshu, & to confine the latter to their proper sphere and thus by implication to confine the former also. When we are mortals content with our humanity, then we are confused in our functions; the manas or sense-mind attempts to do the work of

the mahas or idea-mind, to effect original knowledge, to move in Surya, in the powerful concrete image of the Veda. The idea also confuses itself with sense and moves in the sense-forces, the indriyas, instead of occupying itself in all purity with its own function. Hence the confusions of our intellect and the stumbling of our mental activity in its grappling with the contacts of the outer world. But when we rise from our mortal nature to the nature of godhead, devayantah, amritam sapantah, then the first change is the passage from mortal impurity to immortal purity, and the very nature of purity is a clear brightness and rightness, in which all our members work perfectly in God & the gods, each doing its own function & preserving its right relation with its superior and inferior fellows. Therefore in those who are attaining this nature of godhead, devyatám, their sense-minds strain towards Agni, the divine force of Right Being & Right Action, satyam ritam,—they tend that is to say to have the right state, bháva or temperament, out of which the right action of the indriyas spontaneously proceeds; the seeings of the Yогin who attains, move in Surya, the god of the ideal powers, all that he perceives, creates, distinguishes, is worked out by the pure ideal mentality, which then uses its four powers of self-revelation, self-inspiration, self-intuition, self-discernment without suffering obscuration by the clouds of vital desire & impulse or deflection by the sense-impacts & sense-reactions. The sensational mind confines itself then to its proper work of receiving passively the impacts of the vital, material & mental outer world & the illuminations of Surya and of pouring out on the world in its reaction to the impacts, not its own hasty & distorted responses, but the pure force & action of Agni which works on the world, pure, right & unerring & seizes on it to possess & enjoy it for God in the human being. This is the goal towards which Dakshina is striving in her upward self-extension which ends by her taking her place as viveka or right discernment in the kingdom of Surya, and this she begins already in her new activities by discerning the proper action of the mind from the proper action of idea in the mind. The purified intellect liberates itself from the obscurations of desire,

the slavery to vital impulse, and the false reports and false values of the matter-besieged sense-powers.

The essential nature of Agni's manifestation which is at the root of this successful distinction, is then indicated. Night & Dawn are the two unlike mothers who jointly give birth to Agni, Night, the avyakta unmanifest state of knowledge & being, the power of Avidyá, Dawn, the vyakta manifest state of knowledge & being, the power of Vidyá. They are the two dawns, the two agencies which prepare the manifestation of God in us, Night fostering Agni in secret in the activities of Avidyá, the activities of unilluminated mind, life & body, by which the god in us grows out of matter towards spirit, out of earth up to heaven, Dawn manifesting him again, more & more, until he is ready here for his continuous, pure & perfect activity. When this point of our journey towards perfection is reached he is born, śweto vájí, in the van of the days. We have here one of those great Vedic figures with a double sense in which the Rishis at once revealed & concealed their high knowledge, revealed it to the Aryan mind, concealed it from the unAryan. Agni is the white horse which appears galloping in front of the days,—the same image is used with a similar Vedantic sense in the opening of the Brihad Aranyak Upanishad; but the horse here is not, as in the Upanishad, Aśwa, the horse of vital & material being in the state of life-force, but vájí, the horse of Being generally, Being manifested in substance whether of mind, life, body or idea or the three higher streams proper to our spiritual being. Agni therefore manifests as the fullness, the infinity, the brihat of all this sevenfold substantial being that is the world we are, but white, the colour of illumined purity. He manifests therefore at this stage primarily as that mighty wideness, purity & illumination of our being which is the true basis of the complete & unassailable siddhi in the Yoga, the only basis on which right knowledge, right thinking, right living, right enjoyment can be firmly, vastly & perpetually seated. He appears therefore in the van of the days, the great increasing states of illuminated force & being,—for that is the image of ahan,—which are the eternal future of the mortal when he has attained immortality.

In the next rik the idea is taken up, repeated & amplified to its final issues in that movement of solemn but never otiose repetition which is a feature of Vedic style.

Janishta hi jenyo agre ahnám, Hito hiteshu arusho
vaneshu,
Dame dame sapta ratná dadháno, Agnir hotá ni shasádá
yajíyán.

This divine force is born victorious by its very purity & infinity over all the hostile forces that prevent, obstruct, limit or strive to destroy our accomplished freedoms, powers, illuminations & widenesses; by his victory he ushers in the wide days of the siddha, for which these nights & dawns of our human life are the preparatory movements. He is effective & helpful in the effective powers that work out for our good the movements [of] this lower life towards immortal strength & power, he is active & joyous, arusho, in those that take the delight of these movements and so prepare us for the immortal bliss & ecstasy of the divine nature. Manifesting progressively that Ananda the force of God establishes and maintains in each house of our habitation, in each of our five bodies, in each of our seven levels of conscious existence, the seven essential forms of Ananda, the bliss of body, the bliss of life, the bliss of mind & the senses, the bliss of ideal illumination, the bliss of pure divine universal ecstasy, the bliss of cosmic Force, the bliss of cosmic being. For although we tend upwards immediately to the pure Idea, yet not that but Ananda is the goal of our journey; the manifestation in our lower members of the divine bliss reposing on the divine force & being is the law of our perfection. Agni, whether he raises us to live in pure mind or yet beyond to the high plateaus of the pure ideal existence, adhi shnuná brihatá vartamánam, establishes & supports as the divine force that divine bliss in its seven forms in whatever houses of our being, whatever worlds of our consciousness, have been already possessed by our waking existence, life, body & mind, or life, body, mind and idea, dame dame dadhánah. Thus manifesting God's bliss in us he takes his seat in those houses, domiciled, damúnáh, as we have it in other

Suktas, and in those worlds, to perform as the hotá in his greater might for the sacrifice, greater than the might of other gods or greater than he has hitherto possessed, the offering of human life into the immortal being, á daivyam janam, yajatháya deván.

In a culminating rik which at once completes the first half of the Sukta and introduces a new movement, the Rishi once more takes up the closing thought of this last verse and carries it out into a fuller conclusion.

Agnir hotá ni asídad yajíyán, Upasthe mátuh surabhá u
loke,
Yuvá kavih purunihshttha ritává, Dhartá krishtínám uta
madhye iddhah.

Agni thus takes his seat in us and, because it is through human activity that he is to fulfil the sacrifice, because the ascending movement is not completed, he takes it in the lap of his Mother in that rapturous middle world. For the middle world, the Bhuvah, including all those states of existence in which the mind and the life are interblended as the double medium through which the Purusha acts and connects Heaven & Earth, is the proper centre of all human action. Mind blended with the vital energies is our seat even here in the material world. The bhuvah or middle regions are worlds of rapture & ecstasy because life-energy & the joy of life fulfil themselves there free from the restrictions of the material world in which it is an exile or invader seeking to dominate & use the rebellious earthly material for its own purposes. Agni sits in the lap of the mother, on the principle of body in the material human being, occupying there the vitalised mind consciousness which is man's present centre of activity & bringing into it the mightier bliss of the rapturous middle world to support & enlarge even the vital and physical activities & enjoyments of our earthly existence. He sits there in the human sacrifice, full of eternal youth and vigour, yuvá, in possession of the ideal truth & knowledge, in possession of the unerring rightness of the liberated pure ideal life & consciousness, kavir ritává, & realising that truth & right in many purposes & activities, purunihshtah. For he works all these results as the upholder

of men in their actions, efforts & labours, dhartá krishtinám,— he is that in all his forms of force from the mere physical heat in earth & in our bodies to the divine Tapas in us & without us by which God effects & supports the existence of the cosmos,— and because he is thus supremely the upholder of human life & activity, therefore he is kindled in the mid-space; his seat is on the fullness of the vitalised mind-consciousness in the microcosm, in the rapturous mid-world of fulfilled life-energy in the macrocosm. There kindled, awakened & manifested in man, samidhá buddhah, samiddhah, he does his work for upward-climbing humanity. Thus by the return in iddhah to the words & the idea with which he started, the Rishi marks the close of his first movement of thought.

[31]

[RV V.10]

Gaya Atreya's Hymn to Agni —

1. O Agni, Light of our embodied being, bring to us an illumination most full of force; do thou by power of an all-environing felicity cleave for us towards the goal of possession our path in front.
2. Thou, O wonderful Agni, becomest by the Will the fullness in us of discernment and in thee the doer climbeth up to the might divine as Mitra of the sacrifice.
3. Do thou for us, O Agni, increase attainment and plenty in these who by the confirming mantras of praise, as Purushas of the Sun, enjoy the fullnesses.
4. They, O Agni rapturous, who by delight of the Steed of Life have joy of the words, are Purushas strong in all energies for whom even in heaven the full perfection of the vaster Being awakens of itself.
5. These, O Agni, are thy burning rays that go violently like lightnings that pervade, like a chariot sounding towards the goal.

6. Now do thou prepare, O Agni, us hampered & opposed for having, for delight and may our Powers of Light pass beyond all desires (or overpass all the regions).

7. Thou, O Agni, lord of might, confirmed by praise and while yet we hymn thee bring to us felicity that bears the pervading god, let it be for firm-establishment to those who establish thee with the hymn. And do thou flourish in our battles for our growth.

Gaya, the Rishi, prays to Agni, Lord of Tapas, the representative in Nature of the Divine Power that builds the worlds & works in them towards our soul's fulfilment in and beyond heaven—Agni, as játavedas, the self-existent luminosity of knowledge in this Cosmic Force—for Force is only Chitshakti, working power of the Divine Consciousness & therefore Cosmic Force is always self-luminous, all-knowing force. Agni Jatavedas then is the ray of divine knowledge in this embodied state of existence;—he is Adhrigu—the Light in our embodied being. For this reason all action offered by us to Agni as a work of divine tapas becomes in its nature a self-luminous activity guiding itself whether consciously in our minds or super-consciously, guháhitam, to the divine goal. All Tapas is self-effective and God-effective. As Adhrigu, the divine Light in our embodied being, Agni is to bring to us an illumination of knowledge in our mentality which is ojistha, most full of ojas, superabundant in effective puissance. By God-directed action our heart & intellect become suffused with power & light, or rather with light that is power and power that is light, since knowledge & force are in the divine nature one entity. Agna ojistham á bhara dyumnam asmabhyam adhrigo.

This puissant light brought to us by Agni is attended with the other divine phenomenon or manifestation (vayunam, vayas), bliss, felicity, Ananda. Divine Ananda is the inseparable companion of the divine strength and divine knowledge; Chit, Tapas & Ananda constitute the nature of Sat, the divine Being. The state of divine being is one & infinite embracing all existences, sarva-bhútáni, in one unifying self-consciousness, Atmani; therefore,

divine bliss also is infinite & embracing, ráyá paríṇasá. It environs all our sensations, states & actions, it environs also for us all the vishayas of our sensations, all the beings who come into contact with our soul states, all the objects & fields of our action. We come to take in all these equally the same pure & divine delight. Because the Lord of Tapas brings to us this wonderful felicity, he is called in this hymn “*Agne chandra*”, Agni rapturous, Agni delightful, and in other hymns *ratnadhadhátama*, utter disposer of delight, or *madhubhastya*, he who brings wine of sweetness in his hand. In this puissant light, by this all-environing felicity Agni is to cleave for us through the darknesses & obstructions of this world of Avidya a path towards our goal. Vája means in Veda either possession or having, plenty or a goal; we find it in this latter sense in such expressions as *raghavo na vájam*, like swift horses to a goal or, in this very Sukta, *ratho na vájayuh*, like a chariot that moves towards its goal. Here, as often in the Vedic language which uses freely the devices of symbolism, involved double metaphor and double suggestion, the sense is goal, but there is intended to be some suggestion of the other idea of vája, possession. The path is action of knowledge, the goal is vája, possession or plenteous having, magha, fullness or plenty, of Asurya, the divine might, Force or Tapas of the divine Nature,— magha & vája, full & assured having as opposed to the partial visitations which we receive in this mortal state & mortal nature and cannot invariably use or certainly hold. And this path Agni is to cleave for us, pra, in front of us. The Might of God goes before us on its Tapasya, not remaining content with any limited realisation but pressing forwards towards [.....] consciousness & knowledge, [.....] force & an infinite joy. It dispels the darkness in front & lights, [as] it advances, new reaches of thought, consciousness & knowledge to which our minds were blinded; it scatters spiritual foes ambushed in front; it creates footholds for us in the pathless void, *apade pádá*. We follow & enjoy its fruits, *magháni ánaśub*. Pra no ráyá paríṇasá ratsi vájáya panthám.

Gaya, the Rishi, then proceeds to describe the path & the goal. He addresses the god as *Agne adbhuta*, O marvellous Agni

or O Supreme Agni; for *adbhuta* means that which stands out from other things, is different from them, superior or wonderful. This is the marvellous or supreme nature of Agni that by will in action he becomes in us the fullness & force of discernment in knowledge. We have here two capital terms of the Veda, *kratu* and *daksha*. *Kratu* has several shades of significance, action or activity, more especially, the *yajna* or action of sacrifice; power that expresses itself in action, the Greek *kratos*; & power as a mental force corresponding very nearly to the European conception of Will. We have in our philosophy no exact synonym of the English word Will, because Will to us, as opposed to mere wish, *ichchhā*, is simply Conscious Force; it is *Shakti* or, more precisely, *Chit-shakti*, & its nature in action is *Tapas* or the concentration of consciousness on action & its object or its results. Now the nature of Agni, *kratu* or active power is precisely this *Tapas* or *Chit-shakti*, Conscious Being in concentration of action. It is then by *Tapas* or Will that Agni creates in us Knowledge. But how can Action be said to transform itself into Knowledge, *kriyāshakti* into *jñānashakti*? We can see dimly this transmutation in our ordinary psychological experience; for we know that each time we act, bodily or mentally, the action is automatically registered in us as an experience and by the accumulation of experiences transforms itself into state of knowledge. But in mortal knowledge & mortal nature the act & the knowledge are separated from each other and can be joined or disjoined; in divine knowledge & divine nature the two go always together and are one entity. When God acts, each act is a play of effective self-knowledge. When He creates Light, He conceives of Himself as a Light & Light becomes. The action of creation is really a play of self-conception. He knows at the same time the whole conception of Light, its nature, properties, possibilities, functionings; when therefore He acts or creates, the process of action is a process of conception, the result of action is a result of conception. For this reason when a tree grows out of a seed, the evolution of the right tree out of the right seed is as inevitable as Fate, although the tree has no knowledge and control of its own growth; but the evolution

& the form of the tree evolved are merely manifestations of the divine conception. The Cosmic Self-Consciousness knows itself in the form of a Tree & that *vijnána* or typal idea is manifested by the sure action of the nature or swabhava attached to the conception. This sureness of self-fulfilment based on a secret self-knowledge is the kratu or action of Agni, the divine Power in things. It is a secret Will in things fulfilling itself in motion of activity & in form. But though Agni in the tree knows, the tree knows nothing. When man comes in with his mind, he still does not know but only seeks to know,—for he feels that attached to every object is a right knowledge of that object & in every action is a right knowledge of that action. This knowledge he seeks to bring out, to make conscious in his mind. But mortal knowledge is sense knowledge, a deduction from forms of things; divine knowledge is self-existent knowledge, spontaneously manifested by the identity in consciousness of the knower with the thing known. Mortal knowledge is derived in nature, deferred in time, indirect in means; divine knowledge is spontaneous, direct and self-manifesting. Mortal knowledge is like hearing of a man from others & inferring many things about him which may & must, indeed, be largely or wholly incorrect; divine knowledge is the seeing & hearing of the man himself & knowledge of him by personal experience. Mortal knowledge is crooked, hvára or vrijina; divine knowledge is straight, riju. Mortal knowledge proceeds from & by limitation, by getting hold of & adding up details, dwayena, by duality; divine knowledge is comprehensive & unifying, containing subordinates in the principal, details in the whole, attributes in the thing itself. Mortal knowledge advances step by step over uneven ground in a jungle where it does not know the way; divine knowledge advances over straight & open levels, vítáni prishtháni, where it sees the whole prospect before it, its starting-point, its way & its goal. Mortal knowledge bases itself on martya or mánasa ketu, sense perception or intelligence; divine knowledge bases itself upon daivya ketu, self-perception. Mortal knowledge is manas, divine knowledge is *vijnána*, self-true ideation or soul-knowledge. Even when Agni works from below upward, from

mind up to vijnána, & the daivya ketu has to follow the action of mind & act partially & in details, it does not lose its characteristics of self-existence, self-truth & direct perception. When therefore vijnána acts in the human mind, he associates every action, every will with the knowledge that is the core of the action & the true substance of the will, but this he does at first dimly & obscurely in the nervous impressions, the emotional response, the sense knowledge, as in a smoke-obscured flame. He has then archayo dhúminah, smoky rays; he acts as a force in Avidya, putro hváryáñám, a son of the crookednesses although always rijúyuh, moving towards the straightnesses. But when he can get beyond the sense mind into pure mind, then he begins to show his true nature entirely & the higher knowledge begins; he has his archayo bhrájantah, his intense clear burning rays, he drives his straight-muscled steeds, rijumushkán ashwán. Then every act of will is attended with right discernment, with daksha & transmutes itself into right knowledge.

Vijnana, true ideation, called ritam, truth or vedas, knowledge in the Vedas, acts in human mind by four separate functions; revelation, termed drishti, sight; inspiration termed sruti, hearing; and the two faculties of discernment, smriti, memory, which are intuition, termed ketu, and discrimination, termed daksha, division, or viveka, separation. By drishti we see ourselves the truth face to face, in its own form, nature or self-existence; by sruti we hear the name, sound or word by which the truth is expressed & immediately suggested to the knowledge; by ketu we distinguish a truth presented to us behind a veil whether of result or process, as Newton discovered the law of gravitation hidden behind the fall of the apple; by viveka we distinguish between various truths and are able to put them in their right place, order and relation to each other, or, if presented with mingled truth & error, separate the truth from the falsehood. Agni Jatavedas is termed in the Veda vivichi, he who has the viveka, who separates truth from falsehood; but this is only a special action of the fourth ideal faculty & in its wider scope, it is daksha, that which divides & rightly distributes truth in its multiform aspects. The ensemble of the four faculties is Vedas

or divine knowledge. When man is rising out of the limited & error-besieged mental principle, the faculty most useful to him, most indispensable is daksha or viveka. Drishti of Vijnana transmuted into terms of mind has become observation, sruti appears as imagination, intuition as intelligent perception, viveka as reasoning & intellectual judgment and all of these are liable to the constant touch of error. Human buddhi, intellect, is a distorted shadow of the true ideative faculties. As we return from these shadows to their ideal substance viveka or daksha must be our constant companion; for viveka alone can get rid of the habit of mental error, prevent observation being replaced by false illumination, imagination by false inspiration, intelligence by false intuition, judgment & reason by false discernment. The first sign of human advance out of the anritam of mind to the ritam of the ideal faculty is the growing action of a luminous right discernment which fixes instantly on the truth, feels instantly the presence of error. The fullness, the manhaná of this viveka is the foundation & safeguard of Ritam or Vedas. The first great movement of Agni Jatavedas is to transform by the divine will in mental activity his lower smoke-covered activity into the bright clearness & fullness of the ideal discernment. Agne adbhuta kratwá dakshasya manhaná.

This, then, is the path. It is the development by divine Tapas in the mind of Ritam or Vedas, the supra-intellectual knowledge or unveiled face of Truth, Ritasya panthá — the path of Truth is always in Veda the road which the Ancestors, the Pitris, the great forefathers, the Ancients, pratiñásah, purátanáh, have trodden before us & their descendants, the new seers, have to follow after them. What then is the goal? It is Asuryam, the might of the divine Nature. In thee, says Gaya, the doer, —kráñá, the sádhaka, the seeker after perfection, who conducts or for whom Agni conducts the inner sacrifice, — ascends to the divine Might as Mitra of the sacrifice. Asuryam is the principle of divine Power, Chit-Shakti or Tapas in which divine Being or Sat formulates itself for cosmic activity; Mitra is the Lord of Love who with Bhaga, the Lord of Enjoyment, most intimately represents in human temperament the principle of Ananda, which is the

base of the divine Being & divine Power in world-manifestation. Sat, Chit, Ananda (for Chit & Tapas are one) are the Vedic formula of divine Existence. By the action of Agni, kratwá, the soul achieving Truth merges itself in the divine principle of Love poured out into the offering to God of human life, Mitro na yajniyah, and with it in that principle, realising throughout our consciousness the divine Beatitude, rises into the free play of the infinite Tapas of the divine Existence. In that Tapas the sacrificial activity of Agni in man, the kratu, becoming Godward will finds its manhaná, its absolute fullness & fulfilment. Sat, Tapas, Ananda, Vijnana, Manas — this is the Indian ladder of Jacob by which one descends & ascends again to heaven. Man the Doer, the Manu, the Krana, perfecting himself by works, is lifted by the divine will to Vijnana, to the ideal self of true knowledge & right action & emotion, attains by Truth to Divine Love & Bliss, Mayas, the dháma or seat of Mitra, and thus ascends to the Tapas where Agni is [.....]. This ascension Gaya, the Rishi, is enabled by the fixed symbolic style of the Veda, to express with a masterly economy of words in the second rik of this Sukta.

Agne adbhuta,
kratwá dakshasya manhaná;
Tve asuryam áruhat,
kráñá mitro na yajniyah.

The Rishi next proceeds to dwell on this Ritam or Truth which is the path in order that he may return again to the goal with a greater fullness of significance. We have seen that as the divine Tapas Agni is typified in the symbol of the sacrificial flame, so his activities are typified in the flames or rays of that fire, jwálá or archis, and these rays or brightnesses [are] of two kinds, dhúminah, smoke-enveloped in the heart & sense mind & burning & brilliant, bhrájantah in the pure mind. The stage now considered is that of Agni in the pure mind awakening in it the activities of the vijnána. The god of the vijnána, its Nri or Purusha, is the Lord of the Sun, Sur or Surya. Those who possess the illumination of the vijnána are called, therefore, súrayah, the Illuminati, and the word may be applied to either class of

Nri (Purushas), the human Purushas who evolve upwards by the Vedic sacrifice or the luminous gods of the *vijnána*, the solar gods, the host of Surya, *súrayo narah*, who aid him in his ascent. It is these Solar Purushas who are the *archayo bhrájantah*, the bright-burning brilliances of Agni. The divine Tapas entering the *vijnána* manifests itself in Surya & his hosts, in the powers, faculties & activities of the self-luminous & self-true ideal mind. The Rishi occupies himself with these luminous Powers in his next three verses.

“O Agni,” cries the Rishi, “increase in us the attainment of light & the full plenty of these active gods of the solar illumination.” *Gayam pushtim cha*. The word *gaya*, Sayana tells us, means that which is reached or attained; it is *dhanam*, wealth. But *gaya*, as is usually the case with these early Sanscrit vocables, is capable of several shades of significance. It may mean the act or process of attaining; it may mean the thing reached or attained, whether material wealth or spiritual attainment, & especially it signifies knowledge, just as *ritam* from the word *ri* to go signifies truth or *rishi*, similarly derived, signifies the seer or knower; or it may signify the knower himself, the Rishi. It certainly bears the latter sense in the name *Gaya* which is borne by the Rishi of this *súkta*; the habits of style of the Vedic seers justify us even in seeing a covert introduction of his own name by the Seer in the choice of this word *Gaya*. In any case *Gaya* here can no more mean material wealth than *pushti* can mean corporeal fatness; it implies spiritual gain or attainment &, occurring in close connection with the *súrayo narah* and recalling the name of the Rishi, may be taken in this passage as specially signifying Knowledge. Agni has already established the fullness of the *viveka*. He has now to increase in *Gaya* & his fellow worshippers the light of knowledge & the full growth of all the powers of the *vijnána*; he has to help in man the gods of revelation, inspiration & intuition as well as of *viveka*. How is this to be done? By the mantras of the hymn of praise, *stomebhih*.

The importance & effectiveness, psychological, spiritual, even physical, of the Word, *Vachas*, *Gih*, *Uktha*, may almost

be described as the fundamental thought of the Vedic seers, and this initial psychic perception of our forefathers has dominated Indian religious thought & discipline ever since. The name of God, the mantra, is still the keystone of all Indian yoga. We shall not realise the full bearing & rationale of this great Vedic conception unless we first impress on our minds the Vedic idea of existence & creation, for Vak, the Word, is in that idea the effective agent of creation. All created existence is in the Vedic philosophy a formation by force of consciousness, Chit-shakti, not, as modern thought supposes it to be, a formation by Force of unconscious inanimate Being. Creation itself is only a manifestation, phenomenon or appearing in form, vayas, vayunam, viti, [of] that which is already existent as consciousness, but latent as form in universal Being. It is srishti, a loosing forth, vachas, vyachas or shasti, an expressing or bringing out, not a creation in the modern sense, not a new manufacture of that which never before had any sort of existence. Sat or Being in the universe contains all forms as things in themselves in its Chit or self-consciousness, but for all cosmic purposes avyakta, unexpressed, undefined. To define it is first necessary that the general undifferentiated self-consciousness should dwell by particular concentration of consciousness, by Tapas or Force of self-knowledge, on the thing in itself latent in undifferentiated Cosmic Being. This self-dwelling of Tapas is, first, an act of seeing, íkshanam, drishti. "The Being saw, Let me bring forth worlds", as the Aitareya Upanishad expresses the original Will to create. But a second agent is also needed, Ananda or delight of creation & in the thing created, for without this creative Delight in conscious things nothing could come into existence or once being created remain in existence. "Who could exist or live" asks the Taittiriya Upanishad "if there were not this all-pervading & all-supporting ethereal atmosphere of the divine Bliss around it?" — yad esha ákásha ánando na syát. Therefore as Tapas or Will is the working principle of cosmic Consciousness, (therefore the divine world in which infinite Consciousness is the basic factor is called by the Puranic writers, Tapoloka), so Jana, Birth or Joy of Procreation is the working principle of cosmic Bliss,

(therefore the divine world in which infinite Bliss is the basic factor is called by the Puranic writers, Janaloka). But even so the agents are not sufficient; for Being, Consciousness, Bliss are universal & infinite in nature, indivisible & undividing realities. [There] is a particular faculty of Consciousness, Vijnana, which brings in the element of differentiation. Vijnana, pure Idea, is that which perceives the thing itself as thing in itself, as a whole & in its parts. It introduces the element of Nama, name. The Vedic word Nama connotes definition, distribution & law, (cf from *nam*, Greek *nomos*, law, *nemo*, to distribute, Latin *numerus*, number) & is, in its nature, defining idea. The Nama, the name of a thing, the defining idea about it, is both its nomen & numen, & carries in itself the swabhava of the thing, its nature or self-being and prakriti or natural working; as soon as thing in itself gets its *náma*, it gets also its *swáhá* & *swadhá* — *swáhá*, self-luminous self-existence manifested in self-force & *swadhá*, self-fixity in that self-being; & these two, the self-force & the self-fixity, produce naturally & inevitably all the workings of the thing-in-itself, its *vratáni*, by the guna or gana, quality or number (ratio) of the nature, the *swadhá*. The Nature works out by three processes, Manas, the measuring or limiting of thing in itself in consciousness by the number or ratio, the gana, Prana (Ashwa, the Horse) the energy of the *swáhá*, movement of consciousness accommodating itself to the limitations of the Idea & confining itself to an action appropriate to the single form of the Idea which has been separated by distributing Manas & numbering Ratio, and Annam, existence in form of substance created by the limiting Mind & the self-confining energy of the Prana. This form of substance presents itself to the human mind as Matter; cosmic energy of being working in form of substance presents itself to us most strikingly in the phenomenon of animate Life but is also present in what we see as inanimate forms; Manas working through the nervous Life-energies & their organs, the senses, presents itself to us as human & animal Mind, but is a constant force by other workings & other instruments even in lifeless forms which have not organised nervous energies. These seven principles constitute the world, & are known in Veda as

the ápas or sapta sindhavah, the waters of creative being, the seven elements of one ocean, the sapta dhenavah or sapta gávah, the seven fostering forms of divine consciousness and each of them forms for itself a separate world in which it predominates & is the governing principle of consciousness & existence but to which it necessarily admits its six sisters. These seven worlds are the sapta dhámáni or padáni, seven established places or seats of being, the seven footholds or goals of existence, with the sapta ratnáni, the seven forms of [delight]; five of them give entrance to the human soul in its present workings and are the pancha janáh or pancha kshitayah, five births or five inhabitable worlds & their peoples.

Consciousness is the base of all world existence, but consciousness develops itself in two forms, manifestation & non-manifestation, Dawn & Night, or from our point of view, Knowledge & Ignorance, Chittam & Achittam, Vidya & Avidya, consciousness illumined in the form it has taken as in the seer, consciousness dark & involved in the form it has taken as in the clod & less rigidly in the tree. For it is evident that in the highest principles of Sat, Chit, Ananda, there is universal knowledge, unlimited, inherent in the self-luminous unity of the Cosmic Being; even in Vijnana the element of limitation or bheda has not really entered, for differentiation by Vijnana exists in the cosmic sense of oneness as a play of oneness & is not a real difference; the knowledge of the many is illumined always by the knowledge of the one. The Gods of Sat, Tapas & Jana know themselves as one, Agni there is Varuna & Varuna is Agni; even in Mahas or Brihat, the uru loka, the wide & vast world, the world of Vijnana, the devas know themselves as one even in their multitude. There, however, the first possibility of limitation in consciousness is adumbrated. But it is not till Manas gets full play that limitation sets in, but so long as Manas is pure rishimedhá, not separated from Vijnana, [the] movement from [.....] Therefore in Swar, the world of pure Mind [.....] the stress is not yet a bondage. There is a limited working of being, knowledge & power, which may ignore for the time being

the wider being, knowledge & action & thus generate ignorance, but is not fatally ignorant of it & is not therefore bound by its self-chosen ignorance. The gods know themselves as one, as Purushas of the universal Deva even when they act as if they were entirely different personalities. In this world, therefore, there is no real birth & death, no real day & night, but only the taking & putting off [of] forms, the bringing forward & the putting back of Light from the frontal outward action of the consciousness. In Bhūvar, the worlds of Prana, the conscious energy put out seems to be really absorbed in her outward workings only, in the energy itself, in the form of her own works & to forget her own more universal reality; a veil falls between manas & vijnāna, the veil of Achitti or ignorance. In Bhu, the world of Matter, this movement is complete. Consciousness is involved in its forms & has to be rescued out of it by beings who bring conscious life & mind into the mechanism of its formal energies & the inertia of its substantial forms. Man is the nodus, the agent & instrument of the gods for the full recovery of Consciousness in material Energy, universal being in particular Form. Man, the mental being in Bhu, shares with the Gods the appellation, Nri, the Purusha; he too is a guiding Soul of consciousness & not the mere gana, formal executive energy & mechanical ratio of things which is the outward aspect of Nature.

Man is able to bring out, to express the divine consciousness & nature in the prison of matter or, as the Vedic hymns express it, to manifest the gods—he is devavyacháh, effects by the yajna the devavíti, god-manifestation, in himself, because he is able to use fully the principle of Mind with its powers of mental realisation and verbal expression, manma & vachas, mati & gíh. In the lower forms of life this is not possible. Mind there is dumb or only partly vocal; it is therefore unable to bring into expression, into shansa, the secret name of things, their guhyam náma; he first is able to define them in mind by speech & to arrive from this mental definition to the divine idea in them and from the divine idea to the one truth of which all ideas are expressions. By vachas in mati one arrives at Nama in vijnánam.

For all sound has a creative & expressive power; each activity of sound in existence creates its corresponding physical & mental forms; all activity of forms in their turn creates a corresponding vibration of sound. But human speech informed with mind is the highest creative & expressive power of sound. It tends to bring about in life & being that which it expresses in thought. We can see this easily enough in psychological phenomena. By dwelling on an idea, by tapas on it, we can create not only the image of that idea in our minds, but its form in emotion, its truth in quality of character, its experience in terms of inner being. By dwelling with the will on the idea of courage or virtue it has been found that we can create courage or virtue in ourselves where they were formerly wanting. By brooding on an object with the will in mind in a state of masterful concentration it has been found that we can command the knowledge we need about the object. But the Indian theory of concentration goes farther & asserts that even events, things, objects can be controlled by this inner Tapas & brought about or reduced to subjection without any ostensible material means. This concentration in mind is the manma of the Vedic rishis. The concentration may be on the object or idea itself or on the name of the object or on some form of words which expresses the idea. But even when the concentration is on idea or object & not on name or word, there is still, in all mental concentration, a silent or half-expressed word or vák by which the idea or object is brought before mind. The vák may be repeated aloud and then it becomes the hymn, súkta or rik of the Vedic Rishi, or the námakírtana of the modern devotee; or it may be repeated only by subtle sound in the subtle matter of mind, then it is the mantra of the silent Yогin; or it may be involved and silent at the back of the image, object or unexpressed idea in the mind. The Vedic manma or mantra is of the first variety,—although we need not assume that the Rishis were ignorant of the more silent forms of meditation. Nevertheless, they attached a preeminent importance to the vák, the expressed mental realisation.

The process of the Vedic mantra involves three movements, corresponding to three psychological activities necessary to the

act of meditation or realisation, a movement from soul into mind, a movement from mind into speech, & the movement of speech itself reacting on mind and soul. In all forms there is the soul or [.....] partially expressed in the two primary constituents [.....] & temperament sometimes called manyu or more widely mati, and [an] intellectual part, usually termed dhí or maníshá. The maníshá first brought out the Nama out of the soul in which all things are latent into the heart where the general bháva (character, temperament, sense & feeling) of the Nama manifested itself to the sensationally perceiving mind & then raised it by distinct concept into the thinking mind. The mind by dwelling on the vák brings out the thing defined by Nama into being in the experience of the thinker & there establishes it as a living & acting presence. The mantra then, when it is thought of as operating to bring out the ukthyam, the thing desired & to be expressed, out of the soul into the mind state, mati, is called brahma or ángúsham brahma or, briefly, ángúsham; when it is thought of as mentalising the ukthyam, it is called manma or mantra, when it is thought of as expressing by speech the ukthyam in the thinker's practical experience it is called vachas or gir. Moreover, the vachas may be either of the nature of prayer or praise; as prayer, it is called uktha; as praise it has two functions, the expression in the sádhaka of the divine activity, when it is termed shansa, and the confirmation or firm establishment of the activity once expressed, when it is termed stoma. All these expressions, brahma, manma, vachas, shansa, stoma, stava or stavas, can be and are often used to express the effect of the mantra no less than the mantra itself,—brahma then means the soul-movement or soul-state expressed in the heart or temperament, manma the mental realisation, vachas the expression of the god or his divine activities in the mortal nature, shansa the expression of the man's higher being which is brought about by the mantra, stoma the firm established condition of the manifest god in the man. Nor are these the only terms which are applied to the mantra in the Vedic súktas. It is also called rik, gáyatram, gátha or sáma. It is the rik when it is considered as the mantra

of realisation & the word arka is used to express the act of divine realisation by the mantra; gáyatram when it is considered as the means of attainment to the power, felicity or wideness of the divine being or nature through the path of the Truth or Ritam manifested by the mantra; sáma when it brings about the harmony or equality of the different constituents of our nature, body, life-energy, mind, pure ideation in one divine ánandamaya consciousness. By the mantra the god, entering into the speech and the thought, the soul-state, takes possession of his seat in man & makes manifest there his activities.

The Lords of Light, the Solar Purushas, are already active in the mind purified by the activities of Agni. They have there already not only their rare illuminations, but their established working and their increasing strength, gayam pushtim cha. The expression by vachas, by the girah has been attained. It is their fullnesses, magháni that the Rishi now covets, for the word magha in Veda means a full & copious state or satisfying and abundant possession as opposed to rare & exceptional visitations or enjoyments and to small & limited seeings. These fullnesses the Solar Purushas enjoy by means of the stomas, the mantras of praise which help to confirm the gods in possession of their manifested activities. The wide illuminations of the Ritam, the supra-intellectual revelatory, inspirational, intuitional truth come to man first by rare visitations as the purified mind meditates on the godhead above our mortal minds, above even the pure levels of Swar. These visitations increase in frequency and intensity and leave behind a store of ideal knowledge, of vision & inspiration, & an increasing power of the ideal faculties. By these increasing & repeated confirmations they arrive at an assured and abundant fullness of the divine faculty & its results in the human mind. Ye stomebhih pra súrayo naro magháni ánaśuh.

The Rishi proceeds to dwell more fully on the whole process by which the knowledge in man is changed & elevated from the mental or sensational to the ideal type. It is done by a process of natural awakening out of the joy & strength of the divine Tapas generated by the inner sacrifice. The joy of Agni by his

self-expression in thought & verbal form of thought is the first necessary condition. Agne chandra te girah. When we feel the divine, the immortal force working in us & lifting us beyond mortality, the divine joy comes with it,—the joy that wakes in the poet, the artist, the saint, the seer, the hero, in all who have any sort of communion with the divine Nature & draw from it their force of vision or their force of being or their force of action. They are the girah of Agni, his self-expressions through the word into which human [.....] form themselves or from which our actions draw their force and inspiration. The second requisite is the joy of our nervous & vital parts in this divine activity. The Narah, the Purushas, must be aśwarádhasah. Aśwa, the Horse, the Steed, is the Vedic figure for the Prana, for the Life-Energy pouring itself through nature & through man's nervous activities, the strong impetuous swift galloper of the worlds that bears gods & men on the journey of life, up the ascent of spiritual evolution, through the battles of the great war which is the Cosmos. Without a strong & joyous vital energy to support it, human mind cannot bear the tremendous shocks of the divine activity, the divine knowledge, the divine [?vision]. The mortal system would break down under the intense touch of the immortal powers, [?sink] back into disintegration, darkness & suffering more intense than the ordinary [?conditions] of mortality. But with a strong & rapturous vital energy & activity supporting the play of a joyous divine energy in the mind, the Solar Purushas become strong with the strengths, mental & vital, which the expressions of Agni Chandra generate and are able to feel an unmixed sense of pleasure & well-being in all Agni's self-expressions in man,—this, I think, is the meaning of śumbhanti in this passage. Or, if it has an active sense, it must mean, as Sayana suggests, that they make those expressions entirely auspicious & pleasurable, śobhanā kurvanti; free from the touch of pain & suffering or the ill-results which may come from a premature activity of the higher elements in an ill-prepared & unfit receptacle. Ye Agne chandra te girah śumbhanti aśwarádhasah. Śushmebhīḥ śushmīṇo naro.

When there is this strong & blissful action, blissful in the

vital energy supporting it, blissful in the divine force working in the mind, blissful in the easy & auspicious self-expressions of that force, then the perfection of the illuminative Powers awakes of itself or by the force of the Self in the pure mentality. This spontaneous self-action of the power, the knowledge, the being, the bliss of the Godhead in man, no longer secured or assured by struggle, no longer needing to be protected against legions of spiritual enemies who seek to perpetuate the reign of darkness, suffering, limitation & mortality, but assured & established, but easily, swiftly & mightily developing & reaching its glorious self-perfection, *sukírtih*, is the last stage of the Vedic Yoga and the desired state of the Vedic sádhaka. This natural awakening in the human consciousness of the perfected divine knowledge in the comprehensive wideness, *brihat*, natural to the *Mahas*, the *vijnána*, takes place *divaś chid*, even in the heaven of pure mind, even without man rising in himself to the plane of consciousness above pure mind, *brihad div*, *mahas*, *vijnána*. For if man were once on that plane, then there could be no question of struggle. There intellect & its hosts are quiescent, or have left their mortal parts and been transfigured back into the divine elements from which they came. Imagination is at rest or has been transfigured into inspiration, sense observation or insight of intelligence at rest or transfigured into revelation & luminous vision, judgment, reasoning & intelligent divination at rest or transfigured into sure intuition & illuminated discrimination. The Solar Purushas are there swe dame in their own home; the self-awakening of their perfect activity, *sukírti*, is there natural & inevitable. The necessity of struggle for man comes from this that he lives on the lower plane of mind and has to idealise & illumine his mental activities. The Purushas have to enter a foreign territory & conquer & hold it against its established inhabitants & natural possessors. But even in mind, not the sense mind, not *Bhuvar* in man, but in the purified mind, the pure self-intelligence this easy, natural & victorious awakening is possible under the conditions of a joyous & illuminated vitality, a joyous & illuminated action of *Agni* in the mind & the assured sense of ease & well-being brought into his activities in us by the delightful consciousness

of a higher knowledge & illumination. Divaś chid yeshám brihat sukírtir bodhati tmaná.

The final movement of the Solar Purushas is then described by the Rishi, the movement which takes place when there is the awakening by self-action of its vast vijnánamaya perfection in the pure intelligence. These Solar Purushas, these bright illuminations of Vijnana, are the bright-burning flames of the divine Tapas. Agni, the Divine Being in His aspect of Force, is masked in our nervous energies as the Aśwa, in the mind takes the forms of the mental gods, in the activities of Surya, he is the divine Power expressed in Surya himself and these luminous hosts of the Sun-god are his own brilliant liberated energies. Free from the smoke of the lower regions, free from the excitement and distress of his lower emotional & sensational movements, the thoughts of the Rishi, joyous & liberated, move freely in [the] whole heaven of mind boldly [.....]

Mandala Six

[32]

[RV VI.1.1–4]

Rigveda Book VI. Annotations
First Draft.

I. Hymn to Agni

1. Thou, O Agni, art the supreme (or first) thinker (or giver of thought); and art the priest of invocation of this thinking, O doer of works (or, O Puissant); thou hast made an impassable strength for thyself to every side, O bull, that thou mayst overpower every force.

अग्ने त्वं हि प्रथमो (मुख्यः परमः पूर्वतमो वा) मनोता (मंता मनसः प्रचोदयिता वा) (हे) दस्म (कर्तः कर्मशक्त वा) (त्वं) अस्या धियः (श्रुतिरूपस्य मननस्य मंत्रस्य वा) होताह्वाताभवः । (हे) वृषन् (वर्षिष्ठ बलवन् देव). त्वं सीं (सर्वतो) दुष्टरीतुं (दुर्भेद्यं दुर्लभ्यं) सहो (बलं) अकृणोः (चकृथाः) विश्वस्मै सहसे (सर्वं बलं) सहध्यै (अभिभवितुं येन बलेन सर्वमन्यद्वलमभिभवेः) ।

2. Then didst thou take up thy seat in the place of revelation as the priest of invocation mighty for the sacrifice, adorable of men, thence impelling them to their journey (or to the work).

अधा (अथ) इङ्ग्यः सन् (इङ्ग्यः पूजनीयो वा) यजीयान् (यद्गुं समर्थतरो) होता सन्निळः (ज्ञानस्य) पदे इषयन् (प्रचोदयन्) न्यसीदः (चेतसोऽतर्निषण्णवा-नसि) ।

The Strong Ones (of old) seeking the godhead, turning to knowledge, followed after thee, the first and supreme, to the great felicity.

तं त्वा that thee (तादृशं त्वां) प्रथमं the first or supreme नरः men or the Strong Ones देवयंतः seeking the godhead (देवतां सेवमाना देवकामा देवत्वकामा वा) महो राये for the great felicity (महते भद्राय) चितयंतो waking to or in knowledge (चित्तिं ज्ञानं वर्तयंतो)

अनुगमन् (अन्वगच्छन्) followed.

3. They with wakeful hearts followed thee, and thou travelledst as on a path with thy many colonists, and they attained to felicity in thee; yea they followed the blazing Flame which is visioned and vast and full of substance, and shines with all manner of lustres.

अनु after thee, in thy wake (त्वां understood) बहुभिर्वसव्यैः with many who were to be lodged (in the divine seats बहुभिर्देव - निवासयोग्यैः सह) वृतेव यंतं going as by a road (मार्गेण इव गच्छतं) they (ते is understood) जागृवांसः wakeful (ज्ञाने जाग्रतः) त्वे रयिं गमन् attained to felicity in thee (त्वयि भद्रं प्राप्नुवन्) — अग्निं after Agni रुशंतं blazing (सर्वं द्योतमानं सरक्तवर्णं वा) दर्शतं visioned (इष्टियुक्तं पश्यन्तं दर्शनीयं वा) बृहंतं vast वपावंतं substantial (वपा [])) विश्वहा दीदिवांसं every way shining (सर्वथा सर्वकालं वा देदीप्यमानं).

4. They came by adoration to the seat of the godhead; they desired inspired knowledge and they attained to an inviolate knowledge; yea, even, they held in them the sacrificial Names; they took delight in thy blissful power of vision.

पदं देवस्य To the place of the god नमसा by obeisance व्यंतः arriving (गच्छतः) श्रवस्यवः desiring inspired knowledge (सत्यश्रुतिमिच्छतः) अमृक्तं श्रव आपन् they got an untouched inspiration (वृत्रैरस्पृष्टामवाधितां सत्यश्रुतिं प्राप्नुवन्) चिद् even यज्ञियानि नामानि the sacrificial names (यज्ञफलदानसमर्थानि यज्ञयोग्यानि देव - नामानि) दधिरे they held in themselves (आत्मनः कृत्वा धारयामासुः); भद्रायां संदृष्टौ ते in thy happy vision (त्वदीयायां आनन्दतत्त्वसंयुक्तायां परमसत्यदृष्ट्यां देवदर्शने वा) रण्यंत �they took delight (अरमयन् आनन्दं चक्रः).

1. त्वं ह्यग्ने प्रथमो मनोता. अग्ने (O Agni) त्वं हि (त्वं खलु thou verily) प्रथमः मनोता (art the first or supreme thinker).

Sayana here differs only in the sense of मनोता which means in his view देवानां मनो यत्रोतं भवति तादृशः he on whom the mind of the gods is sewn. मनोता is therefore मन + ऊत (वे) or else मन् + ओत (आवे), a very hazardous and forced etymology; besides the termination is not त but तु. I take it as a verbal agent, an archaic derivative from मन् with an archaic connecting gunated ऊ as in

तनोति. We find this form surviving from O.A. in Greek forms in ωτης. It will mean the thinker or else the giver of thought, the mentaliser.

S. quotes Ai. Br. 2.10 अग्निः सर्वा मनोता अग्नौ मनोताः संगच्छते and says हि shows that the verse is a reference to the Brahmana. This is chronologically impossible.

अस्या धियो अभवो दस्म होता. दस्म (O active, or, O powerful) अस्याः धियः: (of this thought) होता अभवः: (thou hast become the priest of invocation).

दस्म Sayana takes as दर्शनीय beautiful. दस् means to cut, divide, bite (like दंश्), injure, rob, destroy; give, (like दा, दाश, दत्); to see (like दृश्); to shine. It may therefore mean (1) robber, destroyer, destructive, cf दस्युः, दासः, (2) giver, bountiful, (3) seeing, visible, beautiful, (4) shining. None of these senses is suitable in the context; the epithet is otiose therefore in Veda. But also दस् or दंस् must have meant to do, work, toil, cf दंसना, दंसि, पुरुदंसा, दासः: a servant, slave; or, like other words having the sense of cutting, striking etc it may develop the sense of strength, force, power. We have then two other possible senses, active, and powerful or forceful, both of which come in perfectly wherever दस्म or दस् occurs in the Veda.

धियः: Sayana takes = कर्मणः. I see no reason for attaching this sense to the word in the Rig Veda. S. himself frequently admits for धी the sense thought or understanding. At most times he renders it स्तुति prayer. धी means thought, and may mean especially the thought expressed in the mantra, therefore the mantra or hymn itself; and in that sense we may justify this interpretation. But I take it always as thought in a particular or a general sense. See Appendix. Agni is the supreme thinker; in that capacity he has become the priest of the present (godward) thought in the mind of the Rishi. S's sense is "Thou art the summoning priest of this rite", mine, "Thou hast become the priest of invocation of this thinking."

त्वं सीं वृष्ट्रकृणोदुष्टरीतु सहो विश्वस्मै सहसे सहध्यै। वृष्टन् (O bull), त्वं (thou) दुष्टरीतु सहः: (a hard-to-pierce or hard-to-cross force), सीं (on every side) अकृणोः: (अकरोः hast made) विश्वस्मै सहसे सहध्यै (विश्वं सहः: प्रसह्याभिवितुं to force every force). दुष्टरीतु —

दुस् + तरीतु (तृ gunated + तु with connecting ई), तृ to pierce, wound, cross, pass beyond. सहस्रै, an old Vedic infinitive form, expressing the infinitive of purpose; modified into *thai* (*sthai*) it remained the ordinary middle and passive infinitive termination in Greek. विश्वस्मै सहसे (विश्वस्मै not विश्वाय because विश्व like सर्व is a pronominal word in V.S.); the dative of the object instead of the accusative is a common Vedic idiom.

वृषन् Sayana here as ordinarily, कामानं वर्षितः. The word means Bull or Male; it is used of horses. It is the strength of Agni that is in immediate question, not his bounty. वृषा bull, male is constantly applied to Indra and Agni, as to other gods, often with a direct reference to the rays or energies or human beings as the herd they lead. वि० सहसे सह०. S. to overpower every strong enemy. सहस् may be used as an adjective as well as a noun like यशस् = strength or strong, but there is no clear instance in the R.V. and no need here for the adjectival sense. Agni's is the supreme strength or force, which overpowers and dominates all forces in the world.

S's sense, "O rainer (of desires), thou hast made on all sides an invulnerable strength to overcome every strong one (ie enemy)", mine, "Thou hast made an impassable strength for thyself on every side, O Bull, that thou mayst overpower every force."

Translation. S. Thou art the supreme (or ancient) mind-sewn (on whom is sewn the mind of the gods); thou art the summoning priest of this (ritual) work; O rainer (of desires), thou hast made on all sides an invulnerable strength to overcome every strong one.

Thou art the supreme thinker, and thou hast become the priest of invocation of this thinking. Thou hast made an impassable strength for thyself on every side, O Bull, that thou mayst overpower every force.

Explanation. For the esoteric sense of the Veda, we start with the premiss that Agni is the Flame or Force, base of all action, formation, creation, not only, as he very evidently is in the surface exoteric sense, in the material universe, but in all being, in spirit and mind and life as well as in matter. But how do

we arrive at or justify this premiss? At first sight it seems not at all obvious, but rather a very considerable assumption. It appears from the very first expression in this first hymn of Bharadwaja. "O Flame (Agni), thou art the supreme or first thinker." Material fire or its god cannot be so described; the phrase at once gives Agni a psychological function — a flame or fire-god cannot be called thus significantly the supreme or first thinker unless we suppose that in the fiery principle which pervades the universe there is a consciousness which thinks out all the works attributed to it by the Vedic Rishis, such as the creation of the worlds, the guardianship of Truth and Immortality. Sayana's interpretation, "the first in whom the mind of the gods is inwoven", imposes the same idea. We see too that Agni is everywhere designated the Seer, *kavi*. Not only so, but for Vamadeva (IV.3.16) he is the seer to whom the secret words of seer-wisdom (निष्ठा वचासि काव्यानि) are spoken and to whom their hidden sense expresses its meaning, निवचना. This would have no sufficient sense, if it were spoken only of a godhead of cosmic physical flame. It is quite evident from the most literal sense of the Veda that Agni is a godhead characterised by a supreme power of divine knowledge. This can be nothing else than the conscious Force of divine Knowledge which creates (निर्ममे) the worlds. We shall find from other passages that he is the divine Flame also in the thoughts and in the heart of man, अमृतो मर्तेषु, the immortal in mortal beings.

This godhead of divine active Force is the supreme thinker or the first mentaliser of things. He is then an immortal flame of Power that makes for knowledge. As this thinker, this active Puissance, दस्म, he has become the Hotri of this thought, अस्या धियो होता. The thought may be the thought expressed in the hymn = अस्य सूक्तस्य; even if we take धियः = कर्मणः, still it is as the supreme thinker that he works in the sacrifice, and the sense therefore is that it is by his power of thought that he conducts the sacrifice, brings into it the other gods and gives its fruit, — unless we take the two *padas* as unconnected in sense. The Hotri is the priest of invocation and also the priest who gives the offering. This divine Power of the sacrificial thought and

action brings in the powers of the other gods into the sacrifice and conducts the sacrificial action. Is this spoken of the inner or only of the outer ritual sacrifice?

And the Flame is a flame not of effective thought, but of invincible and inviolable Power. It is the Vrishan, the Bull, the Leader of the Herds, the Strong and Mighty One. In the abundance of its strength [it] makes all around it and us and the sacrifice a force which is hard to pierce or whose defences none can pass, and this invulnerable force is not only defensive but aggressive; it overpowers every force. This may mean that the force of this flame of the divine Will in the sacrificial thought and action overcomes every other hostile force or, more simply and generally, it dominates all surrounding powers and makes the sacrifice master of a movement which nothing can resist, degrade or violate.

2. अधा होता न्यसीदो यजीयान्. अधा (Then, or now) न्यसीदो (thou tookest thy seat) यजीयान् होता as the priest of invocation and offering very capable for the sacrifice.

अधा. Sayana takes “now”, अधुना. But अधा may mean like अतः, then, next, after this; after making the invulnerable strength all round. यजीयान्, यजिष्ठ he takes sometimes in a passive sense, यजनीय; but not here, and it would not be appropriate here, for Agni is here the sacrificing priest, not the god to whom sacrifice is given. I find no passage in which यजीयान् or यजिष्ठ must mean यजनीय, — यश्वतम makes always a good and often the only possible sense. I take it for that reason always in this active significance.

इळस्पदे इषयन्नीडयः सन्. इळस्पदे (in the place of knowledge) इषयन् (impelling), ईडयः सन् (being adorable or desirable).

इळस्पदे. Sayana takes in the place of earth, that is in the place of the altar-earth, meaning simply, on the altar. This is a very forced and artificial rendering. पद cannot be so neutral and otiose a word. It means always the footprint or footstep, the place attained to or the proper seat, as in देवस्य पदं (below), or विष्णोः परमं पदं. ईड or इळ means originally to go to, approach, (ई family), so to ask, pray, adore; इळस्पदे may mean exoterically,

place of prayer or adoration. But also verbs with this sense give constantly the sense of knowing, eg ऋषि etc. Ila is a goddess who teaches or gives knowledge, मनुषः शासनी. I suggest that इळ् means knowledge, especially, revelation, ऋक्, अर्चिः, the illuminating knowledge imparted by इळा, who is the goddess or female energy of इळ्. इळस्पदे must be a very archaic phrase. The word itself only occurs in this form इळः.

इषयन्. S. takes as if a nominal from इष् food as if it were “fooding” or “foodifying” like देवयंतः; here in the sense, desiring food, elsewhere, making food. I doubt whether इष् in the Veda really means food, and in any case there is no compelling reason for taking this verb as a nominal form. It is like चेतयन् etc, from इष् which means to throw, drive, impel, send. We shall see immediately that the hymn speaks of the journey to Swar, to the देवस्य पदं. Agni thinker, priest, active power sitting as Hotri in the seat of knowledge impels or sends the sacrifice and by its power the sacrificer on the way, वृत्तेव यंतं, by which as Envoy of the Gods, mover between earth and heaven, he takes them to the home and seat of the Gods, his own home देवस्य पदं.

तं त्वा नरः प्रथमं देवयंतो महो राये चितयंतो अनुग्मन्॥ तं प्रथमं त्वा (तमेव परमं मंतारं त्वां) thee that supreme नरः men (of old) or, the strong ones, देवयंतः (देवान् कामयंतो देवत्वं वा) seeking the godheads चितयंतः seeking knowledge महो राये (महत्यै भूत्यै आनन्दाय) to or for great felicity अनुग्मन् followed.

तं त्वा. तं has the force of तादृशं — thee who hast these qualities and doest these actions, प्रथमं recalling the प्रथमो मनोता of the opening pada.

नरः. Sayana takes this word sometimes as simply meaning “men” (मनुष्याः), but here as most often he explains नेतारो मनुष्याः, men who lead, Ritwiks and Yajamanas, priests and sacrificers. This is a sense which is quite inappropriate in many passages and नृ could not have come to mean men, if it had meant leaders. नृ meant originally to move (cf नृत् to dance, नार water etc.), नृ must have meant mobile, active and so strong. This sense is proved by the word नृम्ण which is certainly used in the Veda in the sense of strength. नृ is a word applied to the gods, the Males, Strong Ones, Purushas as opposed to the ज्ञाः, the females, goddesses

(Gr. *gunê*, woman); it is applied to the fathers, the Angirases or others; it is used as an equivalent to वीर, as in नृवद् वसु for वीरवद् वसु. These are, it seems to me, conclusive indications of the Vedic sense of नृ. Here it is used for the Fathers or ancient Seers as can be seen from many parallel passages. प्रथमं. S. takes “before the other gods”, but that has no force in this passage, — what would be the sense of desiring Agni and following him to Heaven first, the other gods afterwards, as if the journey had to be undertaken many times, — and it ignores the प्रथम of the first line of which this is an evident resumptive repetition.

देवयंतः. Nominal vb. from देव a god. Sayana takes “desiring thee the god”, but I do not know where he gets his “thee” in the word, and if he takes it from त्वा, then there is no instance of an accusative of this kind after देवयति. The word is quite general; it must mean divinising, god-seeking or else making themselves divine. चितयंतः. S. knowing Agni or else making known by the hymn of praise; a very feeble sense in itself and not warranted by other passages. चित् is to become conscious of a thing, get to know or know, चितयंतः expresses either an awakening to knowledge or a continuous activity of getting knowledge. The Fathers or ancient Rishis desired godhead or immortality or companionship with the gods, अमृतत्वं, a growing in knowledge was the means by which they pursued it, and Agni, the first thinker, was the leader of the way to the home of immortality, the seat of the godhead, पदं देवस्य, where men too became divine and immortal. Cf [] This is the very obvious, the straightforward, the most literal sense of the passage. महो राये. Dative of purpose or objective. महः: (for महत्) is one of the few curious indeclinable adjectives. रा: like रयिः is taken by Sayana as meaning wealth; so taking it he misses the whole sense of the passage and its connection with the two Riks that follow. It means obviously a divine riches or spiritual felicity, as we see in the next line, where the Rishis follow Agni as on a path to a great riches रयिं which they find in him, and again in 4, where the thought is expanded and made quite clear, for there it is said the Rishis travel to (व्यंतः) the seat of the god and the wealth they find is श्रवः (श्रव आपन्नमृक्तं), the fullness of the outflowing of the

Truth which Agni leads us to and which is found in the very self of Agni, त्वे रथं.

Translation. Then didst thou take thy seat, a priest of the invocation very mighty for sacrifice, in the seat of knowledge (or, of adoration), impelling, one desirable (or, adorable). The strong ones (of old) seeking godhead, growing in knowledge, followed after thee, even that supreme (thinker) to great riches.

S. Now thou hast taken thy seat, a priest of the offering and great sacrificer, in the place of earth (ie on the altar), desiring food, being worthy of praise. The leaders desiring thee, such a godhead, for themselves, knowing thee (or making thee known), followed thee first (of the gods) for a great wealth.

Explanation.

The Rishi then takes up again and expands the expression of the second pada of the first verse in order to restore the sequence of the idea. It is when he has made around him an invulnerable force to secure the sacrifice and its progress that the divine Flame takes up, as now, his seat as the priest of the invocation and offering and in that fulfilled strength he is very mighty for the works of sacrifice. He sits in the seat of knowledge as the supreme thinker—the Seer Will, may we not say, in the plane of revelatory thought and seeing, इक्षपदे, from there he gives the impulsion to the works and the journey of the sacrifice. This is the desirable Godhead, the Flame that men pray for which by its power of knowledge lifts them to immortality. And the Rishi takes up the suggestion of the word “impelling”, इषयन्, and indicates the nature of the great journey on whose paths the Flame of the divine Force marches himself and impels the human being. It is the great march which was undertaken by the strong semi-divine men of old. They found this supreme Thinker within, awakened by him to knowledge and growing constantly in knowledge they followed after him to divinise themselves in the planes of immortal being, their objective a felicity of vast riches, an immense wealth of spiritual being. This sense is inevitable, if we accept the psychological indications in मनोता, देवयंतः, चितयंतः and all that immediately follows this

verse. How, in any case, can this insistence on the god-seeking, on knowledge, [on the] thought-aspect of the Flame God, on the wakeful following of the seer Agni on his march and on the reaching of the देवस्य पदं mean only a following after Agni for food and material wealth? This is not only wilfully to degrade and materialize the lofty language of the poetry, but to make the whole sense and expression clumsy, blundering and incoherent, where in the original it is admirably developed, straightforward and as natural and flowing as a limpid stream.

3. वृतेव यंतं बहुभिर्वसव्यैः त्वे रथ्यं जागृवांसो अनु ग्मन्।
रुशंतमर्जिनं दर्शतं बृहंतं वपावंतं विश्वहा दीदिवांसं॥

रुशंतं (भास्वंतं) दर्शतं बृहंतं वपावंतं विश्वहा दीदिवांसं (नित्यं सर्वथा वा देवीप्यमानं) अनु Agni blazing with light, visible (or visioned), vast, having substance, always (or altogether, in all ways) shining, बहुभिः वसव्यैः वृता इव (मार्गेणिव) यंतं in the wake of (thee) going as on a path with many colonists or accompanied by many wealthy Powers, जागृवांसः (ते जाग्रतः संतः) त्वे रथ्यं ग्मन् (त्वयि भूतिमध्यगच्छन्) in thee they went to (attained) the wealth.

इव. Sayana takes इव = now, संप्रति. He interprets it thus, that the last verse referred to former priests and sacrificers, अनु ग्मन् having there a past sense पूर्व, but this verse to present priests and sacrificers, अनु ग्मन् having here a present sense. This is an unusual and here quite unwarranted sense of इव. There is nothing to indicate a new subject for the verb or a change in its tense significance. The repetition of the verb is a quite common feature of the Vedic style and it sustains a continuity in the sense and subject; it does not indicate a break in it or turning to a new subject. इव simply indicates that the path, वृत्, पंथ so often referred to in the Veda, is a symbol; this use of इव is common enough in the hymns. वृता. S, the path between earth and heaven: no doubt, but it is not a physical path, but the path of Truth by which Agni goes, ऋतस्य पंथा, (cf []]). वसव्यैः. S. says this may mean the Vasus, or “those who are fit to dwell among the Yajamanas”! He takes अनु ग्मन् here, as following after in the sense of being devoted to or serving, संभजंते. But वृता यंतं surely demands the plain natural sense for the verb. वसव्यैः:

may mean “wealthy” from वसु or “those who are for the वासः” cf वस्यं. Agni is accompanied by many powers that hold or amass the wealth, रथि, वसु or he marches to the देवस्य पदं with many who, like the Rishis following him, have to be lodged there.

त्वे रथिं जागृवांसः. S. interprets, giving wealth to Agni! This is a portentous feat of learning! I fail to understand how “being wakeful” can mean giving, or how it can govern the accusative रथिं. Evidently रथिं is governed by the sense of “going to” in अनु गमन्, an accusative of the destination reached,—in literal English, they followed Agni to the wealth, or in the wake of Agni reached the wealth.

रुशंतं. S. “of a shining colour”. रुशत् is opposed to कृष्ण in IV.3.9 and means bright of hue as opposed to black or simply bright as opposed to dark. दर्शत्. S. says “beautiful”, his usual interpretation. दर्शत् from दृश् to see may be passive, visible, or fit to be seen, beautiful (but this second sense has here no force or bearing on the context), or, active = seeing. See App. वपावंतं. S. does not here explain the word, but elsewhere he says प्रवृद्धं. See Appendix. विश्वहा. S. “always”. It may however mean “in all ways of light”, हा = दा or हा = धा or था.

Translation. In thy wake as thou travelledst as on a path with thy many colonists (or lords of riches) they followed wakeful after thee and came in thee to (those) riches,— (in the wake of) Agni blazing, visible (or, full of sight), vast, full of substance, ever luminous (or, shining in all ways of light).

Explanation. The ancient Rishis pursued the leading divine Power on its ways, with a full wakefulness of the mind of knowledge, चितयंतः, not falling into error or deviating from the path (this psychological sense is extremely frequent in all Vedic literature, it does not mean keeping lively and awake during the sacrifice) and attained in that Power those great riches,—that is to say, in the full flame of the divine Force and Knowledge on its own divine plane, देवस्य पदं. This plane, we find elsewhere, is the home of the Truth, सत्यं ऋतं वृहत्. I take it to be a symbol of the supramental plane of existence, वृहद् यौः which is beyond the two firmaments of heaven and earth. The divine Flame marches as if on a path; the oft-mentioned path of Truth by which the Rishis,

we are told, attained to immortality. He goes surrounded by the souls that aspire to transcend the two firmaments and have to be lodged in that supreme dwelling place, क्षयः, क्षेत्रं etc. He is bright and vast, a visible or a seeing might of the divine force and consciousness, full of the body and substance (वपावंतं, वपुषं, वपुष्यं) of its light and flame, always lifting up its lustres or else shining with a manifold and universal light of knowledge. The epithets in the second line are all applicable to the physical Fire and but for the context they might be taken of the flame on the physical altar; but how does the physical Fire march as if on a path,—for it is not a forest fire that is being here described, or, if it is, how do the sacrificers or the priests follow wakefully the forest fire and get in it a great riches? If it be said that all this is a figure for getting wealth by constant sacrifice, I can only say that it is a most amazing figure and a most excited, violent, tortured, indirect and unprimitive style of writing. Certainly the epic exaltation of the style would lead us to think that it meant something much more exalted and inspiring. Pass, but what of the पदं देवस्य व्यंतः in the next verse? And if that means the altar, what are we to make of the 7th rik, त्वं विशो अनयो दीद्यानो दिवो अग्ने बृहता रोचनेन, where Sayana himself is obliged to translate, thou shining leadst men to heaven? Is not this exactly the same idea and an echo of the same language as in this verse, “men followed thee shining as on a path, and came to the seat of the godhead”? How can the idea of men following the shining god to the देवस्य पदं and the idea of the shining god leading men to the heavens, mean two quite different things? Absolutely, the only difficulty in the way of the plain sense is the refusal to take राये and रथिं in a figurative significance. This plain and natural figure is denied to the Rishis, but a much more violent figure forced on them in order to arrive at a materialistic meaning.

4. पदं देवस्य नमसा व्यंतः: श्रवस्यवः श्रव आपन्नमृक्तं ।

पदं देवस्य the seat (world) of the god नमसा व्यंतः: going to by adoration, श्रवस्यवः (सत्यश्रुतिकामाः) (they) desiring inspired knowledge श्रवः अमृक्तं आपन् (अधर्षितां सत्यश्रुतिं प्राप्नुवन्) attained an inviolate knowledge.

Mandala Seven

[33]

[RV VII.1.1]

Hymns of Vasishtha
to
Agni

VII.1.

1. Men have brought the Flame to birth by their thinkings from the tinders by the movement of the two hands, expressed by the word, the far-seer, the master of the house, the traveller.

अग्निं नरो दीधितिभिररण्योर्हस्तच्युती जनयंत प्रशस्तं ।
द्वेरेद्वाशं गृहपतिमर्थर्युं ॥

अरण्योः

Heaven and Earth = mind and physical being, are the two tinders

हस्तच्युती

The two hands are the two hands of the Sun, सवितेव बाहू

दीधितिभिः

दीधिति = thought, light, finger. All mean the same thing, for the fingers are those of the two hands of the Sun, दश धियः

प्रशस्तं

Well-expressed (शस्) by the word: external sense = praised.

अर्थर्युं

अथ् to move, cf अत् or अथर् — Greek αἴθριος — the plane of flaming light

Note on the Texts

Note on the Texts

HYMNS TO THE MYSTIC FIRE consists primarily of translations of hymns to Agni (the “mystic fire”) from the Rig Veda. It also contains prose pieces in which Sri Aurobindo commented on hymns to Agni or expounded his theory of Vedic interpretation with reference to Agni hymns. Other material on the Veda and on philology that was not published during the author’s lifetime is reproduced in *Vedic and Philological Studies*, volume 14 of THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO. Prose writings on the Veda and translations of Vedic hymns that were first published between 1914 and 1920 in the monthly review *Arya* are reproduced in *The Secret of the Veda with Selected Hymns*, volume 15 of THE COMPLETE WORKS.

Sri Aurobindo took up the study of the Veda within a year or two after he arrived in Pondicherry in 1910. Between 1912 and 1914 he wrote a number of incomplete prose works on various aspects of the Veda and produced many translations of Vedic hymns. A large number of these were hymns to Agni, whom he considered “the most important, the most universal of the Vedic gods”. Between 1914 and 1920 he published essays on the Veda and translations of Vedic hymns in the *Arya*, a monthly journal of which he was the editor. He continued to work on Vedic translations and commentaries from time to time until the 1940s. He allowed some of these translations to circulate among his disciples, but told those who read them that they were “not final”, but “provisional” and “incomplete”. In 1946 he published a selection of translations of hymns to Agni in a small book entitled *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*. Subsequent editions of this book included translations of hymns to Agni and other materials related to Agni from his manuscripts of various periods.

PART ONE: HYMNS TO THE MYSTIC FIRE

This part comprises the complete contents of *Hymns to the Mystic*

Fire: Hymns to Agni from the Rig Veda Translated in their Esoteric Sense, a book that Sri Aurobindo published in 1946. It included a specially written foreword by the author and an extract from an earlier essay entitled “The Doctrine of the Mystics”. These prose pieces were intended to explain Sri Aurobindo’s theory of Vedic interpretation to readers of the translations.

Foreword. Written by Sri Aurobindo for the 1946 edition of *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*.

The Doctrine of the Mystics. The complete essay, an extract from which is reproduced here, appeared in the monthly review *Arya* in September 1915 as a general introduction to a series of translations entitled “Hymns of the Atris”. The portion chosen by Sri Aurobindo for inclusion in *Hymns to the Mystic Fire* comprises approximately the last half of the original essay, which is reproduced on pages 370–84 of *The Secret of the Veda*, volume 15 of THE COMPLETE WORKS.

Hymns of Gritsamada. Translation of the first ten Suktas (hymns) of the second Mandala (book) of the Rig Veda. Gritsamada Bhargava is the name of the Rishi to whom most of the hymns of this book are attributed; however, Suktas 4 to 7 are traditionally ascribed to Somahuti Bhargava. Note that in the established text of the Rig Veda, hymns to Agni are placed before those to other gods in each book (where the book contains the hymns of a single Rishi or family) or each section of a book (in books that are compilations of hymns of different Rishis or families).

The published text is a revised version of a translation found in a notebook used by Sri Aurobindo probably in the late 1920s or early 1930s. The version in the notebook has the heading “Hymns to the Mystic Fire / Gritsamada”. It begins immediately after a translation of the Agni hymns of the sixth Mandala and is followed by a translation of hymns of the fifth Mandala. The 1946 text incorporates changes that are likely to have been dictated by Sri Aurobindo to A. B. Purani shortly before the book was published.

Hymns of Bharadwaja. Translation of Suktas 1–16 of the sixth Mandala of the Rig Veda. All the hymns of this book are attributed to Bharadwaja or his descendants.

The 1946 text is a revised version of a translation found in two

notebooks used by Sri Aurobindo probably in the late 1920s or early 1930s. In the first notebook he wrote the heading “Hymns to the Mystic Fire / Bharadwaja”.

Hymns of Parashara. Translation of Suktas 65 – 73 of the first Mandala of the Rig Veda, which contains hymns from various Rishis and their families. These hymns were numbered from “I” to “IX” in the 1946 edition of *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*.

The 1946 text is a revised version of translations published in a different order in the *Arya* in February, June, July and August 1920 under the heading “Parashara’s Hymns to the Lord of the Flame”. The original translations are reproduced on pages 576 – 90 of *The Secret of the Veda*, volume 15 of THE COMPLETE WORKS. The revision for *Hymns to the Mystic Fire* was dictated by Sri Aurobindo to A. B. Purani.

Hymn of Paruchchhepa. Translation of Sukta 127 of the first Mandala of the Rig Veda. Sri Aurobindo translated only the first of Paruchchhepa’s two hymns to Agni.

The 1946 text is a revised version of a typed translation, probably intended for the *Arya*, found among Sri Aurobindo’s papers.

PART TWO: OTHER HYMNS TO AGNI

The translations in this part are reproduced from manuscripts, type-scripts and transcripts of dictation representing work done by Sri Aurobindo at different times between around 1912 and the 1940s. Except for the translations of Suktas 59, 77, 94 and 97 of the first Mandala (see below), they were not published during his lifetime.

The editors have arranged these hymns by Mandala and Sukta, following the order in the standard text of the Rig Veda. Translations of many of the hymns to Agni in Mandala One and almost all of those in Mandalas Three, Four, Five, Seven, Eight and Ten appear in this part of the present volume. (Translations of the Agni hymns in Mandalas Two and Six and some of those in the first Mandala appear in Part One. There are no hymns to Agni in the ninth Mandala.) The editors have followed tradition by grouping the hymns under the Rishis to whom they are attributed. Sri Aurobindo often put the Rishis’ names as part of the headings of his translations. He sometimes wrote the text in Devanagari before each verse of the translation. Where he did

not do so, the editors have supplied it.

Sri Aurobindo sometimes translated a given hymn more than once. In such cases the editors have reproduced the last translation only, ignoring the earlier ones unless they contained significant annotations or discussions. Such translations with commentaries or notes have been included in Part Three. However, in the Appendix to Part Two the editors have reproduced Sri Aurobindo's complete translations of the first hymn of the Rig Veda as an illustration of how his approach to translating the Veda developed over the years.

Mandala One

Madhuchchhandas Vaishwamitra. Sukta 1. Early 1940s. This is the last of the many translations of the first hymn of the Rig Veda made by Sri Aurobindo between 1912 and the 1940s. The complete set is reproduced in the Appendix to Part Two (pages 451–61).

Medhatithi Kanwa. Sukta 12. Date unknown. Two other translations of this hymn are found in notebooks used by Sri Aurobindo in 1913 and 1917. The present translation may have been dictated in the 1940s to A. B. Purani, who included it in the second (enlarged) edition of *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*, published in 1952 after Sri Aurobindo's passing. **Sukta 13.1–5.** Source and date unknown. Published in the 1952 edition of *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*. This version does not include verses 6–12, which are addressed to gods other than Agni. A complete translation of the hymn is found in a notebook used by Sri Aurobindo around 1913. It is published in *Vedic and Philological Studies*, volume 14 of THE COMPLETE WORKS. **Sukta 14.** Reproduced from a notebook used by Sri Aurobindo around 1913.

Shunahshepa Ajigarti. Suktas 26–27. Reproduced from a notebook used by Sri Aurobindo around 1913. He translated each of these hymns as a single paragraph without verse numbers.

Kanwa Ghaura. Sukta 36. Reproduced from a notebook of a type that Sri Aurobindo was using mostly in 1913 and early 1914.

Nodhas Gautama. Suktas 58–60. Circa 1919. Sri Aurobindo translated these three hymns together on loose sheets of paper under the heading "Hymns of Nodha Gautama". He published a slightly different version of Sukta 59 (with verse 6 omitted, evidently due to lack of

space) on the last page of the January 1920 issue of the *Arya* under the heading “A Hymn of the Universal Divine Force and Will”. This version is reproduced on pages 574–75 of *The Secret of the Veda*, volume 15 of THE COMPLETE WORKS.

Gotama Rahugana. Sukta 74. Reproduced from a notebook of a type that Sri Aurobindo was using mostly in 1913 and early 1914. Italicised words were supplied by him to clarify the meaning. The translation is followed in the manuscript by a paraphrase and notes. These are omitted here, but reproduced in Part Three (pages 556–59). **Sukta 77.** This translation was published with a commentary in the October 1914 issue of the *Arya* as part of a series entitled “Selected Hymns”. The translation and commentary are reproduced on pages 276–84 of *The Secret of the Veda*, volume 15 of THE COMPLETE WORKS. Only the translation is included in the present volume.

Kutsa Angirasa. Sukta 94. This translation (really a free paraphrase) was published in the September 1917 issue of the *Arya*. It is also reproduced on pages 568–72 of *The Secret of the Veda*, volume 15 of THE COMPLETE WORKS. The second half of the last verse, a refrain that occurs at the end of many of the hymns of Kutsa Angirasa, was not translated. A few years earlier, Sri Aurobindo had begun to write a detailed commentary on this hymn. This is included in Part Three (pages 585–99). **Suktas 95–96.** Reproduced from a notebook of a type that Sri Aurobindo was using mostly in 1913 and early 1914. **Sukta 97.** This translation was published in the September 1917 issue of the *Arya*. It is also reproduced on pages 572–73 of *The Secret of the Veda*, volume 15 of THE COMPLETE WORKS.

Dirghatamas Auchathya. Sukta 140. Reproduced from a notebook of a type that Sri Aurobindo was using mostly in 1913 and early 1914. The translation is accompanied by notes which are omitted here, but included in Part Three (pages 600–602).

Mandala Three

Vishwamitra Gathina. Suktas 1–7, 9–29. (Note that Sukta 8 is not addressed to Agni.) The translation of these hymns was dictated by Sri Aurobindo to A. B. Purani in the 1940s and published in 1952 in the second (enlarged) edition of *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*. A handwritten

copy of a previous translation of verses 2–14 of the first hymn, published in Chapter 11 of *The Secret of the Veda* in the July 1915 issue of the *Arya*, was used as a starting-point for the dictated translation of Sukta 1. Early translations of several hymns to Agni in the third Mandala (1–2, 11–16, 18 and 20) are found in notebooks used by Sri Aurobindo between 1913 and 1917.

Mandala Four

Vamadeva Gautama. Suktas 1–15. The translation of these hymns was dictated by Sri Aurobindo to A. B. Purani in the 1940s and published in 1952 in the second (enlarged) edition of *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*. Earlier translations of a few Agni hymns in the fourth Mandala (1–3, 8–10 and 13) are found mainly in notebooks that Sri Aurobindo used for this purpose around 1913. His annotated translations of Suktas 1–6 and three verses of Sukta 7, belonging to the same period or somewhat later, are reproduced in Part Three.

Mandala Five

The Atris. Suktas 1–23 (verse 3). The translation of these hymns was dictated to A. B. Purani in the 1940s and published in 1952 in the second (enlarged) edition of *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*. The fifth Mandala of the Rig Veda contains hymns attributed to members of the Atri clan. Sri Aurobindo's first translations of hymns of this book—including those to Agni and some to other gods—were published in the *Arya* between August 1915 and December 1917 in “Hymns of the Atris”. The *Arya* text of these translations, along with introductory chapters and commentary, is reproduced in Part Three of *The Secret of the Veda*, volume 15 of THE COMPLETE WORKS. The translations of the first twenty-eight hymns of the Mandala, all of which are addressed to Agni, appeared in the *Arya* between October 1915 and July 1916. Sri Aurobindo's most significant retranslation of these hymns between the *Arya* period and the 1940s is found in three notebooks which he used probably in the late 1920s or early 1930s. This translation begins near the end of the first notebook, immediately after the Agni hymns of the second Mandala (see the note above on the “Hymns of Gritsamada” in

Part One). It continues in another notebook with the heading “Hymns to the Mystic Fire / The Atris (V.4–28)”. A third notebook contains a revised version of the hymns translated in the second notebook. Up to the third verse of Sukta 23, the translation in these notebooks is superseded by the one that was dictated by Sri Aurobindo in the 1940s to A. B. Purani and published in the second edition of *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*, from which it is reproduced here. **Suktas 23 (verse 4)–28.** The first three verses of the translation of Sukta 23 were typed from the same source as the translation of Suktas 1–22. After the third verse, this note is found in the typescript: “As the revision stops here, the following translations are taken from the *Arya* where they originally appeared in their first unrevised version, in order to complete this series.” From here on, the *Arya* translation of the Agni hymns of this Mandala was used in the second edition of *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*. This translation, published on pages 458–70 of *The Secret of the Veda*, volume 15 of THE COMPLETE WORKS, is not duplicated here. Instead, the version found in the notebook containing Sri Aurobindo’s last handwritten translation of these hymns is used from this point onwards. It is not known why the dictated translation of the hymns to Agni in the fifth Mandala, which was evidently being prepared for the first edition of *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*, was not completed and published in 1946.

Mandala Seven

Vasishta Maitravaruni. Suktas 1–17. The translation of these hymns was dictated to A. B. Purani in the 1940s and published in 1952 in the second (enlarged) edition of *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*. The only evidence of earlier work by Sri Aurobindo on the Agni hymns of the seventh Mandala consists of a translation of Sukta 6 and the first three verses of Sukta 1, found in notebooks he used in 1914–15, and the notes on a verse of the first hymn reproduced at the end of Part Three.

Mandala Eight

The eighth Mandala contains hymns of various Rishis. Sri Aurobindo translated all of the sixteen hymns to Agni scattered through this book,

including two hymns (Suktas 38 and 40) addressed to Indra and Agni. The translation of these hymns was dictated to A. B. Purani in the 1940s and published in 1952 in the second edition of *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*. Sri Aurobindo's manuscripts show no sign of previous work on the Agni hymns of this Mandala.

Mandala Ten

The tenth Mandala, like the first and the eighth, contains hymns of various Rishis and families of Rishis. Sri Aurobindo translated most of the hymns to Agni in this book. The translation of these hymns was dictated to A. B. Purani in the 1940s and published in 1952 in the second edition of *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*. Sri Aurobindo's manuscripts show no sign of previous work on the Agni hymns of this Mandala.

Appendix to Part Two

Translations of the First Hymn of the Rig Veda. While studying, translating and commenting on the Rig Veda, Sri Aurobindo returned frequently to the first hymn to Agni (Mandala One, Sukta 1). He translated it into English in its entirety on at least fourteen occasions. In this appendix, the editors have reproduced these translations in rough chronological order to give an idea of the development of his ideas about the Veda and his manner of rendering Vedic hymns into English. The notes or commentaries that went with some of the translations have been omitted from this appendix. They can be found in Part Three, as indicated below. The first ten items in Part Three also include several partial translations of the first hymn and renderings of separate verses in the course of more elaborate commentaries.

[1] This version occurs in a notebook that also contains entries in the *Record of Yoga* for 1912. It is followed by a linguistic analysis which is published in Part Three, pages 466–68.

[2] Sri Aurobindo wrote this translation at the end of the commentary published in Part Three, pages 488–510. It is found near the beginning of a ledger he used around 1912–13 for much of his early work on the Veda.

[3] This translation, with the text in Devanagari before each verse, was written in the same ledger as [2], [4] and [6]. The sequence of these four translations has been inferred partly from internal evidence.

[4] Written in the same ledger as versions [2] and [3]. This was the first in an intended series of translations of the eleven hymns of Madhuchchandas with which the Rig Veda opens. The series was discontinued in this format after the second hymn. Sri Aurobindo began again a few pages later with version [6].

[5] This translation begins in the same way as [4] and is closely related to it and version [6]. It evidently belongs to the same period.

[6] This translation occurs in the same ledger as versions [2]–[4] and appears to be the latest of this series. On the next page Sri Aurobindo wrote the notes reproduced in Part Three, page 540.

[7] Found between entries in the *Record of Yoga* for September 1913.

[8]–[9] Reproduced from two similar notebooks of a type that Sri Aurobindo was using mostly in 1913 and early 1914.

[10] The format of this translation, with title, argument and explanatory footnote, resembles that of the translations published in the *Arya* in 1915–17 in “Hymns of the Atris”. It presumably belongs to the same period. Sri Aurobindo translated the first seven hymns of Madhuchchandas in a similar way, each on a separate sheet of paper. He did not complete the series or publish it.

[11] This typed translation, perhaps intended for the *Arya*, is related to version [10] and was evidently done around the same time. A similar version, whose source is no longer available, was later published in the second edition of *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*.

[12] This translation is found after entries in the *Record of Yoga* for February and March 1917. It is followed in the manuscript by a translation of Sukta 12 of the first Mandala, which is the next hymn to Agni.

[13] This translation was written on a sheet used also for work connected with the revision of *The Life Divine* (1939–40).

[14] Reproduced from a notebook used by Sri Aurobindo in the early 1940s mainly for the revision of *Savitri*.

PART THREE: COMMENTARIES AND ANNOTATED TRANSLATIONS

In the course of his study of the Rig Veda, Sri Aurobindo translated many hymns with notes or wrote commentaries to explain or justify his interpretation of them. This work went through several stages and reflected various aspects of his approach to understanding the Veda: philological, psychological and mystical. The resulting commentaries and annotated translations may be viewed as stepping stones toward the interpretation presented in *The Secret of the Veda* and the development of that interpretation in the years after the *Arya* ceased publication.

In this part the editors have collected the commentaries on and significantly annotated translations of hymns to Agni found among Sri Aurobindo's manuscripts. Translations with lighter annotation have been placed in Part Two rather than in this part. Commentaries and translations that appeared in the *Arya* are published in *The Secret of the Veda*, volume 15 of THE COMPLETE WORKS. Commentaries on and translations of hymns addressed to gods other than Agni are included in *Vedic and Philological Studies*, volume 14 of THE COMPLETE WORKS.

The items in this part have been arranged according to Mandala and Sukta of the Rig Veda (RV). Treatments of the same hymn or group of hymns are arranged chronologically. Sri Aurobindo's headings are reproduced as they occur in the manuscripts. Square brackets have been used to number each item and indicate the Mandala and Sukta to which it pertains. Verse numbers are given where only part of a hymn has been translated or commented on.

[1] Translation of RV I.1 (= [1] of Appendix to Part Two), with a linguistic analysis of most of the words in the first verse. Reproduced from a notebook that contains, a few pages later, material for the *Record of Yoga* dated May and June 1912. The project of "an etymological reconstruction of the Old Sanskrit or Aryan tongue", mentioned in the introductory note, is explained more fully in "The Origins of Aryan Speech" and other writings on philology published in *Vedic and Philological Studies*. The abbreviations "O.S." and "O.A." for "Old Sanskrit" and "Old Aryan" in some of the following items refer to this project.

[2] Text of RV I.1, followed by a word-by-word analysis of most of

the first three verses. This is the first writing in a ledger with the title page: "The Rigveda / with a Translation and Commentary in English". The next five items are found in the same ledger. All this material was probably written in 1912, since it occurs before an item whose likely date is near the beginning of January 1913.

[3] Text (verse by verse) of RV I.1, with a word-by-word philological analysis, followed by a full translation (= [2] of Appendix to Part Two). This commentary begins immediately after the last page of the preceding item.

[4] Text of the first verse of RV I.1, followed by a translation of this verse and a discursive commentary relating Veda to Vedanta. This item is separated from the preceding one by an incomplete analysis of the second hymn (not addressed to Agni).

[5] Text and translation of the first verse of RV I.1 with an incomplete commentary related to the preceding one, which it follows in the manuscript.

[6] Word-by-word philological analysis of RV I.1; the text and translation of each verse are given. This commentary begins immediately after the last page of the preceding item.

[7] Translation of RV I.1 (= [6] of Appendix to Part Two), with notes on certain words. This occurs later in the same ledger as the preceding five items. It is followed by translations of the next three hymns and an analysis of RV I.5 which seems to be the "grammatical commentary on the fifth hymn of the Rigveda" mentioned on 7 January 1913 in the *Record of Yoga* (volume 10 of THE COMPLETE WORKS, page 184).

[8] Text (verse by verse) and word-by-word notes on RV I.1.1–5, with a "ritualistic" and a "psychological" translation of each verse. This item is found in a ledger that is similar to the one in which the preceding six items occur and was used by Sri Aurobindo around the same time; a date in April 1913 occurs later on in this ledger.

[9] Discursive commentary on RV I.1, focusing on verses 5–8 (beginning with 8). These are the four verses that Sri Aurobindo later selected for his first published discussion of a Vedic text in *The Secret of the Veda*, Chapter 6, "Agni and the Truth" (volume 15 of THE COMPLETE WORKS, pages 61–69, originally published in the *Arya* in February 1915). Reproduced from a notebook of a type he was using mostly in 1913 and early 1914.

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- [10] Two translations of the first verse of RV I.1 — one more literal, the other bringing out the psychological sense — followed by a discursive commentary. Written on pages facing notes in Sanskrit on RV VI.70–71. These are evidently among the notes mentioned on 22 August 1914 in the *Record of Yoga* (volume 10 of THE COMPLETE WORKS, page 610); the commentary on the facing pages is not directly related to these notes, but was presumably written around the same time.
- [11] Two short commentaries on the first verse of RV I.12, the first mainly in Sanskrit, the second mainly in English. They were written one after the other in a notebook of a type that Sri Aurobindo was using mostly between 1915 and 1917.
- [12] Text of four verses (1, 2, 4 and 5) of RV I.31, with notes referring to Sayana (abbreviated “Say.” or “S.”) and a translation of each verse. Written after the preceding item, in the same notebook.
- [13] Translation of RV I.74 (also reproduced in Part Two), followed by a free paraphrase of the psychological sense and notes on some words in the first two verses. Written in a notebook of a type that Sri Aurobindo was using mostly in 1913 and early 1914. The appendixes referred to in the notes to this item and the next have not been found.
- [14] Text of RV I.74–76, verse by verse, with notes on selected words and translations of most verses according to Sayana and according to the psychological interpretation. Written in a notebook used previously for work on “The Life Divine: A Commentary on the Isha Upanishad [Draft B]” (circa 1913 or early 1914, published in *Isha Upanishad*, volume 17 of THE COMPLETE WORKS, pages 429–550).
- [15] Text of the first two verses of RV I.77, with notes on many of the words and translations of the first verse according to Sayana and according to the psychological interpretation. Written in the same type of notebook as the preceding two items and around the same time.
- [16] Partial text and verse-by-verse translation of the first ten verses of RV I.94 with verbal notes. Written in the same ledger as item [8] (circa 1913). The “Aryan Word Book” referred to in the notes on the first verse has not been found.
- [17] Translation, with notes, of RV I.140. The same translation, without the notes, is included in Part Two. Written in a notebook of a type used by Sri Aurobindo mostly in 1913 and early 1914.
- [18] Notes on RV II.4.1–5, with renderings of most of the verses

as interpreted by Sayana (abbreviated “Sy.” or “S.”) and by Sri Aurobindo. Found in a notebook used previously for a writing published as “Notes on Images Seen in March 1914” in the *Record of Yoga* (volume 11 of THE COMPLETE WORKS, pages 1323–35).

[19] Incomplete commentary on RV III.1.1–12, with renderings of each verse except the last according to Sayana’s commentary and as interpreted by Sri Aurobindo. Reproduced from a notebook of a type he was using mostly in 1913 and early 1914.

[20] Translation of RV III.1.1–12, with notes on Sayana’s interpretation. Written in the same type of notebook as the preceding item. Internal evidence suggests that this translation is intermediate between that version and the translation of verses 2–14 of this hymn published in the *Arya* in July 1915 in Chapter 11 of *The Secret of the Veda* (volume 15 of THE COMPLETE WORKS, pages 115–16).

[21] Text and translation of the first verse of RV IV.1, with notes referring to Sayana (“S.”). Written in a notebook with calendars for 1913 and 1914 printed inside the front cover.

[22] Translation of RV IV.1, with transliterated text and notes referring to Sayana (usually “Sy.”). Written in a notebook of a type that Sri Aurobindo was using mostly in 1913 and early 1914. The system of transliteration adopted by him in this item and the next has some features in common with the one used in the Sacred Books of the East (Oxford University Press, 1879–1910), where some consonants were distinguished by printing them in italics.

[23] Translation of RV IV.2, with the text in transliteration and notes referring to Sayana. Written after the preceding item, in the same notebook.

[24] Translation of RV IV.3, with the text in Devanagari and notes referring to Sayana. Written after the preceding item, in the same notebook.

[25] Translation of RV IV.4, with the text in Devanagari and notes referring to Sayana. Written after the preceding item, in the same notebook.

[26] Translation of RV IV.5, with the text in Devanagari and notes referring to Sayana. Written after the preceding item, in the same notebook.

[27] Translation of the first three verses of RV IV.6, with the text in

Devanagari and notes referring to Sayana. Written after the preceding item, in the same notebook. Sri Aurobindo copied the Sanskrit text of the fourth verse, but did not continue.

[28] Text of RV IV. 6, verse by verse, with notes mostly copied from Sayana's commentary, followed by an English translation according to Sayana's interpretation and (except for the fourth verse) by Sri Aurobindo's own translation. Reproduced from a photocopy of an unknown manuscript. The handwriting appears to belong to a later period than that of the preceding items from the fourth Mandala.

[29] Introduction to a proposed work entitled "The Vamadeva Hymns to Agni", followed by the text and a word-by-word translation of the first three verses of Rig Veda IV.7, with critical notes, translation and discussion of each verse. Written in a notebook identical to those used for the *Record of Yoga* in 1920. The reference to a series of articles on the Veda written "a few years ago" — evidently meaning *The Secret of the Veda*, published in the *Arya* between 1914 and 1916 — is consistent with dating the present item to circa 1920.

[30] Translation of RV V.1 and a discursive commentary on the first half of the Sukta. Written in a notebook of a type used by Sri Aurobindo mostly in 1913 and early 1914.

[31] Translation of RV V.10, with an incomplete commentary on the first five verses. Written on two large sheets of paper folded to make eight pages. The manuscript is in poor condition, much of it hardly legible, with holes mostly at the top and bottom edges of the pages where a number of words have been lost. Another, similarly folded sheet found with this one contains Vedic work related to material in the ledger that was used, probably in 1913, for items [8] and [16].

[32] Translation of RV VI.1.1–4, with verse-by-verse annotations in Sanskrit and (except for the first verse and a half) in English. This is followed by more extensive notes on the first three verses, including contrasting translations according to Sayana's interpretation and Sri Aurobindo's and a discursive explanation of each verse. A similar commentary on the fourth verse was begun, but discontinued. Written on twenty pages of a notebook of the same type as was used for the *Record of Yoga* in 1920 and for items [29] and [33]. The appendix referred to in the notes to the first and third verses has not been found.

[33] Translation and text of the first verse of RV VII.1 with notes on

selected words. Written on a page of a notebook of the same type as the preceding item, probably around 1920. The next page and a half of the notebook contain a Sanskrit commentary on the same verse (see *Writings in Bengali and Sanskrit*, volume 9 of THE COMPLETE WORKS).

PUBLICATION HISTORY

Sri Aurobindo had begun to translate hymns from the Rig Veda by 1912. He continued to work on this project until at least the early 1940s. In 1946 he made a selection of his translations of hymns to Agni, the Vedic god of fire, and published them along with some prose material in a small volume entitled *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*. This book was published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram and printed in Pondicherry at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press (Imprimerie de Sri Aurobindo Ashram). Its complete contents are reproduced in Part One of the present volume.

A second edition of *Hymns to the Mystic Fire* was published in 1952, two years after Sri Aurobindo's passing. This edition included most of his translations of hymns to Agni that were then available. Its length was several times that of the first edition, whose contents were integrated with material not published during his lifetime.

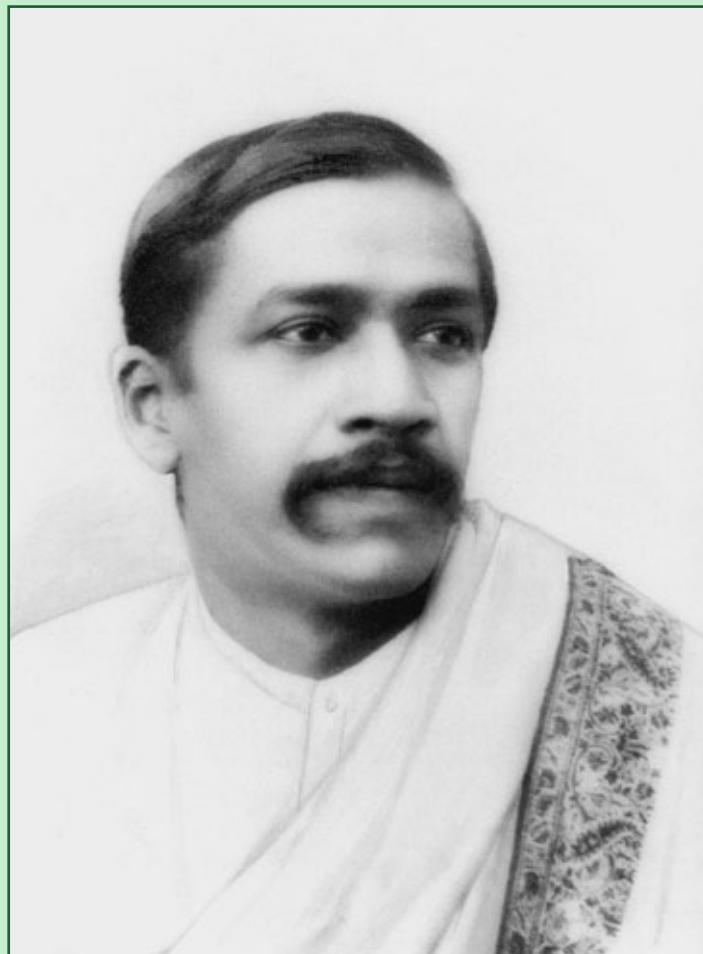
A third edition was published in 1971 as Volume 11 of the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library. It included a few translations not found in the 1952 edition. Some unrevised notes and studies found in Sri Aurobindo's early manuscripts were added at the end of the volume. Most of this material had previously been published in journals associated with the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. In 1973, translations of two further hymns to Agni were included in the *Supplement*, volume 27 of the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library.

The present, fourth edition of *Hymns to the Mystic Fire* contains most of the material that had appeared in the third edition along with a considerable amount of additional material, most of it in the last part. Some of this was first published in the journal *Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research* between 1977 and 1981. Other material reproduced from Sri Aurobindo's manuscripts appears here for the first time. Two items that appeared in the third edition — the translation of RV IV.40, a hymn addressed to Dadhikravan, and the short piece on "Word-

Formation"—have been omitted from this volume and included in *Vedic and Philological Studies*, volume 14 of THE COMPLETE WORKS.

This book has been arranged in three parts. Part One contains the complete contents of the 1946 edition of *Hymns to the Mystic Fire* in their original order as published by Sri Aurobindo. In Part Two, his translations of hymns to Agni other than those that he included in that edition are presented in the order of the Mandalas of the Rig Veda. These translations were made at different times and given varying amounts of attention, as indicated in the notes on Part Two. Most of them were found among Sri Aurobindo's papers in the form of his handwritten drafts or as transcripts of dictation and have been prepared for publication by editors since 1952. A few items in Part Two originally appeared in the *Arya* and are also published in *The Secret of the Veda*, volume 15 of THE COMPLETE WORKS. They are duplicated here for completeness. Part Three of this volume consists of commentaries on hymns to Agni and translations with more extensive annotation than the occasional footnotes Sri Aurobindo provided for many of the translations in Parts One and Two. This part corresponds to the last section of the third edition, but includes about four times as much material, much of it previously unpublished.

Isha Upanishad



Sri Aurobindo

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Isha Upanishad

Publisher's Note

This volume contains Sri Aurobindo's translations of and commentaries on the Isha Upanishad. His translations of and commentaries on other Upanishads and Vedantic texts, and his writings on the Upanishads and Vedanta philosophy in general, are published in *Kena and Other Upanishads*, volume 18 of THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO.

The present volume is divided into two parts. The first consists of Sri Aurobindo's final translation and analysis of the Isha Upanishad. This is the only work in this volume that was published during his lifetime. It contains his definitive interpretation of the Isha Upanishad.

Before publishing this final translation and analysis, Sri Aurobindo wrote ten incomplete commentaries on the Isha Upanishad. These appear in approximate chronological order in Part Two. Ranging in length from a few pages to more than a hundred, they show the development of his interpretation of this Upanishad from around 1900 to the middle of 1914, when he began work on his final translation and analysis.

The texts in both parts have been checked against the relevant manuscript and printed versions.

Guide to Editorial Notation

The contents of Part Two of this volume were never prepared by Sri Aurobindo for publication. They have been transcribed from manuscripts that sometimes present textual difficulties. In this edition these problems have been indicated as far as possible by means of the notation shown below.

Notation	Textual Problem
[.....]	Word(s) lost through damage to the manuscript (at the beginning of a piece, sometimes indicates that a page or pages of the manuscript have been lost)
[word]	Word(s) omitted by the author or lost through damage to the manuscript that are required by grammar or sense, and that could be supplied by the editors
<i>[note]</i>	Situations requiring textual explication; all such information is printed in italics

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Sri Aurobindo in 1908

Part One

Translation and Commentary
Published by Sri Aurobindo

Isha Upanishad

Isha Upanishad

ईशा वास्यमिदं सर्वं यत् किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् ।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुज्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद् धनम् ॥ १ ॥

1. All this is for habitation¹ by the Lord, whatsoever is individual universe of movement in the universal motion. By that renounced thou shouldst enjoy; lust not after any man's possession.

कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छतं समाः ।
एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे ॥ २ ॥

2. Doing verily² works in this world one should wish to live a hundred years. Thus it is in thee and not otherwise than this; action cleaves not to a man.³

¹ There are three possible senses of *vāsyam*, “to be clothed”, “to be worn as a garment” and “to be inhabited”. The first is the ordinarily accepted meaning. Shankara explains it in this significance, that we must lose the sense of this unreal objective universe in the sole perception of the pure Brahman. So explained the first line becomes a contradiction of the whole thought of the Upanishad which teaches the reconciliation, by the perception of essential Unity, of the apparently incompatible opposites, God and the World, Renunciation and Enjoyment, Action and internal Freedom, the One and the Many, Being and its Becomings, the passive divine Impersonality and the active divine Personality, the Knowledge and the Ignorance, the Becoming and the Not-Becoming, Life on earth and beyond and the supreme Immortality. The image is of the world either as a garment or as a dwelling-place for the informing and governing Spirit. The latter significance agrees better with the thought of the Upanishad.

² *Kurvanneva*. The stress of the word *eva* gives the force, “doing works indeed, and not refraining from them”.

³ Shankara reads the line, “Thus in thee—it is not otherwise than thus—action cleaves not, a man.” He interprets *karmāṇī* in the first line in the sense of Vedic sacrifices which are permitted to the ignorant as a means of escaping from evil actions and their results and attaining to heaven, but the second *karma* in exactly the opposite sense, “evil action”. The verse, he tells us, represents a concession to the ignorant; the enlightened soul abandons works and the world and goes to the forest. The whole expression and construction in this rendering become forced and unnatural. The rendering I give seems to me the simple and straightforward sense of the Upanishad.

असूर्या नाम ते लोका अन्धेन तमसावृताः ।
तांस्ते प्रेत्याभिगच्छन्ति ये के चात्महनो जनाः ॥ ३ ॥

3. Sunless⁴ are those worlds and enveloped in blind gloom whereto all they in their passing hence resort who are slayers of their souls.

अनेजदेकं मनसो जवीयो नैनद् देवा आप्नुवन् पूर्वमर्षत् ।
तद् धावतोऽन्यानत्येति तिष्ठत् तस्मिन्नपो मातरिश्वा दधाति ॥ ४ ॥

4. One unmoving that is swifter than Mind, That the Gods reach not, for It progresses ever in front. That, standing, passes beyond others as they run. In That the Master of Life⁵ establishes the Waters.⁶

तदेजति तन्नैजति तद् दूरे तद्वन्तिके ।
तदन्तरस्य सर्वस्य तदु सर्वस्यास्य बाह्यतः ॥ ५ ॥

⁴ We have two readings, *asiurya*, sunless, and *asurya*, Titanic or undivine. The third verse is, in the thought structure of the Upanishad, the starting-point for the final movement in the last four verses. Its suggestions are there taken up and worked out. The prayer to the Sun refers back in thought to the sunless worlds and their blind gloom, which are recalled in the ninth and twelfth verses. The sun and his rays are intimately connected in other Upanishads also with the worlds of Light and their natural opposite is the dark and sunless, not the Titanic worlds.

⁵ *Mātariśvan* seems to mean "he who extends himself in the Mother or the container" whether that be the containing mother element, Ether, or the material energy called Earth in the Veda and spoken of there as the Mother. It is a Vedic epithet of the God Vayu, who, representing the divine principle in the Life-energy, Prana, extends himself in Matter and vivifies its forms. Here, it signifies the divine Life-power that presides in all forms of cosmic activity.

⁶ *Apas*, as it is accentuated in the version of the White Yajurveda, can mean only "waters". If this accentuation is disregarded, we may take it as the singular *apas*, work, action. Shankara, however, renders it by the plural, works. The difficulty only arises because the true Vedic sense of the word had been forgotten and it came to be taken as referring to the fourth of the five elemental states of Matter, the liquid. Such a reference would be entirely irrelevant to the context. But the Waters, otherwise called the seven streams or the seven fostering Cows, are the Vedic symbol for the seven cosmic principles and their activities, three inferior, the physical, vital and mental, four superior, the divine Truth, the divine Bliss, the divine Will and Consciousness, and the divine Being. On this conception also is founded the ancient idea of the seven worlds in each of which the seven principles are separately active by their various harmonies. This is, obviously, the right significance of the word in the Upanishad.

5. That moves and That moves not; That is far and the same is near; That is within all this and That also is outside all this.

यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मन्येवानुपश्यति ।
सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते ॥ ६ ॥

6. But he who sees everywhere the Self in all existences and all existences in the Self, shrinks not thereafter from aught.

यस्मिन् सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मैवाभूद् विजानतः ।
तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एकत्वमनुपश्यतः ॥ ७ ॥

7. He in whom it is the Self-Being that has become all existences that are Becomings,⁷ for he has the perfect knowledge, how shall he be deluded, whence shall he have grief who sees everywhere oneness?

स पर्यगाच्छ्रुक्रमकायमव्रणमस्त्वाविरं शुद्धमपापविद्धम् ।
कविर्मनीषी परिभूः स्वयम्भूर्याथातथ्यतोऽर्थान् व्यदधाच्छ्राश्वतीभ्यः
समाभ्यः ॥ ८ ॥

8. It is He that has gone abroad — That which is bright, bodiless, without scar of imperfection, without sinews, pure, unpierced by evil. The Seer, the Thinker,⁸ the One who becomes everywhere, the Self-existent has ordered objects perfectly according to their nature from years sempiternal.

⁷ The words *sarvāṇi bhūtāni*, literally, “all things that have become”, are opposed to Atman, self-existent and immutable being. The phrase means ordinarily “all creatures”, but its literal sense is evidently insisted on in the expression *bhūtāni abhūt* “became the Becomings”. The idea is the acquisition in man of the supreme consciousness by which the one Self in him extends itself to embrace all creatures and realises the eternal act by which that One manifests itself in the multiple forms of the universal motion.

⁸ There is a clear distinction in Vedic thought between *kavi*, the seer, and *manīṣī*, the thinker. The former indicates the divine supra-intellectual Knowledge which by direct vision and illumination sees the reality, the principles and the forms of things in their true relations, the latter the labouring mentality which works from the divided consciousness through the possibilities of things downward to the actual manifestation in form and upward to their reality in the self-existent Brahman.

अन्धं तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽविद्यामुपासते ।
ततो भूय इव ते तमो य उ विद्यायां रताः ॥ ९ ॥

9. Into a blind darkness they enter who follow after the Ignorance, they as if into a greater darkness who devote themselves to the Knowledge alone.

अन्यदेवाहुर्विद्या अन्यदाहुरविद्या ।
इति शुश्रुम धीराणां ये नस्तद् विचचक्षिरे ॥ १० ॥

10. Other, verily,⁹ it is said, is that which comes by the Knowledge, other that which comes by the Ignorance; this is the lore we have received from the wise who revealed That to our understanding.

विद्याज्ञ अविद्याज्ञ यस्तद् वेदोभयं सह ।
अविद्या मृत्युं तीर्त्वा विद्यायामृतमश्नुते ॥ ११ ॥

11. He who knows That as both in one, the Knowledge and the Ignorance, by the Ignorance crosses beyond death and by the Knowledge enjoys Immortality.

अन्धं तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽसमूतिमुपासते ।
ततो भूय इव ते तमो य उ समूत्यां रताः ॥ १२ ॥

12. Into a blind darkness they enter who follow after the Non-Birth, they as if into a greater darkness who devote themselves to the Birth alone.

अन्यदेवाहुः सम्बवादन्यदाहुरसम्बवात् ।
इति शुश्रुम धीराणां ये नस्तद् विचचक्षिरे ॥ १३ ॥

13. Other, verily, it is said, is that which comes by the Birth,

⁹ *Anyadeva* — *eva* here gives to *anyad* the force, “Quite other than the result described in the preceding verse is that to which lead the Knowledge and the Ignorance.” We have the explanation of *anyad* in the verse that follows. The ordinary rendering, “Knowledge has one result, Ignorance another”, would be an obvious commonplace announced with an exaggerated pompousness, adding nothing to the thought and without any place in the sequence of the ideas.

other that which comes by the Non-Birth; this is the lore we have received from the wise who revealed That to our understanding.

समूत्तिज्ज्व विनाशज्ज्व यस्तद् वेदोभयं सह ।
विनाशेन मृत्युं तीर्त्वा सम्भृत्यामृतमश्नुते ॥ १४ ॥

14. He who knows That as both in one, the Birth and the dissolution of Birth, by the dissolution crosses beyond death and by the Birth enjoys Immortality.

हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखम् ।
तत् त्वं पूषन्नपावृणु सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये ॥ १५ ॥

15. The face of Truth is covered with a brilliant golden lid; that do thou remove, O Fosterer,¹⁰ for the law of the Truth, for sight.

पूषन्नेकर्षे यम सूर्यं प्राजापत्य व्यूहं रश्मीन् समूहं ।
तेजो यत् ते रूपं कल्याणतमं तत् ते पश्यामि
योऽसावसौ पुरुषः सोऽहमस्मि ॥ १६ ॥

16. O Fosterer, O sole Seer, O Ordainer, O illuminating Sun, O power of the Father of creatures, marshal thy rays, draw together thy light; the Lustre which is thy most blessed form

¹⁰ In the inner sense of the Veda Surya, the Sun-God, represents the divine Illumination of the Kavi which exceeds mind and forms the pure self-luminous Truth of things. His principal power is self-revelatory knowledge, termed in the Veda "Sight". His realm is described as the Truth, the Law, the Vast. He is the Fosterer or Increaser, for he enlarges and opens man's dark and limited being into a luminous and infinite consciousness. He is the sole Seer, Seer of Oneness and Knower of the Self, and leads him to the highest Sight. He is Yama, Controller or Ordainer, for he governs man's action and manifested being by the direct Law of the Truth, *satyadharma*, and therefore by the right principle of our nature, *yāthātathyatal*. A luminous power proceeding from the Father of all existence, he reveals in himself the divine Purusha of whom all beings are the manifestations. His rays are the thoughts that proceed luminously from the Truth, the Vast, but become deflected and distorted, broken up and disordered in the reflecting and dividing principle, Mind. They form there the golden lid which covers the face of the Truth. The Seer prays to Surya to cast them into right order and relation and then draw them together into the unity of revealed truth. The result of this inner process is the perception of the oneness of all beings in the divine Soul of the Universe.

of all, that in Thee I behold. The Purusha there and there,
He am I.

वायुरनिलममृतमथेदं भस्मान्तं शरीरम् ।
ॐ क्रतो स्मर कृतं स्मर क्रतो स्मर कृतं स्मर ॥ १७ ॥

17. The Breath of things¹¹ is an immortal Life, but of this body ashes are the end. OM! O Will,¹² remember, that which was done remember! O Will, remember, that which was done remember.

अग्ने नय सुपथा राये अस्मान् विश्वानि देव वयुनानि विद्वान् ।
युयोध्यस्मज्जुहुराणमेनो भूयिष्ठां ते नमउक्तिं विधेम ॥ १८ ॥

18. O god Agni, knowing all things that are manifested, lead us by the good path to the felicity; remove from us the devious attraction of sin.¹³ To thee completest speech of submission we would dispose.¹⁴

¹¹ Vayu, called elsewhere Matarishwan, the Life-Energy in the universe. In the light of Surya he reveals himself as an immortal principle of existence of which birth and death and life in the body are only particular and external processes.

¹² The Vedic term *kratu* means sometimes the action itself, sometimes the effective power behind action represented in mental consciousness by the will. Agni is this power. He is divine force which manifests first in matter as heat and light and material energy and then, taking different forms in the other principles of man's consciousness, leads him by a progressive manifestation upwards to the Truth and the Bliss.

¹³ Sin, in the conception of the Veda, from which this verse is taken bodily, is that which excites and hurries the faculties into deviation from the good path. There is a straight road or road of naturally increasing light and truth, *r̥juḥ panthāḥ*, *r̥tasya panthāḥ*, leading over infinite levels and towards infinite vistas, *vītāni pṛṣṭhāni*, by which the law of our nature should normally take us towards our fulfilment. Sin compels it instead to travel with stumbling amid uneven and limited tracts and along crooked windings (*duriṭāni*, *vījīmāni*).

¹⁴ The word *vidhema* is used of the ordering of the sacrifice, the disposal of the offerings to the God and, generally, of the sacrifice or worship itself. The Vedic *namas*, internal and external obeisance, is the symbol of submission to the divine Being in ourselves and in the world. Here the offering is that of completest submission and the self-surrender of all the faculties of the lower egoistic human nature to the divine Will-force, Agni, so that, free from internal opposition, it may lead the soul of man through the truth towards a felicity full of the spiritual riches, *rāye*. That state of beatitude is intended, self-content in the principle of pure Love and Joy, which the Vedic initiates regarded as the source of the divine existence in the universe and the foundation of the divine life in the human being. It is the deformation of this principle by egoism which appears as desire and the lust of possession in the lower worlds.

Analysis

PREFATORY

Plan of the Upanishad

THE UPANISHADS, being vehicles of illumination and not of instruction, composed for seekers who had already a general familiarity with the ideas of the Vedic and Vedantic seers and even some personal experience of the truths on which they were founded, dispense in their style with expressed transitions of thought and the development of implied or subordinate notions.

Every verse in the Isha Upanishad reposes on a number of ideas implicit in the text but nowhere set forth explicitly; the reasoning also that supports its conclusions is suggested by the words, not expressly conveyed to the intelligence. The reader, or rather the hearer, was supposed to proceed from light to light, confirming his intuitions and verifying by his experience, not submitting the ideas to the judgment of the logical reason.

To the modern mind this method is invalid and inapplicable; it is necessary to present the ideas of the Upanishad in their completeness, underline the suggestions, supply the necessary transitions and bring out the suppressed but always implicit reasoning.

The central idea of the Upanishad, which is a reconciliation and harmony of fundamental opposites, is worked out symmetrically in four successive movements of thought.

FIRST MOVEMENT

In the first, a basis is laid down by the idea of the one and stable Spirit inhabiting and governing a universe of movement and of the forms of movement. (*Verse 1, line 1*)

On this conception the rule of a divine life for man is founded,— enjoyment of all by renunciation of all through the exclusion of desire. (*Verse 1, line 2*)

There is then declared the justification of works and of the physical life on the basis of an inalienable freedom of the soul, one with the Lord, amidst all the activity of the multiple movement. (*Verse 2*)

Finally, the result of an ignorant interference with the right manifestation of the One in the multiplicity is declared to be an involution in states of blind obscurity after death. (*Verse 3*)

SECOND MOVEMENT

In the second movement the ideas of the first verse are resumed and amplified.

The one stable Lord and the multiple movement are identified as one Brahman of whom, however, the unity and stability are the higher truth and who contains all as well as inhabits all. (*Verses 4, 5*)

The basis and fulfilment of the rule of life are found in the experience of unity by which man identifies himself with the cosmic and transcendental Self and is identified in the Self, but with an entire freedom from grief and illusion, with all its becomings. (*Verses 6, 7*)

THIRD MOVEMENT

In the third movement there is a return to the justification of life and works (the subject of verse 2) and an indication of their divine fulfilment.

The degrees of the Lord's self-manifestation in the universe of motion and in the becomings of the one Being are set forth and the inner law of all existences declared to be by His conception and determination. (*Verse 8*)

Vidya and Avidya, Becoming and Non-becoming are reconciled by their mutual utility to the progressive self-realisation which proceeds from the state of mortality to the state of Immortality. (*Verses 9–14*)

FOURTH MOVEMENT

The fourth movement returns to the idea of the worlds and under the figures of Surya and Agni the relations of the Supreme Truth and Immortality (*Verses 15, 16*), the activities of this life (*Verse 17*), and the state after death (*Verse 18*) are symbolically indicated.

I

FIRST MOVEMENT

The Inhabiting Godhead: Life and Action

Verses 1–3*

THE BASIS OF COSMIC EXISTENCE

God and the world, Spirit and formative Nature are confronted and their relations fixed.

COSMOS

All world is a movement of the Spirit in Itself and is mutable and transient in all its formations and appearances; its only eternity is an eternity of recurrence, its only stability a semblance caused by certain apparent fixities of relation and grouping.

Every separate object in the universe is, in truth, itself the whole universe presenting a certain front or outward appearance of its movement. The microcosm is one with the macrocosm.

Yet in their relation of principle of movement and result of movement they are continent and contained, world in world, movement in movement. The individual therefore partakes of the nature of the universal, refers back to it for its source of activity, is, as we say, subject to its laws and part of cosmic Nature.

* 1. All this is for habitation by the Lord, whatsoever is individual universe of movement in the universal motion. By that renounced thou shouldst enjoy; lust not after any man's possession.

2. Doing verily works in this world one should wish to live a hundred years. Thus it is in thee and not otherwise than this; action cleaves not to a man.

3. Sunless are those worlds and enveloped in blind gloom whereto all they in their passing hence resort who are slayers of their souls.

SPIRIT

Spirit is lord of Its movement, one, immutable, free, stable and eternal.

The Movement with all its formed objects has been created in order to provide a habitation for the Spirit who, being One, yet dwells multitudinously in the multiplicity of His mansions.

It is the same Lord who dwells in the sum and the part, in the Cosmos as a whole and in each being, force or object in the Cosmos.

Since He is one and indivisible, the Spirit in all is one and their multiplicity is a play of His cosmic consciousness.

Therefore each human being is in his essence one with all others, free, eternal, immutable, lord of Nature.

TRANSITIONAL THOUGHT

AVIDYA

The object of habitation is enjoyment and possession; the object of the Spirit in Cosmos is, therefore, the possession and enjoyment of the universe. Yet, being thus in his essence one, divine and free, man seems to be limited, divided from others, subject to Nature and even its creation and sport, enslaved to death, ignorance and sorrow. His object in manifestation being possession and enjoyment of his world, he is unable to enjoy because of his limitation. This contrary result comes about by Avidya, the Ignorance of oneness: and the knot of the Ignorance is egoism.

EGO

The cause of ego is that while by Its double power of Vidya and Avidya the Spirit dwells at once in the consciousness of multiplicity and relativity and in the consciousness of unity and identity and is therefore not bound by the Ignorance, yet It

can, in mind, identify Itself with the object in the movement, absorbingly, to the apparent exclusion of the Knowledge which remains behind, veiled at the back of the mentality. The movement of Mind in Nature is thus able to conceive of the object as the reality and the Inhabitant as limited and determined by the appearances of the object. It conceives of the object, not as the universe in one of its frontal appearances, but as itself a separate existence standing out from the Cosmos and different in being from all the rest of it. It conceives similarly of the Inhabitant. This is the illusion of ignorance which falsifies all realities. The illusion is called *ahamkāra*, the separative ego-sense which makes each being conceive of itself as an independent personality.

The result of the separation is the inability to enter into harmony and oneness with the universe and a consequent inability to possess and enjoy it. But the desire to possess and enjoy is the master impulse of the Ego which knows itself obscurely to be the Lord, although owing to the limitations of its relativity, it is unable to realise its true existence. The result is discord with others and oneself, mental and physical suffering, the sense of weakness and inability, the sense of obscuration, the straining of energy in passion and in desire towards self-fulfilment, the recoil of energy exhausted or disappointed towards death and disintegration.

Desire is the badge of subjection with its attendant discord and suffering. That which is free, one and lord, does not desire, but inalienably contains, possesses and enjoys.

THE RULE OF THE DIVINE LIFE

Enjoyment of the universe and all it contains is the object of world-existence, but renunciation of all in desire is the condition of the free enjoyment of all.

The renunciation demanded is not a moral constraint of self-denial or a physical rejection, but an entire liberation of the spirit from any craving after the forms of things.

The terms of this liberation are freedom from egoism and,

consequently, freedom from personal desire. Practically, this renunciation implies that one should not regard anything in the universe as a necessary object of possession, nor as possessed by another and not by oneself, nor as an object of greed in the heart or the senses.

This attitude is founded on the perception of unity. For it has already been said that all souls are one possessing Self, the Lord; and although the Lord inhabits each object as if separately, yet all objects exist in that Self and not outside it.

Therefore by transcending Ego and realising the one Self, we possess the whole universe in the one cosmic consciousness and do not need to possess physically.

Having by oneness with the Lord the possibility of an infinite free delight in all things, we do not need to desire.

Being one with all beings, we possess, in their enjoyment, in ours and in the cosmic Being's, delight of universal self-expression. It is only by this Ananda at once transcendent and universal that man can be free in his soul and yet live in the world with the full active Life of the Lord in His universe of movement.

THE JUSTIFICATION OF WORKS

This freedom does not depend upon inaction, nor is this possession limited to the enjoyment of the inactive Soul that only witnesses without taking part in the movement.

On the contrary, the doing of works in this material world and a full acceptance of the term of physical life are part of its completeness.

For the active Brahman fulfils Itself in the world by works and man also is in the body for self-fulfilment by action. He cannot do otherwise, for even his inertia acts and produces effects in the cosmic movement. Being in this body or any kind of body, it is idle to think of refraining from action or escaping the physical life. The idea that this in itself can be a means of liberation, is part of the Ignorance which supposes the soul to be a separate entity in the Brahman.

Action is shunned because it is thought to be inconsistent with freedom. The man when he acts, is supposed to be necessarily entangled in the desire behind the action, in subjection to the formal energy that drives the action and in the results of the action. These things are true in appearance, not in reality.

Desire is only a mode of the emotional mind which by ignorance seeks its delight in the object of desire and not in the Brahman who expresses Himself in the object. By destroying that ignorance one can do action without entanglement in desire.

The Energy that drives is itself subject to the Lord, who expresses Himself in it with perfect freedom. By getting behind Nature to the Lord of Nature, merging the individual in the Cosmic Will, one can act with the divine freedom. Our actions are given up to the Lord and our personal responsibility ceases in His liberty.

The chain of Karma only binds the movement of Nature and not the soul which, by knowing itself, ceases even to appear to be bound by the results of its works.

Therefore the way of freedom is not inaction, but to cease from identifying oneself with the movement and recover instead our true identity in the Self of things who is their Lord.

THE OTHER WORLDS

By departing from the physical life one does not disappear out of the Movement, but only passes into some other general state of consciousness than the material universe.

These states are either obscure or illuminated, some dark or sunless.

By persisting in gross forms of ignorance, by coercing perversely the soul in its self-fulfilment or by a wrong dissolution of its becoming in the Movement, one enters into states of blind darkness, not into the worlds of light and of liberated and blissful being.

II

SECOND MOVEMENT

[1]

Brahman: Oneness of God and the World

Verses 4–5*

BRAHMAN — THE UNITY

The Lord and the world, even when they seem to be distinct, are not really different from each other; they are one Brahman.

“ONE UNMOVING”

God is the one stable and eternal Reality. He is One because there is nothing else, since all existence and non-existence are He. He is stable or unmoving, because motion implies change in Space and change in Time, and He, being beyond Time and Space, is immutable. He possesses eternally in Himself all that is, has been or ever can be, and He therefore does not increase or diminish. He is beyond causality and relativity and therefore there is no change of relations in His being.

* 4. One unmoving that is swifter than Mind; That the Gods reach not, for It progresses ever in front. That, standing, passes beyond others as they run. In That the Master of Life establishes the Waters.

5. That moves and That moves not; That is far and the same is near; That is within all this and That also is outside all this.

“SWIFTER THAN MIND”

The world is a cyclic movement (*samsara*) of the Divine Consciousness in Space and Time. Its law and, in a sense, its object is progression; it exists by movement and would be dissolved by cessation of movement. But the basis of this movement is not material; it is the energy of active consciousness which, by its motion and multiplication in different principles (different in appearance, the same in essence), creates oppositions of unity and multiplicity, divisions of Time and Space, relations and groupings of circumstance and Causality. All these things are real in consciousness, but only symbolic of the Being, somewhat as the imaginations of a creative Mind are true representations of itself, yet not quite real in comparison with itself, or real with a different kind of reality.

But mental consciousness is not the Power that creates the universe. That is something infinitely more puissant, swift and unfettered than the mind. It is the pure omnipotent self-awareness of the Absolute unbound by any law of the relativity. The laws of the relativity, upheld by the gods, are Its temporary creations. Their apparent eternity is only the duration, immeasurable to us, of the world which they govern. They are laws regularising motion and change, not laws binding the Lord of the movement. The gods, therefore, are described as continually running in their course. But the Lord is free and unaffected by His own movement.

“THAT MOVES, THAT MOVES NOT”

The motion of the world works under the government of a perpetual stability. Change represents the constant shifting of apparent relations in an eternal Immutability.

It is these truths that are expressed in the formulae of the one Unmoving that is swifter than Mind, That which moves and moves not, the one Stable which outstrips in the speed of its effective consciousness the others who run.

TRANSITIONAL THOUGHT

THE MANY¹

If the One is pre-eminently real, “the others”, the Many are not unreal. The world is not a figment of the Mind.

Unity is the eternal truth of things, diversity a play of the unity. The sense of unity has therefore been termed Knowledge, *Vidya*, the sense of diversity Ignorance, *Avidya*. But diversity is not false except when it is divorced from the sense of its true and eternal unity.

Brahman is one, not numerically, but in essence. Numerical oneness would either exclude multiplicity or would be a pluralistic and divisible oneness with the Many as its parts. That is not the unity of Brahman, which can neither be diminished nor increased, nor divided.

The Many in the universe are sometimes called parts of the universal Brahman as the waves are parts of the sea. But, in truth, these waves are each of them that sea, their diversities being those of frontal or superficial appearances caused by the sea’s motion. As each object in the universe is really the whole universe in a different frontal appearance, so each individual soul is all Brahman regarding Itself and world from a centre of cosmic consciousness.

For That is identical, not single. It is identical always and everywhere in Time and Space, as well as identical beyond Time and Space. Numerical oneness and multiplicity are equally valid terms of its essential unity.

These two terms, as we see them, are like all others, representations in Chit, in the free and all-creative self-awareness of

¹ The series of ideas under this heading seem to me to be the indispensable metaphysical basis of the Upanishad. The Isha Upanishad does not teach a pure and exclusive Monism; it declares the One without denying the Many and its method is to see the One in the Many. It asserts the simultaneous validity of *Vidya* and *Avidya* and upholds as the object of action and knowledge an immortality consistent with Life and Birth in this world. It regards every object as itself the universe and every soul as itself the divine Purusha. The ensemble of these ideas is consistent only with a synthetic or comprehensive as opposed to an illusionist or exclusive Monism.

the Absolute regarding itself variously, infinitely, innumerably and formulating what it regards. Chit is a power not only of knowledge, but of expressive will, not only of receptive vision, but of formative representation; the two are indeed one power. For Chit is an action of Being, not of the Void. What it sees, that becomes. It sees itself beyond Space and Time; that becomes in the conditions of Space and Time.

Creation is not a making of something out of nothing or of one thing out of another, but a self-projection of Brahman into the conditions of Space and Time. Creation is not a making, but a becoming in terms and forms of conscious existence.

In the becoming each individual is Brahman variously represented and entering into various relations with Itself in the play of the divine consciousness; in being, each individual is all Brahman.

Brahman as the Absolute or the Universal has the power of standing back from Itself in the relativity. It conceives, by a subordinate movement of consciousness, the individual as other than the universal, the relative as different from the Absolute. Without this separative movement, the individual would always tend to lose itself in the universal, the relative to disappear into the Absolute. Thus, It supports a corresponding reaction in the individual who regards himself as "other" than the transcendent and universal Brahman and "other" than the rest of the Many. He puts identity behind him and enforces the play of Being in the separative Ego.

The individual may regard himself as eternally different from the One, or as eternally one with It, yet different, or he may go back entirely in his consciousness to the pure Identity.² But he can never regard himself as independent of some kind of Unity, for such a view would correspond to no conceivable truth in the universe or beyond it.

These three attitudes correspond to three truths of the

² The positions, in inverse order, of the three principal philosophical schools of Vedanta, Monism, Qualified Monism and Dualism.

Brahman which are simultaneously valid and none of them entirely true without the others as its complements. Their co-existence, difficult of conception to the logical intellect, can be experienced by identity in consciousness with Brahman.

Even in asserting Oneness, we must remember that Brahman is beyond our mental distinctions and is a fact not of Thought that discriminates, but of Being which is absolute, infinite and escapes discrimination. Our consciousness is representative and symbolic; it cannot conceive the thing-in-itself, the Absolute, except by negation, in a sort of void, by emptying it of all that it seems in the universe to contain. But the Absolute is not a void or negation. It is all that is here in Time and beyond Time.

Even oneness is a representation and exists in relation to multiplicity. Vidya and Avidya are equally eternal powers of the supreme Chit. Neither Vidya nor Avidya by itself is the absolute knowledge. (See verses 9–11.)

Still, of all relations oneness is the secret base, not multiplicity. Oneness constitutes and upholds the multiplicity, multiplicity does not constitute and uphold the oneness.

Therefore we have to conceive of oneness as our self and the essential nature of Being, multiplicity as a representation of Self and a becoming. We have to conceive of the Brahman as One Self of all and then return upon the Many as becomings of the One Being (*bhūtāni . . . ātman*). But both the Self and the becomings are Brahman; we cannot regard the one as Brahman and the others as unreal and not Brahman. Both are real, the one with a constituent and comprehensive, the others with a derivative or dependent reality.

THE RUNNING OF THE GODS

Brahman representing Itself in the universe as the Stable, by Its immutable existence (Sat), is Purusha, God, Spirit; representing Itself as the Motional, by Its power of active Consciousness (Chit), is Nature, Force or World-Principle (Prakriti, Shakti,

Maya).³ The play of these two principles is the Life of the universe.

The Gods are Brahman representing Itself in cosmic Personalities expressive of the one Godhead who, in their impersonal action, appear as the various play of the principles of Nature.

The “others” are *sarvāni bhūtāni* of a later verse, all becoming, Brahman representing itself in the separative consciousness of the Many.

Everything in the universe, even the Gods, seems to itself to be moving in the general movement towards a goal outside itself or other than its immediate idea of itself. Brahman is the goal; for it is both the beginning and the end, the cause and the result of all movement.

But the idea of a final goal in the movement of Nature itself is illusory. For Brahman is Absolute and Infinite. The Gods, labouring to reach him, find, at every goal that they realise, Brahman still moving forward in front to a farther realisation. Nothing in the appearances of the universe can be entirely That to the relative consciousness; all is only a symbolic representation of the Unknowable.

All things are already realised in Brahman. The running of the Others in the course of Nature is only a working out (Prakriti), by Causality, in Time and Space, of something that Brahman already possesses.

Even in Its universal being Brahman exceeds the Movement. Exceeding Time, It contains in Itself past, present and future simultaneously and has not to run to the end of conceivable Time. Exceeding Space, It contains all formations in Itself coincidently

³ Prakriti, executive Nature as opposed to Purusha, which is the Soul governing, taking cognizance of and enjoying the works of Prakriti. Shakti, the self-existent, self-cognitive, self-effective Power of the Lord (Ishwara, Deva or Purusha), which expresses itself in the workings of Prakriti. Maya, signifying originally in the Veda comprehensive and creative knowledge, Wisdom that is from of old; afterwards taken in its second and derivative sense, cunning, magic, Illusion. In this second significance it can really be appropriate only to the workings of the lower Nature, *aparā prakṛti*, which has put behind it the Divine Wisdom and is absorbed in the experiences of the separative Ego. It is in the more ancient sense that the word Maya is used in the Upanishads, where, indeed, it occurs but rarely.

and has not to run to the end of conceivable Space. Exceeding Causality, It contains freely in Itself all eventualities as well as all potentialities without being bound by the apparent chain of causality by which they are linked in the universe. Everything is already realised by It as the Lord before it can be accomplished by the separated Personalities in the movement.

THE PRINCIPLE OF LIFE

MATARISHWAN AND THE WATERS

What then is Its intention in the movement?

The movement is a rhythm, a harmony which That, as the Universal Life, works out by figures of Itself in the terms of conscious Being. It is a formula symbolically expressive of the Unknowable,—so arranged that every level of consciousness really represents something beyond itself, depth of depth, continent of continent. It is a play⁴ of the divine Consciousness existing for its own satisfaction and adding nothing to That, which is already complete. It is a fact of conscious being, justified by its own existence, with no purpose ulterior to itself. The idea of purpose, of a goal is born of the progressive self-unfolding by the world of its own true nature to the individual Souls inhabiting its forms; for the Being is gradually self-revealed within its own becomings, real Unity emerges out of the Multiplicity and changes entirely the values of the latter to our consciousness.

This self-unfolding is governed by conditions determined by the complexity of consciousness in its cosmic action.

For consciousness is not simple or homogeneous, it is septuple. That is to say, it constitutes itself into seven forms or grades of conscious activity descending from pure Being to physical being. Their interplay creates the worlds, determines all activities, constitutes all becomings.

⁴ This is the Vaishnava image of the Lila applied usually to the play of the Personal Deity in the world, but equally applicable to the active impersonal Brahman.

Brahman is always the continent of this play or this working. Brahman self-extended in Space and Time is the universe.

In this extension Brahman represents Itself as formative Nature, the universal Mother of things, who appears to us, first, as Matter, called Prithivi, the Earth-Principle.

Brahman in Matter or physical being represents Itself as the universal Life-Power, Matarishwan, which moves there as a dynamic energy, Prana, and presides effectively over all arrangement and formation.

Universal Life establishes, involved in Matter, the septuple consciousness; and the action of Prana, the dynamic energy, on the Matrix of things evolves out of it its different forms and serves as a basis for all their evolutions.

TRANSITIONAL THOUGHT

THE WATERS

There are, then, seven constituents of Chit active in the universe.

We are habitually aware of three elements in our being, Mind, Life and Body. These constitute for us a divided and mutable existence which is in a condition of unstable harmony and works by a strife of positive and negative forces between the two poles of Birth and Death. For all life is a constant birth or becoming (*sambhava, sambhūti* of verses 12–14). All birth entails a constant death or dissolution of that which becomes, in order that it may change into a new becoming. Therefore this state of existence is called Mrityu, Death, and described as a stage which has to be passed through and transcended. (Verses 11, 14)

For this is not the whole of our being and, therefore, not our pure being. We have, behind, a superconscious existence which has also three constituents, Sat, Chit-Tapas and Ananda.

Sat is essence of our being, pure, infinite and undivided, as opposed to this divisible being which founds itself on the constant changeableness of physical substance. Sat is the divine counterpart of physical substance.

Chit-Tapas is pure energy of Consciousness, free in its rest or its action, sovereign in its will, as opposed to the hampered dynamic energies of Prana which, feeding upon physical substances, are dependent on and limited by their sustenance.⁵ Tapas is the divine counterpart of this lower nervous or vital energy.

Ananda is Beatitude, the bliss of pure conscious existence and energy, as opposed to the life of the sensations and emotions which are at the mercy of the outward touches of Life and Matter and their positive and negative reactions, joy and grief, pleasure and pain. Ananda is the divine counterpart of the lower emotional and sensational being.

This higher existence, proper to the divine Sachchidananda, is unified, self-existent, not confused by the figures of Birth and Death. It is called, therefore, Amritam, Immortality, and offered to us as the goal to be aimed at and the felicity to be enjoyed when we have transcended the state of death. (*Verses 11, 14, 17, 18*)

The higher divine is linked to the lower mortal existence by the causal Idea⁶ or supramental Knowledge-Will, Vijnana. It is the causal Idea which, by supporting and secretly guiding the confused activities of the Mind, Life and Body, ensures and compels the right arrangement of the universe. It is called in the Veda the Truth because it represents by direct vision the truth of things both inclusive and independent of their appearances; the Right or Law, because, containing in itself the effective power of Chit, it works out all things according to their nature with a perfect knowledge and prevision; the Vast, because it is of the nature of an infinite cosmic Intelligence comprehensive of all particular activities.

Vijnana, as the Truth, leads the divided consciousness back

⁵ Therefore physical substance is called in the Upanishads Annam, Food. In its origin, however, the word meant simply being or substance.

⁶ Not the abstract mental idea, but the supramental Real-Idea, the Consciousness, Force and Delight of the Being precipitated into a comprehensive and discriminative awareness of all the truths and powers of its own existence, carrying in its self-knowledge the will of self-manifestation, the power of all its potentialities and the power of all its forms. It is power that acts and effectuates, as well as knowledge master of its own action.

to the One. It also sees the truth of things in the multiplicity. Vijnana is the divine counterpart of the lower divided intelligence.

These seven powers of Chit are spoken of by the Vedic Rishis as the Waters, they are imaged as currents flowing into or rising out of the general sea of Consciousness in the human being.⁷

They are all coexistent in the universe eternally and inseparably, but capable of being involved and remanifested in each other. They are actually involved in physical Nature and must necessarily evolve out of it. They can be withdrawn into pure infinite Being and can again be manifested out of it.

The infolding and unfolding of the One in the Many and the Many in the One is therefore the law of the eternally recurrent cosmic Cycles.

THE VISION OF THE BRAHMAN

The Upanishad teaches us how to perceive Brahman in the universe and in our self-existence.

We have to perceive Brahman comprehensively as both the Stable and the Moving. We must see It in eternal and immutable Spirit and in all the changing manifestations of universe and relativity.

We have to perceive all things in Space and Time, the far and the near, the immemorial Past, the immediate Present, the infinite Future with all their contents and happenings as the One Brahman.

We have to perceive Brahman as that which exceeds, contains and supports all individual things as well as all universe, transcendentally of Time and Space and Causality. We have to perceive It also as that which lives in and possesses the universe and all it contains.

This is the transcendental, universal and individual Brahman, Lord, Continent and Indwelling Spirit, which is the object of all knowledge. Its realisation is the condition of perfection and the way of Immortality.

⁷ *Hṛdaya samudra*, Ocean of the Heart. R.V. IV. 58. 5.

III

SECOND MOVEMENT

[2]

Self-Realisation

Verses 6–7*

SELF-REALISATION

Brahman is, subjectively, Atman, the Self or immutable existence of all that is in the universe. Everything that changes in us, mind, life, body, character, temperament, action, is not our real and unchanging self, but becomings of the Self in the movement, *jagatī*.

In Nature, therefore, all things that exist, animate or inanimate, are becomings of the one Self of all. All these different creatures are one indivisible existence. This is the truth each being has to realise.

When this unity has been realised by the individual in every part of his being, he becomes perfect, pure, liberated from ego and the dualities, possessed of the entire divine felicity.

ATMAN

Atman, our true self, is Brahman; it is pure indivisible Being, self-luminous, self-concentrated in consciousness, self-concentrated in force, self-delighted. Its existence is light and bliss. It is timeless, spaceless and free.

* 6. But he who sees everywhere the Self in all existences and all existences in the Self, shrinks not thereafter from aught.

7. He in whom it is the Self-Being that has become all existences that are Becomings, for he has the perfect knowledge, how shall he be deluded, whence shall he have grief who sees everywhere oneness?

THE THREEFOLD PURUSHA¹

Atman represents itself to the consciousness of the creature in three states, dependent on the relations between Purusha and Prakriti, the Soul and Nature. These three states are Akshara, unmoving or immutable; Kshara, moving or mutable; and Para or Uttama, Supreme or Highest.

Kshara Purusha is the Self reflecting the changes and movements of Nature, participating in them, immersed in the consciousness of the movement and seeming in it to be born and die, increase and diminish, progress and change. Atman, as the Kshara, enjoys change and division and duality; controls secretly its own changes but seems to be controlled by them; enjoys the oppositions of pleasure and pain, good and bad, but appears to be their victim; possesses and upholds the action of Nature, by which it seems to be created. For, always and inalienably, the Self is Ishwara, the Lord.

Akshara Purusha is the Self standing back from the changes and movements of Nature, calm, pure, impartial, indifferent, watching them and not participating, above them as on a summit, not immersed in these Waters. This calm Self is the sky that never moves and changes looking down upon the waters that are never at rest. The Akshara is the hidden freedom of the Kshara.

Para Purusha or Purushottama is the Self containing and enjoying both the stillness and the movement, but conditioned and limited by neither of them. It is the Lord, Brahman, the All, the Indefinable and Unknowable.

It is this supreme Self that has to be realised in both the unmoving and the mutable.

PURUSHA IN PRAKRITI²

Atman, the Self, represents itself differently in the sevenfold movement of Nature according to the dominant principle of the consciousness in the individual being.

¹ Gita XV. 16, 17. See also XIII passim.

² Taittiriya Upanishad II. 1–6.

In the physical consciousness Atman becomes the material being, *annamaya puruṣa*.

In the vital or nervous consciousness Atman becomes the vital or dynamic being, *prāṇamaya puruṣa*.

In the mental consciousness Atman becomes the mental being, *manomaya puruṣa*.

In the supra-intellectual consciousness, dominated by the Truth or causal Idea (called in Veda Satyam, Ritam, Brihat, the True, the Right, the Vast), Atman becomes the ideal being or great Soul, *vijñānamaya puruṣa* or *mahat ātman*.³

In the consciousness proper to the universal Beatitude, Atman becomes the all-blissful being or all-enjoying and all-productive Soul, *ānandamaya puruṣa*.

In the consciousness proper to the infinite divine self-awareness which is also the infinite all-effective Will (Chit-Tapas), Atman is the all-conscious Soul that is source and lord of the universe, *caitanya puruṣa*.

In the consciousness proper to the state of pure divine existence Atman is *sat puruṣa*, the pure divine Self.

Man, being one in his true Self with the Lord who inhabits all forms, can live in any of these states of the Self in the world and partake of its experiences. He can be anything he wills from the material to the all-blissful being. Through the Anandamaya he can enter into the Chaitanya and Sat Purusha.

SACHCHIDANANDA

Sachchidananda is the manifestation of the higher Purusha; its nature of infinite being, consciousness, power and bliss is the higher Nature, *parā prakṛti*. Mind, life and body are the lower nature, *aparā prakṛti*.

The state of Sachchidananda is the higher half of universal existence, *parārdha*, the nature of which is Immortality, Amritam. The state of mental existence in Matter is the lower half,

³ The *mahat ātman* or Vast Self is frequently referred to in the Upanishads. It is also called *bhūmā*, the Large.

aparārdha, the nature of which is death, Mrityu.

Mind and life in the body are in the state of Death because by Ignorance they fail to realise Sachchidananda. Realising perfectly Sachchidananda, they can convert themselves, Mind into the nature of the Truth, Vijnana, Life into the nature of Chaitanya, Body into the nature of Sat, that is, into the pure essence.

When this cannot be done perfectly in the body, the soul realises its true state in other forms of existence or worlds, the “sunlit” worlds and states of felicity, and returns upon material existence to complete its evolution in the body.

A progressively perfect realisation in the body is the aim of human evolution.

It is also possible for the soul to withdraw for an indefinable period into the pure state of Sachchidananda.

The realisation of the Self as Sachchidananda is the aim of human existence.

THE CONDITION OF SELF-REALISATION⁴

Sachchidananda is always the pure state of Atman; it may either remain self-contained as if apart from the universe or overlook, embrace and possess it as the Lord.

In fact, it does both simultaneously. (*Verse 8*)

The Lord pervades the universe as the Virat Purusha, the Cosmic Soul (*paribhū* of the eighth verse, the One who becomes everywhere); He enters into each object in the movement, to the Knowledge as Brahman supporting individual consciousness and individual form, to the Ignorance as an individualised and limited being. He manifests as the Jivatman or individual self in the living creature.

From the standpoint of our lower state in the kingdom of death and limitation Atman is Sachchidananda, supra-mental,

⁴ I have collected under this and the preceding headings the principal ideas of the Upanishads with regard to the Self, although not expressly mentioned or alluded to in our text, because they are indispensable to an understanding of the complete philosophy of these Scriptures and to the relations of the thought which is developed in the Isha.

but reflected in the mind. If the mind is pure, bright and still, there is the right reflection; if it is unpurified, troubled and obscured, the reflection is distorted and subjected to the crooked action of the Ignorance.

According to the state of the reflecting mind we may have either purity of self-knowledge or an obscuration and distortion of knowledge in the dualities of truth and error; a pure activity of unegoistic Will or an obscuration and deflection of Will in the dualities of right and wrong action, sin and virtue; a pure state and unmixed play of beatitude or an obscuration and perversion of it in the dualities of right and wrong enjoyment, pleasure and pain, joy and grief.

It is the mental ego-sense that creates this distortion by division and limitation of the Self. The limitation is brought about through the Kshara Purusha identifying itself with the changeable formations of Nature in the separate body, the individual life and the egoistic mind, to the exclusion of the sense of unity with all existence and with all existences.

This exclusion is a fixed habit of the understanding due to our past evolution in the movement, not an ineffugable law of human consciousness. Its diminution and final disappearance are the condition of self-realisation.

The beginning of wisdom, perfection and beatitude is the vision of the One.

THE STAGES OF SELF-REALISATION

THE VISION OF THE ALL

The first movement of self-realisation is the sense of unity with other existences in the universe. Its early or crude form is the attempt to understand or sympathise with others, the tendency of a widening love or compassion or fellow-feeling for others, the impulsion of work for the sake of others.

The oneness so realised is a pluralistic unity, the drawing together of similar units resulting in a collectivity or solidarity

rather than in real oneness. The Many remain to the consciousness as the real existences; the One is only their result.

Real knowledge begins with the perception of essential oneness,—one Matter, one Life, one Mind, one Soul playing in many forms.

When this Soul of things is seen to be Sachchidananda, then knowledge is perfected. For we see Matter to be only a play of Life, Life a play of Mind energising itself in substance, Mind a play of Truth or causal Idea representing truth of being variously in all possible mental forms, Truth a play of Sachchidananda, Sachchidananda the self-manifestation of a supreme Unknowable, Para-Brahman or Para-Purusha.

We perceive the soul in all bodies to be this one Self or Sachchidananda multiplying itself in individual consciousness. We see also all minds, lives, bodies to be active formations of the same existence in the extended being of the Self.

This is the vision of all existences in the Self and of the Self in all existences which is the foundation of perfect internal liberty and perfect joy and peace.

For by this vision, in proportion as it increases in intensity and completeness, there disappears from the individual mentality all *jugupsā*, that is to say, all repulsion, shrinking, dislike, fear, hatred and other perversions of feeling which arise from division and personal opposition to other beings or to the objectivities that surround us. Perfect equality⁵ of soul is established.

THE VISION OF THE SELF IN ITS BECOMINGS

Vision is not sufficient; one must become what inwardly one sees. The whole inner life must be changed so as to represent perfectly in all parts of the being what is understood by the intellect and seen by the inner perception.

⁵ The state described in the Gita as *samatva*. *Jugupsā* is the feeling of repulsion caused by the sense of a want of harmony between one's own limited self-formation and the contacts of the external with a consequent recoil of grief, fear, hatred, discomfort, suffering. It is the opposite of attraction which is the source of desire and attachment. Repulsion and attraction removed, we have *samatva*.

In the individual soul extending itself to the All by the vision of unity (*ekatvam anupaśyataḥ*, seeing everywhere oneness), arranging its thoughts, emotions and sensations according to the perfect knowledge of the right relation of things which comes by the realisation of the Truth (*vijānataḥ*, having the perfect knowledge), there must be repeated the divine act of consciousness by which the one Being, eternally self-existent, manifests in itself the multiplicity of the world (*sarvāṇi bhūtāni ātmaiva abhūt*, the Self-Being became all Becomings).

That is to say, the human or egoistic view is that of a world of innumerable separate creatures each self-existent and different from the others, each trying to get its utmost possible profit out of the others and the world, but the divine view, the way in which God sees the world, is Himself, as the sole Being, living in innumerable existences that are Himself, supporting all, helping all impartially, working out to a divine fulfilment and under terms fixed from the beginning, from years sempiternal, a great progressive harmony of Becoming whose last term is Sachchidananda or Immortality. This is the view-point of the Self as Lord inhabiting the whole movement. The individual soul has to change the human or egoistic for the divine, supreme and universal view and live in that realisation.

It is necessary, therefore, to have the knowledge of the transcendent Self, the sole unity, in the equation *so'ham*, I am He, and in that knowledge to extend one's conscious existence so as to embrace the whole Multiplicity.

This is the double or synthetic ideal of the Isha Upanishad; to embrace simultaneously Vidya and Avidya, the One and the Many; to exist in the world, but change the terms of the Death into the terms of the Immortality; to have the freedom and peace of the Non-Birth simultaneously with the activity of the Birth. (Verses 9–14)

All parts of the lower being must consent to this realisation; to perceive with the intellect is not enough. The heart must consent in a universal love and delight, the sense-mind in a sensation of God and self everywhere, the life in the comprehension of all aims and energies in the world as part of its own being.

THE ACTIVE BEATITUDE

This realisation is the perfect and complete Beatitude, embracing action, but delivered from sorrow and self-delusion.

There is no possibility of self-delusion (*moha*); for the soul, having attained to the perception of the Unknowable behind all existence, is no longer attached to the Becoming and no longer attributes an absolute value to any particularity in the universe, as if that were an object in itself and desirable in itself. All is enjoyable and has a value as the manifestation of the Self and for the sake of the Self which is manifested in it, but none for its own.⁶ Desire and illusion are removed; illusion is replaced by knowledge, desire by the active beatitude of universal possession.

There is no possibility of sorrow; for all is seen as Sachchidananda and therefore in the terms of the infinite conscious existence, the infinite will, the infinite felicity. Even pain and grief are seen to be perverse terms of Ananda, and that Ananda which they veil here and for which they prepare the lower existence (for all suffering in the evolution is a preparation of strength and bliss) is already seized, known and enjoyed by the soul thus liberated and perfected. For it possesses the eternal Reality of which they are the appearances.

Thus it is possible, by the realisation of the unity of God and the world (*iś* and *jagatī*) in the complete knowledge of the Brahman, to renounce desire and illusion through the ascent to the pure Self and the Non-Becoming and yet to enjoy by means of all things in the manifestation God in the universe through a free and illuminated self-identification with Sachchidananda in all existences.

CONCLUSION

We have, therefore, in the second movement the explanation of the first verse of the Upanishad. The first line, asserting that all

⁶ Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

souls are the one Lord inhabiting every object in the universe and that every object is universe in universe, movement in the general movement, has been explained in the terms of complete oneness by the Brahman, transcendental and universal even in the individual, One in the Many, Many in the One, Stable and Motional, exceeding and reconciling all opposites. The second line, fixing as the rule of divine life universal renunciation of desire as the condition of universal enjoyment in the spirit, has been explained by the state of self-realisation, the realisation of the free and transcendent Self as one's own true being, of that Self as Sachchidananda and of the universe seen as the Becoming of Sachchidananda and possessed in the terms of the right knowledge and no longer in the terms of the Ignorance which is the cause of all attraction and repulsion, self-delusion and sorrow.

IV

THIRD MOVEMENT

[1]

The Lord

Verse 8*

“HE”

In its third movement the Upanishad takes up the justification of works already stated in general terms in its second verse and founds it more precisely upon the conception of Brahman or the Self as the Lord,—Ish, Ishwara, Para Purusha, Sa (He)—who is the cause of personality and governs by His law of works the rhythm of the Movement and the process of the worlds that He conceives and realises throughout eternal Time in His own self-existence.

It is an error to conceive that the Upanishads teach the true existence only of an impersonal and actionless Brahman, an impersonal God without power or qualities. They declare rather an Unknowable that manifests itself to us in a double aspect of Personality and Impersonality. When they wish to speak of this Unknowable in the most comprehensive and general way, they use the neuter and call It *Tat*, That; but this neuter does not exclude the aspect of universal and transcendent Personality acting and governing the world (cf. Kena Upanishad III). Still, when they intend to make prominent the latter idea they more often prefer to use the masculine Sa, He, or else they employ the

* 8. It is He that has gone abroad—That which is bright, bodiless, without scar of imperfection, without sinews, pure, unpierced by evil. The Seer, the Thinker, the One who becomes everywhere, the Self-existent has ordered objects perfectly according to their nature from years sempiternal.

term Deva, God or the Divine, or Purusha, the conscious Soul, of whom Prakriti or Maya is the executive Puissance, the Shakti.

The Isha Upanishad, having declared the Brahman as the sole reality manifesting itself in many aspects and forms, having presented this Brahman subjectively as the Self, the one Being of whom all existences are Becomings, and as that which we have to realise in ourselves and in all things and beyond all things, now proceeds to assert the same Brahman more objectively as the Lord, the Purusha who both contains and inhabits the universe.

It is He that went abroad. This Brahman, this Self is identical with the Lord, the Ish, with whose name the Upanishad opens, the Inhabitant of all forms: and, as we shall find, identical with the universal Purusha of the 16th verse,— “The Purusha there and there, He am I.” It is He who has become all things and beings,— a conscious Being, the sole Existent and Self-existent, who is Master and Enjoyer of all He becomes. And the Upanishad proceeds to formulate the nature and manner, the general law of that becoming of God which we call the world. For on this conception depends the Vedic idea of the two poles of death and immortality, the reason for the existence of Avidya, the Ignorance, and the justification of works in the world.

TRANSITIONAL THOUGHT

THE DIVINE PERSONALITY

The Vedantic idea of God, “He”, Deva or Ishwara, must not be confused with the ordinary notions attached to the conception of a Personal God. Personality is generally conceived as identical with individuality and the vulgar idea of a Personal God is a magnified individual like man in His nature but yet different, greater, more vast and all-overpowering. Vedanta admits the human manifestation of Brahman in man and to man, but does not admit that this is the real nature of the Ishwara.

God is Sachchidananda. He manifests Himself as infinite existence of which the essentiality is consciousness, of which

again the essentiality is bliss, is self-delight. Delight cognizing variety of itself, seeking its own variety, as it were, becomes the universe. But these are abstract terms; abstract ideas in themselves cannot produce concrete realities. They are impersonal states; impersonal states cannot in themselves produce personal activities.

This becomes still clearer if we consider the manifestation of Sachchidananda. In that manifestation Delight translates itself into Love; Consciousness translates itself into double terms, captive Knowledge, executive Force; Existence translates itself into Being, that is to say, into Person and Substance. But Love is incomplete without a Lover and an object of Love, Knowledge without a Knower and an object of Knowledge, Force without a Worker and a Work, Substance without a Person cognizing and constituting it.

This is because the original terms also are not really impersonal abstractions. In delight of Brahman there is an Enjoyer of delight, in consciousness of Brahman a Conscient, in existence of Brahman an Existent; but the object of Brahman's delight and consciousness and the term and stuff of Its existence are Itself. In the divine Being Knowledge, the Knower and the Known and, therefore, necessarily also Delight, the Enjoyer and the Enjoyed are one.

This Self-Awareness and Self-Delight of Brahman has two modes of its Force of consciousness, its Prakriti or Maya,—intensive in self-absorption, diffusive in self-extension. The intensive mode is proper to the pure and silent Brahman; the diffusive to the active Brahman. It is the diffusion of the Self-existent in the term and stuff of His own existence that we call the world, the becoming or the perpetual movement (*bhuvanam, jagat*). It is Brahman that becomes; what He becomes is also the Brahman. The object of Love is the self of the Lover; the work is the self-figuration of the Worker; Universe is body and action of the Lord.

When, therefore, we consider the abstract and impersonal aspect of the infinite existence, we say, "That"; when we consider the Existent self-aware and self-blissful, we say, "He". Neither

conception is entirely complete. Brahman itself is the Unknowable beyond all conceptions of Personality and Impersonality. We may call it "That" to show that we exile from our affirmation all term and definition. We may equally call it "He", provided we speak with the same intention of rigorous exclusion. "Tat" and "Sa" are always the same, One that escapes definition.

In the universe there is a constant relation of Oneness and Multiplicity. This expresses itself as the universal Personality and the many Persons, and both between the One and the Many and among the Many themselves there is the possibility of an infinite variety of relations. These relations are determined by the play of the divine existence, the Lord, entering into His manifested habitations. They exist at first as conscious relations between individual souls; they are then taken up by them and used as a means of entering into conscious relation with the One. It is this entering into various relations with the One which is the object and function of Religion. All religions are justified by this essential necessity; all express one Truth in various ways and move by various paths to one goal.

The Divine Personality reveals Himself in various forms and names to the individual soul. These forms and names are in a sense created in the human consciousness; in another they are eternal symbols revealed by the Divine who thus concretises Himself in mind-form to the multiple consciousness and aids it in its return to its own Unity.¹

HE THAT WENT ABROAD

It is He that has extended Himself in the relative consciousness whose totality of finite and changeable circumstances dependent on an equal, immutable and eternal Infinity is what we call the Universe. *Sa paryagāt*.

In this extension we have, therefore, two aspects, one of pure infinite relationless immutability, another of a totality of objects

¹ It would be an error to suppose that these conceptions are in their essence later developments of philosophical Hinduism. The conception of the many forms and names of the One is as old as the Rig Veda.

in Time and Space working out their relations through causality. Both are different and mutually complementary expressions of the same unknowable “He”.

To express the infinite Immutability the Upanishad uses a series of neuter adjectives, “Bright, bodiless, without scar, without sinews, pure, unpierced by evil.” To express the same Absolute as cause, continent and governing Inhabitant of the totality of objects and of each object in the totality (*jagatyāṁ jagat*) it uses four masculine epithets, “The Seer, the Thinker, the One who becomes everywhere, the Self-existent” or “the Self-Becoming”.

The Immutable is the still and secret foundation of the play and the movement, extended equally, impartially in all things, *samam brahma*,² lending its support to all without choice or active participation. Secure and free in His eternal immutability the Lord projects Himself into the play and the movement, becoming there in His self-existence all that the Seer in Him visualises and the Thinker in Him conceives. *Kavir manīṣī paribhūḥ svayambhūḥ*.

THE PURE IMMUTABLE

The pure immutability of the Lord is “bright”. It is a luminosity of pure concentrated Self-awareness, not broken by refractions, not breaking out into colour and form. It is the pure self-knowledge of the Purusha, the conscious Soul, with his Power, his executive Force contained and inactive.

It is “bodiless”,—without form, indivisible and without appearance of division. It is one equal Purusha in all things, not divided by the divisions of Space and Time,—a pure self-conscious Absolute.

It is without scar, that is, without defect, break or imperfection. It is untouched and unaffected by the mutabilities. It supports their clash of relations, their play of more and less, of increase and diminution, of irruption and interpenetration.

² “The equal Brahman.” — Gita.

For Itself is without action, *acalaḥ sanātanaḥ*,³ “motionless, sempiternal”.

It is without sinews. The reason for Its being without scar is that It does not put out Power, does not dispense Force in multiple channels, does not lose it here, increase it there, replenish its loss or seek by love or by violence its complementary or its food. It is without nerves of force; It does not pour itself out in the energies of the Pranic dynamism, of Life, of Matarishwan.

It is pure, unpierced by evil. What we call sin or evil, is merely excess and defect, wrong placement, inharmonious action and reaction. By its equality, by its inaction even while it supports all action, the conscious Soul retains its eternal freedom and eternal purity. For it is unmodified; It watches as the Sakshi, the witness, the modifications effected by Prakriti, but does not partake of them, does not get clogged with them, receives not their impression. *Na lipyate*.

THE SOUL INALIENABLY FREE

What is the relation of the active Brahman and of the human soul to this pure Inactive? They too are That. Action does not change the nature of the Self, but only the nature of the diverse forms. The Self is always pure, blissful, perfect, whether inactive or participating in action.

The Self is all things and exceeds them. It exceeds always that in which the mind is engrossed, that which it takes in a particular time and space as a figure of itself. The boundless whole is always perfect. The totality of things is a complete harmony without wound or flaw. The view-point of the part taken for a whole, in other words the Ignorance, is the broken reflection which creates the consciousness of limitation, incompleteness and discord. We shall see that this Ignorance has a use in the play of the Brahman; but in itself it appears at first to be only a parent of evil.

Ignorance is a veil that separates the mind, body and life

³ Gita II. 24.

from their source and reality, Sachchidananda. Thus obscured the mind feels itself pierced by the evil that Ignorance creates. But the Active Brahman is always Sachchidananda using for its self-becoming the forms of mind, body and life. All their experiences are therefore seen by It in the terms of Sachchidananda. It is not pierced by the evil. For It also is the One and sees everywhere Oneness. It is not mastered by the Ignorance that It uses as a minor term of its conception.

The human soul is one with the Lord; it also is in its completeness Sachchidananda using Ignorance as the minor term of its being. But it has projected its conceptions into this minor term and established there in limited mind its centre of vision, its view-point. It assumes to itself the incompleteness and the resultant sense of want, discord, desire, suffering. The Real Man behind is not affected by all this confusion; but the apparent or exterior Man is affected. To recover its freedom it must recover its completeness; it must identify itself with the divine Inhabitant within, its true and complete self. It can then, like the Lord, conduct the action of Prakriti without undergoing the false impression of identification with the results of its action. It is this idea on which the Upanishad bases the assertion, "Action cleaveth not to a man."

To this end it must recover the silent Brahman within. The Lord possesses always His double term and conducts the action of the universe, extended in it, but not attached to or limited by His works. The human soul, entangled in mind, is obscured in vision by the rushing stream of Prakriti's works and fancies itself to be a part of that stream and swept in its currents and in its eddies. It has to go back in its self-existence to the silent Purusha even while participating in its self-becoming in the movement of Prakriti. It becomes, then, not only like the silent Purusha, the witness and upholder, but also the Lord and the free enjoyer of Prakriti and her works. An absolute calm and passivity, purity and equality within, a sovereign and inexhaustible activity without is the nature of Brahman as we see it manifested in the universe.

There is therefore no farther objection to works. On

the contrary, works are justified by the participation or self-identification of the soul with the Lord in His double aspect of passivity and activity. Tranquillity for the Soul, activity for the energy, is the balance of the divine rhythm in man.

THE LAW OF THINGS

The totality of objects (*arthān*) is the becoming of the Lord in the extension of His own being. Its principle is double. There is consciousness; there is Being. Consciousness dwells in energy (*tapas*) upon its self-being to produce Idea of itself (*vijñāna*) and form and action inevitably corresponding to the Idea. This is the original Indian conception of creation, self-production or projection into form (*sṛṣti, prasava*). Being uses its self-awareness to evolve infinite forms of itself governed by the expansion of the innate Idea in the form. This is the original Indian conception of evolution, prominent in certain philosophies such as the Sankhya (*parināma, vikāra, vivarta*). It is the same phenomenon diversely stated.

In the idea of some thinkers the world is a purely subjective evolution (*vivarta*), not real as objective fact; in the idea of others it is an objective fact, a real modification (*parināma*), but one which makes no difference to the essence of Being. Both notions claim to derive from the Upanishads as their authority, and their opposition comes in fact by the separation of what in the ancient Vedanta was viewed as one, — as we see in this passage.

Brahman is His own subject and His own object, whether in His pure self-existence or in His varied self-becoming. He is the object of His own self-awareness; He is the Knower of His own self-being. The two aspects are inseparable, even though they seem to disappear into each other and emerge again from each other. All appearance of pure subjectivity holds itself as an object implicit in its very subjectivity; all appearance of pure objectivity holds itself as subject implicit in its very objectivity.

All objective existence is the Self-existent, the Self-becoming, “Swayambhu”, becoming by the force of the Idea within it. The Idea is, self-contained, the Fact that it becomes. For Swayambhu

sees or comprehends Himself in the essence of the Fact as “Kavi”, thinks Himself out in the evolution of its possibilities as “Manishi”, becomes form of Himself in the movement in Space and Time as “Paribhu”. These three are one operation appearing as successive in the relative, temporal and spatial Consciousness.

It follows that every object holds in itself the law of its own being eternally, *sāsvatībhyah samābhyaḥ*, from years sempiternal, in perpetual Time. All relations in the totality of objects are thus determined by their Inhabitant, the Self-existent, the Self-becoming, and stand contained in the nature of things by the omnipresence of the One, the Lord, by His self-vision which is their inherent subjective Truth, by His self-becoming which, against a background of boundless possibilities, is the Law of their inevitable evolution in the objective Fact.

Therefore all things are arranged by Him perfectly, *yāthā-tathyataḥ*, as they should be in their nature. There is an imperative harmony in the All, which governs the apparent discords of individualisation. That discord would be real and operate in eternal chaos, if there were only a mass of individual forms and forces, if each form and force did not contain in itself and were not in its reality the self-existent All, the Lord.

THE PROCESS OF THINGS

The Lord appears to us in the relative notion of the process of things first as Kavi, the Wise, the Seer. The Kavi sees the Truth in itself, the truth in its becoming, in its essence, possibilities, actuality. He contains all that in the Idea, the Vijnana, called the Truth and Law, Satyam Ritam. He contains it comprehensively, not piecemeal; the Truth and Law of things is the Brihat, the Large. Viewed by itself, the realm of Vijnana would seem a realm of predetermination, of concentration, of compelling seed-state. But it is a determination not in previous Time, but in perpetual Time; a Fate compelled by the Soul, not compelling it, compelling rather the action and result, present in the expansion of the movement as well as in the concentration of the Idea.

Therefore the truth of the Soul is freedom and mastery, not subjection and bondage. Purusha commands Prakriti, Prakriti does not compel Purusha. *Na karma lipyate nare.*

The Manishi takes his stand in the possibilities. He has behind him the freedom of the Infinite and brings it in as a background for the determination of the finite. Therefore every action in the world seems to emerge from a balancing and clashing of various possibilities. None of these, however, are effective in the determination except by their secret consonance with the Law of that which has to become. The Kavi is in the Manishi and upholds him in his working. But viewed by itself the realm of the Manishi would seem to be a state of plasticity, of free-will, of the interaction of forces, but of a free-will in thought which is met by a fate in things.

For the action of the Manishi is meant to eventuate in the becoming of the Paribhu. The Paribhu, called also Virat, extends Himself in the realm of eventualities. He fulfils what is contained in the Truth, what works out in the possibilities reflected by the mind, what appears to us as the fact objectively realised. The realm of Virat would seem, if taken separately, to be that of a Law and Predetermination which compels all things that evolve in that realm,—the iron chain of Karma, the rule of mechanical necessity, the despotism of an inexplicable Law.

But the becoming of Virat is always the becoming of the self-existent Lord,—*paribhūḥ svayambhūḥ*. Therefore to realise the truth of that becoming we have to go back and re-embrace all that stands behind;—we have to return to the full truth of the free and infinite Sachchidananda.

This is the truth of things as seen from above and from the Unity. It is the divine standpoint; but we have to take account of the human standpoint which starts from below, proceeds from the Ignorance, and perceives these principles successively, not comprehensively, as separate states of consciousness. Humanity is that which returns in experience to Sachchidananda, and it must begin from below, in Avidya, with the mind embodied in Matter, the Thinker imprisoned and emerging from the objective Fact. This imprisoned Thinker is Man, the “Manu”.

He has to start from death and division and arrive at unity and immortality. He has to realise the universal in the individual and the Absolute in the relative. He is Brahman growing self-conscious in the objective multiplicity. He is the ego in the cosmos vindicating himself as the All and the Transcendent.

V

THIRD MOVEMENT

[2]

Knowledge and Ignorance

Verses 9–11*

VIDYA AND AVIDYA

All manifestation proceeds by the two terms, Vidya and Avidya, the consciousness of Unity and the consciousness of Multiplicity. They are the two aspects of the Maya, the formative self-conception of the Eternal.

Unity is the eternal and fundamental fact, without which all multiplicity would be unreal and an impossible illusion. The consciousness of Unity is therefore called Vidya, the Knowledge.

Multiplicity is the play or varied self-expansion of the One, shifting in its terms, divisible in its view of itself, by force of which the One occupies many centres of consciousness, inhabits many formations of energy in the universal Movement. Multiplicity is implicit or explicit in unity. Without it the Unity would be either a void of non-existence or a powerless, sterile limitation to the state of indiscriminate self-absorption or of blank repose.

But the consciousness of multiplicity separated from the true knowledge in the many of their own essential oneness,—the

* 9. Into a blind darkness they enter who follow after the Ignorance, they as if into a greater darkness who devote themselves to the Knowledge alone.

10. Other, verily, it is said, is that which comes by the Knowledge, other that which comes by the Ignorance; this is the lore we have received from the wise who revealed That to our understanding.

11. He who knows That as both in one, the Knowledge and the Ignorance, by the Ignorance crosses beyond death and by the Knowledge enjoys Immortality.

view-point of the separate ego identifying itself with the divided form and the limited action,— is a state of error and delusion. In man this is the form taken by the consciousness of multiplicity. Therefore it is given the name of Avidya, the Ignorance.

Brahman, the Lord, is one and all-blissful, but free from limitation by His unity; all-powerful, He is able to conceive Himself from multiple centres in multiple forms from which and upon which flow multiple currents of energy, seen by us as actions or play of forces. When He is thus multiple, He is not bound by His multiplicity, but amid all variations dwells eternally in His own oneness. He is Lord of Vidya and Avidya. They are the two sides of His self-conception (Maya), the twin powers of His Energy (Chit-Shakti).

Brahman, exceeding as well as dwelling in the play of His Maya, is Ish, lord of it and free. Man, dwelling in the play, is Anish, not lord, not free, subject to Avidya. But this subjection is itself a play of the Ignorance, unreal in essential fact (*paramārtha*), real only in practical relation (*vyavahāra*), in the working out of the actions of the divine Energy, the Chit-Shakti. To get back to the essential fact of his freedom he must recover the sense of Oneness, the consciousness of Brahman, of the Lord, realise his oneness in Brahman and with the Lord. Recovering his freedom, realising his oneness with all existences as becomings of the One Being who is always himself (*so'ham asmi*, He am I), he is able to carry out divine actions in the world, no longer subject to the Ignorance, because free in the Knowledge.

The perfection of man, therefore, is the full manifestation of the Divine in the individual through the supreme accord between Vidya and Avidya. Multiplicity must become conscious of its oneness, Oneness embrace its multiplicity.

THE EXTREME PATHS

The purpose of the Lord in the world cannot be fulfilled by following Vidya alone or Avidya alone.

Those who are devoted entirely to the principle of multiplicity and division and take their orientation away from oneness

enter into a blind darkness of Ignorance. For this tendency is one of increasing contraction and limitation, disaggregation of the gains of knowledge and greater and greater subjection to the mechanical necessities of Prakriti and finally to her separative and self-destructive forces. To turn away from the progression towards Oneness is to turn away from existence and from light.

Those who are devoted entirely to the principle of indiscriminate Unity and seek to put away from them the integrality of the Brahman, also put away from them knowledge and completeness and enter as if into a greater darkness. They enter into some special state and accept it for the whole, mistaking exclusion in consciousness for transcendence in consciousness. They ignore by choice of knowledge, as the others are ignorant by compulsion of error. Knowing all to transcend all is the right path of Vidya.

Although a higher state than the other, this supreme Night is termed a greater darkness, because the lower is one of chaos from which reconstitution is always possible, the higher is a conception of Void or Asat, an attachment to non-existence of Self from which it is more difficult to return to fulfilment of Self.

THE GAINS IN EITHER PATH

Pursued with a less entire attachment the paths of Vidya and Avidya have each their legitimate gains for the human soul, but neither of these are the full and perfect thing undertaken by the individual in the manifestation.

By Vidya one may attain to the state of the silent Brahman or the Akshara Purusha regarding the universe without actively participating in it or to His self-absorbed state of Chit in Sat from which the universe proceeds and towards which it returns. Both these states are conditions of serenity, plenitude, freedom from the confusions and sufferings of the world.

But the highest goal of man is neither fulfilment in the movement as a separate individual nor in the Silence separated from the movement, but in the Uttama Purusha, the Lord, He who went abroad and upholds in Himself both the Kshara and the

Akshara as modes of His being. The self of man, the Jivatman, is here in order to realise in the individual and for the universe that one highest Self of all. The ego created by Avidya is a necessary mechanism for affirming individuality in the universal as a starting-point for this supreme achievement.

By Avidya one may attain to a sort of fullness of power, joy, world-knowledge, largeness of being, which is that of the Titans or of the Gods, of Indra, of Prajapati. This is gained in the path of self-enlargement by an ample acceptance of the multiplicity in all its possibilities and a constant enrichment of the individual by all the materials that the universe can pour into him. But this also is not the goal of man; for though it brings transcendence of the ordinary human limits, it does not bring the divine transcendence of the universe in the Lord of the universe. One transcends confusion of Ignorance, but not limitation of Knowledge,—transcends death of the body, but not limitation of being,—transcends subjection to sorrow, but not subjection to joy,—transcends the lower Prakriti, but not the higher. To gain the real freedom and the perfect Immortality one would have to descend again to all that had been rejected and make the right use of death, sorrow and ignorance.

The real knowledge is that which perceives Brahman in His integrality and does not follow eagerly after one consciousness rather than another, is no more attached to Vidya than to Avidya. This was the knowledge of the ancient sages who were *dhīra*, steadfast in the gaze of their thought, not drawn away from the completeness of knowledge by one light or by another and whose perception of Brahman was consequently entire and comprehensive and their teaching founded on that perception equally entire and comprehensive (*vicacaksire*). It is the knowledge handed down from these Ancients that is being set forth in the Upanishad.

THE COMPLETE PATH

Brahman embraces in His manifestation both Vidya and Avidya and if they are both present in the manifestation, it is because

they are both necessary to its existence and its accomplishment. Avidya subsists because Vidya supports and embraces it; Vidya depends upon Avidya for the preparation and the advance of the soul towards the great Unity. Neither could exist without the other; for if either were abolished, they would both pass away into something which would be neither the one nor the other, something inconceivable and ineffable beyond all manifestation.

In the worst Ignorance there is some point of the knowledge which constitutes that form of Ignorance and some support of Unity which prevents it in its most extreme division, limitation, obscurity from ceasing to exist by dissolving into nothingness. The destiny of the Ignorance is not that it should be dissolved out of existence, but that its elements should be enlightened, united, that which they strive to express delivered, fulfilled and in the fulfilment transmuted and transfigured.

In the uttermost unity of which knowledge is capable the contents of the Multiplicity are inherent and implicit and can any moment be released into activity. The office of Vidya is not to destroy Avidya as a thing that ought never to have been manifested but to draw it continually towards itself, supporting it the while and helping it to deliver itself progressively from that character of Ignorance, of the oblivion of its essential Oneness, which gives it its name.

Avidya fulfilled by turning more and more to Vidya enables the individual and the universal to become what the Lord is in Himself, conscious of His manifestation, conscious of His non-manifestation, free in birth, free in non-birth.

Man represents the point at which the multiplicity in the universe becomes consciously capable of this turning and fulfilment. His own natural fulfilment comes by following the complete path of Avidya surrendering itself to Vidya, the Multiplicity to the Unity, the Ego to the One in all and beyond all, and of Vidya accepting Avidya into itself, the Unity fulfilling the Multiplicity, the One manifesting Himself unveiled in the individual and in the universe.

MORTALITY AND IMMORTALITY

MORTALITY

By Avidya fulfilled man passes beyond death, by Vidya accepting Avidya into itself he enjoys immortality.

By death is meant the state of mortality which is a subjection to the process of constant birth and dying as a limited ego bound to the dualities of joy and sorrow, good and evil, truth and error, love and hatred, pleasure and suffering.

This state comes by limitation and self-division from the One who is all and in all and beyond all and by attachment of the idea of self to a single formation in Time and Space of body, life and mind, by which the Self excludes from its view all that it verily is with the exception of a mass of experiences flowing out from and in upon a particular centre and limited by the capacities of a particular mental, vital and bodily frame. This mass of experiences it organises around the ego-centre in the mind and linking them together in Time by a double action of memory, passive in state, active in work, says continually, "This is I."

The result is that the soul attributes to itself a certain portion only of the play of Prakriti or Chit-Shakti and consequently a certain limited capacity of force of consciousness which has to bear all the impact of what the soul does not regard as itself but as a rush of alien forces; against them it defends its separate formation of individuality from dissolution into Nature or mastery by Nature. It seeks to assert in the individual form and by its means its innate character of Ish or Lord and so to possess and enjoy its world.

But by the very definition of the ego its capacity is limited. It accepts as itself a form made of the movement of Nature which cannot endure in the general flux of things. It has to form it by the process of the movement and this is birth, it dissolves it by the process of the movement and this is death.

It can master by the understanding only so much of its experiences as assimilate with its own view-point and in a way

which must always be imperfect and subject to error because it is not the view of all or the view-point of the All. Its knowledge is partly error and all the rest it ignores.

It can only accept and harmonise itself with a certain number of its experiences, precisely because these are the only ones it can understand sufficiently to assimilate. This is its joy; the rest is sorrow or indifference.

It is only capable of harmonising with the force in its body, nerves and mind a certain number of impacts of alien forces. In these it takes pleasure. The rest it receives with insensibility or pain.

Death therefore is the constant denial by the All of the ego's false self-limitation in the individual frame of mind, life and body.

Error is the constant denial by the All of the ego's false sufficiency in a limited knowledge.

Suffering of mind and body is the constant denial by the All of the ego's attempt to confine the universal Ananda to a false and self-regarding formation of limited and exclusive enjoyments.

It is only by accepting the oneness of the All that the individual can escape from this constant and necessary denial and attain beyond. Then All-being, All-force, All-consciousness, All-truth, All-delight take possession of the individual soul. It changes mortality for immortality.

MORTALITY AND AVIDYA

But the way of attaining to immortality is not by the self-dissolution of the individual formation into the flux of Prakriti, neither is it by prematurely dissolving it into the All-soul which Prakriti expresses. Man moves towards something which fulfils the universe by transcending it. He has to prepare his individual soul for the transcendence and for the fulfilment.

If Avidya is the cause of mortality, it is also the path out of mortality. The limitation has been created precisely in order that the individual may affirm himself against the flux of Prakriti in

order eventually to transcend, possess and transform it.

The first necessity is therefore for man continually to enlarge himself in being, knowledge, joy, power in the limits of the ego so that he may arrive at the conception of something which progressively manifests itself in him in these terms and becomes more and more powerful to deal with the oppositions of Prakriti and to change, individually, more and more the terms of ignorance, suffering and weakness into the terms of knowledge, joy and power and even death into a means of wider life.

This self-enlargement has then to awaken to the perception of something exceeding itself, exceeding the personal manifestation. Man has so to enlarge his conception of self as to see all in himself and himself in all (*verse 6*). He has to see that this "I" which contains all and is contained in all, is the One, is universal and not his personal ego. To That he has to subject his ego, That he has to reproduce in his nature and become, That is what he has to possess and enjoy with an equal soul in all its forms and movements.

He has to see that this universal One is something entirely transcendent, the sole Being, and that the universe and all its forms, actions, egos are only becomings of that Being (*verse 7*). World is a becoming which seeks always to express in motion of Time and Space, by progression in mind, life and body what is beyond all becoming, beyond Time and Space, beyond mind, life and body.

Thus Avidya becomes one with Vidya. By Avidya man passes beyond that death, suffering, ignorance, weakness which were the first terms he had to deal with, the first assertions of the One in the birth affirming Himself amid the limitations and divisions of the Multiplicity. By Vidya he enjoys even in the birth the Immortality.

IMMORTALITY

Immortality does not mean survival of the self or the ego after dissolution of the body. The Self always survives the dissolution of the body, because it always pre-existed before the birth of

the body. The Self is unborn and undying. The survival of the ego is only the first condition by which the individual soul is able to continue and link together its experiences in Avidya so as to pursue with an increasing self-possession and mastery that process of self-enlargement which culminates in Vidya.

By immortality is meant the consciousness which is beyond birth and death, beyond the chain of cause and effect, beyond all bondage and limitation, free, blissful, self-existent in conscious-being, the consciousness of the Lord, of the supreme Purusha, of Sachchidananda.

IMMORTALITY AND BIRTH

On this realisation man can base his free activity in the universe.

But having so far attained, what further utility has the soul for birth or for works? None for itself, everything for God and the universe.

Immortality beyond the universe is not the object of manifestation in the universe, for that the Self always possessed. Man exists in order that through him the Self may enjoy Immortality in the birth as well as in the non-becoming.

Nor is individual salvation the end; for that would only be the sublime of the ego, not its self-realisation through the Lord in all.

Having realised his own immortality, the individual has yet to fulfil God's work in the universe. He has to help the life, the mind and the body in all beings to express progressively Immortality and not mortality.

This he may do by the becoming in the material body which we ordinarily call birth, or from some status in another world or even, it is possible, from beyond world. But birth in the body is the most close, divine and effective form of help which the liberated can give to those who are themselves still bound to the progression of birth in the lowest world of the Ignorance.

VI

THIRD MOVEMENT

[3]

Birth and Non-Birth

Verses 12–14*

THE BIRTH AND THE NON-BIRTH

The Self outside Nature does not become; it is immutable as well as eternal. The Self in Nature becomes, it changes its states and forms. This entry into various states and forms in the succession of Time is Birth in Nature.

Because of these two positions of the Self, in Nature and out of Nature, moving in the movement and seated above the movement, active in the development and eating the fruits of the tree of Life or inactive and simply regarding, there are two possible states of conscious existence directly opposed to each other of which the human soul is capable, the state of Birth, the state of Non-Birth.

Man starts from the troubled state of Birth, he arrives at that tranquil poise of conscious existence liberated from the movement which is the Non-Birth. The knot of the Birth is the ego-sense; the dissolution of the ego-sense brings us to the Non-Birth. Therefore the Non-Birth is also called the Dissolution (Vinasha).

* 12. Into a blind darkness they enter who follow after the Non-Birth, they as if into a greater darkness who devote themselves to the Birth alone.

13. Other, verily, it is said, is that which comes by the Birth, other that which comes by the Non-Birth; this is the lore we have received from the wise who revealed That to our understanding.

14. He who knows That as both in one, the Birth and the dissolution of Birth, by the dissolution crosses beyond death and by the Birth enjoys Immortality.

Birth and Non-Birth are not essentially physical conditions, but soul-states. A man may break the knot of the ego-sense and yet remain in the physical body; but if he concentrates himself solely in the state of dissolution of ego, then he is not born again in the body. He is liberated from birth as soon as the present impulse of Nature which continues the action of the mind and body has been exhausted. On the other hand if he attaches himself to the Birth, the ego-principle in him seeks continually to clothe itself in fresh mental and physical forms.

THE EVIL OF THE EXTREMES

Neither attachment to Non-Birth nor attachment to Birth is the perfect way. For all attachment is an act of ignorance and a violence committed upon the Truth. Its end also is ignorance, a state of blind darkness.

Exclusive attachment to Non-Birth leads to a dissolution into indiscriminate Nature or into the Nihil, into the Void, and both of these are states of blind darkness. For the Nihil is an attempt not to transcend the state of existence in birth, but to annul it, not to pass from a limited into an illimitable existence, but from existence into its opposite. The opposite of existence can only be the Night of negative consciousness, a state of ignorance and not of release.

On the other hand, attachment to Birth in the body means a constant self-limitation and an interminable round of egoistic births in the lower forms of egoism without issue or release. This is, from a certain point of view, a worse darkness than the other; for it is ignorant even of the impulse of release. It is not an error in the grasping after truth, but a perpetual contentment with the state of blindness. It cannot lead even eventually to any greater good, because it does not dream of any higher condition.

THE GOOD OF THE EXTREMES

On the other hand each of these tendencies, pursued with a certain relativity to the other, has its own fruit and its own good.

Non-Birth pursued as the goal of Birth and a higher, fuller and truer existence may lead to withdrawal into the silent Brahman or into the pure liberty of the Non-Being. Birth, pursued as a means of progress and self-enlargement, leads to a greater and fuller life which may, in its turn, become a vestibule to the final achievement.

THE PERFECT WAY

But neither of these results is perfect in itself nor the true goal of humanity. Each of them brings its intended portion into the perfect good of the human soul only when it is completed by the other.

Brahman is both Vidya and Avidya, both Birth and Non-Birth. The realisation of the Self as the unborn and the poise of the soul beyond the dualities of birth and death in the infinite and transcendent existence are the conditions of a free and divine life in the Becoming. The one is necessary to the other. It is by participation in the pure unity of the Immobile (Akshara) Brahman that the soul is released from its absorption in the stream of the movement. So released it identifies itself with the Lord to whom becoming and non-becoming are only modes of His existence and is able to enjoy immortality in the manifestation without being caught in the wheel of Nature's delusions. The necessity of birth ceases, its personal object having been fulfilled; the freedom of becoming remains. For the Divine enjoys equally and simultaneously the freedom of His eternity and the freedom of His becoming.

It may even be said that to have had the conscious experience of a dissolution of the very idea of Being into the supreme Non-Being is necessary for the fullest and freest possession of Being itself. This would be from the synthetic standpoint the justification of the great effort of Buddhism to exceed the conception of all positive being even in its widest or purest essentiality.

Thus by dissolution of ego and of the attachment to birth the soul crosses beyond death; it is liberated from all limitation in the dualities. Having attained this liberation it accepts becoming

as a process of Nature subject to the soul and not binding upon it and by this free and divine becoming enjoys Immortality.

THE JUSTIFICATION OF LIFE

Thus, the third movement of the Upanishad is a justification of life and works, which were enjoined upon the seeker of the Truth in its second verse. Works are the essence of Life. Life is a manifestation of the Brahman; in Brahman the Life Principle arranges a harmony of the seven principles of conscious being by which that manifestation works out its involution and evolution. In Brahman Matarishwan disposes the waters, the sevenfold movement of the divine Existence. That divine Existence is the Lord who has gone abroad in the movement and unrolled the universe in His three modes as All-Seer of the Truth of things, Thinker-out of their possibilities, Realiser of their actualities. He has determined all things sovereignly in their own nature, development and goal from years sempiternal.

That determination works out through His double power of Vidya and Avidya, consciousness of essential unity and consciousness of phenomenal multiplicity.

The Multiplicity carried to its extreme limit returns upon itself in the conscious individual who is the Lord inhabiting the forms of the movement and enjoying first the play of the Ignorance. Afterwards by development in the Ignorance the soul returns to the capacity of Knowledge and enjoys by the Knowledge Immortality.

This Immortality is gained by the dissolution of the limited ego and its chain of births into the consciousness of the unborn and undying, the Eternal, the Lord, the ever-free. But it is enjoyed by a free and divine becoming in the universe and not outside the universe; for there it is always possessed, but here in the material body it is to be worked out and enjoyed by the divine Inhabitant under circumstances that are in appearance the most opposite to its terms, in the life of the individual and in the multiple life of the universe.

Life has to be transcended in order that it may be freely

accepted; the works of the universe have to be overpassed in order that they may be divinely fulfilled.

The soul even in apparent bondage is really free and only plays at being bound; but it has to go back to the consciousness of freedom and possess and enjoy universally not this or that but the Divine and the All.

VII

FOURTH MOVEMENT

[1]

The Worlds — Surya

Verses 15–16*

THE WORLDS AFTER DEATH

In the third verse the Upanishad has spoken of sunless worlds enveloped in blind gloom. In its third movement it also speaks twice of the soul entering into a blind gloom, but here it is a state of consciousness that seems to be indicated and not a world. Nevertheless, the two statements differ little in effect; for in the Vedantic conception a world is only a condition of conscious being organised in the terms of the seven constituent principles of manifested existence. According to the state of consciousness which we reach here in the body, will be our state of consciousness and the surroundings organised by it when the mental being passes out of the body. For the individual soul out of the body must either disappear into the general constituents of its existence, merge itself into Brahman or persist in an organisation of consciousness other than the terrestrial and in relations with the universe other than those which are appropriate to life in the body. This state of consciousness and the relations belonging to it are the other worlds, the worlds after death.

* 15. The face of Truth is covered with a brilliant golden lid; that do thou remove, O Fosterer, for the law of the Truth, for sight.

16. O Fosterer, O sole Seer, O Ordainer, O illumining Sun, O power of the Father of creatures, marshal thy rays, draw together thy light; the Lustre which is thy most blessed form of all, that in Thee I behold. The Purusha there and there, He am I.

THE THREE STATES

The Upanishad admits three states of the soul in relation to the manifested universe,—terrestrial life by birth in the body, the survival of the individual soul after death in other states and the immortal existence which being beyond birth and death, beyond manifestation can yet enter into forms as the Inhabitant and embrace Nature as its lord. The two former conditions appertain to the Becoming; Immortality stands in the Self, in the Non-Birth, and enjoys the Becoming.

The Upanishad, although it does not speak expressly of rebirth in an earthly body, yet implies that belief in its thought and language,—especially in the 17th verse. On the basis of this belief in rebirth man may aim at three distinct objects beyond death,—a better or more fortunate life or lives upon earth, eternal enjoyment of bliss in an ultra-terrestrial world of light and joy or a transcendence exclusive of all universal existence, merged in the Supreme as in one's true self, but having no relation with the actual or possible contents of its infinite consciousness.

REBIRTH

The attainment of a better life or lives upon earth is not the consummation offered to the soul by the thought of the Upanishad. But it is an important intermediate object so long as the soul is in a state of growth and self-enlargement and has not attained to liberation. The obligation of birth and death is a sign that the mental being has not yet unified itself with its true supramental self and spirit, but is dwelling “in Avidya and enclosed within it”.¹ To attain that union the life of man upon earth is its appointed means. After liberation the soul is free, but may still participate in the entire movement and return to birth no longer for its own sake but for the sake of others and according to the will in it of its divine Self, the Lord of its movement.

¹ *Avidyāyām antare vartamānāḥ*.—Katha Upanishad I. 2. 5; Mundaka I. 2. 8.

HEAVEN AND HELL

The enjoyment of beatitude in a heaven beyond is also not the supreme consummation. But Vedantic thought did not envisage rebirth as an immediate entry after death into a new body; the mental being in man is not so rigidly bound to the vital and physical,—on the contrary, the latter are ordinarily dissolved together after death, and there must therefore be, before the soul is attracted back towards terrestrial existence, an interval in which it assimilates its terrestrial experiences in order to be able to constitute a new vital and physical being upon earth. During this interval it must dwell in states or worlds beyond and these may be favourable or unfavourable to its future development. They are favourable in proportion as the light of the Supreme Truth of which Surya is a symbol enters into them, but states of intermediate ignorance or darkness are harmful to the soul in its progress. Those enter into them, as has been affirmed in the third verse, who do hurt to themselves by shutting themselves to the light or distorting the natural course of their development. The Vedantic heavens are states of light and the soul's expansion; darkness, self-obscuration and self-distortion are the nature of the Hells which it has to shun.

In relation to the soul's individual development, therefore, the life in worlds beyond, like the life upon earth, is a means and not an object in itself. After liberation the soul may possess these worlds as it possesses the material birth, accepting in them a means towards the divine manifestation in which they form a condition of its fullness, each being one of the parts in a series of organised states of conscious being which is linked with and supports all the rest.

TRANSCENDENCE

Transcendence is the goal of the development, but it does not exclude the possession of that which is transcended. The soul need not and should not push transcendence so far as to aim at its

own extinction. Nirvana is extinction of the ego-limitations, but not of all possibility of manifestation, since it can be possessed even in the body.

The desire of the exclusive liberation is the last desire that the soul in its expanding knowledge has to abandon; the delusion that it is bound by birth is the last delusion that it has to destroy.

SURYA AND AGNI

On the basis of this conception of the worlds and the relation of these different soul-states to each other the Upanishad proceeds to indicate the two lines of knowledge and action which lead to the supreme vision and the divine felicity. This is done under the form of an invocation to Surya and Agni, the Vedic godheads, representative one of the supreme Truth and its illuminations, the other of the divine Will raising, purifying and perfecting human action.

THE ORDER OF THE WORLDS

To understand entirely the place and function of Surya we must enter a little more profoundly into the Vedic conception of the seven worlds and the principles of consciousness they represent.

All conscious being is one and indivisible in itself, but in manifestation it becomes a complex rhythm, a scale of harmonies, a hierarchy of states or movements. For what we call a state is only the organisation of a complex movement. This hierarchy is composed by a descending or involutive and an ascending or evolutive movement of which Spirit and Matter are the highest and lowest terms.

Spirit is Sat or pure existence, pure in self-awareness (Chit), pure in self-delight (Ananda). Therefore Spirit can be regarded as a triune basis of all conscious being. There are three terms, but they are really one. For all pure existence is in its essence pure self-consciousness and all pure self-consciousness is in its essence pure self-delight. At the same time our consciousness is capable of separating these three by the Idea and the Word and even of

creating for itself in its divided or limited movements the sense of their apparent opposites.

An integral intuition into the nature of conscious being shows us that it is indeed one in essence, but also that it is capable of an infinite potential complexity and multiplicity in self-experience. The working of this potential complexity and multiplicity in the One is what we call from our point of view manifestation or creation or world or becoming—(*bhuvana, bhāva*). Without it no world-existence is possible.

The agent of this becoming is always the self-consciousness of the Being. The power by which the self-consciousness brings out of itself its potential complexities is termed Tapas, Force or Energy, and, being self-conscious, is obviously of the nature of Will. But not Will as we understand it, something exterior to its object, other than its works, labouring on material outside itself, but Will inherent in the Being, inherent in the becoming, one with the movement of existence,—self-conscious Will that becomes what it sees and knows in itself, Will that is expressed as Force of its own work and formulates itself in the result of its work. By this Will, Tapas or Chit-Shakti, the worlds are created.

THE HIGHER WORLDS

All organisation of self-conscious being which takes as its basis the unity of pure existence belongs to the world of the highest creation, *parārdha*,—the worlds of the Spirit.

We can conceive three principal formations.

When Tapas or energy of self-consciousness dwells upon Sat or pure existence as its basis, the result is Satyaloka or world of true existence. The soul in Satyaloka is one with all its manifestations by oneness of essence and therefore one in self-consciousness and in energy of self-consciousness and one also in bliss.

When Tapas dwells upon active power of Chit as its basis, the result is Tapoloka or world of energy of self-consciousness. The soul in Tapoloka is one with all manifestations in this Energy and therefore enjoys oneness also in the totality of their bliss and possesses equally their unity of essence.

When Tapas dwells upon active Delight of being as its basis, the result is Janaloka, world of creative Delight. The soul in Janaloka is one in delight of being with all manifestation and through that bliss one also in conscious energy and in essence of being.

All these are states of consciousness in which unity and multiplicity have not yet been separated from each other. All is in all, each in all and all in each, inherently, by the very nature of conscious being and without effort of conception or travail of perception. There is no night, no obscurity. Neither is there, properly speaking, any dominant action of illuminating Surya. For the whole of consciousness there is self-luminous and needs no light other than itself. The distinct existence of Surya is lost in the oneness of the Lord or Purusha; that luminous oneness is Surya's most blessed form of all.

THE LOWER CREATION

In the lower creation also there are three principles, Matter, Life, and Mind. Sat or pure existence appears there as extended substance or Matter; Will or Force appears as Life which is in its nature creative or manifesting Force and that Force is in its nature a self-conscious will involved and obscure in the forms of its creation. It is liberated from the involution and obscurity by delight of being struggling to become conscious of itself in desire and sensation; the result is the emergence of Mind. So at least it appears to us in the ascending or evolutive movement.

Wherever there is Matter, Life and Mind are present involved or evolving. So also, Life and Mind have some kind of material form as the condition of their activities. These three appear not as triune, owing to their domination by the dividing principle of Avidya, but as triple.

In the organisation of consciousness to which we belong, Tapas dwells upon Matter as its basis. Our consciousness is determined by the divisibility of extended substance in its apparent forms. This is Bhurloka, the material world, the world of formal becoming.

But we may conceive of a world in which dynamic Life-force with sensation emergent in it is the basis and determines without the gross obstacle of Matter the forms that it shall take. This organisation of consciousness has for its field Bhavarloka, the worlds of free vital becoming in form.

We may conceive also of an organised state of consciousness in which Mind liberates itself from subjection to material sensation and becoming dominant determines its own forms instead of being itself determined by the forms in which it finds itself as a result of life evolution. This formation is Swarloka or world of free, pure and luminous mentality.

In these lower worlds consciousness is normally broken up and divided. The light of Surya, the Truth, is imprisoned in the night of the subconscious or appears only reflected in limited centres or with its rays received by those centres and utilised according to their individual nature.

THE INTERMEDIATE WORLD

Between these two creations, linking them together, is the world or organisation of consciousness of which the infinite Truth of things is the foundation. There dominant individualisation no longer usurps the all-pervading soul and the foundation of consciousness is its own vast totality arranging in itself individualised movements which never lose the consciousness of their integrality and total oneness with all others. Multiplicity no longer prevails and divides, but even in the complexity of its movements always refers back to essential unity and its own integral totality. This world is therefore called Maharloka or world of large consciousness.

The principle of Maharloka is Vijnana, the Idea. But this Vijnana is intuitional or rather gnostic Idea,² not intellectual

² Intuition (revelation, inspiration, intuitive perception, intuitive discrimination) is Vijnana working in mind under the conditions and in the forms of mind. Gnosis or true supermind is a power above mind working in its own law, out of the direct identity of the supreme Self, his absolute self-conscious Truth knowing herself by her own power of absolute Light without any need of seeking, even the most luminous seeking.

conception. The difference is that intellectual conception not only tends towards form, but determines itself in the form of the idea and once determined distinguishes itself sharply from other conceptions. But pure intuitional or gnostic Idea sees itself in the Being as well as in the Becoming. It is one with the existence which throws out the form as a symbol of itself and it therefore carries with it always the knowledge of the Truth behind the form. It is in its nature self-conscious of the being and power of the One, aware always of its totality, starting therefore from the totality of all existence and perceiving directly its contents. Its nature is *dr̥ṣṭi*, seeing, not conceiving. It is the vision at once of the essence and the image. It is this intuition or gnosis which is the Vedic Truth, the self-vision and all-vision of Surya.

THE LAW OF THE TRUTH

The face of this Truth is covered as with a brilliant shield, as with a golden lid; covered, that is to say, from the view of our human consciousness. For we are mental beings and our highest ordinary mental sight is composed of the concepts and percepts of the mind, which are indeed a means of knowledge, rays of the Truth, but not in their nature truth of existence, only truth of form. By them we arrange our knowledge of the appearances of things and try to infer the truth behind. The true knowledge is truth of existence, *satyam*, not mere truth of form or appearance.

We can only arrive at the true Truth, if Surya works in us to remove this brilliant formation of concepts and percepts and replaces them by the self-vision and all-vision.

For this it is necessary that the law and action of the Truth should be manifested in us. We must learn to see things as they are, see ourselves as we are. Our present action is one in which self-knowledge and will are divided. We start with a fundamental falsehood, that we have a separate existence from others and we try to know the relations of separate beings in their separateness and act on the knowledge so formed for an individual utility. The law of the Truth would work in us if we saw the totality of our existence containing all others, its forms created by the

action of the totality, its powers working in and by the action of the totality. Our internal and external action would then well naturally and directly out of our self-existence, out of the very truth of things and not in obedience to an intermediate principle which is in its nature a falsifying reflection.

THE FULFILMENT OF SURYA IN MAN

Nevertheless even in our ordinary action there is the beginning or at least the seed of the Truth which must liberate us. Behind every act and perception there is an intuition, a truth which, if it is continually falsified in the form, yet preserves itself in the essence and works to lead us by increasing light and largeness to truth in the manifestation. Behind all this travail of differentiation and division there is an insistent unifying tendency which is also continually falsified in the separate result, but yet leads persistently towards our eventual integrality in knowledge, in being and in will.

Surya is Pushan, fosterer or increaser. His work must be to effect this enlargement of the divided self-perception and action of will into the integral will and knowledge. He is sole seer and replacing other forms of knowledge by his unifying vision enables us to arrive finally at oneness. That intuitive vision of the totality, of one in All and All in one, becomes the ordainer of the right law of action in us, the law of the Truth. For Surya is Yama, the Ordainer or Controller who assures the law, the dharma. Thus we arrive at the fullness of action of the Illuminer in us, accomplish the entirety of the Truth-Consciousness. We are then able to see that all that is contained in the being of Surya, in the Vijnana which builds up the worlds is becoming of existence in the one existence and one Lord of all becoming, the Purusha, Sachchidananda. All becoming is born in the Being who himself exceeds all becomings and is their Lord, Prajapati.

By the revelation of the vision of Surya the true knowledge is formed. In this formation the Upanishad indicates two successive actions. First, there is an arrangement or marshalling of the rays of Surya, that is to say, the truths concealed behind our concepts

and percepts are brought out by separate intuitions of the image and the essence of the image and arranged in their true relations to each other. So we arrive at totalities of intuitive knowledge and can finally go beyond to unity. This is the drawing together of the light of Surya. This double movement is necessitated by the constitution of our minds which cannot, like the original Truth-consciousness, start at once from the totality and perceive its contents from within. The mind can hardly conceive unity except as an abstraction, a sum or a void. Therefore it has to be gradually led from its own manner to that which exceeds it. It has to carry out its own characteristic action of arrangement, but with the help and by the operation of the higher faculty, no longer arbitrarily, but following the very action of the Truth of existence itself. Afterwards, by thus gradually correcting the manner of its own characteristic action it can succeed in reversing that characteristic action itself and learn to proceed from the whole to the contents instead of proceeding from "parts"³ mistaken for entities to an apparent whole which is still a "part" and still mistaken for an entity.

THE ONE EXISTENT

Thus by the action of Surya we arrive at that light of the supreme superconscious in which even the intuitive knowledge of the truth of things based upon the total vision passes into the self-luminous self-vision of the one existent, one in all infinite complexities of a self-experience which never loses its unity or its self-luminousness. This is Surya's goodliest form of all. For it is the supreme Light, the supreme Will, the supreme Delight of existence.

This is the Lord, the Purusha, the self-conscious Being. When we have this vision, there is the integral self-knowledge, the perfect seeing, expressed in the great cry of the Upanishad, *so'ham*. The Purusha there and there, He am I. The Lord manifests Himself in the movements and inhabits many forms, but it is One

³ There are really no parts, existence being indivisible.

who inhabits all. This self-conscious being, this real “I” whom the mental being individualised in the form is aware of as his true self—it is He. It is the All; and it is that which transcends the All.

VIII

FOURTH MOVEMENT

[2]

Action and the Divine Will

Verses 17–18*

THE SIDE OF ACTION

Through Surya then, through the growth of the illumination in the mind which enables it eventually to pass beyond itself, we have the first principle of progress from mortality to immortality. It is by the Sun as a door or gate¹ that the individual, the limited consciousness attains to the full consciousness and life in the one, supreme and all-embracing Soul.

Both consciousness and life are included in the formula of Immortality; Knowledge is incomplete without action. Chit fulfils itself by Tapas, Consciousness by energy. And as Surya represents the divine Light, so Agni to the ancient Rishis represented divine Force, Power or Will-in-Consciousness. The prayer to Agni completes the prayer to Surya.

THE INDIVIDUAL WILL

As in knowledge, so in action, unity is the true foundation. The individual, accepting division as his law, isolating himself

* 17. The Breath of things is an immortal life, but of this body ashes are the end. OM! O Will, remember, that which was done remember! O Will, remember, that which was done remember.

18. O god Agni, knowing all things that are manifested, lead us by the good path to the felicity; remove from us the devious attraction of sin. To thee completest speech of submission we address.

¹ *Sūryadvāreṇa*. — Mundaka Upanishad I. 2. 11.

in his own egoistic limits, is necessarily mortal, obscure and ignorant in his workings. He follows in his aims and in his methods a knowledge that is personal, governed by desire, habits of thought, obscure subconscious impulses or, at best, a broken partial and shifting light. He lives by rays and not in the full blaze of the Sun. His knowledge is narrow in its objectivity, narrow in its subjectivity, in neither one with the integral knowledge and the total working and total will in the universe. His action, therefore, is crooked, many-branching, hesitating and fluctuating in its impulsion and direction; it beats about among falsehoods to find the Truth, tosses or scrapes fragments together to piece out the whole, stumbles among errors and sins to find the right. Being neither one-visioned nor whole-visioned, having neither the totality of the universal Will nor the concentrated oneness of the transcendent, the individual will cannot walk straight on the right or good path towards the Truth and the Immortality. Governed by desire, exposed to the shock of the forces around it with which its egoism and ignorance forbid it to put itself in harmony, it is subject to the twin children of the Ignorance, suffering and falsehood. Not having the divine Truth and Right, it cannot have the divine Felicity.

AGNI, THE DIVINE WILL

But as there is in and behind all the falsehoods of our material mind and reason a Light that prepares by this twilight the full dawn of the Truth in man, so there is in and behind all our errors, sins and stumbling a secret Will, tending towards Love and Harmony, which knows where it is going and prepares and combines our crooked branchings towards the straight path which will be the final result of their toil and seeking. The emergence of this Will and that Light is the condition of immortality.

This Will is Agni. Agni is in the Rig Veda, from which the closing verse of the Upanishad is taken, the flame of the Divine Will or Force of Consciousness working in the worlds. He is described as the immortal in mortals, the leader of the journey, the divine Horse that bears us on the road, the “son

of crookedness” who himself knows and is the straightness and the Truth. Concealed and hard to seize in the workings of this world because they are all falsified by desire and egoism, he uses them to transcend them and emerges as the universal in Man or universal Power, Agni Vaishwanara, who contains in himself all the gods and all the worlds, upholds all the universal workings and finally fulfils the godhead, the Immortality. He is the worker of the divine Work. It is these symbols which govern the sense of the two final verses of the Upanishad.

THE IMMORTAL LIFE-PRINCIPLE

Life is the condition from which the Will and the Light emerge. It is said in the Veda that Vayu or Matarishwan, the Life-principle, is he who brings down Agni from Surya in the high and far-off supreme world. Life calls down the divine Will from the Truth-consciousness into the realm of mind and body to prepare here, in Life, its own manifestation. Agni, enjoying and devouring the things of Life, generates the Maruts, nervous forces of Life that become forces of thought; they, upheld by Agni, prepare the action of Indra, the luminous Mind, who is for our life-powers their Rishi or finder of the Truth and Right. Indra slays Vritra, the Coverer, dispels the darkness, causes Surya to rise upon our being and go abroad over its whole field with the rays of the Truth. Surya is the Creator or manifester, Savitri, who manifests in this mortal world the world or state of immortality, dispels the evil dream of egoism, sin and suffering and transforms Life into the Immortality, the good, the beatitude. The Vedic gods are a parable of human life emerging, mounting, lifting itself towards the Godhead.

Life, body, action, will, these are our first materials. Matter supplies us with the body; but it is only a temporary knot of the movement, a dwelling-place of the Purusha in which he presides over the activities generated out of the Life-principle. Once it is thrown aside by the Life-principle it is dissolved; ashes are its end. Therefore the body is not ourselves, but only an outer tool and instrument. For Matter is the principle of obscurity and

division, of birth and death, of formation and dissolution. It is the assertion of death. Immortal man must not identify himself with the body.

The Life-principle in us survives. It is the immortal Breath² or, as the phrase really means, the subtle force of existence which is superior to the principle of birth and death. At first sight it may appear that birth and death are attributes of the Life, but it is not really so: birth and death are processes of Matter, of the body. The Life-principle is not formed and dissolved in the formulation and dissolution of the body; if that were so, there could be no continuity of the individual existence and all would go back at death into the formless. Life forms body, it is not formed by it. It is the thread upon which the continuity of our successive bodily lives is arranged, precisely because it is itself immortal. It associates itself with the perishable body and carries forward the mental being, the Purusha in the mind, upon his journey.

WILL AND MEMORY

This journey consists in a series of activities continued from life to life in this world with intervals of life in other states. The Life-principle maintains them; it supplies their material in the formative energy which takes shape in them. But their presiding god is not the Life-principle; it is the Will. Will is Kratu, the effective power behind the act. It is of the nature of consciousness; it is energy of consciousness, and although present in all forms, conscious, subconscious or superconscious, vital, physical or mental, yet comes into its kingdom only when it emerges in Mind. It uses the mental faculty of memory to link together and direct consciously the activities towards the goal of the individual.

In man the use of consciousness by the mental will is imperfect, because memory is limited. Our action is both dispersed and circumscribed because mentally we live from hour to hour in the current of Time, holding only to that which attracts or

² *Anilam amṛtam.*

seems immediately useful to our egoistic mind. We live in what we are doing, we do not control what has been done, but are rather controlled by our past works which we have forgotten. This is because we dwell in the action and its fruits instead of living in the soul and viewing the stream of action from behind it. The Lord, the true Will, stands back from the actions and therefore is their lord and not bound by them.

The Upanishad solemnly invokes the Will to remember the thing that has been done, so as to contain and be conscious of the becoming, so as to become a power of knowledge and self-possession and not only a power of impulsion and self-formulation. It will thus more and more approximate itself to the true Will and preside over the co-ordination of the successive lives with a conscious control. Instead of being carried from life to life in a crooked path, as by winds, it will be able to proceed more and more straight in an ordered series, linking life to life with an increasing force of knowledge and direction until it becomes the fully conscious Will moving with illumination on the straight path towards the immortal felicity. The mental will, *kratu*, becomes what it at present only represents, the divine Will, Agni.

WILL AND KNOWLEDGE

The essentiality of the divine Will is that in it Consciousness and Energy, Knowledge and Force are one. It knows all manifestations, all things that take birth in the worlds. It is Jatavedas, that which has right knowledge of all births. It knows them in the law of their being, in their relation to other births, in their aim and method, in their process and goal, in their unity with all and their difference from all. It is this divine Will that conducts the universe; it is one with all the things that it combines and its being, its knowledge, its action are inseparable from each other. What it is, it knows; what it knows, that it does and becomes.

But as soon as egoistic consciousness emerges and interferes, there is a disturbance, a division, a false action. Will becomes

an impulsion ignorant of its secret motive and aim, knowledge becomes a dubious and partial ray not in possession of the will, the act and the result, but only striving to possess and inform them. This is because we are not in possession of our self,³ our true being, but only of the ego. What we are, we know not; what we know, we cannot effect. For knowledge is real and action in harmony with true knowledge only when they proceed naturally out of the conscious, illumined and self-possessing soul, in which being, knowledge and action are one movement.

SURRENDER TO THE DIVINE WILL

This is the change that happens when, the mental will approximating more and more to the divine, Agni burns out in us. It is that increasing knowledge and force which carries us finally into the straight or good path out of the crookedness. It is the divine Will, one with the divine knowledge, which leads us towards felicity, towards the state of Immortality. All that belongs to the deviations of the ego, all that obscures and drives or draws us into this or that false path with its false lures and stumbling blocks are put away from us by it. These things fall away from the divinised Will and cease to find lodging in our consciousness.

Therefore the sign of right action is the increasing and finally the complete submission of the individual to the divine Will which the illumination of Surya reveals in him. Although manifested in his consciousness, this Will is not individual. It is the will of the Purusha who is in all things and transcends them. It is the will of the Lord.

Knowledge of the Lord as the One in the fully self-conscious being, submission to the Lord as the universal and transcendent in the fully self-conscious action, are the two keys of the divine gates, the gates of Immortality.

And the nature of the two united is an illuminated Devotion which accepts, aspires to and fulfils God in the human existence.

³ *Ātmavān*.

CONCLUSION

Thus the fourth movement indicates psychologically the double process of that attainment of Immortality which is the subject of the third movement, the state of bliss and truth within and the worlds of Light after death culminating in the identity of the self-luminous One. At the same time it particularises under the cover of Vedic symbols the process of that self-knowledge and identification with the Self and all its becomings which is the subject of the second movement and of that liberated action in the assertion of which the first culminates. It is thus a fitting close and consummation to the Upanishad.

IX

Conclusion and Summary

THE ISHA Upanishad is one of the more ancient of the Vedantic writings in style, substance and versification, subsequent certainly to the Chhandogya, Brihadaranyaka and perhaps to the Taittiriya and Aitareya, but certainly the most antique of the extant metrical Upanishads. Upanishadic thought falls naturally into two great periods; in one, the earlier, it still kept close to its Vedic roots, reflected the old psychological system of the Vedic Rishis and preserved what may be called their spiritual pragmatism; in the other and later, in which the form and thought became more modern and independent of early symbols and origins, some of the principal elements of Vedic thought and psychology begin to be omitted or to lose their previous connotation and the foundations of the later ascetic and anti-pragmatic Vedanta begin to appear. The Isha belongs to the earlier or Vedic group. It is already face to face with the problem of reconciling human life and activity with the Monistic standpoint and its large solution of the difficulty is one of the most interesting passages of Vedantic literature. It is the sole Upanishad which offered almost insuperable difficulties to the extreme illusionism and anti-pragmatism of Shankaracharya and it was even, for this reason, excised from the list of authoritative Upanishads by one of his greatest followers.

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE UPANISHAD

The principle it follows throughout is the uncompromising reconciliation of uncompromising extremes. Later thought took one series of terms,—the World, Enjoyment, Action, the Many, Birth, the Ignorance,—and gave them a more and more secondary position, exalting the opposite series, God, Renunciation, Quietism, the One, Cessation of Birth, the Knowledge,

until this trend of thought culminated in Illusionism and the idea of existence in the world as a snare and a meaningless burden imposed inexplicably on the soul by itself, which must be cast aside as soon as possible. It ended in a violent cutting of the knot of the great enigma. This Upanishad tries instead to get hold of the extreme ends of the knots, disengage and place them alongside of each other in a release that will be at the same time a right placing and relation. It will not qualify or subordinate unduly any of the extremes, although it recognises a dependence of one on the other. Renunciation is to go to the extreme, but also enjoyment is to be equally integral; Action has to be complete and ungrudging, but also freedom of the soul from its works must be absolute; Unity utter and absolute is the goal, but this absoluteness has to be brought to its highest term by including in it the whole infinite multiplicity of things.

So great is this scruple in the Upanishad that having so expressed itself in the formula “By the Ignorance having crossed over death by the Knowledge one enjoys Immortality” that Life in the world might be interpreted as only a preliminary to an existence beyond, it at once rights the balance by reversing the order in the parallel formula “By dissolution having crossed over death by birth one enjoys Immortality”, and thus makes life itself the field of the immortal existence which is the goal and aspiration of all life. In this conclusion it agrees with the early Vedic thought which believed all the worlds and existence and non-existence and death and life and immortality to be here in the embodied human being, there evolvent, there realisable and to be possessed and enjoyed, not dependent either for acquisition or enjoyment on the renunciation of life and bodily existence. This thought has never entirely passed out of Indian philosophy, but has become secondary and a side admission not strong enough to qualify seriously the increasing assertion of the extinction of mundane existence as the condition of our freedom and our sole wise and worthy aim.

THE OPPOSITES

The pairs of opposites successively taken up by the Upanishad and resolved are, in the order of their succession:

1. The Conscious Lord and phenomenal Nature.
2. Renunciation and Enjoyment.
3. Action in Nature and Freedom in the Soul.
4. The One stable Brahman and the multiple Movement.
5. Being and Becoming.
6. The Active Lord and the indifferent Akshara Brahman.
7. Vidya and Avidya.
8. Birth and Non-Birth.
9. Works and Knowledge.

These discords are thus successively resolved:

GOD AND NATURE

1. Phenomenal Nature is a movement of the conscious Lord. The object of the movement is to create forms of His consciousness in motion in which He as the one Soul in many bodies can take up his habitation and enjoy the multiplicity and the movement with all their relations.¹

ENJOYMENT AND RENUNCIATION

2. Real integral enjoyment of all this movement and multiplicity in its truth and in its infinity depends upon an absolute renunciation; but the renunciation intended is an absolute renunciation of the principle of desire founded on the principle of egoism and not a renunciation of world-existence.² This solution depends on the idea that desire is only an egoistic and vital deformation of the divine Ananda or delight of being from which the

¹ This is also the view of the Gita and generally accepted.

² This again is the central standpoint of the Gita, which, however, admits also the renunciation of world-existence. The general trend of Vedantic thought would accept the renunciation of desire and egoism as the essential but would hold that renunciation of egoism means the renunciation of all world-existence, for it sees desire and not Ananda as the cause of world-existence.

world is born; by extirpation of ego and desire Ananda again becomes the conscious principle of existence. This substitution is the essence of the change from life in death to life in immortality. The enjoyment of the infinite delight of existence free from ego, founded on oneness of all in the Lord, is what is meant by the enjoyment of Immortality.

ACTION AND FREEDOM

3. Actions are not inconsistent with the soul's freedom. Man is not bound by works, but only seems to be bound. He has to recover the consciousness of his inalienable freedom by recovering the consciousness of unity in the Lord, unity in himself, unity with all existence.³ This done, life and works can and should be accepted in their fullness; for the manifestation of the Lord in life and works is the law of our being and the object of our world-existence.

THE QUIESCEENCE AND THE MOVEMENT

4. What then of the Quiescence of the Supreme Being and how is persistence in the Movement compatible with that Quiescence which is generally recognised as an essential condition of the supreme Bliss?

The Quiescence and the Movement are equally one Brahman and the distinction drawn between them is only a phenomenon of our consciousness. So it is with the idea of space and time, the far and the near, the subjective and the objective, internal and external, myself and others, one and many. Brahman, the real existence, is all these things to our consciousness, but in itself ineffably superior to all such practical distinctions. The Movement is a phenomenon of the Quiescence, the Quiescence itself may be conceived as a Movement too rapid for the gods, that is to say, for our various functions of consciousness to follow in its real nature. But it is no formal, material, spatial, temporal

³ This truth would, again, be generally admitted, but not the conclusion that is drawn from it.

movement, only a movement in consciousness. Knowledge sees it all as one, Ignorance divides and creates oppositions where there is no opposition but simply relations of one consciousness in itself. The ego in the body says, "I am within, all else is outside; and in what is outside, this is near to me in Time and Space, that is far." All this is true in present relation; but in essence it is all one indivisible movement of Brahman which is not material movement but a way of seeing things in the one consciousness.

BEING AND BECOMING

5. Everything depends on what we see, how we look at existence in our soul's view of things. Being and Becoming, One and Many are both true and are both the same thing: Being is one, Becomings are many; but this simply means that all Becomings are one Being who places Himself variously in the phenomenal movement of His consciousness. We have to see the One Being, but we have not to cease to see the many Becomings, for they exist and are included in Brahman's view of Himself. Only, we must see with knowledge and not with ignorance. We have to realise our true self as the one unchangeable, indivisible Brahman. We have to see all becomings as developments of the movement in our true self and this self as one inhabiting all bodies and not our body only. We have to be consciously, in our relations with this world, what we really are,—this one self becoming everything that we observe. All the movement, all energies, all forms, all happenings we must see as those of our one and real self in many existences, as the play of the Will and Knowledge and Delight of the Lord in His world-existence.

We shall then be delivered from egoism and desire and the sense of separate existence and therefore from all grief and delusion and shrinking; for all grief is born of the shrinking of the ego from the contacts of existence, its sense of fear, weakness, want, dislike, etc.; and this is born from the delusion of separate existence, the sense of being my separate ego exposed to all these contacts of so much that is not myself.

Get rid of this, see oneness everywhere, be the One manifesting Himself in all creatures; ego will disappear; desire born of the sense of not being this, not having that, will disappear; the free inalienable delight of the One in His own existence will take the place of desire and its satisfactions and dissatisfactions.⁴ Immortality will be yours, death born of division will be overcome.

THE ACTIVE AND INACTIVE BRAHMAN

6. The Inactive and the Active Brahman are simply two aspects of the one Self, the one Brahman, who is the Lord. It is He who has gone abroad in the movement. He maintains Himself free from all modifications in His inactive existence. The inaction is the basis of the action and exists in the action; it is His freedom from all He does and becomes and in all He does and becomes. These are the positive and negative poles of one indivisible consciousness. We embrace both in one quiescence and one movement, inseparable from each other, dependent on each other. The quiescence exists relatively to the movement, the movement to the quiescence. He is beyond both. This is a different point of view from that of the identity of the Movement and Quiescence which are one in reality; it expresses rather their relation in our consciousness once they are admitted as a practical necessity of that consciousness. It is obvious that we also by becoming one with the Lord would share in this biune conscious existence.⁵

VIDYA AND AVIDYA

7. The knowledge of the One and the knowledge of the Many are a result of the movement of the one consciousness, which

⁴ In the ordinary view all this would be admitted, but the practical possibility of maintaining this state of consciousness and birth in the world together would be doubted.

⁵ In the ordinary view the Jiva cannot exist in both at the same time; his dissolution is into the Quiescence and not into unity with the Lord in the action and inaction.

sees all things as One in their truth-Idea but differentiates them in their mentality and formal becoming. If the mind (Manishi) absorbs itself in God as the formal becoming (Paribhu) and separates itself from God in the true Idea (Kavi), then it loses Vidya, the knowledge of the One, and has only the knowledge of the Many which becomes no longer knowledge at all but ignorance, Avidya. This is the cause of the separate ego-sense.

Avidya is accepted by the Lord in the Mind (Manishi) in order to develop individual relations to their utmost in all the possibilities of division and its consequences and then through these individual relations to come back individually to the knowledge of the One in all. That knowledge has remained all along unabrogated in the consciousness of the true seer or Kavi. This seer in ourselves stands back from the mental thinker; the latter, thus separated, has to conquer death and division by a developing experience as the individual Inhabitant and finally to recover by the reunited knowledge of the One and the Many the state of Immortality. This is our proper course and not either to devote ourselves exclusively to the life of Avidya or to reject it entirely for motionless absorption in the One.

BIRTH AND NON-BIRTH

8. The reason for this double movement of the Thinker is that we are intended to realise immortality in the Birth. The self is uniform and undying and in itself always possesses immortality. It does not need to descend into Avidya and Birth to get that immortality of Non-Birth; for it possesses it always. It descends in order to realise and possess it as the individual Brahman in the play of world-existence. It accepts Birth and Death, assumes the ego and then dissolving the ego by the recovery of unity realises itself as the Lord, the One, and Birth as only a becoming of the Lord in mental and formal being; this becoming is now governed by the true sight of the Seer and, once this is done, becoming is no longer inconsistent with Being, birth becomes a means and not an obstacle to the enjoyment of immortality by

the lord of this formal habitation.⁶ This is our proper course and not to remain for ever in the chain of birth and death, nor to flee from birth into a pure non-becoming. The bondage does not consist in the physical act of becoming, but in the persistence of the ignorant sense of the separate ego. The Mind creates the chain and not the body.

WORKS AND KNOWLEDGE

9. The opposition between works and knowledge exists as long as works and knowledge are only of the egoistic mental character. Mental knowledge is not true knowledge; true knowledge is that which is based on the true sight, the sight of the Seer, of Surya, of the Kavi. Mental thought is not knowledge, it is a golden lid placed over the face of the Truth, the Sight, the divine Ideation, the Truth-Consciousness. When that is removed, sight replaces mental thought, the all-embracing truth-ideation, Mahas, Veda, Drishti, replaces the fragmentary mental activity. True Buddhi (Vijnana) emerges from the dissipated action of the Buddhi which is all that is possible on the basis of the sense-mind, the Manas. Vijnana leads us to pure knowledge (Jnana), pure consciousness (Chit). There we realise our entire identity with the Lord in all at the very roots of our being.

But in Chit, Will and Seeing are one. Therefore in Vijnana or truth-ideation also which comes luminously out of Chit, Will and Sight are combined and no longer as in the mind separated from each other. Therefore when we have the sight and live in the truth-consciousness, our will becomes the spontaneous law of the truth in us and, knowing all its acts and their sense and objective, leads straight to the human goal, which was always the enjoyment of the Ananda, the Lord's delight in self-being, the state of Immortality. In our acts also we become one with all beings and our life grows into a representation of oneness,

⁶ This is the stumbling-block to the ordinary philosophies which are impregnated with the idea of the illusoriness of the world, even when they do not go the whole way with the Mayavada. Birth, they would say, is a play of ignorance, it cannot subsist along with entire knowledge.

truth and divine joy and no longer proceeds on the crooked path of egoism full of division, error and stumbling. In a word, we attain to the object of our existence which is to manifest in itself whether on earth in a terrestrial body and against the resistance of Matter or in the worlds beyond or enter beyond all world the glory of the divine Life and the divine Being.

Part Two

Incomplete Commentaries from Manuscripts

Isha Upanishad

All that is world in the Universe

The Sanscrit word जगत् is in origin a reduplicated & therefore frequentative participle from the root गम् to go. It signifies “that which is in perpetual motion”, and implies in its neuter form the world, universe, and in its feminine form the earth. World therefore is that which eternally vibrates, and the Hindu idea of the cosmos reduces itself to a harmony of eternal vibrations; form as we see it is simply the varying combination of different vibrations as they affect us through our perceptions & establish themselves to the concept. So far then Hinduism has reached by analysis to the last & simplest material expression of this complex universe. The question then arises, “Does anything lie beyond? If matter is all, then this is the last & there is no beyond. But is matter all?”

Our first verse is the answer of the Upanishad to this question. “All that is world in the Universe by the Lord must be pervaded.” The very object of our existence is to pierce beyond this last & thinnest veil of matter to Spirit, the Lord who is behind every manifestation of matter, even the simplest & therefore is he the Lord, he is the Self of all things, matter being merely the body. When we have realised that all this universe of vibration is full of the Spirit, we have set our feet on the right road that will lead us to the goal of existence. This is what we “must” do, in other words to realise God in the universe is the object of our existence. But why does the Upanishad say “must be pervaded”; why does it not say simply “is pervaded”? Is this pervasion then not a fact, but a possibility which each individual soul has to turn into a fact for itself? In what sense is it said that the object of the individual soul is to pervade the Universe with the Lord? We must remember that according to the Upanishad there are only two entities in existence which are not phenomena or manifestations, but eternal facts, and these two are in

reality not two but one, the illimitable & infinite Self behind phenomena, and the finite self which perceives phenomena. The Adwaita or Monistic Vedanta affirms the entire unity of these two & explains their apparent separation by Maya, Illusion or Ignorance, in other words by the theory that the Indivisible Eternal has deliberately imagined himself as divisible (I speak in metaphors, the only way of approaching such subtle inquiries) & hence created an illusion of multiplicity where the only real fact is Unity. We may take the metaphor of a sea & its waves; if each wave were to imagine itself separate from all other waves & from the sea of which it is a part, that would be an illusion similar to that of the finite self when it imagines itself as different from other finite selves and from the Infinite. The wave is not really different from the sea but is sea (not *the* sea) and the next moment will be indistinguishable from sea; in fact the word "wave" merely expresses a momentary perception, an idea of change or modification which the next moment we perceive not to exist, and not a real object; the only real object is the sea.

The Visishta Adwaita or modified-Monistic Vedanta on the other hand recognises that the infinite Self & the finite Self are eventually One, but still there is a distinction, a certain limitation of the Oneness. The finite Self is of & in the infinite Self & therefore one with it but it does not coincide with it or disappear into it; the goal of its existence is the delight of feeling its oneness with the Eternal, but still the very feeling of delight implies a limitation, a difference, & this limitation is not temporary but eternal. An image may be taken from the phenomenon of Light & its vibrations; it is all light, there is no real difference, & yet each of the vibrations is in a sense separate & continues its own existence on its own line for ever through infinity. Lastly the Dwaita or Dualistic Vedanta affirms, on the contrary, that the finite selves & the Infinite are for ever different & the whole riddle of the world lies in their difference & in their attraction to each other. To become one with the Eternal is here also the goal of the finite but the oneness is emotional & not essential; it is Union & not fusion. It is difficult to find a close image here, but for want of a better we may take that of a river & the sea to

which it is hastening. It is water hastening to water & the whole aim of the river is to fling itself into the sea & towards that it strives with all its might & with all its soul; & finally it reaches the sea & mixes with it. And yet there it is still, a river & not the sea. So the two live in a perpetual embrace, ever united & yet ever different & feeling their separate existence. Now these three philosophies really image three different states of soul & three different roads to the realisation of God. There is the intellectual state of soul which reaches God through knowledge; this naturally attaches itself to Monism, for it seeks only the knowledge of its identity with God & its tendency is to discourage all action & emotion which interfere with this aim. Then there is the actional state of soul which reaches God through action leading to knowledge & inspired by emotion; this aims at the knowledge of its identity with God, but its actional state requires a certain sense of difference from God without which action becomes meaningless; its tendency therefore, if the knowledge-impulse predominates over the emotional, is to rest for a time in modified Monism, though it recognises pure Monism as a far goal beyond; but if the emotional impulse predominates over the intellectual, its tendency is to adopt modified Monism as a final solution. Lastly there is the emotional state of soul which reaches God through divine love; this naturally attaches itself to Dualism; for the only desire of love is to attain the loved one & go on loving for ever; an impossibility unless the feeling of difference in Union goes on for ever. The three philosophies are therefore simply three different standpoints from which we envisage one single truth, that nothing eventually matters in the world except God & the goal of existence is to attain Him. And I may add my own conviction that all three are necessary soul-stages. By pausing too long in Dualism or even in modified Monism, we debar ourselves too long from our final emancipation; but by leaping too quickly to Monism we fall into a dangerous tendency towards the premature dissolution of phenomena which if largely followed upsets the fine balance of the world. The right progress of the soul is first to realise its difference from God, so that we may feel attracted towards Him, then to realise that that difference

is a temporary or at least not an entire difference, that there is unity beyond, so that we may advance towards Him by the right road & under the laws of that phenomenal existence through which he reveals himself to us, and finally to perceive that we and God are One & all phenomena temporary & illusory, so that escaping from name & form we may lose ourselves in Him and attain our soul's salvation. Well then, here are three standpoints; which is the standpoint of the Upanishads? They do not, in fact, confine themselves to any, but regarding them as three necessary stages, speak now from one, now from another, now from a third. Here it is speaking in a spirit of very slightly modified Monism. There are two nonphenomenal existences, the Infinite Self & the Finite Self; from the point of view of the Infinite, Eternal Self, the universe is already pervaded with God; but we must also consider the point of view of the Finite Self,— which is really Infinite but considers itself to be Finite. To this Finite Self the Universe is only the mass of its own perceptions. If it perceives the Universe as mere matter, then for its purposes the Universe is Matter & not pervaded by the Lord; if I consider yonder tree as so much wood & pith & sap & leaves, such it is & no more so far as I am concerned; if I look within & perceive God there then it is I who have put him there; for the moment before He was not there for me & now He is. In more Monistic language the Self at first imagines itself to be confined within its own body, but as it grows in thought it looks into object after object & perceives itself there & so it goes on putting itself into everything until it has pervaded all that is in the world with itself; it then realises that there is no self or non-self but all is God. We see that it is merely a difference of language, of outlook, of perception; but these are the things through which human thought proceeds & they must be given their due place. To recognize the differences they involve & yet to perceive the unity into which they merge, is the law & goal of all Hindu thought.

But whatever the standpoint we take, for dualist, monist or semimonist the Vedanta lays this down as the great essential step to realise that when we have resolved this universe of forms

& names into a great harmony of vibrations, we must still go beyond & perceive that the whole is but the material expression of one pervading Spirit. And when we have realised this, what is the practical result; for it must be remembered that the Vedanta is always profoundly practical[.]

The Ishavasyopanishad

with a commentary in English

1.

With God all this must be invested, even all that is world in this moving universe; abandon therefore desire and enjoy and covet no man's possession.

THE GURU

The Upanishad sets forth by pronouncing as the indispensable basis of its revelations the universal nature of God. This universal nature of Brahman the Eternal is the beginning and end of the Vedanta and if it is not accepted, nothing the Vedanta says can have any value, as all its propositions either proceed from it or at least presuppose it; deprived of this central and highest truth, the Upanishads become what Mleccha scholars & philosophers think them to be, — a mass of incoherent though often sublime speculations; with this truth in your hand as a lamp to shed light on all the obscurest sayings of the Scriptures, you soon come to realise that the Upanishads are a grand harmonious and perfectly luminous whole, expressing in its various aspects the single and universal Truth; for under the myriad contradictions of phenomena (prapancha) there is one Truth and one only. All the Smritis, the Puranas, the Darshanas, the Dharmashastras, the writings of Shaktas, Shaivas, Vaishnavas, Sauras, as well as the whole of Buddhism and its Scriptures are merely so many explanations, comments and interpretations from different sides, of these various aspects of the one and only Truth. This Truth is the sole foundation on which all religions can rest as on a sure and impregnable rock; — and more than a rock, for a rock may perish but this endures for ever. Therefore is the religion of the Aryas called the Sanatana Dharma, the Law Sempiternal. Nor are the Hindus in error when they declare the Sruti to be eternal and without beginning and the Rishis who

composed the hymns to be only the witnesses who saw the truth and put it in human language; for this seeing was not mental sight, but spiritual. Therefore the Vedas are justly called Sruti or revelation. Of these the Rig, Yajur, Sama & Atharvan are the fertilising rain which gave the plant of the Truth nourishment and made it grow, the Brahmanas are the forest in which the plant is found, the Aranyakas are the soil in which it grows, the Upanishads are the plant itself, roots, stalk, leaves, calix and petals, and the flower which manifests itself once and for ever is the great saying SO AHAM—I AM HE which is the culmination of the Upanishads. Salutation to the SO AHAM. Salutation to the Eternal who is without place, time, cause or limit, Salutation to my Self who am the Eternal.

THE STUDENT

I salute the Eternal and my Self who am the Eternal. Swaha!

THE GURU

The Upanishad therefore begins by saying that all this must be clothed or invested with the Lord. By this expression it is meant that the individual Jivatman or human soul in order to attain salvation must cover up all this universe with the Lord, as one might cover the body with a garment. By the Lord we mean obviously not the Unknowable Parabrahman, for of the Unknowable we cannot speak in terms of place, time or difference, but the Brahman knowable by Yoga, the luminous shadow of the One put forth by the Shakti of the One, which by dividing itself into the Male and Female, Purusha and Prakriti, has created this world of innumerable forms and names. Brahman is spoken of as the Lord; that is, we best think of Him as the Ruler & Sovran of the Universe. He is the still ocean of spiritual force, its mere presence sets working the creative, preservative, and destructive Shakti or Will of the Eternal Parabrahman. By her means he forms the Ocean of Prakriti, which is the substratum of all form or matter. Of these two, the Ocean of spiritual force and the Ocean of material form, the latter is contained in the other & could not be without it. It may be said to be surrounded by it or

clothed by it. The Lord himself is present on the Ocean in various forms, Prajna, Hiranyagarbha & Virat, or Vishnu, Brahma and Maheshwara. This is what the Puranas represent as Vishnu on the Serpent of Time & Space in the Causal Ocean & Brahma growing out of the lotus in his navel etc. This is the Lord, the King & Ruler. We must therefore realise all things in this universe to be the creation of that ocean of Brahman or spiritual force which surrounds them as a robe surrounds its wearer.

THE STUDENT

Surely all things [are] Brahman himself; why then should he be said to surround all things as if he were different from them?

THE GURU

It is meant by this expression that the universal & undivided consciousness which we call Brahman, surrounds and includes all the limited individual consciousnesses which present themselves to us in the shape of things.

THE STUDENT

Still I do not understand. How can the one indivisible consciousness be divided, or if it is divided how can it at the same time remain one and surround its own parts? A thing cannot be at the same time one and indivisible and yet divisible and multifold.

THE GURU

On the contrary this is precisely the nature of consciousness to be eternally one & indivisible, & yet always divisible at will. A man's consciousness has often been split up into two states, each with its own history and memory, so that when he is in one state, he does not know what he has been thinking and doing in the other. Persons ignorant of the Truth imagine from this circumstance that a man's consciousness must be not single and homogeneous but a bundle of different personalities, just as the Sankhyas & others imagine that there must be an infinite number of Purushas, souls & not One, for otherwise, they say,

all would have the same knowledge, the same pleasure & pain etc. (This is so in a sense, as his present personality contains also in a submerged state the personalities of his previous births, and an unwise hypnosis may throw him back into a bygone state of personality.) But this is merely Avidya, Ignorance, & when the apparently individual Purusha puts himself into the complete state of Yoga with the Eternal he discovers that all the time there was only One Purusha who was cognizant of & contained the others, in the sense that they were simply projections (सृष्टिः) from him. These states of split consciousness are only different states of one personality and not separate personalities. This will at once be clear if a skilful and careful hypnotiser put the man in the right state of sleep; for then a third state of personality will often evolve which has known all along what the other two were doing and saying & is in itself sufficient proof that all along the unity of consciousness was there, submerged indeed but constant and subliminally active. The division of this one consciousness into two separate states results from a particular & unusual action of Avidya, the same universal Nescience which in its general & normal action makes men imagine that they are a different self from the Universal Consciousness and not merely states or conditions projected (सृष्टि) of that consciousness. We see here then an established example of the one and indivisible consciousness becoming divided and multifold, yet remaining one and indivisible all the time. This single consciousness itself, the I of the waking man, is only a division or rather a state of a still wider consciousness more independent of gross matter which gets some play in the condition of dream (and of dream hypnosis is only a particular and capricious form), but is more permanently & coherently liberated from the gross body at or after death. This wider consciousness is called the Dream Condition and the body or upadhi in which it works is called the Subtle Body. The Dream Consciousness may be said to surround the waking consciousness and its body as a robe surrounds its wearer, for it is wider & less trammelled in its nature & range; it is the selecting agency from which & by which a part is selected for waking purposes in the material life. The Dream Consciousness

is itself [surrounded] by a still wider consciousness which we call the Sleep Condition or the Causal Body and from this & by this it is selected for life before birth & after death. This Sleep Condition is again surrounded by Brahman from whom & by whom it is selected for causal purposes,—just as a robe surrounds its wearer. Thus you will realise that Brahman is a wide eternally one & indivisible Consciousness which yet limits itself at will and yet remains illimitable surrounding like a robe all its various states or illusory limitations.

THE STUDENT

True but that which surrounds is always a separate thing from that which is surrounded, the robe is different from its wearer.

THE GURU

Let us consider a nut with the kernel in it, we see that ether in the form or *upadhi* of the nut, surrounds ether in the *upadhi* of the kernel as a robe surrounds its wearer; but the two are the same; there is one ether, not two.

THE STUDENT

Now I understand.

THE GURU

Consider next what the Upanishad goes on to indicate more definitely as the thing to be clothed or invested—whatever is *jagat* in *jagati*, or literally whatever is moving thing in her that moves. Now *jagati*, she who moves, is an old name for Earth, Prithivi, and afterwards for the whole *wide* universe, of which the Earth with which alone we human beings are at present concerned, is the type. Why then is the universe called *jagati*, she that moveth? Because it is a form of Prakriti whose essential characteristic is motion; for by motion she creates this material world, and indeed all object-matter is only a form, that is to say a visible, audible or sensible result of motion; every material object is *jagat*, full of infinite motion,—even the stone, even the

clod. This material world, our senses tell us, is the only existing reality; but the Upanishad warns us against the false evidence of our senses and bids us realise in our hearts and minds Brahman the Ocean of spiritual force, drawing him in our imaginations like a robe round each sensible thing.

THE STUDENT

But the Upanishad does not say that the material world is itself Brahman.

THE GURU

It will yet say that. It tells us next by abandonment of this (all that is in the world) to enjoy and not covet any man's wealth. We are to enjoy the whole world, but not to covet the possessions of others. How is this possible? If I, Devadatta, am told to enjoy all that is in the world, but find that I have very little to enjoy while my neighbour Harischandra has untold riches, how can I fail to envy him his wealth and why should I not try to get it for my own enjoyment, if I safely can? I shall not try, because I cannot, because I have realized that there is nothing in this world but Brahman manifesting the universe by his Shakti, and that there is no Devadatta, no Harischandra, but only Brahman in various states of consciousness to which these names are given. If therefore Harischandra enjoys his riches, then it is I who am enjoying them, for Harischandra is myself,—not my body in which I am imprisoned or my desires by which my body is made miserable, but my true self, the Purusha within me who is the witness & enjoyer of all this sweet, bitter, tender, grand, beautiful, terrible, pleasant, horrible and wholly wonderful and enjoyable drama of the world which Prakriti enacts for his delectation. Now if as the Sankhyas and other philosophies and the Christians and other religions declare, there are innumerable Purushas and not one, there would be no ground for the Christian injunction to love others as oneself or for the description by the Sruti & Smriti of the perfect sage as सर्वभूतहितरतः, busied with and delighting in the good of all creatures; for then Harischandra would be in no way connected with me and there would be no point of contact

between us except the material, from which hatred & envy are far more ready to arise than love and sympathy. How then could I prefer him to myself? But from the point of view of Vedanta, such preference is natural, right and in the end inevitable.

THE STUDENT

That is a large view.

THE GURU

And a true view.

THE STUDENT

How is the preference of others to myself inevitable, natural, right?

THE GURU

It is inevitable because as I have risen from the beast to the man, so must I rise from the man to the God & of Godhead this preference is the perennial well & fountain, evolution meaning simply the wider and wider revelation of Brahman, the universal spirit, the progress from the falsehood of matter to the truth of spirit;— and this progress, however slow, is inevitable. It is natural because I am not really preferring another to myself, but my true self to my false, God who is in all to my single body and mind, myself in Devadatta and Harischandra, to myself in Devadatta alone. It is right because it is better for me to enjoy the enjoyment of Harischandra than to enjoy my own, since in this way I shall make my knowledge of Brahman a reality and not a mere intellectual conception or assent; I shall turn it into an experience — anubhav, and anubhav, the Smritis tell us, is the essence of true Jnana. For this reason perfect love, by which I do not mean the mere sensual impulse of man towards woman, is a great and ennobling thing, for by its means two separated conditions of the Universal Consciousness come together and become one. Still nobler and more ennobling is the love of the patriot who lives & dies for his country, for in this way he

becomes one with millions of divine units and still greater, nobler, more exalting the soul of the philanthropist, who without forgetting family or country lives and dies for mankind or for all creatures. He is the wisest Muni, the greatest Yogi, who not only reaches Brahman by the way of Jnana, not only soars to Him on the wings of Bhakti, but becomes He through God-devoted Karma, who gives himself up utterly for his family and friends, for his country, for all humanity, for the world, yes & when he can, the solar system & systems upon systems,—for the whole universe.

Therefore the Upanishad tells us that we must enjoy by abandonment, by *tyaga* or renunciation. This is a curious expression, तेन त्यक्तेन भुजीथाः; it is a curious thing to tell a man that he must abandon & what he has abandoned enjoy by the very sacrifice. The natural man shrinks from the statement as a dangerous paradox. Yet the seer of the Upanishad is wiser than we, for his statement is literally true. Think what it means. It means that we give up our own petty personal joy and pleasure, to bathe up to the eyes in the joys of others; and the joys of one man may be as great as you please, the united joys of a hundred must needs be greater. By renunciation you can increase your enjoyments a hundredfold; if you are a true patriot, you will feel the joys, not of one man, but of three hundred millions; if you are a true philanthropist, all the joys of the countless millions of the earth will flow through your soul like an ocean of nectar. But, you say, their sorrows will flow there too? That too is an agony of sweetness which exalts the soul to Paradise, that you can turn into joy, the unparalleled joy of relieving and turning into bliss the woes of the nation for which you sacrifice yourself or of the humanity in whom you are trying to realise God. Even the mere continuous patient resolute effort to do this is a joy unspeakable; even defeat in such a cause is a stern pleasure when it strengthens the soul for new and ceaseless endeavour. And the souls worthy of the sacrifice, derive equal strength from defeat & victory. Remember that [it] is not the weak in spirit to whom the Eternal gives himself wholly; it is the strong heroic soul that reaches God. Others can only touch His shadow from

afar. In this way the man who renounces the little he can call his own for the good of others, gets in return and can utterly enjoy all that is world in this moving universe.

If you cannot rise so high, still the words of the Upanishad are true in other ways. You are not asked necessarily to give up the objects of your enjoyments physically; it is enough if you give them up in your heart, if you enjoy them in such spirit that you will neither be overjoyed by gain nor cast down by loss. That enjoyment is clear, deep and calm; fate cannot break it, robbers cannot take it away, enemies cannot overwhelm it. Otherwise your enjoyment is chequered and broken with fear, sorrow, trouble & passion, the passion for its increase, the trouble of keeping it, the sorrow of diminution, the fear of its utter loss. It is far better by abandoning to enjoy. If you wish to abandon physically, that too is well, so long as you take care that you are not cherishing the thought of the enjoyment in your mind. Nay, it will often be a quicker road to enjoyment. Wealth and fame and success naturally flee from the man who pursues them; he breaks his heart or perishes without gaining them; or if he gains them, it is often after a very hell of difficulty, a very mountain of toil. But when a man turns his back on wealth & glory, then, unless his past actions forbid, they come crowding to lay themselves at his feet. And if they come, will he enjoy or reject them? He may reject them — that is a great path & the way of innumerable saintly sages — but you need not reject them, you may take & enjoy them. How will you enjoy them then? Not for your personal pleasure, certainly not for your false self; for you have already abandoned that kind of enjoyment in your heart; but you may enjoy God in them and them for God. As a king merely touching the nuzzerana, passes it on into the public treasury, so you may, merely touching the wealth that comes to you, pour it out for those around you, for the country, for humanity, seeing Brahman in these. Glory again he may conceal with humility, but use the influence it gives him in order to lead men upwards to the divine. Such a man will quickly rise above joy & sorrow, victory & defeat; for in sorrow as in joy he will feel himself to be near God, with God, like God and finally God

himself. Therefore the Upanishads go on to say

कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छतं समाः ।

Do thy deeds in this world and wish to live thy hundred years. A hundred years is the full span of man's natural life according to the Vedas. The Sruti therefore tells us that we must not turn our backs on life, must not fling it from us untimely or even long for early release from our body but willingly fill out our term, even be most ready to prolong it to the full period of man's ordinary existence so that we may go on doing our deeds in this world. Mark the emphasis laid on the word कुर्वन् by adding to it *eva*. Verily we must *do* our deeds in the world and not avoid doing them; there is no need to flee to the mountains in order to find the Self, since He is here, in you and in all around you. And if you flee there, not to find Him, but to escape from the misery & misfortune of the world which you are too weak to face, then you lose the Self for this life and perhaps many to come. I repeat to you that it is not the weak and the coward who can climb up to God, but the strong and brave alone. Every individual Jivatman must become the perfect Kshatriya before he can be the Brahmin.

THE STUDENT

All this is opposed to what the wisest men have taught and those we most delight to revere, still teach and practise.

THE GURU

Are you sure that it is? What do they teach?

THE STUDENT

That *vairagya*, disgust with the world is the best way and its entry into a man's soul is his first call to the way of *mukti*, which is not by action but by knowledge.

THE GURU

Vairagya is a big word and it has come to mean many things, and it is because these are confused and jumbled together by the

men of Aryavarta, that tamas and Anaryan cowardice, weakness & selfishness have spread over this holy & ancient land, covering it with a thick pall of darkness. There is one vairagya, the truest and noblest, of the strong man who having tasted the sweets of this world finds that there is no permanent and abiding sweetness in them, that they are not the true and immortal joy which his true and immortal self demands and turns to something in himself which is deeper, holier and imperishable. Then there is the vairagya of the weakling who has lusted and panted and thirsted for the world's sweets but has been pushed & hustled from the board by fate or by stronger men than himself; and would use Yoga and Vedanta as the drunkard uses his bottle and the opium-maniac his pill or his laudanum. Not for such ignoble uses were these great things meant by the Rishis who disclosed them to the world. If such a man came to me for initiation, I would send him back with the fiery rebuke of Srikrishna to the son of Pritha

कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम् ।
अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यमकीर्तिकरमर्जुन ॥
क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत् त्वयुपद्यते ।

Truly is such weakness unworthy of one who is no other than Brahma, the Eternal, the Creator and Destroyer of the worlds. Yet I would not be understood to decry the true vairagya of sorrow and disappointment; for sometimes when men have tried in ignorance for ignoble things and failed, not from weakness but because these things were beneath their true greatness and high destiny, then their eyes are opened and they seek meditation, solitude and samadhi not as a dram to drown their sorrow and still unsated longing, but to realise their divine strength and use it for divine purposes; sometimes great spirits seek the way of the Sannyasin, because in the solitude alone with God and the Guru, they can best develop Brahmatejah. Once attained they pour it in a stream over the world; such was Shankaracharya; and sometimes it is the sorrow of others or the misery of the world that finds them in ease & felicity & drives them out, as Buddha was driven out, to seek help for sufferers in the depths

of their own being. True Sannyasins are the greatest of all men because they are the strongest unto work, the most mighty in God to do the works of God.

THE STUDENT

I repeat that all this is opposed to the teaching of the great Adwaitavadin Acharyas, Sri Shankara and the rest.

THE GURU

It is not opposed to the teaching of Srikrishna who is the greatest of all teachers and the best of Jagatgurus. For he tells Sanjay in the Mahabharata that between the creed of salvation by works and the creed of salvation by no works, that of salvation by works is the true creed and he condemns the other as the idle talk of a weakling; and again and again in the Bhagavadgita he lays stress on the superiority of works.

THE STUDENT

This is true, but he also says that Jnana is superior to all things and there is nothing equal to it.

THE GURU

Nor is there; for Jnana is indispensable. Jnana is first & greatest; works without Jnana will not save a man but only plunge him deeper and deeper into bondage. The works of which the Upanishad speaks are to be done after you have invested all this universe with God; after, that is to say, you have realised that all is the one Brahman and that your actions are but the dramatic illusions unrolled by Prakriti for the delight of the Purusha. You will then do your works तेन त्यक्तेन; or as Srikrishna tells you to do, after giving up the desire for the fruits of your works and devoting all your actions to Him,—not to your lower not-self which feels pleasure & pain but to the Brahman in you which works only लोकसंग्रहार्थ that instead of the uninstructed multitudes being bewildered and led astray by your inactivity, the world may rather be helped, strengthened and maintained by the godlike nature of your works. This is what the Upanishad goes on to say

“Thus to you there is no other way than this, action clingeth not to a man.” This means that desireless actions, actions performed after renunciation and devoted to God,—these & these only—do not cling to a man, do not bind him in their invisible chains but fall from him as the water from the wings of the swan. They cannot bind him, because he is freed from the woven net of causality. Causality springs from the idea of duality, the idea of sorrow & happiness, love & hate, heat & cold which arises from Avidya and he, having renounced desire and realised Unity, is above Avidya and above duality. Bondage has no meaning for him. It is not in reality he that is doing the actions, but Prakriti inspired by the presence of the Purusha in him.

THE STUDENT

Why then does Shankara say that it is necessary to give up works in order to attain absolute unity? Those who do works, in his opinion, only reach सालोक्य with Brahman, relative and not absolute unity.

THE GURU

There was a reason for what Shankara said and it was necessary in his age that Jnana should be exalted at the expense of works; for the great living force with which he had to struggle, was not the heresies of later Buddhism—Buddhism decayed and senescent, but the triumphant doctrines of the Karmakanda which made the faithful performance of Vedic rites & ceremonies the one path and heaven the only goal. In his continual anxiety to show that works — of which these rites & ceremonies were a part,—could not be the one path to heaven, he bent the bow as far as he could the other way and argued that works were not the path to the last and greatest *mukti* at all. Let us however consider what the depreciation of the Karmamarga means in the mouths of Shankara and other Jnanamargis. It may mean that Karma in the sense of Vedic rites & ceremonies are not the way to Mukti and if this is the meaning, then Shankara has done his work effectually; for I think no one of authority will now try to maintain the opposite thesis. We all agree that Swarga,

the sole final result of the Karmakanda, is not Mukti, is much below Mukti and ends as soon as its cause is exhausted. We all agree also that the only spiritual usefulness of Vedic ceremonies is to purify the mind and fit it for starting on the true path of Mukti which lies through Jnana. But if you say that works in the sense of कर्तव्य कर्म are not a path to Mukti, then I demur; for I say that Karma is not different from Jnana, but is Jnana, is the necessary fulfilment and completion of Jnana; that Bhakti, Karma and Jnana are not three but one and go inseparably together. Therefore Srikrishna says that Sankhya (Jnanayog) and Yoga (Bhakti Karma Yoga) are not two but one and only बालाः, undeveloped minds, make a difference.

THE STUDENT

But how can Shankaracharya be called an undeveloped mind?

THE GURU

He was not an undeveloped mind, but he was dealing with undeveloped minds and had to speak their language. If he had given his sanction to Karma, however qualified, the general run of people would not have understood him and would have clung to their rites and ceremonies; it is indeed to this difficulty of language, its natural imperfection and the imperfection of the minds that employ language, to which all the confusion and sense of difference in religion & philosophy is due, for religion & philosophy are one & above difference. Nor was Shankara so entirely opposed to Karma as is ordinarily imagined from the vehemence of his argument in some places. For what do you mean when you say that Karma is no path to Mukti? Is it that Karma prompted by desire is inconsistent with *mukti*, because it necessarily leads to bondage and must therefore be abandoned? On this head there is no dispute. We all agree that works prompted by desire, lead to nothing but the fulfilment of desire followed by fresh works in another life. Is it that Karma without desire is inconsistent with Mukti, prevents *mukti* by fresh bondage and must be abandoned? This is not consistent

with reason, for bondage is the result of desire & ignorance and disappears with desire & ignorance; therefore in *nishkam karma* there can be no bondage. It is inconsistent with Sruti त्रिणाचिकेतस्त्रिभिरेत्य सन्धिं त्रिकर्मकृत्तरति जन्ममृत्यु इत्यादि. It is inconsistent with facts for Srikrishna did works, Janaka and others did works, but none will say that they fell into the bondage of their works; for they were जीवन्मुक्त. Is it meant that *nishkam karma* may be done as a step towards ब्रह्मप्राप्ति by Jnan but must be abandoned as soon as Jnan is acquired? This also will not stand because Janaka and the others did works after they had acquired Jnan as well as before. For the same reason Shankara's argument that कर्म must cease as a matter of sheer necessity as soon as one gains Brahma, because Brahma is अकर्ता, will not stand; for Janaka gained Brahma, Srikrishna was Brahma, and yet both did works; nay, Srikrishna in one place speaks of him as doing works; for indeed Brahman is both अकर्ता as Purusha and कर्ता as Prakriti; and if it be said that Parabrahman the Turiya Atma in whom all *bhed* disappears is अकर्ता, I answer that he is neither कर्ता nor अकर्ता, He is नेति नेति, the Unknowable and the Jivatma does not merge finally in Him while it is in the body; though it may do so at any time by Yoga. लय takes place आदहनिपातात्, that is to say by the Muktatma after leaving its body, not willing to return to another; the Jivanmukta is made one with the luminous shadow of Parabrahman which we call the Sacchidananda. If it be said that this is not Mukti, I answer that there can be no greater Mukti than becoming the Sacchidananda, and that *laya* in the Parabrahman is स्वेच्छाधीन to the Jivatman when it has ceased to be Jivatman and become Sacchidananda; for Parabrahman can always & at will draw Sacchidananda into Itself and Sacchidananda can always and at will draw into Parabrahman; since the two are in no sense two but one, in no sense subject to Avidya but on the other side of Avidya. Then if it be said that निष्काम कर्म can only lead to Brahmaloka and not mukti, I still answer that in that case we must suppose that Srikrishna after he left his body, remained separate from the Supreme and therefore was not Bhagavan at all but only a great philosopher & devotee, not wise enough to

attain Mukti, and that Janak and other Jivanmuktas were falsely called muktas or only in the sense of the आपेक्षिक *mukti*. This however would contradict Scripture and the uniform teaching of Sruti and Smriti, and cannot therefore be upheld by any Hindu, still less by any Vedantin; for if there is no authority in Sruti, then there is no truth in Vedanta, and the doctrine of the Charvakas has as much force as any. Moreover it would contradict reason, since it would make mukti which is a spiritual change, dependent on a mere mechanical & material change like death, which is absurd. Shankara himself therefore admits that in these cases निष्काम कर्म was not inconsistent with मुक्ति or with being the Brahman; and he would have admitted it still more unreservedly if he had not been embarrassed by his relations of intellectual hostility to the Purvamimansa. It is proved therefore that कर्म is not inconsistent with मुक्ति but that on the contrary both the teaching and practice of the greatest Jivanmuktas and of Bhagavan himself have combined Jnana and निष्काम कर्म as one single path to *mukti*.

One argument, however, remains; it may be said that कर्म may be not inconsistent with *mukti*, may be one path to *mukti*, but in the last stage it is not necessary to *mukti*. I readily admit that particular works are not necessary to *mukti*; it is not necessary to continue being a householder in order to gain *mukti*. But no one who possesses a body, can be free of karma. This is clearly and incontrovertibly stated by Srikrishna in the Bhagavadgita.

[न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।
कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥]

And this statement in the Gita is perfectly consistent with reason; for the man who leaves the world behind him and sits on a mountaintop or in an asram has not therefore, it is quite clear, got rid of Karma; if nothing else, he has to maintain his body, to eat, to walk, to move his limbs or to sit in *asan* and meditate; and all this is Karma. If he is not yet mukta, this karma will moreover bind him and bear its fruits in relation to himself as well as to others; even if he is mukta, his body & mind are not free from Karma until his body is dropped off, but go on

under the impulse of prarabdha until the prarabdha & its fruit are complete. Nay even the greatest Yogi by his mere bodily presence in the phenomenal world, is pouring out a stream of spiritual force on all sides, and this action though it does not bind him, has a stupendous influence on others. He is सर्वभूतहिते रतः though he wills it not; he too with regard to his body is अवशः and must let the gunas of prakriti work. Since this is so, let every man who wishes to throw his कर्तव्य कर्म behind him, see that he is not merely postponing the completion of his प्रारब्ध to a future life and thereby condemning himself to the rebirth he wishes to avoid.

THE STUDENT

But how can this be that the jivanmukta is still bound by his past deeds? Does not *mukti* burn up one's past deeds as in a fire? For how can one be at the same time free and yet bound?

THE GURU

Mukti prevents one's future deeds from creating bondage; but what of the past deeds which have already created bondage? The Jivanmukta is not indeed bound, for he is one with God and God is the Master of His *prakriti*, not its slave; but the Prakriti attached to this Jivatman has created causes while in the illusion of bondage and must be allowed to work out its effects, otherwise the chain of causation is snapped and the whole economy of nature is disturbed and thrown into chaos. उत्सीदेयुरिमे लोकाः etc. In order to maintain the worlds therefore, the Jivanmukta remains working like a prisoner on parole, not bound indeed by others, but detained by himself until the period previously appointed for his captivity shall have elapsed.

THE STUDENT

This is indeed a new light on the subject.

THE GURU

It is no new light but as old as the sun; for it is clearly laid down in the Gita and of the teaching of the Gita, Srikrishna

says that it was told by him to Vivasvan, the Vishnu of the solar system and by him to Manou, the original Thinker in man, and by Manou handed down to the great king-sages, his descendants. Nay, it plainly arises from the nature of things. The whole confusion in this matter proceeds from an imperfect understanding of *mukti*; for why do men fly from action and shun their कर्तव्य कर्म in the pursuit of mukti? It is because they dread to be cast again into bondage, to lose their chance of मुक्ति. Yet what is mukti? It is release,—from what? From Avidya, from the great Nescience, from the belief that you are limited & bound, who are illimitable Brahman and cannot be bound. The moment you have realised that Avidya is an illusion, that there is nothing but Brahman and never was nor will be anything but Brahman, realised it, I say, had अनुभव of it, not merely intellectually grasped the idea, from that moment you are free and always have been free. Avidya consists precisely in this that the Jivatman thinks there is something beside himself, he himself being other than Brahman, something which binds him; but in reality He, being Brahman, is not bound, never was bound nor could be bound and never will be bound. Once this is realised, the Jivatman can have no farther fear of *karma*; for he knows that there is no such thing as bondage. He will be quite ready to do his deeds in this world; nay, he will even be ready to be reborn, as Srikrishna himself has promised to be reborn again and again; for of rebirth also he has no farther fear, since he knows he cannot again fall under the dominion of Avidya, unless he himself deliberately wills it; once free, always free. Even if he is reborn, he will be reborn with full knowledge of what he really is, of his past lives and of the whole future and will act as a Jivanmukta.

THE STUDENT

But if this statement once free, always free hold, what of the statements about great Rishis & Yogis falling again under the dominion of Avidya?

THE GURU

A man may be a great Rishi or Yogi without being Jivanmukta. Yog and spiritual learning are means to Mukti, not Mukti itself. For the Sruti says नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो न मेधया न वह्ना श्रुतेन।

THE STUDENT

Will then the Jivanmukta actually wish to live a hundred years, as the Sruti says? Can one who is मुक्त have a desire?

THE GURU

The Jivanmukta will be perfectly ready to live a hundred years or more if needs be; but this recommendation is given not to the Jivanmukta or to any particular class of person but generally. You should desire to live your allotted term of life, because you in the body are the Brahman who by the force of His own Shakti is playing for Himself by Himself this *lila* of creation, preservation and destruction; in this view Brahman is Isha, the Lord, Creator & Destroyer; and you also are Isha, Creator & Destroyer; only for your own amusement, to use a violent metaphor, you have imagined yourself limited by a particular body for the purposes of the play, just as an actor imagines himself to be Dushyanta or Rama or Ravana; and often the actor loses himself in the part and really feels himself to be what he is playing, forgetting that he is really not Dushyanta or Rama, but that Devadatta who plays a hundred parts besides. Still when he shakes off this illusion & remembers that he is Devadatta, he does not therefore walk off from the stage and by refusing to act, break up the play but goes on playing his best till the proper time for the curtain to fall. And so we should all do, whether as householder or Sannyasi, as Jivanmukta or as mumukshu, remembering always that the object of this *samsara* is creation and that it is our business so long as we are in this body to create. The only difference is this, that so long as we forget our Self, we create like servants under the compulsion of our Prakriti or Nature, and are, as it were, slaves & bound by her actions which we imagine to

be ours; but when we know the Self and experience our true Self, then we are masters of our Prakriti and not bound by her creations; our soul becomes the Sakshi, the silent spectator, of the actions of our Nature; thus are we both spectator & actor, and yet because we know the whole to be merely the illusion of an action and not action itself, because we know that Rama is not really killing Ravana nor Ravana being killed, for indeed Ravana lives as much after the supposed death as before; so are we neither actor nor spectator but the Self only and all we see only visions of the Self—as indeed the Sruti frequently uses the word ऐक्षद्, saw, in preference to any other for those conceptions with which the Brahman peoples with Himself the Universe of Himself. The mumukshu therefore will not try or wish to leave his life before the time, just as he will not try or wish to leave actions in this life, but only the desire for their fruit. For if he breaks impatiently the thread of his life before it is spun out, he will be no Jivanmukta but a mere suicide and attain the very opposite result of what he desires. The Upanishad says

असुर्या नाम ते लोका अन्धेन तमसावृताः ।
तांस्ते प्रेत्याभिगच्छन्ति ये के चात्महनो जनाः॥

Shankara takes this verse in a very peculiar way. He interprets आत्महनो as slayers of the Self, and since this is obviously an absurdity, for the Self is eternal and unslayable, he says that it is a metaphor for casting the Self under the delusion of ignorance which leads to birth. Now this is a very startling and violent metaphor and quite uncalled for, since the idea might easily have been expressed in any other natural way. Still the Sruti is full of metaphor and we shall therefore not be justified in rejecting Shankara's interpretation on that ground only. We must see whether the rest of the verse is in harmony with the interpretation. Now we find that in order to support his view Shankara is obliged to strain astonishingly the plain meaning of other words in the sentence also; for he takes लोका as meaning various kinds of birth, so that असुर्या लोका means the various births as man, animal etc, called आसुरा because Rajas predominates in

them and they are accompanied with Asuric dispositions.¹ All this is a curious and unparalleled meaning for Asuric worlds. The expression लोका is never applied to the various kinds of forms the Jivatman assumes, but to the various surroundings of the different conditions through which it passes, of which life in this world is one; we say इहलोक or मर्यलोक, परलोक or स्वर्गलोक, ब्रह्मलोक, गोलोक etc, but we do not say पशुलोक, पक्षिलोक, कीटलोक. If we say आसुर लोक we can mean nothing but the regions of Asuric gloom as opposed to the divine लोकs, Brahmalok, Golok, Swarga. This is the ordinary meaning when we speak of going to a world after death, and we must not take it in any other sense here just to suit our own argument. Moreover the expression ये के loses its peculiar force if we apply it to all living beings except the few who obtain mukti partial or complete; it obviously means some out of many. We must therefore refuse to follow even Shankara, when his interpretation involves so many violences to the language of Sruti and so wide a departure from the recognized meaning of words.

The ordinary sense of the words gives a perfectly clear and consistent meaning. The Sruti tells us that it is no use taking refuge in suicide or the shortening of your life, because those who kill themselves instead of finding freedom, plunge by death into a worse prison of darkness — the Asuric worlds enveloped in blind gloom.

THE STUDENT

Are then worlds of Patala beneath the earth a reality and do the souls go down there after death? But we know now that there is no beneath to the earth, which is round & encircled by nothing worse than air.

¹ Another version which duplicates some of the last part of this sentence reads as follows, beginning after "other words in the sentence also;" — for he says that असूरी लोका means the various kinds of birth; even the Devas being considered Asuric births as opposed to the Paratman; but this is a misuse of words because the Devas cannot be Asura births as opposed to the Daiva birth of Paratman, Paratman is above birth & above Devahood. Asurya can only mean Asuric as opposed to Devic.

THE GURU

Do not be misled by words. The Asuric worlds are a reality, the worlds of gloom in the nether depths of your own being. A world is not a place with hills & trees & stones, but a condition of the Jivatman, all the rest being only circumstances & details of a dream; this is clear from the language of the Sruti when it speaks of the spirit's *lok* in the next world, अमुष्मिन् लोके, as being good or otherwise. Obviously लोक means state or condition. मत्येत्तोक is not essentially this Earth we see, for there may & must be other abodes of mortal beings but the condition of mortality in the gross body, Swargalok is the condition of bliss in the subtle body, Narak the condition of misery in the subtle body, Brahmalok the condition of being near to Hiranyagarbha in the causal body. Just as the Jivatman like a dreamer sees the Earth & all its features when it is in the condition of mortality, and regards itself as in a particular place, so when it is in a condition of complete *tamas* in the subtle body, it believes itself to be in a place surrounded by thick darkness, a place of misery unspeakable. This world of darkness is imagined as being beneath the earth, beneath the condition of mortality, because the side of the earth turned away from the Sun is regarded as the nether side, while Swarga is above the Earth, because the side of earth turned to the Sun is considered the upper side, the place of light & pleasure. So the worlds of utter bliss begin from the Sun and rise above the Sun to Brahmalok. But these are all words & dreams, since Hell & Patal & Earth & Paradise & Heaven are all in the Jivatma itself and not outside it. Nevertheless while we are still dreamers, we must speak in the language & terms of the dream.

THE STUDENT

What then are these worlds of nether gloom?

THE GURU

When a man dies in great pain, or in great grief or in great agitation of mind and his last thoughts are full of fear, rage, pain or horror, then the Jivatman in the Sukshmasharir is unable to

shake off these impressions from his mind for years, sometimes for centuries. The reason of this is the law of death; death is a moment of great concentration when the departing spirit gathers up the impressions of its mortal life, as a host gathers provender for its journey, and whatever impressions are predominant at that moment, govern its condition afterwards. Hence the importance, even apart from Mukti, of living a clean and noble life and dying a calm & strong death. For if the ideas & impressions then uppermost are such as associate the self with this gross body and the vital functions, ie to say, with the lower upadhi, then the soul remains long in a tamasic condition of darkness & suffering, which we call Patal or in its worst forms Hell. If the ideas & impressions uppermost are such as associate the self with the mind and the higher desires then the soul passes quickly through a short period of blindness to a rajaso-sattwic condition of light & pleasure and wider knowledge, which we call Paradise, Swarga or Behesta, from which it will return to birth in this world; if the ideas & impressions are such as to associate the self with the higher understanding & the bliss of the Self, the soul passes quickly to a sattwic condition of highest bliss which we call Heaven or Brahmaloka and thence it does not return. But if we have learned to identify for ever the self with the Self, then before death we become God and after death we shall not be other. For there are three states of Maya, tamasic illusion, rajasic illusion, & sattwic illusion; and each in succession we must shake off to reach that which is no illusion, but the one and only truth.

The Sruti says then that those who slay themselves go down into the nether world of gloom, for they have associated the Self with body and fancied that by getting rid of this body, they will be free, but they have died full of impressions of grief, impatience, disgust and pain. In that state of gloom they are continually repeating the last scene of their life, its impressions and its violent disquiet, and until they have worn off these, there is no possibility of *shanti* for their minds. Let no man in his folly or impatience court such a doom.

THE STUDENT

I understand then that these three verses form a clear & connected exposition. But in the next verse the Upanishad goes on suddenly to something quite disconnected.

THE GURU

No. It says

अनेजदेकं मनसो जवीयो नैनदेवा आप्नुवन् पूर्वमर्षत् ।
तद्वावतोऽन्यानत्येति तिष्ठत्स्मिन्नपो मातरिश्चा दधाति ॥

The Sruti has said that you must invest all things with the Lord. But of course that really means, you must realise how all things are already invested with Him. It now proceeds to show how this is and to indicate that the Lord is the Brahman, the One who, regarded in his creative activity through Purusha & Prakriti, is called the Lord. Therefore it now uses the neuter form of the pronoun, speaking of Him as That and This; because Brahman is above sex & distinction. He is One, yet he is at once unmoving & swifter than mind. He is both Purusha & Prakriti, and yet at the same time He is neither, but One and indivisible; Purusha & Prakriti being merely conceptions in His mind deliberately raised for the sake of creating multiplicity. As Prakriti, He is swifter than the mind; for Prakriti is His creative force making matter & its forms through motion. All creation is motion, all activity is motion. All this apparently stable universe is really in a state of multifold motion, everything is whirling with inconceivable rapidity through motion, and even thought which is the swiftest thing we know, cannot keep pace with the velocity of the cosmic stir. And all this motion, all this ever evolving Cosmos & Universe is Brahman. The Gods in their swiftest movements, the lords of the senses, cannot reach him, for He rushes far in front. The eye, the ear, the mind, nothing material can reach or conceive the inconceivable creative activity of the Brahman. We try to follow Him pouring as light through the solar system and lo! while we are striving He is whirling universes into being far beyond the reach of eye or telescope, far beyond the farthest flights of thought itself. Material senses quail before the thought

of the wondrous stir and stupendous unimaginable activity that the existence of the Universe implies. And yet all the time He who outstrips all others, is not running, but standing. While we are toiling after Him, He is all the time here, at our side, before, behind us, with us, *in* us. Really He does not move at all; all this motion is the result of our own Avidya which by persuading us to imagine ourselves as limited, subjects our thoughts to the conditions of Time & Space. Brahman in all his creative activity is really in one place; He is at the same time in the Sun & here; but we in order to realise Him have to follow Him from the Sun to the Earth; and this motion of our thoughts, this sensory impression of a space covered & a time spent we attribute not to our thought, but to Brahman, just as a man in a railway-train has a sensory impression that everything is rushing past, but that the train is still. Vidya, Knowledge tells him that this is not so. So that the stir of the Cosmos is really the stir of our own minds — and yet even our own mind does not really stir. What we call mind is simply the play of conception sporting with the idea of multiplicity which is in form the idea of motion. The Purusha is really unmoving; he is the motionless & silent spectator of a drama of which He himself is the stage, the theatre, the scenery, the actors and the acting. He is the poet Shakespeare watching Desdemona & Othello, Hamlet & the murderous Uncle, Rosalind & Jacques & Viola and all the other hundred multiplicities of himself acting & talking & rejoicing & suffering, all Himself & yet not himself, who sits there a silent witness, their Creator who has no part in their actions and yet without Him not one of them could exist. This is the mystery of the world and its paradox, yet its one plain, simple & easy truth.

THE STUDENT

Now I see. But what is this suddenly thrown in about Matariswun & the waters? Shankara interprets अपः as actions. Will not this bring it more into harmony with the rest of the verse?

THE GURU

Perhaps; waters is the proper sense of अपः but let us see first whether by taking it in its proper sense we cannot arrive at a clear meaning. The Sruti says that this infinitely motionless yet infinitely moving Brahman is that in which Matariswun setteth the waters. Now we know the conception which the Scripture gives us of this Universe. Everything that we call creation, putting forth & Science calls evolution is in reality a limitation, a *srishti*, as we say, that is a letting loose of a part from the whole, or a selection, as the Scientists say, a natural selection they call it or, as we should put it, selection by the action of Prakriti, of a small portion from a larger stock, of the particular from the general. Thus we have seen that the Sleep Condition or Prajna is a letting loose or let us say selection of one part of consciousness from the wider Universal Consciousness; the Dream Consciousness or Hiranyagarbha is a selection from the wider Sleep Consciousness, and the Waking Consciousness Virat or Vaisvanor is a selection from the wider Dream Consciousness; similarly each individual consciousness is only a selection from the wider Universal Waking Consciousness, each step involving a narrower & ever narrowing consciousness until we come to that extremely narrow bit of consciousness which is only conscious of a bit out of the material & outward world of phenomena. It is the same with the process of material creation. Out of the unformed Prakriti which the Sankhya calls Pradhana or primary idea, substance, plasm or what you will, of matter, one aspect or force is selected which is called Akash and of which ether is the visible manifestation; this *akash* or ether is the substratum of all form & material being. Out of ether a narrower force is selected or let loose which is called Vaiou or Matariswun, the Sleeper in the Mother, because he sleeps or rests directly in the mother-principle, Ether. This is the great God who in the Brahman setteth the waters in their place.

THE STUDENT

You speak of it as a God, I think, metaphorically. Science has done away with the Gods of the old crude mythology.

THE GURU

The Gods are; — they are the Immortals and cannot be done away with by Science however vehemently she denies them; only the knowledge of the One Brahman can do away with them. For behind every great & *elemental* natural phenomenon there is a vast living force which is a manifestation, an aspect of Brahman and can therefore be called nothing less than a God. Of these Matariswun is one of the mightiest.

THE STUDENT

Is Air then a God or Wind a God? But it is only a conglomeration of gases.

THE GURU

That and nothing more in the terms of material analysis, but look beyond to the synthesis; matter is not everything and analysis is not everything. By material analysis you can prove that man is nothing but a conglomeration of animalcules, and so materialism with an obstinate and learned silliness persists in asseverating; but man will never consent to regard himself as a conglomeration of animalcules, because he knows that he is more. He looks beyond the analysis to the synthesis, beyond the house to the dweller in the house, beyond the parts to the force that holds the parts together. So with the Air, which is only one of the manifestations of Matariswun proper to this earth, one of the houses in which he dwells; but Matariswun is in all the worlds and built all the worlds; he has numberless houses for his dwelling. The principle of his being is *motion* materially manifested, and we know that it is by motion creation becomes possible. Matariswun therefore is the Principle of Life, the universal and all pervading ocean of Prana, of which the most important manifestation in man is the force which presides over that distribution of gases in the body to which we give the name of Breath.

THE STUDENT

Still, most people would call this a natural force, not a God.

THE GURU

Call him what you like, only realise that Matariswun is a force of Brahman, nay, Brahman Himself, who in himself setteth the waters to their places. Now just as Matariswun was a selection from Akasha or ether, so is Agni, Fire, a selection from Matariswun and the Waters a selection from fire. Now notice that it is the plural word अपः which is used; just as often you find the Sruti instead of the name Agni of the presiding principle, using the plural *jyotinshi*, lights, splendours, shining things, of the various manifestations of Agni, so it uses आपः, all fluidities, of the various manifestations of Varouna, the presiding force behind them. You must not think that the waters of the ocean or of the rain are the only manifestations of this principle, just as you must not suppose that the fire in yonder brazier or the sun in heaven is the only manifestation of the fiery principle. All the phenomena of light and everything from which heat proceeds have their immediate basis or substratum in Agni. So with the waters which are selected out of Agni by the operations of heat etc. So again all *earth*, all forms of solidity have their basis or substratum in Prithivi, the earth-force, which is again a selection out of Jala or Varouna, the fluid principle. Now life proceeds in this way; it arises on the substratum of ether with Matariswun or the Air Force as its principle & essential condition, by the operation of the fiery or light principle through heat, out of the fluid to solidity which is its body. The material world is therefore often said in the Sruti to be produced out of the waters, because so long as it does not emerge from the fluid state, there is as yet no Cosmos. When Science instead of following the course of Nature upstream by analysis, resolving the solid into fluid, the fluid into the fiery, and the fiery into the aerial, shall begin to follow it downstream, imitating the processes of Prakriti, and especially studying & utilising critical stages of transition, then the secret of material creation will be solved, and Science will be able to create material *life* and not as now merely destroy it. We can now understand what the Sruti means when it says that Matariswun in Brahman setteth the waters to their places. Brahman is the reality behind all material life, and the operations of creation are

only a limited part of His universal consciousness and cannot go on without that consciousness as its basis. Shankara is not perhaps wrong when he reads the meaning “actions” into अपः; for the purposes of mankind, actions are the most important of all the various vital operations over which Matariswun presides. Remember therefore that all you do, create, destroy you are doing, creating & destroying in Brahman, that He is the condition of all your deeds; the more you realise & intensify in yourself Brahman as an ocean of spiritual force, the mightier will be your creation & your destruction, you will approach nearer and nearer to Godhead. For the Spirit is all & not the body, of which you should only be careful as a vehicle of the Spirit, for without the presence of Spirit, which gives Prakriti the force to act, Prakriti would be inert, nay could not exist. For what is Prakriti itself but the creation of the mighty Shakti, who is without end & without beginning, the Shakti of the Eternal? Without some Jnana, some knowledge & feeling of the Spirit within you, your work cannot be great; and the deeper your Jnana the greater your work. All the great creators have been men who felt powerfully God within them, whether they were Daivic, of the Olympian type like Shankara, or Asuric, of the Titanic type like Napoleon; only the Asura, his Jnana being limited and muddied, is always confusing the Eternal with the grosser & temporary manifestations of Prakriti such as his own vital passions of lust & ambition; the Deva, being sattvic & a child of light, sees clearer. When Napoleon cried out, “What is the French Revolution? I am the French Revolution,” he gave utterance to that sense of his being more than a mere man, of his being the very force & power of God in action, which gave him such a stupendous energy & personality; but his mind being muddied by rajas, passion & desire, he could not see that the very fact of his being the French Revolution should have pointed him to higher & grander ideals than the mere satisfaction of his vital part in empire & splendour, that it should have spurred him to be the leader of insurgent humanity, not the trampler down of the immortal spirit of nationality, which was a yet greater and more energetic manifestation of the Eternal Shakti than

himself. Therefore he fell; therefore the Adyashakti, the mighty Devi Chandi Ranarangini Nrimundamalini, withdrew from him her varabhaya and fought against him till she had crushed and torn him with the claws of her lion. Had he fallen as the leader of humanity,—he could not have fallen then, but yet if he had fallen,—his spirit would have conquered after his death and ruled & guided the nations for centuries to come. Get therefore Jnana, the pure knowledge of Brahman within you and show it forth in nishkam karma, in selfless work for your people, for your country, for humanity, for the world, then will you surely become Brahman even in this mortal body and by death take upon yourself eternity.

The Sruti then having set forth the nature of the Lord & identified Him with the Brahman, proceeds to sum up the apparent paradoxes attending his twofold aspect as the Unknowable Parabrahman and the Master of the Universe, as the Self within the Universe and the Self within your body. That moveth and That moveth not,—as has already been explained; That is far and the same That is quite near, That is within all this and the same That is without all this.

THE STUDENT

There is no difficulty in this statement.

THE GURU

No, there is no difficulty, once you have the key. But try to realise what it means. Lift your eyes towards the Sun; He is there in that wonderful heart of life & light and splendour. Watch at night the innumerable constellations glittering like so many solemn watchfires of the Eternal in the limitless silence which is no void but throbs with the presence of a single calm and tremendous existence; see there Orion with his sword and belt shining as he shone to the Aryan fathers ten thousand years ago at the beginning of the Aryan era, Sirius in his splendour, Lyra sailing billions of miles away in the ocean of space. Remember that these innumerable worlds, most of them mightier than our own, are whirling with indescribable speed at the beck of that

Ancient of Days whither none but He knoweth, and yet that they are a million times more ancient than your Himalaya, more steady than the roots of your hills and shall so remain until He at his will shakes them off like withered leaves from the eternal tree of the Universe. Imagine the endlessness of Time, realise the boundlessness of Space; and then remember that when these worlds were not, He was, the Same as now, and when these are not, He shall be, still the Same; perceive that beyond Lyra He is and far away in Space where the stars of the Southern Cross cannot be seen, still He is there. And then come back to the Earth & realise who this He is. He is quite near to you. See yonder old man who passes near you crouching & bent, with his stick. Do you realise that it is God who is passing? There a child runs laughing in the sunlight. Can you hear Him in that laughter? Nay, He is nearer still to you. He is in you, He is you. It is yourself that burns yonder millions of miles away in the infinite reaches of Space, that walks with confident steps on the tumbling billows of the ethereal sea; it is you who have set the stars in their places and woven the necklace of the suns not with hands but by that Yoga, that silent actionless impersonal Will which has set you here today listening to yourself in me. Look up, O child of the ancient Yoga, and be no longer a trembler and a doubter; fear not, doubt not, grieve not; for in your apparent body is One who can create & destroy worlds with a breath.

Yes, He is within all this as a limitless ocean of spiritual force; for if He were not, neither this outer you nor this outer I nor this Sun nor all these worlds could last for even a millionth part of the time that is taken by a falling eyelid. But He is outside it too. Even in His manifestation, He is outside it in the sense of exceeding it, अत्यतिष्ठशांगुलं, in His unmanifestation, He is utterly apart from it. This truth is more difficult to grasp than the other, but it is necessary to grasp it. There is a kind of Pantheism which sees the Universe as God and not God as the Universe; but if the Universe is God, then is God material, divisible, changeable, the mere flux & reflux of things; but all these are not God in Himself, but God in His shadows & appearances; they are, to repeat our figure, the shadows and figments of Shakespeare's

mind, Shakespeare is not only vaster than all his drama-world put together, he is not only both in it and outside it, but apart from it and other than it.

THE STUDENT

Do you mean that these are emanations from His Mind?

THE GURU

I do not. Emanation is a silly word and a silly idea. God is not a body emitting vapours. If they have emanated from Him, where, pray, have they emanated to? Which is their locality and where is their habitation? You cannot go anywhere where you will be outside God; you cannot go out of your Self. For though you flee to the uttermost parts of space, He is there. Are Hamlet & the rest of them emanations from Shakespeare's mind? Will you tell me then where they have emanated to? Is it on to those pages, those corruptions of pulp which are made today and destroyed tomorrow? Is it into those combinations of those letters of the English alphabet with which the pages are covered? Put them into combinations of any other alphabet, or relate them in any language to a man who knows not what letters are, and still Hamlet will live for him. Is it in the sounds that the letters represent? sounds that are heard this moment and forgotten the next? But Hamlet is not forgotten—he lives on in your mind for ever. Is it in the impressions made on the material brain by the forgotten sounds? Nay the Sleep Self within you, even if you have never heard or read the play of Hamlet, will, if it is liberated by any adequate process of Yoga or powerful hypnosis, tell you about Hamlet. Shakespeare's drama-world never emanated from Shakespeare's mind, because it was in his mind and is in his mind; and you can know of Hamlet because your mind is part of the same universal mind as Shakespeare's—part, I say, in appearance, but in reality that mind is one and indivisible. All knowledge belongs to it by its nature perpetually and from perpetuity, and the knowledge that we get in the waking condition through such vehicles as speech & writing are mere fragments created (let loose) from it & yet within it, just as the worlds are mere

fragments created (let loose) from the Brahman, in the sense of being consciousness selected & set apart from the Universal Consciousness, but always within the Brahman. Emanation is a metaphor, like the metaphor in the Sruti about the spider & his web,— convenient for certain purposes, but not the truth, very poor ground therefore on which to build a philosophy.

To realise God in the Universe & in yourself, is true Pantheism and it is the necessary step for approaching the Unknowable, but to mistake the Universe for God, is a mistaken & inverted Pantheism. This inverted Pantheism is the outer aspect of the Rigveda, and it is therefore that the Rigveda unlike the Upanishad may lead either to the continuation of bondage or to Brahmaloka, while the Upanishad can lead only to Brahmaloka or to the Brahman Himself.

THE STUDENT

But the new scholarship tells us that the Rigveda is either henotheistic or polytheistic, not real Pantheism.

THE GURU

Nay, if you seek the interpretation of your religion from Christians, atheists and agnostics, you will hear more wonderful things than that. What do you think of Charvak's interpretation of Vedic religion as neither pantheistic nor polytheistic but a plutotheistic invention of the Brahmins? An European or his disciple in scholarship can no more enter into the spirit of the Veda than the wind can blow freely in a closed room. And pedants especially can never go beyond the manipulation of words. Men like Max Muller presume to lecture us on our Veda & Vedanta because they know something of Sanscrit grammar; but when we come to them for light, we find them playing marbles on the doorsteps of the outer court of the temple. They had not the adhikar to enter, because they came in a spirit of arrogance with preconceived ideas to teach & not to learn; and their learning was therefore not helpful towards truth, but only towards grammar. Others ignorant of the very rudiments of Sanscrit, have seen more deeply than they,— even if some *have* seen more than there

was to see. What for instance is this *henotheism*, this new word, the ill begotten of pedantry upon error? If it is meant that various sections of the Aryas consider different Gods as *the God* above all & the others false or comparatively false Gods, there would have been inevitably violent conflicts between the various sects and perpetual wars of religion but such there were not. If on the other hand, it is meant that different worshippers preferred to worship the Lord of the Universe in different particular forms, then are we still henotheist; for there is hardly one of us who has not his ishta-devata, Vishnou, Siva, Ganapati, Maruti, Rama, Krishna or Shakti; yet we all recognize but one Lord of the Universe behind the form we worship. If on the other hand the same man worshipped different nature-forces, but each in its turn as the Lord of the Universe, then is this Pantheism, pure and simple. And this was indeed the outer aspect of the Vedic religion; but when the seers of the Veda left their altars to sit in meditation, they perceived that Brahman was neither the Visvadevas nor the synthesis of the Visvadevas but something other than they; then was the revelation made that is given us in the Upanishads. ते ध्यानयोगानुगता अपश्यन् देवात्मशक्तिं स्वगुणैर्निर्गृद्धाम्। This is what is meant by saying that Brahman is outside all this; he is neither the synthesis of Nature nor anything that the Universe contains, but himself contains the Universe which is only a shadow of His own Mind in His own Mind.

THE STUDENT

I understand.

THE GURU

If you really understand, then are you ready for the next step which the Sruti takes when it draws from the unity of the Brahman, the sublimest moral principle to be found in any religion.

यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मन्येवानुपश्यति ।
सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते॥

To man finding himself in the midst of the paradoxes created

by the twofold nature of the Self, of himself, the Shakti that knows & the Shakti that plays at not knowing, the Sruti gives an unfailing guide, a sure staff and a perfect ideal. See all creatures in thy Self.² Yes, all; wife, children, friends, enemies, joy, sorrow, victory, defeat, beauty and ugliness, animation and inanimation — all these are but moods of One Consciousness and that Consciousness is our own. If you come to think of it, you have no friends or enemies, no joys or sorrows but of your own making. Scientists tell you that it is by the will to adapt itself in a particular way to its surroundings, one species differentiates itself from another. That is but one application of an universal principle. The Will is the root of all things; you will to have wife & children, friends & enemies and they arise. You will to be sick & sorry and sickness & sorrow seize you; you will to be strong & beautiful and happy, and the world becomes brighter with your radiance. This whole Universe is but the result of One universal Will which having resolved to create multitude in itself has made itself into all the forms you see within it.

THE STUDENT

The idea is difficult to grasp, too vast & yet too subtle.

THE GURU

Because Avidya, the sense of difference is your natural condition in the body. Think a little. This body is built by the protoplasm multiplying itself; it does not *divide* itself, for by division it could not grow. It produces another itself out of itself, the same in appearance, in size, in nature and so it builds up the body which is only itself multiplied in itself. Take that as an imperfect example, which may yet help you to understand.

² Here the following sentences which occur again in a rewritten form twelve pages later are found in the manuscript, enclosed within parentheses but not cancelled:
If thy mind fails thee, if the anguish of thy coverings still conceals the immortal Spirit within, dash away tears, ay be they very tears of blood, wipe them from thy eye and look out on the Universe. There is thy Self, that is Brahman, and all these things, thy self, thy joy, thy sorrow, thy friends & enemies are in Him. तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एकत्वमनुपश्यतः:

THE STUDENT

But it multiplies not in itself, but out of itself, as a man & woman create a son out of themselves.

THE GURU

So it appears to you because it is working in Time & Space, — for the same reason that there seem to you [to] be many Jivatmans outside each other, while deeper knowledge shows you one only, or that you imagine two separate consciousnesses in one man, while more skilful hypnosis shows you that they are one consciousness working variously within itself. In one sense the One seems to us to multiply himself like the protoplasm, because the One Jivatman is the same in all, hence the fundamental similarity of consciousness in all beings; in one sense He seems to divide himself like the human consciousness because He is the unit & all seem to be partial expressions of the comprehensive unit; again he seems to add pieces of Himself together, because you the consciousness who are He add yourself to your wife the consciousness who is again He and become one, and so the process goes on till of the vyashti, analysis in parts, you get the samashti or synthesis of all; finally He seems to subtract Himself from Himself, because as I have told you, each step in creation is a letting loose or separating of part from a wider entity. All these are however figures and appearances and whatever He does, it must be in Himself, because He has nowhere else to do it in, since He is all Space & all Time. Realise therefore that all these around you, wife, children, friends, enemies, men, animals, animate things & inanimate are in you, the Universal Mind, like actors on a stage, and seem to be outside you only for appearance' sake, for the convenience of the play. If you realise this, you will be angry with none, therefore you will hate none & therefore you will try to injure none. For how can you be angry with any; if your enemies injure you, it is yourself who are injuring yourself; whatever they are, you have made them that; whatever they do, you are the root of their action. Nor will you injure them, because you will be injuring none but yourself. Why indeed should you hate them & try to injure them any more

than Shakespeare hated Iago for injuring Othello; do you think that Shakespeare shared the feelings of [Lodovico] when he condemned the successful villain to death & torture? If Shakespeare did hate Iago, you would at once say that it was illusion, Avidya, on the part of Shakespeare — since it is Shakespeare himself who set Iago there to injure Othello, since indeed there is no Othello or Iago, but only Shakespeare creating himself in himself. Why then should you consider your hatred of yourself made enemy more reasonable than Shakespeare's hatred of his own creation? No, all things being in yourself, are your own creation, are yourself, and you cannot hate your own creation, you cannot loathe yourself. Loathing and hatred are the children of illusion, of ignorance. This is the negative side of morality; but there is a positive for which the Sruti next proceeds to lay down the basis. You must for the purpose of withdrawing yourself from unrealities see all creatures in the Self; but if you did that only, you would soon arrive at the Nirvana of all action and ring down the curtain on an unfinished play. For the purpose of continuing the play till the proper time for your final exit, you must also see yourself in all creatures. The nature of the Self in a state of Vidya is bliss; now the state of Vidya is a state of self-realisation, the realisation of oneness & universality. The nature of the Self in the state of Avidya, the false sense of diversity and limitation is a state not of pure bliss but of pleasure & pain, for pleasure is different from bliss, as it is limited & involves pain, while the nature of bliss is illimitable and above duality; it is when pain itself becomes pleasure, is swallowed up in pleasure, that bliss is born. Every thing therefore which removes even partially the sense of difference and helps towards the final unity, brings with it a touch of bliss by a partial oblivion of pain. But that which brings you bliss, you cannot help but delight in ecstatically, you cannot help but *love*. If therefore you see yourself in another, you spontaneously love that other; for in yourself you must delight. If you see yourself in all creatures, you cannot but love all creatures. Universal love is the inevitable consequence of the realisation of the One in Many, and with Universal Love how shall any shred of hate, disgust, dislike, loathing coexist? They

dissolve in it like the night mists in the blaze of the risen sun. Take it in another way and we get a new facet of the one truth. All hatred & repulsion arises from the one cause, Avidya, which begot Will, called Desire, which begot Ahankar, which begot desire called Hunger. From Desire-Hunger are born liking & dislike, liking for whatever satisfies or helps us to our desire, dislike for whatever obstructs or diminishes the satisfaction of desire. This liking in this way created is the liking of the protoplasmic sheath for whatever gives it sensual gratification, the liking of the vital sheath for whatever gives it emotional gratification, the liking of the mind sheath for whatever gives it aesthetic gratification, the liking of the knowledge sheath for whatever gives it intellectual gratification. But beyond these there is something else not so intelligible, beyond my liking for the beautiful body of a woman or for a fine picture or a pleasant companion or an exciting play or a clever speaker or a good poem or an illuminative and well-reasoned argument there is my liking for somebody which has no justification or apparent reason. If sensual gratification were all, then it is obvious that I should have no reason to prefer one woman over another and after the brute gratification liking would cease; I have seen this brute impulse given the name of love; perhaps I myself used to give it that name when the protoplasmic animal predominated in me. If emotional gratification were all, then I might indeed cling for a time to the woman who had pleased my body, but only so long as she gave me emotional pleasure, by her obedience, her sympathy with my likes & dislikes, her pleasant speech, her admiration or her answering love. But the moment these cease, my liking also will begin to fade away. This sort of liking too is persistently given the great name and celebrated in poetry & romance. Then if aesthetic gratification were all, my liking for a woman of great beauty or great charm might well outlast the loss of all emotional gratification, but when the wrinkles began to trace the writing of age on her face or when accident marred her beauty, my liking would fade or vanish since the effect would lose the nutrition of a present cause. Intellectual gratification seldom enters into the love of a man for a woman; even if it did

so, more frequently the intellectual gratification to be derived from a single mind is soon exhausted in daylong and nightlong companionship. Whence then comes that love which is greater than life and stronger than death, which survives the loss of beauty and the loss of charm, which defies the utmost pain & scorn the object of love can deal out to it, which often pours out from a great & high intellect on one infinitely below it? What again is that love of woman which nothing can surpass, which lives on neglect and thrives on scorn & cruelty, whose flames rise higher than the red tongues of the funeral pyre, which follows you into heaven or draws you out of hell? Say not that this love does not exist and that all here is based on appetite, vanity, interest or selfish pleasure, that Rama & Sita, Ruru & Savitri are but dreams & imaginations. Human nature conscious of its divinity throws back the libel in scorn, and poetry blesses & history confirms its verdict. That Love is nothing but the Self recognizing the Self dimly or clearly and therefore seeking to realise oneness & the bliss of oneness. What again is a friend? Certainly I do not seek from my friend the pleasure of the body or choose him for his good looks; nor for that similarity of tastes & pursuits I would ask in a mere comrade; nor do I love him because he loves me or admires me, as I would perhaps love a disciple; nor do I necessarily demand of him a clever brain, as if he were only an intellectual helper or teacher. All these feelings exist, but they are not the soul of friendship. No, I love my friend for the woman's reason, because I love him, because in the old imperishable phrase, he is my *other self*. There by intuition the old Roman hit on the utter secret of Love. Love is the turning of the Self from its false self in the mind or body to its true Self in another; I love him because I have discovered the very Self of me in him, not my body or mind or tastes or feelings, but my very Self of love & bliss, of the outer aspect of whom the Sruti has beautifully said "Love is his right side" etc. So is it with the patriot; he has seen himSelf in his nation & seeks to lose his lower self in that higher national Self; because he can do so, we have a Mazzini, a Garibaldi, a Joan of Arc, a Washington, a Pratap Singh or a Sivaji; the lower material self

could not have given us these; you do not manufacture such men in the workshop of utility, on the forge of Charvaka or grow them in the garden of Epicurus. So is it with the lover of humanity, who loses or seeks to lose his lower self in mankind; no enlightened selfishness could have given us Father Damien or Jesus or Florence Nightingale. So is it finally with the lover of the whole world, of whom the mighty type is Buddha, the one unapproachable ideal of Divine Love in man, he who turned from perfect divine bliss as he had turned from perfect human bliss that not he alone but all creatures might be saved.

To see your Self in all creatures and all creatures in your Self—that is the unshakeable foundation of all religion, love, patriotism, philanthropy, humanity, of everything which rises above selfishness and gross utility. For what is selfishness? it is mistaking the body & the vital impulses for your true self and seeking their gratification, a gross, narrow and transient pleasure, instead of the stainless bliss of your true self which is the whole Universe & more than the Universe. Selfishness arises from Avidya, from the great fundamental ignorance which creates Ahankara, the sense of your individual existence, the pre-occupation with your own individual existence, which at once leads to Desire, to Hunger which is Death, death to yourself and death to others. The sense that this is I and that is you, and that I must take this or that, or else you will take it, that is the basis of all selfishness; the sense that this I must eat that you, in order to live & avoid being eaten, that is the principle of material existence from which arises strife and hatred. And so long as the difference between I and you exists, hatred cannot cease, covetousness cannot cease, war cannot cease, evil & sin cannot cease, and because sin cannot cease, sorrow & misery cannot cease. This is the eternal Maya that makes a mock of all materialistic schemes for a materialistic Paradise upon earth. Paradise cannot be made upon the basis of food and drink, upon the equal division of goods or even upon the common possession of goods, for always the *mine* & *thine*, the greed, the hate, will return again if not between this man & that man, yet between this community and that community. Christianity hopes

to make men live together like brothers — a happy family, loving and helping each other; perhaps it still hopes, though there is little in the state of the modern world to flatter its dreams. But that millennium too will not come, not though Christ should descend with all his angels and cut the knot, after banishing the vast majority of mankind to the outer darkness where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth, by setting up this united family of mankind with the meagre remnants of the pure and faithful. What a mad dream of diseased imaginations that men could be really and everlastingily happy while mankind was everlastingily suffering! How would the everlasting hatred breathing out from the innumerably-peopled furnaces of pain blast & mar with unconquerable smoke of Hell the light & peace of the saints! And how strangely was the slight, but sweet and gracious shadow of Buddhism distorted in the sombre & cruel minds of those fierce Mediterranean races, when they pictured the saints as drawing added bliss from the contemplation of the eternal tortures in which those they had lived with and perhaps loved, were agonizing. Divine love, divine pity, the nature of the Buddha, that was the message which India sent to Europe through the lips of Jesus, and this is how the European mind interpreted divine love & divine pity! The fires of Hell aptly and piously anticipated on earth by the fires of Smithfield, the glowing splendours of the Auto-da-fé, the unspeakable reek of agony that steams up thro' history from the dungeons of the Holy Office — nay, there are wise men who find an apology for these pious torturers; it *was* divine love after all seeking to save the soul at the cost of the perishable body! But the Aryan spirit of the East, the spirit of Buddha struggles for ever with European barbarism and surely in the end it shall conquer. Already Europe does homage to humanity with her lips and in the gateways of her mind; perhaps some day she will do so with her heart also. At any rate the millennium of Tertullian is out of date. But still it is the Christian ideal, the Syrian interpretation of the truth and not the truth itself, which dominates the best European thought and the Christian ideal is the ideal of the *united family*.

THE STUDENT

Surely it is a noble ideal.

THE GURU

Very noble and we have it among ourselves in a noble couplet वसुधैव कुटम्बकं; but everything which implies difference is based upon Avidya and the inevitable fruits of Avidya. Have you ever watched a big united family, a joint-family in Bengal especially in days when the Aryan discipline is lost? Behind its outward show of strength and unity, what jarring, what dissensions, what petty malice & hatred, what envy & covetousness! And then finally one day a crash, a war, a case in the law-courts, a separation for ever. What the joint-family is on a small scale, that on a big scale is an united nation, Russia or Austria or Germany or the *United Kingdom*. Mankind as an united family would mean in practice mankind as an united nation. How much would you gain by it? You would get rid of war,—for a time—of the mangling of men's bodies by men, but the body though to be respected as the chosen vehicle or the favourite dress of Brahman, is not of the first importance. You would not get rid of the much more cruel mangling of the human Self by hatred, greed and strife. The Europeans attach too much importance to the body, shrink too much from physical sin and are far too much at their ease with mental sin. It is enough for them if a woman abstain from carrying out her desire in action, if a man abstain from physical violence, then is the one chaste, the other self-controlled. This if not sheer unAryanism or Mlecchahood is at best the half baked virtue of the semi-Aryanised. Be you who are born in the Aryan discipline, however maimed by long bondage, an Aryan indeed, chaste in mind & spirit, & not merely careful in speech & body, gentle in heart & thought and not merely decent in words & actions. That is true self-control and real morality. No Paradise therefore can exist, no Paradise even if it existed, can last, until that which makes sin and hell is conquered. We may never have a Paradise on earth, but if it is ever to come, it will come not when all mankind are as brothers, for brothers jar and hate as much & often more than mere friends or strangers,

but when all mankind has realised that it is one Self. Nor can that be until mankind has realised that all existence is oneself, for if an united humanity tyrannise over bird & beast & insect, the atmosphere of pain, hatred & fear breathing up from the lower creation will infect & soil the purity of the upper. The law of Karma is inexorable, and whatever you deal out to others, even such shall be the effect on yourself, in this life or in another. Do you think then that this strange thing will ever come about that mankind in general, will ever come to see in the dog and the vulture, nay, in the snake that bites and the scorpion that stings, their own Self, that they will say unto Death my brother & to Destruction my sister, nay that they will know these things as themselves? सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं, the Sruti will not spare you the meanest insect that crawls or the foulest worm that writhes.

THE STUDENT

It does not seem possible.

THE GURU

It does not; and yet the impossible repeatedly happens. At any rate, if you must have an ideal, of the far-off event to which humanity moves, cherish this. Distrust all Utopias that seek to destroy sin or scrape away part of the soil in which it grows while preserving intact the very roots of sin, Ahankar born of Ignorance & Desire. For once Ahankar is there, likes and dislikes are born, रागद्वेषौ the primal couple of dualities, liking for what farthers the satisfaction of desire, dislike for what hinders it, the sense of possession, the sense of loss, attraction, repulsion, charm, repugnance, love, hatred, pity, cruelty, kindness, wrath, — the infinite and eternal procession of the dualities. Admit but one pair, and all the others come tumbling in in its wake. But the man who sees himself in all creatures, cannot hate; he shrinks from none, he has neither repulsion nor fear. ततो न विज्ञुप्सते. Yonder leper whom all men shun — but shall I shun him, who know that from this strange disguise the Brahman looks out with smiling eyes? This foeman who comes with a sword to pierce me through the heart, — I look beyond the sharp threatening sword,

beyond the scowling brow and the eyes of hate, and I recognize the mask of my Self; thereafter I shall neither fear the sword nor hate the bearer. O myself who foolishly callest thyself mine enemy, how canst thou be my enemy unless I choose; friend & enemy are but creations of the Mind that myriad-working magician, that great dreamer & artist; and if I will not to regard thee as my enemy, thou canst no more be such than a dream or shadow can, as indeed thy flashing sword is but a dream and thy scowling brow but a shadow. But thou wilt divide me with thy sword, thou wilt slay me, pierce me with bullets, torture me with fire, blow me from the mouth of thy cannon? Me thou canst not pierce, for I am unslayable, unpierceable, indivisible, unburnable, immovable. Thou canst but tear this dress of me, this foodsheath or multiplied protoplasm which I wear — *I* am what I was before. I will not be angry with thee even, for who would trouble himself to be angry with a child because in its play or little childish wrath it has torn his dress? Perhaps I valued the dress and would not so soon have parted with it; I will try then to save it, if I may, and even punish thee without anger so that thou mayst not tear more dresses; but if I cannot — well, it was but a cloth and another can soon be had from the merchant; nay, have I not already paid the purchase-money? O my judge, thou who sittest pronouncing that I be hanged by the neck till I be dead, because I have broken *thy* laws perchance to give bread to starving thousands, perchance to help the men of my country whom thou wouldest keep as slaves for thy pleasure — Me wilt thou hang? When thou canst shake the sun from heaven or wrap up the skies like a garment, then shall power be given thee to hang me. Who or what is this thou deemest will die by hanging? A bundle of animalculae, no more. This outward thou & I are but stage masks; behind them is One who neither slayeth nor is slain. Mask called a judge, play thou thy part; I have played mine. O son of the ancient Yoga, realise thy Self in all things; fear nothing, loathe nothing; dread none, hate none, but do thy part with strength and courage; so shalt thou be what thou truly art, God in thy victory, God in thy defeat, God in thy very death & torture, — God who will not be defeated & who cannot die.

Shall God fear any? shall He despair? shall He tremble & shake? Nay 'tis the insects that form thy body & brain which shake & tremble; Thou within them sittest looking with calm eyes at their pain & terror; for they are but shadows that dream of themselves as a reality. Realise the Self in all creatures, realise all creatures in the Self; then in the end terror shall flee from thee in terror, pain shall not touch thee, lest itself be tortured by thy touch; death shall not dare to come near to thee lest he be slain.

यस्मिन् सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मैवाभूद्विजानतः ।
तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एकत्वमनुपश्यतः ॥

He who discerneth, in whom all creatures have become himSelf, how shall he be deluded, whence shall he have sorrow, in whose eyes all things are One. That is the realisation of the mighty ideal, the moral and practical result of perfected Vedanta, that in us all things will become ourself. There, says the Sruti, in the man whose Self has become all creatures, what delusion can there be or what sorrow, for wherever he looks (अनुपश्यतः), he sees nothing but the great Oneness, nothing but God, nothing but his own Self of love and bliss. Delusion (मोह) is the mistaking of the appearance for the reality, bewilderment by the force of Maya. "This house that my fathers had was mine and alas, I have lost it." "This was my wife whom I loved, and she is lost to me for ever." "Alas, how has my son disappointed me from whom I hoped so much." "This office for which I hoped and schemed, my rival, the man I hated has got it." All these are the utterances of delusion and the result of delusion is शोक, sorrow. But to one whose Self has become all creatures, there can be no delusion and therefore no sorrow. He does not say "I, Devadatta, have lost this house. What a calamity!" He says "I, Devadatta, have lost this house, but it has gone to me, Harischandra. That is fortunate." I can lose nothing except to myself. Nor shall I weep because my wife is dead & lost, who is not lost at all, but as near to me as ever, since she is still my Self, in my Self, with my Self, as much after death as when her body was underneath my hands. I cannot lose my Self. My son has disappointed me? He has taken his own way & not mine, but he has not disappointed himSelf

who is my Self, he has only disappointed the sheath, the case, the mental cell in which I was imprisoned. The vision of the One Self dispels all differences; an infinite calm, an infinite love, an infinite charity, an infinite tolerance, is the very nature of the strong soul that has seen God. The sin, the stain, the disease, the foulness of the world cannot pollute his mind nor repel his sympathy; as he stoops to lift the sinner from the dung heap in which he wallows, he does not shrink from the ordure that stains his own hands; his eyes are not bedimmed by tears, when he lifts up the shrieking sufferer out of his pit of pain; he lifts him as a father lifts his child who has tumbled in the mire and is crying; the child chooses to think he is hurt & cries; the father knows he is not really hurt, therefore he does not grieve, but neither does he chide him, rather he lifts him up & soothes the wilful imaginary pain. Such a soul has become God, mighty & loving to help and save, not weak to weep and increase the ocean of human tears with his own. Buddha did not weep when he saw the suffering of the world; he went forth to save. And surely such a soul will not grieve over the buffets the outward world seems to give to his outward self; for how can He grieve who is all this Universe? The pain of his petty personal Self is no more to his consciousness than the pain of a crushed ant to a king as he walks musing in his garden bearing on his shoulders the destiny of nations. He cannot feel sorrow for himself even if he would, for he has the sorrow of a whole world to relieve; his own joy is nothing to him, for he has the joy of the whole Universe at his command.

There are two ways of attaining to Jnana, to the Vision. One is the way of Insight, the other the way of World-Sight. There are two ways of Bhakti, one by devotion to the Self as Lord of all concentrated within you, the other by devotion to the Self as Lord of all extended in the Universe. There are two ways of Karma, one by Yoga, quiescence of the sheaths & the ineffable unacting, yet all-enveloping omnipotence of the Self within; the other by quiescence of desire and selfless activity of the sheaths for the wider Self in the Universe. For the first you must turn your eyes within instead of without, put from you the pleasures of contact & sense, hush the mind & its organs and rising above

the dualities become One in yourself, आत्मतुष्टिरात्मारामः. Is this too difficult for thee? Does thy mind fail thee, the anguish of thy coverings still conceal the immortal Spirit within? Dash the tears from thine eyes; though they be tears of blood, still persist in wiping them away as they ooze out and look *out* on the Universe. That is thy self, that is Brahman. Realise all this Cosmic Stir, this rolling of the suns, this light, this life, this ceaseless activity. It is thou thyself that art stirring through all this Universe, thou art this Sun and this moon and these Constellations. The Ocean rolls in thee, the storm blows in thee, the hills stand firm in thee. If thou wert not, these things would not be. Canst thou grieve over the miseries of this little speck in the Brahman, this little insect-sheath, of whose miseries thou art the maker and thou canst be the ender? Is the vision too great for thee? Look round thee then, limit the vision there. These men & women and living things that are round thee, their numberless joys & sorrows, amongst which what are thine? they are all thy Self and they are all in Thee. Thou art their Creator, Disposer & Destroyer. Thou canst break them if thou wilt and thou canst rescue them from their griefs and miseries if thou wilt, for power infinite is within thee. Thou wilt not be the Asura to injure thyself in others? Be then the Deva to help thy Self in others. Learn the sorrows of those who live near thee and remove them; thou wilt soon feel what a joy has been so long lost to thee, a joy in which thy own sorrows grow like an unsubstantial mist. Wrestle with mighty wrongdoers, succour the oppressed, free the slave and the bound and thou shalt soon know something of the joy that is more than any pleasure, thou shalt soon be initiated into the bliss of the One who is in all. Even in death thou shalt know that ecstasy and rejoice in the blood as it flows from thee.

THE STUDENT

These ideals are too high. Where is the strength to follow them and the way to find that strength?

THE GURU

The strength is in yourself and the way to find that strength

has been laid down from the times of old. But accept that ideal first or you will have no spur to help you over the obstacles in the way.

THE STUDENT

But how many will accept the ideal, when there are so many easier ideals to give them strength & comfort?

THE GURU

But are those ideals true? Delusions may give you strength & comfort for a while, but after all they break down & leave you tumbling through Chaos. Truth alone is a sure & everlasting rock of rest, an unfailing spear of strength. The whole universe rests upon Truth, on the Is, not on the Is Not. To be comfortable in delusion is the nature of man in his tamasic covering of gross matter-stuff; it is the business of philosophy & religion to dispel his delusion & force him to face the truth.

THE STUDENT

But many wise men are of the opinions that these smaller ideals are the truth, not religion and philosophy which are a delusion.

THE GURU

Tell me one of these newborn truths that profess to dispel the knowledge that is without end & without beginning; for you know more of the science of the West than I.

THE STUDENT

There is the doctrine of the greatest good of the greatest number, which has something finite, certain and attainable about it — nothing metaphysical, nothing abstract.

THE GURU

We have heard something about it in this country, a system of morality by arithmetic called utilitarianism which would have man pass his life with a pair of scales in his hand weighing good

& evil. It did good in its time, but it was not true, and could not last.

THE STUDENT

In what is it not true?

THE GURU

It is not true, because it is not in human nature; no human being ever made or ever will make an arithmetical calculation of the pain & pleasure to result from an action and the numbers of the people diversely affected by them, before doing the action. This sort of ethical algebra, this system of moral accounts needs a different planet for its development; a qualified accountant has yet to be born on the human plane. You cannot assess pleasure & pain, good and evil in so many ounces & pounds; human feelings, abstract emotions are elusive and variable from moment to moment. Utilitarianism with all its appearance of extreme practicality and definiteness, is really empty of any definite truth and impotent to give any sound and helpful guidance; it is in itself as barren of light as of inspiration, a creed arid, dry and lifeless, and what is worse, *false*. Whatever it has of value, it has copied or rather caricatured from altruism. It gives us standards of weight & measure which are utterly impossible to fix; and it fails to provide any philosophical justification for self-sacrifice nor any ardent inspiration towards it. Utilitarian hedonism—is not that the phrase—suggests, I think, that by doing good to others, we really provide a rarer and deeper pleasure for ourselves than any purely self-limited gratification can give us. Most true—and a truth we needed not to learn from either hedonist or utilitarian. The Buddhists knew it 2000 years ago and the Aryans of India practised it before that; the whole life of Srikrishna was a busy working for the good of others, of his friends, his country and the world, and Srikrishna never knew grief or pain. But there are three kinds of pleasure to be had from charity and beneficence; there is the satisfaction of vanity, the vanity of hearing oneself praised, the vanity of feeling “How very good I am.” This, I think, is at the bottom

of much charity in India and more in Europe, and it is here that hedonism comes most into play, but it is a poor spring and will break down under any strain; it may lead to charity but never to self-sacrifice. Then there is the joy of having done a good work and brought oneself nearer to heaven which used to be and perhaps still is the most common incentive to beneficence in Aryaland. That is a more powerful spring, but it is narrow and does not reach the true self; its best value is that it is helpful towards purification. Then there are the natures born for love & unselfishness who in the mere joy of helping others, of suffering for others, of seeing the joy return to tear-worn faces & pain-dimmed eyes, feel the bliss that comes from the upsurging of God within. To these hedonism is as vanity and the babbling of children. The hedonistic element in utilitarianism is an imperfect & blundering effort to grope for a great truth which it has neither been able to grasp itself nor set forth with scientific accuracy. That truth is found only in the clear & luminous teaching of the Vedanta; it is this, that the compound result we call man *is* a compound result and not the single simple homogeneous being our senses would believe; he is composed of several elements, corporeal, vital, mental, intellectual and essential; and his true self is none of these heterogeneous factors of the element the Self lives in, but something beyond & transcendent. Pain & pleasure, good & evil are therefore not permanent and definite entities; the former are a heterogeneous conglomeration, sometimes a warring agglomeration of the feelings & impulses belonging to the various husks in which the true Self is wrapped. Good & evil are relative & depend on the standpoint we take with reference to the true locality of Self in this little cosmos of man; if we locate that Self low down our "good" will be a poor thing, of the earth, earthy, little distinguishable from evil; if we locate it in its true place, our good will be as high, vast & pure as the heavens. All pain & pleasure, all good & evil have their birth, their existence and their end in the Self. It follows therefore that even the highest love & altruism are bounded by the Self. Altruism is not the sacrifice of self to others, but the sacrifice of our false self to our true Self, which unless we are Yogins we

can best see in others. True love is not the love of others but the love of our Self; for we cannot possibly love what is not ourself. If we love what is not ourself, it must be as a result of contact; but we cannot love by स्पर्श, by mere contact; because contact is temporary in its nature and in its results, and cannot give rise to a permanent feeling such as love. Yajnavalkya well said, "We desire the wife, not for the sake of the wife but for the sake of the Self." Only if we mistake things for the Self which are not the true Self, we shall, as a result, mistake things for love which are not real love. If we mistake the food-husk for Self, we shall desire the wife for corporeal gratification; if we mistake the vital emotion-husk for Self we shall desire the wife for emotional gratification; if we mistake the mind husk for the self we shall desire the wife for aesthetic gratification & the pleasurable sense of her presence, her voice, looks etc about the house; if we mistake the intellect husk for the self, we shall desire the wife for her qualities & virtues, her capacities & mental gifts, for the gratification of the understanding. If we see the Self, in the bliss Sheath, where the element of error reaches the vanishing point, we shall then desire the wife for the gratification of the true Self, the bliss of the sense of Union, of becoming One. And if we have seen & understood our true Self without husk or covering, we shall not desire her at all, because we shall possess her, we shall know that she is already our Self and therefore not to be desired in her sheaths, since *She* is already possessed. It follows that the more inward the sheath with which we confuse the Self, the purer the pleasure, the more exalted the conception of Good, until in the real naked Self we rise beyond good & evil because we have no longer any need of good or any temptation to evil. Emotional pleasure is higher than corporeal, aesthetic than emotional, intellectual than aesthetic, ethical than intellectual, spiritual than ethical. This is the whole truth and the whole philosophy of ethics; all else is practical arrangement and balancing of forces, economising of energies for the purposes of social stability or some other important but impermanent end.

Utilitarianism gets a partial & confused view of the truth and being unable properly to correlate it, groping about for some

law, some standard and principle of order, thinks it has found it in utility. But what utility? I, this perfected animal, with desires, thoughts, sensations and a pressing need for their gratification, can very well understand what is personal utility; utility for this vital, sensational, conceptual me. My utility is to get as much sensual, emotional & intellectual gratification as I may out of life consistent with my own ease & safety; if utility is to be my standard of ethics, that is my ethics. But when you ask me in the name of utility & rationalism to sacrifice these things for some higher or wider utility, for others, for the greater number, for society, I no longer follow you. So much as is necessary to keep up government, law & order and a good police, I can understand, for these things are necessary to my safety & comfort; society has given me these & I must see to & pay for their maintenance by myself & others. That is businesslike, both utilitarian & rational. But beyond this society has not any claim on me; society exists for me, not I for society. If then I have to sacrifice what I perhaps most deeply cherish for society, my life, my goods, my domestic peace, my use for society ceases; I regard society then as a fraudulent depositor who wishes to draw from my ethical bank more than he has deposited. So might argue the average man who is neither immoral nor deeply moral but only respectable; and utilitarianism can give him no satisfactory answer.

Moreover, if I have other instincts than those of the respectable citizen, and ability to carry them out, why should I refrain? What holds me? If I can earn a huge fortune rapidly by some safe form of swindling, by gambling, by speculation or by the merciless methods of the American capitalist, why should I refrain? The charge of anti-social conduct; but that has no terrors for an egotist of strong character; he knows well that he can hush the disapproval of society under a shower of gold coin. Morality with the vital sensational man becomes in an utilitarian age merely the *fear* of social or legal punishment, and strong men do not fear; nor unless their acts shake the social framework will an utilitarian society care to condemn them, for they are breaking no powerful sanctions, outraging no deep-rooted sentiments — utilitarianism deliberately parts company

with sentiment and except force & fear it has no sanctions to replace those of religion & ancient prejudice which it has destroyed. It is useless to tell these people that they will find a deeper & truer bliss in good moral conduct and altruism than in their present selfish and anti-social career. Where is the proof or even the philosophic justification of what these philosophers allege? Their own experience? That is not valid for the average sensational man; *his* deepest pleasure is necessarily vital and sensational; it is only valid for the men who make the statement, they being the intellectual self with an ethical training that has survived from a dead Christianity. In order for it to be true of the sensational man, he must cease to be sensational, he must undergo a process of spiritual regeneration to which utilitarian philosophy cannot give him either the key or even the motive-impulse. For in the mouth of the utilitarian, this statement of the deeper & truer bliss, is a piece of secondhand knowledge; not his own earning, but part of that store of ethical coin rifled by rationalism from the coffers of Christianity on which European civilisation is precariously living at the present day. One trembles to think of the day when that coin shall be exhausted — already we see some signs of growing moral vulgarity, coarseness, almost savagery in the European mind, which, if it increases, if the open worship of brutal force & unscrupulous strength which is rampant in politics & in commerce taint, as it must eventually do, the deeper heart of society, may lead to an orgy of the vital & sensational impulses such as has not been since the worst days of the Roman Empire.

THE STUDENT

But Lecky has proved that the moral improvement of Europe was due entirely to the rise of rationalism.

THE GURU

My son, there is one great capacity of the learned & cultured mind both in Europe & Asia which one should admire without imitating — it is the capacity of dextrous juggling with words. If you choose to give an extension of meaning to a particular

word, a meaning it cannot & ought not to have, you can easily build on it a very glittering edifice of theory, which will charm the eye until someone comes by with a more effective word more effectively extended in meaning and knocks down the old house to build a newer & more glittering mansion. Thus the old eternal truths are overlaid by trashy superstructures until some day some salutary earthquake swallows up the building & builders & reveals the old truth which no change or chance can injure. Amid the giddy round of ever shifting theories Europe gives us, there are only two fundamental truths, often misapplied, but nevertheless true in the sphere of phenomena,—Evolution, which is taught in different ways by our Sankhya & Vedanta, and the Law of Invariable Causality, which is implied in our theories of Kal & Karma. These receive & hold fast to,—for it is by working them out not always well, but always suggestively that Europe has made her real contribution to the eternal store of knowledge. But in their isms and schisms trust not—they contain scant grain of truth hidden in a very bushful of error.

THE STUDENT

Still it seems to me that Lecky is not altogether wrong.

THE GURU

On the contrary he is entirely right,—if we consent to lump together all enlightenment without regard to its nature & source, as rationalism; that the moral improvement of Europe was due to increasing enlightenment is entirely true, for Knowledge, by which I mean not the schoolmaster's satchelful of information or even the learning of the Universities, but Jnana, the perception & realisation of truth, is the eternal enemy and slayer of sin; for sin is descended of ignorance through her child, egoism. It is true that the so-called Christian ages in Europe were times of sin and darkness; Europe had accepted Christ only to crucify him afresh; she had entombed him alive with his pure & gracious teaching and over that living tomb she had built a thing called the Church. What we know as Christendom was a

strange mixture of Roman corruption, German barbarism and fragments of ancient culture all bathed in the pale light that flowed upward from the enhaloed brows of the entombed and crucified Christ. The great spiritual hoard he had opened to the West was kept locked up and unavailable except to individuals whose souls were too bright to be swallowed up in the general darkness. All knowledge was under taboo, not because there was any natural conflict between Religion & Science, but because there was natural & irreconcilable antipathy between the obscurantism of political ecclesiastics & resurgent knowledge. Again Asia came to the rescue of Europe and from the liberal civilisation of the Arabs, Science was reborn into her mediaeval night, and the light of Science, persecuted & tortured, struggled up until the darkness was overpowered & wounded to death. The intellectual history of Europe has outwardly been a struggle between Science & the Church, with which has been confounded the Christian religion which the Church professed with its lips & attempted to strangle with its hands; inwardly it was the ancient struggle between Deva and Asura, sattwa & tamas. Now Religion is sattwic with a natural impulse towards light, it cannot be tamasic, it can have no dealings with the enemies of the Devas; and if something calling itself religion, attempts to suppress light, you may be sure it is not religion but an impostor masquerading in her name. Consider what were the ideas under which as under a banner, the modern spirit overthrew the mediaeval Titan; the final uprush of those ideas we see in the French revolution. The motto of the Revolution we know, liberty, equality & fraternity; the spirit it professed but could not attain we know, humanity. In liberty the union of the individual moral liberty of Christianity with the civic liberty of Greece; in equality, the democratic spiritual equality of Christianity applied to society; fraternity, the aspiration to universal brotherhood, which is the peculiar and distinguishing idea of Christianity; in humanity, the Buddhistic spirit of mercy, pity, love, of which Europe knew nothing till Christianity breathed it forth over the Mediterranean and with greater purity over Ireland, mingled with the sense of the divinity in man, borrowed from India through the old Gnostics

& Platonists, these are the ideas which still profoundly influence Europe, many of which Scientific materialism has been obliged to borrow or tolerate, none of which it has as yet availed entirely to root out. Rationalism did not create these ideas, but found and adopted them. Rationalism is the spirit which subjects all beliefs & opinions to the test of logic from observed facts, it is indeed the intellectual sheath, mostly the lower or merely logical half of the intellectual sheath attempting to establish itself as the Self. This is what we call Science and the scientific spirit. Wherever it has been able to work in the light of pure dry intellect, not distorted by irruptions of the lower selves in the shape of interest, vanity, passions, prejudices, it has produced invaluable results; in the sphere therefore of the passionless observation, classification and correlation of facts we may follow Science without distrust or fear of stumbling; but whenever it tries to theorize from what it has observed about human nature, human affairs & spiritual development, Science is always tumbling into the pits of the lower selves; in attempting to range things above the material level under the law of the material self, it is trying to walk upon water, to float upon air; it is doing something essentially unscientific. Still more is this the case when it deals with the higher things of the spirit in the same terms; its theories then become so amazingly paradoxical, one stands astonished at the wilful blindness to facts to which prejudice & prepossession can lead the trained observers of facts. Follow them not there, there are the blind leading the blind who go round and round battering themselves like a blind bird at night against the same eternal walls and never seeing the window open to it for its escape.

THE STUDENT

But you have said that Evolution is an eternal truth. On the basis of Evolution the scientists have discovered a moral sanction, which does replace the old religious sanctions, the paramount claim of the race upon the individual.

THE GURU

What race? The English or German or Russian or the great

Anglo-Saxon race, which it appears is to inherit the world, God's Englishmen and, we must now add, God's Americans — or is it the whole white race? To whom must the individual bow his head as the head & front of Evolution?

THE STUDENT

I mean the whole human race. The individual is ephemeral, the species endures, the genus lasts almost for ever. On this basis your duty to yourself, your duty to society, your duty to your country, your duty to mankind, all fall into a beautifully ranged, orderly & symmetrical arrangement. All morality is shown to be a historical inevitable evolution, and you have only to recognise it and farther that evolution by falling into its track instead of going backward on the track.

THE GURU

And getting called atavistic and degenerate and other terrible names? Still I should like to be better satisfied as to the basis of this symmetrical and inevitable arrangement; for if I were convinced that I am an ephemeral animal, I should like to enjoy myself during my day like other ephemeral animals and cannot see why I should trouble myself about the eternal future; & even tho' science should hurl the most formidable polysyllables in its vocabulary at me, I do not know that I should greatly care, and I think Mess^rs Rockefeller & Jay Gould & millions more were or are in hearty agreement with me. You say the genus is eternal? But I believe this is not the teaching of Science. As I understand it, man is only an animal, a particular sort of monkey which developed suddenly for some inexplicable reason & shot forward 10,000 miles ahead of every animal yet born upon earth. If this is so, there is no reason why some other animal, say, some particular kind of ant, should not suddenly for some inexplicable reason develop & shoot forward 100,000 miles ahead and make as short work of man as man made of the mammoth. Or in some other way the human race will certainly be replaced. Now what good is it to the mammoth whose bones science has recently disinterred, that a race has developed which

can disinter him and dissertate in numerous polysyllables upon his remains? And if a scientific mammoth in his days had placed before him this prospect and bid him give up in the interest of the mammoth race, his unsocial & selfish ways, would that have seemed even to the most reasonable tusker a sufficient motive for his self-sacrifice? Where would his *benefit* in the affair come in?

THE STUDENT

It is not precisely a question of personal benefit; it is a question of inevitable law. You would be setting yourself against the inevitable law.

THE GURU

Verily? and what do I care, if my opposition to the inevitable brings me no harm, but rather content & prosperity in my day? After my death nothing can injure me, if I am but clay.

THE STUDENT

The individual may be immoral, but morality progresses inevitably.

THE GURU

Truly? I do not think the present state of Europe favourable to that conception. Why, we had thought that Science would make the cultured nations dominate & people the earth. And we find them stationary or absolutely retrograding in population, degenerating in nerve & hardiness, losing in the true imperial qualities. We had thought that sacking of cities, massacre, torture & foul rape were blotted by civilisation from the methods of war. The enlightened peoples of Europe march into China and there takes place an orgy of filth & blood & cold delight in agony which all but the most loathsome savages would shrink from in disgust. Is that the inevitable moral advance or Red Indian savagery improved upon? We had thought that with increasing education & intellectuality must come increasing chastity or at least refinement. In a great American city the police sweeps the brothels and gathers in its net hundreds of educated, cultured,

gracious & stately women who had carried their education, beauty and culture *there*. Is that the inevitable moral advance, or rather the days of Messalina returned? These are not isolated phenomena but could be multiplied infinitely. Europe is following in the footsteps of ancient Rome.

THE STUDENT

There are these periods of retrogression. Evolution advances in a curve, not in a straight line.

THE GURU

And mark that these retrogressions are most inevitable when the world, abandoning religion, plunges into philosophic materialism. Not immediately do they come; while the spirit of the old religion still survives the death of its body, the nations seem perhaps to gain in strength & power; but very soon the posthumous force is exhausted. All the old nations perished because in the pride of intellect they abandoned their *dharma*, their religion. India, China still live. What was the force that enabled India beaten down & trampled by mailed fist & iron hoof ever to survive immortally, ever to resist, ever to crush down the conqueror of the hour at last beneath her gigantic foot, ever to raise her mighty head again to the stars? It is because she never lost hold of religion, never gave up her faith in the spirit. Therefore the promise of Srikrishna ever holds good; therefore the Adyashakti, the mighty Chandi, ever descends when the people turn to her and tramples the Asura to pieces. Times change and a new kind of outer power rules over India in place of the Asuras of the East. But woe to India if she cast from her her eternal *dharma*. The fate of the old nations shall then overtake her, her name shall be cast out from the list of nations and her peoples become a memory and a legend upon the earth. Let her keep true to her Self, and the *Atmashakti*, the eternal Force of the Self shall again strengthen & raise her. Modern Science has engaged itself deeply in two cardinal errors; it has built out of the Law of Causation a new and more inexorable fate than Greek or Hindu or Arab ever imagined. Engrossed

with this predestination, Science has come to believe that the human will is a mere servant, nay, a mere creation of eternal inanimate forces. Science is mistaken & unless it widen its view it may easily be convinced of its mistake in a very ugly fashion before long. The Will is mightier than any law, fate or force. The Will is eternal, omnipotent, it has created the law of causation and governs it; it has made the laws of matter and it can override them; it is itself all the forces which seem to govern and bind it. There is no compulsion on the human will to evolve towards progression; if it chooses to regress, back it will go and all the world reeling and shrieking with it into barbarism and chaos; if it chooses to go forward, no force can stop it. The other mistake Science has made, it borrows from Christianity; it is that action and emotion can be directed towards beings distinct from oneself; all action and emotion are for the self, in the self. But if Science teaches men to regard themselves as distinct and purely corporeal beings, with no connection with others except such as may be created by physical contact and the communication of the senses, it is obvious that the human Will under the obsession of this belief, will inevitably shape its action & thought in accordance passing over the more shadowy moral generalities of evolutionary theorists or play with them only as intellectual marbles. And that spells in the end a colossal selfishness, an increasing sensuality, lust of power, riches, comfort & dominion, a monstrous & egoistic brutality like that of a hundred-armed Titan wielding all the arms of the Gods in those hundred hands. If man believes himself to be an animal he will act like an animal & exalt the animal impulse into his guide. That Europe does not approach more swiftly to this condition is due to the obstinate refusal of Jnana, Religion, true enlightenment, maimed & wounded tho' it be, to perish and make an end; it will not allow the human Will to believe that it is no more than nerve & flesh & body, animal & transitory. It persists & takes a hundred forms to elude the pursuit of materialistic Science, calling upon the Eternal Mother to come down and save; and surely before long she shall come. All bases of morality which do not go back to the original divine

and sempiternal nature of man, must be erroneous and fleeting. Not from the instincts & customs of the ape & savage did the glories of religion & virtue arise,—they are the perennial light of the concealed godhead revealing themselves ever with clearer lines, with floods of more beautiful rainbow lustre, to culminate at last in the pure white light of the supreme realisation, when all creatures have become our Self and our Self realises its own Unity.

यस्मिन् सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मैवाभूद्विजानतः ।
तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एकत्वमनुपश्यतः ॥

The Upanishad having posited this Unity which is at once the justification of all religion & morality and the culmination in which religion & morality disappear into something higher than either, proceeds again to sum up and describe the Eternal under this new light. In the fourth verse He has been described only as the mighty Force which creates & surrounds all this universe; He is now to be described as the mighty Unity which in its unmanifestation is the source of all existence and in its manifestation governs these innumerable worlds.

स पर्यगाच्छुक्रमकायमत्रणमस्ताविरं शुद्धमपापविद्धम् ।
कविर्मनीषी परिभूः स्वयंभूर्यथातथ्यतोऽर्थान्वदधाच्छाश्वतीम्यः
समाभ्यः ॥

This is He that went round, the brightness, unbodied, unscarred, without sinews, pure, untouched by sin; He is the Seer, the Thinker, the Selfborn that pervadeth; He from years sempiternal hath ordered perfectly all things.

The verse begins by repeating a position already taken, of the Lord surrounding all things as a robe surrounds its wearer, creating all things by the appearance of motion, which is however an appearance, a phenomenon and not a reality of the Eternal. “This is He that went round.” In other words the whirl of motion which the manifested Eternal set at work created the worlds; he poured forth from himself as Prajna the Eternal Wisdom and entered & encompassed each thing as he created it. But who is this He? In answering this question the Sruti immediately reverts

to the neuter gender, because it has to go back to the luminous Parabrahman who is beyond the idea of sex or characteristic. He the Creator of the Worlds is in reality That Brightness, the luminous shadow of the Unknowable of which we can only speak in negatives. That has not a body or form, form being created by Him and therefore this side of Him; He has no scars or imperfections, but is one faultless & perfect light; He has no sinews or muscles; ie He is that side of matter and creation is produced from him not by physical means or physical strength & skill, but by the mere flowing forth of his Shakti or Will. Finally He is not only that side of Matter, but He is that side of Mind also, for He is pure and untouched by evil. It is mind that creates impurity & evil, by desire which produces duality; but the Eternal is not subject to desire. What is evil or Sin? It is merely the preference of the more gross to the more subtle, of tamas to rajas and of rajas to sattwa; it operates therefore in the sphere of the *gunas* and the Eternal being above the *gunas* cannot be touched by Sin. Having established the identity of the Lord who creates & rules, with the pure luminous Parabrahman, who is neither lord nor subject, the Sruti describes the Lord in his capacity of the All-wise Governor; he is the Seer & Poet, who by his illumined inspirations creates as Hiranyagarbha the whole world in His own infinite Mind, He is the Thinker, Prajna, the Wise One, from whose essential mass of equipoised consciousness all existence and its laws draw their perennial strength and being and flow forth to their works, and He is also that which flows forth, Virat, the pervading spirit which enters into all things and encompasses. In all these capacities He is selfborn; for He is Prajna who came forth by His own strength from the luminous Parabrahman & is Parabrahman, He is Hiranyagarbha who comes forth by His own strength from Prajna & is Prajna; He is Virat who comes forth by His own strength from Hiranyagarbha & is Hiranyagarbha. He is the Self born out of the Self by the Self. In other words all these are merely names of the One Spirit in different aspects or states of universal & infinite consciousness. Why then is the Lord spoken of, unlike Parabrahman, in the masculine gender? Because he is now considered in His

capacity as the great ruler & ordainer, not in His capacity as the source from which all things flow. As the source, substratum & container of things He is the Trinity, Prajna-Hiranyagarbha-Virat, in whom the Male & Female, Spirit & Matter, the Soul & its Shakti are still one & undivided. He is therefore best spoken of in the neuter. But when we see Him as the Ruler & Ordainer, the Manifested Brahman dealing with a world of phenomena already created, then division has taken place, the Shakti has gone forth to its works, and the great male Trinity, Brahma-Vishnu-Maheshwara, filled with the force of that Shakti are creating, preserving & destroying the countless worlds and the innumerable myriads of their inhabiting forms. Both these Trinities are in reality one Trinity, it is only the point of view that makes the difference. From this standpoint the Sruti goes on then to describe the Lord. He is *kavi*, the great seer & poet in the true sense of the word poet; the *kavi* is he who divines things luminously & distinctly by sheer intuition and whose divinations become, by their own overflow, creations. Paramatman as Sat-Brahma-Hiranyagarbha has this divine quality of poethood,—which men call the power of creation and it is therefore that his Shakti is described as Saraswati. Then the Lord is described as *manishi*, the Thinker. It is the thought of the Lord that is the basis or substratum of all this creation; it is therefore that the inanimate object forms faultlessly, that the tree grows unerringly, that the animal acts with infallible instinct towards his dominant needs, that the star moves in its course & the mountain holds to its base. All the creations of the great Kavi would be inconstant in their relations and clash & collide till they destroyed each other if there were not this imperative Wisdom, with stability & equipoise as its characteristic, underlying all things & keeping them to their places, actions & nature. This Wisdom, be it noted, is the very nature of things; it is no deliberate invention, no thing of afterthoughts, adjustments & alterations, but unchangeable & the essential basis of existence from the beginning. Whatever form it take, of gravitation, or of attraction and repulsion, or of evolution, it is an eternal presence & the very nature of the world, प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म. This power of divine instinctive thought is

one capacity of Paramatman as Chit-Mahadev-Prajna (Tamas, Sthanu). His other capacity is that of destruction, for He is the Spirit of immobility to whom the deep sleep of perfect unconditioned thought is the culmination (Chit) and if it were not for the activity of the Kavi in the Eternal, if the Thinker in Him were to blot out the Poet, all this pulsating world of phenomena would be stilled & resolve by inaction into the womb of undetermined condensed existence. Then again He is *paribhu*, He who exists all round, the great pervading Bliss of existence (Ananda). For the works of the Poet even though upheld by the Thinker, could not last, if it were not that the bliss of existence [is] poured through all created things like a stream of heavenly nectar & makes life, being, their first imperative need. This is that Will to Live of the German philosopher, which because like all Europeans, he could see Truth only in one of her limbs and not as a divine whole, gave so pessimistic a note to his thought. All things are supported & eternalized by this Bliss, for it is the unchanging & eternal Paramatman. Manifesting as the will to live finitely, it must be broadened into the will to live infinitely in order to fulfil itself & recover its own deepest & essential nature. We will first to live as individuals, then to live in the family, then to live in the tribe or clan, then to live in the race or nation, then to live in mankind, then to live in the Universe, then to live in God, the one Eternal; this is the natural evolution of humanity & its course is determined by the very nature of the Self. Science the Apara Vidya traces for us the course & byelaws of evolution, but it is only the Para Vidya that bases it for us, gives us its reason, source, law & culmination. This Bliss is the capacity of Vishnu-Virat who is Ananda. By his very existence in all beings the Lord preserves & saves. Remember that, though you cry out to the Heavens for help in your misery, it is not the blue sky that hears, it is nothing outside you that comes to save, but He within you alone can protect. Art thou oppressed, O man, by ogre & giant, by fiend & foeman? Seek His mighty Shakti, Bhavani Mahishamardini, in yourself and She will externalize armed with sword & trident to crush the triumphing Asura. This is the law & the gospel. The Poet, the Thinker, the Pervading

Presence, these three are the Swayambhu, the eternal Selfborn who is born by HimSelf out of HimSelf into HimSelf. The Gods are not different from each other, for they are all one God, & there is no other. This is He who has ordered from eternal years perfectly all things. याथातश्यतः, each duly as it should be & must be because of its own nature, for the nature of a thing is its origin, its law, its destiny, its end; and harmony with its nature is its perfection. All this mighty universe where various things acting according to their various natures harmonise & melt into a perfect unity, all this wonderful Kingdom of a single Law in its manifold aspects He has ordered, व्यदधात्, he has arranged diversely; he has set each thing in its own place, working in its own orbit & according to its own overmastering & inexorable nature. All this He has done from years eternal, not in time, not at a particular date & season, but eternally, before Time was. The Law did not spring into being, but was, is & for ever shall be. The forms of objects, it is true, vary in Time, but the law of their nature is of eternal origin. In the act you do today, you are obeying a Law which has existed during the whole of eternity. Try to realise it, and you will see Time & Space vanishing into Infinity, you will hear the boom of the eternal waters & the great voice crying for ever on the waters "Tapas, tapas", and feel yourself in the presence of the One unchangeable & eternal God. Maya & her works have no ending, because they had no beginning, but the soul of Man can rise above Maya and her works & stand over her & free from her watching her as her master for whose joy she labours unto all eternity. For verily Man is God and as by his own Will he has cast himself into the illusory bonds of the Enchantress, so by His own will He can shake off the bonds & rule her. The play of the Soul with the Maya is the play of the lover & his beloved, one feigning to be the slave of the other, rejoicing in her favour or weeping at her feet in her anger, and now resuming his rightful rôle of lord & master, yea, turning away from her at will to a fairer & more wonderful face; and now Krishna wears the blue dress & shining jewels, and now Radha the yellow cloth & fragrant garlands of the green wood and the brilliant feather of the peacock; for He

is She, and She is He; they are only playing at difference, for in real truth they have been and are one to all Eternity.

THE STUDENT

Here then the first part of the Upanishad seems to be ended and some very obscure & disconnected utterances follow.

THE GURU

The utterances of the Upanishad are never disconnected, but the connection is usually beneath the surface, not openly declared by explicit statement or grammatical construction. The Upanishad has said that the Eternal has arranged all objects of the Universe perfectly from years eternal. Maya therefore is eternal, Avidya is eternal. The question will at once be put, what then of Vidya & Avidya? the Eternal and the Transient? the Is & the Seems to Be? If Avidya is eternal, let us rejoice in her wonders & glories & never strive to escape from her bonds. But if Vidya alone be eternal, then is Avidya a curse and a bondage, what have we to do with it, but shake it off with disgust as soon as possible? These are the extremes of the Materialist and Nihilist, the Charvak & the Sunyavadin; but the Vedanta gives its sanction to neither. The Unconditioned Brahman is, but of the Conditioned also we cannot say that He is not and the Conditioned Brahman is what we call Maya. Brahman is eternal & Maya therefore is eternal; but the Conditioned Brahman obviously rests on the Unconditioned and cannot be except in Him. As are the reverse & obverse of a coin, so are the Conditioned and Unconditioned, and the aspirant to Knowledge must know both and not one only or he will know but little indeed of the true nature of the Eternal.

THE STUDENT

The followers of Adwaita will call this rank heresy. Maya is illusion, unreality and is slain by knowledge, it cannot therefore be eternal.

THE GURU

You cannot slay Maya; you can only slay Moha, the illusion

of Maya; her you can only conquer and put her under your feet. You remember that Shankara after conquering Ubhayabharati, made her living body his *asan* of meditation; that is the symbol of the Yogi and the wonderful twofold Maya of the Eternal. He has conquered her & put her beneath him, but it is still upon her that his *asan* is based even when he is unconscious of Her and in union with the Eternal. If this were not so, then the whole of phenomena would cease the moment a man becomes a Buddha and enters into Nirvana; for He & the Eternal are One. If Parabrahman therefore were limited either to Vidya or Avidya, obviously Avidya would cease the moment Vidya began and the salvation of one Jivatma would bring about the end of the world for all; just as the Christians say that the crucifixion of Christ saved the world. But this is not so. The power of Shakti of Brahman is twofold & simultaneous; He is able to exercise Vidya & Avidya at the same moment; he eternally realises His own transcendental nature; and at the very same time He realises this wonderful universe of His imagination. He is like a great poet who shadows forth a world of his own creation made in himself and of himself and yet knows that He is different from it & independent of it. It is for this reason only that the salvation of a particular Jivatman does not bring the world to an end. Nor does Shankara really say anything different; for he does not assert that Maya is unreal; he says it is a mysterious something of which you cannot say that it is and yet you cannot say that it is not. This indeed is the only description that the finite mind can make of this mysterious Shakti of the Illimitable, Unconditioned, Unknowable Brahman. Maya in its forms may be unreal & transitory but Maya in its essence as a Shakti of the Eternal, must itself be eternal, from of old & for ever.

The Karmayogin

A Commentary on the
Isha Upanishad

NOTE

Sri Aurobindo modified the structure of *The Karmayogin: A Commentary on the Isha Upanishad* while he was working on it. He began with a two-tier division: “Chapters” and sections. Later he introduced a superior division, the “Part”, and began calling the lowest-level divisions “Chapters”. The intermediate divisions, earlier called “Chapters”, became known as “Books”. The numbering of these divisions is neither consistent nor complete. The table on the opposite page shows the structure as marked by Sri Aurobindo in the manuscript and printed in the text and, italicised and within square brackets, how it would be if the final three-tier division were applied consistently throughout.

In the right margin are indicated the places where the discussions of the first six verses begin. The other twelve verses were not discussed.

[Part I] [No title]

[Book I] Chapter I. The Law of Renunciation.

[Chapter] I. God All and God Everywhere [Start verse 1]

[Chapter] II. Isha, the Lord.

[Chapter] III. Isha and His Universe.

[Chapter] IV. God in Man and in all Creatures

[Chapter] V. Selflessness, the Basic Rule of Karma-Yoga

[Chapter] VI. The Philosophical Justification of Altruism

[Chapter] VII. The Meaning of Renunciation

[Book II] Chapter II. Salvation through Works

[Chapter] I [No title]

[Start verse 2]

[Chapter] II. Vairagya.

[Chapter] III. One Road and not Three.

[Chapter] IV. The denial of salvation by works

[Chapter] V. Mukti and the Jivanmukta.

[Chapter] VI. Suicide and the other World. [Start verse 3]

[Chapter] VII. Retrospect

Part II Karmayoga; the Ideal

[Book III] Chapter IV. The Eternal in His Universe

I. Eternal Truth the Basis of Ethics / I/ The Root of Ethical Ideals

Chapter I. Brahman. [Start verse 4]

Chapter II. Spiritual Evolution in Brahman

Chapter III. Psychical evolution — downward to matter

Chapter IV. Psychical Evolution — Upward to Self.

[No Chapters V or VI]

[Chapter] VII. Elemental Evolution.

[Chapter] VIII. Matariswan and the Waters.

[Chapter] IX. Spirit and Matter

[Chapter] X. [No title]

[Chapter] XI. [No title]

[Chapter] XII. [No title] [Start verse 5]

Book [IV] III. [No title]

Chapter I. [No title] [Start verse 6]

[Chapter] II. Ethics in primitive society.

Chapter III. Social Evolution.

Chapter IV. The place of Religion in ethics.

Chapter I. The Law of Renunciation.

I. God All and God Everywhere

GURU

Salutation to the Eternal who is without place, time, cause or limit. Salutation to Him who rules the Universe, the Lord of the Illusion, the Master of manifold life. Salutation to the Self in me, who is the Self in all creatures. Brahman, Isha, Atman, under whatever aspect He manifests Himself or manifests not, to Him the One and Only Existence, Consciousness, Bliss, salutation.

The Upanishad begins; —

“With the Lord all this must be clothed (as with a garment), even all that is world in this moving universe; abandon the world that thou mayest enjoy it, neither covet any man’s possessions.”

The Upanishad first sets forth the universality of the Supreme Being; whatever we see, hear or are in any way sensible of, we must feel the presence of the Lord surrounding it. This tree that I am sitting under, I must not consider as only so many leaves, bark, pith, sap and roots encased in earth and air; I must realise that it is a manifestation in the Supreme who is the only reality. This voice that I am uttering, vibrates in the atmosphere of the Divine Reality; only because it vibrates there, is it capable of sound, articulation and meaning. No action I do or watch others do, but the Lord is there surrounding and upholding it; otherwise it could not be done. Whatever I see, I am seeing God; whatever I hear, I am hearing God; whatever I do, it is the Energy of God which is governing my actions. This is the first thing the Karmayogin has to realise and until he has set his mind on the realisation, Karmayoga is impossible. The Lord is everywhere; the Lord surrounds everything with His presence; the Lord is all. वासुदेवः सर्वमिति। This Karma that I do, I do it in the Lord; this subjective I who act, exist only in

the Lord; this objective he, she, it to whom the action is done, exists only in the Lord. It is the omnipresent universality of the Supreme, that has first to be realized. When the Yогin has had spiritual experience of this universality, then only is he fit for Karmayoga; for not till then can he sink the constant feeling of I and thou and he in a single higher and wider Existence; not till then can he escape from apparent self to true Self, and without such escape Karmayoga cannot really begin. To clothe all things with the Supreme, to be conscious of Him in all you say, do, think, feel or are sensible of,—this experience is the beginning of Karmayoga. The transformation of this experience into the habitual condition of the soul, is the consummation of Karmayoga; for it leads straight to the knowledge of Brahman and the ecstasy of union with Him, Karma melting into and becoming one with Jnana and Bhakti. Karma, Bhakti, Jnana, — Action, Love, Knowledge, are the three paths which lead out of phenomenal existence to the eternal reality, and where the three meet & become one, is the end of the great journey, that highest home of Vishnu towards which it is the one object of the Upanishad to turn and guide us. The Isha Upanishad is the Scripture of the Karmayogin; of the three paths it teaches the way of Action, and therefore begins with this first indispensable condition of all Godward action, to see all things, creatures, causes, effects, changes & evolutions as so many transitory phenomena enveloped with the presence of the Supreme Being and existing in Him and by Him only. Not I but He, for He is my real self and what I call I is only so much covering and semblance,—this is Vedanta; the first feeling of this truth is the beginning of Jnana, the beginning of Bhakti, the beginning of Karma. सोऽहं. He is the true & only I.

II. Isha, the Lord.

Let us now look closely into the language of the Scripture, for in the Upanishad every word is of infinite importance and is chosen in preference to others for some profound and significant reason. *Ishâ* is the first word of the Upanishad; it is with the Lord that

we must clothe all things in this Universe, it is the Lord whose presence, will, energy we must realize in whatever we see, feel, do or think. It is in other words the Supreme Being not in His aspect as the actionless, unknowable Parabrahman, transcendental and beyond realization by senses, mind or speech; it is not even Sacchidananda, that absolute self-centred Existence, Consciousness, Bliss with whom the Jnanayogin seeks to unite himself in Samadhi; it is the Eternal in His aspect as Ruler of the Universe, He who keeps the wheel of phenomena turning and guides its motions as the mechanician controls his machine. The Karmamargin aims at living disillusionized, but yet using the illusions of Maya as the materials of his Yoga; he seeks to free himself from phenomena while yet living among phenomena; it is therefore Isha, Maheshwara, the Lord of the Illusion, the Master of multiple phenomenal life whom he must seek and in whom he must lose his lower self. Since he works through actions, it is the Master of actions whom he must worship with the flowers and incense of a selfless life.

Is there then a difference between Parabrahman and Isha? Are there two Supreme Beings and not one? No difference, really; the distinction is one of appearance, of semblance. Parabrahman, the absolute, transcendental, eternal reality is unknowable to human reason; That which is above reason in man can reach Parabrahman and experience Parabrahman, because It is Parabrahman, but this is in the state of Samadhi and from the state of Samadhi the human understanding can bring back no record intelligible to the reason or explicable in terms of speech. Parabrahman in His Essence is therefore realizable but not intelligible; He can be experienced, He cannot be explained or understood. Still Parabrahman presents to the understanding two semblances or aspects by which He can be relatively though not absolutely known. These two aspects correspond to the two powers inherent in Parabrahman as the Knower of Himself, the powers of Vidya and Avidya, the power to know and the power not to know, the faculty of Knowledge and the faculty of Illusion. Parabrahman can know Himself as He really is; this is Vidya. He can also imagine

Himself as He is not; this is Avidya. In the first aspect He is Sacchidananda, absolute Existence, Consciousness and Bliss; He exists to Himself alone, because there *is* no other existence but Himself; He is conscious of His own existence only, because there *is* no other existence to be conscious of; He is the bliss of His own self-conscious existence, because there is nothing outside or other than Him to give Him external bliss. That is the eternal reality, that is His aspect to Vidya or true Knowledge. But there is also the eternal unreality, His aspect to Avidya or False Knowledge. Then He is a great Will, Shakti or Force pouring itself out in a million forms and names and keeping for ever in motion the eternal wheel of phenomenal Evolution, which He guides and governs. He is then Isha, the Lord or Ruler. To use a human parallel, Shakespeare pouring himself out in a hundred names and forms, Desdemona, Othello, Iago, Viola, Rosalind, Macbeth, Hamlet, Lear, Cymbeline is using his power of Avidya to become the lord and ruler of a wonderful imaginary world. Shakespeare putting aside his works and returning to his own single & sufficient existence is using his power of Vidya to recover his own constant single reality. But there is one Shakespeare and not two. Now the Karmamargin has to deal with this great multifold phenomenal universe and when he seeks to feel the presence of the Eternal round every single thing it contains, it must necessarily be not in His unconditioned, unphenomenal aspect of Sacchidananda but in His conditioned, phenomenal aspect as Isha, Lord of the Universe. As Isha the Karmayogin may worship Him in various sub-aspects. Isha is a double being as Purusha-Prakriti; Purusha, the great male ocean of spiritual force which sets Prakriti to produce and watches her workings, and Prakriti, the mighty female energy which produces and works unweariedly for the pleasure of Purusha. He is the triple Being, Prajna, Hiranyagarbha, Virat; Prajna, Lord of Sleep-Life, the intelligent force which lives and wakes in what would otherwise seem inert and inanimate existence or the mere blind play of mechanical forces; Hiranyagarbha, the Lord of Dream-Life who takes from this ocean of subconsciously intelligent spiritual being those conscious psychic forces which

He materializes or encases in various forms of gross living matter; and Virat, Lord of Waking-Life, who governs, preserves and maintains the sensible creation which Hiranyagarbha has shaped. He is triple again as Shiva, Brahma, Vishnu; Shiva, the destroyer, the Yогin, the Lord of brute or inert life; the Master of Samadhi, the Refuge of the outcast & of those who have no refuge; Brahma, the Creator, who puts forth life and stays not his hand for a moment; Vishnu, the Preserver & Saviour, the Master of Power & Love and Life and Light and Sweetness. With all these aspects of Isha, the Lord, Hindu worship has associated names & forms and in these names and forms He shows Himself to His worshippers. The Jnanayogin loves to worship Him as Shiva, the Master of utter Samadhi; to the Bhakta He appears in whatever form appeals most to the spiritual emotions of His devotee. But the Karmayogin should devote himself to those forms of the Supreme Lord in which His mighty Shakti, His Will to live and create has expressed itself in its highest, purest and most inspiring and energetic virility; for Karma is merely Shakti in motion and the Karmayogin must be a pure conductor of divine energy, a selfless hero and creator in the world. Isha Himself in His Avatars, Buddha, Rama, Srikrishna, has given us the highest types of this selfless divine energy and it is therefore to these mighty spirits, God-in-man, that the Karmayogin may well direct his worship. Or he may worship Isha in His Shakti, in the form of Durga-Kali, the most powerful realisation of His cosmic energy which the human mind has yet envisaged. If he is able to dispense with forms, he may worship the idea of Isha Himself, the Almighty Lord, whom the Hindu adores as Hari, the Christian as God, the Mahomedan as Allah. Even the atheist, if he recognizes a mighty Power at work in all life and existence and yields up his self and actions to the will and ends of that Power, or if he recognizes in men the godhead he refuses to recognize in the Universe and devotes himself to the selfless service of his kind, has set his foot on the path of Karmayoga and cannot fail to reach the Lord whom he denies. It is of no importance that the Karmayogin should recognize a particular name or form as the greater Self to win whom he must lose his

smaller self; but it is of importance & essential that he should recognize the existence of a Power inside and outside himself to the law of whose Will and Workings he can sacrifice the self-will and self-worship of the natural man. Whatever name he gives to this Power or whether he gives it a name or not, it is Isha, the Lord, whose presence he must feel around every object and movement in the Universe.

III. Isha and His Universe.

Next let us take note of the word वास्यं. All this Universe must be clothed with Isha; we must draw the feeling of His presence round every object in the Universe and envelop it with Isha, as a robe is drawn round and envelops the wearer. For the Lord is greater than His universe. This tree is not the Lord, it is in the Lord. We must avoid the materialistic Pantheism which identifies the visible Universe with the Supreme Being. It is true that He is both the final and material Cause of the universe, and in one sense He is His Universe and His Universe is He, just as Shakespeare's creations are really Shakespeare himself, woven by him out of his own store of psychic material; and yet it would be obviously a mistake to identify, say, Iago with Shakespeare. This tree is evolved out of original ether, ether pervades it and surrounds it, but the tree cannot be described as ether, nor ether as the tree; so, going deeper down, we find it is evolved out of the existence of the Lord who pervades it and surrounds it with His presence; but the tree is not the Lord, nor the Lord the tree. The Hindu is no idolater; he does not worship stocks or stones, the tree as tree or the stone as stone or the idol as a material thing, but he worships the presence of the Lord which fills & surrounds the tree, stone or idol, and of which the tree, stone or idol is merely a manifestation or seeming receptacle. We say for the convenience of language and mental realization that God is in His creature, but really it is the creature who is in God, न त्वं तेषु ते मयि. "I am not in them, they are in Me."

We find European scholars when they are confronted with the metaphors of the Sruti, always stumbling into a blunder

which we must carefully avoid if we wish to understand our Scriptures. Their reason, hard, logical and inflexible, insists on fixing the metaphor to its literal sense and having thus done violence to the spirit of the Upanishad, they triumphantly point to the resultant incoherence and inconsistency of our revealed writings and cry out, "These are the guesses, sometimes sublime, generally infantile, of humanity in its childhood." But the metaphors of the Sruti are merely helps to a clearer understanding; you are intended to take their spirit and not insist on the letter. They are conveniences for the hand in climbing, not supports on which you are to hang your whole weight. Here is a metaphor वास्त्वं, clothe, as with a garment. But the garment is different from the wearer, & limited in the space it occupies: is the Lord then different from His creation and limited in His being? That would be the letter; the spirit is different. The presence of the Lord who is infinite, must be thought of as surrounding each object and not confined to the limits of the object,—this and no more is the force of वास्त्वं. When we see the tree, we do not say, "This is the Lord", but we say "Here is the Lord". The tree exists only in Him & by Him; He is in it and around it, even as the ether is.

All this, says the Sruti, is to be thought of as surrounded by the presence of the Lord, सर्वमिदं, all this that is present to our senses, all in fact that we call the Universe. But to avoid misunderstanding the Upanishad goes on to point out that it is not only the Universe as a whole, but each thing that is in the Universe which we must feel to be encompassed with the divine Presence, यत्किंच जगत्या जगत्। everything and anything that is moving thing in Her who moves. *Jagati*, she that moves, in the ancient Sanscrit, was a word applied to the whole Universe; afterwards it meant rather this moving earth,¹ that part of the cosmos with which we human beings are mainly concerned and the neuter *jagat*, that which moves, came to be the ordinary expression for world or universe. But why is the universe called

¹ The ancient Rishis knew that the earth moves, चला पृथ्वी स्थिरा भाति, "The earth moves, but seems to be still".

“she that moves”? Because it is the result of the working of Prakriti, the visible form of Prakriti, the great female material energy of the Lord, and the essence of Prakriti is motion; for by motion she creates this material world. Indeed all object matter is only a form, that is to say a visible, audible or in some way sensible result of motion. Every material object is what it is here called, *jagat*, a world of infinite motion; even the stone, even the clod. Our senses tell us that the material world is the only reality, the only steadfast thing of whose rule and order we can be sure and by which we can abide; but our senses are in error and the Upanishad warns us against their false evidence. The material world is a transitory and changing whirl of motion on the surface of Brahman, the great ocean of spiritual existence, who alone is, in His depths, eternal, real and steadfast. It is He who as the Lord gives order, rule and abidingness to the infinite motion we call the Universe; and if we wish to be in touch with reality, we must train our souls to become aware of His presence sustaining, pervading and surrounding this moving Prakriti and every objective form to which her varying rates of vibration have given rise. Thus placed in constant touch with reality, the Karmayogin will escape from the false shows and illusions of Prakriti; Karma or action which also is merely her motion, energy at work, will not master him and drive him as a storm drives a ship, but he will rather be the master of action, both his own and that of others. For it is only by understanding practically the reality of a thing and its law of working that one can become its master and make use of it for his own purposes.

IV. God in Man and in all Creatures.

But when the Karmayogin has seen the Lord surrounding all things with His presence and all things existing only as transitory manifestations, idols or images in this divine Reality, what follows? It follows that just as this tree or that mountain exists only as an image or manifestation in the divine Reality, so also all creatures, men included, are merely images or manifestations in the same divine Reality. In other words what is real, living,

eternal in you and me, is not our body, nor our vitality & its desires, nor our mind, nor our reason and understanding, but just the divine presence which pervades me and you as much as it pervades the tree and the mountain. And it is not the body, vitality, mind, reason or understanding which constitutes the presence of the Lord within us; for my body differs from yours, my vitality differs from yours, my mind differs from yours, my reason and understanding differ from yours; they differ even from themselves according to time and circumstances; but the Lord is one and unchanging. There must therefore be something deeper hidden within us than any of these things, something which is alone real, living and eternal. This something is called in the Vedanta the Self; it is Brahman or the Lord within each of his creatures. The Self is in the microcosm what Sacchidananda is in the macrocosm; it is the great pure luminous existence, self-conscious and self-blissful, which acts not, neither desires, but watches the infinite play of Prakriti in the life of the creature It informs. And just as by the power of Avidya Sacchidananda takes the semblance of a mighty Will or Force, Isha, creating endless multiplicity and governing, guiding and rejoicing in the interplay of worlds, so by the same power this Self or Witness in Man takes the semblance of a sublime Will creating for itself action and inaction, pleasure & pain, joy & sorrow, victory & defeat, guiding, governing & rejoicing in the activity of the apparent creature it informs, but unaffected and unbound by his works. This Will, which the Vedanta calls Ananda or Bliss and not will, must not be confused with mere volition or desire, for volition belongs to the outer & apparent man and not to the inner and real. This Self is in me, it is also in you and every other being and in all it is the same Self, only the Will or Shakti manifests in different degrees, with a different intensity and manner of working and so with different qualities & actions in each separate creature. Hence the appearance of diversity and divisibility in what is really One and indivisible.

This divisibility of the Indivisible is one of those profound paradoxes of Vedantic thought which increasing Knowledge will show to be deep and far-reaching truths. It used to be implicitly

believed that human personality was a single and indivisible thing; yet recently a school of psychologists has grown up who consider man as a bundle of various personalities rather than a single, homogeneous and indivisible consciousness. For it has been found that a single man can divide himself or be divided into several personalities, each living its own life and unconscious of the other, while yet again another personality may emerge in him which is conscious of the others and yet separate from all of them. This is true; nevertheless, the *man* all through remains one and the same, not only in body but in his psychical existence; for there is a deeper substratum in him which underlies all these divided personalities and is wider than all of them put together. The truth is that the waking personality is only the apparent man, not the real. Personality is the creation of memory, for memory is its basis and pedestal. If the pedestal, then, be divided and put apart, the superstructure also must be in the same act divided and put apart. But the waking memory is only a part, a selection of a wider latent memory which has faithfully recorded all that happens not in the man's present life only, but in all his past. The personality which corresponds with this latent unerring memory is the true personality of the man; it is his soul, one infinite and indivisible, and its apparent divisions are merely the result of Avidya, false knowledge, due to defective action of the waking memory. So the apparent division of the divine Self into many human selves, of the indivisible Paramatman into many Jivatmans, is simply the result of Avidya due to the action of the Maya or self-imposed illusion of Isha, the great Force who has willed that the One by this force of Maya should become phenomenally manifold. In reality, there is no division and the Self in me is the same as the Self in you and the same as the Self up yonder in the Sun. The unity of spiritual existence is the basis of all true religion and true morality. We know indeed that as God is not contained in His universe, but the universe is in Him, so also God is not contained within a man. When the Sruti says elsewhere that the Purusha lies hidden in the heart of our being and is no larger than the size of a man's thumb, it simply means that to the mind of man under the dominion of Avidya

his body, vitality, mind, reason bulk so largely, the Spirit seems a small and indistinguishable thing indeed inside so many and bulky sheaths and coverings. But in reality, it is body, vitality, mind & reason forming the apparent man that are small and trifling and it is the Spirit or real man that is large, grandiose & mighty. The apparent man exists in & by the real, not the real in the apparent; the body is in the soul, not the soul in the body. Yet for the convenience of language and our finite understanding we are compelled to say that the soul is in the body and that God is within the man; for that is how it naturally presents itself to us who use the mental standpoint and the language of a finite intelligence. The Lord, from our standpoint, is within all His creatures and He is the real self of all His creatures. My self and yourself are not really two but one. This is the second truth proceeding logically from the first, on which the Karmayogin has to lay fast hold.

V. Selflessness, the Basic Rule of Karma-Yoga

From the fundamental truth of one divine Reality pervading and surrounding all phenomenal objects and from its implied corollary, the identity of my Self with your Self, the Upanishad deduces a principle of action which holds good for all Karmayogins. "Abandon the world that thou mayst enjoy it, neither covet any man's possession." He that would save his soul, must first lose it. He who would enjoy the world, must first abandon it. Thus from an intellectual paradox the Upanishad proceeds to a moral paradox, and yet both are profound and accurate statements of fact. At first the reason revolts against an assertion so self-contradictory. If I put my food away from me, how can I enjoy it? If I throw away the sovereign in my hand, another may have the joy of it but how can I? I, Devadatta, am told to enjoy the world, yes, all that is in the world; yet I find that I have little enough to enjoy while my neighbour Harischandra has untold wealth. If I am to enjoy the world, how shall I proceed to my object? Not surely by abandoning the little I have, but by keeping fast hold on it and adding to

it the much that Harischandra has. So would argue the natural man, rationally enough from his point of view, but so would not argue the Karmayogin. He will covet no man's possession, because he knows such terms as possession, mine, thine, to be false and illusory in the light of the secret tremendous truth he has got hold of, that there is nothing in this world real, desirable and worth calling by the name of bliss except Brahman, the eternal reality of things. Self-gratification and the possession of wealth and its enjoyments are transitory, illusory and attended with inevitable trouble and pain, but the enjoyment of one's identity with Brahman and the possession of Brahman are pure and undisturbed bliss. The more I possess of Him, the wider and nearer perfection will be my enjoyment. Brahman then is the only wealth the Karmayogin will covet. But how can we possess Brahman? By surrounding all things in the world with Him, by realizing Him in all things. If I am wealthy, the Lord is there in my wealth, but if I am poor, the Lord is there too in my poverty; because of His presence I can enjoy my poverty as much as I did my wealth. For it is not the wealth and the poverty which matter or are real, but only the feeling of the presence of the Lord in all things. That is one way in which I can enjoy the world by abandoning it; for the world is Brahman, the world is the Lord, and to him who has experience of it, all things are bliss, all things are enjoyment. What ground then is there left for coveting another man's possessions? Harischandra possesses merely so much gold, estates, houses, Government paper; but I, Devadatta, in my cottage, possess the Lord of the Universe and am the master & enjoyer of the whole world. It is I who am rich and not Harischandra. That is the fulfilment of his discipline for the Karmayogin.

But let us go down many steps lower. I have not yet ascended the ladder, but am still climbing. I have not yet acquired the habitual consciousness of the presence of the Lord surrounding all things as the only reality for whose sake alone transitory phenomena are precious or desirable. How in this imperfect stage of development can the Karmayogin escape from covetousness and the desire for other men's possessions? By realising more &

more the supreme bliss of a selfless habit of mind and selfless work. This is the way to his goal; this is his ladder. Unselfishness is usually imagined as the abnegation of self, a painful duty, a "mortification", something negative, irksome and arduous. That is a Western attitude, not Hindu; the European temperament is dominated by the body and the vital impulses; it undertakes altruism as a duty, a law imposed from outside, a standard of conduct and discipline; it is, in this light, something contrary to man's nature, something against which the whole man is disposed to rebel. That is not the right way to look at it. Unselfishness is not something outside the nature, but in the nature, not negative but positive, not a self-mortification and abnegation but a self-enlargement and self-fulfilment; not a law of duty but a law of self-development, not painful, but pleasurable. It is in the nature, only latent, and has to be evolved from inside, not tacked on from outside. The lion's whelp in the fable who was brought up among sheep, shrank from flesh when it was placed before him, but once he had eaten of it, the lion's instincts awoke and the habits of the sheep had no more delight for him. So it is with man. Selflessness is his true nature, but the gratification of the body and the vital impulses has become his habit, his second or false nature, because he has been accustomed to identify his body & vital impulses with himself. He, a lion, has been brought up to think himself a sheep; he, a god, has been trained to be an animal. But let him once get the taste of his true food, and the divinity in him awakes; the habits of the animal can please him no longer and he hungers after selflessness and selfless work as a lion hungers after his natural food. Only the feeling has to be evolved as a fulfilment of his nature, not painfully worked up to as a contravention of his nature. The man who regards selflessness as a duty, has not yet learned the alphabet of true altruism; it is the man who feels it as a delight and a natural craving, who has taken the right way to learn. The Hindu outlook here is the true outlook. The Hindu does not call the man who has risen above the gratification of desire a selfless man; he calls him आत्मवान्, the selfful man; that man is अनात्मवान्, that man has not found himself who still clings to the gratification of his

body & vital impulses. Read that great drama of self-sacrifice, the Nagananda, and you will feel how different is the Hindu outlook from the Western; there self-sacrifice is not a painful and terrible struggle but a glorious outpouring of the nature, a passionate delight. "It is only human nature," we say indulgently of any act of selfishness. But that is an error and thrice an error. It is not human nature, but animal nature; human nature is divine & selfless and the average selfish man is selfish not because of his humanity, but because his humanity is as yet undeveloped & imperfect. Christ, Buddha, these are the perfect men; Tom, Dick & Harry are merely animals slowly shaping into men.

VI. The Philosophical Justification of Altruism

The philosophical justification for this outlook is provided for in the fundamental position of Vedanta. सोऽहं, I am He; Thou too art He; there is therefore no I and Thou, but only He. Brahman, Isha is my true self, the real Devadatta; Brahman, Isha is the true self of my neighbour, the real Harischandra. There is therefore really no Devadatta, no Harischandra, but my Self in the mental and bodily case called Devadatta and my Self in the mental and bodily case called Harischandra. If therefore Harischandra enjoys untold riches, it is I who am enjoying them; for Harischandra is my Self,—not my body in which I am imprisoned or my desires by which my body is made miserable, but my true self, the Purusha or real Man within me, who is the witness and enjoyer of all this sweet, bitter, tender, grand, beautiful, terrible, pleasant, horrible and wholly wonderful and enjoyable drama of the world which Prakriti enacts for his delectation. Once I experience this truth, I can take as much pleasure in the riches of Harischandra as if I myself were enjoying them; for I can thenceforth go out of my own self and so enter into the self of Harischandra, that his pleasure becomes my own. To do that I have simply to break down the illusory barrier of associations which confines my sense of self to my own body, mind & vitality. That this can be done, is a common experience of humanity, to which the name of love is given. Human evolution rises through

love and towards love. This truth is instinctively recognised by all the great religions, even when they cannot provide any philosophical justification for a tenet to which they nevertheless attach the highest importance. The one law of Christianity which replaces all the commandments is to love one's neighbour as oneself, the moral ideal of Buddhism is selfless benevolence & beneficence to others; the moral ideal of Hinduism is the perfect sage whose delight and occupation is the good of all creatures (सर्वभूतहितरतः). It is always the same great ideal expressed with varying emphasis. But love in the sense which religion attaches to the word, depends on the realization of oneself in others. If, as Sankhya and Christian theology say, there are millions of different Purushas, if the real man in me is different and separate from the real man in another, one in kind but not in essence, there can be no feeling of identity; there can only be mental or material contact. From material contact nothing but animal feelings of passion & hatred can arise; from mental contact repulsion is as likely to arise as attraction. A separate individual Self will live its own life, pursue its own gratification or its own salvation; it can have no ground, no impulse to love another as itself, because it cannot feel that the other is itself. The Vedanta provides in the realisation of a single Self and the illusory character of all division the only real explanation of this higher or spiritual love. Altruism in the light of this one profound revealing truth becomes natural, right and inevitable. It is natural because I am not really preferring another to myself, but my wider truer self to my narrower false self, God who is in all to my single mind and body, myself in Devadatta and Harischandra to myself in Devadatta alone. It is right because by embracing in my range of feelings the enjoyment of Harischandra in addition to my own I shall make my knowledge of the universality of Brahman an experience, and not merely an intellectual conception or assent; for experience and not intellectual conception is true knowledge. It is inevitable because that is my way of evolution. As I have risen from the animal to the man, so must I rise from the man to the God; but the basis of godhead is the realisation of oneself in all things. The true aim and end of evolution is the wider and

wider realisation of the universal Brahman. Towards that goal we progress, with whatever tardiness, with whatever lapses, yet inevitably, from the falsehood of matter to the truth of spirit. We leave behind, first, the low animal stage of indolence, brutishness, ignorance, wrath, lust, greed and beast violence, or as we call it in our philosophy the *tamasic* condition and rise to various human activity and energy, the *rajasic* condition; from that again we must rise to the *sattwic* condition of divine equipoise, clarity of mind, purity of soul, high selflessness, pity, love for all creatures, truth, candour, tranquillity. Even this divine height is not the highest; we must leave it behind and climb up to the peak of all things where sits the bright and passionless Lord of all, lighting up with a single ray of His splendour a million universes. On that breathless summit we shall experience the identity of our Self not only with the Self of others, but with the All-Self who is the Lord and who is Brahman. In Brahman our evolution finds its vast end and repose.

VII. The Meaning of Renunciation

The Karmayogin therefore will abandon the world that he may enjoy; he will not seek, as Alexander did, to possess the whole world with a material lordship, but, as Gods do, to possess it in his soul. He will lose himself in his own limited being, that he may find himself illimitably in the being of others. The abandonment of the world means nothing less than this, that we give up our own petty personal joy and pleasure to bathe up to the eyes in the joy of others; and the joys of one man may be as great as you please, the united joys of a hundred must needs be greater. By renouncing enjoyment you can increase your enjoyment a hundredfold. That was ever the privilege of the true lover. If you are [a] true lover of a woman, it is her joys far more than your own that make your happiness; if you are a true lover of your friends, their prosperity and radiant faces will give you a delight which you could never have found in your own small and bounded pleasures; if you are a true lover of your nation, the joy, glory and wealth of all its millions will be yours; if you

are a true lover of mankind, all the joys of the countless millions of the earth will flow like an ocean of nectar through your soul. You will say that their sorrows too will be yours. But is not the privilege of sharing the sorrows of those you love a more precious thing than your own happiness? Count too the other happinesses which that partnership in sorrow can bring to you. If you have power,—and Yoga always brings some power with it,—you may have the unsurpassable joy of solacing or turning into bliss the sorrow of your friend or lover, or the sufferings and degradation of the nation for which you sacrifice yourself or the woes of the humanity in whom you are trying to realize God. Even the mere continuous patient resolute effort to do this is a joy unspeakable; even defeat in such a cause is a stern pleasure that strengthens you for new and invincible endeavour. And if you have not the power to relieve or the means to carry on the struggle, there is still left you the joy of suffering or dying for others. "Greater love than this has no man, that he should die for his friend." Yes, but that greatest love of all means also the greatest joy of all. "It is a sweet and noble thing to die for one's country." How many a patriot in his last moments has felt that this was no empty poetical moralising, but the feeble understatement of a wonderful and inexpressible reality. They say that Christ suffered on the cross! The body suffered, doubtless, but did Christ suffer or did he not rather feel the joy of godhead in his soul? The agony of Gethsemane was not the agony of the coming crucifixion, the cup which he prayed might be taken from his lips, was not the cup of physical suffering, but the bitter cup of the sins of mankind which he had been sent to drink. If it were not so, we should have to say that this Jesus was not the Christ, not the Son of God, not the avatar who dared to say "I and my Father are one", but a poor weak human being who under the illusion of Maya mistook his body for himself. Always remember that it is not the weak in spirit to whom the Eternal gives himself wholly; it is the strong heroic soul that reaches God. Others can only touch his shadow from afar. नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यो न च प्रमादात्तपसो वाप्यलिङ्गात्।

The abandonment of the world which is demanded of the

Karmayogin is not necessarily a physical abandonment. You are not asked to give up your house and wealth, your wife, your children, your friends. What you have to give up is your selfish desire for them and your habit of regarding them as your possessions and chattels who are yours merely in order to give you pleasure. You are not asked to throw away the objects of your desire, but to give them up in your heart. It is the desire you have to part with and not the objects of the desire. The abandonment demanded of you is therefore a spiritual abandonment; the power to enjoy your material possessions in such spirit of detachment that you will not be overjoyed by gain, nor cast down by loss, is the test of its reality,—not the mere flight from their presence, which is simply a flight from temptation. The Karmayogin has to remain in the world & conquer it; he is not allowed to flee from the scene of conflict and shun the battle. His part in life is the part of the hero,—the one quality he must possess, is the lionlike courage that will dare to meet its spiritual enemies in their own country and citadel and tread them down under its heel. A spiritual abandonment then,—for the body only matters as the case of the spirit; it is the spirit on which the Karmayogin must concentrate his effort. To purify the body is well, only because it makes it easier to purify the spirit; in itself it is of no importance; but if the soul is pure, the body cannot be touched by uncleanness. If the spirit itself is not stained by desire, the material enjoyment of the objects of desire cannot stain it. For if my spirit does not lust after new wealth or cling to the wealth I have, then my use of riches must necessarily be selfless and without blame; and having parted with them in spirit and given them into the treasury of God, I can then truly enjoy their possession. That enjoyment is clear, deep and calm; fate cannot break it, robbers cannot take it away, enemies cannot overwhelm it. All other joy of possession is chequered and broken with fear, sorrow, trouble and passion,—the passion for its increase, the trouble of keeping it unimpaired, the sorrow for its diminution, the fear of its utter loss. Passionless enjoyment alone is pure & unmixed delight. If indeed you choose to abandon riches physically as well as in spirit, that too is well, provided you

take care that you are not cherishing the thought of them in your mind. There is another curious law of which many who follow the path of spiritual renunciation, have had experience. It is this that such renunciation is often followed by a singular tendency for wealth to seek him who has ceased to seek wealth. A strong capable will bent on money-making, will doubtless win its desire, but at least as often wealth, fame and success flee from the man who longs after them and come to him who has conquered his longing. Their lover perishes without winning them or reaches them through deep mire of sin or a hell of difficulty or over mountains of toil, while the man who has turned his back on them, finds them crowding to lay themselves at his feet. He may then either enjoy or reject them. The latter is a great path and has been the chosen way of innumerable saintly sages. But the Karmayogin may enjoy them, not for his personal pleasure certainly, not for his false self, since that sort of enjoyment he has abandoned in his heart, but God in them and them for God. As a king merely touching the nazzerana passes it on to the public treasury, so shall the Karmayogin, merely touching the wealth that comes to him, pour it out for those around him, for the poor, for the worker, for his country, for humanity because he sees Brahman in all these. Glory, if it comes to him, he will veil in many folds of quiet and unobtrusive humility and use the influence it gives not for his own purposes but to help men more effectively in their needs or to lead them upward to the divine. Such a man will quickly rise above joy and sorrow, success and failure, victory and defeat; for in sorrow as in joy he will feel himself to be near God. That nearness will deepen into continual companionship and by companionship he will grow ever liker God in his spiritual image until he reaches the last summit of complete identity when man, the God who has forgotten his godhead, remembers utterly and becomes the Eternal. Selflessness then is the real & only law of renunciation; in the love of one's wider self in others, it has its rise; by the feeling of the divine presence in all earthly objects, it becomes rooted & unshakeable; the realization of the Brahman is its completion and goal.

Chapter II

Salvation through Works

I

The law of spiritual abandonment in preference to mere physical abandonment, is the solution enounced by Srikrishna, the greatest of all teachers, for a deep and vexed problem which has troubled the Hindu consciousness from ancient times. There are, as we know, three means of salvation; salvation by knowledge, the central position in Buddhism; salvation by faith & love, the central position in Christianity; salvation by faith & works, the central position in Mahomedanism. In Hinduism, the Sanatandharma, all these three paths are equally accepted. But in all three the peculiar and central religious experience of Hinduism,—the reality & eternity of the Self, the transience & unreality of all else,—is insisted upon as the guiding principle & indispensable idea. This is the bridge which carries you over to immortality; this is the gate of salvation. The Jnanamargin envisages only one reality, the Brahman, and by turning away from all that is phenomenal and seeking the One reality in himself, enters into the being of the Eternal. The Bhakta envisages only two realities, God & himself, and by the ecstatic union of himself with God through love and adoration, enters into the pure and unmixed presence of the Eternal. The Karmamargin envisages three realities which are one; the Eternal in Itself, pure and without a second, the Eternal as a transcendent Will or Force manifesting Himself phenomenally but not really in cosmic work & the Eternal in the Jivatman, manifesting Himself similarly in individual work in a finite body; and he too, by abandoning desire and laying his works upon God, attains likeness to the Eternal and through that gate enters into identity with the Eternal. In one thing all these agree, the transience & unreality of phenomenal existence. But if phenomenal existence is unreal, of what use is it to remain in the world? Let us abandon

house and wealth and wife and friends and children; let us flee from them to the solitude of mountain & forest and escape as soon as possible by knowledge & meditation from the world of phenomena. Such was the cry that arose in India before and after the days of Buddha, when the power of the Jnanamarga was the strongest on the Hindu consciousness. The language of the Bhakta is not very different; "Let us leave the things of the world," he cries, "let us forget all else and think and speak only of the name of Hari." Both have insisted that works and the world are a snare & a bondage from which it is best to flee. The Karmayogin alone has set himself against the current and tried to stand in the midmost of the cosmic stir, in the very surge and flux of phenomena without being washed away in the tide. Few, he has said, who remain in the world, can be above the world and live in communion with the Eternal; but few also who flee to the mountains, really attain Him, and few of those who spend their days in crying Lord, Lord, are accepted by Him to whom they cry. It is always the many who are called, the few who are chosen. And if Janak could remain in the world and be ever with God in the full luxury, power & splendour of the life of a great king, if Rama & Srikrishna lived in the world and did the works of the world, yet were God, who shall say that salvation cannot be attained in the midst of actions, nay, even through the instrumentality of actions? To this dispute the answer of Srikrishna is the one solution. To abandon desire in the spirit is the one thing needful; if one fail to do this, it is vain for him to practise Yoga in mountain or forest solitude, it is vain to sing the name of Hari and cry Lord, Lord, from morn to night, it is vain to hope for safety by "doing one's duty in the world". The man unpurified of desire, whatever way he follows, will not find salvation. But if he can purify his spirit of desire, then whether on solitary mountain and in tiger-haunted forest, or in Brindavun the beautiful, or in the king's court, the trader's shop or the hut of the peasant, salvation is already in his grasp. For the condition of salvation is to leave the lower unreal self and turn to the real Self; and the stain & brand of the lower self is desire. Get rid of desire and the doors of the

Eternal stand wide open for your soul to enter in. The way of the Sannyasin who leaves the world and devotes all himself to Jnana or Bhakti, is a good way, and there is none better; but the way of the Tyagin who lives among sense-objects and in the whirl of action without cherishing the first or yielding to the rush of the second, is the right way for the Karmayogin. This is what the Upanishad with great emphasis proceeds to establish as the second rule of conduct for the Karmamargin.

“Do, verily, thy deeds in this world and wish to live thy hundred years, for thus to thee and there is no other way than this, action cleaveth not to a man.”

A hundred years is the full span of a man’s natural life when he observes all the laws of his nature and keeps his body and mind pure by the use of pure food, by pure ways of living, by purity of thought and by self-restraint in the satisfaction of his desires. The term is ordinarily diminished by heedlessness, sin, contamination or the effects of our past action in other lives; it may, on the other hand, be increased to hundreds of years by Yoga. But the Karmayogin will neither desire to increase his term of life nor to diminish it. To increase his term of life would show a desire for and clinging to phenomenal existence quite inconsistent with that abandonment of desire which we have seen to be the fundamental law of Karmayoga. A few great Yogis have prolonged their lives without personal desire merely to help the world by their presence or example. These are exceptional cases which the ordinary Karmamargin need not keep in view. On the other hand we must not turn our backs on life; we must not fling it from us untimely or even long for an early release from our body, but willingly fill out our term and even be most ready to prolong it to the full period of man’s ordinary existence so that we may go on doing our deeds in this world. Mark the emphasis laid on the word कुर्वन् “doing” by adding to it the particle एव, the force of which is to exclude any other action, state, person or thing than the one expressed by the word to which it is attached. Verily we must do our deeds in this world and not avoid doing them. There is no need to flee to the mountains in order to find God. He is not a hill-man or a serpent

that we should seek for Him only in cave & on summit; nor a deer or tiger that the forest only can harbour Him. He is here, in you and around you; He is in these men and women whom you see daily, with whom you talk & pass your life. In the roar of the city you can find Him and in the quiet of the village, He is there. You may go to the mountains for a while, if the din of life deafens you & you wish to seek solitude to meditate; for to the Karmayogin also Jnana is necessary and solitude is the nurse of knowledge. You may sit by the Ganges or the Narmada near some quiet temple or in some sacred asram to adore the Lord; for to the Karmayogin also *bhakti* is necessary, and places like these which are saturated with the *bhakti* of great saints and impassioned God-lovers best feed and strengthen the impulse of adoration in the soul. But if Karmayoga be your path, you must come back and live again in the stir of the world. In no case flee to solitude and inaction as a coward and weakling, —not in the hope of finding God, but because you think you can by this means escape from the miseries and misfortunes of your life which you are too weak to face. It is not the weak and the coward who can climb up to God, but the strong and brave alone. Every individual Jivatman must become the perfect Kshatriya before he can become the Brahmin. For there is a caste of the soul which is truer and deeper than that of the body. Through four soul-stages a man must pass before he can be perfect; first, as a Sudra, by service and obedience to tame the brute in his being; then, as a Vaishya to satisfy within the law of morality the lower man in him and evolve the higher man by getting the first taste of delight in well-doing to others than himself and his; then, as the Kshatriya, to be trained in those first qualities without which the pursuit of the Eternal is impossible, courage, strength, unconquerable tenacity and self-devotion to a great task; last, as the Brahmin, so to purify body & mind and nature that he may see the Eternal reflected in himself as in an unsoiled mirror. Having once seen God, man can have no farther object in life than to reach and possess Him. Now the Karmayogin is a soul that is already firmly established in the Kshatriya stage and is rising from it through an easily-attained

Brahminhood straight & swift to God. If he loses hold of his courage & heroism, he loses his footing on the very standing-ground from which he is to heighten himself in his spiritual stature until his hand can reach up to and touch the Eternal. Let his footing be lost, & what can he do but fall?

II. Vairagya.

Disgust with the world, the shrinking from the phenomenal life and the desire to escape from it to the Eternal, is called, in our terminology, *vairagya*. *Vairagya* is the turning of the soul to its salvation; but we must be on our guard against the false shows and imitations of it to which our minds are subject. "I am continually battered with the siege of sorrows & miseries; I cannot cope with the world; let me therefore get away from the world, put on the saffron robe and be at peace from anxiety and grief"; that is not the language of real *vairagya*. Just as you recognize a genuine article from the imitation by its trademark, so there is a mark by which you recognize the true Sannyasin. Not weariness of the phenomenal world by itself, but this world-weariness accompanied by a thirst for the Eternal, that is the real *vairagya*. The thirst for the Eternal is the trademark; look for it always and see that it is the real trademark, not an imperfect & fraudulent reproduction. The saffron robe nowadays covers a great deal of selfishness, a great deal of idleness, a great deal of hypocrisy. It is not the robe which is the trademark, but the longing for the Eternal. Nor is it the talk and the outward action which is the trademark, for that may be a mere imitation. Look in the eyes, watch the slighter, less observed habits, wait for a light on the face; then you will find the trademark. Apply the same test to yourself. When you think you have *vairagya*, ask yourself, "Is this mere weariness & disgust, a weak fainting of the soul, or can I detect in it even in a slight degree an awakening of the Self and a desire for that which is not transient but eternal, not bound to sin and chequered with sorrow, but pure and free?" If after severe self-examination, you can detect this desire in yourself, know that your salvation has begun.

There are many kinds of *vairagya*, some true, some false. There is one *vairagya*, deep, intense & energetic, when the strong man having tasted the sweets of the world finds that there is in them no permanent and abiding sweetness; they are not the true and immortal joy which his true and immortal self demands, so he turns from them to something in his being which is deeper and holier, the joy of the inexhaustible and imperishable spirit within. Then there is the *vairagya*, false or transient, of the hypocrite or weakling, who has lusted and panted and thirsted for the world's sweets, but has been pushed and hustled from the board by Fate or by stronger men than himself, and seeks in the outward life of the Sannyasin a slothful and thornless road to honour and ease and the satisfaction of greed, or else would use Yoga and Sannyas as the drunkard uses his bottle or the slave of opium his pill or his daily draught. Not for such ignoble purpose were these great things meant by the Rishis who disclosed them to the world. Beware of such weakness. क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थं नैतत्त्वच्युपपद्यते। Truly is such base weakness unworthy of one who is no other than Brahman, the Eternal, the Creator, Protector and Destroyer of worlds. But on the other hand there is a true *vairagya* of sorrow and disappointment; sometimes men have tried in their ignorance for ignoble things and failed, not from weakness but because these things were not in their nature, were unfit for them and below their true greatness and high destiny. The sorrow and disappointment were necessary to open their eyes to their true selves; then they seek solitude, meditation & Samadhi, not as a dram to drown their sorrow and yet unsated longing, but because their yearning is no longer for unworthy things but for the love of God or the knowledge of the Eternal. Sometimes great spirits enter the way of the Sannyasin, because in the solitude alone with the Eternal they can best develop their divine strength (*Brahmatej*) to use it for divine purposes. Once attained they pour it in a stream of divine knowledge or divine love over the world; such were Shankaracharya and Ramakrishna. Sometimes it is the sorrows & miseries of the world that find them in ease & felicity and drive them out, as Buddha & Christ were driven out, to seek light for the ignorant

and help for sufferers in the depths of their own being. True Sannyasins are the greatest of all workers, because they have the most unalloyed & inexhaustible strength and are the mightiest in God to do the works of God.

Whatever be the precise nature of the *vairagya* or its immediate & exciting cause, if the thirst for the Eternal mingle in it, know that it is real *vairagya* and the necessary impulse towards your salvation. You must pass through this stage if you are to reach the Eternal at all. For if you do not get weary of the phenomenal, your mind cannot turn to the Eternal; the attraction of the phenomenal, keeps your eyes turned downward & not upward, outward & not inward. Welcome therefore the first inrush of *vairagya* into your life, but remember it is a first stage on the road, not the goal. Swami Bhaskarananda was driven into Sannyas by a keen & overmastering disgust of life in the world, but when he had attained *mukti*, the state of his mind so changed that if his wife had been living, he would have lived with her in the world as one in the world; an idea shocking to priestly & learned orthodoxy, but natural to the Jivanmukta. Sri Ramakrishna, when he had attained identity with the Lord, could not indeed return to the world as a householder or bear the touch of worldly things,—for he was the incarnation of utter Bhakti,—but he took as much delight in the Eternal manifested in phenomena & especially in man as in the pure actionless Brahman with whom he became one in Samadhi. The Karmamargin must pass through the condition of Vairagya, but he will not abide in it. Or to speak more accurately he will retain the spiritual element in it and reject the physical. The spiritual element of *vairagya* is the turning away from the selfish desire for phenomenal objects and actions; the physical element is the fear of and shrinking from the objects & actions themselves. The retention of the spiritual element is necessary to all Yogins; the retention of the physical element, though often a sign of great physical purity and saintliness, is not essential to salvation.

Do not be shaken by the high authority of many who say that to leave the world is necessary to the seeker after Brahman and that salvation cannot come by works. For we have

a greater authority than any to set against them, the teaching of Srikrishna himself. He tells Sanjay in the Mahabharata that as between the gospel of action and the gospel of inaction, it is the former that is to his mind and the latter strikes him as the idle talk of a weakling. So too, in the Gita, while laying stress on Jnana & Bhakti, he will by no means banish Karma nor relegate it to an inferior place; the most significant portion of the Gita is its eulogy of Karmayoga and inspired exposition of its nature & principles. Jnana, of course, is indispensable; Jnana is first & best. Works without knowledge will not save a man but only plunge him deeper & deeper into bondage. The Upanishad, before it speaks of the necessity of works, takes care first to insist that you must realise the presence of the Lord enveloping this universe & each object that it contains. When you have got this Jnana that all is the One Brahman and your actions are but the dramatic illusions unrolled by Prakriti for the delight of the Purusha, you will then be able to do works without desire or illusion, abandoning the world that you may enjoy it, as the Upanishad tells you, or as Sri Krishna advises, giving up all hankering for the fruits of your work. You will devote all your actions to the Lord; not to the lower false self, which feels pleasure & pain in the results of your actions, but to the Brahman in you which works लोकसंग्रहार्थ, for the keeping together of the peoples, so that instead of the uninstructed multitudes being bewildered and led astray by your inactivity, the world may be rather helped, strengthened and maintained by the godlike character of your works. And your works must be godlike if they are done without desire or attachment to their fruits. For this is how God works. The world is His *lila*, His play & sport, not a purposeful stir and struggle out of which He is to gain something and be benefited. The great empire in which you glory & think it is to be eternal, is to Him no more than the house of sand which a child has built in his play. He has made it and He will break it, and, one day, it will be as if it had never been. The very Sun and its glorious wheeling planets are but momentary toys in His hands. Once they were not, now they are, a day will come & they will no longer be. Yet while

He works on these things, He works like the boy when he is building his castle of sand, as if the work were to be permanent and for all time.

न च मां तानि कर्मणि निबध्नति धनञ्जय ।
उदासीनवदासीनमसकं तेषु कर्मसु॥

“And yet these actions bind Me not, Dhanunjoy, for I sit as one unconcerned and I have no attachment to these My works.” Actions performed after renunciation, actions devoted to God, these only do not cling to a man nor bind him in their invisible chains, but rather fall from him as water from the wings of a swan. They cannot bind him because he is free from the woven net of causality. Cause and effect exist only in the idea of duality which has its root in Avidya; the Yogin when he has renounced desire and experienced unity, rises above Avidya & her children, and bondage has no farther meaning for him. This is the goal of the Karmayogin as of all Yoga, but the path for him is through spiritual Vairagya, the renunciation of desire, not through physical separation from the objects of desire. This the Upanishad emphasizes in the second line of the verse. “Thus to thee; and there is no other way than this, action clingeth not to a man.” एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे। This is conclusive and beyond appeal.

III. One Road and not Three.

“There is no other way than this.” By this expression it is not intended that Karmayoga is the only path of salvation for all men, but that the renunciation of desire is essential to salvation; every Yogin, be he Jnani, Bhakta, or Karmi, must devote whatever work he may be doing to the Eternal. To the Karmayogin indeed this path is the only possible way; for it is the *swabhava* or nature of a man which decides the way he shall take. If a born Jnani becomes the disciple of a great Bhakta, however submissively he may accept his Master’s teachings, however largely he may infuse his Jnana with Bhakti, yet eventually it is the way of Jnana he must take and no other. For that is his *swabhava* or nature, his

dharma or the law of his being. If the Brahmin predominates in him, he will be drawn into Jnana; if the Kshatriya, into works; if the Sudra or Vaisya, the child or woman, to Bhakti. If he is born saint or avatar, he will harmonize all three, but still with one predominant over the others and striking the main note of his life and teaching. It is always the predominance of one or other, not its unmixed control, which decides the path; for as with the Karmayogin, the devotion of works to God brings inevitably the love of God, and love gives knowledge, so it is with the Bhakta; the love of God will of itself direct all his works to God and bring him straight to knowledge. So it is even with the Jnani; the knowledge of the Brahman means delight in Him, and that is Bhakti; and this love & knowledge cannot let him live to himself but will make him live to Brahman, and that is divine Karma. The three paths are really one, but the Jnani takes the right hand, the Bhakta the left hand and the Karmayogin walks in the middle; while on the way each prefers his own choice as best and thinks the others inferior, but when they reach the goal, they find that none was inferior or superior, but it was one road they were following which only seemed to be three.

The Jnani & Bhakta shrink from the idea of Karma as a means of salvation. Unillumined Karma is such a stumbling block in the path of the seeker that they can hardly regard even illumined & desireless Karma as anything but a subordinate discipline whose only value is to prepare a man for Bhakti or Jnan. They will not easily concede that *karma* can be by itself a direct and sufficient road to Brahman. So Shankaracharya disparages *karma*, and Shankaracharya's is an authority which no man can dare to belittle. Nevertheless even the greatest are conditioned by their nature, by the times they work in and by the kind of work they have come to do. In the age that Shankara lived in, it was right that Jnana should be exalted at the expense of works. The great living force with which he had to deal, was not the heresies of later Buddhism, Buddhism decayed and senescent, but the triumphant Karmakanda which made the faithful performance of Vedic ceremonies the one path and heaven the highest goal. In his continual anxiety to prove that these ceremonies could not be the

path, he bent the bow as far as he could in the other direction and left the impression that works could not be the path to salvation at all. Had he laid stress on Karma as one of the ways to salvation, the people would not have understood him; they would have thought that they had one more authority for their belief in rites and ceremonies as all-sufficient for salvation. These things must be remembered when we find Shankara and Ramanuja and Madhwa differing so widely from each other in their interpretation of the Upanishad. It was necessary that the Scripture should be interpreted by Shankara wholly in the light of Adwaita, the Monistic conception of the Eternal, so that the Monistic idea might receive its definite and consummate philosophical expression; for a similar reason it was necessary that Madhwa should interpret them wholly in the light of the Dwaita or dualistic conception and that Ramanuja should find a reconciliation in Visishtadwaita, a modified Monism. All these conceptions of the Eternal have their own truth and their own usefulness to the soul in its effort to reach Him. But the Upanishad is not concerned only with the ultimate reality of the Brahman to Himself, but also with His reality in His universe and His reality to the Jivatman or individual self. It is therefore sometimes Adwaitic, sometimes Dwaitic, sometimes Visishtadwaitic, and we should have the courage now to leave the paths which the mighty dead have trod out for us, discharge from our mind all preconceived philosophies and ask only, "What does the Upanishad actually say?" Never mind whether the interpretation arrived at seems to be self-contradictory to the logician or incoherent to the metaphysical reasoner; it will be enough if it is true in the experience of the seeker after God. For the Eternal is infinite and cannot be cabined within the narrow limits of a logical formula.

IV. The denial of salvation by works

What is it, after all, to which the denial of salvation by works amounts, when looked at not from the standpoint of logic only but of actual spiritual experience? Some people when they talk of Karma or works, think only of rites and ceremonies, Vedic,

Puranic or Tantric. That kind of works, certainly, do not bring us to salvation. They may give success & great joy, power and splendour in this world. Or they may lead to enjoyment after death in Paradise; but Paradise is not salvation; it is a temporary joyous condition of the soul, the pleasure of which ceases when the cause is exhausted. Or these rites may lead to the conscious possession and use of occult powers, latent in ordinary men, by which you may help or harm others; but the possession of occult powers cannot be an assistance, it is indeed often a hindrance to salvation. Or rites and ceremonies may purify and prepare the mind and fit it for starting on one of the paths to salvation. This indeed is their only helpfulness for the true aim of our existence. They are no more than an infant or preparatory class in the school of Brahmanavida.

It is evident again that works done with desire, works done without knowledge and not devoted to God, cannot lead to salvation, but only to continued bondage. Works prompted by desire, lead only to the fulfilment of desire; nor do they disappear in that consummation. For all work that we do, has, besides its effect on ourselves, infinite effects on others and on the general course of phenomena; these in their turn become causes and produce fresh effects; so the ripple continues widening till we lose sight of it in the distance of futurity. For all the effects of our action we are responsible and by each new thing we do, we are entering into so many debts which we must discharge before we can be released from the obligation of phenomenal existence. Existence in phenomena may be imaged as a debtor's prison in which the soul is detained by a million creditors not one of whom will forgive one farthing of his claims. But those claims we can never discharge; each sum we get to pay off our old creditors, we can only procure by entering into fresh debts which put us at the mercy of new and equally implacable claimants. Nature, the great judge and gaoler, is ever giving fresh decrees against us, for her law is inexorable and will not admit of remission or indulgence. We can obtain our release only by escaping from her jurisdiction into the divine sanctuary where the slave of Nature, by his very entry, becomes free and her master.

But the works of the Karmayogin are works done with knowledge and without desire. These certainly cannot prevent release or lead to fresh debt and fresh bondage. For bondage is the result of desire and ignorance and disappears with desire and ignorance. Desire & ignorance are indeed the boundaries of Nature's jurisdiction and once we have left them behind, we have passed out of her kingdom; we have taken sanctuary from her pursuit and are freemen released from the action of her laws. To deny the innocence of works without desire would be to deny reason, to deny Sruti, to deny facts. For Janaka and others did works, Srikrishna did works, but none will say that either the *avatar* or the *jivanmukta* were bound by his works; for their *karma* was done with knowledge and without desire. Works without desire, then, cannot prevent salvation or lead to fresh bondage.

It may be argued, however, that if they do not prevent salvation, neither do they help towards salvation. The works of the Bhakta or Jnani do not bind him because he has attained the Eternal and by the strength of that attainment becomes free from desire and ignorance; but works done before attainment can be nothing but means of bondage; only the pursuit of God-knowledge and the worship & adoration of God, to which the name of works does not properly apply, are free from responsibility. But this reasoning too is not consistent with divine teaching, with experience or with reason. For divine teaching distinctly tells us that works done after abandonment of the world and devoted to God only, do lead to salvation. We know also that a single action done without desire and devoted to the Lord, gives us strength for fresh actions of the same kind, and the persistent repetition of such works must form the habit of desirelessness & self-devotion to Him, which then become our nature and atmosphere. We have already seen that desirelessness necessarily takes us outside the jurisdiction of Nature, and when we are outside the jurisdiction of Nature, where can we be if not in the presence of the Eternal? Nor can self-devotion to the Lord be reasonably said not to lead to the Lord; for where else can it lead? It is clear therefore that works without desire not only do

not prevent salvation but are a mighty help towards salvation.

It may still be argued that works without desire help only because they lead to devotion and knowledge and there their function ceases; they bring the soul to a certain stage but do not carry it direct to God. It is therefore devotion and knowledge, bhakti and jnana, which alone bring us to God. As soon as either of these takes him by the hand, karma must leave him, just as rites & ceremonies must leave him, and its function is therefore not essentially higher than that of rites & ceremonies. But if this were good reasoning, the Karmayogin might equally well say that Bhakti leads to knowledge and the devotion of one's works to the Lord; therefore knowledge and works without desire bring a man to the Eternal and *bhakti* is only a preliminary means; or that *jnana* leads to adoration of the Eternal and devotion of all one does to him, therefore *bhakti* and works without desire alone bring the soul direct to God and *jnana* is only a preliminary means. Or if it is said that works must cease at a certain stage while Bhakti and Jnana do not cease, this too is inconsistent with experience. For Janaka and others did works after they attained the Eternal and while they were in the body, did not cease from works. It cannot even be said that works though they need not necessarily cease after the attainment of the Eternal, yet need not continue. Particular works need not continue; rites & ceremonies need not continue; the life of the householder need not continue. But work continues so long as the body gross or subtle continues; for both the gross body and the subtle body, both the physical case & the soul-case are always part of Prakriti, and whatever is Prakriti, must do work. The Gita says this plainly

न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत्।
कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैगुणैः॥

“For no man verily remaineth even for a moment without doing works, for all are helplessly made to do work by the moods to which Nature has given birth.” And again सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेन्नानवानपि। “Even the Jnani moveth & doeth after the semblance of his own nature; for created things follow after their

nature and what can forcing it do?" A man works according to his nature and cannot help doing work; but he can choose to what he shall direct his works, whether to his lower self or his higher, whether to desire or to God. The man who leaves the world behind him and sits on a mountaintop or in an asram, has not therefore got rid of works. If nothing else he has to maintain his body, to eat, to walk, to move his limbs, to sit in *asan* and meditate; all this is work. And not only his body works; his mind is far more active than his body. If he is not released from desire, his work will bind him and bear fruit in relation to himself and others. Even if he is released from desire, his body & mind are not free from Karma until he is able to get rid of them finally, and that will not be till his *prarabdha karma* has worked itself out and the debts he has written against his name are wiped off. Even the greatest Yogi by his mere bodily presence in the world, is pouring out a stream of spiritual force on all sides; this action does not bind him, it is true, yet it is work and work which exercises a stupendous influence on others. He is सर्वभूतहितरतः, busy doing good to all creatures by his very nature, even though he does not lift a finger or move a step. He too with regard to his body, gross & subtle, is अवशः, he must let the gunas, the moods of Nature, work. He may control that work, for he is no longer the slave of Prakriti, but he cannot stop it except by finally leaving his body & mind through Yoga with the Eternal. Work therefore does not cease any more than Bhakti or Jnana.

Shankara indeed says that when we have got Jnana, we necessarily cease to do works, for Jnana makes us one with the Eternal who is actionless अकर्ता. Yet Janaka knew the Eternal and did works; Sri Krishna was the Eternal and did works. For Brahman the Eternal, is both कर्ता and अकर्ता; He works and He does not work. As Sacchidananda, He is above works, but He is also above knowledge and above devotion. When the Jivatman becomes Sacchidananda, devotion is lost in Ananda or absolute bliss, knowledge is lost in Chit or absolute Consciousness, works are lost in Sat or absolute Existence. But as Isha or Shakti, He does works by which He is not bound and the Jivatman also

when he is made one with Isha or Shakti continues to do works without being bound.

Works therefore do not cease in the body, nor do they cease after we have left the body except by union with the actionless Sacchidananda or *laya* in the Unknowable Brahman, where Jnana and Bhakti also are swallowed up in unfathomable being. Even of the Unknowable Parabrahman too it cannot be said that It is actionless; It is neither कर्ता nor अकर्ता. It is néti, néti, not this, not that, unexplicable and inexpressible in terms of speech and mind. We need not therefore fear that works without desire will not lead us straight to the Eternal; we need not think that we must give up works in order that we may develop the love of God or attain the knowledge of God.

V. Mukti and the Jivanmukta.

The ideal of the Karmayogin is the Jivanmukta, the self who has attained salvation but instead of immediately passing out of phenomenal existence, remains in it, free from its bondage. There are three kinds of salvation which are relative & partial; *salokya* or constant companionship with the Lord, *sadrishya*, or permanent resemblance to Him in one's nature & actions, and *sayujya* or constant union of the individual self with the Eternal. It is supposed by some schools that entire salvation consists in *laya* or absorption into the Eternal, in other words entire self-removal from phenomena and entrance into the utter being of the unconditioned and unknowable Parabrahman. Such *laya* is not possible in the body, but can only begin, *adehanipatit*, as soon as the Self throws away all its bodies and reenters into its absolute existence. It is not indeed the mere mechanical change of death that brings about this result, but the will of the Self to throw aside all its bodies and never returning to them pass rather out of that state of consciousness in the Eternal in which He looks upon Himself as a Will or Force. This, however, is an extreme attitude. Complete self-identification with the Eternal, such as we find in the Jivanmukta, is complete *mukti*; for the Jivanmukta can at will withdraw himself in Samadhi into the

being of Sacchidananda, who is actionless and turned away from phenomena; and can at will look again towards phenomena, dealing with them as their Lord who puts them to work without being touched by their stir and motion. For the Jivanmukta *laya*, absorption into the Unknowable, can be accomplished at his will; but he does not will it.

The reason for his not willing this utter departure brings us to the very essence of Mukti. Why do men hanker after complete absorption into the unphenomenal? why do they flee from Karma and dread lest it should interfere with their salvation? Because they feel that phenomenal life and works are a bondage and they desire to be free and not bound. This state of mind can only last so long as the seeker is the *mumukshu*, the self desirous of freedom, but when he is actually *mukta*, the free self, the terror of Maya and her works cannot abide with him. *Mukti*, which we have to render in English by salvation, means really release. But release from what bondage, salvation from what tyranny? From the bondage of Maya, from the tyranny of Avidya which will have us believe that we are finite, mortal and bound, who are not finite, but infinite, not mortal, but deathless & immutable, not bound, but always free. The moment you have realised that Avidya is illusion and there is nothing but the Eternal, and never was anything but the Eternal and never will be anything but the Eternal, the moment you have not merely intellectually grasped the idea but come to have habitual experience of the fact, from that moment you will know that you are not bound, never were bound and never will be bound. Avidya consists precisely in this that the Jivatman thinks there is something else than the Eternal which can throw him into bondage and that he himself is something else than the Eternal and can be bound. When the Jivatman shakes off these illusory impressions of Avidya, he realises that there is nothing but Brahman the Eternal who is in His very nature *nityamukta*, from ever and forever free. He can therefore have no fear of Karma nor shrink from it lest it should bind him, for he knows that the feeling of bondage is itself an illusion. He will be ready not only to do his deeds in this world and live out his hundred years, but to be reborn as Srikrishna

himself has promised to be reborn again and again and as other avatars have promised to be reborn. For however often he may enter into phenomenal life, he has no farther terror of Maya and her bondage. Once free, always free.

Even if he does not will to be reborn, he will be careful not to leave the world of phenomena until his *prarabdha karma* is worked out. There are certain debts standing against his name in the ledger of Nature and these he will first absolve. Of course the Jivanmukta is not legally bound by his debts to Nature, for all the promissory notes he has executed in her name have been burned up in the fire of Mukti. He is now free and lord, the master of Prakriti, not its slave. But the Prakriti attached to this Jivatman has created, while in the illusion of bondage, causes which must be allowed to work out their effects; otherwise the chain of causation is snapped and a disturbance is brought about in the economy of Nature. उत्सीदेयुरिमे लोकाः। In order therefore to maintain the law of the world unimpaired, the Jivanmukta remains amid works like a prisoner on parole, not bound by the fetters of Prakriti, but detained by his own will until the time appointed for his captivity shall have elapsed.

The Jivanmukta is the ideal of the Karmayogin and though he may not reach his ideal in this life or the next, still he must always strive to model himself upon it. Do therefore your deeds in this world and wish to live your hundred years. You should be willing to live your allotted term of life not for the sake of long living, but because the real you in the body is Brahman who by the force of His own Shakti is playing for Himself and by Himself this dramatic *lila* of creation, preservation and destruction. He is Isha, the Lord, Creator, Preserver and Destroyer; and you also in the field of your own Prakriti are the lord, creator, preserver and destroyer. You are He; only for your own amusement you have imagined yourself limited to a particular body for the purposes of the play, just as an actor imagines himself to be Dushyanta, Rama or Ravana. The actor has lost himself in the play and for a moment thinks that he is what he is acting; he has forgotten that he is really not Dushyanta or Rama, but Devadatta who has played & will yet play a hundred parts besides. When he shakes

off this illusion and remembers that he is Devadatta, he does not therefore walk off the stage and by refusing to act, break up the play, but goes on playing his best till the proper time comes for him to leave the stage. The object of this phenomenal world is creation and it is our business, while we are in the body, to create. Only, so long as we forget our true Self, we create like servants under the compulsion of Prakriti and are slaves and bound by her actions which we falsely imagine to be our own. But when we know and experience our true Self, then we are masters of Prakriti and not bound by her creations. Our Self becomes the Sakshi, the silent spectator of the actions of our Nature which she models in the way she thinks would best please it. So are we at once spectator and actor; and yet because we know the whole to be merely an illusion of apparent actions, because we know that Rama is not really killing Ravana, nor Ravana being killed, for Ravana lives as much after the supposed death as before, so are we neither spectator nor actor, but the Self only and all we see nothing but visions of the Self. The Karmamargin therefore will not try or wish to abandon actions while he is in this world, but only the desire for their fruits; neither will he try or wish to leave his life in this world before its appointed end. The man who violently breaks the thread of his life before it is spun out, will obtain a result the very opposite to what he desires. The Karmamargin aims at being a Jivanmukta, he will not cherish within himself the spirit of the suicide.

VI. Suicide and the other World.

In the early days of spiritualism in America, there were many who were so charmed by the glowing description of the other world published by spiritualists that they committed suicide in order to reach it. It would almost seem as if in the old days when the pursuit of the Eternal dominated the mind of the race and disgust of the transitory was common, there were many who rather than live out their hundred years preferred a self-willed exit from the world of phenomena. To these the Upanishad addresses a solemn warning. "Godless verily are those

worlds and with blind gloom enveloped, thither they depart when they have passed away, whatso folk are slayers of self.” One has to be peculiarly careful in rendering the exact words of the Upanishad, because Shankara gives a quite unexpected and out-of-the-way interpretation of the verse. He does not accept आत्महनो, self-slayers, in the sense of suicides, the natural and ordinary meaning, but understands it to signify slayers of the eternal Self within them. Since this is a startlingly unnatural & paradoxical sense, for the Self neither slays nor is slain, he farther interprets his interpretation in a figurative sense. To kill the Self means merely to cast the Self under the delusion of ignorance which leads to birth and rebirth; the Self is in a way killed because it is made to disappear into the darkness of Maya. Farther लोकः has always the sense of worlds as in गोलोक ब्रह्मलोक द्युलोक but Shankara forces it to mean births, for example birth as a man, birth as a beast, birth as a God. Then there is a third and equally violent departure from the common & understood use of words; असुरा or आसुरा would mean ordinarily Asuric of the Daityas in opposition to Daivic of the Devas; Shankara takes आसुरा as Rajasic and applicable to birth in the form of men, beasts and even of gods in opposition to दैव which is pure Sattvic and applicable only to Parabrahman. He thus gets the verse to mean, “Rajasic verily are those births and enveloped with blind darkness to which those depart when they pass away, whoso are slayers of the Self.” All those who put themselves under the yoke of Ignorance, lose hold of their true Self and are born as men, beasts or gods, instead of returning to the pure existence of Parabrahman.

The objections to this interpretation are many and fatal. The rendering of आत्महनो substitutes a strained and unparalleled interpretation for the common and straightforward sense of the word. The word लोकः cannot mean a particular kind of birth but either a world or the people in the world; and in these senses it is always used both in the Sruti and elsewhere. We say स्वर्गलोक, द्युलोक, मर्त्यलोक, इहलोक, परलोक; we do not say कीटलोक, पशुलोक, पक्षिलोक. We say indeed मनुष्यलोक, but it means the world of men & never birth as a man. The word असुरा may very well mean

Rajasic but not in the way Shankara applies to it; for असुर्या लोका cannot signify the births of beasts, men, gods as opposed to the divine birth of Parabrahman, who is above birth and above condition. Moreover, Daivic and Asuric are always opposed terms referring to the gods and Titans, precisely as Titanic and Olympian are opposed terms in English. For instance in the Gita

मोघाशा मोघकर्मणो मोघज्ञाना विचेतसः ।
राक्षसीमासुरीं चैव प्रकृतिं मोहिनीं श्रिताः ॥
महात्मानस्तु मां पार्थ दैवीं प्रकृतिमाश्रिताः ।
भजन्त्यनन्यमनसो ज्ञात्वा भूतादिमव्ययम् ॥

In this passage Asuric and Rakshasic nature are rajasic nature as of the Titans and tamasic nature as of the Rakshasa; daivic nature implies sattwic nature as of the Gods. Such is always the sense wherever the terms are opposed in Sanscrit literature. It may be urged, in addition, that the expression ये के loses its strong limiting force if it is applied to all beings but the very few who have found salvation. There are other flaws besides the straining of word-senses. The verse as rendered by Shankara does not logically develop from what went before and the fault of incoherence is imported into the Upanishad which, if taken in its straightforward sense, we rather find to be strictly logical in its structure and very orderly in the development of its thought. On the other hand, the plain rendering of the words of the Upanishad in their received and ordinary sense gives a simple and clear meaning which is both highly appropriate in itself and develops naturally from what has gone before. Shankara's rendering involves so many and considerable faults, that even his authority cannot oblige us to accept it. We will therefore take the verse in its plain sense: it is a warning to those who imagine that by the self-willed shortening of their days upon earth they can escape from the obligation of phenomenal existence.

The Asuric or godless worlds to which the suicide is condemned, are the worlds of deep darkness & suffering at the other pole from the worlds of the gods, the world of light and joy which is the reward of virtuous deeds. Patala under the earth, Hell under Patala, these are Asuric worlds: Swarga on

the mountaintops of existence in the bright sunshine is a world of the gods. All this is of course mythology and metaphor, but the Asuric worlds are a reality; they are the worlds of gloom and suffering in the nether depths of our own being. A world is not a place with hills, trees and stones, but a condition of the Jivatman, all the rest being only circumstances and details of a dream. The Sruti speaks of the spirit's *loka* in the next world, अमुच्चिन् लोके लोकः, where the word is used in its essential meaning of the spirit's state or condition and again in its figurative meaning of the world corresponding to its condition. The apparent surroundings, the sum of sensible images & appearances into which the spirit under the influence of Illusion materializes its mental state, makes the world in which it lives. *Martyaloka* is not essentially this Earth we men live in, for there may be other abodes of mortal beings, but the condition of mortality in the gross body; Swargaloka is the condition of bliss in the subtle body; Narak, Hell, the condition of misery in the subtle body; Brahmalok the condition of abiding with God in the causal body. Just as the Jivatman like a dreamer sees the Earth and all it contains when it is in the condition of mortality and regards itself as in a particular region with hills, trees, rivers, plains, so when it is in a condition of complete *tamas* in the subtle body, it believes itself to be in a place surrounded by thick darkness, a place of misery unspeakable. This world of darkness is imaged as under the earth on the side turned away from the sun; because earth is our mortal condition and this world is a state lower than our mortal condition; it is a world of thick darkness because the light created by the splendour of the Eternal in the consciousness of the Jivatman is entirely eclipsed with the extreme thickening of the veil of Maya which intercepts from us the full glory of His lustre. Hell, Patal, Earth, Paradise, the Lunar & Solar Worlds, Golok, Brahmalok,—these are all imagery and dreams, since they are all in the Jivatman itself and exist outside it only as pictures & figures: still while we are dreamers, let us speak in the language and think the thoughts of dream.

This then is the Asuric world. When a man dies in great pain or in great grief or in fierce agitation of mind and his last

thoughts are full of fear, rage, pain or horror, then the Jivatman in the Sukshmasharir is unable to shake off these impressions from his mind for years, perhaps for centuries. So it is with the suicide; he sinks into this condition because of the feelings of disgust, impatience and pain or rage & fear which govern his last moments; for suicide is not the passionless & divine departure at his appointed time of the Yogin centred in samadhi, but a passionate and disgusting departure; and where there is disturbance or bitterness of the soul in its departure, there can be no tranquillity & sweetness in the state to which it departs. This is the law of death; death is a moment of intense concentration when the departing spirit gathers up the impressions of its mortal life as a host gathers provender for its journey, and whatever impressions are dominant at the moment, govern its condition afterwards.

यं यं वापि स्मरन्भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम् ।
तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय सदा तङ्गावभावितः॥

“Or indeed whatever (collective) impressions of mind one remembering leaveth his body at the last, to that state and no other it goeth, O son of Kunti, and is continually under the impress of those impressions.” Hence the importance, even apart from Mukti, of living a clean and noble life and dying a calm and strong death. For if the ideas and impressions then uppermost are such as to associate the self with this gross body and the vital functions or the base, vile & low desires of the mind, then the soul remains long in a *tamasic* condition of darkness and suffering which we call Patala or in its acute forms Hell. If the ideas and impressions uppermost are such as to associate the self with the higher desires of the mind, then the soul passes quickly to a *rajasic* condition of light & pleasure which we call Swarga, Behesta or Paradise and from which it will return to the state of mortality in the body. If the ideas and impressions uppermost are such as to associate the self with the higher understanding and bliss of the Self, the soul passes quickly to a condition of highest bliss which we call variously Kailas, Vaikuntha, Goloka or Brahmaloka, from which it does not return in this aeon of the

universe. But if we have learned to identify for ever the self with the Self, then before death we become the Eternal and after death we shall not be other. There are three states of Maya, tamasic illusion, rajasic illusion, sattwic illusion, and each in succession we must surmount before we reach utterly that which is no illusion but the one eternal truth and, leaving our body in the state of Samadhi, rise into the unrevealed & imperishable bliss of which the Lord has said, "That is my highest seat of all."

VII. Retrospect

The Isha Upanishad logically falls into four portions, the first of which is comprised in the three verses we have already explained. It lays down for us those first principles of Karmayoga which must govern the mental state and actions of the Karmamargin in his upward progress to his ideal. In the next five verses we shall find the Upanishad enunciating the final goal of the Karmamargin and the ideal state of his mind and emotional part when his Yoga is perfected and he becomes a Yогин in very truth, the Siddha or perfected man and no longer the Sadhak or seeker after perfection.

While he is still a seeker, his mind must be governed by the idea of the Eternal as the mighty Lord and Ruler who pervades and encompasses the Universe. He must see him in all and around all, informing each object and encompassing it. On all that he sees, he must throw the halo of that presence; around all creatures and things, he must perceive the nimbus and the light.

His mind being thus governed by the idea of the divine omnipresence, he must not and cannot covet or desire, for possessing the Lord, what is it that he does not possess? what is it he needs to covet or desire? He cannot wish to injure or deprive others of their wealth, for who are others? are they other than himself? The Karmamargin must strive to abandon desire and make selflessness the law of his life and action. Seeing God in others, he will naturally love them and seek to serve them. By abnegation of desire he will find the sublime satisfaction the divinity in him demands and by the abandonment of the world

in spirit, he will enjoy the whole world as his kingdom with a deep untroubled delight instead of embracing a few limited possessions with a chequered and transient pleasure.

Whatever others may do, the Karmamargin must not remove himself from the field of action and give up work in the world; he is not called upon to abandon the objects of enjoyment, but to possess them with a heart purified of longing and passion. In this spirit he must do his work in this world and not flee from the struggle. Neither must he shrink from life as a bondage. He must realise that there is no bondage to him who is full of God, for God is free and not bound. He must therefore be ready to live out his life and work out his work calmly and without desire, seeking only through his life and actions to get nearer to Him who is the Lord of life and Master of all actions.

Least of all will he allow disgust of life and work so to master him as to make him seek release by shortening his days upon earth. For the suicide does not escape from phenomenal being in this world but passes into a far darker & more terrible prison of Maya than any that earthly existence can devise for the soul.

If his nature can expand to the greatness of this discipline, if his eyes can avail never to lose sight of God, if he can envisage the godhead in his fellowmen, if he can empty his soul of its lust & longing, if he can feel all the glory & joy & beauty of the world passionlessly & disinterestedly as his own, if he can do his works in the world however humble or however mighty not for himself but for God in man and God in the world, if he can slay the sense of egoism in his works and feel them to be not his own but the Lord's, if he can put from him alike the coward's shrinking from death and the coward's longing for death, suffering neither the lust of long life nor impatience of its vanities & vexations, but live out his full term bravely, modestly, selflessly and greatly, then indeed he becomes the Karmayogin who lives ever close to the eternal & almighty Presence, moving freely in the courts of God, admitted hourly to His presence and growing always liker & liker in his spiritual image to the purity, majesty, might and beauty of the Lord. To love God in His world

and approach God in himself is the discipline of the Karmayogin; to embrace all created things in his heart and divinely become God in his spirit, is his goal and ideal.

Part II

Karmayoga; the Ideal

Chapter IV

The Eternal in His Universe

अनेजदेकं मनसो जवीयो नैनद्वेवा आप्नुवन्पूर्वमर्षत् ।
तद्वावतोऽन्यानत्येति तिष्ठत्स्मिन्नपो मातरिश्वा दधाति ॥

I. ETERNAL TRUTH THE BASIS OF ETHICS

“There is the One and It moveth not, yet is It swifter than thought, the Gods could not overtake It as It moved in front. While It standeth still, It outstrippeth others as they run. In It Matariswan ordereth the waters.”

I The Root of Ethical Ideals

Everything that has phenomenal existence, takes its stand on the Eternal and has reality only as a reflection in the pure mirror of His infinite existence. This is no less true of the affections of mind and heart and the formations of thought than of the affections of matter and the formations of the physical ether-stuff out of which this material Universe is made. Every ethical ideal and every religious ideal must therefore depend for its truth and permanence on its philosophical foundation; in other words, on the closeness of its fundamental idea to the ultimate truth of the Eternal. If the ideal implies a reading of the Eternal which is only distantly true and confuses Him with

His physical or psychical manifestations in this world, then it is a relatively false and impermanent ideal. Of all the ancient nations the Hindus, for this reason only, attained to the highest idea and noblest practice of morality. The Greeks confused the Eternal with His physical manifestations and realised Him in them on the side of beauty; beauty therefore was the only law of morality which governed their civilization. Ethics in their eyes was a matter of taste, balance and proportion; it hinged on the avoidance of excess in any direction, of excessive virtue no less than of excessive vice. The fine development of personality under the inspiration of music and through the graceful play of intellect was the essential characteristic of their education; justice, in the sense of a fine balance between one's obligations to oneself and one's obligations to others, the ideal of their polity; decorum, the basis of their public morality; the sense of proportion the one law of restraint in their private ethics. Their idea of deity was confined to the beautiful and brilliant rabble of their Olympus. Hence the charm and versatility of Greek civilisation; hence also its impermanence as a separate culture. The Romans also confused the Eternal with His manifestations in physical Nature, but they read Him on the side not of beauty but of force governed by law; the stern and orderly restraint which governs the Universe, was the feature in Nature's economy which ruled their thought. Jupiter was to them the Governor & great Legislator whose decrees were binding on all; the very meaning of the word religion which they have left to the European world was "binding back" and indicated as the essence of religion restraint and tying down to things fixed and decreed. Their ethics were full of a lofty strength & sternness. Discipline stood as the keystone of their system; discipline of the actions created an inelastic faithfulness to domestic & public duties; discipline of the animal impulses an orderly courage and a cold, hard purity; discipline of the mind a conservative practical type of intellect very favourable to the creation of a powerful and well ordered State but not to the development of a manysided civilization. Their type too, though more long lived than the Greek, could not last, because of the imperfection of the ideal

on which it was based.¹ The Chinese seem to have envisaged the Eternal in a higher aspect than these Mediterranean races; they found Him not in the manifested physical Universe itself, but in its origination and arrangement out of the primal material from which it arose. Heaven, Akasha or the Eternal in the element of Ether, creates in the womb of Earth or formal Matter which is the final element developed out of Ether, this arranged and orderly Universe,—He is therefore the Father, Originator, Disposer and Arranger. Veneration for parents and those who stand in the place of parents became the governing idea of their ethics; orderly disposition, the nice care of ceremony, manners, duties the law of their daily life; origination and organization the main characteristics of their intellectual activity. The permanence and unconquerable vitality of their civilization is due to their having seized on an interpretation of the Eternal which, though not His ultimate truth to humanity, is at least close to that truth and a large aspect of it. It is really Himself in his relation to the Universe, but not the whole of Himself. But the ancient Aryans of India raised the veil completely and saw Him as the Universal Transcendent Self of all things who is at the same time the particular present Self in each. They reached His singleness aloof from phenomena, they saw Him in every one of His million manifestations in phenomena. God in Himself, God in man, God in Nature were the “ideas” which their life expressed. Their civilisation was therefore more manysided and complete and their ethical and intellectual ideals more perfect and permanent than those of any other nation. They had in

¹ *The following passage was written in the top margin of the manuscript page. Its place of insertion was not marked:*

Beauty is not the ultimate truth of the Eternal but only a partial manifestation of Him in phenomena which is externalised for our enjoyment and possession but not set before us as our standard or aim, and the soul which makes beauty its only end is soon cloyed & sated and fails for want of nourishment and of the growth which is impossible without an ever widening & progressive activity. Power & Law are not the ultimate truth of the Eternal, but manifestations of Himself in phenomena which are set within us to develop and around us to condition our works, but this also is not set before us as our standard or aim. The soul which follows Power as its whole end must in the long run lose measure and perish from hardness and egoism and that which sees nothing but Law wither for dryness or fossilise from the cessation of individual expansion.

full measure the sense of filial duty, the careful regulation of ceremony, manners and duties, the characteristics of origination and organization which distinguished the Chinese. They had in full measure the Roman discipline, courage, purity, faithfulness to duty, careful conservatism; but these elements of character & culture which in the Roman were hard, cold, narrow and without any touch of the spirit in man or the sense of his divine individuality, the Hindus warmed & softened with emotional & spiritual meaning and made broad and elastic by accepting the supreme importance of the soul's individual life as overriding and governing the firm organization of morals and society. They were not purely devoted to the worship and culture of beauty like the Greeks and their art was not perfect, yet they had the sense of beauty & art in a greater degree than any other ancient people; unlike the Greeks they had a perfect sense of spiritual beauty and were therefore able to realise the delight & glory of Nature hundreds of years before the sense of it developed in Europe. On the ethical side they had a finer justice than the Greeks, a more noble public decorum, a keener sense of ethical & social balance, but they would not limit the infinite capacities of the soul; they gave play therefore to personal individuality but restrained and ordered its merely lawless ebullitions by the law of the type (caste). In addition to these various elements which they shared with one civilization or another they possessed a higher spiritual ideal which governed & overrode the mere ethics (*mores* or customary morality) which the other nations had developed. Humanity, pity, chivalry, unselfishness, philanthropy, love of and self-sacrifice for all living things, the sense of the divinity in man, the Christian virtues, the modern virtues were fully developed in India at a time when in all the rest of the world they were either non-existent or existent only in the most feeble beginnings. And they were developed, because the Aryan Rishis had been able to discover the truth of the Eternal and give to the nation the vision of the Eternal in all things and the feeling of His presence in themselves and in all around them. They had discovered the truth that morality is not for its own sake, nor for the sake of society, but a preparation and purification of the soul

by which the limited human self must become fit to raise itself out of the dark pit of bodily, mental and emotional selfishness into the clear heaven of universal love and benevolence and enlarge itself until it came into conscious contact, entered into and became one with the Supreme and Semipiternal Self. Some hold the aim of morality to be a placing of oneself in harmony with the eternal laws that govern the Universe, others hold it to be the fulfilment under self-rule and guidance of man's nature, others a natural evolution of man in the direction of his highest faculties. The Hindus perceived that it was all these at once but they discovered that the law with which the soul must put itself in relation was the law of the Eternal Self, that man's nature must seek its fulfilment in that which is permanent & eternal in the Universe and that it is to which his evolution moves. They discovered that his higher self was the Self of his Universe and that by a certain manner of action, by a certain spirit in action, man escaped from his limitations and realised his higher Self. This way of Works is Karmayoga and Karmayoga therefore depends on the Hindu conception of Brahman, the Transcendent Self and its relations to the Universe. From this all Hindu ethics proceeds.²

Chapter I. Brahman.

The first four verses of the Upanishad have given the general principle of Karmayoga; the next four provide its philosophical justification and of these four the first two express in a few phrases the Vedantic philosophy of God and Cosmos as a necessary preliminary to the formation of a true and permanent ethical ideal.

The close dependence of ethical ideals on the fundamental philosophy of the Eternal and Real to which they go back, is a law which the ancient Yogins had well understood. Therefore the Upanishad when it has to set forth an ethical rule or ethical

² *The last six sentences of this paragraph, beginning "They had discovered the truth", were written separately. They seem to have been intended for insertion here.—Ed.*

ideal or intellectual attitude towards life, takes care to preface it with that aspect of the Eternal Reality on which its value and truth depend. The first principles of Karmayoga arise from the realization of the Eternal as a great and divine Presence which pervades and surrounds all things, so that it is impossible to direct one's thought, speech or actions to thing or person without directing them to Him. With the declaration of the Eternal as the Universal and Omnipresent Lord the Upanishad must, therefore, begin. Now it is about to take a step farther & set forth the ideal of the Karmayogin and the consummation of his yoga. It preludes the new train of thought by identifying Isha the Lord with Parabrahman the Eternal and Transcendent Reality. Not only does He surround and sustain as the supreme Will by which and in which alone all things exist, but He is really the immutable and secret Self in all things which is ultimately Parabrahman. This Isha whose Energy vibrates through the worlds, is really the motionless and ineffable Tranquillity towards which the Yogins & the sages strive.

"There is One and It unmoving is swifter than thought; the gods could not reach It moving in front; standing still It passes others as they run; 'tis in This that Matariswan setteth the waters. It moves, It moveth not; It is far, the same It is near; It is within everyone, the same It is also outside everyone."

There is only One existence, one Reality in apparent multiplicity. The unimaginable Presence which is manifest in the infinite variety of the Universe, is alone and alone Is. The variety of things is in fact merely the variety of forms which the play or energy of the Will only seems, by its rapidity of motion, to create; so when the blades of an electric fan go whirling with full velocity, round & round, there seem to be not four blades or two, but a whole score; so, also, when Shiva in His mood begins His wild dance and tosses His arms abroad, He seems to have not two arms but a million. It is the motion of the play of Will, it is the velocity of His Energy vibrating on the surface of His own existence which seems to create multiplicity. All creation is motion, all activity is motion. All this apparently stable universe is really in a state of multifold motion; everything is whirling with

inconceivable rapidity in its own orbit, and even thought which is the swiftest thing we know, cannot keep pace with the velocity of the cosmic stir. And all this motion, all this ever evolving cosmos and universe is Brahman the Eternal. The Gods in their swiftest movements, the lords of the mind & senses cannot reach Him, for He rushes far in front. The eye, the ear, the mind, nothing material can reach or conceive the inconceivable creative activity of this Will which is Brahman. We try to follow Him pouring as light through the solar system and lo! while you are striving He is whirling universes into being far beyond reach of eye or telescope, far beyond the farthest flights of thought itself. तन्मनसो जवीयो। Material senses quail before the thought of the wondrous stir and stupendous unimaginable activity that the existence of the Universe implies. And yet all the time He does not really move. All the time He who outstrips all others, is not running but standing. It is the others, the forms and things His Energy has evolved, who are running and because He outstrips them, they think that He too moves. While we are toiling after Him, He is all the time here, at our side, before us, behind us, with us, in us, His presence pervading us like the ether, clothing us like a garment. "Standing still, He outstrips others as they run." It is our mind & senses that are running and this universal motion is the result of the Avidya to which they are subject; for Avidya by persuading us to imagine ourselves limited, creates the conditions of Time, Space & Causality and confines us in them as in a prisoning wall beyond which our thoughts cannot escape. Brahman in all His creative activity is really standing still in His own being outside and inside Time & Space. He is at the same time in the Sun and here, because neither here nor the Sun are outside Himself; He has not therefore to move any more than a man has to move in order to pass from one thought to another. But we in order to realise His creative activity have to follow Him from the Sun to the Earth and from the Earth to the Sun; and this motion of our limited consciousness, this sensory impression of a space covered and a time spent, we cannot dissociate from Brahman and must needs attribute the limitations of our own thought to Him; just as a man in a railway-train has a sensory impression

that everything is rushing past him and the train is still. The stir of the Cosmos is really the stir of our own minds, and yet even that is a mere phenomenon. What we call mind is simply one play of the Will sporting with the idea of multiplicity which is, in form, the idea of motion. The Purusha, the Real Man in us and in the world, is really unmoving; He is the motionless and silent spectator of a drama of which He himself is the stage, the theatre, the scenery, the actors and the acting. He is the poet Shakespeare watching Desdemona and Othello, Hamlet and the murderous Uncle, Rosalind and Jacques and Viola, and all the other hundred multiplicities of himself acting and talking and rejoicing and suffering, all himself and yet not himself, who sits there a silent witness, their Creator who has no part in their actions, and yet without Him not one of them could exist. This is the mystery of the world and its paradox and yet its plain and easy truth.

But what really is this Will which as Purusha watches the motion and the drama and as Prakriti is the motion and the drama? It is the One motionless, unconditioned, inexpressible Parabrahman of whom, being beyond mark and feature, the Upanishad speaks always as It, while of Isha, the Lord, it speaks as He; for Isha as Purusha is the male or spiritual presence which generates forms in Prakriti the female or material Energy. The spiritual entity does not work, but merely is and has a result; it is the material Energy, the manifestation of Spirit, which works or ceases from work. Eventually however Spirit and Matter are merely aspects of each other & of something which is behind both; that something is the motionless, actionless It. This which without moving is swifter than thought, is It; this which mind & senses cannot reach, for it moves far in front, is It; this which stands still & yet outstrips others as they run is It. Will, Energy, Isha, the play of Prakriti for Purusha, are all merely the manifestation of that unmanifested It. What we envisage as the manifested Brahman is, in His reality to Himself, the unmanifest Parabrahman. It is only in His reality to us that He is the manifested Brahman. And according as a man comes nearer to the truth of Him or loses himself in Him, so will be his spiritual condition. While we think of Him as Isha, the one

in innumerable aspects, the idea of difference remains though it can be subordinated to the idea of Oneness; that is the beginning of Yoga. When we realize Isha as one with Parabrahman, the idea of Oneness has sway & rules; that is the culmination of Yoga. When we realize Parabrahman Itself, that is the cessation of Yoga; for we depart utterly from Oneness & difference and no longer envisage the world of phenomena at all; that is Nirvana.

Chapter II. Spiritual Evolution in Brahman

It is in this infinitely motionless, yet infinitely moving Brahman that Matariswan or Prana, the great Breath of things, the mighty principle of Life, disposes forms and solidities rescuing them out of the undifferentiated state from which the world arose. To understand these two verses it is necessary to grasp clearly the ideas of creation & evolution which the Upanishads seek to formulate. What in Europe is called creation, the Aryan sages preferred to call *srishti*, projection of a part from the whole, the selection, liberation and development of something that is latent and potentially exists. Creation means the bringing into existence of something which does not already exist; *srishti* the manifestation of something which is hidden and unmanifest. The action of Prakriti proceeds upon the principle of selection leading naturally to development; she selects the limited out of the unlimited, the particular out of the general, the small portion out of the larger stock. This limited, particular & fractional having by the very nature of limitation a *swabhav*, an own-being or as it is called in English a nature, which differentiates it from others of its kind, develops under the law of its nature; that is its *swadharma*, its own law & religion of being, and every separate & particular existence, whether inanimate thing or animal or man or community or nation must follow & develop itself under the law of its nature and act according to its own *dharma*. It cannot follow a nature or accept a *dharma* alien to itself except on peril of deterioration, decay and death. This nature is determined by the balance in its composition of the three *gunas* or essential qualities of Prakriti, passivity, activity

and equipoise, which reveal themselves under different shapes in the animate as well as the inanimate, in the mind as well as in the body. In matter they appear as passive reception, reaction and retention, in human soul as the brutal animal, the active, creative man and the calm, clear-souled god. It must always be remembered that Prakriti is no other than Avidya, the great Illusion. She is that impalpable indeterminable source of subtle and gross matter, Matter in the abstract, the idea of difference and duality, the impression of Time, Space and Causality. The limited is limited not in reality, but by walls of Avidya which shut it in and give it an impression of existence separate from that of the illimitable, just as a room is shut off from the rest of the house by walls and has its separate existence and its separate nature small or large, close or airy, coloured white or coloured blue. Break down the walls and the separate existence and separate nature disappear; the very idea of a room is lost and there is nothing left but the house. The sense of limitation and the consequent impulse towards development & self-enlargement immediately create desire which takes the form of hunger and so of a reaching after other existences for the satisfaction of hunger; and from desire & the contact with other existences there arise the two opposite forces of attraction and repulsion which on the moral plane are called liking and dislike, love and hatred. Thus [the] necessity of absorbing mental and aesthetic food for the material of one's works; this too is hunger. The instinct of self-enlargement shows itself in the physical craving for the absorption of other existences to strengthen oneself, in the emotional yearning to other beings, in the intellectual eagerness to absorb the minds of others and the aesthetic desire to possess or enjoy the beauty of things & persons, in the spiritual passion of love & beneficence, and all other activity which means the drawing of the self of others into one's own self and pouring out of oneself on others. Desire is thus the first principle of things. Under the force of attraction and repulsion hunger begins to differentiate itself & develop the various senses in order the better to master its food and to feel & know the other existences which repel or attract it. So out of the primal consciousness of Will dealing with matter

is developed form and organism, vitality, receptive mind, discriminating mind, Egoism. Out of this one method of Prakriti, selection, liberation and development, the whole evolution of the phenomenal world arises. Creation therefore is not a making of something where nothing existed, but a selection and new formation out of existing material; not a sudden increase, but a continual rearrangement and substitution; not an arbitrary manufacture, but an orderly development.

The idea of creation as a selection and development from preexisting material which is common to the Upanishads & the Sankhya philosophy, is also the fundamental idea of the modern theory of Evolution. The theory of Evolution is foreshadowed in the Veda, but nowhere clearly formulated. In the Aitareya Upanishad we find a luminous hint of the evolution of various animal forms until in the course of differentiation by selection the body of man was developed as a perfect temple for the gods and a satisfactory instrument for sensational, intellectual and spiritual evolution. When the Swetaswatara sums up the process of creation in the pregnant formula "One seed developed into many forms", it is simply crystallizing the one general idea on which the whole of Indian thought takes its stand and to which the whole tendency of modern science returns. The opening of the Brihadaranyakopanishad powerfully foreshadows the theory that hunger & the struggle for life (ashanaya mrityu) are the principle agents in life-development. But it was not in this aspect of the law of creation that the old Hindu thought interested itself. Modern Science has made it its business to investigate and master the forces and laws of working of the physical world; it has sought to know how man as a reasoning animal developed into what he is, how he is affected in detail by the laws of external nature and what is the rule of his thought and action in things physical & psycho-physical whether as an individual or in masses. Outside the limits of this inquiry it has been sceptical or indifferent. Hindu thought, on the contrary, has made it its business to investigate the possibilities of man's escape from the animal and physical condition, from his subjection to the laws of external nature and from his apparent limitations as a mere

creature of surroundings & sensational impact from outside. Its province has been the psychical and spiritual world. It has not concerned itself minutely with man's physical sheath, but rather with what is vital & elemental in the matter of which he is made, the law of the workings of the breath and the elemental forces within him, the relation of the various parts of his psychical anatomy to each other, and the law of his thought and action as a spiritual being having one side of itself turned to phenomena and this transient life in society and the world, the other to the single and eternal verity of things.

Speculating and experimenting on these psychical and spiritual relations, the ancient Rishis arrived at what they believed to be the fundamental laws respectively of spiritual, psychical and elemental evolution. Spiritually, the beginning of all things is the Turiya Atman, spirit in its fourth or transcendental state, intellectually unknowable and indefinable, infinite, indivisible, immutable and supra-conscious. This Turiya Atman may be imaged as the infinite ocean of spirit which evolves in itself spiritual manifestations and workings by that process of limitation or selection on which all creation or manifestation depends. By this Turiya Atman there is conceived or there is selected out of its infinite capacity a state of spirit less unknowable and therefore less indefinable, in which the conceptions of finity and division preexist in a potential state and in which consciousness is self-gathered and as yet inoperative. This state of Spirit is called variously Avyakta, the unmanifestation, or the seed-condition or the condition of absolute Sleep, because as yet phenomena and activity are not manifest but preexist gathered-together and undeveloped, just as all the infinite potentialities of organic life upon earth preexist gathered-together and undeveloped in the protoplasm; just as leaf and twig, trunk and branches, sap and pith and bark, root and flower and fruit preexist, gathered-together and undeveloped in the seed. The State of Sleep may be envisaged as Eternal Will and Wisdom on the brink of creation, with the predestined evolution of a million universes, the development of sun & star and nebula and the shining constellations and the wheeling orbits of satellite and planet, the formation of

metals and the life of trees, the motions and actions of fish and bird and beast and the infinite spiritual, mental and physical stir & activities of man already pre-ordained, pre-arranged and pre-existent, before Time was or Space existed or Causality began. Spirit in this state of Sleep is called Prajna, the Wise One or He who knows and orders things beforehand. The next state of Spirit, evolved out of Prajna, is the pure psychical or Dream State in which Spirit is in a condition of ceaseless psychical activity imagining, willing, selecting out of the matter which Prajna provides, and creating thought-forms to clothe the abundant variety of its multitudinous imaginations. The Dream-State is the psychical condition of Spirit and operates in a world of subtle matter finer and more elastic than gross physical matter and therefore not subject to the heavy restrictions and slow processes with which the latter is burdened. For this reason while physical workings are fixed, slow and confined by walls within walls, thought, psychical manifestation and other operations in subtle matter are in comparison volatile, rapid and free, reacting more elastically against the pressure of Time, Condition and Space. This State of Dream may be envisaged as Eternal Will and Energy in the process of creation with the whole activity of the Universe teeming and fructuating within it; it is that psychical matrix out of which physical form and life are evolved and to which in sleep it partially returns so that it may recuperate and drink in a fresh store of psychical energy to support the heavy strain of physical processes in gross matter. Spirit in the middle or Dream-State is called Taijasa or Hiranyagarbha, the Shining Embryon. It is Taijasa, Energy of Light, and Hiranya the Shining because in psychical matter luminous energy is the chief characteristic, colour and light predominating over fluid or solid form. It is Garbha, Embryon, because out of psychical matter physical life and form are selected and evolved into the final or Waking State in which Spirit manifests itself as physically visible, audible & sensible form and life, and arrives at last at an appearance of firm stability & solidity in gross matter. Spirit in the Waking State is called Vaisvanor, the Universal Male, He who informs and supports all forms of energy in this physical universe; for

it is a root idea of Hindu philosophy that Spirit is the Male which casts its seed into Matter and Matter the female Energy which receives the seed and with it creates and operates. Spirit and Matter are not different entities, but simply the positive and negative poles in the creative operation of the All-Self or Universal which evolves in Itself and out of Itself the endless procession of things.

All things in the Universe are of one texture & substance and subject to a single law; existence is a fundamental unity under a superficial diversity. Each part of the Universe is therefore a little Universe in itself repeating under different conditions and in different forms the nature and operations of the wider Cosmos. Every individual man must be in little what the Cosmos is in large. Like the Cosmos therefore each individual man has been created by the evolution of Spirit from its pure essence through the three states of Sleep, Dream and Waking. But this evolution has been a downward evolution; he has descended spiritually from pure Spirit into physical matter, from self-existent, self-knowing, self-delighting God into the reasoning animal. In other words each new condition of Spirit, as it evolved, has overlaid and obscured its predecessor. In the physical condition, which is the ultimate term of the downward evolution, man realizes himself as a body moving among and affected by other bodies and he readily understands, masters and employs physical organs, physical processes and physical forces, but he finds it difficult to understand, master or employ psychical organs, psychical processes and psychical forces,— so difficult that he has come to be sceptical of the existence of the psychical and doubt whether he is a soul at all, whether he is not merely an animal body with an exceptional brain-evolution. In his present state any evolution of the psychical force within is attended with extraordinary disturbances of the physical instruments; such as the development of delusions, hallucinations, eccentricities, mania and disease side by side with the development of genius or exceptional mental & spiritual powers in family or individual. Man has not yet discovered his soul; his main energies have been directed towards realizing and mastering the physical world in which he moves.

It is indeed, as some are beginning dimly to perceive, the soul within him which has all along been using the body for its own ends on the physical plane, but the soul has been working from behind the veil, unrealized and unseen. The Waking-State has overlaid and obscured the Dream-State. When he has mastered, as in the course of his evolution he must master, the psychical world within him, man will find that there is another & deeper self which is overlaid and obscured by the psychical,—the Sleep-world within or as it is called, the causal self. At present, even when he admits the existence of the soul, he sees nothing beyond his psychical self and speaks of soul and spirit as if they were identical. In reality, there are three spirit-states, spirit, soul and body, the sleep-state, the dream-state and the waking-state. Body has overlaid and obscured soul, soul overlays & obscures spirit, spirit in its turn obscures & overlays the pure self from which & towards which the circle of evolution moves.

Creation, then, has been a downward evolution which has for its object to create a body fit for an upward evolution into the region of pure spirit. It is in this direction that the future of human evolution lies. When man has mastered the physical world and its forces, when the earth is his and the fullness thereof, he must turn his efforts towards mastering the world within himself. Instead of allowing the soul to use the body for its own ends, he must learn to master both soul and body and use them consciously for the purposes of the spirit, that Eternal Will & Wisdom which at present operates in secrecy, veiled with darkness within darkness and seeming even to be blind and hidden from itself. In the end he will be master of spirit, soul and body, a Jivanmukta using them at will for cosmic purposes or transcending them to feel his identity with the Self who is pure and absolute existence, consciousness and bliss.

Chapter III. Psychical evolution — downward to matter

In their enquiry into the spiritual nature of man the ancient thinkers and Yogins discovered that he has not only three spiritual states but three bodies or cases of matter corresponding

to the spiritual states. This was in accordance with the nature of phenomenal existence as determined by their inquiries. Spirit and matter, the inner inspiring presence and outward acting substance-energy, are the two necessary terms of this existence. When phenomena are transcended we come to a Self independent of Spirit or Matter; but the moment Self descends into phenomenal existence, it must necessarily create for itself a form or body and a medium in which it manifests and through which it acts. Directly, therefore, the pure transcendent Self evolves one aspect of itself as a definable spiritual condition, it must in the nature of things evolve also a form or body and a medium through and in which Spirit in that condition can manifest itself. Matter, in other words, evolves coevally and coincidently with Spirit. As soon as the Sleep-State appears, Spirit surrounds itself with matter in that most refined & least palpable condition, to which the name of causal matter may be given,— the material seed state, single and elemental in its nature, from which the material universe is evolved. With the evolution of the Dream-State matter also evolves from the causal into the subtle, a condition compound, divisible and capable of definite form but too fine to be perceived by ordinary physical senses. It is only when the Waking-State is evolved that matter concentrates into that gross physical condition which is all that Science has hitherto been able to analyse and investigate.

In man also as in the larger Cosmos each spiritual State lives in and uses its corresponding medium of matter and out of that matter shapes for itself its own body or material case. He has therefore a causal body for his Sleep-State or causal self, a subtle body for his Dream-State or psychical self and a gross body for his Waking-State or physical self. When he dies, what happens is simply the disintegration of the physical body and the return of the Waking into the Dream-State from which it was originally projected. Death, in the ordinary view, is a delivery from matter; body is destroyed and only spirit or soul remains: but this view is rejected by Hindu philosophy as an error resulting from confused and inadequate knowledge of man's psychical nature. The Waking-State having disappeared

into the Dream-State and no longer existing, the physical body must necessarily disintegrate since it has no longer a soul to support it and keep naturally together the gross material atoms out of which it is constructed. But because the physical body is destroyed or dropped off, it does not follow that no body is left. Man goes on existing after death in his Dream-State and moves & acts with his subtle body; it is this dream-state in the subtle body to which the name soul or spirit is popularly given. Even the disintegration of the subtle body and the return of the Dream-State into the Sleep-State from which it was projected, would not imply a release from all restrictions of matter; for the causal body would still remain. It is only when the Sleep-State is also transcended, that phenomenal existence with its necessary duality of Spirit-Matter is left behind and transcended. Then spirit & body are both dissolved into pure and transcendent self-existence.

In examining and analysing these spiritual conditions in their respective bodies the Rishis arrived at a theory of psychical evolution contained within and dependent on the spiritual evolution already described. The basis of psychical as of spiritual existence is the pure Self called the Paramatman or Supreme Self when it manifests in the Cosmos and the Jivatman or individual Self when it manifests in man. The Self first manifests as Will or as the Rishis preferred to call it Ananda, Bliss, Delight. Ananda is the pure delight of existence and activity and may be identified in one of its aspects with the European Will-to-live, but it has a double tendency, the Will to be phenomenally and the Will to be transcendently, the Will to live and the Will to cease from phenomenal life. It is also the Will to know and the Will to enjoy and in each aspect the double tendency is repeated. The Will to know eternal reality is balanced by the Will to know phenomenal diversity; the Will to absolute delight by the Will to phenomenal delight. Will must be clearly distinguished from volition which is only one of the operations of Will acting in phenomena. The impacts from external things upon the mind result in sensations and the reactions of the Will upon these sensations when conveyed to it, take the form of desires. Volition is

simply the impulse of the Will operating through the intelligence to satisfy or curb the desires created in the medium between itself and the mind. But the Will itself is antecedent to mind and intelligence and all the operations of body, mind and intelligence are ultimately operations of material energy ordained by the Will. Self manifesting as Will or Bliss is, spiritually, the Sleep-State and operates absolutely & directly in the Causal body as the creative force behind Nature, but indirectly & under limitations in the subtle & gross bodies as the cause of all thought, action and feeling.

The next evolutionary form of Will, put forth by itself from itself as an instrument or operative force in the creation of the worlds, is Buddhi or Supra-intelligence, an energy which is above mind and reason and acts independently of any cerebral organ. It is Will acting through the Supra-intelligence that guides the growth of the tree and the formation of the animal and gives to all things in the Universe the appearance of careful and abundant workmanship and orderly arrangement from which the idea of an Almighty Artificer full of fecund and infinite imaginations has naturally grown up in the human mind; but from the point of view of the Vedanta Will and Supra-Intelligence are not attributes of an anthropomorphic Deity endowed with a colossal brain but aspects of a spiritual presence manifesting itself cosmically in phenomenal existence. Will, through Buddhi, creating and operating on phenomena in subtle matter evolves Mind, which by reception of external impacts & impressions evolves sensation; by reaction to impressions received, evolves desire and activity; by retention of impressions with their reactions, evolves memory; by coordination of impressions & reactions memorized, evolves the sense of individuality; by individual arrangement of impressions and reactions with the aid of memory evolves understanding; and by the action of supra-intelligence on developed mind evolves reason. Mind & Supra-intelligence with reason as an intermediate link are, spiritually, the Dream-State and operate absolutely and directly in the subtle body but indirectly, under limitations and as a governing and directing force in the gross body.

So far spirit and soul only have been evolved; the evolution of the Will has not manifested itself in physical forms. But in Mind Will has evolved a grand primal sense by which it is able to put itself into conscious relations with external objects; before the development of mind it has been operating by methods of self-contained consciousness through the supra-intelligence. Mind is in a way the one true and real sense; it is Mind that sees, Mind that hears, Mind that smells, Mind that feels, Mind that acts; but for the purposes of varied experience Mind evolves from itself ten potencies, five potencies of knowledge, sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste by which the Will receives impressions of external objects and five potencies of action, grasp, locomotion, utterance, emission and ecstasy, by which it reacts on what it receives; and for each of these potencies it evolves an instrument of potency or sense-organ, making up the ten *indriyas* with the Mind, which is alone self-acting and introspective, as the eleventh. So far however the Mind acts with rapidity and directness under the comparatively light restrictions of subtle matter in the Dream State; it is a psychical sense, an instrument of the soul for knowing and dealing with life in the psychical world of subtle matter. Only in the physical evolution of gross matter do the sense-organs receive their consummate development and become of supreme importance; for Will in the Waking State acts mainly through them and not directly through the Mind. Soul-evolution precedes physical evolution. This theory directly contradicts those conclusions of modern Science which make soul an evolution of physical life and activities, not an all-important and enduring evolution, but merely their temporary efflorescence and dependent on them for its existence. Arguing from the facts of physical evolution which alone it has studied and excluding all possibilities outside this limit, Science is justified in coming to this conclusion, and, as a logical corollary, it is justified in denying the immortality of the soul. For if psychical activities are merely a later and temporary operation of physical life and dependent on the physical for their own continuance, it follows that when physical life ceases with the arrest of bodily operations by the mysterious agency

of death, human personality which is a psychical activity must also come to an end. When the body dies, the soul dies also; it can no more outlast the body than the flower can outlast the plant on which it grows or a house survive the destruction of its foundations. Body is the stem, soul the flower; body the foundation, soul a light and temporary superstructure. To all this Hindu thought gives a direct denial. It claims to have discovered means of investigating psychical life as thoroughly as Science can investigate physical nature and in the light of its investigations it declares that soul exists before body and outlasts it. It is physical life that is an evolution from psychical, and no more than a later and temporary operation of psychical activities. Body is the flower, soul the stem; soul is the foundation, body the fragile and transient superstructure.

For the purposes of physical evolution Will evolves a new aspect of itself which is called Prana or vital energy. Prana exists in the physical state also, but there it is simple, undifferentiated, gathered up in mind and not acting as a separate agent. Prana in gross matter is an all-pervading energy which subsists wherever there is physical existence and is the principle agent in maintaining existence and furthering its activities. It is present in what seems inert and inanimate no less than in what is manifestly endowed with life. It lives concealed in the metal and the sod, it begins to emerge in the plant, it reveals itself in the animal. Prana is the agent of Will in all physical evolution. It is the mainspring of every hunger-impulse and presides over every process of alimentation. It creates life, it fills it with vital needs, desires, longings; it spurs it to the satisfaction of its needs & desires; and it evolves the means and superintends and conducts the processes of that satisfaction. In the course of evolution it reveals itself with an ever-rounding fulness, vibrates with an ever swifter and more complex energy, differentiates and enriches its activity with a more splendid opulence until the crescendo reaches its highest note in man. In this, the noblest type of physical evolution, Prana manifests itself in five distinct vital powers, to which the names, Prana, Samana, Vyana, Apana and Udana have been given by the ancient writers. Prana, the

vital force *par excellence* has its seat in the upper part of the body and conducts all mental operations, the indrawing and the outdrawing of the breath and the induction of food. Samana, seated centrally in the body, balances, equalizes and harmonizes the vital operations and is the agent for the assimilation of food. Vyana pervades the whole body; on it depends the circulation of the blood and the distribution of the essential part of the food eaten and digested throughout the body. Apana, situated in the lower part of the trunk, presides over the lower functions, especially over the emission of such parts of the food as are rejected by the body and over procreation, it is intimately connected with the processes of decay and death. Udana is the vital power which connects bodily life with the spiritual element in man. As in the purely vital operations, so also in the motional and volitional Prana is still the great agent of Will, and conducts such operations of Mind also as depend on the sense-organs for their instruments. Prana is the regent of the body, ministering to the Mind and through that great intermediary executing the behests of the concealed sovereign of existence, the Will.

As Prana is the first term in the physical evolution of the Self, so Anna, Food or gross visible matter is the second term. "I am food that devours the eater of food" says the Taittiriya Upanishad, and no formula could express more pregnantly and tersely the fundamental law of all phenomenal activity especially on the physical plane. The fundamental principle of vitality is hunger and all gross matter forms the food with which Prana satisfies this, its root-impulse. Hence the universality of the struggle for life. This hungry Prana first needs to build up a body in which it can subsist and in order to do so, it devours external substances so as to provide itself with the requisite material. This body once found it is continually eating up by the ceaselessness of its vital activity and has to repair its own ravages by continually drawing in external substances to form fresh material for an ever-wasting and ever-renewing frame. Unable to preserve its body for ever under the exhausting stress of its own activity, it has to procreate fresh forms which will continue vital activity and for the purpose concentrates itself in a part of its material which it throws out of

itself to lead a similar but independent life even after the parent form decays. To satisfy its hunger it is ever evolving fresh means and new potencies for mastery & seizure of its food. Dissatisfied with the poor sustenance a stationary existence can supply, it develops the power & evolves various means of locomotion. To perceive its food more & more thoroughly & rapidly it develops the five senses and evolves the organs of perception through which they can act. To deal successfully with the food perceived, it develops the five potencies of action and evolves the active organs which enable them to work. As a centre of all this sensational and actional activity it evolves the central mind-organ in the brain and as channels of communication between the central & the outer organs it develops a great nerve-system centred in seven plexuses, through which it moves with a ceaseless stir and activity, satisfying hunger, satisfying lust, satisfying desire. At the base of all is the impulse of Life to survive, to prolong itself for the purposes of the Will-to-live of which it is the creature and the servant. Prana & Anna, Vitality and physical form are, spiritually, the Waking-State and operate entirely in gross matter, — the last term of that downward evolution which is the descent of Spirit from the original purity of absolute existence into the impurity and multiplicity of matter.

Chapter IV. Psychical Evolution — Upward to Self.

In this downward psychical evolution, as in the downward spiritual evolution, each succeeding and newly-evolved state of the original Self obscures and overlays that which preceded it, until the last state of the Self appears to be an inert brute and inanimate condition of gross physical matter devoid of life, mental consciousness or spiritual possibilities. From this state of inert and lifeless matter the upward evolution starts and, as in our spiritual evolution the course set down for us is to recover from a firm footing in the Waking State mastery over the obscured and latent Dream and Sleep States and so return into the presence of that pure and unimaginable Self from whom the process of our evolution began, so in our psychical evolution we have to recover

out of the inertia of gross physical materiality Life, Mind, Supra-Intelligence, Will until we know our infinite and eternal Self who is one with the Supreme Self of the Universe.

With inanimate matter the world began, says evolutionary Science; but in inanimate matter there is no evidence of life or mind or spirit, no apparent possibility of the evolution of animate conscious existence. Into this inanimate world at some unknown period, by some unknown means, perhaps from some unknown source, a mysterious thing called Life entered or began to stir and all this mighty evolution we have discovered became in a moment possible. Grant one infinitesimal seed of life and everything else becomes possible, but life itself we cannot explain nor can we discover as yet how it came originally into being. We can only suppose that life is some chemical process or develops from some chemical process we shall ultimately discover. Even what life is, has not been satisfactorily settled. The term is sometimes rigidly confined to animal life,—surely a crude and unscientific limitation, since the peculiarities of animal life,—consciousness and organic growth—, exist quite as evidently in the highest forms of plant-life as in the animalcule or the jelly-fish. Or if we confine life to organic growth, we do so arbitrarily, for recent discoveries have shown the beginning of one element of vital activity, the one which forms the very basis of consciousness, viz. reception of & reaction to outward impressions and the phenomena of vigour and exhaustion, in a substance so apparently inanimate as metal. So obscure is the whole subject that many are inclined to regard life as a divine mystery, breathed by God into the world or introduced, as if it were a sort of psychical meteoric dust, from some other planet. Upanishadic philosophy accounts for the appearance of Life in a more calm and rational manner. Life, it would say, is in a sense a divine mystery but no more and no less so than the existence of inanimate matter. God did not breathe it from outside into an inert and created body, neither did it drift hither from some mystic and superior planet. Nor did it come into sudden being by some fortuitous chemical process which marked off suddenly all existences into two rigidly distinct classes, animate

and inanimate, organic and inorganic. All such ideas are, when carefully examined, irrational and inconsistent with the unity and harmonious development of the world under fixed and invariable laws. Life is evolved naturally and not mysteriously out of matter itself, because it is already latent and preexistent in matter. Prana is involved in anna, matter cannot exist without latent life, and the first step in evolution is the liberation of the latent life out of the heavy obscuration of matter in its grossest and densest forms. This evolution is effected by the three gunas, the triple principle of reception, retention and reaction to outward impacts; as fresh forms of matter are evolved in which the power of retaining impacts received in the shape of impressions becomes more and more declared, consciousness slowly and laboriously develops; as the power of reacting on external objects becomes more pronounced and varied, organic life-growth begins its marvellous career; and the two, helping and enriching each other, evolve complete, well-organized and richly-endowed Life.

Prana receives its perfect development in animal life and when man, the highest term of animal life, has been reached, there is no farther need for its development. The true evolution of Man therefore lies not in the farther development of vitality, but in the complete & triumphant liberation of mind out of the overlaying obscuration of the vital energies. Just as Prana is involved in Anna and has to be evolved out of it, so Mind is involved in Prana and has to be evolved out of it. The moment Life begins to liberate itself from the obscuration of gross matter, the first step has been taken towards the evolution of Mind. We see the gradual development of Mind in animal evolution; the highest animal forms below man seem to possess not only memory and individuality, but a considerable degree of understanding and even the rudiments of reason. In man the development is much more rapid and triumphant, but it is by no means, as yet, complete or perfect. Prana still to an immense extent obscures Mind, the gross body dominates the subtle. Mind is dominated by the instruments which Prana has created for it; the body, the nerve-system, the sense-organs, the

brain hamper and hinder its operations even more than they help them; for the Mind is bound within the narrow circle of their activity and limited by their deficiencies. The continual stir of the vital energies in the brain and throughout the whole system, disturb the Mind, the continual siege of external impressions distract it, the insistent urgency of the senses towards the external world impede the turning of the energies inward; calm and purity, concentration and introspection are rendered so difficult that the majority of men do not attempt them or only compass them spasmodically and imperfectly. Any powerful and unusual development of mind, in its intellectual and spiritual tendencies, is apt to be resented by the vital part of man and to impair or seriously disturb his vital energies and physical health. Along with the intellectual development of the race, there has been a marked deterioration of vital vigour & soundness and of the bodily organs. Moral and spiritual development is continually at war with the needs of our physical life, our hungers, desires, lusts, longings and the insistent urgency of the instincts of self-preservation and self-gratification. It is therefore towards the conquest and control of Prana and the free development of Mind that the energies of Man ought in future to be directed. He must arrive at some arrangement of his social and individual life which, while satisfying the legitimate demands of his body and his vital impulses, will admit of the extreme and unhampered perfection of his intellectual, moral and spiritual being. He must discover and practise some method of maintaining the harmony and soundness of the vital and bodily instruments and processes without for a moment allowing the care for them to restrict the widest possible range, the most bold and powerful exercise and the most intense and fiery energisms of which the higher principle in his being is capable. He must learn how to transcend the limitations and errors of the physical senses and train his mind to act even in the physical body with the rapidity, directness and unlimited range proper to a psychical organ whose function is to operate in subtle as well as in gross matter. To see where the physical eye is blind, to hear where the physical ear is deaf, to feel where the physical sense is callous, to understand thoughts

unexpressed, are legitimate functions of the mind; but they must be exercised, not as a rare power or in moments of supreme excitation, but as a regular and consciously willed operation, the processes of which have been mastered and known. Reason, at present fallible, imperfect and enslaved to desire and prejudice, must be trained into its highest possibilities of clarity, sanity and calm energy. The Mind must be tranquillised and purified by control of the senses and the five Pranas, and trained to turn itself wholly inward, excluding at will all outward impressions, so that Man may become master of the inner world no less than of the outer, a conscious soul using the body and no longer a body governed by a self-concealing and self-guiding psychical entity. We think we have done wonders in the way of mental evolution; in reality we have made no more than a feeble beginning. The infinite possibilities of that evolution still lie unexplored in front.

As Mind is involved in Prana, so is Supra-Intelligence involved and latent in all the operations of Mind. With the evolution of the Mind, some rudimentary beginnings have been unconsciously made towards the liberation of this higher & far grander force. As the mental development foreshadowed above proceeds to its goal, man will begin to evolve and realize himself as a mighty and infinite Intelligence, not limited by sense-perception or the laborious and clumsy processes of the reason, but capable of intuitive and infinite perception. And when the evolution of Mind is complete and the evolution of Supra-Intelligence proceeds, the liberation of the Will involved in its operations will lead man to the highest evolution of all when he realizes himself as a potent and scient Will, master of creation and not its slave, whose infinite delight in its own existence is lifted far beyond the thraldom of pain and pleasure and uses them with as unalloyed a pleasure as the poet when he weaves joy and sorrow, delight and pain and love and fear and horror into one perfect and pleasurable masterpiece or the painter when he mixes his colours and blends light and shade to create a wedded harmony of form and hue. This state of unfettered Will and infinite Delight once realized, he cannot fail to know his real Self, absolute and calm, omnipotent and pure,

the eternal Brahman in whom this evolution has its root and resting-place.

VII. Elemental Evolution.

The evolution of the cosmos has not only spiritual and psychical aspects; it has also from the moment of its inception a material element. Spirit exists from the beginning and was before any beginning, infinite and sempiternal; but Matter also is an eternal entity. In the Parabrahman, the absolute inconceivable Self, Spirit and Matter are one and undifferentiated, but the moment evolution begins Spirit and Matter manifest equally and coevally. We have seen that the first spiritual evolution from the pure self-existent Atman is Prajna of the Sleep-State, Eternal Wisdom, a supporting spiritual presence which contains in itself the whole course of cosmic evolution even as a single seed contains in itself the complete banyan-tree with all its gigantic progeny. We have seen that corresponding to this Eternal Wisdom, there is a first psychic evolution, Ananda or Will, an inspiring psychical force in man & the cosmos which makes all the workings of Nature possible. Spirit however, even when operating as Will, is not a working force in the sense that it itself carries on the operations of Nature; it is an inspiring, impelling force, whose function is to set in motion a powerful material energy of the Self; and it is this material energy which under the inspiration of Will and at the bidding of Prajna sets about the evolution of the Cosmos. Self in its dealings with the Cosmos is a dual entity, underlying spiritual presence and superficially active material energy, or as they are called in the terminology of the Sankhya philosophy, Purusha and Prakriti; — Purusha, that which lies concealed in the Vast of universal existence, Prakriti, active or operative energy thrown forward from the concealed spiritual source. The whole of Evolution spiritual, psychical, material, is the result of Purusha and Prakriti acting upon each other; the three evolutions are really one, coincident and coeval, because throughout it is one Reality that is manifesting and not three. It is Self manifesting as spirit, Self manifesting as soul, Self manifesting as matter or body. The

three manifestations are coincident in Time and Space and each condition of phenomena is a triple state with Spirit and Matter for its extreme terms and Soul for its middle. In the evolution of the spirit-states Purusha determines itself so as to inform and support the progressive manifestations of Self as soul and body; in the evolution of the psychic states Prakriti worked on by Purusha creates for the manifestations of Self as spirit psychic sheaths or coverings which will at the same time inform and support the manifestations of Self as matter; in the evolution of the causal, subtle and gross bodies Prakriti shapes itself so as to create the material out of which the psychical coverings of Self as spirit may be made and the medium in which the Self as soul may operate. The three evolutions are dependent on each other, and that it is really one entity and not three which is evolving, is shown by the fact that while in the first stage of the downward evolution and the last of the upward Matter seems so refined as to appear identical with Spirit, in the last of the downward and first of the upward Spirit seems so densified as to appear identical with Matter. This possibility of evolution from and involution into each other would not be conceivable if they were not in essence one entity; and we may legitimately deduce from the oneness of such diverse phenomena that they *are* no more than phenomena, merely apparent changes in one unchanging reality.

In the first stage of evolution Matter appears as an aspect or shadow of Spirit, and like Spirit it is infinite, unanalysable, undifferentiated. Just as Spirit then has only three positive attributes, infinite and undefinable existence, consciousness and bliss, so original Matter has only three positive attributes, infinite and undefinable Time, Space and Causality—or, as Hindu thought phrases it, Condition. For the essence of Condition being change from one state to another, and each change standing in the relation of cause or origin to the one that follows it, Condition and Causality become convertible terms. From this indefinable noumenal condition of Prakriti the Self forms for its uses matter in its most refined and simple form, undifferentiated and undeveloped, but pregnant with the whole of material evolution. The

causal state is called by the Sankhyas Pradhana, the first state or arrangement of matter and its essential principle. The relation of Spirit and Matter in this causal or seed-state is admirably expressed in the Puranic image of Vishnu, the eternal Purusha, asleep on the waveless causal ocean with the endless coils of the snake Ananta, the Infinite, for his couch. The sea of causal matter is then motionless and it is only when Vishnu awakes, the snake Ananta stirs and the first ever widening ripples are created on the surface of the waters that the actual evolution of matter has begun. The first ripple or vibration in causal matter creates a new & exceedingly fine and pervasive condition of matter called akasha or ether; more complex motion evolves out of ether a somewhat intenser condition which is called Vayu, Air; and so by ever more complex motion with increasing intensity of condition for result, yet three other matter-states are successively developed, Agni or Fire, Apah or Water and Prithivi or Earth. These are the five *tanmatras* or subtle elements of Sankhya philosophy by the combination of which subtle forms in subtle matter are built.

Here it is necessary to enter a caution against possible misunderstandings to which the peculiar nomenclature used by the Rishis & the common rendering of *tanmatra* & *bhuta* by the English word elements may very easily give rise. When we speak of elements in English in a scientific sense, we always imply elemental *substances*, those substances which when analysed by chemical processes, cannot be resolved into substances simpler than themselves. But when Hindu philosophy speaks of the five elements, it is not dealing with substances at all but with elemental states or conditions of matter, which are not perceptible or analysable by chemical inquiry but underlie substances and forms as basic principles of material formation. The old thinkers accepted the atomic theory of the formation of objects and substances but they did not care to carry the theory farther and inquire by what particular combinations of atoms this or that substance came into being or by what variations and developments in detail bodies animate or inanimate came to be what they are. This did not seem to them to be an inquiry

of the first importance; they were content with laying down some main principles of material evolution and there they left the matter. But they were anxious to resolve not substances into their original atoms but matter into its original condition and so discover its ultimate relations to the psychical and spiritual life of man. They saw that perpetual motion involving perpetual change was the fundamental characteristic of matter and that each new motion was attended by a new condition which stood to the immediately preceding condition in the relation of effect to cause or at least of a new birth to the matrix in which it had been enembryoed. Behind the solid condition of matter, they found a condition less dense which was at the basis of all fluid forms; behind the fluid condition, another still less dense which was at the basis of all igneous or luminous forms; behind the igneous, yet another and finer which was at the basis of all aerial or gaseous forms; and last of all one finest and most pervasive condition of all which they called Akash or Ether. Ether was, they found, the primary substance out of which all this visible Universe is evolved and beyond ether they were unable to go without matter losing all the characteristics associated with it in the physical world and lapsing into a quite different substance of which the forms and motions were much more vague, subtle, elastic and volatile than any of which the physical world is aware. This new world of matter they called subtle matter and analysed the subtle as they had analysed the gross until by a similar procession from denser to subtler they came to a finest condition of all which they described as subtle ether. Out of this subtle ether a whole world of subtle forms and energies are evolved which constitute psychical existence. Beyond subtle ether matter lost its subtle characteristics and lapsed into a new kind which they could not analyse but which seemed to be the matrix out of which all material evolution proceeded. This they termed causal matter.

In the course of this analysis they could not help perceiving that consciousness in each world of matter assumed a different form and acted in a different way corresponding to the characteristics of the matter in which it moved. In its operations in

gross matter the forms it assumed were more firm, solid and durable but at the same time more slow, difficult and hampered, just as are the motions and acts of a man in his waking state as compared with what he does in his dreams. In its operations in subtle matter the forms consciousness assumed were freer and more rapid, but more volatile, elastic & swiftly mutable, as are the motions and acts of a man in a dreaming state compared to the activities of his waking condition. To consciousness acting on gross matter they gave therefore the name of the Waking State, to consciousness acting on subtle matter the name of the Dream State. In causal matter they found that consciousness took the shape merely of the pure sense of blissful existence; they could discover no other distinguishing sensation. This therefore they called the Sleep State. They farther discovered that the various faculties and functions of man belonged properly some to one, some to another of the three states of consciousness and its corresponding state of matter. His vital and physical functions operated only in gross matter, and they determined accordingly that his physical life was the result of consciousness working in the Waking State on gross matter. His mental and intuitional processes were found to operate freely and perfectly in subtle matter, but in gross matter with a hampered and imperfect activity; they considered therefore that man's mental life belonged properly to the Dream State and only worked indirectly and under serious limitations in the Waking State. They determined accordingly that mental life must be the result of Consciousness working in the Dream State on subtle matter. There remained the fundamental energy of consciousness, Will-to-be or shaping Delight of existence: this, they perceived, was free and pure in causal matter, but worked if consciously, yet through a medium and under limitations in subtle matter, in hampered & half effectual fashion when the subtle self acted through the gross and sub-consciously only in gross matter. They considered therefore that man's causal faculty or spiritual life belonged properly to the Sleep State and worked indirectly and through less & less easy mediums in the Dream and Waking States; and accordingly determined that it must be the result of Consciousness working in the Sleep State

on causal matter. The whole of creation amounted therefore to a natural outcome from the mutual relations of Spirit and Matter; these two they regarded as two terms — call them forces, energies, substances, or what you will, — of phenomenal existence; and psychical life only as one result of their interaction. They refused however to accept any dualism in their cosmogony and, as has been pointed out, regarded Spirit and Matter as essentially one and their difference as no more than an apparent duality in one real entity. This one entity is not analysable or intellectually knowable, yet it is alone the real, immutable and sempiternal Self of things.

It will be clear even from this brief and condensed statement of the Vedic analysis of existence that the elements of the Upanishad are not the elementary substances of modern chemistry but five general states of matter to which all its actual or substantial manifestations belong. It will also be clear that the names of the five elements have a conventional, not a literal value, but it may be as well to indicate why these particular names have been chosen. The first and original state of subtle matter is the pure ethereal of which the main characteristics are extreme tenuity and pervasiveness and the one sensible property, sound. Sound, according to the Vedic inquirers, is the first evolved property of material substance; it precedes form and has the power both to create it and to destroy it. Looking around them in the physical universe for a substance with these characteristics they found it in Akash or Vyom (sky), implying not our terrestrial atmosphere but that which is both beyond it and pervades it, — the fine pervasive connecting substance in which, as it were, the whole universe floats. They therefore gave this name, Akash, to the ethereal condition of matter.

The next matter-condition evolved from Ether and moving in it, was the pure aerial or gaseous. Here to pervasiveness was added a new potency of sensible and varied motion bringing with it, as increased complexity of motion necessarily must do, increased differentiation and complexity of substance. All the variety and evolutions of gaseous matter with their peculiar activities, functions and combinations have this second state or

power of matter as their substratum; it is the basis also of that universal Prana or vital energy, starting from action, retention and reaction and culminating in organized consciousness, which we have seen to be so all-important an agent in the Vedic theory of the Cosmos. In this second power of matter a new property of material substance is evolved, touch or contact, which was not fully developed in pure ether owing to its extreme tenuity and primary simplicity of substance. Seeking for a physical substance gaseous in nature, sensible by sound and contact, but without form and characterized chiefly by varied motion and an imperfect pervasiveness, the Rishis found it in Vayu, Wind or Air. Vayu, therefore, is the conventional term for the second condition of matter.

Evolved out of the pure gaseous state and moving in it is the third or pure igneous condition of matter, which is also called Tejah, light and heat energy. In the igneous stage pervasiveness becomes still less subtle, sensible motion no longer the paramount characteristic, but energy, especially formative energy, attains full development and creation and destruction, formation and new-formation are at last in readiness. In addition to sound and contact matter has now evolved a third property, form, which could not be developed in pure Air owing to its insufficient density and the elusive vagueness and volatility of gaseous manifestations. The third power of matter is at the basis of all phenomena of light and heat and Prana by its aid so develops that birth and growth now become possible; for light and heat are the necessary condition of animate life-development and in their absence we have the phenomenon of death or inert and inanimate existence: when the energy of light and heat departs from a man, says the Upanishad, then it is that Prana, the vital energy, retires into mind, his subtle or psychical part, and withdraws from the physical frame. The physical substance which seemed to the Rishis to typify the igneous state was fire; for it is sensible by sound, contact and form and, less pervasive than air, is distinguished by the utmost energy of light and heat. Fire therefore is the conventional or symbolic name of the third power of matter.

Next upon the igneous state follows the liquid or fluid, less pervasive, less freely motional or energetic, and distinguishingly marked by a kind of compromise between fixity and volatility. In this state matter evolves a fourth property, taste. The liquid state is the substratum of all fluid forms and activities, and in its comparative fixity life-development finds its first possibility of a sufficiently stable medium. All life is gathered out of "the waters" and depends on the fluid principle within it for its very sustenance. Water as the most typical fluid, half-volatile, half-fixed, perceptible by sound, contact, form and taste, has given a symbolical name to the fourth condition of matter.

The solid state is the last to develop in this progression from tenuity to density, for in this state pervasiveness reaches its lowest expression and fixity predominates. It is the substratum of all solid forms and bodies and the last necessity for the development of life; for it provides life with a fixed form or body in which it can endure and work itself out and which it can develop into organism. The last new property of matter evolved in the solid state is odour; and since earth is the typical solid substance, containing all the five properties sound, contact, form, taste and smell, Earth is the conventional name selected for the fifth and final power of matter.

These five elemental states are only to be found in their purity and with their characteristic qualities distinct and unblended in the world of subtle matter. The five elemental states of gross matter are impure; they are formed out of subtle matter by the combination of the five subtle elements in certain fixed proportions, that one being given the characteristic name of ether, air, fire, water or earth in which the subtle ethereal, gaseous, igneous, fluid or solid element prevails overwhelmingly over the others. Even the last and subtlest condition to which gross matter can be reduced is not a final term; when realised into its constituents, the last term of gross matter disintegrates and matter reaches a stage at which many of the most urgent and inexorable laws of physics no longer operate. It is at this point where chemical analysis and reasoning can no longer follow Nature into her recesses that the Hindu system of Yoga by getting behind the five Pranas or

gross vital breaths through which Life manifests in gross physical matter, is able to take up the pursuit and investigate the secrets of psychic existence in a subtler and freer world.

VIII. Matariswan and the Waters.

We are now in a position to consider what may [be] the precise meaning of the Upanishad when it says that in It Matariswan ordereth the waters. Shankara takes *apah* in a somewhat unusual and peculiar sense and interprets, "Air orders or arranges actions"; in other words, all the activity in the Cosmos is dependent upon the aerial or gaseous element in matter which enters into and supports all objects and, as Prana, differentiates and determines their proper functions. Prana, as we have seen, is the great vital energy breathing and circulating through all existence whose activity is the principal instrument of Will in the evolution of the Universe and whose mediation is necessary for all the operations of mind and body in gross matter. In psychic life also Prana is inherent in mind and supports those activities of subtle matter which are necessary for psychic existence. The intimate connection between Prana and vital activity may be best illustrated in its most obvious and fundamental function in the living organism, the regulation of breathing. So important is this function that Breath and Prana are generally identified; the usual signification of the word Prana is, indeed, breath and the five differentiated vital energies supporting the human frame are called the five breaths. So important is it, that even the searching analysis of modern science has not been able to get behind it, and it is held as an incontrovertible fact that the maintenance of respiration is necessary to the maintenance of life. In reality, this is not so. Ordinarily, of course, the regular inhalation of oxygen into the system and exhalation of corrupted breath out of it, is so necessary to the body that an abrupt interruption of the process, if continued for two minutes will result in death by suffocation. But this is merely due to a persistent vital habit of the body. It needs only a careful training in the regulation of the breath to master this habit and make respiration subservient to the will.

Anyone who has for a long time practised this art of breath-regulation or Pranayam can suspend inhalation and exhalation for many minutes and some not only for minutes but for hours together without injury to the system or the suspension of bodily life; for internal respiration and the continuance of the vital activities within the body still maintain the functions necessary to life. Even the internal respiration may be stopped and the vital activities entirely suspended without subjecting the body to the process of death and disintegration. The body may be kept intact for days, months and years while all the functions of breath and vitality are suspended, until the Will in its psychical sheaths chooses to resume its interrupted communications with the world of gross matter and recommence physical life at the precise point at which it was discontinued. And this is possible because Prana, the vital energy, instead of being allowed to circulate through the system under the necessary conditions of organic physical activity, can be gathered up into the mind-organ and from there in its simple undifferentiated form support and hold together the physical case.

But if respiration is not necessary to the maintenance of life, it certainly is necessary to the maintenance of activity. The first condition of Pranayam is the suspension of conscious physical activity and the perfect stillness of the body, which is the primary object of the various *asans* or rigidly set positions of the body assumed by the Yогин as a necessary preliminary in the practice of his science. In the first stages of Yoga the sub-conscious activity of the body due to the life of the cells, continues; in the later stages when internal respiration and vital activities are suspended, even this ceases, and the life of the body becomes like that of the stone or any other inert object. It is held together and exists by the presence of Prana in its primary state, the only connection of Will with the physical frame being the will to subsist physically. This is the first outstanding fact of Yoga which proves that Prana is the basis of all physical activity; the partial or complete quiescence of Prana brings with it the partial or complete quiescence of physical activity, the resumption of its functions by Prana is inevitably attended by

the resumption of physical activity. The second outstanding fact is the peculiar effect of Pranayam and Yoga on mental activity. The first condition of Yogic exercises is, as has been said, the stillness of the body, which implies the suspension of the five *indriyas* or potencies of action, grasp, locomotion, utterance, emission and physical ecstasy. It is a significant fact that the habit of suspending these *indriyas* is attended by an extraordinary activity of the five *indriyas* of knowledge, sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste, and an immense heightening of mental power and energy. In its higher stages this increase of power intensifies into clairvoyance, clairaudience, the power of reading other minds and knowing actions distant in space and time, conscious telepathy and other psychical powers. The reason for this development is to be found in the habit of gathering Prana or vitality into the mind-organ. Ordinarily the psychical life is overlaid and hampered by the physical life, the activity of Prana in the physical body. As soon as this activity becomes even partially quiescent, the gross physical obstruction of Anna and Prana is rarefied and mind becomes more self-luminous, shining out through the clouds that concealed it; vital energy is not only placed mainly at the service of the mind as in the concentration of the poet and the thinker, but is so much subtilised by the effect of Pranayam that the mind can operate far more vigorously and rapidly than in ordinary conditions. For mind operates freely and naturally in subtle matter only and the subtler the matter, the freer the workings of the mind. At an intenser stage of Yogic exercise all the vital functions are stilled and Prana entirely withdrawn from bodily functions into mind which can then retire into the subtle world and operate with perfect freedom and detachment from physical matter. Here again we see that just as Prana, differentiated and working physically, was the basis of all physical activity, so Prana, intermediate and working psycho-physically, is at the basis of all mental activity, and Prana, pure and working psychically is at the basis of all psychical activity.

The third outstanding fact of Yoga is that while in its earlier processes it stimulates mental activity, in its later stages it

overpasses mental activity. At first the mind drawn inward from active reactions to external impacts, is able to perfect its passive reactions or powers of reception and its internal reactions or powers of retention and combination. Next it is drawn inward from external phenomena altogether and becomes aware of the internal processes and finally succeeds in concentrating entirely within itself. This is followed by the entire quieting of the subtle or psychical *indriyas* or sense-potencies followed by the entire quiescence of the mind itself. The reception of psychical impacts and the vibrations of subtle thought-matter are suspended; mind concentrates on a single thought and finally thought itself is surmounted and the Supra-Intelligence is potent, free and active. It is at this stage that Yoga develops powers which are so unlimited as to appear like omnipotence. The true Yогin, however, does not linger in this stage which is still within the confines of psychical existence, but withdraws the Will beyond Supra-Intelligence entirely into itself. The moment the Will passes out of subtle matter, activity ceases. Will has then three courses open to it; either to realize itself as the eternal Sakshi or witness and behold the vision of the Universe as a phenomenon within itself which it *sees but does not enact*; or to disappear into the Sunya Brahman, Supreme Nothingness, the great Void of unconscious mere-existence with which the Parabrahman is veiled; or to return into the Self and, liberated from even the vision of phenomena, exist in its own infinity of pure consciousness and supreme bliss. If we follow Prana through this process of Yogic liberation, we shall find that Prana ends where activity ceases. For Prana is a material entity arising out of the aerial state of subtle matter and as soon as that state is overpassed, Prana is impossible. Throughout there is this close identification of Prana with activity. It may well be said, therefore, that Matariswan is that which arranges actions.

Matariswan is the philosophical expression for Vayu, the aerial principle. It means that which moves in the mother or matrix and the word implies the three main characteristics of the aerial element. It is evolved directly out of ether, the common matrix, which is therefore its own mother and ultimately the

mother of all elements, forces, substances, objects; its predominant characteristic is motion, and this characteristic of motion operates in the matrix, ether. Moving in ether, developing, combining, it creates the substances out of which sun and nebula and planet are made; it evolves fire and water and atmosphere, earth, stone and metal, plant, fish, bird and beast. Moving in ether, acting and functioning through its energy Prana, it determines the nature, motions, powers, activities of all those infinite forms which it has created. By the combinations & operations of this aerial element the sun is built up, fire is struck forth, clouds are formed, a molten globe cools and solidifies into earth. By the energy of the aerial element the sun gives light and heat, fire burns, clouds give rain, earth revolves. Not only all animate, but all inanimate existence owes its life and various activity to Matariswan and its energy Prana.

But it owes not only its life and activity, but the very materials out of which it is made. Here lies the insufficiency of Shankara's interpretation. The word *apah* naturally and usually signifies "waters", and it is a law of interpretation not lightly to be set aside that when the natural and usual meaning of a word gives a satisfactory or even a possible and not unsuitable sense, it should be preferred to an artificial and unusual meaning. In this case "waters" may have two meanings one of which gives a sense possible and not unsuitable, the other a sense even more satisfactory than Shankara's interpretation. By waters may be indicated the various fluid forms which are evolved by the fluid element, and, involved in the solid, sustain organic life; for the word *apah* is commonly used to indicate the fourth element of matter. Prana, the vital energy, may be said so to dispose these "waters" as to originate, sustain and develop all solidities and all forms of organic life. But this would be a narrow interpretation out of harmony with the vast sweep and significance of this verse which sums up the Supreme Entity in its aspects as the stable substratum of cosmic existence, the mighty sum of cosmic motion and energy and the infinite continent of cosmic energy. It is better therefore to take *apah* in the sense of the original ocean of cosmic matter, a figure which is so common as to have become a

commonplace of Hindu thought. In It, in Brahman, Matariswan, the aerial element took and disposed the infinite supply of causal matter so as to provide the substance, evolve the forms and coordinate the activities of this vast and complex Universe.

IX. Spirit and Matter

But Matariswan does not conduct these numberless cosmic operations vast and minute by virtue of its own intrinsic and unborrowed power. Otherwise we might well ask, If there is a material substance which provides all the wherewithal necessary for the evolution of this Universe and a material energy by whose existence all the operations implied in its evolution can be explained, then the whole Universe can be understood as a development out of eternal Matter with its two properties substance and energy, and no second term of existence other than Matter need be brought in to account for the evolution of Consciousness. But the Upanishad emphatically negatives the material origination of things by stating that it is in Brahman, the Supreme Entity, that Matariswan orders the waters. By this, as Shankara points out, it is meant that only so long as the Supreme Self is there, can the activity of Matariswan be conceived as possible. As ether, the matrix, is the continent and condition of Matariswan and his works, so is Brahman the continent and condition of ether and its evolution. Matariswan is born out of ether and works in ether, but ether is itself only an intermediate evolution; in reality, Matariswan is born out of Brahman the Self and works in Brahman the Self.

The materialistic theory of cosmic origins has a great superficial plausibility of its own and it is popular with scientists because analytical Science knows thoroughly the evolutions of matter and does not know thoroughly the evolutions of soul and spirit; it is therefore inevitably led to explain what it knows imperfectly or not at all by what it does know and understand. The materialistic tendency is immensely assisted by the universal interdependence of Spirit, Soul and Matter. Every spiritual and psychical activity involves a material operation and this Science

has clearly seen. It is natural therefore for the Scientist to argue that the material operation is the cause of the spiritual and psychical activity, nay, that the material operation is the activity and spirit and soul do not exist, but are essentially matter. It is equally true that every material operation involves a spiritual and psychical activity, but this Science has not yet seen. When therefore idealistic philosophies argue in precisely the opposite sense and urge that the spiritual activity is the cause of the material operation, nay that the activity is the material operation and matter does not exist but is essentially spirit, it is natural for Science to brush aside the argument as metaphysical, mystical and irrational. I argue from the firm basis of well-tested certainties, thinks the Scientist, my opponent from mere ideas the truth of which cannot be demonstrated by definite evidence or actual experiment.

All Hindu philosophies, however, not only the Vedantic, but Sankhya and Buddhism agree in rejecting the materialistic reading of the Universe and oppose to the well-tested certainties of Science certainties as well-tested of their own. Hindu thought has its own analysis of the Universe arrived at by processes and experiments in which its faith is as assured and unshakeable as the confidence of the Scientist in his modern methods of analysis and observation. To a certain extent Hindu philosophy goes hand in hand with the materialistic. Prakriti or Nature, an original energy manifesting in substance is the origin, the material and the agent of evolution. This original energy is not Prana, the vital energy, for Prana is not original but a later evolution, arising out of the aerial condition of matter and subsequent in time to the ethereal; there must therefore have been a previous energy which evolved ether out of causal matter. To this original Matter Sankhya gives the name of Prakriti, while Vedanta & Buddhism, admitting the term Prakriti, prefer to call it Maya. But Prakriti is not in itself sufficient to explain the origin of the universe; another force is required which will account for the activity of Prakriti in Pradhana or original substance. This force is Purusha or Spirit. It is the presence of Purusha and Prakriti together, says Sankhya, that can alone account for cosmic evolution.

Vedanta agrees and emphasizes what Sankhya briefly assumes,—that Purusha & Prakriti are themselves merely aspects, obverse and reverse sides, of a single Supreme entity or Self of Things. Buddhism, still more trenchant, does away with the reality of Purusha and Prakriti altogether and regards Cosmic Evolution as a cosmic illusion.

The necessity for positing another force than Prakriti arises from the very nature of Prakriti and its operations. The fundamental characteristic of Prakriti as soon as it manifests is eternal motion,—motion without beginning, without end, without limit, without cessation or respite. Its cosmic stir is like an eternally troubled ocean, a ceaseless rush, foam and clamour of perpetual restlessness, infinite activity. And the rapidity, the variability, the unimaginably complex coincidence and simultaneousness of different rates and forms of motion in the same material, in the same limits of space and time, are such as to baffle realization. We can only realize it in sections by picking the web of Nature to pieces and regarding as separable and self-sufficient what are really simultaneous and coincident motions. The first result of this infinite complexity of motion is an infinite mutability. Wherever we turn our eyes, there is something evolving and developing, something decaying and disintegrating. Nothing at this moment is precisely what it was the moment before; every ripple in the sea of Time means a disturbance however small in the coincident sea of Space, a change however infinitesimal in the condition of the largest or most apparently stable parts of Nature as well as of the minutest or most volatile. Causality, infinite and without beginning or end, cannot cease from its perpetuity of persistent action, its infinite progression of effects which are the causes of other effects, causes which are the effects of other causes; it is an endless chain, moving through Space & Time, working in Substance, forged by an eternal and indefinable Energy. And this eternal motion and mutability means inevitably an infinite multiplicity. Every inch of Space is thronged with an infinite variety of animate and inanimate existences, countless in number, multitudinous in kind, myriadly various in motion and action. An infinite multiplicity of motions make up the world

creating endless variety of substance, form, function; an infinite multiplicity of change is the condition of its activity. Remove this eternal motion, eternal mutability, eternal multiplicity from the idea of Prakriti and we arrive at something we cannot recognize, an inactive energy, an immaterial substance. Without motion, Time, Space, Causality, as things in themselves, cease to be. We are face to face with blank void and nothingness — or else, since this is unimaginable and impossible, we must suppose something which cannot cease to be, an absolute Infinity undivided by Space or Time, an absolute Immutability unconditioned by cause and effect, an absolute Stillness unaffected by the illusive mobilities of Energy, an absolute Spirit ultimately real behind the phenomenon of substance.

If we do not accept this transcendental reality, we must suppose that an eternal Prakriti with eternal motion, mutability, multiplicity as its characteristics is the Alpha & Omega of existence. But a consideration of the Universe does not justify our resting secure in that hypothesis. In this eternal motion there is something perpetually stable, in this eternal mutability a sum and reality which is immutable; in this eternal multiplicity an initial, persistent and final Unity. Eternal motion in itself would lead to nothing but eternal chaos and confusion. We know that the Cosmos is made up of an infinite number of motions simultaneously occupying the same Space and simultaneously existent in the same substance; but the result is not clash or confusion, but harmony. In other words, the condition of this unending motion is an eternal stability. Everywhere we see variety of motion resulting in a harmonious balance, in the orbits of the revolving planets round the moving sun woven into one solar system we have a striking instance out of myriads of this law which governs every object and every organism. There is therefore not only the mobile Prakriti, but something else which is eternally stable.

Eternal mutability, likewise, can lead to nothing but eternal unrest and disorder. What is it that imposes an unchanging law of persistence and orderly development on this mass of infinitely shifting, unquiet and impermanent parts and combines into one harmony this confused strife of changing and interchanging

phenomena? In its details the universe is restlessly mutable, momentarily changing, in its broad masses it is more fixed and permanent, in its sum it is immutable. The class is less mutable and impermanent than the man, the community than the class, the race than the community, mankind than the race; and so it is with all existences. The parts change, the whole persists. And it is well known that while matter goes through infinite changes of form, its sum never changes; unincreasing it develops, undiminishing it disintegrates. But not only is the sum of things immutable, the laws of their development are immutable; phenomena vary but the law governing them remains the same, and for this reason that the nature of things is immutable. Whatever the variety of forms, the thing in itself preserves its characteristics and remains unchanged. Electricity works in various shapes and in many activities, but it is always electricity preserving its true characteristics whatever work it may do or whatever body it may wear and always working and changing under the fixed laws of its being which cannot change. Electricity again is only one form and function of the igneous element which takes many forms, but in all of them preserves its true characteristics and its own law of work. We see therefore that the parts are impermanent, the whole permanent; forms of things change, the reality is immutable. The condition of this unending mutability and impermanence is an eternal immutability and permanence. There is therefore not only this mutable Prakriti, but something else which is eternally immutable.

The apparent multiplicity of the Universe is equally deceptive. For the very condition of this infinite multiplicity, is a persistent Unity which precedes it and towards which it moves. There are many substances, but they are all evolutions from one substance; one seed disposes itself in many forms. There are many laws governing the workings of that substance in its evolution but they resolve themselves into one law to which all existence is subject. As substances and forms develop, there seem to be many things with many natures, but they go back into one thing with one nature. There are many forms of electricity, but all resolve themselves into the one substance electricity; there

are many forms of the igneous element, of which electricity is one, but they all resolve themselves into one igneous element; there are many elements besides the igneous, but they all resolve themselves into one causal and universal substance. This is the bottom fact of the universe; all complexities and varieties resolve themselves into a precedent simplicity, and all simplicities into an original Unity. There is therefore not only this ever-multiplying Prakriti, but something else which is eternally One. In this mobile, mutable, multitudinous Prakriti, there is then a persistent element which is stable, immutable and one. We have arrived again at that One infinitely Immutable, Immobile Sum and Reality of Things which is Parabrahman.

Materialistic Analysis insists however that the eternal unity, immutability and immobility supporting and making possible the eternal multiplicity, mutability and motion are themselves characteristics of Eternal Matter. They are the two opposing lines of force whose action and reaction preserve the equibalance of cosmic existence, but the eternal reality in which they act is not spiritual but material. For material energy working in material substance is quite enough to explain all the evolutions of Nature and these in themselves make Eternal Matter. Hindu thought, however, has always been unable to accept this conclusion because its analysis of cosmic existence has convinced it that substance and energy are not things in themselves, but merely phenomena. Substance increases with density until it reaches its highest expression in solid physical matter; but as it is analysed and resolved nearer and nearer to its origin, its density becomes less and less, its tenuity increases, it becomes more and more unsubstantial, until, on the farther brink of causal matter, it disappears into something which is not substance. Moreover, when examined it appears that substance is really another term for energy; the conditions of density and tenuity which constitute material substance, correspond with the conditions of motional intensity and vagueness which constitute material energy. As, therefore, matter is resolved nearer and nearer to its origins, energy like substance becomes less and less intense, its vagueness increases until it comes to a standstill or rather dissipates in

something which is not energy. The conclusion is irresistible that substance and energy are merely a single phenomenon with a double aspect, and that in the origin of things this phenomenon, to which we may give the name of Matter, does not exist. The question remains, into what do substance and energy disappear? out of what were they born? We are confronted again with the necessity of choosing between the unimaginable impossibility of blank void and nothingness, for which we have no warrant in reason or experience, or the One, Immutable, Immobile, Infinite and Eternal Reality which is Parabrahman. This Supreme Entity is not matter, we have seen. But it may be argued that it cannot be certainly called Spirit, since it is so absolute an entity as to be indefinable except by negatives. Vedanta concedes this caution, asserting only that Parabrahman is not a negative entity, but an eternal and positive Reality, defined by negatives simply because it is not expressible to the finite intellect, and containing in itself the unity of Spirit and Matter, which is neither material nor spiritual.

One argument remains open to material Analysis. Granted Parabrahman as the reality of things, yet phenomenal existence itself is purely material and there is no need to call in the assistance of any other and different entity. For material energy in material substance is sufficient to explain all phenomena. Hindu thought holds however that it is not sufficient to explain the ultimate phenomena of Consciousness. At the beginning of material evolution matter is in itself inanimate, consciousness, to all appearance, non-existent. How and whence, then, did it appear? By the interaction of the three *gunas* inherent in Prakriti, reception, reaction, retention. But the interaction of the three *gunas* did not create Consciousness, they only liberated it from the dense obscuration of gross matter. For if consciousness were not involved in Matter, it could never be evolved from it. For if it be evolved from matter as an entirely new birth, it must be either some already existent material substance in a new form — say, some kind of gas or electricity, or it must be a new substance formed by the union of two or more substances, just as water is formed out of hydrogen and oxygen. No such

gas or electricity has been discovered, no such new substance exists. Indeed the evolution of a mighty, reasoning, aspiring, conquering, irrepressible Consciousness, capable of something like omnipotence and omniscience, out of mere material gases and chemical substance is a paradox so hardy, so colossally and impossibly audacious that mankind has rightly refused to accept it even when advanced with the prestige of Science and her triumphant analysis and the almost irresistible authority of her ablest exponents to support the absurdity. Christian theology was inconsistent enough when it degraded man to the dust as a worm and clod, yet declared him capable of divinity by the easy process of belief in an irrational dogma; but the materialistic paradox, which lodges no hidden angel in the flesh, is even more startling, more naked, more inexorably irrational. Man, says materialistic Science, is an utterly insignificant unit in the universe; the infinitesimal creature of a day, he lives his short span of life and is then decomposed into the gases out of which he was made. He derives his mind, body and moral nature from his brother the chimpanzee and his father the gorilla. In his organism he is merely a mass of animalculae which belong individually to the lowest stage of animal life; but by combining into a republic with the cells of the brain as a sort of despotic senate or council, these undeveloped forms of life have been able to master the world. What has not this republic of animalculae, this Rome of protoplasms, been able to effect? It has analysed the elements; it has weighed the suns and measured the orbits of the stars; it has written the dramas of Shakespeare, the epics of Valmiki and Homer and Vyasa, the philosophies of Kant and Shankara; it has harnessed the forces of Nature to do its bidding; it has understood existence and grasped the conception of infinity. There is something fascinatingly romantic and interesting in the conception and it is not surprising that the human intellect should have been captured for a while by its cheerful audacity. But how long can unreason prevail? Even if we regard man as a limited being and take what the race has done for the utmost measure of what the individual can do, the disproportion between the results achieved and the means supplied by this theory

is too great to be overlooked. It was inevitable that the religions formerly crushed down and almost smothered by the discoveries of Science,—even those creeds most philosophically insufficient and crude,—should be raising their heads and showing an unexpected vitality. Science prevailed for a time over religion by exposing the irrationalities and prejudices which had overgrown and incrusted spiritual truth. But when it sought to replace them by a more astounding irrationality than any religion had been guilty of and began to contract its own hard crust of dogmas and prejudices, it exposed itself to an inevitable reaction. Mankind for a time believed because it was incredible at the bidding of theologians who ruled reason out of court; the experiment is not likely to be repeated for long on the authority of scientists who profess to make reason their judge.

If it be still contended that, however paradoxical, consciousness is the result of impressions and vibrations in the brain, or that consciousness is merely a material energy manifested at a particular intensity of ethereal vibration, like light or sound, the answer is that consciousness operates more powerfully when the brain is quiescent and unimpressed from without and survives cellular decomposition, and that when energy is quiescent and ether dissolved into its origin, consciousness abides. To the Hindu mind this is an insuperable obstacle to the acceptance of the material origin of consciousness. From its long acquaintance with Yoga and the results of Yoga, it has learned that conscious Will in the human body can not only override the laws of gross physical matter and come appreciably nearer, within its sphere, to omnipotence and omniscience, but that this conscious Will can impose absolute quietude on and detach itself from the animalcule republic which is erroneously supposed to originate and contain it and that it does, as a habitual law of Nature, survive the disintegration of the body. These two facts are fatal to the materialistic theory and, so long as the practice of Yoga subsists in India, the Hindu mind will never accept materialism. For they show that, although undeniably consciousness is evolved out of gross matter, it can only be because it was involved into gross matter by a previous downward evolution; it is not being

created, it is being merely liberated from its prison. Neither can consciousness be taken as a function of subtle matter; for just as it can exist apart from and survives the disintegration of its gross body, so also it can exist apart from and survives the disintegration of its subtle body. Before subtle matter evolves, consciousness preexists in causal matter; and after subtle matter dissolves, consciousness survives in causal matter. And since matter at the stage of causality neither functions, nor evolves, consciousness is not a function or evolution of causal matter, but other and different from it. It is clear therefore that from the first appearance of matter, consciousness operates coevally with it, but is not dependent on it for its origin.

X.

Original consciousness, as distinct from Matter, is termed Spirit. Spirit must never be confused with the apparent manifestations of it, which are merely the action and reaction of Matter and Spirit on each other. The characteristics of true Spirit can be determined by distinguishing what is essential, characteristic and permanent in consciousness throughout all its stages from what is merely condition, form or function of consciousness affected by the medium in which it is working. There are three such characteristics which appear rudimentarily the moment consciousness itself appears and seem more and more pronounced as liberated Spirit develops to its highest self-expression. The first of the trio is the impulse of existence, the will to preserve self, to survive and be, not merely temporarily but unendingly. Showing itself at first physically in the instinct of self-preservation and the instinct of self-reproduction, it develops psychically in the desire to outlast death and become "immortal" by whatever way, by a book, a song, a picture, a statue, a discovery, an invention, an immortal act or remembered career no less than by psychical persistence of personality after the death of the body, and it culminates spiritually in the Will to surmount both death and life and persist eternally and transcendentally. The second characteristic of consciousness is the capacity of knowledge or

awareness, the Will to know. Showing itself at first physically in sensation and response to external objects, it develops psychically in personality with memory, its basis, and understanding, reason and intuition, its superstructure, and culminates spiritually in self-knowledge and the awareness of one's own eternal and unabridged reality. The third characteristic of consciousness is the emotion of pleasure in existence, primarily in one's own, sympathetically in all existence, the Will to enjoy. This is the most powerful and fundamental of emotions,—so powerful as to persistently outlast all the pain and struggle which the hampered existence of Spirit in Matter brings to the personality. Showing itself physically at first in mere sense-pleasure and the clinging to life, it develops psychically in the emotions of love and joy, and culminates spiritually in the delight of our psychological personality in contact with or entering into the impersonal existence of our real and infinite Self. These three characteristics constitute the conception of Spirit, which by throwing its will-to-be, its power of awareness and its delight in existence into the medium of Matter sets evolution going. This is what Sankhya philosophy means when it says that Purusha imparts activity to Prakriti by its mere presence or propinquity without thereby becoming itself active. Spirit remains what it essentially is, pure existence, consciousness and delight; it is Prakriti that vibrating to the touch of this conscious delight in existence, begins to act, to move, change and evolve. The limitations of consciousness, the phenomena of consciousness are merely phenomenal results of the vibrations of Prakriti in Consciousness and not changes in Spirit itself. Purusha is the eternally immutable, immobile and singly real condition of Universal Evolution; Prakriti in action is its eternal motion, mutability, multiplicity.

Sankhya does not go beyond this conclusion which it finds sufficient for its purposes; it considers Purusha and Prakriti to be both ultimate eternal entities in the Supreme Reality and their propinquity a satisfactory explanation of the Universe. Vedic philosophy, going deeper, was driven both by philosophical reasoning and the ultimate experience of Yoga to the conception of the one Supreme Entity transcending the distinction between

Spirit and Matter, Purusha and Prakriti, which are merely its noumenal self-expressions. Nor could Vedanta be satisfied with mere propinquity as a sufficient explanation of the manner in which immutability, stability and unity continually interpenetrate, surround and govern the infinite motion, mutability and multiplicity of Matter, still less of the manner in which Purusha identifies itself with the merely phenomenal changes of consciousness. But if Spirit informs, conditions and governs Matter, just as energy informs, conditions and governs substance, it would be possible for it to impress its own nature on the motions of Prakriti at every point of its evolutions without itself moving and acting. And if Spirit and Matter are not entirely different and separate entities but various expressions of a single supreme Ens, Matter a noumenon of apparent self phenomenally evolving as substance and energy, Spirit, a sense of Its real self supporting and therefore pervading and conditioning phenomena, it is then not only possible but inevitable that Spirit should be so constantly and closely aware of the perpetual activity of Matter as to attribute that activity to itself. In this interpretation of the Universe Vedanta consummated its analysis.

Time, Space, Condition reposing in the sense of actual Infinity and Immutability,—this is Prakriti, Origin-of-Matter working in Spirit; and all philosophic analysis of existence must inevitably culminate in this noumenon; for without it the Universe as it is, cannot be conceived; it is the very condition of thought and knowledge; it is the ultimate fact of cosmic existence. The triune noumenon of Time, Space, Condition or, in one word, Prakriti, immediately generates the noumenon of motion characterized by change and relation of parts and we have at once motion, mutability, multiplicity operating in the Infinite and Immutable. The triune noumenon of motion, mutability, multiplicity or, in one word, Energy generates the noumenon of substance moving, changing, relatively shifting in the Infinity and Immutability of Spirit. The noumenon of energy-substance constitutes Pradhana, original matter, and nothing farther is needed for the evolution of the cosmos. Prakriti with its evolution Pradhana is the material cause of the Universe; the presence

of Spirit containing, supporting and pervading Prakriti and its evolutions is the efficient cause of the Universe.

Noumenon leads naturally to phenomenon. Consciousness and Existence in the Eternal Self being one, every noumenon of Consciousness must translate itself into an Existence of which the Consciousness is aware. The conception of Time, Space, Condition creates the appearance of Time, Space, Condition by that fundamental power of Consciousness which shows itself physically as formation, psychically as imagination and spiritually as Avidya, the power of conceiving what is Not-Self. The conception of motion creates the appearance of energy at work. The conception of motion-intensity as substance creates the appearance of matter worked upon. All Matter is phenomenal; all evolution the result of Avidya. Spirit is not phenomenal, but owing to its continual immanency in matter, attributes phenomenal existence to itself, so creating the phenomenon of soul or spirit working in matter. Thus Cosmos originates.

It will be seen that in this explanation of the Universe Spirit is taken as nearer to the Supreme Reality of things than Matter; it is not absolutely the real Self of things, but it is the noumenon or sense of the real Self persisting throughout all the obscurations of Avidya. This view is triply necessitated by the truths of elemental, psychical & spiritual evolution. When we consider the relations of Spirit to elemental matter, we see that as the obscuration of Matter thickens, Spirit becomes more and more concealed until, in gross inanimate matter, it is utterly covered in; but as the obscuration of Matter lessens, Spirit is more and more liberated until in the origin of things Matter seems a mere appearance in the reality of Spirit. It is therefore through Spirit and not through Matter that we are likely to get nearest to the Supreme Reality. So too, when we study our psychical evolution and follow Consciousness in its progressive liberation until it becomes Will in causal matter, we find it characterized in this last stage by the Will to be, the Will to know, the Will to enjoy; and when we get behind will and matter to our pure unconditioned Self, we still envisage Consciousness as pure existence, awareness and bliss. But our pure unconditioned Self is, we have seen, the

Reality of Things unaffected by Prakriti or its phenomena. We may therefore safely conclude that so far as the Supreme Reality can be positively envisaged by us in its purity, it is envisaged as existence, awareness, bliss,—in terms of Spirit and not of Matter. Lastly, when we analyse the evolution of Purusha in its three States, we find that it consists in the reflection of Prakriti as if by the Spirit. Spirit follows Prakriti through her three stages of material evolution, informing and sustaining them and mirrors their changes in itself as the changes of the sky may be mirrored in a clear and motionless pool; but the changes of the sky are not changes in the water. Purusha is immutable, immobile and One, just as the Supreme Reality is immutable, immobile and One. Purusha or Spirit is therefore the noumenon of the true Self, Prakriti the noumenon of not-Self or apparent Self. It is in this true Self of Parabrahman that the evolutions of apparent Self take place. In It Matariswan orderereth the waters.

XI.

Long and difficult to follow as has been this account of the Nature of Things according to Vedic philosophy, it was necessary so that we might understand minutely and comprehensively the meaning of these two verses, which in the second chapter of this book we could only adumbrate. The verses describe Parabrahman in Its truth with respect to the Cosmos, not in the absolute reality which is Its truth in Itself, but at the same time they indicate that it is the absolute and real Self of things which manifests in the Cosmos and not any Other, for there is no Other. It is anejad Ekam, the *One* who moveth not. The root *ejri*, as Shankara points out, means to shake or vibrate, and the reference is obviously to those vibrations of Prakriti on the tranquil surface of Self which are the beginning and cause of matter and its evolutions. But the Self does not vibrate and is not affected by the vibrations of Prakriti, even when It is supporting the cosmos and seems to be moving in it. Throughout it remains the One and is not broken up into multiplicity; even when by its immanence in many forms it seems to be many. These opening

words of the first verse identify the One Immutable Immobile Infinity called Self or Spirit in the Cosmos with the Supreme Entity, Parabrahman.

This Supreme Entity which, as Self or Spirit, is immobile and one, is yet, without moving, swifter than thought. Swiftness implies motion; but the motion of Spirit in Cosmos is the illusory motion we see in the landscape as it whirls swiftly past the quiet watcher in the railway-carriage. The individual Self in Man is the watcher in the train, the train is Prakriti, the landscape the Universal Self in the Cosmos. The watcher is not moving, the landscape is not moving; it is the train which is moving and carries the sitter with it. In this second phrase of the verse the Parabrahman is identified with the Supreme Will in the Cosmos which without lifting a finger or stirring a foot creates and encompasses the Universe. This Supreme Will is simply Self or Spirit envisaging itself as the immanent Cause and Director of cosmical evolution in matter. The Will does not move but causes and conditions the infinitely complex cosmic motions; the Will does not act, but causes and determines actions; the Will does not divide or multiply itself, but plays with the multiplicity of cosmic forms and energies and impresses or mirrors itself in each. Being essentially the Self, it is, like the Self, One and Immobile, but as seen in the moving Cosmos, pervading, informing and governing it, It is, even in its motionlessness, swifter than thought.

The Gods could not reach It going in front. In the terminology of the Upanishads the Gods are the Potencies of the Universe which govern the Mind and the Senses in the microcosm Man and the Elements and their manifestations in the macrocosm Universe. Brahman, the One, precedes all these multiple potencies. It existed before they came into being and is therefore beyond their grasp. The rapid and stupendous effects of Will, omnipotent and omniscient, are such that the Mind, Sight, Hearing, all the senses together cannot comprehend their origination; limited and finite, they cannot grasp that which transcends limit. To the finite intelligence reasoning within prescribed limits it appears that there is no Will in action; all that happens and becomes is the inevitable working of material cause

and effect, or of the Elements combining and working on each other. But Will is the cause of Causation and the disposer of Effect; Will preceded and dictated the workings of the Elements and arranged their combinations beforehand. This is He that from years sempiternal hath ordered perfectly all things. But the mind and senses cannot come near to and apprehend the nature of the Will or realize the how of its workings, because the mind and the senses can only understand what is done through their instrumentality or within the elemental medium to which they are limited and confined. They can analyse the physical forces of Nature and formulate the laws under which they work; they can dissect thought and sentiment and classify the mental functions and the laws of reasoning. But Brahman, the Will, they cannot reach and analyse; for He does not work through them, nor does He act in phenomena. He has arranged the motions of Prakriti beforehand, from years sempiternal; He has mapped out the law of those motions before ever they began to stir; and He now abides concealed in them, not acting but simply by His presence necessitating that the Law shall be observed and His dispositions followed. Will creates effects, outside Time, Space and Condition in a way the Mind cannot comprehend, by *Iccha* or Wish, in other words, by Itself. Will by Will necessitates phenomena in Itself, atmanyatmana. But when Prakriti translates Will into phenomena in the terms of Time, Space, Causality, she does it under limitations and by limited instruments. The preordainment was immediate, unhindered and perfect, but the carrying out seems to be slow, imperfect and the result of ceaseless effort and struggle, a web of failures, incomplete realizations and transient successes, a maze of forces acting and reacting on each other, helping, hindering and repulsing and always with a partial and mechanical or only half-intelligent action. Somehow a result is worked out, progress is made, but nowhere is there any finality or completeness, nowhere the repose of consummation. This incompleteness is an illusion created by the nature of finite Consciousness. The Mind and the Senses, through whom we become aware of the workings of the Universe, are themselves limited and imperfect; functioning only under limits and with

effort they cannot envisage the work accomplished except in parts and with a restricted, disturbed and broken vision. To see life steadily and see it whole is only permitted to a Perfect and Infinite Consciousness standing outside Time, Space and Conditions. To such a divine Vision the working out of preordainment may present itself as a perfect, immediate and unhindered summation. God said, "Let there be Light" and, straightway, there was Light; and when the Light came into being, God saw that it was good. But to the imperfect finite consciousness, Light seems in its inception to have come into being by a slow material evolution completed by a fortuitous shock of forces; in its operation to be lavished with a prodigal wastefulness since only a small part is used for the purposes of life; in its presentation to be conveyed to a blinking and limited vision, hampered by obstacles and chequered with darkness. Limitation, imperfection, progression and retrogression are inseparable from phenomenal work, phenomenal intelligence, phenomenal pleasure and satisfaction. To Brahman the Will who measures all Time in a moment, covers all Space with one stride, embraces the whole chain of causation in one glance, there is no limitation, imperfection, progression or retrogression. He looks upon his work as a whole and sees that it is good. But the Gods cannot reach to His completeness, even though they toil after it; for ever He outruns their pursuit, moving far in front.

Brahman, standing still, overtakes and passes the others as they run. While the Mind and Senses pressing onward through Time, look before and after and see sections of the past and dim apparitions of the future from the standpoint of their moment in the present, the Will from its position beyond the beginning of the past speeds beyond them into the future and to the end of things. It has in that moment apprehended, decided and accomplished in Itself all that is to be and leaves the mind and senses to toil after It and work out the preordained ideas and forms left impressed on the mould of that future which to It already exists. It does this standing still, because to the Will Past, Present and Future are but one moment and It lives in all of them simultaneously; they do not contain Brahman but are

contained in Him. The Mind and senses hasten through Space, measuring the distance between star and star; but the Will passes them, traverses Space from one end to the other, knows it as a Whole and creates in Itself all its forms present, past and future; it leaves the Mind and senses to gather slowly, toilfully and by parts the single comprehensive knowledge It acquired without any process and to experience under the law of Time the immediately complete Universe It has perfected without any labour. It does this also standing still, for to Brahman here and there do not exist; all is here, since He is not in Space, but Space is in Him. While the Mind and senses run in the winding & twisted line of causation, the Will from the beginning of the chain passes them and has in a moment formed and surveyed it to its very end; It leaves them to count out the chain link by link by the imperfect aid of reason, piecing what is past to what is to come, and to trace out by the slow and endless process of work generating work and life generating life the complete and single Evolution which is already a predestined and therefore an accomplished fact. This too It does standing still; for to Brahman there is no succession of cause and effect, since cause and effect exist simultaneously in the Will; cause does not precede Him nor effect follow, but are both embraced in the single and mere existence of Himself as Will.

In It Matariswan ordereth the waters. We have here Brahman in a third relation to Cosmos. Brahman is the stable and immutable Unity which is immanent in the Cosmos as its real self of existence, awareness and bliss and which supports all phenomenal objects and forces as their omnipresent substratum of reality. Secondly, Brahman, this immobile Unity, is also, as Will, that which stands still and is yet swifter than mind and the potencies of mind; for Will, the Ordainer, Disposer and Cause, traverses all Time, Space and Causation, without motion, by the mere fact of being. Lastly, Brahman, this Self and Omnipresent Lord of things, is also that which contains all evolution and determines every object and force evolved by Prana out of original matter. Brahman is Vaisvanor, the Waking Self, in whom is contained and by whom exists all this evolution of physical

world; Brahman is Taijasa, the Dream Self, in whom is contained and by whom exists all the psychical evolution from which the physical draws its material; Brahman is Prajna, the Sleep Self, in whom all evolution psychical & physical is for ever self-existent and preordained; Brahman is the Turiya Atman in whom and by whom Prajna-Taijasa-Vaisvanor are. He pervades the Cosmos and contains the Cosmos, as ether pervades the earth and contains the earth, and not only the Cosmos as a whole but every particular object and force in the Cosmos. This tree is pervaded and surrounded by the Divine Presence,—not, be it clearly understood, by a part of It but by Brahman one and indivisible. The presence of God is as complete in one small flower as in the whole measureless Universe. So also the Spirit in man is not a fragment of Deity, but the Eternal Himself in His imminuable majesty. The Self in me is not merely a brother to the Self in you or of one kind with it but is completely and utterly yourself; for there is no you or I, but One Eternal Immutable in many names and forms, One Reality in many transient and perishable frames.

XII.

It moves, It moveth not; It is far, the same It is near; It is within all this, the same It is outside all.

This second verse only brings out more emphatically what is implied in the first or presents the same truth from a slightly different standpoint. Brahman moves or vibrates, and Brahman does not move or vibrate. As the One Immutable and Immobile, He does not move, but He moves as mobile and multiple Prakriti. When it is said that Brahman is One and Unmoving, it is not meant that the mobile and multiple element in the Universe is other than Brahman; the Gods who cannot reach Brahman, whom He precedes and outstrips, are yet appearances of Himself; Matariswan and the Waters, whom He contains, are also of His substance. Purusha alone is not Brahman, Prakriti also is Brahman; for He is not only the efficient cause of His Cosmos, but its material Cause as well. It is true that the motion

and multiplicity of Prakriti are phenomenal and superficial, the stability and immutability of Purusha fundamental and real; but the phenomenal has a truth and existence of its own and is not utterly unreal. To take the suggestive human parallel, Shakespeare in himself is one and immutable, in his creations he is mutable and many; the personages of his dramas and their words and actions are not Shakespeare in the ultimate truth of himself, yet they are not other than Shakespeare; for they live in him, by him and are of his substance. It is easy to say they are unreal, but they have a reality of their own; they are true psychical images and live as phenomena in the consciousness of Shakespeare though not as separate and independent entities. So also the multiple Cosmos has a true phenomenal existence and reality in the Brahman, though no separate existence as independent entities. The tree and the river are not real as tree and river, but they are real as images, eidolons of the Brahman. In Himself He is calm, quiescent and unmoved, in them He moves and energises.

It is far and It is at the same time near. Physically near and far; the Sun and the distant constellations and Orion and Aldebaran and Lyra and whatever utmost star glitters on the outermost mesh of this network of suns and systems, all that is Brahman; and equally this earth which is our dwelling-place, and this country which is our mother and nurse, and this village or city in which we live and do business, and this house which shelters us, and these trees and tanks which were part of our childhood, and the faces we familiarly know and the voices we daily hear, all in which we habitually live and move, all this is Brahman. Emotionally & mentally near and far; for our love and our hatred, and what we love and hate, things forgotten and things remembered, things we cherish until death and things we put from us with loathing, friend and enemy, injurer and injured, our work and the daily web of our fears and hopes and longings, this is Brahman; and that which is so far from us that it cannot stir a single emotion or create a ripple of sensation in the mind, whether because it is remote in the distance of Time or hidden in the distance of Space or lost to the blindness of

indifference, that too is Brahman. Intellectually near and far; for the unknown and the little known, that which is too vast or too small for us to perceive, or which our most powerful instruments cannot bring near to us or our keenest reasonings analyse or our widest comprehension embrace, that is Brahman; all we daily perceive and note, the myriad forms that Science analyses, the delight of the eye and ear and taste and smell and touch, this is Brahman; and the subjective world in ourselves which is nearest to us of all, thought and memory and sensation and feeling, volitions and aspirations and desires, these too are Brahman. Spiritually near and far; for the Omniscient and Omnipotent Cause and Ruler who creates universes with the indrawing of its breath and destroys universes with its overthrowing, beside whom we feel ourselves to be too vile and weak and feeble to partake even infinitesimally of His divine nature, that is Brahman; the ineffable and unimaginable Spirit whom our senses cannot perceive, nor our minds comprehend, nor our reason touch, that is Brahman; and our own Self who eternally enthroned in the cavern-heart of our being, smiles at our pleasures and pains, mighty in our strength, as mighty in our weakness, pure in our virtues, unstained by our sins, no less omniscient and omnipotent than Isha, no less calm, immutable and ineffable than the Supreme Being,—this our Self too is Brahman. The Karmayogin who has realised it, must hold all existence divine, all life a sacrament, all thought and action a self-dedication to the Eternal.

It is within all this, It too is without all. Brahman is within the whole Universe; every object however inanimate, every form of life however vile, is brim-full with the presence of God. The heathen who worships stocks and stones has come nearer to the truth of things, than the enlightened professor of “rational” religion, who declares God to be omnipresent and yet in the next breath pronounces the objects in which He is present to be void of anything that can command religious reverence. There is no error in “idolatry”; the error is in the mind of the idolater who worships the stone as stone and the stock as stock, thinking that is God, and forgets or does not realise that it is the Divine

Presence in them which is alone worship-worthy. The stock or the stone is not God, for it is only an eidolon, a symbol of His presence; but the worship of it as a symbol is not superstitious or degrading; it is true and ennobling. Every ceremony which reminds us of the presence of the Eternal in the transient, is, if performed with a religious mind, a spiritual help and assists in the purification of consciousness from the obscuration of the senses. To the ordinary intelligence, however, the idea of Brahman's omnipresence, if pushed home, becomes a stumbling-block. How can that which is inert, senseless and helpless be full of that which is divine and almighty? Is it not a sacrilege to see Him in what is vile and repulsive? Is it not a blasphemy to envisage Him in the vicious and the criminal? Hence the popular Manicheanism which pervades every religion; hence the persistent idea of a twofold creative power, God and devil, Ormuzd and Ahriman, Allah and Iblis, the one responsible for all that is good, the other for all that is evil. This kind of spiritual and intellectual weakness loves to see God in everything good and pleasant and beautiful, but ignores Him in what is evil, ugly or displeasing. But it is an imperfect religion which thus yields to the domination of the mind and senses and allows them to determine what is or is not God. Good is a mask and evil is a mask; both are eidola, valid for the purposes of life in phenomena, but when we seek that which is beyond phenomena, we must resolutely remove the mask and see only the face of God behind it. To the Karmayogin there should be nothing common or unclean. There is nothing from which he has the right to shrink; there is none whom he can dare to loathe. For God is within us all; as the Self pure, calm and eternal, and as the Antaryamin or Watcher within, the Knower with all thought, action and existence for His field of observation, the Will behind every movement, every emotion, every deed, the Enjoyer whose presence makes the pain and pleasure of the world. Mind, Life and all our subjective consciousness and the elements of our personal existence and activity, depend on His presence for the motive-force of their existence. And He is not only within us, but within all that is. What we value within ourselves, we must not belittle in others;

what we cherish within ourselves, we must not hurt in others; what we love in ourselves, we must not hate in others. For that which is within us, is the Divine Presence, and that which is in others, is the same Divine Presence. To remember this is worth all the moral teachings and ethical doctrines in the world. Vedanta has been declared by those who have not chosen to understand it, a non-moral or even immoral philosophy. But the central truth of Vedanta enfolds in a single phrase all the highest ethics of the world. Courage, magnanimity, purity, justice, charity, mercy, beneficence, loving kindness, forgiveness, tolerance, all the highest demands that the most exalted ethical teacher can make on humanity are contained in that single doctrine; and find in it their one adequate philosophical justification and sole natural basis.

That is not only within all this, It is also outside all. We have already seen that Brahman is outside all in the sense of containing the Universe and not only pervading but surrounding every object with His presence. He is also outside in the sense that He is apart from it and other than it. He is not confined in Time, Space and Condition, but is quite above and outside Time, Space and Condition: Cosmos is within Him only as the shadow of a cloud is in the water; He is in Cosmos only as the water is in the shadow and causes and contains the shadow; but He is not the Cosmos in His nature or in His substance any more than the water is in nature or substance the shadow. The Cosmos exists in Him phenomenally and as a transient appearance, just as the shadow exists phenomenally in the water and after a time passes away. But there is this difference that the appearance in the water is the shadow of something else cast from outside, but the Cosmos is a shadow or eidolon of Himself created by Brahman in His own being. The materialistic Pantheism so natural to the sense-dominated intelligence of the West, is not Vedanta. God is not in nature or substance His Universe; but the Universe is He phenomenally and as a manifestation. Spirit-Matter is Brahman, but Brahman is not Spirit-Matter. This distinction must be carefully kept in mind or the doctrine of entire identity between Brahman and the Self

of Things, may lead to disastrously false conclusions. The truth that Brahman is in all this, must be carefully balanced by the truth that Brahman is outside it all.

Yet to the Karmayogin the negative side of this dual truth is only necessary as a safeguard against error and confusion; it is the positive side which must be his inspiration. In its light the whole world becomes a holy place and all cause of fear or grief or hatred disappear, all reason for selfishness, grasping, greed and lust are eliminated, all excuses for ignoble desire or ignoble action are taken away. In their stead he receives the mightiest stimulus to self-purification and self-knowledge, which will lead him to the liberation of the divine in himself, to that subdual of the bodily and vital impulses which disciplines the body into the triune strength of purity, abstemiousness and quietude; to courage, magnanimity, justice, truth, the four elements of strength; and mercy, charity, love, beneficence, the four elements of sweetness, making that harmony of perfect sweetness & strength which is perfect character, to a mind, pure of passion and disturbance and prepared against the delusions of sense and the limitations of intellect, such a mind as is alone capable of self-knowledge. In this disciplined body, a perfect heart and a pure mind he will have erected a fitting temple for the Eternal within him in which he can offer the worship of works to the Lord and of selflessness to the Self. For by that worship he will become himself the Lord and find release from phenomenal life into the undisturbed tranquillity of the Spirit. The dictum, *Theos ouk estin alla gignetai*, God is not but is becoming, has been used to express the imperfect evolution of the cosmos but is better applied to the present spiritual progress of humanity. In the race the progress is still rudimentary, but each man has that within him which is empowered to fulfil his evolution and even in this life become no longer an animal, or a mind, a heart, an intellect, but the supreme and highest of all things — Himself.

Book III.

Chapter I.

“But he who sees all creatures in his very Self and the Self in all creatures, thereafter shrinketh not away in loathing. He who discerneth, in whom all creatures have become Himself, how shall he be deluded, whence shall he have sorrow in whose eyes all are one?”

In these two stanzas the Upanishad formulates the ethical ideal of the Karmayogin. It has set forth as its interpretation of life the universality of the Brahman as the sole reality and true self of things; all things exist only in Him and He abides in all as the Self. Every creature is His eidolon or manifestation and every body His temple and dwelling-place. From Him all things began, in Him they develop and mature themselves, to Him they must in their nature strive to return. The mutual relations of all beings to each other may be summed up in the single phrase, “One Self in all creatures, all creatures in one Self”; for He is both within all and contains all. But this Self exists in each creature not partially or fragmentarily but in Its indivisible completeness. Therefore the Self in one creature is precisely the same as the Self in another, not merely kin by origin as in the Christian theology, not merely of the same kind and nature as in the Sankhya teaching, but absolutely identical. The sense of personal separation in space and substance and difference in nature has been illusorily brought about by the play of Prakriti, the noumenon of false self, on the one eternal Reality, creating an illusion of multiplicity and mutability. Self identifies itself with the phenomena of the evolved universe; habitually feeling the play of the three gunas, the principles of material reception, reaction and retention, on the body, the vital impulses, the mind, the intellect, the supra-intelligence it mistakes the continuity of conscious impressions for the real self, forgetting that these are merely aspects of consciousness in relation to matter and not the true and eternal reality of consciousness. But the end of

evolution is to liberate the permanent from the impermanent, the spiritual from the material, the Self from its bondage to the three gunas and the false conceptions which that bondage creates. This liberation or release must therefore be the final aim of religion and ethics, otherwise religion and ethics will be out of harmony with the truth of things and therefore false or imperfect. Religion and ethics must train the individual self in a man to discover its universality, to see himself in all creatures and all creatures in himself, and the ideal or ethically perfect man is the one who has attained to this vision and observes it habitually in his thoughts and actions as the one law of his life.

In order to realize this vision, it has been found by experience that a man must attain freedom from the lower impulses which identify the body and the vital impulses with self; he must practise cleanliness and purity in mind, body and speech, — abstinence from gross gratifications and freedom from the domination of passions and desires; indifference to cold, heat, hunger, thirst, fatigue and other affections from external influences. In other words he must be completely master of his own body. The Christian virtue of purity, the Pagan virtue of endurance, lie therefore at the very root of Vedantic morality.

To see oneself in others is impossible without completely identifying oneself with others; a perfect sympathy is essential and perfect sympathy brings with it perfect love, perfect charity and forgiveness, perfect pity for sin and suffering, perfect tolerance, a universal benevolence with its counterpart in action universal beneficence. The Jivanmukta, the Rishi, the sage must be, by their very nature, sarvabhutahitarata; men who make it their business and pleasure to do good to all creatures, not only all men, but all creatures, — the widest possible ideal of universal charity and beneficence. To do as one would be done by, to love your enemies and those who hate you, to return good for evil are the first ethical inferences from the Vedantic teaching; they were fully expressed in their highest and noblest form by Buddhism five hundred years before they received a passionately emotional and lyrical phrasing in Judaea and were put widely into practice

in India more than two thousand years before Christian Europe took even slightly to heart what it had so long been professing with its lips. And not only perfect love and beneficence, but perfect justice with its necessary counterpart in action, honest dealing and faithful discharge of duty are the natural outcome of the Vedantic teaching. For if we see ourself in others, we shall not only be willing but delighted to yield them all that is due to them and must shrink from wronging or doing hurt to them as naturally as we would shrink from doing hurt to ourselves. The debts we owe to parents, family, friends, the caste, the community, the nation we shall discharge not as an irksome obligation, but as a personal pleasure. The Christian virtue of charity, the Pagan virtue of justice are the very sap and life of Vedantic morality.

Seeing the Self in all creatures, implies seeing the Lord everywhere. The ideal man of Vedanta will accept pain as readily as pleasure, hatred, wrong, insult and injustice as composedly as love, honour and kindness, death as courageously as life. For in all things he will see the mighty Will which governs the Universe and which wills not only his own good and pleasure and success, but the good and pleasure and success of others equally with his own; which decrees that his own good and the good of others shall be worked out not only by his victories and joys, but by his defeats and sufferings. He will not be terrified by the menace of misfortune or the blows dealt him by man or nature, nor even by his own sins and failures, but walk straight forward in the implicit faith that the Supreme Will is guiding his steps aright and that even his stumbling are necessary in order to reach the goal. If his Yoga is perfect, his faith and resignation will also be perfectly calm and strong; for he will then fully realize that the Supreme Will is his own Will. Whatever happens to me, it is I that am its cause and true doer and not my friend or enemy who is merely the agent of my own Karma. But the faith and resignation of the Karmayogin will not be a passive and weak submission. If he sees God in his sufferings and overthrow, he will also see God in his resistance to injustice and evil, a resistance dictated not by selfishness and passion, but undertaken

for the sake of right and truth and the maintenance of that moral order on which the stability of life and the happiness of the peoples depend. And his resistance like all his actions will be marked by a perfect fearlessness, a godlike courage. For when a man sees God in all things and himself in all beings, it is impossible for him to fear. What is it that can cause him terror? Not danger or defeat, not death or torture, not hatred or ingratitude, not the worse death of humiliation and the fiercer torture of shame and disgrace. Not the apparent wrath of God Himself; for what is God but his own self in the Cosmos? There is nothing that he can fear. The Christian virtue of faith and resignation, the Pagan virtue of courage are the strong stem and support of Vedic morality.

The ignorant censure of Vedanta as an immoral doctrine because it confuses the limits between good and evil or rejects the one necessary motive to action and virtue, proceeds from unwillingness or inability to understand the fine truth and harmony of its teachings. Vedanta does indeed teach that virtue and vice, good and evil are relative terms, things phenomenal and not real; it does ask the seeker to recognize the Supreme Will in what is evil no less than in what is good; but it also shows how the progression of the soul rises out of the evil into the good and out of the good into that which is higher than good and evil. Vedanta does reject the lower self of desire as a motive to action and virtue, but it replaces it by the far more powerful stimulus of selflessness which is only the rising to our higher and truer Self. It does declare phenomenal life to be an illusion and a bondage, but it lays down the practice of courage, strength, purity, truth and beneficence as the first step towards liberation from that bondage, and it demands a far higher standard of perfection in these qualities than any other creed or system of ethics. What to many moralists is the highest effort of feeble human nature is to Vedanta only the first imperfect manifestation of the divine self in humanity. Vedanta embraces, harmonizes and yet overtops and exceeds all other moralities; as Vedic religion is the eternal and universal religion, so is Vedic ethics the eternal and universal morality. Esha dharmah sanâtanah.

II. Ethics in primitive society.

Every system of ethics must have a sanction to validate its scheme of morals and an aim which will provide man the stimulus he needs, if he is to surmount his anti-ethical instincts and either subdue them or eradicate. Man is not a purely ethical being; he has immoral and nonmoral impulses which are primarily stronger than his ethical tendencies. To check the former, to liberate, strengthen and train the latter is the first object of all practical ethics religious or non-religious. The first requisite to this end is a true knowledge of human nature and its psychology; for if an ethical system is psychologically untrue, if it is seriously mistaken in its view of human nature or fails to discern and reach his highest and noblest instincts, it will either be ineffective or possibly even do as much harm as good to the moral growth of humanity. But even a psychologically sound morality will not command general assent in practice unless there is a sanction behind it which the reason or the prejudices of mankind will accept as sufficiently strong to make a necessity of obedience. Armed with such a sanction it will influence the thoughts and the thoughts the actions of the race, but even then it will be only a repressive and disciplinary influence; to be an active stimulus or powerful moral lever it must be able to set in our front an aim which will enlist strong natural forces on the side of virtue or an ideal which will appeal to instincts deepseated and persistent in universal humanity.

In its origin it is more than probable that morality was a social growth and limited to communal habits and communal necessities. The aim set before the individual was the continued privilege of abiding in the community and enjoying all-important advantages of security, assistance and social life which membership of the community could alone provide. The sanction was again a communal sanction; the custom-code of the tribe or community commanded assent and obedience precisely because it was the tribe and community that commanded and could enforce them with severe social punishments, death, ostracism, excommunication. This origin of ethics from the customs of the

tribe, themselves originating from the fundamental necessities of self-preservation, is warranted by the facts of sociology as rendered by modern investigation. It agrees also with the view of nature and evolution held by the Vedic inquirers. For if we consider the history of communities and nations so far as we know them, we shall find that it consists so far in a progression from the society to the individual in society, from a basis of *tamas* to an outgrowth of *rajas* in the tamasic basis; while *sattwa* perfected in a few individuals, is, as a social force, not yet emancipated.

We have seen that Prakriti or nature in all its operations works through three inherent *gunas* or qualities which repeat themselves in all stages and forms of her multifold activity; they are present as much in psychic and spiritual evolution as in the physical; and so all-important are they that all activity of any kind whatsoever, all life mental, vital, physical are said to be merely the natural operation of the three *gunas* interacting upon each other. These three *gunas* are called in the Sankhya terminology *sattwa*, *rajas*, *tamas*; comprehension, activity, passivity, or as they manifest in physical substance, retention, active reaction and passive reception. None of these *gunas* can exist or act by themselves; the activity of each involves the activity of the other two; but according as one or the other predominates, an action, a state of things, a substance, a character, is called tamasic, rajasic, or sattwic. In the early stages of upward evolution *tamas* predominates, in the medial *rajas*, in the final *sattwa*. In the early evolution of man it is inevitable, therefore, that the obscuration of *tamas* should be very heavy and that the characteristic of passive receptivity to outside surroundings should be markedly predominant. Early man is active only under the pressure of hunger, or when moved by the primitive impulses of sense and vitality and the needs of self-preservation. His senses are keen and his power of activity great because keen senses and a strong, hardy, agile body are necessary to self-preservation; but in the absence of necessity or stimulus he is profoundly indolent, even inert. His sensibility, physical or mental, is small, for sensibility depends on and increases with

rajas, the power of reaction and this power is in the savage comparatively undeveloped. His emotional reactions are also weak and primitive; in their predominantly physical character and in the helpless spontaneousness of their response to impressions they reveal the domination of tamasic passivity. The centres of individuality, a characteristically sattwo-rajasic function, are too weak as yet to control, regulate and rationalize the response. Hence the emotional nature shows itself on one side in a childishly unruly gratification of the pleasure of pleasant impressions,—the savage is easily mastered by gluttony and drunkenness but also capable of childlike worship and doglike fidelity when brought into close contact with a higher nature; on the other it is manifested in a brutally violent response to unpleasant impressions. Anger is the primitive reaction to an unpleasant impact which is not unfamiliar, fear the primitive reaction to an unpleasant impact which is new and surprising. The savage is therefore prone to childish terror in presence of the unknown, to ferocious anger and vindictive cruelty when his hatred is aroused by injury or the presence of what, though not unfamiliar in form, is alien and therefore hateful in its features. The habit of self-indulgence in anger by an organization of great passivity and low physical and mental sensibility creates the characteristic of a quiet unimpassioned cruelty,—the savage is, as a rule, calmly cruel. The Red-Indian's stoicism, impassivity, immobility, quiet endurance of pain are merely the inertia of the tamasic mind and body systematized and become part of his tribal morality. But the height of passivity is reached in his intellectual organization of which the only strong reaction is the primitive mental response to outside impressions, curiosity. This curiosity is different from the desire to know, for it consists in a childish amused wonder and a desire merely to repeat the experience, not to learn from it. Such curiosity is at the root of the practice of torture; for the primitive mind finds a never-failing delight in the physical response evoked by intense and violent pain. This pleasure in crude physical, moral, aesthetic or intellectual reactions because of their raw intensity and violence is a sure sign of the undeveloped tamasic mind and is still

common enough in the most civilized communities. Originality and independence of mind and character spring from a strong rajasic development and are therefore unknown to the savage who is the creature and slave of his environments. By far the most powerful and insistent of these environments is the community in which he lives and which is necessary to him at every turn for his security and his self-gratification. His passive mentality therefore not only accepts but welcomes rigid control by the community; it receives the hereditary custom-law of the tribe as an inviolable natural law, and has too weak an individuality to react against it or to desire change and progress. The primitive community is therefore stationary; the individual exists in it not as an individual, but as an undetachable fragment of the whole. The social organization, even at its best, is in type and level on a par with that of the beehive and the ant-hill.

The tamasic state of society reaches its highest development when the community, entirely outgrowing the attractions of the nomadic instinct, settles down to a fixed habitation for centuries and adds to its original reason for existence,—communal self-preservation,—the more fruitful impulse towards communal accumulation. It has then the necessary condition for progress from the tamasic stage to the sub-tamasic in which the individual first begins to emerge although he is still subordinated to the community and lives chiefly for the general advantage, not for his own. The settled state of society and the expansion of the community which a more prosperous and stable life brings with it, involve an increasing complexity of the social organization. Specialization of function becomes pronounced, for the larger needs of the community demand an increasing division of labour. Rank and private property begin to emerge; inequality has begun. The more various activities, the more varied experience, the less primitive range of desires and the need of a wider knowledge of things and men create a greater mental alertness and increased mental differentiation. This in its turn means the growth of individuality. Personality, we have seen, has memory for its basis and is determined by memory; individuality or difference of personality is originally created by difference in the

nature and range of the impressions experienced and retained by the mind, which naturally results in different habits of emotional and mental reaction. The fundamental self in all men is the same, the action of external Prakriti in its broad masses is the same all over the world; therefore human personality is necessarily the same in its general nature wherever we meet it. Difference in personality arises purely from difference in the range of mental and emotional experience; from the different distribution of various kinds of experience, and from differently developed habits or ways of reaction to impressions received. For character is nothing but habit; and habit is nothing but an operation of memory. The mind remembers that it received this particular impact before and reacted on it in this particular way and it repeats the familiar experience. The repetition becomes a habit of the mind ingrained in the personality and so a permanent characteristic. Difference of experience thus creates difference of personality, and difference of experience depends on difference in life, pursuits, occupations. So long as life is bounded by the desires of alimentation, self-preservation and self-reproduction, there can be no real individuality within the species, for the processes required and the experiences involved in these functions are practically the same for each member of the species. Even the gratification of primitive sensuous desires does not involve anything more than minute and unnoticeable differences. Hence one savage very much resembles any other savage just as one animal of a species very much resembles another of the same species, and one savage community differs from another only as one animal sub-species differs from a kindred sub-species. It is only when desires and needs multiply, that difference of life and occupation can bring difference of experience and develop individuality. The increasing complexity of the community means the growth of individuality and the liberation of rajas in the human psychology.

Rajas is the principle of activity and increases with the intensity and rapidity of the reactions of Will upon external things; it is not content like tamas with passively receiving impressions and obeying its environments, but seizes on the impressions and

strives ever to turn them to the service of individual personality, to master its environments and use them for its own enjoyment. Everything which it experiences, it utilizes for the pleasure and pain of the individuality. The rajasic man is the creator, the worker, the man of industry, enterprise, invention, originality, the lover of novelty, progress and reform. The growth of rajas therefore necessarily meant the inception of a great problem for society. In the tamasic and sub-tamasic states man develops the all-important faculty of conservatism, reverence for the past, fidelity to the communal inheritance, subordination of the interests and passions of the particular, be it class or individual, to the stability and safety of the whole. But here was a new element likely to disturb and upset the old state of things. The rajasic individuality was not likely to accept the traditional sanction, the communal aim as a satisfying aim and a binding sanction. The more and more he developed, the more and more strongly it would crave for the satisfaction of its expanding individual desires, ideas, activities with less and less regard to the paramount importance of social stability. How should society deal with this element? From that single difficulty arose the whole sociological problem involving difficulties of ethics, legislation and politics which after so many thousands of years mankind has not solved to its permanent satisfaction.

Chapter III. Social Evolution.

In the early stages of the sub-tamasic state the question was not so acute, for differentiation in the society was not at first very complex; it proceeded upon broad lines, and as soon as it took definite form, usually as a result of intermixture with alien elements, it developed classes or castes, the priest, the warrior, the people,—merchant, tiller or artisan— and the thrall or servant. Character developed at first more on these broad lines than by individual irregularities, in types rather than in persons; for each kind of life, each broad line of pursuits and occupations would naturally mean the same general range of experience and the same habits of reaction to external impressions and so evolve

broad developments of character falling into caste-types, within whose general predominance personal idiosyncrasy would be at first comparatively ill-developed and of minor importance. The priest-type would develop favourably in the direction of purity, learning, intellectual ability and acuteness, unfavourably in the direction of jealous exclusiveness, spiritual and intellectual pride, a tendency to trade on the general ignorance. The warrior type would evolve courage, honour, governing power as its qualities, arrogance, violence and ruthless ambition as its defects. The earning class would develop on the one side honesty, industry and enterprise, on the other desire of gain. Obedience and fidelity would be the virtues of the thrall. Society accommodating itself to the altered circumstances modified its single and rigid social morality and admitted the validity of the newly-formed habits of mind and action as within the caste to which it properly belonged. Thus arose the ethical phenomenon of caste morality. Outside the limits of the caste ethics the general social code remained in full force. As the life of the individual in the community expanded in extent and became more varied and complex in content, the social custom-code also became more complex in its details and wider in its comprehensiveness, in its attempt to pursue him into every detail of his life and control not only his broad lines of life but his particular actions, allowing no distinction between private and public life. Its nature had not changed; it was as rigid and inexorable in its demands, as intolerant of individual originality and independence; its sanctions were unaltered, the ancestral tradition of the community and the fear of social punishments, death, ostracism, excommunication or other penalties which if less drastic were yet sufficiently formidable. The object to be fulfilled was still predominantly the same, the satisfaction of communal demands as the price of communal privileges.

In this attempt society could not permanently succeed and had either to abandon it or to call in the aid of other forces and stronger sanctions. The community grew into the nation; social divisions became more intricately complex, the priest-class breaking up into schools, the warriors into clans, the people into

guilds and professions; the organization was growing too vast in size, too intricate in detail. Class began to push its individual claims against class, individuals began to question the old sanctions or doubt the sacredness of tradition. In small villages the old tyranny of society might be possible, in great towns it must necessarily become increasingly lax and ineffective. Above all, as the individual's mental life became enriched and vigorous, society found itself baffled by an insurmountable difficulty; it could control his outward acts by its rigour, but it could not ultimately control his mental and spiritual life, yet this inner life psychical and spiritual tended irresistibly to master and mould outer physical actions. No sanction by which society could enforce its decrees, is of any ultimate utility against the victorious advance of the individual life pressing forward in its irresistible demand for progress and freedom. Society may command the homage of conformance in speech and act to its fixed and conventional ideals; it may control a man's bodily organs; it has no jurisdiction over his heart and mind or only so much as he chooses to allow it. But speech and act cannot long remain divorced from the heart and mind without affecting the soundness of society itself by a dry rot of hypocrisy and falseness; the end of which is either the decay and death of the community or a purifying revolt. Society can save itself only by conceding within limits the claim for individual freedom; outside those limits it must persuade or compel him to conformity by influencing his mind and heart, not by direct coercion of his words and acts.

In the later stages of the subtamasic social period we find that society has to a less or greater extent contracted its demands on the individual. Over his inner life and a certain part of his conduct, it exercises no other coercive influence than that of social disapproval expressed but not enacted; over another part of his conduct it exercises the right of enacting that disapproval in the shape of ostracism or excommunication; but that part of his life which most strongly concerns the community, it still insists on regulating by the infliction or menace of social penalties more or less severe. Social disapproval unenacted is,

however, an ineffective control over mind and spirit. Society therefore, by no means content to leave the inner life of the individual free from the demands of its moral code, since any such abdication of its rule would lead, it instinctively felt, to moral anarchy, sought to dominate the individual intellect and imagination by the more radical process of education. Its view of life and its unwritten code of customs, manners, traditions had always been naturally accepted as sacrosanct, now the individual was consciously habituated and trained from his childhood to retain this impression of venerable and inviolable sanctity. Social morality was no longer unwritten but gathered into codes and systems of life associated either with the names of the primitive makers of the nation or with the deified or half-deified historic individuals who first harmonised and perfected its traditional ideals and routine of life and expressed the consciousness of the race in their political or ethico-legal systems. Such were Lycurgus, Confucius, Menes, Manu. For in those days individual greatness and perfection commanded a sacred reverence from the individual consciousness, because in each man it was to this greatness and perfection that individuality impelled to achieve its complete emancipation was painfully striving forward. Thus in the subtamasic state even at its highest development the social code retained its sacrosanct character in the new form of a consciously cherished and worshipped national tradition; and the repositories of that tradition became the dominant class of the community, whether an oligarchy as in Sparta and early republican Rome or a theocracy as in Egypt. For in order to control not only the heart and imagination but the deepest self in the individual society called in the aid of a spiritual force rapidly growing in its midst, the power of religion. In some communities, it strove even to give the religious sanction to all its own ideas, traditions, demands, sanctions.

In the older races and nations Mongolian, Dravidic, Mediterranean the subtamasic stage of social culture was of long duration and has left its impress in the only civilizations which have survived unbroken from that period, the Indian and Chinese. In the younger races, Aryan and Semitic, the development of the

individual was far more rapid and urgent and left no time for the peculiarities of the later subtamasic period to crystallize and endure. Their evolution passed quickly into the rajaso-tamasic or even into the rajasic stage. In the rajasic state the individual forces himself into predominance and gets that emancipation and free play for his personality which his evolution demands, while the society degenerates into a mere frame for a mass of individuals. Social morality, once so rigid and compelling, dissolves into a loose bundle of superstitions and prejudices; tradition is broken into pieces by the desire for progress & novelty and free play of mind. The individual is governed in his conduct not by social sanctions or religious obligations and ideals, but by his personal idiosyncrasy and the stress of his own ideas, desires, passions, capacities and ambitions, which clamantly demand satisfaction. Individual originality being given free rein, there is an immense outburst of genius, talent, origination, invention or of splendid personal force and activity. Periods such as the revolutionary epoch in France when the rajasic element gets free play and communities like the Ionian democracies of which Athens was the head and type, are not only the most interesting from their fascinating abundance of stir, passion, incident, brilliance of varied personality, but also among the most fruitful and useful to humanity. In such periods, in the brief history of such communities the work of centuries is done in a few years or in a few decades and future ages are fertilized from the seeds of a single epoch. But the history of rajasic communities is necessarily brief, the course of rajasic periods is soon run. Rajas has in itself no principle of endurance; if it is to work steadily and enduringly, it must either be weighted down by a heavy load of tamas or sustained and uplifted by a great strength of sattwa. But sattwa as a social force has not yet liberated itself; it operates on society through a chosen and select few and is only rudimentary as yet in the many. For the preservation of a people tamas is absolutely necessary; a mass of blind conservatism, intolerance of innovations, prejudice, superstition, even gross stupidity are elements essential to the safety of society. The Athenian thinkers themselves dimly realized this,

hence their dislike to the mobile spirit of old democracy and their instinctive preference for the Spartan constitution in spite of its rigid, unprogressive and unintellectual character. They felt the transience and insecurity of the splendid and brilliant life of Athens. Politically the predominance of the individual was dangerous to the state and the evil might be checked but could not be mended by occasional resort to ostracism; the excessively free and varied play of intellect turned out a corrodent which too rapidly ate away the old beliefs and left the people without any fixed beliefs at all; the old prejudices, predilections, superstitions were exposed to too rapid a tide of progress: for a time they acted as some feeble check on the individual, but when the merciless questioning of Socrates and his followers crumbled them to pieces, nothing was left for society to live by. Reason, justice and enlightened virtue which Socrates and his successors offered as a substitute, could not take their place because the world was not, nor is it yet sattvic enough for society to subsist entirely or mainly by the strength of reason, justice and enlightenment. The history of Athens may be summed up from the Vedic standpoint as rajas too rapidly developed destroying tamas and in its turn leading to a too rapid development of sattwa; till by an excess of the critical and judging faculty of sattwa, the creative activity of rajas was decomposed and came to an end. As a result the Athenian social organism lost its vitality, fell a prey to stronger organisms and perished.

Those communities have a better chance of survival which linger in the rajaso-tamasic stage. For that is a social period when the claims of the individual are being constantly balanced and adjusted in a manner which strongly resembles the replacement in the physical organism of waste tissue by sound, bad blood by good, corrupted breath by fresh inhalations; the individual is given legitimate scope, but those irreducible demands of society which are necessary to its conservation, are thoroughly enforced; progress is constantly made, but the past and its traditions are, as far as is consistent with progress, jealously preserved and cherished. England with its rapid alternations of progress safeguarded by conservatism and conservatism vivified by progress

is an excellent example of the rajaso-tamasic community. The English race is preeminently rajasо-tamasic; tamasic by its irrational clinging to what it possesses not because it is inherently good or satisfying but simply because it is there, because it is part of its past and its national traditions; tamasic by its habit of changing not in obedience to any inner voice of ethical aspiration or sense of intellectual fitness but in answer to the pressure of environment; but rajasic by the open field it gives to individual character and energy, rajasic by its reliance on the conflicts and final balance of passions and interests as the main agents of progress and conservation political and social. Japan with her periods of splendid and magnificently fruitful progress and activity when she is absorbing new thoughts and new knowledge, followed by periods of calm and beautiful conservation in which she thoroughly assimilates what she has absorbed and suits it to her system,—Japan with the unlimited energy and personality of her individuals finely subservient to the life of the nation is an instance of a fundamentally rajasо-tamasic nation which has acquired by its assimilation of Indian and Chinese civilisation the immortalizing strength of sattwa.

Sattwa is present indeed in all communities as a natural force, for without it nothing could exist; but as a conscious governing strength, it exists only in India and China. Sattwa is physically the principle of retention which instead of merely reacting to impressions retains them as part of its inner life; it is therefore the natural force which most helps consciousness to develop. As rajogune is the basic principle of desire, so sattwagune is the basic principle of knowledge. It is sattwa that forms memory and evolves judgment. Morally it shows itself as selfless sympathy, intellectually as disinterested enlightenment and dispassionate wisdom, spiritually as a calm self-possessing peacefulness as far removed from the dull tamasic inertia as from the restless turbidity of rajas. The growth of sattwa in a community will show itself by the growing predominance of these characteristics. The community will be more peaceful and unaggressive than the ordinary rajasic race or nation, it will present a more calm and unbroken record of culture and

enlightenment, it will record its life-history not in wars and invasions, not in conquests and defeats, not by the measure of the births and deaths of kings and the downfall of dynasties but by spiritual and intellectual evolutions and revolutions. The history of tamasic nations is a record of material impacts thrown out from the organism or suffered by it; its life is measured by the duration of dynasties or outward forms of government. The history of rajasic nations is a bundle of biographies; the individual predominates. The history of sattwic nations would be the story of the universal human self in its advance to knowledge and godhead. Most of all, the sattwic leaven will show itself in an attempt to order society not to suit material requirements or in obedience to outward environments or under the pressure of inward passions and interests, but in accordance with a high spiritual and intellectual ideal applied to life. And until *sattwa* is fully evolved, the community will try to preserve all the useful forces and institutions gathered by the past social evolution, neither destroying them nor leaving them intact, but harmonising and humanising them by the infusion of a higher ideal and vivifying them from time to time by a fresh review in the light of new experience and wider knowledge. The sattwic nation will avoid the dead conservatism of tamasic communities, it will avoid the restless progress of rajasic nations; it will endeavour to arrive at a living and healthy stability, high, calm and peaceful, in which man may pursue undisturbed his nobler destiny.

The true sattwic community in which life shall be naturally regulated by calm wisdom, enlightenment and universal sympathy, exists only as an Utopia or in the Aryan tradition of the Sattwayuga, the Golden Age. We have not evolved even the rajo-sattwic community in which the licentious play of individual activity and originality will be restrained not by the heavy brake of tamasic indolence, ignorance and prejudice, but by the patient and tolerant control and guidance of the spirit of true science, sympathy and wisdom. The farthest advance made by human evolution is the sub-rajoso-tamasic stage in which *sattwa* partially evolved tries to dominate its companions. Of this kind of community China, India and more recently Japan are the only

known instances. In China the tamasic element is very strong; the passionate conservatism of the race, the aggregativeness of the Chinese character which seems unable to live to itself and needs a guild, an organization or some sort of collective existence to support it, the low physical and emotional sensibility which permits the survival of a barbarous and senselessly cruel system of punishment, are striking evidences of prevalent *tamas*. The *rajasic* element is weaker but evident enough in the religious, intellectual and, in one sense, political liberty allowed to the individual and in the union of Mongolian industry and inventiveness with the democratic individualism which allows every man the chance his individual capacity and energy deserve. *Sattwa* finds its place in the high place immemorially assigned to wisdom, learning and culture and in the noble and perfect Buddhist-Confucian system of ethics and ideal of life which regulates Chinese politics, society and individual life. In India on the other hand, as we shall perceive, we have an unique and remarkable instance of *sattwic*, *rajasic*, *tamasic* influences acting upon the community in almost equal degrees and working at high pressure side by side; *tamasic* constraint and conservatism governs the arrangement of daily life, *rajasic* liberty, progress and originality brilliantly abound in the affairs of the mind and spirit, a high *sattwic* ideal and spirit dominate the national temperament, humanise and vivify all its life, social polity, institutions and return almost periodically, a fresh wave of life and strength, to save the community when it appears doomed to decay and oblivion.

From *sattwa* springs the characteristic indestructibility which Chinese and Indian society, alone of historic civilizations, have evinced under the pressure of the ages and the shocks of repeated, even incessant national disaster. *Sattwa* is the principle of conservation. The passive *tamasic* organism perishes by decay of its unrepaired tissues or disintegrates under the shock of outward forces against which it has not sufficient elasticity to react. The restless *rajasic* organism dies by exhaustion of its too rapidly expended vitality and vigour. But *sattwic* spirit in the *rajaso-tamasic* body is the nectar of the gods which makes for immortality. China and India have suffered much for their

premature evolution of the sattwic element; they have repeatedly undergone defeat and subjugation by the more restless and aggressive communities of the world, while Japan by keeping its rajasic energy intact has victoriously repelled the aggressor. At present both these great countries are under temporary obscuration, they seem to be overweighted with tamas and passing through a process of disintegration and decay. In India especially long continuation of foreign subjection, a condition abhorred by Nature and accursed by Heaven, has brought about disastrous deterioration. Conquering Europe on the other hand, for the first time flooded with sattwa as a distinct social influence by the liberating outburst of the French Revolution, has moved forward. The sattwic impulse of the 18th century, though sorely abused and pressed into the service of rajasic selfishness and tamasic materialism, has yet been so powerful an agent to humanize and illuminate that it has given the world's lead to the European. But these two great Oriental civilizations are not likely to perish; always they have conquered their conquerors, asserted their free individuality and resumed their just place in the forefront of the nations, nor is the future likely to differ materially from the past. So long as the sattwic ideal is not renounced, it is always there to renew itself in extremity and to save. Preeminently sattwic is the Universal Self in man which if realized and held fast to, answers unfailingly the call for help and incarnating in its full season brings with it light, strength and healing. "For the deliverance of the good and the destruction of evil doers, for the restoration of righteousness I am born from age to age."

Chapter IV. The place of Religion in ethics.

If the view of human development as set forth in the last two chapters is correct, we shall have to part with several notions long cherished by humanity. One of these is the pristine perfection of man and his degradation from his perfect state by falling into the domination of sin; God made man perfect but man by his own fault brought sin and death into the world. This Semitic tradition passed from Judaism into Christianity and less

prominently into Mahomedanism became for a long time part and parcel of the fixed beliefs of half humanity. Yet it is doubtful whether the original legend which enshrined and prolonged this tradition, quite bears the interpretation which has been put on it. If rightly understood, it supports rather than conflicts with the theory of trigunic development. The legend does not state that man was unfailingly virtuous by choice, but that he was innocent because he did not yet know good and evil. Innocence of this kind is possible only in the primitive state of man and the description of man as naked and unashamed shows that it is precisely the primitive state of society before arts and civilization were developed, to which the legend alludes. Man was then innocent, because being unable to distinguish between good and evil he could not choose evil of free choice and therefore had no sense of sin and no more responsibility for his actions than the pure animal. His fall from the state of innocence was the result of the growth of rajasic individuality in his mind which led him to assert his own will and desires and disobey the law imposed on him by an external Power. In this first stage of his evolution he is not guided by a law within himself, but by prohibitions which his environment imposes on him without his either understanding or caring to understand the reason for their imposition. Certain things are forbidden to him, and it is as much a necessity for him to refrain from them as to refrain from putting his hand in the fire lest he should be burned; all others are allowed to him and he does them freely without questioning whether, apart from their legality, they are bad or good. Sin comes by disobedience and disobedience by the assertion of an inner standard as against the external standard hitherto obeyed; but it is still a standard not of right and wrong, but of licit and illicit. "What I desire, what my individual nature demands, should be allowed me", reasons the rajasic man; the struggle is between an external negation and an internal assertion, not between two conflicting internal assertions. But once the former begins, the latter must in time follow; the physical conflict must create its psychical counterpart. From the opposition of punished and unpunished evolves the opposition of licit and illicit;

from the opposition of licit and illicit evolves the opposition of right and wrong. Originally the sanction which punishes or spares, allows or disallows, approves or disapproves, is external and social; society is the individual's judge. Finally, in the higher stage of evolution, the sanction is internal and individual; the individual is his own judge. The indulgence of individual desire in disobedience to a general law is the origin of sin.

With the rejection of this theory of an originally perfect humanity, the tradition of an infallible inner conscience which reflects a divinely-ordained canon of absolute right and wrong must be also rejected. If morality is a growth, the moral sense is also a growth and conscience is nothing more than activity of the moral sense, the individual as judge of his own actions. If conscience be a divine and infallible judge, it must be the same in all men; but we know perfectly well that it is not. The conscience of the Red Indian finds nothing immoral in murder and torture; the conscience of the modern civilised man vehemently condemns them. Even in the same man conscience is an uncertain and capricious quantity changing and deciding inconsistently under the influence of time, place and circumstances. The conscience of one age or country varies from the conscience of another age or country. It is therefore contrary to all experience to assert the divinity or infallibility of conscience. A man must be guided ordinarily by his moral sense, not because it is infallible or perfect, but because moral growth depends upon development from within and to this end the independent use of the "inner monitor", when once evolved, is the first necessity.

Ish and Jagat

The Isha Upanishad in its very inception goes straight to the root of the problem the Seer has set out to resolve; he starts at once with the two supreme terms of which our existence seems to be composed and in a monumental phrase, cast into the bronze of eight brief but sufficient words, he confronts them and sets them in their right & eternal relation. Ishá vásyam idam sarvam yat kincha jagatyám jagat. Ish and Jagat, God and Nature, Spirit and World, are the two poles of being between which our consciousness revolves. This double or biune reality is existence, is life, is man. The Eternal seated sole in all His creations occupies the ever-shifting Universe and its innumerable whorls and knots of motion, each called by us an object, in all of which one Lord is multitudinously the Inhabitant. From the brilliant suns to the rose and the grain of dust, from the God and the Titan in their dark or their luminous worlds to man and the insect that he crushes thoughtlessly under his feet, everything is His temple and mansion. He is the veiled deity in the temple, the open householder in the mansion; for Him and His enjoyment of the multiplicity & the unity of His being, all were created and they have no other reason for their existence. For habitation by the Lord is all this, everything whatsoever that is moving thing in her that moves.

The problem of a perfect life upon earth, a life free from those ills of which humanity seems to be the eternal and irredeemable prisoner & victim, can only be solved, in the belief of the Vedantins, if we go back to the fundamental nature of existence; for there alone can we find the root of the evil and the hint of the remedy. They are here in the two words Ish & Jagat. The Inhabitant is the Lord; in this truth, in the knowledge of it by our minds, in the realisation of it by our whole nature and being is the key of escape for the victim of evil, the prisoner of limitation

and death. On the other hand, Nature is a fleeting & inconstant motion preserved by the harmonious fixity of the laws which govern its particular motions. This subjection and inconstancy of Nature is the secret of our bondage, death, limitation and suffering. We who entangle ourselves in the modalities of Nature, must, if we would escape from her confounding illusions, realise the other pole of our existence, unqualified Spirit or God. By rising to the God within us, we become free, liberated from the bondage of the world and the snare of death. For God is freedom, God is immortality. Mrityum tárta amritam asnute. Crossing over death, we enjoy immortality.

This relation of Nature & Spirit, World & God, on which the Seer fixes, Nature the mansion, God the occupant, is their practical, not their essential relation. Conscious existence is Brahman, single & indivisible; Spirit & Nature, World and God are one; anejad ekam manaso javíyas,— they are One unmoving swifter than mind. But for life, whether bound or free, and for the movement from bondage to freedom, this One must always be conceived as a double or biune term in which God is the reverse side of Nature, Nature the obverse side of God. The distinction has been made by Spirit itself in its own being for the object which the Seer expresses in the single word *vásyam*. God has thrown out His own being in the spatial & temporal movement of the Universe, building up forms in His mobile extended self-consciousness which He conceives as different from His still & eternal, regarding, occupying & enjoying self-consciousness, so that He as soul, the subject, may have an objective existence which it can regard, occupy & enjoy, the householder of its self-mansion, the god of its self-temple, the king of its self-empire. In this cosmic relation of Spirit to Nature the word *Ishá* expresses the perfect and absolute freedom, eternally uninfringed, with which the Spirit envisages its objects and occupies its kingdom. World is not a material shell in which Spirit is bound, nor is Spirit a roving breath of things ensnared to which the object it inspires is a prison-house. The indwelling God is the lord of His creations and not their servant or prisoner; as a householder is lord of his dwelling-places to enter them and go forth from them

at his will and to pull down what he has built up whenever it ceases to please him or be serviceable to his needs, so the Spirit is free to enter or go forth from its bodies and has power to build, destroy and rebuild whatever it pleases in this universe. The very universe itself It is free at any moment to destroy and recreate. God is not bound; He is the free and unopposed master of His creations.

This word Ishá, the Lord, is placed designedly at the opening of this great strain of Vedantic thought to rule as with a master-tone all its rhythms. It is the key to everything that follows in the eighteen verses of the Upanishad. Not only does it contradict all mechanical theories of the Universe and assert the preexistence, omnipotence, majesty and freedom of the transcendent Soul of things within, but by identifying the Lord of the universe with the Spirit in all bodies it asserts the greatness, freedom and secret omnipotence of the soul of man that seems here to wander thus painfully entangled and bewildered. Behind all the veils of his nature, the soul in man also is master, not slave, not bound, but free. Grief, death and limitation are instruments of some activity it is here to fulfil for its own delight, and the user is not bound to his instruments; he can modify them, he can reject, he can change. If, then, we appear as though bound, by the fixed nature of our minds and bodies, by the nature of the visible universe, by the dualities of grief & joy, pleasure and pain, by the chain of cause and effect or by any other chain, shackle or tie whatsoever, the bondage is a semblance and can be nothing more. It is Maya, a willed illusion of bondage, or it is Lila, a self-chosen play at bondage. Like a child pretending to be this or that and identifying itself with its role the Purusha, this divine inhabitant within, may seem to forget his freedom, but even when he forgets, the freedom is still there, self-existent, therefore inalienable. Never lost except in appearance, it is recoverable even in appearance. The game of the world-existence is not a game of bondage alone, but equally of freedom & the liberation from bondage.

The Secret of the Isha

It is now several thousands of years since men ceased to study Veda and Upanishad for the sake of Veda or Upanishad. Ever since the human mind in India, more & more intellectualised, always increasingly addicted to the secondary process of knowledge by logic & intellectual ratiocination, increasingly drawn away from the true & primary processes of knowledge by experience and direct perception, began to dislocate & dismember the manysided harmony of ancient Vedic truth & parcel it out into schools of thought & systems of metaphysics, its preoccupation has been rather with the later opinions of Sutras & Bhashyas than with the early truth of Scripture. Veda & Vedanta ceased to be guides to knowledge & became merely mines & quarries from which convenient texts might be extracted, regardless of context, to serve as weapons in the polemic disputes of metaphysicians. The inconvenient texts were ignored or explained away by distortion of their sense or by depreciation of their value. Those that neither helped nor hindered the polemical purpose of the exegete were briefly paraphrased or often left in a twilit obscurity. For the language of the Vedantic writers ceased to be understood; their figures, symbols of thought, shades of expression became antique & unintelligible. Hence passages which, when once fathomed, reveal a depth of knowledge & delicacy of subtle thought almost miraculous in its wealth & quality, strike the casual reader today as a mass of childish, obscure & ignorant fancies characteristic of an unformed and immature thinking. Rubbish & babblings of humanity's nonage an eminent Western scholar has termed them not knowing that it was not the text but his understanding of it that was rubbish & the babblings of ignorance. Worst of all, the spiritual & psychological experiences of the Vedic seekers were largely lost to India as the obscurations of the Iron Age grew upon her,

as her knowledge contracted, her virtue dwindled & her old spiritual valiancy lost its daring & its nerve. Not altogether lost indeed for its sides of knowledge & practice still lived in cave & hermitage, its sides of feeling & emotion, narrowed by a more exclusive & self-abandoned fervour, remained, quickened even in the throbbing intensity of the Bhakti Marga and the violent inner joys of countless devotees. But even here it remained dim & obscure, shorn of its fullness, dimmed in its ancient and radiant purity. Yet we think, however it may be with the Vedas we have understood & possess the Upanishads! We have understood a few principal texts & even those imperfectly; but of the mass of the Upanishads we understand less than we do of the Egyptian hieroglyphics and of the knowledge these great writings hold enshrined we possess less than we do of the wisdom of the ancient Egyptians. Dabhrām evapi twam veththa Brahmano rupam!

I have said that the increasing intellectualisation of the Indian mind has been responsible for this great national loss. Our forefathers who discovered or received Vedic truth, did not arrive at it either by intellectual speculation or by logical reasoning. They attained it by actual & tangible experience in the spirit,—by spiritual & psychological observation, as we may say, & what they thus experienced, they understood by the instrumentality of the intuitive reason. But a time came when men felt an imperative need to give an account to themselves & to others of this supreme & immemorial Vedic truth in the terms of logic, in the language of intellectual ratiocination. For the maintenance of the intuitive reason as the ordinary instrument of knowledge demands as its basis an iron moral & intellectual discipline, a colossal disinterestedness of thinking,—otherwise the imagination and the wishes pollute the purity of its action, replace, dethrone it and wear flamboyantly its name & mask; Vedic knowledge begins to be lost & the practice of life & symbol based upon it are soon replaced by formalised action & unintelligent rite & ceremony. Without tapasya there can be no Veda. This was the course that the stream of thought followed among us, according to the sense of our Indian tradition. The capacity for tapasya belongs to the Golden Age of man's fresh

virility; it fades as humanity ages & the cycle takes its way towards the years that are of Iron, and with tapasya, the basis, divine knowledge, the superstructure, also collapses or dwindle. The place of truth is then taken by superstition, irrational error that takes its stand upon the place where truth lies buried builds its tawdry & fantastic palace of pleasure upon those concealed & consecrated foundations, & even uses the ruins of old truth as stones for its irregular building. But such an usurpation can never endure. For, since the need of man's being is truth & light, the divine law, whose chief article it is that no just demand of the soul shall remain always unsatisfied, raises up Reason to clear away Superstition. Reason arrives as the Angel of the Lord, armed with her sword of doubt & denial (for it is the nature of intellectual Reason that beyond truth of objective appearance she cannot confidently & powerfully affirm anything, but must always remain with regard to fundamental truth agnostic and doubtful, her highest word of affirmation "probably", her lowest "perhaps"),—comes & cuts away whatever she can, often losing herself in a fury of negation, denying superstition indeed, but doubting & denying also even Truth because it has been a foundation for superstition or formed with some of its stones part of the building. But at any rate she clears the field for sounder work; she makes tabula rasa for a more correct writing. The ancient Indian mind felt instinctively—I do not say it realised or argued consciously—the necessity, as the one way to avoid such a reign of negation, of stating to the intellectual reason so much of Vedic truth as could still be grasped and justifying it logically. The Six Darshanas were the result of this mighty labour. Buddhism, the inevitable rush of negation, came indeed but it was prevented from destroying spirituality as European negation destroyed it for a time in the eighteenth & nineteenth centuries by the immense & unshakeable hold the work of the philosophers had taken upon the Indian temperament. So firm was this grasp that even the great Masters of negation—for Brihaspati who affirmed matter was a child & weakling in denial compared with the Buddhists,—could not wholly divest themselves of this characteristic Indian

realisation that subjective experience is the basis of existence & the objective only an outward term of that existence.

But admirable & necessary as was this vast work of intellectual systemisation, subtle, self-grasped & successful beyond parallel, supreme glory as it is now held and highest attainment of Indian mentality, it had from the standpoint of Vedantic truth three capital disadvantages.

Chapters for a Work on the Isha Upanishad

[1]

The Isha Upanishad

The Puranic account supposes us to have left behind the last Satya period, the age of harmony, and to be now in a period of enormous breakdown, disintegration and increasing confusion in which man is labouring forward towards a new harmony which will appear when the spirit of God descends again upon mankind in the form of the Avatara called Kalki, destroys all that is lawless, dark and confused and establishes the reign of the saints, the Sadhus, those, that is to say,—if we take the literal meaning of the word Sadhu, who are strivers after perfection. Translated, again, into modern language—more rationalistic but, again, let me say, not necessarily more accurate—this would mean that the civilisation by which we live is not the result of a recent hotfooted gallop forward from the condition of the Caribbee and Hottentot, but the detritus and uncertain reformation of a great era of knowledge, balance and adjustment which lives for us only in tradition but in a universal tradition, the Golden Age, the Saturnia regna, of the West, our Satyayuga or age of the recovered Veda. What then are these savage races, these epochs of barbarism, these Animistic, Totemistic, Naturalistic and superstitious beliefs, these mythologies, these propitiatory sacrifices, these crude conditions of society? Partly, the Hindu theory would say, the ignorant & fragmentary survival of defaced & disintegrated beliefs & customs, originally deeper, simpler, truer than the modern,—even as a broken statue by Phidias or Praxiteles or a fragment of an Athenian dramatist is

The six chapters comprising this work have been numbered [1] to [6] by the editors. Sri Aurobindo's own chapter divisions have been reproduced as written in the manuscript.

at once simpler & nobler or more beautiful and perfect than the best work of the moderns,—partly, a reeling back into the beast, an enormous movement of communal atavism brought about by worldwide destructive forces in whose workings both Nature and man have assisted. Animism is the obscure memory of an ancient discipline which put us into spiritual communion with intelligent beings and forces living behind the veil of gross matter sensible to our limited material organs. Nature-worship is another side of the same ancient truth. Fetishism remembers barbarously the great Vedic dogma that God is everywhere and God is all and that the inert stone & stock, things mindless & helpless & crude, are also He; in them, too, there is the intelligent Force that has built the Himalayas, filled with its flaming glories the sun and arranged the courses of the planets. The mythologies are ancient traditions, allegories & symbols. The savage and the cannibal are merely the human beast, man hurled down from his ascent and returning from the sattwic or intelligent state into the tamasic, crumbling into the animal and almost into the clod by that disintegration through inertia which to the Hindu idea is the ordinary road to disappearance into the vague & rough material of Nature out of which we were made. The ascent of man, according to this theory, is not a facile and an assured march; on the contrary, it is a steep, a strenuous effort, the ascent difficult, though the periods of attainment & rest yield to us ages of a golden joy, the descent frightfully easy. Even in such a descent something is preserved, unless indeed we are entirely cut off from the great centres of civilisation, all energetic spirits withdrawn from our midst and we ourselves wholly occupied with immediate material needs. An advanced race, losing its intelligent classes and all its sources of intelligence and subjected to these conditions, would be in danger of descending to the same level as the Maori or the Basuto. On the other hand individuals of the most degraded race — a son of African cannibals, for instance — could under proper conditions develop the intellectual activity and high moral standard of the most civilised races. The spirit of man, according to the Vedic idea, is capable of everything wherever it is placed; it has an infinite capacity both for the

highest and the lowest; but because he submits to the matter in which he dwells and matter is dominated by its surrounding contacts, therefore his progress is slow, uncertain and liable to these astounding relapses. Such is the Hindu explanation of the world and, so expressed, freed from the Puranic language & symbols which make it vivid & concrete to us, I can find nothing in it that is irrational. Western thought with its dogmatic materialism, its rigid insistence on its own hastily formed idea of evolution, its premature arrangements of the eras of earth, animal and man, may be impatient of it, but I see no reason why we Hindus, heirs of that ancient and wise tradition, should so long as there is no definite disproof rule it out of court in obedience to Western opinion. We can afford at least to suspend judgment. Modern research is yet in its infancy. We, a calm, experienced & thoughtful nation, always deep & leisurely thinkers, ought not to be carried away by its eager and immature conclusions.

I will take this Puranic theory as a working hypothesis and suppose at least that there was a great Vedic age of advanced civilisation broken afterwards by Time and circumstance and of which modern Hinduism presents us only some preserved, collected or redeveloped fragments; I shall suppose that the real meaning & justification of Purana, Tantra, Itihasa & Yoga can only be discovered by a rediscovery of their old foundation and harmonising secret in the true sense of the Veda, and in this light I shall proceed, awaiting its confirmation or refutation and standing always on the facts of Veda, Vedanta & Yoga. We need not understand by an advanced civilisation a culture or a society at all resembling what our modern notions conceive to be the only model of a civilised society — the modern European; neither need or indeed can we suppose it to have been at all on the model of the modern Hindu. It is probable that this ancient culture had none of those material conveniences on which we vaunt ourselves, — but it may have had others of a higher, possibly even a more potent kind. (Perfection of the memory and the non-accumulation of worthless books might have dispensed with the necessity of large libraries. Other means of receiving information and the habit of thinking for oneself might have

prevented the growth of anything corresponding to the newspaper,— it is even possible that the men of those times would have looked down on that crude and vulgar organ. Possibly the power of telepathy organised — it seems to persist disorganised, — in some savage races, — might make the telegraph, even the wireless telegraph unnecessary.) The social customs of the time might seem strange or even immoral to our modern sanskaras, — just as, no doubt, many of ours will seem incredible and shocking to future ages. The organisation of Government may have been surprisingly different from our own and yet not inconsistent with civilisation; there may have been a simple communism without over-government, large armies or wars of aggression, or even an entire absence of government, a human freedom & natural coordination such as Tolstoy & other European idealists have seen again in their dreams,— for it is at least conceivable that, given certain spiritual conditions which would constitute, in the language of religion, a kingdom of Heaven on earth or a government of God among men, the elaborate arrangements of modern administration,— whose whole basis is human depravity & the needs of an Iron Age,— would become unnecessary. The old tradition runs that in the Satyayuga there was neither the desire nor the need of modern devices; the organised arrangement of men's actions, duties and institutions by an external compulsion representing the community's collective will began in the Bronze Age with the institution of government in Kingship. The Vishnu Purana tells us, conformably with this idea, that Vishnu in the Satya incarnates as Yajna, that is to say as the divine Master in man to whom men offer up all their actions as a sacrifice, reserving nothing for an egoistic satisfaction, but in the Treta he descends [as] the Chakravarti Raja, the King & standing forward as sustainer of society's righteousness, its sword of justice & defence, its preserver of the dharma gathers a number of human communities under his unifying sway. But it is unnecessary to my present purpose to consider these speculations, for which much might be said and many indications collected. It is sufficient that an ancient society might differ in every respect from our modern communities and yet be called advanced if it possessed

a deep, scientific and organised knowledge and if it synthetised in the light of large & cultured conceptions all human institutions, relations and activities. This is all with which I am here and at present concerned. For I have only to inquire whether we have not at any rate some part of such a profound and organised knowledge in the surviving Upanishads and the still extant Sanhitas of the Veda;— written long afterwards, mostly in the Dwapara & Kali when, chiefly, men sought the aid of the written word & the material device to eke out their failing powers & their declining virility of mind & body, we need expect from them no picture of that ancient civilisation, nor even the whole of its knowledge, for the great mass of that knowledge has been lost to us with the other numberless Sanhitas of Veda. The whole of it we cannot reconstitute, since a great mass of Vedic material has been lost to us, possibly beyond hope of recovery until Vishnu descends once more as the Varaha into the sea of oblivion and lifts up the lost Veda on his mighty tusks into the light of our waking consciousness and on to the firm soil of our externalised knowledge.

Not therefore the conception of semi-savages or half civilised philosophers, but the *disjecta membra* of a profound spiritual culture, a high and complex Yogic discipline and a well-founded theory of our relations with the unseen is what we shall expect in Veda & Vedanta. It is here that Comparative Philology intervenes. For it professes to have fixed for the Vedas a meaning which will bring them well within the savage theory and for the Vedanta an ambiguous character, half of it barbarous foolishness and half of it sublime philosophy such as we might expect from a highly gifted nation emerging out of a very primitive culture into a premature and immature activity of the higher intellectual faculties. A worship of the personified Sun, Moon, Fire, Wind, Dawn, Sky and other natural phenomena by means of a system of animal sacrifices, this is the Veda; high religious thinking & profound Monistic ideas forcibly derived from Vedic Nature-worship marred by the crudest notions about physics, psychology, cosmology and material origins & relations generally and mixed up with a great mass

of unintelligible mystical jargon, this is the Upanishads. If that be so, our preoccupation with these works is misplaced. We must put them away as lumber of the past, interesting records of the beginnings and crude origins of religion and philosophy but records only, not authorities for our thought or lamps for our steps in life. We must base ourself not on the Vedas and Upanishads, but, as for that matter many of us are well inclined to do, on Badarayana, Kapila, Shankara and Buddha, not on the ancient Rishis but on the modern philosophers and logicians.

Such an abandonment is only obligatory on us after we have fixed the precise scientific value of these philological conclusions, the view of this modern naturalistic interpretation of which so much is made. We are too apt in India to take the European sciences at their own valuation. The Europeans themselves are often more sceptical. In ethnology the evidence of philology is increasingly disregarded. The ethnologists tend to disregard altogether, for example, the philological distinction between Aryan and Dravidian with its accompanying corollary of an immigration from the sub-Arctic regions or the regions of the Hindu-Kush and to affirm the existence of a single homogeneous Indo-Afghan race in immemorial occupation of the peninsula. Many great scientific thinkers deny the rank of a science to philology or are so much impressed by the failure of this branch of nineteenth-century inquiry that they doubt or deny even the possibility of a science of language. We need not therefore yield a servile assent to the conclusions of the philologists from any fear of being denounced as deniers of modern enlightenment and modern science; for we shall be in excellent company, supported by the authority of protagonists of that enlightenment and science.

When we examine the work of the philologists, our suspicions will receive an ample confirmation; for we shall find no evidence of any true scientific method, but only a few glimpses of it eked out by random speculation sometimes of a highly ingenious and forcible character but sometimes also in the last degree hasty and flimsy. A long time ago European scholars comparing what are now called the Indo-Aryan tongues were struck

by the close resemblance amounting to identity of common domestic and familiar terms in these languages. "Pitar, patēr, pater, vater, father", "mâtar, mêtêr, mater, mutter, mother", — here, they thought, was the seed of a new science and the proof of an affiliation of different languages to our parent source which might lead to the explanation of the whole development of human speech. And indeed there was a coincidence & a discovery which might have been as important to human knowledge as the fall of Newton's apple and the discovery of gravitation. But this great possibility never flowered into actuality. On the contrary the after results were disappointingly meagre. One or two bye-laws of the modification of sounds as between the Aryan languages were worked out, the identity of a certain number of terms as between these kindred tongues well-established and a few theories hazarded or made out as to the classification not scientific but empirical of the various extant dialects of man. No discovery of the laws governing the structure of language, no clear light on the associations between sound and idea, no wide, careful and searching analysis of the origins and development even of the Aryan tongues resulted from this brilliant beginning. Philology is an enquiry that has failed to result in the creation of a science.

In its application to the Vedas modern philology has followed two distinct methods, the philological method proper and the scholastic, derivation of words and the observation of the use of words. From comparative philology in its present imperfect & rudimentary condition all that Vedic research can gain is the discovery of a previously unsuspected identity of meaning as between some peculiarly Vedic words or forms or the Vedic use of Sanscrit words or forms and the sense of the same vocable or form, whether intact or modified, in other Aryan tongues. Wherever Philology goes beyond this limit, its work is conjectural, not scientific and cannot command from us an implicit assent. Unfortunately, also, European scholars permit themselves a licence of speculation and suggestion which may sometimes be fruitful but which renders their work continually unconvincing. I may instance — my limits forbid more detail

— Max Muller's extraordinary dealings in his Preface to the Rig Veda with the Vedic form uloka (for loka). He derives this ancient form without an atom or even a shadow of proof or probability from an original uruloka or urvaloka, rejecting cavalierly the obvious & fruitful Tamil parallel uloka — the same word with the same meaning — on the strength of an argument which proceeds from his ignorance of the Tamil tongue and its peculiar phonetic principles. The example is typical. These scholars are on firmer ground when they attempt to establish new meanings of words by legitimate derivation from Sanscrit roots and careful observation of the sense suitable to a particular word in the various contexts in which it occurs. But here also we may be permitted to differ from their arguments and reject their conclusions. For their work is conjectural; not only is the new meaning assigned to particular words conjectural but the interpretation of the context on which its correctness depends is also very often either doubtful or conjectural. We are moving in a field of uncertainty and the imposing careful method and systematisation of the European scholars must not blind us to the fact that it is a method of conjecture and a systematisation of uncertainties.

Is a more certain application of philology to the Veda at all possible? I believe it is. I believe that by following a different clue we can arrive at least at the beginnings of a true science which will explain in its principles & details the origin, structure and development first of the Sanscrit, and then of the other Aryan & Dravidian tongues, if not of human speech generally in its various families. The scholars erred because they took the identity “pitār, pater, vater, father” as the master-clue to the identities of these languages. But this resemblance of familiar terms is only an incident, a tertiary result of a much deeper, more radical, more fruitful identity. The real clue is not yet discovered, but I believe that it is discoverable. Until, however, it is found and followed up, a task which demands great leisure and a gigantic industry, I am content to insist on the inconclusiveness of the initial work of the philologists. I repeat, the common assumption in Europe and among English-educated Indians that the researches of European

scholarship have fixed for us correctly, conclusively & finally the meaning of Veda and the origin & process of development of Vedanta, is an assumption not yet justified and until it is justified no one is bound by it who does not choose to be bound. The field is still open, the last word still remains to be pronounced. I refuse, therefore, at this stage, my assent to the European idea of Veda and Vedanta and hold myself free to propound another interpretation and a more searching theory.

[2]

Chapter []¹

I have combated the supremacy of the European theory — not seeking actually to refute it but to open the door for other possibilities, because the notions generated by it are a stumbling block to the proper approach to Vedanta. Under their influence we come to the Upanishads with a theory of their origin and in a spirit hostile to the sympathetic insight to which alone they will render up their secret. The very sense of the word Vedanta indicates clearly the aim of the seers who composed the Upanishads as well as the idea they entertained, — the true & correct idea, I believe, of their relations to the Veda. They were, they thought, recording a fulfilment of Vedic knowledge, giving shape to the culmination to which the sacred hymns pointed, and bringing out the inner and essential meaning of the practical details of the Karmakanda. The word, Upanishad, itself meant, I would suggest, originally not a session of speculative inquirers (the ingenious & plausible German derivation) but an affirmation and arrangement of essential truths & principles. The sense, it would almost seem, was at first general but afterwards, by predominant practice, applied exclusively to the Brahmi Upanishad, in which we have the systematisation particularly of the Brahmavidya. In any case such a systematisation of Vedic Knowledge was what these Rishis thought themselves to be effecting. But the

¹ Sri Aurobindo did not write a chapter number. — Ed.

modern theory denies the claim and compels us to approach the Upanishads from a different standpoint and both to judge and to interpret them by the law of a mentality which is as far as the two poles asunder from the mentality of the writers. We shall therefore certainly fail to understand the workings of their minds even if we are right in our history.

But I am convinced that the claim was neither a pretence nor an error. I believe the Vedas to hold a sense which neither mediaeval India nor modern Europe has grasped, but which was perfectly plain to the early Vedantic thinkers. Max Muller has understood one thing by the Vedic mantras, Sayana has understood another, Yaska had his own interpretations of their antique diction, but none of them understood what Yajnavalkya and Ajatashatru understood. We shall yet have to go back from the Nature-worship and henotheism of the Europeans, beyond the mythology and ceremonial of Sayana, beyond even the earlier intimations of Yaska and recover — nor is it the impossible task it seems — the knowledge of Yajnavalkya and Ajatashatru. It is because we do not understand the Vedas that three fourths of the Upanishads are a sealed book to us. Even of the little we think we can understand, much has been insecurely grasped and superficially comprehended, so that these sublimest of all Scriptures have become, latterly, more often a ground for philosophic wranglings than an illumination to the soul. For want of this key profound scholars have fumbled and for want of this guidance great thinkers gone astray, — Max Muller emitted his wonderful utterance about the babblings of humanity's nonage, Shankara left so much of his text unexplained or put it by as inferior truth for the ignorant, Vivekananda found himself compelled to admit his non-comprehension of the Vedantins' cosmological ideas & mention them doubtfully as curious speculations. It is only Veda that can give us a complete insight into Vedanta. Only when we thoroughly know the great Vedic ideas in their totality shall we be able entirely to appreciate the profound, harmonious and grandiose system of thought of our early forefathers. By ignoring the Vedas we lose all but a few rays of the glorious sun of Vedanta.

But whether this view is sound or unsound, whether we decide that the sense of those ancient writings was best known to the ancient Hindus or to the modern Europeans, to Yajnavalkya or to Max Muller, two things are certain that the Vedantic Rishis believed themselves to be in possession of the system of their Vedic predecessors and that they surely did not regard this system as merely a minute collection of ritual practices or merely an elaborate worship of material Nature-Powers. Minds that saw the world steadily as a whole, they did not repel that worship or disown that ritual. Surya was to them the god of the Sun; Agni they regarded as the master of fire; but they were not—and this is the important point—simply the god of the sun and simply the master of fire. They were not even merely a Something behind both, unknown & vague, although deep, mighty & subtle; but because of the nature & origin of the sun, Surya was also a god of a higher moral & spiritual function & Agni possessed of diviner & less palpable masteries. I will cite the single example of the Isha Upanishad in support of my point. The bulk of this poem is occupied with the solution of problems which involve the most abstruse and ultimate questions of metaphysics, ethics and psychology; yet after a series of profound and noble pronouncements on these deep problems the Upanishad turns, suddenly, without any consciousness of descent, without any lowering of tone to appeal with passion and power not to some Supernal Power but to Surya, to Agni. Is it to the earthly Fire and the material Sun that the Rishi lifts his mighty song? Does he pray to Surya to give him the warmth of his beams or to drive away night from the sky? Does he entreat Agni to nourish the sacrificial fire or to receive for the gods on his flaming tongues the clarified butter and the Soma-juice? Not even for a moment, not even by allusion; but rather to Surya to remove—from the sight of his mind—the distracting brilliance which veils from mankind the highest truth and form of things, to enable him to realise his perfect identity with God and to Agni to put aside this siege of the devious attractions of ignorance and desire and raise our kind to that sublime felicity reserved for purified souls. It is for the fulfilment of the loftiest spiritual ends

that he calls upon Surya; it is for support in the noblest moral victories that he appeals to Agni. This is not Helios Hyperion but another Vivusvan, master of this sun & its beams (that is also evident) but master too of the soul's illumination, sa no dhiyah prachodayat; this is not the limping blacksmith Hephaistos, but another Hiranyaretas, master no doubt of this fire and its helpful & consuming flames, but master also of purified & illuminated action and force, *hota kavikratuh satyas chitrasravastamah*—agnih purvebhir rishibhir idyo nutanair uta, the priest, the seer, the true, the full of rich inspirations, Agni adorable to the sages of the past, adorable to the great minds of today. Here is no lapse of a great philosophic mind into barbarous polytheistic superstition, no material and primitive Nature-worship, no extraordinary intellectual compromise and vague henotheism. We are in the presence of an established system of spiritual knowledge and an ordered belief in which matter, mind and spirit are connected and coordinated by the common action of great divine powers. When we know according to what idea of cosmic principle Surya and Agni could be at once material gods and great spiritual helpers, we shall have some clue to the system of the early Vedantins and at the same time, as I believe, to the genuine significance and spiritual value of that ancient & eternal bedrock of Hinduism, the Vedas.

But European scholars have their own explanation of the development of this remarkable speculative system out of the superstitious ritual and unintelligent worship which is all they find in the Vedas and, since the utmost respect in intellectual matters ought to be paid to the king of the day even when we seek to persuade him to abdicate, I must deal with it before I close this introductory portion & pass to the methods & substance of the Upanishads. It is held that there was a development of religious thought from polytheism to henotheism and from henotheism to pantheism which we can trace to some extent in the Vedas themselves and of which the Upanishads are the culmination. Some, notably the Indian disciples of European scholarship—interpreting these ancient movements by the light of our very different modern intellectuality or pushed by the

besetting Occidental impulse to search in our Indian origins for parallels to European history — even assert that the Upanishads represent a protestant and rationalistic movement away from the cumbrous ritual, the polytheistic superstition and the blind primitive religiosity of the Vedas and towards a final rationalistic culmination in the six Darshanas, in the agnosticism of Buddha, in the atheism of Charvaka & in the loftiness of the modern Adwaita philosophy. It would almost seem as if this old Indian movement contains in itself at one & the same time the old philosophic movement of [the Greeks], Luther's Protestant reformation and the glories of modern free thought.² These are indeed exhilarating notions and they have been attractively handled — some of them can be read, developed with great lucidity and charm in that remarkable compilation of European discoveries and fallacies, M^r Romesh Chandra Dutt's History of Ancient Indian Civilisation. Nothing indeed can be more ingenuous and inspiriting, nothing more satisfactory at once to the patriotic imagination and our natural human yearning for the reassuringly familiar. But are such ideas as sound as they are ingenuous? are they as true as they are exhilarating? One may surely be permitted to entertain some doubt! I profess myself wholly unable to find any cry of revolutionary protest, any note of rationalism in the Upanishads. I can find something one might almost call rationalism in Shankara's commentary — but an Indian rationalism entirely different in spirit from its European counterpart. But in the Upanishads the whole method is suprarational; it is the method of intuition and revelation expressed in a language and with a substance that might be characterised rather as the language of mysticism than of rationality. These sages do not protest against polytheism; they affirm the gods.

² *The following sentence was written in the top margin of the manuscript page. Its place of insertion was not marked:*

One would sometimes almost think that this upheaval of thought anticipated at once Plato & Empedocles, Luther, Erasmus and Melanchthon, Kant, Hegel & Berkeley, Hume, Haeckel & Huxley — that we have at one fell blast Graeco-Roman philosophy, Protestant Reformation & modern rationalistic tendency anticipated by the single movement from Janaka to Buddha.

These spiritual Titans do not protest against ritual and ceremony, they insist on the necessity of ritual and ceremony. It is true that they deny emphatically the sufficiency of material sacrifices for the attainment of the highest; but where does the Rigveda itself assert any such efficacy? From this single circumstance no protestant movement against ritual and sacrifice can be inferred, but at the most we can imagine rather than deduce a spiritual movement embracing while it exceeded ritual and sacrifice. But even this seems to me more than we can either infer or hazard without more light on the significance of early Vedic worship & the attitude on the subject of the Vedic Rishis. It is also true that certain scattered expressions have been caught at by Theistic minds as significant of a denial of polytheistic worship. I have heard the phrase, nedam yad idam upasate, not this to which men devote themselves, of the Kena Upanishad given this sense by reading the modern sense of upasana, worship, into the old Vedantic text. It can easily be shown from other passages in the Upanishads that upasate here has not the sense of religious worship, but quite another significance. We have enough to be proud of in our ancient thought & speculation without insisting on finding an exact anticipation of modern knowledge or modern thought & religion in these early Scriptures written thousands of years ago in the dim backwards of our history.

The theory of a natural and progressive development of Pantheistic ideas is far more rational and probable than this adhyaropa of European ideas & history onto the writings of the ancient world. But that theory also I cannot accept. Because the clearly philosophical passages in the Vedas,—those that are recognised as such,—occur in the later hymns,—in which the language is nearest to modern Sanscrit,—it is generally supposed that such a development is proved. It is, however, at least possible that we do not find philosophical ideas in the more ancient hymns merely because we are not mentally prepared to find them there. Not understanding their obscure and antique diction we interpret conjecturally with a confidence born of modern theories, led by our preconceived ideas to grasp only at what, we conceive, ought to be the primitive notions of a half-savage

humanity. Any indications of more developed religious motives, if they exist, will from this method get no chance of revealing themselves & no quarter even if they insisted on lifting their luminous heads out of the waves of oblivion. In hymns with an almost modern diction, we have on the contrary no choice but to recognise their presence.

We cannot then say that there was no philosophy in the earlier & obscurer hymns unless we are sure that we have rightly interpreted their difficult language. But there are also certain positive considerations. The Vedantic thinkers positively believed that they were proceeding on a Vedic basis. They quote Vedic authority, appeal to Vedic ideas, evidently thinking themselves standing on the secure rock of Veda. Either, then, they were indulging in a disingenuous fiction, inconsistent with spiritual greatness & that frank honesty, arjavam, on which the nation prided itself,—either they were consciously innovating under a pretence of Vedic orthodoxy or else quite honestly they were reading their own notions into a text which meant something entirely different, as has often been done even by great & sincere intellects. The first suggestion — it has, I think, been made, — is inadmissible except on conclusive evidence; the second deserves consideration.

If it were only a matter of textual citation or a change of religious notions, there would be no great difficulty in accepting the theory of an unconscious intellectual fiction. But I find in the Upanishads abounding indications of a preexisting philosophical system, minute & careful at least & to my experience profound as well as elaborate. Where is the indication of any other than a Vedic origin for this well-appointed metaphysics, science, cosmology, psychology? Everywhere it is the text of the Veda that is alluded to or quoted, the knowledge of Veda that is presupposed. The study of Veda is throughout considered as the almost indispensable preliminary for the understanding of Vedanta. How came so colossal, persistent & all-pervading a mistake to have been committed by thinkers of so high a capacity? Or when, under what impulsion & by whom was this great & careful system originated & developed? Where shall

we find any documents of that speculation,— its initial steps, its gradual clarifying, its stronger & more assured progress? The Upanishads are usually supposed themselves to be such documents. But the longer I study these profound compositions, the less I feel able to accept this common and very natural hypothesis. If we do not prejudge their more recondite ideas as absurd, if we try sympathetically to enter into the thoughts & beliefs of these Rishis, to understand what precise facts or experiences stand behind their peculiar language, especially if we can renew those experiences by the system they themselves used, the system of Yoga,— a method still open to us— it will, I think, very soon dawn upon our minds that these works are of a very different nature from the speculative experiments they are generally supposed to be. They represent neither a revolt nor a fresh departure. We shall find that we are standing at a goal, not assisting at a starting-point. The form of the Upanishads is the mould not of an initial speculation but of an ultimate thinking. It is a consummation, not a beginning, the soul of an existing body, not the breath of life for a body yet to come into being. Line after line, passage after passage indicates an unexpressed metaphysical, scientific or psychological knowledge which the author thinks himself entitled to take for granted, just as a modern thinker addressing educated men on the ultimate generalisations of Science takes for granted their knowledge of the more important data and ideas accepted by modern men. All this mass of thought so taken for granted must have had a previous existence and history. It is indeed possible that it was developed between the time of the Vedas and the appearance of these Vedantic compositions but left behind it no substantial literary trace of its passage and progress. But it is also possible that the Vedas themselves when properly understood, contain these beginnings or even most of the separate data of these early mental sciences. It is possible that the old teachers of Vedanta were acting quite rationally & understood their business better than we understand it for them when they expected a knowledge of Veda from their students, sometimes even insisting on this preliminary knowledge, not dogmatically,

not by a blind tradition, but because the Veda contained that basis of experimental knowledge upon which the generalisations of Vedanta were built. There is a chance, a considerable chance —I must lay stress again and more strongly on a suggestion already hazarded,— that minds so much closer to the Vedas in time and in the possibility of spiritual affinity may have known better the meaning of their religion than the inhabitant of different surroundings and of another world of thought speculating millenniums afterwards in the light of possibly fanciful Greek and German analogies. So far as I have been able to study & to penetrate the meaning of the Rigvedic hymns, it seems to me that the Europeans are demonstrably wrong in laying so predominant a stress on the material aspects of the Vedic gods. I find Varuna and Mitra to be mainly moral and not material powers; Surya, Agni, Indra have great psychical functions; even Sarasvati, in whom the scholars insist on seeing, wherever they can, an Aryan river, presents herself as a moral and intellectual agency, — “Pâvakâ nah Sarasvatî Vâjebhir vâjinîvatî, Yajnam vashtu *dhiyâvasuh*. Chodayitî sônrîtânâm Chetantî sumatînâm, Yajnam dadhe Sarasvatî. Maho arnas Sarasvatî Prachetayati ketunâ, *dhiyo visvâ virâjati*.” If we accept the plain meaning of the very plain & simple words italicised, we are in the presence not of personified natural phenomena, but of a great purifying, strengthening and illuminating goddess. But every word in the passage, pavaka, yajnam dadhe, maho arnas, ketuna, it seems to me, has a moral or intellectual significance. It would be easy to multiply passages of this kind. I am even prepared to suggest that the Vritras of the Veda (for the Sruti speaks not of a single Vrita but of many) are not — at least in many hymns — forces either of cloud or of drought, but Titans of quite another & higher order. The insight of Itihasa and Purana in these matters informed by old tradition seems to me often more correct than the conjectural scholarship of the Europeans. But there is an even more important truth than the high moral and spiritual significance of the Vedic gods and the Vedic religion which results to my mind from a more careful & unbiased study of the Rigveda. We shall find that the moral functions assigned to these gods are

arranged not on a haphazard, poetic or mythological basis, but in accordance with a careful, perhaps even a systematised introspective psychology and that at every step the details suggested agree with the experiences of the practical psychology which has gone in India from time immemorial by the name of Yoga. The line Maho Arnas Sarasvati prachetayati ketuna dhiyo visva virajati is to the Yогin a profound and at the same time lucid, accurate and simple statement of a considerable Yogic truth and most important Yogic experience. The psychological theory & principle involved, a theory unknown to Europe and obscured in later Hinduism, depends on a map of human psychology which is set forth in its grand lines in the Upanishads. If I am right, we have here an illuminating fact of the greatest importance to the Hindu religion, a fact which will light up, I am certain, much in the Veda that European scholarship has left obscure and will provide our modern study of the development of Hindu Civilisation with a scientific basis and a principle of unbroken continuity; we may find the earliest hymns of the Veda linked in identity of psychological experience to the modern utterances of Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna. Meanwhile the theory I have suggested of the relations of Veda to Vedanta receives, I contend, from these Vedic indications a certain character of actuality.

But I have to leave aside for the present these great & interesting but difficult questions. Although I believe the knowledge of Veda to be requisite for a full understanding of Vedanta, although I have considered it necessary to lay great stress on that relation, I shall myself in this book follow a different method. I shall confine my inquiry principally to the evidence of the Upanishads themselves and use them to shed their light on the Veda, instead of using the light of the written Veda to illumine the Upanishads. The amount & quality of truth I shall arrive at by this process may be inferior in fullness and restricted in quantity; instead of the written mantras, authoritative to many and open to all, I shall have to appeal largely to Yogic experiences as yet accessible only to a few; but I shall have in compensation this advantage that I shall proceed from the less disputed to the more

disputed, from the nearer & better known to the obscurer & more remote, advancing, therefore, by a path not so liberally set with thorns and strewn with impeding boulders. By the necessity of the times my object must be different from that of the mighty ones who went before us. The goal Shankara and other thinkers had in view was the intellectual assurance of the Brahmvada; ours will be the knowledge of the Veda. Mighty Jnanis and Bhaktas, they sought in the Upanishads only those metaphysical truths which base upon reason and Vedic authority the search for the Highest; all else they disregarded as mean or of little moment. From those secure & noble heights, facile of ascent to our ancestors, we of the present generation are compelled to descend. Obliged by the rationalistic assault to enquire into much which they, troubled only by internal & limited disputes, by Buddhism & Sankhya, could afford to take for granted, called upon by modern necessity to study the ideas of the Upanishads in their obscure details no less than in their clear & inspiring generalities, in their doubtful implications no less than in their definite statements, in physical and psychological limb and member no less than in their heart of metaphysical truth, we must seek to know not only the Brahman in Its Universality, but the special functions of Surya and the particular powers of Agni; devote thought to the minor & preliminary "Vyuha rashmin samuha" as well as to the ultimate and capital So'ham asmi; neglect neither the heavenly fire of Nachicatus nor the bricks of his triple flame of sacrifice nor his necklace of many colours. We have behind the Upanishads a profound system of psychology. We must find our way back into that system. We perceive indications of equally elaborate ideas about the processes underlying physical existence, human action and the subtle connections of mind, body and spirit. We must recover in their fullness these ideas and recreate, if possible, this ancient system of psychical mechanics & physics. We find also a cosmology, a system of gods and of worlds. We must know what were the precise origin and relations of this cosmology, on what experiences subjective or objective they rested for their justification. We shall then have mastered not only Vedantadarshana but Vedanta, not only

the truth that Badarayana or Shankara arrived at but the revelation that Yajnavalkya & Ajatashatru saw. We may even be compensated for our descent by a double reward. By discovering the early Vedantic interpretation of Veda, we may pour out a great illumination on the meaning of Veda itself,—to be confirmed, possibly, by the larger & more perfect Nirukta which the future will move inevitably to discover. By recovering the realisations of Yajnavalkya & Ajatashatru, we shall recover perhaps the inspired thoughts of Vasishta and Viswamitra, of Ghora from whom perhaps Srikrishna heard the word of illumination, of Madhuchchhandas, Vamadeva and Atri. And we may even find ourselves enriched in spiritual no less than in psychological knowledge; rejoice in the sense of being filled with a wider & more potent knowledge & energy, with jnanam, with tapahshakti, & find ourselves strengthened & equipped for the swifter pursuit & mightier attainment of the One whom both Veda & Vedanta aspire to know & who is alone utterly worth possessing.

[3]

Chapter V.

The Interpretation of Vedanta.

In an inquiry of this kind, so far as we have to use purely intellectual means—and I have not concealed my opinion that intellectual means are not sufficient and one has to trust largely the intuitions of a quiet and purified mind and the experiences of an illuminated and expanding soul,—but still, so far as we are to use purely intellectual means, the first, most important, most imperative must be a submissive acceptance of the text of the Sruti in its natural suggestion and in its simple and straightforward sense. To this submissiveness we ought to attach the greatest importance & to secure it think no labour or self-discipline wasted. It is the initial tapasya necessary before we are fit to approach the Sruti. Any temperamental rebellion, any

emotional interference, any obstinacy of fixed mental association, any intellectual violation of the text seems to me to vitiate the work of the interpreter and deprive it, even when otherwise noble and brilliant, of some of its value. It is for this reason that the mind, that restless lake of sanskaras, preferences, prejudices, pre-judgments, habitual opinions, intellectual & temperamental likes & dislikes, ought to be entirely silent in this matter; its role is to be submissive and receptive, detached, without passion; passivity, not activity, should be its state, na kinchid api chintayet. For the Sruti carries with it, in its very words, a certain prakash, a certain illumination. The mind ought to wait for that illumination and receiving it, should not because it is contrary to our expectation or our desire, labour to reject or alter what has been seen. Our pitfalls are many. One man has an active, vital & energetic temperament; he is tempted to read into Sruti the praise of action, to slur over anything that savours of quietism. Another is temperamentally quietistic; any command enjoining action as a means towards perfection his heart, his nerves cannot endure, he must get rid of it, belittle it, put it aside on whatever pretext. This is the interference of temperamental preference with the text of the Sruti. A man is attached to a particular thinker or teacher, enamoured of a definite view of life & God. Any contradiction of that thinker, teacher or view irritates his heart & cannot be borne, even though the contradiction seems to stand there plainly on the face of sacred writ; the mind at once obeying the heart sets about proving to itself that the words do not mean what they seem to mean. This is the interference of emotional preference. Or else the mind has always been accustomed to a particular philosophy, mode of thinking, idea of religion or dogma. Whatever contradicts these notions, strikes our fixed mental idea as necessarily wrong. Surely, it says, the philosophy, the thought, the dogma to which I am accustomed must be the thought of the Scriptures; there cannot, in the nature of things, be anything in them inconsistent with what I believe; for what I believe is true and the Scriptures are repositories of truth. So begins the interference which arises from association & fixed opinions. There is, finally, the intervention

of the intellect when a speculative philosopher with a theory or a scholar reaching out after novelty or conscious of an opening for scholastic ingenuities, meddles powerfully with the plain drift of the text. All these interferences, however brilliantly they may be managed, are injuries to the truth of Veda; they diminish its universality and limit its appeal. It is for others to judge whether I have myself been able to avoid all of them,—especially the intellectual interference to which my temperament is most open, but I have had certainly the will to avoid it if not the power, the intention if not its successful performance.

I do not mean, however, that the received or dictionary sense of the word has to be always accepted. In dealing with these ancient writings such a scholastical puritanism would be less dangerous indeed than the licence of the philosophic commentators, but would still be seriously limiting. But in departing from the dictionary sense one must not depart from the native and etymological sense of the word; one ought to abide within its clear grammatical connotation as in a hedge of defence against one's own intellectual self-will and any superstructure of special sense or association must be consistent with that connotation and with the general usage of the Upanishads or of the Veda on which they rest. I have myself suggested that the scope of dhanam in the first verse of the Isha exceeds the contracted idea of material wealth and embraces all sorts of possessions; *eno* in the last verse still keeps to me its etymological association and is different from *papa*; the word *vayunani* meaning no doubt actions or activities, has been supposed by me to keep a colour of its proper etymological sense “phenomena” and to denote universal activities and not solely the individual or human; but none of these suggestions in the least meddle with the grammatical connotation, the etymological force or even the dictionary meaning of the words used; only a deeper or more delicate shade of meaning is made to appear than can ordinarily be perceived by a careless or superficial reader. A more serious doubt may arise when I suggest special associations for *drish-taye* and *satya* in the [fifteenth] verse. It will be seen however that in neither case do I depart from the basic meaning of the

words, sight for drishti, truth for satya. It will be seen also, as I proceed in my larger task, that I have good Vedic warrant for supposing these special senses to be applied sometimes & indeed often to sight and to Truth in the Sruti and that they agree with the whole drift & logical development of this & other Upanishads.

For the fixing of the actual sense of separate words in Sruti is not the only condition of the interpretation nor is the acceptance of their natural sense the only standard for the interpreter. A great value, indeed an immense value must be attached, in my opinion, to the rhythm & structure and the logical connection with each other in thought of the separate clauses & shlokas. The language of the Upanishads is largely regarded by the modern readers as sublime and poetical indeed, full of imagery & suggestion, but not to be too much insisted on, not always to be pressed as having a definite meaning but often allowed to pass vaguely as rather reaching out at truths than accurately expressing them. My experience forbids me to assent to this view, in itself very natural and superficially reasonable. I have been forced to believe in the plenary inspiration of the Upanishads in word as well as in thought; I have been continually obliged to see that the expressions they use are the inevitable expression for the thought that has to be conveyed, and even when using poetical language the Rishis use it with a definite purpose, not vaguely reaching out at truth, but keeping before their vision a clear and firm thought or experience which they clearly & firmly express. No interpretation would impress me with a sense of satisfaction which did not give its clear & due weight to each word or account for the choice of one word over another where the choice is unusual. In accordance with this fullness of inspiration is the perfection of the chhandas, the rhythm & structure of verse & sentence which corresponds felicitously with the rhythm & structure of the thought. I may instance for this importance of the rhythm & structure of sentence such a juxtaposition as jagatyam jagat in the first verse; while the remarkable development & balance, supremely wedded to the thought, of the six verses about Vidya & Avidya may stand as

an example of the importance of rhythm & structure of both sentence & verse. The jagatyam jagat of the first verse already alluded to, is a striking instance of the perfect & pregnant use of language, but there are numerous other examples such as the powerful collocation of kavir manishi paribhuh swayambhur in one of the most noble & profound of the revelatory shlokas, the [eighth]. It is easy for a careless translator or interpreter to accept kavir & manishi loosely as words with the same essential meaning used a little tautologically for a rhetorical effect. In reality, they differ widely in sense, are used in this passage with great correctness and pregnancy and on a right understanding of them depends our right understanding of the whole system of philosophy developed in the Isha. Much depends on whether we take the hiranmaya patra of the [fifteenth] shloka as mere vague poetical rhetoric or an image used with a definite intention and a lucid idea. But almost every step in the Isha will give us examples.

Even an observation of formal metre as an element of the rhythm is of some importance to the Vedantic interpreter. The writers of the Upanishads handle their metres, whether Anushtup or Tristubh, not entirely in the manner of the Vedic Rishis, but very largely on Vedic principles. They permit themselves to avoid elision even in the middle of a pada, eg vidyancha avidyancha, and always avoid it between the different padas; their principle is to keep not only the two lines of the shloka but all its four parts separate and not to run them into each other by sandhi. This peculiarity disappears in the manuscript & printed copies where the post-Vedic sandhi is observed usually though not with absolute consistency. But the disregard of Vedic practice is ruinous to the rhythm and sweetness of the verse, for it disregards the first conditions of the Vedic appeal to the ear. What for instance can be more clumsy than the junction of the padas in the seventh shloka, with its heavy obstruction & jar as of a carriage wheel jolting momentarily over a sudden obstacle,

yasmin sarvani bhutanyatmaivabhud vijanatah
or what can be more rhythmical, sweet & harmonious than the

same verse properly written & read with an observation of the pause between the padas

yasmin sarvani bhutani atmaivabhud vijanatah?

There are other antique peculiarities, the use of two short matras as the equivalent of one long syllable, the occasional introduction of one or more excessive feet into a pada, resembling the use of the Alexandrine in English dramatic verse, the optional quantity of the vowel before a conjunct consonant of which the second element is a liquid, especially the semivowels y or v, and, — although this is more doubtful, — the Vedic use of these semivowels optionally as actual vowels which turns a dissyllable frequently into a trisyllable — a freedom possible only in a living language appealing to an ear tuned to the flexibility of living & daily intonations. It is possible that we have an example of this use in *vidyancha avidyancha*, but although it would introduce a very beautiful and delicate poetical effect, we cannot speak with certainty. These minutiae are not merely interesting to the literary critic and the philologist. Their importance will appear when we find that Max Muller would almost tempt us, for the sake of regularity of metre, to eject the important, if not indispensable *yathatathyato*, which gives such profundity, so many reverberations of meaning to the closing thought in the majestic [eighth] shloka, *kavir manishi paribhuh swayambhur, yathatathyato'rthan vyadadhach chhaswatibhyah samabhayah*; or that Shankara's desperate dealings with the line, from his point of view almost unmanageable,

vinashena mrityum tirtwa sambhutyamritam asnute

his forcing of *vinasha* to mean *sambhava* and reading of *tirtwa asambhutya* are negated by the metre & rhythm of the verse no less than by the rhythm & structure of the thought throughout these six crucial verses.

The ordinary view of the Upanishads ignores another equally important, if not more important characteristic, the closeness of their logical structure, the intimate subjective linking of clause with clause, the logical stride from shloka to shloka, the profound relations of passage to passage. The usual treatment

of these works seems to go on the assumption that this high logical strenuousness does not exist. They might often be loose collections of ill connected speculations, haphazard & illogical structures, for all the importance that is given to this element of their divine inspiration. I shall try to show how mighty are the architectonics of thought in the Isha, how movement leads on to movement, how intimately, for instance, the closing invocations to Surya & Agni are related to the whole thought-structure and how perfectly they develop from what precedes. The importance of the logical relation in the interpretation will be manifest, if I mistake not, at every step of our progress.³

[I have spoken so far of the intellectual tests that we can employ. Before I pass from this subject, it may be well to insert a word of explanation, of self-defence, almost of apology. Among the intellectual interpreters of Sruti, Shankara towers like an unreachable giant above his fellows. As a philosopher, as a metaphysician, as a powerful logician & victorious disputant his greatness can hardly be measured. For a thousand years and more he has stood in the heavens of Indian thought, his head far away in the altitudes of Adwaita, his feet firmly planted on the lifeless remnants of crushed systems and broken philosophies, the wreckage of his logical conquests, his mouth like Trishira's swallowing up the world, lokan grasantam, annihilating it in the white flame of the Mayavada, his shadow covering our intellects & stunting the efforts of all who have dared to think originally & dispute his conclusions. Not Madhwa, not even Ramanuja can prevail against this colossal shadow. Yet I have ventured throughout to differ from this king of commentators — almost even to ignore this great & invincible disputant. If I have done so, it is because I think the decree of our liberty has already been pronounced by another giant of thought. When the great Vivekananda, potent seedsower of the future, in answer to the objection of the Pundits, "But Shankara does not say that," replied simply but finally, "No, but I, Vivekananda, say it," he pronounced the decree of liberation not only for himself but for

³ The paragraph that follows was cancelled in the manuscript by Sri Aurobindo.—Ed.

all of us from the yoke, the golden but heavy yoke, of the mighty Dravidian. For this was Vivekananda's mission to smite away all obstacles, however great & venerable, & open the path to the resurgence of Indian originality & the direct confrontation of the soul of man with the living Truth. He was our deliverer not only from ignorance & weakness, but from the systems of knowledge that would limit us and impose a premature finality.

In truth,]

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Part II.

The Instruments and Field of Vedanta.

Chapter I.

Textual Inference.

The three principal means of intellectual knowledge are anumana, pratyaksha and aptavakya. Anumana, inference from data, depends for its value on the possession of the right data, on the right observation of the data including the drawing of the right analogies, the unerring perception of true identity & rejection of false identity, the just estimate of difference & contrast, and finally on the power of right reasoning from the right data. Pratyaksha is the process by which the things themselves about which we gather data are brought into our ken; aptavakya is evidence, the testimony of men who have themselves been in possession of the knowledge we seek. An error in pratyaksha, an error committed by the apta, an error of data or of reasoning from the data may, if serious in its bearing or extent, vitiate all our conclusions even if all our other means are correct and correctly used. Especially is this danger present to us when we are reasoning not from things but from words; when we are using the often artificial counters of traditional logic & metaphysics, we are apt to lose ourselves in a brilliant cloud, to be lifted from the earth, our pratistha, into some nebulous region where even

if we win high victories we are not much advanced, since we get thereby nothing but an intellectual satisfaction and cannot apply our knowledge to life. This is the great advantage of the scientist over the metaphysician that he is always near to facts & sensible things which, when the truth of them is outraged by the freaks of the mind, present a much more formidable & tangible protest than words, those vague & flexible symbols of things which have been habituated to misuse ever since human thinking began. The metaphysician is too apt to forget that he is dealing with the symbols of things and not with the things themselves; he should but is not always careful to compare his intellectual results with the verities of experience; he is apt to be more anxious that his conclusions should be logical than that they should be in experience true. Much of the argumentation of the great Dravidian thinkers, though perfect in itself, seems to be vitiated by this tendency to argue about words rather than about the realities which alone give any value to words. On the other hand scientists as soon as they go beyond the safe limits of observation & classification of data, as soon as they begin to reason & generalise on the basis of their science, show themselves to be as much subject to the errors of the intellect as ordinary mortals. They too like the metaphysicians use words in a fixed sense established upon insufficient data and forge these premature fixtures into fetters upon thought and inquiry. We seem hardly yet to possess the right & sufficient data for a proper understanding of the universe in which we find ourselves; the habit & power of right reasoning from data, even if with insufficient materials right reasoning were possible, seem yet to be beyond the reach of our human weakness. The continued wrangles of philosophy, dogmatisms of science and quarrels of religion are so many proofs that we are yet unripe for the highest processes of thought and inquiry. How few of us have even the first elementary condition of truth-seeking, a quiet heart and a silent, patient & purified understanding. For the Vedantins were surely right in thinking that in order to be a discoverer & teacher of truth one must first be absolutely dhira,—live that is to say in a luminous calm of both heart & understanding.

[5]

Part II

The Field and Instruments of Vedanta

Chapter I

Historically, then, we have our Hindu theory of the Vedanta. It is the systematised affirmation, the reaffirmation, perhaps, of that knowledge of God, man and the universe, the Veda or Brahmanavidya, on which the last harmony of man's being with his surroundings was effected. What the Vedanta is, intrinsically, I have already hinted. It is the reaffirmation of Veda or Brahmanavidya, not by metaphysical speculation or inferential reasoning, but by spiritual experience and supra-intellectual inspiration. If this idea be true, then by interpreting correctly the Vedanta, we shall come to some knowledge of what God is, what man, of the nature and action of the great principles of our being, matter, life, mind, spirit and whatever else this wonderful world of ours may hold. In fact, this is my sole object in undertaking the explanation of the Upanishads. The essential relations of God & the world, so far as they affect our existence here, this is my subject. A philological enquiry into the meaning of ancient Hindu documents, an antiquarian knowledge of the philosophising of ancient generations, although in itself a worthy object of labour and a patriotic occupation,—since those generations were our forefathers and the builders of our race,—would not to me be a sufficient motive for devoting much time & labour out of a life lived in these pregnant & fruitful times when each of us is given an opportunity of doing according to our powers a great work for humanity. I hold with my forefathers that this is an age of enormous disintegration & reconstitution from which we look forward to a new Satyayuga. That Satyayuga can only be reconstituted by the efforts of the sadhus, the seekers after human perfection, by maintaining in however small a degree that harmony of man's being with his surrounding & containing universe which is the condition of our perfection. The knowledge

of the principles of that harmony is therefore man's greatest need and should be the first preoccupation of his lovers and helpers. This knowledge, this perfection is within us and must ultimately be found and manifested by plunging into the depths of our own being, into that karanasamudra or causal ocean from which our beings emerge and bringing out from thence the lost Veda and the already existing future. Within us is all Veda and all Vedanta, within us is God & perfected humanity — two beatitudes that are the same and yet different. But to effect this great deliverance, to push aside the golden shield of our various thought from the face of Truth, to rescue the concealed Purusha, future Man, out of those waters in which he lies concealed and give him form by the intensity of our tapas, let no man think that it is a brief or an easy task in which we can dispense with the help that the wisdom of the past still offers us. We must link our hands to the sages of the past in order that we may pass on the sacred Vedic fire, agnir idyah, to the Rishis of the future. The best beginning for this great inquiry is, therefore, to know what the Vedanta has to say on these profound problems. Afterwards we may proceed to confirmation from other sources.

Three questions at the very beginning confront us. What is the nature of the truth that the Vedanta sets out to teach,— what, that is to say, are its relations to the actual thought and labour of humanity? What are these methods of inspiration and experience by which they arrive at the truths of which they are the repositories? And granting that they are inspired in word & thought, how are we to arrive at the right meaning of words written long ago, in the Sanscrit language, by ancient thinkers with ideas that are not ours and a knowledge from which we have receded? Is it the method of the darshanik, the logical philosopher, that we must follow? Shall we arrive by logic at this knowledge of the Eternal? Or is [it] the scientist and scholar, who must be our guides? Shall grammar and analysis from outside help us? But the scientist does not admit inspiration, the logician does not use it.

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Part II

The Field and Instruments of Vedanta

Chapter I

Intellect and Revelation

If in the progression of the ages there are always golden periods in which man recovers self-knowledge and attunes the truth of himself to the truth of his surroundings—or may it not even be, may not this be the true secret of his evolution—attunes his surroundings to his fulfilled and triumphant self, not being merely determined by his environment, but using it freely for infinite purposes & determining it, and if the Veda keeps, even fragmentarily, the practical application and the Vedanta, the theoretical statement of that self-knowledge, the importance of the inner meaning of these books to the progress of humanity will be self-evident. It is perfectly true, or so at least the Indian Yogi has always held, that we have in ourselves the eternal Veda. Available by God's grace or our own effort there is always in each human being that hidden salvation. But it is hard to arrive at, harder to apply. Many of the greatest, not seeing how it can be applied to the conditions of phenomenal life, carry it away with them into the eternal Silence. They put away from them the Veda, they seek in the Vedanta or in their souls only so much knowledge as will help them to loosen the coils of thought & sense wound round them by the Almighty Magician. But the Vedanta is not useful only for the denial of life; it is even more useful for the affirmation of life. If it affirms the evil of bondage to the idea of this world, it also affirms the bliss of harmony between the world & God. Neither Shankara nor Schopenhauer have for us the entirety of its knowledge.

It is this supreme utility of Vedanta for life, for man's individual and racial evolution that I hope to rescue from the obscuration of quietistic philosophies born of the pessimism of the iron age. I have said that I do not deny the truth of these

philosophies. The Asad Brahman, Nirvana, annihilation of the manifest soul in the unmanifest are all of them great truths and, if we regard them without the fear & shrinking of the ignorant existence-loving mind, they are not only great but also blissful truths; they are an eternal part of Vedanta and it is well that they should have been brought out though with exaggeration & the exclusion of other verities. But they are only a part, a side of Vedantic truth. There are other sides, in a way even greater and more blissful, and at any rate much more helpful to mankind as a whole. God & the World is my subject,—not the incompatibility of God with the world He has created in Himself, but the fulfilment of Himself in it for which it was created—the conditions in which the kingdom of heaven on earth can be converted from a dream into a possibility,—by the willed evolution in man of his higher nature, by a steady self-purification and a development in the light of this divine knowledge towards the fulfilment of his own supra-material, supra-intellectual nature. For that purpose he must know God and not only the physical laws of Nature. He must know his soul and not only the open or secret machinery of his body. This knowledge he can only get from his own soul or from Vedanta explained to him by the Master, the one who knows, and awakening by its contact the knowledge in his own soul. He cannot get it from Science or from speculative Philosophy, but only from God's revelation. Nayam atma pravachanena labhyah. If Vedanta had not this high utility, if it only brought a philosophical satisfaction or were good for logical disputation, I should not think it worth while to write a word about it, much less to delve deep for its meaning.

We wish to know, we enlightened moderns, what man is, what God, the nature & relation of matter, mind, life in order to satisfy an intellectual craving. If we can systematise our guesses about these things, if we can present the world with a theory intellectually interesting or logically flawless, we are satisfied. But the ancients wished to know these things because they thought they were of the greatest importance for man's life and being. Whether they had their knowledge by thought

or by religion, from the judgment or from the heart, their first preoccupation was to live according to their knowledge,—the Stoic & the Epicurean quite as much as the Christian or the Jew held his knowledge as a means towards life, towards the highest fulfilment of his being. It has been left for enlightened Europe to profess a religion, yet avowedly separate its precepts from practical life, and it has been first the privilege of Teutonic thinkers to speculate in the void, using great words & high ideas as if these were ornaments of a bright lustre & great costliness but of no living utility. The Vedanta is above all a rule of life, a law of being and a determination of relation and conduct; for its ideas are sovereign, potent, insistent to remould a man's whole outlook upon existence; it is at once a philosophy & a religion and it owes this sovereign force & double mastery not only to the substance of its message, but to the instrumentality of that message, the sources from which it is drawn and the principles of knowledge & activity in our complex being to which it appeals.

For although the determination to live by the best light we have is important, it is equally important to know what that light is and how we came by it, whether by the inspiration of the heart & the satisfaction of the emotional being, as in ordinary religion, or by the working of the observation and the logical faculties as in ordinary Science or by intellectual revelation as Newton discovered gravitation or by spiritual intuition as in the methods of the great founders of religion or by a higher principle in us which sums up and yet transcends all these mighty channels of the Jnanam Brahma. It is such a higher undivided principle from which Vedanta professes to derive its knowledge. For the ancient Hindus, alone of earth's nations, seem to have not only trusted the internal revelation in preference to the external, which, however, they also recognized & highly valued, but to have known & commanded the psychological sources of internal revelation and mastered to a certain extent its secret, its science and its workings. They claim to have found a principle of knowledge as superior to reason as reason itself is to sensational perception and animal instinct—to have laid their grasp on workings and results which can satisfy the demands

of the intellect but transcend intellectual ideation, meet the test of observation & logic but act in a sense wider, more direct & more penetrating than observation & logic, and fulfil all the demands of the heart while preserving our freedom from the heart's vagaries. All existence is a staircase by which we are climbing in God & through God Godwards. We start here at the bottom rung, from the involution, the obscuration in matter and ascend from the obscurer manifestation to the less obscure, from an air in which light comes to us from above to emergence in the very light itself. The spirit in the stone, clod and metal is at the bottom of that ladder; tree & plant and all vegetable life a little higher; animal life dwelling in vitality but using from below the lower functions of mind and a reason which entirely depends on memory & observation & almost consists in memory & observation climbs yet higher; man dwelling in the lower mind but using matter & vitality from above and from below taking possession of reason and imagination, seems, of all beings on earth, to be at the top. But above man's present position, above the heart in which he dwells & the imagination & reason to which he rises there opens out a wider atmosphere of life, there shoots down on him a more full & burning splendour of strength & knowledge, a more nectarous lustre of joy & beauty. There there is another sun, another moon, other lightnings than ours. To this the poet and the artist aspire in the intoxication of the vision and the hearing, chakshush cha shrotran cha; from this the prophet & the Pythoness draw the exaltation of their inspiration or its frenzy; genius is a beggar at the doors of that bounty. But all these are like men that dream and utter ill-understood fragments of their dream. For man in his heart is awake; in his reason & imagination, half awake, not yet buddha, but in that higher principle he is asleep. It is to him a state of sushupti. Yet secretly, subliminally, unknown to the egoistic mind he takes from this slumber his waking thought & knowledge, though he is compelled by the limitations of mind to mistake & misuse it. For that slumber is the real waking and our waking is a state of dream and delusion in which we use a distorted truth & establish a world of false relations. Therefore the Gita says, "Yasyam

jagrati bhutani sa nisha pashyato muneh." In that which is night to all creatures, he who has mastered his own being is awake; that in which these creatures are awake, is night to the eye of the awakened seer. The Vedantists call this principle by the name, vijnanam, an entire & pervading principle of knowledge which puts everything in its true light & its right relations. It is from vijnanam that Veda descends to us; the movement of this higher principle is the source of all internal revelation. It is the drishti of which the Veda is the result, it is the sruti which in its expression the Veda is, it is the smriti of the Rishi which gives to the intelligent part, the manishi in him a perfect account of the vision & inspired hearing of the seer in him, the Kavi.

For mankind although evolving towards vijnana yet dwells in the mind. He has to be fulfilled in mind before he can rise taking up mind with him into the vijnanamaya self,—the mahan atma,—just as, in his animal state, he had to be fulfilled in body & vitality before he could develop freely in mind. Thus it comes about that even when Veda manifests in the mental world, it has although the higher & truer, to give an account of itself to the lower & more fallible, to Science, to Philosophy & to Religion. It must answer their doubts & questions, it must satisfy all their right and permissible demands. For although from the ideal point of view it is an anomaly that the higher should be cross-questioned by the lower, the source of truth by the propagators of half-truth and error, yet from the evolutionary point of view an anomaly is often the one right and indispensable process. For if we act otherwise, if we deny for instance the claims of the reason in order to serve revelation only & exclusively—though we ought to serve her first and chiefly—we are in danger of defeating man's evolution, which consists in self-fulfilment and not, except as a temporary means to an end, in self-mortification. Otherwise, we are in danger of becoming by a one-sided exaggeration self-injurers, self-slayers, atmaha, and incurring that condemnation to the sunless & gloomy states beyond of which the Isha Upanishad speaks. Religion makes this mistake when she attempts to destroy the body & the vitality in order to satisfy the aspirations of the heart; philosophy, when she stifles the heart

in order to enthrone the pure intellect; Science when she denies the power of vision of the heart and the pure intellect in order to strengthen & serve solely the analytical reason — denying herself thus the benefit of the great benediction “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God,” denying herself the fullness of the great secular effort of humanity summed up in the gnothi seauton of the sages, binding herself to a barren Agnosticism, urging mankind towards the gran rifiuto, the great refusal & renunciation of its past and its future. Mayavada commits this error when not content with trampling the tyranny of cosmic Illusion underfoot, it seeks to deny and destroy the world in order to attain That which has chosen to express itself through the world. For God has expressed us in many principles & not one. He has ranged them one over the other & commanded us not to destroy one in order to satisfy another, not to sanction internal civil war and perpetrate spiritual suicide, but to rise from one principle to the other, taking it up with us as we go, fulfilling the lower first in itself and then in the higher. We have to dissociate our sense of being from body & vitality and become mind, to dissociate it from mind and become vijnanam, to dissociate it from vijnanam and become divine bliss, awareness & being, Sachchidanandam manifest in phenomenal existence, to dissociate it from Sachchidanandam and become That which is in the world Sachchidanandam, not in order to destroy body, vitality, mind, knowledge, manifested bliss & being but to transcend and satisfy them more mightily, without being limited by their conditions, to become through them yet beyond them infinite, divine & universal. Destroy them we cannot without blotting out ourselves and entering into the Sunyam Brahma; but we can maim ourselves in the world by the attempt to destroy them. For thus are we made and we can be no other,— evam twayi nanyatheto'sti. “Thus is it in thee and it is not otherwise.” Purnata, fullness is the true law of our progression.

Therefore all attempts to deny and slaughter the reason are reprehensible and should be strongly opposed & discouraged. The revolt of Rationalism against the tyranny of the creeds & the Churches is justified by God’s law and truth. And not only the

Churches & creeds, but Veda must bend down from its altitudes & justify itself before reason even as God descends from his heavens of infinity to humour our weakness & limitations and take us into His embrace. On the other hand, to deny Veda in order to give reason a supremacy which its natural limitations, its stumbling imperfections make impossible to it, is to go against Nature and restrict our evolution. It has been well said that to deny Veda by hetuvada, divine revelation by intellectual rationality, is, in the end, to become a pashanda,—a word which has now acquired only the significance of an abusive epithet but meant originally and etymologically a materialist, one who denies his higher self in order to enthrone & worship the brute matter in which he is cased. A harmony is needed in which the higher shall illumine the lower, the lower recognise & rise to the higher. The ancient Hindus, therefore, insisted on Veda as the supreme authority, allowing Philosophy, Science & Religion only as subordinate helps to knowledge, because they perceived the danger of giving too unlicensed a freedom to these great but inferior powers. Religion, putting Veda away into a sacred oblivion, follows the impulses of the undisciplined heart, not purified, but full of the vital impulses, chittam pranair otam, and becomes spasmodic, ignorant, narrow, obscurantist, sectarian, cruel, violent. Philosophy acknowledging Veda in theory but relying instead on her own intellectual self-sufficiency, ends by living in words, a thing of vain disputation & exultant logic-splitting, abstract, unpractical and visionary. Science, denying Veda altogether, arrogant & bigoted in her own conceit, makes man a materialist, a pashanda. For all her analytical knowledge she knows not that that in man which believes only in matter is the beast in him,—the beast so long & with such difficulty subdued & disciplined by Philosophy, Religion & Veda; she keeps telling him, "Thou, O brute body & nerve system, art Brahman," Annam vai Brahma, Prano vai Brahma, until his whole nature begins to believe it. One day, while she yet reigns, he is sure to rise,—the egoistic heartless lust of power & pleasure in man,—and demand that she shall be his servant with her knowledge, her sophistries, her organisation, her appliances,

shall justify to him his selfishness, lusts & cruel impulses and arm them with engines of irresistible potency. Already the shadow of this terrible revival is cast upon the world; already Science is bowing her head to this tremendous demand. What the Hindus foresaw and dreaded and strove to organise their society against it, erecting barrier upon artificial barrier as their own knowledge & grasp upon Veda diminished, is now growing actual and imminent. The way to avoid it is not to deny the truth of Science, but to complete, correct and illuminate it. For the Veda also says with Science, Annam vai Brahma, Prano vai Brahma; it acknowledges the animal, the Pashu in man & God as the Master of the Animal, the Pashupati; but by completing the knowledge and putting it in its right relations, it completes him also & liberates him, lifts the Pashu to the Pashupati and enables him to satisfy himself divinely by enjoying even in matter the supramaterial and replacing egoistic and selfish power by an universal mastery & helpfulness and egoistic & unsatisfying pleasures by a bliss in which he can become one with his fellows, a bliss divine & universal.

In any explanation, therefore, that we may offer of Veda and Vedanta we must give an account to Science, Philosophy & Religion in their own terms of that which we mean by Veda & Vedanta and our reasons for attaching a supreme importance to the conclusions we reach by them. In order that this satisfaction may be given the Vedantist must make it clear what he means by knowledge, what he holds to be the value of the criteria relied on respectively by Science, Philosophy & Religion and how he determines their relation to the standards used by Vedanta. Science takes her stand upon two means of knowledge only; she admits observation by the physical senses aided by physical instruments and she admits inference from this observation, or to use our Indian terms physical pratyaksha & anumana from physical pratyaksha. All else she puts by as misleading and unreliable. She admits neither aptavakya nor analogy, neither the statements of well-equipped & credible witnesses nor argument from the perception of like circumstances as between the various objects or movements observed. Aptavakya is in this system only

an uncertain makeshift, a secondhand pratyaksha; analogy is only a doubtful and often a false inference. But the Vedantist in common with all Indian thinkers admits in intellectual reasoning aptavakya and analogy as well as pratyaksha and anumana.

At bottom all human thinking is some sort of perception; either perception by the mind of something that seems to be outside itself or of something that seems to be within itself, either, as we say, physical perception or mental perception. Logic itself is only the science of placing our perceptions in their proper order,—nothing more. If we take things physical with which alone the modern scientific method is really at home, it must be clear to us that the whole basis of knowledge is the right perception of objects. We have first to bring it under observation by the mind through some sense-organ usually or predominantly the eye,—we have to bring not only the eye, but the mind into concentrated contact with the object; for if only the eye dwells on it, the mind is likely to retain nothing in memory or only a vague impression of what has been seen. This process I may be allowed to call simply bodha or taking into the observation. Once I have the object in my mind's grasp, I proceed to separate it clearly in my observation from all surrounding object or circumstance foreign to it even if contiguous or attached—by separation in observation, by prithagbodha. Finally, I take it completely into my mind by a perfect observation of it in its parts, its circumstance & its entirety, by totality in observation, by samyagbodha. Only if I have accomplished these three movements of perception perfectly, can I be said to have properly or scientifically observed the object; only then can I be sure of its dwelling in my memory or of my power to reproduce it accurately before my imagination.

The Upanishad in Aphorism

THE ISHA UPANISHAD

For the Lord all this is a habitation whatsoever is moving thing in her that moves.

Why dost thou say there is a world? There is no world, only One who moves.

What thou callest world is the movement of Kali; as such embrace thy world-existence. In thy all-embracing stillness of vision thou art Purusha and inhabitest; in thy outward motion and action thou art Prakriti and the builder of the habitation. Thus envisage thy being.

There are many knots of the movement and each knot thy eyes look upon as an object; many currents and each current thy mind sees as force and tendency. Forces and objects are the forms of Kali.

To each form of her we give a name. What is this name? It is word, it is sound, it is vibration of being, the child of infinity & the father of mental idea. Before form can be, name & idea must have existed.

The half-enlightened say "Whatever form is built, the Lord enters to inhabit"; but the Seer knows that whatever the Lord sees in His own being, becomes Idea and seeks a form and a habitation.

The universe is a rhythmic vibration in infinite existence which multiplies itself into many harmonies and holds them well ordered in the original type of motion.

Thou lookest upon a stone and sayest, "It is still." So it is, but to the sense-experience only. To the eye that sees, it is built out of motion and composed of motion. In the ordered

repetition of the atomic movements that compose it, consists its appearance of stillness.

All stability is a fixed equilibrium of rhythm. Disturb the rhythm, the stability dissolves & becomes unstable.

No single rhythm can be eternally stable; therefore the universe is an ocean always in flow, and everything in it is mutable & transient. Each thing in Nature endures till the purpose of Kali in it is fulfilled; then it is dissolved and changed into a constituent of some other harmony.

Prakriti is eternal, but every universe passes. The fact of universe endures for ever, but no particular world of things can last; for each universe is only one rhythm out of an infinite number of possible movements. Whatsoever system in Nature or of Nature is thoroughly worked out, must give place to a new harmony.

Nevertheless all world and everything in world is eternal in its essential being; for all essential existence is Brahman without end or beginning.

Forms and names are also Brahman and eternal; but, in world, theirs is an eternity of recurrence, not of unbroken persistence. Every form & every idea that has once been, exists still and can again recur; every form or idea that is to be, already exists and was from the beginning. Time is a convention of movement, not a condition of existence.

That which inhabits the forms of Kali is Self and Lord of the Movement. Purusha is master of Prakriti, not her subject; Soul determines Form & Action & is not determined by them. Spirit reflects in its knowledge the activity of Nature, but only those activities which it has itself compelled Nature to initiate.

The soul in the body is master of body and not subject to its laws or limited by its experiences.

The soul is not constituted by mind and its activities, for these also are parts of Nature and movements only.

Mind and body are instruments of the secret all-knowing and omnipotent Self within us.

The soul in the body is not limited in space by the body or

in experience by the mind; the whole universe is its habitation.

There is only one Self of things, one soul in multitudinous forms. By body & mind I am separated even from my brother or my lover, but by exceeding body & mind I can become one with all things in being & in experience, even with the stone & the tree.

My universal soul need no more be limited by my individual mind and body, than my individual consciousness is limited by the experiences of a single cell in my body. The walls which imprison us have been built up by Prakriti in her movement and exist only in her inferior kingdoms. As one rises higher they become conventional boundaries which we can always stride across and, on the summits, they merely mark off compartments in our universal consciousness.

The soul does not move, but motion of Nature takes place in its perfect stillness.

The motion of Nature is not real or material motion, but vibration of the soul's self-consciousness.

Nature is Chit-Shakti, the Lord's expressive power of self-awareness, by which whatever He sees in Himself, becomes in form of consciousness.

Every thing in Nature is a becoming of the one Spirit who alone is Being. We and all things in Nature are God's becomings, sarvabhutani.

Although there are to world-experience multitudinous souls (Purushas) in the universe, all these are only one Purusha masked in many forms of His consciousness.

Each soul in itself is God entirely, every group of souls is collectively God; the modalities of Nature's movement create their separation and outward differences.

God transcends world and is not bound by any law of Nature. He uses laws, laws do not use Him.

God transcends world and is not bound to any particular state of consciousness in the world. He is not unity-consciousness nor multiple consciousness, not Personality nor Impersonality, not stillness, nor motion, but simultaneously includes all these self-expressions of His absolute being.

God simultaneously transcends world, contains it and informs it; the soul in the body can arrive at the God-consciousness and at once transcend, contain and inform its universe.

God-consciousness is not exclusive of world-consciousness; Nature is not an outcast from Spirit, but its Image, world is not a falsity contradicting Brahman, but the symbol of a divine Existence.

God is the reverse side of Nature, Nature the obverse side of God.

Since the soul in the body is eternally & inalienably free, its bondage to egoism, law of bodily nature, law of mental nature, law of pleasure and pain, law of life and death, can only be an apparent & not a real bondage. Our chains are either a play or an illusion or both play & illusion.

The secret of our apparent bondage is the Spirit's play by which It consents to forget God-consciousness in the absorption of Nature's movement.

The movement of Nature is a sevenfold flow, each stream subject to its own law of motion but containing latent, expressed or half-apparent in itself its six sisters or companions.

Nature is composed of Being, Will or Force, Creative Bliss, Pure Idea, Mind, Life and Matter,—Sat, Chit or Tapas, Ananda, Vijnanam, Manas, Prana and Annam.

The Soul, Purusha, can seat itself in any of these principles and, according to its situation, its outlook changes and it sees a different world; all world is merely arranged and harmonised outlook of the Spirit.

What God sees, that exists; what He sees with order & harmony, becomes a world.

There are seven worlds, Satya, of pure being, Tapas, of pure will or force, Jana, of pure delight, Mahas, of pure idea, Swar, of pure mentality, Bhuvah, of pure vitality, Bhuh, of pure matter.

The soul in Sat is pure truth of being and perceives itself as one in the world's multiplicity.

The soul in Tapas is pure force of divine will & knowledge and possesses universe omnisciently and omnipotently as its extended self.

The soul in Ananda is pure delight and multiplies itself in universal self-creation and unmixed joy of being.

The soul in Mahas is pure idea, perceives itself in order and arrangement of comprehensive unity in multiplicity, all things in their unity & each thing in its right place, time and circumstance. It is not subject to the tyranny of impressions, but contains & comprehends the objects it knows.

The soul in Manas is pure mentality & receives the pure impression of separate objects & from their sum receives the impression of the whole. It is Manas that measures, limits & divides.

The soul in Prana is pure vitality & pours itself out in various life-energy.

The soul in Annam is pure matter & forgets force of consciousness in the form of consciousness.

Matter is the lowest rung of the ladder and the soul that has descended into Matter tends by its secret nature & inevitable self-impulsion to reemerge out of form towards the freedom of pure universal being. These are the two movements that govern world-existence, adhogati, the descent towards matter or mere form and urdhwagati, the ascent towards Spirit and God.

Man is a mental being, manu or manomaya purusha, who has entered into a vitalised material body and is seeking to make it capable of infinite mentality & infinite ideality so that it may become the perfect instrument, seat and temple of the manifest Sacchidananda.

Mind in the material world is attentive to two kinds of knowledge, impacts from outside, corporeal or mental, received into the individual mentality and translated into mental values and knowledge from within, spiritual, ideal or mental similarly translated.

Inert physical bodies receive all the impacts that the mind receives, but being devoid of organised mentality, retain them only in the involved mind in matter and are incapable of translating them into mental symbols.

Our bodies are naturally inert physical bodies moved by life & mind. They also receive all impacts, but not all of them are

translated into mental values. Of those which are translated, some are rendered imperfectly, some perfectly, some immediately, some only after a longer or shorter incubation in the involved mind in matter. There are the same variable phenomena with the internal knowledge. All the knowledge translated here into mental values forms the stuff of our waking consciousness. This waking consciousness accepted by the manomaya purusha as itself & organised round a central I-sense is the waking ego.

The Jiva or embodied mental being is in its consciousness much wider than the waking ego; it has a wide range of knowledge & experience of the past, present and future, the near & the distant, this life & other lives, this world & other worlds which is not available to the waking ego. The waking ego fails to notice many things & forgets what it notices; the Jiva notices & remembers all experience.

That which goes on in our life-energy & bodies below the level of waking mind is our subconscious self in the world; that which goes on in our mind & higher principles above the level of our waking mind is our superconscious self. The waking ego often receives intimations, more or less obscure, from either source which it fails to trace to their origin.

Man progresses in proportion as he widens his consciousness & renders ever wider & finer experiences available for the perception & delight of the waking consciousness & in proportion as he can ascend to higher reaches of mind & beyond mind to ideality & spirit.

The swiftest & most effective means of his advance & self-fulfilment is to dissolve his waking ego in the enjoyment of an infinite consciousness, at first mental of the universal manomaya Purusha, but afterwards ideal and spiritual of the high vijnana & highest Sacchidananda.

The transcendence & dissolution of the waking mental ego in the body is therefore the first object of all practical Vedanta.

This transcendence & dissolution may result either in loss of the waking self & relapse into some sleepbound principle, undifferentiated Prakriti, sushupta Purusha, Sunyam Brahma (Nihil), etc or in loss of the world self in Parabrahman or in

universalisation of the waking self & the joy of God's divine being in & beyond the world, Amritam. The last is the goal proposed for man by the Isha Upanishad.

The waking ego, identifying the Jiva with its bodily, vital & mental experiences which are part of the stream of Nature's movement & subject to Nature & the process of the movement, falsely believes the soul to be the subject of Nature & not its lord, anish and not Ish. This is the illusion of bondage which the manomaya Purusha either accepts or seeks to destroy. Those who accept it are called baddha Jivas, souls in bondage; those who seek to destroy it mumukshu Jivas, self-liberating souls,— those who have destroyed it are mukta Jivas, souls free from illusion & limitation.

In reality, no soul is bound & therefore none seeking liberation or liberated from bondage; these are all conditions of the waking mind and not of the self or spirit which is Ish, eternally lord & free.

The essence of bondage is limitation & the chief circumstances of limitation are death, suffering and ignorance.

Death, suffering & ignorance are circumstances of the mind in the vitalised body and do not touch the consciousness of the soul in vijnana, ananda, chit & sat. The combination of the three lower members, mind, life & body, is called therefore aparardha, the lower kingdom or in Christian parlance the kingdom of death & sin, the four higher members are called parardha, the higher kingdom, or in Christian parlance, the kingdom of heaven. To liberate man from death, suffering & ignorance and impose the all-blissful & luminous nature of the higher kingdom upon the lower is the object of the Seer in the Isha Upanishad.

This liberation is to be effected by dissolving the waking ego into the Lord's divine being and experiencing entirely our unity with all other existences & with Him who is God, Atman & Brahman.

All individual existences are jagat in jagati, object of motion in stream of motion & obey the laws & processes of that motion.

Body is an object of motion in the stream of material

consciousness, of which the principal law is birth & death. All bodies are subject therefore to formation and dissolution.

Life is a current of motion in the stream of vital consciousness composed of eternal life-energy. Life is not itself subject to death,—death not being a law of life-energy,—but only to expulsion from the form which it occupies and therefore to the physical experience of death of its body.

All matter here is filled with life-energy of a greater or less intensity of action, but the organisation of life in individual animation begins later in the process of the material world by the appearance first of the plant, then of the animal. This evolution of life is caused & supported by the pressure of the gods of the Bhavar or life-world upon Bhu.

Life entering into body is dominated partly by the laws of body; it is therefore unable to impart its own full & uninterrupted energy to its form. Consequently there is no physical immortality.

The organisation of individual animated life tends to hasten the period of dissolution by introducing shocks of an intensity of force alien to matter which wastes the material form by its activity. Therefore the plant dissolves while the stone & metal endure in their own equilibrium.

Mind entering into the vitalised body tends still farther to hasten the period of dissolution by the higher demands of its vibrations upon the body.

Mind is a knot of motion in the stream of mental consciousness. Like life, it is not itself subject to death, but only to expulsion from the vitalised body it has occupied. But because the mental ego identifies itself with the body and understands by its life only this residence in its present perishable gross corporeal body, therefore it has the mental experience of a bodily death.

The experience of death is therefore combined of the apparently mortal mind's ignorance of its own true immortal nature and of the limitation of energy in the body by which the form we inhabit wears out under the shocks of vibrating life-energy & vibrating mentality. We mean by death not dissolution of life or of mind, but dissolution of the form or body.

The dissolution of body is not true death for the mental being called man; it is only a change of media & of the surroundings of consciousness. Matter of body changes its constituents and groupings, mental being persists both in essence and personality and passes into other forms & environments.

The Life Divine

A Commentary on the Isha Upanishad

[Draft A]

Foreword

Veda & Vedanta are the inexhaustible fountains of Indian spirituality. With knowledge or without knowledge, every creed in India, sect, school of philosophy, outburst of religious life, great or petty, brilliant or obscure, draws its springs of life from these ancient and ever flowing waters. Conscious or unwitting each Indian religionist stirs to a vibration that reaches him from those far off ages. Darshana and Tantra and Purana, Shaivism & Vaishnavism, orthodoxy & heresy are merely so many imperfect understandings of Vedic truth & misunderstandings of each other; they are eager half-illuminated attempts to bring some ray of that great calm & perfect light into our lives & make of the stray beam an illumination on our path or a finger laid on the secret & distant goal of our seeking. Our greatest modern minds are mere tributaries of the old Rishis. Shankara, who seems to us a giant, had but a fragment of their knowledge. Buddha wandered away on a bypath in their universal kingdom. These compositions of an unknown antiquity are as the many breasts of the eternal Mother of Knowledge from which our succeeding ages have been fed & the imperishable life in us fostered. The Vedas hold more of that knowledge than the Vedanta, hold it more amply, practically and in detail; but they come to us in a language we have ceased to understand, a vocabulary which often, by the change of meaning to ancient terms, misleads most where it seems most easy & familiar, a scheme of symbols of which the key has been taken from us. Indians do not understand the Vedas at all; Europeans have systematised

a gross misunderstanding of them. The old knowledge in the Vedas is to us, therefore, as a river wandering in dark caverns inaccessible to the common tread. It is in the Upanishads that the stream first emerges into open country. It is there that it is most accessible to us. But even this stream flows through obscure forest & difficult mountain reaches and we only have it for our use at favourable points where the forest thins or the mountain opens. It is there that men have built their little artificial cities of metaphysical thought and spiritual practice, in each of which the inhabitants pretend to control the whole river. They call their dwelling places Vedanta or Sankhya, Adwaita or Dwaita, Shaivism or Vaishnavism, with a hundred names beside and boast that theirs is the way & theirs is the knowledge. But, in reality, each of us can only command a little of the truth of the Sanatana Dharma, because none of us understands more than a little of the Upanishads.

They become, indeed, easier to us as they come nearer to us in date & the modernity of their language — the stream more accessible as it draws farther away from the original sources and descends more into the plain and the lowlands. But even the secret of these more modern revelations is not wholly ours and we delude ourselves if we think we have understood them entirely & need not plunge deeper for their meaning. There is much gold in the sands of the bed which no man has thought of disinterring.

The Isha Upanishad is simpler in form & expression than such writings as the Chhandogya & Brihad Aranyaka which contain in their symbolic expressions, — to us obscure & meaningless, disparaged by many as violently bizarre in idea & language & absurd in substance, — more of the detail of old Vedic knowledge. The diction of the Upanishad is, for the most part, plain & easy; the ideas expressed by it, when they are not wrested from their proper sense, seem to be profound, yet lucid and straightforward. Yet even in the Isha the real import of the closing passage is a sealed book to the commentators, and I am convinced that the failure to understand this culminating strain in the noble progressive harmony of the thoughts has

resulted for us in a failure to grasp the real & complete sense of the whole Upanishad. We understand, more or less clearly, the separate sense of the different slokas, but their true connection & relation of the thoughts to each other has been almost entirely missed. We have hold of some of its isolated truths; we have lost the totality of its purport.

For the Isha Upanishad is one of the most perfectly worked out, one of the most finely and compactly stated inspired arguments the world possesses — an argument not in the sense of a train of disputatious reasoning, logical not in the fashion of an intellectual passage from syllogism to syllogism, but a statement of inspired thought each part of which has been perfectly seen by the revelatory faculty & perfectly stated by inspired expression in itself, in relation to the others & to its place in the whole. Not only every sloka, but every word in each sloka has been perfectly chosen & perfectly placed. There is a consummate harmony in the rhythm of the thought as well as in the rhythm of the language & the verse. The result is a whole system of knowledge & spiritual experience stated with the utmost pregnant brevity, with an epic massiveness & dignity, but yet in itself full and free from omission. We have in this Upanishad no string of incoherent thoughts thrown out at random, no loose transitions from one class of ideas to another, but a single subject greatly treated, with completeness, with precision, with the inspiration of a poet possessed by divine truth & the skill of a consummate architect of thought & language. The Isha Upanishad is the gospel of a divine life in the world and a statement of the conditions under which it is possible and the spirit of its living.

It is this harmonious totality of meaning which it is the sole object of my commentary to bring to light. It has not been my object to support a particular philosophy or to read Adwaita or Dwaita or Visishtadwaita into its separate verses, and make it useful for metaphysical polemics. I hold firmly the belief that the truths of the Upanishads were not arrived at by intellectual speculation, cannot be interpreted by disputation according to the rules of logic and are misused when they are employed merely as mines & quarries for the building of metaphysical systems. I

hold them to have been arrived at by revelation & spiritual experience, to be records of things seen, heard & felt, drishta, sruta, upalabdha, in the soul and to stand for their truth not on logic which they transcend but on vision to which they aspire. Those supra-intellectual faculties by which they received the Veda & developed its implications, drishti, sruti & smriti, are also the only means by which their thoughts can be perfectly understood. What is it that the Upanishad reveals — this is the question I have set myself to answer; I am indifferent for what set of warring philosophical dogmas its texts can be made an armoury.

Nevertheless in the course of exegesis I have been compelled to come into conflict with the opinions of the Mayavada. The collision was inevitable rather than desired, for the Mayavada was the opinion with which I commenced my study of Vedanta. It is a system which still attracts the abstract intellectuality in me and represents to me what I may call an intervening & intermediary truth of realisation which can never lose its validity. But when it seeks to govern human thought & life, to perpetuate itself as the sole truth of Vedanta, I feel that it is in conflict with the old Vedanta, stultifies the Upanishad & endangers or sterilises all our highest human activities without giving us the highest spiritual truth in its place. Even so I would have preferred to leave aside all negative criticism of it in these commentaries. But that is not possible. For it has so possessed India's ideas about the Upanishads that it has to be cleared away in order that the true sense of this Upanishad at least may shine out from the obscuration. For the Isha at least does not support the Mayavada as is indeed evident from the struggle & sense of difficulty in Shankara's own commentary which reduces its fine thought & admirable expression to incoherence & slipshod clumsiness. The error, however lofty, must be removed in order that the plain & simple Truth may reveal itself.

In following the end I have had in view there are a few plain and binding rules by which I have endeavoured always to be guided. My method does not allow me to deal with the language of the Upanishads in the spirit of the scholar,— not the pride of the Pandit dealing with words as he chooses, but the humility of

the seeker after truth in the presence of one of its masters is, I have thought, the proper attitude of the exegete. In the presence of these sacred writings, so unfathomably profound, so infinitely vast in their sense, so subtly perfect in their language, we must be obedient to the text and not presume to subject it ignorantly to our notions. To follow the plain & simple meaning of the words has been therefore the first rule of my exegesis. *Vidya* & *Avidya* are plain words, with a well-ascertained sense; I cannot turn aside from it to interpret them as knowledge of the gods & ignorance. *Sambhuti*, *asambhuti*, *vinasha* are words with fixed meanings; my interpretation must arise directly & simply from those meanings. The rhythm and metre of the Upanishads, the balance of the sentences demand their place in the interpretation; for chhandas is of primary importance in all Veda, — I must not disturb that rhythm, metre & balance in order to get over a philosophical difficulty. The anustup of the *Isha*, for instance, is Vedic in its form & principle & not classical; it demands, that is to say, a stanza of two couplets and admits of sandhi in the middle of the pada but not between two padas: I must not take advantage of a possibility of sandhi between two padas possible only in the classical anustup in order to extract from the Upanishad the opposite of its apparent sense. And when the meaning of a verse is determined, when it stands without qualification as an integral part of the teaching, I am not at liberty to read in a gloss of my own “for the ignorant” in order to deprecate or annul the validity of the doctrine. I am bound by the thoughts of the Sage; I cannot force upon him any ideas of my own to govern & override his apparent meaning — all that I am allowed to do, is to explain his evident textual meaning in the light of my inward spiritual experience but I must not use that experience which may be imperfect to contradict the text.

Shankara has permitted himself all these departures from the attitude of subjection to the text. He has dealt with the Upanishad, and with this Upanishad more than any other, as a master of the Sruti & not its servant. He has sought to include it among his grandiose intellectual conquests. But the Sruti cannot be mastered by the intellect, and although the great Dravidian

has enslaved men's thoughts about the Sruti to his victorious intellectual polemic, the Sruti itself still preserves its inalienable freedom, rising into its secret heights of knowledge & being superior to the clouds & lightnings of the intellect, awaiting & admitting only the tread of the spirit, opening itself only to experience in the soul & vision in the supra-intellectual faculty of ideal knowledge. I trust I shall not be considered as wanting in reverence for the greatest of Indian philosophers, —in my opinion, the greatest of all philosophers. Nevertheless the greatest have their limitations. In profundity, subtlety & loftiness Shankara has no equal; he is not so supreme in breadth & flexibility of understanding. His was a spirit visited with some marvellous intuitions & realisations, but it would be to limit the capacities of the human soul to suppose that his intuitions exclude others equally great or that his realisations are the only or final word of spiritual knowledge. Shankara of the Commentaries on the Upanishad,—although the greatest commentaries on them that we have,—is not so great as Shankara of the Bhashya on the Vedanta Sutras. In the latter he is developing in full freedom his own philosophy, which even those who disagree with it must recognise as one of humanity's most marvellous intellectual achievements; in the former he is attempting to conquer for his own system the entire & exclusive authority of the Sruti. A commentary on the Upanishads should be a work of exegesis; Shankara's is a work of metaphysical philosophy. He does not really approach the Sruti as an exegete; his intention is not to use the philosophical mind in order to arrive at the right explanation of the old Vedanta, but to use explanation of the Vedanta in order to support the right system of philosophy. His main authority is therefore his own preconceived view of Vedantic truth,—a standard external to the text & in so far illegitimate. Accordingly he leaves much of the text unexplained, because it does not either support or conflict with the conclusions which he is interested in establishing; he gives merely a verbal paraphrase or a conventional scholastic rendering. Where he is interested, he compels the Sruti to agree with him. Without going quite to the same extent of self-will

as the Dwaita Commentator who does not hesitate to turn the famous Tat twam asi into Atat twam asi, "Thou art *not* that, O Swetaketu," he goes far enough & uses a fatal masterfulness. The Isha especially, it seems to me, is vitiated by the defects of his method, because in the Isha the clear & apparent meaning of the text conflicts most decisively with some of his favourite tenets. The great passage on Vidya & Avidya, Sambhuti & Asambhuti bristles for him with stumbling blocks. We find him walking amid these difficulties with the powerful but uneasy steps of Milton's angels striding over the burning marl of their prison house. I for my part am unwilling to keep to the trace of his footsteps. For, after all, no human intellect can be permitted to hold the keys of the Sruti & fix for us our gate of entrance & the paths of our passage. The Sruti itself is the only eternal authority on the Sruti.

I have also held it as a rule of sound interpretation that any apparent incoherence, any want of logical relation & succession of thought in the text must exist in my deficiency of understanding & not in the Seer's deficiency of thinking. This view I base upon my constant experience of the Upanishads; for I have always found in the end that the writers thought clearly & connectedly & with a perfect grasp of their subject & my own haste, ignorance & immaturity of spiritual experience has always been convicted in the end of the sole responsibility for any defect imputed by the presumption of the logical understanding to the revealed Scripture. The text has to be studied with a great patience, a great passivity, waiting for experience, waiting for light & then waiting for still more light. Insufficient data, haste of conclusions, wilful ramming of one's own favourite opinions into the text, wilful grasping at an imperfect or unfinished experience, wilful reading of a single narrow truth as the sole meaning of this complex harmony of thought, experience & knowledge which we call the Veda,—these are fruitful sources of error. But if a man can make his mind like a blank slate, if he can enter into the condition of bottomless passivity proper to the state of the calm all-embracing Chaitanya Atma, not attempting to fix what the Truth shall be, but allowing Truth to manifest herself

in his soul, then he will find that it is the nature of the Sruti to reveal perfectly its own message.

For ultimately, as I have already insisted, we can know the subject of the Veda only by the soul & its pure faculty of knowledge, not by verbal scholarship, metaphysical reasoning or intellectual discrimination. By entering into communion with the soul of the thinker which still broods behind the inspired language, we come to realise what he saw, and what he put into his words, what waits there to make itself known to us. By communion with the soul of the Universe which is behind the soul of the thinker & one with it, we get those experiences which illumine & confirm or correct by amplifying our vision of truth in the Sruti. And since no man should lightly hope that he has been able always to think, act & know in this supreme method, it is fitting always to bow down in utter self-surrender to the Master of All, the Lord who as the Knower dwells in himself as name & form & offer to him the truth we have found in the Sruti & the error we have imported in it to do both with the truth & the error whatso He wills in His infinite power, love & wisdom for the purpose of His eternal & infinite Lila.

Chapter I
The Subject & Plan of the Upanishad.

The Upanishads have but one subject without a second and yet by the very nature of that subject they take all life & being & knowledge for their portion. Their theme is the One who is Many. It is an error which the Adwaitins have popularised to suppose that all the aim of the Upanishads is to arrive at the unconditioned Brahman. A very cursory examination of their contents reveals a much wider and more complex purpose. They strive rather to develop from various standpoints the identity of the One & the Many & the relations of the conditioned to the unconditioned. Granting the unconditioned One, they

show us how this conditioned & manifold existence consists with, stands in and is not really different from the original unity. Starting from the multitudinous world they resolve it back into a single transcendental existence, starting back from the transcendental they show us its extension within itself in phenomena. Both the multitudinousness & the Unity, the manifestation & the Manifested they establish in the unknowable Absolute of which nothing can be proposed except that in some way different from any existence conceivable to mind or transferable to the symbols of speech, beyond all conception of Time & Space & Circumstance, beyond Personality & Impersonality, beyond Finite & Infinity It Is. They seek not only to tell us of the way of withdrawal from life into unconditioned existence, but also of the way to dwell here in the knowledge & bliss of the Supreme. They show us the path to heaven & the true joy of the earth. Dwelling on the origin of things & the secret of life & movement, they have their parts of science,—their physics, their theory of evolution, their explanation of heredity. Proceeding from the human soul to the Universal, they have their minutely scrupulous, subtle & profound system of psychology. Asserting the existence of worlds & beings other than those that live within the compass of our waking senses, they have their cosmogony, theogony, philosophy of Nature & of mental & material nature powers. The relations of mind to matter & soul to mind, of men to the gods & the illimitable Master Soul to the souls apparently limited in bodies, have all their authority in the Upanishads. The philosophical analysis of Sankhya, the practices of Tantra, the worship & devotion of Purana, the love of the formed Divinity & the aspiration to the Formless, the atomic structure of Vaisheshika & the cardinal principles of Yoga,—whatever has been afterwards strong in development & influential on the Indian Mind, finds here its authority & sanction. Not the unmanifested & unconditioned alone but the identity of the Transcendental & the phenomenal, their eternal relations, the play of their separation & the might of their union, is the common theme of the Upanishads. They are not only for the anchorite but for the householder. They do not reject life

but embrace it to fulfil it. They build for mankind a bridge by which we can cross over from the limited to the illimitable, the recurrent & transitory to the persistent & eternal, but by which also we can recross & cross again with delight & without danger that once unfathomable & irremovable abyss. They are God's lamps that illumine the stairs by which we ascend & descend no longer bound but freely & at will the whole scale of existence, finding Him there in His ineffability, concealed in utter luminousness, but also here in the garden of light & shade, manifest in every being.

The Upanishads have therefore a common field of thought, experience & knowledge; but in that field each has its own peculiar corner or province. There is nothing vague or ill-connected in their contents, nothing random in their structure. Each sets out with a certain definite thought & aim which it progressively develops & brings to a perfect culmination. The Aitareya for instance has for its subject the workings of the Self in the world as creator and master of evolution; creation, evolution, birth, heredity, death, our present human development are the matter of its brief & pregnant sentences. The Taittiriya takes for its subject the Anandam Brahman, the constitution of the soul in relation to the Infinite Delight in Conscious Being which is God & the reality of existence & reveals the way & the result of its attainment; it develops for us our gospel of eternal Bliss. The Kena starting from the present constitution of consciousness in man affirms the universal Brahman & teaches knowledge & self-surrender to Him as the inscrutable Self & the ever-present Master. Similarly, the Isha has for its subject the nature of human life & action lived & done in the light of Vedantic knowledge & supreme realisation. It is the gospel of a divine life on earth, a consecration of works, the seed & foundation of Karmayoga.

The Upanishads are works of inspiration, not of reasoning; therefore we shall not find in them the development of thought or the logical connection of the sentences managed on the system of modern writers. The principle of our modern writing borrowed from the Greeks, who were the first nation to replace inspiration by intellect, resembles the progress of the serpent over a field,

slow, winding, insinuating, covering perfectly every inch of the ground. The literary method of the ancients resembles the steps of a Titan striding from reef to reef over wide & unfathomable waters. The modern method instructs the intellect, the ancient illumines the soul. In the latter also there is a perfect logical sequence but this logic demands for our understanding & capacity to follow it something of the same illumination which presided at its construction. So profoundly characteristic is this difference that the Greek governs even his poetry by the law & style of the logical intellect, the Indian tends to subject even his prose to the law & style of the illuminated vision. The Sage of the Isha is an inspired poet writing of God & life in a style of clear, but massive & epic sublimity, lofty & grandiose, but without the European epical tendency to amplitude & period, exceedingly terse, pregnant, compactly decisive,—every word stored with meaning & leaving behind it a thousand solemn echoes. These conditions of his method of composition must be taken into full account when we try to interpret his thinking.

The theme which he has to develop arises from the fundamental doctrine of the Vedanta, Sarvam khalu idam Brahma, Verily all this is the Brahman. To realise that everything of which we have separate knowledge by the limited & dividing movement of the mind & senses, is limited & separate only in appearance, but in its reality transcends its appearance and is a manifestation, a form in consciousness, an eidolon, a mask of something absolute, transcendental & without limit,—this is the first necessity of true knowledge according to the early thinkers. But when we have realised it, when we know that earth is not earth except in form & idea but the Brahman, man is not man except in form & idea but the Brahman, what then? Can we live in the light of that knowledge or must we abandon life to possess it? For it is obvious that all actions are done through mind with its two great instruments of name & form and if we are to look beyond name & form we must transcend mind & ignore its limitations. How can we do that & still act & live in this world as men act & live? Can one keep one's eyes fixed on the transcendent & yet move with any ease or safety in the

phenomenal? Must we not remove our thoughts from That (Tat) in order to deal with this (sarvam idam), — just as a man cannot walk safely on earth if he keeps his eyes fixed on the heavens, but must constantly be removing his gaze from the lofty object of his contemplation? And another & deeper question arises. Is life worth living when we know the Brahman? is there any joy & use in the phenomenal when we know the transcendent, in the recurrent & transient when we know the persistent & eternal, in the apparent when we know the real? Immense is the attraction of the infinite & unlimited, why should we take pleasure in the finite & fleeting? Does not the charm of phenomena disappear with the advent of this supreme knowledge & is it possible to busy ourselves with the phenomenal when its attraction & apparent necessity are removed? Is not persistence in life caused by ignorance and possible only if there is persistence in ignorance? Must we not abandon the world, if we would possess God? forsake Maya if we would become one in the Atman? For who can serve at the same time two masters & such different masters? We know the answer of Shankara, the answer of the later Adwaitin, the Mayavadin; and the answer of most religious minds in India since Buddhism conquered our intellects has not been substantially different. To flee the world & seek God, sums up their attitude. There have been notable exceptions, but the general trend hardly varies. The majority of the pre-Buddhistic Hindus answered the question, if I am not mistaken, in a different sense & attained to a deeper consummation. They answered it in the sense of the Isha Upanishad & the Gita; they held divine life in the Brahman here to be a possibility.

The supreme importance of the question is apparent. If the theory of the Illusionist is true, life is an inexplicable breach of Truth, an unjustifiable disturbance in the silence & stillness of the Eternal. It is a freak to be corrected, a snare to be escaped from, a delusion to be renounced, a mighty cosmic whim & blunder. The results upon the nation which produced this tremendous negation, have been prodigious. India has become the land of saints & ascetics, but progressively also of a decaying society and an inert, effete & helpless people. The indignant

denunciation of the Vishnu Purana against the certain results to society of the Buddhist heresy has been fulfilled in the fate of our strongly Buddhicised Hindu nation. We see increasing upon it through the centuries the doom announced in the grave warnings of the Gita against the consequences of inaction, “utsideyur ime lokah . . . sarirayatrapि akarmanah . . . sankarasya cha karta syam upahanyam imah prajah . . . buddhibhedam janayed ajnanam karmasanginam” etc. The religious life of this country has divided itself into two distinct & powerful tendencies, the Hinduism of the withdrawal from life which has organised itself in the monastery & the hermitage and the Hinduism of social life which has resolved itself into a mass of minute ceremony & unintelligent social practice. Neither is pure; both are afflicted with sankara, mixture & confusion of dharmas; for the life of the monastery is stricken with the tendency towards a return to the cares & corruptions of life, the life of society sicklied over & rendered impotent by the sense of its own illusion & worthlessness faced with the superiority of the monastic ideal. If a man or a nation becomes profoundly convinced that this phenomenal life is an illusion, its aims & tendencies of a moment & its values all false values, you cannot expect either the man or the nation to flourish here, whatever may be gained in Nirvana. For the nation any sustained & serious greatness of aim & endeavour becomes impossible. To get through the years of life, to maintain the body and propagate the race, since for some unreasonable reason that is demanded of us, but to get done with the business as soon as possible & escape by sannyasa into the unconditioned, this must obviously be the sole preoccupation of man in a society governed by this negative ideal. What is chiefly needed by it is an elaborate set of rules, the more minute & rigid the better, which will determine every action of life both social & religious, so as to save men the labour of thought & action & give them the assurance that they are doing only the nityakarma necessary to life in the body or the shastric karma which creates the least bondage for future lives & are not heaping up on themselves the burden of long continued existence in this terrible & inexplicable nightmare of

the phenomenal world. But the attachment to works remains & it tends to satisfy itself by an excessive insistence on the petty field still left to it. We see an exclusive preoccupation with a petty money-getting, with the mere maintenance of a family, with the sordid cares of a narrow personal existence. The great ideals, the universalising & liberating movements which have continually swept rajasic Europe & revivified it, have been more & more unknown to us in the later history of our country. We have had but one world-forgetting impulse & one world-conquering passion,—the impulse of final renunciation & the passion of self-devotion to the Master of all or to a spiritual teacher. It is this habit of bhakti that alone has saved us alive; preserving an imperishable core of strength in the midst of our weakness & darkness it has returned upon us from age to age and poured its revivifying stream always through our inert mass and our petrifying society. But for all that our great fundamental mistake about life has told heavily; it has cursed our rajasic activity with continual inefficiency and our sattvic tendencies with a perpetual weight of return to tamas. Andham tamah pravishanti ye avidyam upasate. Tato bhuya iva te tamo ya u vidyayam ratah. Both these sentences of gloom have weighed upon us; we have divided ourselves into the exclusive seekers after the unconditioned knowledge & the exclusive lingerers in the phenomenal ignorance. We have made the life divine well nigh impossible in the world, possible only in remote hermitage, desolate forest or lonely mountain. We have not known the harmony which the early Vedantins practised; we have given ourselves instead to a great negation which, however inspiring and strength giving by its positive side—for it has its strong positive side—to a few exceptional spirits, cannot be grasped by the ordinary soul even when it is accepted by the ordinary intellect, is not man's swadharma, and must therefore tend only to destroy his strength & delight in life by imposing upon him an effort beyond our average human capacity, from which it sinks back dispirited, weakened and nerveless. No nation, not even a chosen race, can with impunity build its life on a fundamental error about the meaning of life. We are here to manifest God in

our mundane existence; our business is to express & formulate in phenomenal activity such truth as we can command about the Eternal; and in order to do that effectively we must answer the riddle set for us of the coexistence of the eternal & the phenomenal — we must harmonise God & Nature on peril of our destruction. The European nations have invariably decayed after a few centuries of efflorescence because they have persisted in ignorance, & been obstinate in Avidya. We who possess the secret but misunderstand it, have taken two millenniums to decay, but in the end we have decayed & brought ourselves to the verge of actual death & decomposition. We can preserve ourselves only by returning to the full & harmonious truth of our religion, truth of Purana & Tantra which we have mistranslated into a collection of fables and of magic formulae, truth of Veda which we have mistranslated into the idea of vacant & pompous ceremonial & the truth of Vedanta which we have mistranslated into the inexplicable explanation, the baffling mystery of an incomprehensible Maya. Veda & Vedanta are not only the Bible of hermits or the textbook of metaphysicians, but a gospel of life and a guide to life for the individual, for the nation & for all humanity.

The Isha Upanishad stands first in the order of the Upanishads we should read as of a supreme importance for us & more almost than any of the others, because it sets itself with express purpose to solve that fundamental difficulty of life to which since Buddha & Shankara we have persisted in returning so lofty but so misleading an answer. The problem resolves itself into a few primary & fundamental questions. Since we have here a great unconditioned unity and a great phenomenal multitudinous manifestation, what is the essential relation between this unity & this manifestation? Given the coexistence & identity of the reality & the phenomenon where is the key to their identity? what is the principle which harmonises them? and wherein lies the purpose & justification of their coexistence & apparent differentiation? The essential relation being known, what is that practical aspect of the relation upon which we can build securely our life here in this world? Is it possible to do the

ordinary works of our human life upon earth consistently with the higher knowledge or in such a way as to embody in our every action the soul of the divine knowledge & the divine guna? What is that attitude towards God & the world which secures us in such a possibility? Or what the rule of life which we must keep before us to govern our practice and what the practical results that flow from its observance? The present curses of phenomenal life seem always to have been the sorrowful trinity of pain, death & limitation; will these practical results of a Vedantic life include the acceptance of this great burden and this besetting darkness or has mankind even here, even in this body & in this society, an escape from death & sorrow? As human beings what is our aim here or what our hope hereafter? These are the great questions that arise from the obscured soul of man to the Infinite & the conflicting & partial answers to them have eternally perplexed humanity. But if they can once be answered, simply, embracingly, satisfactorily — so as to leave no true demand of the God in man upon the world unsatisfied, then the riddle of existence is solved. The Isha Upanishad undertakes to answer them all. Setting out with a declaration of God's purpose in manifestation for which the world was made & the golden rule of life by which each man individually can utterly consummate that divine purpose, the mighty Sage to whom as an instrument & channel we owe this wise & noble solution asserts the possibility of human works without sin, grief & stain in the light of the one spiritual attitude that is consistent with the conscious & true knowledge of things & in the strength of the golden rule by which alone a divine life here can be maintained. In explaining & justifying these original positions he answers incidentally all the other great human questions.

The structure of the Upanishad is built up, the harmony of its thought worked out in four successive movements, with the initial verse of each swelling passage linking it in the motion of thought to the strain that precedes. Before we proceed to any work of analysis or isolate each note in order to obtain its full value, it will be convenient to have a synthetical understanding of the main ideas that run through the symphony and perceive

something of the manner with which they pass into or help each other and build up by their agreement a great and harmonious philosophy of life.

II The First Movement

"For the Lord all this is a habitation, yea, whatsoever single thing is moving in this universe of motion: by that abandoned thou shouldst enjoy; neither do thou covet any man's possession. Doing verily works in this world thou should wish to live a hundred years, for thus it is with thee & not otherwise; action clingeth not to a man. Sunless, truly are those worlds and enveloped in blind gloom whither they passing hence arrive who are hurters of their own souls." So runs the first movement of the Upanishad.

In the very beginning the Rishi strikes the master note to which all the rest of the harmony vibrates, lays down the principle of which every Upanishad is an exposition. God & the World,—these are the two terms of all our knowledge. From their relation we start, to their relation in union or withdrawal from union all our life & activity return. When we have known what the world is, when we have exhausted Science & sounded all the fathomless void, we have still to know what God is, & unless we know what God is, we know nothing fundamental about the world. Tasmin vijnate sarvam vijnatam. He being known, all the rest is known. Material Philosophy & Science have to admit in the end that because they do not know the Transcendental, therefore they cannot be sure about the phenomenal. They can only say that there are these phenomena which represent themselves as acting in these processes to the thought & senses, but whether their appearance is their reality, no man can say. The end of all Science is Agnosticism.

The Rishi takes these two great terms, God, one, stable & eternal, the world shifting, multitudinous, transient. For this great flux of Nature, by which we mean a great cosmic motion & activity, shows us nowhere a centre of knowledge & intelligent control, yet its every movement, denoting law, pointing

to harmony, speaks of a centre somewhere of knowledge & intelligent control. It shows nowhere any definite unity except that of sum and process, yet every little portion of it the more we analyse, cries out more loudly, "There is One & not many." Every single thing in it is perishable & mutable, yet for ever its ancient & inevitable movements thunder in our ears the chant of the immutable & eternal. She is one term, Prakriti, jagati, the ever moving, with every object, small or great, a mere knot of motion, jagat; that which she obeys & worships & of which she speaks to us always & yet seems always by the whirl of her motions in mind & matter to conceal, is the Lord, the Purusha. He is that One, Eternal & Immutable; it is He that is the centre of knowledge & eternal control. He is Ish, the Lord. The relation between the world & its Lord on which the Rishi bids us fix as the one on whose constant & established realisation we can best found the thoughts & activities of the Life Divine, is the relation of the Inhabitant & His habitation. For habitation by Him it was made, not only as a whole, but every object which it has built up, is building or will build in the whirl & race of its eternal movement, from the god to the worm, from the Sun to the atom & the grain of dust to the constellations & their group, each, small or great, mean or mighty, sweet or sombre, beautiful or repulsive, is his dwelling place & that which dwells in it, is the Lord.¹

We start then with this truth. We have seen that the problem of life involves two essential questions; first, the essential relation between the Transcendent & the phenomenal, secondly, that practical aspect of the relation on which we can build securely our life & action in the world. The Rishi starts with the practical relation. This is the knowledge which we must win, the attitude which having attained we must guard & keep. Looking around upon the multitude of objects in the world, we have to see so many houses & in each an inhabitant, one inhabitant only, He

¹ In the manuscript, the above paragraph is followed by one that is bracketed and struck through. This is reproduced as piece [1] of the Appendix. Piece [2] of the Appendix, a passage written separately, is related to the above paragraph in theme.—Ed.

who has built also the whole & inhabits the whole, its Lord. When we see the infinite ether containing this multitude of suns & solar systems, we are not to forget or ignore what we see but we must look on infinity as a house of manifest being & in it one great infinite indwelling Consciousness, Allah, Shiva, Krishna, Narayana, God. When we see around us man & animal & leaf & clod, king & beggar, philosopher & peasant, saint & criminal, we must look on these names & forms as so many houses of being and within each the same great inhabitant, Allah, Shiva, Krishna, Narayana, the Lord. Manhood & animality, animation & inanimation, wealth & poverty, wisdom & ignorance, sainthood & criminality are the robes he wears, but the wearer is One. In every man I meet, I must recognise the Lord I adore. In friend & stranger, in my lover & my slayer, I must see equally, since I also must be He, myself. This is the great secret of existence & the condition which we must first satisfy if we wish to live divinely & be divine.

This is, internally, our necessary attitude towards God & the world. But to translate an internal attitude into the terms of action, it is our experience that a rule of life is needed. The purpose for which a householder builds himself a mansion & dwells in it, can only be one; it is to live & enjoy. So it is with the Purusha & Prakriti; their relation is the enjoyment of the one by the other. God has made this world in His own being that He may in mind & other principles live phenomenally in phenomena & enjoy this phenomenal existence even while secretly or openly He enjoys also His transcendent existence. The Soul or God is, says the Gita, Ishwara, bharta, jnata, anumanta; the Master for whose pleasure Prakriti acts, the Indweller who fills her with his being & supports her actions, the Knower who watches & takes into His cognisance her activities, the anumanta who gives or withdraws or after giving withdraws His consent and as He gives, continues or withdraws it, things begin, endure or cease. But He is also & preeminently bhokta, her enjoyer. For all this is bhogartham—for the sake of enjoyment. But in practice we find that we are not Ish, but anish, not master, but slave; not jnata & anumanta, but ajna, not knowing & controlling, but

ignorant, clouded, struggling for knowledge & mastery; not an immortal enjoyer in delight, but victim of sorrow, death & limitation. Limited, we struggle to enlarge ourselves & our scope; unpossessed of our desire, we demand & we strive; unattaining, reacted upon by hostile forces, we are full of sorrow & racked by pain. We see others possess & ourselves lack & we struggle to dispossess them and possess in their stead. The facts of life as we live it contradict at every turn the sublime dogma of the Vedantist. What are we to do? To struggle with God in others & God in the world or live only for God in others & not at all for God in ourselves?

In his second line the Rishi utters his golden rule of life which supplies us with the only practical solution of the difficulty. To enjoy as we enjoy now is to lift to our lips a cup of mixed honey & poison; to abandon the world is to contradict God's purpose by avoiding the problem instead of solving it; to sacrifice self to others is a half solution which, by itself, limits the divine lila & stultifies our occupation of the body. The fulfilment of self both in our own joy & in the joy of others & in the joy of the whole world is the object of our life. How then is the problem to be solved? By that abandoned thou shouldst enjoy; do not thou covet any man's possession. Tena, that, refers back to *yat kincha jagat*. By that you have to enjoy—for the world and all in it is meant for the purpose of enjoyment, it is the means, movement & medium created by the Lord for the purpose, but by that abandoned, by that renounced. You have not to cast the world & its objects themselves away from you, for then you defeat your own object. It is a deeper, a truer renunciation that is asked of us. Everything in the world has to be renounced and yet, through the thing so renounced, *tena tyaktena*, you have to enjoy, *bhunjithah*.²

Shankara translates “possess”, not “enjoy”. Essentially this makes no difference, for possession implies enjoyment. But the

² Sri Aurobindo wrote the paragraph that follows on a separate page of the manuscript but marked it for insertion here. Two other separately written passages whose points of insertion were not marked are reproduced as pieces [3] and [4] of the Appendix.—Ed.

ordinary sense of the root is to enjoy, & it is clearly the sense which the Rishi intended; for the collocation of the strongly opposite ideas of tyaga & bhoga can no more be an accident than the significant collocation of jagati & jagat in the preceding lines. Nowhere in this Upanishad is there random writing; rather every word is made to carry its entire weight & even run over with fullness of meaning.

In order to make his meaning perfectly clear the Rishi adds "Do not covet". This then is the renunciation demanded, not the renunciation of the thing itself, but the renunciation of the attachment, the craving, the demand — when that is renounced, then only is enjoyment possible, then only can the bitterness be cast out of the cup & only the pure honey remain. For the reason that we are anisha is because we demand. He who is Lord & Master, does not struggle & demand; he does not need even to command; for Prakriti knows His will & hastens to obey it. If we would live divinely, we must realise the Lord in ourselves, we must have sadharmya with Him & be as He. What the Lord wills for His lila in this habitation, Prakriti will bring; what Prakriti brings for our lila, is what the Lord wills. That which struggles in us, craves, fights, covets, struggles, weeps, is not the pure Self but the mind, — which, as we shall find, weeps & struggles because ensnared in limitations it does not understand, — not Ish, but jagat, the movement, the whirl, one eddy in the shifting & struggling movement & clash of forces — perfectly guided by Isha, but to our human understandings unguided or ill-guided — which we call Prakriti. In this great knowledge & its practice we can become desireless & calm, august, joyous, free from anxiety, pain, grief, sama, udasina, yet full of delight in all that we here in Prakriti, — Purushah Prakritistha, — say, see & do.

Immediately the great recurring problem presents itself of works and the cessation from works, — the ancient crux which it is so easy to get rid of by a trenchant act of logic, so hard to solve in harmony with the actual facts of existence. To the ordinary mind action seems impossible or purposeless without desire; to the logical mind it seems inevitable that the more one penetrates into the supreme calm, the farther one must move

from all impulse to action,—that pravritti & nivritti, shama & karma are eternally opposed. Shankara, therefore, deciding all things by his triumphant & inexorable logic, insists that action is inconsistent with the state divine. In practice the seeker after perfection finds that calm, renunciation, joy, peace seem only to be secure when one rests motionlessly established in the impersonal Brahman; freedom of desire is only easy by freedom from activity. Does not then enjoyment without demand or craving, does not enjoyment by the thing renounced mean enjoyment of the renunciation & not of the thing itself? Is it not the enjoyment of the eremite, eremite in soul if not in body, the spectator watching the action of the world but himself no part of it, that is alone possible to the desireless mind? And even if it is not the sole possible enjoyment, is it not the superior & preferable? Who that has self-enjoyment in the soul, would condescend to the enjoyment of external objects? Or if he condescended, it is the greater bliss of other worlds that would attract him and not the broken shreds which are all this world's joys, the hampered fulfilments which are all this world's actualisation of infinite possibility.

To all these ancient questionings the reply of the Upanishad is categorical, explicit, unflinching. "Doing verily works here one should wish to live a hundred years; thus it is with thee & it is not otherwise than this; action cleaveth not to a man." It is not surprising that the great Shankara with his legacy of Buddhist pessimism, his rejection of action, his sense of the nullity of the world, faced by this massive & tremendous asseveration should have put it aside by his favourite device of devoting it to the service of unenlightened minds, although it occurs apparently as an integral portion of the argument & there is not a hint or a trace of its being intended as a contradiction or qualification of the main teaching, although too this interpretation is stultified both by the run of the two lines & by the immediate occurrence of the next verse,—but every incongruity & impossibility is to be accepted rather than suffer such an assertion to stand as the teaching of the Sruti. Nor is it surprising that Shankara's greatest follower, Vidyaranya, feeling perhaps that his master's dealings

with the text in this commentary were of the most arbitrary & violent, should have preferred to exclude the Isha from his list of authoritative Upanishads. But to us, uncommitted to any previous theory, this sloka offers no difficulty but is rather an integral & most illuminating step in the development of a great & liberating doctrine.

Kurvanneva, says the Rishi, having his eye on the great dispute. Thou shalt do works & not abstain from doing them and the works are the works of this material world, those that are to be done iha, here, in this life & body. Doing his works in this world a man shall be joyously willing to live the full span of years allowed to the mortal body. If he grows weary, if he seeks to abridge it, if he has haste in his soul for the side beyond death, he is not yet an enlightened soul, not yet divine. With this great admission the Vedanta can no longer be a mere ascetic gospel. Life — full & unabridged in its duration, — full and uncontracted in its activity is accepted, welcomed, consecrated to divine use. And the Rishi affirms his reason for acceptance — because so it is with thee & it is not otherwise than this. Because in other words this is the law of our being and this is the will of the Eternal. No man, as the Gita clearly teaches, can abstain from works, for even the state of withdrawal of the ascetic, even the self-collected existence of the silent Yогin is an act and an act of tremendous effect & profoundest import. So long as we are in manifest existence, so long we are in the jagati using, influencing & impressing ourselves on the jagat and we cannot escape from the necessity self-imposed on Himself by God within us. And it is so imposed for the reason already stated, because He has made this world for His habitation & as a means for His enjoyment & a thing for His delight — & this his great will & purpose no man can be allowed to frustrate. The wise mind, the illumined soul knowing this truth makes no vain attempt to square this circle; he accepts that which God intends fully & frankly and only seeks the best way to fulfil God in this existence which he occupies on the way to another. For he knows that bondage and freedom are states of the outer mind, not of the inner spirit; for there is none free & none bound, none panting after liberation

& none fleeing from bondage, but only the Eternal rejoicing secretly or manifestly in His innumerable habitations.

But in that case we are eternally bound by the chain of our works, nailed helplessly to the wheel of karma? Not so; for the wheel of karma is an error and the chain of our works is a grand illusion. "Action clingeth not to a man." Bondage is not the result of works, & liberation is not the result of cessation of works. Bondage is a state of the mind; liberation is another state of the mind. When through the principle of desire in the mind the soul, the Ish, the lord, mixes himself up in the whirl of Prakriti, he sees himself in mental consciousness as if carried forward in the stream of causality; he seems to the mind in him to be bound by the effects of his works; when he relinquishes desire, then he recovers his lordship — which in his higher being he has never lost — and appears to himself what he has always been in reality, free in his being, swarat, samrat. It follows then that the way to liberate oneself is not to renounce works but to rise from mind to Supra-mind, from the consciousness of mental being, sambhava, to the consciousness of self-being, swayambhava or asambhuti. It is necessary to remember oneself, but it is not necessary to forget phenomena. For action is the movement of Prakriti and the chain of action is nothing more terrible or mystic than the relation of cause & effect. That chain does not bind the Master; action leaves no stain on the soul. The works of the liberated man produce an effect indeed, but on the stream of Prakriti, not on the soul which is above its action and not under it, uses action & is not victimised by it, determines action & is not determined by it. But if action in its nature bound the soul, then freedom here would be impossible. It does not & cannot; the soul allows mind to mix itself up with its works, buddhir lipyate, but the action does not adhere to the soul, na karma lipyate nare. The fear of action is Maya; the impossibility of combining action with calm & renunciation is a false sanskara. Nivritti or calm is the eternal state & very nature of the soul, pravritti is in manifestation the eternal state and very nature of Prakriti. Their coexistence & harmony is not only possible, but it is the secret of the world obscured only by ignorance in the mind. The enemy therefore is

not action, but ignorance; not works bind us, but works done in the state of ignorance give us the illusion of bondage. The idea of separateness, of limitation with its fruit of desire, internal struggle, disappointment, grief, pain,—this alone is our stumbling block. Abolish it, see God alone everywhere & all difficulty disappears. Nivritti & Pravritti, tyaga & bhoga move harmoniously to the perfect fulfilment of the divine purpose.

Those important enunciations completed, the Sage proceeds to a minor, but not inessential effect of the knowledge he is developing—the life after this one which we have to use here, our progress into worlds beyond. The gati, trans-mortal journey or destination of the soul, occupied profoundly the Vedantic mind as it has occupied humanity in all except in its brief periods of entire materialistic this-worldliness. As yet the Sage does not proceed to any positive statement; but by a negative movement he indicates the importance of the question. Our life here is only one circumstance in our progress—the fundamental circumstance, indeed, since earth is the pratistha or pedestal of our consciousness in manifest being,—but still the fundamental is not the final, the pratistha is not the consummation but only the means to the consummation. It is the first step in our journey, the initial movement in the triple stride of Vishnu. There is beyond it a second step, from which we constantly return till we are ready here for the third, for the consummation. Our future state depends on our fullness at the time of our passage, on our harmonious progress towards divine being. That is the hidden thing in us which we have to develop. We are to become atmavan, to possess our divine being, to disengage & fulfil our real self. Those who fall from this development, who turn aside from it are self-hurters or, to take the full vigorous sense of the word used, self-slayers. Not that God in us can be slain, for death of the soul is impossible,—but there may be temporary perdition of the apparent divinity by the murder of its self-expression. And to this we may arrive either by wilfulness of passion or by intellectual wilfulness. Instead of becoming gods, Suras, images of the Most High, the Paratpara Purusha in His effulgent glory, we may become misrepresentations of Him, false

because distorted images, distorted by imperfection, distorted by onesidedness, Titans, Asuras or else souls unillumined by the sun of Knowledge & if illumined at all then only by false lights which eventually become eclipsed in darkness. Our after state will be Asurya, sunless, unillumined. To what worlds do we then journey?

The ordinary reading of the first word in the third verse of the Upanishad, is *Asūrya*, Titanic, but there is a possible variation *Asúrya*, sunless. The substantial sense resulting from both readings is the same, but the colour given will be different. The Titans or Asuras of the Veda are souls of mere undisciplined might. They are those who found themselves not on light & calm but on *asu*, the vital force & might which is the basis of all energetic & impetuous feeling & action. The self-willed ones, who from temperamental passion wreck themselves by the furious pursuit in desire of a false object or from intellectual passion wreck themselves by the blind pursuit in belief of a false idea, they follow a path because it is their own from Titanical attachment, from an immense though possibly lofty egoism. *Mole ruit sua*. They fall by their own mass, they collapse by excess of greatness. They need not be ignoble souls, but may even seem sometimes more noble than the gods & their victorious legions. When they hack & hew at the god within them, it may be in tremendous devotion to a principle; when they subdue, cloud & torture themselves till they stumble forward into misery & night, till they become demoniac in nature, it may be in furious & hungry insistence on a great aspiration. They may be grandiosely mighty like Hiranyakashipu, ostentatiously largehearted like Bali, fiercely self-righteous like the younger Prahlada. But they fall whether great or petty, noble or ignoble & in their fall they are thrust down by Vishnu to Patala, to the worlds of delusion & shadow, or of impenetrable gloom, because they have used the heart or intellect to serve passion & ignorance, enslaved the spiritual to the material & vital elements & subordinated the man in them to the Naga, the serpent. The Naga is the symbol of the mysterious earthbound force in man. Wisest he of the beasts of the field, but still a beast of the field,

not the winged Garuda revered to be the upbearer of divinity who opens his vans to the sunlight and soars to the highest seat of Vishnu. If we read Asūrya we shall then have to translate “Verily it is to the worlds of the Titans, worlds enveloped in blind gloom, that they after passing hence resort who are self-slayers.” Otherwise it is the worlds farthest removed from the Sun, our symbol & principle of divine Knowledge. There are materialised states of darkness in the conscious being in which they must work out the bewilderment & confusion they have fastened on themselves by an obstinate persistence in self-will & ignorance. In either case the intention of the Sage is evident from the later passages of this Upanishad. Whether we follow exclusively after Avidya or exclusively after Vidya, we go equally astray, exclusiveness means ignorance, exclusiveness means confusion & division of the indivisible Brahman, & persistence in such error is an obstinacy fatal to the soul in its immediate prospects. Temporarily — because eternal perdition is impossible, — it fails to cross successfully over death & enters into trans-mortal darkness. Those who accept the unity of the Brahman, who see in Vidya & Avidya only vyavahara, light & shadow reflected in Him for the use of self-expression in phenomena, who live in the knowledge of the One in the Many, embracing like Brahman all being in themselves, rejecting nothing, preferring nothing, bearing everything, effecting everything, infinite in calm by renunciation, infinite in might & bliss by enjoyment, they are men perfected, they are the siddhas. Even those who not yet attaining, follow faithfully this law & this ideal journey onwards in the way of their self-fulfilment and are lifted by all-purifying Agni to the regions of the Sun where they possess their perfect oneness & receive their consummate felicity.... With this warning (for the promise comes afterward) closes the first movement of the Upanishad.

III

God then & the world are before us, the Inhabitant to be recognised as the Lord of things even when He appears otherwise &

His habitation to be regarded merely as a movement set going by Him for phenomenal purposes, a stream of form & action by which He can enjoy His own conditioned being,—God & the world are to be possessed by a pure & infinite enjoyment, Ananda, or bliss which depends on a perfect renunciation not of the world, but of the limited struggle & the ignorant attachment, of the demand & the groping. These poor & imperfect movements [are] to be replaced by a mighty calm and a divine satisfaction. We are not to renounce works, which do not & cannot stain the soul or bind it, but to be liberated through acceptance of works in a luminous knowledge of their divine use & nature; not mutilation of life is to be our ideal, but fulfilment through life of the intention of the Most High in His phenomenal manifestation. If we mutilate life through self-will & ignorance we imprison ourselves after death in worlds of confusion & darkness and here like a ship befogged & astray in dense sea mists are hindered & long delayed in our divine voyage.

But now farther questions arise. Stated by itself & without development or qualification the first line of this great teaching, although fundamental to the practical living of the divine life and the sufficient & right attitude for its fulfilment might yet, like all trenchant assertions, too positively & exclusively taken, lead us into a profound error & misunderstanding. God & the World, the Movement & the Dweller in the movement, that is the practical relation between the unconditioned & the phenomenal which we have to accept as the unalterable basis of our rule of right living. But this general movement, with the particular knots in it of apparent movement & apparent status which we call formations or objects,—what is it? Movement of Mahat or movement of what nature,—real or unreal? And the inhabitant, is he different from His habitation? If He is different & the habitation is real, what becomes of the universal unity Vedanta teaches and how are we not handed over to duality and a fundamental disparity, if not a fundamental opposition? It is to remove this possible misunderstanding that the Rishi now proceeds to a completer though not yet entirely complete statement of universal existence. He has stated the practical relation,

he now states the essential relation. It amounts in effect to the fundamental tenet of Vedanta in the Upanishads “Sarvam khalu idam Brahma.” All this, in truth, is the Brahman. He says “There is One who unmoving is swifter than mind, neither have the gods reached It for it goes always in front. Standing, it outstrips others as they run. In It Matariswan sets activity. That moves & that does not move; that is far & the same that is verily near; That is within all this, the same that is outside all this.”

Not only the stable but the unstable; not only the constant, but the recurrent; not only the Inhabitant but His habitation; not only Purusha but Prakriti. It is ekam, not a number [of] different beings, as in the dogma of the Sankhyas, but One being; not two separate categories, the real & the unreal, Brahman & Maya, but only One, the Brahman. That which moves not is the Brahman but also that which moves is the Brahman, not merely Maya, not merely a base & ugly dream. We know already by the first verse that the innumerable inhabitants of this moving universe are not essentially many, but are one Soul disporting in many bodies or not really disporting but supporting the multiform play of Prakriti; eko achalah sanatanah, in the solemn language of the Gita, one, motionless, without beginning or end. He is this man & that woman, yonder ancient leaning on his staff, this blue winged bird, that scarlet winged. But now we learn that also the name & form & property, the manhood & the womanhood, the age & the youth, the blueness & the scarlet hue, the staff, the attitude of leaning, the bird, the wing, all is the Brahman. The Inhabitant is not different from His habitation.

This is a difficult point for the ordinary mind to admit intellectually; it is difficult, even for minds not ordinary, really to grasp the intellectual conception, take it into the soul & realise it there in feeling & consciousness. Even the greatest materialist in theory regards himself in his feelings as a mind or a soul and is aware of a gulf between himself & the inanimate. His opinions contradict his heart's consciousness. In Yoga also one of our first realisations is the separateness of the body by the practical removal of the dehatmabuddhi,— a sensation the psychology of which is not well understood & being misunderstood gives

rise to many errors. Hence we have a proneness to regard the inanimate as undivine, the material as gross & even foul and the objective as unreal — as if all this were not merely arrangement & vyavahara, as if the material was not also Atman & spirit, Brahman equally present in clod & man, body & soul, thought & action, as if all were not essentially equal in their divinity, and apparently so diverse merely because of the infinite variation of form & guna! By this cardinal error the intellectual man comes to despise & neglect the body, the religious man to treat the body & often the intellect also as an impediment, praising the heart only, the contemplative spiritual man to aim at casting out both mind & body & banishing from him the very thought & perception of the objective. All are ruled or driven by this dim sensation or clear belief that the subjective soul seated within them alone is God, alone the Self, that the objective movement of Spirit seeming to the movement of mind & senses to be outside & apart from us, is not God & is therefore worthless & evil. They all insist on a mental attitude to things, an attitude of analysis, separation & logical distinction instead of rising beyond mind-limitations & mind-methods to God's transcendent embracing vision which sees all things & states & is affected & bound by none. They all therefore make the essential error of duality, from which eventually every kind of ignorance & confusion arises. It is for this reason, to discourage this error that the Sage insists on his ekam in the neuter — not only is He divine, Sa, God regarding Himself subjectively as universal cognisant Personality, but That is divine, Tat, Brahman realising Himself by identity both beyond & in and as all phenomenal existences, at will & coexistently transcendental & phenomenal, conditioned & unconditioned, One in the One & One in the Many.

Brahman is spoken of here, not as the absolute Parabrahman outside all relation to life & phenomena, for to the unknowable utterness of Parabrahman such phrases as "swifter than the mind" or such ideas as outrunning the gods or going in their front cannot be applied,—It is the Brahman as we see It in Its relation to phenomena, God in the world, conditioned to our awareness in vyavahara, unconditioned to our awareness

in paramartha, which is the subject of this & the following shloka.³ That is the One & sole Existence which, though indeed It does not move, is swifter than the mind & therefore the Gods cannot attain to It because It goes always in front. For the mind served by the senses is the instrument which men use to grasp & measure the world & the gods are the presiding powers of all mental & physical functions, but neither the mind nor the senses, neither sensation nor reason can attain to the Brahman. It always goes far in front of any swiftest agency by which we can pursue It.

What is the precise significance of this imagery? The intention can only be understood if we remember the nature of mental action upon which such enormous stress is here laid and the limitations of that action. Mind always starts from a point, the thinker or the object of thought; it works in space or time on particular objects or groups of objects or at most on the sum of all objects known. It can only seek to know the movement & process of the world, but of that which is beyond & behind movement & process, what can it know? At most it can feel or be told that He the eternal & ineffable exists. Ordinarily, it can only go as far back as itself and say "I, mind, am He; because I think, I am; because I am & think, things are" — propositions which as the expression of a relative & intermediate fact have their validity but are as an universal & ultimate statement untrue. But even the movement of God in nature is too vast & swift for the mind to grasp. It catches at & seizes petty surrounding eddies or even great masses of movement at a little distance; it seizes, arranges to itself in its own terms of vision & classes them triumphantly as ultimate laws of Nature. But who has sailed all these waters or can tell where, if at all, they end? Who shall say that those laws are not byelaws only, or the charter & constitution of a single dependency only or province? Follow

³ *The following sentence was written in the top margin of the manuscript page. Its place of insertion was not marked:*

Of the Absolute all we can say is "It is not that, it is not that"; it is unknowable in Itself, knowable only in our existence here or in relation to our existence here, not to be characterised by any epithet, description or suggestion.

God to the utmost confines of observable space, — He is sure to be whirling universes into being far in front. Pursue Him into the deepest recesses of experimental being, there are unguessed universes of consciousness behind to which you have no present access. Infinity is only one of His aspects, but the very nature of Infinity is that the mind cannot grasp it, though the reason deduces it. Who measured Space? Can any vastest Mind find out when Things began or know when & how they shall end? Nay, there may be near to us universes of another Time, Space & arrangement to which our material dimensions & mind & sense limitations forbid us entrance. Even here who has traced out the purpose of creation or systematised the ways of Providence? Of a hundred things that happen immediately around us, can we even in a dozen instances tell more than fragmentarily & at a hazard why the thing has happened, to what end it conduced, or of what ordering of things it was a piece & movement? Yet, as the eye opens to the innermost secret of things, one realises that an infinite Wisdom presides over the smallest happening & eternally links today's trifling action to the grandiose movement of the centuries — nay, that every thought which passes through our minds however weak, trivial or absurd, has its mark, in the depths of itself its purpose, even its necessity. But of all this how much can the gods of mind, reason & sense ascertain? They run, they gallop, they outstrip the arrow, the bullet, the lightning, the meteor, all material swiftnesses, but That though it moves not, travels still in front. Yes, even when we think we are in front of Him, have fathomed His ways, classified His laws, understood existence, ascertained & determined the future by the past, suddenly we stumble & come across a new landmark or footprint which shows where That has passed; a touch of His finger surprises us as He speeds past & our theories crumble, our knowledge is turned into foolishness, our enlightenment becomes the laughingstock of better enlightened generations. It standing outstrips others as they run, yet all the time, had no need to move. Already God was in front of us, as He is behind, above, below, on every side. Our latest knowledge will always be a candle burning in the mists of the night; our discoveries

pebbles picked up on the shore of a boundless ocean. Not only can we not know That in all Its absolute, transcendent reality, but we cannot know It in all the vastness of Its phenomenal workings. Much we may yet know by the mind, but not all, not more than a corner or a system. All that we can do is to seek the boundless Lord of a boundless universe & here & elsewhere to know each habitation and recognise its Inhabitant. The dweller is divine, but the house too divine, a temple of God, sukritam, well built, delightful & holy — my God Himself manifested as name & form.

That stands really & does not run. What then is the movement by which He outstrips others or is far in front? The clue is given in the expression swifter than mind. It is the mind that runs in us but what is it that runs swifter than mind just as mind runs swifter than any material force? Something of which mind & matter are lower movements, — that which is the essence of the jagati, the essential conscious being of which mind, life & matter are particular currents. This conscious-being is That — the sole Reality which assumes so many appearances. It does not run, for where should it run when it does not exist in time & space, but time & space exist in the Brahman. All things are created in God's consciousness which has no more to move than a man has to move when he follows a particular train of thought. He who was before Time, is still just what He was after Time is finished — drawn back, that is to say, into supratemporal consciousness. He has not moved in His being an inch, He has not changed in His being by the shadow of a shadow. He is still eko achalah sanatanah, one, motionless, without change or end. This side of the Sun or that side of Lyra are to Him one point, or rather no point at all. Space is a symbol into which Thought has translated an arrangement in supraspatial Consciousness. Time & Causality are not different. Therefore it appears that both jagati & jagat are no movement of matter or material force, (that is expressly excluded in the [eighth] verse), nor of mind, (that is expressly excluded here) but of Conscious being in itself, a mysterious activity the essence of which is limitless & absolute Awareness not expressible in language, but translated

in the symbols of our Thought here into a movement in Time, Space & Causality. This universal tenet of Vedanta, although not expressly stated, is yet implied in the Rishi's thought & follows inevitably from his expression. He could very well in his age & surroundings take it for granted, but we have to state it explicitly; for, unless it is assumed, the second movement of the Sage's thought cannot be entirely understood by us. It is, indeed, the foundation of all Vedantic thinking.

In this Brahman Matariswan sets activity. Tasminn apo Matariswa dadhati. Tasmin, in the containing, stable & fulfilling active Brahman already described; Apas, work or activity (Latin opus), this Vedic word being used in preference to karmani, because karmani expresses individual actions & it is here the general universe-activity of Brahman that is intended, not indeed all Prakriti, but that which is manifest as work productive & creative, the movement of the sun & star, the growth of the tree, the flowing of the waters, the progress of life in all its multitude; Matariswa, he that rests in the matrix of things, that is to say Vayu, the motional or first energetic principle of Nature founded in Akasha, the static principle of extension which is the eternal matrix of things, working in it as Prana, the universal life-activity; dadhati, ($\tau\bar{\imath}\theta\eta\sigma\iota$) establishes, sets in its place & manages. For the root dha has always the idea of arrangement, management, working out of things.

The reason for introducing this final and more limiting idea about the Brahman as the culminating phrase of this shloka, is the Sage's intention to emphasise the divineness of that particular movement of Prakriti which is the basis of karmani, human action in this mortal life. Matariswan is the energy of God in Prakriti which enters into as into a womb or matrix (Matar), is first concealed in,—as a child in the womb—& then emerges out of the static condition of extension, represented to our senses in matter as ether. It emerges in the motional principle of expansion & contraction represented to the senses as the gaseous state, especially as breath & as air, called by us therefore Vayu, which by disturbing the even, self-contained vibration (shabda) of the ether, produces vibratory waves (kshobha), generates action &

reaction (rajas) on which ether behind is continually impressing a tendency to equipoise (sattwa), the failure of which is the only cause of disintegration of movement (death, mrityu, tamoguna) & creates contact (sparsha) which is the basis of mental & material sensation & indeed of all relation in phenomenal existence. Matariswan, identifying himself with Vayu, supporting himself on these principles of wave-vibration, action-reaction & contact, valid not only in matter but in life & mind, using the other three elementary or fundamental states known to Vedic enquiry,— agni (fire), the formatory principle of intension, represented to our senses in matter as heat, light & fire, apas or jala (water), the materialising or outward flowing principle of continuation, represented to our senses in matter as sap, seed, rasa, & prithwi (earth), the stabilising principle of condensation, represented to us in matter as earth, the basis of all solids,— Matariswan, deploying existence in settled forms by the fivefold (panchabhaotic) complex movement of the material Brahman, of conscious being as the essential substance of things, reveals himself as universal life activity, upholder of our vitality, prompter & cause of our actions. He as Life, is latently active in the utter inanimate, present, but unorganised in the metal, organised for life and growth only in the plant, for sense & feeling & thought in the animal creation, for reason & illumination & progress to god-head in man, for sempiternal immortality in the gods. But who, ultimately, is this Matariswan? Brahman himself, as the Rigvedic Rishis already knew, manifesting himself in relation to His other movements as the cause, condition & master of vitality.

Life-action, then, is not indeed the whole action of the universe; nor is our human life-action, our apas, work, task here, its culminating activity. There are more developed beings, superior states, other worlds. But it is, whether here or in other planets, the central activity of this universe. It is of this apparently insignificant pebble, the stone that builders not Almighty, not All-wise would have rejected, that God has made the keystone of this work of His construction. In this the movement of our universe finds the means for its central purpose, through it fulfils itself, in it culminates or from it falls away. When God has

fulfilled himself here, under these conditions, with prithivi as his pratistha, then we may pass away finally into other conditions or into the unconditioned, but till then, till God here is satisfied, Brahman here manifested, we come here to fulfil him. Till then, so it must be with us & not otherwise. And this principle is not undivine but divine, not something utterly delusive or diabolical, not the kingdom of a lower spirit or an aberration in knowledge, but God's movement, mahimanam asya, the manifest might, the apparent extension in Itself of the Brahman. Life here is God, the materials of Life here are God. The work is not separate from the worker nor the thought from the thinker. All is the play of a divine Unity.

We can now grasp what the Sage intends when he says, Tad ejati tannaijati. Tat or That, the suggestive vague name for the Brahman whether impersonal or above personality or impersonality, moves & That does not move. It moves or appears to move, — as action of Prakriti & the corresponding knowledge in Purusha, — in the conception of Time, Space & Causality; it does not move in reality, because these are mere symbols, conceptual translations of the actual truth, & movement itself is only such a symbol. The Habitation is the creation of a formative movement of Prakriti, who is indeed always recurrent in her doings because she & her ways are eternal, but also always mutable & inconstant because she works in Time, Space & Causality, terms of perception which have no meaning except as measures of movement or progression from one moment to another, one point to another, one state or event to another. Succession & therefore change is the fundamental law of God's ideative & formative activity in the terms of these three great symbols. But the inhabitant is one & constant, because He is beyond Time & Space. Surrounded apparently by the whirl of Prakriti, to the ignorant tossed about in it, He in reality exists both as its continent & creator as well as its informing soul, master & guide. That therefore in Itself is unmoving, immutable and eternal; in Its movement in Itself, Time-movement, Space-movement, Condition-movement (although as we shall see governed by durable patterns or general processes of conscious being which

ensure order & recurrence from one state or form to another) That is mobile, active, inconstant & fleeting. Sooner or later, all here passes out of our view, except the Inhabitant, the eternal Existence-Consciousness, Him we see seated for ever. On Him in this flux of things we have our sure foundation.

Thus we have the essential reality of things, we have the practical relation of God in Impersonality or Personality as the Inhabitant of His own objective being. We have the principle of unity by which the practical relation refers back always to the essential & derives from it. We have the fundamental justification of works briefly indicated in the identity of the working principle with the eternal Reality behind our works. But the justification of the harmony of tyaga & bhoga on this basis has now to be prepared. After stating, therefore, the identity of the eternal who moveth not, with the eternal who moves, of the Timeless, Spaceless, Conditionless, with the Timed, Spaced & Conditioned, the Sage proceeds with a consideration of the latter only with which our vyavahara or practical life has to deal & emphasises the unity of all things near & far, subjective & objective. That is the near, the same That is the far. He is near to us in our subjective experience, he removes to a distance in the objective where our mind & senses pursue him until they have to cease or return. In the subjective also, he is not only the unknown, but the known, ourselves, that which is seated in our hearts, not only the ungrasped, but the grasped, that which we have & that which we seem not to have, that which we have reached or passed or are approaching & that towards which we vaguely or blindly move. Nothing should we think, feel or observe without saying of it "It is He; it is the Brahman." That is within every creature as all the continent of body & mind & what is more than mind; That is outside every creature as that in which it moves, lives & has its being; not only are our surroundings near or far but that which contains our surroundings, is outside & inside them, alike their continent & their content, sarvam Brahma. For That is the content of all this Universe; That also exceeds & Is apart from every Universe. The Pantheism or Monism which, unable to rise beyond the unity of attainable

data or manifest appearance, makes God conterminous with the world, is not Vedanta. The Pluralism which makes God merely a sum of realised experiences, a growing & diminishing, a fluctuating unknown quantity, X sometimes equal to $a + b$ and sometimes equal to $a - b$, is not our conception of the Universe. These things are He, but He is not these things. To us the world is only a minor term in God's absolute & limitless existence. God is not even infinite, though finity & infinity both are He; He is beyond finity & infinity. He is sarvam Brahma, the All, but he is inexpressibly more than the sarvam. To our highest conception He is One, but in Himself He is beyond conception. Neither Unity nor multiplicity can describe Him, for He is not limited by numbers. Unity is His parabhava, it is His supreme manifestation of being, but it is after all a manifestation, not the utter & unknowable reality.

IV

The object of these two verses which have amplified the idea of monistic Unity in the universe, so as to remove any essential opposition between the world movement & the Inhabitant of the movement, is to lead up to the two verses that follow,—verses of a still higher importance for the purpose of the Upanishad. The Sage has laid down his fundamental positions in the first three verses,—(1) the oneness of all beings in the universe, (2) the harmony of renunciation & enjoyment by freedom from desire & demand, (3) the necessity of action for the fulfilment of the one purpose for which the One inhabits this multitude of names & forms,—the enjoyment of this phenomenal & in its consummation the liberated being. The remainder of the Upanishad is explanatory & justificatory of these original & fundamental positions. In this second movement the object is to establish the possibility of absolutely sorrowless & fearless enjoyment here in this world & in this body on the eternal & unassailable foundations of the Vedantic truth, sarvam khalu idam Brahma. For from that truth the Seer's golden rule of life derives all its validity & practical effectiveness.

These are the words, words of a rich & moving beauty, in which he discharges this part of his argument. "But he who sees all existences in the self and the self in all existences, thereafter shrinketh not at all. He who knows, in whom all existences have become the self, how shall he have grief, how shall he be deluded, who seeth all things as one."

The connecting word एव (the Greek δε) does not in Vedic Sanscrit always imply entire opposition, it suggests a new circumstance or suggests an additional fact or a different point of view. The new circumstance introduced in this verse is the idea of the Atman. The knowledge that the impersonal Brahman is all, need not of itself bring peace & a joyous activity; for the all includes sorrow, includes death, fear, weariness, disgust. Matariswan in establishing action, has also established reaction. He has established that inequality between the force acting & the force acted upon, that want of harmony which is the cause of pain, recoil, disintegration, mutual fear & oppression. We may recognise that all these are one coordinated movement in a single existence, are themselves all one existence but how does that help us if in the movement itself there are these inequalities, these discords, these incapacities which impose on us so much that is painful & sorrowful? We may be calm, resigned, stoical, but how can we be free from pain & sorrow? It is here that Mayavada comes in with its great gospel of liberation. "All this discord" it says in effect "is not Brahman, it is Maya, it is an illusion, a dream, it does not exist in the pure Atman. That is the unmoving; the movement is a cosmic nightmare affecting the mind only. Renounce life, take refuge in the pure, unconditioned, dreamless Atman, mind will dissolve, the world will vanish from you as a dream vanishes & with the world its pain, its useless striving, its miserable joys, its ineffugable sorrow." That is an escape, but it is not the escape which the Seer of the Upanishad meditates for us. He holds to his point. "All this is Brahman, the movement no less than the moving." A few may escape by the wicket gates of the Buddhist & the Mayavadin. Not by denial of fundamental Vedantic truth is mankind intended to be saved.

The worship of a Personal God different from ourselves &

the world brings with it a better chance of joyful activity in the world. "God's will, be it joy or sorrow; God's will, be it the triumph of good or the siege of the evil." This is a great mantra & has mighty effects. But it does not by itself give a secure abiding place. God's will may bring doubt & then there is anguish; may bring loss of the Divine presence, separation from the Beloved & then there is a greater agony. The intellectual man has the intellect God has given him to satisfy. The active man has the impulse to work, but at every step is faced with the difficulties of religion & ethics. He has to slay as a soldier, condemn as a judge, inflict pain, inflict anguish, choose between two courses which seem both to be evil in their nature or their results. Sin enters his heart, or there are ensnaring spirits of doubt which suggest sin where sin is not, he feels that he is acting from passion, not from God. His body suffers, pain distracts, his own pain, the pain of others. In this maelstrom it is only those whose hearts are mightier than their intellects & their devotion a part of their nature who can overcome all the winds that blow upon them. Therefore most devotees withdraw from life or from the greater part of life like the Mayavadins; those who remain have more resignation than happiness. They bear the cross here in the conviction that the aureole awaits them hereafter. But where then is that perfect bliss & that perfect activity which the Sage promises us, doing verily our works here in the ordinary life of mankind? The thing can be done on the devotional foundation, but only by a peculiar & rare temperament aided by God's special grace & favour. We need a wider pedestal, a securer foundation.

He finds that foundation who sees wheresoever he looks (that is the force of *anu* in *anupashyati*) only the Atman, only the Self. He watches the bird flying through the air, but what he is aware of is the Self watching the movement of the Self through the Self—air & bird & flight & watcher are only name & form, presentations of the one Reality to itself in itself by itself *atmani atmanam atmana*. He is stung by the scorpion but what he is aware of is only the touch of the Self on the Self; the scorpion that stings is Brahman, the stung is Brahman, the sting is Brahman, the pain is Brahman. And this he not only

thinks as a metaphysical truth, for mere metaphysical opinion or intellectual attitude never yet brought salvation to living man,—but knows it, feels it & is aware of it utterly with his whole single & complex knowing existence. Body, senses, heart & brain are at one in that experience. Thus to the soul perfected in this knowledge everything that is, seems or is experienced, thinker & thought, action, doer, sufferer, object, field, result, becomes only one reality, Brahman, Self, God and all this variety is only play, only movement of conscious-self in conscious-self. That moves, God has His lila, the Self rejoices in its own inner experiences of itself seen & objectivised. There arises in the soul not merely calm, resignation, desirelessness, heart's joy in God's presence, but with the perfect knowledge comes a perfect bliss in the conditioned & the unconditioned, in the transcendent & in the phenomenal, in action & in resting from action, in Ishwara & in apparent anIshwara, in God's nearness & in God's remoteness, in what men call joy & what men call pain. Grief falls away from the soul, pain becomes rapture, doubt & darkness disappear in an assured & brilliant luminosity. Mukti is fulfilled, the soul is perfectly liberated here & in this body ihaiva,—for this & not renunciation of phenomenal existence is the true Vedantic moksha. This is what is meant by all existing things becoming the Self in a man, this is the result which is predicated of such a divine realisation. "Whence shall he have grief, how shall he be deluded who seeth all things as one?"

There are certain stages in the realisation, two of which are indicated in these slokas, and although the indication is only a minor & incidental movement of the Rishi's thought, the subject is of sufficient practical importance to be dwelt upon for a little even in this necessarily rapid examination. Brahman, Atman, Ishwara—these are the three great names, the three grand realisations we have here about the Absolute Existence. That existence, Paratparam Brahma, in its absolute truth (if such an expression is admissible where the ideas of truth & falsehood, absolute & relative no longer apply & knowledge itself disappears in an unconceivable & unimaginable Identity)—is unknowable by any, even the highest faculty of conscious

mind. Arriving at the farthest limits of our existence here we may become & do become aware of it as a thing beyond our experience. It presents itself to us here as some ultimate shadow of itself which we feel sometimes as Sat, sometimes as Asat, sometimes as both Sat & Asat, & then we perceive that it is none of these things, but something beyond both existence & non-existence which are merely uncertain symbols of it & we end by the formula of the Rishis renouncing all vain attempts at knowledge, Neti, neti, not this not that. We must not go beyond this formula or seek to explain & amplify it. To describe It by negative epithets is as illegitimate & presumptuous as to describe it by positive epithets. We can say of Brahman that it is shuddha, pure; we cannot say of the Paratparam that it is shuddha. How can we know what It is? We can only say that here It translates itself into an utter purity. Neither can we say of It that it is alakshanam, without feature. How do we know what It is not? We can only say that we cannot describe It by any lakshanas, for the features we perceive here are those of a movement in which all opposites present themselves as equally true.

But here in this manifest universal existence we do perceive certain universal states & certain still more fundamental realisations which transcend all phenomena & all oppositions & antinomies. We perceive, for example, a state of Universal Being, the Sad Atman of the Upanishads, the goal of the Adwaitins; we perceive a state of Universal Non-Being, the Asad Atman of the Upanishads, Sunyam, the goal of the Madhyamika Buddhists. Then we perceive that both of these are the same thing differently experienced in the soul. It is That which expresses itself in our experience of Being & forgetfulness of Being, of Consciousness & forgetfulness of Consciousness, of Bliss & forgetfulness of Bliss, of Sacchidananda conditioned & Sacchidananda unconditioned. We call it the Brahman, that which extends itself here in space & time & fills its extension. We feel our identity with it & we realise that it is our true Self & the true Self of everything in the universe & of the universe both in its sum & in its entirety. We call it then the Atman, a word which originally meant true Being or true

Substance. We become aware of It as extending itself & filling its extension here for a purpose, the purpose of Ananda, delight in Vidya, delight in Avidya & governing all things towards that purpose,—self-aware as the One & self-aware as the Many, self-aware as Sat & self-aware as Asat. This great self-aware transcendent more than universal existence we call Sa, Ishwara, "He", God, the Paratpara Purusha, the Higher than the Highest. We see therefore that these three names merely try to express in human language certain fundamental conceptions we have here of That which is not perfectly expressible. The greatest names, tremendous as is their power,—how tremendous only those can know who have made the test without flinching—are only symbols,—I will not say shadows, for that is a word which may be misunderstood. But very great & blissful symbols in which we are meant to find a perfect content & satisfaction.

Through these symbols & the realisations which they try to represent, we have to work out our divine fulfilment here, & the Rishi gives all three of them to us in this Upanishad. For all three are supremely helpful &, in a way, necessary. Until we realise Ishwara, the mighty Inhabitant, as one with ourself, as the Atman, we find a difficulty in identifying Him with all that Is. We fall into these ideas of an extra-Cosmic God which satisfy the early & immature stages of soul development; or we see a God who pervades & upholds all existences but has put them forth in His being as eternally apart from Himself. That is a great practical realisation with immense results to the soul, the realisation of the Bhakta who rests in some kind of Dualism, but it is not the supreme goal which we are seeking. If we realise the Ishwara as the Atman, our Self, without realising Him as the Brahman we run, unless our souls have first become purified, another peril, the peril of the Asura who misapplies the mighty formula So Aham & identifies God with his own unregenerated ignorant Ego,—extending the Inhabitant only to some transient circumstances of the movement in which He dwells. He forgets the other equally important formula, Tat twam asi; he does not realise others as Narayan, does not become one self with all existences, forgets that the very idea of his egoistic self is inconsistent

with the true Adwaita and to extend that in imagination & call it the whole Universe is a caricature of Adwaita. It is like the error of the unphilosophical Idealist who concludes that the objective Universe exists only in his individual Mind, forgetting that it exists equally in other individual minds & not knowing that in reality there is no individual Mind, but only one sea of mind with its self-formed solid bed of sanskaras, waves of which are constantly flowing through him, rising & breaking there & leaving their marks in the sands of his mental, infra-mental & supramental being. Even if we realise all beings as Narayan and one Self, there is a difficulty in realising all things as God & self. The Inhabitant is the Atman, good — but the name & form? We can realise that God dwells in the stone as well as under the stone & around it, but how can the stone be God, — this clod, that rusty piece of iron, this clot of filth? With difficulty the mind unreleased from dwandwa & sanskaras can believe that God logically must be in the piece of filth He has created, but how can He be that filth? The seeker can eventually realise God in the criminal who is to be hanged no less than in the executioner who hangs him & the saint who has pity for both, in the harlot no less than the Sati, in all of the filth no less than in the glorious star that shines in Heaven & the petals of the rose or jasmine that intoxicates our soul with its fragrance, but the crime of the criminal, the sin of the harlot, the corporeality of the filth, must not that be kept separate? The sattwic mere lover of virtue, the lover of beauty, the devotee reverently bowing before the throne, must they not revolt eternally from such conceptions? We shall see that for certain practical reasons we must in action preserve a kind of separateness, — not only between the criminal & his crime, but between the saint & his virtue, — for this reason the Rishi has fixed on the relation of world of Movement & world's Inhabitant as the basis of his system, — but the distinction must be one of vyavahara only, for practice only & must not interfere with our conception of All as Brahman. We must not yield to the limitations of the sattwic mind, the moha or delusions of the sattwic ahankara. For if we yield, we cannot proceed to that greater goal of bliss, which attaining the soul shrinks not at all,

has no delusion, is not touched by any grief. Therefore we must realise the Ishwara not only as the true Self of things, but as Brahman, that which extends itself here equally in all things, in the beautiful but also in the ugly, in the holy & great but also in that which we look on as base & impure. Looking on Brahman moving & Brahman unmoving we have to say with the Mundaka Upanishad, Tad etat satyam (That yonder is this here & the Truth), & looking on Ishwara & Brahman moving & unmoving we have to say with the same Upanishad, "Purusha evedam sarvam karma tapo brahma paramritam." "It is the divine Soul that is all this, even all action and all active force and Brahman & the supreme immortality."

We have to realise the Self everywhere, but we have also to remember always in all our being, to feel always in every fibre of our existence that this Self is Brahman & the Lord. In the realisation of Atman by itself there is this danger that as we human beings stand in the subjective mind, that represents itself to us as our true Self and we are first in danger of identifying our subjective consciousness which is only one movement of Chit, with the Sarva Brahman. Even when we go beyond to the Sad Atman or Pure Existence, we, approaching it necessarily through our subjective being, tend to realise it as pure *subjective* existence & are in danger of not realising the real & ultimate Sat which is pure Existence itself beyond subjectivity & objectivity, but expressing itself here subjectively because of the Purusha & objectively because of the Prakriti,—the mingled strain of our subjective-objective existence here being the result of the interaction & mutual enjoyment of His Male & His Female principle. Hence arise the misconceptions of the Idealists, Illusionists & Mayavadins. If we halt in subjective mind, we see the objective world as a mere dream or vision of our conscious subjective activity. That is the dogma of the Idealist, nor can anyone fathom the depths of our mental being without passing through this experience. If we halt in our pure subjective existence, then not only the objective world, but the mind & its perceptions seem to be a dream, & the only truth is the subjective Nirguna Brahman aware only of his pure subjective existence. When this subjective

Nirguna Brahman looks out from the truth of himself & watches the perceptions of the mind, the great dream of the objective, then It alone as the sakshi seems to be real—but we get rid of the sakshi too & retire into the perfect samadhi in which Brahman is aware only of Itself as self-existent, self-conscious pure Atman. This is the dogma of the Mayavadin & no one can fathom all the depths of our subjective being who has not passed through this experience. Then comes the Buddhist, who turns upon this sakshi, this subjective Atman & says “Thou too art only a dream, for the same thing that tells me thou art, tells me the world is. I have no other evidence of the existence of Atman than I have of the existence of the world without, as both are equally dreams.” And without going farther, he says with the Madhyamikas “The truth is the Asat, the Nihil, the universal Non-being”, or he says with the Buddha — “There is Nirvana of all this subjective & objective; what there is beyond, we need not ask” — so as to say “we cannot know”, “we need only to know that it releases from all pain & grief & death & all return of egoism.” This experience too, if one can have it & not be bound by it, is of great use, of a rich fruitfulness to the soul. He can hardly gaze out of the manifest towards Parabrahman who has never stood face to face with the Asat & launched his soul into the fathomless & shoreless Negation. But we come back to the truth. That which is beyond is Parabrahman & that which represents Him here as the basis of our existence is the absolute existence, neither subjective, nor objective, turned both towards the world & away from it, capable of manifesting everything, capable of manifesting nothing, capable of universality, capable of nullity, capable of putting forth all antinomies, capable of reconciling them, capable therefore both of cosmos & chaos, which is expressed in the formula OM Tat Sat. But this is no other than the Brahman. Is it enough then to realise the Atman as the Brahman? Yes, if we realise that the absolute Brahman, who is rather beyond both Guna & absence of Guna than Nirguna, is also that which expresses itself as Guna, extends itself in space & informs its own extension. We must say with the Mandukya, Sarvam hyetad Brahma — Ayam Atma Brahma — So'yam atma

chatushpak. All this world is Brahman, this Self is Brahman, & this Self which is Brahman is fourfold. Fourfold, not only the Transcendent Turiya, but also He who sees Himself the gross & sees Himself the subtle & sees His own single & blissful being in the states to which we have only access now in the deep trance of sushupti. Nor is this enough. For the realisation goes still too much towards abstraction, towards remoteness. It is necessary to remember that this great Self-Aware Being is the Lord, that He has created & entered into His own movement, with a mighty purpose & for the enjoyment of His own phenomenal being in the worlds. Otherwise we shall not be so much both spectators & masters of our worlds, but its spectators only— & a mere spectator tarries not long at a spectacle, he is soon sated of his inactive joy & withdraws. The movement of withdrawal is necessary for a certain number of souls, it is, so effected, a great, blissful & supremely satisfied movement, but it is not the purpose for which God is in us here. We must realise our true Self as Brahman-Ishwara. We must be one with the Ekah sarvabhuṭantaratma rupam rupam pratirupo bahishcha, the one Self within all existences who shapes Himself to form & form & is outside all of them, & understand the intention of the Aitareya in its great opening, Atma va idam eka evagra asit— Sa ikshata—Sa iman lokan asrijata. In the beginning this was all the Atman, He alone, He looked & put forth these worlds.

Finally, it is not even enough for the Sage's purpose that we should realise the Brahman except as the Atman & Ishwara. For if we do not realise Brahman as the Self & our Self we shall be in danger of losing the subjective aspect of existence & laying too much stress on That as the substratum of our objective existence in which I stand merely as a single unimportant movement. The result is a tamasic, an inert calm, a tendency to merge in the jada Prakriti, the apparent unintelligently active aspect of things which the Europeans call Nature or at the highest a resolution of our selves into that substratum of the objective in the Impersonal Brahman. The denial of the Transcendent Personality, the Paratpara Purusha is a strong tendency of the present-day Adwaita. "God", say these modern Adwaitins, "is a myth, or at most a

dream like ourselves. Just as there is no I, so there is no God.” Under this figure of thought, there lies a philosophical blunder. Personality is not necessarily individual Personality, neither is it a selection & arrangement of qualities, any more than existence is necessarily individual existence or a selection & arrangement of movements in our being. Personality can be & is Universal; this Universal Personality is God in relation to our individual experiences. Personality also can be & is Transcendent, self-existent, beyond individuality & Universality,—this transcendent Personality, a blissful unlimited self-conscious Awareness in self-existence is the Paratpara Purusha — adityavarnas tamasah parastat, drawing us like a sun beyond the darkness of ignorance & the darkness of the Asat. This is He—God universal, but also God transcendent—the Lilamaya Krishna who transcends His lila. Therefore the Upanishads everywhere insist not upon mere Existence, like the later Adwaitin, but on the sole Existent; and they speak continually on the Brahman as the creator, Master, enjoyer of the worlds, by meditating on whom we shall attain to perfect liberation. Neither Buddha nor Jada Bharata are the true guides & fulfillers of our destiny; it is Yajnavalkya, it is Janaka &, most of all, it is Krishna son of Devaki who takes us most surely & entirely into the presence & into the being of the Eternal.

Atman, Brahman, Ishwara, on this triune aspect here of the Transcendent depend all our spiritual realisations and as we take one or the other & in its realisation stop a little this side or proceed a little to that side, our realisations, our experiences & our creeds & systems will vary from each other; & we shall be Buddhists or Adwaitins or Mayavadins or Dualists, followers of Ramanuja or Madhwa, followers of Christ, of Mahomed, of whosoever will give us such light on the Eternal as we are ready to receive. The Rishi of the Isha wishes us to realise all three, but for the sake of divine life in the world to dwell upon Ishwara, but on Ishwara neither extracosmic nor different from His creatures but rather in & about all beings as their indwelling Self, their containing Brahman and that material Brahman also or Prakriti which is the formal continent of the indwelling Self and the

formal content of the containing Brahman. In this realisation there are many stages of progress, many necessary first steps & later approximations; but the Rishi, his work being to throw out brief fundamental & important suggestions only & not to fill in details, to indicate & illumine, not to educate or instruct, gives us for the present only two of the final realisations which are the most essential for his purpose. We shall find, however, that there is more beyond.

We are first to realise this one divine Self, (which is *ourself* also) in all existences and all existences in the Self. We have, therefore, in this realisation three terms, Self within, Self without, which are the same & invariable samam Brahma, & all existences, of which each separate existence is fundamentally the same, but in generic or individual play & movement different from other genera & individuals. All existences—not only animate but inanimate, for sarvabhuteshu does not mean sarvapranishu—not only the man, the animal, the insect, but in the tree, plant & flower & not only in the tree, plant & flower which have a sort of life, but in the mountain, the metal, the diamond, the pebble which seem not to have life, & not only in these bhutas which if they have not an organised life, have at least an organised or a manifest form, but in those which have no organised form, or no form at all to the eye or to any sense. The wind & sea also are He & the gases which constitute the air which moves as wind & the water which flows as the sea. He is ether that contains all & He is that which contains the ether.

Swami Vivekananda in a passage of his works, makes a striking or, as the French say better, a seizing distinction between the locomotive & the worm that it crushes, between the animate which has conscious life in it, however weak, & the inanimate which has only in it, however powerful, a blind & undeveloping power. But, however useful & true this distinction may be for certain practical purposes, certain vyavahara, it is not allowed us by the pure Adwaita of the Upanishads. God is not only in the worm that is crushed, but in the engine that crushes it—the engine too & the power of the engine are Brahman and as much Brahman as the life & consciousness in the worm. He is samam

Brahma. We have a right to make certain practical distinctions for vyavahara but none to make any essential difference. For the Vedanta is inexorable in its positiveness; as it will not spare us the most loathsome worm that crawls but insists that that too is Brahman, so also it will not spare us the most inert or sordid speck of matter, but insists that that too is Brahman. If we stop short anywhere, we create bheda & lose our full spiritual heritage. The seer anupashyati—he follows Prakriti in her movement from the greatest to the most infinitesimal, from the noblest to the meanest & everywhere finds only Brahman, God, the Self. Bhuteshu bhuteshu vichitya dhirah, says the Kena. We must have dhairyam, utter patience, utter understanding. To no weakness, no repugnance, no recoil even of the saint in us or the artist & poet in us, much less of our mere nervous & sensational parts or of the conventional mind with its fixed associations can we stop to listen, if we would attain. Love & hate, joy & grief must not interfere to warp our knowledge. All, all, all without exception is He. He breathes out sweetness upon us in the rose, He touches our cheeks with coolness in the Wind, He fills with His favouring breath the sails of the sailing-ship that carries our merchandise to its market, He tramples down into the Ocean depths the latest marvel & monstrosity of scientific construction in which travel the great ones of the world or in which our beloved are coming to our arms. The wrong that is done to us, it is He that does it—and to whom is it done? To Himself. The blow that is struck, is of His striking. Brahman is the striker, Brahman the instrument, Brahman the stricken. The insult that is cast on us, it is He that has flung it in our face. The disgrace, the defeat, the injustice are of His doing. That crime which we abhor, it is Brahman who has committed it,—it is our Self's, our own doing though we do it in another body. For the least sin that is committed in the world, each one of us is as responsible as the sinner. Our self-righteousness is a Pharisaical error, our hatred of the sinner & our contempt & loathing convict us of ignorance and limit, not increase our power to rectify or to help. The seer, the freed & illuminated soul hates none, condemns nothing but loves all and helps all; he is sarvabhutahite ratah, his occupation

& delight are to do good to all creatures. He is the Self seeing the Self in all, loving the Self in all, enjoying the Self in all, helping the Self in all. That is the ethics & morality of the Vedanta.

For what is the first result of this universal vision? Tato na vijugupsate. Jugupsa is not merely fear but includes all kinds of shrinking, fear, disgust, contempt, loathing in the nerves, hatred in the heart, shrinking of dislike or reluctance from thing or person or action. Raga & dwesha being the motives of all our ordinary feeling & action, jugupsa expresses that movement of recoil in the system which proceeds from dwesha of any kind,—the desire to protect ourselves against or ward off the unwelcome thing that presents itself to the mind, nerves or senses. We see therefore how wide a field the promise of the Upanishad covers. We shall not hate, fear, loathe, despise or shrink from anything whatsoever which the world can present us. It is evident, if this is possible, how all that constitutes real misery will fall from the soul & leave it pure & blissful.

We shall not have any contempt, hatred or disgust for any person, nor shall we fear anyone, however powerful or inimical; for in all we shall see Narayan, we shall know the Lord, we shall recognise ourself. One equal regard will fall from us on the tiger & the lamb, the saint & the sinner, the tyrant who threatens us and the slave who is subject to our lightest caprice. Squalor, sin, disease will not conceal from us the god within nor wrath & cruelty from us God's love working by strange ways under grotesque & fearful masks. No sort of foulness or ugliness will repel us. An universal charity, a wide & tolerant love, a calm & blissful impulse of beneficence to all will be the ethical first fruits of our realisation. We shall make no distinctions, we shall be no respecters of persons. We shall not despise the hut of the peasant nor bow down in the courts of the princes, neither shall we have wrath or scorn against the palace & partiality for the cottage. All these things will be equal to us. The touch of the outcaste will be the same to us as the sprinkling of holy water by the Brahmin — for how shall God pollute God? Every human or living body will be to us a temple & dwelling place of the most High. None shall be to us vile or contemptible. And yet

none shall be too sacred for us, too dear or too inviolable; for it is the house of our Friend & Playmate; nay, it is our own House, for the Lover is not different from the Beloved, & it is a house, jagat not sthanu, a thing that can be changed & has to be changed, for which therefore we shall have deep love, but no fettering attachment. The sword of our enemy will have no terrors for us. For enmity is a play of the Lord & death & life make up one of His games of hide & seek. How shall God slay God? Even as our vision deepens, the touch of the sword shall be to us as much the kiss of His Love as the touch from the lips of a lover—one sharp, poignant & fierce, the other soft & wooing but the manner is the only difference. For we shall have torn aside the grotesque & unreal mask of hatred & seen in the apparent fulfilment of enmity & evil, the real fulfilment of love & good. By the divination of the heart & the vision of the higher knowledge we shall have found out the way of the Lord in His movement.

And because we shall have found out His way & seen everywhere Himself, things also will cause no kind of shrinking in us. We shall exceed the limitations of the senses & the ordinary aesthetic faculties,—we shall have gone beyond the poet & the artist. We shall know why the sages have called Him sarvasundara, the All-Beautiful. For things beautiful will have a more wonderful, intense, ecstatic beauty to us, but things foul, illshapen & ugly will also be to us beautiful, with a larger, more marvellous, more universal beauty than the artistic. We shall exceed the limitations of the mind & heart & conscience; we shall have gone beyond the saint & the moralist. For we shall no more be repelled by the sin of the sinner than by the dirt on our child who has fallen or wallowed in the mud of the roadside. We shall know why the Lord has put on the mask of the sinner & the perfect purpose that is served by sin & crime in the world's economy, & while knowing that it has to be put aside or transformed into good, we shall not be revolted by it, but rather view it with perfect calm & charity. This realisation, although it lifts us beyond the ordinary conceptions of morality & conventional ethics, does not incapacitate us for normal action, as

it might seem to the thought which holds all action impossible except that which proceeds from desire & liking & disliking. Whatever morality the Vedantist practises will be based on a higher & truer ground than the ethics of the ordinary man in love, sympathy & oneness. For an ethics proceeding in its practical action on contempt, dislike or repulsion is an immoral or imperfectly moralised ethics which seeks to drive out poison by poison & it has always failed & will always fail to eradicate sin & evil,— just as the ordinary methods of society have failed to eradicate or even diminish crime & vice, because its method & its spirit are ignorant & paradoxical. Only perfect knowledge & sympathy can give perfect help and these are impossible without oneness.

At the same time it is true that the jivanmukta is not governed by ordinary moral considerations. He shrinks from no actions which the divine purpose demands or the divine impulse commands. He has no wish to kill, but he will not shrink from slaying when it is demanded, for he is bound neither by the rajasic ahankara nor by the sattvic; sattvic obstacles to slaying are therefore taken from him and his knowledge delivers him both from the desire to take life which is the evil of hinsa [and] from the emotional horror of taking life & the nervous fear of taking life which are the rajasic & tamasic basis of outward ahimsa. So also with other actions. For this morality or dharma is of the soul & does not depend upon the action which is a mere outward symbol of the soul & has different values according to the times, the social ideas & environments, the religious creed or the actual circumstances. To men who are not free a conventional morality is an absolute necessity, for there must be a fixed standard to which they can appeal. It is as necessary for the ordinary practice of the world as a standard value of coin for the ordinary commerce of a country. The coin has not really an immutable value; the pound is not perhaps really worth 15 Rs but fluctuates owing to circumstances; nevertheless to allow a fluctuating value is to bring a certain amount of confusion, uncertainty & disorder into finance & commerce. Therefore the liberated man though he knows the truth will not contravene the

fixed rules of society unless he is impelled by divine command or unless the divine purpose is moving towards a change in the fixed morality. Then, if it is the part given to him, he will act as fearlessly against social rules as under ordinary circumstances he will adhere firmly to the law of the environment in which he dwells. For his one care & purpose will be to observe the divine purpose & carry out the divine will.

Neither will events bring to him grief or disappointment, fear or disgust with things, because he follows that divine will & purpose in himself & in others, in the inner world & the outer, watching everywhere the play of the Self. He has divined God's movement. Disgrace & dishonour, obloquy & reproach cannot move him. He is equal in soul to honour & dishonour, respect & insult, mana & apamana, because both come from himself to himself & not from another. Success & failure are equal to him, since he knows that both are equally necessary for the fulfilment of the divine intention. He will no more quarrel with them than with the cold of winter or the breath of the stormblast. They are part of the jagat, part of God's play, of the Self's action on the Self. He acquires a perfect titiksha or power to bear; he moves towards more than titiksha, towards an equal & perfect enjoyment.

Such, then, are some of the practical fruits of the realisation of God as the Self in all existences & the Brahman containing all existences. It raises us towards a perfect calm, resignation, peace & joy; a perfect love, charity & beneficence; a perfect courage, boldness & effectiveness of action; a divine equality to all men & things & equanimity towards all events & actions. And not only perfect, but free. We are not bound by these things we acquire. Our calm does not stay us from even the most colossal activity, for the calm is within us, of the soul & is not an activity in the jagat, in the movement. Our resignation is of the soul & does not mean acquiescence in defeat, but acceptance of it as a circumstance in the struggle towards a divine fulfilment; our peace & joy do not prevent us from understanding & sympathising with the trouble & grief of others; our love does not prevent an outward necessary sternness, our charity a

just appreciation of men & motives nor does our beneficence hold back the sword when it is necessary that it should strike—for sometimes to strike is the highest beneficence, as those only can thoroughly realise who know that God is Rudra as well as Shiva, Chamunda Kali with the necklace of skulls no less than Durga, the protectress & Gauri, the wife & mother. Our courage does not bind itself by the ostentations of the fighter, but knows when flight & concealment are necessary, our boldness does not interfere with skill & prudence, nor our activity forbid us to rest & be passive. Finally our equality of soul leaves room to the other instruments to deal with each thing in the vyavahara according to its various dharma & utility, the law of its being & the law of its purpose.

These are the perfect results of the perfect realisation. But in practice it is difficult for these perfect results to be attained or for this perfect realisation to be maintained, unless after we have attained to it, we go farther & exceed it. In practice we find that there is a flaw, somewhere, which causes us either not perfectly to attain or to slip back after we have attained. The reason is that we are still removed by one considerable step from perfect oneness. We have realised oneness of the self within & the self without, of the self in us & the self in all other existences. But we still regard the jagat, the movement, as not entirely the Self—as movement & play of God, but not itself God, as action of the Lord, but not itself all the Lord expressed to Himself in His own divine awareness. Therefore when things come to us, when action or event affects us, we have to adopt an attitude towards it as something different from ourselves, something that comes, something that affects us. As the result of that attitude we have jugupsa. We have realised oneness, but by what kind of realisation? By seeing,—anupashyati, by action of the seeing faculty in the buddhi or the feeling faculty in the heart—for both these things are vision. Our realisation is a realisation of identity by attitude, not of absolute identity by nature, realisation through instruments of knowledge, not through our conscious being in itself. Subtle as the distinction may seem, it is not really so fine as it appears; it makes a wide difference, it is of first rate

importance in its results. For so long as our divine state depends on our attitude, the least failure or deficiency in that attitude means a waning of the divine state or a defect in its fullness. So long as it rests on a continued act of knowledge in mind & heart, the least discontinuity or defect of that knowledge means a defect of or a falling from our divine fullness. Only if identity with all existences has become our whole nature & being of our being, is the divine state perfected, is its permanent and unbroken enjoyment assured. And so complete & exacting is the oneness of Brahman, so absolute is the law of this Adwaita that if even the name & form & the play & the movement are regarded as Brahman's & not themselves as Brahman, an element of bheda, difference & dissonance, is preserved which tends to prevent this absolute identity of being & preserve the necessity of attitude & the identity only through the instruments of knowledge.

Therefore in his next verse the Rishi gives us a higher & completer realisation which includes the missing elements & perfects the Adwaita. "He in whom Self & all existences have become one and perfectly he knoweth, how shall he be deluded, whence shall he have pain who sees in all things oneness." If we read this verse loosely, we may err by taking it as a justification of that Adwaita which denies the sarvabutani and affirms only the Atma. In that case we shall have not only to translate "All existences have become Self", but to suppose that "become" means "disappeared into", "blotted themselves out in", — an extension of meaning which is justified by nothing, either in the language or in the context. It is contradicted by the immediately following passage in which the Seer insists on the necessity of the simultaneous view of Vidya & Avidya, while the exclusion of the world & its existences can only be effected in the state of sleep or trance and would be broken every time the mind returned to the state of waking. No such broken & truncated realisation is intended. The Mayavada demands that every time we look out on the world & its creatures, we shall say "This is not Brahman, it is a dream, a lie"; Adwaita of the Isha demands that looking out on the world & its creatures we shall say "This is Brahman,

it is God, it is myself.” There is a wide difference between the two attitudes. The one rests a metaphysical & argumentative Adwaita on a tremendous essential Dwaita of Satya & Asatya, that which is true & that which is false; the other rests a practical Adwaita on an apparent Dwaita, all being Satyam, eternal Truth, but Truth seen & recurrent presenting itself to Truth seeing & persistent—the sthanu & the jagat, an apparent difference of appearance to knowledge, not an actual difference of essential reality & unreality. Apart from this divergence, the language of the sloka is such as not to admit of the negation sought by the Mayavadin, but to contradict it. I have not translated the verse literally yet, but now I give the literal translation, “In whom the Self (of him) verily knowing by vijnana has become all creatures, there what delusion, what grief, of him seeing wherever he looks (anu) oneness.” It is evident that the Mayavadin’s position vanishes. The words are sarvani bhutani atmaivabhud—not sarvabhutani atmaivabhuva—a singular verb demanding a singular subject. Therefore it is the Self that becomes, not the bhutas; and we cannot say that this is the attitude of a man still ignorant, ajna, for it is the Self of one who knows entirely, has that knowledge which in the Upanishads is called vijnana & who has attained to the vision of oneness. In him his Self has become all creatures.

Let us understand thoroughly the sense of this important sloka. Yasmin, in whom. The soul has become one with all existence, all existence it feels to be itself containing the creation & exceeding it,—therefore yasmin, not yasya. In him his Self, that which he feels to be his true I has become all creatures. Not only does he feel himself or perceive himself to be *in* all creatures as the divine presence in them & around them, but he is they,—he is each bhuta. The word bhuta means that which has become as opposed to that which eternally is & it includes therefore name & form & play of mind & play of action. The last barrier is broken; ahankara, the sense of separate self, utterly disappears & the soul is all that it sees or is in any way aware of. It is not only the seer in all, but it is the seen; not only the Lord, but his habitation, not only Ish but jagat. In fact, just

as the Lord himself, as Brahman itself becomes all things & all creatures in itself, just as all creatures are only Brahman's becomings, bhutani, just as Brahman is the ejat and the anejat, the moving & the unmoving, God & his world, so is it now with the soul that sees. Of it too it can be said Tad ejati tannajati. It moves & it moves not, it is the near & the far, it is within all things & outside all things. The man thus liberated undergoes a tremendous change of consciousness; he ceases to feel himself as within his body & feels rather his body as within himself & not only his but all bodies; he feels himself at the same time in his body & in all bodies not separately like a piece of water in a jar, but as an unity like one ether undivided in many vessels, & at the same time he feels that they are not in him nor he in them, but that this idea of within & without is merely a way of looking, a way of expressing to the mind a truth in itself beyond expression by space & time — just as we say "I have this in my mind" when we do not really intend to express any location in space but mean rather "This is my mental knowledge as it just now expresses itself." Pashya me yogam aishwaram. For he now feels that these things in which & outside which he seems to be are himself, his becomings in the motion of awareness, jagat, bhutani. This is the first important difference between the preceding realisation of knowledge & this fuller realisation of being. His self has become all existences; they & he are all merely becomings of himself.

But if this realisation is only by the heart through love or only by the purified reason through intellectual perception, then it is not the realisation which this shloka contemplates. For so long as we have not become that which we are realising, realisation is not complete & its moral effects cannot be securely held. For what use is it if we merely understand that all is one when if there is a touch from outside it, the body cries "Something has struck me, I am hurt" or the heart says "Someone has injured me, I am in grief" or the vital spirits cry "Someone means ill to me, I am in fear"? And if the heart realises, but the reason & other instruments fail, how shall we not, feeling one with the grief of others, fail to be crushed by them & overborne? The

lower organs must also consent to the absolute sense of oneness or no sure and perfect result can be gained. How is this to be done? By the force of the vijnana, our ideal self. Therefore the Upanishad adds “vijanatah”, when he knows, not by ordinary knowledge, jnanam, or by intellectual knowledge, prajnanam, but by the ideal knowledge, vijanatah.

What is this vijnana? Vedantic commentators have identified it with buddhi; it is, they think, the discriminating intellect or the pure reason. But in the psychological system of the Veda intellectual vichara, reason, even pure reason, is not the highest nor does it lead to the highest results. The real buddhi is not in mind at all, but above mind. For beyond & behind this intellect, heart, nervous system, body, there is, says the Veda, a level, a sea of being out of which all these descend & here take form, a plane of consciousness in which the soul dwells by the power of perfect truth, in a condition of pure existence of knowledge, satyam, pure arrangement of its nature in that knowledge, ritam or vratham, pure satisfying wideness in being of that knowledge-nature, brihat. This is the soul's kingdom of heaven, its ideal state, immortality, amritatwam. All things here are in the language of [the Vishnu Purana] vijnanavijrimbhitani; they live here in fragments of that wide & mighty truth, but because of bheda, because they are broken up & divide truth against truth, they cannot enjoy Truth of knowledge, Truth of Nature, Truth of being & bliss, but have to strive towards it with much failure, pain & relapse. But if man can rise in himself to that plane and pour down its knowledge upon the lower system, then the whole system becomes remoulded in the mould of the vijnana. Man can get himself a new heart, a new mind, a new life, navyam ayu, even a new body, punah kritam. This whole system will then consent & be compelled to live in the truth — & that truth to which vijnana itself is the door, is Brahman as Sacchidananda. All things here will be Sacchidananda. This is the second superiority of this high realisation as this shloka describes it, that it is vijanatah, attained not by intellectual discernment or feeling of the heart or concentration of the mind, not depending therefore on any state such as sushupti or on any attitude, but

itself determining the attitude, & attained through direct ideal knowledge with the result of becoming all that is in our being, not merely the mind or thought or feeling, in our very nature. The practical consequence will be that body, mind & heart will no longer admit any bahyasparsa, but will utterly feel that nothing can come to them, nothing touch them but only Brahman. To every touch there will be but one response from heart & mind & nerve alike — “This is Brahman.” Nanyat pashyati, nanyach chrinoti. They will see nothing else, hear nothing else, smell nothing else, feel nothing else, taste nothing else, but only Brahman. Of such a state it can be truly & utterly said, & not merely relatively, not subject to any qualification, ekatwam anupashyatah.

That oneness is the oneness of Sacchidananda, one being, one knowledge, one bliss, being that is consciousness, knowledge that is identity, both of them in their essence & reality bliss,— therefore not three separate qualities, but one existence, even though presented to the intellect as a trinity, yet always one. Whatever therefore is felt, seen, heard, thought, it will be bliss that is felt, bliss that is seen, bliss that is heard, bliss that is thought — a bliss which is in its essence & inseparably existence & knowledge. For the intellect we have to use all three words, for on the level of our mental action these three are or seem to be divided & different from each other, but to the illumined being of the Jivanmukta there is no difference, they are one. It is ekatwam. It is Brahman. The highest heights of this realisation are, indeed, not easily attained, but even on its lower levels there is a perfect freedom & an ineffable joy. Swalpam apyasya dharmasya. To these levels, tatra, neither fear, nor grief, nor illusion can come. Tatra ko mohah kah shoka ekatwam anupashyatah. How shall he be deluded, whence shall he have grief, to whose eyes wheresoever they turn all things are one? For grief is born of illusion, shoka proceeds from moha, & the essence of moha is that bewilderment, that stultification of the conscious mind by which we forget oneness. By forgetting oneness, the idea of limitation is fixed on our being; by limitation comes the idea of not being this, not having that; from this idea arises the desire

to be this, to have that; by the disappointment of desire comes disappointment, dislike of that which disappoints, hatred & anger against that which withholds, fear of that which gives contrary experience—the whole brood of earthly ills. Moha shouts “Here is one I love, she is dying”; “Here is one who will kill me, I am terrified”; “Here is a touch too strong for me to bear, it is pain.” “This is virtue, that is sin; if I do not gain one I am lost, if I fall into the other I shall suffer by God’s wrath & judgment. This is fair, that is foul. This is sweet, that is bitter. This I have not which another has, I must have it, even if it be depriving him of his possession.” But he who sees oneness sees only Sacchidananda, only bliss that is conscious being. Just as the mind that has taught itself to see only matter everywhere, says even of mind & soul, even of itself, It is not mind, it is not soul, it is matter, just as it sees everywhere only the play of matter upon matter, in matter, by matter, so the liberated soul says of body & nerve & mind, It is not mind, it is not body, it is not nerve, it is Brahman, it is conscious existence that is bliss and so he sees everywhere this bliss only & the play of bliss upon bliss, in bliss, by bliss. Ananda is the term through which he reconciles himself with the world. Into delight his soul is delivered, by delight he supports in himself the great world movement & dwells in it, in delight he is for ever one with, yet plays with God.

The second movement of the Upanishad is finished. In his first movement the Rishi advanced four propositions,—that the purpose of our existence is the fulfilment of God in the world, realising that the Lord & his movement alone exist, He is the only inhabitant, His movement the only cause of the forms in which He inhabits; secondly that the golden rule of life is to enjoy all God’s movement or God in all his movement but only after the renunciation of demand & desire, for only so can it all be enjoyed; thirdly, that life & action in this world are intended, must be maintained & do not interfere with divine freedom

& bliss; fourthly, that any self-marring movement leads only to confusion & darkness here & beyond & not to our divine realisation. In order to lay down on a firm basis his justification of these teachings, he shows us first that God & the world are one, both are Brahman & therefore the world also is our divine Self compassing by a certain divine power movement of action & phenomenon in its still unmoving Self & without parting with its superiority to the movement, on this basis he shows us that existence & bliss not only can be made one, but if we realise this one Brahman who is our divine Self & God (*antar asya sarvasya*), all existence must necessarily become bliss & cannot be anything else; grief & fear & dislike & delusion have no farther place in us. It is to this realisation we shall arrive by realising God as we give up desire, renounce everything to Him and enjoy the world in Him & by Him, as His movement, as His enjoyment. For we shall then realise that all beings are one with ourself, the renunciation of desire will become possible and we shall not shrink from anything in life, because we shall know that it is God & his movement. Finally, the high & complete realisation will be ours in which the very cause of desire & demand will disappear & all will be utterly the Self, God, Brahman, Sacchidananda.

Chapter V

A question may arise. It is true then that enjoyment of all things here in oneness is possible; that renunciation of desire & self-surrender are the way & the realisation of the Lord in all forms & movements & self-surrender to him the method,—involving also action according to His will, enjoyment according to His will. But when the final realisation is accomplished, when oneness is utterly attained, then what farther need of enjoyment & action? The goal is realised, let the method be abandoned. Why keep the distinction of God & the world, why act any more in

the world when the purpose of action is accomplished? It may still be possible, it is not necessary; it is not even desirable. Lose yourself in Sacchidananda, if not the impersonal unconditioned Brahman. Is it not that in which the vision of oneness logically culminates? Therefore not only the golden rule of conduct has to be justified, but the teaching of a liberated activity has to be justified. It is this to which the Sage next proceeds. He is about to establish the foundations of action in the liberated soul, to show the purpose of the One & the Many,—to reconcile Vidya & Avidya in God's supreme & blissful unity. The eighth verse is the introductory & fundamental verse of this movement.

APPENDIX

[1]

[Bracketed and struck through in the manuscript. See the footnote on page 378.]

From the choice of terms in this opening line certain intellectual consequences arise which we have to accept if we wish to understand the teaching of the Upanishad. First, the Personality of God & His unity. Not only is the impersonal God one Brahman without a second, but the Personal God is one without a second. There is no other person besides God in the universe. Whatever different masks He may wear, from house to house of His habitation, it is always He. The disguises may be utterly concealing. He may manifest as Brahma & Vishnu, Surya & Agni or as the Yaksha & the Pishacha; he may dwell here as the man or dwell here as the animal; he may shine out as the saint or lust in Himself as the criminal; but all these are He.

[2]

[Written on a separate sheet of the manuscript. See the footnote on page 378.]

The world & God. What is the world? It is jagati, says the Rishi, she who is constantly moving. The essence of the world is not Space nor Time nor Circumstance which we call Causality — its essence is motion. Not only so, but every single force & object in it is of the same nature, it is a jagat, a knot of habitual motion. The ancient Hindus knew that the earth moves & therefore the earth also was designated in ancient times by a number of words meaning motion of which jagati itself is one — ga, go, jagati, ila. They knew of the physical movement of the universe. They would not have rejected the scientific hypothesis which sees in every object a mass & arrangement, a sort of cosmos of anus,

atoms in constant movement with regard to [each] other. But the movement here contemplated is not, as we see in the fifth verse, tad ejati & the eighth verse, sa paryagat, movement of matter, but of divine being & conscious force of which matter is only an appearance. But for the present, the Rishi is content to envisage the world as a world of motion & multitude. In essence the kshobha or formative movement called active Prakriti, in universality it is this force ordering & arranging its objects by motion, jagati; in detail it is a multitude of single objects, forces, ideas, sensations etc, all in their nature motion of this moving universe, jagat, the apparently motionless stone no less than the ever circling & rotating earth. In this motion, in the objects, forces, sensations created by it He dwells who is its Lord.

[3]

[Written in the top margin of two pages of the manuscript. Point of insertion not marked. See the footnote on page 380.]

Moreover we must realise the Lord in others as one with Him in ourselves. Then we shall not need to covet any man's possessions. "Do not covet" says the Sage "the possession of any man whomsoever." Dhanam means any kind of possession whatever, not only material wealth — neither the glory of the king, nor the wealth of the merchant, nor the temperament of the sage, nor the strength of elephants, nor the swiftness of eagles. For whom are we envying, whose goods are we coveting? Ourselves, our own goods. If we realise divine unity, we can enjoy them as perfectly in another's experience as in our own. Moreover, being divine in power ourselves we can get them whenever our supreme self wills without anyone else in the world being the poorer for our gain. There must be no demand, no coveting. Not when or if the mind wills, but when or if He wills.

[4]

[Written separately; point of insertion not marked. See the footnote on page 380.]

Practically, therefore, the renunciation demanded of us is the renunciation by the lower unreal & incomplete self, mind, senses, vitality, intellect, will, egoism of all that they are & seek to our real, complete & transcendental Self, the Lord. And that renunciation we make not by substituting another demand, the demand to be rid of all these things & released from the fulfilment of His cosmic purpose, but in order the better to fulfil His purpose & enjoy Him utterly in His movement, in all experience & all action that He in us & through us is manifesting & perfecting. For that which we have to enjoy is not only Ish but jagat,— for as we shall see both are one Brahman & by enjoying Him entirely we must come to enjoy all His movement, since He is here as the Lord of his own movement. For this reason the word Ish has been selected as the fundamental relation of God to ourselves & the world—the master of all our existence to whom we renounce, the Lord who for his purposes has made & governs the world—for in this relation of “Lord” he is inseparable from His movement. It is a relation that depends on the existence & play of the world of which He is the ruler & master. Envisaging the ruler, we envisage that which he rules, the habitation for the sake of the inhabitant indeed, but still the habitation. We get therefore in this first verse of the Upanishad the foundations of the great principle of activity with renunciation with which the teaching of the Gita begins & the still greater principle of atmasamarpana or entire surrender to God, the uttamam rahasayam with which it culminates. We get the reason & spirit of the command to Arjuna from which all the moral teaching of the Gita starts & to which it returns, jitva shatrun bhunkshva rajyam samriddham, the command of activity, the command of enjoyment—but activity for God only, yajnartham, without ahankara, enjoyment in God only, mayi sannyasya, without desire or attachment, neither demanding what He does not take

for Himself in us, nor rejecting what He is here to enjoy, whether the enjoyment be of victory or defeat, of the patched loin cloth of the beggar or the imperial crown.

[5]

[Written in a different notebook; beginning lost or point of insertion unknown. Related thematically to Draft A of "The Life Divine".]

[.....] existence, lies the justification of all that is said in the scriptures of the liberated & perfected soul. He who would be free in this world, must be detached from it, though belonging to it, above it though in it, above it in his inward conscious self-being, though in it in his outward action of Nature. He must combine with a blissful enjoyment of all things in the world, a joyous indifference to all things in the world. He must be not un-mundane but supramundane, not inhuman but superhuman. In all his acts he must have in his soul the loud laughter, the attahasyam, of Kali. He must love with that inner laughter, slay with that laughter, save with that laughter, himself perish or reign, take joy or take torture with that secret & divine laughter. For he knows that the whole world is but a divine play of the eternal Child-God Srikrishna with Himself in the playground of His self-existence. All this he cannot have unless in the roots of his conscious being he feels not concealed or subliminal, but manifest & always present to him, the Bright, Calm, Unconcerned, Unbound, Unrelated Divine Existence.

This Pure Existence is not only an impersonal state of divine being, it is God Himself in His pure personality. For in all the divine manifestation, there is always this double aspect of Personality & Impersonality. God Impersonal manifests Himself, both in the universe & transcendent of the Universe, transcending it as infinite pure Existence, infinite pure Consciousness, infinite pure Delight, the triune Sachchidananda of our Scriptures, entering world existence. He manifests in it all this quality of existence, variation of Consciousness, multiplicity of

delight which with its changes, perversities & apparent self-contradictions makes up the marvellous web of the world. But He is also, transcending existence, the infinite Pure Existent, the infinite Pure Conscious, the infinite Pure Blissful,— not anyone, no person or individual, for He alone is, but still neither a mere abstraction or state of Being. Entering into world existence, He is All-being, God, Shiva, Vishnu, Krishna, Kali, Allah, the Mighty One, the Humble, the Loving, the Merciful, the Ruthless. These things are aspects of Himself to His own consciousness. Just as Sacchidananda is Triune,— not three, but One,— for when we enter deep into the Trinity we find only Unity since Existence is Consciousness & nothing but Consciousness, & Consciousness is Delight & nothing but Delight, so the Personal & Impersonal God are Biune, not two, but one, since when we enter into the depths of this Biune, we find only Unity, Existence nothing but the Existent, the Existent nothing but Existence. The distinction between them is a necessary convention or arrangement of His truth for world manifestation; it does not amount to a difference. The metaphysician fixes his concentration of Will in Knowledge only on the Impersonal & pursuing it through the world & beyond, he affirms the Impersonal God but tends to deny the Personal. The devotee, fixing his concentration on the Personal & pursuing it through the world & beyond, affirms the Personal God but tends to deny or ignore the Impersonal. Both affirmations are true, both denials are false. Neither is one greater than the other, the Impersonal than the Personal, just as in the Personal, Shiva is not greater than Vishnu, nor Vishnu than Shiva, nor the All-Being than Krishna or Kali. Such exaggerated distinctions are the errors of partial or selective Yoga fastening on aspects & ignoring the true being of God in His self-manifestation. We must accept, for our perfection's sake, the multitude of His aspects & even of His divine impersonations, but we must not make them an excuse for breaking up the inalienable unity of God.

The Life Divine

[Draft B]

Part II
The First Movement

Chapter I
God and Nature

I

The Isha Upanishad opens with a monumental phrase in which, by eight brief and sufficient words, two supreme terms of existence are confronted and set forth in their real and eternal relation. Ish is wedded with Jagati, God with Nature, the Eternal seated sole in all His creations with the ever-shifting Universe and its innumerable whorls and knots of motion, each of them called by us an object, in all of which one Lord is multitudinously the Inhabitant. From the brilliant suns to the rose and the grain of dust, from the God and the Titan in their dark or their luminous worlds to man and the insect that he crushes thoughtlessly under his feet, everything is His temple and mansion. He is the veiled deity in the temple, the open householder in the mansion and for Him and His enjoyment of the multiplicity and the unity of His being, all were created and they have no other reason for their existence. Ishá vásyam idam sarvam yat kincha jagatyám jagat. For habitation by the Lord is all this, everything whatsoever that is moving thing in her that moves.

This relation of divine Inhabitant and objective dwelling-place is the fundamental truth of God and the World for life. It is not indeed the whole truth; nor is it their original relation in the terms of being; it is rather relation in action than in being, for purpose of existence than in nature of existence. This practical

relation of the Soul to its world thus selected by the Seer as his starting point is from the beginning and with the most striking emphasis affirmed as a relation not of coordinate equality or simple interaction but of lordship and freedom on one side, of instrumentality on the other, Soul in supreme command of Nature, God in untrammelled possession of His world, not limited by anything in its nature or His nature, but free & Lord. For, since it is the object of the Upanishad to build up a practical rule of life here in the Brahman rather than a metaphysical philosophy for the satisfaction of the intellect, the Seer of the Upanishad selects inevitably the practical rather than the essential relation of God & the world as the starting point of his thought, use & subordination rather than identity. The grammatical form in *vásyam* expresses a purpose or object which has to be fulfilled, —in this instance the object of habitation; the choice of the word *Ishá* implies an absolute control and therefore an absolute freedom in that which has formed the object, envisaged the purpose. Nature, then, is not a material shell in which Spirit is bound, nor is Spirit a roving breath of things ensnared to which the object it inspires is a prisonhouse. The indwelling God is the Lord of His creations and not their servant or prisoner, and as a householder is master of his dwelling-places to enter them and go forth from them at his will or to pull down what he has built up when it ceases to please him or be serviceable to his needs, so the Spirit is free to enter or go forth from Its bodies and has power to build and destroy and rebuild whatsoever It pleases in this universe. The very universe itself It is free to destroy and recreate. God is not bound; He is the entire master of His creations.

The word *Ishá*, starting forward at once to meet us in this opening vibration of the Seer's high strain of thought, becomes the master tone of all its rhythms. It is the key to all that follows in the Upanishad. For not only does it contradict at once all mechanical theories of the Universe and assert the pre-existence, omnipotence, majesty and freedom of the transcendent Soul of things within, but by identifying the Spirit in the universe with the Spirit in all bodies, it asserts what is of equal importance to

its gospel of a divine life for humanity, that the soul in man also is master, not really a slave, not bound, not a prisoner, but free—not bound to grief and death and limitation, but the master, the user of grief and death and limitation and free to pass on from them to other and more perfect instruments. If then we seem to be bound, as undoubtedly we do seem, by a fixed nature of our minds and bodies, by the nature of the universe, by the duality of grief and joy, pleasure and pain, by the chain of cause and effect or by any other chain or tie whatsoever, the seeming is only a seeming and nothing more. It is Maya, illusion of bondage, or it is Lila, a play at being bound. The soul, for its own purposes, may seem to forget its freedom, but even when it forgets, the freedom is there, self-existent, inalienable and, since never lost except in appearance, therefore always recoverable even in that appearance. This is the first truth of Vedanta assumed by the Upanishad in its opening words and from this truth we must start and adhere to it always in our minds, if we would understand in its right bearing & complete suggestion the Seer's gospel of life:—

That which dwells in the body of things is God, Self and Spirit; the Spirit is not the subject of its material, but the master; the soul in the body or in Nature is not the prisoner of its dwelling-place, but has moulded the body and its dharmas, fixed Nature and its processes and can remould, manipulate and arrange them according to its power and pleasure.

Idam sarvam yat kincha, the Seer has said, emphasising the generality of *idam sarvam* by the comprehensive particularity of *yat kincha*. He brings us at once by this expression to the Adwaitic truth in Vedanta that there is a multitude of objects in the universe, (it may be, even, a multitude of universes,) but only one soul of things and not many. Eko 'chalah sanátanah. The Soul in all this and in each particular form is one, still and sempiternal, one in the multitude of its habitations, still and unshifting in the perpetual movement of Nature, sempiternally the same in this constant ceasing and changing of forms. God sits in the centre of this flux of the universe, eternal, still and immutable. He pervades its oceanic heavings and streamings; therefore it endures. Nature is the multiplicity of God, Spirit is

His unity; Nature is His mobility, Spirit is His fixity; Nature is His variation, Spirit is His constant sameness. These truths are not stated at once; the Seer waits for a later verse to arrive at them. In this opening phrase he limits himself to the statement of the unity of God, and the multiplicity and mobility of Nature; for this relation in opposition is all that is immediately necessary to base the rule of divine living which it is his one object in the Upanishad to found upon a right knowledge of God & existence.

The self then of every man, every animal and every object, whether animate or inanimate, is God; the soul in us, therefore, is something divine, free and self-aware. If it seems to be anything else,—bound, miserable, darkened,—that is inevitably some illusion, some freak of the divine consciousness at play with its experiences; if this Soul seems to be other than God or Spirit, what seems is only a name and a form or, to keep to the aspect of the truth here envisaged, is only movement of Nature, jagat, which God has manifested in Himself for the purpose of various enjoyment in various mansions,—it is an image, a mask, a shape or eidolon created in the divine movement, formed by the divine self-awareness, instrumentalised by the divine activity. Therefore He is “this man and yonder woman, a boy and a girl, that old man leaning on his staff, this blue bird and that scarlet-eyed”. We have, asserted in the comprehensiveness of the phrase, not only an entire essential omnipresence of God in us & in the world, but a direct and a practical omnipresence, possessing and insistent, not vague, abstract or elusive. The language of the Sruti is trenchant and inexorable. We must exclude no living being because it seems to us weak, mean, noxious or vile, no object because it seems to us inert, useless or nauseous. The hideous crawling worm or snake no less than the beautiful winged bird and the strong or gracious forms of four-footed life, the dull stone and foul mire and evil-smelling gas no less than man, the divine fighter and worker, are motions of the supreme Spirit; they contain in themselves and are in their secret reality the living God. This is the second general truth of Vedanta which arises inevitably from the pregnant verse of the Seer and, always present to him in his brief and concentrated thinking, must also

accompany us throughout our pursuit of his sense and doctrine.

God is One; Self, Spirit, Soul is one; even when It presents Itself multitudinously in Its habitations as if It were many souls and so appears in the motion of Nature, Its universality and unity are not abrogated nor infringed. In all there is That which by coming out of its absorption in form of movement, recovers its unity. As the soul in man, though seeming to be bound, is always free and can realise its freedom, so, though seeming divided, limited and many, it is always universal, illimitable and one and can realise its universality and unity.

This creature born in a moment of time and bound in an atom of Space, is really in his secret consciousness the universal Spirit who contains the whole universe of things and dwells as the self of all things in these myriad forms of man & bird & beast, tree & earth & stone which my mind regards as outside me & other than myself. In the name of myself God inhabits this form of my being — but it is God that inhabits and the apparent “I” is but a centre of His personality & a knot in the infinite coilings of His active world existence. My ego is a creation of the Jagati in a form of mind; my Self stands behind, possesses and exceeds the universe.

II

This is Spirit in relation to Nature, one in multiplicity, the Lord of nature and process, free in the bound, conscious in the unconscious, inhabitant, master and enjoyer of all forms and movements of life, mind and body. Nature in relation to Spirit is its motion and the result of its motion, jagatyam jagat, phenomenon and everything that exists as phenomenon, universe and everything that constitutes universe. There are two terms in this brief and puissant formula, jagati and jagat. The second, jagat, is particular and multiple and includes whatsoever is separate existence, individual thing or form of motion, yat kincha; the first, jagati, is general and indicates both the resultant sum and the formative principle of all these particular existences, sarvam idam yat kincha. Sarvam idam is Nature regarded objectively as

the sum of her creations; jagati is Nature regarded subjectively and essentially as that divine principle, expressed in motion of being and observed by us as force or Energy, which generates all these forms and variations. For Existence in itself is existence in a state of repose or stillness; indeterminate, infinite, inactive, it generates nothing: it is movement of energy in Existence which is active, which determines forms, which generates appearances of finite being and brings about phenomena of Becoming as opposed to fixed truth of Being. Therefore every objective existence in the world and all subjective forms, being forms of Existence in motion, being inconstant, being always mutable and always changing, progressing from a past of change to a future of change, are not truly different beings at all, but becomings of the one and only Being; each is the result of its previous motion, stands by its continued motion and if that motion were pretermitted or its rhythm disturbed, must change, disintegrate or transmute itself into some other form of becoming. Spirit or God is eternal Being, Nature in its sum & principle is the becoming of God and in its particulars a mass of His becomings, real as becomings, falsely valued as beings. The knowledge of the Upanishads takes its stand on this supreme distinction of Being and its Becomings; we find, indeed, in this Upanishad itself, another and more convenient collective term used to express all that is here defined as *yat kincha jagatyam jagat*,—one which brings us straight to this great distinction. The soul is Atman,¹ Being; everything else is *sarvabhútáni*, all becomings or, literally, all things that have become. This phrase is the common Sanscrit expression for created beings and though often referring in ordinary parlance to animate and self-conscious existences only, yet must in its philosophical sense and especially in the Upanishads, be accepted as inclusive of all existences whether they are or seem animate or inanimate, self-conscious or veiled in consciousness. The tree, flower & stone no less than the animal, heaven and wind and the sun and rain no less than man, invisible gas and

¹ The scholars hold erroneously that Atman meant first breath, then self; it meant, on the contrary, being, from the old root *â*, to be, still extant in Tamil, and the suffix *tman*, which expresses substance or substantial embodiment.

force & current no less than the things we can see and feel fall within its all-embracing formula.

God is the only Being and all other existences are only His becomings; the souls informing them are but one Spirit individualised in forms and forces by the play and movement of Its own self-consciousness.

We see, then, whose this energy is and of what the universe is the motion. But already from the little we have said there begins to emerge clearly another truth which in the Upanishad itself the Seer leaves in shadow for the present and only shapes into clear statement in his fourth and eighth couplets; he emphasises in the fourth couplet the unity of Soul & Nature, the stillness & the motion are not separate from each other, not one of them Brahman and the other an illusion, but both of them equally the one sole Existence, which moves & yet is still even in its motion, *Tad ejati tanmajati, amejad ekam manaso javiyas.* In the eighth verse he indicates that Brahman & the Lord² are not different from each other or from the motion, but are the reality of the motion as the motion itself is the play of the stillness; for to *Tad ejati*, That moves, comes as an echo & response, *Sa paryagát*, He went abroad. *Nature is motion of the Spirit, the world is motion of God; but also Nature is Spirit in motion, the world is God at play.*

All our inefficient envisagings of the world, all our ignorant questions fall away from this supreme Vedantic conception. We cannot ask ourselves, "Why has God brought about this great flux of things, this enormous and multitudinous world-movement? what can have been His purpose in it? Or is it a law of His nature and was He under an inner compulsion to create? Who then or what compelled Him?" These questions fall away from the decisive & trenchant solution, *Ishá vásyam jagat.* He has no purpose in it except habitation, except delight, an ordered and harmonised delight,—therefore there is what we call universe, law, progression, the appearance of a method

² The Mayavadins hold that God is only the first myth of Maya & not the truth of Brahman,—the language of the Upanishad shows that this was not the view of the old Vedantic Rishis.

and a goal; but the order effected feels always its neighbourhood to the grandiose licence of the infinite and the harmony achieved thrills at once with the touch of the Transcendent's impulse to pass out of every rhythm and exceed every harmony. For this is a self-delight which in no way limits or binds Him; He has brought it about and He conducts it in perfect freedom; there is no compulsion on Him & none can compel Him, for He alone exists and Nature is only a play of time-movement in His being, proceeding from Him, contained in Him, governed by Him, not He by it or proceeding from it or coeval with it and therefore capable of being its subject, victim or instrument. Neither is there any inner compulsion limiting Him either as to the nature of the work or its method. The movement of the universe is not the nature of God, nor are its processes the laws of God's being; for Spirit is absolute and has no fixed or binding nature, God is supreme & transcendent and is not bound by state, law or process,—so free is He, rather, that He is not bound even to His own freedom. The laws of Nature, as we have seen, cannot be laws of being at all, since Nature itself is a becoming; they are processes which regulate the harmonies of becoming, processes which are, in the Vedic image, chhandas, rhythms of the movement and not in their own being rigid, inexorable & eternal because self-existent verities; they are results of the tendency to order & harmony, not sempiternal fetters on Existence. Even the most fundamental laws are only modes of activity conceived & chosen by Spirit in the universe. We arrive then at this farther all-important truth:—

Nature is a divine motion of becoming of which Spirit is the origin, substance and control as well as the inhabitant and enjoyer. Laws of Nature are themselves general movements & developments of becoming and conditions of a particular order, rhythm and harmony of the universe, but not inexorably pre-existent or recognisable as the very grain of existence. The Laws of Evolution are themselves evolutions and progressive creations of the Spirit.

Since Spirit, transcendent and original of the universe, is the sole existence, the motion of the universe can only take place in

the Spirit. Therefore the indwelling of the Spirit in forms is not only a free indwelling rather than an imprisonment, but also it is not the whole or essential truth of this mutual relation of God & Nature; indwelling but not confined, like the presence of the ether in the jar, it is symbolical and a figment of divine conception rather than the essential relation of body and spirit. We get the fuller statement of the truth in the fifth couplet of the Upanishad, Tad antar asya sarvasya tad u sarvasyásya báhyatah; That, the inexpressible Reality of things, is within this universe and each thing it contains, but equally it is outside of this universe and each thing that it contains,— outside it as continent, outside it as transcendent. The omnipresent Inhabitant of the world is equally its all-embracing continent. If form is the vessel in which Spirit dwells, Spirit is the sphere in which form exists & moves. But, essentially, It transcends form and formation, movement and relation, & even while It is inhabitant & continent, stands apart from what It inhabits and contains, self-existent, self-sufficient, divine and eternally free. Spirit is the cause, world is the effect, but this cause is not bound to this effect. Na cha mám tání karmáni nibadhnanti, says the Lord in the Gita; I am not bound by these works that I do, even while I do them. The soul of man, one with God, has the same transcendency and the same freedom.

Spirit contains, dwells in and transcends this body of things. It acts in the world but is not bound by Its actions. The same essential freedom must be true of this soul in the body, even though it may seem to be confined in the body and compelled by Nature's results and its own works. The soul in us has the inherent power not only of becoming in this outward & waking consciousness what it is in reality, the continent of the body which seems to contain it, but of transcending in consciousness all bodily relation and relation with the universe.

From the action of Nature in the Spirit, as from the action of the Spirit in Nature, the same formula of freedom emerges. I have, in God and by God, made myself and my world what we now are; I can, in God and by God, change them and make them what I would have them be. I am not the sport and puppet

of Nature and her laws, but their creator and her master. She accommodates herself to me and pretends to herself & me that she is ruling my whole existence, when she is really following, however late, stumblingly and with feigned reluctance, the motion of my will. Instrument of my actions, she pretends to be the mistress of my being. The identity of the soul and God behind all veils is the Vedantic charter of man's freedom. Science, observing only the movement, seeing fixed process everywhere, is obsessed by what she studies and declares the iron despotism of mechanical Law. Vedanta, studying the Force that makes the movement and its cause, arrives at the perception and experience of Spirit everywhere and declares our eternal and indefeasible freedom. It passes beyond the Law to the Liberty of which the Law itself is the creation & expression.

III

It is not enough, however, to know the inner fact and the outer possibility of our freedom; we must also look at and take into account the apparent actuality of our bondage. The debit side of the human ledger must be taken into the reckoning as well as the credit account. The explanation and seed of this bondage is contained in the formula jagatyam jagat; for, if our freedom results from the action of Spirit in Nature and of Nature in Spirit, our bondage results from the action of Nature on all that she has created and contains. Every mundane existence is jagatyam jagat, not a separate and independent motion by itself, but part of and dependent on the universal movement. From this dependence by inclusion derives the great law that every form of things engendered in the motional universe shall be subject to the processes of that particular stream of movement to which it belongs; each individual body subject to the general processes of matter, each individual life to the general processes of vitality, each individual mind to the general processes of mentality, because the individual is only a whorl of motion in the general motion and its individual variation therefore can only be a speciality of the general motion and not contradictory of it.

The multiplicity of God in the universe is only a circumstance of His unity and is limited and governed by the unity; therefore the animal belongs to its species, the tree, the rock and the star each to its kind and man to humanity. If machinery of existence were all, if there were no Spirit in the motion or that Spirit were not Ish, the Master, origin, continent and living transcendence of the motion, this law is of so pressing a nature that the subjection would be absolute, the materialist's reign of iron Law complete, the Buddhist's rigid chain of causation ineffugable. This generality, this pressure of tyrannous insistence is necessary in order that the harmony of the universe may be assured against all disturbing vibrations. It is the bulwark of cosmos against chaos, of the realised actuality against that inconstant & ever-pulsating material of infinite possibility out of which it started, of the finite against the dangerous call and attraction of the Infinite.

The unity of God governs His multiplicity; therefore the more general motion of Nature as representative of or nearest to that unity governs the multiple individual products of the movement. To each motion its law and to each inhabitant of that motion subjection to the law. Therefore Man, being human in Nature, is bound first by Nature, then by his humanity.

But because God is also the transcendence of Nature & Nature moves towards God, therefore, even in Nature itself a principle of freedom and a way of escape have been provided. Avidyayá mrityum tírtwá. For, in reality, the motion of Nature is only the apparent or mechanical cause of our bondage; the real and essential cause arises from the relation of Spirit to Nature. God having descended into Nature, Spirit cast itself out in motion, allows Himself as part of the play to be bewitched by His female energy and seems to accept on Himself in the principle of mind isolated from the higher spiritual principles, her absorption in her work and her forgetfulness of her reality. The soul in mind identifies itself with its form, allows itself apparently to float on the oceanic stream of Nature and envisages itself as carried away by the current. Spirit veils itself from Mind; Ish wraps Himself up in jagat & seems to its own outer consciousness to be jagat. This is the principle of our bondage; the principle of our freedom

is to draw back from that absorption & recover our real self-consciousness as the containing, constituting and transcendent Spirit.

Spirit, absorbed in the motion and process of Nature, appears to be bound by the process of becoming as if it were law of being; it is therefore said to be bound by Karma, that is to say, by the chain of particular cause and effect, the natural chain of active energy and its results. But by drawing back upon itself & ceasing to identify itself with its form, it can get rid of this appearance and recover its lordship and freedom. Incidentally, the soul of Man by drawing more and more towards God, becomes more & more Ish and can more and more control the processes of becoming in himself and in others, in the subjective and in the objective, in the mental and in the material world.

This final conclusion of freedom & power in the world is of the last importance for our immediate purpose. Merely to draw back from all identification with form is to draw away towards the Stillness, the Infinity & the cessation of all this divine play of motion. Ever since Buddhism conquered Vedic India and assured the definite enthronement of the ideal of Sannyasa in opposition to the ideal of Tyaga, this consummation has been constantly praised and held up before us in this country as the highest ideal of man and his only path to salvation. But even if for the few this goal be admitted, yet for the majority of men it must still & always remain God's ultimate purpose in them to realise Him manifest in the world,—since that is His purpose in manifestation,—& not only & exclusively unmanifest in His transcendental stillness. It must be possible then to find God as freedom & immortality in the world and not only aloof from the world. There must be a way of escape provided in Nature itself out of our bondage to Nature. Man must be able to find in Nature itself and in his humanity a way of escape into divinity & freedom from Nature, avidyayá mrityum tárta. This would not be possible if God and Nature, Brahman and the Universe, were two hostile & incompatible entities, the one real and the other false or non-existent. But Spirit and Universe, God and Nature are one Brahman; therefore there must always be a point at

which the two meet; their apparent divergence in consciousness must be somewhere corrected in consciousness, Nature must at some point become God and the apparently material Universe stand revealed as Spirit.

In the profound analysis of the human soul built by the ancient Vedantic thinkers upon the most penetrating self-observation and the most daring & far-reaching psychological experiments, this point of escape, this bridge of reconciliation was discovered in the two supramental principles, Ideal Consciousness & Bliss Consciousness, both of them disengaged from the confusions of the mind involved in matter. Just as modern Scientists, not satisfied with the ordinary processes & utilities of Nature, not satisfied with the observation of her surface forces & daily activities, penetrated further, analysed, probed, discovered hidden forces & extraordinary activities, not satisfied with Nature's obvious use of wind as a locomotive force, found & harnessed the unutilised propulsive energy of steam, not satisfied with observing the power of electricity in the glare & leap of the thunderflash, disengaged & used it for the lighting of our houses & thoroughfares, for the driving of our engines & printing presses, for the alleviation of disease or for the judicial murder of our fellow-creatures, so the old Vedantic Yogins, not satisfied with observing the surface activities and ordinary processes of our subjective nature, penetrated further, analysed, probed, discovered hidden forces & extraordinary activities by which our whole active mentality could be manipulated and rearranged as one manipulates a machine or rearranges a set of levers; pressing yet farther towards the boundaries of existence they discovered whence this energy proceeded & whitherward this stir and movement tended & worked. They found beyond the manifest & obvious triple bond of body, life & mind, two secret states & powers of consciousness which supported them in their works — beyond this limited, groping and striving mind & life which only fumble after right knowledge & labour after the right use of power & even attaining them can possess & wield them only as indirect & secondhand agents, they discovered a principle of ideal consciousness, *vijnana*, which

saw Truth face to face & unerringly, looking on the sun with unshaded eyes, and a principle of all-blissful power & being which possessed in itself, by the very right of its eternal existence & inalienable nature, right joy, right awareness & right action as the very self-atmosphere of its manifestation in the universe. Above this inferior trilogy of matter, life & mind (Annam Prana Manas), there is a superior trilogy of Infinite Being, Force & Bliss (Sat, Chit, Ananda) accessible to us & working on us inhabitants of the lower spheres from the symbol of divine beatific consciousness, the Anandatattwa, as its throne of world rule, the home & fortress of the divine Master, and employing as its distributing & arranging minister the truth-seeing ideal mind to feed, supply & compel the activities of the lower being. They saw, then, being arranged in seven stairs, seven worlds, seven streams of world movement, seven bodies of things, seven states of consciousness which inform & contain the bodies. They saw this material consciousness & this material world as the lowest stair, the least in plenitude & power & joy of these seven divine rivers. Man they saw as a soul dwelling in matter, deriving his activities from mind & holding them in mind but going back in the roots of his being to the divine trilogy. Earth, in the language of their thought, was the footing & pedestal of the human unit, but the heavens of Ananda concealed the secret & ungrasped crown of his world-existence. This conception of the sevenfold form of our being & of world-being helps to constitute the very kernel of the doctrine in the Upanishads. It is the key to their sense in many passages where there is no direct mention or precise reference to any of its seven terms. It is because we miss these clues that so much in these scriptures comes to our mind as a mystery or even as a vague & confused extravagance of disordered mysticism.

In this septuple system of our Scriptures every individual body obeys the laws of matter, every life the processes of vitality, every mind the processes of mentality, every ideal being the processes of ideality and every free soul the processes of Beatitude. The seven worlds are indeed different kingdoms, each with its own nations & creatures, *prajáh, bhútáni*. But since God is

always one, each separate motion contains in itself the presence and potentiality of all the others; moreover, since it contains the potentiality, it is irresistibly led to develop under its own conditions that which it contains. For this reason Matter in the world tends to manifest Life, Life in Matter to rise into Mind, Mind in vitalised body to be released into Pure Idea, Pure Idea in matter-housed Mind to be consummated in divine Beatitude. The pervading law, therefore, which confines each species to the rule of its kind is only one general rhythm of the movement; it is crossed by a higher upward and liberating movement which leads the becoming we now are to strive for development towards that other, freer & larger scale of becoming which is immediately above it. This fresh rule of Nature, then, appears & constitutes the rule of our freedom as the other was the rule of our servitude.

The principle, “To each motion its law & to each inhabitant of the motion subjection to the law” is crossed and corrected by this other principle, “Each motion contains a tendency towards the motion above it and to each type of becoming, therefore, there comes in the progress of time the impulse to strain beyond the mould it has realised to that which is higher than itself.”

In this complex arrangement of Nature where is man's exact position? He is a mental being housed in a vitalised body & he tends through pure idea towards divine beatitude. Now just as matter informed with life, no longer obeys the processes of matter only, but, even while it affects life-processes, is also affected by them and finds its complete liberation in the conquest of matter by life, just as mind in a life body is affected, limited and hampered by vital & bodily processes, but still governs them and would find its own liberation and theirs in the perfect conquest of life & matter by mind, so, since this mental being is really a soul imprisoned in mind, its perfect liberation comes by rising out of the mould of mind through pure idea into beatitude; escaping into beatitude, this mental existence is able to liberate the whole lower system of being by renewing every part of it in the mould and subjecting every part of it to the process of that which we have now become. The mould and process of Ananda

is freedom, God, bliss, immortality, universality, & these, therefore, are the laws of being, the *dharma*s, the sum of a divine beatific existence which we put on by rising out of mental ego into infinite Ananda. The motion of pure Idea, vijnana, is the door of our escape in Avidya; for it is the kingdom within us of Truth and Illumination, domain, in the Vedic symbol, of the god of the Sun, the prophetic Apollo, the burning and enlightening Surya. Sa no dhiyah prachodayát.

The base of our being is in Matter, its knot is in mentality, its escape into divine Bliss. Our aim as human beings must be to rise through the pure Idea into divine bliss and there freed from mental egoism & vital and material limitations spiritualise and beatify our whole existence from the base to the summit.

We are a double birth, God the Spirit, God in Nature, Ish and Jagat. In Nature we are bound in our consciousness, because we are there a whorl of its motion, a wave in its sea; in Spirit we are free, for there we are a part of nothing, but one with the indivisible Spirit. But this double is really biune. God, unbound by His divisibility, unbound by His indivisibility, weds the One to the Many in the play of His consciousness, in His ineffable beatitude. There God and Nature meet, Vidya and Avidya embrace each other, our real freedom governs and uses consciously our apparent bondage, the bliss of Transcendence joins hands with the bliss of manifestation, God shows Himself in humanity and man realises himself as divine.

The joy of that reconciliation dwells in the Immortality to which the Vedanta is our guide and its starting point is the recognition by mind of the one Lord in all bodies, the one Spiritual Being in all becomings, átmánam sarvabhúteshu. Since it is the all-blissful Lord who dwells within and Nature is for His habitation and enjoyment, then a state of Nature which is a state of bondage, sorrow-pursued, death-besieged, wrestling with limitations, is convicted of being only a temporary mask and a divinely willed starting-point for the Energy confined in the triple bonds of mortal Mind, Life & Matter to work out its own immortal freedom. The object of life is self-liberation, the only aim of human existence consistent with the dignity and

fullness of our being is the escape through Nature to God, out of grief, bondage & death into joy, freedom and immortality. Avidyayá mrityum tírtwá vidyayámritam asnute.

APPENDIX

[The following passage, written on a loose sheet, seems to be related to the above section.]

In our observation of the workings of law & freedom in cosmic Nature we cannot fail to be struck by the principle of gradated and progressive freedom by which she climbs up from an apparent rigidity of law to an apparent elasticity of freedom. We observe that matter inert or informed only by an inert principle of motion is the field of rigid law & of fixed process. We observe next that in proportion as life develops in matter, the principle of variation, of flexible adaptability, even of instinctive, if unconscious self-adaptation manifests & increases in her workings. We observe that in proportion as mind develops in living matter this variation, this flexibility & self-adaptation grow into a conscious struggle with & partial domination of the life & matter in which mind operates. From this we arrive easily at certain large corollaries.

(1) Mind, life & matter are, in all probability, one essence, but not one principle. They are three different principles of Nature, each with its separate rhythm, principle of process & mode of working.

(2) Consciousness is the principle of freedom, form is the principle of law; the necessity of dealing with the rigidity of form and its processes is the cause of the limitations of the freedom inherent in consciousness.

(3) Consciousness and life evolve out of matter; they must then have been all the time inherent & involved in matter.

(4) Life itself seems to be an operation of involved consciousness working itself out of the imprisonment in matter. It is therefore conceivable that matter itself may be only a form of involved consciousness.

(5) Mind is a principle of mental self-conscious sensation, action-comprehension, reaction, attraction-repulsion rising into a luminosity (prakasha) we call knowledge of which thought is only the partial system or formula. In Life we notice in the plant & metal a vital sensation, action-comprehension, reaction, attraction-repulsion, essentially the same as the mental but expressed in a different system of values,—values of involved consciousness. In Matter we do not observe sensation, but we do observe the other common activities of Nature. Experimental Yogic psychologists assert that matter does also receive & store blind sensations & that the mind of man can discover records of past events in material objects & convert them into values of knowledge. Science even goes so far as to assert that all sensations are an activity of matter & are stored in the brain & can always be turned by memory under some stimulus into values of knowledge. We may say therefore that the essence of consciousness is at least present in matter, but it only organises itself by evolution, through life in mind.

We cannot assert that the present state of consciousness [which is] the consciousness of limited freedom & derived knowledge in man is the last possible evolution of consciousness. It is at least possible that an entirely free consciousness bringing with it a spontaneous instead of a derived knowledge & an entirely free mastery instead of a partially free manipulation of mind, life & matter is concealed in Nature & its unveiling is the final goal of her evolution.

If such a free consciousness exists, there must be a principle in Nature superior to mind as mind is superior to life & matter & this can be nothing else than the Vedic principle called vijnana.

This free consciousness, entire mastery, must be a power of cosmic Nature & cannot be acquired by the individual except by breaking down the habits of consciousness & exceeding the fixed processes by which the individual action is separated & differentiated from cosmic action.

The ultimate evolution must therefore end in the openness of the individual for cosmic or infinite consciousness-being, not limited by individual ego-sense, the workings of free infinite

cosmic force, not limited by individual will; possessing entire freedom, knowledge & mastery it must be in its nature an infinite joy & bliss in oneself & in all the cosmic workings which enter into our experience. The highest state of Nature & goal of evolution must be infinite Sacchidananda.

So much we can reasonably infer from the facts of the cosmos as we see them. We then arrive at the Vedanta results without starting from Vedanta; but if we accept the Vedantic premise that all world is only a formation & operation of consciousness, these inferences become inevitable conclusions.

Chapter II

The Golden Rule of Living —
Enjoyment & Renunciation

The first line of the Seer's first couplet has given us very briefly and suggestively the base & starting point of the whole thought of the Upanishad; the second line of the same couplet opens to us, with equal brevity, with equal suggestiveness the summation of the whole thought of the Upanishad. The rest of the eighteen shlokas fill out, complete, play variations; they add much thought that is necessary to avoid error, to perceive supplementary and collateral truths or to guide oneself aright in the path that has been hewn out or to walk with unstumbling footsteps through the doors that have been opened to us; but all the practical need of man and the central gist of the Seer's thought about human life is compressed into these two lines with their few brief words and their thousand echoes.

All the underlying Vedantic conceptions which we have had to bring out in our first chapter, have had reference to the three great practical factors of the human problem as it presented itself to Vedantic thinkers, the reality of spiritual freedom, the appearance of material bondage and the means of escape out of the appearance and into the reality, out of matter into Spirit, out of Nature into God. But these expressions, freedom and bondage, are intellectual, ideal or spiritual terms. This human being though he lays hold on intellect as a guide and aspires to ideality and spirit, does not live centred in those superior movements of consciousness; brain leads his thought when it can, but he lives in the heart & lives in it, too, besieged by the nerves and body. His mentality is, therefore, emotional, sensational and temperamental, not intellectual or ideal, and the practical aspect of his own problem is not limitation or infinity, but the pressure of pain, grief, sorrow and suffering and the possibility of escape from these his ruthless and omnipresent persecutors. He could even be content for a while with death and limitation if, free from this admixture of pain & suffering, his short span of life & circumscribed sphere of

action could be assured of that limited happiness which the race at large is vainly pursuing. It was the agony of this problem that seized on Buddha and drove him from his kingly home & rich domestic joys to wander through the world as a beggar and ascetic; to escape from the insistent pain, grief and suffering of the world the Lord of Pity discovered for man the eightfold path, the law of compassion & self-sacrifice, the heavenly door of renunciation and the silent and blindly luminous haven of Nirvana. The Seer of the Upanishad sets before himself the same problem but arrives at a very different solution; for he proceeds not from pity, but from a clear strength and a steady knowledge, perceiving the problem but not overpowered by it, *samáhita, dhíra*. Dwelling in a world of grief, pain, death and limitation, *anityam asukham imam lokam prápya*, yet irresistibly impelled by Nature to aspire after joy, immortality and freedom, bound not to renounce that apparently impossible ideal on peril of forfeiting our highest, most consoling and most exalting impulses, how are we to reconcile this ineffugable contradiction or to escape from this unending struggle? This is the problem which the Seer solves in three brief words, *tena tyaktena bhunjítháh*, again a monumental phrase whose echoes travel the whole of existence. It is because it provides the true practical basis for the solution he is going to suggest that he has preferred to announce at the outset the immediate and active relation of our twofold existence, God inhabiting Nature, rather than the remoter essential relation, God and Nature one Brahman. For the first practical step towards freedom must always be to distinguish between the Inhabitant and the habitation and withdraw from the motion towards the Lord of the motion. It is in the motion that these shadows of limitation, grief and death appear; the Inhabitant is free, blissful and immortal. To escape, then, we must turn from the world to the Master of the world; in ordinary religious parlance, we must renounce the world in order to find and possess God. So also the Gita, after describing our condition, arrived in this transient and troubled world, *anityam asukham imam lokam prápya*, immediately points out the remedy, *bhajaswa Mám*. Turn & cleave rather to me, the Lord. But the world was made by its Lord for

divine habitation & possession; the object of the renunciation, therefore, cannot be to turn away utterly from the world after abandoning it in itself & in the lower consciousness, but to conquer and repossess it through the divine Krishna and in the supreme & all-blissful conscious being of the Lord. Nivasishyasi mayyeva. Thou shalt dwell in Me utterly, in My illimitable being & not in a limited & mortal experience of the world. To form the basis of the rule of life which the Seer enunciates, we have, then, this practical corollary from the language of his first line:—

To escape from grief, death and limitation we must renounce the world, to enjoy bliss, freedom & immortality we must possess ourselves in the Lord; but since His object in manifesting is habitation of the universe and not its destruction, the bliss must be enjoyed in this universe, through the Lord, and not in the Lord apart from and exclusive of life in the universe.

This is the difference, the capital difference between the Buddhistic solution—with all those later solutions affected & governed by Buddhistic thought, such as Mayavada & monastic Christianity—and the ancient answer of Hinduism to the problem put to man by life. These say, “Abandon life, put away all possession & enjoyment; absolute asceticism is your only salvation”; that said “Abandon the world that you may possess and enjoy it.” One is an escape, the other a recoil and an aggression; one is a divorce, the other a reconciliation. Both solutions are heroic; but one is a mighty heroism of difficult retreat and flight; the other a mightier heroism of self-perfection and conquest. The one is the retreat of the Ten Thousand; the other is Caesar’s movement from Dyrrhachium to [Pharsalus]. One path culminates in Buddha, the other in Janaka and Srikrishna. The language of the Seer is perfectly framed, as in the first line, to bring about a confrontation of two giant opposites. Tyaktena in the instrumental case suggests a means, and the very first word after tyaktena, undivided from it by any other vocable or particle, the word which gives the object and work of this instrument, the word which sets ringing from the outset the conclusive note and culminating cry of the Upanishad and is suggested again and again in jijivishet, in ko mohah kah shokah, in amritam,

in kalyanatamam, in raye, is the magnificent bhunjithah, Thou shouldst enjoy. Tyaga and bhoga, renunciation and enjoyment, have always been presented to us as the two conflicting ideals of human life & thought,—inevitably, for they are the two master impulses of Nature—both of them eternal—and through the ages they have perplexed and tormented humanity by their perpetual companionship in an always unfinished and inconclusive strife, dividing us into Puritan and Pagan, Stoic and Epicurean, worldling and ascetic, & perpetuating an opposition that rests on a false division of a double unity, maintaining a strife that can lead to no final victory. The Seer has deliberately brought these two great opposites & enemies together and using a pointed and unequivocal language, has put them side by side no longer as enemies but as friends and mutual helpers; his aim is by a fearless and puissant confrontation to reconcile and wed them eternally to each other, as he has already in the first line confronted, reconciled and eternally wedded the two apparent opposites, Spirit and world-Nature. Had he said not “Tyaktena” but “Tyagena bhunjithah”, from which we might have concluded that he pointed us to renunciation of the world for the enjoyment of God aloof from the world, there would then have been no real confrontation & no great monumental phrase but only a skilful verbal turn of words pointing a contrast rather than effecting a reconciliation. But the instrument of the enjoyment is not renunciation in itself and for itself but the world we have renounced, tena, & the enjoyment is not the self-sufficient joy of renunciation & escape, but the enjoyment of Spirit in the world, the Lord in the motion. By means of all that is thing of world in this moving universe we are to enjoy God &, through Him, no longer as now apart from Him, to enjoy His universal motion,—all this that is moving thing in her that moves becomes the instrument of a divine delight, because the world is God and part of His totality, so that by possessing & enjoying Him we possess and enjoy world also. Enjoyment is to be reconciled then to renunciation & even wedded to it, made to depend upon it as the effect depends upon the cause, to stand upon it as a statue stands upon its pedestal or the roof of a house on its foundations,

walls and pillars. Renunciation the means, enjoyment the end, but renunciation of the world as mere undivine, ignorant & fettered motion & becoming, enjoyment of God in Himself & of the world only as a symbol, a formal expression of God; this reconciliation founded on a knowledge of the true nature & purpose of existence is the gospel of the Seer.

The ascetic gospel of renunciation is incomplete by itself; the Pagan gospel of enjoyment is incomplete by itself. Renunciation and enjoyment of the world must be reconciled by substituting inward for outward bliss, the bliss that goes from within outward for the pleasure which seeks to appeal from without inward, joy of God in the form & name of things for joy of the finite appearance and the isolated idea. The reconciliation is to be effected through the consummate experience of Ananda, the divine beatitude at which we arrive by true seeing in the kingdom of the pure Idea, satyadharma drishtyā.

Let us examine successively this renunciation and this enjoyment. We see, first, that *tena* refers back to the expression in the first line, so wide, so carefully comprehensive, *idam sarvam yat kincha jagatyam jagat*, by which the absolute unity of the Inhabitant is affirmed. We are to abandon utterly the world; we are to renounce every least or greatest detail of phenomenal existence, whether held by us in possession or aimed at in our desire; we are to surrender everything whatsoever that we have or may hope to possess or dream of possessing in the universe. We see that the demand in this second line is as sweeping and unsparing as the all-comprehensive description in its base & predecessor. We are to keep back nothing; all that is dearest to us in our outward environment, wife, children, home, friends, wealth, country, position, fame, honour, success, the respect of men, the love of those we cherish,—all that is dearest to us in our inward life; our loves, hates, jealousies, ambitions, sins, virtues, principles, opinions, tastes, preferences, ideals,—these and all we are, our body, life, mind, soul, personality, ego, all, all have to be sacrificed and laid upon a single altar. We must keep back nothing either of our outer or of our inner wealth; for if, professing to make the complete surrender, we consciously

& willingly keep back one doit or farthing, we are thieves before God, committing the Biblical sin of Ananias & Sapphira, — stena eva sah, — conscious or half-conscious hypocrites, — mithyáchárah sa uchyate, — and, even if the holding back be unwilling or unconscious, still are we imperfect sadhakas not yet having the right to grasp our crown. For the natural principle of this surrender is precise: —

As one gives so one receives. God is All & he who would gain all, must give all. The final sacrifice admits of no reservation and even a slight defect of renunciation, however seemingly lofty the scruple, vitiates the purity and effectiveness of the sacrifice.

But since the renunciation asked of us is not the objective renunciation, — although that too is not excluded so far as it is necessary for the real surrender, — since it is not an outward process of flight from the objects of pleasure, it can only be, in essence, an inner sacrifice to the Master of the world, to Ish, the Lord. Since there is only One Lord in multitudinous bodies & to Him the entire world belongs, everything that is offered to the enjoyment not of the one Lord of the world, but to the mind, senses, body as part of the motion, the jagat, is an ignorant sacrifice on a false altar. It may be justified by the great cosmic ignorance so long as that principle of consciousness keeps its hold on us, but it can never bring the supreme good or the divine bliss. A perverse & broken movement, it brings a perverse and broken result.³ So long as we feel ourselves to be at all separate existences from God and others, anyán, we are here as His deputies and instruments to receive out of what the world possesses so much as the Lord of the world sends or brings to us, and to offer them up not to our mind and senses but to the Master of the Universe seated in ourselves and in others, bhoktáram yajnatapasám sarvalokamaheshwaram. He is the true enjoyer of all sacrifices and works of askesis, the mighty lord of all the worlds. For this reason the Gita directs us to offer up as an utter sacrifice to the Supreme all our actions, all our efforts, all our enjoyments, yat tapasyasi, yat karoshi yad

³ Gita

aśnāsi. Demanding nothing for ourselves, but receiving for Him all that He wills to give us through the action of others or our own, we are to refer them all to Him again for His acceptance. Even what we do, we are to do not for our sake, but for God's sake, not for our personal & self-regarding aims, but for what we see, rightly or wrongly, in the light we have, to be His aim in us, concentrating on the action, not reaching out to its fruit. This rule of life is the greatest we are capable of while still at work in the ignorance and moving subject to the dualities; but if we wish to go beyond, we must proceed to a yet more unsparing sacrifice. The Gita begins with the sacrifice to God of our desires and the fruits of our action; but it goes on to the giving up *into* God, mayi sannyasya, of action itself and even the least internal or external movement towards action, sarvarambhah; it insists, above all & to the end, on the supreme renunciation of the ego-sense, the ahankara, as the one all-satisfying and divine sacrifice demanded by the ego-transcendent Universal Being from the ego-besieged and ego-ridden human soul. We must, in this consummation, fall perfectly passive in mind, life & body & allow the Divine Power to use them from above, as a man uses a machine, wields a sword or hurls a ball to its mark. These formulae of the Gita are, also, the true sense of the inner sacrifice imposed on the seeker by the Isha Upanishad. It is the sacrifice of the lower or motional parts of our being to the higher or divine part — the offering of jagat into the Lord.

The renunciation demanded of us is an inner sacrifice, effected in the surrender to God of all desire and attachment, of all self-will and self-action, and of all ego-sense and separate personality. Desire & attachment to possessions have to be cast & dissolved into the mould of a desireless and all-possessing bliss (Ananda or Jana); self-will & self-action cast & dissolved into the mould of a divine action of the universal Shakti or World Force (Chit or Tapas) which shall use the mind, body and life as a passive, obedient and perfected instrument; ego-sense cast and dissolved into the mould of divine & undivided being (Sat) which regards itself as one in all things & the multiplicity of minds, lives & bodies as only a varied motion of its own divine

unity. This divine being, force & bliss constitute the higher part of man's being centred in the principle of Ananda; they represent the direct, unveiled and unperverted action of the free & blissful Sacchidananda. To this last and supreme Immortality (Amrita) these lower mortal parts of man must be given up as the victims of a high & ultimate spiritual sacrifice in the upward movement of world-Nature.

Renunciation once determined for us in its spirit & type, we arrive naturally at the other term of this great reconciliation, the enjoyment pointed at in bhunjitháh. To understand the place and relation of the Seer's gospel of divine immortality & bliss in the thought and development of Hinduism, we must return for a moment to the fundamental Hindu idea of sacrifice. For it is in the light of this original idea of sacrifice that we must understand the ancient transition from Veda to Vedanta. Sacrifice to the gods was from the earliest times the central idea of the Hindu religion, under the name of renunciation, sacrifice to God still remains its whole spirit and teaching. The gods, Masters of natural forces, act in Nature under God in the motional being of the Master of all and distribute their energies to individual movements and creatures; from their store, the individual receives whatever he possesses of capacities, desires & enjoyments; at their hands he must seek whatever, not possessing, he desires firmly to acquire. But the principle of Nature, that great motion and complex rhythm, stands in the harmony & interdependence of the individual & general, jagatyam jagat; the individual, therefore, can neither gain what he has not nor keep what he has except by sacrifice of his personal energies & possessions into the world-substance & the world-energies. By expenditure of what he has, offering it into the general stream of the corresponding force or substance in the perpetual flux and movement of Nature, he is kept safe by the gods or he increases. If it is my purpose to improve my muscular strength, I must first consent to an output, an expenditure in exercise of the strength I already have, allowing it to escape as energy into the world-sum of energy, sacrificing to Vayu and Prithivi; I must accept temporary loss of power, weariness and exhaustion, losing a little that I may gain

more; then, what I have given is taken up by the deities in the Jagati and, if the sacrifice has been properly conducted, returned increased, doubled, trebled or even decupled to the giver. As it is in our physical, so it is in our mental & emotional being. I must pour love from myself in feeling & action into the world-stream of love, sacrificing to Mitra; then only what I have given may return to me increased, doubled, trebled, decupled in the love and affection of others or in my own enlarged capacity for loving. The rule, being fundamental & universal, holds good with all internal & external possessions and holdings, the dhanani of the Rigveda. "Foster by sacrifice the gods," says the Gita, "and let those gods foster you; fostering each other ye shall attain the supreme good,— param sreyah." Attaining the supreme good we pass beyond the gods and come to God; we leave Veda to arrive at Vedanta or, rather, fulfil Veda in Vedanta. Then we are no longer content to sacrifice this or that possession, giving a share, making reservations, but offer unreservedly & unconditionally the supreme sacrifice, yielding up on the highest of all altars all that we are and possess; we give no longer to Agni, Indra, Varuna or Mitra, but to the supreme & universal Lord, bhoktáram yajnatapasám. Then, too, we receive in return not wealth, nor cattle nor horses nor lands nor empire, not joys nor powers nor brilliances nor capacities, but God Himself & the world with all these things in them as trifles and playthings for the soul to enjoy as God enjoys, possessing them and yet not possessing, wholly unbound by possession.

Renunciation of some kind, voluntary or involuntary, is the condition of all growth and all existence; by expenditure acquisition, by sacrifice security, by renunciation enjoyment, this is God's universal law of sacrifice. The gods who are Powers of Nature, receiving our due sacrifice, give us the partial gains & enjoyments which come within their jurisdiction; God, receiving our due sacrifice, gives us Himself and in Himself everything that exists in Nature or beyond it.

There is a common agreement in the different schools of Hinduism that to the man who has renounced, God gives Himself in return for his renunciation; our difficulty has been

to settle among our many conflicting conceptions what that is in soul existence which God intends to reveal as His very self and to what, therefore, we are called to aspire. The ascetic sees Him in impersonal Being and actionless peace; he believes therefore that we receive in return for renunciation release from phenomena and the bliss of the unconditioned Brahman. The devotee sees Him in divine Personality; he hopes to get, in return for what he offers, Shiva or Rama, Krishna or Kali. Some aspire to the Pure & Bright Stillness beyond, others like the Tantriks, seeing Him as Universal Power, attempt to acquire & feel Him here in a superior & divine power and mastery, yet others would have God in Himself and yet God playing also in His garden of the universe. The reason of these differences lies in our human variation of temperament—for we live in heart and temperament—and therefore of knowledge and approach—for with us mental being seated in the heart temperament determines our knowledge & action,—variations produced by the differently distributed motion in us of Prakriti, of Jagati, of the process of our world-nature. According to our nature we seek God. It is always, in fact, by some principle in Avidya itself that we are moved to exceed Avidya. Even as a man approaches me, says the Gita, precisely in that spirit & in that way I accept and possess him. Ye yathá mám prapadyante táns tathaiva bhajámyaham. The spirit in which the Seer would have us approach the Lord, is an all-embracing universality and the way he chooses for us is to embrace the all-blissful One in the world and in transcendence of the world, as the unity and as the multiplicity, through Vidya & through Avidya, in the Spirit and in the world, by God above Nature and by Nature in God. Ishwara, Brahman, the Life-principle Matariswan, the Bright and Pure Stillness, the supreme & absolute Personality, the triple Purusha, Surya, Sachchidananda, Agni,—successively he presents to us in the course of his thought these names, aspects or images of the Eternal, not that we may accept one and exclude others, but for our soul experience to embrace them all in a multiple & blissful unity. Everywhere he reconciles, everywhere he includes, seeking to understand and not to divide. In this

world he gives us the supreme felicity and in that world our joy shall not be other. Why should we refuse to God in ourselves any form of His divine sweetness? There is no dragon watching at the gates of God to deny to us any of the fruits of Paradise; the law of divisibility and opposition ceases when we have shaken from our necks His leaden yoke of Avidya. But in these initial couplets the Seer is insisting especially on a divine life in this world, iha, as the necessary basis of the fulfilment which is held in store for us at the end of the utter & perfect sacrifice. All that we have renounced to Him, action and struggle, thought and knowledge, the rose and the breeze and the moonlight, bird and beast & human being, man and woman and children and land and houses and gold and silver and oxen and raiment, books and poetry and learning and science, mind, body and life are, when renounced, to become the material, instrument and medium of a divine enjoyment, objectively, by all that he keeps for us or gives back to us physically during and after the discipline of renunciation, subjectively, by the whole universe and all that it contains, possessed through a man's senses so far as God in him accepts their action and in a man's soul by sympathy and identity with all beings & with universal Nature. Still, these things will always remain the instrument of enjoyment; the object of the enjoyment, the true object of all bhoga, for the liberated soul, is God,—not Nature, although God in Nature & through Nature. We shall enjoy God in & through His universal manifestation, but always God and never the universe falsely experienced as a thing existent & enjoyable for its own sake, apart from God and different from Him.

The possession of God in the world-transcending height of His being does not exclude possession of God in His world-containing wideness. To the liberated soul there is no high and base, but only one equal divine bliss and perfection.

In the ideal of the Seer we do not cast away life and mind and body into an eternal sleep; removal from universe is not prescribed as a necessary condition before we can take possession of the supreme & ineffable bliss of the Brahman. The Seer asserts on the contrary a liberated bliss in the world and

in human life. "He whose Self has become all existences, how shall he be deluded, whence shall he have grief", so rings his cry of triumphant freedom; it does not run "He whose Self is dead to the knowledge of all becomings". The most powerful support and argument of purely ascetic philosophies is the Buddhistic idea, foreign to Vedic Hinduism, that true freedom and true bliss are impossible in the universe and can only become possible if we escape out of it into some world-shunning secrecy of being, whether Nihil or Nirvana. The soul handling objects, it is thought, must be attracted to them; or else the freedom from attraction is so difficult and so rare that it is presumptuous to reckon on it as a practical possibility; in Samadhi the spirit is blissful & free, awaking from Samadhi it is bound to feel or be always susceptible to touches of limitation and of grief; the duality of pain & grief is an irrevocable law of the universe and where there is bliss in the world, there must also be as its companion grief in the world, for unmixed bliss is only possible where mind and its laws are excluded. These are the fundamental ideas of Asceticism and if they were true with this scope and this force, the very foundations of the thought in the Isha Upanishad would be vitiated and annulled; but, although generally held and insisted on by numbers of great saints and lofty thinkers, they are an instance of partial truths, perfectly valid, even perfectly general in their own province, carried in practice beyond their province and so by a false extension becoming, like all exaggerated truths, the foundation of error. They are perfectly true in the field where they apply but they apply only in the limits of mind & so long as the soul is subjected in the world to mind and its processes. But it is not a fact that mind is the supreme principle in the world and its movement & processes the dominant & ineffugable motion and process of the universe. It is only true that mind is the present centre of humanity & to humanity therefore seems, falsely, the supreme principle of the active universe. It is no doubt extremely difficult, without divine aid, for man to escape from mind & living in the world, yet to remain superior to the mental duality of joy & grief, pleasure & pain, which is the

ordinary law of our mundane existence. The difficulty of the escape is the justification of Sannyasa. But the escape, though difficult, is not only possible, it is the one real road to our self-fulfilment as the human type of God-existence upon this earth, evam twayi nányatheto'sti. It is possible because the supreme principle and movement of the universe is not mind; the supreme principle is Sat working out through Chit in Ananda, Infinite Being working out through Infinite Force in Infinite Beatitude. The Upanishads demand of us, and not only the Isha but the Taittiriya & other Upanishads, not to dwell in mind untouched by its laws, which would be a laborious & improbable achievement, but to raise ourselves beyond mind through Surya or pure Idea into Ananda and live centred in that principle. From this superior centre, seated free, imperial, Swarat, Samrat, in the mountain citadel of our existence, we can, remaining in the universe, yet govern our use of a subject and no longer rebellious mind, life & body by the process and laws of our blissful spirit and our divine Nature. The superior movement then controls and uses the lower for its own purposes. But since the principle of the superior movement is unmixed bliss, our purposes and activities also must be purposes & activities of unmixed bliss. If we are released only on the levels of mind, then indeed sleep of Samadhi is our one safe & perfect state, for coming out of that sure refuge & retreat, we are again naked in mind and exposed to the efforts of mind to recover its natural supremacy in its own kingdom. Rising to Ananda, liberated in Ananda, living in Ananda, there is no such peril. The kingdom of heaven imposes the will of God on the kingdom of earth, the parardha takes possession of the aparardha, Sacchidananda seizes & revels in the ecstasies of a liberated Manas, Prana and Annam. In opposition, therefore, to the Buddhistic declaration of the omnipresence of grief & pain outside Nirvana, we have in the Vedanta the soul's declaration of its ultimate & eternal independence:—

To live in the world is not necessarily to live in the duality of grief and joy. The soul seated in Ananda, even though it lives the life of the universe, possesses as its dominant principle unmixed

bliss and can use in this world & this human life mind, life & body, sarvam idam, as instruments of God-enjoyment without enduring the dominion of their dualities.

For the rest, these truths are a matter of experience. Those who have attempted to enjoy the universe before renunciation and, escaping from that error & delusion, have afterwards enjoyed God in the universe after renunciation, know, know with a silent & inexpressible rapture, the alteration & seizing revolution, the immense and ineffable change, the seated sublimity and all-penetrating intensity of that bliss of the Brahman towards which the Upanishad points our faltering and doubt-besieged footsteps. Before renunciation we enjoyed Nature ignorantly as a thing in itself and we worshipped mind and the things of the mind, followed after body and the things of the body, indulged in life and the things of the life; after renunciation we enjoy with knowledge, not the rose, but God in colour and petal and perfume, not a poem but God in the beauty of sound and the beauty of words, not food, but God in taste and in vital satisfaction. That which before renunciation was pleasure, has become after renunciation bliss; pleasure which was transient, mutable and fading, has become bliss lasting and inalienable; pleasure which was uncertain, because dependent on circumstances & objects, has become bliss self-existent and secure; pleasure which was uneven, strained towards preferences, balanced by dislikes, has become bliss equal and universal; pleasure which was even at its highest impure and haunted, held with difficulty and insecurely against a background of loss, deficiency and pain, has become bliss pure, satisfying and perfect as God Himself. Before renunciation we besought objects to yield us a petty joy we did not ourselves possess; after renunciation we perceive in the object & receive from it the immeasurable bliss eternally seated in ourselves. Before renunciation, we enjoyed with desire, seeking and effort; after renunciation we enjoy desirelessly, not in the satisfaction of desire, but in eternal possession, not as *anish*, struggling to gain possession of what does not belong to us, but as *ish*, already possessing all that the world contains. Before renunciation we enjoyed, with egoism, only what the greedy

but easily tired mind and senses could grasp, possessing for ourselves and that too only with our own lame, limited and selfish enjoyment; after renunciation we enjoy, without ego-sense, all that we outwardly possess, all that others possess and all that none but God possesses, and we enjoy it not only with our own enjoyment but with the individual and collective enjoyment of all our fellow beings animate and inanimate and with the divine enjoyment of God in the universe. Finally, we enjoyed before renunciation many separate things all of a limited pleasurableness; after renunciation we enjoy one thing in its multiplicity which is all-blissful everywhere. Such is the enjoyment in the world to which the Seer points us in the word, bhunjítháh; and we have always in addition,—for that transcendence is the condition of this secure universality,—the bliss of the Lord's pure being in His self-existence beyond and above the motion of the universe.

Chapter III

The Golden Rule of Life—
Desire, Egoism and Possession

Ma gridhah kasyaswid dhanam.

Immediately after this great fundamental reconciliation, the Seer proceeds to a phrase which under a form of familiar commonness conceals an immoderate wealth of spiritual suggestion. "Lust not after any man's possession." *Má gridhah kasyaswid dhanam.*

We seem to have stumbled out of deep and strange waters into a very familiar shallow. Read superficially and without an eye to the words that precede or to the whole serried thought of the Upanishad, this closing cadence of the Seer's opening sloka would suggest only a commonplace ethical suggestion identical in form & spirit with the last of the Mosaic commandments,— just as read superficially and apart from the coherent & interwoven thought of the Upanishad *tyaktena bhunjitháh* need not go beyond a rule of moral self-discipline in which the aim of the Epicurean finds itself married to the method of the Stoic. But the Upanishads are never, like Greek epic & Jewish scripture, simply ethical in their intention. Their transcendence of the ethical plane is part of their profounder observation of life & soul-experience. The Greeks sought always for a rule of moral training & self-discipline; the Mosaic Law imposed always a rule of outward conduct; and both aimed at an ethical balance of mind or an ethical balance of action; but the Vedanta rejects all mere balancing and arrangement. The Vedic thinkers went straight towards the soul and an inner rebirth. A radical change of outlook on life was their motive force for the change, if any, of outward conduct; a complete revolution & renovation of the soul was its demand on the inner life of man. Troubling themselves little with the management of conduct & feeling always for the springs of life & action, they left the care of ethics to other Shastras; neglecting comparatively the regulation of temperament, they

searched for that within from which temperament proceeds and by which it can be automatically regulated. When once that secret spring is touched, when once the soul is found & the lord of the temple manifests himself, ethics with its outer intellectual & emotional sanctions becomes superfluous; the outward life then flows spontaneously out of the sweetness, power & fullness of a supreme inner change. To the Vedantin the ethical stage is only important as a preliminary clearing in the jungle of desires & passions which prevents us from even attempting seriously to find our way through to the temple of the Lord.

Is there here the indication of such a preliminary ethical self-preparation? No; for it is the constant literary principle of these inspired writings that each phrase in Veda, as in the motion of the universe itself, lives not to itself but goes back to all that has gone before and reaches out to all that is coming; all moreover obey an unexpressed central unity which once grasped, illumines the whole text, but without which these writings break up into a mass of disconnected thoughts. In this Upanishad the one central thought is multiplicity of existence unified and freed from the sense of the dividing ego. The Seer does not allow himself for a moment either to ignore or to deny the multiple existences of the universe, but neither will he for a moment allow us to forget that all these many are really one, all this variety exists in its own unity, Jagat in Ish, the moving Brahman in the stillness, sarvabutani in Atman, the many Purushas in the One. The present phrase, understood as an ordinary ethical rule, would be a contradiction and not an affirmation of the one ever-present and unifying thought of the Isha Upanishad. It would provide us with a preliminary rule of life founded upon the acceptance & not the denial of the dividing ego-sense. The ethical rule against covetousness is an ordinary human rule and stands on a strong affirmation of the ego-sense & it has no meaning in a gospel of divine life & universal consciousness. The phrase can only stand here, not as an ethical rule, but a rule of the inner life, tending not to the confirmation but to the annulment of the ego.

The Mosaic commandment is consistent in itself & with the spirit of the Decalogue. These Judaic moral Ten Tables start from

an uncompromising dualism; their conception of righteousness is the straight road decreed for our walking by a personal Deity as different from His ephemeral creatures as the great eternal ocean from the soon-dried & inconsiderable puddles in a rainswept highway. The particular prohibition of covetousness stands partly on the idea of the morally seemly, the *epieikes* of the Greeks; much more (and in the Jewish temperament entirely) it rests on the stronger & more mechanical conception of legal justice between man and man, the Greek *dikaion*. In either case, it proceeds, like all ethics, from an original acceptance of the egoistic outlook on the universe; starting from the symbols I and thou, mine and thine, its aim and business is not to get rid of the ego-sense but to regulate and check those of its fierce and disorderly movements which poison individual peace and disturb social well-being. Even altruistic ethics starts from this fundamental recognition of egoism. Except in the Vedantised teachings of the Buddha, it does not seek to annul,—rather altruism lives & satisfies itself by an inverse satisfaction of the ego. But the whole aim and spirit of the Vedanta is to annul, to kill, to root out the ego-sense. Similarly ordinary ethics seeks to check, scold and limit desire, as an unruly servant, but would shrink from killing it as an enemy. We are, indeed, allowed by some systems to extend and pasture this eternal hunger, others permit us to satisfy it under severe restrictions; but always we must satisfy desire ethically, with justice & decency, with the sense of measure of the Greeks, avoiding the *aischron*, the *adikon*, the perversion, or with the religious enthusiasm of the Jews, shunning offence to the Lord of Righteousness. We must indulge it [in] what we possess or can lawfully acquire, our own wives, not the wives of others, our own wealth, not others' gold and silver and horses and cattle. But in Vedanta, it is wholly improbable that we should have any such ethical & social preaching of the *epieikes* & the *dikaion*. The principle of the Vedanta is to make no compromise with the inner enemy, but rather merciless war ending in its utter extinction, *jahi shatrum durásadam*.

In this Upanishad we have just had a tremendous and sweeping exclusion of all desire, an inexorable demand to give up

the whole world spiritually to the Lord. It is incredible that immediately, without transition, warning or explanation of his purpose the Seer, this great master of language & its effects, should immediately weaken his thought & hamstring the great impulse he has created by the intrusion of a shallow and minor injunction, that he should say in effect, "Seeing God everywhere, abandon the whole world in Spirit that thou mayst enjoy the whole of divine existence,—but take care not to lust after other people's property." Such an interjection would be either a grotesquely unneeded warning to a soul free from desire and already enjoying the whole world in a free and pure satisfaction, or the suggestion of a preliminary discipline so awkwardly introduced as to break the effect of the great rule towards which it was intended to lead. We could have understood if the Seer had written, reversing the order of the clauses, "Covet not any man's possession, nay, abandon the whole world and all it contains", or even, though this would be contrary to his effective & cumulative style, "Abandon the whole world &, first of all, abandon the desire for other men's possessions." But he could not have written as it must stand now without link or clue; "Abandoning the whole world, enjoy by the whole world; covet not any man's possession." Even if permissible in any other style, such a vicious stumble is impossible to the divine Muse. The moment we read the line in the light of the whole structure & thought of the Upanishad, the difficulty at once vanishes, the real meaning of the clause emerges. Like all the others it is a smooth and clear surface covering many waters. In the careful structure of the Upanishad it starts naturally from the opening Ishá vásyam and its conclusion tyaktena bhunjítháḥ and points forward to átmaivábhút sarvabhútáni of the seventh couplet.⁴

Thus understood in its right place as a link between this

⁴ I have written on this point at a perhaps disproportionate length as an example of the great care necessary in studying the Upanishads. It is not enough to have a correct verbal rendering, everything must be understood in the spirit of the entire unity, not as a separate text apart from its setting. It is only by a strict adherence to this rule that we can really get the secret of the Upanishads.

starting point and the yet deferred conclusion, the thought of the Seer is seen, as he intended it, perfectly simple & straightforward in substance, admirably rich in suggestion. “All forms are various dwelling-places of one self; sorrow proceeds out of desire and egoism contradicting this truth of oneness, ekatwam, from the consequent lust of possession, from the sense that he is he, I am I, his is not mine, the sense that others are kaschid anyah and objects kasyaswid dhanam. This sorrow misbegotten of desire disappears if the mind’s outlook on world can be remoulded in a form of the truth of things & not their false appearance, if it can be made to see that these others, anye, are not at all others, but entirely myself in the world-supporting reality, &, here in world, becomings of myself. Atmaivábhút sarvabhútáni. The decisive mental step to the true perception and practical sign of the true realisation is the selfless purity of the once impure & desiring heart when, possessing by abandonment of desire and by realisation of the one Inhabitant in all persons & bodies,— for person is only persona, a mask, a dramatic role of the sole & universal Personality,— it has ceased to hunger & thirst after what others have in their keeping from the false idea that they are different from myself and their possessions are not already my possessions.” The difference of ideas between the Jew & the Indian becomes at once palpable. “Lust not after thy neighbour’s goods,” says the Jewish lawgiver in effect, “for he is he, thou thou, and thou hast no righteous claim to another man’s possessions.” “Lust not after thy neighbour’s possessions,” cries the Vedantic Seer, “for he is not thy neighbour other than thou, he is thyself & in him it is thy own self that already possesses. Thou hast no need for this desire & this lust.” The object of the injunction is not to accept right ego-sense & discourage greed as wrong ego-sense, but to persuade & lead us to denial of the whole attitude of egoism implied in the lusting after possessions which this particular mind & body do not in the apparent movement of Nature possess, but which are so possessed by us in another mind & body, another habitation of our indwelling Self. In the words of men the letter is nothing. It is the spirit, the supporting stress of thought & the

temperament behind which give to the spoken symbol its import & its effect.

Let me observe in passing, for the observation is needed in these days of the siege of our religion and philosophy by inadequate European conceptions, that we have here the key to an important difference between Vedantic & Western thought, which is not to the discredit of our great national Scripture. We need not be too sensitive to the reproach that the Vedanta is non-ethical or too eager to vindicate an ethical intention for its teachings. Non-ethical may be either infra-ethical or supra-ethical. Let us beware lest in vindicating the claim of Vedanta to an European eminence & elevation, we bring it down from its own heaven touching domain upon its Asiatic and Himalayan mountain tops. Ancient Indian thought and life regularised in teaching a practical difference which the West admits in practice and denies in theory; it admitted three distinct standards determinant of conduct, the customary law, ethical rule and spiritual state; the mass of our pre-classical literature with its greatness of law & custom, its rich abundance & delicacy of moral aspiration & perfection & its great spiritual altitude faithfully reflects this triple recognition. But in the many provinces, the varying levels of human conduct the Vedanta seeks always the summits; its consistent search is for spiritual truth and spiritual standards. Seeking always that which exceeds & includes the lower life, it exceeded also the limits of ethics, finding Brahman in the all & not in the part, anyatra dharmád anyatrádharmát, otherwhere than in virtue and otherwhere than in unrighteousness, & it fixed its eyes only on so much of conduct as helps us to realise the universality of God, the divine oneness of mankind & the unity of all existences. Avoiding these modern pitfalls, we find the full and profound sense of this final phrase disengaging itself naturally by the light of its surroundings.

In this path the cessation from all lusting after things as the possessions of others is the sign of the dissolution of ego in the heart; for it proceeds from the heart's recognition of the truth that one Lord inhabits all bodies. It shows that the truth is no longer only an idea in the intellect but is being lived in the whole

being. The possessions of the one and only Self in one body are also his possessions in all other bodies; what the self in Shyâma owns, that the self in Râma possesses.

The exhortation to freedom from the desire of the heart, Ma gridhah, is the answer to all practical difficulties that may arise from the initial teaching of the Seer. Enjoyment by the world precludes physical abandonment of the world; yet physical abandonment is what we usually contemplate when we use the term renunciation; for although we are mental beings, yet ours is a mentality emmeshed in matter and impelled by that physical Maya to give a materialised or sensible value and a material expression to all our mental conceptions. We hardly admit a truth until we see it cloaked in an outward form or in an outward event & action. What then is this new rule of abandonment which impels not to denial and cessation of world-life, but to a free and perfect enjoyment? We have, at once, the answer in this phrase of the Seer, Ma gridhah. Thou shalt not have the greed of desire in thy heart,—that is the practical effect of the call to renunciation. Mental beings, souls throned in mind, it is in mind our centre not in matter which is to us a mere case, circumference and result of mind, that we should seek our secret of bondage and our means of deliverance. All outward material action is in itself Maya, a thing without self-existent reality. Action is effected only as the outflow and physical symbol of mind; it has no inherent moral or spiritual value, but is capable only of bearing such values as are put on it by the manomaya purusha, the spirit centred and veiled in mind. Humanity still imprisoned in its surroundings, servilely reflects in its mind the habitual impact of outward things, the bahya-sparshah, & gives to them a fixed & conventional mental value. The more humanity moves towards freedom & perfection, the more it will live in the mind itself, use outward circumstances of life & matter only as symbols of a free mental existence & fix their values by the mentality they express and not by some conventional standard determined by the action itself in its outward appearances. Therefore tyaga, the inner renunciation, is preferable to sannyasa, the physical renunciation; for the latter

takes resignedly account of the present weakness of humanity and its false preoccupation with body and helps indeed that weakness to pass out from itself by the extinction of active existence, freeing us from life, but not freeing life for us; but the inner renunciation leads us through our real nature as mental beings, takes account of our strength and teaches us to insist upon it and realise its perfection in God. Sannyasa is a rapid road of escape for our self-accepted weakness; tyaga is a path of fulfilment, the strait and narrow road, for our slowly-realised divine strength. By this road, supathá, Agni Vaisvanara, God's pure force in man, leads us to our felicity. Nayati ráye asmán.

Bodily action is useful as a pressure on the materialised mind, but the better way is to act from within outwards, not from outwards within. To the man who lives the inner life, mind-state is all-important, bodily action only a variable symbol or a theatrical demonstration. Great spirits have yearned after Santryasa as a symbol of inner renunciation and freedom; but the truth that has to be symbolised is selflessness in God, not renunciation, which is only a means towards that selflessness.

When desire is driven from the heart, the only necessary renunciation is already accomplished; all other self-mortification is, then, a superfluous austerity which may be severely lofty or even gracious, but can no longer be serviceable for the perfect aim of human existence.

The main intellectual difficulties opposed to the practice of renunciation disappear before this but there is also a more concrete obstacle. We have this high doctrine that the soul in itself is free and God, but bound and divided in world-motion; in the sense of division from God and its fellows it is bound and by its realisation of oneness with God and all beings it recovers its freedom,—ekatwam anupashyatah. But in practice some obscure obstacle interposes itself and baffles of their expected results the intellectual recognition and the emotional surge towards unity. Mankind has constantly been groping for this obscure and elusive knot of our bondage; but though it plucks at this twist and loosens that complexity, it reaches no better result than a temporary easing of the strings of that disastrous net in which the

world-Magician has caught our labouring minds. In the midst of our unprofitable labour we hear the inspired voice and receive the illuminating word of the Vedantic Seer, “Má gridhah. Desire founded on egoism is the knot of your bondage; cut through that complexity, undo that twist and you are free.” All other loosening of knots is a fumbling search or an incidental labour; desire and egoism slain, every other knot is of itself dissolved and collapses. We have seen that by our very nature as human beings, the knot must be hidden somewhere in our minds, and, particularly, it should be sought in the emotional part of our minds. For where the centre of our active being is, there must be the knot of our bondage, and there also must we seek for the secret of its unloosing. If we had been material beings or centred in matter, the knot would have been in some material habit and the release dependent on a material adjustment; for the individual, perhaps, Hathayoga and the conquest of the body by the physically effective Will would have been the one effective instrument. If we had been vital beings or centred in vitality, the knot would have been some vital obstruction and the release dependent on a vital adjustment; perhaps, then, Pranayama and the conquest by the vitally effective Will of the dualities which affect the nervous life and energy of man would rather have been the true instrument of our freedom. But our centre is mind and especially that part of mind which is sensational in its reaction to outward things & emotional in its valuation of them & in its moral response. We live in that subtle heart in us which taking up into itself the lower bodily and nervous impacts turns them into objects and media of dislike and desire, pleasure and pain and bringing down into itself the higher formations of thought and reason makes them subservient to the same imperative emotional & sensational dualism. We get therefore this law of disciplinary practice:—

Although ego-sense is the cause of the soul's bondage, yet the knot of the bondage in man is in the subtle heart where his active being is centred and it consists in the emotional egoism of desire. To get rid of ego-sense, we must, practically, labour to get rid of desire, for until that liberation is accomplished, the mere intellectual rejection of ego-sense, from which we have to start,

cannot be perfectly operative upon the lower mentality and the vital and bodily existence.

Desire, the cause of our pain, has itself its cause or rather its secret essence in the ego-sense transferred from the discriminating mind to the responsive heart. Vedantic psychology sums up the motion of the Jagati in our mentality,—the complex thing we call mind,—in a quadruple knot;—the nodus of sense-forming mind reactive to outward impacts, the nodus of discriminating mind receptive and critical of these reactions, the nodus of responsive & formative heart or temperamental mind setting in motion waves of emotional or temperamental consciousness which first forms the stuff of the others & shapes itself out as their reaction and their criticism, the nodus of ego-sense which centralises & relates to one mental self-idea all these functionings;—buddhi, manas, chitta, ahankara. Formed in the discriminating mind, egoism enslaves its creator & descends to dominate the heart. “I am I” cries the discriminating mind, enslaved by egoism, “he is he; mine is mine & not his; his is his & so long as I cannot have or take, I can never regard it as mine.” Thus discriminative ego shuts up man in his one bodily habitation and prevents him from enjoying his proper estate, the rich universe, rájyam samriddham, full of beautiful and noble possessions. Egoistic reason turns man into a sort of monomaniac emperor self-confined & limited who fancies himself a prisoner in his single palace, although, really, & if he chose, the wide earth is freely his and all that it contains. The heart accepts from the discriminating mind this false limitation & delusion, undergoes sense of want, sense of confinement, sense of difference & is tortured by their evil emotional results. While desire is our counsellor, pain and suffering must always be our heritage.

We must always remember that if ego were the truth of our being, limitation would not be painful, grief would not be the reaction of our activity. The heart, incapable of excessive yearnings, would rest in its proper circle. But we are capable of excessive yearnings because we ourselves exceed our bodies & circumstances. We are driven by an infinite stress towards

increase, because we are ourselves elastic and really infinite. There is always something within us which is dissatisfied with the Is & gropes for the May be, something which is soon tired of present accomplishment & possession & reaches out for something larger, better or at the lowest new. It is the universe, it is infinity that the hidden Angel within us seeks. The Self within us knows its own infinity & sees itself as the lord of its [creation] [.....] the heart, more passive & therefore more responsive, receives dimly & without understanding — for it is not its function to understand, but to feel — the silent message. Hence it has this striving, this dissatisfaction, this torture of pain, unease & grief. God puts the heart upon the rack of desire so that it may not be satisfied with smallness. He forces it to aspire towards the greatness & infinity of the Spirit, the mahat, brihat, bhúmá. "Nalpena sukham asti, bhumna sukham asti," cries the Upanishad. There is no abiding happiness in the small; happiness comes by the vast & free.

From the strife of this secret truth & this open falsehood desire in the heart contracts its disquieting double nature of wants terribly unlimited & capacities for enjoyment & satisfaction terribly limited & soon exhausted. The Nature-force available to the individual through his ego-centre is normally confined to the small amount of energy necessary for the maintenance of body, life & mind in their habitual & indispensable activities; there is no real provision in this limited nature for the greater things to which man in his expansion aspires. That he must seek from the infinite; that he must acquire from God or the gods, by effort, by sacrifice. The sound, sane, normal, animal man hardly aspires, perhaps would not aspire at all, but for the stress of hunger, the irritation of other men pressing upon his little share of the world & above all the stimulus of that class of beings just above him whom God has partially or entirely awakened to the beyond. But when we strain beyond the normal circle of our energies,— unless we have sought refuge in God first,— then, after the first fervent joy of struggle and partial success, our instruments begin to fail us, the pleasure we are seeking loses itself or turns into pain, pain of effort, pain of longing, pain of

disappointment, pain of incapacity. We advance by suffering, & water the tree of our growth with our blood & tears.

All this pain would be unnecessary, the journey as well as the goal would be Ananda, not suffering but delight, if the ego-sense had not taken possession of our heart & reason. We seek our infinity not only through the finite, but by insisting on the conditions of the finite & exaggerating them. Physical, vital & mental man, acting & striving under these conditions, must always be limited in his realisation and in his best satisfactions never entirely or permanently satisfied. He reaches towards physical, vital and emotional satisfactions which, in the quantity, range or intensity he covets, are & must be forbidden or opposed by his habitual capacities, by his imprisoning & determining environment and by his constant clash with the equally outreaching egoistic desires of other men. He escapes perhaps into mind and seeks an unlimited satisfaction in the enjoyments belonging to that more elastic principle, in art, science or literature; but there too, though freer & better satisfied, he is both fettered by his nerves and body and hedged in by the limitations of the mind itself. The mind in sensational & vital man, incapable of an universal catholicity of possession and enjoyment, measures, divides, erects standards & hedges, rooted customary habits of capacity, fixed associations of enjoyment and fixed associations of failure in enjoyment, till we have built up a whole system of conventional values of pleasant and unpleasant, good and bad, beautiful and ugly, attractive and repellent, and in this mighty forest of conventions, this jungle of dualities move & live; as the forest is unseen for its trees so the fictions of mind,—mind, the purblind stumbler among details,—obscure from us the truth and real bliss of existence. The mentalised body, too, has its own habitual standards of contacts which it can bear and contacts which it cannot or does not wish to bear; therefore we are divided between bodily pleasure and pain and those neutral sensations which conform decidedly to neither of these values. The mentalised nervous energy has, no less, its standards of contacts which it can assimilate and contacts which it wishes to reject, and we have, therefore, to reckon among the links of our

life-chain vital enjoyments & vital sufferings, these also divided by their neutral borders. Even when busy with its own proper experiences, the mind has its standard of contacts with which it can harmonise itself and contacts with which it is at discord or else remains unattracted,—grief, joy and indifference are the resultant emotional responses. Based upon these standards each individual or species has built up its own system of habitual wants & cravings and its own arrangement of accumulated conventions. So has grown the huge tree of desire and its associations, sanskaras as they are termed in our philosophies, which has grown out of the seed of ego-sense in the heart and conceals that seed in every part of its flowerings and branchings. Nor is the uprooting of that upas tree a facile undertaking. For desire does not perish easily by enjoyment; it seeks always to renew enjoyment or go beyond; hardly it perishes by surfeit, for it revives or it seeks other objects; nor is it, either, readily slain by coercion, for it sulks concealed in some invisible den awaiting for a treacherous or violent re-emergence and revenge. To finish with desire altogether by attacking & destroying its seed of ego-sense in the heart, is our only escape from present pain and our only safety from renewed suffering.

Man desires because he is infinite Self seated in the ego-ridden heart. The self is one in being and its nature is bliss; therefore the heart confined by ego seeks to reach out to the unity & to realise the bliss but it seeks, mistakenly, through physical and emotional enjoyment in the jagat. Man desires illimitably because he is universal and illimitable; he cannot satisfy his desires illimitably because egoistic self-division persuades him to limit himself to his individual mind, life and body. Man desires with pain & weeping because by creating habitual wants, conventional dualistic standards of delight and false values of grief and joy, pleasure and pain he has bound himself not to recognise infinite Ananda in the world, not to perceive that to the secret self, because it is unegoistic, all things are delight, even those touches which to the mind and body present themselves falsely & unnecessarily as grief and pain. While he persists in these conditions, desire, failure, discontent & pain must be always his

portion. He must recognise the Truth, for the Truth only can set him free.

Throughout the human ages we seek an escape or a remedy, but all our solutions fail because either they seek escape from the results of ego by affirming the ego or else deny or unduly limit God's purpose in the ego. "Accept your limitations, work and enjoy as perfectly as you may within boundaries," is the creed of a practical Paganism. For a century or two it may serve man's need indifferently, but he is infinite and universal and after a time Nature in him heaves restlessly and strains out towards its element. She accepted the Greek ideal for a century, then rose up and broke it to pieces. "Recognise that you are yourself, others not yourself, and make a rule of life out of the moral consequences of that distinction; desire only that to which you have a right," — this is the solution of ordinary ethics. But still man remains universal; if egoistic vice is the poison of his life, egoistic virtue is not its fulfilment; he breaks back towards sin and unregulated desire or forwards towards something beyond vice and virtue. "Desire what you please, enjoy what you can, but without violating my laws and conventions," is the dyke raised by society; but man is a universal as well as a social unit and the societies he creates are a Procrustean bed which he moulds and remoulds without ever finding his measure. He supports himself on social conventions, laws & equities, but cannot limit himself by his supports. "Desire is sinful; observe duty and the Shastra, discourage & punish enjoyment," is the Puritan's law of self-repression; but duty is only one instinct of our nature and duty satisfied cannot eradicate the need of bliss. Asceticism digs deeper into the truth of things, "Compromise will not do" it cries; "flee utterly from the objects of desire, escape from the field of ego, shun the world." It is an escape, not a solution; God in man may admit escape for the few, but He denies it to the many, for He will not allow His purpose in life and world to be frustrated. Religion digs still deeper: "Replace many desires by one, drive out the desires of this miserable earth by the desire of God and of a future world not besieged by these unsatisfied yearnings." But to postpone the problem to another

life is not to solve it; and to desire God apart from life and not in life is to divide the unity of His being. He will indulge a few in that evasion, but not the mass of mankind; therefore the many have to return with hearts still hungry from the doors of the temple; therefore the successive moulds of religion fail, lose their virtue and are cast away and broken. For Truth is imperative and demands inexorably its satisfaction. And the truth is always this that man is universal being seeking an universal bliss and self-realisation and cannot repose permanently on the wayside, in hedged gardens, or in any imperfect prison whatsoever or bounded resting place.

Universal Ananda & possession is our secret nature, to move towards it till it is reached, God's inexorable impulse in His creation. All solutions that deny or conflict with our nature, can only be palliatives, evasions or individual remedies.

It remains, therefore, to accept the two factors of the problem in their entirety and work out a solution on the basis of a reconciliation. This is the aim of the Seer. By the enjoyment of the whole of universal being in God, the legitimacy of the secret demand in us is recognised, by the renunciation of the attempt to enjoy through egoistic desire and in physical possession, the stumbling-block in the way of fulfilment is distinguished and removed. Mind and heart desire the universe; Self alone can possess it and already possesses it. Therefore the whole secret is to shift our centre from mind and heart to the all-blissful Self, from Jagat to Ish, from our temporary place in Nature besieged by the movement, to our eternal seat in the Godhead possessing, overtopping and controlling the movement. We can take the universe and all it contains into our self and possess it, — nay, we need not take, for it is already there; we have only to reveal it to ourselves; but we cannot take it into our hands or permanently keep any slightest part of it in our personal possession. It is too vast for our grasp and too slippery. We can possess the joy of the whole world physically, mentally & emotionally only by possessing it in the Spirit and through the Spirit; the desire to possess its form instead of its joy, or to claim it for the heart, mind & body in us and not for God

in heart, mind and body, indriyartham and not atmartham, is the capital error of our egoism. The remedy therefore is to get rid of this desire of false possession and ascend into the truth of real possession. Were we to put this in modern language we should say: Man is evolutionary, not evolved; his present state of mentality in heart guided by reason is a transition, not his final nature; in mentality he is tied to desire, in body to limitation and in both to suffering, but when he evolves from the mental into the spiritual being, he will be free from grief because, living in infinite Spirit, he will have done with desire and limitation. In the true Vedantic view of things we must express it otherwise.

Man is Anandamaya Purusha not yet or always manifested, but in course of manifestation. At present he is manomaya, tied to mind and living by desire; he is besieged therefore by pain and limitation, from which, so long as he remains on the mental level, he can only escape entirely by Sannyasa. But if he has the will, he can even in this life and body manifest his true anandamaya self and become in Nature all-possessing & in life all-blissful.

Since then desire is the knot of our bondage and the seat of our sorrow, the seat must be abolished, the knot cut through or loosened. Chidyate hridaya-granthih, says the Upanishad, speaking of the state of liberation, "the knot of the heart is cut asunder." For the heartstrings are the cords that bind us through emotions of love and hate, attraction and repulsion, to the desire-created falsehoods of the world and hold back the soul from rising to its throne in the Vastness, the natural Righteousness of things, the Love, the Bliss. Desire binds to sorrow because it is the sentinel of egoism, the badge of the soul's subjection to its self-created environment and the veil of our absorption in the limited and fleeting. Egoism is the cause of sorrow, but desire is its seat. "I am I, thou art thou, mine is mine, thine is thine"; this false conception of things is the seed of all evil; but its hold would be transitory, if there were not this compelling emotion of desire which adds, "Thou art not I, therefore thee I must control or possess; mine is mine, therefore mine I must cling to and keep; thine is not mine, therefore thine too I must acquire or seize." If this reaching out to our not-selves is inevitable because

our nature is a seeming particularity reaching out to its own real universality, if desire is the sign of the soul emerging out of matter and articulating, with whatever falsehood and stammering, its secret sense that it is the Lord of the universe, yet must it deny & transform itself, if it is to effect its grandiose object. The mighty Asura, Hiranyakashipu or Ravana, Attila, Alexander, Napoleon or Jenghiz, reaching out to possess the whole world physically as the not-self, is the Godhead in man aiming at self-realisation, but a godhead blind and misdirected. The Seer seeks instead to possess in the Spirit and through the Spirit; afterwards what shall be physically possessed or not possessed, is the Lord's business. The first step therefore must always be to get rid definitely of this craving for objects as the not-self in the possession of not-selves. Má gridhah kasyaswid dhanam.

Egoism, seated in the sense of personal difference, is the first element of the heart's error that has to be eliminated. Kasyaswid in the Seer's phrase is absolute and all-embracing like *yat kincha* and *tena*; there can be no limitation, no casuistry, no question of legal right or social justice, no opposition of legitimate claims and illegitimate covetings. Nor does *dhanam* in the Vedic sense include only physical objects, but all possessions, courage, joy, health, fame, position, capacity, genius as well as land, gold, cattle and houses. If we wish to understand the spirit of the rule, we may recall the example of the great Sannyasin who ran after the frightened thief with the vessels dropped in his flight, crying, "Lord, pardon me & take them; I knew not Thou hadst need of them." It is not, indeed, the form of this action that has to be observed and imitated,—the form is a mere symbol,—but the spirit it symbolises; for it breathes of the sense that there is one Lord only in all these habitations and nothing belongs to this body or to that mind or to the mental ego in which their motions are summed and coordinated; but all only to the Lord, one in all bodies. *Ishá vásyam idam sarvam*. It is immaterial whether a particular object belongs physically to myself or another, is kept with me or stolen from me, surrendered by me or recovered by me; that shall be according to the Lord's play and pleasure. Whether He plays in me outwardly the part of a beggar or the

part of a king, of the philanthropist or the conqueror, is not the essential; the essential is that I should know Him in myself and others and live seated in His being and not in my mental ego. Then instead of coveting, enjoying with egoism & sorrowing over loss and disappointment, I shall desire nothing and possess everything in myself, in God and in others, freely, perfectly and universally.

Subjection, seated in the sense of non-possession, is the second element that has to be eliminated. The Lord, the Ish, does not desire, He possesses; desiring objects, we are anish, not lord, pursued by the false dream of non-possession; we see things withheld, things to be acquired, *anaváptam aváptavyam*. Regarding the object as not-myself, we struggle to possess it, against men, against circumstances, against forces of Nature in the midst of which our body is a straw in a whirlwind, our life an insect fluttering candlewards, our mind a bubble in an eddy. All the while, we are in our souls the Lord and possess everything; all this is our estate. Therefore we have to correct our false idea of not having and, shifting our centre from the anish to the Ish, replace temporary acquisition by eternal possession. *Má gridhah dhanam*. Liberated in Ananda, I cannot fail to possess all things in myself inalienably and eternally, without being bound to possession or loss as are those who seek & acquire only with personal possession & through the physical body.

The concentration of our vision on the form of things & in the outward motion of desire is the third element of error that has to be eliminated. We desire and suffer because we mistake form and name for essential existence; we fix on the perishable parts of things, a rose, a piece of gold, an acre of land, a horse, a picture, fame, lordship, reputation. All this is *jagatyám jagat*, myself an object in Nature reaching out to objects in Nature. But the principle of form and name in Nature is motion, separation, flux; therefore my desire & enjoyment in Nature must necessarily be limited, mutable & transient. It is only by shifting the motion of desire to whatever is eternal in the form and name that I can escape from this limitation and this mutability. But the eternal in the form & name of all objects is the eternal in myself

& need not be desired outside myself, or in each thing separately, since it has only to be found in myself to be possessed in all beings & objects. Once more, the universal spiritual possession proves to be all and to include or render immaterial the particular physical possession. Má gridhah kasyaswid dhanam. The treasure you have to seek is in yourself; its possession includes all other possessions. Not only the kingdom of heaven, but all the riches of the earth are within you.

At the same time we must not from this great & vital truth stride forward by a false rigidity of logic into the error of asceticism. Because universal spiritual possession renders immaterial and dispensable the material possession, we must not presume that material possession is worthless & evil. On the contrary by rendering it dispensable and immaterial, it renders it also good and worth having. For so long as the material possession is to our desires & knowledge indispensable for enjoyment, it becomes a bondage & renders life to us a curse & action in the world an evil; but once spiritual possession becomes the root of the matter to us, we become free in the material enjoyment of the object. It no longer binds us, since we no longer either strain after it or suffer by its absence or loss. By that abandoned we enjoy. Even our pursuit of objects becomes a play, the racing or wrestling of boys in a meadow in which there is no evil thought, no harm intended, no possibility of sorrow experienced. Material possession & enjoyment also is intended by God in the human being; for material enjoyment & possession He created this world and made matter its formal basis; but eventually He intends the enjoyment of the object as a symbol of the spirit in the spirit, freely. God in us is the poet, is the musician who throws out some few forms of the infinite world within him into symbols of word or sound, so that the material enjoyment of the sound ceases to be material & becomes a form of spiritual enjoyment and an extension of spirit into matter. I am free at any moment to begin it, at any moment to suspend it; & even when I throw away the temporary outward form of the enjoyment, I keep always the inward eternal form of it in my spirit. So a man who has once seen the Matterhorn rising into the Swiss heavens,

keeps always that for which he was sent by the spirit within him to the toils & perils of Alpine climbing; he keeps in his soul the image of the white and naked peak, hard, firm and detached, a supreme image of matter which seeks to persist by solidity, yet is transient in the end like the rose and the insect, which rises towards but never attains that vaulted azure form above of the unsubstantial, unseen but eternal ether in which & by which it lives. He has done that for which the world of form was created. He has seen & enjoyed God in the symbol of the material object. He has embraced & possessed in his soul through the material organ one becoming of the only & eternal Being.

Chapter IV

The next stride of the Upanishad brings us to one of the greatest and most resounding controversies in Indian metaphysics, the quarrel between pragmatism & quietism, action and inaction, as the goal of man's existence or the condition of his highest self. Here, as always, the Seer solves the problem by a reconciliation of the two opposites. The substance of his teaching may be summed up in three mutually complementary & indispensable formulae, the one fulfilling utterly the pragmatic instinct in man, the other fulfilling utterly his quietistic instinct, & the third reconciling these ancient enemies.

In enjoyment continuance of action, in renunciation continuation of action; for continuance of action is the continuance of God's will in the universe.

The secret Spirit in man is always infinitely calm and free from the touches of its action; the sphere of disturbance is always on the surface only of the ocean of being in the waking consciousness. We should attain in waking mind, too, to that stillness; for without it there can be no freedom in our outward living. We should be perfectly & consciously still in the soul even though a whirlwind of action outwardly.

Since we are in the spirit inalienably free & untouched by action, but in the mind seemingly bound and subject to its stains, our true and only way is not to renounce action but to vindicate that secret spiritual freedom hidden within us as a possession for our outward and active mental consciousness. So shall a man be free, calm & joyous and yet through action accomplish God's purpose in him in the motional universe.

The strife between quietism and pragmatism in philosophy and religion is the intellectual symbol of an unaccomplished harmony in man. The universe and all things in it are the manifest Brahman and in the manifest Brahman there are always two eternal aspects, the aspect of incessant and all-pervading action and energy and the aspect of sempiternal and inalienable stillness and peace. The world of matter in which the mental being called man finds himself dwelling is a sensible manifestation of the principle

of energy supported by the secret and non-manifest presence of the principle of rest and stability. This world is a manifestation of Force which is never at rest and even the apparent stabilities of Nature prove when analysed to be whorls of motion. All here is jagatyám jagat, motion in her that moves. Yet invisibly filling all her motion, supporting her activities and inspiring them, imposing an essential stability on the apparent flux and reflux of her infinite movement we perceive, not discoverable by the analysing reason, but real enough to the synthetic vision and the perceiving mind, the Sthanu, the eternal, imminuable immutable on which & from which all this motion works and in which all its actions result. Because this Eternal & Immutable is there, the parts & constituents of Nature vary, but its sum is unalterable; its appearances are a whirl of mutable forms, its essence is stable and immutable. Nature herself, manifest to the senses & the material reason only as motion and knowable only in the terms of motion, is equally manifest to the poised & considering soul, dhíra, samáhita, as an infinite power of peace & stillness. On a basis of eternal stability the world exists, to the expression of the stable Eternal it feels itself to be proceeding. Imperfection is its apparent starting point & medium, and the essential term of imperfection is mobility; perfection is its aspiration & goal and the essential term of perfection is acquired status. Through imperfection therefore Nature moves, in perfection it rests. But the perfections which are attainable in the movements of Nature are only perfections of the part and therefore their stability is temporary, illusory and precedent to a fresh motion. Only in an infinite perfection can there be an eternal stability. This perfection is a concealed completeness in us which we have to manifest; we are already an infinite perfection in our being, we have to manifest that hidden thing in our becoming. It is towards this infinite perfection that all things in Nature are, consciously or unconsciously, by her inborn tendency and movement irresistibly impelled. The whole problem of existence therefore resolves itself into some harmony or at least some settlement between these two terms. Whatever ignores either term, be it victorious Science or be it supreme Buddhistic Nihilism, has

not understood the terms of the problem and cannot find its solution.

Man dwelling in Nature is compelled towards action and demands rest, lives in imperfection and progresses towards his ungrasped perfection; for action & motion are convertible terms. Action is the motion of man, motion is the action of Nature. All mobility, all change, all play of cause & effect, whether in the mind or the body, whether in animate or inanimate Nature, is therefore karma, action or work,—work is the essential characteristic of Jagati, universal Nature, infinite Force in its universal play. But where then in Nature shall man find rest? Lassitude is not the rest he seeks, sleep is not the rest he seeks; all lassitude, all inertia is still movement but movement of disintegration; sleep is a mass of dreams, sometimes half lit by fugitive and incoherent perceptions, sometimes shut up in a dark shell of bodily unconsciousness. Neither in his bodily nor in his subjective being is a man ever at rest while he lives in this body; what he calls rest is only a change of occupation or a shifting of the action from the waking to the subliminal sleep-consciousness which is always at work behind the waking self. Neither is death the rest he seeks; for death, like sleep, is only a shifting of the habitation, a transference of activity to another field. It is no more rest than the passing of a labourer reaping in a field of corn to work in a field of barley. His temporary & partial realisations of that he seeks are also not man's rest, for from these halting places he moves forwards towards a new activity and a continued journey. Like everything else in Nature man's motion, known to him or unknown, moves towards rest in a perfection which shall be eternal and really stable, not partial and apparently stable. To seek this higher perfection he is eternally moved and if he ever tries at all to rest in the material and temporary, he is soon driven forward again by the inexorable law of his nature to the old imperative endeavour. The frequent attempt of man to escape from his own soul by plunging his head into the running waters of Matter, is one of the recurrent jests, one of the constantly laughable mysteries of the universe. He cannot keep his head down in that alien medium; after some moments he must come

up gasping for the necessary breath of his natural existence.

Since we cannot find a real & ultimate peace in material world, that great flux & whirl of movement, we are driven to look within for a principle of eternal stability. To look within is to look behind the veil of our material life. The very movement supposes that material existence is not everything, that our waking consciousness is not the whole field of our consciousness, but only one outward movement of our being & there is something more in us that is curtained and can be unveiled. This attempt necessitates in practice our acceptance of all subjective experiences as realities, not hallucinations,—as much realities as our experience, which is after all itself subjective, of life & death, of hunger & thirst, of wind & sun & rain. All experience, called by us subjective or called by us objective, corresponds in this view to some reality whether of this world or of another or of something beyond world, to some fact which it represents or misrepresents, and the truth of which has, in either case, to be discovered. Now in this inward looking, as we proceed from experience to yet deeper experience, we do come across a principle of eternal stability, a principle of eternal peace within ourselves which we perceive also to be omnipresent and pervasive of all time & space & to exceed & go beyond all time & all space, a principle we can not only perceive, feel & possess but in which we can live. Hallucination or no hallucination, this is a thing which can be seen, can be grasped, can be sensed by the mind, can be entered into, can be lived. Fact of material existence or no, it is an indubitable fact of spiritual experience and seems for a time to be the only wholly blissful fact, the one thing of which we can say Anandam Brahma, Delight is the eternal Reality, Bliss is Brahman. It is as described in the Upanishad, shukram akáyam avranam asnáviram shuddham apápaviddham, luminous, bodiless, invulnerable, without sinews of force & action, pure, unpenetrated by evil,—whether evil of sin or evil of suffering. The soul in this state has for the world, at first & inalienably, either a peaceful or a joyous indifference,—not a repugnance, but an equal-souled acceptance or an equal-souled rejection of all things in the world which it regards not as binding fact but as

vision of form and name in itself. What has happened when the soul enters into this stable peace & quiet bliss? It has risen out of action into that principle of Brahman manifest in us which is essentially the principle of transcendent self-stability, Sthanu, anejad, fixed and unmoving, in which & by which this world of apparent motion exists. Passing into that inexpressible peace & stillness, we are liberated from the world; we have entered out of the whirling universe of Nature into Brahman's eternal calm.

The whole of our later Hindu philosophy is full of this mighty realisation of the still, self-luminous & inactive Brahman. In those preBuddhistic ascetics, naked of the world and utterly calm, whom the unresting Macedonian found in the Asiatic ultima Thule of his insatiable march, in the all-conquering soul of Buddha, in the victorious intellect of Shankara, in the aspiration and self-fulfilment of a million saints and hermits before and afterwards our race has aspired with an ultimate and limitless sacrifice, with a sovran self-giving, to the boundless Master of peace. Even the latest of the mighty Ones, the great Vivekananda, who was in outward seeming a storm of speech and thought & force and action, was yet reaching always to the rare, remote & icy-pure linga of Amarnath, the still & silent Mahadeva, as his inmost self & goal; in him too the millennial endeavour, the irresistible yearning endured. But is then this sacrifice really the ultimate sacrifice, this yearning the supreme human tendency, this goal the final & unsurpassable resting-place? If so, the gospel of the Isha Upanishad is either a vain message or a halting place for inferior souls. But the Seer will not have it so. Thou shalt act, he says; for thus has God made thee & not otherwise; other is the fruit of Vidya alone & not the supreme gain, the param sreyah. Nor is he in this insistence departing from the highest teaching of Vedanta. For this sacrifice is not really the ultimate sacrifice; the ultimate sacrifice is the renunciation even of mumukshutva, the giving up to God even of the desire for stillness & peace and of the attachment to inaction and the acceptance in its place, no longer with desire, attachment and passion, but with a free soul, of the Lila as well as the Silence, the great eternal play of the Ishwara no

less than his vast eternal peace, the complex and progressively self-fulfilling movement of the Jagati no less than the single & ever-fulfilled immutability of the Ish, the joy of the ejad as well as the calm of the anejad Brahman. That, say the sages, is the final perception of the Vedantin and the supreme consummation of his knowledge when he discovers that there is none bound, none freed, none desiring freedom, but only Brahman variously manifesting, only God in the infinite rest & play of His own Being & becomings,—God & Brahman whom none can bind & who, therefore, even when figured to Himself as man in this apparent cage of a mind and body is still in Himself free —infinitely and for ever. The yearning towards stillness and peace is not then man's supreme tendency; not peace is his goal but divine Ananda of which peace is only the flooring and the threshold. If our ordinary world-existence is that of the Kshara Brahman, which seems to move & change, to be born & grow and perish, & our ordinary soul-state that of the Kshara Purusha who seems to lose himself in the world and to move and change with it, to be born and grow and pass with the mind and body, if the higher existence beyond the mutability of the world is that of the Akshara Brahman, calm, still, unmoving, indifferent, at peace and the soul-state through which we move subjectively to freedom is that of the Akshara Purusha who sits above all this flux & reflux of world-energy at its work, careless of it & untouched by it, *udásínavad ásínah*, yet is not that the last goal nor the unsurpassable resting-place. Beyond & containing the Kshara and the Akshara Brahman we perceive the supreme existence of the Param Brahma which, transcendent, realises in Itself the harmony of [the] stillness & the movement; beyond and containing the Kshara & the Akshara Purusha we arrive at & inhabit the supreme soul-state of the Purushottama, the Para Purusha, Ishwara & Bhagavan, who, transcendent, is the possessor, user and sovran reality of the movement and the eternal self of the stillness. In Him we find our rest and in Him simultaneously we find our active self-fulfilment; for He alone is our complete and utter being. Buddha and Shankara and our immense ascetic impulse of three thousand years are not the last word of our race

nor of humanity; they are the expression of a salutary and violent necessity seizing on man & driving him to abandon utterly the world in its false appearances, by renunciation of all that here we perceive only as motion of Nature, sarvam idam yat kincha jagatyám jagat, they are a divine inspiration and a compelling impulse which will have us by any means and at any cost open our eyes to the truth that not in besotted attachment to the name and form of things, not in the blind, unillumined or falsely-illumined movements of the Jagati, not in that ignorant state of the soul in which it seems to the mind to be anish & not Ish and acts as anish, not Ish, subject and not Lord of the Jagati, is the ultimate fulfilment God intends for us, but there is a stillness beyond the movement which we have to reach, a self-luminousness of the soul in its true peace, freedom & wideness to which we have to aspire. Anyad áhur Avidyayá. But when we have obeyed the impulse, it should, normally, lead us beyond itself; for when we have conquered & transcended the movement, we have yet to surpass and transcend the stillness. Beyond the Kshara & Akshara we rise into the comprehensive infinity of the uttama; lifted above Buddha & Shankara stand Janaka & Krishna, the supreme Yogin & the entire Avatar; they in full action are in entire possession of peace and, conquerors of desire & ego or eternally superior to them, keep their hold on the real and divine bliss of God's triple self-manifestation; they know and exercise the simultaneous & harmonious enjoyment of His transcendent being, His universal Self and His individual play of becoming.

This then is the fundamental position assumed by the Seer, not denying the realisations of the quietistic sages but exceeding the goal of quietism, not preaching attachment to the world, but fulfilling desirelessly & happily, as eternal inhabitant & possessor, God in the world, it asks us to live in God's peace while embracing God's action. Kurvanneveha karmáni; thou shalt verily do actions in the world and not abstain from them; thou shalt not renounce thy human activity among these many kinds of races of thy fellow beings, for God's will in thee is towards action, kurvanneva, not inaction. Evam twayi nányathásti. Therefore, jijívishet shatam samáh, doing all human actions one should

accept the full term of human life, not seek to flee untimely from the sambhuti, the birth & becoming in this world or in the human body, not, like the Nihilist, mistake freedom for a silent nothingness, not blindly & impatiently cut short by physical or spiritual means one's full term of life or full measure of human activity. For those who do these things are, inasmuch as they maim the fullness of God's intended self-fulfilment in man, átmahano janáh, self-slaying births,—not less, but in a way even more so, bhúya iva, than the more numerous herd of beings who by an ignorant attachment to bodily life and outward objects maim that self-fulfilment on its other necessary side. To renounce the condition of self-fulfilment is no less a blind darkness, andham tamas, than to be bewildered by the condition and by attaching oneself to the path, sacrifice the goal. All exclusive knowledge is a form & manner of ignorance; all narrow seeking is a mutilation of our secret and ultimate vastness and infinity.

The emphasis with which the Seer enounces the necessity of life and action, kurvanneva, nányatheto'sti, is demanded from him by the truth of things as a necessary counterpoise to the emphasis with which he has declared the necessity of renunciation and the abandonment of desire in the immediately precedent phrases. For the first natural result of renunciation and the abandonment of desire is a tendency to pure peace and stillness, a disinclination to action as the source of all grief & disturbance and an attachment to inaction as the condition of peace, the sango akarmani of the Gita. Desire, in the ordinary machinery of our nature, is the motive-spring to action; by the touch on this spring the whole machine is set and kept working. Nor does God slacken or destroy that human spring till the machine has written out for Him in dual letters of pleasure & pain, joy & grief, sin & virtue, success and failure, upward evolution and backward sliding, the harmony of His inferior rhythms and His lila as the Ego in the kingdoms of Ignorance. But if the spring is destroyed or if the divine finger no longer falls upon it, then the machine no longer works. Egoistic action, the only activity to which mortal mind is habituated or which it understands, is

impossible without desire or at least without its essential feature, liking and disliking, emotional, sensational and intellectual preference and rejection. Hence, the first result of unsparing inner renunciation, is not only peace & calm, but inaction. If, departing from that calm of inaction, we seek again to act, the force of habit in past Nature associates with that rhythm of action its old triple gamut, ego, desire and suffering. It is the old keys that again are struck, the old painful music that again quivers through our being. This force of habit in past Nature mistaken for ineluctable law of eternal Nature, this obstinately persistent experience mistaken for ultimate and imperative experience is the root and basis of the quietistic gospel which declares action incompatible with peace & joy in Brahman, the false music of an original Illusion, the morbid throb of a great cosmic disease or, in its law, the ordering link of an incoherent series of sensations and to an unreal soul in its whirl of births a rigorous double chain. It is these phantasms that the Seer of the Isha Upanishad has to conjure, — phantasms of an overhasty metaphysical generalisation, imperfect conclusions of the soul escaping from its fever & mistaking the inactive repose of convalescence for its ultimate state of health. Not inaction & inert repose, but a healthful activity is our final state & release. We escape from this fever and struggle in which we live not by the drastic remedy of extinction but by emergence into right form of action and our true life in God. The Seer justifies God in the world to man by declaring His whole purpose in it, His complete action behind & beyond material appearances and our true infinite & cosmic being. The whole error arises from mistaking the root of our suffering and bondage; the doctors of metaphysics have deluded themselves and us with a false diagnosis. This error the Seer sets right in one of [his] brief, mighty and ample phrases, *Na karma lipyate nare, Action cleaveth not to a man.*

Action is not the cause of our bondage; attachment is the cause of our bondage. Inaction binds as much as action, if it is stained with attachment; action binds no more than inaction, if we are free from attachment to our works.

The constant association of ego & desire with action is due

to the relapse of the mind back into its egoistic workings, sahan-kara, sakama. It is this twin relapse which the seeker after perfection has entirely to overcome. We have not either to descend back from non-ego into ego or to take refuge in world-oblivion, but to ascend into God's infinity whose action is eternally unegotic, cosmic & purely self-fulfilling, nirahankara and nishkama. There we shall find & repeat in our own lives at once the utter reality of His self-collected calm and the perfection of His divine force at work, shama & tapas united in an action which is the fulfilment of a mighty Silence expressing itself in waves of power & bliss. That harmony & oneness of divine calm & divine work is man's ultimate experience & the true nature of God active in the world.

This high teaching of the Seer, na karma lipyate nare, seems to contradict violently the great current doctrine of the bondage of Karma which Buddha found as an important but subordinate tenet of our early Vedantic philosophy and brought forward from the second to the first plane of our current metaphysical ideas, impressing it in the process so forcibly on the general Indian mind that it has left a dominant and indelible mark on all our subsequent thinking. In order, therefore, to recover the early thought of Vedanta, it is necessary to understand precisely the intellectual basis of the great Buddhistic doctrine and the point at which it separated from the lesser idea of Karma we find indicated in the Brahmanas and Upanishads. In the world as we see it, there are two fundamental aspects or faces in which existence presents itself to our ultimate mental perceptions, first, self-conscious, self-governing existence, secondly, mechanical Force. According to our view of the mutual relation of these two grand entities will be the nature of our philosophy and our outlook on life. If we hold the self-conscious, self-governing existence to be subordinate to mechanical Force, contained in it and one of its appearances and results, then we are naturally & inevitably driven towards the conception of a tyrannous self-existent Necessity as the true nature & governing force of existence; the self-conscious, self-governing entity dwindles into a side play of that Necessity, governed by it & not really self-governing;

conscious only of its movement by that movement itself and not inherently, it yet mistakenly erects one nodus or one stream of mechanical Nature into the false idea of a self. This is the attitude towards life and existence of Buddhism, of materialistic Rationalism and, with one all-important modification, of Mayavada. On the other hand, if we hold the mechanical Force to be subordinate to the self-conscious, self-governing existence, contained in it and one of its appearances and conscious creations, then we are naturally & inevitably guided towards the conception of an all-constituting Self-Conscious Existence & Power,—Brahman, Ish, popularly conceived as Bhagavan, as God, which is the true being & governing force of existence,—then the apparent mechanical Force reveals itself as no blind or mechanical movement of dead life, that insoluble riddle, that ultra-Eleusinian mystery of modern Rationalism, but the conscious Will of the Sole Existence, its Tapas, its Atmashakti or Chit-Shakti which formulates itself freely into laws and processes—the daivyá adabdhá vratá of the Rigveda—for the ordering of the universe. This is the attitude towards life & existence of the Veda & Upanishads. All other philosophies are halting-places or compromises between these two master-conceptions of existence. The wide divergence between the Vedic & the Buddhistic conceptions of Karma arises as the inevitable result of this direct opposition between their fundamental conceptions of existence itself. Both admit that all active existence is of the nature of energy or work. Vedanta uses the terms Shakti, Force, Power, or Prakriti, Processive Working, for the energy, Karma, Apas, work, or the plural Karmani, works, for the activities & effects of the energy; Buddha ignores Shakti & Prakriti, because he denies the existence of God and soul or of any essential unity, but he sums up the work done in the general singular word Karma and elevates this ever indeterminate, ever increasing sum of work, into a determining conception which governs & constitutes our phenomenal existence. He is bound to this position by his idea of the world as void of unity & existence as consisting of a successive continuity of habitual subjective sensations,—sanskaras,—not an inherent continuity of self-existent Being,—whether that being be

a self-conscious existence or unconscious Force. For Buddha therefore all phenomenal existence is determined by Karma, the sum of previous works; for the Vedanta all phenomenal existence is determined by the working of Shakti or Prakriti, Force of Nature, under the will & choice of Soul, Self or Spirit. This Soul or Spirit, variously termed Deva, self-luminous conscious Being behind the Force of Nature, or Purusha, informing Male inhabitant and possessor of this female executive Energy, or Ishwara, omnipresent Lord of this Will Power, this Shakti formulated in Force of Nature, is the beginning & end, the continent & inhabitant, the source & material of all objects & existences; for this Shakti, Prakriti or Nature produces all its works, objects & happenings only in the Ishwara's self-extended conscious existence. So, the Swetaswatara Upanishad defines Prakriti as *Devátmashaktim swagunair nigúdhám*, Self-Power of the Divinity concealed by its own modes of working. The Self in Vedanta is not only Swayambhu, self-existent; it is Swarat and Samrat, self-governing and world-governing. The Ishwara is master and user of his works, not Himself their slave, creature or instrument. Therefore, while Vedanta accepts the law of works as a subordinate and external instrument of rebirth and prolonged phenomenal existence, a bond unreal in itself & even in its action many-sided, elastic and flexible, Buddhism imposes it as the one cause of rebirth & a mechanical and in its action an ineluctable Necessity & rigid chain; while Vedanta becomes by its fundamental conception the gospel of a recovery by self-realisation in outward consciousness of an always existing freedom & mastery in a world which is secretly anandamaya, all-blissful, Buddhism becomes by its fundamental conception a gospel of escape by self-extinction from a sorrowful, intolerable & otherwise ineffugable bondage.

When we go behind metaphysical conceptions and look at the concrete facts of existence on which they stand, we shall find that the law of Karma is nothing else than a statement of the soul's entire subjection to the law of cause and effect. The idea belongs both to ancient Buddhism and modern Rationalism, but is stated in either philosophy on different grounds. Buddhism

denies the real existence of soul, Rationalism denies it existence altogether, trenchantly & simply. To the modern rationalist the whole world is simply a working out of material Force and mind itself is a particular working of matter. Mind, in this conception, is a sort of automatical electrical apparatus which receives so many various kinds and degrees of shock, beats out mechanical responses & converts them, also mechanically, into so many forms of sound and idea. Ideas themselves must then be entirely material phenomena, although because they do not assume any of the ordinary visible objectual forms of matter, they falsely appear non-material to our consciousness. That consciousness itself is, indeed, only a subjective & quite subordinate activity of matter. Since the machine is automatic, there is no need to suppose the existence of an intelligent operator. Ego is a fiction of the mind, the soul an ignorant theory invented by the uninformed intellect to explain to itself its own existence. What then is the cause of these thinkings, doings, happenings? Obviously, they must be the workings of material Force of which the chief process is a mechanical causality. Previous workings produce as causes by an unchanging, inherent law of action other workings of Force which stand to them as effects; they in their turn join the general sum of causation, helping to produce new effects. The sum of past workings of Force yet in operation,—so far at least as they are concentrated round the object,—are figured for man as heredity, environment, education, past actions and produce a parent state of things or predisposing condition; its present workings, acting as immediate cause, or the sum of immediate causes, produce out of that condition all new states, actions & events, not intentionally but mechanically, by the joint force or interplay of cumulative and special causes. This is the modern materialistic theory of Karma to which, I presume, the majority of modern thinkers would give some kind of assent. Denying the survival of personality after death, it perceives no need to fathom deeper complexities or enter into more subtle problems. The bondage of Law is inexorable but need not greatly trouble us, since death after a short span of activity acts automatically as a release. To ego in the mind, to our falsely self-imagined soul,

even if that ego be so foolish as to chafe and resent the bondage & limitation which is the law of all being, there is always this consolation of a speedy self-extinction in the sum of Matter. But any such resentment is a morbid folly of our intellect. To accept our chains, manipulate, rearrange and use them for our own welfare & that of the race is the gospel of scientific rationalism.

Buddhism views the same set of facts from the other end of thought. Not self-working material force, but a mass of subjective sensations is its reading of the universe. Material existence & action only exist in sensational consciousness and as terms of sensational consciousness; and sensational consciousness only exists as a phenomenon in the void. But behind this sensation-troubled void, there is another state, entity or what you will, Nirvana, in which there is neither this continual birth in phenomena, nor the sensational activity of which continual birth is the nodus. Later Buddhistic schools have supposed Nirvana itself to be void or Nihil, but it does not appear that this was the actual teaching of the Buddha. He left the ultimate metaphysical question aside and fastened only on the practical fact of this bound & troubled sensational existence and that ineffable bliss of release & escape. To escape, that is the goal & end of man. But who escapes? Buddhism denies God, denies the existence of the Atman. There is no one who escapes, only the escape itself. Buddha avoided always the logical difficulty & seized on the practical fact. There is here, undeniably, the phenomenal existence of something which feels, desires, sins & suffers, and the great principle of divine Compassion in him which far more than reason & logic was the master key of his thinking, compelled him only to take hold of this great sufferer, this tormented self-deluder & turn it into that path by which alone it could escape from its own false existence. The path of escape is that moral & intellectual discipline which leads it out of the dual stream of good and bad Karma. To Buddha also the sum of past workings still operative on us is the great preexisting condition which is causal of continued state, action & happenings, past working as cause produces fresh working as effect which again constitutes itself into fresh cause. From this chain there is no escape in

Nature except by perceiving existence as a streaming activity of successive sensational associations or sanskaras and climbing out of the stream by a supreme act of knowledge. For, unlike the modern Rationalist, Buddha's problem was complicated by the belief inherited from Vedic Hinduism that death is not a release; personality survives & in other states, other births, continues to suffer & enjoy, enjoy & suffer through unending Time unless & until the knot is cut, the renunciation of the self-idea envisaged and effected. Then we escape from these running figments of heaven & earth & hell, pleasure & pain, life & death, self & not-self into the shoreless & streamless peace of Nirvana.

Shankara, one of the mightiest of metaphysical intellects, a far greater intellect than the Buddha, though a less mighty soul, built up by his intuitions and reasonings a third position which reconciles Vedic Brahmanava and the Karmavada of Buddhistic rationalism & Rationalistic materialism. Shankara asserts the real existence of the Atman, self or soul which alone exists and is indeed the essential substratum & continent of this phenomenal universe. But he admits with Buddha the absolute rule of Karma, of the law of works, the law of cause & effect over the conscious soul immersed in the phenomenal universe. Is then the soul eternally coerced by its own phenomena, eternally bound to the revolving wheel of its own phenomenal manifestations? No, for freedom is the ultimate spiritual experience. Where then is the point of escape, the door, the egress? The point of escape is for Shankara, as for Buddha, in an ultimate act of knowledge which denies the real existence of the phenomenal world. He erects a rigid antagonism between essential truth and practical truth, paramartha & vyavahara, the one alone we must admit to be true truth, the other we must reject as only apparent truth. This world is a world of action, of karma, & in a world of action the governing practical truth is the law of karma which drives the soul through the endless chain of birth & death & rebirth, whirling for ever betwixt heaven & earth & hell, tossed from good to evil & evil to good, pain to joy & joy to pain, like a tennis ball kept continually at play between two equally skilful players. But all action depends upon and is only rendered

possible by relation, and all relation depends upon and is only rendered possible by self-division, by bheda, by dwaita, by the false conception in the soul of itself as not one, but many, by Avidya therefore, by Maya, a great original sin of Ignorance, a mighty cosmic self-deception. Where there are many, relation and action are possible; where there is one, there can be no relation and therefore no action. Atman or Soul is one, therefore relationless and actionless, shantam avyavaharyam, therefore free from karma, from rebirth, from Maya. The rest is a phenomenon of creation produced by the play of active consciousness, jagati, & cast by it like a shadow or reflected image on the surface of the still, actionless & relationless soul. This play, this jagati is Maya which is and is not,—is in itself, for its works are there, but is not, for those works are unrealities; they are a mass of self-deceptions starting from an original self-deception rooted in the principle of mind. What the mind sees is a reality, it is Atman, Brahman, but the ideas, the terms in which mind sees it are falsehoods.⁵ All practice therefore, however true for practical purposes in world, is really the plausible & well-arranged play of a falsehood; & practical truth & action are only so far useful that out of them, properly handled, emerges the impulse which leads to cessation from action & the knowledge which denies practical existence. In that cessation, in that denial is man's only escape from his false mental self into the calm essential reality, objectless bliss & relationless self-knowledge of the Atman. We see then that Shankara has practically transmuted or replaced Buddha's vague & undefined Nirvana by this actionless & peaceful Atman, the shanta akriya Sacchidananda, substituted for Buddha's false world of subjective sensations a false world of erroneous ideas starting from the original self-deception of duality, and accepting Buddha's law of karma as applicable only to this false world and Buddha's means of escape

⁵ The explanations given by modern Advaitins of Shankara's views, their interpretations in modern thought of his philosophical formulae, are so various & mutually contradictory, that it is becoming as difficult to know the real truth of his views as to know the real & original teaching of Buddha. I give what seems to me to be his teaching & at any rate it is the only logical basis for Mayavada.

by an ultimate act of knowledge, substituted knowledge of real self for Buddha's knowledge of non-self as the essence of that act & the true culmination of inner experience & meditative reason. Shankara like Buddha refuses to explain or discuss how active consciousness came at all to exist on the surface of a sole Self-existence which is in its very being shanta and inactive; he drives, like Buddha, straight at the actual fact of our bondage, the practical cause of bondage and the most direct path of escape from the bondage. These he states for us as he holds them to be established by Scripture, experience & reason & then, the fact once thus triply established, our business is not to account for its existence, which, moreover, must in the nature of things be inexplicable to the mind, since Maya is an original mystery & therefore incapable of solution, but to grasp at the one means of escape, of release, of the great & final liberation. The intellectual difference between the two systems is immense, their temperamental kinship is close. Yet we have this curious result, due to Buddha's stress on the means of self-denial provided by life & its ethical & altruistic possibilities as a preliminary training, that Shankara's system, less intellectually Nihilistic than Buddha's, has been practically more fatal to the activities of the divine power & joy in life in the nation which has so largely accepted his teachings. By denying God in life, by withdrawing the best souls from life, by discouraging through their thought & example,—the thought & example of the best, yad yad acharati sreshthah,—the sraddha of life, the full confident self-acting of Matariswan even in those who have practically accepted & cling to the burden of worldly existence, he has enlarged the original Vedantic seed of ascetic tendency into a gigantic growth of stillness & world-disgust which has overshadowed for centuries the lives & souls of hundreds of millions of human beings. On one side the race & the world have gained immensely, on the other it has suffered an immense impoverishment. The world-fleeing saint & the hermit have multiplied, the world-helping saint & the divine warrior of life come rarely & fail for want of the right atmosphere & environment. The Avatars of moral purity & devotional love abound, the Avatars of life, Krishna

& Balarama, manifest themselves no more. Gone are Janaka & Ajatashatru, Arjuna & Vyasa, the great scientists, the great lawgivers. The cry of OM Tapas with which God creates has grown faint in the soul of India, the cry of OM Shanti with which He withdraws from life alone arouses & directs the best energies of a national consciousness to whose thought all life is sorrow, self-delusion & an undivine blunder. Chilled is that marvellous & mighty vigour which flowed out from the Veda & Upanishads on the Indian consciousness & produced the grand & colossal forms of life eternally portrayed for us in the fragments of our ancient art & history & in the ideal descriptions of the Epics.

In Buddhism & modern Rationalism we have the denial of God, the grand negation, remedied for the purposes of life by a subordinate or substitutory conception which encourages the active impulses in humanity; in Rationalism the negation is corrected by a covert reaffirmation of Him in the guise of a blindly purposeful Nature full of a supreme mechanical intelligence and working out an evolutionary intention in humanity, in Buddhism, by the strong & fruitful affirmation of Karma and of Dharma or ethical religion as the indispensable first condition of escape from Karma; in Mayavada we get back to the affirmation of God, but an ill-balanced affirmation ending for the purposes of life in a practical negation, since God in the world is presented to us as a dream of Maya and God aloof from the world as the only real reality. To get back to the full affirmation we have to return to the ancient Veda. There, we find stated or indicated in every Upanishad, but most succinctly and practically in the Isha Upanishad, Ish, Purusha, Deva as the supreme good; we recover there the perfect affirmation of God & return to the grand, original & eternal negation of all these succeeding negations. There can be no more direct contradiction to the negative element in Shankara's teaching than the uncompromising phrases of the Isha Upanishad, kurvanneveha karmani, nanyatheto'sti, na karma lipyate nare. Both Shankara and the Seer of the Upanishad start from the same premises, the universality of Brahman, the bondage of desire and ignorance,

the necessity of escape through the dissolution of the dividing ego-sense in our mentality; but the practical conclusions they draw from these premises reveal somewhere an abyss of divergence. Abstain from actions, cries Shankara, except, for a time, from those that are indispensable and Shastra-enjoined,— and even these do with a view to their early cessation; for action is the master-key of the chain of Maya and only by ceasing from action can a man escape from the grand Illusion of things; only by cessation in relationless knowledge & the eternal stillness of the actionless Brahman can there come the great release from good & evil, from joy & pain, from birth & death, from living & non-living. Verily do actions, cries the ancient Seer, accept thy full term of human life and endeavour; for action is not in itself a chain nor a result of ignorance, but rather a manifestation of the Most High. Action cleaveth not to a man. The difference arises from a divergence in the fundamental conception of God in the world. To the Mayavadin, Ishwara, God in relation to the world, is a supreme term of Maya and therefore like all things in Maya existent yet not existent; to the Seer God is an eternal reality standing behind Chit-Shakti in its works, embracing it, possessing it, fulfilling Himself in it through the world rhythm. Action to the Mayavadin can only be motived by individual ignorance and must always be a knot of that ignorance; action to the Seer can even in our outward consciousness be motived & in the secret consciousness of God always is motived by the divine & universal Force & Bliss at free play in the divine & universal Being. The world is to the Mayavadin a freak of knowledge, an error on the surface of Self, a misconception of mind about Brahman; the world to the Seer is a running symbol of God and a means for His phenomenal self-manifestation in His own active being & to His own active knowledge. God, being unbound by His own activity and its free lord & disposer, man also, being one in self with God, is unbound by his works and, in God, their free master and disposer. Na karma lipyate nare.

Yet, in this divergence of views the dominant sense of our later Indian spirituality has been with the conclusion of Shankara and against the conclusion of the early, the inspired,

the suprarational Vedanta. To the modern Indian mind unaffected by European pragmatism it has been untrue that action cleaveth not to a man,— na karma lipyate nare—; & it has been true that all action results imperatively in bondage,— yah karoti sa lipyate, whoever acts is entangled in his action. The reason for this preference is obvious. Bondage & sorrow in the world are a fact of our daily experience, withdrawal from life an obvious and logical escape; freedom & bliss in the world are only a statement of Scripture, an experience abnormal to ordinary humanity and if eternally existent, then existent in our supraliminal self and not in our waking consciousness. Therefore India failing in the ancient power of Vedic tapasya has inertly accepted & combined the Buddhist Law of Karma & Rebirth & Shankara's gospel of cosmic Illusion & actionless Peace.

We have seen that the statement of the law of Karma is, at bottom, an assertion of the supremacy, complete & effectual in all forms of activity, of the grand cosmic principle of cause & effect. It formalises the subjection of the human life or even the human soul, at least in all its active parts, to the ineluctable dominion of an unending causality. If it can be shown that the dominion is not ineluctable or man himself is or may be above causality, its master and not under its control, then the whole elaborate chain forged for us by outward world-appearances crumbles in a moment to pieces. For Indian philosophy the main practical application for man of the chain of causality was the Law of Rebirth,— a law of the Soul in Nature; for modern Science, which denies the soul and knows nothing about rebirth, its practical application for man as for plant & stone & animal is, simply, the invariable working of material Force or, using a more popular language, mechanical Law of Nature. Even if the soul exists & rebirth be proved a fact, the Law of Rebirth can be to modern conceptions nothing but a particular working of Force, one, therefore, of the many subordinate Laws of Nature. As locomotion is the effect, electricity or steam the cause or motive force, so rebirth, continuity of personality in a material form, is the effect, past action is the cause; it is a law of Nature,

on a par in the psychological field with the law of gravitation in physical Nature, that the soul which acts shall be subjected to rebirth as the ineluctable result of its actions.

So stated, and given the necessary premise that individual personality is itself no eternal mystery but only a result and a nodus of natural energies working through the mind, the Buddhists' ineffugable law of Karma becomes a luminous, simple, rational, rigidly logical solution of the problem of personal existence, and like all that is simple and trenchantly logical, it attracts sovereignly at the first glance & tempts the thought to find rest in its symmetry & security. But to a mind on the alert for the infinite surprises of our complex world-existence this simplicity, this rigid logic is itself a danger signal, a warning of error. The more largely & patiently we consider existence, the more we perceive its extraordinary complexity, the multitude of its strands and the variability of its formulae, the more we begin to distrust all simple & onesided conclusions. Even though the world be one in substance and unitarian in principle, it is always infinitely manifold in manifestation and infinitely complex in working. When therefore we have arrived at a conclusion which, attracting by its simplicity, convincing by its force of logical dogmatism, coerces all these complexities to fit a single formula, yet we shall do wisely if we survey our position once again, if we ask ourselves what side of the truth we have omitted from our review of things and whether there are not somewhere incompatible facts which we have too forcefully dismissed or too dexterously got rid of in the haste to reach some goal. As Buddhism by logical dexterity got rid of the human perception of self-existence or Mayavada of the human perception of world-existence or Rationalism of the human perception of a psychic life in us & outside us that overtops our material and bodily activities, our thought can only arrive at the whole truth of things when it learns to ignore and evade nothing, to leave out nothing that God has included but rather to give patiently, justly, dispassionately every fact & every aspect of existence its right value and full place in His scheme of things. If we do not perform the necessary work of self-criticism for ourselves,

mankind will eventually do it for us and cast away as falsehoods those exclusive religions or those onesided philosophies which on their too narrow pedestals we have erected with so much & so immature a fervour of self-satisfaction. For Truth in the end is invincible and gets the better of all mankind's temporarily triumphant violences upon her. There are already signs that the mind of the race in India is beginning to react against the exaggeration of the Buddhistic generalisation of Karma to which modern Hinduism has been so long subjected both in life & in thought. The weakness of the Karma theory lies in its absolutist & exclusive generalisation of a great, a fundamental, but still a partial truth,—its overstress on outward human action as a determining factor of the soul's experiences, its insufficient stress on those vaster & more subtle workings of God in man of which outward action is only the partial symbol and the external machinery. It is here that the Upanishads recall us to a wider & sounder view of God in the world & His purpose in action & birth.

Not action but our past soul-states are the womb of our future; not action but desire, attachment and self-immersion of the individualised Soul in mind in a limited stream of the workings of its own executive Nature form the knot in the bondage of rebirth; action, whether of the thought, the speech or the body, is only an outward mechanical process by which the soul-state shadows out or symbolises itself in material life. It has no essential value of its own, but only the value of what it expresses; it can therefore have no binding power upon the soul which originates & determines it. What it does and can help to alter, are merely the mental & emotional values & terms in which soul-state expresses itself and even this function it performs as a partial agent and not as the real determining factor.

If that be true, then we have been grossly exaggerating the power of our actions over our souls, grossly & wilfully accepting in our mental & outward life the tyranny claimed over us by our individual nature, when our hidden relation to her & God's open ultimate intention in us is the very opposite of such a submission to the brute & despotic control of Matter. The relation of the

Swarat to his being, of the Samrat to his environment is our secret & true relation. To conquer one's own nature & fulfil God in world-nature, standing back from her in the soul, free & desireless, but not turning utterly away from her, is the true divine impulse of God in humanity. Life of Nature is intended to be to the soul of man as the Indian wife to her husband, not all in all, for it is to God that he should turn supremely & live in God perpetually, but yet always the half of himself through whose help alone as his sahadharmini, his comrade in works, he can fulfil the divine purpose of his living. The soul to Prakriti is intended to be as the Indian husband to his wife, the image of God in life, for whom she lives & through whom she arrives at the Divinity. We should seek first & live always in God beyond Nature, but God as Nature we should also cherish & enjoy as His symbol of that which is beyond & the appointed means of His active self-manifestation.

In Vedanta, therefore, the true & early Vedanta, the practical freedom of the soul is not to be gained as in Buddhism by self-abolition,— for the ego alone can be abolished, the soul is eternal, began not and cannot end,— nor, as in Mayavada, only by extinction of its activities in actionless self-knowledge,— for God expresses Himself in action no less than in rest; — but rather the soul is eternally free in its nature and its freedom has only to be entirely realised by the mind in all its parts in order to be possessed, whether in action or in inaction, in withdrawal from life or possession & mastery of life, by this outer consciousness which we call our waking self as it is eternally possessed in our wide & true effulgent spiritual being which lives concealed behind the clouded or twilit shiftings of our mental nature and our bodily existence.

Chapter V

The Soul, Causality and Law of Nature.

What then of this causality that we see everywhere? What then of this law and fixed process in all Nature which is at least the indispensable condition of all human activities? How can the supposed freedom of the soul be reconciled with the actual despotism in fact of an ordered Cosmic Energy?

Vedanta does not deny either Law of Causality or Law of Nature nor their fixity nor their imperative control over individual activities; it rather affirms them categorically and, as we shall see, with an inexorable thoroughness far more unsparing than the affirmations of modern Rationalism. But it states these laws in a formula far wider than the rationalist's; it sees not only law of life & law of matter, but law of mind and law of supermind; and it bases the stability and imperative force of all law in the world on an ultimate truth & source of freedom. It is this ultimate conclusion that gives to the Vedantic conception of Causality and Law of Nature an entirely different force and essential meaning from the vast generalisation of mechanical Energy popularised by modern Science. Law of Nature is to Science the tyranny of a self-existent habit in mechanical World-Force which Intelligence, the indulged & brilliant youngest child of material Energy, can use indeed, can convert in its forms or divert in its processes, but from which it has no door of escape. Law of Nature in Vedanta is the normality of a regular or habitual process in self-intelligent World-Force; in other words,—for Chit-Shakti, self-intelligent World-Force can mean nothing else than this,—in the cosmic Will-Power of universal self-existent Being,—of God, of Brahman. The process of Force, then, however fixed, however imperative, is neither mystically self-existent nor mechanically self-determined. On the contrary it depends upon certain relations, exists in certain conditions, amounts to certain fixed motions of the cosmic Will-Power which have been selected from the beginning in the universal Wisdom and, once selected, are manifested, evolved, established and maintained in

the workings of cosmic Energy until the fixed moment arrives for their variation or for their temporary or final dissolution. Laws of Nature are, in the pregnant phrase of the Rig-Veda, adabdhá vratá dhruvá yá devá akrinvata; they are the rules fixed and unovercome of active world-being which the gods have made and which they maintain eternally against the powers of dissolution. For the world in the old Vedic conception is a rhythm of action and movement in God's conscious being; or rather it is a combination and concord of rhythms; it is chhandas, it is metre, it is a choral symphony of Jagati & Gayatri, Brihati & Pankti, Tristubh & Anustubh; it is Vak, a formation of His Word, a formal harmony of His self-expressive consciousness, a harmony discovered and selected out of God's infinite possibilities and exposed therefore to the perpetual attack of those infinite possibilities. Therefore even the most well-established laws of Nature, the most general, persistent, apparently eternal and unvariable processes of world-Force, being formations of Jagati, being rhythms and harmonies of God's active Energy, truths of recurrent motion and not truths of eternal status, are none of them indestructible like the sempiternal Being out of which they emerge, but alterable and dissoluble and, since alterable and dissoluble, therefore ever attacked by powers of disorder and world-dissolution, ever maintained by the divine Powers consciously obedient to eternal Will & expressive of It through whom Ishwara has manifested Himself in material, moral and spiritual Nature.

Law of Nature is in God's being what social Law is in man's action & experience, not indestructible essence of that being or indispensable condition of that action, but formed, evolved and willed condition of a regular, ordered, complex and intricately combined self-expression in a harmony of various relations and grouped workings of energy. All existing natural conditions express a realised status and frame and base a farther evolution out of realised status.

Nature itself is Prakriti, working (literally, forward working) of world-Force, called by us Shakti, the cosmic or divine Power of cosmic or divine Will. And because that Shakti is,

in the phrase of the Swetáswatara Upanishad, Devátmarshaktih swagunair nigúdhá, the self-power of Divine Being hidden by the modes of its own workings, because it is, to use another Sanscrit formula, Chit-Shakti of the Sat-Purusha, Conscious Power of Conscious Being, & because that Conscious Being is infinite, absolute and unlimited in its possibilities and its Conscious Power infinitely, absolutely and illimitably a Free Will choosing freely Its own harmonies and not bound in their rhythms as though in fetters imposed by an alien will, forming, observing and using Its own laws and not compelled, enslaved and used by them, therefore is Prakriti or working of Nature in its laws a self-imposed system, a mighty and ordered Wisdom and not an eternal and inexplicable mechanical necessity. Its laws are formed & fixed processes of world-Force, selected and “loosed forth” by God, srishta, (created, as we loosely say,) out of the illimitable potentialities of self-existence, brought into play out of the depths of His self-being as a rhythm of music is brought out, manifested and arranged, srishta, vyakta, vihita, out of the infinite possibilities of indefinite sound. Self-luminous conscious being precedes, contains and manifests in self-intelligent & self-effective Force; self-intelligent and self-effective Force at once conceals and manifests itself in the mask of Prakriti, the mask of a motional and mechanical working of Nature. We arrive then at this formula of the conception of Law in Nature.

Law of Nature is a fixed process formed by the universal self-conscious Will of Ishwara; it is in its nature a particular or a general movement of that Force. So long as it is maintained, it is binding on things in Nature, but not binding except by His own Will on Ishwara. Fundamental or “eternal” Laws of Nature are those general processes or movements in Conscious Being in which the rhythm of the universe is framed and they would naturally endure unabrogated so long as that rhythm itself is sustained, as it is, in the Will and Being of God.

The Vedantic conception of Causality is equally determined by this initial and fundamental idea of the relation between mechanical process of Nature and the living Will of God. Cause, to the Vedantin, is nimitta, determining means, special determining

factor; it is the particular manipulation, impact or application of motive force which brings out of a preexistent arrangement or condition of things new or modified condition and arrangement, the difference effected constituting result. Oxygen & hydrogen as separately manifest gases, the atmosphere, the ether,—or to put it in the old concrete symbolical language of Indian philosophy, the combined presence of Agni, Vayu and Akasha, form in their arranged shapes & relations the preexistent condition; contact & mixture of the two forces with the new vibrations set up by the new relation, sparsha and shabda, are the nimitta, the determining means; the new apparent condition of things, the rupa, shape of water, is the result. Agni latent in the ether & atmosphere is the preexistent condition; friction of the two aranis and the resultant vibrations, sparsha & shabda, are the nimitta; the sacrificial fire is the result. A seed planted in favourable ground is the preexistent condition, sun & rain, agni & jala, are the nimitta; the appearance of an oak tree is the result. In each case what has really happened is that in a certain arrangement of the current workings and a certain relation of the worked out shapes of Force—in this case of the active Life-Energy in the material world—a new arrangement was always potential and latent, water involved in hydrogen, fire involved in the tinder-wood, the oak tree involved in the seed and a particular process, that is to say a particular working (karma or apas) of the same Force, the same Life-Energy, has been used to evoke the new shape of things out of latency, out of avyakta, and bring it into manifestation, into vyakta. The previous existence of the oak tree in the seed is not admitted by us because it is not there in realised form and to our erroneous notions realised form is alone reality. But realised form is only the material appearance of a truer reality which is not shaped in matter but only in consciousness: the oak tree is in the seed not in form but in being; for the form is only a circumstance of being and it is contained & latent in the being out of which it is born & which it expresses to formal vision. This latency and this process of manifestation in varying time and place by varying nimitta is, says Vedanta, the whole sense of phenomenal existence.

All cause and result are merely the evocation of a latent and potential shape or condition of things out of the previous condition or status in which it was latent, by some particular movement of a Conscious Force which is progressively passing from status to status and thus manifesting in form all that it holds in itself in being. Cause is only a means of manifestation and not itself a creative power. The real cause is only the Will of God working through its own fixed and chosen processes.

Are we to say, as it is often said, that the preexistent condition of things or arranged sum of force is the real cause out of which the event, the change, the new appearance must inevitably come and the advent of the nimitta a sort of accidental or at least subordinate & variable factor by which the inevitable result happens actually to be induced to manifest itself in outward eventuality? We have no right to say so; for it is not true as a matter of perceived fact that a given preexistent condition of things must lead inevitably in its own nature to a fixed result. In all the cases we have cited the preexistent condition did not necessitate the result and could not have produced it, but for the interference of the nimitta or determining factor, just as the determining factor could not have produced the result but for the preexistent condition. Shall we say, then, that granted a given preexistent condition and a given determining factor we shall have with mechanical certainty a given inevitable result? Again, we have no right to say so. The formula seems at first to hold good where the material of the workings of Force is the most rigid & unpliant and the workings themselves are the most mechanical & regular in their recurrence. But even there the inevitability of things is illusory. The aranis may be to hand, the friction occur, yet the sacrificial fire may never be lit; the seed may be planted, the soil favourable, sun and rain perfectly adjusted in their bounty, but the oak tree may not appear. We cannot even say that any given preexistent condition of things is the sole condition under which a given result can be effected. We say, indeed, taking actual fact for necessary fact, that only by the incubation of favourable soil on the right seed can an oak tree appear; but what we are justified in saying is only that, as yet, we

know no other conditions under which an oak tree has appeared. So also we thought that only by the incubation of the earth on the carbon could the diamond be produced; now, other conditions have been found under which this rare formation can be effected. Where the material which the force of Nature uses is more pliant and flexible, the idea of a mechanical Necessity becomes still less credible, is even more feebly substantiated by facts or is directly contradicted. A nation is in its last stage of moral and material decline; the preexistent conditions are precisely the same as in a score of instances in which destruction has followed or are even worse and more favourable to dissolution; the same determining nimitta is applied; but whereas in the previous score of cases the shock of the new impact has determined the anticipated result of destruction, in this worse case the selfsame shock, baffling anticipation, determines the entirely contrary result of rejuvenation, restored strength, energy of expansion, energy even of domination. Either some new factor has entered in unexpectedly or was already existent and even active, but concealed, or else a latent potentiality, which in the other cases remained latent, has here unexpectedly reacted, risen into the active superficial movement and become its dominant and deciding factor. Looking at these things, we are tempted sometimes to say that the whole sum of the past and the whole sum of the present was necessary for any given result in the world to be brought about; we are tempted to speculate that the whole cumulative stream of past active forces, past Apas or Karma, is the one real and inevitable cause of the future. But this is really only a statement of our ignorance; it is only an assertion that what has been, has been and since it has been, must, in any case, have become. It is an attempt to disguise from ourselves a fact that it really confesses, the fact that an infinite possibility of negation or modification, of non-happening or otherwise happening pursues and surrounds every actuality & eventuality in the universe and that we can relate how and under what conditions a thing has happened once or repeatedly and may be expected, if nothing interferes, to happen again, but we cannot fix inevitable cause to inevitable effect.

All event and all process of event is a selection out of infinite

possibility which surrounds the actual past as the Might Have Been and the actual future as the May Be. Of every cause, process & result we can say justly that the result might have been otherwise or the same result spring from some other cause or be effected by some other process. This perception in mind of an omnipresent infinite possibility is a shadow of the soul's perception of the infinite freedom of God.

What then is it that in any given working of result out of precedent condition by nimitta, fixes the combination of the forces at work, governs their manipulation, selects in one case to be the determining factor a force which in other cases was impotent to decide the eventuality? Is it Chance? Is it Fate? Is it some inexplicable mechanical self-guidance? Or is it supreme intelligent Will, Will that is in its nature Intelligence? Is there a conscious Will or rather a Will-Consciousness which contains, informs, constitutes these apparent forces and objects, but is hidden from our eyes by their multitudinous whirl of motion, by their clamorous demand on the attention of the mind and senses, by their insistent claim that we should submit in thought and act to the tyranny of their workings? This last answer is the solution proposed by Vedanta. It rejects the concept of Chance as only a specious name covering our self-satisfied ignorance of the cause and process of things; Chance is really the free action, not pursuable by us in its details, of a mighty cosmic Providence which is one with cosmic Force. It accepts the reality of Fate, but rejects as a void and baseless imagination the idea of an inexplicable mechanical Necessity; Fate is merely the inevitable working out in itself by a cosmic Will of its own fixed and predetermined self-perceptions. It accepts the idea of a principle of unerring self-guidance in Nature, but is unable to regard that principle as in any way a mysterious agency or an inexplicable birth; Nature guides itself unerringly only because Nature is the self-working of a Self-luminous conscious Existence formulating its Will in fixed processes of things and combined arrangement of event actualised in its own eternal and illimitable being. Nature to Vedanta is only the mask of a divine cosmic Will, devátma-shaktih swagunair nigúdhá; Prakriti of Vedanta is no separate

power, no self-existent mechanical entity, but the executive force of the divine Purusha at once self-revealed and self-concealed in the mechanism of its own workings. Purusha, conscious Soul, is the divine Poet and Maker; Nature, conscious Force, is His poetic faculty; but the material of His works is always Himself and their stage & scene are in His own conscious being.

Pre-ordered selection out of infinite possibility is the real nature of the power we call Fate. Chance is a secret Providence and Providence the constantly active Self-Knowledge of cosmic Existence and cosmic Will always fulfilling in actuality its foreseen selection of event and means,—foreseen in knowledge, —and preventing the pressure of infinite possibility from disturbing that pre-ordered arrangement. So a poet might work out in execution the original plot and characters as arranged in his mind and reject at every step the infinite possible variations which suggest themselves to him as he writes.

Law of Nature is the fixed system of conventional or habitual relations under which the Purusha has agreed with Himself to work out His pre-ordered selection and harmony. Causality is the willed arrangement of successive states & events and the choice of particular means in accordance with this fixed system of relations by which pre-ordered Fate of things is worked out in actual event.

Fate, Law and fixed Causality bind things in the movement of the Jagati; they do not bind the Purusha or conscious Soul but are the modes and instruments of His free self-working.

We must be on our guard against the idea that in this statement of the problem of predestination the infinite possibility we assert is an otiose and practically non-existent conception,—a thing that Is Not, a mere mental perception,—or that because the course of the world is fixed, the infinite freedom of God which supports and contains that fixity, is an abstraction of no practical moment or no practical potency. Among the many superficial fallacies of the practical man, there is none more superficial or fallacious than the assumption that in face of what has been, it is idle to consider what might have been. The Might Have Been in the past is the material out of which much of the

future is shaped. It would not be so if the material life were a self-existent thing, proceeding out of itself, sufficient to itself, ending with itself. But the material life is only a selection, a formation, a last result of an infinite conscious life behind which far exceeds the sum of all that actually exists in form and happens in event. Infinite Possibility is a living entity, a positive force; it is the material out of which God is constantly throwing up the positive and finite actuality. It is therefore all-important for a full and real knowledge of the world to know & see this infinite material as well as the actual finite result and ultimately determined shape of things. God Himself in His foreknowledge foresees the infinite possibilities that surround the event as well as the event itself. The forces that we spend vainly for an unrealised result, have always their ultimate end and satisfaction, and often form the most important determinants of a near or a distant future. The future carries in it all the failures of the past and keeps them for its use and for their success in other time, place and circumstance. Even our attempts to alter fixed process, when that process seems to be a fixed & unalterable law of Nature, are not lost & vain; they modify the active vibrations of the fixed current of things and may even lead to an entire alteration of the long-standing processes of things. The refusal of great minds to accept the idea of impossibility, with which they are not often reproached by the slaves of present actuality, is a just recognition of the omnipotence divinely present in us by right of the one supreme Inhabitant in these forms; nor does their immediate failure to externalise their dreams prove to the eye that sees that their faith was an error or a self-delusion. The attempt is often more important than the success, the victim more potent than the victor, not to the limited narrowly utilitarian human mind fixed on the immediate step, the momentary result, but to God's all-knowing Fate in its universal and millennial workings. From another standpoint, it is the infinite possibilities that surround the act or the event which give to act and event their full meaning and value. It may be said that Arjuna's hesitation and refusal to fight at Kurukshetra was of no practical moment since eventually he did take up his bow and slay the Dhritarashtrians & the otiose

incident might well have been omitted by God in His drama; but if it had not been possible for Arjuna to hesitate, to fling down the bow Gandiva or to have retired from the fight but for the command of the incarnate God beside him, then his subsequent action in fighting & slaying would have had an entirely different value, the battle of Kurukshetra would have meant something entirely different to humanity & its results on the future life of the nation & the world would have been, comparatively, almost a zero. We can see this truth even with regard to slighter incidents. The fatality which in Shakespeare's drama wills the death of Romeo & Juliet as the result of a trivial and easily avoidable accident, receives all its value from the possibilities surrounding the actual event, the possibilities of escape from fate, reconciliation & for these tragic lovers the life of an ordinary conjugal happiness. These unrealised possibilities & the secret inevitability — of Spirit, not of matter, — which prevents their realisation, which takes advantage of every trivial accident and makes use of it for the swift & terrible conclusion, make the soul of the tragedy. A mechanical fatality must always be a thing banal, dead, inert and meaningless. It is their perception of these things behind the veil, their transcendence of the material fact, their inspired presentation of human life that ranks the great poets among the sophoi, kavis, vates, and places poetry next to the Scriptures & the revelations of the Seer and the prophets as one subtle means God has given us of glimpsing His hidden truths.

The unrealised possibility is as much a part of Fate as the actual event. The infinite possibilities surrounding an event are not only the materials out of which the event is made and help to modify or determine the more distant future, but alone give its true & full value to every human or cosmic action.

God or Spirit then is the Master of His processes and their results; He is the law of natural law, therefore free from that law, nityamukta, the cause of Fate, therefore not bound by Fate but its ruler. Action is the free play in His eternal Being, therefore that Being is not bound by the action. Action does not compel in Him any results which He is not free to accept or to avoid;

it does not entail fresh action unless He so chooses, nor does it produce any modification either in His conscious existence or in the modes & phenomena of His conscious existence except so far as He allows those modes or phenomena to be affected or varied. In His essential being God or Spirit is ever immutable, since nothing ever essentially changes even in the universe, much less beyond the universe; and it is only phenomena in the cosmic motion of consciousness that seem to change. Here too sages have perceived that the change is not really a change, but only a successive presentation of ever recurrent phenomena to the Time-governed eye of conscious Mind. These changes are a play of self-ideas in Conscious Being existing for ever beyond Time & Space, but represented for us in the symbols of Time & Space. Such as they are, the succession of these changes affected by action of man or action of Nature are not binding on Spirit, not an inexorable stream of cause & result which Spirit has passively & helplessly to endure, but a harmony or progressive rhythm of successive states which Spirit has freely arranged in itself. Na karma lipyate.

God acts or rather produces action, produces, that is to say, process & succession of manifested energies in His own being without being bound either by the action itself or by its process or by its succession or by its causes or by its results. In action or out of action He is entirely, infinitely & absolutely free.

But then there arises the difficulty caused to our darkened minds by the false conception that God & world, God & the human soul are different entities. From this division of the indivisible there arises the notion, the fatal noumenal error, the illogical logic, that God beyond the world is free but God in the world is bound, bound to action, bound to sorrow, bound to death and birth,— the great fundamental error which seals our eyes & creates needlessly the insoluble problem of suffering & evil and death and limitation,— insoluble because we have created a false first premise for all our conclusions about the world. God in the world is not bound, but only pretends to mind that He is bound. Mind so envisages Him because it sees Him observing freely the arrangements & processes that He has

made &, always associating fixed observance in Nature with inevitable observance, supposes Him to be observing His own laws inevitably, helplessly, not freely. All the more then is man, apparently limited, apparently bound in the meshes of a hundred woven laws, supposed to differ precisely in this from the transcendental Being that That is free & untouched by the world & its works, he a slave and moulded by their pressure into what he is now & will hereafter become. Thence the conclusion of so many philosophies that man here can never be anything but a suffering victim of his works & slave of illusion & only by annulling his existence in cosmos can become free,—free not in the cosmos but from the cosmos. But it is not so. For man is the Lord inhabiting His human temple, enjoying his own play in this mortal mansion built by himself out of his own cosmic being; he has determined what he is and is determining now by his play in works as he has previously determined by his play in internal consciousness what he shall become.

God in the world is not different in nature from God beyond the world but the same. Yad amutra tad eveha. God beyond is eternally free; God here is also eternally free. Spirit in all things & spirit in man are one spirit and not different entities or natures; therefore all spirit being eternally free, the soul of man also is eternally free. Mind in its multiple and dual play is, by its non-illuminated state, the creator of this illusion of bondage.

We have in the Gita a striking illustration of God's workings in man which raises in a concrete instance and drives home to the mind the whole difficulty with an incomparable mastery and vividness. The armies of the Pandava and the Kaurava stand facing each other on the sacred plain of Kurukshetra; the whole military strength of India & all its political future have been thrown down upon that vast battlefield as upon a dice board. On one side we see the eleven mighty armies of Duryodhana, greatly superior in numbers, led by the three most renowned warriors & tacticians of the day; on the other the lesser host of Yudhisthira commanded indeed by notable fighters but fixing all its hope of eventual victory on the strong arm and invincible fortunes of Arjuna with Krishna, the incarnate Lord of the

world, as his charioteer. But Arjuna, their supreme hope, is on the point of failing them; he is overcome by the magnitude of the approaching slaughter, afflicted by the fratricidal nature of the conflict he has cast down his bow; he has refused to fight. In the great colloquy that follows & forms the substance of the Gita, the incarnate Master of things, among a host of profound & subtle reasonings, uses also this striking exhortation which has become a commonplace of Indian thought, Mayaivaite nihatáh púrvam eva, Nimittamátram bhava, Savyasáchin. "By Me are these already slain & dead, do thou become only immediate means & determining cause, O Savyasachin." The Universal Will has seen and arranged from the beginning of this great world-act, this vastly planned cycle of natural happenings, the bodily destruction of Duryodhana and his mighty captains; the bow Gandiva in the hand of Arjuna is only the predestined nimitta. By the stream of successive events it has brought about an arrangement of forces in which the nimitta can become operative. There is the preexisting condition; there is the arranged result; there is the determining factor. But supposing this human instrument Arjuna, rejecting the command of the Lord of all things, preferring some hope of spiritual weal, preferring his own moral self-satisfaction, obstinately refuses to be the engine of God's will in him, in a work so thankless, bloody & terrible. What if he listens only to the natural cry of the human heart, Kim karmani ghore mám niyojayasi Keshava, "Why dost Thou appoint me, O Lord, to a dreadful work?" We say from our human standpoint, that even then the Will of God can & will inevitably be fulfilled by Bhima, by the combined exaltation of the Panchala heroes, by the sudden greatness, even,—for "He makes the dumb man eloquent & the lame to overpass the hills", —of some inferior fighter; and, in the thought & language of the great infinite Potentiaality that stands behind the material actuality of things, this would be the truth,—but not in the actuality itself. For in the God-foreseen actuality of things not only the event, but the nimitta is fixed beforehand. The Cosmic Being is no blind & chance bungler who misses His expected tool & has gropingly to improvise another. Arjuna, too, is the

vessel of the universal Will and can only act as It chooses. "The Lord is seated in the heart of all existences, O Arjuna, and He whirls round all existences mounted upon a machine by Maya." Even if Arjuna's mind resists, even if his heart revolts, even if his members fail him, eventually there is a Force greater than the individual & mental will which will, if so destined, prevail upon his mind, his heart, his members. What is that Force? "Prakriti", answers the Gita, "Prakritis twám niyokshyati." The phrase is nowadays ordinarily interpreted to mean that Arjuna's warrior nature will whip him back to the fight. But the thought of the Gita is more profound & far-reaching. By Prakriti is meant the executive World Force, agent of the will of the Ishwara seated in the heart of all existences, that compels the tree to grow, man to think, the king to rule, the poet to create, the warrior to fight. The character of Arjuna is only one means towards her action, & even that acts not by itself, but in conjunction with the character of Duryodhana, of Karna, of Bhishma, of a million others even to the meanest soldier in either army. Yet left to itself the warrior nature of Arjuna might drive him back indeed to the fight but too late to determine its issue; even, it might be, his personal nature, were that God's will, would abdicate its functions, seized & overcome by universal nature, by pity, by vairagya, by fear of sin, and the fateful battle lose its fated nimitta. What is it that, not in free universal potentiality, but in the fixed fact must inevitably determine his return to his normal action? It is the executive Force of the universal Will which not only fixes personal nature, swabhava or swa-prakriti, but fixes too its working in each individual case, not only prepares the circumstance & the means but determines the action & the event. We seem to have here an overriding Fate, an ineluctable Ananke, even a self-acting mechanism of Nature; but it is not a mechanical inevitability, the result of the sum of our & others' past actions, not even a natural inevitability, the result of either a habitual or an ingrained working of our individual nature moved complexly by internal impulses, outward events & the actions of others; but a willed inevitability, seen beforehand in Its universal pre-knowledge by that sole Existence which is expressing itself

here in mind & body, in event & circumstance, and executed by It as its own Will-Force & universal Nature which works out automatically through arranged process & perfectly managed interaction of individual forces that which was foreseen by It & fixed from the beginning of things, vyadadhách chhásватíbhyah samábhyah.⁶

We see then that working of Law of Nature & succession of cause & effect are the process of fulfilment of a Will, a self-effective Intelligence which is superior to working of law & governs, not obeys, succession of cause & effect. That Will is the Lord who inhabits all these animate & inanimate existences, hriddeshe tishthati, the one universal Soul & is master of the Jagati, not bound by her motions & actions. Na cha mám tání karmáni nibadhnanti Dhananjaya. All these actions, O Arjuna, of which I am the cause, bind me not at all; actions do not cleave to me, na mám karmáni limpanti. Still, in the universal Soul of things, we can understand such a freedom & omnipotence; but the affirmation of the Seer has reference not only to the universal Ishwara, but to the individual soul, na karma lipyate nare, action fastens not on the man. How can it be affirmed that man, the individual soul, has any control over the activity of the universal Prakriti of which his action is a part, if that action is predetermined, as the Gita asserts it to be determined, by a higher all-knowing Will? And if he has no control of any kind, what freedom can he have from his actions, from their subjective pressure, from their objective results except the inner freedom of renunciation, of quietism, of indifference? Man, it would seem, can only be free by sitting still in his soul and allowing the great executive world-Force to act out the predestined Will of God, himself caring not for it & in no way mixing himself in the

⁶ *The following paragraph was written at the top of the manuscript page. Its place of insertion was not marked:*

Causality consists merely in the successive conditions of things in the world, one emerging out of another, & the successive groupings, relations & interactions of forces & processes, by which the Will acts out its rhythm [of] prearranged eventualities. The mechanism is a mechanism of self-possessed & continually waking consciousness that knows its whole future, present & past. The fixity of things & events is merely the term of practical executive wisdom in an original & inalienable freedom.

action. Is it not this freedom that the Gita recommends & is not this the action that the Upanishad enjoins,—action worked out mechanically by Prakriti while the soul watches only & knows that it is not the actor? And as for any other & greater freedom, it can only be the freedom by self-extinction of Nara in Narayana, of the individual man in the universal all-inhabiting Ishwara—if indeed the real goal be not some transcendental Impersonality in which man & world & God are all & for ever extinguished.

We might accept this conclusion but for the distinct injunction of the Seer, bhunjítháh, thou shouldst enjoy. Divine Ananda in God at play & God at rest, not loss of interest and a quietistic indifference is the human fulfilment contemplated by the Upanishads. The first error of the human mind is to suppose that because our emotions, our desires, our personal will have an apparent effect upon event & fruit of action, they are themselves the real determinants of those events & the sufficient winners of that fruit; they are neither of these things; they are only one spring of the machinery, only one subordinate working of the universal Will. It is what the universal Will beyond all mentality decides & works out, not what the personally acting will in the material brain & heart hungers after, that determines event. Karmanye vádhikáras te, says the Gita, má phaleshu kadáchana, Thou hast a right to action, but no claim at all on the fruits of action; for the fruits belong to God, they belong to the world-working, they belong to the universal will, they belong to the great purposes of the cosmos & not to any clamorous individual hunger. The second error of the human mind when it perceives itself to be the instrument only of a supreme universal Force or Will, its action to be only a whorl in the stream of universal energy and result to be a predestined event of universal Will partly executable by us, but not independently governable or alterable by our effort, is to argue falsely, confusing the Purusha with the Prakriti, that because our action is subject to universal Nature, therefore the soul also is subject to law of Nature & its only refuge is in quietistic renunciation, in indifference or in the withdrawal from phenomenal living. The real refuge is altogether different; it is the blissful withdrawal from personal

hunger & desire, it is the detached but joyous contemplation of individual will as a working of divine or universal Will, it is the withdrawal from egoistic being & the perception of the individual as only a convenient term of the universal Ishwara, of the Jiva as only a form in consciousness of the Ishwara, it is the equal enjoyment of the fruits favourable or adverse not only of individual will, but of the universal will, not only our own joys, but the joys of all creatures, not only the gains which come to our minds & bodies, but those which come to the minds and bodies of all existences; it is to make the joy & fulfilment of God in the world our joy & fulfilment, it is to see one Lord seated in all creatures. This is the delight-filled equality of mind, anandamaya samata, that is in the world our ultimate prize & supreme state in mortal nature, fulfilling itself in a divine freedom equally from desire for the fruit of the action and from attachment to the action itself; the fruit is to be what the Lord has willed, the action is God's action in us for His great cosmic purpose. God Himself, the Gita tells us, has essentially this immortal freedom from desire, & yet He acts entirely; He has this divine non-attachment to the work itself & yet He works & enjoys in the universe & the individual, na me karmaphale sprihā, asaktam teshu karmasu, varta eva cha karmani; for in Purusha He contemplates, blissful & free, Himself in Prakriti executing inevitably His own eternal will in the universe known to Him before the ages began in that timeless, time-regarding conscious self of which we all are the habitations. So is the divine attitude towards existence constituted, the attitude of the Ishwara; a perfect & blissful calm & quietism of the divine soul harmonised & become one with a colossal activity of the divine Power driving before it the ordered whirl of a myriad forces occupying limitless Space & Time towards an eternally predestined end.

It may be objected, that while the divine Purusha standing back from the workings of His Prakriti, not only can be the free upholder, enjoyer & giver of an original & continued sanction to the world-workings, bharta bhokta anumanta, but also, by His eternal immanence as Master of the Will everywhere, is the

present Ishwara, the controlling Lord of the action, man, by standing back from the Prakriti as the Soul or Purusha, may be indeed, secondarily to God, the upholder of his individual system,—that formal vessel, adhara, of his soul-states,—may be in some sort sanction-giver to its activities, may be, secretly always & here eventually, the free enjoyer of all world-activities that come within its experience, but is not & because of his individuality cannot be or ever realise in himself the Ishwara, the present Lord and master of Nature. He has freedom, not lordship,—the passive freedom of God in the unmoving Brahman he may indeed acquire or share, but not His active lordship in the moving Brahman. To be mukta but never *ish* would seem to be his destiny. Yet the Gita asserts that the Jivatman also is the Ishwara and the Upanishad declares the identity of the human soul with the divine Lord who inhabits all these motion-built forms of Nature.

In this disparity there is no contradiction. There are two aspects of all existence, the Being & the Becoming, Atman & Sarvabhuṭani. According as the soul of man either stands out in its human becoming & lives in the twisted triple strand of the mind, body & vital being, of which we are conscious now & here, or, on the contrary, stands back in the divine unity of Sacchidananda, it enjoys either of two states of conscious experience, the individual self-consciousness of the separate Jivatman or the universal divine consciousness of the Jivatman merged or dwelling in God. In the former & inferior self-poise, our status is that of a separate soul, different from the Ishwara & always in some personal relation with Him; a type usually of our human connections with each other & the world, connection of child with parent, servant with master, teacher with taught, friend with friend, enemy with enemy, mechanist & instrument, harp & harpist, or a combination of several kinds of interplay at once, answering to the tangled relations we see in our human existence. This relation, created by the fundamental duality of God's play with His becomings, can be realised by us in our waking consciousness or exist unconscious in our secret soul; but in any case it is a condition of subjection, conscious or

unconscious, to the sole Ishwara, since even as enemy or rebel we can act after all only as He chooses, however much, for the delight of the play, He gives us a certain length of rope, a certain range of subjective freedom and lets us believe that we are acting independently of Him or in opposition to His will. But what is it that builds up or constitutes in us these relations of the duality? It is not the soul itself but the activities of the mind, life, body, our thoughts, emotions, sensations; it is not the Purusha but our parts of Nature or parts of Prakriti. The soul or Purusha enjoys these relations because it identifies itself with the activities of Nature working in a special name & form & regards all her other workings from that centre of special consciousness; but since that nature, subject to the universal mechanism and a part of it, is anish, not lord, the soul in mind identifying itself with it is also to its outward consciousness anish, not lord. Nevertheless all the time the soul itself is aware, — not in mind, but beyond it, superconsciously in the veiled, secret & higher parts of our nature where it lives guhahita, — of playing a play, of being itself universal, one with God and lord of Nature as well as its enjoyer. The more we detach ourself from Nature, the more, even in Nature itself, our lordship over her increases, our lordship first over her in our own being, our lordship, secondly, over her in her world-actions. We become more & more in our outward consciousness what the soul really is in the secret caverns of its luminous self-concealment, Swarat Samrat, Self-Ruler & Emperor of existence. Still, until the veil is entirely removed, we are indeed the Ishwara by the present immanence of our will in Life, but partially only, and not only secondarily to God, but in a limited degree. We are indeed always subject entirely to the universal Will or Shakti in Prakriti even when we are increasing our individual control over the processes of her individual and universal working. Still as we become purer channels, more & more of the divine Power pours through us & our motions are invested with a more swift, easy & victorious knowledge & effectiveness upon their environment. But it is only when we stand entirely apart from Nature, yet entirely immanent in her by conscious identification with the universal being,

power & bliss of God that we become also entirely Ishwara; for then all walls break down, then with the false separation of individual being from God-being breaks down also the false separation of individual power from God-power and it becomes possible for that divine Knowledge-Will working in us to fulfil infallibly & inevitably its foreseen & intended result, as it fulfils it in the universal working of Nature — foreseen & intended in our waking consciousness, always indeed with a less extended working but still essentially & typically as God works, with a divine science if not the extended divine omniscience, a partial divine victoriousness if not the extended divine omnipotence.

We shall be able to arrive at the precise & practical meaning of this identification & this separation, this detachment & freedom & shall discover the secret of action & rebirth if we look at the actual facts of material life & then at the Vedantic explanation of our conscious existence. We have, to start with, this fundamental divergence already noted between ordinary psychology & the psychology of Vedanta, — the former recognising only three principles, Mind, Life and Matter, or adding at most a fourth, Soul or Spirit, while the latter, with a deeper inlook, a wider outlook, a firmer foundation of daring experiment and probing analysis, distinguishes between various workings of the supra-mental or spiritual principle and encounters in its search seven in the place of three prime elements of conscious being. Sat, Chit, Ananda, Vijnana are four divine unmodifiable principles; they constitute the divine being, divine nature & divine life, and are called in their sum Amritam, Immortality; Manas, Prana, Annam, Mind, Life & Matter, are inferior & modifying principles constituting in their sum in this material world mortal being, mortal nature, mortal life and are called Mrityu or Martya, mortality. The doctrine and instruction of the possibility, the means and the necessity for man of climbing from Mrityu to Amritam, out of Death into divine Life, — mrityum tárwámritam asnute, is Veda & Vedanta.

The world in which we live seems to our normal experience of it to be a material world; matter is its first term, matter is its last. Life-energy and mind-energy seem to exist as middle

terms; but though their existence and activity cannot be denied or ignored, so omnipresent, insistent & victorious is the original element out of which they have emerged that we are led to view them as terms of matter only; originated out of matter, formulated in matter, resolved back into matter, what else can they be than modifications of the sole-existing material principle? The human mind seeks a unity always, and the one unity which seems reasonably established here, is this unity of matter. Therefore, in the fine & profound apologue of the Taittiriya Upanishad, we are told that when Bhrigu Varuni was bidden by his father Varuna to discover, entering into tapas in his thought, what is Brahman, his first conclusion was naturally & inevitably this that Matter is the Sole Existence,— Annam Brahma. “For verily out of Matter are these existences born, by Matter they live, into Matter they pass away and enter in.” We arrive, then, by reason considering only the forms of things and the changes & developments and disintegrations of form, at the culmination of materialistic Rationalism and a Monism of Matter. Annam Brahmeti vyajánát.

But here we cannot rest; driven by the Tapas, the self-force of the eternal Truth within, to an ever increasing self-knowledge & world-knowledge, we begin to analyse, to sound, to look at the insides of existence as well as its outsides. We then find that Matter seems to be only a term of something else, of Force, we say, or Energy which, the more we analyse it, assumes a more & more subtle immateriality and at last all material objects resolve themselves into constructions & forms of this subtle energy. Hoping to reconcile our old conceptions & our new results, we make, at first, a dualism of Force & Matter, but we know in our hearts that the two are one & we are driven at last to admit that ultimate unity. But what is this energy? It is, says the Vedanta, Prana, Matariswan, Life-Force or Vital Energy, that which organises itself in man as nervous energy & creates & carries on the processes & activities of life in material form. We find this same nervous & vital energy present also in the animal, the plant; it exists obscurely, it has been discovered, even in the metal. We have, therefore, in the world we inhabit, a unity of Life-Energy

in its actions as well as a unity of matter in its formal changes. For modern thinking the problem is complicated by the narrow restriction of the idea of life first, popularly, to the material vessels of a conscious nervous activity, man, the animal, the insect, & then, more widely, to all forms of which organic growth and nervous response are the characteristic activities. Vedantic thought sees, on the contrary, that all energy apparent in matter is one Life-energy; nervous force, electric force, even mental force so far as it works in matter are different forms of one working, which it calls Pranashakti, Energy of Life, formulated force of Existence throwing itself out in the currents & knotting itself into the vessels of its self-adaptive material workings. Life, as we know it, is the characteristic fulfilment of this stream of being. According to the Vedantic idea the characteristic form of any energy is to be recognised by us not in its lowest, but in its highest expression. The higher form is not a new-creation of something previously non-existent out of the lower form,—for such a principle is essentially Nihilistic & leads inexorably to Nothingness as the starting point of existence, and to the Vedantic idea nothing can be created which does not already exist, nothing can be evolved which is not already involved. Life-energy of man is involved in life-energy of plant, metal and sod; it is that which manifests itself by veiled and obscure workings in these more imperfect vessels. We see, then, by closer scrutiny, Matter as only a form of Life, organic or inorganic, perfected in nervous action or obscure in mechanical energies. Obsessed by this discovery, living in this medial term of our consciousness, seeing all things from our new standpoint we come to regard Mind also as a term or working of Life. Bhrigu Varuni, bidden by his father back to his austerities of thought, finds a second and, it would seem, a truer formula. He sees Life as the Sole Existence, Pranam Brahma. "For from the Life, verily, are all these existences born; being born they live by the Life, to the life they pass away and enter in." Our physical body at death is resolved into various forms of energy, the mind which inhabits the nervous system dissolves also and is or seems to be no more, except in its posthumous effect on others, an organised active

force in the material world. We arrive, then, by reason considering the energies of things in their forms & the movement [of] forces that constitute their changes, activities, development & disintegration, at the culmination of Vitalistic Rationalism and a Monism of the Life-Energy. Práno Brahmeti vyajánát.

Here too the mind of man, after finding this second goal of its journeyings, discovers that which it took for a final haven to be only a resting place. Life-Energy & Material Form or Substance of Life-Energy constitute together the outward body of sensible things, the *sthula sharira* or gross body of Brahman. But, as we pursue our analysing and probing, we begin to suspect that Mind is an entity different from either Matter or Life-Energy. Matter & Life reveal themselves to the mind through the senses. Mind, self-existent, self-perceptive, has on the contrary two evidences of its existence; it knows itself by the senses through its own results & outward workings,— it knows itself also both independently of the workings & in their more subtle movements, by itself, in itself, *atmanyatmanam atmana*. We perceive, besides, that man is essentially a mental and not a vital being; he lives for himself in the mind, is aware of his existence through the mind, knows & judges all things only as they form themselves to his mind. The speculation then inevitably arises whether as we found Life to be concealed in apparently inert matter and eventually knew Life to be the parent & constituent of material forms, we shall not, as the next step of knowledge, find Mind to be concealed in apparently unconscious forms of life-matter, the parent, constituent & motor impulse both of all life-energies & of all forms & forces in which Life here is either formulated or embodied. But there are difficulties in the way of this conception. First, mind knows itself by itself only in the individual body which possesses it; it is unable, normally, to watch itself in other bodies or perceive there, directly, its own presence & workings, it only knows itself there by analogy, by deduction, by perceiving through the senses the outward or formal effects of its presence & workings. All that is outside the individual form it inhabits, my mind knows by the senses only, & its own workings seem to consist simply of the nervous reception of this

sense knowledge, the nervous reaction to it, the formulation of this experience in mental values & the various arrangement & rearrangement of the values formulated. Secondly, these values do not appear to be fixed independently by mind, as they would be if mind were the creator of forces and objects; mind appears to us to be not their master but their servant, although sometimes a rebellious servant, not their creator, *poietes*, but their translator and interpreter. Thirdly, mind seems unable to create life or to create or change material forms by its direct action. I cannot, by willing, add to my stature or change my features, much less alter forms external to my own. Just as it knows only by the senses, the *jnanendriyas*, so mind seems able to affect life & matter only through its bodily instruments of action,—the *karmendriyas*. The instances to the contrary are so exceptional, obscure and fragmentary that no conclusion can be formed upon such scattered & ill-understood data.

Nevertheless Vedantic thought insists. Knowledge, taught by experience, distrusts all first appearances & looks always behind them for the true truth of things. What is exceptional we must examine, what is ill-combined we must arrange, what is obscure we must illuminate. For it is often only by pursuing & examining the obscure & exceptional action of a force that we can come to know the real nature of the force itself & the rule of its obvious & ordinary action. It is not through the leap of the lightning, but through the study of the electric wire & the action of the wireless current that we get near to the true nature & the fixed laws of electricity. As life is obscure & imperfect in the plant & metal & its full character only eventually appears in man, so also mind is imperfect, if not obscure in man's present mental workings; its full character can emerge only in a better evolved humanity or else in a more developed &, to present ideas, an abnormal and improbable working of its now hampered forces even in our present humanity. The ancient Vedantins therefore experimented as daringly & insatiably with mind as modern scientists with life-force; they deployed in this research an imaginative audacity & a boundless credulity in the possibilities of mind as extreme as the imaginative audacity &

the boundless credulity in the possibilities of force working in matter deployed by the modern in his more external experiments & researches; they had too the same insatiable appetite for verification & more verification,— for without this harmony of boundless belief & inexorable scrutiny there can be no fruitful science; reason in man cannot accomplish knowledge without force of faith; faith cannot be secure in knowledge without force of reason.

Thus experimenting, the Vedantin discovered above mind in life the principle of pure Mind. He found that mind exists in the cosmos pure & untrammelled, but manifests in material forms imprisoned and trammelled. Mind subject to life & matter, erring in the circle of life & matter, he perceived as mortal mind, martya or manu of the Veda, the human thinker; mind pure & free he perceived as divine mind, deva or daivya ketu of the Veda, the divine seer & knower. He found first that mind really exists in man in its own self-sufficient consciousness, independently of the sense life turned upon the outer material world, even when it can only work or actually only works through the senses. Secondly, he found that mind in one form or body subconsciously & superconsciously knows & can watch mind & mind's working in other bodies directly or by means independent of sense-communication & the watching of speech & action, and can, more or less perfectly, bring this subconscious & superconscious knowledge into the field of our waking or life-consciousness. He found, thirdly, that mind can know external objects also without using the ordinary channel of the senses. He found, fourthly, that the values put by mind upon outer impacts & its reactions to them are determined not by the impacts themselves but by the general formulations & habitual responses of Mind itself in the universal Being and these fixed & formulated values & reactions can be varied by it, can be suspended, can be entirely reversed, can be infinitely combined at will in the individual vessel called the human being. Fifthly, mind can & does by will, ketu can by kratu, used actively or passively, consciously, subconsciously or superconsciously, without the aid of the karmendriyas, modify even life-forms &

action of life-forces, & does it even now, swiftly or slowly, to a greater or less degree,—as is evident from the phenomena of heredity & hypnotism,—can determine directly the action of energy in other bodies, animate or even inanimate, can modify existing forms of things and can even arrive, though with much greater difficulty, at the direct creation of forms by the mental will. All these powers, however, are powers of the pure or divine mind and can only be consciously exercised in our mortality, so long as they are abnormal to it, if & so far as the universal Being originates & sanctions their use in the individual; they can be possessed as normal faculties only by a humanity which has climbed out of its present struggling entanglement in mortal being & the subjection of the motion of mind to the motion of life & matter, by a humanity in other words which has divinised itself & reached the high & free term of its evolution. If these ancient results are at all correct—and the whole trend of modern scientific experiment as soon as it consents at all to dissect practically & analyse and manipulate experimentally mind as a separate force, tends, however dimly and initially, towards their confirmation,—then we can enter on a third stage of the march of knowledge. The intellectual difficulties in the way of our surpassing the vitalistic conception of world have disappeared. We begin to move, at first, towards a noumenistic monism of the universe. For if mind in man can determine, manipulate, modify & create not only the sensational values of forms and forces and impacts, but the forms and forces and impacts themselves, it is because in the universe these values, these forms, these forces have, originally and secretly, been fixed, created and moved by universal mind and are really its evolutions & formations. All forms of life-energy in this world are thus formations of mental force in which the principle of mind broods self-absorbed in work of life and concealed in form of life to emerge in man, the mental being. Just as life, working but form-absorbed and concealed in the clod & metal, has emerged in the plant and the animal to organise its full character and activity, so it is with mind. Mind is omnipresent; it does mechanically the works of intelligence in bodies not organised for its self-conscious workings;

in the animal it is partly self-conscious but not yet perfectly able to stand apart from its works and contemplate them; for the animal has more of sanjna than of prajna, more of sensational perceptive consciousness than of contemplative conceptual consciousness. In man first it stands back, contemplates & becomes truly “prajna”, knowledge working with its forms & forces placed before it as objects of its scrutiny. But this evolution is the result and sign of a previous involution. Mind in the universe precedes, contains & constitutes life-action and material formation. Bhrigu Varuni, once more bidden by his father back to his austerity of thought, perceives a third and profounder formula of things. He sees Mind as that Sole Existence, Mano Brahma. “For from mind these existences are born, being born by mind they live, into mind they pass away & enter in.” For as all forms that dissolve go back into the life-forces that constitute and build their shapes, so all forces that dissolve must go back into the sea of mental being by which and out of which they are formulated, impelled and conducted. We arrive, by reason investigating the essential causes, governance and constituting intelligence of all these energies & forms which determines & manifests in their functions, methods and purposes, at the culmination of pure idealistic Rationalism & the Monism of mind. Mano Brahmeti vyajánát.

But Vedanta is not satisfied with the noumenal conception of being; it journeys yet farther back. Studying & experimenting with mind it perceives that mind, too, is a special force manifested out of being and not itself the ultimate nature of being. Moreover it sees that we have crudely put together in the single confused concept of mind, a number of very different principles of which the one common characteristic is the possession of a luminous instead of a darkened consciousness informing its waters, not hidden in the cell of its own forms & motions. We have then still to analyse & probe the nature & limits of mind, & we have to sound and discern the nature & limits if any of what is beyond mind. Carrying the conception of knowledge far beyond the mental principle, discovering a Force more puissant and essential than mind-force, arriving at an essential existence

other and purer than the mental self-consciousness which is, at present, man's ordinary & common subjective experience of himself, Vedanta finds that Life & Matter are not so much developments of universal Mind, as the subordinate formations and movements,—cooperative with it, although evolved out of it and formed by it,—of a supramental, supravital, supramaterial Something which no terms we have yet understood can describe to our intelligence. In the noumenal conception, the formula of the mental Brahman, we have not, then, yet reached the essential term of the reality of things.

Still, we have already in this triple formula of Mind, Life and Body, corrected by the statement of a more real and potent existence behind them, a sufficient present clue, at least, to the nature, the workings and the goal of mental life in this material universe. The basis of our existence here is Matter, but Matter with life and mind involved in it. Every cell of the human body, every fibre of bark & leaf, every grain of earth treasures in itself a secret life & mind, is the hiding-place of Prajapati, the cocoon of the eternal butterfly. In the lowest inert or inanimate status of matter just so much & such a nature of life-energy has been at work as is sufficient for the creation of its different forms and their maintenance & functioning in the convergent & divergent whirl and shock of all these cosmic forces, and this multiform correlation of an inert substance of energy and an apparently inanimate driving force of energy has constituted material being & established for its purposes both a general nature, swabhava or own being of matter and particular fixed processes of inherent self-action, the vratáni of the Veda, which present themselves to us as the eternal laws of physical Nature.

But since Life is involved in Matter, things cannot rest here: the Truth within things, the pure Idea at work in the world which, secret as well as mind & life in force of matter and form of matter, originates & guides evolution, demands & compels, perhaps by the pull from a higher world where life is the predominant power and basic principle, the evocation of an organised & self-fulfilling Life out of this inert substance and inanimate Life-force. That Life then eventually appears, but naturally &

necessarily, it comes as a stranger into its surrounding. Confronted there with a set of laws imposed by the native sovereign, not at ease with them as it would be with the processes of a world of which it was itself, from the beginning, the sovereign and omnipresent ruler & lawgiver, it has to work on the unfit & rebellious material to raise, vitalise & fit it for its own workings as a slave power or a subordinate energy. It has come in that process, like an alien invader & conqueror, to give and take, to make concessions, to conciliate its stubborn material in order eventually to dominate & use it. By slow processes, by long evolution, by multitudinous experiment Life arrives at the creation of a myriad forms of organised vitality in matter, in which the form has been trained & accustomed to bear & to answer to the workings of life in many varying degrees of intensity or complexity. But, in the end, Life itself has come to be fettered by its material. The processes of matter pursue it, enter into its action, encase and limit its processes. They are intolerant of any attempt to increase the complexity of the life-workings or to raise the intensity of its shocks beyond the limit of the rhythm already established between the form & its inhabitant. As a result of this resistance, the form tends to deteriorate or break in any upward or extensive endeavour. Ordinarily also, it comes about that the more intense & organised the life, the more brittle & easily disturbed in its functions becomes the material form which contains it, unless & until a new harmony is established, a new & higher or subtler rhythm effected.

But the upward evolutionary movement has only begun with the appearance of life; it is not ended. The Truth of things, the pure Idea at work in matter knows that Mind also is involved in Matter & the Truth of things demands & compels its evolution. It procures, again perhaps by the pull from a higher world where mind is the predominant power and basic principle, the liberation of this second and greater prisoner. Mind, like Life, appears but as a stranger and invader in a world in which it has to deal with already established processes of matter and already established processes of life in matter, and is not at ease with them as it would be with the processes of a world in which

it was from the beginning a sovereign and omnipresent ruler. Mind, like Life, has to raise its material, mentalise it & make it fit for its own workings, Mind, like Life, to make concessions & conciliate its material. By long evolution, by slow process & multitudinous experiment it arrives at the creation of manifold forms of organised mind consciousness in vitalised matter, which have been trained to harbour & bear its workings. But in the process Mind, like Life, has become to a large extent a slave to its instruments; the processes of matter & material life enter into its action, encase, condition and limit its workings, are intolerant of increasing complexity & intensity, tend to damage or break the form & the functions when subjected to the increasing demand, resist rapid progress. Here too, ordinarily, the more intense the mental action, the more highly organised its faculties, the more brittle and easily disturbed in their functions become the material form and the nervous life, its case & instruments, unless & until a new harmony is established & a new & higher or subtler rhythm effected.

It is now clear that the entire freedom and lordship in Nature of life over matter or of mind over living body can only come if one or more of three essential conditions is satisfied. The inhabitant principle must either develop such a form or establish such an essential harmony with its case & instruments or else get such a hold upon the lower principles that it can at once maintain them in perfect undisturbed existence and compel them to bear a wide, vast, richly filled, even perhaps an infinite intensity & complexity of the functionings of cosmic life-energy or cosmic mind-energy rushing upon its instrument, informing it and using it for its own delight of self-fulfilment. Such a form, such a harmony, such a hold, life would presumably possess in a world where it was the dominant factor, mind in a world similarly subject to its sovereignty. The Veda supposes such worlds to exist; it perceives several births, dwelling places, kingdoms, jana, kshitayah, rajansi,—to the kingdom of matter it gives the name of Bhu, to the kingdom of Life or Life-Consciousness the name of Bhuvan, to the kingdom of pure Mind the name of Swar. It supposes also that the powers of the higher worlds, figured in

the three & thirty gods of the Veda & their subordinate deities, support their representative and instrumental beings in Bhu and favour their attempt to establish an increasing & ultimately perfect similar mastery here for Life or Mind over the material world. For such a growth, such a perfection, the invasion [and] subjection of the lower by the higher principle is the first necessity. For we see that Matter here only realises its highest and most complex potentialities even of material development & organisation when it is invaded, possessed & raised by life, Life its highest & most complex potentialities even of vital development & organisation when it is invaded, possessed & raised by mind, and,—although, owing to our clumsy conceptions about mind, this is not so apparent to us,—Mind also can realise its highest & most complex potentialities even of mental development & organisation only when it is invaded, possessed & raised by that which is higher than itself.

Man is, here, the typical mental being. Imprisoned in the vitalised matter he has invaded & struggling, with his real being in Swar and aided by the gods of Swar, to impose the mastery of Mind on the material world, he has, for the achievement of his object, two alternative principles to follow, either to conquer matter by matter, life by life or else to get behind both of them, discover pure mind & its powers & apply them to his eternal object. His achievements in the struggle with the laws of physical Nature on the physical plane itself are even now considerable; he has been able to seize on her physical forces & harness them to processes & results which she with all her large & gigantic movements has never attempted,—and these processes & utilities are all of them stamped with the subtlety, regularity, & conscious purposefulness of liberated mind. Modern man has not yet succeeded in discovering or using the laws of Life, but there is no reason to suppose that he will not one day make that discovery also. The day must inevitably come when he will be able even to originate no less than to modify freely both plant life & animal life in matter & govern them for his purposes as he now originates mechanisms of material force and modifies & governs its currents, combinations and separate workings

so as to abridge distance, to invade the air, to economise the expenditure of his own life-energies or to serve a hundred other purposes of human construction, destruction or development. All these efforts are marked, however, by one characteristic & pregnant limitation — they proceed on the assumption that we can only master physical Nature by manipulating & turning against her laws, movements & processes which she herself has originally established for very different objects & to suit a very different status of world-existence. Even, therefore, in conquering, he is compelled to obey and to confine his achievement within the limited capacities of the physical instruments and the physical processes. Having passed in a curiously imperfect & illegitimate fashion beyond his original slavery to her simple & elemental workings, he is menaced with a worse slavery to his own monstrous mechanisms & in danger of missing the path of the Gods, following only the path of the Bhutas. The true process of enfranchisement is rather, having discovered [and] separated the life-principle & its workings from the material processes in which they are fettered so that our vital life & forces may be raised into a sufficient instrument for infinite Mind, having the true pranayama or control of his vital being, to discover & separate also the principle & workings of pure mind from both life & matter and use them for the attainment of an entire mastery over our internal & our external world. In the eyes of the Vedantin a little progress, a minor achievement on the real path is of more value in the end than the vastest & most airy achievements of modern Science. For the latter is only clanking of gymnastics in self-multiplied chains by a strong and agile prisoner, the former is a step, however faltering, on the true path of freedom.

Nevertheless, even if we could so master the laws of mind as to entirely control our vital & physical being & its environment, the end of God in man is not achieved; for we ought not only to control life & matter by mind, but mind by a higher principle. Mind can only become free by self-subjection to God above mind and without freedom there is no true mastery. Samrajya is unreal without Swarajya. Mind that has mastered its inferior

principles without obeying the law of a higher Truth, is figured for us in epos and Puran as the victorious Titan, Hiranyakashipu or Ravana,— victorious but doomed in the end to a sudden successful revolt of the lower principles or to direct destruction by Power descending from on high because the mastery it holds is artificial, mechanical, not the aim of Nature in the world & therefore, if eternalised, bound to obstruct the higher destinies of the race. What though it has enslaved the god to its will and compels fire to come at its need or wind to blow where it lists, what though it can control despotically men & things & events? It is not for all that divine nor free nor supreme. Essentially, it does with higher instruments what modern man is now accomplishing with lower instruments; it is using a mental instead of a physical machinery to establish a precarious, temporary & apparent mastery over Nature which only veils a more subtle & tyrannous form of subjection. The Daedalus who multiplies machines, is dependent on his creations, bound by his engines, often destroyed by them and in any case limited & shackled & his gains of one kind balanced by pauperisation in other directions. Not until we have gone beyond machinery, gained self-power, self-being, self-bliss of God, can we hold ourselves secure in the right path and fulfilled in the right object of our ascension. And for this reason, that mind is in its nature bound up with limitation & form and dependent on the centre from which it works. Universal Manas, like universal Life & universal Matter, exists indeed & contains all things in itself, but it contains without comprehending. Its nature is not comprehension, but division, & what it calls comprehension is merely the seizing on details, on fractions and arriving by addition or multiplication at their sum. The integer as mind sees it is not a true integer, for mind is essentially manas, that which measures, contains & is bound by its function of containing. It can by itself arrive only at a pluralist, not an essential unity, or else at a zero. If it passes out of limitation, out of its form, out of its centre, it must be either dissolved into Nirvana, dispersed into the chaos of its unformed & discriminate mental nature or reduced to quietism & immobility. Mind can either rest voiceless & actionless, lost

to itself, in the shantam Brahma or it can find itself in the ejad Brahma; but it cannot combine the two opposites, it cannot at once live in the silent stability of God & throw itself into the voiceful motion of things. That is a privilege of the divine and not of the mortal nature. Acting, mind must use the machinery of the triloka, the triple system of mind, life & matter & must submit to it while using it; it can get behind life & matter, it cannot get behind itself into the true & essential infinity. Therefore, of the soul seated in the triple principle, Shankara's dictum is entirely true that it can escape from bondage only by actionless quiescence of the mental self; Buddha's dictum is entirely justified that it cannot find any ultimate solution except by denying & annulling itself in an ineffable Nirvana. Bhrigu Varuni was not allowed by his father Varuna to rest in the formula of the mental Brahma. Sent back to the austerity of his self-contemplation he had to arrive at the perception no longer of the mind but of the pure Idea as the Sole Existence, Vijnanam Brahma.

We arrive, now, at states of being, consciousness & living experience which are far remote from ordinary human life & thinking, for the expression of which human language has neither been framed nor yet adapted. These higher states of being are the guha, the cavern or secret place, of Vedic imagery, and to express their knowledge & experience of them men have always been compelled to resort to arbitrarily conventional word symbols, parables or concrete metaphors which can only serve as hints, signposts, hieroglyphic figures, not as a means of adequate expression. Those who can divine & follow these signposts find the path for themselves & arrive in experience at the truths the figures are meant to indicate. We can only form some idea of the Vijnana by the use of language & terms which properly belong to mental being and thinking and may therefore when applied to another order of facts quite as easily mislead as help to right understanding. Experience is here the only sure means of knowledge; for we have reached a kingdom of being where already nature of knowledge is beginning to pass into nature of identity, separate consciousness of things into luminous oneness with things, basis of external or sensuous observation into basis

of internal self-identification and comprehension in a common self-existent & self-same truth of things.

Vijnana, like mind, is a principle fundamentally of knowledge, & not like life a principle of force, or like matter, a principle of substance. Force, knowledge & substance of being are the trinity constituting the activity of the divine Bliss of Being & Will to Becoming in the universe. In the system of Vedanta, pure Being exists as the background, beginning & foundation of all cosmic existence, containing in itself in eternal latency & potentiality of becoming all things that become or do not become in this universe. Becoming, or becoming of any form or force in the cosmos, is subject to the will of God or Brahman, that Unknowable which has manifested Itself in this fundamental term of Atman, Pure Being, Sad Brahman. Pure Being is Pure-Self-Awareness; Sat = Chit, — this is the first formula on which becoming depends. Atman extends itself in the secondary terms of Space & Time, which are conscious values of this biune Being that is Consciousness, Space in this formula representing the term of Being, Time the term of Consciousness; but when analysed or realised, they inevitably reduce themselves back into mere figures of extension of this Being-Consciousness & are seen to have no real existence in themselves. In an universe of consciousness-symbols, they are the first symbols. Chit or Self-Awareness of Brahman has again a double status, a status of rest in self-conscious being and a status of apparent motion in self-conscious being. In this double status it has the value in Conscious Being of a self-existent omnipotent Will manifesting in the extension of Brahman or retaining concealed in its unextension whatever it chooses in whatever process or order of things it prefers. Nimitta,⁷ process or order, figured in relation, succession & causality, is the third symbol of consciousness by which cosmos is rendered possible; for it makes possible arrangement of things in the idea of Space & arrangement of happenings in the idea of Time. Will is in its nature Power of Knowledge or Act of Knowledge; therefore,

⁷ The word nimitta means literally, measured arrangement; ordering in time & space is the essence of the concept of nimitta.

when analysed and realised, divine or cosmic Will is perceived to be Chid Brahman, self-conscious Being, Chaitanya, conscious Spirit, which takes into its possession in being of cosmic self-knowledge and effects in force of self-knowledge figures of Its own concealed & unknowable reality. We see, then, that all becoming in universe is a formal or symbolic manifestation of unknowable God or Brahman effected by Tapas, by the dwelling of self-knowledge on latent truth of being & the consequent forcing it out of its latency in figure of truth for the joy of God's cosmic self-knowledge. That which is to us unknowable X beyond thought & sensation is expressed here by Tapas of cosmic consciousness in theorem & formula of progression constituting the order of forms in the universe. The loosing of the latent out of latency by Tapas is the whole nature of creation in the idea of the Vedantin. The symbol of the creative Ishwara is always the Kavi, the poet-seer who by Tapas, by concentration of self-knowledge figured as creative Will, brings out from latency in his infinite unmanifest consciousness varied forms of himself. Therefore, it is said that when Brahma the Creator was born on the sea of essential substance, the kshirasamudra, it was in answer to a cry of OM Tapas, pealing out over the moveless ocean, that he set himself to the work of creation. The Kavi creates for his self-delight in self-expression and for no other reason. For when we say that the Will chooses, the Will prefers, when we speak of the icchashakti or omnipotent Will of God, we are expressing in terms of Force what is fundamentally in consciousness a movement of Delight or Ananda. For the nature of conscious-Being is bliss. That which the pure unrelated Sad Brahman, not looking towards cosmic self-expression, is aware of about Itself is unrelated self-Bliss; that which the creative Chid Brahman, looking towards cosmos, is aware of in the Sat, is the cosmic delight of self-expression in general & in particular symbols of consciousness, in extension of infinite being & conscious force & in their concentration into determined form of being & determined action of force. When we say that Brahman as Chaitanya, as Consciousness, dwells upon a figure of Itself & brings it out of its latency there where it dwells cavern-housed, guhahita, we

imply,— Chaitanya & Ananda, Consciousness & Bliss being one entity,— that Brahman as Ananda, as Self-Delight, fixes on that figure for Its symbolic self-expression. What God delights in, that is His will-to-be in cosmos, that becomes. In the more ancient Vedic terminology this divine principle of Ananda was designated sometimes as mayas, a word which means both love or joy and creative comprehension and sometimes as jana, a word which means at once delight, especially the delight of procreation, productiveness, birth and world. God's delight in things is their birth, their seed of production, their coming into world. Chit Tapas, Consciousness working as Will is the condition & agent of cosmic existence, Ananda is its cause.

Still, we do not yet see clearly what it is that brings about the difference between self-being & symbolic being or becoming. Where is the principle that bridges the gulf between the pure & the figured Brahman? Or what power of consciousness enables the formless to pour itself into forms? It is, says Vedanta, a special principle, a selective power of pure consciousness which all Being possesses, the principle, the faculty of Vijnana. Sacchidananda is a Trinity; Being is in its very essence Bliss [&] Consciousness, Consciousness is in its very essence Being & Bliss, Bliss is in its very essence Consciousness & Being. It is the faculty of Vijnana which, while always resting in their eternal, indefeasible & indivisible oneness, yet casts them into triune figures of being & originates in world their mutual play & their multiplicity. It is vijnana that expresses & arranges the cosmic self-expression of being by looking at Brahman now predominantly in one aspect, now predominantly in another aspect even while it perceives all the others inherently contained in the predominant self-conception. When the vijnana in us dwells thus on the principle of divine Ananda, we see & we work out all things in terms of Ananda; still we are aware all the time of the nature of Ananda as infinite Conscious-Being and the ideas of Consciousness & Being attend & support the Ananda & work themselves out through its workings. When the divine Idea dwells rather on the principle of divine Force or Will in us, then we see & we work out all things in the

terms of Force or Will; still the ideas of Consciousness & Bliss always attend & support Will & work themselves out through its workings. We see, then, that essentially Vijnana when analysed & realised reduces itself to the selective & disposing self-action of Chit-Tapas omnisciently aware of the eternally stable unity & eternally potential multiplicity of Brahman and omnipotently able to arrange the terms of that multiplicity from any & every standpoint of Brahman's self-consciousness. It is essential act of knowledge in an essential status of knowledge; its movement is not in the veiled objective manner of mental knowing, but a primary & comprehensive subjective movement in which universal Knowledge sees objects of itself within itself without any veil by reason of an essential identity in motional difference, self-aware self-existent inalienable identity manifested & not contradicted or abrogated [by] difference of form and action, just as a man sees his thoughts & his actions as movements of himself, as self-expression of himself in his own being. There are therefore three essential attributes of the Vedantic conception of vijnana. Vijnana is satyam; it is knowledge proceeding out of an essential identity of being & consciousness between the known & the knower,—the true ideal knowledge may come to a man either through identity of being with the object contemplated or through unity in consciousness with the object or through self-delight in the object, but always it will be self-revealing truth of fact, self-existent truth of being & not formed truth of thought or opinion. Vijnana is also brihat; it is knowledge comprehensive of & containing the object of knowledge in the knower; it possesses, it does not approach —its process moves from the essence to the appearance, from the unit to the parts, from the greater unit to the lesser unit, not from the attribute to the thing, from the fraction to the integer. Vijnana is ritam, is knowledge perfectly self-arranged & self-guided; spontaneously self-arranged in perception & in action spontaneously self-fulfilled through the law of inevitable manifestation of the Truth in its own nature & by its own force, it is the faultless instrument of an unerring omnipotence & omniscience. Satyam ritam brihat, the True, the Right, the

Large, describes God in His being of pure ideal knowledge and self-efficiency.

What is the practical value of this conception of vijnana? The thing we call mind is the knowledge of the individual about himself and of the world only as it affects or reaches his individual consciousness. It is the view of things which a man shut up in a dungeon with glazed & coloured windows may have about the world and his own dwelling place. In the colours of the senses he sees the objects outside, in the light of the few objects it sees through its small & scanty windows & by reasoning from their appearances mind forms its idea of the world; even of this house which it inhabits, it knows only one room with a locked door & all that is outside that door it can only guess at by analogy or infer from the sounds, smells, vibrations which come to its senses from the rest of the building or the occasional visits, messages & descriptions which it may receive from its other inhabitants. For it is now an ascertained truth even to modern psychological observation & experiment,— and was known thousands of years ago to the Vedantin,— that only a small part of our active conscious being is revealed to our waking mental consciousness; a vast amount of work of action, work of impulse, work of knowledge goes either under or above the lower & the upper level of our waking existence and faculty. In the nature of things, therefore, mental knowledge starts from limitation, lives in limitation & ends in limitation. It is dabhrām, alpam, says the Veda, not, like the vijnana, brihat; in its nature truncated, oppressed, little. We know nothing certainly except that certain phenomena present themselves in a certain regular way to our senses and are valid within certain limits for our life; on the basis of that sensational experience we can make out a practical rule and order of living. All the rest of mental knowledge may be described [as] a selection of probabilities out of a mass of possibilities. But because mental knowledge is limited & subject to mixed truth & error, therefore also the feelings & impulses of mind in man are subject to falsehood, error, wrong placement, corruption & perversion; in a word, to evil & sin. And since action is only a mechanical expression of mind and

feeling, his action also is subject to a resulting falsehood and wrong placement, to evil and sin. Ignorance of self & world is the original error; out of that seed proceeds all evil & suffering. Man, born as a mental being, cannot arrive at right action, right feeling, right knowledge; he can only struggle towards them and approximate to some blundering, limited & imperfect standard of right & truth formed by him out of his fixed notions and habitual feelings. These standards he is continually changing according to the shiftings of his knowledge & the circlings of his knowledge in pursuit of that eternal self-existent Truth & Right which the soul in him knows to exist but the mind & body in him fail to find and accomplish. For mind cannot see the Truth,—the goal & the condition of our journey,—it has to grope after it & feel it; for it has sense of things but not vision of things, mati, not drishti. It does not know the Right, the way of our journey, but has to seek for it; therefore it cannot proceed straight to its goal, but follows a devious & wandering journey. The lower mental life is not only dabhrām & alpam, says the Veda, but it is hvaram & vriyinam, in action of knowledge & action of heart & action of body a crooked going, not like the action of vijnana, riju, straight-moving.

We distinguish then between vijnana & manas. Vijnana is brihat, limitless & comprehensive in its nature and process, because free from individuality, apaurusheya, and universal in its movement and origin; therefore it is true, satyam, in essence and true, ritam, in arrangement. Mind is alpam, limited in its nature because proceeding from an individual centre [and] standpoint and bound in its movement and origin; therefore it admits of asatyam and anritam, error & falsehood or misplacement,—for all falsehood & error is misplacement of truth, all manas diverted action of vijnanam—in the essence & arrangement. Vijnana is, because ritam, therefore riju, right or rectum, the straight—because it is in its nature right arrangement in right being, therefore it proceeds straight by the right way to the right goal with an assured, luminous & self-existent rightness of impulse, rightness of feeling & rightness of action. Mind is hvara; not knowing but seeking, it gropes & circles through falsehood

either to truth or a worse falsehood; through sin & stumbling either to righteousness or to a worse sinfulness. Vijnana has for its process of knowledge drishti; thought of vijnana sees, it does not search; it starts from knowledge, it does not start from ignorance; it starts from the essence, not from the appearance; it begins with the essential truth, Brahman, & sees in it the general truth, the idea, the kavya of the kavi, which creates the mental, vital & material symbol, from the general truth it proceeds to detail & particular, from the idea to the working out of the idea in process, attribute, quality & variation. Reasoning in vijnana is only an arranged statement of already possessed knowledge; it is not a means of arriving at truth, but only of orderly stating of truth. Mind has for its process, mati; mind feels & senses, it does not see, for what it calls sight is only a form of touch or contact with its object from outside, not the internal knowledge of the object as a thing contained in the knower. It starts from ignorance & struggles towards knowledge, it grasps only appearance and can do no more than speculate about essence; starts from the fragments & pieces the whole, starts from the particular & perceives the general as a mental abstraction, not a living reality; proceeds from its abstract generalisation & infers essence but cannot come into the real presence of Being. Reasoning in mind is a statement of successive perceptions of data to arrive at a conditionally valid inference, not at a self-existent and for ever indubitable truth. Mind starts with a dark ignorance in the shape of non-knowledge or false knowledge & ends with a twilit ignorance in the shape of agnostic uncertainty.

Clearly, then, if this faculty of vijnana exists, is of this nature & has these relations to mind, then the path of our evolution and, consequently, also the right direction of our efforts is clear; it is, having exceeded nervous life & body, to exceed mind also and arrive at the culmination of right knowledge, right feeling, right works in the spontaneous & infinite mastery & liberty of the vijnana. It is rational to suppose that such a principle exists; for, given the existence of a self-existent Truth at all, supposing that all is not, as the Nihilistic Buddhist contends, a sensation-troubled void, then a self-acting faculty of knowledge

responding to & perceptive of the self-existent Truth is at least probable and seems to be demanded. If, moreover, we consent to the Vedantic idea of the world as a creative form & rhythm of consciousness, this logical probability becomes an obvious and inevitable necessity. Self-existent Truth of things can in that theory be nothing else than self-perceptive Truth of conscious being. The existence of a world of objects of universal consciousness arranged in fixed relations & processes presupposes the existence of this principle of Vijnana & therefore of the faculty of Vijnana. It may, however, be reasonably questioned whether, even if the faculty exists, it is not a divine privilege denied to man as much as to the tree and the insect. Is not man unchangeably a mental being, not only at present fixed in mind as his centre, but eternally imprisoned in it as his element, continent and condition of existence? But such a rigid limitation is inconsistent with what we know of man and of Nature. Nature moves by steps & gradations out of one stream of her movement into a higher law. She has established a rudimentary reason in the animal which has perfected itself in the supreme animal, man. Equally she has established a rudimentary form of vijnana in man which has to be perfected in the inevitable course of her evolution, and must perforce be perfected here in no other being than a supreme humanity or supreme man. She has first arranged an illegitimate form of vijnana in the intellect, the mental buddhi or human reason, which has all the movements of the vijnana, perception, arrangement, synthesis, analysis, but is unable to arrive at its proper methods & results because it limits itself to the province of the senses and has for its one right function to train these mental servants & purify them from the control of yet lower elements of our being, the grosser life functions, the body, the nervous heart-movements. Above the reason & sending down its higher rays into the human intellect she has seated the vijnana-buddhi, the intuitional mind. Animals have an intuitional sense, they have not the intuitional intellect; man has access to a true intuitional mentality, and there is his right door to release from subjection to the sensational mentality he shares with the lower creatures. When he has fulfilled reason,

— not before, — he has to surmount reason, to silence it just as reason has silenced the brute passions, and lift up its faculties nearer to their true nature, mode and function, to the intuitive mind, which then, unbesieged by the sense mind & the erring intellect, can receive the pure rays from above of the luminous & divine Vijnana.

The evolution of vijnana out of mind is inevitable for the same reason that the evolution of life out of matter was inevitable or the evolution of mind out of life, because the vijnana or pure Idea, already involved in matter, life and mind, demands & will procure, perhaps by the pull from a higher world where the Idea would be the dominant power & basic principle, its own release out of the limitations of sensational mentality. Just as we found matter to be a formation out of life-energy, & life-energy to be a formation out of mind, so mind is a formation out of vijnana. That which has constituted & governs stone or tree, animal or man, is not matter, nor life, nor mind, but the Idea involved in these three masks of conscious being. The idea of the tree in Brahman's consciousness is hidden involved in that form of life-energy which our senses see as a seed. In reality, the seed of the oak tree holds at the back of its intended evolution the potential seminality of all trees that have existed or can exist, because the Idea, the Brihat, by which it exists, is the Brahman in all Its vastness, Brahman whose process in Nature is to dispose variously one seed of things so as to form a myriad various existences. Ekam bijam bahudhá vidadháti. But by successive selective processes of vijnana the form specially fixed in the seed, inherent & latent in it & bound to develop out of it, is first tree and then oak tree. For this reason and no other, an oak tree & no other existence must develop out of the seed the earth has received. It is the involved Idea, is the Vijnana Consciousness of God, which dwells in the seed, has chosen and prepared this form and supports, governs & directs by the mere fact of its inherent existence there the processes, arrangements, life & functionings of the oak tree. We do not see this truth because the form God takes is still a material form without an organised mental consciousness. It is only when we arrive at

human life that, a little more clearly, & yet still very dimly, this truth begins to show itself. To our lower or material mind, for instance, a nation is an intellectual fiction; the reality is only a number of men agreeing for certain material ends to call itself a nation and living in an artificial idea of unity created by the associations born of a mere word. But, first, the intuition-sense we share with the animals by means of the emotional heart, then the reason seeking to find a cause, a formula and justification for the vitality of the nation-idea and, finally, the intuitive mind, looking behind the phenomena of the senses, begin to draw near to the real truth. In real truth a nation is an existence in the universal Consciousness, an Idea-Force in the universal Will that is knowledge, not constituted by geographical boundaries, nor by a given sum or combination of human units, nor by a common language, religion, custom, laws, government,—for all these conditions may be satisfied without a nation existing or dispensed with or exceeded without the nation ceasing to exist,—but created by the idea & living in the idea. Born of the idea in the Brahman, it exists by the force of the idea and only so long as that force supports it & needs the form for its self-fulfilment; the force withdrawn, the form departs into the general Idea force which is constantly grouping men and animals, plants & worlds into figures of corporative Brahman-consciousness, and entering into it either there dissolves or waits for fresh emergence in other time, place & conditions. What is true of the corporate mind-life of the nation is true of the individual mind-life also, of man, the animal, tree, stone, insect. “From the Idea all these existences were born; being born, by the idea they live; to the idea they pass away & enter in.” But not till man appears in the material world, does it begin to be possible for the Idea to produce a form of mind, life and body which will be able to house & express the vijnanamaya ideal being, the god in the universe and can be prepared to bear the activity of a divine force & divine joy and, breaking the walls of the mental ego, enlarge into the wideness of a cosmic consciousness. The gods, it is said in the Upanishad, presented by the Spirit with successive forms of animal life for their habitation, returned always the answer, “This is not enough

for us." Only when human life appeared, did they utter the cry of assent, "This indeed is well & wonderfully made," and enter satisfied into their fit dwelling. But to fulfil the great purpose of its being, humanity has first to learn how to break down the dungeon of mind and unlocking the doors of the one room in its dwelling-place vindicate for himself a free movement in his seven storied mansion. By passing from mind to vijnana, he will possess in his nature that toward which he now only gropes & aspires, a being that has conquered the limitations of ego, a cosmic knowledge that looks at truth direct & unveiled, a perfectly tuned heart whose emotions & impulses are in harmony with the diviner truth of things, an inner & outer action which, free from the duality of sin & virtue, is unstumbling in its spontaneous movement, confident in its pure & inalienable joy, self-effective of its own God-given objects without passing through the pangs of personal desire, straining and disappointment born of wrong aim, wrong method or wrong emotional reaction. Human life & being will then be moulded into the forms of the satyam, ritam, brihat. For man knowing himself & the world, man will work out his life spontaneously as the sun moves or the oak tree grows, by the force of the idea working out the swabhava, own nature, own or proper becoming. For dharma, right life & action in man and in every other existence, is swabhavaniyatam karma, works directed & governed by the inborn nature to fulfil the divine idea symbolised in the type & embodied in the individual. But in the sun & oak tree it works mechanically without an organised consciousness & joy of the work expressed in the form inhabited. Man fulfilled will enjoy consciously the perfect workings of God's Prakriti in him.

The Life Divine

[Draft C]

Chapter II

The perfect truth of the Veda, where it is now hidden, can only be recovered by the same means by which it was originally possessed. Revelation and experience are the doors of the Spirit. It cannot be attained either by logical reasoning or by scholastic investigation,— na pravachanena, na bahuná srutena . . . na tarkenaishá matir apaneyá. “Not by explanation of texts nor by much learning” . . . “not by logic is this realisation attainable.” Logical reasoning and scholastic research can only be aids useful for confirming to the intellect what has already been acquired by revelation and spiritual experience. This limitation, this necessity are the inexorable results of the very nature of Veda.

It is ordinarily assumed by the rationalistic modern mind, itself accustomed to arrive at its intellectual results either by speculation or observation, the metaphysical method or the scientific, that the sublime general ideas of the Upanishads, which are apparently of a metaphysical nature, must have been the result of active metaphysical speculation emerging out of an attempt to elevate and intellectualise the primitively imaginative and sensational religious concepts of the Veda. I hold this theory to be an error caused by the reading of our own modern mental processes into the very different mentality of the Vedic Rishis. The higher mental processes of the ancient world were not intellectual, but intuitive. Those inner operations, the most brilliant, the most effective, the most obscure, are our grandest and most powerful sources of knowledge, but to the logical reason, have a very obscure meaning and doubtful validity. Revelation, inspiration, intuition, intuitive discrimination, were the capital processes of ancient enquiry. To the logical reason of

modern men revelation is a chimera, inspiration only a rapid intellectual selection of thoughts or words, intuition a swift and obscure process of reasoning, intuitive discrimination a brilliant and felicitous method of guessing. But to the Vedic mind they were not only real and familiar, but valid processes; our Indian ancients held them to be the supreme means of arriving at truth, and, if any Vedic Rishi had composed, after the manner of Kant, a Critique of Veda, he would have made the ideas underlying the ancient words drishti, sruti, smriti, ketu, the principal substance of his critique; indeed, unless these ideas are appreciated, it is impossible to understand how the old Rishis arrived so early in human history at results which, whether accepted or questioned, excite the surprise and admiration even of the self-confident modern intellect. I shall try to show at a later stage what I hold to be, in the light of the psychological experience of Yoga, the exact processes involved in these ancient terms and their practical and philosophical justification. But, whatever the validity attached to them or the lack of validity, it is only by reproducing the Vedic processes and recovering the original starting point that we can recover also whatever is, to the intellect, hopelessly obscure in the Veda and Vedanta. If we know of the existence of a buried treasure, but have no proper clue to its exact whereabouts, there are small chances of our enjoying those ancient riches; but if we have a clue, however cryptic, left behind them by the original possessors, the whole problem is then to recover the process of their cryptogram, set ourselves at the proper spot and arrive at their secret cache by repeating the very paces trod out by them in their lost centuries.

All processes of intellectual discovery feel the necessity of reposing upon some means of confirmation and verification which will safeguard their results, deliver us from the persistent questioning of intellectual doubt & satisfy, however incompletely, its demand for a perfectly safe standing-ground, for the greatest amount of surety. Each therefore has a double movement, one swift, direct, fruitful, but unsafe, the other more deliberate and certain. The direct process of metaphysics is speculation, its confirmatory process is reasoning under strict

rules of verbal logic; the direct process of science is hypothesis, its confirmatory process is proof by physical experiment or by some kind of sensational evidence or demonstration. The method of Veda may be said to have in the same way a double movement; the revelatory processes are its direct method, experience by the mind and body is the confirmatory process. The relation between them cannot, indeed, be precisely the same as in the intellectual methods of metaphysics & science; for the revelatory processes are supposed to be self-illuminating and self-justifying. The very nature of revelation is to be a supra-intellectual activity occurring on the plane of that self-existent, self-viewing Truth, independent of our searching & finding, the presumed existence of which is the sole justification for the long labour of the intellect to arrive at truth. In Veda drishti & sruti illumine & convey, the intellect has only to receive & understand. Experience by the mind & body is necessary not for confirmation, but for realisation in the lower plane of consciousness on which we mental and physical beings live. We see a truth self-existent above this plane, self-existent in the satyam ritam brihat of the Veda, the True, the Right, the Vast which is the reality behind phenomena, but we have to actualise it on the levels on which we live, levels of imperfection & uncertainty, striving & seeking; otherwise it does not become serviceable to us; it remains merely a truth seen and does not become a truth lived. But when we moderns attempt to repeat the Vedic revelatory processes, experience by the mind and body becomes an indispensable confirmatory process, even a necessary preliminary process for their acquisition; for the use of these supreme instruments of intuitive & revelatory knowledge is naturally attended, for those to whom the intellect is and has always been the chief and ordinary mental organ, by dangers and difficulties which did not to the same extent pursue the knowledge of the ancient Rishis. To them it was natural in its possession, easily purified in its use; to us it is a difficult acquisition, hampered in its use by the interference of the lower movements. Experience is, for us, indispensable; we may not be certain of excluding by its means all false sight and false intuition, but we can correct much that has been imperfectly seen

and confirm beyond the possibility of all intellectual scepticism that which does clearly come down to us as illumination from our Higher self to be confirmed in life & experience, constantly and regularly, by our lower instruments.

We have, for instance, the remarkable passages in the Isha Upanishad about the sunless worlds, the luminous lid concealing Truth, the marshalling & concentration of the rays of Surya & his goodliest form of all, that form which, once seen, leads direct to the supreme realisation of oneness, So'ham asmi. Our intellect sees in these expressions a brilliant poetry, but no determinable philosophical sense; yet no one can follow thoughtfully the succession of the phrases without feeling that the Seer of the Upanishad did not really intend to lead up to the direct clarity of his supreme philosophical statement by a flight of vague poetical images; he has a more serious meaning, detailed, definite, precise, pregnant, in the carefully arranged procession of these splendid images. How are we to discover it? Using the scholastic method we may hunt for a clue in the other Upanishads; we may find it or imagine we have found it and by the aid of speculative inference and a liberal dose of fancy we may construct a brilliant or even a plausible theory of the Rishi's meaning. Or, without any such clue, by the aid of a clear intelligence and putting together of the ascertainable ideas of Veda or Vedanta, we may fix a meaning which will adequately explain the text, fit into the course of the argument and, in addition, justify itself by shedding light on other passages where there is a reference to the Sun, to its rays or to its revelatory function. These means, however, can only conduct us to a plausible hypothesis, a twilight certainty, or at most a convincing probability. Nor, in this passage at least, will the metaphysical methods of Shankara at all assist us; for it is a question not of metaphysical logic but of the meaning of an ancient symbol, the connotation of certain antique figures. On the other hand, if we have been able to revive by Yoga the old methods used by the ancients themselves, we may, either in the ordinary course of our experiments or guided by the suggestion of the Upanishad, arrive at the actual experiences on which, in Vedic times, the use of this symbol and

these figures was founded. We may perceive in our own selves the interposition of the golden vessel, the action of the rays, their disposition, their concentration; we may have the vision of the goodliest form of all, tejo yat te rupam kalyanatamam, and know, by luminous experience, the link between that vision and the realisation of the supreme Vedantic truth, So'ham asmi. We shall then be certain of our knowledge, our unity with the one & only existence. If the ancient ideas of our psychology are correct, by process of revelation and intuition we could have arrived at the same results; the old Rishis, accustomed to use that process habitually and follow its progressive action with as much surety and confidence as we follow the steps of a logician, would have needed nothing more for certainty, though much more for realisation; but we, habitually intellectual, pursued into the higher processes, when we can arrive at them, by those more brilliant and specious movements of the intellect which ape their luminosity & certainty, could not feel entirely safe & even, one might say, ought not to feel entirely safe against the possibility of error. The confirmation of experience is needed for our intellectual security.

This method, by which, as I hold, the meaning of Veda can alone be entirely recovered, is, then, a process of psychological experiment and spiritual experience aided by the higher intuitive or revelatory faculties,—the vijnana of Hindu psychology,—of which mankind has not yet, indeed, anything but a fitful and disordered use, but which are capable of being, within certain limits, educated and put into action even in our present transitional & unsatisfactory stage of evolution. It differs from the method by which the ancient Rishis received Vedic truth,—revelation confirmed by experience,—only by the side of approach which must be for us from below, not from above, and the weight of the emphasis which must rest for a mentality preponderatingly intellectual and only subordinately intuitive, on experience more than on intuition. For the rest, the common consent of humanity has agreed that only by higher than intellectual faculties can the truths of a supra-human or supersensuous order, if at all they exist, be really known. Religion,

except in ethical & rationalistic creeds like Buddhism and Confucianism which have put aside all such questionings as outside the human domain, has always insisted that revelation is the indispensable angel and intermediary and the intellect at best only its servant, assistant and pupil. Science & rationalism have virtually agreed to this distinction; they have accepted the idea that all knowledge, which does not reach us through the doors of the senses and, on its arrival, submit its pretensions to the judgment of the reason, is incapable of solution by the intellect; but they add that, for this very reason, precisely because the senses are our only doors of experience and the reason our only safe counsellor, the questions raised by religion and metaphysics are utterly vain and insoluble; they relate either to the unknowable or the non-existent; either the material only exists, or, if there is any other existence, the material only can be known and therefore alone exists for the purview of humanity. As man marches upon the dust and is circumscribed by the pressure of the terrestrial atmosphere, so also his thought moves only in the material ether and is circumscribed within the laws & results of material form and motion. Recently we see, even in Europe or chiefly in Europe,—for Asia is too busy imitating Europe of yesterday to perceive whither Europe of today is tending,—a revolt against this arbitrary denial of the rarest parts of human experience. The existence of the supra-sensuous & the infinite is reconquering belief and, at the same time, it is coming again to be admitted that there are faculties of intuitive & supra-rational knowledge which answer in the domain of Consciousness to these supra-sensuous facts of the domain of Being. The belief & the admission go together rationally. For to every order of facts in Nature there should be in the same Nature, inevitably, a corresponding order of faculties in knowledge by which they can be comprehended; if we have no certain knowledge of the facts, it is because we have not as yet the clear and steady use of the faculties.

In three of the external aids by which Veda has been perpetuated in India, religion, Yoga, the guru-parampara, this fundamental principle is amply admitted. Religion starts from

revelation; it rests upon spiritual and moral experience. Yoga, admitting the truth of verbal revelation, the word of God & the word of the Master, yet starts from experience and rises, as a result of experimental development by fixed methods, to the use of intuitive and revelatory knowledge. The Guru-parampara starts with the word of the Guru, accepted as the knowledge of one who has seen, and proceeds to personal mastery by the experience of the disciple who may indeed go beyond his master & even modify his knowledge, but is not allowed to disown his starting-point. But there is one of our great Indian spiritual activities which has developed progressively in the direction of rationalistic methods and given the responsibility for nine-tenths of its work in these supra-sensuous fields to the very organ, pronounced by the consensus of human opinion insufficient for such inquiries,—the intellect. It is in Darshana, in the path of metaphysics, that this paradoxical phenomenon has been permitted. It is true that our metaphysical thinkers, unlike the European, do not launch themselves into the full flood of metaphysical rationalism; they hug the coast. They admit the supreme authority of revelation, but only of verbal revelation, of the spoken Veda. But the sense and the bearing of the Vedic text has long been doubtful and warring philosophies have founded themselves on the sacred Word; how is doubt to be resolved, dispute to be decided? By appeal to other texts? But if there is still dissonance, not entire consonance? By the aptavakya, the word of the fit authority. If that fails or there is, here also, a conflict? By logic; the intellect is called in as the arbiter of the sense of the Sruti. The word of the adept, the aptavakya, is admitted; but different Masters seem to have taught different doctrines. Who or what is to decide? Let it be settled by logical argument. Once more the intellect is called in as supreme judge; neither the Sruti, nor aptavakya, but logical judgment becomes the real master of our knowledge. Psychological experience also is admitted in certain fields of the argument; but men have different experiences, even different ultimate experiences. Adwaita asserts the pure self as an ultimate experience of consciousness; Buddhism denies it, holds it to be an illusion and goes beyond to the experience of

psychological Nothingness. Yet again, logical argument is called in to decide the question. Therefore we find that our metaphysical method of arriving at the higher truth is practically,—though in theory this is subject to certain qualifications,—as much an intellectual & logical method as the method of European metaphysics or the method of scientific rationalism. Only, the Indian metaphysician admits certain data, values certain orders of evidence, which are ruled out of court as invalid or irrelevant by European thinkers. The scientific rationalist observes the sensible facts of life & Nature; these are the data on which alone he feels himself entitled to build his conclusions. The European metaphysician observes the general facts of sensible existence and adds to them the study of words, abstract concepts & categories which answer to no concrete existence, but are the general forms into which human thought has cast itself; these vast nebulae are the metaphysician's data. It is in this ethereal void that he disports himself in a grandiose freedom. The Indian thinker adds to the generalities of natural phenomenon and the abstractions of thought two other classes of evidence, the facts of psychological experience and the word of the revealed Scripture or of competent authorities. But he uses them sparingly & as a last resort. All that is really solid in our metaphysics (I except Patanjali's Yoga Shastra which stands by itself in the six Darshanas,) consists in its parts of logical inference and analogy;—we value in it not what it builds on revelation & experience, but its strenuous manner of justifying certain great assertions of Veda & high experiences of spiritual seekers by the reason and by logical disputation. The method of Darshana, the way of Shankara and Buddha, although it works round and upon certain grand psychological experiences, Maya, Nirvana, is essentially speculative and logical, not intuitive and experiential.

How came this method to be substituted for the old Vedic tradition and what is its real validity? The question has a great practical importance; for every Indian thinker¹ who approaches

¹ The only exception, to my knowledge, is Swami Vivekananda and even he has not entirely escaped the necessity of his environment.

these questions feels himself naturally impelled to be metaphysical in his method or his atmosphere and follow, with whatever modern variations, the path of Shankara, Buddha and the Sankhyas. The way of knowledge has become in India the way of metaphysical disquisition. Are we really bound to continue this tradition or is the more ancient method also the right method, to which humanity must eventually return; and, if so, what have we gained or lost by this more than millennial substitution of speculation for revelation and verbal logic for actual experience? The substitution itself has come about by a powerful general movement of humanity, simultaneous throughout the world, although it most thoroughly affected Greece and through Greece extended to the general temperament & thought of modern Europe. It cannot quite be said that Greece invented the intellect or the intellectual temperament, but it is certain that the Hellenic race first began the application of reason, inexorably, to the remoulding of thought & life in the temperament of intellectuality. Mankind can never be wholly rational, because our race is essentially built up of various elements, none of which can be eliminated from its system of being. It is our nature to be physical, animal, emotional & sensational as well as intellectual and the coldest thinker or most inexorable rationalist cannot escape from the constitution of our common nature. But mankind, under the great impulse which overtook it at a certain stage of its conscious activity, felt the need of rationalising, as far as that could with safety be done, its other irrational members, the heart, the senses, the life-action, even the body. This tendency, pursued simultaneously by Graeco-Roman civilisation, by Confucian China, by philosophical & Post-Buddhist India, combated in India by the vitality of Yoga and religion, in Europe by the great united floods of barbarism and Catholic Christianity, has finally triumphed and reached a pitch of success, an extent of victorious propagation which, in human movements, is usually the precursor of arrest and decay. The movement of pure intellectualism has itself, indeed, no clear premonition of its own end. It hopes to conquer, to perpetualise itself, to bring under its sway the nations that are still exempt from its yoke

or only imperfectly subdued to it; outwardly it seems to be on the point of success. It still holds the mind of Europe, although the soul of Europe begins to attempt uneasily an escape from its narrowing rigidity & dryness; it has seized on Mongolian Japan & is revivifying the traditional intellectualism of China by a flood of fresh ideas, by the inspiration of a new & wider horizon; it has touched already the Mahomedan world; the political subjugation of India has been followed by a pervasive invasion of European intellectualism which is striving hard to substitute itself progressively for the ancient law & nature of our Indian temperament and being. But these manifestations, however overwhelming in appearance, however conclusive they seem of approaching victory, conceal the seeds of a profound revolution in the inverse sense. An outward conquest is often the means of an inward defeat. What is happening now, has happened before on a smaller scale and under less developed conditions. When the combined intellectuality of Greece and practical materialism of the Latins, supported by the conquering military force of the Roman Republic and Empire, came into contact with the old tradition of Asia, the result was the collapse of the politically victorious civilisation under the assault of an Oriental religion which in its tenets & methods not only exceeded but trampled alike on the vital force of the body & on the free play of the intellect, alike on Greece & on Rome. And it was from a part of Asia which underwent directly the Roman yoke, but persisted with the most deep-rooted perseverance in its spiritual traditions that the revanche proceeded; conquered Judaea took captive the victorious civilisation. Once more Europe, much more profoundly intellectualised, much more profoundly materialised in its intellectualism, throws itself upon Asia with a yet more supreme military force, compelling a yet more widespread political subjugation; once more a penetrating eye can discover the preparation of the same result obscurely outlining itself behind the deceptive appearances of the moment. The first effect on the West from this impingement of the mental atmosphere of Europe on the mental atmosphere of Asia and the breaking down of the walls that separated them has been the

revival of the invincible intuitionism of the Aryan or Aryanised races. The philological tripartite division of the Old World into the Aryan, Semitic & Mongolian peoples, even if it be ethnologically untenable, does correspond roughly to real divisions in the cultural temperament of the human race, the result much less of original race than of historical formations & past influences. The Mongolian is predominantly intellectual, his lower nature is largely tamed & rationalised, the intuitive parts of his mind are slow and their beats tepid in their impulse; there is much less in his temperament to resist the intellectualising process of rationalism than in any other portion of humanity; in the Semite intellect is subordinated, he is intuitive, but intuitive through his lower members only, with as much of the higher activity as the heart & senses allow; the Aryan is intuitive either directly or through and by the heart and the intellect. The Aryan is therefore unfitted by his temperament to persevere in the relentless rationalising of our whole being; always there comes a time when he pauses, listens to a voice within that he has disregarded and, convinced by that inner daemon, departs from the paths hewn for him by the sceptical intellect with the same speed and enthusiasm with which he has followed their straight & level vistas. The very nations which are today the hope of a purely intellectual civilisation, hold in themselves that which can never remain satisfied with the pure reason, and this ineradicable betraying force is now being powerfully stimulated by the mental currents which for almost a century have been consciously or subconsciously reaching Europe with a slowly increasing force from the East. Therefore, the repetition, no doubt in a very different form & to very different issues, of the miracle of Christianity is psychologically inevitable.

If indeed, as modern thought imagines, intellectual reason were the last & highest term of evolution, this consummation need not have been inevitable, or, if inevitable, it would have been deplorable; for perfection depends on the rule of our highest member over its inferior cohabitants. But our evolution is only the progressive unfolding of our nature and faculties, & in the list of those faculties reason does not hold the highest

place; it is not even a separate and independent power, but a link, servant and intermediary. Its business, when it is allowed to rule, is to train the lower man so as to make him a fit vessel for an activity higher than its own. The animal is content to follow his impulses under the flashlight of instinct. If ever, as is likely, there was a time when man also was a supreme animal, he must have been guided by an instinct different, perhaps, in its special kind but as trustworthy as animal instinct & of the same essential nature. It was, then, the development in us of that reason which we see ill developed in the animal which deprived man of his sure animal instinct & compelled him to seek for a higher guide. Everything goes to show that he must have sought it at first in the lower intuition & revelation which works in the heart, the aesthetic impulses, the senses. Again, it is the insistent development of reason that has served to make him dissatisfied with these powerful, but still inferior guides. But not until reason, without lapsing back to the lower movements, yet becomes permanently dissatisfied with its own limitations, can it fulfil its work of preparation. For there is a faculty in us superior to the rational, there is that direct seeing & touch of things which shows itself in the higher revelation & intuition & works obscurely, like a fire enveloped in smoke, in the phenomena of intellectual genius & unusual personality. Beyond direct seeing there is a faculty of direct being, if I may so express it, which, if we can entirely reach & hold to it, makes us one with God, brahmabhúta, can reveal in this material life the perfection of Brahman as it is intended to be manifested in humanity, so that man on the human level, in the human cadre, becomes perfect as God is perfect. The intellect itself cannot reach these heights. It can only discipline, chasten & prepare the lower members to receive & hold without harm or disintegration that higher force which has alone the power to raise us to the summits. In the intellectual ages of mankind, reason forgets these limitations; it tries to do a double work, to judge correctly all the knowledge which presents itself to the sensorium & its instruments and also to know things directly & in their essence. The former is its legitimate work & deserves the name of Science; the latter is

an illegitimate attempt to go beyond its sphere and conceals an error under the name of Metaphysics. The intellect can know & judge phenomena; by its labour in examining them it arrives, in spite of much presumption & error, at a considerable number of phenomenal certainties; but it cannot know & judge the essence of things; by attempting to examine that field, whether unaided or as the principal inquirer, it only arrives, if it is honest with itself, at this one truth, that it can be certain of nothing; — all the rest is appearance, asseveration or opinion. We can know things as they seem to be in the order of the physical Nature in which they live; by the reason we cannot be sure what anything is, in itself, in that order of realities of which physical Nature is only the external seeming. Therefore the last refuge of reason, when it becomes conscious of its blunder, is to deny that such an order of realities exists at all, & to confine itself to the knowledge of material & phenomenal certainties. But such a restriction of knowledge brings with it a lowering, narrowing & petrifying of our humanity, because contrary to the whole nature and ineradicable tendency of our kind & sure therefore to falsify & slow down the springs of our action & being. Therefore Nature, mightier & wiser than the Scientist, compels man to revolt against the cold & debasing tyranny of a negative scepticism. She compels him back to the way to his internal skies & compels him to recover, in whatever new terms, the promise of his Scriptures & his Gospels. She makes him listen again for some indirect echo, if not for the actual resonance of the eternal, immutable chant, the ever-rhythmic unwritten Veda.

The European attempt must, therefore, come to nought the moment it is brought face to face, as daily it is being brought more & more nearly face to face with its own inalienable insufficiency. The tradition of Asia will again impose itself on humanity, & it is probable that it will be again a country politically subject to Europe but more than any other tenacious of its spiritual temperament & tradition, which will be the instrument of the revanche. But the revelation that will conquer this time the forces of material rationalism must be one which includes the intellect in exceeding it, fulfils, not annuls it; for the conditions

demand this greater consummation. In the Roman days the intellect was attacked before its constructive work had proceeded beyond the first insufficient paces; today the intellect has done its constructive work and the work must be accepted. It is India alone that can satisfy this double claim of the human reason & the divine intelligence; & the new reconquest will differ as much and in the same way from the old as India differs from old Judaea.

It is true that in this country the reason has never fulfilled itself, triumphed & held undisputed sway to the same extent as in modern Europe. If we take in its general results in India the great intellectual movement of humanity, we see that it broke up & scattered about in fragments the ancient catholic tradition & knowledge, placed its stamp on much that yet remains, destroyed a great deal which it could not assimilate, left a little surviving under veils & in our remote & secret places. On the mental temperament of our people, the long struggle had a disastrous effect; for it has deprived all except the few of the higher supra-intellectual inner life of our forefathers, it has made impossible any general resort to that discipline which gave them the use to a certain extent, at least, of the higher intuitive mentality, the satyadrishti, the direct sight, and has driven the many to be content rather with the irregular intuitions of the heart, the aesthetic faculties & the senses; we have kept those faculties which receive the actual touch of the higher truth obscurely, with the eyes of the intellect closed but lost those which receive them directly, with the eyes of the intellect open and luminously transmitting them to the mind imprisoned in matter. We have therefore neither been able to organise the intellectual efficiency of the Europeans, nor retain the principles of inner greatness known to our forefathers. Nevertheless, we still have among us important remnants of the old knowledge & discipline & we have firm hold in our schools of Yoga on the supreme means by which its lost parts can be recovered. The key of a divine life upon earth lies, rusted indeed in an obscure corner of our mansion, used only by a few, but still it lies there & is still used. It has to be singled out from amid much waste matter, made

fit for complete & general use and given freely to mankind. We have kept, fortunately, the intuitionist temperament to which its use is easy & natural. The failure of the intellect to assume complete sway and entirely rationalise our life, was a necessary condition for the preservation of that temperament, itself necessary for the appointed work & God-decreed life of our nation. On the other hand, the indispensable work of Buddha and his predecessors & successors has not been entirely lost on our nation. Their great movement which denied, limiting itself in rationality, the capacity or the need of the human mind to know beyond the laws of phenomena, seized in metaphysical philosophy upon only so much as was necessary for conduct, sought to establish on pure logic & reason the few fundamental principles it needed and, feeling obscurely the necessity of completing itself by physical science, as soon as it entered that field, far outpaced the accomplishment of Europe or Arabia, ended in a defeat & collapse necessary for the final salvation of humanity. Its defeat necessitated in the divine scheme the later arrival in India of an intellectual & rationalistic civilisation, armed, organised, politically dominant, culturally aggressive, so that we might be forced, against our will & natural tendency, to hear from the rational intellect that which it was entitled to say to us & to perceive at last that the indirect & inferior intuition, great, divine & inspiring as it is in its more intense individual results, is still insufficient for humanity & that we must turn back to a higher guide & recover a lost & superior state. When, without falling into the European error, we have recognised this truth,—and the logical & rationalistic capacity developed in us by Buddha & Shankara gives us the power to recognise it & the tendency,—we shall be ready both for our national survival and for that greater world-work for which, alone among the nations, we keep still the necessary materials and the necessary capacity. Children of the Rishis, not entirely disinherited, repositories of the Veda, still clinging to our trust, we alone can recover in our experience its half lost truths for the growing need of humanity. We have acquired, too, by our long philosophical discipline, the power of stating supra-intellectual knowledge in that language

of the intellect on which the modern world insists as the proper vehicle of understanding and the first condition of acceptance.

We can see, from this point of view, the causes of the general substitution of the logical & speculative method for the intuition & experiential; it was an incident in the inevitable recurrence of one of those periods in which pure intellectuality dominates & which have for their function to refine & chasten the lower nature in the general mass of humanity. We can see what we have gained,—the power of ratiocination, the openness to the processes of reason, the ability to express intellectually—so far as that is possible—supra-intellectual knowledge & experience, the control of the lower members by the reason. We can see, too, the natural limitations of the intellect & the inevitably inferior validity of the metaphysical method to the experiential in the attempt to grasp the truths of Veda, in that the certainty of these truths cannot be acquired either by speculation or logic. We can see how this inferiority has worked for the obscuration or elimination of much that was potent, active & living in the more ancient knowledge; for the intellect tends to reject in its self-confidence what it cannot grasp & define, just as the heart tends to reject in its self-will what it does not desire or enjoy; yet what the intellect cannot grasp & define, includes often the most valuable parts of experience and knowledge.

The seeds of this movement of the intellect are contained in the Sanhitas & Upanishads themselves, although the movement itself is foreign to the Scriptures. The Sanhitas are Karmakanda; their object is not the enunciation of the general Truths of Brahman, but the practice of its particulars; they are the perfect monuments, sufficient to themselves, of especial moments, stages, movements in the progress of the individual towards his divine goal; they are instruments by thought & speech for the stabilisation of his increasing gains in light, force & joy; they are the praise & invocation of the gods who preside over particular functioning in our nature & in world-nature; they are statements of experience packed full of psychological detail and minute spiritual realisation, which confirm the seer & help the seeker. They are truth of experience & have therefore no room

for speculation; they are ascertained truth & give therefore no room to doubt, debate & logical reasoning. But there are passages, rare seeds of the method pursued by the Upanishads, in which a general question is put and the suggestion of an answer offered. The Upanishads, on the contrary, are Jnanakanda; they have for their object the enunciation of the Truth of Brahman & the fundamental principles of Brahman's self-manifestation in universe. But with one remarkable exception they do not use, in order to arrive at this truth, these principles, the method of logical reasoning. Unlike the Sanhitas, they admit, not so much of doubt, as of debate; they move by positive questioning and the positive answer to questioning. But, again, the answer to questioning does not move by logic either in its inception, in its process or in its consummation. When Yajnavalkya holds his grand debate with the Brahmavadins at the court of King Janaka, when the proud Balaki vails his pride to the superior knowledge of King Ajatashatru, it is not by the field of logic or with the arms of metaphysic disquisition that they encounter each other. The question one puts to another is not "What thinkest thou of this?" but "What dost thou know?" and he whose knowledge proves to be deeper than his adversary's, is the conqueror in the discussion. Nor has this superior knowledge been arrived at by a more just or a more brilliant speculation, but by deeper sight, by a more powerful concentration. He has arrived at it, tapas taptwa; that is the method laid down by Varuna to his son Bhrigu in the Taittiriya Upanishad; for, he adds, tapo Brahma, Tapas is Brahman. Tapas, in other words, is the dwelling of the soul on its object, by which Brahman originally created the world through vision — sa ikshata — saw Itself, that is to say, as world & what It saw, became, — the dwelling of the soul on its object whether, prospectively, in creative vision, outwardly realising, as the poet & the genius of action dwells, or, retrospectively, in perceptive vision of the thing created, inwardly realising, as the prophet dwells; tapas is the very foundation of the method of revelation & intuition. Therefore, as in the acquisition of knowledge, speculation & logic are not used, so also in the imparting of knowledge, disquisition and logic are not used.

The thing has been seen by the seer, he is the drashta & to him Veda is drishti; it is spoken to the hearer & he sees, indirectly, through the medium of the word what the seer has seen by the self-vision, directly; to the hearer, Veda is Sruti. Yajnavalkya speaks his knowledge, his adversaries do not dispute it; they, too, see, being themselves habituated to these supreme processes, and the thing seen they silently & without debate acknowledge. If they are to dispute, since dispute is only a comparison of knowledge, of sight, of Veda, of drishti,² they must themselves first see farther, more profoundly, more subtly; and to see farther, they must first plunge into farther tapas, remain long constant in a farther dwelling of the soul on its object.

Still, just as in the Sanhitas there is the seed of the Upanishadic method, so in the Upanishads there is the seed of the later philosophical & intellectual method; we have, very occasionally, an obscure & casual preparation for the Darshanas. One passage, indeed a line, entirely typifies this secret bridging of the two methods; by a slight glance at it we can see how the mighty many-branched tree of the metaphysical philosophies burgeoned out from a very insignificant grain of tendency. Gautama in the Chhandogya, declares to his son Swetaketu the fundamental principle that all existence apparent to us here comes out of one anterior & ultimate existence, and he immediately notices the opposite appreciation, accepted as a starting point in the Aitareya, that existence originally emerges out of an original state of non-being, but only to reject it on the ground of a logical difficulty, "How could existence be created or create itself out of the non-existent";³ it is the earliest statement of the metaphysical principle common to all our positive & orthodox philosophies that nothing comes out of Nothing. The logic is large, axiomatic & elemental; we have a perception of logic

² The word for knowledge, vid, veda, is the Latin word for sight &, for the early Rishis, had probably not yet lost entirely all colour of its physical & more primitive meaning.

³ The language of the Sruti is remarkable, Asat ekam evadwitiyam, Non-Being one without a second, & shows that the old use of not-being differs essentially from our idea of nothingness.

rather than a process of logic or a generalisation from one perception & a priori exclusion of another as evidently impossible, not a logical demonstration of the impossibility. We are still within the four walls of the Upanishadic process, but stand already in the cadre of the doorway leading out into metaphysical disquisition. When we come to the sermons of Buddha, one knows not how many centuries later, and the formal foundation of the six orthodox philosophies we see, in spite of an immense logical & rationalistic development, that they proceed, initially, on this method of Gautama; they start from an act of logical discrimination, the acceptance of one statement of general perception & the rejection of another which seems to be inconsistent with the first or its contrary. All the ancient philosophies refer back to the Veda for the justification of the fundamental formulas in which they differ most obstinately & irreconcilably from each other. They are right in their positive claim; where they are wrong, where Shankara himself goes so hopelessly astray, is in founding on the same authority not only their own ultimate justification, but the confutation of their adversaries. The Veda is not logical, does not really confute anything; its method is experiential, intuitionist; its principle is to receive all experiences, all perceptions of truth about the Brahman, and either to place them side by side in order of experience & occasional relation, as in the Sanhitas, or to arrange them in order of perception and fundamental relation, as in the Upanishads, putting each in its place, correcting misplacement & exaggeration, but not excluding, not destroying. This is admirably seen in the colloquy of Ajatashatru & the proud Balaki; Ajatashatru does not deny the experiences & perceptions of Balaki; he accepts them, denies only their claim to represent the ultimate truth, gives them their true character, puts them in their right place & leads up by this purificatory process to his own deeper knowledge. Harmony, synthesis is the law of the Veda, not discord & a disjunction of the members of truth in order to replace the manysided reality of existence by a narrower logical symmetry. But the metaphysical philosophies are compelled by the law of their being to effect precisely this disjunction. Veda can admit two propositions that

are logically contradictory, so long as they are statements of fundamental experience & perception; it does not get rid of the contradiction by denying experience but seeks instead the higher truth in which the apparent contradiction is reconciled. Logic, by its very nature, is intolerant even of apparent contradiction; its method is verbal, ideative; it accepts words & thoughts as rigid & iron facts instead of what they really are, imperfect symbols & separate sidelights on truth. Being & Non-Being are ideas opposed to each other; therefore, in logic, one or the other must be excluded. The One cannot be at the same time the many; therefore, in logic, either the Many is an illusion, or Duality is the fundamental reality of things. Brahman is Nirguna, without qualities, beyond definition; therefore, to the rigid Adwaitins, the Saguna Brahman, the Infinite Personality of God becomes a supreme myth of Maya, a basic & effective fact indeed, but basic & effective only in and of the grand cosmic illusion which It directs. Logic, the tyrant of the metaphysician, is satisfied by these abstract processes, but Truth is hurt & dismembered. Illusions of truth, dogmas of syllogism, take its place, and war upon each other, as indeed, so long as they live, they must go on warring for ever, since none can ever be established as undisputedly true, resting, as they do, on pure opinion of Smriti poured into the mould of Opinion, having, as they all have, a part only of Truth which they pretend vainly to be the whole.

We see, as a result, a progressive disjunction of the fundamental truths of Veda, &, curiously enough, a disjunction of the various parts of method which make up the totality of the Veda. The totality of Vedantic knowledge consists of several processes; first, Vedanta, the direct perception of the fundamental reality out of which all emerges & to which all returns; secondly, Sankhya, the analysis, by the discriminating perception, of the fundamental principles of being & knowledge in which the Reality manifests itself as world, as subject, & as object; thirdly, Yoga, the psychological basis of experience, experiment, practical analysis, synthesis which verifies the discriminative analysis; fourthly, Vaisheshika, the physical analysis of the form or matter in which the manifesting world-energy

is expressed & established to our outgoing perceptions; fifthly, Nyaya, the analysis of the processes of discrimination whether by the intellect or by higher functions; sixthly, Karma of Veda, the application of the knowledge acquired in formulas of life-action by which the individual & the community can ensure the highest phenomenal expression of the fundamental Reality of which their special nature is capable,— by which, let us say, man can express Brahman in his superior & more plastic kind as the bee or the ant expresses Brahman in its inferior & more rigid & limited nature;— these six rank among other processes,— for life of Veda is supple, flexible and wide,— some of which are the foundation of Purana & Itihasa. The fundamental perception, separating, narrowed itself and became the Uttara Mimansa of Badarayana; the discriminative analysis, separating, narrowed itself and became Sankhya of Kapila; the psychological experimentation, separating, narrowed itself & became Yoga of Patanjali; the physical analysis, separating, narrowed itself and became Vaisheshika of Kanada; the analysis of discriminative processes, separating, narrowed itself and became Nyaya of Gautama; the application in formulas of life-action, separating, narrowed itself extremely & became the Purva Mimansa of Jaimini; yet each of the six arrogated to itself the functions & the sufficiency of the other five. Other parts of knowledge & process, ejected by the ever-narrowing tendency of logical exclusiveness, established themselves in other philosophies and branches of practice & knowledge and have come down to us, changed, often disfigured, in Shastra, in Purana, in legend & history, in different schools of Yoga.

The original method of all these differences was the method of Gautama in the episode of the Chhandogya, the exclusive affirmation of one's own seeing, the logical exclusion, by process of verbal & ideative distinction, of that which has [been] seen by others. We perceive very well this root of the evil in the grand example, supreme in its kind, of the Buddha. Unhelped by the conflicting philosophies of the schools, dissatisfied with the too rigorously materialised methods of the Yogins, he takes the right, the supreme step, he retires into himself & gives his soul

the charge of the Truth. Sa tapo atapyata. He emerges from this concentration of soul, tapas taptwa, with the great illumination received in the ever-memorable night under the Bo tree. What is this illumination of Buddha? It is the perception of the chain of Karma, of the impermanence of sanskaras, of the illusoriness of the mental ego, of the release into the motionless peace of Nirvana. There was nothing new in these things considered merely as tenets; they belong, in one form or another, to Vedanta; they cannot have been unknown to the philosophers of the age. What was new in them was their puissant revivification in a supreme soul and a great personality, their removal from the category of metaphysical dogmas & abstractions, into realities of life, concrete, human, vivid, which could once more be pursued by all, realised, practised and lived. It was this return to the sources, this puissant reconnection of Vedanta with ordinary life which was the secret of the Buddha's tremendous effectuality. New also was the particular connection & interlinking of all these central ideas in the thought of the Buddha, the singular cast given to them by his unique, yet universal temperament & the formulation in the mould of that temperament of a system of Vedantic ethics. Still, in his fundamental method, in his approach to truth & his handling of truth, Buddha had not, so far, gone beyond the method of the Vedantic Rishis; Yajnavalkya or Pippalada would have so sought in themselves for the truth, received illumination in the same fashion, equally cast that knowledge into well-linked formulae of experience which could be lived and practised. But Yajnavalkya or Pippalada would not have shot the iron bolt of logic on the knowledge they had gained and shut themselves in a prison of ratiocination to the experiences of others and to fresh vision. It was here that, owing, perhaps, to the very strenuousness of Buddha's search as well as to the limits of the question with which he had started, "How shall one escape from the pain & grief of the world," he turned from the ancient path and allowed the metaphysical & logical training of his past [to] lay its heavy hand upon him. He built up walls of logic; he shut himself up in a creed. Thus it came about that this great destroyer of the ego, sanctioned in his disciples the supreme act

of intellectual egoism and this giant render of chains imposed on his Sangha, without positively intending it, deprecating it indeed, the bondage to a single personality & the chain of a specific formula of thought. The movement of the metaphysical philosophies, more purely intellectual, far less temperamental & personal than the Buddha's, yet followed the same limiting process. They obeyed not a personal illumination, but the logic of their starting point. Sankhya, for instance, proceeded on a discriminative analysis of the world, proceeded indeed to the last limit of that analysis and found that, fundamentally, Existence starts & maintains its manifestation of world on the basis, first, of the Unity of Nature,—the unity, the Yогin would say, of the energy of the Lord,—and, secondly, of the multiplicity of souls observing & reflecting the works of Nature,—the multiplicity, the Vedantin would say, of the individual souls, in which Brahman, the Lord, the one Supreme soul, puts Himself forth to enjoy the works of His energy. Of these two fundamental principles the Sankhya metaphysician made a formula, an ultimate perception; he refused to go beyond; he built up a wall of logical disquisition to shelter himself from wider perceptions and a more complex experience. Such was the method of all these schools, the developed method of which we find so indistinct a seed in the Upanishads.

Still, it was from some fundamental experience or revelation that the metaphysicians started; the logical element intervened only as a second term of knowledge. Moreover, the method of the aphorism preserved the suggestive profundity of the intuition or revelatory experience & tended to maintain in the practice of knowledge the original closeness of the intellectual concept to that vision in the soul which thought can only translate very imperfectly to the reason. But about a thousand years later we find a new movement of the intellect in force, illustrated by the names of Shankara, Ramanuja, Madhwa, in which logic covers the whole field, leaving only a narrow corner to experience & intuition; but, for that very reason, the experience, the intuition assumes a character of much more eager intensity, exclusiveness, monotone of emphasis and steeps itself more fervently in the

personality & temperament of the thinker. Hence a passion of dispute, an intolerance in logomachy which leaves far behind the measure of more ancient disputants. The battle is, finally, a civil strife between Vedantist & Vedantist; temporarily victorious over rival schools, they turn to rend each other; but the strife is still mainly about fundamental perceptions. The great question now is the fundamental unity or difference between the supreme soul & the individual or another, which would have astonished greatly the ancient Rishis, the question whether the world is false or real,—false, not only in its appearance to the senses, but per se, in itself, in its essence & its being. In the Mayavada of Shankara, Buddha, the rationalist, completes his work in India. He has led the reason to a great act of self-slaughter, the denial of existence to the world which alone it can study, more, the denial of Brahman in the world on the authority of that very Veda which spends so much time in affirming & elaborately explaining Brahman in the world. In other countries, in other ages, the Buddhistic agnostic train of thought led to a still more supreme suicide of reason; for it came to the denial of its own power to know anything real & fundamental, came almost, like Buddhistic Nihilism, to deny the existence of anything real & fundamental. In India the farther advance after Shankara & his successors has been mechanical & practical rather than theoretic; it has led towards the final divorce of intellect from experience. The metaphysician, devoted to intellect, has abandoned experience in favour of the authority of departed Acharyas. The schools of Yoga devoted to experience, have practised their psychological methods according to a fixed tradition without the harmonising touch, the generalising light; Sankhya dispensed with Yoga, Yoga divided itself from Sankhya. Thus has the spiritual life of India, by a misplaced & intolerant action of Intellect & its servant, rash-moving, light-winged,—the chameleon-hued phantasm Opinion, been shredded, parcelled out, narrowed into many streams & shallows, like the Oxus of the poet. Thus has it come down to our own age, ever narrowing more & more, shorn of its victorious streams, awaiting its return to a wider flood and a more grandiose motion.

Chapter III

We have, then, to choose between two methods, one historic & modern, in possession of the field, easily applied in its fullness, the other ancient, difficult to employ, impossible indeed for us to utilise safely except by an inversion of the process of knowledge known to the Rishis. According as we choose the one or the other, we shall arrive at a logical and symmetrical result, a private room hired for ourselves in the mansion of Truth & marked out by us as her sole temple, or shall be free to range in all her domain, gleaning wide & various results, but not soon or easily sure of possessing her entirety. I have indicated the disadvantages of the intellectual & logical method for the interpretation of Vedanta, but, in view of its long dominion & wide acceptance, it will be as well to consider & convince ourselves of the more important of them clearly and in some detail before we proceed.

In the first place, by the method of intellectual reasoning we are compelled to apply the processes of logic to entities which are beyond the grasp of logic. A single instance will suffice. We find, as a matter of experience, that existence is one and yet existence is multiple; everywhere, to whatever nook or corner of being we penetrate, we find this riddle presenting itself, undeniable & ineffugable, of a multiplicity which appears, a unity concealed which yet the mind insists on as the sole truth of the multiplicity. Nor is the unity which our mind thus asks us to perceive, a sum of factors; that oneness exists, but behind it there is an essential unity out of which both the sum & its factors emerge. Yet, divorce that essential unity from all notion of multiplicity expressed or latent, & it ceases to be unity; it becomes something else of which unity & multiplicity are mutually related aspects. But when we have arrived at this coexistent & coincident unity & multiplicity, before we can proceed to the something else which is neither one nor many, logic has already taken alarm. It cannot be, it says, that two opposites really coexist & coincide as the nature of Being. If we ask why not,—since after all, it is an universal experience,—the answer is that the thing is

illogical & irrational;—unintelligible & contradictory to the view of logic & reason, it is, therefore, to them impossible of credence. A sum and its factors, may & must coexist, but not a thing which is at once one and many. Therefore Logic sets to work to get rid of one or both of the two irreconcilable, yet strangely reconciled opposites. Buddhism dismisses the Many as phenomena of sensation, the One as an ideative illusion of sensation; it gets rid of the unity in sum as a mere combination of sensational factors in the figure of the chariot and its parts, having no existence apart from the factors, no real existence at all; it gets rid of the essential unity as a mere illusion of continuity created by the uninterrupted succession of sensations, in the figure of the flame & the wick. It drives by logical process towards a Nullity, although not all its schools are bold enough to arrive at that void & yawning haven. For the rest, its final conclusion is illogical, for though it claims to be the pure concept of Nullity, it is in reality, when examined, a something that is nothing. Therefore, originally, Buddha seems to have turned aside from the problem and declared to his disciples, Seek not to know, for to know, even if it be possible, helps not at all & leads to no useful result. Buddhism was satisfied with having got rid of the original, actual & pressing contradiction in this world here & now which it had set out to destroy. Adwaita asserts the One on the ground of ultimate experience; it dismisses the Many as an illusion; yet since both are ineffugable, since the soul escaping from the illusion, escapes from it merely & does not destroy it, it has to be admitted that the substratum of multiplicity exists eternally. Here again we are led by logical process to a result which is illogical; we have, in the end, a Maya that at once exists and does not exist. This difficulty is at once put aside as beyond enquiry; the contradiction exists, inexplicable but true; we need not enquire farther, for we have got rid of the original contradiction in which we were entangled & cutting through this Gordian knot of Nature, we have released the individual soul from the illusion of multiplicity & therefore from the necessity of phenomenal existence. In both cases the process & result are similar & a like subterfuge is utilised. In both cases Logic, like

Cato at Utica, has committed suicide in order to assert its rights & liberties; but it has died, as the patients of Molière's doctors had the felicity of dying, according to the rules of the science; therefore it is satisfied. It is not, however, Buddhism & Adwaita alone, but every logical philosophy that arrives at a similar result; we find always that when we would explain existence in an ultimate term which shall be subject to logic, we fail; we arrive either at a term which is plainly illogical, or at an explanation which fails to explain or a success which seems to succeed only because it ignores or suppresses or juggles away an important part of the data. The suggestion irresistibly arises whether this is not so, whether it must not be always so merely because the formulae of logic, a creature as it is & a limited movement of intellectual ideation, which is itself a creature and a limited movement of existence, useful enough within the sphere of their birth & movement, & in the circle of their jurisdiction, cannot control that which is beyond & wider than ideation, yet farther beyond & wider than its creature logic? Invaluable in relating correctly the particulars of the universe and purging our ideas about them, it may be of less sovereign efficacy in dealing with the fundamental things which underlie phenomena and of no efficacy at all in discovering the Reality which lies farther back behind phenomena.

Much of the luminous confusion of Metaphysics is due to the self-satisfied content with which it leans upon words & abstract ideas & uses them not merely as instruments, but as data, forgetting that these are merely useful to symbolise & formulate very imperfectly truths of experience & perception. Therefore in dealing with abstract ideas & conceptions we are unsafe unless we insist always on returning to the thing itself which they symbolise. Otherwise we lose ourselves in facile words or in confusing abstractions. For instance, in order to get rid of the anomaly of a Maya that exists & exists not, we say sometimes that the Many have a relative reality, but no essential reality. But what have we said, after all? Merely this, that we do not find the Many existing except in some relation to a unity behind, established in that Unity and, as far as we can see, existent by

that unity, as indeed the unity itself exists in a certain relation to the eternally existent Many either in their manifestation or in their substratum of Maya. How much farther have we got by this manipulation of words? We have found a fresh formula which expresses the difficulty, but does not solve the difficulty. We have taken refuge in a disingenuous phrase which suggests [to] us that phenomena are unreal, but tries to escape from the consequences of its admission. As well may we say, that water is in any sense unreal because it only exists by the mixture of oxygen & hydrogen; oxygen & hydrogen unreal, because they only exist by the congregation of atoms; atoms unreal because they only exist by some obscure principle of the transformation of energy into forms; energy unreal because it exists to us only in its works & manifestations. In all this we are playing with words, we are making an argument of our own ideative limitations. So again, in a different way, with the question of the Personality & Impersonality of God. Personality is to us a word which we use too lightly without fathoming the depth of the thing which it indicates. We confuse it perhaps with the idea of a separate ego, we imagine God in His personality as one Ego among millions separate from all the others, superior & anterior to them; we refuse to extend or to subtilise our conception, and according to our personal predilections we argue that such a Personal God cannot exist or that He must exist. But the whole method was illegitimate. We ought rather to fathom in experience all the possibilities of human personality & of divine personality, if such a thing exists, in order to know them & arrive at sure results about them instead of battling over a verbal symbol or an arbitrary abstraction & ending only in an eternal war of ill-grounded opinions.

This danger of intellectual predilections thrusting out Truth is the third disadvantage of the logical method. Logic claims & even honestly attempts to get rid of predilection and to see things in the sure light of truth, but it is not equal to its task; our nature is full of subtle disguises and, the moment we form an opinion, attaches itself to it & secretly takes it under its protection under pretence of an exclusive attachment to Truth or a militant zeal

for reason & the right opinion. We come to our subject with a predisposition towards a particular kind of solution established either in our feelings, in our previous education & formed ways of thinking or in our temperament & very cast of character. We seize passionately or we select deliberately & reasonably the arguments that favour our conclusion; we reject, whether with impatience or after scrupulous & fair attention, the arguments that would shake it. Logic, a malleable & pliant servitor behind all its air of dry & honest rigidity, asks only that it should be provided with suitable premises, unsuitable premises excluded or explained away, & its conscience is entirely satisfied. We perform the comedy with perfect sincerity, but it is still a comedy which Nature plays with us; our garb of intellectual stoicism has concealed from ourselves, the epicure of his own dish of thoughts, the mind enamoured of its favourite ideas. Shankara comes to the Upanishads with a judgment already formed; he is an Adwaitin, his temperament predisposes him to Mayavada. But the Sruti does not contain the Mayavada, at least explicitly; it does contain, side by side with the fundamental texts of Adwaita, a mass of texts which foster the temper & views of the Dualist. But the Sruti is the supreme & infallible authority; it contains nothing but truth; it can inculcate, therefore, nothing but Adwaita. Obviously, then, these dualistic texts must have a meaning & a bearing different from their surface meaning or their apparent bearing; it is Shankara's business, as a commentator in search of truth, to put always the right, that is to say always the Adwaitic interpretation on Sruti. Watch him then seize the text in his mighty hands and, with a swift effort, twist & shape & force it to assume a meaning or a bearing which will either support or at least be consistent with Adwaita,—a giant victoriously wrestling with & twisting into a shape a mass of obstinate iron! There is no insincerity in the process, rather the fervour of a too passionate sincerity. Still, Truth often veils her face with a tear or a smile, when Shankara comments on the Sruti. He is the greatest; the others are not likely to escape from the snare into which he casts himself headlong. Nor do I think the philosopher has yet been born who has escaped from these

original meshes of intellectual preference, predestined belief & ineffugable personal temperament.

In fact, the supreme failing of the metaphysical method is that, owing to the paucity, abstract uncertainty and doubtful bearing of its most essential data, it becomes almost entirely a domain of opinion. The absolute contempt of scientific rationalism for metaphysics which for a long time past has conquered general opinion in Europe & put an end to fruitful philosophical thinking, is almost certainly exaggerated & unjustified. The emergence of a new metaphysical thinking, more practical & realistic than the old abstract philosophies, presaged by Nietzsche, fulfilled in James & Bergson, is a sign at once of the return of Europe upon this dangerous error and of a perception, subconscious perhaps, of that real defect in the character of metaphysics which gave a hold to the destructive criticisms of modern realism. The long and imposing labours of the highest human intellects in the region of metaphysics, has not been a vain waste of priceless energy. Nature makes no such mistakes; her glance, though it seems to rove & fall at random and vary capriciously, is surer & more infallible in its selection than our human reason. Metaphysics have fulfilled a necessary and, when all has been said, a right & true function in our evolution; the materials of the great systems she has built have been general truths and not abstract errors. But the systems themselves are not final expressions of truth; they are the mould of the philosopher's personality, the stamp of his temperament and type of intellect. If we examine the method & substance of our own philosophies, we shall see why this must be so and cannot be otherwise. Their most important data are vast & vague conceptions, infinite in their nature, Being, Non-Being, Consciousness, Prakriti & Purusha (Nature & Soul), Mind, Matter. How can these entities be compelled to give us their secret except by a profound & exhaustive interrogatory such as modern Science has applied to the lowest principle of Being, analysing & experimenting in every possible way with Matter? But the metaphysician does not base his process on the sure steps of experience. He starts with an ideal definition of these great indefinables and he argues logically

from the abstract idea to results which are faultless, indeed, in logic;—but how can we be sure of an equal faultlessness in the reality of things which is after all our proper business? We cannot be; for each thinker handles according to his own light this vague & plastic material of ideas: there is nothing to check him; he asserts his opinion & his opinion is dominated by his education or his temperament. Shankara asserts that works are incompatible with salvation, Jaimini that works are indispensable to salvation. Who shall decide, when each proceeds with a perfect logic from his premises? Therefore, a second class of data have to be called in, the texts of the Sruti. But Jaimini & Shankara appeal equally to the texts of the Sruti; for there are some which, if pressed in their separate meaning, seem to declare the inutility of works, there are others which, if pressed in their separate meaning, seem to declare the indispensability of works. It is a question of interpretation and, where different interpretations are possible, we interpret, again, according to our opinion which is decided, as we have seen, by our education or our temperament. Even when an interpretation in the sense of our opinion seems to be impossible, an ingenious scholarship, a curious & intrepid learning can make it possible. Sa atma tattwamasi Swetaketo, cries Gautama to his son; "That is the Truth, that is the Self, that art thou, O Swetaketu." The evidence of Revealed Scripture seems to be conclusive for the Adwaitic view of existence. No, cries the Dualist, you have read it wrongly, you have separated átmátattwam into three distinct uncompounded words when there is really an euphonic combination of átmá atat twam, which gives us this result, "Thou art *not* that, O Swetaketu." Our inalienable perception of right, the satyam ritam in us, tells us that the Dualist's device is wrong, a desperate expedient only; but how shall we convince the Dualist, whose business it is, as a dualist, not to be convinced? For grammatically, textually, he is within his rights. Nor can Shankara at least complain of this amazing tour-de-force; for he himself has used the very same device, in his commentary on the Isha Upanishad, in order to read, for the convenience of his philosophy, asambhútyá, by the not coming into birth, where tradition, metre, sentence-

structure & context demand sambhútyá, by the coming into birth. In this confusion, is there any other class of data handled by metaphysics which will help us out of the difficulty? Certain psychological experiences are so handled; notably, the phenomena of sleep, the phenomena of samadhi, the phenomena of ultimate experience in consciousness. But how are we to know that these experiences bear the construction put on them or justify the conclusions drawn from them? how are we to know, for instance, that the experiences in consciousness which we find advanced as ultimate are really ultimate or even that they are not entirely illusory & deceptive? As metaphysics handles them, isolating them from each other, advancing them to demonstrate particular views & opinions, we cannot have any certainty. And, indeed, we find that each builder of a metaphysical system has a different formula of ultimate consciousness, ultimate to him, from which he starts; this difference of the ultimate step in experience which is also the starting-point for the chain of our logical systematising, is the strong foundation of all these age long jarrings in religious sect and school of philosophy. Here again opinion is master, very clearly founded not on data, not on pure truth, but on truth as seen in the colouring & with the limitation of our education & temperament. We can see from examples in modern Science how these differences work out & where their remedy is to be found. Physicists & geologists have disagreed in their view of the age of the earth; the geologists had certain data of experience before them which pointed to one conclusion, the physicists had a different set of data before them which pointed to a different conclusion. The difference here [is] a difference of education; the education of each had trained his mind to look only at a certain set of considerations, to move only in a certain way of thinking & reasoning. If physicist & geologist are combined in one mind, the age of the earth will not even then be indisputably fixed, for the necessary data are still wanting, but a juster perception will be gained, a better preparation for considering the problem, a superior chance of arriving as near to the truth as is now possible. Again, we see two scientists, absolutely agreed on all positive physical problems, confronted

with the phenomena of the psychical world, partly true, partly the conscious or half conscious frauds of exploiters & illusions of enthusiasts. One turns eagerly to the new subject, examines widely, believes readily, is discouraged by no disappointments; the other refuses contemptuously to investigate or, if he investigates, hastens as rapidly as he can to the conclusion that the whole business is a sink of fraud, imposture & mystification. It is difference of temperament, not of the facts, that has determined these conflicting opinions. In the positive questions on which they are agreed, in the conclusions of their respective sciences where the geologist & physicist would not dream of disputing each other's conclusions, intellectual type & temperament are by no means entirely banished as factors, but their play is restricted, a mass of actual fact & experience is there to check them & keep them in order. It is this check that is wanting to the method of the metaphysicians.

If, then, our object is to take a number of general truths, a number of abstract conceptions, a few general statements of Vedanta and wide facts of consciousness, and out of these materials build ourselves a bright, aerial house of speculation in which our intellect can live satisfied with the sense of finality and our personal temperament assert itself as the ultimate truth of things, the method of abstract speculation supporting itself on logic will be sufficient for our purpose. But if we wish rather to know anything for certain about God & the ultimate reality of the world and the foundations of our life & existence, it is not by logic and speculation that we shall arrive at our desire. Experience is the first necessity; an experiential method, not a speculative & logical method. What is the utility of logical discussion & the marshalling of Vedic texts to decide whether works are incompatible with salvation or indispensable to it or neither incompatible nor indispensable, but only useful & permissible? What we need is experience. If once it is established by the experience of the Jivanmuktas that works & salvation are compatible, by the experience of the Karmayogins that works also lead to freedom in the Infinite & Divine Existence,—although they need not be the only path, nor the only requisite,

although, even, it may be difficult to harmonise an active existence with the calm & peace of Infinity,—then no amount of logic to the contrary can be of any avail. Nor will Vedic texts avail, since the bearing of the texts has itself to be first decided. And what is the use of proving by logic & a curious scholarship that Tattwam asi should be read atattwam asi or that Vidya & Avidya in a particular Upanishad do not mean what they mean in every other Upanishad or that amritatwam in one text means the state of the gods & in others the state of Brahman? We need rather to experience always, to experience our unity with the One Truth of things and our difference from it and the relations of the unity to the difference; having experienced we shall understand. We need by practice & experiment, under a fit human guide or guided by the Divinity within, if we have strength & faith in Him, to fathom the outer dissonances & the secret harmonies of Vidya & Avidya, to achieve & enjoy immortality instead of arguing about immortality, to realise the thing the Veda speaks instead of disputing about the words of the text. In the absence of knowledge of the object, touch with the object, direct experience of the object, argument tends to become a vain jangling and speculation a high sounding jargon. These things may be useful to awaken our intellectual interest in the subject and move us to the acquisition of knowledge, but only if we become dissatisfied with them & see the necessity of proceeding farther. The Greek philosophers argued, of old, that the world was made out of water or made out of fire, and their speculations & the logical ingenuities of the sophists awakened a widespread curiosity on the subject; but the moment the experimental methods of physical science give us actual experience of the constituents of the material world, such speculations become valueless; the simple relation of connected facts takes the place of abstract logic. No one would dream of trying to settle the constituents of water or the processes of water by speculative logic; the experiential method is there to forbid that inutility. Even if the right experiential method has to be found, it is still by progressive experience step after step aided by the eye of intuition that it has to be discovered. Argument from first principles

can only be of a minor and almost an accidental assistance; its function is always to awaken the mind & attach it to the object, so that the intuition attracted by the mental demand may fall upon the point desired with its light & bright electric shock and its divinely illuminating swiftness.

It might seem to follow that as the scientific method has been used to elucidate the problems of matter, so it should be used to elucidate the problems of mind & spirit. Certainly, in the absence of another, the scientific method would be the best,—the method of patient and courageous experiment & observation aided by a scrupulous use of hypothesis & exact reasoning. A beginning has been made in this direction in Europe by the examination of the abnormal conditions of hypnosis, divided personality & rare mental & psychic phenomena as well as in the tendency of psychology towards the abandonment of the superficial, academic and unfruitful methods of the past. But it is doubtful whether the scientific method will bear as great fruit in the things of mind as it has borne in the things of matter; it is certain that it is wholly unsuited to the investigation of the things of the spirit, because here we come into touch with Infinity & even cross the borders that divide the definite from the indefinable. The more we progress in that direction, the more the methods of scientific reasoning become inapplicable, unfruitful & misleading. Even the Mind gives a very limited hold to the scientist. In the first place, experiment is much more dangerous & difficult than in the physical sciences; in the latter we risk death & suffering, in the former we have to go out of the normal, face the dangers of the beyond from which man draws back shuddering, risk even the loss of that very reason which we have chosen for our instrument. The repugnance of mankind to take this step is much greater than that fear & repugnance which set the mass of mankind against the early experiments of science as diabolical sorcery & magic. Similarly, we find denounced as quackery, dupery, hallucination, superstition, the modern attempts to deal with the obscure phenomena of mind,—those in which observation of the familiar & normal is not enough & experiment with the abnormal is necessary. But the difficulty of

convincing the ignorant or the reluctant is here infinitely greater, because of the elusive nature of mind as compared with matter. This is the second capital disadvantage of the scientific method, —that our only field for full experiment is ourselves. In matter we can examine any object by bringing it sufficiently near to be within the vicinity of our senses; but in mind we are unable to see the movements & processes of the minds of others except in so far as we can judge them from their gestures, action & physical expression,—indices unutterably perilous to the reasoner, inconceivably misleading. Unless, therefore, we can discover & use mental instruments, answering to the microscope, telescope, retorts of the astronomer, chemist & physicist, by which we can see, study & analyse the mental processes of thought, feeling & sensation in others as well as in ourselves, we may know indeed the physical movements & organs corresponding to some of the motions of mind, but we shall never know mind itself. It is an obscure perception of this truth that explains the powerful revival in our own day of the occult. Erratic & ignorant as much of it is, it was inevitable & it is salutary. Nature, unerring in her action, is filling mankind with an instinctive sense, a sort of dim subterranean intuition that, now that Science has almost completed its analysis of Matter, the next subject of inquiry must be Mind & Mind cannot be known except by as yet undiscovered or little-used introscopic instruments. Even if these are found, the most dangerous, intricate, difficult & varied experiments will be necessary; for mind is infinitely more elusive & elastic than matter. Where physical Nature confines herself rigidly & stubbornly to a single process, psychical Nature uses, versatiley & intricately, a hundred. To have sufficient experience, to be sure of one's results, one must take oneself & others experimentally to pieces, combine & recombine, put in order & put in disorder one's mental & emotional functions in a way & to an extent which humanity of the present day would pronounce chimerical and impossible. Still our own philosophy founding itself on experiments repeated continually through many millenniums declares that it is possible. Our Yoga, if its pretensions are true, enables us to do these things &, given certain difficult

precautions, to do them with an eventual impunity; it separates the various functions, keeps some inactive while others are acting, experimentally analyses & creates new syntheses of mind and feeling, so that we are able to know the constituents, process & function at least of our own internal forces, with some perfection. Certain forms of Yoga claim to develop faculties by which we can not only know & watch the internal processes of others, but silently control them. If these pretensions are found to be justified, if we can really master & use such methods & instruments, a scientific knowledge & control of the forces of mind may become as possible as our present scientific knowledge & control of the forces of Nature. But how much shall we have gained? A knowledge of constituents, processes, functions we shall have, not, any more than in physical nature, a knowledge of things in themselves. The reality & spirit of objects & forces will still escape us, leaving us only their forms & phenomena. Reason will once more find herself baffled; with regard to the one thing that really matters, the one thing humanity is driven eternally to seek as necessary, supreme & the highest good, we shall have to return, as now, to the sterile result of agnosticism.

Experience, yes; but experience illumined by Veda & vijnana. We must by experiment & experience develop those faculties which see the Truth face to face & do not have to approach it indirectly & by inference only. The results of experience will then be illumined by this higher truth; the truth acquired will be confirmed & enlarged by experience. We shall be able to recover our lost kingdoms of the spirit, know the unknowable, enter into relations with the Infinite, be ourselves the reality of the Infinite as well as, if we so choose, its expression in the apparent Finite. We shall not be confined to the silver & copper of mind & matter, but handle also the gold of the Spirit. We shall use indeed the smaller currency in which the Spirit makes itself negotiable in material form & mental impression, not despising even the most apparently insignificant cent or cowrie, since all are divine, but shall use them only as lesser symbols of the higher currency which is alone of a true & self-determined value. This knowledge & possession of the things of the Spirit is the promise of Veda &

Vedanta,—a promise not delayed for its fulfilment to another life & world, but offered, ihaiva, in the present life & in this perishable body, nor only offered, but continually realised since prehistoric times by elect spirits in our Indian generations. Yoga, which offers us the knowledge & control of mental processes & forces in ourselves & others, offers us what is infinitely more valuable & the one thing worth pursuing for its own sake, the knowledge & possession of the truth of forms mental & material in the reality of the Self and the realisation of life in the world as the phenomena of a divine epiphany. We can know God, we can become the Brahman.

This promise long confined to the few, to the initiates in India, is once more being placed before the whole world for its acceptance. Of this supreme offer a life recently lived in an obscure corner of the earth seems to me to be the very incarnation & illuminating symbol,—the life of the Paramhansa Ramakrishna of Dakshineswar. Not for any body of teachings that he left behind, not for any restricted type of living, peculiar system of ethics or religious panacea for the ills of existence,—but because it brought once more into the world with an unexampled thoroughness & liberality the great Vedantic method of experience & inner revelation & showed us its possibilities. An illiterate, poor & obscure Bengali peasant, one who to the end of his life used a patois full of the most rustic forms & expressions, ignorant of Sanscrit, of any language but his own provincial dialect, ignorant of philosophy & science, ignorant of the world, yet realised in himself all the spiritual wisdom of the ages, shed in his brief sayings a light so full, so deep on the most difficult profundities of our inner being, the most abstruse questions of metaphysics that the most strenuous thinkers & the most learned Pandits were impressed by his superiority. By what process did he arrive at this great store of living knowledge? Never by any intellectual process, by any steps of reasoning. In all the things of the intellect, even the most elementary, he was as simple as a child, more unsophisticated than the most ignorant peasant of his native village. He could turn indeed an eye of infallible keenness on the hearts & intentions of men, but

it was the eye of vision, not the eye of thought. Never indeed, in modern times or since the intellectualising of mankind began were reasoning & intellectual processes so rigidly excluded from the process of knowledge with such astonishing results. The secret of his success was that always he lived & saw; where most men only reason and translate thought into sentiment, feel and translate emotion into terms of thinking, he saw with the heart or a higher faculty & threw out his vision into experience with a power of realisation of which modern men have long ceased to be capable; thus living everything to its full conclusion of mental & physical experience his soul opened more & more to knowledge, to direct truth, to the Satyam in things, until the depths hid nothing from him & the heights became accessible to his tread. He first has shown us clearly, entirely & without reserve or attenuating circumstance, the supreme importance of being over thinking, but being, not in terms of the body & life merely, like the sensational & emotional man or the man of action, but in the soul as well and the soul chiefly, in the central entity of this complex human symbol. Therefore he was able to liberate us from the chains imposed by the makeshifts of centuries. He broke through the limitations of the Yogic schools, practised each of them in turn & would reach in three days the consummation which even to powerful Yogins is the accomplishment of decades or even of more lives than one; broke through the limitations of religion and fulfilled himself in experience as a worshipper of Christ and of Allah while all the time remaining in the individual part of him a Hindu of the sect of the Shaktas; broke through the limitations of the Guruparampara, &, while using human teachers for outward process & discipline, yet received his first & supreme initiation from the eternal Mother herself and all his knowledge from the World-Teacher within; broke through the logical limitations of the metaphysical schools and showed us Dwaita & Adwaita inextricably yet harmoniously one in experience, even as they are shown to us in Veda & Vedanta. All that at the time still governed our spiritual life he took typically into his soul & into his mental & physical experience, swallowed up its defects &

imperfections in the infinite abyss of his personality and brought out through these masks & forms always the something beyond that is perfect and supreme. Thus establishing experience and inward revelation as the supreme means of the highest knowledge, he became one of the seed-lives of humanity; and the seed it held was the loosening of the bonds of the rational intellect & the return of humanity's journey from its long detour on the mid-plateaus of reason towards the footpath that winds up to the summits of the spirit.

Note on the Texts

Note on the Texts

ISHA UPANISHAD comprises Sri Aurobindo's translations of and commentaries on the Isha Upanishad. His translations of and commentaries on other Upanishads, as well as his translations of later Vedantic texts and writings on the Upanishads and Vedanta in general, are published in *Kena and Other Upanishads*, volume 18 of THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO.

Sri Aurobindo had a special interest in the Isha Upanishad, whose principle of “uncompromising reconciliation of uncompromising extremes” (p. 83) underlies his own philosophy as well. He first translated the Isha around 1900, and over the next fourteen years returned to it again and again, citing, translating, and writing commentaries on this eighteen-verse text. None of these commentaries was completed, but each served as a step in the development of his interpretation.

Between August 1914 and May 1915 Sri Aurobindo published a translation and analysis of the Isha in the monthly review *Arya*. These were issued as a book in 1920 or 1921; a revised edition came out in 1924. This work contains Sri Aurobindo's last word on the Isha Upanishad; it may also be said to represent the quintessence of his Upanishadic interpretation. His final translation and analysis are published in Part One of the present volume. Part Two contains the various incomplete commentaries he wrote before August 1914.

PART ONE: TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY
PUBLISHED BY SRI AUROBINDO

This part comprises Sri Aurobindo's final translation and analysis of the Isha Upanishad.

Isha Upanishad. This work, consisting of a translation (with Sanskrit text) and an analysis in four “movements”, was published in the monthly review *Arya* in ten instalments between August 1914 (the

Arya's first issue) and May 1915. It was brought out as a book around 1921. New editions appeared in 1924, 1941, 1945, and subsequently. The 1924 edition contained some comparatively minor revisions by the author.

PART TWO: INCOMPLETE COMMENTARIES FROM MANUSCRIPTS

Before publishing his final translation and analysis in 1914–15, Sri Aurobindo made ten different efforts to write commentaries on the *Isha Upanishad*. The earliest dates from around 1902, the last from mid-1914, that is, just before the time he started publishing his final translation and analysis in the *Arya*. They are arranged here in approximate chronological order. Some of them are of considerable length but none was completed or revised for publication. All were discovered among his manuscripts after his passing and subsequently transcribed and published in various journals and books.

Isha Upanishad: All that is world in the Universe. Circa 1902. Sri Aurobindo abandoned this work after a few pages. There is no full stop after the last word written.

The Ishavasyopanishad with a commentary in English. Circa 1905. The title page of this work reads in full: “Materials for Bhavani Grantha-/Mala./1. The Ishavasyopanishad/with a commentary in English.” The Sanskrit phrase “Bhavani Grantha-Mala” means “Garland of books for the goddess Bhavani”. This commentary apparently was intended to be the first of a series of works for the use of students of Bhawani Mandir, a “temple to the goddess Bhawani” where young men would be trained to do selfless work for Mother India. The idea of Bhawani Mandir was primarily that of Barindra Kumar Ghose, Sri Aurobindo’s younger brother, though Sri Aurobindo did write a manifesto setting forth its ideals around 1905 (see *Bhawani Mandir* in *Bande Mataram: Political Writings 1890–1908*, volume 6 of THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO). Shortly after writing the pamphlet, Sri Aurobindo lost interest in the project, and does not appear to have written any other works for the proposed “Grantha-Mala”.

The text of the commentary ends abruptly at the bottom of the last page of the notebook. It may have been continued in another notebook

that has been lost. Inside the back cover, facing the last page of text, Sri Aurobindo wrote the following: “Hunger is in its nature cannibal, you eat protoplasm & nothing else because you are protoplasm”.

The Karmayogin: A Commentary on the Isha Upanishad. Circa 1905–6. This lengthy but still incomplete commentary was written sometime after Sri Aurobindo took up the practice of yoga in 1905, and no later than May 1908, when the second of the two notebooks in which it is written was seized by the Calcutta police at the time of his arrest in connection with the Alipore Bomb Conspiracy. He began it, as he had begun “The Ishavasyopanishad”, as a guru-student dialogue, but dropped this form after the first page. The commentary contains several passages, totalling around 400 lines or ten printed pages, that are the same as or very similar to passages in “The Ishavasyopanishad”. He apparently copied them from that work while writing this one.

Sri Aurobindo modified the structure of the commentary while he was working on it. See the note on page 170 for details. The first two “Chapters”, dealing with verses 1 to 3 of the Upanishad, occupy the first of the two manuscript notebooks that were used for writing the commentary. (For some reason Sri Aurobindo wrote “Chapters I to III” on the first page of this notebook. This may explain why the first “Chapter” in the second notebook is numbered “IV”.) This second notebook contains the second “Part”, which deals with verses 4 to 6 of the Upanishad.

Ish and Jagat. Circa 1912. Editorial title. This piece is quite incomplete. **The Secret of the Isha.** Circa 1912. In the manuscript, “Chapter I” is written above the title. Only this fragmentary first chapter was written. **Chapters for a Work on the Isha Upanishad.** Circa 1912. Editorial title. These six draft chapters for a proposed “book” (see the last paragraph of chapter [2]) have been reproduced in the order in which they occur in Sri Aurobindo’s notebook. The chapters are numbered editorially [1] to [6]. Sri Aurobindo’s own working titles and numbers are given. Although headed “The Isha Upanishad”, the piece deals with the text of the Upanishad only in chapter [3] and more briefly in chapter [6]. Elsewhere it deals, among other things, with Puranic cosmology, the savage and the ascent of the human being, philology, the Veda, and Sri Aurobindo’s method of Vedic and Vedantic exegesis. The suggestion on the scope of “dhanam” in chapter [3] may refer to

Sri Aurobindo's discussion of this word in Appendix [3] of Draft A of "The Life Divine" (see below). This would indicate that this chapter was written after that draft.

The Upanishad in Aphorism: The Isha Upanishad. Circa 1913–14 (placed before the next piece in order to keep the three drafts of "The Life Divine" together). The first paragraph of this "commentary" consists of a translation of the first verse of the Isha Upanishad. The rest is an exploration, in aphorisms, of various related ideas.

The Life Divine: A Commentary on the Isha Upanishad [Draft A]. Circa 1912. Sri Aurobindo wrote this draft in pencil on unused pages or parts of pages of two notebooks that he had used a number of years earlier to make fair copies of literary works. He originally headed the piece "The Isha Upanishad". Later he changed the heading to "The Secret of Divine Life/A Commentary on the Isha Upanishad", and still later to "The Life Divine/A Commentary on the Isha Upanishad". "Introduction", written below the heading, was at one point changed to "Foreword". In the 18 July 1912 entry of *Record of Yoga*, his yogic diary, Sri Aurobindo wrote: "the Life Divine commenced". It was probably to this draft that he was referring. Note also the indirect reference to the *Titanic* disaster, which took place in April 1912. Several passages written for this piece but not worked into the text are reproduced in an appendix published at the end of the text.

The Life Divine [Draft B]. Circa 1913–14. Sri Aurobindo wrote this draft in pen in three notebooks. The five chapters of which it is composed are the beginning of "Part II / The First Movement" of a planned complete commentary. The following outline, written on the first page of the manuscript, shows the structure of this proposed work:

- Part I. The Upanishad
- Part II The First Movement—God, Life & Nature
- Part III The Second Movement—Brahman Self Blissful and All-Blissful
- Part [IV] The Third Movement—God in World—Vidya & Avidya
- Part [V] The Fourth Movement—Surya & Agni
- Part [VI] The Divine Life

Of these six parts, only "Part II The First Movement" was worked on.
The Life Divine [Draft C]. 1914. This draft consists of two chapters, numbered II and III by the author. Although they have the same heading

as “Draft A” and “Draft B”, they seem to be destined not so much for a commentary on the Isha Upanishad as for an independent philosophical writing. (They contain no direct commentary on the Upanishad but occasionally mention it.) They seem in fact to represent a transitional stage between the “Life Divine” commentary on the Isha Upanishad and *The Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo’s principal philosophical work, which began to be published in the *Arya* in August 1914. The first instalment of Sri Aurobindo’s final translation and analysis of the Isha Upanishad (see Part One above) appeared in the same issue.

PUBLISHING HISTORY

Sri Aurobindo published a translation of the Isha Upanishad on 19 June 1909 in the first issue of the *Karmayogin*, a weekly review of politics and culture. This was a revised version of a translation he had completed and typed around 1900. He published his final translation and analysis in the *Arya* between August 1914 and May 1915. Around 1921, the *Arya* text was reprinted by the Arya Publishing House, Calcutta. The same publisher brought out an “authorised edition”, which was said to be “revised and enlarged”, in 1924. That edition in fact contained no real enlargement (other than the restoration of the analysis of verses 4–5, which had inadvertently been omitted in 1921) and only slight authorial revision. Two more editions were brought out by the Arya Publishing House during Sri Aurobindo’s lifetime, in 1941 and 1945. These contained a few minor changes. Several more editions were brought out after 1950. In 1971 the work was included in *The Upanishads*, volume 12 of the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library. The text in the present volume has been checked against the texts printed in the *Arya* and in the first four editions.

None of the ten incomplete commentaries published in Part Two appeared during Sri Aurobindo’s lifetime. All have been transcribed from his manuscripts. Four were published in 1971 in *The Upanishads*, one in the *Supplement* to the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library (1973), and the other five in the journal *Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research* between 1977 and 1983.

Kena and Other Upanishads



Sri Aurobindo

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Kena and Other Upanishads

Publisher's Note

This volume comprises Sri Aurobindo's translations of and commentaries on Upanishads other than the Isha Upanishad. (His writings on that Upanishad appear in *Isha Upanishad*, volume 17 of THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO.) It also includes his translations of later Vedantic texts and writings on the Upanishads and Vedanta philosophy in general.

The volume is divided into three parts. The first consists of translations and commentaries that were published during Sri Aurobindo's lifetime. The pieces in this part, along with his final translation of and commentary on the Isha Upanishad, are his most mature works of Upanishadic interpretation. The second and third parts consist of material from Sri Aurobindo's manuscripts. The second includes early translations of the Prashna, Mandukya, Aitareya and Taittiriya Upanishads, and incomplete translations of and commentaries on some other Upanishads and Vedantic texts. The third part comprises incomplete and fragmentary writings on the Upanishads and Vedanta in general.

All the texts have been checked against the relevant manuscript and printed versions.

Guide to Editorial Notation

The contents of Parts Two and Three of this volume were never prepared by Sri Aurobindo for publication. They have been transcribed from manuscripts that sometimes present textual difficulties. In this edition these problems have been indicated as far as possible by means of the notation shown below.

Notation	Textual Problem
[.....]	Word(s) lost through damage to the manuscript (at the beginning of a piece, sometimes indicates that a page or pages of the manuscript have been lost)
[word]	Word(s) omitted by the author or lost through damage to the manuscript that are required by grammar or sense, and that could be supplied by the editors
[]	Blank left by the author to be filled in later but left unfilled, which the editors were not able to fill
<i>[note]</i>	Situations requiring textual explication; all such information is printed in italics

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Part One

Translations and Commentaries

Published by Sri Aurobindo

These texts were first published between 1909 and 1920. Sri Aurobindo later revised most of them. The revised versions are printed here.



Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry, c. 1915–1918

Kena Upanishad

The Kena Upanishad

FIRST PART

केनेषितं पतति प्रेषितं मनः केन प्राणः प्रथमः प्रैति युक्तः।
केनेषितां वाचमिमां वदन्ति चक्षुः श्रोत्रं क उ देवो युनक्ति ॥१॥

1. By whom missioned falls the mind shot to its mark? By whom yoked moves the first life-breath forward on its paths? By whom impelled is this word that men speak? What god set eye and ear to their workings?

श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं मनसो मनो यद् वाचो ह वाचं स उ प्राणस्य प्राणः।
चक्षुषश्चक्षुरतिमुच्य धीरा: प्रेत्यास्माप्नोकादमृता भवन्ति ॥२॥

2. That which is hearing of our hearing, mind of our mind, speech of our speech, that too is life of our life-breath and sight of our sight. The wise are released beyond and they pass from this world and become immortal.

न तत्र चक्षुर्गच्छति न वाग् गच्छति नो मनः।
न विद्मो न विजानीमो यथैतदनुशिष्यात्।
अन्यदेव तद्विदितादथो अविदितादधि।
इति शुश्रुम पूर्वेषां ये नस्तद् व्याचचक्षिरे ॥३॥

3. There sight travels not, nor speech, nor the mind. We know It not nor can distinguish how one should teach of It: for It is other than the known; It is there above the unknown. It is so we have heard from men of old who declared That to our understanding.

यद्वाचानभ्युदितं येन वागभ्युद्यते।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥४॥

4. That which is unexpressed by the word, that by which the

word is expressed, know That to be the Brahman and not this which men follow after here.

यन्मनसा न मनुते येनाहुर्मनो मतम् ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥ ५ ॥

5. That which thinks not by the mind,¹ that by which the mind is thought, know That to be the Brahman and not this which men follow after here.

यच्चक्षुषा न पश्यति येन चक्षुषि पश्यति ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥ ६ ॥

6. That which sees not with the eye,² that by which one sees the eye's seeings, know That to be the Brahman and not this which men follow after here.

यच्छ्वेत्रेण न शृणोति येन ओत्रमिदं श्रुतम् ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥ ७ ॥

7. That which hears not with the ear,³ that by which the ear's hearing is heard, know That to be the Brahman and not this which men follow after here.

यत्प्राणेन न प्राणिति येन प्राणः प्रणीयते ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥ ८ ॥

8. That which breathes not with the breath,⁴ that by which the life-breath is led forward in its paths, know That to be the Brahman and not this which men follow after here.

¹ Or, “that which one thinks not with the mind”.

² Or, “that which one sees not with the eye”.

³ Or, “that which one hears not with the ear”.

⁴ Or, “that which one breathes not (i.e. smells not) with the breath”.

SECOND PART

यदि मन्यसे सुवेदेति दग्धमेवापि नूनं त्वं वेत्थ ब्रह्मणो रूपम् ।
यदस्य त्वं यदस्य देवेष्वथ नु मीमांस्यमेव ते मन्ये विदितम् ॥ १ ॥

1. If thou thinkest that thou knowest It well, little indeed dost thou know the form of the Brahman. That of It which is thou, that of It which is in the gods, this thou hast to think out. I think It known.

नाहं मन्ये सुवेदेति नो न वेदेति वेद च ।
यो नस्तद्वेद तद्वेद नो न वेदेति वेद च ॥ २ ॥

2. I think not that I know It well and yet I know that It is not unknown to me. He of us who knows It, knows That; he knows that It is not unknown to him.

यस्यामतं तस्य मतं मतं यस्य न वेद सः ।
अविज्ञातं विज्ञानतां विज्ञातमविज्ञानताम् ॥ ३ ॥

3. He by whom It is not thought out, has the thought of It; he by whom It is thought out, knows It not. It is unknown to the discernment of those who discern of It, by those who seek not to discern of It, It is discerned.

प्रतिबोधविदितं मतममृतत्वं हि विन्दते ।
आत्मना विन्दते वीर्यं विद्यया विन्दतेऽमृतम् ॥ ४ ॥

4. When It is known by perception that reflects It, then one has the thought of It, for one finds immortality; by the self one finds the force to attain and by the knowledge one finds immortality.

इह चेदवेदीदथ सत्यमस्ति न चेदिहावेदीन्महती विनष्टिः ।
भूतेषु भूतेषु विचित्य धीराः प्रेत्यास्माल्लोकादमृता भवन्ति ॥ ५ ॥

5. If here one comes to that knowledge, then one truly is; if here one comes not to the knowledge, then great is the perdition.

The wise distinguish That in all kinds of becomings and they pass forward from this world and become immortal.

THIRD PART

ब्रह्म ह देवेभ्यो विजिये तस्य ह ब्रह्मणो विजये देवा अमहीयन्त ।
त ऐक्षन्तास्माकमेवायं विजयोऽस्माकमेवायं महिमेति ॥ १ ॥

1. The Eternal conquered for the gods and in the victory of the Eternal the gods grew to greatness. They saw, “Ours the victory, ours the greatness.”

तद्वैषां विजज्ञौ तेभ्यो ह प्रादुर्बभूव तन्न व्यजानत किमिदं यक्ष-
मिति ॥ २ ॥

2. The Eternal knew their thought and appeared before them; and they knew not what was this mighty Daemon.

तेऽग्निमब्रुवञ्जातवेद एतद्विजानीहि किमेतद्यक्षमिति तथेति ॥ ३ ॥

3. They said to Agni, “O thou that knowest all things born, learn of this thing, what may be this mighty Daemon,” and he said, “So be it.”

तदभ्यद्रवत् तमभ्यवदत् कोऽसीत्यग्निर्वा अहमस्मीत्यब्रवीज्जातवेदा
वा अहमस्मीति ॥ ४ ॥

4. He rushed towards the Eternal and It said to him, “Who art thou?” “I am Agni,” he said, “I am he that knows all things born.”

तस्मिंस्त्वयि किं वीर्यमित्यपीदं सर्वं दहेयं यदिदं पृथिव्यामिति ॥ ५ ॥

5. “Since such thou art, what is the force in thee?” “Even all this I could burn, all that is upon the earth.”

तस्मै तृणं निदधावेतद्हेति तदुपप्रेयाय सर्वजवेन तन्न शशाक दग्धुं स
तत एव निवृते नैतदशकं विज्ञातुं यदेतद्यक्षमिति ॥ ६ ॥

6. The Eternal set before him a blade of grass; “This burn;” and he made towards it with all his speed, but could not burn it. There he ceased, and turned back; “I could not know of It, what might be this mighty Daemon.”

अथ वायुमबृवन् वायवेतद्विजानीहि किमेतद्यक्षमिति तथेति ॥ ७ ॥

7. Then they said to Vayu, “O Vayu, this discern, what is this mighty Daemon.” He said, “So be it.”

तदभ्यद्रवत् तमभ्यवदत् कोऽसीति वायुर्वा अहमस्मीत्यब्रवीन्मातरिश्चा
वा अहमस्मीति ॥ ८ ॥

8. He rushed upon That; It said to him, “Who art thou?” “I am Vayu,” he said, “and I am he that expands in the Mother of things.”

तस्मिंस्त्वयि किं वीर्यमित्यपीदं सर्वमाददीय यदिदं पृथिव्यामिति ॥ ९ ॥

9. “Since such thou art, what is the force in thee?” “Even all this I can take for myself, all this that is upon the earth.”

तस्मै तृणं निदधावेतदादत्त्वेति तद्वपप्रेयाय सर्वज्वेन तत्र शशाकादातुं
स तत एव निवृते नैतदशकं विज्ञातुं यदेतद्यक्षमिति ॥ १० ॥

10. That set before him a blade of grass; “This take.” He went towards it with all his speed and he could not take it. Even there he ceased, even thence he returned; “I could not discern of That, what is this mighty Daemon.”

अथेन्द्रमबृवन् मघवन्नेतद्विजानीहि किमेतद्यक्षमिति तथेति तदभ्यद्रवत्
तस्मात्तिरोदधे ॥ ११ ॥

11. Then they said to Indra, “Master of plenitudes, get thou the knowledge, what is this mighty Daemon.” He said, “So be it.” He rushed upon That. That vanished from before him.

स तस्मिन्नेवाकाशे स्त्रियमाजगाम बहुशोभमानामुमां हैमवर्तीं तां
होवाच किमेतद्यक्षमिति ॥ १२ ॥

12. He in the same ether came upon the Woman, even upon Her who shines out in many forms, Uma daughter of the snowy summits. To her he said, “What was this mighty Daemon?”

FOURTH PART

सा ब्रह्मेति होवाच ब्रह्मणो वा एतद्विजये महीयध्वमिति ततो हैव
विदांचकार ब्रह्मेति ॥ १ ॥

1. She said to him, “It is the Eternal. Of the Eternal is this victory in which ye shall grow to greatness.” Then alone he came to know that this was the Brahman.

तस्माद्वा एते देवा अतितरामिवान्यान् देवान् यदग्निर्वायुरिन्द्रस्ते
ह्येनन्नेदिष्टं पस्पर्शस्ते ह्येनत्प्रथमो विदांचकार ब्रह्मेति ॥ २ ॥

2. Therefore are these gods as it were beyond all the other gods, even Agni and Vayu and Indra, because they came nearest to the touch of That...⁵

तस्माद्वा इन्द्रोऽतितरामिवान्यान्देवान् स ह्येनन्नेदिष्टं पस्पर्शं स ह्येनत्
प्रथमो विदांचकार ब्रह्मेति ॥ ३ ॥

3. Therefore is Indra as it were beyond all the other gods because he came nearest to the touch of That, because he first knew that it was the Brahman.

तस्येष आदेशो यदेतद्विद्युतो व्यद्युतदाः इतीन्यमीमिषदाः इत्यधि-
दैवतम् ॥ ४ ॥

4. Now this is the indication of That,—as is this flash of the lightning upon us or as is this falling of the eyelid, so in that which is of the gods.

⁵ By some mistake of early memorisers or later copyists the rest of the verse has become hopelessly corrupted. It runs, “They he first came to know that it was the Brahman,” which is neither fact nor sense nor grammar. The close of the third verse has crept into and replaced the original close of the second.

अथाध्यात्मं यदेतन्नच्छतीव च मनोऽनेन चैतदुपस्मरत्यभीक्षणं सं-
कल्पः ॥ ५ ॥

5. Then in that which is of the Self,—as the motion of this mind seems to attain to That and by it afterwards the will in the thought continually remembers It.

तद्व तद्वनं नाम तद्वन्मित्युपासितव्यं स य एतदेवं वेदाभि हैनं सर्वाणि
भूतानि संवाच्छन्ति ॥ ६ ॥

6. The name of That is “That Delight”; as That Delight one should follow after It. He who so knows That, towards him verily all existences yearn.

उपनिषदं भो ब्रह्मीत्युक्ता त उपनिषद् ब्राह्मीं वाव त उपनिषदमबू-
मेति ॥ ७ ॥

7. Thou hast said “Speak to me Upanishad”;⁶ spoken to thee is Upanishad. Of the Eternal verily is the Upanishad that we have spoken.

तस्यै तपो दमः कर्मेति प्रतिष्ठा वेदाः सर्वाङ्गानि सत्यमायतनम् ॥ ८ ॥

8. Of this knowledge austerity and self-conquest and works are the foundation, the Vedas are all its limbs, truth is its dwelling place.

यो वा एतामेवं वेदापहत्य पाप्मानमनन्ते स्वर्गे लोके ज्येये प्रतितिष्ठति
प्रतितिष्ठति ॥ ९ ॥

9. He who knows this knowledge, smites evil away from him and in that vaster world and infinite heaven finds his foundation, yea, he finds his foundation.

⁶ Upanishad means inner knowledge, that which enters into the final Truth and settles in it.

Commentary

I

The Subject of the Upanishad

THE TWELVE great Upanishads are written round one body of ancient knowledge; but they approach it from different sides. Into the great kingdom of the Brahnavidya each enters by its own gates, follows its own path or detour, aims at its own point of arrival. The Isha Upanishad and the Kena are both concerned with the same grand problem, the winning of the state of Immortality, the relations of the divine, all-ruling, all-possessing Brahman to the world and to the human consciousness, the means of passing out of our present state of divided self, ignorance and suffering into the unity, the truth, the divine beatitude. As the Isha closes with the aspiration towards the supreme felicity, so the Kena closes with the definition of Brahman as the Delight and the injunction to worship and seek after That as the Delight. Nevertheless there is a variation in the starting-point, even in the standpoint, a certain sensible divergence in the attitude.

For the precise subject of the two Upanishads is not identical. The Isha is concerned with the whole problem of the world and life and works and human destiny in their relation to the supreme truth of the Brahman. It embraces in its brief eighteen verses most of the fundamental problems of Life and scans them swiftly with the idea of the supreme Self and its becomings, the supreme Lord and His workings as the key that shall unlock all gates. The oneness of all existences is its dominating note.

The Kena Upanishad approaches a more restricted problem, starts with a more precise and narrow inquiry. It concerns itself only with the relation of mind-consciousness to Brahman-consciousness and does not stray outside the strict boundaries of its subject. The material world and the physical life are taken for granted, they are hardly mentioned. But the material world and the physical life exist for us only by virtue of our internal

self and our internal life. According as our mental instruments represent to us the external world, according as our vital force in obedience to the mind deals with its impacts and objects, so will be our outward life and existence. The world is for us, not fundamentally but practically at any rate, what our mind and senses declare it to be; life is what our mentality or at least our half-mentalised vital being determines that it shall become. The question is asked by the Upanishad, what then are these mental instruments? what is this mental life which uses the external? Are they the last witnesses, the supreme and final power? Are mind and life and body all or is this human existence only a veil of something greater, mightier, more remote and profound than itself?

The Upanishad replies that there is such a greater existence behind, which is to the mind and its instruments, to the life-force and its workings what they are to the material world. Matter does not know Mind, Mind knows Matter; it is only when the creature embodied in Matter develops mind, becomes the mental being that he can know his mental self and know by that self Matter also in its reality to Mind. So also Mind does not know That which is behind it, That knows Mind; and it is only when the being involved in Mind can deliver out of its appearances his true Self that he can become That, know it as himself and by it know also Mind in its reality to that which is more real than Mind. How to rise beyond the mind and its instruments, enter into himself, attain to the Brahman becomes then the supreme aim for the mental being, the all-important problem of his existence.

For given that there is a more real existence than the mental existence, a greater life than the physical life, it follows that the lower life with its forms and enjoyments which are all that men here ordinarily worship and pursue, can no longer be an object of desire for the awakened spirit. He must aspire beyond; he must free himself from this world of death and mere phenomena to become himself in his true state of immortality beyond them. Then alone he really exists when here in this mortal life itself he can free himself from the mortal consciousness and know and

be the Immortal and Eternal. Otherwise he feels that he has lost himself, has fallen from his true salvation.

But this Brahman-consciousness is not represented by the Upanishad as something quite alien to the mental and physical world, aloof from it and in no way active upon it or concerned with its activities. On the contrary, it is the Lord and ruler of all the world; the energies of the gods in the mortal consciousness are its energies; when they conquer and grow great, it is because Brahman has fought and won. This world therefore is an inferior action, a superficial representation of something infinitely greater, more perfect, more real than itself.

What is that something? It is the All-Bliss which is infinite being and immortal force. It is that pure and utter bliss and not the desires and enjoyments of this world which men ought to worship and to seek. How to seek it is the one question that matters; to follow after it with all one's being is the only truth and the only wisdom.

II

The Question. *What Godhead?*

MIND IS the principal agent of the lower or phenomenal consciousness; vital force or the life-breath, speech and the five senses of knowledge are the instruments of the mind. Prana, the life-force in the nervous system, is indeed the one main instrument of our mental consciousness; for it is that by which the mind receives the contacts of the physical world through the organs of knowledge, sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste, and reacts upon its object by speech and the other four organs of action; all these senses are dependent upon the nervous Life-force for their functioning. The Upanishad therefore begins by a query as to the final source or control of the activities of the Mind, Life-Force, Speech, Senses.

The question is, *kena*, by whom or what? In the ancient conception of the universe our material existence is formed from the five elemental states of Matter, the ethereal, aerial, fiery, liquid and solid; everything that has to do with our material existence is called the elemental, *adhibhūta*. In this material there move non-material powers manifesting through the Mind-Force and Life-Force that work upon Matter, and these are called Gods or devas; everything that has to do with the working of the non-material in us is called *adhidaiva*, that which pertains to the Gods. But above the non-material powers, containing them, greater than they is the Self or Spirit, *ātman*, and everything that has to do with this highest existence in us is called the spiritual, *adhyātma*. For the purpose of the Upanishads the *adhidaiva* is the subtle in us; it is that which is represented by Mind and Life as opposed to gross Matter; for in Mind and Life we have the characteristic action of the Gods.

The Upanishad is not concerned with the elemental, the *adhibhūta*; it is concerned with the relation between the subtle existence and the spiritual, the *adhidaiva* and *adhyātma*. But the

Mind, the Life, the speech, the senses are governed by cosmic powers, by Gods, by Indra, Vayu, Agni. Are these subtle cosmic powers the beginning of existence, the true movers of mind and life, or is there some superior unifying force, one in itself behind them all?

By whom or what is the mind missioned and sent on its errand so that it falls on its object like an arrow shot by a skilful archer at its predetermined mark, like a messenger, an envoy sent by his master to a fixed place for a fixed object? What is it within us or without us that sends forth the mind on its errand? What guides it to its object?

Then there is the Life-force, the Prana, that works in our vital being and nervous system. The Upanishad speaks of it as the first or supreme Breath; elsewhere in the sacred writings it is spoken of as the chief Breath or the Breath of the mouth, *mukhya, āsanya*; it is that which carries in it the Word, the creative expression. In the body of man there are said to be five workings of the life-force called the five Pranas. One specially termed Prana moves in the upper part of the body and is preeminently the breath of life, because it brings the universal Life-force into the physical system and gives it there to be distributed. A second in the lower part of the trunk, termed Apana, is the breath of death; for it gives away the vital force out of the body. A third, the Samana, regulates the interchange of these two forces at their meeting-place, equalises them and is the most important agent in maintaining the equilibrium of the vital forces and their functions. A fourth, the Vyana, pervasive, distributes the vital energies throughout the body. A fifth, the Udana, moves upward from the body to the crown of the head and is a regular channel of communication between the physical life and the greater life of the spirit. None of these are the first or supreme Breath, although the Prana most nearly represents it; the Breath to which so much importance is given in the Upanishads, is the pure life-force itself,—first, because all the others are secondary to it, born from it and only exist as its special functions. It is imaged in the Veda as the Horse; its various energies are the forces that draw the chariots of the Gods. The Vedic image is recalled

by the choice of the terms employed in the Upanishad, *yukta*, yoked, *praiti*, goes forward, as a horse driven by the charioteer advances in its path.

Who then has yoked this Life-force to the many workings of existence or by what power superior to itself does it move forward in its paths? For it is not primal, self-existent or its own agent. We are conscious of a power behind which guides, drives, controls, uses it.

The force of the vital breath enables us to bring up and speed outward from the body this speech that we use to express, to throw out into a world of action and new-creation the willings and thought-formations of the mind. It is propelled by Vayu, the life-breath; it is formed by Agni, the secret will-force and fiery shaping energy in the mind and body. But these are the agents. Who or what is the secret Power that is behind them, the master of the word that men speak, its real former and the origin of that which expresses itself?

The ear hears the sound, the eye sees the form; but hearing and vision are particular operations of the life-force in us used by the mind in order to put itself into communication with the world in which the mental being dwells and to interpret it in the forms of sense. The life-force shapes them, the mind uses them, but something other than the life-force and the mind enables them to shape and to use their objects and their instruments. What God sets eye and ear to their workings? Not Surya, the God of light, not Ether and his regions; for these are only conditions of vision and hearing.

The Gods combine, each bringing his contribution, the operations of the physical world that we observe as of the mental world that is our means of observation; but the whole universal action is one, not a sum of fortuitous atoms; it is one, arranged in its parts, combined in its multiple functioning by virtue of a single conscient existence which can never be constructed or put together (*akṛta*) but is for ever, anterior to all these workings. The Gods work only by this Power anterior to themselves, live only by its life, think only by its thought, act only for its purposes. We look into ourselves and all things and become aware

of it there, an “I”, an “Is”, a Self, which is other, firmer, vaster than any separate or individual being.

But since it is not anything that the mind can make its object or the senses throw into form for the mind, what then is it—or who? What absolute Spirit? What one, supreme and eternal Godhead? *Ko devah*.

III

The Supramental Godhead

THE ETERNAL question has been put which turns man's eyes away from the visible and the outward to that which is utterly within, away from the little known that he has become to the vast unknown he is behind these surfaces and must yet grow into and be because that is his Reality and out of all masquerade of phenomenon and becoming the Real Being must eventually deliver itself. The human soul once seized by this compelling direction can no longer be satisfied with looking forth at mortalities and seemings through those doors of the mind and sense which the Self-existent has made to open outward upon a world of forms; it is driven to gaze inward into a new world of realities.

Here in the world that man knows, he possesses something which, however imperfect and insecure, he yet values. For he aims at and to some extent he procures enlarged being, increasing knowledge, more and more joy and satisfaction and these things are so precious to him that for what he can get of them he is ready to pay the price of continual suffering from the shock of their opposites. If then he has to abandon what he here pursues and clasps, there must be a far more powerful attraction drawing him to the Beyond, a secret offer of something so great as to be a full reward for all possible renunciation that can be demanded of him here. This is offered,—not an enlarged becoming, but infinite being; not always relative piecings of knowledge mistaken in their hour for the whole of knowledge, but the possession of our essential consciousness and the flood of its luminous realities; not partial satisfactions, but *the* delight. In a word, Immortality.

The language of the Upanishad makes it strikingly clear that it is no metaphysical abstraction, no void Silence, no indeterminate Absolute which is offered to the soul that aspires, but rather

the absolute of all that is possessed by it here in the relative world of its sojourning. All here in the mental is a growing light, consciousness and life; all there in the supramental is an infinite life, light and consciousness. That which is here shadowed, is there found; the incomplete here is there the fulfilled. The Beyond is not an annulation, but a transfiguration of all that we are here in our world of forms; it is sovereign Mind of this mind, secret Life of this life, the absolute Sense which supports and justifies our limited senses.

We renounce ourselves in order to find ourselves; for in the mental life there is only a seeking, but never an ultimate finding till mind is overpassed. Therefore there is behind all our mentality a perfection of ourselves which appears to us as an antinomy and contrast to what we are. For here we are a constant becoming; there we possess our eternal being. Here we conceive of ourselves as a changeful consciousness developed and always developing by a hampered effort in the drive of Time; there we are an immutable consciousness of which Time is not the master but the instrument as well as the field of all that it creates and watches. Here we live in an organisation of mortal consciousness which takes the form of a transient world; there we are liberated into the harmonies of an infinite self-seeing which knows all world in the light of the eternal and immortal. The Beyond is our reality; that is our plenitude; that is the absolute satisfaction of our self-existence. It is immortality and it is “That Delight”.

Here in our imprisoned mentality the ego strives to be master and possessor of its inner field and its outer environment, yet cannot hold anything to enjoy it, because it is not possible really to possess what is not-self to us. But there in the freedom of the eternal our self-existence possesses without strife by the sufficient fact that all things are itself. Here is the apparent man, there the real man, the Purusha: here are gods, there is the Divine: here is the attempt to exist, Life flowering out of an all-devouring death, there Existence itself and a dateless immortality.

The answer that is thus given is involved in the very form of the original question. The Truth behind Mind, Life, Sense

must be that which controls by exceeding it; it is the Lord, the all-possessing Deva. This was the conclusion at which the Isha Upanishad arrived by the synthesis of all existences; the Kena arrives at it by the antithesis of one governing self-existence to all this that exists variously by another power of being than its own. Each follows its own method for the resolution of all things into the one Reality, but the conclusion is identical. It is the All-possessing and All-enjoying, who is reached by the renunciation of separate being, separate possession and separate delight.

But the Isha addresses itself to the awakened seeker; it begins therefore with the all-inhabiting Lord, proceeds to the all-becoming Self and returns to the Lord as the Self of the cosmic movement, because it has to justify works to the seeker of the Uncreated and to institute a divine life founded on the joy of immortality and on the unified consciousness of the individual made one with the universal. The Kena addresses itself to the soul still attracted by the external life, not yet wholly awakened nor wholly a seeker; it begins therefore with the Brahman as the Self beyond Mind and proceeds to the Brahman as the hidden Lord of all our mental and vital activities, because it has to point this soul upward beyond its apparent and outward existence. But the two opening chapters of the Kena only state less widely from this other view-point the Isha's doctrine of the Self and its becomings; the last two repeat in other terms of thought the Isha's doctrine of the Lord and His movement.

IV

The Eternal Beyond the Mind

THE UPANISHAD first affirms the existence of this profounder, vaster, more puissant consciousness behind our mental being. That, it affirms, is Brahman. Mind, Life, Sense, Speech are not the utter Brahman; they are only inferior modes and external instruments. Brahman-consciousness is our real self and our true existence.

Mind and body are not our real self; they are mutable formations or images which we go on constructing in the drive of Time as a result of the mass of our past energies. For although those energies seem to us to lie dead in the past because their history is behind us, yet are they still existent in their mass and always active in the present and the future.

Neither is the ego-function our real self. Ego is only a faculty put forward by the discriminative mind to centralise round itself the experiences of the sense-mind and to serve as a sort of lynch-pin in the wheel which keeps together the movement. It is no more than an instrument, although it is true that so long as we are limited by our normal mentality, we are compelled by the nature of that mentality and the purpose of the instrument to mistake our ego-function for our very self.

Neither is it the memory that constitutes our real self. Memory is another instrument, a selective instrument for the practical management of our conscious activities. The ego-function uses it as a rest and support so as to preserve the sense of continuity without which our mental and vital activities could not be organised for a spacious enjoyment by the individual. But even our mental self comprises and is influenced in its being by a host of things which are not present to our memory, are subconscious and hardly grasped at all by our surface existence. Memory is essential to the continuity of the ego-sense, but it is not the constituent of the ego-sense, still less of the being.

Neither is moral personality our real self. It is only a changing formation, a pliable mould framed and used by our subjective life in order to give some appearance of fixity to the constantly mutable becoming which our mental limitations successfully tempt us to call ourselves.

Neither is the totality of that mutable conscious becoming, although enriched by all that subconsciously underlies it, our real self. What we become is a fluent mass of life, a stream of experience pouring through time, a flux of Nature upon the crest of which our mentality rides. What we are is the eternal essence of that life, the immutable consciousness that bears the experience, the immortal substance of Nature and mentality.

For behind all and dominating all that we become and experience, there is something that originates, uses, determines, enjoys, yet is not changed by its origination, not affected by its instruments, not determined by its determinations, not worked upon by its enjoyings. What that is, we cannot know unless we go behind the veil of our mental being which knows only what is affected, what is determined, what is worked upon, what is changed. The mind can only be aware of that as something which we indefinably are, not as something which it definably knows. For the moment our mentality tries to fix this something, it loses itself in the flux and the movement, grasps at parts, functions, fictions, appearances which it uses as planks of safety in the welter or tries to cut out a form from the infinite and say "This is I." In the words of the Veda, "when the mind approaches That and studies it, That vanishes."

But behind the Mind is this other or Brahman-consciousness, Mind of our mind, Sense of our senses, Speech of our speech, Life of our life. Arriving at that, we arrive at Self; we can draw back from mind the image into Brahman the Reality.

But what differentiates that real from this apparent self? Or — since we can say no more than we have said already in the way of definition, since we can only indicate that "That" is not what "this" is, but is the mentally inexpressible absolute of all that is here,—what is the relation of this phenomenon to that reality? For it is the question of the relation that the Upanishad

makes its starting-point; its opening question assumes that there is a relation and that the reality originates and governs the phenomenon.

Obviously, Brahman is not a thing subject to our mind, senses, speech or life-force; it is no object seen, heard, expressed, sensed, formed by thought, nor any state of body or mind that we become in the changing movement of the life. But the thought of the Upanishad attempts to awaken deeper echoes from our gulfs than this obvious denial of the mental and sensuous objectivity of the Brahman. It affirms that not only is it not an object of mind or a formation of life, but it is not even dependent on our mind, life and senses for the exercise of its lordship and activity. It is that which does not think by the mind, does not live by the life, does not sense by the senses, does not find expression in the speech, but rather makes these things themselves the object of its superior, all-comprehending, all-knowing consciousness.

Brahman thinks out the mind by that which is beyond mind; it sees the sight and hears the hearing by that absolute vision and audition which are not phenomenal and instrumental but direct and inherent; it forms our expressive speech out of its creative word; it speeds out this life we cling to from that eternal movement of its energy which is not parcelled out into forms but has always the freedom of its own inexhaustible infinity.

Thus the Upanishad begins its reply to its own question. It first describes Brahman as Mind of the mind, Sight of the sight, Hearing of the hearing, Speech of the speech, Life of the life. It then takes up each of these expressions and throws them successively into a more expanded form so as to suggest a more definite and ample idea of their meaning, so far as that can be done by words. To the expression "Mind of the mind" corresponds the expanded phrase "That which thinks not with the mind, that by which mind is thought" and so on with each of the original descriptive expressions to the closing definition of the Life behind this life as "That which breathes not with the life-breath, that by which the life-power is brought forward into its movement."

And each of these exegetic lines is emphasised by the reiterated admonition, “That Brahman seek to know and not this which men follow after here.” Neither Mind, Life, Sense and Speech nor their objects and expressions are the Reality which we have to know and pursue. True knowledge is of That which forms these instruments for us but is itself independent of their utilities. True possession and enjoyment is of that which, while it creates these objects of our pursuit, itself makes nothing the object of its pursuit and passion, but is eternally satisfied with all things in the joy of its immortal being.

V

The Supreme Word

THE UPANISHAD, reversing the usual order of our logical thought which would put Mind and Sense first or Life first and Speech last as a subordinate function, begins its negative description of Brahman with an explanation of the very striking phrase, Speech of our speech. And we can see that it means a Speech beyond ours, an absolute expression of which human language is only a shadow and as if an artificial counterfeit. What idea underlies this phrase of the Upanishad and this precedence given to the faculty of speech?

Continually, in studying the Upanishads, we have to divest ourselves of modern notions and to realise as closely as possible the associations that lay behind the early Vedantic use of words. We must recollect that in the Vedic system the Word was the creatrix; by the Word Brahma creates the forms of the universe. Moreover, human speech at its highest merely attempts to recover by revelation and inspiration an absolute expression of Truth which already exists in the Infinite above our mental comprehension. Equally, then, must that Word be above our power of mental construction.

All creation is expression by the Word; but the form which is expressed is only a symbol or representation of the thing which is. We see this in human speech which only presents to the mind a mental form of the object; but the object it seeks to express is itself only a form or presentation of another Reality. That reality is Brahman. Brahman expresses by the Word a form or presentation of himself in the objects of sense and consciousness which constitute the universe, just as the human word expresses a mental image of those objects. That Word is creative in a deeper and more original sense than human speech and with a power of which the utmost creativeness of human speech can be only a far-off and feeble analogy.

The word used here for utterance means literally a raising up to confront the mind. Brahman, says the Upanishad, is that which cannot be so raised up before the mind by speech.

Human speech, as we see, raises up only the presentation of a presentation, the mental figure of an object which is itself only a figure of the sole Reality, Brahman. It has indeed a power of new creation, but even that power only extends to the creation of new mental images, that is to say of adaptive formations based upon previous mental images. Such a limited power gives no idea of the original creative puissance which the old thinkers attributed to the divine Word.

If, however, we go a little deeper below the surface, we shall arrive at a power in human speech which does give us a remote image of the original creative Word. We know that vibration of sound has the power to create—and to destroy—forms; this is a commonplace of modern Science. Let us suppose that behind all forms there has been a creative vibration of sound.

Next, let us examine the relation of human speech to sound in general. We see at once that speech is only a particular application of the principle of sound, a vibration made by pressure of the breath in its passage through the throat and mouth. At first, beyond doubt, it must have been formed naturally and spontaneously to express the sensations and emotions created by an object or occurrence and only afterwards seized upon by the mind to express first the idea of the object and then ideas about the object. The value of speech would therefore seem to be only representative and not creative.

But, in fact, speech is creative. It creates forms of emotion, mental images and impulses of action. The ancient Vedic theory and practice extended this creative action of speech by the use of the Mantra. The theory of the Mantra is that it is a word of power born out of the secret depths of our being where it has been brooded upon by a deeper consciousness than the mental, framed in the heart and not originally constructed by the intellect, held in the mind, again concentrated on by the waking mental consciousness and then thrown out silently or vocally—the silent word is perhaps held to be more potent than the

spoken — precisely for the work of creation. The Mantra can not only create new subjective states in ourselves, alter our psychical being, reveal knowledge and faculties we did not before possess, can not only produce similar results in other minds than that of the user, but can produce vibrations in the mental and vital atmosphere which result in effects, in actions and even in the production of material forms on the physical plane.

As a matter of fact, even ordinarily, even daily and hourly we do produce by the word within us thought-vibrations, thought-forms which result in corresponding vital and physical vibrations, act upon ourselves, act upon others, and end in the indirect creation of actions and of forms in the physical world. Man is constantly acting upon man both by the silent and the spoken word and he so acts and creates though less directly and powerfully even in the rest of Nature. But because we are stupidly engrossed with the external forms and phenomena of the world and do not trouble to examine its subtle and non-physical processes, we remain ignorant of all this field of science behind.

The Vedic use of the Mantra is only a conscious utilisation of this secret power of the word. And if we take the theory that underlies it together with our previous hypothesis of a creative vibration of sound behind every formation, we shall begin to understand the idea of the original creative Word. Let us suppose a conscious use of the vibrations of sound which will produce corresponding forms or changes of form. But Matter is only, in the ancient view, the lowest of the planes of existence. Let us realise then that a vibration of sound on the material plane presupposes a corresponding vibration on the vital without which it could not have come into play; that again presupposes a corresponding originative vibration on the mental; the mental presupposes a corresponding originative vibration on the supramental at the very root of things. But a mental vibration implies thought and perception and a supramental vibration implies a supreme vision and discernment. All vibration of sound on that higher plane is, then, instinct with and expressive of this supreme discernment of a truth in things and is at the same time creative, instinct with

a supreme power which casts into forms the truth discerned and eventually, descending from plane to plane, reproduces it in the physical form or object created in Matter by etheric sound. Thus we see that the theory of creation by the Word which is the absolute expression of the Truth, and the theory of the material creation by sound-vibration in the ether correspond and are two logical poles of the same idea. They both belong to the same ancient Vedic system.

This, then, is the supreme Word, Speech of our speech. It is vibration of pure Existence, instinct with the perceptive and originative power of infinite and omnipotent consciousness, shaped by the Mind behind mind into the inevitable word of the Truth of things; out of whatever substance on whatever plane, the form or physical expression emerges by its creative agency. The Supermind using the Word is the creative Logos.

The Word has its seed-sounds — suggesting the eternal syllable of the Veda, A U M, and the seed-sounds of the Tantriks — which carry in them the principles of things; it has its forms which stand behind the revelatory and inspired speech that comes to man's supreme faculties, and these compel the forms of things in the universe; it has its rhythms, — for it is no disordered vibration, but moves out into great cosmic measures, — and according to the rhythm is the law, arrangement, harmony, processes of the world it builds. Life itself is a rhythm of God.

But what is it that is expressed or raised up before the mental consciousness by the Word in the phenomenal world? Not Brahman, but truths, forms and phenomena of Brahman. Brahman is not, cannot be expressed by the Word; he does not use the word here to express his very self, but is known only to his own self-awareness. And even the truths of himself that stand behind the forms of cosmic things are in their true reality always self-expressed to his eternal vision in a higher than the mental vibration, a rhythm and voice of themselves that is their own very soul of movement. Speech, a lesser thing, creates, expresses, but is itself only a creation and expression. Brahman is not expressed by speech, but speech is itself expressed by Brahman. And that which expresses speech in us, brings it up out of our

consciousness with its strivings to raise up the truth of things to our mind, is Brahman himself as the Word, a Thing that is in the supreme superconscience. That Word, Speech of our speech, is in its essence of Power the Eternal himself and in its supreme movements a part of his very form and everlasting spiritual body, *brahmaṇo rūpam*.

Therefore it is not the happenings and phenomena of the world that we have to accept finally as our object of pursuit, but That which brings out from itself the Word by which they were thrown into form for our observation by the consciousness and for our pursuit by the will. In other words, the supreme Existence that has originated all.

Human speech is only a secondary expression and at its highest a shadow of the divine Word, of the seed-sounds, the satisfying rhythms, the revealing forms of sound that are the omniscient and omnipotent speech of the eternal Thinker, Harmonist, Creator. The highest inspired speech to which the human mind can attain, the word most unanalysably expressive of supreme truth, the most puissant syllable or mantra can only be its far-off representation.

The Necessity of Supermind

AS THE Upanishad asserts a speech behind this speech, which is the expressive aspect of the Brahman-consciousness, so it asserts a Mind behind this mind which is its cognitive aspect. And as we asked ourselves what could be the rational basis for the theory of the divine Word superior to our speech, so we have now to ask ourselves what can be the rational basis for this theory of a cognitive faculty or principle superior to Mind. We may say indeed that if we grant a divine Word creative of all things, we must also grant a divine Mind cognitive of the Word and of all that it expresses. But this is not a sufficient foundation; for the theory of the divine Word presents itself only as a rational possibility. A cognition higher than Mind presents itself on the other hand as a necessity which arises from the very nature of Mind itself, a necessity from which we cannot logically escape.

In the ancient system which admitted the soul's survival of the body, Mind was the man, in a very profound and radical sense of the phrase. It is not only that the human being is the one reasoning animal upon earth, the thinking race; he is essentially the mental being in a terrestrial body, the *manu*. Quite apart from the existence of a soul or self one in all creatures, the body is not even the phenomenal self of man; the physical life also is not himself; both may be dissolved, man will persist. But if the mental being also is dissolved, man as man ceases to be; for this is his centre and the nodus of his organism.

On the contrary, according to the theory of a material evolution upheld by modern Science, man is only matter that has developed mind by an increasing sensibility to the shocks of its environment; and matter being the basis of existence there is nothing, except the physical elements, that can survive the dissolution of the body. But this formula is at most the obverse and

inferior side of a much larger truth. Matter could not develop Mind if in or behind the force that constitutes physical forms there were not already a principle of Mind striving towards self-manifestation. The will to enlighten and consciously govern the life and the form must have been already existent in that which appears to us inconscient; it must have been there before mind was evolved. For, if there were no such necessity of Mind in Matter, if the stuff of mentality were not there already and the will to mentalise, Mind could not possibly have come into being out of inconscient substance.

But in the mere chemical elements which go to constitute material forms or in electricity or in any other purely physical factor, whatever unconscious will or sensation they may be possessed by or possess, we can discover nothing which could explain the emergence of conscious sensation, which could constitute a will towards the evolution of thought or which could impose the necessity of such an evolution on inconscient physical substance. It is not then in the form of Matter itself, but in the Force which is at work in Matter, that we must seek the origin of Mind. That Force must either be itself conscious or contain the grain of mental consciousness inherent in its being and therefore the potentiality and indeed the necessity of its emergence. This imprisoned consciousness, though originally absorbed in the creation first of forms and then of physical relations and reactions between physical forms, must still have held in itself from the beginning, however long kept back and suppressed, a will to the ultimate enlightenment of these relations by the creation of corresponding conscious or mental values. Mind is then a concealed necessity which the subconscious holds in itself from the commencement of things; it is the thing that must emerge once the attractions and repulsions of Matter begin to be established; it is the suppressed secret and cause of the reactions of life in the metal, plant and animal.

If on the other hand we say that Mind in some such secret and suppressed form is not already existent in Matter, we must then suppose that it exists outside Matter and embraces it or enters into it. We must suppose a mental plane of existence

which presses upon the physical and tends to possess it. In that case the mental being would be in its origin an entity which is formed outside the material world; but it prepares in that world bodies which become progressively more and more able to house and express Mind. We may image it forming, entering into and possessing the body, breaking into it, as it were,—as the Purusha in the Aitareya Upanishad is said to form the body and then to enter in by breaking open a door in Matter. Man would in this view be a mental being incarnate in the living body who at its dissolution leaves it with full possession of his mentality.

The two theories are far from being incompatible with each other; they can be viewed as complements forming a single truth. For the involution of Mind, its latency in the material Force of the physical universe and in all its movements does not preclude the existence of a mental world beyond and above the reign of the physical principle. In fact, the emergence of such a latent Mind might well depend upon and would certainly profit by the aid and pressure of forces from a supra-physical kingdom, a mental plane of existence.

There are always two possible views of the universe. The one supposes, with modern Science, Matter to be the beginning of things and studies everything as an evolution from Matter; or, if not Matter, then, with the Sankhya philosophy, an indeterminate inconscient active Force or Prakriti of which even mind and reason are mechanical operations,—the Conscious Soul, if any exists, being a quite different and, although conscient, yet inactive entity. The other supposes the conscious soul, the Purusha, to be the material as well as the cause of the universe and Prakriti to be only its Shakti or the Force of its conscious being which operates upon itself as the material of forms.¹ The latter is the view of the Upanishads. Certainly if we study the material world only, excluding all evidence of other planes as a dream or a hallucination, if we equally exclude all evidence of operations

¹ Cf. for example, the Aitareya Upanishad which shows us the Atman or Self using the Purusha as that in which all the operations of Nature are formed.

in mind which exceed the material limitation and study only its ordinary equation with Matter, we must necessarily accept the theory of Matter as the origin and as the indispensable basis and continent. Otherwise, we shall be irresistibly led towards the early Vedantic conclusions.

However this may be, even from the standpoint of the sole material world Man in the substance of his manhood is a mind occupying and using the life of the body — a mind that is greater than the Matter in which it has emerged. He is the highest present expression of the will in the material universe; the Force that has built up the worlds, so far as we are able to judge of its intention from its actual operations as we see them in their present formula upon earth, arrives in him at the thing it was seeking to express. It has brought out the hidden principle of Mind that now operates consciously and intelligently on the life and the body. Man is the satisfaction of the necessity which Nature bore secretly in her from the very commencement of her works; he is the highest possible Name or Numen on this planet; he is the realised terrestrial godhead.

But all this is true only if we assume that for Nature's terrestrial activities Mind is the ultimate formula. In reality and when we study more deeply the phenomena of consciousness, the facts of mentality, the secret tendency, aspiration and necessity of man's own nature, we see that he cannot be the highest term. He is the highest realised here and now; he is not the highest realisable. As there is something below him, so there is something, if even only a possibility, above. As physical Nature concealed a secret beyond herself which in him she has released into creation, so he too conceals a secret beyond himself which he in turn must deliver to the light. That is his destiny.

This must necessarily be so because Mind too is not the first principle of things and therefore cannot be their last possibility. As Matter contained Life in itself, contained it as its own secret necessity and had to be delivered of that birth, and as Life contained Mind in itself, contained it as its own secret necessity and had to be delivered of the birth it held, so Mind too contains in itself that which is beyond itself, contains it as its own secret

necessity and presses to be delivered, it also, of this supreme birth.

What is the rational necessity which forbids us to suppose Mind to be Nature's last birth and compels us to posit something beyond it of which itself is the indication? A consideration of the nature and working of mentality supplies us with the answer. For mentality is composed of three principal elements, thought, will and sensation. Sensation may be described as an attempt of divided consciousness to seize upon its object and enjoy it, thought as its attempt to seize upon the truth of the object and possess it, will as its attempt to seize upon the potentiality of the object and use it. At least these three things are such an attempt in their essentiality, in their instinct, in their subconscious purpose. But obviously the attempt is imperfect in its conditions and its success; its very terms indicate a barrier, a gulf, an incapacity. As Life is limited and hampered by the conditions of its synthesis with Matter, so Mind is limited and hampered by the conditions of its synthesis with Life in Matter. Neither Matter nor Life has found anything proper to their own formula which could help to conquer or sufficiently expand its limitations; they have been compelled each to call in a new principle, Matter to call into itself Life, Life to call into itself Mind. Mind also is not able to find anything proper to its own formula which can conquer or sufficiently expand the limitations imposed upon its workings; Mind also has to call in a new principle beyond itself, freer than itself and more powerful.

In other words, Mind does not exhaust the possibilities of consciousness and therefore cannot be its last and highest expression. Mind tries to arrive at Truth and succeeds only in touching it imperfectly with a veil between; there must be in the nature of things a faculty or principle which sees the Truth unveiled, an eternal faculty of knowledge which corresponds to the eternal fact of the Truth. There is, says the Veda, such a principle; it is the Truth-Consciousness which sees the truth directly and is in possession of it spontaneously. Mind labours to effect the will in it and succeeds only in accomplishing partially, with difficulty and insecurely the potentiality at which it works; there must be

a faculty or principle of conscious effective force which corresponds to the unconscious automatic principle of self-fulfilment in Nature, and this principle must be sought for in the form of consciousness that exceeds Mind. Mind, finally, aspires to seize and enjoy the essential delight-giving quality, the *rasa* of things, but it succeeds only in attaining to it indirectly, holding it in an imperfect grasp and enjoying it externally and fragmentarily; there must be a principle which can attain directly, hold rightly, enjoy intimately and securely. There is, says the Veda, an eternal Bliss-consciousness which corresponds to the eternal *rasa* or essential delight-giving quality of all experience and is not limited by the insecure approximations of the sense in Mind.

If, then, such a deeper principle of consciousness exists, it must be that and not mind which is the original and fundamental intention concealed in Nature and which eventually and somewhere must emerge. But is there any reason for supposing that it must emerge here and in Mind, as Mind has emerged in Life and Life in Matter? We answer in the affirmative because Mind has in itself, however obscurely, that tendency, that aspiration and, at bottom, that necessity. There is one law from the lowest to the highest. Matter, when we examine it closely, proves to be instinct with the stuff of Life—the vibrations, actions and reactions, attractions and repulsions, contractions and expansions, the tendencies of combination, formation and growth, the seekings and responses which are the very substance of life; but the visible principle of life can only emerge when the necessary material conditions have been prepared which will permit it to organise itself in Matter. So also Life is instinct with the stuff of Mind, abounds with an unconscious² sensation, will, intelligence, but the visible principle of Mind can only emerge when the necessary vital conditions have been prepared which will permit it to organise itself in living Matter. Mind too is instinct with the stuff of supermind—sympathies, unities, intuitions, emergences of preexistent knowledge, instincts, imperative lights and movements, inherent self-effectivities of will which disguise

² I use the language of the materialist Haeckel in spite of its paradoxical form.

themselves in a mental form; but the visible principle of supermind can only emerge when the necessary mental conditions are prepared which will permit it to organise itself in man, the mental living creature.

This necessary preparation is proceeding in human development as the corresponding preparations were developed in the lower stages of the evolution,—with the same gradations, retardations, inequalities; but still it is more enlightened, increasingly self-conscious, nearer to a conscious sureness. And the very fact that this progress is attended by less absorption in the detail, less timidity of error, a less conservative attachment to the step gained suggests as much as it contradicts the hope and almost the assurance that when the new principle emerges it will not be by the creation of a new and quite different type which, separated after its creation, will leave the rest of mankind in the same position to it as are the animals to man, but, if not by the elevation of humanity as a whole to a higher level, yet by an opening of the greater possibility to all of the race who have the will to rise. For Man, first among Nature's children, has shown the capacity to change himself by his own effort and the conscious aspiration to transcend.

These considerations justify to the reason the idea of a Mind beyond our mind, but only as a final evolution out of Matter. The Upanishad, however, enthrones it as the already existing creator and ruler of Mind; it is a secret principle already conscient and not merely contained inconsciously in the very stuff of things. But this is the natural conclusion—even apart from spiritual experience—from the nature of the supramental principle. For it is at its highest an eternal knowledge, will, bliss and conscious being and it is more reasonable to conclude that it is eternally conscious, though we are not conscious of it, and the source of the universe, than that it is eternally unconscious and only becomes conscious in Time as a result of the universe. Our unconsciousness of it is no proof that it is unconscious of us: and yet our own incapacity is the only real basis left for the denial of an eternal Mind beyond mind superior to its creations and originative of the cosmos.

All other foundations for the rejection of this ancient wisdom have disappeared or are disappearing before the increasing light of modern knowledge.

Mind and Supermind

WE ARRIVE then at this affirmation of an all-cognitive Principle superior to Mind and exceeding it in nature, scope and capacity. For the Upanishad affirms a Mind beyond mind as the result of intuition and spiritual experience and its existence is equally a necessary conclusion from the facts of the cosmic evolution. What then is this Mind beyond mind? how does it function? or by what means shall we arrive at the knowledge of it or possess it?

The Upanishad asserts about this supreme cognitive principle, first, that it is beyond the reach of mind and the senses; secondly, that it does not itself think with the mind; thirdly, that it is that by which mind itself is thought or mentalised; fourthly, that it is the very nature or description of the Brahman-consciousness.

When we say, however, that "Mind of mind" is the nature or description of the Brahman-consciousness, we must not forget that the absolute Brahman in itself is held to be unknowable and therefore beyond description. It is unknowable, not because it is a void and capable of no description except that of nothingness, nor because, although positive in existence, it has no content or quality, but because it is beyond all things that our present instruments of knowledge can conceive and because the methods of ideation and expression proper to our mentality do not apply to it. It is the absolute of all things that we know and of each thing that we know and yet nothing nor any sum of things can exhaust or characterise its essential being. For its manner of being is other than that which we call existence; its unity resists all analysis, its multiple infinities exceed every synthesis. Therefore it is not in its absolute essentiality that it can be described as Mind of the mind, but in its fundamental nature in regard to our mental existence.

Brahman-consciousness is the eternal outlook of the Absolute upon the relative.

But even of this outlook we may say that it is beyond the reach of mind and speech and senses. Yet mind, speech and senses seem to be our only available means for acquiring and expressing knowledge. Must we not say then that this Brahman-consciousness also is unknowable and that we can never hope to know it or possess it while in this body? Yet the Upanishad commands us to *know* this Brahman and by knowledge to possess it — for the knowledge intended by the words *viddhi, avedit*, is a knowledge that discovers and takes possession, — and it declares later on that it is here, in this body and on this earth that we must thus possess Brahman in knowledge, otherwise great is the perdition. A good deal of confusion has been brought into the interpretation of this Upanishad by a too trenchant dealing with the subtlety of its distinctions between the knowability and the unknowability of the Brahman. We must therefore try to observe exactly what the Upanishad says and especially to seize the whole of its drift by synthetic intuition rather than cut up its meaning so as to make it subject to our logical mentality.

The Upanishad sets out by saying that this Ruler of the mind, senses, speech and life is Mind of our mind, Life of our life, Sense of our senses, Speech of our speech; and it then proceeds to explain what it intends by these challenging phrases. But it introduces between the description and the explanation a warning that neither the description nor the explanation must be pushed beyond their proper limits or understood as more than guide-posts pointing us towards our goal. For neither Mind, Speech nor Sense can travel to the Brahman; therefore Brahman must be beyond all these things in its very nature, otherwise it would be attainable by them in their function. The Upanishad, although it is about to teach of the Brahman, yet affirms, “we know It not, we cannot distinguish how one should teach of It.” The two Sanskrit words that are here used, *vidmaḥ* and *vijānīmaḥ*, seem to indicate the one a general grasp and possession in knowledge, the other a total and exact comprehension in whole and detail, by synthesis and analysis. The reason of this entire inability

is next given, "because Brahman is other than the known and It is there over the unknown," possessing it and, as it were, presiding over it. The known is all that we grasp and possess by our present mentality; it is all that is not the supreme Brahman but only form and phenomenon of it to our sense and mental cognition. The unknown is that which is beyond the known and though unknown is not unknowable if we can enlarge our faculties or attain to others that we do not yet possess.

Yet the Upanishad next proceeds to maintain and explain its first description and to enjoin on us the knowledge of the Brahman which it so describes. This contradiction is not at once reconciled; it is only in the second chapter that the difficulty is solved and only in the fourth that the means of knowledge are indicated. The contradiction arises from the nature of our knowledge itself which is a relation between the consciousness that seeks and the consciousness that is sought; where that relation disappears, knowledge is replaced by sheer identity. In what we call existence, the highest knowledge can be no more than the highest relation between that which seeks and that which is sought, and it consists in a modified identity through which we may pass beyond knowledge to the absolute identity. This metaphysical distinction is of importance because it prevents us from mistaking any relation in knowledge for the absolute and from becoming so bound by our experience as to lose or miss the fundamental awareness of the absolute which is beyond all possible description and behind all formulated experience. But it does not render the highest relation in our knowledge, the modified identity in experience worthless or otiose. On the contrary, it is that we must aim at as the consummation of our existence in the world. For if we possess it without being limited by it,— and if we are limited by it we have not true possession of it,— then in and through it we shall, even while in this body, remain in touch with the Absolute.

The means for the attainment of this highest knowledge is the constant preparation of the mind by the admission into it of a working higher than itself until the mind is capable of giving itself up to the supramental action which exceeds it and

which will finally replace it. In fact, Mind also has to follow the law of natural progression which has governed our evolution in this world from matter into life and life into mind. For just as life-consciousness is beyond the imprisoned material being and unattainable by it through its own instruments, just as mind-consciousness is beyond the first inconscient movements of life, so too this supramental consciousness is beyond the divided and dividing nature of Mind and unattainable by it through its own instruments. But as Matter is constantly prepared for the manifestation of Life until Life is able to move in it, possess it, manage in it its own action and reaction, and as Life is constantly prepared for the manifestation of Mind until Mind is able to use it, enlighten its actions and reactions by higher and higher mental values, so must it be with Mind and that which is beyond Mind.

And all this progression is possible because these things are only different formations of one being and one consciousness. Life only reveals in Matter that which is involved in Matter, that which is the secret meaning and essence of Matter. It reveals, as it were, to material existence its own soul, its own end. So too Mind reveals in Life all that Life means, all that it obscurely is in essence but cannot realise because it is absorbed in its own practical motion and its own characteristic form. So also Supermind must intervene to reveal Mind to itself, to liberate it from its absorption in its own practical motion and characteristic form and enable the mental being to realise that which is the hidden secret of all its formal practice and action. Thus shall man come to the knowledge of that which rules within him and missions his mind to its mark, sends forth his speech, impels the life-force in its paths and sets his senses to their workings.

This supreme cognitive Principle does not think by the mind. Mind is to it an inferior and secondary action, not its own proper mode. For Mind, based on limitation and division, can act only from a given centre in the lower and obscured existence; but Supermind is founded on unity and it comprehends and pervades; its action is in the universal and is in conscious communion with a transcendent source eternal and beyond the formations of the universe. Supermind regards the individual in the

universal and does not begin with him or make of him a separate being. It starts from the Transcendent and sees the universal and individual as they are in relation to it, as its terms, as its formulas; it does not start from the individual and universal to arrive at the Transcendent. Mind acquires knowledge and mastery; it reaches it by a constant mentalising and willing: Supermind possesses knowledge and mastery; possessing, it throws itself out freely in various willing and knowing. Mind gropes by divided sensation; it arrives at a sort of oneness through sympathy: Supermind possesses by a free and all-embracing sense; it lives in the unity of which various love and sympathy are only a secondary play of manifestation. Supermind starts from the whole and sees in it its parts and properties, it does not build up the knowledge of the whole by an increasing knowledge of the parts and properties; and even the whole is to it only a unity of sum, only a partial and inferior term of the higher unity of infinite essence.

We see, then, that these two cognitive Principles start from two opposite poles and act in opposite directions by opposite methods. Yet it is by the higher cognitive that the lower is formed and governed. Mind is thought by that which is beyond Mind; the mentalising consciousness shapes and directs its movement according to the knowledge and impulse it receives from this higher Supermind and even the stuff of which it is formed belongs to that Principle. Mentality exists because that which is beyond Mind has conceived an inverse action of itself working in a thinner, poorer, darker, less powerful substance of conscious being and founded upon its self-concentration on different points in its own being and in different forms of its own being. Supermind fixes these points, sees how consciousness must act from them on other forms of itself and in obedience to the pressure of those other forms, once a particular rhythm or law of universal action is given; it governs the whole action of mentality according to what it thus fixes and sees. Even our ignorance is only the distorted action of a truth projected from the Supermind and could not exist except as such a distortion; and so likewise all our dualities of knowledge, sensation, emotion, force proceed from that higher vision, obey it and are a secondary and, as one

might say, perverse action of the concealed Supermind itself which governs always this lower action in harmony with its first conception of a located consciousness, divided indeed and therefore not in possession of its world or itself, but feeling out towards that possession and towards the unity which, because of the Supermind in us, it instinctively, if obscurely, knows to be its true nature and right.

But, for this very reason, the feeling out, the attempt at acquisition can only succeed in proportion as the mental being abandons his characteristic mentality and its limitations in order to rise beyond to that Mind of the mind which is his origin and his secret governing principle. His mentality must admit Supramentality as Life has admitted Mind. So long as he worships, follows after, adheres to all this that he now accepts as the object of his pursuit, to the mind and its aims, to its broken methods, its constructions of will and opinion and emotion dependent on egoism, division and ignorance, he cannot rise beyond this death to that immortality which the Upanishad promises to the seeker. That Brahman we have to know and seek after and not this which men here adore and pursue.

VIII

The Supreme Sense

THE UPANISHAD is not satisfied with the definition of the Brahman-consciousness as Mind of the mind. Just as it has described it as Speech of the speech, so also it describes it as Eye of the eye, Ear of the ear. Not only is it an absolute cognition behind the play of expression, but also an absolute Sense behind the action of the senses. Every part of our being finds its fulfilment in that which is beyond its present forms of functioning and not in those forms themselves.

This conception of the all-governing supreme consciousness does not fall in with our ordinary theories about sense and mind and the Brahman. We know of sense only as an action of the organs through which embodied mind communicates with external Matter, and these sense-organs have been separately developed in the course of evolution; the senses therefore are not fundamental things, but only subordinate conveniences and temporary physical functionings of the embodied Mind. Brahman, on the other hand, we conceive of by the elimination of all that is not fundamental, by the elimination even of the Mind itself. It is a sort of positive zero, an *x* or unknowable which corresponds to no possible equation of physical or psychological quantities. In essence this may or may not be true; but we have now to think not of the Unknowable but of its highest manifestation in consciousness; and this we have described as the outlook of the Absolute on the relative and as that which is the cause and governing power of all that we and the universe are. There in that governing cause there must be something essential and supreme of which all our fundamental functionings here are a rendering in the terms of embodied consciousness.

Sense, however, is not or does not appear to be fundamental; it is only an instrumentation of Mind using the nervous system. It is not even a pure mental functioning, but depends so much upon

the currents of the Life-force, upon its electric energy vibrating up and down the nerves, that in the Upanishads the senses are called Pranas, powers or functionings of the Life-force. It is true that Mind turns these nervous impressions when communicated to it into mental values, but the sense-action itself seems to be rather nervous than mental. In any case there would, at first sight, appear to be no warrant in reason for attributing a Sense of the sense to that which is not embodied, to a supramental consciousness which has no need of any such instrumentation.

But this is not the last word about sense; this is only its outward appearance behind which we must penetrate. What, not in its functioning, but in its essence, is the thing we call sense? In its functioning, if we analyse that thoroughly, we see that it is the contact of the mind with an eidolon of Matter,—whether that eidolon be of a vibration of sound, a light-image of form, a volley of earth-particles giving the sense of odour, an impression of *rasa* or sap that gives the sense of taste, or that direct sense of disturbance of our nervous being which we call touch. No doubt, the contact of Matter with Matter is the original cause of these sensations; but it is only the eidolon of Matter, as for instance the image of the form cast upon the eye, with which the mind is directly concerned. For the mind operates upon Matter not directly, but through the Life-force; that is its instrument of communication and the Life-force, being in us a nervous energy and not anything material, can seize on Matter only through nervous impressions of form, through contactual images, as it were, which create corresponding values in the energy-consciousness called in the Upanishads the Prana. Mind takes these up and replies to them with corresponding mental values, mental impressions of form, so that the thing sensed comes to us after a triple process of translation, first the material eidolon, secondly the nervous or energy-image, third the image reproduced in stuff of mind.

This elaborate process is concealed from us by the lightning-like rapidity with which it is managed,—rapidity in our impressions of Time; for in another notation of Time by a creature differently constituted each part of the operation might

be distinctly sensible. But the triple translation is always there, because there are really three sheaths of consciousness in us, the material, *annakoṣa*, in which the physical contact and image are received and formed, the vital and nervous, *prāṇakoṣa*, in which there is a nervous contact and formation, the mental, *manahkoṣa*, in which there is mental contact and imaging. We dwell centred in the mental sheath and therefore the experience of the material world has to come through the other two sheaths before it can reach us.

The foundation of sense, therefore, is contact, and the essential contact is the mental without which there would not be sense at all. The plant, for instance, feels nervously, feels in terms of life-energy, precisely as the human nervous system does, and it has precisely the same reactions; but it is only if the plant has rudimentary mind that we can suppose it to be, as we understand the word, sensible of these nervous or vital impressions and reactions. For then it would feel not only nervously, but in terms of mind. Sense, then, may be described as in its essence mental contact with an object and the mental reproduction of its image.

All these things we observe and reason of in terms of this embodiment of mind in Matter; for these sheaths or *kōṣas* are formations in a more and more subtle substance reposing on gross Matter as their base. Let us imagine that there is a mental world in which Mind and not Matter is the base. There sense would be quite a different thing in its operation. It would feel mentally an image in Mind and throw it out into form in more and more gross substance; and whatever physical formations there might already be in that world would respond rapidly to the Mind and obey its modifying suggestions. Mind would be masterful, creative, originative, not as with us either obedient to Matter and merely reproductive or else in struggle with it and only with difficulty able to modify a material predetermined and dully reluctant to its touch. It would be, subject to whatever supramental power might be above it, master of a ductile and easily responsive material. But still Sense would be there, because contact in mental consciousness and formation of images would still be part of the law of being.

Mind, in fact, or active consciousness generally has four necessary functions which are indispensable to it wherever and however it may act and of which the Upanishads speak in the four terms, *vijñāna*, *prajñāna*, *samjñāna* and *ājñāna*. *Vijñāna* is the original comprehensive consciousness which holds an image of things at once in its essence, its totality and its parts and properties; it is the original, spontaneous, true and complete view of it which belongs properly to the supermind and of which mind has only a shadow in the highest operations of the comprehensive intellect. *Prajñāna* is the consciousness which holds an image of things before it as an object with which it has to enter into relations and to possess by apprehension and a combined analytic and synthetic cognition. *Samjñāna* is the contact of consciousness with an image of things by which there is a sensible possession of it in its substance; if *prajñāna* can be described as the outgoing of apprehensive consciousness to possess its object in conscious energy, to know it, *samjñāna* can be described as the inbringing movement of apprehensive consciousness which draws the object placed before it back to itself so as to possess it in conscious substance, to feel it. *Ājñāna* is the operation by which consciousness dwells on an image of things so as to hold, govern and possess it in power. These four, therefore, are the basis of all conscious action.

As our human psychology is constituted, we begin with *samjñāna*, the sense of an object in its image; the apprehension of it in knowledge follows. Afterwards we try to arrive at the comprehension of it in knowledge and the possession of it in power. There are secret operations in us, in our subconscious and superconscious selves, which precede this action, but of these we are not aware in our surface being and therefore for us they do not exist. If we knew of them, our whole conscious functioning would be changed. As it is what happens is a rapid process by which we sense an image and have of it an apprehensive percept and concept, and a slower process of the intellect by which we try to comprehend and possess it. The former process is the natural action of the mind which has entirely developed in us; the latter is an acquired action, an action of the intellect and the intelligent

will which represent in Mind an attempt of the mental being to do what can only be done with perfect spontaneity and mastery by something higher than Mind. The intellect and intelligent will form a bridge by which the mental being is trying to establish a conscious connection with the supramental and to prepare the embodied soul for the descent into it of a supramental action. Therefore the first process is comparatively easy, spontaneous, rapid, perfect; the second slow, laboured, imperfect. In proportion as the intellectual action becomes associated with and dominated by a rudimentary supramental action,—and it is this which constitutes the phenomenon of genius,—the second process also becomes more and more easy, spontaneous, rapid and perfect.

If we suppose a supreme consciousness, master of the world, which really conducts behind the veil all the operations the mental gods attribute to themselves, it will be obvious that that consciousness will be the entire Knower and Lord. The basis of its action or government of the world will be the perfect, original and all-possessing *vijnāna* and *ajñāna*. It will comprehend all things in its energy of conscious knowledge, control all things in its energy of conscious power. These energies will be the spontaneous inherent action of its conscious being creative and possessive of the forms of the universe. What part then will be left for the apprehensive consciousness and the sense? They will be not independent functions, but subordinate operations involved in the action of the comprehensive consciousness itself. In fact, all four there will be one rapid movement. If we had all these four acting in us with the unified rapidity with which the *prajñāna* and *samjñāna* act, we should then have in our notation of Time some inadequate image of the unity of the supreme action of the supreme energy.

If we consider, we shall see that this must be so. The supreme consciousness must not only comprehend and possess in its conscious being the images of things which it creates as its self-expression, but it must place them before it—always in its own being, not externally—and have a certain relation with them by the two terms of apprehensive consciousness. Otherwise the

universe would not take the form that it has for us; for we only reflect in the terms of our organisation the movements of the supreme Energy. But by the very fact that the images of things are there held in front of an apprehending consciousness within the comprehending conscious being and not externalised as our individual mind externalises them, the supreme Mind and supreme Sense will be something quite different from our mentality and our forms of sensation. They will be terms of an entire knowledge and self-possession and not terms of an ignorance and limitation which strives to know and possess.

In its essential and general term our sense must reflect and be the creation of this supreme Sense. But the Upanishad speaks of a Sight behind our sight and a Hearing behind our hearing, not in general terms of a Sense behind our sense. Certainly eye and ear are only taken as typical of the senses, and are chosen because they are the highest and subtlest of them all. But still the differentiation of sense which forms part of our mentality is evidently held to correspond with a differentiation of some kind in the supreme Sense. How is this possible? It is what we have next to unravel by examining the nature and source of the functioning of the separate senses in ourselves,—their source in our mentality and not merely their functioning in the actual terms of our life-energy and our body. What is it in Mind that is fundamental to sight and hearing? Why do we see and hear and not simply sense with the mind?

IX

Sense of Our Senses

MIND WAS called by Indian psychologists the eleventh and ranks as the supreme sense. In the ancient arrangement of the senses, five of knowledge and five of action, it was the sixth of the organs of knowledge and at the same time the sixth of the organs of action. It is a commonplace of psychology that the effective functioning of the senses of knowledge is inoperative without the assistance of the mind; the eye may see, the ear may hear, all the senses may act, but if the mind pays no attention, the man has not heard, seen, felt, touched or tasted. Similarly, according to psychology, the organs of action act only by the force of the mind operating as will or, physiologically, by the reactive nervous force from the brain which must be according to materialistic notions the true self and essence of all will. In any case, the senses or all senses, if there are other than the ten,—according to a text in the Upanishad there should be at least fourteen, seven and seven,—all senses appear to be only organisations, functionings, instrumentations of the mind-consciousness, devices which it has formed in the course of its evolution in living Matter.

Modern psychology has extended our knowledge and has admitted us to a truth which the ancients already knew but expressed in other language. We know now or we rediscover the truth that the conscious operation of mind is only a surface action. There is a much vaster and more potent subconscious mind which loses nothing of what the senses bring to it; it keeps all its wealth in an inexhaustible store of memory, *akṣitam śravah*. The surface mind may pay no attention, still the subconscious mind attends, receives, treasures up with an infallible accuracy. The illiterate servant-girl hears daily her master reciting Hebrew in his study; the surface mind pays no attention to the unintelligible gibberish, but the subconscious mind hears, remembers and,

when in an abnormal condition it comes up to the surface, reproduces those learned recitations with a portentous accuracy which the most correct and retentive scholar might envy. The man or mind has not heard because he did not attend; the greater man or mind within has heard because he always attends, or rather sub-tends, with an infinite capacity. So too a man put under an anaesthetic and operated upon has felt nothing; but release his subconscious mind by hypnosis and he will relate accurately every detail of the operation and its appropriate sufferings; for the stupor of the physical sense-organ could not prevent the larger mind within from observing and feeling.

Similarly we know that a large part of our physical action is instinctive and directed not by the surface but by the subconscious mind. And we know now that it is a mind that acts and not merely an ignorant nervous reaction from the brute physical brain. The subconscious mind in the caterpillar insect knows the anatomy of the victim it intends to immobilise and make food for its young and it directs the sting accordingly, as unerringly as the most skilful surgeon, provided the more limited surface mind with its groping and faltering nervous action does not get in the way and falsify the inner knowledge or the inner will-force.

These examples point us to truths which western psychology, hampered by past ignorance posing as scientific orthodoxy, still ignores or refuses to acknowledge. The Upanishads declare that the Mind in us is infinite; it knows not only what has been seen but what has not been seen, not only what has been heard but what has not been heard, not only what has been discriminated by the thought but what has not been discriminated by the thought. Let us say, then, in the tongue of our modern knowledge that the surface man in us is limited by his physical experiences; he knows only what his nervous life in the body brings to his embodied mind; and even of those bringings he knows, he can retain and utilise only so much as his surface mind-sense attends to and consciously remembers; but there is a larger subliminal consciousness within him which is not thus limited. That consciousness senses what has not been sensed by the surface mind and its organs and knows what the surface mind has not

learned by its acquisitive thought. That in the insect knows the anatomy of its victim; that in the man outwardly insensible not only feels and remembers the action of the surgeon's knife, but knows the appropriate reactions of suffering which were in the physical body inhibited by the anaesthetic and therefore non-existent; that in the illiterate servant-girl heard and retained accurately the words of an unknown language and could, as Yogic experience knows, by a higher action of itself understand those superficially unintelligible sounds.

To return to the Vedantic words we have been using, there is a vaster action of the Sanjnana which is not limited by the action of the physical sense-organs; it was this which sensed perfectly and made its own through the ear the words of the unknown language, through the touch the movements of the unfeet surgeon's knife, through the sense-mind or sixth sense the exact location of the centres of locomotion in the victim insect. There is also associated with it a corresponding vaster action of Prajnana, Ajnana and Vijnana not limited by the smaller apprehensive and comprehensive faculties of the external mind. It is this vaster Prajnana which perceived the proper relation of the words to each other, of the movement of the knife to the unfeet suffering of the nerves and of the successive relation in space of the articulations in the insect's body. Such perception was inherent in the right reproduction of the words, the right narration of the sufferings, the right successive action of the sting. The Ajnana or Knowledge-Will originating all these actions was also vaster, not limited by the faltering force that governs the operations directed by the surface mind. And although in these examples the action of the vaster Vijnana is not so apparent, yet it was evidently there working through them and ensuring their coordination.

But at present it is with the Sanjnana that we are concerned. Here we should note, first of all, that there is an action of the sense-mind which is superior to the particular action of the senses and is aware of things even without imaging them in forms of sight, sound, contact, but which also as a sort of subordinate operation, subordinate but necessary to completeness

of presentation, does image in these forms. This is evident in psychical phenomena. Those who have carried the study and experimentation of them to a certain extent, have found that we can sense things known only to the minds of others, things that exist only at a great distance, things that belong to another plane than the terrestrial but have here their effects; we can both sense them in their images and also feel, as it were, all that they are without any definite image proper to the five senses.

This shows, in the first place, that sight and the other senses are not mere results of the development of our physical organs in the terrestrial evolution. Mind, subconscious in all Matter and evolving in Matter, has developed these physical organs in order to apply its inherent capacities of sight, hearing etc., on the physical plane by physical means for a physical life; but they are inherent capacities and not dependent on the circumstance of terrestrial evolution and they can be employed without the use of the physical eye, ear, skin, palate. Supposing that there are psychical senses which act through a psychical body and we thus explain these psychical phenomena, still that action also is only an organisation of the inherent functioning of the essential sense, the Sanjnana, which in itself can operate without bodily organs. This essential sense is the original capacity of consciousness to feel in itself all that consciousness has formed and to feel it in all the essential properties and operations of that which has form, whether represented materially by vibration of sound or images of light or any other physical symbol.

The trend of knowledge leads more and more to the conclusion that not only are the properties of form, even the most obvious such as colour, light etc., merely operations of Force, but form itself is only an operation of Force. This Force again proves to be self-power of conscious-being¹ in a state of energy and activity. Practically, therefore, all form is only an operation of consciousness impressing itself with presentations of its own workings. We see colour because that is the presentation which

¹ *Devātmaśaktinī svaguṇair nigūḍhām*, self-power of the divine Existent hidden by its own modes. Swetasvatara Upanishad.

consciousness makes to itself of one of its own operations; but colour is only an operation of Force working in the form of Light, and Light again is only a movement, that is to say an operation of Force. The question is what is essential to this operation of Force taking on itself the presentation of form? For it is this that must determine the working of Sanjnana or Sense on whatever plane it may operate.

Everything begins with vibration or movement, the original *kṣobha* or disturbance. If there is no movement of the conscious being, it can only know its own pure static existence. Without vibration² or movement of being in consciousness there can be no act of knowledge and therefore no sense; without vibration or movement of being in force there can be no object of sense. Movement of conscious being as knowledge becoming sensible of itself as movement of force, in other words the knowledge separating itself from its own working to watch that and take it into itself again by feeling,—this is the basis of universal Sanjnana. This is true both of our internal and external operations. I become anger by a vibration of conscious force acting as nervous emotion and I feel the anger that I have become by another movement of conscious force acting as light of knowledge. I am conscious of my body because I have myself become the body; that same force of conscious being which has made this form of itself, this presentation of its workings, knows it in that form, in that presentation. I can know nothing except what I myself am; if I know others, it is because they also are myself, because my self has assumed these apparently alien presentations as well as that which is nearest to my own mental centre. All sensation, all action of sense is thus the same in essence whether external or internal, physical or psychical.

But this vibration of conscious being is presented to itself by various forms of sense which answer to the successive operations of movement in its assumption of form. For first

² The term is used not because it is entirely adequate or accurate, no physical term can be, but because it is most suggestive of the original outgoing of consciousness to seek itself.

we have intensity of vibration creating regular rhythm which is the basis or constituent of all creative formation; secondly, contact or intermiscence of the movements of conscious being which constitute the rhythm; thirdly, definition of the grouping of movements which are in contact, their shape; fourthly, the constant welling up of the essential force to support in its continuity the movement that has been thus defined; fifthly, the actual enforcement and compression of the force in its own movement which maintains the form that has been assumed. In Matter these five constituent operations are said by the Sankhyas to represent themselves as five elemental conditions of substance, the etheric, atmospheric, igneous, liquid and solid; and the rhythm of vibration is seen by them as *sabda*, sound, the basis of hearing, the intermiscence as contact, the basis of touch, the definition as shape, the basis of sight, the upflow of force as *rasa*, sap, the basis of taste, and the discharge of the atomic compression as *gandha*, odour, the basis of smell. It is true that this is only predicated of pure or subtle matter; the physical matter of our world being a mixed operation of force, these five elemental states are not found there separately except in a very modified form. But all these are only the physical workings or symbols. Essentially all formation, to the most subtle and most beyond our senses such as form of mind, form of character, form of soul, amount when scrutinised to this five-fold operation of conscious-force in movement.

All these operations, then, the Sanjnana or essential sense must be able to seize, to make its own by that union in knowledge of knower and object which is peculiar to itself. Its sense of the rhythm or intensity of the vibrations which contain in themselves all the meaning of the form, will be the basis of the essential hearing of which our apprehension of physical sound or the spoken word is only the most outward result; so also its sense of the contact or intermiscence of conscious force with conscious force must be the basis of the essential touch; its sense of the definition or form of force must be the basis of the essential sight; its sense of the upflow of essential being in the form, that which is the secret of its self-delight, must be the basis of the

essential taste; its sense of the compression of force and the self-discharge of its essence of being must be the basis of the essential inhalation grossly represented in physical substance by the sense of smell. On whatever plane, to whatever kind of formation these essentialities of sense will apply themselves and on each they will seek an appropriate organisation, an appropriate functioning.

This various sense will, it is obvious, be in the highest consciousness a complex unity, just as we have seen that there the various operation of knowledge is also a complex unity. Even if we examine the physical senses, say, the sense of hearing, if we observe how the underlying mind receives their action, we shall see that in their essence all the senses are in each other. That mind is not only aware of the vibration which we call sound; it is aware also of the contact and interchange between the force in the sound and the nervous force in us with which that intermixes; it is aware of the definition or form of the sound and of the complex contacts or relations which make up the form; it is aware of the essence or outwelling conscious force which constitutes and maintains the sound and prolongs its vibrations in our nervous being; it is aware of our own nervous inhalation of the vibratory discharge proceeding from the compression of force which makes, so to speak, the solidity of the sound. All these sensations enter into the sensitive reception and joy of music which is the highest physical form of this operation of force,—they constitute our physical sensitiveness to it and the joy of our nervous being in it; diminish one of them and the joy and the sensitiveness are to that extent dulled. Much more must there be this complex unity in a higher than the physical consciousness and most of all must there be unity in the highest. But the essential sense must be capable also of seizing the secret essence of all conscious being in action, in itself and not only through the results of the operation; its appreciation of these results can be nothing more than itself an outcome of this deeper sense which it has of the essence of the Thing behind its appearances.

If we consider these things thus subtly in the light of our

own deeper psychology and pursue them beyond the physical appearances by which they are covered, we shall get to some intellectual conception of the sense behind our senses or rather the Sense of our senses, the Sight of our sight and the Hearing of our hearing. The Brahman-consciousness of which the Upanishad speaks is not the Absolute withdrawn into itself, but that Absolute in its outlook on the relative; it is the Lord, the Master-Soul, the governing Transcendent and All, He who constitutes and controls the action of the gods on the different planes of our being. Since it constitutes them, all our workings can be no more than psychical and physical results and representations of something essential proper to its supreme creative outlook, our sense a shadow of the divine Sense, our sight of the divine Sight, our hearing of the divine Hearing. Nor are that divine sight and hearing limited to things physical, but extend themselves to all forms and operations of conscious being.

The supreme Consciousness does not depend on what we call sight and hearing for its own essential seeing and audition. It operates by a supreme Sense, creative and comprehensive, of which our physical and psychical sight and hearing are external results and partial operations. Neither is it ignorant of these, nor excludes them; for since it constitutes and controls, it must be aware of them but from a supreme plane, *param dhāma*, which includes all in its view; for its original action is that highest movement of Vishnu which, the Veda tells us, the seers behold like an eye extended in heaven. It is that by which the soul sees its seeings and hears its hearings; but all sense only assumes its true value and attains to its absolute, its immortal reality when we cease to pursue the satisfactions of the mere external and physical senses and go beyond even the psychical being to this spiritual or essential which is the source and fountain, the knower, constituent and true valuer of all the rest.

This spiritual sense of things, secret and superconscient in us, alone gives their being, worth and reality to the psychical and physical sense; in themselves they have none. When we attain to it, these inferior operations are as it were taken up into it and the whole world and everything in it changes to us and takes on a

different and a non-material value. That Master-consciousness in us senses our sensations of objects, sees our seeings, hears our hearings no longer for the benefit of the senses and their desires, but with the embrace of the self-existent Bliss which has no cause, beginning or end, eternal in its own immortality.

X

The Superlife — Life of Our Life

BUT THE Brahman-consciousness is not only Mind of our mind, Speech of our speech, Sense of our sense; it is also Life of our life. In other words, it is a supreme and universal energy of existence of which our own material life and its sustaining energy are only an inferior result, a physical symbol, an external and limited functioning. That which governs our existence and its functionings, does not live and act by them, but is their superior cause and the supra-vital principle out of which they are formed and by which they are controlled.

The English word life does duty for many very different shades of meaning; but the word Prana familiar in the Upanishad and in the language of Yoga is restricted to the life-force whether viewed in itself or in its functionings. The popular significance of Prana was indeed the breath drawn into and thrown out from the lungs and so, in its most material and common sense, the life or the life-breath; but this is not the philosophic significance of the word as it is used in the Upanishads. The Prana of the Upanishads is the life-energy itself which was supposed to occupy and act in the body with a fivefold movement, each with its characteristic name and each quite as necessary to the functioning of the life of the body as the act of respiration. Respiration in fact is only one action of the chief movement of the life-energy, the first of the five,—the action which is most normally necessary and vital to the maintenance and distribution of the energy in the physical frame, but which can yet be suspended without the life being necessarily destroyed.

The existence of a vital force or life-energy has been doubted by western Science, because that Science concerns itself only with the most external operations of Nature and has as yet no true knowledge of anything except the physical and outward. This Prana, this life-force is not physical in itself; it is not material

energy, but rather a different principle supporting Matter and involved in it. It supports and occupies all forms and without it no physical form could have come into being or could remain in being. It acts in all material forces such as electricity and is nearest to self-manifestation in those that are nearest to pure force; material forces could not exist or act without it, for from it they derive their energy and movement and they are its vehicles. But all material aspects are only field and form of the Prana which is in itself a pure energy, their cause and not their result. It cannot therefore be detected by any physical analysis; physical analysis can only resolve for us the combinations of those material happenings which are its results and the external signs and symbols of its presence and operation.

How then do we become aware of its existence? By that purification of our mind and body and that subtilisation of our means of sensation and knowledge which become possible through Yoga. We become capable of analysis other than the resolution of forms into their gross physical elements and are able to distinguish the operations of the pure mental principle from those of the material and both of these from the vital or dynamic which forms a link between them and supports them both. We are then able to distinguish the movements of the Pranic currents not only in the physical body which is all that we are normally aware of, but in that subtle frame of our being which Yoga detects underlying and sustaining the physical. This is ordinarily done by the process of Pranayama, the government and control of the respiration. By Pranayama the Hathayogin is able to control, suspend and transcend the ordinary fixed operation of the Pranic energy which is all that Nature needs for the normal functioning of the body and of the physical life and mind, and he becomes aware of the channels in which that energy distributes itself in all its workings and is therefore able to do things with his body which seem miraculous to the ignorant, just as the physical scientist by his knowledge of the workings of material forces is able to do things with them which would seem to us magic if their law and process were not divulged. For all the workings of life in the physical form are governed

by the Prana and not only those which are normal and constant and those which, being always potential, can be easily brought forward and set in action, but those which are of a more remote potentiality and seem to our average experience difficult or impossible.

But the Pranic energy supports not only the operations of our physical life, but also those of the mind in the living body. Therefore by the control of the Pranic energy it is not only possible to control our physical and vital functionings and to transcend their ordinary operation, but to control also the workings of the mind and to transcend its ordinary operations. The human mind in fact depends always on the pranic force which links it with the body through which it manifests itself, and it is able to deploy its own force only in proportion as it can make that energy available for its own uses and subservient to its own purposes. In proportion, therefore, as the Yогin gets back to the control of the Prana, and by the direction of its batteries opens up those nervous centres (*cakras*) in which it is now sluggish or only partially operative, he is able to manifest powers of mind, sense and consciousness which transcend our ordinary experience. The so-called occult powers of Yoga are such faculties which thus open up of themselves as the Yогin advances in the control of the Pranic force and, purifying the channels of its movement, establishes an increasing communication between the consciousness of his subtle subliminal being and the consciousness of his gross physical and superficial existence.

Thus the Prana is vital or nervous force which bears the operations of mind and body, is yoked by them as it were like a horse to a chariot and driven by the mind along the paths on which it wishes to travel to the goal of its desire. Therefore it is described in this Upanishad as yoked and moving forward and again as being led forward, the images recalling the Vedic symbol of the Horse by which the pranic force is constantly designated in the Rig Veda. It is in fact that which does all the action of the world in obedience to conscious or subconscious mind and in the conditions of material force and material form. While the mind is that movement of Nature in us which represents in the mould

of our material and phenomenal existence and within the triple term of the Ignorance the knowledge aspect of the Brahman, the consciousness of the knower, and body is that which similarly represents the being of the existent in the mask of phenomenally divisible substance, so Prana or life-energy represents in the flux of phenomenal things the force, the active dynamis of the Lord who controls and enjoys the manifestation of His own being.¹ It is a universal energy present in every atom and particle of the universe and active in every stirring and current of the constant flux and interchange which constitutes the world.

But just as mind is only an inferior movement of the supreme Conscious-Being and above mind there is a divine and infinite principle of consciousness, will and knowledge which controls the ignorant action of mind, and it is by this superior principle and not by mind that Brahman cognises His own being whether in itself or in its manifestation, so also it must be with this Life-force. The characteristics of the life-force as it manifests itself in us are desire, hunger, an enjoyment which devours the object enjoyed and a sensational movement and activity of response which gropes after possession and seeks to pervade, embrace, take into itself the object of its desire.² It is not in this breath of desire and mortal enjoyment that the true life can consist or the highest, divine energy act, any more than the supreme knowledge can think in the terms of ignorant, groping, limited and divided mind. As the movements of mind are merely representations in the terms of the duality and the ignorance, reflections of a supreme consciousness and knowledge, so the movements of this life-force can only be similar representations of a supreme energy expressing a higher and truer existence possessed of that consciousness and knowledge and therefore free from desire, hunger, transient enjoyment and hampered activity. What is desire here must there be self-existent Will or Love; what is hunger

¹ The three are the reverse aspects of Chit, Sat and Chit-Tapas.

² All these significances are intended by the Vedic Rishis in their use of the word Ashwa, Horse, for the Prana, the root being capable of all of them as we see from the words *āśā*, hope; *āśanā*, hunger; *āś*, to eat; *āś*, to enjoy; *āśu*, swift; *āś*, to move, attain, pervade, etc.

here must there be desireless satisfaction; what is here enjoyment must there be self-existent delight; what is here a groping action and response, must be there self-possessing and all-possessing energy,— such must be the Life of our life by which this inferior action is sustained and led to its goal. Brahman does not breathe with the breath, does not live by this Life-force and its dual terms of birth and death.

What then is this Life of our life? It is the supreme Energy³ which is nothing but the infinite force in action of the supreme conscious Being in His own illumined self. The Self-existent is luminously aware of Himself and full of His own delight; and that self-awareness is a timeless self-possession which in action reveals itself as a force of infinite consciousness omnipotent as well as omniscient; for it exists between two poles, one of eternal stillness and pure identity, the other of eternal energy and identity of All with itself, the stillness eternally supporting the energy. That is the true existence, the Life from which our life proceeds; that is the immortality, while what we cling to as life is “hunger that is death”. Therefore the object of the wise must be to pass in their illumined consciousness beyond the false and phenomenal terms of life and death to this immortality.

Yet is this Life-force, however inferior its workings, instinct with the being, will, light of that which it represents, of that which transcends it; by That it is “led forward” on its paths to a goal which its own existence implies by the very imperfection of its movements and renderings. This death called life is not only a dark figure of that light, but it is the passage by which we pass through transmutation of our being from the death-sleep of Matter into the spirit’s infinite immortality.

³ Tapas or Chit-Shakti.

The Great Transition

THE THOUGHT of the Upanishad, as expressed in its first chapter in the brief and pregnant sentences of the Upani-shadic style, amounts then to this result that the life of the mind, senses, vital activities in which we dwell is not the whole or the chief part of our existence, not the highest, not self-existent, not master of itself. It is an outer fringe, a lower result, an inferior working of something beyond; a superconscious Existence has developed, supports and governs this partial and fragmentary, this incomplete and unsatisfying consciousness and activity of the mind, life and senses. To rise out of this external and surface consciousness towards and into that superconscious is our progress, our goal, our destiny of completeness and satisfaction.

The Upanishad does not assert the unreality, but only the incompleteness and inferiority of our present existence. All that we follow after here is an imperfect representation, a broken and divided functioning of what is eternally in an absolute perfection on that higher plane of existence. This mind of ours unpossessed of its object, groping, purblind, besieged by error and incapacity, its action founded on an external vision of things, is only the shadow thrown by a superconscious Knowledge which possesses, creates and securely uses the truth of things because nothing is external to it, nothing is other than itself, nothing is divided or at war within its all-comprehensive self-awareness. That is the Mind of our mind. Our speech, limited, mechanical, imperfectly interpretative of the outsides of things, restricted by the narrow circle of the mind, based on the appearances of sense is only the far-off and feeble response, the ignorant vibration returned to a creative and revelatory Word which has built up all the forms which our mind and speech seek to comprehend and express. Our sense, a movement in stuff of consciousness vibratory to outward impacts, attempting imperfectly to grasp

them by laboured and separately converging reactions, is only the faulty image of a supreme Sense which at once, fully, harmoniously unites itself with and enjoys all that the supreme Mind and Speech create in the self-joyous activity of the divine and infinite existence. Our life, a breath of force and movement and possession attached to a form of mind and body and restricted by the form, limited in its force, hampered in its movement, besieged in its possession and therefore a thing of discords at war with itself and its environment, hungering and unsatisfied, moving inconstantly from object to object and unable to embrace and retain their multiplicity, devouring its objects of enjoyment and therefore transient in its enjoyments, is only a broken movement of the one, undivided, infinite Life which is all-possessing and ever satisfied because in all it enjoys its eternal self unimprisoned by the divisions of space, unoccupied by the moments of Time, undeluded by the successions of Cause and Circumstance.

This superconscious Existence, one, conscious of itself, conscious both of its eternal peace and its omniscient and omnipotent force, is also conscious of our cosmic existence which it holds in itself, inspires secretly and omnipotently governs. It is the Lord of the Isha Upanishad who inhabits all the creations of His Force, all form of movement in the ever mobile principle of cosmos. It is our self and that of which and by which we are constituted in all our being and activities, the Brahman. The mortal life is a dual representation of That with two conflicting elements in it, negative and positive. Its negative elements of death, suffering, incapacity, strife, division, limitation are a dark figure which conceal and serve the development of that which its positive elements cannot yet achieve,—immortality hiding itself from life in the figure of death, delight hiding itself from pleasure in the figure of suffering, infinite force hiding itself from finite effort in the figure of incapacity, fusion of love hiding itself from desire in the figure of strife, unity hiding itself from acquisition in the figure of division, infinity hiding itself from growth in the figure of limitation. The positive elements suggest what the Brahman is, but never are what the Brahman is, although their victory, the victory of the gods, is always the

victory of the Brahman over its own self-negations, always the self-affirmation of His vastness against the denials of the dark and limiting figure of things. Still, it is not this vastness merely, but the absolute infinity which is Brahman itself. And therefore within this dual figure of things we cannot attain to our self, our Highest; we have to transcend in order to attain. Our pursuit of the positive elements of this existence, our worship of the gods of the mind, life, sense is only a preparatory to the real travail of the soul, and we must leave this lower Brahman and know that Higher if we are to fulfil ourselves. We pursue, for instance, our mental growth, we become mental beings full of an accomplished thought-power and thought-acquisition, *dhirāḥ*, in order that we may by thought of mind go beyond mind itself to the Eternal. For always the life of mind and senses is the jurisdiction of death and limitation; beyond is the immortality.

The wise, therefore, the souls seated and accomplished in luminous thought-power put away from them the dualities of our mind, life and senses and go forward from this world; they go beyond to the unity and the immortality. The word used for going forward is that which expresses the passage of death; it is also that which the Upanishad uses for the forward movement of the Life-force yoked to the car of embodied mind and sense on the paths of life. And in this coincidence we can find a double and most pregnant suggestion.

It is not by abandoning life on earth in order to pursue immortality on other more favourable planes of existence that the great achievement becomes possible. It is here, *ihaiva*, in this mortal life and body that immortality must be won, here in this lower Brahman and by this embodied soul that the Higher must be known and possessed. "If here one find it not, great is the perdition." This life-force in us is led forward by the attraction of the supreme Life on its path of constant acquisition through types of the Brahman until it reaches a point where it has to go entirely forward, to go across out of the mortal life, the mortal vision of things to some Beyond. So long as death is not entirely conquered, this going beyond is represented in the terms of death and by a passing into other worlds where death is

not present, where a type of immortality is tasted corresponding to that which we have found here in our soul-experience; but the attraction of death and limitation is not overpassed because they still conceal something of immortality and infinity which we have not yet achieved; therefore there is a necessity of return, an insistent utility of farther life in the mortal body which we do not overcome until we have passed beyond all types to the very being of the Infinite, One and Immortal.

The worlds of which the Upanishad speaks are essentially soul-conditions and not geographical divisions of the cosmos. This material universe is itself only existence as we see it when the soul dwells on the plane of material movement and experience in which the spirit involves itself in form, and therefore all the framework of things in which it moves by the life and which it embraces by the consciousness is determined by the principle of infinite division and aggregation proper to Matter, to substance of form. This becomes then its world or vision of things. And to whatever soul-condition it climbs, its vision of things will change from the material vision and correspond to that other condition, and in that other framework it will move in its living and embrace it in its consciousness. These are the worlds of the ancient tradition.

But the soul that has entirely realised immortality passes beyond all worlds and is free from frameworks. It enters into the being of the Lord; like this supreme superconscious Self and Brahman, it is not subdued to life and death. It is no longer subject to the necessity of entering into the cycle of rebirth, of travelling continually between the imprisoning dualities of death and birth, affirmation and negation; for it has transcended name and form. This victory, this supreme immortality it must achieve here as an embodied soul in the mortal framework of things. Afterwards, like the Brahman, it transcends and yet embraces the cosmic existence without being subject to it. Personal freedom, personal fulfilment is then achieved by the liberation of the soul from imprisonment in the form of this changing personality and by its ascent to the One that is the All. If afterwards there is any assumption of the figure of mortality, it is an assumption and

not a subjection, a help brought to the world and not a help to be derived from it, a descent of the ensouled superconscious existence not from any personal necessity, but from the universal need in the cosmic labour for those yet unfree and unfulfilled to be helped and strengthened by the force that has already described the path up to the goal in its experience and achieved under the same conditions the Work and the Sacrifice.

Mind and the Brahman

BEFORE we can proceed to the problem how, being what we are and the Brahman being what it is, we can effect the transition from the status of mind, life and senses proper to man over to the status proper to the supreme Consciousness which is master of mind, life and senses, another and prior question arises. The Upanishad does not state it explicitly, but implies and answers it with the strongest emphasis on the solution and the subtlest variety in its repetition of the apparent paradox that is presented.

The Master-Consciousness of the Brahman is that for which we have to abandon this lesser status of the mere creature subject to the movement of Nature in the cosmos; but after all this Master-Consciousness, however high and great a thing it may be, has a relation to the universe and the cosmic movement; it cannot be the utter Absolute, Brahman superior to all relativities. This Conscious-Being who originates, supports and governs our mind, life, senses is the Lord; but where there is no universe of relativities, there can be no Lord, for there is no movement to transcend and govern. Is not then this Lord, as one might say in a later language, not so much the creator of Maya as himself a creation of Maya? Do not both Lord and cosmos disappear when we go beyond all cosmos? And is it not beyond all cosmos that the only true reality exists? Is it not this only true reality and not the Mind of our mind, the Sense of our sense, the Life of our life, the Word behind our speech, which we have to know and possess? As we must go behind all effects to the Cause, must we not equally go beyond the Cause to that in which neither cause nor effects exist? Is not even the immortality spoken of in the Veda and Upanishads a petty thing to be overpassed and abandoned? and should we not reach towards the utter Ineffable where mortality and immortality cease to have any meaning?

The Upanishad does not put to itself the question in this form and language which only became possible when Nihilistic Buddhism and Vedantic Illusionism had passed over the face of our thought and modified philosophical speech and concepts. But it knows of the ineffable Absolute which is the utter reality and absoluteness of the Lord even as the Lord is the absolute of all that is in the cosmos. Of That it proceeds to speak in the only way in which it can be spoken of by the human mind.

Its answer to the problem is that That is precisely the Unknowable¹ of which no relations can be affirmed² and about which therefore our intellect must for ever be silent. The injunction to know the utterly Unknowable would be without any sense or practical meaning. Not that That is a Nihil, a pure Negative, but it cannot either be described by any of the positives of which our mind, speech or perception is capable, nor even can it be indicated by any of them. It is only a little that we know; it is only in the terms of the little that we can put the mental forms of our knowledge. Even when we go beyond to the real form of the Brahman which is not this universe, we can only indicate, we cannot really describe. If then we think we have known it perfectly, we betray our ignorance; we show that we know very little indeed, not even the little that we can put into the forms of our knowledge. For the universe seen as our mind sees it is the little, the divided, the parcelling out of existence and consciousness in which we know and express things by fragments, and we can never really cage in our intellectual and verbal fictions that infinite totality. Yet it is through the principles manifested in the universe that we have to arrive at That, through the life, through the mind and through that highest mental knowledge which grasps at the fundamental Ideas that are like doors concealing behind them the Brahman and yet seeming to reveal Him.

Much less, then, if we can only thus know the Master-Consciousness which is the form of the Brahman, can we pretend to know its utter ineffable reality which is beyond all knowledge.

¹ *Ajñeyam atarkyam.*

² *Avyavahāryam.*

But if this were all, there would be no hope for the soul and a resigned Agnosticism would be the last word of wisdom. The truth is that though thus beyond our mentality and our highest ideative knowledge, the Supreme does give Himself both to this knowledge and to our mentality in the way proper to each and by following that way we can arrive at Him, but only on condition that we do not take our mentalising by the mind and our knowing by the higher thought for the full knowledge and rest in that with a satisfied possession.

The way is to use our mind rightly for such knowledge as is open to its highest, purified capacity. We have to know the form of the Brahman, the Master-Consciousness of the Lord through and yet beyond the universe in which we live. But first we must put aside what is mere form and phenomenon in the universe; for that has nothing to do with the form of the Brahman, the body of the Self, since it is not His form, but only His most external mask. Our first step therefore must be to get behind the forms of Matter, the forms of Life, the forms of Mind and go back to that which is essential, most real, nearest to actual entity. And when we have gone on thus eliminating, thus analysing all forms into the fundamental entities of the cosmos, we shall find that these fundamental entities are really only two, ourselves and the gods.

The gods of the Upanishad have been supposed to be a figure for the senses, but although they act in the senses, they are yet much more than that. They represent the divine power in its great and fundamental cosmic functionings whether in man or in mind and life and matter in general; they are not the functionings themselves but something of the Divine which is essential to their operation and its immediate possessor and cause. They are, as we see from other Upanishads, positive self-representations of the Brahman leading to good, joy, light, love, immortality as against all that is a dark negation of these things. And it is necessarily in the mind, life, senses, and speech of man that the battle here reaches its height and approaches to its full meaning. The gods seek to lead these to good and light; the Titans, sons of darkness, seek to pierce them with ignorance

and evil.³ Behind the gods is the Master-Consciousness of which they are the positive cosmic self-representations.

The other entity which represents the Brahman in the cosmos is the self of the living and thinking creature, man. This self also is not an external mask; it is not form of the mind or form of the life or form of the body. It is something that supports these and makes them possible, something that can say positively like the gods, "I am" and not only "I seem". We have then to scrutinise these two entities and see what they are in relation to each other and to the Brahman; or, as the Upanishad puts it, "That of it which is thou, that of it which is in the gods, *this* is what thy mind has to resolve." Well, but what then of the Brahman is myself? and what of the Brahman is in the Gods? The answer is evident. I am a representation in the cosmos, but for all purposes of the cosmos a real representation of the Self; and the gods are a representation in the cosmos—a real representation since without them the cosmos could not continue—of the Lord. The one supreme Self is the essentiality of all these individual existences; the one supreme Lord is the Godhead in the gods.

The Self and the Lord are one Brahman, whom we can realise through our self and realise through that which is essential in the cosmic movement. Just as our self constitutes our mind, body, life, senses, so that Self constitutes all mind, body, life, senses; it is the origin and essentiality of things. Just as the gods govern, supported by our self, the cosmos of our individual being, the action of our mind, senses and life, so the Lord governs as Mind of the mind, Sense of the sense, Life of the life, supporting His active divinity by His silent essential self-being, all cosmos and all form of being. As we have gone behind the forms of the cosmos to that which is essential in their being and movement and found our self and the gods, so we have to go behind our self and the gods and find the one supreme Self and the one supreme Godhead. Then we can say, "I think that I know."

³ Chhandogya and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads.

But at once we have to qualify our assertion. I think not that I know perfectly, for that is impossible in the terms of our instruments of knowledge. I do not think for a moment that I know the Unknowable, that that can be put into the forms through which I must arrive at the Self and Lord; but at the same time I am no longer in ignorance, I know the Brahman in the only way in which I can know Him, in His self-revelation to me in terms not beyond the grasp of my psychology, manifest as the Self and the Lord. The mystery of existence is revealed in a way that utterly satisfies my being because it enables me first to comprehend it through these figures as far as it can be comprehended by me and, secondly, to enter into, to live in, to be one in law and being with and even to merge myself in the Brahman.

If we fancy that we have grasped the Brahman by the mind and in that delusion fix down our knowledge of Him to the terms our mentality has found, then our knowledge is no knowledge; it is the little knowledge that turns to falsehood. So too those who try to fix Him into our notion of the fundamental ideas in which we discern Him by the thought that rises above ordinary mental perception, have no real discernment of the Brahman, since they take certain idea-symbols for the Reality. On the other hand if we recognise that our mental perceptions are simply so many clues by which we can rise beyond mental perception and if we use these fundamental idea-symbols and the arrangement of them which our uttermost thought makes in order to go beyond the symbol to that reality, then we have rightly used mind and the higher discernment for their supreme purpose. Mind and the higher discernment are satisfied of the Brahman even in being exceeded by Him.

The mind can only reflect in a sort of supreme understanding and experience the form, the image of the supreme as He shows Himself to our mentality. Through this reflection we find, we know; the purpose of knowledge is accomplished, for we find immortality, we enter into the law, the being, the beatitude of the Brahman-consciousness. By self-realisation of Brahman as our self we find the force, the divine energy which lifts us beyond

the limitation, weakness, darkness, sorrow, all-pervading death of our mortal existence; by the knowledge of the one Brahman in all beings and in all the various movement of the cosmos we attain beyond these things to the infinity, the omnipotent being, the omniscient light, the pure beatitude of that divine existence.

This great achievement must be done here in this mortal world, in this limited body; for if we do it, we arrive at our true existence and are no longer bound down to our phenomenal becoming. But if here we find it not, great is the loss and perdition; for we remain continually immersed in the phenomenal life of the mind and body and do not rise above it into the true supramental existence. Nor, if we miss it here, will death give it to us by our passage to another and less difficult world. Only those who use their awakened self and enlightened powers to distinguish and discover that One and Immortal in all existences, the all-originating self, the all-inhabiting Lord, can make the real passage which transcends life and death, can pass out of this mortal status, can press beyond and rise upward into a world-transcending immortality.

This, then, and no other is the means to be seized on and the goal to be reached. "There is no other path for the great journey." The Self and the Lord are that indeterminable, unknowable, ineffable Parabrahman and when we seek rather that which is indeterminable and unknowable to us, it is still the Self and the Lord always that we find, though by an attempt which is not the straight and possible road intended for the embodied soul seeking here to accomplish its true existence.⁴ They are the self-manifested Reality which so places itself before man as the object of his highest aspiration and the fulfilment of all his activities.

⁴ Gita.

XIII

The Parable of the Gods

FROM its assertion of the relative knowableness of the unknowable Brahman and the justification of the soul's aspiration towards that which is beyond its present capacity and status the Upanishad turns to the question of the means by which that high-reaching aspiration can put itself into relation with the object of its search. How is the veil to be penetrated and the subject consciousness of man to enter into the master-consciousness of the Lord? What bridge is there over this gulf? Knowledge has already been pointed out as the supreme means open to us, a knowledge which begins by a sort of reflection of the true existence in the awakened mental understanding. But Mind is one of the gods; the Light behind it is indeed the greatest of the gods, Indra. Then, an awakening of all the gods through their greatest to the essence of that which they are, the one Godhead which they represent. By the mentality opening itself to the Mind of our mind, the sense and speech also will open themselves to the Sense of our sense and to the Word behind our speech and the life to the Life of our life. The Upanishad proceeds to develop this consequence of its central suggestion by a striking parable or analogue.

The gods, the powers that affirm the Good, the Light, the Joy and Beauty, the Strength and Mastery have found themselves victorious in their eternal battle with the powers that deny. It is Brahman that has stood behind the gods and conquered for them; the Master of all who guides all has thrown His deciding will into the balance, put down his darkened children and exalted the children of Light. In this victory of the Master of all the gods are conscious of a mighty development of themselves, a splendid efflorescence of their greatness in man, their joy, their light, their glory, their power and pleasure. But their vision is as yet sealed to their own deeper truth; they know of themselves,

they know not the Eternal; they know the godheads, they do not know God. Therefore they see the victory as their own, the greatness as their own. This opulent efflorescence of the gods and uplifting of their greatness and light is the advance of man to his ordinary ideal of a perfectly enlightened mentality, a strong and sane vitality, a well-ordered body and senses, a harmonious, rich, active and happy life, the Hellenic ideal which the modern world holds to be our ultimate potentiality. When such an efflorescence takes place whether in the individual or the kind, the gods in man grow luminous, strong, happy; they feel they have conquered the world and they proceed to divide it among themselves and enjoy it.

But such is not the full intention of Brahman in the universe or in the creature. The greatness of the gods is His own victory and greatness, but it is only given in order that man may grow nearer to the point at which his faculties will be strong enough to go beyond themselves and realise the Transcendent. Therefore Brahman manifests Himself before the exultant gods in their well-ordered world and puts to them by His silence the heart-shaking, the world-shaking question, "If ye are all, then what am I? for see, I am and I am here." Though He manifests, He does not reveal Himself, but is seen and felt by them as a vague and tremendous presence, the Yaksha, the Daemon, the Spirit, the unknown Power, the Terrible beyond good and evil for whom good and evil are instruments towards His final self-expression. Then there is alarm and confusion in the divine assembly; they feel a demand and a menace; on the side of the evil the possibility of monstrous and appalling powers yet unknown and unmastered which may wreck the fair world they have built, upheave and shatter to pieces the brilliant harmony of the intellect, the aesthetic mind, the moral nature, the vital desires, the body and senses which they have with such labour established; on the side of the good the demand of things unknown which are beyond all these and therefore are equally a menace, since the little which is realised cannot stand against the much that is unrealised, cannot shut out the vast, the infinite that presses against the fragile walls we have erected to define and shelter

our limited being and pleasure. Brahman presents itself to them as the Unknown; the gods knew not what was this Daemon.

Therefore Agni first arises at their bidding to discover its nature, limits, identity. The gods of the Upanishad differ in one all-important respect from the gods of the Rig Veda; for the latter are not only powers of the One, but conscious of their source and true identity; they know the Brahman, they dwell in the supreme Godhead, their origin, home and proper plane is the superconscious Truth. It is true they manifest themselves in man in the form of human faculties and assume the appearance of human limitations, manifest themselves in the lower cosmos and assume the mould of its cosmic operations; but this is only their lesser and lower movement and beyond it they are for ever the One, the Transcendent and Wonderful, the Master of Force and Delight and Knowledge and Being. But in the Upanishads the Brahman idea has grown and cast down the gods from this high preeminence so that they appear only in their lesser human and cosmic workings. Much of their other Vedic aspects they keep. Here the three gods Indra, Vayu, Agni represent the cosmic Divine on each of its three planes, Indra on the mental, Vayu on the vital, Agni on the material. In that order, therefore, beginning from the material they approach the Brahman.

Agni is the heat and flame of the conscious force in Matter which has built up the universe; it is he who has made life and mind possible and developed them in the material universe where he is the greatest deity. Especially he is the primary impeller of speech of which Vayu is the medium and Indra the lord. This heat of conscious force in Matter is Agni Jatavedas, the knower of all births: of all things born, of every cosmic phenomenon he knows the law, the process, the limit, the relation. If then it is some mighty Birth of the cosmos that stands before them, some new indeterminate developed in the cosmic struggle and process, who shall know him, determine his limits, strength, potentialities if not Agni Jatavedas?

Full of confidence he rushes towards the object of his search and is met by the challenge “Who art thou? What is the force in thee?” His name is Agni Jatavedas, the Power that is at the basis

of all birth and process in the material universe and embraces and knows their workings and the force in him is this that all that is thus born, he as the flame of Time and Death can devour. All things are his food which he assimilates and turns into material of new birth and formation. But this all-devourer cannot devour with all his force a fragile blade of grass so long as it has behind it the power of the Eternal. Agni is compelled to return, not having discovered. One thing only is settled that this Daemon is no Birth of the material cosmos, no transient thing that is subject to the flame and breath of Time; it is too great for Agni.

Another god rises to the call. It is Vayu Matarishwan, the great Life-Principle, he who moves, breathes, expands infinitely in the mother element. All things in the universe are the movement of this mighty Life; it is he who has brought Agni and placed him secretly in all existence; for him the worlds have been upbuilt that Life may move in them, that it may act, that it may riot and enjoy. If this Daemon be no birth of Matter, but some stupendous Life-force active whether in the depths or on the heights of being, who shall know it, who shall seize it in his universal expansion if not Vayu Matarishwan?

There is the same confident advance upon the object, the same formidable challenge "Who art thou? What is the force in thee?" This is Vayu Matarishwan and the power in him is this that he, the Life, can take all things in his stride and growth and seize on them for his mastery and enjoyment. But even the veriest frailest trifle he cannot seize and master so long as it is protected against him by the shield of the Omnipotent. Vayu too returns, not having discovered. One thing only is settled that this is no form or force of cosmic Life which operates within the limits of the all-grasping vital impulse; it is too great for Vayu.

Indra next arises, the Puissant, the Opulent. Indra is the power of the Mind; the senses which the Life uses for enjoyment, are operations of Indra which he conducts for knowledge and all things that Agni has upbuilt and supports and destroys in the universe are Indra's field and the subject of his functioning. If then this unknown Existence is something that the senses can grasp or, if it is something that the mind can envisage, Indra

shall know it and make it part of his opulent possessions. But it is nothing that the senses can grasp or the mind envisage, for as soon as Indra approaches it, it vanishes. The mind can only envisage what is limited by Time and Space and this Brahman is that which, as the Rig Veda has said, is neither today nor tomorrow and though it moves and can be approached in the conscious being of all conscious existences, yet when the mind tries to approach it and study it in itself, it vanishes from the view of the mind. The Omnipresent cannot be seized by the senses, the Omniscient cannot be known by the mentality.

But Indra does not turn back from the quest like Agni and Vayu; he pursues his way through the highest ether of the pure mentality and there he approaches the Woman, the many-shining, Uma Haimavati; from her he learns that this Daemon is the Brahman by whom alone the gods of mind and life and body conquer and affirm themselves, and in whom alone they are great. Uma is the supreme Nature from whom the whole cosmic action takes its birth; she is the pure summit and highest power of the One who here shines out in many forms. From this supreme Nature which is also the supreme Consciousness the gods must learn their own truth; they must proceed by reflecting it in themselves instead of limiting themselves to their own lower movement. For she has the knowledge and consciousness of the One, while the lower nature of mind, life and body can only envisage the many. Although therefore Indra, Vayu and Agni are the greatest of the gods, the first coming to know the existence of the Brahman, the others approaching and feeling the touch of it, yet it is only by entering into contact with the supreme consciousness and reflecting its nature and by the elimination of the vital, mental, physical egoism so that their whole function shall be to reflect the One and Supreme that Brahman can be known by the gods in us and possessed. The conscious force that supports our embodied life must become simply and purely a reflector of that supreme Consciousness and Power of which its highest ordinary action is only a twilight figure; the Life must become a passively potent reflection and pure image of that supreme Life which is greater than all our utmost actual and

potential vitality; the Mind must resign itself to be no more than a faithful mirror of the image of the superconscious Existence. By this conscious surrender of mind, life and senses to the Master of our senses, life and mind who alone really governs their action, by this turning of the cosmic existence into a passive reflection of the eternal being and a faithful reproductor of the nature of the Eternal we may hope to know and through knowledge to rise into that which is superconscious to us; we shall enter into the Silence that is master of an eternal, infinite, free and all-blissful activity.

The Transfiguration of the Self and the Gods

THE MEANS of the knowledge of Brahman are, we have seen, to get back behind the forms of the universe to that which is essential in the cosmos — and that which is essential is twofold, the gods in Nature and the self in the individual, — and then to get behind these to the Beyond which they represent. The practical relation of the gods to Brahman in this process of divine knowledge has been already determined. The cosmic functionings through which the gods act, mind, life, speech, senses, body, must become aware of something beyond them which governs them, by which they are and move, by whose force they evolve, enlarge themselves and arrive at power and joy and capacity; to that they must turn from their ordinary operations; leaving these, leaving the false idea of independent action and self-ordering which is an egoism of mind and life and sense they must become consciously passive to the power, light and joy of something which is beyond themselves. What happens then is that this divine Unnameable reflects Himself openly in the gods. His light takes possession of the thinking mind, His power and joy of the life, His light and rapture of the emotional mind and the senses. Something of the supreme image of Brahman falls upon the world-nature and changes it into divine nature.

All this is not done by a sudden miracle. It comes by flashes, revelations, sudden touches and glimpses; there is as if a leap of the lightning of revelation flaming out from those heavens for a moment and then returning into its secret source; as if the lifting of the eyelid of an inner vision and its falling again because the eye cannot look long and steadily on the utter light. The repetition of these touches and visitings from the Beyond fixes the

gods in their upward gaze and expectation, constant repetition fixes them in a constant passivity; not moving out any longer to grasp at the forms of the universe mind, life and senses will more and more be fixed in the memory, in the understanding, in the joy of the touch and vision of that transcendent glory which they have now resolved to make their sole object; to that only they will learn to respond and not to the touches of outward things. The silence which has fallen on them and which is now their foundation and status will become their knowledge of the eternal silence which is Brahman; the response of their functioning to a supernal light, power, joy will become their knowledge of the eternal activity which is Brahman. Other status, other response and activity they will not know. The mind will know nothing but the Brahman, think of nothing but the Brahman, the Life will move to, embrace, enjoy nothing but the Brahman, the eye will see, the ear hear, the other senses sense nothing but the Brahman.

But is then a complete oblivion of the external the goal? Must the mind and senses recede inward and fall into an unending trance and the life be for ever stilled? This is possible, if the soul so wills, but it is not inevitable and indispensable. The Mind is cosmic, one in all the universe; so too are the Life, and the Sense, so too is Matter of the body; and when they exist in and for the Brahman only, they will not only know this but will sense, feel and live in that universal unity. Therefore to whatever thing they turn which to the individual sense and mind and life seems now external to them, there also it is not the mere form of things which they will know, think of, sense, embrace and enjoy, but always and only the Brahman. Moreover, the external will cease to exist for them, because nothing will be external but all things internal to us, even the whole world and all that is in it. For the limit of ego, the wall of individuality will break; the individual Mind will cease to know itself as individual, it will be conscious only of universal Mind one everywhere in which individuals are only knots of the one mentality; so the individual life will lose its sense of separateness and live only in and as the one life in which all individuals are simply whirls of the indivisible flood of pranic

activity; the very body and senses will be no longer conscious of a separated existence, but the real body which the man will feel himself to be physically will be the whole Earth and the whole universe and the whole indivisible form of things wheresoever existent, and the senses also will be converted to this principle of sensation so that even in what we call the external, the eye will see Brahman only in every sight, the ear will hear Brahman only in every sound, the inner and outer body will feel Brahman only in every touch and the touch itself as if internal in the greater body. The soul whose gods are thus converted to this supreme law and religion, will realise in the cosmos itself and in all its multiplicity the truth of the One besides whom there is no other or second. Moreover, becoming one with the formless and infinite, it will exceed the universe itself and see all the worlds not as external, not even as commensurate with itself, but as if within it.

And in fact, in the higher realisation it will not be Mind, Life, Sense of which even the mind, life and sense themselves will be originally aware, but rather that which constitutes them. By this process of constant visiting and divine touch and influence the Mind of the mind, that is to say, the superconscious Knowledge will take possession of the mental understanding and begin to turn all its vision and thinking into luminous stuff and vibration of light of the Supermind. So too the sense will be changed by the visitings of the Sense behind the sense and the whole sense-view of the universe itself will be altered so that the vital, mental and supramental will become visible to the senses with the physical only as their last, outermost and smallest result. So too the Life will become a superlife, a conscious movement of the infinite Conscious-Force; it will be impersonal, unlimited by any particular acts and enjoyment, unbound to their results, untroubled by the dualities or the touch of sin and suffering, grandiose, boundless, immortal. The material world itself will become for these gods a figure of the infinite, luminous and blissful Superconscious.

This will be the transfiguration of the gods, but what of the self? For we have seen that there are two fundamental entities,

the gods and the self, and the self in us is greater than the cosmic Powers, its God-ward destination more vital to our perfection and self-fulfilment than any transfiguration of these lesser deities. Therefore not only must the gods find their one Godhead and resolve themselves into it; that is to say, not only must the cosmic principles working in us resolve themselves into the working of the One, the Principle of all principles, so that they shall become only a unified existence and single action of That in spite of all play of differentiation, but also and with a more fundamental necessity the self in us which supports the action of the gods must find and enter into the one Self of all individual existences, the indivisible Spirit to whom all souls are no more than dark or luminous centres of its consciousness.

This the self of man, since it is the essentiality of a mental being, will do through the mind. In the gods the transfiguration is effected by the Superconscious itself visiting their substance and opening their vision with its flashes until it has transformed them; but the mind is capable of another action which is only apparently movement of mind, but really the movement of the self towards its own reality. The mind seems to go to That, to attain to it; it is lifted out of itself into something beyond and, although it falls back, still by the mind the will of knowledge in the mental thought continually and at last continuously remembers that into which it has entered. On this the Self through the mind seizes and repeatedly dwells and so doing it is finally caught up into it and at last able to dwell securely in that transcendence. It transcends the mind, it transcends its own mental individualisation of the being, that which it now knows as itself; it ascends and takes foundation in the Self of all and in the status of self-joyous infinity which is the supreme manifestation of the Self. This is the transcendent immortality, this is the spiritual existence which the Upanishads declare to be the goal of man and by which we pass out of the mortal state into the heaven of the Spirit.

What then happens to the gods and the cosmos and all that the Lord develops in His being? Does it not all disappear? Is not the transfiguration of the gods even a mere secondary state

through which we pass towards that culmination and which drops away from us as soon as we reach it? And with the disappearance of the gods and the cosmos does not the Lord too, the Master-Consciousness, disappear so that nothing is left but the one pure indeterminate Existence self-blissful in an eternal inaction and non-creation? Such was the conclusion of the later Vedanta in its extreme monistic form and such was the sense which it tried to read into all the Upanishads; but it must be recognised that in the language whether of the Isha or the Kena Upanishad there is absolutely nothing, not even a shade or a nuance pointing to it. If we want to find it there, we have to put it in by force; for the actual language used favours instead the conclusion of other Vedantic systems, which considered the goal to be the eternal joy of the soul in a Brahmaloka or world of the Brahman in which it is one with the infinite existence and yet in a sense still a soul able to enjoy differentiation in the oneness.

In the next verse we have the culmination of the teaching of the Upanishad, the result of the great transcendence which it has been setting forth and afterwards the description of the immortality to which the souls of knowledge attain when they pass beyond the mortal status. It declares that Brahman is in its nature "That Delight", Tadvanam. "Vana" is the Vedic word for delight or delightful, and "Tadvanam" means therefore the transcendent Delight, the all-blissful Ananda of which the Taittiriya Upanishad speaks as the highest Brahman from which all existences are born, by which all existences live and increase and into which all existences arrive in their passing out of death and birth. It is as this transcendent Delight that the Brahman must be worshipped and sought. It is this beatitude therefore which is meant by the immortality of the Upanishads. And what will be the result of knowing and possessing Brahman as the supreme Ananda? It is that towards the knower and possessor of the Brahman is directed the desire of all creatures. In other words, he becomes a centre of the divine Delight shedding it on all the world and attracting all to it as to a fountain of joy and love and self-fulfilment in the universe.

This is the culmination of the teaching of the Upanishad;

there was a demand for the secret teaching that enters into the ultimate truth, for the "Upanishad", and in response this doctrine has been given. It has been uttered, the Upanishad of the Brahman, the hidden ultimate truth of the supreme Existence; its beginning was the search for the Lord, Master of mind, life, speech and senses in whom is the absolute of mind, the absolute of life, the absolute of speech and senses and its close is the finding of Him as the transcendent Beatitude and the elevation of the soul that finds and possesses it into a living centre of that Delight towards which all creatures in the universe shall turn as to a fountain of its ecstasies.

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The Upanishad closes with two verses which seem to review and characterise the whole work in the manner of the ancient writings when they have drawn to their close. This Upanishad or gospel of the inmost Truth of things has for its foundation, it is said, the practice of self-mastery, action and the subdual of the sense-life to the power of the Spirit. In other words, life and works are to be used as a means of arriving out of the state of subjection proper to the soul in the ignorance into a state of mastery which brings it nearer to the absolute self-mastery and all-mastery of the supreme Soul seated in the knowledge. The Vedas, that is to say, the utterances of the inspired seers and the truths they hold, are described as all the limbs of the Upanishad; in other words, all the convergent lines and aspects, all the necessary elements of this great practice, this profound psychological self-training and spiritual aspiration are set forth in these great Scriptures, channels of supreme knowledge and indicators of a supreme discipline. Truth is its home; and this Truth is not merely intellectual verity,— for that is not the sense of the word in the Vedic writings,— but man's ultimate human state of true being, true consciousness, right knowledge, right works, right joy of existence, all indeed that is contrary to the falsehood of egoism and ignorance. It is by these means, by

using works and self-discipline for mastery of oneself and for the generation of spiritual energy, by fathoming in all its parts the knowledge and repeating the high example of the great Vedic seers and by living in the Truth that one becomes capable of the great ascent which the Upanishad opens to us.

The goal of the ascent is the world of the true and vast existence of which the Veda speaks as the Truth that is the final goal and home of man. It is described here as the greater infinite heavenly world, (Swargaloka, Swarloka of the Veda), which is not the lesser Swarga of the Puranas or the lesser Brahmaloka of the Mundaka Upanishad, its world of the sun's rays to which the soul arrives by works of virtue and piety, but falls from them by the exhaustion of their merit; it is the higher Swarga or Brahman-world of the Katha which is beyond the dual symbols of birth and death, the higher Brahman-worlds of the Mundaka which the soul enters by knowledge and renunciation. It is therefore a state not belonging to the Ignorance, but to Knowledge. It is, in fact, the infinite existence and beatitude of the soul in the being of the all-blissful existence; it is too the higher status, the light of the Mind beyond the mind, the joy and eternal mastery of the Life beyond the life, the riches of the Sense beyond the senses. And the soul finds in it not only its own largeness but finds too and possesses the infinity of the One and it has firm foundation in that immortal state because there a supreme Silence and eternal Peace are the secure foundation of eternal Knowledge and absolute Joy.

A Last Word

WE HAVE now completed our review of this Upanishad; we have considered minutely the bearings of its successive utterances and striven to make as precise as we can to the intelligence the sense of the puissant phrases in which it gives us its leading clues to that which can never be entirely expressed by human speech. We have some idea of what it means by that Brahman, by the Mind of mind, the Life of life, the Sense of sense, the Speech of speech, by the opposition of ourselves and the gods, by the Unknowable who is yet not utterly unknowable to us, by the transcendence of the mortal state and the conquest of immortality.

Fundamentally its teaching reposes on the assertion of three states of existence, the human and mortal, the Brahman-consciousness which is the absolute of our relativities, and the utter Absolute which is unknowable. The first is in a sense a false status of misrepresentation because it is a continual term of apparent opposites and balancings where the truth of things is a secret unity; we have here a bright or positive figure and a dark or negative figure and both are figures, neither the Truth; still in that we now live and through that we have to move to the Beyond. The second is the Lord of all this dual action who is beyond it; He is the truth of Brahman and not in any way a falsehood or misrepresentation, but the truth of it as attained by us in our eternal supramental being; in Him are the absolutes of all that here we experience in partial figures. The Unknowable is beyond our grasp because though it is the same Reality, yet it exceeds even our highest term of eternal being and is beyond Existence and Non-existence; it is therefore to the Brahman, the Lord who has a relation to what we are that we must direct our search if we would attain beyond what temporarily seems to what eternally is.

The attainment of the Brahman is our escape from the mortal status into Immortality, by which we understand not the survival of death, but the finding of our true self of eternal being and bliss beyond the dual symbols of birth and death. By immortality we mean the absolute life of the soul as opposed to the transient and mutable life in the body which it assumes by birth and death and rebirth and superior also to its life as the mere mental being who dwells in the world subjected helplessly to this law of death and birth or seems at least by his ignorance to be subjected to this and to other laws of the lower Nature. To know and possess its true nature, free, absolute, master of itself and its embodiments is the soul's means of transcendence, and to know and possess this is to know and possess the Brahman. It is also to rise out of mortal world into immortal world, out of world of bondage into world of largeness, out of finite world into infinite world. It is to ascend out of earthly joy and sorrow into a transcendent Beatitude.

This must be done by the abandonment of our attachment to the figure of things in the mortal world. We must put from us its death and dualities if we would compass the unity and immortality. Therefore it follows that we must cease to make the goods of this world or even its right, light and beauty our object of pursuit; we must go beyond these to a supreme Good, a transcendent Truth, Light and Beauty in which the opposite figures of what we call evil disappear. But still, being in this world, it is only through something in this world itself that we can transcend it; it is through its figures that we must find the absolute. Therefore, we scrutinise them and perceive that there are first these forms of mind, life, speech and sense, all of them figures and imperfect suggestions, and then behind them the cosmic principles through which the One acts. It is to these cosmic principles that we must proceed and turn them from their ordinary aim and movement in the world to find their own supreme aim and absolute movement in their own one God-head, the Lord, the Brahman; they must be drawn to leave the workings of ordinary mind and find the superconscious Mind, to leave the workings of ordinary speech and sense and find the

supra-mental Sense and original Word, to leave the apparent workings of mundane Life and find the transcendent Life.

Besides the gods, there is our self, the spirit within who supports all this action of the gods. Our spirit too must turn from its absorption in its figure of itself as it sees it involved in the movement of individual life, mind, body and subject to it and must direct its gaze upward to its own supreme Self who is beyond all this movement and master of it all. Therefore the mind must indeed become passive to the divine Mind, the sense to the divine Sense, the life to the divine Life and by receptivity to constant touches and visitings of the highest be transfigured into a reflection of these transcendences; but also the individual self must through the mind's aspiration upwards, through upliftings of itself beyond, through constant memory of the supreme Reality in which during these divine moments it has lived, ascend finally into that Bliss and Power and Light.

But this will not necessarily mean the immersion into an all-oblivious Being eternally absorbed in His own inactive self-existence. For the mind, sense, life going beyond their individual formations find that they are only one centre of the sole Mind, Life, Form of things and therefore they find Brahman in that also and not only in an individual transcendence; they bring down the vision of the superconscious into that also and not only into their own individual workings. The mind of the individual escapes from its limits and becomes the one universal mind, his life the one universal life, his bodily sense the sense of the whole universe and even more as his own indivisible Brahman-body. He perceives the universe in himself and he perceives also his self in all existences and knows it to be the one, the omnipresent, the single-multiple all-inhabiting Lord and Reality. Without this realisation he has not fulfilled the conditions of immortality. Therefore it is said that what the sages seek is to distinguish and see the Brahman in all existences; by that discovery, realisation and possession of Him everywhere and in all they attain to their immortal existence.

Still although the victory of the gods, that is to say, the progressive perfection of the mind, life, body in the positive

terms of good, right, joy, knowledge, power is recognised as a victory of the Brahman and the necessity of using life and human works in the world as a means of preparation and self-mastery is admitted, yet a final passing away into the infinite heavenly world or status of the Brahman-consciousness is held out as the goal. And this would seem to imply a rejection of the life of the cosmos. Well then may we ask, we the modern humanity more and more conscious of the inner warning of that which created us, be it Nature or God, that there is a work for the race, a divine purpose in its creation which exceeds the salvation of the individual soul, because the universal is as real or even more real than the individual, we who feel more and more, in the language of the Koran, that the Lord did not create heaven and earth in a jest, that Brahman did not begin dreaming this world-dream in a moment of aberration and delirium,—well may we ask whether this gospel of individual salvation is all the message even of this purer, earlier, more catholic Vedanta. If so, then Vedanta at its best is a gospel for the saint, the ascetic, the monk, the solitary, but it has not a message which the widening consciousness of the world can joyfully accept as the word for which it was waiting. For there is evidently something vital that has escaped it, a profound word of the riddle of existence from which it has turned its eyes or which it was unable or thought it not worth while to solve.

Now certainly there is an emphasis in the Upanishads increasing steadily as time goes on into an over-emphasis, on the salvation of the individual, on his rejection of the lower cosmic life. This note increases in them as they become later in date, it swells afterwards into the rejection of all cosmic life whatever and that becomes finally in later Hinduism almost the one dominant and all-challenging cry. It does not exist in the earlier Vedic revelation where individual salvation is regarded as a means towards a great cosmic victory, the eventual conquest of heaven and earth by the superconscious Truth and Bliss and those who have achieved the victory in the past are the conscious helpers of their yet battling posterity. If this earlier note is missing in the Upanishads, then,—for great as are these Scriptures, luminous,

profound, sublime in their unsurpassed truth, beauty and power, yet it is only the ignorant soul that will make itself the slave of a book,—then in using them as an aid to knowledge we must insistently call back that earlier missing note, we must seek elsewhere a solution for the word of the riddle that has been ignored. The Upanishad alone of extant scriptures gives us without veil or stinting, with plenitude and a noble catholicity the truth of the Brahman; its aid to humanity is therefore indispensable. Only, where anything essential is missing, we must go beyond the Upanishads to seek it,—as for instance when we add to its emphasis on divine knowledge the indispensable ardent emphasis of the later teachings upon divine love and the high emphasis of the Veda upon divine works.

The Vedic gospel of a supreme victory in heaven and on earth for the divine in man, the Christian gospel of a kingdom of God and divine city upon earth, the Puranic idea of progressing Avatars ending in the kingdom of the perfect and the restoration of the golden Age, not only contain behind their forms a profound truth, but they are necessary to the religious sense in mankind. Without it the teaching of the vanity of human life and of a passionate fleeing and renunciation can only be powerful in passing epochs or else on the few strong souls in each age that are really capable of these things. The rest of humanity will either reject the creed which makes that its foundation or ignore it in practice while professing it in precept or else must sink under the weight of its own impotence and the sense of the illusion of life or of the curse of God upon the world as mediaeval Christendom sank into ignorance and obscurantism or later India into stagnant torpor and the pettiness of a life of aimless egoism. The promise for the individual is well but the promise for the race is also needed. Our father Heaven must remain bright with the hope of deliverance, but also our mother Earth must not feel herself for ever accursed.

It was necessary at one time to insist even exclusively on the idea of individual salvation so that the sense of a Beyond might be driven into man's mentality, as it was necessary at one time to insist on a heaven of joys for the virtuous and pious so that

man might be drawn by that shining bait towards the practice of religion and the suppression of his unbridled animality. But as the lures of earth have to be conquered, so also have the lures of heaven. The lure of a pleasant Paradise of the rewards of virtue has been rejected by man; the Upanishads belittled it ages ago in India and it is now no longer dominant in the mind of the people; the similar lure in popular Christianity and popular Islam has no meaning for the conscience of modern humanity. The lure of a release from birth and death and withdrawal from the cosmic labour must also be rejected, as it was rejected by Mahayanist Buddhism which held compassion and helpfulness to be greater than Nirvana. As the virtues we practise must be done without demand of earthly or heavenly reward, so the salvation we seek must be purely internal and impersonal; it must be the release from egoism, the union with the Divine, the realisation of our universality as well as our transcendence, and no salvation should be valued which takes us away from the love of God in his manifestation and the help we can give to the world. If need be, it must be taught for a time, "Better this hell with our other suffering selves than a solitary salvation."

Fortunately, there is no need to go to such lengths and deny one side of the truth in order to establish another. The Upanishad itself suggests the door of escape from any over-emphasis in its own statement of the truth. For the man who knows and possesses the supreme Brahman as the transcendent Beatitude becomes a centre of that delight to which all his fellows shall come, a well from which they can draw the divine waters. Here is the clue that we need. The connection with the universe is preserved for the one reason which supremely justifies that connection; it must subsist not from the desire of personal earthly joy, as with those who are still bound, but for help to all creatures. Two then are the objects of the high-reaching soul, to attain the Supreme and to be for ever for the good of all the world,—even as Brahman Himself; whether here or elsewhere, does not essentially matter. Still where the struggle is thickest, there should be the hero of the spirit, that is surely the highest choice of the son of Immortality; the earth calls most, because it

has most need of him, to the soul that has become one with the universe.

And the nature of the highest good that can be done is also indicated,—though other lower forms of help are not therefore excluded. To assist in the lesser victories of the gods which must prepare the supreme victory of the Brahman may well be and must be in some way or other a part of our task; but the greatest helpfulness of all is this, to be a human centre of the Light, the Glory, the Bliss, the Strength, the Knowledge of the Divine Existence, one through whom it shall communicate itself lavishly to other men and attract by its magnet of delight their souls to that which is the Highest.

Katha Upanishad

The Katha Upanishad

of the Black Yajurveda

THE FIRST CYCLE; FIRST CHAPTER

उशन् है वाजश्रवसः सर्वेदसं ददो। तस्य ह नचिकेता नाम पुत्र
आस ॥ १ ॥

1. Vajasravasa, desiring, gave all he had. Now Vajasravasa had a son named Nachiketas.

तं ह कुमारं सन्तं दक्षिणासु नीयमानासु श्रद्धाविवेश सोऽमन्यत ॥ २ ॥

2. As the gifts were led past, faith took possession of him who was yet a boy unwed and he pondered:

पीतोदका जग्धतृणा दुग्धदोहा निरन्द्रियाः ।
अनन्दा नाम ते लोकास्तान् स गच्छति ता ददत् ॥ ३ ॥

3. “Cattle that have drunk their water, eaten their grass, yielded their milk, worn out their organs, of undelight are the worlds which he reaches who gives such as these.”

स होवाच पितरं तत कस्मै मां दास्यसीति । द्वितीयं तृतीयं तं होवाच
मृत्यवे त्वा ददामीति ॥ ४ ॥

4. He said to his father, “Me, O my father, to whom wilt thou give?” A second time and a third he said it, and he replied, “To Death I give thee.”

बहूनामेमि प्रथमो बहूनामेमि मध्यमः ।
किं स्वद्यमस्य कर्तव्यं यन्मयाद्य करिष्यति ॥ ५ ॥

5. “Among many I walk the first, among many I walk the midmost; something Death means to do which today by me he will accomplish.

अनुपश्य यथा पूर्वे प्रतिपश्य तथापरे ।
सस्यमिव मर्त्यः पच्यते सस्यमिवाजायते पुनः ॥ ६ ॥

6. “Look back and see, even as were the men of old,—look round! — even so are they that have come after. Mortal man withers like the fruits of the field and like the fruits of the field he is born again.”

वैश्वानरः प्रविशत्यतिथिब्राह्मणो गृहान् ।
तस्यैतां शान्तिं कुर्वन्ति हर वैवस्वतोदकम् ॥ ७ ॥

His attendants say to Yama:

7. “Fire is the Brahmin who enters as a guest the houses of men; him thus they appease. Bring, O son of Vivasvan,¹ the water of the guest-rite.

आशाप्रतीक्षे संगतं सूनृतां चेष्टापूर्ते पुत्रपशूंश्च सर्वान् ।
एतद वृङ्के पुरुषस्यात्प्रेधसो यस्यानश्चन् वसति ब्राह्मणो गृहे ॥ ८ ॥

8. “That man of little understanding in whose house a Brahmin dwells fasting, all his hope and his expectation and all he has gained and the good and truth that he has spoken and the wells he has dug and the sacrifices he has offered and all his sons and his cattle are torn from him by that guest unhonoured.”

तिस्रो रात्रीर्यदवात्सीर्गृहे मेऽनश्चन् ब्रह्मन्नतिथिर्नमस्यः ।
नमस्तेऽस्तु ब्रह्मन् स्वस्ति मेऽस्तु तस्मात्प्रति त्रीन्वरान्वृणीष्व ॥ ९ ॥

9. “Because for three nights thou hast dwelt in my house, O Brahmin, a guest worthy of reverence,—salutation to thee, O Brahmin, on me let there be the weal,—therefore three boons do thou choose; for each night a boon.”

¹ Yama, lord of death, is also the master of the Law in the world, and he is therefore the child of the Sun, luminous Master of Truth from which the Law is born.

शान्तसंकल्पः सुमना यथा स्याद् वीतमन्युगौत्मो माभि मृत्यो ।
त्वत्प्रसृष्टं माभिवदेत्प्रतीत एतत् त्रयाणां प्रथमं वरं वृणे ॥ १० ॥

10. “Tranquillised in his thought and serene of mind be the Gautama, my father, let his passion over me pass away from him; assured in heart let him greet me from thy grasp delivered; this boon I choose, the first of three.”

यथा पुरस्ताद् भविता प्रतीत औद्दालकिरारुणिर्मत्रसृष्टः ।
सुखं रात्रीः शयिता वीतमन्युस्त्वां ददृशिवान्मृत्युमुखात्प्रमुक्तम् ॥ ११ ॥

11. “Even as before assured in heart and by me released shall he be, Auddalaki Aruni, thy father; sweetly shall he sleep through the nights and his passion shall pass away from him, having seen thee from death’s jaws delivered.”

स्वर्गे लोके न भयं किञ्चनास्ति न तत्र त्वं न जरया विभेति ।
उभे तीर्त्वाशनायापिपासे शोकातिगो मोदते स्वर्गलोके ॥ १२ ॥

12. “In heaven fear is not at all, in heaven, O Death, thou art not, nor old age and its terrors; crossing over hunger and thirst as over two rivers, leaving sorrow behind the soul in heaven rejoices.

स त्वमग्निं स्वर्गर्थमध्येषि मृत्यो प्रबूहि त्वं श्रद्धानाय मह्यम् ।
स्वर्गलोका अमृतत्वं भजन्त एतद् द्वितीयेन वृणे वरेण ॥ १३ ॥

13. “Therefore that heavenly Flame² which thou, O Death, studiest, expound unto me, for I believe. They who win their world of heaven, have immortality for their portion. This for the second boon I have chosen.”

प्र ते ब्रवीमि तदु मे निबोध स्वर्गर्थमग्निं नचिकेतः प्रजानन् ।
अनन्तलोकास्मिथो प्रतिष्ठां विद्धि त्वमेतं निहितं गुहायाम् ॥ १४ ॥

² The celestial force concealed subconsciously in man’s mortality by the kindling of which and its right ordering man transcends his earthly nature; not the physical flame of the external sacrifice to which these profound phrases are inapplicable.

14. "Hearken to me and understand, O Nachiketas; I declare to thee that heavenly Flame, for I know it. Know this to be the possession of infinite existence and the foundation and the thing hidden in the secret cave of our being."

लोकादिमग्निं तमुवाच तस्मै या इष्टका यावतीर्वा यथा वा ।
स चापि तत्प्रत्यवदद् यथोक्तमथास्य मृत्युः पुनरेवाह तुष्टः ॥ १५ ॥

15. Of the Flame that is the world's beginning³ he told him and what are the bricks to him and how many and the way of their setting; and Nachiketas too repeated it even as it was told; then Death was pleased and said to him yet farther;

तमब्रवीत्रीयमाणो महात्मा वरं तवेहाद्य ददामि भूयः ।
तवैव नाम्ना भवितायमग्निः सृङ्गां चेमामनेकरूपां गृहण ॥ १६ ॥

16. Yea; the Great Soul was gratified and said to him, "Yet a farther boon today I give thee; for even by thy name shall this Fire be called; this necklace also take unto thee, a necklace⁴ of many figures.

त्रिणाच्चिकेतस्त्रिभिरेत्य संधिं त्रिकर्मकृत् तरति जन्ममृत्यू ।
ब्रह्मजज्ञं देवमीड्यं विदित्वा निचाय्येमां शान्तिमत्यन्तमेति ॥ १७ ॥

17. "Whoso lights the three fires⁵ of Nachiketas and comes to union with the Three⁶ and does the triple works,⁷ beyond birth and death he crosses; for he finds the God of our

³ The Divine Force concealed in the subconscious is that which has originated and built up the worlds. At the other end in the superconscious it reveals itself as the Divine Being, Lord and Knower who has manifested Himself out of the Brahman.

⁴ The necklace of many figures is Prakriti, creative Nature which comes under the control of the soul that has attained to the divine existence.

⁵ Probably, the divine force utilised to raise to divinity the triple being of man.

⁶ Possibly, the three Purushas, soul-states or Personalities of the divine Being, indicated by the three letters AUM. The highest Brahman is beyond the three letters of the mystic syllable.

⁷ The sacrifice of the lower existence to the divine, consummated on the three planes of man's physical, vital and mental consciousness.

adoration, the Knower⁸ who is born from the Brahman, whom having beheld he attains to surpassing peace.

त्रिणाचिकेतस्त्रयमेतद् विदित्वा य एवं विद्वांश्चिनुते नाचिकेतम् ।
स मृत्युपाशान्पुरतः प्रणोद्य शोकातिगो मोदते स्वर्गलोके ॥ १८ ॥

18. “When a man has the three flames of Nachiketas and knows this that is Triple, when so knowing he beholds the Flame of Nachiketas, then he thrusts from in front of him the meshes of the snare of death; leaving sorrow behind him he in heaven rejoices.

एष तेऽग्निर्नचिकेतः स्वर्यो यमवृणीथा द्वितीयेन वरेण ।
एतमग्निं तवैव प्रवक्ष्यन्ति जनासस्तृतीयं वरं नचिकेतो वृणीष्व ॥ १९ ॥

19. “This is the heavenly Flame, O Nachiketas, which thou hast chosen for the second boon; of this Flame the peoples shall speak that it is thine indeed. A third boon choose, O Nachiketas.”

येयं प्रेते विचिकित्सा मनुष्येऽस्तीत्येके नायमस्तीति चैके ।
एतद् विद्यामनुशिष्टस्त्वयाहं वराणामेष वरस्तृतीयः ॥ २० ॥

20. “This debate that there is over the man who has passed and some say ‘This he is not’ and some that he is, that, taught by thee, I would know; this is the third boon of the boons of my choosing.”

देवैरत्रापि विचिकित्सितं पुरा न हि सुज्ञेयमणुरेष धर्मः ।
अन्यं वरं नचिकेतो वृणीष्व मा मोपरोत्सीरति मा सृजैनम् ॥ २१ ॥

21. “Even by the gods was this debated of old; for it is not easy of knowledge, since very subtle is the law of it. Another boon choose, O Nachiketas; importune me not, nor urge me; this, this abandon.”

⁸ The Purusha or Divine Being, Knower of the Field, who dwells within all and for whose pleasure Prakriti fulfils the cosmic play.

देवैरत्रापि विचिकित्सितं किल त्वं च मृत्यो यन्न सुज्ञेयमात्थ ।
वक्ता चास्य त्वादृगन्यो न लभ्यो नान्यो वरस्तुल्य एतस्य
कश्चित् ॥ २२ ॥

22. “Even by the gods was this debated, it is sure, and thou thyself hast said that it is not easy of knowledge; never shall I find another like thee⁹ to tell of it, nor is there any other boon that is its equal.”

शतायुषः पुत्रपौत्रान्वृणीष्व बहून्पशून् हस्तिहिरण्यमश्वान् ।
भूमेर्महदायतनं वृणीष्व स्वयं च जीव शरदो यावदिच्छसि ॥ २३ ॥

23. “Choose sons and grandsons who shall live each a hundred years, choose much cattle and elephants and gold and horses; choose a mighty reach of earth and thyself live for as many years as thou listest.

एतच्चुल्यं यदि मन्यसे वरं वृणीष्व वित्तं चिरजीविकां च ।
महाभूमौ नचिकेतस्त्वमेधि कामानां त्वा कामभाजं करोमि ॥ २४ ॥

24. “This boon if thou deemest equal to that of thy asking, choose wealth and long living; possess thou, O Nachiketas, a mighty country; I give thee thy desire of all desirable things for thy portion.

ये ये कामा दुर्लभा मर्त्यलोके सर्वान्कामांश्छन्दतः प्रार्थयस्व ।
इमा रामाः सरथाः सतूर्या न हीदृशा लम्भनीया मनुष्यैः ।
आभिर्मत्रताभिः परिचारयस्व नचिकेतो मरणं मानुप्राक्षीः ॥ २५ ॥

25. “Yea, all desires that are hard to win in the world of mortals, all demand at thy pleasure; lo, these delectable women with their chariots and their bugles, whose like are not to be won by men, these I will give thee; live with them for thy handmaidens. But of death question not, O Nachiketas.”

⁹ Yama is the knower and keeper of the cosmic Law through which the soul has to rise by death and life to the freedom of Immortality.

श्वोभावा मर्त्यस्य यदन्तकैतत् सर्वेन्द्रियाणां जरयन्ति तेजः ।
अपि सर्वं जीवितमल्पमेव तवैव वाहास्तव नृत्यगीते ॥ २६ ॥

26. “Until the morrow mortal man has these things, O Ender, and they wear away all this keenness and glory of his senses; nay, all life is even for a little. Thine are these chariots and thine the dancing of these women and their singing.

न वित्तेन तर्पणीयो मनुष्यो लप्यामहे वित्तमदाक्षम चेत्त्वा ।
जीविष्यामो यावदीशिष्यसि त्वं वरस्तु मे वरणीयः स एव ॥ २७ ॥

27. “Man is not to be satisfied by riches, and riches we shall have if we have beheld thee and shall live as long as thou shalt be lord of us.¹⁰ This boon and no other is for my choosing.

अजीर्यताममृतानामुपेत्य जीर्यन्मर्त्यः क्वधःस्थः प्रजानन् ।
अभिध्यायन् वर्णरतिप्रमोदानतिदीर्घं जीविते को रमेत ॥ २८ ॥

28. “Who that is a mortal man and grows old and dwells down upon the unhappy earth, when he has come into the presence of the ageless Immortals and knows, yea, who when he looks very close at beauty and enjoyment and pleasure, can take delight in overlong living?

यस्मिन्निदं विचिकित्सन्ति मृत्यो यत्सांपराये महति ब्रह्म नस्तत् ।
योऽयं वरो गृद्धमनुप्रविष्टो नान्यं तस्मान्नचिकेता वृणीते ॥ २९ ॥

29. “This of which they thus debate, O Death, declare to me, even that which is in the great passage; than this boon which enters in into the secret that is hidden from us, no other chooses Nachiketas.”

¹⁰ Life being a figure of death and Death of life, the only true existence is the infinite, divine and immortal.

THE FIRST CYCLE; SECOND CHAPTER

अन्यच्छ्रेयोऽन्यदुतैव प्रेयस्ते उमे नानार्थे पुरुषं सिनीतः ।
तयोः श्रेय आददानस्य साधु भवति हीयतेऽर्थाद्य उ प्रेयो वृणीते ॥ १ ॥

Yama speaks:

1. One thing is the good and quite another thing is the pleasant, and both seize upon a man with different meanings. Of these whoso takes the good, it is well with him; he falls from the aim of life who chooses the pleasant.

श्रेयश्च प्रेयश्च मनुष्यमेतस्तौ संपरीत्य विविनक्ति धीरः ।
श्रेयो हि धीरोऽभि प्रेयसो वृणीते प्रेयो मन्दो योगक्षेमाद् वृणीते ॥ २ ॥

2. The good and the pleasant come to a man and the thoughtful mind turns all around them and distinguishes. The wise chooses out the good from the pleasant, but the dull soul chooses the pleasant rather than the getting of his good and its having.

स त्वं प्रियान्प्रियरूपांश्च कामानभिध्यायन् नचिकेतोऽत्यस्राक्षीः ।
नैतां सृङ्गां वित्तमयीमवासो यस्यां मज्जन्ति बहवो मनुष्याः ॥ ३ ॥

3. And thou, O Nachiketas, hast looked close at the objects of desire, at pleasant things and beautiful, and thou hast cast them from thee; thou hast not entered into the net of riches in which many men sink to perdition.

द्वारमेते विपरीते विषृची अविद्या या च विद्येति ज्ञाता ।
विद्याभीप्सिनं नचिकेतसं मन्ये न त्वा कामा बहवोऽलोतुपन्त ॥ ४ ॥

4. For far apart are these, opposite, divergent, the one that is known as the Ignorance and the other the Knowledge. But Nachiketas I deem truly desirous of the knowledge whom so many desirable things could not make to lust after them.

अविद्यायामन्तरे वर्तमानाः स्वयं धीराः पण्डितमन्यमानाः ।
दन्दम्यमाणाः परिशन्ति मूढा अन्धेनैव नीयमाना यथान्धाः ॥ ५ ॥

5. They who dwell in the ignorance, within it, wise in their own wit and deeming themselves very learned, men bewildered are they who wander about round and round circling like blind men led by the blind.

न सांपरायः प्रतिभाति बालं प्रमाद्यन्तं वित्तमोहेन मूढम् ।
अयं लोको नास्ति पर इति मानी पुनः पुनर्वशमापद्यते मे ॥ ६ ॥

6. The childish wit bewildered and drunken with the illusion of riches cannot open its eyes to see the passage to heaven; for he that thinks this world is and there is no other, comes again and again into Death's thraldom.

श्रवणायापि बहुभिर्यो न लभ्यः शृणवन्तोऽपि बहवो यं न विद्युः ।
आश्चर्यो वक्ता कुशलोऽस्य लब्धाऽश्चर्यो ज्ञाता कुशलानुशिष्टः ॥ ७ ॥

7. He that is not easy even to be heard of by many, and even of those that have heard they are many who have not known Him,—a miracle is the man that can speak of Him wisely or is skilful to win Him, and when one is found, a miracle is the listener who can know God even when taught of Him by the knower.

न नरेणावरेण प्रोक्त एष सुविज्ञेयो बहुधा चिन्त्यमानः ।
अनन्यप्रोक्ते गतिरत्र नास्त्यणीयान् ह्यतर्क्यमणुप्रमाणात् ॥ ८ ॥

8. An inferior man cannot tell you of Him; for thus told thou canst not truly know Him, since He is thought of in many aspects. Yet unless told of Him by another thou canst not find thy way there to Him; for He is subtler than subtlety and that which logic cannot reach.

नैषा तर्केण मतिरापनेया प्रोक्तान्येनैव सुज्ञानाय प्रेष्ट ।
यां त्वमापः सत्यधृतिर्बतासि त्वादृद्ग नो भूयान्नचिकेतः प्रष्टा ॥ ९ ॥

9. This wisdom is not to be had by reasoning, O beloved Nachiketas; only when told thee by another it brings real knowledge,—the wisdom which thou hast gotten. Truly thou art steadfast in the Truth! Even such a questioner as thou art may I meet with always.

जानाम्यहं शेवधिरित्यनित्यं न ह्यध्वैः प्राप्यते हि धृवं तत् ।
ततो मया नाचिकेतश्चितोऽग्निरनित्यैर्द्वयैः प्राप्सवानस्मि नित्यम् ॥१०॥

Nachiketas speaks:

10. I know of treasure that it is not for ever; for not by things unstable shall one attain That which is stable; therefore I heaped the fire of Nachiketas, and by the sacrifice of transitory things I won the Eternal.

कामस्यासि जगतः प्रतिष्ठां क्रतोरनन्त्यमभयस्य पारम् ।
स्तोमं महदुरुगायं प्रतिष्ठां दृष्ट्वा धृत्या धीरो नचिकेतोऽत्यस्त्राक्षीः ॥११॥

Yama speaks:

11. When thou hast seen in thy grasp, O Nachiketas, the possession of desire and firm foundation of this world and an infinity of power and the other shore of security and praise and scope and wide moving and firm foundation,¹¹ wise and strong in steadfastness thou didst cast these things from thee.

तं दुर्दर्शं गूढमनुप्रविष्टं गुहाहितं गद्धरेष्टं पुराणम् ।
अथ्यात्मयोगाधिगमेन देवं मत्वा धीरो हर्षशोकौ जहाति ॥१२॥

12. Realising God by attainment to Him through spiritual Yoga, even the Ancient of Days who hath entered deep into that which is hidden and is hard to see, for he is established in our secret being and lodged in the cavern heart of things, the wise and steadfast man casts far from him joy and sorrow.

¹¹ Or, “and great fame chanted through widest regions”.

एतच्छृत्वा संपरिगृह्य मर्त्यः प्रवृह्य धर्म्यमणुमेतमाप्य ।
स मोदते मोदनीयं हि लब्ध्वा विवृतं सश्च नचिकेतसं मन्ये ॥ १३ ॥

13. When mortal man has heard, when he has grasped, when he has forcefully separated the Righteous One from his body and won that subtle Being, then he has delight, for he has got that which one can indeed delight in. Verily I deem of Nachiketas as a house wide open.

अन्यत्र धर्मादन्यत्राधर्मादन्यत्रास्मात् कृताकृतात् ।
अन्यत्र भूताच्च भव्याच्च यत्तत्पश्यसि तद्वद् ॥ १४ ॥

Nachiketas speaks:

14. Tell me of That which thou seest otherwhere than in virtue and otherwhere than in unrighteousness, otherwhere than in the created and the uncreated, otherwhere than in that which has been and that which shall be.

सर्वे वेदा यत्पदमामनन्ति तपांसि सर्वाणि च यद्वदन्ति ।
यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति तत्ते पदं संग्रहेण ब्रवीम्योमित्येतत् ॥ १५ ॥

Yama speaks:

15. The seat and goal that all the Vedas glorify and which all austerities declare, for the desire of which men practise holy living, of That will I tell thee in brief compass. OM is that goal, O Nachiketas.

एतद्वेवाक्षरं ब्रह्म एतद्वेवाक्षरं परम् ।
एतद्वेवाक्षरं ज्ञात्वा यो यदिच्छति तस्य तत् ॥ १६ ॥

16. For this Syllable is Brahman, this Syllable is the Most High: this Syllable if one know, whatsoever one shall desire, it is his.

एतदालम्बनं श्रेष्ठमेतदालम्बनं परम् ।
एतदालम्बनं ज्ञात्वा ब्रह्मलोके महीयते ॥ १७ ॥

17. This support is the best, this support is the highest, knowing

this support one grows great in the world of the Brahman.

न जायते म्रियते वा विपश्चिन्नायं कुतश्चिन्न बभूव कश्चित्।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥ १८ ॥

18. That Wise One is not born, neither does he die; he came not from anywhere, neither is he anyone; he is unborn, he is everlasting, he is ancient and sempiternal, he is not slain in the slaying of the body.

हन्ता चेन्मन्यते हन्तुं हतश्चेन्मन्यते हतम्।
उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥ १९ ॥

19. If the slayer think that he slays, if the slain think that he is slain, both of these have not the knowledge. This slays not, neither is He slain.

अणोरणीयान्महतो महीयानात्मास्य जन्तोर्निहितो गुहायाम्।
तमक्रतुः पश्यति वीतशोको धातुप्रसादान्महिमानमात्मनः ॥ २० ॥

20. Finer than the fine, huger than the huge the Self hides in the secret heart of the creature: when a man strips himself of will and is weaned from sorrow, then he beholds Him, purified from the mental elements he sees the greatness of the Self-being.

आसीनो दूरं व्रजति शयानो याति सर्वतः।
कस्तं मदामदं देवं मदन्यो ज्ञातुमर्हति ॥ २१ ॥

21. Seated He journeys far off, lying down He goes everywhere. Who other than I is fit to know God, even Him who is rapture and the transcendence of rapture?

अशरीरं शरीरेष्वनवस्थेष्वस्थितम्।
महान्तं विभुमात्मानं मत्वा धीरो न शोचति ॥ २२ ॥

22. Realising the Bodiless in bodies, the Established in things unsettled, the Great and Omnipresent Self, the wise and steadfast soul grieves no longer.

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन ।
यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तद्गुं स्वाम् ॥ २३ ॥

23. The Self is not to be won by eloquent teaching, nor by brain power, nor by much learning: but only he whom this being chooses can win Him, for to him this Self bares His body.

नाविरतो दुश्चरितान्नाशान्तो नासमाहितः ।
नाशान्तमानसो वापि प्रज्ञानेनैनमाप्नुयात् ॥ २४ ॥

24. None who has not ceased from doing evil, or who is not calm, or not concentrated in his being, or whose mind has not been tranquillised, can by wisdom attain to Him.

यस्य ब्रह्म च क्षत्रं च उभे भवत ओदनः ।
मृत्युर्यस्योपसेचनं क इत्था वेद यत्र सः ॥ २५ ॥

25. He to whom the sages are as meat and heroes as food for His eating and Death is an ingredient of His banquet, how thus shall one know of Him where He abideth?

THE FIRST CYCLE; THIRD CHAPTER

ऋतं पिवन्तौ सुकृतस्य लोके गुहां प्रविष्टौ परमे परार्धे ।
छायातपौ ब्रह्मविदो वदन्ति पञ्चाग्नयो ये च त्रिणाचिकेताः ॥ १ ॥

Yama speaks:

1. There are two that drink deep of the Truth in the world of work well accomplished: they are lodged in the secret plane of being and in the highest kingdom of the most High is their dwelling: as of light and shade the knowers of the Brahman speak of them and those of the five fires and those who have the three fires of Nachiketas.

यः सेतुरीजानानामक्षरं ब्रह्म यत्परम् ।
अभयं तितीर्षतां पारं नाचिकेतं शकेमहि ॥ २ ॥

2. May we have strength to kindle Agni Nachiketas, for he is the bridge of those who do sacrifice and he is Brahman supreme and imperishable, and the far shore of security to those who would cross this ocean.

आत्मानं रथिनं विद्धि शरीरं रथमेव तु ।
बुद्धिं तु सारथिं विद्धि मनः प्रग्रहमेव च ॥ ३ ॥

3. Know the body for a chariot and the soul for the master of the chariot: know Reason for the charioteer and the mind for the reins only.

इन्द्रियाणि हयानाहुर्विषयांस्तेषु गोचरान् ।
आत्मेन्द्रियमनोयुक्तं भोक्तेत्याहुर्मनीषिणः ॥ ४ ॥

4. The senses they speak of as the steeds and the objects of sense as the paths in which they move; and One yoked with Self and the mind and the senses is the enjoyer, say the thinkers.

यस्त्वविज्ञानवान् भवत्ययुक्तेन मनसा सदा ।
तस्येन्द्रियाण्यवश्यानि दुष्टाश्वा इव सारथेः ॥ ५ ॥

5. Now he that is without knowledge with his mind ever unapplied, his senses are to him as wild horses and will not obey the driver of the chariot.

यस्तु विज्ञानवान् भवति युक्तेन मनसा सदा ।
तस्येन्द्रियाणि वश्यानि सदश्वा इव सारथेः ॥ ६ ॥

6. But he that has knowledge with his mind ever applied, his senses are to him as noble steeds and they obey the driver.

यस्त्वविज्ञानवान् भवत्यमनस्कः सदाऽशुचिः ।
न स तत्पदमाप्नोति संसारं चाधिगच्छति ॥ ७ ॥

7. Yea, he that is without knowledge and is unmindful and is ever unclean, reaches not that goal, but wanders in the cycle of phenomena.

यस्तु विज्ञानवान् भवति समनस्कः सदा शुचिः ।
स तु तत्पदमाप्नोति यस्माद् भूयो न जायते ॥ ८ ॥

8. But he that has knowledge and is mindful and pure always, reaches that goal whence he is not born again.

विज्ञानसारथिर्यस्तु मनःप्रग्रहवान् नरः ।
सोऽध्वनः पारमाप्नोति तद्विष्णोः परमं पदम् ॥ ९ ॥

9. That man who uses the mind for reins and the knowledge for the driver, reaches the end of his road, the highest seat of Vishnu.

इन्द्रियेभ्यः परा ह्यर्था अर्थेभ्यश्च परं मनः ।
मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्बुद्धेरात्मा महान्परः ॥ १० ॥

10. Than the senses the objects of sense are higher; and higher than the objects of sense is the Mind; and higher than the Mind is the faculty of knowledge; and than that is the Great Self higher.

महतः परमव्यक्तमव्यक्तात् पुरुषः परः ।
पुरुषान्न परं किंचित्सा काष्ठा सा परा गतिः ॥ ११ ॥

11. And higher than the Great Self is the Unmanifest and higher than the Unmanifest is the Purusha: than the Purusha there is none higher: He is the culmination, He is the highest goal of the journey.

एष सर्वेषु भूतेषु गूढोऽत्मा न प्रकाशते ।
दृश्यते त्वग्यया बुद्धा सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः ॥ १२ ॥

12. The secret Self in all existences does not manifest Himself to the vision: yet is He seen by the seers of the subtle by a subtle and perfect understanding.

यच्छेद वाङ्मनसी प्राज्ञस्तद्यच्छेज्ञान आत्मनि ।
ज्ञानमात्मनि महति नियच्छेत् तद्यच्छेच्छान्त आत्मनि ॥ १३ ॥

13. Let the wise man restrain speech in his mind and mind in his self of knowledge, and knowledge in the Great Self, and that again let him restrain in the Self that is at peace.

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।
क्षुरस्य धारा निशिता दुरत्यया दुर्गं पथस्तत् कवयो वदन्ति ॥ १४ ॥

14. Arise, awake, find out the great ones and learn of them; for sharp as a razor's edge, hard to traverse, difficult of going is that path, say the sages.

अशब्दमस्पर्शमरूपमव्ययं तथारसं नित्यमगन्धवच्च यत् ।
अनाद्यनन्तं महतः परं ध्रुवं निचाय्य तन्मृत्युमुखात् प्रमुच्यते ॥ १५ ॥

15. That in which sound is not, nor touch, nor shape, nor diminution, nor taste, nor smell, that which is eternal, and It is without end or beginning, higher than the Great Self and stable,—that having seen, from the mouth of death there is deliverance.

नाचिकेतमुपास्यानं मृत्युप्रोक्तं सनातनम् ।
उक्त्वा श्रुत्वा च मेधावी ब्रह्मलोके महीयते ॥ १६ ॥

16. The man of intelligence having spoken or heard the eternal story of Nachiketas wherein Death was the speaker, grows great in the world of the Brahman.

य इमं परमं गुह्यं आवयेद् ब्रह्मसंसदि ।
प्रयतः आद्वकाले वा तदानन्त्याय कल्पते ।
तदानन्त्याय कल्पत इति ॥ १७ ॥

17. He who being pure recites this supreme secret at the time of the Shraddha in the assembly of the Brahmins, that turns for him to infinite existence.

THE SECOND CYCLE; FIRST CHAPTER

पराज्ञं खानि व्यतृणत् स्वयम्भूस्तस्मात्पराङ् पश्यति नान्तरात्मन् ।
कश्चिद्दीरः प्रत्यगात्मानमैक्षदावृत्तचक्षुरमृतत्वमिच्छन् ॥ १ ॥

Yama said:

1. The Self-born hath set the doors of the body to face outward, therefore the soul of a man gazeth outward and not at the Self within; hardly a wise man here and there desiring immortality turneth his eyes inward and seeth the Self within him.

पराचः कामाननुयन्ति बालास्ते मृत्योर्यन्ति विततस्य पाशम् ।
अथ धीरा अमृतत्वं विदित्वा ध्रुवमध्वरेष्विह न प्रार्थयन्ते ॥ २ ॥

2. The rest childishly follow after desire and pleasure and walk into the snare of Death who gapeth wide for them. But calm souls having learned of immortality seek not for permanence in the things of this world that pass and are not.

येन रूपं रसं गन्धं शब्दान् स्पर्शाश्च मैथुनान् ।
एतेनैव विजानाति किमत्र परिशिष्यते । एतद्वै तत् ॥ ३ ॥

3. By the Self one knoweth taste and form and smell, by the Self one knoweth sound and touch and the joy of man with woman; what is there left in this world of which the Self not knoweth? This is the thing thou seekest.

स्वप्नान्तं जागरितान्तं चोभौ येनानुपश्यति ।
महान्तं विभुमात्मानं मत्वा धीरो न शोचति ॥ ४ ॥

4. The calm soul having comprehended the great Lord, the omnipresent Self by whom one beholdeth both to the end of dream and to the end of waking, ceaseth from grieving.

य इमं मध्वदं वेद आत्मानं जीवमन्तिकात् ।
ईशानं भूतभव्यस्य न ततो विज्ञुगुप्तते । एतद्वै तत् ॥ ५ ॥

5. He that hath known from very close this Eater of sweetness, the Jiva, the Self within that is lord of what was and what shall be, shrinketh not thereafter from aught nor abhorreth any. This is the thing thou seekest.

यः पूर्वं तपसो जातमदभ्यः पूर्वमजायत ।
गुहां प्रविश्य तिष्ठन्तं यो भूतेभिर्व्यपश्यत । एतद्वै तत् ॥ ६ ॥

6. He is the seer that seeth Him who came into being before austerity and was before the waters; deep in the heart of the creature he seeth Him, for there He standeth by the mingling of the elements. This is the thing thou seekest.

या प्राणेन संभवत्यदितिर्देवतामयी ।
गुहां प्रविश्य तिष्ठन्तीं या भूतेभिर्व्यजायत । एतद्वै तत् ॥ ७ ॥

7. This is Aditi, the mother of the Gods, who was born through the Prana and by the mingling of the elements had her being; deep in the heart of things she has entered, there she is seated. This is the thing thou seekest.

अरण्योर्निहितो जातवेदा गर्भं इव सुभूतो गर्भिणीभिः ।
दिवे दिव ईड्यो जागृवद्भिर्विष्मदिभर्मनुष्येभिरग्निः ।
एतद्वै तत् ॥ ८ ॥

8. As a woman carrieth with care the unborn child in her womb, so is the Master of knowledge lodged in the tinders, and day by day should men worship him who live their waking life and stand before him with sacrifice; for he is that Agni. This is the thing thou seekest.

यतश्चोदेति सूर्योऽस्तं यत्र च गच्छति ।
तं देवाः सर्वेऽपितास्तदु नात्येति कश्चन । एतद्वै तत् ॥ ९ ॥

9. He from whom the sun riseth and to whom the sun returneth, and in Him are all the Gods established,—none passeth beyond Him. This is the thing thou seekest.

यदेवेह तदमुत्र यदमुत्र तदन्विह ।
मृत्योः स मृत्युमान्योति य इह नानेव पश्यति ॥ १० ॥

10. What is in this world is also in the other, and what is in the other, that again is in this; who thinketh he sees difference here, from death to death he goeth.

मनसैवेदमासव्यं नेह नानास्ति किंचन ।
मृत्योः स मृत्युं गच्छति य इह नानेव पश्यति ॥ ११ ॥

11. Through the mind must we understand that there is nothing in this world that is really various; who thinketh he sees difference here, from death to death he goeth.

अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषो मध्य आत्मनि तिष्ठति ।
ईशानो भूतभव्यस्य न ततो विजुगुप्सते । एतद्वै तत् ॥ १२ ॥

12. The Purusha who is seated in the midst of ourself is no larger than the finger of a man. He is the lord of what was and what shall be; Him having seen one shrinketh not from aught nor abhorreth any. This is the thing thou seekest.

अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषो ज्योतिरिवाधूमकः ।
ईशानो भूतभव्यस्य स एवाद्य स उ श्वः । एतद्वै तत् ॥ १३ ॥

13. The Purusha that is within is no larger than the finger of a man; He is like a blazing fire that is without smoke, He is lord of His past and His future. He alone is today and He alone shall be tomorrow. This is the thing thou seekest.

यथोदकं दुर्गे वृष्टं पर्वतेषु विधावति ।
एवं धर्मान्वृथक् पश्यस्तानेवानुविधावति ॥ १४ ॥

14. As water that raineth in the rough and difficult places, runneth to many sides on the mountain-tops, so he that seeth separate law and action of the one Spirit, followeth in the track of what he seeth.

यथोदकं शुद्धे शुद्धमासिक्तं तादृगेव भवति ।
एवं मुनेर्विजानत आत्मा भवति गौतम ॥ ३५ ॥

15. But as pure water that is poured into pure water, even as it was such it remaineth, so is it with the soul of the thinker who knoweth God, O seed of Gotama.

THE SECOND CYCLE; SECOND CHAPTER

पुरमेकादशद्वारमजस्यावकचेतसः ।
अनुष्टाय न शोचति विमुक्तश्च विमुच्यते । एतद्वै तत् ॥ १ ॥

Yama said:

1. The Unborn who is not devious-minded hath a city with eleven gates; when He taketh up his abode in it, He grieveth not, but when He is set free from it, that is His deliverance. This is the thing thou seekest.

हंसः शुचिषद् वसुरन्तरिक्षसद्गोता वेदिषदतिथिर्दुरोणसत् ।
नृषद्वरसदृतसद् व्योमसदब्जा गोजा ऋतजा अद्रिजा ऋतं बृहत् ॥ २ ॥

2. Lo, the Swan whose dwelling is in the purity, He is the Vasu in the interregions, the Sacrificer at the altar, the Guest in the vessel of the drinking; He is in man and in the Great Ones and His home is in the Law and His dwelling is in the firmament; He is all that is born of water and all that is born of earth and all that is born of the mountains. He is the Truth and He is the Mighty One.

ऊर्ध्वं प्राणमुन्नयत्यपानं प्रत्यगस्यति ।
मध्ये वामनमासीनं विश्वे देवा उपासते ॥ ३ ॥

3. This is He that draweth the main breath upward and casteth the lower breath downward. The Dwarf that sitteth in the centre, to Him all the Gods do homage.

अस्य विस्रंसमानस्य शरीरस्थस्य देहिनः ।
देहाद् विमुच्यमानस्य किमत्र परिशिष्यते । एतद्वै तत् ॥ ४ ॥

4. When this encased spirit that is in the body falleth away from it, when He is freed from its casing, what is there then that remaineth? This is the thing thou seekest.

न प्राणेन नापानेन मत्योर्जीवति कश्चन ।
इतरेण तु जीवन्ति यस्मिन्नेतावुपाश्रितौ ॥ ५ ॥

5. Man that is mortal liveth not by the breath, no, nor by the lower breath; but by something else we live in which both these have their being.

हन्त त इदं प्रवक्ष्यामि गुह्यं ब्रह्म सनातनम् ।
यथा च मरणं प्राप्य आत्मा भवति गौतम ॥ ६ ॥

6. Surely, O Gautama, I will tell thee of this secret and eternal Brahman and likewise what becometh of the soul when one dieth.

योनिमन्ये प्रपद्यन्ते शरीरत्वाय देहिनः ।
स्थाणुमन्येऽनुसंयन्ति यथाकर्म यथाश्रुतम् ॥ ७ ॥

7. For some enter a womb to the embodying of the Spirit and others follow after the Immovable; according to their deeds is their goal and after the measure of their revealed knowledge.

य एष सुसेषु जागर्ति कामं कामं पुरुषो निर्मिमाणः ।
तदेव शुक्रं तद् ब्रह्म तदेवामृतमुच्यते ।
तस्मिंलोकाः श्रिताः सर्वे तदु नात्येति कश्चन । एतद्वै तत् ॥ ८ ॥

8. This that waketh in the sleepers creating desire upon desire, this Purusha, Him they call the Bright One, Him Brahman, Him Immortality, and in Him are all the worlds established; none goeth beyond Him. This is the thing thou seekest.

अग्निर्यथैको भुवनं प्रविष्टो रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव ।
एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बहिश्च ॥ ९ ॥

9. Even as one Fire hath entered into the world but it shapeth itself to the forms it meeteth, so there is one Spirit within all creatures but it shapeth itself to form and form; it is likewise outside these.

वायुर्यथैको भुवनं प्रविष्टो रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव ।
एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बहिश्च ॥ १० ॥

10. Even as one Air hath entered into the world but it shapeth itself to the forms it meeteth, so there is one Spirit within all creatures but it shapeth itself to form and form; it is likewise outside these.

सूर्यो यथा सर्वलोकस्य चक्षुर्न लिप्यते चाक्षुषैर्बाह्यदोषैः ।
एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा न लिप्यते लोकदुःखेन बाह्यः ॥ ११ ॥

11. Even as the Sun is the eye of all this world, yet it is not soiled by the outward blemishes of the visual, so there is one Spirit within all creatures, but the sorrow of this world soils it not, for it is beyond grief and his danger.

एको वशी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा एकं रूपं बहुधा यः करोति ।
तमात्मस्थं येऽनुपश्यन्ति धीरास्तेषां सुखं शाश्वतं नेतरेषाम् ॥ १२ ॥

12. One calm and controlling Spirit within all creatures that maketh one form into many fashions; the calm and strong who see Him in the self as in a mirror, theirs is eternal felicity and 'tis not for others.

नित्योऽनित्यानां चेतनश्चेतनानामेको बहुनां यो विदधाति कामान् ।
तमात्मस्थं येऽनुपश्यन्ति धीरास्तेषां शान्तिः शाश्वती नेतरेषाम् ॥ १३ ॥

13. The One Eternal in many transient, the One Conscious in many conscious beings, who being One ordereth the desires of many; the calm and strong who behold Him in the self as in a mirror, theirs is eternal peace and 'tis not for others.

तदेतदिति मन्यन्तेऽनिर्देशं परमं सुखम् ।
कथं नु तद्विजानीयां किमु भाति विभाति वा ॥१४॥

14. “This is He,” is all they can realise of Him, a highest felicity which none can point to nor any define it. How shall I know of Him whether He shineth or reflecteth one light and another?

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥१५॥

15. There the Sun cannot shine and the moon has no lustre; all the stars are blind; there our lightnings flash not, neither any earthly fire. For all that is bright is but the shadow of His brightness and by His shining all this shineth.

THE SECOND CYCLE; THIRD CHAPTER

ऊर्ध्वमूलोऽवाकशाख एषोऽश्वत्थः सनातनः ।
तदेव शुक्रं तद् ब्रह्म तदेवामृतमुच्यते ।
तस्मैङ्गोकाः श्रिताः सर्वे तदु नात्येति कश्चन । एतद्वै तत् ॥१॥

Yama said:

1. This is the eternal uswattha tree whose roots are aloft, but its branches are downward. It is He that is called the Bright One and Brahman and Immortality, and in Him are all the worlds established; none goeth beyond Him. This is the thing thou seekest.

यदिदं किंच जगत्सर्वं प्राण एजति निःसृतम् ।
महद् भयं वज्रमुद्यतं य एतद् विद्वरमृतास्ते भवन्ति ॥२॥

2. All this universe of motion moveth in the Prana and from the Prana also it proceeded; a mighty terror is He, yea, a thunderbolt uplifted. Who know Him are the immortals.

भयादस्याग्निस्तपति भयात्तपति सूर्यः।
भयादिन्द्रश्च वायुश्च मृत्युर्धावति पञ्चमः॥३॥

3. For fear of Him the fire burneth, for fear of Him the sun giveth heat, for fear of Him Indra and Vayu and Death hasten in their courses.

इह चेदशकद्वोद्धुं प्राक् शरीरस्य विस्रसः।
ततः सर्गेषु लोकेषु शरीरत्वाय कल्पते॥४॥

4. If in this world of men and before thy body fall from thee, thou art able to apprehend it, then thou availest for embodiment in the worlds that are His creations.

यथादर्शे तथात्मनि यथा स्वप्ने तथा पितृलोके।
यथाप्सु परीव ददृशे तथा गन्धर्वलोके छायातपयोरिव ब्रह्मलोके॥५॥

5. In the self one seeth God as in a mirror but as in a dream in the world of the fathers, and as in water one seeth the surface of an object, so one seeth Him in the world of the Gandharvas; but He is seen as light and shade in the heaven of the Spirit.

इन्द्रियाणां पृथग्भावमुदयास्तमयौ च यत्।
पृथगुत्पद्यमानानां मत्वा धीरो न शोचति॥६॥

6. The calm soul having comprehended the separateness of the senses and the rising of them and their setting and their separate emergence putteth from him pain and sorrow.

इन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनो मनसः सत्त्वमुत्तमम्।
सत्त्वादधि महानात्मा महतोऽव्यक्तमुत्तमम्॥७॥

7. The mind is higher than the senses, and above the mind is the thought, and above the thought is the mighty Spirit, and above the Mighty One is the Unmanifest.

अव्यक्तात् परः पुरुषो व्यापकोऽलिङ्गं एव च ।
यं ज्ञात्वा मुच्यते जन्मुरमृतत्वं च गच्छति ॥ ८ ॥

8. But highest above the Unmanifest is the Purusha who per vadeth all and alone hath no sign nor feature. Mortal man knowing Him is released into immortality.

न संदृशे तिष्ठति रूपमस्य न चक्षुषा पश्यति कश्चनैनम् ।
हृदा मनीषा मनसाभिक्षुसो य एतद् विद्वरमृतास्ते भवन्ति ॥ ९ ॥

9. He hath not set His body within the ken of seeing, neither doth any man with the eye behold Him, but to the heart and mind and the supermind He is manifest. Who know Him are the immortals.

यदा पञ्चावतिष्ठन्ते ज्ञानानि मनसा सह ।
बुद्धिश्च न विचेष्टति तामाहुः परमां गतिम् ॥ १० ॥

10. When the five senses cease and are at rest and the mind resteth with them and the Thought ceaseth from its workings, that is the highest state, say thinkers.

तां योगमिति मन्यन्ते स्थिरामिन्द्रियधारणाम् ।
अप्रमत्तस्तदा भवति योगो हि प्रभवाप्ययौ ॥ ११ ॥

11. The state unperturbed when the senses are imprisoned in the mind, of this they say “it is Yoga”. Then man becomes very vigilant, for Yoga is the birth of things and their ending.¹²

नैव वाचा न मनसा प्राप्तुं शक्यो न चक्षुषा ।
अस्तीति ब्रुवतोऽन्यत्र कथं तदुपलभ्यते ॥ १२ ॥

12. Not with the mind hath man the power to see God, no, nor by speech nor with the eye. Unless one saith “He is,” how can one become sensible of Him?

¹² Shankara interprets, “As Yoga hath a beginning (birth) so hath it an ending.” But this is not what the Sruti says.

अस्तीत्येवोपलब्धव्यस्तत्वभावेन चोभयोः ।
अस्तीत्येवोपलब्धस्य तत्त्वभावः प्रसीदति ॥ १३ ॥

13. One must apprehend Him in the concept “He is” and also in His essential principle, but when he hath grasped Him as the Is, then the essential of Him dawneth upon a man.

यदा सर्वे प्रमुच्यन्ते कामा येऽस्य हृदि श्रिताः ।
अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवत्यत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते ॥ १४ ॥

14. When every desire that harboureth in the heart of a man hath been loosened from its moorings, then this mortal putteth on immortality; even here he enjoyeth Brahman in this human body.

यदा सर्वे प्रभिद्यन्ते हृदयस्येह ग्रन्थयः ।
अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवत्येतावद्भुनुशासनम् ॥ १५ ॥

15. When all the strings of the heart are rent asunder, even here in this human birth, then the mortal becometh immortal. This is the whole teaching of the Scriptures.

शतं चैका च हृदयस्य नाइयस्तासां मूर्धनमभिनिःसृतैका ।
तयोर्ध्वमायन्नमृतत्वमेति विश्वङ्गुन्या उत्कमणे भवन्ति ॥ १६ ॥

16. A hundred and one are the nerves of the heart and of all these only one issueth out through the head of a man; by this the soul mounteth up to its immortal home but the rest lead him to all sorts and conditions of births in his passing.

अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषोऽन्तरात्मा सदा जनानां हृदये संनिविष्टः ।
तं स्वाच्छरीरात् प्रवृहेन्मुज्जादिवेषीकां धैर्येण ।
तं विद्याच्छुक्रममृतं तं विद्याच्छुक्रममृतमिति ॥ १७ ॥

17. The Purusha, the Spirit within, who is no larger than the finger of a man is seated for ever in the heart of creatures; one must separate Him with patience from one's own body. Thou as one separates from a blade of grass its main fibre. Thou

shalt know Him for the Bright Immortal, yea, for the Bright Immortal.

मृत्युप्रोक्तां नचिकेतोऽथ लब्ध्वा विद्यामेतां योगविधिं च कृत्प्लम् ।
ब्रह्मप्राप्तो विरजोऽभूद् विमृत्युरन्योऽप्येवं यो विदध्यात्ममेव ॥ १८ ॥

18. Thus did Nachiketas with Death for his teacher win the God-knowledge; he learned likewise the whole ordinance of the Yoga: thereafter he obtained Brahman and became void of stain and void of death. So shall another be who cometh likewise to the science of the Spirit.

Mundaka Upanishad

Mundaka Upanishad

CHAPTER ONE: SECTION I

ब्रह्मा देवानां प्रथमः संबूत् विश्वस्य कर्ता भुवनस्य गोप्ता ।
स ब्रह्मविद्यां सर्वविद्याप्रतिष्ठामर्थर्वाय ज्येष्ठपुत्राय प्राह ॥ १ ॥

1. Brahma first of the Gods was born, the creator of all, the world's protector; he to Atharvan, his eldest son, declared the God-knowledge in which all sciences have their foundation.

अर्थर्वणे यां प्रवदेत ब्रह्माथर्वा तां पुरोवाचाङ्गिरे ब्रह्मविद्याम् ।
स भारद्वाजाय सत्यवहाय प्राह भारद्वाजोऽङ्गिरसे परावराम् ॥ २ ॥

2. The God-knowledge by Brahma declared to Atharvan, Atharvan of old declared to Angir; he to Satyavaha the Bharadwaja told it, the Bharadwaja to Angiras, both the higher and the lower knowledge.

शौनको ह वै महाशालोऽङ्गिरसं विधिवदुपसन्नः पप्रच्छ । कस्मिन्नु
भगवो विज्ञाते सर्वमिदं विज्ञातं भवतीति ॥ ३ ॥

3. Shaunaka, the great house-lord, came to Angiras in the due way of the disciple and asked of him, "Lord, by knowing what does all this that is become known?"

तस्मै स होवाच । द्वे विद्ये वेदितव्ये इति ह स्म यद् ब्रह्मविदो वदन्ति
परा चैवापरा च ॥ ४ ॥

4. To him thus spoke Angiras: Twofold is the knowledge that must be known of which the knowers of the Brahman tell, the higher and the lower knowledge.

तत्रापरा क्रवेदो यजुर्वेदः सामवेदोऽथर्ववेदः शिक्षा कल्पो व्याकरणं
निरुक्तं छन्दो ज्योतिषमिति । अथ परा यया तदक्षरमधिगम्यते ॥ ५ ॥

5. Of which the lower, the Rig Veda and the Yajur Veda and the Sama Veda and the Atharva Veda, chanting, ritual, grammar, etymological interpretation, and prosody and astronomy. And then the higher by which is known the Immutable.

यत् तददेश्यमग्राह्यमगोत्रमवर्णमचक्षुःश्रोत्रं तदपाणिपादम् । नित्यं विभुं
सर्वगतं सुसूक्ष्मं तदव्ययं यद् भूतयोनिं परिपश्यन्ति धीरा: ॥ ६ ॥

6. That the invisible, that the unseizable, without connections, without hue, without eye or ear, that which is without hands or feet, eternal, pervading, which is in all things and impalpable, that which is Imperishable, that which is the womb of creatures sages behold everywhere.

यथोर्णनाभिः सृजते गृह्णते च यथा पृथिव्यामोषधयः संभवन्ति ।
यथा सतः पुरुषात्केशलोमानि तथाक्षरात्संभवतीह विश्वम् ॥ ७ ॥

7. As the spider puts out and gathers in, as herbs spring up upon the earth, as hair of head and body grow from a living man, so here all is born from the Immutable.

तपसा चीयते ब्रह्म ततोऽन्नमभिजायते ।
अन्नात्प्राणो मनः सत्यं लोकाः कर्मसु चामृतम् ॥ ८ ॥

8. Brahman grows by his energy at work, and then from Him is Matter born, and out of Matter life, and mind and truth and the worlds, and in works immortality.

यः सर्वज्ञः सर्वविद् यस्य ज्ञानमयं तपः ।
तस्मादेतद् ब्रह्म नाम रूपमन्तं च जायते ॥ ९ ॥

9. He who is the Omniscient, the all-wise, He whose energy is all made of knowledge, from Him is born this that is Brahman here, this Name and Form and Matter.

CHAPTER ONE: SECTION II

तदेतत्सत्यं मन्त्रेषु कर्माणि कवयो यान्यपश्यंस्तानि त्रेतायां बहुधा
संतानि ।
तान्याचरथ नियं सत्यकामा एष वः पन्थाः सुकृतस्य लोके ॥ १ ॥

1. This is That, the Truth of things: works which the sages beheld in the Mantras¹ were in the Treta² manifoldly extended. Works do ye perform religiously with one passion for the Truth; this is your road to the heaven of good deeds.

यदा लेलायते ह्यर्चिः समिद्दे हव्यवाहने ।
तदाज्यभागावन्तरेणाहुतीः प्रतिपादयेच्छद्यया हुतम् ॥ २ ॥

2. When the fire of the sacrifice is kindled and the flame sways and quivers, then between the double pourings of butter cast therein with faith thy offerings.

यस्याग्निहोत्रमदर्शमपौर्णमासमचातुर्मास्यमनाग्रयणमतिथिर्जितं च ।
अहुतमवैश्वदेवमविधिना हुतमासप्तमांस्तस्य लोकान् हिनस्ति ॥ ३ ॥

3. For he whose altar-fires are empty of the new-moon offering and the full-moon offering and the offering of the rains and the offering of the first fruits, or unfed, or fed without right ritual, or without guests or without the dues to the Vishwa-Devas, destroys his hope of all the seven worlds.

काली कराली च मनोजवा च सुलोहिता या च सुधूम्रवर्णा ।
स्फुलिङ्गिनी विश्वरुची च देवी लेलायमाना इति सप्त जिह्वाः ॥ ४ ॥

4. Kali, the black, Karali, the terrible, Manojava, thought-swift, Sulohita, blood-red, Sudhumravarna, smoke-hued, Sphulingini, scattering sparks, Vishwaruchi, the all-beautiful, these are the seven swaying tongues of the fire.

¹ The inspired verses of the Veda.

² The second of the four ages.

एतेषु यश्चरते भ्राजमानेषु यथाकालं चाहुतयो ह्याददायन् ।
तं नयन्त्येताः सूर्यस्य रश्मयो यत्र देवानां पतिरेकोऽधिवासः ॥ ५ ॥

5. He who in these when they are blazing bright performs the rites, in their due season, him his fires of sacrifice take and they lead him, these rays of the Sun, there where the Overlord of the gods is the Inhabitant on high.

एह्येहीति तमाहुतयः सुवर्चसः सूर्यस्य रश्मभिर्यजमानं वहन्ति ।
प्रियां वाचमभिवदन्त्योऽर्चयन्त्य एष वः पुण्यः सुकृतो ब्रह्मलोकः ॥ ६ ॥

6. “Come with us”, “Come with us”, they cry to him, these luminous fires of sacrifice, and they bear him by the rays of the Sun speaking to him pleasant words of sweetness, doing him homage, “This is your holy world of Brahman and the heaven of your righteousness.”

प्लवा ह्येते अदृढा यज्ञरूपा अष्टादशोक्तमवरं येषु कर्म ।
एतच्छ्रेयो येऽभिनन्दन्ति मृढा जरामृत्युं ते पुनरेवापि यन्ति ॥ ७ ॥

7. But frail are the ships of sacrifice, frail these forms of sacrifice, all the eighteen of them, in which are declared the lower works; fools are they who hail them as the highest good and they come yet again to this world of age and death.

अविद्यायामन्तरे वर्तमानाः स्वयं धीराः पण्डितमन्यमानाः ।
जड्ण्यमानाः परियन्ति मृढा अन्धेनैव नीयमाना यथान्धाः ॥ ८ ॥

8. They who dwell shut within the Ignorance and they hold themselves for learned men thinking “We, even we are the wise and the sages”—fools are they and they wander around beaten and stumbling like blind men led by the blind.

अविद्यायां बहुधा वर्तमाना वयं कृतार्था इत्यभिमन्यन्ति वालाः ।
यत्कर्मिणो न प्रवेदयन्ति रागात् तेनातुराः क्षीणलोकाश्चयवन्ते ॥ ९ ॥

9. They dwell in many bonds of the Ignorance, children thinking, “We have achieved our aim of Paradise”; for when the

men of works are held by their affections, and arrive not at the Knowledge, then they are overtaken by anguish, then their Paradise wastes by enjoying and they fall from their heavens.

इष्टापूर्तं मन्यमाना वरिष्ठं नान्यच्छेयो वेदयन्ते प्रमूढाः ।
नाकस्य पृष्ठे ते सुकृतेऽनुभूत्वेमं लोकं हीनतरं वा विशन्ति ॥ १० ॥

10. Minds bewildered who hold the oblation offered and the well dug for the greatest righteousness and know not any other highest good, on the back of heaven they enjoy the world won by their righteousness and enter again this or even a lower world.

तपःश्रद्धे ये ह्युपवसन्त्यरण्ये शान्ता विद्वांसो भैक्ष्यचर्या चरन्तः ।
सूर्यद्वारेण ते विरजाः प्रयान्ति यत्रामृतः स पुरुषो ह्यव्ययात्मा ॥ ११ ॥

11. But they who in the forest follow after faith and self-discipline, calm and full of knowledge, living upon alms, cast from them the dust of their passions, and through the gate of the Sun they pass on there where is the Immortal, the Spirit, the Self undecaying and imperishable.

परीक्ष्य लोकान्कर्मचितान् ब्राह्मणो निर्वेदमायान्नास्त्यकृतः कृतेन ।
तद्विज्ञानार्थं स गुरुमेवाभिगच्छेत् समित्पाणिः श्रोत्रियं ब्रह्मनिष्ठम् ॥ १२ ॥

12. The seeker of the Brahman, having put to the test the worlds piled up by works, arrives at world-distaste, for not by work done is reached He who is Uncreated.³ For the knowledge of That, let him approach, fuel in hand, a Guru, one who is learned in the Veda and is devoted to contemplation of the Brahman.

तस्मै स विद्वानुपसन्नाय सम्यक् प्रशान्तचित्ताय शमान्विताय ।
येनाक्षरं पुरुषं वेद सत्यं प्रोवाच तां तत्त्वतो ब्रह्मविद्याम् ॥ १३ ॥

³ Or, “He, the uncreated, lives not by that which is made.” Literally, “not by the made (or, by that which is done) the Unmade (He who is uncreated)”.

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13. To him because he has taken entire refuge with him, with a heart tranquillised and a spirit at peace, that man of knowledge declares in its principles the science of the Brahman by which one comes to know the Immutable Spirit, the True and Real.

CHAPTER TWO: SECTION I

तदेतत्सत्यं यथा सुदीप्तात्पावकाद् विस्फुलिङ्गाः सहस्रशः प्रभवन्ते
सरूपाः ।
तथाक्षराद् विविधाः सोम्य भावाः प्रजायन्ते तत्र चैवापि यन्ति ॥ १ ॥

1. This is That, the Truth of things: as from one high-kindled fire thousands of different sparks are born and all have the same form of fire, so, O fair son, from the immutable manifold becomings are born and even into that they depart.

दिव्यो ह्यमूर्त्तः पुरुषः स बाह्याभ्यन्तरो ह्यजः ।
अप्राणो ह्यमनाः शुभ्रो ह्यक्षरात्परतः परः ॥ २ ॥

2. He, the divine, the formless Spirit, even he is the outward and the inward and he the Unborn; he is beyond life, beyond mind, luminous, Supreme beyond the immutable.

एतस्माज्जायते प्राणो मनः सर्वेन्द्रियाणि च ।
खं वायुज्योर्तिरापः पृथिवी विश्वस्य धारिणी ॥ ३ ॥

3. Life and mind and the senses are born from Him and the sky, and the wind, and light, and the waters and earth upholding all that is.

अग्निर्मध्या चक्षुषी चन्द्रसूर्यौ दिशः श्रोत्रे वाग् विवृताश्च वेदाः ।
वायुः प्राणो हृदयं विश्वमस्य पदम्यां पृथिवी ह्योष
सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा ॥ ४ ॥

4. Fire is the head of Him and his eyes are the Sun and Moon, the quarters his organs of hearing and the revealed Vedas are his voice, air is his breath, the universe is his heart, Earth lies at his feet. He is the inner Self in all beings.

तस्मादर्दिनः समिधो यस्य सूर्यः सोमात्पर्जन्य ओषधयः पृथिव्याम् ।
पुमान् रेतः सिञ्चति योषितायां बह्वीः प्रजाः पुरुषात्संप्रसूताः ॥ ५ ॥

5. From Him is fire, of which the Sun is the fuel, then rain

from the Soma, herbs upon the earth, and the male casts his seed into woman: thus are these many peoples born from the Spirit.

तस्मादृचः साम यज्ञंषि दीक्षा यज्ञाश्च सर्वे क्रतवो दक्षिणाश्च ।
संवत्सरश्च यजमानश्च लोकाः सोमो यत्र पवते यत्र सूर्यः ॥ ६ ॥

- From Him are the hymns of the Rig Veda, the Sama and the Yajur, initiation, and all sacrifices and works of sacrifice, and dues given, the year and the giver of the sacrifice and the worlds, on which the moon shines and the sun.

तस्माच्च देवा बहुधा संप्रसूताः साध्या मनुष्याः पश्वो वयांसि ।
प्राणापानौ त्रीहियौ तपश्च अद्वा सत्यं ब्रह्मचर्यं विधिश्च ॥ ७ ॥

- And from Him have issued many gods, and demi-gods and men and beasts and birds, the main breath and downward breath, and rice and barley, and askesis and faith and Truth, and chastity and rule of right practice.

सप्त प्राणाः प्रभवन्ति तस्मात्सप्तार्चिषः समिधः सप्त होमाः ।
सप्त इमे लोका येषु चरन्ति प्राणा गुहाशया निहिताः सप्त सप्त ॥ ८ ॥

- The seven breaths are born from Him and the seven lights and kinds of fuel and the seven oblations and these seven worlds in which move the life-breaths set within with the secret heart for their dwelling-place, seven and seven.

अतः समुद्रा गिरयश्च सर्वेऽस्मात्स्यन्दन्ते सिन्धवः सर्वरूपाः ।
अतश्च सर्वा ओषधयो रसश्च येनैष भूतैस्तिष्ठते ह्यन्तरात्मा ॥ ९ ॥

- From Him are the oceans and all these mountains and from Him flow rivers of all forms, and from Him are all plants, and sensible delight which makes the soul to abide with the material elements.

पुरुष एवेदं विश्वं कर्म तपो ब्रह्म परामृतम् ।
एतद्यो वेद निहितं गुहायां सोऽविद्याग्रन्थं विकिरतीह सोम्य ॥ १० ॥

10. The Spirit is all this universe; He is works and askesis and the Brahman, supreme and immortal. O fair son, he who knows this hidden in the secret heart, scatters even here in this world the knot of the Ignorance.

CHAPTER TWO: SECTION II

आविः संनिहितं गुहाचरं नाम महत्पदमत्रैतत् समर्पितम् ।
एजत्प्राणन्निमिषच्च यदेतज्जानथ सदसद्वरेण्यं परं विज्ञानाद् यद्विरिष्टं
प्रजानाम् ॥ १ ॥

1. Manifested, it is here set close within, moving in the secret heart, this is the mighty foundation and into it is consigned all that moves and breathes and sees. This that is that great foundation here, know, as the Is and Is-not, the supremely desirable, greatest and the Most High, beyond the knowledge of creatures.

यदर्चिमद् यदणुभ्योऽणु च यस्मिन्नोका निहिता लोकिनश्च ।
तदेतदक्षरं ब्रह्म स प्राणस्तदु वाङ्मनः । तदेतत्सत्यं तदमृतं तदेद्वयं
सोम्य विद्धि ॥ २ ॥

2. That which is the Luminous, that which is smaller than the atoms, that in which are set the worlds and their peoples, That is This,—it is Brahman immutable: life is That, it is speech and mind. That is This, the True and Real, it is That which is immortal: it is into That that thou must pierce, O fair son, into That penetrate.

धनुर्गृहीत्वौपनिषदं महास्त्रं शरं ह्युपासानिशितं संधयीत ।
आयम्य तद्भावगतेन चेतसा लक्ष्यं तदेवाक्षरं सोम्य विद्धि ॥ ३ ॥

3. Take up the bow of the Upanishad, that mighty weapon, set to it an arrow sharpened by adoration, draw the bow with a heart wholly devoted to the contemplation of That, and O fair son, penetrate into That as thy target, even into the Immutable.

प्रणवो धनुः शरो ह्यात्मा ब्रह्म तप्लक्ष्यमुच्यते ।
अप्रमत्तेन वेद्वयं शरवत् तन्मयो भवेत् ॥४॥

- OM is the bow and the soul is the arrow, and That, even the Brahman, is spoken of as the target. That must be pierced with an unfaltering aim; one must be absorbed into That as an arrow is lost in its target.

यस्मिन्द्यौः पृथिवी चान्तरिक्षमोत्तमः सह प्राणैश्च सर्वैः ।
तमेवैकं जानथ आत्मानमन्या वाचो विमुञ्चथामृतस्यैष सेतुः ॥५॥

- He in whom are inwoven heaven and earth and the mid-region, and mind with all the life-currents, Him know to be the one Self; other words put away from you: this is the bridge to immortality.

अरा इव रथनाभौ संहता यत्र नाड्यः स एषोऽन्तश्चरते बहुधा
जायमानः ।
ओमित्येवं ध्यायथ आत्मानं स्वस्ति वः पाराय तमसः परस्तात् ॥६॥

- Where the nerves are brought close together like the spokes in the nave of a chariot-wheel, this is He that moves within, — there is He manifoldly born. Meditate on the Self as OM and happy be your passage to the other shore beyond the darkness.

यः सर्वज्ञः सर्वविद् यस्यैष महिमा भुवि ।
दिव्ये ब्रह्मपुरे होष व्योम्न्यात्मा प्रतिष्ठितः ॥७॥

- The Omniscient, the All-wise, whose is this might and majesty upon the earth, is this self enthroned in the divine city of the Brahman, in his ethereal heaven.

मनोमयः प्राणशरीरनेता प्रतिष्ठितोऽन्ने हृदयं संनिधाय ।
तद्विज्ञानेन परिपश्यन्ति धीरा आनन्दरूपममृतं यद्विभाति ॥८॥

- A mental being, leader of the life and the body, has set a heart in matter, in matter he has taken his firm foundation.

By its knowing the wise see everywhere around them That which shines in its effulgence, a shape of Bliss and immortal.

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छ्रद्धान्ते सर्वसंशयाः ।
क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन्दृष्टे परावरे ॥ ९ ॥

9. The knot of the heart-strings is rent, cut away are all doubts, and a man's works are spent and perish, when is seen That which is at once the being below and the Supreme.

हिरण्मये परे कोशे विरजं ब्रह्म निष्कलम् ।
तच्छुद्रं ज्योतिषां ज्योतिस्तद्यदात्मविदो विदुः ॥ १० ॥

10. In a supreme golden sheath the Brahman lies, stainless, without parts. A Splendour is That, It is the Light of Lights, It is That which the self-knowers know.

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥ ११ ॥

11. There the sun shines not and the moon has no splendour and the stars are blind; there these lightnings flash not, how then shall burn this earthly fire? All that shines is but the shadow of his shining; all this universe is effulgent with his light.

ब्रह्मैवेदममृतं पुरस्ताद् ब्रह्म पश्चाद् ब्रह्म दक्षिणतश्चोत्तरेण ।
अधश्चोर्ध्वं च प्रसृतं ब्रह्मैवेदं विश्वमिदं वरिष्ठम् ॥ १२ ॥

12. All this is Brahman immortal, naught else; Brahman is in front of us, Brahman behind us, and to the south of us and to the north of us⁴ and below us and above us; it stretches everywhere. All this is Brahman alone, all this magnificent universe.

⁴ Or, "to the right and the left of us".

CHAPTER THREE: SECTION I

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते ।
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वृत्यनश्चन्नन्यो अभिचाकशीति ॥ १ ॥

1. Two birds, beautiful of wing, close companions, cling to one common tree: of the two one eats the sweet fruit of the tree, the other eats not but watches his fellow.

समाने वृक्षे पुरुषो निमग्नोऽनीशया शोचति मुह्यमानः ।
जुष्टं यदा पश्यत्यन्यमीशमस्य महिमानमिति वीतशोकः ॥ २ ॥

2. The soul is the bird that sits immersed on the one common tree; but because he is not lord he is bewildered and has sorrow. But when he sees that other who is the Lord and beloved, he knows that all is His greatness and his sorrow passes away from him.

यदा पश्यते रुक्मवर्णं कर्तारमीशं पुरुषं ब्रह्मयोनिम् ।
तदा विद्वान्पुण्यपापे विधूय निरञ्जनः परमं साम्यमुपैति ॥ ३ ॥

3. When, a seer, he sees the Golden-hued, the maker, the Lord, the Spirit who is the source of Brahman,⁵ then he becomes the knower and shakes from his wings sin and virtue; pure of all stain he reaches the supreme identity.⁶

प्राणो ह्येष यः सर्वभूतैर्विभाति विजानन् विद्वान्भवते नातिवादी ।
आत्मक्रीड आत्मरतिः क्रियावानेष ब्रह्मविदां वरिष्ठः ॥ ४ ॥

4. This is the life in things that shines manifested by all these beings; a man of knowledge coming wholly to know this, draws back from creeds and too much disputings. In the Self his delight, at play in the Self, doing works,— the best is he among the knowers of the Eternal.

⁵ Or, “whose source is Brahman”; Shankara admits the other meaning as an alternative, but explains it as “the source of the lower Brahman”.

⁶ Or, “pure of all staining tinge he reaches to a supreme equality.”

सत्येन लभ्यस्तपसा ह्येष आत्मा सम्यग्ज्ञानेन ब्रह्मचर्येण नित्यम् ।
अन्तःशरीरे ज्योतिर्मयो हि शुभ्रो यं पश्यन्ति यतयः क्षीणदोषाः ॥५॥

5. The Self can always be won by truth, by self-discipline, by integral knowledge, by a life of purity,—this Self that is in the inner body, radiant, made all of light whom by the perishing of their blemishes the doers of askesis behold.

सत्यमेव जयते नानृतं सत्येन पन्था विततो देवयानः ।
येनाक्रमन्त्यृष्ययो ह्यासकामा यत्र तत्सत्यस्य परमं निधानम् ॥६॥

6. It is Truth that conquers and not falsehood; by Truth was stretched out the path of the journey of the gods, by which the sages winning their desire ascend there where Truth has its supreme abode.

वृहच्च तद्विव्यमचिन्त्यरूपं सूक्ष्माच्च तत्सूक्ष्मतरं विभाति ।
द्वारात्सुद्धरे तदिहान्तिके च पश्यत्स्वहैव निहितं गुहायाम् ॥७॥

7. Vast is That, divine, its form unthinkable; it shines out subtler than the subtle:⁷ very far and farther than farness, it is here close to us, for those who have vision it is even here in this world; it is here, hidden in the secret heart.

न चक्षुषा गृह्यते नापि वाचा नान्यैदैवैस्तपसा कर्मणा वा ।
ज्ञानप्रसादेन विशुद्धसत्त्वस्तस्तु तं पश्यते निष्कलं ध्यायमानः ॥८॥

8. Eye cannot seize, speech cannot grasp Him, nor these other godheads; not by austerity can he be held nor by works: only when the inner being is purified by a glad serenity of knowledge, then indeed, meditating, one beholds the Spirit indivisible.

एषोऽणुरात्मा चेतसा वेदितव्यो यस्मिन्प्राणः पञ्चधा संविवेश ।
प्राणैश्चित्तं सर्वमोतं प्रजानां यस्मिन्विशुद्धे विभवत्येष आत्मा ॥९॥

9. This Self is subtle and has to be known by a thought-mind

⁷ Or, “minuter than the minute”.

into which the life-force has made its fivefold entry: all the conscious heart of creatures is shot through and inwoven with the currents of the life-force and only when it is purified can this Self manifest its power.⁸

यं यं लोकं मनसा संविभाति विशुद्धसत्त्वः कामयते यांश्च कामान् ।
तं तं लोकं जयते तांश्च कामांस्तस्मादात्मज्ञं ह्यर्चयेद् भूतिकामः ॥ १० ॥

10. Whatever world the man whose inner being is purified sheds the light of his mind upon, and whatsoever desires he cherishes, that world he takes by conquest, and those desires. Then, let whosoever seeks for success and well-being approach with homage a self-knower.

CHAPTER THREE: SECTION II

स वेदैतत्परमं ब्रह्म धाम यत्र विश्वं निहितं भाति शुभ्रम् ।
उपासते पुरुषं ये ह्यकामास्ते शुक्रमेतदतिवर्तन्ति धीराः ॥ १ ॥

1. He knows this supreme Brahman as the highest abiding place in which shines out, inset, the radiant world. The wise who are without desire and worship the Spirit pass beyond this sperm.⁹

कामान् यः कामयते मन्यमानः स कामभिर्जायते तत्र तत्र ।
पर्याप्तकामस्य कृतात्मनस्तु इहैव सर्वे प्रविलीयन्ति कामाः ॥ २ ॥

2. He who cherishes desires and his mind dwells with his longings, is by his desires born again wherever they lead him, but the man who has won all his desire¹⁰ and has found his soul, for him even here in this world vanish away all desires.

⁸ The verb *vibhavati* seems here to have a complex sense and to mean, “to manifest its full power and pervading presence”.

⁹ Shankara takes it so in the sense of semen virile, which is the cause of birth into the cosmos. But it is possible that it means rather “pass beyond this brilliant universe”, the radiant world which has just been spoken of, to the greater Light which is its abiding place and source, the supreme Brahman.

¹⁰ Or, “finished with desires”.

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन ।
यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनुं स्वाम् ॥ ३ ॥

3. This Self is not won by exegesis, nor by brain-power, nor by much learning of Scripture. Only by him whom It chooses can It be won; to him this Self unveils its own body.

नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यो न च प्रमादात्तपसो वाप्यलिङ्गात् ।
एतैरुपार्यैर्यतते यस्तु विद्वास्तस्यैष आत्मा विशते ब्रह्मधाम ॥ ४ ॥

4. This Self cannot be won by any who is without strength, nor with error in the seeking, nor by an askesis without the true mark: but when a man of knowledge strives by these means his self enters into Brahman, his abiding place.

संप्राप्यैनमृषयो ज्ञानतृसाः कृतात्मानो वीतरागाः प्रशान्ताः ।
ते सर्वगं सर्वतः प्राप्य धीरा युक्तात्मानः सर्वमेवाविशन्ति ॥ ५ ॥

5. Attaining to him, seers glad with fullness of knowledge, perfected in the Self, all passions cast from them, tranquillised, — these, the wise, come to the all-pervading from every side, and, uniting themselves with him, enter utterly the All.

वेदान्तविज्ञानसुनिष्ठितार्थाः संन्यासयोगाद् यतयः शुद्धसत्त्वाः ।
ते ब्रह्मलोकेषु परान्तकाले परामृताः परिमुच्यन्ति सर्वे ॥ ६ ॥

6. Doers of askesis who have made sure of the aim¹¹ of the whole-knowledge of Vedanta, the inner being purified by the Yoga of renunciation, all in the hour of their last end passing beyond death are released into the worlds of the Brahman.

गताः कलाः पञ्चदश प्रतिष्ठा देवाश्च सर्वे प्रतिदेवतासु ।
कर्माणि विज्ञानमयश्च आत्मा परेऽव्यये सर्वे एकीभवन्ति ॥ ७ ॥

¹¹ Or, “meaning”.

7. The fifteen parts return into their foundations, and all the gods pass into their proper godheads, works and the Self of Knowledge,— all become one in the Supreme and Imperishable.

यथा नद्यः स्यन्दमानाः समुद्रेऽस्तं गच्छन्ति नामरूपे विहाय ।
तथा विद्वान् नामरूपाद्विमुक्तः परात्परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥ ८ ॥

8. As rivers in their flowing reach their home¹² in the ocean and cast off their names and forms, even so one who knows is delivered from name and form and reaches the Supreme beyond the Most High, even the Divine Person.

स यो ह वै तत्परमं ब्रह्म वेद ब्रह्मैव भवति नास्याब्रह्मवित् कुले भवति ।
तरति शोकं तरति पाप्मानं गुहाग्रन्थिभ्यो विमुक्तोऽमृतो भवति ॥ ९ ॥

9. He, verily, who knows that Supreme Brahman becomes himself Brahman; in his lineage none is born who knows not the Brahman. He crosses beyond sorrow, he crosses beyond sin, he is delivered from the knotted cord of the secret heart and becomes immortal.

तदेतद्वचाभ्युक्तम्—
क्रियावन्तः श्रोत्रिया ब्रह्मनिष्ठाः स्वयं जुहूत एकर्षि अद्वयन्तः ।
तेषामेवैतां ब्रह्मविद्यां वदेत शिरोब्रतं विधिवद् यैस्तु चीर्णम् ॥ १० ॥

10. This is That declared by the Rig Veda. Doers of works, versed in the Veda, men absorbed in the Brahman, who putting their faith in the sole-seer offer themselves to him sacrifice,— to them one should speak this Brahman-knowledge, men by whom the Vow of the Head has been done according to the rite.

तदेतत्सत्यमृषिरङ्गिराः पुरोवाच नैतदचीर्णव्रतोऽधीते ।
नमः परमऋषिभ्यो नमः परमऋषिभ्यः ॥ ११ ॥

¹² Or, “come to their end”.

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11. This is That, the Truth of things, which the seer Angiras spoke of old. This none learns who has not performed the Vow of the Head. Salutation to the seers supreme! Salutation to the seers supreme!

Readings in the Taittiriya Upanishad

The Knowledge of Brahman

The knower of Brahman reacheth that which is supreme.
This is that verse which was spoken; “Truth, Knowledge,
Infinity the Brahman,
He who knoweth that hidden in the secrecy in the supreme
ether,
Enjoyeth all desires along with the wise-thinking Brahman.”

This is the burden of the opening sentences of the Taittiriya Upanishad’s second section; they begin its elucidation of the highest truth. Or in the Sanskrit,

*brahmavid āpnoti param —
tad eśābhuyuktā — satyam jñānam anantam brahma —
yo veda nihitam guhāyām — parame vyoman —
so 'snute sarvān kāmān saha — brahmaṇā vipaściteti.*

But what is Brahman?

Whatever reality is in existence, by which all the rest subsists, that is Brahman. An Eternal behind all instabilities, a Truth of things which is implied, if it is hidden in all appearances, a Constant which supports all mutations, but is not increased, diminished, abrogated,— there is such an unknown *x* which makes existence a problem, our own self a mystery, the universe a riddle. If we were only what we seem to be to our normal self-awareness, there would be no mystery; if the world were only what it can be made out to be by the perceptions of the senses and their strict analysis in the reason, there would be no riddle; and if to take our life as it is now and the world as it has so far developed to our experience were the whole possibility of our knowing and doing, there would be no problem. Or at best

there would be but a shallow mystery, an easily solved riddle, the problem only of a child's puzzle. But there is more, and that more is the hidden head of the Infinite and the secret heart of the Eternal. It is the highest and this highest is the all; there is none beyond and there is none other than it. To know it is to know the highest and by knowing the highest to know all. For as it is the beginning and source of all things, so everything else is its consequence; as it is the support and constituent of all things, so the secret of everything else is explained by its secret; as it is the sum and end of all things, so everything else amounts to it and by throwing itself into it achieves the sense of its own existence.

This is the Brahman.

*
* * *

If this unknown be solely an indecipherable, only indefinable *x*, always unknown and unknowable, the hidden never revealed, the secret never opened to us, then our mystery would for ever remain a mystery, our riddle insoluble, our problem intangible. Its existence, even while it determines all we are, know and do, could yet make no practical difference to us; for our relation to it would then be a blind and helpless dependence, a relation binding us to ignorance and maintainable only by that ignorance. Or again, if it be in some way knowable, but the sole result of knowledge were an extinction or cessation of our being, then within our being it could have no consequences; the very act and fructuation of knowledge would bring the annihilation of all that we now are, not its completion or fulfilment. The mystery, riddle, problem would not be so much solved as abolished, for it would lose all its data. In effect we should have to suppose that there is an eternal and irreconcilable opposition between Brahman and what we now are, between the supreme cause and all its effects or between the supreme source and all its derivations. And it would then seem that all that the Eternal originates, all he supports, all he takes back to himself is a denial or contradiction of his being which, though in itself a negative of that which alone is, has yet

in some way become a positive. The two could not coexist in consciousness; if he allowed the world to know him, it would disappear from being.

But the Eternal is knowable, He defines himself so that we may seize him, and man can become, even while he exists as man and in this world and in this body, a knower of the Brahman.

The knowledge of the Brahman is not a thing luminous but otiose, informing to the intellectual view of things but without consequence to the soul of the individual or his living; it is a knowledge that is a power and a divine compulsion to change; by it his existence gains something that now he does not possess in consciousness. What is this gain? it is this that he is conscious now in a lower state only of his being, but by knowledge he gains his highest being.

The highest state of our being is not a denial, contradiction and annihilation of all that we now are; it is a supreme accomplishment of all things that our present existence means and aims at, but in their highest sense and in the eternal values.

*
* *

To live in our present state of self-consciousness is to live and to act in ignorance. We are ignorant of ourselves, because we know as yet only that in us which changes always, from moment to moment, from hour to hour, from period to period, from life to life, and not that in us which is eternal. We are ignorant of the world because we do not know God; we are aware of the law of appearances, but not of the law and truth of being.

Our highest wisdom, our minutest most accurate science, our most effective application of knowledge can be at most a thinning of the veil of ignorance, but not a going beyond it, so long as we do not get at the fundamental knowledge and the consciousness to which that is native. The rest are effective for their own temporal purposes, but prove ineffective in the end, because they do not bring to the highest good; they lead to no permanent solution of the problem of existence.

The ignorance in which we live is not a baseless and wholesale falsehood, but at its lowest the misrepresentation of a Truth, at its highest an imperfect representation and translation into inferior and to that extent misleading values. It is a knowledge of the superficial only and therefore a missing of the secret essential which is the key to all that the superficial is striving for; a knowledge of the finite and apparent, but a missing of all that the apparent symbolises and the finite suggests; a knowledge of inferior forms, but a missing of all that our inferior life and being has above it and to which it must aspire if it is to fulfil its greatest possibilities. The true knowledge is that of the highest, the inmost, the infinite. The knower of the Brahman sees all these lower things in the light of the Highest, the external and superficial as a translation of the internal and essential, the finite from the view of the Infinite. He begins to see and know existence no longer as the thinking animal, but as the Eternal sees and knows it. Therefore he is glad and rich in being, luminous in joy, satisfied of existence.

*
* * *

Knowledge does not end with knowing, nor is it pursued and found for the sake of knowing alone. It has its full value only when it leads to some greater gain than itself, some gain of being. Simply to know the eternal and to remain in the pain, struggle and inferiority of our present way of being, would be a poor and lame advantage.

A greater knowledge opens the possibility and, if really possessed, brings the actuality of a greater being. To be is the first verb which contains all the others; knowledge, action, creation, enjoyment are only a fulfilment of being. Since we are incomplete in being, to grow is our aim, and that knowledge, action, creation, enjoyment are the best which most help us to expand, grow, feel our existence.

Mere existence is not fullness of being. Being knows itself as power, consciousness, delight; a greater being means a greater

power, consciousness and delight.

If by greater being we incurred only a greater pain and suffering, this good would not be worth having. Those who say that it is, mean simply that we get by it a greater sense of fulfilment which brings of itself a greater joy of the power of existence, and an extension of suffering or a loss of other enjoyment is worth having as a price for this greater sense of wideness, height and power. But this could not be the perfection of being or the highest height of its fulfilment; suffering is the seal of a lower status. The highest consciousness is integrally fulfilled in wideness and power of its existence, but also it is integrally fulfilled in delight.

The knower of Brahman has not only the joy of light, but gains something immense as the result of his knowledge, *brahmavid āpnoti*.

What he gains is that highest, that which is supreme; he gains the highest being, the highest consciousness, the highest wideness and power of being, the highest delight; *brahmavid āpnoti param*.

*
* * *

The Supreme is not something aloof and shut up in itself. It is not a mere indefinable, prisoner of its own featureless absoluteness, impotent to define, create, know itself variously, eternally buried in a sleep or a swoon of self-absorption. The Highest is the Infinite and the Infinite contains the All. Whoever attains the highest consciousness, becomes infinite in being and embraces the All.

To make this clear the Upanishad has defined the Brahman as the Truth, Knowledge, Infinity and has defined the result of the knowledge of Him in the secrecy, in the cave of being, in the supreme ether as the enjoyment of all its desires by the soul of the individual in the attainment of its highest self-existence.

Our highest state of being is indeed a becoming one with Brahman in his eternity and infinity, but it is also an association

with him in delight of self-fulfilment, *aśnute saha brahmaṇā*. And that principle of the Eternal by which this association is possible, is the principle of his knowledge, his self-discernment and all-discernment, the wisdom by which he knows himself perfectly in all the world and all beings, *brahmaṇā vipaścītā*.

Delight of being is the continent of all the fulfilled values of existence which we now seek after in the forms of desire. To know its conditions and possess it purely and perfectly is the infinite privilege of the eternal Wisdom.

Truth, Knowledge, Infinity

Truth, Knowledge, Infinity, not as three separate things, but in their inseparable unity, are the supernal conscious being of the Eternal. It is an infinite being, an infinite truth of being, an infinite self-knowledge of self-being. Take one of these away and the idea of the Eternal fails us; we land ourselves in half-lights, in dark or shining paradoxes without issue or in a vain exaggeration and apotheosis of isolated intellectual conceptions.

Infinity is the timeless and spaceless and causeless infinity of the eternal containing all the infinities of space and time and the endless succession which humanly we call causality. But in fact causality is only an inferior aspect and translation into mental and vital terms of something which is not mechanical causality, but the harmonies of a free self-determination of the being of the Eternal.

Truth is truth of the infinite and eternal, truth of being, and truth of becoming only as a self-expression of the being. The circumstances of the self-expression appear to the mind as the finite, but nothing is really finite except the way the mind has of experiencing all that appears to its view. All things are, each thing is the Brahman.

Knowledge is the Eternal's inalienable self-knowledge of his infinite self-existence and of all its truth and reality and, in that truth, of all things as seen not by the mind, but by the self-view of the Spirit. This knowledge is not possible to the mind; it can only be reflected inadequately by it when it is touched by a ray from the secret luminous cavern of our superconscious being; yet of that ray we can make a shining ladder to climb into the source of this supreme self-viewing wisdom.

To know the eternal Truth, Knowledge, Infinity is to know the Brahman.



Part Two

Translations and Commentaries from Manuscripts

These texts written between c. 1900 and 1914 were found among Sri Aurobindo's manuscripts and typescripts. He did not revise them for publication.

Section One

Introduction

On Translating the Upanishads

OM TAT SAT

This translation of a few of the simpler & more exoteric Upanishads to be followed by other sacred and philosophical writings of the Hindus not included in the Revealed Scriptures, all under the one title of the Book of God, has been effected on one definite and unvarying principle, to present to England and through England to Europe the religious message of India only in those parts of her written thought which the West is fit to hear and to present these in such a form as should be attractive & suggestive to the Occidental intellect. The first branch of this principle necessitated a rigid selection on definite lines, the second dictated the choice of a style & method of rendering which should be literary rather than literal.

The series of translations called the Sacred Books of the East, edited by the late Professor Max Muller, was executed in a scholastic and peculiar spirit. Professor Max Muller, a scholar of wide attainments, great versatility and a refreshingly active, ingenious & irresponsible fancy, has won considerable respect in India by his attachment to Vedic studies, but it must fairly be recognized that he was more of a grammarian and philologist, than a sound Sanscrit scholar. He could construe Sanscrit well enough, but he could not feel the language or realise the spirit behind the letter. Accordingly he committed two serious errors of judgment; he imagined that by sitting in Oxford and evolving new meanings out of his own brilliant fancy he could understand the Upanishads better than Shankaracharya or any other Hindu of parts and learning; and he also imagined that what was important for Europe to know about the Upanishads was what he and other European scholars considered they ought to mean. This, however, is a matter of no importance to anybody but the

scholars themselves. What it is really important for Europe to know is in the first place what the Upanishads really do mean, so far as their exoteric teaching extends, and in a less degree what philosophic Hinduism took them to mean. The latter knowledge may be gathered from the commentaries of Shankaracharya and other philosophers which may be studied in the original or in the translations which the Dravidian Presidency, ignorantly called benighted by the materialists, has been issuing with a truly noble learning & high-minded enterprise. The former this book makes some attempt to convey.

But it may be asked, why these particular Upanishads alone, when there are so many others far larger in plan and of a not inferior importance? In answer I may quote a sentence from Professor Max Muller's Preface to the Sacred Books of the East. "I confess" he says "it has been for many years a problem to me, aye, and to a great extent is so still, how the Sacred Books of the East should, by the side of so much that is fresh, natural, simple, beautiful and true, contain so much that is not only unmeaning, artificial and silly, but even hideous and repellent." Now I am myself only a poor coarseminded Oriental and therefore not disposed to deny the gross physical facts of life & nature or able to see why we should scuttle them out of sight and put on a smug, respectable expression which suggests while it affects to hide their existence. This perhaps is the reason why I am somewhat at a loss to imagine what the Professor found in the Upanishads that is hideous and repellent. Still I was brought up almost from my infancy in England and received an English education, so that sometimes I have glimmerings. But as to what he intends by the unmeaning, artificial and silly elements, there can be no doubt. Everything is unmeaning in the Upanishads which the Europeans cannot understand, everything is artificial which does not come within the circle of their mental experience and everything is silly which is not explicable by European science and wisdom. Now this attitude is almost inevitable on the part of an European, for we all judge according to our lights and those who keep their minds really open, who can realise that there may be lights which are not theirs and yet as illuminating or more

illuminating than theirs, are in any nation a very small handful. For the most part men are the slaves of their associations.

Let us suppose that the ceremonies & services of the Roman Catholic were not mere ceremonies and formularies, borrowed for the most part from Eastern occultisms without understanding them,—that they had been arranged so as to be perfect symbols of certain deep metaphysical truths and to produce certain effects spiritual and material according to a scientific knowledge of the power of sound over both mind and matter; let us suppose that deep philosophical works had been written in the terminology of these symbols and often in a veiled allusive language; and let us suppose finally that these were translated into Bengali or Hindustani and presented to an educated Pundit who had studied both at Calcutta & at Nuddea or Benares. What would he make of them? It will be as well to take a concrete instance. Jesus Christ was a great thinker, a man who had caught, apparently by his unaided power, though this is not certain, something of the divine knowledge, but the writers who recorded his sayings were for the most part ordinary men of a very narrow culture and scope of thought and they seem grossly to have misunderstood his deepest sayings. For instance when he said “I and my Father are one” expressing the deep truth that the human self and the divine self are identical, they imagined that he was setting up an individual claim to be God; hence the extraordinary legend of the Virgin Mary & all that followed from it. Well, we all know the story of the Last Supper and Jesus’ marvellously pregnant utterance as he broke the bread and gave of the wine to his disciples “This is my body and this is my blood” and the remarkable rite of the Eucharist and the doctrine of Transubstantiation which the Roman Catholic Church has founded upon it. “Corruption! superstition! blasphemous nonsense!” cries the Protestant. “Only a vivid Oriental metaphor and nothing more.” If so, it was certainly an “unmeaning, artificial and silly” metaphor, nay, “even a hideous and repellent” one. But I prefer to believe that Jesus’ words had always a meaning & generally a true & beautiful one. On the other hand the Transubstantiation doctrine is one which the Catholics

themselves do not understand, it is to them a “mystery”. And yet how plain the meaning is to an Oriental intelligence! The plasm of matter, the foodsheath of the universe to which bread and wine belong, is indeed the blood and body of God and typifies the great primal sacrifice by which God crucified himself so that the world might exist. The Infinite had to become finite, the Unconditioned to condition himself, Spirit to evolve matter. In the bread and the wine which the communicant eats, God actually is but he is not present to our consciousness, and he only becomes so present by an act of faith; this is the whole doctrine of the Transubstantiation. For as the Upanishad says, we must believe in God before we can know him; we must realise him as the “He is” before we realise him in his essential. And indeed if the child had not believed in what his teacher or his book told him, how could the grown man know anything? But if a deep philosophical work were written on the Eucharist hinting at great truths but always using the symbol of the bread and wine and making its terminology from the symbol & from the doctrine of Transubstantiation based upon the symbol, what would our Hindu Pundit make of it? Being a scholar & philosopher, he would find there undoubtedly much that was fresh, natural, simple, beautiful & true but also a great deal that was unmeaning, artificial & silly & even to his vegetarian imagination hideous & repellent. As for the symbol itself, its probable effect on the poor vegetarian would be to make him vomit. “What hideous nonsense,” says the Protestant, “we are to believe that we are eating God!” But that is exactly what the Protestant himself does believe if he is sincere & not a parrot when he says “God is everywhere”, which is true enough, though it would be truer to say everything is in God. If God is everywhere, He must be in the food we eat. Not only is God the eaten, but He is the eater and eventually, says the Vedanta, when you come to the bottom fact of existence there is neither eaten or eater, but all is God. These are hard sayings for the rationalist who insists on limiting knowledge within the circle of the five senses. “God to whom the sages are as meat & princes as excellent eating & Death is the spice of his banquet, how shall such an one know of Him where He abideth?”

Many of the Upanishads are similarly written round symbols and in a phraseology and figures which have or had once a deep meaning and a sacred association to the Hindus but must be unintelligible and repellent to the European. What possible use can be served by presenting to Europe such works as the Chandogya or Aitareya Upanishads in which even the majority of Hindus find it difficult or impossible to penetrate every symbol to its underlying truth? Only the few Upanishads have been selected which contain the kernel of the matter in the least technical and most poetical form; the one exception is the Upanishad of the Questions which will be necessarily strange and not quite penetrable to the European mind. It was, however, necessary to include it for the sake of a due presentation of Upanishad philosophy in some of its details as well as in its main ideas, and its technical element has a more universal appeal than that of the Chandogya or Taittiriya.

An objection may be urged to the method of translation that has been adopted. Professor Max Muller in his translation did not make any attempt to render into English the precise shades of Aryan philosophical terms like Atman & Prana which do not correspond to any philosophical conception familiar to the West; he believed that the very unfamiliarity of the terms he used to translate them would be like a bracing splash of cold water to the mind forcing it to rouse itself and think. In this I think the Professor was in error; his proposition may be true of undaunted philosophical intellects such as Schopenhauer's or of those who are already somewhat familiar with the Sanscrit language, but to the ordinary reader the unfamiliar terminology forms a high & thick hedge of brambles shutting him off from the noble palace & beautiful gardens of the Upanishads. Moreover the result of a scholastic faithfulness to the letter has been to make the style of the translation intolerably uncouth and unworthy of the solemn rhythmic grandeur and ineffable poetical depth and beauty of these great religious poems. I do not say that this translation is worthy of them, for in no other human tongue than Sanscrit is such grandeur & beauty possible. But there are ways and their degrees. For instance *Etadwaitad*, the refrain of the

Katha Upanishad has a deep & solemn ring in Sanscrit because *éta* and *tad* so used have in Sanscrit a profound and grandiose philosophical signification which everybody at once feels; but in English “This truly is That” can be nothing but a juggling with demonstrative pronouns; it is far better and renders more nearly both rhythm & meaning to translate “This is the God of your seeking” however inadequate such a translation may be.

It may, however, fairly be said that a version managed on these lines cannot give a precise & accurate idea of the meaning. It is misleading to translate Prâna sometimes by life, sometimes by breath, sometimes by life breath or breath of life, because breath & life are merely subordinate aspects of the Prâna. Atman again rendered indifferently by soul, spirit & self, must mislead, because what the West calls the soul is really the Atman yoked with mind & intelligence, and spirit is a word of variable connotation often synonymous with soul; even “self” cannot be used precisely in that way in English. Again the Hindu idea of “immortality” is different from the European; it implies not life after death, but freedom from both life and death, for what we call life is after all impossible without death. Similarly Being does not render *Purusha*, nor “matter” *rayi*, nor askesis the whole idea of “tapas”. To a certain extent all this may be admitted, but at the same time I do not think that any reader who can think & feel will be seriously misled, and at any rate he will catch more of the meaning from imperfect English substitutes than from Sanscrit terms which will be a blank to his intelligence. The mind of man demands, and the demand is legitimate, that new ideas shall be presented to him in words which convey to him some association, with which he will not feel like a foreigner in a strange country where no one knows his language nor he theirs. The new must be presented to him in the terms of the old; new wine must be put to some extent in old bottles. What is the use of avoiding the word “God” and speaking always of the Supreme as “It” simply because the Sanscrit usually,—but not, be it observed, invariably—employs the neuter gender? The neuter in Sanscrit applies not only to what is inanimate but to what is beyond such terms as animate and inanimate,

not only to what is below gender but to what is above gender. In English this is not the case. The use of "It" may therefore lead to far more serious misconceptions than to use the term "God" & the pronoun "He". When Matthew Arnold said that God was a stream of tendency making towards righteousness, men naturally scoffed because it seemed to turn God into an inanimate force; yet surely such was not Arnold's meaning. On the other side if the new ideas are presented with force and power, a reader of intelligence will soon come to understand that something different is meant by "God" from the ideas he attaches to that word. And in the meanwhile we gain this distinct advantage that he has not been repelled at the outset by what would naturally seem to him bizarre, repulsive or irreverent.

It is true however that this translation will not convey a precise, full and categorical knowledge of the truths which underlie the Upanishads. To convey such knowledge is not the object of this translation, neither was it the object of the Upanishads themselves. It must always be remembered that these great treatises are simply the gate of the Higher Knowledge; there is much that lies behind the gate. Srikrishna has indeed said that the knowledge in the Vedas is sufficient for a holy mind that is capable of knowing God, just as the water in a well is sufficient for a man's purpose though there may be whole floods of water all around. But this does not apply to ordinary men. The ordinary man who wishes to reach God through knowledge, must undergo an elaborate training. He must begin by becoming absolutely pure, he must cleanse thoroughly his body, his heart and his intellect, he must get himself a new heart and be born again; for only the twiceborn can understand or teach the Vedas. When he has done this he needs yet four things before he can succeed, the Sruti or recorded revelation, the Sacred Teacher, the practice of Yoga and the Grace of God. The business of the Sruti and especially of the Upanishads is to seize the mind and draw it into a magic circle, to accustom it to the thought of God and aspirations after the Supreme, to bathe it in certain ideas, surround it with a certain spiritual atmosphere; for this purpose it plunges & rolls the mind over & over in an ocean of marvellous sound thro' which

a certain train of associations goes ever rolling. In other words it appeals through the intellect, the ear and the imagination to the soul. The purpose of the Upanishad cannot therefore be served by a translation; a translation at best prepares him for & attracts him to the original. But even when he has steeped himself in the original, he may have understood what the Upanishad suggests, but he has not understood all that it implies, the great mass of religious truth that lies behind, of which the Upanishad is but a hint or an echo. For this he must go to the Teacher. "Awake ye, arise & learn of God seeking out the Best who have the knowledge." Hard is it in these days to find the Best; for the Best do not come to us, we have to show our sincerity, patience and perseverance by seeking them. And when we have heard the whole of the Brahmanavida from the Teacher, we still know of God by theory only; we must farther learn from a preceptor the practical knowledge of God, the vision of Him and attainment of Him which is Yoga and the goal of Yoga. And even in that we cannot succeed unless we have the Grace of God, for Yoga is beset with temptations not the least of which are the powers it gives us, powers which the ignorant call supernatural. "Then must a man be very vigilant for Yoga, as it hath a beginning, so hath it an ending." Only the Grace of God, the blessing of triumphant self-mastery that comes from long and patient accumulation of soul-experience, can keep us firm and help us over these temptations. "The Spirit is not to be won by eloquent teaching, nor by brain power, nor by much learning: but he whom the Spirit chooseth, he getteth the Spirit, and to him God discovereth His body." Truly does the Upanishad say "for sharp as a razor's edge is the path, difficult & hard to traverse, say the seers." Fortunately it is not necessary & indeed it is not possible for all to measure the whole journey in a single life, nor can we, or should we abandon our daily duties like Buddha and flee into the mountain or the forest. It is enough for us to make a beginning.

Section Two
Complete Translations

Circa 1900–1902

The Upanishads
rendered into simple and rhythmic English.
(comprising six Upanishads namely the Isha, Kena, Katha,
Moondaca, Prusna, and Mandoukya).

Swulpumupyusya dhurmusya trayate mahato bhayat

Bhagavudgeta.

Even a little of this Law delivereth one out of great fear

X

Qual ch'ella par quand'un poco sorride
Non si può dicer ne tener' a mente,
Si è novo miracolo gentile.

Dante

What She appears when She smiles a little,
Cannot be spoken of, neither can the mind lay hold on it,
It is so sweet and strange and sublime a miracle.

----o:o:o:-----

The Prusna Upanishad

of the Athurvaveda

being the Upanishad of the Six Questions.

Before which one repeats the Mantra.

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवा भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।
स्थिरैररङ्गैस्तुष्टवांसस्तनूभिर्व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ॥
स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्रवाः स्वस्ति नः पूषा विश्ववेदाः ।
स्वस्ति नस्ताक्ष्यो अरिष्टनेमिः स्वस्ति नो बृहस्पतिर्दधातु ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

OM. May we hear what is auspicious with our ears, O ye Gods; may we see what is auspicious with our eyes, O ye of the sacrifice; giving praise with steady limbs, with motionless bodies, may we enter into that life which is founded in the Gods.

Ordain weal unto us Indra of high-heaped glories; ordain weal unto us Pushan, the all-knowing Sun; ordain weal unto us Tarkshya Arishtanemi; Brihaspati ordain weal unto us. OM. Peace! peace! peace!

Then the Chapter of the First Question.

ॐ नमः परमात्मने । हरिः ॐ ॥ सुकेशा च भारद्वाजः शैव्यश्च
सत्यकामः सौर्यायणी च गार्ग्यः कौसल्यशाश्वलायनो भार्गवो वैदर्भिः
कवन्धी कात्यायनस्ते हैते ब्रह्मपरा ब्रह्मनिष्ठाः परं ब्रह्मान्वेषमाणा
एष ह वै तत्सर्वं वक्ष्यतीति ते ह समित्पाणयो भगवन्तं पिप्पलादमुप -
सन्नाः ॥ १ ॥

1. OM! Salutation to the Supreme Spirit. The Supreme is OM.
Sukesha the Bharadwaja; the Shaiyya, Satyakama; Gargya,

son of the Solar race; the Coshalan, son of Uswal; the Bhargove of Vidurbha; and Cobundhy Catyaian;—these sought the Most High God, believing in the Supreme and to the Supreme devoted. Therefore they came to the Lord Pippalada, for they said “This is he that shall tell us of that Universal.”

तान् ह स ऋषिरुवाच भूय एव तपसा ब्रह्मचर्येण श्रद्धया संवत्सरं
संवत्स्यथ यथाकामं प्रश्नान्पृच्छत यदि विज्ञास्यामः सर्वं ह वो वक्ष्याम
इति ॥ २ ॥

2. The Rishi said to them, “Another year do ye dwell in holiness and faith and askesis; then ask what ye will, and if I know, surely I will conceal nothing.”

अथ कबन्धी कात्यायन उपेत्य पप्रच्छ । भगवन् कुतो ह वा इमाः
प्रजाः प्रजायन्त इति ॥ ३ ॥

3. Then came Cobundhy, son of Katya, to him and asked: “Lord, whence are all these creatures born?”

तस्मै स होवाच प्रजाकामो वै प्रजापतिः स तपोऽतप्यत स तपस्तस्वा
स मिथुनमुत्पादयते रयिं च प्राणं चेत्येतौ मे बहुधा प्रजाः करिष्यत
इति ॥ ४ ॥

4. To him answered the Rishi Pippalada: “The Eternal Father desired children, therefore he put forth his energy and by the heat of his energy produced twin creatures, Prana the Life, who is Male, and Rayi the Matter, who is Female. ‘These’ said he ‘shall make for me children of many natures.’

आदित्यो ह वै प्राणो रयिरेव चन्द्रमा रयिर्वा एतत्सर्वं यन्मूर्तं चामूर्तं
च तस्मान्मूर्तिरेव रयिः ॥ ५ ॥

5. “The Sun verily is Life and the Moon is no more than Matter; yet truly all this Universe formed and formless is Matter; therefore Form and Matter are One.

अथादित्य उदयन् यत्प्राचीं दिशं प्रविशति तेन प्राच्यान्प्राणान् रश्मिषु
संनिधत्ते । यद्वक्षिणां यत्प्रतीचीं यद्वदीचीं यदधो यद्वर्ध्वं यदन्तरा दिशो
यत्सर्वं प्रकाशयति तेन सर्वान्प्राणान् रश्मिषु संनिधत्ते ॥ ६ ॥

6. “Now when the Sun rising entereth the East, then absorbeth he the eastern breaths into his rays. But when he illumineth the south and west and north, and below and above and all the angles of space, yea, all that is, then he taketh all the breaths into his rays.

स एष वैश्वानरो विश्वरूपः प्राणोऽग्निरुदयते । तदेतद्वचाभ्युक्तम् ॥ ७ ॥

7. “Therefore is this fire that riseth, this Universal Male, of whom all things are the bodies, Prana the breath of existence. This is that which was said in the Rigveda.

विश्वरूपं हरिणं जातवेदसं परायणं ज्योतिरेकं तपन्तम् ।
सहस्ररश्मिः शतधा वर्तमानः प्राणः प्रजानामुदयत्येष सूर्यः ॥ ८ ॥

8. “Fire is this burning and radiant Sun, he is the One lustre and all-knowing Light, he is the highest heaven of spirits. With a thousand rays he burneth and existeth in a hundred existences; lo this Sun that riseth, he is the Life of all his creatures.’

संवत्सरो वै प्रजापतिस्तस्यायने दक्षिणं चोत्तरं च । तद्ये ह वै तदिष्टापूर्ते
कृतमित्युपासते ते चान्द्रमसमेव लोकमभिजयन्ते । त एव पुनरावर्तन्ते
तस्मादेत ऋषयः प्रजाकामा दक्षिणं प्रतिपद्यन्ते । एष ह वै रथ्यर्थः
पितृयाणः ॥ ९ ॥

9. “The year also is that Eternal Father and of the year there are two paths, the northern solstice and the southern. Now they who worship God with the well dug and the oblation offered, deeming these to be righteousness, conquer their heavens of the Moon; these return again to the world of birth. Therefore do the souls of sages who have not yet put from them the desire of offspring, take the way of the southern solstice which is the road of the Fathers. And this also is Matter, the Female.

अथोत्तरेण तपसा ब्रह्मचर्येण श्रद्धया विद्ययात्मानमन्विष्यादित्यमभि-
जयन्ते । एतद्वै प्राणानामायतनमेतदमृतमभयमेतत् परायणमेतस्मान्न
पुनरावर्तन्त इत्येष निरोधस्तदेष श्लोकः ॥ १० ॥

10. “But by the way of the northern solstice go the souls that have sought the Spirit through holiness and knowledge and faith and askesis; for they conquer their heavens of the Sun. There is the resting place of the breaths, there immortality casteth out fear, there is the highest heaven of spirits; thence no soul returneth; therefore is the wall and barrier. Whereof this is the Scripture.

पञ्चपादं पितरं द्वादशाकृतिं दिव आहुः परे अर्धे पुरीषिणम् ।
अथेमे अन्य उ परे विचक्षणं सप्तचक्रे षडर आहुरपितमिति ॥ ११ ॥

11. “‘Five-portioned, some say, is the Father and hath twelve figures and he floweth in the upper hemisphere beyond the heavens; but others speak of him as the Wisdom who standeth in a chariot of six spokes and seven wheels.’

मासो वै प्रजापतिस्तस्य कृष्णपक्ष एव रथिः शुक्रः प्राणस्तस्मादेत
ऋषयः शुक्र इष्टं कुर्वन्तीतर इतरस्मिन् ॥ १२ ॥

12. “The month also is that Eternal Father, whereof the dark fortnight is Matter the Female and the bright fortnight is Life the Male. Therefore do one manner of sages offer sacrifice in the bright fortnight and another in the dark.

अहोरात्रो वै प्रजापतिस्तस्याहरेव प्राणो रात्रिरेव रथिः प्राणं वा एते
प्रस्कन्दन्ति ये दिवा रत्या संयुज्यन्ते ब्रह्मचर्यमेव तद्यद् रात्रौ रत्या
संयुज्यन्ते ॥ १३ ॥

13. “Day and night also are the Eternal Father, whereof the day is Life and the night is Matter. Therefore do they offend against their own life who take joy with woman by day; by night who take joy, enact holiness.

अन्नं वै प्रजापतिस्ततो ह वै तद् रेतस्तस्मादिमाः प्रजाः प्रजायन्त
इति ॥ १४ ॥

14. “Food is the Eternal Father; for of this came the seed and of the seed is the world of creatures born.

तदे हैं वै तत्प्रजापतिव्रतं चरन्ति ते मिथुनमुत्पादयन्ते । तेषामेवैष
ब्रह्मलोको येषां तपो ब्रह्मचर्यं येषु सत्यं प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥ १५ ॥

15. “They therefore who perform the vow of the Eternal Father produce the twin creature. But theirs is the heaven of the spirit in whom are established askesis and holiness and in whom Truth has her dwelling.

तेषामसौ विरजो ब्रह्मलोको न येषु जिह्वमनृतं न माया चेति ॥ १६ ॥

16. “Theirs is the heaven of the Spirit, the world all spotless, in whom there is neither crookedness nor lying nor any illusion.”

And afterwards

The Chapter of the Second Question.

अथ हैनं भार्गवो वैदर्भिः पप्रच्छ । भगवन् कत्येव देवाः प्रजां वि-
धारयन्ते कतर एतत्प्रकाशयन्ते कः पुनरेषां वरिष्ठ इति ॥ १ ॥

1. Then the Bhargove, the Vidurbhan, asked him: “Lord, how many Gods maintain this creature, and how many illumine it, and which of these again is the mightiest?”

तस्मै स होवाचाकाशो ह वा एष देवो वायुरग्निरापः पृथिवी
वाङ्मनस्क्षुः ओत्रं च । ते प्रकाश्याभिवदन्ति वयमेतद् बाणमवष्टभ्य
विधारयामः ॥ २ ॥

2. To him answered the Rishi Pippalada: “These are the Gods, even Ether and Wind and Fire and Water and Earth and Speech and Mind and Sight and Hearing. These nine illumine the creature; therefore they vaunted themselves,—We, even we support this harp of God and we are the preservers.

तान् वरिष्ठः प्राण उवाच । मा मोहमापद्यथाहमेवैतत् पञ्चधात्मानं
प्रविभज्यैतद् बाणमवष्टभ्य विधारयामीति तेऽश्रद्धधाना बभूतुः ॥ ३ ॥

3. “Then answered Breath, their mightiest: ‘Yield not unto delusion; I dividing myself into this fivefold support this harp of God, I am its preserver.’ But they believed him not.

सोऽभिमानाद्वर्धमुत्क्रमत इव तस्मिन्नुत्क्रामत्यथेतरे सर्वं एवोत्क्रामन्ते
तस्मिंश्च प्रतिष्ठमाने सर्वं एवं प्रातिष्ठन्ते। तद्यथा मक्षिका मधुकर-
राजानमुत्क्रामन्तं सर्वां एवोत्क्रामन्ते तस्मिंश्च प्रतिष्ठमाने सर्वां एवं
प्रातिष्ठन्ते एवं वाङ्मनश्चक्षुः श्रोत्रं च ते प्रीताः प्राणं स्तुवन्ति ॥४॥

4. “Therefore offended he rose up, he was issuing out from the body. But when the Breath goeth out, then go all the others with him, and when the Breath abideth all the others abide; therefore as bees with the kingbee: when he goeth out all go out with him, and when he abideth all abide, even so was it with Speech and Mind and Sight and Hearing; then were they well-pleased and hymned the Breath to adore him.

एषोऽग्निस्तप्त्येष सूर्यं एष पर्जन्यो मघवानेष वायुः।
एष पृथिवी रयिदेवः सदसच्चामृतं च यत् ॥५॥

5. “Lo this is he that is Fire and the Sun that burneth, Rain and Indra and Earth and Air, Matter and Deity, Form and Formless, and Immortality.

अरा इव रथनामौ प्राणे सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम्।
ऋचो यजूषि सामानि यज्ञः क्षत्रं ब्रह्म च ॥६॥

6. “As the spokes meet in the nave of a wheel, so are all things in the Breath established, the Rigveda and the Yajur and the Sama, and Sacrifice and Brahminhood and Kshatriyahood.

प्रजापतिश्चरसि गर्भे त्वमेव प्रतिजायसे।
तुभ्यं प्राणं प्रजास्त्वमा बलिं हरन्ति यः प्राणैः प्रतितिष्ठसि ॥७॥

7. “As the Eternal Father thou movest in the womb and art born in the likeness of the parents. To thee, O Life, the world of creatures offer the burnt offering, who by the breaths abidest.

देवानामसि वह्नितमः पितृणां प्रथमा स्वधा ।
ऋषीणां चरितं सत्यमर्थवाङ्गिरसामसि ॥ ८ ॥

8. “Of all the Gods thou art the strongest and fiercest and to the fathers thou art the first oblation; thou art the truth and virtue of the sages and thou art Athurvan among the sons of Ungirus.

इन्द्रस्त्वं प्राण तेजसा रुद्रोऽसि परिरक्षिता ।
त्वमन्तरिक्षे चरसि सूर्यस्त्वं ज्योतिषां पतिः ॥ ९ ॥

9. “Thou art Indra, O Breath, by thy splendour and energy and Rudra because thou preservest; thou walkest in the welkin as the Sun, that imperial lustre.

यदा त्वमभिवर्षस्यथेमाः प्राण ते प्रजाः ।
आनन्दरूपस्तिष्ठन्ति कामायान्नं भविष्यतीति ॥ १० ॥

10. “When thou, O Breath, rainest, thy creatures stand all joy because there shall be grain to the heart’s desire.

ब्रात्यस्त्वं प्राणैकऋषिरत्ता विश्वस्य सत्पतिः ।
वयमाद्यस्य दातारः पिता त्वं मातरिष्व नः ॥ ११ ॥

11. “Thou art, O Breath, the unpurified and thou art Fire, the only purity, the devourer of all and the lord of existences. We are the givers to thee of thy eating; for thou, O Matariswun, art our Father.

या ते तनुर्वाचि प्रतिष्ठिता या श्रोत्रे या च चक्षुषि ।
या च मनसि संतता शिवां तां कुरु मोत्कमीः ॥ १२ ॥

12. “That body of thine which is established in the speech, sight and hearing, and in the mind is extended, that make propitious; O Life, go not out from our midst!

प्राणस्येदं वशे सर्वं त्रिदिवे यत्प्रतिष्ठितम् ।
मातेव पुत्रान् रक्षस्व श्रीश्च प्रज्ञां च विधेहि न इति ॥ १३ ॥

13. “For all this Universe, yea, all that is established in the heavens to the Breath is subject; guard us as a mother watches over her little children; give us fortune and beauty, give us Wisdom.’”

And afterwards

The Chapter of the Third Question.

अथ हैनं कौसल्यश्वाश्वलायनः पप्रच्छ । भगवन् कुत एष प्राणो
जायते कथमायात्यस्मिन्द्वारा आत्मानं वा प्रविभज्य कथं प्रातिष्ठते
केनोत्क्रमते कथं वाह्यमधिभत्ते कथमध्यात्ममिति ॥ १ ॥

1. Then the Coshalan, the son of Uswal, asked him: “Lord, whence is this Life born? How comes it in this body or how stands by self-division? By what departeth, or how maintaineth the outward and how the inward spiritual?”

तस्मै स होवाचातिप्रश्नान् पृच्छसि ब्रह्मिष्ठोऽसीति तस्मात् तेऽहं
ब्रवीमि ॥ २ ॥

2. To him answered the Rishi Pippalada: “Many and difficult things thou askest; but because thou art very holy, therefore will I tell thee.

आत्मन एष प्राणो जायते । यथैषा पुरुषे छायैतस्मिन्नेतदाततं
मनोकृतेनायात्यस्मिन्द्वारे ॥ ३ ॥

3. “Of the Spirit is this breath of Life born; even as a shadow is cast by a man, so is this Life extended in the Spirit and by the action of the Mind it entereth into this body.

यथा सम्राडेवाधिकृतान् विनियुक्ते । एतान्नामानेतान्नामानधितिष्ठ-
स्वेत्येवमेवैष प्राण इतरान्प्राणान् पृथक्पृथगेव संनिधत्ते ॥ ४ ॥

4. “As an Emperor commandeth his officers, and he sayeth to one ‘Govern for me these villages’, and to another ‘Govern for me these others’, so this breath, the Life, appointeth the other breaths each in his province.

पायूपस्थेऽपानं चक्षुःश्रोत्रे मुखनासिकाभ्यां प्राणः स्वयं प्रातिष्ठते मध्ये
तु समानः । एष ह्येतद्वत्मन्नं समं नयति तस्मादेताः सप्तार्चिषो
भवन्ति ॥ ५ ॥

5. “In the anus and the organ of pleasure is the lower breath, and in the eyes and the ears, the mouth and the nose, the main breath itself is seated; but the medial breath is in the middle. This is he that equally distributeth the burnt offering of food; for from this are the seven fires born.

हृदि ह्येष आत्मा । अत्रैतदेकशतं नाडीनां तासां शतं शतमेकैक-
स्यां द्वासपतिद्वासपतिः प्रतिशाखानाडीसहस्राणि भवन्त्यासु व्यान-
श्चरति ॥ ६ ॥

6. “The Spirit in the heart abideth, and in the heart there are one hundred and one nerves, and each nerve hath a hundred branch-nerves and each branch-nerve hath seventy two thousand sub-branch-nerves; through these the breath pervasor moveth.

अथैकयोर्ध्वं उदानः पुण्येन पुण्यं लोकं नयति पापेन पापमुभाभ्यामेव
मनुष्यलोकम् ॥ ७ ॥

7. “Of these many there is one by which the upper breath departeth that by virtue taketh to the heaven of virtue, by sin to the hell of sin, and by mingled sin and righteousness back to the world of men restoreth.

आदित्यो ह वै बाह्यः प्राण उदयत्येष ह्येनं चाक्षुषं प्राणमनुगूणानः ।
पृथिव्यां या देवता सैषा पुरुषस्यापानमवष्टभ्यान्तरा यदाकाशः स
समानो वायुर्व्यानः ॥ ८ ॥

8. “The Sun is the main breath outside this body, for it cherisheth the eye in its rising. The divinity in the earth, she attracteth the lower breath of man, and the ether between is the medial breath; air is the breath pervasor.

तेजो ह वा उदानस्तस्मादुपशान्ततेजाः । पुनर्भवमिन्द्रियैर्मनसि सं-
पद्यमानैः ॥ ९ ॥

9. “Light, the primal energy, is the upper breath; therefore when the light and heat in a man hath dwindled, his senses retire into the mind and with these he departeth into another birth.

यच्चत्तस्तेनैष प्राणमायाति प्राणस्तेजसा युक्तः । सहात्मना यथा-
संकल्पितं लोकं नयति ॥ १० ॥

10. “Whatsoever be the mind of a man, with that mind he seeketh refuge with the breath when he dieth, and the breath and the upper breath lead him with the Spirit within him to the world of his imaginings.

य एवं विद्वान् प्राणं वेद । न हास्य प्रजा हीयतेऽमृतो भवति तदेष
श्लोकः ॥ ११ ॥

11. “The wise man that knoweth thus of the breath, his progeny wasteth not and he becometh immortal. Whereof this is the Scripture.

उत्पत्तिमायतिं स्थानं विभुत्वं चैव पञ्चधा ।
अध्यात्मं चैव प्राणस्य विज्ञायामृतमञ्जुत इति ॥ १२ ॥

12. “By knowing the origin of the Breath, his coming and his staying and his lordship in the five provinces, likewise his relation to the Spirit, one shall taste immortality.’ ”

And afterwards

The Chapter of the Fourth Question.

अथ हैनं सौर्यायणी गार्यः पप्रच्छ । भगवन्नेतस्मिन् पुरुषे कानि
स्वपन्ति कान्यस्मिन्जाग्रति कतर एष देवः स्वप्नान्पश्यति कस्यैतत्
सुखं भवति कस्मिन्नु सर्वे संप्रतिष्ठिता भवन्तीति ॥ १ ॥

1. Then Gargya of the Solar race asked him, “Lord, what are they that slumber in this Existing and what that keep vigil? Who is this god who seeth dreams or whose is this felicity? Into whom do all they vanish?”

तस्मै स होवाच । यथा गार्घ्यं मरीचयोऽर्कस्यास्तं गच्छतः सर्वा
एतस्मिंस्तेजोमण्डलं एकीभवन्ति । ताः पुनः पुनरुदयतः प्रचरन्त्येवं ह
वै तत्सर्वं परे देवे मनस्येकीभवति । तेन तह्येषु पुरुषो न शृणोति न
पश्यति न जिग्रति न रसयते न स्पृशते नाभिवदते नादत्ते नानन्दयते
न विसृजते नेयायते स्वपितीत्याचक्षते ॥ २ ॥

2. To him answered the Rishi Pippalada: “O Gargya, as are the rays of the sun in its setting, for they retire and all become one in yonder circle of splendour, but when he riseth again once more they walk abroad, so all the man becomes one in the highest god, even the mind. Then indeed this being seeth not, neither heareth, nor doth he smell, nor taste, nor touch, nor speaketh he aught, nor taketh in or giveth out, nor cometh nor goeth; he feeleth not any felicity. Then they say of him, ‘He sleepeth’.

प्राणाग्नय एवैतस्मिन् पुरे जाग्रति । गार्हपत्यो ह वा एषोऽपानो
व्यानोऽन्वाहार्यपचनो यद् गार्हपत्यात् प्रणीयते प्रणयनादाहवनीयः
प्राणः ॥ ३ ॥

3. “But the fires of the breath keep watch in that sleeping city. The lower breath is the householder’s fire and the breath pervasor the fire of the Lares that burneth to the southward. The main breath is the orient fire of the sacrifice; and even as the eastern fire taketh its fuel from the western, so in the slumber of a man the main breath taketh from the lower.

यदुच्छवासनिश्चासावेतावाहुती समं नयतीति स समानः । मनो ह वाव
यजमान इष्टफलमेवोदानः स एनं यजमानमहरहर्व्रह्मा गमयति ॥ ४ ॥

4. “But the medial breath is the priest, the sacrificant; for he equaliseth the offering of the inbreath and the offering of the outbreak. The Mind is the giver of the sacrifice and the upper breath is the fruit of the sacrifice, for it taketh the sacrificer day by day into the presence of the Eternal.

अत्रैष देवः स्वप्ने महिमानमनुभवति । यद् दृष्टं दृष्टमनुपश्यति श्रुतं
श्रुतमेवार्थमनुशृणोति देशदिग्न्तरैश्च प्रत्यनुभूतं पुनः पुनः प्रत्यनुभवति
दृष्टं चादृष्टं च श्रुतं चाश्रुतं चानुभूतं चानुभूतं च सच्चासच्च सर्वं
पश्यति सर्वः पश्यति ॥ ५ ॥

5. “Now the Mind in dream revelleth in the glory of his imaginings. All that it hath seen it seemeth to see over again, and of all that it hath heard it repeateth the hearing; yea, all that it hath felt and thought and known in many lands and in various regions, these it liveth over again in its dreaming. What it hath seen and what it hath not seen, what it hath heard and what it hath not heard, what it hath known and what it hath not known, what is and what is not, all, all it seeth; for the Mind is the Universe.

स यदा तेजसाभिभूतो भवति । अत्रैष देवः स्वप्नान् न पश्यत्यथ
तदैतस्मिन्नशरीर एतत्सुखं भवति ॥ ६ ॥

6. “But when he is overwhelmed with light, then Mind, the God, dreameth no longer; then in this body he hath felicity.

स यथा सोम्य वयांसि वासोवृक्षं संप्रतिष्ठन्ते । एवं ह वै तत्सर्वं पर
आत्मनि संप्रतिष्ठते ॥ ७ ॥

7. “O fair son, as birds wing towards their resting tree, so do all these depart into the Supreme Spirit:

पृथिवी च पृथिवीमात्रा चापश्चापोमात्रा च तेजश्च तेजोमात्रा च वायुश्च
वायुमात्रा चाकाशश्चाकाशमात्रा च चक्षुश्च द्रष्टव्यं च श्रोत्रं च श्रोतव्यं
च प्राणं च प्रातव्यं च रसश्च रसयितव्यं च त्वक् च स्पर्शयितव्यं च
वाक् च वक्तव्यं च हस्तौ चादातव्यं चोपस्थश्चानन्दयितव्यं च पायुश्च
विसर्जयितव्यं च पादौ च गन्तव्यं च मनश्च मन्तव्यं च बुद्धिश्च बोद्धव्यं
चाहंकारश्चाहंकर्तव्यं च चित्तं च चेतयितव्यं च तेजश्च विद्योतयितव्यं
च प्राणश्च विधारयितव्यं च ॥ ८ ॥

8. “Earth and the inner things of earth; water and the inner things of water; light and the inner things of light; air and

the inner things of air; ether and the inner things of ether; the eye and its seeings; the ear and its hearings; smell and the objects of smell; taste and the objects of taste; the skin and the objects of touch; speech and the things to be spoken; the two hands and their takings; the organ of pleasure and its enjoyings; the anus and its excretions; the feet and their goings; the mind and its feelings; the intelligence and what it understandeth; the sense of Ego and that which is felt to be Ego; the conscious heart and that of which it is conscious; light and what it lighteneth; Life and the things it maintaineth.

एष हि द्रष्टा स्प्रष्टा श्रोता ग्राता रसयिता मन्ता बोद्धा कर्ता विज्ञानात्मा
पुरुषः । स परेऽक्षर आत्मनि संप्रतिष्ठते ॥९॥

9. “For this that seeth and toucheth, heareth, smelleth, tasteth, feeleth, understandeth, acteth, is the reasoning self, the Male within. This too departeth into the Higher Self which is Imperishable.

परमेवाक्षरं प्रतिपद्यते स यो ह वै तदच्छायमशरीरमलोहितं शुभ्रमक्षरं
वेदयते यस्तु सोम्य । स सर्वज्ञः सर्वो भवति तदेष श्लोकः ॥१०॥

10. “He that knoweth the shadowless, colourless, bodiless, luminous and imperishable Spirit, attaineth to the Imperishable, even to the Most High. O fair son, he knoweth the All and becometh the All. Whereof this is the Scripture.

विज्ञानात्मा सह देवैश्च सर्वैः प्राणा भूतानि संप्रतिष्ठन्ति यत्र ।
तदक्षरं वेदयते यस्तु सोम्य स सर्वज्ञः सर्वमेवाविवेशेति ॥११॥

11. “‘He, O fair son, that knoweth the Imperishable into whom the understanding self departeth, and all the Gods, and the life-breaths and the elements, he knoweth the Universe!’ ”

And afterwards

The Chapter of the Fifth Question.

अथ हैनं शैव्यः सत्यकामः पप्रच्छ । स यो है तद् भगवन् मनुष्येषु
प्रायणान्तमोक्तारमभिध्यायीत । कतमं वाव स तेन लोकं जयतीति ॥१॥

- Then the Shaivya Satyakama asked him: “Lord, he among men that meditate unto death on OM the syllable, which of the worlds doth he conquer by its puissance?”

तस्मै स होवाच । एतद्वै सत्यकाम परं चापरं च ब्रह्म यदोंकारः ।
तस्माद् विद्वानेतेनैवायतनेनैकतरमन्वेति ॥२॥

- To him answered the Rishi Pippalada: “This imperishable Word that is OM, O Satyakama, is the Higher Brahman and also the Lower. Therefore the wise man by making his home in the Word, winneth to one of these.

स यदेकमात्रमभिध्यायीत स तेनैव संवेदितस्तूर्णमेव जगत्यामभि-
संपद्यते । तमृचो मनुष्यलोकमुपनयन्ते स तत्र तपसा ब्रह्मचर्येण श्रद्धया
संपन्नो महिमानमनुभवति ॥३॥

- “If he meditate on the one letter of OM the syllable, by that enlightened he attaineth swiftly in the material universe, and the hymns of the Rigveda escort him to the world of men; there endowed with askesis and faith and holiness he experienceth majesty.

अथ यदि द्विमात्रेण मनसि संपद्यते सोऽन्तरिक्षं यजुर्भिरुन्नीयते
सोमलोकम् । स सोमलोके विभूतिमनुभूय पुनरावर्तते ॥४॥

- “Now if by the two letters of the syllable he in the mind attaineth, to the skies he is exalted and the hymns of the Yajur escort him to the Lunar World. In the heavens of the Moon he feeleth his soul’s majesty; then once more he returneth.

यः पुनरेतं त्रिमात्रेणोमित्येतेनैवाक्षरेण परं पुरुषमभिध्यायीत स तेजसि
सूर्ये संपन्नः । यथा पादोदरस्त्वचा विनिर्मुच्यत एवं ह वै स पाप्मना
विनिर्मुक्तः स सामभिरुन्नीयते ब्रह्मलोकं स एतस्माज्जीवघनात्परात्परं
पुरिशयं पुरुषमीक्षते तदेतौ श्लोकौ भवतः ॥५॥

5. “But he who by all the three letters meditateth by this syllable, even by OM on the Most High Being, he in the Solar World of light and energy is secured in his attainings; as a snake casteth off its slough, so he casteth off sin, and the hymns of the Samaveda escort him to the heaven of the Spirit. He from that Lower who is the density of existence beholdeth the Higher than the Highest of whom every form is one city. Whereof these are the verses.

तिस्रो मात्रा मृत्युमत्यः प्रयुक्ता अन्योन्यसक्ता अनविप्रयुक्ताः ।
क्रियासु बाह्याभ्यन्तरमध्यमासु सम्यक्प्रयुक्तासु न कम्पते इः ॥६॥

6. “‘Children of death are the letters when they are used as three, the embracing and the inseparable letters; but the wise man is not shaken; for there are three kinds of works, outward deed and inward action and another which is blended of the two, and all these he doeth rightly without fear and without trembling.

ऋग्मिरेतं यजुर्भिरन्तरिक्षं सामभिर्यत्तक्वयो वेदयन्ते ।
तमोंकारेणैवायतनेनान्वेति विद्वान् यत्तच्छान्तमजरममृतमभयं
परं चेति ॥७॥

7. “‘To the earth the Rigveda leadeth, to the skies the Yajur, but the Sama to That of which the sages know. Thither the wise man by resting on OM the syllable attaineth, even to that Supreme Quietude where age is not and fear is cast out by immortality.’”

And afterwards

The Chapter of the Sixth Question.

अथ हैनं सुकेशा भारद्वाजः पप्रच्छ । भगवन् हिरण्यनाभः कौसल्यो
राजपुत्रो मामुपेत्यैतं प्रश्नमपृच्छत । षोडशकले भारद्वाज पुरुषं वेत्थ ।
तमहं कुमारमब्रुवं नाहमिमं वेद । यद्यहमिमवेदिषं कथं ते नावक्ष्य-
मिति । समूलो वा एष परिशुष्यति योऽनृतमभिवदति तस्मान्ना-
र्हाम्यनृतं वक्तुम । स तृष्णीं रथमारुद्ध्य प्रवत्राज । तं त्वा पृच्छामि
क्वासौ पुरुषं इति ॥ १ ॥

- Then Sukesha the Bharadwaja asked him, “Lord, Hiranyan-abha of Coshala, the king’s son, came to me and put me this question, ‘O Bharadwaja, knowest thou the Being and the sixteen parts of Him?’ and I answered the boy, ‘I know Him not; for if I knew Him, surely I should tell thee of Him: but I cannot tell thee a lie; for from the roots he shall wither who speaketh falsehood.’ But he mounted his chariot in silence and departed from me. Of Him I ask thee, who is the Being?”

तस्मै स होवाच । इहैवान्तःशरीरे सोम्य स पुरुषो यस्मिन्नेता: षोडश
कलाः प्रभवन्नीति ॥ २ ॥

- To him answered the Rishi Pippalada: “O fair son, even here is that Being, in the inner body of every creature for in Him are the sixteen members born.

स ईक्षांचक्रे । कस्मिन्नहमुत्कान्त उत्कान्तो भविष्यामि कस्मिन् वा
प्रतिष्ठिते प्रतिष्ठास्यामीति ॥ ३ ॥

- “He bethought Him. ‘What shall that be in whose issuing forth I shall issue forth from the body and in his abiding I shall abide?’

स प्राणमसृजत प्राणाच्छद्धां खं वायुज्योतिरापः पृथिवीन्द्रियं मनः ।
अन्नमन्नाद्वीर्यं तपो मन्त्राः कर्म लोका लोकेषु च नाम च ॥ ४ ॥

- “Then he put forth the Life, and from the Life faith, next ether and then air, and then light, and then water, and then earth, the senses and mind and food, and from food virility

and from virility askesis, and from askesis the mighty verses and from these action, and the worlds from action and name in the worlds; in this wise were all things born from the Spirit.

स यथेमा नद्यः स्यन्दमानाः समुद्रायणाः समुद्रं प्राप्यास्तं गच्छन्ति
भिद्यते तासां नामरूपे समुद्रं इत्येवं प्रोच्यते। एवमेवास्य परिद्रष्टुरिमाः
षोडश कलाः पुरुषायणाः पुरुषं प्राप्यास्तं गच्छन्ति भिद्यते चासां
नामरूपे पुरुषं इत्येवं प्रोच्यते स एषोडकलोडमृतो भवति तदेष
श्लोकः ॥ ५ ॥

5. “Therefore as all these flowing rivers move towards the sea, but when they reach the sea they are lost in it and name and form break away from them and all is called only the sea, so all the sixteen members of the silent witnessing Spirit move towards the Being, and when they have attained the Being they are lost in Him and name and form break away from them and all is called only the Being; then is He without members and immortal. Whereof this is the Scripture.

अरा इव रथनाभौ कला यस्मिन्प्रतिष्ठिताः ।
तं वेद्यं पुरुषं वेद यथा मा वो मृत्युः परिव्यथा इति ॥ ६ ॥

6. “He in whom the members are set as the spokes of a wheel are set in its nave, Him know for the Being who is the goal of knowledge, so shall death pass away from you and his anguish.”

तान् होवाचैतावदेवाहमेतत् परं ब्रह्म वेद । नातः परमस्तीति ॥ ७ ॥

7. And Pippalada said to them: “Thus far do I know the Most High God; than He there is none Higher.”

ते तमर्चयन्तस्त्वं हि नः पिता योऽस्माकमविद्यायाः परं पारं
तारयसीति । नमः परमऋषिभ्यो नमः परमऋषिभ्यः ॥ ८ ॥

8. And they worshipping him: “For thou art our father who hast carried us over to the other side of the Ignorance.”

Salutation to the mighty sages, salutation!

After which one repeats the Mantra.

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवा भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।
 स्थिरैररङ्गैस्तुष्टवांसस्तनूभिर्व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ॥
 स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्चवाः स्वस्ति नः पूषा विश्ववेदाः ।
 स्वस्ति नस्ताक्ष्यो अरिष्टनेमिः स्वस्ति नो बृहस्पतिर्दधातु ॥
 ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

OM. May we hear what is auspicious with our ears, O ye Gods; may we see what is auspicious with our eyes, O ye of the sacrifice; giving praise with steady limbs, with motionless bodies, may we enter into that life which is founded in the Gods.

Ordain weal unto us Indra of high-heaped glories; ordain weal unto us Pushan, the all-knowing Sun; ordain weal unto us Tarkshya Arishtanemi; Brihaspati ordain weal unto us. OM. Peace! peace! peace!

The Mandoukya Upanishad

Before which one repeats the Mantra.

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवा भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।
स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवांसस्तनूभिर्व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ॥
स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्रवाः स्वस्ति नः पूषा विश्ववेदाः ।
स्वस्ति नस्ताक्षर्यो अरिष्टनेमिः स्वस्ति नो वृहस्पतिर्दधातु ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

OM. May we hear what is auspicious with our ears, O ye Gods; may we see what is auspicious with our eyes, O ye of the sacrifice; giving praise with steady limbs, with motionless bodies, may we enter into that life which is founded in the Gods.

Ordain weal unto us Indra of high-heaped glories; ordain weal unto us Pushan, the all-knowing Sun; ordain weal unto us Tarkshya Arishtanemi; Brihaspati ordain weal unto us. OM. Peace! peace! peace!

ओमित्येतदक्षरमिदं सर्वं तस्योपव्याख्यानं भूतं भवद् भविष्यदिति
सर्वमोक्षाकार एव । यच्चान्यत् त्रिकालातीतं तदप्योक्षाकार एव ॥१॥

1. OM is this imperishable Word, OM is the Universe, and this is the exposition of OM. The past, the present and the future, all that was, all that is, all that will be, is OM. Likewise all else that may exist beyond the bounds of Time, that too is OM.

सर्वं ह्येतद् ब्रह्मायमात्मा ब्रह्म सोऽयमात्मा चतुष्पात् ॥२॥

2. All this Universe is the Eternal Brahman, this Self is the Eternal, and the Self is fourfold.

जागरितस्थानो बहिष्प्रग्नः सप्ताङ्गं एकोनविंशतिमुखः स्थूलभुग् वैश्वा-
नरः प्रथमः पादः ॥३॥

3. He whose place is the wakefulness, who is wise of the outward, who has seven limbs, to whom there are nineteen doors, who feeleth and enjoyeth gross objects, Vaiswanor, the Universal Male, He is the first.

स्वप्नस्थानोऽन्तःप्रज्ञः सप्ताङ्गं एकोनविंशतिमुखः प्रविविक्तभुक् तैजसे
द्वितीयः पादः ॥ ४ ॥

4. He whose place is the dream, who is wise of the inward, who has seven limbs, to whom there are nineteen doors, who feeleth and enjoyeth subtle objects, Taijasa, the Inhabitant in Luminous Mind, He is the second.

यत्र सुप्तो न कंचन कामं कामयते न कंचन स्वप्नं पश्यति तत्सुषुप्तम् ।
सुषुप्तस्थानं एकीभूतः प्रज्ञानघनं एवानन्दमयो ह्यानन्दभुक् चेतोमुखः
प्राज्ञस्तृतीयः पादः ॥ ५ ॥

5. When one sleepeth and yearneth not with any desire, nor seeth any dream, that is the perfect slumber. He whose place is the perfect slumber, who is become Oneness, who is wisdom gathered into itself, who is made of mere delight, who enjoyeth delight unrelated, to whom conscious mind is the door, Prajna, the Lord of Wisdom, He is the third.

एष सर्वेष्वर एष सर्वज्ञ एषोऽन्तर्याम्येष योनिः सर्वस्य प्रभवाप्ययौ हि
भूतानाम् ॥ ६ ॥

6. This is the Almighty, this is the Omniscient, this is the Inner Soul, this is the Womb of the Universe, this is the Birth and Destruction of creatures.

नान्तःप्रज्ञं न बहिष्प्रज्ञं नोभयतःप्रज्ञं न प्रज्ञानघनं न प्रज्ञं नाप्रज्ञम् ।
अदृष्टमव्यवहार्यमग्राह्यमलक्षणमचिन्त्यमव्यपदेश्यमेकात्मप्रत्ययसारं
प्रपञ्चोपशमं शान्तं शिवमद्वैतं चतुर्थं मन्यन्ते स आत्मा स विज्ञेयः ॥ ७ ॥

7. He who is neither inward-wise, nor outward-wise, nor both inward and outward wise, nor wisdom self-gathered, nor possessed of wisdom, nor unpossessed of wisdom, He Who

is unseen and incomunicable, unseizable, featureless, unthinkable, and unnameable, Whose essentiality is awareness of the Self in its single existence, in Whom all phenomena dissolve, Who is Calm, Who is Good, Who is the One than Whom there is no other, Him they deem the fourth; He is the Self, He is the object of Knowledge.

सोऽयमात्माध्यक्षरमोक्तारोऽधिमात्रं पादा मात्रा मात्राश्च पादा अकार
उकारो मकार इति ॥ ८ ॥

8. Now this the Self, as to the imperishable Word, is OM; and as to the letters, His parts are the letters and the letters are His parts, namely, A U M.

जागरितस्थानो वैश्वानरोऽकारः प्रथमा मात्रासेरादिमत्त्वाद्वाप्नोति ह
वै सर्वान्कामानादिश्च भवति य एवं वेद ॥ ९ ॥

9. The Waker, Vaiswanor, the Universal Male, He is A, the first letter, because of Initiality and Pervasiveness; he that knoweth Him for such pervadeth and attaineth all his desires; he becometh the source and first.

स्वप्नस्थानस्तैजस उकारो द्वितीया मात्रोत्कर्षादुभयत्वाद्वोत्कर्षति ह
वै ज्ञानसंततिं समानश्च भवति नास्याब्रह्मवित् कुले भवति य एवं
वेद ॥ १० ॥

10. The Dreamer, Taijasa, the Inhabitant in Luminous Mind, He is U, the second letter, because of Advance and Centrality; he that knoweth Him for such, advanceth the bounds of his knowledge and riseth above difference; nor of his seed is any born that knoweth not the Eternal.

सुषुप्तस्थानः प्राज्ञो मकारस्तृतीया मात्रा मितेरपीतेवा मिनोति ह वा
इदं सर्वमपीतिश्च भवति य एवं वेद ॥ ११ ॥

11. The Sleeper, Prajna, the Lord of Wisdom, He is M, the third letter, because of Measure and Finality; he that knoweth Him for such measureth with himself the Universe and becometh the departure into the Eternal.

अमात्रश्वतुर्थोऽव्यवहार्यः प्रपञ्चोपशमः शिवोऽद्वैत एवमोक्षार आत्मैव
संविशत्यात्मनात्मानं य एवं वेद य एवं वेद ॥ १२ ॥

12. Letterless is the fourth, the Incommunicable, the end of phenomena, the Good, the One than Whom there is no other; thus is OM. He that knoweth is the Self and entereth by his self into the Self, he that knoweth, he that knoweth.

Here ends the Mandoukya Upanishad.

After which one repeats the Mantra.

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवा भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।
स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टवांसस्तनूभिर्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ॥
स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्चवाः स्वस्ति नः पूषा विश्ववेदाः ।
स्वस्ति नस्ताक्षर्यो अरिष्टनेमिः स्वस्ति नो वृहस्पतिर्दधातु ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

OM. May we hear what is auspicious with our ears, O ye Gods; may we see what is auspicious with our eyes, O ye of the sacrifice; giving praise with steady limbs, with motionless bodies, may we enter into that life which is founded in the Gods.

Ordain weal unto us Indra of high-heaped glories; ordain weal unto us Pushan, the all-knowing Sun; ordain weal unto us Tarkshya Arishtanemi; Brihaspati ordain weal unto us. OM. Peace! peace! peace!

The Aitereya Upanishad

Chapter I

आत्मा वा इदमेक एवाग्र आसीत् । नान्यत्किंचन मिष्ट । स ईक्षत
लोकान्नु सृजा इति ॥ १ ॥

1. In the beginning the Spirit was One and all this (universe) was the Spirit; there was nought else that saw. The Spirit thought, “Lo, I will make me worlds from out my being.”

स इमाँलोकानसृजत । अम्भो मरीचीर्मरमापोऽदोऽम्भः परेण दिवं द्यौः
प्रतिष्ठान्तरिक्षं मरीचयः पृथिवी मरो या अधस्तात् ता आपः ॥ २ ॥

2. These were the worlds he made; Ambhah, of the ethereal waters, Marichih of light, Mara, of death and mortal things, Apah, of the lower waters. Beyond the shining firmament are the ethereal waters and the firmament is their base and resting-place; Space is the world of light; the earth is the world mortal; and below the earth are the lower waters.

स ईक्षतेमे नु लोका लोकपालान्नु सृजा इति । सोऽदम्य एव पुरुषं
समुद्भृत्यामूर्छयत् ॥ ३ ॥

3. The Spirit thought, “Lo, these are the worlds; and now will I make me guardians for my worlds.” Therefore he gathered the Purusha out of the waters and gave Him shape and substance.

तमभ्यतप्त तस्याभितस्य मुखं निरभिद्यत यथाण्डम् । मुखाद्वाग्
वाचोऽग्निर्नासिके निरभिद्येतां नासिकाभ्यां प्राणः प्राणाद्वायुरक्षिणी
निरभिद्येतामक्षिभ्यां चक्षुश्चक्षुष आदित्यः कर्णौ निरभिद्येतां कर्णाभ्यां
श्रोत्रं श्रोत्राहिष्टस्त्वङ् निरभिद्यत त्वचो लोमानि लोमभ्य ओषधिवन-
स्पतयो हृदयं निरभिद्यत हृदयान्मनो मनसश्चन्द्रमा नाभिर्निरभिद्यत
नाभ्या अपानोऽपानान्मृत्युः शिश्रं निरभिद्यत शिश्रादेतो रेतस
आपः ॥ ४ ॥

4. Yea, the Spirit brooded over Him and of Him thus brooded over the mouth broke forth, as when an egg is hatched and breaketh; from the mouth brake Speech and of Speech fire was born. The nostrils brake forth and from the nostrils Breath and of Breath air was born. The eyes brake forth and from the eyes Sight and of Sight the Sun was born. The ears brake forth and from the ears Hearing and of Hearing the regions were born. The skin brake forth and from the skin hairs and from the hairs herbs of healing and all trees and plants were born. The heart brake forth and from the heart Mind and of Mind the moon was born. The navel brake forth and from the navel Apana and of Apana Death was born. The organ of pleasure brake forth and from the organ seed and of seed the waters were born.

Chapter II

ता एता देवताः सृष्टा अस्मिन्महत्यर्णवे प्रापतन् । तमशनायापिपासा -
भ्यामन्ववार्जत् । ता एनमब्रुवन्नायतनं नः प्रजानीहि यस्मिन्न्रतिष्ठिता
अन्नमदामेति ॥ १ ॥

1. These were the Gods that He created; they fell into this great Ocean, and Hunger and Thirst leaped upon them. Then they said to Him, “Command unto us an habitation that we may dwell secure and eat of food.”

ताभ्यो गामानयत् ता अब्रुवन्न वै नोऽयमलमिति । ताभ्योऽश्वमानयत्
ता अब्रुवन्न वै नोऽयमलमिति ॥ २ ॥

2. He brought unto them the cow, but they said, “Verily, it is not sufficient for us.” He brought unto them the horse, but they said, “Verily, it is not enough for us.”

ताभ्यः पुरुषमानयत् ता अब्रुवन् सुकृतं बतेति पुरुषो वाव सुकृतम् ।
ता अब्रवीद्यथायतनं प्रविशतेति ॥ ३ ॥

3. He brought unto them Man, and they said, “O well fashioned truly! Man indeed is well and beautifully made.” Then

the Spirit said unto them, “Enter ye in each according to his habitation.”

अग्निर्वाग्भूत्वा मुखं प्राविशद् वायुः प्राणो भूत्वा नासिके प्राविश-
दादित्यश्चक्षुभूत्वाक्षिणी प्राविशद् दिशः श्रोत्रं भूत्वा कर्णौ प्राविश-
नोषधिवनस्पतयो लोमानि भूत्वा त्वचं प्राविशश्चन्द्रमा मनो भूत्वा
हृदयं प्राविशन्मृत्युरपानो भूत्वा नाभिं प्राविशदापो रेतो भूत्वा शिशं
प्राविशन् ॥ ४ ॥

4. Fire became Speech and entered into the mouth; Air became Breath and entered into the nostrils; the Sun became Sight and entered into the eyes; the Quarters became Hearing and entered into the ears; Herbs of healing and the plants and trees became Hairs and entered into the skin; the Moon became Mind and entered into the heart; Death became Apana, the lower breathing, and entered into the navel; the Waters became Seed and entered into the organ.

तमशनायापिपासे अबृतामावाभ्यामभिप्रजानीहीति ते अब्रवीदेता-
स्वेव वां देवतास्वाभजाम्येतासु भागिन्यौ करोमीति । तस्माद्यस्यै कस्यै
च देवतायै हविर्गृह्यते भागिन्यावेवास्यामशनायापिपासे भवतः ॥ ५ ॥

5. Then Hunger and Thirst said unto the Spirit, “Unto us too command an habitation.” But He said unto them, “Even among these gods do I apportion you; lo! I have made you sharers in their godhead.” Therefore to whatever god the oblation is offered, Hunger and Thirst surely have their share in the offering.

Chapter III

स ईक्षतेमे नु लोकाश्च लोकपालाश्चान्नमेभ्यः सृजा इति ॥ १ ॥

1. The Spirit thought, “These verily are my worlds and their guardians; and now will I make me food for these.”

सोऽपोऽभ्यतपत् ताभ्योऽभितपाभ्यो मूर्तिरजायत । या वै सा मूर्तिर-
जायतान्नं वै तत् ॥ २ ॥

2. The Spirit brooded in might upon the waters and from the waters brooded mightily over Form was born. Lo, all this that was born as form, is no other than Food.

तदेनत्सुष्टं पराडत्यजिघांसत् तद्वाचाजिघृक्षत् तन्नाशङ्कोद्वाचा ग्रहीतुं
स यद्दैनद् वाचाग्रहैष्यदभिव्याहृत्य हैवान्नमत्रप्स्यत् ॥ ३ ॥

3. Food being created fled back from his grasp. By speech He would have seized it, but He could not seize it by speech. Had He seized it by speech, then would a man be satisfied by merely speaking food.

तत्प्राणेनाजिघृक्षत् तन्नाशङ्कोत्प्राणेन ग्रहीतुं स यद्दैनत् प्राणेनाग्रहैष्य-
दभिप्राण्य हैवान्नमत्रप्स्यत् ॥ ४ ॥

4. By the breath He would have seized it, but He could not seize it by the breath. Had He seized it by the breath, then would a man be satisfied by merely breathing food.

तच्चक्षुषाजिघृक्षत् तन्नाशङ्कोच्चक्षुषा ग्रहीतुं स यद्दैनच्चक्षुषाग्रहैष्यद्
दृष्टा हैवान्नमत्रप्स्यत् ॥ ५ ॥

5. By the eye He would have seized it, but He could not seize it by the eye. Had He seized it by the eye, then would a man be satisfied by merely seeing food.

तच्छोत्रेणाजिघृक्षत् तन्नाशङ्कोच्छोत्रेण ग्रहीतुं स यद्दैनच्छोत्रेणाग्रहै-
ष्यच्छृत्वा हैवान्नमत्रप्स्यत् ॥ ६ ॥

6. By the ear He would have seized it, but He could not seize it by the ear. Had He seized it by the ear, then would a man be satisfied by merely hearing food.

तत्त्वचाजिघृक्षत् तन्नाशङ्कोत्त्वचा ग्रहीतुं स यद्दैनत्त्वचाग्रहैष्यत् स्पृष्टा
हैवान्नमत्रप्स्यत् ॥ ७ ॥

7. By the skin He would have seized it, but He could not seize it by the skin. Had He seized it by the skin, then would a man be satisfied by merely touching food.

तन्मनसाजिघृक्षत् तन्नाशङ्कोन्मनसा ग्रहीतुं स यद्वैनन्मनसाग्रहैष्यद्
ध्यात्वा हैवान्नमत्रप्स्यत् ॥८॥

8. By the mind He would have seized it, but He could not seize it by the mind. Had He seized it by the mind, then would a man be satisfied by merely thinking food.

तच्छ्वेनाजिघृक्षत् तन्नाशङ्कोच्छ्वेन ग्रहीतुं स यद्वैनच्छ्वेना-
ग्रहैष्यद् विसृज्य हैवान्नमत्रप्स्यत् ॥९॥

9. By the organ He would have seized it, but He could not seize it by the organ. Had He seized it by the organ, then would a man be satisfied by merely emitting food.

तदपानेनाजिघृक्षत् तदावयत् सैषोऽन्नस्य ग्रहो यद्वायुरन्नायुर्वा एष
यद्वायुः ॥१०॥

10. By the Apana He would have seized it, and it was seized. Lo this is the seizer of food which is also Breath of the Life, and therefore all that is Breath hath its life in food.

स ईक्षत कथं न्विदं मदृते स्यादिति स ईक्षत कतरेण प्रपद्या इति । स
ईक्षत यदि वाचाभिव्याहृतं यदि प्राणेनाभिप्रणितं यदि चक्षुषा दृष्टं यदि
श्रोत्रेण श्रुतं यदि त्वचा स्पृष्टं यदि मनसा ध्यातं यद्यपानेनाभ्यपानितं
यदि शिश्वेन विसृष्टमथ कोऽहमिति ॥११॥

11. The Spirit thought, "Without Me how should all this be?" and He thought, "By what way shall I enter in?" He thought also, "If utterance is by Speech, if breathing is by the Breath, if sight is by the Eye, if hearing is by the Ear, if thought is by the Mind, if the lower workings are by Apana, if emission is by the organ, who then am I?"

स एतमेव सीमानं विदार्थैतया द्वारा प्रापद्यत । सैषा विद्वतिनाम
द्वास्तदेतन्नान्दनम् । तस्य त्रय आवसथास्त्रयः स्वप्ना अयमावसथो
अयमावसथोऽयमावसथ इति ॥१२॥

12. It was this bound that He cleft, it was by this door that He entered in. 'Tis this that is called the gate of the cleaving; this is the door of His coming and here is the place of His delight.

He hath three mansions in His city, three dreams wherein He dwelleth, and of each in turn He saith, “Lo, this is my habitation” and “This is my habitation” and “This is my habitation.”

स जातो भूतान्यभिव्यैस्यत् किमिहान्यं वावदिषदिति । स एतमेव पुरुषं
ब्रह्म ततमपश्यत् । इदमदर्शमितीऽ ॥ १३ ॥

13. Now when He was born, He thought and spoke only of Nature and her creations; in this world of matter of what else should He speak or reason? Thereafter He beheld that Being who is the Brahman and the last Essence. He said, “Yea, this is He; verily, I have beheld Him.”

तस्मादिदन्दो नामेदन्दो ह वै नाम । तमिदन्दं सन्तमिन्दू इत्याचक्षते
परोक्षेण । परोक्षप्रिया इव हि देवाः परोक्षप्रिया इव हि देवाः ॥ १४ ॥

14. Therefore is He Idandra; for Idandra is the true name of Him. But though He is Idandra, they call Him Indra because of the veil of the Unrevelation; for the gods love the veil of the Unrevelation, yea, verily, the gods love the Unrevelation.

Chapter IV

पुरुषे ह वा अयमादितो गर्भो भवति यदेतद् रेतः । तदेतत् सर्वेभ्यो
इङ्गेभ्यस्तेजः संभूतमात्मन्येवात्मानं विभर्ति तद्यदा स्त्रियां सिञ्च-
त्यथैनज्जनयति तदस्य प्रथमं जन्म ॥ १ ॥

1. In the male first the unborn child becometh. This which is seed is the force and heat of him that from all parts of the creature draweth together for becoming; therefore he beareth himself in himself, and when he casteth it into the woman, 'tis himself he begetteth. And this is the first birth of the Spirit.

तत् स्त्रिया आत्मभूयं गच्छति यथा स्वमङ्गं तथा । तस्मादेनां न
हिनस्ति । सास्यैतमात्मानमत्र गतं भावयति ॥ २ ॥

2. It becometh one self with the woman, therefore it doeth her no hurt and she cherisheth this self of her husband that hath got into her womb.

सा भावयित्री भावयितव्या भवति । तं स्त्री गर्भं विभर्ति । सोऽग्रे एव कुमारं जन्मनोऽग्रेऽधिभावयति । स यत्कुमारं जन्मनोऽग्रेऽधिभावय-त्यात्मानमेव तद् भावयत्येषां लोकानां संतत्या एवं संतता हीमे लोकास्तदस्य द्वितीयं जन्म ॥ ३ ॥

3. She the cherisher must be cherished. So the woman beareth the unborn child and the man cherisheth the boy even from the beginning ere it is born. And whereas he cherisheth the boy ere it is born, 'tis verily himself that he cherisheth for the continuance of these worlds and their peoples; for 'tis even thus the thread of these worlds spinneth on unbroken. And this is the second birth of the Spirit.

सोऽस्यायमात्मा पुण्येभ्यः कर्मभ्यः प्रतिधीयते । अथास्यायमितर आत्मा कृतकृत्यो वयोगतः प्रैति । स इतः प्रयन्नेव पुनर्जायते तदस्य तृतीयं जन्म ॥ ४ ॥

4. Lo this is the spirit and self of him and he maketh it his vicegerent for the works of righteousness. Now this his other self when it hath done the works it came to do and hath reached its age, lo! it goeth hence, and even as it departeth, it is born again. And this is the third birth of the Spirit.

तदुक्तमृषिणा—
गर्भे नु सन्नन्वेषामवेदमहं देवानां जनिमानि विश्वा ।
शतं मा पुर आयसीररक्षन्नधः श्येनो जवसा निरदीयमिति ।
गर्भ एवैतच्छयानो वामदेव एवमुवाच ॥ ५ ॥

5. Therefore it was said by the sage Vamadeva: "I, Vamadeva, being yet in the womb, knew all the births of these gods and their causes. In a hundred cities of iron they held me down and kept me; I broke through them all with might & violence, like a hawk I soared up into my heavens." While yet he lay in the womb, thus said Vamadeva.

स एवं विद्वानस्माच्छ्रीरभेदाद्बृद्धं उत्कम्यामुष्मिन् स्वर्गे लोके सर्वान्
कामानास्वामृतः समभवत्समभवत् ॥ ६ ॥

6. And because he knew this, therefore when the strings of the body were snapped asunder, lo he soared forth into yonder world of Paradise & there having possessed all desires, put death behind him, yea, he put death behind him.

Chapter V

कोऽयमात्मेति वयमुपास्यहे कतरः स आत्मा । येन वा पश्यति येन
वा शृणोति येन वा गन्धानाजिप्रति येन वा वाचं व्याकरोति येन वा
स्वादु चास्वादु च विजानाति ॥ १ ॥

1. Who is this Spirit that we may adore Him? and which of all these is the Spirit? by whom one seeth or by whom one heareth or by whom one smelleth all kinds of perfume or by whom one uttereth clearness of speech or by whom one knoweth the sweet and bitter.

यदेतद्वदयं मनश्चैतत् । संज्ञानमाज्ञानं विज्ञानं प्रज्ञानं मेधा दृष्टिर्घृति-
र्मतिर्मनीषा जूतिः स्मृतिः संकल्पः क्रतुरसुः कामो वश इति । सर्वा-
प्येवैतानि प्रज्ञानस्य नामधेयानि भवन्ति ॥ २ ॥

2. This which is the heart, is mind also. Concept and will and analysis and wisdom and intellect and vision and continuity of purpose and feeling and understanding, pain and memory and volition and operation of thought and vitality and desire and passion, all these, yea all, are but names of the Eternal Wisdom.

एष ब्रह्मैष इन्द्र एष प्रजापतिरेते सर्वे देवा इमानि च पञ्च महाभूतानि
पृथिवी वायुराकाश आपो ज्योतींषीत्येतानीमानि च क्षुद्रमिश्रणीव ।
बीजानीतराणि चेतराणि चाण्डजानि च जारुजानि च स्वेदजानि
चोदिभज्जानि चाश्चा गावः पुरुषा हस्तिनो यत्किंचेदं प्राणि जडमं च
पतन्त्रि च यच्च स्थावरं सर्वं तत् प्रज्ञानेत्रं प्रज्ञाने प्रतिष्ठितं प्रज्ञानेत्रो
लोकः प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठा प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म ॥ ३ ॥

3. This creating Brahma; this ruling Indra; this Prajapati Father of his peoples; all these Gods and these five elemental substances, even earth, air, ether, water and the shining principles; and these great creatures and those small; and seeds of either sort; and things egg-born and things sweat-born and things born of the womb and plants that sprout; and horses and cattle and men and elephants; yea, whatsoever thing here breatheth and all that moveth and everything that hath wings and whatso moveth not; by Wisdom all these are guided and have their firm abiding in Wisdom. For Wisdom is the eye of the world, Wisdom is the sure foundation, Wisdom is Brahman Eternal.

स एतेन प्रज्ञेनात्मनास्माल्लोकादुत्कम्यामुष्मिन् स्वर्गे लोके सर्वान्
कामानास्वामृतः समभवत्समभवत् ॥ ४ ॥

4. By the strength of the wise and seeing Self the sage having soared up from this world ascended into his other world of Paradise; and there having possessed desire, put death behind him, yea, he put death behind him.

Taittiriya Upanishad

Shiksha Valli

Chapter I

हरिः ॐ । शं नो मित्रः शं वरुणः । शं नो भवत्वर्यमा । शं न इन्द्रो
बृहस्पतिः । शं नो विष्णुरुक्मः । नमो ब्रह्मणे । नमस्ते वायो । त्वमेव
प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्मासि । त्वामेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्म वदिष्यामि । ऋतं वदिष्यामि ।
सत्यं वदिष्यामि । तन्मामवतु । तद्वक्तारमवतु । अवतु माम् । अवतु
वक्तारम् । ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Hari OM. Be peace to us Mitra. Be peace to us Varouna. Be peace to us Aryaman. Be peace to us Indra & Brihaspati. May far-striding Vishnu be peace to us. Adoration to the Eternal. Adoration to thee, O Vaiou. Thou, thou art the visible Eternal and as the visible Eternal I will declare thee. I will declare Righteousness! I will declare Truth! May that protect me! May that protect the Speaker! Yea, may it protect me! May it protect the Speaker. OM Peace! Peace! Peace!

Chapter II

ॐ शीक्षां व्याख्यास्यामः । वर्णः स्वरः । मात्रा बलम् । साम संतानः ।
इत्युक्तः शीक्षाध्यायः ॥

OM. We will expound Shiksha, the elements. Syllable and Accent, Pitch and Effort, Even Tone and Continuity, in these six we have declared the chapter of the elements.

Chapter III

सह नौ यशः । सह नौ ब्रह्मवर्चसम् । अथातः संहिताया उपनिषदं
व्याख्यास्यामः । पञ्चस्वधिकरणेषु । अधिलोकमधिज्यौतिषमधिविद्य -
मधिप्रजमध्यात्मम् । ता महासंहिता इत्याचक्षते ।

अथाधिलोकम् । पृथिवी पूर्वरूपम् । द्यौरुत्तररूपम् । आकाशः संधिः । वायुः संधानम् । इत्यधिलोकम् ।
 अथाधिज्यौतिषम् । अग्निः पूर्वरूपम् । आदित्य उत्तररूपम् ।
 आपः संधिः । वैद्युतः संधानम् । इत्यधिज्यौतिषम् ।
 अथाधिविद्यम् । आचार्यः पूर्वरूपम् । अन्तेवास्युत्तररूपम् । विद्या संधिः । प्रवचनं संधानम् । इत्यधिविद्यम् ।
 अथाधिप्रजम् । माता पूर्वरूपम् । पितोत्तररूपम् । प्रजा संधिः ।
 प्रजननं संधानम् । इत्यधिप्रजम् ।
 अथाध्यात्मम् । अधरा हनुः पूर्वरूपम् । उत्तरा हनुरुत्तररूपम् ।
 वाक् संधिः । जिह्वा संधानम् । इत्यध्यात्मम् ।
 इतीमा महासंहिताः । य एवमेता महासंहिता व्याख्याता वेद ।
 संधीयते प्रजया पशुभिः । ब्रह्मवर्चसेनान्नाद्येन सुवर्गयेण लोकेन ॥

Together may we attain glory, together to the radiance of holiness. Hereupon we will expound next the secret meaning of Sanhita whereof there are five capitals; Concerning the Worlds; Concerning the Shining Fires; Concerning the Knowledge; Concerning Progeny; Concerning Self. These are called the great Sanhitas.

Now concerning the worlds. Earth is the first form; the heavens are the second form; ether is the linking; air is the joint of the linking. Thus far concerning the worlds.

Next concerning the shining fires. Fire is the first form; the Sun is the latter form; the waters are the linking; electricity is the joint of the linking. Thus far concerning the shining fires.

Next concerning the Knowledge. The Master is the first form; the disciple is the latter form; Knowledge is the linking; exposition is the joint of the linking. Thus far concerning the Knowledge.

Next concerning progeny. The mother is the first form; the father is the latter form; progeny is the linking; act of procreation is the joint of the linking. Thus far concerning progeny.

Next concerning Self. The upper jaw is the first form; the lower jaw is the latter form; speech is the linking; the tongue is the joint of the linking. Thus far concerning Self.

These are the great Sanhitas. He who knoweth thus the great Sanhitas as we have expounded them, to him are linked progeny

and wealth of cattle and the radiance of holiness and food and all that is of food and the world of his high estate in heaven.

Chapter IV

यश्छन्दसामृषभो विश्वरूपः । छन्दोभ्योऽध्यमृतात्संवभूव । स मेन्द्रो
मेधया स्पृणोतु । अमृतस्य देव धारणे भूयासम् । शरीरं मे विचर्षणम् ।
जिह्वा मे मधुमत्तमा । कणाभ्यां भूरि विश्रुतम् । ब्रह्मणः कोशोऽसि
मेधया पिहितः । श्रुतं मे गोपाय ।

आवहन्ती वितन्वाना । कुर्वाणाचीरमात्मनः । वासांसि मम
गावश्च । अन्नपाने च सर्वदा । ततो मे श्रियमावह । लोमशां पशुभिः
सह स्वाहा ।

आ मा यन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा ।
वि मायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा ।
प्र मायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा ।
दमायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा ।
शमायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा ।
यशो जनेऽसानि स्वाहा ।
श्रेयान् वस्यसोऽसानि स्वाहा ।
तं त्वा भग प्रविशानि स्वाहा ।
स मा भग प्रविश स्वाहा ।
तस्मिन् सहस्रशाखे । नि भगाहं त्वयि मृजे स्वाहा ।
यथापः प्रवता यन्ति । यथा मासा अहर्जरम् । एवं मां ब्रह्म-
चारिणः । धातरायन्तु सर्वतः स्वाहा ।
प्रतिवेशोऽसि प्र मा भाहि प्र मा पद्यस्व ॥

The bull of the hymns of Veda whose visible form is all this Universe, he above the Vedas who sprang from that which is deathless, may Indra increase intellect unto me for my strengthening. O God, may I become a vessel of immortality. May my body be swift to all works, may my tongue drop pure honey. May I hear vast and manifold lore with my ears. O Indra, thou art the sheath of the Eternal and the veil that the workings of brain have drawn over Him; preserve whole unto me the sacred lore that I have studied.

She bringeth unto me wealth and extendeth it, yea, she

maketh speedily my own raiment and cattle and drink and food now and always; therefore carry to me Fortune of much fleecy wealth and cattle with her. Swaha!

May the Brahmacharins come unto me. Swaha!

From here and there may the Brahmacharins come unto me. Swaha!

May the Brahmacharins set forth unto me. Swaha!

May the Brahmacharins attain self-mastery. Swaha!

May the Brahmacharins attain to peace of soul. Swaha!

May I be a name among the folk! Swaha!

May I be the first of the wealthy! Swaha!

O Glorious Lord, into That which is Thou may I enter. Swaha!

Do thou also enter into me, O Shining One. Swaha!

Thou art a river with a hundred branching streams, O Lord of Grace, in thee may I wash me clean. Swaha!

As the waters of a river pour down the steep, as the months of the year hasten to the old age of days, O Lord that cherisheth, so may the Brahmacharins come to me from all the regions. Swaha!

O Lord, thou art my neighbour, thou dwellest very near me. Come to me, be my light and sun.

Chapter V

भूर्भुवः सुवरिति वा एतास्तिस्रो व्याहृतयः । तासामु ह स्मैतां चतुर्थम् ।
माहाचमस्यः प्रवेदयते । मह इति । तद् ब्रह्म । स आत्मा । अङ्गान्यन्या
देवताः ।

भूरिति वा अयं लोकः । भुव इत्यन्तरिक्षम् । सुवरित्यसौ लोकः ।
मह इत्यादित्यः । आदित्येन वाव सर्वे लोका महीयन्ते ।

भूरिति वा अग्निः । भुव इति वायुः । सुवरित्यादित्यः । मह इति
चन्द्रमाः । चन्द्रमसा वाव सर्वाणि ज्योतीर्षि महीयन्ते ।

भूरिति वा ऋचः । भुव इति सामानि । सुवरिति यजूर्षि । मह
इति ब्रह्म । ब्रह्मणा वाव सर्वे वेदा महीयन्ते ।

भूरिति वै प्राणः । भुव इत्यपानः । सुवरिति व्यानः । मह इत्यन्नम् ।
अन्नेन वाव सर्वे प्राणा महीयन्ते ।

ता वा एताश्चतमस्तुधा । चतस्रश्चतस्रो व्याहृतयः । ता यो वेद ।
स वेद ब्रह्म । सर्वेऽस्मै देवा बलिमावहन्ति ॥

Bhûr, Bhuvan and Suvar, these are the three Words of His naming. Verily the Rishi Mahachamasya made known a fourth to these, which is Mahas. It is Brahman, it is the Self, and the other gods are his members.

Bhûr, it is this world; Bhuvan, it is the sky; Suvar, it is the other world: but Mahas is the Sun. By the Sun all these worlds increase and prosper.

Bhûr, it is Fire; Bhuvan, it is Air; Suvar, it is the Sun: but Mahas is the Moon. By the Moon all these shining fires increase and prosper.

Bhûr, it is the hymns of the Rigveda; Bhuvan, it is the hymns of the Sâma; Suvar, it is the hymns of the Yajur: but Mahas is the Eternal. By the Eternal all these Vedas increase and prosper.

Bhûr, it is the main breath; Bhuvan, it is the lower breath; Suvar, it is the breath pervasor: but Mahas is food. By food all these breaths increase and prosper.

These are the four & they are fourfold; — four Words of His naming and each is four again. He who knoweth these knoweth the Eternal, and to him all the Gods carry the offering.

Chapter VI

स य एषोऽन्तर्हृदय आकाशः । तस्मिन्नयं पुरुषो मनोमयः । अमृतो
हिरण्मयः । अन्तरेण तालुके । य एष स्तन इवावलम्बते । सेन्द्रयोनिः ।
यत्रासौ केशान्तो विवर्तते । व्यपोद्धृ शीर्षकपाले ।

भूरित्यग्नौ प्रतितिष्ठति । भुव इति वायौ । सुवरित्यादित्ये ।
मह इति ब्रह्मणि । आप्नोति स्वाराज्यम् । आप्नोति मनसस्पतिम् ।
वाक्पतिश्चक्षुष्टिः । श्रोत्रपतिर्विज्ञानपतिः । एतत्ततो भवति । आकाश -
शरीरं ब्रह्म । सत्यात्म प्राणारामं मनआनन्दम् । शान्तिसमृद्धमृतम् ।
इति प्राचीनयोग्योपास्त्व ॥

Lo this heaven of ether which is in the heart within, there dwelleth the Being who is all Mind, the radiant & golden Immortal. Between the two palates, this that hangeth down like

the breast of a woman, is the womb of Indra; yea where the hair at its end whirleth round like an eddy, there it divideth the skull and pusheth through it.

As Bhûr He is established in Agni, as Bhavar in Vaiou, as Suvar in the Sun, as Mahas in the Eternal. He attaineth to the kingdom of Himself; He attaineth to be the Lord of Mind; He becometh Lord of Speech, Lord of Sight, Lord of Hearing, Lord of the Knowledge. Thereafter this too He becometh,— the Eternal whose body is all ethereal space, whose soul is Truth, whose bliss is in Mind, who taketh His ease in Prana, the Rich in Peace, the Immortal. As such, O son of the ancient Yoga, do thou adore Him.

Chapter VII

पृथिव्यन्तरिक्षं द्यौर्दिशोऽवान्तरदिशः । अग्निर्वायुरादित्यश्चन्द्रमा नक्षत्राणि । आप ओषधयो वनस्पतय आकाश आत्मा । इत्यधिभूतम् ।

अथाध्यात्मम् । प्राणो व्यानोऽपान उदानः समानः । चक्षुः श्रोत्रं मनो वाक् त्वक् । चर्म मांसं स्नावास्थि मज्जा । एतदधिविधाय ऋषिरवोचत् । पाङ्गं वा इदं सर्वम् । पाङ्गेनैव पाङ्गं स्पृणोतीति ॥

Earth, sky, heaven, the quarters and the lesser quarters; Fire, Air, Sun, Moon and the Constellations; Waters, herbs of healing, trees of the forest, ether and the Self in all; these three concerning this outer creation.

Then concerning the Self. The main breath, the middle breath, the nether breath, the upper breath and the breath pervasor; eye, ear, mind, speech and the skin; hide, flesh, muscle, bone and marrow. Thus the Rishi divided them and said, “In sets of five is this universe; five and five with five and five He relateth.”

Chapter VIII

ओमिति ब्रह्म । ओमितीदं सर्वम् । ओमित्येतदनुकृतिर्ह स्म वा अप्यो श्रावयेत्याश्रावयन्ति । ओमिति सामानि गायन्ति । ओं श्रोमिति शस्त्राणि शंसन्ति । ओमित्यध्वर्युः प्रतिगरं प्रतिगृणाति । ओमिति ब्रह्मा

प्रसौति । ओमित्यग्निहोत्रमनुजानाति । ओमिति ब्राह्मणः प्रवक्ष्यन्नाह
ब्रह्मोपाद्वानीति । ब्रह्मैवोपाद्वाति ॥

OM is the Eternal, OM is all this universe. OM is the syllable of assent: saying OM! let us hear, they begin the citation. With OM they sing the hymns of the Sama; with OM SHOM they pronounce the Shastra. With OM the priest officiating at the sacrifice sayeth the response. With OM Brahma beginneth creation (or With OM the chief priest giveth sanction). With OM one sanctioneth the burnt offering. With OM the Brahmin ere he expound the Knowledge, crieth "May I attain the Eternal." The Eternal verily he attaineth.

Chapter IX

ऋतं च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च । सत्यं च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च । तपश्च
स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च । दमश्च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च । शमश्च स्वाध्याय-
प्रवचने च । अग्नयश्च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च । अग्निहोत्रं च स्वाध्याय-
प्रवचने च । अतिथयश्च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च । मानुषं च स्वाध्याय-
प्रवचने च । प्रजा च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च । प्रजनश्च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च ।
प्रजातिश्च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च । सत्यमिति सत्यवचा राथीतरः । तप
इति तपोनित्यः पौरुषिष्ठिः । स्वाध्यायप्रवचने एवेति नाको मौद्रित्यः ।
तद्विं तपस्तद्विं तपः ॥

Righteousness with the study & teaching of Veda; Truth with the study and teaching of Veda; askesis with the study and teaching of Veda; self-mastery with the study and teaching of Veda. Peace of soul with the study and teaching of Veda. The household fires with the study and teaching of Veda. The burnt offering with the study and teaching of Veda. Progeny with the study and teaching of Veda. Act of procreation with the study and teaching of Veda. Children of thy children with the study and teaching of Veda — *these duties*. "Truth is first" said the truth-speaker, the Rishi son of Rathitar. "Askesis is first" said the constant in austerity, the Rishi son of Purushishta. "Study and teaching of Veda is first" said Naka son of Mudgala. For this too is austerity and this too is askesis.

Chapter X

अहं वृक्षस्य रेरिवा । कीर्तिः पृष्ठं गिरेरिव । ऊर्ध्वपवित्रो वाजिनीव स्वमृतमस्मि । द्रविणं सर्वर्चसम् । सुमेधा अमृतोऽक्षितः । इति त्रिशङ्को-र्वदानुवचनम् ।

“I am He that moveth the Tree of the Universe & my glory is like the shoulders of a high mountain. I am lofty and pure like sweet nectar in the strong, I am the shining riches of the world, I am the deep thinker, the deathless One who decayeth not from the beginning.” This is Trishanku’s voicing of Veda and the hymn of his self-knowledge.

Chapter XI

वेदमनूच्याचार्योऽन्तेवासिनमनुशास्ति ।

सत्यं वद । धर्मं चर । स्वाध्यायान्मा प्रमदः । आचार्याय प्रियं धनमाहृत्य प्रजातन्तुं मा व्यवच्छेत्पीः । सत्यान्न प्रमदितव्यम् । धर्मान्न प्रमदितव्यम् । कुशलान्न प्रमदितव्यम् । भूत्यै न प्रमदितव्यम् । स्वाध्यायप्रवचनाभ्यां न प्रमदितव्यम् ।

देवपितृकार्याभ्यां न प्रमदितव्यम् । मातृदेवो भव । पितृदेवो भव । आचार्यदेवो भव । अतिथिदेवो भव । यान्यनवद्यानि कर्माणि । तानि सेवितव्यानि । नो इतराणि । यान्यस्माकं सुचरितानि । तानि त्वयोपास्यानि । नो इतराणि ।

ये के चास्मच्छेयांसो ब्राह्मणाः । तेषां त्वयासनेन प्रश्वसितव्यम् । अद्युया देयम् । अशद्युयाऽदेयम् । श्रिया देयम् । ह्रिया देयम् । भिया देयम् । संविदा देयम् । अथ यदि ते कर्मविचिकित्सा वा वृत्तविचिकित्सा वा स्यात् । ये तत्र ब्राह्मणाः संमर्शिनः । युक्ता आयुक्ताः । अलूक्षा धर्मकामाः स्युः । यथा ते तत्र वर्तेरन् । तथा तत्र वर्तेथाः । अथाभ्यां स्यातेषु । ये तत्र ब्राह्मणाः संमर्शिनः । युक्ता आयुक्ताः । अलूक्षा धर्मकामाः स्युः । यथा ते तेषु वर्तेरन् । तथा तेषु वर्तेथाः ।

एष आदेशः । एष उपदेशः । एषा वेदोपनिषत् । एतदनुशासनम् । एवमुपासितव्यम् । एवमु चैतद्वुपास्यम् ॥

When the Master hath declared Veda, then he giveth the commandments to his disciple.

Speak truth, walk in the way of thy duty, neglect not the

study of Veda. When thou hast brought to the Master the wealth that he desireth, thou shalt not cut short the long thread of thy race. Thou shalt not be negligent of truth; thou shalt not be negligent of thy duty; thou shalt not be negligent of welfare; thou shalt not be negligent towards thy increase and thy thriving; thou shalt not be negligent of the study & teaching of Veda.

Thou shalt not be negligent of thy works unto the Gods or thy works unto the Fathers. Let thy father be unto thee as thy God and thy mother as thy Goddess whom thou adorest. Serve the Master as a God and as a God the stranger within thy dwelling. The works that are without blame before the people, thou shalt do these with diligence and no others. The deeds we have done that are good and righteous, thou shalt practise these as a religion and no others.

Whosoever are better and nobler than we among the Brahmins, thou shalt refresh with a seat to honour them. Thou shalt give with faith and reverence; without faith thou shalt not give. Thou shalt give with shame, thou shalt give with fear; thou shalt give with fellow-feeling. Moreover if thou doubt of thy course or of thy action, then whatsoever Brahmins be there who are careful thinkers, devout, not moved by others, lovers of virtue, not severe or cruel, even as they do in that thing, so do thou. Then as to men accused & arraigned by their fellows, whatsoever Brahmins be there who are careful thinkers, devout, not moved by others, lovers of virtue, not severe or cruel, even as they are towards these, so be thou.

This is the law & the teaching. These are the Commandments. In such wise shalt thou practise religion, yea, verily in such wise do ever religiously.

Chapter XII

शं नो मित्रः शं वरुणः । शं नो भवत्वर्यमा । शं न इन्द्रो बृहस्पतिः । शं नो विष्णुरुक्मः । नमो ब्रह्मणे । नमस्ते वायो । त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्मा-सि । त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्मावादिषम् । कृतमवादिषम् । सत्यमवादिषम् ।

तन्मामावीत् । तद्वक्तारमावीत् । आवीन्माम् । आवीद्वक्तारम् । ॐ
शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः । हरिः ॐ ॥

Be peace to us Mitra. Be peace to us Varouna. Be peace to us Aryaman. Be peace to us Indra and Brihaspati. May far-striding Vishnu be peace to us. Adoration to the Eternal. Adoration to thee, O Vaiou. Thou, thou art the visible Eternal & as the visible Eternal I have declared thee. I have declared Righteousness; I have declared Truth. That has protected me. That has protected the Speaker. Yea it protected me; it protected the Speaker. OM. Peace. Peace. Peace. Hari OM.

Brahmananda Valli

हरिः ॐ । सह नाववतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु । सह वीर्यं करवावहै । तेजस्वि
नावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै । ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Hari OM. Together may He protect us, together may He possess us, together may we make unto us strength and virility. May our study be full to us of light and power. May we never hate. OM! Peace, peace, peace.

Chapter I

ॐ ब्रह्मविदाप्नोति परम् । तदेषाभ्युक्ता । सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म । यो
वेद निहितं गुहायां परमे व्योमन् । सोऽश्रुते सर्वान्कामान् सह । ब्रह्मणा
विपश्चित्तति ।

तस्माद्वा एतस्मादात्मन आकाशः संभूतः । आकाशाद् वायुः ।
वायोरग्निः । अग्नेरापः । अदध्यः पृथिवी । पृथिव्या ओषधयः ।
ओषधीभ्योऽन्नम् । अन्नात्पुरुषः । स वा एष पुरुषोऽन्नरसमयः । तस्येद-
मेव शिरः । अयं दक्षिणः पक्षः । अयमुत्तरः पक्षः । अयमात्मा । इदं
पुच्छं प्रतिष्ठा । तदप्येष श्लोको भवति ॥

OM. The knower of Brahman attaineth the Highest; for this is the verse that was declared of old, “Brahman is Truth, Brahman is Knowledge, Brahman is the Infinite, he that findeth Him hidden in the cavern heart of being; in the highest heaven of His creatures, lo he enjoyeth all desire and he abideth with the Eternal, even with that cognisant and understanding Spirit.”

This is the Self, the Spirit, and from the Spirit ether was born; and from the ether, air; and from the air, fire; and from the fire, the waters; and from the waters, earth; and from the earth, herbs and plants; and from the herbs and plants, food; and from food man was born. Verily, man, this human being, is made of the essential substance of food. And this that we see is the head of him, and this is his right side and this is his left; and

this is his spirit & the self of him; and this is his lower member whereon he resteth abidingly. Whereof this is the Scripture.

Chapter II

अन्नादौ प्रजाः प्रजायन्ते । याः काञ्च पृथिवीं श्रिताः । अथो अन्नेनैव जीवन्ति । अथैनदपि यन्त्यन्ततः । अन्नं हि भूतानां ज्येष्ठम् । तस्मात् सर्वौषधमुच्यते । सर्वं वै तेऽन्नमाप्नुवन्ति । येऽन्नं ब्रह्मोपासते । अन्नं हि भूतानां ज्येष्ठम् । तस्मात्सर्वौषधमुच्यते । अन्नाद् भूतानि जायन्ते । जातान्यन्नेन वर्धन्ते । अद्यतेऽति च भूतानि । तस्मादन्नं तदुच्यत इति । तस्माद्वा एतस्मादन्नरसमयात् । अन्योऽन्तर आत्मा प्राणमयः । तेनैष पूर्णः । स वा एष पुरुषविध एव । तस्य पुरुषविधताम् । अन्वयं पुरुषविधः । तस्य प्राण एव शिरः । व्यानो दक्षिणः पक्षः । अपान उत्तरः पक्षः । आकाश आत्मा । पृथिवी पुच्छं प्रतिष्ठा । तदप्येष श्लोको भवति ॥

Verily all sorts and races of creatures that have their refuge upon earth, are begotten from food; thereafter they live also by food and 'tis to food again that they return at the end and last. For food is the eldest of created things and therefore they name it the Green Stuff of the Universe. Verily they who worship the Eternal as food, attain the mastery of food to the uttermost; for food is the eldest of created things and therefore they name it the Green Stuff of the Universe. From food all creatures are born and being born they increase by food. Lo it is eaten and it eateth; yea it devoureth the creatures that feed upon it, therefore it is called food from the eating.

Now there is a second and inner Self which is other than this that is of the substance of food; and it is made of the vital stuff called Prana. And the Self of Prana filleth the Self of food. Now the Self of Prana is made in the image of a man; according as is the human image of the other, so is it in the image of the man. The main Breath is the head of him, the breath pervasor is his right side and the lower breath is his left side; ether is his spirit which is the self of him, earth is his lower member whereon he resteth abidingly. Whereof this is the Scripture.

Chapter III

प्राणं देवा अनु प्राणन्ति । मनुष्याः पशवश्च ये । प्राणो हि भूतानामायुः ।
तस्मात्सर्वायुषमुच्यते । सर्वमेव त आयुर्यन्ति । ये प्राणं ब्रह्मोपासते ।
प्राणो हि भूतानामायुः । तस्मात्सर्वायुषमुच्यत इति । तस्यैष एव शारीर
आत्मा । यः पूर्वस्य ।

तस्माद्वा एतस्मात्प्राणमयात् । अन्योऽन्तर आत्मा मनोमयः ।
तेनैष पूर्णः । स वा एष पुरुषविध एव । तस्य पुरुषविधताम् । अन्वयं
पुरुषविधः । तस्य यजुरेव शिरः । ऋगदक्षिणः पक्षः । सामोत्तरः पक्षः ।
आदेश आत्मा । अथर्वाङ्गिरसः पुच्छं प्रतिष्ठा । तदप्येष श्लोको भवति ॥

The Gods live and breathe under the dominion of Prana and men and all these that are beasts; for Prana is the life of created things & therefore they name it the Life-Stuff of the All. Verily they who worship the Eternal as Prana attain mastery of Life to the uttermost; for Prana is the life of created things and therefore they name it the Life-Stuff of the All. And this Self of Prana is the soul in the body of the former one which was of food.

Now there is yet a second and inner Self which is other than this that is of Prana, and it is made of Mind. And the Self of Mind filleth the Self of Prana. Now the Self of Mind is made in the image of a man; according as is the human image of the other, so is it in the image of the man. Yajur is the head of him and the Rigveda is his right side and the Samaveda is his left side: the Commandment is his spirit which is the self of him, Atharvan Ungirus is his lower member whereon he resteth abidingly. Whereof this is the Scripture.

Chapter IV

यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते । अप्राप्य मनसा सह । आनन्दं ब्रह्मणो विद्वान् ।
न विभेति कदाचनेति । तस्यैष एव शारीर आत्मा । यः पूर्वस्य ।

तस्माद्वा एतस्मान्मनोमयात् । अन्योऽन्तर आत्मा विज्ञानमयः ।
तेनैष पूर्णः । स वा एष पुरुषविध एव । तस्य पुरुषविधताम् । अन्वयं
पुरुषविधः । तस्य श्रद्धैव शिरः । ऋतं दक्षिणः पक्षः । सत्यमुत्तरः पक्षः ।
योग आत्मा । महः पुच्छं प्रतिष्ठा । तदप्येष श्लोको भवति ॥

The delight of the Eternal from which words turn away without attaining and the mind also returneth baffled, who knoweth the delight of the Eternal? He shall fear nought now or hereafter. And this Self of Mind is the soul in the body to the former one which was of Prana.

Now there is yet a second and inner Self which is other than this which is of Mind and it is made of Knowledge. And the Self of Knowledge filleth the Self of Mind. Now the Knowledge-Self is made in the image of a man; according as is the human image of the other, so is it in the image of the man. Faith is the head of him, Law is his right side, Truth is his left side; Yoga is his spirit which is the self of him; Mahas (the material world) is his lower member whereon he resteth abidingly. Whereof this is the Scripture.

Chapter V

विज्ञानं यज्ञं तनुते । कर्माणि तनुतेऽपि च । विज्ञानं देवाः सर्वे । ब्रह्म ज्येष्ठमुपासते । विज्ञानं ब्रह्म चेद्वेद । तस्माच्चेन्न प्रमाद्यति । शरीरे पाप्मनो हित्वा । सर्वान्कामान् समश्वत इति । तस्यैष एव शारीर आत्मा । यः पूर्वस्य ।

तस्माद्वा एतस्माद्विज्ञानमयात् । अन्योऽन्तर आत्मानन्दमयः । तेनैष पूर्णः । स वा एष पुरुषविध एव । तस्य पुरुषविधताम् । अन्वयं पुरुषविधः । तस्य प्रियमेव शिरः । मोदो दक्षिणः पक्षः । प्रमोद उत्तरः पक्षः । आनन्द आत्मा । ब्रह्म पुच्छं प्रतिष्ठा । तदप्येष श्लोको भवति ॥

Knowledge spreadeth the feast of sacrifice and knowledge spreadeth also the feast of works; all the gods offer adoration to him as to Brahman and the Elder of the Universe. For if one worship Brahman as the knowledge and if one swerve not from it neither falter, then he casteth sin from him in this body and tasteth all desire. And this Self of Knowledge is the soul in the body to the former one which was of Mind.

Now there is yet a second and inner self which is other than this which is of Knowledge and it is fashioned out of Bliss. And the Self of Bliss filleth the Self of Knowledge. Now the Bliss

Self is made in the image of a man; according as is the human image of the other, so is it made in the image of the man. Love is the head of Him; Joy is His right side; pleasure is His left side; Bliss is His spirit which is the self of Him; the Eternal is His lower member wherein He resteth abidingly. Whereof this is the Scripture.

Chapter VI

असन्नेव स भवति । असद् ब्रह्मेति वेद चेत् । अस्ति ब्रह्मेति चेद्वेद् ।
सन्तमेनं ततो विदुरिति । तस्यैष एव शारीर आत्मा । यः पूर्वस्य ।
अथातोऽनुप्रश्नाः । उताविद्वानमुं लोकं प्रेत्य । कश्चन गच्छतीऽ । आहो
विद्वानमुं लोकं प्रेत्य । कश्चित्समश्वताऽ उ ।

सोऽकामयत । बहु स्यां प्रजायेयेति । स तपोऽतप्यत । स
तपस्तस्वा । इदं सर्वमसृजत । यदिदं किंच । तत्सृष्टा । तदेवानुप्राविशत् ।
तदनुप्रविश्य । सच्च त्यच्चाभवत । निरुक्तं चानिरुक्तं च । निलयं
चानिलयं च । विज्ञानं चाविज्ञानं च । सत्यं चानृतं च सत्यमभवत् ।
यदिदं किंच । तत्सत्यमित्याचक्षते । तदप्येष श्लोको भवति ॥

One becometh as the unexisting, if he know the Eternal as negation; but if one knoweth of the Eternal that He is, then men know him for the saint & the one reality. And this Self of Bliss is the soul in the body to the former one which was of Knowledge. And thereupon there arise these questions. "When one who hath not the Knowledge, passeth over to that other world, doth any such travel farther? Or when one who knoweth, hath passed over to the other world, doth any such enjoy possession?"

The Spirit desired of old "I would be manifold for the birth of peoples." Therefore He concentrated all Himself in thought, and by the force of His brooding He created all this universe, yea all whatsoever existeth. Now when He had brought it forth, He entered into that He had created, He entering in became the Is here and the May Be there; He became that which is defined and that which hath no feature; He became this housed thing and that houseless; He became Knowledge and He became Ignorance; He became Truth and He became falsehood. Yea He

became all truth, even whatsoever here existeth. Therefore they say of Him that He is Truth. Whereof this is the Scripture.

Chapter VII

असद्वा इदमग्र आसीत् । ततो वै सदजायत । तदात्मानं स्वयम-
कुरुत । तस्मात् तत्सुकृतमुच्यते इति । यद्वै तत्सुकृतम् । रसो वै
सः । रसं ह्येवायं लब्ध्यानन्दी भवति । को ह्येवान्यात्कः प्राण्यात् ।
यदेष आकाश आनन्दो न स्यात् । एष ह्येवानन्दयाति । यदा ह्यैवैष
एतस्मिन्नदृश्येऽनात्म्येऽनिरुक्तेऽनिलयनेऽभयं प्रतिष्ठां विन्दते । अथ
सोऽभयं गतो भवति । यदा ह्यैवैष एतस्मिन्नदरमन्तरं कुरुते । अथ
तस्य भयं भवति । तत् त्वेव भयं विदुषोऽमन्वानस्य । तदप्येष श्लोको
भवति ॥

In the beginning all this Universe was Non-Existent and Unmanifest, from which this manifest Existence was born. Itself created itself; none other created it. Therefore they say of it the well and beautifully made. Lo this that is well and beautifully made, verily it is no other than the delight behind existence. When he hath gotten him this delight, then it is that this creature becometh a thing of bliss; for who could labour to draw in the breath or who could have strength to breathe it out, if there were not that Bliss in the heaven of his heart, the ether within his being? It is He that is the fountain of bliss; for when the Spirit that is within us findeth his refuge and firm foundation in the Invisible Bodiless Undefinable and Unhoused Eternal, then he hath passed beyond the reach of Fear. But when the Spirit that is within us maketh for himself even a little difference in the Eternal, then he hath fear, yea the Eternal himself becometh a terror to such a knower who thinketh not. Whereof this is the Scripture.

Chapter VIII

भीषास्माद् वातः पवते । भीषोदेति सूर्यः । भीषास्मादग्निश्चेन्द्रश्च ।
मृत्युर्धावति पञ्चम इति । सैषानन्दस्य मीमांसा भवति । युवा स्यात्
साधुयुवाध्यायकः । आशिष्टो दृढिष्टो बलिष्टः । तस्येयं पृथिवी सर्वा

वित्तस्य पूर्णा स्यात् । स एको मानुष आनन्दः । ते ये शतं मानुषा आनन्दाः । स एको मनुष्यगन्धर्वाणामानन्दः । श्रोत्रियस्य चाकामहतस्य । ते ये शतं मनुष्यगन्धर्वाणामानन्दाः । स एको देवगन्धर्वाणामानन्दः । श्रोत्रियस्य चाकामहतस्य । ते ये शतं देवगन्धर्वाणामानन्दाः । स एकः पितृणां चिरलोकलोकानामानन्दः । श्रोत्रियस्य चाकामहतस्य । ते ये शतं पितृणां चिरलोकलोकानामानन्दाः । स एक आजानजानां देवानामानन्दः । श्रोत्रियस्य चाकामहतस्य । ते ये शतमाजानजानां देवानामानन्दाः । स एकः कर्मदेवानां देवानामानन्दः । ये कर्मणा देवानपियन्ति । श्रोत्रियस्य चाकामहतस्य । ते ये शतं कर्मदेवानां देवानामानन्दाः । स एको देवानामानन्दः । श्रोत्रियस्य चाकामहतस्य । ते ये शतं देवानामानन्दाः । स एक इन्द्रस्यानन्दः । श्रोत्रियस्य चाकामहतस्य । ते ये शतमिन्द्रस्यानन्दाः । स एको वृहस्पतेरानन्दः । श्रोत्रियस्य चाकामहतस्य । ते ये शतं वृहस्पतेरानन्दाः । स एकः प्रजापतेरानन्दः । श्रोत्रियस्य चाकामहतस्य । ते ये शतं प्रजापतेरानन्दाः । स एको ब्रह्मण आनन्दः । श्रोत्रियस्य चाकामहतस्य ।

स यश्चायं पुरुषे । यश्चासावादित्ये । स एकः । स य एवंवित् । अस्मात्प्रोकात् प्रेत्य । एतमन्नमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रामति । एतं प्राणमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रामति । एतं मनोमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रामति । एतं विज्ञानमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रामति । एतमानन्दमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रामति । तदप्येष श्लोको भवति ॥

Through the fear of Him the Wind bloweth; through the fear of Him the Sun riseth; through the fear of Him Indra and Agni and Death hasten in their courses. Behold this exposition of the Bliss to which ye shall hearken. Let there be a young man, excellent & lovely in his youth, a great student; let him have fair manners and a most firm heart and great strength of body, and let all this wide earth be full of wealth for his enjoying. That is the measure of bliss of one human being. Now a hundred and a hundredfold of the human measure of bliss, is one bliss of men that have become angels in heaven. And this is the bliss of the Vedawise whose soul the blight of desire not toucheth. A hundred and a hundredfold of this measure of angelic bliss is one bliss of Gods that are angels in heaven. And this is the bliss of the Vedawise whose soul the blight of desire not toucheth. A hundred and a hundredfold of this measure of divine angelic bliss is one bliss of the Fathers whose world of heaven is their world for ever. And

this is the bliss of the Vedawise whose soul the blight of desire not toucheth. A hundred and a hundredfold of this measure of bliss of the Fathers whose worlds are for ever, is one bliss of the Gods who are born as Gods in heaven. And this is the bliss of the Vedawise whose soul the blight of desire not toucheth. A hundred and a hundredfold of this measure of bliss of the firstborn in heaven, is one bliss of the Gods of work who are Gods, for by the strength of their deeds they depart and are Gods in heaven. And this is the bliss of the Vedawise whose soul the blight of desire not toucheth. A hundred and a hundredfold of this measure of bliss of the Gods of work, is one bliss of the great Gods who are Gods for ever. And this is the bliss of the Vedawise whose soul the blight of desire not toucheth. A hundred and a hundredfold of this measure of divine bliss, is one bliss of Indra, the King in Heaven. And this is the bliss of the Vedawise whose soul the blight of desire not toucheth. A hundred and a hundredfold of this measure of Indra's bliss is one bliss of Brihaspati, who taught the Gods in heaven. And this is the bliss of the Vedawise whose soul the blight of desire not toucheth. A hundred and a hundredfold of this measure of Brihaspati's bliss, is one bliss of Prajapati, the Almighty Father. And this is the bliss of the Vedawise whose soul the blight of desire not toucheth. A hundred and a hundredfold of this measure of Prajapati's bliss, is one bliss of the Eternal Spirit. And this is the bliss of the Vedawise whose soul the blight of desire not toucheth.

The Spirit who is here in a man and the Spirit who is there in the Sun, it is one Spirit and there is no other. He who knoweth this, when he hath gone away from this world, passeth to this Self which is of food; he passeth to this Self which is of Prana; he passeth to this Self which is of Mind; he passeth to this Self which is of Knowledge; he passeth to this Self which is of Bliss. Whereof this is the Scripture.

Chapter IX

यतो वाचो निर्वर्तन्ते । अप्राप्य मनसा सह । आनन्दं ब्रह्मणो विद्वान् ।
न विभेति कुतश्चनेति । एतं ह वाव न तपति । किमहं साधु नाकरवम् ।
किमहं पापमकरवमिति । स य एवं विद्वानेते आत्मानं स्पृणुते । उभै
ह्येवेष एते आत्मानं स्पृणुते । य एवं वेद । इत्युपनिषत् ।

सह नाववतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु । सह वीर्यं करवावहै । तेजस्वि
नावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै । ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः । हरिः
ॐ ॥

The Bliss of the Eternal from which words turn back without attaining and mind also returneth baffled, who knoweth the Bliss of the Eternal? He feareth not for aught in this world or elsewhere. Verily to him cometh not remorse and her torment saying “Why have I left undone the good & why have I done that which was evil?” For he who knoweth the Eternal, knoweth these that they are alike his Spirit; yea, he knoweth both evil and good for what they are and delivereth Spirit, who knoweth the Eternal. And this is Upanishad, the secret of the Veda.

Together may He protect us, together may He possess us, together may we make unto us strength & virility. May our reading be full of light and power. May we never hate. OM Peace! Peace! Peace! Hari OM!

Bhrigu Valli

हरिः ॐ । सह नाववतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु । सह वीर्यं करवावहै । तेजस्वि
नावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै । ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Hari OM. Together may He protect us, together may He possess us, together may we make unto us force & virility. May our reading be full of light and power. May we never hate. OM Peace! Peace! Peace!

Chapter I

भृगुर्वै वारुणिः । वरुणं पितरमुपससार । अधीहि भगवो ब्रह्मेति । तस्मा
एतत् प्रोवाच । अन्नं प्राणं चक्षुः श्रोत्रं मनो वाचमिति । तं होवाच ।
यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते । येन जातानि जीवन्ति । यत्
प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति । तद् विजिज्ञासस्व । तद् ब्रह्मेति । स तपोऽतप्यत ।
स तपस्तस्वा ॥

Bhrigu, Varouna's son, came unto his father Varouna and said "Lord, teach me the Eternal." And his father declared it unto him thus "Food and Prana and Eye and Ear and Mind—even these." Verily he said unto him "Seek thou to know that from which these creatures are born, whereby being born they live and to which they go hence and enter again; for that is the Eternal." And Bhrigu concentrated himself in thought and by the askesis of his brooding

Chapter II

अन्नं ब्रह्मेति व्यजानात् । अन्नाद्वेव खल्विमानि भूतानि जायन्ते । अन्नेन
जातानि जीवन्ति । अन्नं प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्तीति । तद्विज्ञाय । पुनरेव
वरुणं पितरमुपससार । अधीहि भगवो ब्रह्मेति । तं होवाच । तपसा ब्रह्म
विजिज्ञासस्व । तपो ब्रह्मेति । स तपोऽतप्यत । स तपस्तस्वा ॥

He knew food for the Eternal. For from food alone, it appeareth, are these creatures born and being born they live by food, and into food they depart and enter again. And when he had known this, he came again to Varouna his father and said "Lord, teach me the Eternal." And his father said to him "By askesis do thou seek to know the Eternal, for concentration in thought is the Eternal." He concentrated himself in thought and by the energy of his brooding

Chapter III

प्राणो ब्रह्मेति व्यजानात् । प्राणाद्वेव खल्विमानि भूतानि जायन्ते ।
 प्राणेन जातानि जीवन्ति । प्राणं प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्तीति । तद्विज्ञाय ।
 पुनरेव वरुणं पितरमुपससार । अधीहि भगवो ब्रह्मेति । तं होवाच ।
 तपसा ब्रह्म विजिज्ञासस्व । तपो ब्रह्मेति । स तपोऽतप्यत । स तप-
 स्तस्वा ॥

He knew Prana for the Eternal. For from Prana alone, it appeareth, are these creatures born and being born they live by Prana and to Prana they go hence and return. And when he had known this, he came again to Varouna his father and said "Lord, teach me the Eternal." But his father said to him "By askesis do thou seek to know the Eternal, for askesis in thought is the Eternal." He concentrated himself in thought and by the energy of his brooding

Chapter IV

मनो ब्रह्मेति व्यजानात् । मनसो ह्येव खल्विमानि भूतानि जायन्ते ।
 मनसा जातानि जीवन्ति । मनः प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्तीति । तद्विज्ञाय ।
 पुनरेव वरुणं पितरमुपससार । अधीहि भगवो ब्रह्मेति । तं होवाच ।
 तपसा ब्रह्म विजिज्ञासस्व । तपो ब्रह्मेति । स तपोऽतप्यत । स तप-
 स्तस्वा ॥

He knew mind for the Eternal. For from mind alone, it appeareth, are these creatures born and being born they live by

mind, and to mind they go hence and return. And when he had known this, he came again to Varouna his father and said “Lord, teach me the Eternal.” But his father said to him “By askesis do thou seek to know the Eternal, for concentration of force is the Eternal.” He concentrated himself in thought and by the energy of his brooding

Chapter V

विज्ञानं ब्रह्मेति व्यजानात् । विज्ञानाद्येव खल्विमानि भूतानि जायन्ते ।
विज्ञानेन जातानि जीवन्ति । विज्ञानं प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्तीति । तद्विद्वा-
ज्ञाय । पुनरेव वरुणं पितरमुपससार । अधीहि भगवो ब्रह्मेति । तं
होवाच । तपसा ब्रह्म विजिज्ञासस्व । तपो ब्रह्मेति । स तपोऽतप्यत । स
तपस्तस्वा ॥

He knew Knowledge for the Eternal. For from Knowledge alone, it appeareth, are these creatures born and being born they live by Knowledge and to Knowledge they go hence and return. And when he had known this, he came again to Varouna his father and said “Lord, teach me the Eternal.” But his father said to him “By askesis do thou seek to know the Eternal, for concentration of force is the Eternal.” He concentrated himself in thought and by the energy of his brooding

Chapter VI

आनन्दो ब्रह्मेति व्यजानात् । आनन्दाद्येव खल्विमानि भूतानि जायन्ते ।
आनन्देन जातानि जीवन्ति । आनन्दं प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्तीति । सैषा
भागवी वारुणी विद्या । परमे व्योमन्तरितिष्ठिता । स य एवं वेद प्रति-
तिष्ठिति । अन्नवानन्नादो भवति । महान्भवति प्रजया पशुभिर्ब्रह्मावर्चसेन ।
महान्कीर्त्या ॥

He knew Bliss for the Eternal. For from Bliss alone, it appeareth, are these creatures born and being born they live by Bliss and to Bliss they go hence and return. This is the lore of Bhrigu, the lore of Varouna, which hath its firm base in the highest heaven.

Who knoweth, getteth his firm base, he becometh the master of food and its eater, great in progeny, great in cattle, great in the splendour of holiness, great in glory.

Chapter VII

अन्नं न निन्द्यात् । तद् व्रतम् । प्राणो वा अन्नम् । शरीरमन्नादम् । प्राणे
शरीरं प्रतिष्ठितम् । शरीरे प्राणः प्रतिष्ठितः । तदेतदन्नमन्ने प्रतिष्ठितम् ।
स य एतदन्नमन्ने प्रतिष्ठितं वेद प्रतितिष्ठति । अन्नवानन्नादो भवति ।
महान्नवति प्रजया पशुभिर्ब्रह्मवर्चसेन । महान्कीर्त्या ॥

Thou shalt not blame food; for that is thy commandment unto labour. Verily Prana also is food, and the body is the eater. The body is established upon Prana and Prana is established upon the body. Therefore food here is established upon food. He who knoweth this food that is established upon food, getteth his firm base, he becometh the master of food and its eater, great in progeny, great in cattle, great in the radiance of holiness, great in glory.

Chapter VIII

अन्नं न परिचक्षीत । तद् व्रतम् । आपो वा अन्नम् । ज्योतिरन्नादम् ।
अप्सु ज्योतिः प्रतिष्ठितम् । ज्योतिष्यापः प्रतिष्ठिताः । तदेतदन्नमन्ने
प्रतिष्ठितम् । स य एतदन्नमन्ने प्रतिष्ठितं वेद प्रतितिष्ठति । अन्नवानन्नादो
भवति । महान्नवति प्रजया पशुभिर्ब्रह्मवर्चसेन । महान्कीर्त्या ॥

Thou shalt not reject food; for that too is the vow of thy labour. Verily the waters also are food, and the bright fire is the eater. The fire is established upon the waters and the waters are established upon the fires. Here too is food established upon food. He who knoweth this food that is established upon food, getteth his firm base, he becometh the master of food and its eater, great in progeny, great in cattle, great in the radiance of holiness, great in glory.

Chapter IX

अन्नं बहु कुर्वीत । तद् ब्रतम् । पृथिवी वा अन्नम् । आकाशोऽन्नादः ।
पृथिव्यामाकाशः प्रतिष्ठितः । आकाशे पृथिवी प्रतिष्ठिता । तदेतदन्नमन्ने
प्रतिष्ठितम् । स य एतदन्नमन्ने प्रतिष्ठितं वेद प्रतितिष्ठिति । अन्नवानन्नादो
भवति । महान्नवति प्रजया पशुभिर्ब्रह्मवर्चसेन । महान्कीर्त्या ॥

Thou shalt increase and amass food; for that too is thy commandment unto labour. Verily, earth also is food and ether is the eater. Ether is established upon earth and earth is established upon ether. Here too is food established upon food. He who knoweth this food that is established upon food, getteth his firm base. He becometh the master of food and its eater, great in progeny, great in cattle, great in the radiance of holiness, great in glory.

Chapter X

न कंचन वसतौ प्रत्याचक्षीत । तद् ब्रतम् । तस्माद् यया कया
च विधया बहुन्नं प्राप्नुयात् । अराध्यस्मा अन्नमित्याचक्षते । एतद्वै
मुखतोऽन्नं राद्म् । मुखतोऽस्मा अन्नं राध्यते । एतद्वै मध्यतोऽन्नं
राद्म् । मध्यतोऽस्मा अन्नं राध्यते । एतद्वा अन्ततोऽन्नं राद्म् ।
अन्ततोऽस्मा अन्नं राध्यते । य एवं वेद । क्षेम इति वाचि । योगक्षेम इति
प्राणापानयोः । कर्मेति हस्तयोः । गतिरिति पादयोः । विसुक्तिरिति
पायौ । इति मानुषीः समाज्ञाः । अथ दैवीः । तृप्तिरिति वृष्टौ । बलमिति
विद्युति । यश इति पशुषु । ज्योतिरिति नक्षत्रेषु । प्रजातिरमृतमानन्द
इत्युपस्थे । सर्वमित्याकाशे । तत्प्रतिष्ठेत्युपासीत । प्रतिष्ठावान् भवति ।
तन्मह इत्युपासीत । महान् भवति । तन्मन इत्युपासीत । मानवान्
भवति । तन्नम इत्युपासीत । नम्यन्तेऽस्मै कामाः । तद् ब्रह्मेत्युपासीत ।
ब्रह्मवान् भवति । तद् ब्रह्मणः परिमर इत्युपासीत । पर्येण मियन्ते
द्विष्णतः सपत्नाः । परि येऽप्रिया भ्रातृव्याः । स यश्चायं पुरुषे ।
यश्चासावादित्ये । स एकः । स य एवंवित् । अस्माल्लोकात् प्रेत्य ।
एतमन्नमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रम्य । एतं प्राणमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रम्य । एतं
मनोमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रम्य । एतं विज्ञानमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रम्य । एत-
मानन्दमयमात्मानमुपसंक्रम्य । इमाँल्लोकान् कामान्नी कामरूप्यनुसं-
चरन् । एतत् साम गायन्नास्ते । हाऽवु हाऽवु हाऽवु । अहमन्नमह-
मन्नमहमन्नम् । अहमन्नादोऽहमन्नादोऽहमन्नादः । अहं श्लोककृदहं

श्लोककृदहं श्लोककृत् । अहमस्मि प्रथमजा ऋतारस्य । पूर्वं देवेभ्यो
अमृतस्य नाडभायि । यो मा ददाति स इदेव माडवाः । अहमन्नमन्न-
मदन्तमाडिमि । अहं विश्वं भुवनमभ्यभवाऽम् । सुवर्णं ज्योतीः । य एवं
वेद । इत्युपनिषत् ॥

सह नाववतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु । सह वीर्यं करवावहै । तेजस्वि
नावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै । ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः । हरिः
ॐ ॥

Thou shalt not reject any man in thy habitation, for that too is thy commandment unto labour. Therefore in whatsoever sort do thou get thee great store of food. They say unto the stranger in their dwelling “Arise, the food is ready.” Was the food made ready at the beginning? To him also is food made ready in the beginning. Was the food made ready in the middle? To him also is food made ready in the middle. Was the food made ready at the end & last? To him also is the food made ready at the end and last, who hath this knowledge. As prosperity in speech, as getting & having in the main breath and the nether, as work in the hands, as movement in the feet, as discharge in the anus, these are the cognitions in the human. Then in the divine; as satisfaction in the rain, as force in the lightning, as splendour in the beasts, as brightness in the constellations, as procreation and bliss and death conquered in the organ of pleasure, as the All in Ether. Pursue thou Him as the firm foundation of things & thou shalt get thee firm foundation. Pursue Him as Mahas, thou shalt become Mighty; pursue Him as Mind, thou shalt become full of mind; pursue Him as adoration, thy desires shall bow down before thee; pursue Him as the Eternal, thou shalt become full of the Spirit; pursue Him as the destruction of the Eternal that rangeth abroad, thou shalt see thy rivals and thy haters perish thick around thee and thy kin who loved thee not. The Spirit who is here in man & the Spirit who is there in the Sun, lo, it is One Spirit and there is no other. He who hath this knowledge, when he goeth from this world having passed to the Self which is of food; having passed to the Self which is of Prana; having passed to the Self which is of Mind; having passed to the Self which is of Knowledge; having passed to the Self which is of

Bliss, lo he rangeth about the worlds & eateth what he will and taketh what shape he will and ever he singeth the mighty Sama. “Ho! ho! ho! I am food! I am food! I am food! I am the eater of food! I am the eater! I am the eater! I am he who maketh Scripture! I am he who maketh! I am he who maketh! I am the firstborn of the Law; before the gods were, I am, yea at the very heart of immortality. He who giveth me, verily he preserveth me; for I being food, eat him that eateth. I have conquered the whole world and possessed it, my light is as the sun in its glory.” Thus he singeth, who hath the knowledge. This verily is Upanishad, the secret of the Veda.

Together may He protect us, together may He possess us, together may we make unto us strength and virility! May our study be full of light and power! May we never hate! OM Peace! Peace! Peace! Hari OM!

Section Three
Incomplete Translations
and Commentaries

Circa 1902–1912

Svetasvatara Upanishad

Chapter IV

य एकोऽवर्णो बहुधा शक्तियोगाद् वर्णाननेकान्निहितार्थो दधाति ।
वि चैति चान्ते विश्वमादौ स देवः स नो बुद्धा शुभया संयुनक्तु ॥१॥

1. He who is one and without hue, but has ordained manifoldly many hues by the Yoga of his Force and holds within himself all objects, and in Him the universe dissolves in the end, that Godhead was in the beginning. May He yoke us with a good and bright understanding.

तदेवाग्निस्तदादित्यस्तद्वायुस्तदु चन्द्रमाः ।
तदेव शुक्रं तद् ब्रह्म तदापस्तत्प्रजापतिः ॥२॥

2. That alone is the fire and That the sun and That the wind and That too the moon; That is the Luminous, That the Brahman, That the waters, That the Father and Lord of creatures.

त्वं स्त्री त्वं पुमानसि त्वं कुमार उत वा कुमारी ।
त्वं जीर्णो दण्डेन वञ्चसि त्वं जातो भवसि विश्वतोमुखः ॥३॥

3. Thou art the woman and Thou the man; Thou art a boy and again a young virgin; Thou art yonder worn and aged man that walkest bent with thy staff. Lo, Thou becomest born and the world is full of thy faces.

नीलः पतञ्जो हरितो लोहिताक्षस्तडिङ्गर्भं ऋतवः समुद्राः ।
अनादिमत् त्वं विभुत्वेन वर्तसे यतो जातानि भुवनानि विश्वा ॥४॥

4. Thou art the blue bird and the green and the scarlet-eyed, the womb of lightning and the seasons and the oceans. Thou

art that which is without beginning and thou movest with thy pervasive extension whence all the worlds are born.

अजामेकां लोहितशुक्रकृष्णां बह्वीः प्रजाः सृजमानां सरूपाः ।
अजो ह्येको जुषमाणोऽनुशेते जहात्येनां भुक्तभोगामजोऽन्यः ॥ ५ ॥

5. There is One, unborn, white and black and red, who is ever bringing forth many creatures with forms and her one unborn loves and cleaves to and lies with her; another unborn abandons, when all her enjoyments have been enjoyed.

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते ।
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्यनश्चन्नन्यो अभिचाकशीति ॥ ६ ॥

6. Two winged birds cling about a common tree, comrades, yoke-fellows; and one eats the sweet fruit of the tree, the other eats not, but watches.

समाने वृक्षे पुरुषो निमग्नोऽनीशया शोचति मुद्यमानः ।
जुष्टं यदा पश्यत्यन्यमीशमस्य महिमानमिति वीतशोकः ॥ ७ ॥

7. The Soul upon a common tree is absorbed and because he is not lord, grieves and is bewildered; but when he sees and cleaves to that other who is the Lord, he knows that all is His greatness and his sorrow passes away from him.

ऋचो अक्षरे परमे व्योमन् यस्मिन्देवा अधि विश्वे निषेदुः ।
यस्तं न वेद किमृचा करिष्यति य इत् तद्विद्वस्त इमे समासते ॥ ८ ॥

8. In the highest immutable Heaven where all the gods have taken up their session, there are the verses of the Rigveda, and he who knows Him not, what shall he do with the Rik? They who know That, lo, it is they who thus are seated.

छन्दांसि यज्ञाः क्रतवो व्रतानि भूतं भव्यं यच्च वेदा वदन्ति ।
अस्मान्मायी सृजते विश्वमेतत् तस्मिंश्चान्यो मायया संनिरुद्धः ॥ ९ ॥

9. Rhythms and sacrifices and ritual and vows, what has been and what is to be and what the Vedas declare, — the Master

of Maya brings forth from that all this that is and there is another whom within it his Maya holds imprisoned.

मायां तु प्रकृतिं विद्यान्मायिनं तु महेश्वरम् ।
तस्यावयवभूतैस्तु व्यासं सर्वमिदं जगत् ॥ १० ॥

10. Thou shalt know Maya to be Force of Nature and the Master of Maya to be the great Lord; this whole universe is occupied by His becomings that are His members.

यो योनिं योनिमधितिष्ठत्येको यस्मिन्निदं सं च वि चैति सर्वम् ।
तमीशानं वरदं देवमीड्यं निचाय्येमां शान्तिमत्यन्तमेति ॥ ११ ॥

11. He who being One enters every womb and in whom all this comes together and goes apart, the adorable Godhead who rules as lord and gives us our desirable boons, one having seen comes exceedingly unto this peace.

यो देवानां प्रभवश्चोद्भवश्च विश्वाधिपो रुद्रो महर्षिः ।
हिरण्यगर्भं पश्यत जायमानं स नो बुद्धा शुभया संयुनक्तु ॥ १२ ॥

12. He who is the coming to birth of the gods and the arising of their being, the master of the universe, the Violent One, the Great Seer and beheld Hiranyagarbha born,—may he yoke us with a bright and good understanding.

यो देवानामधिपो यस्मिन्नोका अधिश्रिताः ।
य ईशो अस्य द्विपदश्चतुष्पदः कस्मै देवाय हविषा विधेम ॥ १३ ॥

13. He who is the master of the gods, in whom the worlds are lodged and who rules over this two-footed and four-footed, to what god should we offer the worship of our oblation?

सूक्ष्मातिसूक्ष्मं कलिलस्य मध्ये विश्वस्य स्रष्टारमनेकरूपम् ।
विश्वस्यैकं परिवेष्टितारं ज्ञात्वा शिवं शान्तिमत्यन्तमेति ॥ १४ ॥

14. Subtle beyond the subtle in the midst of the hurtling chaos, the creator of the universe who has many forms and being

one encompasses all, knowing as the Benign, one comes exceedingly to the peace.

स एव काले भुवनस्य गोप्ता विश्वाधिपः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः ।
यस्मिन् युक्ता ब्रह्मर्षयो देवताश्च तमेवं ज्ञात्वा मृत्युपाशां-
शिष्ठनन्ति ॥ १५ ॥

15. He in Time is the guardian of the world of existence and the master of the universe secret in all existences,— in whom have union of Yoga the holy sages and the gods; thus knowing him one cuts asunder the snares of Death.

घृतात्परं मण्डमिवातिसूक्ष्मं ज्ञात्वा शिवं सर्वभूतेषु गूढम् ।
विश्वस्यैकं परिवेष्टितारं ज्ञात्वा देवं मुच्यते सर्वपाशैः ॥ १६ ॥

16. Knowing him who is exceedingly subtle like the cream above the clarified butter, the Benign secret in all existences, knowing the God who being one encompasses all, one is released from every bondage.

एष देवो विश्वकर्मा महात्मा सदा जनानां हृदये संनिविष्टः ।
हृदा मनीषा मनसाभिकूतो य एतद् विद्वरमृतास्ते भवन्ति ॥ १७ ॥

17. This is the God, the mighty Soul, the Architect of all, seated for ever in the hearts of creatures and he is realised by the heart and the intellect and the mind; who know this, they become immortal.

यदाऽत्मस्तन्न दिवा न रात्रिं सन्न चासज्जिव एव केवलः ।
तदक्षरं तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं प्रज्ञा च तस्मात्प्रसृता पुराणी ॥ १८ ॥

18. When there is no darkness, that is neither day nor night, nor being nor non-being, it is the absolute Benign alone; That is the immutable, that the supreme light of the Creating Sun and from it the Wisdom went forth that is of old.

नैनमूर्ध्वं न तिर्यञ्चं न मध्ये परिजग्रभत् ।
न तस्य प्रतिमा अस्ति यस्य नाम महद्यशः ॥ १९ ॥

19. Him one shall not seize as on high nor as one on a level plane nor in the middle; there is no image for him whose name is a mighty glory.

न संदूशे तिष्ठति रूपमस्य न चक्षुषा पश्यति कश्चनैनम् ।
हृदा हृदिस्थं मनसा य एनमेवं विद्वरमृतास्ते भवन्ति ॥ २० ॥

20. The form of Him stands not within the vision and none beholdeth Him by the eye; but by the heart and the mind, for in the heart is His station; who thus know Him, they become immortal.

अजात इत्येवं कश्चिद् भीरुः प्रपद्यते ।
रुद्र यत्ते दक्षिणं मुखं तेन मां पाहि नित्यम् ॥ २१ ॥

21. One here and there approaches him with awe thinking of him as the Unborn. O Violent One, that which is thy auspicious right-hand face, with that protect me ever.

मा नस्तोके तनये मा न आयुषि मा नो गोषु मा नो अश्वेषु रीरिषः ।
वीरान् मा नो रुद्र भामितो वधीर्हविष्मन्तः सदमित् त्वा हवामहे ॥ २२ ॥

22. Do no hurt to our son nor our grandson nor our life nor our cattle nor our horses. O Violent One, slay not in thy anger our heroes; ever to Thee with the oblation we call.

Chapter V

द्वे अक्षरे ब्रह्मपरे त्वनन्ते विद्याविद्ये निहिते यत्र गृहे ।
क्षरं त्वविद्या ह्यमृतं तु विद्या विद्याविद्ये ईशते यस्तु सोऽन्यः ॥ १ ॥

- Both of these in the Transcendent, the Knowledge & the Ignorance, yea both have their hidden being in the Eternal & Infinite Who dwelleth beyond Brahman of the Veda, & are set in it for ever. But of these Ignorance dieth and Knowledge liveth for ever; and He who is master of both is other than they.

यो योनिं योनिमधितिष्ठत्येको विश्वानि रूपाणि योनीश्च सर्वाः ।
ऋषिं प्रसूतं कपिलं यस्तमग्रे ज्ञानैर्बिर्भर्ति जायमानं च पश्येत् ॥ २ ॥

- He being One entereth upon womb & womb, yea upon all forms of being and upon all wombs of creatures. This was He that of old filled with many sorts of Knowledge Kapila, the seer, after his mother bore him; yea He saw Kapila shaping.

एकैकं जालं बहुधा विकुर्वन्नस्मिन्देवे संहरत्येष देवः ।
भूयः सृष्टा यतयस्तथेशः सर्वाधिपत्यं कुरुते महात्मा ॥ ३ ॥

- God weaveth Him one net or He weaveth Him another and He maketh it of manifold meshes & casteth it abroad in this field of the body; then He draweth it in again. Also He created Yatis, great Seekers, & thus the Mighty Mind wieldeth the sceptre of His universal Lordship.

सर्वा दिश ऊर्ध्वमधश्च तिर्यक् प्रकाशयन्नाजते यद्वन्निवान् ।
एवं स देवो भगवान्वरेण्यो योनिस्वभावानधितिष्ठत्येकः ॥ ४ ॥

- The Sun riseth & driveth the world's wain, then he blazeth illumining all the regions and above and below and the level grow one lustre, even so this glorious & shining God, being One, entereth upon & ruleth nature that clingeth to the womb, to each womb its nature.

यच्च स्वभावं पचति विश्वयोनिः पात्यांश्च सर्वान् परिणामयेद्यः ।
सर्वमेतद् विश्वमधितिष्ठत्येको गुणांश्च सर्वान् विनियोजयेद्यः ॥ ५ ॥

5. For He who is the Womb of the World bringeth each nature to its perfection and He matureth all those that are yet to be perfected. He indwelleth & presideth over all this His world and setteth all the modes of Nature to their workings.

तद् वेदगुह्योपनिषत्सु गृहं तद् ब्रह्मा वेदते ब्रह्मयोनिम् ।
ये पूर्वदेवा ऋषयश्च तद्विद्वस्ते तन्मया अमृता वै बभूवुः ॥ ६ ॥

6. This is that secret mystery which is hidden in Upanishads; for the Upanishad is the secret of the Veda. This is that which Brahma knoweth for the Womb of the Eternal and the older Gods and the sages who knew of This, became This & were immortal.

गुणान्वयो यः फलकर्मकर्ता कृतस्य तस्यैव स चोपभोक्ता ।
स विश्वरूपस्त्रिगुणस्त्रिवर्त्मा प्राणाधिपः संचरति स्वकर्मभिः ॥ ७ ॥

7. There is One who maketh works and their fruits to them, for the moods of Nature cleave to Him; this is He that enjoyeth the works He hath done; and the World is His body and He hath three modes of His natures & the roads of His travel are likewise three. Lo, the Master of Life, by the momentum of His own works He moveth in the centuries.

अङ्गुष्ठमात्रो रवितुल्यरूपः संकल्पाहंकारसमन्वितो यः ।
बुद्धेर्गुणेनात्मगुणेन चैव आराग्रमात्रो ह्यपरोऽपि दृष्टः ॥ ८ ॥

8. His size is as the size of a man's thumb but His aspect as the Sun in its glory; and He hath Volition and He hath Personality; but there is another whom we see by virtue of the Understanding & by virtue of the Spirit for the point of a cobbler's awl is not finer to vision.

वालाग्रशतभागस्य शतधा कल्पितस्य च ।
भागो जीवः स विज्ञेयः स चानन्त्याय कल्पते ॥ ९ ॥

9. Take thou the hundredth part of the point of a hair, divide it into a hundred parts again; then as is a part of this hundredth part of a hundredth, such shalt thou find this Spirit in man, if thou seek to separate Him; yet 'tis this in thee that availeth towards Infinity.

नैव स्त्री न पुमानेष न चैवायं नपुंसकः ।
यद्यच्छरीरमादत्ते तेन तेन स रक्ष्यते ॥ १० ॥

10. Not woman is He, nor man either, nor yet sexless; but whatsoever body He take, that confineth & preserveth Him.

संकल्पनस्पर्शनदृष्टिमोहैर्ग्रासाम्बुवृद्ध्या चात्मविवृद्धिजन्म ।
कर्मानुगान्यनुक्रमेण देही स्थानेषु रूपाण्यभिसंप्रपद्यते ॥ ११ ॥

11. As body is born and groweth by food and drink and plenty, so also the Spirit in body progressively attaineth to successive forms in their fit places — by the allurements of sight, by the witcheries of touch, by the magic of volition, for according to his works he progresseth and his forms shape themselves to his works.

स्थूलानि सूक्ष्माणि बहूनि चैव रूपाणि देही स्वगुणैर्वृणोति ।
क्रियागुणैरात्मगुणैश्च तेषां संयोगहेतुरपरोऽपि दृष्टः ॥ १२ ॥

12. Forms gross and forms subtle, forms many, — the Spirit in body evolveth them all by his own nature in its working; by the law of action of his works & the law of action of the Spirit in man, by these he evolveth them. But there is Another in Whom we behold Cause whereby all these meet together.

अनाद्यनन्तं कलिलस्य मध्ये विश्वस्य स्रष्टारमनेकरूपम् ।
विश्वस्यैकं परिवेष्टितारं ज्ञात्वा देवं मुच्यते सर्वपाशैः ॥ १३ ॥

13. Without beginning, without end in the welter and the chaos, who createth the world by taking many figures & as the One girdeth & encompasseth it. He is the Lord &

if thou know Him thou shalt break free from all kinds of bondage.

भावग्राह्यमनीडाख्यं भावाभावकरं शिवम् ।
कलासर्गकरं देवं ये विदुस्ते जहुस्तनुम् ॥ १४ ॥

14. Shiva the Master of all becomings and not-becomings and from Him this whole creation floweth and it is only one part of Shiva; but He is not named after any nest of the wingèd Spirit, and the heart alone can apprehend Him. They who know Shiva, the Blessed One, abandon body for ever.

Chapter VI

स्वभावमेके कवयो वदन्ति कालं तथान्ये परिमुह्यमानाः ।
देवस्यैष महिमा तु लोके येनेदं भ्रास्यते ब्रह्मचक्रम् ॥१॥

1. 'Tis Nature and Self-existence, say one school of the Seers. Nay, 'tis Time, say another; both are deceived and bewildered. 'Tis the Majesty of the Lord in the world of His creatures whereby the Wheel of the Eternal whirleth about continually.

येनावृतं नित्यमिदं हि सर्वं ज्ञः कालकारो गुणी सर्वविद्यः ।
तेनेशितं कर्म विवर्तते ह पृथ्व्याप्यतेजोऽनिलखानि चिन्त्यम् ॥२॥

2. He envelopeth this whole Universe with Himself for ever, He that knoweth, Maker of Time, & the Modes of Nature dwell in Him; yea, all things He discerneth and by His governance the Law of Works revolveth in its cycle. Earth, water, fire, air, ether, of these thou shalt consider (as the substance wherein it turneth).

तत्कर्म कृत्वा विनिवर्त्य भूयस्तत्त्वस्य तत्त्वेन समेत्य योगम् ।
एकेन द्वाभ्यां त्रिभिरष्टभिर्वा कालेन चैवात्मगुणैश्च सूक्ष्मैः ॥३॥

3. The Lord doeth works and resteth again from His works, one or two or three or eight He yoketh Himself with the Principle of things in their essence & with Time He yoketh Himself and with Self in its subtle workings.

आरभ्य कर्माणि गुणान्वितानि भावांश्च सर्वान् विनियोजयेद्यः ।
तेषामभावे कृतकर्मनाशः कर्मक्षये याति स तत्त्वतोऽन्यः ॥४॥

4. So He beginneth works, that are subject to the modes of Nature, and setteth all existences to their workings: & when these things are not, thereby cometh annihilation of work that hath been done; and with the perishing of work, He departeth out of them; for in His final truth He is other than they.

आदिः स संयोगनिमित्तहेतुः परस्त्रिकालादकलोऽपि दृष्टः।
तं विश्वरूपं भवभूतमीड्यं देवं स्वचित्तस्थमुपास्य पूर्वम् ॥५॥

5. Lo we have beheld Him & He is the Beginning and the Cause of all Causes whereby these elements meet together & form ariseth; the past, the present and the future are this side of Him and Time hath no part in Him. Let us worship the Ancient of Days in our own hearts who sitteth. Let us wait upon God who must be adored, for the world is His shape and the Universe is but His becoming.

स वृक्षकालाकृतिभिः परोऽन्यो यस्मात्प्रपञ्चः परिवर्ततेऽयम्।
धर्मावहं पापनुदं भगेशं ज्ञात्वात्मस्थममृतं विश्वधाम ॥६॥

6. Time & Form and the Tree of Things, none of these is He for He is more than they & it is from Him that this Cosmos beginneth. We will know this Master of grace & glory for He cometh to us carrying righteousness in His hand & He driveth Sin from its strong places. We will know Him for He is in our Self & immortal & the World's foundation.

तमीश्वराणां परमं महेश्वरं तं देवतानां परमं च दैवतम्।
पतिं पतीनां परमं परस्ताद् विदाम देवं भुवनेशमीड्यम् ॥७॥

7. We will know this Mightiest one who is far above all the mighty—this summit of the gods & their godhead, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who towereth high above all summits & greatnesses. Let us learn of God for He is this World's Master & all shall adore Him.

न तस्य कार्यं करणं च विद्यते न तत्समश्वाभ्यधिकश्च दृश्यते।
परास्य शक्तिर्विविधैव श्रूयते स्वाभाविकी ज्ञानबलक्रिया च ॥८॥

8. God needeth not to do anything neither hath He any organ of doing; there is none greater than He nor do we see any that is His equal—for His power is far over all, only men hear of it under a thousand names & various fashions. Lo the strength of Him and the works of Him and

His Knowledge, they are self-efficient & their own cause & nature.

न तस्य कश्चित् पतिरस्ति लोके न चेशिता नैव च तस्य लिङ्गम् ।
स कारणं करणाधिपाधिपो न चास्य कश्चिज्जनिता न चाधिपः ॥ ९ ॥

9. He hath no master in all this world, there is none that shall rule over Him. Nor feature nor distinction hath He; for He is begetting cause and sovran over the lords of these natural organs, but Himself hath no begetter neither any sovran.

यस्तनुनाभ इव तनुभिः प्रधानजैः स्वभावतः ।
देव एकः स्वमावृणोत् स नो दधाद् ब्रह्माप्ययम् ॥ १० ॥

10. Even as is the spider that out of himself fashioneth his own web, so is God One & nought else existeth but by his own nature covereth Himself up in the threads He hath spun out of primal matter. May the One God ordain unto us departure into His Eternal.

एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गृदः सर्वव्यापी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा ।
कर्माध्यक्षः सर्वभूताधिवासः साक्षी चेता केवलो निर्गुणश्च ॥ ११ ॥

11. One God who alone is & He lurketh hidden in every creature for He pervadeth and is the inmost Self of all beings, He presideth over all work and is the home of all things living. He is the Mighty Witness who relateth thought with thought and again He is the Absolute in whom mood is not nor any attribute.

एको वशी निष्क्रियाणां बहूनामेकं बीजं बहुधा यः करोति ।
तमात्मस्थं येऽनुपश्यन्ति धीरास्तेषां सुखं शाश्वतं नेतरेषाम् ॥ १२ ॥

12. One God & alone He controlleth the many who have themselves no separate work nor purpose; and He developeth one seed into many kinds of creatures; the strong-hearted behold God in their own Self, therefore for them is everlasting bliss and not for others.

नित्योऽनित्यानां चेतनश्चेतनानामेको बहूनां यो विदधाति कामान् ।
तत्कारणं सांख्ययोगाधिगम्यं ज्ञात्वा देवं मुच्यते सर्वपाशैः ॥ १३ ॥

13. One Eternal of all these that pass & are not, One conscious in all consciousnesses; He being One ordereth the desires of many; He alone is the great Source to which Sankhya and Yoga bring us. If thou know God thou shalt break free from every sort of bondage.

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥ १४ ॥

14. There the sun cannot shine and the moon has no splendour; the stars are blind; there our lightnings flash not neither any earthly fire; all that is bright is but the shadow of His brightness and by His shining all this shineth.

एको हंसो भुवनस्यास्य मध्ये स एवाग्निः सलिले संनिविष्टः ।
तमेव विदित्वाति मृत्युमेति नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय ॥ १५ ॥

15. One Swan of Being in the heart of all this Universe & He is Fire that lieth deep in the heart of water. By Knowledge of Him, the soul passeth beyond the pursuit of Death and there is no other road for the great passage.

स विश्वकृद् विश्वविदात्मयोनिर्जः कालकारो गुणी सर्वविद्यः ।
प्रधानक्षेत्रज्ञपतिर्गुणेशः संसारमोक्षस्थितिबन्धहेतुः ॥ १६ ॥

16. He hath made all and knoweth all; for He is the womb out of which Self ariseth, & being possessed of the Nature Moods He becometh Time's Maker and discerneth all things. And Matter is subject to Him & the Spirit in Man that cogniseth His field of matter & the modes of Nature are His servants. He therefore is the cause of this coming into phenomena & of the release from phenomena — & because of Him is their endurance & because of Him is their bondage.

स तन्मयो ह्यमृत ईशसंस्थो ज्ञः सर्वगो भुवनस्यास्य गोप्ता ।
य ईशेऽस्य जगतो नित्यमेव नान्यो हेतुर्विद्यत ईशनाय ॥ १७ ॥

17. Lo He is Immortal because He is utter existence; but He houseth Himself in the Lord & is the Knower, the Omnipresent that standeth on guard over this His universe, yea He ruleth all this moving world for ever and for ever, and there is no other source of lordship and kingliness.

यो ब्रह्माणं विदधाति पूर्वं यो वै वेदांश्च प्रहिणोति तस्मै ।
तं ह देवमात्मबुद्धिप्रकाशं मुमुक्षुर्वै शरणमहं प्रपद्ये ॥ १८ ॥

18. He ordained Brahma the Creator from of old and sent forth unto him the Veda, I will hasten unto God who standeth self-revealed in the Spirit & in the Understanding. I will take refuge in the Lord for my salvation;

निष्कलं निष्क्रियं शान्तं निरवद्यं निरञ्जनम् ।
अमृतस्य परं सेतुं दग्धेन्द्रनमिवानलम् ॥ १९ ॥

19. Who hath neither parts nor works for He is utterly tranquil, faultless, stainless, therefore He is the one great bridge that carrieth us over to Immortality, even as when a fire hath burnt all its fuel.

यदा चर्मवदाकाशं वेष्टयिष्यन्ति मानवाः ।
तदा देवमविज्ञाय दुःखस्यान्तो भविष्यति ॥ २० ॥

20. When the sons of men shall fold up ether like a skin and wrap the heavens round them like a garment, then alone without knowledge of the Lord our God shall the misery of the World have an ending.

तपःप्रभावाद् देवप्रसादादच्च ब्रह्म ह श्वेताश्वतरोऽथ विद्वान् ।
अत्याश्रमिष्यः परमं पवित्रं प्रोवाच सम्यगृषिसङ्घजुष्टम् ॥ २१ ॥

21. By the might of his devotion & the grace of God in his being Svetasvatara hereafter knew the Eternal & he came to the

renouncers of the worldly life and truly declared unto them the Most High & Pure God, to whom the companies of seers resort for ever.

वेदान्ते परमं गुह्यं पुराकल्पे प्रचोदितम् ।
नाप्रशान्ताय दातव्यं नापुत्रायाशिष्याय वा पुनः ॥ २२ ॥

22. This is the great secret of the Vedanta which was declared in former times, not on hearts untroubled to be squandered nor men sonless nor on one who hath no disciples.

यस्य देवे परा भक्तिर्यथा देवे तथा गुरौ ।
तस्यैते कथिता ह्यर्थाः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मनः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मनः ॥ २३ ॥

23. But whosoever hath supreme love & adoration for the Lord and as for the Lord, so likewise for the Master, to that Mighty Soul these great matters when they are told become clear of themselves, yea to the Great Soul of him they are manifest.

Chhandogya Upanishad

Chapter I and the first section

ओमित्येतदक्षरमुद्गीथमुपासीत । ओमिति ह्युद्गायति तस्योपव्या-
ख्यानम् ॥१॥

1. Worship ye OM, the eternal syllable. OM is Udgitha, the chant of Samaveda; for with OM they begin the chant of Sama. And this is the exposition of OM.

एषां भूतानां पृथिवी रसः पृथिव्या आपो रसः । अपामोषधयो रस
ओषधीनां पुरुषो रसः पुरुषस्य वाग्रसो वाच ऋग्रस ऋचः साम रसः
साम्न उद्गीथो रसः ॥२॥

2. Earth is the substantial essence of all these creatures and the waters are the essence of earth; herbs of the field are the essence of the waters; man is the essence of the herbs. Speech is the essence of man, Rigveda the essence of Speech, Sama the essence of Rik. Of Sama OM is the essence.

स एष रसानां रसतमः परमः पराध्योऽष्टमो यदुद्गीथः ॥३॥

3. This is the eighth essence of the essences and the really essential, the highest and it belongeth to the upper hemisphere of things.

कतमा कतमर्क् कतमत् कतमत्साम कतमः कतम उद्गीथ इति विमृष्टं
भवति ॥४॥

4. Which among things & which again is Rik; which among things and which again is Sama; which among things and which again is OM of the Udgitha — this is now pondered.

वागेवर्कं प्राणः सामोमित्येतदक्षरमुद्दीथः । तद्वा एतन्मिथुनं यद्वाक् च
प्राणश्चर्कं च साम च ॥५॥

5. Speech is Rik, Breath is Sama; the Imperishable is OM of Udgitha. These are the divine lovers, Speech & Breath, Rik & Sama.

तदेतन्मिथुनमोमित्येतस्मिन्नक्षरे संसृज्यते यदा वै मिथुनौ समागच्छत
आपयतो वै तावन्योन्यस्य कामम् ॥६॥

6. As a pair of lovers are these and they cling together in OM the eternal syllable; now when the beloved and her lover meet, verily they gratify each the desire of the other.

आपयिता ह वै कामानां भवति य एतदेवं विद्वानक्षरमुद्दीथमुपास्ते ॥७॥

7. He becometh a gratifier of the desires of men who with this knowledge worshippeth OM the eternal syllable.

तद् वा एतदनुज्ञाक्षरं यद्वा किंचानुजानात्योमित्येव तदाहैषो एव
समृद्धिर्यदनुज्ञा समर्थयिता ह वै कामानां भवति य एतदेवं विद्वानक्षर-
मुद्दीथमुपास्ते ॥८॥

8. Now this OM is the syllable of Assent; for to whatsoever one assenteth, one sayeth OM; and assent is blessing of increase. Verily he becometh a blesser and increaser of the desires of men who with this knowledge worshippeth OM the eternal syllable.

तेनेयं त्रयी विद्या वर्तत ओमित्याश्रावयत्योमिति शंसत्योमित्युज्ञाय-
त्येतस्यैवाक्षरस्यापचित्यै महिम्ना रसेन ॥९॥

9. By OM the triple knowledge proceedeth; with OM the priest reciteth the Rik, with OM he pronounceth the Yajur, with OM he chanteth the Sama. And all this is for the heaping up of the Imperishable and by the greatness of It and the delightfulness.

तेनोभौ कुरुतो यश्चैतदेवं वेद यश्च न वेद। नाना तु विद्या चाविद्या
च यदेव विद्यया करोति श्रद्धयोपनिषदा तदेव वीर्यवत्तरं भवतीति
खल्वेतस्यैवाक्षरस्योपव्याख्यानं भवति ॥१०॥

10. He doeth works by OM who hath the knowledge, and he also who hath it not; but these are diverse, the Knowledge and the Ignorance. Whatso work one doeth with knowledge, with faith and with the secret of Veda, it becometh to him more virile and mighty. This is the exposition of the eternal letters.

And the second section

देवासुरा हृष्णे यत्र संयेतिर उभये प्राजापत्यास्तद्व देवा उक्तीथमा-
जहूरनेनैनानभिभविष्याम इति ॥१॥

1. The Gods and the Demons strove together and both were children of the Almighty Father. Then the Gods took up for weapon OM of Udgitha, for they said "With this we shall overcome these Titans."

ते ह नासिकं प्राणमुक्तीथमुपासांचक्रिरे तं हासुराः पाप्मना विविधु-
स्तस्मात्तेनोभयं जिग्नति सुरभि च दुर्गन्धि च पाप्मना ह्येष विद्धः ॥२॥

2. The Gods worshipped OM as Breath in the nostrils; but the Demons came and smote it with the arrow of Evil; therefore it smelleth both alike, the sweet scent and the evil odour. For it is smitten through and through with Evil.

अथ ह वाचमुक्तीथमुपासांचक्रिरे तां हासुराः पाप्मना विविधुस्तस्मात्
तयोभयं वदति सत्यं चानृतं च पाप्मना ह्येषा विद्धा ॥३॥

3. Then the Gods worshipped OM as Speech; but the Demons came and smote it with the arrow of Evil; therefore it speaketh both alike, Truth and Falsehood. For it is smitten through and through with Evil.

अथ ह चक्षुरुद्धीथमुपासांचक्रिरे तद्वासुराः पाप्मना विविधुस्तस्मात्
तेनोभयं पश्यति दर्शनीयं चादर्शनीयं च पाप्मना ह्येतद् विद्धम् ॥४॥

4. Then the Gods worshipped OM as the Eye; but the Demons came and smote it with the arrow of Evil; therefore it beholdeth both alike, the fair to see and the foul of favour. For it is smitten through and through with Evil.

अथ ह श्रोत्रमुद्धीथमुपासांचक्रिरे तद्वासुराः पाप्मना विविधुस्तस्मात्
तेनोभयं शृणोति श्रवणीयं चाश्रवणीयं च पाप्मना ह्येतद् विद्धम् ॥५॥

5. Then the Gods worshipped OM as the Ear; but the Demons came and smote it with the arrow of Evil; therefore it heareth both alike, that which is well to hear and that which is harsh and unseemly. For it is smitten through and through with Evil.

अथ ह मन उद्धीथमुपासांचक्रिरे तद्वासुराः पाप्मना विविधुस्तस्मात्
तेनोभयं संकल्पयते संकल्पनीयं चासंकल्पनीयं च पाप्मना ह्येतद्
विद्धम् ॥६॥

6. Then the Gods worshipped Udgitha as Mind; but the Demons came and smote it with the arrow of Evil; therefore it conceiveth both alike, right thoughts and unlawful imaginations. For it is smitten through and through with Evil.

अथ ह य एवायं मुख्यः प्राणस्तमुद्धीथमुपासांचक्रिरे तं हासुरा कृत्वा
विद्ध्वंसुर्यथाश्मानमाखणमृत्वा विध्वंसेत ॥७॥

7. Then the Gods worshipped OM as this which is Breath in the mouth and the Demons rushing against it dashed themselves to pieces; as when an object striketh against firm and solid rock, it dasheth to pieces upon the rock.

एवं यथाश्मानमाखणमृत्वा विध्वंसते एवं हैव स विध्वंसते य एवंविदि
पापं कामयते यश्चैनमभिदासति स एषोऽश्माखणः ॥८॥

8. And even as an object hurling against firm and solid rock

dasheth itself to pieces, so he hurleth himself upon destruction whoso desireth evil against the Knower or whoso doeth him hurt; for the Knower is as that firm and solid rock.

नैवैतेन सुरभि न दुर्गन्धि विजानात्यपहतपाप्मा ह्येष तेन यदश्चाति
यत्पिबति तेनेतरान् प्राणानवति । एतमु एवान्ततोऽविच्छोत्क्रामति
व्याददात्येवान्तत इति ॥ ९ ॥

9. With this Breath one cogniseth neither sweet scent nor ill odour, for it hath flung Evil from it. Whatsoever one eateth with this or drinketh, thereby it cherisheth the other breaths. At the end and last when he findeth not the breath, the Spirit goeth out from the body; verily he openeth wide the mouth as he goeth.

तं हाङ्गिरा उद्गीथमुपासांचक्र एतमु एवाङ्गिरसं मन्यन्तेऽङ्गानां यद्
रसः ॥ १० ॥

10. Angiras worshipped OM of Udgitha as Breath in the mouth and men think of Breath in the mouth as Angiras because it is essence of the members of the body.

तेन तं ह वृहस्पतिरुद्गीथमुपासांचक्र एतमु एव वृहस्पतिं मन्यन्ते वागिध
वृहती तस्या एष पतिः ॥ ११ ॥

11. By the strength of Angiras, Brihaspati worshipped OM as Breath in the mouth, and men think of the Breath as Brihaspati, because Speech is the great goddess and Breath is the lord of Speech.

तेन तं हायास्य उद्गीथमुपासांचक्र एतमु एवायास्यं मन्यन्त आस्याद्
यदयते ॥ १२ ॥

12. By the strength of Brihaspati, Ayasya worshipped OM as Breath in the mouth and men think of the Breath as Ayasya, because 'tis from the mouth it cometh.

तेन तं ह बको दात्म्यो विदांचकार । स ह नैमिषीयाणामुद्राता वभूव
स ह स्मैम्यः कामानागायति ॥ १३ ॥

13. By the strength of Ayasya, Baka the son of Dalbha knew the Breath. And he became the Chanter of the Sama among the Naimishiyas and he chanteth their desires for them unto fulfilment.

आगाता है कामानां भवति य एतदेवं विद्वानक्षरमुद्गीथमुपास्त
इत्यध्यात्मम् ॥ १४ ॥

14. Verily he becometh a chanter unto fulfilment of the desires of men who with this knowledge worshippeth OM of Udgitha, the eternal syllable. Thus far concerning Self is the exposition.

And the third section

अथाधिदैवतं य एवासौ तपति तमुद्गीथमुपासीतोद्यन्वा एष प्रजाभ्य
उद्गायति । उद्यस्तमो भयमपहन्त्यपहन्ता है वै भयस्य तमसो भवति
य एवं वेद ॥ १ ॥

1. Thereafter concerning the Gods. Lo yonder burning fire in the heavens, worship ye Him as the Udgitha; for the Sun riseth & singeth his bright hymn unto the peoples. Yea he riseth, & darkness is slain & its terror — therefore shall he be a slayer of the terror & the darkness, he who thus knoweth.

समान उ एवायं चासौ चोष्णोऽयमुष्णोऽसौ स्वर इतीममाचक्षते स्वर
इति प्रत्यास्वर इत्यमुं तस्माद्ग्रा एतमिमममुं चोद्गीथमुपासीत ॥ २ ॥

2. Breath & the Sun are one & alike — for the one is heat & the other is heat, and they call Breath the mover and the Sun too they call the mover & they call him also the mover that returneth upon his paths — therefore ye shall worship both the one & the other as Udgitha.

अथ खतु व्यानमेवोद्गीथमुपासीत यद्वै प्राणिति स प्राणो यदपानिति
सोऽपानः । अथ यः प्राणापानयोः संधिः स व्यानो यो व्यानः सा
वाक् । तस्मादप्राणन्ननपानन् वाचमभिव्याहरति ॥ ३ ॥

3. Thereafter verily ye shall worship Vyana the middle breath as Udgitha. For when one breathes forth it is Prana, the Main Breath, & when one breathes down it is Apana, the lower breath. Now this which is the joint & linking of the main breath & the lower breath, is Vyana — & Vyana, it is Speech. Therefore 'tis when one neither breatheth forth nor breatheth down that one giveth utterance to Speech.

या वाक् सर्क तस्मादप्राणन्ननपानन्नृचमभिव्याहरति यर्क तत्साम
तस्मादप्राणन्ननपानन् साम गायति यत्साम स उद्गीथस्तस्मादप्राणन्नन-
पानन्नृद्गायति ॥ ४ ॥

4. But Speech is the Rik — therefore 'tis when one neither breatheth out nor breatheth in that one uttereth the Rik. And Rik it is Sama — therefore 'tis when one neither breatheth out nor breatheth in that one chanteth the Sama. But Sama it is Udgitha — therefore 'tis when one neither breatheth out nor breatheth in that one singeth Udgitha.

अतो यान्यन्यानि वीर्यवन्ति कर्माणि यथाग्नेर्मन्यनमाजेः सरणं दृढस्य
धनुषं आयमनमप्राणन्ननपानंस्तानि करोत्येतस्य हेतोव्यानमेवोद्गीथ-
मुपासीत ॥ ५ ॥

5. Hence whatsoever actions there be that are of might & forcefulness as smiting out fire from the tinder or leaping a great barrier or bending a stark & mighty bow, it is when one neither breatheth out nor breatheth in that one doeth these. And for this cause ye shall worship the middle breath as Udgitha.

अथ खतुद्गीथाक्षराण्युपासीतोद्गीथ इति प्राण एवोत् प्राणेन ह्युत्तिष्ठति
वाग् गीर्वाचो ह गिर इत्याचक्षतेऽन्नं थमन्ने हीदं सर्वं स्थितम् ॥ ६ ॥

6. Thereafter verily ye shall worship the syllables of the Udgitha saying Udgitha & Prana is the first syllable, because one riseth up with the main breath & Speech is the second syllable, because they call Speech that which goeth forth &

food is the third syllable, because in food all this Universe is established.

द्यौरेवोदन्तरिक्षं गीः पृथिवी थमादित्य एवोद् वायुर्गर्भग्निस्यं
सामवेद एवोद् यजुर्वेदो गीऋग्वेदस्थं दुर्घेऽस्मै वाग् दोहं यो वाचो
दोहोऽन्नवानन्नादो भवति य एतान्येवं विद्वानुद्गीथाक्षराण्युपास्त उद्गीथ
इति ॥ ७ ॥

7. Heaven is the first syllable, the middle air is the second syllable, earth is the third syllable. The Sun is the first syllable, Air is the second syllable, Fire is the third syllable. The Samaveda is the first syllable, Yajurveda is the second syllable, Rigveda is the third syllable. To him Speech is a cow that yieldeth sweet milk — & what is this milking of Speech? — even that he becometh rich in food & the eater of food who knoweth these & worshippeth the syllables of Udgitha saying lo even this is Udgitha.

Notes on the Chhandogya Upanishad

First Adhyaya

ओमित्येतदक्षरमुद्दीथमुपासीत । ओमिति हृद्गायति तस्योपच्चा-
ख्यानम् ॥ १ ॥

OM is the syllable (the Imperishable One); one should follow after it as the upward Song (movement); for with OM one sings (goes) upwards; of which this is the analytical explanation.

So, literally translated in its double meaning, both its exoteric, physical and symbolic sense and its esoteric symbolised reality, runs the initial sentence of the Upanishad. These opening lines or passages of the Vedanta are always of great importance; they are always so designed as to suggest or even sum up, if not all that comes afterwards, yet the central and pervading idea of the Upanishad. The Isha Vasyam of the Vajasaneyi, the Keneshitam manas of the Talavakara, the Sacrificial Horse of the Brihad Aranyaka, the solitary Atman with its hint of the future world vibrations in the Aitareya are of this type. The Chhandogya, we see from its first and introductory sentence, is to be a work on the right & perfect way of devoting oneself to the Brahman; the spirit, the methods, the formulae are to be given to us. Its subject is the Brahman, but the Brahman as symbolised in the OM, the sacred syllable of the Veda; not, therefore, the pure state of the Universal Existence only, but that Existence in all its parts, the waking world & the dream self and the sleeping, the manifest, half-manifest and hidden, Bhurloka, Bhuvar & Swar,—the right means to win all of them, enjoy all of them, transcend all of them, is the subject of the Chhandogya. OM is the symbol and the thing symbolised. It is the symbol, aksharam, the syllable in which all sound of speech is brought back to its wide, pure indeterminate state; it is the symbolised, aksharam, the changeless, undiminishing, unincreasing, unappearing, undying Reality

which shows itself to experience in all the change, increase, diminution, appearance, departure which in a particular sum & harmony of them we call the world, just as OM the pure eternal sound-basis of speech shows itself to the ear in the variations and combinations of impure sound which in a particular sum and harmony of them we call the Veda. We are to follow after this OM with all our souls, upásita,—to apply ourselves to it and devote ourselves to its knowledge and possession, but always to OM as the Udgitha. Again in this word we have the symbolic sense and the truth symbolised expressed, as in aksharam and OM, in a single vocable with a double function and significance.

The Sanscrit has always been a language in which one word is naturally capable of several meanings and therefore carries with it a number of varied associations. It lends itself, therefore, with peculiar ease and naturalness to the figure called slesha or embrace, the marriage of different meanings in a single form of words. Paronomasia in English is mere punning, a tour-de-force, an incongruity, a grotesque and artificial play of humour. Paronomasia, slesha, in Sanscrit, though in form precisely the same thing, is not punning, not incongruous but easily appropriate, not grotesque or artificial, but natural and often inevitable, not used for intellectual horseplay, but with a serious, often a high and worthy purpose. It has been abused by rhetorical writers; yet great and noble poetical effects have been obtained by its aid, as, for instance, when the same form of words has been used to convey open blame & cover secret praise. Nevertheless in classical Sanscrit, the language has become a little too rigid for the perfect use of the figure; it is too literary, too minutely grammatised; it has lost the memory of its origins. A sense of cleverness and artifice suggests itself to us because meanings known to be distinct and widely separate are brought together in a single activity of the word which usually suggests them only in different contexts. But in the Vedic slesha we have no sense of cleverness or artifice, because the writers themselves had none. The language was still near to its origins and had, not perhaps an intellectual, but still an instinctive memory of them. With less grammatical and as little etymological knowledge as

Panini and the other classical grammarians, the Rishis had better possession of the soul of Sanskrit speech. The different meanings of a word, though distinct, were not yet entirely separate; many links yet survived between them which were afterwards lost; the gradations of sense remained, the hint of the word's history, the shading off from one sense to another. Ardha now means half and it means nothing else. To the Vedic man it carried other associations. Derived from the root ridh which meant originally to go and join, then to add, to increase, to prosper, it bore the sense of place of destination, the person to whom I direct myself, or simply place; increase, also addition, a part added and so simply a part or half. To have used it in any other sense than "place of destination" or as at once "half, part" and "a place of destination" would not be a violence to the Vedic mind, but a natural association of ideas. So when they spoke of the higher worlds of Sacchidananda as Parardha, they meant at once the higher half of man's inner existence & the param dháma or high seat of Vishnou in other worlds and, in addition, thought of that high seat as the destination of our upward movement. All this rose at once to their mind when the word was uttered, naturally, easily and, by long association, inevitably.

OM is a word in instance. When the word was spoken as a solemn affirmation, everyone thought of the Pranava in the Veda, but no one could listen to the word OM without thinking also of the Brahman in Its triple manifestation and in Its transcendent being. The word, aksharam, meaning both syllable & unshifting, when coupled with OM, is a word in instance; "OM the syllable" meant also, inevitably, to the Vedic mind "Brahman, who changes not nor perishes". The words udgítha and udgáyati are words in instance. In classical Sanscrit the prepositional prefix to the verb was dead and bore only a conventional significance or had no force at all; udgáyati or pragáyati is not very different from the simple gáyati; all mean merely sing or chant. But in Veda the preposition is still living & joins its verb or separates itself as it pleases; therefore it keeps its full meaning always. In Vedanta the power of separation is lost, but the separate force remains. Again the roots gí and gá

in classical Sanscrit mean to sing and have resigned the sense of going to their kinsman gam; but in Vedic times, the sense of going was still active and common. They meant also to express, to possess, to hold; but these meanings once common to the family are now entrusted to particular members of it, gir, for expression, grih, for holding. Gáthá, gíthá, gána, gáyati, gátá, gátu, meant to the Vedic mind both going and singing, udgítha meant ascension as well as casting upward the voice or the soul in song. When the Vedic singer said Ud gáyámi, the physical idea was that, perhaps, of the song rising upward, but he had also the psychical idea of the soul rising up in song to the gods and fulfilling in its meeting with them and entering into them its expressed aspiration. To show that this idea is not a modern etymological fancy of my own, it is sufficient to cite the evidence of the Chhandogya Upanishad itself in this very chapter where Baka Dalbhya is spoken of as the Udgata of the Naimishiyas who obtained their desires for them by the Vedic chant, ebhya ágáyati kámán; so, adds the Upanishad, shall everyone be a “singer to” & a “bringer to” of desires, ágátá kámánám, who with this knowledge follows after OM, the Brahman, as the Udgitha.

This then is the meaning of the Upanishad that OM, the syllable, technically called the Udgitha, is to be meditated on as a symbol of the fourfold Brahman with two objects, the “singing to” of one’s desires & aspirations in the triple manifestation and the spiritual ascension into the Brahman Itself so as to meet and enter into heaven after heaven & even into Its transcendent felicity. For, it says, with the syllable OM one begins the chant of the Samaveda, or, in the esoteric sense, by means of the meditation on OM one makes this soul-ascension and becomes master of all the soul desires. It is in this aspect & to this end that the Upanishad will expound OM. To explain Brahman in Its nature & workings, to teach the right worship and meditation on Brahman, to establish what are the different means of attainment of different results and the formulae of the meditation and worship, is its purpose. All this work of explanation has to be done in reference to Veda & Vedic sacrifice and ritual of which OM is the substance. In a certain sense, therefore,

the Upanishad is an explanation of the purpose & symbology of Vedic formulae & ritual; it sums up the results of the long travail of seeking by which the first founders & pioneers of Vedantism in an age when the secret & true sense of Veda had been largely submerged in the ceremonialism & formalism of the close of the Dwapara Yuga, attempted to recover their lost heritage partly by reference to the adepts who still remained in possession of it, partly by the traditions of the great seekers of the past Yuga, Janaka, Yajnavalkya, Krishna and others, partly by their own illuminations and spiritual experience. The Chhandogya Upanishad is thus the summary history of one of the greatest & most interesting ages of human thought.

Satyakama Jabala

The story of Satyakama Jabala occupies five sections, the third to the eighth, of the fourth chapter in the Chhandogya Upanishad. The Chhandogya seems to be the most ancient of the extant Upanishads. It speaks of Krishna, son of Devaki, and Dhritarashtra Vaichitravirya in a tone that would justify us in assuming that it regarded them not as ancient and far-off names but as men who had walked the earth in living memory. The movement of philosophic speculation of which the Upanishads are the extant record, was an attempt to pass from the old ritualistic *karma* to the freedom of the *jnanamarga*. According to the writer of the Gita, this was not a new movement, but a return to a past and lost discipline; for Sri Krishna says to Arjuna of the true or *sajnan karmamarga* he reveals to him, "This is the imperishable Yoga I declared unto Vivaswan, Vivaswan revealed it to Manu and Manu to Ixvacu told it. Thus was it known to the royal sages by hereditary transmission, till by the great lapse of time this yoga was lost, O scourge of thy foes. This is the same ancient Yoga that I have told unto [thee] today, because thou art my lover and my friend; for this is the highest of all the inner truths."

The Dwapara Yuga was the age of Kuru preeminence and the Kurus were a great practical, warlike, ritualistic, juristic race of the Roman type, with little of the speculative temper or moral enthusiasm of the eastern Coshalas, Videhas, Kashis, Chedis. The West of India has always been noted for its practical, soldierly, commercial bent of mind in comparison with the imaginative and idealistic Eastern races and the scholastic, logical and metaphysical South. According to the Hindu theory of the Yugas, it is in the Dwapara that everything is codified, ritualised, formalised. In the Satya Vishnu descends among men as Yajna. Yajna is the spirit of adoration and sacrifice, and in the Satya yajna reigns in the hearts of men, and there is no need

of external ritual, external sacrifices, elaborate law, government, castes, classes and creeds. Men follow the law by the necessity of their purified nature and their complete knowledge. The kingdom of God & the Veda are in the hearts of His people. In the Treta the old perfect order begins to break and Vishnu descends as the *chakravarti raja*, the warrior and ruler, Kartavirya, Parasurama, Rama, and the sword, the law and the written Veda are instituted to govern men. But there is still great elasticity and freedom and within certain limits men follow the healthy impulse of their nature, only slightly corrupted by the first descent from purity. It is in the Dwapara that form and rule have to take the place of the idea and the spirit as the true governors of religion, ethics and society. Vishnu then descends as Vyasa, the great codifier and systematiser of knowledge.

At the end of the Dwapara, when Sri Krishna came, this tendency had reached its extreme development, and the form tended to take the place of the idea and the rule to take the place of the spirit not only in the outward conduct but in the hearts of men. Nevertheless an opposite tendency had already begun. Dhritarashtra himself was an earnest inquirer into the inner meaning of things. Great Vedantists were living and teaching, such as the rishi Ghora to whom Sri Krishna himself went for the word of illumination. Sri Krishna was the intellectual force that took up all these scattered tendencies and, by breaking down the strong formalism of the Dwapara, prepared the work of the Kali. In the Gita he denounces those who will not go outside the four corners of the Veda and philosophises the whole theory of the sacrificial system; he contemptuously dismisses the guidance of the set ethical systems and establishes an inward and spiritual rule of conduct. To many of his time he seems to have appeared as a baneful and destructive portent; like all great revolutionary innovators, he is denounced by Bhurisravas as a well known misleader of men and corrupter of morals. It is the work of the Kali Yuga to destroy everything by questioning everything in order to establish after a struggle between the forces of purity and impurity a new harmony of life and knowledge in another Satyayuga.

After the destruction of the conservative Kurus and Panchalas at Kurukshetra, the development of the Vedanta commenced and went on progressing till in its turn it reached its extreme & excessive development in the teachings of Buddha and Shankaracharya. But at the period of the Chhandogya it is in its early stage of development. The first sections of the Upanishad are taken up with an esoteric development of the inner meaning of certain parts of the sacrificial formulae, which in itself is sufficient to show that the work belongs to the first stratum of Vedantic formation.

The story of Satyakama is one of the most typical in the Upanishad. It is full of sidelights on early Vedantic teaching, Yogic sadhan and that deep psychical knowledge which the writer took for granted in the hearers of his work. So much knowledge, indeed, is thus taken for granted that it is impossible for anyone not himself a practiser of Yoga, to understand anything but its broad conclusions. The modern commentators, Shankara included, have approached it in order to establish particular metaphysical doctrines, not to elucidate its entire significance. I shall take the side that has been neglected; for what to the European inquirer are merely "the babblings of children", bear to the Yogi an aspect of infinite truth, value and significance.

Chapter II

"Now Satyakama Jabala spoke unto his mother Jabala and said 'Mother, I shall go and lead the life of the Brahmacharin; tell me what is my *gotra*.' But she answered him, 'This I know not, my son, of what gotra thou art; resorting to many as a serving woman in my youth I got thee, therefore I know not of what gotra thou art. But Jabala is my name and Satyakama is thine, Satyakama Jabala therefore call thyself.' So he came to Haridrumata the Gautama and said, 'I would stay with my Lord as a Brahmacharin, let me therefore enter under thee.' And he said to him, 'My son, of what gotra art thou?' But the other answered, 'This, alas, I know not of what gotra I am; I asked my

mother and she answered me, Resorting to many in my youth as a serving woman I got thee, therefore I know not of what gotra thou art, but Jabala is my name and Satyakama is thine; Satyakama Jabala therefore am I.' And he said to him, 'None who is not a Brahmin can be strong enough to say this; gather the firewood, my son, I will take thee under me, for thou didst not depart from the truth.' He admitted him and put forth four hundred cows weak and lean and said, 'These, my son, do thou follow as a herd,' and he set the cows in motion and said, 'Return not until they are a thousand.' And he fared abroad with them during the years till they were a thousand."

So the story opens, and simple as it seems, it already contains several points of capital importance in understanding the ideas of the time and the principles of the old Vedantic *sadhana*. Satyakama, as we gather from other passages, was one of the great Vedantic teachers of the time immediately previous to the composition of the Chhandogya Upanishad. But his birth is the meanest possible. His mother is a serving girl, not a *dasi* attached to a permanent household whose son could have named his father and his gotra, but a *paricharika*, serving for hire at various houses, "resorting to many", and therefore unable to name her son's father. Satyakama has, therefore, neither caste, nor gotra, nor any position in life. It appears from this story as from others that, although the system of the four castes was firmly established, it counted as no obstacle in the pursuit of knowledge and spiritual advancement. The Kshatriya could teach the Brahmin, the illegitimate and fatherless son of the serving girl could be guru to the purest and highest blood in the land. This is nothing new or improbable, for it has been so throughout the history of Hinduism and the shutting out of anyone from spiritual truth and culture on the ground of caste is an invention of later times. In the nature of things the usual rule would be for the greater number of spiritual preceptors to be found in the higher castes, but this was the result of natural laws and not of a fixed prohibition. It is noticeable also from this and other instances that it was the father's position that fixed the son's, and the mother's seems to have been of very minor

importance. The question about the gotra was of importance, probably, with regard to the rites and other circumstances of initiation. Satyakama must have known perfectly well that he was the illegitimate son of a serving woman, but he wished to know his father's name and gotra because he would have to tell it to his guru. Even after knowing the worst, he persisted in his intention of taking up spiritual studies, so that he can have had no fear of being rejected on account of his base origin. His guru, impressed by his truthfulness, says, "None but a Brahmin would have the moral strength to make such an avowal." It can hardly be meant by this that Satyakama's father must have been a Brahmin, but that since he had the Brahmin qualities, he must be accepted as a Brahmin. Even the Kshatriya would have hesitated to speak so truthfully, because the Kshatriya is by nature a lover of honour and shuns dishonour, he has the sense of *mana* and *apamana*; but the true Brahmin is *samo manapamanayoh*, he accepts indifferently worldly honour and dishonour and cares only for the truth and the right. In short the Gautama concludes that, whatever may be Satyakama's physical birth, spiritually he is of the highest order and especially fitted for a sadhaka; *na satyad agat*, he did not depart from the truth.

The second point is the first action of the guru after the ceremony of initiation. Instead of beginning the instruction of this promising disciple he sends him out with four hundred miserable kine, more likely to die than prosper and increase, and forbids him to return till he has increased them to a thousand. Wherfore this singular arrangement? Was it a test? Was it a discipline? But Haridrumata had already seen that his new disciple had the high Brahmin qualities. What more did he require?

The perfect man is a fourfold being and one object of Vedantic discipline is to be the perfect man, *siddha*. When Christ said, "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect," he was only repeating in popular language the Vedantic teaching of *sadharma*, likeness to God.

The Brihad Aranyak Upanishad

Chapter One: Section I

उषा वा अश्वस्य मेध्यस्य शिरः । सूर्यश्चक्षुर्वातः प्राणो व्यात्तमग्नि-
वैश्वानरः संवत्सर आत्माश्वस्य मेध्यस्य । द्यौः पृष्ठमन्तरिक्षमुदरं
पृथिवी पाजस्यं दिशः पार्श्वे अवान्तरदिशः पर्शीव ऋतवोऽङ्गानि
मासाश्वार्धमासाश्व पर्वाण्यहोरात्राणि प्रतिष्ठा नक्षत्राण्यस्थीनि नभो
मांसानि । ऊवध्यं सिकताः सिन्धवो गुदा यकृच्च क्रोमानश्च पर्वता
ओषधयश्च वनस्पतयश्च लोमान्युद्यन्पूर्वार्धो निस्तोचञ्जघनार्धो यद्
विजृम्भते तद्विद्योतते यद्विद्यनुते तत्सनयति यन्मेहति तद्वृष्टिं
वागेवास्य वाक् ॥ १ ॥

1. Dawn is the head¹ of the horse sacrificial.² The sun is his eye,³ his breath is the wind, his wide open mouth is Fire, the master might universal, Time is the self of the horse sacrificial.⁴ Heaven is his back & the midworld his belly, earth is his footing,— the regions are his flanks & the lesser regions their ribs, the seasons his members, the months & the half months are their joints, the days & nights are his standing place, the stars his bones & the sky is the flesh of his body. The strands are the food in his belly, the rivers are his veins, his liver & his lungs are the mountains, herbs & plants are his hairs, the rising is his front & the setting his hinder portion, when he stretches himself, then it lightens,

¹ Because it is the front and beginning.

² Aswa meant originally “being, existence, substance”. From the sense of speed & strength it came to mean “horse”. The word is therefore used to indicate material existence & the horse (the image usually conveyed by this name) is taken as the symbol of universal existence in annam.

The horse is symbolic & the sacrifice is symbolic. We have in it an image of the Virat Purusha, of Yajniya Purusha, God expressing himself in the material universe.

³ Because the sun is the master of sight.

⁴ Air is the basis of life, Fire of strength & expansion. Time is that which upholds existence in material space & is the soul of it.

when he shakes his frame, then it thunders, when he urines, then it rains. Speech, verily, is the sound of him.

अहर्वा अश्वं पुरस्तान्महिमान्वजायत तस्य पूर्वे समुद्रे योनी रात्रिरेनं
पश्चान्महिमान्वजायत तस्यापरे समुद्रे योनिरेतौ वा अश्वं महिमाना -
वभितः सबभूवतुः । हयो भूत्वा देवानवहृद् वाजी गन्धवानर्वासुरानश्चो
मनुष्यान् समुद्र एवास्य बन्धुः समुद्रो योनिः ॥ २ ॥

2. Day was the grandeur that was born before the horse as he galloped, the eastern ocean gave it birth; night was the grandeur that was born behind him & its birth was from the other waters. These are the grandeurs that came into being on either side of the horse. He became Haya & bore the gods, Vaja & bore the Gandharvas, Arvan & bore the Titans, Aswa & bore mankind. The sea was his brother & the sea was his birthplace.

Chapter One: Section II

नैवेह किंचनाग्र आसीन्मृत्युनैवेदमावृतमासीत् । अशनाययाशनाया
हि मृत्युस्तन्मनोऽकुरुतात्मन्वी स्यामिति । सोऽर्चन्नरत् तस्यार्चत
आपोऽजायन्तार्चते वै मे कमभूदिति तदेवार्कस्यार्कत्वं कं ह वा अस्मै
भवति य एवमेतदर्कस्यार्कत्वं वद ॥ १ ॥

1. Formerly there was nothing here; this was concealed by Death—by Hunger, for it is Hunger that is Death. That created Mind, & he said, Let me have substance. He moved about working & as he worked the waters were born & he said, Felicity was born to me as I worked. This verily is the activity in action. Therefore felicity cometh to him who thus knoweth this soul of activity in action.

आपो वा अर्कस्तद्यदपां शर आसीत् तत्समहन्यत । सा पृथिव्यभवत्
तस्यामश्राम्यत् तस्य श्रान्तस्य तस्य तेजोरसो निरवर्तताग्निः ॥ २ ॥

2. The waters verily (in their movement) are action; that which was a lake of waters was contracted & became compact. This became earth — upon earth he grew weary — in his

weariness he was heated & the Essence of energy went out from him, even Fire.

स त्रेधात्मानं व्यकुरुतादित्यं तृतीयं वायुं तृतीयं स एष प्राणस्त्रेधा विहितः । तस्य प्राची दिक् शिरोऽसौ चासौ चेमौ । अथास्य प्रतीची दिक् पुच्छमसौ चासौ च सकथ्यौ दक्षिणा चोदीची च पार्श्वे द्यौः पृष्ठमन्तरिक्षमुदरमियमुरः स एषोऽप्सु प्रतिष्ठितो यत्र क्व चैति तदेव प्रतितिष्ठत्येवं विद्वान् ॥ ३ ॥

3. Fire divided himself into three — the sun one of the three & Vayu one of the three; this is that force of life arranged triply. The east is his head and the northeast & the southeast are his arms. Now the west is his seat & the southwest & the northwest are his thighs; his sides are the south & the north; heaven is his back & the middle region is his belly; this earth is his bosom. This is he that is established in the waters wheresoever thou turn. And as that is he established who thus knoweth.

सोऽकामयत द्वितीयो म आत्मा जायेतेति स मनसा वाचं मिथुनं समभवदशनाया मृत्युस्तद्यद्रेत आसीत् स संवत्सरोऽभवत् । न ह पुरा ततः संवत्सर आस तमेतावन्तं कालमबिभः । यावान् संवत्सरस्तमेतावतः कालस्य परस्तादसृजत । तं जातमभिव्याददात् स भाणकरोत् सैव वागभवत् ॥ ४ ॥

4. He desired “Let a second self be born to me.” He by mind had intercourse with speech, even Hunger that is Death; the seed that was of that union became Time. For before this Time was not (period of Time) but so long He had borne him in Himself. So long as is Time’s period, after so long He gave it birth. He yawned upon him as soon as it was born; it cried out & that became speech.

स ऐक्षत यदि वा इममभिमंस्ये कनीयोऽन्नं करिष्य इति स तया वाचा तेनात्मनेदं सर्वमसृजत यदिदं किंचर्चो यजूंषि सामानि छन्दांसि यज्ञान्प्रजाः पशून् । स यद्यदेवासृजत तत्तदत्तुमन्त्रियत सर्वं वा अतीति तददितेरदितित्वं सर्वस्यैतस्यात्ता भवति सर्वमस्यान्नं भवति य एव-मेतददितेरदितित्वं वेद ॥ ५ ॥

5. He saw, If I devour this, I shall diminish food; therefore by that speech & by that self he created all this that we see, the Riks & the Yajus & the Samas & the rhythms & sacrifices & animals & these nations. Whatsoever he created, that he set about devouring, verily he devoureth all; this is the substantiality of being in substance (that it can be destroyed⁵). He becometh the eater of all the world & everything becometh his food who thus knoweth the substantiality of being in substance.

सोऽकामयत् भूयसा यज्ञेन भूयो यजेयेति । सोऽश्राम्यत् स तपोऽतप्यत् तस्य आन्तस्य तपस्य यशो वीर्यमुदक्रामत् । प्राणा वै यशो वीर्यं तत्प्राणेषूक्तान्तेषु शरीरं श्वयितुमन्त्रियत तस्य शरीर एव मन आसीत् ॥ ६ ॥

6. He desired “Let me sacrifice more richly with richer sacrifice.” He laboured & put forth heat of force, & of him thus laboured & heated splendour & strength came forth. The life-forces are that splendour & strength, therefore when the life-forces go forth, the body sets about to rot, yet in his body even so mind was.

सोऽकामयत् मेधं म इदं स्यादात्मन्यनेन स्यामिति । ततोऽश्वः समभवद् यदश्वत् तन्मेध्यमभूदिति तदेवाश्वमेधस्याश्वमेधत्वम् । एष ह वा अश्वमेधं वेद य एनमेवं वेद । तमनवरुच्यैवामन्यत । तं संवत्सरस्य परस्तादात्मन आलभत । . . . ॥ ७ ॥

7. He desired “Let this have sacrificial capacity for me, by this let me be provided with a body.” That which has expressed power & being, that is fit for the sacrifice. This verily is the secret of the Aswamedha & he knoweth indeed the Aswamedha who thus knoweth it. He gave him free course & thought, then after a year (a fixed period of time) he dedicated him to the self. [*The rest of this section was not translated.*]

⁵ Destroyed, ie enjoyed by absorption.

Chapter One: Section III

द्वया ह प्राजापत्या देवाश्चासुराश्च । ततः कानीयसा एव देवा ज्यायसा
असुरास्त एषु लोकेष्वस्पर्धन्ते ते ह देवा ऊर्हन्तासुरान् यज्ञ
उद्गीथेनात्ययामैति ॥ १ ॥

1. Two were the races of the Sons of God, the gods & the Titans. Thereafter the gods were weaker, mightier the Titans. They in these worlds strove together, & the gods said, Let us by the udgitha overpass the Titans in the yajna.

ते ह वाचमूचुस्त्वं न उद्गायेति तथेति तेभ्यो वागुदगायत् । यो वाचि
भोगस्तं देवेभ्य आगायद् यत्कल्याणं वदति तदात्मने । ते विद्वरनेन
वै न उद्गात्रात्येष्यन्तीति तमभिदृत्य पाप्मनाविद्यन् स यः स पाप्मा
यदेवेदमप्रतिरूपं वदति स एव स पाप्मा ॥ २ ॥

2. They said to Speech, Do thou go upward (by the udgitha) for us. “So be it” said Speech and he went upward for them; the enjoyment that is in speech, he reached for the gods, the good that it speaks, he reached for the self. They thought it was by this singer they would overpass them, but they ran at him and penetrated him with evil. The evil that one speaketh this that hath no correspondence (to the thing or fact to be expressed),—this is that evil.

The Great Aranyaka

A Commentary on the Brihad Aranyak Upanishad

Foreword

The Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, at once the most obscure and the profoundest of the Upanishads, offers peculiar difficulties to the modern mind. If its ideas are remote from us, its language is still more remote. Profound, subtle, extraordinarily rich in rare philosophical suggestions and delicate psychology, it has preferred to couch its ideas in a highly figurative and symbolical language, which to its contemporaries, accustomed to this suggestive dialect, must have seemed a noble frame for its riches, but meets us rather as an obscuring veil. To draw aside this curtain, to translate the old Vedic language and figures into the form contemporary thought prefers to give to its ideas is the sole object of this commentary. The task is necessarily a little hazardous. It would have been easy merely to reproduce the thoughts & interpretations of Shankara in the modern tongue — if there were an error, one could afford to err with so supreme an authority. But it seems to me that both the demands of truth and the spiritual need of mankind in this age call for a restoration of old Vedantic truth rather than for the prolonged dominion of that single side of it systematised by the mediaeval thinker. The great Shankaracharya needs no modern praise and can be hurt by no modern disagreement. Easily the first of metaphysical thinkers, the greatest genius in the history of philosophy, his commentary has also done an incalculable service to our race by bridging the intellectual gulf between the sages of the Upanishads and ourselves. It has protected them from the practical

oblivion in which our ignorance & inertia have allowed the Veda to rest for so many centuries — only to be dragged out by the rude hands of the daringly speculative Teuton. It has kept these ancient grandeurs of thought, these high repositories of spirituality under the safe-guard of that temple of metaphysics, the Adwaita philosophy — a little in the background, a little too much veiled & shrouded, but nevertheless safe from the iconoclasm and the restless ingenuities of modern scholarship. Nevertheless, it remains true that Shankara's commentary is interesting not so much for the light it sheds on the Upanishad as for its digressions into his own philosophy. I do not think that Shankara's rational intellect, subtle indeed to the extreme, but avid of logical clearness and consistency, could penetrate far into that mystic symbolism and that deep & elusive flexibility which is characteristic of all the Upanishads, but rises to an almost unattainable height in the Brihad Aranyaka. He has done much, has shown often a readiness and quickness astonishing in so different a type of intellectuality but more is possible and needed. The time is fast coming when the human intellect, aware of the mighty complexity of the universe, will be more ready to learn & less prone to dispute & dictate; we shall be willing then to read ancient documents of knowledge for what they contain instead of attempting to force into them our own truth or get them to serve our philosophic or scholastic purposes. To enter passively into the thoughts of the old Rishis, allow their words to sink into our souls, mould them & create their own reverberations in a sympathetic & responsive material — submissiveness, in short, to the Sruti — was the theory the ancients themselves had of the method of Vedic knowledge — giram upasrutim chara, stoman abhi swara, abhi grinihi, a ruva — to listen in soul to the old voices and allow the Sruti in the soul to respond, to vibrate first obscurely in answer to the Vedantic hymn of knowledge, to give the response, the echo & last to let that response gain in clarity, intensity & fullness. This is the principle of interpretation that I have followed — mystical perhaps but not necessarily more unsound than the insistence & equally personal standards of the logician & the scholar. And

for the rest, where no inner experience of truth sheds light on the text, to abide faithfully by the wording of the Upanishad and trust my intuitions. For I hold it right to follow the intuitions especially in interpreting this Upanishad, even at the risk of being accused of reading mysticism into the Vedanta, because the early Vedantists, it seems to me, were mystics — not in the sense of being vague & loose-thoughted visionaries, but in the sense of being intuitionist symbolists — who regarded the world as a movement of consciousness & all material forms & energies as external symbols & shadows of deeper & ever deeper internal realities. It is not my intention here nor is it in my limits possible to develop the philosophy of the Great Aranyaka Upanishad, but only to develop with just sufficient amplitude for entire clearness the ideas contained in its language & involved in its figures. The business of my commentary is to lay a foundation; it is for the thinker to build the superstructure.

The Horse of the Worlds

The Upanishad begins with a grandiose abruptness in an impetuous figure of the Horse of the Aswamedha. “OM” it begins “Dawn is the head of the horse sacrificial. The sun is his eye, his breath is the wind, his wide-open mouth is Fire, the universal energy; Time is the self of the horse sacrificial. Heaven is his back and the mid-region is his belly, earth is his footing, — the quarters are his flanks and their intermediate regions are his ribs; the seasons are his members, the months and the half months are their joints, the days and nights are that on which he stands, the stars are his bones and the sky is the flesh of his body. The strands are the food in his belly, the rivers are his veins, the mountains are his liver and lungs, herbs and plants are the hairs of his body; the rising day is his front portion and the setting day is his hinder portion. When he stretches himself, then it lightens; when he shakes himself, then it thunders; when he urines, then it rains. Speech verily is the voice of him. Day was the grandeur that was born before the horse as he galloped, the eastern ocean gave it

birth. Night was the grandeur that was born in his rear and its birth was in the western waters. These were the grandeurs that arose to being on either side of the horse. He became Haya and carried the gods,—Vajin and bore the Gandharvas,—Arvan and bore the Titans,—Aswa and carried mankind. The sea was his brother and the sea his birthplace.”

This passage, full of a gigantic imagery, sets the key to the Upanishad and only by entering into the meaning of its symbolism can we command the gates of this many-mansioned city of Vedantic thought. There is never anything merely poetic or ornamental in the language of the Upanishads. Even in this passage which would at first sight seem to be sheer imagery, there is a choice, a selecting eye, an intention in the images. They are all dependent not on the author’s unfettered fancy, but on the common ideas of the early Vedantic theosophy. It is fortunate, also, that the attitude of the Upanishads to the Vedic sacrifices is perfectly plain from this opening. We shall not stand in danger of being accused of reading modern subtleties into primitive minds or of replacing barbarous superstitions by civilised mysticism. The Aswamedha or Horse-Sacrifice is, as we shall see, taken as the symbol of a great spiritual advance, an evolutionary movement, almost, out of the dominion of apparently material forces into a higher spiritual freedom. The Horse of the Aswamedha is, to the author, a physical figure representing, like some algebraical symbol, an unknown quantity of force & speed. From the imagery it is evident that this force, this speed, is something worldwide, something universal; it fills the regions with its body, it occupies Time, it gallops through Space, it bears on in its speed men and gods and the Titans. It is the Horse of the Worlds,—and yet the Horse sacrificial.

Let us regard first the word Aswa and consider whether it throws any light on the secret of this image. For we know that the early Vedantins attached great importance to words in both their apparent and their hidden meaning and no one who does not follow them in this path, can hope to enter into the associations with which their minds were full. Yet the importance of associations in colouring and often in determining our thoughts,

determining even philosophic and scientific thought when it is most careful to be exact & free, should be obvious to the most superficial psychologist. Swami Dayananda's method with the Vedas, although it may have been too vigorously applied and more often out of the powerful mind of the modern Indian thinker than out of the recovered mentality of the old Aryan Rishis, would nevertheless, in its principle, have been approved by these Vedantins. Now the word Aswa must originally have implied strength or speed or both before it came to be applied to a horse. In its first or root significance it means to exist pervadingly and so to possess, have, obtain or enjoy. It is the Greek echo (OS. [Old Sanskrit] *ashâ*), the ordinary word in Greek for "I have". It means, also and even more commonly, to eat or enjoy. Beside this original sense inherent in the roots of its family it has its own peculiar significance of existence in force — strength, solidity, sharpness, speed, — in ashan and ashma, a stone, ashani, a thunderbolt, asri, a sharp edge or corner, (Latin acer, acris, sharp, acus, a point etc) and finally aswa, the strong, swift horse. Its fundamental meanings are, therefore, pervading existence, enjoyment, strength, solidity, speed. Shall we not say, therefore, that aswa to the Rishis meant the unknown power made up of force, strength, solidity, speed and enjoyment that pervades and constitutes the material world?

But there is a danger that etymological fancies may mislead us. It is necessary, therefore, to test our provisional conclusion from philology by a careful examination of the images of this parable. Yet before we proceed to this inquiry, it is as well to note that in the very opening of his second Brahmana, the Rishi passes on immediately from aswa the horse to Ashanaya mrityu, Hunger that is death and assigns this hunger that is death as the characteristic, indeed the very nature of the Force that has arranged and developed — evolved, as the moderns would say — the material worlds.

"Dawn" says the Rishi, "is the head of the horse sacrificial." Now the head is the front, the part of us that faces and looks out upon our world, — and Dawn is that part to the Horse of the worlds. This goddess must therefore be the opening out of

the world to the eye of being — for as day is the symbol of a time of activity, night of a time of inactivity, so dawn images the imperfect but pregnant beginnings of regular cosmic action; it is the Being's movement forward, it is its impulse to look out at the universe in which it finds itself and looking towards it, to yearn, to desire to enter upon possession of a world which looks so bright because of the brightness of the gaze that is turned upon it. The word Ushas means etymologically coming into manifested being; and it could mean also desire or yearning. Ushas or Dawn to the early thinkers was the impulse towards manifest existence, no longer a vague movement in the depths of the Unmanifest, but already emerging and on the brink of its satisfaction. For we must remember that we are dealing with a book full of mystical imagery, which starts with & looks on psychological and philosophical truths in the most material things and we shall miss its meaning altogether, if in our interpretation we are afraid of mysticism.

The sun is the eye of this great Force, the wind is its life-breath or vital energy, Fire is its open mouth. We are here in the company of very familiar symbols. We shall have to return to them hereafter but they are, in their surface application, obvious and lucid. By themselves they are almost sufficient to reveal the meaning of the symbol, — yet not altogether sufficient. For, taken by themselves, they might mislead us into supposing the Horse of the Worlds to be an image of the material universe only, a figure for those movements of matter & in matter with which modern Science is so exclusively preoccupied. But the next image delivers us from passing by this side-gate into materialism. "Time in its period is the self of the Horse Sacrificial." If we accept for the word *atma* a significance which is also common and is, indeed, used in the next chapter, if we understand by it, as I think we ought here to understand by it, "substance" or "body", the expression, in itself remarkable, will become even more luminous and striking. Not Matter then, but Time, a mental circumstance, is the body of this force of the material universe whose eye is the sun and his breath the wind. Are we then to infer that the Seer denies the essential materiality of

matter? does he assert it to be, as Huxley admitted it to be, "a state of consciousness"? We shall see. Meanwhile it is evident already that this Horse of the Worlds is not an image merely of matter or material force, but, as we had already supposed it to be, an image of the power which pervades and constitutes the material universe. We get also from this image about Time the idea of it as an unknown power—for Time which is its self or body, is itself an unknown quantity. The reality which expresses itself to us through Time—its body—but remains itself ungrasped, must be still what men have always felt it to be, the unknown God.

In the images that immediately follow we have the conception of Space added to the conception of Time and both are brought together side by side as constituents of the being of the horse. For the sky is the flesh of his body, the quarters his flanks & the intermediate regions his ribs—the sky, nabhas, the ether above us in which the stellar systems are placed,—and these stellar systems themselves, concentrations of ether, are the bones which support the flesh and of which life in this spatial infinity takes advantage in order more firmly to place & organise itself in matter. But side by side with this spatial image is that of the seasons reminding us immediately & intentionally of the connection of Time to Space. The seasons, determined for us by the movements of the sun & stars, are the flanks of the horse and he stands upon the months and the fortnights—the lunar divisions. Space, then, is the flesh constituting materially this body of Time which the Sage attributes to his Horse of the worlds,—by movement in Space its periods are shaped & determined. Therefore we return always to the full idea of the Horse—not as an image of matter, not as a symbol of the unknown supra-material Power in its supra-material reality, but of that Power expressing itself in matter—materially, we might almost say, pervading & constituting the universe. Time is its body,—yes, but sanvatsara not kala, Time in its periods determined by movement in Space, not Time in its essentiality.

Moreover, it is that Power imaging itself in Cosmos, it is the Horse of the Worlds. For, we read, "Heaven is its back, the

mid-region is its belly, earth is its footing" — pajasyam, the four feet upon which it stands. We must be careful not to confuse the ancient Seer's conception of the universe with our modern conception. To us nothing exists except the system of gross material worlds — annamayam jagat, — this earth, this moon, this sun & its planets, these myriad suns and their systems. But to the Vedantic thinkers the universe, the manifest Brahman, was a harmony of worlds within worlds; they beheld a space within our space but linked with it, they were aware of a Time connected with our Time but different from it. This earth was Bhur. Rising in soul into the air above the earth, the antariksham, they thought they came into contact with other sevenfold earths in which just as here matter is the predominant principle, so there nervous or vital energy is the main principle or else manas, still dependent on matter & vital energy; these earths they called Bhuvan. And rising beyond this atmosphere into the ethereal void they believed themselves to be aware of other worlds which they called Swar or heaven, where again in its turn mind, free, blithe, delivered from its struggle to impose itself in a world not its own upon matter & nerve-life, is the medium of existence & the governing Force. If we keep in mind these ideas, we shall easily understand why the images are thus distributed in the sentence I have last quoted. Heaven is the back of the Horse, because it is on mind that we rest, mind that bears up the Gods & Gandharvas, Titans & men; — the mid-region is the belly because vital energy is that which hungers & devours, moves restlessly everywhere seizing everything and turning it into food or else because mind is the womb of all our higher consciousness; — earth is the footing because matter here, outward form, is the fundamental condition for the manifestation of life, mind and all higher forces. On Matter we rest and have our firm stand; out of Matter we rise to our fulfilment in Spirit.

Then once again, after these higher & more remote suggestions, we are reminded that it is some Force manifesting in matter which the Horse symbolises; the material manifestation constitutes the essence of its symbolism. The images used are of an almost gross materiality. Some of them are at the same

time of a striking interest to the practical student of Yoga, for he recognises in them allusions to certain obscure but exceedingly common Yogic phenomena. The strands of the rivers are imaged as the undigested food in the horse's belly — earth not yet assimilated or of sufficient consistency for the habitual works of life; the rivers, distributing the water that is the life blood of earth's activities, are his veins; the mountains, breathing in health for us from the rarer altitudes and supporting by the streams born from them the works of life, are his lungs and liver; herbs and plants, springing up out of the sap of earth, are the hairs covering & clothing his body. All that is clear enough and designedly superficial. But then the Upanishad goes on to speak no longer of superficial circumstances but of the powers of the Horse. Some of these are material powers, the thunder, the lightning, the rain. When he stretches himself, then it lightens; when he shakes himself, then it thunders; when he urines, then it rains — vijrimbhate, extends himself by intensity, makes the most of his physical bulk & force; vidhunute, throws himself out by energy, converts his whole body into a motion & force; these two words are of a great impetuosity & vehemence, and taken in conjunction with what they image, extremely significant. The Yогin will at once recognise the reference to the electrical manifestations visible or felt which accompany so often the increase of concentration, thought & inner activity in the waking condition — electricity, *vidyutas*, the material symbol, medium & basis of all activities of knowledge, *sarvani vijnanavijrimbhitanī*. He will recognise also the meghadhwani, one of the characteristic sounds heard in the concentration of Yoga, symbolical of kshatratejas and physically indicative of force gathering itself for action. The first image is therefore an image of knowledge expressing itself in matter, the second is an image of power expressing itself in matter. The third, the image of the rain, suggests that it is from the mere waste matter of his body that this great Power is able to fertilise the world & produce sustenance for the myriad nations of his creatures. "Speech verily is the voice of him." Vagevasya *vak*. Speech with its burden of definite thought, is the neighing of this mighty horse of sacrifice; by that this great Power in matter

expresses materially the uprush of his thought & yearning & emotion, visible sparks of the secret universal fire that is in him — guhahitam.

But the real powers, the wonderful fundamental greatnesses of the Horse are, the Sage would have us remember, not the material. What are they then? The sunrise & sunset, day & night are their symbols, not the magnitudes of space, but the magnitudes of Time,— Time, that mysterious condition of universal mind which alone makes the ordering of the universe in Space possible, although its own particular relations to matter are necessarily determined by material events & movements— for itself subtle as well as infinite it offers no means by which it can be materially measured. Sunrise & sunset, that is to say birth & death, are the front & hind part of the body of the horse, Time expressed in matter. But on Day & Night the sage fixes a deeper significance. Day is the symbol of the continual manifestation of material things [in] the vyakta, the manifest or fundamentally in Sat, in infinite being; Night is the symbol of their continual disappearance in Avyakta, the unmanifest or finally into Asat, into infinite non-being. They appear according to the swift movement of this Horse of the Worlds, anu ajayata, or, as I have written, translating the idea & rhythm of the Upanishad rather than the exact words, as he gallops. Day is the greatness that appears in his front, Night is the greatness that appears in his rear,— whatever this Time-Spirit, this Zeitgeist, turns his face towards or arrives at as he gallops through Time, that appears or, as we say, comes into being, whatever he passes away from & leaves, that disappears out of being or, as we say, perishes. Not that things are really destroyed, for nothing that is can be destroyed — nabhvavo vidyate satah, but they no longer appear, they are swallowed up in this darkness of his refusal of consciousness; for the purposes of manifestation they cease to exist. All things exist already in Parabrahman, but all are not here manifest. They are already there in Being, not in Time. The universal Thought expressing itself as Time reaches them, they seem to be born; It passes away from them, they seem to perish; but there they still are, in Being, but not in Time. These

two greatnesses of the appearance of things in Time & Space & their disappearance in Time & Space act always & continuously so long as the Horse is galloping, are his essential greatnesses. Etau vai mahimanau. The birth of one is in the eastern ocean, of the other in the western, that is to say in Sat & Asat, in the ocean of Being & the ocean of denial of Being or else in Vyakrita Prakriti & Avyakrita Prakriti, occult sea of Chaos, manifest sea of Cosmos.

Then the sage throws out briefly a description, not exhaustive but typical, of the relations of the Horse to the different natural types of being that seem to possess this universe. For all of them He is the vahana, He bears them up on His infinite strength & speed & motion. He bears all of them without respect of differences, samabhavena, with the divine impartiality and equality of soul—samam hi Brahma. To the type of each individual being this Universal Might adapts himself & seems to take upon himself their image. He is Haya to the Gods, Arvan to the Asura, Vajin to the Gandharvas, Aswa to men. Ye yatha mam prapadyante tans tathaiva bhajamyaham, mama vartmanuvartante manushyah Partha sarvashah. In reality, they are made in his image, not He in theirs, & though he seems to obey them & follow their needs & impulses, though they handle the whip, ply the spur & tug the reins, it is he who bears them on in the courses of Time that are marked out for him by his hidden Self; He is free & exults in the swiftness of his galloping.

But what are these names, Haya, Vajin, Arvan, Aswa? Certainly, they must suggest qualities which fit the Horse in each case to the peculiar type of its rider; but the meaning depends on associations & an etymology which in modern Sanscrit have gone below the surface & are no longer easily seizable. Haya is especially difficult. For this reason Shankara, relying too much on scholarship & intellectual inference & too little on his intuitions, is openly at a loss in this passage. He sees that the word haya for horse must arise from the radical sense of motion borne by the root *hi*; but every horse has motion for his chief characteristic & utility, Arvan & Vajin no less than Haya. Why then should Haya alone be suitable for riding by the gods, why

Arvan for the Asuras? He has, I think, the right intuition when he suggests that it is some peculiar & excelling kind of motion (*visishtagati*) which is the characteristic of Haya. But then, unable to fix on that peculiarity, unable to read any characteristic meaning in the names that follow, he draws back from his intuition and adds that after all, these names may have merely indicated particular kinds of horses attributed mythologically to these various families of riders. But this suggestion would make the passage mere mythology; but the Upanishads, always intent on their deeper object, never waste time over mere mythology. We must therefore go deeper than Shankara and follow out the intuition he himself has abandoned.

I am dwelling on this passage at a length disproportionate to its immediate importance, not only because Shankara's failure in handling it shows the necessity & fruitfulness of trusting our intuitions when in contact with the Upanishads, but because the passage serves two other important uses. It illustrates the Vedantic use of the etymology of words and it throws light on the precise notions of the old thinkers about those super-terrestrial beings with whom the vision of the ancient Hindus peopled the universe. The Vedantic writers, we continually find, dwelt deeply & curiously on the innate & on the concealed meaning of words; *vyakarana*, always considered essential to the interpretation of the Vedas, they used not merely as scholars, but much more as intuitive thinkers. It was not only the actual etymological sense or the actual sense in use but the suggestions of the sound & syllables of the words which attracted them; for they found that by dwelling on them new & deep truths arose into their understandings. Let us see how they use this method in assigning the names assumed by the sacrificial Horse.

Here modern philology comes to our help, for, by the clue it has given, we can revive in its principle the *Nirukta* of our ancestors and discover by induction & inference the old meaning of the Vedic vocables. I will leave Haya alone for the present; because philology unaided does not help us very much in getting at the sense of its application,— in discovering the *visishtagati* which the word conveyed to the mind of the sage. But Vajin &

Arvan are very illuminative. Vaja & Vajin are common Vedic words; they recur perpetually in the Rigveda. The sense of Vaja is essentially substantiality of being attended with plenty, from which it came to signify full force, copiousness, strength, and by an easy transition substance & plenty in the sense of wealth and possessions. There can be no doubt about Vajin. But European scholarship has confused for us the approach to the sense of Arvan. *Ar* is a common Sanscrit root, the basis of *ari*, *Arya*, *Aryama* and a number of well known words. But the scholars tell us that it means to till or plough & the Aryans so called themselves because they were agriculturists and not nomads & hunters. Starting from this premise one may see in Arvan a horse for ploughing as opposed to a draught-animal or a warhorse, & support the derivation by instancing the Latin *arvum*, a tilled field! But even if the Aryans were ploughmen, the Titans surely were not — Hiranyakashipu & Prahlad did not pride themselves on the breaking of the glebe & the honest sweat of their brow! There is no trace of such an association in arvan here, — I know not whether there is any elsewhere in the Vedas. Indeed, this agriculturist theory of the Aryans seems one of the worst of the many irresponsible freaks which scholastic fancifulness has perpetrated in the field of Sanscrit learning. No ancient race would be likely so to designate itself. *Ar* signifies essentially any kind of preeminence in fact or force in act. It means therefore to be strong, high, swift or active, preeminent, noble, excellent or first; to raise, lead, begin or rule; it means also to struggle, fight, to drive, to labour, to plough. The sense of struggle & combat appears in *ari*, an enemy; the Greek *Ares*, the war-god, *arete*, virtue, meaning originally like the Latin *virtus*, valour; the Latin *arma*, weapons. *Arya* means strong, high, noble or warlike, as indeed its use in literature constantly indicates. We can now discover the true force of Arvan,— it is the strong one in command, it is the stallion, or the bull, ie master of the herd, the leader, master or fighter. The word *Asura* also means the strong or mighty one. The Gandharvas are cited here briefly, so as to suit the rapidity of the passage, as the type of a particular class of beings, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Kinnaras

whose unifying characteristic is material ease, prosperity and a beautiful, happy & undisturbed self-indulgence; they are angels of joy, ease, art, beauty & pleasure. For them the Horse becomes full of ease & plenty, the support of these qualities, the *vahana* of the Gandharvas. The Asuras are, similarly, angels of might & force & violent struggle,—self-will is their characteristic, just as an undisciplined fury of self-indulgence is the characteristic of their kindred Rakshasas. It is a self-will capable of discipline, but always huge & impetuous even in discipline, always based on a colossal egoism. They struggle gigantically to impose that egoism on their surroundings. It is for these mighty but imperfect beings that the Horse adapts himself to their needs, becomes full of force & might and bears up their gigantic struggle, their unceasing effort. And Haya? In the light of these examples we can hazard a suggestion. The root meaning is motion; but from certain kindred words, *hil*, to swing, *hind*, to swing, *hind*, to roam about freely & from another sense of *hi*, to exhilarate or gladden, we may, perhaps, infer that haya indicated to the sage a swift, free & joyous, bounding motion, fit movement for the bearer of the gods. For the Aryan gods were devas, angels of joy & brightness, fulfilled in being, in harmony with their functions & surroundings, not like the Titans imperfect, dispossessed, struggling. Firmly seated on the bounding joy of the Horse, they deliver themselves confidently to the exultation of his movements. The sense here is not so plain & certain as with Vajin & Arvan; but Haya must certainly have been one in character with the Deva in order to be his *vahana*; the sense I have given certainly belongs to the word Deva, is discoverable in Haya from its roots, & that this brightness & joyousness was the character of the Aryan gods, I think every reader of Veda & Purana must feel and admit. Last of all, the Horse becomes Aswa for men. But is he not Aswa for all? why particularly for men? The answer is that the Rishi is already moving forward in thought to the idea of Ashanaya Mrityu with which he opens the second Brahmana of the Upanishad. Man, first & supreme type of terrestrial creatures, is most of all subject to this mystery of wasting & death which the Titans bear with difficulty & the gods

& Gandharvas entirely overcome. For in man that characteristic of enjoyment which by enjoying devours & wastes both its object & itself is especially developed & he bears the consequent pressure of Ashanaya Mrityu which can only lighten & disappear if we rise upward in the scale of Being towards Brahman & become truly sons of immortality, Amritasya putrah. That form of force in matter that is self-wasting because it wastes or preys upon others, is man's vahana.

Of this Horse of the Worlds, who bears up all beings, the sea is the brother & the sea is the birthplace. There can be no doubt of the meaning of this symbol. It is the upper ocean of the Veda in which it imaged the superior & divine existence, these are the waters of supramaterial causality. From that this lower ocean of our manifestation derives its waters, its flowing energies, apah; from that when the Vritras are slain & the firmaments opened, it is perpetually replenished, prati samudram syandamanah and of that it is the shadow & the reproduction of its circumstances under the conditions of mental illusion, — Avidya, mother of limitation & death. This image not only consummates this passage but opens a door of escape from that which is to follow. Deliverance from the dominion of Ashanaya Mrityu is possible because of this circumstance that the sea of divine being is bandhu, kin & friend to the Horse. The aparardha proves to be of the same essential nature as the parardha, our mortal part is akin to our unlimited & immortal part, because the Horse of the Worlds comes to us from that divine source & in his essence partakes of its nature, & from what other except this Ocean can the Horse of the Worlds who is material yet supramaterial be said to have derived his being? We, appearing bound, mortal & limited, are manifestations of a free & infinite reality & from that from which we were born comes friendship & assistance for that which we are, towards making us that which we shall be. From our kindred heavens the Love descends always that works to raise up the lower to its brother, the higher.

The Kaivalya Upanishad

ॐ अथाश्वलायनो भगवन्तं परमेष्ठिनमुपसमेत्योवाच ।
अधीहि भगवन् ब्रह्मविद्यां वरिष्ठां सदा सदिभः सेव्यमानां निगृदाम् ।
यथाचिरात् सर्वपापं व्यपोह्य परात्परं पुरुषं याति विद्वान् ॥१॥

OM. Aswalayana to the Lord Parameshti came and said, Teach me, Lord, the highest knowledge of Brahman, the secret knowledge ever followed by the saints, how the wise man swiftly putting from him all evil goeth to the Purusha who is higher than the highest.

Commentary

The Lord Parameshti is Brahma — not the Creator Hiranyagarbha, but the soul who in this kalpa has climbed up to be the instrument of Creation, the first in time of the Gods, the Pitamaha or original & general Prajapati, the Pitamaha, because all the fathers or special Prajapatis, Daksha and others, are his mind born children. The confusion between the Grandsire and the Creator, who is also called Brahma, is common; but the distinction is clear. Thus in the Mundaka Upanishad ब्रह्मा देवानां प्रथमः संबूतः, it is the first of Gods, the earliest birth of Time, the father of Atharva, and not the unborn eternal Hiranyagarbha. In the Puranas Brahma is described as in fear of his life from Madhu and Kaitabha, and cannot be the fearless and immortal Hiranyagarbha. Nor would it be possible for Aswalayana to come to Hiranyagarbha and say “Teach me, Lord,” for Hiranyagarbha has no form nor is He approachable nor does He manifest Himself to men as Shiva and Vishnu do. He is millionfold, Protean, intangible, and for that reason He places in each cycle a Brahma or divine Man between Him and the search and worship of men. It is Brahma or divine Man who is called Parameshti or the one

full of Parameshtham, that which is superlative and highest,— Hiranyagarbha. The power of Hiranyagarbha is in Brahma and creates through him the nama and rupa of things in this cycle.

To Brahma Parameshthi Aswalayana comes as a disciple to a master and says to him, Lord, teach me the Brahmavidya. He specifies the kind of knowledge he requires. It is varishtha, the best or highest, because it goes beyond the triple Brahman to the Purushottam or Most High God; it is secret, because even in the ordinary teaching of Vedanta, Purana and Tantra it is not expressed, it is always followed by the saints, the initiates. The *santah* or saints are those who are pure of desire and full of knowledge, and it is to these that the secret knowledge has been given सदा, from the beginning. He makes his meaning yet clearer by stating the substance of the knowledge—यथा, how, by what means won by knowledge, विद्वान्, one can swiftly put sin from him and reach Purushottam.

There are three necessary elements of the path to Kaivalya,—first, the starting point, vidya, right knowledge, implying the escape from ignorance, non-knowledge and false knowledge; next, the process or means, escape from सर्वपापं, all evil, ie, sin, pain and grief; last, the goal, Purushottam, the Being who is beyond the highest, that is, beyond Turiya, being the Highest. By the escape from sin, pain and grief one attains absolute ananda, and by ananda, the last term of existence, we reach that in which ananda exists. What is that? It is not Turiya who is shivam, shantam, adwaitam, sacchidanandam, but that which is beyond shivam and ashivam, good and evil, shantam and kalilam, calm and chaos, dwaitam and adwaitam, duality and unity. Sat, Chit and Ananda are in this Highest, but He is neither Sat, Chit nor Ananda nor any combination of these. He is All and yet He is neti, neti, He is One and yet He is many. He is Parabrahman and He is Parameswara. He is Male and He is Female. He is Tat and He is Sa. This is the Higher than the Highest. He is the Purusha, the Being in whose image the world and all the Jivas are made, who pervades all and underlies all the workings of Prakriti as its reality and self. It is this Purusha that Aswalayana seeks.

Nila Rudra Upanishad

First Part

Translation

ॐ अपश्यं त्वावरोहन्तं दिवितः पृथिवीमवः ।
अपश्यमस्यन्तं रुद्रं नीलग्रीवं शिखण्डनम् ॥ १ ॥

1. OM. Thee I beheld in thy descending down from the heavens to the earth, I saw Rudra, the Terrible, the azure-throated, the peacock-feathered, as he hurled.

दिव उग्रो अवारुक्षत्प्रत्यष्ठाद् भूम्यामधि ।
जनासः पश्यते महं नीलग्रीवं विलोहितम् ॥ २ ॥

2. Fierce he came down from the sky, he stood facing me on the earth as its lord,— the people behold a mass of strength, azure-throated, scarlet-hued.

एष एत्यवीरहा रुद्रो जलासभेषजाः ।
यत्तेऽक्षेममनीनशाद् वातीकारोऽप्येतु ते ॥ ३ ॥

3. This that cometh is he that destroyeth evil, Rudra the Terrible, born of the tree that dwelleth in the waters; let the globe of the stormwinds come too, that destroyeth for thee all things of evil omen.

नमस्ते भवभावाय नमस्ते भासमन्यवे ।
नमस्ते अस्तु बाहुभ्यामुतो त इषवे नमः ॥ ४ ॥

4. Salutation to thee who bringeth the world into being, salutation to thee, the passionate with mighty wrath. Salutation be to thy arms of might, salutation be to thy angry shaft.

यामिषुं गिरिशन्त हस्ते विभर्यस्तवे ।
शिवां गिरित्र तां कृषु मा हिंसीत्पुरुषान् मम ॥५॥

5. The arrow thou bearest in thy hand for the hurling, O thou that liest on the mountains, make an arrow of blessing, O keeper of the hills, let it not slay my armed men.

शिवेन वचसा त्वा गिरिशाच्छ्रावदामसि ।
यथा नः सर्वमिज्जगदयक्षमं सुमना असत् ॥६॥

6. With fair speech, O mountain-dweller, we sue to thee in the assembly of the folk, that the whole world may be for us a friendly and sinless place.

या ते इषुः शिवतमा शिवं बभूव ते धनुः ।
शिवा शरव्या या तव तया नो मृड जीवसे ॥७॥

7. That thy arrow which is the kindest of all and thy bow which is well-omened and that thy quiver which beareth blessing, by that thou livest for us, O lord of slaughter.

या ते रुद्र शिवा तनूरघोरा पापकाशिनी ।
तया नस्तन्वा शन्तमया गिरिश त्वाभिचाकशत् ॥८॥

8. That thy body, O Terrible One, which is fair and full of kindness and destroyeth sin, not thy shape of terrors, in that thy body full of peace, O mountaineer, thou art wont to be seen among our folk.

असौ यस्ताम्रो अरुण उत बभूर्विलोहितः ।
ये चेमे अभितो रुद्रा दिक्षु श्रिताः सहस्रशो वैषां हेड ईमहे ॥९॥

9. This Aruna of the dawn that is tawny and copper-red and scarlet-hued, and these thy Violent Ones round about that dwell in the regions in their thousands, verily, it is these whom we desire.

Commentary

1. अपश्यं. I beheld. The speaker is the author of the Upanishad, a prince of the Aryan people, as we see from the fifth verse. He records a vision of Rudra descending from the heavens to the earth. अवः, down, is repeated for the sake of vividness. In the second half of the sloka the murti or image in which he beheld the Divine Manifestation is described, Rudra, the God of might and wrath, the neck and throat blue, a peacock's feather as a crest, in the act of hurling a shaft.

2. He proceeds to describe the descent. He descended fiercely, that is, with wrath in his face, gesture and motion and stood facing the seer, प्रत्यष्ठात्, on the earth, and over it, अधि, in a way expressive of command or control. This image of Divine Power, seen by the prince in Yoga, becomes visible to the people in general as a mass of strength, मह, scarlet in colour, deep blue in the neck and throat. मह is strength, bulk, greatness. The manifestation is that of wrath and might. The people see Rudra as a mass of brilliance, scarlet-ringed and crested with blue, the scarlet in Yoga denoting violent passion of anger or desire, the blue sraddha, bhakti, piety or religion.

3. Rudra, whom we know as the slayer of evil, comes. The Rājarshi describes him as born of the tree that is in the waters. भेष is by philology identical with the Latin ficus or figtree, aswattha. The aswattha is the Yogic emblem of the manifested world, as in the Gita, the tree of the two birds in the Swetasvatara Upanishad, the single tree in the blue expanse of the Song of Liberation. The jala is the apah or waters from which the world rises. The rishi then prays that the वातीकारः, mass of winds of which Rudra is lord and which in the tempest of their course blow away all calamity, such as pestilence etc, may come with him.

4. In the fourth verse he salutes the God. Rudra is the Supreme Ishwara, Creator of the World, He is the dreadful, wrathful and destroying Lord, swift to slay and punish. भास्म is passionate

anger, and the word मन्युः denotes a violent disturbed state of mind, passion, either of grief or of anger. भासमन्यवे therefore means, one who is full of the passion of violent anger. Rudra is being saluted as a God of might and wrath, it is therefore to the arms as the seat of strength and the arrow as the weapon of destruction that salutation is made.

5. Rudra is coming in a new form of wrath and destruction in which the Aryans are not accustomed to see him. Apprehensive of the meaning of this vision, the King summons the people and in assembly prayer is offered to Rudra to avert possible calamity. The shaft is lifted to be hurled from the bow; it is prayed that it may be turned into a shaft of blessing, not of wrath. In this verse the Prince prays the God not to slay his men, meaning evidently, the armed warriors of the clan.

Section Four

Incomplete Commentaries
on the Kena Upanishad

Circa 1912–1914

Kena Upanishad

An Incomplete Commentary

Foreword

As the Isha Upanishad is concerned with the problem of God & the world and consequently with the harmonising of spirituality & ordinary human action, so the Kena is occupied with the problem of God & the Soul and the harmonising of our personal activity with the movement of infinite energy & the supremacy of the universal Will. We are not here in this universe as independent existences. It is evident that we are limited beings clashing with other limited beings, clashing with the forces of material Nature, clashing too with forces of immaterial Nature of which we are aware not with the senses but by the mind. The Upanishad takes for granted that we are souls, not merely life-inspired bodies — into that question it does not enter. But this soul in us is in relation with the outside world through the senses, through the vitality, through mind. It is entangled in the mesh of its instruments, thinks they alone exist or is absorbed in their action with which it identifies itself — it forgets itself in its activities. To recall it to itself, to lift it above this life of the senses, so that even while living in this world, it shall always refer itself & its actions to the high universal Self & Deity which we all are in the ultimate truth of our being — so that we may be free, may be pure & joyous, may be immortal, that is the object of the seer in the Kena Upanishad. Briefly to explain the steps by which he develops and arrives at his point and the principal philosophical positions underlying his great argument, is as always the purpose of this commentary. There is much that might & should be said for the full realisation of this ancient gospel of submission & self-surrender to the Infinite, but it is left to be said in a work of greater amplitude and capacity. Exegesis

in faithful subordination to the strict purport & connotation of the text will be here as always my principle.

The First Part

The Self & the Senses

“By whom controlled, by whom commissioned & sent forth falleth the mind on its object, by whom yoked to its activity goeth abroad this chief of the vital forces? By whom controlled is this word that men speak, and what god set ear & eye to their workings? That which is hearing within hearing, mind of the mind, speech behind the word, he too is the life of vitality & the sight within vision; the calm of soul are liberated from these instruments and passing beyond this world become Immortals... There the eye goes not & speech cannot follow nor the mind; we know it not nor can we decide by reason how to teach of it; for verily it is other than the known & it is beyond the unknown; so have we heard from the men that went before us by whom to us this Brahman was declared. That which is not uttered by speech, but by which speech is expressed, know thou that to be the Soul of things and not this which men here pursue. That which thinketh not by the mind, but by which mind itself is realised, know thou that to be the Soul of things, not this which men here pursue. That which seeth not by sight, but by which one seeth things visible, know thou that to be the Soul of things and not this which men here pursue. That which heareth not by hearing but by which hearing becomes subject to knowledge through the ear, know thou that to be the Soul of things & not this which men here pursue. That which liveth not by the breathing, but by which the breath becometh means of vitality, know thou that to be the Soul of things & not this which men here pursue.”

I

In order to understand the question with which the Upanishad opens its train of thought, it is necessary to remember the ideas of the Vedantic thinkers about the phenomena of sensation, life, mind and ideas which are the elements of all our activity in the body. It is noticeable that the body itself and matter, [the] principle of which the body is a manifestation, are not even mentioned in this Upanishad. The problem of matter the Seer supposes to have been so far solved for the inquirer that he no longer regards the physical state of consciousness as fundamental and no longer considers it as a reality separate from consciousness. All this world is only one conscious Being. Matter to the Vedantist is only one of several states—in reality, movements—of this conscious being,—a state in which this universal consciousness, having created forms within & out of itself as substance, absorbs & loses itself by concentration in the idea of being as substance of form. It is still conscious, but, as form, ceases to be self-conscious. The Purusha in matter, the Knower in the leaf, clod, stone, is involved in form, forgets himself in this movement of his Prakriti or Mode of Action and loses hold in outgoing knowledge of his self of conscious being & delight. He is not in possession of himself; He is not Atmavan. He has to get back what he has lost, to become Atmavan, and that simply means that He has to become gradually aware in matter of that which He has hidden from Himself in matter. He has to evolve what He has involved. This recovery in knowledge of our full and real self is the sole secret meaning & purpose of evolution. In reality it is no evolution, but a manifestation. We are already what we become. That which is still future in matter, is already present in Spirit. That which the mind in matter does not yet know, it is hiding from itself—that in us which is behind mind & informs it already knows—but it keeps its secret.

For that which we regard as matter, cannot be, if the Vedantic view is right, mere matter, mere inert existence, eternally bound by its own inertness. Even in a materialistic view of the world matter cannot be what it seems, but is only a form or

movement of Force which the Indians call Prakriti. This Force, according to the Upanishads, is composed in its action & capable in its potentiality of several principles, of which matter, mind & life are those already manifestly active in this world, and where one of these principles is active, the others must also be there, involved in it; or, to put it in another way, Force acting as one of its own principles, one of its movements, is inherently capable even in that movement of all the others. If in the leaf, clod, stone & metal life and mind are not active, it is not because they are not present, but because they are not yet brought forward (*prakrita*) and organised for action. They are kept concealed, in the background of the consciousness-being which is the leaf, stone or clod; they are not yet *vilu*, as the Rigveda would say, but *guha*, not *vyakta*, but *avyakta*. It is a great error to hold that that which is not just now or in this or that place manifest or active, does not there & then exist. Concealment is not annihilation; non-action is not non-being nor does the combination of secrecy & inaction constitute non-existence.

If it is asked how we know that there is the Purusha or Knower in the leaf, clod or stone,—the Vedantin answers that, apart from the perceptions of the Seer & the subjective & objective experiences by which the validity of the perceptions is firmly established in the reason, the very fact that the Knower emerges in matter shows that He must have been there all the time. And if He was there in some form of matter He must be there generally & in all; for Nature is one & knows no essential division, but only differences of form, circumstance and manifestation. There are not many substances in this world, but one substance variously concentrated in many forms; not many lives, but one liver variously active in many bodies; not many minds, but one mind variously intelligent in many embodied vitalities.

It is, at first sight, a plausible theory that life & mind are only particular movements of matter itself under certain conditions & need not therefore be regarded as independent immaterial movements of consciousness involved in matter but only as latent material activities of which matter is capable. But this view can only be held so long as it appears that mind and life can only

exist in this body & cease as soon as the body is broken up, can only know through the bodily instruments and can only operate in obedience to and as the result of certain material movements. The sages of the Upanishads had already proved by their own experience as Yogins that none of these limitations are inherent in the nature of life & mind. The mind & life which are in this body can depart from it, intact & still organised, and act more freely outside it; mind can know even material things without the help of the physical eye, touch or ear; life itself is not conditioned necessarily, and mind is not even conditioned usually, though it is usually affected, by the state of the body or its movements. It can always and does frequently in our experience transcend them. It can entirely master & determine the condition of the body. Therefore mind is capable of freedom from the matter in which it dwells here,—freedom in being, freedom in knowledge, freedom in power.

It is true that while working in matter, every movement of mind produces some effect & consequently some state or movement in the body, but this does not show that the mind is the material result of matter any more than steam is the mechanical result of the machine. This world in which mind is at present moving, in the system of phenomena to which we are now overtly related, is a world of matter, where, to start with, it is true to say Annam vai sarvam; All is matter. Mind and life awaken in it & seek to express themselves in it. Since & when they act in it, every movement they make, must have an effect upon it and produce a movement in it, just as the activity of steam must produce an effect in the machine in which its force is acting. Mind and life also use particular parts of the bodily machine for particular functions and, when these parts are injured, those workings of life & mind are correspondingly hampered, rendered difficult or for a time impossible — & even altogether impossible unless life & mind are given time, impulse & opportunity to readjust themselves to the new circumstances & either recreate or patch up the old means or adopt a new system of function. It is obvious that such a combination of time, impulse & opportunity cannot usually or even often occur,—

cannot occur at all unless men have the faith, the nistha — unless that is to say, they know beforehand that it can be done & have accustomed themselves to seek for the means. Bodies, drowned & “lifeless”, — nothing is really lifeless in the world, — can now be brought back to life because men believe & know that it can be done & have found a means to do it before the organised mind & life have had time to detach themselves entirely from the unorganised life which is present in all matter. So it is with all powers & operations. They are only impossible so long as we do not believe in their possibility & do not take the trouble or have not the clarity of mind to find their right process.

Life & mind are sometimes believed to descend,— or the hypothesis is advanced— into this world from another where they are more at home. If by world is meant not another star or system in this material universe, but some other systematisation of universal consciousness, the Vedantin who follows the Vedas & Upanishads, will not disagree. Life & mind in another star or system of this visible universe might, it is conceivable, be more free and, therefore, at home; but they would still be acting in a world whose basis & true substance was matter. There would therefore be no essential alteration in the circumstances of their action nor would the problem of their origin here be at all better solved. But it is reasonable to suppose that just as here Force organises itself in matter as its fundamental continent & movement, so there should be — the knowledge & experience of the ancient thinkers showed them that there are — other systems of consciousness where Force organises itself in life and in mind as its fundamental continent & movement. — It is not necessary to consider here what would be the relations in Time & Space of such worlds with ours. Life & mind might descend, ready organised, from such worlds and attach themselves to forms of matter here; but not in the sense of occupying physically these material forms & immediately using them, but in the sense of rousing by the shock of their contact & awakening to activity the latent life & mind in matter. That life & mind in matter would then proceed, under the superior help & impulse, to organise a nervous system for the use of life and a system of life-movements

in the nerves for the use of mind fit to express in matter the superior organisations who have descended here. It was indeed the belief of the ancients that — apart from the government of each living form by a single organised personality — such help from the worlds of life & mind was necessary to maintain & support all functionings of life & mind here below because of the difficulty otherwise of expressing & perfecting them in a world which did not properly belong to them but to quite other movements. This was the basis of the idea of Devas, Daityas, Asuras, Rakshasas, Pisachas, Gandharvas etc, with which the Veda, Upanishad & Itihasa have familiarised our minds. There is no reason to suppose that all worlds of this material system are the home of living things — on the contrary the very reverse is likely to be the truth. It is, probably, with difficulty & in select places that life & mind in matter are evolved.

If it were otherwise, if life & mind were to enter, organised or in full power, (such as they must be in worlds properly belonging to them) into material forms, those forms would immediately begin to function perfectly & without farther trouble. We should not see this long & laborious process of gradual manifestation, so laboured, so difficult, the result of so fierce a struggle, of such a gigantic toil of the secret Will in matter. Everywhere we see the necessity of a gradual organisation of forms. What is it that is being organised? A suitable system for the operations of life, a suitable system for the operations of mind. There are stirrings similar to those that constitute life in inanimate things, in metals — as Science has recently discovered, — vital response & failure to respond, but no system for the regular movement of vitality has been organised; therefore metals do not live. In the plant we have a vital system, one might almost say a nervous system, but although there is what might be called an unconscious mind in plants, although in some there are even vague movements of intelligence, the life system organised is suitable only for the flow of rasa, sap, sufficient for mere life, not for prana, nerve force, necessary for the operation in matter of mind. Apah is sufficient for life, vayu is necessary for life capable of mind. In the animal life is organised on a different plan and a nervous system capable

of carrying currents of pranic force is developed as one rises in the scale of animal creation, until it becomes perfect in man. It is, therefore, life & mind awakening in matter & manifesting with difficulty that is the truth of this material world, not the introduction of a ready made life entirely foreign to it in its own potentiality.

If it be said that the life & mind attaching themselves to matter only enter it by degrees as the system becomes more fit, putting more & more of itself into the body which is being made ready for it, that also is possible & conceivable. We are indeed led to see, as we progress in self-knowledge, that there is a great mental activity belonging to us only part of which is imperfectly expressed in our waking thoughts & perceptions—a sub-conscious or super-conscious Self which stores everything, remembers everything, foresees everything, in a way knows everything knowable, has possession of all that is false & all that is true, but only allows the waking mind into a few of its secrets. Similarly our life in the body is only a partial expression of the immortal life of which we are the assured possessors. But this only proves that we ourselves are not in our totality or essentiality the life & mind in the body, but are using that principle for our purpose or our play in matter. It does not prove that there is no principle of life & mind in matter. On the contrary, there is reason to believe that matter is similarly involved in mind & life & that wherever there is movement of life & mind, it tends to develop for itself some form of body in which securely to individualise itself. By analogy we must suppose life & mind to be similarly involved & latent in matter & therefore evolvable in it & capable of manifestation.

We know then the theory of the early Vedantins with regard to the relations of life, mind and matter & we may now turn to the actual statements of the Upanishad with regard to the activities of life & mind and their relation to the soul of things, the Brahman.

II

Mind

If the Upanishads were no more than philosophical speculations, it would be enough in commenting upon them to state the general thought of a passage and develop its implications in modern language and its bearing upon the ideas we now hold. Or if they only expressed in their ancient language general conclusions of psychological experience, which are still easily accessible & familiar, nothing would be gained by any minute emphasis on the wording of our Vedantic texts. But these great writings are not the record of ideas; they are a record of experiences; and those experiences, psychological and spiritual, are as remote from the superficial psychology of ordinary men as are the experiments and conclusions of Science from the ordinary observation of the peasant driving his plough through a soil only superficially known or the sailor of old guiding his bark by the few stars important to his rudimentary investigation. Every word in the Upanishads arises out of a depth of psychological experience and observation we no longer possess and is a key to spiritual truths which we can no longer attain except by discipline of a painful difficulty. Therefore each word, as we proceed, must be given its due importance. We must consider its place in the thought and discover the ideas of which it was the spoken symbol.

The opening phrase of the Kena Upanishad, *keneshitam patati preshitam manah*, is an example of this constant necessity. The Sage is describing not the mind in its entirety, but that action of it which he has found the most characteristic and important, that which, besides, leads up directly to the question of the secret source of all mental action, its president and impelling power. The central and common experience of this action is expressed by the word *patati*, falls. Motion forward and settling upon an object are the very nature of mind when it acts.

Our modern conception of mind is different; while acknowledging its action of movement and forward attention, we are apt to regard its essential & common action to be rather receptivity

of objects, than research of objects. The scientific explanation of mental activity helps to confirm this notion. Fixing its eye on the nervous system & the brain, the physical channels of thought, Physiology insists on the double action of the afferent and the efferent nerves as constituting the action of thought. An object falls on the sense-organ,— instead of mind falling on the object,— the afferent nerves carry the impact to the brain-cells, their matter undergoes modification, the brain-filaments respond to the shock, a message—the will of the cell-republic—returns through the efferent nerves and that action of perception,— whether of an object or the idea of an object or the idea of an idea, which is the essence of thinking—is accomplished. What else the mind does is merely the internal modification of the grey matter of the brain and the ceaseless activity of its filaments with the store of perceptions & ideas already amassed by these miraculous bits of organised matter. These movements of the bodily machine are all, according to Physiology. But it has been necessary to broach the theory of thought-waves or vibrations created by those animalcular amusements in order to account for the results of thought.

However widely & submissively this theory has been received by a hypnotised world, the Vedantist is bound to challenge it. His research has fixed not only on the physiological action, the movement of the bodily machine, but on the psychological action, the movement of the force that holds the machine,— not only on what the mind does, but on what it omits to do. His observation supported by that careful analysis & isolation in experiment of the separate mental constituents, has led him to a quite different conclusion. He upholds the wisdom of the sage in the phrase *patati manas*. An image falls on the eye,— admittedly, the mere falling of an image on the eye will not constitute mental perception—the mind has to give it attention; for it is not the eye that sees, it is the mind that sees through the eye as an instrument, just as it is not the telescope that sees an otherwise invisible sun, but the astronomer behind the telescope who sees. Therefore, physical reception of images is not sight; physical reception of sounds is not hearing. For how many sights & sounds besiege

us, fall on our retina, touch the tympanum of the ear, yet are to our waking thought non-existent! If the body were really a self-sufficient machine, this could not happen. The impact must be admitted, the message must rush through the afferent nerve, the cells must receive the shock, the modification, the response must occur. A self-sufficient machine has no choice of action or non-action; unless it is out of order, it must do its work. But here we see there is a choice, a selection, an ample power of refusal; the practical researches of the Yogins have shown besides that the power of refusal can be absolute, that something in us has a sovereign & conscious faculty of selection or total prohibition of perception & thought & can even determine how, if at all, it shall respond, can even see without the eye & hear without the ear. Even European hypnotism points to similar phenomena. The matter cannot be settled by the rough & ready conclusions of impatient Physiology eager to take a shortcut to Truth & interpret the world in the light of its first astonished discoveries.

Where the image is not seen, the sound is not heard, it is because the mind does not settle on its object—na patati. But we must first go farther & inquire what it is that works in the afferent & efferent nerves & insures the attention of the nerves. It is not, we have seen, mere physical shock, a simple vibration of the bodily matter in the nerve. For, if it were, attention to every impact would be automatically & inevitably assured. The Vedantins say that the nerve system is an immensely intricate organised apparatus for the action of life in the body; what moves in them is prana, the life principle, materialised, aerial (vayavya) in its nature and therefore invisible to the eye, but sufficiently capable of self-adaptation both to the life of matter & the life of mind to form the meeting place or bridge of the two principles. But this action of life-principle is not sufficient in itself to create thought, for if it were mind could be organised in vegetable as readily as in animal life. It is only when prana has developed a sufficient intensity of movement to form a medium for the rapid activities of mind and mind, at last possessed of a physical instrument, has poured itself into the life-movement and taken possession of it that thought becomes possible. That

which moves in the nerve system is the life-current penetrated & pervaded with the habitual movement of mind. When the movement of mind is involved in the life-movement, as it usually is in all forms, there is no response of mental knowledge to any contact or impression. For just as even in the metal there is life, so even in the metal there is mind; but it is latent, involved, its action secret,—unconscious, as we say, and confined to a passive reception into matter of the mind-forms created by these impacts. This will become clearer as we penetrate deeper into the mysteries of mind; we shall see that even though the clod, stone & tree do not think, they have in them the secret matrix of mind and in that matrix forms are stored which can be translated into mental symbols, into perception, idea and word. But it is only as the life-currents gain in intensity, rapidity & subtlety, making the body of things less durable but more capable of works, that mind-action becomes increasingly possible & once manifested more & more minutely & intricately effective. For body & life here are the *pratistha*, the basis of mind. A point, however, comes at which mind has got in life all that it needs for its higher development; and from that time it goes on enlarging itself & its activities out of all proportion to the farther organisation of its bodily & vital instruments or even without any such farther organisation in the lower man.

But even in the highest forms here in this material world, matter being the basis, life an intermediary and mind the third result, the normal rule is that matter & life (where life is expressed) shall always be active, mind only exceptionally active *in the body*. In other words, the ordinary action of mind is subconscious and receptive, as in the stone, clod & tree. The image that touches the eye, the sound that touches the ear is immediately taken in by the mind-informed life, the mind-informed & life-informed matter & becomes a part of the experience of Brahman in that system. Not only does it create a vibration in body, a stream of movement in life but also an impression in mind. This is inevitable, because mind, life & matter are one. Where one is, the others are, manifest or latent, involved or evolved, supraluminally active or subliminally active. The sword which

has struck in the battle, retains in itself the mental impression of the stroke, the striker & the stricken and that ancient event can be read centuries afterwards by the Yogi who has trained himself to translate its mind-forms into the active language of mind. Thus everything that occurs around us leaves on us its secret stamp & impression. That this is so, the recent discoveries of European psychology have begun to prove & from the ordinary point of view, it is one of the most amazing & stupendous facts of existence; but from the Vedantist's it is the most simple, natural & inevitable. This survival of all experience in a mighty & lasting record, is not confined to such impressions as are conveyed to the brain through the senses, but extends to all that can in any way come to the mind,— to distant events, to past states of existence & old occurrences in which our present selves had no part, to the experiences garnered in dream & in dreamless sleep, to the activities that take place during the apparent unconsciousness or disturbed consciousness of slumber, delirium, anaesthesia & trance. Unconsciousness is an error; cessation of awareness is a delusion.

It is for this reason that the phenomenon on which the sage lays stress as the one thing important & effective in mental action here & in the waking state, is not its receptiveness, but its outgoing force— patati. In sense-activity we can distinguish three kinds of action— first, when the impact is received subconsciously & there is no message by the mind in the life current to the brain,— even if the life current itself carry the message— secondly, when the mind is aware of an impact, that is to say, falls on its object, but merely with the sensory part of itself & not with the understanding part; thirdly, when it falls on the object with both the sensory & understanding parts of itself. In the first case, there is no act of mental knowledge, no attention of eye or mind; as when we pass, absorbed in thought, through a scene of Nature, yet have seen nothing, been aware of nothing. In the second, there is an act of sensory knowledge, the mind in the eye attends & observes, however slightly; the thing is perceived but not conceived or only partly conceived, as when the maid-servant going about her work, listens to the Hebrew of her

master, hearing all, but distinguishing & understanding nothing, not really attending except through the ear alone. In the third, there is true mental perception & conception or the attempt at perception & conception, and only the last movement comes within the description given by the Sage — ishitam preshitam patati manas. But we must observe that in all these cases somebody is attending, something is both aware & understands. The man, unconscious under an anaesthetic drug in an operation, can in hypnosis when his deeper faculties are released, remember & relate accurately everything that occurred to him in his state of supposed unconsciousness. The maid-servant thrown into an abnormal condition, can remember every word of her master's Hebrew discourse, & repeat in perfect order & without a single error long sentences in the language she did not understand. And, it may surely be predicted, one day we shall find that the thing our minds strove so hard to attend to and fathom, this passage in a new language, that new & unclassed phenomenon, was perfectly perceived, perfectly understood, automatically, infallibly, by something within us which either could not or did not convey its knowledge to the mind. We were only trying to make operative on the level of mind, a knowledge we already in some recess of our being perfectly possessed.

From this fact appears all the significance of the sage's sentence about the mind.

A Commentary on the Kena Upanishad

Foreword

The Upanishads are an orchestral movement of knowledge, each of them one strain in a great choral harmony. The knowledge of the Brahman, which is the Universality of our existence, and the knowledge of the world, which is the multiplicity of our existence, but the world interpreted not in the terms of its appearances as in Science, but in the terms of its reality, is the one grand and general subject of the Upanishads. Within this cadre, this general framework each Upanishad has its smaller province; each takes its own standpoint of the knower and its resulting aspect of the known; to each there belongs a particular motive and a distinguishing ground-idea. The Isha Upanishad, for example, is occupied with the problem of spirituality and life, God and the world; its motive is the harmonising of these apparent opposites and the setting forth of their perfect relations in the light of Vedantic knowledge. The Kena is similarly occupied with the problem of the relations between God and the soul and its motive is to harmonise our personal activities of mental energy and human will with the movement of the infinite divine Energy and the supremacy of the universal Will. The Isha, therefore, has its eye more upon the outward Brahman and our action in and with regard to the world we see outside us; the Kena fixes rather on our psychological action and the movements within us. For on this internal relation with the Brahman must evidently depend, from it must evidently arise that attitude towards the external world, the attitude of oneness with all these multitudinous beings which the Isha gives to us as the secret of a perfect & liberated existence. For we are not here in the phenomenal world as independent existences; we appear as limited beings clashing with other limited beings, clashing with the forces of material Nature, clashing too with

forces of immaterial Nature of which we are aware not with the physical senses but with the mind. We must become this multitudinous world, become it in our souls, obviously, not in our body & senses. The body & senses are intended to keep the multitudinousness,—they are there to prevent God's worldwide time-filling play from sinking back into the vague & inchoate. But in the soul there must be nothing but the sense & rapture of oneness in the various joy of multitude. How is that possible? It is possible because our relations with others are not in reality those of separate life-inspired bodies, but of the great universal movement of a single soul — ekah sanatanah,— broken up into separate waves by concentration in these many life-inspired bodies which we see appearing like temporary crests, ridges and bubbles in the divine ocean, apah. This soul in us is in relation to the outside world through the senses, through vitality, through mind. But it is entangled in the meshes of its instruments; it thinks they alone exist or is absorbed in their action with which it tends to identify itself preponderatingly or wholly;—it forgets itself in its activities. To recall the soul in man to self-knowledge, to lift it above the life of the senses [.....] always refer its activities to that highest Self and Deity which [we] ultimately are, so that we may be free and great, may be pure and joyous, be fulfilled and immortal,—this is the governing aim of the Kena Upanishad. I propose in my commentary to follow with some minuteness & care the steps by which the Upanishad develops its aim, to bring out carefully the psychological ideas on which the ancient system was founded and to suggest rather than work out the philosophical positions which are presupposed in the ancient sage's treatment of his subject. To work them out in a volume of the present size and purpose would not be possible, nor, if possible, would it be convenient, since it would need a freer and ampler method delivered from the necessity of faithful subordination to the text. The first principle of a commentary must be to maintain the order of ideas and adhere to the purpose and connotation of the text which it takes as its authority.

Three Fragments of Commentary

The first two words of the Kena, like the first two words of the Isha, concentrate into a single phrase the subject of the Upanishad and settle its bounds & its spirit. By whom is our separate mental existence governed? Who is its Lord & ruler? Who sends forth the mind — kena preshitam, who guides it so that it falls in its ranging on a particular object and not another (kena patati)? The mind is our centre; in the mind our personal existence is enthroned. Manomayah pranasariraneta pratisthito 'nne, a mental guide and leader of the life & body has been established in matter, and we suppose & feel ourselves to be that mental being. But what guides the mind itself? Is it the mental ego as the unreflecting thinker usually & naturally supposes? As a matter of fact, it is perfectly within our knowledge and experience that the mental [ego] guides our actions only partially and imperfectly; it is governed by other forces, it is driven often by impulses that it cannot understand, it receives indications from a superconscious source; it is associated in the body with an immense amount of subconscious action of which it is ignorant or over which it has only a partial control. Guide & leader, perhaps, but certainly not the master. Who then is the master? Mind is not all we are. There is a vital force in us independent of mind. For although the two work together & act upon each other, they are still different movements. Our life goes on or ceases, rests or is active caring nothing, after all, about the mind & its notions. It serves it as a master whose interests it cannot afford to neglect, but does not always obey it & insists on the rights of its own separate existence. Who sent out this life force, who yoked it or applied it to these bodies & these actions, kena praiti yuktah Pranah prathamah — the epithet is used to indicate the essential life force as distinct from the particular life-functions called in Vedantic psycho-physics the five pranas.

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The Kena Upanishad is remarkable for its omissions. It omits to tell us what in relation to the transcendent & immanent Brahman this mind, life, sense activity really are. It omits even to mention one tattwa which one would think as important as mind, life & sense-activity — there is no least reference to matter. These omissions are remarkable; they are also significant. The Sage of the Kena Upanishad has a distinct object in view; he has selected a particular province of knowledge. He is careful not to admit anything which does not bear upon that object or to overstep the strict limits of that province. Matter is beyond his immediate field, therefore he makes no reference to matter. Careless of comprehensiveness, he keeps to the exact matter of his revelation — the working relations between man's mental life and his supreme Existence. With the same scrupulous reserve he abstains from the discussion of the nature of these organs & their essential relation to the supreme Existence. For this knowledge we have to resort to other Scriptures.

*

The subject of the Talavakara Upanishad is indicated and precisely determined by its opening word, Kena, very much as we have seen the subject of the Isha Upanishad to be indicated and precisely determined by its opening words Isha Vasyam. To reveal the true Master of our mental life, the real Force of the Vitality which supports it and of the sense-activities which minister to it and of the mentality which fulfils it in this material existence, is the intention of the Upanishad.

Kena Upanishad

A Partial Translation with Notes

I

1. By whom willed falleth the Mind when it is sent on its mission? By whom yoked goeth forth the primal Breath? By whom controlled is this Speech that men utter? What God yokes the vision¹ and the hearing?
2. That which is the Hearing behind hearing, the Mind of mind, utters the Speech behind speech,—He too is the Life of the life-breath and the Vision behind seeing. The wise put these away and pass beyond; departing from this world they become immortal.
3. There Sight goes not, nor there Speech, nor the Mind arrives. We know it not, nor can we discern how one should teach of this. Other verily is That from the known and then it is beyond the unknown,—so do we hear² from those of old by whom That was expounded unto us.
4. That which remaineth unexpressed by Speech, by which Speech is expressed, know thou That Brahman and not this which men follow³ after here.

¹ The words *chakshub śrotram* do not refer to the physical eye & ear but to the sense activity that uses the organ. This is evident from the expressions in verses 6 & 7, *chakshinshi pashyati* & *śrotram śrutam*—which cannot mean, “one sees the eyes” or “the ear is heard.”

² *Púrve* is used here in the Vedic sense, the ancient sages before us and *śuśrūma* means not the physical hearing but the reception by the Sruti, the inspired Word.

³ *Upásate* is by some understood in the sense of adoration; but the force of the word is here the same as in the Isha Upanishad, *ye avidyám upásate*, which does not mean “those who adore Ignorance”, but those who devote themselves to the state of Ignorance and make it the sole object of their consciousness.

5. That which thinketh⁴ not with the Mind, by which, they say,
 Mind was made subject to mental perception, know thou
 that Brahman⁵ and not this which men follow after here.

⁴ Here and in the verses that follow my rendering differs from the received interpretation which runs, "That which one cannot think with the mind", "That which one cannot see with the eye", etc and in verse 8, "That which one cannot smell by the breath", *yat prāṇena na prāṇīti*. *Prāṇa* is undoubtedly used sometimes of the breath as the medium of the sense of smell & *prāṇīti* to express the action of that sense. But in this Upanishad Prana has been used to indicate the nervous or vital force, the primal or principal Life-Energy, *prāṇah prathamah*, and not a subordinate sense function; the expressions employed almost reconstitute the image of the Horse by which the Life-Energy is symbolised in the language of the Veda and in the opening of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. It is difficult to believe that one & the same word means the Life-Breath in the question proposed, verse 1, and the sense of smell in an integral part of the answer given, verse 8. But if Prana means the Life-Energy typified by its obvious physical function, the life-breath, verse 8 can only mean, "He who liveth (breatheth) not by the life-breath", & the other verses must follow suit. For a kindred idea we may compare Katha Upanishad II.2.5. "No mortal lives by the superior or the inferior life-energy, but by another thing men live in which both these have their foundation."

⁵ The received interpretation runs "Know that to be the Brahman and not this which men follow after here," and by this text Shankara supports his metaphysical doctrine that the objective world is not Brahman and is therefore an illusion. The objections to the interpretation seem to me insuperable. The words are not Tadeva Brahmeti twam viddhi, but Tadeva Brahma twam viddhi, which we should naturally interpret "Seek to know that Brahman" ie, "seek to know Brahman in That Consciousness" and not in the form of this objective world to which most men are attached. Moreover, we ought to give their full value to the remarkable expressions "That by which the mind is thought, seeings seen, hearing heard." Such phrases can hardly refer to the pure Absolute remote from all relativity or to the pure Self of Shankara to whom the objective world is non-existent. They indicate another state of consciousness, intermediate, if you will, in which the universe exists not as an objective and external reality, but within the percipient consciousness and is no longer perceived only through the objective organs and their functions, but known directly to the power from which those organs & functions are derived. This idea is confirmed by the apologue in which Brahman appears as a Power governing the universe, the Ish or Lord of the Isha Upanishad, in whom and by whose existence the gods exist, but also by whose active might and its victories they conquer and reign. It is therefore a self-Existence which is active in its stability and conscious in the multiplicity of the universe as well as in its self-unity. The Upanishads, I think, nowhere deny but rather affirm that the objective world also is Brahman. The error of Ignorance is to accept it as represented by the mind & senses in their inadequate symbols and as if they were real in themselves, each in its own separate reality. The wise put from them the error of the mind and the senses and in the self-luminous & self-effective Consciousness beyond attain to that freedom, unity & immortality which we have seen set before humanity as its goal in the Isha Upanishad.

Section Five

Incomplete Translations
of Two Vedantic Texts

Circa 1900–1902

The Karikas of Gaudapada

The Karikas of Gaudapada are a body of authoritative verse maxims and reasonings setting forth in a brief and closely-argued manual the position of the extreme Monistic school of Vedanta philosophy. The monumental aphorisms of the Vedantasutra are meant rather for the master than the learner. Gaudapada's clear, brief and businesslike verses are of a wider utility; they presuppose only an elementary knowledge of philosophic terminology and the general trend of Monistic and Dualistic discussion. This preliminary knowledge granted they provide the student with an admirably lucid and pregnant nucleus of reasoning which enables him at once to follow the Monistic train of thought and to keep in memory its most notable positions. It has also had the advantage, due no doubt to its preeminent merit and the long possession of authority and general use, of a full and powerful commentary by the great Master himself and a farther exposition by the Master's disciple, the clearminded and often suggestive Anandagiri. To modern students there can be no better introduction to Vedanta philosophy — after some brooding over the sense of the Upanishads — than a study of Gaudapada's Karikas and Shankara's commentary with Deussen's System of the Vedanta in one hand and any brief & popular exposition of the Six Darshanas in the other. It is only after the Monistic School has been thoroughly understood that the Modified-Monistic and Dualistic-Monistic with their intermediary shades can be profitably studied. When the Vedantic theory has been mastered, the Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya & Vaisheshika can in its light be easily mastered in succession with Vijnanabhikshu's work & the great synthesis of the Bhagavadgita to crown the whole structure. The philosophical basis will then be properly laid and the Upanishads can be studied with new interest, verifying or modifying as one goes one's original interpretation of the Sacred Books.

This will bring to a close the theoretical side of the Jnanakanda; its practical and more valuable side can only be mastered in the path of Yoga and under the guidance of a Sadguru.

Gaudapada begins his work by a short exposition in clear philosophic terms of the poetical and rhythmic phraseology of the Upanishad. He first defines precisely the essential character of the triune nature of the Self as manifested in the macrocosm & the microcosm, the Waker, the Dreamer & the Sleeper, who all meet and disappear in the Absolute.

बहिष्मदो विभुविश्वो ह्यन्तःप्रजास्तु तैजसः ।
घनप्रजास्तथा प्राज्ञ एक एव त्रिधा स्मृतः ॥ १ ॥

1. Visva being the Lord who pervades and is conscious of the external, Taijasa he who is conscious of the internal, Prajna he in whom consciousness is (densified and) drawn into itself, the Self presents himself to the memory as One under three conditions.

Shankara: The position taken is this, as *the entity which cognizes* enters into three conditions one after another *and not simultaneously*, and is moreover *in all three* connected by the memory *which persists in feeling* “This is I” “This is I” “This is I”, it is obvious that it is something beyond and above the three conditions, & therefore one, absolute and without attachment to its conditions. And this is supported by the illustrations like that of the large fish given in the Scripture.

दक्षिणाक्षिमुखे विश्वो मनस्यन्तस्तु तैजसः ।
आकाशे च हृदि प्राज्ञस्त्रिधा देहे व्यवस्थितः ॥ २ ॥

2. Visva in the gate of the right eye, Taijasa within in the mind, Prajna in the ether, the heart, this is its threefold station in the body.

Shankara: 1. The object of this verse is to show that these three, Visva, Taijasa & Prajna, are experienced even in the waking

state. The right eye is the door, *the means*, through which especially Visva, the seer of gross objects, becomes subject to experience. The Sruti saith "Verily and of a truth Indha is he, even this Being as he standeth here in the right eye." Vaisvanor is Indha, because his essential principle is light and is at once the macrocosmic Self within the Sun and the seer in the eye.

2. "But" it will be objected "Hiranyagarbha is one and the cognizer of the material field, the guide and seer in the right eye is quite another, the master of the body." Not so; for in itself —*if we look into the real nature of our perceptions*—we do not realise any difference between them. And the Scripture saith "One God hidden in all creatures" and the Smriti also:

Know me, O son of Bharat, for the knower of the body
in all bodies. I stand undivided in all creatures and only
seem to be divided.

3. *Be it noted that* though Visva works indeed in all the organs of sense without distinction, yet because the perceptions of [the] right eye are noticed to be superior in acuteness and clearness it is for that reason only specifically mentioned as his abiding-place. After this Visva then dwelling in the right eye has seen a shape or appearance, he remembers it when he has closed his eyes and still sees within in the mind, as if in a dream, the same shape or appearance as manifested in the form of the idea or impression it has left. And it is just the same in a dream, *the impression or idea preserved by memory reproduces in sleep the same shape or appearance that was seen in waking*. It follows that this Taijasa who is within in the mind is no other than Visva himself.

4. Then by cessation of the process called memory Prajna in the ether or heart becomes unified or as it is said densified consciousness drawn into itself. And this happens because the processes of the mind are absent; for sight and memory are vibrations of the mind and in their absence the Self in the form of Prana takes its abode in the ether or heart without possibility of separation or distinction. For the Scripture saith "It is Prana that swalloweth up all these into itself." Taijasa is the same

as Hiranyagarbha because it has its abode in the mind, and the mind is the subtle part of the body, as is clear from the verse, “This *purusha* is all mind”, and from other like sayings of Scripture.

5. It may be objected that Prana in the state of Sleep is really differenced and manifest & the senses become one with Prana, so how do you predicate of it absence of manifestation and differentia *by saying it becomes One?* But there is no real fault in the reasoning, since in the undifferenced the particularising conditions of space and time are absent *and the same is the case with Prana in the state of Sleep.* Although indeed the Prana is *in a sense* differenced because the idea of separate existence as Prana remains, yet the more special sense of separate existence as circumscribed by the body is brought to a stop in Prana and Prana is therefore undifferenced and unmanifest in the Sleep in relation *at least* to the possessors of this circumscribed egoism. And just as the Prana of those who have the circumscribed bodily egoism becomes undifferenced when it is absorbed *at the end of the world*, so it is with him who has the sense of existence as Prana only in the condition of *Sleep* which is *in reality* precisely the same *as that of the temporary disappearance of phenomena at the end of a world;* both states alike are void of differentia and manifestation and *both alike* are pregnant with the seeds of *future* birth. The *Self* governing either state is one & the same, it is *Self* in an undifferenced and unmanifest condition. It follows that the governing *Self* in each case and the experiencers of the circumscribed bodily egoism are one and the same; therefore the descriptions previously given of *Prajna* become One or become densified & self-concentrated consciousness etc are quite applicable; and the arguments already advanced support the same conclusion.

6. “But” you will say “why is the name, Prana, given to the Undifferenced?” On the ground of the Scripture “For, O fair son, the cord and fastening of the mind is Prana.” “O but” you answer “there the words ‘O fair son, Existence itself is *Prana*’ show that it is Brahman Existent which being the subject of the verses must be intended by the word Prana.” However, my

reasoning is not thereby vitiated, because we all understand the Existent to be pregnant with the seed of *future birth*. Although, then, it is Brahman Existent which is meant by Prana, all the same the name Prana is given to the Existent because the idea of pregnancy with the seed from which the Jiva or life-conditioned human spirit is to be born, has not been eliminated from it and *indeed* it is only when this idea is not eliminated from the idea of Brahman that he can be called Brahman Existent. For if it were the absolute seedless Brahman of which the Scripture had meant to speak, it would have used such expressions as "He is not this, nor that nor anything which we can call him"; "From whom words return baffled"; "He is other than the known and different from the Unknown." The Smriti also says "He (the Absolute) is called neither Existent nor non-Existent." Besides if the Existent be seedless, then there would be no ground for supposing that those who have coalesced with and become absorbed into the Existent in the state of Sleep or the destruction of a world can again awake *out of either of these conditions*. Or if they can, then we should immediately have the contingency of liberated souls again coming into phenomenal existence; for *on this hypothesis* the condition of *souls liberated into the Absolute and those absorbed into the Existent* would be alike, neither having seed or cause of future phenomenal existence. And if to remove this objection you say that it is the seed of ignorance which has to be burnt away in the fire of Knowledge that is absent in the case of liberated souls and some other seed of things in the other case, you are in danger of proving that Knowledge (of the Eternal) is without use or unnecessary as a means of salvation.

7. It is clear then that it is on the understanding that the Existent is pregnant with the seed of phenomenal life that in all the Scripture it is represented as Prana and the cause of things. Consequently it is by elimination of this idea of the seed that it is designated by such phrases as "He is the unborn in whom the objective & subjective are One", "From whom words return baffled", "He is not this nor that nor anything we can call him", and the rest. Our author will speak separately of this seedless condition of the Same Self which has been designated

by the term Prajna. This condition by its being the Fourth or Absolute is devoid of all relations such as body, *Prana* etc and is alone finally and transcendently true. Now the condition of undifferenced seedfulness also is *like the two others* experienced in this body in the form of the idea of the awakened man which tells him “*For so long I felt and knew nothing*”. Thus then the Self is said to have a threefold station in the body.

विश्वो हि स्थूलभुद् नित्यं तैजसः प्रविविक्तभुक् ।
आनन्दभुक् तथा प्राज्ञस्त्रिधा भोगं निबोधत ॥ ३ ॥

3. Visva is the enjoyer of gross objects, Taijasa of subtle, and Prajna of pure (unrelated) pleasure, thus shall ye understand the threefold enjoyment of *the Self in the body*.

स्थूलं तर्पयते विश्वं प्रविविक्तं तु तैजसम् ।
आनन्दश्च तथा प्राज्ञं त्रिधा तृतीं निबोधत ॥ ४ ॥

4. The gross utterly satisfieth Visva, but the subtle Taijasa and pure pleasure satisfieth Prajna, thus shall ye understand the threefold satisfaction of *the Self in the body*.

Shankara: The meaning of these two verses has been explained.

त्रिषु धामसु यद् भोज्यं भोक्ता यश्च प्रकीर्तिः ।
वेदैतद्वभयं यस्तु स भुज्जानो न लिप्यते ॥ ५ ॥

5. That which is enjoyed in the three conditions and that which is the enjoyer, he who knoweth both these as one enjoyeth & receiveth no stain.

Shankara: That which is enjoyed under the names of gross objects, subtle objects and pure pleasure in the three conditions, waking, dream and sleep is one and the same thing although it has taken a threefold aspect. And that which enjoys under the names of Visva, Taijasa & Prajna, has been declared to be one because they are connected by the sense of oneness expressed in the continual feeling “This is I, This is I” and because the nature of cognition is one and without difference throughout. Whoever

knows both these to be one though split up into multiplicity by the sense of being enjoyer or enjoyed, does not receive any stain from enjoyment, because the subject of enjoyment is the One universal and the enjoyer too is not different from the enjoyed. For note that whoever be the enjoyer or whatever his object of enjoyment, he does not increase with it or diminish with it, just as in the case of fire when it has burnt up its object in the shape of wood or other fuel; *it remains no less or greater than it was before.*

प्रभवः सर्वभावानां सतामिति विनिश्चयः ।
सर्वं जनयति प्राणश्चेतोऽशून् पुरुषः पृथक् ॥ ६ ॥

6. It is a certain conclusion that all existences which take birth are already in being; Prana brings the All into phenomenal being, it is this *Prana* or Purusha which *sends* its separate rays of consciousness abroad.

Shankara: All existences (divided as Visva, Taijasa & Prajna) are already in being, that is, they existed before and it is only by their own species & nature, an illusion of name and form created by Ignorance, that they take birth or in other words [are] put forth into phenomenal existence. As indeed the writer says later on “A son from a barren woman is not born either in reality or by illusion”. For if birth of the nonexistent — *that is something coming out of nothing* — were possible, then there would be no means of grasping this world of usage and experience and the Eternal itself would become an unreality. Moreover we have seen that the snake in the rope and other appearances born of the seed of illusion created by Ignorance do really exist as the self of the rope or *other substratum in the case*. For the snake in the rope, the mirage and other *hallucinations of the sort* are never experienced by anybody unless there is some substratum. Just as before the coming into phenomenal being of the snake it existed already in the rope as the rope’s self, so before the coming to birth of all phenomenal existences, they already existed as the self of the seed of things called Prana. And the Scripture also saith, “This universe is the Eternal”, “In the beginning all this

was the Spirit.” The Prana gives birth to the All as separate rays of consciousness;— just as the rays of the Sun, so are these consciousness-rays of the Purusha who is Chid or conscious existence and they are clearly distinguished in different bodies of gods, animals, etc under three different lights as Visva, Taijasa & Prajna, in the same way as reflections of the sun are clearly seen in different pieces of water; they are thrown from the Purusha and though they differ according to the separate existences which are their field of action & enjoyment, yet they are all alike like sparks from a fire being all Jiva or conditioned Self. Thus the Prana or causal Self gives phenomenal birth to all other existences as the spider to his web. Compare the Scripture “As a fire sendeth forth sparks.”

विभूतिं प्रसवं त्वन्ये मन्यन्ते सृष्टिचिन्तकाः ।
स्वप्नमायासरूपेति सृष्टिरन्यैर्विकल्पिता ॥ ७ ॥

7. Some who concern themselves with the *cause of creation* think that Almighty Power is the origin of things and by others creation is imagined as like to illusion or a dream.

Shankara: Those who concern themselves with creation think that creation is the pervading Power, the extension, so to speak, of God; but it is implied, those who concern themselves with final and transcendental truth do not care about speculations on creation. For when men see a conjurer throw a rope into the air and ascend it armed & accoutred and then after he has climbed out of sight fall hewn to pieces in battle and rise again *whole*, they do not care about inquiring into the illusion he has created with all its properties and origins. Just so this evolution of the Sleep, Dream and Waking conditions is just like the self-lengthening of the juggler’s rope and the Prajna, Taijasa and Visva self abiding in the three conditions is like the conjurer climbing up the rope, but the real conjurer is other than the rope or its climber. Just as he stands on the ground invisible and hidden in illusion, so is it with the real and transcendental fact called the Fourth. Therefore it is for Him that the Aryan-minded care, those who follow after salvation, and they do not

care for speculations about creation which are of no importance to them. Accordingly the writer implies that all these theories are only imaginations of those who concern themselves with the origin of creation and then goes on to say that by others creation is imagined as like to an illusion or again as like to a dream.

इच्छामात्रं प्रभोः सृष्टिरिति सृष्टौ विनिश्चिताः ।
कालात्प्रसृतिं भूतानां मन्यन्ते कालचिन्तकाः ॥ ८ ॥

8. Those who have made up their minds on the subject of creation say it is merely the Will of the Lord; those who concern themselves about Time think that from Time is the birth of creatures.

Shankara: Creation is the Will of the Lord because the divine ideas must be true facts—pots etc are ideas only and nothing more than ideas. Some say that creation is the result of Time.

भोगार्थं सृष्टिरित्यन्ये क्रीडार्थमिति चापरे ।
देवस्यैष स्वभावोऽयमासकामस्य का स्पृहा ॥ ९ ॥

9. Others say that creation is for the sake of enjoyment, yet others say it is for play. *Really*, this is the very nature of the Lord; *as for other theories, well*, He has all He can desire and why should He crave for anything?

Shankara: Others think creation *was made* for enjoyment or for play. These two theories are criticised by the line “This is the very nature of the Lord”. Or, it may be, that the theory of Divine Nature is resorted to in order to criticise all *other theories by the argument*, He has all He can desire and why should He crave for anything? For no cause can be alleged for the appearance of the snake etc in the rope and other substrata except the very nature of Ignorance.

निवृत्तेः सर्वदुःखानामीशानः प्रभुरव्ययः।
अद्वैतः सर्वभावानां देवस्तुर्यो विभुः स्मृतः॥१०॥

10. He who is called the Fourth is the Master of the cessation of all ills, the Strong Lord and undecaying, the One without second of all existences, the Shining One who pervadeth.

Shankara: The Fourth Self or *transcendental* is the master of the cessation of all ills, which belong to the conditions of Prajna, Taijasa & Visva. The expression Strong Lord is an explanation of the word Master; it is implied that His strength & lordship are in relation to the cessation of ills, because the cessation of ills results from the knowledge of Him. Undecaying, because He does not pass away, swerve or depart, ie, from His essential nature. How is this? Because He is the One without a second owing to the vanity of all phenomenal existences. He is also called God, the Shining One, because of effulgence, the Fourth and He who pervades, exists everywhere.

कार्यकारणबद्धौ ताविष्येते विश्वतैजसौ।
प्राज्ञः कारणबद्धस्तु द्वौ तौ तुर्ये न सिध्यतः॥११॥

11. Visva & Taijasa are acknowledged to be bound by cause & effect, Prajna is bound by cause only; both of these are held not to exist in the Fourth.

Shankara: The common and particular characteristics of Visva & the two others are now determined in order that the real self of the Fourth may become clear. Effect, that which is made or done, is existence as result. Cause, that which makes or does, is existence as seed. By inapprehension and misapprehension of the Truth the aforesaid Visva & Taijasa are, it is agreed, bound or imprisoned by existence as result and seed. But Prajna is bound by existence as seed only. For the seed state which lies in unawakening to the Truth alone and *not in misreading of Him* is the reason of the state of Prajna. Therefore both of these, existence as cause and existence as effect, inapprehension and misapprehension of the Truth are held not to apply to the Fourth, ie do not exist & cannot happen in Him.

नात्मानं न परांश्वैव न सत्यं नापि चानृतम् ।
प्राज्ञः किंचन संवेति तुर्यं तत्सर्वदृक् सदा ॥ १२ ॥

12. Prajna cogniseth nought, neither self nor others, neither truth nor falsehood; the Fourth seeth all things for ever.

Shankara: But how then is Prajna bound by Cause, while in the Fourth the two kinds of bondage conditioned by inapprehension & misapprehension of the Truth are said to be impossible? Because Prajna does not cognize at all this duality of an outside universe born from Ignorance and conditioned as distinct from Self, so that like Visva & Taijasa he also is bound by inapprehension of the Truth, by that blind darkness which becomes the seed of misapprehension; and because the Fourth seeth all things for ever. That is to say, since nothing *really* exists except the Fourth, He is necessarily a seer of all that is, Omniscient & All-cognizant at all times & for ever; in Him therefore the seed state of which the conditioning feature is inapprehension of the Truth, cannot possibly exist. Absence of the misapprehension which arises out of inapprehension naturally follows. The Sun is for ever illuminative by its nature and non-illumination or misillumination as contrary to its nature cannot happen to it; *and the same train of reasoning applies to the Omnicience of the Turiya.* The Scripture also says “For of the Sight of the Seer there is no annihilation.” Or indeed, since it is the Fourth that in the Waking and Dream State dwelling in all creatures is the light or reflection in them to which all objects *present themselves as visible ie cognizable objects*, it is *in this way too* the seer of all things for ever. The Scripture says “There is nought else than This that seeth.”

Sadananda's Essence of Vedanta

INVOCATION

To the Absolute

अखण्डं सच्चिदानन्दमवाङ्मनसगोचरम् ।
आत्मानमस्तिलाधारमाश्रयेऽभीष्टसिद्धये ॥ १ ॥

1. I take refuge with Him who is *sheer Existence, Intelligence and Bliss, impartible, beyond the purview of speech and mind, the Self in whom the whole Universe exists*—may my desire & purpose attain fulfilment.

To the Masters

अर्थतोऽप्यद्यानन्दानतीतद्वैत्तभानतः ।
गुरुनाराध्य वेदान्तसारं वक्ष्ये यथामति ॥ २ ॥

2. After homage to the Masters who in deed as well as word delight in the One without second and from whom the seeming of duality have passed away, I will declare the Essence of Vedanta according to my intellectual capacity.

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

The Training of the Vedantin

वेदान्तो नामोपनिषत्प्रमाणं तदुपकारीणि शारीरकसूत्रादीनि च ॥ ३ ॥

3. By Vedanta is meant the Upanishads as authoritative basis of the philosophy and as useful supplementary inquiries the Aphoristic Books that treat of the Embodied Soul.

अस्य वेदान्तप्रकरणत्वात् तदीयैरेवानुबन्धैस्तद्वत्सिद्धेर्न ते पृथगा-
लोचनीयाः ॥ ४ ॥

4. Now since Vedanta is the subject of this work, its circumstantiae—the conclusions sought to be established being similar in both,—are the same as those of the Vedanta and need not be separately discussed.

तत्रानुबन्धो नामाधिकारिविषयसंबन्धप्रयोजनानि ॥ ५ ॥

5. In circumstantia we include four things, the fit hearer, the subject, the logical relation, the object of the work.

अधिकारी तु विधिवदधीतवेदवेदाङ्गत्वेनापाततोऽधिगताख्यिलवेदार्थो
ऽस्मिन् जन्मनि जन्मान्तरे वा काम्यनिषिद्धवर्जनपुरःसरं नित्य-
नैमित्तिकप्रायश्चित्तोपासनानुष्ठानेन निर्गतनिख्यिलकल्पषतया नितान्त-
निर्मलस्वान्तः साधनचतुष्टयसंपन्नः प्रमाता ॥ ६ ॥

6. Now the fit hearer of Vedanta must be one who is competent to form a right judgment of it. He must therefore have mastered [] by proper study of Veda and its accessory sciences the entire meaning of Veda; he must in this life or another have begun by abandoning forbidden actions and actions prompted by desire and then by the performance of daily observances, occasional observances, penance and adoration freed himself from all sin and stain and attained to perfect purity of the mind and heart; and he must be in possession of the four Ways & Means.

काम्यानि स्वर्गादीष्टसाधनानि ज्योतिष्ठोमादीनि ॥ ७ ॥

7. By actions of desire is understood all ways and means by which we pursue various kinds of happiness from Paradise downward—the Jyotisthom sacrifice for example.

निषिद्धानि नरकाद्यनिष्टसाधनानि ब्रह्महननादीनि ॥ ८ ॥

8. By forbidden actions is meant all ways & means by which we compass all our ills from the torments of Hell downward,—Brahminicide for example & other sins & disobediences.

नित्यान्यकरणे प्रत्यवायसाधनानि संध्यावन्दनादीनि ॥९॥

9. By regular observances is meant ceremonies like the evening prayer etc, the non-performance of which turns them into means of offence & stumbling blocks.

नैमित्तिकानि पुत्रजन्माद्यनुबन्धीनि जातेष्यादीनि ॥१०॥

10. By occasional observances is understood ceremonies circumstantial to particular occasions, such as the Blessing of the New-born attendant on the birth of a son.

प्रायश्चित्तानि पापक्षयमात्रसाधनानि चान्द्रायणादीनि ॥११॥

11. By penances is understood vows & forms of self-discipline such as the Chandrayan vow which are means *only* towards the purging away of sin.

उपासनानि सगुणब्रह्मविषयकमानसव्यापाररूपाणि शाण्डिल्यविद्या -
दीनि ॥१२॥

12. By adoration is understood the various forms of mental working which have for their whole subject and purpose the Eternal in His aspect as a Personal Deity — Sandilya's Art of Divine Love, for example.

एतेषां नित्यादीनां बुद्धिशुद्धिः परं प्रयोजनमुपासनानां तु चित्तैका -
ग्र्यम् । तमेतमात्मानं वेदानुवचनेन ब्राह्मणा विविदिषन्ति यज्ञेनेत्यादि -
श्रुतेः तपसा कल्पषं हन्तीत्यादिस्मृतेश्च ॥१३॥

13. The main object of the first three, observances regular and occasional and penance, is the purification of the Understanding; but the main object of adoration is singleness of heart & mind towards one object. This is proved by such passages as these from Revealed Scripture — “This is that Self of whom the Brahmins shall seek to know by exposition of Veda and by Sacrifice shall they seek to know Him” — and by other passages from the Unrevealed Scripture such as “By Tapasya (energism of will) one slayeth sin.”

नित्यनैमित्तिकयोरुपासनानां चावान्तरफलं पितृलोकसत्यलोकप्राप्तिः ।
कर्मणा पितृलोको विद्यते देवतोक इत्यादिश्रुतेः ॥ १४ ॥

14. A secondary result of observances regular and occasional and of adoration & worship is attainment to the world of the fathers and to the world of the Living Truth. For so the Scripture says “By action the World of the Fathers is found and the World of the Gods also.”

साधनानि नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकेहामुत्रफलभोगविरागशमदमादिसं -
पत्तिमुमुक्षुत्वानि ॥ १५ ॥

15. By Ways & Means we understand, Discrimination of eternal objects from the transient; Disattachment from enjoyment in this world or another; Calm, Self-Conquest & the other moral excellences; and Desire of Salvation.

नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकस्तावद् ब्रह्मैव नित्यं वस्तु ततोऽन्यदस्ति -
मनित्यमिति विवेचनम् ॥ १६ ॥

16. By Discrimination of eternal objects from the transient we understand the discernment of Brahman as the one thing eternal and of everything other than Brahman as transient and perishable.

Part Three

Writings on Vedanta

These incomplete writings (c. 1902–1916) were not revised by Sri Aurobindo for publication. They have been transcribed from his manuscripts and arranged in chronological order.

Four Fragments

1

The answer to all philosophical problems hinges on the one question, What is myself? It is only by knowing man's real self that we can know God; for whatever we may think or know, the value of the thought and the knowledge must hinge upon the knower, the means of knowledge and

Vedanta's final & single answer to all the questions of philosophy is contained in a single mighty & ever-memorable phrase, So 'ham. I am He or more explicitly or to the question of the inquirer अहं ब्रह्मास्मि, I am Brahman. Cutting through all tremors & hesitations, scorning all doubt or reserve it announces with a hardy & daring incisiveness the complete identity of man & God. This is its gospel that the individual Self who seems so limited, thwarted, befouled, shamed & obscured with the bonds & shackles, the mud & stains of earthly life and the pure, perfect and illimitable Being who possesses & supports all existence, to Whom this vast and majestic Universe is but an inconsiderable corner of His mind and infinite Time cannot end and infinite Space cannot confine and the infinite net of cause and effect is powerless to trammel are equal, are of one nature, power, splendour, bliss, are One. It seems the very madness of megalomania, the very delirium of egoism. And yet if it be true?

And it is true. Reason can come to no other conclusion, Yoga ends in no less an experience, the voices of a hundred holy witnesses who have seen God face to face, bring to us no less wonderful a message. And since it is true, what eagerness should not fill us to

Ego or Self is an Ens which is not knowable by sight or any of the senses; it can only be grasped in the innate conception, "I am". This intuitive and inherent self-perception is called, subjective illumination; for there are two kinds of direct knowledge, one called subjective, the other objective illumination and the difference is that while objective illumination or as it is called the Supra-intelligence has for its object both the known & unknown, the object of subjective illumination is that which is perpetually & inevitably known, since even the supra-intelligence is illumined or revealed by the light of the Ego. For as it is said "The subtle self has consciousness for its

It has been said with a singularly subtle ineptitude that the existence of the One Formless Nameless Indivisible without Qualities & without desires may be admitted; and the existence of a multifold world of phenomena may be admitted; but that the one excludes the other. Since it is not possible that the Absolute should limit itself even illusorily; for any such limitation is an act and an act implies an object; but an Existence without desires can have no object to serve and cannot therefore act. Moreover the Infinite excludes the possibility of the Finite. This is a juggling with words. The Infinite instead of excluding the Finite supposes the Finite. When we think of the Infinite, it is not at first as a blind & limitless expanse but as the Finite Existence we know spreading on & on without beginning or limit. Having once formed the idea of the Infinite, we may then by an effort of the Mind blot out that vision of finite things informing it and imagine infinity as a blind & limitless expanse; but even so Infinity only exists to us on condition of the possibility of the Finite; it is there possible, latent, manifested in the past, to be yet manifested in the future. Destroy the possibility of the Finite and the Infinite becomes unimaginable. This is expressed in the Puranic philosophy of the Parabrahma absorbing all things into

himself for a while only to put them forth again. Nor is the objection that an Act implies an object, in itself tenable; an act may be pure & objectless, ceasing indeed to be an action in the ordinary human sense of the word but not in the philosophic or scientific sense. The sun acts when it shines though it has no object in doing so (जडवत् समाचरेत्).

The Visishtadwait recognizing that the Infinite implies the Finite within it, bases its ontology on the fact; the Adwait points out however that the existence of the Finite is only a possibility and when it occurs implies no real change in the Infinite, nothing essential and permanent, but the objectless action of the Absolute, the working of a force which as it creates nothing real and lasting may well be called Maya or illusion. All turns on whether the Finite is a real ie an essential & permanent existence or a mere condition of thought. If the former, the Visishtadwaita view is correct, but if the latter the Adwaita must claim our adherence.

4

[.....] the next few centuries. This issue I prefer to call the issue between Science and Hinduism, not because there are not in the world other great embodiments of the old religious & moral spirit, but because Hinduism alone has shown an eternal & indestructible vitality and still more because Hinduism alone does not on the side of reason stand naked to the assaults of Science. And when I speak of Hinduism, I do not refer to the ignorant & customary Hinduism of today, which is largely a Buddhicised and vulgarised edition of the old faith, but the purer form which under the pressure of Science is now reasserting its empire over the Hindu mind.

The Spirit of Hinduism

God

OM *ityetad akṣaram idam sarvam*; OM is the syllable, OM is the Universe; all that was, all that is, all that will be is OM. With this pregnant confession of faith Hinduism begins its interpretation of the Universe.

Metaphysical systems arise and metaphysical systems fall; Hegel disappears and Kant arrives; Pantheism, Theism, Atheism pursue their interminable round, and there is no finality. Then Science comes and declares the whole vanity, for all is physical and there is nothing metaphysical save in the brain of the dreamer; and yet tho' Science has spoken still there is no finality. For the soul of man refuses to be dissolved into a force or a procession of sensations or a composite effect created by the action of outward things on the neurons of the brain. It persists in saying "I am"; it persists in demanding an explanation of its existence, and will not be satisfied without an answer. But where is that answer to come from or how is it possible to arrive at any conclusion? The rock on which all metaphysics come to shipwreck is the same unsurpassable barrier before which Science itself becomes a baffled and impotent thing; it is that behind everything, beyond everything, when all knowledge has been acquired, when matter has been pursued into its subtlest unanalysable element, there is always an Inexplicable Something which remains. Metaphysics seeks to tell us What the Universe is and Why it is; in other words to explain the Inexplicable; but the end of this process is inevitably a juggling with words which must repel all clear-minded thinkers. At the end of all metaphysical systems we find an enthroned word which appalled in the purple of finality professes to explain the Universe, and yet when we look into it, we find that it stands itself in need of explanation, that it is merely a Word which stands for the

Inexplicable. Science avoids the difficulty by professing that the ultimate results of its analysis are a sufficient description of the Universe, a sufficient answer to the What, and as to the Why it rests in the great fact of Evolution. Again we find that we have landed ourselves in unexplained words beyond which lies the same region of darkness involved in yet deeper darkness; the *tamas tamasā gūḍham* of the Scriptures; Evolution, Force, Kinesis, these are words in which we gather up our observation of certain phenomena; they are the sum of the workings of a nameless, unintelligible Thing, but what that Thing is and why It is, remains an unsolved mystery. Whether it is that the human mind is intrinsically unable to pierce beyond the veil or whether it has the power latent or potential but as yet unevolved, we may at least safely assert that so far man has not been able to understand Finality; he is constitutionally incapable of imagining a Final Cause which his reason when faithfully interrogated will not refuse to accept as Final, will not be forced by its own nature to subject to the query How & Why. There are only two ways of meeting the difficulty; one is to assert that the reason of man as at present constituted is imperfect and by reason of its imperfection unable to grasp Finality which for all that exists; the other is to assert that the reason of man is right and that Finality is inconceivable because it does not exist. The latter is the answer which Hinduism has selected; the human mind cannot arrive at anything final because there is nothing final, for all the universe is OM and OM is Infinite, without beginning and without end either in Time or in Space. It has indeed been advanced that the human mind can realise only the Finite and not the Infinite,—a sorry paradox, for it is truer to say that the only fact which the human mind can realise is Infinity; the Finite it grasps only as a phenomenon, the very conception of which depends on the wider conception of the Infinite. A finite thing, such as a house, we conceive as a limited phenomenon in relation to that which is not the house; limit is only imaginable in relation to something beyond the limit; a final limit to everything is unimaginable whether in Time or Space. Outside the house is the province and outside the limits of the province is the country

and outside the limits of the country is the earth and outside the limits of the earth is the Universe and to the Universe we can only imagine limits if we imagine it as surrounded by other Universes, and so the mind of man goes travelling forward & ever forward without reaching an end. Having realised that there is no end the Mind refuses to proceed farther and returns on its traces into the world of phenomena. It is this refusal, this return which is meant when it is stated that the human mind cannot conceive Infinity. And yet what does the statement amount to? Simply to this that there is no end to the Infinite, in other words that the Infinite *is* infinite, that the boundless *has* no bound. The human mind works within limits, that is to say, within the Absolute apparently conditioned by phenomena because it is itself the Absolute apparently conditioned by phenomena. This fundamental idea of the Vedanta I shall have occasion to return upon in its proper place; here I follow out the argument so far in order to establish that the working of the human mind within limits does not militate against the undoubted experience that if rigidly interrogated it realises phenomena only as phenomena and the only fact to which it can give assent is the fact of infinity. If therefore we take reason or mental Experience as the final authority, the Hindu proposition demonstrates itself. The alternative proposition like the Roman Curia calls upon us to put reason out of Court and makes discussion of the question impossible. Although one cannot dogmatically declare it to be untrue, it is certainly contrary to all scientific probability; Hinduism does not deny, but rather asserts that the powers of the human mind can & will enlarge indefinitely, but it believes that this will be by the process of development, not by a radical alteration of its essential nature. To assert that man must believe in finality although he is constitutionally unable to grasp any finality, is to leave the terra firma on which all thought moves & reposes, the collective mental experience of the race affecting & affected by the mental experience of each individual and to launch into the void of dogmatic & irrational belief. *Credo quia incredibile est*, I believe because it is incomprehensible.

We come back therefore to the Hindu confession of faith, OM is the syllable, OM is the Universe; the past, the present and the future, — all that was, all that is, all that will be is OM. Likewise all that may exist beyond the bounds of Time, that too is OM.

Mark the determination to drive the idea of Infinity to its logical conclusion. *All that may exist beyond the bounds of Time, that too is OM.* Man can conceive nothing that is neither in the past, present nor future, but if there be such inconceivable thing, it does not by becoming beyond Time place itself beyond OM. That too is OM. In a similar spirit another verse of the Upanishad declares of God “He moves & He moveth not, He is near & He is far, He is within the Universe and He is outside the Universe.” The Universe is all that exists, all that Man can know or conceive & there can be nothing outside it because it has no limits; but if there does exist such inconceivable thing as is beyond illimitable Space it does not by becoming beyond Space, put itself beyond OM. *He is within the Universe and He is outside the Universe.* All Hindu Scripture is precise upon this point, our God is not a gigantic polypus, not a term for infinite & Eternal Matter, not a stream of Tendency that makes for righteousness, or for the survival of the fittest, or for the goal of Evolution, whatever that may be. He is the Infinite and the Absolute, and what seems to be finite and conditioned, seems & is not; is phenomenon & not fact. God is the only fact, God is the only reality; God is the One than whom there is no other. He alone exists, all else appears. But of these things later. At present the conclusion which I wish to present is this that there is an Infinite who is the one fact; there is no Final Cause, because Final Cause implies an Effect different from itself & must therefore be finite, but the human mind cannot conceive of anything ultimate & finite; for there is no such thing; it cannot conceive of a beginning to all things because there was no beginning, or an end to all things because there is no end. There is only One Infinite who is without beginning and without End.

But if He is Infinite, He must be Unknowable, for knowledge implies limit & division. The human mind as has been said, works within limits; in order to know, we must define and

analyse; but definition and analysis imply limits, imply conditions. The Infinite is conceivable to us, but not being measurable, it is also not knowable. This is the second great philosophical truth on which Hinduism insists. OM *tat sat* is its formula, OM, That is what Is. “That”, the most non-committing expression discoverable in the language, is the one selected to express the idea of the Infinite One. “That is the one thing that is”, but *what* That is and *why* That is, lies beyond the scope of our knowledge. Again and again the Scriptures asseverate our ultimate ignorance.¹

¹ *The notes that follow were written by Sri Aurobindo at the top of the last page of this manuscript:*

Infinite, therefore Unknowable, Unknowable therefore Absolute. Prove the Existence of God. Known by Becoming.

The Philosophy of the Upanishads

Chapter I

Prefatory

The philosophy of the Upanishads is the basis of all Indian religion and morals and to a considerable extent of Hindu politics, legislation and society. Its practical importance to [our] race is therefore immense. But it has also profoundly [affected] the thought of the West in many of the most critical stages of [its] development; at first through Pythagoras and other Greek philosophers, then through Buddhism working into Essene, Gnostic and Roman Christianity and once again in our own times through German metaphysics, Theosophy, and a hundred strange and irregular channels. One can open few books now at all in the latest stream of thought without seeing the old Vedantism busy at its work of moulding and broadening the European mind, sometimes by direct and conscious impact as a force, more often by an unacknowledged and impalpable pressure as an atmosphere. This potent influence [in] modern times of a way of thinking many thousands of years old, is due to [a] singular parallelism between the fundamental positions arrived [at by] ancient Vedantism and modern Science. Science in its [researches] amid matter has stumbled on the basal fact of the [Unity] of all things; the Unity of all things is the rock on which the Upanishads have been built. Evolution has been discovered and [analyzed] by Science; Evolution of a kind is implied at every turn by the Vedanta. Vedantism like Science, [but] after its own fashion, [is] severely conscientious in its logical processes and rigorously experimental; [Vedantism] has mastered physical and psychical laws which Science [is] now beginning to handle.

But the parallelism is no more than a parallelism, [there is] no real point of contact; for the Hindu or Southern Asiatic mind

differs fundamentally in its processes from either [the] Teutonic or the Mediterranean. The former is diffuse and comprehensive; the latter compact and precise. The Asiatic acquires a [deeper] and truer view of things in their totality, the European a more accurate and practically serviceable conception of their parts. [The] European seizes on an aspect and takes it for the whole; he is [a] fanatic of single ideas and the preacher of the finite: the Asiatic passes at once to the whole and slurs rapidly over the aspects; he [is] eclectic, inveterately flexible and large-minded, the priest of [the Infinite]. The European is an analytical reasoner proceeding from observations, the Asiatic a synthetic diviner, leaping to intuitions. Even [when] both analyze, the European prefers to dissect his observations, [the] Asiatic to distinguish his experiences: or when both [synthetize, the] European generalises and classifies what he has [observed,] the Asiatic masses into broad single truths what he [has seen] within. The one deals as a master with facts, but halts over [ideas and] having mastered an idea works round it in a circle; the other [masters ideas] unerringly [.....] but stumbles among facts and applications. The mind of the European is an Iliad or an Odyssey, fighting rudely but heroically forward, or, full of a rich curiosity, wandering as an accurate and vigorous observer in landlocked seas of thought; the mind of the Asiatic is a Ramayan or a Mahabharat, a gleaming infinity of splendid and inspiring imaginations and idealisms or else an universe of wide moral aspiration and ever varying and newly-grouped masses of thought. The mind of the Westerner is a Mediterranean full of small and fertile islands, studded with ports to which the owner, a private merchant, eagerly flees with his merchandise after a little dashing among the billows, and eagerly he disembarks and kisses his dear mother earth; the mind of the Eastern man is an Ocean, and its voyager an adventurer and discoverer, a Columbus sailing for months over an illimitable Ocean out of reach of land, and his ports of visit are few and far between, nor does he carry in his bottoms much merchandise you can traffick in; yet he opens for the trader new horizons, new worlds with new markets. By his intuitions and divinations he helps to widen the circles the European is always

obstinately tracing. The European is essentially scientific, artistic and commercial; the Asiatic is essentially a moralist, pietist and philosopher. Of course the distinction is not rigid or absolute; there is much that is Asiatic in numbers of Europeans, and in particular races, notably the South Germans, the Celt and the Slav; there is much that is European in numbers of Asiatics, and in particular nations, notably the Arabs and the Japanese. But the fundamental divergence in speculative habits is very noticeable, for in the things of the mind the South imposes its law on the whole Continent.

We shall therefore expect to find, as we do find, that Vedantic Evolution and Monism are very different things from Evolution and Monism as European Science understands them. European thought seizes on Evolution as manifested in the outward facts of our little earth and follows it into its details with marvellous minuteness, accuracy and care. The Vedanta slurs over this part of the scheme with a brief acknowledgement, but divines the whole course of Evolution in the Universe and lays down with confident insight its larger aspects in the inward facts of the soul. In its Monism also Vedanta is far more profound and searching than the European scientific observer, for while the latter is aware only of this gross material world and resolves everything into the monism of gross Matter, the Vedanta, which is perfectly aware that gross matter can all be resolved into a single principle, does not pause at this discovery; it has pursued its investigations into two other worlds which surround & interpenetrate ours like two concentric but larger circles, the psychic or dream world of subtle Matter and the spiritual or sleep world of causal Matter, each with its own monistic unity; these three parallel monisms it resolves into a Supreme, Absolute and Transcendent Unity which is alone real and eternal. To the Indian consciousness at least these are no mere speculations; they are conclusions based on the actual experiences and observations of investigators who had themselves entered into these inner and yet wider worlds. The good faith of their observations cannot seriously be doubted and their accuracy can only be impugned when Science itself consents to explore the same fields of being

whether by the methods hitherto practised in the East or by any other adequate means of its own invention.

We need not expect in the Upanishads a full statement of the facts on which its more grandiose statements of religious and philosophic truth are built, nor should we hope to find in them complete or reasoned treatises marshalling in a comprehensive and orderly manner the whole scheme of Vedantic philosophy. That is seldom the way in which the true Asiatic goes to work. He is a poet and a *divine* in the real sense of the word. His peculiar faculty is apparent in the very form of his philosophic books. The Aphorisms, that peculiarly Indian instrument of thought, by which our philosophers later on packed tons of speculation into an inch of space, give only the fundamental illuminations on which their philosophy depends. The Exegeses (*Karikas*) of Gaudapada and others are often a connected and logical array of concise and pregnant thoughts each carrying its burden of endless suggestion, each starting its own reverberating echo of wider and wider thought; but they are not comprehensive treatises. Nor can such a term be applied to the Commentaries (*Bhashyas*) of Shankara, Ramanuja and other powerful and original minds; they are, rather, forceful excursions into terse and strenuous logic, basing, strengthening, building up, adding a wing here and a story there to the cunning and multiform, yet harmonic structure of Indian thought. Nowhere will you find an exhaustive and systematic statement of a whole philosophy interpreting every part of the universe in the terms of a single line of thought. This habit of suggestiveness & reserve in thought leaves the old philosophies still as inspiring and full of intention and potential development as when the glowing divinations and massive spiritual experiences stored in the Upanishads were first annealed & hammered into philosophic form. It is the reason of the Vedanta's surprising vitality, of the extent to which it enters and the potency with which it governs Indian life, in a way that no European philosophy except recently the Evolutionary has entered into or governed the life of the West. The European metaphysician has something in him of the pedagogue, something indeed of the mechanic, at least of the geometrician;

his philosophies are masterpieces of consistent logic, admirable constructions of a rigid symmetry. But their very perfection militates against the vitality of the truth they set forth; for Life is not built on the lines of consistent logic, Nature does not proceed on the principle of a rigid symmetry: even where she seems most formal she loves to assert herself in even the slightest, just perceptible, perhaps hardly perceptible deflection from a strict correspondence. Nothing indeed can live permanently which has not in itself the potentiality of an unending Evolution; nothing—nothing finite at least—is completely true which is not incomplete. The moment a poem or work of art becomes incapable of fresh interpretation, or a philosophy of fruitful expansion or a species of change & variety, it ceases from that moment to be essential to existence and is therefore doomed, sooner or later, to extinction. The logical intellect may rebel against this law and insist passionately on finality in truth,¹ but it rebels vainly; for this *is* the law of all life and all truth.

This is the secret of the Upanishads and their undying fruitfulness. They are, to begin with, inspired poems,—not less so when they are couched in prose form than when they are poured into solemn and far-sounding verse,—grand and rhythmic intuitions where the speakers seem to be conveyors only of informing ideas cast out from a full and complete vision in the eternal guardian Mind of the race. The style in which they are couched is wonderfully grave, penetrating and mighty, suffused with strange light as if from another world, its rhythms unequalled for fathomless depth of sound and the rolling sea of solemn echoes they leave behind them. Here only in literature have philosophy and poetry at their highest met together and mingled their beings in the unison of a perfect love and understanding. For the Upanishads stand, as poetry, with the

¹ Observe for instance the phenomenon of Theosophy. The Western intellect seizes upon the profound researches of the East into the things behind the veil, the things of the soul & spirit—researches admirably firm in the outline of their results but incomplete in detail—and lo and behold! everything is arranged, classified, manualized, vulgarized, all gaps filled in, finality insisted on and the infinite future with its infinite possibilities and uncertainties audaciously barred out of its heritage.

greatest productions of creative force and harmonic beauty. As philosophy, they have borne the weight of three millenniums of thought and may well suffice for an equal period of future speculation. But exhaustive and balanced exposition is not to be expected; you must piece together their glowing jewels of thought if you would arrive at the forced symmetry of a system; and perhaps to the end of the world different minds will construct from them a different mosaic. To the systematic intellect this inevitably detracts from their philosophic value, but to the Indian mind, flexible, illimitable, unwilling to recognize any finality in philosophy or religion, it enhances their claim to reverence as Scriptures for the whole world and for all time to come.

Chapter II Discovery of the Absolute Brahman

The idea of transcendental Unity, Oneness & Stability behind all the flux and variety of phenomenal life is the basal idea of the Upanishads: this is the pivot of all Indian metaphysics, the sum and goal of our spiritual experience. To the phenomenal world around us stability and singleness seem at first to be utterly alien; nothing but passes and changes, nothing but has its counterparts, contrasts, harmonised and dissident parts; and all are perpetually shifting and rearranging their relative positions and affections. Yet if one thing is certain, it is that the sum of all this change and motion is absolutely stable, fixed and unvarying; that all this heterogeneous multitude of animate & inanimate things are fundamentally homogeneous and one. Otherwise nothing could endure, nor could there be any certainty in existence. And this unity, stability, unvarying fixity which reason demands & ordinary experience points to, is being ascertained slowly but surely by the investigations of Science. We can no longer escape from the growing conviction that however the parts may change and shift and appear to perish, yet the sum and whole remains unchanged, undiminished and imperishable; however

multitudinous, mutable and mutually irreconcilable forms and compounds may be, yet the grand substratum is one, simple and enduring; death itself is not a reality but a seeming, for what appears to be destruction, is merely transformation and a preparation for rebirth. Science may not have appreciated the full import of her own discoveries; she may shrink from an unflinching acceptance of the logical results to which they lead; and certainly she is as yet far from advancing towards the great converse truths which they for the present conceal,—for instance the wonderful fact that not only is death a seeming, but life itself is a seeming, and beyond life and death there lies a condition which is truer and therefore more permanent than either. But though Science dreams not as yet of her goal, her feet are on the road from which there is no turning back,—the road which Vedanta on a different plane has already trod before it.

Here then is a great fundamental fact which demands from philosophy an adequate explanation of itself;—that all variations resolve themselves into an unity; that within the flux of things and concealed by it is an indefinable, immutable Something, at once the substratum and sum of all, which Time cannot touch, motion perturb, nor variation increase or diminish; and that this substratum and sum has been from all eternity and will be for all eternity. A fundamental fact to which all Thought moves, and yet is it not, when narrowly considered, an acute paradox? For how can the sum of infinite variations be a semipiternally fixed amount which has never augmented or decreased and can never augment or decrease? How can that whole be fixed and eternal of which every smallest part is eternally varying and perishing? Given a bewildering whirl of motion, how does the result come to be not merely now or as a result, but from beginning to end a perfect fixity? Impossible, unless either there be a guiding Power, for which at first sight there seems to be no room in the semipiternal chain of causation; or unless that sum and substratum be the one reality, imperishable because not conditioned by Time, indivisible because not conditioned by Space, immutable because not conditioned by Causality,—in a word absolute & transcendent and *therefore* eternal, unalterable and

undecaying. Motion and change and death and division would then be merely transitory phenomena, masks and seemings of the One and Absolute, the as yet undefined and perhaps indefinable It which alone *is*.

To such a conclusion Indian speculation had turned at a very early period of its conscious strivings — uncertainly at first and with many gropings and blunders. The existence of some Oneness which gives order and stability to the multitudinous stir of the visible world, the Aryan thinkers were from the first disposed to envisage and they sought painfully to arrive at the knowledge of that Oneness in its nature or its essentiality. The living Forces of the Cosmos which they had long worshipped, yet always with a floating but persistent perception of an Unity in their multitude, melted on closer analysis into a single concept, a single Force or Presence, one and universal. The question then arose, Was that Force or Presence intelligent or non-intelligent? God or Nature? "He alone" hazarded the Rigveda "knoweth, or perhaps He knoweth not." Or might it not be that the Oneness which ties together and governs phenomena and rolls out the evolution of the worlds, is really the thing we call *Time*, since of the three original conditions of phenomenal existence, Time, Space and Causality, Time is a necessary part of the conception of Causality and can hardly be abstracted from the conception of Space, but neither Space nor Causality seems necessary to the conception of Time? Or if it be not Time, might it not be *Swabhava*, the essential Nature of Things taking various conditions and forms? Or perhaps *Chance*, some blind principle working out an unity and law in things by infinite experiment, — this too might be possible. Or since from eternal uncertainty eternal certainty cannot come, might it not be *Fate*, a fixed and unalterable law in things in subjection to which this world evolves itself in a preordained procession of phenomena from which it cannot deviate? Or perhaps in the original atomic fountain of things certain *Elements* might be discovered which by perpetual and infinite combinations and permutations keep the universe to its workings? But if so, these elements must themselves proceed from something

which imposes on them the law of their being, and what could that be but the *Womb*, the matrix of original and indestructible Matter, the plasm which moulds the universe and out of which it is moulded? And yet in whatever scheme of things the mind might ultimately rest, some room surely must be made for these conscious, thinking and knowing *Egos* of living beings, of whom knowledge and thought seem to be the essential selves and without whom this world of perceptible and knowable things could not be perceived and known; — and if not perceived and known, might it not be that without them it could not even exist?

Such were the gorges of endless speculation in which the old Aryan thinkers, tossed and perplexed, sought for some firm standing-ground, some definite clue which might save them from being beaten about like stumbling blind men led by a guide as blind. They sought at first to liberate themselves from the tyranny of appearances by the method which Kapila, the ancient prehistoric Master of Thought, had laid down for mankind, the method called Sankhya or the law of Enumeration. The method of Kapila consisted in guidance by pure discriminative reason and it took its name from one of its principal rules, the law of enumeration and generalisation. They enumerated first the immediate Truths-in-Things which they could distinguish or deduce from things obviously phenomenal, and from these by generalisation they arrived at a much smaller number of ulterior Truths-in-Things of which the immediate were merely aspects. And then having enumerated these ulterior Truths-in-Things, they were able by generalisation to reduce them to a very small number of ultimate Truths-in-Things, the Tattwas (literally The-nesses) of the developed Sankhya philosophy. And these Tattwas once enumerated with some approach to certainty, was it not possible to generalise yet one step farther? The Sankhya did so generalise and by this supreme and final generalisation arrived at the very last step on which, in its own unaided strength, it could take safe footing. This was the great principle of Prakriti, the single eternal indestructible principle and origin of Matter which by perpetual evolution rolls out through aeons and aeons the

unending panorama of things.² And for whose benefit? Surely for those conscious knowing and perceiving Egos, the army of witnesses, who, each in his private space of reasoning and perceiving Mind partitioned off by an enveloping medium of gross matter, sit for ever as spectators in the theatre of the Universe! For ever, thought the Sankhyas, since the Egos, though their partitions are being continually broken down and built anew and the spaces occupied never remain permanently identical, yet seem themselves to be no less eternal and indestructible than Prakriti.

This then was the wide fixed lake of ascertained philosophical knowledge into which the method of Sankhya, pure intellectual reasoning on definite principles, led in the mind of ancient India. Branchings off, artificial canals from the reservoir were not, indeed, wanting. Some by resolving that army of witnesses into a single Witness, arrived at the dual conception of God and Nature, Purusha & Prakriti, Spirit and Matter, Ego and Non-ego. Others, more radical, perceived Prakriti as the creation, shadow or aspect of Purusha, so that God alone remained, the spiritual or ideal factor eliminating by inclusion the material or real. Solutions were also attempted on the opposite side; for some eliminated the conscious Egos themselves as mere seemings; not a few seem to have thought that each ego is only a series of successive shocks of consciousness and the persistent sense of identity no more than an illusion due to the unbroken continuity of the shocks. If these shocks of consciousness are borne in on the brain from the changes of Prakriti in the multitudinous stir of evolution, then is consciousness one out of the many terms of Prakriti itself, so that Prakriti alone remains as the one reality, the material or real factor eliminating by inclusion the spiritual or ideal. But if we deny, as many did, that Prakriti is an ultimate reality apart from the perceptions of Purushas and yet apply the theory of a false notion of identity created by successive waves of

² Note that Matter here not only includes gross matter with which Western Science is mainly concerned, but subtle matter, the material in which thought & feeling work, and causal matter in which the fundamental operations of the Will-to-live are conducted.

sensation, we arrive at the impossible & sophistic position of the old Indian Nihilists whose reason by a singular suicide landed itself in Nothingness as the cradle & bourne, nay, the very stuff and reality of all existence. And there was a third direction in which thought tended and which led it to the very threshold of Vedanta; for this also was a possible speculation that Prakriti & Purusha might both be quite real & yet not ultimately different aspects or sides of each other and so, after all, of a Oneness higher than either. But these speculations, plausible or imperfect, logical or sophistic, were yet mere speculations; they had no basis either in observed fact or in reliable experience. Two certainties seemed to have been arrived at, Prakriti was testified to by a close analysis of phenomenal existence; it was the basis of the phenomenal world which without a substratum of original matter could not be accounted for and without a fundamental oneness and indestructibility in that substratum could not be, what observation showed it to be, subject, namely, to fixed laws & evidently invariable in its sum and substance. On the other hand Purushas were testified to by the eternal persistence of the sense of individuality and identity whether during life or after death³ and by the necessity of a perceiving cause for the activity of Prakriti; they were the receptive and contemplative Egos within the sphere of whose consciousness Prakriti, stirred to creative activity by their presence, performed her long drama of phenomenal Evolution.

But meanwhile the seers of ancient India had, in their experiments and efforts at spiritual training and the conquest of the body, perfected a discovery which in its importance to the future of human knowledge dwarfs the divinations of Newton and Galileo; even the discovery of the inductive and experimental method in Science was not more momentous; for they discovered down to its ultimate processes the method of Yoga and by the method of Yoga they rose to three crowning realisations. They

³ Survival of the human personality after death has always been held in India to be a proved fact beyond all dispute; the Charvaka denial of it was contemned as mere irrational & wilful folly. Note however that survival after death does not necessarily to the Indian mind imply immortality, but only raises a presumption in its favour.

realised first as a fact the existence under the flux and multitudinousness of things of that supreme Unity and immutable Stability which had hitherto been posited only as a necessary theory, an inevitable generalisation. They came to know that It is the one reality and all phenomena merely its seemings and appearances, that It is the true Self of all things and phenomena are merely its clothes and trappings. They learned that It is absolute and transcendent and, because absolute and transcendent, therefore eternal, immutable, imminuable and indivisible. And looking back on the past progress of speculation they perceived that this also was the goal to which pure intellectual reasoning would have led them. For that which is in Time must be born and perish; but the Unity and Stability of things is eternal and must therefore transcend Time. That which is in Space must increase & diminish, have parts & relations, but the Unity and Stability of things is imminuable, not augmentable, independent of the changefulness of its parts and untouched by the shifting of their relations, and must therefore transcend Space; — and if it transcends Space, cannot really have parts, since Space is the condition of material divisibility; divisibility therefore must be, like death, a seeming and not a reality. Finally that which is subject to Causality, is necessarily subject to Change; but the Unity and Stability of things is immutable, the same now as it was aeons ago and will be aeons hereafter, and must therefore transcend Causality.

This then was the first realisation through Yoga, NITYO 'NITYÂNÂM, the One Eternal in many transient.

At the same time they realised one truth more,—a surprising truth; they found that the transcendent absolute Self of things was also the Self of living beings, the Self too of man, that highest of the beings living in the material plane on earth. The Purusha or conscious Ego in man which had perplexed and baffled the Sankhyas, turned out to be precisely the same in his ultimate being as Prakriti the apparently non-conscious source of things; the non-consciousness of Prakriti, like so much else, was proved a seeming and no reality, since behind the inanimate form a conscious Intelligence at work is to the eyes of the Yогin luminously self-evident.

This then was the second realisation through Yoga, CHÉTANAŚ CHÉTANĀNĀM, the One Consciousness in many Consciousnesses.

Finally at the base of these two realisations was a third, the most important of all to our race,—that the Transcendent Self in individual man is as complete *because identically the same* as the Transcendent Self in the Universe; for the Transcendent is indivisible and the sense of separate individuality is only one of the fundamental seemings on which the manifestation of phenomenal existence perpetually depends. In this way the Absolute which would otherwise be beyond knowledge, becomes knowable; and the man who knows his whole Self knows the whole Universe. This stupendous truth is enshrined to us in the two famous formulae of Vedanta, SO 'HAM, He am I, and AHAM BRAHM' ÂSMI, I am Brahman the Eternal.

Based on these four grand truths, NITYO 'NITYĀNĀM, CHÉTANAŚ CHÉTANĀNĀM, SO 'HAM, AHAM BRAHM' ÂSMI, as upon four mighty pillars the lofty philosophy of the Upanishads raises its front among the distant stars.

Chapter III Nature of the Absolute Brahman

Viewed in the light of these four great illuminations the utterances of the Upanishads arrange themselves and fall into a perfect harmony. European scholars like Max Muller have seen in these Scriptures a mass of heterogeneous ideas where the sublime jostles the childish, the grandiose walks arm-in-arm with the grotesque, the most petty trivialities feel at home with the rarest and most solemn philosophical intuitions, and they have accordingly declared them to be the babblings of a child humanity; inspired children, idiots endowed with genius, such to the Western view are the great Rishis of the Aranyaka. But the view is suspect from its very nature. It is not likely that men who handle the ultimate and most difficult intellectual problems with such mastery, precision and insight, would babble mere folly in

matters which require the use of much lower faculties. Their utterances in this less exalted sphere may be true or they may be erroneous, but, it may fairly be assumed, they gave them forth with a perfectly clear idea of their bearing and signification. To an understanding totally unacquainted with the methods by which they are arrived at, many of the established conclusions of modern Science would seem unutterably grotesque and childish, —the babblings if not of a child humanity, at least of humanity in its dotage; yet only a little accurate knowledge is needed to show that these grotesque trivialities are well-ascertained and irrefragable truths.

In real truth the Upanishads are in all their parts, allowing for imaginative language and an occasional element of symbolism, quite rational, consistent and homogeneous. They are not concerned indeed to create an artificial impression of consistency by ignoring the various aspects of this manifold Universe and reducing all things to a single denomination; for they are not metaphysical treatises aiming at mathematical abstractness or geometrical precision and consistency. They are a great store of observations and spiritual experiences with conclusions and generalisations from those observations and experiences, set down without any thought of controversial caution or any anxiety to avoid logical contradictions. Yet they have the consistency of all truthful observation and honest experience; they arrange themselves naturally and without set purpose under one grand universal truth developed into a certain number of wide general laws within whose general agreement there is room for infinite particular variations and even anomalies. They have in other words a scientific rather than a logical consistency.

To the rigorous logician bound in his narrow prison of verbal reasoning, the Upanishads seem indeed to base themselves on an initial and fundamental inconsistency. There are a number of passages in these Scriptures which dwell with striking emphasis on the unknowability of the Absolute Brahman. It is distinctly stated that neither mind nor senses can reach the Brahman and that words return baffled from the attempt to describe It; more, —that we do not discern the Absolute and Transcendent in Its

reality, nor can we discriminate the right way or perhaps any way of teaching the reality of It to others; and it is even held, that It can only be properly characterised in negative language and that to every challenge for definition the only true answer is NÉTI NÉTI, *It is not this, It is not that.* Brahman is not definable, not describable, not intellectually knowable. And yet in spite of these passages the Upanishads constantly declare that Brahman is the one true object of knowledge and the whole Scripture is in fact an attempt not perhaps to define, but at least in some sort to characterise and present an idea, and even a detailed idea, of the Brahman.

The inconsistency is more apparent than real. The Brahman in Its ultimate reality is transcendent, absolute, infinite; but the senses and the intellect, which the senses supply with its material, are finite; speech also is limited by the deficiencies of the intellect; Brahman must therefore in Its very nature be unknowable to the intellect and beyond the power of speech to describe,—yet only in Its ultimate reality, not in Its aspects or manifestations. The Agnostic Scientist also believes that there must be some great ultimate Reality unknown and probably unknowable to man (*ignoramus et ignorabimus*) from which this Universe proceeds and on which all phenomena depend, but his admission of Unknowability is confined to the ultimate Nature of this supreme Ens and not to its expression or manifestation in the Universe. The Upanishad, proceeding by a profounder method than material analysis, casts the net of knowledge wider than the modern Agnostic, yet in the end its attitude is much the same; it differs only in this important respect that it asserts even the ultimate Brahman to be although inexpressible in the terms of finite knowledge, yet realisable and attainable.

The first great step to the realisation of the Brahman is by the knowledge of Him as manifested in the phenomenal Universe; for if there is no reality but Brahman, the phenomenal Universe which is obviously a manifestation of *something* permanent and eternal, must be a manifestation of Brahman and of nothing else, and if we know it completely, we do to a certain extent and in a certain way, know Him, not as an Absolute Existence, but under

the conditions of phenomenal manifestation. While, however, European Science seeks only to know the phenomena of gross matter, the Yогin goes farther. He asserts that he has discovered an universe of subtle matter penetrating and surrounding the gross; this universe to which the spirit withdraws partially and for a brief time in sleep but more entirely and for a longer time through the gates of death, is the source whence all psychic processes draw their origin; and the link which connects this universe with the gross material world is to be found in the phenomena of life and mind. His assertion is perfectly positive and the Upanishad proceeds on it as on an ascertained and indisputable fact quite beyond the limits of mere guesswork, inference or speculation. But he goes yet farther and declares that there is yet a third universe of causal matter penetrating and surrounding both the subtle and the gross, and that this universe to which the spirit withdraws in the deepest and most abysmal states of sleep and trance and also in a remote condition beyond the state of man after death, is the source whence all phenomena take their rise. If we are to understand the Upanishads we must accept these to us astounding statements, temporarily at least; for on them the whole scheme of Vedanta is built. Now Brahman manifests Himself in each of these Universes, in the Universe of Causal Matter as the Cause, Self and Inspirer, poetically styled Prajna the Wise One; in the universe of subtle matter as the Creator, Self and Container, styled Hiranyagarbha the Golden Embryo of life and form, and in the universe of gross matter as the Ruler, Guide, Self and Helper, styled Virat the Shining and Mighty One. And in each of these manifestations He can be known and realised by the spirit of Man.

Granted the truth of these remarkable assertions, what then is the relation between the Supreme Self and man? The position has already been quite definitely taken that the transcendent Self in man is identically the same as the transcendent Self in the Universe and that this identity is the one great key to the knowledge of the Absolute Brahman. Does not this position rule out of court any such differences between the Absolute and the human Self as is implied in the character of the triple

manifestation of Brahman? On the one hand completest identity of the Supreme Self and the human is asserted as an ascertained & experienced fact, on the other hand widest difference is asserted as an equally well-ascertained and experienced fact; there can be no reconciliation between these incompatible statements. Yet are they both facts, answers Vedanta; identity *is* a fact in the reality of things; difference *is* a fact in the appearance of things, the world of phenomena; for phenomena are in their essence nothing but seemings and the difference between the individual Self and the Universal Self is the fundamental seeming which makes all the rest possible. This difference grows as the manifestation of Brahman proceeds. In the world of gross matter, it is complete; the difference is so acute, that it is impossible for the material sensual being to conceive of the Supreme Soul as having any point of contact with his own soul and it is only by a long process of evolution that he arrives at the illumination in which some kind of identity becomes to him conceivable. The basal conception for Mind as conditioned by gross matter is Dualistic; the knower here must be different from the Known and his whole intellectual development consists in the discovery, development and perfected use of ever new media and methods of knowledge. Undoubtedly the ultimate knowledge he arrives at brings him to the fundamental truth of identity between himself and the Supreme Self, but in the sphere of gross phenomena this identity can never be more than an intellectual conception, it can never be verified by personal realisation. On the other hand it can be *felt* by the supreme sympathy of love and faith, either through love of humanity and of all other fellow-beings or directly through love of God. This feeling of identity is very strong in religions based largely on the sentiment of Love and Faith. I and my Father are One, cried the Founder of Christianity; I and my brother man & my brother beast are One, says Buddhism; St Francis spoke of Air as his brother and Water as his sister; and the Hindu devotee when he sees a bullock lashed falls down in pain with the mark of the whip on his own body. But the feeling of Oneness remaining only a feeling does not extend into knowledge and therefore these religions while emotionally

pervaded with the sense of identity, tend in the sphere of intellect to a militant Dualism or to any other but always unMonistic standpoint. Dualism is therefore no mere delusion; it is a truth, but a phenomenal truth and not the ultimate reality of things.

As it proceeds in the work of discovering and perfecting methods of knowledge, the individual self finds an entry into the universe of subtle phenomena. Here the difference that divides it from the Supreme Self is less acute; for the bonds of matter are lightened and the great agents of division and disparity, Time and Space, diminish in the consistency of their pressure. The individual here comes to realise a certain unity with the great Whole; he is enlarged and aggrandized into a part of the Universal Self, but the sense of identity is not complete and cannot be complete. The basal conception for Mind in this subtle Universe is Dualo-Monistic; the knower is not quite different from the known; he is like and of the same substance but inferior, smaller and dependent; his sense of oneness may amount to similarity and consubstantiality but not to coincidence and perfect identity.

From the subtle Universe the individual self rises in its evolution until it is able to enter the universe of Causal matter, where it stands near to the fountain-head. In this universe media and methods of knowledge begin to disappear, Mind comes into almost direct relations with its source and the difference between the individual and the Supreme Self is greatly attenuated. Nevertheless there is here too a wall of difference, even though it wears eventually thin as the thinnest paper. The knower is aware that he is coeval and coexistent with the Supreme Self, he is aware in a sense of omnipresence, for wherever the Supreme Self is, there also he is; he is, moreover, on the other side of phenomena and can see the Universe at will without him or within him; but he has still not necessarily realised the Supreme as utterly himself, although the perfect realisation is now for the first time in his grasp. The basal perception for Mind in this Universe is Monism with a difference, but the crowning perception of Monism becomes here possible.

And when it is no longer only possible but grasped? Then the individual Self entering into full realisation, ceases in any

sense to be the individual Self, but merges into & becomes again the eternal and absolute Brahman, without parts, unbeginning, undecaying, unchanging. He has passed beyond causality and phenomena and is no longer under the bondage of that which is only by seeming. This is the *laya* or utter absorption of Hinduism, the highest *nirvana* or extinction from phenomena of the Upanishads and of Buddhist metaphysics. It is obviously a state which words fail to describe, since words which are created to express relations and have no meaning except when they express relations, cannot deal successfully with a state which is perfectly pure, absolute and unrelated; nor is it a condition which the bounded & finite intellect of man on this plane can for a moment envisage. This unintelligibility of the supreme state is naturally a great stumblingblock to the undisciplined imagination of our present-day humanity which, being sensuous, emotional and intellectual, inevitably recoils from a bliss in which neither the senses, emotions nor intellect have any place. Surely, we cry, the extinction or quietude of all these sources & means of sensation and pleasure implies not supreme bliss but absolute nothingness, blank annihilation. "An error", answers the Vedanta, "a pitiful, grovelling error! Why is it that the senses cease in that supreme condition? Because the senses were evolved in order to sense external being and where externality ceases, they having no action cease to exist. The emotions too are directed outwards and need another for their joy, they can only survive so long as we are incomplete. The intellect similarly is and works only so long as there is something external to it and ungrasped. But to the Most High there is nothing ungrasped, the Most High depends on none for His joy. He has therefore neither emotions nor intellect, nor can he either who merges in and becomes the Most High, possess them for a moment after that high consummation. The deprivation of the limited senses in His boundlessness is not a loss or an extinction, but must be a fulfilment, a development into Being which rejoices in its own infinity. The disappearance of our broken & transient emotions in His completeness must bring us not into a cold void but rather into illimitable bliss. The culmination of knowledge by the supersession of our divided

& fallible intellect must lead not to utter darkness and blank vacuity but to the luminous ecstasy of an infinite Consciousness. Not the annihilation of Being, but utter fullness of Being is our Nirvana." And when this ecstatic language is brought to the touchstone of reason, it must surely be declared just and even unanswerable. For the final absolution of the intellect can only be at a point where the Knower, Knowledge and the Known become one, Knowledge being there infinite, direct and without media. And where there is this infinite and flawless knowledge, there must be, one thinks, infinite and flawless existence and bliss. But by the very conditions of this state, we can only say of it that it is, we cannot define it in words, precisely because we cannot realize it with the intellect. The Self can be realized only with the Self; there is no other instrument of realization.

Granted, it may be said, that such a state is conceivably possible,—as certainly it is, starting from your premises, the only and inevitable conclusion,—but what proof have we that it exists as a reality? what proof can even your Yoga bring to us that it exists? For when the individual Self becomes identified with the Supreme, its evolution is over and it does not return into phenomena to tell its experiences. The question is a difficult one to handle, partly because language, if it attempts to deal with it at all precisely, must become so abstract and delicate as to be unintelligible, partly because the experiences it involves are so far off from our present general evolution and attained so rarely that dogmatism or even definite statement appears almost unpardonable. Nevertheless with the use of metaphorical language, or, in St Paul's words, speaking as a fool, one may venture to outline what there is at all to be said on the subject. The truth then seems to be that there are even in this last or fourth state of the Self, stages and degrees, as to the number of which experience varies; but for practical purposes we may speak of three, the first when we stand at the entrance of the porch and look within; the second when we stand at the inner extremity of the porch and are really face to face with the Eternal; the third when we enter into the Holy of Holies. Be it remembered that the language I am using is the language of metaphor and must not be pressed

with a savage literalness. Well then, the first stage is well within the possible experience of man and from it man returns to be a Jivanmukta, one who lives & is yet released in his inner self from the bondage of phenomenal existence; the second stage once reached, man does not ordinarily return, unless he is a supreme Buddha,— or perhaps as a world Avatar; from the third stage none returns nor is it attainable in the body. Brahman as realised by the Jivanmukta, seen from the entrance of the porch, is that which we usually term Parabrahman, the Supreme Eternal and the subject of the most exalted descriptions of the Vedanta. There are therefore five conditions of Brahman. Brahman Virat, Master of the Waking Universe; Brahman Hiranyagarbha, of the Dream Universe; Brahman Prajna or Avyakta of the Trance Universe of Unmanifestation; Parabrahman, the Highest; and that which is higher than the highest, the Unknowable. Now of the Unknowable it is not profitable to speak, but something of Parabrahman can be made intelligible to the human understanding because — always if the liberal use of loose metaphors is not denied,— it can be partially brought within the domain of speech.

Chapter IV Parabrahman

So far the great Transcendent Reality has been viewed from the standpoint of the human spirit as it travels on the upward curve of evolution to culminate in the Supreme. It will now be more convenient to view the Absolute from the other end of the cycle of manifestation where, in a sense, evolution begins and the great Cause of phenomena stands with His face towards the Universe He will soon create. At first of course there is the Absolute, unconditioned, unmanifested, unimaginable, of Whom nothing can be predicated except negatives. But as the first step towards manifestation the Absolute — produces, shall we say? let the word serve for want of a better! — produces in Itself a luminous Shadow of Its infinite inconceivable Being, — the image is

trivial and absurd, but one can find none adequate,—which is Parabrahman or if we like so to call Him, God, the Eternal, the Supreme Spirit, the Seer, Witness, Wisdom, Source, Creator, Ancient of Days. Of Him Vedanta itself can only speak in two great trilogies, subjective and objective, Sacchidanandam, Existence, Consciousness, Bliss; Satyam Jnanam Anantam, Truth, Knowledge, Infinity.

SACCHIDANANDAM. The Supreme is Pure Being, Absolute Existence, SAT. He is Existence because He alone *Is*, there being nothing else which has any ultimate reality or any being independent of His self-manifestation. And He is *Absolute* Existence because since He alone is and nothing else exists in reality, He must necessarily exist by Himself, in Himself and to Himself. There can be no cause for His existence, nor object to His existence; nor can there be any increase or diminution in Him, since increase can only come by addition from something external and diminution by loss to something external, and there is nothing external to Brahman. He cannot change in any way, for then He would be subject to Time and Causality; nor have parts, for then He would be subject to the law of Space. He is beyond the conceptions of Space, Time and Causality which He creates phenomenally as the conditions of manifestation but which cannot condition their Source. Parabrahman, then, is Absolute Existence.

The Supreme is also Pure Awareness, Absolute Consciousness, CHIT. We must be on our guard against confusing the ultimate consciousness of Brahman with our own modes of thought and knowledge, or calling Him in any but avowedly metaphorical language the Universal Omniscient Mind and by such other terminology; Mind, Thought, Knowledge, Omnipotence, Partial Science, Nescience are merely modes in which Consciousness figures under various conditions and in various receptacles. But the Pure Consciousness of the Brahman is a conception which transcends our modes of thinking. Philosophy has done well to point out that consciousness is in its essence purely subjective. We are not conscious of external objects; we are only conscious of certain perceptions and impressions in our

brains which by the separate or concurrent operation of our senses we are able to externalise into name and form; and in the very nature of things and to the end of Time we cannot be conscious of anything except these impressions & perceptions. The fact is indubitable, though Materialism and Idealism explain it in diametrically opposite directions. We shall eventually know that this condition is imperative precisely because consciousness is the fundamental thing from which all phenomenal existence proceeds, so much so that all phenomena have been called by a bold metaphor distortions or corruptions (*vikaras*) of the absolute consciousness. Monistic philosophers tell us however that the true explanation is not corruption but illusion (*adhyaropa*), first of the idea of not-self into the Self, and of externality into the internal, and then of fresh and ever more complex forms by the method of Evolution. These metaphysical explanations it is necessary indeed to grasp, but even when we have mastered their delicate distinctions, refined upon refinement and brought ourselves to the verge of infinite ideas, there at least we must pause; we are moored to our brains and cannot in this body cut the rope in order to spread our sails over the illimitable ocean. It is enough if we satisfy ourselves with some dim realisation of the fact that all sentience is ultimately self-sentience.

The Upanishads tell us that Brahman is not a blind universal Force working by its very nature mechanically, nor even an unconscious Cause of Force; He is conscious or rather is Himself Consciousness, CHIT, as well as SAT. It necessarily follows that SAT and CHIT are really the same; Existence is Consciousness and cannot be separated from Consciousness. Phenomenally we may choose to regard existence as proceeding from sentience or culminating in it or being in and by it; but culmination is only a return to a concealed source, an efflorescence already concealed in the seed, so that from all these three standpoints sentience is eventually the condition of existence; they are only three different aspects of the mental necessity which forbids us to imagine the great Is as essentially unaware that He Is. We may of course choose to believe that things are the other way about, that existence proceeds from insentience through

sentience back again to insentience. Sentience is then merely a form of insentience, a delusion or temporary corruption (*vikara*) of the eternal and insentient. In this case Sentience, Intelligence, Mind, Thought and Knowledge, all are Maya and either insentient Matter or Nothingness the only eternal reality. But the Nihilist's negation of existence is a mere *reductio ad absurdum* of all thought and reason, a metaphysical *harakiri* by which Philosophy rips up her own bowels with her own weapons. The Materialist's conclusion of eternal insentient Matter seems to stand on firmer ground; for we have certainly the observed fact that evolution seems to start from inanimate Matter, and consciousness presents itself in Matter as a thing that appears for a short time only to disappear, a phenomenon or temporary seeming. To this argument also Vedanta can marshal a battalion of replies. The assertion of eternally insentient Matter (*Prakriti*) without any permanently sentient reality (*Purusha*) is, to begin with, a paradox far more startling than the Monistic paradox of Maya and lands us in a conclusion mentally inconceivable. Nor is the materialistic conclusion indisputably proved by observed facts; rather facts seem to lead us to a quite different conclusion, since the existence of anything really insentient behind which there is no concealed Sentience is an assumption (for we cannot even positively say that inanimate things are absolutely inanimate,) and the one fact we surely and indisputably know is our own sentience and animation. In the workings of inanimate Matter we everywhere see the operations of Intelligence operating by means and adapting means to an end and the intelligent use of means by an unconscious entity is a thing paradoxical in itself and unsupported by an atom of proof; indeed the wider knowledge of the Universe attainable to Yoga actually does reveal such a Universal Intelligence everywhere at work.

Brahman, then, is Consciousness, and this once conceded, it follows that He must be in His transcendental reality Absolute Consciousness. His Consciousness is from itself and of itself like His existence, because there is nothing separate and other than Him; not only so but it does not consist in the knowledge of one part of Himself by another, or of His parts by His whole, since

His transcendental existence is one and simple, without parts. His consciousness therefore does not proceed by the same laws as our consciousness, does not proceed by differentiating subject from object, knower from known, but simply *is*, by its own right of pure and unqualified existence, eternally and illimitably, in a way impure and qualified existences cannot conceive.

The Supreme is, finally, Pure Ecstasy, Absolute Bliss, ÂNANDA. Now just as SAT and CHIT are the same, so are SAT and CHIT not different from ÂNANDA; just as Existence is Consciousness and cannot be separated from Consciousness, so Conscious Existence is Bliss and cannot be separated from Bliss. I think we feel this even in the very finite existence and cramped consciousness of life on the material plane. Conscious existence at least cannot endure without pleasure; even in the most miserable sentient being there must be pleasure in existence though it appear small as a grain of mustard seed; blank absolute misery entails suicide and annihilation as its necessary and immediate consequence. The will to live, — the desire of conscious existence and the instinct of self-preservation,— is no mere teleological arrangement of Nature with a particular end before it, but is fundamental and independent of end or object; it is merely a body and form to that pleasure of existence which is essential and eternal; and it cannot be forced to give way to anything but that will to live *more* fully and widely which is the source on one side of all personal ambition and aspiration, on the other of all love, self-sacrifice and self-conquest. Even suicide is merely a frenzied revolt against limitation, a revolt not the less significant because it is without knowledge. The pleasure of existence can consent to merge only in the greater pleasure of a widened existence, and religion, the aspiration towards God, is simply the fulfilment of this eternal elemental force, its desire to merge its separate & limited joy in the sheer bliss of infinite existence. The Will to live individually embodies the pleasure of individual existence which is the outer phenomenal self of all creatures; but the will to live infinitely can only proceed straight from the transcendent, ultimate Spirit in us which is our real Self; and it is this that availeth towards immortality. Brahman, then,

being infinity of conscious existence, is also infinite bliss. And the bliss of Brahman is necessarily absolute both in its nature and as to its object. Any mixture or coexistence with pain would imply a cause of pain either the same or other than the cause of bliss, with the immediate admission of division, struggle, opposition, of something inharmonious and self-annulling in Brahman; but division and opposition which depend upon relation cannot exist in the unrelated Absolute. Pain is, properly considered, the result of limitation. When the desires and impulses are limited in their satisfaction or the matter, physical or mental, on which they act is checked, pressed inward, divided or pulled apart by something alien to itself, then only can pain arise. Where there is no limitation, there can be no pain. The Bliss of Brahman is therefore absolute in its nature.

It is no less absolute with regard to its object; for the subject and object are the same. It is inherent in His own existence and consciousness and cannot possibly have any cause within or without Him who alone Is and Is without parts or division. Some would have us believe that a self-existent bliss is impossible; bliss, like pain, needs an object or cause different from the subject and therefore depends on limitation. Yet even in this material or waking world any considerable and deep experience will show us that there is a pleasure which is independent of surroundings and does not rely for its sustenance on temporary or external objects. The pleasure that depends on others is turbid, precarious and marred by the certainty of diminution and loss; it is only as one withdraws deeper and deeper into oneself that one comes nearer and nearer to the peace that passeth understanding. An equally significant fact is to be found in the phenomena of satiety; of which this is the governing law that the less limited and the more subjective the field of pleasure, the farther is it removed from the reach of satiety and disgust. The body is rapidly sated with pleasure; the emotions, less limited and more subjective, can take in a much deeper draught of joy; the mind, still wider and more capable of internality, has a yet profounder gulp and untiring faculty of assimilation; the pleasures of the intellect and higher understanding, where we

move in a very rare and wide atmosphere, seldom pall and, even then, soon repair themselves; while the infinite spirit, the acme of our subjectiveness, knows not any disgust of spiritual ecstasy and will be content with nothing short of infinity in its bliss. The logical culmination of this ascending series is the transcendent and absolute Parabrahman whose bliss is endless, self-existent and pure.

This then is the Trinity of the Upanishads, Absolute Existence; which is *therefore* Absolute Consciousness; which is therefore Absolute Bliss.

And then the second Trinity SATYAM JNANAM ANANTAM. This Trinity is not different from the first but merely its objective expression. Brahman is *Satyam*, Truth or Reality because Truth or Reality is merely the subjective idea of existence viewed objectively. Only that which fundamentally exists is real and true, and Brahman being absolute existence is also absolute truth and reality. All other things are only relatively real, not indeed false in every sense since they are appearances of a Reality, but impermanent and therefore not in themselves ultimately true.

Brahman is also JNÂNAM, Knowledge; for Knowledge is merely the subjective idea of consciousness viewed objectively. The word *Jnâna* as a philosophic term has an especial connotation. It is distinguished from *samjnâna* which is awareness by contact; from *âjnâna* which is perception by receptive and central Will and implies a command from the brain; from *prajnâna* which is Wisdom, teleological will or knowledge with a purpose; and from *vijnâna* or knowledge by discrimination. *Jnâna* is knowledge direct and without the use of a medium. Brahman is absolute *Jnâna*, direct & self-existent, without beginning, middle or end, in which the Knower is also the Knowledge and the Known.

Finally, Brahman is ANANTAM, Endlessness, including all kinds of Infinity. His Infinity is of course involved in His absolute existence and consciousness, but it arises directly from His absolute bliss, since bliss, as we have seen, consists objectively in the absence of limitation. Infinity therefore is merely the subjective idea of bliss viewed objectively. It may be otherwise expressed by

the word Freedom or by the word Immortality. All phenomenal things are bound by laws and limitations imposed by the triple idea of Time, Space and Causality; in Brahman alone there is absolute Freedom; for He has no beginning, middle or end in Time or Space nor, being immutable, in Causality. Regarded from the point of view of Time, Brahman is Eternity or Immortality, regarded from the point of view of Space He is Infinity or Universality, regarded from the point of view of Causality He is absolute Freedom. In one word He is ANANTAM, Endlessness, Absence of Limitation.

Chapter V

Maya: the Principle of Phenomenal Existence

Brahman then, let us suppose, has projected in Itself this luminous Shadow of Itself and has in the act (speaking always in the language of finite beings with its perpetual taint of Time, Space & Causality) begun to envisage Itself and consider Its essentialities in the light of attributes. He who is Existence, Consciousness, Bliss envisages Himself as existent, conscious, blissful. From that moment phenomenal manifestation becomes inevitable; the Unqualified chooses to regard Himself as qualified. Once this fundamental condition is granted, everything else follows by the rigorous logic of evolution; it is the one postulate which Vedanta demands. For this postulate once granted, we can see how the Absolute when it projects in itself this luminous Shadow called the Parabrahman, prepares the way for and as it were necessitates the evolution of this manifest world,— by bringing into play the great fundamental principle of Maya or Illusion. Under the play of that one principle translating itself into motion, the great transformation spoken of by the Upanishad becomes possible,— the One becomes the Many.

(But this one fundamental postulate is not easily conceded. The question which will at once spring up armed and gigantic in

the European mind is the teleological objection, Why? All action implies a purpose; with what purpose did Brahman regard Himself as qualified? All Evolution is prompted by a desire, implies development, moves to an intelligible goal. What did Brahman who, being Absolute, is self-sufficing, desire, of what development did He stand in need or to what goal does He move? This is, from the teleological standpoint, the great crux of any theory of the Universe which tries to start from an essential and original Unity; a gulf is left which the intellect finds it impossible to bridge. Certain philosophies do indeed attempt to bridge it by a teleological explanation. The Absolute One, it is argued, passes through the cycle of manifestation, because He then returns to His original unity *enriched* with a new store of experiences and impressions, richer in love, richer in knowledge, richer in deed. It is truly amazing that any minds should be found which can seriously flatter themselves with the serene illusion that this is philosophy. Anything more unphilosophical, more vicious in reasoning cannot be imagined. When the Veda, speaking not of the Absolute but of Brahman Hiranyagarbha, says that He was alone and grew afraid of His loneliness, it passes, as a daring poetical fancy; and this too might pass as a poetical fancy, but not as serious reasoning. It is no more than an unreasoning recoil from the European idea of absolute, impersonal Unity as a blank and empty Negation. To avoid this appalling conclusion, an Unity is imagined which can be at the same time, not phenomenally but in its ultimate reality, manifold, teeming with myriad memories. It is difficult to understand the precise argumentation of the idea, whether the One when He has reentered His unity, preserves His experiences in detail or in the mass, say, as a pulp or essence. But at any rate several radical incoherences are in its conception. The Absolute is imaged as a thing incomplete and awaking to a sense of Its incompleteness which It proceeds in a business-like way to remedy; subject therefore to Desire and subject also to Time in which It is now contained! As to the source whence these new impressions are derived which complete the incompleteness of Brahman, that is a still greater mystery. If it was out of Himself, then it was latent in Him, already existing unknown to Himself.

One therefore presumes He produced in Himself, since there was no other place to produce them from, things which had no existence previously but now are; that which was not, became; out of nothing, something arose. This is not philosophy but theology; not reasoning, but faith. As faith it might pass; that God is omnipotent and can therefore literally create something out of nothing, is a dogma which one is at liberty to believe or reject, but it is outside the sphere of reasoning.)

There seems at first to be a fatal objection to the concession of this postulate; it seems really to evade the fundamental question of the problem of Existence or merely carry the beginning of the problem two steps farther back. For the great crux of the Universe is precisely the difficulty of understanding How and Why the One became Many, and we do not get rid of the difficulty by saying that it proceeds from the Unqualified willing to regard Himself as qualified. Even if the question How were satisfactorily met by the theory of Maya, the Why of the whole process remains. The goal of Evolution may have been determined,—it is, let us concede, the return of the Infinite upon Itself through the cycle of manifestation; but the beginning of Evolution is not accounted for, its utility is not made manifest. Why did the Absolute turn His face towards Evolution? There seems to be no possible answer to this inquiry; it is impossible to suggest any teleological reason why the Unqualified should will to look on Himself as qualified and so set the wheel of Evolution rolling,—at any rate any reason which would not be hopelessly at variance with the essential meaning of Absoluteness; and it is only an unphilosophic or imperfectly philosophic mind which can imagine that it has succeeded in the attempt. But the impossibility does not vitiate the theory of Maya; for the Vedantist parries this question of the Why with an unanswerable retort. The question itself, he says, as directed to the Brahman, is inadmissible and an impertinence. He, being Absolute, is in His very nature beyond Causality on which all ideas of need, utility, purpose depend, and to suppose purpose in Him is to question His transcendent and absolute nature: That which is beyond causality, has no need to act on a purpose. To catechise

the Mighty Infinite as to why It chose to veil Its infinity in Maya, or to insist that the Universe shall choose between being utilitarian or not being at all, is absurd; it betrays a want of perfect intellectual lucidity. The question Why simply cannot arise.

But even when the question of utility is set aside, the intelligibility of the process is not established. The Unqualified willing to regard Himself as qualified is, you say, His Maya. But what is the nature of the process, intellectual or volitional, and how can an intellectual or volitional process be consistently attributed to the Absolute? — on this head at least one expects intellectual satisfaction. But the Vedantist strenuously denies the legitimacy of the expectation. If the “Will to regard” were put forward as a literal statement of a definable fact and its terms as philosophically precise, then the expectation would be justifiable. But the terms are avowedly poetical and therefore logically inadequate; they were merely intended to present the fact of Maya to the intellect in the imperfect and totally inadequate manner which is alone possible to finite speech and thought in dealing with the infinite. No intellectual or volitional process as we conceive will and intellect has really taken place. What then has happened? What is Maya? How came it into existence?

The Vedanta answers this question with its usual uncompromising candour and imperturbable clearness of thought; — we cannot tell, it says, for we do not and cannot know; at least we cannot intelligibly define; and this for the simple reason that the birth of Maya, if it had any birth, took place on the other side of phenomena, before the origin of Time, Space and Causality; and is therefore not cognizable by the intellect which can only think in terms of Time, Space and Causality. A little reflection will show that the existence of Maya is necessarily involved even in the casting of the luminous shadow called Parabrahman. A thing so far removed in the dark backward and abysm before Time, a state, force or process (call it what we will) operating directly in the Absolute Who is but cannot be thought of, may be perceived as a fact, but cannot be explained or defined. We say therefore that Maya is a thing *anirdeshyam*, impossible to define, of which we cannot say that it is, — for it is Illusion, —

and we cannot say that it is not,—for it is the Mother of the Universe; we can only infer that it is a something inherent in the being of Brahman and must therefore be not born but eternal, not in Time, but out of Time. So much arises from our premises; more it would be dishonest to pretend to know.

Still Maya is no mere assumption or its existence unprovable! Vedanta is prepared to prove that Maya is; prepared to show *what* it is, not ultimately but as involved in Parabrahman and manifested in the Universe; prepared to describe *how* it set about the work of Evolution, prepared to present Maya in terms of the intellect as a perfectly possible explanation of the entire order of the Universe; prepared even to contend that it is the only explanation perfectly consistent with the nature of being and the recognized bases of scientific and philosophical truth. It is only not prepared to represent the ultimate infinite nature and origin of Maya in precise terms comprehensible to finite mind; for to attempt philosophical impossibilities constitutes an intellectual pastime in which the Vedantist is too much attached to clear thinking to indulge.

What then is Maya? It is, intellectually envisaged, a subjective necessity involved in the very nature of Parabrahman. We have seen that Parabrahman is visible to us in the form of three subjective conceptions with three corresponding objective conceptions, which are the essentialities of His being. But Parabrahman is the Brahman as envisaged by the individual self in the act of returning to its source; Brahman externalized by His own will in the form of Maya is looking at Himself with the curtains of Maya half-lifted but not yet quite thrown back. The forms of Maya have disappeared, but the essentiality stands behind the returning Self at the entrance of the porch, and it is only when he reaches the inner end of the porch that he passes utterly out of the control of Maya. And the essentiality of Maya is to resolve Existence, Consciousness and Bliss which are really one, into three, the Unity appearing as a Trinity and the single Essentiality immediately breaking up into manifold properties or attributes. The Absolute Brahman at the inner entrance is the bright triune Parabrahman, absolute also, but cognizable; at the

threshold of the porch He is Parabrahman envisaging Maya, and the next step carries Him into Maya, where Duality begins, Purusha differentiates from Prakriti, Spirit from Matter, Force from Energy, Ego from Non-Ego; and as the descent into phenomena deepens, single Purusha differentiates itself into multitudinous receptacles, single Prakriti into innumerable forms. This is the law of Maya.

But the first step, speaking in the terms of pure intellect, is the envisaging of the Essentiality as possessing Its three subjective and three objective properties,—Existence; Consciousness; Bliss; Truth; Knowledge; Infinity. The moment this happens, by inevitable necessity, the opposite attributes, Nothingness, Non-Sentience, Pain, present themselves as inseparable shadows of the three substances, and with them come the objective triad, Falsehood, Ignorance, Limitation; Limitation necessitates Divisibility, Divisibility necessitates Time and Space; Time and Space necessitate Causality; Causality, the source from which definite phenomena arise, necessitates Change. All the fundamental laws of Duality have sprung into being, necessitated in a moment by the appearance of Saguna Brahman, the Unqualified Infinite become Qualified. They do not really or ultimately exist, because they are inconsistent with the absolute nature of Parabrahman, for even in the sphere of phenomena we can rise to the truth that annihilation is an illusion and only form is destroyed; nothingness is an impossibility, and the Eternal cannot perish; nor can He become non-sentient in whose being sentience and non-sentience are one; nor can He feel pain who is infinite and without limitation. Yet these things, which we know cannot exist, must be conceived and therefore have phenomenally an existence and a reality in impermanence. For this is the paradox of Maya and her works that we cannot say they exist, because they are in reality impossible, and we cannot say they do not exist, because we must conceive them subjectively and, knowledge being now turned outward, envisage them objectively.

Surely this is to land ourselves in a metaphysical morass! But the key of the tangle is always in our hands;—it is to remember that Parabrahman is Himself only the aspect of the

indefinable Absolute who is beyond Science and Nescience, Existence and Non-existence, Limitation and Infinity, and His sixfold attributes are not really six but one, not really attributes of Brahman, but in their unity Brahman Himself. It is only when we conceive of them as attributes that we are driven to regard Annihilation, Non-sentience and Limitation and their correspondings subjective or objective, as realities. But we are driven so to conceive them by something datelessly inherent in the infinite Will to live, in Brahman Himself. To leave for a moment the difficult language of metaphysics which on this dizzy verge of infinity, eludes and bewilders our giddy understanding and to use the trenchant symbolic style of the Upanishads, Parabrahman is the luminous shadow of the Absolute projected in Itself by Itself, and Maya is similarly the dark shadow projected by the Absolute in Parabrahman; both are real because eternal, but sheer reality is neither the light nor the darkness but the Thing-in-itself which they not merely like phenomena represent, but which in an inexplicable way they are. This, then, is Maya in its subjective relation to Parabrahman.

In phenomena Maya becomes objectivised in a hundred elusive forms, amid whose complex variety we long strive vainly to find the one supreme clue. The old thinkers long followed various of the main threads, but none led them to the mysterious starting point of her motions. "Then" says the Svetasvatara "they followed after concentration of Yoga and saw the Might of the Spirit of the Lord hidden deep in the modes of working of its own nature;" *Devatmashakti*, the Energy of the Divine Self, Parabrahman, is Maya; and it is in another passage stated to have two sides, obverse & reverse, Vidya and Avidya, Science and Nescience. Nescience eternally tends to envelop Science, Science eternally tends to displace Nescience. Avidya or Nescience is Parabrahman's power of creating illusions or images, things which seem but are not in themselves; Vidya or Science is His power of shaking off His own imaginations and returning upon His real and eternal Self. The action and reaction of these two great Energies doing work upon each other is the secret of Universal activity. The power of Nescience is evident on every

plane of existence; for the whole Universe is a series of images. The sun rises up in the morning, mounts into the cusp of the blue Heavens and descends at evening trailing behind it clouds of glory as it disappears. Who could doubt this irrefragable, overwhelmingly evidenced fact? Every day, through myriads of years, the eyes of millions of men all over the world have borne concurrent and unvarying testimony to the truth of these splendid voyagings. Than such universal ocular testimony, what evidence can be more conclusive? Yet it all turns out to be an image created by Nescience in the field of vision. Science comes & undeterred by prison & the stake tells us that the sun never voyages through our heavens, is indeed millions of miles from our heavens, and it is we who move round the Sun, not the Sun round us. Nay those Heavens themselves, the blue firmament into which poetry and religion have read so much beauty and wonder, is itself only an *image*, in which Nescience represents our atmosphere to us in the field of vision. The light too which streams upon us from our Sun and seems to us to fill Space turns out to be no more than an image. Science now freely permitted to multiply her amazing paradoxes, forces us at last to believe that it is only motion of matter affecting us at a certain pitch of vibration with that particular impression on the brain. And so she goes on resolving all things into mere images of the great cosmic ether which alone is. Of such unsubstantialities is this marvellous fabric of visible things created! Nay, it would even appear that the more unsubstantial a thing seems, the nearer it is to ultimate reality. This, which Science proves, says the Vedantist, is precisely what is meant by Maya.

Never dream, however, that Science will end here and that we have come to the last of her unveilings. She will yet go on and tell us that the cosmic ether itself is only an image, that this universe of sensible things and things inferable from sense is only a selection of translations from a far vaster universe of forms built out of subtler matter than our senses can either show or imply to us. And when she has entered into that subtler world with fit instruments of observation and analysis, that too she will relentlessly resolve into mere images of the subtler ether out of

which it is born. Behind that subtler universe also there looms a profounder and vaster, but simpler state of existence where there is only the undetermined universality of things as yet involved in their causes. Here Science must come to her latest dealings with matter and show us that this indeterminate universality of things is after all only an image of something in our own self. Meanwhile with that very self she is busy, continually and potently trying to persuade us that all which we believe to be ourselves, all in which our Nescience would have us contentedly dwell, is mere imagery and form. The animal in us insists that this body is the real Self and the satisfaction of its needs our primal duty; but Science (of whom Prof. Haeckel's Riddle of the Universe is not the concluding utterance) bids us beware of identifying our Self with a mere mass of primitive animal forms associated together by an aggregating nucleus of vital impulses; this surely is not the reality of Shakespeare & Newton, Buddha & St Francis! Then in those vital impulses we seek the bedrock of our being. But these too Science resolves into a delusion or image created by Nescience; for in reality these vital impulses have no existence by themselves but are merely the link established between that material aggregation of animal forms and something within us which we call Mind. Mind too she will not permit us long to mistake for anything more than an image created by the interaction of sensations and response to sensations between the material aggregation of the body and something that governs and informs the material system. This governing power in its action upon mind reveals itself in the discriminating, selecting, ordering and purposeful entity called by Vedanta the Buddhi, of which reason is only one aspect, intellect only one image. Buddhi also turns out eventually to be no entity, only an image, and Science must end by showing us that body, vitality, mind, buddhi are all images of what Philosophy calls Ananda, the pleasure of existence or Will to live; and she reveals to us at last that although this Will divides itself into innumerable forms which represent themselves as individual selves, yet all these are images of one great Cosmic Will to live, just as all material forms are merely images of one great undifferentiated Universality of

cosmic matter, causal ether, if we so choose to describe it. That Will is Purusha, that Universality is Prakriti; and both are but images of Parabrahman.

So, very briefly and inadequately stated in some of its main principles, runs the Vedantic theory of Maya, for which analytic Science is, without quite knowing it, multiplying a stupendous mass of evidence. Every fresh certainty which this Science adds, swells the mass, and it is only where she is incomplete and therefore should be agnostic, that Vedanta finds no assistance from her analysis. The completion of Science means the final conquest over Nescience and the unveiling of Maya.

Chapter VI Maya; the Energy of the Absolute

Maya then is the fundamental fact in the Universe, her dualistic system of balanced pairs of opposites is a necessity of intellectual conception; but the possibility of her existence as an inherent energy in the Absolute, outside phenomena, has yet to be established. So long as Science is incomplete and Yoga a secret discipline for the few, the insistent questions of the metaphysician can never be ignored, nor his method grow obsolete. The confident and even arrogant attempt of experimental Science to monopolise the kingdom of Mind, to the exclusion of the metaphysical and all other methods, was a rash and premature aggression,—rash because premature; successful at first its victorious usurping onrush is beginning to stagger and fail, even to lose hold on positions once thought to be permanently secured. The slow resurgence of metaphysics has already begun. Certainly, no metaphysic can be admissible which does not take count of the standards and undoubted results of Science; but until experimental analysis has solved the whole mystery of the Universe, not by speculation through logic (a method stolen from metaphysics with which Science has no business) but by experimental proof and hypotheses checked & confirmed by experimental proof, leaving no phenomenon unaccounted

for and no fact ignored,—until then metaphysics must reign where analytic experiment leaves a void. Vedanta, though it bases itself chiefly on the subjective experimental methods of Yoga and admits no metaphysical hypothesis as valid which is not in agreement with its results, is yet willing to submit its own conclusions to the tests of metaphysical logic. The Vedantic Yogi shrinks at present, because of certain moral scruples, from divulging his arcana to the crowd, but he recognises that so long as he refuses, he has no right to evade the inquisition of the metaphysical logician. Atharvan & Svetasvatara having spoken, Shankara and Ramanuja must be allowed their arena of verbal discussion.

The metaphysical question involved turns upon the nature of Avidya, Nescience, and its possibility in Parabrahman who is, after all, absolute,—Absolute Consciousness and therefore Absolute Knowledge. It is not sound to say that Parabrahman envisaging Maya, *becomes* capable of Avidya; for envisagement of Maya is simply a metaphorical expression for Avidya itself. Neither can the Vedantist take refuge in the theologian's evasion of reason by an appeal to lawless Omnipotence, to the Credo quia Impossibile. The Eternal is undoubtedly in His own nature free and unlimited, but, as undoubtedly, He has deliberately bound Himself in His relation to phenomena by certain fundamental principles; He has willed that certain things shall not and cannot be, and to use a human parallel He is like a King who having promulgated a certain code is as much bound by his own laws as the meanest subject, or like a poet whose imaginations in themselves free, are limited by laws the moment they begin to take shape. We may say, theoretically, that God being Omnipotent can create something out of nothing, but so long as no single clear instance can be given of a something created out of nothing, the rule of *ex nihilo nihil fit* remains an universal and fundamental law and to suppose that God has based the Universe on a violation of a fundamental law of the Universe, is to kick Reason out of the house and slam the door against her return. Similarly, if the coexistence of Avidya with Vidya in the same field and as it were interpenetrating each other, is

against the Law, it does by that very fact become impossible and the theory of Maya will then be proved an error; no appeal to Omnipotence will save it.

The objection to Avidya may be stated thus that Absolute Knowledge cannot at the same time not know, cannot imagine a thing to be real which is not real; for such imagination involves an element of self-deception, and self-deception is not possible in the Absolute. But is it really a law of consciousness—for there lies the point—that things can in no sense be at the same time real and unreal, that you cannot by any possibility imagine things to be real which *at the same time* you know perfectly well to be unreal? The dualist objector may contend that this impossibility is a law of consciousness. The Vedantin replies at once, Negatur, your statement is refuted by a host of examples; it is inconsistent with universal experience. The most utter and avowed unrealities can be and are firmly imagined as realities, seen as realities, sensed as realities, conceived as realities without the mind for a moment admitting that they are indeed real. The mirage of the desert we know after a time to be unreal, but even then we see & firmly image it as a reality, admire the green beauty of those trees and pant for the cool shining delight of those waters. We see dreams and dreams are unrealities, and yet some of them at least are at the same time not positive unrealities, for they image, and sometimes very exactly, events which have happened, are happening or will happen in the future. We see the juggler throw a rope in the air, climb up it, kill the boy who has preceded him and throw down his bleeding limbs piecemeal on the earth; every detail and circumstance of the unreal event corresponding to the event as it would have been, were it real; we do not imagine it to be unreal while it lasts, and we cannot so imagine it; for the visualisation is too clear & consistent, the feelings it awakes in us are too vivid, and yet all the time we perfectly well know that no such thing is happening. Instances of this sort are not easily numbered.

But these are distant, unimmediate things, and for some of them the evidence may not be considered ample. Let us come nearer to our daily life. We see a stone and we note its properties

of solidity and immobility, nor can we by any persuasion be induced to imagine it as anything else but solid and immobile; and we are right, for it is both: and yet we know that its immobility and solidity are not real, that it is, and to a vision sensible of the infinitesimal would appear, a world of the most active motion, of myriads of atoms *with spaces between them*. Again, if there is one thing that is real to me, it is this, that I am vertical and upright, whatever the people at the Antipodes may be and that I walk in all directions horizontally along the earth; and yet alas! I know that I am in reality not vertical but nearer the horizontal, walking often vertically up and down the earth, like a fly on the wall. I know it perfectly, yet if I were constantly to translate my knowledge into imagination, a padded room in Bedlam would soon be the only place for me. This is indeed the singular and amazing law of our consciousness that it is perfectly capable of holding two contradictory conceptions at the same time and with equal strength. We accept the knowledge which Science places at our disposal, but we perpetually act upon the images which Nescience creates. I know that the sun does not rise or set, does not move round the earth, does not sail through the heavens marking the time of day as it proceeds, but in my daily life I act precisely on the supposition that this unreality really happens; I hourly and momently conceive it and firmly image it as real and sometimes regulate on it my every movement. The eternal belligerents, Science and Nescience, have come in this matter of the sun's motion, as in so many others, to a working compromise. To me as an untrammelled Will to live who by the subtle intellectual part of me, can wander through Eternity and place myself as a spectator in the centre of the sun or even outside the material Universe the better to observe its motions, the phenomenon of the earth's movement round the sun is the reality, and even Nescience consents that I shall work on it as an acknowledged fact in the operations of pure intellect; but to me as a trammelled body unable to leave the earth and bound down in my daily life to the ministry of my senses, the phenomenon of the sun's movement round the earth is the reality and to translate my intellectual knowledge into the stuff of my daily

imaginings would be intolerably inconvenient; it would take my secure resting-place, the earth, from under my feet and make havoc of my life in sensation; even Science therefore consents that I shall work on the evidence of my senses as an acknowledged fact in my material life of earth-bounded existence. In this duplicity of standpoint we see as in a glass darkly some image of the manner in which the Absolute wills to be phenomenally conditioned; at once knows perfectly what is, yet chooses to image what is not, having infinite Science, yet makes room for self-limiting Nescience. It is not necessary to labour the point, or to range through all scientific knowledge for instances; in the light of modern knowledge the objection to the coexistence of *Vidya* & *Avidya* cannot stand; it is a perpetual fact in the daily economy of Consciousness.

Yes, it may be argued, but this does not establish it as anything more than a possibility in regard to the Absolute. A state of things true throughout the range of phenomenal existence, may cease to operate at the point where phenomena themselves cease. The possibility, however, once granted, Vedanta is entitled to put forward *Maya* as the one successful explanation yet advanced of this manifold existence; first, because *Maya* does explain the whole of existence metaphysically and is at the same time an universal, scientifically observable fact ranging through the whole Universe and fundamentally present in every operation of Consciousness; secondly, because it does transcend phenomena as well as inform them, it has its absolute as well as its conditioned state and is therefore not only possible in the Absolute but must be the Absolute Himself in manifestation; and thirdly, because no other possible explanation can logically contain *both* the truth of sheer transcendent Absoluteness of the Brahman and the palpable, imperative existence of the phenomenal Universe.⁴ Illogical theories, theories which part company with reason, theories which, instead of basing themselves in observed laws,

⁴ Of course I am not prepared, in these limits, to develop the final argument; that would imply a detailed examination of all metaphysical systems, which would be in itself the labour of a lifetime.

take their stand in the void, may be had in plenty. Maya is no theory but a fact; no mere result of logic or speculation, but of careful observation, and yet unassailable by logic and unsurpassable by speculation.

One of the most remarkable manifestations of Avidya in human consciousness, presenting in its nature and laws of working a close analogy to its parent is the power of imagination,—the power of bodying forth images which may either be reabsorbed into the individual consciousness which gave them forth or outlast it. Of the latter kind poetical creation is a salient example. At a certain time in a certain country one named Shakespeare created a new world by the force of his Avidya, his faculty of imagining what is not. That world is as real and unreal today as it was when Shakespeare created it or in more accurate Vedantic language *asrijata*, loosed it forth from the causal world within him. Within the limits of that world Iago is real to Othello, Othello to Desdemona, and all are real to any and every consciousness which can for a time abstract itself from this world [of] its self-created surroundings and enter the world of Shakespeare. We are aware of them, observe them, grow in knowledge about them, see them act, hear them speak, feel for their griefs and sorrows; and even when we return to our own world, they do not always leave us, but sometimes come with us and influence our actions. The astonishing power of poetical creation towards moulding life and history, has not yet been sufficiently observed; yet it was after all Achilles, the swift-footed son of Peleus, who thundered through Asia at the head of his legions, dragged Batis at his chariot-wheels and hurled the Iranian to his fall,—Achilles, the son of Peleus, who never lived except as an image,—nay, does not omniscient learning tell us, that even his creator never lived, or was only a haphazard assortment of poets who somehow got themselves collectively nicknamed Homer! Yet these images, which we envisage as real and confess by our words, thoughts, feelings, and sometimes even by our actions to be real, are, all the time and we know them perfectly well to be as mythical as the dream, the mirage and the juggler on his rope. There is no Othello, no Iago, no Desdemona but all these are merely varieties

of name & form, not of Shakespeare, but in which Shakespeare is immanent and which still exist merely because Shakespeare is immanent in them. Nevertheless he who best succeeds in imaging forth these children of illusion, this strange harmonic Maya, is ever adjudged by us to be the best poet, Creator or Maker, even though others may link words more sweetly together or dovetail incidents more deftly. The parallel between this work of imagination and the creation of phenomena and no less between the relation of the author to his creatures and the relation of the Conditioned Brahman to His creatures is astonishingly close in most of their details no less than in their general nature. Observe for instance that in all that multitude of figures vicious & virtuous, wise and foolish, he their creator who gave them forth, their Self and reality without whom they cannot exist, is unaffected by their crimes and virtues, irresponsible and free. The Lord [*sentence left incomplete*]

What then? Is this analogy anything more than poetic fancy, or is not after all, the whole idea of Brahman and Maya itself a mere poetic fancy? Perhaps, but not more fanciful or unreal, in that case, than the Universe itself and its motions; for the principle & working of the two are identical.

Let us ask ourselves, what it is that has happened when a great work of creation takes place and how it is that Shakespeare's creatures are still living to us, now that Shakespeare himself is dead and turned to clay. Singular indeed that Shakespeare's creations should be immortal and Shakespeare himself a mere shortlived conglomeration of protoplasmic cells! We notice first that Shakespeare's dramatic creatures are only a selection or anthology from among the teeming images which peopled that wonderful mind; there were thousands of pictures in that gallery which were never produced for the admiration of the ages. This is a truth to which every creator whether he use stone or colour or words for his thought-symbols will bear emphatic testimony. There was therefore a subtler and vaster world in Shakespeare than the world we know him to have bodied forth into tangible material of literature. Secondly we note that all these imaginations already existed in Shakespeare unmanifested

and unformed before they took shape and body; for certainly they did not come from outside. Shakespeare took his materials from this legend or that play, this chronicle or that history? His framework possibly, but not his creations; Hamlet did not come from the legend or the play, nor Cassius or King Henry from the history or the chronicle. No, Shakespeare contained in himself all his creatures, and therefore transcended & exceeded them; he was and is more than they or even than their sum and total; for they are merely limited manifestations of him under the conditions of time & space, and he would have been the same Shakespeare, even if we had not a scene or a line of him to know him by; only the world of imagination would have remained latent in him instead of manifest, *avyakta* instead of *vyakta*. Once manifest, his creatures are preserved immortally, not by print or manuscript, for the Veda has survived thousands of years without print or manuscript,— but, by words, shall we say? no, for words or sounds are only the physical substance, the atoms out of which their shapes are built, and can be entirely rearranged,— by translation, for example— without our losing Othello and Desdemona, just as the indwelling soul can take a new body without being necessarily changed by the transmigration. Othello and Desdemona are embodied in sounds or words, but thought is their finer and immortal substance. It is the subtler world of thought in Shakespeare from which they have been selected and bodied forth in sounds, and into the world of thought they originally proceeded from a reservoir of life deeper than thought itself, from an ocean of being which our analysis has not yet fathomed.

Now, let us translate these facts into the conceptions of Vedanta. Parabrahman self-limited in the name and form of Shakespeare, dwells deepest in him invisible to consciousness, as the unmanifest world of that something more elemental than thought (may it not be causal, elemental Will?), in which Shakespeare's imaginations lie as yet unformed and undifferentiated; then he comes to a surface of consciousness visible to Shakespeare as the inwardly manifest world of subtle matter or thought in which those imaginations take subtle thought-shapes

& throng; finally, he rises to a surface of consciousness visible to others besides Shakespeare as the outwardly manifest world, manifest in sound, in which a select number of these imaginations are revealed to universal view. These mighty images live immortally in our minds because Parabrahman in Shakespeare is the same as Parabrahman in ourselves; and because Shakespeare's thought is, therefore, water of the same etheric ocean as that which flows through our brains. Thought, in fact, is one, although to be revealed to us, it has to be bodied forth and take separate shapes in sound forms which we are accustomed to perceive and understand. Brahman-Brahma as Thought Creative in Shakespeare brings them forth, Brahman-Vishnu as Thought Preservative in us maintains them, Brahman-Rudra as Thought Destructive or Oblivion will one day destroy them; but in all these operations Brahman is one, Thought is one, even as all the Oceans are one. Shakespeare's world is in every way a parable of ours. There is, however, a distinction — Shakespeare could not body forth his images into forms palpable in gross matter either because, as other religions believe, that power is denied to man, [or] because, as Vedantism suggests, mankind has not risen as yet to that pitch of creative force.

There is one class of phenomena however in which this defect of identity between individual Imagination and universal Avidya seems to be filled up. The mind can create under certain circumstances images surviving its own dissolution or departure, which do take some kind of form in gross matter or at least matter palpable to the gross senses. For the phenomena of apparition there is an accumulating mass of evidence. Orthodox Science prefers to ignore the evidence, declines to believe that a *prima facie* case has been made out for investigation and shuts the gate on farther knowledge with a triple polysyllabic key, mysticism, coincidence, hallucination. Nevertheless, investigated or not, the phenomena persist in occurring! Hauntings, for example, for which there are only scattered indications in Europe, are in India, owing to the more strenuous psychical force and more subtle psychical sensitiveness of our physical organisation, fairly common. In these hauntings we have a signal

instance of the triumph of imagination. In the majority of cases they are images created by dying or doomed men in their agony which survive the creator, some of them visible, some audible, some both visible and audible, and in rare cases in an unearthly, insufficient, but by no means inefficient manner, palpable. The process of their creation is in essence the same as attends the creation of poetry or the creation of the world; it is *tapas* or *tapasya*,—not penance as English scholars will strangely insist on translating it, but HEAT, a tremendous concentration of will, which sets the whole being in a flame, masses all the faculties in closed ranks and hurls them furiously on a single objective. By *tapas* the world was created; by *tapas*, says the Moondaca, creative Brahman is piled up, *chiyate*, gathered & intensified; by *tapas* the rush of inspiration is effected. This *tapas* may be on the material plane associated with purpose or entirely dissociated from purpose. In the case of intense horror or grief, fierce agony or terrible excitement on the verge of death it is totally dissociated from any material purpose, it is what would be ordinarily called involuntary, but it receives from its origin an intensity so unparalleled as to create living images of itself which remain & act long after the source has been dissolved or stilled by death. Such is the ultimate power of imagination, though at present it cannot be fully used on the material plane except in a random, fortuitous and totally unpurposed manner.

In the manner of its working, then, Imagination is a carefully executed replica of Avidya; and if other marks of her essential identity with Avidya are needed, they can be found. Both are, for instance, preponderatingly purposeless. The workings of imagination are often totally dissociated, on the material plane at least, from any intelligible purpose and though it is quite possible that the latent part of our consciousness which works below the surface, may have sometimes a purpose of which the superficial part is not aware, yet in the most ordinary workings of Imagination, an absolute purposelessness is surely evident. Certainly, if not purposelessness there is colossal waste. A few hundreds of images were selected from Shakespeare's mind for a definite artistic purpose, but the thousands that never found verbal

expression, many of them with as splendid potentialities as those which did materialize in Hamlet and Macbeth seem to have risen & perished without any useful purpose. The same wastefulness is shown by Nature in her works; how many millions of lives does she not shower forth that a few may be selected for the purposes of evolution! Yet when she chooses to work economically and with set purpose, she like Imagination can become a scrupulous miser of effort and show herself possessed of a magical swiftness and sureness in shaping the means to the end. Neither Nature nor Imagination, therefore, can be supposed to be blind, random energies proceeding from an ungoverned force and teleological only by accident. Their operations are obviously guided by an Intelligence as perfectly capable, when it so wills, of purposing, planning, fitting its means to its ends, economising its materials and labour as any intelligent and careful workman in these days of science and method. We need therefore some explanation why this great universal Intelligence should not be, as a careful workman, always, not occasionally, economical of its materials and labour. Is not the truth this that Nature is not universally and in all her works teleological, that purpose is only one minor part of existence more concentrated than most and therefore more intense and triumphant, while for the greater part of her universal operation we must find another explanation than the teleological? or rather [one that] will at once contain and exceed the teleological? If it had only been Shakespeare, Michelangelo, Edison, Beethoven, Napoleon, Schopenhauer, the creators in poetry, art, science, music, life or thought, who possessed imagination, we might then have found an use for their unused imaginations in the greater preparatory richness they gave to the soil from which a few exquisite flowers were to spring. The explanation might not be a good one, little more indeed than a poetical fancy, but it could have passed for want of a better. But every human being possesses the divine faculty, more or less developed; every mind is a teeming world of imaginations; and indeed, imagination for imagination the opium-smoker's is more vivid, fertile and gorgeous than Shakespeare's. Yet hardly in one case out of a thousand are these imaginations of use to the world

or anything but a practical hindrance or at best a purposeless pastime to the dreamer. Imagination is a fundamental energy of consciousness, and this marvellous, indomitable energy works on without caring whether she is put to use or misuse or no use at all; she exists merely for the sake of delight in her own existence. Here I think we touch bottom. Imagination is outside purpose, sometimes above, sometimes below it, sometimes united with it, because she is an inherent energy not of some great teleological Master-Workman, but of Ananda, the Bliss of existence or Will to live, and beyond this delight in existence she has no reason for being. In the same way Maya, the infinite creative energy which peoples the phenomenal Universe, is really some force inherent in the infinite Will to be; and it is for this reason that her operations seem so wasteful from the standpoint of utilitarian economy; for she cares nothing about utilitarianism or economy and is only obeying her fundamental impulse towards phenomenal existence, consciousness, and the pleasure of conscious existence. So far as she has a purpose, it is this, and all the teleologic element in Nature has simply this end, to find more perfect surroundings or more exquisite means or wider opportunities or a grander gust and scope for the pleasure of conscious phenomenal existence. Yet the deepest bliss is after all that which she left and to which she will return, not the broken and pain-bounded bliss of finite life, but the perfect and infinite Bliss of transcendent undivided and illimitable consciousness. She seeks for a while to find perfect bliss by finite means and in finite things, the heaven of the socialist or anarchist, the heaven of the artist, the heaven of knowledge, the heaven of thought, or a heaven in some other world; but one day she realises that great truth, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you," and to that after all she returns. *This is Maya.*

One metaphysical test remains to be satisfied before we can be sure that Avidya and Vidya, the outcurve and incurve of Maya, go back to something eternally existent in the Absolute and are not created by phenomenal causes. If inherent in the Absolute, Maya must culminate in conceptions that are themselves absolute, infinite and unconditioned. Vidya tapers off into

infinity in the conceptions, SAT or Pure Existence, CHIT or Pure Consciousness, ANANDA or Pure Bliss; Avidya rises at her apex into ASAT, Nothingness, ACHETANAM, Non-sentience, NIRANANDAM, Blisslessness or Misery. Nothingness & Non-sentience are certainly absolute conceptions, infinite and unconditioned; but the third term of the negative Trinity gives us pause. Absolute pain, blank infinite unconditioned and unrelieved Misery is a conception which Reason shies at and Consciousness refuses, violently refuses to admit as a possibility. A cypher if you like to make metaphysical calculations with, but by itself sheer nought, nowhere discoverable as existing or capable of existence. Yet if infinite misery could be, it would in the very act of being merge into Nothingness, it would lose its name in the very moment of becoming absolute. As a metaphysical conception we may then admit Absolute Blisslessness as a valid third term of the negative Trinity, not as a real or possible state, for no one of the three is a real or possible state. The unreality comes home to us most in the third term, just as reality comes home to us most in the third term of the positive Trinity, because Bliss and its negative blisslessness appeal to us on the material plane vividly and sensibly; the others touch us more indirectly, on the psychic & causal planes. Yet the Nothingness of nothingness is taught us by Science, and the unreality of non-sentience will become clear when the nature of sentience is better understood.

It will be said that the escape from pleasure as well as pain is after all the common goal of Buddhism & Vedanta. True, escape from limited pleasure which involves pain, escape from pain which is nothing but the limitation of pleasure. Both really seek absolute absence of limitation which is not a negative condition, but a positive, infinity and its unspeakable, unmixed bliss; their escape from individuality does not lead them into nothingness, but into infinite existence, their escape from sensation does not purpose the annihilation of sentience but pure absolute consciousness as its goal. Not ASAD ACHETANAM NIRANANDAM, but SACCHIDANANDAM is the great Reality to which Jivatman rises to envisage, the TAT or sole Thing-in-itself to whom by the force of Vidya he tends ever to return.

Chapter VII

The Triple Brahman

Parabrahman is now on the way to phenomenal manifestation; the Absolute Shakespeare of Existence, the infinite *Kavi*, Thinker & Poet, is, by the mere existence of the eternal creative force Maya, about to shadow forth a world of living realities out of Himself which have yet no independent existence. He becomes phenomenally a Creator & Container of the Universe, though really He is what He ever was, absolute and unchanged. To understand why and how the Universe appears what it is, we have deliberately to abandon our scientific standpoint of transcendental knowledge and speaking the language of Nescience, represent the Absolute as limiting Itself, the One becoming the Many, the pure ultra-Spiritual unrefining Itself into the mental and material. We are like the modern astrologer who, knowing perfectly well that the earth moves round the sun, must yet persist in speaking of the Sun as moving and standing in this part of the heavens or that other, because he has to do with the relative *positions* of the Sun and planets with regard to men living in the earth and not with the ultimate astronomical realities.

From this point of view we have to begin with a dualism of the thing and its shadow, Purusha & Prakriti, commonly called spirit and matter. Properly speaking, the distinction is illusory, since there is nothing which is exclusively spirit or exclusively matter, nor can the Universe be strictly parcelled out between these; from the point of view of Reality spirit and matter are not different but the same. We may say, if we like, that the entire Universe is matter and spirit does not exist; we may say, if we like, that the entire Universe is spirit and matter does not exist. In either case we are merely multiplying words without counsel, ignoring the patent fact visible throughout the Universe that both spirit and matter exist and are indissolubly welded, precisely because they are simply one thing viewed from two sides. The distinction between them is one of the primary dualisms and a

first result of the great Ignorance. Maya works out in name and form as material; Maya works out in the conceiver of name and form as spiritual. Purusha is the great principle or force whose presence is necessary to awake creative energy and send it out working into and on shapes of matter. For this reason Purusha is the name usually applied to the Conditioned Brahman in His manifestations; but it is always well to remember that the Primal Existence turned towards manifestation has a double aspect, Male and Female, positive and negative; He is the origin of the birth of things and He is the receptacle of the birth and it is to the Male aspect of Himself that the word Purusha predominatingly applies. The image often applied to these relations is that of the man casting his seed into the woman; his duty is merely to originate the seed and deposit it, but it is the woman's duty to cherish the seed, develop it, bring it forth and start it on its career of manifested life. The seed, says the Upanishad, is the self of the Male, it is spirit, and being cast into the Female, Prakriti, it becomes one with her and therefore does her no hurt; spirit takes the shaping appearance of matter and does not break up the appearances of matter, but develops under their law. The Man and the Woman, universal Adam and Eve, are really one and each is incomplete without the other, barren without the other, inactive without the other. Purusha the Male, God, is that side of the One which gives the impulse towards phenomenal existence; Prakriti the Female, Nature, is that side which is and evolves the material of phenomenal existence; both of them are therefore unborn & eternal. The Male is Purusha, he who lurks in the Wide; the Female is Prakriti, the working of the Male, and sometimes called Rayi, the universal movement emanating from the quiescent Male. Purusha is therefore imaged as the Enjoyer, Prakriti as the enjoyed; Purusha as the Witness, Prakriti as the phenomena he witnesses; Purusha as the *getter* or father of things, Prakriti as their *bearer* or mother. And there are many other images the Upanishad employs, Purusha, for instance, symbolising Himself in the Sun, the father of life, and Prakriti in the Earth, the bearer of life. It is necessary thus clearly to define Purusha from the first in order to avoid confusion in endeavouring to grasp the

development of Maya as the Upanishads describe it.

Parabrahman in the course of evolving phenomena enters into three states or conditions which are called in one passage his three habitations and, by a still more suggestive figure, his three states of dream. The first condition is called *avyakta*, the state previous to manifestation, in which all things are involved, but in which nothing is expressed or imaged, the state of ideality, undifferentiated but pregnant of differentiation, just as the seed is pregnant of the bark, sap, pith, fibre, leaf, fruit and flower and all else that unites to make the conception of a tree; just as the protoplasm is pregnant of all the extraordinary variations of animal life. It is, in its objective aspect, the seed-state of things. The objective possibility, and indeed necessity of such a condition of the whole Universe, cannot be denied; for this is the invariable method of development which the operations of Nature show to us. Evolution does not mean that out of protoplasm as a material so many organisms have been created or added by an outside power, but that they have been developed out of the protoplasm; and if developed, they were already there existent, and have been manifested by some power dwelling and working in the protoplasm itself. But open up the protoplasm, as you will, you will not find in it the rudiments of the organs and organisms it will hereafter develop. So also though the protoplasm and everything else is evolved out of ether, yet no symptom of them would yield themselves up to an analytical research into ether. The organs and organisms are in the protoplasm, the leaf, flower, fruit in the seed and all forms in the ether from which they evolve, in an undifferentiated condition and therefore defy the method of analysis which is confined to the discovery of differences. This is the state called involution. So also ether itself, gross or subtle, and all that evolves from ether is involved in *Avyakta*; they are present but they can never be discovered there because there [they] are undifferentiated. Plato's world of ideas is a confused attempt to arrive at this condition of things, confused because it unites two incompatible things, the conditions of *Avyakta* and those of the next state presided over by *Hiranyagarbha*.

The question then arises, what is the subjective aspect of

Parabrahman in the state of Avyakta? The organs and organisms are evolved out of protoplasm and forms out of ether by a power which resides and works in them, and that power must be intelligent consciousness unmanifested; *must*, because it is obviously a power that can plan, arrange and suit means to ends; *must* because otherwise the law of subtler involving grosser cannot obtain. If matter is all, then from the point of view of matter, the gross is more real because more palpable than the subtle and unreality cannot develop reality; it is intelligent consciousness and nothing else we know of that not only has the power of containing at one and the same time the gross & the subtle, but does consistently proceed in its method of creation or evolution from vagueness to precision, from no-form to form and from simple form to complex form. If the discoveries of Science mean anything and are not a chaos, an illusion or a chimaera, they can only mean the existence of an intelligent consciousness present and working in all things. Parabrahman therefore is present subjectively even in the condition of Avyakta no less than in the other conditions as intelligent consciousness and therefore as bliss.

For the rest, we are driven to the use of metaphors, and since metaphors must be used, one will do as well as another, for none can be entirely applicable. Let us then image Avyakta as an egg, the golden egg of the Puranas, full of the waters of undifferentiated existence and divided into two halves, the upper or luminous half filled with the upper waters of subjective ideation, the lower or tenebrous half with the lower waters of objective ideation. In the upper half Purusha is concealed as the final cause of things; it is there that is formed the idea of undifferentiated, eternal, infinite, universal Spirit. In the lower half he is concealed as Prakriti, the material cause of things; it is there that is formed the idea of undifferentiated, eternal, infinite, universal matter, with the implications Time, Space and Causality involved in its infinity. It is represented mythologically by Vishnu on the causal Ocean sitting on the hood of Ananta, the infinite snake whose endless folds are Time, and are also Space and are also Causality, these three being fundamentally

one,—a Trinity. In the upper half Parabrahman is still utterly Himself, but with a Janus face, one side contemplating the Absolute Reality which He *is*, the other envisaging Maya, looking on the endless procession of her works not yet as a reality, but as a phantasmagoria. In the lower half, if we may use a daring metaphor, Parabrahman forgets Himself. He is subjectively in the state corresponding to utter sleep or trance from which when a man awakes he can only realise that he was and that he was in a state of bliss resulting from the complete absence of limitation; that he was conscious in that state, follows from his realisation of blissful existence, but the consciousness is not a part of his realisation. This concealment of Consciousness is a characteristic of the seed-state of things and it is what is meant by saying that when Parabrahman enters into matter as Prakriti, He forgets Himself.

Of such a condition, the realisations of consciousness do not return to us, we can have no particular information. The Yогin passes through it on his way to the Eternal, but he hastens to this goal and does not linger in it; not only so, but absorption in this stage is greatly dreaded except as a temporary necessity; for if the soul finally leaves the body in that condition, it must recommence the cycle of evolution all over again; for it has identified itself with the seed state of things and must follow the nature of Avyakta which is to start on the motions of Evolution by the regular order of universal manifestation. This absorption is called the Prakriti laya or absorption in Prakriti. The Yогin can enter into this state of complete Nescience or Avidya and remain there for centuries, but if by any chance his body is preserved and he returns to it, he brings nothing back to the store of our knowledge on this side of Avyakta.

Parabrahman in the state of Avyakta Purusha is known as Prâjna, the Master of Prajnâ, Eternal Wisdom or Providence, for it is here that He orders and marshals before Himself like a great poet planning a wonderful masterpiece in his mind, the eternal laws of existence and the unending procession of the worlds. Vidyâ and Avidya are here perfectly balanced, the former still and quiescent though comprehensive, the latter not yet at active

work, waiting for the command, Let there be darkness. And then the veil of darkness, Vidya seems to be in abeyance, and from the disturbance of the balance results inequality; then out of the darkness Eternal Wisdom streams forth to its task of creation and Hiranyagarbha, the Golden Child, is born.

An Incomplete Work of Vedantic Exegesis

Book II The Nature of God

Chapter I

The view of cosmic evolution which has been set forth in the first book of this exegesis,¹ may seem deficient to the ordinary religious consciousness which is limited & enslaved by its creeds and to which its particular way of worship is a master and not a servant, because it leaves no room for a “Personal” God. The idea of a Personal God is, however, a contradiction in terms. God is Universal, he is Omnipresent, Infinite, not subject to limits. This all religions confess, but the next moment they nullify their confession by assuming in Him a Personality. The Universal cannot be personal, the Omnipresent cannot be excluded from any thing or creature in the world He universally pervades and possesses. The moment we attribute certain qualities to God, we limit Him and create a double principle in the world. Yet no religion²

Brahman, we have seen, is the Universal Consciousness which Is and delights in Being; impersonal, infinite, eternal, omnipresent, sole-existing, the One than whom there is no other, and all things and creatures have only a phenomenal existence [in] Brahman and by Brahman.

In the Vedantic theory of this Universe and its view of the nature of the Brahman and Its relations to the phenomena that make up this Universe, there is one initial paradox from which the

¹ *This first book was not written or has not survived. — Ed.*

² *After this incomplete sentence, the rest of the notebook page was left blank. — Ed.*

whole Vedantic philosophy, religion and ethics take their start. We have seen that in existence as we see it there is Something that is eternal, immutable and one, to which we give the name of Brahman, amidst an infinite deal that is transient, mutable and multifold. Brahman as the eternal, immutable and one, is not manifest but latent; It supports, contains and pervades the changing & unstable Universe and gives it eternity as a whole in spite [of the] transience of its parts, unity as a whole in spite of the multiplicity of its parts, immutability as a whole in spite of the mutability of its parts. Without It the persistence of the Universe would be inexplicable, but itself is not visible, nameable or definable except as Sacchidanandam, absolute and therefore unnameable and indefinable self-existence, self-awareness, self-bliss. But when we ask what is it then which is mutable, transient, multiple, and whether this is something other than and different from Brahman, we get the reply that this also is Brahman and that there can be nothing other than Brahman, because Brahman is the One without a second, ekamevadwitiyam. This one, eternal, immutable became the many who are transient and mutable, but this becoming is not real, only phenomenal. Just as all objects & substances are phenomena of and in the single, eternal & unchanging ether, so are all existences animate or inanimate, corporeal, psychical or spiritual phenomena of and in Brahman. This phenomenal change of the One into the Many, the Eternal into the perishable, the Immutable into the everchanging, is a supreme paradox but a paradox which all scientific investigation shows to be the one fundamental fact of the Universe. Science considers the One eternal & permanent reality to be eternal Matter, Vedanta for reasons already stated holds it to be eternal Consciousness of which Spirit-Matter are in phenomena the positive-negative aspects. This Brahman, this Sacchidanandam, this eternal Consciousness unknowable, unnameable and indefinable, which reason cannot analyse, nor imagination put into any shape, nor the mind and senses draw within their jurisdiction, is the Transcendent Reality which alone truly exists. The sole existence of this Turiya Brahman or Transcendent Eternal Consciousness is the basis of the Adwaita philosophy.

But where in all this is there any room for religion, for the spirit of man, for any idea of God? Who is the Lord, Isha, Maheshwar, Vishnu, Rudra, Indra, the Lord of the Illusion, the Ruler, the Mighty One of which all the Upanishads speak? Who is this triple Prajna-Hiranyagarbha-Virat? Who is this twofold Purusha-Prakriti, God & Nature, without which the existence of the phenomenal world and consciousness in matter would not be intelligible or conceivable? To whom does the Bhakti of the Bhakta, to whom do the works of the Karmayogin direct themselves? Why and Whom do men worship? What is it to which the human self rises in Yoga? The answer is that this also is Brahman,—Brahman not in His absolute Self but in relation to the infinite play of multiplicity, mobility, mortality which He has phenomenally created for His own delight on the surface of His really eternal immutable & single existence. Above is the eternal surge, the innumerable laughters of the million-crested, multitudinous, ever-marching, ever-shifting wilderness of waves; below is the silent, motionless, unchanging rest of the Ocean's immeasurable and unvisited depths. The rest and immobility is the Sea, and the mutable stir and motion of the waves is also the Sea, and as the Sea is to its waves, so is Brahman to His creation. What is the relation of the Sea of Brahman to its waves? Brahman is the One Self and all the rest, innumerable souls of creatures and innumerable forms of things are His Maya, illusions which cannot be eternal and therefore cannot be true, because there is only One Eternal; the One Self is real, all else is unreal and ends. This is Adwaita. But even though Brahman be the One Self, He has become Many by His own Iccha or Will and the exercise of His Will is not for a moment or limited by time & space or subject to fatigue, but for ever. He is eternal and therefore His Iccha is eternal and the Many Selves which live in Him by His Iccha are eternal and do not perish, for they also being really Brahman the Self are indistinguishable from Him in nature and though their bodies, mind-forms and all else may perish, cannot themselves perish. He may draw them into Himself in utter communion, but He can also release them again into separate communion, and this is actually what happens. All

else is transient and changes & passes, but the Self that is One and the Self that is Many are both of them real and eternal; and still they are One Self. This is Visishtadwaita. This eternity of the One Self and eternity of the Many-Selves shows that both are real without beginning and without end and the difference between them is therefore without beginning and end. The One is true and the Many are true, and the One is not and cannot be the Many, though the Many live in and for the One. This is Dwaita.

The only tests to which we can subject these three interpretations of the relation between the One and the Many, all of which are equally logical and therefore equally valid to the reason, are the statements of the Upanishads and the Gita and the experiences of Yoga when the Jivatman or individual Self is in direct communion with the Paramatman or Supreme Universal Self and aware therefore of its real relations to Him. The supreme experience of Yoga is undoubtedly the state of complete identification in Sacchidananda in which the Jivatman becomes purely self-existent, self-aware and self-joyous and phenomenal existence no longer is. Adwaita, therefore, is true according to the experience of Yoga. On the other hand the Jivatman can come out of this state and return into phenomenal existence, and there is also another Yogic state in which it is doubly conscious of its reality apart from the world and its reality in the world or can see the Universe at will in itself or outside itself possessing and enjoying it as an omniscient, omnipotent, all-seeing, all-hearing, all-conscious Being; Visishtadwaita therefore is also true. Finally, there is the state in which the Jivatman is entirely aware only of itself and the Paramatman and lives in a state of exalted love and adoration of the Eternal Being; and without this state³

To put the individual Self in intimate relation with the Eternal is the aim of Hindu life, its religion, its polity, its ethics. Morality is not for its own sake, nor for the pleasures of virtue, nor for any reward here or in another life, nor for the sake of society; these

³ *This sentence was not completed; the rest of this notebook page and the next were left blank. — Ed.*

are false aims and false sanctions. Its true aim is a preparation and purification of the soul to fit it for the presence of God. The sense-obscured, limited and desire-driven individual self must raise itself out of the dark pit of sense-obsession into the clear air of the spirit, must disembarass itself of servile bondage to bodily, emotional & intellectual selfishness and assume the freedom & royalty of universal love and beneficence, must expand itself from the narrow, petty, inefficient ego till it becomes commensurate with the infinite, all-powerful, omnipresent Self of All; then is its aim of existence attained, then is its pilgrimage ended. This may be done by realising the Eternal in oneself by knowledge, by realising oneself in Him by Love as God the Beloved, or by realising Him as the Lord of all in His universe and all its creatures by works. This realisation is the true crown of any ethical system. For whether we hold the aim of morality to be the placing of oneself in harmony with eternal laws, or the fulfilment of man's nature, or the natural evolution of man in the direction of his highest faculties, Hinduism will not object but it insists that the Law with which man must put himself into relation is the Eternal in the universe, that in this permanent and stable Truth man's nature fulfils itself out of the transient seemings of his daily existence and that to this goal his evolution moves. This consummation may be reached by ethical means through a certain manner of action and a certain spirit in action which is the essence of Karmamarga, the Way of Works, one of the three ways by which the spirit of man may see, embrace & become God. The first law of Karmamarga is to give up the natural desire for the fruits of our works and surrender all we do, think, feel and are into the keeping of the Eternal, and the second is to identify oneself with all creatures in the Universe both individually and collectively, realising our larger Self in others. These two laws of action together make what is called Karmayoga or the putting of ourselves into relation with that which is Eternal by means of and in our works. Before, then, we can understand what Karmayoga is, we must understand entirely and utterly what is this Eternal Being with whom we must put ourselves in relation and what are His relations with our self,

with the phenomena of the Universe and with the creatures that people it. The Vedantic knowledge of Brahman, the Vedantic Cosmogony, the Vedantic explanation of the coexistence of Brahman with the Universe, the Eternal with the Transient, the Transcendent with the Phenomenal, the One with the Many, are what we have first to study.

Chapter II The Brahman in His Universe

Three verses of the Isha Upanishad describe directly the Brahman & His relations with the Universe, the [fourth] and [fifth:]

*Anejad ekāṁ manaso javīyo nainad devā āpnuvan pūrvam
arṣat
Tad dhāvato 'nyān atyeti tiṣṭhat tasminn apo mātariśvā
dadhāti.
Tad ejati tannaijati tad dūre tadvantike
Tad antar asya sarvasya tad u sarvasyāsyā bāhyataḥ.*

and the [eighth:]

*Sa paryagācchukram akāyam avraṇam asnaṁviram
śuddham apāpaviddham
Kavir manīṣī paribhūḥ svayambhūr yāthātathyato 'rthān
vyadadhācchāsvatibhyah samābhyaḥ.*

We may for the present postpone the minuter consideration of the last verse and proceed on the basis of the earlier two alone.

The first conclusion of Vedanta is that the Brahman in this shifting, multifold, mutable Universe is One, stable & unmoving, therefore permanent and unchanging.

* * *

The second conclusion of Vedanta is that Brahman pervades this Universe & possesses it.

* * *

The third conclusion of Vedanta is that Brahman which pervades, possesses, causes and governs the world is the same as the Absolute Transcendental Existence of which metaphysics speaks. Of this Transcendental Existence Vedanta always speaks in the neuter as Tat, that or it; of the Eternal Will which pervades & governs the Universe it speaks in the masculine as स, He. But in the [fourth] verse we find that to Tat are attributed that universal action and pervasiveness which is properly only attributable to स, the Eternal & Universal Will; the identification of the two could not be more complete. It is yet more strikingly brought out in the [eighth] verse where the description of the cosmical action of Brahman begins with स but the negative attributes of this masculine subject immediately following are in the neuter as appropriate only to the Conditionless Brahman and those that follow later on & apply to the Universal Will revert to the masculine,— all without any break in the sentence.

* * *

The fourth conclusion of the Vedanta is that Brahman [is] not only the Absolute Transcendental Self, not only the One, Stable Immutable Reality in the phenomenal Universe, not only pervades, possesses, causes and governs it as an Eternal Universal Will, but contains and in a figurative sense is it as its condition, continent, material cause and informing force. *Tasmīnnaपो mātariśvā dadhāti*. It is in this infinitely motionless etc.

Book III
Brahman in the individual Self

Chapter I

We have now ascertained in some detail the nature of the Vedantic Cosmogony and have some idea of the relations of Brahman to His universe; but to us human beings, the crown and last glorious evolution of conscious phenomenal existence in psycho-physical matter, the real question of interest is not a knowledge of the nature of the Universe for its own sake, but a knowledge of our selves. γνῶθι σεαυτόν, Know thyself, is still and always the supreme command for humanity, and if we seek to know the universe, it is because that knowledge is necessary to the more important knowledge of ourselves. Science has adopted a different view; looking only at man as a separate bodily organism it fairly enough regards the Universe as more important than man and seeks to study its laws for their own sake. But still it remains true that humanity persists in its claim and that only those discoveries of the physicist, the zoologist and the chemist have been really fruitful which have helped man practically to master physical nature or to understand the laws of his own life and progress. Whatever moralist or philosopher may say, Yajnavalkya's great dictum remains true that whatever man thinks or feels or does he thinks, feels & does not for any other purpose or creature but for the sake of his Self. The supreme question therefore yet remains imperfectly answered, "So much then for Brahman and the Universe; but what of the things we have cherished so long, what of religion, what of God, what of the human soul?" To some extent the answer to this question has been foreshadowed, but before we get our foundations right for the structure of a higher ethical conception of life and conduct, we must probe to the core in comparison with the current and longstanding ideas on the subject the nature of the Supreme Being as set forth by the Vedanta and His relations to the individual self in man which are the chief preoccupation of religion. We may postpone till later

the question whether ethics can or cannot be satisfactorily based on a materialistic interpretation of the world and nonreligious sanctions and aims.

A question of the first importance arises at once, how far does the Vedanta sanction the ordinary ideas of God as a Personal Active Being with definite qualities which is all the average religionist understands by the Divine Idea? Whether we regard him with the Jews as a God of Power and Might & Wrath and Justice, or with the Moslems as God the Judge and Governor and Manager of the world or with the early Christians as a God of Love, yet all agree in regarding Him as a Person, definable, imaginable, limited in His Nature by certain qualities though not limited in His Powers, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent & yet by a mysterious paradox quite separate from His creatures and His world. He creates, judges, punishes, rewards, favours, condemns, loves, hates, is pleased, is angry, for all the world like a man of unlimited powers, and is indeed a Superior Man, a shadow of man's soul thrown out on the huge background of the Universe. The intellectual and moral difficulties of this conception are well-known. An Omnipotent God of Love, in spite of all glosses, remains inconsistent with the anguish and misery, the red slaughter and colossal sum of torture and multitudinous suffering which pervades this world and is the condition of its continuance; an Omnipotent God of Justice who created & caused sin, yet punishes man for falling into the traps He has Himself set, is an infinite & huge inconsistency, an insane contradiction in terms; a God of wrath, a jealous God, who favours & punishes according to His caprice, fumes over insults and preens Himself at the sound of praise is much lower than the better sort of men and, as an inferior, unworthy of the adoration of the saints. An omnipresent God cannot be separate from His world, an infinite God cannot be limited in Time or Space or qualities. Intellectually the whole concept becomes incredible. Science, Philosophy, the great creeds which have set Knowledge as the means of salvation, have always been charged with atheism because they deny these conceptions of the Divine Nature. Science and Philosophy & Knowledge take

their revenge by undermining the faith of the believers in the ordinary religions through an exposure of the crude and semi-savage nature of the ideas which religion has woven together into a bizarre texture of clumsy paradoxes and dignified with the name of God. They show triumphantly that the ordinary conceptions of God when analysed are incredible to the intellect, unsatisfactory and sometimes revolting to the moral sense and, if they succeed in one or two cases in satisfying the heart, succeed only by magnificently ignoring the claims of the reason. They find it an easy task to show that the attempts of theologians to reconcile the difficulties they have created are childish to the trained reason and can find no acceptance with any honest and candid intellect. Theology in vain denies the right of reason to speak in matters of spiritual truth, and demands that the incredible should be believed. Reason is too high a faculty to be with impunity denied its rights. In thus destroying the unsatisfactory intellectual conceptions with which it has been sought to bring the Eternal Being into the province of the reasoning powers, the core & essence of popular religion which is true and necessary to humanity is discredited along with its imperfect coverings; materialism establishes itself for a while as the human creed and the intellect of man holds despotic empire for a while at the expense of his heart and his ethical instincts, until Nature revenges itself and saves the perishing soul of mankind by flooding the world with a religious belief which seeks to satisfy the heart and the ethical instincts only and mocks at and tramples upon the claims of the intellect. In this unnatural duel between faculties which should work harmoniously for our development, the internal peace and progress of the human self is marred & stunted. Much that has been gained is repeatedly being lost and has to be recovered with great difficulty and not always in its entirety.

If reason unaided could solve the enigma of the world, it would be a different matter. But the reason is able only to form at the best an intellectually possible or logically consistent conception of the Eternal in the Universe; it is not able to bring Him home to the human consciousness and relate the

human soul to Him as it should be related if He exists. For nothing is more certain than this that if a universal & eternal Consciousness exists, the life and development of the human soul must be towards It and governed by the law of Its nature; and a philosophy which cannot determine these relations so as to bring light and help to humanity in its long road is merely an intellectual plaything and might just as well have been kept as a private amusement when minds of a ratiocinative turn meet in the lecture-room or the study. Philosophy can see clearly that the Universe can be explicable only in the terms of the Eternal Consciousness by which it exists. Either God is the material universe in which case the name is a mere convenient abstraction like the materialist's "Nature", or He is the Self within the Universe. If the Self, then He is either transcendent and beyond phenomena and the phenomenal Universe can only be Maya, an imagination in the Universal Mind, or else He is involved in phenomena, Consciousness His soul, the Universe His form, Consciousness the witnessing and inspiring Force, the Universe the work or Energy of the Consciousness. But whichever of these possibilities be the truth, Knowledge is not complete if it stops with this single conception and does not proceed to the practical consequences of the conception. If the universe is Maya, what of the human soul? Is that also Maya, a phenomenon like the rest which disappears with the dissolution of the body or is it permanent and identical with the Eternal Consciousness? If permanent, why then has it confused itself with phenomena and how does it escape from the bondage of this confusion? On the other hand if He is involved in phenomena, what is the relation of the human consciousness to the Eternal? Are our souls parts of Him or manifestations or emanations? And if so do they return into Him at the dissolution of the body or do they persist? And if they persist, what is their ultimate goal? Do they remain by individuality separated from Him for ever even after the end of phenomena or are both the Universe and the individual soul eternal? Or is the individual soul only phenomenally different from the eternal, and the phenomenal difference terminable at the pleasure of the Eternal or by the will of the individual Ego?

What are the present relations of the self to the Eternal? What are sin & virtue? pleasure & pain? What are we to do with our emotions, desires, imaginations? Has the Eternal Consciousness any direct action on the phenomenal Universe and, if so, how is He different from the popular conception of God?

These are the questions which Philosophy has to answer, and in answering them the great difficulty it has to meet is its inability to find any better sanction for its conclusions than the play of speculative logic or to evolve anything better than a speculative system of metaphysics which may satisfy the argumentative faculty of the mind but cannot satisfy the reason of the heart or find its way to a mastery of that inner self in man which controls his life. Religion, however imperfect, has the secret of that mastery; religion can conquer the natural instincts and desires of man, metaphysics can only convince him logically that they ought to be conquered — an immense difference. For this reason philosophy has never been able to satisfy any except the intellectual few and was even for a time relegated to oblivion by the imperious contempt of Science which thought that it had discovered a complete solution of the Universe, a truth and a law of life independent of religion and yet able to supersede religion in its peculiar province of reaching & regulating the sources of conduct and leading mankind in its evolution. But it has now become increasingly clear that Science has failed to substantiate its claims, and that a belief in evolution or the supremacy of physical laws or the subjection of the ephemeral individual to the interests of the slightly less ephemeral race is no substitute for a belief in Christ or Buddha, for the law of Divine Love or the trust in Divine Power & Providence. If Philosophy failed to be an ethical control or a spiritual force, Science has failed still more completely, and for a very simple reason — the intellect does not control the conduct. There is quite another mental force which controls it and which turns into motives of action only those intellectual conceptions of which it can be got to approve. We arrive therefore at this dilemma that Philosophy & Science can satisfy the reason but cannot satisfy the heart or get mastery of the source of conduct; while Religion which satisfies

the heart and controls conduct, cannot in its average conceptions permanently satisfy the reason and thus exposes itself to gradual loss of empire over the mind.

A religion therefore which claims to be eternal, must not be content with satisfying the heart and imagination, it must answer to the satisfaction of the intellect the questions with which philosophy is preoccupied. A philosophy which professes to explain the world-problem once for all, must not be satisfied with logical consistency and comprehensiveness; it must like Science base its conclusions not merely on speculative logic, but on actual observation and its truths must always be capable of verification by experiment so that they may be not merely conceivable truth but ascertained truth; it must like religion seize on the heart & imagination and without sacrificing intellectual convincingness, comprehensiveness & accuracy impregnate with itself the springs of human activity; and it must have the power of bringing the human self into direct touch with the Eternal. The Vedantic religion claims to be the eternal religion because it satisfies all these demands. It is intellectually comprehensive in its explanation of all the problems that perplex the human mind; it brings the contradictions of the world into harmony by a single luminous law of being; it has developed in Yoga a process of spiritual experience by which its assertions can be tested and confirmed; the law of being it has discovered seizes not only on the intellect but on the deepest emotions of man and calls into activity his highest ethical instincts; and its whole aim and end is to bring the individual self into a perfect and intimate union with the Eternal.

Chapter II

[*This chapter was not written.*]

The Religion of Vedanta

If it were asked by anyone what is this multitudinous, shifting, expanding, apparently amorphous or at all events multimorphous sea of religious thought, feeling, philosophy, spiritual experience we call Hinduism, what it is characteristically and essentially, we might answer in one word, the religion of Vedanta. And if it were asked what are the Hindus with their unique and persistent difference from all other races, we might again answer, the children of Vedanta. For at the root of all that we Hindus have done, thought and said through these thousands of years of our race-history, behind all we are and seek to be, there lies concealed, the fount of our philosophies, the bedrock of our religions, the kernel of our thought, the explanation of our ethics and society, the summary of our civilisation, the rivet of our nationality, this one marvellous inheritance of ours, the Vedanta. Nor is it only to Hindu streams that this great source has given of its life-giving waters. Buddhism, the teacher of one third of humanity, drank from its inspiration. Christianity, the offspring of Buddhism, derived its ethics and esoteric teaching at second-hand from the same source. Through Persia Vedanta put its stamp on Judaism, through Judaism, Christianity and Sufism on Islam, through Buddha on Confucianism, through Christ and mediaeval mysticism and Catholic ceremonial, through Greek and German philosophy, through Sanscrit learning and [*sentence left incomplete*]

Evolution in the Vedantic View

We must not however pass from this idea,¹ as it is easy to pass, into another which is only a popular error,—that evolution is the object of existence. Evolution is not an universal law, it is a particular process, nor as a process has it any very wide applicability. Some would affirm that every particle of matter in the universe is bound to evolve life, mind, an individualised soul, a finally triumphant spirit. The idea is exhilarating, but impossible. There is no such rigid law, no such self-driven & unintelligent destiny in things. In the conceptions of the Upanishads Brahman in the world is not only Prajna, but Ishwara. He is not subject to law, but uses process. It is only the individual soul in a state of ignorance on which process seems to impose itself as law. Brahman on the other hand has an omnipotent power of selection and limitation. He is not bound to develop self-conscious individuality in every particle of matter, nor has He any object in such a colossal and monotonous application of one particular movement of things. He has nothing to gain by evolving, nothing to lose by not evolving. For to Him all being is only a play of His universal self-consciousness, the will so to exist the only reason of this existence and its own pleasurable its only object in existence. In that play He takes an equal delight in all, He is sama in ananda — an equal delight in the evolved state, the unevolved & the evolving. He is equal also in Being; when He has evolved Himself in the perfect man, He is no more than He already was in the leaf & clod. To suppose that all existence has one compelling purpose of growth, of progress, of consummation is to be guilty of the Western error and misunderstand the nature of being. Existence is already consummate, all change

¹ It is not known what “idea” Sri Aurobindo is referring to here, or whether the writing in which he discussed it has survived. — Ed.

& variety in it is for delight, not for a gain or a development. The Vedantist cannot admit that anything is really developed in the sense of something new emerging into existence by whatever combination or accident which had no previous being. Nasato vidyate bhavah. That which was not cannot come into existence. The play of Brahman is not in its real nature an evolution, but a manifestation, it is not an adding of something that was wanting or a developing of something that was non-existent, but merely a manifesting of something that was hidden. We are already what we shall become. That which is still future in matter, is present in spirit.

We say, then, in the Vedanta that if the human form appears on earth or the tree grows out of the seed, it is because the human form already exists in the seed that is cast into the womb and the form and nature of the tree already exists in the seed that is cast into the earth. If there were not this preexistence as idea or implied form in the seed, there would be no reason why any seed should bring forth according to its kind. The form does not indeed exist sensibly in the form of consciousness which we see as matter, but in the consciousness itself it is there, and therefore there is a predisposition in the matter to produce that form & no other, which is much more than tendency, which amounts to a necessity. But how came this preconception into unintelligent matter? The question itself is erroneous in form; for matter is not unintelligent, but itself a movement of conceiving Spirit. This conceiving Spirit which in man conceives the idea of human form, being one in the mind of the man, in his life principle, in every particle of his body, stamps that conception on the life principle so that it becomes very grain of it, stamps it on the material part so that it becomes very grain of it, so that when the seed is cast into the woman, it enters full of the conception, impregnated with it in the whole totality of its being. We can see how this works in man; we know how the mental conceptions of the father & mother work powerfully to shape body, life & temperament of the son. But we do not perceive how this works in the tree, because we are accustomed to dissociate from the tree all idea of mind & even of life. We therefore talk vaguely of the

law of Nature that the tree shall produce according to its kind without understanding why such a law should exist. Vedanta tells us that the process in the tree is the same as in man, except that mind not being active & self-conscious cannot produce those variations of delicate possibility which are possible in the human being. The supramental conceiving Spirit stamps, through unconscious mind, on the life principle in the tree and on all matter in the tree the conception of its nature & kind so that the seed falls into earth with every atom of its being full of that secret conception and every moment of the tree's growth is presided over by the same fixed idea. Not only in thinking man & living tree but in substances in which life & mind are inactive, this conceiving Spirit presides & determines its law & form. So 'rthan vyadadhach chhaswatibhyah samabhyah.

We must not for a moment imagine that Brahman of the Upanishads is either an extracosmic God entering into a cosmos external to Him or that last refuge of the dualising intellect, an immanent God. When Brahman the conceiving Spirit is said to be in life & mind and matter, it is only as the poet is said to be in his own thought and creations; as a man muses in his mind, as the river pours forward in swirls & currents. It would be easy, by quoting isolated texts from the Upanishads, to establish on them any system whatever; for the sages of the Upanishads have made it their business to see Brahman in many aspects, from many standpoints, to record all the most important fundamental experiences which the soul has when it comes into contact with the All, the Eternal. This they did with the greater freedom because they knew that in the fundamental truth of this All & Eternal, the most varied & even contradictory experiences found their harmony & their relative truth and necessity to each other. The Upanishads are Pantheistic, because they consider the whole universe to be Brahman, yet not Pantheistic because they regard Brahman as transcendental, exceeding the universe & in his final truth other than phenomena. They are Theistic because they consider Brahman as God & Lord of His universe, immanent in it, containing it, governing & arranging it; yet not Theistic because they regard the world also as God, containing

Himself & dwelling in Himself. They are polytheistic because they acknowledge the existence, power & adorability of Surya-Agni, Indra and a host of other deities; yet not polytheistic, because they regard them as only powers and names & personalities of the one Brahman. Thus it is possible for the Isha Upanishad to open with the idea of the indwelling God, Isha vasyam jagat, to continue with the idea of the containing Brahman, Tasminn apo Matariswa dadhati, and at the same time to assert the world, the jagat, also as Brahman, Tad ejati, sa paryagat. That this catholicity was not born of incoherence of thinking is evident from the deliberate & precise nicety [of] statement both in the Gita & the Upanishad. The Gita continually dwells on God in all things, yet it says Naham teshu te mayi, "I am not in them, they are in me"; and again it says God is Bhutabhrīt not bhutastha, and yet na cha matsthāni bhutāni pashya me yogam aishwaram. "I bear up creatures in myself, I do not dwell in them; they exist in me, & yet they do not exist in me; behold my divine Yoga." The Upanishads similarly dwell on the coexistence of contradictory attributes in Brahman, nirguna guni, anejad ekam manaso javiyo, tadejati tannaijati. All this is perfectly intelligible & reconcilable, provided we never lose sight of the key word, the master thought of the Upanishads, that Brahman is not a Being with fixed attributes, but absolute Being beyond attributes yet, being absolute, capable of all, and the world a phenomenal arrangement of attributes in Intelligent Being, arranged not logically & on a principle of mutual exclusion, but harmoniously on a principle of mutual balancing & reconciliation. God's immanence & God's extramanence, God's identity with things & God's transcendence of things, God's personality & God's impersonality, God's mercy & God's cruelty & so on through all possible pairs of opposites, all possible multiplicity of aspects, are but the two sides of the same coin, are but different views of the same scene & incompatible or inharmonious to our ideas only so long as we do not see the entire entity, whole vision.

In Himself therefore God has arranged all objects according to their nature from years sempiternal. He has fixed from the

beginning the relations of his movements in matter, mind and life. The principle of diversity in unity governs all of them. The world is not comprised of many substances combining variously into many forms,—like the elements of the chemist, which now turn out not to be elements,—nor yet of many substances composing by fusion one substance,—as hydrogen & oxygen seem to compose water,—but is always & eternally one substance variously concentrated into many elements, innumerable atoms, multitudinous forms. There are not many lives composing by their union & fusion or by any other sort of combination one composite life, as pluralistic theories tend to suppose, but always & eternally one Life variously active in multitudinous substantial bodies. There are not many minds acting upon each other, mutually penetrative and tending to or consciously seeking unity, as romantic theories of being suppose, but always & eternally one mind variously intelligent in innumerable embodied vitalities. It is because of this unity that there is the possibility of contact, interchange, interpenetration and recovery of unity by & between substance & substance, life & life, mind and mind. The contact & union is the result of oneness; the oneness is not the result of contact & union. This world is not in its reality a sum of things but one unalterable transcendental integer showing itself to us phenomenally as many apparent fractions of itself,—fractional appearances simultaneous in manifestation, related in experience. The mind & sense deal with the fractions, proceed from the experience of fractions to the whole; necessarily, therefore, they arrive at the idea of an eternal sum of things; but this totality of sum is merely a mental symbol, necessary to the mind's computations of existence. When we rise higher, we find ourselves confronted with a unity which is transcendental, an indivisible and incomputable totality. That is Parabrahman, the Absolute. All our thoughts, perceptions, experiences are merely symbols by which the Absolute is phenomenally represented to the movements of its own Awareness conditioned as matter, life, mind or supermind.

Just as each of these tattwas, principles of being, movements of Chit, conditions of Ananda which we call life, matter, mind,

are eternally one in themselves embracing a diversity of mere transient forms & individual activities which emerge from, abide in & one day return into their totality, material form into the substance of the pancha bhutas, individual life into the oceanic surge of the world-pervading life principle, individual mind, whenever that is dissolved, into the secret sukshmatattva or sea of subtle mind-existence, so also these three tattwas & all others that may exist are a diversity embraced in an eternal unity — the unity of Brahman. It is Brahman who moves densely as the stability of matter, forcefully as the energy of life, elastically in the subtlety of mind. Just as different vibrations in ether produce the appearances to sense which we call light & sound, so different vibrations in Chit produce the various appearances to Chit which we call matter, life & mind. It is all merely the extension of the same principle through stair & higher stair of apparent existence until, overcoming all appearances, we come to the still & unvibrating Brahman who, as we say in our gross material language, contains it all. The Sankhya called this essential vibration the kshobha, disturbance in Prakriti, cosmic ripple in Nature. The Vedanta continually speaks of the world as a movement. The Isha speaks of things as jagatyam jagat, particular movement in the general movement of conscious Being steadily *viewed* by that Being in His own self-knowledge, atmani atmanam atmana, self by self in self. This is the motion & nature of the Universe.

This then is Matter, a particular movement of the Brahman, one stream, one ocean of His consciousness fixed in itself as the substance of form. This is life, mind; other movements, other such streams or oceans active as material of thought & vitality. But if they are separate, though one, how is it that they do not flow separately — for obviously in some way they meet, they intermingle, they have relations. Life here evolves in body; mind here evolves in vitalised substance. It is not enough to say, as we have said, that the conception of Brahman is stamped in grain of mind, through mind in grain of life, through life in grain of matter & so produces particular form. For what we actually start with seems to be not life moulding matter, but life evolving out

of matter or at least in matter. Afterwards, no doubt, its needs & circumstances react on matter & help to mould it. Even if we suppose the first moulding to be only latent life and mind, the primacy of matter has to be explained.

The Means of Realisation

Vedanta is merely an intellectual assent, without Yoga. The verbal revelation of the true relations between the One and the Many, the intellectual acceptance of the revelation and the dogmatic acknowledgement of the relations do not lead us beyond metaphysics, and there is no human pursuit more barren and frivolous than metaphysics practised merely as an intellectual pastime, a play with words & thoughts, when there is no intention of fulfilling thought in life or of moulding our inner state and outer activity by the knowledge which we have intellectually accepted. It is only by Yoga that the fulfilment and moulding of our life and being in the type of the true relations between God and the soul can become possible. Therefore every Upanishad has in it an element of Yoga as well as an element of Sankhya, the scientific psychology on which Yoga is founded. Vedanta, the perception of the relations between God in Himself and God in the world, Sankhya, the scientific, philosophical and psychological analysis of those relations and Yoga, called also by the Rishis Yajna, their practical application in social life, religious worship and individual discipline & self-perfection, is and has always been the whole substance of the Hindu religion. Whatever we know of God, that we ought in every way to be and live, is almost the only common dogma of all Hindu sects and schools of every description.

If then we know this of God and ourselves that we and He are one, So 'ham asmi, but divided by a movement of self-awareness which differentiates our forward active movement of waking life from the great life behind that knows and embraces all, then to recover that oneness in our waking state becomes the supreme aim and meaning of every individual existence. Nothing connected only with the movement of division can be of any moment to us, neither our bodily life and health, nor our

family welfare, nor our communal wellbeing compared with this immense self-fulfilment; they can only be of importance as means or movements in the self-fulfilment. If, farther, we know that by recovering our secret oneness with God we shall also be at one with the world and that hatred, grief, fear, limitation, sickness, mortality, the creations of the divided movement, will no longer be able to exercise their yoke upon us, then the abandonment of all else, if necessary, for the one thing needful, becomes not only the supreme aim and meaning of human life, but our only true interest. Even if, as is quite probable, we cannot in one birth attain to the fullness of this grand result yet it is clear that even a little progress towards it must mean an immense change in our life & inner experience and be well worth the sacrifice and the labour. As the Gita says with force, “A little of this rule of life saves man out of his great fear.” If farther a man knows that all mankind is intended to attain this consummation, he being one life with that divine movement called humanity, it must also be part of his self-fulfilment to pour whatever fullness of being, knowledge, power or bliss he may attain, out on his fellow beings. It is his interest also, for humanity being one piece, it is difficult for the individual to attain fullness of life here when the race creates for him an atmosphere of darkness, unrest and base preoccupation with the cares of a half-intellectualised animal existence. So strong has this atmosphere become in the Iron Age, that it is the rule for the individual who seeks his own salvation to sever himself from life and society and content himself with only the inner realisation. Modern Hinduism has become, therefore, in all but its strongest spirits, absorbed in the idea of an individual salvation. But our Vedic forefathers were of a different stuff. They had always their eye on the individual in the race. Nothing is more remarkable in the Veda than the absolute indifference & even confusion with which the singular and plural are used by the Singer, as if “I” & “we” were identical in meaning, and the persistence with which the Rishi regards himself as a representative soul, as it were, of the *visháṁ devayatínám*, the peoples in their seeking after the Godhead. We find the same transition in the Isha from the singular “*pashyami*” of the successful representative soul

realising his oneness with God to the plural asman when he turns to pray for the equal purification and felicity of his fellows. Our ideal, therefore, is fixed,—to become one with God and lead individually the divine life, but also to help others to the divine realisation and prepare, by any means, humanity for the kingdom of God on earth,—satyadharma, satyayuga.

Our means is Yoga. Yoga is not, as the popular mind too often conceives, shutting oneself in a room or isolating oneself in a monastery or cave and going through certain fixed mental and bodily practices. These are merely particular and specialised types of Yogic practice. The mental and bodily practices of Rajayoga and Hathayoga are exercises of great force and utility, but they are not indispensable. Even solitude is not indispensable, and absolute solitude limits our means and scope of self-fulfilment. Yoga is the application, by whatever means, of Vedanta to life so as to put oneself in some kind of touch with the high, one, universal and transcendent Existence in us & without us in our progress towards a final unity. All religious worship, sincerely done, all emotional, intellectual and spiritual realisation of that which is higher than ourselves, all steadily practised increase of essential power, purity, love or knowledge, all sacrifice and self-transcending amounts to some form of Yoga. But Yoga can be done with knowledge or without knowledge, with a higher immediate object or with a lower immediate object, for a partial higher result or for the fullest divine perfection and bliss. Yoga without knowledge can never have the force of Yoga with knowledge, Yoga with the lower object the force of Yoga with the higher object, Yoga for a partial result the force of Yoga for the full & perfect result. But even in its lowest, most ignorant or narrowest forms, it is still a step towards God.

A Fragmentary Chapter for a Work on Vedanta

[.....] Each of the great authoritative Upanishads has its own peculiar character and determined province as well as the common starting point of thought and supreme truth in the light of which all their knowledge has to be understood. The unity of universal existence in the transcendental Being who alone is manifested here or elsewhere forms their common possession & standpoint.

All thought & experience here rest upon this great enigma of a multiplicity that when questioned resolves itself to a unity of sum, of nature & of being, of a unity that when observed seems to be a mere sum or convention for a collection of multiples. The mind when it starts its business of experience in sensation and thought, finds itself stumbling about in a forest of details of each of which it becomes aware individually by knocking up against it, like a wayfarer in a thick and midnight forest stumbling & dashing himself against the trees,— by the shock & the touch only he knows of them. Mind cannot discriminate & put these details into their place except, imperfectly, by the aid of memory — the habit of the [mind] of sensations. Like the women imprisoned in the magic forests of the old Tantra the mind is a prisoner in the circle of its own sensations wandering round & round in that narrow area and always returning to the original source of its bondage,— its inability to go beyond its data, the compulsion under which it lies of returning to the object it meets merely the image of that object as mirrored through the senses & in the mind. It is reason, the faculty that can discriminate as objects, that first attempts to deliver mind from its bondage by standing apart from the object and its mental reflection and judging them in its own terms & by its own measurements and not in the terms & measurements of the senses. The knowledge which the mind gives is sanjna, awareness not passing beyond contact with and response to the thing known, the knowledge which reason gives

is prajna, awareness placing the object in front of it and studying it as a thing affecting but yet apart from and unconnected with the feelings & needs of that which experiences. Therefore it is, according to our philosophy, in buddhi & not in manas that ahankara, the discriminative ego-sense is born. Mind like matter has an inert unity of all things in experience born of non-discrimination; the perception of an object outside & a sensation within it stand on the same footing to sanjna. We must discriminate and reflect, in order to be aware of separate multiplicity as distinguished from a multitude [of] sensations in the unity of our consciousness. Afterwards when we rise through reason but above it, to Veda, we recover, however rudimentarily, the original unity, but discriminating, knowing the tattwa of things, perceiving them to be circumstances not of an individual & sense bound [but] of universal & sense delivered consciousness. This consummation of knowledge & the ordering of life on that knowledge is man's summit of evolution, the business for which he is here upon the earth. To climb to it from the animal mentality [*sentence left incomplete*]

The first thing that this discriminating reason effects is to put each detail in its place & then to arrange the details in groups. It travels from the individual to the group, from the group to the class, from the class to the kind, from the kind to the mass. And there until help arrives it has to pause. It has done much. It has distinguished each individual tree in the magical forest from its neighbour; it has arranged them in groves and thickets; it has distinguished & numbered the various species of trees and fixed their genus. It has mapped them out collectively & known the whole mass as the forest. But it is not yet free. It has not escaped from the ensorcelled gyre of the Almighty Magician. It knows every detail of its prison, nothing more. It has discovered the vyashti & the samashti; it has arrived only at a collective & not at a real unity. It has discovered the relations of unit to unit, the units to the smaller group and the smaller group to the larger group & the whole to the mass. It has its laws of life fixed upon that knowledge, its duties of individual to individual, of man to the family, of the man & family to the class, of [all] three

to the nation, of the nation & its constituents to humanity. It has ordered excellently our life in the prison house. But it still travels in the magic circle, it is still a prisoner & a [.....] It has even discovered one pregnant truth that the farther we travel from the many, the nearer we draw to the one, the less is the transience, the greater the permanence. The family outlasts the individual, the class endures when the single family has perished, the kind survives the disappearance of the class, the collective whole endures & outlives all the revolutions of its component parts. Therefore a final law and morality is found, the sacrifice & consummation of the less in the greater, of the few for the many,—an evolutionary utility, a consummate altruism. And when all is said and done, we are still in the prison house. For even the most permanent is here transient, the world perishes as inevitably as the midge & the ant & to our ranging vision seems hardly mightier in its ultimate reality or the importance of its fate. For who has made individual follow individual & nation follow nation & world follow world through the brilliant mirage of life into the incomprehensible mystery of death; and when all is ended, what profit has a man had of all his labour that he has done under the sun?

Reason cannot deliver us. The day of our freedom dawns when we transcend reason, not by imagination, which is itself only an intellectual faculty, not [by] the intuition even, but by illumination. The intuitive reason can do much for us, can indicate to us the higher truth. The intellectual reason can only arrive, as we have seen, at a collective unity; it is still bound by its data. The intuitive reason first suggests to us a unity which is not collective but essential, the Brahman of the Veda [.....] It is intuitive reason that [.....] infinity. We [.....] its non-existence to the observing intellect. [None] has ever [travelled] beyond the uttermost limit of the stars and assured [himself that] there is always a beyond, or lived from all time before the stars shone out in the heavens so that he can say, Time never began. The imagination can indeed add tract to tract of Space and millennium to millennium of Time and, returning tired &

appalled, say "I at least find no end and infinity is possible." But still we have no proof — there are no data on which we can stand. Infinity remains to the intellect a surmise, a hypothesis, a powerful inference. Reason is essentially a measuring & arranging faculty & can only deal with the finite. It is ensorcelled within the limits of the forest. Yet we have an intuitive perception of the truth of infinity, not collectively, not as a never ending sum of miles or moments but as a thing in itself not dependent on that which it contains. We have, if we examine ourselves, other such intuitive perceptions, of immortality although we cannot look beyond the black wall of death, of freedom although the facts of the world seem to load us with chains.

Are we yet free by the force of this intuitive reason? We cannot say so, — for this reason that it gives us suggestions, but not realisations. It is in its nature what the old psychologists would have called smriti, a memory of truth, rather than a perception. There is a suggestion to us in ourselves of infinity, of immortality, of freedom and knowledge in us replies, Yes, I know that to be true, though I do not see it, there is something in me that has always known it, it is in me like some divine memory. The reason of this movement is that the intuitive reason works in the intellect. It is the memory of freedom coming to the woman in the forest which tells her that there is something outside this green & leafy, but yet to her dark, fatal & dismal forest of imprisonment, some world of wide & boundless skies where a man can move freely doing what he wills, *kamachari*. And because it works in the intellect, its movement can be imitated by the other inhabitants of the intellect, by the brilliancy of imagination, by the fond thought that is only the image of our wish. The rationalist is right in distrusting intuition although it gave him Newton's theory of gravitation and most of the brilliant beginnings of Science & Free Thought, — right, yet not right; right from the standpoint of a scepticism that asks for intellectual certainty, wrong from the standpoint of ultimate truth & the imperative needs of humanity. Faith rests upon the validity of this faculty of intuitive reason, and faith has been the great helper and consoler of humanity in its progress, the indispensable staff on which he

supports his thought & his action. But because the divine smriti is aped by the voices of desire & fancy, faith has also been the parent & perpetuator of many errors.

It is knowledge that loosens our bonds, that snaps asunder the toils of sense & dispels the force of the world-enchantment. In order to be free, we must pass from intuition to illumination. We must get the direct perception of the knowledge of which intuitive reason is the memory. For within us there are unawakened folds in folds of conscious experience which we have yet to set in action in order to fulfil our nature's possibilities. In these inner realms we are sushupta, asleep; but the whole movement of humanity is towards the awakening of these centres. Science is in error when it imagines that man is from all time & to all time a rational animal & the reason the end & summit of his evolution. Man did not begin with reason, neither will he end with it. There are faculties within us which transcend reason and are asleep to our waking consciousness, just as life is asleep in the metal, consciousness in the tree, reason in the animal. Our evolution is not over, we have not completed even half of the great journey. And if now we are striving to purify the intellect & to carry reason to its utmost capacities, it is in order that we may discourage the lower movements of passion and desire, self-interest and prejudice and dogmatic intolerance which stand in the way of the illumination. When the intellectual buddhi is pure by vichara & abhyasa of these things, then it becomes ready to rise up out of the mind into the higher levels of consciousness and there lose itself in a much mightier movement which because of its greatness & perfection is called in the Rigveda mahas and in the Vedanta vijnana. This is what [is] meant in the Veda by Saraswati awakening the great ocean. Pavaka nah saraswati maho arnash chetayati. This is the justification of the demand in our own Yoga that desire shall be expelled, the mind stilled, the very play of reason & imagination silenced before a man shall attain to knowledge,—as the Gita puts it, na kinchid api chintayet.

The illumination of the vijnana, when it is complete, shows us not a collective material unity, a sum of physical units, but a

real unity. It reveals to us Space, Time and the chain of apparent circumstance to be merely conventions & symbols seen in His own being by One Seer and dependent purely on a greater transcendental existence of which they are not separate realities & divisions but the manifold expressions of its single Truth. It is this knowledge that gives us freedom. We escape from the enchanted forest, we know once more the world outside this petty world, see the boundless heavens above & breast the wide & circumambient air of our infinite existence. The first necessity is to know the One, to be in possession of the divine Existence; afterwards we can have all the knowledge, joy & power for action that is intended for our souls,—for He being known all is known, tasmin vijnate sarvam vijnatam, not at once by any miraculous revelation, but by a progressive illumination or rather an application of the single necessary illumination to God's multiplicity in manifestation, by the movement of the mahat & the bhuma, not working from petty details to the whole, but from the knowledge of the one to the knowledge of relation & circumstance, by a process of knowledge that is sovereign & free, not painful, struggling & bound. This is the central truth of Veda & Upanishad & the process by which they have been revealed to men.

This free & great movement of illumination descending from above to us below and not like our thought here which climbs painfully up the mountain peaks of thought only to find at the summit that it is yet far removed from the skies to which it aspires, this winged & mighty descent of Truth is what we call Sruti or revelation. There are three words which are used of illumined thought, drishti, sruti & smriti, sight, hearing and remembrance. The direct vision or experience of a truth or the thought-substance of a truth is called drishti, and because they had that direct vision or experience, that pratyaksha not of the senses, but of the liberated soul, the Rishis are called drashtas. But besides the truth and its artha or thought-substance in which it is represented to the mind, there is the vak or sound symbol, the inevitable word in which the truth is naturally enshrined & revealed & not as in ordinary speech half concealed or only

suggested. The revelation of the vak is sruti. The revealed word is also revelatory and whoever has taken it into his soul, though the mind may not understand it, has the Truth ready prepared in the higher or sushupta reaches of his being from whence it must inevitably descend at a future date or in another life to his lower & darkened consciousness in order to liberate & illumine. It is this psychological truth which is the foundation of the Hindu's trust in the Name of God, the vibrations of the mantra and the sound of the Veda. For the vak carries, in the right state of the soul, an illumination with it of the truth which it holds, an inspiration of its force of satyam which is less than drishti but must in the end lead to drishti. A still more indirect action of the vijnana is smriti; when the truth is presented to the soul and its truth immediately & directly recognised by a movement resembling memory—a perception that this was always true and already known to the higher consciousness. It is smriti that is nearest to intellect action and forms the link between vijnanam & prajnanam, ideal thought & intellectual thought, by leading to the higher forms of intellectual activity, such as intuitive reason, inspiration, insight & prophetic revelation, the equipment of the man of genius.

But what proof have we that this illumination exists? how can we say that this illuminated sight, this revelatory hearing, this confirming remembrance of eternal knowledge is not a self-delusion or a peculiarly brilliant working of imagination and of rapid intellectuality? To those who have the illumination, the question does not arise. The prisoner released from his fetters does not doubt the reality of the file that undid their rivets; the woman escaped from the forest does not ask herself whether this amazing sunlight & wide-vaulted blue sky is not a dream and a delusion. The scientist himself would not be patient with one who began the study of science by questioning the reality of the revealing power of microscope and telescope and suggesting that the objects as seen underneath were so presented merely by an optical illusion. Those who have experienced & seen, know [.....] sceptic. "Learn how to use the instruments [.....] yourself, study all these wonders invisible to

the ordinary eye, examine their constancy, coherency, fidelity to fixed wide & general laws, and then judge; do not vitiate inquiry from the beginning by denying on a priori grounds its utility or the right to inquire." It is only by faith in the instruments of our knowledge that we can acquire knowledge,—by faith in the evidence of the senses that we can think at all, by faith in the validity of reason that we can deduce, infer and argue. So also it is only by faith in illumination that we can see truth from above & come face to [face with God.] It is true that all faith must have its limits. The faith in the senses must be transcended & checked by the faith in our reason. The faith in the reason itself is checked by agnosticism [and] will one day be transcended & checked by the faith in the vijnana. The faith in the vijnana must be checked & harmonised by a faith in a still higher form of knowledge,—knowledge by identity. But within its own province each instrument is supreme and must be trusted. In relying, therefore, upon the vijnana, in asserting and demanding a preliminary faith in it, the Yigin is making no mystic, irrational or obscurantist claim. He is not departing from the universal process of knowledge. He claims to exceed reason, just as the scientist claims to exceed the evidence of the senses. When he asserts that things are not what they seem, that there are invisible forces and agencies at work about us and that the whole of our apparent existence and environment is only phenomenal, he is no more departing from rationality or advancing anything wild or absurd than the scientist when he asserts that the earth moves round the sun and the sun is relatively still, affirms the existence of invisible gases or invisible bacilli, or finds in matter only a form of energy. Nor are faith in the Guru & faith in the Sruti irrational demands, any more than the scientist is irrational in saying to his pupil "Trust my expert knowledge, trust my method of experiment & the books that are authoritative and when you have made the experiments, you can use your intellect to confirm, refute, amend or enlarge whatever scientific knowledge is presented to you in book or lecture or personal instruction,"—or than the man of the Indian village who has been to London is irrational in expecting his fellow villagers to accept his statement

of the existence, sights, scenes and characteristics of London or in supporting [it] by any book that may have been written with authority on the subject. If the Indian Teacher similarly demands faith in himself as an expert, faith in the Sruti as the evidence of ancient experts, drishti as revealed truth coming direct to them by vijnanam from the divine Knowledge, he is following the common, the necessary rule. He has the right to say, Trust these, follow these, afterwards you will yourself look on the unveiled face of Truth & see God. In each case there is a means of confirmation,—the evidence of the observation & deduction has to be confirmed by observation & deduction; the evidence of the senses by the senses, the evidence of the vijnanam by the vijnanam. One cannot exceed one's instrument.

There is also the evidence of common experience — there is this eternal witness to the truth of the vijnana, that men who have used it, in whatever clime & whatever age, however they may differ in their intellectual statement or the conclusions of the reason about what they have seen, are at one in the substance of their experience & vision. Whoever follows in these days the paths indicated, makes the experiments prescribed, goes through the training needed, cannot go beyond, in the substance of his knowledge, or depart from what the ancients observed. He may not go beyond [*sentence left incomplete*]

God and Immortality

Chapter I The Upanishad

The Upanishads stand out from the dim background of Vedic antiquity like stupendous rock cathedrals of thought hewn out of the ancient hills by a race of giant builders the secret of whose inspiration and strength has passed away with them into the Supreme. They are at once Scripture, philosophy and seer-poetry; for even those of them that dispense with the metrical form, are prose poems of a rhythmically mystic thought. But whether as Scripture, philosophical theosophy or literature, there is nothing like them in ancient, mediaeval or modern, in Occidental or Oriental, in Egyptian, Chaldean, Semitic or Mongolian creation; they are unique in style, structure and motive, entirely *sui generis*. After them there were philosophic poems, aphorisms, verse and prose treatises in great number, Sutras, Karikas, Gitas, their intellectual children; but these are a human progeny very different in type from their immortal ancestors. Pseudo-Upanishads there have been in plenty, a hundred or more of them; some have arrived at a passable aping of the more external features of the type, but always betray themselves by the pseudo-style, the artificial falsetto, the rasping creak of the machine; others are pastiches; others are fakes. The great Upanishads stand out always serene, grand, inimitable with their puissant and living breath, with that phrase which goes rolling out a thousand echoes, with that faultless spontaneous sureness of the inevitable expression, with that packed yet easy compression of wide and rich wisdom into a few revelatory syllables by which they justify their claim to be the divine word. Neither this inspiration nor this technique has been renewed or repeated in later human achievement.

And if we look for their secret, we shall find it best expressed in the old expression of them as the impersonal *shabda-brahman*. They are that is to say, the accents of the divine Gnosis,—a revelatory word direct and impersonal from the very heart of a divine and almost superconscious self-vision. All supreme utterance which is the inspired word and not merely speech of the mind, does thus come from a source beyond the human person through whom it is uttered; still it comes except in rare moments through the personal thought, coloured by it, a little altered in the transit, to some extent coloured by the intellect or the temperament. But these seers seem to have possessed the secret of the rapt passivity in which is heard faultlessly the supreme word; they speak the language of the sons of Immortality. Its truth is entirely revelatory, entirely intuitive; its speech altogether a living breath of inspiration; its art sovereignly a spontaneous and unwilled discerning of perfection.

The plan and structure of their thought corresponds; it has a perfection of supra-intellectual cohesion in its effortless welling of sound and thought, a system of natural and unsystematic correspondences. There is no such logical development, explicitly or implicitly satisfying the demands of the intellect, such as we find in other philosophical thought or the best architectonic poetry; but there is at the same time a supreme logic, only it is the logic of existence expressing itself self-luminously rather than of thought carefully finding out its own truth. It is the logic of the Himalayas or of a causeway of giants, not the painful and meticulous construction effected with labour by our later intellectual humanity. There is in the whole a unity of vision; the Upanishad itself rather than a human mind sees with a single glance, hears the word that is the natural body of the truth it has seen, perceives and listens again, and still again, till all has been seen and heard: this is not the unity of the intellect carefully weaving together its connections of thought, choosing, rejecting, pruning to get terseness, developing to get fullness. And yet there is a perfect coherence; for every successive movement takes up the echoes of the old and throws out new echoes which are taken up in their turn. A wave of seeing rises and ends to rise into

another wave and so on till the final fall and natural ceasing of the whole sea of thought on its shore. Perhaps the development of a great and profound strain of music is the nearest thing we have to this ancient poetry of pure intuitive thought. This at least is the method of the metrical Upanishads; and even the others approximate to it, though more pliant in their make.

Note on the Texts

Note on the Texts

KENA AND OTHER UPANISHADS comprises Sri Aurobindo's translations of and commentaries on Upanishads other than the Isha Upanishad, as well as translations of later Vedantic texts, and writings on the Upanishads and Vedanta philosophy in general. Translations of and commentaries on the Isha Upanishad are published in *Isha Upanishad*, volume 17 of THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO.

Sri Aurobindo's work on the Upanishads occupied more than twenty years, from around 1900 until the early 1920s. (One translation was revised some twenty-five years after that.) Between 1914 and 1920, he published translations of the Isha, the Kena and the Mundaka Upanishads, along with commentaries on the Isha and the Kena, in the monthly review *Arya*. These, along with the translation of the Katha Upanishad, which was published in 1909 and subsequently revised, may be said to represent his Upanishadic interpretation in its most definitive form. His other translations and commentaries were not published during his lifetime. Most of them belong to an earlier period and only a few are complete. Some were used in producing the final translations and commentaries published in Part One. They are of interest as steps in the development of his thought, as well as for their own inherent value.

In the present volume, the editors have placed material published during Sri Aurobindo's lifetime in Part One, and material found among his manuscripts in Parts Two and Three. The Sanskrit texts have been included for the convenience of Sanskrit-knowing readers.

PART ONE: TRANSLATIONS AND COMMENTARIES
PUBLISHED BY SRI AUROBINDO

This part contains the final versions of Sri Aurobindo's translations of three Upanishads, the Kena, Katha and Mundaka, and commentaries on the Kena and parts of the Taittiriya.

The Kena Upanishad. Sri Aurobindo first translated the Kena Upanishad in Baroda around 1900. (This translation forms part of a type-written manuscript, hereafter referred to as TMS, which Sri Aurobindo entitled “The Upanishads rendered into simple and rhythmic English”.) The TMS translation of the Kena was lightly revised and published in the weekly review *Karmayogin* in June 1909. In 1920 the *Karmayogin* translation was reproduced in *The Seven Upanishads*, published by Ashtekar & Co., Poona. (Only three of the seven translations in this book were by Sri Aurobindo: Isha, Kena and Mundaka.)

Between 1912 and 1914, Sri Aurobindo began three commentaries on and one annotated translation of the Kena. All of these pieces were left incomplete. They are published in Part Two, Section Four.

Between June 1915 and July 1916, Sri Aurobindo published a new translation of the Kena Upanishad and a fifteen-chapter commentary on it in the *Arya*. He wrote each of the instalments immediately before its publication. Sometime between 1916 and 1920, he lightly revised the *Arya* translation and commentary. Their publication in book-form was planned, and production was actually begun in the summer of 1920; but the proposed book was never issued. Questioned about the possibility of publishing *Kena Upanishad* in December 1927, Sri Aurobindo wrote: “My present intention is not to publish it as it stands. This must be postponed for the present.” He never found time to return to this work.

When the publication of Sri Aurobindo’s Upanishadic translations and commentaries was undertaken after his passing, the existence of the revised versions of his translation of and commentary on the Kena Upanishad was not known. The unrevised *Arya* versions were published by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram as *Kena Upanishad* in 1952, and included in the same publisher’s *Eight Upanishads* in 1953. The revised translation (but unrevised commentary) first appeared in the second edition of *Kena Upanishad* in 1970. The same texts were reproduced in *The Upanishads: Texts, Translations and Commentaries*, volume 12 of the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, in 1971. The revised commentary first appeared in *The Upanishads: Part One*, published by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in 1981.

The *Arya* text of the commentary had no chapter-titles. While revising the work, Sri Aurobindo gave titles to all the chapters except

8, 9 and 12. In the present edition, the editors have provided titles for these three chapters.

The Katha Upanishad of the Black Yajurveda. Sri Aurobindo first translated this Upanishad in Baroda around 1900; it forms part of TMS. He later said that he had tried “to convey the literary merit of the original”. The translation, slightly revised, was published in the *Karmayogin* in July and August 1909. The *Karmayogin* translation was published as *The Katha Upanishad* by Ashtekar & Co., Poona, in 1919. Sometime during the early part of his stay in Pondicherry (1910–20), Sri Aurobindo began a more extensive revision of TMS, but reached only the end of the First Cycle. When it was proposed to bring out the translation in a book during the late 1920s, he replied that he did not have the time to make the necessary revisions. A new edition of *Katha Upanishad* was published by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in 1952. In that edition, in *Eight Upanishads* (1953), and in *The Upanishads* (1971), the partially revised TMS version was used as text, with some editorial modernisation of the language. The *Karmayogin* version, containing the last revision of the Second Cycle, was disregarded. In the present volume, the revised TMS is followed for the First Cycle, and the *Karmayogin* text for the Second.

Mundaka Upanishad. Sri Aurobindo first translated this Upanishad in Baroda around 1900; it forms part of TMS. A revised version of the translation was published in the *Karmayogin* in February 1910. (This revised translation was included in *The Seven Upanishads*.) A further revised translation was published in the *Arya* in the issue of November/December 1920. Sri Aurobindo thoroughly revised the *Arya* translation during the late 1940s. This version was used when the translation was published in *Eight Upanishads* in 1953 and in *The Upanishads* in 1971.

Readings in the Taittiriya Upanishad. Sri Aurobindo translated the Taittiriya Upanishad in Baroda around 1902 (see below), but never revised it for publication. He wrote “The Knowledge of Brahman: Readings in the Taittiriya Upanishad” in 1918 for publication in the *Arya*. It appeared in the November 1918 issue of the review. “Truth, Knowledge, Infinity” was apparently intended for a later issue, but it was never completed and not published during Sri Aurobindo’s lifetime. Its first appearance in a book was in the 1981 edition of *The Upanishads*.

PART TWO: TRANSLATIONS AND COMMENTARIES
FROM MANUSCRIPTS

The texts in this part were not published during Sri Aurobindo's lifetime. Several of the translations and all the commentaries are incomplete. They have been arranged in five sections, the first comprising an introductory essay.

Section One. Introduction

On Translating the Upanishads. Editorial title. Sri Aurobindo wrote this text in Baroda around 1900–1902 under the heading “OM TAT SAT”. He evidently intended it to be the introduction to a collection of his translations, probably “The Upanishads rendered into simple and rhythmic English”. It was first published in a book as the introduction to *Eight Upanishads* in 1953, and was included in *The Upanishads* in 1971 and subsequently.

Section Two. Complete Translations (circa 1900–1902)

“The Upanishads rendered into simple and rhythmic English”. This is the title page of the typewritten manuscript (TMS), which dates from around the turn of the century. Two of the six translations in the manuscript—those of the Prashna (“Prusna”) and Mandukya (“Mandoukya”) Upanishads—were never revised or published by Sri Aurobindo. These two are published here in their original form.

The Prusna Upanishad of the Athurvaveda. Circa 1900. From TMS. The translation was published in *Eight Upanishads* in 1953 and was included in *The Upanishads* in 1971.

The Mandoukya Upanishad. Circa 1900. From TMS. The translation was first published in *Eight Upanishads* in 1953 and was included in *The Upanishads* in 1971.

The Aitereya Upanishad. Sri Aurobindo translated this Upanishad in Baroda around 1902. (It does not form part of TMS.) The translation was never revised and is published here in its original form. It was first published in *Eight Upanishads* in 1953 and was included in *The Upanishads* in 1971.

Taittiriya Upanishad. Sri Aurobindo translated this Upanishad in Baroda around 1902. (It does not form part of TMS.) It was never revised and is published here in its original form. It was first published in *Eight Upanishads* in 1953 and was included in *The Upanishads* in 1971.

Section Three. Incomplete Translations and Commentaries
(circa 1902–1912)

Svetasvatara Upanishad. Sri Aurobindo translated the fourth to sixth chapters of this Upanishad sometime during the first decade of the century. (It is not known whether he ever translated the first three chapters.) Judging by the notebook and handwriting, it would appear that he did the translation during the period of his stay in Baroda; yet he is recorded as saying, “I translated the Shwetashwatara Upanishad while I was in Bengal.” It is possible that he did the translation in Bengal during one of his vacations from Baroda College between 1902 and 1906. He retranslated the fourth chapter in Pondicherry several years later. The early translation of chapters 4 to 6 was first published in the 1971 edition of *The Upanishads*. The revised version of the fourth chapter first appeared in the 1981 edition.

Chhandogya Upanishad. Around 1902 Sri Aurobindo translated the first two sections and part of the third section of the first chapter of this Upanishad in the margins of his copy of *The Chhāndogya Upanishad* (Madras, 1899). He later recopied and revised the first two sections in the notebook he used for his translations of the Aitareya and Taittiriya. The editors have reproduced the recopied translation for sections 1–2, and fallen back on the marginal translation for section 3, verses 1–7. The translation of the first two sections was first published in *The Upanishads* in 1971; the translation of the opening of section 3 first appeared in 1986 in the second impression of the second edition of that book.

Notes on the Chhandogya Upanishad. Circa 1912. Sri Aurobindo wrote these two passages of commentary separately in Pondicherry. The first is entitled in the manuscript “Notes on the Chhandogya Upanishad/ First Adhyaya” (but only the first sentence is treated). Part of the first page was included in *The Upanishads* in 1971; the full text was published in the 1981 edition. The second commentary,

also incomplete, is entitled in the manuscript “Vedic Interpretations/Satyakama Jabala”. In most editions of the Chhandogya Upanishad, the story of Satyakama Jabala occupies sections 4–9 of the fourth chapter, not sections 3–8 as in the edition Sri Aurobindo used. The commentary was first published in the 1981 edition of *The Upanishads*.

The Brihad Aranyak Upanishad. Around 1912 Sri Aurobindo translated the first two sections and part of the third section of the first chapter of this Upanishad in the margins of his copy of the text (Poona: Ananda Ashram, 1902). This marginal translation was first reproduced in the 1981 edition of *The Upanishads*.

The Great Aranyaka. Circa 1912. Shortly after writing the above translation, Sri Aurobindo began a commentary on the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad that he entitled “The Great Aranyaka/A Commentary on the Brihad Aranyak Upanishad”. This was not completed even to the extent of what had been translated. The commentary was included in *The Upanishads* in 1971.

The Kaivalya Upanishad. Sri Aurobindo wrote this translation and commentary, which cover only the first verse of the Upanishad, in Pondicherry around 1912. It was first published in *The Upanishads* in 1971. The commentary in English is followed by a commentary in Sanskrit, which is published in *Writings in Bengali and Sanskrit*, volume 9 of THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO.

Nila Rudra Upanishad. Sri Aurobindo translated the first of the three parts of this Upanishad, with a commentary on the first five verses, in Pondicherry around 1912. It was first published in *The Upanishads* in 1971.

Section Four. Incomplete Commentaries on the Kena Upanishad (circa 1912–1914)

Kena Upanishad: An Incomplete Commentary. Circa 1912. Editorial subtitle. Sri Aurobindo wrote only the “foreword” and portions of one “part” of this planned commentary before abandoning it. It was first published in *The Upanishads* in 1971.

A Commentary on the Kena Upanishad: Foreword. Circa 1912. This fragmentary work appears to be a rewriting of the foreword of the

preceding incomplete commentary. The manuscript has been damaged and one entire line is missing. This piece is being published here for the first time in a book.

Three Fragments of Commentary. Circa 1912–13. Sri Aurobindo wrote these three untitled fragments on sheets used otherwise for linguistic notes, undated entries for the *Record of Yoga* and the essay “The Origin of Genius”. They are being published here for the first time in a book.

Kena Upanishad: A Partial Translation with Notes. Editorial subtitle. Sri Aurobindo wrote this on 23 May 1914. The *Record of Yoga* for that day states: “Kena Upanishad I Kh [Khanda] translated with notes”. It is being published here for the first time.

Section Five. Incomplete Translations of Two Vedantic Texts (circa 1900–1902)

The Karikas of Gaudapada. Editorial title. Circa 1900. This classic Vedantic text was written by Gaudapada in or around the eighth century. Sri Aurobindo translated only the first twelve verses, along with Shankaracharya’s commentary on them. The words italicised in his translation were supplied by him to make the meaning of the Sanskrit more clear. It was first published in *The Upanishads* in 1971.

Sadananda’s Essence of Vedanta. Circa 1902. The *Vedāntasāra* or “Essence of Vedanta” was written by Sadananda in the fifteenth century. Sri Aurobindo translated only the first sixteen of the work’s 227 aphorisms. The incomplete translation was first published in *The Upanishads* in 1971.

PART THREE: WRITINGS ON VEDANTA

These pieces found among Sri Aurobindo’s manuscripts were not completed or published by him. Written at various times from around 1902 to 1916, they have been arranged chronologically from earlier to later.

With the exception of *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*, the writings in this part are being published here for the first time in a book. Most of them previously appeared in the journal *Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research* between 1978 and 1984.

Four Fragments. Circa 1902–4. These jottings are among Sri Aurobindo's earliest independent philosophical writings. Before revision, the last sentence of the final fragment ended: “. . . the purer form in which Vedanta, Sankhya & Yoga are harmonised”. This final fragment is being published here for the first time, the other three for the first time in a book.

The Spirit of Hinduism: God. Circa 1903–4. This piece opens with the first words of the Mandukya Upanishad.

The Philosophy of the Upanishads. Circa 1904–6. Sri Aurobindo wrote this piece during the latter part of his stay in Baroda. (He seems to have left the manuscript in western India when he came to Bengal in February 1906.) After completing six chapters and part of a seventh, he broke off work and never took it up again. The second to the seventh chapters of this work were included in *The Upanishads* in 1971, where they were numbered from one to six. The full text was published as a book in 1994.

The present text has been checked carefully against the manuscript, which unfortunately lacks its first two pages. For those pages the editors have relied on a typewritten transcript that was made before the pages were lost. The transcript contains several blanks, which occur in such a way as to suggest that the outer edge of the missing leaf of the manuscript was broken off. Making use of the indications found in the transcript, the editors have filled in the blanks with conjectural reconstructions; these have been printed within square brackets if they admitted of any doubt.

An Incomplete Work of Vedantic Exegesis. Circa 1906–8. Editorial title. This piece seems to have been written during the same period as “The Karmayogin: A Commentary on the Isha Upanishad”, an extensive work published in *Isha Upanishad*, volume 17 of THE COMPLETE WORKS. It is quite incomplete. Not all the projected chapters were finished, and some of the completed chapters contain unfinished passages. Sri Aurobindo wrote the following outline at the end of the notebook:

II. God

Turiya Brahman. Swayambhu.

Prajna. Kavih.

- Sacchidananda.
 The Sakshi.
 Isha in contemplation. Maheshwara.
 Ananda. The Seed State. Sleep.
 Hiranyagarbha. Manishi
 The Will in Buddhi
 God Manifold. The Saguna Brahman.
 The Qualities of God. The Dream State.
 Virat. Paribhu
 The Almighty. Mahat.
 The Self in creatures. God in Man (Avatars.)
 The Self in Nature.
 Images
 God as Fate
 God as Providence
 Worship (Prayer & Praise)
 Purusha & Prakritih.
 III. Vidya & Avidya
 Salvation. Escape from Avidya.
 Knowledge, Love & Works. Nirguna & Saguna
 Brahman.
 Self-realisation in Virat.
 States of moksha (Hiranyagarbha). Laya (Prajna).
 Yoga.
 IV. I The Law of Karma. Sin & Virtue. Heaven & Hell.
 Salvation by Works
 V. Ethics of Vedanta.

The Religion of Vedanta. 1906–8. An earlier draft of this fragment is published in the Reference Volume, volume 35 of THE COMPLETE WORKS. That draft continues slightly beyond the point where this version stops. After work on the present draft was broken off, Sri Aurobindo wrote the following, apparently a chapter-outline for a planned work:

1. Vedantic Cosmos	4.5
2. God in the Vedanta	1.8
3. Salvation by Works	1.2.3

4. The Ethics of Vedanta	6.7
5. The Twofold Will	9.10.11.12.13.14.15.16
6. Works and Immortality	17.18
7. The Great Release.	

It would appear that the proposed work was to be based on the Isha Upanishad, which has eighteen verses.

Evolution in the Vedantic View. Circa 1912. Editorial title. It is evident from the first sentence that the piece was written as part of a larger work, which either was not completed or has not survived.

The Means of Realisation. Circa 1912. The actual heading in the manuscript is “Chapter XI/ The Means of Realisation”. The ten chapters that presumably preceded this one have not been found or identified.

A Fragmentary Chapter for a Work on Vedanta. Circa 1912–13. Editorial title. The manuscript of this piece is badly damaged in places. The opening lines are lost, as are a number of words and parts of sentences written near the edges and especially at the tops and bottoms of the pages.

God and Immortality. Circa 1916. This incomplete chapter is all that was written of a proposed book.

PUBLISHING HISTORY

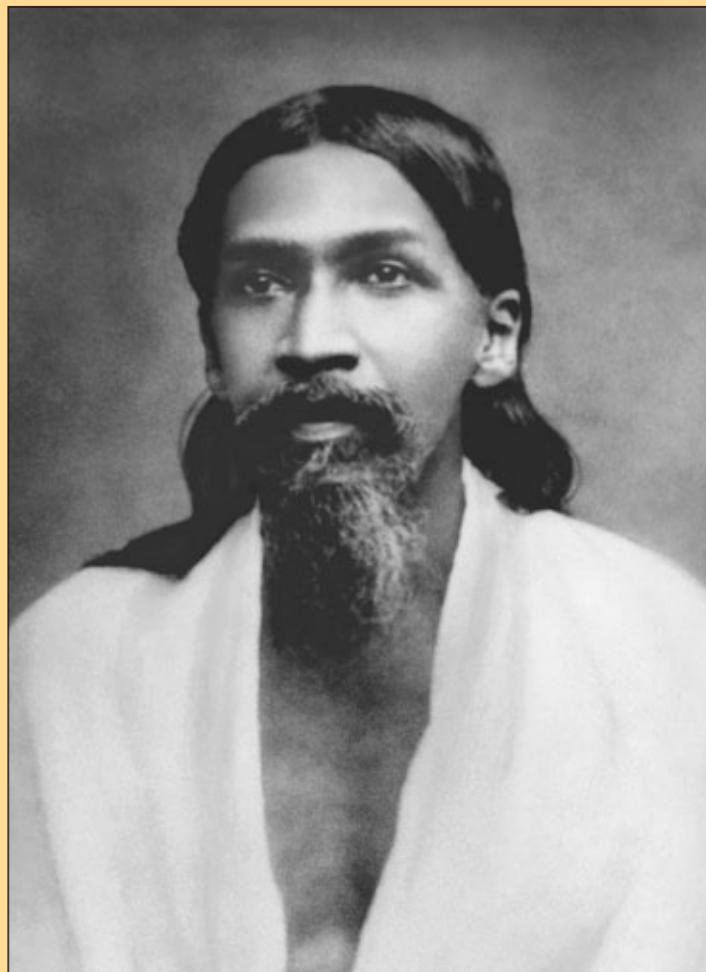
Sri Aurobindo published translations of the Kena, Katha and Mundaka Upanishads in the *Karmayogin*, a weekly journal of political opinion, during the years 1909 and 1910. Between 1914 and 1920 he published revised or new translations of the Kena and Mundaka, and commentaries on all of the Kena and parts of the Taittiriya in the *Arya*, a monthly review of philosophy. He revised most of these works with a view to publishing them in books, but never did so. The unrevised *Karmayogin* translation of the Katha Upanishad was reprinted by Ashtekar & Co., Poona, in 1919; the unrevised *Karmayogin* translations of the Isha, Kena and Mundaka were included in the same publisher’s *Seven Upanishads* in 1920. It is uncertain whether or not Sri Aurobindo authorised these publications.

The pieces published in Parts Two and Three of the present volume

were found among Sri Aurobindo's manuscripts after his passing in 1950. Many of them were first published in journals connected with the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. In 1953 Sri Aurobindo's published translations of the Isha, Kena, Katha and Mundaka Upanishads and his unpublished translations of the Prashna, Mandukya, Aitareya and Taittiriya were brought out by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram as *Eight Upanishads*. In 1971 all these translations, the Arya commentaries on the Isha and Kena, the first of the "Readings in the Taittiriya Upanishad", and a number of pieces from the author's notebooks, were published in *The Upanishads*, volume 12 of the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library. This book was reprinted several times. In 1981 most of the contents of the volume were rearranged and republished under the title *The Upanishads: Part One*. Several pieces that had appeared in the 1971 edition were removed from the 1981 edition with the intention of including them, along with other, recently discovered pieces, in a proposed second volume; but this was never brought out. The 1981 edition was reprinted in 1986 (when the translation of Chapter One, Section 3 of the Chhandogya Upanishad was included) and subsequently.

The present edition is the first to appear under the title *Kena and Other Upanishads*. In it, two pieces are published for the first time: "Kena Upanishad: A Partial Translation with Notes" and the last of the "Four Fragments" in Part Three. Several other pieces in Parts Two and Three have previously appeared only in the journal *Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research* and are included here for the first time in a book.

Essays on the Gita



Sri Aurobindo

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Essays on the Gita

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The first series of *Essays on the Gita* appeared in the monthly review *Arya* between August 1916 and July 1918. It was revised by Sri Aurobindo and published as a book in 1922.

The second series appeared in the *Arya* between August 1918 and July 1920. In 1928 Sri Aurobindo brought out an extensively revised edition in book form.

For the present edition, the text has been thoroughly checked against all previous editions and against the manuscripts of the revised *Arya*.

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Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry, c. 1915

the Purushottama who is the cosmic spirit in Time and who gives the command to the divine action of the liberated human being. He is both Akshara and Kshara, and yet he is other than either of these opposites. *Uttamah purushas teanyah paramātmetyuldhritah, yo lokatra-yam avishya vibhartiyaryaya īswarah*, "But other than these two is that highest spirit called the supreme Self, which enters the three worlds and upbears them, the imperishable Lord." This verse is the keyword of the Gita's reconciliation of these two apparently opposite aspects of our existence.

The idea of the Purushottama has been prepared, alluded to, adumbrated, assumed even from the beginning, but it is only now in the fifteenth chapter that it is expressly stated and the distinction given a name. And it is instructive to see how it is now immediately approached and developed. To rise into the divine nature, we have been told, one must first fix oneself in a perfect spiritual equality and so rise above the lower nature of the three gunas. *Thus beginning the lower planes* by that we fix ourselves in the impersonality, the imperceptible superiority to all action, the purity from all definition and limitation by quality which is the nature of the Purushottama manifested as the eternity and unity of the self, the Akshara. But there is also an eternal multiplicity of the Purushottama in soul manifestation. The Infinite has an eternal power and unending action of his divine Nature, and personality too finds in the infinite its highest spiritual meaning; but it is no longer the egoistic, separative, oblivious personality of the lower Prakriti; it is something exalted, immortal and divine. That mystery is the secret of love and devotion. The eternal soul offering itself to the eternal Divine, of whom it is a portion, *is a portion of the Divine and therefore* finds itself in this love and adoration and the sacrifice of works receives by it its consummation and perfect sanction. It is then through these things that the soul of man fulfils it-

*in that action
the morale
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power, freedom
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This is possible
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self offering,*

*to the ineffableuster of our personality and its
arise*

Essays on the Gita

First Series

I

Our Demand and Need from the Gita

THE WORLD abounds with scriptures sacred and profane, with revelations and half-revelations, with religions and philosophies, sects and schools and systems. To these the many minds of a half-ripe knowledge or no knowledge at all attach themselves with exclusiveness and passion and will have it that this or the other book is alone the eternal Word of God and all others are either impostures or at best imperfectly inspired, that this or that philosophy is the last word of the reasoning intellect and other systems are either errors or saved only by such partial truth in them as links them to the one true philosophical cult. Even the discoveries of physical Science have been elevated into a creed and in its name religion and spirituality banned as ignorance and superstition, philosophy as frippery and moonshine. And to these bigoted exclusions and vain wranglings even the wise have often lent themselves, misled by some spirit of darkness that has mingled with their light and overshadowed it with some cloud of intellectual egoism or spiritual pride. Mankind seems now indeed inclined to grow a little modester and wiser; we no longer slay our fellows in the name of God's truth or because they have minds differently trained or differently constituted from ours; we are less ready to curse and revile our neighbour because he is wicked or presumptuous enough to differ from us in opinion; we are ready even to admit that Truth is everywhere and cannot be our sole monopoly; we are beginning to look at other religions and philosophies for the truth and help they contain and no longer merely in order to damn them as false or criticise what we conceive to be their errors. But we are still apt to declare that our truth gives us *the* supreme knowledge which other religions or philosophies

have missed or only imperfectly grasped so that they deal either with subsidiary and inferior aspects of the truth of things or can merely prepare less evolved minds for the heights to which we have arrived. And we are still prone to force upon ourselves or others the whole sacred mass of the book or gospel we admire, insisting that all shall be accepted as eternally valid truth and no iota or underline or diaeresis denied its part of the plenary inspiration.

It may therefore be useful in approaching an ancient Scripture, such as the Veda, Upanishads or Gita, to indicate precisely the spirit in which we approach it and what exactly we think we may derive from it that is of value to humanity and its future. First of all, there is undoubtedly a Truth one and eternal which we are seeking, from which all other truth derives, by the light of which all other truth finds its right place, explanation and relation to the scheme of knowledge. But precisely for that reason it cannot be shut up in a single trenchant formula, it is not likely to be found in its entirety or in all its bearings in any single philosophy or scripture or uttered altogether and for ever by any one teacher, thinker, prophet or Avatar. Nor has it been wholly found by us if our view of it necessitates the intolerant exclusion of the truth underlying other systems; for when we reject passionately, we mean simply that we cannot appreciate and explain. Secondly, this Truth, though it is one and eternal, expresses itself in Time and through the mind of man; therefore every Scripture must necessarily contain two elements, one temporary, perishable, belonging to the ideas of the period and country in which it was produced, the other eternal and imperishable and applicable in all ages and countries. Moreover, in the statement of the Truth the actual form given to it, the system and arrangement, the metaphysical and intellectual mould, the precise expression used must be largely subject to the mutations of Time and cease to have the same force; for the human intellect modifies itself always; continually dividing and putting together it is obliged to shift its divisions continually and to rearrange its syntheses; it is always leaving old expression and symbol for new or, if it uses the old, it so changes its connotation or at least

its exact content and association that we can never be quite sure of understanding an ancient book of this kind precisely in the sense and spirit it bore to its contemporaries. What is of entirely permanent value is that which besides being universal has been experienced, lived and seen with a higher than the intellectual vision.

I hold it therefore of small importance to extract from the Gita its exact metaphysical connotation as it was understood by the men of the time,—even if that were accurately possible. That it is not possible, is shown by the divergence of the original commentaries which have been and are still being written upon it; for they all agree in each disagreeing with all the others, each finds in the Gita its own system of metaphysics and trend of religious thought. Nor will even the most painstaking and disinterested scholarship and the most luminous theories of the historical development of Indian philosophy save us from inevitable error. But what we can do with profit is to seek in the Gita for the actual living truths it contains, apart from their metaphysical form, to extract from it what can help us or the world at large and to put it in the most natural and vital form and expression we can find that will be suitable to the mentality and helpful to the spiritual needs of our present-day humanity. No doubt in this attempt we may mix a good deal of error born of our own individuality and of the ideas in which we live, as did greater men before us, but if we steep ourselves in the spirit of this great Scripture and, above all, if we have tried to live in that spirit, we may be sure of finding in it as much real truth as we are capable of receiving as well as the spiritual influence and actual help that, personally, we were intended to derive from it. And that is after all what Scriptures were written to give; the rest is academical disputation or theological dogma. Only those Scriptures, religions, philosophies which can be thus constantly renewed, relived, their stuff of permanent truth constantly reshaped and developed in the inner thought and spiritual experience of a developing humanity, continue to be of living importance to mankind. The rest remain as monuments of the past, but have no actual force or vital impulse for the future.

In the Gita there is very little that is merely local or temporal and its spirit is so large, profound and universal that even this little can easily be universalised without the sense of the teaching suffering any diminution or violation; rather by giving an ampler scope to it than belonged to the country and epoch, the teaching gains in depth, truth and power. Often indeed the Gita itself suggests the wider scope that can in this way be given to an idea in itself local or limited. Thus it dwells on the ancient Indian system and idea of sacrifice as an interchange between gods and men,— a system and idea which have long been practically obsolete in India itself and are no longer real to the general human mind; but we find here a sense so entirely subtle, figurative and symbolic given to the word “sacrifice” and the conception of the gods is so little local or mythological, so entirely cosmic and philosophical that we can easily accept both as expressive of a practical fact of psychology and general law of Nature and so apply them to the modern conceptions of interchange between life and life and of ethical sacrifice and self-giving as to widen and deepen these and cast over them a more spiritual aspect and the light of a profounder and more far-reaching Truth. Equally the idea of action according to the Shastra, the fourfold order of society, the allusion to the relative position of the four orders or the comparative spiritual disabilities of Shudras and women seem at first sight local and temporal, and, if they are too much pressed in their literal sense, narrow so much at least of the teaching, deprive it of its universality and spiritual depth and limit its validity for mankind at large. But if we look behind to the spirit and sense and not at the local name and temporal institution, we see that here too the sense is deep and true and the spirit philosophical, spiritual and universal. By Shastra we perceive that the Gita means the law imposed on itself by humanity as a substitute for the purely egoistic action of the natural unregenerate man and a control on his tendency to seek in the satisfaction of his desire the standard and aim of his life. We see too that the fourfold order of society is merely the concrete form of a spiritual truth which is itself independent of the form; it rests on the conception of right works as a rightly ordered

expression of the nature of the individual being through whom the work is done, that nature assigning him his line and scope in life according to his inborn quality and his self-expressive function. Since this is the spirit in which the Gita advances its most local and particular instances, we are justified in pursuing always the same principle and looking always for the deeper general truth which is sure to underlie whatever seems at first sight merely local and of the time. For we shall find always that the deeper truth and principle is implied in the grain of the thought even when it is not expressly stated in its language.

Nor shall we deal in any other spirit with the element of philosophical dogma or religious creed which either enters into the Gita or hangs about it owing to its use of the philosophical terms and religious symbols current at the time. When the Gita speaks of Sankhya and Yoga, we shall not discuss beyond the limits of what is just essential for our statement, the relations of the Sankhya of the Gita with its one Purusha and strong Vedantic colouring to the non-theistic or "atheistic" Sankhya that has come down to us bringing with it its scheme of many Purushas and one Prakriti, nor of the Yoga of the Gita, many-sided, subtle, rich and flexible to the theistic doctrine and the fixed, scientific, rigorously defined and graded system of the Yoga of Patanjali. In the Gita the Sankhya and Yoga are evidently only two convergent parts of the same Vedantic truth or rather two concurrent ways of approaching its realisation, the one philosophical, intellectual, analytic, the other intuition, devotional, practical, ethical, synthetic, reaching knowledge through experience. The Gita recognises no real difference in their teachings. Still less need we discuss the theories which regard the Gita as the fruit of some particular religious system or tradition. Its teaching is universal whatever may have been its origins.

The philosophical system of the Gita, its arrangement of truth, is not that part of its teaching which is the most vital, profound, eternally durable; but most of the material of which the system is composed, the principal ideas suggestive and penetrating which are woven into its complex harmony, are eternally valuable and valid; for they are not merely the luminous ideas or

striking speculations of a philosophic intellect, but rather enduring truths of spiritual experience, verifiable facts of our highest psychological possibilities which no attempt to read deeply the mystery of existence can afford to neglect. Whatever the system may be, it is not, as the commentators strive to make it, framed or intended to support any exclusive school of philosophical thought or to put forward predominantly the claims of any one form of Yoga. The language of the Gita, the structure of thought, the combination and balancing of ideas belong neither to the temper of a sectarian teacher nor to the spirit of a rigorous analytical dialectics cutting off one angle of the truth to exclude all the others; but rather there is a wide, undulating, encircling movement of ideas which is the manifestation of a vast synthetic mind and a rich synthetic experience. This is one of those great syntheses in which Indian spirituality has been as rich as in its creation of the more intensive, exclusive movements of knowledge and religious realisation that follow out with an absolute concentration one clue, one path to its extreme issues. It does not cleave asunder, but reconciles and unifies.

The thought of the Gita is not pure Monism although it sees in one unchanging, pure, eternal Self the foundation of all cosmic existence, nor Mayavada although it speaks of the Maya of the three modes of Prakriti omnipresent in the created world; nor is it qualified Monism although it places in the One his eternal supreme Prakriti manifested in the form of the Jiva and lays most stress on dwelling in God rather than dissolution as the supreme state of spiritual consciousness; nor is it Sankhya although it explains the created world by the double principle of Purusha and Prakriti; nor is it Vaishnava Theism although it presents to us Krishna, who is the Avatar of Vishnu according to the Puranas, as the supreme Deity and allows no essential difference nor any actual superiority of the status of the indefinable relationless Brahman over that of this Lord of beings who is the Master of the universe and the Friend of all creatures. Like the earlier spiritual synthesis of the Upanishads this later synthesis at once spiritual and intellectual avoids naturally every such rigid determination as would injure its universal

comprehensiveness. Its aim is precisely the opposite to that of the polemist commentators who found this Scripture established as one of the three highest Vedantic authorities and attempted to turn it into a weapon of offence and defence against other schools and systems. The Gita is not a weapon for dialectical warfare; it is a gate opening on the whole world of spiritual truth and experience and the view it gives us embraces all the provinces of that supreme region. It maps out, but it does not cut up or build walls or hedges to confine our vision.

There have been other syntheses in the long history of Indian thought. We start with the Vedic synthesis of the psychological being of man in its highest flights and widest rangings of divine knowledge, power, joy, life and glory with the cosmic existence of the gods, pursued behind the symbols of the material universe into those superior planes which are hidden from the physical sense and the material mentality. The crown of this synthesis was in the experience of the Vedic Rishis something divine, transcendent and blissful in whose unity the increasing soul of man and the eternal divine fullness of the cosmic godheads meet perfectly and fulfil themselves. The Upanishads take up this crowning experience of the earlier seers and make it their starting-point for a high and profound synthesis of spiritual knowledge; they draw together into a great harmony all that had been seen and experienced by the inspired and liberated knowers of the Eternal throughout a great and fruitful period of spiritual seeking. The Gita starts from this Vedantic synthesis and upon the basis of its essential ideas builds another harmony of the three great means and powers, Love, Knowledge and Works, through which the soul of man can directly approach and cast itself into the Eternal. There is yet another, the Tantric,¹ which though less subtle and spiritually profound, is even more bold and forceful than the synthesis of the Gita,—for it seizes even upon the obstacles to the spiritual life and compels them to become the means for a richer spiritual conquest and enables us to embrace the whole

¹ All the Puranic tradition, it must be remembered, draws the richness of its contents from the Tantra.

of Life in our divine scope as the Lila² of the Divine; and in some directions it is more immediately rich and fruitful, for it brings forward into the foreground along with divine knowledge, divine works and an enriched devotion of divine Love, the secrets also of the Hatha and Raja Yogas, the use of the body and of mental askesis for the opening up of the divine life on all its planes, to which the Gita gives only a passing and perfunctory attention. Moreover it grasps at that idea of the divine perfectibility of man, possessed by the Vedic Rishis but thrown into the background by the intermediate ages, which is destined to fill so large a place in any future synthesis of human thought, experience and aspiration.

We of the coming day stand at the head of a new age of development which must lead to such a new and larger synthesis. We are not called upon to be orthodox Vedantins of any of the three schools or Tantrics or to adhere to one of the theistic religions of the past or to entrench ourselves within the four corners of the teaching of the Gita. That would be to limit ourselves and to attempt to create our spiritual life out of the being, knowledge and nature of others, of the men of the past, instead of building it out of our own being and potentialities. We do not belong to the past dawns, but to the noons of the future. A mass of new material is flowing into us; we have not only to assimilate the influences of the great theistic religions of India and of the world and a recovered sense of the meaning of Buddhism, but to take full account of the potent though limited revelations of modern knowledge and seeking; and, beyond that, the remote and dateless past which seemed to be dead is returning upon us with an effulgence of many luminous secrets long lost to the consciousness of mankind but now breaking out again from behind the veil. All this points to a new, a very rich, a very vast synthesis; a fresh and widely embracing harmonisation of our gains is both an intellectual and a spiritual necessity of the future. But just as the past syntheses have taken those which preceded them for their starting-point, so also must that of the future,

² The cosmic Play.

to be on firm ground, proceed from what the great bodies of realised spiritual thought and experience in the past have given. Among them the Gita takes a most important place.

Our object, then, in studying the Gita will not be a scholastic or academical scrutiny of its thought, nor to place its philosophy in the history of metaphysical speculation, nor shall we deal with it in the manner of the analytical dialectician. We approach it for help and light and our aim must be to distinguish its essential and living message, that in it on which humanity has to seize for its perfection and its highest spiritual welfare.

II

The Divine Teacher

THE PECULIARITY of the Gita among the great religious books of the world is that it does not stand apart as a work by itself, the fruit of the spiritual life of a creative personality like Christ, Mahomed or Buddha or of an epoch of pure spiritual searching like the Veda and Upanishads, but is given as an episode in an epic history of nations and their wars and men and their deeds and arises out of a critical moment in the soul of one of its leading personages face to face with the crowning action of his life, a work terrible, violent and sanguinary, at the point when he must either recoil from it altogether or carry it through to its inexorable completion. It matters little whether or no, as modern criticism supposes, the Gita is a later composition inserted into the mass of the Mahabharata by its author in order to invest its teaching with the authority and popularity of the great national epic. There seem to me to be strong grounds against this supposition for which, besides, the evidence, extrinsic or internal, is in the last degree scanty and insufficient. But even if it be sound, there remains the fact that the author has not only taken pains to interweave his work inextricably into the vast web of the larger poem, but is careful again and again to remind us of the situation from which the teaching has arisen; he returns to it prominently, not only at the end, but in the middle of his profoundest philosophical disquisitions. We must accept the insistence of the author and give its full importance to this recurrent preoccupation of the Teacher and the disciple. The teaching of the Gita must therefore be regarded not merely in the light of a general spiritual philosophy or ethical doctrine, but as bearing upon a practical crisis in the application of ethics and spirituality to human life. For what that crisis stands, what is the significance of the battle of Kurukshetra and its effect on Arjuna's inner being, we have first to determine if we would

grasp the central drift of the ideas of the Gita.

Very obviously a great body of the profoundest teaching cannot be built round an ordinary occurrence which has no gulfs of deep suggestion and hazardous difficulty behind its superficial and outward aspects and can be governed well enough by the ordinary everyday standards of thought and action. There are indeed three things in the Gita which are spiritually significant, almost symbolic, typical of the profoundest relations and problems of the spiritual life and of human existence at its roots; they are the divine personality of the Teacher, his characteristic relations with his disciple and the occasion of his teaching. The teacher is God himself descended into humanity; the disciple is the first, as we might say in modern language, the representative man of his age, closest friend and chosen instrument of the Avatar, his protagonist in an immense work and struggle the secret purpose of which is unknown to the actors in it, known only to the incarnate Godhead who guides it all from behind the veil of his unfathomable mind of knowledge; the occasion is the violent crisis of that work and struggle at the moment when the anguish and moral difficulty and blind violence of its apparent movements forces itself with the shock of a visible revelation on the mind of its representative man and raises the whole question of the meaning of God in the world and the goal and drift and sense of human life and conduct.

India has from ancient times held strongly a belief in the reality of the Avatara, the descent into form, the revelation of the Godhead in humanity. In the West this belief has never really stamped itself upon the mind because it has been presented through exoteric Christianity as a theological dogma without any roots in the reason and general consciousness and attitude towards life. But in India it has grown up and persisted as a logical outcome of the Vedantic view of life and taken firm root in the consciousness of the race. All existence is a manifestation of God because He is the only existence and nothing can be except as either a real figuring or else a figment of that one reality. Therefore every conscious being is in part or in some way a descent of the Infinite into the apparent finiteness of

name and form. But it is a veiled manifestation and there is a gradation between the supreme being¹ of the Divine and the consciousness shrouded partly or wholly by ignorance of self in the finite. The conscious embodied soul² is the spark of the divine Fire and that soul in man opens out to self-knowledge as it develops out of ignorance of self into self-being. The Divine also, pouring itself into the forms of the cosmic existence, is revealed ordinarily in an efflorescence of its powers, in energies and magnitudes of its knowledge, love, joy, developed force of being,³ in degrees and faces of its divinity. But when the divine Consciousness and Power, taking upon itself the human form and the human mode of action, possesses it not only by powers and magnitudes, by degrees and outward faces of itself but out of its eternal self-knowledge, when the Unborn knows itself and acts in the frame of the mental being and the appearance of birth, that is the height of the conditioned manifestation; it is the full and conscious descent of the Godhead, it is the Avatara.

The Vaishnava form of Vedantism which has laid most stress upon this conception expresses the relation of God in man to man in God by the double figure of Nara-Narayana, associated historically with the origin of a religious school very similar in its doctrines to the teaching of the Gita. Nara is the human soul which, eternal companion of the Divine, finds itself only when it awakens to that companionship and begins, as the Gita would say, to live in God. Narayana is the divine Soul always present in our humanity, the secret guide, friend and helper of the human being, the "Lord who abides within the heart of creatures" of the Gita; when within us the veil of that secret sanctuary is withdrawn and man speaks face to face with God, hears the divine voice, receives the divine light, acts in the divine power, then becomes possible the supreme uplifting of the embodied human conscious-being into the unborn and eternal. He becomes capable of that dwelling in God and giving up of his whole consciousness into the Divine which the Gita upholds as the best or highest secret of things, *uttamam rahasyam*. When

¹ *para bhāva*. ² *dehī*. ³ *vibhūti*.

this eternal divine Consciousness always present in every human being, this God in man, takes possession partly⁴ or wholly of the human consciousness and becomes in visible human shape the guide, teacher, leader of the world, not as those who living in their humanity yet feel something of the power or light or love of the divine Gnosis informing and conducting them, but out of that divine Gnosis itself, direct from its central force and plenitude, then we have the manifest Avatar. The inner Divinity is the eternal Avatar in man; the human manifestation is its sign and development in the external world.

When we thus understand the conception of Avatarhood, we see that whether for the fundamental teaching of the Gita, our present subject, or for spiritual life generally the external aspect has only a secondary importance. Such controversies as the one that has raged in Europe over the historicity of Christ, would seem to a spiritually-minded Indian largely a waste of time; he would concede to it a considerable historical, but hardly any religious importance; for what does it matter in the end whether a Jesus son of the carpenter Joseph was actually born in Nazareth or Bethlehem, lived and taught and was done to death on a real or trumped-up charge of sedition, so long as we can know by spiritual experience the inner Christ, live uplifted in the light of his teaching and escape from the yoke of the natural Law by that atonement of man with God of which the crucifixion is the symbol? If the Christ, God made man, lives within our spiritual being, it would seem to matter little whether or not a son of Mary physically lived and suffered and died in Judea. So too the Krishna who matters to us is the eternal incarnation of the Divine and not the historical teacher and leader of men.

In seeking the kernel of the thought of the Gita we need, therefore, only concern ourselves with the spiritual significance of the human-divine Krishna of the Mahabharata who is presented to us as the teacher of Arjuna on the battle-field of Kurukshetra. The historical Krishna, no doubt, existed. We meet

⁴ Chaitanya, the Avatar of Nadiya, is said to have been thus partly or occasionally occupied by the divine Consciousness and Power.

the name first in the Chhandogya Upanishad where all we can gather about him is that he was well known in spiritual tradition as a knower of the Brahman, so well known indeed in his personality and the circumstances of his life that it was sufficient to refer to him by the name of his mother as Krishna son of Devaki for all to understand who was meant. In the same Upanishad we find mention of King Dhritarashtra son of Vichitravirya, and since tradition associated the two together so closely that they are both of them leading personages in the action of the Mahabharata, we may fairly conclude that they were actually contemporaries and that the epic is to a great extent dealing with historical characters and in the war of Kurukshetra with a historical occurrence imprinted firmly on the memory of the race. We know too that Krishna and Arjuna were the object of religious worship in the pre-Christian centuries; and there is some reason to suppose that they were so in connection with a religious and philosophical tradition from which the Gita may have gathered many of its elements and even the foundation of its synthesis of knowledge, devotion and works, and perhaps also that the human Krishna was the founder, restorer or at the least one of the early teachers of this school. The Gita may well in spite of its later form represent the outcome in Indian thought of the teaching of Krishna and the connection of that teaching with the historical Krishna, with Arjuna and with the war of Kurukshetra may be something more than a dramatic fiction. In the Mahabharata Krishna is represented both as the historical character and the Avatar; his worship and Avatarhood must therefore have been well established by the time — apparently from the fifth to the first centuries B.C. — when the old story and poem or epic tradition of the Bharatas took its present form. There is a hint also in the poem of the story or legend of the Avatar's early life in Vrindavan which, as developed by the Puranas into an intense and powerful spiritual symbol, has exercised so profound an influence on the religious mind of India. We have also in the Harivansha an account of the life of Krishna, very evidently full of legends, which perhaps formed the basis of the Puranic accounts.

But all this, though of considerable historical importance, has none whatever for our present purpose. We are concerned only with the figure of the divine Teacher as it is presented to us in the Gita and with the Power for which it there stands in the spiritual illumination of the human being. The Gita accepts the human Avatarhood; for the Lord speaks of the repeated, the constant⁵ manifestation of the Divine in humanity, when He the eternal Unborn assumes by his Maya, by the power of the infinite Consciousness to clothe itself apparently in finite forms, the conditions of becoming which we call birth. But it is not this upon which stress is laid, but on the transcendent, the cosmic and the internal Divine; it is on the Source of all things and the Master of all and on the Godhead secret in man. It is this internal divinity who is meant when the Gita speaks of the doer of violent Asuric austerities troubling the God within or of the sin of those who despise the Divine lodged in the human body or of the same Godhead destroying our ignorance by the blazing lamp of knowledge. It is then the eternal Avatar, this God in man, the divine Consciousness always present in the human being who manifested in a visible form speaks to the human soul in the Gita, illumines the meaning of life and the secret of divine action and gives it the light of the divine knowledge and guidance and the assuring and fortifying word of the Master of existence in the hour when it comes face to face with the painful mystery of the world. This is what the Indian religious consciousness seeks to make near to itself in whatever form, whether in the symbolic human image it enshrines in its temples or in the worship of its Avatars or in the devotion to the human Guru through whom the voice of the one world-Teacher makes itself heard. Through these it strives to awaken to that inner voice, unveil that form of the Formless and stand face to face with that manifest divine Power, Love and Knowledge.

Secondly, there is the typical, almost the symbolic significance of the human Krishna who stands behind the great action of the Mahabharata, not as its hero, but as its secret centre

⁵ *bahūni me vyatitāni janmāni . . . sambhavāmi yuge yuge.*

and hidden guide. That action is the action of a whole world of men and nations, some of whom have come as helpers of an effort and result by which they do not personally profit, and to these he is a leader, some as its opponents and to them he also is an opponent, the baffle of their designs and their slayer and he seems even to some of them an instigator of all evil and destroyer of their old order and familiar world and secure conventions of virtue and good; some are representatives of that which has to be fulfilled and to them he is counsellor, helper, friend. Where the action pursues its natural course or the doers of the work have to suffer at the hands of its enemies and undergo the ordeals which prepare them for mastery, the Avatar is unseen or appears only for occasional comfort and aid, but at every crisis his hand is felt, yet in such a way that all imagine themselves to be the protagonists and even Arjuna, his nearest friend and chief instrument, does not perceive that he is an instrument and has to confess at last that all the while he did not really know his divine Friend. He has received counsel from his wisdom, help from his power, has loved and been loved, has even adored without understanding his divine nature; but he has been guided like all others through his own egoism and the counsel, help and direction have been given in the language and received by the thoughts of the Ignorance. Until the moment when all has been pushed to the terrible issue of the struggle on the field of Kurukshetra and the Avatar stands at last, still not as fighter, but as the charioteer in the battle-car which carries the destiny of the fight, he has not revealed Himself even to those whom he has chosen.

Thus the figure of Krishna becomes, as it were, the symbol of the divine dealings with humanity. Through our egoism and ignorance we are moved, thinking that we are the doers of the work, vaunting of ourselves as the real causes of the result, and that which moves us we see only occasionally as some vague or even some human and earthly fountain of knowledge, aspiration, force, some Principle or Light or Power which we acknowledge and adore without knowing what it is until the occasion arises that forces us to stand arrested before the Veil.

And the action in which this divine figure moves is the whole wide action of man in life, not merely the inner life, but all this obscure course of the world which we can judge only by the twilight of the human reason as it opens up dimly before our uncertain advance the little span in front. This is the distinguishing feature of the Gita that it is the culmination of such an action which gives rise to its teaching and assigns that prominence and bold relief to the gospel of works which it enunciates with an emphasis and force we do not find in other Indian Scriptures. Not only in the Gita, but in other passages of the Mahabharata we meet with Krishna declaring emphatically the necessity of action, but it is here that he reveals its secret and the divinity behind our works.

The symbolic companionship of Arjuna and Krishna, the human and the divine soul, is expressed elsewhere in Indian thought, in the heavenward journey of Indra and Kutsa seated in one chariot, in the figure of the two birds upon one tree in the Upanishad, in the twin figures of Nara and Narayana, the seers who do *tapasyā* together for the knowledge. But in all three it is the idea of the divine knowledge in which, as the Gita says, all action culminates that is in view; here it is instead the action which leads to that knowledge and in which the divine Knower figures himself. Arjuna and Krishna, this human and this divine, stand together not as seers in the peaceful hermitage of meditation, but as fighter and holder of the reins in the clamorous field, in the midst of the hurtling shafts, in the chariot of battle. The Teacher of the Gita is therefore not only the God in man who unveils himself in the word of knowledge, but the God in man who moves our whole world of action, by and for whom all our humanity exists and struggles and labours, towards whom all human life travels and progresses. He is the secret Master of works and sacrifice and the Friend of the human peoples.

III

The Human Disciple

SUCH then is the divine Teacher of the Gita, the eternal Avatar, the Divine who has descended into the human consciousness, the Lord seated within the heart of all beings, He who guides from behind the veil all our thought and action and heart's seeking even as He directs from behind the veil of visible and sensible forms and forces and tendencies the great universal action of the world which He has manifested in His own being. All the strife of our upward endeavour and seeking finds its culmination and ceases in a satisfied fulfilment when we can rend the veil and get behind our apparent self to this real Self, can realise our whole being in this true Lord of our being, can give up our personality to and into this one real Person, merge our ever-dispersed and ever-converging mental activities into His plenary light, offer up our errant and struggling will and energies into His vast, luminous and undivided Will, at once renounce and satisfy all our dissipated outward-moving desires and emotions in the plenitude of His self-existent Bliss. This is the world-Teacher of whose eternal knowledge all other highest teaching is but the various reflection and partial word, this the Voice to which the hearing of our soul has to awaken.

Arjuna, the disciple who receives his initiation on the battlefield, is a counterpart of this conception; he is the type of the struggling human soul who has not yet received the knowledge, but has grown fit to receive it by action in the world in a close companionship and an increasing nearness to the higher and divine Self in humanity. There is a method of explaining the Gita in which not only this episode but the whole Mahabharata is turned into an allegory of the inner life and has nothing to do with our outward human life and action, but only with the battles of the soul and the powers that strive within us for possession. That is a view which the general character and the

actual language of the epic does not justify and, if pressed, would turn the straightforward philosophical language of the Gita into a constant, laborious and somewhat puerile mystification. The language of the Veda and part at least of the Puranas is plainly symbolic, full of figures and concrete representations of things that lie behind the veil, but the Gita is written in plain terms and professes to solve the great ethical and spiritual difficulties which the life of man raises, and it will not do to go behind this plain language and thought and wrest them to the service of our fancy. But there is this much of truth in the view, that the setting of the doctrine though not symbolical, is certainly typical, as indeed the setting of such a discourse as the Gita must necessarily be if it is to have any relation at all with that which it frames. Arjuna, as we have seen, is the representative man of a great world-struggle and divinely-guided movement of men and nations; in the Gita he typifies the human soul of action brought face to face through that action in its highest and most violent crisis with the problem of human life and its apparent incompatibility with the spiritual state or even with a purely ethical ideal of perfection.

Arjuna is the fighter in the chariot with the divine Krishna as his charioteer. In the Veda also we have this image of the human soul and the divine riding in one chariot through a great battle to the goal of a high-aspiring effort. But there it is a pure figure and symbol. The Divine is there Indra, the Master of the World of Light and Immortality, the power of divine knowledge which descends to the aid of the human seeker battling with the sons of falsehood, darkness, limitation, mortality; the battle is with spiritual enemies who bar the way to the higher world of our being; and the goal is that plane of vast being resplendent with the light of the supreme Truth and uplifted to the conscious immortality of the perfected soul, of which Indra is the master. The human soul is Kutsa, he who constantly seeks the seer-knowledge, as his name implies, and he is the son of Arjuna or Arjuni, the White One, child of Switra the White Mother; he is, that is to say, the sattvic or purified and light-filled soul which is open to the unbroken glories of the divine knowledge. And

when the chariot reaches the end of its journey, the own home of Indra, the human Kutsa has grown into such an exact likeness of his divine companion that he can only be distinguished by Sachi, the wife of Indra, because she is "truth-conscious". The parable is evidently of the inner life of man; it is a figure of the human growing into the likeness of the eternal divine by the increasing illumination of Knowledge. But the Gita starts from action and Arjuna is the man of action and not of knowledge, the fighter, never the seer or the thinker.

From the beginning of the Gita this characteristic temperament of the disciple is clearly indicated and it is maintained throughout. It becomes first evident in the manner in which he is awakened to the sense of what he is doing, the great slaughter of which he is to be the chief instrument, in the thoughts which immediately rise in him, in the standpoint and the psychological motives which make him recoil from the whole terrible catastrophe. They are not the thoughts, the standpoint, the motives of a philosophical or even of a deeply reflective mind or a spiritual temperament confronted with the same or a similar problem. They are those, as we might say, of the practical or the pragmatic man, the emotional, sensational, moral and intelligent human being not habituated to profound and original reflection or any sounding of the depths, accustomed rather to high but fixed standards of thought and action and a confident treading through all vicissitudes and difficulties, who now finds all his standards failing him and all the basis of his confidence in himself and his life shorn away from under him at a single stroke. That is the nature of the crisis which he undergoes.

Arjuna is, in the language of the Gita, a man subject to the action of the three gunas or modes of the Nature-Force and habituated to move unquestioningly in that field, like the generality of men. He justifies his name only in being so far pure and sattwic as to be governed by high and clear principles and impulses and habitually control his lower nature by the noblest Law which he knows. He is not of a violent Asuric disposition, not the slave of his passions, but has been trained to a high calm and self-control, to an unswerving performance of his duties

and firm obedience to the best principles of the time and society in which he has lived and the religion and ethics to which he has been brought up. He is egoistic like other men, but with the purer or sattvic egoism which regards the moral law and society and the claims of others and not only or predominantly his own interests, desires and passions. He has lived and guided himself by the Shastra, the moral and social code. The thought which preoccupies him, the standard which he obeys is the *dharma*, that collective Indian conception of the religious, social and moral rule of conduct, and especially the rule of the station and function to which he belongs, he the Kshatriya, the high-minded, self-governed, chivalrous prince and warrior and leader of Aryan men. Following always this rule, conscious of virtue and right dealing he has travelled so far and finds suddenly that it has led him to become the protagonist of a terrific and unparalleled slaughter, a monstrous civil war involving all the cultured Aryan nations which must lead to the complete destruction of the flower of their manhood and threatens their ordered civilisation with chaos and collapse.

It is typical again of the pragmatic man that it is through his sensations that he awakens to the meaning of his action. He has asked his friend and charioteer to place him between the two armies, not with any profounder idea, but with the proud intention of viewing and looking in the face these myriads of the champions of unrighteousness whom he has to meet and conquer and slay "in this holiday of fight" so that the right may prevail. It is as he gazes that the revelation of the meaning of a civil and domestic war comes home to him, a war in which not only men of the same race, the same nation, the same clan, but those of the same family and household stand upon opposite sides. All whom the social man holds most dear and sacred, he must meet as enemies and slay,—the worshipped teacher and preceptor, the old friend, comrade and companion in arms, grandsires, uncles, those who stood in the relation to him of father, of son, of grandson, connections by blood and connections by marriage,—all these social ties have to be cut asunder by the sword. It is not that he did not know these things before, but he has

never realised it all; obsessed by his claims and wrongs and by the principles of his life, the struggle for the right, the duty of the Kshatriya to protect justice and the law and fight and beat down injustice and lawless violence, he has neither thought it out deeply nor felt it in his heart and at the core of his life. And now it is shown to his vision by the divine charioteer, placed sensationaly before his eyes, and comes home to him like a blow delivered at the very centre of his sensational, vital and emotional being.

The first result is a violent sensational and physical crisis which produces a disgust of the action and its material objects and of life itself. He rejects the vital aim pursued by egoistic humanity in its action,—happiness and enjoyment; he rejects the vital aim of the Kshatriya, victory and rule and power and the government of men. What after all is this fight for justice when reduced to its practical terms, but just this, a fight for the interests of himself, his brothers and his party, for possession and enjoyment and rule? But at such a cost these things are not worth having. For they are of no value in themselves, but only as a means to the right maintenance of social and national life and it is these very aims that in the person of his kin and his race he is about to destroy. And then comes the cry of the emotions. These are they for whose sake life and happiness are desired, our "own people". Who would consent to slay these for the sake of all the earth, or even for the kingdom of the three worlds? What pleasure can there be in life, what happiness, what satisfaction in oneself after such a deed? The whole thing is a dreadful sin,—for now the moral sense awakens to justify the revolt of the sensations and the emotions. It is a sin, there is no right nor justice in mutual slaughter; especially are those who are to be slain the natural objects of reverence and of love, those without whom one would not care to live, and to violate these sacred feelings can be no virtue, can be nothing but a heinous crime. Granted that the offence, the aggression, the first sin, the crimes of greed and selfish passion which have brought things to such a pass came from the other side; yet armed resistance to wrong under such circumstances would be itself a sin and

crime worse than theirs because they are blinded by passion and unconscious of guilt, while on this side it would be with a clear sense of guilt that the sin would be committed. And for what? For the maintenance of family morality, of the social law and the law of the nation? These are the very standards that will be destroyed by this civil war; the family itself will be brought to the point of annihilation, corruption of morals and loss of the purity of race will be engendered, the eternal laws of the race and moral law of the family will be destroyed. Ruin of the race, the collapse of its high traditions, ethical degradation and hell for the authors of such a crime, these are the only practical results possible of this monstrous civil strife. "Therefore," cries Arjuna, casting down the divine bow and inexhaustible quiver given to him by the gods for that tremendous hour, "it is more for my welfare that the sons of Dhritarashtra armed should slay me unarmed and unresisting. I will not fight."

The character of this inner crisis is therefore not the questioning of the thinker; it is not a recoil from the appearances of life and a turning of the eye inward in search of the truth of things, the real meaning of existence and a solution or an escape from the dark riddle of the world. It is the sensational, emotional and moral revolt of the man hitherto satisfied with action and its current standards who finds himself cast by them into a hideous chaos where they are in violent conflict with each other and with themselves and there is no moral standing-ground left, nothing to lay hold of and walk by, no *dharma*.¹ That for the soul of action in the mental being is the worst possible crisis, failure and overthrow. The revolt itself is the most elemental and simple possible; sensationnally, the elemental feeling of horror, pity and disgust; vitally, the loss of attraction and faith in the recognised and familiar objects of action and aims of life; emotionally, the recoil of the ordinary feelings of social man, affection, reverence, desire of a common happiness and satisfaction, from a stern duty outraging them all; morally, the elementary sense of sin and

¹ *Dharma* means literally that which one lays hold of and which holds things together, the law, the norm, the rule of nature, action and life.

hell and rejection of “blood-stained enjoyments”; practically, the sense that the standards of action have led to a result which destroys the practical aims of action. But the whole upshot is that all-embracing inner bankruptcy which Arjuna expresses when he says that his whole conscious being, not the thought alone but heart and vital desires and all, are utterly bewildered and can find nowhere the *dharma*, nowhere any valid law of action. For this alone he takes refuge as a disciple with Krishna; give me, he practically asks, that which I have lost, a true law, a clear rule of action, a path by which I can again confidently walk. He does not ask for the secret of life or of the world, the meaning and purpose of it all, but for a *dharma*.

Yet it is precisely this secret for which he does not ask, or at least so much of the knowledge as is necessary to lead him into a higher life, to which the divine Teacher intends to lead this disciple; for he means him to give up all *dharma*s except the one broad and vast rule of living consciously in the Divine and acting from that consciousness. Therefore after testing the completeness of his revolt from the ordinary standards of conduct, he proceeds to tell him much that has to do with the state of the soul, but nothing of any outward rule of action. He must be equal in soul, abandon the desire of the fruits of work, rise above his intellectual notions of sin and virtue, live and act in Yoga with a mind in Samadhi, firmly fixed, that is to say, in the Divine alone. Arjuna is not satisfied: he wishes to know how the change to this state will affect the outward action of the man, what result it will have on his speech, his movements, his state, what difference it will make in this acting, living human being. Krishna persists merely in enlarging upon the ideas he has already brought forward, on the soul-state behind the action, not on the action itself. It is the fixed anchoring of the intelligence in a state of desireless equality that is the one thing needed. Arjuna breaks out impatiently,—for here is no rule of conduct such as he sought, but rather, as it seems to him, the negation of all action,—“If thou holdest the intelligence to be greater than action, why then dost thou appoint me to an action terrible in its nature? Thou bewilderest my understanding with a mingled

word: speak one thing decisively by which I can attain to what is the best." It is always the pragmatic man who has no value for metaphysical thought or for the inner life except when they help him to his one demand, a *dharma*, a law of life in the world or, if need be, of leaving the world; for that too is a decisive action which he can understand. But to live and act in the world, yet be above it, this is a "mingled" and confusing word the sense of which he has no patience to grasp.

The rest of Arjuna's questions and utterances proceed from the same temperament and character. When he is told that once the soul-state is assured there need be no apparent change in the action, he must act always by the law of his nature, even if the act itself seem faulty and deficient compared with that of another law than his own, he is troubled. The nature! but what of this sense of sin in the action with which he is preoccupied? is it not this very nature which drives men as if by force and even against their better will into sin and guilt? His practical intelligence is baffled by Krishna's assertion that it was he who in ancient times revealed to Vivasvan this Yoga, since lost, which he is now again revealing to Arjuna, and by his demand for an explanation he provokes the famous and oft-quoted statement of Avatarhood and its mundane purpose. He is again perplexed by the words in which Krishna continues to reconcile action and renunciation of action and asks once again for a decisive statement of that which is the best and highest, not this "mingled" word. When he realises fully the nature of the Yoga which he is bidden to embrace, his pragmatic nature accustomed to act from mental will and preference and desire is appalled by its difficulty and he asks what is the end of the soul which attempts and fails, whether it does not lose both this life of human activity and thought and emotion which it has left behind and the Brahmic consciousness to which it aspires and falling from both perish like a dissolving cloud?

When his doubts and perplexities are resolved and he knows that it is the Divine which must be his law, he aims again and always at such clear and decisive knowledge as will guide him practically to this source and this rule of his future action. How

is the Divine to be distinguished among the various states of being which constitute our ordinary experience? What are the great manifestations of its self-energy in the world in which he can recognise and realise it by meditation? May he not see even now the divine cosmic Form of That which is actually speaking to him through the veil of the human mind and body? And his last questions demand a clear distinction between renunciation of works and this subtler renunciation he is asked to prefer; the actual difference between Purusha and Prakriti, the Field and the Knower of the Field, so important for the practice of desireless action under the drive of the divine Will; and finally a clear statement of the practical operations and results of the three modes of Prakriti which he is bidden to surmount.

To such a disciple the Teacher of the Gita gives his divine teaching. He seizes him at a moment of his psychological development by egoistic action when all the mental, moral, emotional values of the ordinary egoistic and social life of man have collapsed in a sudden bankruptcy, and he has to lift him up out of this lower life into a higher consciousness, out of ignorant attachment to action into that which transcends, yet originates and orders action, out of ego into Self, out of life in mind, vitality and body into that higher nature beyond mind which is the status of the Divine. He has at the same time to give him that for which he asks and for which he is inspired to seek by the guidance within him, a new Law of life and action high above the insufficient rule of the ordinary human existence with its endless conflicts and oppositions, perplexities and illusory certainties, a higher Law by which the soul shall be free from this bondage of works and yet powerful to act and conquer in the vast liberty of its divine being. For the action must be performed, the world must fulfil its cycles and the soul of the human being must not turn back in ignorance from the work it is here to do. The whole course of the teaching of the Gita is determined and directed, even in its widest wheelings, towards the fulfilment of these three objects.

IV

The Core of the Teaching

WE KNOW the divine Teacher, we see the human disciple; it remains to form a clear conception of the doctrine. A clear conception fastening upon the essential idea, the central heart of the teaching is especially necessary here because the Gita with its rich and many-sided thought, its synthetical grasp of different aspects of the spiritual life and the fluent winding motion of its argument lends itself, even more than other scriptures, to one-sided misrepresentations born of a partisan intellectuality. The unconscious or half-conscious wresting of fact and word and idea to suit a preconceived notion or the doctrine or principle of one's preference is recognised by Indian logicians as one of the most fruitful sources of fallacy; and it is perhaps the one which it is most difficult for even the most conscientious thinker to avoid. For the human reason is incapable of always playing the detective upon itself in this respect; it is its very nature to seize upon some partial conclusion, idea, principle, become its partisan and make it the key to all truth, and it has an infinite faculty of doubling upon itself so as to avoid detecting in its operations this necessary and cherished weakness. The Gita lends itself easily to this kind of error, because it is easy, by throwing particular emphasis on one of its aspects or even on some salient and emphatic text and putting all the rest of the eighteen chapters into the background or making them a subordinate and auxiliary teaching, to turn it into a partisan of our own doctrine or dogma.

Thus, there are those who make the Gita teach, not works at all, but a discipline of preparation for renouncing life and works: the indifferent performance of prescribed actions or of whatever task may lie ready to the hands, becomes the means, the discipline; the final renunciation of life and works is the sole real object. It is quite easy to justify this view by citations from

the book and by a certain arrangement of stress in following out its argument, especially if we shut our eyes to the peculiar way in which it uses such a word as *sannyāsa*, renunciation; but it is quite impossible to persist in this view on an impartial reading in face of the continual assertion to the very end that action should be preferred to inaction and that superiority lies with the true, the inner renunciation of desire by equality and the giving up of works to the supreme Purusha.

Others again speak of the Gita as if the doctrine of devotion were its whole teaching and put in the background its monistic elements and the high place it gives to quietistic immvergence in the one self of all. And undoubtedly its emphasis on devotion, its insistence on the aspect of the Divine as Lord and Purusha and its doctrine of the Purushottama, the Supreme Being who is superior both to the mutable Being and to the Immutable and who is what in His relation to the world we know as God, are the most striking and among the most vital elements of the Gita. Still, this Lord is the Self in whom all knowledge culminates and the Master of sacrifice to whom all works lead as well as the Lord of Love into whose being the heart of devotion enters, and the Gita preserves a perfectly equal balance, emphasising now knowledge, now works, now devotion, but for the purposes of the immediate trend of the thought, not with any absolute separate preference of one over the others. He in whom all three meet and become one, He is the Supreme Being, the Purushottama.

But at the present day, since in fact the modern mind began to recognise and deal at all with the Gita, the tendency is to subordinate its elements of knowledge and devotion, to take advantage of its continual insistence on action and to find in it a scripture of the Karmayoga, a Light leading us on the path of action, a Gospel of Works. Undoubtedly, the Gita is a Gospel of Works, but of works which culminate in knowledge, that is, in spiritual realisation and quietude, and of works motived by devotion, that is, a conscious surrender of one's whole self first into the hands and then into the being of the Supreme, and not at all of works as they are understood by the modern mind, not at all an action dictated by egoistic and altruistic, by personal,

social, humanitarian motives, principles, ideals. Yet this is what present-day interpretations seek to make of the Gita. We are told continually by many authoritative voices that the Gita, opposing in this the ordinary ascetic and quietistic tendency of Indian thought and spirituality, proclaims with no uncertain sound the gospel of human action, the ideal of disinterested performance of social duties, nay, even, it would seem, the quite modern ideal of social service. To all this I can only reply that very patently and even on the very surface of it the Gita does nothing of the kind and that this is a modern misreading, a reading of the modern mind into an ancient book, of the present-day European or Europeanised intellect into a thoroughly antique, a thoroughly Oriental and Indian teaching. That which the Gita teaches is not a human, but a divine action; not the performance of social duties, but the abandonment of all other standards of duty or conduct for a selfless performance of the divine will working through our nature; not social service, but the action of the Best, the God-possessed, the Master-men done impersonally for the sake of the world and as a sacrifice to Him who stands behind man and Nature.

In other words, the Gita is not a book of practical ethics, but of the spiritual life. The modern mind is just now the European mind, such as it has become after having abandoned not only the philosophic idealism of the highest Graeco-Roman culture from which it started, but the Christian devotionalism of the Middle Ages; these it has replaced by or transmuted into a practical idealism and social, patriotic and philanthropic devotion. It has got rid of God or kept Him only for Sunday use and erected in His place man as its deity and society as its visible idol. At its best it is practical, ethical, social, pragmatic, altruistic, humanitarian. Now all these things are good, are especially needed at the present day, are part of the divine Will or they would not have become so dominant in humanity. Nor is there any reason why the divine man, the man who lives in the Brahmic consciousness, in the God-being should not be all of these things in his action; he will be, if they are the best ideal of the age, the Yugadharma, and there is no yet higher ideal to be established,

no great radical change to be effected. For he is, as the Teacher points out to his disciple, the best who has to set the standard for others; and in fact Arjuna is called upon to live according to the highest ideals of his age and the prevailing culture, but with knowledge, with understanding of that which lay behind, and not as ordinary men, with a following of the merely outward law and rule.

But the point here is that the modern mind has exiled from its practical motive-power the two essential things, God or the Eternal and spirituality or the God-state, which are the master conceptions of the Gita. It lives in humanity only, and the Gita would have us live in God, though for the world in God; in its life, heart and intellect only, and the Gita would have us live in the spirit; in the mutable Being who is "all creatures", and the Gita would have us live also in the Immutable and the Supreme; in the changing march of Time, and the Gita would have us live in the Eternal. Or if these higher things are now beginning to be vaguely envisaged, it is only to make them subservient to man and society; but God and spirituality exist in their own right and not as adjuncts. And in practice the lower in us must learn to exist for the higher, in order that the higher also may in us consciously exist for the lower, to draw it nearer to its own altitudes.

Therefore it is a mistake to interpret the Gita from the standpoint of the mentality of today and force it to teach us the disinterested performance of duty as the highest and all-sufficient law. A little consideration of the situation with which the Gita deals will show us that this could not be its meaning. For the whole point of the teaching, that from which it arises, that which compels the disciple to seek the Teacher, is an inextricable clash of the various related conceptions of duty ending in the collapse of the whole useful intellectual and moral edifice erected by the human mind. In human life some sort of a clash arises fairly often, as for instance between domestic duties and the call of the country or the cause, or between the claim of the country and the good of humanity or some larger religious or moral principle. An inner situation may even arise, as with the Buddha, in which

all duties have to be abandoned, trampled on, flung aside in order to follow the call of the Divine within. I cannot think that the Gita would solve such an inner situation by sending Buddha back to his wife and father and the government of the Sakya State, or would direct a Ramakrishna to become a Pundit in a vernacular school and disinterestedly teach little boys their lessons, or bind down a Vivekananda to support his family and for that to follow dispassionately the law or medicine or journalism. The Gita does not teach the disinterested performance of duties but the following of the divine life, the abandonment of all dharmas, *sarvadharmān*, to take refuge in the Supreme alone, and the divine activity of a Buddha, a Ramakrishna, a Vivekananda is perfectly in consonance with this teaching. Nay, although the Gita prefers action to inaction, it does not rule out the renunciation of works, but accepts it as one of the ways to the Divine. If that can only be attained by renouncing works and life and all duties and the call is strong within us, then into the bonfire they must go, and there is no help for it. The call of God is imperative and cannot be weighed against any other considerations.

But here there is this farther difficulty that the action which Arjuna must do is one from which his moral sense recoils. It is his duty to fight, you say? But that duty has now become to his mind a terrible sin. How does it help him or solve his difficulty, to tell him that he must do his duty disinterestedly, dispassionately? He will want to know which is his duty or how it can be his duty to destroy in a sanguinary massacre his kin, his race and his country. He is told that he has right on his side, but that does not and cannot satisfy him, because his very point is that the justice of his legal claim does not justify him in supporting it by a pitiless massacre destructive to the future of his nation. Is he then to act dispassionately in the sense of not caring whether it is a sin or what its consequences may be so long as he does his duty as a soldier? That may be the teaching of a State, of politicians, of lawyers, of ethical casuists; it can never be the teaching of a great religious and philosophical Scripture which sets out to solve the problem of life and action from the

very roots. And if that is what the Gita has to say on a most poignant moral and spiritual problem, we must put it out of the list of the world's Scriptures and thrust it, if anywhere, then into our library of political science and ethical casuistry.

Undoubtedly, the Gita does, like the Upanishads, teach the equality which rises above sin and virtue, beyond good and evil, but only as a part of the Brahmic consciousness and for the man who is on the path and advanced enough to fulfil the supreme rule. It does not preach indifference to good and evil for the ordinary life of man, where such a doctrine would have the most pernicious consequences. On the contrary it affirms that the doers of evil shall not attain to God. Therefore if Arjuna simply seeks to fulfil in the best way the ordinary law of man's life, disinterested performance of what he feels to be a sin, a thing of Hell, will not help him, even though that sin be his duty as a soldier. He must refrain from what his conscience abhors though a thousand duties were shattered to pieces.

We must remember that duty is an idea which in practice rests upon social conceptions. We may extend the term beyond its proper connotation and talk of our duty to ourselves or we may, if we like, say in a transcendent sense that it was Buddha's duty to abandon all, or even that it is the ascetic's duty to sit motionless in a cave! But this is obviously to play with words. Duty is a relative term and depends upon our relation to others. It is a father's duty, as a father, to nurture and educate his children; a lawyer's to do his best for his client even if he knows him to be guilty and his defence to be a lie; a soldier's to fight and shoot to order even if he kill his own kin and countrymen; a judge's to send the guilty to prison and hang the murderer. And so long as these positions are accepted, the duty remains clear, a practical matter of course even when it is not a point of honour or affection, and overrides the absolute religious or moral law. But what if the inner view is changed, if the lawyer is awakened to the absolute sinfulness of falsehood, the judge becomes convinced that capital punishment is a crime against humanity, the man called upon to the battlefield feels, like the conscientious objector of today or as a Tolstoy would feel, that

in no circumstances is it permissible to take human life any more than to eat human flesh? It is obvious that here the moral law which is above all relative duties must prevail; and that law depends on no social relation or conception of duty but on the awakened inner perception of man, the moral being.

There are in the world, in fact, two different laws of conduct each valid on its own plane, the rule principally dependent on external status and the rule independent of status and entirely dependent on the thought and conscience. The Gita does not teach us to subordinate the higher plane to the lower, it does not ask the awakened moral consciousness to slay itself on the altar of duty as a sacrifice and victim to the law of the social status. It calls us higher and not lower; from the conflict of the two planes it bids us ascend to a supreme poise above the mainly practical, above the purely ethical, to the Brahmic consciousness. It replaces the conception of social duty by a divine obligation. The subjection to external law gives place to a certain principle of inner self-determination of action proceeding by the soul's freedom from the tangled law of works. And this, as we shall see,—the Brahmic consciousness, the soul's freedom from works and the determination of works in the nature by the Lord within and above us,—is the kernel of the Gita's teaching with regard to action.

The Gita can only be understood, like any other great work of the kind, by studying it in its entirety and as a developing argument. But the modern interpreters, starting from the great writer Bankim Chandra Chatterji who first gave to the Gita this new sense of a Gospel of Duty, have laid an almost exclusive stress on the first three or four chapters and in those on the idea of equality, on the expression *kartavyam karma*, the work that is to be done, which they render by duty, and on the phrase "Thou hast a right to action, but none to the fruits of action" which is now popularly quoted as the great word, *mahāvākya*, of the Gita. The rest of the eighteen chapters with their high philosophy are given a secondary importance, except indeed the great vision in the eleventh. This is natural enough for the modern mind which is, or has been till yesterday, inclined to be impatient of

metaphysical subtleties and far-off spiritual seekings, eager to get to work and, like Arjuna himself, mainly concerned for a workable law of works, a *dharma*. But it is the wrong way to handle this Scripture.

The equality which the Gita preaches is not disinterestedness,—the great command to Arjuna given *after* the foundation and main structure of the teaching have been laid and built, “Arise, slay thy enemies, enjoy a prosperous kingdom,” has not the ring of an uncompromising altruism or of a white, dispassionate abnegation; it is a state of inner poise and wideness which is the foundation of spiritual freedom. With that poise, in that freedom we have to do the “work that is to be done,” a phrase which the Gita uses with the greatest wideness including in it all works, *sarvakarmāṇi*, and which far exceeds, though it may include, social duties or ethical obligations. What is the work to be done is not to be determined by the individual choice; nor is the right to the action and the rejection of claim to the fruit the great word of the Gita, but only a preliminary word governing the first state of the disciple when he begins ascending the hill of Yoga. It is practically superseded at a subsequent stage. For the Gita goes on to affirm emphatically that the man is not the doer of the action; it is Prakriti, it is Nature, it is the great Force with its three modes of action that works through him, and he must learn to see that it is *not* he who does the work. Therefore the “right to action” is an idea which is only valid so long as we are still under the illusion of being the doer; it must necessarily disappear from the mind like the claim to the fruit, as soon as we cease to be to our own consciousness the doer of our works. All pragmatic egoism, whether of the claim to fruits or of the right to action, is then at an end.

But the determinism of Prakriti is not the last word of the Gita. The equality of the will and the rejection of fruits are only means for entering with the mind and the heart and the understanding into the divine consciousness and living in it; and the Gita expressly says that they are to be employed as a means as long as the disciple is unable so to live or even to seek by practice the gradual development of this higher state. And

what is this Divine, whom Krishna declares himself to be? It is the Purushottama beyond the Self that acts not, beyond the Prakriti that acts, foundation of the one, master of the other, the Lord of whom all is the manifestation, who even in our present subjection to Maya sits in the heart of His creatures governing the works of Prakriti, He by whom the armies on the field of Kurukshetra have already been slain while yet they live and who uses Arjuna only as an instrument or immediate occasion of this great slaughter. Prakriti is only His executive force. The disciple has to rise beyond this Force and its three modes or *gunas*; he has to become *trigunātīta*. Not to her has he to surrender his actions, over which he has no longer any claim or “right”, but into the being of the Supreme. Reposing his mind and understanding, heart and will in Him, with self-knowledge, with God-knowledge, with world-knowledge, with a perfect equality, a perfect devotion, an absolute self-giving, he has to do works as an offering to the Master of all self-energisings and all sacrifice. Identified in will, conscious with that consciousness, That shall decide and initiate the action. This is the solution which the Divine Teacher offers to the disciple.

What the great, the supreme word of the Gita is, its *mahāvākya*, we have not to seek; for the Gita itself declares it in its last utterance, the crowning note of the great diapason. “With the Lord in thy heart take refuge with all thy being; by His grace thou shalt attain to the supreme peace and the eternal status. So have I expounded to thee a knowledge more secret than that which is hidden. Further hear the most secret, the supreme word that I shall speak to thee. Become my-minded, devoted to Me, to Me do sacrifice and adoration; infallibly, thou shalt come to Me, for dear to me art thou. Abandoning all laws of conduct seek refuge in Me alone. I will release thee from all sin; do not grieve.”

The argument of the Gita resolves itself into three great steps by which action rises out of the human into the divine plane leaving the bondage of the lower for the liberty of a higher law. First, by the renunciation of desire and a perfect equality works have to be done as a sacrifice by man as the doer, a sacrifice to

a deity who is the supreme and only Self though by him not yet realised in his own being. This is the initial step. Secondly, not only the desire of the fruit, but the claim to be the doer of works has to be renounced in the realisation of the Self as the equal, the inactive, the immutable principle and of all works as simply the operation of universal Force, of the Nature-Soul, Prakriti, the unequal, active, mutable power. Lastly, the supreme Self has to be seen as the supreme Purusha governing this Prakriti, of whom the soul in Nature is a partial manifestation, by whom all works are directed, in a perfect transcendence, through Nature. To him love and adoration and the sacrifice of works have to be offered; the whole being has to be surrendered to Him and the whole consciousness raised up to dwell in this divine consciousness so that the human soul may share in His divine transcendence of Nature and of His works and act in a perfect spiritual liberty.

The first step is Karmayoga, the selfless sacrifice of works, and here the Gita's insistence is on action. The second is Jnanayoga, the self-realisation and knowledge of the true nature of the self and the world; and here the insistence is on knowledge; but the sacrifice of works continues and the path of Works becomes one with but does not disappear into the path of Knowledge. The last step is Bhaktiyoga, adoration and seeking of the supreme Self as the Divine Being, and here the insistence is on devotion; but the knowledge is not subordinated, only raised, vitalised and fulfilled, and still the sacrifice of works continues; the double path becomes the triune way of knowledge, works and devotion. And the fruit of the sacrifice, the one fruit still placed before the seeker, is attained, union with the divine Being and oneness with the supreme divine nature.

V

Kurukshetra

BEFORE we can proceed, following in the large steps of the Teacher of the Gita, to watch his tracing of the triune path of man,—the path which is that of his will, heart, thought raising themselves to the Highest and into the being of that which is the supreme object of all action, love and knowledge, we must consider once more the situation from which the Gita arises, but now in its largest bearings as a type of human life and even of all world-existence. For although Arjuna is himself concerned only with his own situation, his inner struggle and the law of action he must follow, yet, as we have seen, the particular question he raises, in the manner in which he raises it, does really bring up the whole question of human life and action, what the world is and why it is and how possibly, it being what it is, life here in the world can be reconciled with life in the Spirit. And all this deep and difficult matter the Teacher insists on resolving as the very foundation of his command to an action which must proceed from a new poise of being and by the light of a liberating knowledge.

But what, then, is it that makes the difficulty for the man who has to take the world as it is and act in it and yet would live, within, the spiritual life? What is this aspect of existence which appals his awakened mind and brings about what the title of the first chapter of the Gita calls significantly the Yoga of the dejection of Arjuna, the dejection and discouragement felt by the human being when he is forced to face the spectacle of the universe as it really is with the veil of the ethical illusion, the illusion of self-righteousness torn from his eyes, before a higher reconciliation with himself is effected? It is that aspect which is figured outwardly in the carnage and massacre of Kurukshetra and spiritually by the vision of the Lord of all things as Time arising to devour and destroy the creatures whom it has made.

This is the vision of the Lord of all existence as the universal Creator but also the universal Destroyer, of whom the ancient Scripture can say in a ruthless image, "The sages and the heroes are his food and death is the spice of his banquet." It is one and the same truth seen first indirectly and obscurely in the facts of life and then directly and clearly in the soul's vision of that which manifests itself in life. The outward aspect is that of world-existence and human existence proceeding by struggle and slaughter; the inward aspect is that of the universal Being fulfilling himself in a vast creation and a vast destruction. Life a battle and a field of death, this is Kurukshetra; God the Terrible, this is the vision that Arjuna sees on that field of massacre.

War, said Heraclitus, is the father of all things, War is the king of all; and the saying, like most of the apophthegms of the Greek thinker, suggests a profound truth. From a clash of material or other forces everything in this world, if not the world itself, seems to be born; by a struggle of forces, tendencies, principles, beings it seems to proceed, ever creating new things, ever destroying the old, marching one knows not very well whither, —to a final self-destruction, say some; in an unending series of vain cycles, say others; in progressive cycles, is the most optimistic conclusion, leading through whatever trouble and apparent confusion towards a higher and higher approximation to some divine apocalypse. However that may be, this is certain that there is not only no construction here without destruction, no harmony except by a poise of contending forces won out of many actual and potential discords, but also no continued existence of life except by a constant self-feeding and devouring of other life. Our very bodily life is a constant dying and being reborn, the body itself a beleaguered city attacked by assailing, protected by defending forces whose business is to devour each other: and this is only a type of all our existence. The command seems to have gone out from the beginning, "Thou shalt not conquer except by battle with thy fellows and thy surroundings; thou shalt not even live except by battle and struggle and by absorbing into thyself other life. The first law of this world that I have made is creation and preservation by destruction."

Ancient thought accepted this starting-point so far as it could see it by scrutiny of the universe. The old Upanishads saw it very clearly and phrased it with an uncompromising thoroughness which will have nothing to do with any honeyed glosses or optimistic scuttlings of the truth. Hunger that is Death, they said, is the creator and master of this world, and they figured vital existence in the image of the Horse of the sacrifice. Matter they described by a name which means ordinarily food and they said, we call it food because it is devoured and devours creatures. The eater eating is eaten, this is the formula of the material world, as the Darwinians rediscovered when they laid it down that the struggle for life is the law of evolutionary existence. Modern science has only rephrased the old truths that had already been expressed in much more forcible, wide and accurate formulas by the apophthegm of Heraclitus and the figures employed by the Upanishads.

Nietzsche's insistence upon war as an aspect of life and the ideal man as a warrior,—the camel-man he may be to begin with and the child-man hereafter, but the lion-man he must become in the middle, if he is to attain his perfection,—these now much-decried theories of Nietzsche have, however much we may differ from many of the moral and practical conclusions he drew from them, their undeniable justification and recall us to a truth we like to hide out of sight. It is good that we should be reminded of it; first, because to see it has for every strong soul a tonic effect which saves us from the flabbiness and relaxation encouraged by a too mellifluous philosophic, religious or ethical sentimentalism, that which loves to look upon Nature as love and life and beauty and good, but turns away from her grim mask of death, adoring God as Shiva but refusing to adore him as Rudra; secondly, because unless we have the honesty and courage to look existence straight in the face, we shall never arrive at any effective solution of its discords and oppositions. We must see first what life and the world are; afterwards, we can all the better set about finding the right way to transform them into what they should be. If this repellent aspect of existence holds in itself some secret of the final harmony, we shall by

ignoring or belittling it miss that secret and all our efforts at a solution will fail by fault of our self-indulgent ignoring of the true elements of the problem. If, on the other hand, it is an enemy to be beaten down, trampled on, excised, eliminated, still we gain nothing by underrating its power and hold upon life or refusing to see how firmly it is rooted in the effective past and the actually operative principles of existence.

War and destruction are not only a universal principle of our life here in its purely material aspects, but also of our mental and moral existence. It is self-evident that in the actual life of man intellectual, social, political, moral we can make no real step forward without a struggle, a battle between what exists and lives and what seeks to exist and live and between all that stands behind either. It is impossible, at least as men and things are, to advance, to grow, to fulfil and still to observe really and utterly that principle of harmlessness which is yet placed before us as the highest and best law of conduct. We will use only soul-force and never destroy by war or any even defensive employment of physical violence? Good, though until soul-force is effective, the Asuric force in men and nations tramples down, breaks, slaughters, burns, pollutes, as we see it doing today, but then at its ease and unhindered, and you have perhaps caused as much destruction of life by your abstinence as others by resort to violence; still you have set up an ideal which may some day and at any rate ought to lead up to better things. But even soul-force, when it is effective, destroys. Only those who have used it with eyes open, know how much more terrible and destructive it is than the sword and the cannon; and only those who do not limit their view to the act and its immediate results, can see how tremendous are its after-effects, how much is eventually destroyed and with that much all the life that depended on it and fed upon it. Evil cannot perish without the destruction of much that lives by the evil, and it is no less destruction even if we personally are saved the pain of a sensational act of violence.

Moreover, every time we use soul-force we raise a great force of Karma against our adversary, the after-movements of which we have no power to control. Vasishtha uses soul-force

against the military violence of Vishwamitra and armies of Huns and Shakas and Pallavas hurl themselves on the aggressor. The very quiescence and passivity of the spiritual man under violence and aggression awakens the tremendous forces of the world to a retributive action; and it may even be more merciful to stay in their path, though by force, those who represent evil than to allow them to trample on until they call down on themselves a worse destruction than we would ever think of inflicting. It is not enough that our own hands should remain clean and our souls unstained for the law of strife and destruction to die out of the world; that which is its root must first disappear out of humanity. Much less will mere immobility and inertia unwilling to use or incapable of using any kind of resistance to evil, abrogate the law; inertia, tamas, indeed, injures much more than can the rajasic principle of strife which at least creates more than it destroys. Therefore, so far as the problem of the individual's action goes, his abstention from strife and its inevitable concomitant destruction in their more gross and physical form may help his own moral being, but it leaves the Slayer of creatures unabashed.

For the rest the whole of human history bears witness to the inexorable vitality and persistent prevalence of this principle in the world. It is natural that we should attempt to palliate, to lay stress on other aspects. Strife and destruction are not all; there is the saving principle of association and mutual help as well as the force of dissociation and mutual strife; a power of love no less than a power of egoistic self-assertion; an impulse to sacrifice ourselves for others as well as the impulse to sacrifice others to ourselves. But when we see how these have actually worked, we shall not be tempted to gloss over or ignore the power of their opposites. Association has been worked not only for mutual help, but at the same time for defence and aggression, to strengthen us against all that attacks or resists in the struggle for life. Association itself has been a servant of war, egoism and the self-assertion of life against life. Love itself has been constantly a power of death. Especially the love of good and the love of God, as embraced by the human ego, have been responsible for

much strife, slaughter and destruction. Self-sacrifice is great and noble, but at its highest it is an acknowledgment of the law of Life by death and becomes an offering on the altar of some Power that demands a victim in order that the work desired may be done. The mother bird facing the animal of prey in defence of its young, the patriot dying for his country's freedom, the religious martyr or the martyr of an idea, these in the lower and the superior scale of animal life are highest examples of self-sacrifice, and it is evident to what they bear witness.

But if we look at after results, an easy optimism becomes even less possible. See the patriot dying in order that his country may be free, and mark that country a few decades after the Lord of Karma has paid the price of the blood and the suffering that was given; you shall see it in its turn an oppressor, an exploiter and conqueror of colonies and dependencies devouring others that it may live and succeed aggressively in life. The Christian martyrs perish in their thousands, setting soul-force against empire-force that Christ may conquer, Christianity prevail. Soul-force does triumph, Christianity does prevail, — but not Christ; the victorious religion becomes a militant and dominant Church and a more fanatically persecuting power than the creed and the empire which it replaced. The very religions organise themselves into powers of mutual strife and battle together fiercely to live, to grow, to possess the world.

All which seems to show that here is an element in existence, perhaps the initial element, which we do not know how to conquer either because it cannot be conquered or because we have not looked at it with a strong and impartial gaze so as to recognise it calmly and fairly and know what it is. We must look existence in the face if our aim is to arrive at a right solution, whatever that solution may be. And to look existence in the face is to look God in the face; for the two cannot be separated, nor the responsibility for the laws of world-existence be shifted away from Him who created them or from That which constituted it. Yet here too we love to palliate and equivocate. We erect a God of Love and Mercy, a God of good, a God just, righteous and virtuous according to our own moral conceptions

of justice, virtue and righteousness, and all the rest, we say, is not He or is not His, but was made by some diabolical Power which He suffered for some reason to work out its wicked will or by some dark Ahriman counterbalancing our gracious Ormuzd, or was even the fault of selfish and sinful man who has spoiled what was made originally perfect by God. As if man had created the law of death and devouring in the animal world or that tremendous process by which Nature creates indeed and preserves but in the same step and by the same inextricable action slays and destroys. It is only a few religions which have had the courage to say without any reserve, like the Indian, that this enigmatic World-Power is one Deity, one Trinity, to lift up the image of the Force that acts in the world in the figure not only of the beneficent Durga, but of the terrible Kali in her blood-stained dance of destruction and to say, "This too is the Mother; this also know to be God; this too, if thou hast the strength, adore." And it is significant that the religion which has had this unflinching honesty and tremendous courage, has succeeded in creating a profound and wide-spread spirituality such as no other can parallel. For truth is the foundation of real spirituality and courage is its soul. *Tasyai satyam āyatanaṁ*.

All this is not to say that strife and destruction are the alpha and omega of existence, that harmony is not greater than war, love more the manifest divine than death or that we must not move towards the replacement of physical force by soul-force, of war by peace, of strife by union, of devouring by love, of egoism by universality, of death by immortal life. God is not only the Destroyer, but the Friend of creatures; not only the cosmic Trinity, but the Transcendent; the terrible Kali is also the loving and beneficent Mother; the lord of Kurukshtera is the divine comrade and charioteer, the attracter of beings, incarnate Krishna. And whithersoever he is driving through all the strife and clash and confusion, to whatever goal or godhead he may be attracting us, it is — no doubt of that — to some transcendence of all these aspects upon which we have been so firmly insisting. But where, how, with what kind of transcendence, under what conditions, this we have to discover; and to discover it, the first

necessity is to see the world as it is, to observe and value rightly his action as it reveals itself at the start and now; afterwards the way and the goal will better reveal themselves. We must acknowledge Kurukshetra; we must submit to the law of Life by Death before we can find our way to the life immortal; we must open our eyes, with a less appalled gaze than Arjuna's, to the vision of our Lord of Time and Death and cease to deny, hate or recoil from the universal Destroyer.

Man and the Battle of Life

THUS, if we are to appreciate in its catholicity the teaching of the Gita, we must accept intellectually its standpoint and courageous envisaging of the manifest nature and process of the world. The divine charioteer of Kurukshetra reveals himself on one side as the Lord of all the worlds and the Friend and omniscient Guide of all creatures, on the other as Time the Destroyer "arisen for the destruction of these peoples." The Gita, following in this the spirit of the catholic Hindu religion, affirms this also as God; it does not attempt to evade the enigma of the world by escaping from it through a side-door. If, in fact, we do not regard existence merely as the mechanic action of a brute and indifferent material Force or, on the other hand, as an equally mechanical play of ideas and energies arising out of an original Non-Existence or else reflected in the passive Soul or the evolution of a dream or nightmare in the surface consciousness of an indifferent, immutable Transcendence which is unaffected by the dream and has no real part in it,—if we accept at all, as the Gita accepts, the existence of God, that is to say of the omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, yet always transcendent Being who manifests the world and Himself in the world, who is not the slave but the lord of His creative Consciousness, Nature or Force (Maya, Prakriti or Shakti), who is not baffled or thwarted in His world-conception or design by His creatures, man or devil, who does not need to justify Himself by shifting the responsibility for any part of His creation or manifestation on that which is created or manifested, then the human being has to start from a great, a difficult act of faith. Finding himself in a world which is apparently a chaos of battling powers, a clash of vast and obscure forces, a life which subsists only by constant change and death, menaced from every side by pain, suffering, evil and destruction, he has to see the omnipresent

Deity in it all and conscious that of this enigma there must be a solution and beyond this Ignorance in which he dwells a Knowledge that reconciles, he has to take his stand upon this faith, "Though Thou slay me, yet will I trust in Thee." All human thought or faith that is active and affirmative, whether it be theistic, pantheistic or atheistic, does in fact involve more or less explicitly and completely such an attitude. It admits and it believes: admits the discords of the world, believes in some highest principle of God, universal Being or Nature which shall enable us to transcend, overcome or harmonise these discords, perhaps even to do all three at once, to harmonise by overcoming and transcending.

Then, as to human life in its actualities, we have to accept its aspect of a struggle and a battle mounting into supreme crises such as that of Kurukshetra. The Gita, as we have seen, takes for its frame such a period of transition and crisis as humanity periodically experiences in its history, in which great forces clash together for a huge destruction and reconstruction, intellectual, social, moral, religious, political, and these in the actual psychological and social stage of human evolution culminate usually through a violent physical convulsion of strife, war or revolution. The Gita proceeds from the acceptance of the necessity in Nature for such vehement crises and it accepts not only the moral aspect, the struggle between righteousness and unrighteousness, between the self-affirming law of Good and the forces that oppose its progression, but also the physical aspect, the actual armed war or other vehement physical strife between the human beings who represent the antagonistic powers. We must remember that the Gita was composed at a time when war was even more than it is now a necessary part of human activity and the idea of its elimination from the scheme of life would have been an absolute chimera. The gospel of universal peace and goodwill among men—for without a universal and entire mutual goodwill there can be no real and abiding peace—has never succeeded for a moment in possessing itself of human life during the historic cycle of our progress, because morally, socially, spiritually the race was not prepared and the poise of

Nature in its evolution would not admit of its being immediately prepared for any such transcendence. Even now we have not actually progressed beyond the feasibility of a system of accommodation between conflicting interests which may minimise the recurrence of the worst forms of strife. And towards this consummation the method, the approach which humanity has been forced by its own nature to adopt, is a monstrous mutual massacre unparalleled in history; a universal war, full of bitterness and irreconcilable hatred, is the straight way and the triumphant means modern man has found for the establishment of universal peace! That consummation, too, founded not upon any fundamental change in human nature, but upon intellectual notions, economic convenience, vital and sentimental shrinkings from the loss of life, discomfort and horror of war, effected by nothing better than political adjustments, gives no very certain promise of firm foundation and long duration. A day may come, must surely come, we will say, when humanity will be ready spiritually, morally, socially for the reign of universal peace; meanwhile the aspect of battle and the nature and function of man as a fighter have to be accepted and accounted for by any practical philosophy and religion. The Gita, taking life as it is and not only as it may be in some distant future, puts the question how this aspect and function of life, which is really an aspect and function of human activity in general, can be harmonised with the spiritual existence.

The Gita is therefore addressed to a fighter, a man of action, one whose duty in life is that of war and protection, war as a part of government for the protection of those who are excused from that duty, debarred from protecting themselves and therefore at the mercy of the strong and the violent, war, secondly and by a moral extension of this idea, for the protection of the weak and the oppressed and for the maintenance of right and justice in the world. For all these ideas, the social and practical, the moral and the chivalrous enter into the Indian conception of the Kshatriya, the man who is a warrior and ruler by function and a knight and king in his nature. Although the more general and universal ideas of the Gita are those which are the most

important to us, we ought not to leave out of consideration altogether the colouring and trend they take from the peculiar Indian culture and social system in the midst of which they arose. That system differed from the modern in its conception. To the modern mind man is a thinker, worker or producer and a fighter all in one, and the tendency of the social system is to lump all these activities and to demand from each individual his contribution to the intellectual, economical and military life and needs of the community without paying any heed to the demands of his individual nature and temperament. The ancient Indian civilisation laid peculiar stress on the individual nature, tendency, temperament and sought to determine by it the ethical type, function and place in the society. Nor did it consider man primarily as a social being or the fullness of his social existence as the highest ideal, but rather as a spiritual being in process of formation and development and his social life, ethical law, play of temperament and exercise of function as means and stages of spiritual formation. Thought and knowledge, war and government, production and distribution, labour and service were carefully differentiated functions of society, each assigned to those who were naturally called to it and providing the right means by which they could individually proceed towards their spiritual development and self-perfection.

The modern idea of a common obligation in all the main departments of human activity has its advantages; it helps to greater solidarity, unity and fullness in the life of the community and a more all-round development of the complete human being as opposed to the endless divisions and over-specialisation and the narrowing and artificial shackling of the life of the individual to which the Indian system eventually led. But it has also its disadvantages and in certain of its developments the too logical application of it has led to grotesque and disastrous absurdities. This is evident enough in the character of modern war. From the idea of a common military obligation binding on every individual to defend and fight for the community by which he lives and profits, has arisen the system by which the whole manhood of the nation is hurled into the bloody trench to slay

and be slain, thinkers, artists, philosophers, priests, merchants, artisans all torn from their natural functions, the whole life of the community disorganised, reason and conscience overridden, even the minister of religion who is salaried by the State or called by his function to preach the gospel of peace and love forced to deny his creed and become a butcher of his fellow-men! Not only are conscience and nature violated by the arbitrary fiat of the military State, but national defence carried to an insane extreme makes its best attempt to become a national suicide.

Indian civilisation on the contrary made it its chief aim to minimise the incidence and disaster of war. For this purpose it limited the military obligation to the small class who by their birth, nature and traditions were marked out for this function and found in it their natural means of self-development through the flowering of the soul in the qualities of courage, disciplined force, strong helpfulness and chivalrous nobility for which the warrior's life pursued under the stress of a high ideal gives a field and opportunities. The rest of the community was in every way guarded from slaughter and outrage; their life and occupations were as little interfered with as possible and the combative and destructive tendencies of human nature were given a restricted field, confined in a sort of lists so as to do the minimum amount of harm to the general life of the race, while at the same time by being subjected to high ethical ideals and every possible rule of humanity and chivalry the function of war was obliged to help in ennobling and elevating instead of brutalising those who performed it. It must be remembered that it is war of this kind and under these conditions that the Gita had in view, war considered as an inevitable part of human life, but so restricted and regulated as to serve like other activities the ethical and spiritual development which was then regarded as the whole real object of life, war destructive within certain carefully fixed limits of the bodily life of individual men but constructive of their inner life and of the ethical elevation of the race. That war in the past has, when subjected to an ideal, helped in this elevation, as in the development of knighthood and chivalry, the

Indian ideal of the Kshatriya, the Japanese ideal of the Samurai, can only be denied by the fanatics of pacifism. When it has fulfilled its function, it may well disappear; for if it tries to survive its utility, it will appear as an unrelieved brutality of violence stripped of its ideal and constructive aspects and will be rejected by the progressive mind of humanity; but its past service to the race must be admitted in any reasonable view of our evolution.

The physical fact of war, however, is only a special and outward manifestation of a general principle in life and the Kshatriya is only the outward manifestation and type of a general characteristic necessary to the completeness of human perfection. War typifies and embodies physically the aspect of battle and struggle which belongs to all life, both to our inner and our outer living, in a world whose method is a meeting and wrestling of forces which progress by mutual destruction towards a continually changing adjustment expressive of a progressive harmonising and hopeful of a perfect harmony based upon some yet ungrasped potentiality of oneness. The Kshatriya is the type and embodiment of the fighter in man who accepts this principle in life and faces it as a warrior striving towards mastery, not shrinking from the destruction of bodies and forms, but through it all aiming at the realisation of some principle of right, justice, law which shall be the basis of the harmony towards which the struggle tends. The Gita accepts this aspect of the world-energy and the physical fact of war which embodies it, and it addresses itself to the man of action, the striver and fighter, the Kshatriya,—war which is the extreme contradiction of the soul's high aspiration to peace within and harmlessness¹ without, the striver and fighter whose necessary turmoil of struggle and action seems to be the very contradiction of the soul's high ideal of calm mastery and self-possession,—and it seeks for an issue from the contradiction, a point at which its terms meet and a poise which shall be the first essential basis of harmony and transcendence.

¹ *abīmśā*.

Man meets the battle of life in the manner most consonant with the essential quality most dominant in his nature. There are, according to the Sankhya philosophy accepted in this respect by the Gita, three essential qualities or modes of the world-energy and therefore also of human nature, *sattva*, the mode of poise, knowledge and satisfaction, *rajas*, the mode of passion, action and struggling emotion, *tamas*, the mode of ignorance and inertia. Dominated by *tamas*, man does not so much meet the rush and shock of the world-energies whirling about him and converging upon him as he succumbs to them, is overborne by them, afflicted, subjected; or at the most, helped by the other qualities, the tamasic man seeks only somehow to survive, to subsist so long as he may, to shelter himself in the fortress of an established routine of thought and action in which he feels himself to a certain extent protected from the battle, able to reject the demand which his higher nature makes upon him, excused from accepting the necessity of farther struggle and the ideal of an increasing effort and mastery. Dominated by *rajas*, man flings himself into the battle and attempts to use the struggle of forces for his own egoistic benefit, to slay, conquer, dominate, enjoy; or, helped by a certain measure of the sattwic quality, the rajasic man makes the struggle itself a means of increasing inner mastery, joy, power, possession. The battle of life becomes his delight and passion partly for its own sake, for the pleasure of activity and the sense of power, partly as a means of his increase and natural self-development. Dominated by *sattva*, man seeks in the midst of the strife for a principle of law, right, poise, harmony, peace, satisfaction. The purely sattwic man tends to seek this within, whether for himself alone or with an impulse to communicate it, when won, to other human minds, but usually by a sort of inner detachment from or else an outer rejection of the strife and turmoil of the active world-energy; but if the sattwic mind accepts partly the rajasic impulse, it seeks rather to impose this poise and harmony upon the struggle and apparent chaos, to vindicate a victory for peace, love and harmony over the principle of war, discord and struggle. All the attitudes adopted by the human mind towards the problem of life either

derive from the domination of one or other of these qualities or else from an attempt at balance and harmony between them.

But there comes also a stage in which the mind recoils from the whole problem and, dissatisfied with the solutions given by the threefold mode of Nature, *traigunya*, seeks for some higher solution outside of it or else above it. It looks for an escape either into something which is outside and void of all qualities and therefore of all activity or in something which is superior to the three qualities and master of them and therefore at once capable of action and unaffected, undominated by its own action, in the *nirguna* or the *trigunātīta*. It aspires to an absolute peace and unconditioned existence or to a dominant calm and superior existence. The natural movement of the former attitude is towards the renunciation of the world, *sannyāsa*; of the latter towards superiority to the claims of the lower nature and its whirl of actions and reactions, and its principle is equality and the inner renunciation of passion and desire. The former is the first impulse of Arjuna recoiling from the calamitous culmination of all his heroic activity in the great cataclysm of battle and massacre, Kurukshetra; losing his whole past principle of action, inaction and the rejection of life and its claims seem to him the only issue. But it is to an inner superiority and not to the physical renunciation of life and action that he is called by the voice of the divine Teacher.

Arjuna is the Kshatriya, the rajasic man who governs his rajasic action by a high sattvic ideal. He advances to this gigantic struggle, to this Kurukshetra with the full acceptance of the joy of battle, as to "a holiday of fight", but with a proud confidence in the righteousness of his cause; he advances in his rapid chariot tearing the hearts of his enemies with the victorious clamour of his war-conch; for he wishes to look upon all these Kings of men who have come here to champion against him the cause of unrighteousness and establish as a rule of life the disregard of law, justice and truth which they would replace by the rule of a selfish and arrogant egoism. When this confidence is shattered within him, when he is smitten down from his customary attitude and mental basis of life, it is by the uprush of the tamasic quality into

the rajasic man, inducing a recoil of astonishment, grief, horror, dismay, dejection, bewilderment of the mind and the war of reason against itself, a collapse towards the principle of ignorance and inertia. As a result he turns towards renunciation. Better the life of the mendicant living upon alms than this *dharma* of the Kshatriya, this battle and action culminating in undiscriminating massacre, this principle of mastery and glory and power which can only be won by destruction and bloodshed, this conquest of blood-stained enjoyments, this vindication of justice and right by a means which contradicts all righteousness and this affirmation of the social law by a war which destroys in its process and result all that constitutes society.

Sannyāsa is the renunciation of life and action and of the threefold modes of Nature, but it has to be approached through one or other of the three qualities. The impulse may be tamasic, a feeling of impotence, fear, aversion, disgust, horror of the world and life; or it may be the rajasic quality tending towards tamas, an impulse of weariness of the struggle, grief, disappointment, refusal to accept any longer this vain turmoil of activity with its pains and its eternal discontent. Or the impulse may be that of rajas tending towards sattwa, the impulse to arrive at something superior to anything life can give, to conquer a higher state, to trample down life itself under the feet of an inner strength which seeks to break all bonds and transcend all limits. Or it may be sattvic, an intellectual perception of the vanity of life and the absence of any real goal or justification for this ever-cycling world-existence or else a spiritual perception of the Timeless, the Infinite, the Silent, the nameless and formless Peace beyond. The recoil of Arjuna is the tamasic recoil from action of the sattwa-rajasic man. The Teacher may confirm it in its direction, using it as a dark entry to the purity and peace of the ascetic life; or he may purify it at once and raise it towards the rare altitudes of the sattvic tendency of renunciation. In fact, he does neither. He discourages the tamasic recoil and the tendency to renunciation and enjoins the continuance of action and even of the same fierce and terrible action, but he points the disciple towards another and inner renunciation which is the real issue

from his crisis and the way towards the soul's superiority to the world-Nature and yet its calm and self-possessed action in the world. Not a physical asceticism, but an inner askesis is the teaching of the Gita.

VII

The Creed of the Aryan Fighter¹

THE ANSWER of the divine Teacher to the first flood of Arjuna's passionate self-questioning, his shrinking from slaughter, his sense of sorrow and sin, his grieving for an empty and desolate life, his forecast of evil results of an evil deed, is a strongly-worded rebuke. All this, it is replied, is confusion of mind and delusion, a weakness of the heart, an unmanliness, a fall from the virility of the fighter and the hero. Not this was fitting in the son of Pritha, not thus should the champion and chief hope of a righteous cause abandon it in the hour of crisis and peril or suffer the sudden amazement of his heart and senses, the clouding of his reason and the downfall of his will to betray him into the casting away of his divine weapons and the refusal of his God-given work. This is not the way cherished and followed by the Aryan man; this mood came not from heaven nor can it lead to heaven, and on earth it is the forfeiting of the glory that waits upon strength and heroism and noble works. Let him put from him this weak and self-indulgent pity, let him rise and smite his enemies!

The answer of a hero to a hero, shall we say, but not that which we should expect from a divine Teacher from whom we demand rather that he shall encourage always gentleness and saintliness and self-abnegation and the recoil from worldly aims and cessation from the ways of the world? The Gita expressly says that Arjuna has thus lapsed into unheroic weakness, "his eyes full and distressed with tears, his heart overcome by depression and discouragement," because he is invaded by pity, *kṛpayāviṣṭam*. Is this not then a divine weakness? Is not pity a divine emotion which should not thus be discouraged with harsh rebuke? Or are we in face of a mere gospel of war and heroic

¹ Gita, II. 1-38.

action, a Nietzschean creed of power and high-browed strength, of Hebraic or old Teutonic hardness which holds pity to be a weakness and thinks like the Norwegian hero who thanked God because He had given him a hard heart? But the teaching of the Gita springs from an Indian creed and to the Indian mind compassion has always figured as one of the largest elements of the divine nature. The Teacher himself enumerating in a later chapter the qualities of the godlike nature in man places among them compassion to creatures, gentleness, freedom from wrath and from the desire to slay and do hurt, no less than fearlessness and high spirit and energy. Harshness and hardness and fierceness and a satisfaction in slaying enemies and amassing wealth and unjust enjoyments are Asuric qualities; they come from the violent Titanic nature which denies the Divine in the world and the Divine in man and worships Desire only as its deity. It is not then from any such standpoint that the weakness of Arjuna merits rebuke.

"Whence has come to thee this dejection, this stain and darkness of the soul in the hour of difficulty and peril?" asks Krishna of Arjuna. The question points to the real nature of Arjuna's deviation from his heroic qualities. There is a divine compassion which descends to us from on high and for the man whose nature does not possess it, is not cast in its mould, to pretend to be the superior man, the master-man or the superman is a folly and an insolence, for he alone is the superman who most manifests the highest nature of the Godhead in humanity. This compassion observes with an eye of love and wisdom and calm strength the battle and the struggle, the strength and weakness of man, his virtues and sins, his joy and suffering, his knowledge and his ignorance, his wisdom and his folly, his aspiration and his failure and it enters into it all to help and to heal. In the saint and philanthropist it may cast itself into the mould of a plenitude of love or charity; in the thinker and hero it assumes the largeness and the force of a helpful wisdom and strength. It is this compassion in the Aryan fighter, the soul of his chivalry, which will not break the bruised reed, but helps and protects the weak and the oppressed and the wounded and the fallen. But it

is also the divine compassion that smites down the strong tyrant and the confident oppressor, not in wrath and with hatred,—for these are not the high divine qualities, the wrath of God against the sinner, God's hatred of the wicked are the fables of half-enlightened creeds, as much a fable as the eternal torture of the Hells they have invented,—but, as the old Indian spirituality clearly saw, with as much love and compassion for the strong Titan erring by his strength and slain for his sins as for the sufferer and the oppressed who have to be saved from his violence and injustice.

But such is not the compassion which actuates Arjuna in the rejection of his work and mission. That is not compassion but an impotence full of a weak self-pity, a recoil from the mental suffering which his act must entail on himself,—“I see not what shall thrust from me the sorrow that dries up the senses,”—and of all things self-pity is among the most ignoble and un-Aryan of moods. Its pity for others is also a form of self-indulgence; it is the physical shrinking of the nerves from the act of slaughter, the egoistic emotional shrinking of the heart from the destruction of the Dhritarashtrians because they are “one’s own people” and without them life will be empty. This pity is a weakness of the mind and senses,—a weakness which may well be beneficial to men of a lower grade of development, who have to be weak because otherwise they will be hard and cruel; for they have to cure the harsher by the gentler forms of sensational egoism, they have to call in tamas, the debile principle, to help sattwa, the principle of light, in quelling the strength and excess of their rajasic passions. But this way is not for the developed Aryan man who has to grow not by weakness, but by an ascension from strength to strength. Arjuna is the divine man, the master-man in the making and as such he has been chosen by the gods. He has a work given to him, he has God beside him in his chariot, he has the heavenly bow Gandiva in his hand, he has the champions of unrighteousness, the opponents of the divine leading of the world in his front. Not his is the right to determine what he shall do or not do according to his emotions and his passions, or to shrink from

a necessary destruction by the claim of his egoistic heart and reason, or to decline his work because it will bring sorrow and emptiness to his life or because its earthly result has no value to him in the absence of the thousands who must perish. All that is a weak falling from his higher nature. He has to see only the work that must be done, *kartavyam karma*, to hear only the divine command breathed through his warrior nature, to feel only for the world and the destiny of mankind calling to him as its god-sent man to assist its march and clear its path of the dark armies that beset it.

Arjuna in his reply to Krishna admits the rebuke even while he strives against and refuses the command. He is aware of his weakness and yet accepts subjection to it. It is poorness of spirit, he owns, that has smitten away from him his true heroic nature; his whole consciousness is bewildered in its view of right and wrong and he accepts the divine Friend as his teacher; but the emotional and intellectual props on which he had supported his sense of righteousness have been entirely cast down and he cannot accept a command which seems to appeal only to his old standpoint and gives him no new basis for action. He attempts still to justify his refusal of the work and puts forward in its support the claim of his nervous and sensational being which shrinks from the slaughter with its sequel of blood-stained enjoyments, the claim of his heart which recoils from the sorrow and emptiness of life that will follow his act, the claim of his customary moral notions which are appalled by the necessity of slaying his gurus, Bhishma and Drona, the claim of his reason which sees no good but only evil results of the terrible and violent work assigned to him. He is resolved that on the old basis of thought and motive he will not fight and he awaits in silence the answer to objections that seem to him unanswerable. It is these claims of Arjuna's egoistic being that Krishna sets out first to destroy in order to make place for the higher law which shall transcend all egoistic motives of action.

The answer of the Teacher proceeds upon two different lines, first, a brief reply founded upon the highest ideas of the general Aryan culture in which Arjuna has been educated,

secondly, another and larger founded on a more intimate knowledge, opening into deeper truths of our being, which is the real starting-point of the teaching of the Gita. This first answer relies on the philosophic and moral conceptions of the Vedantic philosophy and the social idea of duty and honour which formed the ethical basis of Aryan society. Arjuna has sought to justify his refusal on ethical and rational grounds, but he has merely cloaked by words of apparent rationality the revolt of his ignorant and unchastened emotions. He has spoken of the physical life and the death of the body as if these were the primary realities; but they have no such essential value to the sage and the thinker. The sorrow for the bodily death of his friends and kindred is a grief to which wisdom and the true knowledge of life lend no sanction. The enlightened man does not mourn either for the living or the dead, for he knows that suffering and death are merely incidents in the history of the soul. The soul, not the body, is the reality. All these kings of men for whose approaching death he mourns, have lived before, they will live again in the human body; for as the soul passes physically through childhood and youth and age, so it passes on to the changing of the body. The calm and wise mind, the *dhīra*, the thinker who looks upon life steadily and does not allow himself to be disturbed and blinded by his sensations and emotions, is not deceived by material appearances; he does not allow the clamour of his blood and his nerves and his heart to cloud his judgment or to contradict his knowledge. He looks beyond the apparent facts of the life of the body and senses to the real fact of his being and rises beyond the emotional and physical desires of the ignorant nature to the true and only aim of the human existence.

What is that real fact? that highest aim? This, that human life and death repeated through the aeons in the great cycles of the world are only a long progress by which the human being prepares and makes himself fit for immortality. And how shall he prepare himself? who is the man that is fit? The man who rises above the conception of himself as a life and a body, who does not accept the material and sensational touches of the world at their own value or at the value which the physical man attaches

to them, who knows himself and all as souls, learns himself to live in his soul and not in his body and deals with others too as souls and not as mere physical beings. For by immortality is meant not the survival of death,—that is already given to every creature born with a mind,—but the transcendence of life and death. It means that ascension by which man ceases to live as a mind-informed body and lives at last as a spirit and in the Spirit. Whoever is subject to grief and sorrow, a slave to the sensations and emotions, occupied by the touches of things transient cannot become fit for immortality. These things must be borne until they are conquered, till they can give no pain to the liberated man, till he is able to receive all the material happenings of the world whether joyful or sorrowful with a wise and calm equality, even as the tranquil eternal Spirit secret within us receives them. To be disturbed by sorrow and horror as Arjuna has been disturbed, to be deflected by them from the path that has to be travelled, to be overcome by self-pity and intolerance of sorrow and recoil from the unavoidable and trivial circumstance of the death of the body, this is un-Aryan ignorance. It is not the way of the Aryan climbing in calm strength towards the immortal life.

There is no such thing as death, for it is the body that dies and the body is not the man. That which really is, cannot go out of existence, though it may change the forms through which it appears, just as that which is non-existent cannot come into being. The soul is and cannot cease to be. This opposition of is and is not, this balance of being and becoming which is the mind's view of existence, finds its end in the realisation of the soul as the one imperishable self by whom all this universe has been extended. Finite bodies have an end, but that which possesses and uses the body, is infinite, illimitable, eternal, indestructible. It casts away old and takes up new bodies as a man changes worn-out raiment for new; and what is there in this to grieve at and recoil and shrink? This is not born, nor does it die, nor is it a thing that comes into being once and passing away will never come into being again. It is unborn, ancient, sempiternal; it is not slain with the slaying of the body. Who can slay the immortal spirit? Weapons cannot cleave it, nor the fire burn, nor do the

waters drench it, nor the wind dry. Eternally stable, immobile, all-pervading, it is for ever and for ever. Not manifested like the body, but greater than all manifestation, not to be analysed by the thought, but greater than all mind, not capable of change and modification like the life and its organs and their objects, but beyond the changes of mind and life and body, it is yet the Reality which all these strive to figure.

Even if the truth of our being were a thing less sublime, vast, intangible by death and life, if the self were constantly subject to birth and death, still the death of beings ought not to be a cause of sorrow. For that is an inevitable circumstance of the soul's self-manifestation. Its birth is an appearing out of some state in which it is not non-existent but unmanifest to our mortal senses, its death is a return to that unmanifest world or condition and out of it it will again appear in the physical manifestation. The to-do made by the physical mind and senses about death and the horror of death whether on the sick-bed or the battlefield, is the most ignorant of nervous clamours. Our sorrow for the death of men is an ignorant grieving for those for whom there is no cause to grieve, since they have neither gone out of existence nor suffered any painful or terrible change of condition, but are beyond death no less in being and no more unhappy in circumstance than in life. But in reality the higher truth is the real truth. All are that Self, that One, that Divine whom we look on and speak and hear of as the wonderful beyond our comprehension, for after all our seeking and declaring of knowledge and learning from those who have knowledge no human mind has ever known this Absolute. It is this which is here veiled by the world, the master of the body; all life is only its shadow; the coming of the soul into physical manifestation and our passing out of it by death is only one of its minor movements. When we have known ourselves as this, then to speak of ourselves as slayer or slain is an absurdity. One thing only is the truth in which we have to live, the Eternal manifesting itself as the soul of man in the great cycle of its pilgrimage with birth and death for milestones, with worlds beyond as resting-places, with all the circumstances of life happy or unhappy as the means of

our progress and battle and victory and with immortality as the home to which the soul travels.

Therefore, says the Teacher, put away this vain sorrow and shrinking, fight, O son of Bharata. But wherefore such a conclusion? This high and great knowledge, this strenuous self-discipline of the mind and soul by which it is to rise beyond the clamour of the emotions and the cheat of the senses to true self-knowledge, may well free us from grief and delusion; it may well cure us of the fear of death and the sorrow for the dead; it may well show us that those whom we speak of as dead are not dead at all nor to be sorrowed for, since they have only gone beyond; it may well teach us to look undisturbed upon the most terrible assaults of life and upon the death of the body as a trifle; it may exalt us to the conception of all life's circumstances as a manifestation of the One and as a means for our souls to raise themselves above appearances by an upward evolution until we know ourselves as the immortal Spirit. But how does it justify the action demanded of Arjuna and the slaughter of Kurukshetra? The answer is that this is the action required of Arjuna in the path he has to travel; it has come inevitably in the performance of the function demanded of him by his *svadharma*, his social duty, the law of his life and the law of his being. This world, this manifestation of the Self in the material universe is not only a cycle of inner development, but a field in which the external circumstances of life have to be accepted as an environment and an occasion for that development. It is a world of mutual help and struggle; not a serene and peaceful gliding through easy joys is the progress it allows us, but every step has to be gained by heroic effort and through a clash of opposing forces. Those who take up the inner and the outer struggle even to the most physical clash of all, that of war, are the Kshatriyas, the mighty men; war, force, nobility, courage are their nature; protection of the right and an unflinching acceptance of the gage of battle is their virtue and their duty. For there is continually a struggle between right and wrong, justice and injustice, the force that protects and the force that violates and oppresses, and when this has once been brought to the issue of physical strife, the champion and

standard-bearer of the Right must not shake and tremble at the violent and terrible nature of the work he has to do; he must not abandon his followers or fellow-fighters, betray his cause and leave the standard of Right and Justice to trail in the dust and be trampled into mire by the blood-stained feet of the oppressor, because of a weak pity for the violent and cruel and a physical horror of the vastness of the destruction decreed. His virtue and his duty lie in battle and not in abstention from battle; it is not slaughter, but non-slaying which would here be the sin.

The Teacher then turns aside for a moment to give another answer to the cry of Arjuna over the sorrow of the death of kindred which will empty his life of the causes and objects of living. What is the true object of the Kshatriya's life and his true happiness? Not self-pleasing and domestic happiness and a life of comfort and peaceful joy with friends and relatives, but to battle for the right is his true object of life and to find a cause for which he can lay down his life or by victory win the crown and glory of the hero's existence is his greatest happiness. "There is no greater good for the Kshatriya than righteous battle, and when such a battle comes to them of itself like the open gate of heaven, happy are the Kshatriyas then. If thou doest not this battle for the right, then hast thou abandoned thy duty and virtue and thy glory, and sin shall be thy portion." He will by such a refusal incur disgrace and the reproach of fear and weakness and the loss of his Kshatriya honour. For what is worst grief for a Kshatriya? It is the loss of his honour, his fame, his noble station among the mighty men, the men of courage and power; that to him is much worse than death. Battle, courage, power, rule, the honour of the brave, the heaven of those who fall nobly, this is the warrior's ideal. To lower that ideal, to allow a smirch to fall on that honour, to give the example of a hero among heroes whose action lays itself open to the reproach of cowardice and weakness and thus to lower the moral standard of mankind, is to be false to himself and to the demand of the world on its leaders and kings. "Slain thou shalt win Heaven, victorious thou shalt enjoy the earth; therefore arise, O son of Kunti, resolved upon battle."

This heroic appeal may seem to be on a lower level than the stoical spirituality which precedes and the deeper spirituality which follows; for in the next verse the Teacher bids him to make grief and happiness, loss and gain, victory and defeat equal to his soul and then turn to the battle,—the real teaching of the Gita. But Indian ethics has always seen the practical necessity of graded ideals for the developing moral and spiritual life of man. The Kshatriya ideal, the ideal of the four orders is here placed in its social aspect, not as afterwards in its spiritual meaning. This, says Krishna in effect, is my answer to you if you insist on joy and sorrow and the result of your actions as your motive of action. I have shown you in what direction the higher knowledge of self and the world points you; I have now shown you in what direction your social duty and the ethical standard of your order point you, *svadharmaṁ api cāvekṣya*. Whichever you consider, the result is the same. But if you are not satisfied with your social duty and the virtue of your order, if you think that leads you to sorrow and sin, then I bid you rise to a higher and not sink to a lower ideal. Put away all egoism from you, disregard joy and sorrow, disregard gain and loss and all worldly results; look only at the cause you must serve and the work that you must achieve by divine command; “so thou shalt not incur sin.” Thus Arjuna’s plea of sorrow, his plea of the recoil from slaughter, his plea of the sense of sin, his plea of the unhappy results of his action, are answered according to the highest knowledge and ethical ideals to which his race and age had attained.

It is the creed of the Aryan fighter. “Know God,” it says, “know thyself, help man; protect the Right, do without fear or weakness or faltering thy work of battle in the world. Thou art the eternal and imperishable Spirit, thy soul is here on its upward path to immortality; life and death are nothing, sorrow and wounds and suffering are nothing, for these things have to be conquered and overcome. Look not at thy own pleasure and gain and profit, but above and around, above at the shining summits to which thou climbest, around at this world of battle and trial in which good and evil, progress and retrogression are locked in stern conflict. Men call to thee, their strong man, their

hero for help; help then, fight. Destroy when by destruction the world must advance, but hate not that which thou destroyest, neither grieve for all those who perish. Know everywhere the one self, know all to be immortal souls and the body to be but dust. Do thy work with a calm, strong and equal spirit; fight and fall nobly or conquer mightily. For this is the work that God and thy nature have given to thee to accomplish."

VIII

Sankhya and Yoga

IN THE moment of his turning from this first and summary answer to Arjuna's difficulties and in the very first words which strike the keynote of a spiritual solution, the Teacher makes at once a distinction which is of the utmost importance for the understanding of the Gita,—the distinction of Sankhya and Yoga. "Such is the intelligence (the intelligent knowledge of things and will) declared to thee in the Sankhya, hear now this in the Yoga, for if thou art in Yoga by this intelligence, O son of Pritha, thou shalt cast away the bondage of works." That is the literal translation of the words in which the Gita announces the distinction it intends to make.

The Gita is in its foundation a Vedantic work; it is one of the three recognised authorities for the Vedantic teaching and, although not described as a revealed Scripture, although, that is to say, it is largely intellectual, ratiocinative, philosophical in its method, founded indeed on the Truth, but not the directly inspired Word which is the revelation of the Truth through the higher faculties of the seer, it is yet so highly esteemed as to be ranked almost as a thirteenth Upanishad. But still its Vedantic ideas are throughout and thoroughly coloured by the ideas of the Sankhya and the Yoga way of thinking and it derives from this colouring the peculiar synthetic character of its philosophy. It is in fact primarily a practical system of Yoga that it teaches and it brings in metaphysical ideas only as explanatory of its practical system; nor does it merely declare Vedantic knowledge, but it founds knowledge and devotion upon works, even as it uplifts works to knowledge, their culmination, and informs them with devotion as their very heart and kernel of their spirit. Again its Yoga is founded upon the analytical philosophy of the Sankhyas, takes that as a starting-point and always keeps it as a large element of its method and doctrine; but still it proceeds far

beyond it, negatives even some of its characteristic tendencies and finds a means of reconciling the lower analytical knowledge of Sankhya with the higher synthetic and Vedantic truth.

What, then, are the Sankhya and Yoga of which the Gita speaks? They are certainly not the systems which have come down to us under these names as enunciated respectively in the Sankhya Karika of Ishwara Krishna and the Yoga aphorisms of Patanjali. This Sankhya is not the system of the Karikas,—at least as that is generally understood; for the Gita nowhere for a moment admits the multiplicity of Purushas as a primal truth of being and it affirms emphatically what the traditional Sankhya strenuously denies, the One as Self and Purusha, that One again as the Lord, Ishwara or Purushottama, and Ishwara as the cause of the universe. The traditional Sankhya is, to use our modern distinctions, atheistic; the Sankhya of the Gita admits and subtly reconciles the theistic, pantheistic and monistic views of the universe.

Nor is this Yoga the Yoga system of Patanjali; for that is a purely subjective method of Rajayoga, an internal discipline, limited, rigidly cut out, severely and scientifically graded, by which the mind is progressively stilled and taken up into Samadhi so that we may gain the temporal and eternal results of this self-exceeding, the temporal in a great expansion of the soul's knowledge and powers, the eternal in the divine union. But the Yoga of the Gita is a large, flexible and many-sided system with various elements, which are all successfully harmonised by a sort of natural and living assimilation, and of these elements Rajayoga is only one and not the most important and vital. This Yoga does not adopt any strict and scientific gradation but is a process of natural soul-development; it seeks by the adoption of a few principles of subjective poise and action to bring about a renovation of the soul and a sort of change, ascension or new birth out of the lower nature into the divine. Accordingly, its idea of Samadhi is quite different from the ordinary notion of the Yogic trance; and while Patanjali gives to works only an initial importance for moral purification and religious concentration, the Gita goes so far as to make works the distinctive

characteristic of Yoga. Action to Patanjali is only a preliminary, in the Gita it is a permanent foundation; in the Rajayoga it has practically to be put aside when its result has been attained or at any rate ceases very soon to be a means for the Yoga, for the Gita it is a means of the highest ascent and continues even after the complete liberation of the soul.

This much has to be said in order to avoid any confusion of thought that might be created by the use of familiar words in a connotation wider than the technical sense now familiar to us. Still, all that is essential in the Sankhya and Yoga systems, all in them that is large, catholic and universally true, is admitted by the Gita, even though it does not limit itself by them like the opposing schools. Its Sankhya is the catholic and Vedantic Sankhya such as we find it in its first principles and elements in the great Vedantic synthesis of the Upanishads and in the later developments of the Puranas. Its idea of Yoga is that large idea of a principally subjective practice and inner change, necessary for the finding of the Self or the union with God, of which the Rajayoga is only one special application. The Gita insists that Sankhya and Yoga are not two different, incompatible and discordant systems, but one in their principle and aim; they differ only in their method and starting-point. The Sankhya also is a Yoga, but it proceeds by knowledge; it starts, that is to say, by intellectual discrimination and analysis of the principles of our being and attains its aim through the vision and possession of the Truth. Yoga, on the other hand, proceeds by works; it is in its first principle Karmayoga; but it is evident from the whole teaching of the Gita and its later definitions that the word *karma* is used in a very wide sense and that by Yoga is meant the selfless devotion of all the inner as well as the outer activities as a sacrifice to the Lord of all works, offered to the Eternal as Master of all the soul's energies and austerities. Yoga is the practice of the Truth of which knowledge gives the vision, and its practice has for its motor-power a spirit of illumined devotion, of calm or fervent consecration to that which knowledge sees to be the Highest.

But what are the truths of Sankhya? The philosophy drew

its name from its analytical process. Sankhya is the analysis, the enumeration, the separative and discriminative setting forth of the principles of our being of which the ordinary mind sees only the combinations and results of combination. It did not seek at all to synthetise. Its original standpoint is in fact dualistic, not with the very relative dualism of the Vedantic schools which call themselves by that name, Dwaita, but in a very absolute and trenchant fashion. For it explains existence not by one, but by two original principles whose inter-relation is the cause of the universe,—Purusha, the inactive, Prakriti, the active. Purusha is the Soul, not in the ordinary or popular sense of the word, but of pure conscious Being immobile, immutable and self-luminous. Prakriti is Energy and its process. Purusha does nothing, but it reflects the action of Energy and its processes; Prakriti is mechanical, but by being reflected in Purusha it assumes the appearance of consciousness in its activities, and thus there are created those phenomena of creation, conservation, dissolution, birth and life and death, consciousness and unconsciousness, sense-knowledge and intellectual knowledge and ignorance, action and inaction, happiness and suffering which the Purusha under the influence of Prakriti attributes to itself although they belong not at all to itself but to the action or movement of Prakriti alone.

For Prakriti is constituted of three *gunas* or essential modes of energy; sattwa, the seed of intelligence, conserves the workings of energy; rajas, the seed of force and action, creates the workings of energy; tamas, the seed of inertia and non-intelligence, the denial of sattwa and rajas, dissolves what they create and conserve. When these three powers of the energy of Prakriti are in a state of equilibrium, all is in rest, there is no movement, action or creation and there is therefore nothing to be reflected in the immutable luminous being of the conscious Soul. But when the equilibrium is disturbed, then the three gunas fall into a state of inequality in which they strive with and act upon each other and the whole inextricable business of ceaseless creation, conservation and dissolution begins, unrolling the phenomena of the cosmos. This continues so long as

the Purusha consents to reflect the disturbance which obscures his eternal nature and attributes to it the nature of Prakriti; but when he withdraws his consent, the gunas fall into equilibrium and the soul returns to its eternal, unchanging immobility; it is delivered from phenomena. This reflection and this giving or withdrawal of consent seem to be the only powers of Purusha; he is the witness of Nature by virtue of reflection and the giver of the sanction, *sāksī* and *anumantā* of the Gita, but not actively the Ishwara. Even his giving of consent is passive and his withdrawing of consent is only another passivity. All action subjective or objective is foreign to the Soul; it has neither an active will nor an active intelligence. It cannot therefore be the sole cause of the cosmos and the affirmation of a second cause becomes necessary. Not Soul alone by its nature of conscious knowledge, will and delight is the cause of the universe, but Soul and Nature are the dual cause, a passive Consciousness and an active Energy. So the Sankhya explains the existence of the cosmos.

But whence then come this conscious intelligence and conscious will which we perceive to be so large a part of our being and which we commonly and instinctively refer not to the Prakriti, but to the Purusha? According to the Sankhya this intelligence and will are entirely a part of the mechanical energy of Nature and are not properties of the soul; they are the principle of Buddhi, one of the twenty-four *tattvas*, the twenty-four cosmic principles. Prakriti in the evolution of the world bases herself with her three gunas in her as the original substance of things, unmanifest, inconscient, out of which are evolved successively five elemental conditions of energy or matter,—for Matter and Force are the same in the Sankhya philosophy. These are called by the names of the five concrete elements of ancient thought, ether, air, fire, water and earth; but it must be remembered that they are not elements in the modern scientific sense but subtle conditions of material energy and nowhere to be found in their purity in the gross material world. All objects are created by the combination of these five subtle conditions or elements. Again, each of these five is the base of one of five subtle properties of

energy or matter, sound, touch, form, taste and smell, which constitute the way in which the mind-sense perceives objects. Thus by these five elements of Matter put forth from primary energy and these five sense relations through which Matter is known is evolved what we would call in modern language the objective aspect of cosmic existence.

Thirteen other principles constitute the subjective aspect of the cosmic Energy,— Buddhi or Mahat, Ahankara, Manas and its ten sense-functions, five of knowledge, five of action. Manas, mind, is the original sense which perceives all objects and reacts upon them; for it has at once an inferent and an efferent activity, receives by perception what the Gita calls the outward touches of things, *bāhya sparśa*, and so forms its idea of the world and exercises its reactions of active vitality. But it specialises its most ordinary functions of reception by aid of the five perceptive senses of hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell, which make the five properties of things their respective objects, and specialises certain necessary vital functions of reaction by aid of the five active senses which operate for speech, locomotion, the seizing of things, ejection and generation. Buddhi, the discriminating principle, is at once intelligence and will; it is that power in Nature which discriminates and coordinates. Ahankara, the ego-sense, is the subjective principle in Buddhi by which the Purusha is induced to identify himself with Prakriti and her activities. But these subjective principles are themselves as mechanical, as much a part of the inconscient energy as those which constitute her objective operations. If we find it difficult to realise how intelligence and will can be properties of the mechanical Inconscient and themselves mechanical (*jada*), we have only to remember that modern Science itself has been driven to the same conclusion. Even in the mechanical action of the atom there is a power which can only be called an inconscient will and in all the works of Nature that pervading will does inconsciously the works of intelligence. What we call mental intelligence is precisely the same thing in its essence as that which discriminates and coordinates subconsciously in all the activities of the material universe, and conscious Mind itself, Science has tried

to demonstrate, is only a result and transcript of the mechanical action of the inconscient. But Sankhya explains what modern Science leaves in obscurity, the process by which the mechanical and inconscient takes on the appearance of consciousness. It is because of the reflection of Prakriti in Purusha; the light of consciousness of the Soul is attributed to the workings of the mechanical energy and it is thus that the Purusha, observing Nature as the witness and forgetting himself, is deluded with the idea generated in her that it is he who thinks, feels, wills, acts, while all the time the operation of thinking, feeling, willing, acting is conducted really by her and her three modes and not by himself at all. To get rid of this delusion is the first step towards the liberation of the soul from Nature and her works.

There are certainly plenty of things in our existence which the Sankhya does not explain at all or does not explain satisfactorily, but if all we need is a rational explanation of the cosmic processes in their principles as a basis for the great object common to the ancient philosophies, the liberation of the soul from the obsession of cosmic Nature, then the Sankhya explanation of the world and the Sankhya way of liberation seem as good and as effective as any other. What we do not seize at first is why it should bring in an element of pluralism into its dualism by affirming one Prakriti, but many Purushas. It would seem that the existence of one Purusha and one Prakriti should be sufficient to account for the creation and procession of the universe. But the Sankhya was bound to evolve pluralism by its rigidly analytical observation of the principles of things. First, actually, we find that there are many conscious beings in the world and each regards the same world in his own way and has his independent experience of its subjective and objective things, his separate dealings with the same perceptive and reactive processes. If there were only one Purusha, there would not be this central independence and separateness, but all would see the world in an identical fashion and with a common subjectivity and objectivity. Because Prakriti is one, all witness the same world; because her principles are everywhere the same, the general principles which constitute internal and external experience are the

same for all; but the infinite difference of view and outlook and attitude, action and experience and escape from experience,—a difference not of the natural operations which are the same but of the witnessing consciousness,—are utterly inexplicable except on the supposition that there is a multiplicity of witnesses, many Purushas. The separative ego-sense, we may say, is a sufficient explanation? But the ego-sense is a common principle of Nature and need not vary; for by itself it simply induces the Purusha to identify himself with Prakriti, and if there is only one Purusha, all beings would be one, joined and alike in their egoistic consciousness; however different in detail might be the mere forms and combinations of their natural parts, there would be no difference of soul-outlook and soul-experience. The variations of Nature ought not to make all this central difference, this multiplicity of outlook and from beginning to end this separateness of experience in one Witness, one Purusha. Therefore the pluralism of souls is a logical necessity to a pure Sankhya system divorced from the Vedantic elements of the ancient knowledge which first gave it birth. The cosmos and its process can be explained by the commerce of one Prakriti with one Purusha, but not the multiplicity of conscious beings in the cosmos.

There is another difficulty quite as formidable. Liberation is the object set before itself by this philosophy as by others. This liberation is effected, we have said, by the Purusha's withdrawal of his consent from the activities of Prakriti which she conducts only for his pleasure; but, in sum, this is only a way of speaking. The Purusha is passive and the act of giving or withdrawing consent cannot really belong to it, but must be a movement in Prakriti itself. If we consider, we shall see that it is, so far as it is an operation, a movement of reversal or recoil in the principle of Buddhi, the discriminative will. Buddhi has been lending itself to the perceptions of the mind-sense; it has been busy discriminating and coordinating the operations of the cosmic energy and by the aid of the ego-sense identifying the Witness with her works of thought, sense and action. It arrives by the process of discriminating things at the acid and dissolvent realisation that this identity is a delusion; it discriminates finally the Purusha

from Prakriti and perceives that all is mere disturbance of the equilibrium of the gunas; the Buddhi, at once intelligence and will, recoils from the falsehood which it has been supporting and the Purusha, ceasing to be bound, no longer associates himself with the interest of the mind in the cosmic play. The ultimate result will be that Prakriti will lose her power to reflect herself in the Purusha; for the effect of the ego-sense is destroyed and the intelligent will becoming indifferent ceases to be the means of her sanction: necessarily then her gunas must fall into a state of equilibrium, the cosmic play must cease, the Purusha return to his immobile repose. But if there were only the one Purusha and this recoil of the discriminating principle from its delusions took place, all cosmos would cease. As it is, we see that nothing of the kind happens. A few beings among innumerable millions attain to liberation or move towards it; the rest are in no way affected, nor is cosmic Nature in her play with them one whit inconvenienced by this summary rejection which should be the end of all her processes. Only by the theory of many independent Purushas can this fact be explained. The only at all logical explanation from the point of view of Vedantic monism is that of the Mayavada; but there the whole thing becomes a dream, both bondage and liberation are circumstances of the unreality, the empirical blunderings of Maya; in reality there is none freed, none bound. The more realistic Sankhya view of things does not admit this phantasmagoric idea of existence and therefore cannot adopt this solution. Here too we see that the multiplicity of souls is an inevitable conclusion from the data of the Sankhya analysis of existence.

The Gita starts from this analysis and seems at first, even in its setting forth of Yoga, to accept it almost wholly. It accepts Prakriti and her three gunas and twenty-four principles; accepts the attribution of all action to the Prakriti and the passivity of the Purusha; accepts the multiplicity of conscious beings in the cosmos; accepts the dissolution of the identifying ego-sense, the discriminating action of the intelligent will and the transcendence of the action of the three modes of energy as the means of liberation. The Yoga which Arjuna is asked to practise from

the outset is Yoga by the Buddhi, the intelligent will. But there is one deviation of capital importance,— the Purusha is regarded as one, not many; for the free, immaterial, immobile, eternal, immutable Self of the Gita, but for one detail, is a Vedantic description of the eternal, passive, immobile, immutable Purusha of the Sankhyas. But the capital difference is that there is One and not many. This brings in the whole difficulty which the Sankhya multiplicity avoids and necessitates a quite different solution. This the Gita provides by bringing into its Vedantic Sankhya the ideas and principles of Vedantic Yoga.

The first important new element we find is in the conception of Purusha itself. Prakriti conducts her activities for the pleasure of Purusha; but how is that pleasure determined? In the strict Sankhya analysis it can only be by a passive consent of the silent Witness. Passively the Witness consents to the action of the intelligent will and the ego-sense, passively he consents to the recoil of that will from the ego-sense. He is Witness, source of the consent, by reflection upholder of the work of Nature, *sākṣī anumantā bhartā*, but nothing more. But the Purusha of the Gita is also the Lord of Nature; he is Ishwara. If the operation of the intelligent will belongs to Nature, the origination and power of the will proceed from the conscious Soul; he is the Lord of Nature. If the act of intelligence of the Will is the act of Prakriti, the source and light of the intelligence are actively contributed by the Purusha; he is not only the Witness, but the Lord and Knower, master of knowledge and will, *jñātā īśvarah*. He is the supreme cause of the action of Prakriti, the supreme cause of its withdrawal from action. In the Sankhya analysis Purusha and Prakriti in their dualism are the cause of the cosmos; in this synthetic Sankhya Purusha by his Prakriti is the cause of the cosmos. We see at once how far we have travelled from the rigid purism of the traditional analysis.

But what of the one self immutable, immobile, eternally free, with which the Gita began? That is free from all change or involution in change, *avikārya*, unborn, unmanifested, the Brahman, yet it is that “by which all this is extended.” Therefore it would seem that the principle of the Ishwara is in its being;

if it is immobile, it is yet the cause and lord of all action and mobility. But how? And what of the multiplicity of conscious beings in the cosmos? They do not seem to be the Lord, but rather very much not the Lord, *anīśa*, for they are subject to the action of the three gunas and the delusion of the ego-sense, and if, as the Gita seems to say, they are all the one self, how did this involution, subjection and delusion come about or how is it explicable except by the pure passivity of the Purusha? And whence the multiplicity? or how is it that the one self in one body and mind attains to liberation while in others it remains under the delusion of bondage? These are difficulties which cannot be passed by without a solution.

The Gita answers them in its later chapters by an analysis of Purusha and Prakriti which brings in new elements very proper to a Vedantic Yoga, but alien to the traditional Sankhya. It speaks of three Purushas or rather a triple status of the Purusha. The Upanishads in dealing with the truths of Sankhya seem sometimes to speak only of two Purushas. There is one unborn of three colours, says a text, the eternal feminine principle of Prakriti with its three gunas, ever creating; there are two unborn, two Purushas, of whom one cleaves to and enjoys her, the other abandons her because he has enjoyed all her enjoyments. In another verse they are described as two birds on one tree, eternally yoked companions, one of whom eats the fruits of the tree,—the Purusha in Nature enjoying her cosmos,—the other eats not, but watches his fellow,—the silent Witness, withdrawn from the enjoyment; when the first sees the second and knows that all is his greatness, then he is delivered from sorrow. The point of view in the two verses is different, but they have a common implication. One of the birds is the eternally silent, unbound Self or Purusha by whom all this is extended and he regards the cosmos he has extended, but is aloof from it; the other is the Purusha involved in Prakriti. The first verse indicates that the two are the same, represent different states, bound and liberated, of the same conscious being,—for the second Unborn has descended into the enjoyment of Nature and withdrawn from her; the other verse brings out what we would

not gather from the former, that in its higher status of unity the self is for ever free, inactive, unattached, though it descends in its lower being into the multiplicity of the creatures of Prakriti and withdraws from it by reversion in any individual creature to the higher status. This theory of the double status of the one conscious soul opens a door; but the process of the multiplicity of the One is still obscure.

To these two the Gita, developing the thought of other passages in the Upanishads,¹ adds yet another, the supreme, the Purushottama, the highest Purusha, whose greatness all this creation is. Thus there are three, the Kshara, the Akshara, the Uttama. Kshara, the mobile, the mutable is Nature, *svabhāva*, it is the various becoming of the soul; the Purusha here is the multiplicity of the divine Being; it is the Purusha multiple not apart from, but in Prakriti. Akshara, the immobile, the immutable, is the silent and inactive self, it is the unity of the divine Being, Witness of Nature, but not involved in its movement; it is the inactive Purusha free from Prakriti and her works. The Uttama is the Lord, the supreme Brahman, the supreme Self, who possesses both the immutable unity and the mobile multiplicity. It is by a large mobility and action of His nature, His energy, His will and power, that He manifests Himself in the world and by a greater stillness and immobility of His being that He is aloof from it; yet is He as Purushottama above both the aloofness from Nature and the attachment to Nature. This idea of the Purushottama, though continually implied in the Upanishads, is disengaged and definitely brought out by the Gita and has exercised a powerful influence on the later developments of the Indian religious consciousness. It is the foundation of the highest Bhaktiyoga which claims to exceed the rigid definitions of monistic philosophy; it is at the back of the philosophy of the devotional Puranas.

The Gita is not content, either, to abide within the Sankhya analysis of Prakriti; for that makes room only for the ego-sense and not for the multiple Purusha, which is there not a part of

¹ *Puruṣah . . . akṣarāt parataḥ parah*, — although the Akshara is supreme, there is a supreme Purusha higher than it, says the Upanishad.

Prakriti, but separate from her. The Gita affirms on the contrary that the Lord by His nature becomes the Jiva. How is that possible, since there are only the twenty-four principles of the cosmic Energy and no others? Yes, says the divine Teacher in effect, that is a perfectly valid account for the apparent operations of the cosmic Prakriti with its three gunas, and the relation attributed to Purusha and Prakriti there is also quite valid and of great use for the practical purposes of the involution and the withdrawal. But this is only the lower Prakriti of the three modes, the inconscient, the apparent; there is a higher, a supreme, a conscient and divine Nature, and it is that which has become the individual soul, the Jiva. In the lower nature each being appears as the ego, in the higher he is the individual Purusha. In other words multiplicity is part of the spiritual nature of the One. This individual soul is myself, in the creation it is a partial manifestation of me, *mamaiva amśah*, and it possesses all my powers; it is witness, giver of the sanction, upholder, knower, lord. It descends into the lower nature and thinks itself bound by action, so to enjoy the lower being: it can draw back and know itself as the passive Purusha free from all action. It can rise above the three gunas and, liberated from the bondage of action, yet possess action, even as I do myself, and by adoration of the Purushottama and union with him it can enjoy wholly its divine Nature.

Such is the analysis, not confining itself to the apparent cosmic process but penetrating into the occult secrets of super-conscious Nature, *uttamam rāhasyam*, by which the Gita finds its synthesis of Vedanta, Sankhya and Yoga, its synthesis of knowledge, works and devotion. By the pure Sankhya alone the combining of works and liberation is contradictory and impossible. By pure Monism alone the permanent continuation of works as a part of Yoga and the indulgence of devotion after perfect knowledge and liberation and union are attained, become impossible or at least irrational and otiose. The Sankhya knowledge of the Gita dissipates and the Yoga system of the Gita triumphs over all these obstacles.

IX

Sankhya, Yoga and Vedanta

THE WHOLE object of the first six chapters of the Gita is to synthetise in a large frame of Vedantic truth the two methods, ordinarily supposed to be diverse and even opposite, of the Sankhyas and the Yogins. The Sankhya is taken as the starting-point and the basis; but it is from the beginning and with a progressively increasing emphasis permeated with the ideas and methods of Yoga and remoulded in its spirit. The practical difference, as it seems to have presented itself to the religious minds of that day, lay first in this that Sankhya proceeded by knowledge and through the Yoga of the intelligence, while Yoga proceeded by works and the transformation of the active consciousness and, secondly,—a corollary of this first distinction,—that Sankhya led to entire passivity and the renunciation of works, *sannyāsa*, while Yoga held to be quite sufficient the inner renunciation of desire, the purification of the subjective principle which leads to action and the turning of works Godwards, towards the divine existence and towards liberation. Yet both had the same aim, the transcendence of birth and of this terrestrial existence and the union of the human soul with the Highest. This at least is the difference as it is presented to us by the Gita.

The difficulty which Arjuna feels in understanding any possible synthesis of these oppositions is an indication of the hard line that was driven in between these two systems in the normal ideas of the time. The Teacher sets out by reconciling works and the Yoga of the intelligence: the latter, he says, is far superior to mere works; it is by the Yoga of the Buddhi, by knowledge raising man out of the ordinary human mind and its desires into the purity and equality of the Brahmic condition free from all desire that works can be made acceptable. Yet are works a means of salvation, but works thus purified by knowledge.

Filled with the notions of the then prevailing culture, misled by the emphasis which the Teacher lays upon the ideas proper to Vedantic Sankhya, conquest of the senses, withdrawal from mind into the Self, ascent into the Brahmic condition, extinction of our lower personality in the Nirvana of impersonality,—for the ideas proper to Yoga are as yet subordinated and largely held back,—Arjuna is perplexed and asks, “If thou holdest the intelligence to be greater than works, why then dost thou appoint me to a terrible work? Thou seemest to bewilder my intelligence with a confused and mingled speech; tell me then decisively that one thing by which I may attain to my soul’s weal.”

In answer Krishna affirms that the Sankhya goes by knowledge and renunciation, the Yoga by works; but the real renunciation is impossible without Yoga, without works done as a sacrifice, done with equality and without desire of the fruit, with the perception that it is Nature which does the actions and not the soul; but immediately afterwards he declares that the sacrifice of knowledge is the highest, all work finds its consummation in knowledge, by the fire of knowledge all works are burnt up; therefore by Yoga works are renounced and their bondage overcome for the man who is in possession of his Self. Again Arjuna is perplexed; here are desireless works, the principle of Yoga, and renunciation of works, the principle of Sankhya, put together side by side as if part of one method, yet there is no evident reconciliation between them. For the kind of reconciliation which the Teacher has already given,—in outward inaction to see action still persisting and in apparent action to see a real inaction since the soul has renounced its illusion of the worker and given up works into the hands of the Master of sacrifice,—is for the practical mind of Arjuna too slight, too subtle and expressed almost in riddling words; he has not caught their sense or at least not penetrated into their spirit and reality. Therefore he asks again, “Thou declarest to me the renunciation of works, O Krishna, and again thou declarest to me Yoga; which one of these is the better way, that tell me with a clear decisiveness.”

The answer is important, for it puts the whole distinction

very clearly and indicates though it does not develop entirely the line of reconciliation. “Renunciation and Yoga of works both bring about the soul’s salvation, but of the two the Yoga of works is distinguished above the renunciation of works. He should be known as always a Sannyasin (even when he is doing action) who neither dislikes nor desires; for free from the dualities he is released easily and happily from the bondage. Children speak of Sankhya and Yoga apart from each other, not the wise; if a man applies himself integrally to one, he gets the fruit of both,” because in their integrality each contains the other. “The status which is attained by the Sankhya, to that the men of the Yoga also arrive; who sees Sankhya and Yoga as one, he sees. But renunciation is difficult to attain without Yoga; the sage who has Yoga attains soon to the Brahman; his self becomes the self of all existences (of all things that have become), and even though he does works, he is not involved in them.” He knows that the actions are not his, but Nature’s and by that very knowledge he is free; he has renounced works, does no actions, though actions are done through him; he becomes the Self, the Brahman, *brahmabhūta*, he sees all existences as becoming (*bhūtāni*) of that self-existent Being, his own only one of them, all their actions as only the development of cosmic Nature working through their individual nature and his own actions also as a part of the same cosmic activity. This is not the whole teaching of the Gita; for as yet there is only the idea of the immutable self or Purusha, the Akshara Brahman, and of Nature, Prakriti, as that which is responsible for the cosmos and not yet the idea, clearly expressed, of the Ishwara, the Purushottama; as yet only the synthesis of works and knowledge and not yet, in spite of certain hints, the introduction of the supreme element of devotion which becomes so important afterwards; as yet only the one inactive Purusha and the lower Prakriti and not yet the distinction of the triple Purusha and the double Prakriti. It is true the Ishwara is spoken of, but his relation to the self and nature is not yet made definite. The first six chapters only carry the synthesis so far as it can be carried without the clear expression and decisive entrance of these all-important truths

which, when they come in, must necessarily enlarge and modify, though without abolishing, these first reconciliations.

Twofold, says Krishna, is the self-application of the soul by which it enters into the Brahmic condition: "that of the Sankhyas by the Yoga of knowledge, that of the Yogins by the Yoga of works." This identification of Sankhya with Jnanayoga and of Yoga with the way of works is interesting; for it shows that quite a different order of ideas prevailed at that time from those we now possess as the result of the great Vedantic development of Indian thought, subsequent evidently to the composition of the Gita, by which the other Vedic philosophies fell into desuetude as practical methods of liberation. To justify the language of the Gita we must suppose that at that time it was the Sankhya method which was very commonly¹ adopted by those who followed the path of knowledge. Subsequently, with the spread of Buddhism, the Sankhya method of knowledge must have been much overshadowed by the Buddhistic. Buddhism, like the Sankhya non-Theistic and anti-Monistic, laid stress on the impermanence of the results of the cosmic energy, which it presented not as Prakriti but as Karma because the Buddhists admitted neither the Vedantic Brahman nor the inactive Soul of the Sankhyas, and it made the recognition of this impermanence by the discriminating mind its means of liberation. When the reaction against Buddhism arrived, it took up not the old Sankhya notion, but the Vedantic form popularised by Shankara who replaced the Buddhistic impermanence by the cognate Vedantic idea of illusion, Maya, and the Buddhistic idea of Non-Being, indefinable Nirvana, a negative Absolute, by the opposite and yet cognate Vedantic idea of the indefinable Being, Brahman, an ineffably positive Absolute in which all feature and action and energy cease because in That they never really existed and are mere illusions of the mind. It is the method of Shankara based upon these concepts of his philosophy, it is the renunciation of life as an illusion of which we ordinarily think when we speak

¹ The systems of the Puranas and Tantras are full of the ideas of the Sankhya, though subordinated to the Vedantic idea and mingled with many others.

now of the Yoga of knowledge. But in the time of the Gita Maya was evidently not yet quite the master word of the Vedantic philosophy, nor had it, at least with any decisive clearness, the connotation which Shankara brought out of it with such a luminous force and distinctness; for in the Gita there is little talk of Maya and much of Prakriti and, even, the former word is used as little more than an equivalent of the latter but only in its inferior status; it is the lower Prakriti of the three gunas, *traigunyamayī māyā*. Prakriti, not illusive Maya, is in the teaching of the Gita the effective cause of cosmic existence.

Still, whatever the precise distinctions of their metaphysical ideas, the practical difference between the Sankhya and Yoga as developed by the Gita is the same as that which now exists between the Vedantic Yogas of knowledge and of works, and the practical results of the difference are also the same. The Sankhya proceeded like the Vedantic Yoga of knowledge by the Buddhi, by the discriminating intelligence; it arrived by reflective thought, *vicāra*, at right discrimination, *viveka*, of the true nature of the soul and of the imposition on it of the works of Prakriti through attachment and identification, just as the Vedantic method arrives by the same means at the right discrimination of the true nature of the Self and of the imposition on it of cosmic appearances by mental illusion which leads to egoistic identification and attachment. In the Vedantic method Maya ceases for the soul by its return to its true and eternal status as the one Self, the Brahman, and the cosmic action disappears; in the Sankhya method the working of the *gunas* falls to rest by the return of the soul to its true and eternal status as the inactive Purusha and the cosmic action ends. The Brahman of the Mayavadins is silent, immutable and inactive; so too is the Purusha of the Sankhya; therefore for both ascetic renunciation of life and works is a necessary means of liberation. But for the Yoga of the Gita, as for the Vedantic Yoga of works, action is not only a preparation but itself the means of liberation; and it is the justice of this view which the Gita seeks to bring out with such an unceasing force and insistence,—an insistence, unfortunately, which could not prevail in India against the tremendous

tide of Buddhism,² was lost afterwards in the intensity of ascetic illusionism and the fervour of world-shunning saints and devotees and is only now beginning to exercise its real and salutary influence on the Indian mind. Renunciation is indispensable, but the true renunciation is the inner rejection of desire and egoism; without that the outer physical abandoning of works is a thing unreal and ineffective, with it it ceases even to be necessary, although it is not forbidden. Knowledge is essential, there is no higher force for liberation, but works with knowledge are also needed; by the union of knowledge and works the soul dwells entirely in the Brahmic status not only in repose and inactive calm, but in the very midst and stress and violence of action. Devotion is all-important, but works with devotion are also important; by the union of knowledge, devotion and works the soul is taken up into the highest status of the Ishwara to dwell there in the Purushottama who is master at once of the eternal spiritual calm and the eternal cosmic activity. This is the synthesis of the Gita.

But, apart from the distinction between the Sankhya way of knowledge and the Yoga way of works, there was another and similar opposition in the Vedanta itself, and this also the Gita has to deal with, to correct and to fuse into its large restatement of the Aryan spiritual culture. This was the distinction between Karmakanda and Jnanakanda, between the original thought that led to the philosophy of the Purva Mimansa, the Vedavada, and that which led to the philosophy of the Uttara Mimansa,³ the Brahmavada, between those who dwelt in the tradition of the Vedic hymns and the Vedic sacrifice and those who put these aside as a lower knowledge and laid stress on the lofty metaphysical knowledge which emerges from the Upanishads.

² At the same time the Gita seems to have largely influenced Mahayanist Buddhism and texts are taken bodily from it into the Buddhist Scriptures. It may therefore have helped largely to turn Buddhism, originally a school of quietistic and illuminated ascetics, into that religion of meditative devotion and compassionate action which has so powerfully influenced Asiatic culture.

³ Jaimini's idea of liberation is the eternal Brahmaloka in which the soul that has come to know Brahman still possesses a divine body and divine enjoyments. For the Gita the Brahmaloka is not liberation; the soul must pass beyond to the supracosmic status.

For the pragmatic mind of the Vedavadins the Aryan religion of the Rishis meant the strict performance of the Vedic sacrifices and the use of the sacred Vedic mantras in order to possess all human desires in this world, wealth, progeny, victory, every kind of good fortune, and the joys of immortality in Paradise beyond. For the idealism of the Brahnavadins this was only a preliminary preparation and the real object of man, true *puruṣārtha*, began with his turning to the knowledge of the Brahman which would give him the true immortality of an ineffable spiritual bliss far beyond the lower joys of this world or of any inferior heaven. Whatever may have been the true and original sense of the Veda, this was the distinction which had long established itself and with which therefore the Gita has to deal.

Almost the first word of the synthesis of works and knowledge is a strong, almost a violent censure and repudiation of the Vedavada, “this flowery word which they declare who have not clear discernment, devoted to the creed of the Veda, whose creed is that there is nothing else, souls of desire, seekers of Paradise, — it gives the fruits of the works of birth, it is multifarious with specialities of rites, it is directed to enjoyment and lordship as its goal.” The Gita even seems to go on to attack the Veda itself which, though it has been practically cast aside, is still to Indian sentiment intangible, inviolable, the sacred origin and authority for all its philosophy and religion. “The action of the three gunas is the subject matter of the Veda; but do thou become free from the triple guna, O Arjuna.” The Vedas in the widest terms, “all the Vedas”, — which might well include the Upanishads also and seems to include them, for the general term *Śruti* is used later on,— are declared to be unnecessary for the man who knows. “As much use as there is in a well with water in flood on every side, so much is there in all the Vedas for the Brahmin who has the knowledge.” Nay, the Scriptures are even a stumbling-block; for the letter of the Word — perhaps because of its conflict of texts and its various and mutually dissentient interpretations — bewilders the understanding, which can only find certainty and concentration by the light within. “When thy intelligence shall cross beyond the whorl of delusion, then shalt thou become

indifferent to Scripture heard or that which thou hast yet to hear, *gantāsi nirvedam̄ śrotavyasya śrutasya ca*. When thy intelligence which is bewildered by the Sruti, *śrutivipratipannā*, shall stand unmoving and stable in Samadhi, then shalt thou attain to Yoga.” So offensive is all this to conventional religious sentiment that attempts are naturally made by the convenient and indispensable human faculty of text-twisting to put a different sense on some of these verses, but the meaning is plain and hangs together from beginning to end. It is confirmed and emphasised by a subsequent passage in which the knowledge of the knower is described as passing beyond the range of Veda and Upanishad, *śabdabrahmātivartate*.

Let us see, however, what all this means; for we may be sure that a synthetic and catholic system like the Gita’s will not treat such important parts of the Aryan culture in a spirit of mere negation and repudiation. The Gita has to synthetise the Yoga doctrine of liberation by works and the Sankhya doctrine of liberation by knowledge; it has to fuse *karma* with *jñāna*. It has at the same time to synthetise the Purusha and Prakriti idea common to Sankhya and Yoga with the Brahmanava of the current Vedanta in which the Purusha, Deva, Ishwara,—supreme Soul, God, Lord,—of the Upanishads all became merged in the one all-swallowing concept of the immutable Brahman; and it has to bring out again from its overshadowing by that concept but not with any denial of it the Yoga idea of the Lord or Ishwara. It has too its own luminous thought to add, the crown of its synthetic system, the doctrine of the Purushottama and of the triple Purusha for which, though the idea is there, no precise and indisputable authority can be easily found in the Upanishads and which seems indeed at first sight to be in contradiction with that text of the Sruti where only two Purushas are recognised. Moreover, in synthetising works and knowledge it has to take account not only of the opposition of Yoga and Sankhya, but of the opposition of works to knowledge in Vedanta itself, where the connotation of the two words and therefore their point of conflict is not quite the same as the point of the Sankhya-Yoga opposition. It is not surprising at all, one may observe in passing,

that with the conflict of so many philosophical schools all founding themselves on the texts of the Veda and Upanishads, the Gita should describe the understanding as being perplexed and confused, led in different directions by the Sruti, *śrutivipratipannā*. What battles are even now delivered by Indian pundits and metaphysicians over the meaning of the ancient texts and to what different conclusions they lead! The understanding may well get disgusted and indifferent, *gantāsi nirvedam*, refuse to hear any more texts new or old, *śrotavyasya śrutasya ca*, and go into itself to discover the truth in the light of a deeper and inner and direct experience.

In the first six chapters the Gita lays a large foundation for its synthesis of works and knowledge, its synthesis of Sankhya, Yoga and Vedanta. But first it finds that *karma*, works, has a particular sense in the language of the Vedantins; it means the Vedic sacrifices and ceremonies or at most that and the ordering of life according to the Grihyasutras in which these rites are the most important part, the religious kernel of the life. By works the Vedantins understood these religious works, the sacrificial system, the *yajña*, full of a careful order, *vidhi*, of exact and complicated rites, *kriyā-viṣeṣa-bahulām*. But in Yoga works had a much wider significance. The Gita insists on this wider significance; in our conception of spiritual activity all works have to be included, *sarva-karmāṇi*. At the same time it does not, like Buddhism, reject the idea of the sacrifice, it prefers to uplift and enlarge it. Yes, it says in effect, not only is sacrifice, *yajña*, the most important part of life, but all life, all works should be regarded as sacrifice, are *yajña*, though by the ignorant they are performed without the higher knowledge and by the most ignorant not in the true order, *avidhi-pūrvakam*. Sacrifice is the very condition of life; with sacrifice as their eternal companion the Father of creatures created the peoples. But the sacrifices of the Vedavadins are offerings of desire directed towards material rewards, desire eager for the result of works, desire looking to a larger enjoyment in Paradise as immortality and highest salvation. This the system of the Gita cannot admit; for that in its very inception starts with the renunciation of desire, with its

rejection and destruction as the enemy of the soul. The Gita does not deny the validity even of the Vedic sacrificial works; it admits them, it admits that by these means one may get enjoyment here and Paradise beyond; it is I myself, says the divine Teacher, who accept these sacrifices and to whom they are offered, I who give these fruits in the form of the gods since so men choose to approach me. But this is not the true road, nor is the enjoyment of Paradise the liberation and fulfilment which man has to seek. It is the ignorant who worship the gods, not knowing whom they are worshipping ignorantly in these divine forms; for they are worshipping, though in ignorance, the One, the Lord, the only Deva, and it is he who accepts their offering. To that Lord must the sacrifice be offered, the true sacrifice of all the life's energies and activities, with devotion, without desire, for His sake and for the welfare of the peoples. It is because the Vedavada obscures this truth and with its tangle of ritual ties man down to the action of the three gunas that it has to be so severely censured and put roughly aside; but its central idea is not destroyed; transfigured and uplifted, it is turned into a most important part of the true spiritual experience and of the method of liberation.

The Vedantic idea of knowledge does not present the same difficulties. The Gita takes it over at once and completely and throughout the six chapters quietly substitutes the still immutable Brahman of the Vedantins, the One without a second immanent in all cosmos, for the still immutable but multiple Purusha of the Sankhyas. It accepts throughout these chapters knowledge and realisation of the Brahman as the most important, the indispensable means of liberation, even while it insists on desireless works as an essential part of knowledge. It accepts equally Nirvana of the ego in the infinite equality of the immutable, impersonal Brahman as essential to liberation; it practically identifies this extinction with the Sankhya return of the inactive immutable Purusha upon itself when it emerges out of identification with the actions of Prakriti; it combines and fuses the language of the Vedanta with the language of the Sankhya, as had already indeed been done by certain of the

Upanishads.⁴ But still there is a defect in the Vedantic position which has to be overcome. We may, perhaps, conjecture that at this time the Vedanta had not yet redeveloped the later theistic tendencies which in the Upanishads are already present as an element, but not so prominent as in the Vaishnava philosophies of the later Vedantins where they become indeed not only prominent but paramount. We may take it that the orthodox Vedanta was, at any rate in its main tendencies, pantheistic at the basis, monistic at the summit.⁵ It knew of the Brahman, one without a second; it knew of the Gods, Vishnu, Shiva, Brahma and the rest, who all resolve themselves into the Brahman; but the one supreme Brahman as the one Ishwara, Purusha, Deva — words often applied to it in the Upanishads and justifying to that extent, yet passing beyond the Sankhya and the theistic conceptions — was an idea that had fallen from its pride of place;⁶ the names could only be applied in a strictly logical Brahmanava to subordinate or inferior phases of the Brahman-idea. The Gita proposes not only to restore the original equality of these names and therefore of the conceptions they indicate, but to go a step farther. The Brahman in its supreme and not in any lower aspect has to be presented as the Purusha with the lower Prakriti for its Maya, so to synthetise thoroughly Vedanta and Sankhya, and as Ishwara, so to synthetise thoroughly both with Yoga; but the Gita is going to represent the Ishwara, the Purushottama, as higher even than the still and immutable Brahman, and the loss of ego in the impersonal comes in at the beginning as only a great initial and necessary step towards union with the Purushottama. For the Purushottama is the supreme Brahman. It therefore passes boldly beyond the Veda and the Upanishads as they were taught by their best authorised exponents and affirms a teaching of its own which it has developed from them,

⁴ Especially the Swetasvatara.

⁵ The pantheistic formula is that God and the All are one, the monistic adds that God or Brahman alone exists and the cosmos is only an illusory appearance or else a real but partial manifestation.

⁶ This is a little doubtful, but we may say at least that there was a strong tendency in that direction of which Shankara's philosophy was the last culmination.

but which may not be capable of being fitted in within the four corners of their meaning as ordinarily interpreted by the Vedantins.⁷ In fact without this free and synthetic dealing with the letter of the Scripture a work of large synthesis in the then state of conflict between numerous schools and with the current methods of Vedic exegesis would have been impossible.

The Gita in later chapters speaks highly of the Veda and the Upanishads. They are divine Scriptures, they are the Word. The Lord himself is the knower of Veda and the author of Vedanta, *vedavid vedāntakṛt*; the Lord is the one object of knowledge in all the Vedas, *sarvair vedair aham eva vedyah*, a language which implies that the word Veda means the book of knowledge and that these Scriptures deserve their appellation. The Purushottama from his high supremacy above the Immutable and the mutable has extended himself in the world and in the Veda. Still the letter of the Scripture binds and confuses, as the apostle of Christianity warned his disciples when he said that the letter killeth and it is the spirit that saves; and there is a point beyond which the utility of the Scripture itself ceases. The real source of knowledge is the Lord in the heart; "I am seated in the heart of every man and from me is knowledge," says the Gita; the Scripture is only a verbal form of that inner Veda, of that self-luminous Reality, it is *śabdabrahma*: the mantra, says the Veda, has risen from the heart, from the secret place where is the seat of the truth, *sadanād rtasya, guhāyām*. That origin is its sanction; but still the infinite Truth is greater than its word. Nor shall you say of any Scripture that it alone is all-sufficient and no other truth can be admitted, as the Vedavadins said of the Veda, *nānyad astīti vādinaḥ*. This is a saving and liberating word which must be applied to all the Scriptures of the world. Take all the Scriptures that are or have been, Bible and Koran

⁷ In reality the idea of the Purushottama is already announced in the Upanishads, though in a more scattered fashion than in the Gita and, as in the Gita, the Supreme Brahman or Supreme Purusha is constantly described as containing in himself the opposition of the Brahman with qualities and without qualities, *nirguna gunī*. He is not one of these things to the exclusion of the other which seems to our intellect to be its contrary.

and the books of the Chinese, Veda and Upanishads and Purana and Tantra and Shastra and the Gita itself and the sayings of thinkers and sages, prophets and Avatars, still you shall not say that there is nothing else or that the truth your intellect cannot find there is not true because you cannot find it there. That is the limited thought of the sectarian or the composite thought of the eclectic religionist, not the untrammelled truth-seeking of the free and illumined mind and God-experienced soul. Heard or unheard before, that always is the truth which is seen by the heart of man in its illumined depths or heard within from the Master of all knowledge, the knower of the eternal Veda.

X

The Yoga of the Intelligent Will

I HAVE had to deviate in the last two essays and to drag the reader with me into the arid tracts of metaphysical dogma,— however cursorily and with a very insufficient and superficial treatment,— so that we might understand why the Gita follows the peculiar line of development it has taken, working out first a partial truth with only subdued hints of its deeper meaning, then returning upon its hints and bringing out their significance until it rises to its last great suggestion, its supreme mystery which it does not work out at all, but leaves to be lived out, as the later ages of Indian spirituality tried to live it out in great waves of love, of surrender, of ecstasy. Its eye is always on its synthesis and all its strains are the gradual preparation of the mind for its high closing note.

I have declared to you the poise of a self-liberating intelligence in Sankhya, says the divine Teacher to Arjuna. I will now declare to you another poise in Yoga. You are shrinking from the results of your works, you desire other results and turn from your right path in life because it does not lead you to them. But this idea of works and their result, desire of result as the motive, the work as a means for the satisfaction of desire, is the bondage of the ignorant who know not what works are, nor their true source, nor their real operation, nor their high utility. My Yoga will free you from all bondage of the soul to its works, *karma-bandham prahāsyasi*. You are afraid of many things, afraid of sin, afraid of suffering, afraid of hell and punishment, afraid of God, afraid of this world, afraid of the hereafter, afraid of yourself. What is it that you are not afraid of at this moment, you the Aryan fighter, the world's chief hero? But this is the great fear which besieges humanity, its fear of sin and suffering now and hereafter, its fear in a world of whose true nature it is ignorant, of a God whose true being also it has not seen and

whose cosmic purpose it does not understand. My Yoga will deliver you from the great fear and even a little of it will bring deliverance. When you have once set out on this path, you will find that no step is lost; every least movement will be a gain; you will find there no obstacle that can baulk you of your advance. A bold and absolute promise and one to which the fearful and hesitating mind beset and stumbling in all its paths cannot easily lend an assured trust; nor is the large and full truth of it apparent unless with these first words of the message of the Gita we read also the last, "Abandon all laws of conduct and take refuge in Me alone; I will deliver you from all sin and evil; do not grieve."

But it is not with this deep and moving word of God to man, but rather with the first necessary rays of light on the path, directed not like that to the soul, but to the intellect, that the exposition begins. Not the Friend and Lover of man speaks first, but the guide and teacher who has to remove from him his ignorance of his true self and of the nature of the world and of the springs of his own action. For it is because he acts ignorantly, with a wrong intelligence and therefore a wrong will in these matters, that man is or seems to be bound by his works; otherwise works are no bondage to the free soul. It is because of this wrong intelligence that he has hope and fear, wrath and grief and transient joy; otherwise works are possible with a perfect serenity and freedom. Therefore it is the Yoga of the buddhi, the intelligence, that is first enjoined on Arjuna. To act with right intelligence and, therefore, a right will, fixed in the One, aware of the one self in all and acting out of its equal serenity, not running about in different directions under the thousand impulses of our superficial mental self, is the Yoga of the intelligent will.

There are, says the Gita, two types of intelligence in the human being. The first is concentrated, poised, one, homogeneous, directed singly towards the Truth; unity is its characteristic, concentrated fixity is its very being. In the other there is no single will, no unified intelligence, but only an endless number of ideas many-branching, coursing about, that is to say, in this or that direction in pursuit of the desires which are offered to it by life and by the environment. Buddhi, the word used, means, properly

speaking, the mental power of understanding but it is evidently used by the Gita in a large philosophic sense for the whole action of the discriminating and deciding mind which determines both the direction and use of our thoughts and the direction and use of our acts; thought, intelligence, judgment, perceptive choice and aim are all included in its functioning: for the characteristic of the unified intelligence is not only concentration of the mind that knows, but especially concentration of the mind that decides and persists in the decision, *vyavasāya*, while the sign of the dissipated intelligence is not so much even discursiveness of the ideas and perceptions as discursiveness of the aims and desires, therefore of the will. Will, then, and knowledge are the two functions of the Buddhi. The unified intelligent will is fixed in the enlightened soul, it is concentrated in inner self-knowledge; the many-branching and multifarious, busied with many things, careless of the one thing needful is on the contrary subject to the restless and discursive action of the mind, dispersed in outward life and works and their fruits. "Works are far inferior," says the Teacher, "to Yoga of the intelligence; desire rather refuge in the intelligence; poor and wretched souls are they who make the fruit of their works the object of their thoughts and activities."

We must remember the psychological order of the Sankhya which the Gita accepts. On one side there is the Purusha, the soul calm, inactive, immutable, one, not evolutive; on the other side there is Prakriti or Nature-force inert without the conscious Soul, active but only by juxtaposition to that consciousness, by contact with it, as we would say, not so much one at first as indeterminate, triple in its qualities, capable of evolution and involution. The contact of soul and nature generates the play of subjectivity and objectivity which is our experience of being; what is to us the subjective first evolves, because the soul-consciousness is the first cause, inconscient Nature-force only the second and dependent cause; but still it is Nature and not Soul which supplies the instruments of our subjectivity. First in order come Buddhi, discriminative or determinative power evolving out of Nature-force, and its subordinate power of self-discriminating ego. Then as a secondary evolution there arises

out of these the power which seizes the discriminations of objects, sense-mind or Manas,— we must record the Indian names because the corresponding English words are not real equivalents. As a tertiary evolution out of sense-mind we have the specialising organic senses, ten in number, five of perception, five of action; next the powers of each sense of perception, sound, form, scent, etc., which give their value to objects for the mind and make things what they are to our subjectivity,— and, as the substantial basis of these, the primary conditions of the objects of sense, the five elements of ancient philosophy or rather elementary conditions of Nature, *pañca bhūta*, which constitute objects by their various combination.

Reflected in the pure consciousness of Purusha these degrees and powers of Nature-force become the material of our impure subjectivity, impure because its action is dependent on the perceptions of the objective world and on their subjective reactions. Buddhi, which is simply the determinative power that determines all inertly out of indeterminate inconscient Force, takes for us the form of intelligence and will. Manas, the inconscient force which seizes Nature's discriminations by objective action and reaction and grasps at them by attraction, becomes sense-perception and desire, the two crude terms or degradations of intelligence and will,— becomes the sense-mind sensational, emotive, volitional in the lower sense of wish, hope, longing, passion, vital impulsion, all the deformations (*vikāra*) of will. The senses become the instruments of sense-mind, the perceptive five of our sense-knowledge, the active five of our impulsions and vital habits, mediators between the subjective and objective; the rest are the objects of our consciousness, *viśayas* of the senses.

This order of evolution seems contrary to that which we perceive as the order of the material evolution; but if we remember that even Buddhi is in itself an inert action of inconscient Nature and that there is certainly in this sense an inconscient will and intelligence, a discriminative and determinative force even in the atom, if we observe the crude inconscient stuff of sensation, emotion, memory, impulsion in the plant and in the subconscious forms of existence, if we look at these powers

of Nature-force assuming the forms of our subjectivity in the evolving consciousness of animal and man, we shall see that the Sankhya system squares well enough with all that modern enquiry has elicited by its observation of material Nature. In the evolution of the soul back from Prakriti towards Purusha, the reverse order has to be taken to the original Nature-evolution, and that is how the Upanishads and the Gita following and almost quoting the Upanishads state the ascending order of our subjective powers. "Supreme, they say," beyond their objects "are the senses, supreme over the senses the mind, supreme over the mind the intelligent will: that which is supreme over the intelligent will, is he," — is the conscious self, the Purusha. Therefore, says the Gita, it is this Purusha, this supreme cause of our subjective life which we have to understand and become aware of by the intelligence; in that we have to fix our will. So holding our lower subjective self in Nature firmly poised and stilled by means of the greater really conscient self, we can destroy the restless ever-active enemy of our peace and self-mastery, the mind's desire.

For evidently there are two possibilities of the action of the intelligent will. It may take its downward and outward orientation towards a discursive action of the perceptions and the will in the triple play of Prakriti, or it may take its upward and inward orientation towards a settled peace and equality in the calm and immutable purity of the conscious silent soul no longer subject to the distractions of Nature. In the former alternative the subjective being is at the mercy of the objects of sense, it lives in the outward contact of things. That life is the life of desire. For the senses excited by their objects create a restless or often violent disturbance, a strong or even headlong outward movement towards the seizure of these objects and their enjoyment, and they carry away the sense-mind, "as the winds carry away a ship upon the sea"; the mind subjected to the emotions, passions, longings, impulsions awakened by this outward movement of the senses carries away similarly the intelligent will, which loses therefore its power of calm discrimination and mastery. Subjection of the soul to the confused play

of the three gunas of Prakriti in their eternal entangled twining and wrestling, ignorance, a false, sensuous, objective life of the soul, enslavement to grief and wrath and attachment and passion, are the results of the downward trend of the buddhi,—the troubled life of the ordinary, unenlightened, undisciplined man. Those who like the Vedavadins make sense-enjoyment the object of action and its fulfilment the highest aim of the soul, are misleading guides. The inner subjective self-delight independent of objects is our true aim and the high and wide poise of our peace and liberation.

Therefore, it is the upward and inward orientation of the intelligent will that we must resolutely choose with a settled concentration and perseverance, *vyavasāya*; we must fix it firmly in the calm self-knowledge of the Purusha. The first movement must be obviously to get rid of desire which is the whole root of the evil and suffering; and in order to get rid of desire, we must put an end to the cause of desire, the rushing out of the senses to seize and enjoy their objects. We must draw them back when they are inclined thus to rush out, draw them away from their objects,—as the tortoise draws in his limbs into the shell, so these into their source, quiescent in the mind, the mind quiescent in intelligence, the intelligence quiescent in the soul and its self-knowledge, observing the action of Nature, but not subject to it, not desiring anything that the objective life can give.

It is not an external asceticism, the physical renunciation of the objects of sense that I am teaching, suggests Krishna immediately to avoid a misunderstanding which is likely at once to arise. Not the renunciation of the Sankhyas or the austerities of the rigid ascetic with his fasts, his maceration of the body, his attempt to abstain even from food; that is not the self-discipline or the abstinence which I mean, for I speak of an inner withdrawal, a renunciation of desire. The embodied soul, having a body, has to support it normally by food for its normal physical action; by abstention from food it simply removes from itself the physical contact with the object of sense, but does not get rid of the inner relation which makes that contact hurtful. It retains the pleasure of the sense in the object, the *rasa*, the

liking and disliking,—for *rasa* has two sides; the soul must, on the contrary, be capable of enduring the physical contact without suffering inwardly this sensuous reaction. Otherwise there is *nivṛtti*, cessation of the object, *viṣayā vinivartante*, but no subjective cessation, no *nivṛtti* of the mind; but the senses are of the mind, subjective, and subjective cessation of the *rasa* is the only real sign of mastery. But how is this desireless contact with objects, this unsensuous use of the senses possible? It is possible, *param dr̥ṣṭvā*, by the vision of the supreme,—*param*, the Soul, the Purusha,—and by living in the Yoga, in union or oneness of the whole subjective being with that, through the Yoga of the intelligence; for the one Soul is calm, satisfied in its own delight, and that delight free from duality can take, once we see this supreme thing in us and fix the mind and will on that, the place of the sensuous object-ridden pleasures and repulsions of the mind. This is the true way of liberation.

Certainly self-discipline, self-control is never easy. All intelligent human beings know that they must exercise some control over themselves and nothing is more common than this advice to control the senses; but ordinarily it is only advised imperfectly and practised imperfectly in the most limited and insufficient fashion. Even, however, the sage, the man of clear, wise and discerning soul who really labours to acquire complete self-mastery finds himself hurried and carried away by the senses. That is because the mind naturally lends itself to the senses; it observes the objects of sense with an inner interest, settles upon them and makes them the object of absorbing thought for the intelligence and of strong interest for the will. By that attachment comes, by attachment desire, by desire distress, passion and anger when the desire is not satisfied or is thwarted or opposed, and by passion the soul is obscured, the intelligence and will forget to see and be seated in the calm observing soul; there is a fall from the memory of one's true self, and by that lapse the intelligent will is also obscured, destroyed even. For, for the time being, it no longer exists to our memory of ourselves, it disappears in a cloud of passion; we become passion, wrath, grief and cease to be self and intelligence and will. This then must be prevented

and all the senses brought utterly under control; for only by an absolute control of the senses can the wise and calm intelligence be firmly established in its proper seat.

This cannot be done perfectly by the act of the intelligence itself, by a merely mental self-discipline; it can only be done by Yoga with something which is higher than itself and in which calm and self-mastery are inherent. And this Yoga can only arrive at its success by devoting, by consecrating, by giving up the whole self to the Divine, "to Me", says Krishna; for the Liberator is within us, but it is not our mind, nor our intelligence, nor our personal will,—they are only instruments. It is the Lord in whom, as we are told in the end, we have utterly to take refuge. And for that we must at first make him the object of our whole being and keep in soul-contact with him. This is the sense of the phrase "he must sit firm in Yoga, wholly given up to Me"; but as yet it is the merest passing hint after the manner of the Gita, three words only which contain in seed the whole gist of the highest secret yet to be developed. *Yukta āsīta matparah*.

If this is done, then it becomes possible to move among the objects of sense, in contact with them, acting on them, but with the senses entirely under the control of the subjective self,—not at the mercy of the objects and their contacts and reactions,—and that self again obedient to the highest self, the Purusha. Then, free from reactions, the senses will be delivered from the affections of liking and disliking, escape the duality of positive and negative desire, and calm, peace, clearness, happy tranquillity, *ātmaprasāda*, will settle upon the man. That clear tranquillity is the source of the soul's felicity; all grief begins to lose its power of touching the tranquil soul; the intelligence is rapidly established in the peace of the self; suffering is destroyed. It is this calm, desireless, griefless fixity of the buddhi in self-poise and self-knowledge to which the Gita gives the name of Samadhi.

The sign of the man in Samadhi is not that he loses consciousness of objects and surroundings and of his mental and physical self and cannot be recalled to it even by burning or torture of the body,—the ordinary idea of the matter; trance

is a particular intensity, not the essential sign. The test is the expulsion of all desires, their inability to get at the mind, and it is the inner state from which this freedom arises, the delight of the soul gathered within itself with the mind equal and still and high-poised above the attractions and repulsions, the alternations of sunshine and storm and stress of the external life. It is drawn inward even when acting outwardly; it is concentrated in self even when gazing out upon things; it is directed wholly to the Divine even when to the outward vision of others busy and preoccupied with the affairs of the world. Arjuna, voicing the average human mind, asks for some outward, physical, practically discernible sign of this great Samadhi; how does such a man speak, how sit, how walk? No such signs can be given, nor does the Teacher attempt to supply them; for the only possible test of its possession is inward and that there are plenty of hostile psychological forces to apply. Equality is the great stamp of the liberated soul and of that equality even the most discernible signs are still subjective. "A man with mind untroubled by sorrows, who has done with desire for pleasures, from whom liking and wrath and fear have passed away, such is the sage whose understanding has become founded in stability." He is "without the triple action of the qualities of Prakriti, without the dualities, ever based in his true being, without getting or having, possessed of his self." For what gettings and havings has the free soul? Once we are possessed of the Self, we are in possession of all things.

And yet he does not cease from work and action. There is the originality and power of the Gita, that having affirmed this static condition, this superiority to nature, this emptiness even of all that constitutes ordinarily the action of Nature for the liberated soul, it is still able to vindicate for it, to enjoin on it even the continuance of works and thus avoid the great defect of the merely quietistic and ascetic philosophies,—the defect from which we find them today attempting to escape. "Thou hast a right to action, but only to action, never to its fruits; let not the fruits of thy works be thy motive, neither let there be in thee any attachment to inactivity." Therefore it is not the works practised with desire by the Vedavadins, it is not the

claim for the satisfaction of the restless and energetic mind by a constant activity, the claim made by the practical or the kinetic man, which is here enjoined. "Fixed in Yoga do thy actions, having abandoned attachment, having become equal in failure and success; for it is equality that is meant by Yoga." Action is distressed by the choice between a relative good and evil, the fear of sin and the difficult endeavour towards virtue? But the liberated who has united his reason and will with the Divine, casts away from him even here in this world of dualities both good doing and evil doing; for he rises to a higher law beyond good and evil, founded in the liberty of self-knowledge. Such desireless action can have no decisiveness, no effectiveness, no efficient motive, no large or vigorous creative power? Not so; action done in Yoga is not only the highest but the wisest, the most potent and efficient even for the affairs of the world; for it is informed by the knowledge and will of the Master of works: "Yoga is skill in works." But all action directed towards life leads away from the universal aim of the Yогin which is by common consent to escape from bondage to this distressed and sorrowful human birth? Not so, either; the sages who do works without desire for fruits and in Yoga with the Divine are liberated from the bondage of birth and reach that other perfect status in which there are none of the maladies which afflict the mind and life of a suffering humanity.

The status he reaches is the Brahmic condition; he gets to firm standing in the Brahman, *brāhma sthiti*. It is a reversal of the whole view, experience, knowledge, values, seeings of earth-bound creatures. This life of the dualities which is to them their day, their waking, their consciousness, their bright condition of activity and knowledge, is to him a night, a troubled sleep and darkness of the soul; that higher being which is to them a night, a sleep in which all knowledge and will cease, is to the self-mastering sage his waking, his luminous day of true being, knowledge and power. They are troubled and muddy waters disturbed by every little inrush of desire; he is an ocean of wide being and consciousness which is ever being filled, yet ever motionless in its large poise of his soul; all the desires of the

world enter into him as waters into the sea, yet he has no desire nor is troubled. For while they are filled with the troubling sense of ego and mine and thine, he is one with the one Self in all and has no "I" or "mine". He acts as others, but he has abandoned all desires and their longings. He attains to the great peace and is not bewildered by the shows of things; he has extinguished his individual ego in the One, lives in that unity and, fixed in that status at his end, can attain to extinction in the Brahman, Nirvana,— not the negative self-annihilation of the Buddhists, but the great immergence of the separate personal self into the vast reality of the one infinite impersonal Existence.

Such, subtly unifying Sankhya, Yoga and Vedanta, is the first foundation of the teaching of the Gita. It is far from being all, but it is the first indispensable practical unity of knowledge and works with a hint already of the third crowning intensest element in the soul's completeness, divine love and devotion.

Works and Sacrifice

THE YOGA of the intelligent will and its culmination in the Brahmic status, which occupies all the close of the second chapter, contains the seed of much of the teaching of the Gita,—its doctrine of desireless works, of equality, of the rejection of outward renunciation, of devotion to the Divine; but as yet all this is slight and obscure. What is most strongly emphasised as yet is the withdrawal of the will from the ordinary motive of human activities, desire, from man's normal temperament of the sense-seeking thought and will with its passions and ignorance, and from its customary habit of troubled many-branching ideas and wishes to the desireless calm unity and passionless serenity of the Brahmic poise. So much Arjuna has understood. He is not unfamiliar with all this; it is the substance of the current teaching which points man to the path of knowledge and to the renunciation of life and works as his way of perfection. The intelligence withdrawing from sense and desire and human action and turning to the Highest, to the One, to the actionless Purusha, to the immobile, to the featureless Brahman, that surely is the eternal seed of knowledge. There is no room here for works, since works belong to the Ignorance; action is the very opposite of knowledge; its seed is desire and its fruit is bondage. That is the orthodox philosophical doctrine, and Krishna seems quite to admit it when he says that works are far inferior to the Yoga of the intelligence. And yet works are insisted upon as part of the Yoga; so that there seems to be in this teaching a radical inconsistency. Not only so; for some kind of work no doubt may persist for a while, the minimum, the most inoffensive; but here is a work wholly inconsistent with knowledge, with serenity and with the motionless peace of the self-delighted soul,—a work terrible, even monstrous, a bloody strife, a ruthless battle, a giant massacre. Yet it is this that is

enjoined, this that it is sought to justify by the teaching of inner peace and desireless equality and status in the Brahman! Here then is an unreconciled contradiction. Arjuna complains that he has been given a contradictory and confusing doctrine, not the clear, strenuously single road by which the human intelligence can move straight and trenchantly to the supreme good. It is in answer to this objection that the Gita begins at once to develop more clearly its positive and imperative doctrine of Works.

The Teacher first makes a distinction between the two means of salvation on which in this world men can concentrate separately, the Yoga of knowledge, the Yoga of works, the one implying, it is usually supposed, renunciation of works as an obstacle to salvation, the other accepting works as a means of salvation. He does not yet insist strongly on any fusion of them, on any reconciliation of the thought that divides them, but begins by showing that the renunciation of the Sankhyas, the physical renunciation, Sannyasa, is neither the only way, nor at all the better way. *Naiṣkarmya*, a calm voidness from works, is no doubt that to which the soul, the Purusha has to attain; for it is Prakriti which does the work and the soul has to rise above involution in the activities of the being and attain to a free serenity and poise watching over the operations of Prakriti, but not affected by them. That, and not cessation of the works of Prakriti, is what is really meant by the soul's *naiṣkarmya*. Therefore it is an error to think that by not engaging in any kind of action this actionless state of the soul can be attained and enjoyed. Mere renunciation of works is not a sufficient, not even quite a proper means for salvation. "Not by abstention from works does a man enjoy actionlessness, nor by mere renunciation (of works) does he attain to his perfection," — to *siddhi*, the accomplishment of the aims of his self-discipline by Yoga.

But at least it must be one necessary means, indispensable, imperative? For how, if the works of Prakriti continue, can the soul help being involved in them? How can I fight and yet in my soul not think or feel that I the individual am fighting, not desire victory nor be inwardly touched by defeat? This is the teaching of

the Sankhyas that the intelligence of the man who engages in the activities of Nature, is entangled in egoism, ignorance and desire and therefore drawn to action; on the contrary, if the intelligence draws back, then the action must cease with the cessation of the desire and the ignorance. Therefore the giving up of life and works is a necessary part, an inevitable circumstance and an indispensable last means of the movement to liberation. This objection of a current logic,—it is not expressed by Arjuna, but it is in his mind as the turn of his subsequent utterances shows,—the Teacher immediately anticipates. No, he says, such renunciation, far from being indispensable, is not even possible. “For none stands even for a moment not doing work; everyone is made to do action helplessly by the modes born of Prakriti.” The strong perception of the great cosmic action and the eternal activity and power of the cosmic energy which was so much emphasised afterwards by the teaching of the Tantric Shaktas who even made Prakriti or Shakti superior to Purusha, is a very remarkable feature of the Gita. Although here an undertone, it is still strong enough, coupled with what we might call the theistic and devotional elements of its thought, to bring in that activism which so strongly modifies in its scheme of Yoga the quietistic tendencies of the old metaphysical Vedanta. Man embodied in the natural world cannot cease from action, not for a moment, not for a second; his very existence here is an action; the whole universe is an act of God, mere living even is His movement.

Our physical life, its maintenance, its continuance is a journey, a pilgrimage of the body, *śarīra-yātrā*, and that cannot be effected without action. But even if a man could leave his body unmaintained, otiose, if he could stand still always like a tree or sit inert like a stone, *tishthati*, that vegetable or material immobility would not save him from the hands of Nature; he would not be liberated from her workings. For it is not our physical movements and activities alone which are meant by works, by *karma*; our mental existence also is a great complex action, it is even the greater and more important part of the works of the unresting energy,—subjective cause and determinant of the physical. We have gained nothing if we repress the effect but

retain the activity of the subjective cause. The objects of sense are only an occasion for our bondage, the mind's insistence on them is the means, the instrumental cause. A man may control his organs of action and refuse to give them their natural play, but he has gained nothing if his mind continues to remember and dwell upon the objects of sense. Such a man has bewildered himself with false notions of self-discipline; he has not understood its object or its truth, nor the first principles of his subjective existence; therefore all his methods of self-discipline are false and null.¹ The body's actions, even the mind's actions are nothing in themselves, neither a bondage, nor the first cause of bondage. What is vital is the mighty energy of Nature which will have her way and her play in her great field of mind and life and body; what is dangerous in her, is the power of her three *gunas*, modes or qualities to confuse and bewilder the intelligence and so obscure the soul. That, as we shall see later, is the whole crux of action and liberation for the Gita. Be free from obscuration and bewilderment by the three *gunas* and action can continue, as it must continue, and even the largest, richest or most enormous and violent action; it does not matter, for nothing then touches the Purusha, the soul has *naiṣkarmya*.

But at present the Gita does not proceed to that larger point. Since the mind is the instrumental cause, since inaction is impossible, what is rational, necessary, the right way is a controlled action of the subjective and objective organism. The mind must bring the senses under its control as an instrument of the intelligent will and then the organs of action must be used for their proper office, for action, but for action done as Yoga. But what is the essence of this self-control, what is meant by action done as Yoga, *Karmayoga*? It is non-attachment, it is to do works without clinging with the mind to the objects of sense and the fruit of the works. Not complete inaction, which is an error, a confusion, a self-delusion, an impossibility, but action full and

¹ I cannot think that *mithyācāra* means a hypocrite. How is a man a hypocrite who inflicts on himself so severe and complete a privation? He is mistaken and deluded, *vimūḍhātmā*, and his *ācāra*, his formally regulated method of self-discipline, is a false and vain method,—this surely is all that the Gita means.

free done without subjection to sense and passion, desireless and unattached works, are the first secret of perfection. Do action thus self-controlled, says Krishna, *niyatam kuru karma tvam*: I have said that knowledge, the intelligence, is greater than works, *jyāyasi karmano buddhiḥ*, but I did not mean that inaction is greater than action; the contrary is the truth, *karma jyāyo akarmanāḥ*. For knowledge does not mean renunciation of works, it means equality and non-attachment to desire and the objects of sense; and it means the poise of the intelligent will in the Soul free and high-uplifted above the lower instrumentation of Prakriti and controlling the works of the mind and the senses and body in the power of self-knowledge and the pure objectless self-delight of spiritual realisation, *niyatam karma*.² *Buddhiyoga* is fulfilled by *karmayoga*; the Yoga of the self-liberating intelligent will finds its full meaning by the Yoga of desireless works. Thus the Gita founds its teaching of the necessity of desireless works, *niṣkāma karma*, and unites the subjective practice of the Sankhyas — rejecting their merely physical rule — with the practice of Yoga.

But still there is an essential difficulty unsolved. Desire is the ordinary motive of all human actions, and if the soul is free from desire, then there is no farther rationale for action. We may be compelled to do certain works for the maintenance of the body, but even that is a subjection to the desire of the body which we ought to get rid of if we are to attain perfection. But granting that this cannot be done, the only way is to fix a rule for action outside ourselves, not dictated by anything in our subjectivity, the *nityakarma* of the Vedic rule, the routine

² Again, I cannot accept the current interpretation of *niyatam karma* as if it meant fixed and formal works and were equivalent to the Vedic *nityakarma*, the regular works of sacrifice, ceremonial and the daily rule of Vedic living. Surely, *niyata* simply takes up the *niyamya* of the last verse. Krishna makes a statement, “he who controlling the senses by the mind engages with the organs of action in Yoga of action, he excels,” *manasā niyamya ārabhate karmayogam*, and he immediately goes on to draw from the statement an injunction, to sum it up and convert it into a rule. “Do thou do controlled action,” *niyatam kuru karma tvam*: *niyatam* takes up the *niyamya*, *kuru karma* takes up the *ārabhate karmayogam*. Not formal works fixed by an external rule, but desireless works controlled by the liberated *buddhi*, is the Gita’s teaching.

of ceremonial sacrifice, daily conduct and social duty, which the man who seeks liberation may do simply because it is enjoined upon him, without any personal purpose or subjective interest in them, with an absolute indifference to the doing, not because he is compelled by his nature but because it is enjoined by the Shastra. But if the principle of the action is not to be external to the nature but subjective, if the actions even of the liberated and the sage are to be controlled and determined by his nature, *svabhāva-niyatam*, then the only subjective principle of action is desire of whatever kind, lust of the flesh or emotion of the heart or base or noble aim of the mind, but all subject to the *gunas* of Prakriti. Let us then interpret the *niyata karma* of the Gita as the *nityakarma* of the Vedic rule, its *kartavya karma* or work that has to be done as the Aryan rule of social duty and let us take too its work done as a sacrifice to mean simply these Vedic sacrifices and this fixed social duty performed disinterestedly and without any personal object. This is how the Gita's doctrine of desireless work is often interpreted. But it seems to me that the Gita's teaching is not so crude and simple, not so local and temporal and narrow as all that. It is large, free, subtle and profound; it is for all time and for all men, not for a particular age and country. Especially, it is always breaking free from external forms, details, dogmatic notions and going back to principles and the great facts of our nature and our being. It is a work of large philosophic truth and spiritual practicality, not of constrained religious and philosophical formulas and stereotyped dogmas.

The difficulty is this, how, our nature being what it is and desire the common principle of its action, is it possible to institute a really desireless action? For what we call ordinarily disinterested action is not really desireless; it is simply a replacement of certain smaller personal interests by other larger desires which have only the appearance of being impersonal, virtue, country, mankind. All action, moreover, as Krishna insists, is done by the *gunas* of Prakriti, by our nature; in acting according to the Shastra we are still acting according to our nature,—even if this Shastric action is not, as it usually is, a mere cover for our desires, prejudices, passions, egoisms, our personal, national, sectarian

vanities, sentiments and preferences; but even otherwise, even at the purest, still we obey a choice of our nature, and if our nature were different and the *gunas* acted on our intelligence and will in some other combination, we would not accept the Shastra, but live according to our pleasure or our intellectual notions or else break free from the social law to live the life of the solitary or the ascetic. We cannot become impersonal by obeying something outside ourselves, for we cannot so get outside ourselves; we can only do it by rising to the highest in ourselves, into our free Soul and Self which is the same and one in all and has therefore no personal interests, to the Divine in our being who possesses Himself transcendent of cosmos and is therefore not bound by His cosmic works or His individual action. That is what the Gita teaches and desirelessness is only a means to this end, not an aim in itself. Yes, but how is it to be brought about? By doing all works with sacrifice as the only object, is the reply of the divine Teacher. "By doing works otherwise than for sacrifice, this world of men is in bondage to works; for sacrifice practise works, O son of Kunti, becoming free from all attachment." It is evident that all works and not merely sacrifice and social duties can be done in this spirit; any action may be done either from the ego-sense narrow or enlarged or for the sake of the Divine. All being and all action of Prakriti exist only for the sake of the Divine; from that it proceeds, by that it endures, to that it is directed. But so long as we are dominated by the ego-sense we cannot perceive or act in the spirit of this truth, but act for the satisfaction of the ego and in the spirit of the ego, otherwise than for sacrifice. Egoism is the knot of the bondage. By acting Godwards, without any thought of ego, we loosen this knot and finally arrive at freedom.

At first, however, the Gita takes up the Vedic statement of the idea of sacrifice and phrases the law of sacrifice in its current terms. This it does with a definite object. We have seen that the quarrel between renunciation and works has two forms, the opposition of Sankhya and Yoga which is already in principle reconciled and the opposition of Vedism and Vedantism which the Teacher has yet to reconcile. The first is a larger statement of

the opposition in which the idea of works is general and wide. The Sankhya starts from the notion of the divine status as that of the immutable and inactive Purusha which each soul is in reality and makes an opposition between inactivity of Purusha and activity of Prakriti; so its logical culmination is cessation of all works. Yoga starts from the notion of the Divine as Ishwara, lord of the operations of Prakriti and therefore superior to them, and its logical culmination is not cessation of works but the soul's superiority to them and freedom even though doing all works. In the opposition of Vedism and Vedantism works, *karma*, are restricted to Vedic works and sometimes even to Vedic sacrifice and ritualised works, all else being excluded as not useful to salvation. Vedism of the Mimansakas insisted on them as the means, Vedantism taking its stand on the Upanishads looked on them as only a preliminary belonging to the state of ignorance and in the end to be overpassed and rejected, an obstacle to the seeker of liberation. Vedism worshipped the Devas, the gods, with sacrifice and held them to be the powers who assist our salvation. Vedantism was inclined to regard them as powers of the mental and material world opposed to our salvation (men, says the Upanishad, are the cattle of the gods, who do not desire man to know and be free); it saw the Divine as the immutable Brahman who has to be attained not by works of sacrifice and worship but by knowledge. Works only lead to material results and to an inferior Paradise; therefore they have to be renounced.

The Gita resolves this opposition by insisting that the Devas are only forms of the one Deva, the Ishwara, the Lord of all Yoga and worship and sacrifice and austerity, and if it is true that sacrifice offered to the Devas leads only to material results and to Paradise, it is also true that sacrifice offered to the Ishwara leads beyond them to the great liberation. For the Lord and the immutable Brahman are not two different beings, but one and the same Being, and whoever strives towards either, is striving towards that one divine Existence. All works in their totality find their culmination and completeness in the knowledge of the Divine, *sarvam karmākhilam pārtha jñāne parisamāpyate*. They are not an obstacle, but the way to the supreme knowledge.

Thus this opposition too is reconciled with the help of a large elucidation of the meaning of sacrifice. In fact its conflict is only a restricted form of the larger opposition between Yoga and Sankhya. Vedism is a specialised and narrow form of Yoga; the principle of the Vedantists is identical with that of the Sankhyas, for to both the movement of salvation is the recoil of the intelligence, the *buddhi*, from the differentiating powers of Nature, from ego, mind, senses, from the subjective and the objective, and its return to the undifferentiated and the immutable. It is with this object of reconciliation in his mind that the Teacher first approaches his statement of the doctrine of sacrifice; but throughout, even from the very beginning, he keeps his eye not on the restricted Vedic sense of sacrifice and works, but on their larger and universal application,—that widening of narrow and formal notions to admit the great general truths they unduly restrict which is always the method of the Gita.

The Significance of Sacrifice

THE GITA'S theory of sacrifice is stated in two separate passages; one we find in the third chapter, another in the fourth; the first gives it in language which might, taken by itself, seem to be speaking only of the ceremonial sacrifice; the second interpreting that into the sense of a large philosophical symbolism, transforms at once its whole significance and raises it to a plane of high psychological and spiritual truth. "With sacrifice the Lord of creatures of old created creatures and said, By this shall you bring forth (fruits or offspring), let this be your milker of desires. Foster by this the gods and let the gods foster you; fostering each other, you shall attain to the supreme good. Fostered by sacrifice the gods shall give you desired enjoyments; who enjoys their given enjoyments and has not given to them, he is a thief. The good who eat what is left from the sacrifice, are released from all sin; but evil are they and enjoy sin who cook (the food) for their own sake. From food creatures come into being, from rain is the birth of food, from sacrifice comes into being the rain, sacrifice is born of work; work know to be born of Brahman, Brahman is born of the Immutable; therefore is the all-pervading Brahman established in the sacrifice. He who follows not here the wheel thus set in movement, evil is his being, sensual is his delight, in vain, O Partha, that man lives." Having thus stated the necessity of sacrifice,—we shall see hereafter in what sense we may understand a passage which seems at first sight to convey only a traditional theory of ritualism and the necessity of the ceremonial offering,—Krishna proceeds to state the superiority of the spiritual man to works. "But the man whose delight is in the Self and who is satisfied with the enjoyment of the Self and in the Self he is content, for him there exists no work that needs to be done. He has no object here to be gained by action done and none to be gained by action undone;

he has no dependence on all these existences for any object to be gained."

Here then are the two ideals, Vedist and Vedantist, standing as if in all their sharp original separation and opposition, on one side the active ideal of acquiring enjoyments here and the highest good beyond by sacrifice and the mutual dependence of the human being and the divine powers and on the other, facing it, the austerer ideal of the liberated man who, independent in the Spirit, has nothing to do with enjoyment or works or the human or the divine worlds, but exists only in the peace of the supreme Self, joys only in the calm joy of the Brahman. The next verses create a ground for the reconciliation between the two extremes; the secret is not inaction as soon as one turns towards the higher truth, but desireless action both before and after it is reached. The liberated man has nothing to gain by action, but nothing also to gain by inaction, and it is not at all for any personal object that he has to make his choice. "Therefore without attachment perform ever the work that is to be done (done for the sake of the world, *lokasaṅgraha*, as is made clear immediately afterward); for by doing work without attachment man attains to the highest. For it was even by works that Janaka and the rest attained to perfection." It is true that works and sacrifice are a means of arriving at the highest good, *śreyah param avāpsyatha*; but there are three kinds of works, that done without sacrifice for personal enjoyment which is entirely selfish and egoistic and misses the true law and aim and utility of life, *moghaṁ pārtha sa jīvati*, that done with desire, but with sacrifice and the enjoyment only as a result of sacrifice and therefore to that extent consecrated and sanctified, and that done without desire or attachment of any kind. It is the last which brings the soul of man to the highest, *param āpnoti pūruṣah*.

The whole sense and drift of this teaching turns upon the interpretation we are to give to the important words, *yajña*, *karma*, *brahma*, sacrifice, work, Brahman. If the sacrifice is simply the Vedic sacrifice, if the work from which it is born is the Vedic rule of works and if the *brahman* from which the work itself is born is the *śabdabrahman* in the sense only of the

letter of the Veda, then all the positions of the Vedist dogma are conceded and there is nothing more. Ceremonial sacrifice is the right means of gaining children, wealth, enjoyment; by ceremonial sacrifice rain is brought down from heaven and the prosperity and continuity of the race assured; life is a continual transaction between the gods and men in which man offers ceremonial gifts to the gods from the gifts they have bestowed on him and in return is enriched, protected, fostered. Therefore all human works have to be accompanied and turned into a sacrament by ceremonial sacrifice and ritualistic worship; work not so dedicated is accursed, enjoyment without previous ceremonial sacrifice and ritual consecration is a sin. Even salvation, even the highest good is to be gained by ceremonial sacrifice. It must never be abandoned. Even the seeker of liberation has to continue to do ceremonial sacrifice, although without attachment; it is by ceremonial sacrifice and ritualistic works done without attachment that men of the type of Janaka attained to spiritual perfection and liberation.

Obviously, this cannot be the meaning of the Gita, for it would be in contradiction with all the rest of the book. Even in the passage itself, without the illuminating interpretation afterwards given to it in the fourth chapter, we have already an indication of a wider sense where it is said that sacrifice is born from work, work from *brahman*, *brahman* from the Akshara, and therefore the all-pervading Brahman, *sarvagatam brahma*, is established in the sacrifice. The connecting logic of the "therefore" and the repetition of the word *brahma* are significant; for it shows clearly that the *brahman* from which all work is born has to be understood with an eye not so much to the current Vedic teaching in which it means the Veda as to a symbolical sense in which the creative Word is identical with the all-pervading Brahman, the Eternal, the one Self present in all existences, *sarvabhūtesu*, and present in all the workings of existence. The Veda is the knowledge of the Divine, the Eternal, — "I am He who is to be known in all the books of the Knowledge," *vedaiś ca vedyāḥ*, Krishna will say in a subsequent chapter; but it is the knowledge of him in the workings of Prakriti, in the workings of the three

guṇas, first qualities or modes of Nature, *traigunyavisaṭā vedāḥ*. This Brahman or Divine in the workings of Nature is born, as we may say, out of the Akshara, the immutable Purusha, the Self who stands above all the modes or qualities or workings of Nature, *nistraiguṇya*. The Brahman is one but self-displayed in two aspects, the immutable Being and the creator and originator of works in the mutable becoming, *ātman, sarvabhūtāni*; it is the immobile omnipresent Soul of things and it is the spiritual principle of the mobile working of things, Purusha poised in himself and Purusha active in Prakriti; it is *akṣara* and *kṣara*. In both of these aspects the Divine Being, Purushottama, manifests himself in the universe; the immutable above all qualities is His poise of peace, self-possession, equality, *samarī brahma*; from that proceeds His manifestation in the qualities of Prakriti and their universal workings; from the Purusha in Prakriti, from this Brahman with qualities, proceed all the works¹ of the universal energy, Karma, in man and in all existences; from that work proceeds the principle of sacrifice. Even the material interchange between gods and men proceeds upon this principle, as typified in the dependence of rain and its product food on this working and on them the physical birth of creatures. For all the working of Prakriti is in its true nature a sacrifice, *yajña*, with the Divine Being as the enjoyer of all energisms and works and sacrifice and the great Lord of all existences, *bhoktāram yajñatapasām sarvaloka-maheśvaram*, and to know this Divine all-pervading and established in sacrifice, *sarvagataṁ yajñe pratiṣṭhitam*, is the true, the Vedic knowledge.

¹ That this is the right interpretation results also from the opening of the eighth chapter where the universal principles are enumerated, *akṣara (brahma), svabhāva, karma, kṣara bhāva, puruṣa, adhyajña*. Akshara is the immutable Brahman, spirit or self, Atman; swabhava is the principle of the self, *adhyātma*, operative as the original nature of the being, “own way of becoming”, and this proceeds out of the self, the Akshara; Karma proceeds from that and is the creative movement, *visarga*, which brings all natural beings and all changing subjective and objective shapes of being into existence; the result of Karma therefore is all this mutable becoming, the changes of nature developed out of the original self-nature, *kṣara bhāva* out of *svabhāva*; Purusha is the soul, the divine element in the becoming, *adhibdaivata*, by whose presence the workings of Karma become a sacrifice, *yajña*, to the Divine within; *adhyajña* is this secret Divine who receives the sacrifice.

But he may be known in an inferior action through the *devas*, the gods, the powers of the divine Soul in Nature and in the eternal interaction of these powers and the soul of man, mutually giving and receiving, mutually helping, increasing, raising each other's workings and satisfaction, a commerce in which man rises towards a growing fitness for the supreme good. He recognises that his life is a part of this divine action in Nature and not a thing separate and to be held and pursued for its own sake. He regards his enjoyments and the satisfaction of his desires as the fruit of sacrifice and the gift of the gods in their divine universal workings and he ceases to pursue them in the false and evil spirit of sinful egoistic selfishness as if they were a good to be seized from life by his own unaided strength without return and without thankfulness. As this spirit increases in him, he subordinates his desires, becomes satisfied with sacrifice as the law of life and works and is content with whatever remains over from the sacrifice, giving up all the rest freely as an offering in the great and beneficent interchange between his life and the world-life. Whoever goes contrary to this law of action and pursues works and enjoyment for his own isolated personal self-interest, lives in vain; he misses the true meaning and aim and utility of living and the upward growth of the soul; he is not on the path which leads to the highest good. But the highest only comes when the sacrifice is no longer to the gods, but to the one all-pervading Divine established in the sacrifice, of whom the gods are inferior forms and powers, and when he puts away the lower self that desires and enjoys and gives up his personal sense of being the worker to the true executrix of all works, Prakriti, and his personal sense of being the enjoyer to the Divine Purusha, the higher and universal Self who is the real enjoyer of the works of Prakriti. In that Self and not in any personal enjoyment he finds now his sole satisfaction, complete content, pure delight; he has nothing to gain by action or inaction, depends neither on gods nor men for anything, seeks no profit from any, for the self-delight is all-sufficient to him, but does works for the sake of the Divine only, as a pure sacrifice, without attachment or desire. Thus he gains equality and becomes free from the

modes of Nature, *nistraigunya*; his soul takes its poise not in the insecurity of Prakriti, but in the peace of the immutable Brahman, even while his actions continue in the movement of Prakriti. Thus is sacrifice his way of attaining to the Highest.

That this is the sense of the passage is made clear in what follows, by the affirmation of *lokasaṅgraha* as the object of works, of Prakriti as the sole doer of works and the divine Purusha as their equal upholder, to whom works have to be given up even in their doing,—this inner giving up of works and yet physical doing of them is the culmination of sacrifice,—and by the affirmation that the result of such active sacrifice with an equal and desireless mind is liberation from the bondage of works. “He who is satisfied with whatever gain comes to him and equal in failure and success, is not bound even when he acts. When a man liberated, free from attachment, acts for sacrifice, all his action is dissolved,” leaves, that is to say, no result of bondage or after-impression on his free, pure, perfect and equal soul. To these passages we shall have to return. They are followed by a perfectly explicit and detailed interpretation of the meaning of *yajña* in the language of the Gita which leaves no doubt at all about the symbolic use of the words and the psychological character of the sacrifice enjoined by this teaching. In the ancient Vedic system there was always a double sense physical and psychological, outward and symbolic, the exterior form of the sacrifice and the inner meaning of all its circumstances. But the secret symbolism of the ancient Vedic mystics, exact, curious, poetic, psychological, had been long forgotten by this time and it is now replaced by another, large, general and philosophical in the spirit of Vedanta and a later Yoga. The fire of sacrifice, *agni*, is no material flame, but *brahmāgni*, the fire of the Brahman, or it is the Brahman-ward energy, inner Agni, priest of the sacrifice, into which the offering is poured; the fire is self-control or it is a purified sense-action or it is the vital energy in that discipline of the control of the vital being through the control of the breath which is common to Rajayoga and Hathayoga, or it is the fire of self-knowledge, the flame of the supreme sacrifice. The food eaten as the leavings of the sacrifice is, it is explained, the nectar

of immortality, *amṛta*, left over from the offering; and here we have still something of the old Vedic symbolism in which the Soma-wine was the physical symbol of the *amṛta*, the immortalising delight of the divine ecstasy won by the sacrifice, offered to the gods and drunk by men. The offering itself is whatever working of his energy, physical or psychological, is consecrated by him in action of body or action of mind to the gods or God, to the Self or to the universal powers, to one's own higher Self or to the Self in mankind and in all existences.

This elaborate explanation of the Yajna sets out with a vast and comprehensive definition in which it is declared that the act and energy and materials of the sacrifice, the giver and receiver of the sacrifice, the goal and object of the sacrifice are all the one Brahman. "Brahman is the giving, Brahman is the food-offering, by Brahman it is offered into the Brahman-fire, Brahman is that which is to be attained by samadhi in Brahman-action." This then is the knowledge in which the liberated man has to do works of sacrifice. It is the knowledge declared of old in the great Vedantic utterances, "I am He", "All this verily is the Brahman, Brahman is this Self." It is the knowledge of the entire unity; it is the One manifest as the doer and the deed and the object of works, knower and knowledge and the object of knowledge. The universal energy into which the action is poured is the Divine; the consecrated energy of the giving is the Divine; whatever is offered is only some form of the Divine; the giver of the offering is the Divine himself in man; the action, the work, the sacrifice is itself the Divine in movement, in activity; the goal to be reached by sacrifice is the Divine. For the man who has this knowledge and lives and acts in it, there can be no binding works, no personal and egoistically appropriated action; there is only the divine Purusha acting by the divine Prakriti in His own being, offering everything into the fire of His self-conscious cosmic energy, while the knowledge and the possession of His divine existence and consciousness by the soul unified with Him is the goal of all this God-directed movement and activity. To know that and to live and act in this unifying consciousness is to be free.

But all even of the Yogins have not attained to this knowledge. "Some Yogins follow after the sacrifice which is of the gods; others offer the sacrifice by the sacrifice itself into the Brahman-fire." The former conceive of the Divine in various forms and powers and seek him by various means, ordinances, *dharma*s, laws or, as we might say, settled rites of action, self-discipline, consecrated works; for the latter, those who already know, the simple fact of sacrifice, of offering whatever work to the Divine itself, of casting all their activities into the unified divine consciousness and energy, is their one means, their one *dharma*. The means of sacrifice are various; the offerings are of many kinds. There is the psychological sacrifice of self-control and self-discipline which leads to the higher self-possession and self-knowledge. "Some offer their senses into the fires of control, others offer the objects of sense into the fires of sense, and others offer all the actions of the sense and all the actions of the vital force into the fire of the Yoga of self-control kindled by knowledge." There is, that is to say, the discipline which receives the objects of sense-perception without allowing the mind to be disturbed or affected by its sense-activities, the senses themselves becoming pure fires of sacrifice; there is the discipline which stills the senses so that the soul in its purity may appear from behind the veil of mind-action, calm and still; there is the discipline by which, when the self is known, all the actions of the sense-perceptions and all the action of the vital being are received into that one still and tranquil soul. The offering of the striver after perfection may be material and physical, *dravya-yajña*, like that consecrated in worship by the devotee to his deity, or it may be the austerity of his self-discipline and energy of his soul directed to some high aim, *tapo-yajña*, or it may be some form of Yoga like the Pranayama of the Rajayogins and Hathayogins, or any other *yoga-yajña*. All these tend to the purification of the being; all sacrifice is a way towards the attainment of the highest.

The one thing needful, the saving principle constant in all these variations, is to subordinate the lower activities, to diminish the control of desire and replace it by a superior energy, to abandon the purely egoistic enjoyment for that diviner delight

which comes by sacrifice, by self-dedication, by self-mastery, by the giving up of one's lower impulses to a greater and higher aim. "They who enjoy the nectar of immortality left over from the sacrifice attain to the eternal Brahman." Sacrifice is the law of the world and nothing can be gained without it, neither mastery here, nor the possession of heavens beyond, nor the supreme possession of all; "this world is not for him who doeth not sacrifice, how then any other world?" Therefore all these and many other forms of sacrifice have been "extended in the mouth of the Brahman," the mouth of that Fire which receives all offerings; they are all means and forms of the one great Existence in activity, means by which the action of the human being can be offered up to That of which his outward existence is a part and with which his inmost self is one. They are "all born of work"; all proceed from and are ordained by the one vast energy of the Divine which manifests itself in the universal *karma* and makes all the cosmic activity a progressive offering to the one Self and Lord and of which the last stage for the human being is self-knowledge and the possession of the divine or Brahmic consciousness. "So knowing thou shalt become free."

But there are gradations in the range of these various forms of sacrifice, the physical offering the lowest, the sacrifice of knowledge the highest. Knowledge is that in which all this action culminates, not any lower knowledge, but the highest, self-knowledge and God-knowledge, that which we can learn from those who know the true principles of existence, that by possessing which we shall not fall again into the bewilderment of the mind's ignorance and into its bondage to mere sense-knowledge and to the inferior activity of the desires and passions. The knowledge in which all culminates is that by which "thou shalt see all existences (becomings, *bhūtāni*) without exception in the Self, then in Me." For the Self is that one, immutable, all-pervading, all-containing, self-existent reality or Brahman hidden behind our mental being into which our consciousness widens out when it is liberated from the ego; we come to see all beings as becomings, *bhūtāni*, within that one self-existence.

But this Self or immutable Brahman we see too to be the

self-presentation to our essential psychological consciousness of a supreme Being who is the source of our existence and of whom all that is mutable or immutable is the manifestation. He is God, the Divine, the Purushottama. To Him we offer everything as a sacrifice; into His hands we give up our actions; in His existence we live and move; unified with Him in our nature and with all existence in Him, we become one soul and one power of being with Him and with all beings; with His supreme reality we identify and unite our self-being. By works done for sacrifice, eliminating desire, we arrive at knowledge and at the soul's possession of itself; by works done in self-knowledge and God-knowledge we are liberated into the unity, peace and joy of the divine existence.

XIII

The Lord of the Sacrifice

WE HAVE, before we can proceed further, to gather up all that has been said in its main principles. The whole of the Gita's gospel of works rests upon its idea of sacrifice and contains in fact the eternal connecting truth of God and the world and works. The human mind seizes ordinarily only fragmentary notions and standpoints of a many-sided eternal truth of existence and builds upon them its various theories of life and ethics and religion, stressing this or that sign or appearance, but to some entirety of it it must always tend to reawaken whenever it returns in an age of large enlightenment to any entire and synthetic relation of its world-knowledge with its God-knowledge and self-knowledge. The gospel of the Gita reposes upon this fundamental Vedantic truth that all being is the one Brahman and all existence the wheel of Brahman, a divine movement opening out from God and returning to God. All is the expressive activity of Nature and Nature a power of the Divine which works out the consciousness and will of the divine Soul master of her works and inhabitant of her forms. It is for his satisfaction that she descends into the absorption of the forms of things and the works of life and mind and returns again through mind and self-knowledge to the conscious possession of the Soul that dwells within her. There is first an involving of self and all it is or means in an evolution of phenomena; there is afterwards an evolution of self, a revelation of all it is and means, all that is hidden and yet suggested by the phenomenal creation. This cycle of Nature could not be what it is but for the Purusha assuming and maintaining simultaneously three eternal poises each of which is necessary to the totality of this action. It must manifest itself in the mutable, and there we see it as the finite, the many, all existences, *sarvabhūtāni*. It appears to us as the finite personality of these million creatures with their

infinite diversities and various relations and it appears to us behind these as the soul and force of the action of the gods,—that is to say, the cosmic powers and qualities of the Divine which preside over the workings of the life of the universe and constitute to our perception different universal forms of the one Existence, or, it may be, various self-statements of personality of the one supreme Person. Then, secret behind and within all forms and existences, we perceive too an immutable, an infinite, a timeless, an impersonal, a one unchanging spirit of existence, an indivisible Self of all that is, in which all these many find themselves to be really one. And therefore by returning to that the active, finite personality of the individual being discovers that it can release itself into a silent largeness of universality and the peace and poise of an immutable and unattached unity with all that proceeds from and is supported by this indivisible Infinite. Or even he may escape into it from individual existence. But the highest secret of all, *uttamam rahasyam*, is the Purushottama. This is the supreme Divine, God, who possesses both the infinite and the finite and in whom the personal and the impersonal, the one Self and the many existences, being and becoming, the world-action and the supracosmic peace, *pravrtti* and *nivrtti*, meet, are united, are possessed together and in each other. In God all things find their secret truth and their absolute reconciliation.

All truth of works must depend upon the truth of being. All active existence must be in its inmost reality a sacrifice of works offered by Prakriti to Purusha, Nature offering to the supreme and infinite Soul the desire of the multiple finite Soul within her. Life is an altar to which she brings her workings and the fruits of her workings and lays them before whatever aspect of the Divinity the consciousness in her has reached for whatever result of the sacrifice the desire of the living soul can seize on as its immediate or its highest good. According to the grade of consciousness and being which the soul has reached in Nature, will be the Divinity it worships, the delight which it seeks and the hope for which it sacrifices. And in the movement of the mutable Purusha in Nature all is and must be interchange; for

existence is one and its divisions must found themselves on some law of mutual dependence, each growing by each and living by all. Where sacrifice is not willingly given, Nature exacts it by force, she satisfies the law of her living. A mutual giving and receiving is the law of Life without which it cannot for one moment endure, and this fact is the stamp of the divine creative Will on the world it has manifested in its being, the proof that with sacrifice as their eternal companion the Lord of creatures has created all these existences. The universal law of sacrifice is the sign that the world is of God and belongs to God and that life is his dominion and house of worship and not a field for the self-satisfaction of the independent ego; not the fulfilment of the ego,—that is only our crude and obscure beginning,—but the discovery of God, the worship and seeking of the Divine and the Infinite through a constantly enlarging sacrifice culminating in a perfect self-giving founded on a perfect self-knowledge, is that to which the experience of life is at last intended to lead.

But the individual being begins with ignorance and persists long in ignorance. Acutely conscious of himself he sees the ego as the cause and whole meaning of life and not the Divine. He sees himself as the doer of works and does not see that all the workings of existence including his own internal and external activities are the workings of one universal Nature and nothing else. He sees himself as the enjoyer of works and imagines that for him all exists and him Nature ought to satisfy and obey his personal will; he does not see that she is not at all concerned with satisfying him or at all careful of his will, but obeys a higher universal will and seeks to satisfy a Godhead who transcends her and her works and creations; his finite being, his will and his satisfactions are hers and not his, and she offers them at every moment as a sacrifice to the Divine of whose purpose in her she makes all this the covert instrumentation. Because of this ignorance whose seal is egoism, the creature ignores the law of sacrifice and seeks to take all he can for himself and gives only what Nature by her internal and external compulsion forces him to give. He can really take nothing except what she allows him to receive as his portion, what the divine Powers within her yield

to his desire. The egoistic soul in a world of sacrifice is as if a thief or robber who takes what these Powers bring to him and has no mind to give in return. He misses the true meaning of life and, since he does not use life and works for the enlargement and elevation of his being through sacrifice, he lives in vain.

Only when the individual being begins to perceive and acknowledge in his acts the value of the self in others as well as the power and needs of his own ego, begins to perceive universal Nature behind his own workings and through the cosmic godheads gets some glimpse of the One and the Infinite, is he on his way to the transcendence of his limitation by the ego and the discovery of his soul. He begins to discover a law other than that of his desires, to which his desires must be more and more subordinated and subjected; he develops the purely egoistic into the understanding and ethical being. He begins to give more value to the claims of the self in others and less to the claims of his ego; he admits the strife between egoism and altruism and by the increase of his altruistic tendencies he prepares the enlargement of his own consciousness and being. He begins to perceive Nature and divine Powers in Nature to whom he owes sacrifice, adoration, obedience, because it is by them and by their law that the workings both of the mental and the material world are controlled, and he learns that only by increasing their presence and their greatness in his thought and will and life can he himself increase his powers, knowledge, right action and the satisfactions which these things bring to him. Thus he adds the religious and supraphysical to the material and egoistic sense of life and prepares himself to rise through the finite to the Infinite.

But this is only a long intermediate stage. It is still subject to the law of desire, to the centrality of all things in the conceptions and needs of his ego and to the control of his being as well as his works by Nature, though it is a regulated and governed desire, a clarified ego and a Nature more and more subtilised and enlightened by the sattvic, the highest natural principle. All this is still within the domain, though the very much enlarged domain, of the mutable, finite and personal. The real self-knowledge and consequently the right way of works

lies beyond; for the sacrifice done with knowledge is the highest sacrifice and that alone brings a perfect working. That can only come when he perceives that the self in him and the self in others are one being and this self is something higher than the ego, an infinite, an impersonal, a universal existence in whom all move and have their being,—when he perceives that all the cosmic gods to whom he offers his sacrifice are forms of one infinite Godhead and when again, leaving all his limited and limiting conceptions of that one Godhead, he perceives him to be the supreme and ineffable Deity who is at once the finite and the infinite, the one self and the many, beyond Nature though manifesting himself through Nature, beyond limitation by qualities though formulating the power of his being through infinite quality. This is the Purushottama to whom the sacrifice has to be offered, not for any transient personal fruit of works, but for the soul's possession of God and in order to live in harmony and union with the Divine.

In other words, man's way to liberation and perfection lies through an increasing impersonality. It is his ancient and constant experience that the more he opens himself to the impersonal and infinite, to that which is pure and high and one and common in all things and beings, the impersonal and infinite in Nature, the impersonal and infinite in life, the impersonal and infinite in his own subjectivity, the less he is bound by his ego and by the circle of the finite, the more he feels a sense of largeness, peace, pure happiness. The pleasure, joy, satisfaction which the finite by itself can give or the ego in its own right attain, is transitory, petty and insecure. To dwell entirely in the ego-sense and its finite conceptions, powers, satisfactions is to find this world for ever full of transience and suffering, *anityam asukham*; the finite life is always troubled by a certain sense of vanity for this fundamental reason that the finite is not the whole or the highest truth of life; life is not entirely real until it opens into the sense of the infinite. It is for this reason that the Gita opens its gospel of works by insisting on the Brahmic consciousness, the impersonal life, that great object of the discipline of the ancient sages. For the impersonal, the infinite, the One in which all

the impermanent, mutable, multiple activity of the world finds above itself its base of permanence, security and peace, is the immobile Self, the Akshara, the Brahman. If we see this, we shall see that to raise one's consciousness and the poise of one's being out of limited personality into this infinite and impersonal Brahman is the first spiritual necessity. To see all beings in this one Self is the knowledge which raises the soul out of egoistic ignorance and its works and results; to live in it is to acquire peace and firm spiritual foundation.

The way to bring about this great transformation follows a double path; for there is the way of knowledge and there is the way of works, and the Gita combines them in a firm synthesis. The way of knowledge is to turn the understanding, the intelligent will away from its downward absorption in the workings of the mind and the senses and upward to the self, the Purusha or Brahman; it is to make it dwell always on the one idea of the one Self and not in the many-branching conceptions of the mind and many-streaming impulses of desire. Taken by itself this path would seem to lead to the complete renunciation of works, to an immobile passivity and to the severance of the soul from Nature. But in reality such an absolute renunciation, passivity and severance are impossible. Purusha and Prakriti are twin principles of being which cannot be severed, and so long as we remain in Nature, our workings in Nature must continue, even though they may take a different form or rather a different sense from those of the unenlightened soul. The real renunciation—for renunciation, *sannyāsa*, there must be—is not the fleeing from works, but the slaying of ego and desire. The way is to abandon attachment to the fruit of works even while doing them, and the way is to recognise Nature as the agent and leave her to do her works and to live in the soul as the witness and sustainer, watching and sustaining her, but not attached either to her actions or their fruits. The ego, the limited and troubled personality is then quieted and merged in the consciousness of the one impersonal Self, while the works of Nature continue to our vision to operate through all these “becomings” or existences who are now seen by us as living

and acting and moving, under her impulsion entirely, in this one infinite Being; our own finite existence is seen and felt to be only one of these and its workings are seen and felt to be those of Nature, not of our real self which is the silent, impersonal unity. The ego claimed them as its own doings and therefore we thought them ours; but the ego is now dead and henceforth they are no longer ours, but Nature's. We have achieved by the slaying of ego impersonality in our being and consciousness; we have achieved by the renunciation of desire impersonality in the works of our nature. We are free not only in inaction, but in action; our liberty does not depend on a physical and temperamental immobility and vacancy, nor do we fall from freedom directly we act. Even in a full current of natural action the impersonal soul in us remains calm, still and free.

The liberation given by this perfect impersonality is real, is complete, is indispensable; but is it the last word, the end of the whole matter? All life, all world-existence, we have said, is the sacrifice offered by Nature to the Purusha, the one and secret soul in Nature, in whom all her workings take place; but its real sense is obscured in us by ego, by desire, by our limited, active, multiple personality. We have risen out of ego and desire and limited personality and by impersonality, its great corrective, we have found the impersonal Godhead; we have identified our being with the one self and soul in whom all exist. The sacrifice of works continues, conducted not by ourselves any longer, but by Nature,—Nature operating through the finite part of our being, mind, senses, body,—but in our infinite being. But to whom then is this sacrifice offered and with what object? For the impersonal has no activity and no desires, no object to be gained, no dependence for anything on all this world of creatures; it exists for itself, in its own self-delight, in its own immutable eternal being. We may have to do works without desire as a means in order to reach this impersonal self-existence and self-delight, but, that movement once executed, the object of works is finished; the sacrifice is no longer needed. Works may even then continue because Nature continues and her activities; but there is no longer any further object in these works. The sole reason

for our continuing to act after liberation is purely negative; it is the compulsion of Nature on our finite parts of mind and body. But if that be all, then, first, works may well be whittled down and reduced to a minimum, may be confined to what Nature's compulsion absolutely will have from our bodies; and secondly, even if there is no reduction to a minimum,—since action does not matter and inaction also is no object,—then the nature of the works also does not matter. Arjuna, once having attained knowledge, may continue to fight out the battle of Kurukshetra, following his old Kshatriya nature, or he may leave it and live the life of the Sannyasin, following his new quietistic impulse. Which of these things he does, becomes quite indifferent; or rather the second is the better way, since it will discourage more quickly the impulses of Nature which still have a hold on his mind owing to past created tendency and, when his body has fallen from him, he will securely depart into the Infinite and Impersonal with no necessity of returning again to the trouble and madness of life in this transient and sorrowful world, *anityam asukham imam lokam.*

If this were so, the Gita would lose all its meaning; for its first and central object would be defeated. But the Gita insists that the nature of the action does matter and that there is a positive sanction for continuance in works, not only that one quite negative and mechanical reason, the objectless compulsion of Nature. There is still, after the ego has been conquered, a divine Lord and enjoyer of the sacrifice, *bhoktāram yajñatapasām*, and there is still an object in the sacrifice. The impersonal Brahman is not the very last word, not the utterly highest secret of our being; for impersonal and personal, finite and infinite turn out to be only two opposite, yet concomitant aspects of a divine Being unlimited by these distinctions who is both these things at once. God is an ever unmanifest Infinite ever self-impelled to manifest himself in the finite; he is the great impersonal Person of whom all personalities are partial appearances; he is the Divine who reveals himself in the human being, the Lord seated in the heart of man. Knowledge teaches us to see all beings in the one impersonal self, for so we are liberated from the separative

ego-sense, and then through this delivering impersonality to see them in this God, *ātmani atho mayi*, “in the Self and then in Me.” Our ego, our limiting personalities stand in the way of our recognising the Divine who is in all and in whom all have their being; for, subject to personality, we see only such fragmentary aspects of Him as the finite appearances of things suffer us to seize. We have to arrive at him not through our lower personality, but through the high, infinite and impersonal part of our being, and that we find by becoming this self one in all in whose existence the whole world is comprised. This infinite containing, not excluding all finite appearances, this impersonal admitting, not rejecting all individualities and personalities, this immobile sustaining, pervading, containing, not standing apart from all the movement of Nature, is the clear mirror in which the Divine will reveal His being. Therefore it is to the Impersonal that we have first to attain; through the cosmic deities, through the aspects of the finite alone the perfect knowledge of God cannot be totally obtained. But neither is the silent immobility of the impersonal Self, conceived as shut into itself and divorced from all that it sustains, contains and pervades, the whole all-revealing all-satisfying truth of the Divine. To see that we have to look through its silence to the Purushottama, and he in his divine greatness possesses both the Akshara and the Kshara; he is seated in the immobility, but he manifests himself in the movement and in all the action of cosmic Nature; to him even after liberation the sacrifice of works in Nature continues to be offered.

The real goal of the Yoga is then a living and self-completing union with the divine Purushottama and is not merely a self-extinguishing immergence in the impersonal Being. To raise our whole existence to the Divine Being, to dwell in him (*mayyeva nivasiṣyasi*), to be at one with him, unify our consciousness with his, to make our fragmentary nature a reflection of his perfect nature, to be inspired in our thought and sense wholly by the divine knowledge, to be moved in will and action utterly and faultlessly by the divine will, to lose desire in his love and delight, is man’s perfection; it is that which the Gita describes as

the highest secret. It is the true goal and the last sense of human living and the highest step in our progressive sacrifice of works. For he remains to the end the master of works and the soul of sacrifice.

The Principle of Divine Works

THIS THEN is the sense of the Gita's doctrine of sacrifice. Its full significance depends on the idea of the Purushottama which as yet is not developed,—we find it set forth clearly only much later in the eighteen chapters,—and therefore we have had to anticipate, at whatever cost of infidelity to the progressive method of the Gita's exposition, that central teaching. At present the Teacher simply gives a hint, merely adumbrates this supreme presence of the Purushottama and his relation to the immobile Self in whom it is our first business, our pressing spiritual need to find our poise of perfect peace and equality by attainment to the Brahmic condition. He speaks as yet not at all in set terms of the Purushottama, but of himself,—“I”, Krishna, Narayana, the Avatar, the God in man who is also the Lord in the universe incarnated in the figure of the divine charioteer of Kurukshetra. “In the Self, then in Me,” is the formula he gives, implying that the transcendence of the individual personality by seeing it as a “becoming” in the impersonal self-existent Being is simply a means of arriving at that great secret impersonal Personality, which is thus silent, calm and uplifted above Nature in the impersonal Being, but also present and active in Nature in all these million becomings. Losing our lower individual personality in the Impersonal, we arrive finally at union with that supreme Personality which is not separate and individual, but yet assumes all individualities. Transcending the lower nature of the three gunas and seating the soul in the immobile Purusha beyond the three gunas, we can ascend finally into the higher nature of the infinite Godhead which is not bound by the three gunas even when it acts through Nature. Reaching the inner actionlessness of the silent Purusha, *naiṣkarmya*, and leaving Prakriti to do her works, we can attain supremely beyond to the status of the divine Mastery which is

able to do all works and yet be bound by none. The idea of the Purushottama, seen here as the incarnate Narayana, Krishna, is therefore the key. Without it the withdrawal from the lower nature to the Brahmic condition leads necessarily to inaction of the liberated man, his indifference to the works of the world; with it the same withdrawal becomes a step by which the works of the world are taken up in the spirit, with the nature and in the freedom of the Divine. See the silent Brahman as the goal and the world with all its activities has to be forsaken; see God, the Divine, the Purushottama as the goal, superior to action yet its inner spiritual cause and object and original will, and the world with all its activities is conquered and possessed in a divine transcendence of the world. It can become instead of a prison-house an opulent kingdom, *rājyam samṛddham*, which we have conquered for the spiritual life by slaying the limitation of the tyrant ego and overcoming the bondage of our gaoler desires and breaking the prison of our individualistic possession and enjoyment. The liberated universalised soul becomes *svarāt samrāt*, self-ruler and emperor.

The works of sacrifice are thus vindicated as a means of liberation and absolute spiritual perfection, *samsiddhi*. So Janaka and other great Karmayogins of the mighty ancient Yoga attained to perfection, by equal and desireless works done as a sacrifice, without the least egoistic aim or attachment—*karmanaiva hi samsiddhim āsthitā janakādayah*. So too and with the same desirelessness, after liberation and perfection, works can and have to be continued by us in a large divine spirit, with the calm high nature of a spiritual royalty. “Thou shouldst do works regarding also the holding together of the peoples, *lokasaṅgraham evāpi sampaśyan kartum arhasi*. Whatsoever the Best doeth, that the lower kind of man puts into practice; the standard he creates, the people follows. O son of Pritha, I have no work that I need to do in all the three worlds, I have nothing that I have not gained and have yet to gain, and I abide verily in the paths of action,” *varta eva ca karmani*, —*eva* implying, I abide in it and do not leave it as the Sannyasin thinks himself bound to abandon works. “For if I did not abide sleeplessly in

the paths of action, men follow in every way my path, these peoples would sink to destruction if I did not works and I should be the creator of confusion and slay these creatures. As those who know not act with attachment to the action, he who knows should act without attachment, having for his motive to hold together the peoples. He should not create a division of their understanding in the ignorant who are attached to their works; he should set them to all actions, doing them himself with knowledge and in Yoga." There are few more important passages in the Gita than these seven striking couplets.

But let us clearly understand that they must not be interpreted, as the modern pragmatic tendency concerned much more with the present affairs of the world than with any high and far-off spiritual possibility seeks to interpret them, as no more than a philosophical and religious justification of social service, patriotic, cosmopolitan and humanitarian effort and attachment to the hundred eager social schemes and dreams which attract the modern intellect. It is not the rule of a large moral and intellectual altruism which is here announced, but that of a spiritual unity with God and with this world of beings who dwell in him and in whom he dwells. It is not an injunction to subordinate the individual to society and humanity or immolate egoism on the altar of the human collectivity, but to fulfil the individual in God and to sacrifice the ego on the one true altar of the all-embracing Divinity. The Gita moves on a plane of ideas and experiences higher than those of the modern mind which is at the stage indeed of a struggle to shake off the coils of egoism, but is still mundane in its outlook and intellectual and moral rather than spiritual in its temperament. Patriotism, cosmopolitanism, service of society, collectivism, humanitarianism, the ideal or religion of humanity are admirable aids towards our escape from our primary condition of individual, family, social, national egoism into a secondary stage in which the individual realises, as far as it can be done on the intellectual, moral and emotional level,—on that level he cannot do it entirely in the right and perfect way, the way of the integral truth of his being,—the oneness of his existence with the existence of other beings. But

the thought of the Gita reaches beyond to a tertiary condition of our developing self-consciousness towards which the secondary is only a partial stage of advance.

The Indian social tendency has been to subordinate the individual to the claims of society, but Indian religious thought and spiritual seeking have been always loftily individualistic in their aims. An Indian system of thought like the Gita's cannot possibly fail to put first the development of the individual, the highest need of the individual, his claim to discover and exercise his largest spiritual freedom, greatness, splendour, royalty,—his aim to develop into the illumined seer and king in the spiritual sense of seerdom and kingship, which was the first great charter of the ideal humanity promulgated by the ancient Vedic sages. To exceed himself was their goal for the individual, not by losing all his personal aims in the aims of an organised human society, but by enlarging, heightening, aggrandising himself into the consciousness of the Godhead. The rule given here by the Gita is the rule for the master man, the superman, the divinised human being, the Best, not in the sense of any Nietzschean, any one-sided and lopsided, any Olympian, Apollonian or Dionysian, any angelic or demoniac supermanhood, but in that of the man whose whole personality has been offered up into the being, nature and consciousness of the one transcendent and universal Divinity and by loss of the smaller self has found its greater self, has been divinised.

To exalt oneself out of the lower imperfect Prakriti, *trai-gunyamayī māyā*, into unity with the divine being, consciousness and nature,¹ *madbhāvam āgatāḥ*, is the object of the Yoga. But when this object is fulfilled, when the man is in the Brahmic status and sees no longer with the false egoistic vision himself and the world, but sees all beings in the Self, in God, and the Self in all beings, God in all beings, what shall be the action,—since action there still is,—which results from that seeing, and what shall be the cosmic or individual motive of all his

¹ *Sāyujya*, *sālokya* and *sādr̥ṣya* or *sādharmya*. *Sādharmya* is becoming of one law of being and action with the Divine.

works? It is the question of Arjuna,² but answered from a stand-point other than that from which Arjuna had put it. The motive cannot be personal desire on the intellectual, moral, emotional level, for that has been abandoned,— even the moral motive has been abandoned, since the liberated man has passed beyond the lower distinction of sin and virtue, lives in a glorified purity beyond good and evil. It cannot be the spiritual call to his perfect self-development by means of disinterested works, for the call has been answered, the development is perfect and fulfilled. His motive of action can only be the holding together of the peoples, *cikīrṣur lokasaṅgraham*. This great march of the peoples towards a far-off divine ideal has to be held together, prevented from falling into the bewilderment, confusion and utter discord of the understanding which would lead to dissolution and destruction and to which the world moving forward in the night or dark twilight of ignorance would be too easily prone if it were not held together, conducted, kept to the great lines of its discipline by the illumination, by the strength, by the rule and example, by the visible standard and the invisible influence of its Best. The best, the individuals who are in advance of the general line and above the general level of the collectivity, are the natural leaders of mankind, for it is they who can point to the race both the way they must follow and the standard or ideal they have to keep to or to attain. But the divinised man is the Best in no ordinary sense of the word and his influence, his example must have a power which that of no ordinarily superior man can exercise. What example then shall he give? What rule or standard shall he uphold?

In order to indicate more perfectly his meaning, the divine Teacher, the Avatar gives his own example, his own standard to Arjuna. "I abide in the path of action," he seems to say, "the path that all men follow; thou too must abide in action. In the way I act, in that way thou too must act. I am above the necessity of works, for I have nothing to gain by them; I am the Divine who possess all things and all beings in the world and I am myself

² *kim prabhāseta kim āśīta vrajeta kim.*

beyond the world as well as in it and I do not depend upon anything or anyone in all the three worlds for any object; yet I act. This too must be thy manner and spirit of working. I, the Divine, am the rule and the standard; it is I who make the path in which men tread; I am the way and the goal. But I do all this largely, universally, visibly in part, but far more invisibly; and men do not really know the way of my workings. Thou, when thou knowest and seest, when thou hast become the divinised man, must be the individual power of God, the human yet divine example, even as I am in my avatars. Most men dwell in the ignorance, the God-seer dwells in the knowledge; but let him not confuse the minds of men by a dangerous example, rejecting in his superiority the works of the world; let him not cut short the thread of action before it is spun out, let him not perplex and falsify the stages and gradations of the ways I have hewn. The whole range of human action has been decreed by me with a view to the progress of man from the lower to the higher nature, from the apparent undivine to the conscious Divine. The whole range of human works must be that in which the God-knower shall move. All individual, all social action, all the works of the intellect, the heart and the body are still his, not any longer for his own separate sake, but for the sake of God in the world, of God in all beings and that all those beings may move forward, as he has moved, by the path of works towards the discovery of the Divine in themselves. Outwardly his actions may not seem to differ essentially from theirs; battle and rule as well as teaching and thought, all the various commerce of man with man may fall in his range; but the spirit in which he does them must be very different, and it is that spirit which by its influence shall be the great attraction drawing men upwards to his own level, the great lever lifting the mass of men higher in their ascent."

The giving of the example of God himself to the liberated man is profoundly significant; for it reveals the whole basis of the Gita's philosophy of divine works. The liberated man is he who has exalted himself into the divine nature and according to that divine nature must be his actions. But what is the divine nature? It is not entirely and solely that of the Akshara, the immobile,

inactive, impersonal self; for that by itself would lead the liberated man to actionless immobility. It is not characteristically that of the Kshara, the multitudinous, the personal, the Purusha self-subjected to Prakriti; for that by itself would lead him back into subjection to his personality and to the lower nature and its qualities. It is the nature of the Purushottama who holds both these together and by his supreme divinity reconciles them in a divine reconciliation which is the highest secret of his being, *rahasyam hyetad uttamam*. He is not the doer of works in the personal sense of our action involved in Prakriti; for God works through his power, conscious nature, effective force,—Shakti, Maya, Prakriti,—but yet above it, not involved in it, not subject to it, not unable to lift himself beyond the laws, workings, habits of action it creates, not affected or bound by them, not unable to distinguish himself, as we are unable, from the workings of life, mind and body. He is the doer of works who acts not, *kartāram akartāram*. “Know me,” says Krishna, “for the doer of this (the fourfold law of human workings) who am yet the imperishable non-doer. Works fix not themselves on me (*na limpanti*), nor have I desire for the fruits of action.” But neither is he the inactive, impassive, unpuissant Witness and nothing else; for it is he who works in the steps and measures of his power; every movement of it, every particle of the world of beings it forms is instinct with his presence, full of his consciousness, impelled by his will, shaped by his knowledge.

He is, besides, the Supreme without qualities who is possessed of all qualities, *nirguna guṇī*.³ He is not bound by any mode of nature or action, nor consists, as our personality consists, of a sum of qualities, modes of nature, characteristic operations of the mental, moral, emotional, vital, physical being, but is the source of all modes and qualities, capable of developing any he wills in whatever way and to whatever degree he wills; he is the infinite being of which they are ways of becoming, the immeasurable quantity and unbound ineffable of which they are measures, numbers and figures, which they seem to rhythmise

³ *Swetasvatara Upanishad.*

and arithmise in the standards of the universe. Yet neither is he merely an impersonal indeterminate, nor a mere stuff of conscious existence for all determinations and personalisings to draw upon for their material, but a supreme Being, the one original conscious Existent, the perfect Personality capable of all relations even to the most human, concrete and intimate; for he is friend, comrade, lover, playmate, guide, teacher, master, ministrant of knowledge or ministrant of joy, yet in all relations unbound, free and absolute. This too the divinised man becomes in the measure of his attainment, impersonal in his personality, unbound by quality or action even when maintaining the most personal and intimate relations with men, unbound by any *dharma* even when following in appearance this or that *dharma*. Neither the dynamism of the kinetic man nor the actionless light of the ascetic or quietist, neither the vehement personality of the man of action nor the indifferent impersonality of the philosophic sage is the complete divine ideal. These are the two conflicting standards of the man of this world and the ascetic or the quietist philosopher, one immersed in the action of the Kshara, the other striving to dwell entirely in the peace of the Akshara; but the complete divine ideal proceeds from the nature of the Purushottama which transcends this conflict and reconciles all divine possibilities.

The kinetic man is not satisfied with any ideal which does not depend upon the fulfilment of this cosmic nature, this play of the three qualities of that nature, this human activity of mind and heart and body. The highest fulfilment of that activity, he might say, is my idea of human perfection, of the divine possibility in man; some ideal that satisfies the intellect, the heart, the moral being, some ideal of our human nature in its action can alone satisfy the human being; he must have something that he can seek in the workings of his mind and life and body. For that is his nature, his *dharma*, and how can he be fulfilled in something outside his nature? For to his nature each being is bound and within it he must seek for his perfection. According to our human nature must be our human perfection; and each man must strive for it according to the line of his personality, his *svadharma*, but

in life, in action, not outside life and action. Yes, there is a truth in that, replies the Gita; the fulfilment of God in man, the play of the Divine in life is part of the ideal perfection. But if you seek it only in the external, in life, in the principle of action, you will never find it; for you will then not only act according to your nature, which is in itself a rule of perfection, but you will be — and this is a rule of the imperfection — eternally subject to its modes, its dualities of liking and dislike, pain and pleasure and especially to the rajasic mode with its principle of desire and its snare of wrath and grief and longing, — the restless, all-devouring principle of desire, the insatiable fire which besieges your worldly action, the eternal enemy of knowledge by which it is covered over here in your nature as is a fire by smoke or a mirror by dust and which you must slay in order to live in the calm, clear, luminous truth of the spirit. The senses, mind and intellect are the seat of this eternal cause of imperfection and yet it is within this sense, mind and intellect, this play of the lower nature that you would limit your search for perfection! The effort is vain. The kinetic side of your nature must first seek to add to itself the quietistic; you must uplift yourself beyond this lower nature to that which is above the three gunas, that which is founded in the highest principle, in the soul. Only when you have attained to peace of soul, can you become capable of a free and divine action.

The quietist, the ascetic, on the other hand cannot see any possibility of perfection into which life and action enter. Are they not the very seat of bondage and imperfection? Is not all action imperfect in its nature, like a fire that must produce smoke, is not the principle of action itself rajasic, the father of desire, a cause that must have its effect of obscuration of knowledge, its round of longing and success and failure, its oscillations of joy and grief, its duality of virtue and sin? God may be in the world, but he is not of the world; he is a God of renunciation and not the Master or cause of our works; the master of our works is desire and the cause of works is ignorance. If the world, the Kshara is in a sense a manifestation or a *lilā* of the Divine, it is an imperfect play with the ignorance of Nature, an obscuration

rather than a manifestation. That is surely evident from our very first glance at the nature of the world and does not the fullest experience of the world teach us always the same truth? is it not a wheel of the ignorance binding the soul to continual birth by the impulse of desire and action until at last that is exhausted or cast away? Not only desire, but action also must be flung away; seated in the silent self the soul will then pass away into the motionless, actionless, imperturbable, absolute Brahman. To this objection of the impersonalising quietist the Gita is at more pains to answer than to that of the man of the world, the kinetic individual. For this quietism having hold of a higher and more powerful truth which is yet not the whole or the highest truth, its promulgation as the universal, complete, highest ideal of human life is likely to be more confusing and disastrous to the advance of the human race towards its goal than the error of an exclusive kinetism. A strong one-sided truth, when set forth as the whole truth, creates a strong light but also a strong confusion; for the very strength of its element of truth increases the strength of its element of error. The error of the kinetic ideal can only prolong the ignorance and retard the human advance by setting it in search of perfection where perfection cannot be found; but the error of the quietistic ideal contains in itself the very principle of world-destruction. Were I to act upon it, says Krishna, I should destroy the peoples and be the author of confusion; and though the error of an individual human being, even though a nearly divine man, cannot destroy the whole race, it may produce a widespread confusion which may be in its nature destructive of the principle of human life and disturbing to the settled line of its advance.

Therefore the quietistic tendency in man must be got to recognise its own incompleteness and admit on an equality with itself the truth which lies behind the kinetic tendency,—the fulfilment of God in man and the presence of the Divine in all the action of the human race. God is there not only in the silence, but in the action; the quietism of the impassive soul unaffected by Nature and the kinetism of the soul giving itself to Nature so that the great world-sacrifice, the Purusha-Yajna, may be

effected, are not a reality and a falsehood in perpetual struggle nor yet two hostile realities, one superior, the other inferior, each fatal to the other; they are the double term of the divine manifestation. The Akshara alone is not the whole key of their fulfilment, not the very highest secret. The double fulfilment, the reconciliation is to be sought in the Purushottama represented here by Krishna, at once supreme Being, Lord of the worlds and Avatar. The divinised man entering into his divine nature will act even as he acts; he will not give himself up to inaction. The Divine is at work in man in the ignorance and at work in man in the knowledge. To know Him is our soul's highest welfare and the condition of its perfection, but to know and realise Him as a transcendent peace and silence is not all; the secret that has to be learned is at once the secret of the eternal and unborn Divine and the secret of the divine birth and works, *janna karma ca me divyam*. The action which proceeds from that knowledge, will be free from all bondage; "he who so knoweth me," says the Teacher, "is not bound by works." If the escape from the obligation of works and desire and from the wheel of rebirth is to be the aim and the ideal, then this knowledge is to be taken as the true, the broad way of escape; for, says the Gita, "he who knows in their right principles my divine birth and works, comes when he leaves his body, not to rebirth, but to Me, O Arjuna." Through the knowledge and possession of the divine birth he comes to the unborn and imperishable Divine who is the self of all beings, *ajo avyaya ātmā*; through the knowledge and execution of divine works to the Master of works, the lord of all beings, *bhūtānām iśvara*. He lives in that unborn being; his works are those of that universal Mastery.

The Possibility and Purpose of Avatarhood

IN SPEAKING of this Yoga in which action and knowledge become one, the Yoga of the sacrifice of works with knowledge, in which works are fulfilled in knowledge, knowledge supports, changes and enlightens works, and both are offered to the Purushottama, the supreme Divinity who becomes manifest within us as Narayana, Lord of all our being and action seated secret in our hearts for ever, who becomes manifest even in the human form as the Avatar, the divine birth taking possession of our humanity, Krishna has declared in passing that this was the ancient and original Yoga which he gave to Vivasvan, the Sun-God, Vivasvan gave it to Manu, the father of men, Manu gave it to Ikshvaku, head of the Solar line, and so it came down from royal sage to royal sage till it was lost in the great lapse of Time and is now renewed for Arjuna, because he is the lover and devotee, friend and comrade of the Avatar. For this, he says, is the highest secret,—thus claiming for it a superiority to all other forms of Yoga, because those others lead to the impersonal Brahman or to a personal Deity, to a liberation in actionless knowledge or a liberation in absorbed beatitude, but this gives the highest secret and the whole secret; it brings us to divine peace and divine works, to divine knowledge, action and ecstasy unified in a perfect freedom; it unites into itself all the Yogic paths as the highest being of the Divine reconciles and makes one in itself all the different and even contrary powers and principles of its manifested being. Therefore this Yoga of the Gita is not, as some contend, only the Karmayoga, one and the lowest, according to them, of the three paths, but a highest Yoga synthetic and integral directing Godward all the powers of our being.

Arjuna takes the declaration about the transmission of the Yoga in its most physical sense,—there is another significance in which it can be taken,—and asks how the Sun-God, one of the first-born of beings, ancestor of the Solar dynasty, can have received the Yoga from the man Krishna who is only now born into the world. Krishna does not reply, as we might have expected him to have done, that it was as the Divine who is the source of all knowledge that he gave the Word to the Deva who is his form of knowledge, giver of all inner and outer light,—*bhargah savitur devasya yo no dhiyah pracodayāt*; he accepts instead the opportunity which Arjuna gives him of declaring his concealed Godhead, a declaration for which he had prepared when he gave himself as the divine example for the worker who is not bound by his works, but which he has not yet quite explicitly made. He now openly announces himself as the incarnate Godhead, the Avatar.

We have had occasion already, when speaking of the divine Teacher, to state briefly the doctrine of Avatarhood as it appears to us in the light of Vedanta, the light in which the Gita presents it to us. We must now look a little more closely at this Avatarhood and at the significance of the divine Birth of which it is the outward expression; for that is a link of considerable importance in the integral teaching of the Gita. And we may first translate the words of the Teacher himself in which the nature and purpose of Avatarhood are given summarily and remind ourselves also of other passages or references which bear upon it. “Many are my lives that are past, and thine also, O Arjuna; all of them I know, but thou knowest not, O scourge of the foe. Though I am the unborn, though I am imperishable in my self-existence, though I am the Lord of all existences, yet I stand upon my own Nature and I come into birth by my self-Maya. For whosoever there is the fading of the Dharma and the uprising of unrighteousness, then I loose myself forth into birth. For the deliverance of the good, for the destruction of the evil-doers, for the enthroning of the Right I am born from age to age. He who knoweth thus in its right principles my divine birth and my divine work, when he abandons his body, comes not to rebirth, he comes to Me,

O Arjuna. Delivered from liking and fear and wrath, full of me, taking refuge in me, many purified by austerity of knowledge have arrived at my nature of being (*madbhāvam*, the divine nature of the Purushottama). As men approach me, so I accept them to my love (*bhajāmi*); men follow in every way my path, O son of Pritha."

But most men, the Gita goes on to say, desiring the fulfilment of their works, sacrifice to the gods, to various forms and personalities of the one Godhead, because the fulfilment (*siddhi*) that is born of works,—of works without knowledge,—is very swift and easy in the human world; it belongs indeed to that world alone. The other, the divine self-fulfilment in man by the sacrifice with knowledge to the supreme Godhead, is much more difficult; its results belong to a higher plane of existence and they are less easily grasped. Men therefore have to follow the fourfold law of their nature and works and on this plane of mundane action they seek the Godhead through his various qualities. But, says Krishna, though I am the doer of the fourfold works and creator of its fourfold law, yet I must be known also as the non-doer, the imperishable, the immutable Self. "Works affect me not, nor have I desire for the fruit of works;" for God is the impersonal beyond this egoistic personality and this strife of the modes of Nature, and as the Purushottama also, the impersonal Personality, he possesses this supreme freedom even in works. Therefore the doer of divine works even while following the fourfold law has to know and live in that which is beyond, in the impersonal Self and so in the supreme Godhead. "He who thus knows me is not bound by his works. So knowing was work done by the men of old who sought liberation; do therefore, thou also, work of that more ancient kind done by ancient men."

The second portion of these passages which has here been given in substance, explains the nature of divine works, *divyam karma*, with the principle of which we have had to deal in the last essay; the first, which has been fully translated, explains the way of the divine birth, *divyam janma*, the Avatarhood. But we have to remark carefully that the upholding of Dharma in

the world is not the only object of the descent of the Avatar, that great mystery of the Divine manifest in humanity; for the upholding of the Dharma is not an all-sufficient object in itself, not the supreme possible aim for the manifestation of a Christ, a Krishna, a Buddha, but is only the general condition of a higher aim and a more supreme and divine utility. For there are two aspects of the divine birth; one is a descent, the birth of God in humanity, the Godhead manifesting itself in the human form and nature, the eternal Avatar; the other is an ascent, the birth of man into the Godhead, man rising into the divine nature and consciousness, *madbhāvam āgataḥ*; it is the being born anew in a second birth of the soul. It is that new birth which Avatarhood and the upholding of the Dharma are intended to serve. This double aspect in the Gita's doctrine of Avatarhood is apt to be missed by the cursory reader satisfied, as most are, with catching a superficial view of its profound teachings, and it is missed too by the formal commentator petrified in the rigidity of the schools. Yet it is necessary, surely, to the whole meaning of the doctrine. Otherwise the Avatar idea would be only a dogma, a popular superstition, or an imaginative or mystic deification of historical or legendary supermen, not what the Gita makes all its teaching, a deep philosophical and religious truth and an essential part of or step to the supreme mystery of all, *rahasyam uttamam*.

If there were not this rising of man into the Godhead to be helped by the descent of God into humanity, Avatarhood for the sake of the Dharma would be an otiose phenomenon, since mere Right, mere justice or standards of virtue can always be upheld by the divine omnipotence through its ordinary means, by great men or great movements, by the life and work of sages and kings and religious teachers, without any actual incarnation. The Avatar comes as the manifestation of the divine nature in the human nature, the apocalypse of its Christhood, Krishnahood, Buddhahood, in order that the human nature may by moulding its principle, thought, feeling, action, being on the lines of that Christhood, Krishnahood, Buddhahood transfigure itself into the divine. The law, the Dharma which the Avatar establishes

is given for that purpose chiefly; the Christ, Krishna, Buddha stands in its centre as the gate, he makes through himself the way men shall follow. That is why each Incarnation holds before men his own example and declares of himself that he is the way and the gate; he declares too the oneness of his humanity with the divine being, declares that the Son of Man and the Father above from whom he has descended are one, that Krishna in the human body, *mānuṣīm tanum āśritam*, and the supreme Lord and Friend of all creatures are but two revelations of the same divine Purushottama, revealed there in his own being, revealed here in the type of humanity.

That the Gita contains as its kernel this second and real object of the Avatarhood, is evident even from this passage by itself rightly considered; but it becomes much clearer if we take it, not by itself, — always the wrong way to deal with the texts of the Gita, — but in its right close connection with other passages and with the whole teaching. We have to remember and take together its doctrine of the one Self in all, of the Godhead seated in the heart of every creature, its teaching about the relations between the Creator and his creation, its strongly emphasised idea of the *vibhūti*, — noting too the language in which the Teacher gives his own divine example of selfless works which applies equally to the human Krishna and the divine Lord of the worlds, and giving their due weight to such passages as that in the ninth chapter, “Deluded minds despise me lodged in the human body because they know not my supreme nature of being, Lord of all existences”; and we have to read in the light of these ideas this passage we find before us and its declaration that by the knowledge of his divine birth and divine works men come to the Divine and by becoming full of him and even as he and taking refuge in him they arrive at his nature and status of being, *madbhāvam*. For then we shall understand the divine birth and its object, not as an isolated and miraculous phenomenon, but in its proper place in the whole scheme of the world-manifestation; without that we cannot arrive at its divine mystery, but shall either scout it altogether or accept it ignorantly and, it may be, superstitiously or fall into the petty and superficial ideas of the

modern mind about it by which it loses all its inner and helpful significance.

For to the modern mind Avatarhood is one of the most difficult to accept or to understand of all the ideas that are streaming in from the East upon the rationalised human consciousness. It is apt to take it at the best for a mere figure for some high manifestation of human power, character, genius, great work done for the world or in the world, and at the worst to regard it as a superstition,—to the heathen a foolishness and to the Greeks a stumbling-block. The materialist, necessarily, cannot even look at it, since he does not believe in God; to the rationalist or the Deist it is a folly and a thing of derision; to the thoroughgoing dualist who sees an unbridgeable gulf between the human and the divine nature, it sounds like a blasphemy. The rationalist objects that if God exists, he is extracosmic or supracosmic and does not intervene in the affairs of the world, but allows them to be governed by a fixed machinery of law,—he is, in fact, a sort of far-off constitutional monarch or spiritual King Log, at the best an indifferent inactive Spirit behind the activity of Nature, like some generalised or abstract witness Purusha of the Sankhyas; he is pure Spirit and cannot put on a body, infinite and cannot be finite as the human being is finite, the ever unborn creator and cannot be the creature born into the world,—these things are impossible even to his absolute omnipotence. To these objections the thoroughgoing dualist would add that God is in his person, his role and his nature different and separate from man; the perfect cannot put on human imperfection; the unborn personal God cannot be born as a human personality; the Ruler of the worlds cannot be limited in a nature-bound human action and in a perishable human body. These objections, so formidable at first sight to the reason, seem to have been present to the mind of the Teacher in the Gita when he says that although the Divine is unborn, imperishable in his self-existence, the Lord of all beings, yet he assumes birth by a supreme resort to the action of his Nature and by force of his self-Maya; that he whom the deluded despise because lodged in a human body, is verily in his supreme being the Lord of all; that he is in the action of

the divine consciousness the creator of the fourfold Law and the doer of the works of the world and at the same time in the silence of the divine consciousness the impartial witness of the works of his own Nature,—for he is always, beyond both the silence and the action, the supreme Purushottama. And the Gita is able to meet all these oppositions and to reconcile all these contraries because it starts from the Vedantic view of existence, of God and the universe.

For in the Vedantic view of things all these apparently formidable objections are null and void from the beginning. The idea of the Avatar is not indeed indispensable to its scheme, but it comes in naturally into it as a perfectly rational and logical conception. For all here is God, is the Spirit or Self-existence, is Brahman, *ekamevādvitīyam*,—there is nothing else, nothing other and different from it and there can be nothing else, can be nothing other and different from it; Nature is and can be nothing else than a power of the divine consciousness; all beings are and can be nothing else than inner and outer, subjective and objective soul-forms and bodily forms of the divine being which exist in or result from the power of its consciousness. Far from the Infinite being unable to take on finiteness, the whole universe is nothing else but that; we can see, look as we may, nothing else at all in the whole wide world we inhabit. Far from the Spirit being incapable of form or disdaining to connect itself with form of matter or mind and to assume a limited nature or a body, all here is nothing but that, the world exists only by that connection, that assumption. Far from the world being a mechanism of law with no soul or spirit intervening in the movement of its forces or the action of its minds and bodies,—only some original indifferent Spirit passively existing somewhere outside or above it,—the whole world and every particle of it is on the contrary nothing but the divine force in action and that divine force determines and governs its every movement, inhabits its every form, possesses here every soul and mind; all is in God and in him moves and has its being, in all he is, acts and displays his being; every creature is the disguised Narayana.

Far from the unborn being unable to assume birth, all beings

are even in their individuality unborn spirits, eternal without beginning or end, and in their essential existence and their universality all are the one unborn Spirit of whom birth and death are only a phenomenon of the assumption and change of forms. The assumption of imperfection by the perfect is the whole mystic phenomenon of the universe; but the imperfection appears in the form and action of the mind or body assumed, subsists in the phenomenon,—in that which assumes it there is no imperfection, even as in the Sun which illuminates all there is no defect of light or of vision, but only in the capacities of the individual organ of vision. Nor does God rule the world from some remote heaven, but by his intimate omnipresence; each finite working of force is an act of infinite Force and not of a limited separate self-existent energy labouring in its own underived strength; in every finite working of will and knowledge we can discover, supporting it, an act of the infinite all-will and all-knowledge. God's rule is not an absentee, foreign and external government; he governs all because he exceeds all, but also because he dwells within all movements and is their absolute soul and spirit. Therefore none of the objections opposed by our reason to the possibility of Avatarhood can stand in their principle; for the principle is a vain division made by the intellectual reason which the whole phenomenon and the whole reality of the world are busy every moment contradicting and disproving.

But still, apart from the possibility, there is the question of the actual divine working,—whether actually the divine consciousness does appear coming forward from beyond the veil to act at all directly in the phenomenal, the finite, the mental and material, the limited, the imperfect. The finite is indeed nothing but a definition, a face-value of the Infinite's self-representations to its own variations of consciousness; the real value of each finite phenomenon is an infinite value, is indeed the very Infinite. Each being is infinite in its self-existence, whatever it may be in the action of its phenomenal nature, its temporal self-representation. The man is not, when we look closely, himself alone, a rigidly separate self-existent individual, but humanity in a mind and body of itself; and humanity too is no rigidly

separate self-existent species or genus, it is the All-existence, the universal Godhead figuring itself in the type of humanity; there it works out certain possibilities, develops, evolves, as we now say, certain powers of its manifestations. What it evolves, is itself, is the Spirit.

For what we mean by Spirit is self-existent being with an infinite power of consciousness and unconditioned delight in its being; it is either that or nothing, or at least nothing which has anything to do with man and the world or with which, therefore, man or the world has anything to do. Matter, body is only a massed motion of force of conscious being employed as a starting-point for the variable relations of consciousness working through its power of sense; nor is Matter anywhere really void of consciousness, for even in the atom, the cell there is, as is now made abundantly clear in spite of itself by modern Science, a power of will, an intelligence at work; but that power is the power of will and intelligence of the Self, Spirit or Godhead within it, it is not the separate, self-derived will or idea of the mechanical cell or atom. This universal will and intelligence, involved, develops its powers from form to form, and on earth at least it is in man that it draws nearest to the full divine and there first becomes, even in the outward intelligence in the form, obscurely conscious of its divinity. But still there too there is a limitation, there is that imperfection of the manifestation which prevents the lower forms from having the self-knowledge of their identity with the Divine. For in each limited being the limitation of the phenomenal action is accompanied by a limitation also of the phenomenal consciousness which defines the nature of the being and makes the inner difference between creature and creature. The Divine works behind indeed and governs its special manifestation through this outer and imperfect consciousness and will, but is itself secret in the cavern, *guhāyām*, as the Veda puts it, or as the Gita expresses it, "In the heart of all existences the Lord abides turning all existences as if mounted on a machine by Maya." This secret working of the Lord hidden in the heart from the egoistic nature-consciousness through which he works, is God's universal method with creatures. Why then should we

suppose that in any form he comes forward into the frontal, the phenomenal consciousness for a more direct and consciously divine action? Obviously, if at all, then to break the veil between himself and humanity which man limited in his own nature could never lift.

The Gita explains the ordinary imperfect action of the creature by its subjection to the mechanism of Prakriti and its limitation by the self-representations of Maya. These two terms are only complementary aspects of one and the same effective force of divine consciousness. Maya is not essentially illusion,—the element or appearance of illusion only enters in by the ignorance of the lower Prakriti, Maya of the three modes of Nature,—it is the divine consciousness in its power of various self-representation of its being, while Prakriti is the effective force of that consciousness which operates to work out each such self-representation according to its own law and fundamental idea, *svabhāva* and *svadharma*, in its own proper quality and particular force of working, *guna-karma*. “Leaning—pressing down upon my own Nature (Prakriti) I create (loose forth into various being) all this multitude of existences, all helplessly subject to the control of Nature.” Those who know not the Divine lodged in the human body, are ignorant of it because they are grossly subject to this mechanism of Prakriti, helplessly subject to its mental limitations and acquiescent in them, and dwell in an Asuric nature that deludes with desire and bewilders with egoism the will and the intelligence, *mohinīm prakṛtim śritāḥ*. For the Purushottama within is not readily manifest to any and every being; he conceals himself in a thick cloud of darkness or a bright cloud of light, utterly he envelops and wraps himself in his Yogamaya.¹ “All this world,” says the Gita, “because it is bewildered by the three states of being determined by the modes of Nature, fails to recognise me, for this my divine Maya of the modes of Nature is hard to get beyond; those cross beyond it who approach Me; but those who dwell in the Asuric nature of being, have their knowledge reft from them by Maya.” In

¹ *nāhaṁ prakāśāḥ sarvasya yogamāyā-samāvṛtaḥ*.

other words, there is the inherent consciousness of the divine in all, for in all the Divine dwells; but he dwells there covered by his Maya and the essential self-knowledge of beings is reft from them, turned into the error of egoism by the action of Maya, the action of the mechanism of Prakriti. Still by drawing back from the mechanism of Nature to her inner and secret Master man can become conscious of the indwelling Divinity.

Now it is notable that with a slight but important variation of language the Gita describes in the same way both the action of the Divine in bringing about the ordinary birth of creatures and his action in his birth as the Avatar. "Leaning upon my own Nature, *prakṛtim svām avaṣṭabhyā*," it will say later, "I loose forth variously, *visṛjāmi*, this multitude of creatures helplessly subject owing to the control of Prakriti, *avaśāṁ prakṛter vaśāt*." "Standing upon my own Nature," it says here, "I am born by my self-Maya, *prakṛtim svām adhiṣṭhāya . . . ātmamāyayā*, I loose forth myself, *ātmānam srjāmi*." The action implied in the word *avaṣṭabhyā* is a forceful downward pressure by which the object controlled is overcome, oppressed, blocked or limited in its movement or working and becomes helplessly subject to the controlling power, *avaśāṁ vaśāt*; Nature in this action becomes mechanical and its multitude of creatures are held helpless in the mechanism, not lords of their own action. On the contrary the action implied in the word *adhiṣṭhāya* is a dwelling in, but also a standing upon and over the Nature, a conscious control and government by the indwelling Godhead, *adhiṣṭhātrī devatā*, in which the Purusha is not helplessly driven by the Prakriti through ignorance, but rather the Prakriti is full of the light and the will of the Purusha. Therefore in the normal birth that which is loosed forth,—created, as we say,—is the multitude of creatures or becomings, *bhūtagrāmam*; in the divine birth that which is loosed forth, self-created, is the self-conscious self-existent being, *ātmānam*; for the Vedantic distinction between *ātmā* and *bhūtāni* is that which is made in European philosophy between the Being and its becomings. In both cases Maya is the means of the creation or manifestation, but in the divine birth it is by self-Maya, *ātmamāyayā*, not the involution in the lower Maya

of the ignorance, but the conscious action of the self-existent Godhead in its phenomenal self-representation, well aware of its operation and its purpose,—that which the Gita calls elsewhere Yogamaya. In the ordinary birth Yogamaya is used by the Divine to envelop and conceal itself from the lower consciousness, so it becomes for us the means of the ignorance, *avidyā-māyā*; but it is by this same Yogamaya that self-knowledge also is made manifest in the return of our consciousness to the Divine, it is the means of the knowledge, *vidyā-māyā*; and in the divine birth it so operates—as the knowledge controlling and enlightening the works which are ordinarily done in the Ignorance.

The language of the Gita shows therefore that the divine birth is that of the conscious Godhead in our humanity and essentially the opposite of the ordinary birth even though the same means are used, because it is not the birth into the Ignorance, but the birth of the knowledge, not a physical phenomenon, but a soul-birth. It is the Soul's coming into birth as the self-existent Being controlling consciously its becoming and not lost to self-knowledge in the cloud of the ignorance. It is the Soul born into the body as Lord of Nature, standing above and operating in her freely by its will, not entangled and helplessly driven round and round in the mechanism; for it works in the knowledge and not, as most do, in the ignorance. It is the secret Soul in all coming forward from its governing secrecy behind the veil to possess wholly in a human type, but as the Divine, the birth which ordinarily it possesses only from behind the veil as the Ishwara while the outward consciousness in front of the veil is rather possessed than in possession because there it is a partially conscious being, the Jiva lost to self-knowledge and bound in its works through a phenomenal subjection to Nature. The Avatar² therefore is a direct manifestation in humanity by Krishna the divine Soul of that divine condition of being to which Arjuna, the human soul, the type of a highest human being, a Vibhuti, is called upon by the Teacher to arise, and to which he can

² The word Avatara means a descent; it is a coming down of the Divine below the line which divides the divine from the human world or status.

only arise by climbing out of the ignorance and limitation of his ordinary humanity. It is the manifestation from above of that which we have to develop from below; it is the descent of God into that divine birth of the human being into which we mortal creatures must climb; it is the attracting divine example given by God to man in the very type and form and perfected model of our human existence.

The Process of Avatarhood

WE SEE that the mystery of the divine Incarnation in man, the assumption by the Godhead of the human type and the human nature, is in the view of the Gita only the other side of the eternal mystery of human birth itself which is always in its essence, though not in its phenomenal appearance, even such a miraculous assumption. The eternal and universal self of every human being is God; even his personal self is a part of the Godhead, *mamaivāṁśah*,—not a fraction or fragment, surely, since we cannot think of God as broken up into little pieces, but a partial consciousness of the one Consciousness, a partial power of the one Power, a partial enjoyment of world-being by the one and universal Delight of being, and therefore in manifestation or, as we say, in Nature a limited and finite being of the one infinite and illimitable Being. The stamp of that limitation is an ignorance by which he forgets, not only the Godhead from which he came forth, but the Godhead which is always within him, there living in the secret heart of his own nature, there burning like a veiled Fire on the inner altar in his own temple-house of human consciousness.

He is ignorant because there is upon the eyes of his soul and all its organs the seal of that Nature, Prakriti, Maya, by which he has been put forth into manifestation out of God's eternal being; she has minted him like a coin out of the precious metal of the divine substance, but overlaid with a strong coating of the alloy of her phenomenal qualities, stamped with her own stamp and mark of animal humanity, and although the secret sign of the Godhead is there, it is at first indistinguishable and always with difficulty decipherable, not to be really discovered except by that initiation into the mystery of our own being which distinguishes a Godward from an earthward humanity. In the Avatar, the divinely-born Man, the real substance shines

through the coating; the mark of the seal is there only for form, the vision is that of the secret Godhead, the power of the life is that of the secret Godhead, and it breaks through the seals of the assumed human nature; the sign of the Godhead, an inner soul-sign, not outward, not physical, stands out legible for all to read who care to see or who can see; for the Asuric nature is always blind to these things, it sees the body and not the soul, the external being and not the internal, the mask and not the Person. In the ordinary human birth the Nature-aspect of the universal Divine assuming humanity prevails; in the incarnation the God-aspect of the same phenomenon takes its place. In the one he allows the human nature to take possession of his partial being and to dominate it; in the other he takes possession of his partial type of being and its nature and divinely dominates it. Not by evolution or ascent like the ordinary man, the Gita seems to tell us, not by a growing into the divine birth, but by a direct descent into the stuff of humanity and a taking up of its moulds.

But it is to assist that ascent or evolution the descent is made or accepted; that the Gita makes very clear. It is, we might say, to exemplify the possibility of the Divine manifest in the human being, so that man may see what that is and take courage to grow into it. It is also to leave the influence of that manifestation vibrating in the earth-nature and the soul of that manifestation presiding over its upward endeavour. It is to give a spiritual mould of divine manhood into which the seeking soul of the human being can cast itself. It is to give a dharma, a religion,—not a mere creed, but a method of inner and outer living,—a way, a rule and law of self-moulding by which he can grow towards divinity. It is too, since this growth, this ascent is no mere isolated and individual phenomenon, but like all in the divine world-activities a collective business, a work and the work for the race, to assist the human march, to hold it together in its great crises, to break the forces of the downward gravitation when they grow too insistent, to uphold or restore the great dharma of the Godward law in man's nature, to prepare even, however far off, the kingdom of God, the victory of the seekers of light and perfection, *sādhūnām*, and the overthrow of those

who fight for the continuance of the evil and the darkness. All these are recognised objects of the descent of the Avatar, and it is usually by his work that the mass of men seek to distinguish him and for that they are ready to worship him. It is only the spiritual who see that this external Avatarhood is a sign, in the symbol of a human life, of the eternal inner Godhead making himself manifest in the field of their own human mentality and corporeality so that they can grow into unity with that and be possessed by it. The divine manifestation of a Christ, Krishna, Buddha in external humanity has for its inner truth the same manifestation of the eternal Avatar within in our own inner humanity. That which has been done in the outer human life of earth, may be repeated in the inner life of all human beings.

This is the object of the incarnation, but what is the method? First, we have the rational or minimising view of Avatarhood which sees in it only an extraordinary manifestation of the diviner qualities moral, intellectual and dynamic by which average humanity is exceeded. In this idea there is a certain truth. The Avatar is at the same time the Vibhuti. This Krishna who in his divine inner being is the Godhead in a human form, is in his outer human being the leader of his age, the great man of the Vrishnis. This is from the point of view of the Nature, not of the soul. The Divine manifests himself through infinite qualities of his nature and the intensity of the manifestation is measured by their power and their achievement. The *vibhūti* of the Divine is therefore, impersonally, the manifest power of his quality, it is his outflowing, in whatever form, of Knowledge, Energy, Love, Strength and the rest; personally, it is the mental form and the animate being in whom this power is achieved and does its great works. A pre-eminence in this inner and outer achievement, a greater power of divine quality, an effective energy is always the sign. The human *vibhūti* is the hero of the race's struggle towards divine achievement, the hero in the Carlylean sense of heroism, a power of God in man. "I am Vasudeva (Krishna) among the Vrishnis," says the Lord in the Gita, "Dhananjaya (Arjuna) among the Pandavas, Vyasa among the sages, the seer-poet Ushanas among the seer-poets," the first in each category,

the greatest of each group, the most powerfully representative of the qualities and works in which its characteristic soul-power manifests itself. This heightening of the powers of the being is a very necessary step in the progress of the divine manifestation. Every great man who rises above our average level, raises by that very fact our common humanity; he is a living assurance of our divine possibilities, a promise of the Godhead, a glow of the divine Light and a breath of the divine Power.

It is this truth which lies behind the natural human tendency to the deification of great minds and heroic characters; it comes out clearly enough in the Indian habit of mind which easily sees a partial (*amīsa*) Avatar in great saints, teachers, founders, or most significantly in the belief of southern Vaishnavas that some of their saints were incarnations of the symbolic living weapons of Vishnu,—for that is what all great spirits are, living powers and weapons of the Divine in the upward march and battle. This idea is innate and inevitable in any mystic or spiritual view of life which does not draw an inexorable line between the being and nature of the Divine and our human being and nature; it is the sense of the divine in humanity. But still the Vibhuti is not the Avatar; otherwise Arjuna, Vyasa, Ushanas would be Avatars as well as Krishna, even if in a less degree of the power of Avatarhood. The divine quality is not enough; there must be the inner consciousness of the Lord and Self governing the human nature by his divine presence. The heightening of the power of the qualities is part of the becoming, *bhūtagrāma*, an ascent in the ordinary manifestation; in the Avatar there is the special manifestation, the divine birth from above, the eternal and universal Godhead descended into a form of individual humanity, *ātmānam sṛjāmi*, and conscious not only behind the veil but in the outward nature.

There is an intermediary idea, a more mystical view of Avatarhood which supposes that a human soul calls down this descent into himself and is either possessed by the divine consciousness or becomes an effective reflection or channel of it. This view rests upon certain truths of spiritual experience. The divine birth in man, his ascent, is itself a growing of the human

into the divine consciousness, and in its intensest culmination is a losing of the separate self in that. The soul merges its individuality in an infinite and universal being or loses it in the heights of a transcendent being; it becomes one with the Self, the Brahman, the Divine or, as it is sometimes more absolutely put, becomes the one Self, the Brahman, the Divine. The Gita itself speaks of the soul becoming the Brahman, *brahmabhūta*, and of its thereby dwelling in the Lord, in Krishna, but it does not, it must be marked, speak of it as becoming the Lord or the Purushottama, though it does declare that the Jiva himself is always Ishwara, the partial being of the Lord, *mamaivāṁśah*. For this greatest union, this highest becoming is still part of the ascent; while it is the divine birth to which every Jiva arrives, it is not the descent of the Godhead, not Avatarhood, but at most Buddhahood according to the doctrine of the Buddhists, it is the soul awakened from its present mundane individuality into an infinite superconsciousness. That need not carry with it either the inner consciousness or the characteristic action of the Avatar.

On the other hand, this entering into the divine consciousness may be attended by a reflex action of the Divine entering or coming forward into the human parts of our being, pouring himself into the nature, the activity, the mentality, the corporeality even of the man; and that may well be at least a partial Avatarhood. The Lord stands in the heart, says the Gita,—by which it means of course the heart of the subtle being, the nodus of the emotions, sensations, mental consciousness, where the individual Purusha also is seated,—but he stands there veiled, enveloped by his Maya. But above, on a plane within us but now superconscient to us, called heaven by the ancient mystics, the Lord and the Jiva stand together revealed as of one essence of being, the Father and the Son of certain symbolisms, the Divine Being and the divine Man who comes forth from Him born of the higher divine Nature,¹ the virgin Mother, *parā prakṛti*, *parā*

¹ In the Buddhist legend the name of the mother of Buddha makes the symbolism clear; in the Christian the symbol seems to have been attached by a familiar mythopoetic process to the actual human mother of Jesus of Nazareth.

māyā, into the lower or human nature. This seems to be the inner doctrine of the Christian incarnation; in its Trinity the Father is above in this inner Heaven; the Son or supreme Prakriti become Jiva of the Gita descends as the divine Man upon earth, in the mortal body; the Holy Spirit, pure Self, Brahmic consciousness is that which makes them one and that also in which they communicate; for we hear of the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus and it is the same descent which brings down the powers of the higher consciousness into the simple humanity of the Apostles.

But also the higher divine consciousness of the Purushottama may itself descend into the humanity and that of the Jiva disappear into it. This is said by his contemporaries to have happened in the occasional transfigurations of Chaitanya when he who in his normal consciousness was only the lover and devotee of the Lord and rejected all deification, became in these abnormal moments the Lord himself and so spoke and acted, with all the outflooding light and love and power of the divine Presence. Supposing this to be the normal condition, the human receptacle to be constantly no more than a vessel of this divine Presence and divine Consciousness, we should have the Avatar according to this intermediary idea of the incarnation. That easily recommends itself as possible to our human notions; for if the human being can elevate his nature so as to feel a unity with the being of the Divine and himself a mere channel of its consciousness, light, power, love, his own will and personality lost in that will and that being,—and this is a recognised spiritual status,—then there is no inherent impossibility of the reflex action of that Will, Being, Power, Love, Light, Consciousness occupying the whole personality of the human Jiva. And this would not be merely an ascent of our humanity into the divine birth and the divine nature, but a descent of the divine Purusha into humanity, an Avatar.

The Gita, however, goes much farther. It speaks clearly of the Lord himself being born; Krishna speaks of his many births that are past and makes it clear by his language that it is not merely the receptive human being but the Divine of whom he makes this affirmation, because he uses the very language of

the Creator, the same language which he will employ when he has to describe his creation of the world. "Although I am the unborn Lord of creatures, I create (loose forth) my *self* by my Maya," presiding over the actions of my Prakriti. Here there is no question of the Lord and the human Jiva or of the Father and the Son, the divine Man, but only of the Lord and his Prakriti. The Divine descends by his own Prakriti into birth in its human form and type and brings into it the divine Consciousness and the divine Power, though consenting, though willing to act in the form, type, mould of humanity, and he governs its actions in the body as the indwelling and over-dwelling Soul, *adhiṣṭhāya*. From above he governs always, indeed, for so he governs all nature, the human included; from within also he governs all nature, always, but hidden; the difference here is that he is manifest, that the nature is conscious of the divine Presence as the Lord, the Inhabitant, and it is not by his secret will from above, "the will of the Father which is in heaven," but by his quite direct and apparent will that he moves the nature. And here there seems to be no room for the human intermediary; for it is by resort to his own nature, *prakṛtim svām*, and not the special nature of the Jiva that the Lord of all existence thus takes upon himself the human birth.

This doctrine is a hard saying, a difficult thing for the human reason to accept; and for an obvious reason, because of the evident humanity of the Avatar. The Avatar is always a dual phenomenon of divinity and humanity; the Divine takes upon himself the human nature with all its outward limitations and makes them the circumstances, means, instruments of the divine consciousness and the divine power, a vessel of the divine birth and the divine works. But so surely it must be, since otherwise the object of the Avatar's descent is not fulfilled; for that object is precisely to show that the human birth with all its limitations can be made such a means and instrument of the divine birth and divine works, precisely to show that the human type of consciousness can be compatible with the divine essence of consciousness made manifest, can be converted into its vessel, drawn into nearerer conformity with it by a change of its mould

and a heightening of its powers of light and love and strength and purity; and to show also how it can be done. If the Avatar were to act in an entirely supernormal fashion, this object would not be fulfilled. A merely supernormal or miraculous Avatar would be a meaningless absurdity; not that there need be an entire absence of the use of supernormal powers such as Christ's so-called miracles of healing, for the use of supernormal powers is quite a possibility of human nature; but there need not be that at all, nor in any case is it the root of the matter, nor would it at all do if the life were nothing else but a display of supernormal fireworks. The Avatar does not come as a thaumaturgic magician, but as the divine leader of humanity and the exemplar of a divine humanity. Even human sorrow and physical suffering he must assume and use so as to show, first, how that suffering may be a means of redemption,—as did Christ,—secondly, to show how, having been assumed by the divine soul in the human nature, it can also be overcome in the same nature,—as did Buddha. The rationalist who would have cried to Christ, "If thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross," or points out sagely that the Avatar was not divine because he died and died too by disease,—as a dog dieth,—knows not what he is saying: for he has missed the root of the whole matter. Even, the Avatar of sorrow and suffering must come before there can be the Avatar of divine joy; the human limitation must be assumed in order to show how it can be overcome; and the way and the extent of the overcoming, whether internal only or external also, depends upon the stage of the human advance; it must not be done by a non-human miracle.

The question then arises, and it is the sole real difficulty, for here the intellect falters and stumbles over its own limits, how is this human mind and body assumed? For they were not created suddenly and all of a piece, but by some kind of evolution, physical or spiritual or both. No doubt, the descent of the Avatar, like the divine birth from the other side, is essentially a spiritual phenomenon, as is shown by the Gita's *ātmānam sṛjāmi*, it is a soul-birth; but still there is here an attendant physical birth. How then were this human mind and body of

the Avatar created? If we suppose that the body is always created by the hereditary evolution, by inconscient Nature and its immanent Life-spirit without the intervention of the individual soul, the matter becomes simple. A physical and mental body is prepared fit for the divine incarnation by a pure or great heredity and the descending Godhead takes possession of it. But the Gita in this very passage applies the doctrine of reincarnation, boldly enough, to the Avatar himself, and in the usual theory of reincarnation the reincarnating soul by its past spiritual and psychological evolution itself determines and in a way prepares its own mental and physical body. The soul prepares its own body, the body is not prepared for it without any reference to the soul. Are we then to suppose an eternal or continual Avatar himself evolving, we might say, his own fit mental and physical body according to the needs and pace of the human evolution and so appearing from age to age, *yuge yuge*? In some such spirit some would interpret the ten incarnations of Vishnu, first in animal forms, then in the animal man, then in the dwarf man-soul, Vamana, the violent Asuric man, Rama of the axe, the divinely-natured man, a greater Rama, the awakened spiritual man, Buddha, and, preceding him in time, but final in place, the complete divine manhood, Krishna,—for the last Avatar, Kalki, only accomplishes the work Krishna began,—he fulfils in power the great struggle which the previous Avatars prepared in all its potentialities. It is a difficult assumption to our modern mentality, but the language of the Gita seems to demand it. Or, since the Gita does not expressly solve the problem, we may solve it in some other way of our own, as that the body is prepared by the Jiva but assumed from birth by the Godhead or that it is prepared by one of the four Manus, *catvāro manavah*, of the Gita, the spiritual Fathers of every human mind and body. This is going far into the mystic field from which the modern reason is still averse; but once we admit Avatarhood, we have already entered into it and, once entered, may as well tread in it with firm footsteps.

There the Gita's doctrine of Avatarhood stands. We have had to advert to it at length in this aspect of its method, as we

did to the question of its possibility, because it is necessary to look at it and face the difficulties which the reasoning mind of man is likely to offer to it. It is true that the physical Avatarhood does not fill a large space in the Gita, but still it does occupy a definite place in the chain of its teachings and is implied in the whole scheme, the very framework being the Avatar leading the *vibhūti*, the man who has risen to the greatest heights of mere manhood, to the divine birth and divine works. No doubt, too, the inner descent of the Godhead to raise the human soul into himself is the main thing,—it is the inner Christ, Krishna or Buddha that matters. But just as the outer life is of immense importance for the inner development, so the external Avatarhood is of no mean importance for this great spiritual manifestation. The consummation in the mental and physical symbol assists the growth of the inner reality; afterwards the inner reality expresses itself with greater power in a more perfect symbolisation of itself through the outer life. Between these two, spiritual reality and mental and physical expression, acting and returning upon each other constantly the manifestation of the Divine in humanity has elected to move always in the cycles of its concealment and its revelation.

The Divine Birth and Divine Works

THE WORK for which the Avatar descends has like his birth a double sense and a double form. It has an outward side of the divine force acting upon the external world in order to maintain there and to reshape the divine law by which the Godward effort of humanity is kept from decisive retrogression and instead decisively carried forward in spite of the rule of action and reaction, the rhythm of advance and relapse by which Nature proceeds. It has an inward side of the divine force of the Godward consciousness acting upon the soul of the individual and the soul of the race, so that it may receive new forms of revelation of the Divine in man and may be sustained, renewed and enriched in its power of upward self-unfolding. The Avatar does not descend merely for a great outward action, as the pragmatic sense in humanity is too often tempted to suppose. Action and event have no value in themselves, but only take their value from the force which they represent and the idea which they symbolise and which the force is there to serve.

The crisis in which the Avatar appears, though apparent to the outward eye only as a crisis of events and great material changes, is always in its source and real meaning a crisis in the consciousness of humanity when it has to undergo some grand modification and effect some new development. For this action of change a divine force is needed; but the force varies always according to the power of consciousness which it embodies; hence the necessity of a divine consciousness manifesting in the mind and soul of humanity. Where, indeed, the change is mainly intellectual and practical, the intervention of the Avatar is not needed; there is a great uplifting of consciousness, a great manifestation of power in which men are for the time being exalted above their normal selves, and this surge of consciousness and power finds its wave-crests in certain exceptional individuals,

vibhūtis, whose action leading the general action is sufficient for the change intended. The Reformation in Europe and the French Revolution were crises of this character; they were not great spiritual events, but intellectual and practical changes, one in religious, the other in social and political ideas, forms and motives, and the modification of the general consciousness brought about was a mental and dynamic, but not a spiritual modification. But when the crisis has a spiritual seed or intention, then a complete or a partial manifestation of the God-consciousness in a human mind and soul comes as its originator or leader. That is the Avatar.

The outward action of the Avatar is described in the Gita as the restoration of the Dharma; when from age to age the Dharma fades, languishes, loses force and its opposite arises, strong and oppressive, then the Avatar comes and raises it again to power; and as these things in idea are always represented by things in action and by human beings who obey their impulsion, his mission is, in its most human and outward terms, to relieve the seekers of the Dharma who are oppressed by the reign of the reactionary darkness and to destroy the wrong-doers who seek to maintain the denial of the Dharma. But the language used can easily be given a poor and insufficient connotation which would deprive Avatarhood of all its spiritual depth of meaning. Dharma is a word which has an ethical and practical, a natural and philosophical and a religious and spiritual significance, and it may be used in any of these senses exclusive of the others, in a purely ethical, a purely philosophical or a purely religious sense. Ethically it means the law of righteousness, the moral rule of conduct, or in a still more outward and practical significance social and political justice, or even simply the observation of the social law. If used in this sense we shall have to understand that when unrighteousness, injustice and oppression prevail, the Avatar descends to deliver the good and destroy the wicked, to break down injustice and oppression and restore the ethical balance of mankind.

Thus the popular and mythical account of the Krishna avatar is that the unrighteousness of the Kurus as incarnated

in Duryodhana and his brothers became so great a burden to the earth that she had to call upon God to descend and lighten her load; accordingly Vishnu incarnated as Krishna, delivered the oppressed Pandavas and destroyed the unjust Kauravas. A similar account is given of the descent of the previous Vishnu avatars, of Rama to destroy the unrighteous oppression of Ravana, of Parashurama to destroy the unrighteous license of the military and princely caste, the Kshatriyas, of the dwarf Vamana to destroy the rule of the Titan Bali. But obviously the purely practical, ethical or social and political mission of the Avatar which is thus thrown into popular and mythical form, does not give a right account of the phenomenon of Avatarhood. It does not cover its spiritual sense, and if this outward utility were all, we should have to exclude Buddha and Christ whose mission was not at all to destroy evil-doers and deliver the good, but to bring to all men a new spiritual message and a new law of divine growth and spiritual realisation. On the other hand, if we give to the word dharma only its religious sense, in which it means a law of religious and spiritual life, we shall indeed get to the kernel of the matter, but we shall be in danger of excluding a most important part of the work done by the Avatar. Always we see in the history of the divine incarnations the double work, and inevitably, because the Avatar takes up the workings of God in human life, the way of the divine Will and Wisdom in the world, and that always fulfils itself externally as well as internally, by inner progress in the soul and by an outer change in the life.

The Avatar may descend as a great spiritual teacher and saviour, the Christ, the Buddha, but always his work leads, after he has finished his earthly manifestation, to a profound and powerful change not only in the ethical, but in the social and outward life and ideals of the race. He may, on the other hand, descend as an incarnation of the divine life, the divine personality and power in its characteristic action, for a mission ostensibly social, ethical and political, as is represented in the story of Rama or Krishna; but always then this descent becomes in the soul of the race a permanent power for the inner living and the spiritual rebirth. It is indeed curious to note that the

permanent, vital, universal effect of Buddhism and Christianity has been the force of their ethical, social and practical ideals and their influence even on the men and the ages which have rejected their religious and spiritual beliefs, forms and disciplines; later Hinduism which rejected Buddha, his *sangha* and his *dharma*, bears the ineffaceable imprint of the social and ethical influence of Buddhism and its effect on the ideas and the life of the race, while in modern Europe, Christian only in name, humanitarianism is the translation into the ethical and social sphere and the aspiration to liberty, equality and fraternity the translation into the social and political sphere of the spiritual truths of Christianity, the latter especially being effected by men who aggressively rejected the Christian religion and spiritual discipline and by an age which in its intellectual effort of emancipation tried to get rid of Christianity as a creed. On the other hand the life of Rama and Krishna belongs to the prehistoric past which has come down only in poetry and legend and may even be regarded as myths; but it is quite immaterial whether we regard them as myths or historical facts, because their permanent truth and value lie in their persistence as a spiritual form, presence, influence in the inner consciousness of the race and the life of the human soul. Avatarhood is a fact of divine life and consciousness which may realise itself in an outward action, but must persist, when that action is over and has done its work, in a spiritual influence; or may realise itself in a spiritual influence and teaching, but must then have its permanent effect, even when the new religion or discipline is exhausted, in the thought, temperament and outward life of mankind.

We must then, in order to understand the Gita's description of the work of the Avatar, take the idea of the Dharma in its fullest, deepest and largest conception, as the inner and the outer law by which the divine Will and Wisdom work out the spiritual evolution of mankind and its circumstances and results in the life of the race. Dharma in the Indian conception is not merely the good, the right, morality and justice, ethics; it is the whole government of all the relations of man with other beings, with Nature, with God, considered from the point of view of a divine

principle working itself out in forms and laws of action, forms of the inner and the outer life, orderings of relations of every kind in the world. Dharma¹ is both that which we hold to and that which holds together our inner and outer activities. In its primary sense it means a fundamental law of our nature which secretly conditions all our activities, and in this sense each being, type, species, individual, group has its own dharma. Secondly, there is the divine nature which has to develop and manifest in us, and in this sense dharma is the law of the inner workings by which that grows in our being. Thirdly, there is the law by which we govern our outgoing thought and action and our relations with each other so as to help best both our own growth and that of the human race towards the divine ideal.

Dharma is generally spoken of as something eternal and unchanging, and so it is in the fundamental principle, in the ideal, but in its forms it is continually changing and evolving, because man does not already possess the ideal or live in it, but aspires more or less perfectly towards it, is growing towards its knowledge and practice. And in this growth dharma is all that helps us to grow into the divine purity, largeness, light, freedom, power, strength, joy, love, good, unity, beauty, and against it stands its shadow and denial, all that resists its growth and has not undergone its law, all that has not yielded up and does not will to yield up its secret of divine values, but presents a front of perversion and contradiction, of impurity, narrowness, bondage, darkness, weakness, vileness, discord and suffering and division, and the hideous and the crude, all that man has to leave behind in his progress. This is the *adharma*, not-dharma, which strives with and seeks to overcome the dharma, to draw backward and downward, the reactionary force which makes for evil, ignorance and darkness. Between the two there is perpetual battle and struggle, oscillation of victory and defeat in which sometimes the upward and sometimes the downward forces prevail. This has been typified in the Vedic image of the struggle between the divine and the Titanic powers, the sons

¹ The word means "holding" from the root *dhr*, to hold.

of the Light and the undivided Infinity and the children of the Darkness and Division, in Zoroastrianism by Ahuramazda and Ahriman, and in later religions in the contest between God and his angels and Satan or Iblis and his demons for the possession of human life and the human soul.

It is these things that condition and determine the work of the Avatar. In the Buddhistic formula the disciple takes refuge from all that opposes his liberation in three powers, the *dharma*, the *saṅgha*, the Buddha. So in Christianity we have the law of Christian living, the Church and the Christ. These three are always the necessary elements of the work of the Avatar. He gives a *dharma*, a law of self-discipline by which to grow out of the lower into the higher life and which necessarily includes a rule of action and of relations with our fellowmen and other beings, endeavour in the eightfold path or the law of faith, love and purity or any other such revelation of the nature of the divine in life. Then because every tendency in man has its collective as well as its individual aspect, because those who follow one way are naturally drawn together into spiritual companionship and unity, he establishes the *saṅgha*, the fellowship and union of those whom his personality and his teaching unite. In Vaishnavism there is the same trio, *bhāgavata*, *bhakta*, *bhagavān*, — the *bhāgavata*, which is the law of the Vaishnava dispensation of adoration and love, the *bhakta* representing the fellowship of those in whom that law is manifest, *bhagavān*, the divine Lover and Beloved in whose being and nature the divine law of love is founded and fulfils itself. The Avatar represents this third element, the divine personality, nature and being who is the soul of the *dharma* and the *saṅgha*, informs them with himself, keeps them living and draws men towards the felicity and the liberation.

In the teaching of the Gita, which is more catholic and complex than other specialised teachings and disciplines, these things assume a larger meaning. For the unity here is the all-embracing Vedantic unity by which the soul sees all in itself and itself in all and makes itself one with all beings. The *dharma*

is therefore the taking up of all human relations into a higher divine meaning; starting from the established ethical, social and religious rule which binds together the whole community in which the God-seeker lives, it lifts it up by informing it with the Brahmic consciousness; the law it gives is the law of oneness, of equality, of liberated, desireless, God-governed action, of God-knowledge and self-knowledge enlightening and drawing to itself all the nature and all the action, drawing it towards divine being and divine consciousness, and of God-love as the supreme power and crown of the knowledge and the action. The idea of companionship and mutual aid in God-love and God-seeking which is at the basis of the idea of the *sangha* or divine fellowship, is brought in when the Gita speaks of the seeking of God through love and adoration, but the real *sangha* of this teaching is all humanity. The whole world is moving towards this dharma, each man according to his capacity,—“it is my path that men follow in every way,”—and the God-seeker, making himself one with all, making their joy and sorrow and all their life his own, the liberated made already one self with all beings, lives in the life of humanity, lives for the one Self in humanity, for God in all beings, acts for *lokasangraha*, for the maintaining of all in their dharma and the Dharma, for the maintenance of their growth in all its stages and in all its paths towards the Divine. For the Avatar here, though he is manifest in the name and form of Krishna, lays no exclusive stress on this one form of his human birth, but on that which it represents, the Divine, the Purushottama, of whom all Avatars are the human births, of whom all forms and names of the Godhead worshipped by men are the figures. The way declared by Krishna here is indeed announced as the way by which man can reach the real knowledge and the real liberation, but it is one that is inclusive of all paths and not exclusive. For the Divine takes up into his universality all Avatars and all teachings and all dharmas.

The Gita lays stress upon the struggle of which the world is the theatre, in its two aspects, the inner struggle and the outer battle. In the inner struggle the enemies are within, in

the individual, and the slaying of desire, ignorance, egoism is the victory. But there is an outer struggle between the powers of the Dharma and the Adharma in the human collectivity. The former is supported by the divine, the godlike nature in man, and by those who represent it or strive to realise it in human life, the latter by the Titanic or demoniac, the Asuric and Rakshasic nature whose head is a violent egoism, and by those who represent and strive to satisfy it. This is the war of the Gods and Titans, the symbol of which the old Indian literature is full, the struggle of the Mahabharata of which Krishna is the central figure being often represented in that image; the Pandavas who fight for the establishment of the kingdom of the Dharma, are the sons of the Gods, their powers in human form, their adversaries are incarnations of the Titanic powers, they are Asuras. This outer struggle too the Avatar comes to aid, directly or indirectly, to destroy the reign of the Asuras, the evil-doers, and in them depress the power they represent and to restore the oppressed ideals of the Dharma. He comes to bring nearer the kingdom of heaven on earth in the collectivity as well as to build the kingdom of heaven within in the individual human soul.

The inner fruit of the Avatar's coming is gained by those who learn from it the true nature of the divine birth and the divine works and who, growing full of him in their consciousness and taking refuge in him with their whole being, *mām mayā mām upāśritāḥ*, purified by the realising force of their knowledge and delivered from the lower nature, attain to the divine being and divine nature, *madbhāvam*. The Avatar comes to reveal the divine nature in man above this lower nature and to show what are the divine works, free, unegoistic, disinterested, impersonal, universal, full of the divine light, the divine power and the divine love. He comes as the divine personality which shall fill the consciousness of the human being and replace the limited egoistic personality, so that it shall be liberated out of ego into infinity and universality, out of birth into immortality. He comes as the divine power and love which calls men to itself, so that they may take refuge in that and no longer in the insufficiency

of their human wills and the strife of their human fear, wrath and passion, and liberated from all this unquiet and suffering may live in the calm and bliss of the Divine.² Nor does it matter essentially in what form and name or putting forward what aspect of the Divine he comes; for in all ways, varying with their nature, men are following the path set to them by the Divine which will in the end lead them to him and the aspect of him which suits their nature is that which they can best follow when he comes to lead them; in whatever way men accept, love and take joy in God, in that way God accepts, loves and takes joy in man. *Ye yathā mām prapadyante tāṁs tathaiva bhajāmyaham.*

² *janma karma ca me divyam evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ,
tyaktvā dehaṁ punarjanma naiti mām eti so'rjuna.
vitarāgabhayakrodhā manmayā mām upāśritāḥ,
bahavo jñānatapasā pūtā madbhāvam āgatāḥ.*

XVIII

The Divine Worker

TO ATTAIN to the divine birth,— a divinising new birth of the soul into a higher consciousness,— and to do divine works both as a means towards that before it is attained and as an expression of it after it is attained, is then all the Karmayoga of the Gita. The Gita does not try to define works by any outward signs through which it can be recognisable to an external gaze, measurable by the criticism of the world; it deliberately renounces even the ordinary ethical distinctions by which men seek to guide themselves in the light of the human reason. The signs by which it distinguishes divine works are all profoundly intimate and subjective; the stamp by which they are known is invisible, spiritual, supra-ethical.

They are recognisable only by the light of the soul from which they come. For, it says, “what is action and what is inaction, as to this even the sages are perplexed and deluded,” because, judging by practical, social, ethical, intellectual standards, they discriminate by accidentals and do not go to the root of the matter; “I will declare to thee that action by the knowledge of which thou shalt be released from all ills. One has to understand about action as well as to understand about wrong action and about inaction one has to understand; thick and tangled is the way of works.” Action in the world is like a deep forest, *gahana*, through which man goes stumbling as best he can, by the light of the ideas of his time, the standards of his personality, his environment, or rather of many times, many personalities, layers of thought and ethics from many social stages all inextricably confused together, temporal and conventional amidst all their claim to absoluteness and immutable truth, empirical and irrational in spite of their aping of right reason. And finally the sage seeking in the midst of it all a highest foundation of fixed law and an original truth finds himself obliged to raise the

last supreme question, whether all action and life itself are not a delusion and a snare and whether cessation from action, *akarma*, is not the last resort of the tired and disillusioned human soul. But, says Krishna, in this matter even the sages are perplexed and deluded. For by action, by works, not by inaction comes the knowledge and the release.

What then is the solution? what is that type of works by which we shall be released from the ills of life, from this doubt, this error, this grief, from this mixed, impure and baffling result even of our purest and best-intentioned acts, from these million forms of evil and suffering? No outward distinctions need be made, is the reply; no work the world needs, be shunned; no limit or hedge set round our human activities; on the contrary, all actions should be done, but from a soul in Yoga with the Divine, *yuktah krtsna-karma-kṛt*. *Akarma*, cessation from action is not the way; the man who has attained to the insight of the highest reason, perceives that such inaction is itself a constant action, a state subject to the workings of Nature and her qualities. The mind that takes refuge in physical inactivity, is still under the delusion that it and not Nature is the doer of works; it has mistaken inertia for liberation; it does not see that even in what seems absolute inertia greater than that of the stone or clod, Nature is at work, keeps unimpaired her hold. On the contrary in the full flood of action the soul is free from its works, is not the doer, not bound by what is done, and he who lives in the freedom of the soul, not in the bondage of the modes of Nature, alone has release from works. This is what the Gita clearly means when it says that he who in action can see inaction and can see action still continuing in cessation from works, is the man of true reason and discernment among men. This saying hinges upon the Sankhya distinction between Purusha and Prakriti, between the free inactive soul, eternally calm, pure and unmoved in the midst of works, and ever active Nature operative as much in inertia and cessation as in the overt turmoil of her visible hurry of labour. This is the knowledge which the highest effort of the discriminating reason, the *buddhi*, gives to us, and therefore whoever possesses it is the truly rational and discerning man, *sa*

buddhimān manusyesu, — not the perplexed thinker who judges life and works by the external, uncertain and impermanent distinctions of the lower reason. Therefore the liberated man is not afraid of action, he is a large and universal doer of all works, *kṛtsna-karma-kṛt*; not as others do them in subjection to Nature, but poised in the silent calm of the soul, tranquilly in Yoga with the Divine. The Divine is the lord of his works, he is only their channel through the instrumentality of his nature conscious of and subject to her Lord. By the flaming intensity and purity of this knowledge all his works are burned up as in a fire and his mind remains without any stain or disfiguring mark from them, calm, silent, unperturbed, white and clean and pure. To do all in this liberating knowledge, without the personal egoism of the doer, is the first sign of the divine worker.

The second sign is freedom from desire; for where there is not the personal egoism of the doer, desire becomes impossible; it is starved out, sinks for want of a support, dies of inanition. Outwardly the liberated man seems to undertake works of all kinds like other men, on a larger scale perhaps with a more powerful will and driving-force, for the might of the divine will works in his active nature; but from all his inceptions and undertakings the inferior concept and nether will of desire is entirely banished, *sarve samārambhāḥ kāmasaṅkalpavarjitaḥ*. He has abandoned all attachment to the fruits of his works, and where one does not work for the fruit, but solely as an impersonal instrument of the Master of works, desire can find no place, — not even the desire to serve successfully, for the fruit is the Lord's and determined by him and not by the personal will and effort, or to serve with credit and to the Master's satisfaction, for the real doer is the Lord himself and all glory belongs to a form of his Shakti missioned in the nature and not to the limited human personality. The human mind and soul of the liberated man does nothing, *na kiñcit karoti*; even though through his nature he engages in action, it is the Nature, the executive Shakti, it is the conscious Goddess governed by the divine Inhabitant who does the work.

It does not follow that the work is not to be done perfectly,

with success, with a right adaptation of means to ends: on the contrary a perfect working is easier to action done tranquilly in Yoga than to action done in the blindness of hopes and fears, lamed by the judgments of the stumbling reason, running about amidst the eager trepidations of the hasty human will: Yoga, says the Gita elsewhere, is the true skill in works, *yogah karmasu kauśalam*. But all this is done impersonally by the action of a great universal light and power operating through the individual nature. The Karmayogin knows that the power given to him will be adapted to the fruit decreed, the divine thought behind the work equated with the work he has to do, the will in him,—which will not be wish or desire, but an impersonal drive of conscious power directed towards an aim not his own,—subtly regulated in its energy and direction by the divine wisdom. The result may be success, as the ordinary mind understands it, or it may seem to that mind to be defeat and failure; but to him it is always the success intended, not by him, but by the all-wise manipulator of action and result, because he does not seek for victory, but only for the fulfilment of the divine will and wisdom which works out its ends through apparent failure as well as and often with greater force than through apparent triumph. Arjuna, bidden to fight, is assured of victory; but even if certain defeat were before him, he must still fight because that is the present work assigned to him as his immediate share in the great sum of energies by which the divine will is surely accomplished.

The liberated man has no personal hopes; he does not seize on things as his personal possessions; he receives what the divine Will brings him, covets nothing, is jealous of none: what comes to him he takes without repulsion and without attachment; what goes from him he allows to depart into the whirl of things without repining or grief or sense of loss. His heart and self are under perfect control; they are free from reaction and passion, they make no turbulent response to the touches of outward things. His action is indeed a purely physical action, *sārīram kevalam karma*; for all else comes from above, is not generated on the human plane, is only a reflection of the will, knowledge, joy of the divine Purushottama. Therefore he does not lay a stress on

doing and its objects bring about in his mind and heart any of those reactions which we call passion and sin. For sin consists not at all in the outward deed, but in an impure reaction of the personal will, mind and heart which accompanies it or causes it; the impersonal, the spiritual is always pure, *apāpaviddham*, and gives to all that it does its own inalienable purity. This spiritual impersonality is a third sign of the divine worker. All human souls, indeed, who have attained to a certain greatness and largeness are conscious of an impersonal Force or Love or Will and Knowledge working through them, but they are not free from egoistic reactions, sometimes violent enough, of their human personality. But this freedom the liberated soul has attained; for he has cast his personality into the impersonal, where it is no longer his, but is taken up by the divine Person, the Purushottama, who uses all finite qualities infinitely and freely and is bound by none. He has become a soul and ceased to be a sum of natural qualities; and such appearance of personality as remains for the operations of Nature, is something unbound, large, flexible, universal; it is a free mould for the Infinite, it is a living mask of the Purushottama.

The result of this knowledge, this desirelessness and this impersonality is a perfect equality in the soul and the nature. Equality is the fourth sign of the divine worker. He has, says the Gita, passed beyond the dualities; he is *dvandvātīta*. We have seen that he regards with equal eyes, without any disturbance of feeling, failure and success, victory and defeat; but not only these, all dualities are in him surpassed and reconciled. The outward distinctions by which men determine their psychological attitude towards the happenings of the world, have for him only a subordinate and instrumental meaning. He does not ignore them, but he is above them. Good happening and evil happening, so all-important to the human soul subject to desire, are to the desireless divine soul equally welcome since by their mingled strand are worked out the developing forms of the eternal good. He cannot be defeated, since all for him is moving towards the divine victory in the Kurukshetra of Nature, *dharmakṣetre kurukṣetre*, the field of doings which is the field

of the evolving Dharma, and every turn of the conflict has been designed and mapped by the foreseeing eye of the Master of the battle, the Lord of works and Guide of the dharma. Honour and dishonour from men cannot move him, nor their praise nor their blame; for he has a greater clear-seeing judge and another standard for his action, and his motive admits no dependence upon worldly rewards. Arjuna the Kshatriya prizes naturally honour and reputation and is right in shunning disgrace and the name of coward as worse than death; for to maintain the point of honour and the standard of courage in the world is part of his dharma: but Arjuna the liberated soul need care for none of these things, he has only to know the *kartavyam karma*, the work which the supreme Self demands from him, and to do that and leave the result to the Lord of his actions. He has passed even beyond that distinction of sin and virtue which is so all-important to the human soul while it is struggling to minimise the hold of its egoism and lighten the heavy and violent yoke of its passions,—the liberated has risen above these struggles and is seated firmly in the purity of the witnessing and enlightened soul. Sin has fallen away from him, and not a virtue acquired and increased by good action and impaired or lost by evil action, but the inalienable and unalterable purity of a divine and selfless nature is the peak to which he has climbed and the seat upon which he is founded. There the sense of sin and the sense of virtue have no starting-point or applicability.

Arjuna, still in the ignorance, may feel in his heart the call of right and justice and may argue in his mind that abstention from battle would be a sin entailing responsibility for all the suffering that injustice and oppression and the evil karma of the triumph of wrong bring upon men and nations, or he may feel in his heart the recoil from violence and slaughter and argue in his mind that all shedding of blood is a sin which nothing can justify. Both of these attitudes would appeal with equal right to virtue and reason and it would depend upon the man, the circumstances and the time which of these might prevail in his mind or before the eyes of the world. Or he might simply feel constrained by his heart and his honour to support his friends against his enemies,

the cause of the good and just against the cause of the evil and oppressive. The liberated soul looks beyond these conflicting standards; he sees simply what the supreme Self demands from him as needful for the maintenance or for the bringing forward of the evolving Dharma. He has no personal ends to serve, no personal loves and hatreds to satisfy, no rigidly fixed standard of action which opposes its rock-line to the flexible advancing march of the progress of the human race or stands up defiant against the call of the Infinite. He has no personal enemies to be conquered or slain, but sees only men who have been brought up against him by circumstances and the will in things to help by their opposition the march of destiny. Against them he can have no wrath or hatred; for wrath and hatred are foreign to the divine nature. The Asura's desire to break and slay what opposes him, the Rakshasa's grim lust of slaughter are impossible to his calm and peace and his all-embracing sympathy and understanding. He has no wish to injure, but on the contrary a universal friendliness and compassion, *maitrah karuṇa eva ca*: but this compassion is that of a divine soul overlooking men, embracing all other souls in himself, not the shrinking of the heart and the nerves and the flesh which is the ordinary human form of pity: nor does he attach a supreme importance to the life of the body, but looks beyond to the life of the soul and attaches to the other only an instrumental value. He will not hasten to slaughter and strife, but if war comes in the wave of the Dharma, he will accept it with a large equality and a perfect understanding and sympathy for those whose power and pleasure of domination he has to break and whose joy of triumphant life he has to destroy.

For in all he sees two things, the Divine inhabiting every being equally, the varying manifestation unequal only in its temporary circumstances. In the animal and man, in the dog, the unclean outcaste and the learned and virtuous Brahmin, in the saint and the sinner, in the indifferent and the friendly and the hostile, in those who love him and benefit and those who hate him and afflict, he sees himself, he sees God and has at heart for all the same equal kindliness, the same divine affection. Circumstances may determine the outward clasp or the outward

conflict, but can never affect his equal eye, his open heart, his inner embrace of all. And in all his actions there will be the same principle of soul, a perfect equality, and the same principle of work, the will of the Divine in him active for the need of the race in its gradually developing advance towards the Godhead.

Again, the sign of the divine worker is that which is central to the divine consciousness itself, a perfect inner joy and peace which depends upon nothing in the world for its source or its continuance; it is innate, it is the very stuff of the soul's consciousness, it is the very nature of divine being. The ordinary man depends upon outward things for his happiness; therefore he has desire; therefore he has anger and passion, pleasure and pain, joy and grief; therefore he measures all things in the balance of good fortune and evil fortune. None of these things can affect the divine soul; it is ever satisfied without any kind of dependence, *nitya-trpti nirāśrayah*; for its delight, its divine ease, its happiness, its glad light are eternal within, ingrained in itself, *ātma-ratiḥ*, *antah-sukho 'ntar-ārāmas tathāntar-jyotir eva yah*. What joy it takes in outward things is not for their sake, not for things which it seeks in them and can miss, but for the self in them, for their expression of the Divine, for that which is eternal in them and which it cannot miss. It is without attachment to their outward touches, but finds everywhere the same joy that it finds in itself, because its self is theirs, has become one self with the self of all beings, because it is united with the one and equal Brahman in them through all their differences, *brahmayoga-yuktātmā, sarvabhūtātmā-bhūtātmā*. It does not rejoice in the touches of the pleasant or feel anguish in the touches of the unpleasant; neither the wounds of things, nor the wounds of friends, nor the wounds of enemies can disturb the firmness of its outgazing mind or bewilder its receiving heart; this soul is in its nature, as the Upanishad puts it, *avranam*, without wound or scar. In all things it has the same imperishable Ananda, *sukham akṣayam aśmute*.

That equality, impersonality, peace, joy, freedom do not depend on so outward a thing as doing or not doing works. The Gita insists repeatedly on the difference between the inward and

the outward renunciation, *tyāga* and *sannyāsa*. The latter, it says, is valueless without the former, hardly possible even to attain without it, and unnecessary when there is the inward freedom. In fact *tyāga* itself is the real and sufficient Sannyasa. “He should be known as the eternal Sannyasin who neither hates nor desires; free from the dualities he is happily and easily released from all bondage.” The painful process of outward Sannyasa, *duḥkham āptum*, is an unnecessary process. It is perfectly true that all actions, as well as the fruit of action, have to be given up, to be renounced, but inwardly, not outwardly, not into the inertia of Nature, but to the Lord in sacrifice, into the calm and joy of the Impersonal from whom all action proceeds without disturbing his peace. The true Sannyasa of action is the reposing of all works on the Brahman. “He who, having abandoned attachment, acts reposing (or founding) his works on the Brahman, *brahmaṇyādhāya karmāṇi*, is not stained by sin even as water clings not to the lotus-leaf.” Therefore the Yogins first “do works with the body, mind, understanding, or even merely with the organs of action, abandoning attachment, for self-purification, *sangam tyaktvātmaśuddhaye*. By abandoning attachment to the fruits of works the soul in union with Brahman attains to peace of rapt foundation in Brahman, but the soul not in union is attached to the fruit and bound by the action of desire.” The foundation, the purity, the peace once attained, the embodied soul perfectly controlling its nature, having renounced all its actions by the mind, inwardly, not outwardly, “sits in its nine-gated city neither doing nor causing to be done.” For this soul is the one impersonal Soul in all, the all-pervading Lord, *prabhu*, *vibhu*, who, as the impersonal, neither creates the works of the world, nor the mind’s idea of being the doer, *na kartṛtvām na karmāṇi*, nor the coupling of works to their fruits, the chain of cause and effect. All that is worked out by the Nature in the man, *svabhāva*, his principle of self-becoming, as the word literally means. The all-pervading Impersonal accepts neither the sin nor the virtue of any: these are things created by the ignorance in the creature, by his egoism of the doer, by his ignorance of his highest self, by his involution in the operations of Nature, and

when the self-knowledge within him is released from this dark envelope, that knowledge lights up like a sun the real self within him; he knows himself then to be the soul supreme above the instruments of Nature. Pure, infinite, inviolable, immutable, he is no longer affected; no longer does he imagine himself to be modified by her workings. By complete identification with the Impersonal he can, too, release himself from the necessity of returning by birth into her movement.

And yet this liberation does not at all prevent him from acting. Only, he knows that it is not he who is active, but the modes, the qualities of Nature, her triple *gunas*. "The man who knows the principles of things thinks, his mind in Yoga (with the inactive Impersonal), 'I am doing nothing'; when he sees, hears, touches, smells, eats, moves, sleeps, breathes, speaks, takes, ejects, opens his eyes or closes them, he holds that it is only the senses acting upon the objects of the senses." He himself, safe in the immutable, unmodified soul, is beyond the grip of the three gunas, *trigunātīta*; he is neither sattvic, rajaslic nor tamasic; he sees with a clear untroubled spirit the alternations of the natural modes and qualities in his action, their rhythmic play of light and happiness, activity and force, rest and inertia. This superiority of the calm soul observing its action but not involved in it, this *traiguṇātītya*, is also a high sign of the divine worker. By itself the idea might lead to a doctrine of the mechanical determinism of Nature and the perfect aloofness and irresponsibility of the soul; but the Gita effectively avoids this fault of an insufficient thought by its illumining supertheistic idea of the Purushottama. It makes it clear that it is not in the end Nature which mechanically determines its own action; it is the will of the Supreme which inspires her; he who has already slain the Dhritarashtrians, he of whom Arjuna is only the human instrument, a universal Soul, a transcendent Godhead is the master of her labour. The reposing of works in the Impersonal is a means of getting rid of the personal egoism of the doer, but the end is to give up all our actions to that great Lord of all, *sarva-loka-maheśvara*. "With a consciousness identified with the Self, renouncing all thy actions into Me, *mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi*

sannyasyādhyātmacetasā, freed from personal hopes and desires, from the thought of ‘I’ and ‘mine’, delivered from the fever of the soul, fight,” work, do my will in the world. The Divine motives, inspires, determines the entire action; the human soul impersonal in the Brahman is the pure and silent channel of his power; that power in the Nature executes the divine movement. Such only are the works of the liberated soul, *muktasya karma*, for in nothing does he act from a personal inception; such are the actions of the accomplished Karmayogin. They rise from a free spirit and disappear without modifying it, like waves that rise and disappear on the surface of conscious, immutable depths. *Gata-saṅgasya muktasya jñānāvasthita-cetasah, yajñāyācarataḥ karma samagram pravilīyate.*

XIX

Equality

SINCE knowledge, desirelessness, impersonality, equality, the inner self-existent peace and bliss, freedom from or at least superiority to the tangled interlocking of the three modes of Nature are the signs of the liberated soul, they must accompany it in all its activities. They are the condition of that unalterable calm which this soul preserves in all the movement, all the shock, all the clash of forces which surround it in the world. That calm reflects the equable immutability of the Brahman in the midst of all mutations, and it belongs to the indivisible and impartial Oneness which is for ever immanent in all the multiplicities of the universe. For an equal and all-equalising spirit is that Oneness in the midst of the million differences and inequalities of the world; and equality of the spirit is the sole real equality. For in all else in existence there can only be similarity, adjustment and balance; but even in the greatest similarities of the world we find difference of inequality and difference of unlikeness and the adjusted balancings of the world can only come about by a poising of combined unequal weights.

Hence the immense importance attached by the Gita in its elements of Karmayoga to equality; it is the nodus of the free spirit's free relations with the world. Self-knowledge, desirelessness, impersonality, bliss, freedom from the modes of Nature, when withdrawn into themselves, self-absorbed, inactive, have no need of equality; for they take no cognisance of the things in which the opposition of equality and inequality arises. But the moment the spirit takes cognisance of and deals with the multiplicities, personalities, differences, inequalities of the action of Nature, it has to effectuate these other signs of its free status by this one manifesting sign of equality. Knowledge is the consciousness of unity with the One; and in relation with the many different beings and existences of the universe it must

show itself by an equal oneness with all. Impersonality is the one immutable spirit's superiority to the variations of its multiple personality in the world; in its dealings with the personalities of the universe it must show itself in the equal and impartial spirit of its action with regard to all, however various that action may be made by the variety of relations into which it is moulded or of the conditions under which it has to take place. So Krishna in the Gita says that none is dear to him, none hated, to all he is equal in spirit; yet is the God-lover the special receiver of his grace, because the relation he has created is different and the one impartial Lord of all yet meets each soul according to its way of approach to him. Desirelessness is the illimitable Spirit's superiority to the limiting attraction of the separate objects of desire in the world; when it has to enter into relations with those objects, it must show it either by an equal and impartial indifference in their possession or by an equal and impartial unattached delight in all and love for all which, because it is self-existent, does not depend upon possession or non-possession, but is in its essence unperturbed and immutable. For the spirit's bliss is in itself, and if this bliss is to enter into relations with things and creatures, it is only in this way that it can manifest its free spirituality. *Traigunātītya*, transcendence of the gunas, is the unperturbed spirit's superiority to that flux of action of the modes of Nature which is in its constant character perturbed and unequal; if it has to enter into relations with the conflicting and unequal activities of Nature, if the free soul is to allow its nature any action at all, it must show its superiority by an impartial equality towards all activities, results or happenings.

Equality is the sign and also for the aspirant the test. Where there is inequality in the soul, there there is in evidence some unequal play of the modes of Nature, motion of desire, play of personal will, feeling and action, activity of joy and grief or that disturbed and disturbing delight which is not true spiritual bliss but a mental satisfaction bringing in its train inevitably a counterpart or recoil of mental dissatisfaction. Where there is inequality of soul, there there is deviation from knowledge, loss of steadfast abiding in the all-embracing and all-reconciling

oneness of the Brahman and unity of things. By his equality the Karmayogin knows in the midst of his action that he is free.

It is the spiritual nature of the equality enjoined, high and universal in its character and comprehension, which gives its distinctive note to the teaching of the Gita in this matter. For otherwise the mere teaching of equality in itself as the most desirable status of the mind, feelings and temperament in which we rise superior to human weakness, is by no means peculiar to the Gita. Equality has always been held up to admiration as the philosophic ideal and the characteristic temperament of the sages. The Gita takes up indeed this philosophic ideal, but carries it far beyond into a higher region where we find ourselves breathing a larger and purer air. The Stoic poise, the philosophic poise of the soul are only its first and second steps of ascension out of the whirl of the passions and the tossings of desire to a serenity and bliss, not of the Gods, but of the Divine himself in his supreme self-mastery. The Stoic equality, making character its pivot, founds itself upon self-mastery by austere endurance; the happier and serener philosophic equality prefers self-mastery by knowledge, by detachment, by a high intellectual indifference seated above the disturbances to which our nature is prone, *udāśīnavad āśīnah*, as the Gita expresses it; there is also the religious or Christian equality which is a perpetual kneeling or a prostrate resignation and submission to the will of God. These are the three steps and means towards divine peace, heroic endurance, sage indifference, pious resignation, *titikṣā*, *udāśīnatā*, *namas* or *nati*. The Gita takes them all in its large synthetic manner and weaves them into its upward soul-movement, but it gives to each a profounder root, a larger outlook, a more universal and transcendent significance. For to each it gives the values of the spirit, its power of spiritual being beyond the strain of character, beyond the difficult poise of the understanding, beyond the stress of the emotions.

The ordinary human soul takes a pleasure in the customary disturbances of its nature-life; it is because it has this pleasure and because, having it, it gives a sanction to the troubled play of the lower nature that the play continues perpetually; for the

Prakriti does nothing except for the pleasure and with the sanction of its lover and enjoyer, the Purusha. We do not recognise this truth because under the actual stroke of the adverse disturbance, smitten by grief, pain, discomfort, misfortune, failure, defeat, blame, dishonour, the mind shrinks back from the blow, while it leaps eagerly to the embrace of the opposite and pleasurable disturbances, joy, pleasure, satisfactions of all kinds, prosperity, success, victory, glory, praise; but this does not alter the truth of the soul's pleasure in life which remains constant behind the dualities of the mind. The warrior does not feel physical pleasure in his wounds or find mental satisfaction in his defeats; but he has a complete delight in the godhead of battle which brings to him defeat and wounds as well as the joy of victory, and he accepts the chances of the former and the hope of the latter as part of the mingled weft of war, the thing which the delight in him pursues. Even, wounds bring him a joy and pride in memory, complete when the pain of them has passed, but often enough present even while it is there and actually fed by the pain. Defeat keeps for him the joy and pride of indomitable resistance to a superior adversary, or, if he is of a baser kind, the passions of hatred and revenge which also have their darker and crueler pleasures. So it is with the pleasure of the soul in the normal play of our life.

The mind recoils by pain and dislike from the adverse strokes of life; that is Nature's device for enforcing a principle of self-protection, *jugupsā*, so that the vulnerable nervous and bodily parts of us may not unduly rush upon self-destruction to embrace it: it takes joy in the favourable touches of life; that is Nature's lure of rajasic pleasure, so that the force in the creature may overcome the tamasic tendencies of inertia and inactivity and be impelled fully towards action, desire, struggle, success, and by its attachment to these things her ends may be worked out. Our secret soul takes a pleasure in this strife and effort, and even a pleasure in adversity and suffering, which can be complete enough in memory and retrospect, but is present too behind at the time and often even rises to the surface of the afflicted mind to support it in its passion; but what really

attracts the soul is the whole mingled weft of the thing we call life with all its disturbance of struggle and seeking, its attractions and repulsions, its offer and its menace, its varieties of every kind. To the rajasic desire-soul in us a monotonous pleasure, success without struggle, joy without a shadow must after a time become fatiguing, insipid, cloying; it needs a background of darkness to give full value to its enjoyment of light: for the happiness it seeks and enjoys is of that very nature, it is in its very essence relative and dependent on the perception and experience of its opposite. The joy of the soul in the dualities is the secret of the mind's pleasure in living.

Ask it to rise out of all this disturbance to the unmingled joy of the pure bliss-soul which all the time secretly supports its strength in the struggle and makes its own continued existence possible,—it will draw back at once from the call. It does not believe in such an existence; or it believes that it would not be life, that it would not be at all the varied existence in the world around it in which it is accustomed to take pleasure; it would be something tasteless and without savour. Or it feels that the effort would be too difficult for it; it recoils from the struggle of the ascent, although in reality the spiritual change is not at all more difficult than the realisation of the dreams the desire-soul pursues, nor entails more struggle and labour in the attainment than the tremendous effort which the desire-soul expends in its passionate chase after its own transient objects of pleasure and desire. The true cause of its unwillingness is that it is asked to rise above its own atmosphere and breathe a rarer and purer air of life, whose bliss and power it cannot realise and hardly even conceives as real, while the joy of this lower turbid nature is to it the one thing familiar and palpable. Nor is this lower satisfaction in itself a thing evil and unprofitable; it is rather the condition for the upward evolution of our human nature out of the tamasic ignorance and inertia to which its material being is most subject; it is the rajasic stage of the graded ascent of man towards the supreme self-knowledge, power and bliss. But if we rest eternally on this plane, the *madhyamā gatiḥ* of the Gita, our ascent remains unfinished, the evolution of the soul incomplete.

Through the sattwic being and nature to that which is beyond the three gunas lies the way of the soul to its perfection.

The movement which will lead us out of the disturbances of the lower nature must be necessarily a movement towards equality in the mind, in the emotional temperament, in the soul. But it is to be noted that, although in the end we must arrive at a superiority to all the three gunas of the lower nature, it is yet in its incipience by a resort to one or other of the three that the movement must begin. The beginning of equality may be sattwic, rajasic or tamasic; for there is a possibility in the human nature of a tamasic equality. It may be purely tamasic, the heavy equability of a vital temperament rendered inertly irresponsible to the shocks of existence by a sort of dull insensibility undesirous of the joy of life. Or it may result from a weariness of the emotions and desires accumulated by a surfeit and satiety of the pleasure or else, on the contrary, a disappointment and a disgust and shrinking from the pain of life, a lassitude, a fear and horror and dislike of the world: it is then in its nature a mixed movement, rājaso-tamasic, but the lower quality predominates. Or, approaching the sattwic principle, it may aid itself by the intellectual perception that the desires of life cannot be satisfied, that the soul is too weak to master life, that the whole thing is nothing but sorrow and transient effort and nowhere in it is there any real truth or sanity or light or happiness; this is the sattwo-tamasic principle of equality and is not so much equality, though it may lead to that, as indifference or equal refusal. Essentially, the movement of tamasic equality is a generalisation of Nature's principle of *jugupsā* or self-protecting recoil extended from the shunning of particular painful effects to a shunning of the whole life of Nature itself as in sum leading to pain and self-tormenting and not to the delight which the soul demands.

In tamasic equality by itself there is no real liberation; but it can be made a powerful starting-point, if, as in Indian asceticism, it is turned into the sattwic by the perception of the greater existence, the truer power, the higher delight of the immutable Self above Nature. The natural turn of such a movement, however, is towards Sannyasa, the renunciation of life and works, rather

than to that union of inner renunciation of desire with continued activity in the world of Nature which the Gita advocates. The Gita, however, admits and makes room for this movement; it allows as a recoiling starting-point the perception of the defects of the world-existence, birth and disease and death and old age and sorrow, the historic starting-point of the Buddha, *janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhi-duḥkha-doṣānudarśanam*, and it accepts the effort of those whose self-discipline is motived by a desire for release, even in this spirit, from the curse of age and death, *jarā-marana-mokṣāya mām āśritya yatanti ye*. But that, to be of any profit, must be accompanied by the sattvic perception of a higher state and the taking delight and refuge in the existence of the Divine, *mām āśritya*. Then the soul by its recoil comes to a greater condition of being, lifted beyond the three gunas and free from birth and death and age and grief, and enjoys the immortality of its self-existence, *janma-mṛtyu-jarā-duḥkhair vimukto 'mr̥tam aśnute*. The tamasic unwillingness to accept the pain and effort of life is indeed by itself a weakening and degrading thing, and in this lies the danger of preaching to all alike the gospel of asceticism and world-disgust, that it puts the stamp of a tamasic weakness and shrinking on unfit souls, confuses their understanding, *buddhibhedam janayet*, diminishes the sustained aspiration, the confidence in living, the power of effort which the soul of man needs for its salutary, its necessary rajasic struggle to master its environment, without really opening to it—for it is yet incapable of that—a higher goal, a greater endeavour, a mightier victory. But in souls that are fit this tamasic recoil may serve a useful spiritual purpose by slaying their rajasic attraction, their eager preoccupation with the lower life which prevents the sattvic awakening to a higher possibility. Seeking then for a refuge in the void they have created, they are able to hear the divine call, “O soul that findest thyself in this transient and unhappy world, turn and put thy delight in Me,” *anityam asukham lokam imam prāpya bhajasva mām*.

Still, in this movement, the equality consists only in an equal recoil from all that constitutes the world; and it arrives at indifference and aloofness, but does not include that power to

accept equally all the touches of the world pleasurable or painful without attachment or disturbance which is a necessary element in the discipline of the Gita. Therefore, even if we begin with the tamasic recoil,—which is not at all necessary,—it can only be as a first incitement to a greater endeavour, not as a permanent pessimism. The real discipline begins with the movement to mastery over these things from which we were first inclined merely to flee. It is here that the possibility of a kind of rajasic equality comes in, which is at its lowest the strong nature's pride in self-mastery, self-control, superiority to passion and weakness; but the Stoic ideal seizes upon this point of departure and makes it the key to an entire liberation of the soul from subjection to all weakness of its lower nature. As the tamasic inward recoil is a generalisation of Nature's principle of *jugupsā* or self-protection from suffering, so the rajasic upward movement is a generalisation of Nature's other principle of the acceptance of struggle and effort and the innate impulse of life towards mastery and victory; but it transfers the battle to the field where alone complete victory is possible. Instead of a struggle for scattered outward aims and transient successes, it proposes nothing less than the conquest of Nature and the world itself by a spiritual struggle and an inner victory. The tamasic recoil turns from both the pains and pleasures of the world to flee from them; the rajasic movement turns upon them to bear, master and rise superior to them. The Stoic self-discipline calls desire and passion into its embrace of the wrestler and crushes them between its arms, as did old Dhritarashtra in the epic the iron image of Bhima. It endures the shock of things painful and pleasurable, the causes of the physical and mental affections of the nature, and breaks their effects to pieces; it is complete when the soul can bear all touches without being pained or attracted, excited or troubled. It seeks to make man the conqueror and king of his nature.

The Gita, making its call on the warrior nature of Arjuna, starts with this heroic movement. It calls on him to turn on the great enemy desire and slay it. Its first description of equality is that of the Stoic philosopher. "He whose mind is undisturbed in the midst of sorrows and amid pleasures is free from desire, from

whom liking and fear and wrath have passed away, is the sage of settled understanding. Who in all things is without affection though visited by this good or that evil and neither hates nor rejoices, his intelligence sits firmly founded in wisdom." If one abstains from food, it says, giving a physical example, the object of sense ceases to affect, but the affection itself of the sense, the *rasa*, remains; it is only when, even in the exercise of the sense, it can keep back from seeking its sensuous aim in the object, *artha*, and abandon the affection, the desire for the pleasure of taste, that the highest level of the soul is reached. It is by using the mental organs on the objects, "ranging over them with the senses," *viśayān indriyaiś caram*, but with senses subject to the self, freed from liking and disliking, that one gets into a large and sweet clearness of soul and temperament in which passion and grief find no place. All desires have to enter into the soul, as waters into the sea, and yet it has to remain immovable, filled but not disturbed: so in the end all desires can be abandoned. To be freed from wrath and passion and fear and attraction is repeatedly stressed as a necessary condition of the liberated status, and for this we must learn to bear their shocks, which cannot be done without exposing ourselves to their causes. "He who can bear here in the body the velocity of wrath and desire, is the Yogin, the happy man." *Titikṣā*, the will and power to endure, is the means. "The material touches which cause heat and cold, happiness and pain, things transient which come and go, these learn to endure. For the man whom these do not trouble nor pain, the firm and wise who is equal in pleasure and suffering, makes himself apt for immortality." The equal-souled has to bear suffering and not hate, to receive pleasure and not rejoice. Even the physical affections are to be mastered by endurance and this too is part of the Stoic discipline. Age, death, suffering, pain are not fled from, but accepted and vanquished by a high indifference.¹ Not to flee appalled from Nature in her

¹ *Dhīras tatra na muhyati*, says the Gita; the strong and wise soul is not perplexed, troubled or moved by them. But still they are accepted only to be conquered, *jarā-marāṇa-mokṣāya yatanti*.

lower masks, but to meet and conquer her is the true instinct of the strong nature, *puruṣarṣabha*, the leonine soul among men. Thus compelled, she throws aside her mask and reveals to him his true nature as the free soul, not her subject but her king and lord, *svarāṭ*, *samrāṭ*.

But the Gita accepts this Stoic discipline, this heroic philosophy, on the same condition that it accepts the tamasic recoil,—it must have above it the sattwic vision of knowledge, at its root the aim at self-realisation and in its steps the ascent to the divine Nature. A Stoic discipline which merely crushed down the common affections of our human nature,—although less dangerous than a tamasic weariness of life, unfruitful pessimism and sterile inertia, because it would at least increase the power and self-mastery of the soul,—would still be no unmixed good, since it might lead to insensibility and an inhuman isolation without giving the true spiritual release. The Stoic equality is justified as an element in the discipline of the Gita because it can be associated with and can help to the realisation of the free immutable Self in the mobile human being, *param dṛṣṭvā*, and to status in that new self-consciousness, *eṣā brāhmaṇī sthitih*. “Awakening by the understanding to the Highest which is beyond even the discerning mind, put force on the self by the self to make it firm and still, and slay this enemy who is so hard to assail, Desire.” Both the tamasic recoil of escape and the rajasic movement of struggle and victory are only justified when they look beyond themselves through the sattwic principle to the self-knowledge which legitimises both the recoil and the struggle.

The pure philosopher, the thinker, the born sage not only relies upon the sattwic principle in him as his ultimate justification, but uses it from the beginning as his instrument of self-mastery. He starts from the sattwic equality. He too observes the transitoriness of the material and external world and its failure to satisfy the desires or to give the true delight, but this causes in him no grief, fear or disappointment. He observes all with an eye of tranquil discernment and makes his choice without repulsion or perplexity. “The enjoyments born of the touches of things are

causes of sorrow, they have a beginning and an end; therefore the sage, the man of awakened understanding, *budhah*, does not place his delight in these." "The self in him is unattached to the touches of external things; he finds his happiness in himself." He sees, as the Gita puts it, that he is himself his own enemy and his own friend, and therefore he takes care not to dethrone himself by casting his being into the hands of desire and passion, *nātmānam avasādayet*, but delivers himself out of that imprisonment by his own inner power, *uddhared ātmanātmānam*; for whoever has conquered his lower self, finds in his higher self his best friend and ally. He becomes satisfied with knowledge, master of his senses, a Yогin by sattvic equality,— for equality is Yoga, *samatvām yoga ucyate*,— regarding alike clod and stone and gold, tranquil and self-poised in heat and cold, suffering and happiness, honour and disgrace. He is equal in soul to friend and enemy and to neutral and indifferent, because he sees that these are transitory relations born of the changing conditions of life. Even by the pretensions of learning and purity and virtue and the claims to superiority which men base upon these things, he is not led away. He is equal-souled to all men, to the sinner and the saint, to the virtuous, learned and cultured Brahmin and the fallen outcaste. All these are the Gita's descriptions of the sattvic equality, and they sum up well enough what is familiar to the world as the calm philosophic equality of the sage.

Where then is the difference between this and the larger equality taught by the Gita? It lies in the difference between the intellectual and philosophic discernment and the spiritual, the Vedantic knowledge of unity on which the Gita founds its teaching. The philosopher maintains his equality by the power of the buddhi, the discerning mind; but even that by itself is a doubtful foundation. For, though master of himself on the whole by a constant attention or an acquired habit of mind, in reality he is not free from his lower nature, and it does actually assert itself in many ways and may at any moment take a violent revenge for its rejection and suppression. For, always, the play of the lower nature is a triple play, and the rajasic and tamasic qualities are ever lying in wait for the sattvic man. "Even the mind of the

wise man who labours for perfection is carried away by the vehement insistence of the senses." Perfect security can only be had by resorting to something higher than the sattwic quality, something higher than the discerning mind, to the Self,—not the philosopher's intelligent self, but the divine sage's spiritual self which is beyond the three gunas. All must be consummated by a divine birth into the higher spiritual nature.

And the philosopher's equality is like the Stoic's, like the world-fleeing ascetic's, inwardly a lonely freedom, remote and aloof from men; but the man born to the divine birth has found the Divine not only in himself, but in all beings. He has realised his unity with all and his equality is therefore full of sympathy and oneness. He sees all as himself and is not intent on his lonely salvation; he even takes upon himself the burden of their happiness and sorrow by which he is not himself affected or subjected. The perfect sage, the Gita more than once repeats, is ever engaged with a large equality in doing good to all creatures and makes that his occupation and delight, *sarvabhūtahite rataḥ*. The perfect Yогin is no solitary musing on the Self in his ivory tower of spiritual isolation, but *yuktah kṛtsna-karma-kṛt*, a many-sided universal worker for the good of the world, for God in the world. For he is a *bhakta*, a lover and devotee of the Divine, as well as a sage and a Yогin, a lover who loves God wherever he finds Him and who finds Him everywhere; and what he loves, he does not disdain to serve, nor does action carry him away from the bliss of union, since all his acts proceed from the One in him and to the One in all they are directed. The equality of the Gita is a large synthetic equality in which all is lifted up into the integrality of the divine being and the divine nature.

XX

Equality and Knowledge

YOGA and knowledge are, in this early part of the Gita's teaching, the two wings of the soul's ascent. By Yoga is meant union through divine works done without desire, with equality of soul to all things and all men, as a sacrifice to the Supreme, while knowledge is that on which this desirelessness, this equality, this power of sacrifice is founded. The two wings indeed assist each other's flight; acting together, yet with a subtle alternation of mutual aid, like the two eyes in a man which see together because they see alternately, they increase one another mutually by interchange of substance. As the works grow more and more desireless, equal-minded, sacrificial in spirit, the knowledge increases; with the increase of the knowledge the soul becomes firmer in the desireless, sacrificial equality of its works. The sacrifice of knowledge, says the Gita therefore, is greater than any material sacrifice. "Even if thou art the greatest doer of sin beyond all sinners, thou shalt cross over all the crookedness of evil in the ship of knowledge. . . . There is nothing in the world equal in purity to knowledge." By knowledge desire and its first-born child, sin, are destroyed. The liberated man is able to do works as a sacrifice because he is freed from attachment through his mind, heart and spirit being firmly founded in self-knowledge, *gata-saṅgasya jñānāvasthita-cetasah*. All his work disappears completely as soon as done, suffers *laya*, as one might say, in the being of the Brahman, *pravilīyate*; it has no reactionary consequence on the soul of the apparent doer. The work is done by the Lord through his Nature, it is no longer personal to the human instrument. The work itself becomes but power of the nature and substance of the being of the Brahman.

It is in this sense that the Gita is speaking when it says that all the totality of work finds its completion, culmination, end in knowledge, *sarvam karmākhilam jñāne parisamāpyate*. "As

a fire kindled turns to ashes its fuel, so the fire of knowledge turns all works to ashes.” By this it is not at all meant that when knowledge is complete, there is cessation from works. What is meant is made clear by the Gita when it says that he who has destroyed all doubt by knowledge and has by Yoga given up all works and is in possession of the Self is not bound by his works, *yoga-sannyasta-karmāṇam ātmavantam na karmāṇi nibadhnanti*, and that he whose self has become the self of all existences, acts and yet is not affected by his works, is not caught in them, receives from them no soul-ensnaring reaction, *kurvann api na lipyate*. Therefore, it says, the Yoga of works is better than the physical renunciation of works, because, while Sannyasa is difficult for embodied beings who must do works so long as they are in the body, Yoga of works is entirely sufficient and it rapidly and easily brings the soul to Brahman. That Yoga of works is, we have seen, the offering of all action to the Lord, which induces as its culmination an inner and not an outer, a spiritual, not a physical giving up of works into the Brahman, into the being of the Lord, *brahmaṇi ādhāya karmāṇi, mayi sannyasya*. When works are thus “reposed on the Brahman,” the personality of the instrumental doer ceases; though he acts, he does nothing; for he has given up not only the fruits of his works, but the works themselves and the doing of them to the Lord. The Divine then takes the burden of works from him; the Supreme becomes the doer and the act and the result.

This knowledge of which the Gita speaks, is not an intellectual activity of the mind; it is a luminous growth into the highest state of being by the outshining of the light of the divine sun of Truth, “that Truth, the Sun lying concealed in the darkness” of our ignorance of which the Rigveda speaks, *tat satyam sūryam tamasi ksīyatam*. The immutable Brahman is there in the spirit’s skies above this troubled lower nature of the dualities, untouched either by its virtue or by its sin, accepting neither our sense of sin nor our self-righteousness, untouched by its joy and its sorrow, indifferent to our joy in success and our grief in failure, master of all, supreme, all-pervading, *prabhu vibhu*, calm, strong, pure, equal in all things, the source of Nature,

not the direct doer of our works, but the witness of Nature and her works, not imposing on us either the illusion of being the doer, for that illusion is the result of the ignorance of this lower Nature. But this freedom, mastery, purity we cannot see; we are bewildered by the natural ignorance which hides from us the eternal self-knowledge of the Brahman secret within our being. But knowledge comes to its persistent seeker and removes the natural self-ignorance; it shines out like a long-hidden sun and lights up to our vision that self-being supreme beyond the dualities of this lower existence, *ādityavat prakāśayati tat param*. By a long whole-hearted endeavour, by directing our whole conscious being to that, by making that our whole aim, by turning it into the whole object of our discerning mind and so seeing it not only in ourselves but everywhere, we become one thought and self with that, *tad-buddhayas tad-ātmānah*, we are washed clean of all the darkness and suffering of the lower man by the waters of knowledge,¹ *jñāna-nirdhūta-kalmaṣāḥ*.

The result is, says the Gita, a perfect equality to all things and all persons; and then only can we repose our works completely in the Brahman. For the Brahman is equal, *samāṁ brahma*, and it is only when we have this perfect equality, *sāmye sthitam manah*, “seeing with an equal eye the learned and cultured Brahmin, the cow, the elephant, the dog, the outcaste” and knowing all as one Brahman, that we can, living in that oneness, see like the Brahman our works proceeding from the nature freely without any fear of attachment, sin or bondage. Sin and stain then cannot be; for we have overcome that creation full of desire and its works and reactions which belongs to the ignorance, *tair jitah sargah*, and living in the supreme and divine Nature there is no longer fault or defect in our works; for these are created by the inequalities of the ignorance. The equal Brahman is faultless, *nirdoṣam hi samāṁ brahma*, beyond the confusion of good and evil, and living in the Brahman we

¹ The Rigveda so speaks of the streams of the Truth, the waters that have perfect knowledge, the waters that are full of the divine sunlight, *ṛtasya dhārāḥ*, *āpo vicetasah*, *svarvatir apah*. What are here metaphors, are there concrete symbols.

too rise beyond good and evil; we act in that purity, stainlessly, with an equal and single purpose of fulfilling the welfare of all existences, *kṣīṇa-kalmaṣāḥ sarvabhūta-hite ratāḥ*. The Lord in our hearts is in the ignorance also the cause of our actions, but through his Maya, through the egoism of our lower nature which creates the tangled web of our actions and brings back upon our egoism the recoil of their tangled reactions affecting us inwardly as sin and virtue, affecting us outwardly as suffering and pleasure, evil fortune and good fortune, the great chain of Karma. When we are freed by knowledge, the Lord, no longer hidden in our hearts, but manifest as our supreme self, takes up our works and uses us as faultless instruments, *nimitta-mātram*, for the helping of the world. Such is the intimate union between knowledge and equality; knowledge here in the *buddhi* reflected as equality in the temperament; above, on a higher plane of consciousness, knowledge as the light of the Being, equality as the stuff of the Nature.

Always in this sense of a supreme self-knowledge is this word *jñāna* used in Indian philosophy and Yoga; it is the light by which we grow into our true being, not the knowledge by which we increase our information and our intellectual riches; it is not scientific or psychological or philosophic or ethical or aesthetic or worldly and practical knowledge. These too no doubt help us to grow, but only in the becoming, not in the being; they enter into the definition of Yogic knowledge only when we use them as aids to know the Supreme, the Self, the Divine,—scientific knowledge, when we can get through the veil of processes and phenomena and see the one Reality behind which explains them all; psychological knowledge, when we use it to know ourselves and to distinguish the lower from the higher, so that this we may renounce and into that we may grow; philosophical knowledge, when we turn it as a light upon the essential principles of existence so as to discover and live in that which is eternal; ethical knowledge, when by it having distinguished sin from virtue we put away the one and rise above the other into the pure innocence of the divine Nature; aesthetic knowledge, when we discover by it the beauty of the Divine;

knowledge of the world, when we see through it the way of the Lord with his creatures and use it for the service of the Divine in man. Even then they are only aids; the real knowledge is that which is a secret to the mind, of which the mind only gets reflections, but which lives in the spirit.

The Gita in describing how we come by this knowledge, says that we get first initiation into it from the men of knowledge who have *seen*, not those who know merely by the intellect, its essential truths; but the actuality of it comes from within ourselves: "the man who is perfected by Yoga, finds it of himself in the self by the course of Time," it grows within him, that is to say, and he grows into it as he goes on increasing in desirelessness, in equality, in devotion to the Divine. It is only of the supreme knowledge that this can altogether be said; the knowledge which the intellect of man amasses, is gathered laboriously by the senses and the reason from outside. To get this other knowledge, self-existent, intuitive, self-experiencing, self-revealing, we must have conquered and controlled our mind and senses, *samyatendriyah*, so that we are no longer subject to their delusions, but rather the mind and senses become its pure mirror; we must have fixed our whole conscious being on the truth of that supreme reality in which all exists, *tat-parah*, so that it may display in us its luminous self-existence.

Finally, we must have a faith which no intellectual doubt can be allowed to disturb, *śraddhāvān labhate jñānam*. "The ignorant who has not faith, the soul of doubt goeth to perdition; neither this world, nor the supreme world, nor any happiness is for the soul full of doubts." In fact, it is true that without faith nothing decisive can be achieved either in this world or for possession of the world above, and that it is only by laying hold of some sure basis and positive support that man can attain any measure of terrestrial or celestial success and satisfaction and happiness; the merely sceptical mind loses itself in the void. But still in the lower knowledge doubt and scepticism have their temporary uses; in the higher they are stumbling-blocks: for there the whole secret is not the balancing of truth and error, but a constantly progressing realisation of revealed truth. In

intellectual knowledge there is always a mixture of falsehood or incompleteness which has to be got rid of by subjecting the truth itself to sceptical inquiry; but in the higher knowledge falsehood cannot enter and that which intellect contributes by attaching itself to this or that opinion, cannot be got rid of by mere questioning, but will fall away of itself by persistence in realisation. Whatever incompleteness there is in the knowledge attained, it must be got rid of, not by questioning in its roots what has already been realised, but by proceeding to further and more complete realisation through a deeper, higher and wider living in the Spirit. And what is not yet realised must be prepared for by faith, not by sceptical questioning, because this truth is one which the intellect cannot give and which is indeed often quite opposed to the ideas in which the reasoning and logical mind gets entangled: it is not a truth which has to be proved, but a truth which has to be lived inwardly, a greater reality into which we have to grow. Finally, it is in itself a self-existent truth and would be self-evident if it were not for the sorceries of the ignorance in which we live; the doubts, the perplexities which prevent us from accepting and following it, arise from that ignorance, from the sense-bewildered, opinion-perplexed heart and mind, living as they do in a lower and phenomenal truth and therefore questioning the higher realities, *ajñāna-sambhūtam hṛtsthām saṁśayam*. They have to be cut away by the sword of knowledge, says the Gita, by the knowledge that realises, by resorting constantly to Yoga, that is, by living out the union with the Supreme whose truth being known all is known, *yasmin vijñāte sarvam vijñātam*.

The higher knowledge we then get is that which is to the knower of Brahman his constant vision of things when he lives uninterruptedly in the Brahman, *brahmavid brahmani sthitah*. That is not a vision or knowledge or consciousness of Brahman to the exclusion of all else, but a seeing of all in Brahman and as the Self. For, it is said, the knowledge by which we rise beyond all relapse back into the bewilderment of our mental nature, is “that by which thou shalt see all existences without exception in the Self, then in Me.” Elsewhere the Gita puts it more largely,

“Equal-visioned everywhere, he sees the Self in all existences and all existences in the Self. He who sees Me everywhere and all and each in Me, is never lost to Me nor I to him. He who has reached oneness and loves Me in all beings, that Yigin, howsoever he lives and acts, is living and acting in Me. O Arjuna, he who sees all equally everywhere as himself, whether it be happiness or suffering, I hold him to be the supreme Yigin.” That is the old Vedantic knowledge of the Upanishads which the Gita holds up constantly before us; but it is its superiority to other later formulations of it that it turns persistently this knowledge into a great practical philosophy of divine living. Always it insists on the relation between this knowledge of oneness and Karmayoga, and therefore on the knowledge of oneness as the basis of a liberated action in the world. Whenever it speaks of knowledge, it turns at once to speak of equality which is its result; whenever it speaks of equality, it turns to speak too of the knowledge which is its basis. The equality it enjoins does not begin and end in a static condition of the soul useful only for self-liberation; it is always a basis of works. The peace of the Brahman in the liberated soul is the foundation; the large, free, equal, world-wide action of the Lord in the liberated nature radiates the power which proceeds from that peace; these two made one synthesise divine works and God-knowledge.

We see at once what a profound extension we get here for the ideas which otherwise the Gita has in common with other systems of philosophic, ethical or religious living. Endurance, philosophic indifference, resignation are, we have said, the foundation of three kinds of equality; but the Gita’s truth of knowledge not only gathers them all up together, but gives them an infinitely profound, a magnificently ample significance. The Stoic knowledge is that of the soul’s power of self-mastery by fortitude, an equality attained by a struggle with one’s nature, maintained by a constant vigilance and control against its natural rebellions: it gives a noble peace, an austere happiness, but not the supreme joy of the liberated self living not by a rule, but in the pure, easy, spontaneous perfection of its divine being, so that “however it may act and live, it acts and lives

in the Divine," because here perfection is not only attained but possessed in its own right and has no longer to be maintained by effort, for it has become the very nature of the soul's being. The Gita accepts the endurance and fortitude of our struggle with the lower nature as a preliminary movement; but if a certain mastery comes by our individual strength, the freedom of mastery only comes by our union with God, by a merging or dwelling of the personality in the one divine Person and the loss of the personal will in the divine Will. There is a divine Master of Nature and her works, above her though inhabiting her, who is our highest being and our universal self; to be one with him is to make ourselves divine. By union with God we enter into a supreme freedom and a supreme mastery. The ideal of the Stoic, the sage who is king because by self-rule he becomes master also of outward conditions, resembles superficially the Vedantic idea of the self-ruler and all-ruler, *svarāt samrāt*; but it is on a lower plane. The Stoic kingship is maintained by a force put upon self and environment; the entirely liberated kingship of the Yогin exists naturally by the eternal royalty of the divine nature, a union with its unfettered universality, a finally unforced dwelling in its superiority to the instrumental nature through which it acts. His mastery over things is because he has become one soul with all things. To take an image from Roman institutions, the Stoic freedom is that of the *libertus*, the freedman, who is still really a dependent on the power that once held him enslaved; his is a freedom allowed by Nature because he has merited it. The freedom of the Gita is that of the freeman, the true freedom of the birth into the higher nature, self-existent in its divinity. Whatever he does and however he lives, the free soul lives in the Divine; he is the privileged child of the mansion, *bālavat*, who cannot err or fall because all he is and does is full of the Perfect, the All-blissful, the All-loving, the All-beautiful. The kingdom which he enjoys, *rājyam samṛddham*, is a sweet and happy dominion of which it may be said, in the pregnant phrase of the Greek thinker, "The kingdom is of the child."

The knowledge of the philosopher is that of the true nature of mundane existence, the transience of outward things, the

vanity of the world's differences and distinctions, the superiority of the inner calm, peace, light, self-dependence. It is an equality of philosophic indifference; it brings a high calm, but not the greater spiritual joy; it is an isolated freedom, a wisdom like that of the Lucretian sage high in his superiority upon the cliff-top whence he looks down on men tossed still upon the tempestuous waters from which he has escaped,—in the end something after all aloof and ineffective. The Gita admits the philosophic motive of indifference as a preliminary movement; but the indifference to which it finally arrives, if indeed that inadequate word can be at all applied, has nothing in it of the philosophic aloofness. It is indeed a position as of one seated above, *udāśīnavat*, but as the Divine is seated above, having no need at all in the world, yet he does works always and is present everywhere supporting, helping, guiding the labour of creatures. This equality is founded upon oneness with all beings. It brings in what is wanting to the philosophic equality; for its soul is the soul of peace, but also it is the soul of love. It sees all beings without exception in the Divine, it is one self with the Self of all existences and therefore it is in supreme sympathy with all of them. Without exception, *aśeṣena*, not only with all that is good and fair and pleases; nothing and no one, however vile, fallen, criminal, repellent in appearance, can be excluded from this universal, this whole-souled sympathy and spiritual oneness. Here there is no room, not merely for hatred or anger or uncharitableness, but for aloofness, disdain or any petty pride of superiority. A divine compassion for the ignorance of the struggling mind, a divine will to pour forth on it all light and power and happiness there will be, indeed, for the apparent man; but for the divine Soul within him there will be more, there will be adoration and love. For from all, from the thief and the harlot and the outcaste as from the saint and the sage, the Beloved looks forth and cries to us, "This is I." "He who loves Me in all beings,"—what greater word of power for the utmost intensities and profundities of divine and universal love, has been uttered by any philosophy or any religion?

Resignation is the basis of a kind of religious equality, submission to the divine will, a patient bearing of the cross, a

submissive forbearance. In the Gita this element takes the more ample form of an entire surrender of the whole being to God. It is not merely a passive submission, but an active self-giving; not only a seeing and an accepting of the divine Will in all things, but a giving up of one's own will to be the instrument of the Master of works, and this not with the lesser idea of being a servant of God, but, eventually at least, of such a complete renunciation both of the consciousness and the works to him that our being becomes one with his being and the impersonalised nature only an instrument and nothing else. All result good or bad, pleasing or unpleasing, fortunate or unfortunate, is accepted as belonging to the Master of our actions, so that finally not only are grief and suffering borne, but they are banished: a perfect equality of the emotional mind is established. There is no assumption of personal will in the instrument; it is seen that all is already worked out in the omniscient prescience and omnipotent effective power of the universal Divine and that the egoism of men cannot alter the workings of that Will. Therefore, the final attitude is that enjoined on Arjuna in a later chapter, "All has been already done by Me in my divine will and foresight; become only the occasion, O Arjuna," *nimitta-mātrām bhava savyasācin*. This attitude must lead finally to an absolute union of the personal with the Divine Will and, with the growth of knowledge, bring about a faultless response of the instrument to the divine Power and Knowledge. A perfect, an absolute equality of self-surrender, the mentality a passive channel of the divine Light and Power, the active being a mightily effective instrument for its work in the world, will be the poise of this supreme union of the Transcendent, the universal and the individual.

Equality too there will be with regard to the action of others upon us. Nothing that they can do will alter the inner oneness, love, sympathy which arises from the perception of the one Self in all, the Divine in all beings. But a resigned forbearance and submission to them and their deeds, a passive non-resistance, will be no necessary part of the action; it cannot be, since a constant instrumental obedience to the divine and universal Will must mean in the shock of opposite forces that fill the world a

conflict with personal wills which seek rather their own egoistic satisfaction. Therefore Arjuna is bidden to resist, to fight, to conquer; but, to fight without hatred or personal desire or personal enmity or antagonism, since to the liberated soul these feelings are impossible. To act for the *lokasaṅgraha*, impersonally, for the keeping and leading of the peoples on the path to the divine goal, is a rule which rises necessarily from the oneness of the soul with the Divine, the universal Being, since that is the whole sense and drift of the universal action. Nor does it conflict with our oneness with all beings, even those who present themselves here as opponents and enemies. For the divine goal is their goal also, since it is the secret aim of all, even of those whose outward minds, misled by ignorance and egoism, would wander from the path and resist the impulsion. Resistance and defeat are the best outward service that can be done to them. By this perception the Gita avoids the limiting conclusion which might have been drawn from a doctrine of equality impracticably overriding all relations and of a weakening love without knowledge, while it keeps the one thing essential unimpaired. For the soul oneness with all, for the heart calm universal love, sympathy, compassion, but for the hands freedom to work out impersonally the good, not of this or that person only without regard to or to the detriment of the divine plan, but the purpose of the creation, the progressing welfare and salvation of men, the total good of all existences.

Oneness with God, oneness with all beings, the realisation of the eternal divine unity everywhere and the drawing onwards of men towards that oneness are the law of life which arises from the teachings of the Gita. There can be none greater, wider, more profound. Liberated oneself, to live in this oneness, to help mankind on the path that leads towards it and meanwhile to do all works for God and help man also to do with joy and acceptance all the works to which he is called, *kṛtsna-karma-kṛt*, *sarvakarmāṇi joṣayan*, no greater or more liberal rule of divine works can be given. This freedom and this oneness are the secret goal of our human nature and the ultimate will in the existence of the race. It is that to which it must turn for the happiness all

mankind is now vainly seeking, when once men lift their eyes and their hearts to see the Divine in them and around, in all and everywhere, *sarvesu*, *sarvatra*, and learn that it is in him they live, while this lower nature of division is only a prison-wall which they must break down or at best an infant-school which they must outgrow, so that they may become adult in nature and free in spirit. To be made one self with God above and God in man and God in the world is the sense of liberation and the secret of perfection.

The Determinism of Nature

WHEN we can live in the higher Self by the unity of works and self-knowledge, we become superior to the method of the lower workings of Prakriti. We are no longer enslaved to Nature and her gunas, but, one with the Ishwara, the master of our nature, we are able to use her without subjection to the chain of Karma, for the purposes of the Divine Will in us; for that is what the greater Self in us is, he is the Lord of her works and unaffected by the troubled stress of her reactions. The soul ignorant in Nature, on the contrary, is enslaved by that ignorance to her modes, because it is identified there, not felicitously with its true self, not with the Divine who is seated above her, but stupidly and unhappily with the ego-mind which is a subordinate factor in her operations in spite of the exaggerated figure it makes, a mere mental knot and point of reference for the play of the natural workings. To break this knot, no longer to make the ego the centre and beneficiary of our works, but to derive all from and refer all to the divine Supersoul is the way to become superior to all the restless trouble of Nature's modes. For it is to live in the supreme consciousness, of which the ego-mind is a degradation, and to act in an equal and unified Will and Force and not in the unequal play of the gunas which is a broken seeking and striving, a disturbance, an inferior Maya.

The passages in which the Gita lays stress on the subjection of the ego-soul to Nature, have by some been understood as the enunciation of an absolute and a mechanical determinism which leaves no room for any freedom within the cosmic existence. Certainly, the language it uses is emphatic and seems very absolute. But we must take, here as elsewhere, the thought of the Gita as a whole and not force its affirmations in their solitary sense quite detached from each other,—as indeed every truth,

however true in itself, yet, taken apart from others which at once limit and complete it, becomes a snare to bind the intellect and a misleading dogma; for in reality each is one thread of a complex weft and no thread must be taken apart from the weft. Everything in the Gita is even so interwoven and must be understood in its relation to the whole. The Gita itself makes a distinction between those who have not the knowledge of the whole, *akṛtsnavidah*, and are misled by the partial truths of existence, and the Yогin who has the synthetic knowledge of the totality, *kṛtsna-vit*. To see all existence steadily and see it whole and not be misled by its conflicting truths, is the first necessity for the calm and complete wisdom to which the Yогin is called upon to rise. A certain absolute freedom is one aspect of the soul's relations with Nature at one pole of our complex being; a certain absolute determinism by Nature is the opposite aspect at its opposite pole; and there is also a partial and apparent, therefore an unreal eidolon of liberty which the soul receives by a contorted reflection of these two opposite truths in the developing mentality. It is the latter to which we ordinarily give, more or less inaccurately, the name of free will; but the Gita regards nothing as freedom which is not a complete liberation and mastery.

We have always to keep in mind the two great doctrines which stand behind all the Gita's teachings with regard to the soul and Nature,—the Sankhya truth of the Purusha and Prakriti corrected and completed by the Vedantic truth of the threefold Purusha and the double Prakriti of which the lower form is the Maya of the three gunas and the higher is the divine nature and the true soul-nature. This is the key which reconciles and explains what we might have otherwise to leave as contradictions and inconsistencies. There are, in fact, different planes of our conscious existence, and what is practical truth on one plane ceases to be true, because it assumes a quite different appearance, as soon as we rise to a higher level from which we can see things more in the whole. Recent scientific discovery has shown that man, animal, plant and even the metal have essentially the same vital reactions and they would, therefore,

if each has a certain kind of what for want of a better word we must call nervous consciousness, possess the same basis of mechanical psychology. Yet if each of these could give its own mental account of what it experiences, we should have four quite different and largely contradictory statements of the same reactions and the same natural principles, because they get, as we rise in the scale of being, a different meaning and value and have to be judged by a different outlook. So it is with the levels of the human soul. What we now call in our ordinary mentality our free will and have a certain limited justification for so calling it, yet appears to the Yогin who has climbed beyond and to whom our night is day and our day night, not free will at all, but a subjection to the modes of Nature. He regards the same facts, but from the higher outlook of the whole-knower, *kṛtsna-vit*, while we view it altogether from the more limited mentality of our partial knowledge, *akṛtsnavidah*, which is an ignorance. What we vaunt of as our freedom is to him bondage.

The perception of the ignorance of our assumption of freedom while one is all the time in the meshes of this lower nature, is the view-point at which the Gita arrives and it is in contradiction to this ignorant claim that it affirms the complete subjection of the ego-soul on this plane to the gunas. "While the actions are being entirely done by the modes of Nature," it says, "he whose self is bewildered by egoism thinks that it is his 'I' which is doing them. But one who knows the true principles of the divisions of the modes and of works, realises that it is the modes which are acting and reacting on each other and is not caught in them by attachment. Those who are bewildered by the modes, get attached to the modes and their works; dull minds, not knowers of the whole, let not the knower of the whole disturb them in their mental standpoint. Giving up thy works to Me, free from desire and egoism, fight delivered from the fever of thy soul." Here there is the clear distinction between two levels of consciousness, two standpoints of action, that of the soul caught in the web of its egoistic nature and doing works with the idea, but not the reality of free will, under the impulsion of Nature, and that of the soul delivered from its identification with the

ego, observing, sanctioning and governing the works of Nature from above her.

We speak of the soul being subject to Nature; but on the other hand the Gita in distinguishing the properties of the soul and Nature affirms that while Nature is the executrix, the soul is always the lord, *īśvara*. It speaks here of the self being bewildered by egoism, but the real Self to the Vedantin is the divine, eternally free and self-aware. What then is this self that is bewildered by Nature, this soul that is subject to her? The answer is that we are speaking here in the common parlance of our lower or mental view of things; we are speaking of the apparent self, of the apparent soul, not of the real self, not of the true Purusha. It is really the ego which is subject to Nature, inevitably, because it is itself part of Nature, one functioning of her machinery; but when the self-awareness in the mind-consciousness identifies itself with the ego, it creates the appearance of a lower self, an ego-self. And so too what we think of ordinarily as the soul is really the natural personality, not the true Person, the Purusha, but the desire-soul in us which is a reflection of the consciousness of the Purusha in the workings of Prakriti: it is, in fact, itself only an action of the three modes and therefore a part of Nature. Thus there are, we may say, two souls in us, the apparent or desire-soul, which changes with the mutations of the gunas and is entirely constituted and determined by them, and the free and eternal Purusha not limited by Nature and her gunas. We have two selves, the apparent self, which is only the ego, that mental centre in us which takes up this mutable action of Prakriti, this mutable personality, and which says "I am this personality, I am this natural being who am doing these works," — but the natural being is simply Nature, a composite of the gunas, — and the true self which is, indeed, the upholder, the possessor and the lord of Nature and figured in her, but is not itself the mutable natural personality. The way to be free must then be to get rid of the desires of this desire-soul and the false self-view of this ego. "Having become free from desire and egoism," cries the Teacher, "fight with all the fever of thy soul passed away from thee," — *nirāśīr nirmamo bhūtvā*.

This view of our being starts from the Sankhya analysis of the dual principle in our nature, Purusha and Prakriti. Purusha is inactive, *akartā*; Prakriti is active, *kartrī*: Purusha is the being full of the light of consciousness; Prakriti is the Nature, mechanical, reflecting all her works in the conscious witness, the Purusha. Prakriti works by the inequality of her three modes, gunas, in perpetual collision and intermixture and mutation with each other; and by her function of ego-mind she gets the Purusha to identify himself with all this working and so creates the sense of active, mutable, temporal personality in the silent eternity of the Self. The impure natural consciousness overclouds the pure soul-consciousness; the mind forgets the Person in the ego and the personality; we suffer the discriminating intelligence to be carried away by the sense-mind and its outgoing functions and by the desire of the life and the body. So long as the Purusha sanctions this action, ego and desire and ignorance must govern the natural being.

But if this were all, then the only remedy would be to withdraw altogether the sanction, suffer or compel all our nature by this withdrawal to fall into a motionless equilibrium of the three gunas and so cease from all action. But this is precisely the remedy,—though it is undoubtedly a remedy, one which abolishes, we might say, the patient along with the disease,—which the Gita constantly discourages. Especially, to resort to a tamasic inaction is just what the ignorant will do if this truth is thrust upon them; the discriminating mind in them will fall into a false division, a false opposition, *buddhibheda*; their active nature and their intelligence will be divided against each other and produce a disturbance and confusion without true issue, a false and self-deceiving line of action, *mithyācāra*, or else a mere tamasic inertia, cessation of works, diminution of the will to life and action, not therefore a liberation, but rather a subjection to the lowest of the three gunas, to *tamas*, the principle of ignorance and of inertia. Or else they will not be able to understand at all, they will find fault with this higher teaching, assert against it their present mental experience, their ignorant idea of free will and, yet more confirmed by the plausibility of their logic in their

bewilderment and the deception of ego and desire, lose their chance of liberation in a deeper, more obstinate confirmation of the ignorance.

In fact, these higher truths can only be helpful, because there only they are true to experience and can be lived, on a higher and vaster plane of consciousness and being. To view these truths from below is to mis-see, misunderstand and probably to misuse them. It is a higher truth that the distinction of good and evil is indeed a practical fact and law valid for the egoistic human life which is the stage of transition from the animal to the divine, but on a higher plane we rise beyond good and evil, are above their duality even as the Godhead is above it. But the unripe mind, seizing on this truth without rising from the lower consciousness where it is not practically valid, will simply make it a convenient excuse for indulging its Asuric propensities, denying the distinction between good and evil altogether and falling by self-indulgence deeper into the morass of perdition, *sarva-jñāna-vimūḍhān naṣṭān acetasah*. So too with this truth of the determinism of Nature; it will be mis-seen and misused, as those misuse it who declare that a man is what his nature has made him and cannot do otherwise than as his nature compels him. It is true in a sense, but not in the sense which is attached to it, not in the sense that the ego-self can claim irresponsibility and impunity for itself in its works; for it has will and it has desire and so long as it acts according to its will and desire, even though that be its nature, it must bear the reactions of its Karma. It is in a net, if you will, a snare which may well seem perplexing, illogical, unjust, terrible to its present experience, to its limited self-knowledge, but a snare of its own choice, a net of its own weaving.

The Gita says, indeed, "All existences follow their nature and what shall coercing it avail?" which seems, if we take it by itself, a hopelessly absolute assertion of the omnipotence of Nature over the soul; "even the man of knowledge acts according to his own nature." And on this it founds the injunction to follow faithfully in our action the law of our nature. "Better is one's own law of works, *svadharma*, though in itself faulty than an alien

law well wrought out; death in one's own law of being is better, perilous is it to follow an alien law." What is precisely meant by this *svadharma* we have to wait to see until we get to the more elaborate disquisition in the closing chapters about Purusha and Prakriti and the gunas; but certainly it does not mean that we are to follow any impulse, even though evil, which what we call our nature dictates to us. For between these two verses the Gita throws in this further injunction, "In the object of this or that sense liking and disliking are set in ambush; fall not into their power, for they are the besetters of the soul in its path." And immediately after this, in answer to Arjuna's objection who asks him, if there is no fault in following our Nature, what are we then to say of that in us which drives a man to sin, as if by force, even against his own struggling will, the Teacher replies that this is desire and its companion wrath, children of rajas, the second guna, the principle of passion, and this desire is the soul's great enemy and has to be slain. Abstention from evil-doing it declares to be the first condition for liberation, and always it enjoins self-mastery, self-control, *samīyama*, control of the mind, senses, all the lower being.

There is therefore a distinction to be made between what is essential in the nature, its native and inevitable action, which it avails not at all to repress, suppress, coerce, and what is accidental to it, its wanderings, confusions, perversions, over which we must certainly get control. There is a distinction implied too between coercion and suppression, *nigraha*, and control with right use and right guidance, *samīyama*. The former is a violence done to the nature by the will, which in the end depresses the natural powers of the being, *ātmānam avasādayet*; the latter is the control of the lower by the higher self, which successfully gives to those powers their right action and their maximum efficiency, — *yogah karmasu kauśalam*. This nature of *samīyama* is made very clear by the Gita in the opening of its sixth chapter, "By the self thou shouldst deliver the self, thou shouldst not depress and cast down the self (whether by self-indulgence or suppression); for the self is the friend of the self and the self is the enemy. To the man is his self a friend in whom the (lower)

self has been conquered by the (higher) self, but to him who is not in possession of his (higher) self, the (lower) self is as if an enemy and it acts as an enemy." When one has conquered one's self and attained to the calm of a perfect self-mastery and self-possession, then is the supreme self in a man founded and poised even in his outwardly conscious human being, *samāhita*. In other words, to master the lower self by the higher, the natural self by the spiritual is the way of man's perfection and liberation.

Here then is a very great qualification of the determinism of Nature, a precise limitation of its meaning and scope. How the passage from subjection to mastery works out is best seen if we observe the working of the gunas in the scale of Nature from the bottom to the top. At the bottom are the existences in which the principle of tamas is supreme, the beings who have not yet attained to the light of self-consciousness and are utterly driven by the current of Nature. There is a will even in the atom, but we see clearly enough that it is not free will, because it is mechanical and the atom does not possess the will, but is possessed by it. Here the *buddhi*, the element of intelligence and will in Prakriti, is actually and plainly what the Sankhya asserts it to be, *jada*, a mechanical, even an inconscient principle in which the light of the conscious Soul has not at all struggled to the surface: the atom is not conscious of an intelligent will; tamas, the inert and ignorant principle, has its grip on it, contains *rajas*, conceals *sattva* within itself and holds a high holiday of mastery, Nature compelling this form of existence to act with a stupendous force indeed, but as a mechanical instrument, *yantrārūḍham māyayā*. Next, in the plant the principle of *rajas* has struggled to the surface, with its power of life, with its capacity of the nervous reactions which in us are recognisable as pleasure and suffering, but *sattva* is quite involved, has not yet emerged to awaken the light of a conscious intelligent will; all is still mechanical, subconscious or half-conscious, tamas stronger than rajas, both gaolers of the imprisoned sattva.

In the animal, though tamas is still strong, though we may still describe him as belonging to the tamasic creation, *tāmasa sarga*, yet rajas prevails much more against tamas, brings with

it its developed power of life, desire, emotion, passion, pleasure, suffering, while sattwa, emerging, but still dependent on the lower action, contributes to these the first light of the conscious mind, the mechanical sense of ego, conscious memory, a certain kind of thought, especially the wonders of instinct and animal intuition. But as yet the buddhi, the intelligent will, has not developed the full light of consciousness; therefore, no responsibility can be attributed to the animal for its actions. The tiger can be no more blamed for killing and devouring than the atom for its blind movements, the fire for burning and consuming or the storm for its destructions. If it could answer the question, the tiger would indeed say, like man, that it had free will, it would have the egoism of the doer, it would say, "I kill, I devour"; but we can see clearly enough that it is not really the tiger, but Nature in the tiger that kills, it is Nature in the tiger that devours; and if it refrains from killing or devouring, it is from satiety, from fear or from indolence, from another principle of Nature in it, from the action of the guna called tamas. As it was Nature in the animal that killed, so it is Nature in the animal that refrained from killing. Whatever soul is in it, sanctions passively the action of Nature, is as much passive in its passion and activity as in its indolence or inaction. The animal like the atom acts according to the mechanism of its Nature, and not otherwise, *sadr̄śam ceṣṭate svasyāḥ prakṛteḥ*, as if mounted on a machine, *yantrārūḍho māyayā*.

Well, but in man at least there is another action, a free soul, a free will, a sense of responsibility, a real doer other than Nature, other than the mechanism of Maya? So it seems, because in man there is a conscious intelligent will; *buddhi* is full of the light of the observing Purusha, who through it, it seems, observes, understands, approves or disapproves, gives or withholds the sanction, seems indeed at last to begin to be the lord of his nature. Man is not like the tiger or the fire or the storm; he cannot kill and say as a sufficient justification, "I am acting according to my nature", and he cannot do it, because he has not the nature and not, therefore, the law of action, *svadharma*, of the tiger, storm or fire. He has a conscious intelligent will,

a *buddhi*, and to that he must refer his actions. If he does not do so, if he acts blindly according to his impulses and passions, then the law of his being is not rightly worked out, *svadharmaḥ su-anuṣṭhitah*, he has not acted according to the full measure of his humanity, but even as might the animal. It is true that the principle of *rajas* or the principle of *tamas* gets hold of his *buddhi* and induces it to justify any and every action he commits or any avoidance of action; but still the justification or at least the reference to the *buddhi* must be there either before or after the action is committed. And, besides, in man *sattva* is awake and acts not only as intelligence and intelligent will, but as a seeking for light, for right knowledge and right action according to that knowledge, as a sympathetic perception of the existence and claims of others, as an attempt to know the higher law of his own nature, which the sattvic principle in him creates, and to obey it, and as a conception of the greater peace and happiness which virtue, knowledge and sympathy bring in their train. He knows more or less imperfectly that he has to govern his rajasic and tamasic by his sattvic nature and that thither tends the perfection of his normal humanity.

But is the condition of the predominantly sattvic nature freedom and is this will in man a free will? That the Gita from the standpoint of a higher consciousness in which alone is true freedom, denies. The *buddhi* or conscious intelligent will is still an instrument of Nature and when it acts, even in the most sattvic sense, it is still Nature which acts and the soul which is carried on the wheel by Maya. At any rate, at least nine-tenths of our freedom of will is a palpable fiction; that will is created and determined not by its own self-existent action at a given moment, but by our past, our heredity, our training, our environment, the whole tremendous complex thing we call Karma, which is, behind us, the whole past action of Nature on us and the world converging in the individual, determining what he is, determining what his will shall be at a given moment and determining, as far as analysis can see, even its action at that moment. The ego associates itself always with its Karma and it says "I did" and "I will" and "I suffer", but if it looks at

itself and sees how it was made, it is obliged to say of man as of the animal, "Nature did this in me, Nature wills in me", and if it qualifies by saying "my Nature", that only means "Nature as self-determined in this individual creature". It was the strong perception of this aspect of existence which compelled the Buddhists to declare that all is Karma and that there is no self in existence, that the idea of self is only a delusion of the ego-mind. When the ego thinks "I choose and will this virtuous and not that evil action", it is simply associating itself, somewhat like the fly on the wheel, or rather as might a cog or other part of a mechanism if it were conscious, with a predominant wave or a formed current of the sattwic principle by which Nature chooses through the buddhi one type of action in preference to another. Nature forms itself in us and wills in us, the Sankhya would say, for the pleasure of the inactive observing Purusha.

But even if this extreme statement has to be qualified, and we shall see hereafter in what sense, still the freedom of our individual will, if we choose to give it that name, is very relative and almost infinitesimal, so much is it mixed up with other determining elements. Its strongest power does not amount to mastery. It cannot be relied upon to resist the strong wave of circumstance or of other nature which either overbears or modifies or mixes up with it or at the best subtly deceives and circumvents it. Even the most sattwic will is so overborne or mixed up with or circumvented by the rajasic and tamasic gunas as to be only in part sattwic, and thence arises that sufficiently strong element of self-deception, of a quite involuntary and even innocent make-believe and hiding from oneself which the merciless eye of the psychologist detects even in the best human action. When we think that we are acting quite freely, powers are concealed behind our action which escape the most careful self-introspection; when we think that we are free from ego, the ego is there, concealed, in the mind of the saint as in that of the sinner. When our eyes are really opened on our action and its springs, we are obliged to say with the Gita "*gunā gunेशु vartante*", "it was the modes of Nature that were acting upon the modes."

For this reason even a high predominance of the sattwic

principle does not constitute freedom. For, as the Gita points out, the sattwa binds, as much as the other gunas, and binds just in the same way, by desire, by ego; a nobler desire, a purer ego,— but so long as in any form these two hold the being, there is no freedom. The man of virtue, of knowledge, has his ego of the virtuous man, his ego of knowledge, and it is that sattwic ego which he seeks to satisfy; for his own sake he seeks virtue and knowledge. Only when we cease to satisfy the ego, to think and to will from the ego, the limited "I" in us, then is there a real freedom. In other words, freedom, highest self-mastery begin when above the natural self we see and hold the supreme Self of which the ego is an obstructing veil and a blinding shadow. And that can only be when we see the one Self in us seated above Nature and make our individual being one with it in being and consciousness and in its individual nature of action only an instrument of a supreme Will, the one Will that is really free. For that we must rise high above the three gunas, become *trigunātīta*; for that Self is beyond even the sattwic principle. We have to climb to it through the sattwa, but we attain to it only when we get beyond sattwa; we reach out to it from the ego, but only reach it by leaving the ego. We are drawn towards it by the highest, most passionate, most stupendous and ecstatic of all desires; but we can securely live in it only when all desire drops away from us. We have at a certain stage to liberate ourselves even from the desire of our liberation.

Beyond the Modes of Nature

S O FAR then extends the determinism of Nature, and what it amounts to is this that the ego from which we act is itself an instrument of the action of Prakriti and cannot therefore be free from the control of Prakriti; the will of the ego is a will determined by Prakriti, it is a part of the nature as it has been formed in us by the sum of its own past action and self-modification, and by the nature in us so formed and the will in it so formed our present action also is determined. It is said by some that the first initiating action is always free to our choice however much all that follows may be determined by that, and in this power of initiation and its effect on our future lies our responsibility. But where is that first action in Nature which has no determining past behind it, where that present condition of our nature which is not in sum and detail the result of the action of our past nature? We have that impression of a free initial act because we are living at every moment from our present on towards our future and we do not live back constantly from our present into our past, so that what is strongly vivid to our minds is the present and its consequences while we have a much less vivid hold of our present as entirely the consequence of our past; this latter we are apt to look on as if it were dead and done with. We speak and act as if we were perfectly free in the pure and virgin moment to do what we will with ourselves using an absolute inward independence of choice. But there is no such absolute liberty, our choice has no such independence.

Certainly, the will in us has always to choose between a certain number of possibilities, for that is the way in which Nature always acts; even our passivity, our refusal to will, is itself a choice, itself an act of the will of Nature in us; even in the atom there is a will always at its work. The whole difference

is the extent to which we associate our idea of self with the action of the will in Nature; when we so associate ourselves, we think of it as our will and say that it is a free will and that it is we who are acting. And error or not, illusion or not, this idea of our will, of our action is not a thing of no consequence, of no utility; everything in Nature has a consequence and a utility. It is rather that process of our conscious being by which Nature in us becomes more and more aware of and responsive to the presence of the secret Purusha within her and opens by that increase of knowledge to a greater possibility of action; it is by the aid of the ego-idea and the personal will that she raises herself to her own higher possibilities, rises out of the sheer or else the predominant passivity of the tamasic nature into the passion and the struggle of the rajasic nature and from the passion and the struggle of the rajasic nature to the greater light, happiness and purity of the sattvic nature. The relative self-mastery gained by the natural man over himself is the dominion achieved by the higher possibilities of his nature over its lower possibilities, and this is done in him when he associates his idea of self with the struggle of the higher guna to get the mastery, the predominance over the lower guna. The sense of free will, illusion or not, is a necessary machinery of the action of Nature, necessary for man during his progress, and it would be disastrous for him to lose it before he is ready for a higher truth. If it be said, as it has been said, that Nature deludes man to fulfil her behests and that the idea of a free individual will is the most powerful of these delusions, then it must also be said that the delusion is for his good and without it he could not rise to his full possibilities.

But it is not a sheer delusion, it is only an error of standpoint and an error of placement. The ego thinks that it is the real self and acts as if it were the true centre of action and as if all existed for its sake, and there it commits an error of standpoint and placement. It is not wrong in thinking that there is something or someone within ourselves, within this action of our nature, who is the true centre of its action and for whom all exists; but this is not the ego, it is the Lord secret within

our hearts, the divine Purusha, and the Jiva, other than ego, who is a portion of his being. The self-assertion of ego-sense is the broken and distorted shadow in our minds of the truth that there is a real Self within us which is the master of all and for whom and at whose behest Nature goes about her works. So too the ego's idea of free will is a distorted and misplaced sense of the truth that there is a free Self within us and that the will in Nature is only a modified and partial reflection of its will, modified and partial because it lives in the successive moments of Time and acts by a constant series of modifications which forget much of their own precedents and are only imperfectly conscious of their own consequences and aims. But the Will within, exceeding the moments of Time, knows all these, and the action of Nature in us is an attempt, we might say, to work out under the difficult conditions of a natural and egoistic ignorance what is foreseen in full supramental light by the inner Will and Knowledge.

But a time must come in our progress when we are ready to open our eyes to the real truth of our being, and then the error of our egoistic free will must fall away from us. The rejection of the idea of egoistic free will does not imply a cessation of action, because Nature is the doer and carries out her action after this machinery is dispensed with even as she did before it came into usage in the process of her evolution. In the man who has rejected it, it may even be possible for her to develop a greater action; for his mind may be more aware of all that his nature is by the self-creation of the past, more aware of the powers that environ and are working upon it to help or to hinder its growth, more aware too of the latent greater possibilities which it contains by virtue of all in it that is unexpressed, yet capable of expression; and this mind may be a freer channel for the sanction of the Purusha to the greater possibilities that it sees and a freer instrument for the response of Nature, for her resultant attempt at their development and realisation. But the rejection of free will must not be a mere fatalism or idea of natural determinism in the understanding without any vision of the real Self in us; for then the ego still remains as our sole idea of self and, as that

is always the instrument of Prakriti, we still act by the ego and with our will as her instrument, and the idea in us brings no real change, but only a modification of our intellectual attitude. We shall have accepted the phenomenal truth of the determination of our egoistic being and action by Nature, we shall have seen our subjection: but we shall not have seen the unborn Self within which is above the action of the gunas; we shall not have seen wherein lies our gate of freedom. Nature and ego are not all we are; there is the free soul, the Purusha.

But in what consists this freedom of the Purusha? The Purusha of the current Sankhya philosophy is free in the essence of his being, but because he is the non-doer, *akartā*; and in so far as he permits Nature to throw on the inactive Soul her shadow of action, he becomes bound phenomenally by the actions of the gunas and cannot recover his freedom except by dissociation from her and by cessation of her activities. If then a man casts from him the idea of himself as the doer or of the works as his, if, as the Gita enjoins, he fixes himself in the view of himself as the inactive non-doer, *ātmānam akartāram*, and all action as not his own but Nature's, as the play of her gunas, will not a like result follow? The Sankhya Purusha is the giver of the sanction, but a passive sanction only, *anumati*, the work is entirely Nature's; essentially he is the witness and sustainer, not the governing and active consciousness of the universal Godhead. He is the Soul that sees and accepts, as a spectator accepts the representation of a play he is watching, not the Soul that both governs and watches the play planned by himself and staged in his own being. If then he withdraws the sanction, if he refuses to acknowledge the illusion of doing by which the play continues, he ceases also to be the sustainer and the action comes to a stop, since it is only for the pleasure of the witnessing conscious Soul that Nature performs it and only by his support that she can maintain it. Therefore it is evident that the Gita's conception of the relations of the Purusha and Prakriti are not the Sankhya's, since the same movement leads to a quite different result, in one case to cessation of works, in the other to a great, a selfless and desireless, a divine action. In the Sankhya Soul and Nature are two different

entities, in the Gita they are two aspects, two powers of one self-existent being; the Soul is not only giver of the sanction, but lord of Nature, Ishwara, through her enjoying the play of the world, through her executing divine will and knowledge in a scheme of things supported by his sanction and existing by his immanent presence, existing in his being, governed by the law of his being and by the conscious will within it. To know, to respond to, to live in the divine being and nature of this Soul is the object of withdrawing from the ego and its action. One rises then above the lower nature of the gunas to the higher divine nature.

The movement by which this ascension is determined results from the complex poise of the Soul in its relations with Nature; it depends on the Gita's idea of the triple Purusha. The Soul that immediately informs the action, the mutations, the successive becomings of Nature, is the Kshara, that which seems to change with her changes, to move in her motion, the Person who follows in his idea of his being the changes of his personality brought about by the continuous action of her Karma. Nature here is Kshara, a constant movement and mutation in Time, a constant becoming. But this Nature is simply the executive power of the Soul itself; for only by what he is, can she become, only according to the possibilities of his becoming, can she act; she works out the becoming of his being. Her Karma is determined by Swabhava, the own-nature, the law of self-becoming of the soul, even though, because it is the agent and executive of the becoming, the action rather seems often to determine the nature. According to what we are, we act, and by our action we develop, we work out what we are. Nature is the action, the mutation, the becoming, and it is the Power that executes all these; but the Soul is the conscious Being from which that Power proceeds, from whose luminous stuff of consciousness she has drawn the variable will that changes and expresses its changes in her actions. And this Soul is One and Many; it is the one Life-being out of which all life is constituted and it is all these living beings; it is the cosmic Existent and it is all this multitude of cosmic existences, *sarvabhūtāni*, for all these are One; all the many Purushas are in their original being the one and only

Purusha. But the mechanism of the ego-sense in Nature, which is part of her action, induces the mind to identify the soul's consciousness with the limited becoming of the moment, with the sum of her active consciousness in a given field of space and time, with the result from moment to moment of the sum of her past actions. It is possible to realise in a way the unity of all these beings even in Nature herself and to become aware of a cosmic Soul which is manifest in the whole action of cosmic Nature, Nature manifesting the Soul, the Soul constituting the Nature. But this is to become aware only of the great cosmic Becoming, which is not false or unreal, but the knowledge of which alone does not give us the true knowledge of our Self; for our true Self is always something more than this and something beyond it.

For, beyond the soul manifest in Nature and bound up with its action, is another status of the Purusha, which is entirely a status and not at all an action; that is the silent, the immutable, the all-pervading, self-existent, motionless Self, *sarvagatam acalam*, immutable Being and not Becoming, the Akshara. In the Kshara the Soul is involved in the action of Nature, therefore it is concentrated, loses itself, as it were, in the moments of Time, in the waves of the Becoming, not really, but only in appearance and by following the current; in the Akshara Nature falls to silence and rest in the Soul, therefore it becomes aware of its immutable Being. The Kshara is the Sankhya's Purusha when it reflects the varied workings of the gunas of Nature, and it knows itself as the Saguna, the Personal; the Akshara is the Sankhya's Purusha when these gunas have fallen into a state of equilibrium, and it knows itself as the Nirguna, the Impersonal. Therefore while the Kshara, associating itself with the work of Prakriti, seems to be the doer of works, *kartā*, the Akshara dissociated from all the workings of the gunas is the inactive non-doer, *akartā*, and witness. The soul of man, when it takes the poise of the Kshara, identifies itself with the play of personality and readily clouds its self-knowledge with the ego-sense in Nature, so that he thinks of himself as the ego-doer of works; when it takes its poise in the Akshara, it identifies itself with the Impersonal and is aware

of Nature as the doer and itself as the inactive witnessing Self, *akartāram*. The mind of man has to tend to one of these poises, it takes them as alternatives; it is bound by Nature to action in the mutations of quality and personality or it is free from her workings in immutable impersonality.

But these two, the status and immutability of the Soul and the action of the Soul and its mutability in Nature, actually coexist. And this would be an anomaly irreconcilable except by some such theory as that of Maya or else of a double and divided being, if there were not a supreme reality of the Soul's existence of which these are the two contrary aspects, but which is limited by neither of them. We have seen that the Gita finds this in the Purushottama. The supreme Soul is the Ishwara, God, the Master of all being, *sarvaloka-mahesvara*. He puts forth his own active nature, his Prakriti, — *svāṁ prakṛtim*, says the Gita, — manifest in the Jiva, worked out by the *svabhāva*, "own-becoming", of each Jiva according to the law of the divine being in it, the great lines of which each Jiva must follow, but worked out too in the egoistic nature by the bewildering play of the three gunas upon each other, *guṇā guṇeṣu vartante*. That is the *traiguṇyamayī māyā*, the Maya hard for man to get beyond, *duratyayā*, — yet can one get beyond it by transcending the three gunas. For while all this is done by the Ishwara through his Nature-Power in the Kshara, in the Akshara he is untouched, indifferent, regarding all equally, extended within all, yet above all. In all three he is the Lord, the supreme Ishwara in the highest, the presiding and all-pervading Impersonality, *prabhu* and *vibhu*, in the Akshara, and the immanent Will and present active Lord in the Kshara. He is free in his impersonality even while working out the play of his personality; he is not either merely impersonal or personal, but one and the same being in two aspects; he is the impersonal-personal, *nirguṇo guṇī*, of the Upanishad. By him all has been willed even before it is worked out, — as he says of the still living Dhartarashtrians, "already have they been slain by Me," *maya nihatāḥ pūrvam eva*, — and the working out by Nature is only the result of his Will; yet by virtue of his impersonality behind he is not bound by his works, *kartāram akartāram*.

But man as the individual self, owing to his ignorant self-identification with the work and the becoming, as if that were all his soul and not a power of his soul, a power proceeding from it, is bewildered by the ego-sense. He thinks that it is he and others who are doing all; he does not see that Nature is doing all and that he is misrepresenting and disfiguring her works to himself by ignorance and attachment. He is enslaved by the gunas, now hampered in the dull case of tamas, now blown by the strong winds of rajas, now limited by the partial lights of sattwa, not distinguishing himself at all from the nature-mind which alone is thus modified by the gunas. He is therefore mastered by pain and pleasure, happiness and grief, desire and passion, attachment and disgust: he has no freedom.

He must, to be free, get back from the Nature action to the status of the Akshara; he will then be *trigunātīta*, beyond the gunas. Knowing himself as the Akshara Brahman, the unchanging Purusha, he will know himself as an immutable impersonal self, the Atman, tranquilly observing and impartially supporting the action, but himself calm, indifferent, untouched, motionless, pure, one with all beings in their self, not one with Nature and her workings. This self, though by its presence authorising the works of Nature, though by its all-pervading existence supporting and consenting to them, *prabhu vibhu*, does not itself create works or the state of the doer or the joining of the works to their fruit, *na kartr̄tvam na karmāṇi srjati na karma-phala-samyogam*, but only watches nature in the Kshara working out these things, *svabhāvas tu pravartate*; it accepts neither the sin nor the virtue of the living creatures born into this birth as its own, *nādatte kasyacit pāpam na caiva sukṛtam*; it preserves its spiritual purity. It is the ego bewildered by ignorance which attributes these things to itself, because it assumes the responsibility of the doer and chooses to figure as that and not as the instrument of a greater power, which is all that it really is; *ajñānenāvṛtam jñānam tena muhyanti jantavaḥ*. By going back into the impersonal self the soul gets back into a greater self-knowledge and is liberated from the bondage of the works of Nature, untouched by her gunas, free from her shows of good

and evil, suffering and happiness. The natural being, the mind, body, life, still remain, Nature still works; but the inner being does not identify himself with these, nor while the gunas play in the natural being, does he rejoice or grieve. He is the calm and free immutable Self observing all.

Is this the last state, the utmost possibility, the highest secret? It cannot be, since this is a mixed or divided, not a perfectly harmonised status, a double, not a unified being, a freedom in the soul, an imperfection in the Nature. It can only be a stage. What then is there beyond it? One solution is that of the Sannyasin who rejects the nature, the action altogether, so far at least as action can be rejected, so that there may be an unmixed undivided freedom; but this solution, though admitted, is not preferred by the Gita. The Gita also insists on the giving up of actions, *sarvakarmāni sannyasya*, but inwardly to the Brahman. Brahman in the Kshara supports wholly the action of Prakriti, Brahman in the Akshara, even while supporting, dissociates itself from the action, preserves its freedom; the individual soul, unified with the Brahman in the Akshara, is free and dissociated, yet, unified with the Brahman in the Kshara, supports but is not affected. This it can do best when it sees that both are aspects of the one Purushottama. The Purushottama, inhabiting all existences as the secret Ishwara, controls the Nature and by his will, now no longer distorted and disfigured by the ego-sense, the Nature works out the actions by the swabhava; the individual soul makes the divinised natural being an instrument of the divine Will, *nimitta-mātram*. He remains even in action *trigunatīta*, beyond the gunas, free from the gunas, *nistraiguṇya*, he fulfils entirely at last the early injunction of the Gita, *nistraiguṇyo bhavārjuna*. He is indeed still the enjoyer of the gunas, as is the Brahman, though not limited by them, *nirguṇam guṇabhboktr ca*, unattached, yet all-supporting, even as is that Brahman, *asaktam sarvabhṛt*: but the action of the gunas within him is quite changed; it is lifted above their egoistic character and reactions. For he has unified his whole being in the Purushottama, has assumed the divine being and the higher divine nature of becoming, *madbhāva*, has unified even his mind and natural

consciousness with the Divine, *manmanā maccittah*. This change is the final evolution of the nature and the consummation of the divine birth, *rahasyam uttamam*. When it is accomplished, the soul is aware of itself as the master of its nature and, grown a light of the divine Light and will of the divine Will, is able to change its natural workings into a divine action.

XXIII

Nirvana and Works in the World

THE UNION of the soul with the Purushottama by a Yoga of the whole being is the complete teaching of the Gita and not only the union with the immutable Self as in the narrower doctrine which follows the exclusive way of knowledge. That is why the Gita subsequently, after it has effected the reconciliation of knowledge and works, is able to develop the idea of love and devotion, unified with both works and knowledge, as the highest height of the way to the supreme secret. For if the union with the immutable Self were the sole secret or the highest secret, that would not at all be possible; for then at a given point our inner basis for love and devotion, no less than our inner foundation of works, would crumble away and collapse. Union utter and exclusive with the immutable Self alone means the abolition of the whole point of view of the mutable being, not only in its ordinary and inferior action but in its very roots, in all that makes its existence possible, not only in the works of its ignorance, but in the works of its knowledge. It would mean the abolition of all that difference in conscious poise and activity between the human soul and the Divine which makes possible the play of the Kshara; for the action of the Kshara would become then entirely a play of the ignorance without any root or basis of divine reality in it. On the contrary, union by Yoga with the Purushottama means the knowledge and enjoyment of our oneness with him in our self-existent being and of a certain differentiation in our active being. It is the persistence of the latter in a play of divine works which are urged by the motive power of divine love and constituted by a perfected divine Nature, it is the vision of the Divine in the world harmonised with a realisation of the Divine in the self which makes action and devotion possible to the liberated man, and not only possible but inevitable in the perfect mode of his being.

But the direct way to union lies through the firm realisation of the immutable Self, and it is the Gita's insistence on this as a first necessity, after which alone works and devotion can acquire their whole divine meaning, that makes it possible for us to mistake its drift. For if we take the passages in which it insists most rigorously upon this necessity and neglect to observe the whole sequence of thought in which they stand, we may easily come to the conclusion that it does really teach actionless absorption as the final state of the soul and action only as a preliminary means towards stillness in the motionless Immutable. It is in the close of the fifth and throughout the sixth chapter that this insistence is strongest and most comprehensive. There we get the description of a Yoga which would seem at first sight to be incompatible with works and we get the repeated use of the word Nirvana to describe the status to which the Yогin arrives.

The mark of this status is the supreme peace of a calm self-extinction, *śāntim nirvāṇa-paramām*, and, as if to make it quite clear that it is not the Buddhist's Nirvana in a blissful negation of being, but the Vedantic loss of a partial in a perfect being that it intends, the Gita uses always the phrase *brahma-nirvāṇa*, extinction in the Brahman; and the Brahman here certainly seems to mean the Immutable, to denote primarily at least the inner timeless Self withdrawn from active participation even though immanent in the externality of Nature. We have to see then what is the drift of the Gita here, and especially whether this peace is the peace of an absolute inactive cessation, whether the self-extinction in the Akshara means the absolute excision of all knowledge and consciousness of the Kshara and of all action in the Kshara. We are accustomed indeed to regard Nirvana and any kind of existence and action in the world as incompatible and we might be inclined to argue that the use of the word is by itself sufficient and decides the question. But if we look closely at Buddhism, we shall doubt whether the absolute incompatibility really existed even for the Buddhists; and if we look closely at the Gita, we shall see that it does not form part of this supreme Vedantic teaching.

The Gita after speaking of the perfect equality of the

Brahman-knower who has risen into the Brahman-consciousness, *brahmavid brahmani sthitah*, develops in nine verses that follow its idea of Brahmayoga and of Nirvana in the Brahman. “When the soul is no longer attached to the touches of outward things,” it begins, “then one finds the happiness that exists in the Self; such a one enjoys an imperishable happiness, because his self is in Yoga, *yukta*, by Yoga with the Brahman.” The non-attachment is essential, it says, in order to be free from the attacks of desire and wrath and passion, a freedom without which true happiness is not possible. That happiness and that equality are to be gained entirely by man in the body: he is not to suffer any least remnant of the subjection to the troubled lower nature to remain in the idea that the perfect release will come by a putting off of the body; a perfect spiritual freedom is to be won here upon earth and possessed and enjoyed in the human life, *prāk śarīra-vimokṣanāt*. It then continues, “He who has the inner happiness and the inner ease and repose and the inner light, that Yогin becomes the Brahman and reaches self-extinction in the Brahman, *brahma-nirvānam*.” Here, very clearly, Nirvana means the extinction of the ego in the higher spiritual, inner Self, that which is for ever timeless, spaceless, not bound by the chain of cause and effect and the changes of the world-mutation, self-blissful, self-illuminated and for ever at peace. The Yогin ceases to be the ego, the little person limited by the mind and the body; he becomes the Brahman; he is unified in consciousness with the immutable divinity of the eternal Self which is immanent in his natural being.

But is this a going in into some deep sleep of samadhi away from all world-consciousness, or is it the preparatory movement for a dissolution of the natural being and the individual soul into some absolute Self who is utterly and for ever beyond Nature and her works, *laya, mokṣa*? Is that withdrawal necessary before we can enter into Nirvana, or is Nirvana, as the context seems to suggest, a state which can exist simultaneously with world-consciousness and even in its own way include it? Apparently the latter, for in the succeeding verse the Gita goes on to say,

“Sages win Nirvana in the Brahman, they in whom the stains of sin are effaced and the knot of doubt is cut asunder, masters of their selves, who are occupied in doing good to all creatures, *sarvabhūta-hite ratāḥ*.” That would almost seem to mean that to be thus is to be in Nirvana. But the next verse is quite clear and decisive, “*Yatis* (those who practise self-mastery by Yoga and austerity) who are delivered from desire and wrath and have gained self-mastery, for them Nirvana in the Brahman exists all about them, encompasses them, they already live in it because they have knowledge of the Self.” That is to say, to have knowledge and possession of the self is to exist in Nirvana. This is clearly a large extension of the idea of Nirvana. Freedom from all stain of the passions, the self-mastery of the equal mind on which that freedom is founded, equality to all beings, *sarvabhūtesu*, and beneficial love for all, final destruction of that doubt and obscurity of the ignorance which keeps us divided from the all-unifying Divine and the knowledge of the One Self within us and in all are evidently the conditions of Nirvana which are laid down in these verses of the Gita, go to constitute it and are its spiritual substance.

Thus Nirvana is clearly compatible with world-consciousness and with action in the world. For the sages who possess it are conscious of and in intimate relation by works with the Divine in the mutable universe; they are occupied with the good of all creatures, *sarvabhūta-hite*. They have not renounced the experiences of the Kshara Purusha, they have divinised them; for the Kshara, the Gita tells us, is all existences, *sarvabhūtāni*, and the doing universal good to all is a divine action in the mutability of Nature. This action in the world is not inconsistent with living in Brahman, it is rather its inevitable condition and outward result because the Brahman in whom we find Nirvana, the spiritual consciousness in which we lose the separative ego-consciousness, is not only within us but within all these existences, exists not only above and apart from all these universal happenings, but pervades them, contains them and is extended in them. Therefore by Nirvana in the Brahman must be meant a destruction or extinction of the limited separative consciousness, falsifying

and dividing, which is brought into being on the surface of existence by the lower Maya of the three gunas, and entry into Nirvana is a passage into this other true unifying consciousness which is the heart of existence and its continent and its whole containing and supporting, its whole original and eternal and final truth. Nirvana when we gain it, enter into it, is not only within us, but all around, *abhi to vartate*, because this is not only the Brahman-consciousness which lives secret within us, but the Brahman-consciousness in which we live. It is the Self which we are within, the supreme Self of our individual being but also the Self which we are without, the supreme Self of the universe, the self of all existences. By living in that self we live in all, and no longer in our egoistic being alone; by oneness with that self a steadfast oneness with all in the universe becomes the very nature of our being and the root status of our active consciousness and root motive of all our action.

But again we get immediately afterwards two verses which might seem to lead away from this conclusion. "Having put outside of himself all outward touches and concentrated the vision between the eyebrows and made equal the *prāṇa* and the *apāna* moving within the nostrils, having controlled the senses, the mind and the understanding, the sage devoted to liberation, from whom desire and wrath and fear have passed away is ever free." Here we have a process of Yoga that brings in an element which seems quite other than the Yoga of works and other even than the pure Yoga of knowledge by discrimination and contemplation; it belongs in all its characteristic features to the system, introduces the psycho-physical askesis of Rajayoga. There is the conquest of all the movements of the mind, *cittavṛtti-nirodha*; there is the control of the breathing, Pranayama; there is the drawing in of the sense and the vision. All of them are processes which lead to the inner trance of Samadhi, the object of all of them *mokṣa*, and *mokṣa* signifies in ordinary parlance the renunciation not only of the separative ego-consciousness, but of the whole active consciousness, a dissolution of our being into the highest Brahman. Are we to suppose that the Gita gives this process in that sense as the last movement of a release by

dissolution or only as a special means and a strong aid to overcome the outward-going mind? Is this the finale, the climax, the last word? We shall find reason to regard it as both a special means, an aid, and at least one gate of a final departure, not by dissolution, but by an uplifting to the supracosmic existence. For even here in this passage this is not the last word; the last word, the finale, the climax comes in a verse that follows and is the last couplet of the chapter. "When a man has known Me as the Enjoyer of sacrifice and tapasya (of all askesis and energisms), the mighty lord of all the worlds, the friend of all creatures, he comes by the peace." The power of the Karmayoga comes in again; the knowledge of the active Brahman, the cosmic supersoul, is insisted on among the conditions of the peace of Nirvana.

We get back to the great idea of the Gita, the idea of the Purushottama,—though that name is not given till close upon the end, it is always that which Krishna means by his "I" and "Me", the Divine who is there as the one self in our timeless immutable being, who is present too in the world, in all existences, in all activities, the master of the silence and the peace, the master of the power and the action, who is here incarnate as the divine charioteer of the stupendous conflict, the Transcendent, the Self, the All, the master of every individual being. He is the enjoyer of all sacrifice and of all tapasya, therefore shall the seeker of liberation do works as a sacrifice and as a tapasya; he is the lord of all the worlds, manifested in Nature and in these beings, therefore shall the liberated man still do works for the right government and leading on of the peoples in these worlds, *loka-sangraha*; he is the friend of all existences, therefore is the sage who has found Nirvana within him and all around, still and always occupied with the good of all creatures,—even as the Nirvana of Mahayana Buddhism took for its highest sign the works of a universal compassion. Therefore too, even when he has found oneness with the Divine in his timeless and immutable self, is he still capable, since he embraces the relations also of the play of Nature, of divine love for man and of love for the Divine, of bhakti.

That this is the drift of the meaning, becomes clearer when we have fathomed the sense of the sixth chapter which is a large comment on and a full development of the idea of these closing verses of the fifth,—that shows the importance which the Gita attaches to them. We shall therefore run as briefly as possible through the substance of this sixth chapter. First the Teacher emphasises—and this is very significant—his often repeated asseveration about the real essence of Sannyasa, that it is an inward, not an outward renunciation. “Whoever does the work to be done without resort to its fruits, he is the Sannyasin and the Yогin, not the man who lights not the sacrificial fire and does not the works. What they have called renunciation (Sannyasa), know to be in truth Yoga; for none becomes a Yогin who has not renounced the desire-will in the mind.” Works are to be done, but with what purpose and in what order? They are first to be done while ascending the hill of Yoga, for then works are the cause, *kāraṇam*. The cause of what? The cause of self-perfection, of liberation, of nirvana in the Brahman; for by doing works with a steady practice of the inner renunciation this perfection, this liberation, this conquest of the desire-mind and the ego-self and the lower nature are easily accomplished.

But when one has got to the top? Then works are no longer the cause; the calm of self-mastery and self-possession gained by works becomes the cause. Again, the cause of what? Of fixity in the Self, in the Brahman-consciousness and of the perfect equality in which the divine works of the liberated man are done. “For when one does not get attached to the objects of sense or to works and has renounced all will of desire in the mind, then is he said to have ascended to the top of Yoga.” That, as we know already, is the spirit in which the liberated man does works; he does them without desire and attachment, without the egoistic personal will and the mental seeking which is the parent of desire. He has conquered his lower self, reached the perfect calm in which his highest self is manifest to him, that highest self always concentrated in its own being, *samāhita*, in Samadhi, not only in the trance of the inward-drawn consciousness, but always, in the waking state of the mind as well, in exposure to

the causes of desire and of the disturbance of calm, to grief and pleasure, heat and cold, honour and disgrace, all the dualities, *sītoṣṇa-sukhaduhkheśu tathā mānāpamānayoh*. This higher self is the Akshara, *kūṭastha*, which stands above the changes and the perturbations of the natural being; and the Yогin is said to be in Yoga with it when he also is like it, *kūṭastha*, when he is superior to all appearances and mutations, when he is satisfied with self-knowledge, when he is equal-minded to all things and happenings and persons.

But this Yoga is after all no easy thing to acquire, as Arjuna indeed shortly afterwards suggests, for the restless mind is always liable to be pulled down from these heights by the attacks of outward things and to fall back into the strong control of grief and passion and inequality. Therefore, it would seem, the Gita proceeds to give us in addition to its general method of knowledge and works a special process of Rajayogic meditation also, a powerful method of practice, *abhyāsa*, a strong way to the complete control of the mind and all its workings. In this process the Yогin is directed to practise continually union with the Self so that that may become his normal consciousness. He is to sit apart and alone, with all desire and idea of possession banished from his mind, self-controlled in his whole being and consciousness. "He should set in a pure spot his firm seat, neither too high, nor yet too low, covered with a cloth, with a deer-skin, with sacred grass, and there seated with a concentrated mind and with the workings of the mental consciousness and the senses under control he should practise Yoga for self-purification, *ātma-viśuddhaye*." The posture he takes must be the motionless erect posture proper to the practice of Rajayoga; the vision should be drawn in and fixed between the eye-brows, "not regarding the regions." The mind is to be kept calm and free from fear and the vow of Brahmacharya observed; the whole controlled mentality must be devoted and turned to the Divine so that the lower action of the consciousness shall be merged in the higher peace. For the object to be attained is the still peace of Nirvana. "Thus always putting himself in Yoga by control of his mind the Yогin attains to the supreme peace of Nirvana which has its

foundation in Me, *sāntim nirvāṇa-paramāṁ matsamsthām.*"

This peace of Nirvana is reached when all the mental consciousness is perfectly controlled and liberated from desire and remains still in the Self, when, motionless like the light of a lamp in a windless place, it ceases from its restless action, shut in from its outward motion, and by the silence and stillness of the mind the Self is seen within, not disfigured as in the mind, but in the Self, seen, not as it is mistranslated falsely or partially by the mind and represented to us through the ego, but self-perceived by the Self, *svaprakāśa*. Then the soul is satisfied and knows its own true and exceeding bliss, not that untroubled happiness which is the portion of the mind and the senses, but an inner and serene felicity in which it is safe from the mind's perturbations and can no longer fall away from the spiritual truth of its being. Not even the fieriest assault of mental grief can disturb it; for mental grief comes to us from outside, is a reaction to external touches, and this is the inner, the self-existent happiness of those who no longer accept the slavery of the unstable mental reactions to external touches. It is the putting away of the contact with pain, the divorce of the mind's marriage with grief, *duḥkha-samyoga-viyogam*. The firm winning of this inalienable spiritual bliss is Yoga, it is the divine union; it is the greatest of all gains and the treasure beside which all others lose their value. Therefore is this Yoga to be resolutely practised without yielding to any discouragement by difficulty or failure until the release, until the bliss of Nirvana is secured as an eternal possession.

The main stress here has fallen on the stilling of the emotive mind, the mind of desire and the senses which are the recipients of outward touches and reply to them with our customary emotional reactions; but even the mental thought has to be stilled in the silence of the self-existent being. First, all the desires born of the desire-will have to be wholly abandoned without any exception or residue and the senses have to be held in by the mind so that they shall not run out to all sides after their usual disorderly and restless habit; but next the mind itself has to be seized by the buddhi and drawn inward. One should slowly cease from mental action by a buddhi held in the grasp of fixity

and having fixed the mind in the higher self one should not think of anything at all. Whenever the restless and unquiet mind goes forth, it should be controlled and brought into subjection in the Self. When the mind is thoroughly quieted, then there comes upon the Yогin the highest, stainless, passionless bliss of the soul that has become the Brahman. "Thus freed from stain of passion and putting himself constantly into Yoga, the Yогin easily and happily enjoys the touch of the Brahman which is an exceeding bliss."

And yet the result is not, while one yet lives, a Nirvana which puts away every possibility of action in the world, every relation with beings in the world. It would seem at first that it ought to be so. When all the desires and passions have ceased, when the mind is no longer permitted to throw itself out in thought, when the practice of this silent and solitary Yoga has become the rule, what farther action or relation with the world of outward touches and mutable appearances is any longer possible? No doubt, the Yогin for a time still remains in the body, but the cave, the forest, the mountain-top seem now the fittest, the only possible scene of his continued living and constant trance of Samadhi his sole joy and occupation. But, first, while this solitary Yoga is being pursued, the renunciation of all other action is not recommended by the Gita. This Yoga, it says, is not for the man who gives up sleep and food and play and action, even as it is not for those who indulge too much in these things of the life and the body; but the sleep and waking, the food, the play, the putting forth of effort in works should all be *yukta*. This is generally interpreted as meaning that all should be moderate, regulated, done in fit measure, and that may indeed be the significance. But at any rate when the Yoga is attained, all this has to be *yukta* in another sense, the ordinary sense of the word everywhere else in the Gita. In all states, in waking and in sleeping, in food and play and action, the Yогin will then be in Yoga with the Divine, and all will be done by him in the consciousness of the Divine as the self and as the All and as that which supports and contains his own life and his action. Desire and ego and personal will and the thought of the

mind are the motives of action only in the lower nature; when the ego is lost and the Yогin becomes Brahman, when he lives in and is, even, a transcendent and universal consciousness, action comes spontaneously out of that, luminous knowledge higher than the mental thought comes out of that, a power other and mightier than the personal will comes out of that to do for him his works and bring its fruits:¹ personal action has ceased, all has been taken up into the Brahman and assumed by the Divine, *mayi sannyasya karmāni*.

For when the Gita describes the nature of this self-realisation and the result of the Yoga which comes by Nirvana of the separative ego-mind and its motives of thought and feeling and action into the Brahman-consciousness, it includes the cosmic sense, though lifted into a new kind of vision. "The man whose self is in Yoga, sees the self in all beings and all beings in the self, he sees all with an equal vision." All that he sees is to him the Self, all is his self, all is the Divine. But is there no danger, if he dwells at all in the mutability of the Kshara, of his losing all the results of this difficult Yoga, losing the Self and falling back into the mind, of the Divine losing him and the world getting him, of his losing the Divine and getting back in its place the ego and the lower nature? No, says the Gita; "he who sees Me everywhere and sees all in Me, to him I do not get lost, nor does he get lost to Me." For this peace of Nirvana, though it is gained through the Akshara, is founded upon the being of the Purushottama, *mat-samsthām*, and that is extended, the Divine, the Brahman is extended too in the world of beings and, though transcendent of it, not imprisoned in its own transcendence. One has to see all things as He and live and act wholly in that vision; that is the perfect fruit of the Yoga.

But why act? Is it not safer to sit in one's solitude looking out upon the world, if you will, seeing it in Brahman, in the Divine, but not taking part in it, not moving in it, not living in it, not acting in it, living rather ordinarily in the inner Samadhi? Should not that be the law, the rule, the dharma of this highest spiritual

¹ *yoga-kṣemāni vahāmyaham.*

condition? No, again; for the liberated Yigin there is no other law, rule, dharma than simply this, to live in the Divine and love the Divine and be one with all beings; his freedom is an absolute and not a contingent freedom, self-existent and not dependent any longer on any rule of conduct, law of life or limitation of any kind. He has no longer any need of a process of Yoga, because he is now perpetually in Yoga. "The Yigin who has taken his stand upon oneness and loves Me in all beings, however and in all ways he lives and acts, lives and acts in Me." The love of the world spiritualised, changed from a sense-experience to a soul-experience, is founded on the love of God and in that love there is no peril and no shortcoming. Fear and disgust of the world may often be necessary for the recoil from the lower nature, for it is really the fear and disgust of our own ego which reflects itself in the world. But to see God in the world is to fear nothing, it is to embrace all in the being of God; to see all as the Divine is to hate and loathe nothing, but love God in the world and the world in God.

But at least the things of the lower nature will be shunned and feared, the things which the Yigin has taken so much trouble to surmount? Not this either; all is embraced in the equality of the self-vision. "He, O Arjuna, who sees with equality everything in the image of the Self, whether it be grief or it be happiness, him I hold to be the supreme Yigin." And by this it is not meant at all that he himself shall fall from the griefless spiritual bliss and feel again worldly unhappiness, even in the sorrow of others, but seeing in others the play of the dualities which he himself has left and surmounted, he shall still see all as himself, his self in all, God in all and, not disturbed or bewildered by the appearances of these things, moved only by them to help and heal, to occupy himself with the good of all beings, to lead men to the spiritual bliss, to work for the progress of the world Godwards, he shall live the divine life, so long as days upon earth are his portion. The God-lover who can do this, can thus embrace all things in God, can look calmly on the lower nature and the works of the Maya of the three gunas and act in them and upon them without perturbation or fall or disturbance from the height and power

of the spiritual oneness, free in the largeness of the God-vision, sweet and great and luminous in the strength of the God-nature, may well be declared to be the supreme Yogin. He indeed has conquered the creation, *jital sargah*.

The Gita brings in here as always bhakti as the climax of the Yoga, *sarvabhūtasthitam yo mām bhajati ekatvam āsthitah*; that may almost be said to sum up the whole final result of the Gita's teaching— whoever loves God in all and his soul is founded upon the divine oneness, however he lives and acts, lives and acts in God. And to emphasise it still more, after an intervention of Arjuna and a reply to his doubt as to how so difficult a Yoga can be at all possible for the restless mind of man, the divine Teacher returns to this idea and makes it his culminating utterance. "The Yogin is greater than the doers of askesis, greater than the men of knowledge, greater than the men of works; become then the Yogin, O Arjuna," the Yogin, one who seeks for and attains, by works and knowledge and askesis or by whatever other means, not even spiritual knowledge or power or anything else for their own sake, but the union with God alone; for in that all else is contained and in that lifted beyond itself to a divinest significance. But even among Yogins the greatest is the Bhakta. "Of all Yogins he who with all his inner self given up to Me, for Me has love and faith, *śraddhāvān bhajate*, him I hold to be the most united with Me in Yoga." It is this that is the closing word of these first six chapters and contains in itself the seed of the rest, of that which still remains unspoken and is nowhere entirely spoken; for it is always and remains something of a mystery and a secret, *rahasyam*, the highest spiritual mystery and the divine secret.

The Gist of the Karmayoga

THE FIRST six chapters of the Gita form a sort of preliminary block of the teaching; all the rest, all the other twelve chapters are the working out of certain unfinished figures in this block which here are seen only as hints behind the large-size execution of the main motives, yet are in themselves of capital importance and are therefore reserved for a yet larger treatment on the other two faces of the work. If the Gita were not a great written Scripture which must be carried to its end, if it were actually a discourse by a living teacher to a disciple which could be resumed in good time, when the disciple was ready for farther truth, one could conceive of his stopping here at the end of the sixth chapter and saying, "Work this out first, there is plenty for you to do to realise it and you have the largest possible basis; as difficulties arise, they will solve themselves or I will solve them for you. But at present live out what I have told you; work in this spirit." True, there are many things here which cannot be properly understood except in the light thrown on them by what is to come after. In order to clear up immediate difficulties and obviate possible misunderstandings, I have had myself to anticipate a good deal, to bring in repeatedly, for example, the idea of the Purushottama, for without that it would have been impossible to clear up certain obscurities about the Self and action and the Lord of action, which the Gita deliberately accepts so that it may not disturb the firmness of the first steps by reaching out prematurely to things too great as yet for the mind of the human disciple.

Arjuna, himself, if the Teacher were to break off his discourse here, might well object: "You have spoken much of the destruction of desire and attachment, of equality, of the conquest of the senses and the stilling of the mind, of passionless and impersonal action, of the sacrifice of works, of the inner as

preferable to the outer renunciation, and these things I understand intellectually, however difficult they may appear to me in practice. But you have also spoken of rising above the gunas, while yet one remains in action, and you have not told me how the gunas work, and unless I know that, it will be difficult for me to detect and rise above them. Besides, you have spoken of bhakti as the greatest element in Yoga, yet you have talked much of works and knowledge, but very little or nothing of bhakti. And to whom is bhakti, this greatest thing, to be offered? Not to the still impersonal Self, certainly, but to you, the Lord. Tell me, then, what you are, who, as bhakti is greater even than this self-knowledge, are greater than the immutable Self, which is yet itself greater than mutable Nature and the world of action, even as knowledge is greater than works. What is the relation between these three things? between works and knowledge and divine love? between the soul in Nature and the immutable Self and that which is at once the changeless Self of all and the Master of knowledge and love and works, the supreme Divinity who is here with me in this great battle and massacre, my charioteer in the chariot of this fierce and terrible action?" It is to answer these questions that the rest of the Gita is written, and in a complete intellectual solution they have indeed to be taken up without delay and resolved. But in actual *sādhanā* one has to advance from stage to stage, leaving many things, indeed the greatest things to arise subsequently and solve themselves fully by the light of the advance we have made in spiritual experience. The Gita follows to a certain extent this curve of experience and puts first a sort of large preliminary basis of works and knowledge which contains an element leading up to bhakti and to a greater knowledge, but not yet fully arriving. The six chapters present us with that basis.

We may then pause to consider how far they have carried the solution of the original problem with which the Gita started. The problem in itself, it may be useful again to remark, need not necessarily have led up to the whole question of the nature of existence and of the replacement of the normal by the spiritual life. It might have been dealt with on a pragmatical or an ethical

basis or from an intellectual or an ideal standpoint or by a consideration of all of these together; that in fact would have been our modern method of solving the difficulty. By itself it raises in the first instance just this question, whether Arjuna should be governed by the ethical sense of personal sin in slaughter or by the consideration equally ethical of his public and social duty, the defence of the Right, the opposition demanded by conscience from all noble natures to the armed forces of injustice and oppression? That question has been raised in our own time and the present hour, and it can be solved, as we solve it now, by one or other of very various solutions, but all from the standpoint of our normal life and our normal human mind. It may be answered as a question between the personal conscience and our duty to the society and the State, between an ideal and a practical morality, between "soul-force" and the recognition of the troublesome fact that life is not yet at least all soul and that to take up arms for the right in a physical struggle is sometimes inevitable. All these solutions are, however, intellectual, temperamental, emotional; they depend upon the individual standpoint and are at the best our own proper way of meeting the difficulty offered to us, proper because suitable to our nature and the stage of our ethical and intellectual evolution, the best we can, with the light we have, see and do; it leads to no final solution. And this is so because it proceeds from the normal mind which is always a tangle of various tendencies of our being and can only arrive at a choice or an accommodation between them, between our reason, our ethical being, our dynamic needs, our life-instincts, our emotional being and those rarer movements which we may perhaps call soul-instincts or psychical preferences. The Gita recognises that from this standpoint there can be no absolute, only an immediate practical solution and, after offering to Arjuna from the highest ideals of his age just such a practical solution, which he is in no mood to accept and indeed is evidently not intended to accept, it proceeds to quite a different standpoint and to quite another answer.

The Gita's solution is to rise above our natural being and normal mind, above our intellectual and ethical perplexities into

another consciousness with another law of being and therefore another standpoint for our action; where personal desire and personal emotions no longer govern it; where the dualities fall away; where the action is no longer our own and where therefore the sense of personal virtue and personal sin is exceeded; where the universal, the impersonal, the divine spirit works out through us its purpose in the world; where we are ourselves by a new and divine birth changed into being of that Being, consciousness of that Consciousness, power of that Power, bliss of that Bliss, and, living no longer in our lower nature, have no works to do of our own, no personal aim to pursue of our own, but if we do works at all,—and that is the one real problem and difficulty left,—do only the divine works, those of which our outward nature is only a passive instrument and no longer the cause, no longer provides the motive; for the motive-power is above us in the will of the Master of our works. And this is presented to us as the true solution, because it goes back to the real truth of our being and to live according to the real truth of our being is evidently the highest solution and the sole entirely true solution of the problems of our existence. Our mental and vital personality is a truth of our natural existence, but a truth of the ignorance, and all that attaches itself to it is also truth of that order, practically valid for the works of the ignorance, but no longer valid when we get back to the real truth of our being. But how can we actually be sure that this is the truth? We cannot so long as we remain satisfied with our ordinary mental experience; for our normal mental experience is wholly that of this lower nature full of the ignorance. We can only know this greater truth by living it, that is to say, by passing beyond the mental into the spiritual experience, by Yoga. For the living out of spiritual experience until we cease to be mind and become spirit, until, liberated from the imperfections of our present nature, we are able to live entirely in our true and divine being is what in the end we mean by Yoga.

This upward transference of our centre of being and the consequent transformation of our whole existence and consciousness, with a resultant change in the whole spirit and motive of

our action, the action often remaining precisely the same in all its outward appearances, makes the gist of the Gita's Karmayoga. Change your being, be reborn into the spirit and by that new birth proceed with the action to which the Spirit within has appointed you, may be said to be the heart of its message. Or again, put otherwise, with a deeper and more spiritual import, —make the work you have to do here your means of inner spiritual rebirth, the divine birth, and, having become divine, do still divine works as an instrument of the Divine for the leading of the peoples. Therefore there are here two things which have to be clearly laid down and clearly grasped, the way to the change, to this upward transference, this new divine birth, and the nature of the work or rather the spirit in which it has to be done, since the outward form of it need not at all change, although really its scope and aim become quite different. But these two things are practically the same, for the elucidation of one elucidates the other. The spirit of our action arises from the nature of our being and the inner foundation it has taken, but also this nature is itself affected by the trend and spiritual effect of our action; a very great change in the spirit of our works changes the nature of our being and alters the foundation it has taken; it shifts the centre of conscious force from which we act. If life and action were entirely illusory, as some would have it, if the Spirit had nothing to do with works or life, this would not be so; but the soul in us develops itself by life and works and, not indeed so much the action itself, but the way of our soul's inner force of working determines its relations to the Spirit. This is, indeed, the justification of Karmayoga as a practical means of the higher self-realisation.

We start from this foundation that the present inner life of man, almost entirely dependent as it is upon his vital and physical nature, only lifted beyond it by a limited play of mental energy, is not the whole of his possible existence, not even the whole of his present real existence. There is within him a hidden Self, of which his present nature is either only an outer appearance or is a partial dynamic result. The Gita seems throughout to admit its dynamic reality and not to adopt the severer view

of the extreme Vedantists that it is only an appearance, a view which strikes at the very roots of all works and action. Its way of formulating this element of its philosophical thought, — it might be done in a different way, — is to admit the Sankhya distinction between the Soul and Nature, the power that knows, supports and informs and the power that works, acts, provides all the variations of instrument, medium and process. Only it takes the free and immutable Soul of the Sankhyas, calls it in Vedantic language the one immutable omnipresent Self or Brahman, and distinguishes it from this other soul involved in Nature, which is our mutable and dynamic being, the multiple soul of things, the basis of variation and personality. But in what then consists this action of Nature?

It consists in a power of process, Prakriti, which is the interplay of three fundamental modes of its working, three qualities, gunas. And what is the medium? It is the complex system of existence created by a graded evolution of the instruments of Prakriti, which, as they are reflected here in the soul's experience of her workings, we may call successively the reason and the ego, the mind, the senses and the elements of material energy which are the basis of its forms. These are all mechanical, a complex engine of Nature, *yantra*; and from our modern point of view we may say that they are all involved in material energy and manifest themselves in it as the soul in Nature becomes aware of itself by an upward evolution of each instrument, but in the inverse order to that which we have stated, matter first, then sensation, then mind, next reason, last spiritual consciousness. Reason, which is at first only preoccupied with the workings of Nature, may then detect their ultimate character, may see them only as a play of the three gunas in which the soul is entangled, may distinguish between the soul and these workings; then the soul gets a chance of disentangling itself and of going back to its original freedom and immutable existence. In Vedantic language, it sees the spirit, the being; it ceases to identify itself with the instruments and workings of Nature, with its becoming; it identifies itself with its true Self and being and recovers its immutable spiritual self-existence. It is then from this spiritual

self-existence, according to the Gita, that it can freely and as the master of its being, the Ishwara, support the action of its becoming.

Looking only at the psychological facts on which these philosophical distinctions are founded,—philosophy is only a way of formulating to ourselves intellectually in their essential significance the psychological and physical facts of existence and their relation to any ultimate reality that may exist,—we may say that there are two lives we can lead, the life of the soul engrossed in the workings of its active nature, identified with its psychological and physical instruments, limited by them, bound by its personality, subject to Nature, and the life of the Spirit, superior to these things, large, impersonal, universal, free, unlimited, transcendent, supporting with an infinite equality its natural being and action, but exceeding them by its freedom and infinity. We may live in what is now our natural being or we may live in our greater and spiritual being. This is the first great distinction on which the Karmayoga of the Gita is founded.

The whole question and the whole method lie then in the liberation of the soul from the limitations of our present natural being. In our natural life the first dominating fact is our subjection to the forms of material Nature, the outward touches of things. These present themselves to our life through the senses, and the life through the senses immediately returns upon these objects to seize upon them and deal with them, desires, attaches itself, seeks for results. The mind in all its inner sensations, reactions, emotions, habitual ways of perceiving, thinking and feeling obeys this action of the senses; the reason too carried away by the mind gives itself up to this life of the senses, this life in which the inner being is subject to the externality of things and cannot for a moment really get above it or outside the circle of its action upon us and its psychological results and reactions within us. It cannot get beyond them because there is the principle of ego by which the reason differentiates the sum of the action of Nature upon our mind, will, sense, body from her action in other minds, wills, nervous organisms, bodies; and life to us means only the way she affects our ego and the way our

ego replies to her touches. We know nothing else, we seem to be nothing else; the soul itself seems then only a separate mass of mind, will, emotional and nervous reception and reaction. We may enlarge our ego, identify ourselves with the family, clan, class, country, nation, humanity even, but still the ego remains in all these disguises the root of our actions, only it finds a larger satisfaction of its separate being by these wider dealings with external things.

What acts in us is still the will of the natural being seizing upon the touches of the external world to satisfy the different phases of its personality, and the will in this seizing is always a will of desire and passion and attachment to our works and their results, the will of Nature in us; our personal will, we say, but our ego personality is a creation of Nature, it is not and cannot be our free self, our independent being. The whole is the action of the modes of Nature. It may be a tamasic action, and then we have an inert personality subject to and satisfied with the mechanical round of things, incapable of any strong effort at a freer action and mastery. Or it may be the rajasic action, and then we have the restless active personality which throws itself upon Nature and tries to make her serve its needs and desires, but does not see that its apparent mastery is a servitude, since its needs and desires are those of Nature, and while we are subject to them, there can be for us no freedom. Or it may be a sattvic action, and then we have the enlightened personality which tries to live by reason or to realise some preferred ideal of good, truth or beauty; but this reason is still subject to the appearances of Nature and these ideals are only changing phases of our personality in which we find in the end no sure rule or permanent satisfaction. We are still carried on a wheel of mutation, obeying in our circlings through the ego some Power within us and within all this, but not ourselves that Power or in union and communion with it. Still there is no freedom, no real mastery.

Yet freedom is possible. For that we have to get first away into ourselves from the action of the external world upon our senses; that is to say, we have to live inwardly and be able to

hold back the natural running of the senses after their external objects. A mastery of the senses, an ability to do without all that they hanker after, is the first condition of the true soul-life; only so can we begin to feel that there is a soul within us which is other than the mutations of mind in its reception of the touches of outward things, a soul which in its depths goes back to something self-existent, immutable, tranquil, self-possessed, grandiose, serene and august, master of itself and unaffected by the eager runnings of our external nature. But this cannot be done so long as we are subject to desire. For it is desire, the principle of all our superficial life, which satisfies itself with the life of the senses and finds its whole account in the play of the passions. We must get rid then of desire and, that propensity of our natural being destroyed, the passions which are its emotional results will fall into quietude; for the joy and grief of possession and of loss, success and failure, pleasant and unpleasant touches, which entertain them, will pass out of our souls. A calm equality will then be gained. And since we have still to live and act in the world and our nature in works is to seek for the fruits of our works, we must change that nature and do works without attachment to their fruits, otherwise desire and all its results remain. But how can we change this nature of the doer of works in us? By dissociating works from ego and personality, by seeing through the reason that all this is only the play of the gunas of Nature, and by dissociating our soul from the play, by making it first of all the observer of the workings of Nature and leaving those works to the Power that is really behind them, the something in Nature which is greater than ourselves, not our personality, but the Master of the universe. But the mind will not permit all this; its nature is to run out after the senses and carry the reason and will with it. Then we must learn to still the mind. We must attain that absolute peace and stillness in which we become aware of the calm, motionless, blissful Self within us which is eternally untroubled and unaffected by the touches of things, is sufficient to itself and finds there alone its eternal satisfaction.

This Self is our self-existent being. It is not limited by our

personal existence. It is the same in all existences, pervasive, equal to all things, supporting the whole universal action with its infinity, but unlimited by all that is finite, unmodified by the changings of Nature and personality. When this Self is revealed within us, when we feel its peace and stillness, we can grow into that; we can transfer the poise of our soul from its lower immergence in Nature and draw it back into the Self. We can do this by the force of the things we have attained, calm, equality, passionless impersonality. For as we grow in these things, carry them to their fullness, subject all our nature to them, we are growing into this calm, equal, passionless, impersonal, all-pervading Self. Our senses fall into that stillness and receive the touches of the world on us with a supreme tranquillity; our mind falls into stillness and becomes the calm, universal witness; our ego dissolves itself into this impersonal existence. All things we see in this self which we have become in ourself; and we see this self in all; we become one being with all beings in the spiritual basis of their existence. By doing works in this selfless tranquillity and impersonality, our works cease to be ours, cease to bind or trouble us with their reactions. Nature and her gunas weave the web of her works, but without affecting our griefless self-existent tranquillity. All is given up into that one equal and universal Brahman.

But here there are two difficulties. First, there seems to be an antinomy between this tranquil and immutable Self and the action of Nature. How then does the action at all exist or how can it continue once we have entered into the immutable Self-existence? Where in that is the will to works which would make the action of our nature possible? If we say with the Sankhya that the will is in Nature and not in the Self, still there must be a motive in Nature and the power in her to draw the soul into its workings by interest, ego and attachment, and when these things cease to reflect themselves in the soul-consciousness, her power ceases and the motive of works ceases with it. But the Gita does not accept this view, which seems indeed to necessitate the existence of many Purushas and not one universal Purusha, otherwise the separate experience of the soul and its separate

liberation while millions of others are still involved, would not be intelligible. Nature is not a separate principle, but the power of the Supreme going forth in cosmic creation. But if the Supreme is only this immutable Self and the individual is only something that has gone forth from him in the Power, then the moment it returns and takes its poise in the self, everything must cease except the supreme unity and the supreme calm. Secondly, even if in some mysterious way action still continues, yet since the Self is equal to all things, it cannot matter whether works are done or, if they are done, it cannot matter what work is done. Why then this insistence on the most violent and disastrous form of action, this chariot, this battle, this warrior, this divine charioteer?

The Gita answers by presenting the Supreme as something greater even than the immutable Self, more comprehensive, one who is at once this Self and the Master of works in Nature. But he directs the works of Nature with the eternal calm, the equality, the superiority to works and personality which belong to the immutable. This, we may say, is the poise of being from which he directs works, and by growing into this we are growing into his being and into the poise of divine works. From this he goes forth as the Will and Power of his being in Nature, manifests himself in all existences, is born as Man in the world, is there in the heart of all men, reveals himself as the Avatar, the divine birth in man; and as man grows into his being, it is into the divine birth that he grows. Works must be done as a sacrifice to this Lord of our works, and we must by growing into the Self realise our oneness with him in our being and see our personality as a partial manifestation of him in Nature. One with him in being, we grow one with all beings in the universe and do divine works, not as ours, but as his workings through us for the maintenance and leading of the peoples.

This is the essential thing to be done, and once this is done, the difficulties which present themselves to Arjuna will disappear. The problem is no longer one of our personal action, for that which makes our personality becomes a thing temporal and subordinate, the question is then only one of the workings of the divine Will through us in the universe. To understand that we

must know what this supreme Being is in himself and in Nature, what the workings of Nature are and what they lead to, and the intimate relation between the soul in Nature and this supreme Soul, of which bhakti with knowledge is the foundation. The elucidation of these questions is the subject of the rest of the Gita.

END OF THE FIRST SERIES

ESSAYS ON THE GITA
SECOND SERIES

PART I
THE SYNTHESIS OF WORKS,
LOVE AND KNOWLEDGE

I

The Two Natures¹

THE FIRST six chapters of the Gita have been treated as a single block of teachings, its primary basis of practice and knowledge; the remaining twelve may be similarly treated as two closely connected blocks which develop the rest of the doctrine from this primary basis. The seventh to the twelfth chapters lay down a large metaphysical statement of the nature of the Divine Being and on that foundation closely relate and synthetise knowledge and devotion, just as the first part of the Gita related and synthetised works and knowledge. The vision of the World-Purusha intervenes in the eleventh chapter, gives a dynamic turn to this stage of the synthesis and relates it vividly to works and life. Thus again all is brought powerfully back to the original question of Arjuna round which the whole exposition revolves and completes its cycle. Afterwards the Gita proceeds by the differentiation of the Purusha and Prakriti to work out its ideas of the action of the gunas, of the ascension beyond the gunas and of the culmination of desireless works with knowledge where that coalesces with Bhakti,—knowledge, works and love made one,—and it rises thence to its great finale, the supreme secret of self-surrender to the Master of Existence.

In this second part of the Gita we come to a more concise and easy manner of statement than we have yet had. In the first six chapters the definitions have not yet been made which give the key to the underlying truth; difficulties are being met and solved; the progress is a little laboured and moves through several involutions and returns; much is implied the bearing of which is not yet clear. Here we seem to get on to clearer ground and to lay hold of a more compact and pointed expression. But because of this very conciseness we have to be careful always

¹ Gita, VII. 1-14.

of our steps in order to avoid error and a missing of the real sense. For we are here no longer steadily on the safe ground of psychological and spiritual experience, but have to deal with intellectual statements of spiritual and often of supracosmic truth. Metaphysical statement has always this peril and uncertainty about it that it is an attempt to define to our minds what is really infinite, an attempt which has to be made, but can never be quite satisfactory, quite final or ultimate. The highest spiritual truth can be lived, can be seen, but can only be partially stated. The deeper method and language of the Upanishads with its free resort to image and symbol, its intuitive form of speech in which the hard limiting definiteness of intellectual utterance is broken down and the implications of words are allowed to roll out into an illimitable wave of suggestion, is in these realms the only right method and language. But the Gita cannot resort to this form, because it is designed to satisfy an intellectual difficulty, answers a state of mind in which the reason, the arbiter to which we refer the conflicts of our impulses and sentiments, is at war with itself and impotent to arrive at a conclusion. The reason has to be led to a truth beyond itself, but by its own means and in its own manner. Offered a spiritually psychological solution, of the data of which it has no experience, it can only be assured of its validity if it is satisfied by an intellectual statement of the truths of being upon which the solution rests.

So far the justifying truths that have been offered to it are those with which it is already familiar, and they are only sufficient as a starting-point. There is first the distinction between the Self and the individual being in Nature. The distinction has been used to point out that this individual being in Nature is necessarily subject, so long as he lives shut up within the action of the ego, to the workings of the three gunas which make up by their unstable movements the whole scope and method of the reason, the mind and the life and senses in the body. And within this circle there is no solution. Therefore the solution has to be found by an ascent out of the circle, above this nature of the gunas, to the one immutable Self and silent Spirit, because then one gets beyond that action of the ego and desire which

is the whole root of the difficulty. But since this by itself seems to lead straight towards inaction, as beyond Nature there is no instrumentality of action and no cause or determinant of action,—for the immutable self is inactive, impartial and equal to all things, all workings and all happenings,—the Yoga idea is brought in of the Ishwara, the Divine as master of works and sacrifice, and it is hinted but not yet expressly stated that this Divine exceeds even the immutable self and that in him lies the key to cosmic existence. Therefore by rising to him through the Self it is possible to have spiritual freedom from our works and yet to continue in the works of Nature. But it has not yet been stated who is this Supreme, incarnate here in the divine teacher and charioteer of works, or what are his relations to the Self and to the individual being in Nature. Nor is it clear how the Will to works coming from him can be other than the will in the nature of the three gunas. And if it is only that, then the soul obeying it can hardly fail to be in subjection to the gunas in its action, if not in its spirit, and if so, at once the freedom promised becomes either illusory or incomplete. Will seems to be an aspect of the executive part of being, to be power and active force of nature, Shakti, Prakriti. Is there then a higher Nature than that of the three gunas? Is there a power of pragmatic creation, will, action other than that of ego, desire, mind, sense, reason and the vital impulse?

Therefore, in this uncertainty, what has now to be done is to give more completely the knowledge on which divine works are to be founded. And this can only be the complete, the integral knowledge of the Divine who is the source of works and in whose being the worker becomes by knowledge free; for he knows the free Spirit from whom all works proceed and participates in his freedom. Moreover this knowledge must bring a light that justifies the assertion with which the first part of the Gita closes. It must ground the supremacy of bhakti over all other motives and powers of spiritual consciousness and action; it must be a knowledge of the supreme Lord of all creatures to whom alone the soul can offer itself in the perfect self-surrender which is the highest height of all love and devotion. This is what the

Teacher proposes to give in the opening verses of the seventh chapter which initiate the development that occupies all the rest of the book. "Hear," he says, "how by practising Yoga with a mind attached to me and with me as *āśraya* (the whole basis, lodgment, point of resort of the conscious being and action) thou shalt know me without any remainder of doubt, integrally, *samagram mām*. I will speak to thee without omission or remainder, *aśeṣataḥ*," (for otherwise a ground of doubt may remain), "the essential knowledge, attended with all the comprehensive knowledge, by knowing which there shall be no other thing here left to be known." The implication of the phrase is that the Divine Being is all, *vāsudevaḥ sarvam*, and therefore if he is known integrally in all his powers and principles, then all is known, not only the pure Self, but the world and action and Nature. There is then nothing else here left to be known, because all is that Divine Existence. It is only because our view here is not thus integral, because it rests on the dividing mind and reason and the separative idea of the ego, that our mental perception of things is an ignorance. We have to get away from this mental and egoistic view to the true unifying knowledge, and that has two aspects, the essential, *jñāna*, and the comprehensive, *vijñāna*, the direct spiritual awareness of the supreme Being and the right intimate knowledge of the principles of his existence, Prakriti, Purusha and the rest, by which all that is can be known in its divine origin and in the supreme truth of its nature. That integral knowledge, says the Gita, is a rare and difficult thing; "among thousands of men one here and there strives after perfection, and of those who strive and attain to perfection one here and there knows me in all the principles of my existence, *tattvataḥ*."

Then, to start with and in order to found this integral knowledge, the Gita makes that deep and momentous distinction which is the practical basis of all its Yoga, the distinction between the two Natures, the phenomenal and the spiritual Nature. "The five elements (conditions of material being), mind, reason, ego, this is my eightfold divided Nature. But know my other Nature different from this, the supreme which becomes the Jiva and by which this world is upheld." Here is the first new metaphysical

idea of the Gita which helps it to start from the notions of the Sankhya philosophy and yet exceed them and give to their terms, which it keeps and extends, a Vedantic significance. An eightfold Nature constituted of the five *bhūtas*,—elements, as it is rendered, but rather elemental or essential conditions of material being to which are given the concrete names of earth, water, fire, air and ether,—the mind with its various senses and organs, the reason-will and the ego, is the Sankhya description of Prakriti. The Sankhya stops there, and because it stops there, it has to set up an unbridgeable division between the soul and Nature; it has to posit them as two quite distinct primary entities. The Gita also, if it stopped there, would have to make the same incurable antinomy between the Self and cosmic Nature which would then be only the Maya of the three gunas and all this cosmic existence would be simply the result of this Maya; it could be nothing else. But there is something else, there is a higher principle, a nature of spirit, *parā prakrtir me*. There is a supreme nature of the Divine which is the real source of cosmic existence and its fundamental creative force and effective energy and of which the other lower and ignorant Nature is only a derivation and a dark shadow. In this highest dynamis Purusha and Prakriti are one. Prakriti there is only the will and the executive power of the Purusha, his activity of being,—not a separate entity, but himself in Power.

This supreme Prakriti is not merely a presence of the power of spiritual being immanent in cosmic activities. For then it might be only the inactive presence of the all-pervading Self, immanent in all things or containing them, compelling in a way the world action but not itself active. Nor is this highest Prakriti the *avyakta* of the Sankhyas, the primary unmanifest seed-state of the manifest active eightfold nature of things, the one productive original force of Prakriti out of which her many instrumental and executive powers evolve. Nor is it sufficient to interpret that idea of *avyakta* in the Vedantic sense and say that this supreme Nature is the power involved and inherent in unmanifest Spirit or Self out of which cosmos comes and into which it returns. It is that, but it is much more; for that is only one of its spiritual states. It is the integral conscious-power of the supreme Being,

cit-śakti, which is behind the self and cosmos. In the immutable Self it is involved in the Spirit; it is there, but in *nivṛtti* or a holding back from action: in the mutable self and the cosmos it comes out into action, *pravṛtti*. There by its dynamic presence it evolves in the Spirit all existences and appears in them as their essential spiritual nature, the persistent truth behind their play of subjective and objective phenomena. It is the essential quality and force, *svabhāva*, the self-principle of all their becoming, the inherent principle and divine power behind their phenomenal existence. The balance of the gunas is only a quantitative and quite derivative play evolved out of this supreme Principle. All this activity of forms, all this mental, sensuous, intelligential striving of the lower nature is only a phenomenon, which could not be at all except for this spiritual force and this power of being; it comes from that and it exists in that and by that solely. If we dwell in the phenomenal nature only and see things only by the notions it impresses on us, we shall not get at the real truth of our active existence. The real truth is this spiritual power, this divine force of being, this essential quality of the spirit in things or rather of the spirit in which things are and from which they draw all their potencies and the seeds of their movements. Get at that truth, power, quality and we shall get at the real law of our becoming and the divine principle of our living, its source and sanction in the Knowledge and not only its process in the Ignorance.

This is to throw the sense of the Gita into language suited to our modern way of thinking; but if we look at its description of the Para Prakriti, we shall find that this is practically the substance of what it says. For first, this other higher Prakriti is, says Krishna, my supreme nature, *prakṛtim me parām*. And this "I" here is the Purushottama, the supreme Being, the supreme Soul, the transcendent and universal Spirit. The original and eternal nature of the Spirit and its transcendent and originating Shakti is what is meant by the Para Prakriti. For speaking first of the origin of the world from the point of view of the active power of his Nature, Krishna assevers, "This is the womb of all beings," *etad-yonīni bhūtāni*. And in the next line of the couplet, again

stating the same fact from the point of view of the originating Soul, he continues, "I am the birth of the whole world and so too its dissolution; there is nothing else supreme beyond Me." Here then the supreme Soul, Purushottama, and the supreme Nature, Para Prakriti, are identified: they are put as two ways of looking at one and the same reality. For when Krishna declares, I am the birth of the world and its dissolution, it is evident that it is this Para Prakriti, supreme Nature, of his being which is both these things. The Spirit is the supreme Being in his infinite consciousness and the supreme Nature is the infinity of power or will of being of the Spirit,—it is his infinite consciousness in its inherent divine energy and its supernal divine action. The birth is the movement of evolution of this conscious Energy out of the Spirit, *parā prakṛtir jīvabhūtā*, its activity in the mutable universe; the dissolution is the withdrawing of that activity by involution of the Energy into the immutable existence and self-gathered power of the Spirit. That then is what is initially meant by the supreme Nature.

The supreme Nature, *parā prakṛtiḥ*, is then the infinite timeless conscious power of the self-existent Being out of which all existences in the cosmos are manifested and come out of timelessness into Time. But in order to provide a spiritual basis for this manifold universal becoming in the cosmos the supreme Nature formulates itself as the Jiva. To put it otherwise, the eternal multiple soul of the Purushottama appears as individual spiritual existence in all the forms of the cosmos. All existences are instinct with the life of the one indivisible Spirit; all are supported in their personality, actions and forms by the eternal multiplicity of the one Purusha. We must be careful not to make the mistake of thinking that this supreme Nature is identical with the Jiva manifested in Time in the sense that there is nothing else or that it is only nature of becoming and not at all nature of being: that could not be the supreme nature of the Spirit. Even in Time it is something more; for otherwise the only truth of it in the cosmos would be nature of multiplicity and there would be no nature of unity in the world. That is not what the Gita says: it does not say that the supreme Prakriti is in its essence the

Jiva, *jīvātmikām*, but that it has become the Jiva, *jīvabhūtām*; and it is implied in that expression that behind its manifestation as the Jiva here it is originally something else and higher, it is nature of the one supreme spirit. The Jiva, as we are told later on, is the Lord, *īśvara*, but in his partial manifestation, *mamaivāṁśah*; even all the multiplicity of beings in the universe or in numberless universes could not be in their becoming the integral Divine, but only a partial manifestation of the infinite One. In them Brahman the one indivisible existence resides as if divided, *avibhaktam ca bhūteṣu vibhaktam iva ca sthitam*. The unity is the greater truth, the multiplicity is the lesser truth, though both are a truth and neither of them is an illusion.

It is by the unity of this spiritual nature that the world is sustained, *yayedam dhāryate jagat*, even as it is that from which it is born with all its becomings, *etad-yonīni bhūtāni sarvāṇi*, and that also which withdraws the whole world and its existences into itself in the hour of dissolution, *aham kṛtsnasya jagataḥ prabhavaḥ pralayas tathā*. But in the manifestation which is thus put forth in the Spirit, upheld in its action, withdrawn in its periodical rest from action, the Jiva is the basis of the multiple existence; it is the multiple soul, if we may so call it, or, if we prefer, the soul of the multiplicity we experience here. It is one always with the Divine in its being, different from it only in the power of its being,—different not in the sense that it is not at all the same power, but in this sense that it only supports the one power in a partial multiply individualised action. Therefore all things are initially, ultimately and in the principle of their continuance too the Spirit. The fundamental nature of all is nature of the Spirit, and only in their lower differential phenomena do they seem to be something else, to be nature of body, life, mind, reason, ego and the senses. But these are phenomenal derivatives, they are not the essential truth of our nature and our existence.

The supreme nature of spiritual being gives us then both an original truth and power of existence beyond cosmos and a first basis of spiritual truth for the manifestation in the cosmos. But where is the link between this supreme nature and the lower

phenomenal nature? On me, says Krishna, all this, all that is here — *sarvam idam*, the common phrase in the Upanishads for the totality of phenomena in the mobility of the universe — is strung like pearls upon a thread. But this is only an image which we cannot press very far; for the pearls are only kept in relation to each other by the thread and have no other oneness or relation with the pearl-string except their dependence on it for this mutual connection. Let us go then from the image to that which it images. It is the supreme nature of Spirit, the infinite conscious power of its being, self-conscious, all-conscious, all-wise, which maintains these phenomenal existences in relation to each other, penetrates them, abides in and supports them and weaves them into the system of its manifestation. This one supreme power manifests not only in all as the One, but in each as the Jiva, the individual spiritual presence; it manifests also as the essence of all quality of Nature. These are therefore the concealed spiritual powers behind all phenomena. This highest quality is not the working of the three gunas, which is phenomenon of quality and not its spiritual essence. It is rather the inherent, one, yet variable inner power of all these superficial variations. It is a fundamental truth of the Becoming, a truth that supports and gives a spiritual and divine significance to all its appearances. The workings of the gunas are only the superficial unstable becomings of reason, mind, sense, ego, life and matter, *sāttvikā bhāvā rājasās tāmasās ca*; but this is rather the essential stable original intimate power of the becoming, *svabhāva*. It is that which determines the primary law of all becoming and of each Jiva; it constitutes the essence and develops the movement of the nature. It is a principle in each creature that derives from and is immediately related to a transcendent divine Becoming, that of the Ishwara, *madbhāvah*. In this relation of the divine *bhāva* to the *svabhāva* and of the *svabhāva* to the superficial *bhāvāḥ*, of the divine Nature to the individual self-nature and of the self-nature in its pure and original quality to the phenomenal nature in all its mixed and confused play of qualities, we find the link between that supreme and this lower existence. The degraded powers and values of the inferior Prakriti derive from

the absolute powers and values of the supreme Shakti and must go back to them to find their own source and truth and the essential law of their operation and movement. So too the soul or Jiva involved here in the shackled, poor and inferior play of the phenomenal qualities, if he would escape from it and be divine and perfect, must by resort to the pure action of his essential quality of Swabhava go back to that higher law of his own being in which he can discover the will, the power, the dynamic principle, the highest working of his divine nature.

This is clear from the immediately subsequent passage in which the Gita gives a number of instances to show how the Divine in the power of his supreme nature manifests and acts within the animate and so-called inanimate existences of the universe. We may disentangle them from the loose and free order which the exigence of the poetical form imposes and put them in their proper philosophical series. First, the divine Power and Presence works within the five elemental conditions of matter. "I am taste in the waters, sound in ether, scent in earth, energy of light in fire," and, it may be added for more completeness, touch or contact in air. That is to say, the Divine himself in his Para Prakriti is the energy at the basis of the various sensory relations of which, according to the ancient Sankhya system, the ethereal, the radiant, electric and gaseous, the liquid and the other elemental conditions of matter are the physical medium. The five elemental conditions of matter are the quantitative or material element in the lower nature and are the basis of material forms. The five Tanmatras — taste, touch, scent, and the others — are the qualitative element. These Tanmatras are the subtle energies whose action puts the sensory consciousness in relation to the gross forms of matter, — they are the basis of all phenomenal knowledge. From the material point of view matter is the reality and the sensory relations are derivative; but from the spiritual point of view the truth is the opposite. Matter and the material media are themselves derivative powers and at bottom are only concrete ways or conditions in which the workings of the quality of Nature in things manifest themselves to the sensory consciousness of the Jiva. The one original and

eternal fact is the energy of Nature, the power and quality of being which so manifests itself to the soul through the senses. And what is essential in the senses, most spiritual, most subtle is itself stuff of that eternal quality and power. But energy or power of being in Nature is the Divine himself in his Prakriti; each sense in its purity is therefore that Prakriti, each sense is the Divine in his dynamic conscious force.

This we gather better from the other terms of the series. "I am the light of sun and moon, the manhood in man, the intelligence of the intelligent, the energy of the energetic, the strength of the strong, the ascetic force of those who do askesis, *tapasyā*." "I am life in all existences." In each case it is the energy of the essential quality on which each of these becomes depends for what it has become, that is given as the characteristic sign indicating the presence of the divine Power in their nature. Again, "I am pranava in all the Vedas," that is to say, the basic syllable OM, which is the foundation of all the potent creative sounds of the revealed word; OM is the one universal formulation of the energy of sound and speech, that which contains and sums up, synthetises and releases all the spiritual power and all the potentiality of Vak and Shabda and of which the other sounds, out of whose stuff words of speech are woven, are supposed to be the developed evolutions. That makes it quite clear. It is not the phenomenal developments of the senses or of life or of light, intelligence, energy, strength, manhood, ascetic force that are proper to the supreme Prakriti. It is the essential quality in its spiritual power that constitutes the Swabhava. It is the force of spirit so manifesting, it is the light of its consciousness and the power of its energy in things revealed in a pure original sign that is the self-nature. That force, light, power is the eternal seed from which all other things are the developments and derivations and variabilities and plastic circumstances. Therefore the Gita throws in as the most general statement in the series, "Know me to be the eternal seed of all existences, O son of Pritha." This eternal seed is the power of spiritual being, the conscious will in the being, the seed which, as is said elsewhere, the Divine casts into the great Brahman, into the supramental vastness,

and from that all are born into phenomenal existence. It is that seed of spirit which manifests itself as the essential quality in all becomings and constitutes their swabhava.

The practical distinction between this original power of essential quality and the phenomenal derivations of the lower nature, between the thing itself in its purity and the thing in its lower appearances, is indicated very clearly at the close of the series. "I am the strength of the strong devoid of desire and liking," stripped of all attachment to the phenomenal pleasure of things. "I am in beings the desire which is not contrary to their dharma." And as for the secondary subjective becomings of Nature, *bhāvāḥ* (states of mind, affections of desire, movements of passion, the reactions of the senses, the limited and dual play of reason, the turns of the feeling and moral sense), which are sattwic, rajasic and tamasic, as for the working of the three gunas, they are, says the Gita, not themselves the pure action of the supreme spiritual nature, but are derivations from it; "they are verily from me," *matta eva*, they have no other origin, "but I am not in them, it is they that are in me." Here is indeed a strong and yet subtle distinction. "I am" says the Divine "the essential light, strength, desire, power, intelligence, but these derivations from them I am not in my essence, nor am I in them, yet are they all of them from me and they are all in my being." It is then upon the basis of these statements that we have to view the transition of things from the higher to the lower and again from the lower back to the higher nature.

The first statement offers no difficulty. The strong man in spite of the divine nature of the principle of strength in him falls into subjection to desire and to attachment, stumbles into sin, struggles towards virtue. But that is because he descends in all his derivative action into the grasp of the three gunas and does not govern that action from above, from his essential divine nature. The divine nature of his strength is not affected by these derivations, it remains the same in its essence in spite of every obscuration and every lapse. The Divine is there in that nature and supports him by its strength through the confusions of his lower existence till he is able to recover the light, illumine wholly

his life with the true sun of his being and govern his will and its acts by the pure power of the divine will in his higher nature. But how can the Divine be desire, *kāma*? for this desire, this *kāma* has been declared to be our one great enemy who has to be slain. But that desire was the desire of the lower nature of the gunas which has its native point of origin in the rajasic being, *rajoguṇa-samudbhavah*; for this is what we usually mean when we speak of desire. This other, the spiritual, is a will not contrary to the dharma.

Is it meant that the spiritual *kāma* is a virtuous desire, ethical in its nature, a sattvic desire,— for virtue is always sattvic in its origin and motive force? But then there would be here an obvious contradiction,— since in the very next line all sattvic affections are declared to be not the Divine, but only lower derivations. Undoubtedly sin has to be abandoned if one is to get anywhere near the Godhead; but so too has virtue to be overpassed if we are to enter into the Divine Being. The sattvic nature has to be attained, but it has then to be exceeded. Ethical action is only a means of purification by which we can rise towards the divine nature, but that nature itself is lifted beyond the dualities,— and indeed there could otherwise be no pure divine presence or divine strength in the strong man who is subjected to the rajasic passions. Dharma in the spiritual sense is not morality or ethics. Dharma, says the Gita elsewhere, is action governed by the swabhava, the essential law of one's nature. And this swabhava is at its core the pure quality of the spirit in its inherent power of conscious will and in its characteristic force of action. The desire meant here is therefore the purposeful will of the Divine in us searching for and discovering not the pleasure of the lower Prakriti, but the Ananda of its own play and self-fulfilling; it is the desire of the divine Delight of existence unrolling its own conscious force of action in accordance with the law of the swabhava.

But what again is meant by saying that the Divine is not in the becomings, the forms and affections of the lower nature, even the sattvic, though they all are in his being? In a sense he must evidently be in them, otherwise they could not exist. But

what is meant is that the true and supreme spiritual nature of the Divine is not imprisoned there; they are only phenomena in his being created out of it by the action of the ego and the ignorance. The ignorance presents everything to us in an inverted vision and at least a partially falsified experience. We imagine that the soul is in the body, almost a result and derivation from the body; even we so feel it: but it is the body that is in the soul and a result and derivation from the soul. We think of the spirit as a small part of us—the Purusha who is no bigger than the thumb—in this great mass of material and mental phenomena: in reality, the latter for all its imposing appearance is a very small thing in the infinity of the being of the spirit. So it is here; in much the same sense these things are in the Divine rather than the Divine in these things. This lower nature of the three gunas which creates so false a view of things and imparts to them an inferior character is a Maya, a power of illusion, by which it is not meant that it is all non-existent or deals with unrealities, but that it bewilders our knowledge, creates false values, envelops us in ego, mentality, sense, physicality, limited intelligence and there conceals from us the supreme truth of our existence. This illusive Maya hides from us the Divine that we are, the infinite and imperishable spirit. “By these three kinds of becoming which are of the nature of the gunas, this whole world is bewildered and does not recognise Me supreme beyond them and imperishable.” If we could see that that Divine is the real truth of our existence, all else also would change to our vision, assume its true character and our life and action acquire the divine values and move in the law of the divine nature.

But why then, since the Divine is there after all and the divine nature at the root even of these bewildering derivations, since we are the Jiva and the Jiva is that, is this Maya so hard to overcome, *māyā duratyayā?* Because it is still the Maya of the Divine, *daivī hyeṣā guṇamayī mama māyā;* “this is my divine Maya of the gunas.” It is itself divine and a development from the nature of the Divine, but the Divine in the nature of the gods; it is *daivī*, of the godheads or, if you will, of the Godhead, but of the Godhead in its divided subjective and lower cosmic aspects,

sattwic, rajasic and tamasic. It is a cosmic veil which the God-head has spun around our understanding; Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra have woven its complex threads; the Shakti, the Supreme Nature is there at its base and is hidden in its every tissue. We have to work out this web in ourselves and turn through it and from it leaving it behind us when its use is finished, turn from the gods to the original and supreme Godhead in whom we shall discover at the same time the last sense of the gods and their works and the inmost spiritual verities of our own imperishable existence. "To Me who turn and come, they alone cross over beyond this Maya."

II

The Synthesis of Devotion and Knowledge¹

THE GITA is not a treatise of metaphysical philosophy, in spite of the great mass of metaphysical ideas which arise incidentally in its pages; for here no metaphysical truth is brought into expression solely for its own sake. It seeks the highest truth for the highest practical utility, not for intellectual or even for spiritual satisfaction, but as the truth that saves and opens to us the passage from our present mortal imperfection to an immortal perfection. Therefore after giving us in the first fourteen verses of this chapter a leading philosophical truth of which we stand in need, it hastens in the next sixteen verses to make an immediate application of it. It turns it into a first starting-point for the unification of works, knowledge and devotion,—for the preliminary synthesis of works and knowledge by themselves has already been accomplished.

We have before us three powers, the Purushottama as the supreme truth of that into which we have to grow, the Self and the Jiva. Or, as we may put it, there is the Supreme, there is the impersonal spirit, and there is the multiple soul, timeless foundation of our spiritual personality, the true and eternal individual, *mamaivāṁśah sanātanah*. All these three are divine, all three are the Divine. The supreme spiritual nature of being, the Para Prakriti free from any limitation by the conditioning Ignorance, is the nature of the Purushottama. In the impersonal Self there is the same divine nature, but here it is in its state of eternal rest, equilibrium, inactivity, nivritti. Finally, for activity, for pravritti, the Para Prakriti becomes the multiple spiritual personality, the Jiva. But the intrinsic activity of this supreme

¹ Gita, VII. 15-28.

Nature is always a spiritual, a divine working. It is force of the supreme divine Nature, it is the conscious will of the being of the Supreme that throws itself out in various essential and spiritual power of quality in the Jiva: that essential power is the swabhava of the Jiva. All act and becoming which proceed directly from this spiritual force are a divine becoming and a pure and spiritual action. Therefore it follows that in action the effort of the human individual must be to get back to his true spiritual personality and to make all his works flow from the power of its supernal Shakti, to develop action through the soul and the inmost intrinsic being, not through the mental idea and vital desire, and to turn all his acts into a pure outflowing of the will of the Supreme, all his life into a dynamic symbol of the Divine Nature.

But there is also this lower nature of the three gunas whose character is the character of the ignorance and whose action is the action of the ignorance, mixed, confused, perverted; it is the action of the lower personality, of the ego, of the natural and not of the spiritual individual. It is in order to recede from that false personality that we have to resort to the impersonal Self and make ourselves one with it. Then, freed so from the ego personality, we can find the relation of the true individual to the Purushottama. It is one with him in being, even though necessarily partial and determinative, because individual, in action and temporal manifestation of nature. Freed too from the lower nature we can realise the higher, the divine, the spiritual. Therefore to act from the soul does not mean to act from the desire soul; for that is not the high intrinsic being, but only the lower natural and superficial appearance. To act in accordance with the intrinsic nature, the swabhava, does not mean to act out of the passions of the ego, to enact with indifference or with desire sin and virtue according to the natural impulses and the unstable play of the gunas. Yielding to passion, an active or an inert indulgence of sin is no way either to the spiritual quietism of the highest impersonality or to the spiritual activity of the divine individual who is to be a channel for the will of the supreme Person, a direct power and visible becoming of the Purushottama.

The Gita has laid it down from the beginning that the very first precondition of the divine birth, the higher existence is the slaying of rajasic desire and its children, and that means the exclusion of sin. Sin is the working of the lower nature for the crude satisfaction of its own ignorant, dull or violent rajasic and tamasic propensities in revolt against any high self-control and self-mastery of the nature by the spirit. And in order to get rid of this crude compulsion of the being by the lower Prakriti in its inferior modes we must have recourse to the highest mode of that Prakriti, the sattwic, which is seeking always for a harmonious light of knowledge and for a right rule of action. The Purusha, the soul within us which assents in Nature to the varying impulse of the gunas, has to give its sanction to that sattwic impulse and that sattwic will and temperament in our being which seeks after such a rule. The sattwic will in our nature has to govern us and not the rajasic and tamasic will. This is the meaning of all high reason in action as of all true ethical culture; it is the law of Nature in us striving to evolve from her lower and disorderly to her higher and orderly action, to act not in passion and ignorance with the result of grief and unquiet, but in knowledge and enlightened will with the result of inner happiness, poise and peace. We cannot get beyond the three gunas, if we do not first develop within ourselves the rule of the highest guna, sattwa.

“The evil-doers attain not to me,” says the Purushottama, “souls bewildered, low in the human scale; for their knowledge is reft away from them by Maya and they resort to the nature of being of the Asura.” This bewilderment is a befooling of the soul in Nature by the deceptive ego. The evil-doer cannot attain to the Supreme because he is for ever trying to satisfy the idol ego on the lowest scale of human nature; his real God is this ego. His mind and will, hurried away in the activities of the Maya of the three gunas, are not instruments of the spirit, but willing slaves or self-deceived tools of his desires. He sees this lower nature only and not his supreme self and highest being or the Godhead within himself and in the world: he explains all existence to his will in the terms of ego and desire and serves only ego and desire. To serve ego and desire without aspiration

to a higher nature and a higher law is to have the mind and the temperament of the Asura. A first necessary step upward is to aspire to a higher nature and a higher law, to obey a better rule than the rule of desire, to perceive and worship a nobler godhead than the ego or than any magnified image of the ego, to become a right thinker and a right doer. This too is not in itself enough; for even the sattvic man is subject to the bewilderment of the gunas, because he is still governed by wish and disliking, *icchā-dvesa*. He moves within the circle of the forms of Nature and has not the highest, not the transcendental and integral knowledge. Still by the constant upward aspiration in his ethical aim he in the end gets rid of the obscuration of sin which is the obscuration of rajasic desire and passion and acquires a purified nature capable of deliverance from the rule of the triple Maya. By virtue alone man cannot attain to the highest, but by virtue² he can develop a first capacity for attaining to it, *adhikāra*. For the crude rajasic or the dull tamasic ego is difficult to shake off and put below us; the sattvic ego is less difficult and at last, when it sufficiently subtilises and enlightens itself, becomes even easy to transcend, transmute or annihilate.

Man, therefore, has first of all to become ethical, *sukṛti*, and then to rise to heights beyond any mere ethical rule of living, to the light, largeness and power of the spiritual nature, where he gets beyond the grasp of the dualities and its delusion, *dvandva-moha*. There he no longer seeks his personal good or pleasure or shuns his personal suffering or pain, for by these things he is no longer affected, nor says any longer, "I am virtuous," "I am sinful," but acts in his own high spiritual nature by the will of the Divine for the universal good. We have already seen that for this end self-knowledge, equality, impersonality are the first necessities, and that that is the way of reconciliation between knowledge and works, between spirituality and activity in the world, between the ever immobile quietism of the timeless self and the eternal play of the pragmatic energy of Nature. But

² Obviously, by the true inner *pūnya*, a sattvic clarity in thought, feeling, temperament, motive and conduct, not a merely conventional or social virtue.

the Gita now lays down another and greater necessity for the Karmayogin who has unified his Yoga of works with the Yoga of knowledge. Not knowledge and works alone are demanded of him now, but *bhakti* also, devotion to the Divine, love and adoration and the soul's desire of the Highest. This demand, not expressly made until now, had yet been prepared when the Teacher laid down as the necessary turn of his Yoga the conversion of all works into a sacrifice to the Lord of our being and fixed as its culmination the giving up of all works, not only into our impersonal Self, but through impersonality into the Being from whom all our will and power originate. What was there implied is now brought out and we begin to see more fully the Gita's purpose.

We have now set before us three interdependent movements of our release out of the normal nature and our growth into the divine and spiritual being. "By the delusion of the dualities which arises from wish and disliking, all existences in the creation are led into bewilderment," says the Gita. That is the ignorance, the egoism which fails to see and lay hold on the Divine everywhere, because it sees only the dualities of Nature and is constantly occupied with its own separate personality and its seekings and shrinkings. For escape from this circle the first necessity in our works is to get clear of the sin of the vital ego, the fire of passion, the tumult of desire of the rajasic nature, and this has to be done by the steady sattwic impulse of the ethical being. When that is done, *yeshāṁ tvantagataṁ pāpam janānāṁ puṇyakarmanām*, — or rather as it is being done, for after a certain point all growth in the sattwic nature brings an increasing capacity for a high quietude, equality and transcendence, — it is necessary to rise above the dualities and to become impersonal, equal, one self with the Immutable, one self with all existences. This process of growing into the spirit completes our purification. But while this is being done, while the soul is enlarging into self-knowledge, it has also to increase in devotion. For it has not only to act in a large spirit of equality, but to do also sacrifice to the Lord, to that Godhead in all beings which it does not yet know perfectly, but which it will be able so to know, integrally, *samagramī mām*,

when it has firmly the vision of the one self everywhere and in all existences. Equality and vision of unity once perfectly gained, *te dvandva-moha-nirmuktāḥ*, a supreme bhakti, an all-embracing devotion to the Divine, becomes the whole and the sole law of the being. All other law of conduct merges into that surrender, *sarva-dharmāṇ parityajya*. The soul then becomes firm in this bhakti and in the vow of self-consecration of all its being, knowledge, works; for it has now for its sure base, its absolute foundation of existence and action the perfect, the integral, the unifying knowledge of the all-originating Godhead, *te bhajante māṁ drḍha-vratāḥ*.

From the ordinary point of view any return towards bhakti or continuation of the heart's activities after knowledge and impersonality have been gained, might seem to be a relapse. For in bhakti there is always the element, the foundation even of personality, since its motive-power is the love and adoration of the individual soul, the Jiva, turned towards the supreme and universal Being. But from the standpoint of the Gita, where the aim is not inaction and immersing in the eternal Impersonal, but a union with the Purushottama through the integrality of our being, this objection cannot at all intervene. In this Yoga the soul escapes indeed its lower personality by the sense of its impersonal and immutable self-being; but it still acts and all action belongs to the multiple soul in the mutability of Nature. If we do not bring in as a corrective to an excessive quietism the idea of sacrifice to the Highest, we have to regard this element of action as something not at all ourselves, some remnant of the play of the gunas without any divine reality behind it, a last dissolving form of ego, of I-ness, a continued impetus of the lower Nature for which we are not responsible since our knowledge rejects it and aims at escape from it into pure inaction. But by combining the tranquil impersonality of the one self with the stress of the works of Nature done as a sacrifice to the Lord, we by this double key escape from the lower egoistic personality and grow into the purity of our true spiritual person. Then are we no longer the bound and ignorant ego in the lower, but the free Jiva in the supreme Nature. Then we no longer live in the

knowledge of the one immutable and impersonal self and this mutable multiple Nature as two opposite entities, but rise to the very embrace of the Purushottama discovered simultaneously through both of these powers of our being. All three are the spirit, and the two which are apparent opposites prove to be only confronting faces of the third which is the highest. "There is the immutable and impersonal spiritual being (Purusha)," says Krishna later on, "and there is the mutable and personal spiritual being. But there is too another Highest (*uttama puruṣa*) called the supreme self, Paramatman, he who has entered into this whole world and upbears it, the Lord, the imperishable. I am this Purushottama who am beyond the mutable and am greater and higher even than the immutable. He who has knowledge of me as the Purushottama, adores me (has bhakti for me, *bhajati*), with all-knowledge and in every way of his natural being." And it is this bhakti of an integral knowledge and integral self-giving which the Gita now begins to develop.

For note that it is bhakti with knowledge which the Gita demands from the disciple and it regards all other forms of devotion as good in themselves but still inferior; they may do well by the way, but they are not the thing at which it aims in the soul's culmination. Among those who have put away the sin of the rajasic egoism and are moving towards the Divine, the Gita distinguishes between four kinds of *bhaktas*. There are those who turn to him as a refuge from sorrow and suffering in the world, *ārta*. There are those who seek him as the giver of good in the world, *arthārthī*. There are those who come to him in the desire for knowledge, *jijñāsu*. And lastly there are those who adore him with knowledge, *jñāni*. All are approved by the Gita, but only on the last does it lay the seal of its complete sanction. All these movements without exception are high and good, *udārāḥ sarva evaite*, but the bhakti with knowledge excels them all, *viśisyate*. We may say that these forms are successively the bhakti of the vital-emotional and affective nature,³ that of the

³ The later *bhakti* of ecstatic love is at its roots psychic in nature; it is vital-emotional only in its inferior forms or in some of its more outward manifestations.

practical and dynamic nature, that of the reasoning intellectual nature, and that of the highest intuitive being which takes up all the rest of the nature into unity with the Divine. Practically, however, the others may be regarded as preparatory movements. For the Gita itself here says that it is only at the end of many existences that one can, after possession of the integral knowledge and after working that out in oneself through many lives, attain at the long last to the Transcendent. For the knowledge of the Divine as all things that are is difficult to attain and rare on earth is the great soul, *mahātmā*, who is capable of fully so seeing him and of entering into him with his whole being, in every way of his nature, by the wide power of this all-embracing knowledge, *sarvavit sarvabhāvena*.

It may be asked how is that devotion high and noble, *udāra*, which seeks God only for the worldly boons he can give or as a refuge in sorrow and suffering, and not the Divine for its own sake? Do not egoism, weakness, desire reign in such an adoration and does it not belong to the lower nature? Moreover, where there is not knowledge, the devotee does not approach the Divine in his integral all-embracing truth, *vāsudevah sarvam iti*, but constructs imperfect names and images of the Godhead which are only reflections of his own need, temperament and nature, and he worships them to help or appease his natural longings. He constructs for the Godhead the name and form of Indra or Agni, of Vishnu or Shiva, of a divinised Christ or Buddha, or else some composite of natural qualities, an indulgent God of love and mercy, or a severe God of righteousness and justice, or an awe-inspiring God of wrath and terror and flaming punishments, or some amalgam of any of these, and to that he raises his altars without and in his heart and mind and falls down before it to demand from it worldly good and joy or healing of his wounds or a sectarian sanction for an erring, dogmatic, intellectual, intolerant knowledge. All this up to a certain point is true enough. Very rare is the great soul who knows that Vasudeva the omnipresent Being is all that is, *vāsudevah sarvam iti sa mahātmā sudurlabhalah*. Men are led away by various outer desires which take from them the working

of the inner knowledge, *kāmais tais tair hṛtajñānāḥ*. Ignorant, they resort to other godheads, imperfect forms of the deity which correspond to their desire, *prapadyante 'nyadevataḥ*. Limited, they set up this or that rule and cult, *tam tam niyamam āsthāya*, which satisfies the need of their nature. And in all this it is a compelling personal determination, it is this narrow need of their own nature that they follow and take for the highest truth, — incapable yet of the infinite and its largeness. The Godhead in these forms gives them their desires if their faith is whole; but these fruits and gratifications are temporary and it is a petty intelligence and unformed reason which makes the pursuit of them its principle of religion and life. And so far as there is a spiritual attainment by this way, it is only to the gods; it is only the Divine in formations of mutable nature and as the giver of her results that they realise. But those who adore the transcendent and integral Godhead embrace all this and transform it all, exalt the gods to their highest, Nature to her summits, and go beyond them to the very Godhead, realise and attain to the Transcendent. *Devān deva-yajo yānti mad-bhaktā yānti mām api.*

Still the supreme Godhead does not at all reject these devotees because of their imperfect vision. For the Divine in his supreme transcendent being, unborn, imminable and superior to all these partial manifestations, cannot be easily known to any living creature. He is self-enveloped in this immense cloak of Maya, that Maya of his Yoga, by which he is one with the world and yet beyond it, immanent but hidden, seated in all hearts but not revealed to any and every being. Man in Nature thinks that these manifestations in Nature are all the Divine, when they are only his works and his powers and his veils. He knows all past and all present and future existences, but him none yet knoweth. If then after thus bewildering them with his workings in Nature, he were not to meet them in these at all, there would be no divine hope for man or for any soul in Maya. Therefore according to their nature, as they approach him, he accepts their bhakti and answers to it with the reply of divine love and compassion. These forms are after all a certain kind of

manifestation through which the imperfect human intelligence can touch him, these desires are first means by which our souls turn towards him: nor is any devotion worthless or ineffective, whatever its limitations. It has the one grand necessity, faith. "Whatever form of me any devotee with faith desires to worship, I make that faith of his firm and undeviating." By the force of that faith in his cult and worship he gets his desire and the spiritual realisation for which he is at the moment fitted. By seeking all his good from the Divine, he shall come in the end to seek in the Divine all his good. By depending for his joys on the Divine, he shall learn to fix in the Divine all his joy. By knowing the Divine in his forms and qualities, he shall come to know him as the All and the Transcendent who is the source of all things.⁴

Thus by spiritual development devotion becomes one with knowledge. The Jiva comes to delight in the one Godhead,—in the Divine known as all being and consciousness and delight and as all things and beings and happenings, known in Nature, known in the self, known for that which exceeds self and Nature. He is ever in constant union with him, *nityayukta*; his whole life and being are an eternal Yoga with the Transcendent than whom there is nothing higher, with the Universal besides whom there is none else and nothing else. On him is concentrated all his bhakti, *ekabhaktih*, not on any partial godhead, rule or cult. This single devotion is his whole law of living and he has gone beyond all creeds of religious belief, rules of conduct, personal aims of life. He has no griefs to be healed, for he is in possession of the All-blissful. He has no desires to hunger after, for he possesses the highest and the All and is close to the All-Power that brings all fulfilment. He has no doubts or baffled seekings left, for all knowledge streams upon him from the Light in which he lives. He loves perfectly the Divine and is his beloved; for as he takes joy in the Divine, so too the Divine takes joy in him. This is

⁴ There is a place also for the three lesser seekings even after the highest attainment, but transformed, not narrowly personal,—for there can still be a passion for the removal of sorrow and evil and ignorance and for the increasing evolution and integral manifestation of the supreme good, power, joy and knowledge in this phenomenal Nature.

the God-lover who has the knowledge, *jñānī bhakta*. And this knower, says the Godhead in the Gita, is my self; the others seize only motives and aspects in Nature, but he the very self-being and all-being of the Purushottama with which he is in union. His is the divine birth in the supreme Nature, integral in being, completed in will, absolute in love, perfected in knowledge. In him the Jiva's cosmic existence is justified because it has exceeded itself and so found its own whole and highest truth of being.

III

The Supreme Divine¹

ALREADY what has been said in the seventh chapter provides us with the starting-point of our new and fuller position and fixes it with sufficient precision. Substantially it comes to this that we are to move inwardly towards a greater consciousness and a supreme existence, not by a total exclusion of our cosmic nature, but by a higher, a spiritual fulfilment of all that we now essentially are. Only there is to be a change from our mortal imperfection to a divine perfection of being. The first idea on which this possibility is founded, is the conception of the individual soul in man as in its eternal essence and its original power a ray of the supreme Soul and Godhead, here a veiled manifestation of him, a being of his being, a consciousness of his consciousness, a nature of his nature, but in the obscurity of this mental and physical existence self-forgetful of its source, its reality, its true character. The second idea is that of the double nature of the Soul in manifestation, — the original nature in which it is one with its own true spiritual being, and the derived in which it is subject to the confusions of egoism and ignorance. The latter has to be cast away and the spiritual has to be inwardly recovered, fulfilled, made dynamic and active. Through an inner self-fulfilment, the opening of a new status, our birth into a new power, we return to the nature of the Spirit and re-become a portion of the Godhead from whom we have descended into this mortal figure of being.

There is here at once a departure from the general contemporary mind of Indian thought, a less negating attitude, a greater affirmation. In place of its obsessing idea of a self-annulment of Nature we get the glimpse of an ampler solution, the principle of a self-fulfilment in divine Nature. There is, even, at least

¹ Gita, VII. 29-30, VIII.

a foreshadowing of the later developments of the religions of Bhakti. Our first experience of what is beyond our normal status, concealed behind the egoistic being in which we live, is still for the Gita the calm of a vast impersonal immutable self in whose equality and oneness we lose our petty egoistic personality and cast off in its tranquil purity all our narrow motives of desire and passion. But our second completer vision reveals to us a living Infinite, a divine immeasurable Being from whom all that we are proceeds and to which all that we are belongs, self and nature, world and spirit. When we are one with him in self and spirit, we do not lose ourselves, but rather recover our true selves in him poised in the supremacy of this Infinite. And this is done at one and the same time by three simultaneous movements,—an integral self-finding through works founded in his and our spiritual nature, an integral self-becoming through knowledge of the Divine Being in whom all exists and who is all, and—most sovereign and decisive movement of all—an integral self-giving through love and devotion of our whole being to this All and this Supreme, attracted to the Master of our works, to the Inhabitant of our hearts, to the continent of all our conscious existence. To him who is the source of all that we are, we give all that we are. Our persistent consecration turns into knowledge of him all our knowing and into light of his power all our action. The passion of love in our self-giving carries us up to him and opens the mystery of his deepest heart of being. Love completes the triple cord of the sacrifice, perfects the triune key of the highest secret, *uttamam rahasyam*.

An integral knowledge in our self-giving is the first condition of its effective force. And therefore we have first of all to know this Purusha in all the powers and principles of his divine existence, *tattvatah*, in the whole harmony of it, in its eternal essence and living process. But to the ancient thought all the value of this knowledge, *tattvajñāna*, lay in its power for release out of our mortal birth into the immortality of a supreme existence. The Gita therefore proceeds next to show how this liberation too in the highest degree is a final outcome of its own movement of spiritual self-fulfilment. The knowledge of the Purushottama,

it says in effect, is the perfect knowledge of the Brahman. Those who have resort to Me as their refuge, *mām āśritya*, their divine light, their deliverer, receiver and harbourer of their souls, those who turn to Me in their spiritual effort towards release from age and death, from the mortal being and its limitations, says Krishna, come to know that Brahman and all the integrality of the spiritual nature and the entirety of Karma. And because they know Me and know at the same time the material and the divine nature of being and the truth of the Master of sacrifice, they keep knowledge of Me also in the critical moment of their departure from physical existence and have at that moment their whole consciousness in union with Me. Therefore they attain to Me. No longer bound to the mortal existence, they reach the very highest status of the Divine quite as effectively as those who lose their separate personality in the impersonal and immutable Brahman. Thus the Gita closes this important and decisive seventh chapter.

Here we have certain expressions which give us in their brief sum the chief essential truths of the manifestation of the supreme Divine in the cosmos. All the originative and effective aspects of it are there, all that concerns the soul in its return to integral self-knowledge. First there is that Brahman, *tad brahma*; *adhyātma*, second, the principle of the self in Nature; *adhibhūta* and *adhidaiva* next, the objective phenomenon and subjective phenomenon of being; *adhiyajña* last, the secret of the cosmic principle of works and sacrifice. I, the Purushottama (*mām viduh*), says in effect Krishna, I who am above all these things, must yet be sought and known through all together and by means of their relations,—that is the only complete way for the human consciousness which is seeking its path back towards Me. But these terms in themselves are not at first quite clear or at least they are open to different interpretations, they have to be made precise in their connotation, and Arjuna the disciple at once asks for their elucidation. Krishna answers very briefly,—nowhere does the Gita linger very long upon any purely metaphysical explanation; it gives only so much and in such a way as will make their truth just seizable for the soul to proceed on to

experience. By that Brahman, a phrase which in the Upanishads is more than once used for the self-existent as opposed to the phenomenal being, the Gita intends, it appears, the immutable self-existence which is the highest self-expression of the Divine and on whose unalterable eternity all the rest, all that moves and evolves, is founded, *akṣaram paramam*. By *adhyātma* it means *svabhāva*, the spiritual way and law of being of the soul in the supreme Nature. Karma, it says, is the name given to the creative impulse and energy, *visargah*, which looses out things from this first essential self-becoming, this Swabhava, and effects, creates, works out under its influence the cosmic becoming of existences in Prakriti. By *adhibhūta* is to be understood all the result of mutable becoming, *kṣaro bhāvah*. By *adhidaiva* is intended the Purusha, the soul in Nature, the subjective being who observes and enjoys as the object of his consciousness all that is this mutable becoming of his essential existence worked out here by Karma in Nature. By *adhiyajña*, the Lord of works and sacrifice, I mean, says Krishna, myself, the Divine, the Godhead, the Purushottama here secret in the body of all these embodied existences. All that is, therefore, falls within this formula.

The Gita immediately proceeds from this brief statement to work out the idea of the final release by knowledge which it has suggested in the last verse of the preceding chapter. It will return indeed upon its thought hereafter to give such ulterior light as is needed for action and inner realisation, and we may wait till then for a fuller knowledge of all that these terms indicate. But before we proceed farther, it is necessary to bring out as much of the connection between these things as we are justified in understanding from this passage itself and from what has gone before. For here is indicated the Gita's idea of the process of the cosmos. First there is the Brahman, the highest immutable self-existent being which all existences are behind the play of cosmic Nature in time and space and causality, *desa-kāla-nimitta*. For by that self-existence alone time and space and causality are able to exist, and without that unchanging support omnipresent, yet indivisible they could not proceed to their divisions and results and measures. But of itself the immutable

Brahman does nothing, causes nothing, determines nothing; it is impartial, equal, all-supporting, but does not select or originate. What then originates, what determines, what gives the divine impulsion of the Supreme? what is it that governs Karma and actively unrolls the cosmic becoming in Time out of the eternal being? It is Nature as Swabhava. The Supreme, the Godhead, the Purushottama is there and supports on his eternal immutability the action of his higher spiritual Shakti. He displays the divine Being, Consciousness, Will or Power, *yayedam dhāryate jagat*: that is the Para Prakriti. The self-awareness of the Spirit in this supreme Nature perceives in the light of self-knowledge the dynamic idea, the authentic truth of whatever he separates in his own being and expresses it in the Swabhava, the spiritual nature of the Jiva. The inherent truth and principle of the self of each Jiva, that which works itself out in manifestation, the essential divine nature in all which remains constant behind all conversions, perversions, reverersions, that is the Swabhava. All that is in the Swabhava is loosed out into cosmic Nature for her to do what she can with it under the inner eye of the Purushottama. Out of the constant *svabhāva*, out of the essential nature and self-principle of being of each becoming, she creates the varied mutations by which she strives to express it, unrolls all her changes in name and form, in time and space and those successions of condition developed one out of the other in time and space which we call causality, *nimitta*.

All this bringing out and continual change from state to state is Karma, is action of Nature, is the energy of Prakriti, the worker, the goddess of processes. It is first a loosing forth of the *svabhāva* into its creative action, *visargah*. The creation is of existences in the becoming, *bhūta-karāḥ*, and of all that they subjectively or otherwise become, *bhāva-karāḥ*. All taken together, it is a constant birth of things in Time, *udbhava*, of which the creative energy of Karma is the principle. All this mutable becoming emerges by a combination of the powers and energies of Nature, *adhibhūta*, which constitutes the world and is the object of the soul's consciousness. In it all the soul is the enjoying and observing Deity in Nature; the divine powers of

mind and will and sense, all the powers of its conscious being by which it reflects this working of Prakriti are its godheads, *adhidaiva*. This soul in Nature is therefore the *ksara puruṣa*, it is the mutable soul, the eternal activity of the Godhead: the same soul in the Brahman drawn back from her is the *akṣara puruṣa*, the immutable self, the eternal silence of the Godhead. But in the form and body of the mutable being inhabits the supreme Godhead. Possessing at once the calm of the immutable existence and the enjoyment of the mutable action there dwells in man the Purushottama. He is not only remote from us in some supreme status beyond, but he is here too in the body of every being, in the heart of man and in Nature. There he receives the works of Nature as a sacrifice and awaits the conscious self-giving of the human soul: but always even in the human creature's ignorance and egoism he is the Lord of his swabhava and the Master of all his works, who presides over the law of Prakriti and Karma. From him the soul came forth into the play of Nature's mutations; to him the soul returns through immutable self-existence to the highest status of the Divine, *param dhāma*.

Man, born into the world, revolves between world and world in the action of Prakriti and Karma. Purusha in Prakriti is his formula: what the soul in him thinks, contemplates and acts, that always he becomes. All that he had been, determined his present birth; and all that he is, thinks, does in this life up to the moment of his death, determines what he will become in the worlds beyond and in lives yet to be. If birth is a becoming, death also is a becoming, not by any means a cessation. The body is abandoned, but the soul goes on its way, *tyaktvā kalevaram*. Much then depends on what he is at the critical moment of his departure. For whatever form of becoming his consciousness is fixed on at the time of death and has been full of that always in his mind and thought before death, to that form he must attain, since the Prakriti by Karma works out the soul's thoughts and energies and that is in real fact her whole business. Therefore, if the soul in the human being desires to attain to the status of the Purushottama, there are two necessities, two conditions which must be satisfied before that can be possible. He must have

moulded towards that ideal his whole inner life in his earthly living; and he must be faithful to his aspiration and will in his departing. "Whoever leaves his body and departs" says Krishna "remembering me at his time of end, comes to my *bhāva*," that of the Purushottama, my status of being. He is united with the original being of the Divine and that is the ultimate becoming of the soul, *paro bhāvah*, the last result of Karma in its return upon itself and towards its source. The soul which has followed the play of cosmic evolution that veils here its essential spiritual nature, its original form of becoming, *svabhāva*, and has passed through all these other ways of becoming of its consciousness which are only its phenomena, *tam tam bhāvam*, returns to that essential nature and, finding through this return its true self and spirit, comes to the original status of being which is from the point of view of the return a highest becoming, *mad-bhāvam*. In a certain sense we may say that it becomes God, since it unites itself with nature of the Divine in a last transformation of its own phenomenal nature and existence.

The Gita here lays a great stress on the thought and state of mind at the time of death, a stress which will with difficulty be understood if we do not recognise what may be called the self-creative power of the consciousness. What the thought, the inner regard, the faith, *śraddhā*, settles itself upon with a complete and definite insistence, into that our inner being tends to change. This tendency becomes a decisive force when we go to those higher spiritual and self-evolved experiences which are less dependent on external things than is our ordinary psychology, enslaved as that is to outward Nature. There we can see ourselves steadily becoming that on which we keep our minds fixed and to which we constantly aspire. Therefore there any lapse of the thought, any infidelity of the memory means always a retardation of the change or some fall in its process and a going back towards what we were before,—at least so long as we have not substantially and irrevocably fixed our new becoming. When we have done that, when we have made it normal to our experience, the memory of it remains self-existently because that now is the natural form of our consciousness. In the critical moment of passing

from the mortal plane of living, the importance of our then state of consciousness becomes evident. But it is not a death-bed remembrance at variance with or insufficiently prepared by the whole tenor of our life and our past subjectivity that can have this saving power. The thought of the Gita here is not on a par with the indulgences and facilities of popular religion; it has nothing in common with the crude fancies that make the absolution and last unction of the priest, an edifying "Christian" death after an unedifying profane life or the precaution or accident of a death in sacred Benares or holy Ganges a sufficient machinery of salvation. The divine subjective becoming on which the mind has to be fixed firmly in the moment of the physical death, *yam smaran bhāvam tyajati ante kalevaram*, must have been one into which the soul was at each moment growing inwardly during the physical life, *sadā tad-bhāva-bhāvitah*. "Therefore," says the divine Teacher, "at all times remember me and fight; for if thy mind and thy understanding are always fixed on and given up to Me, *mayi arpita-mano-buddhiḥ*, to Me thou shalt surely come. For it is by thinking always of him with a consciousness united with him in an undeviating Yoga of constant practice that one comes to the divine and supreme Purusha."

We arrive here at the first description of this supreme Purusha,—the Godhead who is even more and greater than the Immutable and to whom the Gita gives subsequently the name of Purushottama. He too in his timeless eternity is immutable and far beyond all this manifestation and here in Time there dawn on us only faint glimpses of his being conveyed through many varied symbols and disguises, *avyakto akṣarāḥ*. Still he is not merely a featureless or indiscernible existence, *anirdeśyam*; or he is indiscernible only because he is subtler than the last subtlety of which the mind is aware and because the form of the Divine is beyond our thought, *anor anyāṁsam acintya-rūpam*. This supreme Soul and Self is the Seer, the Ancient of Days and in his eternal self-vision and wisdom the Master and Ruler of all existence who sets in their place in his being all things that are, *kavīm purāṇam anuśāsitāram sarvasya dhātāram*. This supreme Soul is the immutable self-existent Brahman of whom the Veda-

knowers speak, and this is that into which the doers of askesis enter when they have passed beyond the affections of the mind of mortality and for the desire of which they practise the control of the bodily passions.² That eternal reality is the highest step, place, foothold of being (*padam*); therefore is it the supreme goal of the soul's movement in Time, itself no movement but a status original, semipiternal and supreme, *param sthānam ādyam*.

The Gita describes the last state of the mind of the Yогin in which he passes from life through death to this supreme divine existence. A motionless mind, a soul armed with the strength of Yoga, a union with God in bhakti,—the union by love is not here superseded by the featureless unification through knowledge, it remains to the end a part of the supreme force of the Yoga,—and the life-force entirely drawn up and set between the brows in the seat of mystic vision. All the doors of the sense are closed, the mind is shut in into the heart, the life-force taken up out of its diffused movement into the head, the intelligence concentrated in the utterance of the sacred syllable OM and its conceptional thought in the remembrance of the supreme Godhead, *mām anusmaran*. That is the established Yogic way of going, a last offering up of the whole being to the Eternal, the Transcendent. But still that is only a process; the essential condition is the constant undeviating memory of the Divine in life, even in action and battle—*mām anusmara yudhya ca*—and the turning of the whole act of living into an uninterrupted Yoga, *nitya-yoga*. Whoever does that, finds Me easy to attain, says the Godhead; he is the great soul who reaches the supreme perfection.

The condition to which the soul arrives when it thus departs from life is supracosmic. The highest heavens of the cosmic plan are subject to a return to rebirth; but there is no rebirth imposed on the soul that departs to the Purushottama. Therefore whatever fruit can be had from the aspiration of knowledge to the indefinable Brahman, is acquired also by this other and comprehensive aspiration through knowledge, works and love to the

² The language here is taken bodily from the Upanishads.

self-existent Godhead who is the Master of works and the Friend of mankind and of all beings. To know him so and so to seek him does not bind to rebirth or to the chain of Karma; the soul can satisfy its desire to escape permanently from the transient and painful condition of our mortal being. And the Gita here, in order to make more precise to the mind this circling round of births and the escape from it, adopts the ancient theory of the cosmic cycles which became a fixed part of Indian cosmological notions. There is an eternal cycle of alternating periods of cosmic manifestation and non-manifestation, each period called respectively a day and a night of the creator Brahma, each of equal length in Time, the long aeon of his working which endures for a thousand ages, the long aeon of his sleep of another thousand silent ages. At the coming of the Day all manifestations are born into being out of the unmanifest, at the coming of the Night all vanish or are dissolved into it. Thus all these existences alternate helplessly in the cycle of becoming and non-becoming; they come into the becoming again and again, *bhūtvā bhūtvā*, and they go back constantly into the unmanifest. But this unmanifest is not the original divinity of the Being; there is another status of his existence, *bhāvo 'nyo*, a supracosmic unmanifest beyond this cosmic non-manifestation, which is eternally self-seated, is not an opposite of this cosmic status of manifestation but far above and unlike it, changeless, eternal, not forced to perish with the perishing of all these existences. "He is called the unmanifest immutable, him they speak of as the supreme soul and status, and those who attain to him return not; that is my supreme place of being, *paramāṁ dhāma*." For the soul attaining to it has escaped out of the cycle of cosmic manifestation and non-manifestation.

Whether we entertain or we dismiss this cosmological notion,—which depends on the value we are inclined to assign to the knowledge of "the knowers of day and night,"—the important thing is the turn the Gita gives to it. One might easily imagine that this eternally unmanifested Being whose status seems to have nothing to do with the manifestation or the non-manifestation, must be the ever undefined and indefinable Absolute, and the proper way to reach him is to get rid of all

that we have become in the manifestation, not to carry up to it our whole inner consciousness in a combined concentration of the mind's knowledge, the heart's love, the Yogic will, the vital life-force. Especially, bhakti seems inapplicable to the Absolute who is void of every relation, *avyavahārya*. "But" insists the Gita,—although this condition is supracosmic and although it is eternally unmanifest,—still "that supreme Purusha has to be won by a bhakti which turns to him alone in whom all beings exist and by whom all this world has been extended in space." In other words, the supreme Purusha is not an entirely relationless Absolute aloof from our illusions, but he is the Seer, Creator and Ruler of the worlds, *kavim anuśāsitāram, dhātāram*, and it is by knowing and by loving Him as the One and the All, *vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti*, that we ought by a union with him of our whole conscious being in all things, all energies, all actions to seek the supreme consummation, the perfect perfection, the absolute release.

Then there comes a more curious thought which the Gita has adopted from the mystics of the early Vedanta. It gives the different times at which the Yогin has to leave his body according as he wills to seek rebirth or to avoid it. Fire and light and smoke or mist, the day and the night, the bright fortnight of the lunar month and the dark, the northern solstice and the southern, these are the opposites. By the first in each pair the knowers of the Brahman go to the Brahman; but by the second the Yогin reaches the "lunar light" and returns subsequently to human birth. These are the bright and the dark paths, called the path of the gods and the path of the fathers in the Upanishads, and the Yогin who knows them is not misled into any error. Whatever psycho-physical fact or else symbolism there may be behind this notion,³—it comes down from the age of the mystics who saw in every physical thing an effective symbol of the psychological

³ Yogic experience shows in fact that there is a real psycho-physical truth, not indeed absolute in its application, behind this idea, viz., that in the inner struggle between the powers of the Light and the powers of the Darkness, the former tend to have a natural prevalence in the bright periods of the day or the year, the latter in the dark periods, and this balance may last until the fundamental victory is won.

and who traced everywhere an interaction and a sort of identity of the outward with the inward, light and knowledge, the fiery principle and the spiritual energy,— we need observe only the turn by which the Gita closes the passage: "Therefore at all times be in Yoga."

For that is after all the essential, to make the whole being one with the Divine, so entirely and in all ways one as to be naturally and constantly fixed in union, and thus to make all living, not only thought and meditation, but action, labour, battle, a remembering of God. "Remember me and fight," means not to lose the ever-present thought of the Eternal for one single moment in the clash of the temporal which normally absorbs our minds, and that seems sufficiently difficult, almost impossible. It is entirely possible indeed only if the other conditions are satisfied. If we have become in our consciousness one self with all, one self which is always to our thought the Divine, and even our eyes and our other senses see and sense the Divine Being everywhere so that it is impossible for us at any time at all to feel or think of anything as that merely which the unenlightened sense perceives, but only as the Godhead at once concealed and manifested in that form, and if our will is one in consciousness with a supreme will and every act of will, of mind, of body is felt to come from it, to be its movement, instinct with it or identical, then what the Gita demands can be integrally done. The remembrance of the Divine Being becomes no longer an intermittent act of the mind, but the natural condition of our activities and in a way the very substance of the consciousness. The Jiva has become possessed of its right and natural, its spiritual relation to the Purushottama and all our life is a Yoga, an accomplished and yet an eternally self-accomplishing oneness.

IV

The Secret of Secrets

ALL THE truth that has developed itself at this length step by step, each bringing forward a fresh aspect of the integral knowledge and founding on it some result of spiritual state and action, has now to take a turn of immense importance. The Teacher therefore takes care first to draw attention to the decisive character of what he is about to say, so that the mind of Arjuna may be awakened and attentive. For he is going to open his mind to the knowledge and sight of the integral Divinity and lead up to the vision of the eleventh book, by which the warrior of Kurukshetra becomes conscious of the author and upholder of his being and action and mission, the Godhead in man and the world, whom nothing in man and the world limits or binds, because all proceeds from him, is a movement in his infinite being, continues and is supported by his will, is justified in his divine self-knowledge, has him always for its origin, substance and end. Arjuna is to become aware of himself as existing only in God and as acting only by the power within him, his workings only an instrumentality of the divine action, his egoistic consciousness only a veil and to his ignorance a misrepresentation of the real being within him which is an immortal spark and portion of the supreme Godhead.

This vision is to remove whatever doubt may still remain within his mind; it is to make him strong for the action from which he has shrunk, but to which he is irrevocably commanded and can no more recoil from it,—for to recoil would be the negation and denial of the divine will and sanction within him already expressed in his individual consciousness but soon to assume the appearance of the greater cosmic sanction. For now the world Being appears to him as the body of God ensouled by the eternal Time-spirit and with its majestic and dreadful voice missions him to the crash of the battle. He is called by it to

the liberation of his spirit, to the fulfilment of his action in the cosmic mystery, and the two—liberation and action—are to be one movement. His intellectual doubts are clearing away as a greater light of self-knowledge and the knowledge of God and Nature is being unfolded before him. But intellectual clarity is not enough; he must see with the inner sight illuminating his blind outward human vision, so that he may act with the consent of his whole being, with a perfect faith in all his members, *śraddhā*, with a perfect devotion to the Self of his self and the Master of his being and to the same Self of the world and Master of all being in the universe.

All that has gone before laid the foundations of the knowledge or prepared its first necessary materials or scaffolding, but now the full frame of the structure is to be placed before his unsealed vision. All that is to come after will have its great importance because it will analyse parts of this frame, show in what this or that in it consists; but in substance the integral knowledge of the Being who is speaking to him is to be now unveiled to his eyes so that he cannot choose but see. What has gone before showed him that he is not bound fatally to the knot of the ignorance and egoistic action in which he had hitherto remained contented till its partial solutions sufficed no longer to satisfy his mind bewildered by the conflict of opposite appearances that make up the action of the world and his heart troubled by the entanglement of his works from which he feels himself unable to escape except by renunciation of life and works. He has been shown that there are two opposed ways of working and living, one in the ignorance of the ego, one in the clear self-knowledge of a divine being. He may act with desire, with passion, an ego driven by the qualities of the lower Nature, subject to the balance of virtue and sin, joy and sorrow, preoccupied with the fruits and consequences of his works, success and defeat, good result and evil result, bound on the world machine, caught up in a great tangle of action and inaction and perverse action which perplex the heart and mind and soul of man with their changing and contrary masks and appearances. But he is not utterly tied down to the works of the ignorance; he may do if he will the

works of knowledge. He may act here as the higher thinker, the knower, the Yogin, the seeker of freedom first and afterwards the liberated spirit. To perceive that great possibility and to keep his will and intelligence fixed on the knowledge and self-vision which will realise and make it effectual, is the path of escape from his sorrow and bewilderment, the way out of the human riddle.

There is a spirit within us calm, superior to works, equal, not bound in this external tangle, surveying it as its supporter, source, immanent witness, but not involved in it. Infinite, containing all, one self in all, it surveys impartially the whole action of nature and it sees that it is only the action of Nature, not its own action. It sees that the ego and its will and its intelligence are all a machinery of Nature and that all their activities are determined by the complexity of her triple modes and qualities. The eternal spirit itself is free from these things. It is free from them because it knows; it knows that Nature and ego and the personal being of all these creatures do not make up the whole of existence. For existence is not merely a glorious or a vain, a wonderful or a dismal panorama of a constant mutation of becoming. There is something eternal, immutable, imperishable, a timeless self-existence; that is not affected by the mutations of Nature. It is their impartial witness, neither affecting nor affected, neither acting nor acted upon, neither virtuous nor sinful, but always pure, complete, great and unwounded. Neither grieving nor rejoicing at all that afflicts and attracts the egoistic being, it is the friend of none, the enemy of none, but one equal self of all. Man is not now conscious of this self, because he is wrapped up in his outward-going mind, because he will not learn or has not learned to live within; he does not detach himself, draw back from his action and observe it as the work of Nature. Ego is the obstacle, the linch-pin of the wheel of delusion, the loss of the ego in the soul's self the first condition of freedom. To become spirit, no longer merely a mind and ego, is the opening word of this message of liberation.

Arjuna has been therefore called upon first to give up all desire of the fruits of his works and become simply the desireless

impartial doer of whatever has to be done, — leaving the fruit to whatever power may be the master of the cosmic workings. For he very evidently is not the master; it is not for the satisfaction of his personal ego that Nature was set upon her ways, not for the fulfilment of his desires and preferences that the universal Life is living, not for the justification of his intellectual opinions, judgments and standards that the universal Mind is working, nor is it to that petty tribunal that it has to refer its cosmic aims or its terrestrial method and purposes. These claims can only be made by the ignorant souls who live in their personality and see everything from that poor and narrow standpoint. He must stand back first from his egoistic demand on the world and work only as one among the millions who contributes his share of effort and labour to a result determined not by himself, but by the universal action and purpose. But he has to do yet more, he has to give up the idea of being the doer and to see, freed from all personality, that it is the universal intelligence, will, mind, life that is at work in him and in all others. Nature is the universal worker; his works are hers, even as the fruits of her works in him are part of the grand sum of result guided by a greater Power than his own. If he can do these two things spiritually, then the tangle and bondage of his works will fall far away from him; for the whole knot of that bondage lay in his egoistic demand and participation. Passion and sin and personal joy and grief will fade away from his soul, which will now live within, pure, large, calm, equal to all persons and all things. Action will produce no subjective reaction and will leave no stain nor any mark on his spirit's purity and peace. He will have the inner joy, rest, ease and inalienable bliss of a free unaffected being. Neither within nor without will he have any more the old little personality, for he will feel consciously one self and spirit with all, even as his outer nature will have become to his consciousness an inseparable part of the universal mind, life and will. His separative egoistic personality will have been taken up and extinguished in the impersonality of spiritual being; his separative egoistic nature will be unified with the action of cosmic Nature.

But this liberation is dependent on two simultaneous, but

not yet reconciled perceptions, the clear vision of spirit and the clear vision of Nature. This is not the scientific and intelligent detachment which is quite possible even to the materialistic philosopher who has some clear vision of Nature alone, but not the perception of his own soul and self-being. Nor is it the intellectual detachment of the idealistic sage who escapes from the more limiting and disturbing forms of his ego by a luminous use of the reason. This is a larger, more living, more perfect spiritual detachment which comes by a vision of the Supreme who is more than Nature and greater than mind and reason. But even this detachment is only the initial secret of freedom and of the clear vision of knowledge, it is not the whole clue to the divine mystery,— for by itself it would leave Nature unexplained and the natural active part of being isolated from the spiritual and quietistic self-existence. The divine detachment must be the foundation for a divine participation in Nature which will replace the old egoistic participation, the divine quietism must support a divine activism and kinetism. This truth which the Teacher has had in view all along and therefore insisted on the sacrifice of works, the recognition of the Supreme as the master of our works and the doctrine of the Avatar and the divine birth, has yet been at first kept subordinate to the primary necessity of a quietistic liberation. Only the truths which lead to spiritual calm, detachment, equality and oneness, in a word, to the perception and becoming of the immutable self, have been fully developed and given their largest amplitude of power and significance. The other great and necessary truth, its complement, has been left in a certain obscurity of a lesser or relative light; it has been hinted at constantly, but not as yet developed. Now in these successive chapters it is being rapidly released into expression.

Throughout Krishna, the Avatar, the Teacher, the charioteer of the human soul in the world-action, has been preparing the revelation of the secret of himself, Nature's deepest secret. He has kept one note always sounding across his preparatory strain and insistently coming in as a warning and prelude of the larger ultimate harmony of his integral Truth. That note was the idea of a supreme Godhead which dwells within man and Nature,

but is greater than man and Nature, is found by impersonality of the self, but of which impersonal self is not the whole significance. We now see the meaning of that strong recurring insistence. It was this one Godhead, the same in universal self and man and Nature who through the voice of the Teacher in the chariot was preparing for his absolute claim to the whole being of the awakened seer of things and doer of works. "I who am within thee," he was saying, "I who am here in this human body, I for whom all exists, acts, strives, am at once the secret of the self-existent spirit and of the cosmic action. This 'I' is the greater I of whom the largest human personality is only a partial and fragmentary manifestation, Nature itself only an inferior working. Master of the soul, master of all the works of the cosmos, I am the one Light, the sole Power, the only Being. This Godhead within thee is the Teacher, the Sun, the lifter of the clear blaze of knowledge in which thou becomest aware of the difference between thy immutable self and thy mutable nature. But look beyond the light itself to its source; then shalt thou know the supreme Soul in which is recovered the spiritual truth of personality and Nature. See then the one self in all beings that thou mayst see me in all beings; see all beings in one spiritual self and reality, because that is the way to see all beings in me; know one Brahman in all that thou mayst see God who is the supreme Brahman. Know thyself, be thyself that thou mayst be united with me of whom this timeless self is the clear light or the transparent curtain. I the Godhead am the highest truth of self and spirit."

Arjuna has to see that the same Godhead is the higher truth too not only of self and spirit but of Nature and his own personality, the secret at once of the individual and the universe. That was the Will universal in Nature, greater than the acts of Nature which proceed from him, to whom belong her actions and man's and the fruits of them. Therefore has he to do works as a sacrifice, because that is the truth of his works and of all works. Nature is the worker and not ego, but Nature is only a power of the Being who is the sole master of all her works and energisms and of all the aeons of the cosmic sacrifice. Therefore

since his works are that Being's, he has to give up all his actions to the Godhead in him and the world by whom they are done in the divine mystery of Nature. This is the double condition of the divine birth of the soul, of its release from the mortality of the ego and the body into the spiritual and eternal,—knowledge first of one's timeless immutable self and union through it with the timeless Godhead, but knowledge too of that which lives behind the riddle of cosmos, the Godhead in all existences and their workings. Thus only can we aspire through the offering of all our nature and being to a living union with the One who has become in Time and Space all that is. Here is the place of bhakti in the scheme of the Yoga of an integral self-liberation. It is an adoration and aspiration towards that which is greater than imperishable self or changing Nature. All knowledge then becomes an adoration and aspiration, but all works too become an adoration and aspiration. Works of nature and freedom of soul are unified in this adoration and become one self-uplifting to the one Godhead. The final release, a passing away from the lower nature to the source of the higher spiritual becoming, is not an extinction of the soul,—only its form of ego becomes extinct,—but a departure of our whole self of knowledge, will and love to dwell no longer in his universal, but in his supracosmic reality, a fulfilment, not an annulation.

Necessarily, to make this knowledge clear to the mind of Arjuna, the divine Teacher sets out by removing the source of two remaining difficulties, the antinomy between the impersonal self and the human personality and the antinomy between the self and Nature. While these two antinomies last, the Godhead in Nature and man remains obscure, irrational and unbelievable. Nature has been represented as the mechanical bondage of the gunas, the soul as the egoistic being subject to that bondage. But if that be all their truth, they are not and cannot be divine. Nature, ignorant and mechanical, cannot be a power of God; for divine Power must be free in its workings, spiritual in its origin, spiritual in its greatness. The soul bound and egoistic in Nature, mental, vital, physical only, cannot be a portion of the Divine and itself a divine being; for such a divine being must be itself of

the very nature of the Divine, free, spiritual, self-developing, self-existent, superior to mind, life and body. Both these difficulties and the obscurities they bring in are removed by one illuminating ray of truth. Mechanical Nature is only a lower truth; it is the formula of an inferior phenomenal action. There is a higher which is the spiritual and that is the nature of our spiritual personality, our true person. God is at once impersonal and personal. His impersonality is to our psychological realisation an infinite of timeless being, consciousness, bliss of existence; his personality represents itself here as a conscious power of being, a conscious centre of knowledge and will and the joy of multiple self-manifestation. We are that one impersonality in the static essence of our being; we are each of us the multitude of that essential power in our spiritual person. But the distinction is only for the purposes of self-manifestation; the divine impersonality is, when one goes behind it, at the same time infinite He, a supreme soul and spirit. It is the great "I"—so *aham*, I am He, from which all personality and nature proceed and disport themselves here diversely in the appearance of an impersonal world. Brahman is all this that is, says the Upanishad, for Brahman is one self which sees itself in four successive positions of consciousness. Vasudeva, the eternal Being, is all, says the Gita. He is the Brahman, consciously supports and originates all from his higher spiritual nature, consciously here becomes all things in a nature of intelligence, mind, life and sense and objective phenomenon of material existence. The Jiva is he in that spiritual nature of the Eternal, his eternal multiplicity, his self-vision from many centres of conscious self-power. God, Nature and Jiva are the three terms of existence, and these three are one being.

How does this Being manifest himself in cosmos? First as the immutable timeless self omnipresent and all-supporting which is in its eternity being and not becoming. Then, held in that being there is an essential power or spiritual principle of self-becoming, *svabhāva*, through which by spiritual self-vision it determines and expresses, creates by liberation all that is latent or contained in its own existence. The power or the energy of that self-becoming looses forth into universal action, Karma, all

that is thus determined in the spirit. All creation is this action, is this working of the essential nature, is Karma. But it is developed here in a mutable Nature of intelligence, mind, life, sense and form-objectivity of material phenomenon actually cut off from the absolute light and limited by the Ignorance. All its workings become there a sacrifice of the soul in Nature to the supreme Soul secret within her, and the supreme Godhead dwells therefore in all as the Master of their sacrifice, whose presence and power govern it and whose self-knowledge and delight of being receive it. To know this is to have the right knowledge of the universe and the vision of God in the cosmos and to find out the door of escape from the Ignorance. For this knowledge, made effective for man by the offering up of his works and all his consciousness to the Godhead in all, enables him to return to his spiritual existence and through it to the supracosmic Reality eternal and luminous above this mutable Nature.

This truth is the secret of being which the Gita is now going to apply in its amplitude of result for our inner life and our outer works. What it is going to say is the most secret thing of all.¹ It is the knowledge of the whole Godhead, *samagran mām*, which the Master of his being has promised to Arjuna, that essential knowledge attended with the complete knowledge of it in all its principles which will leave nothing yet to be known. The whole knot of the ignorance which has bewildered his human mind and has made his will recoil from his divinely appointed work, will have been cut entirely asunder. This is the wisdom of all wisdoms, the secret of all secrets, the king-knowledge, the king-secret. It is a pure and supreme light which one can verify by direct spiritual experience and see in oneself as the truth: it is the right and just knowledge, the very law of being. It is easy to practise when one gets hold of it, sees it, tries faithfully to live in it.

But faith is necessary; if faith is absent, if one trusts to the critical intelligence which goes by outward facts and jealously questions the revelatory knowledge because that does not square

¹ Gita, IX. 1-3.

with the divisions and imperfections of the apparent nature and seems to exceed it and state something which carries us beyond the first practical facts of our present existence, its grief, its pain, evil, defect, undivine error and stumbling, *aśubham*, then there is no possibility of living out that greater knowledge. The soul that fails to get faith in the higher truth and law, must return into the path of ordinary mortal living subject to death and error and evil: it cannot grow into the Godhead which it denies. For this is a truth which has to be lived,—and lived in the soul's growing light, not argued out in the mind's darkness. One has to grow into it, one has to become it,—that is the only way to verify it. It is only by an exceeding of the lower self that one can become the real divine self and live the truth of our spiritual existence. All the apparent truths one can oppose to it are appearances of the lower Nature. The release from the evil and the defect of the lower Nature, *aśubham*, can only come by accepting a higher knowledge in which all this apparent evil becomes convinced of ultimate unreality, is shown to be a creation of our darkness. But to grow thus into the freedom of the divine Nature one must accept and believe in the Godhead secret within our present limited nature. For the reason why the practice of this Yoga becomes possible and easy is that in doing it we give up the whole working of all that we naturally are into the hands of that inner divine Purusha. The Godhead works out the divine birth in us progressively, simply, infallibly, by taking up our being into his and by filling it with his own knowledge and power, *jñānadīpena bhāsvatā*; he lays hands on our obscure ignorant nature and transforms it into his own light and wideness. What with entire faith and without egoism we believe in and impelled by him will to be, the God within will surely accomplish. But the egoistic mind and life we now and apparently are, must first surrender itself for transmutation into the hands of that inmost secret Divinity within us.

The Divine Truth and Way

THE GITA then proceeds to unveil the supreme and integral secret, the one thought and truth in which the seeker of perfection and liberation must learn to live and the one law of perfection of his spiritual members and of all their movements. This supreme secret is the mystery of the transcendent Godhead who is all and everywhere, yet so much greater and other than the universe and all its forms that nothing here contains him, nothing expresses him really, and no language which is borrowed from the appearances of things in space and time and their relations can suggest the truth of his unimaginable being. The consequent law of our perfection is an adoration by our whole nature and its self-surrender to its divine source and possessor. Our one ultimate way is the turning of our entire existence in the world, and not merely of this or that in it, into a single movement towards the Eternal. By the power and mystery of a divine Yoga we have come out of his inexpressible secracies into this bounded nature of phenomenal things. By a reverse movement of the same Yoga we must transcend the limits of phenomenal nature and recover the greater consciousness by which we can live in the Divine and the Eternal.

The supreme being of the Divine is beyond manifestation: the true sempiternal image of him is not revealed in matter, nor is it seized by life, nor is it cognisable by mind, *acintyārūpa, avyaktamūrti*. What we see is only a self-created form, *rūpa*, not the eternal form of the Divinity, *svarūpa*. There is someone or there is something that is other than the universe, inexpressible, unimaginable, an ineffably infinite Godhead beyond anything that our largest or subtlest conceptions of infinity can shadow. All this weft of things to which we give the

name of universe, all this immense sum of motion to which we can fix no limits and vainly seek in its forms and movements for any stable reality, any status, level and point of cosmic leverage, has been spun out, shaped, extended by this highest Infinite, founded upon this ineffable supracosmic Mystery. It is founded upon a self-formulation which is itself unmanifest and unthinkable. All this mass of becomings always changing and in motion, all these creatures, existences, things, breathing and living forms cannot contain him either in their sum or in their separate existence. He is not in them; it is not in them or by them that he lives, moves or has his being,—God is not the Becoming. It is they that are in him, it is they that live and move in him and draw their truth from him; they are his becomings, he is their being.¹ In the unthinkable timeless and spaceless infinity of his existence he has extended this minor phenomenon of a boundless universe in an endless space and time.

And even to say of him that all exists in him is not the whole truth of the matter, not the entirely real relation: for it is to speak of him with the idea of space, and the Divine is spaceless and timeless. Space and time, immanence and pervasion and exceeding are all of them terms and images of his consciousness. There is a Yoga of divine Power, *me yoga aiśvarah*, by which the Supreme creates phenomena of himself in a spiritual, not a material, self-formulation of his own extended infinity, an extension of which the material is only an image. He sees himself as one with that, is identified with that and all it harbours. In that infinite self-seeing, which is not his whole seeing,—the pantheist's identity of God and universe is a still more limited view,—he is at once one with all that is and yet exceeds it; but he is other also than this self or extended infinity of spiritual being which contains and exceeds the universe. All exists here in his world-conscious infinite, but that again is upheld as a self-conception by the supracosmic reality of the Godhead which exceeds all our terms of world and being and consciousness.

¹ *matsthāni sarvabhūtāni na cāhaṁ teṣvavasthitah.*

This is the mystery of his being that he is supracosmic, yet not in any exclusive sense extracosmic. For he pervades it all as its self; there is a luminous uninvolved presence of the self-being of God, *mama ātmā*, which is in constant relation with the becoming and brings all its existences into manifestation by his simple presence.² Therefore it is that we have these terms of Being and becoming, existence in itself, *ātman*, and existences dependent upon it, *bhūtāni*, mutable beings and immutable being. But the highest truth of these two relations and the resolution of their antinomy must be found in that which exceeds it; it is the supreme Godhead who manifests both containing self and its contained phenomena by the power of his spiritual consciousness, *yogamāyā*. And it is only through union with him in our spiritual consciousness that we can arrive at our real relations with his being.

Metaphysically stated, this is the intention of these verses of the Gita: but they rest founded not upon any intellectual speculation, but on spiritual experience; they synthetise because they arise globally from certain truths of spiritual consciousness. When we attempt to put ourselves into conscious relations with whatever supreme or universal Being there exists concealed or manifest in the world, we arrive at a very various experience and one or other variant term of this experience is turned by different intellectual conceptions into their fundamental idea of existence. We have, to start with, the crude experience first of a Divine who is something quite different from and greater than ourselves, quite different from and greater than the universe in which we live; and so it is and no more so long as we live only in our phenomenal selves and see around us only the phenomenal face of the world. For the highest truth of the Supreme is supracosmic and all that is phenomenal seems a thing other than the infinity of the self-conscious spirit, seems an image of a lesser truth if not an illusion. When we dwell in this difference only, we regard the Divine as if extracosmic. That he is only in this sense that he is not, being supracosmic,

² *bbūtabhṛn na ca bhūtastho mamātmā bbūtabbhāvanah*.

contained in the cosmos and its creations, but not in the sense that they are outside his being: for there is nothing outside the one Eternal and Real. We realise this first truth of the God-head spiritually when we get the experience that we live and move and have our being in him alone, that however different from him we may be, we depend on him for our existence and the universe itself is only a phenomenon and movement in the Spirit.

But again we have the farther and more transcendent experience that our self-existence is one with his self-existence. We perceive a one self of all and of that we have the consciousness and the vision: we can no longer say or think that we are entirely different from him, but that there is self and there is phenomenon of the self-existent; all is one in self, but all is variation in the phenomenon. By an exclusive intensity of union with the self we may even come to experience the phenomenon as a thing dreamlike and unreal. But again by a double intensity we may have too the double experience of a supreme self-existent oneness with him and yet of ourselves as living with him and in many relations to him in a persistent form, an actual derivation of his being. The universe, and our existence in the universe, becomes to us a constant and real form of the self-aware existence of the Divine. In that lesser truth we have our relations of difference between us and him and all these other living or inanimate powers of the Eternal and our dealings with his cosmic self in the nature of the universe. These relations are other than the supracosmic truth, they are derivative creations of a certain power of consciousness of the spirit, and because they are other and because they are creations the exclusive seekers of the supracosmic Absolute tax them with an unreality relative or complete. Yet are they from him, they are existent forms derived from his being, not figments created out of nothing. For it is ever itself and figures of itself and not things quite other than itself that the Spirit sees everywhere. Nor can we say that there is nothing at all in the supracosmic that corresponds to these relations. We cannot say that they are derivations of consciousness sprung from that source but

yet with nothing in the source which at all supports or justifies them, nothing that is the eternal reality and supernal principle of these forms of his being.

Again if we press in yet another way the difference between the self and the forms of self, we may come to regard the Self as containing and immanent, we may admit the truth of omnipresent spirit, and yet the forms of spirit, the moulds of its presence may affect us not only as something other than it, not only as transient, but as unreal images. We have the experience of the Spirit, the Divine Being immutable and ever containing in his vision the mutabilities of the universe; we have too the separate, the simultaneous or the coincident experience of the Divine immanent in ourselves and in all creatures. And yet the universe may be to us only an empirical form of his and our consciousness, or only an image or a symbol of existence by which we have to construct our significant relations with him and to grow gradually aware of him. But on the other hand, we get another revealing spiritual experience in which we are forced to see as the very Divine all things, not only that Spirit which dwells immutable in the universe and in its countless creatures, but all this inward and outward becoming. All is then to us a divine Reality manifesting himself in us and in the cosmos. If this experience is exclusive, we get the pantheistic identity, the One that is all: but the pantheistic vision is only a partial seeing. This extended universe is not all that the Spirit is, there is an Eternal greater than it by which alone its existence is possible. Cosmos is not the Divine in all his utter reality, but a single self-expression, a true but minor motion of his being. All these spiritual experiences, however different or opposed at first sight, are yet reconcilable if we cease to press on one or other exclusively and if we see this simple truth that the divine Reality is something greater than the universal existence, but yet that all universal and particular things are that Divine and nothing else,—significative of him, we might say, and not entirely That in any part or sum of their appearance, but still they could not be significative of him if they were something else and not term and stuff of the

divine existence. That is the Real; but they are its expressive realities.³

This is what is intended by the phrase, *vāsudevah sarvam iti*; the Godhead is all that is universe and all that is in the universe and all that is more than the universe. The Gita lays stress first on his supracosmic existence. For otherwise the mind would miss its highest goal and remain turned towards the cosmic only or else attached to some partial experience of the Divine in the cosmos. It lays stress next on his universal existence in which all moves and acts. For that is the justification of the cosmic effort and that is the vast spiritual self-awareness in which the Godhead self-seen as the Time-Spirit does his universal works. Next it insists with a certain austere emphasis on the acceptance of the Godhead as the divine inhabitant in the human body. For he is the Immanent in all existences, and if the indwelling divinity is not recognised, not only will the divine meaning of individual existence be missed, the urge to our supreme spiritual possibilities deprived of its greatest force, but the relations of soul with soul in humanity will be left petty, limited and egoistic. Finally, it insists at great length on the divine manifestation in all things in the universe and affirms the derivation of all that is from the nature, power and light of the one Godhead. For that seeing too is essential to the God-knowledge; on it is founded the integral turn of the whole being and the whole nature Godwards, the acceptance by man of the works of the divine Power in the world and the possibility of remoulding his mentality and will into the type of the God-action, transcendent in initiation, cosmic in motive, transmitted through the individual, the Jiva.

The supreme Godhead, the Self immutable behind the cosmic consciousness, the individual Divinity in the human being

³ Even if in the mind we feel them to be comparatively unreal in face of the absolutely Real. Shankara's Mayavada apart from its logical scaffolding comes when reduced to terms of spiritual experience to no more than an exaggerated expression of this relative unreality. Beyond mind the difficulty disappears, for there it never existed. The separate experiences that lie behind the differences of religious sects and schools of philosophy or Yoga, transmuted, shed their divergent mental sequences, are harmonised and, when exalted to their highest common intensity, unified in the supramental infinite.

and the Divine secretly conscious or partially manifested in cosmic Nature and all her works and creatures, are then one reality, one Godhead. But the truths that we can put forward the most confidently of one, are reversed or they alter their sense when we try to apply them to the other poises of the one Being. Thus the Divine is always the Lord, Ishwara; but we cannot therefore crudely apply the idea of his essential lordship and mastery in exactly the same way without change in all four fields. As the Divine manifest in cosmic Nature he acts in close identity with Nature. He is himself then Nature, so to speak, but with a spirit within her workings which foresees and forewills, understands and enforces, compels the action, overrules in the result. As the one silent self of all he is the non-doer, and Nature alone is the doer. He leaves all these works to be done by her according to the law of our being, *svabhāvas tu pravartate*, and yet he is still the lord, *prabhu vibhu*, because he views and upholds our action and enables Nature to work by his silent sanction. He by his immobility transmits the power of the supreme Godhead through the compulsion of his pervading motionless Presence and supports its workings by the equal regard of his witness Self in all things. As the supreme supracosmic Godhead he originates all, but is above all; he compels all to manifest, but does not lose himself in what he creates or attach himself to the works of his Nature. His is the free presiding Will of being that is antecedent to all the necessities of the natural action. In the individual he is during the ignorance the secret Godhead in us who compels all to revolve on the machine of Nature on which the ego is carried round as part of the machinery, at once a clog and a convenience. But since all the Divine is within each being, we can rise above this relation by transcending the ignorance. For we can identify ourselves with the one Self supporter of all things and become the witness and non-doer. Or else we can put our individual being into the human soul's right relation with the supreme Godhead within us and make it in its parts of nature the immediate cause and instrument, *nimitta*, and in its spiritual self and person a high participant in the supreme, free and unattached mastery of that inner Numen. This is a thing we have to see clearly in

the Gita; we have to allow for this variation of the sense of the same truth according to the nodus of relation from which its application comes into force. Otherwise we shall see mere contradiction and inconsistency where none exists or be baffled like Arjuna by what seems to us a riddling utterance.

Thus the Gita begins by affirming that the Supreme contains all things in himself, but is not in any, *matsthāni sarva-bhūtāni*, "all are situated in Me, not I in them," and yet it proceeds immediately to say, "and yet all existences are not situated in Me, my self is the bearer of all existences and it is not situated in existences." And yet again it insists with an apparent self-contradiction that the Divine has lodged himself, has taken up his abode in the human body, *mānuṣīm tanum āśritam*, and that the recognition of this truth is necessary for the soul's release by the integral way of works and love and knowledge. These statements are only in appearance inconsistent with each other. It is as the supracosmic Godhead that he is not in existences, nor even they in him; for the distinction we make between Being and becoming applies only to the manifestation in the phenomenal universe. In the supracosmic existence all is eternal Being and all, if there too there is any multiplicity, are eternal beings; nor can the spatial idea of indwelling come in, since a supracosmic absolute being is not affected by the concepts of time and space which are created here by the Lord's Yogamaya. There a spiritual, not a spatial or temporal coexistence, a spiritual identity and coincidence must be the foundation. But on the other hand in the cosmic manifestation there is an extension of universe in space and time by the supreme unmanifest supracosmic Being, and in that extension he appears first as a self who supports all these existences; *bhūta-bhṛt*, he bears them in his all-pervading self-existence. And, even, through this omnipresent self the supreme Self too, the Paramatman, can be said to bear the universe; he is its invisible spiritual foundation and the hidden spiritual cause of the becoming of all existences. He bears the universe as the secret spirit in us bears our thoughts, works, movements. He seems to pervade and to contain mind, life and body, to support them by his presence: but this pervasion is itself an act

of consciousness, not material; the body itself is only a constant act of consciousness of the spirit.

This divine Self contains all existences; all are situated in him, not materially in essence, but in that extended spiritual conception of self-being of which our too rigid notion of a material and etheric space is only a rendering in the terms of the physical mind and senses. In reality all even here is spiritual coexistence, identity and coincidence; but that is a fundamental truth which we cannot apply until we get back to the supreme consciousness. Till then such an idea would only be an intellectual concept to which nothing corresponds in our practical experience. We have to say, then, using these terms of relation in space and time, that the universe and all its beings exist in the divine Self-existent as everything else exists in the spatial primacy of ether. "It is as the great, the all-pervading aerial principle dwells in the etheric that all existences dwell in Me, that is how you have to conceive of it," says the Teacher here to Arjuna. The universal existence is all-pervading and infinite and the Self-existent too is all-pervading and infinite; but the self-existent infinity is stable, static, immutable, the universal is an all-pervading movement, *sarvatragah*. The Self is one, not many; but the universal expresses itself as all existence and is, as it seems, the sum of all existences. One is Being; the other is Power of Being which moves and creates and acts in the existence of the fundamental, supporting, immutable Spirit. The Self does not dwell in all these existences or in any of them; that is to say, he is not contained by any,—just as the ether here is not contained in any form, though all forms are derived ultimately from the ether. Nor is he contained in or constituted by all existences together—any more than the ether is contained in the mobile extension of the aerial principle or is constituted by the sum of its forms or its forces. But still in the movement also is the Divine; he dwells in the many as the Lord in each being. Both these relations are true of him at one and the same time. The one is a relation of self-existence to the universal movement; the other, the immanence, is a relation of the universal existence to its own forms. The one is a truth of being in its all-containing

immutability, self-existent: the other is a truth of Power of the same being manifest in the government and information of its own self-veiling and self-revealing movements.

The Supreme from above cosmic existence leans, it is here said, or presses down upon his Nature to loose from it in an eternal cyclic recurrence all that it contains in it, all that was once manifest and has become latent. All existences act in the universe in subjection to this impelling movement and to the laws of manifested being by which is expressed in cosmic harmonies the phenomenon of the divine All-existence. The Jiva follows the cycle of its becoming in the action of this divine Nature, *prakṛtim māmikām, svāmī prakṛtim*, the “own nature” of the Divine. It becomes in the turns of her progression this or that personality; it follows always the curve of its own law of being as a manifestation of the divine Nature, whether in her higher and direct or her lower and derived movement, whether in ignorance or in knowledge; it returns out of her action into her immobility and silence in the lapse of the cycle. Ignorant, it is subject to her cyclic whirl, not master of itself, but dominated by her, *avaśah prakṛter vasāt*; only by return to the divine consciousness can it attain to mastery and freedom. The Divine too follows the cycle, not as subject to it, but as its informing Spirit and guide, not with his whole being involved in it, but with his power of being accompanying and shaping it. He is the presiding control of his own action of Nature, *adhyakṣa*,—not a spirit born in her, but the creative spirit who causes her to produce all that appears in the manifestation. If in his power he accompanies her and causes all her workings, he is outside it too, as if One seated above her universal action in the supracosmic mastery, not attached to her by any involving and mastering desire and not therefore bound by her works, because he infinitely exceeds them and precedes them, is the same before, during and after all their procession in the cycles of Time. All their mutations make no difference to his immutable being. The silent self that pervades and supports the cosmos is not affected by its changes because, though supporting, it does not participate in them. This greatest supreme supracosmic Self also is not affected because it

exceeds and eternally transcends them.

But also since this action is the action of the divine Nature, *svā prakṛtiḥ*, and the divine Nature can never be separate from the Divine, in everything she creates the Godhead must be immanent. That is a relation which is not the whole truth of his being, but neither is it a truth which we can at all afford to ignore. He is lodged in the human body. Those who ignore his presence, who despise because of its masks the divinity in the human form, are bewildered and befooled by the appearances of Nature and they cannot realise that there is the secret Godhead within, whether conscious in humanity as in the Avatar or veiled by his Maya. Those who are great-souled, who are not shut up in their idea of ego, who open themselves to the indwelling Divinity, know that the secret spirit in man which appears here bounded by the limited human nature, is the same ineffable splendour which we worship beyond as the supreme Godhead. They become aware of the highest status of him in which he is master and lord of all existences and yet see that in each existence he is still the supreme Deity and the indwelling Godhead. All the rest is a self-limitation for the manifesting of the variations of Nature in the cosmos. They see too that as it is his Nature which has become all that is in the universe, everything here is in its inner fact nothing but one Divine, all is Vasudeva, and they worship him not only as the supreme Godhead beyond, but here in the world, in his oneness and in every separate being. They see this truth and in this truth they live and act; him they adore, live, serve both as the Transcendent of things and as God in the world and as the Godhead in all that is, serve him with works of sacrifice, seek him out by knowledge, see nothing else but him everywhere and lift their whole being to him both in its self and in all its inward and outward nature. This they know to be the large and perfect way; for it is the way of the whole truth of the one supreme and universal and individual Godhead.⁴

⁴ Gita, IX. 4-11, 13-15, 34.

VI

Works, Devotion and Knowledge

THIS THEN is the integral truth, the highest and widest knowledge. The Divine is supracosmic, the eternal Para-brahman who supports with his timeless and spaceless existence all this cosmic manifestation of his own being and nature in Space and Time. He is the supreme spirit who ensouls the forms and movements of the universe, Paramatman. He is the supernal Person of whom all self and nature, all being and becoming in this or any universe are the self-conception and the self-energising, Purushottama. He is the ineffable Lord of all existence who by his spiritual control of his own manifested Power in Nature unrolls the cycles of the world and the natural evolution of creatures in the cycles, Parameshwara. From him the Jiva, individual spirit, soul in Nature, existent by his being, conscious by the light of his consciousness, empowered to knowledge, to will and to action by his will and power, enjoying existence by his divine enjoyment of the cosmos, has come here into the cosmic rounds.

The inner soul in man is here a partial self-manifestation of the Divine, self-limited for the works of his Nature in the universe, *prakrtir jīva-bhūtā*. In his spiritual essence the individual is one with the Divine. In the works of the divine Prakriti he is one with him, yet there is an operative difference and many deep relations with God in Nature and with God above cosmic Nature. In the works of the lower appearance of Prakriti he seems by an ignorance and egoistic separation to be quite other than the One and to think, will, act, enjoy in this separative consciousness for the egoistic pleasure and purpose of his personal existence in the universe and its surface relations with other embodied minds and lives. But in fact all his being, all his thinking, all his willing and action and enjoyment are only a reflection—egoistic and perverted so long as he is in the ignorance—of the

Divine's being, the Divine's thought, will, action and enjoyment of Nature. To get back to this truth of himself is his direct means of salvation, his largest and nearest door of escape from subjection to the Ignorance. Since he is a spirit, a soul with a nature of mind and reason, of will and dynamic action, of emotion and sensation and life's seeking for the delight of existence, it is by turning all these powers Godwards that the return to the highest truth of himself can be made entirely possible. He must know with the knowledge of the supreme Self and Brahman; he must turn his love and adoration to the supreme Person; he must subject his will and works to the supreme Lord of cosmos. Then he passes from the lower to the divine Nature: he casts from him the thought and will and works of the Ignorance and thinks, wills and works in his divine identity as soul of that Soul, power and light of that Spirit; he enjoys all the inner infinite of the Divine and no longer only these outward touches, masks and appearances. Thus divinely living, thus directing his whole self and soul and nature Godwards, he is taken up into the truest truth of the supreme Brahman.

To know Vasudeva as all and live in that knowledge is the secret. He knows him as the Self, immutable, continent of all as well as immanent in all things. He draws back from the confused and perturbed whirl of the lower nature to dwell in the still and inalienable calm and light of the self-existent spirit. There he realises a constant unity with this self of the Divine that is present in all existences and supports all cosmic movement and action and phenomenon. He looks upward from this eternal unchanging spiritual hypostasis of the mutable universe to the greater Eternal, the supracosmic, the Real. He knows him as the divine Inhabitant in all things that are, the Lord in the heart of man, the secret Ishwara, and removes the veil between his natural being and this inner spiritual Master of his being. He makes his will, thought and works one in knowledge with the Ishwara's, attuned by an ever-present realisation to the sense of the indwelling Divinity, sees and adores him in all and changes the whole human action to the highest meaning of the divine nature. He knows him as the source and the substance of all that

is around him in the universe. All things that are he sees as at once in their appearance the veils and in their secret trend the means and signs of self-manifestation of that one unthinkable Reality and everywhere discovers that oneness, Brahman, Purusha, Atman, Vasudeva, the Being that has become all these creatures. Therefore too his whole inner existence comes into tune and harmony with the Infinite now self-revealed in all that lives or is within and around him and his whole outer existence turns into an exact instrumentation of the cosmic purpose. He looks up through the Self to the Parabrahman who there and here is the one and only existence. He looks up through the divine Inhabitant in all to that supernal Person who in his supreme status is beyond all habitation. He looks up through the Lord manifested in the universe to the Supreme who exceeds and rules all his manifestation. Thus he arises through a limitless unfolding of knowledge and upward vision and aspiration to that to which he has turned with an all-compelling integrality, *sarvabhāvena*.

This integral turning of the soul Godwards bases royally the Gita's synthesis of knowledge and works and devotion. To know God thus integrally is to know him as One in the self and in all manifestation and beyond all manifestation,—and all this unitedly and at once. And yet even so to know him is not enough unless it is accompanied by an intense uplifting of the heart and soul Godwards, unless it kindles a one-pointed and at the same time all-embracing love, adoration, aspiration. Indeed the knowledge which is not companioned by an aspiration and vivified by an uplifting is no true knowledge, for it can be only an intellectual seeing and a barren cognitive endeavour. The vision of God brings infallibly the adoration and passionate seeking of the Divine,—a passion for the Divine in his self-existent being, but also for the Divine in ourselves and for the Divine in all that is. To know with the intellect is simply to understand and may be an effective starting-point,—or, too, it may not be, and it will not be if there is no sincerity in the knowledge, no urge towards inner realisation in the will, no power upon the soul, no call in the spirit: for that would mean that the brain has

externally understood, but inwardly the soul has seen nothing. True knowledge is to know with the inner being, and when the inner being is touched by the light, then it arises to embrace that which is seen, it yearns to possess, it struggles to shape that in itself and itself to it, it labours to become one with the glory of its vision. Knowledge in this sense is an awakening to identity and, since the inner being realises itself by consciousness and delight, by love, by possession and oneness with whatever of itself it has seen, knowledge awakened must bring an overmastering impulse towards this true and only perfect realisation. Here that which is known is not an externalised object, but the divine Purusha, self and lord of all that we are. An all-seizing delight in him and a deep and moved love and adoration of him must be the inevitable result and is the very soul of this knowledge. And this adoration is no isolated seeking of the heart, but an offering of the whole existence. Therefore it must take also the form of a sacrifice; there is a giving of all our works to the Ishwara, there is a surrender of all our active inward and outward nature to the Godhead of our adoration in its every subjective and in its every objective movement. All our subjective workings move in him and they seek him, the Lord and Self, as the source and goal of their power and endeavour. All our objective workings move out towards him in the world and make him their object, initiate a service of God in the world of which the controlling power is the Divinity within us in whom we are one self with the universe and its creatures. For both world and self, Nature and the soul in her are enlightened by the consciousness of the One, are inner and outer bodies of the transcendent Purushottama. So comes a synthesis of mind and heart and will in the one self and spirit and with it the synthesis of knowledge, love and works in this integral union, this embracing God-realisation, this divine Yoga.

But to arrive at this movement at all is difficult for the ego-bound nature. And to arrive at its victorious and harmonious integrality is not easy even when we have set our feet on the way finally and for ever. Mortal mind is bewildered by its ignorant reliance upon veils and appearances; it sees only the outward human body, human mind, human way of living and catches no

liberating glimpse of the Divinity who is lodged in the creature. It ignores the divinity within itself and cannot see it in other men, and even though the Divine manifest himself in humanity as Avatar and Vibhuti, it is still blind and ignores or despises the veiled Godhead, *avajānanti mām mūḍhā mānuṣīm tanum āśritam*. And if it ignores him in the living creature, still less can it see him in the objective world on which it looks out from its prison of separative ego through the barred windows of the finite mind. It does not see God in the universe; it knows nothing of the supreme Divinity who is master of these planes full of various existences and dwells within them; it is blind to the vision by which all in the world grows divine and the soul itself awakens to its own inherent divinity and becomes of the Godhead, godlike. What it does see readily, and to that it attaches itself with passion, is only the life of the ego hunting after finite things for their own sake and for the satisfaction of the earthly hunger of the intellect, body, senses. Those who have given themselves up too entirely to this outward drive of the mentality, fall into the hands of the lower nature, cling to it and make it their foundation. They become a prey to the nature of the Rakshasa in man who sacrifices everything to a violent and inordinate satisfaction of his separate vital ego and makes that the dark godhead of his will and thought and action and enjoyment. Or they are hurried onward in a fruitless cycle by the arrogant self-will, self-sufficient thought, self-regarding act, self-satisfied and yet ever unsatisfied intellectualised appetite of enjoyment of the Asuric nature. But to live persistently in this separative ego-consciousness and make that the centre of all our activities is to miss altogether the true self-awareness. The charm it throws upon the misled instruments of the spirit is an enchantment that chains life to a profitless circling. All its hope, action, knowledge are vain things when judged by the divine and eternal standard, for it shuts out the great hope, excludes the liberating action, banishes the illuminating knowledge. It is a false knowledge that sees the phenomenon but misses the truth of the phenomenon, a blind hope that chases after the transient but misses the eternal, a sterile action whose every

profit is annulled by loss and amounts to a perennial labour of Sisyphus.¹

The great-souled who open themselves to the light and largeness of the diviner nature of which man is capable, are alone on the path narrow in the beginning, inexpressibly wide in the end that leads to liberation and perfection. The growth of the god in man is man's proper business; the steadfast turning of this lower Asuric and Rakshasic into the divine nature is the carefully hidden meaning of human life. As this growth increases, the veil falls and the soul comes to see the greater significance of action and the real truth of existence. The eye opens to the Godhead in man, to the Godhead in the world; it sees inwardly and comes to know outwardly the infinite Spirit, the Imperishable from whom all existences originate and who exists in all and by him and in him all exist always. Therefore when this vision, this knowledge seizes on the soul, its whole life-aspiration becomes a surpassing love and fathomless adoration of the Divine and Infinite. The mind attaches itself singly to the eternal, the spiritual, the living, the universal, the Real; it values nothing but for its sake, it delights only in the all-blissful Purusha. All the word and all the thought become one hymning of the universal greatness, Light, Beauty, Power and Truth that has revealed itself in its glory to the human spirit and a worship of the one supreme Soul and infinite Person. All the long stress of the inner self to break outward becomes a form now of spiritual endeavour and aspiration to possess the Divine in the soul and realise the Divine in the nature. All life becomes a constant Yoga and unification of that Divine and this human spirit. This is the manner of the integral devotion; it creates a single uplifting of our whole being and nature through sacrifice by the dedicated heart to the eternal Purushottama.²

Those who lay a predominant stress on knowledge, arrive to the same point by an always increasing, engrossing, enforcing power of the vision of the Divine on the soul and the nature. Theirs is the sacrifice of knowledge and by an ineffable ecstasy

¹ Gita, IX. 11-12. ² IX. 13-14.

of knowledge they come to the adoration of the Purushottama, *jñāna-yajñena yajanto mām upāsate*. This is a comprehension filled with Bhakti, because it is integral in its instruments, integral in its objective. It is not a pursuit of the Supreme merely as an abstract unity or an indeterminable Absolute. It is a heartfelt seeking and seizing of the Supreme and the Universal, a pursuit of the Infinite in his infinity and of the Infinite in all that is finite, a vision and embracing of the One in his oneness and of the One in all his several principles, his innumerable visages, forces, forms, here, there, everywhere, timelessly and in time, multiply, multitudinously, in endless aspects of his Godhead, in beings without number, all his million universal faces fronting us in the world and its creatures, *ekatvena pr̥thaktvena bahudhā viśvatomukham*. This knowledge becomes easily an adoration, a large devotion, a vast self-giving, an integral self-offering because it is the knowledge of a Spirit, the contact of a Being, the embrace of a supreme and universal Soul which claims all that we are even as it lavishes on us when we approach it all the treasures of its endless delight of existence.³

The way of works too turns into an adoration and a devotion of self-giving because it is an entire sacrifice of all our will and its activities to the one Purushottama. The outward Vedic rite is a powerful symbol, effective for a slighter though still a heavenward purpose; but the real sacrifice is that inner oblation in which the Divine All becomes himself the ritual action, the sacrifice and every single circumstance of the sacrifice. All the working and forms of that inner rite are the self-ordinance and self-expression of his power in us mounting by our aspiration towards the source of its energies. The Divine Inhabitant becomes himself the flame and the offering, because the flame is the Godward will and that will is God himself within us. And the offering too is form and force of the constituent Godhead in our nature and being; all that has been received from him is given up to the service and the worship of its own Reality,

³ IX. 15.

its own supreme Truth and Origin. The Divine Thinker becomes himself the sacred mantra; it is the Light of his being that expresses itself in the thought directed Godward and is effective in the revealing word of splendour that enshrines the thought's secret and in the rhythm that repeats for man the rhythms of the Eternal. The illumining Godhead is himself the Veda and that which is made known by the Veda. He is both the knowledge and the object of the knowledge. The Rik, the Yajur, the Sama, the word of illumination which lights up the mind with the rays of knowledge, the word of power for the right ordaining of action, the word of calm and harmonious attainment for the bringing of the divine desire of the spirit, are themselves the Brahman, the Godhead. The mantra of the divine Consciousness brings its light of revelation, the mantra of the divine Power its will of effectuation, the mantra of the divine Ananda its equal fulfilment of the spiritual delight of existence. All word and thought are an outflowering of the great OM,—OM, the Word, the Eternal. Manifest in the forms of sensible objects, manifest in that conscious play of creative self-conception of which forms and objects are the figures, manifest behind in the self-gathered superconscious power of the Infinite, OM is the sovereign source, seed, womb of thing and idea, form and name,—it is itself, integrally, the supreme Intangible, the original Unity, the timeless Mystery self-existent above all manifestation in supernal being.⁴ This sacrifice is therefore at once works and adoration and knowledge.⁵

To the soul that thus knows, adores, offers up all its workings in a great self-surrender of its being to the Eternal, God is all and all is the Godhead. It knows God as the Father of this world who nourishes and cherishes and watches over his children. It knows God as the divine Mother who holds us in her bosom, lavishes upon us the sweetness of her love and fills the universe with her forms of beauty. It knows him as the first Creator from

⁴ AUM,—A the spirit of the gross and external, Virat, U the spirit of the subtle and internal, Taijasa, M the spirit of the secret superconscious omnipotence, Prajna, OM the Absolute, Turiya.—*Mandukya Upanishad*.

⁵ IX. 16-17.

whom has originated all that originates and creates in space and time and relation. It knows him as the Master and ordainer of all universal and of every individual dispensation. The world and fate and uncertain eventuality cannot terrify, the aspect of suffering and evil cannot bewilder the man who has surrendered himself to the Eternal. God to the soul that sees is the path and God is the goal of his journey, a path in which there is no self-losing and a goal to which his wisely guided steps are surely arriving at every moment. He knows the Godhead as the master of his and all being, the upholder of his nature, the husband of the nature-soul, its lover and cherisher, the inner witness of all his thoughts and actions. God is his house and country, the refuge of his seekings and desires, the wise and close and benignant friend of all beings. All birth and status and destruction of apparent existences is to his vision and experience the One who brings forward, maintains and withdraws his temporal self-manifestation in its system of perpetual recurrences. He alone is the imperishable seed and origin of all that seem to be born and perish and their eternal resting-place in their non-manifestation. It is he that burns in the heat of the sun and the flame; it is he who is the plenty of the rain and its withholding; he is all this physical Nature and her workings. Death is his mask and immortality is his self-revelation. All that we call existent is he and all that we look upon as non-existent still is there secret in the Infinite and is part of the mysterious being of the Ineffable.⁶

Nothing but the highest knowledge and adoration, no other way than an entire self-giving and surrender to this Highest who is all, will bring us to the Highest. Other religion, other worship, other knowledge, other seeking has always its fruits, but these are transient and limited to the enjoyment of divine symbols and appearances. There are always open for our following according to the balance of our mentality an outer and an inmost knowledge, an outer and an inmost seeking. Outward religion is the worship of an outward deity and the pursuit of an external beatitude: its devotees purify their conduct from sin and attain

⁶ IX. 17-19.

to an active ethical righteousness in order to satisfy the fixed law, the Shastra, the external dispensation; they perform the ceremonial symbol of the outer communion. But their object is to secure after the mortal pleasure and pain of earthly life the bliss of heavenly worlds, a greater happiness than earth can give but still a personal and mundane enjoyment though in a larger world than the field of this limited and suffering terrestrial nature. And to that to which they aspire, they attain by faith and right endeavour; for material existence and earthly activities are not the whole scope of our personal becoming or the whole formula of the cosmos. Other worlds there are of a larger felicity, *svargalokam visālam*. Thus the Vedic ritualist of old learned the exoteric sense of the triple Veda, purified himself from sin, drank the wine of communion with the gods and sought by sacrifice and good deeds the rewards of heaven. This firm belief in a Beyond and this seeking of a diviner world secures to the soul in its passing the strength to attain to the joys of heaven on which its faith and seeking were centred: but the return to mortal existence imposes itself because the true aim of that existence has not been found and realised. Here and not elsewhere the highest Godhead has to be found, the soul's divine nature developed out of the imperfect physical human nature and through unity with God and man and universe the whole large truth of being discovered and lived and made visibly wonderful. That completes the long cycle of our becoming and admits us to a supreme result; that is the opportunity given to the soul by the human birth and, until that is accomplished, it cannot cease. The God-lover advances constantly towards this ultimate necessity of our birth in cosmos through a concentrated love and adoration by which he makes the supreme and universal Divine the whole object of his living — not either egoistic terrestrial satisfaction or the celestial worlds — and the whole object of his thought and his seeing. To see nothing but the Divine, to be at every moment in union with him, to love him in all creatures and have the delight of him in all things is the whole condition of his spiritual existence. His God-vision does not divorce him from life, nor does he miss anything of the fullness of life; for God himself becomes the spontaneous

bringer to him of every good and of all his inner and outer getting and having, *yoga-kṣemāṁ vahāmyaham*. The joy of heaven and the joy of earth are only a small shadow of his possessions; for as he grows into the Divine, the Divine too flows out upon him with all the light, power and joy of an infinite existence.⁷

Ordinary religion is a sacrifice to partial godheads other than the integral Divinity. The Gita takes its direct examples from the old Vedic religion on its exoteric side as it had then developed; it describes this outward worship as a sacrifice to other godheads, *anya-devatāḥ*, to the gods, or to the divinised Ancestors, or to elemental powers and spirits, *devān*, *pitṛn*, *bhūtāni*. Men consecrate their life and works ordinarily to partial powers or aspects of the divine Existence as they see or conceive them — mostly powers and aspects that ensoul to them things prominent in Nature and man or else reflect to them their own humanity in a divine exceeding symbol. If they do this with faith, then their faith is justified; for the Divine accepts whatever symbol, form or conception of himself is present to the mind of the worshipper, *yāṁ yāṁ tanum śraddhayā arcati*, as it is said elsewhere, and meets him according to the faith that is in him. All sincere religious belief and practice is really a seeking after the one supreme and universal Godhead; for he always is the sole master of man's sacrifice and askesis and infinite enjoyer of his effort and aspiration. However small or low the form of the worship, however limited the idea of the godhead, however restricted the giving, the faith, the effort to get behind the veil of one's own ego-worship and limitation by material Nature, it yet forms a thread of connection between the soul of man and the All-soul and there is a response. Still the response, the fruit of the adoration and offering is according to the knowledge, the faith and the work and cannot exceed their limitations, and therefore from the point of view of the greater God-knowledge, which alone gives the entire truth of being and becoming, this inferior offering is not given according to the true and highest law of the sacrifice. It is not founded on a knowledge of the supreme Godhead in his integral

⁷ IX. 20-22.

existence and the true principles of his self-manifestation, but attaches itself to external and partial appearances,—*na mām abhijānanti tattvena*. Therefore its sacrifice too is limited in its object, largely egoistic in its motive, partial and mistaken in its action and its giving, *yajanti avidhi-pūrvakam*. An entire seeing of the Divine is the condition of an entire conscious self-surrender; the rest attains to things that are incomplete and partial, and has to fall back from them and return to enlarge itself in a greater seeking and wider God-experience. But to follow after the supreme and universal Godhead alone and utterly is to attain to all knowledge and result which other ways acquire, while yet one is not limited by any aspect, though one finds the truth of him in all aspects. This movement embraces all forms of divine being on its way to the supreme Purushottama.⁸

This absolute self-giving, this one-minded surrender is the devotion which the Gita makes the crown of its synthesis. All action and effort are by this devotion turned into an offering to the supreme and universal Godhead. “Whatever thou doest, whatever thou enjoyest, whatever thou sacrificest, whatever thou givest, whatever energy of tapasya, of the soul’s will or effort thou puttest forth, make it an offering unto Me.” Here the least, the slightest circumstance of life, the most insignificant gift out of oneself or what one has, the smallest action assumes a divine significance and it becomes an acceptable offering to the Godhead who makes it a means for his possession of the soul and life of the God-lover. The distinctions made by desire and ego then disappear. As there is no straining after the good result of one’s action, no shunning of unhappy result, but all action and result are given up to the Supreme to whom all work and fruit in the world belong for ever, there is no farther bondage. For by an absolute self-giving all egoistic desire disappears from the heart and there is a perfect union between the Divine and the individual soul through an inner renunciation of its separate living. All will, all action, all result become that of the Godhead, work divinely through the purified and illumined nature and no

⁸ IX. 23-25.

longer belong to the limited personal ego. The finite nature thus surrendered becomes a free channel of the Infinite; the soul in its spiritual being, uplifted out of the ignorance and the limitation, returns to its oneness with the Eternal. The Divine Eternal is the inhabitant in all existences; he is equal in all and the equal friend, father, mother, creator, lover, supporter of all creatures. He is the enemy of none and he is the partial lover of none; none has he cast out, none has he eternally condemned, none has he favoured by any despotism of arbitrary caprice: all at last equally come to him through their circlings in the ignorance. But it is only this perfect adoration that can make this indwelling of God in man and man in God a conscious thing and an engrossing and perfect union. Love of the Highest and a total self-surrender are the straight and swift way to this divine oneness.⁹

The equal Divine Presence in all of us makes no other preliminary condition, if once this integral self-giving has been made in faith and in sincerity and with a fundamental completeness. All have access to this gate, all can enter into this temple: our mundane distinctions disappear in the mansion of the All-lover. There the virtuous man is not preferred, nor the sinner shut out from the Presence; together by this road the Brahmin pure of life and exact in observance of the law and the outcaste born from a womb of sin and sorrow and rejected of men can travel and find an equal and open access to the supreme liberation and the highest dwelling in the Eternal. Man and woman find their equal right before God; for the divine Spirit is no respecter of persons or of social distinctions and restrictions: all can go straight to him without intermediary or shackling condition. "If" says the divine Teacher "even a man of very evil conduct turns to me with a sole and entire love, he must be regarded as a saint, for the settled will of endeavour in him is a right and complete will. Swiftly he becomes a soul of righteousness and obtains eternal peace." In other words a will of entire self-giving opens wide all the gates of the spirit and brings in response an entire descent and self-giving of the Godhead to the human being, and that at

⁹ IX. 26-29.

once reshapes and assimilates everything in us to the law of the divine existence by a rapid transformation of the lower into the spiritual nature. The will of self-giving forces away by its power the veil between God and man; it annuls every error and annihilates every obstacle. Those who aspire in their human strength by effort of knowledge or effort of virtue or effort of laborious self-discipline, grow with much anxious difficulty towards the Eternal; but when the soul gives up its ego and its works to the Divine, God himself comes to us and takes up our burden. To the ignorant he brings the light of the divine knowledge, to the feeble the power of the divine will, to the sinner the liberation of the divine purity, to the suffering the infinite spiritual joy and Ananda. Their weakness and the stumbling of their human strength make no difference. "This is my word of promise," cries the voice of the Godhead to Arjuna, "that he who loves me shall not perish." Previous effort and preparation, the purity and the holiness of the Brahmin, the enlightened strength of the king-sage great in works and knowledge have their value, because they make it easier for the imperfect human creature to arrive at this wide vision and self-surrender; but even without this preparation all who take refuge in the divine Lover of man, the Vaishya once preoccupied with the narrowness of wealth-getting and the labour of production, the Shudra hampered by a thousand hard restrictions, woman shut in and stunted in her growth by the narrow circle society has drawn around her self-expansion, those too, *pāpa-yonayah*, on whom their past Karma has imposed even the very worst of births, the outcaste, the Pariah, the Chandala, find at once the gates of God opening before them. In the spiritual life all the external distinctions of which men make so much because they appeal with an oppressive force to the outward mind, cease before the equality of the divine Light and the wide omnipotence of an impartial Power.¹⁰

The earthly world preoccupied with the dualities and bound to the immediate transient relations of the hour and the moment is for man, so long as he dwells here attached to these things

¹⁰ IX. 30-32.

and while he accepts the law they impose on him for the law of his life, a world of struggle, suffering and sorrow. The way to liberation is to turn from the outward to the inward, from the appearance created by the material life which lays its burden on the mind and imprisons it in the grooves of the life and the body to the divine Reality which waits to manifest itself through the freedom of the spirit. Love of the world, the mask, must change into the love of God, the Truth. Once this secret and inner Godhead is known and is embraced, the whole being and the whole life will undergo a sovereign uplifting and a marvellous transmutation. In place of the ignorance of the lower Nature absorbed in its outward works and appearances the eye will open to the vision of God everywhere, to the unity and universality of the spirit. The world's sorrow and pain will disappear in the bliss of the All-blissful; our weakness and error and sin will be changed into the all-embracing and all-transforming strength, truth and purity of the Eternal. To make the mind one with the divine consciousness, to make the whole of our emotional nature one love of God everywhere, to make all our works one sacrifice to the Lord of the worlds and all our worship and aspiration one adoration of him and self-surrender, to direct the whole self Godwards in an entire union is the way to rise out of a mundane into a divine existence. This is the Gita's teaching of divine love and devotion, in which knowledge, works and the heart's longing become one in a supreme unification, a merging of all their divergences, an intertwining of all their threads, a high fusion, a wide identifying movement.¹¹

¹¹ IX. 33-34.

The Supreme Word of the Gita

WE HAVE now got to the inmost kernel of the Gita's Yoga, the whole living and breathing centre of its teaching. We can see now quite clearly that the ascent of the limited human soul when it withdraws from the ego and the lower nature into the immutable Self calm, silent and stable, was only a first step, an initial change. And now too we can see why the Gita from the first insisted on the Ishwara, the Godhead in the human form, who speaks always of himself, "*aham, mām,*" as of some great secret and omnipresent Being, lord of all the worlds and master of the human soul, one who is greater even than that immutable self-existence which is still and unmoved for ever and abides for ever untouched by the subjective and objective appearances of the natural universe.

All Yoga is a seeking after the Divine, a turn towards union with the Eternal. According to the adequacy of our perception of the Divine and the Eternal will be the way of the seeking, the depth and fullness of the union and the integrality of the realisation. Man, the mental being, approaches the Infinite through his finite mind and has to open some near gate of this finite upon that Infinite. He seeks for some conception on which his mind is able to seize, selects some power of his nature which by force of an absolute self-heightening can reach out and lay its touch on the infinite Truth that in itself is beyond his mental comprehension. Some face of that infinite Truth — for, because it is infinite, it has numberless faces, words of its meaning, self-suggestions — he attempts to see, so that by attaching himself to it he can arrive through direct experience to the immeasurable reality it figures. However narrow the gate may be, he is satisfied if it offers some prospect into the wideness which attracts him, if it sets him on the way to the fathomless profundity and unreachable heights of that which calls to his spirit. And as he approaches it, so it

receives him, *ye yathā mām prapadyante*.

Philosophic mind attempts to attain to the Eternal by an abstractive knowledge. The business of knowledge is to comprehend and for the finite intellect that means to define and determine. But the only way to determine the indeterminable is by some kind of universal negation, *neti neti*. Therefore the mind proceeds to exclude from the conception of the Eternal all that offers itself as limitable by the senses and the heart and the understanding. An entire opposition is made between the Self and the not-self, between an eternal, immutable, indefinable self-existence and all forms of existence,—between Brahman and Maya, between the ineffable Reality and all that undertakes to express, but cannot express the Ineffable,—between Karma and Nirvana, between the ever continuous but ever impermanent action and conception of the universal Energy and some absolute ineffable supreme Negation of its action and conception which is empty of all life and mentality and dynamic significance. That strong drive of knowledge towards the Eternal leads away from everything that is transient. It negates life in order to return to its source, cuts away from us all that we seem to be in order to get from it to the nameless and impersonal reality of our being. The desires of the heart, the works of the will and the conceptions of the mind are rejected; even in the end knowledge itself is negated and abolished in the Identical and Unknowable. By the way of an increasing quietude ending in an absolute passivity the Maya-created soul or the bundle of associations we call ourselves enters into annihilation of its idea of personality, makes an end of the lie of living, disappears into Nirvana.

But this difficult abstractive method of self-negation, however it may draw to it some exceptional natures, cannot satisfy universally the embodied soul in man, because it does not give an outlet to all the straining of his complex nature towards the perfect Eternal. Not only his abstracting contemplative intellect but his yearning heart, his active will, his positive mind in search of some Truth to which his existence and the existence of the world is a manifold key, have their straining towards the Eternal and Infinite and seek to find in it their divine Source and the jus-

tification of their being and their nature. From this need arise the religions of love and works, whose strength is that they satisfy and lead Godwards the most active and developed powers of our humanity,— for only by starting from these can knowledge be effective. Even Buddhism with its austere and uncompromising negation both of subjective self and objective things had still to found itself initially on a divine discipline of works and to admit as a substitute for bhakti the spiritualised emotionalism of a universal love and compassion, since so only could it become an effective way for mankind, a truly liberating religion. Even illusionist Mayavada with its ultralogical intolerance of action and the creations of mentality had to allow a provisional and practical reality to man and the universe and to God in the world in order to have a first foothold and a feasible starting-point; it had to affirm what it denied in order to give some reality to man's bondage and to his effort for liberation.

But the weakness of the kinetic and the emotional religions is that they are too much absorbed in some divine Personality and in the divine values of the finite. And, even when they have a conception of the infinite Godhead, they do not give us the full satisfaction of knowledge because they do not follow it out into its most ultimate and supernal tendencies. These religions fall short of a complete absorption in the Eternal and the perfect union by identity,— and yet to that identity in some other way, if not in the abstractive, since there all oneness has its basis, the spirit that is in man must one day arrive. On the other hand, the weakness of a contemplative quietistic spirituality is that it arrives at this result by a too absolute abstraction and in the end it turns into a nothing or a fiction the human soul whose aspiration was yet all the time the whole sense of this attempt at union; for without the soul and its aspiration liberation and union could have no meaning. The little that this way of thinking recognises of his other powers of existence, it relegates to an inferior preliminary action which never arrives at any full or satisfying realisation in the Eternal and Infinite. Yet these things too which it restricts unduly, the potent will, the strong yearning of love, the positive light and all-embracing intuition

of the conscious mental being are from the Divine, represent essential powers of him and must have some justification in their Source and some dynamic way of self-fulfilment in him. No God-knowledge can be integral, perfect or universally satisfying which leaves unfulfilled their absolute claim, no wisdom utterly wise which in its intolerant asceticism of search negates or in the pride of pure knowledge belittles the spiritual reality behind these ways of the Godhead.

The greatness of the central thought of the Gita in which all its threads are gathered up and united, consists in the synthetic value of a conception which recognises the whole nature of the soul of man in the universe and validates by a large and wise unification its many-sided need of the supreme and infinite Truth, Power, Love, Being to which our humanity turns in its search for perfection and immortality and some highest joy and power and peace. There is a strong and wide endeavour towards a comprehensive spiritual view of God and man and universal existence. Not indeed that everything without any exception is seized in these eighteen chapters, no spiritual problem left for solution; but still so large a scheme is laid out that we have only to fill in, to develop, to modify, to stress, to follow out points, to work out hint and illuminate adumbration in order to find a clue to any further claim of our intelligence and need of our spirit. The Gita itself does not evolve any quite novel solution out of its own questionings. To arrive at the comprehensiveness at which it aims, it goes back behind the great philosophical systems to the original Vedanta of the Upanishads; for there we have the widest and profoundest extant synthetic vision of spirit and man and cosmos. But what is in the Upanishads undeveloped to the intelligence because wrapped up in a luminous kernel of intuitive vision and symbolic utterance, the Gita brings out in the light of a later intellectual thinking and distinctive experience.

In the frame of its synthesis it admits the seeking of the abstractive thinkers for the Indefinable, *anirdeśyam*, the ever unmanifest Immutable, *avyaktam akṣaram*. Those who devote themselves to this search, find, they also, the Purushottama, the supreme Divine Person, *mām*, the Spirit and highest Soul

and Lord of things. For his utmost self-existent way of being is indeed an unthinkable, *acintyārūpam*, an unimaginable positive, an absolute quintessence of all absolutes far beyond the determination of the intelligence. The method of negative passivity, quietude, renunciation of life and works by which men feel after this intangible Absolute is admitted and ratified in the Gita's philosophy, but only with a minor permissive sanction. This negating knowledge approaches the Eternal by one side only of the truth and that side the most difficult to reach and follow for the embodied soul in Nature, *duḥkham dehavadbhīr avāpyate*; it proceeds by a highly specialised, even an unnecessarily arduous way, "narrow and difficult to tread as a razor's edge." Not by denying all relations, but through all relations is the Divine Infinite naturally approachable to man and most easily, widely, intimately seizable. This seeing is not after all the largest or the truest truth that the Supreme is without any relations with the mental, vital, physical existence of man in the universe, *avyavahāryam*, nor that what is described as the empirical truth of things, the truth of relations, *vyavahāra*, is altogether the opposite of the highest spiritual truth, *paramārtha*. On the contrary there are a thousand relations by which the supreme Eternal is secretly in contact and union with our human existence and by all essential ways of our nature and of the world's nature, *sarvabhāvena*, can that contact be made sensible and that union made real to our soul, heart, will, intelligence, spirit. Therefore is this other way natural and easy for man, *sukham āptum*. God does not make himself difficult of approach to us: only one thing is needed, one demand made on us, the single indomitable will to break through the veil of our ignorance and the whole, the persistent seeking of the mind and heart and life for that which is all the time near to it, within it, its own soul of being and spiritual essence and the secret of its personality and its impersonality, its self and its nature. This is our one difficulty; the rest the Master of our existence will himself see to and accomplish, *aham tvāṁ mokṣayisyāmi mā śucah*.

In the very part of its teaching in which the Gita's synthesis leans most towards the side of pure knowledge, we have

seen that it constantly prepares for this fuller truth and more pregnant experience. Indeed, it is implied in the very form the Gita gives to the realisation of the self-existent Immutable. That immutable Self of all existences seems indeed to stand back from any active intervention in the workings of Nature; but it is not void of all relation whatever and remote from all connection. It is our witness and supporter; it gives a silent and impersonal sanction; it has even an impassive enjoyment. The many-sided action of Nature is still possible even when the soul is poised in that calm self-existence: for the witness soul is the immutable Purusha, and Purusha has always some relation with Prakriti. But now the reason of this double aspect of silence and of activity is revealed in its entire significance,—because the silent all-pervading Self is only one side of the truth of the divine Being. He who pervades the world as the one unchanging self that supports all its mutations, is equally the Godhead in man, the Lord in the heart of every creature, the conscient Cause and Master of all our subjective becoming and all our inward-taking and outward-going objectivised action. The Ishwara of the Yogins is one with the Brahman of the seeker of knowledge, one supreme and universal Spirit, one supreme and universal Godhead.

This Godhead is not the limited personal God of so many exoteric religions; for those are all only partial and outward formations of this other, this creative and directive, this personal side of his complete truth of existence. This is the one supreme Person, Soul, Being, Purusha of whom all godheads are aspects, all individual personality a limited development in cosmic Nature. This Godhead is not a particularised name and form of Divinity, *ista-devatā*, constructed by the intelligence or embodying the special aspiration of the worshipper. All such names and forms are only powers and faces of the one Deva who is the universal Lord of all worshippers and all religions: but this is itself that universal Deity, *deva-deva*. This Ishwara is not a reflection of the impersonal and indeterminable Brahman in illusive Maya: for from beyond all cosmos as well as within it he rules and is the Lord of the worlds and their creatures. He is

Parabrahman who is Parameshwara, supreme Lord because he is the supreme Self and Spirit, and from his highest original existence he originates and governs the universe, not self-deceived, but with an all-knowing omnipotence. Nor is the working of his divine Nature in the cosmos an illusion whether of his or our consciousness. The only illusive Maya is the ignorance of the lower Prakriti which is not a creator of non-existent things on the impalpable background of the One and Absolute, but because of its blind encumbered and limited working misrepresents to the human mind by the figure of ego and other inadequate figures of mind, life and matter the greater sense, the deeper realities of existence. There is a supreme, a divine Nature which is the true creatrix of the universe. All creatures and all objects are becomings of the one divine Being; all life is a working of the power of the one Lord; all nature is a manifestation of the one Infinite. He is the Godhead in man; the Jiva is spirit of his Spirit. He is the Godhead in the universe; this world in Space and Time is his phenomenal self-extension.

In the unrolling of this comprehensive vision of existence and super-existence the Yoga of the Gita finds its unified significance and unexampled amplitude. This supreme Godhead is the one unchanging imperishable Self in all that is; therefore to the spiritual sense of this unchanging imperishable self man has to awake and to unify with it his inner impersonal being. He is the Godhead in man who originates and directs all his workings; therefore man has to awake to the Godhead within himself, to know the divinity he houses, to rise out of all that veils and obscures it and to become united with this inmost Self of his self, this greater consciousness of his consciousness, this hidden Master of all his will and works, this Being within him who is the fount and object of all his various becoming. He is the Godhead whose divine nature, origin of all that we are, is thickly veiled by these lower natural derivations; therefore man has to get back from his lower apparent existence, imperfect and mortal, to his essential divine nature of immortality and perfection. This Godhead is one in all things that are, the self who lives in all and the self in whom all live and move; therefore man has to

discover his spiritual unity with all creatures, to see all in the self and the self in all beings, even to see all things and creatures as himself, *ātmaupamyaṇa sarvatra*, and accordingly think, feel and act in all his mind, will and living. This Godhead is the origin of all that is here or elsewhere and by his Nature he has become all these innumerable existences, *abhūt sarvāṇi bhūtāṇi*; therefore man has to see and adore the One in all things animate and inanimate, to worship the manifestation in sun and star and flower, in man and every living creature, in the forms and forces, qualities and powers of Nature, *vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti*. He has to make himself by divine vision and divine sympathy and finally by a strong inner identity one universality with the universe. A passive relationless identity excludes love and action, but this larger and richer oneness fulfils itself by works and by a pure emotion: it becomes the source and continent and substance and motive and divine purpose of all our acts and feelings. *Kasmai devāya haviṣā vidhema*, to what Godhead shall we give all our life and activities as an offering? This is that Godhead, this the Lord who claims our sacrifice. A passive relationless identity excludes the joy of adoration and devotion; but bhakti is the very soul and heart and summit of this richer, completer, more intimate union. This Godhead is the fulfilment of all relations, father, mother, lover, friend and refuge of the soul of every creature. He is the one supreme and universal Deva, Atman, Purusha, Brahman, Ishwara of the secret wisdom. He has manifested the world in himself in all these ways by his divine Yoga: its multitudinous existences are one in him and he is one in them in many aspects. To awaken to the revelation of him in all these ways together is man's side of the same divine Yoga.

To make it perfectly and indisputably clear that this is the supreme and entire truth of his teaching, this the integral knowledge which he had promised to reveal, the divine Avatar declares, in a brief reiteration of the upshot of all that he has been saying, that this and no other is his supreme word, *paramām vacaḥ*. "Again hearken to my supreme word," *bhūya eva śṛṇu me paramām vacaḥ*. This supreme word of the Gita is, we find, first the explicit and unmistakable declaration that the highest

worship and highest knowledge of the Eternal are the knowledge and the adoration of him as the supreme and divine Origin of all that is in existence and the mighty Lord of the world and its peoples of whose being all things are the becomings. It is, secondly, the declaration of a unified knowledge and bhakti as the supreme Yoga; that is the destined and the natural way given to man to arrive at union with the eternal Godhead. And to make more significant this definition of the way, to give an illuminating point to this highest importance of bhakti founded upon and opening to knowledge and made the basis and motive-power for divinely appointed works, the acceptance of it by the heart and mind of the disciple is put as a condition for the farther development by which the final command to action comes at last to be given to the human instrument, Arjuna. "I will speak this supreme word to thee" says the Godhead "from my will for thy soul's good, now that thy heart is taking delight in me," *te priyamāñāya vakṣyāmi*. For this delight of the heart in God is the whole constituent and essence of true bhakti, *bhajanti priti-pūrvakam*. As soon as the supreme word is given, Arjuna is made to utter his acceptance of it and to ask for a practical way of seeing God in all things in Nature, and from that question immediately and naturally there develops the vision of the Divine as the Spirit of the universe and there arises the tremendous command to the world-action.¹

The idea of the Divine on which the Gita insists as the secret of the whole mystery of existence, the knowledge that leads to liberation, is one that bridges the opposition between the cosmic procession in Time and a supracosmic eternity without denying either of them or taking anything from the reality of either. It harmonises the pantheistic, the theistic and the highest transcendental terms of our spiritual conception and spiritual experience. The Divine is the unborn Eternal who has no origin; there is and can be nothing before him from which he proceeds, because he is one and timeless and absolute. "Neither the gods nor the great Rishis know any birth of me. . . . He who knows

¹ Gita, X. 1-18.

me as the unborn without origin . . . ” are the opening utterances of this supreme word. And it gives the high promise that this knowledge, not limiting, not intellectual, but pure and spiritual,—for the form and nature, if we can use such language, of this transcendental Being, his *svarūpa*, are necessarily unthinkable by the mind, *acintyārūpa*,—liberates mortal man from all confusion of ignorance and from all bondage of sin, suffering and evil, *yo vetti asammūḍhah sa martyesu sarva-pāpaiḥ pramuc-yate*. The human soul that can dwell in the light of this supreme spiritual knowledge is lifted by it beyond the ideative or sensible formulations of the universe. It rises into the ineffable power of an all-exceeding, yet all-fulfilling identity, the same beyond and here. This spiritual experience of the transcendental Infinite breaks down the limitations of the pantheistic conception of existence. The infinite of a cosmic monism which makes God and the universe one, tries to imprison the Divine in his world manifestation and leaves us that as our sole possible means of knowing him; but this experience liberates us into the timeless and spaceless Eternal. “Neither the Gods nor the Titans know thy manifestation” cries Arjuna in his reply: the whole universe or even numberless universes cannot manifest him, cannot contain his ineffable light and infinite greatness. All other lesser God-knowledge has its truth only by dependence on the ever unmanifested and ineffable reality of the transcendent Godhead.

But at the same time the divine Transcendence is not a negation, nor is it an Absolute empty of all relation to the universe. It is a supreme positive, it is an absolute of all absolutes. All cosmic relations derive from this Supreme; all cosmic existences return to it and find in it alone their true and immeasurable existence. “For I am altogether and in every way the origin of the gods and the great Rishis.” The gods are the great undying Powers and immortal Personalities who consciously inform, constitute, preside over the subjective and objective forces of the cosmos. The gods are spiritual forms of the eternal and original Deity who descend from him into the many processes of the world. Multitudinous, universal, the gods weave out of the primary principles of being and its thousand complexities the whole web

of this diversified existence of the One. All their own existence, nature, power, process proceeds in every way, in every principle, in its every strand from the truth of the transcendent Ineffable. Nothing is independently created here, nothing is caused self-sufficiently by these divine agents; everything finds its origin, cause, first spiritual reason for being and will to be in the absolute and supreme Godhead,—*aham ādiḥ sarvaśaḥ*. Nothing in the universe has its real cause in the universe; all proceeds from this supernal Existence.

The great Rishis, called here as in the Veda the seven original Seers, *maharṣayaḥ sapta pūrve*, the seven Ancients of the world, are intelligence-powers of that divine Wisdom which has evolved all things out of its own self-conscious infinitude, *prajñā purāṇī*, —developed them down the range of the seven principles of its own essence. These Rishis embody the all-upholding, all-illuminating, all-manifesting seven Thoughts of the Veda, *sapta dhiyāḥ*, —the Upanishad speaks of all things as being arranged in septettes, *sapta sapta*. Along with these are coupled the four eternal Manus, fathers of man, —for the active nature of the Godhead is fourfold and humanity expresses this nature in its fourfold character. These also, as their name implies, are mental beings. Creators of all this life that depends on manifest or latent mind for its action, from them are all these living creatures in the world; all are their children and offspring, *yeṣāṁ loka imāḥ prajāḥ*. And these great Rishis and these Manus are themselves perpetual mental becomings of the supreme Soul² and born out of his spiritual transcendence into cosmic Nature, —originators, but he the origin of all that originates in the universe. Spirit of all spirits, Soul of all souls, Mind of all mind, Life of all life, Substance of all form, this transcendent Absolute is no complete opposite of all we are, but on the contrary the originating and illuminating Absolute of all the principles and powers of our and the world's being and nature.

This transcendent Origin of our existence is not separated

² *mad-bhāvā mānasā jātāḥ*.

from us by any unbridgeable gulf and does not disown the creatures that derive from him or condemn them to be only the figments of an illusion. He is the Being, all are his becomings. He does not create out of a void, out of a Nihil or out of an unsubstantial matrix of dream. Out of himself he creates, in himself he becomes; all are in his being and all is of his being. This truth admits and exceeds the pantheistic seeing of things. Vasudeva is all, *vāsudevah sarvam*; but Vasudeva is all that appears in the cosmos because he is too all that does not appear in it, all that is never manifested. His being is in no way limited by his becoming; he is in no degree bound by this world of relations. Even in becoming all he is still a Transcendence; even in assuming finite forms he is always the Infinite. Nature, Prakriti, is in her essence his spiritual power, self-power, *ātmāśakti*; this spiritual self-power develops infinite primal qualities of becoming in the inwardness of things and turns them into an external surface of form and action. For in her essential, secret and divine order the spiritual truth of each and all comes first, a thing of her deep identities; their psychological truth of quality and nature is dependent on the spiritual for all in it that is authentic, it derives from the spirit; least in necessity, last in order the objective truth of form and action derives from inner quality of nature and depends on it for all these variable presentations of existence here in the external order. Or in other words, the objective fact is only an expression of a sum of soul factors and these go back always to a spiritual cause of their appearance.

This finite outward becoming is an expressive phenomenon of the divine Infinite. Nature is, secondarily, the lower Nature, a subordinate variable development of a few selective combinations out of the many possibilities of the Infinite. Evolved out of essential and psychological quality of being and becoming, *svabhāva*, these combinations of form and energy, action and movement exist for a quite limited relation and mutual experience in the cosmic oneness. And in this lower, outward and apparent order of things Nature as an expressive power of the Godhead is disfigured by the perversions of an obscure cosmic Ignorance and her divine significances lost in the materialised,

separative and egoistic mechanism of our mental and vital experience. But still here also all is from the supreme Godhead, a birth, a becoming, an evolution,³ a process of development through action of Nature out of the Transcendent. *Aham sarvasya prabhavo mattah sarvam pravartate*; “I am the birth of everything and from me all proceeds into development of action and movement.” Not only is this true of all that we call good or praise and recognise as divine, all that is luminous, sattvic, ethical, peace-giving, spiritually joy-giving, “understanding and knowledge and freedom from the bewilderment of the Ignorance, forgiveness and truth and self-government and calm of inner control, non-injuring and equality, contentment and austerity and giving.” It is true also of the oppositions that perplex the mortal mind and bring in ignorance and its bewilderment, “grief and pleasure, coming into being and destruction, fear and fearlessness, glory and ingloriousness” with all the rest of the interplay of light and darkness, all the myriad mixed threads that quiver so painfully and yet with a constant stimulation through the entanglement of our nervous mind and its ignorant subjectivities. All here in their separate diversities are subjective becomings of existences in the one great Becoming and they get their birth and being from Him who transcends them. The Transcendent knows and originates these things, but is not caught as in a web in that diversified knowledge and is not overcome by his creation. We must observe here the emphatic collocation of the three words from the verb *bhū*, to become, *bhavanti*, *bhāvāḥ*, *bhūtānām*. All existences are becomings of the Divine, *bhūtāni*; all subjective states and movements are his and their psychological becomings, *bhāvāḥ*. These even, our lesser subjective conditions and their apparent results no less than the highest spiritual states, are all becomings from the supreme Being,⁴ *bhavanti matta eva*. The Gita recognises and stresses the distinction between Being and becoming, but does

³ *prabhava*, *bhāva*, *pravṛtti*.

⁴ Cf. the Upanishad, *ātmā eva abhūt sarvāṇī bhūtāni*, the Self has become all existences, with this contained significance in the choice of the words, the Self-existent has become all these becomings.

not turn it into an opposition. For that would be to abrogate the universal oneness. The Godhead is one in his transcendence, one all-supporting Self of things, one in the unity of his cosmic nature. These three are one Godhead; all derives from him, all becomes from his being, all is eternal portion or temporal expression of the Eternal. In the Transcendence, in the Absolute, if we are to follow the Gita, we must look, not for a supreme negation of all things, but for the positive key of their mystery, the reconciling secret of their existence.

But there is another supreme reality of the Infinite that must also be recognised as an indispensable element of the liberating knowledge. This reality is that of the transcendent downlook as well as the close immanent presence of the divine government of the universe. The Supreme who becomes all creation, yet infinitely transcends it, is not a will-less cause aloof from his creation. He is not an involuntary originator who disowns all responsibility for these results of his universal Power or casts them upon an illusive consciousness entirely different from his own or leaves them to a mechanical Law or to a Demiurge or to a Manichean conflict of Principles. He is not an aloof and indifferent Witness who waits impassively for all to abolish itself or return to its unmoved original principle. He is the mighty lord of the worlds and peoples, *loka-maheśvara*, and governs all not only from within but from above, from his supreme transcendence. Cosmos cannot be governed by a Power that does not transcend cosmos. A divine government implies the free mastery of an omnipotent Ruler and not an automatic force or mechanical law of determinative becoming limited by the apparent nature of the cosmos. This is the theistic seeing of the universe, but it is no shrinking and gingerly theism afraid of the world's contradictions, but one which sees God as the omniscient and omnipotent, the sole original Being who manifests in himself all, whatever it may be, good and evil, pain and pleasure, light and darkness as stuff of his own existence and governs himself what in himself he has manifested. Unaffected by its oppositions, unbound by his creation, exceeding, yet intimately related to this Nature and closely one with her creatures, their

Spirit, Self, highest Soul, Lord, Lover, Friend, Refuge, he is ever leading them from within them and from above through the mortal appearances of ignorance and suffering and sin and evil, ever leading each through his nature and all through universal Nature towards a supreme light and bliss and immortality and transcendence. This is the fullness of the liberating knowledge. It is a knowledge of the Divine within us and in the world as at the same time a transcendent Infinite. An Absolute who has become all that is by his divine Nature, his effective power of Spirit, he governs all from his transcendence. He is intimately present within every creature and the cause, ruler, director of all cosmic happenings and yet is he far too great, mighty and infinite to be limited by his creation.

This character of the knowledge is emphasised in three separate verses of promise. "Whosoever knows me," says the Godhead, "as the unborn who is without origin, mighty lord of the worlds and peoples, lives unbewildered among mortals and is delivered from all sin and evil. . . . Whosoever knows in its right principles this my pervading lordship and this my Yoga (the divine Yoga, *aisvara yoga*, by which the Transcendent is one with all existences, even while more than them all, and dwells in them and contains them as becoming of his own Nature), unites himself to me by an untrembling Yoga. . . . The wise hold me for the birth of each and all, hold each and all as developing from me its action and movement, and so holding they love and adore me . . . and I give them the Yoga of the understanding by which they come to me and I destroy for them the darkness which is born of the ignorance." These results must arise inevitably from the very nature of the knowledge and from the very nature of the Yoga which converts that knowledge into spiritual growth and spiritual experience. For all the perplexity of man's mind and action, all the stumbling, insecurity and affliction of his mind, his will, his ethical turn, his emotional, sensational and vital urgings can be traced back to the groping and bewildered cognition and volition natural to his sense-obscured mortal mind in the body, *sammoha*. But when he sees the divine Origin of all things, when he looks steadily from the cosmic appearance to its transcendent

Reality and back from that Reality to the appearance, he is then delivered from this bewilderment of the mind, will, heart and senses, he walks enlightened and free, *asammūḍhah martyeṣu*. Assigning to everything its supernal and real and not any longer only its present and apparent value, he finds the hidden links and connections; he consciously directs all life and act to their high and true object and governs them by the light and power which comes to him from the Godhead within him. Thus he escapes from the wrong cognition, the wrong mental and volitional reaction, the wrong sensational reception and impulse which here originate sin and error and suffering, *sarva-pāpaib pramucyate*. For living thus in the transcendent and universal he sees his own and every other individuality in their greater values and is released from the falsehood and ignorance of his separative and egoistic will and knowledge. That is always the essence of the spiritual liberation.

The wisdom of the liberated man is not then, in the view of the Gita, a consciousness of abstracted and unrelated impersonality, a do-nothing quietude. For the mind and soul of the liberated man are firmly settled in a constant sense, an integral feeling of the pervasion of the world by the actuating and directing presence of the divine Master of the universe, *etāṁ vibhūtim mama yo vetti*. He is aware of his spirit's transcendence of the cosmic order, but he is aware also of his oneness with it by the divine Yoga, *yogāṁ ca mama*. And he sees each aspect of the transcendent, the cosmic and the individual existence in its right relation to the supreme Truth and puts all in their right place in the unity of the divine Yoga. He no longer sees each thing in its separateness,—the separate seeing that leaves all either unexplained or one-sided to the experiencing consciousness. Nor does he see all confusedly together,—the confused seeing that gives a wrong light and a chaotic action. Secure in the transcendence, he is not affected by the cosmic stress and the turmoil of Time and circumstance. Untroubled in the midst of all this creation and destruction of things, his spirit adheres to an unshaken and untrembling, an unvacillating Yoga of union with the eternal and spiritual in the universe. He watches through it all

the divine persistence of the Master of the Yoga and acts out of a tranquil universality and oneness with all things and creatures. And this close contact with all things implies no involution of soul and mind in the separative lower nature, because his basis of spiritual experience is not the inferior phenomenal form and movement but the inner All and the supreme Transcendence. He becomes of like nature and law of being with the Divine, *sādharmyam āgataḥ*, transcendent even in universality of spirit, universal even in the individuality of mind, life and body. By this Yoga once perfected, undeviating and fixed, *avikampena yogena yujyate*, he is able to take up whatever poise of nature, assume whatever human condition, do whatever world-action without any fall from his oneness with the divine Self, without any loss of his constant communion with the Master of existence.⁵

This knowledge translated into the affective, emotional, temperamental plane becomes a calm love and intense adoration of the original and transcendental Godhead above us, the ever-present Master of all things here, God in man, God in Nature. It is at first a wisdom of the intelligence, the *buddhi*; but that is accompanied by a moved spiritualised state of the affective nature,⁶ *bhāva*. This change of the heart and mind is the beginning of a total change of all the nature. A new inner birth and becoming prepares us for oneness with the supreme object of our love and adoration, *madbhāvāya*. There is an intense delight of love in the greatness and beauty and perfection of this divine Being now seen everywhere in the world and above it, *prīti*. That deeper ecstasy assumes the place of the scattered and external pleasure of the mind in existence or rather it draws all other delight into it and transforms by a marvellous alchemy the mind's and the heart's feelings and all sense movements. The whole consciousness becomes full of the Godhead and replete with his answering consciousness; the whole life flows into one sea of bliss-experience. All the speech and thought of such God-lovers becomes a mutual utterance and understanding of the

⁵ *sarvathā vartamāno'pi sa yogī mayi vartate.*

⁶ *budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ*.

Divine. In that one joy is concentrated all the contentment of the being, all the play and pleasure of the nature. There is a continual union from moment to moment in the thought and memory, there is an unbroken continuity of the experience of oneness in the spirit. And from the moment that this inner state begins, even in the stage of imperfection, the Divine confirms it by the perfect Yoga of the will and intelligence. He uplifts the blazing lamp of knowledge within us, he destroys the ignorance of the separative mind and will, he stands revealed in the human spirit. By the Yoga of the will and intelligence founded on an illumined union of works and knowledge the transition was effected from our lower troubled mind-ranges to the immutable calm of the witnessing Soul above the active nature. But now by this greater yoga of the Buddhi founded on an illumined union of love and adoration with an all-comprehending knowledge the soul rises in a vast ecstasy to the whole transcendental truth of the absolute and all-originating Godhead. The Eternal is fulfilled in the individual spirit and individual nature; the individual spirit is exalted from birth in time to the infinitudes of the Eternal.

VIII

God in Power of Becoming

A VERY important step has been reached, a decisive statement of its metaphysical and psychological synthesis has been added to the development of the Gita's gospel of spiritual liberation and divine works. The Godhead has been revealed in thought to Arjuna; he has been made visible to the mind's search and the heart's seeing as the supreme and universal Being, the supernal and universal Person, the inward-dwelling Master of our existence for whom man's knowledge, will and adoration were seeking through the mists of the Ignorance. There remains only the vision of the multiple Virat Purusha to complete the revelation on one more of its many sides.

The metaphysical synthesis is complete. Sankhya has been admitted for the separation of the soul from the lower nature,—a separation that must be effected by self-knowledge through the discriminating reason and by transcendence of our subjection to the three gunas constituent of that nature. It has been completed and its limitations exceeded by a large revelation of the unity of the supreme Soul and supreme Nature, *para purusa*, *para prakrti*. Vedanta of the philosophers has been admitted for the self-effacement of the natural separative personality built round the ego. Its method has been used to replace the little personal by the large impersonal being, to annul the separative illusion in the unity of the Brahman and to substitute for the blind seeing of the ego the truer vision of all things in one Self and one Self in all things. Its truth has been completed by the impartial revelation of the Parabrahman from whom originate both the mobile and the immobile, the mutable and the immutable, the action and the silence. Its possible limitations have been transcended by the intimate revelation of the supreme Soul and Lord who becomes here in all Nature, manifests himself in all personality and puts forth the power of his Nature in all action. Yoga has

been admitted for the self-surrender of the will, mind, heart, all the psychological being to the Ishwara, the divine Lord of the nature. It has been completed by the revelation of the supernal Master of existence as the original Godhead of whom the Jiva is the partial being in Nature. Its possible limitations have been exceeded by the soul's seeing of all things as the Lord in the light of a perfect spiritual oneness.

There results an integral vision of the Divine Existent at once as the transcendent Reality, supracosmic origin of cosmos, as the impersonal Self of all things, calm continent of the cosmos, and as the immanent Divinity in all beings, personalities, objects, powers and qualities, the Immanent who is the constituent self, the effective nature and the inward and outward becoming of all existences. The Yoga of knowledge has been fulfilled sovereignly in this integral seeing and knowing of the One. The Yoga of works has been crowned by the surrender of all works to their Master,—for the natural man is now only an instrument of his will. The Yoga of love and adoration has been declared in its amplest forms. The intense consummation of knowledge and works, love conducts to a crowning union of soul and Oversoul in a highest amplitude. In that union the revelations of knowledge are made real to the heart as well as to the intelligence. In that union the difficult sacrifice of self in an instrumental action becomes the easy, free and blissful expression of a living oneness. The whole means of the spiritual liberation has been given; the whole foundation of the divine action has been constructed.

Arjuna accepts the entire knowledge that has thus been given to him by the divine Teacher. His mind is already delivered from its doubts and seekings; his heart, turned now from the outward aspect of the world, from its baffling appearance to its supreme sense and origin and its inner realities, is already released from sorrow and affliction and touched with the ineffable gladness of a divine revelation. The language which he is made to use in voicing his acceptance is such as to emphasise and insist once again on the profound integrality of this knowledge and its all-embracing finality and fullness. He accepts first the Avatar, the Godhead in man who is speaking to him as the supreme

Brahman, as the supracosmic All and Absolute of existence in which the soul can dwell when it rises out of this manifestation and this partial becoming to its source, *param brahma, param dhāma*. He accepts him as the supreme purity of the ever free Existence to which one arrives through the effacement of ego in the self's immutable impersonality calm and still for ever, *pavitram paramam*. He accepts him next as the one Permanent, the eternal Soul, the divine Purusha, *puruṣam sāśvatam̄ divyam*. He acclaims in him the original Godhead, adores the Unborn who is the pervading, indwelling, self-extending master of all existence, *ādi-devam ajam vibhum*. He accepts him therefore not only as that Wonderful who is beyond expression of any kind, for nothing is sufficient to manifest him,— “neither the Gods nor the Titans, O blessed Lord, know thy manifestation,” *na hi te bhagavan vyaktim̄ vidur devā na dānavāḥ*,— but as the lord of all existences and the one divine efficient cause of all their becoming, God of the gods from whom all godheads have sprung, master of the universe who manifests and governs it from above by the power of his supreme and his universal Nature, *bhūtabhāvana bhūtesa deva-deva jagat-pate*. And lastly he accepts him as that Vasudeva in and around us who is all things here by virtue of the world-pervading, all-inhabiting, all-constituting master powers of his becoming, *vibhūtayah*, “the sovereign powers of thy becoming by which thou standest pervading these worlds,” *yābbhir vibhūtibhir lokān imāṁs tvāṁ vyāpya tiṣṭhasi*.¹

He has accepted the truth with the adoration of his heart, the submission of his will and the understanding of his intelligence. He is already prepared to act as the divine instrument in this knowledge and with this self-surrender. But a desire for a deeper constant spiritual realisation has been awakened in his heart and will. This is a truth which is evident only to the supreme Soul in its own self-knowledge,— for, cries Arjuna, “thou alone, O Purushottama, knowest thyself by thyself,” *ātmanā ātmānam̄ vettha*. This is a knowledge that comes by spiritual identity and the unaided heart, will, intelligence of the natural man cannot

¹ Gita, X. 12-15.

arrive at it by their own motion and can only get at imperfect mental reflections that reveal less than they conceal and disfigure. This is a secret wisdom which one must hear from the seers who have seen the face of this Truth, have heard its word and have become one with it in self and spirit. "All the Rishis say this of thee and the divine seer Narada, Asita, Devala, Vyasa." Or else one must receive it from within by revelation and inspiration from the inner Godhead who lifts in us the blazing lamp of knowledge. *Svayañcaiva braviṣi me*, "and thou thyself sayest it to me." Once revealed, it has to be accepted by the assent of the mind, the consent of the will and the heart's delight and submission, the three elements of the complete mental faith, *śraddhā*. It is so that Arjuna has accepted it; "all this that thou sayest, my mind holds for the truth." But still there will remain the need of that deeper possession in the very self of our being out from its most intimate psychic centre, the soul's demand for that inexpressible permanent spiritual realisation of which the mental is only a preliminary or a shadow and without which there cannot be a complete union with the Eternal.

Now the way to arrive at that realisation has been given to Arjuna. And so far as regards the great self-evident divine principles, these do not baffle the mind; it can open to the idea of the supreme Godhead, to the experience of the immutable Self, to the direct perception of the immanent Divinity, to the contact of the conscient universal Being. One can, once the mind is illumined with the idea, follow readily the way and, with whatever preliminary difficult effort to exceed the normal mental perceptions, come in the end to the self-experience of these essential truths that stand behind our and all existence, *ātmanā ātmānam*. One can do it with this readiness because these, once conceived, are evidently divine realities; there is nothing in our mental associations to prevent us from admitting God in these high aspects. But the difficulty is to see him in the apparent truths of existence, to detect him in this fact of Nature and in these disguising phenomena of the world's becoming; for here all is opposed to the sublimity of this unifying conception. How can we consent to see the Divine as man and animal being and

inanimate object, in the noble and the low, the sweet and the terrible, the good and the evil? If, assenting to some idea of God extended in the things of the cosmos, we see him in ideal light of knowledge and greatness of power and charm of beauty and beneficence of love and ample largeness of spirit, how shall we avoid the breaking of the unity by their opposites which in actual fact cling to these high things and envelop them and obscure? And if in spite of the limitations of human mind and nature we can see God in the man of God, how shall we see him in those who oppose him and represent in act and nature all that we conceive of as undivine? If Narayana is without difficulty visible in the sage and the saint, how shall he be easily visible to us in the sinner, the criminal, the harlot and the outcaste? To all the differentiations of the world-existence the sage, looking everywhere for the supreme purity and oneness, returns the austere cry, "not this, not this," *neti neti*. Even if to many things in the world we give a willing or reluctant assent and admit the Divine in the universe, still before most must not the mind persist in that cry "not this, not this"? Here constantly the assent of the understanding, the consent of the will and the heart's faith become difficult to a human mentality anchored always on phenomenon and appearance. At least some compelling indications are needed, some links and bridges, some supports to the difficult effort at oneness.

Arjuna, though he accepts the revelation of Vasudeva as all and though his heart is full of the delight of it, — for already he finds that it is delivering him from the perplexity and stumbling differentiations of his mind which was crying for a clue, a guiding truth amid the bewildering problems of a world of oppositions, and it is to his hearing the nectar of immortality, *amṛtam*, — yet feels the need of such supports and indices. He feels that they are indispensable to overcome the difficulty of a complete and firm realisation; for how else can this knowledge be made a thing of the heart and life? He requires guiding indications, asks Krishna even for a complete and detailed enumeration of the sovereign powers of his becoming and desires that nothing shall be left out of the vision, nothing remain to baffle him. "Thou

shouldst tell me" he says "of thy divine self-manifestations in thy sovereign power of becoming, *divyā ātma-vibhūtayah*, all without exception,—*āśeṣena*, nothing omitted,—thy Vibhutis by which thou pervadest these worlds and peoples. How shall I know thee, O Yogin, by thinking of thee everywhere at all moments and in what pre-eminent becomings should I think of thee?" This Yoga by which thou art one with all and one in all and all are becomings of thy being, all are pervading or pre-eminent or disguised powers of thy nature, tell me of it, he cries, in its detail and extent, and tell me ever more of it; it is nectar of immortality to me, and however much of it I hear, I am not satiated. Here we get an indication in the Gita of something which the Gita itself does not bring out expressly, but which occurs frequently in the Upanishads and was developed later on by Vaishnavism and Shaktism in a greater intensity of vision, man's possible joy of the Divine in the world-existence, the universal Ananda, the play of the Mother, the sweetness and beauty of God's Lila.²

The divine Teacher accedes to the request of the disciple, but with an initial reminder that a full reply is not possible. For God is infinite and his manifestation is infinite. The forms of his manifestation too are innumerable. Each form is a symbol of some divine power, *vibhūti*, concealed in it and to the seeing eye each finite carries in it its own revelation of the infinite. Yes, he says, I will tell thee of my divine Vibhutis, but only in some of my principal pre-eminences and as an indication and by the example of things in which thou canst most readily see the power of the Godhead, *prādhānyataḥ, uddeśataḥ*. For there is no end to the innumerable detail of the Godhead's self-extension in the universe, *nāsti anto vistarasya me*. This reminder begins the passage and is repeated at the end in order to give it a greater and unmistakable emphasis. And then throughout the rest of the chapter³ we get a summary description of these principal indications, these pre-eminent signs of the divine force present in the things and persons of the universe. It seems at first as

² X. 16-18. ³ X. 19-42.

if they were given pell-mell, without any order, but still there is a certain principle in the enumeration, which, if it is once disengaged, can lead by a helpful guidance to the inner sense of the idea and its consequences. The chapter has been called the Vibhuti-Yoga, — an indispensable yoga. For while we must identify ourselves impartially with the universal divine Becoming in all its extension, its good and evil, perfection and imperfection, light and darkness, we must at the same time realise that there is an ascending evolutionary power in it, an increasing intensity of its revelation in things, a hierarchic secret something that carries us upward from the first concealing appearances through higher and higher forms towards the large ideal nature of the universal Godhead.

This summary enumeration begins with a statement of the primal principle that underlies all the power of this manifestation in the universe. It is this that in every being and object God dwells concealed and discoverable; he is housed as in a crypt in the mind and heart of every thing and creature, an inner self in the core of its subjective and its objective becoming, one who is the beginning and middle and end of all that is, has been or will be. For it is this inner divine Self hidden from the mind and heart which he inhabits, this luminous Inhabitant concealed from the view of the soul in Nature which he has put forth into Nature as his representative, who is all the time evolving the mutations of our personality in Time and our sensational existence in Space, — Time and Space that are the conceptual movement and extension of the Godhead in us. All is this self-seeing Soul, this self-representing Spirit. For ever from within all beings, from within all conscient and inconscient existences, this All-conscient develops his manifested self in quality and power, develops it in the forms of objects, in the instruments of our subjectivity, in knowledge and word and thinking, in the creations of the mind and in the passion and actions of the doer, in the measures of Time, in cosmic powers and godheads and in the forces of Nature, in plant life, in animal life, in human and superhuman beings.

If we look at things with this eye of vision unblinded by

differentiations of quality and quantity or by difference of values and oppositions of nature, we shall see that all things are in fact and can be nothing but powers of his manifestation, vibhutis of this universal Soul and Spirit, Yoga of this great Yогин, self-creations of this marvellous self-Creator. He is the unborn and the all-pervading Master of his own innumerable becomings in the universe, *ajo vibhuḥ*; all things are his powers and effectuations in his self-Nature, vibhutis. He is the origin of all they are, their beginning; he is their support in their ever-changing status, their middle; he is their end too, the culmination or the disintegration of each created thing in its cessation or its disappearance. He brings them out from his consciousness and is hidden in them, he withdraws them into his consciousness and they are hidden in him for a time or for ever. What is apparent to us is only a power of becoming of the One: what disappears from our sense and vision is effect of that power of becoming of the One. All classes, genera, species, individuals are such vibhutis. But since it is through power in his becoming that he is apparent to us, he is especially apparent in whatever is of a pre-eminent value or seems to act with a powerful and pre-eminent force. And therefore in each kind of being we can see him most in those in whom the power of nature of that kind reaches its highest, its leading, its most effectively self-revealing manifestation. These are in a special sense Vibhutis. Yet the highest power and manifestation is only a very partial revelation of the Infinite; even the whole universe is informed by only one degree of his greatness, illumined by one ray of his splendour, glorious with a faint hint of his delight and beauty. This is in sum the gist of the enumeration, the result we carry away from it, the heart of its meaning.

God is imperishable, beginningless, unending Time; this is his most evident Power of becoming and the essence of the whole universal movement. *Aham eva akṣayah kālah*. In that movement of Time and Becoming God appears to our conception or experience of him by the evidence of his works as the divine Power who ordains and sets all things in their place in the movement. In his form of Space it is he who fronts us

in every direction, million-bodied, myriad-minded, manifest in each existence; we see his faces on all sides of us. *Dhātā 'ham viśvato-mukhaḥ*. For simultaneously in all these many million persons and things, *sarva-bhūteṣu*, there works the mystery of his self and thought and force and his divine genius of creation and his marvellous art of formation and his impeccable ordering of relations and possibilities and inevitable consequences. He appears to us too in the universe as the universal spirit of Destruction, who seems to create only to undo his creations in the end,—“I am all-snatching Death,” *aham mr̥tyuḥ sarva-harab*. And yet his Power of becoming does not cease from its workings, for the force of rebirth and new creation ever keeps pace with the force of death and destruction,—“and I am too the birth of all that shall come into being.” The divine Self in things is the sustaining Spirit of the present, the withdrawing Spirit of the past, the creative Spirit of the future.

Then among all these living beings, cosmic godheads, super-human and human and subhuman creatures, and amid all these qualities, powers and objects, the chief, the head, the greatest in quality of each class is a special power of the becoming of the Godhead. I am, says the Godhead, Vishnu among the Adityas, Shiva among the Rudras, Indra among the gods, Prahlada among the Titans, Brihaspati the chief of the high priests of the world, Skanda the war-god, leader of the leaders of battle, Marichi among the Maruts, the lord of wealth among the Yakshas and Rakshasas, the serpent Ananta among the Nagas, Agni among the Vasus, Chitraratha among the Gandharvas, Kandarpa the love-God among the progenitors, Varuna among the peoples of the sea, Aryaman among the Fathers, Narada among the divine sages, Yama lord of the Law among those who maintain rule and law, among the powers of storm the Wind-God. At the other end of the scale I am the radiant sun among lights and splendours, the moon among the stars of night, the ocean among the flowing waters, Meru among the peaks of the world, Himalaya among the mountain-ranges, Ganges among the rivers, the divine thunderbolt among weapons. Among all plants and trees I am the Aswattha, among horses Indra’s horse Uchchaihsravas, Airavata

among the elephants, among the birds Garuda, Vasuki the snake-god among the serpents, Kamadhuk the cow of plenty among cattle, the alligator among fishes, the lion among the beasts of the forest. I am Margasirsha, first of the months; I am spring, the fairest of the seasons.

In living beings, the Godhead tells Arjuna, I am consciousness by which they are aware of themselves and their surroundings. I am mind among the senses, mind by which they receive the impressions of objects and react upon them. I am man's qualities of mind and character and body and action; I am glory and speech and memory and intelligence and steadfastness and forgiveness, the energy of the energetic and the strength of the mighty. I am resolution and perseverance and victory, I am the sattvic quality of the good, I am the gambling of the cunning; I am the mastery and power of all who rule and tame and vanquish and the policy of all who succeed and conquer; I am the silence of things secret, the knowledge of the knower, the logic of those who debate. I am the letter A among letters, the dual among compounds, the sacred syllable OM among words, the Gayatri among metres, the Sama-veda among the Vedas and the great Sama among the mantras. I am Time the head of all reckoning to those who reckon and measure. I am spiritual knowledge among the many philosophies, arts and sciences. I am all the powers of the human being and all the energies of the universe and its creatures.

Those in whom my powers rise to the utmost heights of human attainment are myself always, my special Vibhutis. I am among men the king of men, the leader, the mighty man, the hero. I am Rama among warriors, Krishna among the Vrishnis, Arjuna among the Pandavas. The illumined Rishi is my Vibhuti; I am Bhrigu among the great Rishis. The great seer, the inspired poet who sees and reveals the truth by the light of the idea and sound of the word, is myself luminous in the mortal; I am Ushanas among the seer-poets. The great sage, thinker, philosopher is my power among men, my own vast intelligence; I am Vyasa among the sages. But, with whatever variety of degree in manifestation, all beings are in their own way and nature

powers of the Godhead; nothing moving or unmoving, animate or inanimate in the world can be without me. I am the divine seed of all existences and of that seed they are the branches and flowers; what is in the seed of self, that only they can develop in Nature. There is no numbering or limit to my divine Vibhutis; what I have spoken is nothing more than a summary development and I have given only the light of a few leading indications and a strong opening to endless verities. Whatever beautiful and glorious creature thou seest in the world, whatever being is mighty and forceful among men and above man and below him, know to be a very splendour, light and energy of Me and born of a potent portion and intense power of my existence. But what need is there of a multitude of details for this knowledge? Take it thus, that I am here in this world and everywhere, I am in all and I constitute all: there is nothing else than I, nothing without Me. I support this entire universe with a single degree of my illimitable power and an infinitesimal portion of my fathomless spirit; all these worlds are only sparks, hints, glintings of the I Am eternal and immeasurable.

IX

The Theory of the Vibhuti

THE IMPORTANCE of this chapter of the Gita is very much greater than appears at first view or to an eye of prepossession which is looking into the text only for the creed of the last transcendence and the detached turning of the human soul away from the world to a distant Absolute. The message of the Gita is the gospel of the Divinity in man who by force of an increasing union unfolds himself out of the veil of the lower Nature, reveals to the human soul his cosmic spirit, reveals his absolute transcendencies, reveals himself in man and in all beings. The potential outcome here of this union, this divine Yoga, man growing towards the Godhead, the Godhead manifest in the human soul and to the inner human vision, is our liberation from limited ego and our elevation to the higher nature of a divine humanity. For dwelling in this greater spiritual nature and not in the mortal weft, the tangled complexity of the three gunas, man, one with God by knowledge, love and will and the giving up of his whole being into the Godhead, is able indeed to rise to the absolute Transcendence, but also to act upon the world, no longer in ignorance, but in the right relation of the individual to the Supreme, in the truth of the Spirit, fulfilled in immortality, for God in the world and no longer for the ego. To call Arjuna to this action, to make him aware of the being and power that he is and of the Being and Power whose will acts through him, is the purpose of the embodied Godhead. To this end the divine Krishna is his charioteer; to this end there came upon him that great discouragement and deep dissatisfaction with the lesser human motives of his work; to substitute for them the larger spiritual motive this revelation is given to him in the supreme moment of the work to which he has been appointed. The vision of the World-Purusha and the divine command to action is the culminating point to which he was being led. That

is already imminent; but without the knowledge now given to him through the Vibhuti-Yoga it would not bring with it its full meaning.

The mystery of the world-existence is in part revealed by the Gita. In part, for who shall exhaust its infinite depths or what creed or philosophy say that it has enlightened in a narrow space or shut up in a brief system all the significance of the cosmic miracle? But so far as is essential for the Gita's purpose, it is revealed to us. We have the way of the origination of the world from God, the immanence of the Divine in it and its immanence in the Divine, the essential unity of all existence, the relation of the human soul obscured in Nature to the Godhead, its awakening to self-knowledge, its birth into a greater consciousness, its ascension into its own spiritual heights. But when this new self-vision and consciousness have been acquired in place of the original ignorance, what will be the liberated man's view of the world around him, his attitude towards the cosmic manifestation of which he has now the central secret? He will have first the knowledge of the unity of existence and the regarding eye of that knowledge. He will see all around him as souls and forms and powers of the one divine Being. Henceforward that vision will be the starting-point of all the inward and outward operations of his consciousness; it will be the fundamental seeing, the spiritual basis of all his actions. He will see all things and every creature living, moving and acting in the One, contained in the divine and eternal Existence. But he will also see that One as the Inhabitant in all, their Self, the essential Spirit within them without whose secret presence in their conscious nature they could not at all live, move or act and without whose will, power, sanction or sufferance not one of their movements at any moment would be in the least degree possible. Themselves too, their soul, mind, life and physical mould he will see only as a result of the power, will and force of this one Self and Spirit. All will be to him a becoming of this one universal Being. Their consciousness he will see to be derived entirely from its consciousness, their power and will to be drawn from and dependent on its power and will, their partial phenomenon of nature to be a resultant from its greater

divine Nature, whether in the immediate actuality of things it strikes the mind as a manifestation or a disguise, a figure or a disfigurement of the Godhead. No untoward or bewildering appearance of things will in any smallest degree diminish or conflict with the completeness of this vision. It is the essential foundation of the greater consciousness into which he has arisen, it is the indispensable light that has opened around him and the one perfect way of seeing, the one Truth that makes all others possible.

But the world is only a partial manifestation of the Godhead, it is not itself that Divinity. The Godhead is infinitely greater than any natural manifestation can be. By his very infinity, by its absolute freedom he exists beyond all possibility of integral formulation in any scheme of worlds or extension of cosmic Nature, however wide, complex, endlessly varied this and every world may seem to us,—*nāsti anto vistarasya me*,—however to our finite view infinite. Therefore beyond cosmos the eye of the liberated spirit will see the utter Divine. Cosmos he will see as a figure drawn from the Divinity who is beyond all figure, a constant minor term in the absolute existence. Every relative and finite he will see as a figure of the divine Absolute and Infinite, and both beyond all finites and through each finite he will arrive at that alone, see always that beyond each phenomenon and natural creature and relative action and every quality and every happening; looking at each of these things and beyond it, he will find in the Divinity its spiritual significance.

These things will not be to his mind intellectual concepts or this attitude to the world simply a way of thinking or a pragmatic dogma. For if his knowledge is conceptual only, it is a philosophy, an intellectual construction, not a spiritual knowledge and vision, not a spiritual state of consciousness. The spiritual seeing of God and world is not ideative only, not even mainly or primarily ideative. It is direct experience and as real, vivid, near, constant, effective, intimate as to the mind its sensuous seeing and feeling of images, objects and persons. It is only the physical mind that thinks of God and spirit as an abstract conception which it cannot visualise or represent

to itself except by words and names and symbolic images and fictions. Spirit sees spirit, the divinised consciousness sees God as directly and more directly, as intimately and more intimately than bodily consciousness sees matter. It sees, feels, thinks, senses the Divine. For to the spiritual consciousness all manifest existence appears as a world of spirit and not a world of matter, not a world of life, not a world even of mind; these other things are to its view only God-thought, God-force, God-form. That is what the Gita means by living and acting in Vasudeva, *mayi vartate*. The spiritual consciousness is aware of the Godhead with that close knowledge by identity which is so much more tremendously real than any mental perception of the thinkable or any sensuous experience of the sensible. It is so aware even of the Absolute who is behind and beyond all world-existence and who originates and surpasses it and is for ever outside its vicissitudes. And of the immutable self of this Godhead that pervades and supports the world's mutations with his unchanging eternity, this consciousness is similarly aware, by identity, by the oneness of this self with our own timeless unchanging immortal spirit. It is aware again in the same manner of the divine Person who knows himself in all these things and persons and becomes all things and persons in his consciousness and shapes their thoughts and forms and governs their actions by his immanent will. It is intimately conscious of God absolute, God as self, God as spirit, soul and nature. Even this external Nature it knows by identity and self-experience, but an identity freely admitting variation, admitting relations, admitting greater and lesser degrees of the action of the one power of existence. For Nature is God's power of various self-becoming, *ātma-vibhūti*.

But this spiritual consciousness of world-existence will not see Nature in the world as the normal mind of man sees it in the ignorance or only as it is in the effects of the ignorance. All in this Nature that is of the ignorance, all that is imperfect or painful or perverse and repellent, does not exist as an absolute opposite of the nature of the Godhead, but goes back to something behind itself, goes back to a saving power of spirit in which it can find its own true being and redemption. There is an

original and originating Supreme Prakriti, in which the divine power and will to be enjoys its own absolute quality and pure revelation. There is found the highest, there the perfect energy of all the energies we see in the universe. That is what presents itself to us as the ideal nature of the Godhead, a nature of absolute knowledge, absolute power and will, absolute love and delight. And all the infinite variations of its quality and energy, *ananta-guṇa, aganana-śakti*, are there wonderfully various, admirably and spontaneously harmonised free self-formulations of this absolute wisdom and will and power and delight and love. All is there a many-sided untrammelled unity of infinites. Each energy, each quality is in the ideal divine nature pure, perfect, self-possessed, harmonious in its action; nothing there strives for its own separate limited self-fulfilment, all act in an inexpressible oneness. There all dharmas, all laws of being—dharma, law of being, is only characteristic action of divine energy and quality, *guṇa-karma*,—are one free and plastic dharma. The one divine Power of being¹ works with an immeasurable liberty and, tied to no single excluding law, not limited by any binding system, rejoices in her own play of infinity and never falters in her truth of self-expression perfect for ever.

But in the universe in which we live, there is a separating principle of selection and differentiation. There we see each energy, each quality which comes out for expression labouring as if for its own hand, trying to get as much self-expression as it can in whatever way it can, and accommodating somehow as best or as worst it may that effort with the concomitant or rival effort of other energies and qualities for their separate self-expression. The Spirit, the Divine dwells in this struggling world-nature and imposes on it a certain harmony by the inalienable law of the inner secret oneness on which the action of all these powers is based. But it is a relative harmony which seems to result from an original division, to emerge from and subsist by the shock of divisions and not from an original oneness. Or at least the oneness seems to be suppressed and latent, not to

¹ *tapas, cit-śakti.*

find itself, never to put off its baffling disguises. And in fact it does not find itself till the individual being in this world-nature discovers in himself the higher divine Prakriti from whom this lesser movement is a derivation. Nevertheless, the qualities and energies at work in the world, operating variously in man, animal, plant, inanimate thing, are, whatever forms they may take, always divine qualities and energies. All energies and qualities are powers of the Godhead. Each comes from the divine Prakriti there, works for its self-expression in the lower Prakriti here, increases its potency of affirmation and actualised values under these hampering conditions, and as it reaches its heights of self-power, comes near to the visible expression of the Divinity and directs itself upward to its own absolute in the supreme, the ideal, the divine Nature. For each energy is being and power of the Godhead and the expansion and self-expression of energy is always the expansion and expression of the Godhead.

One might even say that at a certain point of intensity each force in us, force of knowledge, force of will, force of love, force of delight, can result in an explosion which breaks the shell of the lower formulation and liberates the energy from its separative action into union with the infinite freedom and power of the divine Being. A highest Godward tension liberates the mind through an absolute seeing of knowledge, liberates the heart through an absolute love and delight, liberates the whole existence through an absolute concentration of will towards a greater existence. But the percussion and the delivering shock come by the touch of the Divine on our actual nature which directs the energy away from its normal limited separative action and objects towards the Eternal, Universal and Transcendent, orientates it towards the infinite and absolute Godhead. This truth of the dynamic omnipresence of the divine Power of being is the foundation of the theory of the Vibhuti.

The infinite divine Shakti is present everywhere and secretly supports the lower formulation, *parā prakrtir me yayā dhāryate jagat*, but it holds itself back, hidden in the heart of each natural existence, *sarvabhūtānām hrddese*, until the veil of Yogamaya is rent by the light of knowledge. The spiritual being of man, the

Jiva, possesses the divine Nature. He is a manifestation of God in that Nature, *parā prakrtir jīva-bhūtā*, and he has latent in him all the divine energies and qualities, the light, the force, the power of being of the Godhead. But in this inferior Prakriti in which we live, the Jiva follows the principle of selection and finite determination, and there whatever nexus of energy, whatever quality or spiritual principle he brings into birth with him or brings forward as the seed of his self-expression, becomes an operative portion of his swabhava, his law of self-becoming, and determines his swadharma, his law of action. And if that were all, there would be no perplexity or difficulty; the life of man would be a luminous unfolding of godhead. But this lower energy of our world is a nature of ignorance, of egoism, of the three gunas. Because this is a nature of egoism, the Jiva conceives of himself as the separative ego: he works out his self-expression egoistically as a separative will to be in conflict as well as in association with the same will to be in others. He attempts to possess the world by strife and not by unity and harmony; he stresses an ego-centric discord. Because this is a nature of ignorance, a blind seeing and an imperfect or partial self-expression, he does not know himself, does not know his law of being, but follows it instinctively under the ill-understood compulsion of the world-energy, with a struggle, with much inner conflict, with a very large possibility of deviation. Because this is a nature of the three gunas, this confused and striving self-expression takes various forms of incapacity, perversion or partial self-finding. Dominated by the guna of tamas, the mode of darkness and inertia, the power of being works in a weak confusion, a prevailing incapacity, an unaspiring subjection to the blind mechanism of the forces of the Ignorance. Dominated by the guna of rajas, the mode of action, desire and possession, there is a struggle, there is an effort, there is a growth of power and capacity, but it is stumbling, painful, vehement, misled by wrong notions, methods and ideals, impelled to a misuse, corruption and perversion of right notions, methods or ideals and prone, especially, to a great, often an enormous exaggeration of the ego. Dominated by the guna of sattwa, the mode of light

and poise and peace, there is a more harmonious action, a right dealing with the nature, but right only within the limits of an individual light and a capacity unable to exceed the better forms of this lower mental will and knowledge. To escape from this tangle, to rise beyond the ignorance, the ego and the gunas is the first real step towards divine perfection. By that transcendence the Jiva finds his own divine nature and his true existence.

The liberated eye of knowledge in the spiritual consciousness does not in its outlook on the world see this struggling lower Nature alone. If we perceive only the apparent outward fact of our nature and others' nature, we are looking with the eye of the ignorance and cannot know God equally in all, in the sattvic, the rajasic, the tamasic creature, in God and Titan, in saint and sinner, in the wise man and the ignorant, in the great and in the little, in man, animal, plant and inanimate existence. The liberated vision sees three things at once as the whole occult truth of the natural being. First and foremost it sees the divine Prakriti in all, secret, present, waiting for evolution; it sees her as the real power in all things, that which gives its value to all this apparent action of diverse quality and force, and it reads the significance of these latter phenomena not in their own language of ego and ignorance, but in the light of the divine Nature. Therefore it sees too, secondly, the differences of the apparent action in Deva and Rakshasa, man and beast and bird and reptile, good and wicked, ignorant and learned, but as action of divine quality and energy under these conditions, under these masks. It is not deluded by the mask, but detects behind every mask the Godhead. It observes the perversion or the imperfection, but it pierces to the truth of the spirit behind, it discovers it even in the perversion and imperfection self-blinded, struggling to find itself, groping through various forms of self-expression and experience towards complete self-knowledge, towards its own infinite and absolute. The liberated eye does not lay undue stress on the perversion and imperfection, but is able to see all with a complete love and charity in the heart, a complete understanding in the intelligence, a complete equality in the spirit. Finally, it sees the upward urge of the striving powers of the Will to be

towards Godhead; it respects, welcomes, encourages all high manifestations of energy and quality, the flaming tongues of the Divinity, the mounting greatnesses of soul and mind and life in their intensities uplifted from the levels of the lower nature towards heights of luminous wisdom and knowledge, mighty power, strength, capacity, courage, heroism, benignant sweetness and ardour and grandeur of love and self-giving, pre-eminent virtue, noble action, captivating beauty and harmony, fine and godlike creation. The eye of the spirit sees and marks out the rising godhead of man in the great Vibhuti.

This is a recognition of the Godhead as Power, but power in its widest sense, power not only of might, but of knowledge, will, love, work, purity, sweetness, beauty. The Divine is being, consciousness and delight, and in the world all throws itself out and finds itself again by energy of being, energy of consciousness and energy of delight; this is a world of the works of the divine Shakti. That Shakti shapes herself here in innumerable kinds of beings and each of them has its own characteristic powers of her force. Each power is the Divine himself in that form, in the lion as in the hind, in the Titan as in the God, in the inconscient sun that flames through ether as in man who thinks upon earth. The deformation given by the gunas is the minor, not really the major aspect; the essential thing is the divine power that is finding self-expression. It is the Godhead who manifests himself in the great thinker, the hero, the leader of men, the great teacher, sage, prophet, religious founder, saint, lover of man, the great poet, the great artist, the great scientist, the ascetic self-tamer, the tamer of things and events and forces. The work itself, the high poem, the perfect form of beauty, the deep love, the noble act, the divine achievement is a movement of godhead; it is the Divine in manifestation.

This is a truth which all ancient cultures recognised and respected, but one side of the modern mind has singular repugnances to the idea, sees in it a worship of mere strength and power, an ignorant or self-degrading hero-worship or a doctrine of the Asuric superman. Certainly, there is an ignorant way of taking this truth, as there is an ignorant way of taking all

truths; but it has its proper place, its indispensable function in the divine economy of Nature. The Gita puts it in that right place and perspective. It must be based on the recognition of the divine self in all men and all creatures; it must be consistent with an equal heart to the great and the small, the eminent and the obscure manifestation. God must be seen and loved in the ignorant, the humble, the weak, the vile, the outcaste. In the Vibhuti himself it is not, except as a symbol, the outward individual that is to be thus recognised and set high, but the one Godhead who displays himself in the power. But this does not abrogate the fact that there is an ascending scale in manifestation and that Nature mounts upward in her degrees of self-expression from her groping, dark or suppressed symbols to the first visible expressions of the Godhead. Each great being, each great achievement is a sign of her power of self-exceeding and a promise of the final, the supreme exceeding. Man himself is a superior degree of natural manifestation to the beast and reptile, though in both there is the one equal Brahman. But man has not reached his own highest heights of self-exceeding and meanwhile every hint of a greater power of the Will to be in him must be recognised as a promise and an indication. Respect for the divinity in man, in all men, is not diminished, but heightened and given a richer significance by lifting our eyes to the trail of the great Pioneers who lead or point him by whatever step of attainment towards supermanhood.

Arjuna himself is a Vibhuti; he is a man high in the spiritual evolution, a figure marked out in the crowd of his contemporaries, a chosen instrument of the divine Narayana, the Godhead in humanity. In one place the Teacher speaking as the supreme and equal Self of all declares that there is none dear to him, none hated, but in others he says that Arjuna is dear to him and his bhakta and therefore guided and safe in his hands, chosen for the vision and the knowledge. There is here only an apparent inconsistency. The Power as the self of the cosmos is equal to all, therefore to each being he gives according to the workings of his nature; but there is also a personal relation of the Purushottama to the human being in which he is especially near to the man

who has come near to him. All these heroes and men of might who have joined in battle on the plain of Kurukshetra are vessels of the divine Will and through each he works according to his nature but behind the veil of his ego. Arjuna has reached that point when the veil can be rent and the embodied Godhead can reveal the mystery of his workings to his Vibhuti. It is even essential that there should be the revelation. He is the instrument of a great work, a work terrible in appearance but necessary for a long step forward in the march of the race, a decisive movement in its struggle towards the kingdom of the Right and the Truth, *dharmaṛājya*. The history of the cycles of man is a progress towards the unveiling of the Godhead in the soul and life of humanity; each high event and stage of it is a divine manifestation. Arjuna, the chief instrument of the hidden Will, the great protagonist, must become the divine man capable of doing the work consciously as the action of the Divine. So only can that action become psychically alive and receive its spiritual import and its light and power of secret significance. He is called to self-knowledge; he must see God as the Master of the universe and the origin of the world's creatures and happenings, all as the Godhead's self-expression in Nature, God in all, God in himself as man and as Vibhuti, God in the lownesses of being and on its heights, God on the topmost summits, man too upon heights as the Vibhuti and climbing to the last summits in the supreme liberation and union. Time in its creation and destruction must be seen by him as the figure of the Godhead in its steps, — steps that accomplish the cycles of the cosmos on whose spires of movement the divine spirit in the human body rises doing God's work in the world as his Vibhuti to the supreme transcendences. This knowledge has been given; the Time-figure of the Godhead is now to be revealed and from the million mouths of that figure will issue the command for the appointed action to the liberated Vibhuti.

The Vision of the World-Spirit Time the Destroyer

THE VISION of the universal Purusha is one of the best known and most powerfully poetic passages in the Gita, but its place in the thought is not altogether on the surface. It is evidently intended for a poetic and revelatory symbol and we must see how it is brought in and for what purpose and discover to what it points in its significant aspects before we can capture its meaning. It is invited by Arjuna in his desire to see the living image, the visible greatness of the unseen Divine, the very embodiment of the Spirit and Power that governs the universe. He has heard the highest spiritual secret of existence, that all is from God and all is the Divine and in all things God dwells and is concealed and can be revealed in every finite appearance. The illusion which so persistently holds man's sense and mind, the idea that things at all exist in themselves or for themselves apart from God or that anything subject to Nature can be self-moved and self-guided, has passed from him, — that was the cause of his doubt and bewilderment and refusal of action. Now he knows what is the sense of the birth and passing away of existences. He knows that the imperishable greatness of the divine conscious Soul is the secret of all these appearances. All is a Yoga of this great eternal Spirit in things and all happenings are the result and expression of that Yoga; all Nature is full of the secret Godhead and in labour to reveal him in her. But he would see too the very form and body of this Godhead, if that be possible. He has heard of his attributes and understood the steps and ways of his self-revelation; but now he asks of this Master of the Yoga to discover his very imperishable Self to the eye of Yoga. Not, evidently, the formless silence of his actionless immutability, but the Supreme from whom is all energy and action, of whom forms

are the masks, who reveals his force in the Vibhuti,—the Master of works, the Master of knowledge and adoration, the Lord of Nature and all her creatures. For this greatest all-comprehending vision he is made to ask because it is so, from the Spirit revealed in the universe, that he must receive the command to his part in the world-action.

What thou hast to see, replies the Avatar, the human eye cannot grasp,—for the human eye can see only the outward appearances of things or make out of them separate symbol forms, each of them significant of only a few aspects of the eternal Mystery. But there is a divine eye, an inmost seeing, by which the supreme Godhead in his Yoga can be beheld and that eye I now give to thee. Thou shalt see, he says, my hundreds and thousands of divine forms, various in kind, various in shape and hue; thou shalt see the Adityas and the Rudras and the Maruts and the Aswins; thou shalt see many wonders that none has beheld; thou shalt see today the whole world related and unified in my body and whatever else thou willest to behold. This then is the keynote, the central significance. It is the vision of the One in the many, the Many in the One,—and all are the One. It is this vision that to the eye of the divine Yoga liberates, justifies, explains all that is and was and shall be. Once seen and held, it lays the shining axe of God at the root of all doubts and perplexities and annihilates all denials and oppositions. It is the vision that reconciles and unifies. If the soul can arrive at unity with the Godhead in this vision,—Arjuna has not yet done that, therefore we find that he has fear when he sees,—all even that is terrible in the world loses its terror. We see that it too is an aspect of the Godhead and once we have found his meaning in it, not looking at it by itself alone, we can accept the whole of existence with an all-embracing joy and a mighty courage, go forward with sure steps to the appointed work and envisage beyond it the supreme consummation. The soul admitted to the divine knowledge which beholds all things in one view, not with a divided, partial and therefore bewildered seeing, can make a new discovery of the world and all else that it wills to see, *yac cānyad draṣṭum icchasi*; it can move on the basis of this all-

relating and all-unifying vision from revelation to completing revelation.

The supreme Form is then made visible. It is that of the infinite Godhead whose faces are everywhere and in whom are all the wonders of existence, who multiplies unendingly all the many marvellous revelations of his being, a world-wide Divinity seeing with innumerable eyes, speaking from innumerable mouths, armed for battle with numberless divine uplifted weapons, glorious with divine ornaments of beauty, robed in heavenly raiment of deity, lovely with garlands of divine flowers, fragrant with divine perfumes. Such is the light of this body of God as if a thousand suns had risen at once in heaven. The whole world multitudinously divided and yet unified is visible in the body of the God of Gods. Arjuna sees him, God magnificent and beautiful and terrible, the Lord of souls who has manifested in the glory and greatness of his spirit this wild and monstrous and orderly and wonderful and sweet and terrible world, and overcome with marvel and joy and fear he bows down and adores with words of awe and with clasped hands the tremendous vision. "I see" he cries "all the gods in thy body, O God, and different companies of beings, Brahma the creating lord seated in the Lotus, and the Rishis and the race of the divine Serpents. I see numberless arms and bellies and eyes and faces, I see thy infinite forms on every side, but I see not thy end nor thy middle nor thy beginning, O Lord of the universe, O Form universal. I see thee crowned and with thy mace and thy discus, hard to discern because thou art a luminous mass of energy on all sides of me, an encompassing blaze, a sun-bright fire-bright Immeasurable. Thou art the supreme Immutable whom we have to know, thou art the high foundation and abode of the universe, thou art the imperishable guardian of the eternal laws, thou art the sempiternal soul of existence."

But in the greatness of this vision there is too the terrific image of the Destroyer. This Immeasurable without end or middle or beginning is he in whom all things begin and exist and end. This Godhead who embraces the worlds with his numberless arms and destroys with his million hands, whose eyes are suns

and moons, has a face of blazing fire and is ever burning up the whole universe with the flame of his energy. The form of him is fierce and marvellous and alone it fills all the regions and occupies the whole space between earth and heaven. The companies of the gods enter it, afraid, adoring; the Rishis and the Siddhas crying "May there be peace and weal" praise it with many praises; the eyes of Gods and Titans and Giants are fixed on it in amazement. It has enormous burning eyes; it has mouths that gape to devour, terrible with many tusks of destruction; it has faces like the fires of Death and Time. The kings and the captains and the heroes on both sides of the world-battle are hastening into its tusked and terrible jaws and some are seen with crushed and bleeding heads caught between its teeth of power; the nations are rushing to destruction with helpless speed into its mouths of flame like many rivers hurrying in their course towards the ocean or like moths that cast themselves on a kindled fire. With those burning mouths the Form of Dread is licking all the regions around; the whole world is full of his burning energies and baked in the fierceness of his lustres. The world and its nations are shaken and in anguish with the terror of destruction and Arjuna shares in the trouble and panic around him; troubled and in pain is the soul within him and he finds no peace or gladness. He cries to the dreadful Godhead, "Declare to me who thou art that wearest this form of fierceness. Salutation to thee, O thou great Godhead, turn thy heart to grace. I would know who thou art who wast from the beginning, for I know not the will of thy workings."

This last cry of Arjuna indicates the double intention in the vision. This is the figure of the supreme and universal Being, the Ancient of Days who is for ever, *sanātanam puruṣam purāṇam*, this is he who for ever creates, for Brahma the Creator is one of the Godheads seen in his body, he who keeps the world always in existence, for he is the guardian of the eternal laws, but who is always too destroying in order that he may new-create, who is Time, who is Death, who is Rudra the Dancer of the calm and awful dance, who is Kali with her garland of skulls trampling naked in battle and flecked with the blood of the slaughtered

Titans, who is the cyclone and the fire and the earthquake and pain and famine and revolution and ruin and the swallowing ocean. And it is this last aspect of him which he puts forward at the moment. It is an aspect from which the mind in men willingly turns away and ostrich-like hides its head so that perchance, not seeing, it may not be seen by the Terrible. The weakness of the human heart wants only fair and comforting truths or in their absence pleasant fables; it will not have the truth in its entirety because there is much that is not clear and pleasant and comfortable, but hard to understand and harder to bear. The raw religionist, the superficial optimistic thinker, the sentimental idealist, the man at the mercy of his sensations and emotions agree in twisting away from the sterner conclusions, the harsher and fiercer aspects of universal existence. Indian religion has been ignorantly reproached for not sharing in this general game of hiding, because on the contrary it has built and placed before it the terrible as well as the sweet and beautiful symbols of the Godhead. But it is the depth and largeness of its long thought and spiritual experience that prevent it from feeling or from giving countenance to these feeble shrinkings.

Indian spirituality knows that God is Love and Peace and calm Eternity,— the Gita which presents us with these terrible images, speaks of the Godhead who embodies himself in them as the lover and friend of all creatures. But there is too the sterner aspect of his divine government of the world which meets us from the beginning, the aspect of destruction, and to ignore it is to miss the full reality of the divine Love and Peace and Calm and Eternity and even to throw on it an aspect of partiality and illusion, because the comforting exclusive form in which it is put is not borne out by the nature of the world in which we live. This world of our battle and labour is a fierce dangerous destructive devouring world in which life exists precariously and the soul and body of man move among enormous perils, a world in which by every step forward, whether we will it or no, something is crushed and broken, in which every breath of life is a breath too of death. To put away the responsibility for all that seems to us evil or terrible on the shoulders of a semi-omnipotent Devil,

or to put it aside as part of Nature, making an unbridgeable opposition between world-nature and God-Nature, as if Nature were independent of God, or to throw the responsibility on man and his sins, as if he had a preponderant voice in the making of this world or could create anything against the will of God, are clumsily comfortable devices in which the religious thought of India has never taken refuge. We have to look courageously in the face of the reality and see that it is God and none else who has made this world in his being and that so he has made it. We have to see that Nature devouring her children, Time eating up the lives of creatures, Death universal and ineluctable and the violence of the Rudra forces in man and Nature are also the supreme Godhead in one of his cosmic figures. We have to see that God the bountiful and prodigal creator, God the helpful, strong and benignant preserver is also God the devourer and destroyer. The torment of the couch of pain and evil on which we are racked is his touch as much as happiness and sweetness and pleasure. It is only when we see with the eye of the complete union and feel this truth in the depths of our being that we can entirely discover behind that mask too the calm and beautiful face of the all-blissful Godhead and in this touch that tests our imperfection the touch of the friend and builder of the spirit in man. The discords of the worlds are God's discords and it is only by accepting and proceeding through them that we can arrive at the greater concords of his supreme harmony, the summits and thrilled vastnesses of his transcendent and his cosmic Ananda.

The problem raised by the Gita and the solution it gives demand this character of the vision of the World-Spirit. It is the problem of a great struggle, ruin and massacre which has been brought about by the all-guiding Will and in which the eternal Avatar himself has descended as the charioteer of the protagonist in the battle. The seer of the vision is himself the protagonist, the representative of the battling soul of man who has to strike down tyrant and oppressive powers that stand in the path of his evolution and to establish and enjoy the kingdom of a higher right and nobler law of being. Perplexed by the terrible aspect of the catastrophe in which kindred smite at kindred, whole nations

are to perish and society itself seems doomed to sink down in a pit of confusion and anarchy, he has shrunk back, refused the task of destiny and demanded of his divine Friend and Guide why he is appointed to so dreadful a work, *kim karmani ghore mām niyojayasi*. He has been shown then how individually to rise above the apparent character of whatever work he may do, to see that Nature the executive force is the doer of the work, his natural being the instrument, God the master of Nature and of works to whom he must offer them without desire or egoistic choice as a sacrifice. He has been shown too that the Divine who is above all these things and untouched by them, yet manifests himself in man and Nature and their action and that all is a movement in the cycles of this divine manifestation. But now when he is put face to face with the embodiment of this truth, he sees in it magnified by the image of the divine greatness this aspect of terror and destruction and is appalled and can hardly bear it. For why should it be thus that the All-spirit manifests himself in Nature? What is the significance of this creating and devouring flame that is mortal existence, this world-wide struggle, these constant disastrous revolutions, this labour and anguish and travail and perishing of creatures? He puts the ancient question and breathes the eternal prayer, "Declare to me who art thou that comest to us in this form of fierceness. I would know who art thou who wast from the beginning, for I know not the will of thy workings. Turn thy heart to grace."

Destruction, replies the Godhead, is the will of my workings with which I stand here on this field of Kurukshetra, the field of the working out of the Dharma, the field of human action,—as we might symbolically translate the descriptive phrase, *dharma-kṣetre kuru-kṣetre*,—a world-wide destruction which has come in the process of the Time-Spirit. I have a foreseeing purpose which fulfils itself infallibly and no participation or abstention of any human being can prevent, alter or modify it; all is done by me already in my eternal eye of will before it can at all be done by man upon earth. I as Time have to destroy the old structures and to build up a new, mighty and splendid kingdom. Thou as a human instrument of the divine Power and Wisdom hast in this

struggle which thou canst not prevent to battle for the right and slay and conquer its opponents. Thou too, the human soul in Nature, hast to enjoy in Nature the fruit given by me, the empire of right and justice. Let this be sufficient for thee,—to be one with God in thy soul, to receive his command, to do his will, to see calmly a supreme purpose fulfilled in the world. “I am Time the waster of the peoples arisen and increased whose will in my workings is here to destroy the nations. Even without thee all these warriors shall be not, who are ranked in the opposing armies. Therefore arise, get thee glory, conquer thy enemies and enjoy an opulent kingdom. By me and none other already even are they slain, do thou become the occasion only, O Savyasachin. Slay, by me who are slain, Drona, Bhishma, Jayadratha, Karna and other heroic fighters; be not pained and troubled. Fight, thou shalt conquer the adversary in the battle.” The fruit of the great and terrible work is promised and prophesied, not as a fruit hungered for by the individual,—for to that there is to be no attachment,—but as the result of the divine will, the glory and success of the thing to be done accomplished, the glory given by the Divine to himself in his Vibhuti. Thus is the final and compelling command to action given to the protagonist of the world-battle.

It is the Timeless manifest as Time and World-Spirit from whom the command to action proceeds. For certainly the God-head when he says, “I am Time the Destroyer of beings,” does not mean either that he is the Time-Spirit alone or that the whole essence of the Time-Spirit is destruction. But it is this which is the present will of his workings, *pravṛtti*. Destruction is always a simultaneous or alternate element which keeps pace with creation and it is by destroying and renewing that the Master of Life does his long work of preservation. More, destruction is the first condition of progress. Inwardly, the man who does not destroy his lower self-formations, cannot rise to a greater existence. Outwardly also, the nation or community or race which shrinks too long from destroying and replacing its past forms of life, is itself destroyed, rots and perishes and out of its debris other nations, communities and races are formed. By destruction

of the old giant occupants man made himself a place upon earth. By destruction of the Titans the gods maintain the continuity of the divine Law in the cosmos. Whoever prematurely attempts to get rid of this law of battle and destruction, strives vainly against the greater will of the World-Spirit. Whoever turns from it in the weakness of his lower members, as did Arjuna in the beginning,— therefore was his shrinking condemned as a small and false pity, an inglorious, an un-Aryan and unheavenly feebleness of heart and impotence of spirit, *klaibyam*, *kṣudram* *ḥṛdaya-daurbalyam*,— is showing not true virtue, but a want of spiritual courage to face the sterner truths of Nature and of action and existence. Man can only exceed the law of battle by discovering the greater law of his immortality. There are those who seek this where it always exists and must primarily be found, in the higher reaches of the pure spirit, and to find it turn away from a world governed by the law of Death. That is an individual solution which makes no difference to mankind and the world, or rather makes only this difference that they are deprived of so much spiritual power which might have helped them forward in the painful march of their evolution.

What then is the master man, the divine worker, the opened channel of the universal Will to do when he finds the World-Spirit turned towards some immense catastrophe, figured before his eyes as Time the destroyer arisen and increased for the destruction of the nations, and himself put there in the forefront whether as a fighter with physical weapons or a leader and guide or an inspirer of men, as he cannot fail to be by the very force of his nature and the power within him, *svabhāvajena svena karmanā?* To abstain, to sit silent, to protest by non-intervention? But abstention will not help, will not prevent the fulfilment of the destroying Will, but rather by the lacuna it creates increase confusion. Even without thee, cries the Godhead, my will of destruction would still be accomplished, *rte'pi tvām*. If Arjuna were to abstain or even if the battle of Kurukshetra were not to be fought, that evasion would only prolong and make worse the inevitable confusion, disorder, ruin that are coming. For these things are no accident, but an inevitable seed that

has been sown and a harvest that must be reaped. They who have sown the wind, must reap the whirlwind. Nor indeed will his own nature allow him any real abstention, *prakṛtis tvāṁ niyokṣyati*. This the Teacher tells Arjuna at the close, "That which in thy egoism thou thinkest saying, I will not fight, vain is this thy resolve: Nature shall yoke thee to thy work. Bound by thy own action which is born of the law of thy being, what from delusion thou desirest not to do, that thou shalt do even perforce." Then to give another turn, to use some kind of soul force, spiritual method and power, not physical weapons? But that is only another form of the same action; the destruction will still take place, and the turn given too will be not what the individual ego, but what the World-Spirit wills. Even, the force of destruction may feed on this new power, may get a more formidable impetus and Kali arise filling the world with a more terrible sound of her laughter. No real peace can be till the heart of man deserves peace; the law of Vishnu cannot prevail till the debt to Rudra is paid. To turn aside then and preach to a still unevolved mankind the law of love and oneness? Teachers of the law of love and oneness there must be, for by that way must come the ultimate salvation. But not till the Time-Spirit in man is ready, can the inner and ultimate prevail over the outer and immediate reality. Christ and Buddha have come and gone, but it is Rudra who still holds the world in the hollow of his hand. And meanwhile the fierce forward labour of mankind tormented and oppressed by the Powers that are profiteers of egoistic force and their servants cries for the sword of the Hero of the struggle and the word of its prophet.

The highest way appointed for him is to carry out the will of God without egoism, as the human occasion and instrument of that which he sees to be decreed, with the constant supporting memory of the Godhead in himself and man, *mām anusmaran*, and in whatever ways are appointed for him by the Lord of his Nature. *Nimittamātram bhava savyasācin*. He will not cherish personal enmity, anger, hatred, egoistic desire and passion, will not hasten towards strife or lust after violence and destruction like the fierce Asura, but he will do his work, *lokasaṅgrahāya*.

Beyond the action he will look towards that to which it leads, that for which he is warring. For God the Time-Spirit does not destroy for the sake of destruction, but to make the ways clear in the cyclic process for a greater rule and a progressing manifestation, *rājyam samṛddham*. He will accept in its deeper sense, which the superficial mind does not see, the greatness of the struggle, the glory of the victory,—if need be, the glory of the victory which comes masked as defeat,—and lead man too in the enjoyment of his opulent kingdom. Not appalled by the face of the Destroyer, he will see within it the eternal Spirit imperishable in all these perishing bodies and behind it the face of the Charioteer, the Leader of man, the Friend of all creatures, *suḥṛdam sarvabhūtānām*. This formidable World-Form once seen and acknowledged, it is to that reassuring truth that the rest of the chapter is directed; it discloses in the end a more intimate face and body of the Eternal.

The Vision of the World-Spirit¹ The Double Aspect

EVEN WHILE the effects of the terrible aspect of this vision are still upon him, the first words uttered by Arjuna after the Godhead has spoken are eloquent of a greater uplifting and reassuring reality behind this face of death and this destruction. "Rightly and in good place," he cries, "O Krishna, does the world rejoice and take pleasure in thy name, the Rakshasas are fleeing from thee in terror to all the quarters and the companies of the Siddhas bow down before thee in adoration. How should they not do thee homage, O great Spirit? For thou art the original Creator and Doer of works and greater even than creative Brahma. O thou Infinite, O thou Lord of the gods, O thou abode of the universe, thou art the Immutable and thou art what is and is not and thou art that which is the Supreme. Thou art the ancient Soul and the first and original Godhead and the supreme resting-place of this All; thou art the knower and that which is to be known and the highest status; O infinite in form, by thee was extended the universe. Thou art Yama and Vayu and Agni and Soma and Varuna and Prajapati, father of creatures, and the great-grandsire. Salutation to thee a thousand times over and again and yet again salutation, in front and behind and from every side, for thou art each and all that is. Infinite in might and immeasurable in strength of action thou pervadest all and art every one."

But this supreme universal Being has lived here before him with the human face, in the mortal body, the divine Man, the embodied Godhead, the Avatar, and till now he has not known him. He has seen the humanity only and has treated the Divine as

¹ Gita, XI. 35-55.

a mere human creature. He has not pierced through the earthly mask to the Godhead of which the humanity was a vessel and a symbol, and he prays now for that Godhead's forgiveness of his unseeing carelessness and his negligent ignorance. "For whatsoever I have spoken to thee in rash vehemence, thinking of thee only as my human friend and companion, 'O Krishna, O Yadava, O comrade,' not knowing this thy greatness, in negligent error or in love, and for whatsoever disrespect was shown by me to thee in jest, on the couch and the seat and in the banquet, alone or in thy presence, I pray forgiveness from thee the immeasurable. Thou art the father of all this world of the moving and unmoving; thou art one to be worshipped and the most solemn object of veneration. None is equal to thee, how then another greater in all the three worlds, O incomparable in might? Therefore I bow down before thee and prostrate my body and I demand grace of thee the adorable Lord. As a father to his son, as a friend to his friend and comrade, as one dear with him he loves, so shouldst thou, O Godhead, bear with me. I have seen what never was seen before and I rejoice, but my mind is troubled with fear. O Godhead, show me that other form of thine. I would see thee even as before crowned and with thy mace and discus. Assume thy four-armed shape, O thousand-armed, O Form universal."

From the first words there comes the suggestion that the hidden truth behind these terrifying forms is a reassuring, a heartening and delightful truth. There is something that makes the heart of the world to rejoice and take pleasure in the name and nearness of the Divine. It is the profound sense of that which makes us see in the dark face of Kali the face of the Mother and to perceive even in the midst of destruction the protecting arms of the Friend of creatures, in the midst of evil the presence of a pure unalterable Benignity and in the midst of death the Master of Immortality. From the terror of the King of the divine action the Rakshasas, the fierce giant powers of darkness, flee destroyed, defeated and overpowered. But the Siddhas, but the complete and perfect who know and sing the names of the Immortal and live in the truth of his being, bow down before every form of

Him and know what every form enshrines and signifies. Nothing has real need to fear except that which is to be destroyed, the evil, the ignorance, the veilers in Night, the Rakshasa powers. All the movement and action of Rudra the Terrible is towards perfection and divine light and completeness.

For this Spirit, this Divine is only in outward form the Destroyer, Time who undoes all these finite forms: but in himself he is the Infinite, the Master of the cosmic Godheads, in whom the world and all its action are securely seated. He is the original and ever originating Creator, one greater than that figure of creative Power called Brahma which he shows to us in the form of things as one aspect of his trinity, creation chequered by a balance of preservation and destruction. The real divine creation is eternal; it is the Infinite manifested sempiternally in finite things, the Spirit who conceals and reveals himself for ever in his innumerable infinity of souls and in the wonder of their actions and in the beauty of their forms. He is the eternal Immutable; he is the dual appearance of the Is and Is-not, of the manifest and the never manifested, of things that were and seem to be no more, are and appear doomed to perish, shall be and shall pass. But what he is beyond all these is That, the Supreme, who holds all things mutable in the single eternity of a Time to which all is ever present. He possesses his immutable self in a timeless eternity of which Time and creation are an ever extending figure.

This is the Truth of him in which all is reconciled; a harmony of simultaneous and interdependent truths start from and amount to the one that is real. It is the truth of a supreme Soul of whose supreme nature the world is a derivation and an inferior figure of that Infinite; of the Ancient of Days who for ever presides over the long evolutions of Time; of the original Godhead of whom Gods and men and all living creatures are the children, the powers, the souls, spiritually justified in their being by his truth of existence; of the Knower who develops in man the knowledge of himself and world and God; of the one Object of all knowing who reveals himself to man's heart and mind and soul, so that every new opening form of our knowledge is a partial unfolding of him, up to the highest by which he is

intimately, profoundly and integrally seen and discovered. This is the high supreme Stability who originates and supports and receives to himself all that are in the universe. By him in his own existence the world is extended, by his omnipotent power, by his miraculous self-conception and energy and Ananda of never-ending creation. All is an infinity of his material and spiritual forms. He is all the many gods from the least to the greatest; he is the father of creatures and all are his children and his people. He is the origin of Brahma, the father to the first father of the divine creators of these different races of living things. On this truth there is a constant insistence. Again it is repeated that he is the All, he is each and every one, *sarvah*. He is the infinite Universal and he is each individual and everything that is, the one Force and Being in every one of us, the infinite Energy that throws itself out in these multitudes, the immeasurable Will and mighty Power of motion and action that forms out of itself all the courses of Time and all the happenings of the spirit in Nature.

And from that insistence the thought naturally turns to the presence of this one great Godhead in man. There the soul of the seer of the vision is impressed by three successive suggestions. First, it is borne in upon him that in the body of this son of Man who moved beside him as a transient creature upon earth and sat by his side and lay with him on the same couch and ate with him in the banquet and was the object of jest and careless word, actor in war and council and common things, in this figure of mortal man was all the time something great, concealed, of tremendous significance, a Godhead, an Avatar, a universal Power, a One Reality, a supreme Transcendence. To this occult divinity in which all the significance of man and his long race is wrapped and from which all world-existence receives its inner meaning of ineffable greatness, he had been blind. Now only he sees the universal Spirit in the individual frame, the Divine embodied in humanity, the transcendent Inhabitant of this symbol of Nature. He has seen now only this tremendous, infinite, immeasurable Reality of all these apparent things, this boundless universal Form which so exceeds every individual form and yet of whom each individual thing is a house for his dwelling. For that great Reality is equal

and infinite and the same in the individual and in the universe. And at first his blindness, his treatment of this Divine as the mere outward man, his seeing of only the mental and physical relation seems to him a sin against the Mightiness that was there. For the being whom he called Krishna, Yadava, comrade, was this immeasurable Greatness, this incomparable Might, this Spirit one in all of whom all are the creations. That and not the veiling outward humanity, *avajānan mānuṣīm tanum āśritam*, was what he should have seen with awe and with submission and veneration.

But the second suggestion is that what was figured in the human manifestation and the human relation is also a reality which accompanies and mitigates for our mind the tremendous character of the universal vision. The transcendence and cosmic aspect have to be seen, for without that seeing the limitations of humanity cannot be exceeded. In that unifying oneness all has to be included. But by itself that would set too great a gulf between the transcendent spirit and this soul bound and circumscribed in an inferior Nature. The infinite presence in its unmitigated splendour would be too overwhelming for the separate littleness of the limited, individual and natural man. A link is needed by which he can see this universal Godhead in his own individual and natural being, close to him, not only omnipotently there to govern all he is by universal and immeasurable Power, but humanly figured to support and raise him to unity by an intimate individual relation. The adoration by which the finite creature bows down before the Infinite, receives all its sweetness and draws near to a closest truth of companionship and oneness when it deepens into the more intimate adoration which lives in the sense of the fatherhood of God, the friendhood of God, the attracting love between the Divine Spirit and our human soul and nature. For the Divine inhabits the human soul and body; he draws around him and wears like a robe the human mind and figure. He assumes the human relations which the soul affects in the mortal body and they find in God their own fullest sense and greatest realisation. This is the Vaishnava bhakti of which the seed is here in the Gita's words, but which received afterwards

a more deep, ecstatic and significant extension.

And from this second suggestion a third immediately arises. The form of the transcendent and universal Being is to the strength of the liberated spirit a thing mighty, encouraging and fortifying, a source of power, an equalising, sublimating, all-justifying vision; but to the normal man it is overwhelming, appalling, incomunicable. The truth that reassures, even when known, is grasped with difficulty behind the formidable and mighty aspect of all-destructive Time and an incalculable Will and a vast immeasurable inextricable working. But there is too the gracious mediating form of divine Narayana, the God who is so close to man and in man, the Charioteer of the battle and the journey, with his four arms of helpful power, a humanised symbol of Godhead, not this million-armed universality. It is this mediating aspect which man must have for his support constantly before him. For it is this figure of Narayana which symbolises the truth that reassures. It makes close, visible, living, seizable the vast spiritual joy in which for the inner spirit and life of man the universal workings behind all their stupendous circling, retrogression, progression sovereignly culminate, their marvellous and auspicious upshot. To this humanised embodied soul their end becomes here a union, a closeness, a constant companionship of man and God, man living in the world for God, God dwelling in man and turning to his own divine ends in him the enigmatic world-process. And beyond the end is a yet more wonderful oneness and inliving in the last transfigurations of the Eternal.

The Godhead in answer to Arjuna's prayer reassumes his own normal Narayana image, *svakām rūpam*, the desired form of grace and love and sweetness and beauty. But first he declares the incalculable significance of the other mighty Image which he is about to veil. "This that thou now seest," he tells him, "is my supreme shape, my form of luminous energy, the universal, the original which none but thou amongst men has yet seen. I have shown it by my self-Yoga. For it is an image of my very Self and Spirit, it is the very Supreme self-figured in cosmic existence and the soul in perfect Yoga with me sees it without any trembling

of the nervous parts or any bewilderment and confusion of the mind, because he descries not only what is terrible and overwhelming in its appearance, but also its high and reassuring significance. And thou also shouldst so envisage it without fear, without confusion of mind, without any sinking of the members; but since the lower nature in thee is not yet prepared to look upon it with that high strength and tranquillity, I will reassume again for thee my Narayana figure in which the human mind sees isolated and toned to its humanity the calm, helpfulness and delight of a friendly Godhead. The greater Form”—and this is repeated again after it has disappeared—“is only for the rare highest souls. The gods themselves ever desire to look upon it. It cannot be won by Veda or austerities or gifts or sacrifice; it can be seen, known, entered into only by that bhakti which regards, adores and loves Me alone in all things.”

But what then is the uniqueness of this Form by which it is lifted so far beyond cognizance that all the ordinary endeavour of human knowledge and even the inmost austerity of its spiritual effort are insufficient, unaided, to reach the vision? It is this that man can know by other means this or that exclusive aspect of the one existence, its individual, cosmic or world-excluding figures, but not this greatest reconciling Oneness of all the aspects of the Divinity in which at one and the same time and in one and the same vision all is manifested, all is exceeded and all is consummated. For here transcendent, universal and individual Godhead, Spirit and Nature, Infinite and finite, space and time and timelessness, Being and Becoming, all that we can strive to think and know of the Godhead, whether of the absolute or the manifested existence, are wonderfully revealed in an ineffable oneness. This vision can be reached only by the absolute adoration, the love, the intimate unity that crowns at their summit the fullness of works and knowledge. To know, to see, to enter into it, to be one with this supreme form of the Supreme becomes then possible, and it is that end which the Gita proposes for its Yoga. There is a supreme consciousness through which it is possible to enter into the glory of the Transcendent and contain in him the immutable Self and all mutable Becoming,—

it is possible to be one with all, yet above all, to exceed world and yet embrace the whole nature at once of the cosmic and the supracosmic Godhead. This is difficult indeed for limited man imprisoned in his mind and body: but, says the Godhead, “be a doer of my works, accept me as the supreme being and object, become my bhakta, be free from attachment and without enmity to all existences; for such a man comes to me.” In other words superiority to the lower nature, unity with all creatures, oneness with the cosmic Godhead and the Transcendence, oneness of will with the Divine in works, absolute love for the One and for God in all,—this is the way to that absolute spiritual self-exceeding and that unimaginable transformation.

The Way and the Bhakta

IN THE eleventh chapter of the Gita the original object of the teaching has been achieved and brought up to a certain completeness. The command to divine action done for the sake of the world and in union with the Spirit who dwells in it and in all its creatures and in whom all its working takes place, has been given and accepted by the Vibhuti. The disciple has been led away from the old poise of the normal man and the standards, motives, outlook, egoistic consciousness of his ignorance, away from all that had finally failed him in the hour of his spiritual crisis. The very action which on that standing he had rejected, the terrible function, the appalling labour, he has now been brought to admit and accept on a new inner basis. A reconciling greater knowledge, a diviner consciousness, a high impersonal motive, a spiritual standard of oneness with the will of the Divine acting on the world from the fountain light and with the motive power of the spiritual nature,—this is the new inner principle of works which is to transform the old ignorant action. A knowledge which embraces oneness with the Divine and arrives through the Divine at conscious oneness with all things and beings, a will emptied of egoism and acting only by the command and as an instrumentation of the secret Master of works, a divine love whose one aspiration is towards a close intimacy with the supreme Soul of all existence, accomplished by the unity of these three perfected powers an inner all-comprehending unity with the transcendent and universal Spirit and Nature and all creatures are the foundation offered for his activities to the liberated man. For from that foundation the soul in him can suffer the instrumental nature to act in safety; he is lifted above all cause of stumbling, delivered from egoism and its limitations, rescued from all fear of sin and evil and consequence, exalted out of that bondage to the outward nature

and the limited action which is the knot of the Ignorance. He can act in the power of the Light, no longer in twilight or darkness, and a divine sanction upholds every step of his conduct. The difficulty which had been raised by the antinomy between the freedom of the Spirit and the bondage of the soul in Nature, has been solved by a luminous reconciliation of Spirit with Nature. That antinomy exists for the mind in the ignorance; it ceases to exist for the spirit in its knowledge.

But there is something more to be said in order to bring out all the meaning of the great spiritual change. The twelfth chapter leads up to this remaining knowledge and the last six that follow develop it to a grand final conclusion. This thing that remains still to be said turns upon the difference between the current Vedantic view of spiritual liberation and the larger comprehensive freedom which the teaching of the Gita opens to the spirit. There is now a pointed return to that difference. The current Vedantic way led through the door of an austere and exclusive knowledge. The Yoga, the oneness which it recognised as the means and the absorbing essence of the spiritual release, was a Yoga of pure knowledge and a still oneness with a supreme Immutable, an absolute Indefinable,—the unmanifested Brahman, infinite, silent, intangible, aloof, far above all this universe of relations. In the way proposed by the Gita knowledge is indeed the indispensable foundation, but an integral knowledge. Impersonal integral works are the first indispensable means; but a deep and large love and adoration, to which a relationless Unmanifest, an aloof and immovable Brahman can return no answer, since these things ask for a relation and an intimate personal closeness, are the strongest and highest power for release and spiritual perfection and the immortal Ananda. The Godhead with whom the soul of man has to enter into this closest oneness, is indeed in his supreme status a transcendent Unthinkable too great for any manifestation, Parabrahman; but he is at the same time the living supreme Soul of all things. He is the supreme Lord, the Master of works and universal nature. He at once exceeds and inhabits as its self the soul and mind and body of the creature. He is Purushottama, Parameshwara and

Paramatman and in all these equal aspects the same single and eternal Godhead. It is an awakening to this integral reconciling knowledge that is the wide gate to the utter release of the soul and an unimaginable perfection of the nature. It is this Godhead in the unity of all his aspects to whom our works and our adoration and our knowledge have to be directed as a constant inner sacrifice. It is this supreme soul, Purushottama, transcendent of the universe, but also its containing spirit, inhabitant and possessor, even as it is mightily figured in the vision of Kurukshetra, into whom the liberated spirit has to enter once it has reached to the vision and knowledge of him in all the principles and powers of his existence, once it is able to grasp and enjoy his multitudinous oneness, *jñātum draṣṭum tattvena praveṣṭum ca*.

The liberation of the Gita is not a self-oblivious abolition of the soul's personal being in the absorption of the One, *sāyujya mukti*; it is all kinds of union at once. There is an entire unification with the supreme Godhead in essence of being and intimacy of consciousness and identity of bliss, *sāyujya*, — for one object of this Yoga is to become Brahman, *brahmabhūta*. There is an eternal ecstatic dwelling in the highest existence of the Supreme, *sālokya*, — for it is said, "Thou shalt dwell in me," *nivasiṣyasi mayyeva*. There is an eternal love and adoration in a uniting nearness, there is an embrace of the liberated spirit by its divine Lover and the enveloping Self of its infinitudes, *sāmīpya*. There is an identity of the soul's liberated nature with the divine nature, *sādr̥ṣya mukti*, — for the perfection of the free spirit is to become even as the Divine, *madbhāvam āgataḥ*, and to be one with him in the law of its being and the law of its works and nature, *sādharmyam āgataḥ*. The orthodox Yoga of knowledge aims at a fathomless immersion in the one infinite existence, *sāyujya*; it looks upon that alone as the entire liberation. The Yoga of adoration envisages an eternal habitation or nearness as the greater release, *sālokya*, *sāmīpya*. The Yoga of works leads to oneness in power of being and nature, *sādr̥ṣya*. But the Gita envelops them all in its catholic integrality and fuses them all into one greatest and richest divine freedom and perfection.

Arjuna is made to raise the question of this difference. It

must be remembered that the distinction between the impersonal immutable Akshara Purusha and the supreme Soul that is at once impersonality and divine Person and much more than either—that this capital distinction implied in the later chapters and in the divine “I” of which Krishna has constantly spoken, *aham, mām*, has as yet not been quite expressly and definitely drawn. We have been throughout anticipating it in order to understand from the beginning the full significance of the Gita’s message and not have to go back again, as we would otherwise be obliged, over the same ground newly seen and prospected in the light of this greater truth. Arjuna has been enjoined first to sink his separate personality in the calm impersonality of the one eternal and immutable self, a teaching which agreed well with his previous notions and offered no difficulties. But now he is confronted with the vision of this greatest transcendent, this widest universal Godhead and commanded to seek oneness with him by knowledge and works and adoration. Therefore he asks the better to have a doubt cleared which might otherwise have arisen, “Those devotees who thus by a constant union seek after thee, *tvām*, and those who seek after the unmanifest Immutable, which of these have the greater knowledge of Yoga?” This recalls the distinction made in the beginning by such phrases as “in the self, then in me,” *ātmani atho mayi*: Arjuna points the distinction, *tvām, akṣaram avyaktam*. Thou, he says in substance, art the supreme Source and Origin of all beings, a Presence immanent in all things, a Power pervading the universe with thy forms, a Person manifest in thy Vibhutis, manifest in creatures, manifest in Nature, seated as the Lord of works in the world and in our hearts by thy mighty world-Yoga. As such I have to know, adore, unite myself with thee in all my being, consciousness, thoughts, feelings and actions, *satata-yukta*. But what then of this Immutable who never manifests, never puts on any form, stands back and apart from all action, enters into no relation with the universe or with anything in it, is eternally silent and one and impersonal and immobile? This eternal Self is the greater Principle according to all current notions and the Godhead in the manifestation is an inferior figure:

the unmanifest and not the manifest is the eternal Spirit. How then does the union which admits the manifestation, admits the lesser thing, come yet to be the greater Yoga-knowledge?

To this question Krishna replies with an emphatic decisiveness. "Those who found their mind in Me and by constant union, possessed of a supreme faith, seek after Me, I hold to be the most perfectly in union of Yoga." The supreme faith is that which sees God in all and to its eye the manifestation and the non-manifestation are one Godhead. The perfect union is that which meets the Divine at every moment, in every action and with all the integrality of the nature. But those also who seek by a hard ascent after the indefinable unmanifest Immutable alone, arrive, says the Godhead, to Me. For they are not mistaken in their aim, but they follow a more difficult and a less complete and perfect path. At the easiest, to reach the unmanifest Absolute they have to climb through the manifest Immutable here. This manifest Immutable is my own all-pervading impersonality and silence; vast, unthinkable, immobile, constant, omnipresent, it supports the action of personality but does not share in it. It offers no hold to the mind; it can only be gained by a motionless spiritual impersonality and silence and those who follow after it alone have to restrain altogether and even draw in completely the action of the mind and senses. But still by the equality of their understanding and by their seeing of one self in all things and by their tranquil benignancy of silent will for the good of all existences they too meet me in all objects and creatures. No less than those who unite themselves with the Divine in all ways of their existence, *sarva-bhāvena*, and enter largely and fully into the unthinkable living fountainhead of universal things, *divyam puruṣam acintya-rūpam*, these seekers too who climb through this more difficult exclusive oneness towards a relationless unmanifest Absolute find in the end the same Eternal. But this is a less direct and more arduous way; it is not the full and natural movement of the spiritualised human nature.

And it must not be thought that because it is more arduous, therefore it is a higher and more effective process. The easier way of the Gita leads more rapidly, naturally and normally to

the same absolute liberation. For its acceptance of the divine Person does not imply any attachment to the mental and sensuous limitations of embodied Nature. On the contrary it brings a swift and effectual unchaining from the phenomenal bondage of death and birth. The Yогin of exclusive knowledge imposes on himself a painful struggle with the manifold demands of his nature; he denies them even their highest satisfaction and cuts away from him even the upward impulses of his spirit whenever they imply relations or fall short of a negating absolute. The living way of the Gita on the contrary finds out the most intense upward trend of all our being and by turning it Godwards uses knowledge, will, feeling and the instinct for perfection as so many puissant wings of a mounting liberation. The unmanifest Brahman in its indefinable unity is a thing to which embodied souls can only arrive and that hardly by a constant mortification, a suffering of all the repressed members, a stern difficulty and anguish of the nature, *duḥkham avāpyate, kleśo 'dhikataras teṣām*. The indefinable Oneness accepts all that climb to it, but offers no help of relation and gives no foothold to the climber. All has to be done by a severe austerity and a stern and lonely individual effort. How different is it for those who seek after the Purushottama in the way of the Gita! When they meditate on him with a Yoga which sees none else, because it sees all to be Vasudeva, he meets them at every point, in every movement, at all times, with innumerable forms and faces, holds up the lamp of knowledge within and floods with its divine and happy lustre the whole of existence. Illumined, they discern the supreme Spirit in every form and face, arrive at once through all Nature to the Lord of Nature, arrive through all beings to the Soul of all being, arrive through themselves to the Self of all that they are; incontinently they break through a hundred opening issues at once into that from which everything has its origin. The other method of a difficult relationless stillness tries to get away from all action even though that is impossible to embodied creatures. Here the actions are all given up to the supreme Master of action and he as the supreme Will meets the will of sacrifice, takes from it its burden and assumes to himself the charge of the works of

the divine Nature in us. And when too in the high passion of love the devotee of the Lover and Friend of man and of all creatures casts upon him all his heart of consciousness and yearning of delight, then swiftly the Supreme comes to him as the saviour and deliverer and exalts him by a happy embrace of his mind and heart and body out of the waves of the sea of death in this mortal nature into the secure bosom of the Eternal.

This then is the swiftest, largest and greatest way. On me, says the Godhead to the soul of man, repose all thy mind and lodge all thy understanding in me: I will lift them up bathed in the supernal blaze of the divine love and will and knowledge to myself from whom these things flow. Doubt not that thou shalt dwell in me above this mortal existence. The chain of the limiting earthly nature cannot hold the immortal spirit exalted by the passion, the power and the light of the eternal love, will and knowledge. No doubt, on this way too there are difficulties; for there is the lower nature with its fierce or dull downward gravitation which resists and battles against the motion of ascent and clogs the wings of the exaltation and the upward rapture. The divine consciousness even when it has been found at first in a wonder of great moments or in calm and splendid durations, cannot at once be altogether held or called back at will; there is felt often an inability to keep the personal consciousness fixed steadily in the Divine; there are nights of long exile from the Light, there are hours or moments of revolt, doubt or failure. But still by the practice of union and by constant repetition of the experience, that highest spirit grows upon the being and takes permanent possession of the nature. Is this also found too difficult because of the power and persistence of the outward-going movement of the mind? Then the way is simple, to do all actions for the sake of the Lord of the action, so that every outward-going movement of the mind shall be associated with the inner spiritual truth of the being and called back even in the very movement to the eternal reality and connected with its source. Then the presence of the Purushottama will grow upon the natural man till he is filled with it and becomes a godhead and a spirit; all life will become a constant remembering of God

and perfection too will grow and the unity of the whole existence of the human soul with the supreme Existence.

But it may be that even this constant remembering of God and lifting up of our works to him is felt to be beyond the power of the limited mind, because in its forgetfulness it turns to the act and its outward object and will not remember to look within and lay our every movement on the divine altar of the Spirit. Then the way is to control the lower self in the act and do works without desire of the fruit. All fruit has to be renounced, to be given up to the Power that directs the work, and yet the work has to be done that is imposed by It on the nature. For by this means the obstacle steadily diminishes and easily disappears; the mind is left free to remember the Lord and to fix itself in the liberty of the divine consciousness. And here the Gita gives an ascending scale of potencies and assigns the palm of excellence to this Yoga of desireless action. *Abhyāsa*, practice of a method, repetition of an effort and experience is a great and powerful thing; but better than this is knowledge, the successful and luminous turning of the thought to the Truth behind things. This thought-knowledge too is excelled by a silent complete concentration on the Truth so that the consciousness shall eventually live in it and be always one with it. But more powerful still is the giving up of the fruit of one's works, because that immediately destroys all causes of disturbance and brings and preserves automatically an inner calm and peace, and calm and peace are the foundation on which all else becomes perfect and secure in possession by the tranquil spirit. Then the consciousness can be at ease, happily fix itself in the Divine and rise undisturbed to perfection. Then too knowledge, will and devotion can lift their pinnacles from a firm soil of solid calm into the ether of Eternity.

What then will be the divine nature, what will be the greater state of consciousness and being of the bhakta who has followed this way and turned to the adoration of the Eternal? The Gita in a number of verses rings the changes on its first insistent demand, on equality, on desirelessness, on freedom of spirit. This is to be the base always,— and that was why so much stress was laid on it in the beginning. And in that equality bhakti, the love and

adoration of the Purushottama must rear the spirit towards some greatest highest perfection of which this calm equality will be the wide foundation. Several formulas of this fundamental equal consciousness are given here. First, an absence of egoism, of I-ness and my-ness, *nirmamo nirahaṅkāraḥ*. The bhakta of the Purushottama is one who has a universal heart and mind which has broken down all the narrow walls of the ego. A universal love dwells in his heart, a universal compassion flows from it like an encompassing sea. He will have friendship and pity for all beings and hate for no living thing: for he is patient, long-suffering, enduring, a well of forgiveness. A desireless content is his, a tranquil equality to pleasure and pain, suffering and happiness, the steadfast control of self and the firm unshakable will and resolution of the Yogin and a love and devotion which gives up the whole mind and reason to the Lord, to the Master of his consciousness and knowledge. Or, simply, he will be one who is freed from the troubled agitated lower nature and from its waves of joy and fear and anxiety and resentment and desire, a spirit of calm by whom the world is not afflicted or troubled, nor is he afflicted or troubled by the world, a soul of peace with whom all are at peace.

Or he will be one who has given up all desire and action to the Master of his being, one pure and still, indifferent to whatever comes, not pained or afflicted by any result or happening, one who has flung away from him all egoistic, personal and mental initiative whether of the inner or the outer act, one who lets the divine will and divine knowledge flow through him undeflected by his own resolves, preferences and desires, and yet for that very reason is swift and skilful in all action of his nature, because this flawless unity with the supreme will, this pure instrumentation is the condition of the greatest skill in works. Again, he will be one who neither desires the pleasant and rejoices at its touch nor abhors the unpleasant and sorrows at its burden. He has abolished the distinction between fortunate and unfortunate happenings, because his devotion receives all things equally as good from the hands of his eternal Lover and Master. The God-lover dear to God is a soul of wide equality,

equal to friend and enemy, equal to honour and insult, pleasure and pain, praise and blame, grief and happiness, heat and cold, to all that troubles with opposite affections the normal nature. He will have no attachment to person or thing, place or home; he will be content and well-satisfied with whatever surroundings, whatever relation men adopt to him, whatever station or fortune. He will keep a mind firm in all things, because it is constantly seated in the highest self and fixed for ever on the one divine object of his love and adoration. Equality, desirelessness and freedom from the lower egoistic nature and its claims are always the one perfect foundation demanded by the Gita for the great liberation. There is to the end an emphatic repetition of its first fundamental teaching and original desideratum, the calm soul of knowledge that sees the one self in all things, the tranquil egoless equality that results from this knowledge, the desireless action offered in that equality to the Master of works, the surrender of the whole mental nature of man into the hands of the mightier indwelling spirit. And the crown of this equality is love founded on knowledge, fulfilled in instrumental action, extended to all things and beings, a vast absorbing and all-containing love for the divine Self who is Creator and Master of the universe, *suhṛdam sarva-bhūtānāṁ sarva-loka-maheśvaram*.

This is the foundation, the condition, the means by which the supreme spiritual perfection is to be won, and those who have it in any way are all dear to me, says the Godhead, *bhaktimān me priyah*. But exceedingly dear, *atīva me priyāḥ*, are those souls nearest to the Godhead whose love of me is completed by the still wider and greatest perfection of which I have just shown to you the way and the process. These are the bhaktas who make the Purushottama their one supreme aim and follow out with a perfect faith and exactitude the immortalising Dharma described in this teaching. Dharma in the language of the Gita means the innate law of the being and its works and an action proceeding from and determined by the inner nature, *svabhāva-niyatam karma*. In the lower ignorant consciousness of mind, life and body there are many dharmas, many rules, many standards and laws because there are many varying determinations and types

of the mental, vital and physical nature. The immortal Dharma is one; it is that of the highest spiritual divine consciousness and its powers, *parā prakṛtiḥ*. It is beyond the three gunas, and to reach it all these lower dharmas have to be abandoned, *sarva-dharmān parityajya*. Alone in their place the one liberating unifying consciousness and power of the Eternal has to become the infinite source of our action, its mould, determinant and exemplar. To rise out of our lower personal egoism, to enter into the impersonal and equal calm of the immutable eternal all-pervading Akshara Purusha, to aspire from that calm by a perfect self-surrender of all one's nature and existence to that which is other and higher than the Akshara, is the first necessity of this Yoga. In the strength of that aspiration one can rise to the immortal Dharma. There, made one in being, consciousness and divine bliss with the greatest Uttama Purusha, made one with his supreme dynamic nature-force, *svā prakṛtiḥ*, the liberated spirit can know infinitely, love illimitably, act unfalteringly in the authentic power of a highest immortality and a perfect freedom. The rest of the Gita is written to throw a fuller light on this immortal Dharma.

PART II
THE SUPREME SECRET

XIII

The Field and its Knower¹

THE GITA in its last six chapters, in order to found on a clear and complete knowledge the way of the soul's rising out of the lower into the divine nature, restates in another form the enlightenment the Teacher has already imparted to Arjuna. Essentially it is the same knowledge, but details and relations are now made prominent and assigned their entire significance, thoughts and truths brought out in their full value that were alluded to only in passing or generally stated in the light of another purpose. Thus in the first six chapters the knowledge necessary for the distinction between the immutable self and the soul veiled in nature was accorded an entire prominence. The references to the supreme Self and Purusha were summary and not at all explicit; it was assumed in order to justify works in the world and it was affirmed to be the Master of being, but there was otherwise nothing to show what it was and its relations to the rest were not even hinted at, much less developed. The remaining chapters are devoted to the bringing out of this suppressed knowledge in a conspicuous light and strong pre-eminence. It is to the Lord, the Ishwara, it is to the distinction of the higher and the lower nature and to the vision of the all-originating and all-constituting Godhead in Nature, it is to the One in all beings that prominence has been assigned in the next six Adhyayas (7-12) in order to found a root-unity of works and love with knowledge. But now it is necessary to bring out more definitely the precise relations between the supreme Purusha, the immutable self, the Jiva and Prakriti in her action and her gunas. Arjuna is therefore made to put a question which shall evoke a clearer elucidation of these still ill-lighted matters. He asks to learn of the Purusha and the Prakriti; he inquires of the

¹ Gita, XIII.

field of being and the knower of the field and of knowledge and the object of knowledge. Here is contained the sum of all the knowledge of self and the world that is still needed if the soul is to throw off its natural ignorance and staying its steps on a right use of knowledge, of life, of works and of its own relations with the Divine in these things ascend into unity of being with the eternal Spirit of existence.

The essence of the Gita's ideas in these matters has already, anticipating the final evolution of its thought, been elucidated in a certain measure; but, following its example, we may state them again from the point of view of its present preoccupation. Action being admitted, a divine action done with self-knowledge as the instrument of the divine Will in the cosmos being accepted as perfectly consistent with the Brahmic status and an indispensable part of the Godward movement, that action being uplifted inwardly as a sacrifice with adoration to the Highest, how does this way practically affect the great object of spiritual life, the rising from the lower into the higher nature, from mortal into immortal being? All life, all works are a transaction between the soul and Nature. What is the original character of that transaction? what does it become at its spiritual culminating point? to what perfection does it lead the soul that gets free from its lower and external motives and grows inwardly into the very highest poise of the Spirit and deepest motive-force of the works of its energy in the universe? These are the questions involved, — there are others which the Gita does not raise or answer, for they were not pressingly present to the human mind of that day, — and they are replied to in the sense of the solution drawn from a large-sighted combination of the Vedantic, Sankhya and Yoga views of existence which is the starting-point of the whole thought of the Gita.

The Soul which finds itself here embodied in Nature has a triple reality to its own self-experience. First it is a spiritual being apparently subjected by ignorance to the outward workings of Prakriti and represented in her mobility as an acting, thinking, mutable personality, a creature of Nature, an ego. Next when it gets behind all this action and motion, it finds its own higher

reality to be an eternal and impersonal self and immutable spirit which has no other share in the action and movement than to support it by its presence and regard it as an undisturbed equal witness. And last, when it looks beyond these two opposite selves, it discovers a greater ineffable Reality from which both proceed, the Eternal who is Self of the self and the Master of all Nature and all action, and not only the Master, but the origin and the spiritual support and scene of these workings of his own energy in Cosmos, and not only the origin and spiritual container, but the spiritual inhabitant in all forces, in all things and in all beings, and not only the inhabitant but, by the developments of this eternal energy of his being which we call Nature, himself all energies and forces, all things and all beings. This Nature itself is of two kinds, one derived and inferior, another original and supreme. There is a lower nature of the cosmic mechanism by association with which the soul in Prakriti lives in a certain ignorance born of Maya, *traiguruyamayī māyā*, conceives of itself as an ego of embodied mind and life, works under the power of the modes of Nature, thinks itself bound, suffering, limited by personality, chained to the obligation of birth and the wheel of action, a thing of desires, transient, mortal, a slave of its own nature. Above this inferior power of existence there is a higher divine and spiritual nature of its own true being in which this soul is for ever a conscious portion of the Eternal and Divine, blissful, free, superior to its mask of becoming, immortal, imperishable, a power of the Godhead. To rise by this higher nature to the Eternal through divine knowledge, love and works founded on a spiritual universality is the key of the complete spiritual liberation. This much has been made clear; and we have to see now more in detail what farther considerations this change of being involves and especially what is the difference between these two natures and how our action and our soul-status are affected by the liberation. For that purpose the Gita enters largely into certain details of the highest knowledge which it had hitherto kept in the background. Especially it dwells on the relation between Being and becoming, Soul and Nature, the action of the three gunas, the highest liberation, the largest fullest self-giving

of the human soul to the Divine Spirit. There is in all that it says in these closing six chapters much of the greatest importance, but it is the last thought with which it closes that is of supreme interest; for in it we shall find the central idea of its teaching, its great word to the soul of man, its highest message.

First, the whole of existence must be regarded as a field of the soul's construction and action in the midst of Nature. The Gita explains the *kṣetram*, field, by saying that it is this body which is called the field of the spirit, and in this body there is someone who takes cognizance of the field, *kṣetrajña*, the knower of Nature. It is evident, however, from the definitions that succeed that it is not the physical body alone which is the field, but all too that the body supports, the working of nature, the mentality, the natural action of the objectivity and subjectivity of our being.² This wider body too is only the individual field; there is a larger, a universal, a world-body, a world-field of the same Knower. For in each embodied creature there is this one Knower: in each existence he uses mainly and centrally this single outward result of the power of his nature which he has formed for his habitation, *īśā vāsyam sarvam yat kiñca*, makes each separate sustained knot of his mobile Energy the first base and scope of his developing harmonies. In Nature he knows the world as it affects and is reflected by the consciousness in this one limited body; the world exists to us as it is seen in our single mind,—and in the end, even, this seemingly small embodied consciousness can so enlarge itself that it contains in itself the whole universe, *ātmani viśva-darśanam*. But, physically, it is a microcosm in a macrocosm, and the macrocosm too, the large world too, is a body and field inhabited by the spiritual knower.

That becomes evident when the Gita proceeds to state the character, nature, source, deformations, powers of this sensible embodiment of our being. We see then that it is the whole working of the lower Prakṛiti that is meant by the *kṣetra*. That totality is the field of action of the embodied spirit here within us, the

² The Upanishad speaks of a fivefold body or sheath of Nature, a physical, vital, mental, ideal and divine body; this may be regarded as the totality of the field, *kṣetram*.

field of which it takes cognizance. For a varied and detailed knowledge of all this world of Nature in its essential action as seen from the spiritual view-point we are referred to the verses of the ancient seers, the seers of the Veda and Upanishads, in which we get the inspired and intuitive account of these creations of the Spirit, and to the Brahma Sutras which will give us the rational and philosophic analysis. The Gita contents itself with a brief practical statement of the lower nature of our being in the terms of the Sankhya thinkers. First there is the indiscriminate unmanifest Energy; out of that has come the objective evolution of the five elemental states of matter; as also the subjective evolution of the senses, intelligence and ego; there are too five objects of the senses, or rather five different ways of sense cognizance of the world, powers evolved by the universal energy in order to deal with all the forms of things she has created from the five elemental states assumed by her original objective substance,— organic relations by which the ego endowed with intelligence and sense acts on the formations of the cosmos: this is the constitution of the kshetra. Then there is a general consciousness that first informs and then illumines the Energy in its works; there is a faculty of that consciousness by which the Energy holds together the relations of objects; there is too a continuity, a persistence of the subjective and objective relations of our consciousness with its objects. These are the necessary powers of the field; all these are common and universal powers at once of the mental, vital and physical Nature. Pleasure and pain, liking and disliking are the principal deformations of the kshetra. From the Vedantic point of view we may say that pleasure and pain are the vital or sensational deformations given by the lower energy to the spontaneous Ananda or delight of the spirit when brought into contact with her workings. And we may say from the same view-point that liking and disliking are the corresponding mental deformations given by her to the reactive Will of the spirit that determines its response to her contacts. These dualities are the positive and negative terms in which the ego soul of the lower nature enjoys the universe. The negative terms, pain, dislike, sorrow, repulsion and the rest, are

perverse or at the best ignorantly reverse responses: the positive terms, liking, pleasure, joy, attraction, are ill-guided responses or at the best insufficient and in character inferior to those of the true spiritual experience.

All these things taken together constitute the fundamental character of our first transactions with the world of Nature, but it is evidently not the whole description of our being; it is our actuality but not the limit of our possibilities. There is something beyond to be known, *jñeyam*, and it is when the knower of the field turns from the field itself to learn of himself within it and of all that is behind its appearances that real knowledge begins, *jñānam*, — the true knowledge of the field no less than of the knower. That turning inward alone delivers from ignorance. For the farther we go inward, the more we seize on greater and fuller realities of things and grasp the complete truth both of God and the soul and of the world and its movements. Therefore, says the divine Teacher, it is the knowledge at once of the field and its knower, *kṣetra-kṣetrajñayor jñānam*, a united and even unified self-knowledge and world-knowledge, which is the real illumination and the only wisdom. For both soul and nature are the Brahman, but the true truth of the world of Nature can only be discovered by the liberated sage who possesses also the truth of the spirit. One Brahman, one reality in Self and Nature is the object of all knowledge.

The Gita then tells us what is the spiritual knowledge or rather it tells us what are the conditions of knowledge, the marks, the signs of the man whose soul is turned towards the inner wisdom. These signs are the recognised and traditional characteristics of the sage,— his strong turning away of the heart from attachment to outward and worldly things, his inward and brooding spirit, his steady mind and calm equality, the settled fixity of his thought and will upon the greatest inmost truths, upon the things that are real and eternal. First, there comes a certain moral condition, a sattwic government of the natural being. There is fixed in him a total absence of worldly pride and arrogance, a candid soul, a tolerant, long-suffering and benignant heart, purity of mind and body, tranquil firmness

and steadfastness, self-control and a masterful government of the lower nature and the heart's worship given to the Teacher, whether to the divine Teacher within or to the human Master in whom the divine Wisdom is embodied,— for that is the sense of the reverence given to the Guru. Then there is a nobler and freer attitude towards the outward world, an attitude of perfect detachment and equality, a firm removal of the natural being's attraction to the objects of the senses and a radical freedom from the claims of that constant clamorous ego-sense, ego-idea, ego-motive which tyrannises over the normal man. There is no longer any clinging to the attachment and absorption of family and home. There is instead of these vital and animal movements an unattached will and sense and intelligence, a keen perception of the defective nature of the ordinary life of physical man with its aimless and painful subjection to birth and death and disease and age, a constant equalness to all pleasant or unpleasant happenings,— for the soul is seated within and impervious to the shocks of external events,— and a meditative mind turned towards solitude and away from the vain noise of crowds and the assemblies of men. Finally, there is a strong turn within towards the things that really matter, a philosophic perception of the true sense and large principles of existence, a tranquil continuity of inner spiritual knowledge and light, the Yoga of an unswerving devotion, love of God, the heart's deep and constant adoration of the universal and eternal Presence.

The one object to which the mind of spiritual knowledge must be turned is the Eternal by fixity in whom the soul clouded here and swathed in the mists of Nature recovers and enjoys its native and original consciousness of immortality and transcendence. To be fixed on the transient, to be limited in the phenomenon is to accept mortality; the constant truth in things that perish is that in them which is inward and immutable. The soul when it allows itself to be tyrannised over by the appearances of Nature, misses itself and goes whirling about in the cycle of the births and deaths of its bodies. There, passionately following without end the mutations of personality and its interests, it cannot draw back to the possession of its

impersonal and unborn self-existence. To be able to do that is to find oneself and get back to one's true being, that which assumes these births but does not perish with the perishing of its forms. To enjoy the eternity to which birth and life are only outward circumstances, is the soul's true immortality and transcendence. That Eternal or that Eternity is the Brahman. Brahman is That which is transcendent and That which is universal: it is the free spirit who supports in front the play of soul with nature and assures behind their imperishable oneness; it is at once the mutable and the immutable, the All that is the One. In his highest supracosmic status Brahman is a transcendent Eternity without origin or change far above the phenomenal oppositions of existence and non-existence, persistence and transience between which the outward world moves. But once seen in the substance and light of this eternity, the world also becomes other than it seems to the mind and senses; for then we see the universe no longer as a whirl of mind and life and matter or a mass of the determinations of energy and substance, but as no other than this eternal Brahman. A spirit who immeasurably fills and surrounds all this movement with himself—for indeed the movement too is himself—and who throws on all that is finite the splendour of his garment of infinity, a bodiless and million-bodied spirit whose hands of strength and feet of swiftness are on every side of us, whose heads and eyes and faces are those innumerable visages which we see wherever we turn, whose ear is everywhere listening to the silence of eternity and the music of the worlds, is the universal Being in whose embrace we live.

All relations of Soul and Nature are circumstances in the eternity of Brahman; sense and quality, their reflectors and constituents, are this supreme Soul's devices for the presentation of the workings that his own energy in things constantly liberates into movement. He is himself beyond the limitation of the senses, sees all things but not with the physical eye, hears all things but not with the physical ear, is aware of all things but not with the limiting mind—mind which represents but cannot truly know. Not determined by any qualities, he possesses and determines in his substance all qualities and enjoys this qualitative action of

his own Nature. He is attached to nothing, bound by nothing, fixed to nothing that he does; calm, he supports in a large and immortal freedom all the action and movement and passion of his universal Shakti. He becomes all that is in the universe; that which is in us is he and all that we experience outside ourselves is he. The inward and the outward, the far and the near, the moving and the unmoving, all this he is at once. He is the subtlety of the subtle which is beyond our knowledge, even as he is the density of force and substance which offers itself to the grasp of our minds. He is indivisible and the One, but seems to divide himself in forms and creatures and appears as all these separate existences. All things can get back in him, can return in the Spirit to the indivisible unity of their self-existence. All is eternally born from him, upborne in his eternity, taken eternally back into his oneness. He is the light of all lights and luminous beyond all the darkness of our ignorance. He is knowledge and the object of knowledge. The spiritual supramental knowledge that floods the illumined mind and transfigures it is this spirit manifesting himself in light to the force-obscured soul which he has put forth into the action of Nature. This eternal Light is in the heart of every being; it is he who is the secret knower of the field, *kṣetrajña*, and presides as the Lord in the heart of things over this province and over all these kingdoms of his manifested becoming and action. When man sees this eternal and universal Godhead within himself, when he becomes aware of the soul in all things and discovers the spirit in Nature, when he feels all the universe as a wave mounting in this Eternity and all that is as the one existence, he puts on the light of Godhead and stands free in the midst of the worlds of Nature. A divine knowledge and a perfect turning with adoration to this Divine is the secret of the great spiritual liberation. Freedom, love and spiritual knowledge raise us from mortal nature to immortal being.

The Soul and Nature are only two aspects of the eternal Brahman, an apparent duality which founds the operations of his universal existence. The Soul is without origin and eternal, Nature too is without origin and eternal; but the modes of Nature and the lower forms she assumes to our conscious

experience have an origin in the transactions of these two entities. They come from her, wear by her the outward chain of cause and effect, doing and the results of doing, force and its workings, all that is here transient and mutable. Constantly they change and the soul and Nature seem to change with them, but in themselves these two powers are eternal and always the same. Nature creates and acts, the Soul enjoys her creation and action; but in this inferior form of her action she turns this enjoyment into the obscure and petty figures of pain and pleasure. Forcibly the soul, the individual Purusha, is attracted by her qualitative workings and this attraction of her qualities draws him constantly to births of all kinds in which he enjoys the variations and vicissitudes, the good and evil of birth in Nature. But this is only the outward experience of the soul mutable in conception by identification with mutable Nature. Seated in this body is her and our Divinity, the supreme Self, Paramatman, the supreme Soul, the mighty Lord of Nature, who watches her action, sanctions her operations, upholds all she does, commands her manifold creation, enjoys with his universal delight this play of her figures of his own being. That is the self-knowledge to which we have to accustom our mentality before we can truly know ourselves as an eternal portion of the Eternal. Once that is fixed, no matter how the soul in us may comport itself outwardly in its transactions with Nature, whatever it may seem to do or however it may seem to assume this or that figure of personality and active force and embodied ego, it is in itself free, no longer bound to birth because one through impersonality of self with the inner unborn spirit of existence. That impersonality is our union with the supreme egoless I of all that is in cosmos.

This knowledge comes by an inner meditation through which the eternal self becomes apparent to us in our own self-existence. Or it comes by the Yoga of the Sankhyas, the separation of the soul from nature. Or it comes by the Yoga of works in which the personal will is dissolved through the opening up of our mind and heart and all our active forces to the Lord who assumes to himself the whole of our works in nature. The spiritual knowledge may be awakened by the

urging of the spirit within us, its call to this or that Yoga, this or that way of oneness. Or it may come to us by hearing of the truth from others and the moulding of the mind into the sense of that to which it listens with faith and concentration. But however arrived at, it carries us beyond death to immortality. Knowledge shows us high above the mutable transactions of the soul with the mortality of nature our highest Self as the supreme Lord of her actions, one and equal in all objects and creatures, not born in the taking up of a body, not subject to death in the perishing of all these bodies. That is the true seeing, the seeing of that in us which is eternal and immortal. As we perceive more and more this equal spirit in all things, we pass into that equality of the spirit; as we dwell more and more in this universal being, we become ourselves universal beings; as we grow more and more aware of this eternal, we put on our own eternity and are for ever. We identify ourselves with the eternity of the self and no longer with the limitation and distress of our mental and physical ignorance. Then we see that all our works are an evolution and operation of Nature and our real self not the executive doer, but the free witness and lord and unattached enjoyer of the action. All this surface of cosmic movement is a diverse becoming of natural existences in the one eternal Being, all is extended, manifested, rolled out by the universal Energy from the seeds of her Idea deep in his existence; but the spirit even though it takes up and enjoys her workings in this body of ours, is not affected by its mortality because it is eternal beyond birth and death, is not limited by the personalities which it multiply assumes in her because it is the one supreme self of all these personalities, is not changed by the mutations of quality because it is itself undetermined by quality, does not act even in action, *kartāram api akartāram*, because it supports natural action in a perfect spiritual freedom from its effects, is the originator indeed of all activities, but in no way changed or affected by the play of its Nature. As the all-pervading ether is not affected or changed by the multiple forms it assumes, but remains always the same pure subtle original substance, even so this spirit when it has done and become all

possible things, remains through it all the same pure immutable subtle infinite essence. That is the supreme status of the soul, *parā gatiḥ*, that is the divine being and nature, *madbhāva*, and whoever arrives at spiritual knowledge, rises to that supreme immortality of the Eternal.

This Brahman, this eternal and spiritual knower of the field of his own natural becoming, this Nature, his perpetual energy, which converts herself into that field, this immortality of the soul in mortal nature,—these things together make the whole reality of our existence. The spirit within, when we turn to it, illuminates the entire field of Nature with its own truth in all the splendour of its rays. In the light of that sun of knowledge the eye of knowledge opens in us and we live in that truth and no longer in this ignorance. Then we perceive that our limitation to our present mental and physical nature was an error of the darkness, then we are liberated from the law of the lower Prakriti, the law of the mind and body, then we attain to the supreme nature of the spirit. That splendid and lofty change is the last, the divine and infinite becoming, the putting off of mortal nature, the putting on of an immortal existence.

XIV

Above the Gunas¹

THE DISTINCTIONS between the Soul and Nature rapidly drawn in the verses of the thirteenth chapter by a few decisive epithets, a few brief but packed characterisations of their separate power and functioning, and especially the distinction between the embodied soul subjected to the action of Nature by its enjoyment of her gunas, qualities or modes and the Supreme Soul which dwells enjoying the gunas, but not subject because it is itself beyond them, are the basis on which the Gita rests its whole idea of the liberated being made one in the conscious law of its existence with the Divine. That liberation, that oneness, that putting on of the divine nature, *sādharmya*, it declares to be the very essence of spiritual freedom and the whole significance of immortality. This supreme importance assigned to *sādharmya* is a capital point in the teaching of the Gita.

To be immortal was never held in the ancient spiritual teaching to consist merely in a personal survival of the death of the body: all beings are immortal in that sense and it is only the forms that perish. The souls that do not arrive at liberation, live through the returning aeons; all exist involved or secret in the Brahman during the dissolution of the manifest worlds and are born again in the appearance of a new cycle. Pralaya, the end of a cycle of aeons, is the temporary disintegration of a universal form of existence and of all the individual forms which move in its rounds, but that is only a momentary pause, a silent interval followed by an outburst of new creation, reintegration and reconstruction in which they reappear and recover the impetus of their progression. Our physical death is also a pralaya,—the Gita will presently use the word in the sense of this death,

¹ Gita, XIV.

pralayam yāti deha-bhṛt, “the soul bearing the body comes to a pralaya,” to a disintegration of that form of matter with which its ignorance identified its being and which now dissolves into the natural elements. But the soul itself persists and after an interval resumes in a new body formed from those elements its round of births in the cycle, just as after the interval of pause and cessation the universal Being resumes his endless round of the cyclic aeons. This immortality in the rounds of Time is common to all embodied spirits.

To be immortal in the deeper sense is something different from this survival of death and this constant recurrence. Immortality is that supreme status in which the Spirit knows itself to be superior to death and birth, not conditioned by the nature of its manifestation, infinite, imperishable, immutably eternal, — immortal, because never being born it never dies. The divine Purushottama, who is the supreme Lord and supreme Brahman, possesses for ever this immortal eternity and is not affected by his taking up a body or by his continuous assumption of cosmic forms and powers because he exists always in this self-knowledge. His very nature is to be unchangeably conscious of his own eternity; he is self-aware without end or beginning. He is here the Inhabitant of all bodies, but as the unborn in every body, not limited in his consciousness by that manifestation, not identified with the physical nature which he assumes; for that is only a minor circumstance of his universal activised play of existence. Liberation, immortality is to live in this unchangeably conscious eternal being of the Purushottama.² But to arrive here at this greater spiritual immortality the embodied soul must cease to live according to the law of the lower nature; it must

² Mark that nowhere in the Gita is there any indication that dissolution of the individual spiritual being into the unmanifest, indefinable or absolute Brahman, *avyaktam anirdeśyam*, is the true meaning or condition of immortality or the true aim of Yoga. On the contrary it describes immortality later on as an indwelling in the Ishwara in his supreme status, *mayi nivasiṣyasi, parāṁ dhāma*, and here as *sādharmya, parāṁ siddhim*, a supreme perfection, a becoming of one law of being and nature with the Supreme, persistent still in existence and conscious of the universal movement but above it, as all the sages still exist, *munayah sarve*, not bound to birth in the creation, not troubled by the dissolution of the cycles.

put on the law of the Divine's supreme way of existence which is in fact the real law of its own eternal essence. In the spiritual evolution of its becoming, no less than in its secret original being, it must grow into the likeness of the Divine.

And this great thing, to rise from the human into the divine nature, we can only do by an effort of Godward knowledge, will and adoration. For the soul sent forth by the Supreme as his eternal portion, his immortal representative into the workings of universal Nature is yet obliged by the character of those workings, *avaśam prakṛter vaśat*, to identify itself in its external consciousness with her limiting conditions, to identify itself with a life, mind and body that are oblivious of their inner spiritual reality and of the innate Godhead. To get back to self-knowledge and to the knowledge of the real as distinct from the apparent relations of the soul with Nature, to know God and ourselves and the world with a spiritual and no longer with a physical or externalised experience, through the deepest truth of the inner soul-consciousness and not through the misleading phenomenal significances of the sense-mind and the outward understanding, is an indispensable means of this perfection. Perfection cannot come without self-knowledge and God-knowledge and a spiritual attitude towards our natural existence, and that is why the ancient wisdom laid so much stress on salvation by knowledge, — not an intellectual cognizance of things, but a growing of man the mental being into a greater spiritual consciousness. The soul's salvation cannot come without the soul's perfection, without its growing into the divine nature; the impartial Godhead will not effect it for us by an act of caprice or an arbitrary *sanad* of his favour. Divine works are effective for salvation because they lead us towards this perfection and to a knowledge of self and nature and God by a growing unity with the inner Master of our existence. Divine love is effective because by it we grow into the likeness of the sole and supreme object of our adoration and call down the answering love of the Highest to flood us with the light of his knowledge and the uplifting power and purity of his eternal spirit. Therefore, says the Gita, this is the supreme knowledge and the highest of all knowings because it leads to

the highest perfection and spiritual status, *parām siddhim*, and brings the soul to likeness with the Divine, *sādharmya*. It is the eternal wisdom, the great spiritual experience by which all the sages attained to that highest perfection, grew into one law of being with the Supreme and live for ever in his eternity, not born in the creation, not troubled by the anguish of the universal dissolution. This perfection, then, this *sādharmya* is the way of immortality and the indispensable condition without which the soul cannot consciously live in the Eternal.

The soul of man could not grow into the likeness of the Divine, if it were not in its secret essence imperishably one with the Divine and part and parcel of his divinity: it could not be or become immortal if it were merely a creature of mental, vital and physical Nature. All existence is a manifestation of the divine Existence and that which is within us is spirit of the eternal Spirit. We have come indeed into the lower material nature and are under its influence, but we have come there from the supreme spiritual nature: this inferior imperfect status is our apparent, but that our real being. The Eternal puts all this movement forth as his self-creation. He is at once the Father and Mother of the universe; the substance of the infinite Idea, *vijñāna*, the Mahad Brahman, is the womb into which he casts the seed of his self-conception. As the Over-Soul he casts the seed; as the Mother, the Nature-Soul, the Energy filled with his conscious power, he receives it into this infinite substance of being made pregnant with his illimitable, yet self-limiting Idea. He receives into this Vast of self-conception and develops there the divine embryo into mental and physical form of existence born from the original act of conceptional creation. All we see springs from that act of creation; but that which is born here is only finite idea and form of the unborn and infinite. The Spirit is eternal and superior to all its manifestation: Nature, eternal without beginning in the Spirit, proceeds for ever with the rhythm of the cycles by unending act of creation and unconcluding act of cessation; the Soul too which takes on this or that form in Nature, is no less eternal than she, *anādī ubhāv api*. Even while in Nature it follows the unceasing round of the cycles, it is, in the Eternal

from which it proceeds into them, for ever raised above the terms of birth and death, and even in its apparent consciousness here it can become aware of that innate and constant transcendence.

What is it then that makes the difference, what is it that gets the soul into the appearance of birth and death and bondage,—for this is patent that it is only an appearance? It is a subordinate act or state of consciousness, it is a self-oblivious identification with the modes of Nature in the limited workings of this lower motivity and with this self-wrapped ego-bounded knot of action of the mind, life and body. To rise above the modes of Nature, to be *traigunyātīta*, is indispensable, if we are to get back into our fully conscious being away from the obsessing power of the lower action and to put on the free nature of the spirit and its eternal immortality. That condition of the *sādharmya* is what the Gita next proceeds to develop. It has already alluded to it and laid it down with a brief emphasis in a previous chapter; but it has now to indicate more precisely what are these modes, these gunas, how they bind the soul and keep it back from spiritual freedom and what is meant by rising above the modes of Nature.

The modes of Nature are all qualitative in their essence and are called for that reason its gunas or qualities. In any spiritual conception of the universe this must be so, because the connecting medium between spirit and matter must be psyche or soul power and the primary action psychological and qualitative, not physical and quantitative; for quality is the immaterial, the more spiritual element in all the action of the universal Energy, her prior dynamics. The predominance of physical Science has accustomed us to a different view of Nature, because there the first thing that strikes us is the importance of the quantitative aspect of her workings and her dependence for the creation of forms on quantitative combinations and dispositions. And yet even there the discovery that matter is rather substance or act of energy than energy a motive power of self-existent material substance or an inherent power acting in matter has led to some revival of an older reading of universal Nature. The analysis of the ancient Indian thinkers allowed for the quantitative action of Nature, *mātrā*; but that it regarded as proper to its more objective and

formally executive working, while the innately ideative executive power which disposes things according to the quality of their being and energy, *guna, svabhāva*, is the primary determinant and underlies all the outer quantitative dispositions. In the basis of the physical world this is not apparent only because there the underlying ideative spirit, the Mahad Brahman, is overlaid and hidden up by the movement of matter and material energy. But even in the physical world the miraculous varying results of different combinations and quantities of elements otherwise identical with each other admits of no conceivable explanation if there is not a superior power of variative quality of which these material dispositions are only the convenient mechanical devices. Or let us say at once, there must be a secret ideative capacity of the universal energy, *vijñāna*,—even if we suppose that energy and its instrumental idea, *buddhi*, to be themselves mechanical in their nature,—which fixes the mathematics and decides the resultants of these outer dispositions: it is the omnipotent Idea in the spirit which invents and makes use of these devices. And in the vital and mental existence quality at once openly appears as the primary power and amount of energy is only a secondary factor. But in fact the mental, the vital, the physical existence are all subject to the limitations of quality, all are governed by its determinations, even though that truth seems more and more obscured as we descend the scale of existence. Only the Spirit, which by the power of its idea-being and its idea-force called *mahat* and *vijñāna* fixes these conditions, is not so determined, not subject to any limitations either of quality or quantity because its immeasurable and indeterminable infinity is superior to the modes which it develops and uses for its creation.

But, again, the whole qualitative action of Nature, so infinitely intricate in its detail and variety, is figured as cast into the mould of three general modes of quality everywhere present, intertwined, almost inextricable, *sattva, rajas, tamas*. These modes are described in the Gita only by their psychological action in man, or incidentally in things such as food according as they produce a psychological or vital effect on human beings. If we look for a more general definition, we shall perhaps catch a

glimpse of it in the symbolic idea of Indian religion which attributes each of these qualities respectively to one member of the cosmic Trinity, sattwa to the preserver Vishnu, rajas to the creator Brahma, tamas to the destroyer Rudra. Looking behind this idea for the rationale of the triple ascription, we might define the three modes or qualities in terms of the motion of the universal Energy as Nature's three concomitant and inseparable powers of equilibrium, kinesis and inertia. But that is only their appearance in terms of the external action of Force. It is otherwise if we regard consciousness and force as twin terms of the one Existence, always coexistent in the reality of being, however in the primal outward phenomenon of material Nature light of consciousness may seem to disappear in a vast action of nescient unillumined energy, while at an opposite pole of spiritual quiescence action of force may seem to disappear in the stillness of the observing or witness consciousness. These two conditions are the two extremes of an apparently separated Purusha and Prakriti, but each at its extreme point does not abolish but at the most only conceals its eternal mate in the depths of its own characteristic way of being. Therefore, since consciousness is always there even in an apparently inconscient Force, we must find a corresponding psychological power of these three modes which informs their more outward executive action. On their psychological side the three qualities may be defined, tamas as Nature's power of nescience, rajas as her power of active seeking ignorance enlightened by desire and impulsion, sattwa as her power of possessing and harmonising knowledge.

The three qualitative modes of Nature are inextricably intertwined in all cosmic existence. Tamas, the principle of inertia, is a passive and inert nescience which suffers all shocks and contacts without any effort of mastering response and by itself would lead to a disintegration of the whole action of the energy and a radical dispersion of substance. But it is driven by the kinetic power of rajas and even in the nescience of Matter is met and embraced by an innate though unpossessed preserving principle of harmony and balance and knowledge. Material energy appears to be tamasic in its basic action, *jada*, nescient,

mechanic and in movement disintegrative. But it is dominated by a huge force and impulsion of mute rajasic kinesis which drives it, even in and even by its dispersion and disintegration, to build and create and again by a sattvic ideative element in its apparently inconscient force which is always imposing a harmony and preservative order on the two opposite tendencies. Rajas, the principle of creative endeavour and motion and impulsion in Prakriti, kinesis, *pravṛtti*, so seen in Matter, appears more evidently as a conscious or half-conscious passion of seeking and desire and action in the dominant character of Life,—for that passion is the nature of all vital existence. And it would lead by itself in its own nature to a persistent but always mutable and unstable life and activity and creation without any settled result. But met on one side by the disintegrating power of tamas with death and decay and inertia, its ignorant action is on the other side of its functioning settled and harmonised and sustained by the power of sattwa, subconscious in the lower forms of life, more and more conscious in the emergence of mentality, most conscious in the effort of the evolved intelligence figuring as will and reason in the fully developed mental being. Sattwa, the principle of understanding knowledge and of according assimilation, measure and equilibrium, which by itself would lead only to some lasting concord of fixed and luminous harmonies, is in the motions of this world impelled to follow the mutable strife and action of the eternal kinesis and constantly overpowered or hedged in by the forces of inertia and nescience. This is the appearance of a world governed by the interlocked and mutually limited play of the three qualitative modes of Nature.

The Gita applies this generalised analysis of the universal Energy to the psychological nature of man in relation to his bondage to Prakriti and the realisation of spiritual freedom. Sattwa, it tells us, is by the purity of its quality a cause of light and illumination and by virtue of that purity it produces no disease or morbidity or suffering in the nature. When into all the doors in the body there comes a flooding of light, as if the doors and windows of a closed house were opened to sunshine, a light of understanding, perception and knowledge,

—when the intelligence is alert and illumined, the senses quickened, the whole mentality satisfied and full of brightness and the nervous being calmed and filled with an illumined ease and clarity, *prasāda*, one should understand that there has been a great increase and uprising of the sattwic guna in the nature. For knowledge and a harmonious ease and pleasure and happiness are the characteristic results of sattwa. The pleasure that is sattwic is not only that contentment which an inner clarity of satisfied will and intelligence brings with it, but all delight and content produced by the soul's possession of itself in light or by an accord or an adequate and truthful adjustment between the regarding soul and the surrounding Nature and her offered objects of desire and perception.

Rajas, again, the Gita tells us, has for its essence attraction of liking and longing. Rajas is a child of the attachment of the soul to the desire of objects; it is born from the nature's thirst for an unpossessed satisfaction. It is therefore full of unrest and fever and lust and greed and excitement, a thing of seeking impulsions, and all this mounts in us when the middle guna increases. It is the force of desire which motives all ordinary personal initiative of action and all that movement of stir and seeking and propulsion in our nature which is the impetus towards action and works, *pravṛtti*. Rajas, then, is evidently the kinetic force in the modes of Nature. Its fruit is the lust of action, but also grief, pain, all kinds of suffering; for it has no right possession of its object—desire in fact implies non-possession—and even its pleasure of acquired possession is troubled and unstable because it has not clear knowledge and does not know how to possess nor can it find the secret of accord and right enjoyment. All the ignorant and passionate seeking of life belongs to the rajasic mode of Nature.

Tamas, finally, is born of inertia and ignorance and its fruit too is inertia and ignorance. It is the darkness of tamas which obscures knowledge and causes all confusion and delusion. Therefore it is the opposite of sattwa, for the essence of sattwa is enlightenment, *prakāśa*, and the essence of tamas is absence of light, nescience, *aprakāśa*. But tamas brings incapacity and

negligence of action as well as the incapacity and negligence of error, inattention and misunderstanding or non-understanding; indolence, languor and sleep belong to this guna. Therefore it is the opposite too of rajas; for the essence of rajas is movement and impulsion and kinesis, *pravrtti*, but the essence of tamas is inertia, *apravrtti*. Tamas is inertia of nescience and inertia of inaction, a double negative.

These three qualities of Nature are evidently present and active in all human beings and none can be said to be quite devoid of one and another or free from any one of the three; none is cast in the mould of one guna to the exclusion of the others. All men have in them in whatever degree the rajasic impulse of desire and activity and the sattwic boon of light and happiness, some balance, some adjustment of mind to itself and its surroundings and objects, and all have their share of tamasic incapacity and ignorance or nescience. But these qualities are not constant in any man in the quantitative action of their force or in the combination of their elements; for they are variable and in a continual state of mutual impact, displacement and interaction. Now one leads, now another increases and predominates, and each subjects us to its characteristic action and consequences. Only by a general and ordinary predominance of one or other of the qualities can a man be said to be either sattwic or rajasic or tamasic in his nature; but this can only be a general and not an exclusive or absolute description. The three qualities are a triple power which by their interaction determine the character and disposition and through that and its various motions the actions of the natural man. But this triple power is at the same time a triple cord of bondage. "The three gunas born of Prakriti" says the Gita "bind in the body the imperishable dweller in the body." In a certain sense we can see at once that there must be this bondage in following the action of the gunas; for they are all limited by their finite of quality and operation and cause limitation. Tamas is on both its sides an incapacity and therefore very obviously binds to limitation. Rajasic desire as an initiator of action is a more positive power, but still we can see well enough that desire with its limiting and engrossing hold on man

must always be a bondage. But how does sattwa, the power of knowledge and happiness, become a chain? It so becomes because it is a principle of mental nature, a principle of limited and limiting knowledge and of a happiness which depends upon right following or attainment of this or that object or else on particular states of the mentality, on a light of mind which can be only a more or less clear twilight. Its pleasure can only be a passing intensity or a qualified ease. Other is the infinite spiritual knowledge and the free self-existent delight of our spiritual being.

But then there is the question, how does our infinite and imperishable spirit, even involved in Nature, come thus to confine itself to the lower action of Prakriti and undergo this bondage and how is it not, like the supreme spirit of which it is a portion, free in its infinity even while enjoying the self-limitations of its active evolution? The reason, says the Gita, is our attachment to the gunas and to the result of their workings. Sattwa, it says, attaches to happiness, rajas attaches to action, tamas covers up the knowledge and attaches to negligence of error and inaction. Or again, "sattwa binds by attachment to knowledge and attachment to happiness, rajas binds the embodied spirit by attachment to works, tamas binds by negligence and indolence and sleep." In other words, the soul by attachment to the enjoyment of the gunas and their results concentrates its consciousness on the lower and outward action of life, mind and body in Nature, imprisons itself in the form of these things and becomes oblivious of its own greater consciousness behind in the spirit, unaware of the free power and scope of the liberating Purusha. Evidently, in order to be liberated and perfect, we must get back from these things, away from the gunas and above them and return to the power of that free spiritual consciousness above Nature.

But this would seem to imply a cessation of all doing, since all natural action is done by the gunas, by Nature through her modes. The soul cannot act by itself, it can only act through Nature and her modes. And yet the Gita, while it demands freedom from the modes, insists upon the necessity of action. Here comes in the importance of its insistence on the abandonment

of the fruits; for it is the desire of the fruits which is the most potent cause of the soul's bondage and by abandoning it the soul can be free in action. Ignorance is the result of tamasic action, pain the consequence of rajasic works, pain of reaction, disappointment, dissatisfaction or transience, and therefore in attachment to the fruits of this kind of activity attended as they are with these undesirable accompaniments there is no profit. But of works rightly done the fruit is pure and sattwic, the inner result is knowledge and happiness. Yet attachment even to these pleasurable things must be entirely abandoned, first, because in the mind they are limited and limiting forms and, secondly, because, since sattwa is constantly entangled with and besieged by rajas and tamas which may at any moment overcome it, there is a perpetual insecurity in their tenure. But, even if one is free from any clinging to the fruit, there may be an attachment to the work itself, either for its own sake, the essential rajasic bond, or owing to a lax subjection to the drive of Nature, the tamasic, or for the sake of the attracting rightness of the thing done, which is the sattwic attaching cause powerful on the virtuous man or the man of knowledge. And here evidently the resource is in that other injunction of the Gita, to give up the action itself to the Lord of works and be only a desireless and equal-minded instrument of his will. To see that the modes of Nature are the whole agency and cause of our works and to know and turn to that which is supreme above the gunas, is the way to rise above the lower nature. Only so can we attain to the movement and status of the Divine, *mad-bhāva*, by which free from subjection to birth and death and their concomitants, decay, old age and suffering, the liberated soul shall enjoy in the end immortality and all that is eternal.

But what, asks Arjuna, are the signs of such a man, what his action and how is he said even in action to be above the three gunas? The sign, says Krishna, is that equality of which I have so constantly spoken; the sign is that inwardly he regards happiness and suffering alike, gold and mud and stone as of equal value and that to him the pleasant and the unpleasant, praise and blame, honour and insult, the faction of his friends

and the faction of his enemies are equal things. He is steadfast in a wise imperturbable and immutable inner calm and quietude. He initiates no action, but leaves all works to be done by the gunas of Nature. Sattwa, rajas or tamas may rise or cease in his outer mentality and his physical movements with their results of enlightenment, of impulsion to works or of inaction and the clouding over of the mental and nervous being, but he does not rejoice when this comes or that ceases, nor on the other hand does he abhor or shrink from the operation or the cessation of these things. He has seated himself in the conscious light of another principle than the nature of the gunas and that greater consciousness remains steadfast in him, above these powers and unshaken by their motions like the sun above clouds to one who has risen into a higher atmosphere. He from that height sees that it is the gunas that are in process of action and that their storm and calm are not himself but only a movement of Prakriti; his self is immovable above and his spirit does not participate in that shifting mutability of things unstable. This is the impersonality of the Brahmic status; for that higher principle, that greater wide high-seated consciousness, *kūṭastha*, is the immutable Brahman.

But still there is evidently here a double status, there is a scission of the being between two opposites; a liberated spirit in the immutable Self or Brahman watches the action of an unliberated mutable Nature,—Akshara and Kshara. Is there no greater status, no principle of more absolute perfection, or is this division the highest consciousness possible in the body, and is the end of Yoga to drop the mutable nature and the gunas born of the embodiment in Nature and disappear into the impersonality and everlasting peace of the Brahman? Is that *laya* or dissolution of the individual Purusha the greatest liberation? There is, it would seem, something else; for the Gita says at the close, always returning to this one final note, "He also who loves and strives after Me with an undeviating love and adoration, passes beyond the three gunas and he too is prepared for becoming the Brahman." This "I" is the Purushottama who is the foundation of the silent Brahman and of immortality and imperishable spiritual existence and of the eternal dharma and

of an utter bliss of happiness. There is a status then which is greater than the peace of the Akshara as it watches unmoved the strife of the gunas. There is a highest spiritual experience and foundation above the immutability of the Brahman, there is an eternal dharma greater than the rajasic impulsion to works, *pravṛtti*, there is an absolute delight which is untouched by rajasic suffering and beyond the sattwic happiness, and these things are found and possessed by dwelling in the being and power of the Purushottama. But since it is acquired by bhakti, its status must be that divine delight, Ananda, in which is experienced the union of utter love³ and possessing oneness, the crown of bhakti. And to rise into that Ananda, into that imperishable oneness must be the completion of spiritual perfection and the fulfilment of the eternal immortalising dharma.

³ *niratiśayapremāspadatvam ānandatattvam.*

XV

The Three Purushas¹

THE DOCTRINE of the Gita from the beginning to the end converges on all its lines and through all the flexibility of its turns towards one central thought, and to that it is arriving in all its balancing and reconciliation of the disagreements of various philosophic systems and its careful synthetising of the truths of spiritual experience, lights often conflicting or at least divergent when taken separately and exclusively pursued along their outer arc and curve of radiation, but here brought together into one focus of grouping vision. This central thought is the idea of a triple consciousness, three and yet one, present in the whole scale of existence.

There is a spirit here at work in the world that is one in innumerable appearances. It is the developer of birth and action, the moving power of life, the inhabiting and associating consciousness in the myriad mutabilities of Nature; it is the constituting reality of all this stir in Time and Space; it is itself Time and Space and Circumstance. It is this multitude of souls in the worlds; it is the gods and men and creatures and things and forces and qualities and quantities and powers and presences. It is Nature, which is power of the Spirit, and objects, which are its phenomena of name and idea and form, and existences, who are portions and births and becomings of this single self-existent spiritual entity, the One, the Eternal. But what we see obviously at work before us is not this Eternal and his conscious Shakti, but a Nature which in the blind stress of her operations is ignorant of the spirit within her action. Her work is a confused, ignorant and limiting play of certain fundamental modes, qualities, principles of force in mechanical operation and the fixity or the flux of their consequences. And whatever soul comes to the

¹ Gita, XV.

surface in her action, is itself in appearance ignorant, suffering, bound to the incomplete and unsatisfying play of this inferior Nature. The inherent Power in her is yet other than what it thus seems to be; for, hidden in its truth, manifest in its appearances, it is the Kshara, the universal Soul, the spirit in the mutability of cosmic phenomenon and becoming, one with the Immutable and the Supreme. We have to arrive at the hidden truth behind its manifest appearances; we have to discover the Spirit behind these veils and to see all as the One, *vāsudevalḥ sarvam iti*, individual, universal, transcendent. But this is a thing impossible to achieve with any completeness of inner reality, so long as we live concentrated in the inferior Nature. For in this lesser movement Nature is an ignorance, a Maya; she shelters the Divine within its folds and conceals him from herself and her creatures. The Godhead is hidden by the Maya of his own all-creating Yoga, the Eternal figured in transience, Being absorbed and covered up by its own manifesting phenomena. In the Kshara taken alone as a thing in itself, the mutable universal apart from the undivided Immutable and the Transcendent, there is no completeness of knowledge, no completeness of our being and therefore no liberation.

But then there is another spirit of whom we become aware and who is none of these things, but self and self only. This Spirit is eternal, always the same, never changed or affected by manifestation, the one, the stable, a self-existence undivided and not even seemingly divided by the division of things and powers in Nature, inactive in her action, immobile in her motion. It is the Self of all and yet unmoved, indifferent, intangible, as if all these things which depend upon it were not-self, not its own results and powers and consequences, but a drama of action developed before the eye of an unmoved unparticipating spectator. For the mind that stages and shares in the drama is other than the Self which indifferently contains the action. This spirit is timeless, though we see it in Time; it is unextended in space, though we see it as if pervading space. We become aware of it in proportion as we draw back from out inward, or look behind the action and motion for something that is eternal and stable, or get away from time and its creation to the uncreated, away from phenomenon

to being, from the personal to impersonality, from becoming to unalterable self-existence. This is the Akshara, the immutable in the mutable, the immobile in the mobile, the imperishable in things perishable. Or rather, since there is only an appearance of pervasion, it is the immutable, immobile and imperishable in which proceeds all the mobility of mutable and perishable things.

The Kshara spirit visible to us as all natural existence and the totality of all existences moves and acts pervadingly in the immobile and eternal Akshara. This mobile Power of Self acts in that fundamental stability of Self, as the second principle of material Nature, Vayu, with its contactual force of aggregation and separation, attraction and repulsion, supporting the formative force of the fiery (radiant, gaseous and electric) and other elemental movements, ranges pervadingly in the subtly massive stability of ether. This Akshara is the self higher than the buddhi — it exceeds even that highest subjective principle of Nature in our being, the liberating intelligence, through which man returning beyond his restless mobile mental to his calm eternal spiritual self is at last free from the persistence of birth and the long chain of action, of Karma. This self in its highest status, *param dhāma*, is an unmanifest beyond even the unmanifest principle of the original cosmic Prakriti, Avyakta, and, if the soul turns to this Immutable, the hold of cosmos and Nature falls away from it and it passes beyond birth to an unchanging eternal existence. These two then are the two spirits we see in the world; one emerges in front in its action, the other remains behind it steadfast in that perpetual silence from which the action comes and in which all actions cease and disappear into timeless being, Nirvana. *Dvāv imau puruṣau loke kṣaraś cāksara eva ca.*

The difficulty which baffles our intelligence is that these two seem to be irreconcilable opposites with no real nexus between them or any transition from the one to the other except by an intolerant movement of separation. The Kshara acts, or at least motivates action, separately in the Akshara; the Akshara stands apart, self-centred, separate in its inactivity from the Kshara. At first sight it would almost seem better, more logical, more easy

of comprehension, if we admitted with the Sankhyas an original and eternal duality of Purusha and Prakriti, if not even an eternal plurality of souls. Our experience of the Akshara would then be simply the withdrawal of each Purusha into himself, his turning away from Nature and therefore from all contact with other souls in the relations of existence; for each is self-sufficient and infinite and complete in his own essence. But after all the final experience is that of a unity of all beings which is not merely a community of experience, a common subjection to one force of Nature, but a oneness in the spirit, a vast identity of conscious being beyond all this endless variety of determination, behind all this apparent separativism of relative existence. The Gita takes its stand in that highest spiritual experience. It appears indeed to admit an eternal plurality of souls subject to and sustained by their eternal unity, for cosmos is for ever and manifestation goes on in unending cycles; nor does it affirm anywhere or use any expression that would indicate an absolute disappearance, *laya*, the annulation of the individual soul in the Infinite. But at the same time it affirms with a strong insistence that the Akshara is the one self of all these many souls, and it is therefore evident that these two spirits are a dual status of one eternal and universal existence. That is a very ancient doctrine; it is the whole basis of the largest vision of the Upanishads,—as when the Isha tells us that Brahman is both the mobile and the immobile, is the One and the Many, is the Self and all existences, *ātman, sarvabhūtāni*, is the Knowledge and the Ignorance, is the eternal unborn status and also the birth of existences, and that to dwell only on one of these things to the rejection of its eternal counterpart is a darkness of exclusive knowledge or a darkness of ignorance. It too insists like the Gita that man must know and must embrace both and learn of the Supreme in his entirety—*samagram mām*, as the Gita puts it—in order to enjoy immortality and live in the Eternal. The teaching of the Gita and this side of the teaching of the Upanishads are so far at one; for they look at and admit both sides of the reality and still arrive at identity as the conclusion and the highest truth of existence.

But this greater knowledge and experience, however true

and however powerful in its appeal to our highest seeing, has still to get rid of a very real and pressing difficulty, a practical as well as a logical contradiction which seems at first sight to persist up to the highest heights of spiritual experience. The Eternal is other than this mobile subjective and objective experience, there is a greater consciousness, *na idam yad upāsate*:² and yet at the same time all this is the Eternal, all this is the perennial self-seeing of the Self, *sarvam khalu idam brahma*,³ *ayam ātmā brahma*.⁴ The Eternal has become all existences, *ātmā abhūt sarvāṇi bhūtāni*;⁵ as the Swetasvatara puts it, "Thou art this boy and yonder girl and that old man walking supported on his staff,"—even as in the Gita the Divine says that he is Krishna and Arjuna and Vyasa and Ushanas, and the lion and the aswattha tree, and consciousness and intelligence and all qualities and the self of all creatures. But how are these two the same, when they seem not only so opposite in nature, but so difficult to unify in experience? For when we live in the mobility of the becoming, we may be aware of but hardly live in the immortality of timeless self-existence. And when we fix ourselves in timeless being, Time and Space and circumstance fall away from us and begin to appear as a troubled dream in the Infinite. The most persuasive conclusion would be, at first sight, that the mobility of the spirit in Nature is an illusion, a thing real only when we live in it, but not real in essence, and that is why, when we go back into self, it falls away from our incorruptible essence. That is the familiar cutting of the knot of the riddle, *brahma satyam jagan mithyā*.

The Gita does not take refuge in this explanation which has enormous difficulties of its own, besides its failure to account for the illusion,—for it only says that it is all a mysterious and incomprehensible Maya, and then we might just as well say that it is all a mysterious and incomprehensible double reality, spirit concealing itself from spirit. The Gita speaks of Maya, but only as a bewildering partial consciousness which loses hold of the

² *Kena Upanishad*.

³ *Chhandogya Upanishad*: Verily all this that is is the Brahman.

⁴ *Mandukya Upanishad*: The Self is the Brahman.

⁵ *Isha Upanishad*.

complete reality, lives in the phenomenon of mobile Nature and has no sight of the Spirit of which she is the active Power, *me prakṛtiḥ*. When we transcend this Maya, the world does not disappear, it only changes its whole heart of meaning. In the spiritual vision we find not that all this does not really exist, but rather that all is, but with a sense quite other than its present mistaken significance: all is self and soul and nature of the God-head, all is Vasudeva. The world for the Gita is real, a creation of the Lord, a power of the Eternal, a manifestation from the Parabrahman, and even this lower nature of the triple Maya is a derivation from the supreme divine Nature. Nor can we take refuge altogether in this distinction that there is a double, an inferior active and temporal and a superior calm, still and eternal reality beyond action and that our liberation is to pass from this partiality to that greatness, from the action to the silence. For the Gita insists that we can and should, while we live, be conscious in the self and its silence and yet act with power in the world of Nature. And it gives the example of the Divine himself who is not bound by necessity of birth, but free, superior to the cosmos, and yet abides eternally in action, *varta eva ca karmani*. Therefore it is by putting on a likeness of the divine nature in its completeness that the unity of this double experience becomes entirely possible. But what is the principle of that oneness?

The Gita finds it in its supreme vision of the Purushottama; for that is the type, according to its doctrine, of the complete and the highest experience, it is the knowledge of the whole-knowers, *kṛtsnavidah*. The Akshara is *para*, supreme in relation to the elements and action of cosmic Nature. It is the immutable Self of all, and the immutable Self of all is the Purushottama. The Akshara is he in the freedom of his self-existence unaffected by the action of his own power in Nature, not impinged on by the urge of his own becoming, undisturbed by the play of his own qualities. But this is only one aspect though a great aspect of the integral knowledge. The Purushottama is at the same time greater than the Akshara, because he is more than this immutability and he is not limited even by the highest eternal status of his being, *param*

dhāma. Still, it is through whatever is immutable and eternal in us that we arrive at that highest status from which there is no returning to birth, and that was the liberation which was sought by the wise of old, the ancient sages. But when pursued through the Akshara alone, this attempt at liberation becomes the seeking of the Indefinable, a thing hard for our nature embodied as we are here in Matter. The Indefinable, to which the Akshara, the pure intangible self here in us rises in its separative urge, is some supreme Unmanifest, *paro avyaktah*, and that highest unmanifest Akshara is still the Purushottama. Therefore, the Gita has said, those also who follow after the Indefinable, come to me, the eternal Godhead. But yet is he more even than a highest unmanifest Akshara, more than any negative Absolute, *neti neti*, because he is to be known also as the supreme Purusha who extends this whole universe in his own existence. He is a supreme mysterious All, an ineffable positive Absolute of all things here. He is the Lord in the Kshara, Purushottama not only there, but here in the heart of every creature, Ishwara. And there too even in his highest eternal status, *paro avyaktah*, he is the supreme Lord, Parameshwara, no aloof and unrelated Indefinable, but the origin and father and mother and first foundation and eternal abode of self and cosmos and Master of all existences and enjoyer of askesis and sacrifice. It is by knowing him at once in the Akshara and the Kshara, it is by knowing him as the Unborn who partially manifests himself in all birth and even himself descends as the constant Avatar, it is by knowing him in his entirety, *samagran mām*, that the soul is easily released from the appearances of the lower Nature and returns by a vast sudden growth and broad immeasurable ascension into the divine being and supreme Nature. For the truth of the Kshara too is a truth of the Purushottama. The Purushottama is in the heart of every creature and is manifested in his countless Vibhutis; the Purushottama is the cosmic spirit in Time and it is he that gives the command to the divine action of the liberated human spirit. He is both Akshara and Kshara, and yet he is other because he is more and greater than either of these opposites. *Uttamah puruṣas tvanyah paramātmetyudāhṛtaḥ, yo lokatrayam āviśya*

bibhartyavyaya īśvarah, “But other than these two is that highest spirit called the supreme Self, who enters the three worlds and upbears them, the imperishable Lord.” This verse is the keyword of the Gita’s reconciliation of these two apparently opposite aspects of our existence.

The idea of the Purushottama has been prepared, alluded to, adumbrated, assumed even from the beginning, but it is only now in the fifteenth chapter that it is expressly stated and the distinction illuminated by a name. And it is instructive to see how it is immediately approached and developed. To ascend into the divine nature, we have been told, one must first fix oneself in a perfect spiritual equality and rise above the lower nature of the three gunas. Thus transcending the lower Prakriti we fix ourselves in the impersonality, the imperturbable superiority to all action, the purity from all definition and limitation by quality which is one side of the manifested nature of the Purushottama, his manifestation as the eternity and unity of the self, the Akshara. But there is also an ineffable eternal multiplicity of the Purushottama, a highest truest truth behind the primal mystery of soul manifestation. The Infinite has an eternal power, an unbeginning and unending action of his divine Nature, and in that action the miracle of soul personality emerges from a play of apparently impersonal forces, *prakṛtir jīvabhūtā*. This is possible because personality too is a character of the Divine and finds in the Infinite its highest spiritual truth and meaning. But the Person in the Infinite is not the egoistic, separative, oblivious personality of the lower Prakriti; it is something exalted, universal and transcendent, immortal and divine. That mystery of the supreme Person is the secret of love and devotion. The spiritual person, *puruṣa*, the eternal soul in us offers itself and all it has and is to the eternal Divine, the supreme Person and Godhead of whom it is a portion, *āṁśa*. The completeness of knowledge finds itself in this self-offering, this uplifting of our personal nature by love and adoration to the ineffable Master of our personality and its acts; the sacrifice of works receives by it its consummation and perfect sanction. It is then through these things that the soul of man fulfils itself most completely

in this other and dynamic secret, this other great and intimate aspect of the divine nature and possesses by that fulfilment the foundation of immortality, the supreme felicity and the eternal Dharma. And having so stated this double requisite, equality in the one self, adoration of the one Lord, at first separately as if they were two different ways of arriving at the Brahmic status, *brahmabhūyāya*, — one taking the form of quietistic *sannyāsa*, the other a form of divine love and divine action, — the Gita proceeds now to unite the personal and the impersonal in the Purushottama and to define their relations. For the object of the Gita is to get rid of exclusions and separative exaggerations and fuse these two sides of knowledge and spiritual experience into a single and perfect way to the supreme perfection.

First there comes a description of cosmic existence in the Vedantic image of the asvattha tree. This tree of cosmic existence has no beginning and no end, *nānto na cādiḥ*, in space or in time; for it is eternal and imperishable, *avyaya*. The real form of it cannot be perceived by us in this material world of man's embodiment, nor has it any apparent lasting foundation here; it is an infinite movement and its foundation is above in the supreme of the Infinite. Its principle is the ancient sempiternal urge to action, *pravṛtti*, which for ever proceeds without beginning or end from the original Soul of all existence, *ādyam puruṣam yataḥ pravṛtih prasṛtā purāṇī*. Therefore its original source is above, beyond Time in the Eternal, but its branches stretch down below and it extends and plunges its other roots, well-fixed and clinging roots of attachment and desire with their consequences of more and more desire and an endlessly developing action, plunges them downward here into the world of men. The hymns of the Veda are compared to its leaves and the man who knows this tree of the cosmos is the Veda-knower. And here we see the sense of that rather disparaging view of the Veda or at least of the Vedavada, which we had to notice at the beginning. For the knowledge the Veda gives us is a knowledge of the gods, of the principles and powers of the cosmos, and its fruits are the fruits of a sacrifice which is offered with desire, fruits of enjoyment and lordship in the nature of the three worlds, in earth and

heaven and the world between earth and heaven. The branches of this cosmic tree extend both below and above, below in the material, above in the supraphysical planes; they grow by the gunas of Nature, for the triple guna is all the subject of the Vedas, *traigunya-viṣayā vedāḥ*. The Vedic rhythms, *chandāṁsi*, are the leaves and the sensible objects of desire supremely gained by a right doing of sacrifice are the constant budding of the foliage. Man, therefore, so long as he enjoys the play of the gunas and is attached to desire, is held in the coils of Pravritti, in the movement of birth and action, turns about constantly between the earth and the middle planes and the heavens and is unable to get back to his supreme spiritual infinitudes. This was perceived by the sages. To achieve liberation they followed the path of Nivritti or cessation from the original urge to action, and the consummation of this way is the cessation of birth itself and a transcendent status in the highest supracosmic reach of the Eternal. But for this purpose it is necessary to cut these long-fixed roots of desire by the strong sword of detachment and then to seek for that highest goal whence, once having reached it, there is no compulsion of return to mortal life. To be free from the bewilderment of this lower Maya, without egoism, the great fault of attachment conquered, all desires stilled, the duality of joy and grief cast away, always to be fixed in wide equality, always to be firm in a pure spiritual consciousness, these are the steps of the way to that supreme Infinite. There we find the timeless being which is not illumined by sun or moon or fire, but is itself the light of the presence of the eternal Purusha. I turn away, says the Vedantic verse, to seek that original Soul alone and to reach him in the great passage. That is the highest status of the Purushottama, his supracosmic existence.

But it would seem that this can be attained very well, best even, pre-eminently, directly, by the quiescence of Sannyasa. Its appointed path would seem to be the way of the Akshara, a complete renunciation of works and life, an ascetic seclusion, an ascetic inaction. Where is the room here, or at least where is the call, the necessity, for the command to action, and what has all this to do with the maintenance of the cosmic existence,

lokasaṅgraha, the slaughter of Kurukshetra, the ways of the Spirit in Time, the vision of the million-bodied Lord and his high-voiced bidding, “Arise, slay the foe, enjoy a wealthy kingdom”? And what then is this soul in Nature? This spirit too, this Kshara, this enjoyer of our mutable existence, is the Purushottama; it is he in his eternal multiplicity, that is the Gita’s answer. “It is an eternal portion of me that becomes the Jiva in a world of Jivas.” This is an epithet, a statement of immense bearing and consequence. For it means that each soul, each being in its spiritual reality is the very Divine, however partial its actual manifestation of him in Nature. And it means too, if words have any sense, that each manifesting spirit, each of the many, is an eternal individual, an eternal unborn and undying power of the one Existence. We call this manifesting spirit the Jiva, because it appears here as if a living creature in a world of living creatures, and we speak of this spirit in man as the human soul and think of it in the terms of humanity only. But in truth it is something greater than its present appearance and not bound to its humanity: it was a lesser manifestation than the human in its past, it can become something much greater than mental man in its future. And when this soul rises above all ignorant limitation, then it puts on its divine nature of which its humanity is only a temporary veil, a thing of partial and incomplete significance. The individual spirit exists and ever existed beyond in the Eternal, for it is itself everlasting, *sanātana*. It is evidently this idea of the eternal individual which leads the Gita to avoid any expression at all suggestive of a complete dissolution, *laya*, and to speak rather of the highest state of the soul as a dwelling in the Purushottama, *nivasiyasi mayyeva*. If when speaking of the one Self of all it seems to use the language of Adwaita, yet this enduring truth of the eternal individual, *mamāṁśah sanātanah*, adds something which brings in a qualification and appears almost to accept the seeing of the Visishtadwaita,—though we must not therefore leap at once to the conclusion that that alone is the Gita’s philosophy or that its doctrine is identical with the later doctrine of Ramanuja. Still this much is clear that there is an eternal, a real and not only an illusive

principle of multiplicity in the spiritual being of the one divine Existence.

This eternal individual is not other than or in any way really separate from the Divine Purusha. It is the Lord himself, the Ishwara who by virtue of the eternal multiplicity of his oneness — is not all existence a rendering of that truth of the Infinite? — exists for ever as the immortal soul within us and has taken up this body and goes forth from the transient framework when it is cast away to disappear into the elements of Nature. He brings in with him and cultivates for the enjoyment of the objects of mind and sense the subjective powers of Prakriti, mind and the five senses, and in his going forth too he goes taking them as the wind takes the perfumes from a vase. But the identity of the Lord and the soul in mutable Nature is hidden from us by outward appearance and lost in the crowding mobile deceptions of that Nature. And those who allow themselves to be governed by the figures of Nature, the figure of humanity or any other form, will never see it, but will ignore and despise the Divine lodged in the human body. Their ignorance cannot perceive him in his coming in and his going forth or in his staying and enjoying and assumption of quality, but sees only what is there visible to the mind and senses, not the greater truth which can only be glimpsed by the eye of knowledge. Never can they have sight of him, even if they strive to do so, until they learn to put away the limitations of the outward consciousness and build in themselves their spiritual being, create for it, as it were, a form in their nature. Man, to know himself, must be *kṛtātmā*, formed and complete in the spiritual mould, enlightened in the spiritual vision. The Yogins who have this eye of knowledge, see the Divine Being we are in their own endless reality, their own eternity of spirit. Illumined, they see the Lord in themselves and are delivered from the crude material limitation, from the form of mental personality, from the transient life formulation: they dwell immortal in the truth of the self and spirit. But they see him too not only in themselves, but in all the cosmos. In the light of the sun that illuminates all this world they witness the light of the Godhead which is in us; the light in the moon and in fire is

the light of the Divine. It is the Divine who has entered into this form of earth and is the spirit of its material force and sustains by his might these multitudes. The Divine is the godhead of Soma who by the *rasa*, the sap in the Earth-mother, nourishes the plants and trees that clothe her surface. The Divine and no other is the flame of life that sustains the physical body of living creatures and turns its food into sustenance of their vital force. He is lodged in the heart of every breathing thing; from him are memory and knowledge and the debates of the reason. He is that which is known by all the Vedas and by all forms of knowing; he is the knower of Veda and the maker of Vedanta. In other words, the Divine is at once the Soul of matter and the Soul of life and the Soul of mind as well as the Soul of the supramental light that is beyond mind and its limited reasoning intelligence.

Thus the Divine is manifest in a double soul of his mystery, a twofold power, *dvāv imau puruṣau*; he supports at once the spirit of mutable things that is all these existences, *kṣarāḥ sarvāṇī bhūtāni*, and the immutable spirit that stands above them in his imperturbable immobility of eternal silence and calm. And it is by the force of the Divine in them that the mind and heart and will of man are so powerfully drawn in different directions by these two spirits as if by opposing and incompatible attractions one insistent to annul the other. But the Divine is neither wholly the Kshara, nor wholly the Akshara. He is greater than the immutable Self and he is much greater than the Soul of mutable things. If he is capable of being both at once, it is because he is other than they, *anyah*, the Purushottama above all cosmos and yet extended in the world and extended in the Veda, in self-knowledge and in cosmic experience. And whoever thus knows and sees him as the Purushottama, is no longer bewildered whether by the world-appearance or by the separate attraction of these two apparent contraries. These at first confront each other here in him as a positive of the cosmic action and as its negative in the Self who has no part in an action that belongs or seems to belong entirely to the ignorance of Nature. Or again they challenge his consciousness as

a positive of pure, indeterminable, stable, eternal self-existence and as its negative of a world of elusive determinations and relations, ideas and forms, perpetual unstable becoming and the creating and uncreating tangle of action and evolution, birth and death, appearance and disappearance. He embraces and escapes them, overcomes their opposition and becomes all-knowing, *sarvavid*, a whole-knower. He sees the entire sense both of the self and of things; he restores the integral reality of the Divine;⁶ he unites the Kshara and the Akshara in the Purushottama. He loves, worships, cleaves to and adores the supreme Self of his and all existence, the one Lord of his and all energies, the close and far-off Eternal in and beyond the world. And he does this too with no single side or portion of himself, exclusive spiritualised mind, blinding light of the heart intense but divorced from largeness, or sole aspiration of the will in works, but in all the perfectly illumined ways of his being and his becoming, his soul and his nature. Divine in the equality of his imperturbable self-existence, one in it with all objects and creatures, he brings that boundless equality, that deep oneness down into his mind and heart and life and body and founds on it in an indivisible integrality the trinity of divine love, divine works and divine knowledge. This is the Gita's way of salvation.

And is that not too after all the real Adwaita which makes no least scission in the one eternal Existence? This utmost undividing Monism sees the one as the one even in the multiplicities of Nature, in all aspects, as much in the reality of self and of cosmos as in that greatest reality of the supracosmic which is the source of self and the truth of the cosmos and is not bound either by any affirmation of universal becoming or by any universal or absolute negation. That at least is the Adwaita of the Gita. This is the most secret Shastra, says the Teacher to Arjuna; this is the supreme teaching and science which leads us into the heart of the highest mystery of existence. Absolutely to know it, to seize it in knowledge and feeling and force and experience is to

⁶ *samagramā mām.*

be perfected in the transformed understanding, divinely satisfied in heart and successful in the supreme sense and objective of all will and action and works. It is the way to be immortal, to rise towards the highest divine nature and to assume the eternal Dharma.

The Fullness of Spiritual Action

THE DEVELOPMENT of the idea of the Gita has reached a point at which one question alone remains for solution, — the question of our nature bound and defective and how it is to effect, not only in principle but in all its movements, its evolution from the lower to the higher being and from the law of its present action to the immortal Dharma. The difficulty is one which is implied in certain of the positions laid down in the Gita, but has to be brought out into greater prominence than it gets there and to be put into a clearer shape before our intelligence. The Gita proceeded on a psychological knowledge which was familiar to the mind of the time, and in the steps of its thought it was well able to abridge its transitions, to take much for granted and to leave many things unexpressed which we need to have put strongly into light and made precise to us. Its teaching sets out at the beginning to propose a new source and level for our action in the world; that was the starting-point and that motives also the conclusion. Its initial object was not precisely to propose a way of liberation, *mokṣa*, but rather to show the compatibility of works with the soul's effort towards liberation and of spiritual freedom itself when once attained with continued action in the world, *muktasya karma*. Incidentally, a synthetic Yoga or psychological method of arriving at spiritual liberation and perfection has been developed and certain metaphysical affirmations have been put forward, certain truths of our being and nature on which the validity of this Yoga reposes. But the original preoccupation remains throughout, the original difficulty and problem, how Arjuna, dislodged by a strong revulsion of thought and feeling from the established natural and rational foundations and standards of action, is to find a new and satisfying spiritual norm of works, or how he is to live in the truth of the Spirit — since he can

no longer act according to the partial truths of the customary reason and nature of man — and yet to do his appointed work on the battle-field of Kurukshetra. To live inwardly calm, detached, silent in the silence of the impersonal and universal Self and yet do dynamically the works of dynamic Nature, and more largely, to be one with the Eternal within us and to do all the will of the Eternal in the world expressed through a sublimated force, a divine height of the personal nature uplifted, liberated, universalised, made one with God-nature, — this is the Gita's solution.

Let us see what this comes to in the most plain and positive terms and from the standpoint of the problem which is at the root of Arjuna's difficulty and refusal. His duty as a human being and a social being is the discharge of the high function of the Kshatriya without which the frame of society cannot be maintained, the ideals of the race cannot be vindicated, the harmonious order of right and justice cannot be upheld against the anarchic violence of oppression, wrong and injustice. And yet the appeal to duty by itself can no longer satisfy the protagonist of the struggle because in the terrible actuality of Kurukshetra it presents itself in harsh, perplexed and ambiguous terms. The discharge of his social duty has suddenly come to signify assent to an enormous result of sin and sorrow and suffering; the customary means of maintaining social order and justice is found to lead instead to a great disorder and chaos. The rule of just claim and interest, that which we call rights, will not serve him here; for the kingdom he has to win for himself and his brothers and his side in the war is indeed rightly theirs and its assertion an overthrow of Asuric tyranny and a vindication of justice, but a blood-bespattered justice and a kingdom possessed in sorrow and with the stain on it of a great sin, a monstrous harm done to society, a veritable crime against the race. Nor will the rule of Dharma, of ethical right, serve any better; for there is here a conflict of dharmas. A new and greater yet unguessed rule is needed to solve the problem, but what is that rule?

For to withdraw from his work, to take refuge in a saintly inactivity and leave the imperfect world with its unsatisfying

methods and motives to take care of itself is one possible solution easy to envisage, easy to execute, but this is the very cutting of the knot that has been insistently forbidden by the Teacher. Action is demanded of man by the Master of the world who is the master of all his works and whose world is a field of action, whether done through the ego and in the ignorance or partial light of the limited human reason or initiated from a higher and more largely seeing plane of vision and motive. Again, to abandon this particular action as evil would be another kind of solution, the ready resort of the shortsighted moralising mind, but to this evasion too the Teacher refuses his assent. Arjuna's abstention would work a much greater sin and evil: it would mean, if it had any effect at all, the triumph of wrong and injustice and the rejection of his own mission as an instrument of the divine workings. A violent crisis in the destinies of the race has been brought about not by any blind motion of forces or solely by the confused clash of human ideas, interests, passions, egoisms, but by a Will which is behind these outward appearances. This truth Arjuna must be brought to see; he must learn to act impersonally, imperturbably as the instrument not of his little personal desires and weak human shrinkings, but of a vaster and more luminous Power, a greater all-wise divine and universal Will. He must act impersonally and universally in a high union of his soul with the inner and outer Godhead, *yukta*, in a calm Yoga with his own supreme Self and the informing Self of the universe.

But this truth cannot be rightly seen and this kind of action cannot be rightly undertaken, cannot become real as long as man is governed by the ego, even by the half-enlightened unilluminated sattvic ego of the reason and the mental intelligence. For this is a truth of the spirit, this is an action from a spiritual basis. A spiritual, not an intellectual knowledge is the indispensable requisite for this way of works, its sole possible light, medium, incentive. First, therefore, the Teacher points out that all these ideas and feelings which trouble, perplex and baffle Arjuna, joy and sorrow, desire and sin, the mind's turn towards governing action by the outward results of action, the human shrinking from what seems terrible and formidable in the dealings of the

universal Spirit with the world, are things born of the subjection of our consciousness to a natural ignorance, the way of working of a lower nature in which the soul is involved and sees itself as a separate ego returning to the action of things upon it dual reactions of pain and pleasure, virtue and vice, right and wrong, good happening and evil fortune. These reactions create a tangled web of perplexity in which the soul is lost and bewildered by its own ignorance; it has to guide itself by partial and imperfect solutions that serve ordinarily with a stumbling sufficiency in the normal life, but fail when brought to the test of a wider seeing and a profounder experience. To understand the real sense of action and existence one must retreat behind all these appearances into the truth of the spirit; one must found self-knowledge before one can have the basis of a right world-knowledge.

The first requisite is to shake the wings of the soul free from desire and passion and troubling emotion and all this perturbed and distorting atmosphere of human mind and arrive into an ether of dispassionate equality, a heaven of impersonal calm, an egoless feeling and vision of things. For only in that lucid upper air, reaches free from all storm and cloud, can self-knowledge come and the law of the world and the truth of Nature be seen steadily and with an embracing eye and in an undisturbed and all-comprehending and all-penetrating light. Behind this little personality which is a helpless instrument, a passive or vainly resistant puppet of Nature and a form figured in her creations, there is an impersonal self one in all which sees and knows all things; there is an equal, impartial, universal presence and support of creation, a witnessing consciousness that suffers Nature to work out the becoming of things in their own type, *svabhāva*, but does not involve and lose itself in the action she initiates. To draw back from the ego and the troubled personality into this calm, equal, eternal, universal, impersonal Self is the first step towards a seeing action in Yoga done in conscious union with the divine Being and the infallible Will that, however obscure now to us, manifests itself in the universe.

When we live tranquilly poised in this self of impersonal wideness, then because that is vast, calm, quiescent, impersonal,

our other little false self, our ego of action disappears into its largeness and we see that it is Nature that acts and not we, that all action is the action of Nature and can be nothing else. And this thing we call Nature is a universal executive Power of eternal being in motion which takes different shapes and forms in this or that class of its creatures and in each individual of the species according to its type of natural existence and the resultant function and law of its works. According to its nature each creature must act and it cannot act by anything else. Ego and personal will and desire are nothing more than vividly conscious forms and limited natural workings of a universal Force that is itself formless and infinite and far exceeds them; reason and intelligence and mind and sense and life and body, all that we vaunt or take for our own, are Nature's instruments and creations. But the impersonal Self does not act and is not part of Nature: it observes the action from behind and above and remains lord of itself and a free and impassive knower and witness. The soul that lives in this impersonality is not affected by the actions of which our nature is an instrument; it does not reply to them or their effects by grief and joy, desire and shrinking, attraction and repulsion or any of the hundred dualities that draw and shake and afflict us. It regards all men and all things and all happenings with equal eyes, watches the modes or qualities of Nature acting on the modes or qualities, sees the whole secret of the mechanism, but is itself beyond these modes and qualities, a pure absolute essential being, impassive, free, at peace. Nature works out her action and the soul impersonal and universal supports her but is not involved, is not attached, is not entangled, is not troubled, is not bewildered. If we can live in this equal self, we too are at peace; our works continue so long as Nature's impulsion prolongs itself in our instruments, but there is a spiritual freedom and quiescence.

This duality of Self and Nature, quiescent Purusha, active Prakriti, is not, however, the whole of our being; these are not really the two last words in the matter. If it were so, either all works would be quite indifferent to the soul and this or that action or refraining from action would take place by some ungoverned

turn of the mobile variations of the gunas,—Arjuna would be moved to battle by rajasic impulse in the instruments or withheld from it by tamasic inertia or sattwic indifference,—or else, if it so is that he must act and act only in this way, it would be by some mechanical determinism of Nature. Moreover, since the soul in its retreat would come to live in the impersonal quiescent Self and cease to live at all in active Nature, the final result would be quiescence, cessation, inertia, not the action imposed by the Gita. And, finally, this duality gives no real explanation why the soul is at all called to involve itself in Nature and her works; for it cannot be that the one ever uninvolved self-conscious spirit gets itself involved and loses its self-knowledge and has to return to that knowledge. This pure Self, this Atman is on the contrary always there, always the same, always the one self-conscious impersonal aloof Witness or impartial supporter of the action. It is this lacuna, this impossible vacuum that compels us to suppose two Purushas or two poses of the one Purusha, one secret in the Self that observes all from its self-existence—or perhaps observes nothing, another self-projected into Nature that lends itself to her action and identifies itself with her creations. But even this dualism of Self and Prakriti or Maya corrected by the dualism of the two Purushas is not the whole philosophic creed of the Gita. It goes beyond them to the supreme all-embracing oneness of a highest Purusha, Purushottama.

The Gita affirms that there is a supreme Mystery, a highest Reality that upholds and reconciles the truth of these two different manifestations. There is an utmost supreme Self, Lord and Brahman, one who is both the impersonal and the personal, but other and greater than either of them and other and greater than both of them together. He is Purusha, Self and soul of our being, but he is also Prakriti; for Prakriti is the power of the All-Soul, the power of the Eternal and Infinite self-moved to action and creation. The supreme Ineffable, the universal Person, he becomes by his Prakriti all these creatures. The supreme Atman and Brahman, he manifests by his Maya of self-knowledge and his Maya of ignorance the double truth of the cosmic riddle. The supreme Lord, master of his Force, his Shakti, he creates, impels

and governs all this Nature and all the personality, power and works of these innumerable existences. Each soul is a partial being of this self-existent One, an eternal soul of this All-Soul, a partial manifestation of this supreme Lord and his universal Nature. All here is this Divine, this Godhead, Vasudeva; for by Nature and the soul in Nature he becomes all that is and everything proceeds from him and lives in or by him, though he himself is greater than any widest manifestation, any deepest spirit, any cosmic figure. This is the complete truth of existence and this all the secret of the universal action that we have seen disengaging itself from the later chapters of the Gita.

But how does this greater truth modify or how affect the principle of spiritual action? It modifies it to begin with in this fundamental matter that the whole meaning of the relation of Self and soul and Nature gets changed, opens out to a new vision, fills in the blanks that were left, acquires a greater amplitude, assumes a true and spiritually positive, a flawlessly integral significance. The world is no longer a purely mechanical qualitative action and determination of Nature set over against the quiescence of an impersonal self-existence which has no quality or power of self-determination, no ability or impulse to create. The chasm left by this unsatisfactory dualism is bridged and an uplifting unity revealed between knowledge and works, the soul and Nature. The quiescent impersonal Self is a truth,—it is the truth of the calm of the Godhead, the silence of the Eternal, the freedom of the Lord of all birth and becoming and action and creation, his calm infinite freedom of self-existence not bound, troubled or affected by his creation, not touched by the action and reaction of his Nature. Nature itself is now no inexplicable illusion, no separated and opposite phenomenon, but a movement of the Eternal, all her stir and activity and multiplicity founded and supported on the detached and observing tranquillity of an immutable self and spirit. The Lord of Nature remains that immutable self even while he is at the same time the one and multiple soul of the universe and becomes in a partial manifestation all these forces, powers, consciousnesses, gods, animals, things, men. Nature of the gunas is a lower self-

limited action of his power; it is nature of imperfectly conscious manifestation and therefore of a certain ignorance. The truth of the self, even as the truth of the Divine, is held back from her surface force absorbed here in its outer action — much as man's deeper being is held back from the knowledge of his surface consciousness — until the soul in her turns to find out this hidden thing, gets inside itself and discovers its own real verities, its heights and its depths. That is why it has to draw back from its little personal and egoistic to its large and impersonal, immutable and universal Self in order to become capable of self-knowledge. But the Lord is there, not only in that self, but in Nature. He is in the heart of every creature and guides by his presence the turnings of this great natural mechanism. He is present in all, all lives in him, all is himself because all is a becoming of his being, a portion or a figure of his existence. But all proceeds here in a lower partial working that has come out of a secret, a higher and greater and completer nature of Divinity, the eternal infinite nature or absolute self-power of the Godhead, *devātmaśakti*. The perfect, integrally conscious soul hidden in man, an eternal portion of Deity, a spiritual being of the eternal Divine Being, can open in us and can too open us to him if we live constantly in this true truth of his action and our existence. The seeker of Godhead has to get back to the reality of his immutable and eternal impersonal self and at the same time he has to see everywhere the Divine from whom he proceeds, to see him as all, to see him in the whole of this mutable Nature and in every part and result of her and in all her workings, and there too to make himself one with God, there too to live in him, to enter there too into the divine oneness. He unites in that integrality the divine calm and freedom of his deep essential existence with a supreme power of instrumental action in his divinised self of Nature.

But how is this to be done? It can be done first by a right spirit in our will of works. The seeker has to regard all his action as a sacrifice to the Lord of works who is the eternal and universal Being and his own highest Self and the Self of all others and the supreme all-inhabiting, all-containing, all-governing

Godhead in the universe. The whole action of Nature is such a sacrifice,—offered at first indeed to the divine Powers that move her and move in her, but these powers are only limited forms and names of the One and Illimitable. Man ordinarily offers his sacrifice openly or under a disguise to his own ego; his oblation is the false action of his own self-will and ignorance. Or he offers his knowledge, action, aspiration, works of energy and effort to the gods for partial, temporal and personal aims. The man of knowledge, the liberated soul offers on the contrary all his activities to the one eternal Godhead without any attachment to their fruit or to the satisfaction of his lower personal desires. He works for God, not for himself, for the universal welfare, for the Soul of the world and not for any particular object which is of his own personal creation or for any construction of his mental will or object of his vital longings, as a divine agent, not as a principal and separate profiteer in the world-commerce. And this, it must be noted, is a thing that cannot be really done except in proportion as the mind arrives at equality, universality, wide impersonality, and a clear freedom from every disguise of the insistent ego: for without these things the claim to be thus acting is a pretension or an illusion. The whole action of the world is the business of the Lord of the universe, the concern of the self-existent Spirit of whom it is the unceasing creation, the progressive becoming, the significant manifestation and living symbol in Nature. The fruits are his, the results are those determined by him and our personal action is only a minor contribution ruled or overruled, so far as its motive is an egoistic claim, by this Self and Spirit in us who is the Self and Spirit in all and governs things for the universal end and good and not for the sake of our ego. To work impersonally, desirelessly and without attachment to the fruits of our work, for the sake of God and the world and the greater Self and the fulfilment of the universal will,—this is the first step towards liberation and perfection.

But beyond this step there lies that other greater motion, the inner surrender of all our actions to the Divinity within us. For it is infinite Nature that impels our works and a divine

Will in and above her that demands action of us; the choice and turn our ego gives to it is a contribution of our tamasic, rajasic, sattwic quality, a deformation in the lower Nature. The deformation comes by the ego thinking of itself as the doer; the character of the act takes the form of the limited personal nature and the soul is bound up with that and its narrow figures and does not allow the act to proceed freely and purely from the infinite power within it. And the ego is chained to the act and its outcome; it must suffer the personal consequence and reaction even as it claims the responsible origination and personal will of the doing. The free perfect working comes first by referring and finally by surrendering altogether the action and its origination to the divine Master of our existence; for we feel it progressively taken up by a supreme Presence within us, the soul drawn into deep intimacy and close unity with an inner Power and Godhead and the work originated directly from the greater Self, from the all-wise, infinite, universal force of an eternal being and not from the ignorance of the little personal ego. The action is chosen and shaped according to the nature, but entirely by the divine Will in the nature, and it is therefore free and perfect within, whatever its outward appearance; it comes stamped with the inward spiritual seal of the Infinite as the thing to be done, the movement and the step of the movement decreed in the ways of the omniscient Master of action, *kartavyam karma*. The soul of the liberated man is free in its impersonality, even while he contributes to the action as its means and its occasion his instrumental personal self-creation and the special will and power in his nature. That will and power is now not separately, egoistically his own, but a force of the suprapersonal Divine who acts in this becoming of his own self, this one of his myriad personalities by means of the characteristic form of the natural being, the swabhava. This is the high secret and mystery, *uttamam rahasyam*, of the action of the liberated man. It is the result of a growing of the human soul into a divine Light and of the union of its nature with a highest universal nature.

This change cannot come about except by knowledge. There is necessary a right knowledge of self and God and world and a

living and growing into the greater consciousness to which that knowledge admits us. We know now what the knowledge is. It is sufficient to remember that it reposes on another and wider vision than the human mental, a changed vision and experience by which one is first of all liberated from the limitations of the ego sense and its contacts and feels and sees the one self in all, all in God, all beings as Vasudeva, all as vessels of the Godhead and one's self too as a significant being and soul-power of that one Godhead; it treats in a spiritual uniting consciousness all the happenings of the lives of others as if they were happenings of one's own life; it allows no wall of separation and lives in a universal sympathy with all existences, while amidst the world-movement one still does the work that has to be done for the good of all, *sarva-bhūta-hite*, according to the way appointed by the Divine and in the measures imposed by the command of the Spirit who is Master of Time. Thus living and acting in this knowledge the soul of man becomes united with the Eternal in personality and in impersonality, lives in the Eternal though acting in Time, even as the Eternal acts, and is free, perfect and blissful whatever may be the form and determination of the work done in Nature.

The liberated man has the complete and total knowledge, *kṛtsnavid*, and does all works without any of the restrictions made by the mind, *kṛtsna-karma-kṛt*, according to the force and freedom and infinite power of the divine will within him. And since he is united with the Eternal, he has too the pure spiritual and illimitable joy of his eternal existence. He turns with adoration to the Self of whom he is a portion, the Master of his works and divine Lover of his soul and nature. He is not an impassive calm spectator only; he lifts not only his knowledge and will to the Eternal, but his heart also of love and adoration and passion. For without that uplifting of the heart his whole nature is not fulfilled and united with God; the ecstasy of the spirit's calm needs to be transformed by the ecstasy of the soul's Ananda. Beyond the personal Jiva and the impersonal Brahman or Atman he reaches the supracosmic Purushottama who is immutable in impersonality and fulfils himself in personality and draws us to

him through these two different attractions. The liberated seeker rises personally to that highest Numen by his soul's love and joy in God and the adoration of the will in him for the Master of its works; the peace and largeness of his impersonal universal knowledge is perfected by delight in the self-existent integral close and intimate reality of this surpassing and universal God-head. This delight glorifies his knowledge and unites it with the eternal delight of the Spirit in its self and its manifestation; this perfects too his personality in the superperson of the divine Purusha and makes his natural being and action one with eternal beauty, eternal harmony, eternal love and Ananda.

But all this change means a total passing from the lower human to the higher divine nature. It is a lifting of our whole being or at least of the whole mental being that wills, knows and feels beyond what we are into some highest spiritual consciousness, some satisfying fullest power of existence, some deepest widest delight of the spirit. And this may well be possible by a transcendence of our present natural life, it may well be possible in some celestial state beyond the earthly existence or still beyond in a supracosmic superconsciousness; it may happen by transition to an absolute and infinite power and status of the Spirit. But while we are here in the body, here in life, here in action, what in this change becomes of the lower nature? For at present all our activities are determined in their trend and shape by the nature, and this Nature here is the nature of the three gunas, and in all natural being and in all natural activities there is the triple guna, tamas with its ignorance and inertia, rajas with its kinesis and action, its passion and grief and perversion, sattwa with its light and happiness, and the bondage of these things. And granted that the soul becomes superior in the self to the three gunas, how does it escape in its instrumental nature from their working and result and bondage? For even the man of knowledge, says the Gita, must act according to his nature. To feel and bear the reactions of the gunas in the outer manifestation, but to be free from them and superior in the observing conscious self behind is not sufficient; for it leaves still a dualism of freedom and subjection, a contradiction between what we are within and

what we are without, between our self and our power, what we know ourselves to be and what we will and do. Where is the release here, where the full elevation and transformation to the higher spiritual nature, the immortal Dharma, the law proper to the infinite purity and power of a divine being? If this change cannot be effected while in the body, then so it must be said, that the whole nature cannot be transformed and there must remain an unreconciled duality until the mortal type of existence drops off like a discarded shell from the spirit. But in that case the gospel of works cannot well be the right or at least cannot be the ultimate gospel: a perfect quiescence or at least as perfect a quiescence as possible, a progressive Sannyasa and renunciation of works would seem still to be the true counsel of perfection, — as indeed the Mayavadin contends, who says that the Gita's way is no doubt the right way so long as we remain in action, but still all works are an illusion and quiescence the highest path. To act in this spirit is well, but only as a transition to a renunciation of all works, to cessation, to an absolute quiescence.

This is the difficulty which the Gita has still to meet in order to justify works to the seeker after the Spirit. Otherwise it must say to Arjuna, "Act temporarily in this fashion, but afterwards seek the higher way of renunciation of works." But on the contrary it has said that not the cessation of works, but renunciation of desire is the better way; it has spoken of the action of the liberated man, *muktasya karma*. It has even insisted on doing all actions, *sarvāṇi karmāṇi, kṛtsna-karma-kṛt*; it has said that in whatever way the perfected Yогin lives and acts, he lives and acts in God. This can only be, if the nature also in its dynamics and workings becomes divine, a power imperturbable, intangible, inviolate, pure and untroubled by the reactions of the inferior Prakriti. How and by what steps is this most difficult transformation to be effected? What is this last secret of the soul's perfection? what the principle or the process of this transmutation of our human and earthly nature?

XVII

Deva and Asura¹

THE PRACTICAL difficulty of the change from the ignorant and shackled normal nature of man to the dynamic freedom of a divine and spiritual being will be apparent if we ask ourselves, more narrowly, how the transition can be effected from the fettered embarrassed functioning of the three qualities to the infinite action of the liberated man who is no longer subject to the gunas. The transition is indispensable; for it is clearly laid down that he must be above or else without the three gunas, *trigunātīta, nistraigunya*. On the other hand it is no less clearly, no less emphatically laid down that in every natural existence here on earth the three gunas are there in their inextricable working and it is even said that all action of man or creature or force is merely the action of these three modes upon each other, a functioning in which one or other predominates and the rest modify its operation and results, *gunā gunęsu vartante*. How then can there be another dynamic and kinetic nature or any other kind of works? To act is to be subject to the three qualities of Nature; to be beyond these conditions of her working is to be silent in the Spirit. The Ishwara, the Supreme who is master of all her works and functions and guides and determines them by his divine will, is indeed above this mechanism of quality, not touched or limited by her modes, but still it would seem that he acts always through them, always shapes by the power of the swabhava and through the psychological machinery of the gunas. These three are fundamental properties of Prakriti, necessary operations of the executive Nature-force which takes shape here in us, and the Jiva himself is only a portion of the Divine in this Prakriti. If then the liberated man still does works, still moves in the kinetic movement, it must be

¹ Gita, XVI.

so that he moves and acts, in Nature and by the limitation of her qualities, subject to their reactions, not, in so far as the natural part of him persists, in the freedom of the Divine. But the Gita has said exactly the opposite, that the liberated Yогin is delivered from the guna reactions and whatever he does, however he lives, moves and acts in God, in the power of his freedom and immortality, in the law of the supreme eternal Infinite, *sarvathā vartamāno'pi sa yogī mayi vartate*. There seems here to be a contradiction, an impasse.

But this is only when we knot ourselves up in the rigid logical oppositions of the analytic mind, not when we look freely and subtly at the nature of spirit and at the spirit in Nature. What moves the world is not really the modes of Prakriti,—these are only the lower aspect, the mechanism of our normal nature. The real motive power is a divine spiritual Will which uses at present these inferior conditions, but is itself not limited, not dominated, not mechanised, as is the human will, by the gunas. No doubt, since these modes are so universal in their action, they must proceed from something inherent in the power of the Spirit; there must be powers in the divine Will-force from which these aspects of Prakriti have their origin. For everything in the lower normal nature is derived from the higher spiritual power of being of the Purushottama, *mattah pravartate*; it does not come into being *de novo* and without a spiritual cause. Something in the essential power of the spirit there must be from which the sattwic light and satisfaction, the rajasic kinesis, the tamasic inertia of our nature are derivations and of which they are the imperfect or degraded forms. But once we get back to these sources in their purity above this imperfection and degradation of them in which we live, we shall find that these motions put on a quite different aspect as soon as we begin to live in the spirit. Being and action and the modes of being and action become altogether different things, far above their present limited appearance.

For what is behind this troubled kinesis of the cosmos with all its clash and struggle? What is it that when it touches the mind, when it puts on mental values, creates the reactions of desire, striving, straining, error of will, sorrow, sin, pain? It is a

will of the spirit in movement, it is a large divine will in action which is not touched by these things; it is a power² of the free and infinite conscious Godhead which has no desire because it exercises a universal possession and a spontaneous Ananda of its movements. Wearied by no striving and straining, it enjoys a free mastery of its means and its objects; misled by no error of the will, it holds a knowledge of self and things which is the source of its mastery and its Ananda; overcome by no sorrow, sin or pain, it has the joy and purity of its being and the joy and purity of its power. The soul that lives in God acts by this spiritual will and not by the normal will of the unliberated mind: its kinesis takes place by this spiritual force and not by the rajasic mode of Nature, precisely because it no longer lives in the lower movement to which that deformation belongs, but has got back in the divine nature to the pure and perfect sense of the kinesis.

And again what is behind the inertia of Nature, behind this Tamas which, when complete, makes her action like the blind driving of a machine, a mechanical impetus unobservant of anything except the groove in which it is set to spin and not conscious even of the law of that motion,—this Tamas that turns cessation of the accustomed action into death and disintegration and becomes in the mind a power for inaction and ignorance? This tamas is an obscurity which mistranslates, we may say, into inaction of power and inaction of knowledge the Spirit's eternal principle of calm and repose—the repose which the Divine never loses even while he acts, the eternal repose which supports his integral action of knowledge and the force of his creative will both there in its own infinities and here in an apparent limitation of its working and self-awareness. The peace of the Godhead is not a disintegration of energy or a vacant inertia; it would keep all that Infinity has known and done gathered up and concentratedly conscious in an omnipotent silence even if the Power everywhere ceased for a time actively to know and create. The Eternal does not need to sleep or rest; he does not get tired and flag; he has no need

² *tapas, cit-śakti.*

of a pause to refresh and recreate his exhausted energies; for his energy is inexhaustibly the same, indefatigable and infinite. The Godhead is calm and at rest in the midst of his action; and on the other hand his very cessation of action would retain in it the full power and all the potentialities of his kinesis. The liberated soul enters into this calm and participates in the eternal repose of the spirit. This is known to everyone who has had any taste at all of the joy of liberation, that it contains an eternal power of calm. And that profound tranquillity can remain in the very heart of action, can persevere in the most violent motion of forces. There may be an impetuous flood of thought, doing, will, movement, an overflowing rush of love, the emotion of the self-existent spiritual ecstasy at its strongest intensity, and that may extend itself to a fiery and forceful spiritual enjoyment of things and beings in the world and in the ways of Nature, and yet this tranquillity and repose would be behind the surge and in it, always conscious of its depths, always the same. The calm of the liberated man is not an indolence, incapacity, insensibility, inertia; it is full of immortal power, capable of all action, attuned to deepest delight, open to profoundest love and compassion and to every manner of intensest Ananda.

And so too beyond the inferior light and happiness of that purest quality of Nature, Sattwa, the power that makes for assimilation and equivalence, right knowledge and right dealing, fine harmony, firm balance, right law of action, right possession and brings so full a satisfaction to the mind, beyond this highest thing in the normal nature, admirable in itself so far as it goes and while it can be maintained, but precarious, secured by limitation, dependent on rule and condition, there is at its high and distant source a greater light and bliss free in the free spirit. That is not limited nor dependent on limitation or rule or condition but self-existent and unalterable, not the result of this or that harmony amid the discords of our nature but the fount of harmony and able to create whatever harmony it will. That is a luminous spiritual and in its native action a direct supramental force of knowledge, *jyotiḥ*, not our modified and derivative mental light, *prakāśa*. That is the light and bliss

of widest self-existence, spontaneous self-knowledge, intimate universal identity, deepest self-interchange, not of acquisition, assimilation, adjustment and laboured equivalence. That light is full of a luminous spiritual will and there is no gulf or disparateness between its knowledge and its action. That delight is not our paler mental happiness, *sukham*, but a profound concentrated intense self-existent bliss extended to all that our being does, envisages, creates, a fixed divine rapture, Ananda. The liberated soul participates more and more profoundly in this light and bliss and grows the more perfectly into it, the more integrally it unites itself with the Divine. And while among the gunas of the lower Nature there is a necessary disequilibrium, a shifting inconstancy of measures and a perpetual struggle for domination, the greater light and bliss, calm, will of kinesis of the Spirit do not exclude each other, are not at war, are not even merely in equilibrium, but each an aspect of the two others and in their fullness all are inseparable and one. Our mind when it approaches the Divine may seem to enter into one to the exclusion of another, may appear for instance to achieve calm to the exclusion of kinesis of action, but that is because we approach him first through the selecting spirit in the mind. Afterwards when we are able to rise above even the spiritual mind, we can see that each divine power contains all the rest and can get rid of this initial error.³

We see then that action is possible without the subjection of the soul to the normal degraded functioning of the modes of Nature. That functioning depends on the mental, vital and physical limitation into which we are cast; it is a deformation, an incapacity, a wrong or depressed value imposed on us by the mind and life in matter. When we grow into the spirit, this

³ The account given here of the supreme spiritual and supramental forms of highest Nature action corresponding to the gunas is not derived from the Gita, but introduced from spiritual experience. The Gita does not describe in any detail the action of the highest Nature, *rahasyam uttamam*; it leaves that for the seeker to discover by his own spiritual experience. It only points out the nature of the high sattvic temperament and action through which this supreme mystery has to be reached and insists at the same time on the overpassing of Sattwa and transcendence of the three gunas.

dharma or inferior law of Nature is replaced by the immortal dharma of the spirit; there is the experience of a free immortal action, a divine illimitable knowledge, a transcendent power, an unfathomable repose. But still there remains the question of the transition; for there must be a transition, a proceeding by steps, since nothing in God's workings in this world is done by an abrupt action without procedure or basis. We have the thing we seek in us, but we have in practice to evolve it out of the inferior forms of our nature.⁴ Therefore in the action of the modes itself there must be some means, some leverage, some *point d'appui*, by which we can effect this transformation. The Gita finds it in the full development of the sattwic guna till that in its potent expansion reaches a point at which it can go beyond itself and disappear into its source. The reason is evident, because sattwa is a power of light and happiness, a force that makes for calm and knowledge, and at its highest point it can arrive at a certain reflection, almost a mental identity with the spiritual light and bliss from which it derives. The other two gunas cannot get this transformation, rajas into the divine kinetic will or tamas into the divine repose and calm, without the intervention of the sattwic power in Nature. The principle of inertia will always remain an inert inaction of power or an incapacity of knowledge until its ignorance disappears in illumination and its torpid incapacity is lost in the light and force of the omnipotent divine will of repose. Then only can we have the supreme calm. Therefore tamas must be dominated by sattwa. The principle of rajas for the same reason must remain always a restless, troubled, feverish or unhappy working because it has not right knowledge; its native movement is a wrong and perverse action, perverse through ignorance. Our will must purify itself by knowledge; it must get more and more to a right and luminously informed action before it can be converted into the divine kinetic will. That again means

⁴ This is from the point of view of our nature ascending upwards by self-conquest, effort and discipline. There must also intervene more and more a descent of the divine Light, Presence and Power into the being to transform it; otherwise the change at the point of culmination and beyond it cannot take place. That is why there comes in as the last movement the necessity of an absolute self-surrender.

the necessity of the intervention of sattwa. The sattwic quality is a first mediator between the higher and the lower nature. It must indeed at a certain point transform or escape from itself and break up and dissolve into its source; its conditioned derivative seeking light and carefully constructed action must change into the free direct dynamics and spontaneous light of the spirit. But meanwhile a high increase of sattwic power delivers us largely from the tamasic and the rajasic disqualification; and its own disqualification, once we are not pulled too much downward by rajas and tama, can be surmounted with a greater ease. To develop sattwa till it becomes full of spiritual light and calm and happiness is the first condition of this preparatory discipline of the nature.

That, we shall find, is the whole intention of the remaining chapters of the Gita. But first it prefaces the consideration of this enlightening movement by a distinction between two kinds of being, the Deva and the Asura; for the Deva is capable of a high self-transforming sattwic action, the Asura incapable. We must see what is the object of this preface and the precise bearing of this distinction. The general nature of all human beings is the same, it is a mixture of the three gunas; it would seem then that in all there must be the capacity to develop and strengthen the sattwic element and turn it upward towards the heights of the divine transformation. That our ordinary turn is actually towards making our reason and will the servants of our rajasic or tamasic egoism, the ministers of our restless and ill-balanced kinetic desire or our self-indulgent indolence and static inertia, can only be, one would imagine, a temporary characteristic of our undeveloped spiritual being, a rawness of its imperfect evolution and must disappear when our consciousness rises in the spiritual scale. But we actually see that men, at least men above a certain level, fall very largely into two classes, those who have a dominant force of sattwic nature turned towards knowledge, self-control, beneficence, perfection and those who have a dominant force of rajasic nature turned towards egoistic greatness, satisfaction of desire, the indulgence of their own strong will and personality which they seek to impose on the

world, not for the service of man or God, but for their own pride, glory and pleasure. These are the human representatives of the Devas and Danavas or Asuras, the Gods and the Titans. This distinction is a very ancient one in Indian religious symbolism. The fundamental idea of the Rig Veda is a struggle between the Gods and their dark opponents, between the Masters of Light, sons of Infinity, and the children of Division and Night, a battle in which man takes part and which is reflected in all his inner life and action. This was also a fundamental principle of the religion of Zoroaster. The same idea is prominent in later literature. The Ramayana is in its ethical intention the parable of an enormous conflict between the Deva in human form and the incarnate Rakshasa, between the representative of a high culture and Dharma and a huge unbridled force and gigantic civilisation of the exaggerated Ego. The Mahabharata, of which the Gita is a section, takes for its subject a lifelong clash between human Devas and Asuras, the men of power, sons of the Gods, who are governed by the light of a high ethical Dharma and others who are embodied Titans, the men of power who are out for the service of their intellectual, vital and physical ego. The ancient mind, more open than ours to the truth of things behind the physical veil, saw behind the life of man great cosmic Powers or beings representative of certain turns or grades of the universal Shakti, divine, titanic, gigantic, demoniac, and men who strongly represented in themselves these types of nature were themselves considered as Devas, Asuras, Rakshasas, Pisachas. The Gita for its own purposes takes up this distinction and develops the difference between these two kinds of beings, *dvau bhūtasargau*. It has spoken previously of the nature which is Asuric and Rakshasic and obstructs God-knowledge, salvation and perfection; it now contrasts it with the Daivic nature which is turned to these things.

Arjuna, says the Teacher, is of the Deva nature. He need not grieve with the thought that by acceptance of battle and slaughter he will be yielding to the impulses of the Asura. The action on which all turns, the battle which Arjuna has to fight with the incarnate Godhead as his charioteer at the bidding of

the Master of the world in the form of the Time-Spirit, is a struggle to establish the kingdom of the Dharma, the empire of Truth, Right and Justice. He himself is born in the Deva kind; he has developed in himself the sattwic being, until he has now come to a point at which he is capable of a high transformation and liberation from the *traigunya* and therefore even from the sattwic nature. The distinction between the Deva and the Asura is not comprehensive of all humanity, not rigidly applicable to all its individuals, neither is it sharp and definite in all stages of the moral or spiritual history of the race or in all phases of the individual evolution. The tamasic man who makes so large a part of the whole, falls into neither category as it is here described, though he may have both elements in him in a low degree and for the most part serves tepidly the lower qualities. The normal man is ordinarily a mixture; but one or the other tendency is more pronounced, tends to make him predominantly rajaso-tamasic or sattwo-rajasic and can be said to be preparing him for either culmination, for the divine clarity or the titanic turbulence. For here what is in question is a certain culmination in the evolution of the qualitative nature, as will be evident from the descriptions given in the text. On one side there can be a sublimation of the sattwic quality, the culmination or manifestation of the unborn Deva, on the other a sublimation of the rajasic turn of the soul in nature, the entire birth of the Asura. The one leads towards that movement of liberation on which the Gita is about to lay stress; it makes possible a high self-exceeding of the sattwa quality and a transformation into the likeness of the divine being, *vimokṣaya*. The other leads away from that universal potentiality and precipitates towards an exaggeration of our bondage to the ego. This is the point of the distinction.

The Deva nature is distinguished by an acme of the sattwic habits and qualities; self-control, sacrifice, the religious habit, cleanliness and purity, candour and straightforwardness, truth, calm and self-denial, compassion to all beings, modesty, gentleness, forgivingness, patience, steadfastness, a deep sweet and serious freedom from all restlessness, levity and inconstancy are its native attributes. The Asuric qualities, wrath, greed, cunning,

treachery, wilful doing of injury to others, pride and arrogance and excessive self-esteem have no place in its composition. But its gentleness and self-denial and self-control are free too from all weakness: it has energy and soul force, strong resolution, the fearlessness of the soul that lives in the right and according to the truth as well as its harmlessness, *tejah*, *abhayam*, *dhrtih*, *ahimsā*, *satyam*. The whole being, the whole temperament is integrally pure; there is a seeking for knowledge and a calm and fixed abiding in knowledge. This is the wealth, the plenitude of the man born into the Deva nature.

The Asuric nature has too its wealth, its plenitude of force, but it is of a very different, a powerful and evil kind. Asuric men have no true knowledge of the way of action or the way of abstention, the fulfilling or the holding in of the nature. Truth is not in them, nor clean doing, nor faithful observance. They see naturally in the world nothing but a huge play of the satisfaction of self; theirs is a world with Desire for its cause and seed and governing force and law, a world of Chance, a world devoid of just relation and linked Karma, a world without God, not true, not founded in Truth. Whatever better intellectual or higher religious dogma they may possess, this alone is the true creed of their mind and will in action; they follow always the cult of Desire and Ego. On that way of seeing life they lean in reality and by its falsehood they ruin their souls and their reason. The Asuric man becomes the centre or instrument of a fierce, Titanic, violent action, a power of destruction in the world, a fount of injury and evil. Arrogant, full of self-esteem and the drunkenness of their pride, these misguided souls delude themselves, persist in false and obstinate aims and pursue the fixed impure resolution of their longings. They imagine that desire and enjoyment are all the aim of life and in their inordinate and insatiable pursuit of it they are the prey of a devouring, a measurelessly unceasing care and thought and endeavour and anxiety till the moment of their death. Bound by a hundred bonds, devoured by wrath and lust, unweariedly occupied in amassing unjust gains which may serve their enjoyment and the satisfaction of their craving, always they think, "Today I have gained this object of desire, tomorrow I

shall have that other; today I have so much wealth, more I will get tomorrow. I have killed this my enemy, the rest too I will kill. I am a lord and king of men, I am perfect, accomplished, strong, happy, fortunate, a privileged enjoyer of the world; I am wealthy, I am of high birth; who is there like unto me? I will sacrifice, I will give, I will enjoy." Thus occupied by many egoistic ideas, deluded, doing works, but doing them wrongly, acting mightily, but for themselves, for desire, for enjoyment, not for God in themselves and God in man, they fall into the unclean hell of their own evil. They sacrifice and give, but from a self-regarding ostentation, from vanity and with a stiff and foolish pride. In the egoism of their strength and power, in the violence of their wrath and arrogance they hate, despise and belittle the God hidden in themselves and the God in man. And because they have this proud hatred and contempt of good and of God, because they are cruel and evil, the Divine casts them down continually into more and more Asuric births. Not seeking him, they find him not, and at last, losing the way to him altogether, sink down into the lowest status of soul-nature, *adhamām gatim*.

This graphic description, even giving its entire value to the distinction it implies, must not be pressed to carry more in it than it means. When it is said that there are two creations of beings in this material world, Deva and Asura,⁵ it is not meant that human souls are so created by God from the beginning each with its own inevitable career in Nature, nor is it meant that there is a rigid spiritual predestination and those rejected from the beginning by the Divine are blinded by him so that they may be thrust down to eternal perdition and the impurity of Hell. All souls are eternal portions of the Divine, the Asura as well as the Deva, all can come to salvation: even the greatest sinner can turn to the Divine. But the evolution of the soul in Nature

⁵ The distinction between the two creations has its full truth in supraphysical planes where the law of spiritual evolution does not govern the movement. There are worlds of the Devas, worlds of the Asuras, and there are in these worlds behind us constant types of beings which support the complex divine play of creation indispensable to the march of the universe and cast their influence also on the earth and on the life and nature of man in this physical plane of existence.

is an adventure of which Swabhava and the Karma governed by the swabhava are ever the chief powers; and if an excess in the manifestation of the swabhava, the self-becoming of the soul, a disorder in its play turns the law of being to the perverse side, if the rajasic qualities are given the upper hand, cultured to the diminution of sattwa, then the trend of Karma and its results necessarily culminate not in the sattwic height which is capable of the movement of liberation, but in the highest exaggeration of the perversities of the lower nature. The man, if he does not stop short and abandon his way of error, has eventually the Asura full-born in him, and once he has taken that enormous turn away from the Light and Truth, he can no more reverse the fatal speed of his course because of the very immensity of the misused divine power in him until he has plumbed the depths to which it falls, found bottom and seen where the way has led him, the power exhausted and misspent, himself down in the lowest state of the soul nature, which is Hell. Only when he understands and turns to the Light, does that other truth of the Gita come in, that even the greatest sinner, the most impure and violent evil-doer is saved the moment he turns to adore and follow after the Godhead within him. Then, simply by that turn, he gets very soon into the sattwic way which leads to perfection and freedom.

The Asuric Prakriti is the rajasic at its height; it leads to the slavery of the soul in Nature, to desire, wrath and greed, the three powers of the rajasic ego, and these are the three-fold doors of Hell, the Hell into which the natural being falls when it indulges the impurity and evil and error of its lower or perverted instincts. These three are again the doors of a great darkness, they fold back into tamas, the characteristic power of the original Ignorance; for the unbridled force of the rajasic nature, when exhausted, falls back into the weakness, collapse, darkness, incapacity of the worst tamasic soul-status. To escape from this downfall one must get rid of these three evil forces and turn to the light of the sattwic quality, live by the right, in the true relations, according to the Truth and the Law; then one follows one's own higher good and arrives at the highest soul-

status. To follow the law of desire is not the true rule of our nature; there is a higher and juster standard of its works. But where is it embodied or how is it to be found? In the first place, the human race has always been seeking for this just and high Law and whatever it has discovered is embodied in its Shastra, its rule of science and knowledge, rule of ethics, rule of religion, rule of best social living, rule of one's right relations with man and God and Nature. Shastra does not mean a mass of customs, some good, some bad, unintelligently followed by the customary routine mind of the tamasic man. Shastra is the knowledge and teaching laid down by intuition, experience and wisdom, the science and art and ethic of life, the best standards available to the race. The half-awakened man who leaves the observance of its rule to follow the guidance of his instincts and desires, can get pleasure but not happiness; for the inner happiness can only come by right living. He cannot move to perfection, cannot acquire the highest spiritual status. The law of instinct and desire seems to come first in the animal world, but the manhood of man grows by the pursuit of truth and religion and knowledge and a right life. The Shastra, the recognised Right that he has set up to govern his lower members by his reason and intelligent will, must therefore first be observed and made the authority for conduct and works and for what should or should not be done, till the instinctive desire nature is schooled and abated and put down by the habit of self-control and man is ready first for a freer intelligent self-guidance and then for the highest supreme law and supreme liberty of the spiritual nature.

For the Shastra in its ordinary aspect is not that spiritual law, although at its loftiest point, when it becomes a science and art of spiritual living, Adhyatma-shastra,—the Gita itself describes its own teaching as the highest and most secret Shastra,—it formulates a rule of the self-transcendence of the sattwic nature and develops the discipline which leads to spiritual transmutation. Yet all Shastra is built on a number of preparatory conditions, dharmas; it is a means, not an end. The supreme end is the freedom of the spirit when abandoning all dharmas the soul turns to God for its sole law of action, acts straight from the

divine will and lives in the freedom of the divine nature, not in the Law, but in the Spirit. This is the development of the teaching which is prepared by the next question of Arjuna.

XVIII

The Gunas, Faith and Works¹

THE GITA has made a distinction between action according to the licence of personal desire and action done according to the Shastra. We must understand by the latter the recognised science and art of life which is the outcome of mankind's collective living, its culture, religion, science, its progressive discovery of the best rule of life,—but mankind still walking in the ignorance and proceeding in a half light towards knowledge. The action of personal desire belongs to the unregenerated state of our nature and is dictated by ignorance or false knowledge and an unregulated or ill-regulated kinetic or rajasic egoism. The action controlled by Shastra is an outcome of intellectual, ethical, aesthetic, social and religious culture; it embodies an attempt at a certain right living, harmony and right order and is evidently an effort, more or less advanced according to circumstances, of the sattvic element in man to overtop, regulate and control or guide, where it must be admitted, his rajasic and tamasic egoism. It is the means to a step in advance, and therefore mankind must first proceed through it and make this Shastra its law of action rather than obey the impulsion of its personal desires. This is a general rule which humanity has always recognised wherever it has arrived at any kind of established and developed society; it has an idea of an order, a law, a standard of its perfection, something other than the guidance of its desires or the crude direction of its raw impulses. This greater rule the individual finds usually outside himself in some more or less fixed outcome of the experience and wisdom of the race, which he accepts, to which his mind and the leading parts of his being give their assent or sanction and which he tries to make his own by living it in his mind, will and action.

¹ Gita, XVII.

And this assent of the being, its conscious acceptance and will to believe and realise, may be called by the name which the Gita gives to it, his faith, *śraddhā*. The religion, the philosophy, the ethical law, the social idea, the cultural idea in which I put my faith, gives me a law for my nature and its works, an idea of relative right or an idea of relative or absolute perfection and in proportion as I have a sincerity and completeness of faith in it and an intensity of will to live according to that faith, I can become what it proposes to me, I can shape myself into an image of that right or an exemplar of that perfection.

But we see also that there is a freer tendency in man other than the leading of his desires and other than his will to accept the Law, the fixed idea, the safe governing rule of the Shastra. The individual frequently enough, the community at any moment of its life is seen to turn away from the Shastra, becomes impatient of it, loses that form of its will and faith and goes in search of another law which it is now more disposed to accept as the right rule of living and regard as a more vital or higher truth of existence. This may happen when the established Shastra ceases to be a living thing and degenerates or stiffens into a mass of customs and conventions. Or it may come because it is found that the Shastra is imperfect or no longer useful for the progress demanded; a new truth, a more perfect law of living has become imperative. If that does not exist, it has to be discovered by the effort of the race or by some great and illumined individual mind who embodies the desire and seeking of the race. The Vedic law becomes a convention and a Buddha appears with his new rule of the eightfold path and the goal of Nirvana; and it may be remarked that he propounds it not as a personal invention, but as the true rule of Aryan living constantly rediscovered by the Buddha, the enlightened mind, the awakened spirit. But this practically means that there is an ideal, an eternal Dharma which religion, philosophy, ethics and all other powers in man that strive after truth and perfection are constantly endeavouring to embody in new statements of the science and art of the inner and outer life, a new Shastra. The Mosaic law of religious, ethical and social righteousness is

convicted of narrowness and imperfection and is now besides a convention; the law of Christ comes to replace it and claims at once to abrogate and to fulfil, to abrogate the imperfect form and fulfil in a deeper and broader light and power the spirit of the thing which it aimed at, the divine rule of living. And the human search does not stop there, but leaves these formulations too, goes back to some past truth it had rejected or breaks forward to some new truth and power, but is always in search of the same thing, the law of its perfection, its rule of right living, its complete, highest and essential self and nature.

This movement begins with the individual, who is no longer satisfied with the law because he finds that it no longer corresponds to his idea and largest or intensest experience of himself and existence and therefore he can no longer bring to it the will to believe and practise. It does not correspond to his inner way of being, it is not to him *sat*, the thing that truly is, the right, the highest or best or real good; it is not the truth and law of his or of all being. The Shastra is something impersonal to the individual, and that gives it its authority over the narrow personal law of his members; but at the same time it is personal to the collectivity and is the outcome of its experience, its culture or its nature. It is not in all its form and spirit the ideal rule of fulfilment of the Self or the eternal law of the Master of our nature, although it may contain in itself in small or larger measure indications, preparations, illuminating glimpses of that far greater thing. And the individual may have gone beyond the collectivity and be ready for a greater truth, a wider walk, a deeper intention of the Life-Spirit. The leading in him that departs from the Shastra may not indeed be always a higher movement; it may take the form of a revolt of the egoistic or rajasic nature seeking freedom from the yoke of something which it feels to be cramping to its liberty of self-fulfilment and self-finding. But even then it is often justified by some narrowness or imperfection of the Shastra or by the degradation of the current rule of living into a merely restricting or lifeless convention. And so far it is legitimate, it appeals to a truth, it has a good and just reason for existence: for though it misses the right path, yet the free action of the rajasic

ego, because it has more in it of liberty and life, is better than the dead and hidebound tamasic following of a convention. The rajasic is always stronger, always more forcefully inspired and has more possibilities in it than the tamasic nature. But also this leading may be sattvic at its heart; it may be a turn to a larger and greater ideal which will carry us nearer to a more complete and ample truth of our self and universal existence than has yet been seen and nearer therefore to that highest law which is one with the divine freedom. And in effect this movement is usually an attempt to lay hold on some forgotten truth or to move on to a yet undiscovered or unlived truth of our being. It is not a mere licentious movement of the unregulated nature; it has its spiritual justification and is a necessity of our spiritual progress. And even if the Shastra is still a living thing and the best rule for the human average, the exceptional man, spiritual, inwardly developed, is not bound by that standard. He is called upon to go beyond the fixed line of the Shastra. For this is a rule for the guidance, control and relative perfection of the normal imperfect man and he has to go on to a more absolute perfection: this is a system of fixed dharmas and he has to learn to live in the liberty of the Spirit.

But what then shall be the secure base of an action which departs both from the guidance of desire and from the normal law? For the rule of desire has an authority of its own, no longer safe or satisfactory to us as it is to the animal or as it might have been to a primitive humanity, but still, so far as it goes, founded on a very living part of our nature and fortified by its strong indications; and the law, the Shastra has behind it all the authority of long established rule, old successful sanctions and a secure past experience. But this new movement is of the nature of a powerful adventure into the unknown or partly known, a daring development and a new conquest, and what then is the clue to be followed, the guiding light on which it can depend or its strong basis in our being? The answer is that the clue and support is to be found in man's *śraddhā*, his faith, his will to believe, to live what he sees or thinks to be the truth of himself and of existence. In other words this movement is man's appeal

to himself or to something potent and compelling in himself or in universal existence for the discovery of his truth, his law of living, his way to fullness and perfection. And everything depends on the nature of his faith, the thing in himself or in the universal soul — of which he is a portion or manifestation — to which he directs it and on how near he gets by it to his real self and the Self or true being of the universe. If he is tamasic, obscure, clouded, if he has an ignorant faith, an inept will, he will reach nothing true and will fall away to his lower nature. If he is lured by false rajasic lights, he can be carried away by self-will into bypaths that may lead to morass or precipice. In either case his only chance of salvation lies in a return of sattwa upon him to impose a new enlightened order and rule upon his members which will liberate him from the violent error of his self-will or the dull error of his clouded ignorance. If on the other hand he has the sattwic nature and a sattwic faith and direction for his steps, he will arrive in sight of a higher yet unachieved ideal rule which may lead him even in rare instances beyond the sattwic light some way at least towards a highest divine illumination and divine way of being and living. For if the sattwic light is so strong in him as to bring him to its own culminating point, then he will be able advancing from that point to make out his gate of entrance into some first ray of that which is divine, transcendent and absolute. In all effort at self-finding these possibilities are there; they are the conditions of this spiritual adventure.

Now we have to see how the Gita deals with this question on its own line of spiritual teaching and self-discipline. For Arjuna puts immediately a suggestive query from which the problem or one aspect of it arises. When men, he says, sacrifice to God or the gods with faith, *śraddhā*, but abandon the rule of the Shastra, what is that concentrated will of devotion in them, *nīṣṭhā*, which gives them this faith and moves them to this kind of action? Is it sattwa, rajas or tamas? to which strand of our nature does it belong? The answer of the Gita first states the principle that the faith in us is of a triple kind like all things in Nature and varies according to the dominating quality of our nature. The faith of each man takes the shape, hue, quality given to it by his

stuff of being, his constituting temperament, his innate power of existence, *sattvānurūpā sarvasya śraddhā*. And then there comes a remarkable line in which the Gita tells us that this Purusha, this soul in man, is, as it were, made of *śraddhā*, a faith, a will to be, a belief in itself and existence, and whatever is that will, faith or constituting belief in him, he is that and that is he. *Śraddhāmayaḥ yam puruṣo yo yac-chraddhah sa eva saḥ*. If we look into this pregnant saying a little closely, we shall find that this single line contains implied in its few forceful words almost the whole theory of the modern gospel of pragmatism. For if a man or the soul in a man consists of the faith which is in him, taken in this deeper sense, then it follows that the truth which he sees and wills to live is for him the truth of his being, the truth of himself that he has created or is creating and there can be for him no other real truth. This truth is a thing of his inner and outer action, a thing of his becoming, of the soul's dynamics, not of that in him which never changes. He is what he is today by some past will of his nature sustained and continued by a present will to know, to believe and to be in his intelligence and vital force, and whatever new turn is taken by this will and faith active in his very substance, that he will tend to become in the future. We create our own truth of existence in our own action of mind and life, which is another way of saying that we create our own selves, are our own makers.

But very obviously this is only one aspect of the truth, and all one-aspected statements are suspect to the thinker. Truth is not merely whatever our own personality is or creates; that is only the truth of our becoming, one point or line of emphasis in a movement of widest volume. Beyond our personality there is, first, a universal being as well as a universal becoming of which ours is a little movement; and beyond that too there is the eternal Being out of which all becoming derives and to which it owes its potentialities, elements, original and final motives. We may say indeed that all becoming is only an act of universal consciousness, is Maya, is a creation of the will to become, and the only other reality, if there is any, is a pure eternal existence beyond consciousness, featureless, unexpressed and

inexpressible. That is practically the standpoint taken by the Mayavadin's Adwaita and the sense of the distinction he makes between pragmatic truth which to his mind is illusory or at least only temporarily and partly real—while modern pragmatism takes it to be the true truth or at least the only recognisable reality because the only reality that we can act and know,—between that pragmatic illusion and on the other side of creative Maya the lonely Absolute featureless and inexpressible. But for the Gita absolute Brahman is also supreme Purusha, and Purusha is always conscious Soul, though its highest consciousness, its superconsciousness, if we will,—as, one may add, its lowest which we call the Inconscient,—is something very different from our mind consciousness to which alone we are accustomed to give the name. There is in that highest superconsciousness a highest truth and dharma of immortality, a greatest divine way of being, a way of the eternal and infinite. That eternal way of existence and divine manner of being exists already in the eternity of the Purushottama, but we are now attempting to create it here too in our becoming by Yoga; our endeavour is to become the Divine, to be as He, *madbhāva*. That also depends on *śraddhā*. It is by an act of our conscious substance and a belief in its truth, an inmost will to live it or be it that we come by it; but this does not mean that it does not already exist beyond us. Though it may not exist for our outward mind until we see and create ourselves anew into it, it is still there in the Eternal and we may say even that it is already there in our own secret self; for in us also, in our depths the Purushottama always is. Our growing into that, our creation of it is his and its manifestation in us. All creation indeed since it proceeds from the conscious substance of the Eternal, is a manifestation of him and proceeds by a faith, acceptance, will to be in the originating consciousness, Chit-Shakti.

We are concerned at present, however, not with the metaphysical issue, but with the relation of this will or faith in our being to our possibility of growth into the perfection of the divine nature. This power, this *śraddhā* is in any case our basis. When we live, when we are and do according to our desires, that

is a persistent act of *śraddhā* belonging mostly to our vital and physical, our tamasic and rajasic nature. And when we try to be, to live and to do according to the Shastra, we proceed by a persistent act of *śraddhā* which belongs, supposing it to be not a routine faith, to a sattwic tendency that is constantly labouring to impose itself on our rajasic and tamasic parts. When we leave both these things and try to be, to live and to do according to some ideal or novel conception of truth of our own finding or our own individual acceptance, that too is a persistent act of *śraddhā* which may be dominated by any one of these three qualities that constantly govern our every thought, will, feeling and act. And again when we try to be, to live and to do according to the divine nature, then too we must proceed by a persistent act of *śraddhā*, which must be according to the Gita the faith of the sattwic nature when it culminates and is preparing to exceed its own clear-cut limits. But all and any of these things implies some kinesis or displacement of nature, all suppose an inner or outer or ordinarily both an inner and an outer action. And what then will be the character of this action? The Gita states three main elements of the work we have to do, *kartavyam karma*, and these three are sacrifice, giving and askesis. For when questioned by Arjuna on the difference between the outer and inner renunciation, *sannyāsa* and *tyāga*, Krishna insists that these three things ought not to be renounced at all but ought altogether to be done, for they are the work before us, *kartavyam karma*, and they purify the wise. In other words these acts constitute the means of our perfection. But at the same time they may be done unwisely or less wisely by the unwise. All dynamic action may be reduced in its essential parts to these three elements. For all dynamic action, all kinesis of the nature involves a voluntary or an involuntary tapasya or askesis, an energism and concentration of our forces or capacities or of some capacity which helps us to achieve, to acquire or to become something, *tapas*. All action involves a giving of what we are or have, an expenditure which is the price of that achievement, acquisition or becoming, *dāna*. All action involves too a sacrifice to elemental or to universal powers or to the supreme Master of our works. The question

is whether we do these things unconsciously, passively, or at best with an unintelligent ignorant half-conscious will, or with an unwisely or perversely conscient energism, or with a wisely conscient will rooted in knowledge, in other words, whether our sacrifice, giving and askesis are tamasic, rajasic or sattvic in nature.

For everything here, including physical things, partakes of this triple character. Our food, for example, the Gita tells us, is either sattvic, rajasic or tamasic according to its character and effect on the body. The sattvic temperament in the mental and physical body turns naturally to the things that increase the life, increase the inner and outer strength, nourish at once the mental, vital and physical force and increase the pleasure and satisfaction and happy condition of mind and life and body, all that is succulent and soft and firm and satisfying. The rajasic temperament prefers naturally food that is violently sour, pungent, hot, acrid, rough and strong and burning, the aliments that increase ill-health and the distempers of the mind and body. The tamasic temperament takes a perverse pleasure in cold, impure, stale, rotten or tasteless food or even accepts like the animals the remnants half-eaten by others. All-pervading is the principle of the three gunas. The gunas apply at the other end in the same way to the things of the mind and spirit, to sacrifice, giving and askesis, and the Gita distinguishes under each of these three heads between the three kinds in the customary terms of these things as they were formulated by the symbolism of the old Indian culture. But, remembering the very wide sense which the Gita itself gives to the idea of sacrifice, we may well enlarge the surface meaning of these hints and open them to a freer significance. And it will be convenient to take them in the reverse order, from tamas to sattwa, since we are considering how we go upward out of our lower nature through a certain sattvic culmination and self-exceeding to a divine nature and action beyond the three gunas.

The tamasic sacrifice is work which is done without faith, without, that is to say, any full conscious idea and acceptance and will towards the thing Nature yet compels us to execute. It is

done mechanically, because the act of living demands it, because it comes in our way, because others do it, to avoid some other greater difficulty which may arise from not doing it, or from any other tamasic motive. And it is apt to be done, if we have in the full this kind of temperament, carelessly, perfunctorily, in the wrong way. It will not be performed by the *vidhi* or right rule of the Shastra, will not be led in its steps according to the right method laid down by the art and science of life and the true science of the thing to be done. There will be no giving of food in the sacrifice,—and that act in the Indian ritual is symbolic of the element of helpful giving inherent in every action that is real sacrifice, the indispensable giving to others, the fruitful help to others, to the world, without which our action becomes a wholly self-regarding thing and a violation of the true universal law of solidarity and interchange. The work will be done without the dakshina, the much-needed giving or self-giving to the leaders of the sacrificial action, whether to the outward guide and helper of our work or to the veiled or manifest godhead within us. It will be done without the mantra, without the dedicating thought which is the sacred body of our will and knowledge lifted upwards to the godheads we serve by our sacrifice. The tamasic man does not offer his sacrifice to the gods, but to inferior elemental powers or to those grosser spirits behind the veil who feed upon his works and dominate his life with their darkness.

The rajasic man offers his sacrifice to lower godheads or to perverse powers, the Yakshas, the keepers of wealth, or to the Asuric and the Rakshasic forces. His sacrifice may be performed outwardly according to the Shastra, but its motive is ostentation, pride or a strong lust after the fruit of his action, a vehement demand for the reward of his works. All work therefore that proceeds from violent or egoistic personal desire or from an arrogant will intent to impose itself on the world for personal objects is of the rajasic nature, even if it mask itself with the insignia of the light, even if it be done outwardly as a sacrifice. Although it is ostensibly given to God or to the gods, it remains essentially an Asuric action. It is the inner state, motive and

direction which give their value to our works, and not merely the apparent outer direction, the divine names we may call to sanction them or even the sincere intellectual belief which seems to justify us in the performance. Wherever there is a dominating egoism in our acts, there our work becomes a rajasic sacrifice. The true sattwic sacrifice on the other hand is distinguished by three signs that are the quiet seal of its character. First, it is dictated by the effective truth, executed according to the *vidhi*, the right principle, the exact method and rule, the just rhythm and law of our works, their true functioning, their dharma; that means that the reason and enlightened will are the guides and determinants of their steps and their purpose. Secondly, it is executed with a mind concentrated and fixed on the idea of the thing to be done as a true sacrifice imposed on us by the divine law that governs our life and therefore performed out of a high inner obligation or imperative truth and without desire for the personal fruit,—the more impersonal the motive of the action and the temperament of the force put out in it, the more sattwic is its nature. And finally it is offered to the gods without any reservation; it is acceptable to the divine powers by whom—for they are his masks and personalities—the Master of existence governs the universe.

This sattwic sacrifice comes then very near to the ideal and leads directly towards the kind of action demanded by the Gita; but it is not the last and highest ideal, it is not yet the action of the perfected man who lives in the divine nature. For it is carried out as a fixed dharma, and it is offered as a sacrifice or service to the gods, to some partial power or aspect of the Divine manifested in ourselves or in the universe. Work done with a disinterested religious faith or selflessly for humanity or impersonally from devotion to the Right or the Truth is of this nature, and action of that kind is necessary for our perfection; for it purifies our thought and will and our natural substance. The culmination of the sattwic action at which we have to arrive is of a still larger and freer kind; it is the high last sacrifice offered by us to the supreme Divine in his integral being and with a seeking for the Purushottama or with the vision of Vasudeva in all that

is, the action done impersonally, universally, for the good of the world, for the fulfilment of the divine will in the universe. That culmination leads to its own transcending, to the immortal Dharma. For then comes a freedom in which there is no personal action at all, no sattwic rule of dharma, no limitation of Shastra; the inferior reason and will are themselves overpassed and it is not they but a higher wisdom that dictates and guides the work and commands its objective. There is no question of personal fruit; for the will that works is not our own but a supreme Will of which the soul is the instrument. There is no self-regarding and no selflessness; for the Jiva, the eternal portion of the Divine, is united with the highest Self of his existence and he and all are one in that Self and Spirit. There is no personal action, for all actions are given up to the Master of our works and it is he that does the action through the divinised Prakriti. There is no sacrifice,—unless we can say that the Master of sacrifice is offering the works of his energy in the Jiva to himself in his own cosmic form. This is the supreme self-surpassing state arrived at by the action that is sacrifice, this the perfection of the soul that has come to its full consciousness in the divine nature.

Tamasic tapasya is that which is pursued under a clouded and deluded idea hard and obstinate in its delusion, maintained by an ignorant faith in some cherished falsehood, performed with effort and suffering imposed on oneself in pursuit of some narrow and vulgar egoistic object empty of relation to any true or great aim or else with a concentration of the energy in a will to do hurt to others. That which makes this kind of energism tamasic is not any principle of inertia, for inertia is foreign to tapasya, but a darkness in the mind and nature, a vulgar narrowness and ugliness in the doing or a brutish instinct or desire in the aim or in the motive feeling. Rajasic energisms of askesis are those which are undertaken to get honour and worship from men, for the sake of personal distinction and outward glory and greatness or from some other of the many motives of egoistic will and pride. This kind of askesis is devoted to fleeting particular objects which add nothing to the heavenward growth and perfection of the soul; it is a thing without fixed

and helpful principle, an energy bound up with changeful and passing occasion and itself of that nature. Or even if there is ostensibly a more inward and noble object and the faith and will are of a higher kind, yet if any kind of arrogance or pride or any great strength of violent self-will or desire enters into the askesis or if it drives some violent, lawless or terrible action contrary to the Shastra, opposed to the right rule of life and works and afflicting to oneself and to others, or if it is of the nature of self-torture and hurts the mental, vital and physical elements or violates the God within us who is seated in the inner subtle body, then too it is an unwise, an Asuric, a rajasic or rajo-tamasic tapasya.

Sattwic tapasya is that which is done with a highest enlightened faith, as a duty deeply accepted or for some ethical or spiritual or other higher reason and with no desire for any external or narrowly personal fruit in the action. It is of the character of self-discipline and asks for self-control and a harmonising of one's nature. The Gita describes three kinds of sattwic askesis. First comes the physical, the askesis of the outward act; under this head are especially mentioned worship and reverence of those deserving reverence, cleanliness of the person, the action and the life, candid dealing, sexual purity and avoidance of killing and injury to others. Next is askesis of speech, and that consists in the study of Scripture, kind, true and beneficent speech and a careful avoidance of words that may cause fear, sorrow and trouble to others. Finally there is the askesis of mental and moral perfection, and that means the purifying of the whole temperament, gentleness and a clear and calm gladness of mind, self-control and silence. Here comes in all that quiets or disciplines the rajasic and egoistic nature and all that replaces it by the happy and tranquil principle of good and virtue. This is the askesis of the sattwic dharma so highly prized in the system of the ancient Indian culture. Its greater culmination will be a high purity of the reason and will, an equal soul, a deep peace and calm, a wide sympathy and preparation of oneness, a reflection of the inner soul's divine gladness in the mind, life and body. There at that lofty point the ethical is already passing away

into the spiritual type and character. And this culmination too can be made to transcend itself, can be raised into a higher and freer light, can pass away into the settled godlike energy of the supreme nature. And what will remain then will be the spirit's immaculate Tapas, a highest will and luminous force in all the members acting in a wide and solid calm and a deep and pure spiritual delight, Ananda. There will then be no farther need of askesis, no tapasya, because all is naturally and easily divine, all is that Tapas. There will be no separate labour of the lower energism, because the energy of Prakriti will have found its true source and base in the transcendent will of the Purushottama. Then, because of this high initiation, the acts of this energy on the lower planes also will proceed naturally and spontaneously from an innate perfect will and by an inherent perfect guidance. There will be no limitation by any of the present dharmas; for there will be a free action far above the rajasic and tamasic nature, but also far beyond the too careful and narrow limits of the sattwic rule of action.

As with tapasya, all giving also is of an ignorant tamasic, an ostentatious rajasic or a disinterested and enlightened sattwic character. The tamasic gift is offered ignorantly with no consideration of the right conditions of time, place and object; it is a foolish, inconsiderate and in reality a self-regarding movement, an ungenerous and ignoble generosity, the gift offered without sympathy or true liberality, without regard for the feelings of the recipient and despised by him even in the acceptance. The rajasic kind of giving is that which is done with regret, unwillingness or violence to oneself or with a personal and egoistic object or in the hope of a return of some kind from whatever quarter or a corresponding or greater benefit to oneself from the receiver. The sattwic way of giving is to bestow with right reason and goodwill and sympathy in the right conditions of time and place and on the right recipient who is worthy or to whom the gift can be really helpful. Its act is performed for the sake of the giving and the beneficence, without any view to a benefit already done or yet to be done to oneself by the receiver of the benefit and without any personal object in the action.

The culmination of the sattwic way of *dāna* will bring into the action an increasing element of that wide self-giving to others and to the world and to God, *ātma-dāna*, *ātma-samarpana*, which is the high consecration of the sacrifice of works enjoined by the Gita. And the transcendence in the divine nature will be a greatest completeness of self-offering founded on the largest meaning of existence. All this manifold universe comes into birth and is constantly maintained by God's giving of himself and his powers and the lavish outflow of his self and spirit into all these existences; universal being, says the Veda, is the sacrifice of the Purusha. All the action of the perfected soul will be even such a constant divine giving of itself and its powers, an outflowing of the knowledge, light, strength, love, joy, helpful shakti which it possesses in the Divine and by his influence and effluence on all around it according to their capacity of reception or on all this world and its creatures. That will be the complete result of the complete self-giving of the soul to the Master of our existence.

The Gita closes this chapter with what seems at first sight a recondite utterance. The formula OM, Tat, Sat, is, it says, the triple definition of the Brahman, by whom the Brahmanas, the Vedas and sacrifices were created of old and in it resides all their significance. Tat, That, indicates the Absolute. Sat indicates the supreme and universal existence in its principle. OM is the symbol of the triple Brahman, the outward-looking, the inward or subtle and the superconscious causal Purusha. Each letter A, U, M indicates one of these three in ascending order and the syllable as a whole brings out the fourth state, Turiya, which rises to the Absolute. OM is the initiating syllable pronounced at the outset as a benedictory prelude and sanction to all act of sacrifice, all act of giving and all act of askesis; it is a reminder that our work should be made an expression of the triple Divine in our inner being and turned towards him in the idea and motive. The seekers of liberation indeed do these actions without desire of fruit and only with the idea, feeling, Ananda of the absolute Divine behind their nature. It is that which they seek by this purity and impersonality in their works, this high desirelessness, this vast emptiness of ego and plenitude of Spirit. Sat means

good and it means existence. Both these things, the principle of good and the principle of reality, must be there behind all the three kinds of action. All good works are Sat, for they prepare the soul for the higher reality of our being; all firm abiding in sacrifice, giving and askesis and all works done with that central view, as sacrifice, as giving, as askesis, are Sat, for they build the basis for the highest truth of our spirit. And because *śraddhā* is the central principle of our existence, any of these things done without *śraddhā* is a falsity and has no true meaning or true substance on earth or beyond, no reality, no power to endure or create in life here or after the mortal life in greater regions of our conscious spirit. The soul's faith, not a mere intellectual belief, but its concordant will to know, to see, to believe and to do and be according to its vision and knowledge, is that which determines by its power the measure of our possibilities of becoming, and it is this faith and will turned in all our inner and outer self, nature and action towards all that is highest, most divine, most real and eternal that will enable us to reach the supreme perfection.

XIX

The Gunas, Mind and Works¹

THE GITA has not yet completed its analysis of action in the light of this fundamental idea of the three gunas and the transcendence of them by a self-exceeding culmination of the highest sattwic discipline. Faith, *śraddhā*, the will to believe and to be, know, live and enact the Truth that we have seen is the principal factor, the indispensable force behind a self-developing action, most of all behind the growth of the soul by works into its full spiritual stature. But there are also the mental powers, the instruments and the conditions which help to constitute the momentum, direction and character of the activity and are therefore of importance for a full understanding of this psychological discipline. The Gita enters into a summary psychological analysis of these things before it proceeds to its great finale, the culmination of all it teaches, the highest secret which is that of a spiritual exceeding of all dharmas, a divine transcendence. And we have to follow it in its brief descriptions, summarily, expanding just enough to seize fully the main idea; for these are secondary things, but yet each of great consequence in its own place and for its own purpose. It is their action cast in the type of the gunas that we have to bring out from the brief descriptions in the text; the nature of the culmination of any or each of them beyond the gunas will automatically follow from the character of the general transcendence.

This part of the subject is introduced by a last question of Arjuna regarding the principle of Sannyasa and the principle of Tyaga and their difference. The frequent harping, the reiterated emphasis of the Gita on this crucial distinction has been amply justified by the subsequent history of the later Indian mind, its

¹ Gita, XVIII. 1-39.

constant confusion of these two very different things and its strong bent towards belittling any activity of the kind taught by the Gita as at best only a preliminary to the supreme inaction of Sannyasa. As a matter of fact, when people talk of Tyaga, of renunciation, it is always the physical renunciation of the world which they understand by the word or at least on which they lay emphasis, while the Gita takes absolutely the opposite view that the real Tyaga has action and living in the world as its basis and not a flight to the monastery, the cave or the hill-top. The real Tyaga is action with a renunciation of desire and that too is the real Sannyasa.

The liberating activity of the sattwic self-discipline must no doubt be pervaded by a spirit of renunciation,—that is an essential element: but what renunciation and in what manner of the spirit? Not the renunciation of work in the world, not any outward asceticism or any ostentation of a visible giving up of enjoyment, but a renunciation, a leaving, *tyāga*, of vital desire and ego, a total laying aside, *sannyāsa*, of the separate personal life of the desire soul and ego-governed mind and rajasic vital nature. That is the true condition for entering into the heights of Yoga whether through the impersonal self and Brahmic oneness or through universal Vasudeva or inwardly into the supreme Purushottama. More conventionally taken, Sannyasa in the standing terminology of the sages means the physical depositing or laying aside of desirable actions: Tyaga —this is the Gita's distinction—is the name given by the wise to a mental and spiritual renunciation, an entire abandonment of all attached clinging to the fruit of our works, to the action itself or to its personal initiation or rajasic impulse. In that sense Tyaga, not Sannyasa, is the better way. It is not the desirable actions that must be laid aside, but the desire which gives them that character has to be put away from us. The fruit of the action may come in the dispensation of the Master of works, but there is to be no egoistic demand for that as a reward and condition of doing works. Or the fruit may not at all come and still the work has to be performed as the thing to be done, *kartavyam karma*, the thing which the Master within demands

of us. The success, the failure are in his hands and he will regulate them according to his omniscient will and inscrutable purpose. Action, all action has indeed to be given up in the end, not physically by abstention, by immobility, by inertia, but spiritually to the Master of our being by whose power alone can any action be accomplished. There has to be a renunciation of the false idea of ourselves as the doer; for in reality it is the universal Shakti that works through our personality and our ego. The spiritual transference of all our works to the Master and his Shakti is the real Sannyasa in the teaching of the Gita.

The question still arises, what works are to be done? Those even who stand for a final physical renunciation are not at one in this difficult matter. Some would have it that all works must be excised from our life, as if that were possible. But it is not possible so long as we are in the body and alive; nor can salvation consist in reducing our active selves by trance to the lifeless immobility of the clod and the pebble. The silence of Samadhi does not abrogate the difficulty, for as soon as the breath comes again into the body, we are once more in action and have toppled down from the heights of this salvation by spiritual slumber. But the true salvation, the release by an inner renunciation of the ego and union with the Purushottama remains steady in whatever state, persists in this world or out of it or in whatever world or out of all world, is self-existent, *sarvathā vartamāno'pi*, and does not depend upon inaction or action. What then are the actions to be done? The thoroughgoing ascetic answer, not noted by the Gita — it was perhaps not altogether current at the time — might be that solely begging, eating and meditation are to be permitted among voluntary activities and otherwise only the necessary actions of the body. But the more liberal and comprehensive solution was evidently to continue the three most sattwic activities, sacrifice, giving and askesis. And these certainly are to be done, says the Gita, for they purify the wise. But more generally, and understanding these three things in their widest sense, it is the rightly regulated action, *niyatam karma*, that has to be done, action regulated by the Shastra, the

science and art of right knowledge, right works, right living, or regulated by the essential nature, *svabhāva-niyatam karma*, or, finally and best of all, regulated by the will of the Divine within and above us. The last is the true and only action of the liberated man, *muktasya karma*. To renounce these works is not a right movement—the Gita lays that down plainly and trenchantly in the end, *niyatasya tu sannyāsaḥ karmano nopaladyate*. To renounce them from an ignorant confidence in the sufficiency of that withdrawal for the true liberation is a tamasic renunciation. The gunas follow us, we see, into the renunciation of works as well as into works. A renunciation with attachment to inaction, *sāṅgo akarmani*, would be equally a tamasic withdrawal. And to give them up because they bring sorrow or are a trouble to the flesh and a weariness to the mind or in the feeling that all is vanity and vexation of spirit, is a rajasic renunciation and does not bring the high spiritual fruit; that too is not the true Tyaga. It is a result of intellectual pessimism or vital weariness, it has its roots in ego. No freedom can come from a renunciation governed by this self-regarding principle.

The sattwic principle of renunciation is to withdraw not from action, but from the personal demand, the ego factor behind it. It is to do works not dictated by desire but by the law of right living or by the essential nature, its knowledge, its ideal, its faith in itself and the Truth it sees, its *śraddhā*. Or else, on a higher spiritual plane, they are dictated by the will of the Master and done with the mind in Yoga, without any personal attachment either to the action or to the fruit of the action. There must be a complete renunciation of all desire and of all self-regarding egoistic choice and impulse and finally of that much subtler egoism of the will which either says, “The work is mine, I am the doer”, or even “The work is God’s, but I am the doer.” There must be no attachment to pleasant, desirable, lucrative or successful work and no doing of it because it has that nature; but that kind of work too has to be done,—done totally, selflessly, with the assent of the spirit,—when it is the action demanded from above and from within us, *kartavyam*

karma. There must be no aversion to unpleasant, undesirable or ungratifying action or work that brings or is likely to bring with it suffering, danger, harsh conditions, inauspicious consequences; for that too has to be accepted, totally, selflessly, with a deep understanding of its need and meaning, when it is the work that should be done, *kartavyam karma*. The wise man puts away the shrinkings and hesitations of the desire-soul and the doubts of the ordinary human intelligence, that measure by little personal, conventional or otherwise limited standards. He follows in the light of the full sattvic mind and with the power of an inner renunciation lifting the soul to impersonality, towards God, towards the universal and eternal the highest ideal law of his nature or the will of the Master of works in his secret spirit. He will not do action for the sake of any personal result or for any reward in this life or with any attachment to success, profit or consequence: neither will his works be undertaken for the sake of a fruit in the invisible hereafter or ask for a reward in other births or in worlds beyond us, the prizes for which the half-baked religious mind hungers. The three kinds of result, pleasant, unpleasant and mixed, in this or other worlds, in this or another life are for the slaves of desire and ego; these things do not cling to the free spirit. The liberated worker who has given up his works by the inner sannyasa to a greater Power is free from Karma. Action he will do, for some kind of action, less or more, small or great, is inevitable, natural, right for the embodied soul,—action is part of the divine law of living, it is the high dynamics of the spirit. The essence of renunciation, the true Tyaga, the true Sannyasa is not any rule of thumb of inaction but a disinterested soul, a selfless mind, the transition from ego to the free impersonal and spiritual nature. The spirit of this inner renunciation is the first mental condition of the highest culminating sattvic discipline.

The Gita then speaks of the five causes or indispensable requisites for the accomplishment of works as laid down by the Sankhya. These five are, first, the frame of body, life and mind which are the basis or standing-ground of the soul in Nature, *adhisthāna*, next, the doer, *kartā*, third, the various

instrumentation of Nature, *karāṇa*, fourth, the many kinds of effort which make up the force of action, *cēṣṭāḥ*, and last, Fate, *daivam*, that is to say, the influence of the Power or powers other than the human factors, other than the visible mechanism of Nature, that stand behind these and modify the work and dispose its fruits in the steps of act and consequence. These five elements make up among them all the efficient causes, *kāraṇa*, that determine the shaping and outcome of whatever work man undertakes with mind and speech and body.

The doer is ordinarily supposed to be our surface personal ego, but that is the false idea of the understanding that has not arrived at knowledge. The ego is the ostensible doer, but the ego and its will are creations and instruments of Nature with which the ignorant understanding wrongly identifies our self and they are not the only determinants even of human action, much less of its turn and consequence. When we are liberated from ego, our real self behind comes forward, impersonal and universal, and it sees in its self-vision of unity with the universal Spirit universal Nature as the doer of the work and the Divine Will behind as the master of universal Nature. Only so long as we have not this knowledge, are we bound by the character of the ego and its will as the doer and do good and evil and have the satisfaction of our tamasic, rajasic or sattvic nature. But once we live in this greater knowledge, the character and consequences of the work can make no difference to the freedom of the spirit. The work may be outwardly a terrible action like this great battle and slaughter of Kurukshetra; but although the liberated man takes his part in the struggle and though he slay all these peoples, he slays no man and he is not bound by his work, because the work is that of the Master of the Worlds and it is he who has already slain in his hidden omnipotent will all these armies. This work of destruction was needed that humanity might move forward to another creation and a new purpose, might get rid as in a fire of its past karma of unrighteousness and oppression and injustice and move towards a kingdom of the Dharma. The liberated man does all his appointed work as the living instrument one in spirit with

the universal Spirit. And knowing that all this must be and looking beyond the outward appearance he acts not for self but for God and man and the human and cosmic order,² not in fact himself acting, but conscious of the presence and power of the divine Force in his deeds and their issue. He knows that the supreme Shakti is doing in his mental, vital and physical body, *adhiṣṭhāna*, as the sole doer the thing appointed by a Fate which is in truth not Fate, not a mechanical dispensation, but the wise and all-seeing Will that is at work behind human Karma. This "terrible work" on which the whole teaching of the Gita turns, is an extreme example of action inauspicious in appearance, *akuśalam*, though a great good lies beyond the appearance. Impersonally has it to be done by the divinely appointed man for the holding together of the world purpose, *loka-saṅgrahārtham*, without personal aim or desire, because it is the appointed service.

It is clear then that the work is not the sole thing that matters; the knowledge in which we do works makes an immense spiritual difference. There are three things, says the Gita, which go to constitute the mental impulsion to works, and they are the knowledge in our will, the object of knowledge and the knower; and into the knowledge there comes always the working of the three gunas. It is this element of the gunas that makes all the difference to our view of the thing known and to the spirit in which the knower does his work. The tamasic ignorant knowledge is a small and narrow, a lazy or dully obstinate way of looking at things which has no eye for the real nature of the world or of the thing done or its field or the act or its conditions. The tamasic mind does not look for real cause and effect, but absorbs itself in one movement or one routine with an obstinate attachment to it, can see nothing but the little section of personal activity before its eyes and does not know in fact what it is doing but blindly lets natural impulsion work out through its deed results of which it has no conception, foresight or comprehending intelligence. The

² The cosmic order comes into question, because the triumph of the Asura in humanity means to that extent the triumph of the Asura in the balance of the world-forces.

rajasic knowledge is that which sees the multiplicity of things only in their separateness and variety of operation in all these existences and is unable to discover a true principle of unity or rightly coordinate its will and action, but follows the bent of ego and desire, the activity of its many-branching egoistic will and various and mixed motive in response to the solicitation of internal and environing impulsions and forces. This knowing is a jumble of sections of knowledge, often inconsistent knowledge, put forcefully together by the mind in order to make some kind of pathway through the confusion of our half-knowledge and half-ignorance. Or else it is a restless kinetic multiple action with no firm governing higher ideal and self-possessed law of true light and power within it. The sattwic knowledge on the contrary sees existence as one indivisible whole in all these divisions, one imperishable being in all becomings; it masters the principle of its action and the relation of the particular action to the total purpose of existence; it puts in the right place each step of the complete process. At the highest top of knowledge this seeing becomes the knowledge of the one spirit in the world, one in all these many existences, of the one Master of all works, of the forces of cosmos as expressions of the Godhead and of the work itself as the operation of his supreme will and wisdom in man and his life and essential nature. The personal will has come to be entirely conscious, illumined, spiritually awake, and it lives and works in the One, obeys more and more perfectly his supreme mandate and grows more and more a faultless instrument of his light and power in the human person. The supreme liberated action arrives through this culmination of the sattwic knowledge.

There are again three things, the doer, the instrument and the work done, that hold the action together and make it possible. And here again it is the difference of the gunas that determines the character of each of these elements. The sattwic mind that seeks always for a right harmony and right knowledge is the governing instrument of the sattwic man and moves all the rest of the machine. An egoistic will of desire supported by the desire-soul is the dominant instrument of the rajasic worker. An

ignorant instinct or the unenlightened impulsion of the physical mind and the crude vital nature is the chief instrumental force of the tamasic doer of action. The instrument of the liberated man is a greater spiritual light and power, far higher than the highest sattwic intelligence, and it works in him by an enveloping descent from a supraphysical centre and uses as a clear channel of its force a purified and receptive mind, life and body.

Tamasic action is that done with a confused, deluded and ignorant mind, in mechanical obedience to the instincts, impulsions and unseeing ideas, without regarding the strength or capacity or the waste and loss of blind misapplied effort or the antecedent and consequence and right conditions of the impulse, effort or labour. Rajasic action is that which a man undertakes under the dominion of desire, with his eyes fixed on the work and its hoped-for fruit and nothing else, or with an egoistic sense of his own personality in the action, and it is done with inordinate effort, with a passionate labour, with a great heaving and straining of the personal will to get at the object of its desire. Sattwic action is that which a man does calmly in the clear light of reason and knowledge and with an impersonal sense of right or duty or the demand of an ideal, as the thing that ought to be done whatever may be the result to himself in this world or another, a work performed without attachment, without liking or disliking for its spur or its drag, for the sole satisfaction of his reason and sense of right, of the lucid intelligence and the enlightened will and the pure disinterested mind and the high contented spirit. At the line of culmination of sattwa it will be transformed and become a highest impersonal action dictated by the spirit within us and no longer by the intelligence, an action moved by the highest law of the nature, free from the lower ego and its light or heavy baggage and from limitation even by best opinion, noblest desire, purest personal will or loftiest mental ideal. There will be none of these impedimenta; in their place there will stand a clear spiritual self-knowledge and illumination and an imperative intimate sense of an infallible power that acts and of the work to be done for the world and for the world's Master.

The tamasic doer of action is one who does not put himself really into the work, but acts with a mechanical mind, or obeys the most vulgar thought of the herd, follows the common routine or is wedded to a blind error and prejudice. He is obstinate in stupidity, stubborn in error and takes a foolish pride in his ignorant doing; a narrow and evasive cunning replaces true intelligence; he has a stupid and insolent contempt for those with whom he has to deal, especially for wiser men and his betters. A dull laziness, slowness, procrastination, looseness, want of vigour or of sincerity mark his action. The tamasic man is ordinarily slow to act, dilatory in his steps, easily depressed, ready soon to give up his task if it taxes his strength, his diligence or his patience. The rajasic doer of action on the contrary is one eagerly attached to the work, bent on its rapid completion, passionately desirous of fruit and reward and consequence, greedy of heart, impure of mind, often violent and cruel and brutal in the means he uses; he cares little whom he injures or how much he injures others so long as he gets what he wants, satisfies his passions and will, vindicates the claims of his ego. He is full of an incontinent joy in success and bitterly grieved and stricken by failure. The sattvic doer is free from all this attachment, this egoism, this violent strength or passionate weakness; his is a mind and will unelated by success, undepressed by failure, full of a fixed impersonal resolution, a calm rectitude of zeal or a high and pure and selfless enthusiasm in the work that has to be done. At and beyond the culmination of sattwa this resolution, zeal, enthusiasm become the spontaneous working of the spiritual Tapas and at last a highest soul-force, the direct God-Power, the mighty and steadfast movement of a divine energy in the human instrument, the self-assured steps of the Seer-will, the gnostic intelligence and with it the wide delight of the free spirit in the works of the liberated nature.

The reason armed with the intelligent will works in man in whatever manner or measure he may possess these human gifts and it is accordingly right or perverted, clouded or luminous, narrow and small or large and wide like the mind of its possessor. It is the understanding power of his nature, *buddhi*, that

chooses the work for him or, more often, approves and sets its sanction on one or other among the many suggestions of his complex instincts, impulsions, ideas and desires. It is that which determines for him what is right or wrong, to be done or not to be done, Dharma or Adharma. And the persistence of the will³ is that continuous force of mental Nature which sustains the work and gives it consistence and persistence. Here again there is the incidence of the gunas. The tamasic reason is a false, ignorant and darkened instrument which chains us to see all things in a dull and wrong light, a cloud of misconceptions, a stupid ignoring of the values of things and people. This reason calls light darkness and darkness light, takes what is not the true law and upholds it as the law, persists in the thing which ought not to be done and holds it up to us as the one right thing to be done. Its ignorance is invincible and its persistence of will is a persistence in the satisfaction and dull pride of its ignorance. That is on its side of blind action; but it is pursued also by a heavy stress of inertia and impotence, a persistence in dullness and sleep, an aversion to mental change and progress, a dwelling on the fears and pains and depressions of mind which deter us in our path or keep us to base, weak and cowardly ways. Timidity, shirking, evasion, indolence, the justification by the mind of its fears and false doubts and cautions and refusals of duty and its lapses and turnings from the call of our higher nature, a safe following of the line of least resistance so that there may be the least trouble and effort and peril in the winning of the fruit of our labour,—rather no fruit or poor result, it says, than a great and noble toil or a perilous and exacting endeavour and adventure,—these are characteristics of the tamasic will and intelligence.

The rajasic understanding, when it does not knowingly choose error and evil for the sake of the error and evil, can make distinctions between right and wrong, between what should or should not be done, but not rightly, rather with a pulling awry of their true measures and a constant distortion of values. And

³ *dhṛti*.

this is because its reason and will are a reason of the ego and a will of desire, and these powers misrepresent and distort the truth and the right to serve their own egoistic purpose. It is only when we are free from ego and desire and look steadily with a calm, pure, disinterested mind concerned only with the truth and its sequences that we can hope to see things rightly and in their just values. But the rajasic will fixes its persistent attention on the satisfaction of its own attached clingings and desires in its pursuit of interest and pleasure and of what it thinks or chooses to think right and justice, Dharma. Always it is apt to put on these things the construction which will most flatter and justify its desires and to uphold as right or legitimate the means which will best help it to get the coveted fruits of its work and endeavour. That is the cause of three fourths of the falsehood and misconduct of the human reason and will. Rajas with its vehement hold on the vital ego is the great sinner and positive misleader.

The sattwic understanding sees in its right place, right form, right measure the movement of the world, the law of action and the law of abstention from action, the thing that is to be done and the thing that is not to be done, what is safe for the soul and what is dangerous, what is to be feared and shunned and what is to be embraced by the will, what binds the spirit of man and what sets it free. These are the things that it follows or avoids by the persistence of its conscious will according to the degree of its light and the stage of evolution it has reached in its upward ascent to the highest self and Spirit. The culmination of this sattwic intelligence is found by a high persistence of the aspiring buddhi when it is settled on what is beyond the ordinary reason and mental will, pointed to the summits, turned to a steady control of the senses and the life and a union by Yoga with man's highest Self, the universal Divine, the transcendent Spirit. It is there that arriving through the sattwic guna one can pass beyond the gunas, can climb beyond the limitations of the mind and its will and intelligence and sattwa itself disappear into that which is above the gunas and beyond this instrumental nature. There the soul is enshrined in light and enthroned in firm union

with the Self and Spirit and Godhead. Arrived upon that summit we can leave the Highest to guide Nature in our members in the free spontaneity of a divine action: for there there is no wrong or confused working, no element of error or impotence to obscure or distort the luminous perfection and power of the Spirit. All these lower conditions, laws, dharmas cease to have any hold on us; the Infinite acts in the liberated man and there is no law but the immortal truth and right of the free spirit, no Karma, no kind of bondage.

Harmony and order are the characteristic qualities of the sattvic mind and temperament, quiet happiness, a clear and calm content and an inner ease and peace. Happiness is indeed the one thing which is openly or indirectly the universal pursuit of our human nature,—happiness or its suggestion or some counterfeit of it, some pleasure, some enjoyment, some satisfaction of the mind, the will, the passions or the body. Pain is an experience our nature has to accept when it must, involuntarily as a necessity, an unavoidable incident of universal Nature, or voluntarily as a means to what we seek after, but not a thing desired for its own sake,—except when it is so sought in perversity or with an ardour of enthusiasm in suffering for some touch of fierce pleasure it brings or the intense strength it engenders. But there are various kinds of happiness or pleasure according to the guna which dominates in our nature. Thus the tamasic mind can remain well-pleased in its indolence and inertia, its stupor and sleep, its blindness and its error. Nature has armed it with the privilege of a smug satisfaction in its stupidity and ignorance, its dim lights of the cave, its inert contentment, its petty or base joys and its vulgar pleasures. Delusion is the beginning of this satisfaction and delusion is its consequence; but still there is given a dull, a by no means admirable but a sufficient pleasure in his delusions to the dweller in the cave. There is a tamasic happiness founded in inertia and ignorance.

The mind of the rajasic man drinks of a more fiery and intoxicating cup; the keen, mobile, active pleasure of the senses and the body and the sense-entangled or fierily kinetic will and intelligence are to him all the joy of life and the very significance

of living. This joy is nectar to the lips at the first touch, but there is a secret poison in the bottom of the cup and after it the bitterness of disappointment, satiety, fatigue, revolt, disgust, sin, suffering, loss, transience. And it must be so because these pleasures in their external figure are not the things which the spirit in us truly demands from life; there is something behind and beyond the transience of the form, something that is lasting, satisfying, self-sufficient. What the sattvic nature seeks, therefore, is the satisfaction of the higher mind and the spirit and when it once gets this large object of its quest, there comes in a clear, pure happiness of the soul, a state of fullness, an abiding ease and peace. This happiness does not depend on outward things, but on ourselves alone and on the flowering of what is best and most inward within us. But it is not at first our normal possession; it has to be conquered by self-discipline, a labour of the soul, a high and arduous endeavour. At first this means much loss of habitual pleasure, much suffering and struggle, a poison born of the churning of our nature, a painful conflict of forces, much revolt and opposition to the change due to the ill-will of the members or the insistence of vital movements, but in the end the nectar of immortality rises in the place of this bitterness and as we climb to the higher spiritual nature we come to the end of sorrow, the euthanasia of grief and pain. That is the surpassing happiness which descends upon us at the point or line of culmination of the sattvic discipline.

The self-exceeding of the sattvic nature comes when we get beyond the great but still inferior sattvic pleasure, beyond the pleasures of mental knowledge and virtue and peace to the eternal calm of the self and the spiritual ecstasy of the divine oneness. That spiritual joy is no longer the sattvic happiness, *sukham*, but the absolute Ananda. Ananda is the secret delight from which all things are born, by which all is sustained in existence and to which all can rise in the spiritual culmination. Only then can it be possessed when the liberated man, free from ego and its desires, lives at last one with his highest self, one with all beings and one with God in an absolute bliss of the spirit.

XX

Swabhava and Swadharma¹

IT IS then by a liberating development of the soul out of this lower nature of the triple gunas into the supreme divine nature beyond the three gunas that we can best arrive at spiritual perfection and freedom. And this again can best be brought about by an anterior development of the predominance of the highest sattwic quality to a point at which sattwa also is overpassed, mounts beyond its own limitations and breaks up into a supreme freedom, absolute light, serene power of the conscious spirit in which there is no determination by conflicting gunas. A highest sattwic faith and aim new-shaping what we are according to the highest mental conception of our inner possibilities that we can form in the free intelligence, is changed by this transition into a vision of our own real being, a spiritual self-knowledge. A loftiest ideality or standard of dharma, a pursuit of the right law of our natural existence, is transformed into a free assured self-existent perfection in which all dependence on standards is transcended and the spontaneous law of the immortal self and spirit displaces the lower rule of the instruments and members. The sattwic mind and will change into that spiritual knowledge and dynamic power of identical existence in which the whole nature puts off its disguise and becomes a free self-expression of the godhead within it. The sattwic doer becomes the Jiva in contact with his source, united with the Purushottama; he is no longer the personal doer of the act, but a spiritual channel of the works of the transcendent and universal Spirit. His natural being transformed and illumined remains to be the instrument of a universal and impersonal action, the bow of the divine Archer. What was sattwic action becomes the free activity of the perfected nature in which there is no longer any personal

¹ Gita, XVIII. 40-48.

limitation, any tethering to this or that quality, any bondage of sin and virtue, self and others or any but a supreme spiritual self-determination. That is the culmination of works uplifted to the sole Divine Worker by a God-seeking and spiritual knowledge.

But there is still an incidental question of great importance in the old Indian system of culture and, even apart from that antique view, of considerable general importance, on which we have had some passing pronouncements already by the Gita and which now falls into its proper place. All action on the normal level is determined by the gunas; the action which is to be done, *kartavyam karma*, takes the triple form of giving, askesis and sacrifice, and any or all of these three may assume the character of any of the gunas. Therefore we have to proceed by the raising of these things to the highest sattwic height of which they are capable and go yet farther beyond to a largeness in which all works become a free self-giving, an energy of the divine Tapas, a perpetual sacrament of the spiritual existence. But this is a general law and all these considerations have been the enunciation of quite general principles and refer indiscriminately to all actions and to all men alike. All can eventually arrive by spiritual evolution to this strong discipline, this large perfection, this highest spiritual state. But while the general rule of mind and action is the same for all men, we see too that there is a constant law of variation and each individual acts not only according to the common laws of the human spirit, mind, will, life, but according to his own nature; each man fulfils different functions or follows a different bent according to the rule of his own circumstances, capacities, turn, character, powers. What place is to be assigned to this variation, this individual rule of nature in the spiritual discipline?

The Gita has laid some stress on this point and even assigned to it a great preliminary importance. At the very start it has spoken of the nature, rule and function of the Kshatriya as Arjuna's own law of action, *svadharma*;² it has proceeded to lay it down with a striking emphasis that one's own nature, rule,

² II. 31. *svadharmaṁ api cāveksya.*

function should be observed and followed,—even if defective, it is better than the well-performed rule of another's nature. Death in one's own law of nature is better for a man than victory in an alien movement. To follow the law of another's nature is dangerous to the soul,³ contradictory, as we may say, to the natural way of his evolution, a thing mechanically imposed and therefore imported, artificial and sterilising to one's growth towards the true stature of the spirit. What comes out of the being is the right and healthful thing, the authentic movement, not what is imposed on it from outside or laid on it by life's compulsions or the mind's error. This swadharma is of four general kinds formulated outwardly in the action of the four orders of the old Indian social culture, *cāturvarṇya*. That system corresponds, says the Gita, to a divine law, it "was created by me according to the divisions of the gunas and works,"—created from the beginning by the Master of existence. In other words, there are four distinct orders of the active nature, or four fundamental types of the soul in nature, *svabhāva*, and the work and proper function of each human being corresponds to his type of nature. This is now finally explained in preciser detail. The works of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras, says the Gita, are divided according to the qualities (*gunas*) born of their own inner nature, spiritual temperament, essential character (*svabhāva*). Calm, self-control, askesis, purity, long-suffering, candour, knowledge, acceptance of spiritual truth are the work of the Brahmin, born of his swabhava. Heroism, high spirit, resolution, ability, not fleeing in the battle, giving, lordship (*iśvara-bhāva*, the temperament of the ruler and leader) are the natural work of the Kshatriya. Agriculture, cattle-keeping, trade inclusive of the labour of the craftsman and the artisan are the natural work of the Vaishya. All work of the character of service falls within the natural function of the Shudra. A man, it goes on to say, who devotes himself to his own natural work in life acquires spiritual perfection, not indeed by the mere act itself, but if he does it with right knowledge and the right motive, if he

³ III. 35.

can make it a worship of the Spirit of this creation and dedicate it sincerely to the Master of the universe from whom is all impulse to action. All labour, all action and function, whatever it be, can be consecrated by this dedication of works, can convert the life into a self-offering to the Godhead within and without us and is itself converted into a means of spiritual perfection. But a work not naturally one's own, even though it may be well performed, even though it may look better from the outside when judged by an external and mechanical standard or may lead to more success in life, is still inferior as a means of subjective growth precisely because it has an external motive and a mechanical impulsion. One's own natural work is better, even if it looks from some other point of view defective. One does not incur sin or stain when one acts in the true spirit of the work and in agreement with the law of one's own nature. All action in the three gunas is imperfect, all human work is subject to fault, defect or limitation; but that should not make us abandon our own proper work and natural function. Action should be rightly regulated action, *niyatam karma*, but intrinsically one's own, evolved from within, in harmony with the truth of one's being, regulated by the Swabhava, *svabhava-niyatam karma*.

What precisely is the intention of the Gita? Let us take it first in its more outward meaning and consider the tinge given to the principle it enounces by the ideas of the race and the time — the hue of the cultural environment, the ancient significance. These verses and the earlier pronouncements of the Gita on the same subject have been seized upon in current controversies on the caste question and interpreted by some as a sanction of the present system, used by others as a denial of the hereditary basis of caste. In point of fact the verses in the Gita have no bearing on the existing caste system, because that is a very different thing from the ancient social ideal of *caturvarna*, the four clear-cut orders of the Aryan community, and in no way corresponds with the description of the Gita. Agriculture, cattle-keeping and trade of every kind are said here to be the work of the Vaishya; but in the later system the majority of those concerned in trade and in cattle-keeping, artisans, small craftsmen and others are

actually classed as Shudras,— where they are not put altogether outside the pale,— and, with some exceptions, the merchant class is alone and that too not everywhere ranked as Vaishya. Agriculture, government and service are the professions of all classes from the Brahmin down to the Shudra. And if the economical divisions of function have been confounded beyond any possibility of rectification, the law of the guna or quality is still less a part of the later system. There all is rigid custom, *ācāra*, with no reference to the need of the individual nature. If again we take the religious side of the contention advanced by the advocates of the caste system, we can certainly fasten no such absurd idea on the words of the Gita as that it is a law of a man's nature that he shall follow without regard to his personal bent and capacities the profession of his parents or his immediate or distant ancestors, the son of a milkman be a milkman, the son of a doctor a doctor, the descendants of shoemakers remain shoemakers to the end of measurable time, still less that by doing so, by this unintelligent and mechanical repetition of the law of another's nature without regard to his own individual call and qualities a man automatically farthers his own perfection and arrives at spiritual freedom. The Gita's words refer to the ancient system of *caturvarna*, as it existed or was supposed to exist in its ideal purity,— there is some controversy whether it was ever anything more than an ideal or general norm more or less loosely followed in practice,— and it should be considered in that connection alone. Here too there is considerable difficulty as to the exact outward significance.

The ancient system of the four orders had a triple aspect; it took a social and economic, a cultural and a spiritual appearance. On the economic side it recognised four functions of the social man in the community, the religious and intellectual, the political, the economic and the servile functions. There are thus four kinds of work, the work of religious ministration, letters, learning and knowledge, the work of government, politics, administration and war, the work of production, wealth-making and exchange, the work of hired labour and service. An endeavour was made to found and stabilise the whole arrangement

of society on the partition of these four functions among four clearly marked classes. This system was not peculiar to India, but was with certain differences the dominating feature of a stage of social evolution in other ancient or mediaeval societies. The four functions are still inherent in the life of all normal communities, but the clear divisions no longer exist anywhere. The old system everywhere broke down and gave place to a more fluid order or, as in India, to a confused and complex social rigidity and economic immobility degenerating towards a chaos of castes. Along with this economic division there existed the association of a cultural idea which gave to each class its religious custom, its law of honour, ethical rule, suitable education and training, type of character, family ideal and discipline. The facts of life did not always correspond to the idea,—there is always a certain gulf found between the mental ideal and the vital and physical practice,—but there was a constant and strenuous endeavour to keep up as much as possible a real correspondence. The importance of this attempt and of the cultural ideal and atmosphere it created in the past training of the social man, can hardly be put too high; but at the present day it has little more than a historical, a past and evolutionary significance. Finally, wherever this system existed, it was given more or less a religious sanction (more in the East, very little in Europe) and in India a profounder spiritual use and significance. This spiritual significance is the real kernel of the teaching of the Gita.

The Gita found this system in existence and its ideal in possession of the Indian mind and it recognised and accepted both the ideal and system and its religious sanction. "The four-fold order was created by me," says Krishna, "according to the divisions of quality and active function." On the mere strength of this phrase it cannot altogether be concluded that the Gita regarded this system as an eternal and universal social order. Other ancient authorities did not so regard it; rather they distinctly state that it did not exist in the beginning and will collapse in a later age of the cycle. Still we may understand from the phrase that the fourfold function of social man was considered as normally inherent in the psychological and economic needs

of every community and therefore a dispensation of the Spirit that expresses itself in the human corporate and individual existence. The Gita's line is in fact an intellectual rendering of the well-known symbol in the Vedic Purusha-Sukta. But what then should be the natural basis and form of practice of these functions? The practical basis in ancient times came to be the hereditary principle. A man's social function and position were no doubt determined originally, as they are still in freer, less closely ordered communities by environment, occasion, birth and capacity; but as there set in a more fixed stratification, his rank came practically to be regulated by birth mainly or alone and in the later system of caste birth came to be the sole rule of status. The son of a Brahmin is always a Brahmin in status, though he may have nothing of the typical Brahmin qualities or character, no intellectual training or spiritual experience or religious worth or knowledge, no connection whatever with the right function of his class, no Brahminhood in his work and no Brahminhood in his nature.

This was an inevitable evolution, because the external signs are the only ones which are easily and conveniently determinable and birth was the most handy and manageable in an increasingly mechanised, complex and conventional social order. For a time the possible disparity between the hereditary fiction and the individual's real inborn character and capacity was made up or minimised by education and training: but eventually this effort ceased to be sustained and the hereditary convention held absolute rule. The ancient lawgivers, while recognising the hereditary practice, insisted that quality, character and capacity were the one sound and real basis and that without them the hereditary social status became an unspiritual falsehood because it had lost its true significance. The Gita too, as always, founds its thought on the inner significance. It speaks indeed in one verse of the work born with a man, *sahajam karma*; but this does not in itself imply a hereditary basis. According to the Indian theory of rebirth, which the Gita recognises, a man's inborn nature and course of life are essentially determined by his own past lives, are the self-development already effected by his past

actions and mental and spiritual evolution and cannot depend solely on the material factor of his ancestry, parentage, physical birth, which can only be of subordinate moment, one effective sign perhaps, but not the dominant principle. The word *sahaja* means that which is born with us, whatever is natural, inborn, innate; its equivalent in all other passages is *svabhāvaja*. The work or function of a man is determined by his qualities, *karma* is determined by *guna*; it is the work born of his Swabhava, *svabhāvajam karma*, and regulated by his Swabhava, *svabhāvaniyatam karma*. This emphasis on an inner quality and spirit which finds expression in work, function and action is the whole sense of the Gita's idea of Karma.

And from this emphasis on the inner truth and not on the outer form arises the spiritual significance and power which the Gita assigns to the following of the Swadharma. That is the really important bearing of the passage. Too much has been made of its connection with the outer social order, as if the object of the Gita were to support that for its own sake or to justify it by a religio-philosophical theory. In fact it lays very little stress on the external rule and a very great stress on the internal law which the Varna system attempted to put into regulated outward practice. And it is on the individual and spiritual value of this law and not on its communal and economic or other social and cultural importance that the eye of the thought is fixed in this passage. The Gita accepted the Vedic theory of sacrifice, but gave it a profound turn, an inner, subjective and universal meaning, a spiritual sense and direction which alters all its values. Here too and in the same way it accepts the theory of the four orders of men, but gives to it a profound turn, an inner, subjective and universal meaning, a spiritual sense and direction. And immediately the idea behind the theory changes its values and becomes an enduring and living truth not bound up with the transience of a particular social form and order. What the Gita is concerned with is not the validity of the Aryan social order now abolished or in a state of deliquescence,—if that were all, its principle of the Swabhava and Swadharma would have no permanent truth or value,—but the relation of

a man's outward life to his inward being, the evolution of his action from his soul and inner law of nature.

And we see in fact that the Gita itself indicates very clearly its intention when it describes the work of the Brahmin and the Kshatriya not in terms of external function, not defined as learning, priest-work and letters or government, war and politics, but entirely in terms of internal character. The language reads a little curiously to our ear. Calm, self-control, askesis, purity, long-suffering, candour, knowledge, acceptance and practice of spiritual truth would not ordinarily be described as a man's function, work or life occupation. Yet this is precisely what the Gita means and says,—that these things, their development, their expression in conduct, their power to cast into form the law of the sattwic nature are the real work of the Brahmin: learning, religious ministration and the other outer functions are only its most suitable field, a favourable means of this inner development, its appropriate self-expression, its way of fixing itself into firmness of type and externalised solidity of character. War, government, politics, leadership and rule are a similar field and means for the Kshatriya; but his real work is the development, the expression in conduct, the power to cast into form and dynamic rhythm of movement the law of the active battling royal or warrior spirit. The work of the Vaishya and Shudra is expressed in terms of external function, and this opposite turn may have some significance. For the temperament moved to production and wealth-getting or limited in the circle of labour and service, the mercantile and the servile mind, are usually turned outward, more occupied with the external values of their work than its power for character, and this disposition is not so favourable to a sattwic or spiritual action of the nature. That too is the reason why a commercial and industrial age or a society preoccupied with the idea of work and labour creates around it an atmosphere more favourable to the material than the spiritual life, more adapted to vital efficiency than to the subtler perfection of the high-reaching mind and spirit. Nevertheless, this kind of nature too and its functions have their inner significance, their spiritual value and can be made a means and power for

perfection. As has been said elsewhere, not alone the Brahmin with his ideal of spirituality, ethical purity and knowledge and the Kshatriya with his ideal of nobility, chivalry and high character, but the wealth-seeking Vaishya, the toil-imprisoned Shudra, woman with her narrow, circumscribed and subject life, the very outcaste born from a womb of sin, *pāpayonayah*, can by this road rise at once towards the highest inner greatness and spiritual freedom, towards perfection, towards the liberation and fulfilment of the divine element in the human being.

Three propositions suggest themselves even at the first view and may be taken as implicit in all that the Gita says in this passage. First, all action must be determined from within because each man has in him something his own, some characteristic principle and inborn power of his nature. That is the efficient power of his spirit, that creates the dynamic form of his soul in nature and to express and perfect it by action, to make it effective in capacity and conduct and life is his work, his true Karma: that points him to the right way of his inner and outer living and is the right starting-point for his farther development. Next, there are broadly four types of nature each with its characteristic function and ideal rule of work and character and the type indicates the man's proper field and should trace for him his just circle of function in his outer social existence. Finally, whatever work a man does, if done according to the law of his being, the truth of his nature, can be turned Godwards and made an effective means of spiritual liberation and perfection. The first and last of these propositions are suggestions of an evident truth and justice. The ordinary way of man's individual and social living seems indeed to be a contradiction of these principles; for certainly we bear a terrible weight of external necessity, rule and law and our need for self-expression, for the development of our true person, our real soul, our inmost characteristic law of nature in life is at every turn interfered with, thwarted, forced from its course, given a very poor chance and scope by environmental influences. Life, State, society, family, all surrounding powers seem to be in a league to lay their yoke on our spirit, compel us into their moulds, impose on us their mechanical interest and rough

immediate convenience. We become parts of a machine; we are not, are hardly allowed to be men in the true sense, *manuṣya*, *puruṣa*, souls, minds, free children of the spirit empowered to develop the highest characteristic perfection of our being and make it our means of service to the race. It would seem that we are not what we make ourselves, but what we are made. Yet the more we advance in knowledge, the more the truth of the Gita's rule is bound to appear. The child's education ought to be an outbringing of all that is best, most powerful, most intimate and living in his nature; the mould into which the man's action and development ought to run is that of his innate quality and power. He must acquire new things, but he will acquire them best, most vitally on the basis of his own developed type and inborn force. And so too the functions of a man ought to be determined by his natural turn, gift and capacities. The individual who develops freely in this manner will be a living soul and mind and will have a much greater power for the service of the race. And we are able now to see more clearly that this rule is true not only of the individual but of the community and the nation, the group soul, the collective man. The second proposition of the four types and their functions is more open to dispute. It may be said that it is too simple and positive, that it takes no sufficient account of the complexity of life and the plasticity of human nature, and, whatever the theory or its intrinsic merits, the outward social application must lead precisely to that tyranny of a mechanical rule which is the flat contradiction of all law of Swadharma. But it has a profounder meaning under the surface which gives it a less disputable value. And even if we reject it, the third proposition will yet stand in its general significance. Whatever a man's work and function in life, he can, if it is determined from within or if he is allowed to make it a self-expression of his nature, turn it into a means of growth and of a greater inner perfection. And whatever it be, if he performs his natural function in the right spirit, if he enlightens it by the ideal mind, if he turns its action to the uses of the Godhead within, serves with it the Spirit manifested in the universe or makes it a conscious instrumentation for the purposes of the Divine in humanity,

he can transmute it into a means towards the highest spiritual perfection and freedom.

But the Gita's teaching here has a still profounder significance if we take it not as a detached quotation self-contained in meaning, as is too often done, but as we should do, in connection with all that it has been saying throughout the work and especially in the last twelve chapters. The Gita's philosophy of life and works is that all proceeds from the Divine Existence, the transcendent and universal Spirit. All is a veiled manifestation of the Godhead, Vasudeva, *yataḥ pravṛttir bhūtānāṁ yena sarvam idam tatam*, and to unveil the Immortal within and in the world, to dwell in unity with the Soul of the universe, to rise in consciousness, knowledge, will, love, spiritual delight to oneness with the supreme Godhead, to live in the highest spiritual nature with the individual and natural being delivered from shortcoming and ignorance and made a conscious instrument for the works of the divine Shakti is the perfection of which humanity is capable and the condition of immortality and freedom. But how is this possible when in fact we are enveloped in natural ignorance, the soul shut up in the prison of ego, overcome, beset, hammered and moulded by the environment, mastered by the mechanism of Nature, cut off from our hold on the reality of our own secret spiritual force? The answer is that all this natural action, however now enveloped in a veiled and contrary working, still contains the principle of its own evolving freedom and perfection. A Godhead is seated in the heart of every man and is the Lord of this mysterious action of Nature. And though this Spirit of the universe, this One who is all, seems to be turning us on the wheel of the world as if mounted on a machine by the force of Maya, shaping us in our ignorance as the potter shapes a pot, as the weaver a fabric, by some skilful mechanical principle, yet is this spirit our own greatest self and it is according to the real idea, the truth of ourselves, that which is growing in us and finding always new and more adequate forms in birth after birth, in our animal and human and divine life, in that which we were, that which we are, that which we shall be,—it is in accordance with this inner soul-truth that, as our opened eyes

will discover, we are progressively shaped by this spirit within us in its all-wise omnipotence. This machinery of ego, this tangled complexity of the three gunas, mind, body, life, emotion, desire, struggle, thought, aspiration, endeavour, this locked interaction of pain and pleasure, sin and virtue, striving and success and failure, soul and environment, myself and others, is only the outward imperfect form taken by a higher spiritual Force in me which pursues through its vicissitudes the progressive self-expression of the divine reality and greatness I am secretly in spirit and shall overtly become in nature. This action contains in itself the principle of its own success, the principle of the Swabhava and Swadharma.

The Jiva is in self-expression a portion of the Purushottama. He represents in Nature the power of the supreme Spirit, he is in his personality that Power; he brings out in an individual existence the potentialities of the Soul of the universe. This Jiva itself is spirit and not the natural ego; the spirit and not the form of ego is our reality and inner soul principle. The true force of what we are and can be is there in that higher spiritual Power and this mechanical Maya of the three gunas is not the inmost and fundamental truth of its movements; it is only a present executive energy, an apparatus of lower convenience, a scheme of outward exercise and practice. The spiritual Nature which has become this multiple personality in the universe, *parā prakṛtir jīva-bhūtā*, is the basic stuff of our existence: all the rest is lower derivation and outer formation from a highest hidden activity of the spirit. And in Nature each of us has a principle and will of our own becoming; each soul is a force of self-consciousness that formulates an idea of the Divine in it and guides by that its action and evolution, its progressive self-finding, its constant varying self-expression, its apparently uncertain but secretly inevitable growth to fullness. That is our Swabhava, our own real nature; that is our truth of being which is finding now only a constant partial expression in our various becoming in the world. The law of action determined by this Swabhava is our right law of self-shaping, function, working, our Swadharma.

This principle obtains throughout cosmos; there is every-

where the one Power at work, one common universal Nature, but in each grade, form, energy, genus, species, individual creature she follows out a major Idea and minor ideas and principles of constant and complex variation that found both the permanent dharma of each and its temporary dharmas. These fix for it the law of its being in becoming, the curve of its birth and persistence and change, the force of its self-preservation and self-increasing, the lines of its stable and evolving self-expression and self-finding, the rules of its relations to all the rest of the expression of the Self in the universe. To follow the law of its being, Swadharma, to develop the idea in its being, Swabhava, is its ground of safety, its right walk and procedure. That does not in the end chain down the soul to any present formulation, but rather by this way of development it enriches itself most surely with new experiences assimilated to its own law and principle and can most powerfully grow and break at its hour beyond present moulds to a higher self-expression. To be unable to maintain its own law and principle, to fail to adapt itself to its environment in such a way as to adapt the environment to itself and make it useful to its own nature is to lose its self, forfeit its right of self, deviate from its way of self, is perdition, *vinaṣṭi*, is falsehood, death, anguish of decay and dissolution and necessity of painful self-recovery often after eclipse and disappearance, is the vain circuit of the wrong road retarding our real progress. This law obtains in one form or another in all Nature; it underlies all that action of law of universality and law of variation revealed to us by science. The same law obtains in the life of the human being, his many lives in many human bodies. Here it has an outward play and an inward spiritual truth, and the outward play can only put on its full and real meaning when we have found the inward spiritual truth and enlightened all our action with the values of the spirit. This great and desirable transformation can be effected with rapidity and power in proportion to our progress in self-knowledge.

And first we have to see that the Swabhava means one thing in the highest spiritual nature and takes quite another form and significance in the lower nature of the three gunas. There too it

acts, but is not in full possession of itself, is seeking as it were for its own true law in a half light or a darkness and goes on its way through many lower forms, many false forms, endless imperfections, perversions, self-losings, self-findings, seekings after norm and rule before it arrives at self-discovery and perfection. Our nature here is a mixed weft of knowledge and ignorance, of truth and falsehood, of success and failure, of right and wrong, of finding and losing, of sin and virtue. It is always the Swabhava that is looking for self-expression and self-finding through all these things, *svabhāvas tu pravartate*, a truth which should teach us universal charity and equality of vision, since we are all subject to the same perplexity and struggle. These motions belong, not to the soul, but to the nature. The Purushottama is not limited by this ignorance; he governs it from above and guides the soul through its changes. The pure immutable self is not touched by these movements; it witnesses and supports by its intangible eternity this mutable Nature in her vicissitudes. The real soul of the individual, the central being in us, is greater than these things, but accepts them in its outward evolution in Nature. And when we have got at this real soul, at the changeless universal self sustaining us and at the Purushottama, the Lord within us who presides over and guides the whole action of Nature, we have found all the spiritual meaning of the law of our life. For we become aware of the Master of existence expressing himself for ever in his infinite quality, *anantaguna*, in all beings. We become aware of a fourfold presence of the Divinity, a Soul of self-knowledge and world-knowledge, a Soul of strength and power that seeks for and finds and uses its powers, a Soul of mutuality and creation and relation and interchange between creature and creature, a Soul of works that labours in the universe and serves all in each and turns the labour of each to the service of all others. We become aware too of the individual Power of the Divine in us, that which directly uses these fourfold powers, assigns our strain of self-expression, determines our divine work and office and raises us through it all to his universality in manifoldness till we can find by it our spiritual oneness with him and with all that he is in the cosmos.

The external idea of the four orders of men in life is concerned only with the more outward working of this truth of the divine action; it is limited to one side of its operation in the functioning of the three gunas. It is true that in this birth men fall very largely into one of four types, the man of knowledge, the man of power, the productive vital man, the man of rude labour and service. These are not fundamental divisions, but stages of self-development in our manhood. The human being starts with a sufficient load of ignorance and inertia; his first state is one of rude toil enforced on his animal indolence by the needs of the body, by the impulsion of life, by necessity of Nature and, beyond a certain point of need, by some form of direct or indirect compulsion which society lays upon him, and those who are still governed by this tamas are the Shudras, the serfs of society who give it their toil and can contribute nothing or very little else in comparison with more developed men to its manifold play of life. By kinetic action man develops the rajasic guna in him and we get a second type of man who is driven by a constant instinct for useful creation, production, having, acquisition, holding and enjoying, the middle economic and vital man, the Vaishya. At a higher elevation of the rajasic or kinetic quality of our one common nature we get the active man with a more dominant will, with bolder ambitions, with the instinct to act, battle, and enforce his will, at the strongest to lead, command, rule, carry masses of men in his orbit, the fighter, leader, ruler, prince, king, Kshatriya. And where the sattvic mind predominates, we get the Brahmin, the man with a turn for knowledge, who brings thought, reflection, the seeking for truth and an intelligent or at the highest a spiritual rule into life and illumines by it his conception and mode of existence.

There is always in human nature something of all these four personalities developed or undeveloped, wide or narrow, suppressed or rising to the surface, but in most men one or the other tends to predominate and seems to take up sometimes the whole space of action in the nature. And in any society we should have all four types,—even, for an example, if we create a purely productive and commercial society such as modern

times have attempted, or for that matter a Shudra society of labour, of the proletariat such as attracts the most modern mind and is now being attempted in one part of Europe and advocated in others. There would still be the thinkers moved to find the law and truth and guiding rule of the whole matter, the captains and leaders of industry who would make all this productive activity an excuse for the satisfaction of their need of adventure and battle and leadership and dominance, the many typical purely productive and wealth-getting men, the average workers satisfied with a modicum of labour and the reward of their labour. But these are quite outward things, and if that were all, this economy of human type would have no spiritual significance. Or it would mean at most, as has been sometimes held in India, that we have to go through these stages of development in our births; for we must perforce proceed progressively through the tamasic, the rajaso-tamasic, the rajasic or rajaso-sattwic to the sattwic nature, ascend and fix ourselves in an inner Brahminhood, *brāhmaṇya*, and then seek salvation from that basis. But in that case there would be no logical room for the Gita's assertion that even the Shudra or Chandala can by turning his life Godwards climb straight to spiritual liberty and perfection.

The fundamental truth is not this outward thing, but a force of our inner being in movement, the truth of the fourfold active power of the spiritual nature. Each Jiva possesses in his spiritual nature these four sides, is a soul of knowledge, a soul of strength and of power, a soul of mutuality and interchange, a soul of works and service, but one side or other predominates in the action and expressive spirit and tinges the dealings of the soul with its embodied nature; it leads and gives its stamp to the other powers and uses them for the principal strain of action, tendency, experience. The Swabhava then follows, not crudely and rigidly as put in the social demarcation, but subtly and flexibly the law of this strain and develops in developing it the other three powers. Thus the pursuit of the impulse of works and service rightly done develops knowledge, increases power, trains closeness or balance of mutuality and skill and order of relation.

Each front of the fourfold godhead moves through the enlargement of its own dominant principle of nature and enrichment by the other three towards a total perfection. This development undergoes the law of the three gunas. There is possible a tamasic and rajasic way of following even the dharma of the soul of knowledge, a brute tamasic and a high sattwic way of following the dharma of power, a forceful rajasic or a beautiful and noble sattwic way of following the dharma of works and service. To arrive at the sattwic way of the inner individual Swadharma and of the works to which it moves us on the ways of life is a preliminary condition of perfection. And it may be noted that the inner Swadharma is not bound to any outward social or other form of action, occupation or function. The soul of works or that element in us that is satisfied to serve, can, for example, make the life of the pursuit of knowledge, the life of struggle and power or the life of mutuality, production and interchange a means of satisfying its divine impulse to labour and to service.

And in the end to arrive at the divinest figure and most dynamic soul-power of this fourfold activity is a wide doorway to a swiftest and largest reality of the most high spiritual perfection. This we can do if we turn the action of the Swadharma into a worship of the inner Godhead, the universal Spirit, the transcendent Purushottama and, eventually, surrender the whole action into his hands, *mayi sannyasya karmāṇi*. Then as we get beyond the limitation of the three gunas, so also do we get beyond the division of the fourfold law and beyond the limitation of all distinctive dharmas, *sarvadharmaṇ parityajya*. The Spirit takes up the individual into the universal Swabhava, perfects and unifies the fourfold soul of nature in us and does its self-determined works according to the divine will and the accomplished power of the godhead in the creature.

The Gita's injunction is to worship the Divine by our own work, *sva-karmanā*; our offering must be the works determined by our own law of being and nature. For from the Divine all movement of creation and impulse to act originates and by him all this universe is extended and for the holding together of the worlds he presides over and shapes all action through the

Swabhava. To worship him with our inner and outer activities, to make our whole life a sacrifice of works to the Highest is to prepare ourselves to become one with him in all our will and substance and nature. Our work should be according to the truth within us, it should not be an accommodation with outward and artificial standards: it must be a living and sincere expression of the soul and its inborn powers. For to follow out the living inmost truth of this soul in our present nature will help us eventually to arrive at the immortal truth of the same soul in the now superconscious supreme nature. There we can live in oneness with God and our true self and all beings and, perfected, become a faultless instrument of divine action in the freedom of the immortal Dharma.

Towards the Supreme Secret¹

THE TEACHER has completed all else that he needed to say, he has worked out all the central principles and the supporting suggestions and implications of his message and elucidated the principal doubts and questions that might rise around it, and now all that rests for him to do is to put into decisive phrase and penetrating formula the one last word, the heart itself of the message, the very core of his gospel. And we find that this decisive, last and crowning word is not merely the essence of what has been already said on the matter, not merely a concentrated description of the needed self-discipline, the Sadhana, and of that greater spiritual consciousness which is to be the result of all its effort and askesis; it sweeps out, as it were, yet farther, breaks down every limit and rule, canon and formula and opens into a wide and illimitable spiritual truth with an infinite potentiality of significance. And that is a sign of the profundity, the wide reach, the greatness of spirit of the Gita's teaching. An ordinary religious teaching or philosophical doctrine is well enough satisfied to seize on certain great and vital aspects of truth and turn them into utilisable dogma and instruction, method and practice for the guidance of man in his inner life and the law and form of his action; it does not go farther, it does not open doors out of the circle of its own system, does not lead us out into some widest freedom and unimprisoned largeness. This limitation is useful and indeed for a time indispensable. Man bounded by his mind and will has need of a law and rule, a fixed system, a definite practice selective of his thought and action; he asks for the single unmistakable hewn path hedged, fixed and secure to the tread, for the limited horizons, for the enclosed resting-places. It is only the strong

¹ Gita, XVIII. 49-56.

and few who can move through freedom to freedom. And yet in the end the free soul ought to have an issue out of the forms and systems in which the mind finds its account and takes its limited pleasure. To exceed our ladder of ascent, not to stop short even on the topmost stair but move untrammelled and at large in the wideness of the spirit is a release important for our perfection; the spirit's absolute liberty is our perfect status. And this is how the Gita leads us: it lays down a firm and sure but very large way of ascent, a great Dharma, and then it takes us out beyond all that is laid down, beyond all dharmas, into infinitely open spaces, divulges to us the hope, lets us into the secret of an absolute perfection founded in an absolute spiritual liberty, and that secret, *guhyatamam*, is the substance of what it calls its supreme word, that the hidden thing, the inmost knowledge.

And first the Gita restates the body of its message. It summarises the whole outline and essence in the short space of fifteen verses, lines of a brief and concentrated expression and significance that miss nothing of the kernel of the matter, couched in phrases of the most lucid precision and clearness. And they must therefore be scanned with care, must be read deeply in the light of all that has gone before, because here it is evidently intended to extract what the Gita itself considers to be the central sense of its own teaching. The statement sets out from the original starting-point of the thought in the book, the enigma of human action, the apparently insuperable difficulty of living in the highest self and spirit while yet we continue to do the works of the world. The easiest way is to give up the problem as insoluble, life and action as an illusion or an inferior movement of existence to be abandoned as soon as we can rise out of the snare of the world into the truth of spiritual being. That is the ascetic solution, if it can be called a solution; at any rate it is a decisive and effective way out of the enigma, a way to which ancient Indian thought of the highest and most meditative kind, as soon as it commenced to turn at a sharp incline from its first large and free synthesis, had moved with an always increasing preponderance. The Gita like the Tantra and on certain sides the later religions attempts to preserve the ancient balance: it

maintains the substance and foundation of the original synthesis, but the form has been changed and renovated in the light of a developing spiritual experience. This teaching does not evade the difficult problem of reconciling the full active life of man with the inner life in the highest self and spirit; it advances what it holds to be the real solution. It does not at all deny the efficacy of the ascetic renunciation of life for its own purpose, but it sees that that cuts instead of loosening the knot of the riddle and therefore it accounts it an inferior method and holds its own for the better way. The two paths both lead us out of the lower ignorant normal nature of man to the pure spiritual consciousness and so far both must be held to be valid and even one in essence: but where one stops short and turns back, the other advances with a firm subtlety and high courage, opens a gate on unexplored vistas, completes man in God and unites and reconciles in the spirit soul and Nature.

And therefore in the first five of these verses the Gita so phrases its statement that it shall be applicable to both the way of the inner and the way of the outer renunciation and yet in such a manner that one has only to assign to some of their common expressions a deeper and more inward meaning in order to get the sense and thought of the method favoured by the Gita. The difficulty of human action is that the soul and nature of man seem fatally subjected to many kinds of bondage, the prison of the ignorance, the meshes of the ego, the chain of the passions, the hammering insistence of the life of the moment, an obscure and limited circle without an issue. The soul shut up in this circle of action has no freedom, no leisure or light of self-knowledge to make the discovery of its self and the true value of life and meaning of existence. It has indeed such hints of its being as it can get from its active personality and dynamic nature, but the standards of perfection it can erect there are much too temporal, restricted and relative to be a satisfactory key to its own riddle. How, while absorbed and continually forced outward by the engrossing call of its active nature, is it to get back to its real self and spiritual existence? The ascetic renunciation and the way of the Gita are both agreed that it must first of all renounce this

absorption, must cast from it the external solicitation of outward things and separate silent self from active nature; it must identify itself with the immobile Spirit and live in the silence. It must arrive at an inner inactivity, *naiṣkarma*. It is therefore this saving inner passivity that the Gita puts here as the first object of its Yoga, the first necessary perfection in it or Siddhi. “An understanding without attachment in all things, a soul self-conquered and empty of desire, man attains by renunciation a supreme perfection of *naiṣkarma*.”

This ideal of renunciation, of a self-conquered stillness, spiritual passivity and freedom from desire is common to all the ancient wisdom. The Gita gives us its psychological foundation with an unsurpassed completeness and clearness. It rests on the common experience of all seekers of self-knowledge that there are two different natures and as it were two selves in us. There is the lower self of the obscure mental, vital and physical nature subject to ignorance and inertia in the very stuff of its consciousness and especially in its basis of material substance, kinetic and vital indeed by the power of life but without inherent self-possession and self-knowledge in its action, attaining in the mind to some knowledge and harmony, but only with difficult effort and by a constant struggle with its own disabilities. And there is the higher nature and self of our spiritual being, self-possessed and self-luminous but in our ordinary mentality inaccessible to our experience. At times we get glimpses of this greater thing within us, but we are not consciously within it, we do not live in its light and calm and illimitable splendour. The first of these two very different things is the Gita’s nature of the three gunas. Its seeing of itself is centred in the ego idea, its principle of action is desire born of ego, and the knot of ego is attachment to the objects of the mind and sense and the life’s desire. The inevitable constant result of all these things is bondage, settled subjection to a lower control, absence of self-mastery, absence of self-knowledge. The other greater power and presence is discovered to be nature and being of the pure spirit unconditioned by ego, that which is called in Indian philosophy self and impersonal Brahman. Its principle is an infinite and an impersonal existence

one and the same in all: and, since this impersonal existence is without ego, without conditioning quality, without desire, need or stimulus, it is immobile and immutable; eternally the same, it regards and supports but does not share or initiate the action of the universe. The soul when it throws itself out into active Nature is the Gita's Kshara, its mobile or mutable Purusha; the same soul gathered back into pure silent self and essential spirit is the Gita's Akshara, immobile or immutable Purusha.

Then evidently the straight and simplest way to get out of the close bondage of the active nature and back to spiritual freedom is to cast away entirely all that belongs to the dynamics of the ignorance and to convert the soul into a pure spiritual existence. That is what is called becoming Brahman, *brahma-bhūya*. It is to put off the lower mental, vital, physical existence and to put on the pure spiritual being. This can best be done by the intelligence and will, *buddhi*, our present topmost principle. It has to turn away from the things of the lower existence and first and foremost from its effective knot of desire, from our attachment to the objects pursued by the mind and the senses. One must become an understanding unattached in all things, *asakta-buddhiḥ sarvatra*. Then all desire passes away from the soul in its silence; it is free from all longings, *vigata-sprhaḥ*. That brings with it or it makes possible the subjection of our lower and the possession of our higher self, a possession dependent on complete self-mastery, secured by a radical victory and conquest over our mobile nature, *jitātmā*. And all this amounts to an absolute inner renunciation of the desire of things, *sannyāsa*. Renunciation is the way to this perfection and the man who has thus inwardly renounced all is described by the Gita as the true Sannyasin. But because the word usually signifies as well an outward renunciation or sometimes even that alone, the Teacher uses another word, *tyāga*, to distinguish the inward from the outward withdrawal and says that Tyaga is better than Sannyasa. The ascetic way goes much farther in its recoil from the dynamic Nature. It is enamoured of renunciation for its own sake and insists on an outward giving up of life and action, a complete quietism of soul and nature. That, the Gita replies, is

not possible entirely so long as we live in the body. As far as it is possible, it may be done, but such a rigorous diminution of works is not indispensable: it is not even really or at least ordinarily advisable. The one thing needed is a complete inner quietism and that is all the Gita's sense of *naiskarmya*.

If we ask why this reservation, why this indulgence to the dynamic principle when our object is to become the pure self and the pure self is described as inactive, *akartā*, the answer is that that inactivity and divorce of self from Nature are not the whole truth of our spiritual release. Self and Nature are in the end one thing; a total and perfect spirituality makes us one with all the Divine in self and in nature. In fact this becoming Brahman, this assumption into the self of eternal silence, *brahma-bhūya*, is not all our objective, but only the necessary immense base for a still greater and more marvellous divine becoming, *madbhāva*. And to get to that greatest spiritual perfection we have indeed to be immobile in the self, silent in all our members, but also to act in the power, Shakti, Prakriti, the true and high force of the Spirit. And if we ask how a simultaneity of what seem to be two opposites is possible, the answer is that that is the very nature of a complete spiritual being; always it has this double poise of the Infinite. The impersonal self is silent; we too must be inwardly silent, impersonal, withdrawn into the spirit. The impersonal self looks on all action as done not by it but by Prakriti; it regards with a pure equality all the working of her qualities, modes and forces: the soul impersonalised in the self must similarly regard all our actions as done not by itself but by the qualities of Prakriti; it must be equal in all things, *sarvatra*. And at the same time in order that we may not stop here, in order that we may eventually go forward and find a spiritual rule and direction in our works and not only a law of inner immobility and silence, we are asked to impose on the intelligence and will the attitude of sacrifice, all our action inwardly changed and turned into an offering to the Lord of Nature, to the Being of whom she is the self-power, *svā prakṛtiḥ*, the supreme Spirit. Even we have eventually to renounce all into his hands, to abandon all personal initiation of action, *sarvārambhāḥ*, to

keep our natural selves only as an instrument of his works and his purpose. These things have been already explained fully and the Gita does not here insist, but uses simply without farther qualification the common terms, *sannyāsa* and *naiṣkarmya*.

A completest inner quietism once admitted as our necessary means towards living in the pure impersonal self, the question how practically it brings about that result is the next issue that arises. "How, having attained this perfection, one thus attains to the Brahman, hear from me, O son of Kunti,—that which is the supreme concentrated direction of the knowledge." The knowledge meant here is the Yoga of the Sankhyas,—the Yoga of pure knowledge accepted by the Gita, *jñāna-yogena sāṅkhyānām*, so far as it is one with its own Yoga which includes also the way of works of the Yogins, *karma-yogena yoginām*. But all mention of works is kept back for the moment. For by Brahman here is meant at first the silent, the impersonal, the immutable. The Brahman indeed is both for the Upanishads and the Gita all that is and lives and moves; it is not solely an impersonal Infinite or an unthinkable and incomunicable Absolute, *acintyam avyavahāryam*. All this is Brahman, says the Upanishad; all this is Vasudeva, says the Gita,—the supreme Brahman is all that moves or is stable and his hands and feet and eyes and heads and faces are on every side of us. But still there are two aspects of this All,—his immutable eternal self that supports existence and his self of active power that moves abroad in the world movement. It is only when we lose our limited ego personality in the impersonality of the self that we arrive at the calm and free oneness by which we can possess a true unity with the universal power of the Divine in his world movement. Impersonality is a denial of limitation and division, and the cult of impersonality is a natural condition of true being, an indispensable preliminary of true knowledge and therefore a first requisite of true action. It is very clear that we cannot become one self with all or one with the universal Spirit and his vast self-knowledge, his complex will and his widespread world-purpose by insisting on our limited personality of ego; for that divides us from others and it makes us bound and self-centred in our view and in our will to action.

Imprisoned in personality we can only get at a limited union by sympathy or by some relative accommodation of ourselves to the view-point and feeling and will of others. To be one with all and with the Divine and his will in the cosmos we must become at first impersonal and free from our ego and its claims and from the ego's way of seeing ourselves and the world and others. And we cannot do this if there is not something in our being other than the personality, other than the ego, an impersonal self one with all existences. To lose ego and be this impersonal self, to become this impersonal Brahman in our consciousness is therefore the first movement of this Yoga.

How then is this to be done? First, says the Gita, through a union of our purified intelligence with the pure spiritual substance in us by the yoga of the buddhi, *buddhyā viśuddhayā yuktah*. This spiritual turning of the buddhi from the outward and downward to the inward and upward look is the essence of the Yoga of knowledge. The purified understanding has to control the whole being, *ātmānam niyamya*; it must draw us away from attachment to the outward-going desires of the lower nature by a firm and a steady will, *dhṛtyā*, which in its concentration faces entirely towards the impersonality of the pure spirit. The senses must abandon their objects, the mind must cast away the liking and disliking which these objects excite in it,—for the impersonal self has no desires and repulsions; these are vital reactions of our personality to the touches of things and the corresponding response of the mind and senses to the touches is their support and their basis. An entire control has to be acquired over the mind, speech and body, over even the vital and physical reactions, hunger and cold and heat and physical pleasure and pain; the whole of our being must become indifferent, unaffected by these things, equal to all outward touches and to their inward reactions and responses. This is the most direct and powerful method, the straight and sharp way of Yoga. There has to be a complete cessation of desire and attachment, *vairāgya*; a strong resort to impersonal solitude, a constant union with the inmost self by meditation is demanded of the seeker. And yet the object of this austere discipline is not to be self-centred in some supreme

egoistic seclusion and tranquillity of the sage and thinker averse to the trouble of participation in the world-action; the object is to get rid of all ego. One must put away utterly first the rajasic kind of egoism, egoistic strength and violence, arrogance, desire, wrath, the sense and instinct of possession, the urge of the passions, the strong lusts of life. But afterwards must be discarded egoism of all kinds, even of the most sattvic type; for the aim is to make soul and mind and life free in the end from all imprisoning I-ness and my-ness, *nirmama*. The extinction of ego and its demands of all sorts is the method put before us. For the pure impersonal self which, unshaken, supports the universe has no egoism and makes no demand on thing or person; it is calm and luminously impassive and silently regards all things and persons with an equal and impartial eye of self-knowledge and world-knowledge. Then clearly it is by living inwardly in a similar or identical impersonality that the soul within, released from the siege of things, can best become capable of oneness with this immutable Brahman which regards and knows but is not affected by the forms and mutations of the universe.

This first pursuit of impersonality as enjoined by the Gita brings with it evidently a certain completest inner quietism and is identical in its inmost parts and principles of practice with the method of Sannyasa. And yet there is a point at which its tendency of withdrawal from the claims of dynamic Nature and the external world is checked and a limit imposed to prevent the inner quietism from deepening into refusal of action and a physical withdrawal. The renunciation of their objects by the senses, *viṣayāṁs tyaktvā*, is to be of the nature of Tyaga; it must be a giving up of all sensuous attachment, *rasa*, not a refusal of the intrinsic necessary activity of the senses. One must move among surrounding things and act on the objects of the sense-field with a pure, true and intense, a simple and absolute operation of the senses for their utility to the spirit in divine action, *kevalair indriyaiś caran*, and not at all for the fulfilment of desire. There is to be *vairāgya*, not in the common significance of disgust of life or distaste for the world action, but renunciation of *rāga*, as also of its opposite, *dveṣa*. There must be a withdrawal from

all mental and vital liking as from all mental and vital disliking whatsoever. And this is asked not for extinction, but in order that there may be a perfect enabling equality in which the spirit can give an unhampered and unlimited assent to the integral and comprehensive divine vision of things and to the integral divine action in Nature. A continual resort to meditation, *dhyāna-yoga-paro nityam*, is the firm means by which the soul of man can realise its self of Power and its self of silence. And yet there must be no abandonment of the active life for a life of pure meditation; action must always be done as a sacrifice to the supreme Spirit. This movement of recoil in the path of Sannyasa prepares an absorbed disappearance of the individual in the Eternal, and renunciation of action and life in the world is an indispensable step in the process. But in the Gita's path of Tyaga it is a preparation rather for the turning of our whole life and existence and of all action into an integral oneness with the serene and immeasurable being, consciousness and will of the Divine, and it preludes and makes possible a vast and total passing upward of the soul out of the lower ego to the inexpressible perfection of the supreme spiritual nature, *parā prakrti*.

This decisive departure of the Gita's thought is indicated in the next two verses, of which the first runs with a significant sequence, "When one has become the Brahman, when one neither grieves nor desires, when one is equal to all beings, then one gets the supreme love and devotion to Me." But in the narrow path of knowledge bhakti, devotion to the personal Godhead, can be only an inferior and preliminary movement; the end, the climax is the disappearance of personality in a featureless oneness with the impersonal Brahman in which there can be no place for bhakti: for there is none to be adored and none to adore; all else is lost in the silent immobile identity of the Jiva with the Atman. Here there is given to us something yet higher than the Impersonal,—here there is the supreme Self who is the supreme Ishwara, here there is the supreme Soul and its supreme nature, here there is the Purushottama who is beyond the personal and impersonal and reconciles them on his eternal heights. The ego personality still disappears in the silence of the Impersonal, but

at the same time there remains even with this silence at the back the action of a supreme Self, one greater than the Impersonal. There is no longer the lower blind and limping action of the ego and the three gunas, but instead the vast self-determining movement of an infinite spiritual Force, a free immeasurable Shakti. All Nature becomes the power of the one Divine and all action his action through the individual as channel and instrument. In place of the ego there comes forward conscious and manifest the true spiritual individual in the freedom of his real nature, in the power of his supernal status, in the majesty and splendour of his eternal kinship to the Divine, an imperishable portion of the supreme Godhead, an indestructible power of the supreme Prakriti, *mamaivāṁśah sanātanah, parā prakṛtir jīva-bhūtā*. The soul of man then feels itself to be one in a supreme spiritual impersonality with the Purushottama and in its universalised personality a manifest power of the Godhead. Its knowledge is a light of his knowledge; its will is a force of his will; its unity with all in the universe is a play of his eternal oneness. It is in this double realisation, it is in this union of two sides of an ineffable Truth of existence by either and both of which man can approach and enter into his own infinite being, that the liberated man has to live and act and feel and determine or rather have determined for him by a greatest power of his supreme self his relations with all and the inner and outer workings of his spirit. And in that unifying realisation adoration, love and devotion are not only still possible, but are a large, an inevitable and a crowning portion of the highest experience. The One who eternally becomes the Many, the Many who in their apparent division are still eternally one, the Highest who displays in us this secret and mystery of existence, not dispersed by his multiplicity, not limited by his oneness,—this is the integral knowledge, this is the reconciling experience which makes one capable of liberated action, *muktasya karma*.

This knowledge comes, says the Gita, by a highest bhakti. It is attained when the mind exceeds itself by a supramental and high spiritual seeing of things and when the heart too rises in unison beyond our more ignorant mental forms of love and

devotion to a love that is calm and deep and luminous with widest knowledge, to a supreme delight in God and an illimitable adoration, the unperturbed ecstasy, the spiritual Ananda. When the soul has lost its separative personality, when it has become the Brahman, it is then that it can live in the true Person and can attain to the supreme revealing bhakti for the Purushottama and can come to know him utterly by the power of its profound bhakti, its heart's knowledge, *bhaktyā mām abhijānāti*. That is the integral knowledge, when the heart's fathomless vision completes the mind's absolute experience,—*samagram mām jñātvā*. “He comes to know Me,” says the Gita, “who and how much I am and in all the reality and principles of my being, *yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ*.” This integral knowledge is the knowledge of the Divine present in the individual; it is the entire experience of the Lord secret in the heart of man, revealed now as the supreme Self of his existence, the Sun of all his illumined consciousness, the Master and Power of all his works, the divine Fountain of all his soul's love and delight, the Lover and Beloved of his worship and adoration. It is the knowledge too of the Divine extended in the universe, of the Eternal from whom all proceeds and in whom all lives and has its being, of the Self and Spirit of the cosmos, of Vasudeva who has become all this that is, of the Lord of cosmic existence who reigns over the works of Nature. It is the knowledge of the divine Purusha luminous in his transcendent eternity, the form of whose being escapes from the thought of the mind but not from its silence; it is the entire living experience of him as absolute Self, supreme Brahman, supreme Soul, supreme Godhead: for that seemingly incomunicable Absolute is at the same time and even in that highest status the originating Spirit of the cosmic action and Lord of all these existences. The soul of the liberated man thus enters by a reconciling knowledge, penetrates by a perfect simultaneous delight of the transcendent Divine, of the Divine in the individual and of the Divine in the universe into the Purushottama, *mām viśate tadanantaram*. He becomes one with him in his self-knowledge and self-experience, one with him in his being and consciousness and will and world-knowledge and world-impulse, one with him in the universe and

in his unity with all creatures in the universe and one with him beyond world and individual in the transcendence of the eternal Infinite, *śāśvataṁ padam avyayam*. This is the culmination of the supreme bhakti that is at the core of the supreme knowledge.

And it then becomes evident how action continual and unceasing and of all kinds without diminution or abandonment of any part of the activities of life can be not only quite consistent with a supreme spiritual experience, but as forceful a means of reaching this highest spiritual condition as bhakti or knowledge. Nothing can be more positive than the Gita's statement in this matter. "And by doing also all actions always lodged in Me he attains by my grace the eternal and imperishable status." This liberating action is of the character of works done in a profound union of the will and all the dynamic parts of our nature with the Divine in ourself and the cosmos. It is done first as a sacrifice with the idea still of our self as the doer. It is done next without that idea and with a perception of the Prakriti as the sole doer. It is done last with the knowledge of that Prakriti as the supreme power of the Divine and a renunciation, a surrender of all our actions to him with the individual as a channel only and an instrument. Our works then proceed straight from the Self and Divine within us, are a part of the indivisible universal action, are initiated and performed not by us but by a vast transcendent Shakti. All that we do is done for the sake of the Lord seated in the heart of all, for the Godhead in the individual and for the fulfilment of his will in us, for the sake of the Divine in the world, for the good of all beings, for the fulfilment of the world action and the world purpose, or in one word for the sake of the Purushottama and done really by him through his universal Shakti. These divine works, whatever their form or outward character, cannot bind, but are rather a potent means for rising out of this lower Prakriti of the three gunas to the perfection of the supreme, divine and spiritual nature. Disengaged from these mixed and limited dharmas we escape into the immortal Dharma which comes upon us when we make ourselves one in all our consciousness and action with the Purushottama. That oneness here brings with it the power to rise there into the immortality

beyond Time. There we shall exist in his eternal transcendence.

Thus these eight verses carefully read in the light of the knowledge already given by the Teacher are a brief, but still a comprehensive indication of the whole essential idea, the entire central method, all the kernel of the complete Yoga of the Gita.

The Supreme Secret¹

THE ESSENCE of the teaching and the Yoga has thus been given to the disciple on the field of his work and battle and the divine Teacher now proceeds to apply it to his action, but in a way that makes it applicable to all action. Attached to a crucial example, spoken to the protagonist of Kurukshetra, the words bear a much wider significance and are a universal rule for all who are ready to ascend above the ordinary mentality and to live and act in the highest spiritual consciousness. To break out of ego and personal mind and see everything in the wideness of the self and spirit, to know God and adore him in his integral truth and in all his aspects, to surrender all oneself to the transcendent Soul of nature and existence, to possess and be possessed by the divine consciousness, to be one with the One in universality of love and delight and will and knowledge, one in him with all beings, to do works as an adoration and a sacrifice on the divine foundation of a world in which all is God and in the divine status of a liberated spirit, is the sense of the Gita's Yoga. It is a transition from the apparent to the supreme spiritual and real truth of our being, and one enters into it by putting off the many limitations of the separative consciousness and the mind's attachment to the passion and unrest and ignorance, the lesser light and knowledge, the sin and virtue, the dual law and standard of the lower nature. Therefore, says the Teacher, "devoting all thyself to me, giving up in thy conscious mind all thy actions into Me, resorting to Yoga of the will and intelligence be always one in heart and consciousness with Me. If thou art that at all times, then by my grace thou shalt pass safe through all difficult and perilous passages; but if from egoism thou hear not, thou shalt fall into perdition. Vain is this thy resolve, that

¹ Gita, XVIII. 57-66, 73.

in thy egoism thou thinkest, saying 'I will not fight'; thy nature shall appoint thee to thy work. What from delusion thou desirest not to do, that helplessly thou shalt do bound by thy own work born of thy swabhava. The Lord is stationed in the heart of all existences, O Arjuna, and turns them all round and round mounted on a machine by his Maya. In him take refuge in every way of thy being and by his grace thou shalt come to the supreme peace and the eternal status."

These are lines that carry in them the innermost heart of this Yoga and lead to its crowning experience and we must understand them in their innermost spirit and the whole vastness of that high summit of experience. The words express the most complete, intimate and living relation possible between God and man; they are instinct with the concentrated force of religious feeling that springs from the human being's absolute adoration, his upward surrender of his whole existence, his unreserved and perfect self-giving to the transcendent and universal Divinity from whom he comes and in whom he lives. This stress of feeling is in entire consonance with the high and enduring place that the Gita assigns to bhakti, to the love of God, to the adoration of the Highest, as the inmost spirit and motive of the supreme action and the crown and core of the supreme knowledge. The phrases used and the spiritual emotion with which they vibrate seem to give the most intense prominence possible and an utmost importance to the personal truth and presence of the Godhead. It is no abstract Absolute of the philosopher, no indifferent impersonal Presence or ineffable Silence intolerant of all relations to whom this complete surrender of all our works can be made and this closeness and intimacy of oneness with him in all the parts of our conscious existence imposed as the condition and law of our perfection or of whom this divine intervention and protection and deliverance are the promise. It is a Master of our works, a Friend and Lover of our soul, an intimate Spirit of our life, an indwelling and overdwelling Lord of all our personal and impersonal self and nature who alone can utter to us this near and moving message. And yet this is not the common relation established by the religions between man living in his sattvic or

other ego-mind and some personal form and aspect of the Deity, *ista-deva*, constructed by that mind or offered to it to satisfy its limited ideal, aspiration or desire. That is the ordinary sense and actual character of the normal mental being's religious devotion; but here there is something wider that passes beyond the mind and its limits and its dharmas. It is something deeper than the mind that offers and something greater than the Ishta-deva that receives the surrender.

That which surrenders here is the Jiva, the essential soul, the original central and spiritual being of man, the individual Purusha. It is the Jiva delivered from the limiting and ignorant ego-sense who knows himself not as a separate personality but as an eternal portion and power and soul-becoming of the Divine, *amśa sanātana*, the Jiva released and uplifted by the passing away of ignorance and established in the light and freedom of his own true and supreme nature which is one with that of the Eternal. It is this central spiritual being in us who thus enters into a perfect and closely real relation of delight and union with the origin and continent and governing Self and Power of our existence. And he who receives our surrender is no limited Deity but the Purushottama, the one eternal Godhead, the one supreme Soul of all that is and of all Nature, the original transcendent Spirit of existence. An immutable impersonal self-existence is his first obvious spiritual self-presentation to the experience of our liberated knowledge, the first sign of his presence, the first touch and impression of his substance. A universal and transcendent infinite Person or Purusha is the mysterious hidden secret of his very being, unthinkable in form of mind, *acintya-rūpa*, but very near and present to the powers of our consciousness, emotion, will and knowledge when they are lifted out of themselves, out of their blind and petty forms into a luminous spiritual, an immeasurable supramental Ananda and power and gnosis. It is He, ineffable Absolute but also Friend and Lord and Enlightener and Lover, who is the object of this most complete devotion and approach and this most intimate inner becoming and surrender. This union, this relation is a thing lifted beyond the forms and laws of the limiting mind, too high for all these inferior dharmas;

it is a truth of our self and spirit. And yet or rather therefore, because it is the truth of our self and spirit, the truth of its oneness with that Spirit from which all comes and by it and as its derivations and suggestions all exists and travails, it is not a negation but a fulfilment of all that mind and life point to and bear in them as their secret and unaccomplished significance. Thus it is not by a nirvana, an exclusion and negating extinction of all that we are here, but by a nirvana, an exclusion and negating extinction of ignorance and ego and a consequent ineffable fulfilment of our knowledge and will and heart's aspiration, an uplifted and limitless living of them in the Divine, in the Eternal, *nivasiṣyasi mayyeva*, a transfiguration and transference of all our consciousness to a greater inner status that there comes this supreme perfection and release in the spirit.

The crux of the spiritual problem, the character of this transition of which it is so difficult for the normal mind of man to get a true apprehension, turns altogether upon the capital distinction between the ignorant life of the ego in the lower nature and the large and luminous existence of the liberated Jiva in his own true spiritual nature. The renunciation of the first must be complete, the transition to the second absolute. This is the distinction on which the Gita dwells here with all possible emphasis. On the one side is this poor, trepidant, braggart egoistic condition of consciousness, *ahaṅkṛta bhāva*, the crippling narrowness of this little helpless separative personality according to whose view-point we ordinarily think and act, feel and respond to the touches of existence. On the other are the vast spiritual reaches of immortal fullness, bliss and knowledge into which we are admitted through union with the divine Being, of whom we are then a manifestation and expression in the eternal light and no longer a disguise in the darkness of the ego-nature. It is the completeness of this union which is indicated by the Gita's *satataṁ mac-cittah*. The life of the ego is founded on a construction of the apparent mental, vital and physical truth of existence, on a nexus of pragmatic relations between the individual soul and Nature, on an intellectual, emotional and sensational interpretation of things used by the little limited I in

us to maintain and satisfy the ideas and desires of its bounded separate personality amid the vast action of the universe. All our dharmas, all the ordinary standards by which we determine our view of things and our knowledge and our action, proceed upon this narrow and limiting basis, and to follow them even in the widest wheelings round our ego centre does not carry us out of this petty circle. It is a circle in which the soul is a contented or struggling prisoner, for ever subject to the mixed compulsions of Nature.

For Purusha veils himself in this round, veils his divine and immortal being in ignorance and is subject to the law of an insistent limiting Prakriti. That law is the compelling rule of the three gunas. It is a triple stair that stumbles upward towards the divine light but cannot reach it. At its base is the law or dharma of inertia: the tamasic man inertly obeys in a customary mechanical action the suggestions and impulses, the round of will of his material and his half-intellectualised vital and sensational nature. In the middle intervenes the kinetic law or dharma; the rajasic man, vital, dynamic, active, attempts to impose himself on his world and environment, but only increases the wounding weight and tyrant yoke of his turbulent passions, desires and egoisms, the burden of his restless self-will, the yoke of his rajasic nature. At the top presses down upon life the harmonic regulative law or dharma; the sattwic man attempts to erect and follow his limited personal standards of reasoning knowledge, enlightened utility or mechanised virtue, his religions and philosophies and ethical formulas, mental systems and constructions, fixed channels of idea and conduct which do not agree with the totality of the meaning of life and are constantly being broken in the movement of the wider universal purpose. The dharma of the sattwic man is the highest in the circle of the gunas; but that too is a limited view and a dwarfed standard. Its imperfect indications lead to a petty and relative perfection; temporarily satisfying to the enlightened personal ego, it is not founded either on the whole truth of the self or on the whole truth of Nature.

And in fact the actual life of man is not at any time one

of these things alone, neither a mechanical routine execution of the first crude law of Nature, nor the struggle of a kinetic soul of action, nor a victorious emergence of conscious light and reason and good and knowledge. There is a mixture of all these dharmas out of which our will and intelligence make a more or less arbitrary construction to be realised as best it can, but never in fact realised except by compromise with other compelling things in the universal Prakriti. The sattwic ideals of our enlightened will and reason are either themselves compromises, at best progressive compromises, subject to a constant imperfection and flux of change, or if absolute in their character, they can be followed only as a counsel of perfection ignored for the most part in practice or successful only as a partial influence. And if sometimes we imagine we have completely realised them, it is because we ignore in ourselves the subconscious or half-conscious mixture of other powers and motives that are usually as much or more than our ideals the real force in our action. That self-ignorance constitutes the whole vanity of human reason and self-righteousness; it is the dark secret lining behind the spotless white outsides of human sainthood and alone makes possible the specious egoisms of knowledge and virtue. The best human knowledge is a half knowledge and the highest human virtue a thing of mixed quality and, even when most sincerely absolute in standard, sufficiently relative in practice. As a general law of living the absolute sattwic ideals cannot prevail in conduct; indispensable as a power for the betterment and raising of personal aspiration and conduct, their insistence modifies life but cannot wholly change it, and their perfect fulfilment images itself only in a dream of the future or a world of heavenly nature free from the mixed strain of our terrestrial existence. It cannot be otherwise because neither the nature of this world nor the nature of man is or can be one single piece made of the pure stuff of sattwa.

The first door of escape we see out of this limitation of our possibilities, out of this confused mixture of dharmas is in a certain high trend towards impersonality, a movement inwards towards something large and universal and calm and free and

right and pure hidden now by the limiting mind of ego. The difficulty is that while we can feel a positive release into this impersonality in moments of the quiet and silence of our being, an impersonal activity is by no means so easy to realise. The pursuit of an impersonal truth or an impersonal will in our conduct is vitiated so long as we live at all in our normal mind by that which is natural and inevitable to that mind, the law of our personality, the subtle urge of our vital nature, the colour of ego. The pursuit of impersonal truth is turned by these influences into an unsuspected cloak for a system of intellectual preferences supported by our mind's limiting insistence; the pursuit of a disinterested impersonal action is converted into a greater authority and apparent high sanction for our personal will's interested selections and blind arbitrary persistences. On the other hand an absolute impersonality would seem to impose an equally absolute quietism, and this would mean that all action is bound to the machinery of the ego and the three gunas and to recede from life and its works the only way out of the circle. This impersonal silence however is not the last word of wisdom in the matter, because it is not the only way and crown or not all the way and the last crown of self-realisation open to our endeavour. There is a mightier fuller more positive spiritual experience in which the circle of our egoistic personality and the round of the mind's limitations vanish in the unwalled infinity of a greatest self and spirit and yet life and its works not only remain still acceptable and possible but reach up and out to their widest spiritual completeness and assume a grand ascending significance.

There have been different gradations in this movement to bridge the gulf between an absolute impersonality and the dynamic possibilities of our nature. The thought and practice of the Mahayana approached this difficult reconciliation through the experience of a deep desirelessness and a large dissolving freedom from mental and vital attachment and sanskaras and on the positive side a universal altruism, a fathomless compassion for the world and its creatures which became as it were the flood and outpouring of the high Nirvanic state on life and action.

That reconciliation was equally the sense of yet another spiritual experience, more conscious of a world significance, more profound, kindling, richly comprehensive on the side of action, a step nearer to the thought of the Gita: this experience we find or can at least read behind the utterances of the Taoist thinkers. There there seems to be an impersonal ineffable Eternal who is spirit and at the same time the one life of the universe: it supports and flows impartially in all things, *samat brahma*; it is a One that is nothing, Asat, because other than all that we perceive and yet the totality of all these existences. The fluid personality that forms like foam on this Infinite, the mobile ego with its attachments and repulsions, its likings and dislikings, its fixed mental distinctions, is an effective image that veils and deforms to us the one reality, Tao, the supreme All and Nothing. That can be touched only by losing personality and its little structural forms in the unseizable universal and eternal Presence and, this once achieved, we live in that a real life and have another greater consciousness which makes us penetrate all things, ourselves penetrable to all eternal influences. Here, as in the Gita, the highest way would seem to be a complete openness and self-surrender to the Eternal. "Your body is not your own," says the Taoist thinker, "it is the delegated image of God: your life is not your own, it is the delegated harmony of God: your individuality is not your own, it is the delegated adaptability of God." And here too a vast perfection and liberated action are the dynamic result of the soul's surrender. The works of ego personality are a separative running counter to the bias of universal nature. This false movement must be replaced by a wise and still passivity in the hands of the universal and eternal Power, a passivity that makes us adaptable to the infinite action, in harmony with its truth, plastic to the shaping breath of the Spirit. The man who has this harmony may be motionless within and absorbed in silence, but his Self will appear free from disguises, the divine Influence will be at work in him and while he abides in tranquillity and an inward inaction, *naiṣkarma*, yet he will act with an irresistible power and myriads of things and beings will move and gather under his influence. The impersonal force of the Self

takes up his works, movements no longer deformed by ego, and sovereignly acts through him for the keeping together and control of the world and its peoples, *loka-saṅgrahārtha*.

There is little difference between these experiences and the first impersonal activity inculcated by the Gita. The Gita also demands of us renunciation of desire, attachment and ego, transcendence of the lower nature and the breaking up of our personality and its little formations. The Gita also demands of us to live in the Self and Spirit, to see the Self and Spirit in all and all in the Self and Spirit and all as the Self and Spirit. It demands of us like the Taoist thinker to renounce our natural personality and its works into the Self, the Spirit, the Eternal, the Brahman, *ātmani sannyasya, brahmaṇi*. And there is this coincidence because that is always man's highest and freest possible experience of a quietistic inner largeness and silence reconciled with an outer dynamic active living, the two coexistent or fused together in the impersonal infinite reality and illimitable action of the one immortal Power and sole eternal Existence. But the Gita adds a phrase of immense import that alters everything, *ātmani atho mayi*. The demand is to see all things in the self and then in "Me" the Ishwara, to renounce all action into the Self, Spirit, Brahman and thence into the supreme Person, the Purushottama. There is here a still greater and profounder complex of spiritual experience, a larger transmutation of the significance of human life, a more mystic and heart-felt sweep of the return of the stream to the ocean, the restoration of personal works and the cosmic action to the Eternal Worker. The stress on pure impersonality has this difficulty and incompleteness for us that it reduces the inner person, the spiritual individual, that persistent miracle of our inmost being, to a temporary, illusive and mutable formation in the Infinite. The Infinite alone exists and except in a passing play has no true regard on the soul of the living creature. There can be no real and permanent relation between the soul in man and the Eternal, if that soul is even as the always renewable body no more than a transient phenomenon in the Infinite.

It is true that the ego and its limited personality are even such a temporary and mutable formation of Nature and therefore it

must be broken and we must feel ourselves one with all and infinite. But the ego is not the real person; when it has been dissolved there still remains the spiritual individual, there is still the eternal Jiva. The ego limitation disappears and the soul lives in a profound unity with the One and feels its universal unity with all things. And yet it is still our own soul that enjoys this expanse and oneness. The universal action, even when it is felt as the action of one and the same energy in all, even when it is experienced as the initiation and movement of the Ishwara, still takes different forms in different souls of men, *amśah sanātanah*, and a different turn in their nature. The light of spiritual knowledge, the manifold universal Shakti, the eternal delight of being stream into us and around us, concentrate in the soul and flow out on the surrounding world from each as from a centre of living spiritual consciousness whose circumference is lost in the infinite. More, the spiritual individual remains as a little universe of divine existence at once independent and inseparable from the whole infinite universe of the divine self-manifestation of which we see a petty portion around us. A portion of the Transcendent, creative, he creates his own world around him even while he retains this cosmic consciousness in which are all others. If it be objected that this is an illusion which must disappear when he retreats into the transcendent Absolute, there is after all no very certain certainty in that matter. For it is still the soul in man that is the enjoyer of this release, as it was the living spiritual centre of the divine action and manifestation; there is something more than the mere self-breaking of an illusory shell of individuality in the Infinite. This mystery of our existence signifies that what we are is not only a temporary name and form of the One, but as we may say, a soul and spirit of the Divine Oneness. Our spiritual individuality of which the ego is only a misleading shadow and projection in the ignorance has or is a truth that persists beyond the ignorance; there is something of us that dwells for ever in the supreme nature of the Purushottama, *nivasiṣyasi mayi*. This is the profound comprehensiveness of the teaching of the Gita that while it recognises the truth of the universalised impersonality into which we enter by the extinction of ego, *brahma-nirvāṇa*,

— for indeed without it there can be no liberation or at least no absolute release,— it recognises too the persistent spiritual truth of our personality as a factor of the highest experience. Not this natural but that divine and central being in us is the eternal Jiva. It is the Ishwara, Vasudeva who is all things, that takes up our mind and life and body for the enjoyment of the lower Prakriti; it is the supreme Prakriti, the original spiritual nature of the supreme Purusha that holds together the universe and appears in it as the Jiva. This Jiva then is a portion of the Purushottama's original divine spiritual being, a living power of the living Eternal. He is not merely a temporary form of lower Nature, but an eternal portion of the Highest in his supreme Prakriti, an eternal conscious ray of the divine existence and as everlasting as that supernal Prakriti. One side of the highest perfection and status of our liberated consciousness must then be to assume the true place of the Jiva in a supreme spiritual Nature, there to dwell in the glory of the supreme Purusha and there to have the joy of the eternal spiritual oneness.

This mystery of our being implies necessarily a similar supreme mystery of the being of the Purushottama, *rahasyam uttamam*. It is not an exclusive impersonality of the Absolute that is the highest secret. This highest secret is the miracle of a supreme Person and apparent vast Impersonal that are one, an immutable transcendent Self of all things and a Spirit that manifests itself here at the very foundation of cosmos as an infinite and multiple personality acting everywhere,— a Self and Spirit revealed to our last, closest, profoundest experience as an illimitable Being who accepts us and takes us to him, not into a blank of featureless existence, but most positively, deeply, wonderfully into all Himself and in all the ways of his and our conscious existence. This highest experience and this largest way of seeing open a profound, moving and endless significance to our parts of nature, our knowledge, will, heart's love and adoration, which is lost or diminished if we put an exclusive stress on the impersonal, because that stress suppresses or minimises or does not allow of the intensest fulfilment of movements and powers that are a portion of our deepest nature, intensities and

luminosities that are attached to the closest essential fibres of our self-experience. It is not the austerity of knowledge alone that can help us; there is room and infinite room for the heart's love and aspiration illumined and uplifted by knowledge, a more mystically clear, a greater calmly passionate knowledge. It is by the perpetual unified closeness of our heart-consciousness, mind-consciousness, all consciousness, *satataṁ maccittah*, that we get the widest, the deepest, the most integral experience of our oneness with the Eternal. A nearest oneness in all the being, profoundly individual in a divine passion even in the midst of universality, even at the top of transcendence is here enjoined on the human soul as its way to reach the Highest and its way to possess the perfection and the divine consciousness to which it is called by its nature as a spirit. The intelligence and will have to turn the whole existence in all its parts to the Ishwara, to the divine Self and Master of that whole existence, *buddhi-yogam upāśritya*. The heart has to cast all other emotion into the delight of oneness with him and the love of Him in all creatures. The sense spiritualised has to see and hear and feel him everywhere. The life has to be utterly his life in the Jiva. All the actions have to proceed from his sole power and sole initiation in the will, knowledge, organs of action, senses, vital parts, body. This way is deeply impersonal because the separateness of ego is abolished for the soul universalised and restored to transcendence. And yet it is intimately personal because it soars to a transcendent passion and power of indwelling and oneness. A featureless extinction may be a rigorous demand of the mind's logic of self-annulment; it is not the last word of the supreme mystery, *rahasyam uttamam*.

The refusal of Arjuna to persevere in his divinely appointed work proceeded from the ego sense in him, *ahaṅkāra*. Behind it was a mixture and confusion and tangled error of ideas and impulsions of the sattvic, rajasic, tamasic ego, the vital nature's fear of sin and its personal consequences, the heart's recoil from individual grief and suffering, the clouded reason's covering of egoistic impulses by self-deceptive specious pleas of right and virtue, our nature's ignorant shrinking from the ways of God

because they seem other than the ways of man and impose things terrible and unpleasant on his nervous and emotional parts and his intelligence. The spiritual consequences will be infinitely worse now than before, now that a higher truth and a greater way and spirit of action have been revealed to him, if yet persisting in his egoism he perseveres in a vain and impossible refusal. For it is a vain resolution, a futile recoil, since it springs only from a temporary failure of strength, a strong but passing deviation from the principle of energy of his inmost character, and is not the true will and way of his nature. If now he casts down his arms, he will yet be compelled by that nature to resume them when he sees the battle and slaughter go on without him, his abstention a defeat of all for which he has lived, the cause for whose service he was born weakened and bewildered by the absence or inactivity of its protagonist, vanquished and afflicted by the cynical and unscrupulous strength of the champions of a self-regarding unrighteousness and injustice. And in this return there will be no spiritual virtue. It was a confusion of the ideas and feelings of the ego mind that impelled his refusal; it will be his nature working through a restoration of the characteristic ideas and feelings of the ego mind that will compel him to annul his refusal. But whatever the direction, this continued subjection to the ego will mean a worse, a more fatal spiritual refusal, a perdition, *vinasti*; for it will be a definite falling away from a greater truth of his being than that which he has followed in the ignorance of the lower nature. He has been admitted to a higher consciousness, a new self-realisation, he has been shown the possibility of a divine instead of an egoistic action; the gates have been opened before him of a divine and spiritual in place of a merely intellectual, emotional, sensuous and vital life. He is called to be no longer a great blind instrument, but a conscious soul and an enlightened power and vessel of the Godhead.

For there is this possibility within us: there is open to us even at our human highest this consummation and transcendence. The ordinary mind and life of man is a half-enlightened and mostly an ignorant development and a partial uncompleted manifestation of something concealed within him. There is a

godhead there concealed from himself, subliminal to his consciousness, immobilised behind the obscure veil of a working that is not wholly his own and the secret of which he has not yet mastered. He finds himself in the world thinking and willing and feeling and acting and he takes himself instinctively or intellectually conceives of himself or at least conducts his life as a separate self-existent being who has the freedom of his thought and will and feeling and action. He bears the burden of his sin and error and suffering and takes the responsibility and merit of his knowledge and virtue; he claims the right to satisfy his sattwic, rajasic or tamasic ego and arrogates the power to shape his own destiny and to turn the world to his own uses. It is this idea of himself through which Nature works in him, and she deals with him according to his own conception, but fulfils all the time the will of the greater Spirit within her. The error of this self-view of man is like most of his errors the distortion of a truth, a distortion that creates a whole system of erroneous and yet effective values. What is true of his spirit he attributes to his ego-personality and gives it a false application, a false form and a mass of ignorant consequences. The ignorance lies in this fundamental deficiency of his surface consciousness that he identifies himself only with the outward mechanical part of him which is a convenience of Nature and with so much only of the soul as reflects and is reflected in these workings. He misses the greater inner spirit within which gives to all his mind and life and creation and action an unfulfilled promise and a hidden significance. A universal Nature here obeys the power of the Spirit who is the master of the universe, shapes each creature and determines its action according to the law of its own nature, Swabhava, shapes man too and determines his action according to the general law of nature of his kind, the law of a mental being emmeshed and ignorant in the life and the body, shapes too each man and determines his individual action according to the law of his own distinct type and the variations of his own original swabhava. It is this universal Nature that forms and directs the mechanical workings of the body and the instinctive operations of our vital and nervous parts; and there our subjection to her

is very obvious. And she has formed and directs the action too, hardly less mechanical as things now are, of our sense-mind and will and intelligence. Only, while in the animal the mind workings are a wholly mechanical obedience to Prakriti, man has this distinction that he embodies a conscious development in which the soul more actively participates, and that gives to his outward mentality the sense, useful to him, indispensable, but very largely a misleading sense, of a certain freedom and increasing mastery of his instrumental nature. And it is especially misleading because it blinds him to the hard fact of his bondage and his false idea of freedom prevents him from finding a true liberty and lordship. For the freedom and mastery of man over his nature are hardly even real and cannot be complete until he becomes aware of the Divinity within him and is in possession of his own real self and spirit other than the ego, *ātmavān*. It is that which Nature is labouring to express in mind and life and body; it is that which imposes on her this or that law of being and working, Swabhava; it is that which shapes the outward destiny and the evolution of the soul within us. It is therefore only when he is in possession of his real self and spirit that his nature can become a conscious instrument and enlightened power of the godhead.

For then, when we enter into that inmost self of our existence, we come to know that in us and in all is the one Spirit and Godhead whom all Nature serves and manifests and we ourselves are soul of this Soul, spirit of this Spirit, our body his delegated image, our life a movement of the rhythm of his life, our mind a sheath of his consciousness, our senses his instruments, our emotions and sensations the seekings of his delight of being, our actions a means of his purpose, our freedom only a shadow, suggestion or glimpse while we are ignorant, but when we know him and ourselves a prolongation and effective channel of his immortal freedom. Our masteries are a reflection of his power at work, our best knowledge a partial light of his knowledge, the highest most potent will of our spirit a projection and delegation of the will of this Spirit in all things who is the Master and Soul of the universe. It is the Lord seated in the heart

of every creature who has been turning us in all our inner and outer action during the ignorance as if mounted on a machine on the wheel of this Maya of the lower Nature. And whether obscure in the Ignorance or luminous in the Knowledge, it is for him in us and him in the world that we have our existence. To live consciously and integrally in this knowledge and this truth is to escape from ego and break out of Maya. All other highest dharmas are only a preparation for this Dharma, and all Yoga is only a means by which we can come first to some kind of union and finally, if we have the full light, to an integral union with the Master and supreme Soul and Self of our existence. The greatest Yoga is to take refuge from all the perplexities and difficulties of our nature with this indwelling Lord of all Nature, to turn to him with our whole being, with the life and body and sense and mind and heart and understanding, with our whole dedicated knowledge and will and action, *sarva-bhāvena*, in every way of our conscious self and our instrumental nature. And when we can at all times and entirely do this, then the divine Light and Love and Power takes hold of us, fills both self and instruments and leads us safe through all the doubts and difficulties and perplexities and perils that beset our soul and our life, leads us to a supreme peace and the spiritual freedom of our immortal and eternal status, *parām sāntim, sthānari sāśvatam*.

For after giving out all the laws, the dharmas, and the deepest essence of its Yoga, after saying that beyond all the first secrets revealed to the mind of man by the transforming light of spiritual knowledge, *guhyāt*, this is a still deeper more secret truth, *guhyataram*, the Gita suddenly declares that there is yet a supreme word that it has to speak, *paramām vacah*, and a most secret truth of all, *sarva-guhyatamam*. This secret of secrets the Teacher will tell to Arjuna as his highest good because he is the chosen and beloved soul, *iṣṭa*. For evidently, as had already been declared by the Upanishad, it is only the rare soul chosen by the Spirit for the revelation of his very body, *tanum svām*, who can be admitted to this mystery, because he alone is near enough in heart and mind and life to the Godhead to respond truly to it in all his being and to make it a living practice. The last, the

closing supreme word of the Gita expressing the highest mystery is spoken in two brief, direct and simple slokas and these are left without farther comment or enlargement to sink into the mind and reveal their own fullness of meaning in the soul's experience. For it is alone this inner incessantly extending experience that can make evident the infinite deal of meaning with which are for ever pregnant these words in themselves apparently so slight and simple. And we feel, as they are being uttered, that it was this for which the soul of the disciple was being prepared all the time and the rest was only an enlightening and enabling discipline and doctrine. Thus runs this secret of secrets, the highest most direct message of the Ishwara. "Become my-minded, my lover and adorer, a sacrificer to me, bow thyself to me, to me thou shalt come, this is my pledge and promise to thee, for dear art thou to me. Abandon all dharmas and take refuge in me alone. I will deliver thee from all sin and evil, do not grieve."

The Gita throughout has been insisting on a great and well-built discipline of Yoga, a large and clearly traced philosophical system, on the Swabhava and the Swadharma, on the sattvic law of life as leading out of itself by a self-exceeding exaltation to a free spiritual dharma of immortal existence utterly wide in its spaces and high-lifted beyond the limitation of even this highest guna, on many rules and means and injunctions and conditions of perfection, and now suddenly it seems to break out of its own structure and says to the human soul, "Abandon all dharmas, give thyself to the Divine alone, to the supreme Godhead above and around and within thee: that is all that thou needest, that is the truest and greatest way, that is the real deliverance." The Master of the worlds in the form of the divine Charioteer and Teacher of Kurukshestra has revealed to man the magnificent realities of God and Self and Spirit and the nature of the complex world and the relation of man's mind and life and heart and senses to the Spirit and the victorious means by which through his own spiritual self-discipline and effort he can rise out of mortality into immortality and out of his limited mental into his infinite spiritual existence. And now speaking as the Spirit and Godhead in man and in all things he says to him,

“All this personal effort and self-discipline will not in the end be needed, all following and limitation of rule and dharma can at last be thrown away as hampering encumbrances if thou canst make a complete surrender to Me, depend alone on the Spirit and Godhead within thee and all things and trust to his sole guidance. Turn all thy mind to me and fill it with the thought of me and my presence. Turn all thy heart to me, make thy every action, whatever it be, a sacrifice and offering to me. That done, leave me to do my will with thy life and soul and action; do not be grieved or perplexed by my dealings with thy mind and heart and life and works or troubled because they do not seem to follow the laws and dharmas man imposes on himself to guide his limited will and intelligence. My ways are the ways of a perfect wisdom and power and love that knows all things and combines all its movements in view of a perfect eventual result; for it is refining and weaving together the many threads of an integral perfection. I am here with thee in thy chariot of battle revealed as the Master of Existence within and without thee and I repeat the absolute assurance, the infallible promise that I will lead thee to myself through and beyond all sorrow and evil. Whatever difficulties and perplexities arise, be sure of this that I am leading thee to a complete divine life in the universal and an immortal existence in the transcendent Spirit.”

The secret thing, *guhyam*, that all deep spiritual knowledge reveals to us, mirrored in various teachings and justified in the soul’s experience, is for the Gita the secret of the spiritual self hidden within us of which mind and external Nature are only manifestations or figures. It is the secret of the constant relations between soul and Nature, Purusha and Prakriti, the secret of an indwelling Godhead who is the lord of all existence and veiled from us in its forms and movements. These are the truths taught in many ways by Vedanta and Sankhya and Yoga and synthetised in the earlier chapters of the Gita. And amidst all their apparent distinctions they are one truth and all the different ways of Yoga are various means of spiritual self-discipline by which our unquiet mind and blinded life are stilled and turned towards this many-aspected One and the secret truth of self and God made

so real to us and intimate that we can either consciously live and dwell in it or lose our separate selves in the Eternal and no longer be compelled at all by the mental Ignorance.

The more secret thing, *guhyataram*, developed by the Gita is the profound reconciling truth of the divine Purushottama, at once self and Purusha, supreme Brahman and a sole, intimate, mysterious, ineffable Godhead. That gives to the thought a larger and more deeply understanding foundation for an ultimate knowledge and to the spiritual experience a greater and more fully comprehending and comprehensive Yoga. This deeper mystery is founded on the secret of the supreme spiritual Prakriti and of the Jiva, an eternal portion of the Divine in that eternal and this manifested Nature and of one spirit and essence with him in his immutable self-existence. This profounder knowledge escapes from the elementary distinction of spiritual experience between the Beyond and what is here. For the Transcendent beyond the worlds is at the same time Vasudeva who is all things in all worlds; he is the Lord standing in the heart of every creature and the self of all existences and the origin and supernal meaning of everything that he has put forth in his Prakriti. He is manifested in his Vibhutis and he is the Spirit in Time who compels the action of the world and the Sun of all knowledge and the Lover and Beloved of the soul and the Master of all works and sacrifice. The result of an inmost opening to this deeper, truer, more secret mystery is the Gita's Yoga of integral knowledge, integral works and integral bhakti. It is the simultaneous experience of spiritual universality and a free and perfected spiritual individuality, of an entire union with God and an entire dwelling in him as at once the frame of the soul's immortality and the support and power of our liberated action in the world and the body.

And now there comes the supreme word and most secret thing of all, *guhyatamam*, that the Spirit and Godhead is an Infinite free from all dharmas and though he conducts the world according to fixed laws and leads man through his dharmas of ignorance and knowledge, sin and virtue, right and wrong, liking and disliking and indifference, pleasure and pain, joy and

sorrow and the rejection of these opposites, through his physical and vital, intellectual, emotional, ethical and spiritual forms and rules and standards, yet the Spirit and Godhead transcends all these things, and if we too can cast away all dependence on dharmas, surrender ourselves to this free and eternal Spirit and, taking care only to keep ourselves absolutely and exclusively open to him, trust to the light and power and delight of the Divine in us and, unafraid and ungrieving, accept only his guidance, then that is the truest, the greatest release and that brings the absolute and inevitable perfection of our self and nature. This is the way offered to the chosen of the Spirit,—to those only in whom he takes the greatest delight because they are nearest to him and most capable of oneness and of being even as he, freely consenting and concordant with Nature in her highest power and movement, universal in soul consciousness, transcendent in the spirit.

For a time comes in spiritual development when we become aware that all our effort and action are only our mental and vital reactions to the silent and secret insistence of a greater Presence in and around us. It is borne in upon us that all our Yoga, our aspiration and our endeavour are imperfect or narrow forms, because disfigured or at least limited by the mind's associations, demands, prejudgetments, predilections, mistranslations or half translations of a vaster truth. Our ideas and experiences and efforts are mental images only of greatest things which would be done more perfectly, directly, freely, largely, more in harmony with the universal and eternal will by that Power itself in us if we could only put ourselves passively as instruments in the hands of a supreme and absolute strength and wisdom. That Power is not separate from us; it is our own self one with the self of all others and at the same time a transcendent Being and an immanent Person. Our existence, our action taken up into this greatest Existence would be no longer, as it seems to us now, individually our own in a mental separation. It would be the vast movement of an Infinity and an intimate ineffable Presence; it would be the constant spontaneity of formation and expression in us of this deep universal self and this transcendent Spirit. The Gita

indicates that in order that that may wholly be, the surrender must be without reservations; our Yoga, our life, our state of inner being must be determined freely by this living Infinite, not predetermined by our mind's insistence on this or that dharma or any dharma. The divine Master of the Yoga, *yogeśvarah kṛṣṇah*, will then himself take up our Yoga and raise us to our utmost possible perfection, not the perfection of any external or mental standard or limiting rule, but vast and comprehensive, to the mind incalculable. It will be a perfection developed by an all-seeing Wisdom according to the whole truth, first indeed of our human swabhava, but afterwards of a greater thing into which it will open, a spirit and power illimitable, immortal, free and all-transmuting, the light and splendour of a divine and infinite nature.

All must be given as material of that transmutation. An omniscient consciousness will take up our knowledge and our ignorance, our truth and our error, cast away their forms of insufficiency, *sarva-dharmān parityajya*, and transform all into its infinite light. An almighty Power will take up our virtue and sin, our right and wrong, our strength and our weakness, cast away their tangled figures, *sarva-dharmān parityajya*, and transform all into its transcendent purity and universal good and infallible force. An ineffable Ananda will take up our petty joy and sorrow, our struggling pleasure and pain, cast away their discordances and imperfect rhythms, *sarva-dharmān parityajya*, and transform all into its transcendent and universal unimaginable delight. All that all the Yogas can do will be done and more; but it will be done in a greater seeing way, with a greater wisdom and truth than any human teacher, saint or sage can give us. The inner spiritual state to which this supreme Yoga will take us, will be above all that is here and yet comprehensive of all things in this and other worlds, but with a spiritual transformation of all, without limitation, without bondage, *sarva-dharmān parityajya*. The infinite existence, consciousness and delight of the Godhead in its calm silence and bright boundless activity will be there, will be its essential, fundamental, universal stuff, mould and character. And in that mould of infinity the Divine made manifest

will overtly dwell, no longer concealed by his Yogamaya, and whenever and as he wills build in us whatever shapes of the Infinite, translucent forms of knowledge, thought, love, spiritual joy, power and action according to his self-fulfilling will and immortal pleasure. And there will be no binding effect on the free soul and the unaffected nature, no unescapable crystallising into this or that inferior formula. For all the action will be executed by the power of the Spirit in a divine freedom, *sarva-dharmān parityajya*. An unfallen abiding in the transcendent Spirit, *param dhāma*, will be the foundation and the assurance of this spiritual state. An intimate understanding oneness with universal being and all creatures, released from the evil and suffering of the separative mind but wisely regardful of true distinctions, will be the conditioning power. A constant delight, oneness and harmony of the eternal individual here with the Divine and all that he is will be the effect of this integral liberation. The baffling problems of our human existence of which Arjuna's difficulty stands as an acute example, are created by our separative personality in the Ignorance. This Yoga because it puts the soul of man into its right relation with God and world-existence and makes our action God's, the knowledge and will shaping and moving it his and our life the harmony of a divine self-expression, is the way to their total disappearance.

The whole Yoga is revealed, the great word of the teaching is given, and Arjuna the chosen human soul is once more turned, no longer in his egoistic mind but in this greatest self-knowledge, to the divine action. The Vibhuti is ready for the divine life in the human, his conscious spirit for the works of the liberated soul, *muktasya karma*. Destroyed is the illusion of the mind; the soul's memory of its self and its truth concealed so long by the misleading shows and forms of our life has returned to it and become its normal consciousness: all doubt and perplexity gone, it can turn to the execution of the command and do faithfully whatever work for God and the world may be appointed and apportioned to it by the Master of our being, the Spirit and Godhead self-fulfilled in Time and universe.

The Core of the Gita's Meaning

WHAT THEN is the message of the Gita and what its working value, its spiritual utility to the human mind of the present day after the long ages that have elapsed since it was written and the great subsequent transformations of thought and experience? The human mind moves always forward, alters its viewpoint and enlarges its thought substance, and the effect of these changes is to render past systems of thinking obsolete or, when they are preserved, to extend, to modify and subtly or visibly to alter their value. The vitality of an ancient doctrine consists in the extent to which it naturally lends itself to such a treatment; for that means that whatever may have been the limitations or the obsolescences of the form of its thought, the truth of substance, the truth of living vision and experience on which its system was built is still sound and retains a permanent validity and significance. The Gita is a book that has worn extraordinarily well and it is almost as fresh and still in its real substance quite as new, because always renewable in experience, as when it first appeared in or was written into the frame of the Mahabharata. It is still received in India as one of the great bodies of doctrine that most authoritatively govern religious thinking and its teaching acknowledged as of the highest value if not wholly accepted by almost all shades of religious belief and opinion. Its influence is not merely philosophic or academic but immediate and living, an influence both for thought and action, and its ideas are actually at work as a powerful shaping factor in the revival and renewal of a nation and a culture. It has even been said recently by a great voice that all we need of spiritual truth for the spiritual life is to be found in the Gita. It would be to encourage the superstition of the book to take too literally that utterance. The truth of the spirit is infinite and cannot be circumscribed in that manner. Still it

may be said that most of the main clues are there and that after all the later developments of spiritual experience and discovery we can still return to it for a large inspiration and guidance. Outside India too it is universally acknowledged as one of the world's great scriptures, although in Europe its thought is better understood than its secret of spiritual practice. What is it then that gives this vitality to the thought and the truth of the Gita?

The central interest of the Gita's philosophy and Yoga is its attempt, the idea with which it sets out, continues and closes, to reconcile and even effect a kind of unity between the inner spiritual truth in its most absolute and integral realisation and the outer actualities of man's life and action. A compromise between the two is common enough, but that can never be a final and satisfactory solution. An ethical rendering of spirituality is also common and has its value as a law of conduct; but that is a mental solution which does not amount to a complete practical reconciliation of the whole truth of spirit with the whole truth of life and it raises as many problems as it solves. One of these is indeed the starting-point of the Gita; it sets out with an ethical problem raised by a conflict in which we have on one side the dharma of the man of action, a prince and warrior and leader of men, the protagonist of a great crisis, of a struggle on the physical plane, the plane of actual life, between the powers of right and justice and the powers of wrong and injustice, the demand of the destiny of the race upon him that he shall resist and give battle and establish even though through a terrible physical struggle and a giant slaughter a new era and reign of truth and right and justice, and on the other side the ethical sense which condemns the means and the action as a sin, recoils from the price of individual suffering and social strife, unsettling and disturbance and regards abstention from violence and battle as the only way and the one right moral attitude. A spiritualised ethics insists on Ahinsa, on non-injuring and non-killing as the highest law of spiritual conduct. The battle, if it is to be fought out at all, must be fought on the spiritual plane and by some kind of non-resistance or refusal of participation or only by soul resistance, and if this does not succeed on the external plane,

if the force of injustice conquers, the individual will still have preserved his virtue and vindicated by his example the highest ideal. On the other hand a more insistent extreme of the inner spiritual direction, passing beyond this struggle between social duty and an absolutist ethical ideal, is apt to take the ascetic turn and to point away from life and all its aims and standards of action towards another and celestial or supracosmic state in which alone beyond the perplexed vanity and illusion of man's birth and life and death there can be a pure spiritual existence. The Gita rejects none of these things in their place,—for it insists on the performance of the social duty, the following of the dharma for the man who has to take his share in the common action, accepts Ahinsa as part of the highest spiritual-ethical ideal and recognises the ascetic renunciation as a way of spiritual salvation. And yet it goes boldly beyond all these conflicting positions; greatly daring, it justifies all life to the spirit as a significant manifestation of the one Divine Being and asserts the compatibility of a complete human action and a complete spiritual life lived in union with the Infinite, consonant with the highest Self, expressive of the perfect Godhead.

All the problems of human life arise from the complexity of our existence, the obscurity of its essential principle and the secrecy of the inmost power that makes out its determinations and governs its purpose and its processes. If our existence were of one piece, solely material-vital or solely mental or solely spiritual, or even if the others were entirely or mainly involved in one of these or were quite latent in our subconscious or our superconscious parts, there would be nothing to perplex us; the material and vital law would be imperative or the mental would be clear to its own pure and unobstructed principle or the spiritual self-existent and self-sufficient to spirit. The animals are aware of no problems; a mental god in a world of pure mentality would admit none or would solve them all by the purity of a mental rule or the satisfaction of a rational harmony; a pure spirit would be above them and self-content in the infinite. But the existence of man is a triple web, a thing mysteriously physical-vital, mental and spiritual at once, and he knows not what are

the true relations of these things, which the real reality of his life and his nature, whither the attraction of his destiny and where the sphere of his perfection.

Matter and life are his actual basis, the thing from which he starts and on which he stands and whose requirement and law he has to satisfy if he would exist at all on earth and in the body. The material and vital law is a rule of survival, of struggle, of desire and possession, of self-assertion and the satisfaction of the body, the life and the ego. All the intellectual reasoning in the world, all the ethical idealism and spiritual absolutism of which the higher faculties of man are capable cannot abolish the reality and claim of our vital and material base or prevent the race from following under the imperative compulsion of Nature its aims and the satisfaction of its necessities or from making its important problems a great and legitimate part of human destiny and human interest and endeavour. And the intelligence of man even, failing to find any sustenance in spiritual or ideal solutions that solve everything else but the pressing problems of our actual human life, often turns away from them to an exclusive acceptance of the vital and material existence and the reasoned or instinctive pursuit of its utmost possible efficiency, well-being and organised satisfaction. A gospel of the will to live or the will to power or of a rationalised vital and material perfection becomes the recognised dharma of the human race and all else is considered either a pretentious falsity or a quite subsidiary thing, a side issue of a minor and dependent consequence.

Matter and life however in spite of their insistence and great importance are not all that man is, nor can he wholly accept mind as nothing but a servant of the life and body admitted to certain pure enjoyments of its own as a sort of reward for its service or regard it as no more than an extension and flower of the vital urge, an ideal luxury contingent upon the satisfaction of the material life. The mind much more intimately than the body and the life is the man, and the mind as it develops insists more and more on making the body and the life an instrument — an indispensable instrument and yet a considerable obstacle, otherwise there would be no problem — for its own characteristic

satisfactions and self-realisation. The mind of man is not only a vital and physical, but an intellectual, aesthetic, ethical, psychic, emotional and dynamic intelligence, and in the sphere of each of its tendencies its highest and strongest nature is to strain towards some absolute of them which the frame of life will not allow it to capture wholly and embody and make here entirely real. The mental absolute of our aspiration remains as a partly grasped shining or fiery ideal which the mind can make inwardly very present to itself, inwardly imperative on its effort, and can even effectuate partly, but not compel all the facts of life into its image. There is thus an absolute, a high imperative of intellectual truth and reason sought for by our intellectual being; there is an absolute, an imperative of right and conduct aimed at by the ethical conscience; there is an absolute, an imperative of love, sympathy, compassion, oneness yearned after by our emotional and psychic nature; there is an absolute, an imperative of delight and beauty quivered to by the aesthetic soul; there is an absolute, an imperative of inner self-mastery and control of life laboured after by the dynamic will; all these are there together and impinge upon the absolute, the imperative of possession and pleasure and safe embodied existence insisted on by the vital and physical mind. And the human intelligence, since it is not able to realise entirely any of these things, much less all of them together, erects in each sphere many standards and dharmas, standards of truth and reason, of right and conduct, of delight and beauty, of love, sympathy and oneness, of self-mastery and control, of self-preservation and possession and vital efficiency and pleasure, and tries to impose them on life. The absolute shining ideals stand far above and beyond our capacity and rare individuals approximate to them as best they can: the mass follow or profess to follow some less magnificent norm, some established possible and relative standard. Human life as a whole undergoes the attraction and yet rejects the ideal. Life resists in the strength of some obscure infinite of its own and wears down or breaks down any established mental and moral order. And this must be either because the two are quite different and disparate though meeting and interacting principles or because mind has not the

clue to the whole reality of life. The clue must be sought in something greater, an unknown something above the mentality and morality of the human creature.

The mind itself has the vague sense of some surpassing factor of this kind and in the pursuit of its absolutes frequently strikes against it. It glimpses a state, a power, a presence that is near and within and inmost to it and yet immeasurably greater and singularly distant and above it; it has a vision of something more essential, more absolute than its own absolutes, intimate, infinite, one, and it is that which we call God, Self or Spirit. This then the mind attempts to know, enter, touch and seize wholly, to approach it or become it, to arrive at some kind of unity or lose itself in a complete identity with that mystery, *āścaryam*. The difficulty is that this spirit in its purity seems something yet farther than the mental absolutes from the actualities of life, something not translatable by mind into its own terms, much less into those of life and action. Therefore we have the intransigent absolutists of the spirit who reject the mental and condemn the material being and yearn after a pure spiritual existence happily purchased by the dissolution of all that we are in life and mind, a Nirvana. The rest of spiritual effort is for these fanatics of the Absolute a mental preparation or a compromise, a spiritualising of life and mind as much as possible. And because the difficulty most constantly insistent on man's mentality in practice is that presented by the claims of his vital being, by life and conduct and action, the direction taken by this preparatory endeavour consists mainly in a spiritualising of the ethical supported by the psychical mind — or rather it brings in the spiritual power and purity to aid these in enforcing their absolute claim and to impart a greater authority than life allows to the ethical ideal of right and truth of conduct or the psychic ideal of love and sympathy and oneness. These things are helped to some highest expression, given their broadest luminous basis by an assent of the reason and will to the underlying truth of the absolute oneness of the spirit and therefore the essential oneness of all living creatures. This kind of spirituality linked on in some way to the demands of the normal mind of man,

persuaded to the acceptance of useful social duty and current law of social conduct, popularised by cult and ceremony and image is the outward substance of the world's greater religions. These religions have their individual victories, call in some ray of a higher light, impose some shadow of a larger spiritual or semi-spiritual rule, but cannot effect a complete victory, end flatly in a compromise and in the act of compromise are defeated by life. Its problems remain and even recur in their fiercest forms — even such as this grim problem of Kurukshtetra. The idealising intellect and ethical mind hope always to eliminate them, to discover some happy device born of their own aspiration and made effective by their own imperative insistence, which will annihilate this nether untoward aspect of life; but it endures and is not eliminated. The spiritualised intelligence on the other hand offers indeed by the voice of religion the promise of some victorious millennium hereafter, but meanwhile half convinced of terrestrial impotence, persuaded that the soul is a stranger and intruder upon earth, declares that after all not here in the life of the body or in the collective life of mortal man but in some immortal Beyond lies the heaven or the Nirvana where alone is to be found the true spiritual existence.

It is here that the Gita intervenes with a restatement of the truth of the Spirit, of the Self, of God and of the world and Nature. It extends and remoulds the truth evolved by a later thought from the ancient Upanishads and ventures with assured steps on an endeavour to apply its solving power to the problem of life and action. The solution offered by the Gita does not disentangle all the problem as it offers itself to modern mankind; as stated here to a more ancient mentality, it does not meet the insistent pressure of the present mind of man for a collective advance, does not respond to its cry for a collective life that will at last embody a greater rational and ethical and if possible even a dynamic spiritual ideal. Its call is to the individual who has become capable of a complete spiritual existence; but for the rest of the race it prescribes only a gradual advance, to be wisely effected by following out faithfully with more and more of intelligence and moral purpose and with a final turn to

spirituality the law of their nature. Its message touches the other smaller solutions but, even when it accepts them partly, it is to point them beyond themselves to a higher and more integral secret into which as yet only the few individuals have shown themselves fit to enter.

The Gita's message to the mind that follows after the vital and material life is that all life is indeed a manifestation of the universal Power in the individual, a derivation from the Self, a ray from the Divine, but actually it figures the Self and the Divine veiled in a disguising Maya, and to pursue the lower life for its own sake is to persist in a stumbling path and to enthroned our nature's obscure ignorance and not at all to find the true truth and complete law of existence. A gospel of the will to live, the will to power, of the satisfaction of desire, of the glorification of mere force and strength, of the worship of the ego and its vehement acquisitive self-will and tireless self-regarding intellect is the gospel of the Asura and it can lead only to some gigantic ruin and perdition. The vital and material man must accept for his government a religious and social and ideal dharma by which, while satisfying desire and interest under right restrictions, he can train and subdue his lower personality and scrupulously attune it to a higher law both of the personal and the communal life.

The Gita's message to the mind occupied with the pursuit of intellectual, ethical and social standards, the mind that insists on salvation by the observance of established dharmas, the moral law, social duty and function or the solutions of the liberated intelligence, is that this is indeed a very necessary stage, the dharma has indeed to be observed and, rightly observed, can raise the stature of the spirit and prepare and serve the spiritual life, but still it is not the complete and last truth of existence. The soul of man has to go beyond to some more absolute dharma of man's spiritual and immortal nature. And this can only be done if we repress and get rid of the ignorant formulations of the lower mental elements and the falsehood of egoistic personality, impersonalise the action of the intelligence and will, live in the identity of the one self in all, break out of all ego-moulds into the

impersonal spirit. The mind moves under the limiting compulsion of the triple lower nature, it erects its standards in obedience to the tamasic, rajasic or at highest the sattvic qualities; but the destiny of the soul is a divine perfection and liberation and that can only be based in the freedom of our highest self, can only be found by passing through its vast impersonality and universality beyond mind into the integral light of the immeasurable Godhead and supreme Infinite who is beyond all dharmas.

The Gita's message to those, absolutist seekers of the Infinite, who carry impersonality to an exclusive extreme, entertain an intolerant passion for the extinction of life and action and would have as the one ultimate aim and ideal an endeavour to cease from all individual being in the pure silence of the ineffable Spirit, is that this is indeed one path of journey and entry into the Infinite, but the most difficult, the ideal of inaction a dangerous thing to hold up by precept or example before the world, this way, though great, yet not the best way for man and this knowledge, though true, yet not the integral knowledge. The Supreme, the all-conscious Self, the Godhead, the Infinite is not solely a spiritual existence remote and ineffable; he is here in the universe at once hidden and expressed through man and the gods and through all beings and in all that is. And it is by finding him not only in some immutable silence but in the world and its beings and in all self and in all Nature, it is by raising to an integral as well as to a highest union with him all the activities of the intelligence, the heart, the will, the life that man can solve at once his inner riddle of self and God and the outer problem of his active human existence. Made Godlike, God-becoming, he can enjoy the infinite breadth of a supreme spiritual consciousness that is reached through works no less than through love and knowledge. Immortal and free, he can continue his human action from that highest level and transmute it into a supreme and all-embracing divine activity, — that indeed is the ultimate crown and significance here of all works and living and sacrifice and the world's endeavour.

This highest message is first for those who have the strength to follow after it, the master men, the great spirits, the God-

knowers, God-doers, God-lovers who can live in God and for God and do their work joyfully for him in the world, a divine work uplifted above the restless darkness of the human mind and the false limitations of the ego. At the same time, and here we get the gleam of a larger promise which we may even extend to the hope of a collective turn towards perfection,—for if there is hope for man, why should there not be hope for mankind? —the Gita declares that all can if they will, even to the lowest and sinfullest among men, enter into the path of this Yoga. And if there is a true self-surrender and an absolute unegoistic faith in the indwelling Divinity, success is certain in this path. The decisive turn is needed; there must be an abiding belief in the Spirit, a sincere and insistent will to live in the Divine, to be in self one with him and in Nature—where too we are an eternal portion of his being—one with his greater spiritual Nature, God-possessed in all our members and Godlike.

The Gita in the development of its idea raises many issues, such as the determinism of Nature, the significance of the universal manifestation and the ultimate status of the liberated soul, questions that have been the subject of unending and inconclusive debate. It is not necessary in this series of essays of which the object is a scrutiny and positive affirmation of the substance of the Gita and a disengaging of its contribution to the abiding spiritual thought of humanity and its kernel of living practice, to enter far into these discussions or to consider where we may differ from its standpoint or conclusions, make any reserves in our assent or even, strong in later experience, go beyond its metaphysical teaching or its Yoga. It will be sufficient to close with a formulation of the living message it still brings for man the eternal seeker and discoverer to guide him through the present circuits and the possible steeper ascent of his life up to the luminous heights of his spirit.

The Message of the Gita

“**T**HE SECRET of action,” so we might summarise the message of the Gita, the word of its divine Teacher, “is one with the secret of all life and existence. Existence is not merely a machinery of Nature, a wheel of law in which the soul is entangled for a moment or for ages; it is a constant manifestation of the Spirit. Life is not for the sake of life alone, but for God, and the living soul of man is an eternal portion of the Godhead. Action is for self-finding, for self-fulfilment, for self-realisation and not only for its own external and apparent fruits of the moment or the future. There is an inner law and meaning of all things dependent on the supreme as well as the manifested nature of the self; the true truth of works lies there and can be represented only incidentally, imperfectly and disguised by ignorance in the outer appearances of the mind and its action. The supreme, the faultless largest law of action is therefore to find out the truth of your own highest and inmost existence and live in it and not to follow any outer standard and dharma. All life and action must be till then an imperfection, a difficulty, a struggle and a problem. It is only by discovering your true self and living according to its true truth, its real reality that the problem can be finally solved, the difficulty and struggle overpassed and your doings perfected in the security of the discovered self and spirit turn into a divinely authentic action. Know then your self; know your true self to be God and one with the self of all others; know your soul to be a portion of God. Live in what you know; live in the self, live in your supreme spiritual nature, be united with God and Godlike. Offer, first, all your actions as a sacrifice to the Highest and the One in you and to the Highest and the One in the world; deliver last all you are and do into his hands for the supreme and universal spirit to do through you his own will and works in the world. This is the solution that I present to you and in the end you will find that there is no other.”

Here it is necessary to state the Gita's view of the fundamental opposition on which like all Indian teaching it takes its position. This finding of the true self, this knowledge of the God-head within us and all is not an easy thing; nor is it an easy thing either to turn this knowledge, even though seen by the mind, into the stuff of our consciousness and the whole condition of our action. All action is determined by the effective state of our being, and the effective state of our being is determined by the state of our constant self-seeing will and active consciousness and by its basis of kinetic movement. It is what we see and believe with our whole active nature ourselves to be and our relations with the world to mean, it is our faith, our *śraddhā*, that makes us what we are. But the consciousness of man is of a double kind and corresponds to a double truth of existence; for there is a truth of the inner reality and a truth of the outer appearance. According as he lives in one or the other, he will be a mind dwelling in human ignorance or a soul founded in divine knowledge.

In its outer appearance the truth of existence is solely what we call Nature or Prakriti, a Force that operates as the whole law and mechanism of being, creates the world which is the object of our mind and senses and creates too the mind and senses as a means of relation between the creature and the objective world in which he lives. In this outer appearance man in his soul, his mind, his life, his body seems to be a creature of Nature differentiated from others by a separation of his body, life and mind and especially by his ego-sense — that subtle mechanism constructed for him that he may confirm and centralise his consciousness of all this strong separateness and difference. All in him, his soul of mind and its action as well as the functioning of his life and body, is very evidently determined by the law of his nature, cannot get outside of it, cannot operate otherwise. He attributes indeed a certain freedom to his personal will, the will of his ego; but that in reality amounts to nothing, since his ego is only a sense which makes him identify himself with the creation that Nature has made of him, with the varying mind and life and body she has constructed. His ego is itself a product of her workings, and as is the nature of his ego, so will be the nature of its will and

according to that he must act and he can no other.

This then is man's ordinary consciousness of himself, this his faith in his own being, that he is a creature of Nature, a separate ego establishing whatever relations with others and with the world, making whatever development of himself, satisfying whatever will, desire, idea of his mind may be permissible in her circle and consonant with her intention or law in his existence.

There is, however, something in man's consciousness which does not fall in with the rigidity of this formula; he has a faith, which grows greater as his soul develops, in another and an inner reality of existence. In this inner reality the truth of existence is no longer Nature but Soul and Spirit, Purusha rather than Prakriti. Nature herself is only a power of Spirit, Prakriti the force of the Purusha. A Spirit, a Self, a Being one in all is the master of this world which is only his partial manifestation. That Spirit is the upholder of Nature and her action and the giver of the sanction by which alone her law becomes imperative and her force and its ways operative. That Spirit within her is the Knower who illuminates her and makes her conscient in us; his is the immanent and superconscient Will that inspires and motivates her workings. The soul in man, a portion of this Divinity, shares his nature. Our nature is our soul's manifestation, operates by its sanction and embodies its secret self-knowledge and self-consciousness and its will of being in her motions and forms and changes.

The real soul and self of us is hidden from our intelligence by its ignorance of inner things, by a false identification, by an absorption in our outward mechanism of mind, life and body. But if the active soul of man can once draw back from this identification with its natural instruments, if it can see and live in the entire faith of its inner reality, then all is changed to it, life and existence take on another appearance, action a different meaning and character. Our being then becomes no longer this little egoistic creation of Nature, but the largeness of a divine, immortal and spiritual Power. Our consciousness becomes no longer that of this limited and struggling mental and vital creature, but an infinite, divine and spiritual consciousness.

And our will and action too are no longer that of this bounded personality and its ego, but a divine and spiritual will and action, the will and power of the Universal, the Supreme, the All-Self and Spirit acting freely through the human figure.

"This is the great change and transfiguration," runs the message of the Godhead in man, the Avatar, the divine Teacher, "to which I call the elect, and the elect are all who can turn their will away from the ignorance of the natural instruments to the soul's deepest experience, its knowledge of the inner self and spirit, its contact with the Godhead, its power to enter into the Divine. The elect are all who can accept this faith and this greater law. It is difficult indeed to accept for the human intellect attached always to its own cloud-forms and half lights of ignorance and to the yet obscurer habits of man's mental, nervous and physical parts; but once received it is a great and sure and saving way, because it is identical with the true truth of man's being and it is the authentic movement of his inmost and supreme nature.

"But the change is a very great one, an enormous transformation, and it cannot be done without an entire turning and conversion of your whole being and nature. There will be needed a complete consecration of your self and your nature and your life to the Highest and to nothing else but the Highest; for all must be held only for the sake of the Highest, nothing accepted except as it is in God and a form of God and for the sake of the Divine. There will be needed an admission of new truth, an entire turn and giving of your mind to a new knowledge of self and others and world and God and soul and Nature, a knowledge of oneness, a knowledge of universal Divinity, which will be at first an acceptance by the understanding but must become in the end a vision, a consciousness, a permanent state of the soul and the frame of its movements.

"There will be needed a will that shall make this new knowledge, vision, consciousness a motive of action and the sole motive. And it must be the motive not of an action grudging, limited, confined to a few necessary operations of Nature or to the few things that seem helpful to a formal perfection, apposite to a religious turn or to an individual salvation, but rather all action of

human life taken up by the equal spirit and done for the sake of God and the good of all creatures. There will be needed an uplifting of the heart in a single aspiration to the Highest, a single love of the Divine Being, a single God-adoration. And there must be a widening too of the calmed and enlightened heart to embrace God in all beings. There will be needed a change of the habitual and normal nature of man as he is now to a supreme and divine spiritual nature. There will be needed in a word a Yoga which shall be at once a Yoga of integral knowledge, a Yoga of the integral will and its works, a Yoga of integral love, adoration and devotion and a Yoga of an integral spiritual perfection of the whole being and of all its parts and states and powers and motions.

"What then is this knowledge that will have to be admitted by the understanding, supported by the soul's faith and made real and living to the mind, heart and life? It is the knowledge of the supreme Soul and Spirit in its oneness and its wholeness. It is the knowledge of One who is for ever, beyond Time and Space and name and form and world, high beyond his own personal and impersonal levels and yet from whom all this proceeds, One whom all manifests in manifold Nature and her multitude of figures. It is the knowledge of him as an impersonal eternal immutable Spirit, the calm and limitless thing we call Self, infinite, equal and always the same, unaffected and unmodified and unchanged amid all this constant changing and all this multitude of individual personalities and soul powers and Nature powers and the forms and forces and eventualities of this transitory and apparent existence. It is the knowledge of him at the same time as the Spirit and Power who seems ever mutable in Nature, the Inhabitant who shapes himself to every form and modifies himself to every grade and degree and activity of his power, the Spirit who, becoming all that is even while he is for ever infinitely more than all that is, dwells in man and animal and thing, subject and object, soul and mind and life and matter, every existence and every force and every creature.

"It is not by insisting on this or that side only of the truth that you can practise this Yoga. The Divine whom you have to seek, the Self whom you have to discover, the supreme Soul of whom

your soul is an eternal portion, is simultaneously all these things; you have to know them simultaneously in a supreme oneness, enter into all of them at once and in all states and all things see Him alone. If he were solely the Spirit mutable in Nature, there would be only an eternal and universal becoming. If you limit your faith and knowledge to that one aspect, you will never go beyond your personality and its constant changeful figures; on such a foundation you would be bound altogether in the revolutions of Nature. But you are not merely a succession of soul moments in Time. There is an impersonal self in you which supports the stream of your personality and is one with God's vast and impersonal spirit. And incalculable beyond this impersonality and personality, dominating these two constant poles of what you are here, you are eternal and transcendent in the Eternal Transcendence.

"If, again, there were only the truth of an eternal impersonal self that neither acts nor creates, then the world and your soul would be illusions without any real basis. If you limit your faith and knowledge to this one lonely aspect, the renunciation of life and action is your only resource. But God in the world and you in the world are realities; the world and you are true and actual powers and manifestations of the Supreme. Therefore accept life and action and do not reject them. One with God in your impersonal self and essence, an eternal portion of the Godhead turned to him by the love and adoration of your spiritual personality for its own Infinite, make of your natural being what it is intended to be, an instrument of works, a channel, a power of the Divine. That it always is in its truth, but now unconsciously and imperfectly, through the lower nature, doomed to a disfigurement of the Godhead by your ego. Make it consciously and perfectly and without any distortion by ego a power of the Divine in his supreme spiritual nature and a vehicle of his will and his works. In this way you will live in the integral truth of your own being and you will possess the integral God-union, the whole and flawless Yoga.

"The Supreme is the Purushottama, eternal beyond all manifestation, infinite beyond all limitation by Time or Space or Causality or any of his numberless qualities and features. But

this does not mean that in his supreme eternity he is unconnected with all that happens here, cut off from world and Nature, aloof from all these beings. He is the supreme ineffable Brahman, he is impersonal self, he is all personal existences. Spirit here and life and matter, soul and Nature and the works of Nature are aspects and movements of his infinite and eternal existence. He is the supreme transcendent Spirit and all comes into manifestation from him and are his forms and his self-powers. As the one self he is here all-pervasive and equal and impersonal in man and animal and thing and object and every force of Nature. He is the supreme Soul and all souls are tireless flames of this one Soul. All living beings are in their spiritual personality deathless portions of the one Person or Purusha. He is the eternal Master of all manifested existence, Lord of the worlds and their creatures. He is the omnipotent originator of all actions, not bound by his works, and to him go all action and effort and sacrifice. He is in all and all are in him; he has become all and yet too he is above all and not limited by his creations. He is the transcendent Divine; he descends as the Avatar; he is manifest by his power in the Vibhuti; he is the Godhead secret in every human being. All the gods whom men worship are only personalities and forms and names and mental bodies of the one Divine Existence.

"The Supreme has manifested the world from his spiritual essence and in his own infinite existence and manifested himself too variously in the world. All things are his powers and figures and to the powers and figures of him there is no end, because he himself is infinite. As a pervading and containing impersonal self-existence he informs and sustains equally and without any partiality, preference or attachment to any person or thing or happening or feature all this infinite manifestation in Time and the universe. This pure and equal Self does not act, but supports impartially all the action of things. And yet it is the Supreme, but as the cosmic Spirit and the Time Spirit, who wills and conducts and determines the action of the world through his multitudinous power-to-be, that power of the Spirit which we call Nature. He creates, sustains and destroys his creations. He is seated too in the heart of every living creature and from there as a secret

Power in the individual, no less than from his universal presence in the Cosmos, he originates by force of Nature, manifests some line of his mystery in quality of nature and in executive energy of nature, shapes each thing and being separately according to its kind and initiates and upholds all action. It is this transcendent first origination from the Supreme and this constant universal and individual manifestation of Him in things and beings which makes the complex character of the cosmos.

“There are always these three eternal states of the Divine Being. There is always and for ever this one eternal immutable self-existence which is the basis and support of existent things. There is always and for ever this Spirit mutable in Nature manifested by her as all these existences. There is always and for ever this transcendent Divine who can be both of these others at once, can be a pure and silent Spirit and at the same time the active soul and life of the cycles of the universe, because he is something other and more than these two whether taken separately or together. In us is the Jiva, a spirit of this Spirit, a conscious power of the Supreme. He is one who carries in his deepest self the whole of the immanent Divine and in Nature lives in the universal Divine,—no temporary creation but an eternal soul acting and moving in the eternal Self, in the eternal Infinite.

“This conscient soul in us can adopt either of these three states of the Spirit. Man can live here in the mutability of Nature and in that alone. Ignorant of his real self, ignorant of the Godhead within him, he knows only Nature: he sees her as a mechanical executive and creative Force and sees himself and others as her creations,—egos, separated existences in her universe. It is thus, superficially, that he now lives and, while it is so and until he exceeds this outer consciousness and knows what is within him, all his thought and science can only be a shadow of light thrown upon screens and surfaces. This ignorance is possible, is even imposed, because the Godhead within is hidden by the veil of his own power. His greater reality is lost to our view by the completeness with which he has identified himself in a partial appearance with his creations and images and absorbed

the created mind in the deceptive workings of his own Nature. And it is possible also because the real, the eternal, the spiritual Nature which is the secret of things in themselves is not manifest in their outward phenomena. The Nature which we see when we look outwards, the Nature which acts in our mind and body and senses is a lower Force, a derivation, a Magician who creates figures of the Spirit but hides the Spirit in its figures, conceals the truth and makes men look upon masks, a Force which is only capable of a sum of secondary and depressed values, not of the full power and glory and ecstasy and sweetness of the manifestation of the Divine. This Nature in us is a Maya of the ego, a tangle of the dualities, a web of ignorance and the three gunas. And so long as the soul of man lives in the surface fact of mind and life and body and not in his self and spirit, he cannot see God and himself and the world as they really are, cannot overcome this Maya, but must do what he can with its terms and figures.

"It is possible by drawing back from the lower turn of his nature in which man now lives, to awake from this light that is darkness and live in the luminous truth of the eternal and immutable self-existence. Man then is no longer bound up in his narrow prison of personality, no longer sees himself as this little I that thinks and acts and feels and struggles and labours for a little. He is merged in the vast and free impersonality of the pure spirit; he becomes the Brahman; he knows himself as one with the one self in all things. He is no longer aware of ego, no longer troubled by the dualities, no longer feels anguish of grief or disturbance of joy, is no longer shaken by desire, is no longer troubled by sin or limited by virtue. Or if the shadows of these things remain, he sees and knows them only as Nature working in her own qualities and does not feel them to be the truth of himself in which he lives. Nature alone acts and works out her mechanical figures: but the pure spirit is silent, inactive and free. Calm, untouched by her workings, it regards them with a perfect equality and knows itself to be other than these things. This spiritual state brings with it a still peace and freedom but not the dynamic divinity, not the integral perfection; it is a great step,

but it is not the integral God-knowledge and self-knowledge.

“A perfect perfection comes only by living in the supreme and the whole Divine. Then the soul of man is united with the Godhead of which it is a portion; then it is one with all beings in the self and spirit, one with them both in God and in Nature; then it is not only free but complete, plunged in the supreme felicity, ready for its ultimate perfection. He still sees the self as an eternal and changeless Spirit silently supporting all things; but he sees also Nature no longer as a mere mechanical force that works out things according to the mechanism of the gunas, but as a power of the Spirit and the force of God in manifestation. He sees that the lower Nature is not the inmost truth of the spirit’s action; he becomes aware of a highest spiritual nature of the Divine in which is contained the source and the yet to be realised greater truth of all that is imperfectly figured now in mind, life and body. Arisen from the lower mental to this supreme spiritual nature, he is delivered there from all ego. He knows himself as a spiritual being, in his essence one with all existences and in his active nature a power of the one Godhead and an eternal soul of the transcendent Infinite. He sees all in God and God in all; he sees all things as Vasudeva. He is delivered from the dualities of joy and grief, from the pleasant and the unpleasant, from desire and disappointment, from sin and virtue. All henceforth is to his conscious sight and sense the will and working of the Divine. He lives and acts as a soul and portion of the universal consciousness and power; he is filled with the transcendent divine delight, a spiritual Ananda. His action becomes the divine action and his status the highest spiritual status.

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“This is the solution, this the salvation, this the perfection that I offer to all those who can listen to a divine voice within them and are capable of this faith and knowledge. But to climb to this pre-eminent condition the first necessity, the original radical step is to turn away from all that belongs to your lower Nature

and fix yourself by concentration of the will and intelligence on that which is higher than either will or intelligence, higher than mind and heart and sense and body. And first of all you must turn to your own eternal and immutable self, impersonal and the same in all creatures. So long as you live in ego and mental personality, you will always spin endlessly in the same rounds and there can be no real issue. Turn your will inward beyond the heart and its desires and the sense and its attractions; lift it upward beyond the mind and its associations and attachments and its bounded wish and thought and impulse. Arrive at something within you that is eternal, ever unchanged, calm, unperturbed, equal, impartial to all things and persons and happenings, not affected by any action, not altered by the figures of Nature. Be that, be the eternal self, be the Brahman. If you can become that by a permanent spiritual experience, you will have an assured basis on which you can stand delivered from the limitations of your mind-created personality, secure against any fall from peace and knowledge, free from ego.

“Thus to impersonalise your being is not possible so long as you nurse and cherish and cling to your ego or anything that belongs to it. Desire and the passions that arise from desire are the principal sign and knot of ego. It is desire that makes you go on saying I and mine and subjects you through a persistent egoism to satisfaction and dissatisfaction, liking and disliking, hope and despair, joy and grief, to your petty loves and hatreds, to wrath and passion, to your attachment to success and things pleasant and to the sorrow and suffering of failure and of things unpleasant. Desire brings always confusion of mind and limitation of the will, an egoistic and distorted view of things, a failure and clouding of knowledge. Desire and its preferences and violences are the first strong root of sin and error. There can be while you cherish desire no assured stainless tranquillity, no settled light, no calm pure knowledge. There can be no right being — for desire is a perversion of the spirit — and no firm foundation for right thought, action and feeling. Desire, if permitted to remain under whatever colour, is a perpetual menace even to the wisest and can at any moment subtly or violently cast

down the mind from even its firmest and most surely acquired foundation. Desire is the chief enemy of spiritual perfection.

"Slay then desire; put away attachment to the possession and enjoyment of the outwardness of things. Separate yourself from all that comes to you as outward touches and solicitations, as objects of the mind and senses. Learn to bear and reject all the rush of the passions and to remain securely seated in your inner self even while they rage in your members, until at last they cease to affect any part of your nature. Bear and put away similarly the forceful attacks and even the slightest insinuating touches of joy and sorrow. Cast away liking and disliking, destroy preference and hatred, root out shrinking and repugnance. Let there be a calm indifference to these things and to all the objects of desire in all your nature. Look on them with the silent and tranquil regard of an impersonal spirit.

"The result will be an absolute equality and the power of unshakable calm that the universal spirit maintains in front of its creations, facing ever the manifold action of Nature. Look with equal eyes; receive with an equal heart and mind all that comes to you, success and failure, honour and dishonour, the esteem and love of men and their scorn and persecution and hatred, every happening that would be to others a cause of joy and every happening that would be to others a cause of sorrow. Look with equal eyes on all persons, on the good and the wicked, on the wise and the foolish, on the Brahmin and the outcaste, on man at his highest and every pettiest creature. Meet equally all men whatever their relations to you, friend and ally, neutral and indifferent, opponent and enemy, lover and hater. These things touch the ego and you are called to be free from ego. These are personal relations and you have to observe all with the deep regard of the impersonal spirit. These are temporal and personal differences which you have to see but not be influenced by them; for you must fix not on these differences but on that which is the same in all, on the one self which all are, on the Divine in every creature and on the one working of Nature which is the equal will of God in men and things and energies and happenings and in all endeavour and

result and whatever outcome of the world's labour.

"Action will still be done in you because Nature is always at work; but you must learn and feel that your self is not the doer of the action. Observe simply, observe unmoved the working of Nature and the play of her qualities and the magic of the gunas. Observe unmoved this action in yourself; look on all that is being done around you and see that it is the same working in others. Observe that the result of your works and theirs is constantly other than you or they desired or intended, not theirs, not yours, but omnipotently fixed by a greater Power that wills and acts here in universal Nature. Observe too that even the will in your works is not yours but Nature's. It is the will of the ego sense in you and is determined by the predominant quality in your composition which she has developed in the past or else brings forward at the moment. It depends on the play of your natural personality and that formation of Nature is not your true person. Draw back from this external formation to your inner silent self; you will see that you the Purusha are inactive, but Nature continues to do always her works according to her gunas. Fix yourself in this inner inactivity and stillness: no longer regard yourself as the doer. Remain seated in yourself above the play, free from the perturbed action of the gunas. Live secure in the purity of an impersonal spirit, live untroubled by the mortal waves that persist in your members.

"If you can do this, then you will find yourself uplifted into a great release, a wide freedom and a deep peace. Then you will be aware of God and immortal, possessed of your dateless self-existence, independent of mind and life and body, sure of your spiritual being, untouched by the reactions of Nature, unstained by passion and sin and pain and sorrow. Then you will depend for your joy and desire on no mortal or outward or worldly thing, but will possess inalienably the self-sufficient delight of a calm and eternal spirit. Then you will have ceased to be a mental creature and will have become spirit illimitable, the Brahman. And into this eternity of the silent self, rejecting from your mind all seed of thought and all root of desire, rejecting the figure of birth in the body, you can pass at your end by concentration in

the pure Eternal and a mighty transference of your consciousness to the Infinite, the Absolute.

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“This however is not all the truth of the Yoga and this end and way of departure, though a great end and a great way, is not the thing I propose to you. For I am the eternal Worker within you and I ask of you works. I demand of you not a passive consent to a mechanical movement of Nature from which in your self you are wholly separated, indifferent and aloof, but action complete and divine, done as the willing and understanding instrument of the Divine, done for God in you and others and for the good of the world. This action I propose to you, first no doubt as a means of perfection in the supreme spiritual Nature, but as a part too of that perfection. Action is a part of the integral knowledge of God, of his greater mysterious truth and of an entire living in the Divine; action can and should be continued even after perfection and freedom are won. I ask of you the action of the Jivanmukta, the works of the Siddha. Something has to be added to the Yoga already described,—for that was only a first Yoga of knowledge. There is also a Yoga of action in the illumination of God-experience; works can be made one spirit with knowledge. For works done in a total self-vision and God-vision, a vision of God in the world and of the world in God are themselves a movement of knowledge, a movement of light, an indispensable means and an intimate part of spiritual perfection.

“Therefore now to the experience of a high impersonality add too this knowledge that the Supreme whom one meets as the pure silent Self can be met also as a vast dynamic Spirit who originates all works and is Lord of the worlds and the Master of man’s action and endeavour and sacrifice. This apparently self-acting mechanism of Nature conceals an immanent divine Will that compels and guides it and shapes its purposes. But you cannot feel or know that Will while you are shut up in your

narrow cell of personality, blinded and chained to your viewpoint of the ego and its desires. For you can wholly respond to it only when you are impersonalised by knowledge and widened to see all things in the self and in God and the self and God in all things. All becomes here by the power of the Spirit; all do their works by the immanence of God in things and his presence in the heart of every creature. The Creator of the worlds is not limited by his creations; the Lord of works is not bound by his works; the divine Will is not attached to its labour and the results of its labour: for it is omnipotent, all-possessing and all-blissful. But still the Lord looks down on his creations from his transcendence; he descends as the Avatar; he is here in you; he rules from within all things in the steps of their nature. And you too must do works in him, after the way and in the steps of the divine nature, untouched by limitation, attachment or bondage. Act for the best good of all, act for the maintenance of the march of the world, for the support or the leading of its peoples. The action asked of you is the action of the liberated Yогin; it is the spontaneous output of a free and God-held energy, it is an equal-minded movement, it is a selfless and desireless labour.

“The first step on this free, this equal, this divine way of action is to put from you attachment to fruit and recompense and to labour only for the sake of the work itself that has to be done. For you must deeply feel that the fruits belong not to you but to the Master of the world. Consecrate your labour and leave its returns to the Spirit who manifests and fulfils himself in the universal movement. The outcome of your action is determined by his will alone and whatever it be, good or evil fortune, success or failure, it is turned by him to the accomplishment of his world purpose. An entirely desireless and disinterested working of the personal will and the whole instrumental nature is the first rule of Karmayoga. Demand no fruit, accept whatever result is given to you; accept it with equality and a calm gladness: successful or foiled, prosperous or afflicted, continue unafraid, untroubled and unwavering on the steep path of the divine action.

“This is no more than the first step on the path. For you must be not only unattached to results, but unattached also to

your labour. Cease to regard your works as your own; as you have abandoned the fruits of your work, so you must surrender the work also to the Lord of action and sacrifice. Recognise that your nature determines your action; your nature rules the immediate motion of your Swabhava and decides the expressive turn and development of your spirit in the paths of the executive force of Prakriti. Bring in no longer any self-will to confuse the steps of your mind in following the Godward way. Accept the action proper to your nature. Make of all you do from the greatest and most unusual effort to the smallest daily act, make of each act of your mind, each act of your heart, each act of your body, of every inner and outer turn, of every thought and will and feeling, of every step and pause and movement, a sacrifice to the Master of all sacrifice and Tapasya.

"Next know that you are an eternal portion of the Eternal and the powers of your nature are nothing without him, nothing if not his partial self-expression. It is the Divine Infinite that is being progressively fulfilled in your nature. It is the supreme power-to-be, it is the Shakti of the Lord that shapes and takes shape in your swabhava. Give up then all sense that you are the doer; see the Eternal alone as the doer of the action. Let your natural being be an occasion, an instrument, a channel of power, a means of manifestation. Offer up your will to him and make it one with his eternal will: surrender all your actions in the silence of your self and spirit to the transcendent Master of your nature. This cannot be really done or done perfectly so long as there is any ego sense in you or any mental claim or vital clamour. Action done in the least degree for the sake of the ego or tinged with the desire and will of the ego is not a perfect sacrifice. Nor can this great thing be well and truly done so long as there is inequality anywhere or any stamp of ignorant shrinking and preference. But when there is a perfect equality to all works, results, things and persons, a surrender to the Highest and not to desire or ego, then the divine Will determines without stumbling or deflection and the divine Power executes freely without any nether interference or perverting reaction all works in the purity and safety of your transmuted nature. To allow

your every act to be shaped through you by the divine Will in its immaculate sovereignty is the highest degree of the perfection that comes by doing works in Yoga. That done, your nature will follow its cosmic walk in a complete and constant union with the Supreme, express the highest Self, obey the Ishwara.

"This way of divine works is a far better release and a more perfect way and solution than the physical renunciation of life and works. A physical abstention is not entirely possible and is not in the measure of its possibility indispensable to the spirit's freedom; it is besides a dangerous example, for it exerts a misleading influence on ordinary men. The best, the greatest set the standard which the rest of humanity strive to follow. Then since action is the nature of the embodied spirit, since works are the will of the eternal Worker, the great spirits, the master minds should set this example. World-workers should they be, doing all works of the world without reservation, God-workers free, glad and desireless, liberated souls and natures.

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"The mind of knowledge and the will of action are not all; there is within you a heart whose demand is for delight. Here too in the heart's power and illumination, in its demand for delight, for the soul's satisfaction your nature must be turned, transformed and lifted to one conscious ecstasy with the Divine. The knowledge of the impersonal self brings its own Ananda; there is a joy of impersonality, a singleness of joy of the pure spirit. But an integral knowledge brings a greater triple delight. It opens the gates of the Transcendent's bliss; it releases into the limitless delight of a universal impersonality; it discovers the rapture of all this multitudinous manifestation: for there is a joy of the Eternal in Nature. This Ananda in the Jiva, a portion here of the Divine, takes the form of an ecstasy founded in the Godhead who is his source, in his supreme self, in the Master of his existence. An entire God-love and adoration extends to a love of the world and all its forms and powers and creatures; in

all the Divine is seen, is found, is adored, is served or is felt in oneness. Add to knowledge and works this crown of the eternal triune delight; admit this love, learn this worship; make it one spirit with works and knowledge. That is the apex of the perfect perfection.

"This Yoga of love will give you a highest potential force for spiritual largeness and unity and freedom. But it must be a love which is one with God-knowledge. There is a devotion which seeks God in suffering for consolation and succour and deliverance; there is a devotion which seeks him for his gifts, for divine aid and protection and as a fountain of the satisfaction of desire; there is a devotion that, still ignorant, turns to him for light and knowledge. And so long as one is limited to these forms, there may persist even in their highest and noblest Godward turn a working of the three gunas. But when the God-lover is also the God-knower, the lover becomes one self with the Beloved; for he is the chosen of the Most High and the elect of the Spirit. Develop in yourself this God-engrossed love; the heart spiritualised and lifted beyond the limitations of its lower nature will reveal to you most intimately the secrets of God's immeasurable being, bring into you the whole touch and influx and glory of his divine Power and open to you the mysteries of an eternal rapture. It is perfect love that is the key to a perfect knowledge.

"This integral God-love demands too an integral work for the sake of the Divine in yourself and in all creatures. The ordinary man does works in obedience to some desire sinful or virtuous, some vital impulse low or high, some mental choice common or exalted or from some mixed mind and life motive. But the work done by you must be free and desireless; work done without desire creates no reaction and imposes no bondage. Done in a perfect equality and an unmoved calm and peace, but without any divine passion, it is at first the fine yoke of a spiritual obligation, *kartavyam karma*, then the uplifting of a divine sacrifice; at its highest it can be the expression of a calm and glad acquiescence in active oneness. The oneness in love will do much more: it will replace the first impassive calm by a strong

and deep rapture, not the petty ardour of egoistic desire but the ocean of an infinite Ananda. It will bring the moving sense and the pure and divine passion of the presence of the Beloved into your works; there will be an insistent joy of labour for God in yourself and for God in all beings. Love is the crown of works and the crown of knowledge.

“This love that is knowledge, this love that can be the deep heart of your action, will be your most effective force for an utter consecration and complete perfection. An integral union of the individual’s being with the Divine Being is the condition of a perfect spiritual life. Turn then altogether towards the Divine; make one with him by knowledge, love and works all your nature. Turn utterly towards him and give up ungrudgingly into his hands your mind and your heart and your will, all your consciousness and even your very senses and body. Let your consciousness be sovereignly moulded by him into a flawless mould of his divine consciousness. Let your heart become a lucid or flaming heart of the Divine. Let your will be an impeccable action of his will. Let your very sense and body be the rapturous sensation and body of the Divine. Adore and sacrifice to him with all you are; remember him in every thought and feeling, every impulsion and act. Persevere until all these things are wholly his and he has taken up even in most common and outward things as in the inmost sacred chamber of your spirit his constant transmuting presence.

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“This triune way is the means by which you can rise entirely out of your lower into your supreme spiritual nature. That is the hidden superconscious nature in which the Jiva, a portion of the high Infinite and Divine and intimately one in law of being with him, dwells in his Truth and not any longer in an externalised Maya. This perfection, this unity can be enjoyed in its own native status, aloof in a supreme supracosmic existence: but here also you may and should realise it, here in the human body and

physical world. It is not enough for this end to be calm, inactive and free from the gunas in the inner self and to watch and allow indifferently their mechanical action in the outer members. For the active nature as well as the self has to be given to the Divine and to become divine. All that you are must grow into one law of being with the Purushottama, *sādharmya*; all must be changed into my conscious spiritual becoming, *mad-bhāva*. A completest surrender must be there. Take refuge with Me in all the many ways and along all the living lines of your nature; for that alone will bring about this great change and perfection.

"This high consummation of the Yoga will at once solve or rather it will wholly remove and destroy at its roots the problem of action. Human action is a thing full of difficulties and perplexities, tangled and confused like a forest with a few more or less obscure paths cut into it rather than through it; but all this difficulty and entanglement arises from the single fact that man lives imprisoned in the ignorance of his mental, vital and physical nature. He is compelled by its qualities and yet afflicted with responsibility in his will because something in him feels that he is a soul who ought to be what now he is not at all or very little, master and ruler of his nature. All his laws of living, all his dharmas must be under these conditions imperfect, temporary and provisional and at best only partly right or true. His imperfections can cease only when he knows himself, knows the real nature of the world in which he lives and, most of all, knows the Eternal from whom he comes and in whom and by whom he exists. When he has once achieved a true consciousness and knowledge, there is no longer any problem; for then he acts freely out of himself and lives spontaneously in accordance with the truth of his spirit and his highest nature. At its fullest, at the highest height of this knowledge it is not he who acts but the Divine, the One eternal and infinite who acts in him and through him in his liberated wisdom and power and perfection.

"Man in his natural being is a sattwic, rajasic and tamasic creature of Nature. According as one or other of her qualities predominates in him, he makes and follows this or that law

of his life and action. His tamasic, material, sensational mind subject to inertia and fear and ignorance either obeys partly the compulsion of its environment and partly the spasmodic impulses of its desires or finds a protection in the routine following of a dull customary intelligence. The rajasic mind of desire struggles with the world in which it lives and tries to possess always new things, to command, battle, conquer, create, destroy, accumulate. Always it goes forward tossed between success and failure, joy and sorrow, exultation or despair. But in all, whatever law it may seem to admit, it follows really only the law of the lower self and ego, the restless, untired, self-devouring and all-devouring mind of the Asuric and Rakshasic nature. The sattvic intelligence surmounts partly this state, sees that a better law than that of desire and ego must be followed and erects and imposes on itself a social, an ethical, a religious rule, a Dharma, a Shastra. This is as high as the ordinary mind of man can go, to erect an ideal or practical rule for the guidance of the mind and will and as faithfully as possible observe it in life and conduct. This sattvic mind must be developed to its highest point where it succeeds in putting away the mixture of ego motive altogether and observes the Dharma for its own sake as an impersonal social, ethical or religious ideal, the thing disinterestedly to be done solely because it is right, *kartavyam karma*.

"The real truth of all this action of Prakriti is, however, less outwardly mental and more inwardly subjective. It is this that man is an embodied soul involved in material and mental nature, and he follows in it a progressive law of his development determined by an inner law of his being; his cast of spirit makes out his cast of mind and life, his swabhava. Each man has a swadharma, a law of his inner being which he must observe, find out and follow. The action determined by his inner nature, that is his real Dharma. To follow it is the true law of his development; to deviate from it is to bring in confusion, retardation and error. That social, ethical, religious or other law and ideal is best for him always which helps him to observe and follow out his Swadharma.

"All this action however is even at its best subject to the

ignorance of the mind and the play of the gunas. It is only when the soul of man finds itself that he can overpass and erase from his consciousness the ignorance and the confusion of the gunas. It is true that even when you have found yourself and live in your self, your nature will still continue on its old lines and act for a time according to its inferior modes. But now you can follow that action with a perfect self-knowledge and can make of it a sacrifice to the Master of your existence. Follow then the law of your Swadharma, do the action that is demanded by your Swabhava whatever it may be. Reject all motive of egoism, all initiation by self-will, all rule of desire, until you can make the complete surrender of all the ways of your being to the Supreme.

“And when you are once able to do that sincerely, that will be the moment to renounce the initiation of your acts without exception into the hands of the supreme Godhead within you. Then you will be released from all laws of conduct, liberated from all dharmas. The Divine Power and Presence within you will free you from sin and evil and lift you far above human standards of virtue. For you will live and act in the absolute and spontaneous right and purity of the spiritual being and the immaculate force of the divine nature. The Divine and not you will enact his own will and works through you, not for your lower personal pleasure and desire, but for the world-purpose and for your divine good and the manifest or secret good of all. Inundated with light, you will see the form of the Godhead in the world and in the works of Time, know his purpose and hear his command. Your nature will receive as an instrument his will only whatever it may be and do it without question, because there will come with each initiation of your acts from above and within you an imperative knowledge and an illumined assent to the divine wisdom and its significance. The battle will be his, his the victory, his the empire.

“This will be your perfection in the world and the body, and beyond these worlds of temporal birth the supreme eternal superconsciousness will be yours and you will dwell for ever in the highest status of the Supreme Spirit. The cycles of incarnation and the fear of mortality will not distress you; for here in life

you will have accomplished the expression of the Godhead, and your soul, even though it has descended into mind and body, will already be living in the vast eternity of the Spirit.

“This then is the supreme movement, this complete surrender of your whole self and nature, this abandonment of all dharmas to the Divine who is your highest Self, this absolute aspiration of all your members to the supreme spiritual nature. If you can once achieve it, whether at the outset or much later on the way, then whatever you are or were in your outward nature, your way is sure and your perfection inevitable. A supreme Presence within you will take up your Yoga and carry it swiftly along the lines of your swabhava to its consummate completion. And afterwards whatever your way of life and mode of action, you will be consciously living, acting and moving in him and the Divine Power will act through you in your every inner and outer motion. This is the supreme way because it is the highest secret and mystery and yet an inner movement progressively realisable by all. This is the deepest and most intimate truth of your real, your spiritual existence.”

THE END

Note on the Text

ESSAYS ON THE GITA was first published in the monthly review *Arya* in two series. The first series, covering the first six chapters of the Gita, ran from August 1916 to July 1918. The second series, covering the last twelve chapters, ran from August 1918 to July 1920.

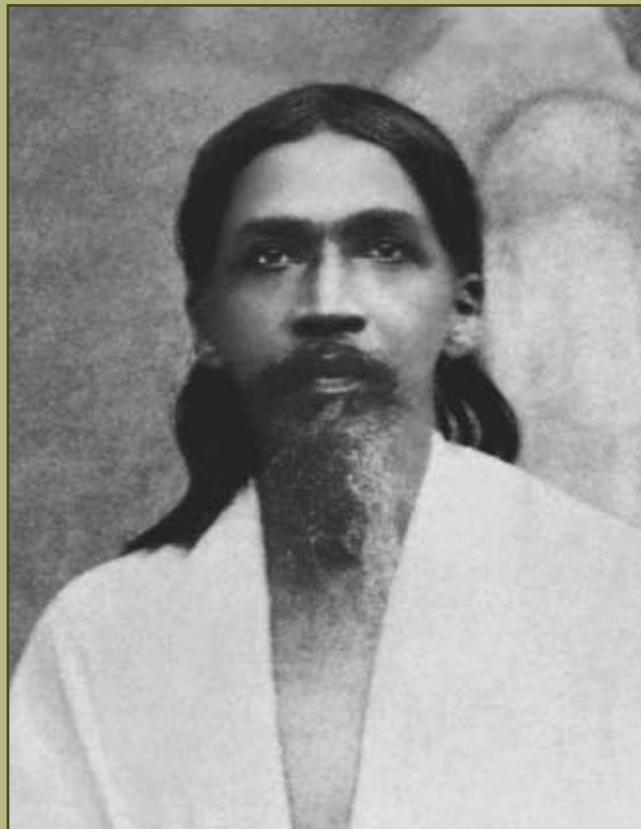
The first series, slightly revised and with some new chapter titles, was brought out as a book in 1922 by V. Ramaswamy Sastrulu and Sons, Madras. New editions of the first series were published by Arya Publishing House, Calcutta, in 1926, 1937, 1944 and 1949. The same publisher issued an extensively revised edition of the second series in 1928, and new editions of this series in 1942, 1945 and 1949.

The 1922 edition of the first series may be considered an incomplete first edition of *Essays on the Gita*. The first and second series pairs of 1926 and 1928, 1937 and 1942, 1944 and 1945, and 1949 (both series) may be considered the second, third, fourth and fifth editions of the book.

Since 1949 the two series of *Essays on the Gita* have appeared in one volume. An American edition was published by The Sri Aurobindo Library, New York, in 1950. The sixth and seventh Indian editions were published by the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education in 1959 and 1966. In 1970 *Essays on the Gita* formed volume 13 of the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library. This, the eighth Indian edition, was reprinted many times.

The text of the present, ninth, edition has been carefully checked against Sri Aurobindo's extant manuscripts and all editions published before 1950.

The Renaissance in India
and
Other Essays on Indian Culture



Sri Aurobindo

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THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO
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The Renaissance in India

with

A Defence of Indian Culture

Publisher's Note

Most of the essays that make up this volume have appeared until now under the title *The Foundations of Indian Culture*. That title was not Sri Aurobindo's. It was first used when those essays were published as a book in New York in 1953.

The present volume consists of three series of essays and one single essay, published in the monthly review *Arya* as follows:

The Renaissance in India, August–November 1918.
Indian Culture and External Influence, March 1919.
“*Is India Civilised?*”, December 1918–February 1919.
A Defence of Indian Culture, February 1919–January 1921.

Sri Aurobindo revised the four essays making up *The Renaissance in India* and published them as a booklet in 1920. He later revised “*Is India Civilised?*” and the first eight and a half chapters of *A Defence of Indian Culture*. These revised chapters were not published during his lifetime. In 1947 some of the later chapters of *A Defence of Indian Culture*, lightly revised, were published in two booklets. The four essays on Indian art appeared as *The Significance of Indian Art* and the four essays on Indian polity as *The Spirit and Form of Indian Polity*. The rest of the series was only sporadically revised. When its publication was proposed to him in 1949, Sri Aurobindo replied:

The Defence of Indian Culture is an unfinished book and also I had intended to alter much of it and to omit all but brief references to William Archer's criticisms. That was why its publication has been so long delayed. Even if it is reprinted as it is considerable alterations will have to be made and there must be some completion and an end to the book which does not at present exist.

The desired alterations were never made.

The text of the present edition has been checked against the *Arya* and the revised versions.

A number of photographic reproductions of Indian architecture, sculpture and painting have been included to illustrate references in the text.

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The illustrations of Indian architecture, sculpture and painting in this volume are reproduced by courtesy of the Archeological Survey of India; Department of Archeology, Govt. of Tamil Nadu; Archeological Museum, Mathura; Colombo Museum and Mrs. Elizabeth Beck.

The Renaissance in India

The Renaissance in India

THREE has been recently some talk of a Renaissance in India. A number of illuminating essays with that general title and subject have been given to us by a poet and subtle critic and thinker, Mr. James H. Cousins, and others have touched suggestively various sides of the growing movement towards a new life and a new thought that may well seem to justify the description. This Renaissance, this new birth in India, if it is a fact, must become a thing of immense importance both to herself and the world, to herself because of all that is meant for her in the recovery or the change of her time-old spirit and national ideals, to the world because of the possibilities involved in the rearising of a force that is in many respects unlike any other and its genius very different from the mentality and spirit that have hitherto governed the modern idea in mankind, although not so far away perhaps from that which is preparing to govern the future. It is rather the first point of view that I shall put forward at present: for the question what India means to make of her own life must precede the wider question what her new life may mean to the human race. And it is besides likely to become before long an issue of a pressing importance.

There is a first question, whether at all there is really a Renaissance in India. That depends a good deal on what we mean by the word; it depends also on the future, for the thing itself is only in its infancy and it is too early to say to what it may lead. The word carries the mind back to the turning-point of European culture to which it was first applied; that was not so much a reawakening as an overturn and reversal, a seizure of Christianised, Teutonised, feudalised Europe by the old Graeco-Latin spirit and form with all the complex and momentous results which came from it. That is certainly not a type of renaissance that is at all possible in India. There is

a closer resemblance to the recent Celtic movement in Ireland, the attempt of a reawakened national spirit to find a new impulse of self-expression which shall give the spiritual force for a great reshaping and rebuilding: in Ireland this was discovered by a return to the Celtic spirit and culture after a long period of eclipsing English influences, and in India something of the same kind of movement is appearing and has especially taken a pronounced turn since the political outburst of 1905. But even here the analogy does not give the whole truth.

We have to see moreover that the whole is at present a great formless chaos of conflicting influences with a few luminous points of formation here and there where a new self-consciousness has come to the surface. But it cannot be said that these forms have yet a sufficient hold on the general mind of the people. They represent an advance movement; they are the voices of the vanguard, the torchlights of the pioneers. On the whole what we see is a giant Shakti who awakening into a new world, a new and alien environment, finds herself shackled in all her limbs by a multitude of gross or minute bonds, bonds self-woven by her past, bonds recently imposed from outside, and is struggling to be free from them, to arise and proclaim herself, to cast abroad her spirit and set her seal on the world. We hear on every side a sound of the slow fraying of bonds, here and there a sharp tearing and snapping; but freedom of movement has not yet been attained. The eyes are not yet clear, the bud of the soul has only partly opened. The Titaness has not yet arisen.

Mr. Cousins puts the question in his book whether the word renaissance at all applies since India has always been awake and stood in no need of reawakening. There is a certain truth behind that and to one coming in with a fresh mind from outside and struck by the living continuity of past and present India, it may be especially apparent; but that is not quite how we can see it who are her children and are still suffering from the bitter effects of the great decline which came to a head in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Undoubtedly there was a period, a brief but very disastrous period of the dwindling of that great fire of life, even a moment of incipient disintegration, marked politically by

the anarchy which gave European adventure its chance, inwardly by an increasing torpor of the creative spirit in religion and art,—science and philosophy and intellectual knowledge had long been dead or petrified into a mere scholastic Punditism,—all pointing to a nadir of setting energy, the evening-time from which according to the Indian idea of the cycles a new age has to start. It was that moment and the pressure of a superimposed European culture which followed it that made the reawakening necessary.

We have practically to take three facts into consideration, the great past of Indian culture and life with the moment of inadaptive torpor into which it had lapsed, the first period of the Western contact in which it seemed for a moment likely to perish by slow decomposition, and the ascending movement which first broke into some clarity of expression only a decade or two ago. Mr. Cousins has his eye fixed on Indian spirituality which has always maintained itself even in the decline of the national vitality; it was certainly that which saved India always at every critical moment of her destiny, and it has been the starting-point too of her renascence. Any other nation under the same pressure would have long ago perished soul and body. But certainly the outward members were becoming gangrened; the powers of renovation seemed for a moment to be beaten by the powers of stagnation, and stagnation is death. Now that the salvation, the reawakening has come, India will certainly keep her essential spirit, will keep her characteristic soul, but there is likely to be a great change of the body. The shaping for itself of a new body, of new philosophical, artistic, literary, cultural, political, social forms by the same soul rejuvenescent will, I should think, be the type of the Indian renascence,—forms not contradictory of the truths of life which the old expressed, but rather expressive of those truths restated, cured of defect, completed.

What was this ancient spirit and characteristic soul of India? European writers, struck by the general metaphysical bent of the Indian mind, by its strong religious instincts and religious idealism, by its other-worldliness, are inclined to write as if this

were all the Indian spirit. An abstract, metaphysical, religious mind overpowered by the sense of the infinite, not apt for life, dreamy, unpractical, turning away from life and action as Maya, this, they said, is India; and for a time Indians in this as in other matters submissively echoed their new Western teachers and masters. They learned to speak with pride of their metaphysics, of their literature, of their religion, but in all else they were content to be learners and imitators. Since then Europe has discovered that there was too an Indian art of remarkable power and beauty; but the rest of what India meant it has hardly at all seen. But meanwhile the Indian mind began to emancipate itself and to look upon its past with a clear and self-discerning eye, and it very soon discovered that it had been misled into an entirely false self-view. All such one-sided appreciations indeed almost invariably turn out to be false. Was it not the general misconception about Germany at one time, because she was great in philosophy and music, but had blundered in life and been unable to make the most of its materials, that this was a nation of unpractical dreamers, idealists, erudites and sentimentalists, patient, docile and industrious certainly, but politically inapt, — “admirable, ridiculous Germany”? Europe has had a terrible awakening from that error. When the renascence of India is complete, she will have an awakening, not of the same brutal kind, certainly, but startling enough, as to the real nature and capacity of the Indian spirit.

Spirituality is indeed the master-key of the Indian mind; the sense of the infinite is native to it. India saw from the beginning, — and, even in her ages of reason and her age of increasing ignorance, she never lost hold of the insight,— that life cannot be rightly seen in the sole light, cannot be perfectly lived in the sole power of its externalities. She was alive to the greatness of material laws and forces; she had a keen eye for the importance of the physical sciences; she knew how to organise the arts of ordinary life. But she saw that the physical does not get its full sense until it stands in right relation to the supra-physical; she saw that the complexity of the universe could not be explained in the present terms of man or seen by his superficial sight, that

there were other powers behind, other powers within man himself of which he is normally unaware, that he is conscious only of a small part of himself, that the invisible always surrounds the visible, the suprasensible the sensible, even as infinity always surrounds the finite. She saw too that man has the power of exceeding himself, of becoming himself more entirely and profoundly than he is,—truths which have only recently begun to be seen in Europe and seem even now too great for its common intelligence. She saw the myriad gods beyond man, God beyond the gods, and beyond God his own ineffable eternity; she saw that there were ranges of life beyond our life, ranges of mind beyond our present mind and above these she saw the splendours of the spirit. Then with that calm audacity of her intuition which knew no fear or littleness and shrank from no act whether of spiritual or intellectual, ethical or vital courage, she declared that there was none of these things which man could not attain if he trained his will and knowledge; he could conquer these ranges of mind, become the spirit, become a god, become one with God, become the ineffable Brahman. And with the logical practicality and sense of science and organised method which distinguished her mentality, she set forth immediately to find out the way. Hence from long ages of this insight and practice there was ingrained in her her spirituality, her powerful psychic tendency, her great yearning to grapple with the infinite and possess it, her ineradicable religious sense, her idealism, her Yoga, the constant turn of her art and her philosophy.

But this was not and could not be her whole mentality, her entire spirit; spirituality itself does not flourish on earth in the void, even as our mountaintops do not rise like those of an enchantment of dream out of the clouds without a base. When we look at the past of India, what strikes us next is her stupendous vitality, her inexhaustible power of life and joy of life, her almost unimaginably prolific creativeness. For three thousand years at least,—it is indeed much longer,—she has been creating abundantly and incessantly, lavishly, with an inexhaustible many-sidedness, republics and kingdoms and empires, philosophies and cosmogonies and sciences and creeds and arts and poems

and all kinds of monuments, palaces and temples and public works, communities and societies and religious orders, laws and codes and rituals, physical sciences, psychic sciences, systems of Yoga, systems of politics and administration, arts spiritual, arts worldly, trades, industries, fine crafts, — the list is endless and in each item there is almost a plethora of activity. She creates and creates and is not satisfied and is not tired; she will not have an end of it, seems hardly to need a space for rest, a time for inertia and lying fallow. She expands too outside her borders; her ships cross the ocean and the fine superfluity of her wealth brims over to Judaea and Egypt and Rome; her colonies spread her arts and epics and creeds in the Archipelago; her traces are found in the sands of Mesopotamia; her religions conquer China and Japan and spread westward as far as Palestine and Alexandria, and the figures of the Upanishads and the sayings of the Buddhists are reechoed on the lips of Christ. Everywhere, as on her soil, so in her works there is the teeming of a superabundant energy of life. European critics complain that in her ancient architecture, sculpture and art there is no reticence, no holding back of riches, no blank spaces, that she labours to fill every rift with ore, occupy every inch with plenty. Well, but defect or no, that is the necessity of her superabundance of life, of the teeming of the infinite within her. She lavishes her riches because she must, as the Infinite fills every inch of space with the stirring of life and energy because it is the Infinite.

But this supreme spirituality and this prolific abundance of the energy and joy of life and creation do not make all that the spirit of India has been in its past. It is not a confused splendour of tropical vegetation under heavens of a pure sapphire infinity. It is only to eyes unaccustomed to such wealth that there seems to be a confusion in this crowding of space with rich forms of life, a luxurious disorder of excess or a wanton lack of measure, clear balance and design. For the third power of the ancient Indian spirit was a strong intellectuality, at once austere and rich, robust and minute, powerful and delicate, massive in principle and curious in detail. Its chief impulse was that of order and arrangement, but an order founded upon a seeking for the inner

law and truth of things and having in view always the possibility of conscientious practice. India has been preeminently the land of the Dharma and the Shastra. She searched for the inner truth and law of each human or cosmic activity, its dharma; that found, she laboured to cast into elaborate form and detailed law of arrangement its application in fact and rule of life. Her first period was luminous with the discovery of the Spirit; her second completed the discovery of the Dharma; her third elaborated into detail the first simpler formulation of the Shastra; but none was exclusive, the three elements are always present.

In this third period the curious elaboration of all life into a science and an art assumes extraordinary proportions. The mere mass of the intellectual production during the period from Asoka well into the Mahomedan epoch is something truly prodigious, as can be seen at once if one studies the account which recent scholarship gives of it, and we must remember that that scholarship as yet only deals with a fraction of what is still lying extant and what is extant is only a small percentage of what was once written and known. There is no historical parallel for such an intellectual labour and activity before the invention of printing and the facilities of modern science; yet all that mass of research and production and curiosity of detail was accomplished without these facilities and with no better record than the memory and for an aid the perishable palm-leaf. Nor was all this colossal literature confined to philosophy and theology, religion and Yoga, logic and rhetoric and grammar and linguistics, poetry and drama, medicine and astronomy and the sciences; it embraced all life, politics and society, all the arts from painting to dancing, all the sixty-four accomplishments, everything then known that could be useful to life or interesting to the mind, even, for instance, to such practical side minutiae as the breeding and training of horses and elephants, each of which had its Shastra and its art, its apparatus of technical terms, its copious literature. In each subject from the largest and most momentous to the smallest and most trivial there was expended the same all-embracing, opulent, minute and thorough intellectuality. On one side there is an insatiable curiosity, the desire of life to know

itself in every detail, on the other a spirit of organisation and scrupulous order, the desire of the mind to tread through life with a harmonised knowledge and in the right rhythm and measure. Thus an ingrained and dominant spirituality, an inexhaustible vital creativeness and gust of life and, mediating between them, a powerful, penetrating and scrupulous intelligence combined of the rational, ethical and aesthetic mind each at a high intensity of action, created the harmony of the ancient Indian culture.

Indeed without this opulent vitality and opulent intellectuality India could never have done so much as she did with her spiritual tendencies. It is a great error to suppose that spirituality flourishes best in an impoverished soil with the life half-killed and the intellect discouraged and intimidated. The spirituality that so flourishes is something morbid, hectic and exposed to perilous reactions. It is when the race has lived most richly and thought most profoundly that spirituality finds its heights and its depths and its constant and many-sided fruition. In modern Europe it is after a long explosion of vital force and a stupendous activity of the intellect that spirituality has begun really to emerge and with some promise of being not, as it once was, the sorrowful physician of the malady of life, but the beginning of a large and profound clarity. The European eye is struck in Indian spiritual thought by the Buddhistic and illusionist denial of life. But it must be remembered that this is only one side of its philosophic tendency which assumed exaggerated proportions only in the period of decline. In itself too that was simply one result, in one direction, of a tendency of the Indian mind which is common to all its activities, the impulse to follow each motive, each specialisation of motive even, spiritual, intellectual, ethical, vital, to its extreme point and to sound its utmost possibility. Part of its innate direction was to seek in each not only for its fullness of detail, but for its infinite, its absolute, its profoundest depth or its highest pinnacle. It knew that without a "fine excess" we cannot break down the limits which the dull temper of the normal mind opposes to knowledge and thought and experience; and it had in seeking this point a boundless courage and yet a sure tread. Thus it carried each tangent of philosophic thought,

each line of spiritual experience to its farthest point, and chose to look from that farthest point at all existence, so as to see what truth or power such a view could give it. It tried to know the whole of divine nature and to see too as high as it could beyond nature and into whatever there might be of supradivine. When it formulated a spiritual atheism, it followed that to its acme of possible vision. When, too, it indulged in materialistic atheism,—though it did that only with a side glance, as the freak of an insatiable intellectual curiosity,—yet it formulated it straight out, boldly and nakedly, without the least concession to idealism or ethicism.

Everywhere we find this tendency. The ideals of the Indian mind have included the height of self-assertion of the human spirit and its thirst of independence and mastery and possession and the height also of its self-abnegation, dependence and submission and self-giving. In life the ideal of opulent living and the ideal of poverty were carried to the extreme of regal splendour and the extreme of satisfied nudity. Its intuitions were sufficiently clear and courageous not to be blinded by its own most cherished ideas and fixed habits of life. If it was obliged to stereotype caste as the symbol of its social order, it never quite forgot, as the caste-spirit is apt to forget, that the human soul and the human mind are beyond caste. For it had seen in the lowest human being the Godhead, Narayana. It emphasised distinctions only to turn upon them and deny all distinctions. If all its political needs and circumstances compelled it at last to exaggerate the monarchical principle and declare the divinity of the king and to abolish its earlier republican city states and independent federations as too favourable to the centrifugal tendency, if therefore it could not develop democracy, yet it had the democratic idea, applied it in the village, in council and municipality, within the caste, was the first to assert a divinity in the people and could cry to the monarch at the height of his power, "O king, what art thou but the head servant of the demos?" Its idea of the golden age was a free spiritual anarchism. Its spiritual extremism could not prevent it from fathoming through a long era the life of the senses and its enjoyments, and there too it sought the utmost

richness of sensuous detail and the depths and intensities of sensuous experience. Yet it is notable that this pursuit of the most opposite extremes never resulted in disorder; and its most hedonistic period offers nothing that at all resembles the unbridled corruption which a similar tendency has more than once produced in Europe. For the Indian mind is not only spiritual and ethical, but intellectual and artistic, and both the rule of the intellect and the rhythm of beauty are hostile to the spirit of chaos. In every extreme the Indian spirit seeks for a law in that extreme and a rule, measure and structure in its application. Besides, this sounding of extremes is balanced by a still more ingrained characteristic, the synthetical tendency, so that having pushed each motive to its farthest possibility the Indian mind returns always towards some fusion of the knowledge it has gained and to a resulting harmony and balance in action and institution. Balance and rhythm which the Greeks arrived at by self-limitation, India arrived at by its sense of intellectual, ethical and aesthetic order and the synthetic impulse of its mind and life.

I have dwelt on these facts because they are apt to be ignored by those who look only at certain sides of the Indian mind and spirit which are most prominent in the last epochs. By insisting only upon these we get an inaccurate or incomplete idea of the past of India and of the integral meaning of its civilisation and the spirit that animated it. The present is only a last deposit of the past at a time of ebb; it has no doubt also to be the starting-point of the future, but in this present all that was in India's past is still dormant, it is not destroyed; it is waiting there to assume new forms. The decline was the ebb-movement of a creative spirit which can only be understood by seeing it in the full tide of its greatness; the renascence is the return of the tide and it is the same spirit that is likely to animate it, although the forms it takes may be quite new. To judge therefore the possibilities of the renascence, the powers that it may reveal and the scope that it may take, we must dismiss the idea that the tendency of metaphysical abstraction is the one note of the Indian spirit which dominates or inspires all its cadences. Its real

key-note is the tendency of spiritual realisation, not cast at all into any white monotone, but many-faceted, many-coloured, as supple in its adaptability as it is intense in its highest pitches. The note of spirituality is dominant, initial, constant, always recurrent; it is the support of all the rest. The first age of India's greatness was a spiritual age when she sought passionately for the truth of existence through the intuitive mind and through an inner experience and interpretation both of the psychic and the physical existence. The stamp put on her by that beginning she has never lost, but rather always enriched it with fresh spiritual experience and discovery at each step of the national life. Even in her hour of decline it was the one thing she could never lose.

But this spiritual tendency does not shoot upward only to the abstract, the hidden and the intangible; it casts its rays downward and outward to embrace the multiplicities of thought and the richness of life. Therefore the second long epoch of India's greatness was an age of the intellect, the ethical sense, the dynamic will in action enlightened to formulate and govern life in the lustre of spiritual truth. After the age of the Spirit, the age of the Dharma; after the Veda and Upanishads, the heroic centuries of action and social formation, typal construction and thought and philosophy, when the outward forms of Indian life and culture were fixed in their large lines and even their later developments were being determined in the seed. The great classical age of Sanskrit culture was the flowering of this intellectuality into curiosity of detail in the refinements of scholarship, science, art, literature, politics, sociology, mundane life. We see at this time too the sounding not only of aesthetic, but of emotional and sensuous, even of vital and sensual experience. But the old spirituality reigned behind all this mental and all this vital activity, and its later period, the post-classical, saw a lifting up of the whole lower life and an impressing upon it of the values of the spirit. This was the sense of the Puranic and Tantric systems and the religions of Bhakti. Later Vaishnavism, the last fine flower of the Indian spirit, was in its essence the taking up of the aesthetic, emotional and sensuous being into the service of the spiritual. It completed the curve of the cycle.

The evening of decline which followed the completion of the curve was prepared by three movements of retrogression. First there is, comparatively, a sinking of that superabundant vital energy and a fading of the joy of life and the joy of creation. Even in the decline this energy is still something splendid and extraordinary and only for a very brief period sinks nearest to a complete torpor; but still a comparison with its past greatness will show that the decadence was marked and progressive. Secondly, there is a rapid cessation of the old free intellectual activity, a slumber of the scientific and the critical mind as well as the creative intuition; what remains becomes more and more a repetition of ill-understood fragments of past knowledge. There is a petrification of the mind and life in the relics of the forms which a great intellectual past had created. Old authority and rule become rigidly despotic and, as always then happens, lose their real sense and spirit. Finally, spirituality remains but burns no longer with the large and clear flame of knowledge of former times, but in intense jets and in a dispersed action which replaces the old magnificent synthesis and in which certain spiritual truths are emphasised to the neglect of others. This diminution amounts to a certain failure of the great endeavour which is the whole meaning of Indian culture, a falling short in the progress towards the perfect spiritualisation of the mind and the life. The beginnings were superlative, the developments very great, but at a certain point where progress, adaptation, a new flowering should have come in, the old civilisation stopped short, partly drew back, partly lost its way. The essential no doubt remained and still remains in the heart of the race and not only in its habits and memories, but in its action it was covered up in a great smoke of confusion. The causes internal and external we need not now discuss; but the fact is there. It was the cause of the momentary helplessness of the Indian mind in the face of new and unprecedented conditions.

It was at this moment that the European wave swept over India. The first effect of this entry of a new and quite opposite civilisation was the destruction of much that had no longer the

power to live, the deliquescence of much else, a tendency to the devitalisation of the rest. A new activity came in, but this was at first crudely and confusedly imitative of the foreign culture. It was a crucial moment and an ordeal of perilous severity; a less vigorous energy of life might well have foundered and perished under the double weight of the deadening of its old innate motives and a servile imitation of alien ideas and habits. History shows us how disastrous this situation can be to nations and civilisations. But fortunately the energy of life was there, sleeping only for a moment, not dead, and, given that energy, the evil carried within itself its own cure. For whatever temporary rotting and destruction this crude impact of European life and culture has caused, it gave three needed impulses. It revived the dormant intellectual and critical impulse; it rehabilitated life and awakened the desire of new creation; it put the reviving Indian spirit face to face with novel conditions and ideals and the urgent necessity of understanding, assimilating and conquering them. The national mind turned a new eye on its past culture, reawoke to its sense and import, but also at the same time saw it in relation to modern knowledge and ideas. Out of this awakening vision and impulse the Indian renaissance is arising, and that must determine its future tendency. The recovery of the old spiritual knowledge and experience in all its splendour, depth and fullness is its first, most essential work; the flowing of this spirituality into new forms of philosophy, literature, art, science and critical knowledge is the second; an original dealing with modern problems in the light of the Indian spirit and the endeavour to formulate a greater synthesis of a spiritualised society is the third and most difficult. Its success on these three lines will be the measure of its help to the future of humanity.

The Spirit is a higher infinite of verities; life is a lower infinite of possibilities which seek to grow and find their own truth and fulfilment in the light of these verities. Our intellect, our will, our ethical and our aesthetic being are the reflectors and the mediators. The method of the West is to exaggerate life and to call down as much—or as little—as may be of the higher powers

to stimulate and embellish life.¹ But the method of India is on the contrary to discover the spirit within and the higher hidden intensities of the superior powers and to dominate life in one way or another so as to make it responsive to and expressive of the spirit and in that way increase the power of life. Its tendency with the intellect, will, ethical, aesthetic and emotional being is to sound indeed their normal mental possibilities, but also to upraise them towards the greater light and power of their own highest intuitions. The work of the renaissance in India must be to make this spirit, this higher view of life, this sense of deeper potentiality once more a creative, perhaps a dominant power in the world. But to that truth of itself it is as yet only vaguely awake; the mass of Indian action is still at the moment proceeding under the impress of the European motive and method and, because there is a spirit within us to which they are foreign, the action is poor in will, feeble in form and ineffective in results, for it does not come from the roots of our being. Only in a few directions is there some clear light of self-knowledge. It is when a greater light prevails and becomes general that we shall be able to speak, not only in prospect but in fact, of the renaissance of India.

¹ Mr. Cousins' distinction between invocation and evocation.

The Renaissance in India – 2

THE PROCESS which has led up to the renaissance now inevitable, may be analysed, both historically and logically, into three steps by which a transition is being managed, a complex breaking, reshaping and new building, with the final result yet distant in prospect,—though here and there the first bases may have been already laid,—a new age of an old culture transformed, not an affiliation of a new-born civilisation to one that is old and dead, but a true rebirth, a renascence. The first step was the reception of the European contact, a radical reconsideration of many of the prominent elements and some revolutionary denial of the very principles of the old culture. The second was a reaction of the Indian spirit upon the European influence, sometimes with a total denial of what it offered and a stressing both of the essential and the strict letter of the national past, which yet masked a movement of assimilation. The third, only now beginning or recently begun, is rather a process of new creation in which the spiritual power of the Indian mind remains supreme, recovers its truths, accepts whatever it finds sound or true, useful or inevitable of the modern idea and form, but so transmutes and Indianises it, so absorbs and so transforms it entirely into itself that its foreign character disappears and it becomes another harmonious element in the characteristic working of the ancient goddess, the Shakti of India mastering and taking possession of the modern influence, no longer possessed or overcome by it.

Nothing in the many processes of Nature, whether she deals with men or with things, comes by chance or accident or is really at the mercy of external causes. What things are inwardly, determines the course of even their most considerable changes; and timeless India being what she is, the complexity of this transition was predestined and unavoidable. It was impossible that

she should take a rapid wholesale imprint of Western motives and their forms and leave the ruling motives of her own past to accommodate themselves to the foreign change as best they could afterwards. A swift transformation scene like that which brought into being a new modernised Japan, would have been out of the question for her, even if the external circumstances had been equally favourable. For Japan lives centrally in her temperament and in her aesthetic sense, and therefore she has always been rapidly assimilative; her strong temperamental persistence has been enough to preserve her national stamp and her artistic vision a sufficient power to keep her soul alive. But India lives centrally in the spirit, with less buoyancy and vivacity and therefore with a less ready adaptiveness of creation, but a greater, intenser, more brooding depth; her processes are apt to be deliberate, uncertain and long because she has to take things into that depth and from its profoundest inwardness to modify or remould the more outward parts of her life. And until that has been done, the absorption completed, the powers of the remoulding determined, she cannot yet move forward with an easier step on the new way she is taking. From the complexity of the movement arises all the difficulty of the problems she has to face and the rather chaotic confusion of the opinions, standpoints and tendencies that have got entangled in the process, which prevents any easy, clear and decided development, so that we seem to be advancing under a confused pressure of circumstance or in a series of shifting waves of impulsion, this ebbing for that to arise, rather than with any clear idea of our future direction. But here too lies the assurance that once the inner direction has found its way and its implications have come to the surface, the result will be no mere Asiatic modification of Western modernism, but some great, new and original thing of the first importance to the future of human civilisation.

This was not the idea of the earliest generation of intellectuals, few in number but powerful by their talent and originative vigour, that arose as the first result of Western education in India. Theirs was the impatient hope of a transformation such as took place afterwards with so striking a velocity in Japan;

they saw in welcome prospect a new India modernised wholesale and radically in mind, spirit and life. Intensely patriotic in motive, they were yet denationalised in their mental attitude. They admitted practically, if not in set opinion, the occidental view of our past culture as only a half-civilisation and their governing ideals were borrowed from the West or at least centrally inspired by the purely Western spirit and type of their education. From mediaeval India they drew away in revolt and inclined to discredit and destroy whatever it had created; if they took anything from it, it was as poetic symbols to which they gave a superficial and modern significance. To ancient India they looked back on the contrary with a sentiment of pride, at least in certain directions, and were willing to take from it whatever material they could subdue to their new standpoint, but they could not quite grasp anything of it in its original sense and spirit and strove to rid it of all that would not square with their Westernised intellectuality. They sought for a bare, simplified and rationalised religion, created a literature which imported very eagerly the forms, ideas and whole spirit of their English models,—the value of the other arts was almost entirely ignored,—put their political faith and hope in a wholesale assimilation or rather an exact imitation of the middle-class pseudo-democracy of nineteenth-century England, would have revolutionised Indian society by introducing into it all the social ideas and main features of the European form. Whatever value for the future there may be in the things they grasped at with this eager conviction, their method was, as we now recognise, a false method,—an anglicised India is a thing we can no longer view as either possible or desirable,—and it could only, if pursued to the end, have made us painful copyists, clumsy followers always stumbling in the wake of European evolution and always fifty years behind it. This movement of thought did not and could not endure; something of it still continues, but its engrossing power has passed away beyond any chance of vigorous revival.

Nevertheless, this earliest period of crude reception left behind it results that were of value and indeed indispensable to a powerful renaissance. We may single out three of them as

of the first order of importance. It reawakened a free activity of the intellect which, though at first confined within very narrow bounds and derivative in its ideas, is now spreading to all subjects of human and national interest and is applying itself with an increasing curiosity and a growing originality to every field it seizes. This is bringing back to the Indian mind its old unresting thirst for all kinds of knowledge and must restore to it before long the width of its range and the depth and flexible power of its action; and it has opened to it the full scope of the critical faculty of the human mind, its passion for exhaustive observation and emancipated judgment which, in older times exercised only by a few and within limits, has now become an essential equipment of the intellect. These things the imitative period did not itself carry very far, but it cast the germ which we now see beginning to fructify more richly. Secondly, it threw definitely the ferment of modern ideas into the old culture and fixed them before our view in such a way that we are obliged to reckon and deal with them in far other sort than would have been possible if we had simply proceeded from our old fixed traditions without some such momentary violent break in our customary view of things. Finally, it made us turn our look upon all that our past contains with new eyes which have not only enabled us to recover something of their ancient sense and spirit, long embedded and lost in the unintelligent practice of received forms, but to bring out of them a new light which gives to the old truths fresh aspects and therefore novel potentialities of creation and evolution. That in this first period we misunderstood our ancient culture, does not matter; the enforcement of a reconsideration, which even orthodox thought has been obliged to accept, is the fact of capital importance.

The second period of reaction of the Indian mind upon the new elements, its movement towards a recovery of the national poise, has helped us to direct these powers and tendencies into sounder and much more fruitful lines of action. For the anglicising impulse was very soon met by the old national spirit and began to be heavily suffused by its influence. It is now a very small and always dwindling number of our present-day

intellectuals who still remain obstinately Westernised in their outlook; and even these have given up the attitude of blatant and uncompromising depreciation of the past which was at one time a common pose. A larger number have proceeded by a constantly increasing suffusion of their modernism with much of ancient motive and sentiment, a better insight into the meaning of Indian things and their characteristics, a free acceptance more of their spirit than of their forms and an attempt at new interpretation. At first the central idea still remained very plainly of the modern type and betrayed everywhere the Western inspiration, but it drew to itself willingly the ancient ideas and it coloured itself more and more with their essential spirit; and latterly this suffusing element has overflowed, has tended more and more to take up and subdue the original motives until the thought and spirit, turn and tinge are now characteristically Indian. The works of Bankim Chandra Chatterji and Tagore, the two minds of the most distinctive and original genius in our recent literature, illustrate the stages of this transition.

Side by side with this movement and more characteristic and powerful there has been flowing an opposite current. This first started on its way by an integral reaction, a vindication and reacceptance of everything Indian as it stood and because it was Indian. We have still waves of this impulse and many of its influences continuing among us; for its work is not yet completed. But in reality the reaction marks the beginning of a more subtle assimilation and fusing; for in vindicating ancient things it has been obliged to do so in a way that will at once meet and satisfy the old mentality and the new, the traditional and the critical mind. This in itself involves no mere return, but consciously or unconsciously hastens a restatement. And the riper form of the return has taken as its principle a synthetical restatement; it has sought to arrive at the spirit of the ancient culture and, while respecting its forms and often preserving them to revivify, has yet not hesitated also to remould, to reject the outworn and to admit whatever new motive seemed assimilable to the old spirituality or apt to widen the channel of its larger evolution. Of this freer dealing with past and present, this preservation

by reconstruction Vivekananda was in his life-time the leading exemplar and the most powerful exponent.

But this too could not be the end; of itself it leads towards a principle of new creation. Otherwise the upshot of the double current of thought and tendency might be an incongruous assimilation, something in the mental sphere like the strangely assorted half-European, half-Indian dress which we now put upon our bodies. India has to get back entirely to the native power of her spirit at its very deepest and to turn all the needed strengths and aims of her present and future life into materials for that spirit to work upon and integrate and harmonise. Of such vital and original creation we may cite the new Indian art as a striking example. The beginning of this process of original creation in every sphere of her national activity will be the sign of the integral self-finding of her renaissance.

The Renaissance in India – 3

TO ATTEMPT to penetrate through the indeterminate confusion of present tendencies and first efforts in order to foresee the exact forms the new creation will take, would be an effort of very doubtful utility. One might as well try to forecast a harmony from the sounds made by the tuning of the instrument. In one direction or another we may just detect certain decisive indications, but even these are only first indications and we may be quite sure that much lies behind them that will go far beyond anything that they yet suggest. This is true whether in religion and spirituality or thought and science, poetry and art or society and politics. Everywhere there is, at most, only a beginning of beginnings.

One thing seems at any rate certain, that the spiritual motive will be in the future of India, as in her past, the real originative and dominating strain. By spirituality we do not mean a remote metaphysical mind or the tendency to dream rather than to act. That was not the great India of old in her splendid days of vigour,—whatever certain European critics or interpreters of her culture may say,—and it will not be the India of the future. Metaphysical thinking will always no doubt be a strong element in her mentality, and it is to be hoped that she will never lose her great, her sovereign powers in that direction; but Indian metaphysics are as far removed from the brilliant or the profound idea-spinning of the French or the German mind as from the broad intellectual generalising on the basis of the facts of physical science which for some time did duty for philosophy in modern Europe. It has always been in its essential parts an intellectual approach to spiritual realisation. Though in later times it led too much away from life, yet that was not its original character whether in its early Vedantic intuitional forms or in those later developments of it, such as the Gita, which belong

to the period of its most vigorous intellectual originality and creation. Buddhism itself, the philosophy which first really threw doubt on the value of life, did so only in its intellectual tendency; in its dynamic parts, by its ethical system and spiritual method, it gave a new set of values, a severe vigour, yet a gentler idealism to human living and was therefore powerfully creative both in the arts which interpret life and in society and politics. To realise intimately truth of spirit and to quicken and to remould life by it is the native tendency of the Indian mind, and to that it must always return in all its periods of health, greatness and vigour.

All great movements of life in India have begun with a new spiritual thought and usually a new religious activity. What more striking and significant fact can there be than this that even the new European influence, which was an influence intellectual, rationalistic, so often antireligious and which drew so much of its idealism from the increasingly cosmopolitan, mundane and secularist thought of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, precipitated in India from the very first an attempt at religious reformation and led actually to the creation of new religions? The instinct of the Indian mind was that, if a reconstruction of ideas and of society was to be attempted, it must start from a spiritual basis and take from the first a religious motive and form. The Brahmo Samaj had in its inception a large cosmopolitan idea, it was even almost eclectic in the choice of the materials for the synthesis it attempted; it combined a Vedantic first inspiration, outward forms akin to those of English Unitarianism and something of its temper, a modicum of Christian influence, a strong dose of religious rationalism and intellectualism. It is noteworthy, however, that it started from an endeavour to restate the Vedanta, and it is curiously significant of the way in which even what might be well called a protestant movement follows the curve of the national tradition and temper, that the three stages of its growth, marked by the three churches or congregations into which it split, correspond to the three eternal motives of the Indian religious mind, Jnana, Bhakti and Karma, the contemplative and philosophical, the emotional and fervently devotional and the actively and practically dynamic

spiritual mentality. The Arya Samaj in the Punjab founded itself on a fresh interpretation of the truth of the Veda and an attempt to apply old Vedic principles of life to modern conditions. The movement associated with the great names of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda has been a very wide synthesis of past religious motives and spiritual experience topped by a reaffirmation of the old asceticism and monasticism, but with new living strands in it and combined with a strong humanitarianism and zeal of missionary expansion. There has been too the movement of orthodox Hindu revivalism, more vigorous two or three decades ago than it is now. The rest of India has either felt vibrations of some of these great regional movements or been touched with smaller ones of their own making. In Bengal a strong Neo-Vaishnavic tendency is the most recent development of its religious mind and shows that the preparatory creative activity has not yet finished its workings. Throughout India the old religious sects and disciplines are becoming strongly revitalised, vocal, active, moved to a fresh self-affirmation. Islam has recently shared in the general stirring and attempts to return vitally to the original Islamic ideals or to strike out fresh developments have preceded or accompanied the awakening to life of the long torpid Mussulman mass in India.

Perhaps none of these forms, nor all the sum of them may be definitive, they may constitute only the preparatory self-finding of the Indian spiritual mind recovering its past and turning towards its future. India is the meeting-place of the religions and among these Hinduism alone is by itself a vast and complex thing, not so much a religion as a great diversified and yet subtly unified mass of spiritual thought, realisation and aspiration. What will finally come out of all this stir and ferment, lies yet in the future. There has been an introduction of fresh fruitful impulses to activity: there has been much revival of the vitality of old forms, a new study, rehabilitation, resort to old disciplines and old authorities and scriptures, — we may note that Vedanta, Veda, Purana, Yoga, and recently the same thing is being initiated with regard to the Tantra, have each in their turn been brought back into understanding, if not always yet to a perfect

understanding, to practice, to some efficacy on thought and on life; there has been an evolution of enlarging truth and novel forms out of ancient ideas and renewed experience. Whatever the last upshot may be, this spiritual and religious ferment and activity stand out as the most prominent feature of the new India; and it may be observed that while in other fields the tendency has been, until quite recently, more critical than constructive, here every impulse has been throughout powerfully creative. Especially, we see everywhere the tendency towards the return of the spirit upon life; the reassertion of a spiritual living as a foundation for a new life of the nation has been a recognisable impulse. Even asceticism and monasticism are rapidly becoming, no longer merely contemplative, self-centred or aloof, but missionary, educative, humanitarian. And recently in the utterances of the leaders of thought the insistence on life has been growing marked, self-conscious and positive. This is at present the most significant immediate sign of the future. Probably, here lies the key of the Indian renaissance, in a return from forms to the depths of a released spirituality which will show itself again in a pervading return of spirituality upon life.

But what are likely to be the great constructive ideas and the great decisive instruments which this spirituality will take to deal with and govern life, is as yet obscure, because the thought of this new India is still inchoate and indeterminative. Religions, creeds and forms are only a characteristic outward sign of the spiritual impulsion and religion itself is the intensive action by which it tries to find its inward force. Its expansive movement comes in the thought which it throws out on life, the ideals which open up new horizons and which the intellect accepts and life labours to assimilate. Philosophy in India has been the intellectual canaliser of spiritual knowledge and experience, but the philosophical intellect has not as yet decidedly begun the work of new creation; it has been rather busy with the restatement of its past gains than with any new statement which would visibly and rapidly enlarge the boundaries of its thought and aspiration. The contact of European philosophy has not been fruitful of any creative reaction; first because the

past philosophies of Europe have very little that could be of any utility in this direction, nothing of the first importance in fact which India has not already stated in forms better suited to her own spiritual temper and genius, and though the thought of Nietzsche, of Bergson and of James has recently touched more vitally just a few minds here and there, their drift is much too externally pragmatic and vitalistic to be genuinely assimilable by the Indian spirit. But, principally, a real Indian philosophy can only be evolved out of spiritual experience and as the fruit of the spiritual seeking which all the religious movements of the past century have helped to generalise. It cannot spring, as in Europe, out of the critical intellect solely or as the fruit of scientific thought and knowledge. Nor has there been very much preparing force of original critical thought in nineteenth century India. The more original intellects have either turned towards pure literature or else been busy assimilating and at most Indianising modern ideas. And though a stronger thought tendency is now beginning, all is yet uncertain flux or brilliantly vague foreshadowing.

In poetry, literature, art, science there have, on the contrary, been definite beginnings. Bengal in these, as in many other directions, has been recently the chief testing crucible or the first workshop of the Shakti of India; it is there she has chosen to cast in the greatest vivacity of new influences and develop her initial forms and inspirations. In the rest of India there is often much activity of production and one hears here and there of a solitary poet or prose-writer of genius or notable talent; but Bengal has already a considerable literature of importance, with a distinct spirit and form, well-based and always developing; she has now a great body of art original, inspired, full of delicate beauty and vision; she has not only two renowned scientists, one of the two world-famous for a central and far-reaching discovery, but a young school of research which promises to count for something in the world's science. It is here therefore that we can observe the trend of the Indian mind and the direction in which it is turning. Especially the art of the Bengal painters is very significant, more so even than the prose of Bankim or the poetry

of Tagore. Bengali poetry has had to feel its way and does not seem yet quite definitively to have found it, but Bengal art has found its way at once at the first step, by a sort of immediate intuition.

Partly this is because the new literature began in the period of foreign influence and of an indecisive groping, while art in India was quite silent,—except for the preposterous Ravi Varma interlude which was doomed to sterility by its absurdly barren incompetence,—began in a moment of self-recovery and could profit by a clearer possibility of light. But besides, plastic art is in itself by its very limitation, by the narrower and intense range of its forms and motives, often more decisively indicative than the more fluid and variable turns of literary thought and expression. Now the whole power of the Bengal artists springs from their deliberate choice of the spirit and hidden meaning in things rather than their form and surface meaning as the object to be expressed. It is intuitive and its forms are the very rhythm of its intuition, they have little to do with the metric formalities devised by the observing intellect; it leans over the finite to discover its suggestions of the infinite and inexpressible; it turns to outward life and nature to found upon it lines and colours, rhythms and embodiments which will be significant of the other life and other nature than the physical which all that is merely outward conceals. This is the eternal motive of Indian art, but applied in a new way less largely ideaed, mythological and symbolical, but with a more delicately suggestive attempt at a near, subtle, direct embodiment. This art is a true new creation, and we may expect that the artistic mind of the rest of India will follow through the gate thus opened, but we may expect it too to take on there other characteristics and find other ways of expression; for the peculiar turn and tone given by the Calcutta painters is intimate to the temperament of Bengal. But India is great by the unity of her national coupled with the rich diversity of her regional mind. That we may expect to see reflected in the resurgence of her artistic creativeness.

Poetry and literature in Bengal have gone through two distinct stages and seem to be preparing for a third of which one

cannot quite foresee the character. It began with a European and mostly an English influence, a taking in of fresh poetical and prose forms, literary ideas, artistic canons. It was a period of copious and buoyant creation which produced a number of poets and poetesses, one or two of great genius, others of a fine poetic capacity, much work of beauty and distinction, a real opening of the floodgates of Saraswati. Its work was not at all crudely imitative; the foreign influences are everywhere visible, but they are assimilated, not merely obeyed or aped. The quality of the Bengali temperament and its native aesthetic turn took hold of them and poured them into a mould of speech suitable to its own spirit. But still the substance was not quite native to the soul and therefore one feels a certain void in it. The form and expression have the peculiar grace and the delicate plastic beauty which Bengali poetical expression achieved from its beginning, but the thing expressed does not in the end amount to very much. As is inevitable when one does not think or create freely but is principally assimilating thought and form, it is thin and falls short of the greatness which we would expect from the natural power of the poet.

That period is long over, it has lived its time and its work has taken its place in the past of the literature. Two of its creators, one, the sovereign initiator of its prose expression, supreme by combination of original mentality with a flawless artistic gift, the other born into its last glow of productive brilliance, but outliving it to develop another strain and a profounder voice of poetry, released the real soul of Bengal into expression. The work of Bankim Chandra is now of the past, because it has entered already into the new mind of Bengal which it did more than any other literary influence to form; the work of Rabindranath still largely holds the present, but it has opened ways for the future which promise to go beyond it. Both show an increasing return to the Indian spirit in fresh forms; both are voices of the dawn, seek more than they find, suggest and are calling for more than they actually evoke. At present we see a fresh preparation, on one side evolving and promising to broaden out from the influence of Tagore, on the other in revolt against it and insisting on a more

distinctively national type of inspiration and creation; but what will come out of it, is not yet clear. On the whole it appears that the movement is turning in the same direction as that of the new art, though with the more flexible utterance and varied motive natural to the spoken thought and expressive word. No utterance of the highest genius, such as would give the decisive turn, has yet made itself heard. But some faint promise of a great imaginative and intuitive literature of a new Indian type is already discernible in these uncertain voices.

In the things of the mind we have then within however limited an area certain beginnings, preparatory or even initially definitive. But in the outward life of the nation we are still in a stage of much uncertainty and confusion. Very largely this is due to the political conditions which have ceased in spirit to be those of the past, but are not yet in fact those of the future. The fever and the strain born from the alternation of waves of aspiration with the reflux of non-fulfilment are not favourable to the strong formulation of a new birth in the national life. All that is as yet clear is that the first period of a superficial assimilation and aping of European political ideas and methods is over. Another political spirit has awakened in the people under the shock of the movement of the last decade which, vehemently national in its motive, proclaimed a religion of Indian patriotism, applied the notions of the ancient religion and philosophy to politics, expressed the cult of the country as mother and Shakti and attempted to base the idea of democracy firmly on the spiritual thought and impulses native to the Indian mind. Crude often and uncertain in its self-expression, organising its effort for revolt against past and present conditions but not immediately successful in carrying forward its methods of constructive development, it still effectively aroused the people and gave a definite turn to its political thought and life, the outcome of which can only appear when the nation has found completely the will and gained sufficiently the power to determine its own evolution.

Indian society is in a still more chaotic stage; for the old forms are crumbling away under the pressure of the environment, their spirit and reality are more and more passing out of

them, but the façade persists by the force of inertia of thought and will and the remaining attachment of a long association, while the new is still powerless to be born. There is much of slow and often hardly perceptible destruction, a dull preservation effective only by immobility, no possibility yet of sound reconstruction. We have had a loud proclaiming,—only where supported by religion, as in the reforming Samajes, any strong effectuation,—of a movement of social change, appealing sometimes crudely to Western exemplars and ideals, sometimes to the genius or the pattern of ancient times; but it has quite failed to carry the people, because it could not get at their spirit and itself lacked, with the exceptions noted, in robust sincerity. We have had too a revival of orthodox conservatism, more academic and sentimental than profound in its impulse or in touch with the great facts and forces of life. We have now in emergence an increasing sense of the necessity of a renovation of social ideas and expressive forms by the spirit of the nation awaking to the deeper yet unexpressed implications of its own culture, but as yet no sufficient will or means of execution. It is probable that only with the beginning of a freer national life will the powers of the renaissance take effective hold of the social mind and action of the awakened people.

The Renaissance in India – 4

THE RENAISSANCE thus determining itself, but not yet finally determined, if it is to be what the name implies, a rebirth of the soul of India into a new body of energy, a new form of its innate and ancient spirit, *prajñā purāṇī*, must insist much more finally and integrally than it has as yet done on its spiritual turn, on the greater and greater action of the spiritual motive in every sphere of our living. But here we are still liable to be met by the remnants of a misunderstanding or a refusal to understand, — it is something of both, — which was perhaps to a little extent justified by certain ascetic or religionist exaggerations, a distrust which is accentuated by a recoil from the excessive other-worldliness that has marked certain developments of the Indian mind and life, but yet is not justified, because it misses the true point at issue. Thus we are sometimes asked what on earth we mean by spirituality in art and poetry or in political and social life, — a confession of ignorance strange enough in any Indian mouth at this stage of our national history, — or how art and poetry will be any the better when they have got into them what I have recently seen described as the “twang of spirituality”, and how the practical problems either of society or of politics are going at all to profit by this element. We have here really an echo of the European idea, now of sufficiently long standing, that religion and spirituality on the one side and intellectual activity and practical life on the other are two entirely different things and have each to be pursued on its own entirely separate lines and in obedience to its own entirely separate principles. Again we may be met also by the suspicion that in holding up this ideal rule before India we are pointing her to the metaphysical and away from the dynamic and pragmatic or inculcating some obscurantist reactionary principle of mystical or irrational religiosity and diverting her from the

paths of reason and modernity which she must follow if she is to be an efficient and a well-organised nation able to survive in the shocks of the modern world. We must therefore try to make clear what it is we mean by a renaissance governed by the principle of spirituality.

But first let us say what we do not mean by this ideal. Clearly it does not signify that we shall regard earthly life as a temporal vanity, try to become all of us as soon as possible monastic ascetics, frame our social life into a preparation for the monastery or cavern or mountain-top or make of it a static life without any great progressive ideals but only some aim which has nothing to do with earth or the collective advance of the human race. That may have been for some time a tendency of the Indian mind, but it was never the whole tendency. Nor does spirituality mean the moulding of the whole type of the national being to suit the limited dogmas, forms, tenets of a particular religion, as was often enough attempted by the old societies, an idea which still persists in many minds by the power of old mental habit and association; clearly such an attempt would be impossible, even if it were desirable, in a country full of the most diverse religious opinions and harbouring too three such distinct general forms as Hinduism, Islam and Christianity, to say nothing of the numerous special forms to which each of these has given birth. Spirituality is much wider than any particular religion, and in the larger ideas of it that are now coming on us even the greatest religion becomes no more than a broad sect or branch of the one universal religion, by which we shall understand in the future man's seeking for the eternal, the divine, the greater self, the source of unity and his attempt to arrive at some equation, some increasing approximation of the values of human life with the eternal and the divine values.

Nor do we mean the exclusion of anything whatsoever from our scope, of any of the great aims of human life, any of the great problems of our modern world, any form of human activity, any general or inherent impulse or characteristic means of the desire of the soul of man for development, expansion, increasing vigour and joy, light, power, perfection. Spirit without mind,

spirit without body is not the type of man, therefore a human spirituality must not belittle the mind, life or body or hold them of small account: it will rather hold them of high account, of immense importance, precisely because they are the conditions and instruments of the life of the spirit in man. The ancient Indian culture attached quite as much value to the soundness, growth and strength of the mind, life and body as the old Hellenic or the modern scientific thought, although for a different end and a greater motive. Therefore to everything that serves and belongs to the healthy fullness of these things, it gave free play, to the activity of the reason, to science and philosophy, to the satisfaction of the aesthetic being and to all the many arts great or small, to the health and strength of the body, to the physical and economical well-being, ease, opulence of the race,—there was never a national ideal of poverty in India as some would have us believe, nor was bareness or squalor the essential setting of her spirituality,—and to its general military, political and social strength and efficiency. Their aim was high, but firm and wide too was the base they sought to establish and great the care bestowed on these first instruments. Necessarily the new India will seek the same end in new ways under the vivid impulse of fresh and large ideas and by an instrumentality suited to more complex conditions; but the scope of her effort and action and the suppleness and variety of her mind will not be less, but greater than of old. Spirituality is not necessarily exclusive; it can be and in its fullness must be all-inclusive.

But still there is a great difference between the spiritual and the purely material and mental view of existence. The spiritual view holds that the mind, life, body are man's means and not his aims and even that they are not his last and highest means; it sees them as his outer instrumental self and not his whole being. It sees the infinite behind all things finite and it adjudges the value of the finite by higher infinite values of which they are the imperfect translation and towards which, to a truer expression of them, they are always trying to arrive. It sees a greater reality than the apparent not only behind man and the world, but within man and the world, and this soul, self, divine thing in man it

holds to be that in him which is of the highest importance, that which everything else in him must try in whatever way to bring out and express, and this soul, self, divine presence in the world it holds to be that which man has ever to try to see and recognise through all appearances, to unite his thought and life with it and in it to find his unity with his fellows. This alters necessarily our whole normal view of things; even in preserving all the aims of human life, it will give them a different sense and direction.

We aim at the health and vigour of the body; but with what object? For its own sake, will be the ordinary reply, because it is worth having; or else that we may have long life and a sound basis for our intellectual, vital, emotional satisfactions. Yes, for its own sake, in a way, but in this sense that the physical too is an expression of the spirit and its perfection is worth having, is part of the dharma of the complete human living; but still more as a basis for all that higher activity which ends in the discovery and expression of the divine self in man. *Sarīram khalu dharmasādhanam*, runs the old Sanskrit saying, the body too is our means for fulfilling the dharma, the Godward law of our being. The mental, the emotional, the aesthetic parts of us have to be developed, is the ordinary view, so that they may have a greater satisfaction, or because that is man's finer nature, because so he feels himself more alive and fulfilled. This, but not this only; rather because these things too are the expressions of the spirit, things which are seeking in him for their divine values and by their growth, subtlety, flexibility, power, intensity he is able to come nearer to the divine Reality in the world, to lay hold on it variously, to tune eventually his whole life into unity and conformity with it. Morality is in the ordinary view a well-regulated individual and social conduct which keeps society going and leads towards a better, a more rational, temperate, sympathetic, self-restrained dealing with our fellows. But ethics in the spiritual point of view is much more, it is a means of developing in our action and still more essentially in the character of our being the diviner self in us, a step of our growing into the nature of the Godhead.

So with all our aims and activities; spirituality takes them

all and gives them a greater, diviner, more intimate sense. Philosophy is in the Western way of dealing with it a dispassionate enquiry by the light of the reason into the first truths of existence, which we shall get at either by observing the facts science places at our disposal or by a careful dialectical scrutiny of the concepts of the reason or a mixture of the two methods. But from the spiritual view-point truth of existence is to be found by intuition and inner experience and not only by the reason and by scientific observation; the work of philosophy is to arrange the data given by the various means of knowledge, excluding none, and put them into their synthetic relation to the one Truth, the one supreme and universal reality. Eventually, its real value is to prepare a basis for spiritual realisation and the growing of the human being into his divine self and divine nature. Science itself becomes only a knowledge of the world which throws an added light on the spirit of the universe and his way in things. Nor will it confine itself to a physical knowledge and its practical fruits or to the knowledge of life and man and mind based upon the idea of matter or material energy as our starting-point; a spiritualised culture will make room for new fields of research, for new and old psychical sciences and results which start from spirit as the first truth and from the power of mind and of what is greater than mind to act upon life and matter. The primitive aim of art and poetry is to create images of man and Nature which shall satisfy the sense of beauty and embody artistically the ideas of the intelligence about life and the responses of the imagination to it; but in a spiritual culture they become too in their aim a revelation of greater things concealed in man and Nature and of the deepest spiritual and universal beauty. Politics, society, economy are in the first form of human life simply an arrangement by which men collectively can live, produce, satisfy their desires, enjoy, progress in bodily, vital and mental efficiency; but the spiritual aim makes them much more than this, first, a framework of life within which man can seek for and grow into his real self and divinity, secondly, an increasing embodiment of the divine law of being in life, thirdly, a collective advance towards the light, power, peace, unity, harmony of the diviner

nature of humanity which the race is trying to evolve. This and nothing more but nothing less, this in all its potentialities, is what we mean by a spiritual culture and the application of spirituality to life.

Those who distrust this ideal or who cannot understand it, are still under the sway of the European conception of life which for a time threatened to swamp entirely the Indian spirit. But let us remember that Europe itself is labouring to outgrow the limitations of its own conceptions and precisely by a rapid infusion of the ideas of the East,—naturally, essential ideas and not the mere forms,—which have been first infiltrating and are now more freely streaming into Western thought, poetry, art, ideas of life, not to overturn its culture, but to transform, enlighten and aggrandise its best values and to add new elements which have too long been ignored or forgotten. It will be singular if while Europe is thus intelligently enlarging herself in the new light she has been able to seize and admitting the truths of the spirit and the aim at a divine change in man and his life, we in India are to take up the cast-off clothes of European thought and life and to straggle along in the old rut of her wheels, always taking up today what she had cast off yesterday. We should not allow our cultural independence to be paralysed by the accident that at the moment Europe came in upon us, we were in a state of ebb and weakness, such as comes some day upon all civilisations. That no more proves that our spirituality, our culture, our leading ideas were entirely mistaken and the best we can do is vigorously to Europeanise, rationalise, materialise ourselves in the practical parts of life,—keeping perhaps some spirituality, religion, Indianism as a graceful decoration in the background,—than the great catastrophe of the war proves that Europe's science, her democracy, her progress were all wrong and she should return to the Middle Ages or imitate the culture of China or Turkey or Tibet. Such generalisations are the facile falsehoods of a hasty and unreflecting ignorance.

We have both made mistakes, faltered in the true application of our ideals, been misled into unhealthy exaggerations. Europe has understood the lesson, she is striving to correct herself;

but she does not for this reason forswear science, democracy, progress, but purposes to complete and perfect them, to use them better, to give them a sounder direction. She is admitting the light of the East, but on the basis of her own way of thinking and living, opening herself to truth of the spirit, but not abandoning her own truth of life and science and social ideals. We should be as faithful, as free in our dealings with the Indian spirit and modern influences; correct what went wrong with us; apply our spirituality on broader and freer lines, be if possible not less but more spiritual than were our forefathers; admit Western science, reason, progressiveness, the essential modern ideas, but on the basis of our own way of life and assimilated to our spiritual aim and ideal; open ourselves to the throb of life, the pragmatic activity, the great modern endeavour, but not therefore abandon our fundamental view of God and man and Nature. There is no real quarrel between them; for rather these two things need each other to fill themselves in, to discover all their own implications, to awaken to their own richest and completest significances.

India can best develop herself and serve humanity by being herself and following the law of her own nature. This does not mean, as some narrowly and blindly suppose, the rejection of everything new that comes to us in the stream of Time or happens to have been first developed or powerfully expressed by the West. Such an attitude would be intellectually absurd, physically impossible, and above all unspiritual; true spirituality rejects no new light, no added means or materials of our human self-development. It means simply to keep our centre, our essential way of being, our inborn nature and assimilate to it all we receive, and evolve out of it all we do and create. Religion has been a central preoccupation of the Indian mind; some have told us that too much religion ruined India, precisely because we made the whole of life religion or religion the whole of life, we have failed in life and gone under. I will not answer, adopting the language used by the poet in a slightly different connection, that our fall does not matter and that the dust in which India lies is sacred. The fall, the failure does matter, and to lie in the dust is no sound position for man or nation. But the reason assigned

is not the true one. If the majority of Indians had indeed made the whole of their lives religion in the true sense of the word, we should not be where we are now; it was because their public life became most irreligious, egoistic, self-seeking, materialistic that they fell. It is possible, that on one side we deviated too much into an excessive religiosity, that is to say, an excessive externalism of ceremony, rule, routine, mechanical worship, on the other into a too world-shunning asceticism which drew away the best minds who were thus lost to society instead of standing like the ancient Rishis as its spiritual support and its illuminating life-givers. But the root of the matter was the dwindling of the spiritual impulse in its generality and broadness, the decline of intellectual activity and freedom, the waning of great ideals, the loss of the gust of life.

Perhaps there was too much of religion in one sense; the word is English, smacks too much of things external such as creeds, rites, an external piety; there is no one Indian equivalent. But if we give rather to religion the sense of the following of the spiritual impulse in its fullness and define spirituality as the attempt to know and live in the highest self, the divine, the all-embracing unity and to raise life in all its parts to the divinest possible values, then it is evident that there was not too much of religion, but rather too little of it—and in what there was, a too one-sided and therefore an insufficiently ample tendency. The right remedy is, not to belittle still farther the agelong ideal of India, but to return to its old amplitude and give it a still wider scope, to make in very truth all the life of the nation a religion in this high spiritual sense. This is the direction in which the philosophy, poetry, art of the West is, still more or less obscurely, but with an increasing light, beginning to turn, and even some faint glints of the truth are beginning now to fall across political and sociological ideals. India has the key to the knowledge and conscious application of the ideal; what was dark to her before in its application, she can now, with a new light, illumine; what was wrong and wry in her old methods she can now rectify; the fences which she created to protect the outer growth of the spiritual ideal and which afterwards became

barriers to its expansion and farther application, she can now break down and give her spirit a freer field and an ampler flight: she can, if she will, give a new and decisive turn to the problems over which all mankind is labouring and stumbling, for the clue to their solutions is there in her ancient knowledge. Whether she will rise or not to the height of her opportunity in the renaissance which is coming upon her, is the question of her destiny.

Indian Culture
and
External Influence

Indian Culture and External Influence

IN CONSIDERING Indian civilisation and its renascence, I suggested that a powerful new creation in all fields was our great need, the meaning of the renascence and the one way of preserving the civilisation. Confronted with the huge rush of modern life and thought, invaded by another dominant civilisation almost her opposite or inspired at least with a very different spirit to her own, India can only survive by confronting this raw, new, aggressive, powerful world with fresh diviner creations of her own spirit, cast in the mould of her own spiritual ideals. She must meet it by solving its greater problems,—which she cannot avoid, even if such avoidance could be thought desirable,—in her own way, through solutions arising out of her own being and from her own deepest and largest knowledge. In that connection I spoke of the acceptance and assimilation from the West of whatever in its knowledge, ideas, powers was assimilable, compatible with her spirit, reconcilable with her ideals, valuable for a new statement of life. This question of external influence and new creation from within is of very considerable importance; it calls for more than a passing mention. Especially it is necessary to form some more precise idea of what we mean by acceptance and of the actual effect of assimilation; for this is a problem of pressing incidence in which we have to get our ideas clear and fix firmly and seemingly on our line of solution.

But it is possible to hold that while new creation—and not a motionless sticking to old forms—is our one way of life and salvation, no acceptance of anything Western is called for, we can find in ourselves all that we need; no considerable acceptance is possible without creating a breach which will bring pouring in the rest of the occidental deluge. That, if I have not misread it, is the sense of a comment on these articles in a

Bengali literary periodical¹ which holds up the ideal of a new creation to arise from within entirely on national lines and in the national spirit. The writer takes his stand on a position which is common ground, that humanity is one, but different peoples are variant soul-forms of the common humanity. When we find the oneness, the principle of variation is not destroyed but finds rather its justification; it is not by abolishing ourselves, our own special temperament and power, that we can get at the living oneness, but by following it out and raising it to its highest possibilities of freedom and action. That is a truth which I have myself insisted on repeatedly, with regard to the modern idea and attempt at some kind of political unification of humanity, as a very important part of the psychological sense of social development, and again in this question of a particular people's life and culture in all its parts and manifestations. I have insisted that uniformity is not a real but a dead unity: uniformity kills life while real unity, if well founded, becomes vigorous and fruitful by a rich energy of variation. But the writer adds that the idea of taking over what is best in occidental civilisation, is a false notion without a living meaning; to leave the bad and take the good sounds very well, but this bad and this good are not separable in that way: they are the inextricably mingled growth of one being, not separate blocks of a child's toy house set side by side and easily detachable, — and what is meant then by cutting out and taking one element and leaving the rest? If we take over a Western ideal, we take it over from a living form which strikes us; we imitate that form, are subjugated by its spirit and natural tendencies, and the good and bad intertwined in the living growth come in upon us together and take united possession. In fact, we have been for a long time so imitating the West, trying to become like it or partly like it and have fortunately failed, for that would have meant creating a bastard or twy-natured culture; but twy-natured, as Tennyson makes his Lucretius say, is no-natured and a bastard culture is no sound, truth-living

¹ *Narayan*, edited by Mr. C. R. Das.

culture. An entire return upon ourselves is our only way of salvation.

There is much to be said here, it seems to me, both in the way of confirmation and of modification. But let us be clear about the meaning of our terms. That the attempt in the last century which still in some directions continues,—to imitate European civilisation and to make ourselves a sort of brown Englishmen, to throw our ancient culture into the dust-bin and put on the livery or uniform of the West was a mistaken and illegitimate endeavour, I heartily agree. At the same time a certain amount of imitation, a great amount even, was, one might almost say, a biological necessity, at any rate a psychological necessity of the situation. Not only when a lesser meets a greater culture, but when a culture which has fallen into a state of comparative inactivity, sleep, contraction, is faced with, still more when it receives the direct shock of a waking, active, tremendously creative civilisation, finds thrown upon it novel and successful powers and functionings, sees an immense succession and development of new ideas and formations, it is impelled by the very instinct of life to take over these ideas and forms, to annex, to enrich itself, even to imitate and reproduce, and in one way or in another take large account and advantage of these new forces and opportunities. That is a phenomenon which has happened repeatedly in history, in a greater or a lesser degree, in part or in totality. But if there is only a mechanical imitation, if there is a subordination and servitude, the inactive or weaker culture perishes, it is swallowed up by the invading leviathan. And even short of that, in proportion as there is a leaning towards these undesirable things, it languishes, is unsuccessful in its attempt at annexation, loses besides the power of its own spirit. To recover its own centre, find its own base and do whatever it has to do in its own strength and genius is certainly the one way of salvation. But even then a certain amount of acceptance, of forms too,—some imitation, if all taking over of forms must be called imitation,—is inevitable. We have, for instance, taken over in literature the form of the novel, the short story, the critical essay among a number of other adoptions, in science not only the

discoveries and inventions, but the method and instrumentation of inductive research, in politics the press, the platform, the forms and habits of agitation, the public association. I do not suppose that anyone seriously thinks of renouncing or exiling these modern additions to our life,—though they are not all of them by any means unmixed blessings,—on the ground that they are foreign importations. But the question is what we do with them and whether we can bring them to be instruments and by some characteristic modification moulds of our own spirit. If so, there has been an acceptance and an assimilation; if not there has been merely a helpless imitation.

But the taking over of forms is not the heart of the question. When I speak of acceptance and assimilation, I am thinking of certain influences, ideas, energies brought forward with a great living force by Europe, which can awaken and enrich our own cultural activities and cultural being if we succeed in dealing with them with a victorious power and originality, if we can bring them into our characteristic way of being and transform them by its shaping action. That was in fact what our own ancestors did, never losing their originality, never effacing their uniqueness, because always vigorously creating from within, with whatever knowledge or artistic suggestion from outside they thought worthy of acceptance or capable of an Indian treatment. But I would certainly repel the formula of taking the good and leaving the bad as a crudity, one of those facile formulas which catch the superficial mind but are unsound in conception. Obviously, if we “take over” anything, the good and the bad in it will come in together pell-mell. If we take over for instance that terrible, monstrous and compelling thing, that giant Asuric creation, European industrialism,—unfortunately we are being forced by circumstances to do it,—whether we take it in its form or its principle, we may under more favourable conditions develop by it our wealth and economic resources, but assuredly we shall get too its social discords and moral plagues and cruel problems, and I do not see how we shall avoid becoming the slaves of the economic aim in life and losing the spiritual principle of our culture.

But, besides, these terms good and bad in this connection mean nothing definite, give us no help. If I must use them, where they can have only a relative significance, in a matter not of ethics, but of an interchange between life and life, I must first give them this general significance that whatever helps me to find myself more intimately, nobly, with a greater and sounder possibility of self-expressive creation, is good; whatever carries me out of my orientation, whatever weakens and belittles my power, richness, breadth and height of self-being, is bad for me. If the distinction is so understood, it will be evident, I think, to any serious and critical mind which tries to fathom things, that the real point is not the taking over of this or that formal detail, which has only a sign value, for example, widow remarriage, but a dealing with great effective ideas, such as are the ideas, in the external field of life, of social and political liberty, equality, democracy. If I accept any of these ideas it is not because they are modern or European, which is in itself no recommendation, but because they are human, because they present fruitful view-points to the spirit, because they are things of the greatest importance in the future development of the life of man. What I mean by acceptance of the effective idea of democracy,—the thing itself, never fully worked out, was present as an element in ancient Indian as in ancient European polity and society,—is that I find its inclusion in our future way of living, in some shape, to be a necessity of our growth. What I mean by assimilation, is that we must not take it crudely in the European forms, but must go back to whatever corresponds to it, illuminates its sense, justifies its highest purport in our own spiritual conception of life and existence, and in that light work out its extent, degree, form, relation to other ideas, application. To everything I would apply the same principle, to each in its own kind, after its proper dharma, in its right measure of importance, its spiritual, intellectual, ethical, aesthetic, dynamic utility.

I take it as a self-evident law of individual being applicable to group-individuality, that it is neither desirable nor possible to exclude everything that comes in to us from outside. I take it as an equally self-evident law that a living organism, which

grows not by accretion, but by self-development and assimilation, must recast the things it takes in to suit the law and form and characteristic action of its biological or psychological body, reject what would be deleterious or poisonous to it,— and what is that but the non-assimilable? — take only what can be turned into useful stuff of self-expression. It is, to use an apt Sanskritic phrase employed in the Bengali tongue, *ātmasāt-karana*, an assimilative appropriation, a making the thing settle into oneself and turn into characteristic form of our self-being. The impossibility of entire rejection arises from the very fact of our being a term of diversity in a unity, not really separate from all other existence, but in relation with all that surrounds us, because in life this relation expresses itself very largely by a process of interchange. The undesirability of total rejection, even if it were entirely possible, arises from the fact that interchange with the environment is necessary to a healthy persistence and growth; the living organism which rejects all such interchange, would speedily languish and die of lethargy and inanition.

Mentally, vitally and physically I do not grow by a pure self-development from within in a virgin isolation; I am not a separate self-existent being proceeding from a past to a new becoming in a world of its own where no one is but itself, nothing works but its own inner powers and musings. There is in every individualised existence a double action, a self-development from within which is its greatest intimate power of being and by which it is itself, and a reception of impacts from outside which it has to accommodate to its own individuality and make into material of self-growth and self-power. The two operations are not mutually exclusive, nor is the second harmful to the first except when the inner genius is too weak to deal victoriously with its environmental world; on the contrary the reception of impacts stimulates in a vigorous and healthy being its force for self-development and is an aid to a greater and more pronouncedly characteristic self-determination. As we rise in the scale we find that the power of original development from within, of conscious self-determination increases more and more, while in those who live most powerfully in themselves it reaches striking,

sometimes almost divine proportions. But at the same time we see that the allied power of seizing upon the impacts and suggestions of the outside world grows in proportion; those who live most powerfully in themselves, can also most largely use the world and all its material for the Self,— and, it must be added, most successfully help the world and enrich it out of their own being. The man who most finds and lives from the inner self, can most embrace the universal and become one with it; the Swarat, independent, self-possessed and self-ruler, can most be the Samrat, possessor and shaper of the world in which he lives, can most too grow one with all in the Atman. That is the truth this developing existence teaches us, and it is one of the greatest secrets of the old Indian spiritual knowledge.

Therefore to live in one's self, determining one's self-expression from one's own centre of being in accordance with one's own law of being, swadharma, is the first necessity. Not to be able to do that means disintegration of the life; not to do it sufficiently means languor, weakness, inefficiency, the danger of being oppressed by the environing forces and overborne; not to be able to do it wisely, intuitively, with a strong use of one's inner material and inner powers, means confusion, disorder and finally decline and loss of vitality. But also not to be able to use the material that the life around offers us, not to lay hold on it with an intuitive selection and a strong mastering assimilation is a serious deficiency and a danger to the existence. To a healthy individuality the external impact or entering energy, idea, influence may act as an irritant awakening the inner being to a sense of discord, incompatibility or peril, and then there is a struggle, an impulse and process of rejection; but even in this struggle, in this process of rejection there is some resultant of change and growth, some increment of the power and material of life; the energies of the being are stimulated and helped by the attack. It may act as a stimulus, awakening a new action of the self-consciousness and a sense of fresh possibility,— by comparison, by suggestion, by knocking at locked doors and arousing slumbering energies. It may come in as a possible material which has then to be reshaped to a form of the inner energy,

harmonised with the inner being, reinterpreted in the light of its own characteristic self-consciousness. In a great change of environment or a close meeting with a mass of invading influences all these processes work together and there is possibly much temporary perplexity and difficulty, many doubtful and perilous movements, but also the opportunity of a great self-developing transformation or an immense and vigorous renascence.

The group-soul differs from the individual only in being more self-sufficient by reason of its being an assemblage of many individual selves and capable within of many group variations. There is a constant inner interchange which may for a long time suffice to maintain the vitality, growth, power of developing activity, even when there is a restricted interchange with the rest of humanity. Greek civilisation,— after growing under the influence of Egyptian, Phoenician and other oriental influences,— separated itself sharply from the non-Hellenic “barbarian” cultures and was able for some centuries to live within itself by a rich variation and internal interchange. There was the same phenomenon in ancient India of a culture living intensely from within in a profound differentiation from all surrounding cultures, its vitality rendered possible by an even greater richness of internal interchange and variation. Chinese civilisation offers a third instance. But at no time did Indian culture exclude altogether external influences; on the contrary a very great power of selective assimilation, subordination and transformation of external elements was a characteristic of its processes; it protected itself from any considerable or overwhelming invasion, but laid hands on and included whatever struck or impressed it and in the act of inclusion subjected it to a characteristic change which harmonised the new element with the spirit of its own culture. But nowadays any such strong separative aloofness as distinguished the ancient civilisations, is no longer possible; the races of mankind have come too close to each other, are being thrown together in a certain unavoidable life unity. We are confronted with the more difficult problem of living in the full stress of this greater interaction and imposing on its impacts the law of our being.

Any attempt to remain exactly what we were before the European invasion or to ignore in future the claims of a modern environment and necessity is foredoomed to an obvious failure. However much we may deplore some of the characteristics of that intervening period in which we were dominated by the Western standpoint or move away from the standpoint back to our own characteristic way of seeing existence, we cannot get rid of a certain element of inevitable change it has produced upon us, any more than a man can go back in life to what he was some years ago and recover entire and unaffected a past mentality. Time and its influences have not only passed over him, but carried him forward in their stream. We cannot go backward to a past form of our being, but we can go forward to a large repossession of ourselves in which we shall make a better, more living, more real, more self-possessed use of the intervening experience. We can still think in the essential sense of the great spirit and ideals of our past, but the form of our thinking, our speaking, our development of them has changed by the very fact of new thought and experience; we see them not only in the old, but in new lights, we support them by the added strength of new view-points, even the old words we use acquire for us a modified, more extended and richer significance. Again, we cannot be "ourselves alone" in any narrow formal sense, because we must necessarily take account of the modern world around us and get full knowledge of it, otherwise we cannot live. But all such taking account of things, all added knowledge modifies our subjective being. My mind, with all that depends on it, is modified by what it observes and works upon, modified when it takes in from it fresh materials of thought, modified when it is wakened by its stimulus to new activities, modified even when it denies and rejects; for even an old thought or truth which I affirm against an opposing idea, becomes a new thought to me in the effort of affirmation and rejection, clothes itself with new aspects and issues. My life is modified in the same way by the life influences it has to encounter and confront. Finally, we cannot avoid dealing with the great governing ideas and problems of the modern world. The modern world is still

mainly European, a world dominated by the European mind and Western civilisation. We claim to set right this undue preponderance, to reassert the Asiatic and, for ourselves, the Indian mind and to preserve and develop the great values of Asiatic and of Indian civilisation. But the Asiatic or the Indian mind can only assert itself successfully by meeting these problems and by giving them a solution which will justify its own ideals and spirit.

The principle I have affirmed results both from the necessity of our nature and the necessity of things, of life,—fidelity to our own spirit, nature, ideals, the creation of our own characteristic forms in the new age and the new environment, but also a strong and masterful dealing with external influences which need not be and in the nature of the situation cannot be a total rejection; therefore there must be an element of successful assimilation. There remains the very difficult question of the application of the principle,—the degree, the way, the guiding perceptions. To think that out we must look at each province of culture and, keeping always firm hold on a perception of what the Indian spirit is and the Indian ideal is, see how they can work upon the present situation and possibilities in each of these provinces and lead to a new victorious creation. In such thinking it will not do to be too dogmatic. Each capable Indian mind must think it out or, better, work it out in its own light and power,—as the Bengal artists are working it out in their own sphere,—and contribute some illumination or effectuation. The spirit of the Indian renascence will take care of the rest, that power of the universal Time-Spirit which has begun to move in our midst for the creation of a new and greater India.

“Is India Civilised?”

“Is India Civilised?”

A BOOK under this rather startling title was published some years ago by Sir John Woodroffe, the well-known scholar and writer on Tantric philosophy, in answer to an extravagant *jeu d'esprit* by Mr. William Archer. That well-known dramatic critic leaving his safe natural sphere for fields in which his chief claim to speak was a sublime and confident ignorance, assailed the whole life and culture of India and even lumped together all her greatest achievements, philosophy, religion, poetry, painting, sculpture, Upanishads, Mahabharata, Ramayana in one wholesale condemnation as a repulsive mass of unspeakable barbarism. It was argued by many at the time that to reply to a critic of this kind was to break a butterfly, or it might be in this instance a bumble-bee upon the wheel. But Sir John Woodroffe insisted that even an attack of this ignorant kind ought not to be neglected; he took it as a particularly useful type in the general kind, first, because it raised the question from the rationalistic and not from the Christian and missionary standpoint and, again, because it betrayed the grosser underlying motives of all such attacks. But his book was important, not so much as an answer to a particular critic, but because it raised with great point and power the whole question of the survival of Indian civilisation and the inevitability of a war of cultures.

The question whether there has been or is a civilisation in India is not any longer debatable; for everyone whose opinion counts recognises the presence of a distinct and a great civilisation unique in its character. Sir John Woodroffe's purpose was to disclose the conflict of European and Asiatic culture and, in greater prominence, the distinct meaning and value of Indian civilisation, the peril it now runs and the calamity its destruction would be to the world. The author held its preservation to be of an immense importance to mankind and he believed it to

be in great danger. In the stupendous rush of change which is coming on the human world as a result of the present tornado of upheaval, ancient India's culture, attacked by European modernism, overpowered in the material field, betrayed by the indifference of her children, may perish for ever along with the soul of the nation that holds it in its keeping. The book was an urgent invitation to us to appreciate better this sacred trust and the near peril which besets it and to stand firm and faithful in the hour of the ordeal. It will be useful to state briefly its gist as an introduction to this all-important issue.

A true happiness in this world is the right terrestrial aim of man, and true happiness lies in the finding and maintenance of a natural harmony of spirit, mind and body. A culture is to be valued to the extent to which it has discovered the right key of this harmony and organised its expressive motives and movements. And a civilisation must be judged by the manner in which all its principles, ideas, forms, ways of living work to bring that harmony out, manage its rhythmic play and secure its continuance or the development of its motives. A civilisation in pursuit of this aim may be predominantly material like modern European culture, predominantly mental and intellectual like the old Graeco-Roman or predominantly spiritual like the still persistent culture of India. India's central conception is that of the Eternal, the Spirit here incased in matter, involved and immanent in it and evolving on the material plane by rebirth of the individual up the scale of being till in mental man it enters the world of ideas and realm of conscious morality, *dharma*. This achievement, this victory over unconscious matter develops its lines, enlarges its scope, elevates its levels until the increasing manifestation of the sattvic or spiritual portion of the vehicle of mind enables the individual mental being in man to identify himself with the pure spiritual consciousness beyond Mind. India's social system is built upon this conception; her philosophy formulates it; her religion is an aspiration to the spiritual consciousness and its fruits; her art and literature have the same upward look; her whole dharma or law of being is founded upon it. Progress she admits, but this spiritual progress, not the

externally self-unfolding process of an always more and more prosperous and efficient material civilisation. It is her founding of life upon this exalted conception and her urge towards the spiritual and the eternal that constitute the distinct value of her civilisation. And it is her fidelity, with whatever human shortcomings, to this highest ideal that has made her people a nation apart in the human world.

But there are other cultures led by a different conception and even an opposite motive. And by the law of struggle which is the first law of existence in the material universe, varying cultures are bound to come into conflict. A deep-seated urge in Nature compels them to attempt to extend themselves and to destroy, assimilate and replace all disparities or opposites. Conflict is not indeed the last and ideal stage; for that comes when various cultures develop freely, without hatred, misunderstanding or aggression and even with an underlying sense of unity, their separate special motives. But so long as the principle of struggle prevails, one must face the lesser law; it is fatal to disarm in the midmost of the battle. The culture which gives up its living separateness, the civilisation which neglects an active self-defence will be swallowed up and the nation which lived by it will lose its soul and perish. Each nation is a Shakti or power of the evolving spirit in humanity and lives by the principle which it embodies. India is the Bharata Shakti, the living energy of a great spiritual conception, and fidelity to it is the very principle of her existence. For by its virtue alone she has been one of the immortal nations; this alone has been the secret of her amazing persistence and perpetual force of survival and revival.

The principle of struggle has assumed the large historical aspect of an agelong clash and pressure of conflict between Asia and Europe. This clash, this mutual pressure has had its material side, but has borne also its cultural and spiritual aspect. Both materially and spiritually Europe has thrown herself repeatedly upon Asia, Asia too upon Europe, to conquer, assimilate and dominate. There has been a constant alternation, a flowing backward and forward of these two seas of power. All Asia has always had the spiritual tendency in more or less intensity,

with more or less clearness; but in this essential matter India is the quintessence of the Asiatic way of being. Europe too in mediaeval times had a culture in which by the dominance of the Christian idea—but Christianity was of Asiatic origin—the spiritual motive took the lead; then there was an essential similarity as well as a certain difference. Still the differentiation of cultural temperament has on the whole been constant. Since some centuries Europe has become material, predatory, aggressive, and has lost the harmony of the inner and outer man which is the true meaning of civilisation and the efficient condition of a true progress. Material comfort, material progress, material efficiency have become the gods of her worship. The modern European civilisation which has invaded Asia and which all violent attacks on Indian ideals represent, is the effective form of this materialistic culture. India, true to her spiritual motive, has never shared in the physical attacks of Asia upon Europe; her method has always been an infiltration of the world with her ideas, such as we today see again in progress. But she has now been physically occupied by Europe and this physical conquest must necessarily be associated with an attempt at cultural conquest; that invasion too has also made some progress. On the other hand English rule has enabled India still to retain her identity and social type; it has awakened her to herself and has meanwhile, until she became conscious of her strength, guarded her against the flood which would otherwise have submerged and broken her civilisation.¹ It is for her now to recover herself, defend her cultural existence against the alien penetration, preserve her distinct spirit, essential principle and characteristic forms for her own salvation and the total welfare of the human race.

But many questions may arise,—and principally whether

¹ This contention cannot be accepted in an unqualified sense. English rule has by its general principle of social and religious non-interference prevented any direct and violent touch, any deliberate and purposeful social pressure; but it has undermined and deprived of living strength all the preexisting centres and instruments of Indian social life and by a sort of unperceived rodent process left it only a rotting shell without expansive power or any better defensive force than the force of inertia.

such a spirit of defence and attack is the right spirit, whether union, harmony, interchange are not our proper temperament for the coming human advance. Is not a unified world-culture the large way of the future? Can either an exaggeratedly spiritual or an excessively temporal civilisation be the sound condition of human progress or human perfection? A happy or just reconciliation would seem to be a better key to a harmony of Spirit, Mind and Body. And there is the question too whether the forms of Indian culture must be preserved intact as well as the spirit. To these queries the reply of the author is to be found in his law of graduality of the spiritual advance of humanity, its need of advancing through three successive stages.

The first stage is the period of conflict and competition which has been ever dominant in the past and still overshadows the present of mankind. For even when the crudest forms of material conflict are mitigated, the conflict itself still survives and the cultural struggle comes into greater prominence. The second step brings the stage of concert. The third and last is marked by the spirit of sacrifice in which, because all is known as the one Self, each gives himself for the good of others. The second stage has hardly at all commenced for most; the third belongs to the indeterminate future. Individuals have reached the highest stage; the perfected Sannyasin, the liberated man, the soul that has become one with the Spirit, knows all being as himself and for him all self-defence and attack are needless. For strife does not belong to the law of his seeing; sacrifice and self-giving are the whole principle of his action. But no people has reached that level, and to follow a law or principle involuntarily or ignorantly or contrary to the truth of one's consciousness is a falsehood and a self-destruction. To allow oneself to be killed, like the lamb attacked by the wolf, brings no growth, farthers no development, assures no spiritual merit. Concert or unity may come in good time, but it must be an underlying unity with a free differentiation, not a swallowing up of one by another or an incongruous and inharmonious mixture. Nor can it come before the world is ready for these greater things. To lay down one's arms in a state of war is to invite destruction and it can serve no

compensating spiritual purpose.

Spiritual and temporal have indeed to be perfectly harmonised, for the spirit works through mind and body. But the purely intellectual or heavily material culture of the kind that Europe now favours, bears in its heart the seed of death; for the living aim of culture is the realisation on earth of the kingdom of heaven. India, though its urge is towards the Eternal, since that is always the highest, the entirely real, still contains in her own culture and her own philosophy a supreme reconciliation of the eternal and the temporal and she need not seek it from outside. On the same principle the form of the interdependence of mind, body and spirit in a harmonious culture is important as well as the pure spirit; for the form is the rhythm of the spirit. It follows that to break up the form is to injure the spirit's self-expression or at least to put it into grave peril. Change of forms there may and will be, but the novel formation must be a new self-expression or self-creation developed from within; it must be characteristic of the spirit and not servilely borrowed from the embodiments of an alien nature.

Where then does India actually stand in this critical hour of her necessity and how far can she be said to be still firmly seated on her eternal foundations? Already she has been largely affected by European culture and the peril is far from over; on the contrary it will be greater, more insistent, more imperatively violent in the immediate future. Asia is rearising; but that very fact will intensify and is already intensifying the attempt, natural and legitimate according to the law of competition, of European civilisation to assimilate Asia. For if she is culturally transformed and conquered, then when she again counts in the material order of the world, it will not be with any menace of the invasion of Europe by the Asiatic ideal. It is a cultural quarrel complicated with a political question. Asia must become culturally a province of Europe and form politically one part of a Europeanised if not a European concert; otherwise Europe may become culturally a province of Asia, Asiaticised by the dominant influence of wealthy, enormous, powerful Asiatic peoples in the new world-system. The motive of Mr. Archer's attack is frankly a political

motive. This is the burden of all his song that the reconstruction of the world must take place in the forms and follow the canons of a rationalistic and materialistic European civilisation. On his reasoning, India if she adheres to her own civilisation, if she cherishes its spiritual motive, if she clings to its spiritual principle of formation, will stand out as a living denial, a hideous "blot" upon this fair, luminous, rationalistic world. Either she must Europeanise, rationalise, materialise her whole being and deserve liberty by the change or else she must be kept in subjection and administered by her cultural superiors: her people of three hundred million religious savages must be held down firmly, taught and civilised by her noble and enlightened Christian-atheistic European warders and tutors. A grotesque statement in form, but in substance it has in it the root of the matter. As against the attack — not universal, for understanding and appreciation of Indian culture are now more common than before, — India is indeed awaking and defending herself, but not sufficiently and not with the whole-heartedness, the clear sight and the firm resolution which can alone save her from the peril. Today it is close; let her choose, — for the choice is imperatively before her, to live or to perish.

The warning cannot be neglected; recent utterances of European publicists and statesmen, recent books and writings against India and the joyful and enthusiastic welcome they have received from the public of occidental countries, point to the reality of the danger. It arises indeed as a necessity from the present political situation and cultural trend of humanity at this moment of enormous decisive change. It is not necessary to follow the writer in all the viewpoints expressed in his book. I cannot myself accept in full his eulogy of the mediaeval civilisation of Europe. Its interest, the beauty of its artistic motives, its deep and sincere spiritual urgings are marred for me by its large strain of ignorance and obscurantism, its cruel intolerance, its revolting early-Teutonic hardness, brutality, ferocity and coarseness. He seems to me to hit a little too hard at the later European culture. This predominantly economic type of civilisation has been ugly enough in its strain of utilitarian materialism, which we shall

err grossly if we imitate; still it has been uplifted by some nobler ideals that have done much for the race. But even these are crude and imperfect in their form and need to be spiritualised in their meaning before they can be wholly admitted by the mind of India. I think too that the author has a little underrated the force of the Indian revival. I do not mean its outward realised strength, for that is very deficient, but the inevitability of its drive, its spiritual and potential force. And he has made a little too much of the servile type of Indian who is capable of mouthing the portentously obsequious imagination that "European institutions are the standard by which the aspirations of India are set." That, except for the rapidly dwindling class to which this spokesman belongs, has its truth now only in a single field, the political,—a very important exception, I admit, and one which opens the door to a peril of stupendous proportions. But even there a deep change of spirit is foreshadowed although it has not yet taken definite form and has now to meet a fresh invasion of furious Europeanism inspired by the militant crudeness of proletarian Russia. Again he does not attach a sufficient importance to the increasing infiltration of India's spiritual thought into Europe and America, which is her characteristic retort to the European invasion. It is from this point of view that the whole question takes on a different aspect.

Sir John Woodroffe invites us to a vigorous self-defence. But defence by itself in the modern struggle can only end in defeat, and, if battle there must be, the only sound strategy is a vigorous aggression based on a strong, living and mobile defence; for by that aggressive force alone can the defence itself be effective. Why are a certain class of Indians still hypnotised in all fields by European culture and why are we all still hypnotised by it in the field of politics? Because they constantly saw all the power, creation, activity on the side of Europe, all the immobility or weakness of a static inefficient defence on the side of India. But wherever the Indian spirit has been able to react, to attack with energy and to create with éclat, the European glamour has begun immediately to lose its hypnotic power. No one now feels the weight of the religious assault from Europe

which was very powerful at the outset, because the creative activities of the Hindu revival have made Indian religion a living and evolving, a secure, triumphant and self-assertive power. But the seal was put to this work by two events, the Theosophical movement and the appearance of Swami Vivekananda at Chicago. For these two things showed the spiritual ideas for which India stands no longer on their defence but aggressive and invading the materialised mentality of the Occident. All India had been vulgarised and anglicised in its aesthetic notions by English education and influence, until the brilliant and sudden dawn of the Bengal school of art cast its rays so far as to be seen in Tokio, London and Paris. That significant cultural event has already effected an aesthetic revolution in the country, not yet by any means complete, but irresistible and sure of the future. The same phenomenon extends to other fields. Even in the province of politics that was the internal sense of the policy of the so-called extremist party in the Swadeshi movement; for it was a movement which attempted to override the previous apparent impossibility of political creation by the Indian spirit upon other than imitative European lines. If it failed for the time being, not by any falsity in its inspiration, but by the strength of a hostile pressure and the weakness still left by a past decadence, if its incipient creations were broken or left languishing and deprived of their original significance, yet it will remain as a finger-post on the roads. The attempt is bound to be renewed as soon as a wider gate is opened under more favourable conditions. Till that attempt comes and succeeds, a serious danger besets the soul of India; for a political Europeanisation would be followed by a social turn of the same kind and bring a cultural and spiritual death in its train. Aggression must be successful and creative if the defence is to be effective.

This great question must be given its larger world-wide import if we are to see it in its true lines. The principle of struggle, conflict and competition still governs and for some time will still govern international relations; for even if war is abolished in the near future by some as yet improbable good fortune of the race, conflict will take other forms. At the same time a certain growing

mutual closeness of the life of humanity is the most prominent phenomenon of the day. The War has brought it into violent relief; but the after-war is bringing out all its implications as well as the mass of its difficulties. This is as yet no real concert, still less the beginning of a true unity, but only a compelling physical oneness forced on us by scientific inventions and modern circumstances. But this physical oneness must necessarily bring its mental, cultural and psychological results. At first it will probably accentuate rather than diminish conflict in many directions, enhance political and economic struggles of many kinds and hasten too a cultural struggle. There it may bring about in the end a swallowing unification and a destruction of all other civilisations by one aggressive European type: whether that type will be bourgeois economical or labour materialistic or a rationalistic intellectualism cannot easily be foreseen, but at present in one form or another this is the actuality that is most in the front. On the other hand it may lead to a free concert with some underlying oneness. But the ideal of the entire separateness of the peoples each developing its sharply separatist culture with an alien exclusion law for other leading ideas and cultural forms, although it has been for some time abroad and was growing in vigour, is not likely to prevail. For that to happen the whole aim of unification preparing in Nature must fall to pieces, an improbable but not quite impossible catastrophe. Europe dominates the world and it is natural to forecast a Westernised world with such petty differences as might be permissible in a European unity given up to the rigorous scientific pursuit of the development and organisation of material life. Across this possibility falls the shadow of India.

Sir John Woodroffe quotes the dictum of Professor Lowes Dickinson that the opposition is not so much between Asia and Europe as between India and the rest of the world. There is a truth behind that dictum; but the cultural opposition of Europe and Asia remains an unabated factor. Spirituality is not the monopoly of India; however it may hide submerged in intellectualism or hid in other concealing veils, it is a necessary part of human nature. But the difference is between spirituality made the

leading motive and the determining power of both the inner and the outer life and spirituality suppressed, allowed only under disguises or brought in as a minor power, its reign denied or put off in favour of the intellect or of a dominant materialistic vitalism. The former way was the type of the ancient wisdom at one time universal in all civilised countries — literally, from China to Peru. But all other nations have fallen away from it and diminished its large pervasiveness or fallen away from it altogether as in Europe. Or they are now, as in Asia, in danger of abandoning it for the invading economic, commercial, industrial, intellectually utilitarian modern type. India alone, with whatever fall or decline of light and vigour, has remained faithful to the heart of the spiritual motive. India alone is still obstinately recalcitrant; for Turkey and China and Japan, say her critics, have outgrown that foolishness, by which it is meant that they have grown rationalistic and materialistic. India alone as a nation, whatever individuals or a small class may have done, has till now refused to give up her worshipped Godhead or bow her knee to the strong reigning idols of rationalism, commercialism and economism, the successful iron gods of the West. Affected she has been, but not yet overcome. Her surface mind rather than her deeper intelligence has been obliged to admit many Western ideas, liberty, equality, democracy and others, and to reconcile them with her Vedantic Truth; but she has not been altogether at ease with them in the Western form and she seeks about already in her thought to give to them an Indian which cannot fail to be a spiritualised turn. The first passion to imitate English ideas and culture has passed; but another more dangerous has recently taken its place, the passion to imitate continental European culture at large and in particular the crude and vehement turn of revolutionary Russia. On the other hand one sees a growing revival of this ancient Hindu religion and the immense sweep of a spiritual awakening and its significant movements. And out of this ambiguous situation there can be only one out of two issues. Either India will be rationalised and industrialised out of all recognition and she will be no longer India or else she will be the leader in a new world-phase, aid by her example and cultural

infiltration the new tendencies of the West and spiritualise the human race. That is the one radical and poignant question at issue. Will the spiritual motive which India represents prevail on Europe and create there new forms congenial to the West, or will European rationalism and commercialism put an end for ever to the Indian type of culture?

Not, then, whether India is civilised is the query that should be put, but whether the motive which has shaped her civilisation or the old-European intellectual or the new-European materialistic motive is to lead human culture. Is the harmony of the spirit, mind and body to found itself on the gross law of our physical nature, rationalised only or touched at the most by an ineffective spiritual glimmer, or is the dominant power of spirit to take the lead and force the lesser powers of the intellect, mind and body to a more exalted effort after a highest harmony, a victorious ever-developing equipoise? India must defend herself by reshaping her cultural forms to express more powerfully, intimately and perfectly her ancient ideal. Her aggression must lead the waves of the light thus liberated in triumphant self-expanding rounds all over the world which it once possessed or at least enlightened in far-off ages. An appearance of conflict must be admitted for a time, for as long as the attack of an opposite culture continues. But since it will be in effect an assistance to all the best that is emerging from the advanced thought of the Occident, it will culminate in the beginning of concert on a higher plane and a preparation of oneness.

“Is India Civilised?” – 2

THIS QUESTION of Indian civilisation, once it has raised this greater issue, shifts from its narrow meaning and disappears into a much larger problem. Does the future of humanity lie in a culture founded solely upon reason and science? Is the progress of human life the effort of a mind, a continuous collective mind constituted by an ever changing sum of transient individuals, that has emerged from the darkness of the unconscious material universe and is stumbling about in it in search of some clear light and some sure support amid its difficulties and problems? And does civilisation consist in man's endeavour to find that light and support in a rationalised knowledge and a rationalised way of life? An ordered knowledge of the powers, forces, possibilities of physical Nature and of the psychology of man as a mental and physical being is then the only true science. An ordered use of that knowledge for a progressive social efficiency and well-being, which will make his brief existence more efficient, more tolerable, more comfortable, happier, better appointed, more luxuriously enriched with the pleasures of the mind, life and body, is the only true art of life. All our philosophy, all our religion,—supposing religion has not been outgrown and rejected,—all our science, thought, art, social structure, law and institution must found itself upon this idea of existence and must serve this one aim and endeavour. This is the formula which European civilisation has accepted and is still labouring to bring into some kind of realisation. It is the formula of an intelligently mechanised civilisation supporting a rational and utilitarian culture.

Or is not the truth of our being rather that of a Soul embodied in Nature which is seeking to know itself, to find itself, to enlarge its consciousness, to arrive at a greater way of existence, to progress in the spirit and grow into the full light of self-

knowledge and some divine inner perfection? Are not religion, philosophy, science, thought, art, society, all life even means only of this growth, instruments of the spirit to be used for its service and with this spiritual aim as their dominant or at least their ultimate preoccupation? That is the idea of life and being,—the knowledge of it, as she claims,—for which India stood till yesterday and still strives to stand with all that is most persistent and powerful in her nature. It is the formula of a spiritualised civilisation striving through the perfection but also through an exceeding of mind, life and body towards a high soul-culture.

Whether the future hope of the race lies in a rational and an intelligently mechanised or in a spiritual, intuitive and religious civilisation and culture,—that, then, is the important issue. When the rationalist critic denies that India is or ever has been civilised, when he declares the Upanishads, the Vedanta, Buddhism, Hinduism, ancient Indian art and poetry a mass of barbarism, the vain production of a persistently barbaric mind, what he means is simply that civilisation is synonymous and identical with the cult and practice of the materialistic reason and that anything which falls below or goes above that standard does not deserve the name. A too metaphysical philosophy, a too religious religion,—if not indeed all philosophy and all religion,—any too idealistic and all mystic thought and art and every kind of occult knowledge, all that refines and probes beyond the limited purview of the reason dealing with the physical universe and seems therefore to it bizarre, over-subtle, excessive, unintelligible, all that responds to the sense of the Infinite, all that is obsessed with the idea of the eternal, and a society which is too much governed by ideas born of these things and not solely by intellectual clarity and the pursuit of a material development and efficiency, are not the products of civilisation, but the offspring of a crudely subtle barbarism. But this thesis obviously proves too much; most of the great past of humanity would fall under its condemnation. Even ancient Greek culture would not escape it; much of the thought and art of modern European civilisation itself would in that case have to be damned as at least semi-barbarous. Evidently, we cannot without falling

into exaggeration and absurdity narrow the sense of the word and impoverish the significance of the past strivings of the race. Indian civilisation in the past has been and must be recognised as the fruit of a great culture, quite as much as the Graeco-Roman, the Christian, the Islamic or the later Renaissance civilisation of Europe.

But the essential question remains open; the dispute is only narrowed to its central issue. A more moderate and perspicacious rationalistic critic would admit the past value of India's achievements. He would not condemn Buddhism and Vedanta and all Indian art and philosophy and social ideas as barbarous, but he would still contend that not there lies any future good for the human race. The true line of advance lies through European modernism, the mighty works of Science and the great modern adventure of humanity, its effort well founded not upon speculation and imagination but on ascertained and tangible scientific truth, its laboriously increased riches of sure and firmly tested scientific organisation. An Indian mind faithful to its ideals would contend on the contrary that while reason and science and all other auxiliaries have their place in the human effort, the real truth goes beyond them. The secret of our ultimate perfection is to be discovered deeper within us and things and Nature; it is to be sought centrally in spiritual self-knowledge and self-perfection and in the founding of life on that self-knowledge.

When the issue is so stated, we can at once see that the gulf between East and West, India and Europe is much less profound and unbridgeable now than it was thirty or forty years ago. The basic difference still remains; the life of the West is still chiefly governed by the rationalistic idea and a materialistic preoccupation. But at the summits of thought and steadily penetrating more and more downward through art and poetry and music and general literature an immense change is in progress. A reaching towards deeper things, an increasing return of seekings which had been banished, an urge towards higher experience yet unrealised, an admission of ideas long foreign to the Western mentality can be seen everywhere. Aiding this process and aided by it there has been a certain infiltration of Indian and Eastern

thought and influence; even here and there we find some growing recognition of the high value or the superior greatness of the ancient spiritual ideal. This infiltration began at a very early stage of the near contact between the farther Orient and Europe of which the English occupation of India was the most direct occasion. But at first it was a slight and superficial touch, at most an intellectual influence on a few superior minds. An academic interest or an attracted turn of scholars and thinkers towards Vedanta, Sankhya, Buddhism, admiration for the subtlety and largeness of Indian philosophic idealism, the stamp left by the Upanishads and the Gita on great intellects like Schopenhauer and Emerson and on a few lesser thinkers, this was the first narrow inlet of the floods. The impression did not go very far at the best and the little effect it might have produced was counteracted and even effaced for a time by the great flood of scientific materialism which submerged the whole life-view of later nineteenth-century Europe.

But now other movements have arisen and laid hold on thought and life with a triumphant success. Philosophy and thought have taken a sharp curve away from rationalistic materialism and its confident absolutisms. On the one hand, as a first consequence of the seeking for a larger thought and vision of the universe, Indian Monism has taken a subtle but powerful hold on many minds, though often in strange disguises. On the other hand new philosophies have been born, not indeed directly spiritual, vitalistic rather and pragmatic, but yet by their greater subjectivity already nearer to Indian ways of thinking. The old limits of scientific interest have begun to break down; various forms of psychical research and novel departures in psychology and even an interest in psychism and occultism, have come into increasing vogue and fasten more and more their hold in spite of the anathemas of orthodox religion and orthodox science. Theosophy with its comprehensive combinations of old and new beliefs and its appeal to ancient spiritual and psychic systems, has everywhere exercised an influence far beyond the circle of its professed adherents. Opposed for a long time with obloquy and ridicule, it has done much to spread the belief in Karma,

reincarnation, other planes of existence, the evolution of the embodied soul through intellect and psyche to spirit, ideas which once accepted must change the whole attitude towards life. Even Science itself is constantly arriving at conclusions which only repeat upon the physical plane and in its language truths which ancient India had already affirmed from the standpoint of spiritual knowledge in the tongue of the Veda and Vedanta. Every one of these advances leads directly or in its intrinsic meaning towards a nearer approach between the mind of East and West and to that extent to a likelihood of a better understanding of Indian thought and ideals.

In some directions the change of attitude has gone remarkably far and seems to be constantly increasing. A Christian missionary quoted by Sir John Woodroffe is "amazed to find the extent to which Hindu Pantheism has begun to permeate the religious conceptions of Germany, of America, even of England" and he considers its cumulative effect an imminent "danger" to the next generation. Another writer cited by him goes so far as to attribute all the highest philosophical thought of Europe to the previous thinking of the Brahmins and affirms even that all modern solutions of intellectual problems will be found anticipated in the East. A distinguished French psychologist recently told an Indian visitor that India had already laid down all the large lines and main truths, the broad schema, of a genuine psychology and all that Europe can now do is to fill them in with exact details and scientific verifications. These utterances are the extreme indications of a growing change of which the drift is unmistakable.

Nor is it only in philosophy and the higher thinking that this turn is visible. European art has moved in certain directions far away from its old moorings; it is developing a new eye and opening in its own manner to motives which until now were held in honour only in the East. Eastern art and decoration have begun to be widely appreciated and have exercised a strong if subtle influence. Poetry has for some time commenced to speak uncertainly a new language,—note that the world-wide fame of Tagore would have been unthinkable thirty years ago,—and

one often finds the verse even of ordinary writers teeming with thoughts and expressions which could formerly have found few parallels outside Indian, Buddhistic and Sufi poems. And there are some first preliminary signs of a similar phenomenon in general literature. More and more the seekers of new truth are finding their spiritual home in India or owe to her much of their inspiration or at least acknowledge her light and undergo her influence. If this turn continues to accentuate its drive, and there is little chance of a reversion, the spiritual and intellectual gulf between East and West if not filled up, will at least be bridged and the defence of Indian culture and ideals will stand in a stronger position.

But then, it may be said, if there is this certainty of an approximative understanding, what is the need of an aggressive defence of Indian culture or of any defence at all? Indeed, what is the need for the continuance of any distinctive Indian civilisation in the future? East and West will meet from two opposite sides and merge in each other and found in the life of a unified humanity a common world-culture. All previous or existing forms, systems, variations will fuse in this new amalgam and find their fulfilment. But the problem is not so easy, not so harmoniously simple. For, even if we could assume that in a united world-culture there would be no spiritual need and no vital utility for strong distinctive variations, we are still very far from any such oneness. The subjective and spiritual turn of the more advanced modern thought is still confined to a minority and has only very superficially coloured the general intelligence of Europe. Moreover, it is a movement of the thought only; the great life-motives of European civilisation stand as yet where they were. There is a greater pressure of certain idealistic elements in the proposed reshaping of human relations, but they have not shaken off or even loosened the yoke of the immediate materialistic past. It is precisely at this critical moment and in these conditions that the whole human world, India included, is about to be forced into the stress and travail of a swift transformation. The danger is that the pressure of dominant European ideas and motives, the temptations of the political needs of the hour, the velocity

of rapid inevitable change will leave no time for the growth of sound thought and spiritual reflection and may strain to bursting-point the old Indian cultural and social system, and shatter this ancient civilisation before India has had time to readjust her mental stand and outlook or to reject, remould or replace the forms that can no longer meet her environmental national necessities, create new characteristic powers and figures and find a firm basis for a swift evolution in the sense of her own spirit and ideals. In that event a rationalised and Westernised India, a brown ape of Europe, might emerge from the chaos, keeping some elements only of her ancient thought to modify, but no longer to shape and govern her total existence. Like other countries she would have passed into the mould of occidental modernism; ancient India would have perished.

Certain minds would see in this contingency no disaster, but rather a most desirable turn and a happy event. It would mean, in their view, that India had given up her spiritual separation and undergone the much needed intellectual and moral change that would at last entitle her to enter into the comity of modern peoples. And since in the new world-comity there would enter an increasing spiritual and subjective element and much perhaps of India's own religious and philosophical thought would be appropriated by its culture, the disappearance of her antique spirit and personal self-expression need be no absolute loss. Ancient India would have passed like ancient Greece, leaving its contribution to a new and more largely progressive life of the race. But the absorption of the Graeco-Roman culture by the later European world, even though many of its elements still survive in a larger and more complex civilisation, was yet attended with serious diminutions. There was a deplorable loss of its high and clear intellectual order, a still more calamitous perdition of the ancient cult of beauty, and even now after so many centuries there has been no true recovery of the lost spirit. A much greater diminution of the world's riches would result from the disappearance of a distinctive Indian civilisation, because the difference between its standpoint and that of European modernism is deeper, its spirit unique and the rich mass and diversity of its thousand

lines of inner experience a heritage that still India alone can preserve in its intricate truth and dynamic order.

The tendency of the normal Western mind is to live from below upward and from out inward. A strong foundation is taken in the vital and material nature and higher powers are invoked and admitted only to modify and partially uplift the natural terrestrial life. The inner existence is formed and governed by the external powers. India's constant aim has been on the contrary to find a basis of living in the higher spiritual truth and to live from the inner spirit outwards, to exceed the present way of mind, life and body, to command and dictate to external Nature. As the old Vedic seers put it, "Their divine foundation was above even while they stood below; let its rays be settled deep within us," *nīcīnāḥ sthur upari budhna eṣām, asme antar nīhitāḥ ketavah syuḥ*. Now that difference is no unimportant subtlety, but of a great and penetrating practical consequence. And we can see how Europe would deal with any spiritual influence by her treatment of Christianity and its inner rule which she never really accepted as the law of her life. It was admitted but only as an ideal and emotional influence and used only to chasten and give some spiritual colouring to the vital vigour of the Teuton and the intellectual clarity and sensuous refinement of the Latins. Any new spiritual development she might accept would be taken in the same way and used to a like limited and superficial purpose, if an insistent living culture were not there in the world to challenge this lesser ideal and insist on the true life of the spirit.

It may well be that both tendencies, the mental and the vital and physical stress of Europe and the spiritual and psychic impulse of India, are needed for the completeness of the human movement. But if the spiritual ideal points the final way to a triumphant harmony of manifested life, then it is all-important for India not to lose hold of the truth, not to give up the highest she knows and barter it away for a perhaps more readily practicable but still lower ideal alien to her true and constant nature. It is important too for humanity that a great collective effort to realise this highest ideal—however imperfect it may have been,

into whatever confusion and degeneration it may temporarily have fallen,—should not cease, but continue. Always it can recover its force and enlarge its expression; for the spirit is not bound to temporal forms but ever-new, immortal and infinite. A new creation of the old Indian *svadharma*, not a transmutation to some law of the Western nature, is our best way to serve and increase the sum of human progress.

There arises the necessity of a defence and a strong, even an aggressive defence; for only an aggressive defence can be effective in the conditions of the modern struggle. But here we find ourselves brought up against an opposite turn of mind and its stark obstructive temper. For there are plenty of Indians now who are for a stubbornly static defence, and whatever aggressiveness they put into it consists in a rather vulgar and unthinking cultural Chauvinism which holds that whatever we have is good for us because it is Indian or even that whatever is in India is best, because it is the creation of the Rishis. As if all the later clumsy and chaotic developments were laid down by those much misused, much misapplied and often very much forged founders of our culture. But the question is whether a static defence is of any effective value. I hold that it is of no value, because it is inconsistent with the truth of things and doomed to failure. It amounts to an attempt to sit stubbornly still while the Shakti of the world is rapidly moving on her way, and not only the Shakti of the world but the Shakti in India also. It is a determination to live only on our past cultural capital, to eke it out, small as it has grown in our wasteful and incompetent hands, to the last anna: but to live on our capital without using it for fresh gains is to end in bankruptcy and pauperism. The past has to be used and spent as mobile and current capital for some larger profit, acquisition and development of the future: but to gain we must release, we must part with something in order to grow and live more richly,—that is the universal law of existence. Otherwise the life within us will stagnate and perish in its immobile torpor. Thus to shrink from enlargement and change is too a false confession of impotence. It is to hold that India's creative capacity in religion and in philosophy came to

an end with Shankara, Ramanuja, Madhwa and Chaitanya and in social construction with Raghunandan and Vidyaranya. It is to rest in art and poetry either in a blank and uncreative void or in a vain and lifeless repetition of beautiful but spent forms and motives. It is to cling to social forms that are crumbling and will continue to crumble in spite of our efforts and risk to be crushed in their collapse.

The objection to any large change—for a large and bold change is needed and no peddling will serve our purpose—can be given a plausible turn only if we rest it on the contention that the forms of a culture are the right rhythm of its spirit and in breaking the rhythm we may expel the spirit and dissipate the harmony for ever. Yes, but though the Spirit is eternal in its essence and in the fundamental principles of its harmony immutable, the actual rhythm of its self-expression in form is ever mutable. Immutable in its being and in the powers of its being but richly mutable in life, that is the very nature of the spirit's manifested existence. And we have to see too whether the actual rhythm of the moment is still a harmony or whether it has not become in the hands of an inferior and ignorant orchestra a discord and no longer expresses rightly or sufficiently the ancient spirit. To recognise defect in the form is not to deny the inherent spirit; it is rather the condition for moving onward to a greater future amplitude, a more perfect realisation, a happier outflow of the Truth we harbour. Whether we shall actually find a greater expression than the past gave us, depends on our own selves, on our capacity of response to the eternal Power and Wisdom and the illumination of the Shakti within us and on our skill in works, the skill that comes by unity with the eternal spirit we are in the measure of our light labouring to express; *yogah karmasu kauśalam*.

This from the standpoint of Indian culture, and that must be always for us the first consideration and the intrinsic standpoint. But there is also the standpoint of the pressure of the Time Spirit upon us. For this too is the action of the universal Shakti and cannot be ignored, held at arm's length or forbidden entrance. Here too the policy of new creation imposes itself as the true and only effective way. Even if to stand still and stiff within our

well-defended gates were desirable, it is no longer possible. We can no longer take our single station apart in humanity, isolated like a solitary island in the desert ocean, neither going forth nor allowing to enter in,—if indeed we ever did it. For good or for ill the world is with us; the flood of modern ideas and forces are pouring in and will take no denial. There are two ways of meeting them, either to offer a forlorn and hopeless resistance or to seize and subjugate them. If we offer only an inert or stubborn passive resistance, they will still come in on us, break down our defences where they are weakest, sap them where they are stiffer, and where they can do neither, steal in unknown or ill-apprehended by underground mine and tunnel. Entering unassimilated they will act as disruptive forces, and it will be only partly by outward attack, but much more by an inward explosion that this ancient Indian civilisation will be shattered to pieces. Ominous sparks are already beginning to run about which nobody knows how to extinguish, and if we could extinguish them, we should be no better off, for we should yet have to deal with the source from which they are starting. Even the most rigid defenders of the present in the name of the past show in their every word how strongly they have been affected by new ways of thinking. Many if not most are calling passionately, calling inevitably for innovations in certain fields, changes European in spirit and method which, once admitted without some radical assimilation and Indianisation, will end by breaking up the whole social structure they think they are defending. That arises from confusion of thought and an incapacity of power. Because we are unable to think and create in certain fields, we are obliged to borrow without assimilation or with only an illusory pretence of assimilation. Because we cannot see the whole sense of what we are doing from a high inner and commanding point of vision, we are busy bringing together disparates without any saving reconciliation. A slow combustion and swift explosion are likely to be the end of our efforts.

Aggressive defence implies a new creation from this inner and commanding vision and while it demands a bringing of what we have to a more expressive force of form, it must allow also

an effective assimilation of whatever is useful to our new life and can be made harmonious with our spirit. Battle, shock and struggle themselves are no vain destruction; they are a violent cover for Time's great interchanges. Even the most successful victor receives much from the vanquished and if sometimes he appropriates it, as often it takes him prisoner. The Western attack is not confined to a breaking down of the forms of Eastern culture; there is at the same time a large, subtle and silent appropriation of much that is valuable in the East for the enrichment of occidental culture. Therefore to bring forward the glories of our past and scatter on Europe and America as much of its treasures as they will receive, will not save us. That liberality will enrich and strengthen our cultural assailants, but for us it will only serve to give a self-confidence which will be useless and even misleading if it is not made a force of will for a greater creation. What we have to do is to front the attack with new and more powerful formations which will not only throw it back, but even, where that is possible and helpful to the race, carry the war into the assailant's country. At the same time we must take by a strong creative assimilation whatever answers to our own needs and responds to the Indian spirit. In certain directions, as yet all too few, we have begun both these movements. In others we have simply created an unintelligent mixture or else have taken and are still taking over rash, crude and undigested borrowings. Imitation, a rough and haphazard borrowing of the assailant's engines and methods may be temporarily useful, but by itself it is only another way of submitting to conquest. A stark appropriation is not sufficient; successful assimilation to the Indian spirit is the needed movement. The problem is one of immense difficulty and stupendous in its proportions and we have not yet approached it with wisdom and insight. All the more pressing is the need to awaken to the situation and meet it with original thinking and a conscious action wise and powerful in insight and sure in process. A mastering and helpful assimilation of new stuff into an eternal body has always been in the past a peculiar power of the genius of India.

“Is India Civilised?” – 3

BUT THERE is yet another point of view from which the challenge put in front of us ceases to be an issue crudely and provokingly phrased in a conflict of cultures. Instead it presents itself as a problem with a deep significance; it becomes a thought-provoking suggestion that affects not only ours but all civilisations still in existence.

We can reply on the cultural issue from the view-point of the past and the valuation of different cultures as acquired contributions to the growth of the human race, that Indian civilisation has been the form and expression of a culture as great as any of the historic civilisations of mankind, great in religion, great in philosophy, great in science, great in thought of many kinds, great in literature, art and poetry, great in the organisation of society and politics, great in craft and trade and commerce. There have been dark spots, positive imperfections, heavy shortcomings; what civilisation has been perfect, which has not had its deep stains and cruel abysses? There have been considerable lacunae, many blind alleys, much uncultured or ill-cultured ground: what civilisation has been without its un-filled parts, its negative aspects? But our ancient civilisation can survive the severest comparisons of either ancient or mediaeval times. More high-reaching, subtle, many-sided, curious and profound than the Greek, more noble and humane than the Roman, more large and spiritual than the old Egyptian, more vast and original than any other Asiatic civilisation, more intellectual than the European prior to the eighteenth century, possessing all that these had and more, it was the most powerful, self-possessed, stimulating and wide in influence of all past human cultures.

And if we look from the view-point of the present and the fruitful workings of the progressive Time-Spirit, we can say that

even here in spite of our downfall all is not on the debit side. Many of the forms of our civilisation have become inapt and effete and others stand in need of radical change and renovation. But that can be said equally well of European culture; for all its recently acquired progressiveness and habit of more rapid self-adaptation, large parts of it are already rotten and out of date. In spite of all drawbacks and in spite of downfall the spirit of Indian culture, its central ideas, its best ideals have still their message for humanity and not for India alone. And we in India hold that they are capable of developing out of themselves by contact with new need and idea as good and better solutions of the problems before us than those which are offered to us secondhand from Western sources. But besides the comparisons of the past and the needs of the present there is too a view-point of the ideal future. There are the farther goals towards which humanity is moving,— and the present is only a crude aspiration towards them and the immediate future we now see in hope and strive to bring about in form, only its crude preparatory stage. There is an unrealised standard of the ideas which to the mind of the moment are figments of Utopia, but may become to a more developed humanity the commonplaces of their daily environment, the familiar things of the present which they have to overpass. How stands Indian civilisation with regard to this yet unrealised future of the race? Are its master ideas and dominant powers guiding lights or helping forces towards it or do they end in themselves with no vistas on the evolutionary potentialities of the earth's coming ages?

The very idea of progress is an illusion to some minds; for they imagine that the race moves constantly in a circle. Or even their view is that greatness more often than not is to be found in the past and that the line of our movement is a curve of deterioration, a downward lapse. But that is an illusion created when we look too much upon the highlights of the past and forget its shadows or concentrate too much on the dark spaces of the present and ignore its powers of light and its aspects of happier promise. It is created too by a mistaken deduction from the phenomenon of an uneven progress. For Nature effects her

evolution through a rhythm of advance and relapse, day and night, waking and sleep; there is a temporary pushing of certain results at the expense of others not less desirable for perfection and to a superficial eye there may seem to be a relapse even in our advance. Progress admittedly does not march on securely in a straight line like a man sure of his familiar way or an army covering an unimpeded terrain or well-mapped unoccupied spaces. Human progress is very much an adventure through the unknown, an unknown full of surprises and baffling obstacles; it stumbles often, it misses its way at many points, it cedes here in order to gain there, it retraces its steps frequently in order to get more widely forward. The present does not always compare favourably with the past; even when it is more advanced in the mass, it may still be inferior in certain directions important to our inner or our outer welfare. But earth does move forward after all, *eppur si muove*. Even in failure there is a preparation for success: our nights carry in them the secret of a greater dawn. This is a frequent experience in our individual progress, but the human collectivity also moves in much the same manner. The question is whither are we marching or what are the true routes and harbours of our voyage.

Western civilisation is proud of its successful modernism. But there is much that it has lost in the eagerness of its gains and much which men of old strove towards that it has not even attempted to accomplish. There is much too that it has wilfully flung aside in impatience or scorn to its own great loss, to the injury of its life, to the imperfection of its culture. An ancient Greek of the time of Pericles or the philosophers suddenly transported in time to this century would be astonished by the immense gains of the intellect and the expansion of the mind, the modern many-sidedness of the reason and inexhaustible habit of inquiry, the power of endless generalisation and precise detail. He would admire without reserve the miraculous growth of science and its giant discoveries, the abundant power, richness and minuteness of its instrumentation, the wonder-working force of its inventive genius. He would be overcome and stupefied rather than surprised and charmed by the enormous stir and

pulsation of modern life. But at the same time he would draw back repelled from its unashamed mass of ugliness and vulgarity, its unchastened external utilitarianism, its vitalistic riot and the morbid exaggeration and unsoundness of many of its growths. He would see in it much ill-disguised evidence of the uneliminated survival of the triumphant barbarian. If he recognised its intellectuality and the scrupulous application of thought and scientific reason to the machinery of life, he would miss in it his own later attempt at the clear and noble application of the ideal reason to the inner life of the mind and the soul. He would find that in this civilisation beauty had become an exotic and the shining ideal mind in some fields a debased and exploited slave and in others a neglected stranger. As for the great spiritual seekers of the past, they would experience in all this huge activity of the intellect and the life the sense of an aching void. A feeling of its illusion and unreality because that which is greatest in man and raises him beyond himself had been neglected, would oppress them at every step. The discovery of the laws of physical Nature would not compensate in their eyes for the comparative decline — for a long time it was the almost absolute cessation — of a greater seeking and finding, the discovery of the freedom of the spirit.

But an unbiassed view will prefer to regard this age of civilisation as an evolutionary stage, an imperfect but important turn of the human advance. It is then possible to see that great gains have been made which are of the utmost value to an ultimate perfection, even if they have been made at a great price. There is not only a greater generalisation of knowledge and more thorough use of intellectual power and activity in multiple fields. There is not only the advance of Science and its application to the conquest of our environment, an immense apparatus of means, vast utilisations, endless minute conveniences, an irresistible machinery, a tireless exploitation of forces. There is too a certain development of powerful if not high-pitched ideals and there is an attempt, however external and therefore imperfect, to bring them to bear upon the working of human society as a whole. Much has been diminished or lost, but it

can be recovered, eventually, if not with ease. Once restored to its true movement, the inner life of man will find that it has gained in materials, in power of plasticity, in a new kind of depth and wideness. And we shall have acquired a salutary habit of many-sided thoroughness and a sincere endeavour to shape the outer collective life into an adequate image of our highest ideals. Temporary diminutions will not count before the greater inner expansion that is likely to succeed this age of external turmoil and outward-looking endeavour.

If on the other hand an ancient Indian of the time of the Upanishads, the Buddhist period or the later classical age were to be set down in modern India and note that larger part of its life which belongs to the age of decline, he would experience a much more depressing sensation, the sense of a national, a cultural debacle, a fall from the highest summits to discouragingly low levels. He might well ask himself what this degenerate posterity had done with the mighty civilisation of the past. He would wonder how with so much to inspire, to elevate, to spur them to yet greater accomplishment and self-exceeding, they could have lapsed into this impotent and inert confusion and, instead of developing the high motives of Indian culture to yet deeper and wider issues, allowed them to overload themselves with ugly accretions, to rust, to rot, almost to perish. He would see his race clinging to forms and shells and rags of the past and missing nine-tenths of its nobler values. He would compare the spiritual light and energy of the heroic ages of the Upanishads and the philosophies with the later inertia or small and broken fragmentarily derivative activity of our philosophic thought. After the intellectual curiosity, the scientific development, the creative literary and artistic greatness, the noble fecundity of the classical age he would be amazed by the extent of a later degeneracy, its mental poverty, immobility, static repetition, the comparative feebleness of the creative intuition, the long sterility of art, the cessation of science. He would deplore a prone descent to ignorance, a failing of the old powerful will and tapasya, almost a volitional impotence. In place of the simpler and more spiritually rational order of old times he would find a bewildering chaotic

disorganised organisation of things without centre and without any large harmonising idea. He would find not a true social order but a half arrested, half hastening putrescence. In place of the great adaptable civilisation which assimilated with power and was able to return tenfold for what it received, he would meet a helplessness that bore passively or only with a few ineffectual galvanic reactions the forces of the outside world and the stress of adverse circumstance. At one time he would see that there had been even a loss of faith and self-confidence so considerable as to tempt the intellectuals of the nation to scrap the ancient spirit and ideals for an alien and imported culture. He would note indeed the beginning of a change, but might perhaps doubt how deep it had gone or whether it was powerful enough to save, forceful enough to upheave the whole nation from its cherished torpor and weakness, enlightened enough to guide a new and robust creative activity towards the building of new significant forms for the ancient spirit.

Here too a better understanding points to hope rather than to the flat despondency suggested by a too hasty surface glance. This last age of Indian history is an example of the constant local succession of night even to the most long and brilliant day in the evolution of the race. But it was a night filled at first with many and brilliant constellations and even at its thickest and worst it was the darkness of Kalidasa's *vīceya-tārakā prabhāta-kalpeva śarvari*, "night preparing for dawn, with a few just decipherable stars." Even in the decline all was not loss; there were needed developments, there were spiritual and other gains of the greatest importance for the future. If the high spiritualised mind and stupendous force of spiritual will, *tapasyā*, that characterised ancient India were less in evidence, there were new gains of spiritual emotion and sensitiveness to spiritual impulse on the lower planes of consciousness, that had been lacking before. Architecture, literature, painting, sculpture lost the grandeur, power, nobility of old, but evoked other powers and motives full of delicacy, vividness and grace. There was a descent from the heights to the lower levels, but a descent that gathered riches on its way and was needed for the fullness of spiritual discovery

and experience. And in the worst period of decline and failure the spirit was not dead in India, but only torpid, concealed and shackled; now emerging in answer to a pressure of constant awakening shocks for a strong self-liberation it finds that its sleep was a preparation of new potentialities behind the veil of that slumber. The decline of our past culture may even be regarded as a needed waning and dying of old forms to make way not only for a new, but, if we will that it should be so, a greater and more perfect creation.

For after all it is the will in the being that gives to circumstances their value, and often an unexpected value; the hue of apparent actuality is a misleading indicator. If the will in a race or civilisation is towards death, if it clings to the lassitude of decay and the laissez-faire of the moribund or even in strength insists blindly upon the propensities that lead to destruction or if it cherishes only the powers of dead Time and puts away from it the powers of the future, if it prefers life that was to life that will be, nothing, not even abundant strength and resources and intelligence, not even many calls to live and constantly offered opportunities will save it from an inevitable disintegration or collapse. But if there comes to it a strong faith in itself and a robust will to live, if it is open to the things that shall come, willing to seize on the future and what it offers and strong to compel it where it seems adverse, it can draw from adversity and defeat a force of invincible victory and rise from apparent helplessness and decay in a mighty flame of renovation to the light of a more splendid life. This is what Indian civilisation is now rearising to do as it has always done in the eternal strength of its spirit.

The greatness of the ideals of the past is a promise of greater ideals for the future. A continual expansion of what stood behind past endeavour and capacity is the one abiding justification of a living culture. But it follows that civilisation and barbarism are words of a quite relative significance. For from the view of the evolutionary future European and Indian civilisation at their best have only been half achievements, infant dawns pointing to the mature sunlight that is to come. Neither

Europe nor India nor any race, country or continent of mankind has ever been fully civilised from this point of view; none has grasped the whole secret of a true and perfect human living, none has applied with an entire insight or a perfectly vigilant sincerity even the little they were able to achieve. If we define civilisation as a harmony of spirit, mind and body, where has that harmony been entire or altogether real? Where have there not been glaring deficiencies and painful discords? Where has the whole secret of the harmony been altogether grasped in all its parts or the complete music of life evolved into the triumphant ease of a satisfying, durable and steadily mounting concord? Not only are there everywhere positive, ugly, even "hideous" blots on the life of man, but much that we now accept with equanimity, much in which we take pride, may well be regarded by a future humanity as barbarism or at least as semi-barbarous and immature. The achievements that we regard as ideal, will be condemned as a self-satisfied imperfection blind to its own errors; the ideas that we vaunt as enlightenment will appear as a demi-light or a darkness. Not only will many forms of our life that claim to be ancient or even eternal, as if that could be said of any form of things, fail and disappear; the subjective shapes given to our best principles and ideals will perhaps claim from the future at best an understanding indulgence. There is little that will not have to undergo expansion and mutation, change perhaps beyond recognition or accept to be modified in a new synthesis. In the end the coming ages may look on Europe and Asia of today much as we look on savage tribes or primitive peoples. And this view from the future, if we can get it, is undoubtedly the most illuminating and dynamic standpoint from which we can judge our present; but it does not invalidate our comparative appreciation of past and extant cultures.

For this past and present are creating the greater steps of that future and much of it will survive even in that which supplants it. There is behind our imperfect cultural figures a permanent spirit to which we must cling and which will remain permanent even hereafter; there are certain fundamental motives or essential idea-forces which cannot be thrown aside, because they are part

of the vital principle of our being and of the aim of Nature in us, our *svadharma*. But these motives, these idea-forces are, whether for nation or for humanity as a whole, few and simple in their essence and capable of an application always varying and progressive. The rest belongs to the less internal layers of our being and must undergo the changing pressure and satisfy the forward-moving demands of the Time-Spirit. There is this permanent spirit in things and there is this persistent *swadharma* or law of our nature; but there is too a less binding system of laws of successive formulation,—rhythms of the spirit, forms, turns, habits of the nature, and these endure the mutations of the ages, *yugadharma*. The race must obey this double principle of persistence and mutation or bear the penalty of a decay and deterioration that may attain even its living centre.

Certainly we must repel with vigour every disintegrating or injurious attack; but it is much more important to form our own true and independent view of our own past achievement, present position and future possibilities,—what we were, what we are and what we may be. In our past we must distinguish all that was great, essential, elevating, vitalising, illuminating, victorious, effective. And in that again we must distinguish what was close to the permanent, essential spirit and the persistent law of our cultural being and separate from it what was temporary and transiently formulative. For all that was great in the past cannot be preserved as it was or repeated for ever; there are new needs, there are other vistas before us. But we have to distinguish too what was deficient, ill-grasped, imperfectly formulated or only suited to the limiting needs of the age or unfavourable circumstances. For it is quite idle to pretend that all in the past, even at its greatest, was entirely admirable and in its kind the highest consummate achievement of the human mind and spirit. Afterwards we have to make a comparison of this past with our present and to understand the causes of our decline and seek the remedy of our shortcomings and ailments. Our sense of the greatness of our past must not be made a fatally hypnotising lure to inertia; it should be rather an inspiration to renewed and greater achievement. But in our criticism of the present we

must not be one-sided or condemn with a foolish impartiality all that we are or have done. Neither flattering or glossing over our downfall nor fouling our nest to win the applause of the stranger, we have to note our actual weakness and its roots, but to fix too our eyes with a still firmer attention on our elements of strength, our abiding potentialities, our dynamic impulses of self-renewal.

A second comparison has to be made between the West and India. In the past of Europe and the past of India we can observe with an unbiassed mind the successes of the West, the gifts it brought to humanity, but also its large gaps, striking deficiencies, terrible and even "hideous" vices and failures. On the other balance we have to cast ancient and mediaeval India's achievements and failures. Here we shall find that there is little for which we need lower our heads before Europe and much in which we rise well and sometimes immeasurably above her. But we have to scrutinise next the present of the West in its strong success, vitality, conquering insolence. What has been great in it we shall allow, but take deep note too of its defects, stumblings and dangers. And with this dangerous greatness we must compare the present of India, her downfall and its causes, her velleities of revival, her elements that still make for superiority now and in the future. Let us see and take account of all that we must inevitably receive from the West and consider how we can assimilate it to our own spirit and ideals. But let us see too what founts of native power there are in ourselves from which we can draw deeper, more vital and fresher streams of the power of life than from anything the West can offer. For that will help us more than occidental forms and motives, because it will be more natural to us, more stimulating to our idiosyncrasy of nature, more packed with creative suggestions, more easily taken up and completely followed in power of practice.

But far more helpful than any of these necessary comparisons will be the forward look from our past and present towards our own and not any foreign ideal of the future. For it is our evolutionary push towards the future that will give to our past and present their true value and significance. India's nature, her

mission, the work that she has to do, her part in the earth's destiny, the peculiar power for which she stands is written there in her past history and is the secret purpose behind her present sufferings and ordeals. A reshaping of the forms of our spirit will have to take place; but it is the spirit itself behind past forms that we have to disengage and preserve and to give to it new and powerful thought-significances, culture-values, a new instrumentation, greater figures. And so long as we recognise these essential things and are faithful to their spirit, it will not hurt us to make even the most drastic mental or physical adaptations and the most extreme cultural and social changes. But these changes themselves must be cast in the spirit and mould of India and not in any other, not in the spirit of America or Europe, not in the mould of Japan or Russia. We must recognise the great gulf between what we are and what we may and ought to strive to be. But this we must do not in any spirit of discouragement or denial of ourselves and the truth of our spirit, but in order to measure the advance we have to make. For we have to find its true lines and to find in ourselves the aspiration and inspiration, the fire and the force to conceive them and to execute.

An original truth-seeking thought is needed if we are to take this stand and make this movement, a strong and courageous intuition, an unfailing spiritual and intellectual rectitude. The courage to defend our culture against ignorant occidental criticism and to maintain it against the gigantic modern pressure comes first, but with it there must be the courage to admit not from any European standpoint but from our own outlook the errors of our culture. Apart from all phenomena of decline or deterioration, we should recognise without any sophistical denial those things in our creeds of life and social institutions which are in themselves mistaken and some of them indefensible, things weakening to our national life, degrading to our civilisation, dishonouring to our culture. A flagrant example can be found in the treatment of our outcastes. There are those who would excuse it as an unavoidable error in the circumstances of the past; there are others who contend that it was the best possible solution then available. There are still others who would justify

it and, with whatever modifications, prolong it as necessary to our social synthesis. The contention is highly disputable. The excuse was there, but it is no justification for continuance. A solution which condemns by segregation one sixth of the nation to permanent ignominy, continued filth, uncleanliness of the inner and outer life and a brutal animal existence instead of lifting them out of it is no solution but rather an acceptance of weakness and a constant wound to the social body and to its collective spiritual, intellectual, moral and material welfare. A social synthesis which can only live by making a permanent rule of the degradation of our fellowmen and countrymen stands condemned and foredoomed to decay and disturbance. The evil effects may be kept under for a long time and work only by the subtler unobserved action of the law of Karma; but once the light of Truth is let in on these dark spots, to perpetuate them is to maintain a seed of disruption and ruin our chances of eventual survival.

Again, we have to look on our cultural ideas and our social forms and see where they have lost their ancient spirit or real significance. Many of them are now a fiction and no longer in accordance with the ideas they assume or with the facts of life. Others even if good in themselves or else beneficent in their own time are no longer sufficient for our growth. All these must either be transformed or discarded and truer ideas and better formulations must be found in their place. The new turn we must give them will not always be a return upon their old significance. The new dynamic truths we have to discover need not be parked within the limited truth of a past ideal. On our past and present ideals we have to turn the searchlight of the spirit and see whether they have not to be surpassed or enlarged or brought into consonance with new wider ideals. All we do or create must be consistent with the abiding spirit of India, but framed to fit into a greater harmonised rhythm and plastic to the call of a more luminous future. If faith in ourselves and fidelity to the spirit of our culture are the first requisites of a continued and vigorous life, a recognition of greater possibilities is a condition not less indispensable. There cannot be a healthy and victorious

survival if we make of the past a fetish instead of an inspiring impulse.

The spirit and ideals of our civilisation need no defence, for in their best parts and in their essence they were of eternal value. India's internal and individual seeking of them was earnest, powerful, effective. But the application in the collective life of society was subjected to serious reserves. Never sufficiently bold and thoroughgoing, it became more and more limited and halting when the life-force declined in her peoples. This defect, this gulf between ideal and collective practice, has pursued all human living and was not peculiar to India; but the dissonance became especially marked with the lapse of time and it put at last on our society a growing stamp of weakness and failure. There was a large effort in the beginning at some kind of synthesis between the inner ideal and the outer life; but a static regulation of society was its latter end. An underlying principle of spiritual idealism, an elusive unity and fixed helpful forms of mutuality remained always there, but also an increasing element of strict bondage and minute division and fissiparous complexity in the social mass. The great Vedantic ideals of freedom, unity and the godhead in man were left to the inner spiritual effort of individuals. The power of expansion and assimilation diminished and when powerful and aggressive forces broke in from outside, Islam, Europe, the later Hindu society was content with an imprisoned and static self-preservation, a mere permission to live. The form of living became more and more narrow and it endured a continually restricted assertion of its ancient spirit. Duration, survival was achieved, but not in the end a really secure and vital duration, not a great, robust and victorious survival.

And now survival itself has become impossible without expansion. If we are to live at all, we must resume India's great interrupted endeavour; we must take up boldly and execute thoroughly in the individual and in the society, in the spiritual and in the mundane life, in philosophy and religion, in art and literature, in thought, in political and economic and social formulation the full and unlimited sense of her highest spirit

and knowledge. And if we do that, we shall find that the best of what comes to us draped in occidental forms, is already implied in our own ancient wisdom and has there a greater spirit behind it, a profounder truth and self-knowledge and the capacity of a will to nobler and more ideal formations. Only we need to work out thoroughly in life what we have always known in the spirit. There and nowhere else lies the secret of the needed harmony between the essential meaning of our past culture and the environmental requirements of our future.

That view opens out a prospect beyond the battle of cultures which is the immediate dangerous aspect of the meeting of East and West. The Spirit in man has one aim before it in all mankind; but different continents or peoples approach it from different sides, with different formulations and in a differing spirit. Not recognising the underlying unity of the ultimate divine motive, they give battle to each other and claim that theirs alone is the way for mankind. The one real and perfect civilisation is the one in which they happen to be born, all the rest must perish or go under. But the real and perfect civilisation yet waits to be discovered; for the life of mankind is still nine tenths of barbarism to one tenth of culture. The European mind gives the first place to the principle of growth by struggle; it is by struggle that it arrives at some kind of concert. But this concert is itself hardly more than an organisation for growth by competition, aggression and farther battle. It is a peace that is constantly breaking, even within itself, into a fresh strife of principles, ideas, interests, races, classes. It is an organisation precarious at its base and in its centre because it is founded on half-truths that deteriorate into whole falsehoods; but it is still or has been till now vigorous in constant achievement and able to grow powerfully and to devour and assimilate. Indian culture proceeded on the principle of a concert that strove to find its base in a unity and reached out again towards some greater oneness. Its aim was a lasting organisation that would minimise or even eliminate the principle of struggle. But it ended by achieving peace and stable arrangement through exclusion, fragmentation and immobility of status; it drew a magic circle of safety and shut itself up in it for good.

In the end it lost its force of aggression, weakened its power of assimilation and decayed within its barriers. A static and limited concert, not always enlarging itself, not plastic becomes in our human state of imperfection a prison or a sleeping-chamber. Concert cannot be anything but imperfect and provisional in its form and can only preserve its vitality and fulfil its ultimate aim if it constantly adapts, expands, progresses. Its lesser unities must widen towards a broader and more comprehensive and above all a more real and spiritual oneness. In the larger statement of our culture and civilisation that we have now to achieve, a greater outward expression of spiritual and psychological oneness, but with a diversity which the mechanical method of Europe does not tolerate, will surely be one leading motive. A concert, a unity with the rest of mankind, in which we shall maintain our spiritual and our outer independence will be another line of our endeavour. But what now appears as a struggle may well be the first necessary step, before we can formulate that unity of mankind which the West sees only in idea, but cannot achieve because it does not possess its spirit. Therefore Europe labours to establish unity by accommodation of conflicting interests and the force of mechanical institutions; but so attempted, it will either not be founded at all or will be founded on sand. Meanwhile she wishes to blot out every other culture, as if hers were the only truth or all the truth of life and there were no such thing as truth of the spirit. India, the ancient possessor of the truth of the spirit, must resist that arrogant claim and aggression and affirm her own deeper truths in spite of heavy odds and against all comers. For in its preservation lies the only hope that mankind instead of marching to a new cataclysm and primitive beginning with a constant repetition of the old blind cycles will at last emerge into the light and accomplish the drive forward which will bring the terrestrial evolution to its next step of ascent in the progressive manifestation of the Spirit.

A Defence of Indian Culture

I

A Rationalistic Critic on Indian Culture

WHEN we try to appreciate a culture, and when that culture is the one in which we have grown up or from which we draw our governing ideals and are likely from overpartiality to minimise its deficiencies or from over-familiarity to miss aspects or values of it which would strike an unaccustomed eye, it is always useful as well as interesting to know how others see it. It will not move us to change our view-point for theirs; but we can get fresh light from a study of this kind and help our self-introspection. But there are different ways of seeing a foreign civilisation and culture. There is the eye of sympathy and intuition and a close appreciative self-identification: that gives us work like Sister Nivedita's *Web of Indian Life* or Mr. Fielding's book on Burma or Sir John Woodroffe's studies of Tantra. These are attempts to push aside all concealing veils and reveal the soul of a people. It may well be that they do not give us all the hard outward fact, but we are enlightened of something deeper which has its greater reality; we get not the thing as it is in the deficiencies of life, but its ideal meaning. The soul, the essential spirit is one thing, the forms taken in this difficult human actuality are another and are often imperfect or perverted; neither can be neglected if we would have a total vision. Then there is the eye of the discerning and dispassionate critic who tries to see the thing as it is in its intention and actuality, apportion the light and shade, get the balance of merit and defect, success and failure, mark off that which evokes appreciative sympathy from that which calls for critical censure. We may not always agree; the standpoint is different and by its externality, by failure of intuition and self-identification it may miss things that are essential or may not

get the whole meaning of that which it praises or condemns: still we profit, we can add to our sense of shade and tone or correct our own previous judgment. Finally there is the eye of the hostile critic, convinced of the inferiority of the culture in question, who gives plainly and honestly without deliberate overcharging what he conceives to be sound reason for his judgment. That too has its use for us; hostile criticism of this kind is good for the soul and the intellect, provided we do not allow ourselves to be afflicted, beaten down or shaken from the upholding centre of our living faith and action. Most things in our human world are imperfect and it is sometimes well to get a strong view of our imperfections. Or, if nothing else, we can at least learn to appreciate opposite standpoints and get at the source of the opposition; wisdom, insight and sympathy grow by such comparisons.

But hostile criticism to be of any sound value must be criticism, not slander and false witness, not vitriol-throwing: it must state the facts without distortion, preserve consistent standards of judgment, observe a certain effort at justice, sanity, measure. Mr. William Archer's well-known book on India, which on account of its very demerits I have taken as the type of the characteristic Western or anti-Indian regard on our culture, was certainly not of this character. It is not only that here we have a wholesale and unsparing condemnation, a picture all shade and no light: that is a recommendation, for Mr. Archer's professed object was to challenge the enthusiastic canonisation of Indian culture by its admirers in the character of a devil's advocate whose business is to find out and state in its strongest terms everything that can be said against the claim. And for us too it is useful to have before us an attack which covers the whole field so that we may see in one comprehensive view the entire enemy case against our culture. But there are three vitiating elements in his statement. First, it had an ulterior, a political object; it started with the underlying idea that India must be proved altogether barbarous in order to destroy or damage her case for self-government. That sort of extraneous motive at once puts his whole pleading out of court; for it means a constant deliberate distortion in order to serve a material interest, foreign altogether

to the disinterested intellectual objects of cultural comparison and criticism.

In fact this book is not criticism; it is literary or rather journalistic pugilism. There too it is of a peculiar kind; it is a furious sparring at a lay figure of India which is knocked down at pleasure through a long and exuberant dance of misstatement and exaggeration in the hope of convincing an ignorant audience that the performer has prostrated a living adversary. Sanity, justice, measure are things altogether at a discount: a show-off of the appearance of staggering and irresistible blows is the object held in view, and for that anything comes in handy,—the facts are altogether misstated or clumsily caricatured, the most extraordinary and unfounded suggestions advanced with an air of obviousness, the most illogical inconsistencies permitted if an apparent point can be scored. All this is not the occasional freak of a well-informed critic suffering from a fit of mental biliousness and impelled to work it off by an extravagant intellectual exercise, an irresponsible fantasia or a hostile war-dance around a subject with which he is not in sympathy. That is a kind of extravagance, which is sometimes permissible and may be interesting and amusing. It is a sweet and pleasant thing, cries the Roman poet, to play the fool in place and right season, *dulce est desipere in loco*. But Mr. Archer's constant departures into irrational extravagance are not by any means *in loco*. We discover very soon,—in addition to his illegitimate motive and his deliberate unfairness this is a third and worst cardinal defect,—that for the most part he knew absolutely nothing about the things on which he was passing his confident damning judgments. What he has done is to collect together in his mind all the unfavourable comments he had read about India, eke them out with casual impressions of his own and advance this unwholesome and unsubstantial compound as his original production, although his one genuine and native contribution is the cheery cocksureness of his secondhand opinions. The book is a journalistic fake, not an honest critical production.

The writer was evidently no authority on metaphysics, which he despises as a misuse of the human mind; yet he lays

down the law at length about the values of Indian philosophy. He was a rationalist to whom religion is an error, a psychological disease, a sin against reason; yet he adjudges here between the comparative claims of religions, assigning a *proxime accessit* to Christianity, mainly, it seems, because Christians do not seriously believe in their own religion,—let not the reader laugh, the book advances quite seriously this amazing reason,—and bestowing the wooden spoon on Hinduism. He admits his incompetence to speak about music, yet that has not prevented him from relegating Indian music to a position of hopeless inferiority. His judgment on art and architecture is of the narrowest kind; but he is generously liberal of his decisive depreciations. In drama and literature one would expect from him better things; but the astonishing superficiality of his standards and his arguments here leaves one wondering how in the world he got his reputation as a dramatic and literary critic: one concludes that either he must have used a very different method in dealing with European literature or else it is very easy to get a reputation of this kind in England. An ill-informed misrepresentation of facts, a light-hearted temerity of judgment on things he has not cared to study constitute this critic's title to write on Indian culture and dismiss it authoritatively as a mass of barbarism.

It is not then for a well-informed outside view or even an instructive adverse criticism of Indian civilisation that I have turned to Mr. William Archer. In the end it is only those who possess a culture who can judge the intrinsic value of its productions, because they alone can enter entirely into its spirit. To the foreign critic we can only go for help in forming a comparative judgment,—which too is indispensable. But if for any reason we had to depend on a foreign judgment for the definitive view of these things, it is evident that in each field it is to men who can speak with some authority that we must turn. It matters very little to me what Mr. Archer or Dr. Gough or Sir John Woodroffe's unnamed English professor may say about Indian philosophy; it is enough for me to know what Emerson or Schopenhauer or Nietzsche, three entirely different minds of the greatest power in this field, or what thinkers like Cousin

and Schlegel have to say about it or to mark the increasing influence of some of its conceptions, the great parallel lines of thought in earlier European thinking and the confirmations of ancient Indian metaphysics and psychology which are the results of the most modern research and inquiry. For religion I shall not go to Mr. Harold Begbie or any European atheist or rationalist for a judgment on our spirituality, but see rather what are the impressions of open-minded men of religious feeling and experience who can alone be judges, a spiritual and religious thinker such as Tolstoy, for instance. Or I may study even, allowing for an inevitable bias, what the more cultured Christian missionary has to say about a religion which he can no longer dismiss as a barbarous superstition. In art I shall not turn to the opinion of the average European who knows nothing of the spirit, meaning or technique of Indian architecture, painting and sculpture. For the first I shall consult some recognised authority like Fergusson; for the others if critics like Mr. Havell are to be dismissed as partisans, I can at least learn something from Okakura or Mr. Laurence Binyon. In literature I shall be at a loss, for I cannot remember that any Western writer of genius or high reputation as a critic has had any first-hand knowledge of Sanskrit literature or of the Prakritic tongues, and a judgment founded on translations can only deal with the substance,—and even that in most translations of Indian work is only the dead substance with the whole breath of life gone out of it. Still even here Goethe's well-known epigram on the *Shakuntala* will be enough by itself to show me that all Indian writing is not of a barbarous inferiority to European creation. And perhaps we may find a scholar here and there with some literary taste and judgment, not a too common combination, who will be of help to us. This sort of excursion will certainly not give us an entirely reliable scheme of values, but at any rate we shall be safer than in a resort to the great lowland clan of Goughs, Archers and Begbies.

If I still find it necessary or useful to notice these lucubrations, it is for quite another purpose. Even for that purpose all that Mr. Archer writes is not of utility; much of it is so

irrational, inconsequent or unscrupulous in suggestion that one can only note and pass on. When for instance he assures his readers that Indian philosophers think that sitting cross-legged and contemplating one's own navel is the best way of ascertaining the truths of the universe and that their real object is an indolent immobility and to live upon the alms of the faithful, his object in thus describing one of the postures of abstracted meditation is to stamp the meditation itself in the eyes of ignorant English readers with the character of a bovine absurdity and a selfish laziness; that is an instance of his unscrupulousness which helps us to observe the kinks of his own rationalistic mind, but is useful for nothing else. When he denies that there is any real morality in Hinduism or affirms that it has never claimed moral teaching as one of its functions, statements which are the exact contrary of the facts, when he goes so far as to say that Hinduism is the character of the people and it indicates a melancholy proclivity towards *whatever* is monstrous and unwholesome, one can only conclude that truth-speaking is not one of the ethical virtues which Mr. William Archer thought it necessary to practise or at least that it need be no part of a rationalist's criticism of religion.

But no, after all Mr. Archer does throw a grudging tribute on the altar of truth; for he admits in the same breath that Hinduism talks much of righteousness and allows that there are in the Hindu writings many admirable ethical doctrines. But that only proves that Hindu philosophy is illogical,—the morality is there indeed, but it ought not to be; its presence does not suit Mr. Archer's thesis. Admire the logic, the rational consistency of this champion of rationalism! Mark that at the same time one of his objections to the Ramayana, admitted to be one of the Bibles of the Hindu people, is that its ideal characters, Rama and Sita, the effective patterns of the highest Indian manhood and womanhood, are much too virtuous for his taste. Rama is too saintly for human nature. I do not know in fact that Rama is more saintly than Christ or St. Francis, yet I had always thought they were within the pale of human nature; but perhaps this critic will reply that, if not beyond that

pale, their excessive virtues are at least like the daily practice of the Hindu cult,—shall we say for example, scrupulous physical purity and personal cleanliness and the daily turning of the mind to God in worship and meditation,—“sufficient to place them beyond the pale of civilisation.” For he tells us that Sita, the type of conjugal fidelity and chastity, is so excessive in her virtue “as to verge on immorality.” Meaningless smart extravagance has reached its highest point when it can thus verge on the idiotic. I am as sorry to use the epithet as Mr. Archer to harp on Indian “barbarism”, but there is really no help for it; “it expresses the essence of the situation.” If all were of this character,—there is too much of it and it is deplorable,—a contemptuous silence would be the only possible reply. But fortunately Apollo does not always stretch his bow thus to the breaking-point; all Mr. Archer’s shafts are not of this wildgoose flight. There is much in his writing that expresses crudely, but still with sufficient accuracy the feeling of recoil of the average occidental mind at its first view of the unique characteristics of Indian culture and that is a thing worth noting and sounding; it is necessary to understand it and find out its value.

This is the utility I wish to seize on; for it is an utility and even more. It is through the average mind that we get best at the bedrock of the psychological differences which divide from each other great blocks of our common humanity. The cultured mind tends to diminish the force of these prejudices or at least even in difference and opposition to develop points of similarity or of contact. In the average mentality we have a better chance of getting them in their crude strength and can appreciate their full force and bearing. Mr. Archer helps us here admirably. Not that we have not to clear away much rubbish to get at what we want. I should have preferred to deal with a manual of misunderstanding which had the same thoroughness of scope, but expressed itself with a more straightforward simplicity and less of vicious smartness and of superfluous ill-will; but none such is available. Let us take Mr. Archer then and dissect some of his prejudices to get at their inner psychology. We shall perhaps

find that through all this unpleasant crudity we can arrive at the essence of a historic misunderstanding of continents. An exact understanding of it may even help us towards an approach to some kind of reconciliation.

II

A Rationalistic Critic on Indian Culture—2

IT IS best to start with a precise idea of the species of critic from whom we are going to draw our estimate of oppositions. What we have before us are the ideas of an average and typical occidental mind on Indian culture, a man of sufficient education and wide reading, but no genius or exceptional capacity, rather an ordinary successful talent, no flexibility or broad sympathy of mind, but pronounced and rigid opinions which are backed up and given an appearance of weight by the habit of using to good effect a varied though not always sound information. This is in fact the mind and standpoint of an average Englishman of some ability formed in the habit of journalism. That is precisely the kind of thing we want in order to seize the nature of the antagonism which led Mr. Rudyard Kipling,—himself a super-journalist and “magnified non-natural” average man, the average lifted up, without ceasing to be itself, by the glare of a kind of crude and barbaric genius,—to affirm the eternal incompatibility of the East and the West. Let us see what strikes such a mentality as unique and abhorrent in the Indian mind and its culture: if we can put aside all sensitiveness of personal feeling and look dispassionately at this phenomenon, we shall find it an interesting and illuminative study.

A certain objection may be advanced against taking a rationalistic critic with a political bias, a mind belonging at best to the today which is already becoming yesterday, in this widely representative capacity. The misunderstanding of continents has been the result of a long-enduring and historic difference, and this book gives us only one phase of it which is of a very modern character. But it is in modern times, in an age of scientific and rationalistic enlightenment, that the difference has become

most pronounced, the misunderstanding most aggressive and the sense of cultural incompatibility most conscious and self-revealing. An ancient Greek, full of disinterested intellectual curiosity and a flexible aesthetic appreciation, was in spite of his feeling of racial and cultural superiority to the barbarian much nearer to the Indian mind than a typical modern European. Not only could a Pythagoras or a philosopher of the Neo-platonist school, an Alexander or a Menander understand with a more ready sympathy the root ideas of Asiatic culture, but an average man of ability, a Megasthenes for instance, could be trusted to see and understand, though not inwardly and perfectly, yet in a sufficient measure. The mediaeval European, for all his militant Christianity and his prejudice against the infidel and paynim, yet resembled his opponent in many characteristic ways of seeing and feeling to an extent which is no longer possible to an average European mind, unless it has been imbued with the new ideas which are once more lessening the gulf between the continents. It was the rationalising of the occidental mind, the rationalising even of its religious ideas and sentiments, which made the gulf so wide as to appear unbridgeable. Our critic represents this increased hostility in an extreme form, a shape given to it by the unthinking free-thinker, the man who has not thought out originally these difficult problems, but imbibed his views from his cultural environment and the intellectual atmosphere of the period. He will exaggerate enormously the points of opposition, but by his very exaggeration he will make them more strikingly clear and intelligible. He will make up for his want of correct information and intelligent study by a certain sureness of instinct in his attack upon things alien to his own mental outlook.

It is this sureness of instinct which has led him to direct the real gravamen of his attack against Indian philosophy and religion. The culture of a people may be roughly described as the expression of a consciousness of life which formulates itself in three aspects. There is a side of thought, of ideal, of upward will and the soul's aspiration; there is a side of creative self-expression and appreciative aesthetics, intelligence and imagination; and there is a side of practical and outward formulation.

A people's philosophy and higher thinking give us its mind's purest, largest and most general formulation of its consciousness of life and its dynamic view of existence. Its religion formulates the most intense form of its upward will and the soul's aspirations towards the fulfilment of its highest ideal and impulse. Its art, poetry, literature provide for us the creative expression and impression of its intuition, imagination, vital turn and creative intelligence. Its society and politics provide in their forms an outward frame in which the more external life works out what it can of its inspiring ideal and of its special character and nature under the difficulties of the environment. We can see how much it has taken of the crude material of living, what it has done with it, how it has shaped as much of it as possible into some reflection of its guiding consciousness and deeper spirit. None of them express the whole secret spirit behind, but they derive from it their main ideas and their cultural character. Together they make up its soul, mind and body. In Indian civilisation philosophy and religion, philosophy made dynamic by religion, religion enlightened by philosophy have led, the rest follow as best they can. This is indeed its first distinctive character, which it shares with the more developed Asiatic peoples, but has carried to an extraordinary degree of thoroughgoing pervasiveness. When it is spoken of as a Brahminical civilisation, that is the real significance of the phrase. The phrase cannot truly imply any domination of sacerdotalism, though in some lower aspects of the culture the sacerdotal mind has been only too prominent; for the priest as such has had no hand in shaping the great lines of the culture. But it is true that its main motives have been shaped by philosophic thinkers and religious minds, not by any means all of them of Brahmin birth. The fact that a class has been developed whose business was to preserve the spiritual traditions, knowledge and sacred law of the race,—for this and not a mere priest trade was the proper occupation of the Brahmin,—and that this class could for thousands of years maintain in the greatest part, but not monopolise, the keeping of the national mind and conscience, and the direction of social principles, forms and manners, is only a characteristic

indication. The fact behind is that Indian culture has been from the beginning and has remained a spiritual, an inward-looking religio-philosophical culture. Everything else in it has derived from that one central and original peculiarity or has been in some way dependent on it or subordinate to it; even external life has been subjected to the inward look of the spirit.

Our critic has felt the importance of this central point and directed upon it his most unsparing attack; in other quarters he may make concessions, allow attenuations, here he will make none. All here must be bad and harmful, or if not deleterious, then ineffective, by the very nature of the central ideas and motives, for any real good. This is a significant attitude. Of course there is the polemical motive. That which is claimed for the Indian mind and its civilisation is a high spirituality, high on all the summits of thought and religion, permeating art and literature and religious practice and social ideas and affecting even the ordinary man's attitude to life. If the claim is conceded, as it is conceded by all sympathetic and disinterested inquirers even when they do not accept the Indian view of life, then Indian culture stands, its civilisation has a right to live. More, it has a right even to throw a challenge to rationalistic modernism and say, "Attain first my level of spirituality before you claim to destroy and supersede me or call on me to modernise myself entirely in your sense. No matter if I have myself latterly fallen from my own heights or if my present forms cannot meet all the requirements of the future mind of humanity; I can reascend, the power is there in me. I may even be able to develop a spiritual modernism which will help you in your effort to exceed yourself and arrive at a larger harmony than any you have reached in the past or can dream of in the present." The hostile critic feels that he must deny this claim at its roots. He tries to prove Indian philosophy to be unspiritual and Indian religion to be an irrational animistic cult of monstrosity. In this effort which is an attempt to stand Truth on her head and force her to see facts upside down, he lands himself in a paradoxical absurdity and inconsistency which destroy his case by sheer overstatement. Still there arise even from this farrago two quite genuine issues. First, we can

ask whether the spiritual and religio-philosophical view of life and the government of civilisation by its ideas and motives or the rationalistic and external view of life and the satisfaction of the vital being governed by the intellectual and practical reason give the best lead to mankind. And granting the value and power of a spiritual conception of life, we can ask whether the expression given to it by Indian culture is the best possible and the most helpful to the growth of humanity towards its highest level. These are the real questions at issue between this Asiatic or ancient mind and the European or modern intelligence.

The typical occidental mind, which prolongs still the mentality of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, has been almost entirely fashioned by the second view; it has grown into the mould of the vitalistic rational idea. Its attitude to life has never been governed by a philosophic conception of existence except during a brief period of Graeco-Roman culture and then only in a small class of thinking and highly cultivated minds; always it is dominated by environmental necessity and the practical reason. It has left behind it too the ages in which spiritual and religious conceptions which invaded it from the East, strove to impose themselves on the vitalistic and rational tendency; it has largely rejected them or thrust them into a corner. Its religion is the religion of life, a religion of earth and of terrestrial humanity, an ideal of intellectual growth, vital efficiency, physical health and enjoyment, a rational social order. This mind confronted by Indian culture is at once repelled, first by its unfamiliarity and strangeness, then by a sense of irrational abnormality and a total difference and often a diametrical opposition of standpoints and finally by an abundance and plethora of unintelligible forms. These forms appear to its eye to teem with the supranatural and therefore, as it thinks, with the false. Even the unnatural is there, a persistent departure from the common norm, from right method and sound device, a frame of things in which everything, to use Mr. Chesterton's expression, is of the wrong shape. The old orthodox Christian point of view might regard this culture as a thing of hell, an abnormal creation of demons; the modern orthodox rationalistic standpoint looks at it as a nightmare not

only irrational, but antirational, a monstrosity, an out-of-date anomaly, at best a coloured fantasia of the oriental past. That is no doubt an extreme attitude, — it is Mr. Archer's, — but incomprehension and distaste are the rule. One continually finds traces of these feelings even in minds which try to understand and sympathise; but to the average occidental content with his first raw natural impressions all is a repellent confusion. Indian philosophy is an incomprehensible, subtly unsubstantial cloud-weaving; Indian religion meets his eye as a mixture of absurd asceticism and an absurder gross, immoral and superstitious polytheism. He sees in Indian art a riot of crudely distorted or conventional forms and an impossible seeking after suggestions of the infinite — whereas all true art should be a beautiful and rational reproduction or fine imaginative representation of the natural and finite. He condemns in Indian society an anachronistic and semi-barbaric survival of old-world and mediaeval ideas and institutions. This view, which has recently undergone some modification and is less loud and confident in expression, but still subsists, is the whole foundation of Mr. Archer's philippic.

This is evident from the nature of all the objections he brings against Indian civilisation. When you strip them of their journalistic rhetoric, you find that they amount simply to this natural antagonism of the rationalised vital and practical man against a culture which subordinates reason to a supra-rational spirituality and life and action to a feeling after something which is greater than life and action. Philosophy and religion are the soul of Indian culture, inseparable from each other and interpenetrative. The whole objective of Indian philosophy, its entire *raison d'être*, is the knowledge of the spirit, the experience of it and the right way to a spiritual existence; its single aim coincides with the highest significance of religion. Indian religion draws all its characteristic value from the spiritual philosophy which illuminates its supreme aspiration and colours even most of what is drawn from an inferior range of religious experience. But what are Mr. Archer's objections, first to Indian philosophy? Well, his first objection simply comes to this that it is too philosophical. His second accusation is that even as that worthless thing, meta-

physical philosophy, it is too metaphysical. His third charge, the most positive and plausible, is that it enervates and kills the personality and the will-power by false notions of pessimism, asceticism, karma and reincarnation. If we take his criticism under each of these heads, we shall see that it is really not a dispassionate intellectual criticism, but the exaggerated expression of a mental dislike and a fundamental difference of temperament and standpoint.

Mr. Archer cannot deny,—the denial would go beyond even his unequalled capacity for affirming absurdities,—that the Indian mind has displayed an unparalleled activity and fruitfulness in philosophical thinking. He cannot deny that a familiarity with metaphysical conceptions and the capacity of discussing with some subtlety a metaphysical problem is much more wide-spread in India than in any other country. Even an ordinary Indian intellect can understand and deal with questions of this kind where an occidental mind of corresponding culture and attainments would be as hopelessly out of its depth as is Mr. Archer in these pages. But he denies that this familiarity and this subtlety are any proof of great mental capacity—"necessarily", he adds, I suppose in order to escape the charge of having suggested that Plato, Spinoza or Berkeley did not show a great mental capacity. Perhaps it is not "necessarily" such a proof; but it does show in one great order of questions, in one large and especially difficult range of the mind's powers and interests a remarkable and unique general development. The European journalist's capacity for discussing with some show of acumen questions of economy and politics or, for that matter, art, literature and drama, is not "necessarily" proof of a great mental capacity; but it does show a great development of the European mind in general, a wide-spread information and normal capacity in these fields of its action. The crudity of his opinions and his treatment of his subjects may sometimes seem a little "barbaric" to an outsider; but the thing itself is a proof that there is a culture, a civilisation, a great intellectual and civic achievement and a sufficient wide-spread interest in the achievement. Mr. Archer has to avoid a similar conclusion in

another subtler and more difficult range about India. He does it by denying that philosophy is of any value; this activity of the Indian mind is for him only an unequalled diligence in knowing the unknowable and thinking about the unthinkable. And why so? Well, because philosophy deals with a region where there is no possible "test of values" and in such a region thought itself, since it is simply unverifiable speculation, can be of little or no value.

There we come to a really interesting and characteristic opposition of standpoints, more, a difference in the very grain of the mind. As stated, it is the sceptical argument of the atheist and agnostic, but after all that is only the extreme logical statement of an attitude common to the average European turn of thinking which is inherently a positivist attitude. Philosophy has been pursued in Europe with great and noble intellectual results by the highest minds, but very much as a pursuit apart from life, a thing high and splendid, but ineffective. It is remarkable that while in India and China philosophy has seized hold on life, has had an enormous practical effect on the civilisation and got into the very bones of current thought and action, it has never at all succeeded in achieving this importance in Europe. In the days of the Stoics and Epicureans it got a grip, but only among the highly cultured; at the present day, too, we have some renewed tendency of the kind. Nietzsche has had his influence, certain French thinkers also in France, the philosophies of James and Bergson have attracted some amount of public interest; but it is a mere nothing compared with the effective power of Asiatic philosophy. The average European draws his guiding views not from the philosophic, but from the positive and practical reason. He does not absolutely disdain philosophy like Mr. Archer, but he considers it, if not a "man-made illusion", yet a rather nebulous, remote and ineffective kind of occupation. He honours the philosophers, but he puts their works on the highest shelf of the library of civilisation, not to be taken down or consulted except by a few minds of an exceptional turn. He admires, but he distrusts them. Plato's idea of philosophers as the right rulers and best directors of society seems to him the most fantastic

and unpractical of notions; the philosopher, precisely because he moves among ideas, must be without any hold on real life. The Indian mind holds on the contrary that the Rishi, the thinker, the seer of spiritual truth is the best guide not only of the religious and moral, but the practical life. The seer, the Rishi is the natural director of society; to the Rishis he attributes the ideals and guiding intuitions of his civilisation. Even today he is very ready to give the name to anyone who can give a spiritual truth which helps his life or a formative idea and inspiration which influences religion, ethics, society, even politics.

This is because the Indian believes that the ultimate truths are truths of the spirit and that truths of the spirit are the most fundamental and most effective truths of our existence, powerfully creative of the inner, salutarily reformative of the outer life. To the European the ultimate truths are more often truths of the ideative intellect, the pure reason; but, whether intellectual or spiritual, they belong to a sphere beyond the ordinary action of the mind, life and body where alone there are any daily verifying "tests of values". These tests can only be given by living experience of outward fact and the positive and practical reason. The rest are speculations and their proper place is in the world of ideas, not in the world of life. That brings us to a difference of standpoint which is the essence of Mr. Archer's second objection. He believes that all philosophy is speculation and guessing; the only verifiable truth, we must suppose, is that of the normal fact, the outward world and our responses to it, truth of physical science and a psychology founded on physical science. He reproaches Indian philosophy for having taken its speculations seriously, for presenting speculation in the guise of dogma, for the "unspiritual" habit which mistakes groping for seeing and guessing for knowing,—in place, I presume, of the very spiritual habit which holds the physically sensible for the only knowable and takes the knowledge of the body for the knowledge of the soul and spirit. He waxes bitterly sarcastic over the idea that philosophic meditation and Yoga are the best way to ascertain the truth of Nature and the constitution of the universe. Mr. Archer's descriptions of Indian philosophy are

a grossly ignorant misrepresentation of its idea and spirit, but in their essence they represent the view inevitably taken by the normal positivist mind of the Occident.

In fact, Indian philosophy abhors mere guessing and speculation. That word is constantly applied by European critics to the thoughts and conclusions of the Upanishads, of the philosophies, of Buddhism; but Indian philosophers would reject it altogether as at all a valid description of their method. If our philosophy admits an ultimate unthinkable and unknowable, it does not concern itself with any positive description or analysis of that supreme Mystery,—the absurdity the rationalist ascribes to it; it concerns itself with whatever is thinkable and knowable to us at the highest term as well as on the lower ranges of our experience. If it has been able to make its conclusions articles of religious faith,—dogmas, as they are here called,—it is because it has been able to base them on an experience verifiable by any man who will take the necessary means and apply the only possible tests. The Indian mind does not admit that the only possible test of values or of reality is the outward scientific, the test of a scrutiny of physical Nature or the everyday normal facts of our surface psychology, which is only a small movement upon vast hidden subconscious and superconscious heights, depths and ranges. What are the tests of these more ordinary or objective values? Evidently, experience, experimental analysis and synthesis, reason, intuition,—for I believe the value of intuition is admitted nowadays by modern philosophy and science. The tests of this other subtler order of truths are the same, experience, experimental analysis and synthesis, reason, intuition. Only, since these things are truths of the soul and spirit, it must necessarily be a psychological and spiritual experience, a psychological and psycho-physical experimentation, analysis and synthesis, a larger intuition which looks into higher realms, realities, possibilities of being, a reason which admits something beyond itself, looks upward to the supra-rational, tries to give as far as may be an account of it to the human intelligence. Yoga, which Mr. Archer invites us so pressingly to abandon, is itself nothing

but a well-tested means of opening up these greater realms of experience.

Mr. Archer and minds of his type cannot be expected to know these things; they are beyond the little narrow range of facts and ideas which is to them the whole arc of knowledge. But even if he knew, it would make no difference to him; he would reject the very thought with scornful impatience, without any degrading of his immense rationalistic superiority by any sort of examination into the possibility of an unfamiliar truth. In this attitude he would have the average positivist mind on his side. To that mind such notions seem in their very nature absurd and incomprehensible,—much worse than Greek and Hebrew, languages which have very respectable and credit-worthy professors; but these are hieroglyphs which can only be upheld as decipherable signs by Indians and Theosophists and mystical thinkers, a disreputable clan. It can understand dogma and speculation about spiritual truth, a priest, a Bible, whether disbelieving them or giving them a conventional acceptance; but profoundest verifiable spiritual truth, firmly ascertainable spiritual values! The idea is foreign to this mentality and sounds to it like jargon. It can understand, even when it dismisses, an authoritative religion, an "I believe because it is rationally impossible"; but a deepest mystery of religion, a highest truth of philosophical thinking, a farthest ultimate discovery of psychological experience, a systematic and ordered experimentation of self-search and self-analysis, a constructive inner possibility of self-perfection, all arriving at the same result, assenting to each other's conclusions, reconciling spirit and reason and the whole psychological nature and its deepest needs,—this great ancient and persistent research and triumph of Indian culture baffles and offends the average positivist mind of the West. It is bewildered by the possession of a knowledge which the West never more than fumbled after and ended by missing. Irritated, perplexed, contemptuous, it refuses to recognise the superiority of such a harmony to its own lesser self-divided culture. For it is accustomed only to a religious seeking and experience which is at war with science and philosophy or oscillates between irrational

belief and a troubled or else a self-confident scepticism. In Europe philosophy has been sometimes the handmaid—not the sister—of religion; but more often it has turned its back on religious belief in hostility or in a disdainful separation. The war between religion and science has been almost the leading phenomenon of European culture. Even philosophy and science have been unable to agree; they too have quarrelled and separated. These powers still coexist in Europe, but they are not a happy family; civil war is their natural atmosphere.

No wonder that the positivist mind to which this seems the natural order of things, should turn from a way of thinking and knowing in which there is a harmony, a consensus, a union between philosophy and religion and a systematised well-tested psychological experience. It is easily moved to escape from the challenge of this alien form of knowledge by readily dismissing Indian psychology as a jungle of self-hypnotic hallucinations, Indian religion as a rank growth of antirational superstitions, Indian philosophy as a remote cloud-land of unsubstantial speculation. It is unfortunate for the peace of mind which this self-satisfied attitude brings with it and for the effect of Mr. Archer's facile and devastating method of criticism that the West too has recently got itself pushed into paths of thinking and discovery which seem dangerously likely to justify all this mass of unpleasant barbarism and to bring Europe herself nearer to so monstrous a way of thinking. It is becoming more and more clear that Indian philosophy has anticipated in its own way most of what has been or is being thought out in metaphysical speculation. One finds even scientific thought repeating very ancient Indian generalisations from the other end of the scale of research. Indian psychology which Mr. Archer dismisses along with Indian cosmology and physiology as baseless classification and ingenious guessing,—it is anything but that, for it is based rigorously on experience,—is justified more and more by all the latest psychological discoveries. The fundamental ideas of Indian religion look perilously near to a conquest by which they will become the prominent thought and sentiment of a new and universal religious mentality and spiritual seeking. Who can say

that the psycho-physiology of Indian Yoga may not be justified if certain lines of "groping and guessing" in the West are pushed a little farther? And even perhaps the Indian cosmological idea that there are other planes of being than this easily sensible kingdom of Matter, may be rehabilitated in a not very distant future? But the positivist mind may yet be of good courage: for its hold is still strong and it has still the claim of intellectual orthodoxy and the prestige of the right of possession; many streams must swell and meet together before it is washed under and a tide of uniting thought sweeps humanity towards the hidden shores of the Spirit.

III

A Rationalistic Critic on Indian Culture – 3

THIS CRITICISM so far is not very formidable; its edge, if it has any apart from the edge of trenchant misrepresentation, turns against the assailant. To have put a high value on philosophy, sought by it the highest secrets of our being, turned an effective philosophic thought on life and called in the thinkers, the men of profoundest spiritual experience, highest ideas, largest available knowledge, to govern and shape society, to have subjected creed and dogma to the test of the philosophic mind and founded religious belief upon spiritual intuition, philosophical thought and psychological experience, are signs, not of barbarism or of a mean and ignorant culture, but marks of the highest possible type of civilisation. There is nothing here that would warrant us in abasing ourselves before the idols of the positivist reason or putting the spirit and aim of Indian culture at all lower than the spirit and aim of Western civilisation whether in its high ancient period of rational enlightenment and the speculative idea or in its modern period of broad and minute scientific thought and strong applied knowledge. Different it is, inferior it is not, but has rather a distinct element of superiority in the unique height of its motive and the spiritual nobility of its endeavour.

It is useful to lay stress on this greatness of spirit and aim, not only because it is of immense importance and the first test of the value of a culture, but because the assailants take advantage of two extraneous circumstances to create a prejudice and confuse the real issues. They have the immense advantage of attacking India when she is prostrate and in the dust and, materially, Indian civilisation seems to have ended in a great defeat and downfall. Strong in this temporary advantage they can afford to show a

superb and generous courage in kicking the surrounding dust and mire with their hooves upon the sick and wounded lioness caught in the nets of the hunters and try to persuade the world that she had never any strength and virtue in her. It is an easy task in this age of the noble culture of Reason and Mammon and Science doing the works of Moloch, when the brazen idol of the great goddess Success is worshipped as she was never before worshipped by cultured human beings. But they have too the yet greater advantage of representing her to the world in a period of the eclipse of her civilisation when after at least two thousand years of the most brilliant and many-sided cultural activity she had for a time lost everything except the memory of her past and her long depressed and obscured but always living and now strongly reviving religious spirit.

I have touched elsewhere on the significance of this failure and this temporary eclipse. I may have to deal with it again at closer quarters, since it has been raised as an objection to the value of Indian culture and Indian spirituality. At present it will be enough to say that culture cannot be judged by material success; still less can spirituality be brought to that touchstone. Philosophic, aesthetic, poetic, intellectual Greece failed and fell while drilled and militarist Rome triumphed and conquered, but no one dreams of crediting for that reason the victorious imperial nation with a greater civilisation and a higher culture. The religious culture of Judaea is not disproved or lessened by the destruction of the Jewish State, any more than it is proved and given greater value by the commercial capacity shown by the Jewish race in their dispersion. But I admit, as ancient Indian thought admitted, that material and economic capacity and prosperity are a necessary, though not the highest or most essential part of the total effort of human civilisation. In that respect India throughout her long period of cultural activity can claim equality with any ancient or mediaeval country. No people before modern times reached a higher splendour of wealth, commercial prosperity, material appointment, social organisation. That is the record of history, of ancient documents, of contemporary witnesses; to deny it is to give evidence of a singular

prepossession and obfuscation of the view, an imaginative, or is it unimaginative, misreading of present actuality into past actuality. The splendour of Asiatic and not least of Indian prosperity, the wealth of Ormuz and of Ind, the "barbaric doors rough with gold", *barbaricae postes squalentes auro*, were once stigmatised by the less opulent West as a sign of barbarism. Circumstances are now strangely reversed; the opulent barbarism and a much less artistic ostentation of wealth are to be found in London, New York and Paris, and it is the nakedness of India and the squalor of her poverty which are flung in her face as evidence of the worthlessness of her culture.

India's ancient and mediaeval political, administrative, military and economic organisation was no mean achievement; the records stand and can be left to contradict the ignorance of the uninstructed and the rhetoric of the journalistic critic or the interested politician. There was no doubt an element of failure and defect, almost unavoidable in the totality of a problem on so large a scale and in the then conditions. But to exaggerate that into a count against her civilisation would be a singular severity of criticism which few civilisations watched to their end could survive. Failure in the end, yes, because of the decline of her culture, but not as a result of its most valuable elements. A later eclipse of the more essential elements of her civilisation is not a disproof of their original value. Indian civilisation must be judged mainly by the culture and greatness of its millenniums, not by the ignorance and weakness of a few centuries. A culture must be judged, first by its essential spirit, then by its best accomplishment and, lastly, by its power of survival, renovation and adaptation to new phases of the permanent needs of the race. In the poverty, confusion and disorganisation of a period of temporary decline, the eye of the hostile witness refuses to see or to recognise the saving soul of good which still keeps this civilisation alive and promises a strong and vivid return to the greatness of its permanent ideal. Its obstinate elastic force of rebound, its old measureless adaptability are again at work; it is no longer even solely on the defence, but boldly aggressive. Not survival alone, but victory and conquest are the promise of its future.

But our critic does not merely deny the lofty aim and greatness of spirit of Indian civilisation, which stand too high to be vulnerable to an assault of this ignorant and prejudiced character. He questions its leading ideas, denies its practical life-value, disparages its fruits, efficacy, character. Has this disparagement any critical value or is it only a temperamental expression of the misunderstanding natural to a widely different view of life and to a diametrically opposite estimate of our nature's highest significances and realities? If we consider the character of the attack and its terms, we shall see that it amounts to no more than a condemnation passed by the positivist mind attached to the normal values of life upon the quite different standards of a culture which looks beyond the ordinary life of man, points to something greater behind it and makes it a passage to something eternal, permanent and infinite. India, we are told, has no spirituality,—a portentous discovery; on the contrary she has succeeded, it would seem, in killing the germs of all sane and virile spirituality. Mr. Archer evidently puts his own sense, a novel and interesting and very occidental sense, on the word. Spirituality has meant hitherto a recognition of something greater than mind and life, the aspiration to a consciousness pure, great, divine beyond our normal mental and vital nature, a surge and rising of the soul in man out of the littleness and bondage of our lower parts towards a greater thing secret within him. That at least is the idea, the experience, which is the very core of Indian thinking. But the rationalist does not believe in the spirit in this sense; life, human will-force and reason are his highest godheads. Spirituality then,—it would have been simpler and more logical to reject the word when the thing on which it rests is denied,—has to be given another sense, some high passion and effort of the emotions, will and reason, directed towards the finite, not towards the infinite, towards things temporary, not towards the eternal, towards perishable life, not towards any greater reality which overpasses and supports the superficial phenomena of life. The thought and suffering which seam and furrow the ideal head of Homer, there, we are told, is the sane and virile spirituality. The calm and compassion of Buddha

victorious over ignorance and suffering, the meditation of the thinker tranced in communion with the Eternal, lifted above the seekings of thought into identity with a supreme light, the rapture of the saint made one by love in the pure heart with the transcendent and universal Love, the will of the Karmayogin raised above egoistic desire and passion into the impersonality of the divine and universal will, these things on which India has set the highest value and which have been the supreme endeavour of her greatest spirits, are not sane, not virile. This, one may be allowed to say, is a very occidental and up to date idea of spirituality. Homer, Shakespeare, Raphael, Spinoza, Kant, Charlemagne, Abraham Lincoln, Lenin, Mussolini, these, shall we suggest, are to figure henceforth not only as great poets and artists or heroes of thought and action, but as our typical heroes and exemplars of spirituality. Not Buddha, not Christ, Chaitanya, St. Francis, Ramakrishna; these are either semi-barbaric Orientals or touched by the feminine insanity of an oriental religion. The impression made on an Indian mind resembles the reaction that a cultured intellectual might feel if he were told that good cooking, good dressing, good engineering, good schoolmastering are the true beauty and their pursuit the right, sane, virile aesthetic cult and literature, architecture, sculpture and painting are only a useless scribbling on paper, an insane hacking of stone and an effeminate daubing of canvas; Vauban, Pestalozzi, Dr. Parr, Vatel and Beau Brummell are then the true heroes of artistic creation and not Da Vinci, Angelo, Sophocles, Dante, Shakespeare or Rodin. Whether Mr. Archer's epithets and his accusations against Indian spirituality stand in the comparison, let the judicious determine. But meanwhile we see the opposition of the standpoints and begin to understand the inwardness of the difference between the West and India.

This forms the gravamen of the charge against the effective value of Indian philosophy, that it turns away from life, nature, vital will and the effort of man upon earth. It denies all value to life; it leads not towards the study of nature, but away from it. It expels all volitional individuality; it preaches the unreality of the

world, detachment from terrestrial interests, the unimportance of the life of the moment compared with the endless chain of past and future existences. It is an enervating metaphysic tangled up with false notions of pessimism, asceticism, karma and reincarnation, all of them ideas fatal to that supreme spiritual thing, volitional individuality. This is a grotesquely exaggerated and false notion of Indian culture and philosophy, got up by presenting one side only of the Indian mind in colours of a sombre emphasis, after a manner which I suppose Mr. Archer has learned from the modern masters of realism. But in substance and spirit it is a fairly correct statement of the notions which the European mind has formed in the past about the character of Indian thought and culture, sometimes in ignorance, sometimes in defiance of the evidence. For a time even it managed to impress some strong shadow of this error on the mind of educated India. It is best to begin by setting right the tones of the picture; that done, we can better judge the opposition of mentality which is at the bottom of the criticism.

To say that Indian philosophy has led away from the study of nature is to state a gross unfact and to ignore the magnificent history of Indian civilisation. If by nature is meant physical Nature, the plain truth is that no nation before the modern epoch carried scientific research so far and with such signal success as India of ancient times. That is a truth which lies on the face of history for all to read; it has been brought forward with great force and much wealth of detail by Indian scholars and scientists of high eminence, but it was already known and acknowledged by European savants who had taken the trouble to make a comparative study in the subject. Not only was India in the first rank in mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, medicine, surgery, all the branches of physical knowledge which were practised in ancient times, but she was, along with the Greeks, the teacher of the Arabs from whom Europe recovered the lost habit of scientific enquiry and got the basis from which modern science started. In many directions India had the priority of discovery,—to take only two striking examples among a multitude, the decimal notation in mathematics or the perception that the earth is a

moving body in astronomy,—*calā prthvī sthirā bhāti*, the earth moves and only appears to be still, said the Indian astronomer many centuries before Galileo. This great development would hardly have been possible in a nation whose thinkers and men of learning were led by its metaphysical tendencies to turn away from the study of nature. A remarkable feature of the Indian mind was a close attention to the things of life, a disposition to observe minutely its salient facts, to systematise and to found in each department of it a science, Shastra, well-founded scheme and rule. That is at least a good beginning of the scientific tendency and not the sign of a culture capable only of unsubstantial metaphysics.

It is perfectly true that Indian science came abruptly to a halt somewhere about the thirteenth century and a period of darkness and inactivity prevented it from proceeding forward or sharing at once in the vast modern development of scientific knowledge. But this was not due to any increase or intolerance of the metaphysical tendency calling the national mind away from physical nature. It was part of a general cessation of new intellectual activity, for philosophy too ceased to develop almost at the same time. The last great original attempts at spiritual philosophy are dated only a century or two later than the names of the last great original scientists. It is true also that Indian metaphysics did not attempt, as modern philosophy has attempted without success, to read the truth of existence principally by the light of the truths of physical Nature. This ancient wisdom founded itself rather upon an inner experimental psychology and a profound psychic science, India's special strength,—but study of mind too and of our inner forces is surely study of nature,—in which her success was greater than in physical knowledge. This she could not but do, since it was the spiritual truth of existence for which she was seeking; nor is any really great and enduring philosophy possible except on this basis. It is true also that the harmony she established in her culture between philosophical truth and truth of psychology and religion was not extended in the same degree to the truth of physical Nature; physical Science had not then arrived at the great universal generalisations which would

have made and are now making that synthesis entirely possible. Nevertheless from the beginning, from as early as the thought of the Vedas, the Indian mind had recognised that the same general laws and powers hold in the spiritual, the psychological and the physical existence. It discovered too the omnipresence of life, affirmed the evolution of the soul in Nature from the vegetable and the animal to the human form, asserted on the basis of philosophic intuition and spiritual and psychological experience many of the truths which modern Science is reaffirming from its own side of the approach to knowledge. These things too were not the results of a barren and empty metaphysics, not the inventions of bovine navel-gazing dreamers.

Equally is it a misrepresentation to say that Indian culture denies all value to life, detaches from terrestrial interests and insists on the unimportance of the life of the moment. To read these European comments one would imagine that in all Indian thought there was nothing but the nihilistic school of Buddhism and the monistic illusionism of Shankara and that all Indian art, literature and social thinking were nothing but the statement of their recoil from the falsehood and vanity of things. It does not follow that because these things are what the average European has heard about India or what most interests or strikes the European scholar in her thought, therefore they are, however great may have been their influence, the whole of Indian thinking. The ancient civilisation of India founded itself very expressly upon four human interests; first, desire and enjoyment, next, material, economic and other aims and needs of the mind and body, thirdly, ethical conduct and the right law of individual and social life, and, lastly spiritual liberation; *kāma, artha, dharma, mokṣa*. The business of culture and social organisation was to lead, to satisfy, to support these things in man and to build some harmony of their forms and motives. Except in very rare cases the satisfaction of the three mundane objects must run before the other; fullness of life must precede the surpassing of life. The debt to the family, the community and the gods could not be scamped; earth must have her due and the relative its play, even if beyond it there was the glory of heaven or the peace of the

Absolute. There was no preaching of a general rush to the cave and the hermitage.

The symmetric character of ancient Indian life and the vivid variety of its literature were inconsistent with any exclusive other-worldly direction. The great mass of Sanskrit literature is a literature of human life; certain philosophic and religious writings are devoted to the withdrawal from it, but even these are not as a rule contemptuous of its value. If the Indian mind gave the highest importance to a spiritual release,—and whatever the positivist mood may say, a spiritual liberation of some kind is the highest possibility of the human spirit,—it was not interested in that alone. It looked equally at ethics, law, politics, society, the sciences, the arts and crafts, everything that appertains to human life. It thought on these things deeply and scrutinisingly and it wrote of them with power and knowledge. What a fine monument of political and administrative genius is the *Sukra-Nīti*, to take one example only, and what a mirror of the practical organisation of a great civilised people! Indian art was not always solely hieratic,—it seemed so only because it is in the temples and cave cathedrals that its greatest work survived; as the old literature testifies, as we see from the Rajput and Mogul paintings, it was devoted as much to the court and the city and to cultural ideas and the life of the people as to the temple and monastery and their motives. Indian education of women as well as of men was more rich and comprehensive and many-sided than any system of education before modern times. The documents which prove these things are now available to anyone who cares to study. It is time that this parrot talk about the unpractical, metaphysical, quietistic, anti-vital character of Indian civilisation should cease and give place to a true and understanding estimate.

But it is perfectly true that Indian culture has always set the highest value on that in man which rises beyond the terrestrial preoccupation; it has held up the goal of a supreme and arduous self-exceeding as the summit of human endeavour. The spiritual life was to its view a nobler thing than the life of external power and enjoyment, the thinker greater than the man of action, the

spiritual man greater than the thinker. The soul that lives in God is more perfect than the soul that lives only in outward mind or only for the claims and joys of thinking and living matter. It is here that the difference comes in between the typical Western and the typical Indian mentality. The West has acquired the religious mind rather than possessed it by nature and it has always worn its acquisition with a certain looseness. India has constantly believed in worlds behind of which the material world is only the antechamber. Always she has seen a self within us greater than the mental and vital self, greater than the ego. Always she has bowed her intellect and heart before a near and present Eternal in which the temporal being exists and to which in man it increasingly turns for transcendence. The sentiment of the Bengali poet, the wonderful singer and rapt devotee of the Divine Mother,—

How rich an estate man lies fallow here!
If this were tilled, a golden crop would spring,—

expresses the real Indian feeling about human life. But it is most attracted by the greater spiritual possibilities man alone of terrestrial beings possesses. The ancient Aryan culture recognised all human possibilities, but put this highest of all and graded life according to a transitional scale in its system of the four classes and the four orders. Buddhism first gave an exaggerated and enormous extension to the ascetic ideal and the monastic impulse, erased the transition and upset the balance. Its victorious system left only two orders, the householder and the ascetic, the monk and the layman, an effect which subsists to the present day. It is this upsetting of the Dharma for which we find it fiercely attacked in the Vishnu Purana under the veil of an analogue, for it weakened in the end the life of society by its tense exaggeration and its hard system of opposites. But Buddhism too had another side, a side turned towards action and creation and gave a new light, a new meaning and a new moral and ideal power to life. Afterwards there came the lofty illusionism of Shankara at the close of the two greatest known millenniums of Indian culture. Life thenceforward was too much depreciated as an unreality or

a relative phenomenon, in the end not worth living, not worth our assent to it and persistence in its motives. But this dogma was not universally accepted, nor admitted without a struggle; Shankara was even denounced by his adversaries as a masked Buddhist. The later Indian mind has been powerfully impressed by his idea of Maya; but popular thought and sentiment was never wholly shaped by it. The religions of devotion which see in life a play or Lila of God and not a half sombre, half glaring illusion defacing the white silence of eternity had a closer growing influence. If they did not counteract, they humanised the austere ascetic ideal. It is only recently that educated India accepted the ideas of English and German scholars, imagined for a time Shankara's Mayavada to be the one highest thing, if not the whole of our philosophy, and put it in a place of exclusive prominence. But against that tendency too there is now a powerful reaction, not towards replacing the spirit without life by life without the spirit, but towards a spiritual possession of mind, life and matter. Still it is true that the ascetic ideal which in the ancient vigour of our culture was the fine spire of life mounting into the eternal existence, became latterly its top-heavy dome and tended under the weight of its bare and imposing sublimity to crush the rest of the edifice.

But here also we should get the right view, away from all exaggeration and false stress. Mr. Archer drags in Karma and Reincarnation into his list of anti-vital Indian notions. But it is preposterous, it is a stupid misunderstanding to speak of reincarnation as a doctrine which preaches the unimportance of the life of the moment compared with the endless chain of past and future existences. The doctrine of reincarnation and Karma tells us that the soul has a past which shaped its present birth and existence; it has a future which our present action is shaping; our past has taken and our future will take the form of recurring terrestrial births and Karma, our own action, is the power which by its continuity and development as a subjective and objective force determines the whole nature and eventuality of these repeated existences. There is nothing here to deprecate the importance of the present life. On the contrary the doctrine

gives it immense vistas and enormously enhances the value of effort and action. The nature of the present act is of an incalculable importance because it determines not only our immediate but our subsequent future. There will be found too insistently pervading Indian literature and deeply settled in the mind of the people the idea of a whole-hearted concentrated present action and energy, tapasya, as a miraculous all-powerful force for the acquisition of our desires, whether the material or the spiritual desires of the human will. No doubt, our present life loses the exclusive importance which we give to it when we regard it only as an ephemeral moment in Time never to be repeated, our one sole opportunity, without any after-existence beyond it. But a narrow exaggerated insistence on the present shuts up the human soul in the prison of the moment: it may give a feverish intensity to action, but it is inimical to calm and joy and greatness of the spirit. No doubt, too, the idea that our present sufferings are the results of our own past action, imparts a calm, a resignation, an acquiescence to the Indian mind which the restless Western intelligence finds it difficult to understand or tolerate. This may degenerate in a time of great national weakness, depression and misfortune, into a quietistic fatalism that may extinguish the fire of reparative endeavour. But that is not its inevitable turn, nor is it the turn given to it in the records of the more vigorous past of our culture. The note there is of action, of tapasya. There is too another turn given to this belief which increased with time, the Buddhistic dogma of the succession of rebirths as a chain of Karma from which the soul must escape into the eternal silence. This notion has strongly affected Hinduism; but whatever is depressing in it, belongs not properly to the doctrine of rebirth but to other elements stigmatised as an ascetic pessimism by the vitalistic thought of Europe.

Pessimism is not peculiar to the Indian mind: it has been an element in the thought of all developed civilisations. It is the sign of a culture already old, the fruit of a mind which has lived much, experienced much, sounded life and found it full of suffering, sounded joy and achievement and found that all is vanity and vexation of spirit and there is nothing new under the sun or, if

there is, its novelty is but of a day. Pessimism has been as rampant in Europe as in India and it is certainly a singular thing to find the materialist of all people bringing against Indian spirituality this accusation of lowering the values of existence. For what can be more depressing than the materialistic view of the quite physical and ephemeral nature of human life? There is nothing in the most ascetic notes of the Indian mind like the black gloom of certain kinds of European pessimism, a city of dreadful night without joy here or hope beyond, and nothing like the sad and shrinking attitude before death and the dissolution of the body which pervades Western literature. The note of ascetic pessimism often found in Christianity is a distinctly Western note; for it is absent in Christ's teachings. This mediaeval religion with its cross, its salvation by suffering, its devil-ridden and flesh-ridden world and the flames of eternal hell waiting for man beyond the grave has a character of pain and terror alien to the Indian mind, to which indeed religious terror is a stranger. The suffering of the world is there, but it fades into a bliss of spiritual peace or ecstasy beyond the sorrow line. Buddha's teaching laid heavy stress on the sorrow and impermanence of things, but the Buddhist Nirvana won by the heroic spirit of moral self-conquest and calm wisdom is a state of ineffable calm and joy, open not only to a few like the Christian heavens, but to all, and very different from the blank cessation which is the mechanical release of our pain and struggle, the sorry Nirvana of the Western pessimist, the materialist's brute flat end of all things. Even illusionism preached, not a gospel of sorrow, but the final unreality of joy and grief and the whole world-existence. It admits the practical validity of life and allows its values to those who dwell in the Ignorance. And like all Indian asceticism it places before man the possibility of a great effort, a luminous concentration of knowledge, a mighty urge of the will by which he can rise to an absolute peace or an absolute bliss. A not ignoble pessimism there has been about man's normal life as it is, a profound sense of its imperfection, a disgust of its futile obscurity, smallness and ignorance; but an unconquerable optimism as regards his spiritual possibility was the other side of this mood. If it did

not believe in the ideal of an immense material progress of the race or a perfection of the normal man with earth as its field, it believed in a sure spiritual progress for every individual and an ultimate perfection lifted above subjection to the shocks of life. And this pessimism with regard to life is not the sole note of the Indian religious mind; its most popular forms accept life as a game of God and see beyond our present conditions for every human being the eternal nearness to the Divine. A luminous ascent into godhead was always held to be a consummation well within man's grasp. That can hardly be called a depressing or pessimistic theory of existence.

There can be no great and complete culture without some element of asceticism in it; for asceticism means the self-denial and self-conquest by which man represses his lower impulses and rises to greater heights of his nature. Indian asceticism is not a mournful gospel of sorrow or a painful mortification of the flesh in morbid penance, but a noble effort towards a higher joy and an absolute possession of the spirit. A great joy of self-conquest, a still joy of inner peace and the forceful joy of a supreme self-exceeding are at the heart of its experience. It is only a mind besotted with the flesh or too enamoured of external life and its restless effort and inconstant satisfactions that can deny the nobility or idealistic loftiness of the ascetic endeavour. But there are the exaggerations and deflections that all ideals undergo. Those which are the most difficult to humanity, suffer from them most, and asceticism may become a fanatic self-torture, a crude repression of the nature, a tired flight from existence or an indolent avoidance of the trouble of life and a weak recoil from the effort demanded of our manhood. Practised not by the comparatively few who are called to it, but preached in its extreme form to all and adopted by unfit thousands, its values may be debased, counterfeits may abound and the vital force of the community lose its elasticity and its forward spring. It would be idle to pretend that such defects and untoward results have been absent in India. I do not accept the ascetic ideal as the final solution of the problem of human existence; but even its exaggerations have a nobler spirit behind them than the vitalistic

exaggerations which are the opposite defect of Western culture.

After all asceticism and illusionism are minor issues. The point to be pressed is that Indian spirituality in its greatest eras and in its inmost significance has not been a tired quietism or a conventional monasticism, but a high effort of the human spirit to rise beyond the life of desire and vital satisfaction and arrive at an acme of spiritual calm, greatness, strength, illumination, divine realisation, settled peace and bliss. The question between the culture of India and the vehement secular activism of the modern mind is whether such an endeavour is or is not essential to man's highest perfection. And if it is, then the other question arises whether it is to be only an exceptional force confined to a few rare spirits or can be made the main inspiring motive-power of a great and complete human civilisation.

IV

A Rationalistic Critic on Indian Culture—4

ARIGHT judgment of the life-value of Indian philosophy is intimately bound up with a right appreciation of the life-value of Indian religion; religion and philosophy are too intimately one in this culture to be divided from each other. Indian philosophy is not a purely rational gymnastic of speculative logic in the air, an ultra-subtle process of thought-spinning and word-spinning like the greater part of philosophy in Europe; it is the organised intellectual theory of the intuitive ordering perception of all that is the soul, the thought, the dynamic truth, the heart of feeling and power of Indian religion. Indian religion is Indian spiritual philosophy put into action and experience. Whatever in the religious thought and practice of that vast, rich, thousand-sided, infinitely pliable, yet very firmly structured system we call Hinduism, does not in intention come under this description,—whatever its practice,—is either social framework or projection of ritual buttresses or survival of old supports and additions. Or else it is an excrescence and growth of corruption, a degradation of its truth and meaning in the vulgar mind, part of the debased mixtures that overtake all religious thinking and practice. Or, in some instances, it is dead habit contracted in periods of fossilisation or ill-assimilated extraneous matter gathered into this giant body. The inner principle of Hinduism, the most tolerant and receptive of religious systems, is not sharply exclusive like the religious spirit of Christianity or Islam; as far as that could be without loss of its own powerful idiosyncrasy and law of being, it has been synthetic, acquisitive, inclusive. Always it has taken in from every side and trusted to the power of assimilation that burns in its spiritual heart and in the white heat of its flaming centre to turn even the most

unpromising material into forms for its spirit.

But before we turn to see what it is that so fiercely irritates and exasperates our hostile Western critic in Indian religious philosophy, it is as well to consider what he has to say about other sides of this ancient, dateless and still vigorously living, growing, all-assimilating Hinduism. For he has a great deal to say and it is unsparing and without measure. There is not the intemperate drunkenness of denunciation and vomit of false witness, hatred, uncharitableness and all things degrading and unspiritual and unclean that are the mark of a certain type of "Christian literature" on the subject,—for example, the superlative specimen of this noxious compound which Sir John Woodroffe has cited from the pages of Mr. Harold Begbie, "virile" perhaps if violence is virile, but certainly not sane. But still it is a mass of unsparing condemnation, exaggerated where it has any foundation at all and serenely illogical in its blithe joy of deliberate misrepresentation. Still, even from this crude mass it is possible to disengage the salient and typical antipathies that recommend it to the uncritical and even to many critical minds, and it is these alone that it is useful to discover.

The total irrationality of Hinduism is the main theme of the attack. Mr. Archer does casually admit a philosophical, and one might therefore suppose a rational element in the religion of India, but he disparages and dismisses as false and positively harmful the governing ideas of this religious philosophy as he understands or imagines he understands them. He explains the pervading irrational character of Hindu religion by the allegation that the Indian people have always gravitated towards the form rather than the substance and towards the letter rather than the spirit. One would have supposed that this kind of gravitation is a fairly universal feature of the human mind, not only in religion, but in society, politics, art, literature, even in science. In every conceivable human activity a cult of the form and forgetfulness of the spirit, a turn towards convention, externalism, unthinking dogma has been the common drift of the human mind from China to Peru and it does not skip Europe on its way. And Europe where men have constantly fought, killed,

burned, tortured, imprisoned, persecuted in every way imaginable by human stupidity and cruelty for the sake of dogmas, words, rites and forms of church government, Europe where these things have done duty for spirituality and religion, has hardly a record which would entitle it to cast this reproach in the face of the East. But, we are told, this gravitation afflicts the Indian religion more than any other creed. Higher Hinduism can be scarcely said to exist except in certain small reforming sects and current Hinduism, the popular religion, is the cult of a monstrous folk-lore oppressive and paralysing to the imagination,— although here again one would think that if anything an excess rather than a paralysis of the creative imagination might be charged against the Indian mind. Animism and magic are the prevailing characteristics. The Indian people has displayed a genius for obfuscating reason and formalising, materialising and degrading religion. If India has possessed great thinkers, she has not extracted from their thoughts a rational and ennobling religion: the devotion of the Spanish or the Russian peasant is rational and enlightened by comparison. Irrationalism, anti-rationalism,— that in this laboured and overcharged accusation is the constant cry; it is the keynote of the Archer tune.

The phenomenon that has astonished and disgusted the mind of the critic is the obstinate survival in India of the old religious spirit and large antique religious types unsubmerged by the flood of modernism and its devastating utilitarian free thought. India, he tells us, still clings to what not only the Western world, but China and Japan have outgrown for ages. The religion is a superstition full of performances of piety repulsive to the free enlightened secular mind of the modern man. Its daily practices put it far outside the pale of civilisation. Perhaps, if it had confined its practice decorously to church attendance on Sundays and to marriage and funeral services and grace before meat, it might have been admitted as human and tolerable! As it is, it is the great anachronism of the modern world; it has not been cleansed for thirty centuries; it is paganism, it is a wholly unfiltered paganism; its tendency towards pollution rather than purification marks out its place as incomparably the lowest in

the scale of world religions. An ingenious remedy is proposed. Christianity destroyed Paganism in Europe; therefore, since any immediate or very rapid triumph of sceptical free-thought would be too happily abrupt a transition to be quite feasible, we unenlightened, polluted, impure Hindus are advised to take up for a time with Christianity, poor irrational thing that it is, dark and deformed though it looks in the ample light of the positivist reason, because Christianity and especially Protestant Christianity will be at least a good preparatory step towards the noble freedom and stainless purities of atheism and agnosticism. But if even this little cannot be hoped for in spite of numerous famine conversions, at any rate Hinduism must somehow or other get itself filtered, and until that hygienic operation has been executed, India must be denied fellowship on equal terms with the civilised nations.

Incidentally, to support this charge of irrationalism and its companion charge of Paganism, we find a third and more damaging count brought against us and our religious culture, an alleged want of all moral worth and ethical substance. There is now an increasing perception, even in Europe, that reason is not the last word of human mind, not quite the one and only sovereign way to truth and certainly not the sole arbiter of religious and spiritual truth. The accusation of paganism too does not settle the question, since plenty of cultivated minds are well able to see that there were many great, true and beautiful things in the ancient religions that were lumped together by Christian ignorance under that inappropriate nickname. Nor has the world been entirely a gainer by losing these high ancient forms and motives. But whatever the actual practice of men,—and in this respect the normal human being is a singular mixture of the sincere but quite ineffective, the just respectable, would-be ethical man and the self-deceiving or semi-hypocritical Pharisee,—one can always appeal with force to a moralistic prejudice. All religions raise high the flag of morality and, whether religious or secular-minded, all but the antinomian, the rebel and the cynic, profess to follow or at least to admit that standard in their lives. This accusation is therefore about the most prejudicial charge

that can be brought against any religion. The self-constituted prosecuting judge whose diatribe we are examining brings it without scruple and without measure. He has discovered that Hinduism is not an ennobling or even a morally helpful religion; if it has talked much of righteousness, it has never claimed moral teaching as one of its functions. A religion that can talk much of righteousness without performing the function of moral teaching, sounds rather like a square which can make no claim to be a quadrilateral; but let that pass. If the Hindu is comparatively free from the grosser Western vices,—as yet only, and only until he enters “the pale of civilisation” by adopting Christianity or otherwise,—it is not because there is any ethical strain in his character; it is because these vices do not come his way. His social system founded on the barbarous idea of the Dharma, of the divine and the human, the universal and the individual, the ethical and the social law, and supported on it at every point, has stupidly neglected to supply him with the opportunities of departing from it so liberally provided by Western civilisation! And yet the whole character of Hinduism, which is the character of the people, indicates, we are calmly told, a melancholy proclivity towards whatever is monstrous and unwholesome! On that highest note of unmeasured denunciation we may leave Mr. Archer’s monstrous and unwholesome dance of disparagement and turn to disengage the temperamental sources of his dislike and anger.

Two things especially distinguish the normal European mind,—for we must leave aside some great souls and some great thinkers or some moments or epochs of abnormal religiosity and look at the dominant strain. Its two significant characters are the cult of the inquiring, defining, effective, practical reason and the cult of life. The great high tides of European civilisation, Greek culture, the Roman world before Constantine, the Renascence, the modern age with its two colossal idols, Industrialism and physical Science, have come to the West on the strong ascending urge of this double force. Whenever the tide of these powers has ebbed, the European mind has entered into much confusion, darkness and weakness. Christianity failed to spiritualise

Europe, whatever it may have done towards humanising it in certain ethical directions, because it ran counter to these two master instincts; it denied the supremacy of the reason and put its anathema on a satisfied or strenuous fullness of life. But in Asia there has been neither this predominance of reason and the life-cult nor any incompatibility of these two powers with the religious spirit. The great ages of Asia, the strong culminations of her civilisation and culture,—in India the high Vedic beginning, the grand spiritual stir of the Upanishads, the wide flood of Buddhism, Vedanta, Sankhya, the Puranic and Tantric religions, the flowering of Vaishnavism and Shaivism in the southern kingdoms—have come in on a surge of spiritual light and a massive or intense climbing of the religious or the religio-philosophic mind to its own heights, its noblest realities, its largest riches of vision and experience. It was in such periods that intellect, thought, poetry, the arts, the material life flowered into splendour. The ebbing of spirituality brought in always, on the contrary, the weakness of these other powers, periods of fossilisation or at least depression of the power of life, tracts of decline, even beginnings of decay. This is a clue to which we have to hold if we would understand the great lines of divergence between the East and the West.

Towards the spirit if not all the way to it man must rise or he misses his upward curve of strength; but there are different ways of approach to its secret forces. Europe, it would seem, must go through the life and the reason and find spiritual truth by their means as a crown and a revelation; she cannot at once take the kingdom of heaven by violence, as the saying of Christ would have men do. The attempt confuses and obscures her reason, is combated by her life instincts and leads to revolt, negation, a return to her own law of nature. But Asia or at any rate India lives naturally by a spiritual influx from above; that alone brings with it a spiritual evocation of her higher powers of mind and life. The two continents are two sides of the integral orb of humanity and until they meet and fuse, each must move to whatever progress or culmination the spirit in humanity seeks, by the law of its being, its own proper Dharma. A one-sided

world would have been the poorer for its uniformity and the monotone of a single culture; there is a need of divergent lines of advance until we can raise our heads into that infinity of the spirit in which there is a light broad enough to draw together and reconcile all highest ways of thinking, feeling and living. That is a truth which the violent Indian assailant of a materialistic Europe or the contemptuous enemy or cold disparager of Asiatic or Indian culture agree to ignore. There is here no real question between barbarism and civilisation, for all masses of men are barbarians labouring to civilise themselves. There is only one of the dynamic differences necessary for the completeness of the growing orb of human culture.

Meanwhile the divergence unfortunately gives rise to a constant warring opposition of outlooks in religion and in most other matters, and the opposition brings with it more or less of an incapacity for mutual understanding and even a positive enmity or dislike. The emphasis of the Western mind is on life, the outer life above all, the things that are grasped, visible, tangible. The inner life is taken only as an intelligent reflection of the outer world, with the reason for a firm putter of things into shape, an intelligent critic, builder, refiner of the external materials offered by Nature. The present use of living, to be wholly in this life and for this life, is all the preoccupation of Europe. The present life of the individual and the continuous physical existence and developing mind and knowledge of humanity make up her one absorbing interest. Even from religion the West is apt to demand that it shall subordinate its aim or its effect to this utility of the immediate visible world. The Greek and the Roman looked on religious cult as a sanction for the life of the "polis" or a force for the just firmness and stability of the State. The Middle Ages when the Christian idea was at its height were an interregnum; it was a period during which the Western mind was trying to assimilate in its emotion and intelligence an oriental ideal. But it never succeeded in firmly living it and had eventually to throw it aside or keep it only for a verbal homage. The present moment is in the same way for Asia an interregnum dominated by an attempt to assimilate in its intellect and life in

spite of a rebellious soul and temperament the Western outlook and its earth-bound ideal. And it may be safely predicted that Asia too will not succeed in living out this alien law firmly or for a long time. But in Europe even the Christian idea, marked in its purity by the emphasis of its introspective tendency and an uncompromising other-worldliness, had to compromise with the demands of the occidental temperament and in doing that it lost its own inner kingdom. The genuine temperament of the West triumphed and in an increasing degree rationalised, secularised and almost annihilated the religious spirit. Religion became more and more a pale and ever thinning shadow pushed aside into a small corner of the life and a still smaller corner of the nature and awaiting sentence of death or exile, while outside the doors of the vanquished Church marched on their victorious way the triumphant secular pomps of the outward life and the positive reason and materialistic Science.

The tendency to secularism is a necessary consequence of the cult of life and reason divorced from their inmost inlook. Ancient Europe did not separate religion and life; but that was because it had no need for the separation. Its religion, once it got rid of the oriental element of the mysteries, was a secular institution which did not look beyond a certain supraphysical sanction and convenient aid to the government of this life. And even then the tendency was to philosophise and reason away the relics of the original religious spirit, to exile the little shadow that remained of the brooding wings of a suprarational mystery and to get into the clear sunlight of the logical and practical reason. But modern Europe went farther and to the very end of this way. The more effectually to shake off the obsession of the Christian idea, which like all oriental religious thought claims to make religion commensurate with life and, against whatever obstacles may be opposed to it by the unregenerate vital nature of the animal man, spiritualise the whole being and its action, modern Europe separated religion from life, from philosophy, from art and science, from politics, from the greater part of social action and social existence. And it secularised and rationalised too the ethical demand so that it might stand

in itself on its own basis and have no need of any aid from religious sanction or mystic insistence. At the end of this turn is an antinomian tendency, constantly recurring in the life-history of Europe and now again in evidence. This force seeks to annul ethics also, not by rising above it into the absolute purity of the spirit, as mystic experience claims to do, but by breaking out of its barriers below into an exultant freedom of the vital play. In this evolution religion was left aside, an impoverished system of belief and ceremony to which one might or might not subscribe with very little difference to the march of the human mind and life. Its penetrating and colouring power had been reduced to a faint minimum; a superficial pigmentation of dogma, sentiment and emotion was all that survived this drastic process.

Even the poor little corner that was still conceded to it, intellectualism insisted on flooding as much as possible with the light of reason. The trend has been to reduce, not only the infra-rational, but equally the suprarational refuges of the religious spirit. The old pagan polytheistic symbolism had clothed with its beautiful figures the ancient idea of a divine presence and supraphysical life and Power in all Nature and in every particle of life and matter and in all animal existence and in all the mental action of man; but this idea, which to the secularist reason is only an intellectualised animism, had already been ruthlessly swept aside. The Divinity had abandoned the earth and lived far aloof and remote in other worlds, in a celestial heaven of saints and immortal spirits. But why should there be any other worlds? I admit, cried the progressing intellect, only this material world to which our reason and senses bear witness. A vague bleak abstraction of spiritual existence without any living habitation, without any means of dynamic nearness was left to satisfy the wintry remnants of the old spiritual sense or the old fantastic illusion. A blank and tepid Theism remained or a rationalised Christianity without either the name of Christ or his presence. Or why should that even be allowed by the critical light of the intelligence? A Reason or Power, called God for want of a better name, represented by the moral and physical Law in the material universe, is quite sufficient for any rational mind,

—and so we get to Deism, to a vacant intellectual formula. Or why should there be any God at all? The reason and the senses by themselves give no witness to God; at best they can make of Him only a plausible hypothesis. But there is no need of an unsubstantial hypothesis, since Nature is enough and the sole thing of which we have knowledge. Thus by an inevitable process we reach the atheistic or agnostic cult of secularism, the acme of denial, the zenith of the positive intelligence. And there reason and life may henceforward take their foundation and reign well satisfied over a conquered world,—if only that inconvenient veiled ambiguous infinite Something behind will leave them alone for the future!

A temperament, an outlook of this kind must necessarily be impatient of any such thing as an earnest straining after the suprarational and the infinite. It may tolerate some moderate play of these fine hallucinations as an innocent indulgence of the speculative mind or the artistic imagination, provided it is not too serious and does not intrude upon life. But asceticism and other-worldliness are abhorrent to its temperament and fatal to its outlook. Life is a thing to be possessed and enjoyed rationally or forcefully according to our power, but this earthly life, the one thing we know, our only province. At most a moderate intellectual and ethical asceticism is permissible, the simple life, plain living, high thinking; but an ecstatic spiritual asceticism is an offence to the reason, almost a crime. Pessimism of the vitalistic kind may be allowed its mood or its hour; for it admits that life is an evil that has to be lived and does not cut at its roots. But the obvious right standpoint is to take life as it is and make the most of it, either practically for the best ordering of its mixed good and evil or ideally with some hope of a relative perfection. If spirituality is to have any meaning, it can only signify the aim or the high labour of a lofty intelligence, rational will, limited beauty and moral good which will try to make the best of this life that is, but not vainly look beyond to some unhuman, unattainable, infinite or absolute satisfaction. If religion is to survive, let its function be to serve this kind of spiritual aim, to govern conduct, to give beauty and purity to our living, but let it

minister only to this sane and virile spirituality; let it keep within the bounds of the practical reason and an earthly intelligence. This description no doubt isolates the main strands and ignores departures to one side or the other; and in all human nature there must be departures, often of an extreme kind. But it would not, I think, be an unfair or exaggerated description of the persistent ground and characteristic turn of the Western temperament and its outlook and the normal poise of its intelligence. This is its self-fulfilled static poise before it proceeds to that deflection or that self-exceeding to which man is inevitably moved when he reaches the acme of his normal nature. For he harbours a power in Nature that must either grow or else stagnate and cease and disintegrate, and until he has found all himself, there is for him no static abiding and no permanent home for his spirit.

Now when this Western mind is confronted with the still surviving force of Indian religion, thought, culture, it finds that all its standards are denied, exceeded or belittled; all that it honours is given a second place, all that it has rejected is still held in honour. Here is a philosophy which founds itself on the immediate reality of the Infinite, the pressing claim of the Absolute. And this is not as a thing to speculate about, but as a real presence and a constant Power which demands the soul of man and calls it. Here is a mentality which sees the Divine in Nature and man and animal and inanimate thing, God at the beginning, God in the middle, God at the end, God everywhere. And all this is not a permissible poetical play of the imagination that need not be taken too seriously by life, but is put forward as a thing to be lived, realised, put at the back even of outward action, turned into stuff of thought, feeling and conduct! And whole disciplines are systematised for this purpose, disciplines which men still practise! And whole lives are given up to this pursuit of the supreme Person, the universal Godhead, the One, the Absolute, the Infinite! And to pursue this immaterial aim men are still content to abandon the outward life and society and home and family and their most cherished pursuits and all that has to a rational mind a substantial and ascertainable value! Here is a country which is still heavily coloured with the

ochre tint of the garb of the Sannyasin, where the Beyond is still preached as a truth and men have a living belief in other worlds and reincarnation and a whole army of antique ideas whose truth is quite unverifiable by the instruments of physical Science. Here the experiences of Yoga are held to be as true or more true than the experiments of the laboratory. Is this not a thinking of things evidently unthinkable since the rational Western mind has ceased to think about them? Is it not an attempt to know things evidently unknowable since the modern mind has abandoned all attempt to know them? There is amongst these irrational half-savages an endeavour even to make this unreal thing the highest flight of life, its very goal, and a governing force, a shaping power in art and culture and conduct. But art and culture and conduct are things which, this rational mind tells us, Indian spirituality and religion ought logically not to touch at all; for they belong to the realm of the finite and can only be founded on the intellectual reason and the practical environment and the truths and suggestions of physical Nature. There in its native form is the apparent gulf between the two mentalities and it looks unbridgeable. Or rather the Indian mind can understand well enough, even when it does not share, the positivist turn of the occidental intelligence; but it is itself to the latter a thing, if not damnable, at least abnormal and unintelligible.

The effects of the Indian religio-philosophical standpoint on life are to the occidental critic still more intolerable. If his reason was already offended by this suprarational and to him antirational urge, it is the strongest instincts of his temperament that are now violently shocked by their own direct contrasts and opposites. Life, the thing on which he puts an entire and unquestioning value, is questioned here. It is belittled and discouraged by the extremest consequences of one side of the Indian outlook or inlook and is nowhere accepted as it is for its own sake. Asceticism ranges rampant, is at the head of things, casts its shadow on the vital instincts and calls man to exceed the life of the body and even the life of the mental will and intelligence. The Western mind lays an enormous stress upon force of personality, upon the individual will, upon the apparent man and the desires

and demands of his nature. But here is an opposing stress on a high growth towards impersonality, on the widening of the individual into the universal will, on an increasing or breaking beyond the apparent man and his limits. The flowering of the mental and vital ego or at most its subservience to the larger ego of the community is the West's cultural ideal. But here the ego is regarded as the chief obstacle to the soul's perfection and its place is proposed to be taken not by the concrete communal ego, but by something inward, abstract, transcendental, something supramental, supraphysical, absolutely real. The Western temperament is rajasic, kinetic, pragmatic, active; thought for it turns always to action and has little value except for the sake of action or else for a fine satisfaction of the mind's play and vigour. But here the type proposed for admiration is the self-possessed sattvic man for whom calm thought, spiritual knowledge and the inner life are the things of the greatest importance and action is chiefly of consequence not for its own sake, not for its rewards and fruits, but for its effects on the growth of the inner nature. Here too is a disconcerting quietism which looks forward to the cessation or Nirvana of all thought and action in a perpetual light and peace. It is not surprising that a critic with an unreleased occidental mind should look upon these contrasts with much dissatisfaction, a recoil of antipathy, an almost ferocious repugnance.

But at any rate these things, however remote they may seem to his understanding, contain something that is lofty and noble. He can disparage them as false, antirational and depressing, but not denounce them as evil and ignoble. Or he can do this only on the strength of such misrepresentations as some of those we have noted in Mr. Archer's more irresponsible strictures. These things may be signs of an antique or an antiquated mind, but are certainly not the fruits of a barbaric culture. But when he surveys the forms of the religion which they enlighten and animate, it does look to him as if he was in the presence of a pure barbarism, a savage ignorant muddle. For here is an abundance of everything of which he has so long been steadily emptying religion in his own culture, well content to call that emptiness

reformation, enlightenment and the rational truth of things. He sees a gigantic polytheism, a superabundance of what seems to his intelligence rank superstition, a limitless readiness of belief in things that are to him without significance or incredible. The Hindu is popularly credited with thirty crores and more of gods, as many inhabitants for all the many heavens as there are men in this single earthly peninsula India; and he has no objection to adding, if need be, to this mighty multitude. Here are temples, images, a priesthood, a mass of unintelligible rites and ceremonies, the daily repetition of Sanskrit mantras and prayers, some of them of a prehistoric creation, a belief in all kinds of supraphysical beings and forces, saints, gurus, holy days, vows, offerings, sacrifice, a constant reference of life to powers and influences of which there can be no physical evidence instead of a rational scientific dependence on the material laws which alone govern the existence of mortal creatures. It is to him an unintelligible chaos; it is animism; it is a monstrous folk-lore. The meaning which Indian thought puts upon these things, their spiritual sense, escapes him altogether or it leaves him incredulous or else strikes his mind as a vain and mad symbolism subtle, useless, futile. And not only is the cult and belief of this people antiquated and mediaeval in kind, but it is not kept in its proper place. Instead of putting religion into an unobtrusive and ineffective corner, the Indian mind has the pretension, the preposterous pretension which rational man has outgrown for ever, of filling with it the whole of life.

It would be difficult to convince the too positive average European intelligence which has "outgrown" the religious mentality or is only struggling back towards it after a not yet liquidated bankruptcy of rationalistic materialism, that there is any profound truth or meaning in these Indian religious forms. It has been well said that they are rhythms of the spirit; but one who misses the spirit must necessarily miss too the connection of the spirit and the rhythm. The gods of this worship are, as every Indian knows, potent names, divine forms, dynamic personalities, living aspects of the one Infinite. Each Godhead is a form or derivation or dependent power of the supreme Trinity,

each Goddess a form of the universal Energy, Conscious-Force or Shakti. But to the logical European mind monotheism, polytheism, pantheism are irreconcilable warring dogmas; oneness, many-ness, all-ness are not and cannot be different but concordant aspects of the eternal Infinite. A belief in one Divine Being superior to cosmos who is all cosmos and who lives in many forms of godhead, is a hotch-potch, mush, confusion of ideas; for synthesis, intuitive vision, inner experience are not the forte of this strongly external, analytic and logical mind. The image to the Hindu is a physical symbol and support of the supraphysical; it is a basis for the meeting between the embodied mind and sense of man and the supraphysical power, force or presence which he worships and with which he wishes to communicate. But the average European has small faith in disembodied entities and, if they are at all, he would put them away into a category apart, another unconnected world, a separate existence. A nexus between the physical and supraphysical is to his view a meaningless subtlety admissible only in imaginative poetry and romance.

The rites, ceremonies, system of cult and worship of Hinduism can only be understood if we remember its fundamental character. It is in the first place a non-dogmatic inclusive religion and would have taken even Islam and Christianity into itself, if they had tolerated the process. All that it has met on its way it has taken into itself, content if it could put its forms into some valid relation with the truth of the supraphysical worlds and the truth of the Infinite. Again it has always known in its heart that religion, if it is to be a reality for the mass of men and not only for a few saints and thinkers, must address its appeal to the whole of our being, not only to the suprarational and the rational parts, but to all the others. The imagination, the emotions, the aesthetic sense, even the very instincts of the half subconscious parts must be taken into the influence. Religion must lead man towards the suprarational, the spiritual truth and it must take the aid of the illumined reason on the way, but it cannot afford to neglect to call Godwards the rest of our complex nature. And it must take too each man where he stands and spiritualise him through what he can feel and not at once force

on him something which he cannot yet grasp as a true and living power. That is the sense and aim of all those parts of Hinduism which are specially stigmatised as irrational or antirational by the positivist intelligence. But the European mind has failed to understand this plain necessity or has despised it. It insists on "purifying" religion, by the reason and not by the spirit, on "reforming" it, by the reason and not by the spirit. And we have seen what were the results of this kind of purification and reformation in Europe. The infallible outcome of that ignorant doctoring has been first to impoverish and then slowly to kill religion; the patient has fallen a victim to the treatment, while he might well have survived the disease!

The accusation of a want of ethical content is almost monstrously false,—it is the direct opposite of the truth; but we must look for its explanation in some kind of characteristic misunderstanding; for it is not new. Hindu thought and literature might almost be accused of a tyrannously pervading ethical obsession; everywhere the ethical note recurs. The idea of the Dharma is, next to the idea of the Infinite, its major chord; Dharma, next to spirit, is its foundation of life. There is no ethical idea which it has not stressed, put in its most ideal and imperative form, enforced by teaching, injunction, parable, artistic creation, formative examples. Truth, honour, loyalty, fidelity, courage, chastity, love, long-suffering, self-sacrifice, harmlessness, forgiveness, compassion, benevolence, beneficence are its common themes, are in its view the very stuff of a right human life, the essence of man's dharma. Buddhism with its high and noble ethics, Jainism with its austere ideal of self-conquest, Hinduism with its magnificent examples of all sides of the Dharma are not inferior in ethical teaching and practice to any religion or system, but rather take the highest rank and have had the strongest effective force. For the practice of these virtues in older times there is abundant internal and foreign evidence. A considerable stamp of them still remains in spite of much degeneracy even though there has been some depression of the manlier qualities which only flourish in their fullest power on the soil of freedom. The legend to the contrary began in the minds

of English scholars with a Christian bias who were misled by the stress which Indian philosophy lays on knowledge rather than works as the means of salvation. For they did not note or could not grasp the meaning of the rule well-known to all Indian spiritual seekers that a pure sattvic mind and life are presupposed as the first step towards the divine knowledge—the doers of evil find me not, says the Gita. And they were unable to realise that knowledge of the truth means for Indian thought, not intellectual assent or recognition, but a new consciousness and a life according to the truth of the Spirit. Morality is for the Western mind mostly a thing of outward conduct; but conduct for the Indian mind is only one means of expression and sign of a soul-state. Hinduism only incidentally strings together a number of commandments for observance, a table of moral laws; more deeply it enjoins a spiritual or ethical purity of the mind with action as one outward index. It says strongly enough, almost too strongly, "Thou shouldst not kill," but insists more firmly on the injunction, "Thou shalt not hate, thou shalt not yield to greed, anger or malice," for these are the roots of killing. And Hinduism admits relative standards, a wisdom too hard for the European intelligence. Non-injuring is the very highest of its laws, *ahimsā paramo dharmah*; still it does not lay it down as a physical rule for the warrior, but insistently demands from him mercy, chivalry, respect for the non-belligerent, the weak, the unarmed, the vanquished, the prisoner, the wounded, the fugitive, and so escapes the unpracticality of a too absolutist rule for all life. A misunderstanding of this inwardness and this wise relativity is perhaps responsible for much misrepresentation. The Western ethicist likes to have a high standard as a counsel of perfection and is not too much concerned if it is honoured more by the breach than by the observance; Indian ethics puts up an equally high and often higher standard; but less concerned with high professions than with truth of life, it admits stages of progress and in the lower stages is satisfied if it can moralise as much as possible those who are not yet capable of the highest ethical concepts and practice.

All these criticisms of Hinduism are therefore either false in

fact or invalid in their very nature. It remains to be considered whether the farther yet more common charge is justified in full or in part,—the damaging accusation that Indian culture depresses the vital force, paralyses the will, gives no great or vigorous power, no high incentive, no fortifying and ennobling motive to human life.

A Rationalistic Critic on Indian Culture – 5

THE QUESTION before us is whether Indian culture has a sufficient power for the fortifying and ennobling of our normal human existence. Apart from its transcendental aims, has it any pragmatic, non-ascetic, dynamic value, any power for expansion of life and for the right control of life? This is a question of central importance. For if it has nothing of this kind to give us, then whatever its other cultural greatness, it cannot live. It becomes an abnormal cis-Himalayan hot-house splendour which could subsist in its peninsular seclusion, but must perish in the keen and arduous air of the modern struggle of life. No anti-vital culture can survive. A too intellectual or too ethereal civilisation void of strong vital stimulus and motive must languish for want of sap and blood. A culture to be permanently and completely serviceable to man must give him something more than some kind of rare transcendental uprush towards an exceeding of all earthly life-values. It must do more even than adorn with a great curiosity of knowledge, science and philosophic enquiry or a rich light and blaze of art, poetry and architecture the long stability and orderly well-being of an old, ripe and humane society. All this Indian culture did in the past to a noble purpose. But it must satisfy too the tests of a progressive Life-power. There must be some inspiration for the terrestrial endeavour of man, an object, a stimulus, a force for development and a will to live. Whether or not our end is silence and Nirvana, a spiritual cessation or a material death, this is certain that the world itself is a mighty labour of a vast Life-Spirit and man the present doubtful crown on earth and the struggling but still unsuccessful present hero and protagonist of its endeavour or its drama. A great human culture must see this

truth in some fullness; it must impart some conscious and ideal power of self-effectuation to this upward effort. It is not enough to found a stable base for life, not enough to adorn it, not enough to shoot up sublimely to summits beyond it; the greatness and growth of the race on earth must be our equal care. To miss this great intermediate reality is a capital imperfection and in itself a seal of failure.

Our critics will have it that the whole body of Indian culture bears the stamp of just such a failure. The Western impression has been that Hinduism is an entirely metaphysical and other-worldly system dreaming of things beyond, oblivious of the now and here: a depressing sense of the unreality of life or an intoxication of the Infinite turns it away from any nobility, vitality and greatness of human aspiration and the earth's labour. Its philosophy may be sublime, its religious spirit fervent, its ancient social system strong, symmetrical and stable, its literature and its art good in their own way, but the salt of life is absent, the breath of will-power, the force of a living endeavour. This new journalistic Apollo, our Archer who is out to cleave with his arrows the python coils of Indian barbarism, abounds in outcries in this sense. But, if that is so, evidently India can have done nothing great, contributed no invigorating power to human life, produced no men of mighty will, no potent personalities, no strong significant human lives, no vital human figures in art and poetry, no significant architecture and sculpture. And that is what our devil's advocate tells us in graphic phrases. He tells us that there is in this religion and philosophy a general undervaluing of life and endeavour. Life is conceived as a shoreless expanse in which generations rise and fall as helplessly and purposelessly as waves in mid-ocean; the individual is everywhere dwarfed and depreciated; one solitary great character, Gautama Buddha, who "perhaps never existed," is India's sole contribution to the world's pantheon, or for the rest a pale featureless Asoka. The characters of drama and poetry are lifeless exaggerations or puppets of supernatural powers; the art is empty of reality; the whole history of the civilisation makes a drab, effete, melancholy picture. There is no power of life in this religion and this

philosophy, there is no breath of life in this history, there is no colour of life in this art and poetry; that is the blank result of Indian culture. Whoever has seen at first hand and felt the literature, followed the history, studied the civilisation of India, can see that this is a bitter misrepresentation, a violent caricature, an absurd falsehood. But it is an extreme and unscrupulous way of putting an impression often given to the European mind and, as before, we must see why different eyes see the same object in such different colours. It is the same primary misunderstanding that is at the root. India has lived and lived richly, splendidly, greatly, but with a different will in life from Europe. The idea and plan of her life have been peculiar to her temperament, original and unique. Her values are not easy to seize for an outsider and her highest things are easily open to hostile misrepresentation by the ignorant, precisely because they are too high for the normal untrained mind and apt to shoot beyond its limits.

There are three powers that we must grasp in order to judge the life-value of a culture. There is, first, the power of its original conception of life; there is, next, the power of the forms, types and rhythms it has given to life; there is, last, the inspiration, the vigour, the force of vital execution of its motives manifested in the actual lives of men and of the community that flourished under its influence. The European conception of life is a thing with which we in India are now very familiar, because our present thought and effort are obscured with its shadow when they are not filled with its presence. For we have been trying hard to assimilate something of it, even to shape ourselves and especially our political, economic and outward conduct into some imitation of its forms and rhythms. The European idea is the conception of a Force that manifests itself in the material universe and a Life in it of which man is almost the only discoverable meaning. This anthropocentric view of things has not been altered by the recent stress of Science on the vast blank inanities of an inconscient mechanical Nature. And in man, thus unique in the inert drift of Nature, the whole effort of Life is to arrive at some light and harmony of the understanding and ordering reason, some efficient rational power, adorning

beauty, strong utility, vital enjoyment, economic welfare. The free power of the individual ego, the organised will of the corporate ego, these are the great needed forces. The development of individual personality and an organised efficient national life are the two things that matter in the European ideal. These two powers have grown, striven, run riot at times, and the restless and often violent vividness of the historic stir and the literary and artistic vivacity of Europe are due to their powerful colours. The enjoyment of life and force, the gallop of egoistic passion and vital satisfaction are a loud and insistent strain, a constant high-voiced motive. Against them is another opposite effort, the endeavour to govern life by reason, science, ethics, art; a restraining and harmonising utility is here the foremost motive. At different times different powers have taken the lead. Christian religiosity too has come in and added new tones, modified some tendencies, deepened others. Each age and period has increased the wealth of contributory lines and forces and helped the complexity and largeness of the total conception. At present the sense of the corporate life dominates and it is served by the idea of a great intellectual and material progress, an ameliorated political and social state governed by science. There is an ideal of intelligent utility, liberty and equality or else an ideal of stringent organisation and efficiency and a perfectly mobilised, carefully marshalled uniting of forces in a ceaseless pull towards the general welfare. This endeavour of Europe has become terribly outward and mechanical in its appearance; but some renewed power of a more humanistic idea is trying to beat its way in again and man may perhaps before long refuse to be tied on the wheel of his own triumphant machinery and conquered by his apparatus. At any rate we need not lay too much emphasis on what may be a passing phase. The broad permanent European conception of life remains and it is in its own limits a great and invigorating conception,—imperfect, narrow at the top, shut in under a heavy lid, poor in its horizons, too much of the soil, but still with a sense in it that is strenuous and noble.

The Indian conception of life starts from a deeper centre and moves on less external lines to a very different objective. The

peculiarity of the Indian eye of thought is that it looks through the form, looks even through the force, and searches for the spirit in things everywhere. The peculiarity of the Indian will in life is that it feels itself to be unfulfilled, not in touch with perfection, not permanently justified in any intermediate satisfaction if it has not found and does not live in the truth of the spirit. The Indian idea of the world, of Nature and of existence is not physical, but psychological and spiritual. Spirit, soul, consciousness are not only greater than inert matter and inconscient force, but they precede and originate these lesser things. All force is power or means of a secret spirit; the Force that sustains the world is a conscious Will and Nature is its machinery of executive power. Matter is the body or field of a consciousness hidden within it, the material universe a form and movement of the Spirit. Man himself is not a life and mind born of Matter and eternally subject to physical Nature, but a spirit that uses life and body. It is an understanding faith in this conception of existence, it is the attempt to live it out, it is the science and practice of this high endeavour, and it is the aspiration to break out in the end from this mind bound to life and matter into a greater spiritual consciousness that is the innermost sense of Indian culture. It is this that constitutes the much-talked-of Indian spirituality. It is evidently very remote from the dominant European idea; it is different even from the form given by Europe to the Christian conception of life. But it does not mean at all that Indian culture concedes no reality to life, follows no material or vital aims and satisfactions or cares to do nothing for our actual human existence. It cannot truly be contended that a conception of this kind can give no powerful and inspiring motive to the human effort of man. Certainly, in this view, matter, mind, life, reason, form are only powers of the spirit and valuable not for their own sake, but because of the Spirit within them. *Ātmārtham*, they exist for the sake of the Self, says the Upanishad, and this is certainly the Indian attitude to these things. But that does not deprecate them or deprive them of their value; on the contrary it increases a hundredfold their significance. Form and body immensely increase in importance if they are felt to be instinct

with the life of the Spirit and are conceived as a support for the rhythm of its workings. And human life was in ancient Indian thought no vile and unworthy existence; it is the greatest thing known to us, it is desired, the Purana boldly says, even by the gods in heaven. The deepening and raising of the richest or the most potent energies of our minds, our hearts, our life-power, our bodies are all means by which the spirit can proceed to self-discovery and the return to its own infinite freedom and power. For when mind and heart and reason heighten to their greatest lights and powers, they bring embodied life to the point where it can open to a still greater light and power beyond them; the individual mind widens into a vast universal consciousness and lifts towards a high spiritual transcendence. These are at least no sterilising and depressing ideas; they exalt the life of man and make something like godhead its logical outcome.

The dignity given to human existence by the Vedantic thought and by the thought of the classical ages of Indian culture exceeded anything conceived by the Western idea of humanity. Man in the West has always been only an ephemeral creature of Nature or a soul manufactured at birth by an arbitrary breath of the whimsical Creator and set under impossible conditions to get salvation, but far more likely to be thrown away into the burning refuse-heap of Hell as a hopeless failure. At best he is exalted by a reasoning mind and will and an effort to be better than God or Nature made him. Far more ennobling, inspiring, filled with the motive-force of a great idea is the conception placed before us by Indian culture. Man in the Indian idea is a spirit veiled in the works of energy, moving to self-discovery, capable of Godhead. He is a soul that is growing through Nature to conscious self-hood; he is a divinity and an eternal existence; he is an ever-flowing wave of the God-ocean, an inextinguishable spark of the supreme Fire. Even, he is in his uttermost reality identical with the ineffable Transcendence from which he came and greater than the godheads whom he worships. The natural half-animal creature that for a while he seems to be is not at all his whole being and is not in any way his real being. His inmost reality is the divine Self or at least one dynamic eternal portion

of it, and to find that and exceed his outward, apparent, natural self is the greatness of which he alone of terrestrial beings is capable. He has the spiritual capacity to pass to a supreme and extraordinary pitch of manhood and that is the first aim which is proposed to him by Indian culture. Living no more in the first crude type of an undeveloped humanity to which most men still belong, *na yathā prākṛto janah*, he can even become a free perfected semi-divine man, *mukta, siddha*. But he can do more; released into the cosmic consciousness, his spirit can become one with God, one self with the Spirit of the universe or rise into a Light and Vastness that transcends the universe; his nature can become one dynamic power with universal Nature or one Light with a transcendental Gnosis. To be shut up for ever in his ego is not his ultimate perfection; he can become a universal soul, one with the supreme Unity, one with others, one with all beings. This is the high sense and power concealed in his humanity that he can aspire to this perfection and transcendence. And he can arrive at it through any or all of his natural powers if they will accept release, through his mind and reason and thought and their illuminations, through his heart and its unlimited power of love and sympathy, through his will and its dynamic drive towards mastery and right action, through his ethical nature and its hunger for the universal Good, through his aesthetic sense and its seekings after delight and beauty or through his inner soul and its power of absolute spiritual calm, wideness, joy and peace.

This is the sense of that spiritual liberation and perfection of which Indian thought and inner discipline have been full since the earliest Vedic times. However high and arduous this aim may be, it has always seemed to it possible and even in a way near and normal, once spiritual realisation has discovered its path. The positivist Western mind finds it difficult to give this conception the rank of a living and intelligible idea. The status of the *siddha, bhāgavata, mukta* appears to it a baseless chimera. It seems to its Christian associations a blasphemy against the solitary greatness of God, before whom man is only a grovelling worm, to its fierce attachment to the normal ego a negation of personality

and a repellent menace, to its earthbound rationalism a dream, a self-hypnotic hallucination or a deluding mania. And yet in ancient Europe the Stoics, Platonists, Pythagoreans had made some approach to this aspiration, and even afterwards, a few rare souls have envisaged or pursued it through occult ways. And now it is again beginning to percolate into the Western imagination, but less as a dynamic life-motive than in poetry and in certain aspects of general thought or through movements like Theosophy that draw from ancient and oriental sources. Science and philosophy and religion still regard it with scorn as an illusion, with indifference as a dream or with condemnation as a heathen arrogance. It is the distinction of Indian culture to have seized on this great dynamic hope, to have kept it a living and practicable thing and to have searched out all the possible paths to this spiritual way of perfect existence. Indian thought has made this great thing the common highest aim and universal spiritual destiny of the soul that is in every human creature.

The value of the Indian conception for life must depend on the relations and gradations by which it connects this difficult and distant perfection with our normal living and present everyday nature. Put over against the latter without any connection or any gradations that lead up to it and make it possible, it would either be a high unattainable ideal or the detached remote passion of a few exceptional spirits. Or even it would discourage the springs of our natural life by the too great contrast between this spiritual being and our own poor imperfect nature. Something of the kind has happened in later times; the current Western impression about the exaggerated asceticism and otherworldliness of Indian religion and philosophy is founded on the growing gulf created by a later thought between man's spiritual possibilities and his terrestrial status. But we must not be misled by extreme tendencies or the overemphasis put upon them in a period of decline. If we would get at the real meaning of the Indian idea of life, we must go back to its best times. And we must not look at this or that school of philosophy or at some side of it as the whole of Indian thought; the totality of the ancient philosophical thinking, religion, literature, art, society

must be our ground of enquiry. The Indian conception in its early soundness made no such mistake as to imagine that this great thing can or even ought to be done by some violent, intolerant, immediate leap from one pole of existence to its opposite. Even the most extreme philosophies do not go so far. The workings of the Spirit in the universe were a reality to one side of the Indian mind, to another only a half reality, a self-descriptive Lila or illusory Maya. To the one the world was an action of the Infinite Energy, Shakti, to the other a figment of some secondary paradoxical consciousness in the Eternal, Maya: but life as an intermediate reality was never denied by any school of Indian thinking. Indian thought recognised that the normal life of man has to be passed through with a conscientious endeavour to fulfil its purpose: its powers must be developed with knowledge; its forms must be perused, interpreted and fathomed; its values must be worked out, possessed and lived; its enjoyments must be fully taken on their own level. Only afterwards can we go on to self-existence or a supra-existence. The spiritual perfection which opens before man is the crown of a long, patient, millennial outflowering of the spirit in life and nature. This belief in a gradual spiritual progress and evolution here is indeed the secret of the almost universal Indian acceptance of the truth of reincarnation. It is only by millions of lives in inferior forms that the secret soul in the universe, conscious even in the inconscient, *cetano acetaneṣu*, has arrived at humanity: it is only by hundreds or thousands, perhaps even millions of human lives that man can grow into his divine self-existence. Every life is a step which he can take backward or forward; his action in life, his will in life, his thought and knowledge by which he governs and directs his life, determine what he is yet to be from the earliest stages to the last transcendence. *Yathā karma yathā śrutam.*

This belief in a gradual soul evolution with a final perfection or divine transcendence and human life as its first direct means and often repeated opportunity, is the pivot of the Indian conception of existence. This gives to our life the figure of an ascent in spirals or circles; and the long period of the ascent has to be filled in with human knowledge and human action

and human experience. There is room within it for all terrestrial aims, activities and aspirations; there is place in the ascent for all types of human character and nature. For the spirit in the world assumes hundreds of forms and follows many tendencies and gives many shapes to his play or *līlā*. All are part of the total mass of our necessary experience; each has its justification, each has its natural or true law and reason of being, each has its utility in the play and the process. The claim of sense satisfaction was not ignored, it was given its just importance. The soul's need of labour and heroic action was not stifled, it was urged to its fullest action and freest scope. The hundred forms of the pursuit of knowledge were given an absolute freedom of movement; the play of the emotions was allowed, refined, trained till they were fit for the divine levels; the demand of the aesthetic faculties was encouraged in its highest rarest forms and in life's commonest details. Indian culture did not deface nor impoverish the richness of the grand game of human life; it never depressed or mutilated the activities of our nature. On the contrary, subject to a certain principle of harmony and government, it allowed them their full, often their extreme value. Man was allowed to fathom on his way all experience, to give to his character and action a large rein and heroic proportions, and to fill in life opulently with colour and beauty and enjoyment. This life side of the Indian idea is stamped in strong relief over the epic and the classical literature. It is amazing indeed that anyone with an eye or a brain could have read the Ramayana, Mahabharata, the dramas, the literary epics, the romances, and the great abundance of gnomic and lyric poetry in Sanskrit and in the later tongues (to say nothing of the massive remains of other cultural work and social and political system and speculation), and yet failed to perceive this breadth, wealth and greatness. One must have read without eyes to see or without a mind to understand; most indeed of the adverse critics have not read or studied at all, but only flung about their preconceived notions with a violent or a high-browed ignorant assurance.

But while it is the generous office of culture to enrich, enlarge and encourage human life, it must also give the vital

forces a guiding law, subject them to some moral and rational government and lead them beyond their first natural formulations, until it can find for life the clue to a spiritual freedom, perfection and greatness. The preeminent value of the ancient Indian civilisation lay in the power with which it did this work, the profound wisdom and high and subtle skill with which it based society and ordered the individual life, and encouraged and guided the propensities of human nature and finally turned them all towards the realisation of its master idea. The mind it was training, while not called away from its immediate aims, was never allowed to lose sight of the use of life as a discipline for spiritual perfection and a passage to the Infinite.

The Indian mind whether in the government of life or in the discipline of spirituality kept always in sight two main truths of our existence. First, our being in its growth has stages through which it must pass: if there are sometimes leaps forward, yet most of its growth is a developing progression; the swiftest race has its stadia. Then again, life is complex and the nature of man is complex; in each life man has to figure a certain sum of its complexity and put that into some kind of order. But the initial movement of life is that form of it which develops the powers of the natural ego in man; self-interest and hedonistic desire are the original human motives,—*kāma, artha*. Indian culture gave a large recognition to this primary turn of our nature. These powers have to be accepted and put in order; for the natural ego-life must be lived and the forces it evolves in the human being must be brought to fullness. But this element must be kept from making any too unbridled claim or heading furiously towards its satisfaction; only so can it get its full results without disaster and only so can it be inspired eventually to go beyond itself and turn in the end to a greater spiritual Good and Bliss. An internal or external anarchy cannot be the rule; a life governed in any absolute or excessive degree by self-will, passion, sense-attraction, self-interest and desire cannot be the natural whole of a human or a humane existence. The tempting imagination that it can and that this is the true law is a lure with which the Western mind has played in characteristic leanings

or outbursts; but this turn unjustly called Paganism,—for the Greek or Pagan intelligence had a noble thought for law and harmony and self-rule,—is alien to the Indian spirit. India has felt the call of the senses not less than Greece, Rome or modern Europe; she perceived very well the possibility of a materialistic life and its attraction worked on certain minds and gave birth to the philosophy of the Charvakas: but this could not take full hold or establish even for a time any dominant empire. Even if we can see in it, when lived on a grand scale, a certain perverse greatness, still a colossal egoism indulgent of the sole life of the mind and the senses was regarded by her as the nature of the Asura and Rakshasa. It is the Titanic, gigantic or demoniac type of spirit, permitted in its own plane, but not the proper law for a human life. Another power claims man and overtops desire and self-interest and self-will, the power of the Dharma.

The Dharma, at once religious law of action and deepest law of our nature, is not, as in the Western idea, a creed, cult or ideal inspiring an ethical and social rule; it is the right law of functioning of our life in all its parts. The tendency of man to seek after a just and perfect law of his living finds its truth and its justification in the Dharma. Every thing indeed has its dharma, its law of life imposed on it by its nature; but for man the dharma is the conscious imposition of a rule of ideal living on all his members. Dharma is fixed in its essence, but still it develops in our consciousness and evolves and has its stages; there are gradations of spiritual and ethical ascension in the search for the highest law of our nature. All men cannot follow in all things one common and invariable rule. Life is too complex to admit of the arbitrary ideal simplicity which the moralising theorist loves. Natures differ; the position, the work we have to do has its own claims and standards; the aim and bent, the call of life, the call of the spirit within is not the same for everyone: the degree and turn of development and the capacity, *adhikāra*, are not equal. Man lives in society and by society, and every society has its own general dharma, and the individual life must be fitted into this wider law of movement. But there too the individual's part in society and his nature and the needs of his capacity and

temperament vary and have many kinds and degrees: the social law must make some room for this variety and would lose by being rigidly one for all. The man of knowledge, the man of power, the productive and acquisitive man, the priest, scholar, poet, artist, ruler, fighter, trader, tiller of the soil, craftsman, labourer, servant cannot usefully have the same training, cannot be shaped in the same pattern, cannot all follow the same way of living. All ought not to be put under the same tables of the law; for that would be a senseless geometric rigidity that would spoil the plastic truth of life. Each has his type of nature and there must be a rule for the perfection of that type; each has his own proper function and there must be a canon and ideal for the function. There must be in all things some wise and understanding standard of practice and idea of perfection and living rule,—that is the one thing needful for the Dharma. A lawless impulsion of desire and interest and propensity cannot be allowed to lead human conduct; even in the frankest following of desire and interest and propensity there must be a governing and restraining and directing line, a guidance. There must be an ethic or a science, a restraint as well as a scope arising from the truth of the thing sought, a standard of perfection, an order. Differing with the type of the man and the type of the function these special dharmas would yet rise towards the greater law and truth that contains and overtops the others and is universally effective. This then was the Dharma, special for the special person, stage of development, pursuit of life or individual field of action, but universal too in the broad lines which all ought to pursue.

The universal embracing dharma in the Indian idea is a law of ideal perfection for the developing mind and soul of man; it compels him to grow in the power and force of certain high or large universal qualities which in their harmony build a highest type of manhood. In Indian thought and life this was the ideal of the best, the law of the good or noble man, the discipline laid down for the self-perfecting individual, *ārya*, *śrestha*, *sajjana*, *sādhu*. This ideal was not a purely moral or ethical conception, although that element might predominate; it was also intellectual, religious, social, aesthetic, the flowering of the whole ideal

man, the perfection of the total human nature. The most varied qualities met in the Indian conception of the best, *śrestha*, the good and noble man, *ārya*. In the heart benevolence, beneficence, love, compassion, altruism, long-suffering, liberality, kindliness, patience; in the character courage, heroism, energy, loyalty, continence, truth, honour, justice, faith, obedience and reverence where these were due, but power too to govern and direct, a fine modesty and yet a strong independence and noble pride; in the mind wisdom and intelligence and love of learning, knowledge of all the best thought, an openness to poetry, art and beauty, an educated capacity and skill in works; in the inner being a strong religious sense, piety, love of God, seeking after the Highest, the spiritual turn; in social relations and conduct a strict observance of all the social dharmas, as father, son, husband, brother, kinsman, friend, ruler or subject, master or servant, priest or warrior or worker, king or sage, member of clan or caste: this was the total ideal of the Arya, the man of high upbringing and noble nature. The ideal is clearly portrayed in the written records of ancient India during two millenniums and it is the very life-breath of Hindu ethics. It was the creation of an at once ideal and rational mind, spirit-wise and worldly-wise, deeply religious, nobly ethical, firmly yet flexibly intellectual, scientific and aesthetic, patient and tolerant of life's difficulties and human weakness, but arduous in self-discipline. This was the mind that was at the base of the Indian civilisation and gave its characteristic stamp to all the culture.

But even this was only the foundation and preparation for another highest thing which by its presence exalts human life beyond itself into something spiritual and divine. Indian culture raised the crude animal life of desire, self-interest and satisfied propensity beyond its first intention to a noble self-exceeding and shapeliness by infusing into it the order and high aims of the Dharma. But its profounder characteristic aim—and in this it was unique—was to raise this nobler life too of the self-perfecting human being beyond its own intention to a mightiest self-exceeding and freedom; it laboured to infuse into it the great aim of spiritual liberation and perfection, *mukti*, *mokṣa*.

The Law and its observance are neither the beginning nor the end of man; there is beyond the field of the Law a larger realm of consciousness in which, climbing, he emerges into a great spiritual freedom. Not a noble but ever death-bound manhood is the highest height of man's perfection: immortality, freedom, divinity are within his grasp. Ancient Indian culture held this highest aim constantly before the inner eye of the soul and insistently inspired with its prospect and light the whole conception of existence. The entire life of the individual was ennobled by this aim; the whole ordering of society was cast into a scale of graduated ascension towards this supreme summit.

A well-governed system of the individual and communal existence must be always in the first instance an ordering of the three first powers recognised by Indian thought. The claim of the natural functionings must be recognised in it to the full; the pursuit of personal and communal interest and the satisfaction of human desires as of human needs must be amply admitted and there must be an understanding combination of knowledge and labour towards these ends. But all must be controlled, uplifted and widened to greater aims by the ideal of the Dharma. And if, as India believes, there is a higher spiritual consciousness towards which man can rise, that ascent must be kept throughout in view as the supreme goal of life. The system of Indian culture at once indulged and controlled man's nature; it fitted him for his social role; it stamped on his mind the generous ideal of an accomplished humanity refined, harmonised in all its capacities, ennobled in all its members; but it placed before him too the theory and practice of a highest change, familiarised him with the conception of a spiritual existence and sowed in him a hunger for the divine and the infinite. The symbols of his religion were filled with suggestions which led towards it; at every step he was reminded of lives behind and in front and of worlds beyond the material existence; he was brought close to the nearness, even to the call and pressure of the Spirit who is greater than the life it informs, of the final goal, of a high possible immortality, freedom, God-consciousness, divine Nature. Man was not allowed to forget that he had in him a

highest self beyond his little personal ego and that always he and all things live, move and have their being in God, in the Eternal, in the Spirit. There were ways and disciplines provided in number by which he could realise this liberating truth or could at least turn and follow at a distance this highest aim according to his capacity and nature, *adhikāra*. Around him he saw and revered the powerful practicants and the mighty masters of these disciplines. These men were in early times the teachers of his youth, the summits of his society, the inspirers and fountain-heads of his civilisation, the great lights of his culture. Spiritual freedom, spiritual perfection were not figured as a far-off intangible ideal, but presented as the highest human aim towards which all must grow in the end, and were made near and possible to his endeavour from a first practicable basis of life and the Dharma. The spiritual idea governed, enlightened and gathered towards itself all the other life-motives of a great civilised people.

A Rationalistic Critic on Indian Culture – 6

THESE are the principal lines upon which the structure of Indian civilisation was founded and they constitute the power of its conception of life. I do not think it can be said that there is here any inferiority to other human cultures or to any established conception of life that has ever held sway over the mind of man in historic times. There is nothing here that can be said to discourage life and its flowering or to deprive it of impetus and elevation and a great motive. On the contrary there is a full and frank recognition and examination of the whole of human existence in all its variety and range and power, there is a clear and wise and noble idea for its right government and there is an ideal tendency pointing it upward and a magnificent call to a highest possible perfection and greatness. These are the serious uses of culture, these are the things that raise the life of man above a crude, primitive barbarism. If a civilisation is to be judged by the power of its ideas, their power for these great uses, Indian civilisation was inferior to none. Certainly, it was not perfect or final or complete; for that can be alleged of no past or present cultural idea or system. Man is in his inmost self an infinite being, in his mind and life too he is continually growing, with whatever stumblings and long relapses, and he cannot be permanently bound in any one system of ideas or frame of living. The structures in which he lives are incomplete and provisional; even those which seem the most comprehensive lose their force to stand and are convicted by time of insufficiency and must be replaced or change. But this at least can be said of the Indian idea that it seized with a remarkable depth and comprehensiveness on the main truths and needs of the whole human being, on his mind and life and body, his artistic and ethical and intellectual

parts of nature, his soul and spirit, and gave them a subtle and liberal, a profoundly large and high and wise, a sympathetic and yet nobly arduous direction. More cannot be said for any past or any existing culture.

But there must be in any culture aiming at completeness, not only great and noble governing and inspiring ideas, but a harmony of forms and rhythms, a mould into which the ideas and the life can run and settle. Here we must be prepared for a lesser perfection, a greater incompleteness. And the reason is that just as the spirit is vaster than its ideas, the ideas too are larger than their forms, moulds and rhythms. Form has a certain fixity which limits; no form can exhaust or fully express the potentialities of the idea or force that gave it birth. Neither can any idea, however great, or any limited play of force or form bind the infinite spirit: that is the secret of earth's need of mutation and progress. The idea is only a partial expression of the spirit. Even within its own limits, on its own lines it ought always to become more supple, to fill itself out with other views, to rise and broaden to new applications, and often it has to lose itself in uplifting transformations of its own meaning into vaster significances or fuse itself into new and richer syntheses. In the history of all great cultures therefore we find a passage through three periods, for this passage is a necessary consequence of this truth of things. There is a first period of large and loose formation; there is a second period in which we see a fixing of forms, moulds and rhythms; and there is a closing or a critical period of superannuation, decay and disintegration. This last stage is the supreme crisis in the life of a civilisation; if it cannot transform itself, it enters into a slow lingering decline or else collapses in a death agony brought about by the rapid impact of stronger and more immediately living though not necessarily greater or truer powers or formations. But if it is able to shake itself free of limiting forms, to renovate its ideas and to give a new scope to its spirit, if it is willing to understand, master and assimilate novel growths and necessities, then there is a rebirth, a fresh lease of life and expansion, a true renascence.

Indian civilisation passed in its own large and leisurely manner through all these stages. Its first period was that of a great spiritual outflowering in which the forms were supple, flexible and freely responsive to its essential spirit. That fluid movement passed away into an age of strong intellectuality in which all was fixed into distinct, sufficiently complex, but largely treated and still supple forms and rhythms. There came as a consequence a period of richly crystallised fixity shaken by crises which were partly met by a change of ideas and a modification of forms. But the hard binding of set forms triumphed at last and there was a decline of the inspiring spirit, a stagnation of living force, a progressive decay of the outward structure. This decay was accompanied and at once arrested for a moment and hastened in the end by the impact of other cultures. Today we are in the midst of a violent and decisive crisis brought about by the inflooding of the West and of all for which it stands. An upheaval resulted that began with the threat of a total death and irretrievable destruction of the culture; but its course is now uplifted on the contrary by the strong hope of a great revival, transmutation and renascence. Each of these three stages has its special significance for the student of culture. If we would understand the essential spirit of Indian civilisation, we must go back to its first formative period, the early epoch of the Veda and the Upanishads, its heroic creative seed-time. If we would study the fixed forms of its spirit and discern the thing it eventually realised as the basic rhythm of its life, we must look with an observing eye at the later middle period of the Shastras and the classic writings, the age of philosophy and science, legislation and political and social theory and many-sided critical thought, religious fixation, art, sculpture, painting, architecture. If we would discover the limitations, the points at which it stopped short and failed to develop its whole or its true spirit, we must observe closely the unhappy disclosures of its period of decline. If, finally, we would discover the directions it is likely to follow in its transformation, we must try to fathom what lies beneath the still confused movements of its crisis of renascence. None of these can indeed be cut clean apart from each other; for what developed in one period

is already forecast and begun in the preceding age: but still on a certain large and imprecise scale we can make these distinctions and they are necessary for a discerning analytic view. But at present we are only concerned with the developed forms and the principal rhythms which persisted through its greater eras.

The problem which Indian culture had to solve was that of a firm outward basis on which to found the practical development of its spirit and its idea in life. How are we to take the natural life of man and, while allowing it sufficient scope and variety and freedom, yet to subject it to a law, canon, dharma, a law of function, a law of type, a law of each actual unideal human tendency and a law too of highest ideal intention? And how again are we to point that dharma towards its own exceeding by the fulfilment and cessation of its disciplinary purpose in the secure freedom of the spiritual life? Indian culture from an early stage seized upon a double idea for its own guidance which it threw into a basic system of the individual life in the social frame. This was the double system of the four Varnas and the four Asramas,—four graded classes of society and four successive stages of a developing human life.

The ancient Chaturvarnya must not be judged by its later disintegrated degeneration and gross meaningless parody, the caste system. But neither was it precisely the system of the classes which we find in other civilisations, priesthood, nobility, merchant class and serfs or labourers. It may have had outwardly the same starting-point, but it was given a very different revealing significance. The ancient Indian idea was that man falls by his nature into four types. There are, first and highest, the man of learning and thought and knowledge; next, the man of power and action, ruler, warrior, leader, administrator; third in the scale, the economic man, producer and wealth-getter, the merchant, artisan, cultivator: these were the twice-born, who received the initiation, Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya. Last came the more undeveloped human type, not yet fit for these steps of the scale, unintellectual, without force, incapable of creation or intelligent production, the man fit only for unskilled labour and menial service, the Shudra. The economic order of society was

cast in the form and gradation of these four types. The Brahmin class was called upon to give the community its priests, thinkers, men of letters, legists, scholars, religious leaders and guides. The Kshatriya class gave it its kings, warriors, governors and administrators. The Vaishya order supplied it with its producers, agriculturists, craftsmen, artisans, merchants and traders. The Shudra class ministered to its need of menials and servants. As far as this went, there was nothing peculiar in the system except its extraordinary durability and, perhaps, the supreme position given to religion, thought and learning, not only at the top of the scale,—for that can be paralleled from one or two other civilisations,—but as the dominant power. The Indian idea in its purity fixed the status of a man in this order not by his birth, but by his capacities and his inner nature, and, if this rule had been strictly observed, that would have been a very clear mark of distinctness, a superiority of a unique kind. But even the best society is always something of a machine and gravitates towards the material sign and standard, and to found truly the social order upon this finer psychological basis would have been in those times a difficult and vain endeavour. In practice we find that birth became the basis of the Varna. It is elsewhere that we must look for the strong distinguishing mark which has made of this social structure a thing apart and sole in its type.

At no time indeed was the adherence to the economic rule quite absolute. The early ages show a considerable flexibility which was not quite lost in the process of complex crystallisation into a fixed form. And even in the greater rigidity of the latter-day caste system there has been in practice a confusion of economic functions. The vitality of a vigorous community cannot obey at every point the indications of a pattern and tradition cut by the mechanising mind. Moreover there was always a difference between the ideal theory of the system and its rougher unideal practice. For the material side of an idea or system has always its weaknesses even in its best times, and the final defect of all systems of this kind is that they stiffen into a fixed hierarchy which cannot maintain permanently its purity or the utility it was meant to serve. It becomes a soulless

form and prolongs itself in a state of corruption, degeneracy or oppressive formalism when the uses that justified it are no longer in existence. Even when its ways can no longer be made consistent with the developing needs of the growth of humanity, the formal system persists and corrupts the truth of life and blocks progress. Indian society did not escape this general law; it was overtaken by these deficiencies, lost the true sense of the thing which it set out to embody and degenerated into a chaos of castes, developing evils which we are now much embarrassed to eliminate. But it was a well-devised and necessary scheme in its time; it gave the community the firm and nobly built stability it needed for the security of its cultural development,—a stability hardly paralleled in any other culture. And, as interpreted by the Indian genius, it became a greater thing than a mere outward economic, political and social mechanism intended to serve the needs and convenience of the collective life.

For the real greatness of the Indian system of the four varnas did not lie in its well-ordered division of economic function; its true originality and permanent value was in the ethical and spiritual content which the thinkers and builders of the society poured into these forms. This inner content started with the idea that the intellectual, ethical and spiritual growth of the individual is the central need of the race. Society itself is only the necessary framework for this growth; it is a system of relations which provides it with its needed medium, field and conditions and with a nexus of helpful influences. A secure place had to be found in the community for the individual man from which he could at once serve these relations, helping to maintain the society and pay it his debt of duty and assistance, and proceed to his own self-development with the best possible aid from the communal life. Birth was accepted in practice as the first gross and natural indicator; for heredity to the Indian mind has always ranked as a factor of the highest importance: it was even taken in later thought as a sign of the nature and as an index to the surroundings which the individual had prepared for himself by his past soul-development in former existences. But birth is not and cannot be the sole test of Varna. The intellectual capacity

of the man, the turn of his temperament, his ethical nature, his spiritual stature, these are the important factors. There was erected therefore a rule of family living, a system of individual observance and self-training, a force of upbringing and education which would bring out and formulate these essential things. The individual man was carefully trained in the capacities, habits and attainments, and habituated to the sense of honour and duty necessary for the discharge of his allotted function in life. He was scrupulously equipped with the science of the thing he had to do, the best way to succeed in it as an interest, *artha*, and to attain to the highest rule, canon and recognised perfection of its activities, economic, political, sacerdotal, literary, scholastic or whatever else they might be. Even the most despised pursuits had their education, their law and canon, their ambition of success, their sense of honour in the discharge and scruple of well-doing, their dignity of a fixed standard of perfection, and it was because they had these things that even the lowest and least attractive could be in a certain degree a means of self-finding and ordered self-satisfaction. In addition to this special function and training there were the general accomplishments, sciences, arts, graces of life, those which satisfy the intellectual, aesthetic and hedonistic powers of human nature. These in ancient India were many and various, were taught with minuteness, thoroughness and subtlety and were available to all men of culture.

But while there was provision for all these things and it was made with a vivid liberality of the life-spirit and a noble sense of order, the spirit of Indian culture did not, like other ancient cultures, stop here. It said to the individual: "This is only the substructure; it is of a pressing importance indeed, but still not the last and greatest thing. When you have paid your debt to society, filled well and admirably your place in its life, helped its maintenance and continuity and taken from it your legitimate and desired satisfactions, there still remains the greatest thing of all. There is still your own self, the inner you, the soul which is a spiritual portion of the Infinite, one in its essence with the Eternal. This self, this soul in you you have to find, you are here for that, and it is from the place I have provided for you in life

and by this training that you can begin to find it. For to each Varna I have supplied its highest ideal of manhood, the highest ideal way of which your nature is capable. By directing your life and nature in its own law of being towards that perfection, you can not only grow towards the ideal and enter into harmony with universal nature but come also into nearness and contact with a greater nature of divinity and move towards transcendence. That is the real object before you. From the life-basis I give you you can rise to the liberating knowledge which brings a spiritual release, *mokṣa*. Then you can grow out of all these limitations in which you are being trained; you can grow through the fulfilled Dharma and beyond it into the eternity of your self, into the fullness, freedom, greatness and bliss of the immortal spirit; for that is what each man is behind the veils of his nature. When you have done that you are free. Then you have gone beyond all the dharmas; you are then a universal soul, one with all existence, and you can either act in that divine liberty for the good of all living things or else turn to enjoy in solitude the bliss of eternity and transcendence." The whole system of society, founded on the four varnas, was made a harmonious means for the elevation and progress of the soul, mind and life from the natural pursuit of interest and desire first to the perfection of the law of our being, Dharma, and at the end to a highest spiritual freedom. For man's true end in life must be always this realisation of his own immortal self, this entry in its secret of an infinite and eternal existence.

The Indian system did not entirely leave this difficult growth to the individual's unaided inner initiative. It supplied him with a framework; it gave him a scale and gradation for his life which could be made into a kind of ladder rising in that sense. This high convenience was the object of the four Asramas. Life was divided into four natural periods and each of them marked out a stage in the working out of this cultural idea of living. There was the period of the student, the period of the householder, the period of the recluse or forest-dweller, the period of the free supersocial man, *parivrājaka*. The student life was framed to lay the groundwork of what the man had to know, do and

be. It gave a thorough training in the necessary arts, sciences, branches of knowledge, but it was still more insistent on the discipline of the ethical nature and in earlier days contained as an indispensable factor a grounding in the Vedic formula of spiritual knowledge. In these earlier days this training was given in suitable surroundings far away from the life of cities and the teacher was one who had himself passed through the round of this circle of living and, very usually, even, one who had arrived at some remarkable realisation of spiritual knowledge. But subsequently education became more intellectual and mundane; it was imparted in cities and universities and aimed less at an inner preparation of character and knowledge and more at instruction and the training of the intelligence. But in the beginning the Aryan man was really prepared in some degree for the four great objects of his life, *artha*, *kāma*, *dharma*, *mokṣa*. Entering into the householder stage to live out his knowledge, he was able to serve there the three first human objects; he satisfied his natural being and its interests and desire to take the joy of life, he paid his debt to the society and its demands and by the way he discharged his life functions he prepared himself for the last greatest purpose of his existence. In the third stage he retired to the forest and worked out in a certain seclusion the truth of his spirit. He lived in a broad freedom from the stricter social bonds; but if he so willed, gathering the young around him or receiving the inquirer and seeker, he could leave his knowledge to the new rising generation as an educator or a spiritual teacher. In the last stage of life he was free to throw off every remaining tie and to wander over the world in an extreme spiritual detachment from all the forms of social life, satisfying only the barest necessities, communing with the universal spirit, making his soul ready for eternity. This circle was not obligatory on all. The great majority never went beyond the two first stages; many passed away in the *vānaprastha* or forest stage. Only the rare few made the last extreme venture and took the life of the wandering recluse. But this profoundly conceived cycle gave a scheme which kept the full course of the human spirit in its view; it could be taken advantage of by all according to their

actual growth and in its fullness by those who were sufficiently developed in their present birth to complete the circle.

On this first firm and noble basis Indian civilisation grew to its maturity and became a thing rich, splendid and unique. While it filled the view with the last mountain prospect of a supreme spiritual elevation, it did not neglect the life of the levels. It lived between the busy life of the city and village, the freedom and seclusion of the forest and the last overarching illimitable ether. Moving firmly between life and death it saw beyond both and cut out a hundred high-roads to immortality. It developed the external nature and drew it into the inner self; it enriched life to raise it into the spirit. Thus founded, thus trained, the ancient Indian race grew to astonishing heights of culture and civilisation; it lived with a noble, well-based, ample and vigorous order and freedom; it developed a great literature, sciences, arts, crafts, industries; it rose to the highest possible ideals and no mean practice of knowledge and culture, of arduous greatness and heroism, of kindness, philanthropy and human sympathy and oneness; it laid the inspired basis of wonderful spiritual philosophies; it examined the secrets of external nature and discovered and lived the boundless and miraculous truths of the inner being; it fathomed self and understood and possessed the world. As the civilisation grew in richness and complexity, it lost indeed the first grand simplicity of its early order. The intellect towered and widened, but intuition waned or retreated into the hearts of the saints and adepts and mystics. A greater stress came to be laid on scientific system, accuracy and order, not only in all the things of the life and mind, but even in the things of the spirit; the free flood of intuitive knowledge was forced to run in hewn channels. Society became more artificial and complex, less free and noble; more of a bond on the individual, it was less a field for the growth of his spiritual faculties. The old fine integral harmony gave place to an exaggerated stress on one or other of its elemental factors. *Artha* and *kāma*, interest and desire were in some directions developed at the expense of the *dharma*. The lines of the *dharma* were filled and stamped in with so rigid a distinctness as to stand in the way of the freedom of the spirit.

Spiritual liberation was pursued in hostility to life and not as its full-orbed result and high crowning. But still some strong basis of the old knowledge remained to inspire, to harmonise, to keep alive the soul of India. Even when deterioration came and a slow collapse, even when the life of the community degenerated into an uneasily petrified ignorance and confusion, the old spiritual aim and tradition remained to sweeten and humanise and save in its worst days the Indian peoples. For we see that it continually swept back on the race in new waves and high outbursts of life-giving energy or leaped up in intense kindlings of the spiritualised mind or heart, even as it now rises once more in all its strength to give the impulse of a great renascence.

Indian Spirituality and Life

I HAVE described the framework of the Indian idea from the outlook of an intellectual criticism, because that is the standpoint of the critics who affect to disparage its value. I have shown that Indian culture must be adjudged even from this alien outlook to have been the creation of a wide and noble spirit. Inspired in the heart of its being by a lofty principle, illumined with a striking and uplifting idea of individual manhood and its powers and its possible perfection, aligned to a spacious plan of social architecture, it was enriched not only by a strong philosophic, intellectual and artistic creativeness but by a great and vivifying and fruitful life-power. But this by itself does not give an adequate account of its spirit or its greatness. One might describe Greek or Roman civilisation from this outlook and miss little that was of importance; but Indian civilisation was not only a great cultural system, but an immense religious effort of the human spirit.

The whole root of difference between Indian and European culture springs from the spiritual aim of Indian civilisation. It is the turn which this aim imposes on all the rich and luxuriant variety of its forms and rhythms that gives to it its unique character. For even what it has in common with other cultures gets from that turn a stamp of striking originality and solitary greatness. A spiritual aspiration was the governing force of this culture, its core of thought, its ruling passion. Not only did it make spirituality the highest aim of life, but it even tried, as far as that could be done in the past conditions of the human race, to turn the whole of life towards spirituality. But since religion is in the human mind the first native, if imperfect form of the spiritual impulse, the predominance of the spiritual idea, its endeavour to take hold of life, necessitated a casting of thought and action into the religious mould and a persistent filling of every circumstance

of life with the religious sense; it demanded a pervasively religio-philosophic culture. The highest spirituality indeed moves in a free and wide air far above that lower stage of seeking which is governed by religious form and dogma; it does not easily bear their limitations and, even when it admits, it transcends them; it lives in an experience which to the formal religious mind is unintelligible. But man does not arrive immediately at that highest inner elevation and, if it were demanded from him at once, he would never arrive there. At first he needs lower supports and stages of ascent; he asks for some scaffolding of dogma, worship, image, sign, form, symbol, some indulgence and permission of mixed half-natural motive on which he can stand while he builds up in him the temple of the spirit. Only when the temple is completed, can the supports be removed, the scaffolding disappear. The religious culture which now goes by the name of Hinduism not only fulfilled this purpose, but, unlike certain creational religions, it knew its purpose. It gave itself no name, because it set itself no sectarian limits; it claimed no universal adhesion, asserted no sole infallible dogma, set up no single narrow path or gate of salvation; it was less a creed or cult than a continuously enlarging tradition of the Godward endeavour of the human spirit. An immense many-sided many-staged provision for a spiritual self-building and self-finding, it had some right to speak of itself by the only name it knew, the eternal religion, *sanātana dharma*. It is only if we have a just and right appreciation of this sense and spirit of Indian religion that we can come to an understanding of the true sense and spirit of Indian culture.

Now just here is the first baffling difficulty over which the European mind stumbles; for it finds itself unable to make out what Hindu religion is. Where, it asks, is its soul? where is its mind and fixed thought? where is the form of its body? How can there be a religion which has no rigid dogmas demanding belief on pain of eternal damnation, no theological postulates, even no fixed theology, no credo distinguishing it from antagonistic or rival religions? How can there be a religion which has no papal head, no governing ecclesiastic body, no church, chapel

or congregational system, no binding religious form of any kind obligatory on all its adherents, no one administration and discipline? For the Hindu priests are mere ceremonial officiants without any ecclesiastical authority or disciplinary powers and the Pundits are mere interpreters of the Shastra, not the lawgivers of the religion or its rulers. How again can Hinduism be called a religion when it admits all beliefs, allowing even a kind of high-reaching atheism and agnosticism and permits all possible spiritual experiences, all kinds of religious adventures? The only thing fixed, rigid, positive, clear is the social law, and even that varies in different castes, regions, communities. The caste rules and not the Church; but even the caste cannot punish a man for his beliefs, ban heterodoxy or prevent his following a new revolutionary doctrine or a new spiritual leader. If it excommunicates Christian or Muslim, it is not for religious belief or practice, but because they break with the social rule and order. It has been asserted in consequence that there is no such thing as a Hindu religion, but only a Hindu social system with a bundle of the most disparate religious beliefs and institutions. The precious dictum that Hinduism is a mass of folk-lore with an ineffective coat of metaphysical daubing is perhaps the final judgment of the superficial occidental mind on this matter.

This misunderstanding springs from the total difference of outlook on religion that divides the Indian mind and the normal Western intelligence. The difference is so great that it could only be bridged by a supple philosophical training or a wide spiritual culture; but the established forms of religion and the rigid methods of philosophical thought practised in the West make no provision and even allow no opportunity for either. To the Indian mind the least important part of religion is its dogma; the religious spirit matters, not the theological credo. On the contrary to the Western mind a fixed intellectual belief is the most important part of a cult; it is its core of meaning, it is the thing that distinguishes it from others. For it is its formulated beliefs that make it either a true or a false religion, according as it agrees or does not agree with the credo of its critic. This notion, however foolish and shallow, is a necessary consequence

of the Western idea which falsely supposes that intellectual truth is the highest verity and, even, that there is no other. The Indian religious thinker knows that all the highest eternal verities are truths of the spirit. The supreme truths are neither the rigid conclusions of logical reasoning nor the affirmations of credal statement, but fruits of the soul's inner experience. Intellectual truth is only one of the doors to the outer precincts of the temple. And since intellectual truth turned towards the Infinite must be in its very nature many-sided and not narrowly one, the most varying intellectual beliefs can be equally true because they mirror different facets of the Infinite. However separated by intellectual distance, they still form so many side-entrances which admit the mind to some faint ray from a supreme Light. There are no true and false religions, but rather all religions are true in their own way and degree. Each is one of the thousand paths to the One Eternal.

Indian religion placed four necessities before human life. First, it imposed upon the mind a belief in a highest consciousness or state of existence universal and transcendent of the universe, from which all comes, in which all lives and moves without knowing it and of which all must one day grow aware, returning towards that which is perfect, eternal and infinite. Next, it laid upon the individual life the need of self-preparation by development and experience till man is ready for an effort to grow consciously into the truth of this greater existence. Thirdly, it provided it with a well-founded, well-explored, many-branching and always enlarging way of knowledge and of spiritual or religious discipline. Lastly, for those not yet ready for these higher steps it provided an organisation of the individual and collective life, a framework of personal and social discipline and conduct, of mental and moral and vital development by which they could move each in his own limits and according to his own nature in such a way as to become eventually ready for the greater existence. The first three of these elements are the most essential to any religion, but Hinduism has always attached to the last also a great importance; it has left out no part of life as a thing secular and foreign to the religious and spiritual life. Still the

Indian religious tradition is not merely the form of a religio-social system, as the ignorant critic vainly imagines. However greatly that may count at the moment of a social departure, however stubbornly the conservative religious mind may oppose all pronounced or drastic change, still the core of Hinduism is a spiritual, not a social discipline. Actually we find religions like Sikhism counted in the Vedic family although they broke down the old social tradition and invented a novel form, while the Jains and Buddhists were traditionally considered to be outside the religious fold although they observed Hindu social custom and intermarried with Hindus, because their spiritual system and teaching figured in its origin as a denial of the truth of Veda and a departure from the continuity of the Vedic line. In all these four elements that constitute Hinduism there are major and minor differences between Hindus of various sects, schools, communities and races; but nevertheless there is also a general unity of spirit, of fundamental type and form and of spiritual temperament which creates in this vast fluidity an immense force of cohesion and a strong principle of oneness.

The fundamental idea of all Indian religion is one common to the highest human thinking everywhere. The supreme truth of all that is is a Being or an existence beyond the mental and physical appearances we contact here. Beyond mind, life and body there is a Spirit and Self containing all that is finite and infinite, surpassing all that is relative, a supreme Absolute, originating and supporting all that is transient, a one Eternal. A one transcendent, universal, original and sempiternal Divinity or divine Essence, Consciousness, Force and Bliss is the fount and continent and inhabitant of things. Soul, nature, life are only a manifestation or partial phenomenon of this self-aware Eternity and this conscious Eternal. But this Truth of being was not seized by the Indian mind only as a philosophical speculation, a theological dogma, an abstraction contemplated by the intelligence. It was not an idea to be indulged by the thinker in his study, but otherwise void of practical bearing on life. It was not a mystic sublimation which could be ignored in the dealings of man with the world and Nature. It was a living spiritual

Truth, an Entity, a Power, a Presence that could be sought by all according to their degree of capacity and seized in a thousand ways through life and beyond life. This Truth was to be lived and even to be made the governing idea of thought and life and action. This recognition and pursuit of something or someone Supreme is behind all forms the one universal credo of Indian religion, and if it has taken a hundred shapes, it was precisely because it was so much alive. The Infinite alone justifies the existence of the finite and the finite by itself has no entirely separate value or independent existence. Life, if it is not an illusion, is a divine Play, a manifestation of the glory of the Infinite. Or it is a means by which the soul growing in Nature through countless forms and many lives can approach, touch, feel and unite itself through love and knowledge and faith and adoration and a Godward will in works with this transcendent Being and this infinite Existence. This Self or this self-existent Being is the one supreme reality, and all things else are either only appearances or only true by dependence upon it. It follows that self-realisation and God-realisation are the great business of the living and thinking human being. All life and thought are in the end a means of progress towards self-realisation and God-realisation.

Indian religion never considered intellectual or theological conceptions about the supreme Truth to be the one thing of central importance. To pursue that Truth under whatever conception or whatever form, to attain to it by inner experience, to live in it in consciousness, this it held to be the sole thing needful. One school or sect might consider the real self of man to be indivisibly one with the universal Self or the supreme Spirit. Another might regard man as one with the Divine in essence but different from him in Nature. A third might hold God, Nature and the individual soul in man to be three eternally different powers of being. But for all the truth of Self held with equal force; for even to the Indian dualist God is the supreme self and reality in whom and by whom Nature and man live, move and have their being and, if you eliminate God from his view of things, Nature and man would lose for him all their meaning

and importance. The Spirit, universal Nature (whether called Maya, Prakriti or Shakti) and the soul in living beings, Jiva, are the three truths which are universally admitted by all the many religious sects and conflicting religious philosophies of India. Universal also is the admission that the discovery of the inner spiritual self in man, the divine soul in him, and some kind of living and uniting contact or absolute unity of the soul in man with God or supreme Self or eternal Brahman is the condition of spiritual perfection. It is open to us to conceive and have experience of the Divine as an impersonal Absolute and Infinite or to approach and know and feel Him as a transcendent and universal sempiternal Person: but whatever be our way of reaching him, the one important truth of spiritual experience is that he is in the heart and centre of all existence and all existence is in him and to find him is the great self-finding. Differences of credal belief are to the Indian mind nothing more than various ways of seeing the one Self and Godhead in all. Self-realisation is the one thing needful; to open to the inner Spirit, to live in the Infinite, to seek after and discover the Eternal, to be in union with God, that is the common idea and aim of religion, that is the sense of spiritual salvation, that is the living Truth that fulfils and releases. This dynamic following after the highest spiritual truth and the highest spiritual aim are the uniting bond of Indian religion and, behind all its thousand forms, its one common essence.

If there were nothing else to be said in favour of the spiritual genius of the Indian people or the claim of Indian civilisation to stand in the front rank as a spiritual culture, it would be sufficiently substantiated by this single fact that not only was this greatest and widest spiritual truth seen in India with the boldest largeness, felt and expressed with a unique intensity, and approached from all possible sides, but it was made consciously the grand uplifting idea of life, the core of all thinking, the foundation of all religion, the secret sense and declared ultimate aim of human existence. The truth announced is not peculiar to Indian thinking; it has been seen and followed by the highest minds and souls everywhere. But elsewhere it has been the

living guide only of a few thinkers, or of some rare mystics or exceptionally gifted spiritual natures. The mass of men have had no understanding, no distant perception, not even a reflected glimpse of this something Beyond; they have lived only in the lower sectarian side of religion, in inferior ideas of the Deity or in the outward mundane aspects of life. But Indian culture did succeed by the strenuousness of its vision, the universality of its approach, the intensity of its seeking in doing what has been done by no other culture. It succeeded in stamping religion with the essential ideal of a real spirituality; it brought some living reflection of the very highest spiritual truth and some breath of its influence into every part of the religious field. Nothing can be more untrue than to pretend that the general religious mind of India has not at all grasped the higher spiritual or metaphysical truths of Indian religion. It is a sheer falsehood or a wilful misunderstanding to say that it has lived always in the externals only of rite and creed and shibboleth. On the contrary, the main metaphysical truths of Indian religious philosophy in their broad idea-aspects or in an intensely poetic and dynamic representation have been stamped on the general mind of the people. The ideas of Maya, Lila, divine Immanence are as familiar to the man in the street and the worshipper in the temple as to the philosopher in his seclusion, the monk in his monastery and the saint in his hermitage. The spiritual reality which they reflect, the profound experience to which they point, has permeated the religion, the literature, the art, even the popular religious songs of a whole people.

It is true that these things are realised by the mass of men more readily through the fervour of devotion than by a strenuous effort of thinking; but that is as it must and should be since the heart of man is nearer to the Truth than his intelligence. It is true, too, that the tendency to put too much stress on externals has always been there and worked to overcloud the deeper spiritual motive; but that is not peculiar to India, it is a common failing of human nature, not less but rather more evident in Europe than in Asia. It has needed a constant stream of saints and religious thinkers and the teaching of illuminated Sannyasins to keep the

reality vivid and resist the deadening weight of form and ceremony and ritual. But the fact remains that these messengers of the spirit have never been wanting. And the still more significant fact remains that there has never been wanting either a happy readiness in the common mind to listen to the message. The ordinary materialised souls, the external minds are the majority in India as everywhere. How easy it is for the superior European critic to forget this common fact of our humanity and treat this turn as a peculiar sin of the Indian mentality! But at least the people of India, even the "ignorant masses" have this distinction that they are by centuries of training nearer to the inner realities, are divided from them by a less thick veil of the universal ignorance and are more easily led back to a vital glimpse of God and Spirit, self and eternity than the mass of men or even the cultured elite anywhere else. Where else could the lofty, austere and difficult teaching of a Buddha have seized so rapidly on the popular mind? Where else could the songs of a Tukaram, a Ramprasad, a Kabir, the Sikh gurus and the chants of the Tamil saints with their fervid devotion but also their profound spiritual thinking have found so speedy an echo and formed a popular religious literature? This strong permeation or close nearness of the spiritual turn, this readiness of the mind of a whole nation to turn to the highest realities is the sign and fruit of an age-long, a real and a still living and supremely spiritual culture.

The endless variety of Indian philosophy and religion seems to the European mind interminable, bewildering, wearisome, useless; it is unable to see the forest because of the richness and luxuriance of its vegetation; it misses the common spiritual life in the multitude of its forms. But this infinite variety is itself, as Vivekananda pertinently pointed out, a sign of a superior religious culture. The Indian mind has always realised that the Supreme is the Infinite; it has perceived, right from its Vedic beginnings, that to the soul in Nature the Infinite must always present itself in an endless variety of aspects. The mentality of the West has long cherished the aggressive and quite illogical idea of a single religion for all mankind, a religion universal by the very force of its narrowness, one set of dogmas, one

cult, one system of ceremonies, one array of prohibitions and injunctions, one ecclesiastical ordinance. That narrow absurdity prances about as the one true religion which all must accept on peril of persecution by men here and spiritual rejection or fierce eternal punishment by God in other worlds. This grotesque creation of human unreason, the parent of so much intolerance, cruelty, obscurantism and aggressive fanaticism, has never been able to take firm hold of the free and supple mind of India. Men everywhere have common human failings, and intolerance and narrowness especially in the matter of observances there has been and is in India. There has been much violence of theological disputation, there have been querulous bickerings of sects with their pretensions to spiritual superiority and greater knowledge, and sometimes, at one time especially in southern India in a period of acute religious differences, there have been brief local outbreaks of active mutual tyranny and persecution even unto death. But these things have never taken the proportions which they assumed in Europe. Intolerance has been confined for the most part to the minor forms of polemical attack or to social obstruction or ostracism; very seldom have they transgressed across the line to the major forms of barbaric persecution which draw a long, red and hideous stain across the religious history of Europe. There has played ever in India the saving perception of a higher and purer spiritual intelligence, which has had its effect on the mass mentality. Indian religion has always felt that since the minds, the temperaments, the intellectual affinities of men are unlimited in their variety, a perfect liberty of thought and of worship must be allowed to the individual in his approach to the Infinite.

India recognised authority of spiritual experience and knowledge, but she recognised still more the need of variety of spiritual experience and knowledge. Even in the days of decline when the claim of authority became in too many directions rigorous and excessive, she still kept the saving perception that there could not be one but must be many authorities. An alert readiness to acknowledge new light capable of enlarging the old tradition has always been characteristic of the religious

mind in India. Indian civilisation did not develop to a last logical conclusion its earlier political and social liberties,—that greatness of freedom or boldness of experiment belongs to the West; but liberty of religious practice and a complete freedom of thought in religion as in every other matter have always counted among its constant traditions. The atheist and the agnostic were free from persecution in India. Buddhism and Jainism might be disparaged as unorthodox religions, but they were allowed to live freely side by side with the orthodox creeds and philosophies; in her eager thirst for truth she gave them their full chance, tested all their values, and as much of their truth as was assimilable was taken into the stock of the common and always enlarging continuity of her spiritual experience. That ageless continuity was carefully conserved, but it admitted light from all quarters. In latter times the saints who reached some fusion of the Hindu and the Islamic teaching were freely and immediately recognised as leaders of Hindu religion,—even, in some cases, when they started with a Mussulman birth and from the Mussulman standpoint. The Yogin who developed a new path of Yoga, the religious teacher who founded a new order, the thinker who built up a novel statement of the many-sided truth of spiritual existence, found no serious obstacle to their practice or their propaganda. At most they had to meet the opposition of the priest and pundit instinctively adverse to any change; but this had only to be lived down for the new element to be received into the free and pliant body of the national religion and its ever plastic order.

The necessity of a firm spiritual order as well as an untrammelled spiritual freedom was always perceived; but it was provided for in various ways and not in any one formal, external or artificial manner. It was founded in the first place on the recognition of an ever enlarging number of authorised scriptures. Of these scriptures some like the Gita possessed a common and widespread authority, others were peculiar to sects or schools: some like the Vedas were supposed to have an absolute, others a relative binding force. But the very largest freedom of interpretation was allowed, and this prevented any of these authoritative

books from being turned into an instrument of ecclesiastical tyranny or a denial of freedom to the human mind and spirit. Another instrument of order was the power of family and communal tradition, *kuladharma*, persistent but not immutable. A third was the religious authority of the Brahmins; as priests they officiated as the custodians of observance, as scholars, acting in a much more important and respected role than the officiating priesthood could claim,—for to the priesthood no great consideration was given in India,—they stood as the exponents of religious tradition and were a strong conservative power. Finally, and most characteristically, most powerfully, order was secured by the succession of Gurus or spiritual teachers, *parampara*, who preserved the continuity of each spiritual system and handed it down from generation to generation but were empowered also, unlike the priest and the Pundit, to enrich freely its significance and develop its practice. A living and moving, not a rigid continuity, was the characteristic turn of the inner religious mind of India. The evolution of the Vaishnava religion from very early times, its succession of saints and teachers, the striking developments given to it successively by Ramanuja, Madhwa, Chaitanya, Vallabhacharya and its recent stirrings of survival after a period of languor and of some fossilisation form one notable example of this firm combination of a long continuity and fixed tradition with latitude of powerful and vivid change. A more striking instance was the founding of the Sikh religion, its long line of Gurus and the novel direction and form given to it by Guru Govind Singh in the democratic institution of the Khalsa. The Buddhist Sangha and its councils, the creation of a sort of divided pontifical authority by Shankaracharya, an authority transmitted from generation to generation for more than a thousand years and even now not altogether effete, the Sikh Khalsa, the adoption of the congregational form called Samaj by the modern reforming sects indicate an attempt towards a compact and stringent order. But it is noteworthy that even in these attempts the freedom and plasticity and living sincerity of the religious mind of India always prevented it from initiating anything like the overblown ecclesiastical orders and despotic

hierarchies which in the West have striven to impose the tyranny of their obscurantist yoke on the spiritual liberty of the human race.

The instinct for order and freedom at once in any field of human activity is always a sign of a high natural capacity in that field, and a people which could devise such a union of unlimited religious liberty with an always orderly religious evolution, must be credited with a high religious capacity, even as they cannot be denied its inevitable fruit, a great, ancient and still living spiritual culture. It is this absolute freedom of thought and experience and this provision of a framework sufficiently flexible and various to ensure liberty and yet sufficiently sure and firm to be the means of a stable and powerful evolution that have given to Indian civilisation this wonderful and seemingly eternal religion with its marvellous wealth of many-sided philosophies, of great scriptures, of profound religious works, of religions that approach the Eternal from every side of his infinite Truth, of Yoga-systems of psycho-spiritual discipline and self-finding, of suggestive forms, symbols and ceremonies which are strong to train the mind at all stages of development towards the Godward endeavour. Its firm structure capable of supporting without peril a large tolerance and assimilative spirit, its vivacity, intensity, profundity and multitudinousness of experience, its freedom from the unnatural European divorce between mundane knowledge and science on the one side and religion on the other, its reconciliation of the claims of the intellect with the claims of the spirit, its long endurance and infinite capacity of revival make it stand out today as the most remarkable, rich and living of all religious systems. The nineteenth century has thrown on it its tremendous shock of negation and scepticism but has not been able to destroy its assured roots of spiritual knowledge. A little disturbed for a brief moment, surprised and temporarily shaken by this attack in a period of greatest depression of the nation's vital force, India revived almost at once and responded by a fresh outburst of spiritual activity, seeking, assimilation, formative effort. A great new life is visibly preparing in her, a mighty transformation and farther dynamic evolution and potent march forward into the

inexhaustible infinities of spiritual experience.

The many-sided plasticity of Indian cult and spiritual experience is the native sign of its truth, its living reality, the unfettered sincerity of its search and finding; but this plasticity is a constant stumbling block to the European mind. The religious thinking of Europe is accustomed to rigid impoverishing definitions, to strict exclusions, to a constant preoccupation with the outward idea, the organisation, the form. A precise creed framed by the logical or theological intellect, a strict and definite moral code to fix the conduct, a bundle of observances and ceremonies, a firm ecclesiastical or congregational organisation, that is Western religion. Once the spirit is safely imprisoned and chained up in these things, some emotional fervours and even a certain amount of mystic seeking can be tolerated — within rational limits; but, after all, it is perhaps safest to do without these dangerous spices. Trained in these conceptions, the European critic comes to India and is struck by the immense mass and intricacy of a polytheistic cult crowned at its summit by a belief in the one Infinite. This belief he erroneously supposes to be identical with the barren and abstract intellectual pantheism of the West. He applies with an obstinate prejudgment the ideas and definitions of his own thinking, and this illegitimate importation has fixed many false values on Indian spiritual conceptions, — unhappily, even in the mind of “educated” India. But where our religion eludes his fixed standards, misunderstanding, denunciation and supercilious condemnation come at once to his rescue. The Indian mind on the contrary is averse to intolerant mental exclusions; for a great force of intuition and inner experience had given it from the beginning that towards which the mind of the West is only now reaching with much fumbling and difficulty, — the cosmic consciousness, the cosmic vision. Even when it sees the One without a second, it still admits his duality of Spirit and Nature; it leaves room for his many trinities and million aspects. Even when it concentrates on a single limiting aspect of the Divinity and seems to see nothing but that, it still keeps instinctively at the back of its consciousness the sense of the All and the idea of the One. Even when it distributes its worship among

many objects, it looks at the same time through the objects of its worship and sees beyond the multitude of godheads the unity of the Supreme. This synthetic turn is not peculiar to the mystics or to a small literate class or to philosophic thinkers nourished on the high sublimities of the Veda and Vedanta. It permeates the popular mind nourished on the thoughts, images, traditions and cultural symbols of the Purana and Tantra; for these things are only concrete representations or living figures of the synthetic monism, the many-sided unitarianism, the large cosmic universalism of the Vedic scriptures.

Indian religion founded itself on the conception of a timeless, nameless and formless Supreme, but it did not feel called upon, like the narrower and more ignorant monotheisms of the younger races, to deny or abolish all intermediary forms and names and powers and personalities of the Eternal and Infinite. A colourless monism or a pale vague transcendental Theism was not its beginning, its middle and its end. The one Godhead is worshipped as the All, for all in the universe is he or made out of his being or his nature. But Indian religion is not therefore pantheism; for beyond this universality it recognises the supra-cosmic Eternal. Indian polytheism is not the popular polytheism of ancient Europe; for here the worshipper of many gods still knows that all his divinities are forms, names, personalities and powers of the One; his gods proceed from the one Purusha, his goddesses are energies of the one divine Force. Those ways of Indian cult which most resemble a popular form of Theism, are still something more; for they do not exclude, but admit the many aspects of God. Indian image-worship is not the idolatry of a barbaric or undeveloped mind; for even the most ignorant know that the image is a symbol and support and can throw it away when its use is over. The later religious forms which most felt the impress of the Islamic idea, like Nanak's worship of the timeless One, Akala, and the reforming creeds of today, born under the influence of the West, yet draw away from the limitations of Western or Semitic monotheism. Irresistibly they turn from these infantile conceptions towards the fathomless truth of Vedanta. The divine Personality of God and his human relations with

man are strongly stressed by Vaishnavism and Shaivism as the most dynamic Truth; but that is not the whole of these religions, and this divine Personality is not the limited magnified-human personal God of the West. Indian religion cannot be described by any of the definitions known to the occidental intelligence. In its totality it has been a free and tolerant synthesis of all spiritual worship and experience. Observing the one Truth from all its many sides, it shut out none. It gave itself no specific name and bound itself by no limiting distinction. Allowing separative designations for its constituting cults and divisions, it remained itself nameless, formless, universal, infinite, like the Brahman of its agelong seeking. Although strikingly distinguished from other creeds by its traditional scriptures, cults and symbols, it is not in its essential character a credal religion at all but a vast and many-sided, an always unifying and always progressive and self-enlarging system of spiritual culture.¹

It is necessary to emphasise this synthetic character and embracing unity of the Indian religious mind, because otherwise we miss the whole meaning of Indian life and the whole sense of Indian culture. It is only by recognising this broad and plastic character that we can understand its total effect on the life of the community and the life of the individual. And if we are asked, "But after all what is Hinduism, what does it teach, what does it practise, what are its common factors?" we can answer that Indian religion is founded upon three basic ideas or rather three fundamentals of a highest and widest spiritual experience. First comes the idea of the One Existence of the Veda to whom sages give different names, the One without a second of the Upanishads who is all that is and beyond all that is, the Permanent of the Buddhists, the Absolute of the Illusionists, the supreme God or Purusha of the Theists who holds in his power the soul and Nature,—in a word the Eternal, the Infinite. This

¹ The only religion that India has apparently rejected in the end, is Buddhism; but in fact this appearance is a historical error. Buddhism lost its separative force, because its spiritual substance, as opposed to its credal parts, was absorbed by the religious mind of Hindu India. Even so, it survived in the North and was exterminated not by Shankaracharya or another, but by the invading force of Islam.

is the first common foundation; but it can be and is expressed in an endless variety of formulas by the human intelligence. To discover and closely approach and enter into whatever kind or degree of unity with this Permanent, this Infinite, this Eternal, is the highest height and last effort of its spiritual experience. That is the first universal *credo* of the religious mind of India.

Admit in whatever formula this foundation, follow this great spiritual aim by one of the thousand paths recognised in India or even any new path which branches off from them and you are at the core of the religion. For its second basic idea is the manifold way of man's approach to the Eternal and Infinite. The Infinite is full of many infinities and each of these infinities is itself the very Eternal. And here in the limitations of the cosmos God manifests himself and fulfils himself in the world in many ways, but each is the way of the Eternal. For in each finite we can discover and through all things as his forms and symbols we can approach the Infinite; all cosmic powers are manifestations, all forces are forces of the One. The gods behind the workings of Nature are to be seen and adored as powers, names and personalities of the one Godhead. An infinite Conscious-Force, executive Energy, Will or Law, Maya, Prakriti, Shakti or Karma, is behind all happenings, whether to us they seem good or bad, acceptable or unacceptable, fortunate or adverse. The Infinite creates and is Brahma; it preserves and is Vishnu; it destroys or takes to itself and is Rudra or Shiva. The supreme Energy beneficent in upholding and protection is or else formulates itself as the Mother of the worlds, Luxmi or Durga. Or beneficent even in the mask of destruction, it is Chandi or it is Kali, the dark Mother. The One Godhead manifests himself in the form of his qualities in various names and godheads. The God of divine love of the Vaishnava, the God of divine power of the Shakta appear as two different godheads; but in truth they are the one infinite Deity in different figures.² One may

² This explanation of Indian polytheism is not a modern invention created to meet Western reproaches; it is to be found explicitly stated in the Gita; it is, still earlier, the sense of the Upanishads; it was clearly stated in so many words in the first ancient days by the "primitive" poets (in truth the profound mystics) of the Veda.

approach the Supreme through any of these names and forms, with knowledge or in ignorance; for through them and beyond them we can proceed at last to the supreme experience.

One thing however has to be noted that while many modernised Indian religionists tend, by way of an intellectual compromise with modern materialistic rationalism, to explain away these things as symbols, the ancient Indian religious mentality saw them not only as symbols but as world-realities,— even if to the Illusionist realities only of the world of Maya. For between the highest unimaginable Existence and our material way of being the spiritual and psychic knowledge of India did not fix a gulf as between two unrelated opposites. It was aware of other psychological planes of consciousness and experience and the truths of these supraphysical planes were no less real to it than the outward truths of the material universe. Man approaches God at first according to his psychological nature and his capacity for deeper experience, *svabhāva, adhikāra*. The level of Truth, the plane of consciousness he can reach is determined by his inner evolutionary stage. Thence comes the variety of religious cult, but its data are not imaginary structures, inventions of priests or poets, but truths of a supraphysical existence intermediate between the consciousness of the physical world and the ineffable superconsciousness of the Absolute.

The third idea of strongest consequence at the base of Indian religion is the most dynamic for the inner spiritual life. It is that while the Supreme or the Divine can be approached through a universal consciousness and by piercing through all inner and outer Nature, That or He can be met by each individual soul in itself, in its own spiritual part, because there is something in it that is intimately one or at least intimately related with the one divine Existence. The essence of Indian religion is to aim at so growing and so living that we can grow out of the Ignorance which veils this self-knowledge from our mind and life and become aware of the Divinity within us. These three things put together are the whole of Hindu religion, its essential sense and, if any credo is needed, its credo.

VIII

Indian Spirituality and Life – 2

THE TASK of religion and spirituality is to mediate between God and man, between the Eternal and Infinite and this transient, yet persistent finite, between a luminous Truth-consciousness not expressed or not yet expressed here and the Mind's ignorance. But nothing is more difficult than to bring home the greatness and uplifting power of the spiritual consciousness to the natural man forming the vast majority of the race; for his mind and senses are turned outward towards the external calls of life and its objects and never inwards to the Truth which lies behind them. This external vision and attraction are the essence of the universal blinding force which is designated in Indian philosophy the Ignorance. Ancient Indian spirituality recognised that man lives in the Ignorance and has to be led through its imperfect indications to a highest inmost knowledge. Our life moves between two worlds, the depths upon depths of our inward being and the surface field of our outward nature. The majority of men put the whole emphasis of life on the outward and live very strongly in their surface consciousness and very little in the inward existence. Even the choice spirits raised from the grossness of the common vital and physical mould by the stress of thought and culture do not usually get farther than a strong dwelling on the things of the mind. The highest flight they reach — and it is this that the West persistently mistakes for spirituality — is a preference for living in the mind and emotions more than in the gross outward life or else an attempt to subject this rebellious life-stuff to the law of intellectual truth or ethical reason and will or aesthetic beauty or of all three together. But spiritual knowledge perceives that there is a greater thing in us; our inmost self, our real being is not the intellect, not the aesthetic, ethical or thinking mind, but the divinity within, the Spirit, and these other things are only the instruments of the

Spirit. A mere intellectual, ethical and aesthetic culture does not go back to the inmost truth of the spirit; it is still an Ignorance, an incomplete, outward and superficial knowledge. To have made the discovery of our deepest being and hidden spiritual nature is the first necessity and to have erected the living of an inmost spiritual life into the aim of existence is the characteristic sign of a spiritual culture.

This endeavour takes in certain religions the form of a spiritual exclusiveness which revolts from the outward existence rather than seeks to transform it. The main tendency of the Christian discipline was not only to despise the physical and vital way of living, but to disparage and imprison the intellectual and distrust and discourage the aesthetic thirsts of our nature. It emphasised against them a limited spiritual emotionalism and its intense experiences as the one thing needful; the development of the ethical sense was the sole mental necessity, its translation into act the sole indispensable condition or result of the spiritual life. Indian spirituality reposed on too wide and many-sided a culture to admit as its base this narrow movement; but on its more solitary summits, at least in its later period, it tended to a spiritual exclusiveness loftier in vision, but even more imperative and excessive. A spirituality of this intolerant high-pointed kind, to whatever elevation it may rise, however it may help to purify life or lead to a certain kind of individual salvation, cannot be a complete thing. For its exclusiveness imposes on it a certain impotence to deal effectively with the problems of human existence; it cannot lead it to its integral perfection or combine its highest heights with its broadest broadness. A wider spiritual culture must recognise that the Spirit is not only the highest and inmost thing, but all is manifestation and creation of the Spirit. It must have a wider outlook, a more embracing range of applicability and, even, a more aspiring and ambitious aim of its endeavour. Its aim must be not only to raise to inaccessible heights the few elect, but to draw all men and all life and the whole human being upward, to spiritualise life and in the end to divinise human nature. Not only must it be able to lay hold on his deepest individual being but to inspire too his communal

existence. It must turn by a spiritual change all the members of his ignorance into members of the knowledge; it must transmute all the instruments of the human into instruments of a divine living. The total movement of Indian spirituality is towards this aim; in spite of all the difficulties, imperfections and fluctuations of its evolution, it had this character. But like other cultures it was not at all times and in all its parts and movements consciously aware of its own total significance. This large sense sometimes emerged into something like a conscious synthetic clarity, but was more often kept in the depths and on the surface dispersed in a multitude of subordinate and special stand-points. Still, it is only by an intelligence of the total drift that its manifold sides and rich variations of effort and teaching and discipline can receive their full reconciling unity and be understood in the light of its own most intrinsic purpose.

Now the spirit of Indian religion and spiritual culture has been persistently and immovably the same throughout the long time of its vigour, but its form has undergone remarkable changes. Yet if we look into them from the right centre it will be apparent that these changes are the results of a logical and inevitable evolution inherent in the very process of man's growth towards the heights. In its earliest form, its first Vedic system, it took its outward foundation on the mind of the physical man whose natural faith is in things physical, in the sensible and visible objects, presences, representations and the external pursuits and aims of this material world. The means, symbols, rites, figures, by which it sought to mediate between the spirit and the normal human mentality were drawn from these most external physical things. Man's first and primitive idea of the Divine can only come through his vision of external Nature and the sense of a superior Power or Powers concealed behind her phenomena, veiled in the heaven and earth, father and mother of our being, in the sun and moon and stars, its lights and regulators, in dawn and day and night and rain and wind and storm, the oceans and the rivers and the forests, all the circumstances and forces of her scene of action, all that vast and mysterious surrounding life of which we are a part and

in which the natural heart and mind of the human creature feel instinctively through whatever bright or dark or confused figures that there is here some divine Multitude or else mighty Infinite, one, manifold and mysterious, which takes these forms and manifests itself in these motions. The Vedic religion took this natural sense and feeling of the physical man; it used the conceptions to which they gave birth, and it sought to lead him through them to the psychic and spiritual truths of his own being and the being of the cosmos. It recognised that he was right when he saw behind the manifestations of Nature great living powers and godheads, even though he knew not their inner truth, and right too in offering to them worship and propitiation and atonement. For that inevitably must be the initial way in which his active physical, vital and mental nature is allowed to approach the Godhead. He approaches it through its visible outward manifestations as something greater than his own natural self, something single or multiple that guides, sustains and directs his life, and he calls to it for help and support in the desires and difficulties and distresses and struggles of his human existence.¹ The Vedic religion accepted also the form in which early man everywhere expressed his sense of the relation between himself and the godheads of Nature; it adopted as its central symbol the act and ritual of a physical sacrifice. However crude the notions attached to it, this idea of the necessity of sacrifice did express obscurely a first law of being. For it was founded on that secret of constant interchange between the individual and the universal powers of the cosmos which covertly supports all the process of life and develops the action of Nature.

But even in its external or exoteric side the Vedic religion did not limit itself to this acceptance and regulation of the first

¹ The Gita recognises four kinds or degrees of worshippers and God-seekers. There are first the *arthārthī* and *ārta*, those who seek him for the fulfilment of desire and those who turn for divine help in the sorrow and suffering of existence; there is next the *jijñāsu*, the seeker of knowledge, the questioner who is moved to seek the Divine in his truth and in that to meet him; last and highest, there is the *jñāni* who has already contact with the truth and is able to live in unity with the Spirit.

religious notions of the natural physical mind of man. The Vedic Rishis gave a psychic function to the godheads worshipped by the people; they spoke to them of a higher Truth, Right, Law of which the gods were the guardians, of the necessity of a truer knowledge and a larger inner living according to this Truth and Right and of a home of Immortality to which the soul of man could ascend by the power of Truth and of right doing. The people no doubt took these ideas in their most external sense; but they were trained by them to develop their ethical nature, to turn towards some initial development of their psychic being, to conceive the idea of a knowledge and truth other than that of the physical life and to admit even a first conception of some greater spiritual Reality which was the ultimate object of human worship or aspiration. This religious and moral force was the highest reach of the external cult and the most that could be understood or followed by the mass of the people.

The deeper truth of these things was reserved for the initiates, for those who were ready to understand and practise the inner sense, the esoteric meaning hidden in the Vedic scripture. For the Veda is full of words which, as the Rishis themselves express it, are secret words that give their inner meaning only to the seer, *kavaye nivacanā niryā vacāmsi*. This is a feature of the ancient sacred hymns which grew obscure to later ages; it became a dead tradition and has been entirely ignored by modern scholarship in its laborious attempt to read the hieroglyph of the Vedic symbols. Yet its recognition is essential to a right understanding of almost all the ancient religions; for mostly they started on their upward curve through an esoteric element of which the key was not given to all. In all or most there was a surface cult for the common physical man who was held yet unfit for the psychic and spiritual life and an inner secret of the Mysteries carefully disguised by symbols whose sense was opened only to the initiates. This was the origin of the later distinction between the Shudra, the undeveloped physical-minded man, and the twice-born, those who were capable of entering into the second birth by initiation and to whom alone the Vedic education could be given without danger. This too actuated the

later prohibition of any reading or teaching of the Veda by the Shudra. It was this inner meaning, it was the higher psychic and spiritual truths concealed by the outer sense, that gave to these hymns the name by which they are still known, the Veda, the Book of Knowledge. Only by penetrating into the esoteric sense of this worship can we understand the full flowering of the Vedic religion in the Upanishads and in the long later evolution of Indian spiritual seeking and experience. For it is all there in its luminous seed, preshadowed or even prefigured in the verses of the early seers. The persistent notion which through every change ascribed the foundation of all our culture to the Rishis, whatever its fabulous forms and mythical ascriptions, contains a real truth and veils a sound historic tradition. It reflects the fact of a true initiation and an unbroken continuity between this great primitive past and the riper but hardly greater spiritual development of our historic culture.

This inner Vedic religion started with an extension of the psychic significance of the godheads in the Cosmos. Its primary notion was that of a hierarchy of worlds, an ascending stair of planes of being in the universe. It saw a mounting scale of the worlds corresponding to a similar mounting scale of planes or degrees or levels of consciousness in the nature of man. A Truth, Right and Law sustains and governs all these levels of Nature; one in essence, it takes in them different but cognate forms. There is for instance the series of the outer physical light, another higher and inner light which is the vehicle of the mental, vital and psychic consciousness and a highest inmost light of spiritual illumination. Surya, the Sun-God, was the lord of the physical Sun; but he is at the same time to the Vedic seer-poet the giver of the rays of knowledge which illumine the mind and he is too the soul and energy and body of the spiritual illumination. And in all these powers he is a luminous form of the one and infinite Godhead. All the Vedic godheads have this outer and this inner and inmost function, their known and their secret Names. All are in their external character powers of physical Nature; all have in their inner meaning a psychic function and psychological ascriptions; all too are various powers of some one

highest Reality, *ekam sat*, the one infinite Existence. This hardly knowable Supreme is called often in the Veda "That Truth" or "That One", *tat satyam, tad ekam*. This complex character of the Vedic godheads assumes forms which have been wholly misunderstood by those who ascribe to them only their outward physical significance. Each of these gods is in himself a complete and separate cosmic personality of the one Existence and in their combination of powers they form the complete universal power, the cosmic whole, *vaiśvadevyam*. Each again, apart from his special function, is one godhead with the others; each holds in himself the universal divinity, each god is all the other gods. This is the aspect of the Vedic teaching and worship to which a European scholar, mistaking entirely its significance because he read it in the dim and poor light of European religious experience, has given the sounding misnomer, henotheism. Beyond, in the triple Infinite, these godheads put on their highest nature and are names of the one nameless Ineffable.

But the greatest power of the Vedic teaching, that which made it the source of all later Indian philosophies, religions, systems of Yoga, lay in its application to the inner life of man. Man lives in the physical cosmos subject to death and the "much falsehood" of the mortal existence. To rise beyond this death, to become one of the immortals, he has to turn from the falsehood to the Truth; he has to turn to the Light and to battle with and to conquer the powers of the Darkness. This he does by communion with the divine Powers and their aid; the way to call down this aid was the secret of the Vedic mystics. The symbols of the outer sacrifice are given for this purpose in the manner of the Mysteries all over the world an inner meaning; they represent a calling of the gods into the human being, a connecting sacrifice, an intimate interchange, a mutual aid, a communion. There is a building of the powers of the godheads within man and a formation in him of the universality of the divine nature. For the gods are the guardians and increasers of the Truth, the powers of the Immortal, the sons of the infinite Mother; the way to immortality is the upward way of the gods, the way of the Truth, a journey, an ascent by which there is a growth into the

law of the Truth, *ṛtasya panthāḥ*. Man arrives at immortality by breaking beyond the limitations not only of his physical self, but of his mental and his ordinary psychic nature into the highest plane and supreme ether of the Truth: for there is the foundation of immortality and the native seat of the triple Infinite. On these ideas the Vedic sages built up a profound psychological and psychic discipline which led beyond itself to a highest spirituality and contained the nucleus of later Indian Yoga. Already we find in their seed, though not in their full expansion, the most characteristic ideas of Indian spirituality. There is the one Existence, *ekam sat*, supracosmic beyond the individual and the universe. There is the one God who presents to us the many forms, names, powers, personalities of his Godhead. There is the distinction between the Knowledge and the Ignorance,² the greater truth of an immortal life opposed to the much falsehood or mixed truth and falsehood of mortal existence. There is the discipline of an inward growth of man from the physical through the psychic to the spiritual existence. There is the conquest of death, the secret of immortality, the perception of a realisable divinity of the human spirit. In an age to which in the insolence of our external knowledge we are accustomed to look back as the childhood of humanity or at best a period of vigorous barbarism, this was the inspired and intuitive psychic and spiritual teaching by which the ancient human fathers, *pūrve pitaraḥ manusyāḥ*, founded a great and profound civilisation in India.

This high beginning was secured in its results by a larger sublime efflorescence. The Upanishads have always been recognised in India as the crown and end of Veda; that is indicated in their general name, Vedanta. And they are in fact a large crowning outcome of the Vedic discipline and experience. The time in which the Vedantic truth was wholly seen and the Upanishads took shape, was, as we can discern from such records as the Chhandogya and Brihadaranyaka, an epoch of immense and strenuous seeking, an intense and ardent seed-time of the

² *Cittim acittim cinaavad vi vidvān*. "Let the knower distinguish the Knowledge and the Ignorance."

Spirit. In the stress of that seeking the truths held by the initiates but kept back from ordinary men broke their barriers, swept through the higher mind of the nation and fertilised the soil of Indian culture for a constant and ever increasing growth of spiritual consciousness and spiritual experience. This turn was not as yet universal; it was chiefly men of the higher classes, Kshatriyas and Brahmins trained in the Vedic system of education, no longer content with an external truth and the works of the outer sacrifice, who began everywhere to seek for the highest word of revealing experience from the sages who possessed the knowledge of the One. But we find too among those who attained to the knowledge and became great teachers men of inferior or doubtful birth like Janashruti, the wealthy Shudra, or Satyakama Jabali, son of a servant-girl who knew not who was his father. The work that was done in this period became the firm bedrock of Indian spirituality in later ages and from it gush still the life-giving waters of a perennial and never failing inspiration. This period, this activity, this grand achievement created the whole difference between the evolution of Indian civilisation and the quite different curve of other cultures.

For a time had come when the original Vedic symbols must lose their significance and pass into an obscurity that became impenetrable, as did the inner teaching of the Mysteries in other countries. The old poise of culture between two extremes with a bridge of religious cult and symbolism to unite them, the crude or half-trained naturalness of the outer physical man on one side of the line, and on the other an inner and secret psychic and spiritual life for the initiates could no longer suffice as the basis of our spiritual progress. The human race in its cycle of civilisation needed a large-lined advance; it called for a more and more generalised intellectual, ethical and aesthetic evolution to help it to grow into the light. This turn had to come in India as in other lands. But the danger was that the greater spiritual truth already gained might be lost in the lesser confident half-light of the acute but unillumined intellect or stifled within the narrow limits of the self-sufficient logical reason. That was what actually happened in the West, Greece leading the way. The old

knowledge was prolonged in a less inspired, less dynamic and more intellectual form by the Pythagoreans, by the Stoics, by Plato and the Neo-Platonists; but still in spite of them and in spite of the only half-illumined spiritual wave which swept over Europe from Asia in an ill-understood Christianity, the whole real trend of Western civilisation has been intellectual, rational, secular and even materialistic, and it keeps this character to the present day. Its general aim has been a strong or a fine culture of the vital and physical man by the power of an intellectualised ethics, aesthetics and reason, not the leading up of our lower members into the supreme light and power of the spirit. The ancient spiritual knowledge and the spiritual tendency it had created were saved in India from this collapse by the immense effort of the age of the Upanishads. The Vedantic seers renewed the Vedic truth by extricating it from its cryptic symbols and casting it into a highest and most direct and powerful language of intuition and inner experience. It was not the language of the intellect, but still it wore a form which the intellect could take hold of, translate into its own more abstract terms and convert into a starting-point for an ever widening and deepening philosophic speculation and the reason's long search after a Truth original, supreme and ultimate. There was in India as in the West a great upbuilding of a high, wide and complex intellectual, aesthetic, ethical and social culture. But left in Europe to its own resources, combated rather than helped by obscure religious emotion and dogma, here it was guided, uplifted and more and more penetrated and suffused by a great saving power of spirituality and a vast stimulating and tolerant light of wisdom from a highest ether of knowledge.

The second or post-Vedic age of Indian civilisation was distinguished by the rise of the great philosophies, by a copious, vivid, many-thoughted, many-sided epic literature, by the beginnings of art and science, by the evolution of a vigorous and complex society, by the formation of large kingdoms and empires, by manifold formative activities of all kinds and great systems of living and thinking. Here as elsewhere, in Greece, Rome, Persia, China, this was the age of a high outburst of the

intelligence working upon life and the things of the mind to discover their reason and their right way and bring out a broad and noble fullness of human existence. But in India this effort never lost sight of the spiritual motive, never missed the touch of the religious sense. It was a birth time and youth of the seeking intellect and, as in Greece, philosophy was the main instrument by which it laboured to solve the problems of life and the world. Science too developed, but it came second only as an auxiliary power. It was through profound and subtle philosophies that the intellect of India attempted to analyse by the reason and logical faculty what had formerly been approached with a much more living force through intuition and the soul's experience. But the philosophic mind started from the data these mightier powers had discovered and was faithful to its parent Light; it went back always in one form or another to the profound truths of the Upanishads which kept their place as the highest authority in these matters. There was a constant admission that spiritual experience is a greater thing and its light a truer if more incalculable guide than the clarities of the reasoning intelligence.

The same governing force kept its hold on all the other activities of the Indian mind and Indian life. The epic literature is full almost to excess of a strong and free intellectual and ethical thinking; there is an incessant criticism of life by the intelligence and the ethical reason, an arresting curiosity and desire to fix the norm of truth in all possible fields. But in the background and coming constantly to the front there is too a constant religious sense and an implicit or avowed assent to the spiritual truths which remained the unshakable basis of the culture. These truths suffused with their higher light secular thought and action or stood above to remind them that they were only steps towards a goal. Art in India, contrary to a common idea, dwelt much upon life; but still its highest achievement was always in the field of the interpretation of the religio-philosophical mind and its whole tone was coloured by a suggestion of the spiritual and the infinite. Indian society developed with an unsurpassed organising ability, stable effectiveness, practical insight its communal coordination of the mundane life of interest and desire,

kāma, artha; it governed always its action by a reference at every point to the moral and religious law, the Dharma: but it never lost sight of spiritual liberation as our highest point and the ultimate aim of the effort of Life. In later times when there was a still stronger secular tendency of intellectual culture, there came in an immense development of the mundane intelligence, an opulent political and social evolution, an emphatic stressing of aesthetic, sensuous and hedonistic experience. But this effort too always strove to keep itself within the ancient frame and not to lose the special stamp of the Indian cultural idea. The enlarged secular turn was compensated by a deepening of the intensities of psycho-religious experience. New religious or mystic forms and disciplines attempted to seize not only the soul and the intellect, but the emotions, the senses, the vital and the aesthetic nature of man and turn them into stuff of the spiritual life. And every excess of emphasis on the splendour and richness and power and pleasures of life had its recoil and was balanced by a corresponding potent stress on spiritual asceticism as the higher way. The two trends, on one side an extreme of the richness of life experience, on the other an extreme and pure rigorous intensity of the spiritual life, accompanied each other; their interaction, whatever loss there might be of the earlier deep harmony and large synthesis, yet by their double pull preserved something still of the balance of Indian culture.

Indian religion followed this line of evolution and kept its inner continuity with its Vedic and Vedantic origins; but it changed entirely its mental contents and colour and its outward basis. It did not effectuate this change through any protestant revolt or revolution or with any idea of an iconoclastic reformation. A continuous development of its organic life took place, a natural transformation brought out latent motives or else gave to already established motive-ideas a more predominant place or effective form. At one time indeed it seemed as if a discontinuity and a sharp new beginning were needed and would take place. Buddhism seemed to reject all spiritual continuity with the Vedic religion. But this was after all less in reality than in appearance. The Buddhist ideal of Nirvana was no more than a sharply

negative and exclusive statement of the highest Vedantic spiritual experience. The ethical system of the eightfold path taken as the way to release was an austere sublimation of the Vedic notion of the Right, Truth and Law followed as the way to immortality, *ṛtasya panthāḥ*. The strongest note of Mahayana Buddhism, its stress on universal compassion and fellow-feeling, was an ethical application of the spiritual unity which is the essential idea of Vedanta.³ The most characteristic tenets of the new discipline, Nirvana and Karma, could have been supported from the utterances of the Brahmanas and Upanishads. Buddhism could easily have claimed for itself a Vedic origin and the claim would have been no less valid than the Vedic ascription of the Sankhya philosophy and discipline with which it had some points of intimate alliance. But what hurt Buddhism and determined in the end its rejection, was not its denial of a Vedic origin or authority, but the exclusive trenchancy of its intellectual, ethical and spiritual positions. A result of an intense stress of the union of logical reason with the spiritualised mind—for it was by an intense spiritual search supported on a clear and hard rational thinking that it was born as a separate religion,—its trenchant affirmations and still more exclusive negations could not be made sufficiently compatible with the native flexibility, many-sided susceptibility and rich synthetic turn of the Indian religious consciousness; it was a high creed but not plastic enough to hold the heart of the people. Indian religion absorbed all that it could of Buddhism, but rejected its exclusive positions and preserved the full line of its own continuity, casting back to the ancient Vedanta.

This lasting line of change moved forward not by any destruction of principle, but by a gradual fading out of the prominent Vedic forms and the substitution of others. There was a transformation of symbol and ritual and ceremony or a substitution of new kindred figures, an emergence of things that are only hints in the original system, a development of novel idea-forms

³ Buddha himself does not seem to have preached his tenets as a novel revolutionary creed, but as the old Aryan way, the true form of the eternal religion.

from the seed of the original thinking. And especially there was a farther widening and fathoming of psychic and spiritual experience. The Vedic gods rapidly lost their deep original significance. At first they kept their hold by their outer cosmic sense but were overshadowed by the great Trinity, Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva, and afterwards faded altogether. A new pantheon appeared which in its outward symbolic aspects expressed a deeper truth and larger range of religious experience, an intenser feeling, a vaster idea. The Vedic sacrifice persisted only in broken and lessening fragments. The house of Fire was replaced by the temple; the karmic ritual of sacrifice was transformed into the devotional temple ritual; the vague and shifting mental images of the Vedic gods figured in the mantras yielded to more precise conceptual forms of the two great deities, Vishnu and Shiva, and of their Shaktis and their offshoots. These new concepts stabilised in physical images which were made the basis both for internal adoration and for the external worship which replaced sacrifice. The psychic and spiritual mystic endeavour which was the inner sense of the Vedic hymns, disappeared into the less intensely luminous but more wide and rich and complex psycho-spiritual inner life of Puranic and Tantric religion and Yoga.

The Purano-Tantric stage of the religion was once decried by European critics and Indian reformers as a base and ignorant degradation of an earlier and purer religion. It was rather an effort, successful in a great measure, to open the general mind of the people to a higher and deeper range of inner truth and experience and feeling. Much of the adverse criticism once heard proceeded from a total ignorance of the sense and intention of this worship. Much of this criticism has been uselessly concentrated on side-paths and aberrations which could hardly be avoided in this immensely audacious experimental widening of the basis of the culture. For there was a catholic attempt to draw towards the spiritual truth minds of all qualities and people of all classes. Much was lost of the profound psychic knowledge of the Vedic seers, but much also of new knowledge was developed, untrodden ways were opened and a hundred gates discovered into the Infinite. If we try to see the essential sense and aim of this

development and the intrinsic value of its forms and means and symbols, we shall find that this evolution followed upon the early Vedic form very much for the same reason as Catholic Christianity replaced the mysteries and sacrifices of the early Pagan religions. For in both cases the outward basis of the early religion spoke to the outward physical mind of the people and took that as the starting-point of its appeal. But the new evolution tried to awaken a more inner mind even in the common man, to lay hold on his inner vital and emotional nature, to support all by an awakening of the soul and to lead him through these things towards a highest spiritual truth. It attempted in fact to bring the mass into the temple of the spirit rather than leave them in the outer precincts. The outward physical sense was satisfied through its aesthetic turn by a picturesque temple worship, by numerous ceremonies, by the use of physical images; but these were given a psycho-emotional sense and direction that was open to the heart and imagination of the ordinary man and not reserved for the deeper sight of the elect or the strenuous tapasya of the initiates. The secret initiation remained but was now a condition for the passage from the surface psycho-emotional and religious to a profounder psychic-spiritual truth and experience.

Nothing essential was touched in its core by this new orientation; but the instruments, atmosphere, field of religious experience underwent a considerable change. The Vedic godheads were to the mass of their worshippers divine powers who presided over the workings of the outward life of the physical cosmos; the Puranic Trinity had even for the multitude a predominant psycho-religious and spiritual significance. Its more external significances, for instance the functions of cosmic creation, preservation and destruction, were only a dependent fringe of these profundities that alone touched the heart of its mystery. The central spiritual truth remained in both systems the same, the truth of the One in many aspects. The Trinity is a triple form of the one supreme Godhead and Brahman; the Shaktis are energies of the one Energy of the highest divine Being. But this greatest religious truth was no longer reserved for the initiated few; it was now more and more brought powerfully, widely and

intensely home to the general mind and feeling of the people. Even the so-called henotheism of the Vedic idea was prolonged and heightened in the larger and simpler worship of Vishnu or Shiva as the one universal and highest Godhead of whom all others are living forms and powers. The idea of the Divinity in man was popularised to an extraordinary extent, not only the occasional manifestation of the Divine in humanity which founded the worship of the Avatars, but the Presence discoverable in the heart of every creature. The systems of Yoga developed themselves on the same common basis. All led or hoped to lead through many kinds of psycho-physical, inner vital, inner mental and psycho-spiritual methods to the common aim of all Indian spirituality, a greater consciousness and a more or less complete union with the One and Divine or else an emergence of the individual soul in the Absolute. The Purano-Tantric system was a wide, assured and many-sided endeavour, unparalleled in its power, insight, amplitude, to provide the race with a basis of generalised psycho-religious experience from which man could rise through knowledge, works or love or through any other fundamental power of his nature to some established supreme experience and highest absolute status.

This great effort and achievement which covered all the time between the Vedic age and the decline of Buddhism, was still not the last possibility of religious evolution open to Indian culture. The Vedic training of the physically-minded man made the development possible. But in its turn this raising of the basis of religion to the inner mind and life and psychic nature, this training and bringing out of the psychic man ought to make possible a still larger development and support a greater spiritual movement as the leading power of life. The first stage makes possible the preparation of the natural external man for spirituality; the second takes up his outward life into a deeper mental and psychical living and brings him more directly into contact with the spirit and divinity within him; the third should render him capable of taking up his whole mental, psychical, physical living into a first beginning at least of a generalised spiritual life. This endeavour has manifested itself in the evolution of Indian spirituality and

is the significance of the latest philosophies, the great spiritual movements of the saints and bhaktas and an increasing resort to the various paths of Yoga. But unhappily it synchronised with a decline of Indian culture and an increasing collapse of its general power and knowledge, and in these surroundings it could not bear its natural fruit; but at the same time it has done much to prepare such a possibility in the future. If Indian culture is to survive and keep its spiritual basis and innate character, it is in this direction, and not in a mere revival or prolongation of the Puranic system, that its evolution must turn, rising so towards the fulfilment of that which the Vedic seers saw as the aim of man and his life thousands of years ago and the Vedantic sages cast into the clear and immortal forms of their luminous revelation.

Even the psychic-emotional part of man's nature is not the inmost door to religious feeling, nor is his inner mind the highest witness to spiritual experience. There is behind the first the inmost soul of man, in that deepest secret heart, *hṛdaye guhāyām*, in which the ancient seers saw the very tabernacle of the indwelling Godhead and there is above the second a luminous highest mind directly open to a truth of the Spirit to which man's normal nature has as yet only an occasional and momentary access. Religious evolution, spiritual experience can find their true native road only when they open to these hidden powers and make them their support for a lasting change, a divinisation of human life and nature. An effort of this kind was the very force behind the most luminous and vivid of the later movements of India's vast religious cycle. It is the secret of the most powerful forms of Vaishnavism and Tantra and Yoga. The labour of ascent from our half-animal human nature into the fresh purity of the spiritual consciousness needed to be followed and supplemented by a descent of the light and force of the spirit into man's members and the attempt to transform human into divine nature.

But it could not find its complete way or its fruit because it synchronised with a decline of the life force in India and a lowering of power and knowledge in her general civilisation and culture. Nevertheless here lies the destined force of her survival

and renewal, this is the dynamic meaning of her future. A widest and highest spiritualising of life on earth is the last vision of all that vast and unexampled seeking and experiment in a thousand ways of the soul's outermost and innermost experience which is the unique character of her past; this in the end is the mission for which she was born and the meaning of her existence.

IX

Indian Spirituality and Life – 3

IT IS essential, if we are to get a right view of Indian civilisation or of any civilisation, to keep to the central, living, governing things and not to be led away by the confusion of accidents and details. This is a precaution which the critics of our culture steadily refuse to take. A civilisation, a culture must be looked at first in its initiating, supporting, durable central motives, in its heart of abiding principle; otherwise we shall be likely to find ourselves, like these critics, in a maze without a clue and we shall stumble about among false and partial conclusions and miss entirely the true truth of the matter. The importance of avoiding this error is evident when we are seeking for the essential significance of Indian religious culture. But the same method must be held to when we proceed to observe its dynamic formulation and the effect of its spiritual ideal on life.

Indian culture recognises the spirit as the truth of our being and our life as a growth and evolution of the spirit. It sees the Eternal, the Infinite, the Supreme, the All; it sees this as the secret highest Self of all, this is what it calls God, the Permanent, the Real, and it sees man as a soul and power of this being of God in Nature. The progressive growth of the finite consciousness of man towards this Self, towards God, towards the universal, the eternal, the infinite, in a word his growth into spiritual consciousness, by the development of his ordinary ignorant natural being into an illumined divine nature, this is for Indian thinking the significance of life and the aim of human existence. To this deeper and more spiritual idea of Nature and of existence a great deal of what is strongest and most potential of fruitful consequences in recent European thinking already turns with a growing impetus. This turn may be a relapse to “barbarism” or it may be the high natural outcome of her own increasing and ripened culture; that is a question for Europe to decide. But

always to India this ideal inspiration or rather this spiritual vision of Self, God, Spirit, this nearness to a cosmic consciousness, a cosmic sense and feeling, a cosmic idea, will, love, delight into which we can release the limited, ignorant, suffering ego, this drive towards the transcendental, eternal and infinite, and the moulding of man into a conscious soul and power of that greater Existence have been the engrossing motive of her philosophy, the sustaining force of her religion, the fundamental idea of her civilisation and culture.

I have suggested that the formal turn, the rhythmic lines of effort of this culture must be regarded as having passed through two complete external stages; while a third has taken its initial steps and is the destiny of her future. The early Vedic was the first stage: then religion took its outward formal stand on the natural approach of the physical mind of man to the Godhead in the universe, but the initiates guarded the sacrificial fire of a greater spiritual truth behind the form. The Purano-Tantric was the second stage: then religion took its outward formal stand on the first deeper approaches of man's inner mind and life to the Divine in the universe, but a greater initiation opened the way to a far more intimate truth and pushed towards an inner living of the spiritual life in all its profundity and in all the infinite possibilities of an uttermost sublime experience. There has been long in preparation a third stage which belongs to the future. Its inspiring idea has been often cast out in limited or large, veiled and quiet or bold and striking spiritual movements and potent new disciplines and religions, but it has not yet been successful in finding its way or imposing new lines on human life. The circumstances were adverse, the hour not yet come. This greatest movement of the Indian spiritual mind has a double impulse. Its will is to call the community of men and all men each according to his power to live in the greatest light of all and found their whole life on some fully revealed power and grand uplifting truth of the Spirit. But it has had too at times a highest vision which sees the possibility not only of an ascent towards the Eternal but of a descent of the Divine Consciousness and a change of human into divine nature. A perception of the divinity hidden

in man has been its crowning force. This is a turn that cannot be rightly understood in the ideas or language of the European religious reformer or his imitators. It is not what the purist of the reason or the purist of the spirit imagines it to be and by that too hasty imagination falls short in his endeavour. Its index vision is pointed to a truth that exceeds the human mind and, if at all realised in his members, would turn human life into a divine superlife. And not until this third largest sweep of the spiritual evolution has come into its own, can Indian civilisation be said to have discharged its mission, to have spoken its last word and be *functus officio*, crowned and complete in its office of mediation between the life of man and the spirit.

The past dealings of Indian religion with life must be judged according to the stages of its progress; each age of its movement must be considered on its own basis. But throughout it consistently held to two perceptions that showed great practical wisdom and a fine spiritual tact. First, it saw that the approach to the spirit cannot be sudden, simple and immediate for all individuals or for the community of men; it must come ordinarily or at least at first through a gradual culture, training, progress. There must be an enlarging of the natural life accompanied by an uplifting of all its motives; a growing hold upon it of the higher rational, psychic and ethical powers must prepare and lead it towards a higher spiritual law. But the Indian religious mind saw too at the same time that if its greater aim was to be fruitful and the character of its culture imperative, there must be throughout and at every moment some kind of insistence on the spiritual motive. And for the mass of men this means always some kind of religious influence. That pervasive insistence was necessary in order that from the beginning some power of the universal inner truth, some ray from the real reality of our existence might cast its light or at least its sensible if subtle influence on the natural life of man. Human life must be induced to flower, naturally in a way, but at the same time with a wise nurturing and cultivation into its own profounder spiritual significance. Indian culture has worked by two coordinated, mutually stimulating and always interblended operations of which these perceptions are the

principle. First, it has laboured to lead upward and enlarge the life of the individual in the community through a natural series of life-stages till it was ready for the spiritual levels. But also it has striven to keep that highest aim before the mind at every stage and throw its influence on each circumstance and action both of man's inner and his outer existence.

In the plan of its first aim it came nearer to the highest ancient culture of mankind in other regions, but in a type and with a motive all its own. The frame of its system was constituted by a triple quartette. Its first circle was the synthesis and gradation of the fourfold object of life, vital desire and hedonistic enjoyment, personal and communal interest, moral right and law, and spiritual liberation. Its second circle was the fourfold order of society, carefully graded and equipped with its fixed economic functions and its deeper cultural, ethical and spiritual significances. Its third, the most original and indeed unique of its englobing life-patterns, was the fourfold scale of the successive stages of life, student, householder, forest recluse and free supersocial man. This frame, these lines of a large and noble life-training subsisted in their purity, their grand natural balance of austerity and accommodation, their fine effectiveness during the later Vedic and heroic age of the civilisation: afterwards they crumbled slowly or lost their completeness and order. But the tradition, the idea with some large effect of its force and some figure of its lines endured throughout the whole period of cultural vigour. However deflected it might have been from its true form and spirit, however mutilated and complicated for the worse, there was always left some presence of its inspiration and power. Only in the decline do we get the slow collapse, the degraded and confused mass of conventions which still labours to represent the ancient and noble Aryan system, but in spite of relics of glamour and beauty, in spite of survivals of spiritual suggestion and in spite of a residue of the old high training, is little better than a detritus or a mass of confused relics. Still even in this degradation enough of the original virtue has remained to ensure a remarkable remnant of the ancient beauty, attractiveness and power of survival.

But the turn given to the other and more direct spiritual operation of this culture is of a still greater importance. For it is that which, always surviving, has coloured permanently the Indian mind and life. It has remained the same behind every change of forms and throughout all the ages of the civilisation it has renewed its effectiveness and held its field. This second side of the cultural effort took the form of an endeavour to cast the whole of life into a religious mould; it multiplied means and devices which by their insistent suggestion and opportunity and their mass of effect would help to stamp a Godward tendency on the entire existence. Indian culture was founded on a religious conception of life and both the individual and the community drank in at every moment its influence. It was stamped on them by the training and turn of the education; the entire life atmosphere, all the social surroundings were suffused with it; it breathed its power through the whole original form and hieratic character of the culture. Always was felt the near idea of the spiritual existence and its supremacy as the ideal, highest over all others; everywhere there was the pervading pressure of the notion of the universe as a manifestation of divine Powers and a movement full of the presence of the Divine. Man himself was not a mere reasoning animal, but a soul in constant relation with God and with the divine cosmic Powers. The soul's continued existence was a cyclic or upward progress from birth to birth; human life was the summit of an evolution which terminated in the conscious Spirit, every stage of that life a step in a pilgrimage. Every single action of man had its importance of fruit whether in future lives or in the worlds beyond the material existence.

But Indian religion was not content with the general pressure of these conceptions, the training, the atmosphere, the stamp on the culture. Its persistent effort was to impress the mind at every moment and in each particular with the religious influence. And to do this more effectively by a living and practical adaptation, not asking from anyone what was too much for him or too little, it took as a guiding idea its perception of the varying natural capacity of man, *adhikāra*. It provided in its system means by which each man high or low, wise or ignorant, exceptional or

average might feel in the way suitable to his nature and evolutionary stage the call, the pressure, the influence. Avoiding the error of the religions that impose a single dogmatic and inflexible rule on every man regardless of the possibilities of his nature, it tried rather to draw him gently upward and help him to grow steadily in religious and spiritual experience. Every part of human nature, every characteristic turn of its action was given a place in the system; each was suitably surrounded with the spiritual idea and a religious influence, each provided with steps by which it might rise towards its own spiritual possibility and significance. The highest spiritual meaning of life was set on the summits of each evolving power of the human nature. The intelligence was called to a supreme knowledge, the dynamic active and creative powers pointed to openness and unity with an infinite and universal Will, the heart and sense put in contact with a divine love and joy and beauty. But this highest meaning was also put everywhere indicatively or in symbols behind the whole system of living, even in its details, so that its impression might fall in whatever degree on the life, increase in pervasion and in the end take up the entire control. This was the aim and, if we consider the imperfections of our nature and the difficulty of the endeavour, we can say that it achieved an unusual measure of success. It has been said with some truth that for the Indian the whole of life is a religion. True of the ideal of Indian life, it is true to a certain degree and in a certain sense in its fact and practice. No step could be taken in the Indian's inner or outer life without his being reminded of a spiritual existence. Everywhere he felt the closeness or at least saw the sign of something beyond his natural life, beyond the moment in time, beyond his individual ego, something other than the needs and interests of his vital and physical nature. That insistence gave its tone and turn to his thought and action and feeling; it produced that subtler sensitiveness to the spiritual appeal, that greater readiness to turn to the spiritual effort which are even now distinguishing marks of the Indian temperament. It is that readiness, that sensitiveness which justifies us when we speak of the characteristic spirituality of the Indian people.

The ancient idea of the *adhikāra* has to be taken into careful account if we would understand the peculiar character of Indian religion. In most other religious systems we find a high-pitched spiritual call and a difficult and rigid ethical standard far beyond the possibilities of man's half-evolved, defective and imperfect nature. This standard, this call are announced as if imperative on all; but it is evident that only a few can give an adequate response. There is presented to our view for all our picture of life the sharp division of two extremes; the saint and the worldling, the religious and the irreligious, the good and the bad, the pious and the impious, souls accepted and souls rejected, the sheep and the goats, the saved and the damned, the believer and the infidel, are the two categories set constantly before us. All between is a confusion, a tug of war, an uncertain balance. This crude and summary classification is the foundation of the Christian system of an eternal heaven and hell; at best, the Catholic religion humanely interposes a precarious chance hung between that happy and this dread alternative, the chance of a painful purgatory for more than nine tenths of the human race. Indian religion set up on its summits a still more high-pitched spiritual call, a standard of conduct still more perfect and absolute; but it did not go about its work with this summary and unreflecting ignorance. All beings are to the Indian mind portions of the Divine, evolving souls, and sure of an eventual salvation and release into the spirit. All must feel, as the good in them grows or, more truly, the godhead in them finds itself and becomes conscious, the ultimate touch and call of their highest self and through that call the attraction to the Eternal and Divine. But actually in life there are infinite differences between man and man; some are more inwardly evolved, others are less mature, many if not most are infant souls incapable of great steps and difficult efforts. Each needs to be dealt with according to his nature and his soul stature. But a general distinction can be drawn between three principal types varying in their openness to the spiritual appeal or to the religious influence or impulse. This distinction amounts to a gradation of three stages in the growing human consciousness. One crude, ill-formed, still outward, still

vitally and physically minded can be led only by devices suited to its ignorance. Another, more developed and capable of a much stronger and deeper psycho-spiritual experience, offers a riper make of manhood gifted with a more conscious intelligence, a larger vital or aesthetic opening, a stronger ethical power of the nature. A third, the ripest and most developed of all, is ready for the spiritual heights, fit to receive or to climb towards the loftiest ultimate truth of God and of its own being and to tread the summits of divine experience.¹

It was to meet the need of the first type or level that Indian religion created that mass of suggestive ceremony and effective ritual and strict outward rule and injunction and all that pageant of attracting and compelling symbol with which the cult is so richly equipped or profusely decorated. These are for the most part forming and indicative things which work upon the mind consciously and subconsciously and prepare it for an entry into the significance of the greater permanent things that lie behind them. And for this type too, for its vital mind and will, is intended all in the religion that calls on man to turn to a divine Power or powers for the just satisfaction of his desires and his interests, just because subject to the right and the law, the Dharma. In the Vedic times the outward ritual sacrifice and at a later period all the religious forms and notions that clustered visibly around the rites and imagery of temple worship, constant festival and ceremony and daily act of outward devotion were intended to serve this type or this soul-stage. Many of these things may seem to the developed mind to belong to an ignorant or half awakened religionism; but they have their concealed truth and their psychic value and are indispensable in this stage for the development and difficult awakening of the soul shrouded in the ignorance of material Nature.

¹ The Tantric distinction is between the animal man, the hero man and the divine man, *páśu*, *víra*, *deva*. Or we may grade the difference according to the three gunas,—first, the tamasic or rajaso-tamasic man ignorant, inert or moved only in a little light by small motive forces, the rajasic or sattwo-rajasic man struggling with an awakened mind and will towards self-development or self-affirmation, and the satwic man open in mind and heart and will to the Light, standing at the top of the scale and ready to transcend it.

The middle stage, the second type starts from these things, but gets behind them; it is capable of understanding more clearly and consciously the psychic truths, the conceptions of the intelligence, the aesthetic indications, the ethical values and all the other mediating directions which Indian religion took care to place behind its symbols. These intermediate truths vivify the outward forms of the system and those who can grasp them can go through these mental indices towards things that are beyond the mind and approach the profounder truths of the spirit. For at this stage there is already something awake that can go inward to a more deeply psycho-religious experience. Already the mind, heart and will have some strength to grapple with the difficulties of the relations between the spirit and life, some urge to satisfy more luminously or more inwardly the rational, aesthetic and ethical nature and lead them upward towards their own highest heights; one can begin to train mind and soul towards a spiritual consciousness and the opening of a spiritual existence. This ascending type of humanity claims for its use all that large and opulent middle region of philosophic, psycho-spiritual, ethical, aesthetic and emotional religious seeking which is the larger and more significant portion of the wealth of Indian culture. At this stage intervene the philosophical systems, the subtle illuminating debates and inquiries of the thinkers; here are the nobler or more passionate reaches of devotion, here are held up the higher, ampler or austerer ideals of the Dharma; here break in the psychical suggestions and first definite urgings of the eternal and infinite which draw men by their appeal and promise towards the practice of Yoga.

But these things, great as they were, were not final or supreme: they were openings, steps of ascension towards the luminous grandeurs of spiritual truth and its practice was kept ready and its means of attainment provided for the third and greatest type of human being, the third loftiest stage of the spiritual evolution. The complete light of spiritual knowledge when it emerges from veil and compromise and goes beyond all symbols and middle significances, the absolute and universal

divine love, the beauty of the All-beautiful, the noblest dharma of unity with all beings, universal compassion and benevolence calm and sweet in the perfect purity of the spirit, the upsurge of the psychical being into the spiritual unity or the spiritual ecstasy, these divinest things were the heritage of the human being ready for divinity and their way and call were the supreme significances of Indian religion and Yoga. He reached by them the fruits of his perfect spiritual evolution, an identity with the Self and Spirit, a dwelling in or with God, the divine law of his being, a spiritual universality, communion, transcendence.

But distinctions are lines that can always be overpassed in the infinite complexity of man's nature and there was no sharp and unbridgeable division, only a gradation, since the actuality or potentiality of the three powers coexist in all men. Both the middle and the highest significances were near and present and pervaded the whole system, and the approaches to the highest status were not absolutely denied to any man, in spite of certain prohibitions: but these prohibitions broke down in practice or left a way of escape to the man who felt the call; the call itself was a sign of election. He had only to find the way and the guide. But even in the direct approach the principle of *adhikāra*, differing capacity and varying nature, *svabhāva*, was recognised in subtle ways, which it would be beyond my present purpose to enumerate. One may note as an example the significant Indian idea of the *iṣṭa-devatā*, the special name, form, idea of the Divinity which each man may choose for worship and communion and follow after according to the attraction in his nature and his capacity of spiritual intelligence. And each of the forms has its outer initial associations and suggestions for the worshipper, its appeal to the intelligence, psychical, aesthetic, emotional power in the nature and its highest spiritual significance which leads through some one truth of the Godhead into the essence of spirituality. One may note too that in the practice of Yoga the disciple has to be led through his nature and according to his capacity and the spiritual teacher and guide is expected to perceive and take account of the necessary gradations and the individual need and power in his giving of help and guidance.

Many things may be objected to in the actual working of this large and flexible system and I shall take some note of them when I have to deal with the weak points or the pejorative side of the culture against which the hostile critic directs with a misleading exaggeration his missiles. But the principle of it and the main lines of the application embody a remarkable wisdom, knowledge and careful observation of human nature and an assured insight into the things of the spirit which none can question who has considered deeply and flexibly these difficult matters or had any close experience of the obstacles and potentialities of our nature in its approach to the concealed spiritual reality.

This carefully graded and complex system of religious development and spiritual evolution was linked on by a process of pervading intimate connection to that general culture of the life of the human being and his powers which must be the first care of every civilisation worth the name. The most delicate and difficult part of this task of human development is concerned with the thinking being of man, his mind of reason and knowledge. No ancient culture of which we have knowledge, not even the Greek, attached more importance to it or spent more effort on its cultivation. The business of the ancient Rishi was not only to know God, but to know the world and life and to reduce it by knowledge to a thing well understood and mastered with which the reason and will of man could deal on assured lines and on a safe basis of wise method and order. The ripe result of this effort was the Shastra. When we speak of the Shastra nowadays, we mean too often only the religio-social system of injunctions of the middle age made sacrosanct by their mythical attribution to Manu, Parashara and other Vedic sages. But in older India Shastra meant any systematised teaching and science; each department of life, each line of activity, each subject of knowledge had its science or Shastra. The attempt was to reduce each to a theoretical and practical order founded on detailed observation, just generalisation, full experience, intuitive, logical and experimental analysis and synthesis, in order to enable man to know always with a just fruitfulness for life and to act with the security of right knowledge. The smallest and the greatest

things were examined with equal care and attention and each provided with its art and science. The name was given even to the highest spiritual knowledge whenever it was stated not in a mass of intuitive experience and revelatory knowledge as in the Upanishads, but for intellectual comprehension in system and order,—and in that sense the Gita is able to call its profound spiritual teaching the most secret science, *guhyatamān śāstram*. This high scientific and philosophical spirit was carried by the ancient Indian culture into all its activities. No Indian religion is complete without its outward form of preparatory practice, its supporting philosophy and its Yoga or system of inward practice or art of spiritual living; most even of what seems irrational in it to a first glance, has its philosophical turn and significance. It is this complete understanding and philosophical character which has given religion in India its durable security and immense vitality and enabled it to resist the acid dissolvent power of modern sceptical inquiry; whatever is ill-founded in experience and reason, that power can dissolve, but not the heart and mind of these great teachings. But what we have more especially to observe is that while Indian culture made a distinction between the lower and the higher learning, the knowledge of things and the knowledge of self, it did not put a gulf between them like some religions, but considered the knowledge of the world and things as a preparatory and a leading up to the knowledge of Self and God. All Shastra was put under the sanction of the names of the Rishis, who were in the beginning the teachers not only of spiritual truth and philosophy,—and we may note that all Indian philosophy, even the logic of Nyaya and the atomic theory of the Vaisheshikas, has for its highest crowning note and eventual object spiritual knowledge and liberation,—but of the arts, the social, political and military, the physical and psychic sciences, and every instructor was in his degree respected as a *guru* or *ācārya*, a guide or preceptor of the human spirit. All knowledge was woven into one and led up by degrees to the one highest knowledge.

The whole right practice of life founded on this knowledge was in the view of Indian culture a Dharma, a living according

to a just understanding and right view of self-culture, of the knowledge of things and life and of action in that knowledge. Thus each man and class and kind and species and each activity of soul, mind, life, body has its dharma. But the largest or at least most vitally important part of the Dharma was held to be the culture and ordering of the ethical nature of man. The ethical aspect of life, contrary to the amazingly ignorant observation of a certain type of critics, attracted a quite enormous amount of attention, occupied the greater part of Indian thought and writing not devoted to the things of pure knowledge and of the spirit and was so far pushed that there is no ethical formation or ideal which does not reach in it its highest conception and a certain divine absolutism of ideal practice. Indian thought took for granted,—though there are some remarkable speculations to the contrary,—the ethical nature of man and the ethical law of the world. It considered that man was justified in satisfying his desires, since that is necessary for the satisfaction and expansion of life, but not in obeying the dictates of desire as the law of his being; for in all things there is a greater law, each has not only its side of interest and desire, but its dharma or rule of right practice, satisfaction, expansion, regulation. The Dharma, then, fixed by the wise in the Shastra is the right thing to observe, the true rule of action. First in the web of Dharma comes the social law; for man's life is only initially for his vital, personal, individual self, but much more imperatively for the community, though most imperatively of all for the greatest Self one in himself and in all beings, for God, for the Spirit. Therefore first the individual must subordinate himself to the communal self, though by no means bound altogether to efface himself in it as the extremists of the communal idea imagine. He must live according to the law of his nature harmonised with the law of his social type and class, for the nation and in a higher reach of his being—this was greatly stressed by the Buddhists—for humanity. Thus living and acting he could learn to transcend the social scale of the Dharma, practise without injuring the basis of life the ideal scale and finally grow into the liberty of the spirit, when rule and duty were not binding because he would then move and

act in a highest free and immortal dharma of the divine nature. All these aspects of the Dharma were closely linked up together in a progressive unity. Thus, for an example, each of the four orders had its own social function and ethics, but also an ideal rule for the growth of the pure ethical being, and every man by observing his dharma and turning his action Godwards could grow out of it into the spiritual freedom. But behind all dharma and ethics was put, not only as a safeguard but as a light, a religious sanction, a reminder of the continuity of life and of man's long pilgrimage through many births, a reminder of the Gods and planes beyond and of the Divine, and above it all the vision of a last stage of perfect comprehension and unity and of divine transcendence.

The system of Indian ethics liberalised by the catholicity of the ancient mind did not ban or violently discourage the aesthetic or even the hedonistic being of man in spite of a growing ascetic tendency and a certain high austerity of the summits. The aesthetic satisfactions of all kinds and all grades were an important part of the culture. Poetry, the drama, song, dance, music, the greater and lesser arts were placed under the sanction of the Rishis and were made instruments of the spirit's culture. A just theory held them to be initially the means of a pure aesthetic satisfaction and each was founded on its own basic rule and law, but on that basis and with a perfect fidelity to it still raised up to minister to the intellectual, ethical and religious development of the being. It is notable that the two vast Indian epics have been considered as much as Dharmashastras as great historico-mythic epic narratives, *itihāsas*. They are, that is to say, noble, vivid and puissant pictures of life, but they utter and breathe throughout their course the law and ideal of a great and high ethical and religious spirit in life and aim in their highest intention at the idea of the Divine and the way of the mounting soul in the action of the world. Indian painting, sculpture and architecture did not refuse service to the aesthetic satisfaction and interpretation of the social, civic and individual life of the human being; these things, as all evidences show, played a great part in their motives of creation, but still

their highest work was reserved for the greatest spiritual side of the culture, and throughout we see them seized and suffused with the brooding stress of the Indian mind on the soul, the Godhead, the spiritual, the Infinite. And we have to note too that the aesthetic and hedonistic being was made not only an aid to religion and spirituality and liberally used for that purpose, but even one of the main gates of man's approach to the Spirit. The Vaishnava religion especially is a religion of love and beauty and of the satisfaction of the whole delight-soul of man in God and even the desires and images of the sensuous life were turned by its vision into figures of a divine soul-experience. Few religions have gone so far as this immense catholicity or carried the whole nature so high in its large, puissant and many-sided approach to the spiritual and the infinite.

Finally, there is the most outwardly vital life of man, his ordinary dynamic, political, economical and social being. This too Indian culture took strenuously in hand and subjected its whole body to the pressure of its own ideals and conceptions. Its method was to build up great shastras of social living, duty and enjoyment, military and political rule and conduct and economical well-being. These were directed on one side to success, expansion, opulence and the right art and relation of these activities, but on those motives, demanded by the very nature of the vital man and his action, was imposed the law of the Dharma, a stringent social and ethical ideal and rule — thus the whole life of the king as the head of power and responsibility was regulated by it in its every hour and function, — and the constant reminder of religious duty. In latter times a Machiavellian principle of statecraft, that which has been always and is still pursued by governments and diplomats, encroached on this nobler system, but in the best age of Indian thought this depravation was condemned as a temporarily effective, but lesser, ignoble and inferior way of policy. The great rule of the culture was that the higher a man's position and power, the larger the scope of his function and influence of his acts and example, the greater should be the call on him of the Dharma. The whole law and custom of society was placed under the sanction of the Rishis and the gods,

protected from the violence of the great and powerful, given a socio-religious character and the king himself charged to live and rule as the guardian and servant of the Dharma with only an executive power over the community which was valid so long as he observed with fidelity the Law. And as this vital aspect of life is the one which most easily draws us outward and away from the inner self and the diviner aim of living, it was the most strenuously linked up at every point with the religious idea in the way the vital man can best understand, in the Vedic times by the constant reminder of the sacrifice behind every social and civic act, at a later period by religious rites, ceremonies, worship, the calling in of the gods, the insistence on the subsequent results or a supraterrestrial aim of works. So great was this preoccupation, that while in the spiritual and intellectual and other spheres a considerable or a complete liberty was allowed to speculation, action, creation, here the tendency was to impose a rigorous law and authority, a tendency which in the end became greatly exaggerated and prevented the expansion of the society into new forms more suitable for the need of the spirit of the age, the Yugadharma. A door of liberty was opened to the community by the provision of an automatic permission to change custom and to the individual in the adoption of the religious life with its own higher discipline or freedom outside the ordinary social weft of binding rule and injunction. A rigid observation and discipline of the social law, a larger nobler discipline and freer self-culture of the ideal side of the Dharma, a wide freedom of the religious and spiritual life became the three powers of the system. The steps of the expanding human spirit mounted through these powers to its perfection.

Thus the whole general character of the application of Indian ideals to life became throughout of this one texture, the constant, subtly graded, subtly harmonised preparation of the soul of man for its spiritual being. First, the regulated satisfaction of the primary natural being of man subjected to the law of the Dharma and the ethical idea and besieged at every moment by the suggestions of religion, a religion at first appealing to his more outward undeveloped mind, but in each of

its outward symbols and circumstances opening to a profounder significance, armed with the indication of a profoundest spiritual and ideal meaning as its justification. Then, the higher steps of the developed reason and psychical, ethical and aesthetic powers closely interwoven and raised by a similar opening beyond themselves to their own heights of spiritual direction and potentiality. Finally, each of these growing powers in man was made on its own line of approach a gateway into his divine and spiritual being. Thus we may observe that there was created a Yoga of knowledge for the self-exceeding of the thinking intellectual man, a Yoga of works for the self-exceeding of the active, dynamic and ethical man, a Yoga of love and bhakti for the self-exceeding of the emotional, aesthetic, hedonistic man, by which each arrived to perfection through a self-ward, spiritual, God-ward direction of his own special power, as too a Yoga of self-exceeding through the power of the psychical being and even through the power of the life in the body,—Yogas which could be practised in separation or with some kind of synthesis. But all these ways of self-exceeding led to a highest self-becoming. To become one with universal being and all existences, one with the self and spirit, united with God completed the human evolution, built the final step of man's self-culture.

X

Indian Spirituality and Life – 4

I HAVE dwelt at some length, though still very inadequately, on the principles of Indian religion, the sense of its evolution and the intention of its system, because these things are being constantly ignored and battle delivered by its defenders and assailants on details, particular consequences and side issues. Those too have their importance because they are part of the practical execution, the working out of the culture in life; but they cannot be rightly valued unless we seize hold of the intention which was behind the execution. And the first thing we see is that the principle, the essential intention of Indian culture was extraordinarily high, ambitious and noble, the highest indeed that the human spirit can conceive. For what can be a greater idea of life than that which makes it a development of the spirit in man to its most vast, secret and high possibilities,—a culture that conceives of life as a movement of the Eternal in time, of the universal in the individual, of the infinite in the finite, of the Divine in man, or holds that man can become not only conscious of the eternal and the infinite, but live in its power and universalise, spiritualise and divinise himself by self-knowledge? What greater aim can be for the life of man than to grow by an inner and outer experience till he can live in God, realise his spirit, become divine in knowledge, in will and in the joy of his highest existence? And that is the whole sense of the striving of Indian culture.

It is easy to say that these ideas are fantastic, chimerical and impracticable, that there is no spirit and no eternal and nothing divine, and man would do much better not to dabble in religion and philosophy, but rather make the best he can of the ephemeral littleness of his life and body. That is a negation natural enough to the vital and physical mind, but it rests on the assumption that man can only be what he is at the moment, and

there is nothing greater in him which it is his business to evolve; such a negation has no enduring value. The whole aim of a great culture is to lift man up to something which at first he is not, to lead him to knowledge though he starts from an unfathomable ignorance, to teach him to live by his reason, though actually he lives much more by his unreason, by the law of good and unity, though he is now full of evil and discord, by a law of beauty and harmony though his actual life is a repulsive muddle of ugliness and jarring barbarisms, by some high law of his spirit, though at present he is egoistic, material, unspiritual, engrossed by the needs and desires of his physical being. If a civilisation has not any of these aims, it can hardly at all be said to have a culture and certainly in no sense a great and noble culture. But the last of these aims, as conceived by ancient India, is the highest of all because it includes and surpasses all the others. To have made this attempt is to have ennobled the life of the race; to have failed in it is better than if it had never at all been attempted; to have achieved even a partial success is a great contribution to the future possibilities of the human being.

The system of Indian culture is another thing. A system is in its very nature at once an effectuation and a limitation of the spirit; and yet we must have a science and art of life, a system of living. All that is needed is that the lines laid down should be large and noble, capable of evolution so that the spirit may more and more express itself in life, flexible even in its firmness so that it may absorb and harmonise new material and enlarge its variety and richness without losing its unity. The system of Indian culture was all these things in its principle and up to a certain point and a certain period in its practice. That a decline came upon it in the end and a kind of arrest of growth, not absolute, but still very serious and dangerous to its life and future, is perfectly true, and we shall have to ask whether that was due to the inherent character of the culture, to a deformation or to a temporary exhaustion of the force of living, and, if the last, how that exhaustion came. At present, I will only note in passing one point which has its importance. Our critic is never tired of harping on India's misfortunes and he attributes them

all to the incurable badness of our civilisation, the total absence of a true and sound culture. Now misfortune is not a proof of absence of culture, nor good fortune the sign of salvation. Greece was unfortunate; she was as much torn by internal dissensions and civil wars as India, she was finally unable to arrive at unity or preserve independence; yet Europe owes half its civilisation to those squabbling inconsequent petty peoples of Greece. Italy was unfortunate enough in all conscience, yet few nations have contributed more to European culture than incompetent and unfortunate Italy. The misfortunes of India have been considerably exaggerated, at least in their incidence, but take them at their worst, admit that no nation has suffered more. If all that is due to the badness of our civilisation, to what is due then the remarkable fact of the obstinate survival of India, her culture and her civilisation under this load of misfortunes, or the power which enables her still to assert herself and her spirit at this moment, to the great wrath of her critics, against the tremendous shock of the flood from Europe which has almost submerged other peoples? If her misfortunes are due to her cultural deficiencies, must not by a parity of reasoning this extraordinary vitality be due to some great force in her, some enduring virtue of truth in her spirit? A mere lie and insanity cannot live; its persistence is a disease which must before long lead to death; it cannot be the source of an unslayable life. There must be some heart of soundness, some saving truth which has kept this people alive and still enables it to raise its head and affirm its will to be and its faith in its mission.

But, finally, we have to see not only the spirit and principle of the culture, not only the ideal idea and scope of intention in its system, but its actual working and effect in the values of life. Here we must admit great limitations, great imperfections. There is no culture, no civilisation ancient or modern which in its system has been entirely satisfactory to the need of perfection in man; there is none in which the working has not been marred by considerable limitations and imperfections. And the greater the aim of the culture, the larger the body of the civilisation, the more are these flaws likely to overbear the eye. In the first place

every culture suffers by the limitations or defects of its qualities and, an almost infallible consequence, by the exaggerations too of its qualities. It tends to concentrate on certain leading ideas and to lose sight of others or unduly depress them; this want of balance gives rise to one-sided tendencies which are not properly checked, not kept in their due place, and bring about unhealthy exaggerations. But so long as the vigour of the civilisation lasts, life accommodates itself, makes the most of compensating forces and in spite of all stumblings, evils, disasters some great thing is done; but in a time of decline the defect or the excess of a particular quality gets the upper hand, becomes a disease, makes a general ravage and, if not arrested, may lead to decay and death. Again, the ideal may be great, may have even, as Indian culture had in its best times, a certain kind of provisional completeness, a first attempt at comprehensive harmony, but there is always a great gulf between the ideal and the actual practice of life. To bridge that gulf or at least to make it as narrow as possible is the most difficult part of human endeavour. Finally, the evolution of our race, surprising enough if we look across the ages, is still, when all is said, a slow and embarrassed progress. Each age, each civilisation carries the heavy burden of our deficiencies, each succeeding age throws off something of the load, but loses some virtue of the past, creates other gaps and embarrasses itself with new aberrations. We have to strike a balance, to see things in the whole, to observe whither we are tending and use a large secular vision; otherwise it would be difficult to keep an unfailing faith in the destinies of the race. For, after all, what we have accomplished so far in the main at the best of times is to bring in a modicum of reason and culture and spirituality to leaven a great mass of barbarism. Mankind is still no more than semi-civilised and it was never anything else in the recorded history of its present cycle.

And therefore every civilisation presents a mixed and anomalous appearance and can be turned by a hostile or unsympathetic observation which notes and exaggerates its defects, ignores its true spirit and its qualities, masses the shades, leaves out the lights, into a mass of barbarism, a picture of almost

unrelieved gloom and failure, to the legitimate surprise and indignation of those to whom its motives appear to have a great and just value. For each has achieved something of special value for humanity in the midst of its general work of culture, brought out in a high degree some potentiality of our nature and given a first large standing-ground for its future perfection. Greece developed to a high degree the intellectual reason and the sense of form and harmonious beauty, Rome founded firmly strength and power and patriotism and law and order, modern Europe has raised to enormous proportions practical reason, science and efficiency and economic capacity, India developed the spiritual mind working on the other powers of man and exceeding them, the intuitive reason, the philosophical harmony of the Dharma informed by the religious spirit, the sense of the eternal and the infinite. The future has to go on to a greater and more perfect comprehensive development of these things and to evolve fresh powers, but we shall not do this rightly by damning the past or damning other cultures than our own in a spirit of arrogant intolerance. We need not only a spirit of calm criticism, but an eye of sympathetic intuition to extract the good from the past and present effort of humanity and make the most of it for our future progress.

This being so, if our critic insists that the past culture of India was of the nature of a semi-barbarism, I shall not object, so long as I have the liberty of passing the same criticism, equally valid or invalid, on the type of European culture which he wishes to foist on us in its place. Mr. Archer feels the openings which European civilisation gives to this kind of retort and he pleads plaintively that it ought not to be made; he takes refuge in the old tag that a *tu quoque* is no argument. Certainly the retort would be irrelevant if this were only a question of the dispassionate criticism of Indian culture without arrogant comparisons and offensive pretensions. But it becomes a perfectly valid and effective argument when the critic turns into a partisan and tries to trample underfoot all the claims of the Indian spirit and its civilisation in the name of the superiority of Europe. When he insists on our renouncing our own natural being and culture

in order to follow and imitate the West as docile pupils on the ground of India's failure to achieve cultural perfection or the ideal of a sound civilisation, we have a right to point out that Europe has to its credit at least as ugly a failure, and for the same fundamental reasons. We have a right to ask whether science, practical reason and efficiency and an unbridled economic production which makes man a slave of his life and body, a wheel, spring or cog in a huge mechanism or a cell of an economic organism and translates into human terms the ideal of the ant-hill and the bee-hive, is really the whole truth of our being and a sound or complete ideal of civilisation. The ideal of this culture, though it has its obstacles and difficulties, is at any rate not an unduly exalted aim and ought to be more easy of accomplishment than the arduous spiritual ideal of ancient India. But how much of the European mind and life is really governed by reason and what does this practical reason and efficiency come to in the end? To what perfection has it brought the human mind and soul and life? The aggressive ugliness of modern European life, its paucity of philosophic reason and aesthetic beauty and religious aspiration, its constant unrest, its harsh and oppressive mechanical burden, its lack of inner freedom, its recent huge catastrophe, the fierce struggle of classes are things of which we have a right to take note. To harp in the style of the Archerian lyre on these aspects alone and to ignore the brighter side of modern ideals would certainly be an injustice. There was a time indeed many years ago, when, while admiring the past cultural achievement of Europe, the present industrial form of it seemed to me an intellectualised Titanic barbarism with Germany as its too admired type and successful protagonist. A wider view of the ways of the Spirit in the world corrects the one-sidedness of this notion, but still it contains a truth which Europe recognised in the hour of her agony, though now she seems to be forgetting too easily her momentary illumination. Mr. Archer argues that at least the West is trying to struggle out of its barbarism while India has been content to stagnate in her deficiencies. That may be a truth of the immediate past; but what then? The question still remains whether Europe is taking the only, the complete or

the best way open to human endeavour and whether it is not the right thing for India, not to imitate Europe, though she well may learn from Western experience, but to get out of her stagnation by developing what is best and most essential in her own spirit and culture.

The right, the natural path for India lies so obviously in this direction that in order to destroy it Mr. Archer in his chosen role as devil's advocate has to juggle with the truth at every step and labour hard and vainly to reestablish the spell of hypnotic suggestion, now broken for good, which led most of us for a long space to condemn wholesale ourselves and our past and imagine that the Indian's whole duty in life was to turn an imitative ape in leading-strings and dance to the mechanic barrel-organ tunes of the British civiliser. The claim of Indian culture to survival can be met first and most radically by challenging the value of its fundamental ideas and the high things which are most native to its ideal, its temperament, its way of looking at the world. To deny the truth or the value of spirituality, of the sense of the eternal and infinite, the inner spiritual experience, the philosophic mind and spirit, the religious aim and feeling, the intuitive reason, the idea of universality and spiritual unity is one resource, and this is the real attitude of our critic which emerges constantly in his vehement philippic. But he cannot carry it through consistently, because it brings him into conflict with ideas and perceptions which are ineradicable in the human mind and which even in Europe are now after a temporary obscuration beginning to come back into favour. Therefore he hedges and tries rather to prove that we find in India, even in her magnificent past, even at her best, no spirituality, no real philosophy, no true or high religious feeling, no light of intuitive reason, nothing at all of the great things to which she has directed her most strenuous aspiration. This assertion is sufficiently absurd, self-contradictory and opposed to the express testimony of those who are eminently fitted and entitled to express an authoritative opinion on these matters. He therefore establishes a third line of attack combined of two inconsistent and opposite assertions, first, that the higher Hinduism which is made up of

these greater things has had no effect on India and, secondly, that it has had on the contrary a most all-pervading, a most disastrous and paralysing, a soul-killing, life-killing effect. He attempts to make his indictment effective by massing together all these inconsistent lines of attack and leading them all to the one conclusion, that the culture of India is both in theory and practice wrong, worthless, deleterious to the true aim of human living.

The last position taken is the only one which we need now consider, since the value of the essential ideas of Indian culture cannot be destroyed and to deny them is futile. The things they stand for are there, in whatever form, vaguely or distinctly seeking for themselves in the highest and deepest movements of human being and its nature. The peculiarity of Indian culture lies only in this distinction that what is vague or confused or imperfectly brought out in most other cultures, it has laboured rather to make distinct, to sound all its possibilities, to fix its aspects and lines and hold it up as a true, precise, large and practicable ideal for the race. The formulation may not be entirely complete; it may have to be still more enlarged, bettered, put otherwise, things missed brought out, the lines and forms modified, errors of stress and direction corrected; but a firm, a large foundation has been laid down not only in theory, but in solid practice. If there has been an actual complete failure in life,—and that is the one point left,—it must be due to one of two causes; either there has been some essential bungling in the application of the ideal to the facts of life as it is, or else there has been a refusal to recognise the facts of life at all. Perhaps, then, there has been, to put it otherwise, an insistence on what we may be at some hardly attainable height of our being without having first made the most of what we are. The infinite can only be reached after we have grown in the finite, the eternal grasped only by man growing in time, the spiritual perfected only by man accomplished first in body, life and mind. If that necessity has been ignored, then one may fairly contend that there has been a gross, impracticable and inexcusable error in the governing idea of Indian culture. But as a matter of fact there has been no such

error. We have seen what were the aim and idea and method of Indian culture and it will be perfectly clear that the value of life and its training were amply recognised in its system and given their proper place. Even the most extreme philosophies and religions, Buddhism and Illusionism, which held life to be an impermanence or ignorance that must be transcended and cast away, yet did not lose sight of the truth that man must develop himself under the conditions of this present ignorance or impermanence before he can attain to knowledge and to that Permanent which is the denial of temporal being. Buddhism was not solely a cloudy sublimation of Nirvana, nothingness, extinction and the tyrannous futility of Karma; it gave us a great and powerful discipline for the life of man on earth. The enormous positive effects it had on society and ethics and the creative impulse it imparted to art and thought and in a less degree to literature, are a sufficient proof of the strong vitality of its method. If this positive turn was present in the most extreme philosophy of denial, it was still more largely present in the totality of Indian culture.

There has been indeed from early times in the Indian mind a certain strain, a tendency towards a lofty and austere exaggeration in the direction taken by Buddhism and Mayavada. This excess was inevitable, the human mind being what it is; it had even its necessity and value. Our mind does not arrive at the totality of truth easily and by one embracing effort; an arduous search is the condition of its finding. The mind opposes different sides of the truth to each other, follows each to its extreme possibility, treats it even for a time as the sole truth, makes imperfect compromises, arrives by various adjustments and gropings nearer to the true relations. The Indian mind followed this method; it covered, as far as it could, the whole field, tried every position, looked at the truth from every angle, attempted many extremes and many syntheses. But the European critic very ordinarily labours under the idea that this exaggeration in the direction of negating life was actually the whole of Indian thought and sentiment or the one undisputed governing idea of the culture. Nothing could be more false and

inaccurate. The early Vedic religion did not deny, but laid a full emphasis on life. The Upanishads did not deny life, but held that the world is a manifestation of the Eternal, of Brahman, all here is Brahman, all is in the Spirit and the Spirit is in all, the self-existent Spirit has become all these things and creatures; life too is Brahman, the life-force is the very basis of our existence, the life-spirit Vayu is the manifest and evident Eternal, *pratyakṣam brahma*. But it affirmed that the present way of existence of man is not the highest or the whole; his outward mind and life are not all his being; to be fulfilled and perfect he has to grow out of his physical and mental ignorance into spiritual self-knowledge.

Buddhism arrived at a later stage and seized on one side of these ancient teachings to make a sharp spiritual and intellectual opposition between the impermanence of life and the permanence of the Eternal which brought to a head and made a gospel of the ascetic exaggeration. But the synthetic Hindu mind struggled against this negation and finally threw out Buddhism, though not without contracting an increased bias in this direction. That bias came to its height in the philosophy of Shankara, his theory of Maya, which put its powerful imprint on the Indian mind and, coinciding with a progressive decline in the full vitality of the race, did tend for a time to fix a pessimistic and negative view of terrestrial life and distort the larger Indian ideal. But his theory is not at all a necessary deduction from the great Vedantic authorities, the Upanishads, Brahmasutras and Gita, and was always combated by other Vedantic philosophies and religions which drew from them and from spiritual experience very different conclusions. At the present time, in spite of a temporary exaltation of Shankara's philosophy, the most vital movements of Indian thought and religion are moving again towards the synthesis of spirituality and life which was an essential part of the ancient Indian ideal. Therefore Mr. Archer's contention that whatever India has achieved in life and creation and action has been done in spite of the governing ideas of her culture, since logically she ought to have abandoned life and creation and action, is as unsound as it is unnatural and grotesque. To develop to the full the intellectual, the dynamic

and volitional, the ethical, the aesthetic, the social and economic being of man was an important element of Indian civilisation, — if for nothing else, at least as an indispensable preliminary to spiritual perfection and freedom. India's best achievements in thought, art, literature, society were the logical outcome of her religio-philosophical culture.

But still it may be argued that whatever may have been the theory, the exaggeration was there and in practice it discouraged life and action. That, when its other falsities have been eliminated, is what Mr. Archer's criticism comes to in the end; the emphasis on the Self, the eternal, the universal, the impersonal, the infinite discouraged, he thinks, life, will, personality, human action and led to a false and life-killing asceticism. India achieved nothing of importance, produced no great personalities, was impotent in will and endeavour, her literature and art are a barbaric and monstrous nullity not equal even to the third-rate work of Europe, her life story a long and dismal record of incompetence and failure. An inconsistency more or less is nothing to this critic and in the same breath he affirms that this very India, described by him elsewhere as always effete, sterile or a mother of monstrous abortions, is one of the most interesting countries in the world, that her art casts a potent and attractive spell and has numberless beauties, that her very barbarisms are magnificent and that, most wonderful of all, in presence of some of her personalities in the abodes of her ancient fine-spun aristocratic culture a European is apt to feel like a semi-barbarian intruder! But let us leave aside these signs of grace which are only an occasional glimmering of light across the darkness and gloom of Mr. Archer's mood. We must see how far there is any foundation for the substance of this criticism. What was the real value of Indian life, will, personality, achievement, creation, those things that she regards as her glories, but her critic tells her she should shudder at as her disgrace? That is the one remaining vital question.

Indian Spirituality and Life – 5

THE MOST general charge against Indian culture in its practical effects can be dismissed without any serious difficulty. The critic with whom I have to deal has, in fact, spoiled his case by the spirit of frantic exaggeration in which he writes. To say that there has been no great or vivid activity of life in India, that she has had no great personalities with the mythical exception of Buddha and the other pale exception of Asoka, that she has never shown any will-power and never done any great thing, is so contrary to all the facts of history that only a devil's advocate in search of a case could advance it at all or put it with that crude vehemence. India has lived and lived greatly, whatever judgment one may pass on her ideas and institutions. What is meant after all by life and when is it that we most fully and greatly live? Life is surely nothing but the creation and active self-expression of man's spirit, powers, capacities, his will to be and think and create and love and do and achieve. When that is wanting or, since it cannot be absolutely wanting, depressed, held under, discouraged or inert, whether by internal or external causes, then we may say that there is a lack of life. Life in its largest sense is the great web of our internal and external action, the play of Shakti, the play of Karma; it is religion and philosophy and thought and science and poetry and art, drama and song and dance and play, politics and society, industry, commerce and trade, adventure and travel, war and peace, conflict and unity, victory and defeat and aspirations and vicissitudes, the thoughts, emotions, words, deeds, joys and sorrows which make up the existence of man. In a narrower sense life is sometimes spoken of as the more obvious and external vital action, a thing which can be depressed by a top-heavy intellectuality or ascetic spirituality, sickled over with the pale cast of thought or the paler cast of world-weariness or made

flat, stale and uninteresting by a formalised, conventional or too strait-laced system of society. Again, life may be very active and full of colour for a small and privileged part of the community, but the life of the mass dull, void and miserable. Or, finally, there may be all the ordinary materials and circumstances of mere living, but if life is not uplifted by great hopes, aspirations and ideals, then we may well say that the community does not really live; it is defective in the characteristic greatness of the human spirit.

The ancient and mediaeval life of India was not wanting in any of the things that make up the vivid interesting activity of human existence. On the contrary, it was extraordinarily full of colour and interest. Mr. Archer's criticism on this point, a criticism packed full of ignorance and built up by a purely fictitious construction of what things logically ought to have been on the theory of a dominating asceticism and belief in the illusionary character of the world, is not and cannot be borne out by anyone who has come close to the facts. It is true that while many European writers who have studied the history of the land and the people, have expressed strongly their appreciation of the vividness and interesting fullness, colour and beauty of life in India before the present period,—that unhappily exists no longer except in the pages of history and literature and the broken or crumbling fragments of the past,—those who see only from a distance or fix their eyes only on one aspect, speak of it often as a land of metaphysics, philosophies, dreams and brooding imaginations, and certain artists and writers are apt to write in a strain as if it were a country of the Arabian Nights, a mere glitter of strange hues and fancies and marvels. But on the contrary India has been as much a home of serious and solid realities, of a firm grappling with the problems of thought and life, of measured and wise organisation and great action as any other considerable centre of civilisation. The widely different view these perceptions express simply show the many-sided brilliance and fullness of her life. The colour and magnificence have been its aesthetic side; she has had great dreams and high and splendid imaginations, for that too is wanted for the completeness of our

living; but also deep philosophical and religious thinking, a wide and searching criticism of life, a great political and social order, a strong ethical tone and a persistent vigour of individual and communal living. That is a combination which means life in all its fullness, though deficient, it may be, except in extraordinary cases, in the more violent egoistic perversities and exaggerations which some minds seem to take for a proof of the highest vigour of existence.

In what field indeed has not India attempted, achieved, created, and in all on a large scale and yet with much attention to completeness of detail? Of her spiritual and philosophic achievement there can be no real question. They stand there as the Himalayas stand upon the earth in the phrase of Kalidasa, *prthivyā iva mānadarṇah*, "as if earth's measuring rod," mediating still between earth and heaven, measuring the finite, casting their plummet far into the infinite, plunging their extremities into the upper and lower seas of the superconscious and the subliminal, the spiritual and the natural being. But if her philosophies, her religious disciplines, her long list of great spiritual personalities, thinkers, founders, saints are her greatest glory, as was natural to her temperament and governing idea, they are by no means her sole glories, nor are the others dwarfed by their eminence. It is now proved that in science she went farther than any country before the modern era, and even Europe owes the beginning of her physical science to India as much as to Greece, although not directly but through the medium of the Arabs. And, even if she had only gone as far, that would have been sufficient proof of a strong intellectual life in an ancient culture. Especially in mathematics, astronomy and chemistry, the chief elements of ancient science, she discovered and formulated much and well and anticipated by force of reasoning or experiment some of the scientific ideas and discoveries which Europe first arrived at much later, but was able to base more firmly by her new and completer method. She was well-equipped in surgery and her system of medicine survives to this day and has still its value, though it declined intermediately in knowledge and is only now recovering its vitality.

In literature, in the life of the mind, she lived and built greatly. Not only has she the Vedas, Upanishads and Gita, not to speak of less supreme but still powerful or beautiful work in that field, unequalled monuments of religious and philosophic poetry, a kind in which Europe has never been able to do anything much of any great value, but that vast national structure, the Mahabharata, gathering into its cycle the poetic literature and expressing so completely the life of a long formative age, that it is said of it in a popular saying which has the justice if also the exaggeration of a too apt epigram, "What is not in this Bharata, is not in Bharatavarsha (India)," and the Ramayana, the greatest and most remarkable poem of its kind, that most sublime and beautiful epic of ethical idealism and a heroic semi-divine human life, and the marvellous richness, fullness and colour of the poetry and romance of highly cultured thought, sensuous enjoyment, imagination, action and adventure which makes up the romantic literature of her classical epoch. Nor did this long continuous vigour of creation cease with the loss of vitality by the Sanskrit tongue, but was paralleled and carried on in a mass of great or of beautiful work in her other languages, in Pali first and Prakrit, much unfortunately lost,¹ and Tamil, afterwards in Hindi, Bengali, Marathi and other tongues. The long tradition of her architecture, sculpture and painting speaks for itself, even in what survives after all the ruin of stormy centuries: whatever judgment may be formed of it by the narrower school of Western aesthetics,—and at least its fineness of execution and workmanship cannot be denied, nor the power with which it renders the Indian mind,—it testifies at least to a continuous creative activity. And creation is proof of life and great creation of greatness of life.

But these things are, it may be said, the things of the mind, and the intellect, imagination and aesthetic mind of India may have been creatively active, but yet her outward life depressed, dull, poor, gloomy with the hues of asceticism, void of will-power and personality, ineffective, null. That would be a hard

¹ E.g. the once famous work in Paisachi of which the *Kathasaritsagara* is an inferior version.

proposition to swallow; for literature, art and science do not flourish in a void of life. But here too what are the facts? India has not only had the long roll of her great saints, sages, thinkers, religious founders, poets, creators, scientists, scholars, legislators; she has had her great rulers, administrators, soldiers, conquerors, heroes, men with the strong active will, the mind that plans and the seeing force that builds. She has warred and ruled, traded and colonised and spread her civilisation, built polities and organised communities and societies, done all that makes the outward activity of great peoples. A nation tends to throw out its most vivid types in that line of action which is most congenial to its temperament and expressive of its leading idea, and it is the great saints and religious personalities that stand at the head in India and present the most striking and continuous roll-call of greatness, just as Rome lived most in her warriors and statesmen and rulers. The Rishi in ancient India was the outstanding figure with the hero just behind, while in later times the most striking feature is the long uninterrupted chain from Buddha and Mahavira to Ramanuja, Chaitanya, Nanak, Ramdas and Tukaram and beyond them to Ramakrishna and Vivekananda and Dayananda. But there have been also the remarkable achievements of statesmen and rulers, from the first dawn of ascertainable history which comes in with the striking figures of Chandragupta, Chanakya, Asoka, the Gupta emperors and goes down through the multitude of famous Hindu and Mahomedan figures of the middle age to quite modern times. In ancient India there was the life of republics, oligarchies, democracies, small kingdoms of which no detail of history now survives, afterwards the long effort at empire-building, the colonisation of Ceylon and the Archipelago, the vivid struggles that attended the rise and decline of the Pathan and Mogul dynasties, the Hindu struggle for survival in the south, the wonderful record of Rajput heroism and the great upheaval of national life in Maharashtra penetrating to the lowest strata of society, the remarkable episode of the Sikh Khalsa. An adequate picture of that outward life still remains to be given; once given it would be the end of many fictions. All this

mass of action was not accomplished by men without mind and will and vital force, by pale shadows of humanity in whom the vigorous manhood had been crushed out under the burden of a gloomy and all-effacing asceticism, nor does it look like the sign of a metaphysically minded people of dreamers averse to life and action. It was not men of straw or lifeless and will-less dummies or thin-blooded dreamers who thus acted, planned, conquered, built great systems of administration, founded kingdoms and empires, figured as great patrons of poetry and art and architecture or, later, resisted heroically imperial power and fought for the freedom of clan or people. Nor was it a nation devoid of life which maintained its existence and culture and still lived on and broke out constantly into new revivals under the ever increasing stress of continuously adverse circumstances. The modern Indian revival, religious, cultural, political, called now sometimes a renaissance, which so troubles and grieves the minds of her critics, is only a repetition under altered circumstances, in an adapted form, in a greater though as yet less vivid mass of movement, of a phenomenon which has constantly repeated itself throughout a millennium of Indian history.

And it must be remembered that by virtue of its culture and its system the whole nation shared in the common life. In all countries in the past the mass has indeed lived with a less active and vivid force than the few,—sometimes with the mere elements of life, not with even any beginning of finished richness,—nor has modern civilisation yet got rid of this disparity, though it has opened the advantages or at least the initial opportunities of a first-hand life and thought and knowledge to a greater number. But in ancient India, though the higher classes led and had the lion's share of the force and wealth of life, the people too lived and until much later times intensely though on a lesser scale and with a more diffused and less concentrated force. Their religious life was more intense than that of any other country; they drank in with remarkable facility the thoughts of the philosophers and the influence of the saints; they heard and followed Buddha and the many who came after him; they were taught by the Sannyasins and sang the songs of the Bhaktas and

Bauls and thus possessed some of the most delicate and beautiful poetical literature ever produced; they contributed many of the greatest names in our religion, and from the outcastes themselves came saints revered by the whole community. In ancient Hindu times they had their share of political life and power; they were the people, the *viśāḥ* of the Veda, of whom the kings were the leaders and from them as well as from the sacred or princely families were born the Rishis; they held their villages as little self-administered republics; in the time of the great kingdoms and empires they sat in the municipalities and urban councils and the bulk of the typical royal Council described in the books of political science was composed of commoners, Vaishyas, and not of Brahmin Pundits and Kshatriya nobles; for a long time they could impose their will on their kings, without the need of a long struggle, by a single demonstration of their displeasure. So long as Hindu kingdoms existed, something of all this survived, and even the entrance into India of central Asian forms of absolutist despotism, never an indigenous Indian growth, left some remnant of the old edifice still in being. The people had their share too in art and poetry, their means by which the essence of Indian culture was disseminated through the mass, a system of elementary education in addition to the great universities of ancient times, a type of popular dramatic representation which was in some parts of the country alive even yesterday; they gave India her artists and architects and many of the famous poets in the popular tongues; they preserved by the force of their long past culture an innate aesthetic sense and faculty of which the work of Indian craftsmen remained a constant and striking evidence until it was destroyed or degraded by the vulgarisation and loss of aesthetic sense and beauty which has been one of the results of modern civilisation. Nor was the life of India ascetic, gloomy or sad, as the too logical mind of the critic would have it be. The outward form is more quiet than in other countries, there is a certain gravity and reserve before strangers which deceives the foreign observer, and in recent times asceticism and poverty and an increase of puritanic tendency had their effect, but the life portrayed in the literature of the country is glad and

vivid, and even now despite certain varieties of temperament and many forces making for depression laughter, humour, an unobtrusive elasticity and equanimity in the vicissitudes of life are very marked features of the Indian character.

The whole theory of a want of life and will and activity in the Indian people as a result of their culture is then a myth. The circumstances which have given some colour to it in later times will be noted in their proper place; but they are a feature of the decline and even then must be taken with considerable qualification, and the much longer history of its past greatness tells quite another story. That history has not been recorded in the European fashion; for the art of history and biography, though not entirely neglected, was never brought to perfection in India, never sufficiently practised, nor does any sustained record of the doings of kings and great men and peoples before the Mussulman dynasties survive except in the one solitary instance of Cashmere. This is certainly a defect and leaves a very serious gap. India has lived much, but has not sat down to record the history of her life. Her soul and mind have left their great monuments, but so much as we know—and after all it is not little—of the rest, the more outward things, remains or has emerged recently in spite of her neglect; such exact records as she had, she has allowed to rust forgotten or disappear. Perhaps what Mr. Archer really means when he tells us that we have had no personalities in our history, is that they do not come home to his mind because their doings and sayings are not minutely recorded in the Western manner; their personality, will-power and creative force emerge only in their work or in indicative tradition and anecdote or in incomplete records. And very curiously, very fancifully this defect has been set down to an ascetic want of interest in life; it is supposed that India was so much absorbed in the eternal that she deliberately despised and neglected time, so profoundly concentrated on the pursuit of ascetic brooding and quietistic peace that she looked down on and took no interest in the memory of action. That is another myth. The same phenomenon of a lack of sustained and deliberate record appears in other ancient cultures, but nobody

suggests that Egypt, Assyria or Persia have to be reconstructed for us by the archaeologists for an analogous reason. The genius of Greece developed the art of history, though only in the later period of her activity, and Europe has cherished and preserved the art; India and other ancient civilisations did not arrive at it or neglected its full development. It is a defect, but there is no reason why we should go out of our way in this one case to attribute it to a deliberate motive or to any lack of interest in life. And in spite of the defect the greatness and activity of the past life of India reveals itself and comes out in bolder relief the more the inquiry into her past unearths the vast amount of material still available.

But our critic will still have it that India lived as it were in spite of herself and that in all this teeming action there is ample evidence of the dwarfing of individual will and the absence of any great individual personality. He arrives at that result by methods which savour of the skill of the journalist or pamphleteer rather than the disinterested mind of the critic. He tells us for instance that India has contributed only one or at most two great names to the world's Pantheon. By that, of course, he means Europe's Pantheon, or the world's Pantheon as constructed by the mind of Europe, crammed with the figures of Western history and achievement which are near and familiar to it and admitting only a very few of the more gigantic names from the distant East, those which it finds it most difficult to ignore. One remembers the list made by a great French poet in the field of literature in which a sounding string of French names equals or outnumbers the whole contribution of the rest of Europe! If an Indian were to set about the same task in the same spirit, he would no doubt similarly pour out an interminable list of Indian names with some great men of Europe and America, Arabia, Persia, China, Japan forming a brief tail to this large peninsular body. These exercises of the partial mentality have no value. And it is difficult to find out what measure of values Mr. Archer is using when he relegates other great Indian names, allowing for three or four only, to the second plan and even there belittles them in comparison with corresponding European immortals. In what

is Shivaji with his vivid and interesting life and character, who not only founded a kingdom but organised a nation, inferior to Cromwell, or Shankara whose great spirit in the few years of its mortal life swept triumphant through India and reconstituted the whole religious life of her peoples, inferior as a personality to Luther? Why are Chanakya and Chandragupta who laid down the form of empire-building in India and whose great administrative system survived with changes often for the worse down to modern times, lesser men than the rulers and statesmen of European history? India may not present any recorded moment of her life so crowded as the few years of Athens to which Mr. Archer makes appeal; she may have no parallel to the swarm of interesting but often disturbing, questionable or even dark and revolting figures which illuminate and stain the story of the Italian cities during the Renaissance, although she has had too her crowded moments thronged by figures of a different kind. But she has had many rulers, statesmen and encouragers of art as great in their own way as Pericles or Lorenzo di Medici; the personalities of her famed poets emerge more dimly through the mist of time, but with indications which point to a lofty spirit or a humanity as great as that of Aeschylus or Euripides or a life-story as human and interesting as that of the famous Italian poets. And if, comparing this one country with all Europe as Mr. Archer insists, — mainly on the ground that Indians themselves make the comparison when they speak of the size of the country, its many races and the difficulty so long experienced in organising Indian unity, — it may be that in the field of political and military action Europe has a long lead, but what of the unparalleled profusion of great spiritual personalities in which India is preeminent? Again Mr. Archer speaks with arrogant depreciation of the significant figures born of the creative Indian mind which people its literature and its drama. Here too it is difficult to follow him or to accept his measure of values. To an oriental mind at least Rama and Ravana are as vivid and great and real characters as the personalities of Homer and Shakespeare, Sita and Draupadi certainly not less living than Helen or Cleopatra, Damayanti and Shakuntala and other feminine types not less

sweet, gracious and alive than Alcestis or Desdemona. I am not here affirming any superiority, but the bottomless inequality and inferiority which this critic affirms exists, not in truth, but only in his imagination or his way of seeing.

That perhaps is the one thing of significance, the one thing which is really worth noting, the difference of mentality which is at the bottom of these comparisons. There is not any inferiority of life or force or active and reactive will but, as far as the sameness of human nature allows, a difference of type, character, personality, let us say, an emphasis in different and almost opposite directions. Will-power and personality have not been wanting in India, but the direction preferably given to them and the type most admired are of a different kind. The average European mind is prone to value or at least to be more interested in the egoistic or self-asserting will which insists upon itself with a strong or a bold, an aggressive, sometimes a fierce insistence; the Indian mind not only prizes more from the ethical standpoint, — that is found everywhere, — but is more vividly interested in the calm, self-controlling or even the self-effacing personality; for the effacement of egoism seems to it to be not an effacement, but an enhancement of value and power of the true person and its greatness. Mr. Archer finds Asoka pale and featureless; to an Indian mind he is supremely vivid and attractive. Why is Asoka to be called pale in comparison with Charlemagne or, let us say, with Constantine? Is it because he only mentions his sanguinary conquest of Kalinga in order to speak of his remorse and the turning of his spirit, a sentiment which Charlemagne massacring the Saxons in order to make good Christians of them could not in the least have understood, nor any more perhaps the Pope who anointed him? Constantine gave the victory to the Christian religion, but there is nothing Christian in his personality; Asoka not only enthroned Buddhism, but strove though not with a perfect success to follow the path laid down by Buddha. And the Indian mind would account him not only a nobler will, but a greater and more attracting personality than Constantine or Charlemagne. It is interested in Chanakya, but much more interested in Chaitanya.

And in literature also just as in actual life it has the same turn. This European mind finds Rama and Sita uninteresting and unreal, because they are too virtuous, too ideal, too white in colour; but to the Indian mind even apart from all religious sentiment they are figures of an absorbing reality which appeal to the inmost fibres of our being. A European scholar criticising the Mahabharata finds the strong and violent Bhima the only real character in that great poem; the Indian mind on the contrary finds greater character and a more moving interest in the calm and collected heroism of Arjuna, in the fine ethical temperament of Yudhisthira, in the divine charioteer of Kurukshetra who works not for his own hand but for the founding of the kingdom of right and justice. Those vehement or self-asserting characters or those driven by the storm of their passions which make the chief interest of European epic and drama, would either be relegated by it to the second plan or else, if set in large proportions, so brought in in order to bring into relief the greatness of the higher type of personality, as Ravana contrasts with and sets off Rama. The admiration of the one kind of mentality in the aesthetics of life goes to the coloured, that of the other to the luminous personality. Or, to put it in the form of the distinction made by the Indian mind itself, the interest of the one centres more in the rajasic, that of the other in the sattwic will and character.

Whether this difference imposes an inferiority on the aesthetics of Indian life and creation, each must judge for himself, but surely the Indian is the more evolved and spiritual conception. The Indian mind believes that the will and personality are not diminished but heightened by moving from the rajasic or more coloured egoistic to the sattwic and more luminous level of our being. Are not after all calm, self-mastery, a high balance signs of a greater and more real force of character than mere self-assertion of strength of will or the furious driving of the passions? Their possession does not mean that one must act with an inferior or less puissant, but only with a more right, collected and balanced will. And it is a mistake to think that asceticism itself rightly understood and practised implies an effacement

of will; it brings much rather its greater concentration. That is the Indian view and experience and the meaning of the old legends in the epics — to which Mr. Archer, misunderstanding the idea behind them, violently objects,— attributing so enormous a force, even when it was misused, to the power gained by ascetic self-mastery, Tapasya. The Indian mind believed and still believes that soul power is a greater thing, works from a mightier centre of will and has greater results than a more outwardly and materially active will-force. But it will be said that India has valued most the impersonal and that must obviously discourage personality. But this too, — except for the negative ideal of losing oneself in the trance or the silence of the Eternal, which is not the true essence of the matter, — involves a misconception. However paradoxical it may sound, one finds actually that the acceptance of the eternal and impersonal behind one's being and action and the attempt at unity with it is precisely the thing that carries the person to his largest greatness and power. For this impersonality is not a nullity, but an oceanic totality of the being. The perfect man, the Siddha or the Buddha, becomes universal, embraces all being in sympathy and oneness, finds himself in others as in himself and by so doing draws into himself at the same time something of the infinite power of a universal energy. That is the positive ideal of Indian culture. And when this hostile critic finds himself forced to do homage to the superiority of certain personalities who have sprung from this "fine-spun aristocratic" culture, he is really paying a tribute to some results of this preference of the sattvic to the rajasic, the universal to the limited and egoistic man. Not to be as the common man, that is to say, as the crude natural or half-baked human being, was indeed the sense of this ancient endeavour and in that sense it may be called an aristocratic culture. But it was not a vulgar outward but a spiritual nobility which was the aim of its self-discipline. Indian life, personality, art, literature must be judged in this light and appreciated or depreciated after being seen in the real sense and with the right understanding of Indian culture.

XII

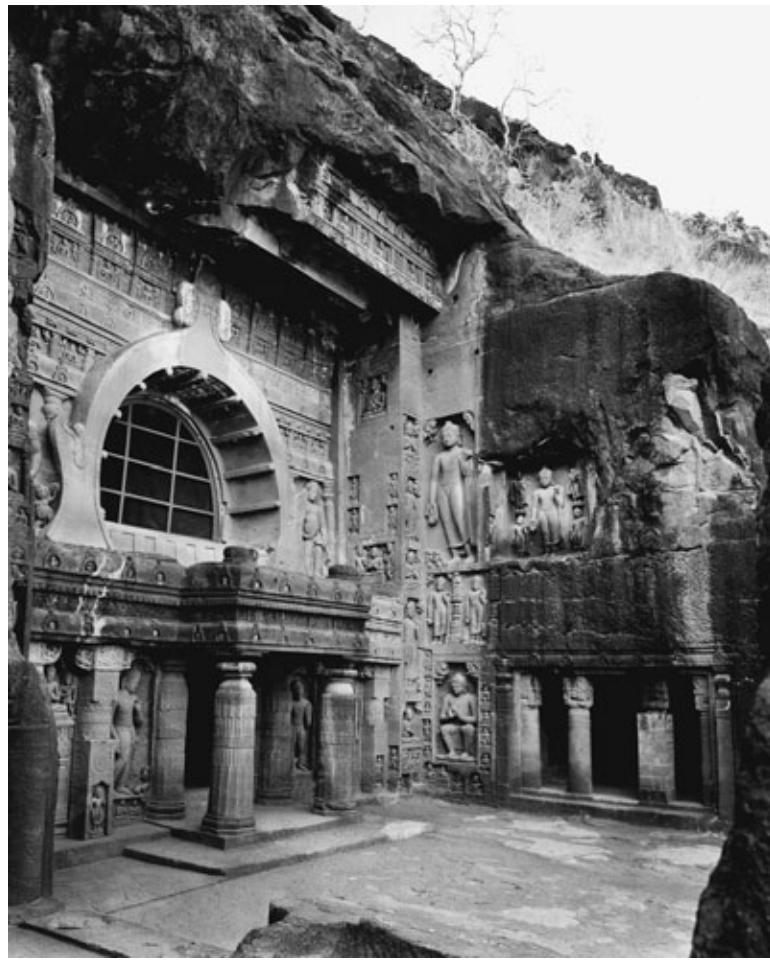
Indian Art

A GOOD deal of hostile or unsympathetic Western criticism of Indian civilisation has been directed in the past against its aesthetic side and taken the form of a disdainful or violent depreciation of its fine arts, architecture, sculpture and painting. Mr. Archer would not find much support in his wholesale and undiscriminating depreciation of a great literature, but here too there has been, if not positive attack, much failure of understanding; but in the attack on Indian art, his is the last and shrillest of many hostile voices. This aesthetic side of a people's culture is of the highest importance and demands almost as much scrutiny and carefulness of appreciation as the philosophy, religion and central formative ideas which have been the foundation of Indian life and of which much of the art and literature is a conscious expression in significant aesthetic forms. Fortunately, a considerable amount of work has been already done in the clearing away of misconceptions about Indian sculpture and painting and, if that were all, I might be content to refer to the works of Mr. Havell and Dr. Coomaraswamy or to the sufficiently understanding though less deeply informed and penetrating criticisms of others who cannot be charged with a prepossession in favour of oriental work. But a more general and searching consideration of first principles is called for in any complete view of the essential motives of Indian culture. I am appealing mainly to that new mind of India which long misled by an alien education, view and influence is returning to a sound and true idea of its past and future; but in this field the return is far from being as pervading, complete or luminous as it should be. I shall confine myself therefore first to a consideration of the sources of misunderstanding and pass from that to the true cultural significance of Indian aesthetic creation.

Mr. Archer pursuing his policy of Thorough devotes a whole

chapter to the subject. This chapter is one long torrent of sweeping denunciation. But it would be a waste of time to take his attack as serious criticism and answer all in detail. His reply to defenders and eulogists is amazing in its shallowness and triviality, made up mostly of small, feeble and sometimes irrelevant points, big glaring epithets and forcibly senseless phrases, based for the rest on a misunderstanding or a sheer inability to conceive the meaning of spiritual experiences and metaphysical ideas, which betrays an entire absence of the religious sense and the philosophic mind. Mr. Archer is of course a rationalist and contemner of philosophy and entitled to his deficiencies; but why then try to judge things into the sense of which one is unable to enter and exhibit the spectacle of a blind man discoursing on colours? I will cite one or two instances which will show the quality of his criticism and amply justify a refusal to attach any positive value to the actual points he labours to make, except for the light they throw on the psychology of the objectors.

I will give first an instance amazing in its ineptitude. The Indian ideal figure of the masculine body insists on two features among many, a characteristic width at the shoulders and slenderness in the middle. Well, an objection to broadness of girth and largeness of belly — allowed only where they are appropriate as in sculptures of Ganesha or the Yakshas — is not peculiar to the Indian aesthetic sense; an emphasis, even a pronounced emphasis on their opposites is surely intelligible enough as an aesthetic tradition, however some may prefer a more realistic and prosperous presentation of the human figure. But Indian poets and authorities on art have given in this connection the simile of the lion, and lo and behold Mr. Archer solemnly discoursing on this image as a plain proof that the Indian people were only just out of the semi-savage state! It is only too clear that they drew the ideal of heroic manhood from their native jungle, from theriolatry, that is to say, from a worship of wild beasts! I presume, on the same principle and with the same stupefying ingenuity he would find in Kamban's image of the sea for the colour and depth of Sita's eyes clear evidence of a still more primitive savagery and barbaric worship of inanimate



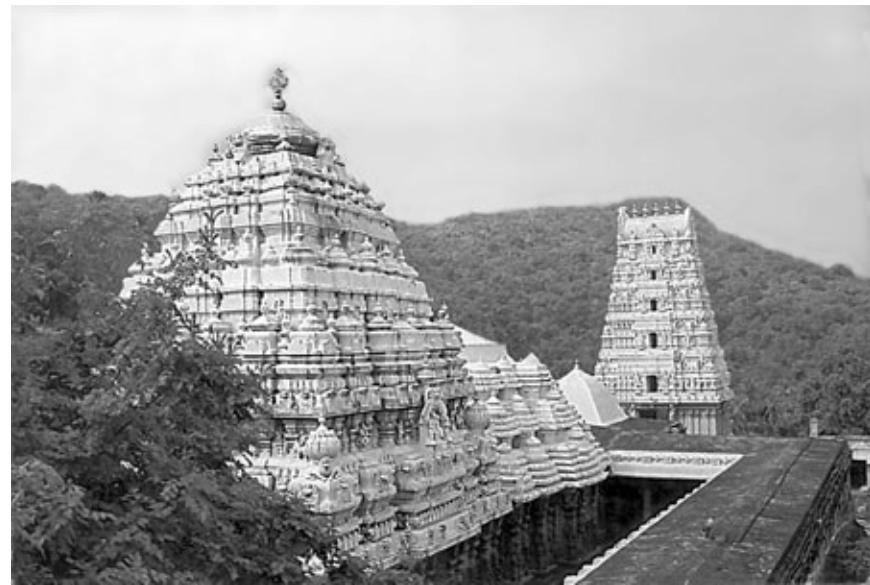
1. Cave Cathedral, Ajanta

The secular buildings of ancient India, her palaces and places of assembly and civic edifices have not outlived the ravage of time; what remains to us is mostly something of the great mountain and cave temples, something too of the temples of her ancient cities of the plains....(p. 272)



2. Kalahastishwara Temple, Andhra Pradesh

The straight way here is not to detach the temple from its surroundings, but to see it in unity with the sky and low-lying landscape or with the sky and hills around and feel the thing common to both, the construction and its environment, the reality in Nature, the reality expressed in the work of art.
(p.277)



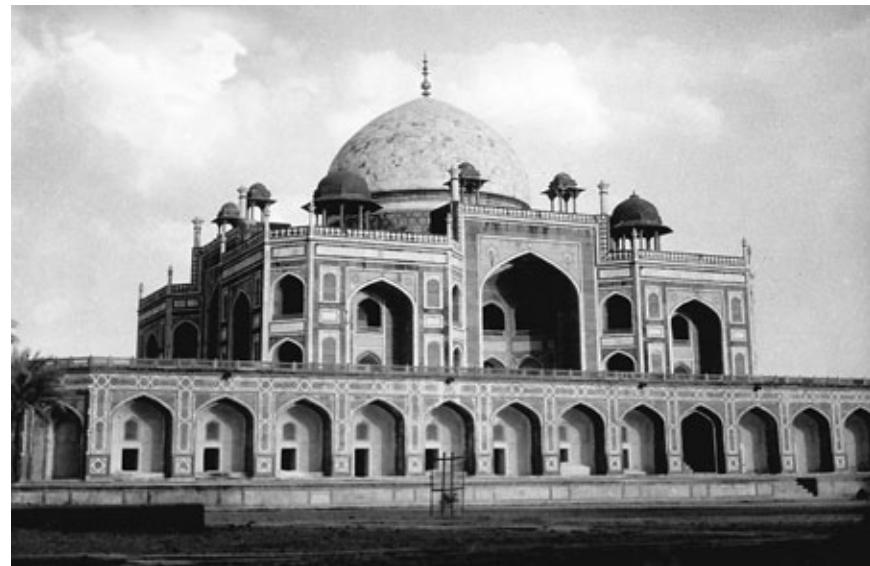
3. Sinhachalam Temple, Andhra Pradesh

One of these buildings climbs up bold, massive in projection, up-piled in the greatness of a forceful but sure ascent, preserving its range and line to the last, the other soars from the strength of its base, in the grace and emotion of a curving mass to a rounded summit and crowning symbol. (p. 277)



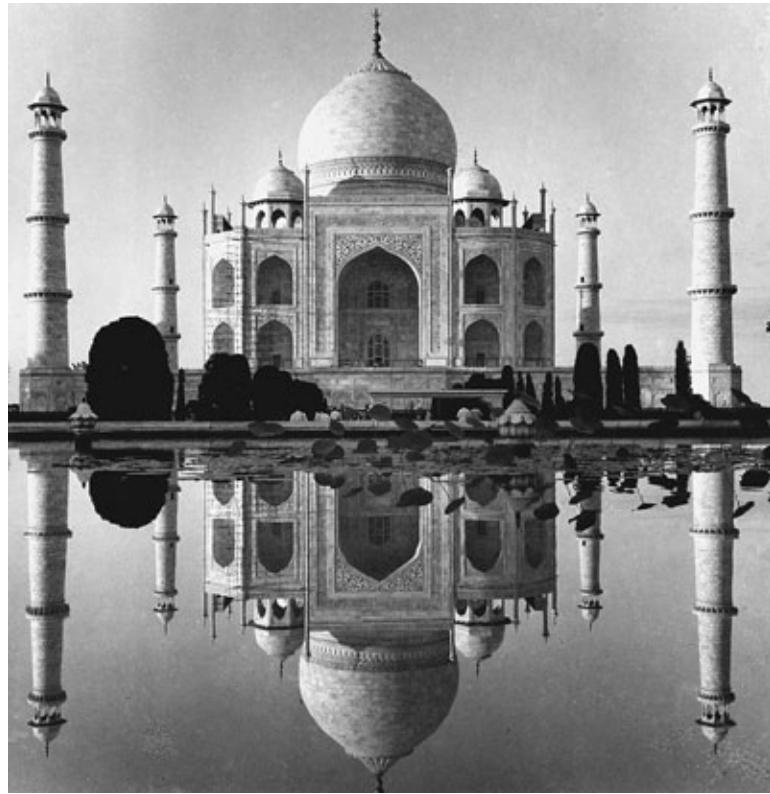
4. Kandarya Mahadeo Temple, Khajuraho

The great temples of the north have often ... a singular grace
in their power, a luminous lightness relieving their mass and
strength, a rich delicacy of beauty in their ornate fullness.
(p.280)



5. Humayun's Tomb, New Delhi

It seems to me that here the Indian mind has taken in much from the Arab and Persian imagination and in certain mosques and tombs I seem to find an impress of the robust and bold Afghan and Mogul temperament; but it remains clear enough that it is still on the whole a typically Indian creation with the peculiar Indian gift. (p. 282)



6. Taj Mahal, Agra

The Taj is not merely a sensuous reminiscence of an imperial amour or a fairy enchantment hewn from the moon's lucent quarries, but the eternal dream of a love that survives death.
(p.284)



7. Itimad-ud-Daulah's Tomb, Agra

Not rational but magical beauty satisfying and enchanting to some deeper quite suprarational aesthetic soul in us is the inexpressible charm of these creations. (p. 283)



8. Panch Mahal, Fatehpur Sikri

The buildings of Fatehpur-Sikri are not monuments of an effeminate luxurious decadence,—an absurd description for the mind of the time of Akbar,—but give form to a nobility, power and beauty which lay hold upon but do not wallow on the earth. (p. 284)

nature, or in Valmiki's description of his heroine's "eyes like wine", *madirekṣanā*, evidence of a chronic inebriety and the semi-drunken inspiration of the Indian poetic mind. This is one example of Mr. Archer's most telling points. It is by no means an isolated though it is an extreme specimen, and the absurdity of that particular argument only brings out the triviality of this manner of criticism. It is on a par with the common objection to the slim hands and feet loved of the Bengal painters which one hears sometimes advanced as a solid condemnation of their work. And that can be pardoned in the average man who under the high dispensation of modern culture is not expected to have any intelligent conception about art,—the instinctive appreciation has been already safely killed and buried. But what are we to say of a professed critic who ignores the deeper motives and fastens on details in order to give them this kind of significance?

But there are more grave and important objections in this criticism; for Mr. Archer turns also to deal with philosophy in art. The whole basis of Indian artistic creation, perfectly conscious and recognised in the canons, is directly spiritual and intuitive. Mr. Havell rightly lays stress on this essential distinction and speaks in passing of the infinite superiority of the method of direct perception over intellect, an assertion naturally offensive to the rationalistic mind, though it is now increasingly affirmed by leading Western thinkers. Mr. Archer at once starts out to hack at it with a very blunt tomahawk. How does he deal with this crucial matter? In a way which misses the whole real point and has nothing whatever to do with the philosophy of art. He fastens on Mr. Havell's coupling of the master intuition of Buddha with the great intuition of Newton and objects to the parallel because the two discoveries deal with two different orders of knowledge, one scientific and physical, the other mental or psychic, spiritual or philosophic in nature. He trots out from its stable the old objection that Newton's intuition was only the last step in a long intellectual process, while according to this positive psychologist and philosophic critic the intuitions of Buddha and other Indian sages had no basis in any intellectual process of any kind or any verifiable experience. It is on the

contrary the simple fact, well-known to all who know anything of the subject, that the conclusions of Buddha and other Indian philosophers (I am not now speaking of the inspired thought of the Upanishads which was pure spiritual experience enlightened by intuition and gnosis,) were preceded by a very acute scrutiny of relevant psychological phenomena and a process of reasoning which, though certainly not rationalistic, was as rational as any other method of thinking. He clinches his refutation by the sage remark that these intuitions which he chooses to call fantasies contradict one another and therefore, it seems, have no sort of value except their vain metaphysical subtlety. Are we to conclude that the patient study of phenomena, the scrupulous and rigidly verifiable intellectual reasonings and conclusions of Western scientists have led to no conflicting or contradictory results? One could never imagine at this rate that the science of heredity is torn by conflicting "fantasies" or that Newton's "fantasies" about space and gravitational effect on space are at this day in danger of being upset by Einstein's "fantasies" in the same field. It is a minor matter that Mr. Archer happens to be wrong in his idea of Buddha's intuition when he says that he would have rejected a certain Vedantic intuition, since Buddha neither accepted nor rejected, but simply refused at all to speculate on the supreme cause. His intuition was confined to the cause of sorrow and the impermanence of things and the release by extinction of ego, desire and Sanskara, and so far as he chose to go, his intuition of this extinction, Nirvana, and the Vedantic intuition of the supreme unity were the seeing of one truth of spiritual experience, seen no doubt from different angles of vision and couched in different intellectual forms, but with a common intuitive substance. The rest was foreign to Buddha's rigidly practical purpose. All this leads us far afield from our subject, but our critic has a remarkably confused mind and to follow him is to be condemned to divagate.

Thus far Mr. Archer on intuition. This is the character of his excursions on first principles in art. Is it really necessary to point out that a power of mind or spirit may be the same and yet act differently in different fields? or that a certain kind of intuition

may be prepared by a long intellectual training, but that does not make it a last step in an intellectual process, any more than the precedence of sense activity makes intellectual reasoning a last step of sense-perception? The reason overtops sense and admits us to other and subtler ranges of truth; the intuition similarly overtops reason and admits us to a more direct and luminous power of truth. But very obviously in the use of the intuition the poet and artist cannot proceed precisely in the same way as the scientist or philosopher. Leonardo da Vinci's remarkable intuitions in science and his creative intuitions in art started from the same power, but the surrounding or subordinate mental operations were of a different character and colour. And in art itself there are different kinds of intuition. Shakespeare's seeing of life differs in its character and aims from Balzac's or Ibsen's, but the essential part of the process, that which makes it intuitive, is the same. The Buddhistic, the Vedantic seeing of things may be equally powerful starting-points for artistic creation, may lead one to the calm of a Buddha or the other to the rapture dance or majestic stillness of Shiva, and it is quite indifferent to the purposes of art to which of them the metaphysician may be inclined to give a logical preference. These are elementary notions and it is not surprising that one who ignores them should misunderstand the strong and subtle artistic creations of India.

The weakness of Mr. Archer's attack, its empty noise and violence and exiguity of substance must not blind us to the very real importance of the mental outlook from which his dislike of Indian art proceeds. For the outlook and the dislike it generates are rooted in something deeper than themselves, a whole cultural training, natural or acquired temperament and fundamental attitude towards existence, and it measures, if the immeasurable can be measured, the width of the gulf which till recently separated the oriental and the Western mind and most of all the European and the Indian way of seeing things. An inability to understand the motives and methods of Indian art and a contempt of or repulsion from it was almost universal till yesterday in the mind of Europe. There was little

difference in this regard between the average man bound by his customary first notions and the competent critic trained to appreciate different forms of culture. The gulf was too wide for any bridge of culture then built to span. To the European mind Indian art was a thing barbarous, immature, monstrous, an arrested growth from humanity's primitive savagery and incompetent childhood. If there has been now some change, it is due to the remarkably sudden widening of the horizon and view of European culture, a partial shifting even of the standpoint from which it was accustomed to see and judge all that it saw. In matters of art the Western mind was long bound up as in a prison in the Greek and Renaissance tradition modified by a later mentality with only two side rooms of escape, the romantic and the realistic motives, but these were only wings of the same building; for the base was the same and a common essential canon united their variations. The conventional superstition of the imitation of Nature as the first law or the limiting rule of art governed even the freest work and gave its tone to the artistic and critical intelligence. The canons of Western artistic creation were held to be the sole valid criteria and everything else was regarded as primitive and half-developed or else strange and fantastic and interesting only by its curiosity. But a remarkable change has begun to set in, even though the old ideas still largely rule. The prison, if not broken, has at least had a wide breach made in it; a more flexible vision and a more profound imagination have begun to superimpose themselves on the old ingrained attitude. As a result, and as a contributing influence towards this change, oriental or at any rate Chinese and Japanese art has begun to command something like adequate recognition.

But the change has not yet gone far enough for a thorough appreciation of the deepest and most characteristic spirit and inspiration of Indian work. An eye or an effort like Mr. Havell's is still rare. For the most part even the most sympathetic criticism stops short at a technical appreciation and imaginative sympathy which tries to understand from outside and penetrates into so much only of the artistic suggestion

as can be at once seized by the new wider view of a more accomplished and flexible critical mentality. But there is little sign of the understanding of the very well-spring and spiritual fountain of Indian artistic creation. There is therefore still a utility in fathoming the depths and causes of the divergence. That is especially necessary for the Indian mind itself, for by the appreciation excited by an opposing view it will be better able to understand itself and especially to seize what is essential in Indian art and must be clung to in the future and what is an incident or a phase of growth and can be shed in the advance to a new creation. This is properly a task for those who have themselves at once the creative insight, the technical competence and the seeing critical eye. But everyone who has at all the Indian spirit and feeling, can at least give some account of the main, the central things which constitute for him the appeal of Indian painting, sculpture and architecture. This is all that I shall attempt, for it will be in itself the best defence and justification of Indian culture on its side of aesthetic significance.

The criticism of art is a vain and dead thing when it ignores the spirit, aim, essential motive from which a type of artistic creation starts and judges by the external details only in the light of a quite different spirit, aim and motive. Once we understand the essential things, enter into the characteristic way and spirit, are able to interpret the form and execution from that inner centre, we can then see how it looks in the light of other standpoints, in the light of the comparative mind. A comparative criticism has its use, but the essential understanding must precede it if it is to have any real value. But while this is comparatively easy in the wider and more flexible turn of literature, it is, I think, more difficult in the other arts, when the difference of spirit is deep, because there the absence of the mediating word, the necessity of proceeding direct from spirit to line and form brings about a special intensity and exclusive concentration of aim and stress of execution. The intensity of the thing that moves the work is brought out with a more distinct power, but by its very stress and directness allows of

few accommodations and combined variations of appeal. The thing meant and the thing done strike deep home into the soul or the imaginative mind, but touch it over a smaller surface and with a lesser multitude of points of contact. But whatever the reason, it is less easy for a different kind of mind to appreciate.

The Indian mind in its natural poise finds it almost or quite as difficult really, that is to say, spiritually to understand the arts of Europe, as the ordinary European mind to enter into the spirit of Indian painting and sculpture. I have seen a comparison made between a feminine Indian figure and a Greek Aphrodite which illustrates the difficulty in an extreme form. The critic tells me that the Indian figure is full of a strong spiritual sense—here of the very breath and being of devotion, an ineffable devotion, and that is true, it is a suggestion or even a revelation which breaks through or overflows the form rather than depends on the external work,—but the Greek creation can only awaken a sublimated carnal or sensuous delight. Now having entered somewhat into the heart of meaning of Greek sculpture, I can see that this is a wrong account of the matter. The critic has got into the real spirit of the Indian, but not into the real spirit of the Greek work; his criticism from that moment, as a comparative appreciation, loses all value. The Greek figure stresses no doubt the body, but appeals through it to an imaginative seeing inspiration which aims at expressing a certain divine power of beauty and gives us therefore something which is much more than a merely sensuous aesthetic pleasure. If the artist has done this with perfection, the work has accomplished its aim and ranks as a masterpiece. The Indian sculptor stresses something behind, something more remote to the surface imagination, but nearer to the soul, and subordinates to it the physical form. If he has only partially succeeded or done it with power but with something faulty in the execution, his work is less great, even though it may have a greater spirit in the intention: but when he wholly succeeds, then his work too is a masterpiece, and we may prefer it with a good conscience, if the spiritual, the higher intuitive vision is what we most demand from art. This however

need not interfere with an appreciation of both kinds in their own order.

But in viewing much of other European work of the very greatest repute, I am myself aware of a failure of spiritual sympathy. I look for instance on some of the most famed pieces of Tintoretto,— not the portraits, for those give the soul, if only the active or character soul in the man, but say, the Adam and Eve, the St. George slaying the dragon, the Christ appearing to Venetian Senators, and I am aware of standing baffled and stopped by an irresponsible blankness somewhere in my being. I can see the magnificence and power of colouring and design, I can see the force of externalised imagination or the spirited dramatic rendering of action, but I strive in vain to get out any significance below the surface or equivalent to the greatness of the form, except perhaps an incidental minor suggestion here and there and that is not sufficient for me. When I try to analyse my failure, I find at first certain conceptions which conflict with my expectation or my own way of seeing. This muscular Adam, the sensuous beauty of this Eve do not bring home to me the mother or the father of the race, this dragon seems to me only a surly portentous beast in great danger of being killed, not a creative embodiment of monstrous evil, this Christ with his massive body and benevolent philosophic visage almost offends me, is not at any rate the Christ whom I know. But these are after all incidental things; what is really the matter is that I come to this art with a previous demand for a kind of vision, imagination, emotion, significance which it cannot give me. And not being so self-confident as to think that what commands the admiration of the greatest critics and artists is not admirable, I can see this and pause on the verge of applying Mr. Archer's criticism of certain Indian work and saying that the mere execution is beautiful or marvellous but there is no imagination, nothing beyond what is on the surface. I can understand that what is wanting is really the kind of imagination I personally demand; but though my acquired cultured mind explains this to me and may intellectually catch at the something more, my natural being will not be satisfied,

I am oppressed, not uplifted by this triumph of life and the flesh and of the power and stir of life,—not that I object to these things in themselves or to the greatest emphasis on the sensuous or even the sensual, elements not at all absent from Indian creation, if I can get something at least of the deeper thing I want behind it,—and I find myself turning away from the work of one of the greatest Italian masters to satisfy myself with some “barbaric” Indian painting or statue, some calm unfathomable Buddha, bronze Shiva or eighteen-armed Durga slaying the Asuras. But the cause of my failure is there, that I am seeking for something which was not meant in the spirit of this art and which I ought not to expect from its characteristic creation. And if I had steeped myself in this Renaissance mind as in the original Hellenic spirit, I could have added something to my inner experience and acquired a more catholic and universal aesthesis.

I lay stress on this psychological misunderstanding or want of understanding, because it explains the attitude of the natural European mind to the great works of Indian art and puts on it its right value. This mind catches only what is kin to European effort and regards that too as inferior, naturally and quite rightly since the same thing is more sincerely and perfectly done from a more native fountain of power in Western work. That explains the amazing preference of better informed critics than Mr. Archer for the bastard Gandharan sculpture to great and sincere work original and true in its unity,—Gandharan sculpture which is an unsatisfying, almost an impotent junction of two incompatible motives, incompatible at least if one is not fused into the other as here certainly it is not fused,—or its praise otherwise incomprehensible of certain second-rate or third-rate creations and its turning away from others noble and profound but strange to its conceptions. Or else it seizes with appreciation—but is it really a total and a deeply understanding appreciation?—on work like the Indo-Saracenic which though in no way akin to Western types has yet the power at certain points to get within the outskirts of its circle of aesthetic conceptions. It is even so much struck by the Taj as to

try to believe that it is the work of an Italian sculptor, some astonishing genius, no doubt, who Indianised himself miraculously in this one hour of solitary achievement, for India is a land of miracles,—and probably died of the effort, for he has left us no other work to admire. Again it admires, at least in Mr. Archer, Javanese work because of its humanity and even concludes from that that it is not Indian. Its essential unity with Indian work behind the variation of manner is invisible to this mind because the spirit and inner meaning of Indian work is a blank to its vision and it sees only a form, a notation of the meaning, which, therefore, it does not understand and dislikes. One might just as well say that the Gita written in the Devanagari is a barbaric, monstrous or meaningless thing, but put into some cursive character at once becomes not Indian, because human and intelligible!

But, ordinarily, place this mind before anything ancient, Hindu, Buddhistic or Vedantic in art and it looks at it with a blank or an angry incomprehension. It looks for the sense and does not find any, because either it has not in itself the experience and finds it difficult to have the imagination, much more the realisation of what this art does really mean and express, or because it insists on looking for what it is accustomed to see at home and, not finding that, is convinced that there is nothing to see or nothing of any value. Or else if there is something which it could have understood, it does not understand because it is expressed in the Indian form and the Indian way. It looks at the method and form and finds it unfamiliar, contrary to its own canons, is revolted, contemptuous, repelled, speaks of the thing as monstrous, barbarous, ugly or null, passes on in a high dislike or disdain. Or if it is overborne by some sense of unanalysable beauty of greatness or power it still speaks of a splendid barbarism. Do you want an illuminating instance of this blankness of comprehension? Mr. Archer sees the Dhyani Buddha with its supreme, its unfathomable, its infinite spiritual calm which every cultured oriental mind can at once feel and respond to in the depths of his being, and he denies that there is anything,—only drooped eyelids, an

immobile pose and an insipid, by which I suppose he means a calm passionless face.¹ He turns for comfort to the Hellenic nobility of expression of the Gandharan Buddha, or to the living Rabindranath Tagore more spiritual than any Buddha from Peshawar to Kamakura, an inept misuse of comparison against which I imagine the great poet himself would be the first to protest. There we have the total incomprehension, the blind window, the blocked door in the mind, and there too the reason why the natural Western mentality comes to Indian art with a demand for something other than what its characteristic spirit and motive intend to give, and, demanding that, is not prepared to enter into another kind of spiritual experience and another range of creative sight, imaginative power and mode of self-expression.

This once understood, we can turn to the difference in the spirit and method of artistic creation which has given rise to the mutual incomprehension; for that will bring us to the positive side of the matter. All great artistic work proceeds from an act of intuition, not really an intellectual idea or a splendid imagination,—these are only mental translations,—but a direct intuition of some truth of life or being, some significant form of that truth, some development of it in the mind of man. And so far there is no difference between great European and great Indian work. Where then begins the immense divergence? It is there in everything else, in the object and field of the intuitive vision, in the method of working out the sight or suggestion, in the part taken in the rendering by the external form and technique, in the whole way of the rendering to the human mind, even in the centre of our being to which the work appeals. The European artist gets his intuition by a suggestion from an appearance in life and Nature or, if it starts from something

¹ In a note Mr. Archer mentions and very rightly discounts an absurd apology for these Buddhas, viz., that the greatness and spirituality are not at all in the work, but in the devotion of the artist! If the artist cannot put into his work what was in him—and here it is not devotion that is expressed,—his work is a futile abortion. But if he has expressed what he has felt, the capacity to feel it must also be there in the mind that looks at his work.

in his own soul, relates it at once to an external support. He brings down that intuition into his normal mind and sets the intellectual idea and the imagination in the intelligence to clothe it with a mental stuff which will render its form to the moved reason, emotion, aesthesis. Then he missions his eye and hand to execute it in terms which start from a colourable "imitation" of life and Nature — and in ordinary hands too often end there — to get at an interpretation that really changes it into the image of something not outward in our own being or in universal being which was the real thing seen. And to that in looking at the work we have to get back through colour and line and disposition or whatever else may be part of the external means, to their mental suggestions and through them to the soul of the whole matter. The appeal is not direct to the eye of the deepest self and spirit within, but to the outward soul by a strong awakening of the sensuous, the vital, the emotional, the intellectual and imaginative being, and of the spiritual we get as much or as little as can suit itself to and express itself through the outward man. Life, action, passion, emotion, idea, Nature seen for their own sake and for an aesthetic delight in them, these are the object and field of this creative intuition. The something more which the Indian mind knows to be behind these things looks out, if at all, from behind many veils. The direct and unveiled presence of the Infinite and its godheads is not evoked or thought necessary to the greater greatness and the highest perfection.

The theory of ancient Indian art at its greatest — and the greatest gives its character to the rest and throws on it something of its stamp and influence — is of another kind. Its highest business is to disclose something of the Self, the Infinite, the Divine to the regard of the soul, the Self through its expressions, the Infinite through its living finite symbols, the Divine through his powers. Or the Godheads are to be revealed, luminously interpreted or in some way suggested to the soul's understanding or to its devotion or at the very least to a spiritually or religiously aesthetic emotion. When this hieratic art comes down from these altitudes to the intermediate worlds behind ours, to the lesser godheads or genii, it still carries into them some power or some

hint from above. And when it comes quite down to the material world and the life of man and the things of external Nature, it does not altogether get rid of the greater vision, the hieratic stamp, the spiritual seeing, and in most good work — except in moments of relaxation and a humorous or vivid play with the obvious — there is always something more in which the seeing presentation of life floats as in an immaterial atmosphere. Life is seen in the self or in some suggestion of the infinite or of something beyond or there is at least a touch and influence of these which helps to shape the presentation. It is not that all Indian work realises this ideal; there is plenty no doubt that falls short, is lowered, ineffective or even debased, but it is the best and the most characteristic influence and execution which gives its tone to an art and by which we must judge. Indian art in fact is identical in its spiritual aim and principle with the rest of Indian culture.

A seeing in the self accordingly becomes the characteristic method of the Indian artist and it is directly enjoined on him by the canon. He has to see first in his spiritual being the truth of the thing he must express and to create its form in his intuitive mind; he is not bound to look out first on outward life and Nature for his model, his authority, his rule, his teacher or his fountain of suggestions. Why should he when it is something quite inward he has to bring out into expression? It is not an idea in the intellect, a mental imagination, an outward emotion on which he has to depend for his stimulants, but an idea, image, emotion of the spirit, and the mental equivalents are subordinate things for help in the transmission and give only a part of the colouring and the shape. A material form, colour, line and design are his physical means of the expression, but in using them he is not bound to an imitation of Nature, but has to make the form and all else significant of his vision, and if that can only be done or can best be done by some modification, some pose, some touch or symbolic variation which is not found in physical Nature, he is at perfect liberty to use it, since truth to his vision, the unity of the thing he is seeing and expressing is his only business. The line, colour and the rest are not his first, but his

last preoccupation, because they have to carry on them a world of things which have already taken spiritual form in his mind. He has not for instance to re-create for us the human face and body of the Buddha or some one passion or incident of his life, but to reveal the calm of Nirvana through a figure of the Buddha, and every detail and accessory must be turned into a means or an aid of his purpose. And even when it is some human passion or incident he has to portray, it is not usually that alone, but also or more something else in the soul to which it points or from which it starts or some power behind the action that has to enter into the spirit of his design and is often really the main thing. And through the eye that looks on his work he has to appeal not merely to an excitement of the outward soul, but to the inner self, *antarātman*. One may well say that beyond the ordinary cultivation of the aesthetic instinct necessary to all artistic appreciation there is a spiritual insight or culture needed if we are to enter into the whole meaning of Indian artistic creation, otherwise we get only at the surface external things or at the most at things only just below the surface. It is an intuitive and spiritual art and must be seen with the intuitive and spiritual eye.

This is the distinctive character of Indian art and to ignore it is to fall into total incomprehension or into much misunderstanding. Indian architecture, painting, sculpture are not only intimately one in inspiration with the central things in Indian philosophy, religion, Yoga, culture, but a specially intense expression of their significance. There is much in the literature which can be well enough appreciated without any very deep entry into these things, but it is comparatively a very small part of what is left of the other arts, Hindu or Buddhistic, of which this can be said. They have been very largely a hieratic aesthetic script of India's spiritual, contemplative and religious experience.

XIII

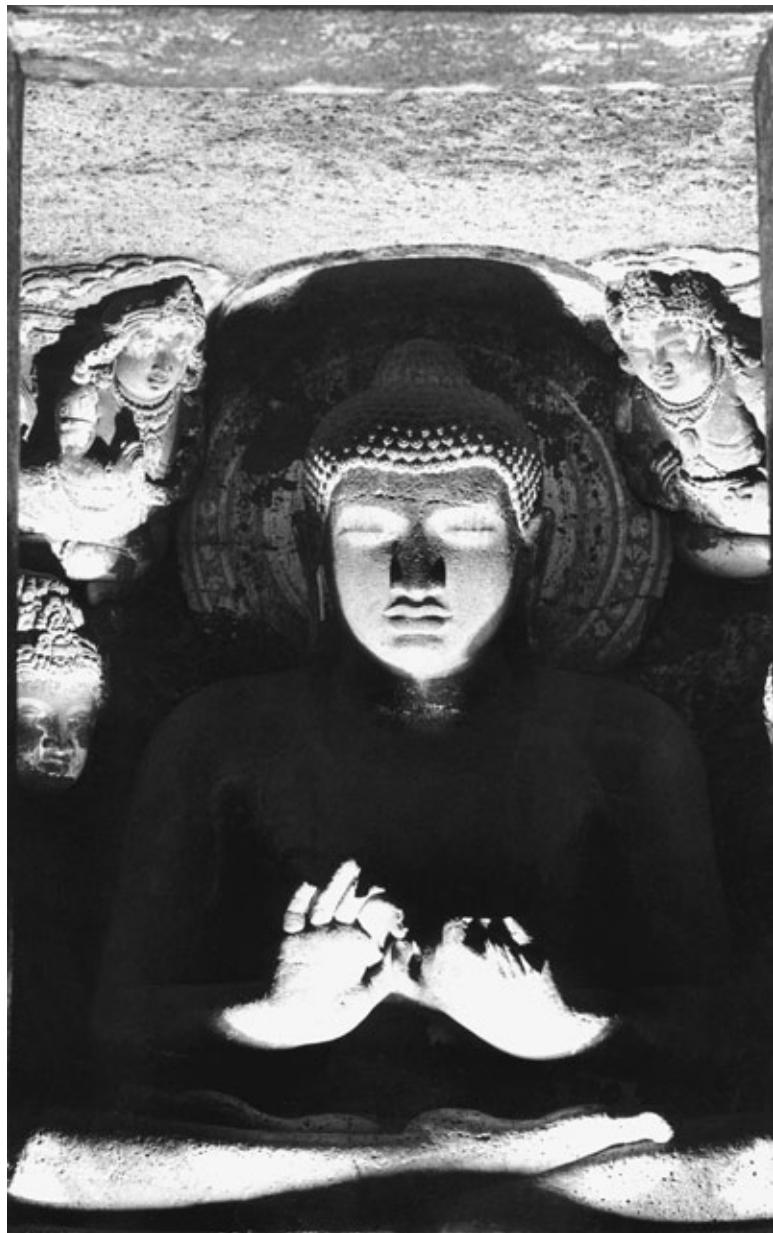
Indian Art-2

ARCHITECTURE, sculpture and painting, because they are the three great arts which appeal to the spirit through the eye, are those too in which the sensible and the invisible meet with the strongest emphasis on themselves and yet the greatest necessity of each other. The form with its insistent masses, proportions, lines, colours, can here only justify them by their service for the something intangible it has to express; the spirit needs all the possible help of the material body to interpret itself to itself through the eye, yet asks of it that it shall be as transparent a veil as possible of its own greater significance. The art of the East and the art of the West—each in its characteristic or mean, for there are always exceptions,—deal with the problem of these two interlocking powers in a quite different way. The Western mind is arrested and attracted by the form, lingers on it and cannot get away from its charm, loves it for its own beauty, rests on the emotional, intellectual, aesthetic suggestions that arise directly from its most visible language, confines the soul in the body; it might almost be said that for this mind form creates the spirit, the spirit depends for its existence and for everything it has to say on the form. The Indian attitude to the matter is at the opposite pole to this view. For the Indian mind form does not exist except as a creation of the spirit and draws all its meaning and value from the spirit. Every line, arrangement of mass, colour, shape, posture, every physical suggestion, however many, crowded, opulent they may be, is first and last a suggestion, a hint, very often a symbol which is in its main function a support for a spiritual emotion, idea, image that again goes beyond itself to the less definable, but more powerfully sensible reality of the spirit which has excited these movements in the aesthetic mind and passed through them into significant shapes.

This characteristic attitude of the Indian reflective and creative mind necessitates in our view of its creations an effort to get beyond at once to the inner spirit of the reality it expresses and see from it and not from outside. And in fact to start from the physical details and their synthesis appears to me quite the wrong way to look at an Indian work of art. The orthodox style of Western criticism seems to be to dwell scrutinisingly on the technique, on form, on the obvious story of the form, and then pass to some appreciation of beautiful or impressive emotion and idea. It is only in some deeper and more sensitive minds that we get beyond that depth into profounder things. A criticism of that kind applied to Indian art leaves it barren or poor of significance. Here the only right way is to get at once through a total intuitive or revelatory impression or by some meditative dwelling on the whole, *dhyāna* in the technical Indian term, to the spiritual meaning and atmosphere, make ourselves one with that as completely as possible, and then only the helpful meaning and value of all the rest comes out with a complete and revealing force. For here it is the spirit that carries the form, while in most Western art it is the form that carries whatever there may be of spirit. The striking phrase of Epictetus recurs to the mind in which he describes man as a little soul carrying a corpse, *psucharion ei bastazon nekron*. The more ordinary Western outlook is upon animate matter carrying in its life a modicum of soul. But the seeing of the Indian mind and of Indian art is that of a great, a limitless self and spirit, *mahān ātmā*, which carries to us in the sea of its presence a living shape of itself, small in comparison to its own infinity, but yet sufficient by the power that informs this symbol to support some aspect of that infinite's self-expression. It is therefore essential that we should look here not solely with the physical eye informed by the reason and the aesthetic imagination, but make the physical seeing a passage to the opening of the inner spiritual eye and a moved communion in the soul. A great oriental work of art does not easily reveal its secret to one who comes to it solely in a mood of aesthetic curiosity or with a considering critical objective mind, still less as the cultivated and interested tourist.

passing among strange and foreign things; but it has to be seen in loneliness, in the solitude of one's self, in moments when one is capable of long and deep meditation and as little weighted as possible with the conventions of material life. That is why the Japanese with their fine sense in these things,—a sense which modern Europe with her assault of crowded art galleries and over-pictured walls seems to have quite lost, though perhaps I am wrong, and those are the right conditions for display of European art,—have put their temples and their Buddhas as often as possible away on mountains and in distant or secluded scenes of Nature and avoid living with great paintings in the crude hours of daily life, but keep them by preference in such a way that their undisputed suggestion can sink into the mind in its finer moments or apart where they can go and look at them in a treasured secrecy when the soul is at leisure from life. That is an indication of the utmost value pointing to the nature of the appeal made by Eastern art and the right way and mood for looking at its creations.

Indian architecture especially demands this kind of inner study and this spiritual self-identification with its deepest meaning and will not otherwise reveal itself to us. The secular buildings of ancient India, her palaces and places of assembly and civic edifices have not outlived the ravage of time; what remains to us is mostly something of the great mountain and cave temples, something too of the temples of her ancient cities of the plains, and for the rest we have the fanes and shrines of her later times, whether situated in temple cities and places of pilgrimage like Srirangam and Rameshwaram or in her great once regal towns like Madura, when the temple was the centre of life. It is then the most hieratic side of a hieratic art that remains to us. These sacred buildings are the signs, the architectural self-expression of an ancient spiritual and religious culture. Ignore the spiritual suggestion, the religious significance, the meaning of the symbols and indications, look only with the rational and secular aesthetic mind, and it is vain to expect that we shall get to any true and discerning appreciation of this art. And it has to be remembered too that the religious spirit here is something



9. Dhyani Buddha, Ajanta

The figure of the Buddha achieves the expression of the infinite in a finite image,... the illimitable calm of Nirvana in a human form and visage. (p. 291)



10. Maheshwara Murti, Elephanta Caves

The inspiration, the way of seeing is frankly not naturalistic, not, that is to say, the vivid, convincing and accurate, the graceful, beautiful or strong, or even the idealised or imaginative imitation of surface or terrestrial nature. (p. 293)



11. Durga Mahishasuramardini, Mamallapuram

The gods of Indian sculpture are cosmic beings, embodiments of some great spiritual power, spiritual idea and action, inmost psychic significance, the human form a vehicle of this soul meaning, its outward means of self-expression; everything in the figure, every opportunity it gives, the face, the hands, the posture of the limbs, the poise and turn of the body, every accessory, has to be made instinct with the inner meaning, help it to emerge, carry out the rhythm of the total suggestion.... (p. 290)



12. Nagaraja and Queen, Ajanta

The sculptor must express always in static form; the idea of the spirit is cut out for him in mass and line, significant in the stability of its insistence...;



13. Buddha, Mathura Museum

for him eternity seizes hold of time in its shapes and arrests it in the monumental spirit of stone or bronze. (p. 302)



14. Princely Doorkeeper, Mamallapuram

The material in which we work makes its own peculiar demand on the creative spirit, lays down its own natural conditions, ...



15. Vrikshaka, Gwalior Museum

and the art of making in stone or bronze calls for a cast of mind which the ancients had and the moderns have not or have had only in rare individuals.... (p. 287)



16. Buddha, Sarnath

An assured history of two millenniums of accomplished sculptural creation is a rare and significant fact in the life of a people. (p. 288)

quite different from the sense of European religions; and even mediaeval Christianity, especially as now looked at by the modern European mind which has gone through the two great crises of the Renaissance and recent secularism, will not in spite of its oriental origin and affinities be of much real help. To bring in into the artistic look on an Indian temple occidental memories or a comparison with Greek Parthenon or Italian church or Duomo or Campanile or even the great Gothic cathedrals of mediaeval France, though these have in them something much nearer to the Indian mentality, is to intrude a fatally foreign and disturbing element or standard in the mind. But this consciously or else subconsciously is what almost every European mind does to a greater or less degree,—and it is here a pernicious immixture, for it subjects the work of a vision that saw the immeasurable to the tests of an eye that dwells only on measure.

Indian sacred architecture of whatever date, style or dedication goes back to something timelessly ancient and now outside India almost wholly lost, something which belongs to the past, and yet it goes forward too, though this the rationalistic mind will not easily admit, to something which will return upon us and is already beginning to return, something which belongs to the future. An Indian temple, to whatever godhead it may be built, is in its inmost reality an altar raised to the divine Self, a house of the Cosmic Spirit, an appeal and aspiration to the Infinite. As that and in the light of that seeing and conception it must in the first place be understood, and everything else must be seen in that setting and that light, and then only can there be any real understanding. No artistic eye however alert and sensible and no aesthetic mind however full and sensitive can arrive at that understanding, if it is attached to a Hellenised conception of rational beauty or shuts itself up in a materialised or intellectual interpretation and fails to open itself to the great things here meant by a kindred close response to some touch of the cosmic consciousness, some revelation of the greater spiritual self, some suggestion of the Infinite. These things, the spiritual self, the cosmic spirit, the Infinite, are not rational, but suprarational, eternal presences, but to the intellect only words, and visible, sensible,

near only to an intuition and revelation in our inmost selves. An art which starts from them as a first conception can only give us what it has to give, their touch, their nearness, their self-disclosure, through some responding intuition and revelation in us, in our own soul, our own self. It is this which one must come to it to find and not demand from it the satisfaction of some quite other seeking or some very different turn of imagination and more limited superficial significance.

This is the first truth of Indian architecture and its significance which demands emphasis and it leads at once to the answer to certain very common misapprehensions and objections. All art reposes on some unity and all its details, whether few and sparing or lavish and crowded and full, must go back to that unity and help its significance; otherwise it is not art. Now we find our Western critic telling us with an assurance which would be stupefying if one did not see how naturally it arose, that in Indian architecture there is no unity, which is as much as to say that there is here no great art at all, but only a skill in the execution of crowded and unrelated details. We are told even by otherwise sympathetic judges that there is an overloading of ornament and detail which, however beautiful or splendid in itself, stands in the way of unity, an attempt to load every rift with ore, an absence of calm, no unfilled spaces, no relief to the eye. Mr. Archer as usual carries up the adverse criticism to its extreme clamorous top notes; his heavily shotted phrases are all a continuous insistence on this one theme. The great temples of the South of India are, he allows, marvels of massive construction. He seems by the way to have a rooted objection to massiveness in architecture or great massed effects in sculpture, regardless of their appropriateness or need, although he admits them in literature. Still this much there is and with it a sort of titanic impressiveness, but of unity, clarity, nobility there is no trace. This observation seems to my judgment sufficiently contradictory, since I do not understand how there can be a marvel of construction, whether light or massive, without any unity,—but here is not even, it seems, a trace of it—or a mighty impressiveness without any greatness or nobility whatever, even allowing this to be a Titanic and not

an Olympian nobleness. He tells us that everything is ponderous, everything here overwrought and the most prominent features swarming, writhing with contorted semi-human figures are as senseless as anything in architecture. How, one might ask, does he know that they are senseless, when he practically admits that he has made no attempt to find what is their sense, but has simply assumed from the self-satisfied sufficiency of his own admitted ignorance and failure to understand that there cannot be any meaning? And the whole thing he characterises as a monstrosity built by Rakshasas, ogres, demons, a gigantesque barbarism. The northern buildings find a little less disfavour in his eyes, but the difference in the end is small or none. There is the same ponderousness, absence of lightness and grace, an even greater profusion of incised ornament; these too are barbaric creations. Alone the Mahomedan architecture, called Indo-Saracenic, is exempted from this otherwise universal condemnation.

It is a little surprising after all, however natural the first blindness here, that even assailants of this extreme kind, since they must certainly know that there can be no art, no effective construction without unity, should not have paused even once to ask themselves whether after all there must not be here some principle of oneness which they had missed because they came with alien conceptions and looked at things from the wrong end, and before pronouncing this magisterial judgment should not have had patience to wait in a more detached and receptive way upon the thing under their eye and seen whether then some secret of unity did not emerge. But it is the more sympathetic and less violent critic who deserves a direct answer. Now it may readily be admitted that the failure to see at once the unity of this architecture is perfectly natural to a European eye, because unity in the sense demanded by the Western conception, the Greek unity gained by much suppression and a sparing use of detail and circumstance or even the Gothic unity got by casting everything into the mould of a single spiritual aspiration, is not there. And the greater unity that really is there can never be arrived at at all, if the eye begins and ends by dwelling on form and detail and ornament, because it will then be obsessed by

these things and find it difficult to go beyond to the unity which all this in its totality serves not so much to express in itself, but to fill it with that which comes out of it and relieve its oneness by multitude. An original oneness, not a combined or synthetic or an effected unity, is that from which this art begins and to which its work when finished returns or rather lives in it as in its self and natural atmosphere. Indian sacred architecture constantly represents the greatest oneness of the self, the cosmic, the infinite in the immensity of its world-design, the multitude of its features of self-expression, *lakṣana*, (yet the oneness is greater than and independent of their totality and in itself indefinable), and all its starting-point of unity in conception, its mass of design and immensity of material, its crowding abundance of significant ornament and detail and its return towards oneness are only intelligible as necessary circumstances of this poem, this epic or this lyric — for there are smaller structures which are such lyrics — of the Infinite. The Western mentality, except in those who are coming or returning, since Europe had once something of this cult in her own way, to this vision, may find it difficult to appreciate the truth and meaning of such an art, which tries to figure existence as a whole and not in its pieces; but I would invite those Indian minds who are troubled by these criticisms or partly or temporarily overpowered by the Western way of seeing things, to look at our architecture in the light of this conception and see whether all but minor objections do not vanish as soon as the real meaning makes itself felt and gives body to the first indefinable impression and emotion which we experience before the greater constructions of the Indian builders.

To appreciate this spiritual-aesthetic truth of Indian architecture, it will be best to look first at some work where there is not the complication of surroundings now often out of harmony with the building, outside even those temple towns which still retain their dependence on the sacred motive, and rather in some place where there is room for a free background of Nature. I have before me two prints which can well serve the purpose, a temple at Kalahasti, a temple at Sinhachalam, two buildings entirely different in treatment and yet one in the ground and

the universal motive. The straight way here is not to detach the temple from its surroundings, but to see it in unity with the sky and low-lying landscape or with the sky and hills around and feel the thing common to both, the construction and its environment, the reality in Nature, the reality expressed in the work of art. The oneness to which this Nature aspires in her inconscient self-creation and in which she lives, the oneness to which the soul of man uplifts itself in his conscious spiritual upbuilding, his labour of aspiration here expressed in stone, and in which so upbuilt he and his work live, are the same and the soul-motive is one. Thus seen this work of man seems to be something which has started out and detached itself against the power of the natural world, something of the one common aspiration in both to the same infinite spirit of itself,—the inconscient uplook and against it the strong single relief of the self-conscious effort and success of finding. One of these buildings climbs up bold, massive in projection, up-piled in the greatness of a forceful but sure ascent, preserving its range and line to the last, the other soars from the strength of its base, in the grace and emotion of a curving mass to a rounded summit and crowning symbol. There is in both a constant, subtle yet pronounced lessening from the base towards the top, but at each stage a repetition of the same form, the same multiplicity of insistence, the same crowded fullness and indented relief, but one maintains its multiple endeavour and indication to the last, the other ends in a single sign. To find the significance we have first to feel the oneness of the infinity in which this nature and this art live, then see this thronged expression as the sign of the infinite multiplicity which fills this oneness, see in the regular lessening ascent of the edifice the subtler and subtler return from the base on earth to the original unity and seize on the symbolic indication of its close at the top. Not absence of unity, but a tremendous unity is revealed. Reinterpret intimately what this representation means in the terms of our own spiritual self-existence and cosmic being, and we have what these great builders saw in themselves and reared in stone. All objections, once we have got at this identity in spiritual experience, fall away and show themselves to be what

they really are, the utterance and cavil of an impotent misunderstanding, an insufficient apprehension or a complete failure to see. To appreciate the detail of Indian architecture is easy when the whole is thus seen and known; otherwise, it is impossible.

This method of interpretation applies, however different the construction and the nature of the rendering, to all Dravidian architecture, not only to the mighty temples of far-spread fame, but to unknown roadside shrines in small towns, which are only a slighter execution of the same theme, a satisfied suggestion here, but the greater buildings a grandiose fulfilled aspiration. The architectural language of the north is of a different kind, there is another basic style; but here too the same spiritual, meditative, intuitive method has to be used and we get at the same result, an aesthetic interpretation or suggestion of the one spiritual experience, one in all its complexity and diversity, which founds the unity of the infinite variations of Indian spirituality and religious feeling and the realised union of the human self with the Divine. This is the unity too of all the creations of this hieratic art. The different styles and motives arrive at or express that unity in different ways. The objection that an excess of thronging detail and ornament hides, impairs or breaks up the unity, is advanced only because the eye has made the mistake of dwelling on the detail first without relation to this original spiritual oneness, which has first to be fixed in an intimate spiritual seeing and union and then all else seen in that vision and experience. When we look on the multiplicity of the world, it is only a crowded plurality that we can find and to arrive at unity we have to reduce, to suppress what we have seen or sparingly select a few indications or to be satisfied with the unity of this or that separate idea, experience or imagination; but when we have realised the self, the infinite unity and look back on the multiplicity of the world, then we find that oneness able to bear all the infinity of variation and circumstance we can crowd into it and its unity remains unabridged by even the most endless self-multiplication of its informing creation. We find the same thing in looking at this architecture. The wealth of ornament, detail, circumstance in Indian temples represents the infinite variety and

repetition of the worlds,—not our world only, but all the planes,—suggests the infinite multiplicity in the infinite oneness. It is a matter of our own experience and fullness of vision how much we leave out or bring in, whether we express so much or so little or attempt as in the Dravidian style to give the impression of a teeming inexhaustible plenitude. The largeness of this unity is base and continent enough for any superstructure or content of multitude.

To condemn this abundance as barbarous is to apply a foreign standard. Where after all are we bound to draw the line? To the pure classical taste Shakespeare's art once appeared great but barbarous for a similar reason,—one remembers the Gallic description of him as a drunken barbarian of genius,—his artistic unity non-existent or spoilt by crowding tropical vegetation of incident and character, his teeming imaginations violent, exaggerated, sometimes bizarre, monstrous, without symmetry, proportion and all the other lucid unities, lightnesses, graces loved by the classic mind. That mind might say of his work in language like Mr. Archer's that here there is indeed a Titanic genius, a mass of power, but of unity, clarity, classic nobility no trace, but rather an entire absence of lucid grace and lightness and restraint, a profusion of wild ornament and an imaginative riot without law or measure, strained figures, distorted positions and gestures, no dignity, no fine, just, rationally natural and beautiful classic movement and pose. But even the strictest Latin mind has now got over its objections to the "splendid barbarism" of Shakespeare and can understand that here is a fuller, less sparing and exiguous vision of life, a greater intuitive unity than the formal unities of the classic aesthetics. But the Indian vision of the world and existence was vaster and fuller than Shakespeare's, because it embraced not merely life, but all being, not merely humanity, but all the worlds and all Nature and cosmos. The European mind not having arrived except in individuals at any close, direct, insistent realisation of the unity of the infinite self or the cosmic consciousness peopled with its infinite multiplicity, is not driven to express these things, cannot understand or put up with them when they are expressed in this

oriental art, speech and style and object to it as the Latin mind once objected to Shakespeare. Perhaps the day is not distant when it will see and understand and perhaps even itself try to express the same things in another language.

The objection that the crowding detail allows no calm, gives no relief or space to the eye, falls under the same heading, springs from the same root, is urged from a different experience and has no validity for the Indian experience. For this unity on which all is upborne, carries in itself the infinite space and calm of the spiritual realisation, and there is no need for other unfilled spaces or tracts of calm of a lesser more superficial kind. The eye is here only a way of access to the soul, it is to that that there is the appeal, and if the soul living in this realisation or dwelling under the influence of this aesthetic impression needs any relief, it is not from the incidence of life and form, but from the immense incidence of that vastness of infinity and tranquil silence, and that can only be given by its opposite, by an abundance of form and detail and life. As for the objection in regard to Dravidian architecture to its massiveness and its Titanic construction, the precise spiritual effect intended could not be given otherwise; for the infinite, the cosmic seen as a whole in its vast manifestation is Titanic, is mighty in material and power. It is other and quite different things also, but none of these are absent from Indian construction. The great temples of the north have often in spite of Mr. Archer's dictum, a singular grace in their power, a luminous lightness relieving their mass and strength, a rich delicacy of beauty in their ornate fullness. It is not indeed the Greek lightness, clarity or naked nobleness, nor is it exclusive, but comes in in a fine blending of opposites which is in the very spirit of the Indian religious, philosophical and aesthetic mind. Nor are these things absent from many Dravidian buildings, though in certain styles they are boldly sacrificed or only put into minor incidents,— one instance of the kind Mr. Archer rejoices in as an oasis in the desert of this to him unintelligible mass of might and greatness,— but in either case suppressed so that the fullness of solemn and grandiose effect may have a complete, an undiminished expression.

I need not deal with adverse strictures of a more insignificant kind,—such as the dislike of the Indian form of the arch and dome, because they are not the radiating arch and dome of other styles. That is only an intolerant refusal to admit the beauty of unaccustomed forms. It is legitimate to prefer one's own things, those to which our mind and nature have been trained, but to condemn other art and effort because it also prefers its own way of arriving at beauty, greatness, self-expression, is a narrowness which with the growth of a more catholic culture ought to disappear. But there is one comment on Dravidian temple architecture which is worth noting because it is made by others than Mr. Archer and his kind. Even a sympathetic mind like Professor Geddes is impressed by some sense of a monstrous effect of terror and gloom in these mighty buildings. Such expressions are astonishing to an Indian mind because terror and gloom are conspicuously absent from the feelings aroused in it by its religion, art or literature. In the religion they are rarely awakened and only in order to be immediately healed and, even when they come, are always sustained by the sense of a supporting and helping presence, an eternal greatness and calm or love or Delight behind; the very goddess of destruction is at the same time the compassionate and loving Mother; the austere Maheshwara, Rudra, is also Shiva, the auspicious, Ashutosha, the refuge of men. The Indian thinking and religious mind looks with calm, without shrinking or repulsion, with an understanding born of its agelong effort at identity and oneness, at all that meets it in the stupendous spectacle of the cosmos. And even its asceticism, its turning from the world, which begins not in terror and gloom, but in a sense of vanity and fatigue, or of something higher, truer, happier than life, soon passes beyond any element of pessimistic sadness into the rapture of the eternal peace and bliss. Indian secular poetry and drama is throughout rich, vital and joyous and there is more tragedy, terror, sorrow and gloom packed into any few pages of European work than we can find in the whole mass of Indian literature. It does not seem to me that Indian art is at all different in this respect from the religion and literature. The Western mind is here thrusting in its own habitual reactions

upon things in the indigenous conception in which they have no proper place. Mark the curious misreading of the dance of Shiva as a dance of Death or Destruction, whereas, as anybody ought to be able to see who looks upon the Nataraja, it expresses on the contrary the rapture of the cosmic dance with the profundities behind of the unmoved eternal and infinite bliss. So too the figure of Kali which is so terrible to European eyes is, as we know, the Mother of the universe accepting this fierce aspect of destruction in order to slay the Asuras, the powers of evil in man and the world. There are other strands in this feeling in the Western mind which seem to spring from a dislike of anything uplifted far beyond the human measure and others again in which we see a subtle survival of the Greek limitation, the fear, gloom and aversion with which the sunny terrestrial Hellenic mind commonly met the idea of the beyond, the limitless, the unknown; but that reaction has no place in Indian mentality. And as for the strangeness or formidable aspect of certain unhuman figures or the conception of demons or Rakshasas, it must be remembered that the Indian aesthetic mind deals not only with the earth but with psychic planes in which these things exist and ranges freely among them without being overpowered because it carries everywhere the stamp of a large confidence in the strength and the omnipresence of the Self or the Divine.

I have dwelt on Hindu and especially on Dravidian architecture because the latter is the most fiercely attacked as the most uncompromisingly foreign to European taste. But a word too may be said about Indo-Moslem architecture. I am not concerned to defend any claim for the purely indigenous origin of its features. It seems to me that here the Indian mind has taken in much from the Arab and Persian imagination and in certain mosques and tombs I seem to find an impress of the robust and bold Afghan and Mogul temperament; but it remains clear enough that it is still on the whole a typically Indian creation with the peculiar Indian gift. The richness of decorative skill and imagination has been turned to the uses of another style, but it is the same skill which we find in the northern Hindu temples, and in the ground we see, however toned down, something some-

times of the old epic mass and power, but more often that lyric grace which we see developing before the Mahomedan advent in the indigenous sculpture,—as in the schools of the North-East and of Java,—and sometimes a blending of the two motives. The modification, the toning down sets the average European mind at ease and secures its suffrage. But what is it that it so much admires? Mr. Archer tells us at first that it is its rational beauty, refinement and grace, normal, fair, refreshing after the monstrous riot of Hindu Yogic hallucination and nightmare. That description which might have been written of Greek art, seems to me grotesquely inapplicable. Immediately afterwards he harps on quite another and an incompatible phrase, and calls it a fairy-land of exquisite architecture. A rational fairy-land is a wonder which may perhaps be hereafter discovered by some strange intertwining of the nineteenth and twentieth century minds, but I do not think it has yet existed on earth or in the heavens. Not rational but magical beauty satisfying and enchanting to some deeper quite suprarational aesthetic soul in us is the inexpressible charm of these creations. But still where does the magic touch our critic? He tells us in a rapt journalistic style. It is the exquisite marble tracerries, the beautiful domes and minarets, the stately halls of sepulture, the marvellous loggias and arcades, the magnificent plinths and platforms, the majestic gateways, et cetera. And is this then all? Only the charm of an outward material luxury and magnificence? Yes; Mr. Archer again tells us that we must be content here with a visual sensuous beauty without any moral suggestion. And that helps him to bring in the sentence of destructive condemnation without which he could not feel happy in dealing with Indian things: this Moslem architecture suggests not only unbridled luxury, but effeminacy and decadence! But in that case, whatever its beauty, it belongs entirely to a secondary plane of artistic creation and cannot rank with the great spiritual aspirations in stone of the Hindu builders.

I do not demand “moral suggestions” from architecture, but is it true that there is nothing but a sensuous outward grace and beauty and luxury in these Indo-Moslem buildings? It is not at

all true of the characteristic greater work. The Taj is not merely a sensuous reminiscence of an imperial amour or a fairy enchantment hewn from the moon's lucent quarries, but the eternal dream of a love that survives death. The great mosques embody often a religious aspiration lifted to a noble austerity which supports and is not lessened by the subordinated ornament and grace. The tombs reach beyond death to the beauty and joy of Paradise. The buildings of Fatehpur-Sikri are not monuments of an effeminate luxurious decadence,—an absurd description for the mind of the time of Akbar,—but give form to a nobility, power and beauty which lay hold upon but do not wallow on the earth. There is not here indeed the vast spiritual content of the earlier Indian mind, but it is still an Indian mind which in these delicate creations absorbs the West Asian influence, and lays stress on the sensuous as before in the poetry of Kalidasa, but uplifts it to a certain immaterial charm, rises often from the earth without quite leaving it into the magical beauty of the middle world and in the religious mood touches with a devout hand the skirts of the Divine. The all-pervading spiritual obsession is not there, but other elements of life not ignored by Indian culture and gaining on it since the classical times are here brought out under a new influence and are still penetrated with some radiant glow of a superior lustre.

Indian Art - 3

THE SCULPTURE and painting of ancient India have recently been rehabilitated with a surprising suddenness in the eyes of a more cultivated European criticism in the course of that rapid opening of the Western mind to the value of oriental thought and creation which is one of the most significant signs of a change that is yet only in its beginning. There have even been here and there minds of a fine perception and profound originality who have seen in a return to the ancient and persistent freedom of oriental art, its refusal to be shackled or debased by an imitative realism, its fidelity to the true theory of art as an inspired interpretation of the deeper soul values of existence lifted beyond servitude to the outsides of Nature, the right way to the regeneration and liberation of the aesthetic and creative mind of Europe. And actually, although much of Western art runs still along the old grooves, much too of its most original recent creation has elements or a guiding direction which brings it nearer to the Eastern mentality and understanding. It might then be possible for us to leave it at that and wait for time to deepen this new vision and vindicate more fully the truth and greatness of the art of India.

But we are concerned not only with the critical estimation of our art by Europe, but much more nearly with the evil effect of the earlier depreciation on the Indian mind which has been for a long time side-tracked off its true road by a foreign, an anglicised education and, as a result, vulgarised and falsified by the loss of its own true centre, because this hampers and retards a sound and living revival of artistic taste and culture and stands in the way of a new age of creation. It was only a few years ago that the mind of educated India — “educated” without an atom of real culture — accepted contentedly the vulgar English estimate of our sculpture and painting as undeveloped inferior art or even

a mass of monstrous and abortive miscreation, and though that has passed and there is a great change, there is still very common a heavy weight of secondhand occidental notions, a bluntness or absolute lacking of aesthetic taste,¹ a failure to appreciate, and one still comes sometimes across a strain of blatantly anglicised criticism which depreciates all that is in the Indian manner and praises only what is consistent with Western canons. And the old style of European criticism continues to have some weight with us, because the lack of aesthetic or indeed of any real cultural training in our present system of education makes us ignorant and undiscriminating receptacles, so that we are ready to take the considered opinions of competent critics like Okakura or Mr. Laurence Binyon and the rash scribblings of journalists of the type of Mr. Archer, who write without authority because in these things they have neither taste nor knowledge, as of equal importance and the latter even attract a greater attention. It is still necessary therefore to reiterate things which, however obvious to a trained or sensitive aesthetic intelligence, are not yet familiar to the average mind still untutored or habituated to a system of false weights and values. The work of recovering a true and inward understanding of ourselves—our past and our present self and from that our future—is only in its commencement for the majority of our people.

To appreciate our own artistic past at its right value we have to free ourselves from all subjection to a foreign outlook and see our sculpture and painting, as I have already suggested about our architecture, in the light of its own profound intention and greatness of spirit. When we so look at it, we shall be able to see that the sculpture of ancient and mediaeval India claims its place on the very highest levels of artistic achievement. I do not know where we shall find a sculptural art of a more profound intention, a greater spirit, a more consistent skill of achievement. Inferior work there is, work that fails or succeeds

¹ For example, one still reads with a sense of despairing stupefaction “criticism” that speaks of Ravi Varma and Abanindranath Tagore as artistic creators of different styles, but an equal power and genius!

only partially, but take it in its whole, in the long persistence of its excellence, in the number of its masterpieces, in the power with which it renders the soul and the mind of a people, and we shall be tempted to go further and claim for it a first place. The art of sculpture has indeed flourished supremely only in ancient countries where it was conceived against its natural background and support, a great architecture. Egypt, Greece, India take the premier rank in this kind of creation. Mediaeval and modern Europe produced nothing of the same mastery, abundance and amplitude, while on the contrary in painting later Europe has done much and richly and with a prolonged and constantly renewed inspiration. The difference arises from the different kind of mentality required by the two arts. The material in which we work makes its own peculiar demand on the creative spirit, lays down its own natural conditions, as Ruskin has pointed out in a different connection, and the art of making in stone or bronze calls for a cast of mind which the ancients had and the moderns have not or have had only in rare individuals, an artistic mind not too rapidly mobile and self-indulgent, not too much mastered by its own personality and emotion and the touches that excite and pass, but founded rather on some great basis of assured thought and vision, stable in temperament, fixed in its imagination on things that are firm and enduring. One cannot trifle with ease in these sterner materials, one cannot even for long or with safety indulge in them in mere grace and external beauty or the more superficial, mobile and lightly attractive motives. The aesthetic self-indulgence which the soul of colour permits and even invites, the attraction of the mobile play of life to which line of brush, pen or pencil gives latitude, are here forbidden or, if to some extent achieved, only within a line of restraint to cross which is perilous and soon fatal. Here grand or profound motives are called for, a more or less penetrating spiritual vision or some sense of things eternal to base the creation. The sculptural art is static, self-contained, necessarily firm, noble or severe and demands an aesthetic spirit capable of these qualities. A certain mobility of life and mastering grace of line can come in upon this basis, but if it entirely replaces the original dharma of the

material, that means that the spirit of the statuette has come into the statue and we may be sure of an approaching decadence. Hellenic sculpture following this line passed from the greatness of Phidias through the soft self-indulgence of Praxiteles to its decline. A later Europe has failed for the most part in sculpture, in spite of some great work by individuals, an Angelo or a Rodin, because it played externally with stone and bronze, took them as a medium for the representation of life and could not find a sufficient basis of profound vision or spiritual motive. In Egypt and in India, on the contrary, sculpture preserved its power of successful creation through several great ages. The earliest recently discovered work in India dates back to the fifth century B.C. and is already fully evolved with an evident history of consummate previous creation behind it, and the latest work of some high value comes down to within a few centuries from our own time. An assured history of two millenniums of accomplished sculptural creation is a rare and significant fact in the life of a people.

This greatness and continuity of Indian sculpture is due to the close connection between the religious and philosophical and the aesthetic mind of the people. Its survival into times not far from us was possible because of the survival of the cast of the antique mind in that philosophy and religion, a mind familiar with eternal things, capable of cosmic vision, having its roots of thought and seeing in the profundities of the soul, in the most intimate, pregnant and abiding experiences of the human spirit. The spirit of this greatness is indeed at the opposite pole to the perfection within limits, the lucid nobility or the vital fineness and physical grace of Hellenic creation in stone. And since the favourite trick of Mr. Archer and his kind is to throw the Hellenic ideal constantly in our face, as if sculpture must be either governed by the Greek standard or worthless, it is as well to take note of the meaning of the difference. The earlier and more archaic Greek style had indeed something in it which looks like a reminiscent touch of a first creative origin from Egypt and the Orient, but there is already there the governing conception which determined the Greek aesthetics and has dominated the



17. Nataraja, Kuram, Tamil Nadu

Or what of the marvellous genius and skill in the treatment of
the cosmic movement and delight of the dance of Shiva...?
(p. 292)



18. Sundaramurti Swami, Colombo Museum

The dignity and beauty of the human figure in the best Indian statues cannot be excelled, but what was sought and what was achieved was not an outward naturalistic, but a spiritual and a psychic beauty.... (p. 296)



19. Avalokiteshwara, Nepal

... gracious imaginations of Bengal, Nepal and Java...(p. 297)



20. Nataraja, Tanjore

The Buddhistic, the Vedantic seeing of things may be equally powerful starting-points for artistic creation, may lead one to the calm of a Buddha or the other to the rapture dance or majestic stillness of Shiva.... (p. 259)



21. Bodhisattva Padmapani, Ajanta

... the unique character of Indian painting, the peculiar appeal of the art of Ajanta springs from the remarkably inward, spiritual and psychic turn which was given to the artistic conception and method by the pervading genius of Indian culture. (p. 303)

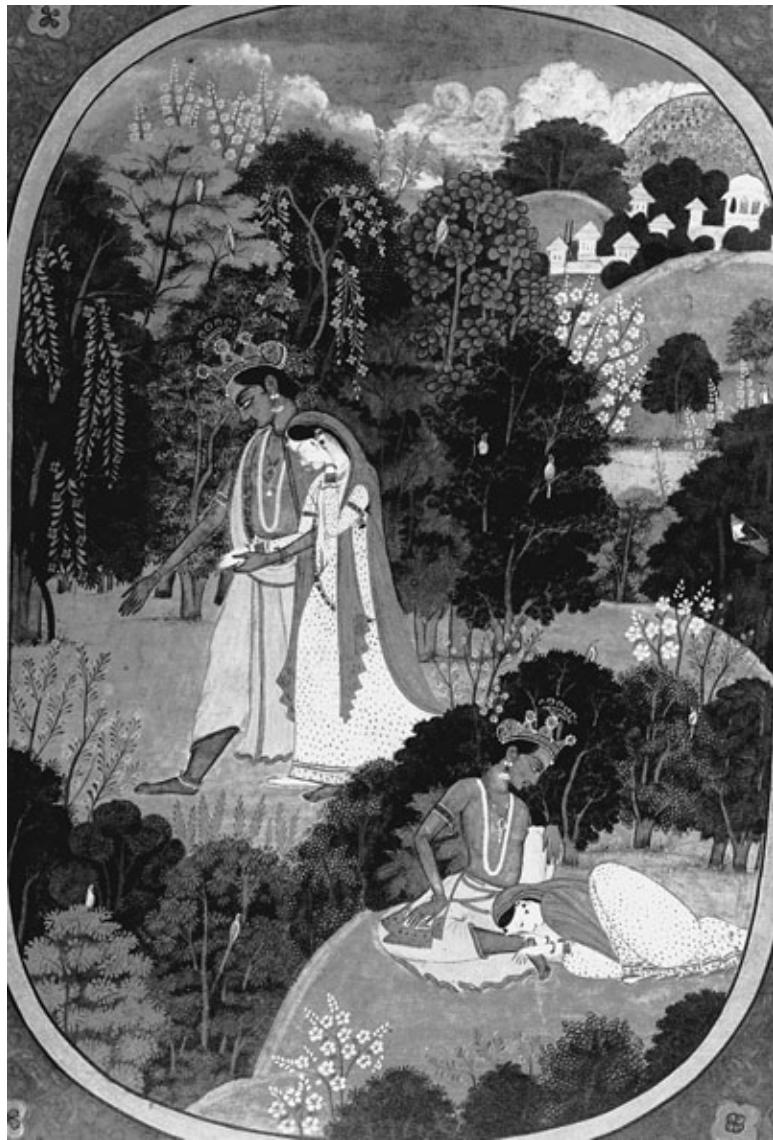


22. Apsaras, Sigiriya, Sri Lanka

The rest of all that vivid contemporaneous creation which must at one time have covered the whole country in the temples and viharas and the houses of the cultured and the courts and pleasure-houses of nobles and kings, has perished, and we have only, more or less similar to the work at Ajanta, some crumbling fragments of rich and profuse decoration in the caves of Bagh and a few paintings of female figures in two rock-cut chambers at Sigiriya. (p. 299)



23. Painting in Bagh Caves, Madhya Pradesh



24. Krishna and Radha, Rajput School

Painting is naturally the most sensuous of the arts, and the highest greatness open to the painter is to spiritualise this sensuous appeal by making the most vivid outward beauty a revelation of subtle spiritual emotion.... (p. 302)

later mind of Europe, the will to combine some kind of expression of an inner truth with an idealising imitation of external Nature. The brilliance, beauty and nobility of the work which was accomplished, was a very great and perfect thing, but it is idle to maintain that that is the sole possible method or the one permanent and natural law of artistic creation. Its highest greatness subsisted only so long — and it was not for very long — as a certain satisfying balance was struck and constantly maintained between a fine, but not very subtle, opulent or profound spiritual suggestion and an outward physical harmony of nobility and grace. A later work achieved a brief miracle of vital suggestion and sensuous physical grace with a certain power of expressing the spirit of beauty in the mould of the senses; but this once done, there was no more to see or create. For the curious turn which impels at the present day the modern mind to return to spiritual vision through a fiction of exaggerated realism which is really a pressure upon the form of things to yield the secret of the spirit in life and matter, was not open to the classic temperament and intelligence. And it is surely time for us to see, as is now by many admitted, that an acknowledgment of the greatness of Greek art in its own province ought not to prevent the plain perception of the rather strait and narrow bounds of that province. What Greek sculpture expressed was fine, gracious and noble, but what it did not express and could not by the limitations of its canon hope to attempt, was considerable, was immense in possibility, was that spiritual depth and extension which the human mind needs for its larger and deeper self-experience. And just this is the greatness of Indian sculpture that it expresses in stone and bronze what the Greek aesthetic mind could not conceive or express and embodies it with a profound understanding of its right conditions and a native perfection.

The more ancient sculptural art of India embodies in visible form what the Upanishads threw out into inspired thought and the Mahabharata and Ramayana portrayed by the word in life. This sculpture like the architecture springs from spiritual realisation, and what it creates and expresses at its greatest is the spirit in form, the soul in body, this or that living soul power

in the divine or the human, the universal and cosmic individualised in suggestion but not lost in individuality, the impersonal supporting a not too insistent play of personality, the abiding moments of the eternal, the presence, the idea, the power, the calm or potent delight of the spirit in its actions and creations. And over all the art something of this intention broods and persists and is suggested even where it does not dominate the mind of the sculptor. And therefore as in the architecture so in the sculpture, we have to bring a different mind to this work, a different capacity of vision and response, we have to go deeper into ourselves to see than in the more outwardly imaginative art of Europe. The Olympian gods of Phidias are magnified and uplifted human beings saved from a too human limitation by a certain divine calm of impersonality or universalised quality, divine type, guna; in other work we see heroes, athletes, feminine incarnations of beauty, calm and restrained embodiments of idea, action or emotion in the idealised beauty of the human figure. The gods of Indian sculpture are cosmic beings, embodiments of some great spiritual power, spiritual idea and action, inmost psychic significance, the human form a vehicle of this soul meaning, its outward means of self-expression; everything in the figure, every opportunity it gives, the face, the hands, the posture of the limbs, the poise and turn of the body, every accessory, has to be made instinct with the inner meaning, help it to emerge, carry out the rhythm of the total suggestion, and on the other hand everything is suppressed which would defeat this end, especially all that would mean an insistence on the merely vital or physical, outward or obvious suggestions of the human figure. Not the ideal physical or emotional beauty, but the utmost spiritual beauty or significance of which the human form is capable, is the aim of this kind of creation. The divine self in us is its theme, the body made a form of the soul is its idea and its secret. And therefore in front of this art it is not enough to look at it and respond with the aesthetic eye and the imagination, but we must look also into the form for what it carries and even through and behind it to pursue the profound suggestion it gives into its own infinite. The religious

or hieratic side of Indian sculpture is intimately connected with the spiritual experiences of Indian meditation and adoration,—those deep things of our self-discovery which our critic calls contemptuously Yogic hallucinations,—soul realisation is its method of creation and soul realisation must be the way of our response and understanding. And even with the figures of human beings or groups it is still a like inner aim and vision which governs the labour of the sculptor. The statue of a king or a saint is not meant merely to give the idea of a king or saint or to portray some dramatic action or to be a character portrait in stone, but to embody rather a soul state or experience or deeper soul quality, as for instance, not the outward emotion, but the inner soul-side of rapt ecstasy of adoration and God-vision in the saint or the devotee before the presence of the worshipped deity. This is the character of the task the Indian sculptor set before his effort and it is according to his success in that and not by the absence of something else, some quality or some intention foreign to his mind and contrary to his design, that we have to judge of his achievement and his labour.

Once we admit this standard, it is impossible to speak too highly of the profound intelligence of its conditions which was developed in Indian sculpture, of the skill with which its task was treated or of the consummate grandeur and beauty of its masterpieces. Take the great Buddhas — not the Gandharan, but the divine figures or groups in cave cathedral or temple, the best of the later southern bronzes of which there is a remarkable collection of plates in Mr. Gangoly's book on that subject, the Kalasanvara image, the Natarajas. No greater or finer work, whether in conception or execution, has been done by the human hand and its greatness is increased by obeying a spiritualised aesthetic vision. The figure of the Buddha achieves the expression of the infinite in a finite image, and that is surely no mean or barbaric achievement, to embody the illimitable calm of Nirvana in a human form and visage. The Kalasanvara Shiva is supreme not only by the majesty, power, calmly forceful control, dignity and kingship of existence which the whole spirit and pose of the figure visibly incarnates,—that is only half or less than half

its achievement,—but much more by the concentrated divine passion of the spiritual overcoming of time and existence which the artist has succeeded in putting into eye and brow and mouth and every feature and has subtly supported by the contained suggestion, not emotional, but spiritual, of every part of the body of the godhead and the rhythm of his meaning which he has poured through the whole unity of this creation. Or what of the marvellous genius and skill in the treatment of the cosmic movement and delight of the dance of Shiva, the success with which the posture of every limb is made to bring out the rhythm of the significance, the rapturous intensity and abandon of the movement itself and yet the just restraint in the intensity of motion, the subtle variation of each element of the single theme in the seizing idea of these master sculptors? Image after image in the great temples or saved from the wreck of time shows the same grand traditional art and the genius which worked in that tradition and its many styles, the profound and firmly grasped spiritual idea, the consistent expression of it in every curve, line and mass, in hand and limb, in suggestive pose, in expressive rhythm,—it is an art which, understood in its own spirit, need fear no comparison with any other, ancient or modern, Hellenic or Egyptian, of the near or the far East or of the West in any of its creative ages. This sculpture passed through many changes, a more ancient art of extraordinary grandeur and epic power uplifted by the same spirit as reigned in the Vedic and Vedantic seers and in the epic poets, a later Puranic turn towards grace and beauty and rapture and an outburst of lyric ecstasy and movement, and last a rapid and vacant decadence; but throughout all the second period too the depth and greatness of sculptural motive supports and vivifies the work and in the very turn towards decadence something of it often remains to redeem from complete debasement, emptiness or insignificance.

Let us see then what is the value of the objections made to the spirit and style of Indian sculpture. This is the burden of the objurgations of the devil's advocate that his self-bound European mind finds the whole thing barbaric, meaningless, uncouth, strange, bizarre, the work of a distorted imagination

labouring mid a nightmare of unlovely unrealities. Now there is in the total of what survives to us work that is less inspired or even work that is bad, exaggerated, forced or clumsy, the production of mechanic artificers mingled with the creation of great nameless artists, and an eye that does not understand the sense, the first conditions of the work, the mind of the race or its type of aesthesia, may well fail to distinguish between good and inferior execution, decadent work and the work of the great hands and the great eras. But applied as a general description the criticism is itself grotesque and distorted and it means only that here are conceptions and a figuring imagination strange to the Western intelligence. The line and run and turn demanded by the Indian aesthetic sense are not the same as those demanded by the European. It would take too long to examine the detail of the difference which we find not only in sculpture, but in the other plastic arts and in music and even to a certain extent in literature, but on the whole we may say that the Indian mind moves on the spur of a spiritual sensitiveness and psychic curiosity, while the aesthetic curiosity of the European temperament is intellectual, vital, emotional and imaginative in that sense, and almost the whole strangeness of the Indian use of line and mass, ornament and proportion and rhythm arises from this difference. The two minds live almost in different worlds, are either not looking at the same things or, even where they meet in the object, see it from a different level or surrounded by a different atmosphere, and we know what power the point of view or the medium of vision has to transform the object. And undoubtedly there is very ample ground for Mr. Archer's complaint of the want of naturalism in most Indian sculpture. The inspiration, the way of seeing is frankly not naturalistic, not, that is to say, the vivid, convincing and accurate, the graceful, beautiful or strong, or even the idealised or imaginative imitation of surface or terrestrial nature. The Indian sculptor is concerned with embodying spiritual experiences and impressions, not with recording or glorifying what is received by the physical senses. He may start with suggestions from earthly and physical things, but he produces his work only after he has closed his eyes to the

insistence of the physical circumstances, seen them in the psychic memory and transformed them within himself so as to bring out something other than their physical reality or their vital and intellectual significance. His eye sees the psychic line and turn of things and he replaces by them the material contours. It is not surprising that such a method should produce results which are strange to the average Western mind and eye when these are not liberated by a broad and sympathetic culture. And what is strange to us, is naturally repugnant to our habitual mind and uncouth to our habitual sense, bizarre to our imaginative tradition and aesthetic training. We want what is familiar to the eye and obvious to the imagination and will not readily admit that there may be here another and perhaps greater beauty than that in the circle of which we are accustomed to live and take pleasure.

It seems to be especially the application of this psychic vision to the human form which offends these critics of Indian sculpture. There is the familiar objection to such features as the multiplication of the arms in the figures of gods and goddesses, the four, six, eight or ten arms of Shiva, the eighteen arms of Durga, because they are a monstrosity, a thing not in nature. Now certainly a play of imagination of this kind would be out of place in the representation of a man or woman, because it would have no artistic or other meaning, but I cannot see why this freedom should be denied in the representation of cosmic beings like the Indian godheads. The whole question is, first, whether it is an appropriate means of conveying a significance not otherwise to be represented with an equal power and force and, secondly, whether it is capable of artistic representation, a rhythm of artistic truth and unity which need not be that of physical nature. If not, then it is an ugliness and violence, but if these conditions are satisfied, the means are justified and I do not see that we have any right, faced with the perfection of the work, to raise a discordant clamour. Mr. Archer himself is struck with the perfection of skill and mastery with which these to him superfluous limbs are disposed in the figures of the dancing Shiva, and indeed it would need an eye of impossible blindness

not to see that much, but what is still more important is the artistic significance which this skill is used to serve, and, if that is understood, we can at once see that the spiritual emotion and suggestions of the cosmic dance are brought out by this device in a way which would not be as possible with a two-armed figure. The same truth holds as to the Durga with her eighteen arms slaying the Asuras or the Shivas of the great Pallava creations where the lyrical beauty of the Natarajas is absent, but there is instead a great epical rhythm and grandeur. Art justifies its own means and here it does it with a supreme perfection. And as for the "contorted" postures of some figures, the same law holds. There is often a departure in this respect from the anatomical norm of the physical body or else — and that is a rather different thing — an emphasis more or less pronounced on an unusual pose of limbs or body, and the question then is whether it is done without sense or purpose, a mere clumsiness or an ugly exaggeration, or whether it rather serves some significance and establishes in the place of the normal physical metric of Nature another purposeful and successful artistic rhythm. Art after all is not forbidden to deal with the unusual or to alter and overpass Nature, and it might almost be said that it has been doing little else since it began to serve the human imagination from its first grand epic exaggerations to the violences of modern romanticism and realism, from the high ages of Valmiki and Homer to the day of Hugo and Ibsen. The means matter, but less than the significance and the thing done and the power and beauty with which it expresses the dreams and truths of the human spirit.

The whole question of the Indian artistic treatment of the human figure has to be understood in the light of its aesthetic purpose. It works with a certain intention and ideal, a general norm and standard which permits of a good many variations and from which too there are appropriate departures. The epithets with which Mr. Archer tries to damn its features are absurd, captious, exaggerated, the forced phrases of a journalist trying to depreciate a perfectly sensible, beautiful and aesthetic norm with which he does not sympathise. There are other things here than a repetition of hawk faces, wasp waists, thin legs and the rest of

the ill-tempered caricature. He doubts Mr. Havell's suggestion that these old Indian artists knew the anatomy of the body well enough, as Indian science knew it, but chose to depart from it for their own purpose. It does not seem to me to matter much, since art is not anatomy, nor an artistic masterpiece necessarily a reproduction of physical fact or a lesson in natural science. I see no reason to regret the absence of telling studies in muscles, torsos, etc., for I cannot regard these things as having in themselves any essential artistic value. The one important point is that the Indian artist had a perfect idea of proportion and rhythm and used them in certain styles with nobility and power, in others like the Javan, the Gauda or the southern bronzes with that or with a perfect grace added and often an intense and a lyrical sweetness. The dignity and beauty of the human figure in the best Indian statues cannot be excelled, but what was sought and what was achieved was not an outward naturalistic, but a spiritual and a psychic beauty, and to achieve it the sculptor suppressed, and was entirely right in suppressing, the obtrusive material detail and aimed instead at purity of outline and fineness of feature. And into that outline, into that purity and fineness he was able to work whatever he chose, mass of force or delicacy of grace, a static dignity or a mighty strength or a restrained violence of movement or whatever served or helped his meaning. A divine and subtle body was his ideal; and to a taste and imagination too blunt or realistic to conceive the truth and beauty of his idea, the ideal itself may well be a stumbling-block, a thing of offence. But the triumphs of art are not to be limited by the narrow prejudices of the natural realistic man; that triumphs and endures which appeals to the best, *sādhu-sammatam*, that is deepest and greatest which satisfies the profoundest souls and the most sensitive psychic imaginations.

Each manner of art has its own ideals, traditions, agreed conventions; for the ideas and forms of the creative spirit are many, though there is one ultimate basis. The perspective, the psychic vision of the Chinese and Japanese painters are not the same as those of European artists; but who can ignore the beauty and the wonder of their work? I dare say Mr. Archer would set

a Constable or a Turner above the whole mass of Far Eastern work, as I myself, if I had to make a choice, would take a Chinese or Japanese landscape or other magic transmutation of Nature in preference to all others; but these are matters of individual, national or continental temperament and preference. The essence of the question lies in the rendering of the truth and beauty seized by the spirit. Indian sculpture, Indian art in general follows its own ideal and traditions and these are unique in their character and quality. It is the expression great as a whole through many centuries and ages of creation, supreme at its best, whether in rare early pre-Asokan, in Asokan or later work of the first heroic age or in the magnificent statues of the cave-cathedrals and Pallava and other southern temples or the noble, accomplished or gracious imaginations of Bengal, Nepal and Java through the after centuries or in the singular skill and delicacy of the bronze work of the southern religions, a self-expression of the spirit and ideals of a great nation and a great culture which stands apart in the cast of its mind and qualities among the earth's peoples, famed for its spiritual achievement, its deep philosophies and its religious spirit, its artistic taste, the richness of its poetic imagination, and not inferior once in its dealings with life and its social endeavour and political institutions. This sculpture is a singularly powerful, a seizing and profound interpretation in stone and bronze of the inner soul of that people. The nation, the culture failed for a time in life after a long greatness, as others failed before it and others will yet fail that now flourish; the creations of its mind have been arrested, this art like others has ceased or fallen into decay, but the thing from which it rose, the spiritual fire within still burns and in the renascence that is coming it may be that this great art too will revive, not saddled with the grave limitations of modern Western work in the kind, but vivified by the nobility of a new impulse and power of the ancient spiritual motive. Let it recover, not limited by old forms, but undeterred by the cavillings of an alien mind, the sense of the grandeur and beauty and the inner significance of its past achievement; for in the continuity of its spiritual endeavour lies its best hope for the future.

Indian Art-4

THE ART of painting in ancient and later India, owing to the comparative scantiness of its surviving creations, does not create quite so great an impression as her architecture and sculpture and it has even been supposed that this art flourished only at intervals, finally ceased for a period of several centuries and was revived later on by the Moguls and by Hindu artists who underwent the Mogul influence. This however is a hasty view that does not outlast a more careful research and consideration of the available evidence. It appears, on the contrary, that Indian culture was able to arrive at a well developed and an understanding aesthetic use of colour and line from very early times and, allowing for the successive fluctuations, periods of decline and fresh outbursts of originality and vigour, which the collective human mind undergoes in all countries, used this form of self-expression very persistently through the long centuries of its growth and greatness. And especially it is apparent now that there was a persistent tradition, a fundamental spirit and turn of the aesthetic sense native to the mind of India which links even the latest Rajput art to the earliest surviving work still preserved at its highest summit of achievement in the rock-cut retreats of Ajanta.

The materials of the art of painting are unfortunately more perishable than those of any other of the greater means of creative aesthetic self-expression and of the ancient masterpieces only a little survives, but that little still indicates the immensity of the amount of work of which it is the fading remnant. It is said that of the twenty-nine caves at Ajanta almost all once bore signs of decoration by frescoes; only so long ago as forty years sixteen still contained something of the original paintings, but now six alone still bear their witness to the greatness of this ancient art, though rapidly perishing and deprived of something of the

original warmth and beauty and glory of colour. The rest of all that vivid contemporaneous creation which must at one time have covered the whole country in the temples and viharas and the houses of the cultured and the courts and pleasure-houses of nobles and kings, has perished, and we have only, more or less similar to the work at Ajanta, some crumbling fragments of rich and profuse decoration in the caves of Bagh and a few paintings of female figures in two rock-cut chambers at Sigiriya.¹ These remnants represent the work of some six or seven centuries, but they leave gaps, and nothing now remains of any paintings earlier than the first century of the Christian era, except some frescoes, spoilt by unskilful restoration, from the first century before it, while after the seventh there is a blank which might at first sight argue a total decline of the art, a cessation and disappearance. But there are fortunately evidences which carry back the tradition of the art at one end many centuries earlier and other remains more recently discovered and of another kind outside India and in the Himalayan countries carry it forward at the other end as late as the twelfth century and help us to link it on to the later schools of Rajput painting. The history of the self-expression of the Indian mind in painting covers a period of as much as two millenniums of more or less intense artistic creation and stands on a par in this respect with the architecture and sculpture.

The paintings that remain to us from ancient times are the work of Buddhist painters, but the art itself in India was of pre-Buddhistic origin. The Tibetan historian ascribes a remote antiquity to all the crafts, prior to the Buddha, and this is a conclusion increasingly pointed to by a constant accumulation of evidence. Already in the third century before the Christian era we find the theory of the art well founded from previous times, the six essential elements, *sadanga*, recognised and enumerated, like the more or less corresponding six Chinese canons which are first mentioned nearly a thousand years later, and in a very

¹ Since then more paintings of high quality have been found in some southern temples, akin in their spirit and style to the work at Ajanta.

ancient work on the art pointing back to pre-Buddhistic times a number of careful and very well-defined rules and traditions are laid down which were developed into an elaborate science of technique and traditional rule in the later Shilpasutras. The frequent references in the ancient literature also are of a character which would have been impossible without a widespread practice and appreciation of the art by both men and women of the cultured classes, and these allusions and incidents evidencing a moved delight in the painted form and beauty of colour and the appeal both to the decorative sense and to the aesthetic emotion occur not only in the later poetry of Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti and other classical dramatists, but in the early popular drama of Bhasa and earlier still in the epics and in the sacred books of the Buddhists. The absence of any actual creations of this earlier art makes it indeed impossible to say with absolute certainty what was its fundamental character and intimate source of inspiration or whether it was religious and hieratic or secular in its origin. The theory has been advanced rather too positively that it was in the courts of kings that the art began and with a purely secular motive and inspiration, and it is true that while the surviving work of Buddhist artists is mainly religious in subject or at least links on common scenes of life to Buddhist ceremony and legend, the references in the epic and dramatic literature are usually to painting of a more purely aesthetic character, personal, domestic or civic, portrait painting, the representation of scenes and incidents in the lives of kings and other great personalities or mural decoration of palaces and private or public buildings. On the other hand, there are similar elements in Buddhist painting, as, for example, the portraits of the queens of King Kashyapa at Sigiriya, the historic representation of a Persian embassy or the landing of Vijaya in Ceylon. And we may fairly assume that all along Indian painting both Buddhist and Hindu covered much the same kind of ground as the later Rajput work in a more ample fashion and with a more antique greatness of spirit and was in its ensemble an interpretation of the whole religion, culture and life of the Indian people. The one important and significant thing that emerges is the constant

oneness and continuity of all Indian art in its essential spirit and tradition. Thus the earlier work at Ajanta has been found to be akin to the earlier sculptural work of the Buddhists, while the later paintings have a similar close kinship to the sculptural reliefs at Java. And we find that the spirit and tradition which reigns through all changes of style and manner at Ajanta, is present too at Bagh and Sigiriya, in the Khotan frescoes, in the illuminations of Buddhist manuscripts of a much later time and in spite of the change of form and manner is still spiritually the same in the Rajput paintings. This unity and continuity enable us to distinguish and arrive at a clear understanding of what is the essential aim, inner turn and motive, spiritual method which differentiate Indian painting first from occidental work and then from the nearer and more kindred art of other countries of Asia.

The spirit and motive of Indian painting are in their centre of conception and shaping force of sight identical with the inspiring vision of Indian sculpture. All Indian art is a throwing out of a certain profound self-vision formed by a going within to find out the secret significance of form and appearance, a discovery of the subject in one's deeper self, the giving of soul-form to that vision and a remoulding of the material and natural shape to express the psychic truth of it with the greatest possible purity and power of outline and the greatest possible concentrated rhythmic unity of significance in all the parts of an indivisible artistic whole. Take whatever masterpiece of Indian painting and we shall find these conditions aimed at and brought out into a triumphant beauty of suggestion and execution. The only difference from the other arts comes from the turn natural and inevitable to its own kind of aesthetics, from the moved and indulgent dwelling on what one might call the mobilities of the soul rather than on its static eternities, on the casting out of self into the grace and movement of psychic and vital life (subject always to the reserve and restraint necessary to all art) rather than on the holding back of life in the stabilities of the self and its eternal qualities and principles, guna and tattwa. This distinction is of the very essence of the difference between the work given to the sculptor and the painter, a difference imposed on them by the natural

scope, turn, possibility of their instrument and medium. The sculptor must express always in static form; the idea of the spirit is cut out for him in mass and line, significant in the stability of its insistence, and he can lighten the weight of this insistence but not get rid of it or away from it; for him eternity seizes hold of time in its shapes and arrests it in the monumental spirit of stone or bronze. The painter on the contrary lavishes his soul in colour and there is a liquidity in the form, a fluent grace of subtlety in the line he uses which imposes on him a more mobile and emotional way of self-expression. The more he gives us of the colour and changing form and emotion of the life of the soul, the more his work glows with beauty, masters the inner aesthetic sense and opens it to the thing his art better gives us than any other, the delight of the motion of the self out into a spiritually sensuous joy of beautiful shapes and the coloured radiances of existence. Painting is naturally the most sensuous of the arts, and the highest greatness open to the painter is to spiritualise this sensuous appeal by making the most vivid outward beauty a revelation of subtle spiritual emotion so that the soul and the sense are at harmony in the deepest and finest richness of both and united in their satisfied consonant expression of the inner significances of things and life. There is less of the austerity of Tapasya in his way of working, a less severely restrained expression of eternal things and of the fundamental truths behind the forms of things, but there is in compensation a moved wealth of psychic or warmth of vital suggestion, a lavish delight of the beauty of the play of the eternal in the moments of time and there the artist arrests it for us and makes moments of the life of the soul reflected in form of man or creature or incident or scene or Nature full of a permanent and opulent significance to our spiritual vision. The art of the painter justifies visually to the spirit the search of the sense for delight by making it its own search for the pure intensities of meaning of the universal beauty it has revealed or hidden in creation; the indulgence of the eye's desire in perfection of form and colour becomes an enlightenment of the inner being through the power of a certain spiritually aesthetic Ananda.

The Indian artist lived in the light of an inspiration which imposed this greater aim on his art and his method sprang from its fountains and served it to the exclusion of any more earthly sensuous or outwardly imaginative aesthetic impulse. The six limbs of his art, the *śadanga*, are common to all work in line and colour: they are the necessary elements and in their elements the great arts are the same everywhere; the distinction of forms, *rūpabhedā*, proportion, arrangement of line and mass, design, harmony, perspective, *pramāṇa*, the emotion or aesthetic feeling expressed by the form, *bhāva*, the seeking for beauty and charm for the satisfaction of the aesthetic spirit, *lāvanya*, truth of the form and its suggestion, *sādr̥ṣya*, the turn, combination, harmony of colours, *varṇikābhāṅga*, are the first constituents to which every successful work of art reduces itself in analysis. But it is the turn given to each of the constituents which makes all the difference in the aim and effect of the technique and the source and character of the inner vision guiding the creative hand in their combination which makes all the difference in the spiritual value of the achievement, and the unique character of Indian painting, the peculiar appeal of the art of Ajanta springs from the remarkably inward, spiritual and psychic turn which was given to the artistic conception and method by the pervading genius of Indian culture. Indian painting no more than Indian architecture and sculpture could escape from its absorbing motive, its transmuting atmosphere, the direct or subtle obsession of the mind that has been subtly and strangely changed, the eye that has been trained to see, not as others with only the external eye but by a constant communing of the mental parts and the inner vision with the self beyond mind and the spirit to which forms are only a transparent veil or a slight index of its own greater splendour. The outward beauty and power, the grandeur of drawing, the richness of colour, the aesthetic grace of this painting is too obvious and insistent to be denied, the psychical appeal usually carries something in it to which there is a response in every cultivated and sensitive human mind and the departures from the outward physical norm are less vehement and intense, less disdainful of the more external beauty and

grace,—as is only right in the nature of this art,—than in the sculpture: therefore we find it more easily appreciated up to a certain point by the Western critical mind, and even when not well appreciated, it is exposed to milder objections. There is not the same blank incomprehension or violence of misunderstanding and repulsion. And yet we find at the same time that there is something which seems to escape the appreciation or is only imperfectly understood, and this something is precisely that profounder spiritual intention of which the things the eye and aesthetic sense immediately seize are only the intermediaries. This explains the remark often made about Indian work of the less visibly potent and quieter kind that it lacks inspiration or imagination or is a conventional art: the spirit is missed where it does not strongly impose itself, and is not fully caught even where the power which is put into the expression is too great and direct to allow of denial. Indian painting like Indian architecture and sculpture appeals through the physical and psychical to another spiritual vision from which the artist worked and it is only when this is no less awakened in us than the aesthetic sense that it can be appreciated in all the depth of its significance.

The orthodox Western artist works by a severely conscientious reproduction of the forms of outward Nature; the external world is his model, and he has to keep it before his eye and repress any tendency towards a substantial departure from it or any motion to yield his first allegiance to a subtler spirit. His imagination submits itself to physical Nature even when he brings in conceptions which are more properly of another kingdom, the stress of the physical world is always with him, and the Seer of the subtle, the creator of mental forms, the inner Artist, the wide-eyed voyager in the vaster psychical realms, is obliged to subdue his inspirations to the law of the Seer of the outward, the spirit that has embodied itself in the creations of the terrestrial life, the material universe. An idealised imaginative realism is as far as he can ordinarily go in the method of his work when he would fill the outward with the subtler inner seeing. And when, dissatisfied with this confining law, he would break quite out of the circle, he is exposed to a temptation to stray

into intellectual or imaginative extravagances which violate the universal rule of the right distinction of forms, *rūpabhedā*, and belong to the vision of some intermediate world of sheer fantasy. His art has discovered the rule of proportion, arrangement and perspective which preserves the illusion of physical Nature and he relates his whole design to her design in a spirit of conscientious obedience and faithful dependence. His imagination is a servant or interpreter of her imaginations, he finds in the observation of her universal law of beauty his secret of unity and harmony and his subjectivity tries to discover itself in hers by a close dwelling on the objective shapes she has given to her creative spirit. The farthest he has got in the direction of a more intimately subjective spirit is an impressionism which still waits upon her models but seeks to get at some first inward or original effect of them on the inner sense, and through that he arrives at some more strongly psychical rendering, but he does not work altogether from within outward in the freer manner of the oriental artist. His emotion and artistic feeling move in this form and are limited by this artistic convention and are not a pure spiritual or psychic emotion but usually an imaginative exaltation derived from the suggestions of life and outward things with a psychic element or an evocation of spiritual feeling initiated and dominated by the touch of the outward. The charm that he gives is a sublimation of the beauty that appeals to the outward senses by the power of the idea and the imagination working on the outward sense appeal and other beauty is only brought in by association into that frame. The truth of correspondence he depends upon is a likeness to the creations of physical Nature and their intellectual, emotional and aesthetic significances, and his work of line and wave of colour are meant to embody the flow of this vision. The method of this art is always a transcript from the visible world with such necessary transmutation as the aesthetic mind imposes on its materials. At the lowest to illustrate, at the highest to interpret life and Nature to the mind by identifying it with deeper things through some derivative touch of the spirit that has entered into and subdued itself to

their shapes, *pravisya yaḥ pratirūpo babbhūva*, is the governing principle.²

The Indian artist sets out from the other end of the scale of values of experience which connect life and the spirit. The whole creative force comes here from a spiritual and psychic vision, the emphasis of the physical is secondary and always deliberately lightened so as to give an overwhelmingly spiritual and psychic impression and everything is suppressed which does not serve this purpose or would distract the mind from the purity of this intention. This painting expresses the soul through life, but life is only a means of the spiritual self-expression, and its outward representation is not the first object or the direct motive. There is a real and a very vivid and vital representation, but it is more of an inner psychical than of the outward physical life. A critic of high repute speaking of the Indian influence in a famous Japanese painting fixes on the grand strongly outlined figures and the feeling for life and character recalling the Ajanta frescoes as the signs of its Indian character: but we have to mark carefully the nature of this feeling for life and the origin and intention of this strong outlining of the figures. The feeling for life and character here is a very different thing from the splendid and abundant vitality and the power and force of character which we find in an Italian painting, a fresco from Michael Angelo's hand or a portrait by Titian or Tintoretto. The first primitive object of the art of painting is to illustrate life and Nature and at the lowest this becomes a more or less vigorous and original or conventionally faithful reproduction, but it rises in great hands to a revelation of the glory and beauty of the sensuous appeal of life or of the dramatic power and moving interest of character and emotion and action. That is a common form of aesthetic work in Europe; but in Indian art it is never the governing motive. The sensuous appeal is there, but it is refined into only one and not the chief element of the richness of a soul of psychic grace and beauty which is for the Indian

² All this is no longer true of European art in much of its more prominent recent developments.

artist the true beauty, *lāvanya*: the dramatic motive is subordinated and made only a purely secondary element, only so much is given of character and action as will help to bring out the deeper spiritual or psychic feeling, *bhāva*, and all insistence or too prominent force of these more outwardly dynamic things is shunned, because that would externalise too much the spiritual emotion and take away from its intense purity by the interference of the grosser intensity which emotion puts on in the stress of the active outward nature. The life depicted is the life of the soul and not, except as a form and a helping suggestion, the life of the vital being and the body. For the second more elevated aim of art is the interpretation or intuitive revelation of existence through the forms of life and Nature and it is this that is the starting-point of the Indian motive. But the interpretation may proceed on the basis of the forms already given us by physical Nature and try to evoke by the form an idea, a truth of the spirit which starts from it as a suggestion and returns upon it for support, and the effort is then to correlate the form as it is to the physical eye with the truth which it evokes without overpassing the limits imposed by the appearance. This is the common method of occidental art always zealous for the immediate fidelity to Nature which is its idea of true correspondence, *sādr̤syā*, but it is rejected by the Indian artist. He begins from within, sees in his soul the thing he wishes to express or interpret and tries to discover the right line, colour and design of his intuition which, when it appears on the physical ground, is not a just and reminding reproduction of the line, colour and design of physical nature, but much rather what seems to us a psychical transmutation of the natural figure. In reality the shapes he paints are the forms of things as he has seen them in the psychical plane of experience: these are the soul-figures of which physical things are a gross representation and their purity and subtlety reveals at once what the physical masks by the thickness of its casings. The lines and colours sought here are the psychic lines and the psychic hues proper to the vision which the artist has gone into himself to discover.

This is the whole governing principle of the art which gives its stamp to every detail of an Indian painting and transforms

the artist's use of the six limbs of the canon. The distinction of forms is faithfully observed, but not in the sense of an exact naturalistic fidelity to the physical appearance with the object of a faithful reproduction of the outward shapes of the world in which we live. To recall with fidelity something our eyes have seen or could have seen on the spot, a scene, an interior, a living and breathing person, and give the aesthetic sense and emotion of it to the mind is not the motive. There is here an extraordinary vividness, naturalness, reality, but it is a more than physical reality, a reality which the soul at once recognises as of its own sphere, a vivid naturalness of psychic truth, the convincing spirit of the form to which the soul, not the outward naturalness of the form to which the physical eye bears witness. The truth, the exact likeness is there, the correspondence, *sādṛśya*, but it is the truth of the essence of the form, it is the likeness of the soul to itself, the reproduction of the subtle embodiment which is the basis of the physical embodiment, the purer and finer subtle body of an object which is the very expression of its own essential nature, *svabhāva*. The means by which this effect is produced is characteristic of the inward vision of the Indian mind. It is done by a bold and firm insistence on the pure and strong outline and a total suppression of everything that would interfere with its boldness, strength and purity or would blur over and dilute the intense significance of the line. In the treatment of the human figure all corporeal filling in of the outline by insistence on the flesh, the muscle, the anatomical detail is minimised or disregarded: the strong subtle lines and pure shapes which make the humanity of the human form are alone brought into relief; the whole essential human being is there, the divinity that has taken this garb of the spirit to the eye, but not the superfluous physicality which he carries with him as his burden. It is the ideal psychical figure and body of man and woman that is before us in its charm and beauty. The filling in of the line is done in another way; it is effected by a disposition of pure masses, a design and coloured wave-flow of the body, *bhaṅga*, a simplicity of content that enables the artist to flood the whole with the significance of the one spiritual emotion, feeling, suggestion which he intends



25. The Adoration Group, Ajanta

The simplicity in the greatness and power, the fullness of expression gained by reserve and suppression and concentration which we find here is the perfect method of the classical art of India. (p.310)

to convey, his intuition of the moment of the soul, its living self-experience. All is disposed so as to express that and that alone. The almost miraculously subtle and meaningful use of the hands to express the psychic suggestion is a common and well-marked feature of Indian paintings and the way in which the suggestion of the face and the eyes is subtly repeated or supplemented by this expression of the hands is always one of the first things that strikes the regard, but as we continue to look, we see that every turn of the body, the pose of each limb, the relation and design of all the masses are filled with the same psychical feeling. The more important accessories help it by a kindred suggestion or bring it out by a support or variation or extension or relief of the motive. The same law of significant line and suppression of distracting detail is applied to animal forms, buildings, trees, objects. There is in all the art an inspired harmony of conception, method and expression. Colour too is used as a means for the spiritual and psychic intention, and we can see this well enough if we study the suggestive significance of the hues in a Buddhist miniature. This power of line and subtlety of psychic suggestion in the filling in of the expressive outlines is the source of that remarkable union of greatness and moving grace which is the stamp of the whole work of Ajanta and continues in Rajput painting, though there the grandeur of the earlier work is lost in the grace and replaced by a delicately intense but still bold and decisive power of vivid and suggestive line. It is this common spirit and tradition which is the mark of all the truly indigenous work of India.

These things have to be carefully understood and held in mind when we look at an Indian painting and the real spirit of it first grasped before we condemn or praise. To dwell on that in it which is common to all art is well enough, but it is what is peculiar to India that is its real essence. And there again to appreciate the technique and the fervour of religious feeling is not sufficient; the spiritual intention served by the technique, the psychic significance of line and colour, the greater thing of which the religious emotion is the result has to be felt if we would identify ourself with the whole purpose of the artist. If

we look long, for an example, at the adoration group of the mother and child before the Buddha, one of the most profound, tender and noble of the Ajanta masterpieces, we shall find that the impression of intense religious feeling of adoration there is only the most outward general touch in the ensemble of the emotion. That which it deepens to is the turning of the soul of humanity in love to the benignant and calm Ineffable which has made itself sensible and human to us in the universal compassion of the Buddha, and the motive of the soul moment the painting interprets is the dedication of the awakening mind of the child, the coming younger humanity, to that in which already the soul of the mother has learned to find and fix its spiritual joy. The eyes, brows, lips, face, poise of the head of the woman are filled with this spiritual emotion which is a continued memory and possession of the psychical release, the steady settled calm of the heart's experience filled with an ineffable tenderness, the familiar depths which are yet moved with the wonder and always farther appeal of something that is infinite, the body and other limbs are grave masses of this emotion and in their poise a basic embodiment of it, while the hands prolong it in the dedicative putting forward of her child to meet the Eternal. This contact of the human and eternal is repeated in the smaller figure with a subtly and strongly indicated variation, the glad and childlike smile of awakening which promises but not yet possesses the depths that are to come, the hands disposed to receive and keep, the body in its looser curves and waves harmonising with that significance. The two have forgotten themselves and seem almost to forget or confound each other in that which they adore and contemplate, and yet the dedicating hands unite mother and child in the common act and feeling by their simultaneous gesture of maternal possession and spiritual giving. The two figures have at each point the same rhythm, but with a significant difference. The simplicity in the greatness and power, the fullness of expression gained by reserve and suppression and concentration which we find here is the perfect method of the classical art of India. And by this perfection Buddhist art became not merely an illustration of the religion and an expression of its thought and its religious

feeling, history and legend, but a revealing interpretation of the spiritual sense of Buddhism and its profounder meaning to the soul of India.

To understand that—we must always seek first and foremost this kind of deeper intention—is to understand the reason of the differences between the occidental and the Indian treatment of the life motives. Thus a portrait by a great European painter will express with sovereign power the soul through character, through the active qualities, the ruling powers and passions, the master feeling and temperament, the active mental and vital man: the Indian artist tones down the outward-going dynamic indices and gives only so much of them as will serve to bring out or to modulate something that is more of the grain of the subtle soul, something more static and impersonal of which our personality is at once the mask and the index. A moment of the spirit expressing with purity the permanence of a very subtle soul quality is the highest type of the Indian portrait. And more generally the feeling for character which has been noted as a feature of the Ajanta work is of a similar kind. An Indian painting expressing, let us say, a religious feeling centred on some significant incident will show the expression in each figure varied in such a way as to bring out the universal spiritual essence of the emotion modified by the essential soul type, different waves of the one sea, all complexity of dramatic insistence is avoided, and so much stress only is laid on character in the individual feeling as to give the variation without diminishing the unity of the fundamental emotion. The vividness of life in these paintings must not obscure for us the more profound purpose for which it is the setting, and this has especially to be kept in mind in our view of the later art which has not the greatness of the classic work and runs to a less grave and highly sustained kind, to lyric emotion, minute vividness of life movement, the more naive feelings of the people. One sometimes finds inspiration, decisive power of thought and feeling, originality of creative imagination denied to this later art; but its real difference from that of Ajanta is only that the intermediate psychic transmission between the life movement and the inmost motive has been given

with less power and distinctness: the psychic thought and feeling are there more thrown outward in movement, less contained in the soul, but still the soul motive is not only present but makes the true atmosphere and if we miss it, we miss the real sense of the picture. This is more evident where the inspiration is religious, but it is not absent from the secular subject. Here too spiritual intention or psychic suggestion are the things of the first importance. In Ajanta work they are all-important and to ignore them at all is to open the way to serious errors of interpretation. Thus a highly competent and very sympathetic critic speaking of the painting of the Great Renunciation says truly that this great work excels in its expression of sorrow and feeling of profound pity, but then, looking for what a Western imagination would naturally put into such a subject, he goes on to speak of the weight of a tragic decision, the bitterness of renouncing a life of bliss blended with a yearning sense of hope in the happiness of the future, and that is singularly to misunderstand the spirit in which the Indian mind turns from the transient to the eternal, to mistake the Indian art motive and to put a vital into the place of a spiritual emotion. It is not at all his own personal sorrow but the sorrow of all others, not an emotional self-pity but a poignant pity for the world, not the regret for a life of domestic bliss but the afflicting sense of the unreality of human happiness that is concentrated in the eyes and lips of the Buddha, and the yearning there is not, certainly, for earthly happiness in the future but for the spiritual way out, the anguished seeking which found its release, already foreseen by the spirit behind and hence the immense calm and restraint that support the sorrow, in the true bliss of Nirvana. There is illustrated the whole difference between two kinds of imagination, the mental, vital and physical stress of the art of Europe and the subtle, less forcefully tangible spiritual stress of the art of India.

It is the indigenous art of which this is the constant spirit and tradition, and it has been doubted whether the Mogul paintings deserve that name, have anything to do with that tradition and are not rather an exotic importation from Persia. Almost all oriental art is akin in this respect that the psychic enters into

and for the most part lays its subtler law on the physical vision and the psychic line and significance give the characteristic turn, are the secret of the decorative skill, direct the higher art in its principal motive. But there is a difference between the Persian psychicality which is redolent of the magic of the middle worlds and the Indian which is only a means of transmission of the spiritual vision. And obviously the Indo-Persian style is of the former kind and not indigenous to India. But the Mogul school is not an exotic; there is rather a blending of two mentalities: on the one side there is a leaning to some kind of externalism which is not the same thing as Western naturalism, a secular spirit and certain prominent elements that are more strongly illustrative than interpretative, but the central thing is still the domination of a transforming touch which shows that there as in the architecture the Indian mind has taken hold of another invading mentality and made it a help to a more outward-going self-expression that comes in as a new side strain in the spiritual continuity of achievement which began in prehistoric times and ended only with the general decline of Indian culture. Painting, the last of the arts in that decline to touch the bottom, has also been the first to rise again and lift the dawn fires of an era of new creation.

It is not necessary to dilate on the decorative arts and crafts of India, for their excellence has always been beyond dispute. The generalised sense of beauty which they imply is one of the greatest proofs that there can be of the value and soundness of a national culture. Indian culture in this respect need not fear any comparison: if it is less predominantly artistic than that of Japan, it is because it has put first the spiritual need and made all other things subservient to and a means for the spiritual growth of the people. Its civilisation, standing in the first rank in the three great arts as in all things of the mind, has proved that the spiritual urge is not, as has been vainly supposed, sterilising to the other activities, but a most powerful force for the many-sided development of the human whole.

Indian Literature

THE ARTS which appeal to the soul through the eye are able to arrive at a peculiarly concentrated expression of the spirit, the aesthesis and the creative mind of a people, but it is in its literature that we must seek for its most flexible and many-sided self-expression, for it is the word used in all its power of clear figure or its threads of suggestion that carries to us most subtly and variably the shades and turns and teeming significances of the inner self in its manifestation. The greatness of a literature lies first in the greatness and worth of its substance, the value of its thought and the beauty of its forms, but also in the degree to which, satisfying the highest conditions of the art of speech, it avails to bring out and raise the soul and life or the living and the ideal mind of a people, an age, a culture, through the genius of some of its greatest or most sensitive representative spirits. And if we ask what in both these respects is the achievement of the Indian mind as it has come down to us in the Sanskrit and other literatures, we might surely say that here at least there is little room for any just depreciation and denial even by a mind the most disposed to quarrel with the effect on life and the character of the culture. The ancient and classical creations of the Sanskrit tongue both in quality and in body and abundance of excellence, in their potent originality and force and beauty, in their substance and art and structure, in grandeur and justice and charm of speech and in the height and width of the reach of their spirit stand very evidently in the front rank among the world's great literatures. The language itself, as has been universally recognised by those competent to form a judgment, is one of the most magnificent, the most perfect and wonderfully sufficient literary instruments developed by the human mind, at once majestic and sweet and flexible, strong and clearly-formed and full and vibrant and subtle, and its quality and character would be

of itself a sufficient evidence of the character and quality of the race whose mind it expressed and the culture of which it was the reflecting medium. The great and noble use made of it by poet and thinker did not fall below the splendour of its capacities. Nor is it in the Sanskrit tongue alone that the Indian mind has done high and beautiful and perfect things, though it couched in that language the larger part of its most prominent and formative and grandest creations. It would be necessary for a complete estimate to take into account as well the Buddhistic literature in Pali and the poetic literatures, here opulent, there more scanty in production, of about a dozen Sanskritic and Dravidian tongues. The whole has almost a continental effect and does not fall so far short in the quantity of its really lasting things and equals in its things of best excellence the work of ancient and mediaeval and modern Europe. The people and the civilisation that count among their great works and their great names the Veda and the Upanishads, the mighty structures of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti and Bhartrihari and Jayadeva and the other rich creations of classical Indian drama and poetry and romance, the Dhammapada and the Jatakas, the Panchatantra, Tulsidas, Vidyapati and Chandidas and Ramprasad, Ramdas and Tukaram, Tiruvalluvar and Kamban and the songs of Nanak and Kabir and Mirabai and the southern Shaiva saints and the Alwars,—to name only the best-known writers and most characteristic productions, though there is a very large body of other work in the different tongues of both the first and the second excellence,—must surely be counted among the greatest civilisations and the world's most developed and creative peoples. A mental activity so great and of so fine a quality commencing more than three thousand years ago and still not exhausted is unique and the best and most undeniable witness to something extraordinarily sound and vital in the culture.

A criticism that ignores or belittles the significance of this unsurpassed record and this splendour of the self-expressing spirit and the creative intelligence, stands convicted at once of a blind malignity or an invincible prejudice and does not merit

refutation. It would be a sheer waste of time and energy to review the objections raised by our devil's advocate: for nothing vital to the greatness of a literature is really in dispute and there is only to the credit of the attack a general distortion and denunciation and a laborious and exaggerated cavilling at details and idiosyncracies which at most show a difference between the idealising mind and abundant imagination of India and the more realistically observant mind and less rich and exuberant imagination of Europe. The fit parallel to this motive and style of criticism would be if an Indian critic who had read European literature only in bad or ineffective Indian translations, were to pass it under a hostile and disparaging review, dismiss the Iliad as a crude and empty semi-savage and primitive epos, Dante's great work as the nightmare of a cruel and superstitious religious fantasy, Shakespeare as a drunken barbarian of considerable genius with an epileptic imagination, the whole drama of Greece and Spain and England as a mass of bad ethics and violent horrors, French poetry as a succession of bald or tawdry rhetorical exercises and French fiction as a tainted and immoral thing, a long sacrifice on the altar of the goddess Lubricity, admit here and there a minor merit, but make no attempt at all to understand the central spirit or aesthetic quality or principle of structure and conclude on the strength of his own absurd method that the ideals of both Pagan and Christian Europe were altogether false and bad and its imagination afflicted with a "habitual and ancestral" earthiness, morbidity, poverty and disorder. No criticism would be worth making on such a mass of absurdities, and in this equally ridiculous philippic only a stray observation or two less inconsequent and opaque than the others perhaps demands a passing notice. But although these futilities do not at all represent the genuine view of the general European mind on the subject of Indian poetry and literature, still one finds a frequent inability to appreciate the spirit or the form or the aesthetic value of Indian writing and especially its perfection and power as an expression of the cultural mind of the people. One meets such criticisms even from sympathetic critics as an admission of the vigour, colour and splendour of Indian poetry followed by a

conclusion that for all that it does not satisfy, and this means that the intellectual and temperamental misunderstanding extends to some degree even to this field of creation where different minds meet more readily than in painting and sculpture, that there is a rift between the two mentalities and what is delightful and packed with meaning and power to the one has no substance, but only a form, of aesthetic or intellectual pleasure for the other. This difficulty is partly due to an inability to enter into the living spirit and feel the vital touch of the language, but partly to a spiritual difference in similarity which is even more baffling than a complete dissimilarity and otherness. Chinese poetry for example is altogether of its own kind and it is more possible for a Western mentality, when it does not altogether pass it by as an alien world, to develop an undisturbed appreciation because the receptivity of the mind is not checked or hampered by any disturbing memories or comparisons. Indian poetry on the contrary, like the poetry of Europe, is the creation of an Aryan or Aryanised national mind, starts apparently from similar motives, moves on the same plane, uses cognate forms, and yet has something quite different in its spirit which creates a pronounced and separating divergence in its aesthetic tones, type of imagination, turn of self-expression, ideative mind, method, form, structure. The mind accustomed to the European idea and technique expects the same kind of satisfaction here and does not meet it, feels a baffling difference to whose secret it is a stranger, and the subtly pursuing comparison and vain expectation stand in the way of a full receptivity and intimate understanding. At bottom it is an insufficient comprehension of the quite different spirit behind, the different heart of this culture that produces the mingled attraction and dissatisfaction. The subject is too large to be dealt with adequately in small limits: I shall only attempt to bring out certain points by a consideration of some of the most representative master works of creative intuition and imagination taken as a record of the soul and mind of the Indian people.

The early mind of India in the magnificent youth of the nation, when a fathomless spiritual insight was at work, a subtle

intuitive vision and a deep, clear and greatly outlined intellectual and ethical thinking and heroic action and creation which founded and traced the plan and made the permanent structure of her unique culture and civilisation, is represented by four of the supreme productions of her genius, the Veda, the Upanishads and the two vast epics, and each of them is of a kind, a form and an intention not easily paralleled in any other literature. The two first are the visible foundation of her spiritual and religious being, the others a large creative interpretation of her greatest period of life, of the ideas that informed and the ideals that governed it and the figures in which she saw man and Nature and God and the powers of the universe. The Veda gave us the first types and figures of these things as seen and formed by an imaged spiritual intuition and psychological and religious experience; the Upanishads constantly breaking through and beyond form and symbol and image without entirely abandoning them, since always they come in as accompaniment or undertone, reveal in a unique kind of poetry the ultimate and unsurpassable truths of self and God and man and the world and its principles and powers in their most essential, their profoundest and most intimate and their most ample realities,—highest mysteries and clarities vividly seen in an irresistible, an unwalled perception that has got through the intuitive and psychological to the sheer spiritual vision. And after that we have powerful and beautiful developments of the intellect and the life and of ideal, ethical, aesthetic, psychic, emotional and sensuous and physical knowledge and idea and vision and experience of which the epics are the early record and the rest of the literature the continuation; but the foundation remains the same throughout, and whatever new and often larger types and significant figures replace the old or intervene to add and modify and alter the whole ensemble, are in their essential build and character transmutations and extensions of the original vision and first spiritual experience and never an unconnected departure. There is a persistence, a continuity of the Indian mind in its literary creation in spite of great changes as consistent as that which we find in painting and sculpture.

The Veda is the creation of an early intuitive and symbolical mentality to which the later mind of man, strongly intellectualised and governed on the one side by reasoning idea and abstract conception, on the other hand by the facts of life and matter accepted as they present themselves to the senses and positive intelligence without seeking in them for any divine or mystic significance, indulging the imagination as a play of the aesthetic fancy rather than as an opener of the doors of truth and only trusting to its suggestions when they are confirmed by the logical reason or by physical experience, aware only of carefully intellectualised intuitions and recalcitrant for the most part to any others, has grown a total stranger. It is not surprising therefore that the Veda should have become unintelligible to our minds except in its most outward shell of language, and that even very imperfectly known owing to the obstacle of an antique and ill-understood diction, and that the most inadequate interpretations should be made which reduce this great creation of the young and splendid mind of humanity to a botched and defaced scrawl, an incoherent hotch-potch of the absurdities of a primitive imagination perplexing what would be otherwise the quite plain, flat and common record of a naturalistic religion which mirrored only and could only minister to the crude and materialistic desires of a barbaric life mind. The Veda became to the later scholastic and ritualistic idea of Indian priests and pundits nothing better than a book of mythology and sacrificial ceremonies; European scholars seeking in it for what was alone to them of any rational interest, the history, myths and popular religious notions of a primitive people, have done yet worse wrong to the Veda and by insisting on a wholly external rendering still farther stripped it of its spiritual interest and its poetic greatness and beauty.

But this was not what it was to the Vedic Rishis themselves or to the great seers and thinkers who came after them and developed out of their pregnant and luminous intuitions their own wonderful structures of thought and speech built upon an unexampled spiritual revelation and experience. The Veda was

to these early seers the Word discovering the Truth and clothing in image and symbol the mystic significances of life. It was a divine discovery and unveiling of the potencies of the word, of its mysterious revealing and creative capacity, not the word of the logical and reasoning or the aesthetic intelligence, but the intuitive and inspired rhythmic utterance, the mantra. Image and myth were freely used, not as an imaginative indulgence, but as living parables and symbols of things that were very real to their speakers and could not otherwise find their own intimate and native shape in utterance, and the imagination itself was a priest of greater realities than those that meet and hold the eye and mind limited by the external suggestions of life and the physical existence. This was their idea of the sacred poet, a mind visited by some highest light and its forms of idea and word, a seer and hearer of the Truth, *kavayah satyaśrutah*. The poets of the Vedic verse certainly did not regard their function as it is represented by modern scholars, they did not look on themselves as a sort of superior medicine-men and makers of hymn and incantation to a robust and barbarous tribe, but as seers and thinkers, *r̥si, dhīra*. These singers believed that they were in possession of a high, mystic and hidden truth, claimed to be the bearers of a speech acceptable to a divine knowledge, and expressly so speak of their utterances, as secret words which declare their whole significance only to the seer, *kavaye nivacanā ninyā vacāṁsi*. And to those who came after them the Veda was a book of knowledge, and even of the supreme knowledge, a revelation, a great utterance of eternal and impersonal truth as it had been seen and heard in the inner experience of inspired and semi-divine thinkers. The smallest circumstances of the sacrifice around which the hymns were written were intended to carry a symbolic and psychological power of significance, as was well known to the writers of the ancient Brahmanas. The sacred verses, each by itself held to be full of a divine meaning, were taken by the thinkers of the Upanishads as the profound and pregnant seed-words of the truth they sought and the highest authority they could give for their own sublime utterances was a supporting citation from their predecessors with the formula,

tad esā ṛcābhvuktā, "This is that word which was spoken by the Rig Veda." Western scholars choose to imagine that the successors of the Vedic Rishis were in error, that, except for some later hymns, they put a false and non-existent meaning into the old verses and that they themselves, divided from the Rishis not only by ages of time but by many gulfs and separating seas of an intellectualised mentality, know infinitely better. But mere common sense ought to tell us that those who were so much nearer in both ways to the original poets had a better chance of holding at least the essential truth of the matter and suggests at least the strong probability that the Veda was really what it professes to be, the seeking for a mystic knowledge, the first form of the constant attempt of the Indian mind, to which it has always been faithful, to look beyond the appearances of the physical world and through its own inner experiences to the godheads, powers, self-existence of the One of whom the sages speak variously—the famous phrase in which the Veda utters its own central secret, *ekam sad viprā bahudhā vadanti*.

The real character of the Veda can best be understood by taking it anywhere and rendering it straightforwardly according to its own phrases and images. A famous German scholar rating from his high pedestal of superior intelligence the silly persons who find sublimity in the Veda, tells us that it is full of childish, silly, even monstrous conceptions, that it is tedious, low, commonplace, that it represents human nature on a low level of selfishness and worldliness and that only here and there are a few rare sentiments that come from the depths of the soul. It may be made so if we put our own mental conceptions into the words of the Rishis, but if we read them as they are without any such false translation into what we think early barbarians ought to have said and thought, we shall find instead a sacred poetry sublime and powerful in its words and images, though with another kind of language and imagination than we now prefer and appreciate, deep and subtle in its psychological experience and stirred by a moved soul of vision and utterance. Hear rather the word itself of the Veda.

States upon states are born, covering over covering¹ awakens to knowledge: in the lap of the mother he wholly sees. They have called to him, getting a wide knowledge, they guard sleeplessly the strength, they have entered into the strong city. The peoples born on earth increase the luminous (force) of the son of the White Mother; he has gold on his neck, he is large of speech, he is as if by (the power of) this honey wine a seeker of plenty. He is like pleasant and desirable milk, he is a thing uncompanioned and is with the two who are companions and is as a heat that is the belly of plenty and is invincible and an overcomer of many. Play, O Ray, and manifest thyself.²

Or again in the succeeding hymn,—

Those (flames) of thee, the forceful (godhead), that move not and are increased and puissant, uncling the hostility and crookedness of one who has another law. O Fire, we choose thee for our priest and the means of effectuation of our strength and in the sacrifices bringing the food of thy pleasure we call thee by the word. . . . O god of perfect works, may we be for the felicity, for the truth, revelling with the rays, revelling with the heroes.

And finally let us take the bulk of the third hymn that follows couched in the ordinary symbols of the sacrifice,—

As the Manu we set thee in thy place, as the Manu we kindle thee: O Fire, O Angiras, as the Manu sacrifice to the gods for him who desires the godheads. O Fire, well pleased thou art kindled in the human being and the ladles go to thee continually. . . . Thee all the gods with one pleasure (in thee) made their messenger and serving thee, O seer, (men) in the sacrifices adore the god. Let the mortal adore the divine Fire with sacrifice

¹ Or, “the coverer of the coverer”.

² Literally, “become towards us”.

to the godheads. Kindled, flame forth, O Bright One. Sit in the seat of Truth, sit in the seat of peace.³

That, whatever interpretation we choose to put on its images, is a mystic and symbolic poetry and that is the real Veda.

The character of Vedic poetry apparent from these typical verses need not surprise or baffle us when we see what will be evident from a comparative study of Asiatic literature, that though distinguished by its theory and treatment of the Word, its peculiar system of images and the complexity of its thought and symbolised experience, it is in fact the beginning of a form of symbolic or figurative imagery for the poetic expression of spiritual experience which reappears constantly in later Indian writing, the figures of the Tantras and Puranas, the figures of the Vaishnava poets,—one might add even a certain element in the modern poetry of Tagore,—and has its kindred movements in certain Chinese poets and in the images of the Sufis. The poet has to express a spiritual and psychical knowledge and experience and he cannot do it altogether or mainly in the more abstract language of the philosophical thinker, for he has to bring out, not the naked idea of it, but as vividly as possible its very life and most intimate touches. He has to reveal in one way or another a whole world within him and the quite inner and spiritual significances of the world around him and also, it may well be, godheads, powers, visions and experiences of planes of consciousness other than the one with which our normal minds are familiar. He uses or starts with the images taken from his own normal and outward life and that of humanity and from visible Nature, and though they do not of themselves actually express, yet obliges them to express by implication or to figure the spiritual and psychic idea and experience. He takes them selecting freely his notation of images according to his insight or imagination and transmutes them into instruments of another significance and at the same time pours a direct spiritual

³ I have translated these passages with as close a literalness as the English language will admit. Let the reader compare the original and judge whether this is not the sense of the verses.

meaning into the Nature and life to which they belong, applies outward figures to inner things and brings out their latent and inner spiritual or psychic significance into life's outward figures and circumstances. Or an outward figure nearest to the inward experience, its material counterpart, is taken throughout and used with such realism and consistency that while it indicates to those who possess it the spiritual experience, it means only the external thing to others,—just as the Vaishnava poetry of Bengal makes to the devout mind a physical and emotional image or suggestion of the love of the human soul for God, but to the profane is nothing but a sensuous and passionate love poetry hung conventionally round the traditional human-divine personalities of Krishna and Radha. The two methods may meet together, the fixed system of outward images be used as the body of the poetry, while freedom is often taken to pass their first limits, to treat them only as initial suggestions and transmute subtly or even cast them aside or subdue into a secondary strain or carry them out of themselves so that the translucent veil they offer to our minds lifts from or passes into the open revelation. The last is the method of the Veda and it varies according to the passion and stress of the sight in the poet or the exaltation of his utterance.

The poets of the Veda had another mentality than ours, their use of their images is of a peculiar kind and an antique cast of vision gives a strange outline to their substance. The physical and the psychical worlds were to their eyes a manifestation and a twofold and diverse and yet connected and similar figure of cosmic godheads, the inner and outer life of man a divine commerce with the gods, and behind was the one spirit or being of which the gods were names and personalities and powers. These godheads were at once masters of physical Nature and its principles and forms their godheads and their bodies and inward divine powers with their corresponding states and energies born in our psychic being because they are the soul powers of the cosmos, the guardians of truth and immortality, the children of the Infinite, and each of them too is in his origin and his last reality the supreme Spirit putting in front one of his aspects. The life of

man was to these seers a thing of mixed truth and falsehood, a movement from mortality to immortality, from mixed light and darkness to the splendour of a divine Truth whose home is above in the Infinite but which can be built up here in man's soul and life, a battle between the children of light and the sons of Night, a getting of treasure, of the wealth, the booty given by the gods to the human warrior, and a journey and a sacrifice; and of these things they spoke in a fixed system of images taken from Nature and from the surrounding life of the war-like, pastoral and agricultural Aryan peoples and centred round the cult of Fire and the worship of the powers of living Nature and the institution of sacrifice. The details of outward existence and of the sacrifice were in their life and practice symbols, and in their poetry not dead symbols or artificial metaphors, but living and powerful suggestions and counterparts of inner things. And they used too for their expression a fixed and yet variable body of other images and a glowing web of myth and parable, images that became parables, parables that became myths and myths that remained always images, and yet all these things were to them, in a way that can only be understood by those who have entered into a certain order of psychic experience, actual realities. The physical melted its shades into the lustres of the psychic, the psychic deepened into the light of the spiritual and there was no sharp dividing line in the transition, but a natural blending and intershading of their suggestions and colours. It is evident that a poetry of this kind, written by men with this kind of vision or imagination, cannot either be interpreted or judged by the standards of a reason and taste observant only of the canons of the physical existence. The invocation "Play, O Ray, and become towards us" is at once a suggestion of the leaping up and radiant play of the potent sacrificial flame on the physical altar and of a similar psychical phenomenon, the manifestation of the saving flame of a divine power and light within us. The Western critic sneers at the bold and reckless and to him monstrous image in which Indra son of earth and heaven is said to create his own father and mother; but if we remember that Indra is the supreme spirit in one of its eternal and constant aspects, creator of earth

and heaven, born as a cosmic godhead between the mental and physical worlds and recreating their powers in man, we shall see that the image is not only a powerful but in fact a true and revealing figure, and in the Vedic technique it does not matter that it outrages the physical imagination since it expresses a greater actuality as no other figure could have done with the same awakening aptness and vivid poetical force. The Bull and Cow of the Veda, the shining herds of the Sun lying hidden in the cave are strange enough creatures to the physical mind, but they do not belong to the earth and in their own plane they are at once images and actual things and full of life and significance. It is in this way that throughout we must interpret and receive the Vedic poetry according to its own spirit and vision and the psychically natural, even if to us strange and supranatural, truth of its ideas and figures.

The Veda thus understood stands out, apart from its interest as the world's first yet extant Scripture, its earliest interpretation of man and the Divine and the universe, as a remarkable, a sublime and powerful poetic creation. It is in its form and speech no barbaric production. The Vedic poets are masters of a consummate technique, their rhythms are carved like chariots of the gods and borne on divine and ample wings of sound, and are at once concentrated and wide-waved, great in movement and subtle in modulation, their speech lyric by intensity and epic by elevation, an utterance of great power, pure and bold and grand in outline, a speech direct and brief in impact, full to overflowing in sense and suggestion so that each verse exists at once as a strong and sufficient thing in itself and takes its place as a large step between what came before and what comes after. A sacred and hieratic tradition faithfully followed gave them both their form and substance, but this substance consisted of the deepest psychic and spiritual experiences of which the human soul is capable and the forms seldom or never degenerate into a convention, because what they are intended to convey was lived in himself by each poet and made new to his own mind in expression by the subtleties or sublimities of his individual vision. The utterances of the greatest seers, Vishwamitra, Vamadeva,

Dirghatamas and many others, touch the most extraordinary heights and amplitudes of a sublime and mystic poetry and there are poems like the Hymn of Creation that move in a powerful clarity on the summits of thought on which the Upanishads lived constantly with a more sustained breathing. The mind of ancient India did not err when it traced back all its philosophy, religion and essential things of its culture to these seer-poets, for all the future spirituality of her people is contained there in seed or in first expression.

It is one great importance of a right understanding of the Vedic hymns as a form of sacred literature that it helps us to see the original shaping not only of the master ideas that governed the mind of India, but of its characteristic types of spiritual experience, its turn of imagination, its creative temperament and the kind of significant forms in which it persistently interpreted its sight of self and things and life and the universe. It is in a great part of the literature the same turn of inspiration and self-expression that we see in the architecture, painting and sculpture. Its first character is a constant sense of the infinite, the cosmic, and of things as seen in or affected by the cosmic vision, set in or against the amplitude of the one and infinite; its second peculiarity is a tendency to see and render its spiritual experience in a great richness of images taken from the inner psychic plane or in physical images transmuted by the stress of a psychic significance and impression and line and idea colour; and its third tendency is to image the terrestrial life often magnified, as in the Mahabharata and Ramayana, or else subtilised in the transparencies of a larger atmosphere, attended by a greater than the terrestrial meaning or at any rate presented against the background of the spiritual and psychic worlds and not alone in its own separate figure. The spiritual, the infinite is near and real and the gods are real and the worlds beyond not so much beyond as immanent in our own existence. That which to the Western mind is myth and imagination is here an actuality and a strand of the life of our inner being, what is there beautiful poetic idea and philosophic speculation is here a thing constantly realised and present to the experience. It is this turn of the Indian

mind, its spiritual sincerity and psychic positivism, that makes the Veda and Upanishads and the later religious and religio-philosophic poetry so powerful in inspiration and intimate and living in expression and image, and it has its less absorbing but still very sensible effect on the working of the poetic idea and imagination even in the more secular literature.

Indian Literature–2

THE UPANISHADS are the supreme work of the Indian mind, and that it should be so, that the highest self-expression of its genius, its sublimest poetry, its greatest creation of the thought and word should be not a literary or poetical masterpiece of the ordinary kind, but a large flood of spiritual revelation of this direct and profound character, is a significant fact, evidence of a unique mentality and unusual turn of spirit. The Upanishads are at once profound religious scriptures,—for they are a record of the deepest spiritual experiences,—documents of revelatory and intuitive philosophy of an inexhaustible light, power and largeness and, whether written in verse or cadenced prose, spiritual poems of an absolute, an unfailing inspiration inevitable in phrase, wonderful in rhythm and expression. It is the expression of a mind in which philosophy and religion and poetry are made one, because this religion does not end with a cult nor is limited to a religio-ethical aspiration, but rises to an infinite discovery of God, of Self, of our highest and whole reality of spirit and being and speaks out of an ecstasy of luminous knowledge and an ecstasy of moved and fulfilled experience, this philosophy is not an abstract intellectual speculation about Truth or a structure of the logical intelligence, but Truth seen, felt, lived, held by the inmost mind and soul in the joy of utterance of an assured discovery and possession, and this poetry is the work of the aesthetic mind lifted up beyond its ordinary field to express the wonder and beauty of the rarest spiritual self-vision and the profoundest illumined truth of self and God and universe. Here the intuitive mind and intimate psychological experience of the Vedic seers passes into a supreme culmination in which the Spirit, as is said in a phrase of the Katha Upanishad, discloses its own very body, reveals the very word of its self-expression and discovers to

the mind the vibration of rhythms which repeating themselves within in the spiritual hearing seem to build up the soul and set it satisfied and complete on the heights of self-knowledge.

This character of the Upanishads needs to be insisted upon with a strong emphasis, because it is ignored by foreign translators who seek to bring out the intellectual sense without feeling the life of thought vision and the ecstasy of spiritual experience which made the ancient verses appear then and still make them to those who can enter into the element in which these utterances move, a revelation not to the intellect alone, but to the soul and the whole being, make of them in the old expressive word not intellectual thought and phrase, but Sruti, spiritual audience, an inspired Scripture. The philosophical substance of the Upanishads demands at this day no farther stress of appreciation of its value; for even if the amplest acknowledgement by the greatest minds were wanting, the whole history of philosophy would be there to offer its evidence. The Upanishads have been the acknowledged source of numerous profound philosophies and religions that flowed from it in India like her great rivers from their Himalayan cradle fertilising the mind and life of the people and kept its soul alive through the long procession of the centuries, constantly returned to for light, never failing to give fresh illumination, a fountain of inexhaustible life-giving waters. Buddhism with all its developments was only a restatement, although from a new standpoint and with fresh terms of intellectual definition and reasoning, of one side of its experience and it carried it thus changed in form but hardly in substance over all Asia and westward towards Europe. The ideas of the Upanishads can be rediscovered in much of the thought of Pythagoras and Plato and form the profoundest part of Neo-platonism and Gnosticism with all their considerable consequences to the philosophical thinking of the West, and Sufism only repeats them in another religious language. The larger part of German metaphysics is little more in substance than an intellectual development of great realities more spiritually seen in this ancient teaching, and modern thought is rapidly absorbing them with a closer, more living and intense receptiveness which

promises a revolution both in philosophical and in religious thinking; here they are filtering in through many indirect influences, there slowly pouring through direct and open channels. There is hardly a main philosophical idea which cannot find an authority or a seed or indication in these antique writings — the speculations, according to a certain view, of thinkers who had no better past or background to their thought than a crude, barbaric, naturalistic and animistic ignorance. And even the larger generalisations of Science are constantly found to apply to the truth of physical Nature formulas already discovered by the Indian sages in their original, their largest meaning in the deeper truth of the spirit.

And yet these works are not philosophical speculations of the intellectual kind, a metaphysical analysis which labours to define notions, to select ideas and discriminate those that are true, to logicise truth or else to support the mind in its intellectual preferences by dialectical reasoning and is content to put forward an exclusive solution of existence in the light of this or that idea of the reason and see all things from that viewpoint, in that focus and determining perspective. The Upanishads could not have had so undying a vitality, exercised so unfailing an influence, produced such results or seen now their affirmations independently justified in other spheres of inquiry and by quite opposite methods, if they had been of that character. It is because these seers saw Truth rather than merely thought it, clothed it indeed with a strong body of intuitive idea and disclosing image, but a body of ideal transparency through which we look into the illimitable, because they fathomed things in the light of self-existence and saw them with the eye of the Infinite, that their words remain always alive and immortal, of an inexhaustible significance, an inevitable authenticity, a satisfying finality that is at the same time an infinite commencement of truth, to which all our lines of investigation when they go through to their end arrive again and to which humanity constantly returns in its minds and its ages of greatest vision. The Upanishads are Vedanta, a book of knowledge in a higher degree even than the Vedas, but knowledge in the profounder Indian sense of

the word, Jnana. Not a mere thinking and considering by the intelligence, the pursuit and grasping of a mental form of truth by the intellectual mind, but a seeing of it with the soul and a total living in it with the power of the inner being, a spiritual seizing by a kind of identification with the object of knowledge is Jnana. And because it is only by an integral knowing of the self that this kind of direct knowledge can be made complete, it was the self that the Vedantic sages sought to know, to live in and to be one with it by identity. And through this endeavour they came easily to see that the self in us is one with the universal self of all things and that this self again is the same as God and Brahman, a transcendent Being or Existence, and they beheld, felt, lived in the inmost truth of all things in the universe and the inmost truth of man's inner and outer existence by the light of this one and unifying vision. The Upanishads are epic hymns of self-knowledge and world-knowledge and God-knowledge. The great formulations of philosophic truth with which they abound are not abstract intellectual generalisations, things that may shine and enlighten the mind, but do not live and move the soul to ascension, but are ardours as well as lights of an intuitive and revelatory illumination, teachings as well as seeings of the one Existence, the transcendent Godhead, the divine and universal Self and discoveries of his relation with things and creatures in this great cosmic manifestation. Chants of inspired knowledge, they breathe like all hymns a tone of religious aspiration and ecstasy, not of the narrowly intense kind proper to a lesser religious feeling, but raised beyond cult and special forms of devotion to the universal Ananda of the Divine which comes to us by approach to and oneness with the self-existent and universal spirit. And though mainly concerned with an inner vision and not directly with outward human action, all the highest ethics of Buddhism and later Hinduism are still emergences of the very life and significance of the truths to which they give expressive form and force, — and there is something greater than any ethical precept and mental rule of virtue, the supreme ideal of a spiritual action founded on oneness with God and all living beings. Therefore even when the life of the forms of the

Vedic cult had passed away, the Upanishads still remained alive and creative and could generate the great devotional religions and motive the persistent Indian idea of the Dharma.

The Upanishads are the creation of a revelatory and intuitive mind and its illumined experience, and all their substance, structure, phrase, imagery, movement are determined by and stamped with this original character. These supreme and all-embracing truths, these visions of oneness and self and a universal divine being are cast into brief and monumental phrases which bring them at once before the soul's eye and make them real and imperative to its aspiration and experience or are couched in poetic sentences full of revealing power and suggestive thought-colour that discover a whole infinite through a finite image. The One is there revealed, but also disclosed the many aspects, and each is given its whole significance by the amplitude of the expression and finds as if in a spontaneous self-discovery its place and its connection by the illuminating justness of each word and all the phrase. The largest metaphysical truths and the subtlest subtleties of psychological experience are taken up into the inspired movement and made at once precise to the seeing mind and loaded with unending suggestion to the discovering spirit. There are separate phrases, single couplets, brief passages which contain each in itself the substance of a vast philosophy and yet each is only thrown out as a side, an aspect, a portion of the infinite self-knowledge. All here is a packed and pregnant and yet perfectly lucid and luminous brevity and an immeasurable completeness. A thought of this kind cannot follow the tardy, careful and diffuse development of the logical intelligence. The passage, the sentence, the couplet, the line, even the half line follows the one that precedes with a certain interval full of an unexpressed thought, an echoing silence between them, a thought which is carried in the total suggestion and implied in the step itself, but which the mind is left to work out for its own profit, and these intervals of pregnant silence are large, the steps of this thought are like the paces of a Titan striding from rock to distant rock across infinite waters. There is a perfect totality, a comprehensive connection of harmonious parts in the structure

of each Upanishad; but it is done in the way of a mind that sees masses of truth at a time and stops to bring only the needed word out of a filled silence. The rhythm in verse or cadenced prose corresponds to the sculpture of the thought and the phrase. The metrical forms of the Upanishads are made up of four half lines each clearly cut, the lines mostly complete in themselves and integral in sense, the half lines presenting two thoughts or distinct parts of a thought that are wedded to and complete each other, and the sound movement follows a corresponding principle, each step brief and marked off by the distinctness of its pause, full of echoing cadences that remain long vibrating in the inner hearing: each is as if a wave of the infinite that carries in it the whole voice and rumour of the ocean. It is a kind of poetry—word of vision, rhythm of the spirit,—that has not been written before or after.

The imagery of the Upanishads is in large part developed from the type of imagery of the Veda and though very ordinarily it prefers an unveiled clarity of directly illuminative image, not unoften also it uses the same symbols in a way that is closely akin to the spirit and to the less technical part of the method of the older symbolism. It is to a great extent this element no longer seizable by our way of thinking that has baffled certain Western scholars and made them cry out that these scriptures are a mixture of the sublimest philosophical speculations with the first awkward stammerings of the child mind of humanity. The Upanishads are not a revolutionary departure from the Vedic mind and its temperament and fundamental ideas, but a continuation and development and to a certain extent an enlarging transformation in the sense of bringing out into open expression all that was held covered in the symbolic Vedic speech as a mystery and a secret. It begins by taking up the imagery and the ritual symbols of the Veda and the Brahmanas and turning them in such a way as to bring out an inner and a mystic sense which will serve as a sort of psychical starting-point for its own more highly evolved and more purely spiritual philosophy. There are a number of passages especially in the prose Upanishads which are entirely of this kind and deal, in a manner recondite, obscure

and even unintelligible to the modern understanding, with the psychic sense of ideas then current in the Vedic religious mind, the distinction between the three kinds of Veda, the three worlds and other similar subjects; but, leading as they do in the thought of the Upanishads to deepest spiritual truths, these passages cannot be dismissed as childish aberrations of the intelligence void of sense or of any discoverable bearing on the higher thought in which they culminate. On the contrary we find that they have a deep enough significance once we can get inside their symbolic meaning. That appears in a psycho-physical passing upward into a psycho-spiritual knowledge for which we would now use more intellectual, less concrete and imaged terms, but which is still valid for those who practise Yoga and rediscover the secrets of our psycho-physical and psycho-spiritual being. Typical passages of this kind of peculiar expression of psychic truths are Ajatashatru's explanation of sleep and dream or the passages of the Prasna Upanishad on the vital principle and its motions, or those in which the Vedic idea of the struggle between the Gods and the demons is taken up and given its spiritual significance and the Vedic godheads more openly than in Rik and Saman characterised and invoked in their inner function and spiritual power.

I may cite as an example of this development of Vedic idea and image a passage of the Taittiriya in which Indra plainly appears as the power and godhead of the divine mind:

He who is the Bull of the Vedas of the universal form, he
who was born in the sacred rhythms from the Immortal,
— may Indra satisfy me through the intelligence. O God,
may I become a vessel of the Immortal. May my body
be full of vision and my tongue of sweetness, may I hear
the much and vast with my ears. For thou art the sheath
of Brahman covered over and hidden by the intelligence.

And a kindred passage may also be cited from the Isha in which Surya the Sun-God is invoked as the godhead of knowledge whose supreme form of effulgence is the oneness of the Spirit and his rays dispersed here on the mental level are the shining

diffusion of the thought mind and conceal his own infinite supra-mental truth, the body and self of this Sun, the truth of the spirit and the Eternal:

The face of the Truth is covered with a golden lid: O fostering Sun, that uncover for the law of the truth, for sight. O fosterer, O sole Rishi, O controlling Yama, O Surya, O son of the Father of creatures, marshal and mass thy rays: the Lustre that is thy most blessed form of all, that I see, He who is this, this Purusha, He am I.

The kinship in difference of these passages with the imagery and style of the Veda is evident and the last indeed paraphrases or translates into a later and more open style a Vedic verse of the Atris:

Hidden by your truth is the Truth that is constant for ever where they unyoke the horses of the Sun. There the ten thousands stand together, That is the One: I have seen the supreme Godhead of the embodied gods.

This Vedic and Vedantic imagery is foreign to our present mentality which does not believe in the living truth of the symbol, because the revealing imagination intimidated by the intellect has no longer the courage to accept, identify itself with and boldly embody a psychic and spiritual vision; but it is certainly very far from being a childish or a primitive and barbarous mysticism; this vivid, living, luminously poetic intuitive language is rather the natural expression of a highly evolved spiritual culture.

The intuitive thought of the Upanishads starts from this concrete imagery and these symbols, first to the Vedic Rishis secret seer words wholly expressive to the mind of the seer but veils of their deepest sense to the ordinary intelligence, link them to a less covertly expressive language and pass beyond them to another magnificently open and sublime imagery and diction which at once reveals the spiritual truth in all its splendour. The prose Upanishads show us this process of the early mind of India at its work using the symbol and then passing beyond it to the

overt expression of the spiritual significance. A passage of the Prasna Upanishad on the power and significance of the mystic syllable AUM illustrates the earlier stage of the process:

This syllable OM, O Satyakama, it is the supreme and it is the lower Brahman. Therefore the man of knowledge passeth by this house of the Brahman to the one or the other. And if one meditate on the single letter, he getteth by it knowledge and soon he attaineth on the earth. And him the Riks lead to the world of men and there perfected in Tapas and Brahmacharya and faith he experienceth the greatness of the spirit. Now if by the double letter he is accomplished in the mind, then is he led up by the Yajus to the middle world, to the moon-world of Soma. He in the world of Soma experienceth the majesty of the spirit and returneth again. And he who by the triple letter again, even this syllable OM, shall meditate on the highest Purusha, is perfected in the light that is the Sun. As a snake putteth off its skin, even so is he released from sin and evil and is led by the Samans to the world of Brahman. He from this dense of living souls seeth the higher than the highest Purusha who lieth in this mansion. The three letters are afflicted by death, but now they are used undivided and united to each other, then are the inner and the outer and the middle action of the spirit made whole in their perfect using and the spirit knows and is not shaken. This world by the Riks, the middle world by the Yajus and by the Samans that which the seers make known to us. The man of knowledge passeth to Him by OM, his house, even to the supreme spirit that is calm and ageless and fearless and immortal.

The symbols here are still obscure to our intelligence, but indications are given which show beyond doubt that they are representations of a psychical experience leading to different states of spiritual realisation and we can see that these are three, outward, mental and supramental, and as the result of the last a

supreme perfection, a complete and integral action of the whole being in the tranquil eternity of the immortal Spirit. And later in the Mandukya Upanishad the other symbols are cast aside and we are admitted to the unveiled significance. Then there emerges a knowledge to which modern thought is returning through its own very different intellectual, rational and scientific method, the knowledge that behind the operations of our outward physical consciousness are working the operations of another, subliminal,—another and yet the same,—of which our waking mind is a surface action, and above—perhaps, we still say—is a spiritual superconsciousness in which can be found, it may well be, the highest state and the whole secret of our being. We shall see, when we look closely at the passage of the Prasna Upanishad, that this knowledge is already there, and I think we can very rationally conclude that these and similar utterances of the ancient sages, however perplexing their form to the rational mind, cannot be dismissed as a childish mysticism, but are the imaged expression, natural to the mentality of the time, of what the reason itself by its own processes is now showing us to be true and a very profound truth and real reality of knowledge.

The metrical Upanishads continue this highly charged symbolism but carry it more lightly and in the bulk of their verses pass beyond this kind of image to the overt expression. The Self, the Spirit, the Godhead in man and creatures and Nature and all this world and in other worlds and beyond all cosmos, the Immortal, the One, the Infinite is hymned without veils in the splendour of his eternal transcendence and his manifold self-revelation. A few passages from the teachings of Yama, lord of the Law and of Death, to Nachiketas, will be enough to illustrate something of their character.

OM is this syllable. This syllable is the Brahman, this syllable is the Supreme. He who knoweth the imperishable OM, whatso he willeth, it is his. This support is the best, this support is the highest; and when a man knoweth it, he is greatened in the world of Brahman. The omniscient is not born, nor dies, nor has he come into being from

anywhere, nor is he anyone. He is unborn, he is constant and eternal, he is the Ancient of Days who is not slain in the slaying of the body. . . .

He is seated and journeys far, and lying still he goes to every side. Who other than I should know this ecstatic Godhead? The wise man cometh to know the great Lord and Self established and bodiless in these bodies that pass and has grief no longer. This Self is not to be won by teaching nor by brain-power nor by much learning: he whom the Spirit chooses, by him alone it can be won, and to him this Spirit discloses its own very body. One who has not ceased from ill-doing, one who is not concentrated and calm, one whose mind is not tranquil, shall not get him by the brain's wisdom. He of whom warriors and sages are the food and death is the spice of his banquet, who knoweth where is He? . . .

The Self-born has cloven his doors outward, therefore man sees outward and not in the inner self: only a wise man here and there turns his eyes inward, desiring immortality, and looks on the Self face to face. The child minds follow after surface desires and fall into the net of death which is spread wide for us; but the wise know of immortality and ask not from things inconstant that which is constant. One knoweth by this Self form and taste and odour and touch and its pleasures and what then is here left over? The wise man cometh to know the great Lord and Self by whom one seeth all that is in the soul that wakes and all that is in the soul that dreams and hath grief no longer. He who knoweth the Self, the eater of sweetness close to the living being, the lord of what was and what will be, shrinks thereafter from nothing that is. He knoweth him who is that which was born of old from Tapas and who was born of old from the waters and hath entered in and standeth in the secret cavern of being with all these creatures. He knoweth her who is born by the life force, the infinite Mother with all the gods in her, her who hath entered in and standeth in the

secret cavern of being with all these creatures. This is the Fire that hath the knowledge and it is hidden in the two tinders as the embryo is borne in pregnant women; this is the Fire that must be adored by men watching sleeplessly and bringing to him the offering. He is that from which the Sun rises and that in which it sets: and in him all the gods are founded and none can pass beyond him. What is here, even that is in other worlds, and what is there, even according to that is all that is here. He goes from death to death who sees here only difference. A Purusha no bigger than a thumb stands in man's central self and is the lord of what was and what shall be, and knowing him thenceforth one shrinks from nothing that is. A Purusha no bigger than a man's thumb and he is like a light without smoke; he is the Lord of what was and what shall be; it is he that is today and it is he that shall be tomorrow.

The Upanishads abound with passages which are at once poetry and spiritual philosophy, of an absolute clarity and beauty, but no translation empty of the suggestions and the grave and subtle and luminous sense echoes of the original words and rhythms can give any idea of their power and perfection. There are others in which the subtlest psychological and philosophical truths are expressed with an entire sufficiency without falling short of a perfect beauty of poetical expression and always so as to live to the mind and soul and not merely be presented to the understanding intelligence. There is in some of the prose Upanishads another element of vivid narrative and tradition which restores for us though only in brief glimpses the picture of that extraordinary stir and movement of spiritual enquiry and passion for the highest knowledge which made the Upanishads possible. The scenes of the old world live before us in a few pages, the sages sitting in their groves ready to test and teach the comer, princes and learned Brahmins and great landed nobles going about in search of knowledge, the king's son in his chariot and the illegitimate son of the servant-girl,

seeking any man who might carry in himself the thought of light and the word of revelation, the typical figures and personalities, Janaka and the subtle mind of Ajatashatru, Raikwa of the cart, Yajnavalkya militant for truth, calm and ironic, taking to himself with both hands without attachment worldly possessions and spiritual riches and casting at last all his wealth behind to wander forth as a houseless ascetic, Krishna son of Devaki who heard a single word of the Rishi Ghora and knew at once the Eternal, the ashramas, the courts of kings who were also spiritual discoverers and thinkers, the great sacrificial assemblies where the sages met and compared their knowledge. And we see how the soul of India was born and how arose this great birth-song in which it soared from its earth into the supreme empyrean of the spirit. The Vedas and the Upanishads are not only the sufficient fountain-head of Indian philosophy and religion, but of all Indian art, poetry and literature. It was the soul, the temperament, the ideal mind formed and expressed in them which later carved out the great philosophies, built the structure of the Dharma, recorded its heroic youth in the Mahabharata and Ramayana, intellectualised indefatigably in the classical times of the ripeness of its manhood, threw out so many original intuitions in science, created so rich a glow of aesthetic and vital and sensuous experience, renewed its spiritual and psychic experience in Tantra and Purana, flung itself into grandeur and beauty of line and colour, hewed and cast its thought and vision in stone and bronze, poured itself into new channels of self-expression in the later tongues and now after eclipse reemerges always the same in difference and ready for a new life and a new creation.

XVIII

Indian Literature – 3

THE VEDA is thus the spiritual and psychological seed of Indian culture and the Upanishads the expression of the truth of highest spiritual knowledge and experience that has always been the supreme idea of that culture and the ultimate objective to which it directed the life of the individual and the aspiration of the soul of the people: and these two great bodies of sacred writing, its first great efforts of poetic and creative self-expression, coming into being at a time preceding the later strong and ample and afterwards rich and curious intellectual development, are conceived and couched in the language of a purely psychic and spiritual mentality. An evolution so begun had to proceed by a sort of enriching descent from the spirit to matter and to pass on first to an intellectual endeavour to see life and the world and the self in all their relations as they present themselves to the reasoning and the practical intelligence. The earlier movement of this intellectual effort was naturally accompanied by a practical development and organisation of life consciously expressive of the mind and spirit of the people, the erection of a strong and successful structure of society shaped so as to fulfil the mundane objects of human existence under the control of a careful religious, ethical and social order and discipline, but also so as to provide for the evolution of the soul of man through these things to a spiritual freedom and perfection. It is this stage of which we get a remarkably ample and effective representation in the immediately succeeding period of Indian literary creation.

This movement of the Indian mind is represented in its more critical effort on one side by a strenuous philosophical thinking crystallised into the great philosophic systems, on the other by an equally insistent endeavour to formulate in a clear body and with a strict cogency an ethical, social and political ideal and

practice in a consistent and organised system of individual and communal life and that endeavour resulted in the authoritative social treatises or Shastras of which the greatest and the most authoritative is the famous Laws of Manu. The work of the philosophers was to systematise and justify to the reasoning intelligence the truths of the self and man and the world already discovered by intuition, revelation and spiritual experience and embodied in the Veda and the Upanishads, and at the same time to indicate and systematise methods of discipline founded upon this knowledge by which man might effectuate the highest aim of his existence. The characteristic form in which this was done shows the action of the intuitive passing into that of the intellectual mentality and preserves the stamp and form expressive of its transitional character. The terse and pregnant phrase of the sacred literature abounding in intuitive substance is replaced by a still more compact and crowded brief expression, no longer intuitive and poetic, but severely intellectual,—the expression of a principle, a whole development of philosophic thought or a logical step burdened with considerable consequences in a few words, sometimes one or two, a shortest decisive formula often almost enigmatic in its concentrated fullness. These Sutras or aphorisms became the basis of ratiocinative commentaries developing by metaphysical and logical method and with a considerable variety of interpretation all that was contained at first in the series of aphoristic formulas. Their concern is solely with original and ultimate truth and the method of spiritual liberation, *mokṣa*.

The work of the social thinkers and legislators was on the contrary concerned with normal action and practice. It attempted to take up the ordinary life of man and of the community and the life of human desire and aim and interest and ordered rule and custom and to interpret and formulate it in the same complete and decisive manner and at the same time to throw the whole into an ordered relation to the ruling ideas of the national culture and frame and perpetuate a social system intelligently fashioned so as to provide a basis, a structure, a gradation by which there could be a secure evolution of the life

from the vital and mental to the spiritual motive. The leading idea was the government of human interest and desire by the social and ethical law, the Dharma, so that it might be made,— all vital, economic, aesthetic, hedonistic, intellectual and other needs being satisfied duly and according to the right law of the nature,— a preparation for the spiritual existence. Here too we have as an initial form the aphoristic method of the Vedic *grhya-sūtras*, afterwards the diffuser, fuller method of the Dharma Shastras,— the first satisfied with brief indications of simple and essential socio-religious principle and practice, the later work attempting to cover the whole life of the individual, the class and the people. The very character of the effort and its thoroughness and the constant unity of idea that reigns through the whole of it are a remarkable evidence of a very developed intellectual, aesthetic and ethical consciousness and a high turn and capacity for a noble and ordered civilisation and culture. The intelligence at work, the understanding and formative power manifested is not inferior to that of any ancient or modern people, and there is a gravity, a unified clarity and nobility of conception which balances at least in any true idea of culture the greater suppleness, more well-informed experience and science and eager flexibility of experimental hardihood which are the gains that distinguish our later humanity. At any rate it was no barbaric mind that was thus intently careful for a fine and well unified order of society, a high and clear thought to govern it and at the end of life a great spiritual perfection and release.

The pure literature of the period is represented by the two great epics, the Mahabharata, which gathered into its vast structure the greater part of the poetic activity of the Indian mind during several centuries, and the Ramayana. These two poems are epical in their motive and spirit, but they are not like any other two epics in the world, but are entirely of their own kind and subtly different from others in their principle. It is not only that although they contain an early heroic story and a transmutation of many primitive elements, their form belongs to a period of highly developed intellectual, ethical and social culture, is enriched with a body of mature thought and uplifted

by a ripe nobility and refined gravity of ethical tone and therefore these poems are quite different from primitive edda and saga and greater in breadth of view and substance and height of motive — I do not speak now of aesthetic quality and poetic perfection — than the Homeric poems, while at the same time there is still an early breath, a direct and straightforward vigour, a freshness and greatness and pulse of life, a simplicity of strength and beauty that makes of them quite another kind than the elaborately constructed literary epics of Virgil or Milton, Firdausi or Kalidasa. This peculiar blending of the natural breath of an early, heroic, swift and vigorous force of life with a strong development and activity of the ethical, the intellectual, even the philosophic mind is indeed a remarkable feature; these poems are the voice of the youth of a people, but a youth not only fresh and fine and buoyant, but also great and accomplished, wise and noble. This however is only a temperamental distinction: there is another that is more far-reaching, a difference in the whole conception, function and structure.

One of the elements of the old Vedic education was a knowledge of significant tradition, Itihasa, and it is this word that was used by the ancient critics to distinguish the Mahabharata and the Ramayana from the later literary epics. The Itihasa was an ancient historical or legendary tradition turned to creative use as a significant mythus or tale expressive of some spiritual or religious or ethical or ideal meaning and thus formative of the mind of the people. The Mahabharata and Ramayana are Itihasas of this kind on a large scale and with a massive purpose. The poets who wrote and those who added to these great bodies of poetic writing did not intend merely to tell an ancient tale in a beautiful or noble manner or even to fashion a poem pregnant with much richness of interest and meaning, though they did both these things with a high success; they wrote with a sense of their function as architects and sculptors of life, creative exponents, fashioners of significant forms of the national thought and religion and ethics and culture. A profound stress of thought on life, a large and vital view of religion and society, a certain strain of philosophic idea runs through these poems

and the whole ancient culture of India is embodied in them with a great force of intellectual conception and living presentation. The Mahabharata has been spoken of as a fifth Veda, it has been said of both these poems that they are not only great poems but Dharmashastras, the body of a large religious and ethical and social and political teaching, and their effect and hold on the mind and life of the people have been so great that they have been described as the bible of the Indian people. That is not quite an accurate analogy, for the bible of the Indian people contains also the Veda and Upanishads, the Purana and Tantras and the Dharmashastras, not to speak of a large bulk of the religious poetry in the regional languages. The work of these epics was to popularise high philosophic and ethical idea and cultural practice; it was to throw out prominently and with a seizing relief and effect in a frame of great poetry and on a background of poetic story and around significant personalities that became to the people abiding national memories and representative figures all that was best in the soul and thought or true to the life or real to the creative imagination and ideal mind or characteristic and illuminative of the social, ethical, political and religious culture of India. All these things were brought together and disposed with artistic power and a telling effect in a poetic body given to traditions half legendary, half historic but cherished henceforth as deepest and most living truth and as a part of their religion by the people. Thus framed the Mahabharata and Ramayana, whether in the original Sanskrit or rewritten in the regional tongues, brought to the masses by Kathakas,— rhapsodists, reciters and exegetes,— became and remained one of the chief instruments of popular education and culture, moulded the thought, character, aesthetic and religious mind of the people and gave even to the illiterate some sufficient tincture of philosophy, ethics, social and political ideas, aesthetic emotion, poetry, fiction and romance. That which was for the cultured classes contained in Veda and Upanishad, shut into profound philosophical aphorism and treatise or inculcated in dharma-shastra and artha-shastra, was put here into creative and living figures, associated with familiar story and legend,

fused into a vivid representation of life and thus made a near and living power that all could readily assimilate through the poetic word appealing at once to the soul and the imagination and the intelligence.

The Mahabharata especially is not only the story of the Bharatas, the epic of an early event which had become a national tradition but on a vast scale the epic of the soul and religious and ethical mind and social and political ideals and culture and life of India. It is said popularly of it and with a certain measure of truth that whatever is in India is in the Mahabharata. The Mahabharata is the creation and expression not of a single individual mind, but of the mind of a nation; it is the poem of itself written by a whole people. It would be vain to apply to it the canons of a poetical art applicable to an epic poem with a smaller and more restricted purpose, but still a great and quite conscious art has been expended both on its detail and its total structure. The whole poem has been built like a vast national temple unrolling slowly its immense and complex idea from chamber to chamber, crowded with significant groups and sculptures and inscriptions, the grouped figures carved in divine or semi-divine proportions, a humanity aggrandised and half uplifted to superhumanity and yet always true to the human motive and idea and feeling, the strain of the real constantly raised by the tones of the ideal, the life of this world amply portrayed but subjected to the conscious influence and presence of the powers of the worlds behind it, and the whole unified by the long embodied procession of a consistent idea worked out in the wide steps of the poetic story. As is needed in an epic narrative, the conduct of the story is the main interest of the poem and it is carried through with an at once large and minute movement, wide and bold in the mass, striking and effective in detail, always simple, strong and epic in its style and pace. At the same time though supremely interesting in substance and vivid in the manner of the telling as a poetic story, it is something more, — a significant tale, *Itihasa*, representative throughout of the central ideas and ideals of Indian life and culture. The leading motive is the Indian idea of the Dharma. Here the Vedic notion of the struggle between the

godheads of truth and light and unity and the powers of darkness and division and falsehood is brought out from the spiritual and religious and internal into the outer intellectual, ethical and vital plane. It takes there in the figure of the story a double form of a personal and a political struggle, the personal a conflict between typical and representative personalities embodying the greater ethical ideals of the Indian Dharma and others who are embodiments of Asuric egoism and self-will and misuse of the Dharma, the political a battle in which the personal struggle culminates, an international clash ending in the establishment of a new rule of righteousness and justice, a kingdom or rather an empire of the Dharma uniting warring races and substituting for the ambitious arrogance of kings and aristocratic clans the supremacy, the calm and peace of a just and humane empire. It is the old struggle of Deva and Asura, God and Titan, but represented in the terms of human life.

The way in which this double form is worked out and the presentation of the movement of individual lives and of the national life first as their background and then as coming into the front in a movement of kingdoms and armies and nations show a high architectonic faculty akin in the sphere of poetry to that which laboured in Indian architecture, and the whole has been conducted with a large poetic art and vision. There is the same power to embrace great spaces in a total view and the same tendency to fill them with an abundance of minute, effective, vivid and significant detail. There is brought too into the frame of the narrative a very considerable element of other tales, legends, episodes, most of them of a significant character suitable to the method of Itihasa, and an extraordinary amount of philosophical, religious, ethical, social and political thinking sometimes direct, sometimes cast into the form of the legend and episode. The ideas of the Upanishads and of the great philosophies are brought in continually and sometimes given new developments, as in the Gita; religious myth and tale and idea and teaching are made part of the tissue; the ethical ideals of the race are expressed or are transmuted into the shape of tale and episode as well as embodied in the figures of the story,

political and social ideals and institutions are similarly developed or illustrated with a high vividness and clearness and space is found too for aesthetic and other suggestions connected with the life of the people. All these things are interwoven into the epic narrative with a remarkable skill and closeness. The irregularities inevitable in so combined and difficult a plan and in a work to which many poets of an unequal power have contributed fall into their place in the general massive complexity of the scheme and assist rather than break the total impression. The whole is a poetic expression unique in its power and fullness of the entire soul and thought and life of a people.

The Ramayana is a work of the same essential kind as the Mahabharata; it differs only by a greater simplicity of plan, a more delicate ideal temperament and a finer glow of poetic warmth and colour. The main bulk of the poem in spite of much accretion is evidently by a single hand and has a less complex and more obvious unity of structure. There is less of the philosophic, more of the purely poetic mind, more of the artist, less of the builder. The whole story is from beginning to end of one piece and there is no deviation from the stream of the narrative. At the same time there is a like vastness of vision, an even more wide-winged flight of epic sublimity in the conception and sustained richness of minute execution in the detail. The structural power, strong workmanship and method of disposition of the Mahabharata remind one of the art of the Indian builders, the grandeur and boldness of outline and wealth of colour and minute decorative execution of the Ramayana suggest rather a transcript into literature of the spirit and style of Indian painting. The epic poet has taken here also as his subject an Itihasa, an ancient tale or legend associated with an old Indian dynasty and filled it in with detail from myth and folklore, but has exalted all into a scale of grandiose epic figure that it may bear more worthily the high intention and significance. The subject is the same as in the Mahabharata, the strife of the divine with the titanic forces in the life of the earth, but in more purely ideal forms, in frankly supernatural dimensions and an imaginative heightening of both the good and the evil in human

character. On one side is portrayed an ideal manhood, a divine beauty of virtue and ethical order, a civilization founded on the Dharma and realising an exaltation of the moral ideal which is presented with a singularly strong appeal of aesthetic grace and harmony and sweetness; on the other are wild and anarchic and almost amorphous forces of superhuman egoism and self-will and exultant violence, and the two ideas and powers of mental nature living and embodied are brought into conflict and led to a decisive issue of the victory of the divine man over the Rakshasa. All shade and complexity are omitted which would diminish the single purity of the idea, the representative force in the outline of the figures, the significance of the temperamental colour and only so much admitted as is sufficient to humanise the appeal and the significance. The poet makes us conscious of the immense forces that are behind our life and sets his action in a magnificent epic scenery, the great imperial city, the mountains and the ocean, the forest and wilderness, described with such a largeness as to make us feel as if the whole world were the scene of his poem and its subject the whole divine and titanic possibility of man imaged in a few great or monstrous figures. The ethical and the aesthetic mind of India have here fused themselves into a harmonious unity and reached an unexampled pure wideness and beauty of self-expression. The Ramayana embodied for the Indian imagination its highest and tenderest human ideals of character, made strength and courage and gentleness and purity and fidelity and self-sacrifice familiar to it in the suavest and most harmonious forms coloured so as to attract the emotion and the aesthetic sense, stripped morals of all repellent austerity on one side or on the other of mere commonness and lent a certain high divineness to the ordinary things of life, conjugal and filial and maternal and fraternal feeling, the duty of the prince and leader and the loyalty of follower and subject, the greatness of the great and the truth and worth of the simple, toning things ethical to the beauty of a more psychical meaning by the glow of its ideal hues. The work of Valmiki has been an agent of almost incalculable power in the moulding of the cultural mind of India: it has presented to it to be loved and imitated in figures

like Rama and Sita, made so divinely and with such a revelation of reality as to become objects of enduring cult and worship, or like Hanuman, Lakshmana, Bharata the living human image of its ethical ideals; it has fashioned much of what is best and sweetest in the national character, and it has evoked and fixed in it those finer and exquisite yet firm soul tones and that more delicate humanity of temperament which are a more valuable thing than the formal outsides of virtue and conduct.

The poetical manner of these epics is not inferior to the greatness of their substance. The style and the verse in which they are written have always a noble epic quality, a lucid classical simplicity and directness rich in expression but stripped of superfluous ornament, a swift, vigorous, flexible and fluid verse constantly sure of the epic cadence. There is a difference in the temperament of the language. The characteristic diction of the Mahabharata is almost austere masculine, trusting to force of sense and inspired accuracy of turn, almost ascetic in its simplicity and directness and a frequent fine and happy barenness; it is the speech of a strong and rapid poetical intelligence and a great and straightforward vital force, brief and telling in phrase but by virtue of a single-minded sincerity and, except in some knotted passages or episodes, without any rhetorical labour of compactness, a style like the light and strong body of a runner nude and pure and healthily lustrous and clear without superfluity of flesh or exaggeration of muscle, agile and swift and untired in the race. There is inevitably much in this vast poem that is in an inferior manner, but little or nothing that falls below a certain sustained level in which there is always something of this virtue. The diction of the Ramayana is shaped in a more attractive mould, a marvel of sweetness and strength, lucidity and warmth and grace; its phrase has not only poetic truth and epic force and diction but a constant intimate vibration of the feeling of the idea, emotion or object: there is an element of fine ideal delicacy in its sustained strength and breath of power. In both poems it is a high poetic soul and inspired intelligence that is at work; the directly intuitive mind of the Veda and Upanishads has

retired behind the veil of the intellectual and outwardly psychical imagination.

This is the character of the epics and the qualities which have made them immortal, cherished among India's greatest literary and cultural treasures, and given them their enduring power over the national mind. Apart from minor defects and inequalities such as we find in all works set at this pitch and involving a considerable length of labour, the objections made by Western criticism are simply expressions of a difference of mentality and aesthetic taste. The vastness of the plan and the leisurely minuteness of detail are baffling and tiring to a Western mind accustomed to smaller limits, a more easily fatigued eye and imagination and a hastier pace of life, but they are congenial to the spaciousness of vision and intent curiosity of circumstance, characteristic of the Indian mind, that spring as I have pointed out in relation to architecture from the habit of the cosmic consciousness and its sight and imagination and activity of experience. Another difference is that the terrestrial life is not seen realistically just as it is to the physical mind but constantly in relation to the much that is behind it, the human action is surrounded and influenced by great powers and forces, Daivic, Asuric and Rakshasic, and the greater human figures are a kind of incarnation of these more cosmic personalities and powers. The objection that the individual thereby loses his individual interest and becomes a puppet of impersonal forces is not true either in reality or actually in the imaginative figures of this literature, for there we see that the personages gain by it in greatness and force of action and are only ennobled by an impersonality that raises and heightens the play of their personality. The mingling of terrestrial nature and supernature, not as a mere imagination but with an entire sincerity and naturalness, is due to the same conception of a greater reality in life, and it is as significant figures of this greater reality that we must regard much to which the realistic critic objects with an absurdly misplaced violence, such as the powers gained by Tapasya, the use of divine weapons, the frequent indications of psychic action and influence. The complaint of exaggeration is equally invalid

where the whole action is that of men raised beyond the usual human level, since we can only ask for proportions consonant with the truth of the stature of life conceived in the imagination of the poet and cannot insist on an unimaginative fidelity to the ordinary measures which would here be false because wholly out of place. The complaint of lifelessness and want of personality in the epic characters is equally unfounded: Rama and Sita, Arjuna and Yudhisthira, Bhishma and Duryodhana and Karna are intensely real and human and alive to the Indian mind. Only the main insistence, here as in Indian art, is not on the outward saliences of character, for these are only used secondarily as aids to the presentation, but on the soul life and the inner soul quality presented with as absolute a vividness and strength and purity of outline as possible. The idealism of characters like Rama and Sita is no pale and vapid unreality; they are vivid with the truth of the ideal life, of the greatness that man may be and does become when he gives his soul a chance and it is no sound objection that there is only a small allowance of the broken littleness of our ordinary nature.

These epics are therefore not a mere mass of untransmuted legend and folklore, as is ignorantly objected, but a highly artistic representation of intimate significances of life, the living presentment of a strong and noble thinking, a developed ethical and aesthetic mind and a high social and political ideal, the ensouled image of a great culture. As rich in freshness of life but immeasurably more profound and evolved in thought and substance than the Greek, as advanced in maturity of culture but more vigorous and vital and young in strength than the Latin epic poetry, the Indian epic poems were fashioned to serve a greater and completer national and cultural function and that they should have been received and absorbed by both the high and the low, the cultured and the masses and remained through twenty centuries an intimate and formative part of the life of the whole nation is of itself the strongest possible evidence of the greatness and fineness of this ancient Indian culture.

XIX

Indian Literature – 4

THE CLASSICAL age of the ancient literature, the best known and appraised of all, covers a period of some ten centuries and possibly more, and it is marked off from the earlier writings by a considerable difference, not so much in substance, as in the moulding and the colour of its thought, temperament and language. The divine childhood, the heroic youth, the bright and strong early manhood of the people and its culture are over and there is instead a long and opulent maturity and as its sequence an equally opulent and richly coloured decline. The decline is not to death, for it is followed by a certain rejuvenescence, a fresh start and repeated beginning, of which the medium is no longer Sanskrit but the derived languages, the daughters of the dialects raised into literary instruments and developing as the grand and ancient tongue loses its last forces and inspiring life. The difference in spirit and mould between the epics and the speech of Bhartrihari and Kalidasa is already enormous and may possibly be explained by the early centuries of Buddhism when Sanskrit ceased to be the sole literary tongue understood and spoken by all educated men and Pali came up as its successful rival and the means of expression for at least a great part of the current of the national thought and life. The language and movement of the epics have all the vigour, freedom, spontaneous force and appeal of a speech that leaps straight from the founts of life; the speech of Kalidasa is an accomplished art, an intellectual and aesthetic creation consummate, deliberate, finely ornate, carved like a statue, coloured like a painting, not yet artificial, though there is a masterly artifice and device, but still a careful work of art laboured by the intelligence. It is carefully natural, not with the spontaneous ease of a first, but the accomplished air of ease of a habitual second nature. The elements of artifice and device increase and

predominate in the later writers, their language is a laborious and deliberate though a powerful and beautiful construction and appeals only to an erudite audience, a learned elite. The religious writings, Purana and Tantra, moving from a deeper, still intensely living source, aiming by their simplicity at a wider appeal, prolong for a time the tradition of the epics, but the simplicity and directness is willed rather than the earlier natural ease. In the end Sanskrit becomes the language of the Pundits and except for certain philosophical, religious and learned purposes no longer a first-hand expression of the life and mind of the people.

The alteration in the literary speech corresponds however, apart from all inducing circumstances, to a great change in the centre of mentality of the culture. It is still and always spiritual, philosophical, religious, ethical, but the inner austerer things seem to draw back a little and to stand in the background, acknowledged indeed and overshadowing the rest, but nevertheless a little detaching themselves from them and allowing them to act for their own enlargement and profit. The exterior powers that stand out in front are the curious intellect, the vital urge, the aesthetic, urbanely active and hedonistic sense life. It is the great period of logical philosophy, of science, of art and the developed crafts, law, politics, trade, colonisation, the great kingdoms and empires with their ordered and elaborate administrations, the minute rule of the Shastras in all departments of thought and life, an enjoyment of all that is brilliant, sensuous, agreeable, a discussion of all that could be thought and known, a fixing and systemising of all that could be brought into the compass of intelligence and practice,—the most splendid, sumptuous and imposing millennium of Indian culture.

The intellectuality that predominates is not in any way restless, sceptical or negative, but it is enormously inquiring and active, accepting the great lines of spiritual, religious, philosophical and social truth that had been discovered and laid down by the past, but eager too to develop, to complete, to know minutely and thoroughly and fix in perfectly established system and detail, to work out all possible branches and ramifications,

to fill the intelligence, the sense and the life. The grand basic principles and lines of Indian religion, philosophy, society have already been found and built and the steps of the culture move now in the magnitude and satisfying security of a great tradition; but there is still ample room for creation and discovery within these fields and a much wider province, great beginnings, strong developments of science and art and literature, the freedom of the purely intellectual and aesthetic activities, much scope too for the hedonisms of the vital and the refinements of the emotional being, a cultivation of the art and rhythmic practice of life. There is a highly intellectualised vital stress and a many-sided interest in living, an indulgence of an at once intellectual and vital and sensuous satisfaction extending even to a frankness of physical and sensual experience, but in the manner of the oriental mind with a certain decorousness and order, an element of aesthetic restraint and the observance of rule and measure even in indulgence that saves always from the unbridled licence to which less disciplined races are liable. The characteristic, the central action is the play of the intellectual mind and everywhere that predominates. In the earlier age the many strands of the Indian mind and life principle are unified and inseparable, a single wide movement set to a strong and abundant but simple music; here they seem to stand side by side related and harmonised, curious and complex, multiply one. The spontaneous unity of the intuitive mind is replaced by the artificial unity of the analysing and synthetising intelligence. Art and religion still continue the predominance of the spiritual and intuitive motive, but it is less to the front in literature. A division has been settled between religious and secular writing that did not exist to any appreciable extent in the previous ages. The great poets and writers are secular creators and their works have no chance of forming part of the intimate religious and ethical mind of the people as did the Ramayana and Mahabharata. The stream of religious poetry flows separately in Purana and Tantra.

The great representative poet of this age is Kalidasa. He establishes a type which was preparing before and endured after him with more or less of additional decoration, but substantially

unchanged through the centuries. His poems are the perfect and harmoniously designed model of a kind and substance that others cast always into similar forms but with a genius inferior in power or less rhythmically balanced, faultless and whole. The art of poetic speech in Kalidasa's period reaches an extraordinary perfection. Poetry itself had become a high craft, conscious of its means, meticulously conscientious in the use of its instruments, as alert and exact in its technique as architecture, painting and sculpture, vigilant to equate beauty and power of the form with nobility and richness of the conception, aim and spirit and the scrupulous completeness of its execution with fullness of aesthetic vision or of the emotional or sensuous appeal. There was established here as in the other arts and indeed during all this era in all human activities a Shastra, a well recognised and carefully practised science and art of poetics, critical and formulative of all that makes perfection of method and prescriptive of things to be avoided, curious of essentials and possibilities but under a regime of standards and limits conceived with the aim of excluding all fault of excess or of defect and therefore in practice as unfavourable to any creative lawlessness, even though the poet's native right of fantasy and freedom is theoretically admitted, as to any least tendency towards bad or careless, hasty or irregular workmanship. The poet is expected to be thoroughly conscious of his art, as minutely acquainted with its conditions and its fixed and certain standard and method as the painter and sculptor and to govern by his critical sense and knowledge the flight of his genius. This careful art of poetry became in the end too much of a rigid tradition, too appreciative of rhetorical device and artifice and even permitted and admired the most extraordinary contortions of the learned intelligence, as in the Alexandrian decline of Greek poetry, but the earlier work is usually free from these shortcomings or they are only occasional and rare.

The classical Sanskrit is perhaps the most remarkably finished and capable instrument of thought yet fashioned, at any rate by either the Aryan or the Semitic mind, lucid with the utmost possible clarity, precise to the farthest limit of precision, always compact and at its best sparing in its formation of phrase,

but yet with all this never poor or bare: there is no sacrifice of depth to lucidity, but rather a pregnant opulence of meaning, a capacity of high richness and beauty, a natural grandeur of sound and diction inherited from the ancient days. The abuse of the faculty of compound structure proved fatal later on to the prose, but in the earlier prose and poetry where it is limited, there is an air of continent abundance strengthened by restraint and all the more capable of making the most of its resources. The great and subtle and musical rhythms of the classical poetry with their imaginative, attractive and beautiful names, manifold in capacity, careful in structure, are of themselves a mould that insists on perfection and hardly admits the possibility of a mean or slovenly workmanship or a defective movement. The unit of this poetical art is the *śloka*, the sufficient verse of four quarters or *pādas*, and each *śloka* is expected to be a work of perfect art in itself, a harmonious, vivid and convincing expression of an object, scene, detail, thought, sentiment, state of mind or emotion that can stand by itself as an independent figure; the succession of *ślokas* must be a constant development by addition of completeness to completeness and the whole poem or canto of a long poem an artistic and satisfying structure in this manner, the succession of cantos a progression of definite movements building a total harmony. It is this carefully artistic and highly cultured type of poetic creation that reached its acme of perfection in the poetry of Kalidasa.

This preeminence proceeds from two qualities possessed in a degree only to be paralleled in the work of the greatest world-poets and not always combined in them in so equable a harmony and with so adequate a combination of execution and substance. Kalidasa ranks among the supreme poetic artists with Milton and Virgil and he has a more subtle and delicate spirit and touch in his art than the English, a greater breath of native power informing and vivifying his execution than the Latin poet. There is no more perfect and harmonious style in literature, no more inspired and careful master of the absolutely harmonious and sufficient phrase combining the minimum of word expenditure with the fullest sense of an accomplished ease

and a divine elegance and not excluding a fine excess that is not excessive, an utmost possible refined opulence of aesthetic value. More perfectly than any other he realises the artistic combination of a harmonious economy of expression, not a word, syllable, sound in superfluity, and a total sense of wise and lavish opulence that was the aim of the earlier classical poets. None so divinely skilful as he in imparting without any overdoing the richest colour, charm, appeal and value, greatness or nobility or power or suavity and always some kind and the right kind and the fullest degree of beauty to each line and each phrase. The felicity of selection is equalled by the felicity of combination. One of the most splendidly sensuous of poets in the higher sense of that epithet because he has a vivid vision and feeling of his object, his sensuousness is neither lax nor overpowering, but always satisfying and just, because it is united with a plenary force of the intelligence, a gravity and strength sometimes apparent, sometimes disguised in beauty but appreciable within the broidered and coloured robe, a royal restraint in the heart of the regal indulgence. And Kalidasa's sovereign mastery of rhythm is as great as his sovereign mastery of phrase. Here we meet in each metrical kind with the most perfect discoveries of verbal harmony in the Sanskrit language (pure lyrical melody comes only afterwards at the end in one or two poets like Jayadeva), harmonies founded on a constant subtle complexity of the fine assonances of sound and an unobtrusive use of significant cadence that never breaks the fluent unity of tone of the music. And the other quality of Kalidasa's poetry is the unfailing adequacy of the substance. Careful always to get the full aesthetic value of the word and sound clothing his thought and substance, he is equally careful that the thought and the substance itself should be of a high, strong or rich intellectual, descriptive or emotional value. His conception is large in its view though it has not the cosmic breadth of the earlier poets and it is sustained at every step in its execution. The hand of the artist never fails in the management of its material,—exception being made of a fault of composition marring one, the least considerable of his works,— and his

imagination is always as equal to its task as his touch is great and subtle.

The work to which these supreme poetic qualities were brought was very much the same at bottom, though differing in its form and method, as that achieved by the earlier epics; it was to interpret in poetic speech and represent in significant images and figures the mind, the life, the culture of India in his age. Kalidasa's seven extant poems, each in its own way and within its limits and on its level a masterpiece, are a brilliant and delicately ornate roll of pictures and inscriptions with that as their single real subject. His was a richly stored mind, the mind at once of a scholar and observer possessed of all the learning of his time, versed in the politics, law, social idea, system and detail, religion, mythology, philosophy, art of his time, intimate with the life of courts and familiar with the life of the people, widely and very minutely observant of the life of Nature, of bird and beast, season and tree and flower, all the lore of the mind and all the lore of the eye; and this mind was at the same time always that of a great poet and artist. There is not in his work the touch of pedantry or excessive learning that mars the art of some other Sanskrit poets, he knows how to subdue all his matter to the spirit of his art and to make the scholar and observer no more than a gatherer of materials for the poet, but the richness of documentation is there ready and available and constantly brought in as part of incident and description and surrounding idea and forms or intervenes in the brilliant series of images that pass before us in the long succession of magnificent couplets and stanzas. India, her great mountains and forests and plains and their peoples, her men and women and the circumstances of their life, her animals, her cities and villages, her hermitages, rivers, gardens and tilled lands are the background of narrative and drama and love poem. He has seen it all and filled his mind with it and never fails to bring it before us vivid with all the wealth of description of which he is capable. Her ethical and domestic ideals, the life of the ascetic in the forest or engaged in meditation and austerity upon the mountains and the life of the householder, her familiar customs and social standards and

observances, her religious notions, cult, symbols give the rest of the surroundings and the atmosphere. The high actions of gods and kings, the nobler or the more delicate human sentiments, the charm and beauty of women, the sensuous passion of lovers, the procession of the seasons and the scenes of Nature, these are his favourite subjects.

He is a true son of his age in his dwelling on the artistic, hedonistic, sensuous sides of experience and preeminently a poet of love and beauty and the joy of life. He represents it also in his intellectual passion for higher things, his intense appreciation of knowledge, culture, the religious idea, the ethical ideal, the greatness of ascetic self-mastery, and these too he makes a part of the beauty and interest of life and sees as admirable elements of its complete and splendid picture. All his work is of this tissue. His great literary epic, the "House of Raghu", treats the story of a line of ancient kings as representative of the highest religious and ethical culture and ideals of the race and brings out its significances environed with a splendid decoration of almost pictorially depicted sentiment and action, noble or beautiful thought and speech and vivid incident and scene and surrounding. Another unfinished epic, a great fragment but by the virtue of his method of work complete in itself so far as the tale proceeds, is in subject a legend of the gods, the ancient subject of a strife of Gods and Titans, the solution prepared here by a union of the supreme God and the Goddess, but in treatment it is a description of Nature and the human life of India raised to a divine magnitude on the sacred mountain and in the homes of the high deities. His three dramas move around the passion of love, but with the same insistence on the detail and picture of life. One poem unrolls the hued series of the seasons of the Indian year. Another leads the messenger cloud across northern India viewing as it passes the panorama of her scenes and closes on a vivid and delicately sensuous and emotional portrayal of the passion of love. In these varied settings we get a singularly complete impression of the mind, the tradition, the sentiment, the rich, beautiful and ordered life of the India of the times, not in its very deepest things, for these have to be sought elsewhere,

but in what was for the time most characteristic, the intellectual, vital and artistic turn of that period of her culture.

The rest of the poetry of the times is of one fundamental type with Kalidasa's; for it has with individual variations the same thought mind, temperament, general materials, poetic method, and much of it has a high genius or an unusual quality and distinction though not the same perfection, beauty and felicity. The literary epics of Bharavi and Magha reveal the beginning of the decline marked by the progressive encroachment of a rhetorical and laborious standard of form, method and manner that heavily burdens and is bound eventually to stifle the poetic spirit, an increasing artificiality of tradition and convention and gross faults of taste that bear evidence of the approaching transmission of the language out of the hands of the literary creator into the control of the Pundit and pedant. Magha's poem is more constructed by rule of rhetoric than created and he displays as merits the very worst puerilities of melodious jingle, intricate acrostic and laborious double meaning. Bharavi is less attainted by the decadence, but not immune, and he suffers himself to be betrayed by its influence to much that is neither suitable to his temperament and genius nor in itself beautiful or true. Nevertheless Bharavi has high qualities of grave poetic thinking and epic sublimity of description and Magha poetic gifts that would have secured for him a more considerable place in literature if the poet had not been crossed with a pedant. In this mixture of genius with defect of taste and manner the later classical poets resemble the Elizabethans with the difference that in one case the incoherence is the result of a crude and still unripe, in the other of an overripe and decadent culture. At the same time they bring out very prominently the character of this age of Sanskrit literature, its qualities but also its limitations that escape the eye in Kalidasa and are hidden in the splendour of his genius.

This poetry is preeminently a ripe and deliberate poetic representation and criticism of thought and life and the things that traditionally interested an aristocratic and cultured class in a very advanced and intellectual period of civilisation. The intellect predominates everywhere and, even when it seems to

stand aside and leave room for pure objective presentation, it puts on that too the stamp of its image. In the earlier epics the thought, religion, ethics, life movements are all strongly lived; the poetic intelligence is at work but always absorbed in its work, self-forgetful and identified with its object, and it is this that is the secret of their great creative force and living poetic sincerity and power. The later poets are interested in the same things but with an intensely reflective experience and critical intelligence that always observes more than it lives with its objects. In the literary epics there is no real movement of life, but only a close brilliant description of life. The poet makes to pass before us a series of pictured incidents, scenes, details, figures, attitudes richly coloured, exact, vivid, convincing to the eye and attractive, but in spite of the charm and interest we speedily perceive that these are only animated pictures. Things are indeed seen vividly but with the more outer eye of the imagination, observed by the intellect, reproduced by the sensuous imagination of the poet, but they have not been deeply lived in the spirit. Kalidasa alone is immune from this deficiency of the method because there is in him a great thinking, imaginative, sensuous poetic soul that has lived and creates what he pictures and does not merely fabricate brilliant scenes and figures. The rest only occasionally rise above the deficiency and do then great and not only brilliant or effective work. Their ordinary work is so well done as to deserve great and unstinted praise for what it possesses, but not the highest praise. It is in the end more decorative than creative. There ensues from the character of this poetic method a spiritual consequence, that we see here very vividly the current thought, ethics, aesthetic culture, active and sense life of contemporary India, but not the deeper soul of these things so much as their outer character and body. There is much ethical and religious thought of a sufficiently high ideal kind, and it is quite sincere but only intellectually sincere, and therefore there is no impression of the deeper religious feeling or the living ethical power that we get in the Mahabharata and Ramayana and in most of the art and literature of India. The ascetic life is depicted, but only in its ideas and outward figure:

the sensuous life is depicted in the same scrupulous manner — it is intensely observed and appreciated and well reproduced to the eye and the intelligence, but not intensely felt and created in the soul of the poet. The intellect has become too detached and too critically observant to live things with the natural force of the life or with the intuitive identity. This is the quality and also the malady of an overdeveloped intellectualism and it has always been the forerunner of a decadence.

The predominantly intellectual turn appears in the abundance of another kind of writing, the gnomic verse, *subhāṣita*. This is the use of the independent completeness of the *śloka* to be the body in its single sufficiency of the concentrated essence and expression of a thought, an aperçu or significant incident of life, a sentiment so expressed as to convey its essential idea to the intelligence. There is a great plenty of this kind of work admirably done; for it was congenial to the keen intellect and the wide, mature and well-stored experience of the age: but in the work of Bhartrihari it assumes the proportions of genius, because he writes not only with the thought but with emotion, with what might be called a moved intellectuality of the feeling and an intimate experience that gives great potency and sometimes poignancy to his utterance. There are three centuries or *śatakas* of his sentences, the first expressing high ethical thought or worldly wisdom or brief criticisms of aspects of life, the second concerned with erotic passion, much less effective because it is the fruit of curiosity and the environment rather than the poet's own temperament and genius, and the third proclaiming an ascetic weariness and recoil from the world. Bhartrihari's triple work is significant of the three leading motives of the mind of the age, its reflective interest in life and turn for high and strong and minute thinking, its preoccupation with the enjoyment of the senses, and its ascetic spiritual turn — the end of the one and the ransom of the other. It is significant too by the character of this spirituality; it is no longer the great natural flight of the spirit to the fullness of its own high domain, but rather a turning away of the intellect and the senses wearied of themselves and life, unable to find there the

satisfaction they sought, to find peace in a spiritual passivity in which the tired thought and sense could find their absolute rest and cessation.

The drama however is the most attractive though not therefore the greatest product of the poetical mind of the age. There its excessive intellectuality was compelled by the necessities of dramatic poetry to be more closely and creatively identified with the very mould and movement of life. The Sanskrit drama type is a beautiful form and it has been used in most of the plays that have come down to us with an accomplished art and a true creative faculty. At the same time it is true that it does not rise to the greatnesses of the Greek or the Shakespearian drama. This is not due to the elimination of tragedy,—for there can be dramatic creation of the greatest kind without a solution in death, sorrow, overwhelming calamity or the tragic return of Karma, a note that is yet not altogether absent from the Indian mind,—for it is there in the Mahabharata and was added later on to the earlier triumphant and victorious close of the Ramayana; but a closing air of peace and calm was more congenial to the sattwic turn of the Indian temperament and imagination. It is due to the absence of any bold dramatic treatment of the great issues and problems of life. These dramas are mostly romantic plays reproducing the images and settled paces of the most cultured life of the time cast into the frame of old myth and legend, but a few are more realistic and represent the type of the citizen householder or other scenes of the times or a historical subject. The magnificent courts of kings or the beauty of the surroundings of Nature are their more common scene. But whatever their subject or kind, they are only brilliant transcripts or imaginative transmutations of life, and something more is needed for the very greatest or most moving dramatic creation. But their type still admits of a high or a strong or delicate poetry and a representation, if not any very profound interpretation of human action and motive and they do not fall short in this kind. A great charm of poetic beauty and subtle feeling and atmosphere,—reaching its most accomplished type in the *Shakuntala* of Kalidasa, the most perfect and captivating romantic drama in

all literature,— or an interesting turn of sentiment and action, a skilful unobtrusive development according to the recognised principle and carefully observed formula of the art, in temperate measure without violent noise of incident or emphatic stress on situation or crowded figures, the movement subdued to a key of suavity and calm, a delicate psychology, not a strongly marked characterisation such as is commonly demanded in the dramatic art of Europe, but a subtle indication by slight touches in the dialogue and action, these are the usual characteristics. It is an art that was produced by and appealed to a highly cultured class, refined, and intellectual and subtle, loving best a tranquil aesthetic charm, suavity and beauty, and it has the limitations of the kind but also its qualities. There is a constant grace and fineness of work in the best period, a plainer and more direct but still fine vigour in Bhasa and the writers who prolong him, a breath of largeness and power in the dramas of Bhavabhuti, a high and consummate beauty in the perfection of Kalidasa.

This drama, this poetry, the prose romances crowded with descriptive detail, monographs like Bana's biography of Harsha or Jonaraja's history of Cashmere, the collections of religious or romantic or realistic tales, the Jatakas, the Kathasaritsagara with its opulence and inexhaustible abundance of narrative in verse, the Panchatantra and the more concise Hitopadesha which develop the form of the animal fable to make a piquant setting for a mass of acute worldly wisdom and policy and statecraft, and a great body of other less known work are only the surviving remnants of what, as many indications show, must have been an immense literary activity, but they are sufficiently abundant and representative to create a crowded and splendid impression, a many-toned picture of a high culture, a rich intellectuality, a great and ordered society with an opulent religious, aesthetic, ethical, economic, political and vital activity, a many-sided development, a plentiful life-movement. As completely as the earlier epics they belie the legend of an India lost in metaphysics and religious dreamings and incapable of the great things of life. The other element which has given rise to this conception, an intense strain of philosophic thinking and religious experience, follows

in fact at this time an almost separate movement and develops gradually behind the pomp and motion of this outward action the thought, the influences, the temperament and tendencies that were to govern another millennium of the life of the Indian people.

Indian Literature – 5

THE DOMINANT note in the Indian mind, the temperament that has been at the foundation of all its culture and originated and supported the greater part of its creative action in philosophy, religion, art and life has been, I have insisted, spiritual, intuitive and psychic: but this fundamental tendency has not excluded but rather powerfully supported a strong and rich intellectual, practical and vital activity. In the secular classical literature this activity comes very much to the front, is the prominent characteristic and puts the original spirit a little in the background. That does not mean that the spirit is changed or lost or that there is nothing psychic or intuitive in the secular poetry of the time. On the contrary all the type of the mind reflected there is of the familiar Indian character constant through every change, religio-philosophic, religio-ethical, religio-social, with all the past spiritual experience behind it and supporting it though not prominently in the front; the imagination is of the same kind that we have found in the art of the time; the frames of significant image, symbol and myth are those which have come down from the past subjected to the modifications and new developments that get their full body in the Puranas, and they have a strong psychic suggestion. The difference is that they take in the hands of these poets more of the form of a tradition well understood and worked upon by the intellect than of an original spiritual creation, and it is the intelligence that is prominent, accepting and observing established ideas and things in this frame and type and making its critical or reproductive observation and assent vivid with the strong lines and rich colours of artistic presentation and embellishing image. The original force, the intuitive vision work most strongly now in the outward, in the sensuous, the objective, the vital aspects of existence, and it is these that in this age are being more fully

taken up, brought out and made in the religious field a support for an extension of spiritual experience.

The sense of this evolution of the culture appears more clearly outside the range of pure literature in the philosophic writings of the time and in the religious poetry of the Puranas and Tantras. It was these two strains which mixing together and soon becoming a single whole proved to be the most living and enduring movement of the classical age, had the most abiding result in the mind of the people, were the creating force and made the most conspicuous part of the later popular literatures. It is a remarkable proof of the native disposition, capacity and profound spiritual intelligence and feeling of the national mind that the philosophic thinking of this period should have left behind it this immense influence; for it was of the highest and severest intellectual character. The tendency that had begun in earlier times and created Buddhism, Jainism and the great schools of philosophy, the labour of the metaphysical intellect to formulate to the reason the truths discovered by the intuitive spiritual experience, to subject them to the close test of a logical and severely dialectical ratiocination and to elicit from them all that the thought could discover, reaches its greatest power of elaborate and careful reasoning, minute criticism and analysis and forceful logical construction and systematisation in the abundant philosophical writing of the period between the sixth and thirteenth centuries marked especially by the work of the great southern thinkers, Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhwa. It did not cease even then, but survived its greatest days and continued even up to our own times throwing up sometimes great creative thinking and often new and subtle philosophical ideas in the midst of an incessant stream of commentary and criticism on established lines. Here there was no decline but a continued vigour of the metaphysical turn in the mind of the race. The work it did was to complete the diffusion of the philosophic intelligence with the result that even an average Indian mentality, once awakened, responds with a surprising quickness to the most subtle and profound ideas. It is notable that no Hindu religion old or new has been able to come into existence

without developing as its support a clear philosophic content and suggestion.

The philosophical writings in prose make no pretension to rank as literature; it is in these that the critical side is prominent, and they have no well-built creative shape, but there are other productions in which a more structural presentation of the complete thought is attempted and here the literary form adopted is ordinarily the philosophical poem. The preference for this form is a direct continuation of the tradition of the Upanishads and the Gita. These works cannot be given a very high place as poetry: they are too overweighted with thought and the preoccupation of an intellectual as distinguished from an intuitive adequacy in the phrase to have the breath of life and impetus of inspiration that are the indispensable attributes of the creative poetic mind. It is the critical and affirmative intelligence that is most active and not the vision seeing and interpretative. The epic greatness of the soul that sees and chants the self-vision and God-vision and supreme world-vision, the blaze of light that makes the power of the Upanishads, is absent, and absent too the direct thought springing straight from the soul's life and experience, the perfect, strong and suggestive phrase and the living beauty of the rhythmic pace that make the poetic greatness of the Gita. At the same time some of these poems are, if certainly not great poetry, yet admirable literature combining a supreme philosophical genius with a remarkable literary talent, not indeed creations, but noble and skilful constructions, embodying the highest possible thought, using well all the weighty, compact and sparing phrase of the classical Sanskrit speech, achieving the harmony and noble elegance of its rhythms. These merits are seen at their best in poems like the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* attributed to Shankara, and there we hear even, in spite of its too abstract turn, an intellectual echo of the voice of the Upanishads and the manner of the Gita. These poems, if inferior to the grandeur and beauty of earlier Indian work, are at least equal in poetic style and superior in height of thought to the same kind anywhere else and deservedly survive to fulfil the aim intended by their writers. And one must not omit to mention a few snatches of philosophic song here

and there that are a quintessence at once of philosophic thought and poetic beauty, or the abundant literature of hymns, many of them consummate in their power and fervour and their charm of rhythm and expression which prepare us for the similar but larger work in the later regional literature.

The philosophical creations of India differ in this respect from the bulk of the metaphysical thinking of Europe that even when they most adopt the intellectual form and method, yet their real substance is not intellectual, but is rather the result of a subtle and very profound intelligence working on the stuff of sight and spiritual experience. This is the result of the constant unity India has preserved between philosophy, religion and Yoga. The philosophy is the intuitive or intellectual presentation of the truth that was sought for first through the religious mind and its experiences and it is never satisfied by discovering truth to the idea and justifying it to the logical intelligence, although that is admirably done, but has its eye always turned to realisation in the soul's life, the object of Yoga. The thinking of this age, even in giving so much prominence to the intellectual side, does not depart from this constant need of the Indian temperament. It works out from spiritual experience through the exact and laborious inspection and introspection of the intellect and works backward and again from the intellectual perceptions to new gains of spiritual experience. There is indeed a tendency of fragmentation and exclusiveness; the great integral truth of the Upanishads has already been broken into divergent schools of thought and these are now farther subdividing into still less comprehensive systems; but still in each of these lessened provinces there is a gain of minute or intensive searching and on the whole, if a loss of breadth on the heights, in recompense some extension of assimilable spiritual knowledge. And this rhythm of exchange between the spirit and the intelligence, the spirit illuminating, the intelligence searching and arriving and helping the lower life to absorb the intuitions of the spirit, did its part in giving Indian spirituality a wonderful intensity, security and persistence not exemplified in any other people. It is indeed largely the work of these philosophers who were at the same time Yogins that

saved the soul of India alive through the gathering night of her decadence.

This however could not have been done without the aid of a great body of more easily seizable ideas, forms, images, appealing to the imagination, emotions, ethical and aesthetic sense of the people, that had to be partly an expression of the higher spiritual truth and partly a bridge of transition between the normal religious and the spiritual mentality. The need was met by the Tantras and Puranas. The Puranas are the religious poetry peculiar to this period: for although the form probably existed in ancient times, it is only now that it was entirely developed and became the characteristic and the principal literary expression of the religious spirit, and it is to this period that we must attribute, not indeed all the substance, but the main bulk and the existing shape of the Puranic writings. The Puranas have been much discredited and depreciated in recent times, since the coming in of modern ideas coloured by Western rationalism and the turning of the intelligence under new impulses back towards the earlier fundamental ideas of the ancient culture. Much however of this depreciation is due to an entire misunderstanding of the purpose, method and sense of the mediaeval religious writings. It is only in an understanding of the turn of the Indian religious imagination and of the place of these writings in the evolution of the culture that we can seize their sense.

In fact the better comprehension that is now returning to us of our own self and past shows that the Puranic religions are only a new form and extension of the truth of the ancient spirituality and philosophy and socio-religious culture. In their avowed intention they are popular summaries of the cosmogony, symbolic myth and image, tradition, cult, social rule of the Indian people continued, as the name Purana signifies, from ancient times. There is no essential change, but only a change of forms. The psychic symbols or true images of truth belonging to the Vedic age disappear or are relegated to a subordinate plan with a changed and diminished sense: others take their place more visibly large in aim, cosmic, comprehensive, not starting with conceptions drawn from the physical universe, but supplied

entirely from the psychic universe within us. The Vedic gods and goddesses conceal from the profane by their physical aspect their psychic and spiritual significance. The Puranic trinity and the forms of its female energies have on the contrary no meaning to the physical mind or imagination, but are philosophic and psychic conceptions and embodiments of the unity and multiplicity of the all-manifesting Godhead. The Puranic cults have been characterised as a degradation of the Vedic religion, but they might conceivably be described, not in the essence, for that remains always the same, but in the outward movement, as an extension and advance. Image worship and temple cult and profuse ceremony, to whatever superstition or externalism their misuse may lead, are not necessarily a degradation. The Vedic religion had no need of images, for the physical signs of its godheads were the forms of physical Nature and the outward universe was their visible house. The Puranic religion worshipped the psychical forms of the Godhead within us and had to express it outwardly in symbolic figures and house it in temples that were an architectural sign of cosmic significances. And the very inwardness it intended necessitated a profusion of outward symbol to embody the complexity of these inward things to the physical imagination and vision. The religious aesthetics has changed, but the meaning of the religion has been altered only in temperament and fashion, not in essence. The real difference is this that the early religion was made by men of the highest mystic and spiritual experience living among a mass still impressed mostly by the life of the physical universe: the Upanishads casting off the physical veil created a free transcendent and cosmic vision and experience and this was expressed by a later age to the mass in images containing a large philosophical and intellectual meaning of which the Trinity and the Shaktis of Vishnu and Shiva are the central figures: the Puranas carried forward this appeal to the intellect and imagination and made it living to the psychic experience, the emotions, the aesthetic feeling and the senses. A constant attempt to make the spiritual truths discovered by the Yojin and the Rishi integrally expressive, appealing, effective to the whole nature of man and to

provide outward means by which the ordinary mind, the mind of a whole people might be drawn to a first approach to them is the sense of the religio-philosophic evolution of Indian culture.

It is to be observed that the Puranas and Tantras contain in themselves the highest spiritual and philosophical truths, not broken up and expressed in opposition to each other as in the debates of the thinkers, but synthetised by a fusion, relation or grouping in the way most congenial to the catholicity of the Indian mind and spirit. This is done sometimes expressly, but most often in a form which might carry something of it to the popular imagination and feeling by legend, tale, symbol, analogue, miracle and parable. An immense and complex body of psycho-spiritual experience is embodied in the Tantras, supported by visual images and systematised in forms of Yogic practice. This element is also found in the Puranas, but more loosely and cast out in a less strenuous sequence. This method is after all simply a prolongation, in another form and with a temperamental change, of the method of the Vedas. The Puranas construct a system of physical images and observances each with its psychical significance. Thus the sacredness of the confluence of the three rivers, Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati, is a figure of an inner confluence and points to a crucial experience in a psycho-physical process of Yoga and it has too other significances, as is common in the economy of this kind of symbolism. The so-called fantastic geography of the Puranas, as we are expressly told in the Puranas themselves, is a rich poetic figure, a symbolic geography of the inner psychical universe. The cosmogony expressed sometimes in terms proper to the physical universe has, as in the Veda, a spiritual and psychological meaning and basis. It is easy to see how in the increasing ignorance of later times the more technical parts of the Puranic symbology inevitably lent themselves to much superstition and to crude physical ideas about spiritual and psychic things. But that danger attends all attempts to bring them to the comprehension of the mass of men and this disadvantage should not blind us to the enormous effect produced in training the mass mind to respond to a psycho-religious and psycho-spiritual appeal that prepares a capacity

for higher things. That effect endures even though the Puranic system may have to be superseded by a finer appeal and the awakening to more directly subtle significances, and if such a supersession becomes possible, it will itself be due very largely to the work done by the Puranas.

The Puranas are essentially a true religious poetry, an art of aesthetic presentation of religious truth. All the bulk of the eighteen Puranas does not indeed take a high rank in this kind: there is much waste substance and not a little of dull and dreary matter, but on the whole the poetic method employed is justified by the richness and power of the creation. The earliest work is the best—with one exception at the end in a new style which stands by itself and is unique. The Vishnu Purana for instance in spite of one or two desert spaces is a remarkable literary creation of a very considerable quality maintaining much of the direct force and height of the old epic style. There is in it a varied movement, much vigorous and some sublime epic writing, an occasional lyrical element of a lucid sweetness and beauty, a number of narratives of the finest verve and skilful simplicity of poetic workmanship. The Bhagavat coming at the end and departing to a great extent from the more popular style and manner, for it is strongly affected by the learned and more ornately literary form of speech, is a still more remarkable production full of subtlety, rich and deep thought and beauty. It is here that we get the culmination of the movement which had the most important effects on the future, the evolution of the emotional and ecstatic religions of Bhakti. The tendency that underlay this development was contained in the earlier forms of the religious mind of India and was slowly gaining ground, but it had hitherto been overshadowed and kept from its perfect formation by the dominant tendency towards the austerities of knowledge and action and the seeking of the spiritual ecstasy only on the highest planes of being. The turn of the classical age outward to the exterior life and the satisfaction of the senses brought in a new inward turn of which the later ecstatic forms of the Vaishnava religion were the most complete manifestation. Confined to the secular and outward this fathoming of vital

and sensuous experience might have led only to a relaxation of nerve and vigour, an ethical degeneracy or licence; but the Indian mind is always compelled by its master impulse to reduce all its experience of life to the corresponding spiritual term and factor and the result was a transfiguring of even these most external things into a basis for new spiritual experience. The emotional, the sensuous, even the sensual motions of the being, before they could draw the soul farther outward, were taken and transmuted into a psychical form and, so changed, they became the elements of a mystic capture of the Divine through the heart and the senses and a religion of the joy of God's love, delight and beauty. In the Tantra the new elements are taken up and assigned their place in a complete psycho-spiritual and psycho-physical science of Yoga. Its popular form in the Vaishnava religion centres round the mystic analogue of the pastoral life of the child Krishna. In the Vishnu Purana the tale of Krishna is a heroic saga of the divine Avatar: in later Puranas we see the aesthetic and erotic symbol developing and in the Bhagavat it is given its full power and prepared to manifest its entire spiritual and philosophic as well as its psychic sense and to remould into its own lines by a shifting of the centre of synthesis from knowledge to spiritual love and delight the earlier significance of Vedanta. The perfect outcome of this evolution is to be found in the philosophy and religion of divine love promulgated by Chaitanya.

It is the later developments of Vedantic philosophy, the Puranic ideas and images and the poetic and aesthetic spirituality of the religions of devotion that inspired from their birth the regional literatures. The literature of the Sanskrit tongue does not come to any abrupt end. Poetry of the classical type continues to be written especially in the South down to a comparatively late period and Sanskrit remains still the language of philosophy and of all kinds of scholarship: all prose work, all the work of the critical mind is written in the ancient tongue. But the genius rapidly fades out from it, it becomes stiff, heavy and artificial and only a scholastic talent remains to keep it in continuance. In every province the local tongues arise here earlier, there a little later to the dignity of literature and become the vehicle of

poetic creation and the instrument of popular culture. Sanskrit, although not devoid of popular elements, is essentially and in the best sense an aristocratic speech developing and holding to the necessity of a noble aspiration and the great manner a high spiritual, intellectual, ethical and aesthetic culture, then possible in this manner only to the higher classes, and handing it down by various channels of impression and transfusion and especially by religion, art and social and ethical rule to the mass of the people. Pali in the hands of the Buddhists becomes a direct means of this transmission. The poetry of the regional tongues on the contrary creates, in every sense of the word, a popular literature. The Sanskrit writers were men of the three highest castes, mostly Brahmins and Kshatriyas, and later they were learned men writing for a highly cultured elite; the Buddhist writers too were for the most part philosophers, monks, kings, preachers writing sometimes for themselves, sometimes in a more popular form for the mass of the people; but the poetry of the regional tongues sprang straight from the heart of the people and its writers came from all classes from the Brahmin to the lowest Shudra and the outcaste. It is only in Urdu and to a less degree in the Southern tongues, as in Tamil whose great period is contemporaneous with the classical Sanskrit, its later production continuing during the survival of independent or semi-independent courts and kingdoms in the South, that there is a strong influence of the learned or classical temperament and habit; but even here there is a very considerable popular element as in the songs of the Shaiva saints and Vaishnava Alwars. The field here is too large to be easily known in its totality or to permit of a rapid survey, but something must be said of the character and value of this later literature that we may see how vital and persistently creative Indian culture remained even in a period which compared with its greater times might be regarded as a period of restriction and decadence.

As the Sanskrit literature begins with the Vedas and Upanishads, these later literatures begin with the inspired poetry of saints and devotees: for in India it is always a spiritual movement that is the source or at least imparts the impulse of formation

to new ideas and possibilities and initiates the changes of the national life. It is this kind that predominated almost throughout the creative activity of most of these tongues before modern times, because it was always poetry of this type that was nearest to the heart and mind of the people; and even where the work is of a more secular spirit, the religious turn enters into it and provides the framework, a part of the tone or the apparent motive. In abundance, in poetic excellence, in the union of spontaneous beauty of motive and lyrical skill this poetry has no parallel in its own field in any other literature. A sincerity of devotional feeling is not enough to produce work of this high turn of beauty, as is shown by the sterility of Christian Europe in this kind; it needs a rich and profound spiritual culture. Another part of the literature is devoted to the bringing of something of the essence of the old culture into the popular tongues through new poetic versions of the story of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana or in romantic narrative founded on the ancient legends; and here again we have work of the very greatest genius as well as much of a lesser but still high order. A third type presents vividly the religious beliefs and feelings of the people, the life of court and city and village and hamlet, of landholder and trader and artisan and peasant. The bulk of the work done in the regional tongues falls under one or other of these heads, but there are variations such as the religio-ethical and political poems of Ramdas in Maharashtra or the gnomic poetry, the greatest in plan, conception and force of execution ever written in this kind, of the Tamil saint, Tiruvalluvar. There is too in one or two of these languages a later erotic poetry not without considerable lyrical beauty of an entirely mundane inspiration. The same culture reigns amid many variations of form in all this work of the regional peoples, but each creates on the lines of its own peculiar character and temperament and this gives a different stamp, the source of a rich variety in the unity, to each of these beautiful and vigorous literatures.

Thus under the stress of temperamental variation the poetry of the Vaishnavas puts on very different artistic forms in different provinces. There is first the use of the psychical symbol created

by the Puranas, and this assumes its most complete and artistic shape in Bengal and becomes there a long continued tradition. The desire of the soul for God is there thrown into symbolic figure in the lyrical love cycle of Radha and Krishna, the Nature soul in man seeking for the Divine Soul through love, seized and mastered by his beauty, attracted by his magical flute, abandoning human cares and duties for this one overpowering passion and in the cadence of its phases passing through first desire to the bliss of union, the pangs of separation, the eternal longing and reunion, the *lilā* of the love of the human spirit for God. There is a settled frame and sequence, a subtly simple lyrical rhythm, a traditional diction of appealing directness and often of intense beauty. This accomplished lyrical form springs at once to perfect birth from the genius of the first two poets who used the Bengali tongue, Vidyapati, a consummate artist of word and line, and the inspired singer Chandidas in whose name stand some of the sweetest and most poignant and exquisite love-lyrics in any tongue. The symbol here is sustained in its most external figure of human passion and so consistently that it is now supposed by many to mean nothing else, but this is quite negatived by the use of the same figures by the devout poets of the religion of Chaitanya. All the spiritual experience that lay behind the symbol was embodied in that inspired prophet and incarnation of the ecstasy of divine love and its spiritual philosophy put into clear form in his teaching. His followers continued the poetic tradition of the earlier singers and though they fall below them in genius, yet left behind a great mass of this kind of poetry always beautiful in form and often deep and moving in substance. Another type is created in the perfect lyrics of the Rajput queen Mirabai, in which the images of the Krishna symbol are more directly turned into a song of the love and pursuit of the divine Lover by the soul of the singer. In the Bengal poetry the expression preferred is the symbolic figure impersonal to the poet: here a personal note gives the peculiar intensity to the emotion. This is given a still more direct turn by a southern poetess in the image of herself as the bride of Krishna. The peculiar power of this kind of Vaishnava religion and poetry

is in the turning of all the human emotions Godward, the passion of love being preferred as the intensest and most absorbing of them all, and though the idea recurs wherever there has been a strong development of devotional religion, it has nowhere been used with so much power and sincerity as in the work of the Indian poets.

Other Vaishnava poetry does not use the Krishna symbol, but is rather addressed in language of a more direct devotion to Vishnu or centres sometimes around the Rama Avatar. The songs of Tukaram are the best known of this kind. The Vaishnava poetry of Bengal avoids except very rarely any element of intellectualising thought and relies purely on emotional description, a sensuous figure of passion and intensity of feeling: Maratha poetry on the contrary has from the beginning a strong intellectual strain. The first Marathi poet is at once a devotee, a Yojin and a thinker; the poetry of the saint Ramdas, associated with the birth and awakening of a nation, is almost entirely a stream of religious ethical thinking raised to the lyrical pitch; and it is the penetrating truth and fervour of a thought arising from the heart of devotion that makes the charm and power of Tukaram's songs. A long strain of devotee poets keeps sounding the note that he struck and their work fills the greater space of Marathi poetry. The same type takes a lighter and more high-pitched turn in the poetry of Kabir. In Bengal again at the end of the Mahomedan period there is the same blending of fervent devotion with many depths and turns of religious thought in the songs of Ramprasad to the divine Mother, combined here with a vivid play of imagination turning all familiar things into apt and pregnant images and an intense spontaneity of feeling. In the South a profounder philosophic utterance is often fused into the devotional note, especially in the Shaiva poets, and, as in the early Sanskrit poetry, vivified by a great power of living phrase and image, and farther north the high Vedantic spirituality renews itself in the Hindi poetry of Surdas and inspires Nanak and the Sikh gurus. The spiritual culture prepared and perfected by two millenniums of the ancient civilisation has flooded the mind of all these peoples and given birth to great new literatures and

its voice is heard continually through all their course.

The narrative poetry of this age is less striking and original except for a certain number of great or famous works. Most of these tongues have felt the cultural necessity of transferring into the popular speech the whole central story of the Mahabharata or certain of its episodes and, still more universally, the story of the Ramayana. In Bengal there is the Mahabharata of Kashiram, the gist of the old epic simply retold in a lucid classical style, and the Ramayana of Krittibas, more near to the vigour of the soil, neither of them attaining to the epic manner but still written with a simple poetic skill and a swift narrative force. Only two however of these later poets arrived at a vividly living recreation of the ancient story and succeeded in producing a supreme masterpiece, Kamban, the Tamil poet who makes of his subject a great original epic, and Tulsidas whose famed Hindi Ramayana combines with a singular mastery lyric intensity, romantic richness and the sublimity of the epic imagination and is at once a story of the divine Avatar and a long chant of religious devotion. An English historian of the literature has even claimed for Tulsidas's poem superiority to the epic of Valmiki: that is an exaggeration and, whatever the merits, there cannot be a greater than the greatest, but that such claims can be made for Tulsidas and Kamban is evidence at least of the power of the poets and a proof that the creative genius of the Indian mind has not declined even in the narrowing of the range of its culture and knowledge. All this poetry indeed shows a gain in intensity that compensates to some extent for the loss of the ancient height and amplitude.

While this kind of narrative writing goes back to the epics, another seems to derive its first shaping and motive from the classical poems of Kalidasa, Bharavi and Magha. A certain number take for their subject, like that earlier poetry, episodes of the Mahabharata or other ancient or Puranic legends, but the classical and epic manner has disappeared, the inspiration resembles more that of the Puranas and there is the tone and the looser and easier development of the popular romance. This kind is commoner in western India and excellence in it is the title to fame of Premananda, the most considerable of the Gujerati

poets. In Bengal we find another type of half-romantic half-realistic narrative which develops a poetic picture of the religious mind and life and scenes of contemporary times and has a strong resemblance in its motive to the more outward element in the aim of Rajput painting. The life of Chaitanya written in a simple and naive romance verse, appealing by its directness and sincerity but inadequate in poetic form, is a unique contemporary presentation of the birth and foundation of a religious movement. Two other poems that have become classics, celebrate the greatness of Durga or Chandi, the goddess who is the Energy of Shiva,—the "Chandi" of Mukundaram, a pure romance of great poetic beauty which presents in its frame of popular legend a very living picture of the life of the people, and the "Annadamangal" of Bharatchandra repeating in its first part the Puranic tales of the gods as they might be imagined by the Bengali villager in the type of his own human life, telling in the second a romantic love story and in the third a historical incident of the time of Jehangir, all these disparate elements forming the development of the one central motive and presented without any imaginative elevation but with an unsurpassable vividness of description and power of vital and convincing phrase. All this poetry, the epic and the romance, the didactic poem, of which Ramdas and the famous Kural of Tiruvalluvar are the chief representatives, and the philosophic and devotional lyrics are not the creation or meant for the appreciation of a cultivated class, but with few exceptions the expression of a popular culture. The Ramayana of Tulsidas, the songs of Ramprasad and of the Bauls, the wandering Vaishnava devotees, the poetry of Ramdas and Tukaram, the sentences of Tiruvalluvar and the poetess Avvai and the inspired lyrics of the southern saints and Alwars were known to all classes and their thought or their emotion entered deeply into the life of the people.

I have dwelt at this length on the literature because it is, not indeed the complete, but still the most varied and ample record of the culture of a people. Three millenniums at least of a creation of this kind and greatness are surely the evidence of a real and very remarkable culture. The last period shows no

doubt a gradual decline, but one may note the splendour even of the decline and especially the continued vitality of religious, literary and artistic creation. At the moment when it seemed to be drawing to a close it has revived at the first chance and begins again another cycle, at first precisely in the three things that lasted the longest, spiritual and religious activity, literature and painting, but already the renewal promises to extend itself to all the many activities of life and culture in which India was once a great and leading people.

Indian Polity

I HAVE spoken hitherto of the greatness of Indian civilisation in the things most important to human culture, those activities that raise man to his noblest potentialities as a mental, a spiritual, religious, intellectual, ethical, aesthetic being, and in all these matters the cavillings of the critics break down before the height and largeness and profundity revealed when we look at the whole and all its parts in the light of a true understanding of the spirit and intention and a close discerning regard on the actual achievement of the culture. There is revealed not only a great civilisation, but one of the half dozen greatest of which we have a still existing record. But there are many who would admit the greatness of the achievement of India in the things of the mind and the spirit, but would still point out that she has failed in life, her culture has not resulted in a strong, successful or progressive organisation of life such as Europe shows to us, and that in the end at least the highest part of her mind turned away from life to asceticism and an inactive and world-shunning pursuit by the individual of his personal spiritual salvation. Or at most she has come only to a certain point and then there has been an arrest and decadence.

This charge weighs with an especial heaviness in the balance today because the modern man, even the modern cultured man, is or tends to be to a degree quite unprecedented *politikon zōon*, a political, economic and social being valuing above all things the efficiency of the outward existence and the things of the mind and spirit mainly, when not exclusively, for their aid to humanity's vital and mechanical progress: he has not that regard of the ancients which looked up towards the highest heights and regarded an achievement in the things of the mind and the spirit with an unquestioning admiration or a deep veneration for its own sake as the greatest possible contribution to human culture

and progress. And although this modern tendency is exaggerated and ugly and degrading in its exaggeration, inimical to humanity's spiritual evolution, it has this much of truth behind it that while the first value of a culture is its power to raise and enlarge the internal man, the mind, the soul, the spirit, its soundness is not complete unless it has shaped also his external existence and made of it a rhythm of advance towards high and great ideals. This is the true sense of progress and there must be as part of it a sound political, economic and social life, a power and efficiency enabling a people to survive, to grow and to move securely towards a collective perfection, and a vital elasticity and responsiveness that will give room for a constant advance in the outward expression of the mind and the spirit. If a culture does not serve these ends, then there is evidently a defect somewhere either in its essential conceptions or its wholeness or in its application that will seriously detract from its claims to a complete and integral value.

The ideals that governed the spirit and body of Indian society were of the highest kind, its social order secured an inexpugnable basic stability, the strong life force that worked in it was creative of an extraordinary energy, richness and interest, and the life organised remarkable in its opulence, variety in unity, beauty, productiveness, movement. All the records of Indian history, art and literature bear evidence to a cultural life of this character and even in decline and dissolution there survives some stamp of it to remind however faintly and distantly of the past greatness. To what then does the charge brought against Indian culture as an agent of the life power amount and what is its justification? In its exaggerated form it is founded upon the characteristics of the decline and dissolution, the features of the decadence read backward into the time of greatness, and it amounts to this that India has always shown an incompetence for any free or sound political organisation and has been constantly a divided and for the most part of her long history a subject nation, that her economic system whatever its bygone merits, if it had any, remained an inelastic and static order that led in modern conditions to poverty and failure and her

society an unprogressive hierarchy, caste-ridden, full of semi-barbaric abuses, only fit to be thrown on the scrap-heap among the broken rubbish of the past and replaced by the freedom, soundness and perfection or at least the progressive perfectibility of the European social order. It is necessary to reestablish the real facts and their meaning and afterwards it will be time to pass judgment on the political, the economic and the social aspects of Indian culture.

The legend of Indian political incompetence has arisen from a false view of the historical development and an insufficient knowledge of the ancient past of the country. It has long been currently supposed that she passed at once from the freer type of the primitive Aryan or Vedic social and political organisation to a system socially marked by the despotism of the Brahmin theocracy and politically by an absolute monarchy of the oriental, by which is meant the Western Asiatic, type and has remained fixed in these two things for ever after. That summary reading of Indian history has been destroyed by a more careful and enlightened scholarship and the facts are of a quite different nature. It is true that India never evolved either the scrambling and burdensome industrialism or the parliamentary organisation of freedom and self-styled democracy characteristic of the bourgeois or Vaishya period of the cycle of European progress. But the time is passing when the uncritical praise of these things as the ideal state and the last word of social and political progress was fashionable, their defects are now visible and the greatness of an oriental civilisation need not be judged by the standard of these Western developments. Indian scholars have attempted to read the modern ideas and types of democracy and even a parliamentary system into the past of India, but this seems to me an ill-judged endeavour. There was a strong democratic element, if we must use the Western terms, in Indian polity and even institutions that present a certain analogy to the parliamentary form, but in reality these features were of India's own kind and not at all the same thing as modern parliaments and modern democracy. And so considered they are a much more remarkable evidence of the political capacity of the Indian people in their

living adaptation to the ensemble of the social mind and body of the nation than when we judge them by the very different standard of Western society and the peculiar needs of its cultural cycle.

The Indian system began with a variation of the type generally associated with the early history of the Aryan peoples; but certain features have a more general character and belong to a still earlier stage in the social development of the human race. It was a clan or tribal system, Kula, founded upon the equality of all the freemen of the clan or race; this was not at first firmly founded upon the territorial basis, the migratory tendency was still in evidence or recurred under pressure and the land was known by the name of the people who occupied it, the Kuru country or simply the Kurus, the Malava country or the Malavas. After the fixed settlement within determined boundaries the system of the clan or tribe continued, but found a basic unit or constituent atom in the settled village community. The meeting of the people, *visah*, assembling for communal deliberation, for sacrifice and worship or as the host for war, remained for a long time the power-sign of the mass body and the agent of the active common life with the king as the head and representative, but long depending even after his position became hereditary on the assent of the people for his formal election or confirmation. The religious institution of the sacrifice developed in time a class of priests and inspired singers, men trained in the ritual or in possession of the mystic knowledge which lay behind the symbols of the sacrifice, the seed of the great Brahminic institution. These were not at first hereditary, but exercised other professions and belonged in their ordinary life to the general body of the people. This free and simple natural constitution of the society seems to have been general at first throughout Aryan India.

The later development out of this primitive form followed up to a certain point the ordinary line of evolution as we see it in other communities, but at the same time threw up certain very striking peculiarities that owing to the unique mentality of the race fixed themselves, became prominent characteristics

and gave a different stamp to the political, economic and social factors of Indian civilisation. The hereditary principle emerged at an early stage and increased constantly its power and hold on the society until it became everywhere the basis of the whole organisation of its activities. A hereditary kingship was established, a powerful princely and warrior class appeared, the rest of the people were marked off as the caste of traders, artisans and agriculturalists and a subject or menial caste was added, perhaps sometimes as the result of conquest but more probably or more commonly from economic necessity, of servants and labourers. The predominance from early times of the religious and spiritual tendency in the mind of the Indian people brought about at the top of the social system the growth of the Brahmin order, priests, scholars, legists, repositories of the sacred lore of the Vedas, a development paralleled elsewhere but here given an unequalled permanence and definiteness and supreme importance. In other countries with a less complex mentality this predominance might have resulted in a theocracy: but the Brahmins in spite of their ever-increasing and finally predominant authority did not and could not usurp in India the political power. As sacrosanct priests and legists and spiritual preceptors of the monarch and the people they exercised a very considerable influence, but the real or active political power remained with the king, the Kshatriya aristocracy and the commons.

A peculiar figure for some time was the Rishi, the man of a higher spiritual experience and knowledge, born in any of the classes, but exercising an authority by his spiritual personality over all, revered and consulted by the king of whom he was sometimes the religious preceptor and in the then fluid state of social evolution able alone to exercise an important role in evolving new basic ideas and effecting direct and immediate changes of the socio-religious ideas and customs of the people. It was a marked feature of the Indian mind that it sought to attach a spiritual meaning and a religious sanction to all, even to the most external social and political circumstances of its life, imposing on all classes and functions an ideal, not except incidentally of rights and powers, but of duties, a rule of their

action and an ideal way and temperament, character, spirit in the action, a dharma with a spiritual significance. It was the work of the Rishi to put this stamp enduringly on the national mind, to prolong and perpetuate it, to discover and interpret the ideal law and its practical meaning, to cast the life of the people into the well-shaped ideals and significant forms of a civilisation founded on the spiritual and religious sense. And in later ages we find the Brahminic schools of legists attributing their codes, though in themselves only formulations of existing rule and custom, to the ancient Rishis. Whatever the developments of the Indian socio-political body in later days, this original character still exercised its influence, even when all tended at last to become traditionalised and conventionalised instead of moving forward constantly in the steps of a free and living practice.

The political evolution of this early system varied in different parts of India. The ordinary development, as in most other countries, was in the direction of an increasing emphasis on the control of the king as the centre, head and unifying factor of a more and more complex system of rule and administration and this prevailed eventually and became the universal type. But for a long time it was combated and held in check by a contrary tendency that resulted in the appearance and the strong and enduring vitality of city or regional or confederated republics. The king became either a hereditary or elected executive head of the republic or an archon administering for a brief and fixed period or else he altogether disappeared from the polity of the state. This turn must have come about in many cases by a natural evolution of the power of the assemblies, but in others it seems to have been secured by some kind of revolution and there appear to have been vicissitudes, alternations between periods of monarchical and periods of republican government. Among a certain number of the Indian peoples the republican form finally asserted its hold and proved itself capable of a strong and settled organisation and a long duration lasting over many centuries. In some cases they were governed by a democratic assembly, in more by an oligarchical senate. It is unfortunate that we know little of the details of the constitution and nothing of the inner

history of these Indian republics, but the evidence is clear of the high reputation they enjoyed throughout India for the excellence of their civil and the formidable efficiency of their military organisation. There is an interesting dictum of Buddha that so long as the republican institutions were maintained in their purity and vigour, a small state of this kind would remain invincible even by the arms of the powerful and ambitious Magadhan monarchy, and this opinion is amply confirmed by the political writers who consider the alliance of the republics the most solid and valuable political and military support a king could have and advise their reduction not so much by the force of arms, as that would have a very precarious chance of success, but by Machiavellian means, — similar to those actually employed in Greece by Philip of Macedon, — aimed at undermining their internal unity and the efficiency of their constitution.

These republican states were already long established and in vigorous functioning in the sixth century before Christ, contemporary therefore with the brilliant but ephemeral and troubled Greek city commonwealths, but this form of political liberty in India long outlasted the period of Greek republican freedom. The ancient Indian mind, not less fertile in political invention, must be considered superior to that of the mercurial and restless Mediterranean people in the capacity for a firm organisation and settled constitutional order. Some of these states appear to have enjoyed a longer and a more settled history of vigorous freedom than republican Rome, for they persisted even against the mighty empire of Chandragupta and Asoka and were still in existence in the early centuries of the Christian era. But none of them developed the aggressive spirit and the conquering and widely organising capacity of the Roman republic; they were content to preserve their own free inner life and their independence. India especially after the invasion of Alexander felt the need of a movement of unification and the republics were factors of division: strong for themselves, they could do nothing for the organisation of the peninsula, too vast indeed for any system of confederation of small states to be possible — and indeed in the ancient world that endeavour nowhere succeeded, always it

broke down in the effort of expansion beyond certain narrow limits and could not endure against the movement towards a more centralised government. In India as elsewhere it was the monarchical state that grew and finally held the field replacing all other forms of political organisation. The republican organisation disappeared from her history and is known to us only by the evidence of coins, scattered references and the testimony of Greek observers and of the contemporary political writers and theorists who supported and helped to confirm and develop the monarchical state throughout India.

But Indian monarchy previous to the Mahomedan invasion was not, in spite of a certain sanctity and great authority conceded to the regal position and the personality of the king as the representative of the divine Power and the guardian of the Dharma, in any way a personal despotism or an absolutist autocracy: it had no resemblance to the ancient Persian monarchy or the monarchies of western and central Asia or the Roman imperial government or later European autocracies: it was of an altogether different type from the system of the Pathan or the Mogul emperors. The Indian king exercised supreme administrative and judicial power, was in possession of all the military forces of the kingdom and with his Council alone responsible for peace and war and he had too a general supervision and control over the good order and welfare of the life of the community, but his power was not personal and it was besides hedged in by safeguards against abuse and encroachment and limited by the liberties and powers of other public authorities and interests who were, so to speak, lesser copartners with him in the exercise of sovereignty and administrative legislation and control. He was in fact a limited or constitutional monarch, although the machinery by which the constitution was maintained and the limitation effected differed from the kind familiar in European history; and even the continuance of his rule was far more dependent than that of mediaeval European kings on the continued will and assent of the people.

A greater sovereign than the king was the Dharma, the religious, ethical, social, political, juridic and customary law

organically governing the life of the people. This impersonal authority was considered sacred and eternal in its spirit and the totality of its body, always characteristically the same, the changes organically and spontaneously brought about in its actual form by the evolution of the society being constantly incorporated in it, regional, family and other customs forming a sort of attendant and subordinate body capable of change only from within,—and with the Dharma no secular authority had any right of autocratic interference. The Brahmins themselves were recorders and exponents of the Dharma, not its creators nor authorised to make at will any changes, although it is evident that by an authoritative expression of opinion they could and did favour or oppose this or that tendency to change of principle or detail. The king was only the guardian, executor and servant of the Dharma, charged to see to its observance and to prevent offences, serious irregularities and breaches. He himself was bound the first to obey it and observe the rigorous rule it laid on his personal life and action and on the province, powers and duties of his regal authority and office.

This subjection of the sovereign power to the Dharma was not an ideal theory inoperative in practice; for the rule of the socio-religious law actively conditioned the whole life of the people and was therefore a living reality, and it had in the political field very large practical consequences. It meant first that the king had not the power of direct legislation and was limited to the issue of administrative decrees that had to be in consonance with the religious, social, political, economic constitution of the community,—and even here there were other powers than that of the king who shared with him the right of promulgating and seeing to the execution of administrative decrees independently issued,—neither could he disregard in the general tenor and character and the effective result of his administration the express or tacit will of the people.

The religious liberties of the commons were assured and could not normally be infringed by any secular authority; each religious community, each new or long-standing religion could shape its own way of life and institutions and had its own

authorities or governing bodies exercising in their proper field an entire independence. There was no exclusive State religion and the monarch was not the religious head of the people. Asoka in this respect seems to have attempted an extension of the royal control or influence and similar velleities were occasionally shown on a minor scale by other powerful sovereigns. But Asoka's so-called edicts of this kind had a recommendatory rather than an imperative character, and the sovereign who wished to bring about a change in religious belief or institutions had always, in accordance with the Indian principle of communal freedom and the obligation of a respect for and a previous consultation of the wishes of those concerned, to secure the assent of the recognised authorities or to refer the matter to a consultative assembly for deliberation, as was done in the famous Buddhist councils, or to arrange a discussion between the exponents of the different religions and abide by the issue. The monarch might personally favour a particular sect or creed and his active preference might evidently have a considerable propagandist influence, but at the same time he was bound to respect and support in his public office all the recognised religions of the people with a certain measure of impartiality, a rule that explains the support extended by Buddhist and Brahmin emperors to both the rival religions. At times there were, mainly in the south, instances of petty or violent State persecutions, but these outbreaks were a violation of the Dharma due to momentary passion at a time of acute religious ferment and were always local and of a brief duration. Normally there was no place in the Indian political system for religious oppression and intolerance and a settled State policy of that kind was unthinkable.

The social life of the people was similarly free from autocratic interference. Instances of royal legislation in this province are rare and here too, when it occurred, there had to be a consultation of the will of those concerned, as in the rearrangement or the reconstitution of the caste system by the Sena kings in Bengal after its disorganisation during a long period of Buddhist predominance. Change in the society was brought about not artificially from above but automatically from within and

principally by the freedom allowed to families or particular communities to develop or alter automatically their own rule of life, *ācāra*.

In the sphere of administration the power of the king was similarly hedged in by the standing constitution of the Dharma. His right of taxation was limited in the most important sources of revenue to a fixed percentage as a maximum and in other directions often by the right of the bodies representing the various elements of the community to a voice in the matter and always by the general rule that his right to govern was subject to the satisfaction and good-will of the people. This as we shall see, was not merely a pious wish or opinion of the Brahmin custodians of the Dharma. The king was in person the supreme court and the highest control in the execution of the civil and criminal law, but here too his role was that of the executor: he was bound to administer the law faithfully as it stood through his judges or with the aid of the Brahmin legists learned in these matters. He had the complete and unfettered control in his Council only of foreign policy, military administration and war and peace and of a great number of directive activities. He was free to make efficient arrangements for all that part of the administration that served to secure and promote the welfare of the community, good order, public morals, and all such matters as could best be supervised or regulated by the sovereign authority. He had a right of patronage and punishment consistent with the law and was expected to exercise it with a strict regard to an effect of general beneficence and promotion of the public welfare.

There could therefore be ordinarily little or no room in the ancient Indian system for autocratic freak or monarchical violence and oppression, much less for the savage cruelty and tyranny of so common an occurrence in the history of some other countries. Nevertheless such happenings were possible by the sovereign's disregard of the Dharma or by a misuse of his power of administrative decree; instances occurred of the kind,—though the worst recorded is that of a tyrant belonging to a foreign dynasty; in other cases any prolonged outbreak of autocratic caprice, violence or injustice seems to have led

before long to an effective protest or revolt on the part of the people. The legists provided for the possibility of oppression. In spite of the sanctity and prestige attaching to the sovereign it was laid down that obedience ceased to be binding if the king ceased to be faithful executor of the Dharma. Incompetence and violation of the obligation to rule to the satisfaction of the people were in theory and effect sufficient causes for his removal. Manu even lays it down that an unjust and oppressive king should be killed by his own subjects like a mad dog, and this justification by the highest authority of the right or even the duty of insurrection and regicide in extreme cases is sufficient to show that absolutism or the unconditional divine right of kings was no part of the intention of the Indian political system. As a matter of fact the right was actually exercised as we find both from history and literature. Another more peaceful and more commonly exercised remedy was a threat of secession or exodus which in most cases was sufficient to bring the delinquent ruler to reason. It is interesting to find the threat of secession employed against an unpopular monarch in the south as late as the seventeenth century, as well as a declaration by a popular assembly denouncing any assistance given to the king as an act of treason. A more common remedy was deposition by the council of ministers or by the public assemblies. The kingship thus constituted proved to be in effect moderate, efficient and beneficent, served well the purposes assigned to it and secured an abiding hold on the affections of the people. The monarchical institution was however only one, an approved and very important, but not, as we see from the existence of the ancient republics, an indispensable element of the Indian socio-political system, and we shall understand nothing of the real principle of the system and its working if we stop short with a view of the regal façade and fail to see what lay behind it. It is there that we shall find the clue to the essential character of the whole construction.

Indian Polity-2

THE TRUE nature of the Indian polity can only be realised if we look at it not as a separate thing, a machinery independent of the rest of the mind and life of the people, but as a part of and in its relation to the organic totality of the social existence.

A people, a great human collectivity, is in fact an organic living being with a collective or rather—for the word collective is too mechanical to be true to the inner reality—a common or communal soul, mind and body. The life of the society like the physical life of the individual human being passes through a cycle of birth, growth, youth, ripeness and decline, and if this last stage goes far enough without any arrest of its course towards decadence, it may perish,—even so all the older peoples and nations except India and China perished,—as a man dies of old age. But the collective being has too the capacity of renewing itself, of a recovery and a new cycle. For in each people there is a soul idea or life idea at work, less mortal than its body, and if this idea is itself sufficiently powerful, large and force-giving and the people sufficiently strong, vital and plastic in mind and temperament to combine stability with a constant enlargement or new application of the power of the soul idea or life idea in its being, it may pass through many such cycles before it comes to a final exhaustion. Moreover, the idea is itself only the principle of soul manifestation of the communal being and each communal soul again a manifestation and vehicle of the greater eternal spirit that expresses itself in Time and on earth is seeking, as it were, its own fullness in humanity through the vicissitudes of the human cycles. A people then which learns to live consciously not solely in its physical and outward life, not even only in that and the power of the life idea or soul idea that governs the changes of its development and is the key to its

psychology and temperament, but in the soul and spirit behind, may not at all exhaust itself, may not end by disappearance or a dissolution or a fusion into others or have to give place to a new race and people, but having itself fused into its life many original smaller societies and attained to its maximum natural growth pass without death through many renascences. And even if at any time it appears to be on the point of absolute exhaustion and dissolution, it may recover by the force of the spirit and begin another and perhaps a more glorious cycle. The history of India has been that of the life of such a people.

The master idea that has governed the life, culture, social ideals of the Indian people has been the seeking of man for his true spiritual self and the use of life—subject to a necessary evolution first of his lower physical, vital and mental nature—as a frame and means for that discovery and for man's ascent from the ignorant natural into the spiritual existence. This dominant idea India has never quite forgotten even under the stress and material exigencies and the externalities of political and social construction. But the difficulty of making the social life an expression of man's true self and some highest realisation of the spirit within him is immensely greater than that which attends a spiritual self-expression through the things of the mind, religion, thought, art, literature, and while in these India reached extraordinary heights and largenesses, she could not in the outward life go beyond certain very partial realisations and very imperfect tentatives,—a general spiritualising symbolism, an infiltration of the greater aspiration, a certain cast given to the communal life, the creation of institutions favourable to the spiritual idea. Politics, society, economics are the natural field of the two first and grosser parts of human aim and conduct recognised in the Indian system, interest and hedonistic desire: Dharma, the higher law, has nowhere been brought more than partially into this outer side of life, and in politics to a very minimum extent; for the effort at governing political action by ethics is usually little more than a pretence. The coordination or true union of the collective outward life with Moksha, the liberated spiritual existence, has hardly even been conceived or

attempted, much less anywhere succeeded in the past history of the yet hardly adult human race. Accordingly, we find that the governance by the Dharma of India's social, economic and even (though here the attempt broke down earlier than in other spheres) her political rule of life, system, turn of existence, with the adumbration of a spiritual significance behind,—the full attainment of the spiritual life being left as a supreme aim to the effort of the individual—was as far as her ancient system could advance. This much endeavour, however, she did make with persistence and patience and it gave a peculiar type to her social polity. It is perhaps for a future India, taking up and enlarging with a more complete aim, a more comprehensive experience, a more certain knowledge that shall reconcile life and the spirit, her ancient mission, to found the status and action of the collective being of man on the realisation of the deeper spiritual truth, the yet unrealised spiritual potentialities of our existence and so ensoul the life of her people as to make it the Lila of the greater Self in humanity, a conscious communal soul and body of Virat, the universal spirit.

Another point must be noted which creates a difference between the ancient polity of India and that of the European peoples and makes the standards of the West as inapplicable here as in the things of the mind and the inner culture. Human society has in its growth to pass through three stages of evolution before it can arrive at the completeness of its possibilities. The first is a condition in which the forms and activities of the communal existence are those of the spontaneous play of the powers and principles of its life. All its growth, all its formations, customs, institutions are then a natural organic development,—the motive and constructive power coming mostly from the subconscious principle of the life within it,—expressing, but without deliberate intention, the communal psychology, temperament, vital and physical need, and persisting or altering partly under the pressure of an internal impulse, partly under that of the environment acting on the communal mind and temper. In this stage the people is not yet intelligently self-conscious in the way of the reason, is not yet a thinking collective being, and it does

not try to govern its whole communal existence by the reasoning will, but lives according to its vital intuitions or their first mental renderings. The early framework of Indian society and polity grew up in such a period as in most ancient and mediaeval communities, but also in the later age of a growing social self-consciousness they were not rejected but only farther shaped, developed, systematised so as to be always, not a construction of politicians, legislators and social and political thinkers, but a strongly stable vital order natural to the mind, instincts and life intuitions of the Indian people.

A second stage of the society is that in which the communal mind becomes more and more intellectually self-conscious, first in its more cultured minds, then more generally, first broadly, then more and more minutely and in all the parts of its life. It learns to review and deal with its own life, communal ideas, needs, institutions in the light of the developed intelligence and finally by the power of the critical and constructive reason. This is a stage which is full of great possibilities but attended too by serious characteristic dangers. Its first advantages are those which go always with the increase of a clear and understanding and finally an exact and scientific knowledge and the culminating stage is the strict and armoured efficiency which the critical and constructive, the scientific reason used to the fullest degree offers as its reward and consequence. Another and greater outcome of this stage of social evolution is the emergence of high and luminous ideals which promise to raise man beyond the limits of the vital being, beyond his first social, economic and political needs and desires and out of their customary moulds and inspire an impulse of bold experiment with the communal life which opens a field of possibility for the realisation of a more and more ideal society. This application of the scientific mind to life with the strict, well-finished, armoured efficiency which is its normal highest result, this pursuit of great consciously proposed social and political ideals and the progress which is the index of the ground covered in the endeavour, have been, with whatever limits and drawbacks, the distinguishing advantages of the political and social effort of Europe.

On the other hand the tendency of the reason when it pretends to deal with the materials of life as its absolute governor, is to look too far away from the reality of the society as a living growth and to treat it as a mechanism which can be manipulated at will and constructed like so much dead wood or iron according to the arbitrary dictates of the intelligence. The sophisticating, labouring, constructing, efficient, mechanising reason loses hold of the simple principles of a people's vitality; it cuts it away from the secret roots of its life. The result is an exaggerated dependence on system and institution, on legislation and administration and the deadly tendency to develop, in place of a living people, a mechanical State. An instrument of the communal life tries to take the place of the life itself and there is created a powerful but mechanical and artificial organisation; but, as the price of this exterior gain, there is lost the truth of life of an organically self-developing communal soul in the body of a free and living people. It is this error of the scientific reason stifling the work of the vital and the spiritual intuition under the dead weight of its mechanical method which is the weakness of Europe and has deceived her aspiration and prevented her from arriving at the true realisation of her own higher ideals.

It is only by reaching a third stage of the evolution of the collective social as of the individual human being that the ideals first seized and cherished by the thought of man can discover their own real source and character and their true means and conditions of effectuation or the perfect society be anything more than a vision on a shining cloud constantly run after in a circle and constantly deceiving the hope and escaping the embrace. That will be when man in the collectivity begins to live more deeply and to govern his collective life neither primarily by the needs, instincts, intuitions welling up out of the vital self, nor secondarily by the constructions of the reasoning mind, but first, foremost and always by the power of unity, sympathy, spontaneous liberty, supple and living order of his discovered greater self and spirit in which the individual and the communal existence have their law of freedom, perfection and oneness. That is a rule that has not yet anywhere found its right conditions

for even beginning its effort, for it can only come when man's attempt to reach and abide by the law of the spiritual existence is no longer an exceptional aim for individuals or else degraded in its more general aspiration to the form of a popular religion, but is recognised and followed out as the imperative need of his being and its true and right attainment the necessity of the next step in the evolution of the race.

The small early Indian communities developed like others through the first stage of a vigorous and spontaneous vitality, finding naturally and freely its own norm and line, casting up form of life and social and political institution out of the vital intuition and temperament of the communal being. As they fused with each other into an increasing cultural and social unity and formed larger and larger political bodies, they developed a common spirit and a common basis and general structure allowing of a great freedom of variation in minor line and figure. There was no need of a rigid uniformity; the common spirit and life impulse were enough to impose on this plasticity a law of general oneness. And even when there grew up the great kingdoms and empires, still the characteristic institutions of the smaller kingdoms, republics, peoples were as much as possible incorporated rather than destroyed or thrown aside in the new cast of the socio-political structure. Whatever could not survive in the natural evolution of the people or was no longer needed, fell away of itself and passed into desuetude: whatever could last by modifying itself to new circumstance and environment, was allowed to survive: whatever was in intimate consonance with the psychical and the vital law of being and temperament of the Indian people became universalised and took its place in the enduring figure of the society and polity.

This spontaneous principle of life was respected by the age of growing intellectual culture. The Indian thinkers on society, economics and politics, Dharma Shastra and Artha Shastra, made it their business not to construct ideals and systems of society and government in the abstract intelligence, but to understand and regulate by the practical reason the institutions and ways of communal living already developed by the communal mind and

life and to develop, fix and harmonise without destroying the original elements, and whatever new element or idea was needed was added or introduced as a superstructure or a modifying but not a revolutionary and destructive principle. It was in this way that the transition from the earlier stages to the fully developed monarchical polity was managed; it proceeded by an incorporation of the existing institutions under the supreme control of the king or the emperor. The character and status of many of them was modified by the superimposition of the monarchical or imperial system, but, as far as possible, they did not pass out of existence. As a result we do not find in India the element of intellectually idealistic political progress or revolutionary experiment which has been so marked a feature of ancient and of modern Europe. A profound respect for the creations of the past as the natural expression of the Indian mind and life, the sound manifestation of its Dharma or right law of being, was the strongest element in the mental attitude and this preservative instinct was not disturbed but rather yet more firmly settled and fixed by the great millennium of high intellectual culture. A slow evolution of custom and institution conservative of the principle of settled order, of social and political precedent, of established framework and structure was the one way of progress possible or admissible. On the other hand, Indian polity never arrived at that unwholesome substitution of the mechanical for the natural order of the life of the people which has been the disease of European civilisation now culminating in the monstrous artificial organisation of the bureaucratic and industrial State. The advantages of the idealising intellect were absent, but so also were the disadvantages of the mechanising rational intelligence.

The Indian mind has always been profoundly intuitive in habit even when it was the most occupied with the development of the reasoning intelligence, and its political and social thought has therefore been always an attempt to combine the intuitions of life and the intuitions of the spirit with the light of the reason acting as an intermediary and an ordering and regulating factor. It has tried to base itself strongly on the established and persistent actualities of life and to depend for its idealism not

on the intellect but on the illuminations, inspirations, higher experiences of the spirit, and it has used the reason as a critical power testing and assuring the steps and aiding but not replacing the life and the spirit—always the true and sound constructors. The spiritual mind of India regarded life as a manifestation of the self: the community was the body of the creator Brahma, the people was a life body of Brahman in the *samasti*, the collectivity, it was the collective Narayana, as the individual was Brahman in the *vyasti*, the separate Jiva, the individual Narayana; the king was the living representative of the Divine and the other orders of the community the natural powers of the collective self, *prakrtayah*. The agreed conventions, institutes, customs, constitution of the body social and politic in all its parts had therefore not only a binding authority but a certain sacrosanct character.

The right order of human life as of the universe is preserved according to the ancient Indian idea by each individual being following faithfully his swadharma, the true law and norm of his nature and the nature of his kind and by the group being, the organic collective life, doing likewise. The family, clan, caste, class, social, religious, industrial or other community, nation, people are all organic group beings that evolve their own dharma and to follow it is the condition of their preservation, healthy continuity, sound action. There is also the dharma of the position, the function, the particular relation with others, as there is too the dharma imposed by the condition, environment, age, *yugadharma*, the universal religious or ethical dharma, and all these acting on the natural dharma, the action according to the Swabhava, create the body of the Law. The ancient theory supposed that in an entirely right and sound condition of man, individual and collective,—a condition typified by the legendary Golden Age, Satya Yuga, Age of Truth,—there is no need of any political government or State or artificial construction of society, because all then live freely according to the truth of their enlightened self and God-inhabited being and therefore spontaneously according to the inner divine Dharma. The self-determining individual and self-determining community living

according to the right and free law of his and its being is therefore the ideal. But in the actual condition of humanity, its ignorant and devious nature subject to perversions and violations of the true individual and the true social dharma, there has to be superimposed on the natural life of society a State, a sovereign power, a king or governing body, whose business is not to interfere unduly with the life of the society, which must be allowed to function for the most part according to its natural law and custom and spontaneous development, but to superintend and assist its right process and see that the Dharma is observed and in vigour and, negatively, to punish and repress and, as far as may be, prevent offences against the Dharma. A more advanced stage of corruption of the Dharma is marked by the necessity of the appearance of the legislator and the formal government of the whole of life by external or written law and code and rule; but to determine it — apart from external administrative detail — was not the function of the political sovereign, who was only its administrator, but of the socio-religious creator, the Rishi, or the Brahminic recorder and interpreter. And the Law itself written or unwritten was always not a thing to be new created or fabricated by a political and legislative authority, but a thing already existent and only to be interpreted and stated as it was or as it grew naturally out of pre-existing law and principle in the communal life and consciousness. The last and worst state of the society growing out of this increasing artificiality and convention must be a period of anarchy and conflict and dissolution of the dharma, — Kali Yuga, — which must precede through a red-grey evening of cataclysm and struggle a recovery and a new self-expression of the spirit in the human being.

The main function of the political sovereign, the king and council and the other ruling members of the body politic, was therefore to serve and assist the maintenance of the sound law of life of the society: the sovereign was the guardian and administrator of the Dharma. The function of society itself included the right satisfaction of the vital, economic and other needs of the human being and of his hedonistic claim to pleasure and enjoyment, but according to their right law and measure

of satisfaction and subject and subordinated to the ethical and social and religious dharma. All the members and groups of the socio-political body had their Dharma determined for them by their nature, their position, their relation to the whole body and must be assured and maintained in the free and right exercise of it, must be left to their own natural and self-determined functioning within their own bounds, but at the same time restrained from any transgression, encroachment or deviation from their right working and true limits. That was the office of the supreme political authority, the sovereign in his Council aided by the public assemblies. It was not the business of the state authority to interfere with or encroach upon the free functioning of the caste, religious community, guild, village, township or the organic custom of the region or province or to abrogate their rights, for these were inherent because necessary to the sound exercise of the social Dharma. All that it was called upon to do was to coordinate, to exercise a general and supreme control, to defend the life of the community against external attack or internal disruption, to repress crime and disorder, to assist, promote and regulate in its larger lines the economic and industrial welfare, to see to the provision of facilities, and to use for these purposes the powers that passed beyond the scope of the others.

Thus in effect the Indian polity was the system of a very complex communal freedom and self-determination, each group unit of the community having its own natural existence and administering its own proper life and business, set off from the rest by a natural demarcation of its field and limits, but connected with the whole by well-understood relations, each a copartner with the others in the powers and duties of the communal existence, executing its own laws and rules, administering within its own proper limits, joining with the others in the discussion and the regulation of matters of a mutual or common interest and represented in some way and to the degree of its importance in the general assemblies of the kingdom or empire. The State, sovereign or supreme political authority was an instrument of coordination and of a general control and efficiency and exercised a supreme but not an absolute authority; for in all its

rights and powers it was limited by the Law and by the will of the people and in all its internal functions only a copartner with the other members of the socio-political body.

This was the theory and principle and the actual constitution of the Indian polity, a complex of communal freedom and self-determination with a supreme coordinating authority, a sovereign person and body, armed with efficient powers, position and prestige, but limited to its proper rights and functions, at once controlling and controlled by the rest, admitting them as its active copartners in all branches, sharing the regulation and administration of the communal existence, and all alike, the sovereign, the people and all its constituent communities, bound to the maintenance and restrained by the yoke of the Dharma. Moreover the economic and political aspects of the communal life were only a part of the Dharma and a part not at all separate but inextricably united with all the rest, the religious, the ethical, the higher cultural aim of the social existence. The ethical law coloured the political and economic and was imposed on every action of the king and his ministers, the council and assemblies, the individual, the constituent groups of the society; ethical and cultural considerations counted in the use of the vote and the qualifications for minister, official and councillor; a high character and training was expected from all who held authority in the affairs of the Aryan people. The religious spirit and the reminders of religion were the head and the background of the whole life of king and people. The life of the society was regarded not so much as an aim in itself in spite of the necessary specialisation of parts of its system, but in all its parts and the whole as a great framework and training ground for the education of the human mind and soul and its development through the natural to the spiritual existence.

Indian Polity – 3

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL evolution of Indian civilisation, as far as one can judge from the available records, passed through four historical stages, first the simple Aryan community, then a long period of transition in which the national life was proceeding through a considerable variety of experimental formations in political structure and synthesis, thirdly, the definite formation of the monarchical state coordinating all the complex elements of the communal life of the people into regional and imperial unities, and last the era of decline in which there was an internal arrest and stagnation and an imposition of new cultures and systems from western Asia and Europe. The distinguishing character of the first three periods is a remarkable solidity and stability in all the formations and a sound and vital and powerful evolution of the life of the people rendered slow and leisurely by this fundamental conservative stability of the system but all the more sure in its building and living and complete in its structure. And even in the decline this solidity opposes a strong resistance to the process of demolition. The structure breaks up at the top under foreign pressure, but preserves for a long time its basis, keeps, wherever it can maintain itself against invasion, much of its characteristic system and is even towards the end capable of attempts at revival of its form and its spirit. And now too though the whole political system has disappeared and its last surviving elements have been ground out of existence, the peculiar social mind and temperament which created it remains even in the present social stagnation, weakness, perversion and disintegration and may yet in spite of immediate tendencies and appearances, once it is free to work again at its own will and after its own manner, proceed not along the Western line of evolution, but to a new creation out of its own spirit which may perhaps lead at the call of the demand now

vaguely beginning to appear in the advanced thought of the race towards the inception of the third stage of communal living and a spiritual basis of human society. In any case the long stability of its constructions and the greatness of the life they sheltered is certainly no sign of incapacity, but rather of a remarkable political instinct and capacity in the cultural mind of India.

The one principle permanent at the base of construction throughout all the building and extension and rebuilding of the Indian polity was the principle of an organically self-determining communal life,—self-determining not only in the mass and by means of the machinery of the vote and a representative body erected on the surface, representative only of the political mind of a part of the nation, which is all that the modern system has been able to manage, but in every pulse of its life and in each separate member of its existence. A free synthetic communal order was its character, and the condition of liberty it aimed at was not so much an individual as a communal freedom. In the beginning the problem was simple enough as only two kinds of communal unit had to be considered, the village and the clan, tribe or small regional people. The free organic life of the first was founded on the system of the self-governing village community and it was done with such sufficiency and solidity that it lasted down almost to our own days resisting all the wear and tear of time and the inroad of other systems and was only recently steam-rollered out of existence by the ruthless and lifeless machinery of the British bureaucratic system. The whole people living in its villages mostly on agriculture formed in the total a single religious, social, military and political body governing itself in its assembly, *samiti*, under the leadership of the king, as yet without any clear separation of functions or class division of labour.

It was the inadequacy of this system for all but the simplest form of agricultural and pastoral life and all but the small people living within a very limited area that compelled the problem of the evolution of a more complex communal system and a modified and more intricate application of the fundamental Indian principle. The agricultural and pastoral life common at first to

all the members of the Aryan community, *kṛṣṭayah*, remained always the large basis, but it developed an increasingly rich superstructure of commerce and industry and numerous arts and crafts and a smaller superstructure of specialised military and political and religious and learned occupations and functions. The village community remained throughout the stable unit, the firm grain or indestructible atom of the social body, but there grew up a group life of tens and hundreds of villages, each under its head and needing its administrative organisation, and these, as the clan grew into a large people by conquest or coalition with others, became constituents of a kingdom or a confederated republican nation, and these again the circles, *mandala*, of larger kingdoms and finally of one or more great empires. The test of the Indian genius for socio-political construction lay in the successful application of its principle of a communal self-determined freedom and order to suit this growing development and new order of circumstances.

The Indian mind evolved, to meet this necessity, the stable socio-religious system of the four orders. Outwardly this might seem to be only a more rigid form of the familiar social system developed naturally in most human peoples at one time or another, a priesthood, a military and political aristocracy, a class of artisans and free agriculturalists and traders and a proletariat of serfs or labourers. The resemblance however is only in the externals and the spirit of the system of Chaturvarna was different in India. In the later Vedic and the epic times the fourfold order was at once and inextricably the religious, social, political and economic framework of the society and within that framework each order had its natural portion and in none of the fundamental activities was the share or position of any of them exclusive. This characteristic is vital to an understanding of the ancient system, but has been obscured by false notions formed from a misunderstanding or an exaggeration of later phenomena and of conditions mostly belonging to the decline. The Brahmins, for example, had not a monopoly either of sacred learning or of the highest spiritual knowledge and opportunities. At first we see a kind of competition between the Brahmins and

the Kshatriyas for the spiritual lead and the latter for a long time held their own against the pretensions of the learned and sacerdotal order. The Brahmins, however, as logists, teachers, priests, men who could give their whole time and energy to philosophy, scholarship, the study of the sacred writings, prevailed in the end and secured a settled and imposing predominance. The priestly and learned class became the religious authorities, the custodians of the sacred books and the tradition, the interpreters of the law and Shastra, the recognised teachers in all the departments of knowledge, the ordinary religious preceptors or gurus of the other classes and supplied the bulk, though never the totality of the philosophers, thinkers, literary men, scholars. The study of the Vedas and Upanishads passed mainly into their hands, although always open to the three higher orders; it was denied in theory to the Shudras. As a matter of fact, however, a series of religious movements kept up even in the later days the essential element of the old freedom, brought the highest spiritual knowledge and opportunity to all doors and, as in the beginning we find the Vedic and Vedantic Rishis born from all classes, we find too up to the end the yogins, saints, spiritual thinkers, innovators and restorers, religious poets and singers, the fountain-heads of a living spirituality and knowledge as distinguished from traditional authority and lore, derived from all the strata of the community down to the lowest Shudras and even the despised and oppressed outcastes.

The four orders grew into a fixed social hierarchy, but, leaving aside the status of the outcastes, each had attached to it a spiritual life and utility, a certain social dignity, an education, a principle of social and ethical honour and a place and duty and right in the communal body. The system served again as an automatic means of securing a fixed division of labour and a settled economic status, the hereditary principle at first prevailing, although here even the theory was more rigid than the practice, but none was denied the right or opportunity of amassing wealth and making some figure in society, administration and politics by means of influence or status in his own order. For, finally, the social hierarchy was not at the same time a political hierarchy:

all the four orders had their part in the common political rights of the citizen and in the assemblies and administrative bodies their place and their share of influence. It may be noted too that in law and theory at least women in ancient India, contrary to the sentiment of other ancient peoples, were not denied civic rights, although in practice this equality was rendered nugatory for all but a few by their social subordination to the male and their domestic preoccupation; instances have yet survived in the existing records of women figuring, not only as queens and administrators and even in the battlefield, a common enough incident in Indian history, but as elected representatives on civic bodies.

The whole Indian system was founded upon a close participation of all the orders in the common life, each predominating in its own field, the Brahmin in religion, learning and letters, the Kshatriya in war, king-craft and interstate political action, the Vaishya in wealth-getting and productive economical function, but none, not even the Shudra, excluded from his share in the civic life and an effective place and voice in politics, administration, justice. As a consequence the old Indian polity at no time developed, or at least it did not maintain for long, those exclusive forms of class rule that have so long and powerfully marked the political history of other countries. A priestly theocracy, like that of Tibet, or the rule of a landed and military aristocracy that prevailed for centuries in France and England and other European countries or a mercantile oligarchy, as in Carthage and Venice, were forms of government foreign to the Indian spirit. A certain political predominance of the great Kshatriya families at a time of general war and strife and mobile expansion, when the clans and tribes were developing into nations and kingdoms and were still striving with each other for hegemony and overlordship, seems to be indicated in the traditions preserved in the Mahabharata and recurred in a cruder form in the return to the clan nation in mediaeval Rajputana: but in ancient India this was a passing phase and the predominance did not exclude the political and civic influence of men of the other orders or interfere with or exercise any oppressive control over the free

life of the various communal units. The democratic republics of the intermediate times were in all probability polities which endeavoured to preserve in its fullness the old principle of the active participation of the whole body of the people in the assemblies and not democracies of the Greek type; the oligarchical republics were clan governments or were ruled by more limited senates drawn from the dignified elements of the society and this afterwards developed into councils or assemblies representing all the four orders as in the later royal councils and urban bodies. In any case the system finally evolved was a mixed polity in which none of the orders had an undue predominance. Accordingly we do not find in India either that struggle between the patrician and plebeian elements of the community, the oligarchic and the democratic idea, ending in the establishment of an absolute monarchical rule, which characterises the troubled history of Greece and Rome or that cycle of successive forms evolving by a strife of classes,—first a ruling aristocracy, then replacing it by encroachment or revolution the dominance of the moneyed and professional classes, the regime of the bourgeois industrialising the society and governing and exploiting it in the name of the commons or masses and, finally, the present turn towards a rule of the proletariat of Labour,—which we see in later Europe. The Indian mind and temperament less exclusively intellectual and vital, more intuitively synthetic and flexible than that of the occidental peoples arrived, not certainly at any ideal system of society and politics, but at least at a wise and stable synthesis — not a dangerously unstable equilibrium, not a compromise or balance — of all the natural powers and orders, an organic and vital coordination respectful of the free functioning of all the organs of the communal body and therefore ensured, although not against the decadence that overtakes all human systems, at any rate against any organic disturbance or disorder.

The summit of the political structure was occupied by three governing bodies, the King in his ministerial council, the metropolitan assembly and the general assembly of the kingdom. The members of the Council and the ministers were drawn from all orders. The Council included a fixed number

of Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra representatives. The Vaishyas had indeed numerically a great preponderance, but this was a just proportion as it corresponded to their numerical preponderance in the body of the people: for in the early Aryan society the Vaishya order comprised not only the merchants and small traders but the craftsmen and artisans and the agriculturists and formed therefore the bulk of the commons, *viśah*, and the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Shudras, however considerable the position and influence of the two higher orders, were later social growths and were comparatively very inferior in number. It was only after the confusion created by the Buddhist upheaval and the Brahminic reconstitution of the society in the age of cultural decadence that the mass of the cultivators and artisans and small traders sank in the greater part of India to the condition of Shudras with a small Brahmin mass at the top and in between a slight sprinkling of Kshatriyas and of Vaishyas. The Council, representing thus the whole community, was the supreme executive and administrative body and its assent and participation necessary to all the action and decrees of the sovereign in all more important matters of government, finance, policy, throughout the whole range of the communal interests. It was the King, the ministers and the council who aided by a system of boards of administration superintended and controlled all the various departments of the State action. The power of the king undoubtedly tended to grow with time and he was often tempted to act according to his own independent will and initiative; but still, as long as the system was in its vigour, he could not with impunity defy or ignore the opinion and will of the ministers and council. Even, it seems, so powerful and strong-willed a sovereign as the great emperor Asoka was eventually defeated in his conflict with his council and was forced practically to abdicate his power. The ministers in council could and did often proceed to the deposition of a recalcitrant or an incompetent monarch and replace him by another of his family or by a new dynasty and it was in this way that there came about several of the historic changes, as for example the dynastic revolution from the Mauryas to the

Sungas and again the initiation of the Kanwa line of emperors. As a matter of constitutional theory and ordinary practice all the action of the king was in reality that of the king in his council with the aid of his ministers and all his personal action was only valid as depending on their assent and in so far as it was a just and faithful discharge of the functions assigned to him by the Dharma. And as the Council was, as it were, a quintessential power body or action centre taking up into itself in a manageable compass, concentrating and representing in its constitution the four orders, the main elements of the social organism, the king too could only be the active head of this power and not, as in an autocratic regime, himself the State or the owner of the country and the irresponsible personal ruler of a nation of obedient subjects. The obedience owed by the people was due to the Law, the Dharma, and to the edicts of the King in council only as an administrative means for the service and maintenance of the Dharma.

At the same time a small body like the Council subject to the immediate and constant influence of the sovereign and his ministers might, if it had been the sole governing body, have degenerated into an instrument of autocratic rule. But there were two other powerful bodies in the State which represented on a larger scale the social organism, were a nearer and closer expression of its mind, life and will independent of the immediate regal influence and exercising large and constant powers of administration and administrative legislation and capable at all times of acting as a check on the royal power, since in case of their displeasure they could either get rid of an unpopular or oppressive king or render his administration impossible until he made submission to the will of the people. These were the great metropolitan and general assemblies sitting separately for the exercise each of its separate powers and together for matters concerning the whole people.¹ The Paura or metropolitan civic

¹ The facts about these bodies — I have selected only those that are significant for my purpose — are taken from the luminous and scrupulously documented contribution of Mr. Jayaswal to the subject.

assembly sat constantly in the capital town of the kingdom or empire—and under the imperial system there seem also to have been similar lesser bodies in the chief towns of the provinces, survivals of the assemblies that governed them when they were themselves capitals of independent kingdoms—and was constituted of representatives of the city guilds and the various caste bodies belonging to all the orders of the society or at least to the three lower orders. The guilds and caste bodies were themselves organic self-governing constituents of the community both in the country and the city and the supreme assembly of the citizens was not an artificial but an organic representation of the collective totality of the whole organism as it existed within the limits of the metropolis. It governed all the life of the city, acting directly or through subordinate lesser assemblies and administrative boards or committees of five, ten or more members, and, both by regulations and decrees which the guilds were bound to obey and by direct administration, controlled and supervised the commercial, industrial, financial and municipal affairs of the civic community. But in addition it was a power that had to be consulted and could take action in the wider affairs of the kingdom, sometimes separately and sometimes in cooperation with the general assembly, and its constant presence and functioning at the capital made it a force that had always to be reckoned with by the king and his ministers and their council. In a case of conflict with the royal ministers or governors even the distant civic parliaments in the provinces could make their displeasure felt if offended in matters of their position or privileges or discontented with the king's administrators and could compel the withdrawal of the offending officer.

The general assembly was similarly an organic representation of the mind and will of the whole country outside the metropolis; for it was composed of the deputies, elective heads or chief men of the townships and villages. A certain plutocratic element seems to have entered into its composition, as it was principally recruited from the wealthier men of the represented communities, and it was therefore something of the nature of an assembly of the commons not of an entirely democratic type,

— although unlike all but the most recent modern parliaments it included Shudras as well as Kshatriyas and Vaishyas,— but still a sufficiently faithful expression of the life and mind of the people. It was not however a supreme parliament: for it had ordinarily no fundamental legislative powers, any more than had the king and council or the metropolitan assembly, but only of decree and regulation. Its business was to serve as a direct instrument of the will of the people in the coordination of the various activities of the life of the nation, to see to the right direction of these and to the securing of the general order and welfare of the commerce, industry, agriculture, social and political life of the nation, to pass decrees and regulations to that purpose and secure privileges and facilities from the king and his council, to give or withhold the assent of the people to the actions of the sovereign and, if need be, to oppose him actively and prevent misgovernment or end it by the means open to the people's representatives. The joint session of the metropolitan and general assemblies was consulted in matters of succession, could depose the sovereign, alter the succession at his death, transfer the throne outside the reigning family, act sometimes as a supreme court of law in cases having a political tincture, cases of treason or of miscarriage of justice. The royal resolutions on any matter of State policy were promulgated to these assemblies and their assent had to be taken in all matters involving special taxation, war, sacrifice, large schemes of irrigation etc., and all questions of vital interest to the country. The two bodies seem to have sat constantly, for matters came up daily from them to the sovereign: their acts were registered by the king and had automatically the effect of law. It is clear indeed from a total review of their rights and activities that they were partners in the sovereignty and its powers were inherent in them and even those could be exercised by them on extraordinary occasions which were not normally within their purview. It is significant that Asoka in his attempt to alter the Dharma of the community, proceeded not merely by his royal decree but by discussion with the Assembly. The ancient description seems therefore to have been thoroughly justified which characterised the two bodies as

executors of the kingdom's activities and at need the instruments of opposition to the king's government.

It is not clear when these great institutions went out of existence, whether before the Mahomedan invasion or as a result of the foreign conquest. Any collapse of the system at the top leaving a gulf between the royal government, which would grow more autocratic by its isolation and in sole control of the larger national affairs, and the other constituents of the socio-political body each carrying on its own internal affairs, as was to the end the case with the village communities, but not in any living relation with the higher State matters, would obviously be, in an organisation of complex communal freedom where coordination of the life was imperatively needed, a great cause of weakness. In any case the invasion from Central Asia, bringing in a tradition of personal and autocratic rule unfamiliar with these restraints would immediately destroy such bodies, or their remnants or survivals wherever they still existed, and this happened throughout the whole of Northern India. The Indian political system was still maintained for many centuries in the south, but the public assemblies which went on existing there do not seem to have been of the same constitution as the ancient political bodies, but were rather some of the other communal organisations and assemblies of which these were a coordination and supreme instrument of control. These inferior assemblies included bodies originally of a political character, once the supreme governing institutions of the clan nation, *kula*, and the republic, *gana*. Under the new dispensation they remained in existence, but lost their supreme powers and could only administer with a subordinate and restricted authority the affairs of their constituent communities. The *kula* or clan family persisted, even after it had lost its political character, as a socio-religious institution, especially among the Kshatriyas, and preserved the tradition of its social and religious law, *kula-dharma*, and in some cases its communal assembly, *kula-sangha*. The public assemblies that we find even in quite recent times filling the role of the old general assembly in Southern India, more than one coexisting and acting separately or in unison, appear to have been variations

on this type of body. In Rajputana also the clan family, *kula*, recovered its political character and action, but in another form and without the ancient institutions and finer cultural temper, although they preserved in a high degree the Kshatriya dharma of courage, chivalry, magnanimity and honour.

A stronger permanent element in the Indian communal system, one that grew up in the frame of the four orders — in the end even replacing it — and acquired an extraordinary vitality, persistence and predominant importance was the historic and still tenacious though decadent institution of caste, *jāti*. Originally this rose from subdivisions of the four orders that grew up in each order under the stress of various forces. The subdivision of the Brahmin castes was mainly due to religious, socio-religious and ceremonial causes, but there were also regional and local divisions: the Kshatriyas remained for the most part one united order, though divided into *kulas*. On the other hand the Vaishya and Shudra orders split up into innumerable castes under the necessity of a subdivision of economic functions on the basis of the hereditary principle. Apart from the increasingly rigid application of the hereditary principle, this settled subdivision of function could well enough have been secured, as in other countries, by a guild system and in the towns we do find a vigorous and efficient guild system in existence. But the guild system afterwards fell into desuetude and the more general institution of caste became the one basis of economic function everywhere. The caste in town and village was a separate communal unit, at once religious, social and economic, and decided its religious, social and other questions, carried on its caste affairs and exercised jurisdiction over its members in a perfect freedom from all outside interference: only on fundamental questions of the Dharma the Brahmins were referred to for an authoritative interpretation or decision as custodians of the Shastra. As with the *kula*, each caste had its caste law and rule of living and conduct, *jāti-dharma*, and its caste communal assembly, *jāti-sangha*. As the Indian polity in all its institutions was founded on a communal and not on an individualistic basis, the caste also counted in the political and administrative functioning of the

kingdom. The guilds equally were self-functioning mercantile and industrial communal units, assembled for the discussion and administration of their affairs and had besides their united assemblies which seem at one time to have been the governing urban bodies. These guild governments, if they may so be called, — for they were more than municipalities, — disappeared afterwards into the more general urban body which represented an organic unity of both the guilds and the caste assemblies of all the orders. The castes as such were not directly represented in the general assembly of the kingdom, but they had their place in the administration of local affairs.

The village community and the township were the most tangibly stable basis of the whole system; but these, it must be noted, were not solely territorial units or a convenient mechanism for electoral, administrative or other useful social and political purposes, but always true communal unities with an organic life of their own that functioned in its own power and not merely as a subordinate part of the machinery of the State. The village community has been described as a little village republic, and the description is hardly an exaggeration: for each village was within its own limits autonomous and self-sufficient, governed by its own elected Panchayats and elected or hereditary officers, satisfying its own needs, providing for its own education, police, tribunals, all its economic necessities and functions, managing itself its own life as an independent and self-governing unit. The villages carried on also their affairs with each other by combinations of various kinds and there were too groups of villages under elected or hereditary heads and forming therefore, though in a less closely organised fashion, a natural body. But the townships in India were also in a hardly less striking way autonomous and self-governing bodies, ruled by their own assembly and committees with an elective system and the use of the vote, managing their own affairs in their own right and sending like the villages their representative men to the general assembly of the kingdom. The administration of these urban governments included all works contributing to the material or other welfare of the citizens, police, judicial cases, public works and the

charge of sacred and public places, registration, the collection of municipal taxes and all matters relating to trade, industry and commerce. If the village community can be described as a little village republic, the constitution of the township can equally be described as a larger urban republic. It is significant that the Naigama and Paura assemblies,—the guild governments and the metropolitan bodies,—had the privilege of striking coins of their own, a power otherwise exercised only by the monarchical heads of States and the republics.

Another kind of community must be noted, those which had no political existence, but were yet each in its own kind a self-governing body; for they illustrate the strong tendency of Indian life to throw itself in all its manifestations into a closely communal form of existence. One example is the joint family, prevalent everywhere in India and only now breaking down under the pressure of modern conditions, of which the two fundamental principles were first a communal holding of the property by the agnates and their families and, as far as possible, an undivided communal life under the management of the head of the family and, secondly, the claim of each male to an equal portion in the share of his father, a portion due to him in case of separation and division of the estate. This communal unity with the persistent separate right of the individual is an example of the synthetic turn of the Indian mind and life, its recognition of fundamental tendencies and its attempt to harmonise them even if they seemed in their norm of practice to be contradictory to each other. It is the same synthetic turn as that which in all parts of the Indian socio-political system tended to fuse together in different ways the theocratic, the monarchic and aristocratic, the plutocratic and the democratic tendencies in a whole which bore the characteristics of none of them nor was yet an accommodation of them or amalgamation whether by a system of checks and balances or by an intellectually constructed synthesis, but rather a natural outward form of the inborn tendencies and character of the complex social mind and temperament.

At the other end, forming the ascetic and purely spiritual extreme of the Indian life-mind, we find the religious community

and, again, this too takes a communal shape. The original Vedic society had no place for any Church or religious community or ecclesiastical order, for in its system the body of the people formed a single socio-religious whole with no separation into religious and secular, layman and cleric, and in spite of later developments the Hindu religion has held, in the whole or at least as the basis, to this principle. On the other hand an increasing ascetic tendency that came in time to distinguish the religious from the mundane life and tended to create the separate religious community, was confirmed by the rise of the creeds and disciplines of the Buddhists and the Jains. The Buddhist monastic order was the first development of the complete figure of the organised religious community. Here we find that Buddha simply applied the known principles of the Indian society and polity to the ascetic life. The order he created was intended to be a *dharma-saṅgha*, and each monastery a religious commune living the life of a united communal body which existed as the expression and was based in all the rules, features, structure of its life on the maintenance of the Dharma as it was understood by the Buddhists. This was, as we can at once see, precisely the principle and theory of the whole Hindu society, but given here the higher intensity possible to the spiritual life and a purely religious body. It managed its affairs too like the Indian social and political communal unities. An assembly of the order discussed debatable questions of the Dharma and its application and proceeded by vote as in the meeting-halls of the republics, but it was subject still to a limiting control intended to avoid the possible evils of a too purely democratic method. The monastic system once thus firmly established was taken over from Buddhism by the orthodox religion, but without its elaborate organisation. These religious communities tended, wherever they could prevail against the older Brahminic system, as in the order created by Shankaracharya, to become a sort of ecclesiastical head to the lay body of the community, but they arrogated to themselves no political position and the struggle between Church and State is absent from the political history of India.

It is clear therefore that the whole life of ancient India retained even in the time of the great kingdoms and empires its first principle and essential working and its social polity remained fundamentally a complex system of self-determined and self-governing communal bodies. The evolution of an organised State authority supervening on this system was necessitated in India as elsewhere partly by the demand of the practical reason for a more stringent and scientifically efficient coordination than was possible except in small areas to the looser natural coordination of life, and more imperatively by the need of a systematised military aggression and defence and international action concentrated in the hands of a single central authority. An extension of the free republican State might have sufficed to meet the former demand, for it had the potentiality and the necessary institutions, but the method of the monarchical State with its more constricted and easily tangible centrality presented a more ready and manageable device and a more facile and apparently efficient machinery. And for the external task, involving almost from the commencement the supremely difficult age-long problem of the political unification of India, then a continent rather than a country, the republican system, more suited to strength in defence than for aggression, proved in spite of its efficient military organisation to be inadequate. It was, therefore, in India as elsewhere, the strong form of the monarchical State that prevailed finally and swallowed up the others. At the same time the fidelity of the Indian mind to its fundamental intuitions and ideals preserved the basis of communal self-government natural to the temperament of the people, prevented the monarchical State from developing into an autocracy or exceeding its proper functions and stood successfully in the way of its mechanising the life of the society. It is only in the long decline that we find the free institutions that stood between the royal government and the self-determining communal life of the people either tending to disappear or else to lose much of their ancient power and vigour and the evils of personal government, of a bureaucracy of scribes and officials and of a too preponderant centralised authority commencing to manifest in some sensible measure.

As long as the ancient traditions of the Indian polity remained and in proportion as they continued to be vital and effective, these evils remained either sporadic and occasional or could not assume any serious proportions. It was the combination of foreign invasion and conquest with the slow decline and final decadence of the ancient Indian culture that brought about the collapse of considerable parts of the old structure and the degradation and disintegration, with no sufficient means for revival or new creation, of the socio-political life of the people.

At the height of its evolution and in the great days of Indian civilisation we find an admirable political system efficient in the highest degree and very perfectly combining communal self-government with stability and order. The State carried on its work administrative, judicial, financial and protective without destroying or encroaching on the rights and free activities of the people and its constituent bodies in the same departments. The royal courts in capital and country were the supreme judicial authority coordinating the administration of justice throughout the kingdom, but they did not unduly interfere with the judicial powers entrusted to their own courts by the village and urban communes and, even, the regal system associated with itself the guild, caste and family courts, working as an ample means of arbitration and only insisted on its own exclusive control of the more serious criminal offences. A similar respect was shown to the administrative and financial powers of the village and urban communes. The king's governors and officials in town and country existed side by side with the civic governors and officials and the communal heads and officers appointed by the people and its assemblies. The State did not interfere with the religious liberty or the established economic and social life of the nation; it confined itself to the maintenance of social order and the provision of a needed supervision, support, coordination and facilities for the rich and powerful functioning of all the national activities. It understood too always and magnificently fulfilled its opportunities as a source of splendid and munificent stimulation to the architecture, art, culture, scholarship, literature already created by the communal mind of India. In the person of the

monarch it was the dignified and powerful head and in the system of his administration the supreme instrument—neither an arbitrary autocracy or bureaucracy, nor a machine oppressing or replacing life—of a great and stable civilisation and a free and living people.

Indian Polity – 4

ARIGHT knowledge of the facts and a right understanding of the character and principle of the Indian socio-political system disposes at once of the contention of occidental critics that the Indian mind, even if remarkable in metaphysics, religion, art and literature was inapt for the organisation of life, inferior in the works of the practical intelligence and, especially, that it was sterile in political experiment and its record empty of sound political construction, thinking and action. On the contrary, Indian civilisation evolved an admirable political system, built solidly and with an enduring soundness, combined with a remarkable skill the monarchical, democratic and other principles and tendencies to which the mind of man has leaned in its efforts of civic construction and escaped at the same time the excess of the mechanising turn which is the defect of the modern European State. I shall consider afterwards the objections that can be made to it from the evolutionary standpoint of the West and its idea of progress.

But there is another side of politics on which it may be said that the Indian political mind has registered nothing but failure. The organisation it developed may have been admirable for stability and effective administration and the securing of communal order and liberties and the well-being of the people under ancient conditions, but even if its many peoples were each of them separately self-governed, well governed and prosperous and the country at large assured in the steady functioning of a highly developed civilisation and culture, yet that organisation failed to serve for the national and political unification of India and failed in the end to secure it against foreign invasion, the disruption of its institutions and an agelong servitude. The political system of a society has to be judged, no doubt first and foremost by the stability, prosperity, internal freedom and order

it ensures to the people, but also it must be judged by the security it erects against other States, its unity and power of defence and aggression against external rivals and enemies. It is not perhaps altogether to the credit of humanity that it should be so and a nation or people that is inferior in this kind of political strength, as were the ancient Greeks and mediaeval Italians, may be spiritually and culturally far superior to its conquerors and may well have contributed more to a true human progress than successful military States, aggressive communities, predatory empires. But the life of man is still predominatingly vital and moved therefore by the tendencies of expansion, possession, aggression, mutual struggle for absorption and dominant survival which are the first law of life, and a collective mind and consciousness that gives a constant proof of incapacity for aggression and defence and does not organise the centralised and efficient unity necessary to its own safety, is clearly one that in the political field falls far short of the first order. India has never been nationally and politically one. India was for close on a thousand years swept by barbaric invasions and for almost another thousand years in servitude to successive foreign masters. It is clear therefore that judgment of political incapacity must be passed against the Indian people.

Here again the first necessity is to get rid of exaggerations, to form a clear idea of the actual facts and their significance and understand the tendencies and principles involved in the problem that admittedly throughout the long history of India escaped a right solution. And first if the greatness of a people and a civilisation is to be reckoned by its military aggressiveness, its scale of foreign conquest, its success in warfare against other nations and the triumph of its organised acquisitive and predatory instincts, its irresistible push towards annexation and exploitation, it must be confessed that India ranks perhaps the lowest in the list of the world's great peoples. At no time does India seem to have been moved towards an aggressive military and political expansion beyond her own borders; no epic of world dominion, no great tale of far-borne invasion or expanding colonial empire has ever been written in the tale of Indian achievement. The sole great

endeavour of expansion, of conquest, of invasion she attempted was the expansion of her culture, the invasion and conquest of the Eastern world by the Buddhistic idea and the penetration of her spirituality, art and thought-forces. And this was an invasion of peace and not of war, for to spread a spiritual civilisation by force and physical conquest, the vaunt or the excuse of modern imperialism, would have been uncongenial to the ancient cast of her mind and temperament and the idea underlying her Dharma. A series of colonising expeditions carried indeed Indian blood and Indian culture to the islands of the archipelago, but the ships that set out from both the eastern and western coast were not fleets of invaders missioned to annex those outlying countries to an Indian empire but of exiles or adventurers carrying with them to yet uncultured peoples Indian religion, architecture, art, poetry, thought, life, manners. The idea of empire and even of world-empire was not absent from the Indian mind, but its world was the Indian world and the object the founding of the imperial unity of its peoples.

This idea, the sense of this necessity, a constant urge towards its realisation is evident throughout the whole course of Indian history from earlier Vedic times through the heroic period represented by the traditions of the Ramayana and Mahabharata and the effort of the imperial Mauryas and Guptas up to the Mogul unification and the last ambition of the Peshwas, until there came the final failure and the levelling of all the conflicting forces under a foreign yoke, a uniform subjection in place of the free unity of a free people. The question then is whether the tardiness, the difficulty, the fluctuating movements of the process and the collapse of the long effort were due to a fundamental incapacity in the civilisation or in the political consciousness and ability of the people or to other forces. A great deal has been said and written about the inability of Indians to unite, the want of a common patriotism — now only being created, it is said, by the influence of Western culture — and the divisions imposed by religion and caste. Admitting even in their full degree the force of these strictures, — all of them are not altogether true or rightly stated or vitally applicable to the matter, — they are only

symptoms and we have still to seek for the deeper causes.

The reply made for the defence is usually that India is practically a continent almost as large as Europe containing a great number of peoples and the difficulties of the problem have been as great or at least almost as considerable. And if then it is no proof of the insufficiency of Western civilisation or of the political incapacity of the European peoples that the idea of European unity should still remain an ineffective phantasm on the ideal plane and to this day impossible to realise in practice, it is not just to apply a different system of values to the much more clear ideal of unity or at least of unification, the persistent attempt at its realisation and the frequent near approach to success that marked the history of the Indian peoples. There is some force in the contention, but it is not in the form entirely apposite, for the analogy is far from perfect and the conditions were not quite of the same order. The peoples of Europe are nations very sharply divided from each other in their collective personality, and their spiritual unity in the Christian religion or even their cultural unity in a common European civilisation, never so real and complete as the ancient spiritual and cultural unity of India, was also not the very centre of their life, not its basis or firm ground of existence, not its supporting earth but only its general air or circumambient atmosphere. Their base of existence lay in the political and economic life which was strongly separate in each country, and it was the very strength of the political consciousness in the Western mind that kept Europe a mass of divided and constantly warring nations. It is only the increasing community of political movements and the now total economic interdependence of the whole of Europe that has at last created not any unity, but a nascent and still ineffective League of Nations struggling vainly to apply the mentality born of an agelong separatism to the common interests of the European peoples. But in India at a very early time the spiritual and cultural unity was made complete and became the very stuff of the life of all this great surge of humanity between the Himalayas and the two seas. The peoples of ancient India were never so much distinct nations sharply divided from each other by a separate political

and economic life as sub-peoples of a great spiritual and cultural nation itself firmly separated, physically, from other countries by the seas and the mountains and from other nations by its strong sense of difference, its peculiar common religion and culture. The creation of a political unity, however vast the area and however many the practical difficulties, ought therefore to have been effected more easily than could possibly be the unity of Europe. The cause of the failure must be sought deeper down and we shall find that it lay in a dissidence between the manner in which the problem was or ought to have been envisaged and the actual turn given to the endeavour and in the latter a contradiction of the peculiar mentality of the people.

The whole basis of the Indian mind is its spiritual and inward turn, its propensity to seek the things of the spirit and the inner being first and foremost and to look at all else as secondary, dependent, to be handled and determined in the light of the higher knowledge and as an expression, a preliminary, field or aid or at least a pendent to the deeper spiritual aim,—a tendency therefore to create whatever it had to create first on the inner plane and afterwards in its other aspects. This mentality and this consequent tendency to create from within outwards being given, it was inevitable that the unity India first created for herself should be the spiritual and cultural oneness. It could not be, to begin with, a political unification effected by an external rule centralised, imposed or constructed, as was done in Rome or ancient Persia, by a conquering kingdom or the genius of a military and organising people. It cannot, I think, justly be said that this was a mistake or a proof of the unpractical turn of the Indian mind and that the single political body should have been created first and afterwards the spiritual unity could have securely grown up in the vast body of an Indian national empire. The problem that presented itself at the beginning was that of a huge area containing more than a hundred kingdoms, clans, peoples, tribes, races, in this respect another Greece, but a Greece on an enormous scale, almost as large as modern Europe. As in Greece a cultural Hellenic unity was necessary to create a fundamental feeling of oneness, here too and much more imperatively

a conscious spiritual and cultural unity of all these peoples was the first, the indispensable condition without which no enduring unity could be possible. The instinct of the Indian mind and of its great Rishis and founders of its culture was sound in this matter. And even if we suppose that an outward imperial unity like that of the Roman world could have been founded among the peoples of early India by military and political means, we must not forget that the Roman unity did not endure, that even the unity of ancient Italy founded by the Roman conquest and organisation did not endure, and it is not likely that a similar attempt in the vast reaches of India without the previous spiritual and cultural basis would have been of an enduring character. It cannot be said either, even if the emphasis on spiritual and cultural unity be pronounced to have been too engrossing or excessive and the insistence on political and external unity too feeble, that the effect of this precedence has been merely disastrous and without any advantage. It is due to this original peculiarity, to this indelible spiritual stamp, to this underlying oneness amidst all diversities that if India is not yet a single organised political nation, she still survives and is still India.

After all the spiritual and cultural is the only enduring unity and it is by a persistent mind and spirit much more than by an enduring physical body and outward organisation that the soul of a people survives. This is a truth the positive Western mind may be unwilling to understand or concede, and yet its proofs are written across the whole story of the ages. The ancient nations, contemporaries of India, and many younger born than she are dead and only their monuments left behind them. Greece and Egypt exist only on the map and in name, for it is not the soul of Hellas or the deeper nation-soul that built Memphis which we now find at Athens or at Cairo. Rome imposed a political and a purely outward cultural unity on the Mediterranean peoples, but their living spiritual and cultural oneness she could not create, and therefore the east broke away from the west, Africa kept no impress of the Roman interlude, and even the western nations still called Latin could offer no living resistance to barbarian invaders and had to be reborn

by the infusion of a foreign vitality to become modern Italy, Spain and France. But India still lives and keeps the continuity of her inner mind and soul and spirit with the India of the ages. Invasion and foreign rule, the Greek, the Parthian and the Hun, the robust vigour of Islam, the levelling steam-roller heaviness of the British occupation and the British system, the enormous pressure of the Occident have not been able to drive or crush the ancient soul out of the body her Vedic Rishis made for her. At every step, under every calamity and attack and domination, she has been able to resist and survive either with an active or a passive resistance. And this she was able to do in her great days by her spiritual solidarity and power of assimilation and reaction, expelling all that would not be absorbed, absorbing all that could not be expelled, and even after the beginning of the decline she was still able to survive by the same force, abated but not slayable, retreating and maintaining for a time her ancient political system in the south, throwing up under the pressure of Islam Rajput and Sikh and Mahratta to defend her ancient self and its idea, persisting passively where she could not resist actively, condemning to decay each empire that could not answer her riddle or make terms with her, awaiting always the day of her revival. And even now it is a similar phenomenon that we see in process before our eyes. And what shall we say then of the surpassing vitality of the civilisation that could accomplish this miracle and of the wisdom of those who built its foundation not on things external but on the spirit and the inner mind and made a spiritual and cultural oneness the root and stock of her existence and not solely its fragile flower, the eternal basis and not the perishable superstructure?

But spiritual unity is a large and flexible thing and does not insist like the political and external on centralisation and uniformity; rather it lives diffused in the system and permits readily a great diversity and freedom of life. Here we touch on the secret of the difficulty in the problem of unifying ancient India. It could not be done by the ordinary means of a centralised uniform imperial State crushing out all that made for free divergence, local autonomies, established communal liberties,

and each time that an attempt was made in this direction, it has failed after however long a term of apparent success, and we might even say that the guardians of India's destiny wisely compelled it to fail that her inner spirit might not perish and her soul barter for an engine of temporary security the deep sources of its life. The ancient mind of India had the intuition of its need; its idea of empire was a uniting rule that respected every existing regional and communal liberty, that unnecessarily crushed out no living autonomy, that effected a synthesis of her life and not a mechanical oneness. Afterwards the conditions under which such a solution might securely have evolved and found its true means and form and basis, disappeared and there was instead an attempt to establish a single administrative empire. That endeavour, dictated by the pressure of an immediate and external necessity, failed to achieve a complete success in spite of its greatness and splendour. It could not do so because it followed a trend that was not eventually compatible with the true turn of the Indian spirit. It has been seen that the underlying principle of the Indian politico-social system was a synthesis of communal autonomies, the autonomy of the village, of the town and capital city, of the caste, guild, family, *kula*, religious community, regional unit. The state or kingdom or confederated republic was a means of holding together and synthetising in a free and living organic system these autonomies. The imperial problem was to synthetise again these states, peoples, nations, effecting their unity but respecting their autonomy, into a larger free and living organism. A system had to be found that would maintain peace and oneness among its members, secure safety against external attack and totalise the free play and evolution, in its unity and diversity, in the uncoerced and active life of all its constituent communal and regional units, of the soul and body of Indian civilisation and culture, the functioning on a grand and total scale of the Dharma.

This was the sense in which the earlier mind of India understood the problem. The administrative empire of later times accepted it only partially, but its trend was, very slowly and almost subconsciously, what the centralising tendency must always be,

if not actively to destroy, still to wear down and weaken the vigour of the subordinated autonomies. The consequence was that whenever the central authority was weak, the persistent principle of regional autonomy essential to the life of India reasserted itself to the detriment of the artificial unity established and not, as it should have done, for the harmonious intensification and freer but still united functioning of the total life. The imperial monarchy tended also to wear down the vigour of the free assemblies, and the result was that the communal units instead of being elements of a united strength became isolated and dividing factors. The village community preserved something of its vigour, but had no living connection with the supreme authority and, losing the larger national sense, was willing to accept any indigenous or foreign rule that respected its own self-sufficient narrow life. The religious communities came to be imbued with the same spirit. The castes, multiplying themselves without any true necessity or true relation to the spiritual or the economic need of the country, became mere sacrosanct conventional divisions, a power for isolation and not, as they originally were, factors of a harmonious functioning of the total life-synthesis. It is not true that the caste divisions were in ancient India an obstacle to the united life of the people or that they were even in later times an active power for political strife and disunion,—except indeed at the end, in the final decline, and especially during the later history of the Mahratta confederation; but they did become a passive force of social division and of a stagnant compartmentalism obstructive to the reconstitution of a free and actively united life.

The evils that attended the system did not all manifest themselves with any power before the Mahomedan invasions, but they must have been already there in their beginning and they increased rapidly under the conditions created by the Pathan and the Mogul empires. These later imperial systems however brilliant and powerful, suffered still more than their predecessors from the evils of centralisation owing to their autocratic character and were constantly breaking down from the same tendency of the regional life of India to assert itself against an artificial

unitarian regime, while, because they had no true, living and free relation with the life of the people, they proved unable to create the common patriotism which would have effectively secured them against the foreign invader. And in the end there has come a mechanical Western rule that has crushed out all the still existing communal or regional autonomies and substituted the dead unity of a machine. But again in the reaction against it we see the same ancient tendencies reviving, the tendency towards a reconstitution of the regional life of the Indian peoples, the demand for a provincial autonomy founded on true subdivisions of race and language, a harking back of the Indian mind to the ideal of the lost village community as a living unit necessary to the natural life of the national body and, not yet reborn but dimly beginning to dawn on the more advanced minds, a truer idea of the communal basis proper to Indian life and the renovation and reconstruction of Indian society and politics on a spiritual foundation.

The failure to achieve Indian unity of which the invasions and the final subjection to the foreigner were the consequence, arose therefore at once from the magnitude and from the peculiarity of the task, because the easy method of a centralised empire could not truly succeed in India, while yet it seemed the only device possible and was attempted again and again with a partial success that seemed for the time and a long time to justify it, but always with an eventual failure. I have suggested that the early mind of India better understood the essential character of the problem. The Vedic Rishis and their successors made it their chief work to found a spiritual basis of Indian life and to effect the spiritual and cultural unity of the many races and peoples of the peninsula. But they were not blind to the necessity of a political unification. Observing the constant tendency of the clan life of the Aryan peoples to consolidate under confederacies and hegemonies of varying proportions, *vairājya*, *sāmrājya*, they saw that to follow this line to its full conclusion was the right way and evolved therefore the ideal of the Chakravarti, a uniting imperial rule, uniting without destroying the autonomy of India's many kingdoms and peoples, from sea to sea. This

ideal they supported, like everything else in Indian life, with a spiritual and religious sanction, set up as its outward symbol the Aswamedha and Rajasuya sacrifices, and made it the dharma of a powerful King, his royal and religious duty, to attempt the fulfilment of the ideal. He was not allowed by the Dharma to destroy the liberties of the peoples who came under his sway nor to dethrone or annihilate their royal houses or replace their archons by his officials and governors. His function was to establish a suzerain power possessed of sufficient military strength to preserve internal peace and to combine at need the full forces of the country. And to this elementary function came to be added the ideal of the fulfilment and maintenance under a strong uniting hand of the Indian dharma, the right functioning of the spiritual, religious, ethical and social culture of India.

The full flowering of the ideal is seen in the great epics. The Mahabharata is the record of a legendary or, it may be, a historic attempt to establish such an empire, a *dharmarājya* or kingdom of the Dharma. There the ideal is pictured as so imperative and widely acknowledged that even the turbulent Shishupala is represented as motivating his submission and attendance at the Rajasuya sacrifice on the ground that Yudhisthira was carrying out an action demanded by the Dharma. And in the Ramayana we have an idealised picture of such a Dharmarajya, a settled universal empire. Here too it is not an autocratic despotism but a universal monarchy supported by a free assembly of the city and provinces and of all the classes that is held up as the ideal, an enlargement of the monarchical state synthetising the communal autonomies of the Indian system and maintaining the law and constitution of the Dharma. The ideal of conquest held up is not a destructive and predatory invasion annihilating the organic freedom and the political and social institutions and exploiting the economic resources of the conquered peoples, but a sacrificial progression bringing with it a trial of military strength of which the result was easily accepted because defeat entailed neither humiliation nor servitude and suffering but merely a strengthening adhesion to a suzerain power concerned only with establishing the visible unity of the nation and the Dharma. The

ideal of the ancient Rishis is clear and their purpose: it is evident that they saw the military and political utility and necessity of a unification of the divided and warring peoples of the land, but they saw also that it ought not to be secured at the expense of the free life of the regional peoples or of the communal liberties and not therefore by a centralised monarchy or a rigidly unitarian imperial State. A hegemony or confederacy under an imperial head would be the nearest Western analogy to the conception they sought to impose on the minds of the people.

There is no historical evidence that this ideal was ever successfully carried into execution, although the epic tradition speaks of several such empires preceding the Dharmarajya of Yudhisthira. At the time of Buddha and later when Chandragupta and Chanakya were building the first historic Indian empire, the country was still covered with free kingdoms and republics and there was no united empire to meet the great raid of Alexander. It is evident that if any hegemony had previously existed, it had failed to discover a means or system of enduring permanence. This might however have evolved if time had been given, but a serious change had meanwhile taken place which made it urgently necessary to find an immediate solution. The historic weakness of the Indian peninsula has always been until modern times its vulnerability through the north-western passes. This weakness did not exist so long as ancient India extended northward far beyond the Indus and the powerful kingdoms of Gandhara and Vahlika presented a firm bulwark against foreign invasion. But they had now gone down before the organised Persian empire and from this time forward the trans-Indus countries, ceasing to be part of India, ceased also to be its protection and became instead the secure base for every successive invader. The inroad of Alexander brought home the magnitude of the danger to the political mind of India and from this time we see poets, writers, political thinkers constantly upholding the imperial ideal or thinking out the means of its realisation. The immediate practical result was the rise of the empire founded with remarkable swiftness by the statesmanship of Chanakya and constantly maintained or restored through

eight or nine centuries, in spite of periods of weakness and incipient disintegration, successively by the Maurya, Sunga, Kanwa, Andhra and Gupta dynasties. The history of this empire, its remarkable organisation, administration, public works, opulence, magnificent culture and the vigour, the brilliance, the splendid fruitfulness of the life of the peninsula under its shelter emerges only from scattered insufficient records, but even so it ranks among the greatest constructed and maintained by the genius of the earth's great peoples. India has no reason, from this point of view, to be anything but proud of her ancient achievement in empire-building or to submit to the hasty verdict that denies to her antique civilisation a strong practical genius or high political virtue.

At the same time this empire suffered by the inevitable haste, violence and artificiality of its first construction to meet a pressing need, because that prevented it from being the deliberate, natural and steady evolution in the old solid Indian manner of the truth of her deepest ideal. The attempt to establish a centralised imperial monarchy brought with it not a free synthesis but a breaking down of regional autonomies. Although according to the Indian principle their institutes and customs were respected and at first even their political institutions not wholly annulled, at any rate in many cases, but brought within the imperial system, these could not really flourish under the shadow of the imperial centralisation. The free peoples of the ancient Indian world began to disappear, their broken materials serving afterwards to create the now existing Indian races. And I think it can be concluded on the whole that although for a long time the great popular assemblies continued to remain in vigour, their function in the end tended to become more mechanical and their vitality to decline and suffer. The urban republics too tended to become more and more mere municipalities of the organised kingdom or empire. The habits of mind created by the imperial centralisation and the weakening or disappearance of the more dignified free popular institutions of the past created a sort of spiritual gap, on one side of which were the administered content with any government that gave them security and

did not interfere too much with their religion, life and customs and on the other the imperial administration beneficent and splendid, no doubt, but no longer that living head of a free and living people contemplated by the earlier and the true political mind of India. These results became prominent and were final only with the decline, but they were there in seed and rendered almost inevitable by the adoption of a mechanical method of unification. The advantages gained were those of a stronger and more coherent military action and a more regularised and uniform administration, but these could not compensate in the end for the impairment of the free organic diversified life which was the true expression of the mind and temperament of the people.

A worse result was a certain fall from the high ideal of the Dharma. In the struggle of kingdom with kingdom for supremacy a habit of Machiavellian statecraft replaced the nobler ethical ideals of the past, aggressive ambition was left without any sufficient spiritual or moral check and there was a coarsening of the national mind in the ethics of politics and government already evidenced in the draconic penal legislation of the Maurya times and in Asoka's sanguinary conquest of Orissa. The deterioration, held in abeyance by a religious spirit and high intelligence, did not come to a head till more than a thousand years afterwards and we only see it in its full force in the worst period of the decline when unrestrained mutual aggression, the unbridled egoism of princes and leaders, a total lack of political principle and capacity for effective union, the want of a common patriotism and the traditional indifference of the common people to a change of rulers gave the whole of the vast peninsula into the grasp of a handful of merchants from across the seas. But however tardy the worst results in their coming and however redeemed and held in check at first by the political greatness of the empire and a splendid intellectual and artistic culture and by frequent spiritual revivals, India had already lost by the time of the later Guptas the chance of a natural and perfect flowering of her true mind and inmost spirit in the political life of her peoples.

Meanwhile the empire served well enough, although not perfectly, the end for which it was created, the saving of Indian soil and Indian civilisation from that immense flood of barbarian unrest which threatened all the ancient stabilised cultures and finally proved too strong for the highly developed Graeco-Roman civilisation and the vast and powerful Roman empire. That unrest throwing great masses of Teutons, Slavs, Huns and Scythians to west and east and south battered at the gates of India for many centuries, effected certain inroads, but, when it sank, left the great edifice of Indian civilisation standing and still firm, great and secure. The irruptions took place whenever the empire grew weak and this seems to have happened whenever the country was left for some time secure. The empire was weakened by the suspension of the need which created it, for then the regional spirit reawoke in separatist movements disintegrating its unity or breaking down its large extension over all the North. A fresh peril brought about the renewal of its strength under a new dynasty, but the phenomenon continued to repeat itself until, the peril ceasing for a considerable time, the empire called into existence to meet it passed away not to revive. It left behind it a certain number of great kingdoms in the east, south and centre and a more confused mass of peoples in the northwest, the weak point at which the Mussulmans broke in and in a brief period rebuilt in the north, but in another, a Central Asiatic type, the ancient empire.

These earlier foreign invasions and their effects have to be seen in their true proportions, which are often disturbed by the exaggerated theories of oriental scholars. The invasion of Alexander was an eastward impulsion of Hellenism that had a work to do in western and central Asia, but no future in India. Immediately ejected by Chandragupta, it left no traces. The entrance of the Graeco-Bactrians which took place during the weakness of the later Mauryas and was annulled by the reviving strength of the empire, was that of a Hellenised people already profoundly influenced by Indian culture. The later Parthian, Hun and Scythian invasions were of a more serious character and for a time seemed dangerous to the integrity of India. In the

end however they affected powerfully only the Punjab, although they threw their waves farther south along the western coast and dynasties of a foreign extraction may have been established for a time far down towards the south. To what degree the racial character of these parts was affected, is far from certain. Oriental scholars and ethnologists have imagined that the Punjab was Scythianised, that the Rajputs are of the same stock and that even farther south the race was changed by the intrusion. These speculations are founded upon scanty or no evidence and are contradicted by other theories, and it is highly doubtful whether the barbarian invaders could have come in such numbers as to produce so considerable a consequence. It is farther rendered improbable by the fact that in one or two or three generations the invaders were entirely Indianised, assumed completely the Indian religion, manners, customs, culture and melted into the mass of the Indian peoples. No such phenomenon took place as in the countries of the Roman empire, of barbarian tribes imposing on a superior civilisation their laws, political system, barbaric customs, alien rule. This is the common significant fact of these irruptions and it must have been due to one or all of three factors. The invaders may have been armies rather than peoples: the occupation was not a continuous external rule which had time to stiffen in its foreign character, for each was followed by a revival of the strength of the Indian empire and its return upon the conquered provinces: and finally the powerfully vital and absorbing character of Indian culture was too strong to allow of any mental resistance to assimilation in the intruders. At any rate if these irruptions were of a very considerable character, Indian civilisation must be considered to have proved itself much more sound, more vital and more solid than the younger Graeco-Roman which went down before the Teuton and the Arab or survived only underneath and in a debased form heavily barbarised, broken and unrecognisable. And the Indian empire too must be pronounced to have proved after all more efficacious than was the Roman with all its vaunt of solidity and greatness, for it succeeded, even if pierced in the west, in preserving the security of the great mass of the peninsula.

It is a later downfall, the Mussulman conquest failing in the hands of the Arabs but successfully reattempted after a long interval, and all that followed it which serves to justify the doubt thrown on the capacity of the Indian peoples. But first let us put aside certain misconceptions which cloud the real issue. This conquest took place at a time when the vitality of ancient Indian life and culture after two thousand years of activity and creation was already exhausted for a time or very near exhaustion and needed a breathing space to rejuvenate itself by transference from the Sanskrit to the popular tongues and the newly forming regional peoples. The conquest was effected rapidly enough in the north, although not entirely complete there for several centuries, but the south long preserved its freedom as of old against the earlier indigenous empire and there was not so long a distance of time between the extinction of the kingdom of Vijayanagara and the rise of the Mahrattas. The Rajputs maintained their independence until the time of Akbar and his successors and it was in the end partly with the aid of Rajput princes acting as their generals and ministers that the Moguls completed their sway over the east and the south. And this was again possible because—a fact too often forgotten—the Mussulman domination ceased very rapidly to be a foreign rule. The vast mass of the Mussulmans in the country were and are Indians by race, only a very small admixture of Pathan, Turkish and Mogul blood took place, and even the foreign kings and nobles became almost immediately wholly Indian in mind, life and interest. If the race had really like certain European countries remained for many centuries passive, acquiescent and impotent under an alien sway, that would indeed have been a proof of a great inherent weakness; but the British is the first really continuous foreign rule that has dominated India. The ancient civilisation underwent indeed an eclipse and decline under the weight of a Central Asiatic religion and culture with which it failed to coalesce, but it survived its pressure, put its impact on it in many directions and remained to our own day alive even in decadence and capable of recovery, thus giving a proof of strength and soundness rare in the history of human cultures.

And in the political field it never ceased to throw up great rulers, statesmen, soldiers, administrators. Its political genius was not in the decadence sufficient, not coherent enough or swift in vision and action, to withstand the Pathan, Mogul and European, but it was strong to survive and await every opportunity of revival, made a bid for empire under Rana Sanga, created the great kingdom of Vijayanagara, held its own for centuries against Islam in the hills of Rajputana, and in its worst days still built and maintained against the whole power of the ablest of the Moguls the kingdom of Shivaji, formed the Mahratta confederacy and the Sikh Khalsa, undermined the great Mogul structure and again made a last attempt at empire. On the brink of the final and almost fatal collapse in the midst of unspeakable darkness, disunion and confusion it could still produce Ranjit Singh and Nana Fadnavis and Madhoji Scindia and oppose the inevitable march of England's destiny. These facts do not diminish the weight of the charge that can be made of an incapacity to see and solve the central problem and answer the one persistent question of Fate, but considered as the phenomena of a decadence they make a sufficiently remarkable record not easily paralleled under similar circumstances and certainly put a different complexion on the total question than the crude statement that India has been always subject and politically incapable.

The real problem introduced by the Mussulman conquest was not that of subjection to a foreign rule and the ability to recover freedom, but the struggle between two civilisations, one ancient and indigenous, the other mediaeval and brought in from outside. That which rendered the problem insoluble was the attachment of each to a powerful religion, the one militant and aggressive, the other spiritually tolerant indeed and flexible, but obstinately faithful in its discipline to its own principle and standing on the defence behind a barrier of social forms. There were two conceivable solutions, the rise of a greater spiritual principle and formation which could reconcile the two or a political patriotism surmounting the religious struggle and uniting the two communities. The first was impossible in that age. Akbar attempted it on the Mussulman side, but his religion

was an intellectual and political rather than a spiritual creation and had never any chance of assent from the strongly religious mind of the two communities. Nanak attempted it from the Hindu side, but his religion, universal in principle, became a sect in practice. Akbar attempted also to create a common political patriotism, but this endeavour too was foredoomed to failure. An autocratic empire built on the Central Asian principle could not create the desired spirit by calling in the administrative ability of the two communities in the person of great men and princes and nobles to a common service in the creation of a united imperial India: the living assent of the people was needed and that remained passive for want of awakening political ideals and institutions. The Mogul empire was a great and magnificent construction and an immense amount of political genius and talent was employed in its creation and maintenance. It was as splendid, powerful and beneficent and, it may be added, in spite of Aurangzeb's fanatical zeal, infinitely more liberal and tolerant in religion than any mediaeval or contemporary European kingdom or empire and India under its rule stood high in military and political strength, economic opulence and the brilliance of its art and culture. But it failed like the empires before it, more disastrously even, and in the same way, crumbling not by external attack but by internal disintegration. A military and administrative centralised empire could not effect India's living political unity. And although a new life seemed about to rise in the regional peoples, the chance was cut short by the intrusion of the European nations and their seizure of the opportunity created by the failure of the Peshwas and the desperate confusion of the succeeding anarchy and decadence.

Two remarkable creations embodied in the period of disintegration the last effort of the Indian political mind to form the foundations of a new life under the old conditions, but neither proved to be of a kind that could solve the problem. The Mahratta revival inspired by Ramdas's conception of the Maharashtra Dharma and cast into shape by Shivaji was an attempt to restore what could still be understood or remembered of the ancient form and spirit, but it failed, as all attempts to

revive the past must fail, in spite of the spiritual impetus and the democratic forces that assisted its inception. The Peshwas for all their genius lacked the vision of the founder and could only establish a military and political confederacy. And their endeavour to found an empire could not succeed because it was inspired by a regional patriotism that failed to enlarge itself beyond its own limits and awaken to the living ideal of a united India. The Sikh Khalsa on the other hand was an astonishingly original and novel creation and its face was turned not to the past but the future. Apart and singular in its theocratic head and democratic soul and structure, its profound spiritual beginning, its first attempt to combine the deepest elements of Islam and Vedanta, it was a premature drive towards an entrance into the third or spiritual stage of human society, but it could not create between the spirit and the external life the transmitting medium of a rich creative thought and culture. And thus hampered and deficient it began and ended within narrow local limits, achieved intensity but no power of expansion. The conditions were not then in existence that could have made possible a successful endeavour.

Afterwards came the night and a temporary end of all political initiative and creation. The lifeless attempt of the last generation to imitate and reproduce with a servile fidelity the ideals and forms of the West has been no true indication of the political mind and genius of the Indian people. But again amid all the mist of confusion there is still the possibility of a new twilight, not of an evening but a morning Yuga-sandhya. India of the ages is not dead nor has she spoken her last creative word; she lives and has still something to do for herself and the human peoples. And that which must seek now to awake is not an anglicised oriental people, docile pupil of the West and doomed to repeat the cycle of the Occident's success and failure, but still the ancient immemorable Shakti recovering her deepest self, lifting her head higher towards the supreme source of light and strength and turning to discover the complete meaning and a vaster form of her Dharma.

Note on the Texts

Note on the Texts

The thirty-two essays that make up this volume were first published in the monthly journal *Arya* between August 1918 and January 1921. Each essay was written immediately before its publication.

The Renaissance in India. Four essays appeared in the *Arya* between August and November 1918 under the title *The Renaissance in India*. In September 1920 they were published under the same title by the Prabartak Publishing House, Chandernagore, after being revised lightly by Sri Aurobindo. The publisher's note to this edition stated: "The subject matter of the book was written in a way of appreciation of Mr. James H. Cousins' book of the same name." Cousins' *Renaissance in India*, a series of articles on contemporary Indian art and other subjects, was published by Ganesh & Co., Madras, with a preface dated June 1918. New editions of Sri Aurobindo's *Renaissance in India* were published in 1927, 1937, 1946, 1951 and 1966. The 1966 edition has been frequently reprinted. In 1971 and 1972 *The Renaissance in India* was published along with *The Foundations of Indian Culture* (see below) as volume 14 of the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library (de luxe and popular editions).

Indian Culture and External Influence. This essay, published in March 1919, was written in answer to a comment in the Bengali journal *Narayan* on Sri Aurobindo's series, *The Renaissance in India*. In 1953 the essay was included in *The Foundations of Indian Culture* as an appendix.

"Is India Civilised?" Three essays appeared in the *Arya* under this title between December 1918 and February 1919. They were written in response to a book by Sir John Woodroffe entitled *Is India Civilized? Essays on Indian Culture* (Madras: Ganesh & Co., foreword dated 4 October 1918). Woodroffe's book was itself a response to a book by

William Archer, *India and the Future* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1917).

A Defence of Indian Culture. In the issue of the *Arya* in which he concluded “*Is India Civilised?*”, Sri Aurobindo began another series dealing in more detail with William Archer’s criticisms of Indian culture, taken to represent a typical Western attitude at that time. Six essays were published under the title “A Rationalistic Critic on Indian Culture” between February and July 1919. In the August 1919 issue of the *Arya* the title “A Defence of Indian Culture” appeared for the first time with this note: “As these articles have extended beyond their original intention, a more suitable title is substituted for the original heading.” The next eighteen articles appeared under the new title. The twenty-four instalments of the series were numbered I-XXIV (actually XXIII due to an error). The series was discontinued with the termination of the *Arya* in January 1921.

Revision of “Is India Civilised?” and A Defence of Indian Culture. Sometime in the 1920s or 1930s Sri Aurobindo revised the three instalments of “*Is India Civilised?*” and the first eight and a half instalments of *A Defence of Indian Culture* (including the six entitled “A Rationalistic Critic on Indian Culture”). When the eight essays on art and polity referred to in the next paragraph were republished in 1947, Sri Aurobindo revised them slightly. He also made a few changes to the essays on literature. The rest of *A Defence of Indian Culture* was not revised.

Separate booklets. In February 1947 the four instalments on Indian art from *A Defence of Indian Culture* were published by Sri Aurobindo Circle, Bombay, under the title *The Significance of Indian Art*. New editions of this booklet were published in 1953 and 1964. In 1947, sometime after February, the four instalments on Indian polity were published by the Arya Publishing House, Calcutta, under the title *The Spirit and Form of Indian Polity*. A new edition of this booklet was brought out in 1966. The publisher’s note to *The Significance of Indian Art*, seen and approved by Sri Aurobindo, is reproduced below in full:

These chapters have been abstracted from Sri Aurobindo’s work left unfinished in the *Arya*,—*A Defence of Indian*

Culture (1918-1921). This was undertaken as a reply to a considerable work by Mr. William Archer criticising and attacking Indian civilisation and culture in all its domains: at that time this critic's views were typical of a very general attitude of the European mind towards the Indian civilisation and its special character, forms and creations and to combat the self-depreciation awakened in the Indian mind by this hostile impact and to explain to it the meaning of its own civilisation and past achievements was the main object of Sri Aurobindo. Since then, there has been a radical change and Mr. Archer's strictures and the answer to them might have been omitted and only the positive part of the work retained in this publication but there is a historical interest in the comparison or contrast drawn and otherwise also it may still have its value. The four chapters have therefore been reprinted in their entirety.

In 1949, a year before Sri Aurobindo's passing, he was asked about the possibility of bringing out the whole of *A Defence of Indian Culture*. At this time, in a statement reproduced in the Publisher's Note to the present volume, he indicated that he did not feel that the book as it then stood was ready for publication.

The Foundations of Indian Culture. In 1953 the three essays of "Is India Civilised?", the twenty-four chapters making up *A Defence of Indian Culture* and, as an appendix, *Indian Culture and External Influence* (but not *The Renaissance in India*) were published by The Sri Aurobindo Library, New York, as *The Foundations of Indian Culture*. This title was provided by the editors of the volume. The editors divided the last eighteen chapters of *A Defence* into four sections for which they provided headings: "Religion and Spirituality", "Indian Art", "Indian Literature", "Indian Polity". The same material identically arranged was published under the same title by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, in 1959. A new edition of this book was brought out in 1968. *The Foundations of Indian Culture* and *The Renaissance in India* were published together in 1971 and 1972 as the de luxe and popular editions of volume 14 of the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library. The SABCL edition of *The Foundations*, without *The Renaissance*,

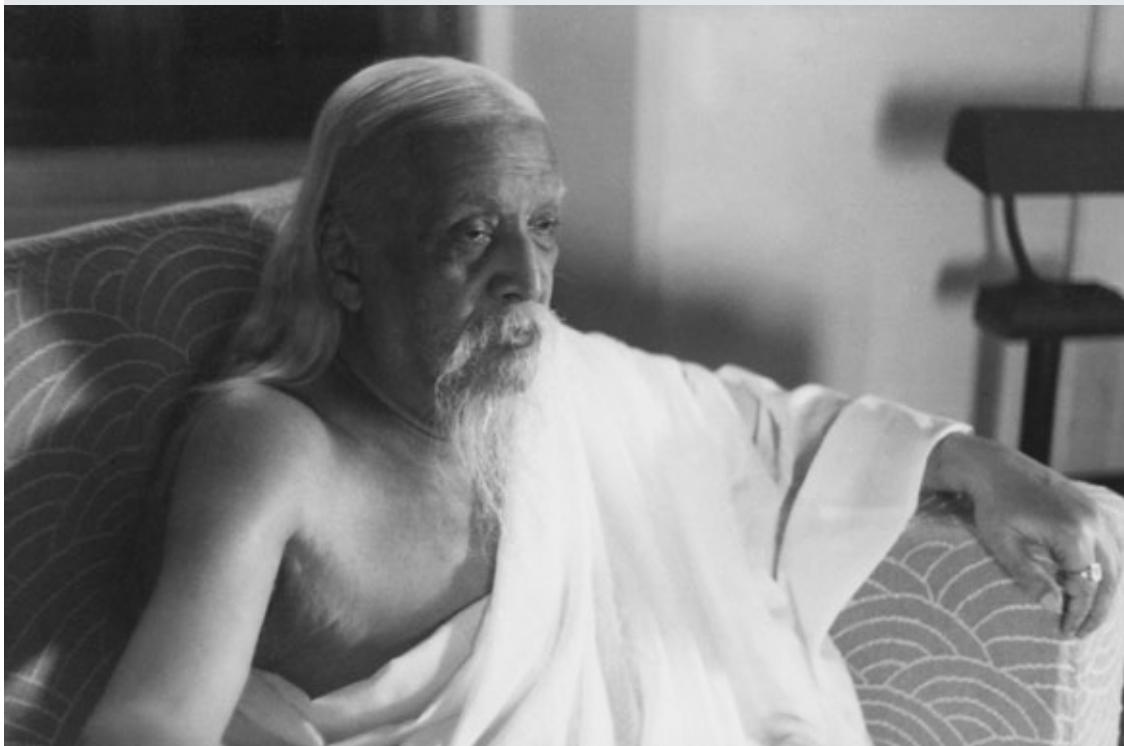
was reprinted in reduced facsimile in 1975 and five more times between 1980 and 1995.

The present edition. This volume contains, under another title and in a different order, the same writings as volume 14 of the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library. The book is now published as *The Renaissance in India with A Defence of Indian Culture*, using the titles Sri Aurobindo himself gave to the two principal sets of essays. *The Renaissance in India* formed the starting-point and was the only series brought out as a book during Sri Aurobindo's lifetime. Its title has been given priority over that of the longer but unfinished series, *A Defence of Indian Culture*. "Is India Civilised?" and *Indian Culture and External Influence* have been put in their appropriate places. With the exception of the last-named piece, the essays appear in the order in which they were published in the *Arya*. The present editors have kept the original sequential numbering of the twenty-four essays of *A Defence of Indian Culture*. In addition they have retained the *Arya* heading "A Rationalistic Critic on Indian Culture" for the first six chapters. They have also used the headings given in 1953 to the four editorial divisions of the remainder of the work, with one change, the replacement of "Religion and Spirituality" by "Indian Spirituality and Life".

The editors have carefully checked the text of each of the essays against the *Arya* text and, where appropriate, the revised versions.

21-22

Sri Aurobindo
The Life Divine



Sri Aurobindo

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The Life Divine

Publisher's Note

The Life Divine first appeared serially in the monthly review *Arya* between August 1914 and January 1919. Each instalment was written immediately before its publication. In 1939 and 1940 Sri Aurobindo revised *The Life Divine* for book publication. The first volume of the revised version, consisting of the first twenty-seven chapters of the *Arya* text, along with a newly written twenty-eighth chapter, was published in November 1939. The revision of all but two of the *Arya* chapters was light. The second volume of the revised version was published in July 1940. The revision of this volume was extensive. Eight *Arya* chapters were discarded and seventeen considerably revised, while twelve new chapters were written. Volume I was reprinted in 1943 and 1947, Volume II in 1944. A one-volume edition was brought out in the United States in 1949. New editions were published in India in 1955, 1970 and 2001, and in the United States in 1990. The editions of 1970 and 1990 were reprinted many times.

The present edition has been checked against all editions published before 1950 and, when necessary, the author's manuscripts.

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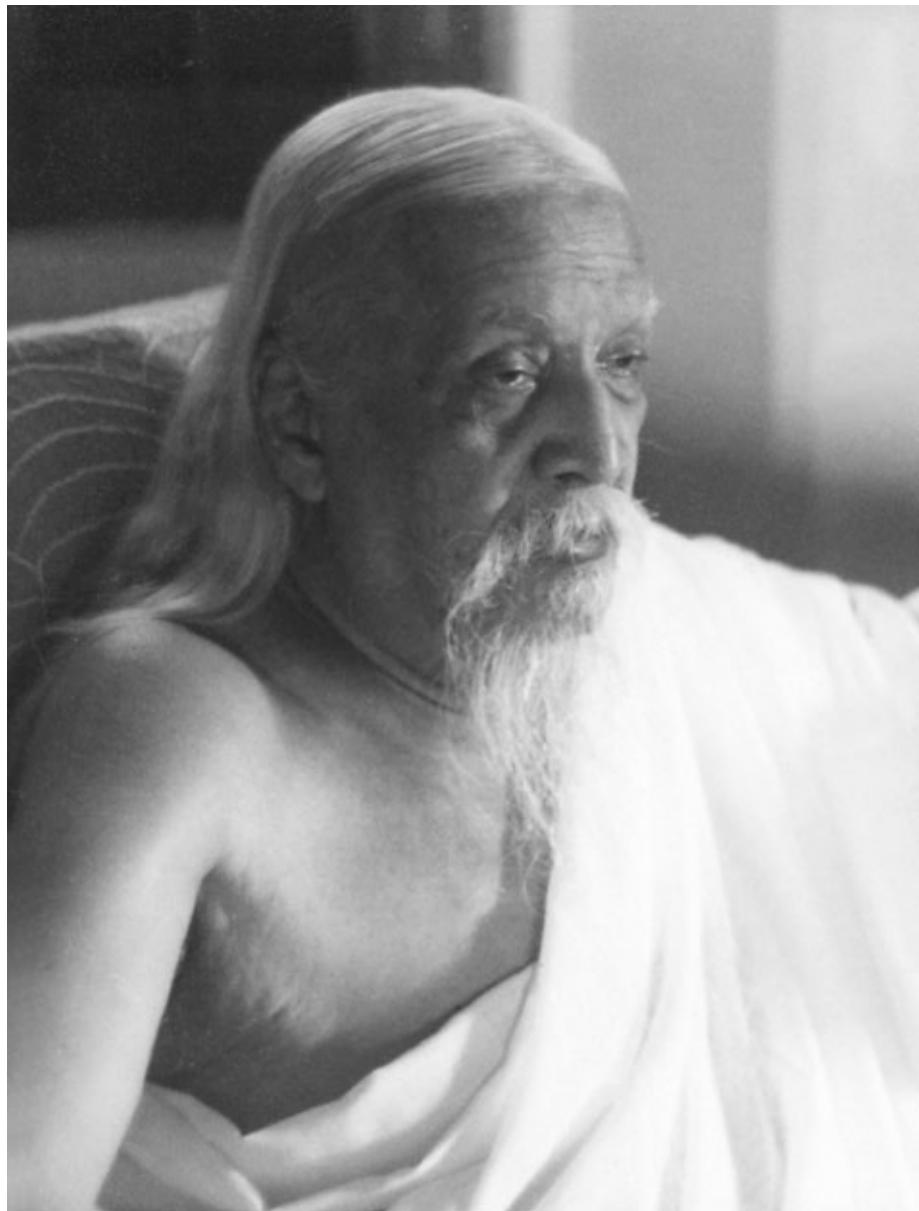
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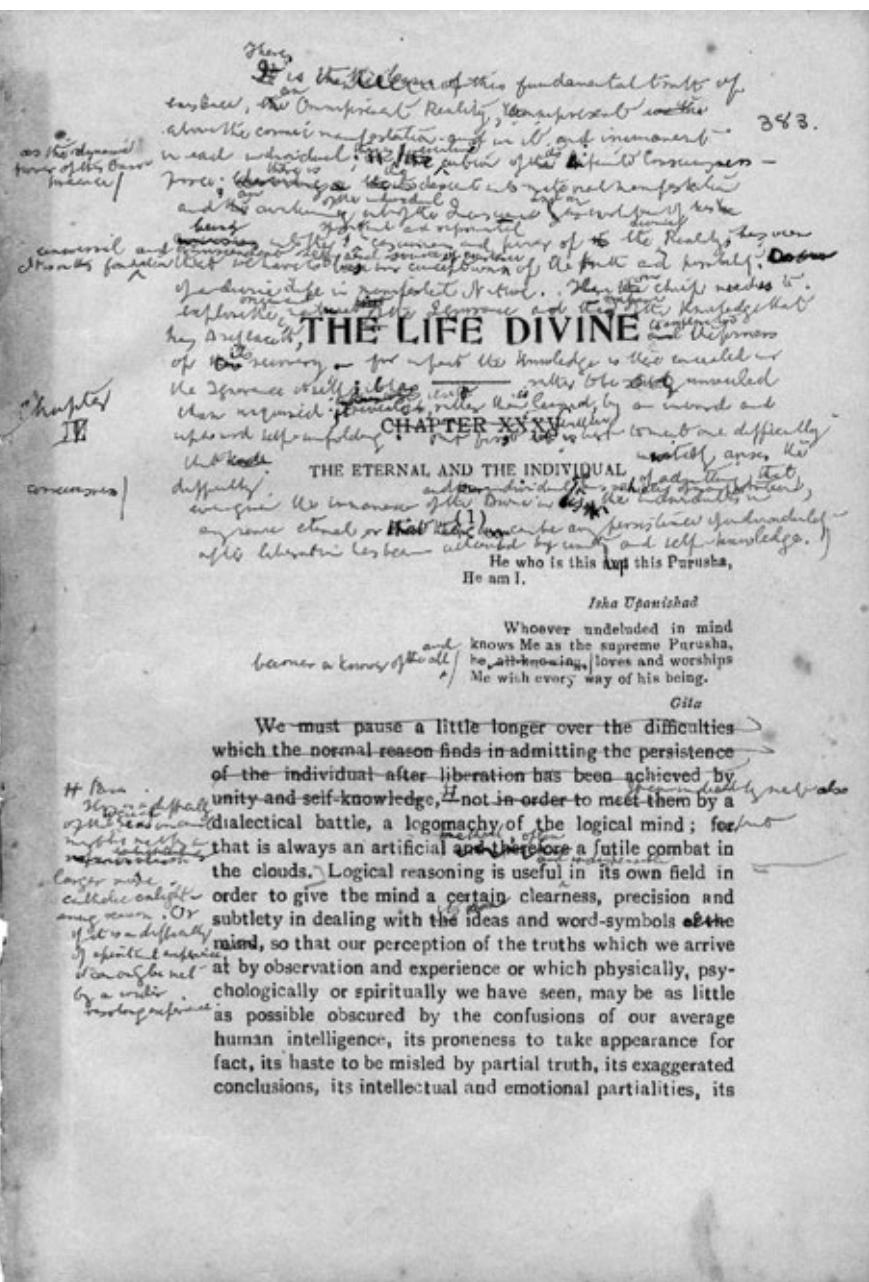
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Sri Aurobindo, 1950



A page of Arya, revised by Sir Aurobindo

Book One
Omnipresent Reality
and the Universe

Chapter I

The Human Aspiration

She follows to the goal of those that are passing on beyond,
she is the first in the eternal succession of the dawns that are
coming,—Usha widens bringing out that which lives, awak-
ening someone who was dead. . . . What is her scope when
she harmonises with the dawns that shone out before and
those that now must shine? She desires the ancient mornings
and fulfils their light; projecting forwards her illumination she
enters into communion with the rest that are to come.

Kutsa Angirasa — Rig Veda.¹

Threefold are those supreme births of this divine force that is
in the world, they are true, they are desirable; he moves there
wide-overt within the Infinite and shines pure, luminous and
fulfilling. . . . That which is immortal in mortals and possessed
of the truth, is a god and established inwardly as an energy
working out in our divine powers. . . . Become high-uplifted,
O Strength, pierce all veils, manifest in us the things of the
Godhead.

Vamadeva — Rig Veda.²

THE EARLIEST preoccupation of man in his awakened thoughts and, as it seems, his inevitable and ultimate preoccupation,—for it survives the longest periods of scepticism and returns after every banishment,—is also the highest which his thought can envisage. It manifests itself in the divination of Godhead, the impulse towards perfection, the search after pure Truth and unmixed Bliss, the sense of a secret immortality. The ancient dawns of human knowledge have left us their witness to this constant aspiration; today we see

¹ I. 113. 8, 10.

² IV. 1. 7; IV. 2. 1; IV. 4. 5.

a humanity satiated but not satisfied by victorious analysis of the externalities of Nature preparing to return to its primeval longings. The earliest formula of Wisdom promises to be its last, — God, Light, Freedom, Immortality.

These persistent ideals of the race are at once the contradiction of its normal experience and the affirmation of higher and deeper experiences which are abnormal to humanity and only to be attained, in their organised entirety, by a revolutionary individual effort or an evolutionary general progression. To know, possess and be the divine being in an animal and egoistic consciousness, to convert our twilit or obscure physical mentality into the plenary supramental illumination, to build peace and a self-existent bliss where there is only a stress of transitory satisfactions besieged by physical pain and emotional suffering, to establish an infinite freedom in a world which presents itself as a group of mechanical necessities, to discover and realise the immortal life in a body subjected to death and constant mutation, — this is offered to us as the manifestation of God in Matter and the goal of Nature in her terrestrial evolution. To the ordinary material intellect which takes its present organisation of consciousness for the limit of its possibilities, the direct contradiction of the unrealised ideals with the realised fact is a final argument against their validity. But if we take a more deliberate view of the world's workings, that direct opposition appears rather as part of Nature's profoundest method and the seal of her completest sanction.

For all problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony. They arise from the perception of an unsolved discord and the instinct of an undiscovered agreement or unity. To rest content with an unsolved discord is possible for the practical and more animal part of man, but impossible for his fully awakened mind, and usually even his practical parts only escape from the general necessity either by shutting out the problem or by accepting a rough, utilitarian and unilluminated compromise. For essentially, all Nature seeks a harmony, life and matter in their own sphere as much as mind in the arrangement of its perceptions. The greater the apparent disorder of the materials offered

or the apparent disparateness, even to irreconcilable opposition, of the elements that have to be utilised, the stronger is the spur, and it drives towards a more subtle and puissant order than can normally be the result of a less difficult endeavour. The accordance of active Life with a material of form in which the condition of activity itself seems to be inertia, is one problem of opposites that Nature has solved and seeks always to solve better with greater complexities; for its perfect solution would be the material immortality of a fully organised mind-supporting animal body. The accordance of conscious mind and conscious will with a form and a life in themselves not overtly self-conscious and capable at best of a mechanical or subconscious will is another problem of opposites in which she has produced astonishing results and aims always at higher marvels; for there her ultimate miracle would be an animal consciousness no longer seeking but possessed of Truth and Light, with the practical omnipotence which would result from the possession of a direct and perfected knowledge. Not only, then, is the upward impulse of man towards the accordance of yet higher opposites rational in itself, but it is the only logical completion of a rule and an effort that seem to be a fundamental method of Nature and the very sense of her universal strivings.

We speak of the evolution of Life in Matter, the evolution of Mind in Matter; but evolution is a word which merely states the phenomenon without explaining it. For there seems to be no reason why Life should evolve out of material elements or Mind out of living form, unless we accept the Vedantic solution that Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life because in essence Matter is a form of veiled Life, Life a form of veiled Consciousness. And then there seems to be little objection to a farther step in the series and the admission that mental consciousness may itself be only a form and a veil of higher states which are beyond Mind. In that case, the unconquerable impulse of man towards God, Light, Bliss, Freedom, Immortality presents itself in its right place in the chain as simply the imperative impulse by which Nature is seeking to evolve beyond Mind, and appears to be as natural, true and just as the impulse towards Life

which she has planted in certain forms of Matter or the impulse towards Mind which she has planted in certain forms of Life. As there, so here, the impulse exists more or less obscurely in her different vessels with an ever-ascending series in the power of its will-to-be; as there, so here, it is gradually evolving and bound fully to evolve the necessary organs and faculties. As the impulse towards Mind ranges from the more sensitive reactions of Life in the metal and the plant up to its full organisation in man, so in man himself there is the same ascending series, the preparation, if nothing more, of a higher and divine life. The animal is a living laboratory in which Nature has, it is said, worked out man. Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious co-operation she wills to work out the superman, the god. Or shall we not say, rather, to manifest God? For if evolution is the progressive manifestation by Nature of that which slept or worked in her, involved, it is also the overt realisation of that which she secretly is. We cannot, then, bid her pause at a given stage of her evolution, nor have we the right to condemn with the religionist as perverse and presumptuous or with the rationalist as a disease or hallucination any intention she may evince or effort she may make to go beyond. If it be true that Spirit is involved in Matter and apparent Nature is secret God, then the manifestation of the divine in himself and the realisation of God within and without are the highest and most legitimate aim possible to man upon earth.

Thus the eternal paradox and eternal truth of a divine life in an animal body, an immortal aspiration or reality inhabiting a mortal tenement, a single and universal consciousness representing itself in limited minds and divided egos, a transcendent, indefinable, timeless and spaceless Being who alone renders time and space and cosmos possible, and in all these the higher truth realisable by the lower term, justify themselves to the deliberate reason as well as to the persistent instinct or intuition of mankind. Attempts are sometimes made to have done finally with questionings which have so often been declared insoluble by logical thought and to persuade men to limit their mental activities to the practical and immediate problems of their

material existence in the universe; but such evasions are never permanent in their effect. Mankind returns from them with a more vehement impulse of inquiry or a more violent hunger for an immediate solution. By that hunger mysticism profits and new religions arise to replace the old that have been destroyed or stripped of significance by a scepticism which itself could not satisfy because, although its business was inquiry, it was unwilling sufficiently to inquire. The attempt to deny or stifle a truth because it is yet obscure in its outward workings and too often represented by obscurantist superstition or a crude faith, is itself a kind of obscurantism. The will to escape from a cosmic necessity because it is arduous, difficult to justify by immediate tangible results, slow in regulating its operations, must turn out eventually to have been no acceptance of the truth of Nature but a revolt against the secret, mightier will of the great Mother. It is better and more rational to accept what she will not allow us as a race to reject and lift it from the sphere of blind instinct, obscure intuition and random aspiration into the light of reason and an instructed and consciously self-guiding will. And if there is any higher light of illumined intuition or self-revealing truth which is now in man either obstructed and inoperative or works with intermittent glancings as if from behind a veil or with occasional displays as of the northern lights in our material skies, then there also we need not fear to aspire. For it is likely that such is the next higher state of consciousness of which Mind is only a form and veil, and through the splendours of that light may lie the path of our progressive self-enlargement into whatever highest state is humanity's ultimate resting-place.

Chapter II

The Two Negations

1

The Materialist Denial

He energised conscious-force (in the austerity of thought) and came to the knowledge that Matter is the Brahman. For from Matter all existences are born; born, by Matter they increase and enter into Matter in their passing hence. Then he went to Varuna, his father, and said, "Lord, teach me of the Brahman." But he said to him: "Energise (again) the conscious-energy in thee; for the Energy is Brahman." *Taittiriya Upanishad.*¹

THE AFFIRMATION of a divine life upon earth and an immortal sense in mortal existence can have no base unless we recognise not only eternal Spirit as the inhabitant of this bodily mansion, the wearer of this mutable robe, but accept Matter of which it is made, as a fit and noble material out of which He weaves constantly His garbs, builds recurrently the unending series of His mansions.

Nor is this, even, enough to guard us against a recoil from life in the body unless, with the Upanishads, perceiving behind their appearances the identity in essence of these two extreme terms of existence, we are able to say in the very language of those ancient writings, "Matter also is Brahman", and to give its full value to the vigorous figure by which the physical universe is described as the external body of the Divine Being. Nor,—so far divided apparently are these two extreme terms,—is that identification convincing to the rational intellect if we refuse to

¹ III. I, 2.

recognise a series of ascending terms (Life, Mind, Supermind and the grades that link Mind to Supermind) between Spirit and Matter. Otherwise the two must appear as irreconcilable opponents bound together in an unhappy wedlock and their divorce the one reasonable solution. To identify them, to represent each in the terms of the other, becomes an artificial creation of Thought opposed to the logic of facts and possible only by an irrational mysticism.

If we assert only pure Spirit and a mechanical unintelligent substance or energy, calling one God or Soul and the other Nature, the inevitable end will be that we shall either deny God or else turn from Nature. For both Thought and Life, a choice then becomes imperative. Thought comes to deny the one as an illusion of the imagination or the other as an illusion of the senses; Life comes to fix on the immaterial and flee from itself in a disgust or a self-forgetting ecstasy, or else to deny its own immortality and take its orientation away from God and towards the animal. Purusha and Prakriti, the passively luminous Soul of the Sankhyas and their mechanically active Energy, have nothing in common, not even their opposite modes of inertia; their antinomies can only be resolved by the cessation of the inertly driven Activity into the immutable Repose upon which it has been casting in vain the sterile procession of its images. Shankara's wordless, inactive Self and his Maya of many names and forms are equally disparate and irreconcilable entities; their rigid antagonism can terminate only by the dissolution of the multitudinous illusion into the sole Truth of an eternal Silence.

The materialist has an easier field; it is possible for him by denying Spirit to arrive at a more readily convincing simplicity of statement, a real Monism, the Monism of Matter or else of Force. But in this rigidity of statement it is impossible for him to persist permanently. He too ends by positing an unknowable as inert, as remote from the known universe as the passive Purusha or the silent Atman. It serves no purpose but to put off by a vague concession the inexorable demands of Thought or to stand as an excuse for refusing to extend the limits of inquiry.

Therefore, in these barren contradictions the human mind

cannot rest satisfied. It must seek always a complete affirmation; it can find it only by a luminous reconciliation. To reach that reconciliation it must traverse the degrees which our inner consciousness imposes on us and, whether by objective method of analysis applied to Life and Mind as to Matter or by subjective synthesis and illumination, arrive at the repose of the ultimate unity without denying the energy of the expressive multiplicity. Only in such a complete and catholic affirmation can all the multiform and apparently contradictory data of existence be harmonised and the manifold conflicting forces which govern our thought and life discover the central Truth which they are here to symbolise and variously fulfil. Then only can our Thought, having attained a true centre, ceasing to wander in circles, work like the Brahman of the Upanishad, fixed and stable even in its play and its worldwide coursing, and our life, knowing its aim, serve it with a serene and settled joy and light as well as with a rhythmically discursive energy.

But when that rhythm has once been disturbed, it is necessary and helpful that man should test separately, in their extreme assertion, each of the two great opposites. It is the mind's natural way of returning more perfectly to the affirmation it has lost. On the road it may attempt to rest in the intervening degrees, reducing all things into the terms of an original Life-Energy or of sensation or of Ideas; but these exclusive solutions have always an air of unreality. They may satisfy for a time the logical reason which deals only with pure ideas, but they cannot satisfy the mind's sense of actuality. For the mind knows that there is something behind itself which is not the Idea; it knows, on the other hand, that there is something within itself which is more than the vital Breath. Either Spirit or Matter can give it for a time some sense of ultimate reality; not so any of the principles that intervene. It must, therefore, go to the two extremes before it can return fruitfully upon the whole. For by its very nature, served by a sense that can perceive with distinctness only the parts of existence and by a speech that, also, can achieve distinctness only when it carefully divides and limits, the intellect is driven, having before it this multiplicity of elemental principles, to seek unity by

reducing all ruthlessly to the terms of one. It attempts practically, in order to assert this one, to get rid of the others. To perceive the real source of their identity without this exclusive process, it must either have overleaped itself or must have completed the circuit only to find that all equally reduce themselves to That which escapes definition or description and is yet not only real but attainable. By whatever road we may travel, That is always the end at which we arrive and we can only escape it by refusing to complete the journey.

It is therefore of good augury that after many experiments and verbal solutions we should now find ourselves standing today in the presence of the two that have alone borne for long the most rigorous tests of experience, the two extremes, and that at the end of the experience both should have come to a result which the universal instinct in mankind, that veiled judge, sentinel and representative of the universal Spirit of Truth, refuses to accept as right or as satisfying. In Europe and in India, respectively, the negation of the materialist and the refusal of the ascetic have sought to assert themselves as the sole truth and to dominate the conception of Life. In India, if the result has been a great heaping up of the treasures of the Spirit,—or of some of them,—it has also been a great bankruptcy of Life; in Europe, the fullness of riches and the triumphant mastery of this world's powers and possessions have progressed towards an equal bankruptcy in the things of the Spirit. Nor has the intellect, which sought the solution of all problems in the one term of Matter, found satisfaction in the answer that it has received.

Therefore the time grows ripe and the tendency of the world moves towards a new and comprehensive affirmation in thought and in inner and outer experience and to its corollary, a new and rich self-fulfilment in an integral human existence for the individual and for the race.

From the difference in the relations of Spirit and Matter to the Unknowable which they both represent, there arises also a difference of effectiveness in the material and the spiritual negations. The denial of the materialist although more insistent and immediately successful, more facile in its appeal to the generality

of mankind, is yet less enduring, less effective finally than the absorbing and perilous refusal of the ascetic. For it carries within itself its own cure. Its most powerful element is the Agnosticism which, admitting the Unknowable behind all manifestation, extends the limits of the unknowable until it comprehends all that is merely unknown. Its premiss is that the physical senses are our sole means of Knowledge and that Reason, therefore, even in its most extended and vigorous flights, cannot escape beyond their domain; it must deal always and solely with the facts which they provide or suggest; and the suggestions themselves must always be kept tied to their origins; we cannot go beyond, we cannot use them as a bridge leading us into a domain where more powerful and less limited faculties come into play and another kind of inquiry has to be instituted.

A premiss so arbitrary pronounces on itself its own sentence of insufficiency. It can only be maintained by ignoring or explaining away all that vast field of evidence and experience which contradicts it, denying or disparaging noble and useful faculties, active consciously or obscurely or at worst latent in all human beings, and refusing to investigate supraphysical phenomena except as manifested in relation to matter and its movements and conceived as a subordinate activity of material forces. As soon as we begin to investigate the operations of mind and of supermind, in themselves and without the prejudgment that is determined from the beginning to see in them only a subordinate term of Matter, we come into contact with a mass of phenomena which escape entirely from the rigid hold, the limiting dogmatism of the materialist formula. And the moment we recognise, as our enlarging experience compels us to recognise, that there are in the universe knowable realities beyond the range of the senses and in man powers and faculties which determine rather than are determined by the material organs through which they hold themselves in touch with the world of the senses,—that outer shell of our true and complete existence,—the premiss of materialistic Agnosticism disappears. We are ready for a large statement and an ever-developing inquiry.

But, first, it is well that we should recognise the enormous,

the indispensable utility of the very brief period of rationalistic Materialism through which humanity has been passing. For that vast field of evidence and experience which now begins to reopen its gates to us, can only be safely entered when the intellect has been severely trained to a clear austerity; seized on by unripe minds, it lends itself to the most perilous distortions and misleading imaginations and actually in the past encrusted a real nucleus of truth with such an accretion of perverting superstitions and irrationalising dogmas that all advance in true knowledge was rendered impossible. It became necessary for a time to make a clean sweep at once of the truth and its disguise in order that the road might be clear for a new departure and a surer advance. The rationalistic tendency of Materialism has done mankind this great service.

For the faculties that transcend the senses, by the very fact of their being immeshed in Matter, missioned to work in a physical body, put in harness to draw one car along with the emotional desires and nervous impulses, are exposed to a mixed functioning in which they are in danger of illuminating confusion rather than clarifying truth. Especially is this mixed functioning dangerous when men with unchastened minds and unpurified sensibilities attempt to rise into the higher domains of spiritual experience. In what regions of unsubstantial cloud and semi-brilliant fog or a murk visited by flashes which blind more than they enlighten, do they not lose themselves by that rash and premature adventure! An adventure necessary indeed in the way in which Nature chooses to effect her advance,—for she amuses herself as she works,—but still, for the Reason, rash and premature.

It is necessary, therefore, that advancing Knowledge should base herself on a clear, pure and disciplined intellect. It is necessary, too, that she should correct her errors sometimes by a return to the restraint of sensible fact, the concrete realities of the physical world. The touch of Earth is always reinvigorating to the son of Earth, even when he seeks a supraphysical Knowledge. It may even be said that the supraphysical can only be really mastered in its fullness — to its heights we can always

reach — when we keep our feet firmly on the physical. “Earth is His footing,”² says the Upanishad whenever it images the Self that manifests in the universe. And it is certainly the fact that the wider we extend and the surer we make our knowledge of the physical world, the wider and surer becomes our foundation for the higher knowledge, even for the highest, even for the Brahavidya.

In emerging, therefore, out of the materialistic period of human Knowledge we must be careful that we do not rashly condemn what we are leaving or throw away even one tittle of its gains, before we can summon perceptions and powers that are well grasped and secure, to occupy their place. Rather we shall observe with respect and wonder the work that Atheism has done for the Divine and admire the services that Agnosticism has rendered in preparing the illimitable increase of knowledge. In our world error is continually the handmaid and pathfinder of Truth; for error is really a half-truth that stumbles because of its limitations; often it is Truth that wears a disguise in order to arrive unobserved near to its goal. Well, if it could always be, as it has been in the great period we are leaving, the faithful handmaid, severe, conscientious, clean-handed, luminous within its limits, a half-truth and not a reckless and presumptuous aberration.

A certain kind of Agnosticism is the final truth of all knowledge. For when we come to the end of whatever path, the universe appears as only a symbol or an appearance of an unknowable Reality which translates itself here into different systems of values, physical values, vital and sensational values, intellectual, ideal and spiritual values. The more That becomes real to us, the more it is seen to be always beyond defining thought and beyond formulating expression. “Mind attains not there, nor speech.”³ And yet as it is possible to exaggerate, with the Illusionists, the unreality of the appearance, so it is possible

² “Padbhyaṁ pṛthivī.” — Mundaka Upanishad, II. 1. 4.

“Pṛthivī pājasyam.” — Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, I. 1. 1.

³ Kena Upanishad, I. 3.

to exaggerate the unknowableness of the Unknowable. When we speak of It as unknowable, we mean, really, that It escapes the grasp of our thought and speech, instruments which proceed always by the sense of difference and express by the way of definition; but if not knowable by thought, It is attainable by a supreme effort of consciousness. There is even a kind of Knowledge which is one with Identity and by which, in a sense, It can be known. Certainly, that Knowledge cannot be reproduced successfully in the terms of thought and speech, but when we have attained to it, the result is a revaluation of That in the symbols of our cosmic consciousness, not only in one but in all the ranges of symbols, which results in a revolution of our internal being and, through the internal, of our external life. Moreover, there is also a kind of Knowledge through which That does reveal itself by all these names and forms of phenomenal existence which to the ordinary intelligence only conceal It. It is this higher but not highest process of Knowledge to which we can attain by passing the limits of the materialistic formula and scrutinising Life, Mind and Supermind in the phenomena that are characteristic of them and not merely in those subordinate movements by which they link themselves to Matter.

The Unknown is not the Unknowable;⁴ it need not remain the unknown for us, unless we choose ignorance or persist in our first limitations. For to all things that are not unknowable, all things in the universe, there correspond in that universe faculties which can take cognisance of them, and in man, the microcosm, these faculties are always existent and at a certain stage capable of development. We may choose not to develop them; where they are partially developed, we may discourage and impose on them a kind of atrophy. But, fundamentally, all possible knowledge is knowledge within the power of humanity. And since in man there is the inalienable impulse of Nature towards self-realisation, no struggle of the intellect to limit the action of our capacities within a determined area can for ever prevail.

⁴ Other is That than the Known; also it is above the Unknown.

— *Kena Upanishad*, I. 3.

When we have proved Matter and realised its secret capacities, the very knowledge which has found its convenience in that temporary limitation, must cry to us, like the Vedic Restrainers, “Forth now and push forward also in other fields.”⁵

If modern Materialism were simply an unintelligent acquiescence in the material life, the advance might be indefinitely delayed. But since its very soul is the search for Knowledge, it will be unable to cry a halt; as it reaches the barriers of sense-knowledge and of the reasoning from sense-knowledge, its very rush will carry it beyond and the rapidity and sureness with which it has embraced the visible universe is only an earnest of the energy and success which we may hope to see repeated in the conquest of what lies beyond, once the stride is taken that crosses the barrier. We see already that advance in its obscure beginnings.

Not only in the one final conception, but in the great line of its general results Knowledge, by whatever path it is followed, tends to become one. Nothing can be more remarkable and suggestive than the extent to which modern Science confirms in the domain of Matter the conceptions and even the very formulae of language which were arrived at, by a very different method, in the Vedanta,—the original Vedanta, not of the schools of metaphysical philosophy, but of the Upanishads. And these, on the other hand, often reveal their full significance, their richer contents only when they are viewed in the new light shed by the discoveries of modern Science,—for instance, that Vedantic expression which describes things in the Cosmos as one seed arranged by the universal Energy in multitudinous forms.⁶ Significant, especially, is the drive of Science towards a Monism which is consistent with multiplicity, towards the Vedic idea of the one essence with its many becomings. Even if the dualistic appearance of Matter and Force be insisted on, it does not really stand in the way of this Monism. For it will be evident that essential Matter is a thing non-existent to the senses and only, like the

⁵ *Rig Veda*, I. 4. 5.

⁶ *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, VI. 12.

Pradhana of the Sankhyas, a conceptual form of substance; and in fact the point is increasingly reached where only an arbitrary distinction in thought divides form of substance from form of energy.

Matter expresses itself eventually as a formulation of some unknown Force. Life, too, that yet unfathomed mystery, begins to reveal itself as an obscure energy of sensibility imprisoned in its material formulation; and when the dividing ignorance is cured which gives us the sense of a gulf between Life and Matter, it is difficult to suppose that Mind, Life and Matter will be found to be anything else than one Energy triply formulated, the triple world of the Vedic seers. Nor will the conception then be able to endure of a brute material Force as the mother of Mind. The Energy that creates the world can be nothing else than a Will, and Will is only consciousness applying itself to a work and a result.

What is that work and result, if not a self-involution of Consciousness in form and a self-evolution out of form so as to actualise some mighty possibility in the universe which it has created? And what is its will in Man if not a will to unending Life, to unbounded Knowledge, to unfettered Power? Science itself begins to dream of the physical conquest of death, expresses an insatiable thirst for knowledge, is working out something like a terrestrial omnipotence for humanity. Space and Time are contracting to the vanishing-point in its works, and it strives in a hundred ways to make man the master of circumstance and so lighten the fetters of causality. The idea of limit, of the impossible begins to grow a little shadowy and it appears instead that whatever man constantly wills, he must in the end be able to do; for the consciousness in the race eventually finds the means. It is not in the individual that this omnipotence expresses itself, but the collective Will of mankind that works out with the individual as a means. And yet when we look more deeply, it is not any conscious Will of the collectivity, but a superconscious Might that uses the individual as a centre and means, the collectivity as a condition and field. What is this but the God in man, the infinite Identity, the multitudinous Unity,

the Omniscient, the Omnipotent, who having made man in His own image, with the ego as a centre of working, with the race, the collective Narayana,⁷ the *viśvamānava*⁸ as the mould and circumscription, seeks to express in them some image of the unity, omniscience, omnipotence which are the self-conception of the Divine? “That which is immortal in mortals is a God and established inwardly as an energy working out in our divine powers.”⁹ It is this vast cosmic impulse which the modern world, without quite knowing its own aim, yet serves in all its activities and labours subconsciously to fulfil.

But there is always a limit and an encumbrance,—the limit of the material field in the Knowledge, the encumbrance of the material machinery in the Power. But here also the latest trend is highly significant of a freer future. As the outposts of scientific Knowledge come more and more to be set on the borders that divide the material from the immaterial, so also the highest achievements of practical Science are those which tend to simplify and reduce to the vanishing-point the machinery by which the greatest effects are produced. Wireless telegraphy is Nature’s exterior sign and pretext for a new orientation. The sensible physical means for the intermediate transmission of the physical force is removed; it is only preserved at the points of impulsion and reception. Eventually even these must disappear; for when the laws and forces of the supraphysical are studied with the right starting-point, the means will infallibly be found for Mind directly to seize on the physical energy and speed it accurately upon its errand. There, once we bring ourselves to recognise it, lie the gates that open upon the enormous vistas of the future.

Yet even if we had full knowledge and control of the worlds immediately above Matter, there would still be a limitation and still a beyond. The last knot of our bondage is at that point where the external draws into oneness with the internal, the

⁷ A name of Vishnu, who, as the God in man, lives constantly associated in a dual unity with Nara, the human being.

⁸ The universal man.

⁹ *Rig Veda*, IV. 2. 1.

machinery of ego itself becomes subtilised to the vanishing-point and the law of our action is at last unity embracing and possessing multiplicity and no longer, as now, multiplicity struggling towards some figure of unity. There is the central throne of cosmic Knowledge looking out on her widest dominion; there the empire of oneself with the empire of one's world;¹⁰ there the life¹¹ in the eternally consummate Being and the realisation of His divine nature¹² in our human existence.

¹⁰ *Svārājya* and *sāmrājya*, the double aim proposed to itself by the positive Yoga of the ancients.

¹¹ *Sālokya-mukti*, liberation by conscious existence in one world of being with the Divine.

¹² *Sādharmya-mukti*, liberation by assumption of the Divine Nature.

Chapter III

The Two Negations

2

The Refusal of the Ascetic

All this is the Brahman; this Self is the Brahman and the Self is fourfold.

Beyond relation, featureless, unthinkable, in which all is still.
Mandukya Upanishad.¹

AND STILL there is a beyond. For on the other side of the cosmic consciousness there is, attainable to us, a consciousness yet more transcendent,—transcendent not only of the ego, but of the Cosmos itself,—against which the universe seems to stand out like a petty picture against an immeasurable background. That supports the universal activity,—or perhaps only tolerates it; It embraces Life with Its vastness,—or else rejects it from Its infinitude.

If the materialist is justified from his point of view in insisting on Matter as reality, the relative world as the sole thing of which we can in some sort be sure and the Beyond as wholly unknowable, if not indeed non-existent, a dream of the mind, an abstraction of Thought divorcing itself from reality, so also is the Sannyasin, enamoured of that Beyond, justified from his point of view in insisting on pure Spirit as the reality, the one thing free from change, birth, death, and the relative as a creation of the mind and the senses, a dream, an abstraction in

¹ Verses 2, 7.

the contrary sense of Mentality withdrawing from the pure and eternal Knowledge.

What justification, of logic or of experience, can be asserted in support of the one extreme which cannot be met by an equally cogent logic and an equally valid experience at the other end? The world of Matter is affirmed by the experience of the physical senses which, because they are themselves unable to perceive anything immaterial or not organised as gross Matter, would persuade us that the suprasensible is the unreal. This vulgar or rustic error of our corporeal organs does not gain in validity by being promoted into the domain of philosophical reasoning. Obviously, their pretension is unfounded. Even in the world of Matter there are existences of which the physical senses are incapable of taking cognisance. Yet the denial of the suprasensible as necessarily an illusion or a hallucination depends on this constant sensuous association of the real with the materially perceptible, which is itself a hallucination. Assuming throughout what it seeks to establish, it has the vice of the argument in a circle and can have no validity for an impartial reasoning.

Not only are there physical realities which are suprasensible, but, if evidence and experience are at all a test of truth, there are also senses which are supraphysical² and can not only take cognisance of the realities of the material world without the aid of the corporeal sense-organs, but can bring us into contact with other realities, supraphysical and belonging to another world— included, that is to say, in an organisation of conscious experiences that are dependent on some other principle than the gross Matter of which our suns and earths seem to be made.

Constantly asserted by human experience and belief since the origins of thought, this truth, now that the necessity of an exclusive preoccupation with the secrets of the material world no longer exists, begins to be justified by new-born forms of scientific research. The increasing evidences, of which only the most obvious and outward are established under the name of

² *Sūkṣma indriyas*, subtle organs, existing in the subtle body (*sūkṣma deha*), and the means of subtle vision and experience (*sūkṣma drṣṭi*).

telepathy with its cognate phenomena, cannot long be resisted except by minds shut up in the brilliant shell of the past, by intellects limited in spite of their acuteness through the limitation of their field of experience and inquiry, or by those who confuse enlightenment and reason with the faithful repetition of the formulas left to us from a bygone century and the jealous conservation of dead or dying intellectual dogmas.

It is true that the glimpse of supraphysical realities acquired by methodical research has been imperfect and is yet ill-affirmed; for the methods used are still crude and defective. But these rediscovered subtle senses have at least been found to be true witnesses to physical facts beyond the range of the corporeal organs. There is no justification, then, for scouting them as false witnesses when they testify to supraphysical facts beyond the domain of the material organisation of consciousness. Like all evidence, like the evidence of the physical senses themselves, their testimony has to be controlled, scrutinised and arranged by the reason, rightly translated and rightly related, and their field, laws and processes determined. But the truth of great ranges of experience whose objects exist in a more subtle substance and are perceived by more subtle instruments than those of gross physical Matter, claims in the end the same validity as the truth of the material universe. The worlds beyond exist: they have their universal rhythm, their grand lines and formations, their self-existent laws and mighty energies, their just and luminous means of knowledge. And here on our physical existence and in our physical body they exercise their influences; here also they organise their means of manifestation and commission their messengers and their witnesses.

But the worlds are only frames for our experience, the senses only instruments of experience and conveniences. Consciousness is the great underlying fact, the universal witness for whom the world is a field, the senses instruments. To that witness the worlds and their objects appeal for their reality and for the one world or the many, for the physical equally with the supraphysical we have no other evidence that they exist. It has been argued that this is no relation peculiar to the constitution

of humanity and its outlook upon an objective world, but the very nature of existence itself; all phenomenal existence consists of an observing consciousness and an active objectivity, and the Action cannot proceed without the Witness because the universe exists only in or for the consciousness that observes and has no independent reality. It has been argued in reply that the material universe enjoys an eternal self-existence: it was here before life and mind made their appearance; it will survive after they have disappeared and no longer trouble with their transient strivings and limited thoughts the eternal and inconscient rhythm of the suns. The difference, so metaphysical in appearance, is yet of the utmost practical import, for it determines the whole outlook of man upon life, the goal that he shall assign for his efforts and the field in which he shall circumscribe his energies. For it raises the question of the reality of cosmic existence and, more important still, the question of the value of human life.

If we push the materialist conclusion far enough, we arrive at an insignificance and unreality in the life of the individual and the race which leaves us, logically, the option between either a feverish effort of the individual to snatch what he may from a transient existence, to "live his life", as it is said, or a dispassionate and objectless service of the race and the individual, knowing well that the latter is a transient fiction of the nervous mentality and the former only a little more long-lived collective form of the same regular nervous spasm of Matter. We work or enjoy under the impulsion of a material energy which deceives us with the brief delusion of life or with the nobler delusion of an ethical aim and a mental consummation. Materialism like spiritual Monism arrives at a Maya that is and yet is not,—is, for it is present and compelling, is not, for it is phenomenal and transitory in its works. At the other end, if we stress too much the unreality of the objective world, we arrive by a different road at similar but still more trenchant conclusions,—the fictitious character of the individual ego, the unreality and purposelessness of human existence, the return into the Non-Being or the relationless Absolute as the sole rational escape from the meaningless tangle of phenomenal life.

And yet the question cannot be solved by logic arguing on the data of our ordinary physical existence; for in those data there is always a hiatus of experience which renders all argument inconclusive. We have, normally, neither any definitive experience of a cosmic mind or supermind not bound up with the life of the individual body, nor, on the other hand, any firm limit of experience which would justify us in supposing that our subjective self really depends upon the physical frame and can neither survive it nor enlarge itself beyond the individual body. Only by an extension of the field of our consciousness or an un hoped-for increase in our instruments of knowledge can the ancient quarrel be decided.

The extension of our consciousness, to be satisfying, must necessarily be an inner enlargement from the individual into the cosmic existence. For the Witness, if he exists, is not the individual embodied mind born in the world, but that cosmic Consciousness embracing the universe and appearing as an immanent Intelligence in all its works to which either world subsists eternally and really as Its own active existence or else from which it is born and into which it disappears by an act of knowledge or by an act of conscious power. Not organised mind, but that which, calm and eternal, broods equally in the living earth and the living human body and to which mind and senses are dispensable instruments, is the Witness of cosmic existence and its Lord.

The possibility of a cosmic consciousness in humanity is coming slowly to be admitted in modern Psychology, like the possibility of more elastic instruments of knowledge, although still classified, even when its value and power are admitted, as a hallucination. In the psychology of the East it has always been recognised as a reality and the aim of our subjective progress. The essence of the passage over to this goal is the exceeding of the limits imposed on us by the ego-sense and at least a partaking, at most an identification with the self-knowledge which broods secret in all life and in all that seems to us inanimate.

Entering into that Consciousness, we may continue to dwell, like It, upon universal existence. Then we become aware,—

for all our terms of consciousness and even our sensational experience begin to change,—of Matter as one existence and of bodies as its formations in which the one existence separates itself physically in the single body from itself in all others and again by physical means establishes communication between these multitudinous points of its being. Mind we experience similarly, and Life also, as the same existence one in its multiplicity, separating and reuniting itself in each domain by means appropriate to that movement. And, if we choose, we can proceed farther and, after passing through many linking stages, become aware of a supermind whose universal operation is the key to all lesser activities. Nor do we become merely conscious of this cosmic existence, but likewise conscious in it, receiving it in sensation, but also entering into it in awareness. In it we live as we lived before in the ego-sense, active, more and more in contact, even unified more and more with other minds, other lives, other bodies than the organism we call ourselves, producing effects not only on our own moral and mental being and on the subjective being of others, but even on the physical world and its events by means nearer to the divine than those possible to our egoistic capacity.

Real then to the man who has had contact with it or lives in it, is this cosmic consciousness, with a greater than the physical reality; real in itself, real in its effects and works. And as it is thus real to the world which is its own total expression, so is the world real to it; but not as an independent existence. For in that higher and less hampered experience we perceive that consciousness and being are not different from each other, but all being is a supreme consciousness, all consciousness is self-existence, eternal in itself, real in its works and neither a dream nor an evolution. The world is real precisely because it exists only in consciousness; for it is a Conscious Energy one with Being that creates it. It is the existence of material form in its own right apart from the self-illuminated energy which assumes the form, that would be a contradiction of the truth of things, a phantasmagoria, a nightmare, an impossible falsehood.

But this conscious Being which is the truth of the infinite

supermind, is more than the universe and lives independently in Its own inexpressible infinity as well as in the cosmic harmonies. World lives by That; That does not live by the world. And as we can enter into the cosmic consciousness and be one with all cosmic existence, so we can enter into the world-transcending consciousness and become superior to all cosmic existence. And then arises the question which first occurred to us, whether this transcendence is necessarily also a rejection. What relation has this universe to the Beyond?

For at the gates of the Transcendent stands that mere and perfect Spirit described in the Upanishads, luminous, pure, sustaining the world but inactive in it, without sinews of energy, without flaw of duality, without scar of division, unique, identical, free from all appearance of relation and of multiplicity, — the pure Self of the Adwaitins,³ the inactive Brahman, the transcendent Silence. And the mind when it passes those gates suddenly, without intermediate transitions, receives a sense of the unreality of the world and the sole reality of the Silence which is one of the most powerful and convincing experiences of which the human mind is capable. Here, in the perception of this pure Self or of the Non-Being behind it, we have the starting-point for a second negation, — parallel at the other pole to the materialistic, but more complete, more final, more perilous in its effects on the individuals or collectivities that hear its potent call to the wilderness, — the refusal of the ascetic.

It is this revolt of Spirit against Matter that for two thousand years, since Buddhism disturbed the balance of the old Aryan world, has dominated increasingly the Indian mind. Not that the sense of the cosmic illusion is the whole of Indian thought; there are other philosophical statements, other religious aspirations. Nor has some attempt at an adjustment between the two terms been wanting even from the most extreme philosophies. But all have lived in the shadow of the great Refusal and the final end of life for all is the garb of the ascetic. The general conception of existence has been permeated with the Buddhistic theory of the

³ The Vedantic Monists.

chain of Karma and with the consequent antinomy of bondage and liberation, bondage by birth, liberation by cessation from birth. Therefore all voices are joined in one great consensus that not in this world of the dualities can there be our kingdom of heaven, but beyond, whether in the joys of the eternal Vrindavan⁴ or the high beatitude of Brahmaloka,⁵ beyond all manifestations in some ineffable Nirvana⁶ or where all separate experience is lost in the featureless unity of the indefinable Existence. And through many centuries a great army of shining witnesses, saints and teachers, names sacred to Indian memory and dominant in Indian imagination, have borne always the same witness and swelled always the same lofty and distant appeal,—renunciation the sole path of knowledge, acceptance of physical life the act of the ignorant, cessation from birth the right use of human birth, the call of the Spirit, the recoil from Matter.

For an age out of sympathy with the ascetic spirit—and throughout all the rest of the world the hour of the Anchorite may seem to have passed or to be passing—it is easy to attribute this great trend to the failing of vital energy in an ancient race tired out by its burden, its once vast share in the common advance, exhausted by its many-sided contribution to the sum of human effort and human knowledge. But we have seen that it corresponds to a truth of existence, a state of conscious realisation which stands at the very summit of our possibility. In practice also the ascetic spirit is an indispensable element in human perfection and even its separate affirmation cannot be avoided so long as the race has not at the other end liberated its intellect and its vital habits from subjection to an always insistent animalism.

We seek indeed a larger and completer affirmation. We perceive that in the Indian ascetic ideal the great Vedantic formula,

⁴ *Goloka*, the Vaishnava heaven of eternal Beauty and Bliss.

⁵ The highest state of pure existence, consciousness and beatitude attainable by the soul without complete extinction in the Indefinable.

⁶ Extinction, not necessarily of all being, but of being as we know it; extinction of ego, desire and egoistic action and mentality.

“One without a second”, has not been read sufficiently in the light of that other formula equally imperative, “All this is the Brahman”. The passionate aspiration of man upward to the Divine has not been sufficiently related to the descending movement of the Divine leaning downward to embrace eternally Its manifestation. Its meaning in Matter has not been so well understood as Its truth in the Spirit. The Reality which the Sannyasin seeks has been grasped in its full height, but not, as by the ancient Vedantins, in its full extent and comprehensiveness. But in our completer affirmation we must not minimise the part of the pure spiritual impulse. As we have seen how greatly Materialism has served the ends of the Divine, so we must acknowledge the still greater service rendered by Asceticism to Life. We shall preserve the truths of material Science and its real utilities in the final harmony, even if many or even if all of its existing forms have to be broken or left aside. An even greater scruple of right preservation must guide us in our dealing with the legacy, however actually diminished or depreciated, of the Aryan past.

Chapter IV

Reality Omnipresent

If one knows Him as Brahman the Non-Being, he becomes merely the non-existent. If one knows that Brahman Is, then is he known as the real in existence. *Taittiriya Upanishad.*¹

SINCE, then, we admit both the claim of the pure Spirit to manifest in us its absolute freedom and the claim of universal Matter to be the mould and condition of our manifestation, we have to find a truth that can entirely reconcile these antagonists and can give to both their due portion in Life and their due justification in Thought, amercing neither of its rights, denying in neither the sovereign truth from which even its errors, even the exclusiveness of its exaggerations draw so constant a strength. For wherever there is an extreme statement that makes such a powerful appeal to the human mind, we may be sure that we are standing in the presence of no mere error, superstition or hallucination, but of some sovereign fact disguised which demands our fealty and will avenge itself if denied or excluded. Herein lies the difficulty of a satisfying solution and the source of that lack of finality which pursues all mere compromises between Spirit and Matter. A compromise is a bargain, a transaction of interests between two conflicting powers; it is not a true reconciliation. True reconciliation proceeds always by a mutual comprehension leading to some sort of intimate oneness. It is therefore through the utmost possible unification of Spirit and Matter that we shall best arrive at their reconciling truth and so at some strongest foundation for a reconciling practice in the inner life of the individual and his outer existence.

We have found already in the cosmic consciousness a

¹ II. 6.

meeting-place where Matter becomes real to Spirit, Spirit becomes real to Matter. For in the cosmic consciousness Mind and Life are intermediaries and no longer, as they seem in the ordinary egoistic mentality, agents of separation, fomenters of an artificial quarrel between the positive and negative principles of the same unknowable Reality. Attaining to the cosmic consciousness Mind, illuminated by a knowledge that perceives at once the truth of Unity and the truth of Multiplicity and seizes on the formulae of their interaction, finds its own discords at once explained and reconciled by the divine Harmony; satisfied, it consents to become the agent of that supreme union between God and Life towards which we tend. Matter reveals itself to the realising thought and to the subtilised senses as the figure and body of Spirit,—Spirit in its self-formative extension. Spirit reveals itself through the same consenting agents as the soul, the truth, the essence of Matter. Both admit and confess each other as divine, real and essentially one. Mind and Life are disclosed in that illumination as at once figures and instruments of the supreme Conscious Being by which It extends and houses Itself in material form and in that form unveils Itself to Its multiple centres of consciousness. Mind attains its self-fulfilment when it becomes a pure mirror of the Truth of Being which expresses itself in the symbols of the universe; Life, when it consciously lends its energies to the perfect self-figuration of the Divine in ever-new forms and activities of the universal existence.

In the light of this conception we can perceive the possibility of a divine life for man in the world which will at once justify Science by disclosing a living sense and intelligible aim for the cosmic and the terrestrial evolution and realise by the transfiguration of the human soul into the divine the great ideal dream of all high religions.

But what then of that silent Self, inactive, pure, self-existent, self-enjoying, which presented itself to us as the abiding justification of the ascetic? Here also harmony and not irreconcilable opposition must be the illuminative truth. The silent and the active Brahman are not different, opposite and irreconcilable entities, the one denying, the other affirming a cosmic illusion;

they are one Brahman in two aspects, positive and negative, and each is necessary to the other. It is out of this Silence that the Word which creates the worlds for ever proceeds; for the Word expresses that which is self-hidden in the Silence. It is an eternal passivity which makes possible the perfect freedom and omnipotence of an eternal divine activity in innumerable cosmic systems. For the becomings of that activity derive their energies and their illimitable potency of variation and harmony from the impartial support of the immutable Being, its consent to this infinite fecundity of its own dynamic Nature.

Man, too, becomes perfect only when he has found within himself that absolute calm and passivity of the Brahman and supports by it with the same divine tolerance and the same divine bliss a free and inexhaustible activity. Those who have thus possessed the Calm within can perceive always welling out from its silence the perennial supply of the energies that work in the universe. It is not, therefore, the truth of the Silence to say that it is in its nature a rejection of the cosmic activity. The apparent incompatibility of the two states is an error of the limited Mind which, accustomed to trenchant oppositions of affirmation and denial and passing suddenly from one pole to the other, is unable to conceive of a comprehensive consciousness vast and strong enough to include both in a simultaneous embrace. The Silence does not reject the world; it sustains it. Or rather it supports with an equal impartiality the activity and the withdrawal from the activity and approves also the reconciliation by which the soul remains free and still even while it lends itself to all action.

But, still, there is the absolute withdrawal, there is the Non-Being. Out of the Non-Being, says the ancient Scripture, Being appeared.² Then into the Non-Being it must surely sink again. If the infinite indiscriminate Existence permits all possibilities of discrimination and multiple realisation, does not the Non-Being at least, as primal state and sole constant reality, negate and reject all possibility of a real universe? The Nihil of certain

² In the beginning all this was the Non-Being. It was thence that Being was born.
— *Taittiriya Upanishad*, II. 7.

Buddhist schools would then be the true ascetic solution; the Self, like the ego, would be only an ideative formation by an illusory phenomenal consciousness.

But again we find that we are being misled by words, deceived by the trenchant oppositions of our limited mentality with its fond reliance on verbal distinctions as if they perfectly represented ultimate truths and its rendering of our supramental experiences in the sense of those intolerant distinctions. Non-Being is only a word. When we examine the fact it represents, we can no longer be sure that absolute non-existence has any better chance than the infinite Self of being more than an ideative formation of the mind. We really mean by this Nothing something beyond the last term to which we can reduce our purest conception and our most abstract or subtle experience of actual being as we know or conceive it while in this universe. This Nothing then is merely a something beyond positive conception. We erect a fiction of nothingness in order to overpass, by the method of total exclusion, all that we can know and consciously are. Actually when we examine closely the Nihil of certain philosophies, we begin to perceive that it is a zero which is All or an indefinable Infinite which appears to the mind a blank, because mind grasps only finite constructions, but is in fact the only true Existence.³

And when we say that out of Non-Being Being appeared, we perceive that we are speaking in terms of Time about that which is beyond Time. For what was that portentous date in the history of eternal Nothing on which Being was born out of it or when will come that other date equally formidable on which an unreal all will relapse into the perpetual void? Sat and Asat, if they have both to be affirmed, must be conceived as if they

³ Another Upanishad rejects the birth of being out of Non-Being as an impossibility; Being, it says, can only be born from Being. But if we take Non-Being in the sense, not of an inexistent Nihil but of an *x* which exceeds our idea or experience of existence,—a sense applicable to the Absolute Brahman of the Adwaita as well as the Void or Zero of the Buddhists,—the impossibility disappears, for That may very well be the source of being, whether by a conceptual or formative Maya or a manifestation or creation out of itself.

obtained simultaneously. They permit each other even though they refuse to mingle. Both, since we must speak in terms of Time, are eternal. And who shall persuade eternal Being that it does not really exist and only eternal Non-Being is? In such a negation of all experience how shall we find the solution that explains all experience?

Pure Being is the affirmation by the Unknowable of Itself as the free base of all cosmic existence. We give the name of Non-Being to a contrary affirmation of Its freedom from all cosmic existence,—freedom, that is to say, from all positive terms of actual existence which consciousness in the universe can formulate to itself, even from the most abstract, even from the most transcendent. It does not deny them as a real expression of Itself, but It denies Its limitation by all expression or any expression whatsoever. The Non-Being permits the Being, even as the Silence permits the Activity. By this simultaneous negation and affirmation, not mutually destructive, but complementary to each other like all contraries, the simultaneous awareness of conscious Self-being as a reality and the Unknowable beyond as the same Reality becomes realisable to the awakened human soul. Thus was it possible for the Buddha to attain the state of Nirvana and yet act puissantly in the world, impersonal in his inner consciousness, in his action the most powerful personality that we know of as having lived and produced results upon earth.

When we ponder on these things, we begin to perceive how feeble in their self-assertive violence and how confusing in their misleading distinctness are the words that we use. We begin also to perceive that the limitations we impose on the Brahman arise from a narrowness of experience in the individual mind which concentrates itself on one aspect of the Unknowable and proceeds forthwith to deny or disparage all the rest. We tend always to translate too rigidly what we can conceive or know of the Absolute into the terms of our own particular relativity. We affirm the One and Identical by passionately discriminating and asserting the egoism of our own opinions and partial experiences against the opinions and partial experiences of others. It is wiser

to wait, to learn, to grow, and, since we are obliged for the sake of our self-perfection to speak of these things which no human speech can express, to search for the widest, the most flexible, the most catholic affirmation possible and found on it the largest and most comprehensive harmony.

We recognise, then, that it is possible for the consciousness in the individual to enter into a state in which relative existence appears to be dissolved and even Self seems to be an inadequate conception. It is possible to pass into a Silence beyond the Silence. But this is not the whole of our ultimate experience, nor the single and all-excluding truth. For we find that this Nirvana, this self-extinction, while it gives an absolute peace and freedom to the soul within is yet consistent in practice with a desireless but effective action without. This possibility of an entire motionless impersonality and void Calm within doing outwardly the works of the eternal verities, Love, Truth and Righteousness, was perhaps the real gist of the Buddha's teaching,— this superiority to ego and to the chain of personal workings and to the identification with mutable form and idea, not the petty ideal of an escape from the trouble and suffering of the physical birth. In any case, as the perfect man would combine in himself the silence and the activity, so also would the completely conscious soul reach back to the absolute freedom of the Non-Being without therefore losing its hold on Existence and the universe. It would thus reproduce in itself perpetually the eternal miracle of the divine Existence, in the universe, yet always beyond it and even, as it were, beyond itself. The opposite experience could only be a concentration of mentality in the individual upon Non-existence with the result of an oblivion and personal withdrawal from a cosmic activity still and always proceeding in the consciousness of the Eternal Being.

Thus, after reconciling Spirit and Matter in the cosmic consciousness, we perceive the reconciliation, in the transcendental consciousness, of the final assertion of all and its negation. We discover that all affirmations are assertions of status or activity in the Unknowable; all the corresponding negations are assertions of Its freedom both from and in that status or activity.

The Unknowable is Something to us supreme, wonderful and ineffable which continually formulates Itself to our consciousness and continually escapes from the formulation It has made. This it does not as some malicious spirit or freakish magician leading us from falsehood to greater falsehood and so to a final negation of all things, but as even here the Wise beyond our wisdom guiding us from reality to ever profounder and vaster reality until we find the profoundest and vastest of which we are capable. An omnipresent reality is the Brahman, not an omnipresent cause of persistent illusions.

If we thus accept a positive basis for our harmony — and on what other can harmony be founded? — the various conceptual formulations of the Unknowable, each of them representing a truth beyond conception, must be understood as far as possible in their relation to each other and in their effect upon life, not separately, not exclusively, not so affirmed as to destroy or unduly diminish all other affirmations. The real Monism, the true Adwaita, is that which admits all things as the one Brahman and does not seek to bisect Its existence into two incompatible entities, an eternal Truth and an eternal Falsehood, Brahman and not-Brahman, Self and not-Self, a real Self and an unreal, yet perpetual Maya. If it be true that the Self alone exists, it must be also true that all is the Self. And if this Self, God or Brahman is no helpless state, no bounded power, no limited personality, but the self-conscious All, there must be some good and inherent reason in it for the manifestation, to discover which we must proceed on the hypothesis of some potency, some wisdom, some truth of being in all that is manifested. The discord and apparent evil of the world must in their sphere be admitted, but not accepted as our conquerors. The deepest instinct of humanity seeks always and seeks wisely wisdom as the last word of the universal manifestation, not an eternal mockery and illusion, — a secret and finally triumphant good, not an all-creative and invincible evil, — an ultimate victory and fulfilment, not the disappointed recoil of the soul from its great adventure.

For we cannot suppose that the sole Entity is compelled by something outside or other than Itself, since no such thing exists.

Nor can we suppose that It submits unwillingly to something partial within Itself which is hostile to its whole Being, denied by It and yet too strong for It; for this would be only to erect in other language the same contradiction of an All and something other than the All. Even if we say that the universe exists merely because the Self in its absolute impartiality tolerates all things alike, viewing with indifference all actualities and all possibilities, yet is there something that wills the manifestation and supports it, and this cannot be something other than the All. Brahman is indivisible in all things and whatever is willed in the world has been ultimately willed by the Brahman. It is only our relative consciousness, alarmed or baffled by the phenomena of evil, ignorance and pain in the cosmos, that seeks to deliver the Brahman from responsibility for Itself and its workings by erecting some opposite principle, Maya or Mara, conscious Devil or self-existent principle of evil. There is one Lord and Self and the many are only His representations and becomings.

If then the world is a dream or an illusion or a mistake, it is a dream originated and willed by the Self in its totality and not only originated and willed, but supported and perpetually entertained. Moreover, it is a dream existing in a Reality and the stuff of which it is made is that Reality, for Brahman must be the material of the world as well as its base and continent. If the gold of which the vessel is made is real, how shall we suppose that the vessel itself is a mirage? We see that these words, dream, illusion, are tricks of speech, habits of our relative consciousness; they represent a certain truth, even a great truth, but they also misrepresent it. Just as Non-Being turns out to be other than mere nullity, so the cosmic Dream turns out to be other than mere phantasm and hallucination of the mind. Phenomenon is not phantasm; phenomenon is the substantial form of a Truth.

We start, then, with the conception of an omnipresent Reality of which neither the Non-Being at the one end nor the universe at the other are negations that annul; they are rather different states of the Reality, obverse and reverse affirmations. The highest experience of this Reality in the universe shows it to be not only a conscious Existence, but a supreme Intelligence and

Force and a self-existent Bliss; and beyond the universe it is still some other unknowable existence, some utter and ineffable Bliss. Therefore we are justified in supposing that even the dualities of the universe, when interpreted not as now by our sensational and partial conceptions, but by our liberated intelligence and experience, will be also resolved into those highest terms. While we still labour under the stress of the dualities, this perception must no doubt constantly support itself on an act of faith, but a faith which the highest Reason, the widest and most patient reflection do not deny, but rather affirm. This creed is given, indeed, to humanity to support it on its journey, until it arrives at a stage of development when faith will be turned into knowledge and perfect experience and Wisdom will be justified of her works.

Chapter V

The Destiny of the Individual

By the Ignorance they cross beyond Death and by the Knowledge enjoy Immortality. . . . By the Non-Birth they cross beyond Death and by the Birth enjoy Immortality.

*Isha Upanishad.*¹

AN OMNIPRESENT Reality is the truth of all life and existence whether absolute or relative, whether corporeal or incorporeal, whether animate or inanimate, whether intelligent or unintelligent; and in all its infinitely varying and even constantly opposed self-expressions, from the contradictions nearest to our ordinary experience to those remotest antinomies which lose themselves on the verges of the Ineffable, the Reality is one and not a sum or concourse. From that all variations begin, in that all variations consist, to that all variations return. All affirmations are denied only to lead to a wider affirmation of the same Reality. All antinomies confront each other in order to recognise one Truth in their opposed aspects and embrace by the way of conflict their mutual Unity. Brahman is the Alpha and the Omega. Brahman is the One besides whom there is nothing else existent.

But this unity is in its nature indefinable. When we seek to envisage it by the mind we are compelled to proceed through an infinite series of conceptions and experiences. And yet in the end we are obliged to negate our largest conceptions, our most comprehensive experiences in order to affirm that the Reality exceeds all definitions. We arrive at the formula of the Indian sages, *neti neti*, “It is not this, It is not that”, there is no experience by which we can limit It, there is no conception by which It can be defined.

¹ Verses 11, 14.

An Unknowable which appears to us in many states and attributes of being, in many forms of consciousness, in many activities of energy, this is what Mind can ultimately say about the existence which we ourselves are and which we see in all that is presented to our thought and senses. It is in and through those states, those forms, those activities that we have to approach and know the Unknowable. But if in our haste to arrive at a Unity that our mind can seize and hold, if in our insistence to confine the Infinite in our embrace we identify the Reality with any one definable state of being however pure and eternal, with any particular attribute however general and comprehensive, with any fixed formulation of consciousness however vast in its scope, with any energy or activity however boundless its application, and if we exclude all the rest, then our thoughts sin against Its unknowability and arrive not at a true unity but at a division of the Indivisible.

So strongly was this truth perceived in the ancient times that the Vedantic Seers, even after they had arrived at the crowning idea, the convincing experience of Sachchidananda as the highest positive expression of the Reality to our consciousness, erected in their speculations or went on in their perceptions to an Asat, a Non-Being beyond, which is not the ultimate existence, the pure consciousness, the infinite bliss of which all our experiences are the expression or the deformation. If at all an existence, a consciousness, a bliss, it is beyond the highest and purest positive form of these things that here we can possess and other therefore than what here we know by these names. Buddhism, somewhat arbitrarily declared by the theologians to be an un-Vedic doctrine because it rejected the authority of the Scriptures, yet goes back to this essentially Vedantic conception. Only, the positive and synthetic teaching of the Upanishads beheld Sat and Asat not as opposites destructive of each other, but as the last antinomy through which we look up to the Unknowable. And in the transactions of our positive consciousness, even Unity has to make its account with Multiplicity; for the Many also are Brahman. It is by Vidya, the Knowledge of the Oneness, that we know God; without it Avidya, the relative and multiple consciousness, is a

night of darkness and a disorder of Ignorance. Yet if we exclude the field of that Ignorance, if we get rid of Avidya as if it were a thing non-existent and unreal, then Knowledge itself becomes a sort of obscurity and a source of imperfection. We become as men blinded by a light so that we can no longer see the field which that light illuminates.

Such is the teaching, calm, wise and clear, of our most ancient sages. They had the patience and the strength to find and to know; they had also the clarity and humility to admit the limitation of our knowledge. They perceived the borders where it has to pass into something beyond itself. It was a later impatience of heart and mind, vehement attraction to an ultimate bliss or high masterfulness of pure experience and trenchant intelligence which sought the One to deny the Many and because it had received the breath of the heights scorned or recoiled from the secret of the depths. But the steady eye of the ancient wisdom perceived that to know God really, it must know Him everywhere equally and without distinction, considering and valuing but not mastered by the oppositions through which He shines.

We will put aside then the trenchant distinctions of a partial logic which declares that because the One is the reality, the Many are an illusion, and because the Absolute is Sat, the one existence, the relative is Asat and non-existent. If in the Many we pursue insistently the One, it is to return with the benediction and the revelation of the One confirming itself in the Many.

We will guard ourselves also against the excessive importance that the mind attaches to particular points of view at which it arrives in its more powerful expansions and transitions. The perception of the spiritualised mind that the universe is an unreal dream can have no more absolute a value to us than the perception of the materialised mind that God and the Beyond are an illusory idea. In the one case the mind, habituated only to the evidence of the senses and associating reality with corporeal fact, is either unaccustomed to use other means of knowledge or unable to extend the notion of reality to a supraphysical experience. In the other case the same mind, passing beyond to the overwhelming experience of an incorporeal reality, simply

transfers the same inability and the same consequent sense of dream or hallucination to the experience of the senses. But we perceive also the truth that these two conceptions disfigure. It is true that for this world of form in which we are set for our self-realisation, nothing is entirely valid until it has possessed itself of our physical consciousness and manifested on the lowest levels in harmony with its manifestation on the highest summits. It is equally true that form and matter asserting themselves as a self-existent reality are an illusion of Ignorance. Form and matter can be valid only as shape and substance of manifestation for the incorporeal and immaterial. They are in their nature an act of divine consciousness, in their aim the representation of a status of the Spirit.

In other words, if Brahman has entered into form and represented Its being in material substance, it can only be to enjoy self-manifestation in the figures of relative and phenomenal consciousness. Brahman is in this world to represent Itself in the values of Life. Life exists in Brahman in order to discover Brahman in itself. Therefore man's importance in the world is that he gives to it that development of consciousness in which its transfiguration by a perfect self-discovery becomes possible. To fulfil God in life is man's manhood. He starts from the animal vitality and its activities, but a divine existence is his objective.

But as in Thought, so in Life, the true rule of self-realisation is a progressive comprehension. Brahman expresses Itself in many successive forms of consciousness, successive in their relation even if coexistent in being or coeval in Time, and Life in its self-unfolding must also rise to ever-new provinces of its own being. But if in passing from one domain to another we renounce what has already been given us from eagerness for our new attainment, if in reaching the mental life we cast away or belittle the physical life which is our basis, or if we reject the mental and physical in our attraction to the spiritual, we do not fulfil God integrally, nor satisfy the conditions of His self-manifestation. We do not become perfect, but only shift the field of our imperfection or at most attain a limited altitude. However high we may climb, even though it be to the Non-Being itself,

we climb ill if we forget our base. Not to abandon the lower to itself, but to transfigure it in the light of the higher to which we have attained, is true divinity of nature. Brahman is integral and unifies many states of consciousness at a time; we also, manifesting the nature of Brahman, should become integral and all-embracing.

Besides the recoil from the physical life, there is another exaggeration of the ascetic impulse which this ideal of an integral manifestation corrects. The nodus of Life is the relation between three general forms of consciousness, the individual, the universal and the transcendent or supracosmic. In the ordinary distribution of life's activities the individual regards himself as a separate being included in the universe and both as dependent upon that which transcends alike the universe and the individual. It is to this Transcendence that we give currently the name of God, who thus becomes to our conceptions not so much supracosmic as extra-cosmic. The belittling and degradation of both the individual and the universe is a natural consequence of this division: the cessation of both cosmos and individual by the attainment of the Transcendence would be logically its supreme conclusion.

The integral view of the unity of Brahman avoids these consequences. Just as we need not give up the bodily life to attain to the mental and spiritual, so we can arrive at a point of view where the preservation of the individual activities is no longer inconsistent with our comprehension of the cosmic consciousness or our attainment to the transcendent and supracosmic. For the World-Transcendent embraces the universe, is one with it and does not exclude it, even as the universe embraces the individual, is one with him and does not exclude him. The individual is a centre of the whole universal consciousness; the universe is a form and definition which is occupied by the entire immanence of the Formless and Indefinable.

This is always the true relation, veiled from us by our ignorance or our wrong consciousness of things. When we attain to knowledge or right consciousness, nothing essential in the eternal relation is changed, but only the inview and the outview

from the individual centre is profoundly modified and consequently also the spirit and effect of its activity. The individual is still necessary to the action of the Transcendent in the universe and that action in him does not cease to be possible by his illumination. On the contrary, since the conscious manifestation of the Transcendent in the individual is the means by which the collective, the universal is also to become conscious of itself, the continuation of the illumined individual in the action of the world is an imperative need of the world-play. If his inexorable removal through the very act of illumination is the law, then the world is condemned to remain eternally the scene of unredeemed darkness, death and suffering. And such a world can only be a ruthless ordeal or a mechanical illusion.

It is so that ascetic philosophy tends to conceive it. But individual salvation can have no real sense if existence in the cosmos is itself an illusion. In the Monistic view the individual soul is one with the Supreme, its sense of separateness an ignorance, escape from the sense of separateness and identity with the Supreme its salvation. But who then profits by this escape? Not the supreme Self, for it is supposed to be always and inalienably free, still, silent, pure. Not the world, for that remains constantly in the bondage and is not freed by the escape of any individual soul from the universal Illusion. It is the individual soul itself which effects its supreme good by escaping from the sorrow and the division into the peace and the bliss. There would seem then to be some kind of reality of the individual soul as distinct from the world and from the Supreme even in the event of freedom and illumination. But for the Illusionist the individual soul is an illusion and non-existent except in the inexplicable mystery of Maya. Therefore we arrive at the escape of an illusory non-existent soul from an illusory non-existent bondage in an illusory non-existent world as the supreme good which that non-existent soul has to pursue! For this is the last word of the Knowledge, "There is none bound, none freed, none seeking to be free." Vidya turns out to be as much a part of the Phenomenal as Avidya; Maya meets us even in our escape and laughs at the triumphant logic which seemed to cut the knot of her mystery.

These things, it is said, cannot be explained; they are the initial and insoluble miracle. They are for us a practical fact and have to be accepted. We have to escape by a confusion out of a confusion. The individual soul can only cut the knot of ego by a supreme act of egoism, an exclusive attachment to its own individual salvation which amounts to an absolute assertion of its separate existence in Maya. We are led to regard other souls as if they were figments of our mind and their salvation unimportant, our soul alone as if it were entirely real and its salvation the one thing that matters. I come to regard my personal escape from bondage as real while other souls who are equally myself remain behind in the bondage!

It is only when we put aside all irreconcilable antinomy between Self and the world that things fall into their place by a less paradoxical logic. We must accept the many-sidedness of the manifestation even while we assert the unity of the Manifested. And is not this after all the truth that pursues us wherever we cast our eyes, unless seeing we choose not to see? Is not this after all the perfectly natural and simple mystery of Conscious Being that It is bound neither by Its unity nor by Its multiplicity? It is "absolute" in the sense of being entirely free to include and arrange in Its own way all possible terms of Its self-expression. There is none bound, none freed, none seeking to be free,—for always That is a perfect freedom. It is so free that It is not even bound by Its liberty. It can play at being bound without incurring a real bondage. Its chain is a self-imposed convention, Its limitation in the ego a transitional device that It uses in order to repeat Its transcendence and universality in the scheme of the individual Brahman.

The Transcendent, the Supracosmic is absolute and free in Itself beyond Time and Space and beyond the conceptual opposites of finite and infinite. But in cosmos It uses Its liberty of self-formation, Its Maya, to make a scheme of Itself in the complementary terms of unity and multiplicity, and this multiple unity It establishes in the three conditions of the subconscious, the conscious and the superconscious. For actually we see that the Many objectivised in form in our material universe start

with a subconscious unity which expresses itself openly enough in cosmic action and cosmic substance, but of which they are not themselves superficially aware. In the conscient the ego becomes the superficial point at which the awareness of unity can emerge; but it applies its perception of unity to the form and surface action and, failing to take account of all that operates behind, fails also to realise that it is not only one in itself but one with others. This limitation of the universal "I" in the divided ego-sense constitutes our imperfect individualised personality. But when the ego transcends the personal consciousness, it begins to include and be overpowered by that which is to us superconscious; it becomes aware of the cosmic unity and enters into the Transcendent Self which here cosmos expresses by a multiple oneness.

The liberation of the individual soul is therefore the keynote of the definitive divine action; it is the primary divine necessity and the pivot on which all else turns. It is the point of Light at which the intended complete self-manifestation in the Many begins to emerge. But the liberated soul extends its perception of unity horizontally as well as vertically. Its unity with the transcendent One is incomplete without its unity with the cosmic Many. And that lateral unity translates itself by a multiplication, a reproduction of its own liberated state at other points in the Multiplicity. The divine soul reproduces itself in similar liberated souls as the animal reproduces itself in similar bodies. Therefore, whenever even a single soul is liberated, there is a tendency to an extension and even to an outburst of the same divine self-consciousness in other individual souls of our terrestrial humanity and,—who knows?—perhaps even beyond the terrestrial consciousness. Where shall we fix the limit of that extension? Is it altogether a legend which says of the Buddha that as he stood on the threshold of Nirvana, of the Non-Being, his soul turned back and took the vow never to make the irrevocable crossing so long as there was a single being upon earth undelivered from the knot of the suffering, from the bondage of the ego?

But we can attain to the highest without blotting ourselves

out from the cosmic extension. Brahman preserves always Its two terms of liberty within and of formation without, of expression and of freedom from the expression. We also, being That, can attain to the same divine self-possession. The harmony of the two tendencies is the condition of all life that aims at being really divine. Liberty pursued by exclusion of the thing exceeded leads along the path of negation to the refusal of that which God has accepted. Activity pursued by absorption in the act and the energy leads to an inferior affirmation and the denial of the Highest. But what God combines and synthetises, wherefore should man insist on divorcing? To be perfect as He is perfect is the condition of His integral attainment.

Through Avidya, the Multiplicity, lies our path out of the transitional egoistic self-expression in which death and suffering predominate; through Vidya consenting with Avidya by the perfect sense of oneness even in that multiplicity, we enjoy integrally the immortality and the beatitude. By attaining to the Unborn beyond all becoming we are liberated from this lower birth and death; by accepting the Becoming freely as the Divine, we invade mortality with the immortal beatitude and become luminous centres of its conscious self-expression in humanity.

Chapter VI

Man in the Universe

The Soul of man, a traveller, wanders in this cycle of Brahman, huge, a totality of lives, a totality of states, thinking itself different from the Impeller of the journey. Accepted by Him, it attains its goal of Immortality. *Swetasvatara Upanishad.*¹

THE PROGRESSIVE revelation of a great, a transcendent, a luminous Reality with the multitudinous relativities of this world that we see and those other worlds that we do not see as means and material, condition and field, this would seem then to be the meaning of the universe,—since meaning and aim it has and is neither a purposeless illusion nor a fortuitous accident. For the same reasoning which leads us to conclude that world-existence is not a deceptive trick of Mind, justifies equally the certainty that it is no blindly and helplessly self-existent mass of separate phenomenal existences clinging together and struggling together as best they can in their orbit through eternity, no tremendous self-creation and self-impulsion of an ignorant Force without any secret Intelligence within aware of its starting-point and its goal and guiding its process and its motion. An existence, wholly self-aware and therefore entirely master of itself, possesses the phenomenal being in which it is involved, realises itself in form, unfolds itself in the individual.

That luminous Emergence is the dawn which the Aryan forefathers worshipped. Its fulfilled perfection is that highest step of the world-pervading Vishnu which they beheld as if an eye of vision extended in the purest heavens of the Mind. For it exists already as an all-revealing and all-guiding Truth of things which watches over the world and attracts mortal man, first without

¹ I. 6.

the knowledge of his conscious mind, by the general march of Nature, but at last consciously by a progressive awakening and self-enlargement, to his divine ascension. The ascent to the divine Life is the human journey, the Work of works, the acceptable Sacrifice. This alone is man's real business in the world and the justification of his existence, without which he would be only an insect crawling among other ephemeral insects on a speck of surface mud and water which has managed to form itself amid the appalling immensities of the physical universe.

This Truth of things that has to emerge out of the phenomenal world's contradictions is declared to be an infinite Bliss and self-conscious Existence, the same everywhere, in all things, in all times and beyond Time, and aware of itself behind all these phenomena by whose intensest vibrations of activity or by whose largest totality it can never be entirely expressed or in any way limited; for it is self-existent and does not depend for its being upon its manifestations. They represent it, but do not exhaust it; point to it, but do not reveal it. It is revealed only to itself within their forms. The conscious existence involved in the form comes, as it evolves, to know itself by intuition, by self-vision, by self-experience. It becomes itself in the world by knowing itself; it knows itself by becoming itself. Thus possessed of itself inwardly, it imparts also to its forms and modes the conscious delight of Sachchidananda. This becoming of the infinite Bliss-Existence-Consciousness in mind and life and body,—for independent of them it exists eternally,—is the transfiguration intended and the utility of individual existence. Through the individual it manifests in relation even as of itself it exists in identity.

The Unknowable knowing itself as Sachchidananda is the one supreme affirmation of Vedanta; it contains all the others or on it they depend. This is the one veritable experience that remains when all appearances have been accounted for negatively by the elimination of their shapes and coverings or positively by the reduction of their names and forms to the constant truth that they contain. For fulfilment of life or for transcendence of life, and whether purity, calm and freedom in the spirit be

our aim or puissance, joy and perfection, Sachchidananda is the unknown, omnipresent, indispensable term for which the human consciousness, whether in knowledge and sentiment or in sensation and action, is eternally seeking.

The universe and the individual are the two essential appearances into which the Unknowable descends and through which it has to be approached; for other intermediate collectivities are born only of their interaction. This descent of the supreme Reality is in its nature a self-concealing; and in the descent there are successive levels, in the concealing successive veils. Necessarily, the revelation takes the form of an ascent; and necessarily also the ascent and the revelation are both progressive. For each successive level in the descent of the Divine is to man a stage in an ascension; each veil that hides the unknown God becomes for the God-lover and God-seeker an instrument of His unveiling. Out of the rhythmic slumber of material Nature unconscious of the Soul and the Idea that maintain the ordered activities of her energy even in her dumb and mighty material trance, the world struggles into the more quick, varied and disordered rhythm of Life labouring on the verges of self-consciousness. Out of Life it struggles upward into Mind in which the unit becomes awake to itself and its world, and in that awakening the universe gains the leverage it required for its supreme work, it gains self-conscious individuality. But Mind takes up the work to continue, not to complete it. It is a labourer of acute but limited intelligence who takes the confused materials offered by Life and, having improved, adapted, varied, classified according to its power, hands them over to the supreme Artist of our divine manhood. That Artist dwells in supermind; for supermind is superman. Therefore our world has yet to climb beyond Mind to a higher principle, a higher status, a higher dynamism in which universe and individual become aware of and possess that which they both are and therefore stand explained to each other, in harmony with each other, unified.

The disorders of life and mind cease by discerning the secret of a more perfect order than the physical. Matter below life and mind contains in itself the balance between a perfect poise of

tranquillity and the action of an immeasurable energy, but does not possess that which it contains. Its peace wears the dull mask of an obscure inertia, a sleep of unconsciousness or rather of a drugged and imprisoned consciousness. Driven by a force which is its real self but whose sense it cannot yet seize nor share, it has not the awakened joy of its own harmonious energies.

Life and mind awaken to the sense of this want in the form of a striving and seeking ignorance and a troubled and baffled desire which are the first steps towards self-knowledge and self-fulfilment. But where then is the kingdom of their self-fulfilling? It comes to them by the exceeding of themselves. Beyond life and mind we recover consciously in its divine truth that which the balance of material Nature grossly represented,—a tranquillity which is neither inertia nor a sealed trance of consciousness but the concentration of an absolute force and an absolute self-awareness, and an action of immeasurable energy which is at the same time an out-thrilling of ineffable bliss because its every act is the expression, not of a want and an ignorant straining, but of an absolute peace and self-mastery. In that attainment our ignorance realises the light of which it was a darkened or a partial reflection; our desires cease in the plenitude and fulfilment towards which even in their most brute material forms they were an obscure and fallen aspiration.

The universe and the individual are necessary to each other in their ascent. Always indeed they exist for each other and profit by each other. Universe is a diffusion of the divine All in infinite Space and Time, the individual its concentration within limits of Space and Time. Universe seeks in infinite extension the divine totality it feels itself to be but cannot entirely realise; for in extension existence drives at a pluralistic sum of itself which can neither be the primal nor the final unit, but only a recurring decimal without end or beginning. Therefore it creates in itself a self-conscious concentration of the All through which it can aspire. In the conscious individual Prakriti turns back to perceive Purusha, World seeks after Self; God having entirely become Nature, Nature seeks to become progressively God.

On the other hand it is by means of the universe that the

individual is impelled to realise himself. Not only is it his foundation, his means, his field, the stuff of the divine Work; but also, since the concentration of the universal Life which he is takes place within limits and is not like the intensive unity of Brahman free from all conception of bound and term, he must necessarily universalise and impersonalise himself in order to manifest the divine All which is his reality. Yet is he called upon to preserve, even when he most extends himself in universality of consciousness, a mysterious transcendent something of which his sense of personality gives him an obscure and egoistic representation. Otherwise he has missed his goal, the problem set to him has not been solved, the divine work for which he accepted birth has not been done.

The universe comes to the individual as Life,—a dynamism the entire secret of which he has to master and a mass of colliding results, a whirl of potential energies out of which he has to disengage some supreme order and some yet unrealised harmony. This is after all the real sense of man's progress. It is not merely a restatement in slightly different terms of what physical Nature has already accomplished. Nor can the ideal of human life be simply the animal repeated on a higher scale of mentality. Otherwise, any system or order which assured a tolerable well-being and a moderate mental satisfaction would have stayed our advance. The animal is satisfied with a modicum of necessity; the gods are content with their splendours. But man cannot rest permanently until he reaches some highest good. He is the greatest of living beings because he is the most discontented, because he feels most the pressure of limitations. He alone, perhaps, is capable of being seized by the divine frenzy for a remote ideal.

To the Life-Spirit, therefore, the individual in whom its potentialities centre is pre-eminently Man, the Purusha. It is the Son of Man who is supremely capable of incarnating God. This Man is the Manu, the thinker, the Manomaya Purusha, mental person or soul in mind of the ancient sages. No mere superior mammal is he, but a conceptive soul basing itself on the animal body in Matter. He is conscious Name or Numen accepting and utilising form as a medium through which Person can deal with

substance. The animal life emerging out of Matter is only the inferior term of his existence. The life of thought, feeling, will, conscious impulsion, that which we name in its totality Mind, that which strives to seize upon Matter and its vital energies and subject them to the law of its own progressive transformation, is the middle term in which he takes his effectual station. But there is equally a supreme term which Mind in man searches after so that having found he may affirm it in his mental and bodily existence. This practical affirmation of something essentially superior to his present self is the basis of the divine life in the human being.

Awakened to a profounder self-knowledge than his first mental idea of himself, Man begins to conceive some formula and to perceive some appearance of the thing that he has to affirm. But it appears to him as if poised between two negations of itself. If, beyond his present attainment, he perceives or is touched by the power, light, bliss of a self-conscious infinite existence and translates his thought or his experience of it into terms convenient for his mentality,—Infinity, Omniscience, Omnipotence, Immortality, Freedom, Love, Beatitude, God,—yet does this sun of his seeing appear to shine between a double Night,—a darkness below, a mightier darkness beyond. For when he strives to know it utterly, it seems to pass into something which neither any one of these terms nor the sum of them can at all represent. His mind at last negates God for a Beyond, or at least it seems to find God transcending Himself, denying Himself to the conception. Here also, in the world, in himself, and around himself, he is met always by the opposites of his affirmation. Death is ever with him, limitation invests his being and his experience, error, inconscience, weakness, inertia, grief, pain, evil are constant oppressors of his effort. Here also he is driven to deny God, or at least the Divine seems to negate or to hide itself in some appearance or outcome which is other than its true and eternal reality.

And the terms of this denial are not, like that other and remoter negation, inconceivable and therefore naturally mysterious, unknowable to his mind, but appear to be knowable,

known, definite, — and still mysterious. He knows not what they are, why they exist, how they came into being. He sees their processes as they affect and appear to him; he cannot fathom their essential reality.

Perhaps they are unfathomable, perhaps they also are really unknowable in their essence? Or, it may be, they have no essential reality, — are an illusion, Asat, non-being. The superior Negation appears to us sometimes as a Nihil, a Non-Existence; this inferior negation may also be, in its essence, a Nihil, a non-existence. But as we have already put away from us this evasion of the difficulty with regard to that higher, so also we discard it for this inferior Asat. To deny entirely its reality or to seek an escape from it as a mere disastrous illusion is to put away from us the problem and to shun our work. For Life, these things that seem to deny God, to be the opposites of Sachchidananda, are real, even if they turn out to be temporary. They and their opposites, good, knowledge, joy, pleasure, life, survival, strength, power, increase, are the very material of her workings.

It is probable indeed that they are the result or rather the inseparable accompaniments, not of an illusion, but of a wrong relation, wrong because it is founded on a false view of what the individual is in the universe and therefore a false attitude both towards God and Nature, towards self and environment. Because that which he has become is out of harmony both with what the world of his habitation is and what he himself should be and is to be, therefore man is subject to these contradictions of the secret Truth of things. In that case they are not the punishment of a fall, but the conditions of a progress. They are the first elements of the work he has to fulfil, the price he has to pay for the crown which he hopes to win, the narrow way by which Nature escapes out of Matter into consciousness; they are at once her ransom and her stock.

For out of these false relations and by their aid the true have to be found. By the Ignorance we have to cross over death. So too the Veda speaks cryptically of energies that are like women evil in impulse, wandering from the path, doing hurt to their Lord, which yet, though themselves false and unhappy, build up in the

end "this vast Truth", the Truth that is the Bliss. It would be, then, not when he has excised the evil in Nature out of himself by an act of moral surgery or parted with life by an abhorrent recoil, but when he has turned Death into a more perfect life, lifted the small things of the human limitation into the great things of the divine vastness, transformed suffering into beatitude, converted evil into its proper good, translated error and falsehood into their secret truth that the sacrifice will be accomplished, the journey done and Heaven and Earth equalised join hands in the bliss of the Supreme.

Yet how can such contraries pass into each other? By what alchemy shall this lead of mortality be turned into that gold of divine Being? But if they are not in their essence contraries? If they are manifestations of one Reality, identical in substance? Then indeed a divine transmutation becomes conceivable.

We have seen that the Non-Being beyond may well be an inconceivable existence and perhaps an ineffable Bliss. At least the Nirvana of Buddhism which formulated one most luminous effort of man to reach and to rest in this highest Non-Existence, represents itself in the psychology of the liberated yet upon earth as an unspeakable peace and gladness; its practical effect is the extinction of all suffering through the disappearance of all egoistic idea or sensation and the nearest we can get to a positive conception of it is that it is some inexpressible Beatitude (if the name or any name can be applied to a peace so void of contents) into which even the notion of self-existence seems to be swallowed up and disappear. It is a Sachchidananda to which we dare no longer apply even the supreme terms of Sat, of Chit and of Ananda. For all terms are annulled and all cognitive experience is overpassed.

On the other hand, we have hazarded the suggestion that since all is one Reality, this inferior negation also, this other contradiction or non-existence of Sachchidananda is none other than Sachchidananda itself. It is capable of being conceived by the intellect, perceived in the vision, even received through the sensations as verily that which it seems to deny, and such would it always be to our conscious experience if things were not

falsified by some great fundamental error, some possessing and compelling Ignorance, Maya or Avidya. In this sense a solution might be sought, not perhaps a satisfying metaphysical solution for the logical mind,—for we are standing on the border-line of the unknowable, the ineffable and straining our eyes beyond,—but a sufficient basis in experience for the practice of the divine life.

To do this we must dare to go below the clear surfaces of things on which the mind loves to dwell, to tempt the vast and obscure, to penetrate the unfathomable depths of consciousness and identify ourselves with states of being that are not our own. Human language is a poor help in such a search, but at least we may find in it some symbols and figures, return with some just expressible hints which will help the light of the soul and throw upon the mind some reflection of the ineffable design.

Chapter VII

The Ego and the Dualities

The soul seated on the same tree of Nature is absorbed and deluded and has sorrow because it is not the Lord, but when it sees and is in union with that other self and greatness of it which is the Lord, then sorrow passes away from it.

*Swetasvatara Upanishad.*¹

IF ALL is in truth Sachchidananda, death, suffering, evil, limitation can only be the creations, positive in practical effect, negative in essence, of a distorting consciousness which has fallen from the total and unifying knowledge of itself into some error of division and partial experience. This is the fall of man typified in the poetic parable of the Hebrew Genesis. That fall is his deviation from the full and pure acceptance of God and himself, or rather of God in himself, into a dividing consciousness which brings with it all the train of the dualities, life and death, good and evil, joy and pain, completeness and want, the fruit of a divided being. This is the fruit which Adam and Eve, Purusha and Prakriti, the soul tempted by Nature, have eaten. The redemption comes by the recovery of the universal in the individual and of the spiritual term in the physical consciousness. Then alone the soul in Nature can be allowed to partake of the fruit of the tree of life and be as the Divine and live for ever. For then only can the purpose of its descent into material consciousness be accomplished, when the knowledge of good and evil, joy and suffering, life and death has been accomplished through the recovery by the human soul of a higher knowledge which reconciles and identifies these opposites in the universal and transforms their divisions into the image of the divine Unity.

¹ IV. 7.

To Sachchidananda extended in all things in widest commonality and impartial universality, death, suffering, evil and limitation can only be at the most reverse terms, shadow-forms of their luminous opposites. As these things are felt by us, they are notes of a discord. They formulate separation where there should be a unity, miscomprehension where there should be an understanding, an attempt to arrive at independent harmonies where there should be a self-adaptation to the orchestral whole. All totality, even if it be only in one scheme of the universal vibrations, even if it be only a totality of the physical consciousness without possession of all that is in movement beyond and behind, must be to that extent a reversion to harmony and a reconciliation of jarring opposites. On the other hand, to Sachchidananda transcendent of the forms of the universe the dual terms themselves, even so understood, can no longer be justly applicable. Transcendence transfigures; it does not reconcile, but rather transmutes opposites into something surpassing them that effaces their oppositions.

At first, however, we must strive to relate the individual again to the harmony of the totality. There it is necessary for us — otherwise there is no issue from the problem — to realise that the terms in which our present consciousness renders the values of the universe, though practically justified for the purposes of human experience and progress, are not the sole terms in which it is possible to render them and may not be the complete, the right, the ultimate formulas. Just as there may be sense-organs or formations of sense-capacity which see the physical world differently and it may well be better, because more completely, than our sense-organs and sense-capacity, so there may be other mental and supramental envisagings of the universe which surpass our own. States of consciousness there are in which Death is only a change in immortal Life, pain a violent backwash of the waters of universal delight, limitation a turning of the Infinite upon itself, evil a circling of the good around its own perfection; and this not in abstract conception only, but in actual vision and in constant and substantial experience. To arrive at such states of consciousness may, for the individual, be one of the

most important and indispensable steps of his progress towards self-perfection.

Certainly, the practical values given us by our senses and by the dualistic sense-mind must hold good in their field and be accepted as the standard for ordinary life-experience until a larger harmony is ready into which they can enter and transform themselves without losing hold of the realities which they represent. To enlarge the sense-faculties without the knowledge that would give the old sense-values their right interpretation from the new standpoint might lead to serious disorders and incapacities, might unfit for practical life and for the orderly and disciplined use of the reason. Equally, an enlargement of our mental consciousness out of the experience of the egoistic dualities into an unregulated unity with some form of total consciousness might easily bring about a confusion and incapacity for the active life of humanity in the established order of the world's relativities. This, no doubt, is the root of the injunction imposed in the Gita on the man who has the knowledge not to disturb the life-basis and thought-basis of the ignorant; for, impelled by his example but unable to comprehend the principle of his action, they would lose their own system of values without arriving at a higher foundation.

Such a disorder and incapacity may be accepted personally and are accepted by many great souls as a temporary passage or as the price to be paid for the entry into a wider existence. But the right goal of human progress must be always an effective and synthetic reinterpretation by which the law of that wider existence may be represented in a new order of truths and in a more just and puissant working of the faculties on the life-material of the universe. For the senses the sun goes round the earth; that was for them the centre of existence and the motions of life are arranged on the basis of a misconception. The truth is the very opposite, but its discovery would have been of little use if there were not a science that makes the new conception the centre of a reasoned and ordered knowledge putting their right values on the perceptions of the senses. So also for the mental consciousness God moves round the personal ego and all His

works and ways are brought to the judgment of our egoistic sensations, emotions and conceptions and are there given values and interpretations which, though a perversion and inversion of the truth of things, are yet useful and practically sufficient in a certain development of human life and progress. They are a rough practical systematisation of our experience of things valid so long as we dwell in a certain order of ideas and activities. But they do not represent the last and highest state of human life and knowledge. "Truth is the path and not the falsehood." The truth is not that God moves round the ego as the centre of existence and can be judged by the ego and its view of the dualities, but that the Divine is itself the centre and that the experience of the individual only finds its own true truth when it is known in the terms of the universal and the transcendent. Nevertheless, to substitute this conception for the egoistic without an adequate base of knowledge may lead to the substitution of new but still false and arbitrary ideas for the old and bring about a violent instead of a settled disorder of right values. Such a disorder often marks the inception of new philosophies and religions and initiates useful revolutions. But the true goal is only reached when we can group round the right central conception a reasoned and effective knowledge in which the egoistic life shall rediscover all its values transformed and corrected. Then we shall possess that new order of truths which will make it possible for us to substitute a more divine life for the existence which we now lead and to effectualise a more divine and puissant use of our faculties on the life-material of the universe.

That new life and power of the human integer must necessarily repose on a realisation of the great verities which translate into our mode of conceiving things the nature of the divine existence. It must proceed through a renunciation by the ego of its false standpoint and false certainties, through its entry into a right relation and harmony with the totalities of which it forms a part and with the transcendences from which it is a descent, and through its perfect self-opening to a truth and a law that exceed its own conventions,—a truth that shall be its fulfilment and a law that shall be its deliverance. Its goal must

be the abolition of those values which are the creations of the egoistic view of things; its crown must be the transcendence of limitation, ignorance, death, suffering and evil.

The transcendence, the abolition are not possible here on earth and in our human life if the terms of that life are necessarily bound to our present egoistic valuations. If life is in its nature individual phenomenon and not representation of a universal existence and the breathing of a mighty Life-Spirit, if the dualities which are the response of the individual to its contacts are not merely a response but the very essence and condition of all living, if limitation is the inalienable nature of the substance of which our mind and body are formed, disintegration of death the first and last condition of all life, its end and its beginning, pleasure and pain the inseparable dual stuff of all sensation, joy and grief the necessary light and shade of all emotion, truth and error the two poles between which all knowledge must eternally move, then transcendence is only attainable by the abandonment of human life in a Nirvana beyond all existence or by attainment to another world, a heaven quite otherwise constituted than this material universe.

It is not very easy for the customary mind of man, always attached to its past and present associations, to conceive of an existence still human, yet radically changed in what are now our fixed circumstances. We are in respect to our possible higher evolution much in the position of the original Ape of the Darwinian theory. It would have been impossible for that Ape leading his instinctive arboreal life in primeval forests to conceive that there would be one day an animal on the earth who would use a new faculty called reason upon the materials of his inner and outer existence, who would dominate by that power his instincts and habits, change the circumstances of his physical life, build for himself houses of stone, manipulate Nature's forces, sail the seas, ride the air, develop codes of conduct, evolve conscious methods for his mental and spiritual development. And if such a conception had been possible for the Ape-mind, it would still have been difficult for him to imagine that by any progress of Nature or long effort of Will and tendency he himself could

develop into that animal. Man, because he has acquired reason and still more because he has indulged his power of imagination and intuition, is able to conceive an existence higher than his own and even to envisage his personal elevation beyond his present state into that existence. His idea of the supreme state is an absolute of all that is positive to his own concepts and desirable to his own instinctive aspiration,—Knowledge without its negative shadow of error, Bliss without its negation in experience of suffering, Power without its constant denial by incapacity, purity and plenitude of being without the opposing sense of defect and limitation. It is so that he conceives his gods; it is so that he constructs his heavens. But it is not so that his reason conceives of a possible earth and a possible humanity. His dream of God and Heaven is really a dream of his own perfection; but he finds the same difficulty in accepting its practical realisation here for his ultimate aim as would the ancestral Ape if called upon to believe in himself as the future Man. His imagination, his religious aspirations may hold that end before him; but when his reason asserts itself, rejecting imagination and transcendent intuition, he puts it by as a brilliant superstition contrary to the hard facts of the material universe. It becomes then only his inspiring vision of the impossible. All that is possible is a conditioned, limited and precarious knowledge, happiness, power and good.

Yet in the principle of reason itself there is the assertion of a Transcendence. For reason is in its whole aim and essence the pursuit of Knowledge, the pursuit, that is to say, of Truth by the elimination of error. Its view, its aim is not that of a passage from a greater to a lesser error, but it supposes a positive, pre-existent Truth towards which through the dualities of right knowledge and wrong knowledge we can progressively move. If our reason has not the same instinctive certitude with regard to the other aspirations of humanity, it is because it lacks the same essential illumination inherent in its own positive activity. We can just conceive of a positive or absolute realisation of happiness, because the heart to which that instinct for happiness belongs has its own form of certitude, is capable of faith, and because our

minds can envisage the elimination of unsatisfied want which is the apparent cause of suffering. But how shall we conceive of the elimination of pain from nervous sensation or of death from the life of the body? Yet the rejection of pain is a sovereign instinct of the sensations, the rejection of death a dominant claim inherent in the essence of our vitality. But these things present themselves to our reason as instinctive aspirations, not as realisable potentialities.

Yet the same law should hold throughout. The error of the practical reason is an excessive subjection to the apparent fact which it can immediately feel as real and an insufficient courage in carrying profounder facts of potentiality to their logical conclusion. What is, is the realisation of an anterior potentiality; present potentiality is a clue to future realisation. And here potentiality exists; for the mastery of phenomena depends upon a knowledge of their causes and processes and if we know the causes of error, sorrow, pain, death, we may labour with some hope towards their elimination. For knowledge is power and mastery.

In fact, we do pursue as an ideal, so far as we may, the elimination of all these negative or adverse phenomena. We seek constantly to minimise the causes of error, pain and suffering. Science, as its knowledge increases, dreams of regulating birth and of indefinitely prolonging life, if not of effecting the entire conquest of death. But because we envisage only external or secondary causes, we can only think of removing them to a distance and not of eliminating the actual roots of that against which we struggle. And we are thus limited because we strive towards secondary perceptions and not towards root-knowledge, because we know processes of things, but not their essence. We thus arrive at a more powerful manipulation of circumstances, but not at essential control. But if we could grasp the essential nature and the essential cause of error, suffering and death, we might hope to arrive at a mastery over them which should be not relative but entire. We might hope even to eliminate them altogether and justify the dominant instinct of our nature by the conquest of that absolute good, bliss, knowledge and immortality which

our intuitions perceive as the true and ultimate condition of the human being.

The ancient Vedanta presents us with such a solution in the conception and experience of Brahman as the one universal and essential fact and of the nature of Brahman as Sachchidananda.

In this view the essence of all life is the movement of a universal and immortal existence, the essence of all sensation and emotion is the play of a universal and self-existent delight in being, the essence of all thought and perception is the radiation of a universal and all-pervading truth, the essence of all activity is the progression of a universal and self-effecting good.

But the play and movement embodies itself in a multiplicity of forms, a variation of tendencies, an interplay of energies. Multiplicity permits of the interference of a determinative and temporarily deformative factor, the individual ego; and the nature of the ego is a self-limitation of consciousness by a willed ignorance of the rest of its play and its exclusive absorption in one form, one combination of tendencies, one field of the movement of energies. Ego is the factor which determines the reactions of error, sorrow, pain, evil, death; for it gives these values to movements which would otherwise be represented in their right relation to the one Existence, Bliss, Truth and Good. By recovering the right relation we may eliminate the ego-determined reactions, reducing them eventually to their true values; and this recovery can be effected by the right participation of the individual in the consciousness of the totality and in the consciousness of the transcendent which the totality represents.

Into later Vedanta there crept and arrived at fixity the idea that the limited ego is not only the cause of the dualities, but the essential condition for the existence of the universe. By getting rid of the ignorance of the ego and its resultant limitations we do indeed eliminate the dualities, but we eliminate along with them our existence in the cosmic movement. Thus we return to the essentially evil and illusory nature of human existence and the vanity of all effort after perfection in the life of the world. A relative good linked always to its opposite is all that here we can

seek. But if we adhere to the larger and profounder idea that the ego is only an intermediate representation of something beyond itself, we escape from this consequence and are able to apply Vedanta to fulfilment of life and not only to the escape from life. The essential cause and condition of universal existence is the Lord, Ishwara or Purusha, manifesting and occupying individual and universal forms. The limited ego is only an intermediate phenomenon of consciousness necessary for a certain line of development. Following this line the individual can arrive at that which is beyond himself, that which he represents, and can yet continue to represent it, no longer as an obscured and limited ego, but as a centre of the Divine and of the universal consciousness embracing, utilising and transforming into harmony with the Divine all individual determinations.

We have then the manifestation of the divine Conscious Being in the totality of physical Nature as the foundation of human existence in the material universe. We have the emergence of that Conscious Being in an involved and inevitably evolving Life, Mind and Supermind as the condition of our activities; for it is this evolution which has enabled man to appear in Matter and it is this evolution which will enable him progressively to manifest God in the body, — the universal Incarnation. We have in egoistic formation the intermediate and decisive factor which allows the One to emerge as the conscious Many out of that indeterminate totality general, obscure and formless which we call the subconscious, — *hrdaya samudra*, the ocean heart in things of the Rig Veda. We have the dualities of life and death, joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, truth and error, good and evil as the first formations of egoistic consciousness, the natural and inevitable outcome of its attempt to realise unity in an artificial construction of itself exclusive of the total truth, good, life and delight of being in the universe. We have the dissolution of this egoistic construction by the self-opening of the individual to the universe and to God as the means of that supreme fulfilment to which egoistic life is only a prelude even as animal life was only a prelude to the human. We have the realisation of the All in the individual by the transformation of the limited ego into

a conscious centre of the divine unity and freedom as the term at which the fulfilment arrives. And we have the outflowing of the infinite and absolute Existence, Truth, Good and Delight of being on the Many in the world as the divine result towards which the cycles of our evolution move. This is the supreme birth which maternal Nature holds in herself; of this she strives to be delivered.

Chapter VIII

The Methods of Vedantic Knowledge

This secret Self in all beings is not apparent, but it is seen by
means of the supreme reason, the subtle, by those who have
the subtle vision.

*Katha Upanishad.*¹

BUT WHAT then is the working of this Sachchidananda in the world and by what process of things are the relations between itself and the ego which figures it first formed, then led to their consummation? For on those relations and on the process they follow depend the whole philosophy and practice of a divine life for man.

We arrive at the conception and at the knowledge of a divine existence by exceeding the evidence of the senses and piercing beyond the walls of the physical mind. So long as we confine ourselves to sense-evidence and the physical consciousness, we can conceive nothing and know nothing except the material world and its phenomena. But certain faculties in us enable our mentality to arrive at conceptions which we may indeed deduce by ratiocination or by imaginative variation from the facts of the physical world as we see them, but which are not warranted by any purely physical data or any physical experience. The first of these instruments is the pure reason.

Human reason has a double action, mixed or dependent, pure or sovereign. Reason accepts a mixed action when it confines itself to the circle of our sensible experience, admits its law as the final truth and concerns itself only with the study of phenomenon, that is to say, with the appearances of things in their relations, processes and utilities. This rational action is incapable of knowing what is, it only knows what appears

¹ I. 3. 12.

to be, it has no plummet by which it can sound the depths of being, it can only survey the field of becoming. Reason, on the other hand, asserts its pure action, when accepting our sensible experiences as a starting-point but refusing to be limited by them it goes behind, judges, works in its own right and strives to arrive at general and unalterable concepts which attach themselves not to the appearances of things, but to that which stands behind their appearances. It may arrive at its result by direct judgment passing immediately from the appearance to that which stands behind it and in that case the concept arrived at may seem to be a result of the sensible experience and dependent upon it though it is really a perception of reason working in its own right. But the perceptions of the pure reason may also — and this is their more characteristic action — use the experience from which they start as a mere excuse and leave it far behind before they arrive at their result, so far that the result may seem the direct contrary of that which our sensible experience wishes to dictate to us. This movement is legitimate and indispensable, because our normal experience not only covers only a small part of universal fact, but even in the limits of its own field uses instruments that are defective and gives us false weights and measures. It must be exceeded, put away to a distance and its insistences often denied if we are to arrive at more adequate conceptions of the truth of things. To correct the errors of the sense-mind by the use of reason is one of the most valuable powers developed by man and the chief cause of his superiority among terrestrial beings.

The complete use of pure reason brings us finally from physical to metaphysical knowledge. But the concepts of metaphysical knowledge do not in themselves fully satisfy the demand of our integral being. They are indeed entirely satisfactory to the pure reason itself, because they are the very stuff of its own existence. But our nature sees things through two eyes always, for it views them doubly as idea and as fact and therefore every concept is incomplete for us and to a part of our nature almost unreal until it becomes an experience. But the truths which are now in question, are of an order not subject to our normal experience. They are, in their nature, “beyond the perception of the senses

but seizable by the perception of the reason.” Therefore, some other faculty of experience is necessary by which the demand of our nature can be fulfilled and this can only come, since we are dealing with the supraphysical, by an extension of psychological experience.

In a sense all our experience is psychological since even what we receive by the senses, has no meaning or value to us till it is translated into the terms of the sense-mind, the Manas of Indian philosophical terminology. Manas, say our philosophers, is the sixth sense. But we may even say that it is the only sense and that the others, vision, hearing, touch, smell, taste are merely specialisations of the sense-mind which, although it normally uses the sense-organs for the basis of its experience, yet exceeds them and is capable of a direct experience proper to its own inherent action. As a result psychological experience, like the cognitions of the reason, is capable in man of a double action, mixed or dependent, pure or sovereign. Its mixed action takes place usually when the mind seeks to become aware of the external world, the object; the pure action when it seeks to become aware of itself, the subject. In the former activity, it is dependent on the senses and forms its perceptions in accordance with their evidence; in the latter it acts in itself and is aware of things directly by a sort of identity with them. We are thus aware of our emotions; we are aware of anger, as has been acutely said, because we become anger. We are thus aware also of our own existence; and here the nature of experience as knowledge by identity becomes apparent. In reality, all experience is in its secret nature knowledge by identity; but its true character is hidden from us because we have separated ourselves from the rest of the world by exclusion, by the distinction of ourself as subject and everything else as object, and we are compelled to develop processes and organs by which we may again enter into communion with all that we have excluded. We have to replace direct knowledge through conscious identity by an indirect knowledge which appears to be caused by physical contact and mental sympathy. This limitation is a fundamental creation of the ego and an instance of the manner

in which it has proceeded throughout, starting from an original falsehood and covering over the true truth of things by contingent falsehoods which become for us practical truths of relation.

From this nature of mental and sense knowledge as it is at present organised in us, it follows that there is no inevitable necessity in our existing limitations. They are the result of an evolution in which mind has accustomed itself to depend upon certain physiological functionings and their reactions as its normal means of entering into relation with the material universe. Therefore, although it is the rule that when we seek to become aware of the external world, we have to do so indirectly through the sense-organs and can experience only so much of the truth about things and men as the senses convey to us, yet this rule is merely the regularity of a dominant habit. It is possible for the mind—and it would be natural for it, if it could be persuaded to liberate itself from its consent to the domination of matter,—to take direct cognisance of the objects of sense without the aid of the sense-organs. This is what happens in experiments of hypnosis and cognate psychological phenomena. Because our waking consciousness is determined and limited by the balance between mind and matter worked out by life in its evolution, this direct cognisance is usually impossible in our ordinary waking state and has therefore to be brought about by throwing the waking mind into a state of sleep which liberates the true or subliminal mind. Mind is then able to assert its true character as the one and all-sufficient sense and free to apply to the objects of sense its pure and sovereign instead of its mixed and dependent action. Nor is this extension of faculty really impossible but only more difficult in our waking state,—as is known to all who have been able to go far enough in certain paths of psychological experiment.

The sovereign action of the sense-mind can be employed to develop other senses besides the five which we ordinarily use. For instance, it is possible to develop the power of appreciating accurately without physical means the weight of an object

which we hold in our hands. Here the sense of contact and pressure is merely used as a starting-point, just as the data of sense-experience are used by the pure reason, but it is not really the sense of touch which gives the measure of the weight to the mind; that finds the right value through its own independent perception and uses the touch only in order to enter into relation with the object. And as with the pure reason, so with the sense-mind, the sense-experience can be used as a mere first point from which it proceeds to a knowledge that has nothing to do with the sense-organs and often contradicts their evidence. Nor is the extension of faculty confined only to outsides and superficies. It is possible, once we have entered by any of the senses into relation with an external object, so to apply the Manas as to become aware of the contents of the object, for example, to receive or to perceive the thoughts or feelings of others without aid from their utterance, gesture, action or facial expressions and even in contradiction of these always partial and often misleading data. Finally, by an utilisation of the inner senses, — that is to say, of the sense-powers, in themselves, in their purely mental or subtle activity as distinguished from the physical which is only a selection for the purposes of outward life from their total and general action, — we are able to take cognition of sense-experiences, of appearances and images of things other than those which belong to the organisation of our material environment. All these extensions of faculty, though received with hesitation and incredulity by the physical mind because they are abnormal to the habitual scheme of our ordinary life and experience, difficult to set in action, still more difficult to systematise so as to be able to make of them an orderly and serviceable set of instruments, must yet be admitted, since they are the invariable result of any attempt to enlarge the field of our superficially active consciousness whether by some kind of untaught effort and casual ill-ordered effect or by a scientific and well-regulated practice.

None of them, however, leads to the aim we have in view, the psychological experience of those truths that are “beyond perception by the sense but seizable by the perceptions of the

reason”, *buddhigrāhyam atīndriyam*.² They give us only a larger field of phenomena and more effective means for the observation of phenomena. The truth of things always escapes beyond the sense. Yet is it a sound rule inherent in the very constitution of universal existence that where there are truths attainable by the reason, there must be somewhere in the organism possessed of that reason a means of arriving at or verifying them by experience. The one means we have left in our mentality is an extension of that form of knowledge by identity which gives us the awareness of our own existence. It is really upon a self-awareness more or less conscient, more or less present to our conception that the knowledge of the contents of our self is based. Or to put it in a more general formula, the knowledge of the contents is contained in the knowledge of the continent. If then we can extend our faculty of mental self-awareness to awareness of the Self beyond and outside us, Atman or Brahman of the Upanishads, we may become possessors in experience of the truths which form the contents of the Atman or Brahman in the universe. It is on this possibility that Indian Vedanta has based itself. It has sought through knowledge of the Self the knowledge of the universe.

But always mental experience and the concepts of the reason have been held by it to be even at their highest a reflection in mental identifications and not the supreme self-existent identity. We have to go beyond the mind and the reason. The reason active in our waking consciousness is only a mediator between the subconscious All that we come from in our evolution upwards and the superconscious All towards which we are impelled by that evolution. The subconscious and the superconscious are two different formulations of the same All. The master-word of the subconscious is Life, the master-word of the superconscious is Light. In the subconscious knowledge or consciousness is involved in action, for action is the essence of Life. In the superconscious action re-enters into Light and no longer contains involved knowledge but is itself contained in a supreme

² *Gita*, VI. 21.

consciousness. Intuitive knowledge is that which is common between them and the foundation of intuitive knowledge is conscious or effective identity between that which knows and that which is known; it is that state of common self-existence in which the knower and the known are one through knowledge. But in the subconscious the intuition manifests itself in the action, in effectivity, and the knowledge or conscious identity is either entirely or more or less concealed in the action. In the superconscious, on the contrary, Light being the law and the principle, the intuition manifests itself in its true nature as knowledge emerging out of conscious identity, and effectivity of action is rather the accompaniment or necessary consequent and no longer masks as the primary fact. Between these two states reason and mind act as intermediaries which enable the being to liberate knowledge out of its imprisonment in the act and prepare it to resume its essential primacy. When the self-awareness in the mind applied both to continent and content, to own-self and other-self, exalts itself into the luminous self-manifest identity, the reason also converts itself into the form of the self-luminous intuitive³ knowledge. This is the highest possible state of our knowledge when mind fulfils itself in the supramental.

Such is the scheme of the human understanding upon which the conclusions of the most ancient Vedanta were built. To develop the results arrived at on this foundation by the ancient sages is not my object, but it is necessary to pass briefly in review some of their principal conclusions so far as they affect the problem of the divine Life with which alone we are at present concerned. For it is in those ideas that we shall find the best previous foundation of that which we seek now to rebuild and although, as with all knowledge, old expression has to be replaced to a certain extent by new expression suited to a later mentality and old light has to merge itself into new light

³ I use the word "intuition" for want of a better. In truth, it is a makeshift and inadequate to the connotation demanded of it. The same has to be said of the word "consciousness" and many others which our poverty compels us to extend illegitimately in their significance.

as dawn succeeds dawn, yet it is with the old treasure as our initial capital or so much of it as we can recover that we shall most advantageously proceed to accumulate the largest gains in our new commerce with the ever-changeless and ever-changing Infinite.

Sad Brahman, Existence pure, indefinable, infinite, absolute, is the last concept at which Vedantic analysis arrives in its view of the universe, the fundamental Reality which Vedantic experience discovers behind all the movement and formation which constitute the apparent reality. It is obvious that when we posit this conception, we go entirely beyond what our ordinary consciousness, our normal experience contains or warrants. The senses and sense-mind know nothing whatever about any pure or absolute existence. All that our sense-experience tells us of, is form and movement. Forms exist, but with an existence that is not pure, rather always mixed, combined, aggregated, relative. When we go within ourselves, we may get rid of precise form, but we cannot get rid of movement, of change. Motion of Matter in Space, motion of change in Time seem to be the condition of existence. We may say indeed, if we like, that this is existence and that the idea of existence in itself corresponds to no discoverable reality. At the most in the phenomenon of self-awareness or behind it, we get sometimes a glimpse of something immovable and immutable, something that we vaguely perceive or imagine that we are beyond all life and death, beyond all change and formation and action. Here is the one door in us that sometimes swings open upon the splendour of a truth beyond and, before it shuts again, allows a ray to touch us,—a luminous intimation which, if we have the strength and firmness, we may hold to in our faith and make a starting-point for another play of consciousness than that of the sense-mind, for the play of Intuition.

For if we examine carefully, we shall find that Intuition is our first teacher. Intuition always stands veiled behind our mental operations. Intuition brings to man those brilliant messages from the Unknown which are the beginning of his higher knowledge. Reason only comes in afterwards to see what profit it can have

of the shining harvest. Intuition gives us that idea of something behind and beyond all that we know and seem to be which pursues man always in contradiction of his lower reason and all his normal experience and impels him to formulate that formless perception in the more positive ideas of God, Immortality, Heaven and the rest by which we strive to express it to the mind. For Intuition is as strong as Nature herself from whose very soul it has sprung and cares nothing for the contradictions of reason or the denials of experience. It knows what is because it is, because itself it is of that and has come from that, and will not yield it to the judgment of what merely becomes and appears. What the Intuition tells us of, is not so much Existence as the Existent, for it proceeds from that one point of light in us which gives it its advantage, that sometimes opened door in our own self-awareness. Ancient Vedanta seized this message of the Intuition and formulated it in the three great declarations of the Upanishads, "I am He", "Thou art That, O Swetaketu", "All this is the Brahman; this Self is the Brahman".

But Intuition by the very nature of its action in man, working as it does from behind the veil, active principally in his more unenlightened, less articulate parts, served in front of the veil, in the narrow light which is our waking conscience, only by instruments that are unable fully to assimilate its messages,— Intuition is unable to give us the truth in that ordered and articulated form which our nature demands. Before it could effect any such completeness of direct knowledge in us, it would have to organise itself in our surface being and take possession there of the leading part. But in our surface being it is not the Intuition, it is the Reason which is organised and helps us to order our perceptions, thoughts and actions. Therefore the age of intuitive knowledge, represented by the early Vedantic thinking of the Upanishads, had to give place to the age of rational knowledge; inspired Scripture made room for metaphysical philosophy, even as afterwards metaphysical philosophy had to give place to experimental Science. Intuitive thought which is a messenger from the superconscious and therefore our highest faculty, was supplanted by the pure reason which is only a sort of deputy

and belongs to the middle heights of our being; pure reason in its turn was supplanted for a time by the mixed action of the reason which lives on our plains and lower elevations and does not in its view exceed the horizon of the experience that the physical mind and senses or such aids as we can invent for them can bring to us. And this process which seems to be a descent, is really a circle of progress. For in each case the lower faculty is compelled to take up as much as it can assimilate of what the higher had already given and to attempt to re-establish it by its own methods. By the attempt it is itself enlarged in its scope and arrives eventually at a more supple and a more ample self-accommodation to the higher faculties. Without this succession and attempt at separate assimilation we should be obliged to remain under the exclusive domination of a part of our nature while the rest remained either depressed and unduly subjected or separate in its field and therefore poor in its development. With this succession and separate attempt the balance is righted; a more complete harmony of our parts of knowledge is prepared.

We see this succession in the Upanishads and the subsequent Indian philosophies. The sages of the Veda and Vedanta relied entirely upon intuition and spiritual experience. It is by an error that scholars sometimes speak of great debates or discussions in the Upanishad. Wherever there is the appearance of a controversy, it is not by discussion, by dialectics or the use of logical reasoning that it proceeds, but by a comparison of intuitions and experiences in which the less luminous gives place to the more luminous, the narrower, faultier or less essential to the more comprehensive, more perfect, more essential. The question asked by one sage of another is "What dost thou know?", not "What dost thou think?" nor "To what conclusion has thy reasoning arrived?" Nowhere in the Upanishads do we find any trace of logical reasoning urged in support of the truths of Vedanta. Intuition, the sages seem to have held, must be corrected by a more perfect intuition; logical reasoning cannot be its judge.

And yet the human reason demands its own method of satisfaction. Therefore when the age of rationalistic speculation began, Indian philosophers, respectful of the heritage of the past,

adopted a double attitude towards the Truth they sought. They recognised in the Sruti, the earlier results of Intuition or, as they preferred to call it, of inspired Revelation, an authority superior to Reason. But at the same time they started from Reason and tested the results it gave them, holding only those conclusions to be valid which were supported by the supreme authority. In this way they avoided to a certain extent the besetting sin of metaphysics, the tendency to battle in the clouds because it deals with words as if they were imperative facts instead of symbols which have always to be carefully scrutinised and brought back constantly to the sense of that which they represent. Their speculations tended at first to keep near at the centre to the highest and profoundest experience and proceeded with the united consent of the two great authorities, Reason and Intuition. Nevertheless, the natural trend of Reason to assert its own supremacy triumphed in effect over the theory of its subordination. Hence the rise of conflicting schools each of which founded itself in theory on the Veda and used its texts as a weapon against the others. For the highest intuitive Knowledge sees things in the whole, in the large and details only as sides of the indivisible whole; its tendency is towards immediate synthesis and the unity of knowledge. Reason, on the contrary, proceeds by analysis and division and assembles its facts to form a whole; but in the assemblage so formed there are opposites, anomalies, logical incompatibilities, and the natural tendency of Reason is to affirm some and to negate others which conflict with its chosen conclusions so that it may form a flawlessly logical system. The unity of the first intuitional knowledge was thus broken up and the ingenuity of the logicians was always able to discover devices, methods of interpretation, standards of varying value by which inconvenient texts of the Scripture could be practically annulled and an entire freedom acquired for their metaphysical speculation.

Nevertheless, the main conceptions of the earlier Vedanta remained in parts in the various philosophical systems and efforts were made from time to time to recombine them into some image of the old catholicity and unity of intuitional thought. And behind the thought of all, variously presented, survived as

the fundamental conception, Purusha, Atman or Sad Brahman, the pure Existent of the Upanishads, often rationalised into an idea or psychological state, but still carrying something of its old burden of inexpressible reality. What may be the relation of the movement of becoming which is what we call the world to this absolute Unity and how the ego, whether generated by the movement or cause of the movement, can return to that true Self, Divinity or Reality declared by the Vedanta, these were the questions speculative and practical which have always occupied the thought of India.

Chapter IX

The Pure Existent

One indivisible that is pure existence.

*Chhandogya Upanishad.*¹

WHEN we withdraw our gaze from its egoistic preoccupation with limited and fleeting interests and look upon the world with dispassionate and curious eyes that search only for the Truth, our first result is the perception of a boundless energy of infinite existence, infinite movement, infinite activity pouring itself out in limitless Space, in eternal Time, an existence that surpasses infinitely our ego or any ego or any collectivity of egos, in whose balance the grandiose products of aeons are but the dust of a moment and in whose incalculable sum numberless myriads count only as a petty swarm. We instinctively act and feel and weave our life thoughts as if this stupendous world movement were at work around us as centre and for our benefit, for our help or harm, or as if the justification of our egoistic cravings, emotions, ideas, standards were its proper business even as they are our own chief concern. When we begin to see, we perceive that it exists for itself, not for us, has its own gigantic aims, its own complex and boundless idea, its own vast desire or delight that it seeks to fulfil, its own immense and formidable standards which look down as if with an indulgent and ironic smile at the pettiness of ours. And yet let us not swing over to the other extreme and form too positive an idea of our own insignificance. That too would be an act of ignorance and the shutting of our eyes to the great facts of the universe.

¹ VI. 2. 1.

For this boundless Movement does not regard us as unimportant to it. Science reveals to us how minute is the care, how cunning the device, how intense the absorption it bestows upon the smallest of its works even as on the largest. This mighty energy is an equal and impartial mother, *samat brahma*, in the great term of the Gita, and its intensity and force of movement is the same in the formation and upholding of a system of suns and the organisation of the life of an ant-hill. It is the illusion of size, of quantity that induces us to look on the one as great, the other as petty. If we look, on the contrary, not at mass of quantity but force of quality, we shall say that the ant is greater than the solar system it inhabits and man greater than all inanimate Nature put together. But this again is the illusion of quality. When we go behind and examine only the intensity of the movement of which quality and quantity are aspects, we realise that this Brahman dwells equally in all existences. Equally partaken of by all in its being, we are tempted to say, equally distributed to all in its energy. But this too is an illusion of quantity. Brahman dwells in all, indivisible, yet as if divided and distributed. If we look again with an observing perception not dominated by intellectual concepts, but informed by intuition and culminating in knowledge by identity, we shall see that the consciousness of this infinite Energy is other than our mental consciousness, that it is indivisible and gives, not an equal part of itself, but its whole self at one and the same time to the solar system and to the ant-hill. To Brahman there are no whole and parts, but each thing is all itself and benefits by the whole of Brahman. Quality and quantity differ, the self is equal. The form and manner and result of the force of action vary infinitely, but the eternal, primal, infinite energy is the same in all. The force of strength that goes to make the strong man is no whit greater than the force of weakness that goes to make the weak. The energy spent is as great in repression as in expression, in negation as in affirmation, in silence as in sound.

Therefore the first reckoning we have to mend is that between this infinite Movement, this energy of existence which is the world and ourselves. At present we keep a false account. We

are infinitely important to the All, but to us the All is negligible; we alone are important to ourselves. This is the sign of the original ignorance which is the root of the ego, that it can only think with itself as centre as if it were the All, and of that which is not itself accepts only so much as it is mentally disposed to acknowledge or as it is forced to recognise by the shocks of its environment. Even when it begins to philosophise, does it not assert that the world only exists in and by its consciousness? Its own state of consciousness or mental standards are to it the test of reality; all outside its orbit or view tends to become false or non-existent. This mental self-sufficiency of man creates a system of false accountantship which prevents us from drawing the right and full value from life. There is a sense in which these pretensions of the human mind and ego repose on a truth, but this truth only emerges when the mind has learned its ignorance and the ego has submitted to the All and lost in it its separate self-assertion. To recognise that we, or rather the results and appearances we call ourselves, are only a partial movement of this infinite Movement and that it is that infinite which we have to know, to be consciously and to fulfil faithfully, is the commencement of true living. To recognise that in our true selves we are one with the total movement and not minor or subordinate is the other side of the account, and its expression in the manner of our being, thought, emotion and action is necessary to the culmination of a true or divine living.

But to settle the account we have to know what is this All, this infinite and omnipotent energy. And here we come to a fresh complication. For it is asserted to us by the pure reason and it seems to be asserted to us by Vedanta that as we are subordinate and an aspect of this Movement, so the movement is subordinate and an aspect of something other than itself, of a great timeless, spaceless Stability, *sthānu*, which is immutable, inexhaustible and unexpended, not acting though containing all this action, not energy, but pure existence. Those who see only this world-energy can declare indeed that there is no such thing: our idea of an eternal stability, an immutable pure existence is a fiction of our intellectual conceptions starting from a

false idea of the stable: for there is nothing that is stable; all is movement and our conception of the stable is only an artifice of our mental consciousness by which we secure a standpoint for dealing practically with the movement. It is easy to show that this is true in the movement itself. There is nothing there that is stable. All that appears to be stationary is only a block of movement, a formulation of energy at work which so affects our consciousness that it seems to be still, somewhat as the earth seems to us to be still, somewhat as a train in which we are travelling seems to be still in the midst of a rushing landscape. But is it equally true that underlying this movement, supporting it, there is nothing that is moveless and immutable? Is it true that existence consists only in the action of energy? Or is it not rather that energy is an output of Existence?

We see at once that if such an Existence is, it must be, like the Energy, infinite. Neither reason nor experience nor intuition nor imagination bears witness to us of the possibility of a final terminus. All end and beginning presuppose something beyond the end or beginning. An absolute end, an absolute beginning is not only a contradiction in terms, but a contradiction of the essence of things, a violence, a fiction. Infinity imposes itself upon the appearances of the finite by its ineffugable self-existence.

But this is infinity with regard to Time and Space, an eternal duration, interminable extension. The pure Reason goes farther and looking in its own colourless and austere light at Time and Space points out that these two are categories of our consciousness, conditions under which we arrange our perception of phenomenon. When we look at existence in itself, Time and Space disappear. If there is any extension, it is not a spatial but a psychological extension; if there is any duration, it is not a temporal but a psychological duration; and it is then easy to see that this extension and duration are only symbols which represent to the mind something not translatable into intellectual terms, an eternity which seems to us the same all-containing ever-new moment, an infinity which seems to us the same all-containing all-pervading point without magnitude. And this conflict of terms, so violent, yet accurately expressive of something we do

perceive, shows that mind and speech have passed beyond their natural limits and are striving to express a Reality in which their own conventions and necessary oppositions disappear into an ineffable identity.

But is this a true record? May it not be that Time and Space so disappear merely because the existence we are regarding is a fiction of the intellect, a fantastic Nihil created by speech, which we strive to erect into a conceptual reality? We regard again that Existence-in-itself and we say, No. There is something behind the phenomenon not only infinite but indefinable. Of no phenomenon, of no totality of phenomena can we say that absolutely it is. Even if we reduce all phenomena to one fundamental, universal irreducible phenomenon of movement or energy, we get only an indefinable phenomenon. The very conception of movement carries with it the potentiality of repose and betrays itself as an activity of some existence; the very idea of energy in action carries with it the idea of energy abstaining from action; and an absolute energy not in action is simply and purely absolute existence. We have only these two alternatives, either an indefinable pure existence or an indefinable energy in action and, if the latter alone is true, without any stable base or cause, then the energy is a result and phenomenon generated by the action, the movement which alone is. We have then no Existence, or we have the Nihil of the Buddhists with existence as only an attribute of an eternal phenomenon, of Action, of Karma, of Movement. This, asserts the pure reason, leaves my perceptions unsatisfied, contradicts my fundamental seeing, and therefore cannot be. For it brings us to a last abruptly ceasing stair of an ascent which leaves the whole staircase without support, suspended in the Void.

If this indefinable, infinite, timeless, spaceless Existence is, it is necessarily a pure absolute. It cannot be summed up in any quantity or quantities, it cannot be composed of any quality or combination of qualities. It is not an aggregate of forms or a formal substratum of forms. If all forms, quantities, qualities were to disappear, this would remain. Existence without quantity, without quality, without form is not only conceivable, but

it is the one thing we can conceive behind these phenomena. Necessarily, when we say it is without them, we mean that it exceeds them, that it is something into which they pass in such a way as to cease to be what we call form, quality, quantity and out of which they emerge as form, quality and quantity in the movement. They do not pass away into one form, one quality, one quantity which is the basis of all the rest,—for there is none such,—but into something which cannot be defined by any of these terms. So all things that are conditions and appearances of the movement pass into That from which they have come and there, so far as they exist, become something that can no longer be described by the terms that are appropriate to them in the movement. Therefore we say that the pure existence is an Absolute and in itself unknowable by our thought although we can go back to it in a supreme identity that transcends the terms of knowledge. The movement, on the contrary, is the field of the relative and yet by the very definition of the relative all things in the movement contain, are contained in and are the Absolute. The relation of the phenomena of Nature to the fundamental ether which is contained in them, constitutes them, contains them and yet is so different from them that entering into it they cease to be what they now are, is the illustration given by the Vedanta as most nearly representing this identity in difference between the Absolute and the relative.

Necessarily, when we speak of things passing into that from which they have come, we are using the language of our temporal consciousness and must guard ourselves against its illusions. The emergence of the movement from the Immutable is an eternal phenomenon and it is only because we cannot conceive it in that beginningless, endless, ever-new moment which is the eternity of the Timeless that our notions and perceptions are compelled to place it in a temporal eternity of successive duration to which are attached the ideas of an always recurrent beginning, middle and end.

But all this, it may be said, is valid only so long as we accept the concepts of pure reason and remain subject to them. But the concepts of reason have no obligatory force. We must judge of

existence not by what we mentally conceive, but by what we see to exist. And the purest, freest form of insight into existence as it is shows us nothing but movement. Two things alone exist, movement in Space, movement in Time, the former objective, the latter subjective. Extension is real, duration is real, Space and Time are real. Even if we can go behind extension in Space and perceive it as a psychological phenomenon, as an attempt of the mind to make existence manageable by distributing the indivisible whole in a conceptual Space, yet we cannot go behind the movement of succession and change in Time. For that is the very stuff of our consciousness. We are and the world is a movement that continually progresses and increases by the inclusion of all the successions of the past in a present which represents itself to us as the beginning of all the successions of the future,—a beginning, a present that always eludes us because it is not, for it has perished before it is born. What is, is the eternal, indivisible succession of Time carrying on its stream a progressive movement of consciousness also indivisible.² Duration then, eternally successive movement and change in Time, is the sole absolute. Becoming is the only being.

In reality, this opposition of actual insight into being to the conceptual fictions of the pure Reason is fallacious. If indeed intuition in this matter were really opposed to intelligence, we could not confidently support a merely conceptual reasoning against fundamental insight. But this appeal to intuitive experience is incomplete. It is valid only so far as it proceeds and it errs by stopping short of the integral experience. So long as the intuition fixes itself only upon that which we become, we see ourselves as a continual progression of movement and change in consciousness in the eternal succession of Time. We are the river, the flame of the Buddhist illustration. But there is a supreme

² Indivisible in the totality of the movement. Each moment of Time or Consciousness may be considered as separate from its predecessor and successor, each successive action of Energy as a new quantum or new creation; but this does not abrogate continuity without which there would be no duration of Time or coherence of consciousness. A man's steps as he walks or runs or leaps are separate, but there is something that takes the steps and makes the movement continuous.

experience and supreme intuition by which we go back behind our surface self and find that this becoming, change, succession are only a mode of our being and that there is that in us which is not involved at all in the becoming. Not only can we have the intuition of this that is stable and eternal in us, not only can we have the glimpse of it in experience behind the veil of continually fleeting becomings, but we can draw back into it and live in it entirely, so effecting an entire change in our external life, and in our attitude, and in our action upon the movement of the world. And this stability in which we can so live is precisely that which the pure Reason has already given us, although it can be arrived at without reasoning at all, without knowing previously what it is,—it is pure existence, eternal, infinite, indefinable, not affected by the succession of Time, not involved in the extension of Space, beyond form, quantity, quality,—Self only and absolute.

The pure existent is then a fact and no mere concept; it is the fundamental reality. But, let us hasten to add, the movement, the energy, the becoming are also a fact, also a reality. The supreme intuition and its corresponding experience may correct the other, may go beyond, may suspend, but do not abolish it. We have therefore two fundamental facts of pure existence and of world-existence, a fact of Being, a fact of Becoming. To deny one or the other is easy; to recognise the facts of consciousness and find out their relation is the true and fruitful wisdom.

Stability and movement, we must remember, are only our psychological representations of the Absolute, even as are oneness and multitude. The Absolute is beyond stability and movement as it is beyond unity and multiplicity. But it takes its eternal poise in the one and the stable and whirls round itself infinitely, inconceivably, securely in the moving and multitudinous. World-existence is the ecstatic dance of Shiva which multiplies the body of the God numberlessly to the view: it leaves that white existence precisely where and what it was, ever is and ever will be; its sole absolute object is the joy of the dancing.

But as we cannot describe or think out the Absolute in itself,

beyond stability and movement, beyond unity and multitude,—nor is that at all our business,—we must accept the double fact, admit both Shiva and Kali and seek to know what is this measureless Movement in Time and Space with regard to that timeless and spaceless pure Existence, one and stable, to which measure and measurelessness are inapplicable. We have seen what pure Reason, intuition and experience have to say about pure Existence, about Sat; what have they to say about Force, about Movement, about Shakti?

And the first thing we have to ask ourselves is whether that Force is simply force, simply an unintelligent energy of movement or whether the consciousness which seems to emerge out of it in this material world we live in, is not merely one of its phenomenal results but rather its own true and secret nature. In Vedantic terms, is Force simply Prakriti, only a movement of action and process, or is Prakriti really power of Chit, in its nature force of creative self-consciousness? On this essential problem all the rest hinges.

Chapter X

Conscious Force

They beheld the self-force of the Divine Being deep hidden by its own conscious modes of working.

*Swetasvatara Upanishad.*¹

This is he that is awake in those who sleep.

*Katha Upanishad.*²

ALL PHENOMENAL existence resolves itself into Force, into a movement of energy that assumes more or less material, more or less gross or subtle forms for self-presentation to its own experience. In the ancient images by which human thought attempted to make this origin and law of being intelligible and real to itself, this infinite existence of Force was figured as a sea, initially at rest and therefore free from forms, but the first disturbance, the first initiation of movement necessitates the creation of forms and is the seed of a universe.

Matter is the presentation of force which is most easily intelligible to our intelligence, moulded as it is by contacts in Matter to which a mind involved in material brain gives the response. The elementary state of material Force is, in the view of the old Indian physicists, a condition of pure material extension in Space of which the peculiar property is vibration typified to us by the phenomenon of sound. But vibration in this state of ether is not sufficient to create forms. There must first be some obstruction in the flow of the Force ocean, some contraction and expansion, some interplay of vibrations, some impinging of force upon force so as to create a beginning of fixed relations and mutual effects. Material Force modifying its first ethereal

¹ I. 3. ² II. 2. 8.

status assumes a second, called in the old language the aerial, of which the special property is contact between force and force, contact that is the basis of all material relations. Still we have not as yet real forms but only varying forces. A sustaining principle is needed. This is provided by a third self-modification of the primitive Force of which the principle of light, electricity, fire and heat is for us the characteristic manifestation. Even then, we can have forms of force preserving their own character and peculiar action, but not stable forms of Matter. A fourth state characterised by diffusion and a first medium of permanent attractions and repulsions, termed picturesquely water or the liquid state, and a fifth of cohesion, termed earth or the solid state, complete the necessary elements.

All forms of Matter of which we are aware, all physical things even to the most subtle, are built up by the combination of these five elements. Upon them also depends all our sensible experience; for by reception of vibration comes the sense of sound; by contact of things in a world of vibrations of Force the sense of touch; by the action of light in the forms hatched, outlined, sustained by the force of light and fire and heat the sense of sight; by the fourth element the sense of taste; by the fifth the sense of smell. All is essentially response to vibratory contacts between force and force. In this way the ancient thinkers bridged the gulf between pure Force and its final modifications and satisfied the difficulty which prevents the ordinary human mind from understanding how all these forms which are to his senses so real, solid and durable can be in truth only temporary phenomena and a thing like pure energy, to the senses non-existent, intangible and almost incredible, can be the one permanent cosmic reality.

The problem of consciousness is not solved by this theory; for it does not explain how the contact of vibrations of Force should give rise to conscious sensations. The Sankhyas or analytic thinkers posited therefore behind these five elements two principles which they called Mahat and Ahankara, principles which are really non-material; for the first is nothing but the vast cosmic principle of Force and the other the divisional principle of Ego-formation. Nevertheless, these two principles, as also the

principle of intelligence, become active in consciousness not by virtue of Force itself, but by virtue of an inactive Conscious-Soul or souls in which its activities are reflected and by that reflection assume the hue of consciousness.

Such is the explanation of things offered by the school of Indian philosophy which comes nearest to the modern materialistic ideas and which carried the idea of a mechanical or unconscious Force in Nature as far as was possible to a seriously reflective Indian mind. Whatever its defects, its main idea was so indisputable that it came to be generally accepted. However the phenomenon of consciousness may be explained, whether Nature be an inert impulse or a conscious principle, it is certainly Force; the principle of things is a formative movement of energies, all forms are born of meeting and mutual adaptation between unshaped forces, all sensation and action is a response of something in a form of Force to the contacts of other forms of Force. This is the world as we experience it and from this experience we must always start.

Physical analysis of Matter by modern Science has come to the same general conclusion, even if a few last doubts still linger. Intuition and experience confirm this concord of Science and Philosophy. Pure reason finds in it the satisfaction of its own essential conceptions. For even in the view of the world as essentially an act of consciousness, an act is implied and in the act movement of Force, play of Energy. This also, when we examine from within our own experience, proves to be the fundamental nature of the world. All our activities are the play of the triple force of the old philosophies, knowledge-force, desire-force, action-force, and all these prove to be really three streams of one original and identical Power, Adya Shakti. Even our states of rest are only equable state or equilibrium of the play of her movement.

Movement of Force being admitted as the whole nature of the Cosmos, two questions arise. And first, how did this movement come to take place at all in the bosom of existence? If we suppose it to be not only eternal but the very essence of all existence, the question does not arise. But we have negated

this theory. We are aware of an existence which is not compelled by the movement. How then does this movement alien to its eternal repose come to take place in it? by what cause? by what possibility? by what mysterious impulsion?

The answer most approved by the ancient Indian mind was that Force is inherent in Existence. Shiva and Kali, Brahman and Shakti are one and not two who are separable. Force inherent in existence may be at rest or it may be in motion, but when it is at rest, it exists none the less and is not abolished, diminished or in any way essentially altered. This reply is so entirely rational and in accordance with the nature of things that we need not hesitate to accept it. For it is impossible, because contradictory of reason, to suppose that Force is a thing alien to the one and infinite existence and entered into it from outside or was non-existent and arose in it at some point in Time. Even the Illusionist theory must admit that Maya, the power of self-illusion in Brahman, is potentially eternal in eternal Being and then the sole question is its manifestation or non-manifestation. The Sankhya also asserts the eternal coexistence of Prakriti and Purusha, Nature and Conscious-Soul, and the alternative states of rest or equilibrium of Prakriti and movement or disturbance of equilibrium.

But since Force is thus inherent in existence and it is the nature of Force to have this double or alternative potentiality of rest and movement, that is to say, of self-concentration in Force and self-diffusion in Force, the question of the how of the movement, its possibility, initiating impulsion or impelling cause does not arise. For we can easily, then, conceive that this potentiality must translate itself either as an alternative rhythm of rest and movement succeeding each other in Time or else as an eternal self-concentration of Force in immutable existence with a superficial play of movement, change and formation like the rising and falling of waves on the surface of the ocean. And this superficial play — we are necessarily speaking in inadequate images — may be either coeval with the self-concentration and itself also eternal or it may begin and end in Time and be resumed by a sort of constant rhythm; it is then not eternal in continuity but eternal in recurrence.

The problem of the how thus eliminated, there presents itself the question of the why. Why should this possibility of a play of movement of Force translate itself at all? why should not Force of existence remain eternally concentrated in itself, infinite, free from all variation and formation? This question also does not arise if we assume Existence to be non-conscious and consciousness only a development of material energy which we wrongly suppose to be immaterial. For then we can say simply that this rhythm is the nature of Force in existence and there is absolutely no reason to seek for a why, a cause, an initial motive or a final purpose for that which is in its nature eternally self-existent. We cannot put that question to eternal self-existence and ask it either why it exists or how it came into existence; neither can we put it to self-force of existence and its inherent nature of impulsion to movement. All that we can then inquire into is its manner of self-manifestation, its principles of movement and formation, its process of evolution. Both Existence and Force being inert,—inert status and inert impulsion,—both of them unconscious and unintelligent, there cannot be any purpose or final goal in evolution or any original cause or intention.

But if we suppose or find Existence to be conscious Being, the problem arises. We may indeed suppose a conscious Being which is subject to its nature of Force, compelled by it and without option as to whether it shall manifest in the universe or remain unmanifest. Such is the cosmic God of the Tantriks and the Mayavadins who is subject to Shakti or Maya, Purusha involved in Maya or controlled by Shakti. But it is obvious that such a God is not the supreme infinite Existence with which we have started. Admittedly, it is only a formulation of Brahman in the cosmos by the Brahman which is itself logically anterior to Shakti or Maya and takes her back into its transcendental being when she ceases from her works. In a conscious existence which is absolute, independent of its formations, not determined by its works, we must suppose an inherent freedom to manifest or not to manifest the potentiality of movement. A Brahman compelled by Prakriti is not Brahman, but an inert Infinite with an active

content in it more powerful than the continent, a conscious holder of Force of whom his Force is master. If we say that it is compelled by itself as Force, by its own nature, we do not get rid of the contradiction, the evasion of our first postulate. We have got back to an Existence which is really nothing but Force, Force at rest or in movement, absolute Force perhaps, but not absolute Being.

It is then necessary to examine into the relation between Force and Consciousness. But what do we mean by the latter term? Ordinarily we mean by it our first obvious idea of a mental waking consciousness such as is possessed by the human being during the major part of his bodily existence, when he is not asleep, stunned or otherwise deprived of his physical and superficial methods of sensation. In this sense it is plain enough that consciousness is the exception and not the rule in the order of the material universe. We ourselves do not always possess it. But this vulgar and shallow idea of the nature of consciousness, though it still colours our ordinary thought and associations, must now definitely disappear out of philosophical thinking. For we know that there is something in us which is conscious when we sleep, when we are stunned or drugged or in a swoon, in all apparently unconscious states of our physical being. Not only so, but we may now be sure that the old thinkers were right when they declared that even in our waking state what we call then our consciousness is only a small selection from our entire conscious being. It is a superficies, it is not even the whole of our mentality. Behind it, much vaster than it, there is a subliminal or subconscious mind which is the greater part of ourselves and contains heights and profundities which no man has yet measured or fathomed. This knowledge gives us a starting-point for the true science of Force and its workings; it delivers us definitely from circumscription by the material and from the illusion of the obvious.

Materialism indeed insists that, whatever the extension of consciousness, it is a material phenomenon inseparable from our physical organs and not their utiliser but their result. This orthodox contention, however, is no longer able to hold the

field against the tide of increasing knowledge. Its explanations are becoming more and more inadequate and strained. It is becoming always clearer that not only does the capacity of our total consciousness far exceed that of our organs, the senses, the nerves, the brain, but that even for our ordinary thought and consciousness these organs are only their habitual instruments and not their generators. Consciousness uses the brain which its upward strivings have produced, brain has not produced nor does it use the consciousness. There are even abnormal instances which go to prove that our organs are not entirely indispensable instruments,—that the heart-beats are not absolutely essential to life, any more than is breathing, nor the organised brain-cells to thought. Our physical organism no more causes or explains thought and consciousness than the construction of an engine causes or explains the motive-power of steam or electricity. The force is anterior, not the physical instrument.

Momentous logical consequences follow. In the first place we may ask whether, since even mental consciousness exists where we see inanimation and inertia, it is not possible that even in material objects a universal subconscious mind is present although unable to act or communicate itself to its surfaces for want of organs. Is the material state an emptiness of consciousness, or is it not rather only a sleep of consciousness—even though from the point of view of evolution an original and not an intermediate sleep? And by sleep the human example teaches us that we mean not a suspension of consciousness, but its gathering inward away from conscious physical response to the impacts of external things. And is not this what all existence is that has not yet developed means of outward communication with the external physical world? Is there not a Conscious Soul, a Purusha who wakes for ever even in all that sleeps?

We may go farther. When we speak of subconscious mind, we should mean by the phrase a thing not different from the outer mentality, but only acting below the surface, unknown to the waking man, in the same sense if perhaps with a deeper plunge and a larger scope. But the phenomena of the subliminal

self far exceed the limits of any such definition. It includes an action not only immensely superior in capacity, but quite different in kind from what we know as mentality in our waking self. We have therefore a right to suppose that there is a superconscient in us as well as a subconscious, a range of conscious faculties and therefore an organisation of consciousness which rise high above that psychological stratum to which we give the name of mentality. And since the subliminal self in us thus rises in superconsciousness above mentality, may it not also sink in subconsciousness below mentality? Are there not in us and in the world forms of consciousness which are submental, to which we can give the name of vital and physical consciousness? If so, we must suppose in the plant and the metal also a force to which we can give the name of consciousness although it is not the human or animal mentality for which we have hitherto preserved the monopoly of that description.

Not only is this probable but, if we will consider things dispassionately, it is certain. In ourselves there is such a vital consciousness which acts in the cells of the body and the automatic vital functions so that we go through purposeful movements and obey attractions and repulsions to which our mind is a stranger. In animals this vital consciousness is an even more important factor. In plants it is intuitively evident. The seekings and shrinkings of the plant, its pleasure and pain, its sleep and its wakefulness and all that strange life whose truth an Indian scientist has brought to light by rigidly scientific methods, are all movements of consciousness, but, as far as we can see, not of mentality. There is then a sub-mental, a vital consciousness which has precisely the same initial reactions as the mental, but is different in the constitution of its self-experience, even as that which is superconscient is in the constitution of its self-experience different from the mental being.

Does the range of what we can call consciousness cease with the plant, with that in which we recognise the existence of a sub-animal life? If so, we must then suppose that there is a force of life and consciousness originally alien to Matter which has yet entered into and occupied Matter,—perhaps from another

world.³ For whence, otherwise, can it have come? The ancient thinkers believed in the existence of such other worlds, which perhaps sustain life and consciousness in ours or even call it out by their pressure, but do not create it by their entry. Nothing can evolve out of Matter which is not therein already contained.

But there is no reason to suppose that the gamut of life and consciousness fails and stops short in that which seems to us purely material. The development of recent research and thought seems to point to a sort of obscure beginning of life and perhaps a sort of inert or suppressed consciousness in the metal and in the earth and in other "inanimate" forms, or at least the first stuff of what becomes consciousness in us may be there. Only while in the plant we can dimly recognise and conceive the thing that I have called vital consciousness, the consciousness of Matter, of the inert form, is difficult indeed for us to understand or imagine, and what we find it difficult to understand or imagine we consider it our right to deny. Nevertheless, when one has pursued consciousness so far into the depths, it becomes incredible that there should be this sudden gulf in Nature. Thought has a right to suppose a unity where that unity is confessed by all other classes of phenomena and in one class only, not denied, but merely more concealed than in others. And if we suppose the unity to be unbroken, we then arrive at the existence of consciousness in all forms of the Force which is at work in the world. Even if there be no conscient or superconscient Purusha inhabiting all forms, yet is there in those forms a conscious force of being of which even their outer parts overtly or inertly partake.

Necessarily, in such a view, the word consciousness changes its meaning. It is no longer synonymous with mentality but indicates a self-aware force of existence of which mentality is a middle term; below mentality it sinks into vital and material movements which are for us subconscious; above, it rises into

³ The curious speculation is now current that Life entered earth not from another world, but from another planet. To the thinker that would explain nothing. The essential question is how Life comes into Matter at all and not how it enters into the matter of a particular planet.

the supramental which is for us the superconscious. But in all it is one and the same thing organising itself differently. This is, once more, the Indian conception of Chit which, as energy, creates the worlds. Essentially, we arrive at that unity which materialistic Science perceives from the other end when it asserts that Mind cannot be another force than Matter, but must be merely development and outcome of material energy. Indian thought at its deepest affirms on the other hand that Mind and Matter are rather different grades of the same energy, different organisations of one conscious Force of Existence.

But what right have we to assume consciousness as the just description for this Force? For consciousness implies some kind of intelligence, purposefulness, self-knowledge, even though they may not take the forms habitual to our mentality. Even from this point of view everything supports rather than contradicts the idea of a universal conscious Force. We see, for instance, in the animal, operations of a perfect purposefulness and an exact, indeed a scientifically minute knowledge which are quite beyond the capacities of the animal mentality and which man himself can only acquire by long culture and education and even then uses with a much less sure rapidity. We are entitled to see in this general fact the proof of a conscious Force at work in the animal and the insect which is more intelligent, more purposeful, more aware of its intention, its ends, its means, its conditions than the highest mentality yet manifested in any individual form on earth. And in the operations of inanimate Nature we find the same pervading characteristic of a supreme hidden intelligence, "hidden in the modes of its own workings".

The only argument against a conscious and intelligent source for this purposeful work, this work of intelligence, of selection, adaptation and seeking is that large element in Nature's operations to which we give the name of waste. But obviously this is an objection based on the limitations of our human intellect which seeks to impose its own particular rationality, good enough for limited human ends, on the general operations of the World-Force. We see only part of Nature's purpose and all that does not subserve that part we call waste. Yet even our

own human action is full of an apparent waste, so appearing from the individual point of view, which yet, we may be sure, subserves well enough the large and universal purpose of things. That part of her intention which we can detect, Nature gets done surely enough in spite of, perhaps really by virtue of her apparent waste. We may well trust to her in the rest which we do not yet detect.

For the rest, it is impossible to ignore the drive of set purpose, the guidance of apparent blind tendency, the sure eventual or immediate coming to the target sought, which characterise the operations of World-Force in the animal, in the plant, in inanimate things. So long as Matter was Alpha and Omega to the scientific mind, the reluctance to admit intelligence as the mother of intelligence was an honest scruple. But now it is no more than an outworn paradox to affirm the emergence of human consciousness, intelligence and mastery out of an unintelligent, blindly driving unconsciousness in which no form or substance of them previously existed. Man's consciousness can be nothing else than a form of Nature's consciousness. It is there in other involved forms below Mind, it emerges in Mind, it shall ascend into yet superior forms beyond Mind. For the Force that builds the worlds is a conscious Force, the Existence which manifests itself in them is conscious Being and a perfect emergence of its potentialities in form is the sole object which we can rationally conceive for its manifestation of this world of forms.

Chapter XI

Delight of Existence: The Problem

For who could live or breathe if there were not this delight of existence as the ether in which we dwell?

From Delight all these beings are born, by Delight they exist and grow, to Delight they return.

Taittiriya Upanishad.¹

BUT EVEN if we accept this pure Existence, this Brahman, this Sat as the absolute beginning, end and continent of things and in Brahman an inherent self-consciousness inseparable from its being and throwing itself out as a force of movement of consciousness which is creative of forces, forms and worlds, we have yet no answer to the question “Why should Brahman, perfect, absolute, infinite, needing nothing, desiring nothing, at all throw out force of consciousness to create in itself these worlds of forms?” For we have put aside the solution that it is compelled by its own nature of Force to create, obliged by its own potentiality of movement and formation to move into forms. It is true that it has this potentiality, but it is not limited, bound or compelled by it; it is free. If, then, being free to move or remain eternally still, to throw itself into forms or retain the potentiality of form in itself, it indulges its power of movement and formation, it can be only for one reason, for delight.

This primary, ultimate and eternal Existence, as seen by the Vedantins, is not merely bare existence, or a conscious existence whose consciousness is crude force or power; it is a conscious existence the very term of whose being, the very term of whose consciousness is bliss. As in absolute existence there can be no

¹ II. 7; III. 6.

nothingness, no night of unconsciousness, no deficiency, that is to say, no failure of Force,—for if there were any of these things, it would not be absolute,—so also there can be no suffering, no negation of delight. Absoluteness of conscious existence is illimitable bliss of conscious existence; the two are only different phrases for the same thing. All illimitableness, all infinity, all absoluteness is pure delight. Even our relative humanity has this experience that all dissatisfaction means a limit, an obstacle,—satisfaction comes by realisation of something withheld, by the surpassing of the limit, the overcoming of the obstacle. This is because our original being is the absolute in full possession of its infinite and illimitable self-consciousness and self-power; a self-possession whose other name is self-delight. And in proportion as the relative touches upon that self-possession, it moves towards satisfaction, touches delight.

The self-delight of Brahman is not limited, however, by the still and motionless possession of its absolute self-being. Just as its force of consciousness is capable of throwing itself into forms infinitely and with an endless variation, so also its self-delight is capable of movement, of variation, of revelling in that infinite flux and mutability of itself represented by numberless teeming universes. To loose forth and enjoy this infinite movement and variation of its self-delight is the object of its extensive or creative play of Force.

In other words, that which has thrown itself out into forms is a triune Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, Sachchidananda, whose consciousness is in its nature a creative or rather a self-expressive Force capable of infinite variation in phenomenon and form of its self-conscious being and endlessly enjoying the delight of that variation. It follows that all things that exist are what they are as terms of that existence, terms of that conscious force, terms of that delight of being. Just as we find all things to be mutable forms of one immutable being, finite results of one infinite force, so we shall find that all things are variable self-expression of one invariable and all-embracing delight of self-existence. In everything that is, dwells the conscious force and it exists and is what it is by virtue of that conscious force; so also in everything

that is there is the delight of existence and it exists and is what it is by virtue of that delight.

This ancient Vedantic theory of cosmic origin is immediately confronted in the human mind by two powerful contradictions, the emotional and sensational consciousness of pain and the ethical problem of evil. For if the world be an expression of Sachchidananda, not only of existence that is conscious-force, —for that can easily be admitted,— but of existence that is also infinite self-delight, how are we to account for the universal presence of grief, of suffering, of pain? For this world appears to us rather as a world of suffering than as a world of the delight of existence. Certainly, that view of the world is an exaggeration, an error of perspective. If we regard it dispassionately and with a sole view to accurate and unemotional appreciation, we shall find that the sum of the pleasure of existence far exceeds the sum of the pain of existence,—appearances and individual cases to the contrary notwithstanding,—and that the active or passive, surface or underlying pleasure of existence is the normal state of nature, pain a contrary occurrence temporarily suspending or overlaying that normal state. But for that very reason the lesser sum of pain affects us more intensely and often looms larger than the greater sum of pleasure; precisely because the latter is normal, we do not treasure it, hardly even observe it unless it intensifies into some acuter form of itself, into a wave of happiness, a crest of joy or ecstasy. It is these things that we call delight and seek and the normal satisfaction of existence which is always there regardless of event and particular cause or object, affects us as something neutral which is neither pleasure nor pain. It is there, a great practical fact, for without it there would not be the universal and overpowering instinct of self-preservation, but it is not what we seek and therefore we do not enter it into our balance of emotional and sensational profit and loss. In that balance we enter only positive pleasures on one side and discomfort and pain on the other; pain affects us more intensely because it is abnormal to our being, contrary to our natural tendency and is experienced as an outrage on our existence, an offence and external attack on what we are and seek to be.

Nevertheless the abnormality of pain or its greater or lesser sum does not affect the philosophical issue; greater or less, its mere presence constitutes the whole problem. All being Sachchidananda, how can pain and suffering at all exist? This, the real problem, is often farther confused by a false issue starting from the idea of a personal extra-cosmic God and a partial issue, the ethical difficulty.

Sachchidananda, it may be reasoned, is God, is a conscious Being who is the author of existence; how then can God have created a world in which He inflicts suffering on His creatures, sanctions pain, permits evil? God being All-Good, who created pain and evil? If we say that pain is a trial and an ordeal, we do not solve the moral problem, we arrive at an immoral or non-moral God,—an excellent world-mechanist perhaps, a cunning psychologist, but not a God of Good and of Love whom we can worship, only a God of Might to whose law we must submit or whose caprice we may hope to propitiate. For one who invents torture as a means of test or ordeal, stands convicted either of deliberate cruelty or of moral insensibility and, if a moral being at all, is inferior to the highest instinct of his own creatures. And if to escape this moral difficulty, we say that pain is an inevitable result and natural punishment of moral evil,—an explanation which will not even square with the facts of life unless we admit the theory of Karma and rebirth by which the soul suffers now for antenatal sins in other bodies,—we still do not escape the very root of the ethical problem,—who created or why or whence was created that moral evil which entails the punishment of pain and suffering? And seeing that moral evil is in reality a form of mental disease or ignorance, who or what created this law or inevitable connection which punishes a mental disease or act of ignorance by a recoil so terrible, by tortures often so extreme and monstrous? The inexorable law of Karma is irreconcilable with a supreme moral and personal Deity, and therefore the clear logic of Buddha denied the existence of any free and all-governing personal God; all personality he declared to be a creation of ignorance and subject to Karma.

In truth, the difficulty thus sharply presented arises only if

we assume the existence of an extra-cosmic personal God, not Himself the universe, one who has created good and evil, pain and suffering for His creatures, but Himself stands above and unaffected by them, watching, ruling, doing His will with a suffering and struggling world or, if not doing His will, if allowing the world to be driven by an inexorable law, unhelped by Him or inefficiently helped, then not God, not omnipotent, not all-good and all-loving. On no theory of an extra-cosmic moral God, can evil and suffering be explained,—the creation of evil and suffering,—except by an unsatisfactory subterfuge which avoids the question at issue instead of answering it or a plain or implied Manicheanism which practically annuls the Godhead in attempting to justify its ways or excuse its works. But such a God is not the Vedantic Sachchidananda. Sachchidananda of the Vedanta is one existence without a second; all that is, is He. If then evil and suffering exist, it is He that bears the evil and suffering in the creature in whom He has embodied Himself. The problem then changes entirely. The question is no longer how came God to create for His creatures a suffering and evil of which He is Himself incapable and therefore immune, but how came the sole and infinite Existence-Consciousness-Bliss to admit into itself that which is not bliss, that which seems to be its positive negation.

Half of the moral difficulty —that difficulty in its one unanswerable form disappears. It no longer arises, can no longer be put. Cruelty to others, I remaining immune or even participating in their sufferings by subsequent repentance or belated pity, is one thing; self-infliction of suffering, I being the sole existence, is quite another. Still the ethical difficulty may be brought back in a modified form; All-Delight being necessarily all-good and all-love, how can evil and suffering exist in Sachchidananda, since he is not mechanical existence, but free and conscious being, free to condemn and reject evil and suffering? We have to recognise that the issue so stated is also a false issue because it applies the terms of a partial statement as if they were applicable to the whole. For the ideas of good and of love which we thus bring into the concept of the All-Delight spring from a dualistic

and divisional conception of things; they are based entirely on the relations between creature and creature, yet we persist in applying them to a problem which starts, on the contrary, from the assumption of One who is all. We have to see first how the problem appears or how it can be solved in its original purity, on the basis of unity in difference; only then can we safely deal with its parts and its developments, such as the relations between creature and creature on the basis of division and duality.

We have to recognise, if we thus view the whole, not limiting ourselves to the human difficulty and the human standpoint, that we do not live in an ethical world. The attempt of human thought to force an ethical meaning into the whole of Nature is one of those acts of wilful and obstinate self-confusion, one of those pathetic attempts of the human being to read himself, his limited habitual human self into all things and judge them from the standpoint he has personally evolved, which most effectively prevent him from arriving at real knowledge and complete sight. Material Nature is not ethical; the law which governs it is a co-ordination of fixed habits which take no cognisance of good and evil, but only of force that creates, force that arranges and preserves, force that disturbs and destroys impartially, non-ethically, according to the secret Will in it, according to the mute satisfaction of that Will in its own self-formations and self-dissolutions. Animal or vital Nature is also non-ethical, although as it progresses it manifests the crude material out of which the higher animal evolves the ethical impulse. We do not blame the tiger because it slays and devours its prey any more than we blame the storm because it destroys or the fire because it tortures and kills; neither does the conscious-force in the storm, the fire or the tiger blame or condemn itself. Blame and condemnation, or rather self-blame and self-condemnation, are the beginning of true ethics. When we blame others without applying the same law to ourselves, we are not speaking with a true ethical judgment, but only applying the language ethics has evolved for us to an emotional impulse of recoil from or dislike of that which displeases or hurts us.

This recoil or dislike is the primary origin of ethics, but is

not itself ethical. The fear of the deer for the tiger, the rage of the strong creature against its assailant is a vital recoil of the individual delight of existence from that which threatens it. In the progress of the mentality it refines itself into repugnance, dislike, disapproval. Disapproval of that which threatens and hurts us, approval of that which flatters and satisfies refine into the conception of good and evil to oneself, to the community, to others than ourselves, to other communities than ours, and finally into the general approval of good, the general disapproval of evil. But, throughout, the fundamental nature of the thing remains the same. Man desires self-expression, self-development, in other words, the progressing play in himself of the conscious-force of existence; that is his fundamental delight. Whatever hurts that self-expression, self-development, satisfaction of his progressing self, is for him evil; whatever helps, confirms, raises, aggrandises, ennobles it is his good. Only, his conception of the self-development changes, becomes higher and wider, begins to exceed his limited personality, to embrace others, to embrace all in its scope.

In other words, ethics is a stage in evolution. That which is common to all stages is the urge of Sachchidananda towards self-expression. This urge is at first non-ethical, then infra-ethical in the animal, then in the intelligent animal even anti-ethical for it permits us to approve hurt done to others which we disapprove when done to ourselves. In this respect man even now is only half-ethical. And just as all below us is infra-ethical, so there may be that above us whither we shall eventually arrive, which is supra-ethical, has no need of ethics. The ethical impulse and attitude, so all-important to humanity, is a means by which it struggles out of the lower harmony and universality based upon inconscience and broken up by Life into individual discords towards a higher harmony and universality based upon conscient oneness with all existences. Arriving at that goal, this means will no longer be necessary or even possible, since the qualities and oppositions on which it depends will naturally dissolve and disappear in the final reconciliation.

If, then, the ethical standpoint applies only to a temporary

though all-important passage from one universality to another, we cannot apply it to the total solution of the problem of the universe, but can only admit it as one element in that solution. To do otherwise is to run into the peril of falsifying all the facts of the universe, all the meaning of the evolution behind and beyond us in order to suit a temporary outlook and a half-evolved view of the utility of things. The world has three layers, infra-ethical, ethical and supra-ethical. We have to find that which is common to all; for only so can we resolve the problem.

That which is common to all is, we have seen, the satisfaction of conscious-force of existence developing itself into forms and seeking in that development its delight. From that satisfaction or delight of self-existence it evidently began; for it is that which is normal to it, to which it clings, which it makes its base; but it seeks new forms of itself and in the passage to higher forms there intervenes the phenomenon of pain and suffering which seems to contradict the fundamental nature of its being. This and this alone is the root-problem.

How shall we solve it? Shall we say that Sachchidananda is not the beginning and end of things, but the beginning and end is Nihil, an impartial void, itself nothing but containing all potentialities of existence or non-existence, consciousness or non-consciousness, delight or undelight? We may accept this answer if we choose; but although we seek thereby to explain everything, we have really explained nothing, we have only included everything. A Nothing which is full of all potentialities is the most complete opposition of terms and things possible and we have therefore only explained a minor contradiction by a major, by driving the self-contradiction of things to their maximum. Nihil is the void, where there can be no potentialities; an impartial indeterminate of all potentialities is Chaos, and all that we have done is to put Chaos into the Void without explaining how it got there. Let us return, then, to our original conception of Sachchidananda and see whether on that foundation a completer solution is not possible.

We must first make it clear to ourselves that just as when we speak of universal consciousness we mean something different

from, more essential and wider than the waking mental consciousness of the human being, so also when we speak of universal delight of existence we mean something different from, more essential and wider than the ordinary emotional and sensational pleasure of the individual human creature. Pleasure, joy and delight, as man uses the words, are limited and occasional movements which depend on certain habitual causes and emerge, like their opposites pain and grief which are equally limited and occasional movements, from a background other than themselves. Delight of being is universal, illimitable and self-existent, not dependent on particular causes, the background of all backgrounds, from which pleasure, pain and other more neutral experiences emerge. When delight of being seeks to realise itself as delight of becoming, it moves in the movement of force and itself takes different forms of movement of which pleasure and pain are positive and negative currents. Subconscious in Matter, superconscious beyond Mind this delight seeks in Mind and Life to realise itself by emergence in the becoming, in the increasing self-consciousness of the movement. Its first phenomena are dual and impure, move between the poles of pleasure and pain, but it aims at its self-revelation in the purity of a supreme delight of being which is self-existent and independent of objects and causes. Just as Sachchidananda moves towards the realisation of the universal existence in the individual and of the form-exceeding consciousness in the form of body and mind, so it moves towards the realisation of universal, self-existent and objectless delight in the flux of particular experiences and objects. Those objects we now seek as stimulating causes of a transient pleasure and satisfaction; free, possessed of self, we shall not seek but shall possess them as reflectors rather than causes of a delight which eternally exists.

In the egoistic human being, the mental person emergent out of the dim shell of matter, delight of existence is neutral, semi-latent, still in the shadow of the subconscious, hardly more than a concealed soil of plenty covered by desire with a luxuriant growth of poisonous weeds and hardly less poisonous flowers, the pains and pleasures of our egoistic existence. When the

divine conscious-force working secretly in us has devoured these growths of desire, when in the image of the Rig Veda the fire of God has burnt up the shoots of earth, that which is concealed at the roots of these pains and pleasures, their cause and secret being, the sap of delight in them, will emerge in new forms not of desire, but of self-existent satisfaction which will replace mortal pleasure by the Immortal's ecstasy. And this transformation is possible because these growths of sensation and emotion are in their essential being, the pains no less than the pleasures, that delight of existence which they seek but fail to reveal,—fail because of division, ignorance of self and egoism.

Chapter XII

Delight of Existence: The Solution

The name of That is the Delight; as the Delight we must worship and seek after It.

*Kena Upanishad.*¹

IN THIS conception of an inalienable underlying delight of existence of which all outward or surface sensations are a positive, negative or neutral play, waves and foamings of that infinite deep, we arrive at the true solution of the problem we are examining. The self of things is an infinite indivisible existence; of that existence the essential nature or power is an infinite imperishable force of self-conscious being; and of that self-consciousness the essential nature or knowledge of itself is, again, an infinite inalienable delight of being. In formlessness and in all forms, in the eternal awareness of infinite and indivisible being and in the multiform appearances of finite division this self-existence preserves perpetually its self-delight. As in the apparent inconscience of Matter our soul, growing out of its bondage to its own superficial habit and particular mode of self-conscious existence, discovers that infinite Conscious-Force constant, immobile, brooding, so in the apparent non-sensation of Matter it comes to discover and attune itself to an infinite conscious Delight imperturbable, ecstatic, all-embracing. This delight is its own delight, this self is its own self in all; but to our ordinary view of self and things which awakes and moves only upon surfaces, it remains hidden, profound, subconscious. And as it is within all forms, so it is within all experiences whether pleasant, painful or neutral. There too hidden, profound, subconscious, it is that which enables and compels things to remain in existence. It is the reason of that clinging to existence,

¹ IV. 6.

that overmastering will-to-be, translated vitally as the instinct of self-preservation, physically as the imperishability of matter, mentally as the sense of immortality which attends the formed existence through all its phases of self-development and of which even the occasional impulse of self-destruction is only a reverse form, an attraction to other state of being and a consequent recoil from present state of being. Delight is existence, Delight is the secret of creation, Delight is the root of birth, Delight is the cause of remaining in existence, Delight is the end of birth and that into which creation ceases. "From Ananda" says the Upanishad "all existences are born, by Ananda they remain in being and increase, to Ananda they depart."

As we look at these three aspects of essential Being, one in reality, triune to our mental view, separable only in appearance, in the phenomena of the divided consciousness, we are able to put in their right place the divergent formulae of the old philosophies so that they unite and become one, ceasing from their agelong controversy. For if we regard world-existence only in its appearances and only in its relation to pure, infinite, indivisible, immutable Existence, we are entitled to regard it, describe it and realise it as Maya. Maya in its original sense meant a comprehending and containing consciousness capable of embracing, measuring and limiting and therefore formative; it is that which outlines, measures out, moulds forms in the formless, psychologises and seems to make knowable the Unknowable, geometrises and seems to make measurable the limitless. Later the word came from its original sense of knowledge, skill, intelligence to acquire a pejorative sense of cunning, fraud or illusion, and it is in the figure of an enchantment or illusion that it is used by the philosophical systems.

World is Maya. World is not unreal in the sense that it has no sort of existence; for even if it were only a dream of the Self, still it would exist in It as a dream, real to It in the present even while ultimately unreal. Nor ought we to say that world is unreal in the sense that it has no kind of eternal existence; for although particular worlds and particular forms may or do dissolve physically and return mentally from the consciousness

of manifestation into the non-manifestation, yet Form in itself, World in itself are eternal. From the non-manifestation they return inevitably into manifestation; they have an eternal recurrence if not an eternal persistence, an eternal immutability in sum and foundation along with an eternal mutability in aspect and apparition. Nor have we any surety that there ever was or ever will be a period in Time when no form of universe, no play of being is represented to itself in the eternal Conscious-Being, but only an intuitive perception that the world that we know can and does appear from That and return into It perpetually.

Still world is Maya because it is not the essential truth of infinite existence, but only a creation of self-conscious being,—not a creation in the void, not a creation in nothing and out of nothing, but in the eternal Truth and out of the eternal Truth of that Self-being; its continent, origin and substance are the essential, real Existence, its forms are mutable formations of That to Its own conscious perception, determined by Its own creative conscious-force. They are capable of manifestation, capable of non-manifestation, capable of other-manifestation. We may, if we choose, call them therefore illusions of the infinite consciousness, thus audaciously flinging back a shadow of our mental sense of subjection to error and incapacity upon that which, being greater than Mind, is beyond subjection to falsehood and illusion. But seeing that the essence and substance of Existence is not a lie and that all errors and deformations of our divided consciousness represent some truth of the indivisible self-conscious Existence, we can only say that the world is not essential truth of That, but phenomenal truth of Its free multiplicity and infinite superficial mutability and not truth of Its fundamental and immutable Unity.

If, on the other hand, we look at world-existence in relation to consciousness only and to force of consciousness, we may regard, describe and realise it as a movement of Force obeying some secret will or else some necessity imposed on it by the very existence of the Consciousness that possesses or regards it. It is then the play of Prakriti, the executive Force, to satisfy Purusha, the regarding and enjoying Conscious-Being or it is the

play of Purusha reflected in the movements of Force and with them identifying himself. World, then, is the play of the Mother of things moved to cast Herself for ever into infinite forms and avid of eternally outpouring experiences.

Again if we look at World-Existence rather in its relation to the self-delight of eternally existent being, we may regard, describe and realise it as Lila, the play, the child's joy, the poet's joy, the actor's joy, the mechanician's joy of the Soul of things eternally young, perpetually inexhaustible, creating and re-creating Himself in Himself for the sheer bliss of that self-creation, of that self-representation,—Himself the play, Himself the player, Himself the playground. These three generalisations of the play of existence in its relation to the eternal and stable, the immutable Sachchidananda, starting from the three conceptions of Maya, Prakriti and Lila and representing themselves in our philosophical systems as mutually contradictory philosophies, are in reality perfectly consistent with each other, complementary and necessary in their totality to an integral view of life and the world. The world of which we are a part is in its most obvious view a movement of Force; but that Force, when we penetrate its appearances, proves to be a constant and yet always mutable rhythm of creative consciousness casting up, projecting in itself phenomenal truths of its own infinite and eternal being; and this rhythm is in its essence, cause and purpose a play of the infinite delight of being ever busy with its own innumerable self-representations. This triple or triune view must be the starting-point for all our understanding of the universe.

Since, then, eternal and immutable delight of being moving out into infinite and variable delight of becoming is the root of the whole matter, we have to conceive one indivisible conscious Being behind all our experiences supporting them by its inalienable delight and effecting by its movement the variations of pleasure, pain and neutral indifference in our sensational existence. That is our real self; the mental being subject to the triple vibration can only be a representation of our real self put in front for the purposes of that sensational experience of things which is the first rhythm of our divided consciousness in its response

and reaction to the multiple contacts of the universe. It is an imperfect response, a tangled and discordant rhythm preparing and preluding the full and unified play of the conscious Being in us; it is not the true and perfect symphony that may be ours if we can once enter into sympathy with the One in all variations and attune ourselves to the absolute and universal diapason.

If this view be right, then certain consequences inevitably impose themselves. In the first place, since in our depths we ourselves are that One, since in the reality of our being we are the indivisible All-Consciousness and therefore the inalienable All-Bliss, the disposition of our sensational experience in the three vibrations of pain, pleasure and indifference can only be a superficial arrangement created by that limited part of ourselves which is uppermost in our waking consciousness. Behind there must be something in us, — much vaster, profounder, truer than the superficial consciousness, — which takes delight impartially in all experiences; it is that delight which secretly supports the superficial mental being and enables it to persevere through all labours, sufferings and ordeals in the agitated movement of the Becoming. That which we call ourselves is only a trembling ray on the surface; behind is all the vast subconscious, the vast superconscious profiting by all these surface experiences and imposing them on its external self which it exposes as a sort of sensitive covering to the contacts of the world; itself veiled, it receives these contacts and assimilates them into the values of a truer, a profounder, a mastering and creative experience. Out of its depths it returns them to the surface in forms of strength, character, knowledge, impulsion whose roots are mysterious to us because our mind moves and quivers on the surface and has not learned to concentrate itself and live in the depths.

In our ordinary life this truth is hidden from us or only dimly glimpsed at times or imperfectly held and conceived. But if we learn to live within, we infallibly awaken to this presence within us which is our more real self, a presence profound, calm, joyous and puissant of which the world is not the master — a presence which, if it is not the Lord Himself, is the radiation of the Lord within. We are aware of it within supporting and helping the

apparent and superficial self and smiling at its pleasures and pains as at the error and passion of a little child. And if we can go back into ourselves and identify ourselves, not with our superficial experience, but with that radiant penumbra of the Divine, we can live in that attitude towards the contacts of the world and, standing back in our entire consciousness from the pleasures and pains of the body, vital being and mind, possess them as experiences whose nature being superficial does not touch or impose itself on our core and real being. In the entirely expressive Sanskrit terms, there is an *ānandamaya* behind the *manomaya*, a vast Bliss-Self behind the limited mental self, and the latter is only a shadowy image and disturbed reflection of the former. The truth of ourselves lies within and not on the surface.

Again this triple vibration of pleasure, pain, indifference, being superficial, being an arrangement and result of our imperfect evolution, can have in it no absoluteness, no necessity. There is no real obligation on us to return to a particular contact a particular response of pleasure, pain or neutral reaction, there is only an obligation of habit. We feel pleasure or pain in a particular contact because that is the habit our nature has formed, because that is the constant relation the recipient has established with the contact. It is within our competence to return quite the opposite response, pleasure where we used to have pain, pain where we used to have pleasure. It is equally within our competence to accustom the superficial being to return instead of the mechanical reactions of pleasure, pain and indifference that free reply of inalienable delight which is the constant experience of the true and vast Bliss-Self within us. And this is a greater conquest, a still deeper and more complete self-possession than a glad and detached reception in the depths of the habitual reactions on the surface. For it is no longer a mere acceptance without subjection, a free acquiescence in imperfect values of experience, but enables us to convert imperfect into perfect, false into true values,—the constant but veritable delight of the Spirit in things taking the place of the dualities experienced by the mental being.

In the things of the mind this pure habitual relativity of the

reactions of pleasure and pain is not difficult to perceive. The nervous being in us, indeed, is accustomed to a certain fixedness, a false impression of absoluteness in these things. To it victory, success, honour, good fortune of all kinds are pleasant things in themselves, absolutely, and must produce joy as sugar must taste sweet; defeat, failure, disappointment, disgrace, evil fortune of all kinds are unpleasant things in themselves, absolutely, and must produce grief as wormwood must taste bitter. To vary these responses is to it a departure from fact, abnormal and morbid; for the nervous being is a thing enslaved to habit and in itself the means devised by Nature for fixing constancy of reaction, sameness of experience, the settled scheme of man's relations to life. The mental being on the other hand is free, for it is the means she has devised for flexibility and variation, for change and progress; it is subject only so long as it chooses to remain subject, to dwell in one mental habit rather than in another or so long as it allows itself to be dominated by its nervous instrument. It is not bound to be grieved by defeat, disgrace, loss: it can meet these things and all things with a perfect indifference; it can even meet them with a perfect gladness. Therefore man finds that the more he refuses to be dominated by his nerves and body, the more he draws back from implication of himself in his physical and vital parts, the greater is his freedom. He becomes the master of his own responses to the world's contacts, no longer the slave of external touches.

In regard to physical pleasure and pain, it is more difficult to apply the universal truth; for this is the very domain of the nerves and the body, the centre and seat of that in us whose nature is to be dominated by external contact and external pressure. Even here, however, we have glimpses of the truth. We see it in the fact that according to the habit the same physical contact can be either pleasurable or painful, not only to different individuals, but to the same individual under different conditions or at different stages of his development. We see it in the fact that men in periods of great excitement or high exaltation remain physically indifferent to pain or unconscious of pain under contacts which ordinarily would inflict severe torture or suffering.

In many cases it is only when the nerves are able to reassert themselves and remind the mentality of its habitual obligation to suffer that the sense of suffering returns. But this return to the habitual obligation is not inevitable; it is only habitual. We see that in the phenomena of hypnosis not only can the hypnotised subject be successfully forbidden to feel the pain of a wound or puncture when in the abnormal state, but can be prevented with equal success from returning to his habitual reaction of suffering when he is awakened. The reason of this phenomenon is perfectly simple; it is because the hypnotiser suspends the habitual waking consciousness which is the slave of nervous habits and is able to appeal to the subliminal mental being in the depths, the inner mental being who is master, if he wills, of the nerves and the body. But this freedom which is effected by hypnosis abnormally, rapidly, without true possession, by an alien will, may equally be won normally, gradually, with true possession, by one's own will so as to effect partially or completely a victory of the mental being over the habitual nervous reactions of the body.

Pain of mind and body is a device of Nature, that is to say, of Force in her works, meant to subserve a definite transitional end in her upward evolution. The world is from the point of view of the individual a play and complex shock of multitudinous forces. In the midst of this complex play the individual stands as a limited constructed being with a limited amount of force exposed to numberless shocks which may wound, maim, break up or disintegrate the construction which he calls himself. Pain is in the nature of a nervous and physical recoil from a dangerous or harmful contact; it is a part of what the Upanishad calls *jugupsā*, the shrinking of the limited being from that which is not himself and not sympathetic or in harmony with himself, its impulse of self-defence against "others". It is, from this point of view, an indication by Nature of that which has to be avoided or, if not successfully avoided, has to be remedied. It does not come into being in the purely physical world so long as life does not enter into it; for till then mechanical methods are sufficient. Its office begins when life with its frailty and imperfect possession of

Matter enters on the scene; it grows with the growth of Mind in life. Its office continues so long as Mind is bound in the life and body which it is using, dependent upon them for its knowledge and means of action, subjected to their limitations and to the egoistic impulses and aims which are born of those limitations. But if and when Mind in man becomes capable of being free, unegoistic, in harmony with all other beings and with the play of the universal forces, the use and office of suffering diminishes, its *raison d'être* must finally cease to be and it can only continue as an atavism of Nature, a habit that has survived its use, a persistence of the lower in the as yet imperfect organisation of the higher. Its eventual elimination must be an essential point in the destined conquest of the soul over subjection to Matter and egoistic limitation in Mind.

This elimination is possible because pain and pleasure themselves are currents, one imperfect, the other perverse, but still currents of the delight of existence. The reason for this imperfection and this perversion is the self-division of the being in his consciousness by measuring and limiting Maya and in consequence an egoistic and piecemeal instead of a universal reception of contacts by the individual. For the universal soul all things and all contacts of things carry in them an essence of delight best described by the Sanskrit aesthetic term, *rasa*, which means at once sap or essence of a thing and its taste. It is because we do not seek the essence of the thing in its contact with us, but look only to the manner in which it affects our desires and fears, our cravings and shrinkings that grief and pain, imperfect and transient pleasure or indifference, that is to say, blank inability to seize the essence, are the forms taken by the Rasa. If we could be entirely disinterested in mind and heart and impose that detachment on the nervous being, the progressive elimination of these imperfect and perverse forms of Rasa would be possible and the true essential taste of the inalienable delight of existence in all its variations would be within our reach. We attain to something of this capacity for variable but universal delight in the aesthetic reception of things as represented by Art and Poetry, so that we enjoy there the Rasa or taste of the

sorrowful, the terrible, even the horrible or repellent;² and the reason is because we are detached, disinterested, not thinking of ourselves or of self-defence (*jugupsā*), but only of the thing and its essence. Certainly, this aesthetic reception of contacts is not a precise image or reflection of the pure delight which is supramental and supra-aesthetic; for the latter would eliminate sorrow, terror, horror and disgust with their cause while the former admits them: but it represents partially and imperfectly one stage of the progressive delight of the universal Soul in things in its manifestation and it admits us in one part of our nature to that detachment from egoistic sensation and that universal attitude through which the one Soul sees harmony and beauty where we divided beings experience rather chaos and discord. The full liberation can come to us only by a similar liberation in all our parts, the universal aesthesis, the universal standpoint of knowledge, the universal detachment from all things and yet sympathy with all in our nervous and emotional being.

Since the nature of suffering is a failure of the conscious-force in us to meet the shocks of existence and a consequent shrinking and contraction and its root is an inequality of that receptive and possessing force due to our self-limitation by egoism consequent on the ignorance of our true Self, of Sachchidananda, the elimination of suffering must first proceed by the substitution of *titiksā*, the facing, enduring and conquest of all shocks of existence for *jugupsā*, the shrinking and contraction: by this endurance and conquest we proceed to an equality which may be either an equal indifference to all contacts or an equal gladness in all contacts; and this equality again must find a firm foundation in the substitution of the Sachchidananda consciousness which is All-Bliss for the ego-consciousness which enjoys and suffers. The Sachchidananda consciousness may be transcendent of the universe and aloof from it, and to this state of distant Bliss the path is equal indifference; it is the path of the ascetic. Or the Sachchidananda consciousness may be at once transcendent and universal; and to this state of present and all-embracing

² So termed in Sanskrit Rhetoric, the *karuṇa*, *bhayānaka* and *bibhatsa* Rasas.

Bliss the path is surrender and loss of the ego in the universal and possession of an all-pervading equal delight; it is the path of the ancient Vedic sages. But neutrality to the imperfect touches of pleasure and the perverse touches of pain is the first direct and natural result of the soul's self-discipline and the conversion to equal delight can, usually, come only afterwards. The direct transformation of the triple vibration into Ananda is possible, but less easy to the human being.

Such then is the view of the universe which arises out of the integral Vedantic affirmation. An infinite, indivisible existence all-blissful in its pure self-consciousness moves out of its fundamental purity into the varied play of Force that is consciousness, into the movement of Prakriti which is the play of Maya. The delight of its existence is at first self-gathered, absorbed, subconscious in the basis of the physical universe; then emergent in a great mass of neutral movement which is not yet what we call sensation; then further emergent with the growth of mind and ego in the triple vibration of pain, pleasure and indifference originating from the limitation of the force of consciousness in the form and from its exposure to shocks of the universal Force which it finds alien to it and out of harmony with its own measure and standard; finally, the conscious emergence of the full Sachchidananda in its creations by universality, by equality, by self-possession and conquest of Nature. This is the course and movement of the world.

If it then be asked why the One Existence should take delight in such a movement, the answer lies in the fact that all possibilities are inherent in Its infinity and that the delight of existence — in its mutable becoming, not in its immutable being, — lies precisely in the variable realisation of its possibilities. And the possibility worked out here in the universe of which we are a part, begins from the concealment of Sachchidananda in that which seems to be its own opposite and its self-finding even amid the terms of that opposite. Infinite being loses itself in the appearance of non-being and emerges in the appearance of a finite Soul; infinite consciousness loses itself in the appearance of a vast indeterminate inconscience and emerges in the

appearance of a superficial limited consciousness; infinite self-sustaining Force loses itself in the appearance of a chaos of atoms and emerges in the appearance of the insecure balance of a world; infinite Delight loses itself in the appearance of an insensible Matter and emerges in the appearance of a discordant rhythm of varied pain, pleasure and neutral feeling, love, hatred and indifference; infinite unity loses itself in the appearance of a chaos of multiplicity and emerges in a discord of forces and beings which seek to recover unity by possessing, dissolving and devouring each other. In this creation the real Sachchidananda has to emerge. Man, the individual, has to become and to live as a universal being; his limited mental consciousness has to widen to the superconscious unity in which each embraces all; his narrow heart has to learn the infinite embrace and replace its lusts and discords by universal love and his restricted vital being to become equal to the whole shock of the universe upon it and capable of universal delight; his very physical being has to know itself as no separate entity but as one with and sustaining in itself the whole flow of the indivisible Force that is all things; his whole nature has to reproduce in the individual the unity, the harmony, the oneness-in-all of the supreme Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.

Through all this play the secret reality is always one and the same delight of existence,—the same in the delight of the subconscious sleep before the emergence of the individual, in the delight of the struggle and all the varieties, vicissitudes, perversions, conversions, reversions of the effort to find itself amid the mazes of the half-conscious dream of which the individual is the centre, and in the delight of the eternal superconscious self-possession into which the individual must wake and there become one with the indivisible Sachchidananda. This is the play of the One, the Lord, the All as it reveals itself to our liberated and enlightened knowledge from the conceptive standpoint of this material universe.

Chapter XIII

The Divine Maya

By the Names of the Lord and hers they shaped and measured
the force of the Mother of Light; wearing might after might
of that Force as a robe the lords of Maya shaped out Form in
this Being.

The Masters of Maya shaped all by His Maya; the Fathers
who have divine vision set Him within as a child that is to be
born.

Rig Veda.¹

EXISTENCE that acts and creates by the power and from the pure delight of its conscious being is the reality that we are, the self of all our modes and moods, the cause, object and goal of all our doing, becoming and creating. As the poet, artist or musician when he creates does really nothing but develop some potentiality in his unmanifested self into a form of manifestation and as the thinker, statesman, mechanist only bring out into a shape of things that which lay hidden in themselves, was themselves, is still themselves when it is cast into form, so is it with the world and the Eternal. All creation or becoming is nothing but this self-manifestation. Out of the seed there evolves that which is already in the seed, pre-existent in being, predestined in its will to become, prearranged in the delight of becoming. The original plasm held in itself in force of being the resultant organism. For it is always that secret, burdened, self-knowing force which labours under its own irresistible impulse to manifest the form of itself with which it is charged. Only, the individual who creates or develops out of himself, makes a distinction between himself, the force that

¹ III. 38. 7; IX. 83. 3.

works in him and the material in which he works. In reality the force is himself, the individualised consciousness which it instrumentalises is himself, the material which it uses is himself, the resultant form is himself. In other words it is one existence, one force, one delight of being which concentrates itself at various points, says of each "This is I" and works in it by a various play of self-force for a various play of self-formation.

What it produces is itself and can be nothing other than itself; it is working out a play, a rhythm, a development of its own existence, force of consciousness and delight of being. Therefore whatever comes into the world, seeks nothing but this, to be, to arrive at the intended form, to enlarge its self-existence in that form, to develop, manifest, increase, realise infinitely the consciousness and the power that is in it, to have the delight of coming into manifestation, the delight of the form of being, the delight of the rhythm of consciousness, the delight of the play of force and to aggrandise and perfect that delight by whatever means is possible, in whatever direction, through whatever idea of itself may be suggested to it by the Existence, the Conscious-Force, the Delight active within its deepest being.

And if there is any goal, any completeness towards which things tend, it can only be the completeness—in the individual and in the whole which the individuals constitute—of its self-existence, of its power and consciousness and of its delight of being. But such completeness is not possible in the individual consciousness concentrated within the limits of the individual formation; absolute completeness is not feasible in the finite because it is alien to the self-conception of the finite. Therefore the only final goal possible is the emergence of the infinite consciousness in the individual; it is his recovery of the truth of himself by self-knowledge and by self-realisation, the truth of the Infinite in being, the Infinite in consciousness, the Infinite in delight repossessed as his own Self and Reality of which the finite is only a mask and an instrument for various expression.

Thus by the very nature of the world-play as it has been realised by Sachchidananda in the vastness of His existence

extended as Space and Time, we have to conceive first of an involution and a self-absorption of conscious being into the density and infinite divisibility of substance, for otherwise there can be no finite variation; next, an emergence of the self-imprisoned force into formal being, living being, thinking being; and finally a release of the formed thinking being into the free realisation of itself as the One and the Infinite at play in the world and by the release its recovery of the boundless existence-consciousness-bliss that even now it is secretly, really and eternally. This triple movement is the whole key of the world-enigma.

It is so that the ancient and eternal truth of Vedanta receives into itself and illumines, justifies and shows us all the meaning of the modern and phenomenal truth of evolution in the universe. And it is so only that this modern truth of evolution which is the old truth of the Universal developing itself successively in Time, seen opaquely through the study of Force and Matter, can find its own full sense and justification,—by illuminating itself with the Light of the ancient and eternal truth still preserved for us in the Vedantic Scriptures. To this mutual self-discovery and self-illumination by the fusion of the old Eastern and the new Western knowledge the thought of the world is already turning.

Still, when we have found that all things are Sachchidananda, all has not yet been explained. We know the Reality of the universe, we do not yet know the process by which that Reality has turned itself into this phenomenon. We have the key of the riddle, we have still to find the lock in which it will turn. For this Existence, Conscious-Force, Delight does not work directly or with a sovereign irresponsibility like a magician building up worlds and universes by the mere fiat of its word. We perceive a process, we are aware of a Law.

It is true that this Law when we analyse it, seems to resolve itself into an equilibrium of the play of forces and a determination of that play into fixed lines of working by the accident of development and the habit of past realised energy. But this apparent and secondary truth is final to us only so long as we conceive of Force solely. When we perceive that Force is a self-expression of Existence, we are bound to perceive also that this

line which Force has taken, corresponds to some self-truth of that Existence which governs and determines its constant curve and destination. And since consciousness is the nature of the original Existence and the essence of its Force, this truth must be a self-perception in Conscious-Being and this determination of the line taken by Force must result from a power of self-directive knowledge inherent in Consciousness which enables it to guide its own Force inevitably along the logical line of the original self-perception. It is then a self-determining power in universal consciousness, a capacity in self-awareness of infinite existence to perceive a certain Truth in itself and direct its force of creation along the line of that Truth, which has presided over the cosmic manifestation.

But why should we interpose any special power or faculty between the infinite Consciousness itself and the result of its workings? May not this Self-awareness of the Infinite range freely creating forms which afterwards remain in play so long as there is not the fiat that bids them cease,—even as the old Semitic Revelation tells us, “God said, Let there be Light, and there was Light”? But when we say, “God said, Let there be Light”, we assume the act of a power of consciousness which determines light out of everything else that is not light; and when we say “and there was Light” we presume a directing faculty, an active power corresponding to the original perceptive power, which brings out the phenomenon and, working out Light according to the line of the original perception, prevents it from being overpowered by all the infinite possibilities that are other than itself. Infinite consciousness in its infinite action can produce only infinite results; to settle upon a fixed Truth or order of truths and build a world in conformity with that which is fixed, demands a selective faculty of knowledge commissioned to shape finite appearance out of the infinite Reality.

This power was known to the Vedic seers by the name of Maya. Maya meant for them the power of infinite consciousness to comprehend, contain in itself and measure out, that is to say, to form—for form is delimitation—Name and Shape out of the vast illimitable Truth of infinite existence. It is by Maya that

static truth of essential being becomes ordered truth of active being—or, to put it in more metaphysical language, out of the supreme being in which all is all without barrier of separative consciousness emerges the phenomenal being in which all is in each and each is in all for the play of existence with existence, consciousness with consciousness, force with force, delight with delight. This play of all in each and each in all is concealed at first from us by the mental play or the illusion of Maya which persuades each that he is in all but not all in him and that he is in all as a separated being not as a being always inseparably one with the rest of existence. Afterwards we have to emerge from this error into the supramental play or the truth of Maya where the “each” and the “all” coexist in the inseparable unity of the one truth and the multiple symbol. The lower, present and deluding mental Maya has first to be embraced, then to be overcome; for it is God’s play with division and darkness and limitation, desire and strife and suffering in which He subjects Himself to the Force that has come out of Himself and by her obscure suffers Himself to be obscured. That other Maya concealed by this mental has to be overpassed, then embraced; for it is God’s play of the infinities of existence, the splendours of knowledge, the glories of force mastered and the ecstasies of love illimitable where He emerges out of the hold of Force, holds her instead and fulfils in her illumined that for which she went out from Him at the first.

This distinction between the lower and the higher Maya is the link in thought and in cosmic Fact which the pessimistic and illusionist philosophies miss or neglect. To them the mental Maya, or perhaps an Overmind, is the creatrix of the world, and a world created by mental Maya would indeed be an inexplicable paradox and a fixed yet floating nightmare of conscious existence which could neither be classed as an illusion nor as a reality. We have to see that the mind is only an intermediate term between the creative governing knowledge and the soul imprisoned in its works. Sachchidananda, involved by one of His lower movements in the self-oblivious absorption of Force that is lost in the form of her own workings, returns towards Himself

out of the self-oblivion; Mind is only one of His instruments in the descent and the ascent. It is an instrument of the descending creation, not the secret creatrix,—a transitional stage in the ascent, not our high original source and the consummate term of cosmic existence.

The philosophies which recognise Mind alone as the creator of the worlds or accept an original principle with Mind as the only mediator between it and the forms of the universe, may be divided into the purely noumenal and the idealistic. The purely noumenal recognise in the cosmos only the work of Mind, Thought, Idea: but Idea may be purely arbitrary and have no essential relation to any real Truth of existence; such Truth, if it exists, may be regarded as a mere Absolute aloof from all relations and irreconcilable with a world of relations. The idealistic interpretation supposes a relation between the Truth behind and the conceptive phenomenon in front, a relation which is not merely that of an antinomy and opposition. The view I am presenting goes farther in idealism; it sees the creative Idea as Real-Idea, that is to say, a power of Conscious Force expressive of real being, born out of real being and partaking of its nature and neither a child of the Void nor a weaver of fictions. It is conscious Reality throwing itself into mutable forms of its own imperishable and immutable substance. The world is therefore not a figment of conception in the universal Mind, but a conscious birth of that which is beyond Mind into forms of itself. A Truth of conscious being supports these forms and expresses itself in them, and the knowledge corresponding to the truth thus expressed reigns as a supramental Truth-consciousness² organising real ideas in a perfect harmony before they are cast into the mental-vital-material mould. Mind, Life and Body are an inferior consciousness and a partial expression which strives to arrive in the mould of a various evolution at that superior expression of itself already existent to the Beyond-Mind. That which

² I take the phrase from the Rig Veda,—*rta-cit*, which means the consciousness of essential truth of being (*satyam*), of ordered truth of active being (*rtam*) and the vast self-awareness (*bṛhat*) in which alone this consciousness is possible.

is in the Beyond-Mind is the ideal which in its own conditions it is labouring to realise.

From our ascending point of view we may say that the Real is behind all that exists; it expresses itself intermediately in an Ideal which is a harmonised truth of itself; the Ideal throws out a phenomenal reality of variable conscious-being which, inevitably drawn towards its own essential Reality, tries at last to recover it entirely whether by a violent leap or normally through the Ideal which put it forth. It is this that explains the imperfect reality of human existence as seen by the Mind, the instinctive aspiration in the mental being towards a perfectibility ever beyond itself, towards the concealed harmony of the Ideal, and the supreme surge of the spirit beyond the ideal to the transcendental. The very facts of our consciousness, its constitution and its necessity presuppose such a triple order; they negate the dual and irreconcilable antithesis of a mere Absolute to a mere relativity.

Mind is not sufficient to explain existence in the universe. Infinite Consciousness must first translate itself into infinite faculty of Knowledge or, as we call it from our point of view, omniscience. But Mind is not a faculty of knowledge nor an instrument of omniscience; it is a faculty for the seeking of knowledge, for expressing as much as it can gain of it in certain forms of a relative thought and for using it towards certain capacities of action. Even when it finds, it does not possess; it only keeps a certain fund of current coin of Truth—not Truth itself—in the bank of Memory to draw upon according to its needs. For Mind is that which does not know, which tries to know and which never knows except as in a glass darkly. It is the power which interprets truth of universal existence for the practical uses of a certain order of things; it is not the power which knows and guides that existence and therefore it cannot be the power which created or manifested it.

But if we suppose an infinite Mind which would be free from our limitations, that at least might well be the creator of the universe? But such a Mind would be something quite different from the definition of mind as we know it: it would be something

beyond mentality; it would be the supramental Truth. An infinite Mind constituted in the terms of mentality as we know it could only create an infinite chaos, a vast clash of chance, accident, vicissitude wandering towards an indeterminate end after which it would be always tentatively groping and aspiring. An infinite, omniscient, omnipotent Mind would not be mind at all, but supramental knowledge.

Mind, as we know it, is a reflective mirror which receives presentations or images of a pre-existent Truth or Fact, either external to or at least vaster than itself. It represents to itself from moment to moment the phenomenon that is or has been. It possesses also the faculty of constructing in itself possible images other than those of the actual fact presented to it; that is to say, it represents to itself not only phenomenon that has been but also phenomenon that may be: it cannot, be it noted, represent to itself phenomenon that assuredly will be, except when it is an assured repetition of what is or has been. It has, finally, the faculty of forecasting new modifications which it seeks to construct out of the meeting of what has been and what may be, out of the fulfilled possibility and the unfulfilled, something that it sometimes succeeds in constructing more or less exactly, sometimes fails to realise, but usually finds cast into other forms than it forecasted and turned to other ends than it desired or intended.

An infinite Mind of this character might possibly construct an accidental cosmos of conflicting possibilities and it might shape it into something shifting, something always transient, something ever uncertain in its drift, neither real nor unreal, possessed of no definite end or aim but only an endless succession of momentary aims leading — since there is no superior directing power of knowledge — eventually nowhither. Nihilism or Illusionism or some kindred philosophy is the only logical conclusion of such a pure noumenalism. The cosmos so constructed would be a presentation or reflection of something not itself, but always and to the end a false presentation, a distorted reflection; all cosmic existence would be a Mind struggling to work out fully its imaginations, but not succeeding, because they

have no imperative basis of self-truth; overpowered and carried forward by the stream of its own past energies, it would be borne onward indeterminately for ever without issue unless or until it can either slay itself or fall into an eternal stillness. That traced to its roots is Nihilism and Illusionism and it is the only wisdom if we suppose that our human mentality or anything at all like it represents the highest cosmic force and the original conception at work in the universe.

But the moment we find in the original power of knowledge a higher force than that which is represented by our human mentality, this conception of the universe becomes insufficient and therefore invalid. It has its truth but it is not the whole truth. It is law of the immediate appearance of the universe, but not of its original truth and ultimate fact. For we perceive behind the action of Mind, Life and Body, something that is not embraced in the stream of Force but embraces and controls it; something that is not born into a world which it seeks to interpret, but has created in its being a world of which it has the omniscience; something that does not labour perpetually to form something else out of itself while it drifts in the overmastering surge of past energies it can no longer control, but has already in its consciousness a perfect Form of itself and is here gradually unfolding it. The world expresses a foreseen Truth, obeys a predetermining Will, realises an original formative self-vision, — it is the growing image of a divine creation.

So long as we work only through the mentality governed by appearances, this something beyond and behind and yet always immanent can be only an inference or a presence vaguely felt. We perceive a law of cyclic progress and infer an ever-increasing perfection of somewhat that is somewhere foreknown. For everywhere we see Law founded in self-being and, when we penetrate within into the rationale of its process, we find that Law is the expression of an innate knowledge, a knowledge inherent in the existence which is expressing itself and implied in the force that expresses it; and Law developed by Knowledge so as to allow of progression implies a divinely seen goal towards which the motion is directed. We see too that our reason seeks to

emerge out of and dominate the helpless drift of our mentality and we arrive at the perception that Reason is only a messenger, a representative or a shadow of a greater consciousness beyond itself which does not need to reason because it is all and knows all that it is. And we can then pass to the inference that this source of Reason is identical with the Knowledge that acts as Law in the world. This Knowledge determines its own law sovereignly because it knows what has been, is and will be and it knows because it is eternally, and infinitely cognises itself. Being that is infinite consciousness, infinite consciousness that is omnipotent force, when it makes a world—that is to say, a harmony of itself—its object of consciousness, becomes seizable by our thought as a cosmic existence that knows its own truth and realises in forms that which it knows.

But it is only when we cease to reason and go deep into ourselves, into that secrecy where the activity of mind is stilled, that this other consciousness becomes really manifest to us—however imperfectly owing to our long habit of mental reaction and mental limitation. Then we can know surely in an increasing illumination that which we had uncertainly conceived by the pale and flickering light of Reason. Knowledge waits seated beyond mind and intellectual reasoning, throned in the luminous vast of illimitable self-vision.

Chapter XIV

The Supermind as Creator

All things are self-deployings of the Divine Knowledge.

*Vishnu Purana.*¹

A PRINCIPLE of active Will and Knowledge superior to Mind and creatrix of the worlds is then the intermediary power and state of being between that self-possession of the One and this flux of the Many. This principle is not entirely alien to us; it does not belong solely and incommunicably to a Being who is entirely other than ourselves or to a state of existence from which we are mysteriously projected into birth, but also rejected and unable to return. If it seems to us to be seated on heights far above us, yet are they the heights of our own being and accessible to our tread. We can not only infer and glimpse that Truth, but we are capable of realising it. We may by a progressive expanding or a sudden luminous self-transcendence mount up to these summits in unforgettable moments or dwell on them during hours or days of greatest superhuman experience. When we descend again, there are doors of communication which we can keep always open or reopen even though they should constantly shut. But to dwell there permanently on this last and highest summit of the created and creative being is in the end the supreme ideal for our evolving human consciousness when it seeks not self-annulment but self-perfection. For, as we have seen, this is the original Idea and the final harmony and truth to which our gradual self-expression in the world returns and which it is meant to achieve.

Still, we may doubt whether it is possible, now or at all, to give any account of this state to the human intellect or to utilise

¹ II. 12. 39.

in any communicable and organisable way its divine workings for the elevation of our human knowledge and action. The doubt does not arise solely from the rarity or dubiety of any known phenomena that would betray a human working of this divine faculty, or from the remoteness which separates this action from the experience and verifiable knowledge of ordinary humanity; it is strongly suggested also by the apparent contradiction in both essence and operation between human mentality and the divine Supermind.

And certainly, if this consciousness had no relation at all to mind nor anywhere any identity with the mental being, it would be quite impossible to give any account of it to our human notions. Or, if it were in its nature only vision in knowledge and not at all dynamic power of knowledge, we could hope to attain by its contact a beatific state of mental illumination, but not a greater light and power for the works of the world. But since this consciousness is creatrix of the world, it must be not only state of knowledge, but power of knowledge, and not only a Will to light and vision, but a Will to power and works. And since Mind too is created out of it, Mind must be a development by limitation out of this primal faculty and this mediatory act of the supreme Consciousness and must therefore be capable of resolving itself back into it through a reverse development by expansion. For always Mind must be identical with Supermind in essence and conceal in itself the potentiality of Supermind, however different or even contrary it may have become in its actual forms and settled modes of operation. It may not then be an irrational or unprofitable attempt to strive by the method of comparison and contrast towards some idea of the Supermind from the standpoint and in the terms of our intellectual knowledge. The idea, the terms may well be inadequate and yet still serve as a finger of light pointing us onward on a way which to some distance at least we may tread. Moreover it is possible for Mind to rise beyond itself into certain heights or planes of consciousness which receive into themselves some modified light or power of the supramental consciousness and know that by an illumination, intuition or a direct contact or experience,

although to live in it and see and act from it is a victory that has not yet been made humanly possible.

And first we may pause a moment and ask ourselves whether no light can be found from the past which will guide us towards these ill-explored domains. We need a name, and we need a starting-point. For we have called this state of consciousness the Supermind; but the word is ambiguous since it may be taken in the sense of mind itself supereminent and lifted above ordinary mentality but not radically changed, or on the contrary it may bear the sense of all that is beyond mind and therefore assume a too extensive comprehensiveness which would bring in even the Ineffable itself. A subsidiary description is required which will more accurately limit its significance.

It is the cryptic verses of the Veda that help us here; for they contain, though concealed, the gospel of the divine and immortal Supermind and through the veil some illumining flashes come to us. We can see through these utterances the conception of this Supermind as a vastness beyond the ordinary firmaments of our consciousness in which truth of being is luminously one with all that expresses it and assures inevitably truth of vision, formulation, arrangement, word, act and movement and therefore truth also of result of movement, result of action and expression, infallible ordinance or law. Vast all-comprehensiveness; luminous truth and harmony of being in that vastness and not a vague chaos or self-lost obscurity; truth of law and act and knowledge expressive of that harmonious truth of being: these seem to be the essential terms of the Vedic description. The Gods, who in their highest secret entity are powers of this Supermind, born of it, seated in it as in their proper home, are in their knowledge "truth-conscious" and in their action possessed of the "seer-will". Their conscious-force turned towards works and creation is possessed and guided by a perfect and direct knowledge of the thing to be done and its essence and its law,—a knowledge which determines a wholly effective will-power that does not deviate or falter in its process or in its result, but expresses and fulfils spontaneously and inevitably in the act that which has been seen in the vision. Light is here one with Force, the

vibrations of knowledge with the rhythm of the will and both are one, perfectly and without seeking, groping or effort, with the assured result. The divine Nature has a double power, a spontaneous self-formulation and self-arrangement which wells naturally out of the essence of the thing manifested and expresses its original truth, and a self-force of light inherent in the thing itself and the source of its spontaneous and inevitable self-arrangement.

There are subordinate, but important details. The Vedic seers seem to speak of two primary faculties of the "truth-conscious" soul; they are Sight and Hearing, by which is intended direct operations of an inherent Knowledge describable as truth-vision and truth-audition and reflected from far-off in our human mentality by the faculties of revelation and inspiration. Besides, a distinction seems to be made in the operations of the Supermind between knowledge by a comprehending and pervading consciousness which is very near to subjective knowledge by identity and knowledge by a projecting, confronting, apprehending consciousness which is the beginning of objective cognition. These are the Vedic clues. And we may accept from this ancient experience the subsidiary term "truth-consciousness" to delimit the connotation of the more elastic phrase, Supermind.

We see at once that such a consciousness, described by such characteristics, must be an intermediate formulation which refers back to a term above it and forward to another below it; we see at the same time that it is evidently the link and means by which the inferior develops out of the superior and should equally be the link and means by which it may develop back again towards its source. The term above is the unitarian or indivisible consciousness of pure Sachchidananda in which there are no separating distinctions; the term below is the analytic or dividing consciousness of Mind which can only know by separation and distinction and has at the most a vague and secondary apprehension of unity and infinity,—for, though it can synthetise its divisions, it cannot arrive at a true totality. Between them is this comprehensive and creative consciousness, by its

power of pervading and intimately comprehending knowledge the child of that self-awareness by identity which is the poise of the Brahman and by its power of projecting, confronting, apprehending knowledge parent of that awareness by distinction which is the process of the Mind.

Above, the formula of the One eternally stable and immutable; below, the formula of the Many which, eternally mutable, seeks but hardly finds in the flux of things a firm and immutable standing-point; between, the seat of all trinities, of all that is biune, of all that becomes Many-in-One and yet remains One-in-Many because it was originally One that is always potentially Many. This intermediary term is therefore the beginning and end of all creation and arrangement, the Alpha and the Omega, the starting-point of all differentiation, the instrument of all unification, originative, executive and consummative of all realised or realisable harmonies. It has the knowledge of the One, but is able to draw out of the One its hidden multitudes; it manifests the Many, but does not lose itself in their differentiations. And shall we not say that its very existence points back to Something beyond our supreme perception of the ineffable Unity,—Something ineffable and mentally inconceivable not because of its unity and indivisibility, but because of its freedom from even these formulations of our mind,—Something beyond both unity and multiplicity? That would be the utter Absolute and Real which yet justifies to us both our knowledge of God and our knowledge of the world.

But these terms are large and difficult to grasp; let us come to precisions. We speak of the One as Sachchidananda; but in the very description we posit three entities and unite them to arrive at a trinity. We say “Existence, Consciousness, Bliss”, and then we say, “they are one”. It is a process of the mind. But for the unitarian consciousness such a process is inadmissible. Existence is Consciousness and there can be no distinction between them; Consciousness is Bliss and there can be no distinction between them. And since there is not even this differentiation, there can be no world. If that is the sole reality, then world is not and never existed, can never have been conceived; for indivisible

consciousness is undividing consciousness and cannot originate division and differentiation. But this is a *reductio ad absurdum*; we cannot admit it unless we are content to base everything upon an impossible paradox and an unreconciled antithesis.

On the other hand, Mind can conceive with precision divisions as real; it can conceive a synthetic totality or the finite extending itself indefinitely; it can grasp aggregates of divided things and the samenesses underlying them; but the ultimate unity and absolute infinity are to its conscience of things abstract notions and unseizable quantities, not something that is real to its grasp, much less something that is alone real. Here is therefore the very opposite term to the unitarian consciousness; we have, confronting the essential and indivisible unity, an essential multiplicity which cannot arrive at unity without abolishing itself and in the very act confessing that it could never really have existed. Yet it was; for it is this that has found unity and abolished itself. And again we have a *reductio ad absurdum* repeating the violent paradox which seeks to convince thought by stunning it and the irreconciled and irreconcilable antithesis.

The difficulty, in its lower term, disappears if we realise that Mind is only a preparatory form of our consciousness. Mind is an instrument of analysis and synthesis, but not of essential knowledge. Its function is to cut out something vaguely from the unknown Thing in itself and call this measurement or delimitation of it the whole, and again to analyse the whole into its parts which it regards as separate mental objects. It is only the parts and accidents that the Mind can see definitely and, after its own fashion, know. Of the whole its only definite idea is an assemblage of parts or a totality of properties and accidents. The whole not seen as a part of something else or in its own parts, properties and accidents is to the mind no more than a vague perception; only when it is analysed and put by itself as a separate constituted object, a totality in a larger totality, can Mind say to itself, "This now I know." And really it does not know. It knows only its own analysis of the object and the idea it has formed of it by a synthesis of the separate parts and properties that it has seen. There its characteristic power, its sure function ceases, and

if we would have a greater, a profounder and a real knowledge,—a knowledge and not an intense but formless sentiment such as comes sometimes to certain deep but inarticulate parts of our mentality,—Mind has to make room for another consciousness which will fulfil Mind by transcending it or reverse and so rectify its operations after leaping beyond it: the summit of mental knowledge is only a vaulting-board from which that leap can be taken. The utmost mission of Mind is to train our obscure consciousness which has emerged out of the dark prison of Matter, to enlighten its blind instincts, random intuitions, vague perceptions till it shall become capable of this greater light and this higher ascension. Mind is a passage, not a culmination.

On the other hand, the unitarian consciousness or indivisible Unity cannot be that impossible entity, a thing without contents out of which all contents have issued and into which they disappear and become annihilated. It must be an original self-concentration in which all is contained but in another manner than in this temporal and spatial manifestation. That which has thus concentrated itself, is the utterly ineffable and inconceivable Existence which the Nihilist images to his mind as the negative Void of all that we know and are but the Transcendentalist with equal reason may image to his mind as the positive but indistinguishable Reality of all that we know and are. “In the beginning,” says the Vedanta, “was the one Existence without a second,” but before and after the beginning, now, for ever and beyond Time is that which we cannot describe even as the One, even when we say that nothing but That is. What we can be aware of is, first, its original self-concentration which we endeavour to realise as the indivisible One; secondly, the diffusion and apparent disintegration of all that was concentrated in its unity which is the Mind’s conception of the universe; and thirdly, its firm self-extension in the Truth-consciousness which contains and upholds the diffusion and prevents it from being a real disintegration, maintains unity in utmost diversity and stability in utmost mutability, insists on harmony in the appearance of an all-pervading strife and collision, keeps eternal cosmos where Mind would arrive only at a chaos eternally attempting

to form itself. This is the Supermind, the Truth-consciousness, the Real-Idea which knows itself and all that it becomes.

Supermind is the vast self-extension of the Brahman that contains and develops. By the Idea it develops the triune principle of existence, consciousness and bliss out of their indivisible unity. It differentiates them, but it does not divide. It establishes a Trinity, not arriving like the Mind from the three to the One, but manifesting the three out of the One—for it manifests and develops—and yet maintaining them in the unity—for it knows and contains. By the differentiation it is able to bring forward one or other of them as the effective Deity which contains the others involved or explicit in itself and this process it makes the foundation of all other differentiations. And it acts by the same operation on all the principles and possibilities which it evolves out of this all-constituent trinity. It possesses the power of development, of evolution, of making explicit, and that power carries with it the other power of involution, of envelopment, of making implicit. In a sense, the whole of creation may be said to be a movement between two involutions, Spirit in which all is involved and out of which all evolves downward to the other pole of Matter, Matter in which also all is involved and out of which all evolves upward to the other pole of Spirit.

Thus the whole process of differentiation by the Real-Idea creative of the universe is a putting forward of principles, forces, forms which contain for the comprehending consciousness all the rest of existence within them and front the apprehending consciousness with all the rest of existence implicit behind them. Therefore all is in each as well as each in all. Therefore every seed of things implies in itself all the infinity of various possibilities, but is kept to one law of process and result by the Will, that is to say, by the Knowledge-Force of the Conscious-Being who is manifesting himself and who, sure of the Idea in himself, pre-determines by it his own forms and movements. The seed is the Truth of its own being which this Self-Existence sees in itself, the resultant of that seed of self-vision is the Truth of self-action, the natural law of development, formation and functioning which follows inevitably upon the self-vision and keeps to the processes

involved in the original Truth. All Nature is simply, then, the Seer-Will, the Knowledge-Force of the Conscious-Being at work to evolve in force and form all the inevitable truth of the Idea into which it has originally thrown itself.

This conception of the Idea points us to the essential contrast between our mental consciousness and the Truth-consciousness. We regard thought as a thing separate from existence, abstract, unsubstantial, different from reality, something which appears one knows not whence and detaches itself from objective reality in order to observe, understand and judge it; for so it seems and therefore is to our all-dividing, all-analysing mentality. The first business of Mind is to render "discrete", to make fissures much more than to discern, and so it has made this paralysing fissure between thought and reality. But in Supermind all being is consciousness, all consciousness is of being, and the idea, a pregnant vibration of consciousness, is equally a vibration of being pregnant of itself; it is an initial coming out, in creative self-knowledge, of that which lay concentrated in uncreative self-awareness. It comes out as Idea that is a reality, and it is that reality of the Idea which evolves itself, always by its own power and consciousness of itself, always self-conscious, always self-developing by the will inherent in the Idea, always self-realising by the knowledge ingrained in its every impulsion. This is the truth of all creation, of all evolution.

In Supermind being, consciousness of knowledge and consciousness of will are not divided as they seem to be in our mental operations; they are a trinity, one movement with three effective aspects. Each has its own effect. Being gives the effect of substance, consciousness the effect of knowledge, of the self-guiding and shaping idea, of comprehension and apprehension; will gives the effect of self-fulfilling force. But the idea is only the light of the reality illumining itself; it is not mental thought nor imagination, but effective self-awareness. It is Real-Idea.

In Supermind knowledge in the Idea is not divorced from will in the Idea, but one with it — just as it is not different from being or substance, but is one with the being, luminous power of the substance. As the power of burning light is not different from

the substance of the fire, so the power of the Idea is not different from the substance of the Being which works itself out in the Idea and its development. In our mentality all are different. We have an idea and a will according to the idea or an impulsion of will and an idea detaching itself from it; but we differentiate effectually the idea from the will and both from ourselves. I am; the idea is a mysterious abstraction that appears in me, the will is another mystery, a force nearer to concreteness, though not concrete, but always something that is not myself, something that I have or get or am seized with, but am not. I make a gulf also between my will, its means and the effect, for these I regard as concrete realities outside and other than myself. Therefore neither myself nor the idea nor the will in me are self-effective. The idea may fall away from me, the will may fail, the means may be lacking, I myself by any or all of these lacunae may remain unfulfilled.

But in the Supermind there is no such paralysing division, because knowledge is not self-divided, force is not self-divided, being is not self-divided as in the mind; they are neither broken in themselves, nor divorced from each other. For the Supermind is the Vast; it starts from unity, not division, it is primarily comprehensive, differentiation is only its secondary act. Therefore whatever be the truth of being expressed, the idea corresponds to it exactly, the will-force to the idea,—force being only power of the consciousness,—and the result to the will. Nor does the idea clash with other ideas, the will or force with other will or force as in man and his world; for there is one vast Consciousness which contains and relates all ideas in itself as its own ideas, one vast Will which contains and relates all energies in itself as its own energies. It holds back this, advances that other, but according to its own preconceiving Idea-Will.

This is the justification of the current religious notions of the omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence of the Divine Being. Far from being an irrational imagination they are perfectly rational and in no way contradict either the logic of a comprehensive philosophy or the indications of observation and experience. The error is to make an unbridgeable gulf between

God and man, Brahman and the world. That error elevates an actual and practical differentiation in being, consciousness and force into an essential division. But this aspect of the question we shall touch upon afterwards. At present we have arrived at an affirmation and some conception of the divine and creative Supermind in which all is one in being, consciousness, will and delight, yet with an infinite capacity of differentiation that deploys but does not destroy the unity,—in which Truth is the substance and Truth rises in the Idea and Truth comes out in the form and there is one truth of knowledge and will, one truth of self-fulfilment and therefore of delight; for all self-fulfilment is satisfaction of being. Therefore, always, in all mutations and combinations a self-existent and inalienable harmony.

Chapter XV

The Supreme Truth-Consciousness

One seated in the sleep of Superconsciousness, a massed Intelligence, blissful and the enjoyer of Bliss. . . . This is the omnipotent, this is the omniscient, this is the inner control, this is the source of all.

Mandukya Upanishad.¹

WE HAVE to regard therefore this all-containing, all-originating, all-consummating Supermind as the nature of the Divine Being, not indeed in its absolute self-existence, but in its action as the Lord and Creator of its own worlds. This is the truth of that which we call God. Obviously this is not the too personal and limited Deity, the magnified and supernatural Man of the ordinary occidental conception; for that conception erects a too human Eidolon of a certain relation between the creative Supermind and the ego. We must not indeed exclude the personal aspect of the Deity, for the impersonal is only one face of existence; the Divine is All-existence, but it is also the one Existenter, — it is the sole Conscious-Being, but still a Being. Nevertheless, with this aspect we are not concerned at present; it is the impersonal psychological truth of the divine Consciousness that we are seeking to fathom: it is this that we have to fix in a large and clarified conception.

The Truth-Consciousness is everywhere present in the universe as an ordering self-knowledge by which the One manifests the harmonies of its infinite potential multiplicity. Without this ordering self-knowledge the manifestation would be merely a shifting chaos, precisely because the potentiality is infinite, — which by itself might lead only to a play of uncontrolled unbounded Chance. If there were only infinite potentiality without

¹ Verses 5, 6.

any law of guiding truth and harmonious self-vision, without any predetermining Idea in the very seed of things cast out for evolution, the world could be nothing but a teeming, amorphous, confused uncertainty. But the knowledge that creates, because what it creates or releases are forms and powers of itself and not things other than itself, possesses in its own being the vision of the truth and law that governs each potentiality, and along with that an intrinsic awareness of its relation to other potentialities and the harmonies that are possible between them; it holds all this prefigured in the general determining harmony which the whole rhythmic Idea of a universe must contain in its very birth and self-conception and which must therefore inevitably work out by the interplay of its constituents. It is the source and keeper of Law in the world; for that law is nothing arbitrary—it is the expression of a self-nature which is determined by the compelling truth of the real idea that each thing is in its inception. Therefore from the beginning the whole development is predetermined in its self-knowledge and at every moment in its self-working: it is what it must be at each moment by its own original inherent Truth; it moves to what it must be at the next, still by its own original inherent Truth; it will be at the end that which was contained and intended in its seed.

This development and progress of the world according to an original truth of its own being implies a succession of Time, a relation in Space and a regulated interaction of related things in Space to which the succession of Time gives the aspect of Causality. Time and Space, according to the metaphysician, have only a conceptual and not a real existence; but since all things and not these only are forms assumed by Conscious-Being in its own consciousness, the distinction is of no great importance. Time and Space are that one Conscious-Being viewing itself in extension, subjectively as Time, objectively as Space. Our mental view of these two categories is determined by the idea of measure which is inherent in the action of the analytical, dividing movement of Mind. Time is for the Mind a mobile extension measured out by the succession of the past, present and future in which Mind places itself at a certain standpoint whence it looks before

and after. Space is a stable extension measured out by divisibility of substance; at a certain point in that divisible extension Mind places itself and regards the disposition of substance around it.

In actual fact Mind measures Time by event and Space by Matter; but it is possible in pure mentality to disregard the movement of event and the disposition of substance and realise the pure movement of Conscious-Force which constitutes Space and Time; these two are then merely two aspects of the universal force of Consciousness which in their intertwined interaction comprehend the warp and woof of its action upon itself. And to a consciousness higher than Mind which should regard our past, present and future in one view, containing and not contained in them, not situated at a particular moment of Time for its point of prospection, Time might well offer itself as an eternal present. And to the same consciousness not situated at any particular point of Space, but containing all points and regions in itself, Space also might well offer itself as a subjective and indivisible extension,—no less subjective than Time. At certain moments we become aware of such an indivisible regard upholding by its immutable self-conscious unity the variations of the universe. But we must not now ask how the contents of Time and Space would present themselves there in their transcendent truth; for this our mind cannot conceive,—and it is even ready to deny to this Indivisible any possibility of knowing the world in any other way than that of our mind and senses.

What we have to realise and can to a certain extent conceive is the one view and all-comprehending regard by which the Supermind embraces and unifies the successions of Time and the divisions of Space. And first, if there were not this factor of the successions of Time, there would be no change or progression; a perfect harmony would be perpetually manifest, coeval with other harmonies in a sort of eternal moment, not successive to them in the movement from past to future. We have instead the constant succession of a developing harmony in which one strain rises out of another that preceded it and conceals in itself that which it has replaced. Or, if the self-manifestation were to exist without the factor of divisible Space, there would be

no mutable relation of forms or intershock of forces; all would exist and not be worked out,— a spaceless self-consciousness purely subjective would contain all things in an infinite subjective grasp as in the mind of a cosmic poet or dreamer, but would not distribute itself through all in an indefinite objective self-extension. Or again, if Time alone were real, its successions would be a pure development in which one strain would rise out of another in a subjective free spontaneity as in a series of musical sounds or a succession of poetical images. We have instead a harmony worked out by Time in terms of forms and forces that stand related to one another in an all-containing spatial extension; an incessant succession of powers and figures of things and happenings is our vision of existence.

Different potentialities are embodied, placed, related in this field of Time and Space, each with its powers and possibilities fronting other powers and possibilities, and as a result the successions of Time become in their appearance to the mind a working out of things by shock and struggle and not a spontaneous succession. In reality, there is a spontaneous working out of things from within and the external shock and struggle are only the superficial aspect of this elaboration. For the inner and inherent law of the one and whole, which is necessarily a harmony, governs the outer and processive laws of the parts or forms which appear to be in collision; and to the supramental vision this greater and profounder truth of harmony is always present. That which is an apparent discord to the mind because it considers each thing separately in itself, is an element of the general ever-present and ever-developing harmony to the Supermind because it views all things in a multiple unity. Besides, the mind sees only a given time and space and views many possibilities pell-mell as all more or less realisable in that time and space; the divine Supermind sees the whole extension of Time and Space and can embrace all the mind's possibilities and very many more not visible to the mind, but without any error, groping or confusion; for it perceives each potentiality in its proper force, essential necessity, right relation to the others and the time, place and circumstance both of its gradual and its

ultimate realisation. To see things steadily and see them whole is not possible to the mind; but it is the very nature of the transcendent Supermind.

This Supermind in its conscious vision not only contains all the forms of itself which its conscious force creates, but it pervades them as an indwelling Presence and a self-revealing Light. It is present, even though concealed, in every form and force of the universe; it is that which determines sovereignly and spontaneously form, force and functioning; it limits the variations it compels; it gathers, disperses, modifies the energy which it uses; and all this is done in accord with the first laws² that its self-knowledge has fixed in the very birth of the form, at the very starting-point of the force. It is seated within everything as the Lord in the heart of all existences,—he who turns them as on an engine by the power of his Maya;³ it is within them and embraces them as the divine Seer who variously disposed and ordained objects, each rightly according to the thing that it is, from years sempiternal.⁴

Each thing in Nature, therefore, whether animate or inanimate, mentally self-conscious or not self-conscious, is governed in its being and in its operations by an indwelling Vision and Power, to us subconscious or inconscient because we are not conscious of it, but not inconscient to itself, rather profoundly and universally conscient. Therefore each thing seems to do the works of intelligence, even without possessing intelligence, because it obeys, whether subconsciously as in the plant and animal or half-consciously as in man, the real-idea of the divine Supermind within it. But it is not a mental Intelligence that informs and governs all things; it is a self-aware Truth of being in which self-knowledge is inseparable from self-existence: it is this Truth-consciousness which has not to think out things but works them out with knowledge according to the impeccable self-vision and the inevitable force of a sole and self-fulfilling

² A Vedic expression. The gods act according to the first laws, original and therefore supreme, which are the law of the truth of things.

³ *Gita*, XVIII. 61.

⁴ *Isha Upanishad*, Verse 8.

Existence. Mental intelligence thinks out because it is merely a reflecting force of consciousness which does not know, but seeks to know; it follows in Time step by step the working of a knowledge higher than itself, a knowledge that exists always, one and whole, that holds Time in its grasp, that sees past, present and future in a single regard.

This, then, is the first operative principle of the divine Supermind; it is a cosmic vision which is all-comprehensive, all-pervading, all-inhabiting. Because it comprehends all things in being and static self-awareness, subjective, timeless, spaceless, therefore it comprehends all things in dynamic knowledge and governs their objective self-embodiment in Space and Time.

In this consciousness the knower, knowledge and the known are not different entities, but fundamentally one. Our mentality makes a distinction between these three because without distinctions it cannot proceed; losing its proper means and fundamental law of action, it becomes motionless and inactive. Therefore, even when I regard myself mentally, I have still to make this distinction. I am, as the knower; what I observe in myself, I regard as the object of my knowledge, myself yet not myself; knowledge is an operation by which I link the knower to the known. But the artificiality, the purely practical and utilitarian character of this operation is evident; it is evident that it does not represent the fundamental truth of things. In reality, I the knower am the consciousness which knows; the knowledge is that consciousness, myself, operating; the known is also myself, a form or movement of the same consciousness. The three are clearly one existence, one movement, indivisible though seeming to be divided, not distributed between its forms although appearing to distribute itself and to stand separate in each. But this is a knowledge which the mind can arrive at, can reason out, can feel, but cannot readily make the practical basis of its intelligent operations. And with regard to objects external to the form of consciousness which I call myself, the difficulty becomes almost insuperable; even to feel unity there is an abnormal effort and to retain it, to act upon it continually would be a new and foreign action not properly belonging to the Mind. Mind can at most

hold it as an understood truth so as to correct and modify by it its own normal activities which are still based upon division, somewhat as we know intellectually that the earth moves round the sun and are able to correct by it but not abolish the artificial and physically practical arrangement by which the senses persist in regarding the sun as in motion round the earth.

But the Supermind possesses and acts always, fundamentally, on this truth of unity which to the mind is only a secondary or acquired possession and not the very grain of its seeing. Supermind sees the universe and its contents as itself in a single indivisible act of knowledge, an act which is its life, which is the very movement of its self-existence. Therefore this comprehensive divine consciousness in its aspect of Will does not so much guide or govern the development of cosmic life as consummate it in itself by an act of power which is inseparable from the act of knowledge and from the movement of self-existence, is indeed one and the same act. For we have seen that universal force and universal consciousness are one — cosmic force is the operation of cosmic consciousness. So also divine Knowledge and divine Will are one; they are the same fundamental movement or act of existence.

This indivisibility of the comprehensive Supermind which contains all multiplicity without derogating from its own unity, is a truth upon which we have always to insist, if we are to understand the cosmos and get rid of the initial error of our analytic mentality. A tree evolves out of the seed in which it is already contained, the seed out of the tree; a fixed law, an invariable process reigns in the permanence of the form of manifestation which we call a tree. The mind regards this phenomenon, this birth, life and reproduction of a tree, as a thing in itself and on that basis studies, classes and explains it. It explains the tree by the seed, the seed by the tree; it declares a law of Nature. But it has explained nothing; it has only analysed and recorded the process of a mystery. Supposing even that it comes to perceive a secret conscious force as the soul, the real being of this form and the rest as merely a settled operation and manifestation of that force, still it tends to regard the form as a separate existence with

its separate law of nature and process of development. In the animal and in man with his conscious mentality this separative tendency of the Mind induces it to regard itself also as a separate existence, the conscious subject, and other forms as separate objects of its mentality. This useful arrangement, necessary to life and the first basis of all its practice, is accepted by the mind as an actual fact and thence proceeds all the error of the ego.

But the Supermind works otherwise. The tree and its process would not be what they are, could not indeed exist, if it were a separate existence; forms are what they are by the force of the cosmic existence, they develop as they do as a result of their relation to it and to all its other manifestations. The separate law of their nature is only an application of the universal law and truth of all Nature; their particular development is determined by their place in the general development. The tree does not explain the seed, nor the seed the tree; cosmos explains both and God explains cosmos. The Supermind, pervading and inhabiting at once the seed and the tree and all objects, lives in this greater knowledge which is indivisible and one though with a modified and not an absolute indivisibility and unity. In this comprehensive knowledge there is no independent centre of existence, no individual separated ego such as we see in ourselves; the whole of existence is to its self-awareness an equable extension, one in oneness, one in multiplicity, one in all conditions and everywhere. Here the All and the One are the same existence; the individual being does not and cannot lose the consciousness of its identity with all beings and with the One Being; for that identity is inherent in supramental cognition, a part of the supramental self-evidence.

In that spacious equality of oneness the Being is not divided and distributed; equally self-extended, pervading its extension as One, inhabiting as One the multiplicity of forms, it is everywhere at once the single and equal Brahman. For this extension of the Being in Time and Space and this pervasion and indwelling is in intimate relation with the absolute Unity from which it has proceeded, with that absolute Indivisible in which there is no centre or circumference but only the timeless and spaceless One.

That high concentration of unity in the unextended Brahman must necessarily translate itself in the extension by this equal pervasive concentration, this indivisible comprehension of all things, this universal undistributed immanence, this unity which no play of multiplicity can abrogate or diminish. "Brahman is in all things, all things are in Brahman, all things are Brahman" is the triple formula of the comprehensive Supermind, a single truth of self-manifestation in three aspects which it holds together and inseparably in its self-view as the fundamental knowledge from which it proceeds to the play of the cosmos.

But what then is the origin of mentality and the organisation of this lower consciousness in the triple terms of Mind, Life and Matter which is our view of the universe? For since all things that exist must proceed from the action of the all-efficient Supermind, from its operation in the three original terms of Existence, Conscious-Force and Bliss, there must be some faculty of the creative Truth-Consciousness which so operates as to cast them into these new terms, into this inferior trio of mentality, vitality and physical substance. This faculty we find in a secondary power of the creative knowledge, its power of a projecting, confronting and apprehending consciousness in which knowledge centralises itself and stands back from its works to observe them. And when we speak of centralisation, we mean, as distinguished from the equable concentration of consciousness of which we have hitherto spoken, an unequal concentration in which there is the beginning of self-division—or of its phenomenal appearance.

First of all, the Knower holds himself concentrated in knowledge as subject and regards his Force of consciousness as if continually proceeding from him into the form of himself, continually working in it, continually drawing back into himself, continually issuing forth again. From this single act of self-modification proceed all the practical distinctions upon which the relative view and the relative action of the universe is based. A practical distinction has been created between the Knower, Knowledge and the Known, between the Lord, His force and the children and works of the Force, between the Enjoyer, the

Enjoyment and the Enjoyed, between the Self, Maya and the becomings of the Self.

Secondly, this conscious Soul concentrated in knowledge, this Purusha observing and governing the Force that has gone forth from him, his Shakti or Prakriti, repeats himself in every form of himself. He accompanies, as it were, his Force of consciousness into its works and reproduces there the act of self-division from which this apprehending consciousness is born. In each form this Soul dwells with his Nature and observes himself in other forms from that artificial and practical centre of consciousness. In all it is the same Soul, the same divine Being; the multiplication of centres is only a practical act of consciousness intended to institute a play of difference, of mutuality, mutual knowledge, mutual shock of force, mutual enjoyment, a difference based upon essential unity, a unity realised on a practical basis of difference.

We can speak of this new status of the all-pervading Supermind as a further departure from the unitarian truth of things and from the indivisible consciousness which constitutes inalienably the unity essential to the existence of the cosmos. We can see that pursued a little farther it may become truly Avidya, the great Ignorance which starts from multiplicity as the fundamental reality and in order to travel back to real unity has to commence with the false unity of the ego. We can see also that once the individual centre is accepted as the determining standpoint, as the knower, mental sensation, mental intelligence, mental action of will and all their consequences cannot fail to come into being. But also we have to see that so long as the soul acts in the Supermind, Ignorance has not yet begun; the field of knowledge and action is still the truth-consciousness, the basis is still the unity.

For the Self still regards itself as one in all and all things as becomings in itself and of itself; the Lord still knows his Force as himself in act and every being as himself in soul and himself in form; it is still his own being that the Enjoyer enjoys, even though in a multiplicity. The one real change has been an unequal concentration of consciousness and a multiple distribution of force.

There is a practical distinction in consciousness, but there is no essential difference of consciousness or true division in its vision of itself. The Truth-consciousness has arrived at a position which prepares our mentality, but is not yet that of our mentality. And it is this that we must study in order to seize Mind at its origin, at the point where it makes its great lapse from the high and vast wideness of the Truth-consciousness into the division and the ignorance. Fortunately, this apprehending Truth-consciousness⁵ is much more facile to our grasp by its nearness to us, by its foreshadowing of our mental operations than the remoter realisation that we have hitherto been struggling to express in our inadequate language of the intellect. The barrier that has to be crossed is less formidable.

⁵ *prajñāna*.

Chapter XVI

The Triple Status of Supermind

My self is that which supports all beings and constitutes their existence. . . . I am the self which abides within all beings.

*Gita.*¹

Three powers of Light uphold three luminous worlds divine.

*Rig Veda.*²

BEFORE we pass to this easier understanding of the world we inhabit from the standpoint of an apprehending Truth-consciousness which sees things as would an individual soul freed from the limitations of mentality and admitted to participate in the action of the Divine Supermind, we must pause and resume briefly what we have realised or can yet realise of the consciousness of the Lord, the Ishwara as He develops the world by His Maya out of the original concentrated unity of His being.

We have started with the assertion of all existence as one Being whose essential nature is Consciousness, one Consciousness whose active nature is Force or Will; and this Being is Delight, this Consciousness is Delight, this Force or Will is Delight. Eternal and inalienable Bliss of Existence, Bliss of Consciousness, Bliss of Force or Will whether concentrated in itself and at rest or active and creative, this is God and this is ourselves in our essential, our non-phenomenal being. Concentrated in itself, it possesses or rather is the essential, eternal, inalienable Bliss; active and creative, it possesses or rather becomes the delight of the play of existence, the play of consciousness, the play of force and will. That play is the universe and that delight is the

¹ IX. 5; X. 20. ² V. 29. 1.

sole cause, motive and object of cosmic existence. The Divine Consciousness possesses that play and delight eternally and inalienably; our essential being, our real self which is concealed from us by the false self or mental ego, also enjoys that play and delight eternally and inalienably and cannot indeed do otherwise since it is one in being with the Divine Consciousness. If we aspire therefore to a divine life, we cannot attain to it by any other way than by unveiling this veiled self in us, by mounting from our present status in the false self or mental ego to a higher status in the true self, the Atman, by entering into that unity with the Divine Consciousness which something superconscient in us always enjoys,—otherwise we could not exist,—but which our conscious mentality has forfeited.

But when we thus assert this unity of Sachchidananda on the one hand and this divided mentality on the other, we posit two opposite entities one of which must be false if the other is to be held as true, one of which must be abolished if the other is to be enjoyed. Yet it is in the mind and its form of life and body that we exist on earth and, if we must abolish the consciousness of mind, life and body in order to reach the one Existence, Consciousness and Bliss, then a divine life here is impossible. We must abandon cosmic existence utterly as an illusion in order to enjoy or re-become the Transcendent. From this solution there is no escape unless there be an intermediate link between the two which can explain them to each other and establish between them such a relation as will make it possible for us to realise the one Existence, Consciousness, Delight in the mould of the mind, life and body.

The intermediate link exists. We call it the Supermind or the Truth-Consciousness, because it is a principle superior to mentality and exists, acts and proceeds in the fundamental truth and unity of things and not like the mind in their appearances and phenomenal divisions. The existence of the supermind is a logical necessity arising directly from the position with which we have started. For in itself Sachchidananda must be a spaceless and timeless absolute of conscious existence that is bliss; but the world is, on the contrary, an extension in Time and Space

and a movement, a working out, a development of relations and possibilities by causality—or what so appears to us—in Time and Space. The true name of this Causality is Divine Law and the essence of that Law is an inevitable self-development of the truth of the thing that is, as Idea, in the very essence of what is developed; it is a previously fixed determination of relative movements out of the stuff of infinite possibility. That which thus develops all things must be a Knowledge-Will or Conscious-Force; for all manifestation of universe is a play of the Conscious-Force which is the essential nature of existence. But the developing Knowledge-Will cannot be mental; for mind does not know, possess or govern this Law, but is governed by it, is one of its results, moves in the phenomena of the self-development and not at its root, observes as divided things the results of the development and strives in vain to arrive at their source and reality. Moreover this Knowledge-Will which develops all must be in possession of the unity of things and must out of it manifest their multiplicity; but mind is not in possession of that unity, it has only an imperfect possession of a part of the multiplicity.

Therefore there must be a principle superior to the Mind which satisfies the conditions in which Mind fails. No doubt, it is Sachchidananda itself that is this principle, but Sachchidananda not resting in its pure infinite invariable consciousness, but proceeding out of this primal poise, or rather upon it as a base and in it as a continent, into a movement which is its form of Energy and instrument of cosmic creation. Consciousness and Force are the twin essential aspects of the pure Power of existence; Knowledge and Will must therefore be the form which that Power takes in creating a world of relations in the extension of Time and Space. This Knowledge and this Will must be one, infinite, all-embracing, all-possessing, all-forming, holding eternally in itself that which it casts into movement and form. The Supermind then is Being moving out into a determinative self-knowledge which perceives certain truths of itself and wills to realise them in a temporal and spatial extension of its own timeless and spaceless existence. Whatever is in its own being,

takes form as self-knowledge, as Truth-Consciousness, as Real-Idea, and, that self-knowledge being also self-force, fulfils or realises itself inevitably in Time and Space.

This, then, is the nature of the Divine Consciousness which creates in itself all things by a movement of its conscious-force and governs their development through a self-evolution by inherent knowledge-will of the truth of existence or real-idea which has formed them. The Being that is thus conscient is what we call God; and He must obviously be omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent. Omnipresent, for all forms are forms of His conscious being created by its force of movement in its own extension as Space and Time; omniscient, for all things exist in His conscious-being, are formed by it and possessed by it; omnipotent, for this all-possessing consciousness is also an all-possessing Force and all-informing Will. And this Will and Knowledge are not at war with each other as our will and knowledge are capable of being at war with each other, because they are not different but are one movement of the same being. Nor can they be contradicted by any other will, force or consciousness from outside or within; for there is no consciousness or force external to the One, and all energies and formations of knowledge within are not other than it, but are merely play of the one all-determining Will and the one all-harmonising Knowledge. What we see as a clash of wills and forces, because we dwell in the particular and divided and cannot see the whole, the Supermind envisages as the conspiring elements of a predetermined harmony which is always present to it because the totality of things is eternally subject to its gaze.

Whatever be the poise or form its action takes, this will always be the nature of the divine Consciousness. But, its existence being absolute in itself, its power of existence is also absolute in its extension, and it is not therefore limited to one poise or one form of action. We, human beings, are phenomenally a particular form of consciousness, subject to Time and Space, and can only be, in our surface consciousness which is all we know of ourselves, one thing at a time, one formation, one poise of being, one aggregate of experience; and that one thing is for us the truth of ourselves which we acknowledge; all the rest is either not true

or no longer true, because it has disappeared into the past out of our ken, or not yet true, because it is waiting in the future and not yet in our ken. But the Divine Consciousness is not so particularised, nor so limited; it can be many things at a time and take more than one enduring poise even for all time. We find that in the principle of Supermind itself it has three such general poises or sessions of its world-founding consciousness. The first founds the inalienable unity of things, the second modifies that unity so as to support the manifestation of the Many in One and One in Many; the third further modifies it so as to support the evolution of a diversified individuality which, by the action of Ignorance, becomes in us at a lower level the illusion of the separate ego.

We have seen what is the nature of this first and primary poise of the Supermind which founds the inalienable unity of things. It is not the pure unitarian consciousness; for that is a timeless and spaceless concentration of Sachchidananda in itself, in which Conscious Force does not cast itself out into any kind of extension and, if it contains the universe at all, contains it in eternal potentiality and not in temporal actuality. This, on the contrary, is an equal self-extension of Sachchidananda all-comprehending, all-possessing, all-constituting. But this all is one, not many; there is no individualisation. It is when the reflection of this Supermind falls upon our stilled and purified self that we lose all sense of individuality; for there is no concentration of consciousness there to support an individual development. All is developed in unity and as one; all is held by this Divine Consciousness as forms of its existence, not as in any degree separate existences. Somewhat as the thoughts and images that occur in our mind are not separate existences to us, but forms taken by our consciousness, so are all names and forms to this primary Supermind. It is the pure divine ideation and formation in the Infinite,—only an ideation and formation that is organised not as an unreal play of mental thought, but as a real play of conscious being. The divine soul in this poise would make no difference between Conscious-Soul and Force-Soul, for all force would be action of consciousness, nor between

Matter and Spirit since all mould would be simply form of Spirit.

In the second poise of the Supermind the Divine Consciousness stands back in the idea from the movement which it contains, realising it by a sort of apprehending consciousness, following it, occupying and inhabiting its works, seeming to distribute itself in its forms. In each name and form it would realise itself as the stable Conscious-Self, the same in all; but also it would realise itself as a concentration of Conscious-Self following and supporting the individual play of movement and upholding its differentiation from other play of movement, — the same everywhere in soul-essence, but varying in soul-form. This concentration supporting the soul-form would be the individual Divine or Jivatman as distinguished from the universal Divine or one all-constituting self. There would be no essential difference, but only a practical differentiation for the play which would not abrogate the real unity. The universal Divine would know all soul-forms as itself and yet establish a different relation with each separately and in each with all the others. The individual Divine would envisage its existence as a soul-form and soul-movement of the One and, while by the comprehending action of consciousness it would enjoy its unity with the One and with all soul-forms, it would also by a forward or frontal apprehending action support and enjoy its individual movement and its relations of a free difference in unity both with the One and with all its forms. If our purified mind were to reflect this secondary poise of Supermind, our soul could support and occupy its individual existence and yet even there realise itself as the One that has become all, inhabits all, contains all, enjoying even in its particular modification its unity with God and its fellows. In no other circumstance of the supramental existence would there be any characteristic change; the only change would be this play of the One that has manifested its multiplicity and of the Many that are still one, with all that is necessary to maintain and conduct the play.

A third poise of the Supermind would be attained if the supporting concentration were no longer to stand at the back, as it were, of the movement, inhabiting it with a certain superiority

to it and so following and enjoying, but were to project itself into the movement and to be in a way involved in it. Here, the character of the play would be altered, but only in so far as the individual Divine would so predominantly make the play of relations with the universal and with its other forms the practical field of its conscious experience that the realisation of utter unity with them would be only a supreme accompaniment and constant culmination of all experience; but in the higher poise unity would be the dominant and fundamental experience and variation would be only a play of the unity. This tertiary poise would be therefore that of a sort of fundamental blissful dualism in unity — no longer unity qualified by a subordinate dualism — between the individual Divine and its universal source, with all the consequences that would accrue from the maintenance and operation of such a dualism.

It may be said that the first consequence would be a lapse into the ignorance of Avidya which takes the Many for the real fact of existence and views the One only as a cosmic sum of the Many. But there would not necessarily be any such lapse. For the individual Divine would still be conscious of itself as the result of the One and of its power of conscious self-creation, that is to say, of its multiple self-concentration conceived so as to govern and enjoy manifoldly its manifold existence in the extension of Time and Space; this true spiritual Individual would not arrogate to itself an independent or separate existence. It would only affirm the truth of the differentiating movement along with the truth of the stable unity, regarding them as the upper and lower poles of the same truth, the foundation and culmination of the same divine play; and it would insist on the joy of the differentiation as necessary to the fullness of the joy of the unity.

Obviously, these three poises would be only different ways of dealing with the same Truth; the Truth of existence enjoyed would be the same, the way of enjoying it or rather the poise of the soul in enjoying it would be different. The delight, the Ananda would vary, but would abide always within the status of the Truth-consciousness and involve no lapse into the Falsehood and the Ignorance. For the secondary and tertiary

Supermind would only develop and apply in the terms of the divine multiplicity what the primary Supermind had held in the terms of the divine unity. We cannot stamp any of these three poises with the stigma of falsehood and illusion. The language of the Upanishads, the supreme ancient authority for these truths of a higher experience, when they speak of the Divine existence which is manifesting itself, implies the validity of all these experiences. We can only assert the priority of the oneness to the multiplicity, a priority not in time but in relation of consciousness, and no statement of supreme spiritual experience, no Vedantic philosophy denies this priority or the eternal dependence of the Many on the One. It is because in Time the Many seem not to be eternal but to manifest out of the One and return into it as their essence that their reality is denied; but it might equally be reasoned that the eternal persistence or, if you will, the eternal recurrence of the manifestation in Time is a proof that the divine multiplicity is an eternal fact of the Supreme beyond Time no less than the divine unity; otherwise it could not have this characteristic of inevitable eternal recurrence in Time.

It is indeed only when our human mentality lays an exclusive emphasis on one side of spiritual experience, affirms that to be the sole eternal truth and states it in the terms of our all-dividing mental logic that the necessity for mutually destructive schools of philosophy arises. Thus, emphasising the sole truth of the unitarian consciousness, we observe the play of the divine unity, erroneously rendered by our mentality into the terms of real difference, but, not satisfied with correcting this error of the mind by the truth of a higher principle, we assert that the play itself is an illusion. Or, emphasising the play of the One in the Many, we declare a qualified unity and regard the individual soul as a soul-form of the Supreme, but would assert the eternity of this qualified existence and deny altogether the experience of a pure consciousness in an unqualified oneness. Or, again, emphasising the play of difference, we assert that the Supreme and the human soul are eternally different and reject the validity of an experience which exceeds and seems to abolish that difference.

But the position that we have now firmly taken absolves us from the necessity of these negations and exclusions: we see that there is a truth behind all these affirmations, but at the same time an excess which leads to an ill-founded negation. Affirming, as we have done, the absolute absoluteness of That, not limited by our ideas of unity, not limited by our ideas of multiplicity, affirming the unity as a basis for the manifestation of the multiplicity and the multiplicity as the basis for the return to oneness and the enjoyment of unity in the divine manifestation, we need not burden our present statement with these discussions or undertake the vain labour of enslaving to our mental distinctions and definitions the absolute freedom of the Divine Infinite.

Chapter XVII

The Divine Soul

He whose self has become all existences, for he has the knowledge, how shall he be deluded, whence shall he have grief, he who sees everywhere oneness? *Isha Upanishad.*¹

BY THE conception we have formed of the Supermind, by its opposition to the mentality on which our human existence is based, we are able not only to form a precise instead of a vague idea of divinity and the divine life,—expressions which we are otherwise condemned to use with looseness and as the vague wording of a large but almost impalpable aspiration,—but also to give these ideas a firm basis of philosophical reasoning, to put them into a clear relation with the humanity and the human life which is all we at present enjoy and to justify our hope and aspiration by the very nature of the world and of our own cosmic antecedents and the inevitable future of our evolution. We begin to grasp intellectually what is the Divine, the eternal Reality, and to understand how out of it the world has come. We begin also to perceive how inevitably that which has come out of the Divine must return to the Divine. We may now ask with profit and a chance of clearer reply how we must change and what we must become in order to arrive there in our nature and our life and our relations with others and not only through a solitary and ecstatic realisation in the profundities of our being. Certainly, there is still a defect in our premisses; for we have so far been striving to define for ourselves what the Divine is in its descent towards limited Nature, whereas what we ourselves actually are is the Divine in the individual ascending back out of limited Nature

¹ Verse 7.

to its own proper divinity. This difference of movement must involve a difference between the life of the gods who have never known the fall and the life of man redeemed, conqueror of the lost godhead and bearing within him the experience and it may be the new riches gathered by him from his acceptance of the utter descent. Nevertheless, there can be no difference of essential characteristics, but only of mould and colouring. We can already ascertain on the basis of the conclusions at which we have arrived the essential nature of the divine life towards which we aspire.

What then would be the existence of a divine soul, not descended into the ignorance by the fall of Spirit into Matter and the eclipse of soul by material Nature? What would be its consciousness, living in the original Truth of things, in the inalienable unity, in the world of its own infinite being, like the Divine Existence itself, but able by the play of the Divine Maya and by the distinction of the comprehending and apprehending Truth-Consciousness to enjoy also difference from God at the same time as unity with Him and to embrace difference and yet oneness with other divine souls in the infinite play of the self-multiplied Identical?

Obviously, the existence of such a soul would be always self-contained in the conscious play of Sachchidananda. It would be pure and infinite self-existence in its being; in its becoming it would be a free play of immortal life uninvaded by death and birth and change of body because unclouded by ignorance and not involved in the darkness of our material being. It would be a pure and unlimited consciousness in its energy, poised in an eternal and luminous tranquillity as its foundation, yet able to play freely with forms of knowledge and forms of conscious power, tranquil, unaffected by the stumblings of mental error and the misprisions of our striving will because it never departs from truth and oneness, never falls from the inherent light and the natural harmony of its divine existence. It would be, finally, a pure and inalienable delight in its eternal self-experience and in Time a free variation of bliss unaffected by our perversions of dislike, hatred, discontent and suffering because undivided in

being, unbaffled by erring self-will, unperverted by the ignorant stimulus of desire.

Its consciousness would not be shut out from any part of the infinite truth, nor limited by any poise or status that it might assume in its relations with others, nor condemned to any loss of self-knowledge by its acceptance of a purely phenomenal individuality and the play of practical differentiation. It would in its self-experience live eternally in the presence of the Absolute. To us the Absolute is only an intellectual conception of indefinable existence. The intellect tells us simply that there is a Brahman higher than the highest,² an Unknowable that knows itself in other fashion than that of our knowledge; but the intellect cannot bring us into its presence. The divine soul living in the Truth of things would, on the contrary, always have the conscious sense of itself as a manifestation of the Absolute. Its immutable existence it would be aware of as the original "self-form"³ of that Transcendent,—Sachchidananda; its play of conscious being it would be aware of as manifestation of That in forms of Sachchidananda. In its every state or act of knowledge it would be aware of the Unknowable cognising itself by a form of variable self-knowledge; in its every state or act of power, will or force aware of the Transcendence possessing itself by a form of conscious power of being and knowledge; in its every state or act of delight, joy or love aware of the Transcendence embracing itself by a form of conscious self-enjoyment. This presence of the Absolute would not be with it as an experience occasionally glimpsed or finally arrived at and held with difficulty or as an addition, acquisition or culmination superimposed on its ordinary state of being: it would be the very foundation of its being both in the unity and the differentiation; it would be present to it in all its knowing, willing, doing, enjoying; it would be absent neither from its timeless self nor from any moment of Time, neither from its spaceless being nor from any determination of its extended existence, neither from its unconditioned purity

² *parātpara*.

³ *svarūpa*.

beyond all cause and circumstance nor from any relation of circumstance, condition and causality. This constant presence of the Absolute would be the basis of its infinite freedom and delight, ensure its security in the play and provide the root and sap and essence of its divine being.

Moreover such a divine soul would live simultaneously in the two terms of the eternal existence of Sachchidananda, the two inseparable poles of the self-unfolding of the Absolute which we call the One and the Many. All being does really so live; but to our divided self-awareness there is an incompatibility, a gulf between the two driving us towards a choice, to dwell either in the multiplicity exiled from the direct and entire consciousness of the One or in the unity repellent of the consciousness of the Many. But the divine soul would not be enslaved to this divorce and duality. It would be aware in itself at once of the infinite self-concentration and the infinite self-extension and diffusion. It would be aware simultaneously of the One in its unitarian consciousness holding the innumerable multiplicity in itself as if potential, unexpressed and therefore to our mental experience of that state non-existent, and of the One in its extended consciousness holding the multiplicity thrown out and active as the play of its own conscious being, will and delight. It would equally be aware of the Many ever drawing down to themselves the One that is the eternal source and reality of their existence and of the Many ever mounting up attracted to the One that is the eternal culmination and blissful justification of all their play of difference. This vast view of things is the mould of the Truth-Consciousness, the foundation of the large Truth and Right hymned by the Vedic seers; this unity of all these terms of opposition is the real Adwaita, the supreme comprehending word of the knowledge of the Unknowable.

The divine soul will be aware of all variation of being, consciousness, will and delight as the outflowing, the extension, the diffusion of that self-concentrated Unity developing itself, not into difference and division, but into another, an extended form of infinite oneness. It will itself always be concentrated in oneness in the essence of its being, always manifested in variation

in the extension of its being. All that takes form in itself will be the manifested potentialities of the One, the Word or Name vibrating out of the nameless Silence, the Form realising the formless essence, the active Will or Power proceeding out of the tranquil Force, the ray of self-cognition gleaming out from the sun of timeless self-awareness, the wave of becoming rising up into shape of self-conscious existence out of the eternally self-conscious Being, the joy and love welling for ever out of the eternal still Delight. It will be the Absolute biune in its self-unfolding, and each relativity in it will be absolute to itself because aware of itself as the Absolute manifested but without that ignorance which excludes other relativities as alien to its being or less complete than itself.

In the extension the divine soul will be aware of the three grades of the supramental existence, not as we are mentally compelled to regard them, not as grades, but as a triune fact of the self-manifestation of Sachchidananda. It will be able to embrace them in one and the same comprehensive self-realisation,—for a vast comprehensiveness is the foundation of the truth-conscious supermind. It will be able divinely to conceive, perceive and sense all things as the Self, its own self, one self of all, one Self-being and Self-becoming, but not divided in its becomings which have no existence apart from its own self-consciousness. It will be able divinely to conceive, perceive and sense all existences as soul-forms of the One which have each its own being in the One, its own standpoint in the One, its own relations with all the other existences that people the infinite unity, but all dependent on the One, conscious form of Him in His own infinity. It will be able divinely to conceive, perceive and sense all these existences in their individuality, in their separate standpoint living as the individual Divine, each with the One and Supreme dwelling in it and each therefore not altogether a form or eidolon, not really an illusory part of a real whole, a mere foaming wave on the surface of an immobile Ocean,—for these are after all no more than inadequate mental images,—but a whole in the whole, a truth that repeats the infinite Truth, a wave that is all the sea, a relative that proves to be

the Absolute itself when we look behind form and see it in its completeness.

For these three are aspects of the one Existence. The first is based upon that self-knowledge which, in our human realisation of the Divine, the Upanishad describes as the Self in us becoming all existences; the second on that which is described as seeing all existences in the Self; the third on that which is described as seeing the Self in all existences. The Self becoming all existences is the basis of our oneness with all; the Self containing all existences is the basis of our oneness in difference; the Self inhabiting all is the basis of our individuality in the universal. If the defect of our mentality, if its need of exclusive concentration compels it to dwell on any one of these aspects of self-knowledge to the exclusion of the others, if a realisation imperfect as well as exclusive moves us always to bring in a human element of error into the very Truth itself and of conflict and mutual negation into the all-comprehending unity, yet to a divine supramental being, by the essential character of the supermind which is a comprehending oneness and infinite totality, they must present themselves as a triple and indeed a triune realisation.

If we suppose this soul to take its poise, its centre in the consciousness of the individual Divine living and acting in distinct relation with the "others", still it will have in the foundation of its consciousness the entire unity from which all emerges and it will have in the background of that consciousness the extended and the modified unity and to any of these it will be capable of returning and of contemplating from them its individuality. In the Veda all these poised are asserted of the gods. In essence the gods are one existence which the sages call by different names; but in their action founded in and proceeding from the large Truth and Right Agni or another is said to be all the other gods, he is the One that becomes all; at the same time he is said to contain all the gods in himself as the nave of a wheel contains the spokes, he is the One that contains all; and yet as Agni he is described as a separate deity, one who helps all the others, exceeds them in force and knowledge, yet is inferior to them in cosmic position and is employed by them as messenger, priest

and worker,—the creator of the world and father, he is yet the son born of our works, he is, that is to say, the original and the manifested indwelling Self or Divine, the One that inhabits all.

All the relations of the divine soul with God or its supreme Self and with its other selves in other forms will be determined by this comprehensive self-knowledge. These relations will be relations of being, of consciousness and knowledge, of will and force, of love and delight. Infinite in their potentiality of variation, they need exclude no possible relation of soul with soul that is compatible with the preservation of the inalienable sense of unity in spite of every phenomenon of difference. Thus in its relations of enjoyment the divine soul will have the delight of all its own experience in itself; it will have the delight of all its experience of relation with others as a communion with other selves in other forms created for a varied play in the universe; it will have too the delight of the experiences of its other selves as if they were its own—as indeed they really are. And all this capacity it will have because it will be aware of its own experiences, of its relations with others and of the experiences of others and their relations with itself as all the joy or Ananda of the One, the supreme Self, its own self, differentiated by its separate habitation of all these forms comprehended in its own being but still one in difference. Because this unity is the basis of all its experience, it will be free from the discords of our divided consciousness, divided by ignorance and a separatist egoism; all these selves and their relations will play consciously into each other's hands; they will part and melt into each other as the numberless notes of an eternal harmony.

And the same rule will apply to the relations of its being, knowledge, will with the being, knowledge and will of others. For all its experience and delight will be the play of a self-blissful conscious force of being in which, by obedience to this truth of unity, will cannot be at strife with knowledge nor either of them with delight. Nor will the knowledge, will and delight of one soul clash with the knowledge, will and delight of another, because by their awareness of their unity what is clash and strife and discord in our divided being will be there the meeting, entwining and

mutual interplay of the different notes of one infinite harmony.

In its relations with its supreme Self, with God, the divine soul will have this sense of the oneness of the transcendent and universal Divine with its own being. It will enjoy that oneness of God with itself in its own individuality and with its other selves in the universality. Its relations of knowledge will be the play of the divine omniscience, for God is Knowledge, and what is ignorance with us will be there only the holding back of knowledge in the repose of conscious self-awareness so that certain forms of that self-awareness may be brought forward into activity of Light. Its relations of will will be there the play of the divine omnipotence, for God is Force, Will and Power, and what with us is weakness and incapacity will be the holding back of will in tranquil concentrated force so that certain forms of divine conscious-force may realise themselves brought forward into form of Power. Its relations of love and delight will be the play of the divine ecstasy, for God is Love and Delight, and what with us would be denial of love and delight will be the holding back of joy in the still sea of Bliss so that certain forms of divine union and enjoyment may be brought in front in an active upwelling of waves of the Bliss. So also all its becoming will be formation of the divine being in response to these activities and what is with us cessation, death, annihilation will be only rest, transition or holding back of the joyous creative Maya in the eternal being of Sachchidananda. At the same time this oneness will not preclude relations of the divine soul with God, with its supreme Self, founded on the joy of difference separating itself from unity to enjoy that unity otherwise; it will not annul the possibility of any of those exquisite forms of God-enjoyment which are the highest rapture of the God-lover in his clasp of the Divine.

But what will be the conditions in which and by which this nature of the life of the divine soul will realise itself? All experience in relation proceeds through certain forces of being formulating themselves by an instrumentation to which we give the name of properties, qualities, activities, faculties. As, for instance, Mind throws itself into various forms of mind-power, such as judgment, observation, memory, sympathy, proper to its

own being, so must the Truth-consciousness or Supermind effect the relations of soul with soul by forces, faculties, functionings proper to supramental being; otherwise there would be no play of differentiation. What these functionings are, we shall see when we come to consider the psychological conditions of the divine Life; at present we are only considering its metaphysical foundations, its essential nature and principles. Suffice it at present to observe that the absence or abolition of separatist egoism and of effective division in consciousness is the one essential condition of the divine Life, and therefore their presence in us is that which constitutes our mortality and our fall from the Divine. This is our “original sin”, or rather let us say in a more philosophical language, the deviation from the Truth and Right of the Spirit, from its oneness, integrality and harmony that was the necessary condition for the great plunge into the Ignorance which is the soul’s adventure in the world and from which was born our suffering and aspiring humanity.

Chapter XVIII

Mind and Supermind

He discovered that Mind was the Brahman.

*Taittiriya Upanishad.*¹

Indivisible, but as if divided in beings.

*Gita.*²

THE CONCEPTION which we have so far been striving to form is that of the essence only of the supramental life which the divine soul possesses securely in the being of Sachchidananda, but which the human soul has to manifest in this body of Sachchidananda formed here into the mould of a mental and physical living. But so far as we have been able yet to envisage this supramental existence, it does not seem to have any connection or correspondence with life as we know it, life active between the two terms of our normal existence, the two firmaments of mind and body. It seems rather to be a state of being, a state of consciousness, a state of active relation and mutual enjoyment such as disembodied souls might possess and experience in a world without physical forms, a world in which differentiation of souls had been accomplished but not differentiation of bodies, a world of active and joyous infinites, not of form-imprisoned spirits. Therefore it might reasonably be doubted whether such a divine living would be possible with this limitation of bodily form and this limitation of form-imprisoned mind and form-trammelled force which is what we now know as existence.

In fact, we have striven to arrive at some conception of that supreme infinite being, conscious-force and self-delight of which our world is a creation and our mentality a perverse

¹ III. 4. ² XIII. 17.

figure; we have tried to give ourselves an idea of what this divine Maya may be, this Truth-consciousness, this Real-Idea by which the conscious force of the transcendent and universal Existence conceives, forms and governs the universe, the order, the cosmos of its manifested delight of being. But we have not studied the connections of these four great and divine terms with the three others with which our human experience is alone familiar,—mind, life and body. We have not scrutinised this other and apparently undivine Maya which is the root of all our striving and suffering or seen how precisely it develops out of the divine reality or the divine Maya. And till we have done this, till we have woven the missing cords of connection, our world is still unexplained to us and the doubt of a possible unification between that higher existence and this lower life has still a basis. We know that our world has come forth from Sachchidananda and subsists in His being; we conceive that He dwells in it as the Enjoyer and Knower, Lord and Self; we have seen that our dual terms of sensation, mind, force, being can only be representations of His delight, His conscious force, His divine existence. But it would seem that they are actually so much the opposite of what He really and supernally is that we cannot while dwelling in the cause of these opposites, cannot while contained in the lower triple term of existence attain to the divine living. We must either exalt this lower being into that higher status or exchange body for that pure existence, life for that pure condition of conscious-force, sensation and mentality for that pure delight and knowledge which live in the truth of the spiritual reality. And must not this mean that we abandon all earthly or limited mental existence for something which is its opposite,—either for some pure state of the Spirit or else for some world of the Truth of things, if such exists, or other worlds, if such exist, of divine Bliss, divine Energy, divine Being? In that case the perfection of humanity is elsewhere than in humanity itself; the summit of its earthly evolution can only be a fine apex of dissolving mentality whence it takes the great leap either into formless being or into worlds beyond the reach of embodied Mind.

But in reality all that we call undivine can only be an action of the four divine principles themselves, such action of them as was necessary to create this universe of forms. Those forms have been created not outside but in the divine existence, conscious-force and bliss, not outside but in and as a part of the working of the divine Real-Idea. There is therefore no reason to suppose that there cannot be any real play of the higher divine consciousness in a world of forms or that forms and their immediate supports, mental consciousness, energy of vital force and formal substance, must necessarily distort that which they represent. It is possible, even probable that mind, body and life are to be found in their pure forms in the divine Truth itself, are there in fact as subordinate activities of its consciousness and part of the complete instrumentation by which the supreme Force always works. Mind, life and body must then be capable of divinity; their form and working in that short period out of possibly only one cycle of the terrestrial evolution which Science reveals to us, need not represent all the potential workings of these three principles in the living body. They work as they do because they are by some means separated in consciousness from the divine Truth from which they proceed. Were this separation once abrogated by the expanding energy of the Divine in humanity, their present functioning might well be converted, would indeed naturally be converted by a supreme evolution and progression into that purer working which they have in the Truth-consciousness.

In that case not only would it be possible to manifest and maintain the divine consciousness in the human mind and body but, even, that divine consciousness might in the end, increasing its conquests, remould mind, life and body themselves into a more perfect image of its eternal Truth and realise not only in soul but in substance its kingdom of heaven upon earth. The first of these victories, the internal, has certainly been achieved in a greater or less degree by some, perhaps by many, upon earth; the other, the external, even if never more or less realised in past aeons as a first type for future cycles and still held in the subconscious memory of the earth-nature, may yet be intended as a coming victorious achievement of God in humanity. This

earthly life need not be necessarily and for ever a wheel of half-joyous half-anguished effort; attainment may also be intended and the glory and joy of God made manifest upon earth.

What Mind, Life and Body are in their supreme sources and what therefore they must be in the integral completeness of the divine manifestation when informed by the Truth and not cut off from it by the separation and the ignorance in which presently we live,—this then is the problem that we have next to consider. For there they must have already their perfection towards which we here are growing,—we who are only the first shackled movement of the Mind which is evolving in Matter, we who are not yet liberated from the conditions and effects of that involution of spirit in form, that plunge of Light into its own shadow by which the darkened material consciousness of physical Nature was created. The type of all perfection towards which we grow, the terms of our highest evolution must already be held in the divine Real-Idea; they must be there formed and conscious for us to grow towards and into them: for that pre-existence in the divine knowledge is what our human mentality names and seeks as the Ideal. The Ideal is an eternal Reality which we have not yet realised in the conditions of our own being, not a non-existent which the Eternal and Divine has not yet grasped and only we imperfect beings have glimpsed and mean to create.

Mind, first, the chained and hampered sovereign of our human living. Mind in its essence is a consciousness which measures, limits, cuts out forms of things from the indivisible whole and contains them as if each were a separate integer. Even with what exists only as obvious parts and fractions, Mind establishes this fiction of its ordinary commerce that they are things with which it can deal separately and not merely as aspects of a whole. For, even when it knows that they are not things in themselves, it is obliged to deal with them as if they were things in themselves; otherwise it could not subject them to its own characteristic activity. It is this essential characteristic of Mind which conditions the workings of all its operative powers, whether conception, perception, sensation or the dealings of

creative thought. It conceives, perceives, senses things as if rigidly cut out from a background or a mass and employs them as fixed units of the material given to it for creation or possession. All its action and enjoyment deal thus with wholes that form part of a greater whole, and these subordinate wholes again are broken up into parts which are also treated as wholes for the particular purposes they serve. Mind may divide, multiply, add, subtract, but it cannot get beyond the limits of this mathematics. If it goes beyond and tries to conceive a real whole, it loses itself in a foreign element; it falls from its own firm ground into the ocean of the intangible, into the abysses of the infinite where it can neither perceive, conceive, sense nor deal with its subject for creation and enjoyment. For if Mind appears sometimes to conceive, to perceive, to sense or to enjoy with possession the infinite, it is only in seeming and always in a figure of the infinite. What it does thus vaguely possess is simply a formless Vast and not the real spaceless infinite. The moment it tries to deal with that, to possess it, at once the inalienable tendency to delimitation comes in and the Mind finds itself again handling images, forms and words. Mind cannot possess the infinite, it can only suffer it or be possessed by it; it can only lie blissfully helpless under the luminous shadow of the Real cast down on it from planes of existence beyond its reach. The possession of the Infinite cannot come except by an ascent to those supramental planes, nor the knowledge of it except by an inert submission of Mind to the descending messages of the Truth-conscious Reality.

This essential faculty and the essential limitation that accompanies it are the truth of Mind and fix its real nature and action, *svabhāva* and *svadharma*; here is the mark of the divine fiat assigning it its office in the complete instrumentation of the supreme Maya,—the office determined by that which it is in its very birth from the eternal self-conception of the Self-existent. That office is to translate always infinity into the terms of the finite, to measure off, limit, depiece. Actually it does this in our consciousness to the exclusion of all true sense of the Infinite; therefore Mind is the nodus of the great Ignorance, because

it is that which originally divides and distributes, and it has even been mistaken for the cause of the universe and for the whole of the divine Maya. But the divine Maya comprehends Vidya as well as Avidya, the Knowledge as well as the Ignorance. For it is obvious that since the finite is only an appearance of the Infinite, a result of its action, a play of its conception and cannot exist except by it, in it, with it as a background, itself form of that stuff and action of that force, there must be an original consciousness which contains and views both at the same time and is intimately conscious of all the relations of the one with the other. In that consciousness there is no ignorance, because the infinite is known and the finite is not separated from it as an independent reality; but still there is a subordinate process of delimitation,—otherwise no world could exist,—a process by which the ever dividing and reuniting consciousness of Mind, the ever divergent and convergent action of Life and the infinitely divided and self-aggregating substance of Matter come, all by one principle and original act, into phenomenal being. This subordinate process of the eternal Seer and Thinker, perfectly luminous, perfectly aware of Himself and all, knowing well what He does, conscious of the infinite in the finite which He is creating, may be called the divine Mind. And it is obvious that it must be a subordinate and not really a separate working of the Real-Idea, of the Supermind, and must operate through what we have described as the apprehending movement of the Truth-consciousness.

That apprehending consciousness, the Prajnana, places, as we have seen, the working of the indivisible All, active and formative, as a process and object of creative knowledge before the consciousness of the same All, originative and cognisant as the possessor and witness of its own working,—somewhat as a poet views the creations of his own consciousness placed before him in it as if they were things other than the creator and his creative force, yet all the time they are really no more than the play of self-formation of his own being in itself and are indivisible there from their creator. Thus Prajnana makes the fundamental division which leads to all the rest, the division of the Purusha,

the conscious soul who knows and sees and by his vision creates and ordains, and the Prakriti, the Force-Soul or Nature-Soul which is his knowledge and his vision, his creation and his all-ordaining power. Both are one Being, one existence, and the forms seen and created are multiple forms of that Being which are placed by Him as knowledge before Himself as knower, by Himself as Force before Himself as Creator. The last action of this apprehending consciousness takes place when the Purusha pervading the conscious extension of his being, present at every point of himself as well as in his totality, inhabiting every form, regards the whole as if separately, from each of the standpoints he has taken; he views and governs the relations of each soul-form of himself with other soul-forms from the standpoint of will and knowledge appropriate to each particular form.

Thus the elements of division have come into being. First, the infinity of the One has translated itself into an extension in conceptual Time and Space; secondly, the omnipresence of the One in that self-conscious extension translates itself into a multiplicity of the conscious soul, the many Purushas of the Sankhya; thirdly, the multiplicity of soul-forms has translated itself into a divided habitation of the extended unity. This divided habitation is inevitable the moment these multiple Purushas do not each inhabit a separate world of its own, do not each possess a separate Prakriti building a separate universe, but rather all enjoy the same Prakriti,—as they must do, being only soul-forms of the One presiding over the multiple creations of His power,—yet have relations with each other in the one world of being created by the one Prakriti. The Purusha in each form actively identifies himself with each; he delimits himself in that and sets off his other forms against it in his consciousness as containing his other selves which are identical with him in being but different in relation, different in the various extent, various range of movement and various view of the one substance, force, consciousness, delight which each is actually deploying at any given moment of Time or in any given field of Space. Granted that in the divine Existence, perfectly aware of itself, this is not a binding limitation, not an identification to which the soul

becomes enslaved and which it cannot exceed as we are enslaved to our self-identification with the body and unable to exceed the limitation of our conscious ego, unable to escape from a particular movement of our consciousness in Time determining our particular field in Space; granted all this, still there is a free identification from moment to moment which only the inalienable self-knowledge of the divine soul prevents from fixing itself in an apparently rigid chain of separation and Time succession such as that in which our consciousness seems to be fixed and chained.

Thus the depiecing is already there; the relation of form with form as if they were separate beings, of will-of-being with will-of-being as if they were separate forces, of knowledge-of-being with knowledge-of-being as if they were separate consciousnesses has already been founded. It is as yet only "as if"; for the divine soul is not deluded, it is aware of all as phenomenon of being and keeps hold of its existence in the reality of being; it does not forfeit its unity: it uses mind as a subordinate action of the infinite knowledge, a definition of things subordinate to its awareness of infinity, a delimitation dependent on its awareness of essential totality — not that apparent and pluralistic totality of sum and collective aggregation which is only another phenomenon of Mind. Thus there is no real limitation; the soul uses its defining power for the play of well-distinguished forms and forces and is not used by that power.

A new factor, a new action of conscious force is therefore needed to create the operation of a helplessly limited as opposed to a freely limiting mind, — that is to say, of mind subject to its own play and deceived by it as opposed to mind master of its own play and viewing it in its truth, the creature mind as opposed to the divine. That new factor is Avidya, the self-ignoring faculty which separates the action of mind from the action of the supermind that originated and still governs it from behind the veil. Thus separated, Mind perceives only the particular and not the universal, or conceives only the particular in an unpossessed universal and no longer both particular and universal as phenomena of the Infinite. Thus we have the limited mind which

views every phenomenon as a thing-in-itself, separate part of a whole which again exists separately in a greater whole and so on, enlarging always its aggregates without getting back to the sense of a true infinity.

Mind, being an action of the Infinite, depieces as well as aggregates *ad infinitum*. It cuts up being into wholes, into ever smaller wholes, into atoms and those atoms into primal atoms, until it would, if it could, dissolve the primal atom into nothingness. But it cannot, because behind this dividing action is the saving knowledge of the supramental which knows every whole, every atom to be only a concentration of all-force, of all-consciousness, of all-being into phenomenal forms of itself. The dissolution of the aggregate into an infinite nothingness at which Mind seems to arrive, is to the Supermind only the return of the self-concentrating conscious-being out of its phenomenon into its infinite existence. Whichever way its consciousness proceeds, by the way of infinite division or by the way of infinite enlargement, it arrives only at itself, at its own infinite unity and eternal being. And when the action of the mind is consciously subordinate to this knowledge of the supermind, the truth of the process is known to it also and not at all ignored; there is no real division but only an infinitely multiple concentration into forms of being and into arrangements of the relation of those forms of being to each other in which division is a subordinate appearance of the whole process necessary to their spatial and temporal play. For divide as you will, get down to the most infinitesimal atom or form the most monstrous possible aggregate of worlds and systems, you cannot get by either process to a thing-in-itself; all are forms of a Force which alone is real in itself while the rest are real only as self-imaginings or manifesting self-forms of the eternal Force-consciousness.

Whence then does the limiting Avidya, the fall of mind from Supermind and the consequent idea of real division originally proceed? exactly from what perversion of the supramental functioning? It proceeds from the individualised soul viewing everything from its own standpoint and excluding all others; it proceeds, that is to say, by an exclusive concentration of

consciousness, an exclusive self-identification of the soul with a particular temporal and spatial action which is only a part of its own play of being; it starts from the soul's ignoring the fact that all others are also itself, all other action its own action and all other states of being and consciousness equally its own as well as the action of the one particular moment in Time and one particular standing-point in Space and the one particular form it presently occupies. It concentrates on the moment, the field, the form, the movement so as to lose the rest; it has then to recover the rest by linking together the succession of moments, the succession of points of Space, the succession of forms in Time and Space, the succession of movements in Time and Space. It has thus lost the truth of the indivisibility of Time, the indivisibility of Force and Substance. It has lost sight even of the obvious fact that all minds are one Mind taking many standpoints, all lives one Life developing many currents of activity, all body and form one substance of Force and Consciousness concentrating into many apparent stabilities of force and consciousness; but in truth all these stabilities are really only a constant whorl of movement repeating a form while it modifies it; they are nothing more. For the Mind tries to clamp everything into rigidly fixed forms and apparently unchanging or unmoving external factors, because otherwise it cannot act; it then thinks it has got what it wants: in reality all is a flux of change and renewal and there is no fixed form-in-itself and no unchanging external factor. Only the eternal Real-Idea is firm and maintains a certain ordered constancy of figures and relations in the flux of things, a constancy which the Mind vainly attempts to imitate by attributing fixity to that which is always inconstant. These truths Mind has to rediscover; it knows them all the time, but only in the hidden back of its consciousness, in the secret light of its self-being; and that light is to it a darkness because it has created the ignorance, because it has lapsed from the dividing into the divided mentality, because it has become involved in its own workings and in its own creations.

This ignorance is farther deepened for man by his self-identification with the body. To us mind seems to be determined

by the body, because it is preoccupied with that and devoted to the physical workings which it uses for its conscious superficial action in this gross material world. Employing constantly that operation of the brain and nerves which it has developed in the course of its own development in the body, it is too absorbed in observing what this physical machinery gives to it to get back from it to its own pure workings; those are to it mostly subconscious. Still we can conceive a life mind or life being which has got beyond the evolutionary necessity of this absorption and is able to see and even experience itself assuming body after body and not created separately in each body and ending with it; for it is only the physical impress of mind on matter, only the corporeal mentality that is so created, not the whole mental being. This corporeal mentality is merely our surface of mind, merely the front which it presents to physical experience. Behind, even in our terrestrial being, there is this other, subconscious or subliminal to us, which knows itself as more than the body and is capable of a less materialised action. To this we owe immediately most of the larger, deeper and more forceful dynamic action of our surface mind; this, when we become conscious of it or of its impress on us, is our first idea or our first realisation of a soul or inner being, Purusha.³

But this life mentality also, though it may get free from the error of body, does not make us free from the whole error of mind; it is still subject to the original act of ignorance by which the individualised soul regards everything from its own standpoint and can see the truth of things only as they present themselves to it from outside or else as they rise up to its view from its separate temporal and spatial consciousness, forms and results of past and present experience. It is not conscious of its other selves except by the outward indications they give of their existence, indications of communicated thought, speech, action, result of actions, or subtler indications — not felt directly by the physical being — of vital impact and relation. Equally is it ignorant of itself; for it knows of its self only through a movement in

³ Perceived as the life being or vital being, *prāṇamaya puruṣa*.

Time and a succession of lives in which it has used its variously embodied energies. As our physical instrumental mind has the illusion of the body, so this subconscious dynamic mind has the illusion of life. In that it is absorbed and concentrated, by that it is limited, with that it identifies its being. Here we do not yet get back to the meeting-place of mind and supermind and the point at which they originally separated.

But there is still another clearer reflective mentality behind the dynamic and vital which is capable of escaping from this absorption in life and views itself as assuming life and body in order to image out in active relations of energy that which it perceives in will and thought. It is the source of the pure thinker in us; it is that which knows mentality in itself and sees the world not in terms of life and body but of mind; it is that⁴ which, when we get back to it, we sometimes mistake for the pure spirit as we mistake the dynamic mind for the soul. This higher mind is able to perceive and deal with other souls as other forms of its pure self; it is capable of sensing them by pure mental impact and communication and no longer only by vital and nervous impact and physical indication; it conceives too a mental figure of unity, and in its activity and its will it can create and possess more directly—not only indirectly as in the ordinary physical life—and in other minds and lives as well as its own. But still even this pure mentality does not escape from the original error of mind. For it is still its separate mental self which it makes the judge, witness and centre of the universe and through it alone strives to arrive at its own higher self and reality; all others are “others” grouped to it around itself: when it wills to be free, it has to draw back from life and mind in order to disappear into the real unity. For there is still the veil created by Avidya between the mental and supramental action; an image of the Truth gets through, not the Truth itself.

It is only when the veil is rent and the divided mind overpowered, silent and passive to a supramental action that mind itself gets back to the Truth of things. There we find a luminous

⁴ The mental being, *manomaya puruṣa*.

mentality reflective, obedient and instrumental to the divine Real-Idea. There we perceive what the world really is; we know in every way ourselves in others and as others, others as ourselves and all as the universal and self-multiplied One. We lose the rigidly separate individual standpoint which is the source of all limitation and error. Still, we perceive also that all that the ignorance of Mind took for the truth was in fact truth, but truth deflected, mistaken and falsely conceived. We still perceive the division, the individualising, the atomic creation, but we know them and ourselves for what they and we really are. And so we perceive that the Mind was really a subordinate action and instrumentation of the Truth-consciousness. So long as it is not separated in self-experience from the enveloping Master-consciousness and does not try to set up house for itself, so long as it serves passively as an instrumentation and does not attempt to possess for its own benefit, Mind fulfils luminously its function which is in the Truth to hold forms apart from each other by a phenomenal, a purely formal delimitation of their activity behind which the governing universality of the being remains conscious and untouched. It has to receive the truth of things and distribute it according to the unerring perception of a supreme and universal Eye and Will. It has to uphold an individualisation of active consciousness, delight, force, substance which derives all its power, reality and joy from an inalienable universality behind. It has to turn the multiplicity of the One into an apparent division by which relations are defined and held off against each other so as to meet again and join. It has to establish the delight of separation and contact in the midst of an eternal unity and intermischance. It has to enable the One to behave as if He were an individual dealing with other individuals but always in His own unity, and this is what the world really is. The mind is the final operation of the apprehending Truth-consciousness which makes all this possible, and what we call the Ignorance does not create a new thing and absolute falsehood but only misrepresents the Truth. The Ignorance is the Mind separated in knowledge from its source of knowledge and giving a false rigidity and a mistaken appearance of opposition and conflict

to the harmonious play of the supreme Truth in its universal manifestation.

The fundamental error of the Mind is, then, this fall from self-knowledge by which the individual soul conceives of its individuality as a separate fact instead of as a form of Oneness and makes itself the centre of its own universe instead of knowing itself as one concentration of the universal. From that original error all its particular ignorances and limitations are contingent results. For, viewing the flux of things only as it flows upon and through itself, it makes a limitation of being from which proceeds a limitation of consciousness and therefore of knowledge, a limitation of conscious force and will and therefore of power, a limitation of self-enjoyment and therefore of delight. It is conscious of things and knows them only as they present themselves to its individuality and therefore it falls into an ignorance of the rest and thereby into an erroneous conception even of that which it seems to know: for since all being is interdependent, the knowledge either of the whole or of the essence is necessary for the right knowledge of the part. Hence there is an element of error in all human knowledge. Similarly our will, ignorant of the rest of the all-will, must fall into error of working and a greater or less degree of incapacity and impotence; the soul's self-delight and delight of things, ignoring the all-bliss and by defect of will and knowledge unable to master its world, must fall into incapacity of possessive delight and therefore into suffering. Self-ignorance is therefore the root of all the perversity of our existence, and that perversity stands fortified in the self-limitation, the egoism which is the form taken by that self-ignorance.

Yet is all ignorance and all perversity only the distortion of the truth and right of things and not the play of an absolute falsehood. It is the result of Mind viewing things in the division it makes, *avidyāyām antare*, instead of viewing itself and its divisions as instrumentation and phenomenon of the play of the truth of Sachchidananda. If it gets back to the truth from which it fell, it becomes again the final action of the Truth-consciousness in its apprehensive operation, and the relations it helps to create in that light and power will be relations of the Truth and not

of the perversity. They will be the straight things and not the crooked, to use the expressive distinction of the Vedic Rishis, — Truths, that is to say, of divine being with its self-possessive consciousness, will and delight moving harmoniously in itself. Now we have rather the warped and zigzag movement of mind and life, the contortions created by the struggle of the soul once grown oblivious of its true being to find itself again, to resolve back all error into the truth which both our truth and our error, our right and our wrong limit or distort, all incapacity into the strength which both our power and our weakness are a struggle of force to grasp, all suffering into the delight which both our joy and our pain are a convulsive effort of sensation to realise, all death into the immortality to which both our life and our death are a constant effort of being to return.

Chapter XIX

Life

Pranic energy is the life of creatures; for that is said to be the universal principle of life. *Taittiriya Upanishad.*¹

WE PERCEIVE, then, what Mind is in its divine origin and how it is related to the Truth-consciousness,— Mind, the highest of the three lower principles which constitute our human existence. It is a special action of the divine consciousness, or rather it is the final strand of its whole creative action. It enables the Purusha to hold apart the relations of different forms and forces of himself to each other; it creates phenomenal differences which to the individual soul fallen from the Truth-consciousness take the appearance of radical divisions, and is by that original perversion the parent of all the resultant perversions which impress us as the contrary dualities and oppositions proper to the life of the Soul in the Ignorance. But so long as it is not separated from the Supermind, it supports, not perversions and falsehoods, but the various working of the universal Truth.

Mind thus appears as a creative cosmic agency. This is not the impression which we normally have of our mentality; rather we regard it primarily as a perceptive organ, perceptive of things already created by Force working in Matter, and the only origination we allow to it is a secondary creation of new combined forms from those already developed by Force in Matter. But the knowledge we are now recovering, aided by the last discoveries of Science, begins to show us that in this Force and in this Matter there is a subconscious Mind at work which is certainly responsible for its own emergence, first in the forms

¹ II. 3.

of life and secondly in the forms of mind itself, first in the nervous consciousness of plant-life and the primitive animal, secondly in the ever-developing mentality of the evolved animal and of man. And as we have already discovered that Matter is only substance-form of Force, so we shall discover that material Force is only energy-form of Mind. Material force is, in fact, a subconscious operation of Will; Will that works in us in what seems to be light, though it is in truth no more than a half-light, and material Force that works in what to us seems to be a darkness of unintelligence, are yet really and in essence the same, as materialistic thought has always instinctively felt from the wrong or lower end of things and as spiritual knowledge working from the summit had long ago discovered. We may say, therefore, that it is a subconscious Mind or Intelligence which, manifesting Force as its driving-power, its executive Nature, its Prakriti, has created this material world.

But since, as we have now found, Mind is no independent and original entity but only a final operation of the Truth-consciousness or Supermind, therefore wherever Mind is, there Supermind must be. Supermind or the Truth-consciousness is the real creative agency of the universal Existence. Even when Mind is in its own darkened consciousness separated from its source, yet is that larger movement always there in the workings of Mind; forcing them to preserve their right relation, evolving from them the inevitable results they bear in themselves, producing the right tree from the right seed, it compels even the operations of so brute, inert and darkened a thing as material Force to result in a world of Law, of order, of right relation and not, as it would otherwise be, of hurtling chance and chaos. Obviously, this order and right relation can only be relative and not the supreme order and supreme right which would reign if Mind were not in its own consciousness separated from Supermind; it is an arrangement, an order of the results right and proper to the action of dividing Mind and its creation of separative oppositions, its dual contrary sides of the one Truth. The Divine Consciousness, having conceived and thrown into operation the Idea of this dual or divided representation of Itself, deduces

from it in real-idea and educes practically from it in substance of life, by the governing action of the whole Truth-consciousness behind it, its own inferior truth or inevitable result of various relation. For this is the nature of Law or Truth in the world that it is the just working and bringing out of that which is contained in being, implied in the essence and nature of the thing itself, latent in its self-being and self-law, *svabhāva* and *svadharma*, as seen by the divine Knowledge. To use one of those wonderful formulas of the Upanishad² which contain a world of knowledge in a few revealing words, it is the Self-existent who as the seer and thinker becoming everywhere has arranged in Himself all things rightly from years eternal according to the truth of that which they are.

Consequently, the triple world that we live in, the world of Mind-Life-Body, is triple only in its actual accomplished evolution. Life involved in Matter has emerged in the form of thinking and mentally conscious life. But with Mind, involved in it and therefore in Life and Matter, is the Supermind, which is the origin and ruler of the other three, and this also must emerge. We seek for an intelligence at the root of the world, because intelligence is the highest principle of which we are aware and that which seems to us to govern and explain all our own action and creation and, therefore, if there is a Consciousness at all in the universe, we presume that it must be an Intelligence, a mental Consciousness. But intelligence only perceives, reflects and uses within the measure of its capacity the work of a Truth of being superior to itself; the power behind that works must therefore be another and superior form of Consciousness proper to that Truth. We have, accordingly, to mend our conception and affirm that not a subconscious Mind or Intelligence, but an involved Supermind, which puts Mind in front of it as the immediately active special form of its knowledge-will subconscious in Force and uses material Force or Will subconscious in substance of being as its executive Nature or Prakriti, has created this material universe.

² *Kavir maniṣī paribhūḥ svayambhūr yāthātathyato'rthān vyadadhāt śāśvatibhyah samābhyaḥ*. — *Isha Upanishad*, Verse 8.

But we see that here Mind is manifested in a specialisation of Force to which we give the name of Life. What then is Life? and what relation has it to Supermind, to this supreme trinity of Sachchidananda active in creation by means of the Real-Idea or Truth-consciousness? From what principle in the Trinity does it take its birth? or by what necessity, divine or undivine, of the Truth or the illusion, does it come into being? Life is an evil, rings down the centuries the ancient cry, a delusion, a delirium, an insanity from which we have to flee into the repose of eternal being. Is it so? and why then is it so? Why has the Eternal wantonly inflicted this evil, brought this delirium or insanity upon Himself or else upon the creatures brought into being by His terrible all-deluding Maya? Or is it rather some divine principle that thus expresses itself, some power of the Delight of eternal being that had to express and has thus thrown itself into Time and Space in this constant outburst of the million and million forms of life which people the countless worlds of the universe?

When we study this Life as it manifests itself upon earth with Matter as its basis, we observe that essentially it is a form of the one cosmic Energy, a dynamic movement or current of it positive and negative, a constant act or play of the Force which builds up forms, energises them by a continual stream of stimulation and maintains them by an unceasing process of disintegration and renewal of their substance. This would tend to show that the natural opposition we make between death and life is an error of our mentality, one of those false oppositions — false to inner truth though valid in surface practical experience — which, deceived by appearances, it is constantly bringing into the universal unity. Death has no reality except as a process of life. Disintegration of substance and renewal of substance, maintenance of form and change of form are the constant process of life; death is merely a rapid disintegration subservient to life's necessity of change and variation of formal experience. Even in the death of the body there is no cessation of Life, only the material of one form of life is broken up to serve as material for other forms of life. Similarly we may be sure, in the uniform law of Nature, that if there is in the bodily form a mental or psychic

energy, that also is not destroyed but only breaks out from one form to assume others by some process of metempsychosis or new ensouling of body. All renews itself, nothing perishes.

It could be affirmed as a consequence that there is one all-pervading Life or dynamic energy — the material aspect being only its outermost movement — that creates all these forms of the physical universe, Life imperishable and eternal which, even if the whole figure of the universe were quite abolished, would itself still go on existing and be capable of producing a new universe in its place, must indeed, unless it be held back in a state of rest by some higher Power or hold itself back, inevitably go on creating. In that case Life is nothing else than the Force that builds and maintains and destroys forms in the world; it is Life that manifests itself in the form of the earth as much as in the plant that grows upon the earth and the animals that support their existence by devouring the life-force of the plant or of each other. All existence here is a universal Life that takes form of Matter. It might for that purpose hide life-process in physical process before it emerges as submental sensitivity and mentalised vitality, but still it would be throughout the same creative Life-principle.

It will be said, however, that this is not what we mean by life; we mean a particular result of universal force with which we are familiar and which manifests itself only in the animal and the plant, but not in the metal, the stone, the gas, operates in the animal cell but not in the pure physical atom. We must, therefore, in order to be sure of our ground, examine in what precisely consists this particular result of the play of Force which we call life and how it differs from that other result of the play of Force in inanimate things which, we say, is not life. We see at once that there are here on earth three realms of the play of Force, the animal kingdom of the old classification to which we belong, the vegetable, and lastly the mere material void, as we pretend, of life. How does life in ourselves differ from the life of the plant, and the life of the plant from the not-life, say, of the metal, the mineral kingdom of the old phraseology, or that new chemical kingdom which Science has discovered?

Ordinarily, when we speak of life, we have meant animal life, that which moves, breathes, eats, feels, desires, and, if we speak of the life of plants, it has been almost as a metaphor rather than a reality, for plant life was regarded as a purely material process rather than a biological phenomenon. Especially we have associated life with breathing; the breath is life, it was said in every language, and the formula is true if we change our conception of what we mean by the Breath of Life. But it is evident that spontaneous motion or locomotion, breathing, eating are only processes of life and not life itself; they are means for the generation or release of that constantly stimulating energy which is our vitality and for that process of disintegration and renewal by which it supports our substantial existence; but these processes of our vitality can be maintained in other ways than by our respiration and our means of sustenance. It is a proved fact that even human life can remain in the body and can remain in full consciousness when breathing and the beating of the heart and other conditions formerly deemed essential to it have been temporarily suspended. And new evidence of phenomena has been brought forward to establish that the plant, to which we can still deny any conscious reaction, has at least a physical life identical with our own and even organised essentially like our own though different in its apparent organisation. If that is proved true, we still have to make a clean sweep of our old facile and false conceptions and get beyond symptoms and externalities to the root of the matter.

In some recent discoveries³ which, if their conclusions are

³ These considerations drawn from recent scientific researches are brought in here as illustrative, not probative of the nature and process of Life in Matter as they are developed here. Science and metaphysics (whether founded on pure intellectual speculation or, as in India, ultimately on a spiritual vision of things and spiritual experience) have each its own province and method of inquiry. Science cannot dictate its conclusions to metaphysics any more than metaphysics can impose its conclusions on Science. Still if we accept the reasonable belief that Being and Nature in all their states have a system of correspondences expressive of a common Truth underlying them, it is permissible to suppose that truths of the physical universe can throw some light on the nature as well as the process of the Force that is active in the universe—not a complete light, for physical Science is necessarily incomplete in the range of its inquiry and has no clue to the occult movements of the Force.

accepted, must throw an intense light on the problem of Life in Matter, a great Indian physicist has pointed attention to the response to stimulus as an infallible sign of the existence of life. It is especially the phenomenon of plant-life that has been illumined by his data and illustrated in all its subtle functionings; but we must not forget that in the essential point the same proof of vitality, the response to stimulus, the positive state of life and its negative state which we call death, have been affirmed by him in metals as in the plant. Not indeed with the same abundance, not indeed so as to show an essentially identical organisation of life; but it is possible that, could instruments of the right nature and sufficient delicacy be invented, more points of similarity between the metal and plant life could be discovered; and even if it prove not to be so, this might mean that the same or any life organisation is absent, but the beginnings of vitality could still be there. But if life, however rudimentary in its symptoms, exists in the metal, it must be admitted as present, involved perhaps or elementary and elemental in the earth or other material existences akin to the metal. If we can pursue our inquiries farther, not obliged to stop short where our immediate means of investigation fail us, we may be sure from our unvarying experience of Nature that investigations thus pursued will in the end prove to us that there is no break, no rigid line of demarcation between the earth and the metal formed in it or between the metal and the plant and, pursuing the synthesis farther, that there is none either between the elements and atoms that constitute the earth or metal and the metal or earth that they constitute. Each step of this graded existence prepares the next, holds in itself what appears in that which follows it. Life is everywhere, secret or manifest, organised or elemental, involved or evolved, but universal, all-pervading, imperishable; only its forms and organisings differ.

We must remember that the physical response to stimulus is only an outward sign of life, even as are breathing and locomotion in ourselves. An exceptional stimulus is applied by the experimenter and vivid responses are given which we can at once recognise as indices of vitality in the object of the experiment.

But during its whole existence the plant is responding constantly to a constant mass of stimulation from its environment; that is to say, there is a constantly maintained force in it which is capable of responding to the application of force from its surroundings. It is said that the idea of a vital force in the plant or other living organism has been destroyed by these experiments. But when we say that a stimulus has been applied to the plant, we mean that an energised force, a force in dynamic movement has been directed on that object, and when we say that a response is given, we mean that an energised force capable of dynamic movement and of sensitive vibration answers to the shock. There is a vibrant reception and reply, as well as a will to grow and be, indicative of a submental, a vital-physical organisation of consciousness-force hidden in the form of being. The fact would seem to be, then, that as there is a constant dynamic energy in movement in the universe which takes various material forms more or less subtle or gross, so in each physical body or object, plant or animal or metal, there is stored and active the same constant dynamic force; a certain interchange of these two gives us the phenomena which we associate with the idea of life. It is this action that we recognise as the action of Life-Energy and that which so energises itself is the Life-Force. Mind-Energy, Life-Energy, material Energy are different dynamisms of one World-Force.

Even when a form appears to us to be dead, this force still exists in it in potentiality although its familiar operations of vitality are suspended and about to be permanently ended. Within certain limits that which is dead can be revived; the habitual operations, the response, the circulation of active energy can be restored; and this proves that what we call life was still there in the body, latent, that is to say, not active in its usual habits, its habits of ordinary physical functioning, its habits of nervous play and response, its habits in the animal of conscious mental response. It is difficult to suppose that there is a distinct entity called life which has gone entirely out of the body and gets into it again when it feels — how, since there is nothing to connect it with the body? — that somebody is stimulating the form. In certain cases, such as catalepsy, we see that the outward physical

signs and operations of life are suspended, but the mentality is there self-possessed and conscious although unable to compel the usual physical responses. Certainly, it is not the fact that the man is physically dead but mentally alive or that life has gone out of the body while mind still inhabits it, but only that the ordinary physical functioning is suspended, while the mental is still active.

So also, in certain forms of trance, both the physical functionings and the outward mental are suspended, but afterwards resume their operation, in some cases by external stimulation, but more normally by a spontaneous return to activity from within. What has really happened is that the surface mind-force has been withdrawn into subconscious mind and the surface life-force into subactive life and either the whole man has lapsed into the subconscious existence or else he has withdrawn his outer life into the subconscious while his inner being has been lifted into the superconscious. But the main point for us at present is that the Force, whatever it be, that maintains dynamic energy of life in the body, has indeed suspended its outer operations, but still informs the organised substance. A point comes, however, at which it is no longer possible to restore the suspended activities; and this occurs when either such a lesion has been inflicted on the body as makes it useless or incapable of the habitual functionings or, in the absence of such lesion, when the process of disintegration has begun, that is to say, when the Force that should renew the life-action becomes entirely inert to the pressure of the environing forces with whose mass of stimulation it was wont to keep up a constant interchange. Even then there is Life in the body, but a Life that is busy only with the process of disintegrating the formed substance so that it may escape in its elements and constitute with them new forms. The Will in the universal force that held the form together, now withdraws from constitution and supports instead a process of dispersion. Not till then is there the real death of the body.

Life then is the dynamic play of a universal Force, a Force in which mental consciousness and nervous vitality are in some form or at least in their principle always inherent and therefore they appear and organise themselves in our world in the forms

of Matter. The life-play of this Force manifests itself as an interchange of stimulation and response to stimulation between the different forms it has built up and in which it keeps up its constant dynamic pulsation; each form is constantly taking into itself and giving out again the breath and energy of the common Force; each form feeds upon that and nourishes itself with it by various means, whether indirectly by taking in other forms in which the energy is stored or directly by absorbing the dynamic discharges it receives from outside. All this is the play of Life; but it is chiefly recognisable to us where the organisation of it is sufficient for us to perceive its more outward and complex movements and especially where it partakes of the nervous type of vital energy which belongs to our own organisation. It is for this reason that we are ready enough to admit life in the plant because obvious phenomena of life are there,—and this becomes still easier if it can be shown that it manifests symptoms of nervosity and has a vital system not very different from our own,—but are unwilling to recognise it in the metal and the earth and the chemical atom where these phenomenal developments can with difficulty be detected or do not apparently at all exist.

Is there any justification for elevating this distinction into an essential difference? What, for instance, is the difference between life in ourselves and life in the plant? We see that they differ, first, in our possession of the power of locomotion which has evidently nothing to do with the essence of vitality, and, secondly, in our possession of conscious sensation which is, so far as we know, not yet evolved in the plant. Our nervous responses are largely, though by no means always or in their entirety, attended with the mental response of conscious sensation; they have a value to the mind as well as to the nerve system and the body agitated by the nervous action. In the plant it would seem that there are symptoms of nervous sensation, including those which would be in us rendered as pleasure and pain, waking and sleep, exhilaration, dullness and fatigue, and the body is inwardly agitated by the nervous action, but there is no sign of the actual presence of mentally conscious sensation. But sensation is sensation whether mentally conscious or vitally sensitive,

and sensation is a form of consciousness. When the sensitive plant shrinks from a contact, it appears that it is nervously affected, that something in it dislikes the contact and tries to draw away from it; there is, in a word, a subconscious sensation in the plant, just as there are, as we have seen, subconscious operations of the same kind in ourselves. In the human system it is quite possible to bring these subconscious perceptions and sensations to the surface long after they have happened and have ceased to affect the nervous system; and an ever-increasing mass of evidence has irrefutably established the existence of a subconscious mentality in us much vaster than the conscious. The mere fact that the plant has no superficially vigilant mind which can be awakened to the valuation of its subconscious sensations, makes no difference to the essential identity of the phenomena. The phenomena being the same, the thing they manifest must be the same, and that thing is a subconscious mind. And it is quite possible that there is a more rudimentary life operation of the subconscious sense-mind in the metal, although in the metal there is no bodily agitation corresponding to the nervous response; but the absence of bodily agitation makes no essential difference to the presence of vitality in the metal any more than the absence of bodily locomotion makes an essential difference to the presence of vitality in the plant.

What happens when the conscious becomes subconscious in the body or the subconscious becomes conscious? The real difference lies in the absorption of the conscious energy in part of its work, its more or less exclusive concentration. In certain forms of concentration, what we call the mentality, that is to say, the Prajna or apprehensive consciousness almost or quite ceases to act consciously, yet the work of the body and the nerves and the sense-mind goes on unnoticed but constant and perfect; it has all become subconscious and only in one activity or chain of activities is the mind luminously active. While I write, the physical act of writing is largely or sometimes entirely done by the subconscious mind; the body makes, unconsciously as we say, certain nervous movements; the mind is awake only to the thought with which it is occupied. The whole man indeed may

sink into the subconscious, yet habitual movements implying the action of mind may continue, as in many phenomena of sleep; or he may rise into the superconscious and yet be active with the subliminal mind in the body, as in certain phenomena of *samādhi* or Yoga trance. It is evident, then, that the difference between plant sensation and our sensation is simply that in the plant the conscious Force manifesting itself in the universe has not yet fully emerged from the sleep of Matter, from the absorption which entirely divides the worker Force from its source of work in the superconscious knowledge, and therefore does subconsciously what it will do consciously when it emerges in man from its absorption and begins to wake, though still indirectly, to its knowledge-self. It does exactly the same things, but in a different way and with a different value in terms of consciousness.

It is becoming possible now to conceive that in the very atom there is something that becomes in us a will and a desire, there is an attraction and repulsion which, though phenomenally other, are essentially the same thing as liking and disliking in ourselves, but are, as we say, inconscient or subconscious. This essence of will and desire are evident everywhere in Nature and, though this is not yet sufficiently envisaged, they are associated with and indeed the expression of a subconscious or, if you will, inconscient or quite involved sense and intelligence which are equally pervasive. Present in every atom of Matter all this is necessarily present in every thing which is formed by the aggregation of those atoms; and they are present in the atom because they are present in the Force which builds up and constitutes the atom. That Force is fundamentally the Chit-Tapas or Chit-Shakti of the Vedanta, consciousness-force, inherent conscious force of conscious-being, which manifests itself as nervous energy full of submental sensation in the plant, as desire-sense and desire-will in the primary animal forms, as self-conscious sense and force in the developing animal, as mental will and knowledge topping all the rest in man. Life is a scale of the universal Energy in which the transition from inconscience to consciousness is managed; it is an intermediary power of it latent or submerged in Matter, delivered by its own force into submental being, delivered finally

by the emergence of Mind into the full possibility of its dynamis.

Apart from all other considerations, this conclusion imposes itself as a logical necessity if we observe even the surface process of the emergence in the light of the evolutionary theme. It is self-evident that Life in the plant, even if otherwise organised than in the animal, is yet the same power, marked by birth and growth and death, propagation by the seed, death by decay or malady or violence, maintenance by indrawing of nourishing elements from without, dependence on light and heat, productiveness and sterility, even states of sleep and waking, energy and depression of life-dynamism, passage from infancy to maturity and age; the plant contains, moreover, the essences of the force of life and is therefore the natural food of animal existences. If it is conceded that it has a nervous system and reactions to stimuli, a beginning or undercurrent of submental or purely vital sensations, the identity becomes closer; but still it remains evidently a stage of life evolution intermediate between animal existence and "inanimate" Matter. This is precisely what must be expected if Life is a force evolving out of Matter and culminating in Mind, and, if it is that, then we are bound to suppose that it is already there in Matter itself submerged or latent in the material subconsciousness or inconscience. For from where else can it emerge? Evolution of Life in matter supposes a previous involution of it there, unless we suppose it to be a new creation magically and unaccountably introduced into Nature. If it is that, it must either be a creation out of nothing or a result of material operations which is not accounted for by anything in the operations themselves or by any element in them which is of a kindred nature; or, conceivably, it may be a descent from above, from some supraphysical plane above the material universe. The two first suppositions can be dismissed as arbitrary conceptions; the last explanation is possible and it is quite conceivable and in the occult view of things true that a pressure from some plane of Life above the material universe has assisted the emergence of life here. But this does not exclude the origin of life from Matter itself as a primary and necessary movement; for the existence of a Life-world or Life-plane above the material does not of itself

lead to the emergence of Life in matter unless that Life-plane exists as a formative stage in a descent of Being through several grades or powers of itself into the Inconscience with the result of an involution of itself with all these powers in Matter for a later evolution and emergence. Whether signs of this submerged life are discoverable, unorganised yet or rudimentary, in material things or there are no such signs, because this involved Life is in a full sleep, is not a question of capital importance. The material Energy that aggregates, forms and disaggregates⁴ is the same Power in another grade of itself as that Life-Energy which expresses itself in birth, growth and death, just as by its doing of the works of Intelligence in a somnambulist subconsciousness it betrays itself as the same Power that in yet another grade attains the status of Mind; its very character shows that it contains in itself, though not yet in their characteristic organisation or process, the yet undelivered powers of Mind and Life.

Life then reveals itself as essentially the same everywhere from the atom to man, the atom containing the subconscious stuff and movement of being which are released into consciousness in the animal, with plant life as a midway stage in the evolution. Life is really a universal operation of Conscious-Force acting subconsciously on and in Matter; it is the operation that creates, maintains, destroys and re-creates forms or bodies and attempts by play of nerve-force, that is to say, by currents of interchange of stimulating energy to awake conscious sensation in those bodies. In this operation there are three stages; the lowest is that in which the vibration is still in the sleep of Matter, entirely subconscious so as to seem wholly mechanical; the middle stage is that in which it becomes capable of a response still submental but on the verge of what we know as consciousness;

⁴ Birth, growth and death of life are in their outward aspect the same process of aggregation, formation and disaggregation, though more than that in their inner process and significance. Even the ensoulment of the body by the psychic being follows, if the occult view of these things is correct, a similar outward process, for the soul as nucleus draws to itself for birth and aggregates the elements of its mental, vital and physical sheaths and their contents, increases these formations in life, and in its departing drops and disaggregates again these aggregates, drawing back into itself its inner powers, till in rebirth it repeats the original process.

the highest is that in which life develops conscious mentality in the form of a mentally perceptible sensation which in this transition becomes the basis for the development of sense-mind and intelligence. It is in the middle stage that we catch the idea of Life as distinguished from Matter and Mind, but in reality it is the same in all the stages and always a middle term between Mind and Matter, constituent of the latter and instinct with the former. It is an operation of Conscious-Force which is neither the mere formation of substance nor the operation of mind with substance and form as its object of apprehension; it is rather an energising of conscious being which is a cause and support of the formation of substance and an intermediate source and support of conscious mental apprehension. Life, as this intermediate energising of conscious being, liberates into sensitive action and reaction a form of the creative force of existence which was working subconsciously or inconsciously, absorbed in its own substance; it supports and liberates into action the apprehensive consciousness of existence called mind and gives it a dynamic instrumentation so that it can work not only on its own forms but on forms of life and matter; it connects, too, and supports, as a middle term between them, the mutual commerce of the two, mind and matter. This means of commerce Life provides in the continual currents of her pulsating nerve-energy which carry force of the form as a sensation to modify Mind and bring back force of Mind as will to modify Matter. It is therefore this nerve-energy which we usually mean when we talk of Life; it is the Prana or Life-force of the Indian system. But nerve-energy is only the form it takes in the animal being; the same Pranic energy is present in all forms down to the atom, since everywhere it is the same in essence and everywhere it is the same operation of Conscious-Force,—Force supporting and modifying the substantial existence of its own forms, Force with sense and mind secretly active but at first involved in the form and preparing to emerge, then finally emerging from their involution. This is the whole significance of the omnipresent Life that has manifested and inhabits the material universe.

Chapter XX

Death, Desire and Incapacity

In the beginning all was covered by Hunger that is Death; that made for itself Mind so that it might attain to possession of self.

*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*¹

This is the Power discovered by the mortal that has the multitude of its desires so that it may sustain all things; it takes the taste of all foods and builds a house for the being.

*Rig Veda.*²

IN OUR last chapter we have considered Life from the point of view of the material existence and the appearance and working of the vital principle in Matter and we have reasoned from the data which this evolutionary terrestrial existence offers. But it is evident that wherever it may appear and however it may work, under whatsoever conditions, the general principle must be everywhere the same. Life is universal Force working so as to create, energise, maintain and modify, even to the extent of dissolving and reconstructing, substantial forms with mutual play and interchange of an overtly or secretly conscious energy as its fundamental character. In the material world we inhabit Mind is involved and subconscious in Life, just as Supermind is involved and subconscious in Mind, and this Life instinct with an involved subconscious Mind is again itself involved in Matter. Therefore Matter is here the basis and the apparent beginning; in the language of the Upanishads, Prithivi, the Earth-principle, is our foundation. The material universe starts from the formal atom surcharged with energy, instinct with the unformed stuff of a subconscious desire, will, intelligence. Out of this Matter apparent Life manifests and it delivers out of itself by means of

¹ I. 2. 1. ² V. 7. 6.

the living body the Mind it contains imprisoned within it; Mind also has still to deliver out of itself the Supermind concealed in its workings. But we can conceive a world otherwise constituted in which Mind is not involved at the start but consciously uses its innate energy to create original forms of substance and is not, as here, only subconscious in the beginning. Still though the working of such a world would be quite different from ours, the intermediate vehicle of operation of that energy would always be Life. The thing itself would be the same, even if the process were entirely reversed.

But then it appears immediately that as Mind is only a final operation of Supermind, so Life is only a final operation of the Consciousness-Force of which Real-Idea is the determinative form and creative agent. Consciousness that is Force is the nature of Being and this conscious Being manifested as a creative Knowledge-Will is the Real-Idea or Supermind. The supramental Knowledge-Will is Consciousness-Force rendered operative for the creation of forms of united being in an ordered harmony to which we give the name of world or universe; so also Mind and Life are the same Consciousness-Force, the same Knowledge-Will, but operating for the maintenance of distinctly individual forms in a sort of demarcation, opposition and interchange in which the soul in each form of being works out its own mind and life as if they were separate from the others, though in fact they are never separate but are the play of the one Soul, Mind, Life in different forms of its single reality. In other words, as Mind is the final individualising operation of the all-comprehending and all-apprehending Supermind, the process by which its consciousness works individualised in each form from the standpoint proper to it and with the cosmic relations which proceed from that standpoint, so Life is the final operation by which the Force of Conscious-Being acting through the all-possessing and all-creative Will of the universal Supermind maintains and energises, constitutes and reconstitutes individual forms and acts in them as the basis of all the activities of the soul thus embodied. Life is the energy of the Divine continually generating itself in forms as in a dynamo and not only playing

with the outgoing battery of its shocks on surrounding forms of things but receiving itself the incoming shocks of all life around as they pour in upon and penetrate the form from outside, from the environing universe.

In this view Life appears as a form of energy of consciousness intermediary and appropriate to the action of Mind on Matter; in a sense, it may be said to be an energy aspect of Mind when it creates and relates itself no longer only to ideas, but to motions of force and to forms of substance. But it must immediately be added that just as Mind is not a separate entity, but has all Supermind behind it and it is Supermind that creates with Mind only as its final individualising operation, so Life also is not a separate entity or movement, but has all Conscious-Force behind it in every one of its workings and it is that Conscious-Force alone which exists and acts in created things. Life is only its final operation intermediary between Mind and Body. All that we say of Life must therefore be subject to the qualifications arising from this dependence. We do not really know Life whether in its nature or its process unless and until we are aware and grow conscious of that Conscious-Force working in it of which it is only the external aspect and instrumentation. Then only can we perceive and execute with knowledge, as individual soul-forms and mental and bodily instruments of the Divine, the will of God in Life; then only can Life and Mind proceed in paths and movements of an ever-increasing straightness of the truth in ourselves and things by a constant diminishing of the crooked perversions of the Ignorance. Just as Mind has to unite itself consciously with the Supermind from which it is separated by the action of Avidya, so Life has to become aware of the Conscious-Force which operates in it for ends and with a meaning of which the life in us, because it is absorbed in the mere process of living as our mind is absorbed in the mere process of mentalising life and matter, is unconscious in its darkened action so that it serves them blindly and ignorantly and not, as it must and will in its liberation and fulfilment, luminously or with a self-fulfilling knowledge, power and bliss.

In fact, our Life, because it is subservient to the darkened

and dividing operation of Mind, is itself darkened and divided and undergoes all that subjection to death, limitation, weakness, suffering, ignorant functioning of which the bound and limited creature-Mind is the parent and cause. The original source of the perversion was, we have seen, the self-limitation of the individual soul bound to self-ignorance because it regards itself by an exclusive concentration as a separate self-existent individuality and regards all cosmic action only as it presents itself to its own individual consciousness, knowledge, will, force, enjoyment and limited being instead of seeing itself as a conscious form of the One and embracing all consciousness, all knowledge, all will, all force, all enjoyment and all being as one with its own. The universal life in us, obeying this direction of the soul imprisoned in mind, itself becomes imprisoned in an individual action. It exists and acts as a separate life with a limited insufficient capacity undergoing and not freely embracing the shock and pressure of all the cosmic life around it. Thrown into the constant cosmic interchange of Force in the universe as a poor, limited, individual existence, Life at first helplessly suffers and obeys the giant interplay with only a mechanical reaction upon all that attacks, devours, enjoys, uses, drives it. But as consciousness develops, as the light of its own being emerges from the inert darkness of the involutionary sleep, the individual existence becomes dimly aware of the power in it and seeks first nervously and then mentally to master, use and enjoy the play. This awakening to the Power in it is the gradual awakening to self. For Life is Force and Force is Power and Power is Will and Will is the working of the Master-consciousness. Life in the individual becomes more and more aware in its depths that it too is the Will-Force of Sachchidananda which is master of the universe and it aspires itself to be individually master of its own world. To realise its own power and to master as well as to know its world is therefore the increasing impulse of all individual life; that impulse is an essential feature of the growing self-manifestation of the Divine in cosmic existence.

But though Life is Power and the growth of individual life means the growth of the individual Power, still the mere fact of

its being a divided individualised life and force prevents it from really becoming master of its world. For that would mean to be master of the All-Force, and it is impossible for a divided and individualised consciousness with a divided, individualised and therefore limited power and will to be master of the All-Force; only the All-Will can be that and the individual only, if at all, by becoming again one with the All-Will and therefore with the All-Force. Otherwise, the individual life in the individual form must be always subject to the three badges of its limitation, Death, Desire and Incapacity.

Death is imposed on the individual life both by the conditions of its own existence and by its relations to the All-Force which manifests itself in the universe. For the individual life is a particular play of energy specialised to constitute, maintain, energise and finally to dissolve, when its utility is over, one of myriad forms which all serve, each in its own place, time and scope, the whole play of the universe. The energy of life in the body has to support the attack of the energies external to it in the universe; it has to draw them in and feed upon them and is itself being constantly devoured by them. All Matter according to the Upanishad is food, and this is the formula of the material world that "the eater eating is himself eaten". The life organised in the body is constantly exposed to the possibility of being broken up by the attack of the life external to it or, its devouring capacity being insufficient or not properly served or there being no right balance between the capacity of devouring and the capacity or necessity of providing food for the life outside, it is unable to protect itself and is devoured or is unable to renew itself and therefore wasted away or broken; it has to go through the process of death for a new construction or renewal.

Not only so but, again in the language of the Upanishad, the life-force is the food of the body and the body the food of the life-force; in other words, the life-energy in us both supplies the material by which the form is built up and constantly maintained and renewed and is at the same time constantly using up the substantial form of itself which it thus creates and keeps in existence. If the balance between these two operations

is imperfect or is disturbed or if the ordered play of the different currents of life-force is thrown out of gear, then disease and decay intervene and commence the process of disintegration. And the very struggle for conscious mastery and even the growth of mind make the maintenance of the life more difficult. For there is an increasing demand of the life-energy on the form, a demand which is in excess of the original system of supply and disturbs the original balance of supply and demand, and before a new balance can be established, many disorders are introduced inimical to the harmony and to the length of maintenance of the life; in addition the attempt at mastery creates always a corresponding reaction in the environment which is full of forces that also desire fulfilment and are therefore intolerant of, revolt against and attack the existence which seeks to master them. There too a balance is disturbed, a more intense struggle is generated; however strong the mastering life, unless either it is unlimited or else succeeds in establishing a new harmony with its environment, it cannot always resist and triumph but must one day be overcome and disintegrated.

But, apart from all these necessities, there is the one fundamental necessity of the nature and object of embodied life itself, which is to seek infinite experience on a finite basis; and since the form, the basis by its very organisation limits the possibility of experience, this can only be done by dissolving it and seeking new forms. For the soul, having once limited itself by concentrating on the moment and the field, is driven to seek its infinity again by the principle of succession, by adding moment to moment and thus storing up a Time-experience which it calls its past; in that Time it moves through successive fields, successive experiences or lives, successive accumulations of knowledge, capacity, enjoyment, and all this it holds in subconscious or superconscious memory as its fund of past acquisition in Time. To this process change of form is essential, and for the soul involved in individual body change of form means dissolution of the body in subjection to the law and compulsion of the All-life in the material universe, to its law of supply of the material of form and demand on the material, to its principle of constant

intershock and the struggle of the embodied life to exist in a world of mutual devouring. And this is the law of Death.

This then is the necessity and justification of Death, not as a denial of Life, but as a process of Life; death is necessary because eternal change of form is the sole immortality to which the finite living substance can aspire and eternal change of experience the sole infinity to which the finite mind involved in living body can attain. This change of form cannot be allowed to remain merely a constant renewal of the same form-type such as constitutes our bodily life between birth and death; for unless the form-type is changed and the experiencing mind is thrown into new forms in new circumstances of time, place and environment, the necessary variation of experience which the very nature of existence in Time and Space demands, cannot be effectuated. And it is only the process of Death by dissolution and by the devouring of life by Life, it is only the absence of freedom, the compulsion, the struggle, the pain, the subjection to something that appears to be Not-Self which makes this necessary and salutary change appear terrible and undesirable to our mortal mentality. It is the sense of being devoured, broken up, destroyed or forced away which is the sting of Death and which even the belief in personal survival of death cannot wholly abrogate.

But this process is a necessity of that mutual devouring which we see to be the initial law of Life in Matter. Life, says the Upanishad, is Hunger which is Death, and by this Hunger which is Death, *aśanāyā mr̥tyuh*, the material world has been created. For Life here assumes as its mould material substance, and material substance is Being infinitely divided and seeking infinitely to aggregate itself; between these two impulses of infinite division and infinite aggregation the material existence of the universe is constituted. The attempt of the individual, the living atom, to maintain and aggrandise itself is the whole sense of Desire; a physical, vital, moral, mental increase by a more and more all-embracing experience, a more and more all-embracing possession, absorption, assimilation, enjoyment is the inevitable, fundamental, ineradicable impulse of Existence, once divided and individualised, yet ever secretly conscious of its

all-embracing, all-possessing infinity. The impulse to realise that secret consciousness is the spur of the cosmic Divine, the lust of the embodied Self within every individual creature; and it is inevitable, just, salutary that it should seek to realise it first in the terms of life by an increasing growth and expansion. In the physical world this can only be done by feeding on the environment, by aggrandising oneself through the absorption of others or of what is possessed by others; and this necessity is the universal justification of Hunger in all its forms. Still what devours must also be devoured; for the law of interchange, of action and reaction, of limited capacity and therefore of a final exhaustion and succumbing governs all life in the physical world.

In the conscious mind that which was still only a vital hunger in subconscious life, transforms itself into higher forms; hunger in the vital parts becomes craving of Desire in the mentalised life, straining of Will in the intellectual or thinking life. This movement of desire must and ought to continue until the individual has grown sufficiently so that he can now at last become master of himself and by increasing union with the Infinite possessor of his universe. Desire is the lever by which the divine Life-principle effects its end of self-affirmation in the universe and the attempt to extinguish it in the interests of inertia is a denial of the divine Life-principle, a Will-not-to-be which is necessarily ignorance; for one cannot cease to be individually except by being infinitely. Desire too can only cease rightly by becoming the desire of the infinite and satisfying itself with a supernal fulfilment and an infinite satisfaction in the all-possessing bliss of the Infinite. Meanwhile it has to progress from the type of a mutually devouring hunger to the type of a mutual giving, of an increasingly joyous sacrifice of interchange; — the individual gives himself to other individuals and receives them back in exchange; the lower gives itself to the higher and the higher to the lower so that they may be fulfilled in each other; the human gives itself to the Divine and the Divine to the human; the All in the individual gives itself to the All in the universe and receives its realised universality as a divine recompense. Thus the law of Hunger must give place progressively to the law of Love, the law of Division to the law

of Unity, the law of Death to the law of Immortality. Such is the necessity, such the justification, such the culmination and self-fulfilment of the Desire that is at work in the universe.

As this mask of Death which Life assumes results from the movement of the finite seeking to affirm its immortality, so Desire is the impulse of the Force of Being individualised in Life to affirm progressively in the terms of succession in Time and of self-extension in Space, in the framework of the finite, its infinite Bliss, the Ananda of Sachchidananda. The mask of Desire which that impulse assumes comes directly from the third phenomenon of Life, its law of incapacity. Life is an infinite Force working in the terms of the finite; inevitably, throughout its overt individualised action in the finite its omnipotence must appear and act as a limited capacity and a partial impotence, although behind every act of the individual, however weak, however futile, however stumbling, there must be the whole superconscious and subconscious presence of infinite omnipotent Force; without that presence behind it no least single movement in the cosmos can happen; into its sum of universal action each single act and movement falls by the fiat of the omnipotent omniscience which works as the Supermind inherent in things. But the individualised life-force is to its own consciousness limited and full of incapacity; for it has to work not only against the mass of other environing individualised life-forces, but also subject to control and denial by the infinite Life itself with whose total will and trend its own will and trend may not immediately agree. Therefore limitation of force, phenomenon of incapacity is the third of the three characteristics of individualised and divided Life. On the other hand, the impulse of self-enlargement and all-possession remains and it does not and is not meant to measure or limit itself by the limit of its present force or capacity. Hence from the gulf between the impulse to possess and the force of possession desire arises; for if there were no such discrepancy, if the force could always take possession of its object, always attain securely its end, desire would not come into existence but only a calm and self-possessed Will without craving such as is the Will of the Divine.

If the individualised force were the energy of a mind free from ignorance, no such limitation, no such necessity of desire would intervene. For a mind not separated from supermind, a mind of divine knowledge would know the intention, scope and inevitable result of its every act and would not crave or struggle but put forth an assured force self-limited to the immediate object in view. It would, even in stretching beyond the present, even in undertaking movements not intended to succeed immediately, yet not be subject to desire or limitation. For the failures also of the Divine are acts of its omniscient omnipotence which knows the right time and circumstance for the incipience, the vicissitudes, the immediate and the final results of all its cosmic undertakings. The mind of knowledge, being in unison with the divine Supermind, would participate in this science and this all-determining power. But, as we have seen, individualised life-force here is an energy of individualising and ignorant Mind, Mind that has fallen from the knowledge of its own Supermind. Therefore incapacity is necessary to its relations in Life and inevitable in the nature of things; for the practical omnipotence of an ignorant force even in a limited sphere is unthinkable, since in that sphere such a force would set itself against the working of the divine and omniscient omnipotence and unfix the fixed purpose of things,—an impossible cosmic situation. The struggle of limited forces increasing their capacity by that struggle under the driving impetus of instinctive or conscious desire is therefore the first law of Life. As with desire, so with this strife; it must rise into a mutually helpful trial of strength, a conscious wrestling of brother forces in which the victor and vanquished or rather that which influences by action from above and that which influences by retort of action from below must equally gain and increase. And this again has eventually to become the happy shock of divine interchange, the strenuous clasp of Love replacing the convulsive clasp of strife. Still, strife is the necessary and salutary beginning. Death, Desire and Strife are the trinity of divided living, the triple mask of the divine Life-principle in its first essay of cosmic self-affirmation.

Chapter XXI

The Ascent of Life

Let the path of the Word lead to the godheads, towards the Waters by the working of the Mind. . . .¹ O Flame, thou goest to the ocean of Heaven, towards the gods; thou makest to meet together the godheads of the planes, the waters that are in the realm of light above the sun and the waters that abide below.²

The Lord of Delight conquers the third status; he maintains and governs according to the Soul of universality; like a hawk, a kite he settles on the vessel and uplifts it, a finder of the Light he manifests the fourth status and cleaves to the ocean that is the billowing of those waters.³

Thrice Vishnu paced and set his step uplifted out of the primal dust; three steps he has paced, the Guardian, the Invincible, and from beyond he upholds their laws. Scan the workings of Vishnu and see from whence he has manifested their laws. That is his highest pace which is seen ever by the seers like an eye extended in heaven; that the illumined, the awakened kindle into a blaze, even Vishnu's step supreme. . . .⁴

Rig Veda.

WE HAVE seen that as the divided mortal Mind, parent of limitation and ignorance and the dualities, is only a dark figure of the supermind, of the self-luminous divine Consciousness in its first dealings with the apparent negation of itself from which our cosmos commences, so also Life as it emerges in our material universe, an energy of the dividing

¹ X. 30. 1. ² III. 22. 3. ³ IX. 96. 18, 19. ⁴ I. 22. 17-21.

Mind subconscious, submerged, imprisoned in Matter, Life as the parent of death, hunger and incapacity, is only a dark figure of the divine superconscious Force whose highest terms are immortality, satisfied delight and omnipotence. This relation fixes the nature of that great cosmic processus of which we are a part; it determines the first, the middle and the ultimate terms of our evolution. The first terms of Life are division, a force-driven subconscious will, apparent not as will but as dumb urge of physical energy, and the impotence of an inert subjection to the mechanical forces that govern the interchange between the form and its environment. This in conscience and this blind but potent action of Energy are the type of the material universe as the physical scientist sees it and this his view of things extends and turns into the whole of basic existence; it is the consciousness of Matter and the accomplished type of material living. But there comes a new equipoise, there intervenes a new set of terms which increase in proportion as Life delivers itself out of this form and begins to evolve towards conscious Mind; for the middle terms of Life are death and mutual devouring, hunger and conscious desire, the sense of a limited room and capacity and the struggle to increase, to expand, to conquer and to possess. These three terms are the basis of that status of evolution which the Darwinian theory first made plain to human knowledge. For the phenomenon of death involves in itself a struggle to survive, since death is only the negative term in which Life hides from itself and tempts its own positive being to seek for immortality. The phenomenon of hunger and desire involves a struggle towards a status of satisfaction and security, since desire is only the stimulus by which Life tempts its own positive being to rise out of the negation of unfulfilled hunger towards the full possession of the delight of existence. The phenomenon of limited capacity involves a struggle towards expansion, mastery and possession, the possession of the self and the conquest of the environment, since limitation and defect are only the negation by which Life tempts its own positive being to seek for the perfection of which it is eternally capable. The struggle for life is not only a struggle to survive, it is also a struggle for possession and perfection,

since only by taking hold of the environment whether more or less, whether by self-adaptation to it or by adapting it to oneself either by accepting and conciliating it or by conquering and changing it, can survival be secured, and equally is it true that only a greater and greater perfection can assure a continuous permanence, a lasting survival. It is this truth that Darwinism sought to express in the formula of the survival of the fittest.

But as the scientific mind sought to extend to Life the mechanical principle proper to the existence and concealed mechanical consciousness in Matter, not seeing that a new principle has entered whose very reason of being is to subject to itself the mechanical, so the Darwinian formula was used to extend too largely the aggressive principle of Life, the vital selfishness of the individual, the instinct and process of self-preservation, self-assertion and aggressive living. For these two first states of Life contain in themselves the seeds of a new principle and another state which must increase in proportion as Mind evolves out of matter through the vital formula into its own law. And still more must all things change when as Life evolves upward towards Mind, so Mind evolves upward towards Supermind and Spirit. Precisely because the struggle for survival, the impulse towards permanence is contradicted by the law of death, the individual life is compelled, and used, to secure permanence rather for its species than for itself; but this it cannot do without the co-operation of others; and the principle of co-operation and mutual help, the desire of others, the desire of the wife, the child, the friend and helper, the associated group, the practice of association, of conscious joining and interchange are the seeds out of which flowers the principle of love. Let us grant that at first love may only be an extended selfishness and that this aspect of extended selfishness may persist and dominate, as it does still persist and dominate, in higher stages of the evolution: still as mind evolves and more and more finds itself, it comes by the experience of life and love and mutual help to perceive that the natural individual is a minor term of being and exists by the universal. Once this is discovered, as it is inevitably discovered by man the mental being, his destiny is determined; for

he has reached the point at which Mind can begin to open to the truth that there is something beyond itself; from that moment his evolution, however obscure and slow, towards that superior something, towards Spirit, towards supermind, towards supermanhood is inevitably predetermined.

Therefore Life is predestined by its own nature to a third status, a third set of terms of its self-expression. If we examine this ascent of Life we shall see that the last terms of its actual evolution, the terms of that which we have called its third status, must necessarily be in appearance the very contradiction and opposite but in fact the very fulfilment and transfiguration of its first conditions. Life starts with the extreme divisions and rigid forms of Matter, and of this rigid division the atom, which is the basis of all material form, is the very type. The atom stands apart from all others even in its union with them, rejects death and dissolution under any ordinary force and is the physical type of the separate ego defining its existence against the principle of fusion in Nature. But unity is as strong a principle in Nature as division; it is indeed the master principle of which division is only a subordinate term, and to the principle of unity every divided form must therefore subordinate itself in one fashion or another by mechanical necessity, by compulsion, by assent or inducement. Therefore, if Nature for her own ends, in order principally to have a firm basis for her combinations and a fixed seed of forms, allows the atom ordinarily to resist the process of fusion by dissolution, she compels it to subserve the process of fusion by aggregation; the atom, as it is the first aggregate, is also the first basis of aggregate unities.

When Life reaches its second status, that which we recognise as vitality, the contrary phenomenon takes the lead and the physical basis of the vital ego is obliged to consent to dissolution. Its constituents are broken up so that the elements of one life can be used to enter into the elemental formation of other lives. The extent to which this law reigns in Nature has not yet been fully recognised and indeed cannot be until we have a science of mental life and spiritual existence as sound as our present science of physical life and the existence of Matter. Still we can

see broadly that not only the elements of our physical body, but those of our subtler vital being, our life-energy, our desire-energy, our powers, strivings, passions enter both during our life and after our death into the life-existence of others. An ancient occult knowledge tells us that we have a vital frame as well as a physical and this too is after death dissolved and lends itself to the constitution of other vital bodies; our life energies while we live are continually mixing with the energies of other beings. A similar law governs the mutual relations of our mental life with the mental life of other thinking creatures. There is a constant dissolution and dispersion and a reconstruction effected by the shock of mind upon mind with a constant interchange and fusion of elements. Interchange, intermixture and fusion of being with being, is the very process of life, a law of its existence.

We have then two principles in Life, the necessity or the will of the separate ego to survive in its distinctness and guard its identity and the compulsion imposed upon it by Nature to fuse itself with others. In the physical world she lays much stress on the former impulse; for she needs to create stable separate forms, since it is her first and really her most difficult problem to create and maintain any such thing as a separative survival of individuality and a stable form for it in the incessant flux and motion of Energy and in the unity of the infinite. In the atomic life therefore the individual form persists as the basis and secures by its aggregation with others the more or less prolonged existence of aggregate forms which shall be the basis of vital and mental individualisations. But as soon as Nature has secured a sufficient firmness in this respect for the safe conduct of her ulterior operations, she reverses the process; the individual form perishes and the aggregate life profits by the elements of the form that is thus dissolved. This, however, cannot be the last stage; that can only be reached when the two principles are harmonised, when the individual is able to persist in the consciousness of his individuality and yet fuse himself with others without disturbance of preservative equilibrium and interruption of survival.

The terms of the problem presuppose the full emergence of Mind; for in vitality without conscious mind there can be no

equation, but only a temporary unstable equilibrium ending in the death of the body, the dissolution of the individual and the dispersal of its elements into the universality. The nature of physical Life forbids the idea of an individual form possessing the same inherent power of persistence and therefore of continued individual existence as the atoms of which it is composed. Only a mental being, supported by the psychic nodus within which expresses or begins to express the secret soul, can hope to persist by his power of linking on the past to the future in a stream of continuity which the breaking of the form may break in the physical memory but need not destroy in the mental being itself and which may even by an eventual development bridge over the gap of physical memory created by death and birth of the body. Even as it is, even in the present imperfect development of embodied mind, the mental being is conscious in the mass of a past and a future extending beyond the life of the body; he becomes aware of an individual past, of individual lives that have created his and of which he is a development and modified reproduction and of future individual lives which his is creating out of itself; he is conscious also of an aggregate life past and future through which his own continuity runs as one of its fibres. This which is evident to physical Science in the terms of heredity, becomes otherwise evident to the developing soul behind the mental being in the terms of persistent personality. The mental being expressive of this soul-consciousness is therefore the nodus of the persistent individual and the persistent aggregate life; in him their union and harmony become possible.

Association with love as its secret principle and its emergent summit is the type, the power of this new relation and therefore the governing principle of the development into the third status of life. The conscious preservation of individuality along with the consciously accepted necessity and desire of interchange, self-giving and fusion with other individuals, is necessary for the working of the principle of love; for if either is abolished, the working of love ceases, whatever may take its place. Fulfilment of love by entire self-immolation, even with an illusion of self-annihilation, is indeed an idea and an impulse in the mental

being, but it points to a development beyond this third status of Life. This third status is a condition in which we rise progressively beyond the struggle for life by mutual devouring and the survival of the fittest by that struggle; for there is more and more a survival by mutual help and a self-perfectioning by mutual adaptation, interchange and fusion. Life is a self-affirmation of being, even a development and survival of ego, but of a being that has need of other beings, an ego that seeks to meet and include other egos and to be included in their life. The individuals and the aggregates who develop most the law of association and the law of love, of common help, kindness, affection, comradeship, unity, who harmonise most successfully survival and mutual self-giving, the aggregate increasing the individual and the individual the aggregate, as well as individual increasing individual and aggregate aggregate by mutual interchange, will be the fittest for survival in this tertiary status of the evolution.

This development is significant of the increasing predominance of Mind⁵ which progressively imposes its own law more and more upon the material existence. For Mind by its greater subtlety does not need to devour in order to assimilate, possess and grow; rather the more it gives, the more it receives and grows; and the more it fuses itself into others, the more it fuses others into itself and increases the scope of its being. Physical life exhausts itself by too much giving and ruins itself by too much devouring; but though Mind in proportion as it leans on the law of Matter suffers the same limitation, yet, on the other hand, in proportion as it grows into its own law it tends to overcome this limitation, and in proportion as it overcomes the material limitation giving and receiving become one. For in its upward ascent it grows towards the rule of conscious unity in differentiation which is the divine law of the manifest Sachchidananda.

⁵ What is spoken of here is mind as it acts directly in life, in the vital being, through the heart. Love—the relative principle, not its absolute—is a principle of life, not of mind, but it can possess itself and move towards permanence only when taken up by the mind into its own light. What is called love in the body and the vital parts is mostly a form of hunger without permanence.

The second term of the original status of life is subconscious will which in the secondary status becomes hunger and conscious desire, — hunger and desire, the first seed of conscious mind. The growth into the third status of life by the principle of association, the growth of love, does not abolish the law of desire, but rather transforms and fulfils it. Love is in its nature the desire to give oneself to others and to receive others in exchange; it is a commerce between being and being. Physical life does not desire to give itself, it desires only to receive. It is true that it is compelled to give itself, for the life which only receives and does not give must become barren, wither and perish, — if indeed such life in its entirety is possible at all here or in any world; but it is compelled, not willing, it obeys the subconscious impulse of Nature rather than consciously shares in it. Even when love intervenes, the self-giving at first still preserves to a large extent the mechanical character of the subconscious will in the atom. Love itself at first obeys the law of hunger and enjoys the receiving and the exacting from others rather than the giving and surrendering to others which it admits chiefly as a necessary price for the thing that it desires. But here it has not yet attained to its true nature; its true law is to establish an equal commerce in which the joy of giving is equal to the joy of receiving and tends in the end to become even greater; but that is when it is shooting beyond itself under the pressure of the psychic flame to attain to the fulfilment of utter unity and has therefore to realise that which seemed to it not-self as an even greater and dearer self than its own individuality. In its life-origin, the law of love is the impulse to realise and fulfil oneself in others and by others, to be enriched by enriching, to possess and be possessed because without being possessed one does not possess oneself utterly.

The inert incapacity of atomic existence to possess itself, the subjection of the material individual to the not-self, belongs to the first status of life. The consciousness of limitation and the struggle to possess, to master both self and the not-self is the type of the secondary status. Here, too, the development to the third status brings a transformation of the original terms into a fulfilment and a harmony which repeat the terms while seeming

to contradict them. There comes about through association and through love a recognition of the not-self as a greater self and therefore a consciously accepted submission to its law and need which fulfils the increasing impulse of aggregate life to absorb the individual; and there is a possession again by the individual of the life of others as his own and of all that it has to give him as his own which fulfils the opposite impulse of individual possession. Nor can this relation of mutuality between the individual and the world he lives in be expressed or complete or secure unless the same relation is established between individual and individual and between aggregate and aggregate. All the difficult effort of man towards the harmonisation of self-affirmation and freedom, by which he possesses himself, with association and love, fraternity, comradeship, in which he gives himself to others, his ideals of harmonious equilibrium, justice, mutuality, equality by which he creates a balance of the two opposites, are really an attempt inevitably predetermined in its lines to solve the original problem of Nature, the very problem of Life itself, by the resolution of the conflict between the two opposites which present themselves in the very foundations of Life in Matter. The resolution is attempted by the higher principle of Mind which alone can find the road towards the harmony intended, even though the harmony itself can only be found in a Power still beyond us.

For, if the data with which we have started are correct, the end of the road, the goal itself can only be reached by Mind passing beyond itself into that which is beyond Mind, since of That the Mind is only an inferior term and an instrument first for descent into form and individuality and secondly for reascension into that reality which the form embodies and the individuality represents. Therefore the perfect solution of the problem of Life is not likely to be realised by association, interchange and accommodations of love alone or through the law of the mind and the heart alone. It must come by a fourth status of life in which the eternal unity of the many is realised through the spirit and the conscious foundation of all the operations of life is laid no longer in the divisions of body, nor in the passions and hungers

of the vitality, nor in the groupings and the imperfect harmonies of the mind, nor in a combination of all these, but in the unity and freedom of the Spirit.

Chapter XXII

The Problem of Life

This it is that is called the universal Life.

*Taittiriya Upanishad.*¹

The Lord is seated in the heart of all beings turning all beings
mounted upon a machine by his Maya.

*Gita.*²

He who knows the Truth, the Knowledge, the Infinity that is
Brahman shall enjoy with the all-wise Brahman all objects of
desire.

*Taittiriya Upanishad.*³

LIFE IS, we have seen, the putting forth, under certain cosmic circumstances, of a Conscious-Force which is in its own nature infinite, absolute, untrammelled, inalienably possessed of its own unity and bliss, the Conscious-Force of Sachchidananda. The central circumstance of this cosmic process, in so far as it differs in its appearances from the purity of the infinite Existence and the self-possession of the undivided Energy, is the dividing faculty of the Mind obscured by ignorance. There results from this divided action of an undivided Force the apparition of dualities, oppositions, seeming denials of the nature of Sachchidananda which exist as an abiding reality for the mind, but only as a phenomenon misrepresenting a manifold Reality for the divine cosmic Consciousness concealed behind the veil of mind. Hence the world takes on the appearance of a clash of opposing truths each seeking to fulfil itself, each having the right to fulfilment, and therefore of a mass of problems and mysteries which have to be solved because behind all this confusion there is the hidden Truth and unity pressing for the

¹ II. 3. ² XVIII. 61. ³ II. 1.

solution and by the solution for its own unveiled manifestation in the world.

This solution has to be sought by the mind, but not by the mind alone; it has to be a solution in Life, in act of being as well as in consciousness of being. Consciousness as Force has created the world-movement and its problems; consciousness as Force has to solve the problems it has created and carry the world-movement to the inevitable fulfilment of its secret sense and evolving Truth. But this Life has taken successively three appearances. The first is material,—a submerged consciousness is concealed in its own superficial expressive action and representative forms of force; for the consciousness itself disappears from view in the act and is lost in the form. The second is vital,—an emerging consciousness is half-apparent as power of life and process of the growth, activity and decay of form, it is half-delivered out of its original imprisonment, it has become vibrant in power, as vital craving and satisfaction or repulsion, but at first not at all and then only imperfectly vibrant in light as knowledge of its own self-existence and its environment. The third is mental,—an emerged consciousness reflects fact of life as mental sense and responsive perception and idea while as new idea it tries to become fact of life, modifies the internal and attempts to modify conformably the external existence of the being. Here, in mind, consciousness is delivered out of its imprisonment in the act and form of its own force; but it is not yet master of the act and form because it has emerged as an individual consciousness and is aware therefore only of a fragmentary movement of its own total activities.

The whole crux and difficulty of human life lies here. Man is this mental being, this mental consciousness working as mental force, aware in a way of the universal force and life of which he is part but, because he has not knowledge of its universality or even of the totality of his own being, unable to deal either with life in general or with his own life in a really effective and victorious movement of mastery. He seeks to know Matter in order to be master of the material environment, to know Life in order to be master of the vital existence, to know Mind in

order to be master of the great obscure movement of mentality in which he is not only a jet of light of self-consciousness like the animal, but also more and more a flame of growing knowledge. Thus he seeks to know himself in order to be master of himself, to know the world in order to be master of the world. This is the urge of Existence in him, the necessity of the Consciousness he is, the impulsion of the Force that is his life, the secret will of Sachchidananda appearing as the individual in a world in which He expresses and yet seems to deny Himself. To find the conditions under which this inner impulsion is satisfied is the problem man must strive always to resolve and to that he is compelled by the very nature of his own existence and by the Deity seated within him; and until the problem is solved, the impulse satisfied, the human race cannot rest from its labour. Either man must fulfil himself by satisfying the Divine within him or he must produce out of himself a new and greater being who will be more capable of satisfying it. He must either himself become a divine humanity or give place to Superman.

This results from the very logic of things because, the mental consciousness of man not being the completely illumined consciousness entirely emerged out of the obscuration of Matter but only a progressive term in the great emergence, the line of evolutionary creation in which he has appeared cannot stop where he now is, but must go either beyond its present term in him or else beyond him if he himself has not the force to go forward. Mental idea trying to become fact of life must pass on till it becomes the whole Truth of existence delivering itself out of its successive wrappings, revealed and progressively fulfilled in light of consciousness and joyously fulfilled in power; for in and through these two terms of power and light Existence manifests itself, because existence is in its nature Consciousness and Force: but the third term in which these, its two constituents, meet, become one and are ultimately fulfilled, is satisfied Delight of self-existence. For an evolving life like ours this inevitable culmination must necessarily mean the finding of the self that was contained in the seed of its own birth and, with that self-finding, the complete working out of the potentialities deposited

in the movement of Conscious-Force from which this life took its rise. The potentiality thus contained in our human existence is Sachchidananda realising Himself in a certain harmony and unification of the individual life and the universal so that mankind shall express in a common consciousness, common movement of power, common delight the transcendent Something which has cast itself into this form of things.

All life depends for its nature on the fundamental poise of its own constituting consciousness; for as the Consciousness is, so will the Force be. Where the Consciousness is infinite, one, transcendent of its acts and forms even while embracing and informing, organising and executing them, as is the consciousness of Sachchidananda, so will be the Force, infinite in its scope, one in its works, transcendent in its power and self-knowledge. Where the Consciousness is like that of material Nature, submerged, self-oblivious, driving along in the drift of its own Force without seeming to know it, even though by the very nature of the eternal relation between the two terms it really determines the drift which drives it, so will be the Force: it will be a monstrous movement of the Inert and Inconscient, unaware of what it contains, seeming mechanically to fulfil itself by a sort of inexorable accident, an inevitably happy chance, even while all the while it really obeys faultlessly the law of the Right and Truth fixed for it by the will of the supernal Conscious-Being concealed within its movement. Where the Consciousness is divided in itself, as in Mind, limiting itself in various centres, setting each to fulfil itself without knowledge of what is in other centres and of its relation to others, aware of things and forces in their apparent division and opposition to each other but not in their real unity, such will be the Force: it will be a life like that we are and see around us; it will be a clash and intertwining of individual lives seeking each its own fulfilment without knowing its relation to others, a conflict and difficult accommodation of divided and opposing or differing forces and, in the mentality, a mixing, a shock and wrestle and insecure combination of divided and opposing or divergent ideas which cannot arrive at the knowledge of their necessity to each other or grasp their

place as elements of that Unity behind which is expressing itself through them and in which their discords must cease. But where the Consciousness is in possession of both the diversity and the unity and the latter contains and governs the former, where it is aware at once of the Law, Truth and Right of the All and the Law, Truth and Right of the individual and the two become consciously harmonised in a mutual unity, where the whole nature of the consciousness is the One knowing itself as the Many and the Many knowing themselves as the One, there the Force also will be of the same nature: it will be a Life that consciously obeys the law of Unity and yet fulfils each thing in the diversity according to its proper rule and function; it will be a life in which all the individuals live at once in themselves and in each other as one conscious Being in many souls, one power of Consciousness in many minds, one joy of Force working in many lives, one reality of Delight fulfilling itself in many hearts and bodies.

The first of these four positions, the source of all this progressive relation between Consciousness and Force, is their poise in the being of Sachchidananda where they are one; for there the Force is consciousness of being working itself out without ever ceasing to be consciousness and the Consciousness is similarly luminous Force of being eternally aware of itself and of its own Delight and never ceasing to be this power of utter light and self-possession. The second relation is that of material Nature; it is the poise of being in the material universe which is the great denial of Sachchidananda by Himself: for here there is the utter apparent separation of Force from Consciousness, the specious miracle of the all-governing and infallible Inconscient which is only the mask but which modern knowledge has mistaken for the real face of the cosmic Deity. The third relation is the poise of being in Mind and in the Life which we see emerging out of this denial, bewildered by it, struggling — without any possibility of cessation by submission, but also without any clear knowledge or instinct of a victorious solution — against the thousand and one problems involved in this perplexing apparition of man the half-potent conscient being out of the omnipotent Inconscience of the material universe. The fourth relation is the poise of being

in Supermind: it is the fulfilled existence which will eventually solve all this complex problem created by the partial affirmation emerging out of the total denial; and it must needs solve it in the only possible way, by the complete affirmation fulfilling all that was secretly there contained in potentiality and intended in fact of evolution behind the mask of the great denial. That is the real life of the real Man towards which this partial life and partial unfulfilled manhood is striving forward with a perfect knowledge and guidance in the so-called Inconscient within us, but in our conscient parts with only a dim and struggling prevision, with fragments of realisation, with glimpses of the ideal, with flashes of revelation and inspiration in the poet and the prophet, the seer and the transcendentalist, the mystic and the thinker, the great intellects and the great souls of humanity.

From the data we have now before us we can see that the difficulties which arise from the imperfect poise of Consciousness and Force in man in his present status of mind and life are principally three. First, he is aware only of a small part of his own being: his surface mentality, his surface life, his surface physical being is all that he knows and he does not know even all of that; below is the occult surge of his subconscious and his subliminal mind, his subconscious and his subliminal life-impulses, his subconscious corporeality, all that large part of himself which he does not know and cannot govern, but which rather knows and governs him. For, existence and consciousness and force being one, we can only have some real power over so much of our existence as we are identified with by self-awareness; the rest must be governed by its own consciousness which is subliminal to our surface mind and life and body. And yet, the two being one movement and not two separate movements, the larger and more potent part of ourselves must govern and determine in the mass the smaller and less powerful; therefore we are governed by the subconscious and subliminal even in our conscious existence and in our very self-mastery and self-direction we are only instruments of what seems to us the Inconscient within us.

This is what the old wisdom meant when it said that man imagines himself to be the doer of the work by his free will,

but in reality Nature determines all his works and even the wise are compelled to follow their own Nature. But since Nature is the creative force of consciousness of the Being within us who is masked by His own inverse movement and apparent denial of Himself, they called that inverse creative movement of His consciousness the Maya or Illusion-Power of the Lord and said that all existences are turned as upon a machine through His Maya by the Lord seated within the heart of all existences. It is evident then that only by man so far exceeding mind as to become one in self-awareness with the Lord can he become master of his own being. And since this is not possible in the unconscious or in the subconscious itself, since profit cannot come by plunging down into our depths back towards the Inconscient, it can only be by going inward where the Lord is seated and by ascending into that which is still superconscious to us, into the Supermind, that this unity can be wholly established. For there in the higher and divine Maya is the conscious knowledge, in its law and truth, of that which works in the subconscious by the lower Maya under the conditions of the Denial which seeks to become the Affirmation. For this lower Nature works out what is willed and known in that higher Nature. The Illusion-Power of the divine knowledge in the world which creates appearances is governed by the Truth-Power of the same knowledge which knows the truth behind the appearances and keeps ready for us the Affirmation towards which they are working. The partial and apparent Man here will find there the perfect and real Man capable of an entirely self-aware being by his full unity with that Self-existent who is the omniscient lord of His own cosmic evolution and procession.

The second difficulty is that man is separated in his mind, his life, his body from the universal and therefore, even as he does not know himself, is equally and even more incapable of knowing his fellow-creatures. He forms by inferences, theories, observations and a certain imperfect capacity of sympathy a rough mental construction about them; but this is not knowledge. Knowledge can only come by conscious identity, for that is the only true knowledge, — existence aware of itself. We know

what we are so far as we are consciously aware of ourself, the rest is hidden; so also we can come really to know that with which we become one in our consciousness, but only so far as we can become one with it. If the means of knowledge are indirect and imperfect, the knowledge attained will also be indirect and imperfect. It will enable us to work out with a certain precarious clumsiness but still perfectly enough from our mental standpoint certain limited practical aims, necessities, conveniences, a certain imperfect and insecure harmony of our relations with that which we know; but only by a conscious unity with it can we arrive at a perfect relation. Therefore we must arrive at a conscious unity with our fellow-beings and not merely at the sympathy created by love or the understanding created by mental knowledge, which will always be the knowledge of their superficial existence and therefore imperfect in itself and subject to denial and frustration by the uprush of the unknown and unmastered from the subconscious or the subliminal in them and us. But this conscious oneness can only be established by entering into that in which we are one with them, the universal; and the fullness of the universal exists consciously only in that which is superconscious to us, in the Supermind: for here in our normal being the greater part of it is subconscious and therefore in this normal poise of mind, life and body it cannot be possessed. The lower conscious nature is bound down to ego in all its activities, chained triply to the stake of differentiated individuality. The Supermind alone commands unity in diversity.

The third difficulty is the division between force and consciousness in the evolutionary existence. There is, first, the division which has been created by the evolution itself in its three successive formations of Matter, Life and Mind, each with its own law of working. The Life is at war with the body; it attempts to force it to satisfy life's desires, impulses, satisfactions and demands from its limited capacity what could only be possible to an immortal and divine body; and the body, enslaved and tyrannised over, suffers and is in constant dumb revolt against the demands made upon it by the Life. The Mind is at war with both: sometimes it helps the Life against the Body, sometimes

restrains the vital urge and seeks to protect the corporeal frame from life's desires, passions and over-driving energies; it also seeks to possess the Life and turn its energy to the mind's own ends, to the utmost joys of the mind's own activity, to the satisfaction of mental, aesthetic, emotional aims and their fulfilment in human existence; and the Life too finds itself enslaved and misused and is in frequent insurrection against the ignorant, half-wise tyrant seated above it. This is the war of our members which the mind cannot satisfactorily resolve because it has to deal with a problem insoluble to it, the aspiration of an immortal being in a mortal life and body. It can only arrive at a long succession of compromises or end in an abandonment of the problem either by submission with the materialist to the mortality of our apparent being or with the ascetic and the religionist by the rejection and condemnation of the earthly life and withdrawal to happier and easier fields of existence. But the true solution lies in finding the principle beyond Mind of which Immortality is the law and in conquering by it the mortality of our existence.

But there is also that fundamental division within between force of Nature and the conscious being which is the original cause of this incapacity. Not only is there a division between the mental, the vital and the physical being, but each of them is also divided against itself. The capacity of the body is less than the capacity of the instinctive soul or conscious being, the physical Purusha within it, the capacity of the vital force less than the capacity of the impulsive soul, the vital conscious being or Purusha within it, the capacity of the mental energy less than the capacity of the intellectual and emotional soul, the mental Purusha within it. For the soul is the inner consciousness which aspires to its own complete self-realisation and therefore always exceeds the individual formation of the moment, and the Force which has taken its poise in the formation is always pushed by its soul to that which is abnormal to the poise, transcendent of it; thus constantly pushed it has much trouble in answering, more in evolving from the present to a greater capacity. In trying to fulfil the demands of this triple soul it is distracted and driven to set instinct against instinct, impulse against impulse, emotion

against emotion, idea against idea, satisfying this, denying that, then repenting and returning on what it has done, adjusting, compensating, readjusting *ad infinitum*, but not arriving at any principle of unity. And in the mind again the conscious-power that should harmonise and unite is not only limited in its knowledge and in its will, but the knowledge and the will are disparate and often at discord. The principle of unity is above in the supermind: for there alone is the conscious unity of all diversities; there alone will and knowledge are equal and in perfect harmony; there alone Consciousness and Force arrive at their divine equation.

Man, in proportion as he develops into a self-conscious and truly thinking being, becomes acutely aware of all this discord and disparateness in his parts and he seeks to arrive at a harmony of his mind, life and body, a harmony of his knowledge and will and emotion, a harmony of all his members. Sometimes this desire stops short at the attainment of a workable compromise which will bring with it a relative peace; but compromise can only be a halt on the way, since the Deity within will not be satisfied eventually with less than a perfect harmony combining in itself the integral development of our many-sided potentialities. Less than this would be an evasion of the problem, not its solution, or else only a temporary solution provided as a resting-place for the soul in its continual self-enlargement and ascension. Such a perfect harmony would demand as essential terms a perfect mentality, a perfect play of vital force, a perfect physical existence. But where in the radically imperfect shall we find the principle and power of perfection? Mind rooted in division and limitation cannot provide it to us, nor can life and the body which are the energy and the frame of dividing and limiting mind. The principle and power of perfection are there in the subconscious but wrapped up in the tegument or veil of the lower Maya, a mute premonition emerging as an unrealised ideal; in the superconscious they await, open, eternally realised, but still separated from us by the veil of our self-ignorance. It is above, then, and not either in our present poise nor below it that we must seek for the reconciling power and knowledge.

Equally, man, as he develops, becomes acutely aware of the discord and ignorance that governs his relations with the world, acutely intolerant of it, more and more set upon finding a principle of harmony, peace, joy and unity. This too can only come to him from above. For only by developing a mind which shall have knowledge of the mind of others as of itself, free from our mutual ignorance and misunderstanding, a will that feels and makes itself one with the will of others, an emotional heart that contains the emotions of others as its own, a life-force that senses the energies of others and accepts them for its own and seeks to fulfil them as its own, and a body that is not a wall of imprisonment and defence against the world,—but all this under the law of a Light and Truth that shall transcend the aberrations and errors, the much sin and falsehood of our and others' minds, wills, emotions, life-energies,—only so can the life of man spiritually and practically become one with that of his fellow-beings and the individual recover his own universal self. The subconscious has this life of the All and the superconscious has it, but under conditions which necessitate our motion upwards. For not towards the Godhead concealed in the “inconscient ocean where darkness is wrapped within darkness”,⁴ but towards the Godhead seated in the sea of eternal light,⁵ in the highest ether of our being, is the original impetus which has carried upward the evolving soul to the type of our humanity.

Unless therefore the race is to fall by the wayside and leave the victory to other and new creations of the eager travailing Mother, it must aspire to this ascent, conducted indeed through love, mental illumination and the vital urge to possession and self-giving, but leading beyond to the supramental unity which transcends and fulfils them; in the founding of human life upon the supramental realisation of conscious unity with the One and with all in our being and in all its members humanity must seek its final good and salvation. And this is what we have described as the fourth status of Life in its ascent towards the Godhead.

⁴ *Rig Veda*, X. 129. 3.

⁵ The Waters which are in the realm of light above the Sun and those which abide below.—*Rig Veda*, III. 22. 3.

Chapter XXIII

The Double Soul in Man

The Purusha, the inner Self, no larger than the size of a man's thumb.

*Katha Upanishad.*¹

*Swetasvatara Upanishad.*²

He who knows this Self who is the eater of the honey of existence and the lord of what is and shall be, has thenceforward no shrinking.

*Katha Upanishad.*³

Whence shall he have grief, how shall he be deluded who sees everywhere the Oneness?

*Isha Upanishad.*⁴

He who has found the bliss of the Eternal has no fear from any quarter.

*Taittiriya Upanishad.*⁵

THE FIRST status of Life we found to be characterised by a dumb inconscient drive or urge, a force of some involved will in the material or atomic existence, not free and possessor of itself or its works or their results, but entirely possessed by the universal movement in which it arises as the obscure unformed seed of individuality. The root of the second status is desire, eager to possess but limited in capacity; the bud of the third is Love which seeks both to possess and be possessed, to receive and to give itself; the fine flower of the fourth, its sign of perfection, we conceive as the pure and full emergence of the original will, the illumined fulfilment of the intermediate desire, the high and deep satisfaction of the conscious interchange of Love by the unification of the state of the possessor and possessed in the divine unity of souls which is the foundation of the supramental existence. If we scrutinise these terms carefully we

¹ II. 1. 12, 13; II. 3. 17.

² III. 13.

³ II. 1. 5.

⁴ Verse 7.

⁵ II. 9.

shall see that they are shapes and stages of the soul's seeking for the individual and universal delight of things; the ascent of Life is in its nature the ascent of the divine Delight in things from its dumb conception in Matter through vicissitudes and opposites to its luminous consummation in Spirit.

The world being what it is, it could not be otherwise. For the world is a masked form of Sachchidananda, and the nature of the consciousness of Sachchidananda and therefore the thing in which His force must always find and achieve itself is divine Bliss, an omnipresent self-delight. Since Life is an energy of His conscious-force, the secret of all its movements must be a hidden delight inherent in all things which is at once cause, motive and object of its activities; and if by reason of egoistic division that delight is missed, if it is held back behind a veil, if it is represented as its own opposite, even as being is masked in death, consciousness figures as the inconscient and force mocks itself with the guise of incapacity, then that which lives cannot be satisfied, cannot either rest from the movement or fulfil the movement except by laying hold on this universal delight which is at once the secret total delight of its own being and the original, all-encompassing, all-informing, all-upholding delight of the transcendent and immanent Sachchidananda. To seek for delight is therefore the fundamental impulse and sense of Life; to find and possess and fulfil it is its whole motive.

But where in us is this principle of Delight? through what term of our being does it manifest and fulfil itself in the action of the cosmos as the principle of Conscious-Force manifests and uses Life for its cosmic term and the principle of Supermind manifests and uses Mind? We have distinguished a fourfold principle of divine Being creative of the universe,— Existence, Conscious-Force, Bliss and Supermind. Supermind, we have seen, is omnipresent in the material cosmos, but veiled; it is behind the actual phenomenon of things and occultly expresses itself there, but uses for effectuation its own subordinate term, Mind. The divine Conscious-Force is omnipresent in the material cosmos, but veiled, operative secretly behind the actual phenomenon of things, and it expresses itself there

characteristically through its own subordinate term, Life. And, though we have not yet examined separately the principle of Matter, yet we can already see that the divine All-existence also is omnipresent in the material cosmos, but veiled, hidden behind the actual phenomenon of things, and manifests itself there initially through its own subordinate term, Substance, Form of being or Matter. Then, equally, the principle of divine Bliss must be omnipresent in the cosmos, veiled indeed and possessing itself behind the actual phenomenon of things, but still manifested in us through some subordinate principle of its own in which it is hidden and by which it must be found and achieved in the action of the universe.

That term is something in us which we sometimes call in a special sense the soul,—that is to say, the psychic principle which is not the life or the mind, much less the body, but which holds in itself the opening and flowering of the essence of all these to their own peculiar delight of self, to light, to love, to joy and beauty and to a refined purity of being. In fact, however, there is a double soul or psychic term in us, as every other cosmic principle in us is also double. For we have two minds, one the surface mind of our expressed evolutionary ego, the superficial mentality created by us in our emergence out of Matter, another a subliminal mind which is not hampered by our actual mental life and its strict limitations, something large, powerful and luminous, the true mental being behind that superficial form of mental personality which we mistake for ourselves. So also we have two lives, one outer, involved in the physical body, bound by its past evolution in Matter, which lives and was born and will die, the other a subliminal force of life which is not cabined between the narrow boundaries of our physical birth and death, but is our true vital being behind the form of living which we ignorantly take for our real existence. Even in the matter of our being there is this duality; for behind our body we have a subtler material existence which provides the substance not only of our physical but of our vital and mental sheaths and is therefore our real substance supporting this physical form which we erroneously imagine to be the whole body of our

spirit. So too we have a double psychic entity in us, the surface desire-soul which works in our vital cravings, our emotions, aesthetic faculty and mental seeking for power, knowledge and happiness, and a subliminal psychic entity, a pure power of light, love, joy and refined essence of being which is our true soul behind the outer form of psychic existence we so often dignify by the name. It is when some reflection of this larger and purer psychic entity comes to the surface that we say of a man, he has a soul, and when it is absent in his outward psychic life that we say of him, he has no soul.

The external forms of our being are those of our small egoistic existence; the subliminal are the formations of our larger true individuality. Therefore are these that concealed part of our being in which our individuality is close to our universality, touches it, is in constant relation and commerce with it. The subliminal mind in us is open to the universal knowledge of the cosmic Mind, the subliminal life in us to the universal force of the cosmic Life, the subliminal physicality in us to the universal force-formation of cosmic Matter; the thick walls which divide from these things our surface mind, life, body and which Nature has to pierce with so much trouble, so imperfectly and by so many skilful-clumsy physical devices, are there, in the subliminal, only a rarefied medium at once of separation and communication. So too is the subliminal soul in us open to the universal delight which the cosmic soul takes in its own existence and in the existence of the myriad souls that represent it and in the operations of mind, life and matter by which Nature lends herself to their play and development; but from this cosmic delight the surface soul is shut off by egoistic walls of great thickness which have indeed gates of penetration, but in their entry through them the touches of the divine cosmic Delight become dwarfed, distorted or have to come in masked as their own opposites.

It follows that in this surface or desire-soul there is no true soul-life, but a psychic deformation and wrong reception of the touch of things. The malady of the world is that the individual cannot find his real soul, and the root-cause of this malady is again that he cannot meet in his embrace of things outward

the real soul of the world in which he lives. He seeks to find there the essence of being, the essence of power, the essence of conscious-existence, the essence of delight, but receives instead a crowd of contradictory touches and impressions. If he could find that essence, he would find also the one universal being, power, conscious existence and delight even in this throng of touches and impressions; the contradictions of what seems would be reconciled in the unity and harmony of the Truth that reaches out to us in these contacts. At the same time he would find his own true soul and through it his self, because the true soul is his self's delegate and his self and the self of the world are one. But this he cannot do because of the egoistic ignorance in the mind of thought, the heart of emotion, the sense which responds to the touch of things not by a courageous and whole-hearted embrace of the world, but by a flux of reachings and shrinkings, cautious approaches or eager rushes and sullen or discontented or panic or angry recoils according as the touch pleases or displeases, comforts or alarms, satisfies or dissatisfies. It is the desire-soul that by its wrong reception of life becomes the cause of a triple misinterpretation of the *rasa*, the delight in things, so that, instead of figuring the pure essential joy of being, it comes rendered unequally into the three terms of pleasure, pain and indifference.

We have seen, when we considered the Delight of Existence in its relations to the world, that there is no absoluteness or essential validity in our standards of pleasure and pain and indifference, that they are entirely determined by the subjectivity of the receiving consciousness and that the degree of either pleasure and pain can be heightened to a maximum or depressed to a minimum or even effaced entirely in its apparent nature. Pleasure can become pain or pain pleasure because in their secret reality they are the same thing differently reproduced in the sensations and emotions. Indifference is either the inattention of the surface desire-soul in its mind, sensations, emotions and cravings to the *rasa* of things, or its incapacity to receive and respond to it, or its refusal to give any surface response or, again, its driving and crushing down of the pleasure or the pain by the will into the

neutral tint of unacceptance. In all these cases what happens is that either there is a positive refusal or a negative unreadiness or incapacity to render or in any way represent positively on the surface something that is yet subliminally active.

For, as we now know by psychological observation and experiment that the subliminal mind receives and remembers all those touches of things which the surface mind ignores, so also we shall find that the subliminal soul responds to the *rasa*, or essence in experience, of these things which the surface desire-soul rejects by distaste and refusal or ignores by neutral unacceptance. Self-knowledge is impossible unless we go behind our surface existence, which is a mere result of selective outer experiences, an imperfect sounding-board or a hasty, incompetent and fragmentary translation of a little out of the much that we are,— unless we go behind this and send down our plummet into the subconscious and open ourself to the superconscious so as to know their relation to our surface being. For between these three things our existence moves and finds in them its totality. The superconscious in us is one with the self and soul of the world and is not governed by any phenomenal diversity; it possesses therefore the truth of things and the delight of things in their plenitude. The subconscious, so called,⁶ in that luminous head of itself which we call the subliminal, is, on the contrary, not a true possessor but an instrument of experience; it is not practically one with the soul and self of the world, but it is open to it through its world-experience. The subliminal soul is conscious inwardly of the *rasa* of things and has an equal delight in all contacts; it is conscious also of the values and standards of the surface desire-soul and receives on its own surface corresponding touches of pleasure, pain and indifference, but takes an equal delight in all. In other words, our real soul within takes joy of all its experiences, gathers from them strength, pleasure and knowledge, grows by them in its store and its plenty. It is this

⁶ The real subconscious is a nether diminished consciousness close to the Inconscient; the subliminal is a consciousness larger than our surface existence. But both belong to the inner realm of our being of which our surface is unaware, so both are jumbled together in our common conception and parlance.

real soul in us which compels the shrinking desire-mind to bear and even to seek and find a pleasure in what is painful to it, to reject what is pleasant to it, to modify or even reverse its values, to equalise things in indifference or to equalise them in joy, the joy of the variety of existence. And this it does because it is impelled by the universal to develop itself by all kinds of experience so as to grow in Nature. Otherwise, if we lived only by the surface desire-soul, we could no more change or advance than the plant or stone in whose immobility or in whose routine of existence, because life is not superficially conscious, the secret soul of things has as yet no instrument by which it can rescue the life out of the fixed and narrow gamut into which it is born. The desire-soul left to itself would circle in the same grooves for ever.

In the view of old philosophies pleasure and pain are inseparable like intellectual truth and falsehood and power and incapacity and birth and death; therefore the only possible escape from them would be a total indifference, a blank response to the excitations of the world-self. But a subtler psychological knowledge shows us that this view which is based on the surface facts of existence only, does not really exhaust the possibilities of the problem. It is possible by bringing the real soul to the surface to replace the egoistic standards of pleasure and pain by an equal, an all-embracing personal-impersonal delight. The lover of Nature does this when he takes joy in all the things of Nature universally without admitting repulsion or fear or mere liking and disliking, perceiving beauty in that which seems to others mean and insignificant, bare and savage, terrible and repellent. The artist and the poet do it when they seek the *rasa* of the universal from the aesthetic emotion or from the physical line or from the mental form of beauty or from the inner sense and power alike of that from which the ordinary man turns away and of that to which he is attached by a sense of pleasure. The seeker of knowledge, the God-lover who finds the object of his love everywhere, the spiritual man, the intellectual, the sensuous, the aesthetic all do this in their own fashion and must do it if they would find embracingly the Knowledge, the Beauty, the Joy

or the Divinity which they seek. It is only in the parts where the little ego is usually too strong for us, it is only in our emotional or physical joy and suffering, our pleasure and pain of life, before which the desire-soul in us is utterly weak and cowardly, that the application of the divine principle becomes supremely difficult and seems to many impossible or even monstrous and repellent. Here the ignorance of the ego shrinks from the principle of impersonality which it yet applies without too much difficulty in Science, in Art and even in a certain kind of imperfect spiritual living because there the rule of impersonality does not attack those desires cherished by the surface soul and those values of desire fixed by the surface mind in which our outward life is most vitally interested. In the freer and higher movements there is demanded of us only a limited and specialised equality and impersonality proper to a particular field of consciousness and activity while the egoistic basis of our practical life remains to us; in the lower movements the whole foundation of our life has to be changed in order to make room for impersonality, and this the desire-soul finds impossible.

The true soul secret in us — subliminal, we have said, but the word is misleading, for this presence is not situated below the threshold of waking mind, but rather burns in the temple of the inmost heart behind the thick screen of an ignorant mind, life and body, not subliminal but behind the veil, — this veiled psychic entity is the flame of the Godhead always alight within us, inextinguishable even by that dense unconsciousness of any spiritual self within which obscures our outward nature. It is a flame born out of the Divine and, luminous inhabitant of the Ignorance, grows in it till it is able to turn it towards the Knowledge. It is the concealed Witness and Control, the hidden Guide, the Daemon of Socrates, the inner light or inner voice of the mystic. It is that which endures and is imperishable in us from birth to birth, untouched by death, decay or corruption, an indestructible spark of the Divine. Not the unborn Self or Atman, for the Self even in presiding over the existence of the individual is aware always of its universality and transcendence, it is yet its deputy in the forms of Nature, the individual soul,

caitya puruṣa, supporting mind, life and body, standing behind the mental, the vital, the subtle-physical being in us and watching and profiting by their development and experience. These other person-powers in man, these beings of his being, are also veiled in their true entity, but they put forward temporary personalities which compose our outer individuality and whose combined superficial action and appearance of status we call ourselves: this inmost entity also, taking form in us as the psychic Person, puts forward a psychic personality which changes, grows, develops from life to life; for this is the traveller between birth and death and between death and birth, our nature parts are only its manifold and changing vesture. The psychic being can at first exercise only a concealed and partial and indirect action through the mind, the life and the body, since it is these parts of Nature that have to be developed as its instruments of self-expression, and it is long confined by their evolution. Missioned to lead man in the Ignorance towards the light of the Divine Consciousness, it takes the essence of all experience in the Ignorance to form a nucleus of soul-growth in the nature; the rest it turns into material for the future growth of the instruments which it has to use until they are ready to be a luminous instrumentation of the Divine. It is this secret psychic entity which is the true original Conscience in us deeper than the constructed and conventional conscience of the moralist, for it is this which points always towards Truth and Right and Beauty, towards Love and Harmony and all that is a divine possibility in us, and persists till these things become the major need of our nature. It is the psychic personality in us that flowers as the saint, the sage, the seer; when it reaches its full strength, it turns the being towards the Knowledge of Self and the Divine, towards the supreme Truth, the supreme Good, the supreme Beauty, Love and Bliss, the divine heights and largenesses, and opens us to the touch of spiritual sympathy, universality, oneness. On the contrary, where the psychic personality is weak, crude or ill-developed, the finer parts and movements in us are lacking or poor in character and power, even though the mind may be forceful and brilliant, the heart of vital emotions hard and strong and masterful, the

life-force dominant and successful, the bodily existence rich and fortunate and an apparent lord and victor. It is then the outer desire-soul, the pseudo-psychic entity, that reigns and we mistake its misinterpretations of psychic suggestion and aspiration, its ideas and ideals, its desires and yearnings for true soul-stuff and wealth of spiritual experience.⁷ If the secret psychic Person can come forward into the front and, replacing the desire-soul, govern overtly and entirely and not only partially and from behind the veil this outer nature of mind, life and body, then these can be cast into soul images of what is true, right and beautiful and in the end the whole nature can be turned towards the real aim of life, the supreme victory, the ascent into spiritual existence.

But it might seem then that by bringing this psychic entity, this true soul in us, into the front and giving it there the lead and rule we shall gain all the fulfilment of our natural being that we can seek for and open also the gates of the kingdom of the Spirit. And it might well be reasoned that there is no need for any intervention of a superior Truth-Consciousness or principle of Supermind to help us to attain to the divine status or the divine perfection. Yet, although the psychic transformation is one necessary condition of the total transformation of our existence, it is not all that is needed for the largest spiritual change. In the first place, since this is the individual soul in Nature, it can open to the hidden diviner ranges of our being and receive and reflect their light and power and experience, but another, a spiritual transformation from above is needed for us to possess our self in its universality and transcendence. By itself

⁷ The word "psychic" in our ordinary parlance is more often used in reference to this desire-soul than to the true psychic. It is used still more loosely of psychological and other phenomena of an abnormal or supernormal character which are really connected with the inner mind, inner vital, subtle physical being subliminal in us and are not at all direct operations of the psyche. Even such phenomena as materialisation and dematerialisation are included, though, if established, they evidently are not soul-action and would not shed any light upon the nature or existence of the psychic entity, but would rather be an abnormal action of an occult subtle physical energy intervening in the ordinary status of the gross body of things, reducing it to its own subtle condition and again reconstituting it in the terms of gross matter.

the psychic being at a certain stage might be content to create a formation of truth, good and beauty and make that its station; at a farther stage it might become passively subject to the world-self, a mirror of the universal existence, consciousness, power, delight, but not their full participant or possessor. Although more nearly and thrillingly united to the cosmic consciousness in knowledge, emotion and even appreciation through the senses, it might become purely recipient and passive, remote from mastery and action in the world; or, one with the static self behind the cosmos, but separate inwardly from the world-movement, losing its individuality in its Source, it might return to that Source and have neither the will nor the power any further for that which was its ultimate mission here, to lead the nature also towards its divine realisation. For the psychic being came into Nature from the Self, the Divine, and it can turn back from Nature to the silent Divine through the silence of the Self and a supreme spiritual immobility. Again, an eternal portion of the Divine,⁸ this part is by the law of the Infinite inseparable from its Divine Whole, this part is indeed itself that Whole, except in its frontal appearance, its frontal separative self-experience; it may awaken to that reality and plunge into it to the apparent extinction or at least the merging of the individual existence. A small nucleus here in the mass of our ignorant Nature, so that it is described in the Upanishad as no bigger than a man's thumb, it can by the spiritual influx enlarge itself and embrace the whole world with the heart and mind in an intimate communion or oneness. Or it may become aware of its eternal Companion and elect to live for ever in His presence, in an imperishable union and oneness as the eternal lover with the eternal Beloved, which of all spiritual experiences is the most intense in beauty and rapture. All these are great and splendid achievements of our spiritual self-finding, but they are not necessarily the last end and entire consummation; more is possible.

For these are achievements of the spiritual mind in man; they are movements of that mind passing beyond itself, but on

⁸ *Gita*, XV. 7.

its own plane, into the splendours of the Spirit. Mind, even at its highest stages far beyond our present mentality, acts yet in its nature by division; it takes the aspects of the Eternal and treats each aspect as if it were the whole truth of the Eternal Being and can find in each its own perfect fulfilment. Even it erects them into opposites and creates a whole range of these opposites, the Silence of the Divine and the divine Dynamis, the immobile Brahman aloof from existence, without qualities, and the active Brahman with qualities, Lord of existence, Being and Becoming, the Divine Person and an impersonal pure Existence; it can then cut itself away from the one and plunge itself into the other as the sole abiding Truth of existence. It can regard the Person as the sole Reality or the Impersonal as alone true; it can regard the Lover as only a means of expression of eternal Love or love as only the self-expression of the Lover; it can see beings as only personal powers of an impersonal Existence or impersonal existence as only a state of the one Being, the Infinite Person. Its spiritual achievement, its road of passage towards the supreme aim will follow these dividing lines. But beyond this movement of spiritual Mind is the higher experience of the supermind Truth-Consciousness; there these opposites disappear and these partialities are relinquished in the rich totality of a supreme and integral realisation of eternal Being. It is this that is the aim we have conceived, the consummation of our existence here by an ascent to the supramental Truth-Consciousness and its descent into our nature. The psychic transformation after rising into the spiritual change has then to be completed, integralised, exceeded and uplifted by a supramental transformation which lifts it to the summit of the ascending endeavour.

Even as between the other divided and opposed terms of manifested Being, so also a supramental consciousness-energy could alone establish a perfect harmony between these two terms—apparently opposite only because of the Ignorance—of spirit status and world dynamism in our embodied existence. In the Ignorance Nature centres the order of her psychological movements, not around the secret spiritual self, but around its substitute, the ego-principle: a certain ego-centrism is the basis

on which we bind together our experiences and relations in the midst of the complex contacts, contradictions, dualities, incoherences of the world in which we live; this ego-centrism is our rock of safety against the cosmic and the infinite, our defence. But in our spiritual change we have to forego this defence; ego has to vanish, the person finds itself dissolved into a vast impersonality, and in this impersonality there is at first no key to an ordered dynamism of action. A very usual result is that one is divided into two parts of being, the spiritual within, the natural without; in one there is the divine realisation seated in a perfect inner freedom, but the natural part goes on with the old action of Nature, continues by a mechanical movement of past energies her already transmitted impulse. Even, if there is an entire dissolution of the limited person and the old ego-centric order, the outer nature may become the field of an apparent incoherence, although all within is luminous with the Self. Thus we become outwardly inert and inactive, moved by circumstance or forces but not self-mobile,⁹ even though the consciousness is enlightened within, or as a child though within is a plenary self-knowledge,¹⁰ or as one inconsequent in thought and impulse though within is an utter calm and serenity,¹¹ or as the wild and disordered soul though inwardly there is the purity and poise of the Spirit.¹² Or if there is an ordered dynamism in the outward nature, it may be a continuation of superficial ego-action witnessed but not accepted by the inner being, or a mental dynamism that cannot be perfectly expressive of the inner spiritual realisation; for there is no equipollence between action of mind and status of spirit. Even at the best where there is an intuitive guidance of Light from within, the nature of its expression in dynamism of action must be marked with the imperfections of mind, life and body, a King with incapable ministers, a Knowledge expressed in the values of the Ignorance. Only the descent of the Supermind with its perfect unity of Truth-Knowledge and Truth-Will can establish in the outer as

⁹ *jadavat.*

¹⁰ *bālavat.*

¹¹ *unmattavat.*

¹² *pīśācavat.*

in the inner existence the harmony of the Spirit; for it alone can turn the values of the Ignorance entirely into the values of the Knowledge.

In the fulfilment of our psychic being as in the consummation of our parts of mind and life, it is the relating of it to its divine source, to its correspondent truth in the Supreme Reality, that is the indispensable movement; and, here too as there, it is by the power of the Supermind that it can be done with an integral completeness, an intimacy that becomes an authentic identity; for it is the Supermind which links the higher and the lower hemispheres of the One Existence. In Supermind is the integrating Light, the consummating Force, the wide entry into the supreme Ananda: the psychic being uplifted by that Light and Force can unite itself with the original Delight of existence from which it came: overcoming the dualities of pain and pleasure, delivering from all fear and shrinking the mind, life and body, it can recast the contacts of existence in the world into terms of the Divine Ananda.

Chapter XXIV

Matter

He arrived at the knowledge that Matter is Brahman.

*Taittiriya Upanishad.*¹

WE HAVE now the rational assurance that Life is neither an inexplicable dream nor an impossible evil that has yet become a dolorous fact, but a mighty pulsation of the divine All-Existence. We see something of its foundation and its principle, we look upward to its high potentiality and ultimate divine out-flowering. But there is one principle below all the others which we have not yet sufficiently considered, the principle of Matter upon which Life stands as upon a pedestal or out of which it evolves like the form of a many-branching tree out of its encasing seed. The mind, life and body of man depend upon this physical principle, and if the out-flowering of Life is the result of Consciousness emerging into Mind, expanding, elevating itself in search of its own truth in the largeness of the supramental existence, yet it seems also to be conditioned by this case of body and by this foundation of Matter. The importance of the body is obvious; it is because he has developed or been given a body and brain capable of receiving and serving a progressive mental illumination that man has risen above the animal. Equally, it can only be by developing a body or at least a functioning of the physical instrument capable of receiving and serving a still higher illumination that he will rise above himself and realise, not merely in thought and in his internal being but in life, a perfectly divine manhood. Otherwise either the promise of Life is cancelled, its meaning annulled and earthly being can only realise Sachchidananda by abolishing itself, by shedding

¹ III. 2.

from it mind, life and body and returning to the pure Infinite, or else man is not the divine instrument, there is a destined limit to the consciously progressive power which distinguishes him from all other terrestrial existences and, as he has replaced them in the front of things, so another must eventually replace him and assume his heritage.

It seems indeed that the body is from the beginning the soul's great difficulty, its continual stumbling-block and rock of offence. Therefore the eager seeker of spiritual fulfilment has hurled his ban against the body and his world-disgust selects this world-principle above all other things as an especial object of loathing. The body is the obscure burden that he cannot bear; its obstinate material grossness is the obsession that drives him for deliverance to the life of the ascetic. To get rid of it he has even gone so far as to deny its existence and the reality of the material universe. Most of the religions have put their curse upon Matter and have made the refusal or the resigned temporary endurance of the physical life the test of religious truth and of spirituality. The older creeds, more patient, more broodingly profound, not touched with the torture and the feverish impatience of the soul under the burden of the Iron Age, did not make this formidable division; they acknowledged Earth the Mother and Heaven the Father and accorded to them an equal love and reverence; but their ancient mysteries are obscure and unfathomable to our gaze who, whether our view of things be materialistic or spiritual, are alike content to cut the Gordian knot of the problem of existence with one decisive blow and to accept an escape into an eternal bliss or an end in an eternal annihilation or an eternal quietude.

The quarrel does not really commence with our awakening to our spiritual possibilities; it begins from the appearance of life itself and its struggle to establish its activities and its permanent aggregations of living form against the force of inertia, against the force of unconsciousness, against the force of atomic disaggregation which are in the material principle the knot of the great Denial. Life is at constant war with Matter and the battle seems always to end in the apparent defeat of Life and in that collapse downward to the material principle which we call death. The

discord deepens with the appearance of Mind; for Mind has its own quarrel with both Life and Matter: it is at constant war with their limitations, in constant subjection to and revolt against the grossness and inertia of the one and the passions and sufferings of the other; and the battle seems to turn eventually, though not very surely, towards a partial and costly victory for the Mind in which it conquers, represses or even slays the vital cravings, impairs the physical force and disturbs the balance of the body in the interests of a greater mental activity and a higher moral being. It is in this struggle that the impatience of Life, the disgust of the body and the recoil from both towards a pure mental and moral existence take their rise. When man awakens to an existence beyond Mind, he carries yet farther this principle of discord. Mind, Body and Life are condemned as the trinity of the world, the flesh and the devil. Mind too is banned as the source of all our malady; war is declared between the spirit and its instruments and the victory of the spiritual Inhabitant is sought for in an evasion from its narrow residence, a rejection of mind, life and body and a withdrawal into its own infinitudes. The world is a discord and we shall best solve its perplexities by carrying the principle of discord itself to its extreme possibility, a cutting away and a final severance.

But these defeats and victories are only apparent, this solution is not a solution but an escape from the problem. Life is not really defeated by Matter; it makes a compromise by using death for the continuance of life. Mind is not really victorious over Life and Matter, but has only achieved an imperfect development of some of its potentialities at the cost of others which are bound up with the unrealised or rejected possibilities of its better use of life and body. The individual soul has not conquered the lower triplicity, but only rejected their claim upon it and fled from the work which spirit had undertaken when it first cast itself into form of universe. The problem continues because the labour of the Divine in the universe continues, but without any satisfying solution of the problem or any victorious accomplishment of the labour. Therefore, since our own standpoint is that Sachchidananda is the beginning and the middle and the end and

that struggle and discord cannot be eternal and fundamental principles in His being but by their very existence imply labour towards a perfect solution and a complete victory, we must seek that solution in a real victory of Life over Matter through the free and perfect use of body by Life, in a real victory of Mind over Life and Matter through a free and perfect use of life-force and form by Mind and in a real victory of Spirit over the triplexity through a free and perfect occupation of mind, life and body by conscious spirit; in the view we have worked out this last conquest can alone make the others really possible. To the end, then, that we may see how these conquests can be at all or wholly possible, we must find out the reality of Matter just as, seeking the fundamental knowledge, we have found out the reality of Mind and Soul and Life.

In a certain sense Matter is unreal and non-existent; that is to say, our present knowledge, idea and experience of Matter is not its truth, but merely a phenomenon of particular relation between our senses and the all-existence in which we move. When Science discovers that Matter resolves itself into forms of Energy, it has hold of a universal and fundamental truth; and when philosophy discovers that Matter only exists as substantial appearance to the consciousness and that the one reality is Spirit or pure conscious Being, it has hold of a greater and completer, a still more fundamental truth. But still the question remains why Energy should take the form of Matter and not of mere force-currents or why that which is really Spirit should admit the phenomenon of Matter and not rest in states, velleities and joys of the spirit. This, it is said, is the work of Mind or else, since evidently Thought does not directly create or even perceive the material form of things, it is the work of Sense; the sense-mind creates the forms which it seems to perceive and the thought-mind works upon the forms which the sense-mind presents to it. But, evidently, the individual embodied mind is not the creator of the phenomenon of Matter; earth-existence cannot be the result of the human mind which is itself the result of earth-existence. If we say that the world exists only in our own minds, we express a non-fact and a confusion; for the material world

existed before man was upon the earth and it will go on existing if man disappears from the earth or even if our individual mind abolishes itself in the Infinite. We must conclude then that there is a universal Mind, subconscious to us in the form of the universe or superconscious in its spirit, which has created that form for its habitation. And since the creator must have preceded and must exceed its creation, this really implies a superconscious Mind which by the instrumentality of a universal sense creates² in itself the relation of form with form and constitutes the rhythm of the material universe. But this also is no complete solution; it tells us that Matter is a creation of Consciousness, but it does not explain how Consciousness came to create Matter as the basis of its cosmic workings.

We shall understand better if we go back at once to the original principle of things. Existence is in its activity a Conscious-Force which presents the workings of its force to its consciousness as forms of its own being. Since Force is only the action of one sole-existing Conscious-Being, its results can be nothing else but forms of that Conscious-Being; Substance or Matter, then, is only a form of Spirit. The appearance which this form of Spirit assumes to our senses is due to that dividing action of Mind from which we have been able to deduce consistently the whole phenomenon of the universe. We know now that Life is an action of Conscious-Force of which material forms are the result; Life involved in those forms, appearing in them first as inconscient force, evolves and brings back into manifestation as Mind the consciousness which is the real self of the force and which never ceased to exist in it even when unmanifest. We know also that Mind is an inferior power of the original conscious Knowledge or Supermind, a power to which Life acts as an instrumental

² Mind, as we know it, creates only in a relative and instrumental sense; it has an unlimited power of combination, but its creative motives and forms come to it from above: all created forms have their base in the Infinite above Mind, Life and Matter and are here represented, reconstructed — very usually misconstrued — from the infinitesimal. Their foundation is above, their branchings downward, says the Rig Veda. The superconscious Mind of which we speak might rather be called an Overmind and inhabits in the hierarchical order of the powers of the Spirit, a zone directly dependent on the supramental consciousness.

energy; for, descending through Supermind, Consciousness or Chit represents itself as Mind, Force of consciousness or Tapas represents itself as Life. Mind, by its separation from its own higher reality in Supermind, gives Life the appearance of division and, by its farther involution in its own Life-Force, becomes subconscious in Life and thus gives the outward appearance of an inconscient force to its material workings. Therefore, the inconscience, the inertia, the atomic disaggregation of Matter must have their source in this all-dividing and self-involving action of Mind by which our universe came into being. As Mind is only a final action of Supermind in the descent towards creation and Life an action of Conscious-Force working in the conditions of the Ignorance created by this descent of Mind, so Matter, as we know it, is only the final form taken by conscious-being as the result of that working. Matter is substance of the one conscious-being phenomenally divided within itself by the action of a universal Mind,³ — a division which the individual mind repeats and dwells in, but which does not abrogate or at all diminish the unity of Spirit or the unity of Energy or the real unity of Matter.

But why this phenomenal and pragmatic division of an indivisible Existence? It is because Mind has to carry the principle of multiplicity to its extreme potential which can only be done by separateness and division. To do that it must, precipitating itself into Life to create forms for the Multiple, give to the universal principle of Being the appearance of a gross and material substance instead of a pure or subtle substance. It must, that is to say, give it the appearance of substance which offers itself to the contact of Mind as stable thing or object in an abiding multiplicity of objects and not of substance which offers itself to the contact of pure consciousness as something of its own eternal pure existence and reality or to subtle sense as a principle of plastic form freely expressive of the conscious being. The contact of mind with its objects creates what we

³ Mind is here used in its widest sense including the operation of an Overmind power which is nearest to the supramental Truth-Consciousness and which is the first fountain of the creation of the Ignorance.

call sense, but here it has to be an obscure externalised sense which must be assured of the reality of what it contacts. The descent of pure substance into material substance follows, then, inevitably on the descent of Sachchidananda through supermind into mind and life. It is a necessary result of the will to make multiplicity of being and an awareness of things from separate centres of consciousness the first method of this lower experience of existence. If we go back to the spiritual basis of things, substance in its utter purity resolves itself into pure conscious being, self-existent, inherently self-aware by identity, but not yet turning its consciousness upon itself as object. Supermind preserves this self-awareness by identity as its substance of self-knowledge and its light of self-creation, but for that creation presents Being to itself as the subject-object one and multiple of its own active consciousness. Being as object is held there in a supreme knowledge which can, by comprehension, see it both as an object of cognition within itself and subjectively as itself, but can also and simultaneously, by apprehension, project it as an object (or objects) of cognition within the circumference of its consciousness, not other than itself, part of its being, but a part (or parts) put away from itself,—that is to say, from the centre of vision in which Being concentrates itself as the Knower, Witness or Purusha. We have seen that from this apprehending consciousness arises the movement of Mind, the movement by which the individual knower regards a form of his own universal being as if other than he; but in the divine Mind there is immediately or rather simultaneously another movement or reverse side of the same movement, an act of union in being which heals this phenomenal division and prevents it from becoming even for a moment solely real to the knower. This act of conscious union is that which is represented otherwise in dividing Mind obtusely, ignorantly, quite externally as contact in consciousness between divided beings and separate objects, and with us this contact in divided consciousness is primarily represented by the principle of sense. On this basis of sense, on this contact of union subject to division, the action of the thought-mind finds itself and prepares for the return to a higher principle of union in which

division is made subject to unity and subordinate. Substance, then, as we know it, material substance, is the form in which Mind acting through sense contacts the conscious Being of which it is itself a movement of knowledge.

But Mind by its very nature tends to know and sense substance of conscious-being, not in its unity or totality but by the principle of division. It sees it, as it were, in infinitesimal points which it associates together in order to arrive at a totality, and into these view-points and associations cosmic Mind throws itself and dwells in them. So dwelling, creative by its inherent force as the agent of Real-Idea, bound by its own nature to convert all its perceptions into energy of life, as the All-Existent converts all His self-aspectings into various energy of His creative Force of consciousness, cosmic Mind turns these, its multiple viewpoints of universal existence, into standpoints of universal Life; it turns them in Matter into forms of atomic being instinct with the life that forms them and governed by the mind and will that actuate the formation. At the same time, the atomic existences which it thus forms must by the very law of their being tend to associate themselves, to aggregate; and each of these aggregates also, instinct with the hidden life that forms and the hidden mind and will that actuate them, bears with it a fiction of a separated individual existence. Each such individual object or existence is supported, according as the mind in it is implicit or explicit, unmanifest or manifest, by its mechanical ego of force, in which the will-to-be is dumb and imprisoned but none the less powerful, or by its self-aware mental ego in which the will-to-be is liberated, conscious, separately active.

Thus not any eternal and original law of eternal and original Matter, but the nature of the action of cosmic Mind is the cause of atomic existence. Matter is a creation, and for its creation the infinitesimal, an extreme fragmentation of the Infinite, was needed as the starting-point or basis. Ether may and does exist as an intangible, almost spiritual support of Matter, but as a phenomenon it does not seem, to our present knowledge at least, to be materially detectable. Subdivide the visible aggregate or the formal atom into essential atoms, break it up into the most

infinitesimal dust of being, we shall still, because of the nature of the Mind and Life that formed them, arrive at some utmost atomic existence, unstable perhaps but always reconstituting itself in the eternal flux of force, phenomenally, and not at a mere unatomic extension incapable of contents. Unatomic extension of substance, extension which is not an aggregation, coexistence otherwise than by distribution in space are realities of pure existence, pure substance; they are a knowledge of supermind and a principle of its dynamism, not a creative concept of the dividing Mind, though Mind can become aware of them behind its workings. They are the reality underlying Matter, but not the phenomenon which we call Matter. Mind, Life, Matter itself can be one with that pure existence and conscious extension in their static reality, but not operate by that oneness in their dynamic action, self-perception and self-formation.

Therefore we arrive at this truth of Matter that there is a conceptive self-extension of being which works itself out in the universe as substance or object of consciousness and which cosmic Mind and Life in their creative action represent through atomic division and aggregation as the thing we call Matter. But this Matter, like Mind and Life, is still Being or Brahman in its selfcreative action. It is a form of the force of conscious Being, a form given by Mind and realised by Life. It holds within it as its own reality consciousness concealed from itself, involved and absorbed in the result of its own self-formation and therefore self-oblivious. And, however brute and void of sense it seems to us, it is yet, to the secret experience of the consciousness hidden within it, delight of being offering itself to this secret consciousness as object of sensation in order to tempt that hidden godhead out of its secrecy. Being manifest as substance, force of Being cast into form, into a figured self-representation of the secret self-consciousness, delight offering itself to its own consciousness as an object,—what is this but Sachchidananda? Matter is Sachchidananda represented to His own mental experience as a formal basis of objective knowledge, action and delight of existence.

Chapter XXV

The Knot of Matter

I cannot travel to the Truth of the luminous Lord by force or by the duality. . . . Who are they that protect the foundation of the falsehood? Who are the guardians of the unreal word?

Then existence was not nor non-existence, the mid-world was not nor the Ether nor what is beyond. What covered all? where was it? in whose refuge? what was that ocean dense and deep? Death was not nor immortality nor the knowledge of day and night. That One lived without breath by his self-law, there was nothing else nor aught beyond it. In the beginning Darkness was hidden by darkness, all this was an ocean of in conscience. When universal being was concealed by fragmentation, then by the greatness of its energy That One was born. That moved at first as desire within, which was the primal seed of mind. The seers of Truth discovered the building of being in non-being by will in the heart and by the thought; their ray was extended horizontally; but what was there below, what was there above? There were Casters of the seed, there were Greatnesses; there was self-law below, there was Will above.

*Rig Veda.*¹

IF THEN the conclusion at which we have arrived is correct,—and there is no other possible on the data upon which we are working,—the sharp division which practical experience and long habit of mind have created between Spirit and Matter has no longer any fundamental reality. The world is a differentiated unity, a manifold oneness, not a constant attempt at compromise between eternal dissonances, not an everlasting

¹ V. 12. 2, 4; X. 129. 1-5.

struggle between irreconcilable opposites. An inalienable one-ness generating infinite variety is its foundation and beginning; a constant reconciliation behind apparent division and struggle combining all possible disparities for vast ends in a secret Consciousness and Will which is ever one and master of all its own complex action, appears to be its real character in the middle; we must assume therefore that a fulfilment of the emerging Will and Consciousness and a triumphant harmony must be its conclusion. Substance is the form of itself on which it works, and of that substance if Matter is one end, Spirit is the other. The two are one: Spirit is the soul and reality of that which we sense as Matter; Matter is a form and body of that which we realise as Spirit.

Certainly, there is a vast practical difference and on that difference the whole indivisible series and ever-ascending degrees of the world-existence are founded. Substance, we have said, is conscious existence presenting itself to the sense as object so that, on the basis of whatever sense-relation is established, the work of world-formation and cosmic progression may proceed. But there need not be only one basis, only one fundamental principle of relation immutably created between sense and substance; on the contrary, there is an ascending and developing series. We are aware of another substance in which pure mind works as its natural medium and which is far subtler, more flexible, more plastic than anything that our physical sense can conceive of as Matter. We can speak of a substance of mind because we become aware of a subtler medium in which forms arise and action takes place; we can speak also of a substance of pure dynamic life-energy other than the subtlest forms of material substance and its physically sensible force-currents. Spirit itself is pure substance of being presenting itself as an object no longer to physical, vital or mental sense, but to a light of a pure spiritual perceptive knowledge in which the subject becomes its own object, that is to say, in which the Timeless and Spaceless is aware of itself in a pure spiritually self-conceptive self-extension as the basis and primal material of all existence. Beyond this foundation is the disappearance of all conscious differentiation between subject

and object in an absolute identity, and there we can no longer speak of Substance.

Therefore it is a purely conceptional—a spiritually, not a mentally conceptional difference ending in a practical distinction, which creates the series descending from Spirit through Mind to Matter and ascending again from Matter through Mind to Spirit. But the real oneness is never abrogated, and, when we get back to the original and integral view of things, we see that it is never even truly diminished or impaired, not even in the grossest densities of Matter. Brahman is not only the cause and supporting power and indwelling principle of the universe, he is also its material and its sole material. Matter also is Brahman and it is nothing other than or different from Brahman. If indeed Matter were cut off from Spirit, this would not be so; but it is, as we have seen, only a final form and objective aspect of the divine Existence with all of God ever present in it and behind it. As this apparently brute and inert Matter is everywhere and always instinct with a mighty dynamic force of Life, as this dynamic but apparently unconscious Life secretes within it an ever-working unapparent Mind of whose secret dealings it is the overt energy, as this ignorant, unillumined and groping Mind in the living body is supported and sovereignly guided by its own real self, the Supermind, which is there equally in unmentalised Matter, so all Matter as well as all Life, Mind and Supermind are only modes of the Brahman, the Eternal, the Spirit, Sachchidananda, who not only dwells in them all, but is all these things though no one of them is His absolute being.

But still there is this conceptional difference and practical distinction, and in that, even if Matter is not really cut off from Spirit, yet it seems with such a practical definiteness to be so cut off, it is so different, even so contrary in its law, the material life seems so much to be the negation of all spiritual existence that its rejection might well appear to be the one short cut out of the difficulty,—as undoubtedly it is; but a short cut or any cut is no solution. Still, there, in Matter undoubtedly lies the crux; that raises the obstacle: for because of Matter Life is gross and limited and stricken with death and pain, because of

Matter Mind is more than half blind, its wings clipped, its feet tied to a narrow perch and held back from the vastness and freedom above of which it is conscious. Therefore the exclusive spiritual seeker is justified from his view-point if, disgusted with the mud of Matter, revolted by the animal grossness of Life or impatient of the self-imprisoned narrowness and downward vision of Mind, he determines to break from it all and return by inaction and silence to the Spirit's immobile liberty. But that is not the sole view-point, nor, because it has been sublimely held or glorified by shining and golden examples, need we consider it the integral and ultimate wisdom. Rather, liberating ourselves from all passion and revolt, let us see what this divine order of the universe means, and, as for this great knot and tangle of Matter denying the Spirit, let us seek to find out and separate its strands so as to loosen it by a solution and not cut through it by a violence. We must state the difficulty, the opposition first, entirely, trenchantly, with exaggeration, if need be, rather than with diminution, and then look for the issue.

First, then, the fundamental opposition Matter presents to Spirit is this that it is the culmination of the principle of Ignorance. Here Consciousness has lost and forgotten itself in a form of its works, as a man might forget in extreme absorption not only who he is but that he is at all and become momentarily only the work that is being done and the force that is doing it. The Spirit self-luminous, infinitely aware of itself behind all workings of force and their master, seems here to have disappeared and not to be at all; somewhere He is perhaps, but here He seems to have left only a brute and inconscient material Force which creates and destroys eternally without knowing itself or what it creates or why it creates at all or why it destroys what once it has created: it does not know, for it has no mind; it does not care, for it has no heart. And if that is not the real truth even of the material universe, if behind all this false phenomenon there is a Mind, a Will and something greater than Mind or mental Will, yet it is this dark semblance that the material universe itself presents as a truth to the consciousness which emerges in it out of its night; and if it be no truth but a lie, yet is it a most effective

lie, for it determines the conditions of our phenomenal existence and besieges all our aspiration and effort.

For this is the monstrous thing, the terrible and pitiless miracle of the material universe that out of this no-Mind a mind or, at least, minds emerge and find themselves struggling feebly for light, helpless individually, only less helpless when in self-defence they associate their individual feebleesses in the midst of the giant Ignorance which is the law of the universe. Out of this heartless Inconscience and within its rigorous jurisdiction hearts have been born and aspire and are tortured and bleed under the weight of the blind and insentient cruelty of this iron existence, a cruelty which lays its law upon them and becomes sentient in their sentience, brutal, ferocious, horrible. But what after all, behind appearances, is this seeming mystery? We can see that it is the Consciousness which had lost itself returning again to itself, emerging out of its giant self-forgetfulness, slowly, painfully, as a Life that is would-be sentient, half-sentient, dimly sentient, wholly sentient and finally struggles to be more than sentient, to be again divinely self-conscious, free, infinite, immortal. But it works towards this under a law that is the opposite of all these things, under the conditions of Matter, that is to say, against the grasp of the Ignorance. The movements it has to follow, the instruments it has to use are set and made for it by this brute and divided Matter and impose on it at every step ignorance and limitation.

For the second fundamental opposition that Matter offers to Spirit, is this that it is the culmination of bondage to mechanic Law and opposes to all that seeks to liberate itself a colossal Inertia. Not that Matter itself is inert; it is rather an infinite motion, an inconceivable force, a limitless action, whose grandiose movements are a subject for our constant admiration. But while Spirit is free, master of itself and its works, not bound by them, creator of law and not its subject, this giant Matter is rigidly chained by a fixed and mechanical Law which is imposed on it, which it does not understand nor has ever conceived but works out unconsciously as a machine works and knows not who created it, by what process or to what end. And when Life

awakes and seeks to impose itself on physical form and material force and to use all things at its own will and for its own need, when Mind awakes and seeks to know the who, the why, the how of itself and all things and above all to use its knowledge for the imposition of its own freer law and self-guiding action upon things, material Nature seems to yield, even to approve and aid, though after a struggle, reluctantly and only up to a certain point. But beyond that point it presents an obstinate inertia, obstruction, negation and even persuades Life and Mind that they cannot go farther, cannot pursue to the end their partial victory. Life strives to enlarge and prolong itself and succeeds; but when it seeks utter wideness and immortality, it meets the iron obstruction of Matter and finds itself bound to narrowness and death. Mind seeks to aid life and to fulfil its own impulse to embrace all knowledge, to become all light, to possess truth and be truth, to enforce love and joy and be love and joy; but always there is the deviation and error and grossness of the material life-instincts and the denial and obstruction of the material sense and the physical instruments. Error ever pursues its knowledge, darkness is inseparably the companion and background of its light; truth is successfully sought and yet, when grasped, it ceases to be truth and the quest has to continue; love is there but it cannot satisfy itself, joy is there but it cannot justify itself, and each of them drags as if its chain or casts as if its shadow its own opposites, anger and hatred and indifference, satiety and grief and pain. The inertia with which Matter responds to the demands of the Mind and Life, prevents the conquest of the Ignorance and of the brute Force that is the power of the Ignorance.

And when we seek to know why this is so, we see that the success of this inertia and obstruction is due to a third power of Matter; for the third fundamental opposition which Matter offers to Spirit is this that it is the culmination of the principle of division and struggle. Indivisible indeed in reality, divisibility is its whole basis of action from which it seems forbidden ever to depart; for its only two methods of union are either the aggregation of units or an assimilation which involves the

destruction of one unit by another; and both of these methods of union are a confession of eternal division, since even the first associates rather than unifies and by its very principle admits the constant possibility and therefore the ultimate necessity of dissociation, of dissolution. Both methods repose on death, one as a means, the other as a condition of life. And both presuppose as the condition of world-existence a constant struggle of the divided units with each other, each striving to maintain itself, to maintain its associations, to compel or destroy what resists it, to gather in and devour others as its food, but itself moved to revolt against and flee from compulsion, destruction and assimilation by devouring. When the vital principle manifests its activities in Matter, it finds there this basis only for all its activities and is compelled to bow itself to the yoke; it has to accept the law of death, desire and limitation and that constant struggle to devour, possess, dominate which we have seen to be the first aspect of Life. And when the mental principle manifests in Matter, it has to accept from the mould and material in which it works the same principle of limitation, of seeking without secure finding, the same constant association and dissociation of its gains and of the constituents of its works, so that the knowledge gained by man, the mental being, seems never to be final or free from doubt and denial and all his labour seems condemned to move in a rhythm of action and reaction and of making and unmaking, in cycles of creation and brief preservation and long destruction with no certain and assured progress.

Especially and most fatally, the ignorance, inertia and division of Matter impose on the vital and mental existence emerging in it the law of pain and suffering and the unrest of dissatisfaction with its status of division, inertia and ignorance. Ignorance would indeed bring no pain of dissatisfaction if the mental consciousness were entirely ignorant, if it could halt satisfied in some shell of custom, unaware of its own ignorance or of the infinite ocean of consciousness and knowledge by which it lives surrounded; but precisely it is to this that the emerging consciousness in Matter awakes, first, to its ignorance of the world in which it lives and which it has to know and master

in order to be happy, secondly, to the ultimate barrenness and limitation of this knowledge, to the meagreness and insecurity of the power and happiness it brings and to the awareness of an infinite consciousness, knowledge, true being in which alone is to be found a victorious and infinite happiness. Nor would the obstruction of inertia bring with it unrest and dissatisfaction if the vital sentience emerging in Matter were entirely inert, if it were kept satisfied with its own half-conscious limited existence, unaware of the infinite power and immortal existence in which it lives as part of and yet separated from it, or if it had nothing within driving it towards the effort really to participate in that infinity and immortality. But this is precisely what all life is driven to feel and seek from the first, its insecurity and the need and struggle for persistence, for self-preservation; it awakes in the end to the limitation of its existence and begins to feel the impulsion towards largeness and persistence, towards the infinite and the eternal.

And when in man life becomes wholly self-conscious, this unavoidable struggle and effort and aspiration reach their acme and the pain and discord of the world become finally too keenly sensible to be borne with contentment. Man may for a long time quiet himself by seeking to be satisfied with his limitations or by confining his struggle to such mastery as he can gain over this material world he inhabits, some mental and physical triumph of his progressive knowledge over its inconscient fixities, of his small, concentrated conscious will and power over its inertly-driven monstrous forces. But here, too, he finds the limitation, the poor inconclusiveness of the greatest results he can achieve and is obliged to look beyond. The finite cannot remain permanently satisfied so long as it is conscious either of a finite greater than itself or of an infinite beyond itself to which it can yet aspire. And if the finite could be so satisfied, yet the apparently finite being who feels himself to be really an infinite or feels merely the presence or the impulse and stirring of an infinite within, can never be satisfied till these two are reconciled, till That is possessed by him and he is possessed by it in whatever degree or manner. Man is such a finite-seeming infinity and cannot fail

to arrive at a seeking after the Infinite. He is the first son of earth who becomes vaguely aware of God within him, of his immortality or of his need of immortality, and the knowledge is a whip that drives and a cross of crucifixion until he is able to turn it into a source of infinite light and joy and power.

This progressive development, this growing manifestation of the divine Consciousness and Force, Knowledge and Will that had lost itself in the ignorance and inertia of Matter, might well be a happy efflorescence proceeding from joy to greater and at last to infinite joy if it were not for the principle of rigid division from which Matter has started. The shutting up of the individual in his own personal consciousness of separate and limited mind, life and body prevents what would otherwise be the natural law of our development. It brings into the body the law of attraction and repulsion, of defence and attack, of discord and pain. For each body being a limited conscious-force feels itself exposed to the attack, impact, forceful contact of other such limited conscious-forces or of universal forces and, where it feels itself broken in upon or unable to harmonise the contacting and the recipient consciousness, it suffers discomfort and pain, is attracted or repelled, has to defend itself or to assail; it is constantly called upon to undergo what it is unwilling or unable to suffer. Into the emotional and the sense-mind the law of division brings the same reactions with the higher values of grief and joy, love and hatred, oppression and depression, all cast into terms of desire, and by desire into straining and effort, and by the straining into excess and defect of force, incapacity, the rhythm of attainment and disappointment, possession and recoil, a constant strife and trouble and unease. Into the mind as a whole, instead of a divine law of narrower truth flowing into greater truth, lesser light taken up into wider light, lower will surrendered to higher transforming will, pettier satisfaction progressing towards nobler and more complete satisfaction, it brings similar dualities of truth pursued by error, light by darkness, power by incapacity, pleasure of pursuit and attainment by pain of repulse and of dissatisfaction with what is attained; mind takes up its own affliction along with the affliction of life and

body and becomes aware of the triple defect and insufficiency of our natural being. All this means the denial of Ananda, the negation of the trinity of Sachchidananda and therefore, if the negation be insuperable, the futility of existence; for existence in throwing itself out in the play of consciousness and force must seek that movement not merely for itself, but for satisfaction in the play, and if in the play no real satisfaction can be found, it must obviously be abandoned in the end as a vain attempt, a colossal mistake, a delirium of the self-embodying spirit.

This is the whole basis of the pessimist theory of the world,—optimist, it may be, as to worlds and states beyond, but pessimist as to the earthly life and the destiny of the mental being in his dealings with the material universe. For it affirms that since the very nature of material existence is division and the very seed of embodied mind is self-limitation, ignorance and egoism, to seek satisfaction of the spirit upon earth or to seek an issue and divine purpose and culmination for the world-play is a vanity and delusion; only in a heaven of the Spirit and not in the world, or only in the Spirit's true quietude and not in its phenomenal activities can we reunite existence and consciousness with the divine self-delight. The Infinite can only recover itself by rejecting as an error and a false step its attempt to find itself in the finite. Nor can the emergence of mental consciousness in the material universe bring with it any promise of a divine fulfilment. For the principle of division is not proper to Matter, but to Mind; Matter is only an illusion of Mind into which Mind brings its own rule of division and ignorance. Therefore within this illusion Mind can only find itself; it can only travel between the three terms of the divided existence it has created: it cannot find there the unity of the Spirit or the truth of the spiritual existence.

Now it is true that the principle of division in Matter can be only a creation of the divided Mind which has precipitated itself into material existence; for that material existence has no self-being, is not the original phenomenon but only a form created by an all-dividing Life-force which works out the conceptions of an all-dividing Mind. By working out being into these appearances of the ignorance, inertia and division of Matter the dividing

Mind has lost and imprisoned itself in a dungeon of its own building, is bound with chains which it has itself forged. And if it be true that the dividing Mind is the first principle of creation, then it must be also the ultimate attainment possible in the creation, and the mental being struggling vainly with Life and Matter, overpowering them only to be overpowered by them, repeating eternally a fruitless cycle must be the last and highest word of cosmic existence. But no such consequence ensues if, on the contrary, it is the immortal and infinite Spirit that has veiled itself in the dense robe of material substance and works there by the supreme creative power of Supermind, permitting the divisions of Mind and the reign of the lowest or material principle only as initial conditions for a certain evolutionary play of the One in the Many. If, in other words, it is not merely a mental being who is hidden in the forms of the universe, but the infinite Being, Knowledge, Will which emerges out of Matter first as Life, then as Mind, with the rest of it still unrevealed, then the emergence of consciousness out of the apparently Inconscient must have another and completer term; the appearance of a supramental spiritual being who shall impose on his mental, vital, bodily workings a higher law than that of the dividing Mind is no longer impossible. On the contrary, it is the natural and inevitable conclusion of the nature of cosmic existence.

Such a supramental being would, as we have seen, liberate the mind from the knot of its divided existence and use the individualisation of mind as merely a useful subordinate action of the all-embracing Supermind; and he would liberate the life also from the knot of its divided existence and use the individualisation of life as merely a useful subordinate action of the one Conscious-Force fulfilling its being and joy in a diversified unity. Is there any reason why he should not also liberate the bodily existence from the present law of death, division and mutual devouring and use individualisation of body as merely a useful subordinate term of the one divine Conscious-Existence made serviceable for the joy of the Infinite in the finite? or why this spirit should not be free in a sovereign occupation of form, consciously immortal even in the changing of his robe of Matter,

possessed of his self-delight in a world subjected to the law of unity and love and beauty? And if man be the inhabitant of terrestrial existence through whom that transformation of the mental into the supramental can at last be operated, is it not possible that he may develop, as well as a divine mind and a divine life, also a divine body? or, if the phrase seem to be too startling to our present limited conceptions of human potentiality, may he not in his development of his true being and its light and joy and power arrive at a divine use of mind and life and body by which the descent of Spirit into form shall be at once humanly and divinely justified?

The one thing that can stand in the way of that ultimate terrestrial possibility is if our present view of Matter and its laws represent the only possible relation between sense and substance, between the Divine as knower and the Divine as object, or if, other relations being possible, they are yet not in any way possible here, but must be sought on higher planes of existence. In that case, it is in heavens beyond that we must seek our entire divine fulfilment, as the religions assert, and their other assertion of the kingdom of God or the kingdom of the perfect upon earth must be put aside as a delusion. Here we can only pursue or attain an internal preparation or victory and, having liberated the mind and life and soul within, must turn from the unconquered and unconquerable material principle, from an unregenerated and intractable earth to find elsewhere our divine substance. There is, however, no reason why we should accept this limiting conclusion. There are, quite certainly, other states even of Matter itself; there is undoubtedly an ascending series of the divine gradations of substance; there is the possibility of the material being transfiguring itself through the acceptance of a higher law than its own which is yet its own because it is always there latent and potential in its own secracies.

Chapter XXVI

The Ascending Series of Substance

There is a self that is of the essence of Matter — there is another inner self of Life that fills the other — there is another inner self of Mind — there is another inner self of Truth-Knowledge — there is another inner self of Bliss.

*Taittiriya Upanishad.*¹

They climb Indra like a ladder. As one mounts peak after peak, there becomes clear the much that has still to be done. Indra brings consciousness of That as the goal.

Like a hawk, a kite He settles on the Vessel and upbears it; in His stream of movement He discovers the Rays, for He goes bearing his weapons: He cleaves to the ocean surge of the waters; a great King, He declares the fourth status. Like a mortal purifying his body, like a war-horse galloping to the conquest of riches He pours calling through all the sheath and enters these vessels.

*Rig Veda.*²

IF WE consider what it is that most represents to us the materiality of Matter, we shall see that it is its aspects of solidity, tangibility, increasing resistance, firm response to the touch of Sense. Substance seems more truly material and real in proportion as it presents to us a solid resistance and by virtue of that resistance a durability of sensible form on which our consciousness can dwell; in proportion as it is more subtle, less densely resistant and enduringly seizable by the sense, it appears to us less material. This attitude of our ordinary consciousness towards Matter is a symbol of the essential object for which Matter has been created. Substance passes into the material status

¹ II. 1-5. ² I. 10. 1, 2; IX. 96. 19, 20.

in order that it may present to the consciousness which has to deal with it durable, firmly seizable images on which the mind can rest and base its operations and which the Life can handle with at least a relative surety of permanence in the form upon which it works. Therefore in the ancient Vedic formula Earth, type of the more solid states of substance, was accepted as the symbolic name of the material principle. Therefore, too, touch or contact is for us the essential basis of Sense; all other physical senses, taste, smell, hearing, sight are based upon a series of more and more subtle and indirect contacts between the percipient and the perceived. Equally, in the Sankhya classification of the five elemental states of Substance from ether to earth, we see that their characteristic is a constant progression from the more subtle to the less subtle so that at the summit we have the subtle vibrations of the ethereal and at the base the grosser density of the earthly or solid elemental condition. Matter therefore is the last stage known to us in the progress of pure substance towards a basis of cosmic relation in which the first word shall be not spirit but form, and form in its utmost possible development of concentration, resistance, durably gross image, mutual impenetrability,—the culminating point of distinction, separation and division. This is the intention and character of the material universe; it is the formula of accomplished divisibility.

And if there is, as there must be in the nature of things, an ascending series in the scale of substance from Matter to Spirit, it must be marked by a progressive diminution of these capacities most characteristic of the physical principle and a progressive increase of the opposite characteristics which will lead us to the formula of pure spiritual self-extension. This is to say that they must be marked by less and less bondage to the form, more and more subtlety and flexibility of substance and force, more and more interfusion, interpenetration, power of assimilation, power of interchange, power of variation, transmutation, unification. Drawing away from durability of form, we draw towards eternity of essence; drawing away from our poise in the persistent separation and resistance of physical Matter, we draw near to the highest divine poise in the infinity, unity and

indivisibility of Spirit. Between gross substance and pure spirit substance this must be the fundamental antinomy. In Matter Chit or Conscious-Force masses itself more and more to resist and stand out against other masses of the same Conscious-Force; in substance of Spirit pure consciousness images itself freely in its sense of itself with an essential indivisibility and a constant unifying interchange as the basic formula even of the most diversifying play of its own Force. Between these two poles there is the possibility of an infinite gradation.

These considerations become of great importance when we consider the possible relation between the divine life and the divine mind of the perfected human soul and the very gross and seemingly undivine body or formula of physical being in which we actually dwell. That formula is the result of a certain fixed relation between sense and substance from which the material universe has started. But as this relation is not the only possible relation, so that formula is not the only possible formula. Life and mind may manifest themselves in another relation to substance and work out different physical laws, other and larger habits, even a different substance of body with a freer action of the sense, a freer action of the life, a freer action of the mind. Death, division, mutual resistance and exclusion between embodied masses of the same conscious life-force are the formula of our physical existence; the narrow limitation of the play of the senses, the determination within a small circle of the field, duration and power of the life-workings, the obscuration, lame movement, broken and bounded functioning of the mind are the yoke which that formula expressed in the animal body has imposed upon the higher principles. But these things are not the sole possible rhythm of cosmic Nature. There are superior states, there are higher worlds, and if the law of these can by any progress of man and by any liberation of our substance from its present imperfections be imposed on this sensible form and instrument of our being, then there may be even here a physical working of divine mind and sense, a physical working of divine life in the human frame and even the evolution upon earth of something that we may call a divinely human body. The

body of man also may some day come by its transfiguration; the Earth-Mother too may reveal in us her godhead.

Even within the formula of the physical cosmos there is an ascending series in the scale of Matter which leads us from the more to the less dense, from the less to the more subtle. Where we reach the highest term of that series, the most supra-ethereal subtlety of material substance or formulation of Force, what lies beyond? Not a Nihil, not a void; for there is no such thing as absolute void or real nullity and what we call by that name is simply something beyond the grasp of our sense, our mind or our most subtle consciousness. Nor is it true that there is nothing beyond, or that some ethereal substance of Matter is the eternal beginning; for we know that Matter and material Force are only a last result of a pure Substance and pure Force in which consciousness is luminously self-aware and self-possessing and not as in Matter lost to itself in an inconscient sleep and an inert motion. What then is there between this material substance and that pure substance? For we do not leap from the one to the other, we do not pass at once from the inconscient to absolute consciousness. There must be and there are grades between inconscient substance and utterly self-conscious self-extension, as between the principle of Matter and the principle of Spirit.

All who have at all sounded those abysses are agreed and bear witness to this fact that there are a series of subtler and subtler formulations of substance which escape from and go beyond the formula of the material universe. Without going deeply into matters which are too occult and difficult for our present inquiry, we may say, adhering to the system on which we have based ourselves, that these gradations of substance, in one important aspect of their formulation in series, can be seen to correspond to the ascending series of Matter, Life, Mind, Supermind and that other higher divine triplicity of Sachchidananda. In other words, we find that substance in its ascension bases itself upon each of these principles and makes itself successively a characteristic vehicle for the dominating cosmic self-expression of each in their ascending series.

Here in the material world everything is founded upon the

formula of material substance. Sense, Life, Thought found themselves upon what the ancients called the Earth-Power, start from it, obey its laws, accommodate their workings to this fundamental principle, limit themselves by its possibilities and, if they would develop others, have even in that development to take account of the original formula, its purpose and its demand upon the divine evolution. The sense works through physical instruments, the life through a physical nerve-system and vital organs, the mind has to build its operations upon a corporeal basis and use a material instrumentation, even its pure mental workings have to take the data so derived as a field and as the stuff upon which it works. There is no necessity in the essential nature of mind, sense, life that they should be so limited: for the physical sense-organs are not the creators of sense-perceptions, but themselves the creation, the instruments and here a necessary convenience of the cosmic sense; the nervous system and vital organs are not the creators of life's action and reaction, but themselves the creation, the instruments and here a necessary convenience of the cosmic Life-force; the brain is not the creator of thought, but itself the creation, the instrument and here a necessary convenience of the cosmic Mind. The necessity then is not absolute, but teleological; it is the result of a divine cosmic Will in the material universe which intends to posit here a physical relation between sense and its object, establishes here a material formula and law of Conscious-Force and creates by it physical images of Conscious-Being to serve as the initial, dominating and determining fact of the world in which we live. It is not a fundamental law of being, but a constructive principle necessitated by the intention of the Spirit to evolve in a world of Matter.

In the next grade of substance the initial, dominating, determining fact is no longer substantial form and force, but life and conscious desire. Therefore the world beyond this material plane must be a world based upon a conscious cosmic vital Energy, a force of vital seeking and a force of Desire and their self-expression and not upon an inconscient or subconscious will taking the form of a material force and energy. All the forms, bodies, forces, life-movements, sense-

movements, thought-movements, developments, culminations, self-fulfilments of that world must be dominated and determined by this initial fact of Conscious-Life to which Matter and Mind must subject themselves, must start from that, base themselves upon that, be limited or enlarged by its laws, powers, capacities, limitations; and if Mind there seeks to develop yet higher possibilities, still it must then too take account of the original vital formula of desire-force, its purpose and its demand upon the divine manifestation.

So too with the higher gradations. The next in the series must be governed by the dominating and determining factor of Mind. Substance there must be subtle and flexible enough to assume the shapes directly imposed upon it by Mind, to obey its operations, to subordinate itself to its demand for self-expression and self-fulfilment. The relations of sense and substance too must have a corresponding subtlety and flexibility and must be determined, not by the relations of physical organ with physical object, but of Mind with the subtler substance upon which it works. The life of such a world would be the servant of Mind in a sense of which our weak mental operations and our limited, coarse and rebellious vital faculties can have no adequate conception. There Mind dominates as the original formula, its purpose prevails, its demand overrides all others in the law of the divine manifestation. At a yet higher reach Supermind — or, intermediately, principles touched by it — or, still higher, a pure Bliss, a pure Conscious Power or pure Being replace Mind as the dominant principle, and we enter into those ranges of cosmic existence which to the old Vedic seers were the worlds of illuminated divine existence and the foundation of what they termed Immortality and which later Indian religions imaged in figures like the Brahmaloka or Goloka, some supreme self-expression of the Being as Spirit in which the soul liberated into its highest perfection possesses the infinity and beatitude of the eternal Godhead.

The principle which underlies this continually ascending experience and vision uplifted beyond the material formulation of things is that all cosmic existence is a complex harmony and does

not finish with the limited range of consciousness in which the ordinary human mind and life are content to be imprisoned. Being, consciousness, force, substance descend and ascend a many-runged ladder on each step of which being has a vaster self-extension, consciousness a wider sense of its own range and largeness and joy, force a greater intensity and a more rapid and blissful capacity, substance gives a more subtle, plastic, buoyant and flexible rendering of its primal reality. For the more subtle is also the more powerful,—one might say, the more truly concrete; it is less bound than the gross, it has a greater permanence in its being along with a greater potentiality, plasticity and range in its becoming. Each plateau of the hill of being gives to our widening experience a higher plane of our consciousness and a richer world for our existence.

But how does this ascending series affect the possibilities of our material existence? It would not affect them at all if each plane of consciousness, each world of existence, each grade of substance, each degree of cosmic force were cut off entirely from that which precedes and that which follows it. But the opposite is the truth; the manifestation of the Spirit is a complex weft and in the design and pattern of one principle all the others enter as elements of the spiritual whole. Our material world is the result of all the others, for the other principles have all descended into Matter to create the physical universe, and every particle of what we call Matter contains all of them implicit in itself; their secret action, as we have seen, is involved in every moment of its existence and every movement of its activity. And as Matter is the last word of the descent, so it is also the first word of the ascent; as the powers of all these planes, worlds, grades, degrees are involved in the material existence, so are they all capable of evolution out of it. It is for this reason that material being does not begin and end with gases and chemical compounds and physical forces and movements, with nebulae and suns and earths, but evolves life, evolves mind, must evolve eventually supermind and the higher degrees of the spiritual existence. Evolution comes by the unceasing pressure of the supra-material planes on the material compelling it to deliver

out of itself their principles and powers which might conceivably otherwise have slept imprisoned in the rigidity of the material formula. This would even so have been improbable, since their presence there implies a purpose of deliverance; but still this necessity from below is actually very much aided by a kindred superior pressure.

Nor can this evolution end with the first meagre formulation of life, mind, supermind, spirit conceded to these higher powers by the reluctant power of Matter. For as they evolve, as they awake, as they become more active and avid of their own potentialities, the pressure on them of the superior planes, a pressure involved in the existence and close connection and interdependence of the worlds, must also increase in insistence, power and effectiveness. Not only must these principles manifest from below in a qualified and restricted emergence, but also from above they must descend in their characteristic power and full possible efflorescence into the material being; the material creature must open to a wider and wider play of their activities in Matter, and all that is needed is a fit receptacle, medium, instrument. That is provided for in the body, life and consciousness of man.

Certainly, if that body, life and consciousness were limited to the possibilities of the gross body which are all that our physical senses and physical mentality accept, there would be a very narrow term for this evolution, and the human being could not hope to accomplish anything essentially greater than his present achievement. But this body, as ancient occult science discovered, is not the whole even of our physical being; this gross density is not all of our substance. The oldest Vedantic knowledge tells us of five degrees of our being, the material, the vital, the mental, the ideal, the spiritual or beatific and to each of these grades of our soul there corresponds a grade of our substance, a sheath as it was called in the ancient figurative language. A later psychology found that these five sheaths of our substance were the material of three bodies, gross physical, subtle and causal, in all of which the soul actually and simultaneously dwells, although here and now we are superficially conscious only of the material vehicle.

But it is possible to become conscious in our other bodies as well and it is in fact the opening up of the veil between them and consequently between our physical, psychical and ideal personalities which is the cause of those “psychic” and “occult” phenomena that are now beginning to be increasingly though yet too little and too clumsily examined, even while they are far too much exploited. The old Hathayogins and Tantriks of India had long ago reduced this matter of the higher human life and body to a science. They had discovered six nervous centres of life in the dense body corresponding to six centres of life and mind faculty in the subtle, and they had found out subtle physical exercises by which these centres, now closed, could be opened up, the higher psychical life proper to our subtle existence entered into by man, and even the physical and vital obstructions to the experience of the ideal and spiritual being could be destroyed. It is significant that one prominent result claimed by the Hathayogins for their practices and verified in many respects was a control of the physical life-force which liberated them from some of the ordinary habits or so-called laws thought by physical science to be inseparable from life in the body.

Behind all these terms of ancient psycho-physical science lies the one great fact and law of our being that whatever be its temporary poise of form, consciousness, power in this material evolution, there must be behind it and there is a greater, a truer existence of which this is only the external result and physically sensible aspect. Our substance does not end with the physical body; that is only the earthly pedestal, the terrestrial base, the material starting-point. As there are behind our waking mentality vaster ranges of consciousness subconscious and superconscious to it of which we become sometimes abnormally aware, so there are behind our gross physical being other and subtler grades of substance with a finer law and a greater power which support the denser body and which can by our entering into the ranges of consciousness belonging to them be made to impose that law and power on our dense matter and substitute their purer, higher, intenser conditions of being for the grossness

and limitation of our present physical life and impulses and habits. If that be so, then the evolution of a nobler physical existence not limited by the ordinary conditions of animal birth and life and death, of difficult alimentation and facility of disorder and disease and subjection to poor and unsatisfied vital cravings ceases to have the appearance of a dream and chimera and becomes a possibility founded upon a rational and philosophic truth which is in accordance with all the rest that we have hitherto known, experienced or been able to think out about the overt and secret truth of our existence.

So it should rationally be; for the uninterrupted series of the principles of our being and their close mutual connection is too evident for it to be possible that one of them should be condemned and cut off while the others are capable of a divine liberation. The ascent of man from the physical to the supramental must open out the possibility of a corresponding ascent in the grades of substance to that ideal or causal body which is proper to our supramental being, and the conquest of the lower principles by supermind and its liberation of them into a divine life and a divine mentality must also render possible a conquest of our physical limitations by the power and principle of supramental substance. And this means the evolution not only of an untrammelled consciousness, a mind and sense not shut up in the walls of the physical ego or limited to the poor basis of knowledge given by the physical organs of sense, but a life-power liberated more and more from its mortal limitations, a physical life fit for a divine inhabitant and,—in the sense not of attachment or of restriction to our present corporeal frame but an exceeding of the law of the physical body,—the conquest of death, an earthly immortality. For from the divine Bliss, the original Delight of existence, the Lord of Immortality comes pouring the wine of that Bliss, the mystic Soma, into these jars of mentalised living matter; eternal and beautiful, he enters into these sheaths of substance for the integral transformation of the being and nature.

Chapter XXVII

The Sevenfold Chord of Being

In the ignorance of my mind, I ask of these steps of the Gods
that are set within. The all-knowing Gods have taken the
Infant of a year and they have woven about him seven threads
to make this weft.

Rig Veda.¹

WE HAVE now, by our scrutiny of the seven great terms of existence which the ancient seers fixed on as the foundation and sevenfold mode of all cosmic existence, discerned the gradations of evolution and involution and arrived at the basis of knowledge towards which we were striving. We have laid down that the origin, the continent, the initial and the ultimate reality of all that is in the cosmos is the triune principle of transcendent and infinite Existence, Consciousness and Bliss which is the nature of divine being. Consciousness has two aspects, illuminating and effective, state and power of self-awareness and state and power of self-force, by which Being possesses itself whether in its static condition or in its dynamic movement; for in its creative action it knows by omnipotent self-consciousness all that is latent within it and produces and governs the universe of its potentialities by an omniscient self-energy. This creative action of the All-existent has its nodus in the fourth, the intermediate principle of Supermind or Real-Idea, in which a divine Knowledge one with self-existence and self-awareness and a substantial Will which is in perfect unison with that knowledge, because it is itself in its substance and nature that self-conscious self-existence dynamic in illumined action, develop infallibly the movement and form and law of things in right accordance with their self-existent

¹ I. 164. 5.

Truth and in harmony with the significances of its manifestation.

The creation depends on and moves between the biune principle of unity and multiplicity; it is a manifoldness of idea and force and form which is the expression of an original unity, and it is an eternal oneness which is the foundation and reality of the multiple worlds and makes their play possible. Supermind therefore proceeds by a double faculty of comprehensive and apprehensive knowledge; proceeding from the essential oneness to the resultant multiplicity, it comprehends all things in itself as itself the One in its manifold aspects and it apprehends separately all things in itself as objects of its will and knowledge. While to its original self-awareness all things are one being, one consciousness, one will, one self-delight and the whole movement of things a movement one and indivisible, it proceeds in its action from the unity to the multiplicity and from multiplicity to unity, creating an ordered relation between them and an appearance but not a binding reality of division, a subtle unseparating division, or rather a demarcation and determination within the indivisible. The Supermind is the divine Gnosis which creates, governs and upholds the worlds: it is the secret Wisdom which upholds both our Knowledge and our Ignorance.

We have discovered also that Mind, Life and Matter are a triple aspect of these higher principles working, so far as our universe is concerned, in subjection to the principle of Ignorance, to the superficial and apparent self-forgetfulness of the One in its play of division and multiplicity. Really, these three are only subordinate powers of the divine quaternary: Mind is a subordinate power of Supermind which takes its stand in the standpoint of division, actually forgetful here of the oneness behind though able to return to it by reillumination from the supramental; Life is similarly a subordinate power of the energy aspect of Sachchidananda, it is Force working out form and the play of conscious energy from the standpoint of division created by Mind; Matter is the form of substance of being which the existence of Sachchidananda assumes when it subjects itself to this phenomenal action of its own consciousness and force.

In addition, there is a fourth principle which comes into

manifestation at the nodus of mind, life and body, that which we call the soul; but this has a double appearance, in front the desire-soul which strives for the possession and delight of things, and, behind and either largely or entirely concealed by the desire-soul, the true psychic entity which is the real repository of the experiences of the spirit. And we have concluded that this fourth human principle is a projection and an action of the third divine principle of infinite Bliss, but an action in the terms of our consciousness and under the conditions of soul-evolution in this world. As the existence of the Divine is in its nature an infinite consciousness and the self-power of that consciousness, so the nature of its infinite consciousness is pure and infinite Bliss; self-possession and self-awareness are the essence of its self-delight. The cosmos also is a play of this divine self-delight and the delight of that play is entirely possessed by the Universal; but in the individual owing to the action of ignorance and division it is held back in the subliminal and the superconscious being; on our surface it lacks and has to be sought for, found and possessed by the development of the individual consciousness towards universality and transcendence.

We may, therefore, if we will, pose eight² principles instead of seven, and then we perceive that our existence is a sort of refraction of the divine existence, in inverted order of ascent and descent, thus ranged,—

Existence	Matter
Consciousness-Force	Life
Bliss	Psyche
Supermind	Mind

The Divine descends from pure existence through the play of Consciousness-Force and Bliss and the creative medium of Supermind into cosmic being; we ascend from Matter through a developing life, soul and mind and the illuminating medium of supermind towards the divine being. The knot of the two, the

² The Vedic Seers speak of the seven Rays, but also of eight, nine, ten or twelve.

higher and the lower hemisphere,³ is where mind and supermind meet with a veil between them. The rending of the veil is the condition of the divine life in humanity; for by that rending, by the illuminating descent of the higher into the nature of the lower being and the forceful ascent of the lower being into the nature of the higher, mind can recover its divine light in the all-comprehending supermind, the soul realise its divine self in the all-possessing all-blissful Ananda, life repossess its divine power in the play of omnipotent Conscious-Force and Matter open to its divine liberty as a form of the divine Existence. And if there be any goal to the evolution which finds here its present crown and head in the human being, other than an aimless circling and an individual escape from the circling, if the infinite potentiality of this creature, who alone here stands between Spirit and Matter with the power to mediate between them, has any meaning other than an ultimate awakening from the delusion of life by despair and disgust of the cosmic effort and its complete rejection, then even such a luminous and puissant transfiguration and emergence of the Divine in the creature must be that high-uplifted goal and that supreme significance.

But before we can turn to the psychological and practical conditions under which such a transfiguration may be changed from an essential possibility into a dynamic potentiality, we have much to consider; for we must discern not only the essential principles of the descent of Sachchidananda into cosmic existence, which we have already done, but the large plan of its order here and the nature and action of the manifested power of Conscious-Force which reigns over the conditions under which we now exist. At present, what we have first to see is that the seven or the eight principles we have examined are essential to all cosmic creation and are there, manifested or as yet unmanifested, in ourselves, in this "Infant of a year" which we still are,—for we are far yet from being the adults of evolutionary Nature. The higher Trinity is the source and basis of all existence and play of existence, and all cosmos must be an expression and

³ *parārdha* and *aparārdha*.

action of its essential reality. No universe can be merely a form of being which has sprung up and outlined itself in an absolute nullity and void and remains standing out against a non-existent emptiness. It must be either a figure of existence within the infinite Existence who is beyond all figure or it must be itself the All-Existence. In fact, when we unify our self with cosmic being, we see that it is really both of these things at once; that is to say, it is the All-Existent figuring Himself out in an infinite series of rhythms in His own conceptive extension of Himself as Time and Space. Moreover we see that this cosmic action or any cosmic action is impossible without the play of an infinite Force of Existence which produces and regulates all these forms and movements; and that Force equally presupposes or is the action of an infinite Consciousness, because it is in its nature a cosmic Will determining all relations and apprehending them by its own mode of awareness, and it could not so determine and apprehend them if there were no comprehensive Consciousness behind that mode of cosmic awareness to originate as well as to hold, fix and reflect through it the relations of Being in the developing formation or becoming of itself which we call a universe.

Finally, Consciousness being thus omniscient and omnipotent, in entire luminous possession of itself, and such entire luminous possession being necessarily and in its very nature Bliss, for it cannot be anything else, a vast universal self-delight must be the cause, essence and object of cosmic existence. "If there were not" says the ancient seer "this all-encompassing ether of Delight of existence in which we dwell, if that delight were not our ether, then none could breathe, none could live." This self-bliss may become subconscious, seemingly lost on the surface, but not only must it be there at our roots, all existence must be essentially a seeking and reaching out to discover and possess it, and in proportion as the creature in the cosmos finds himself, whether in will and power or in light and knowledge or in being and wideness or in love and joy itself, he must awaken to something of the secret ecstasy. Joy of being, delight of realisation by knowledge, rapture of possession by will and

power or creative force, ecstasy of union in love and joy are the highest terms of expanding life because they are the essence of existence itself in its hidden roots as on its yet unseen heights. Wherever, then, cosmic existence manifests itself, these three must be behind and within it.

But infinite Existence, Consciousness and Bliss need not throw themselves out into apparent being at all or, doing so, it would not be cosmic being, but simply an infinity of figures without fixed order or relation, if they did not hold or develop and bring out from themselves this fourth term of Supermind, of the divine Gnosis. There must be in every cosmos a power of Knowledge and Will which out of infinite potentiality fixes determined relations, develops the result out of the seed, rolls out the mighty rhythms of cosmic Law and views and governs the worlds as their immortal and infinite Seer and Ruler.⁴ This power indeed is nothing else than Sachchidananda Himself; it creates nothing which is not in its own self-existence, and for that reason all cosmic and real Law is a thing not imposed from outside, but from within, all development is self-development, all seed and result are seed of a Truth of things and result of that seed determined out of its potentialities. For the same reason no Law is absolute, because only the infinite is absolute, and everything contains within itself endless potentialities quite beyond its determined form and course, which are only determined through a self-limitation by Idea proceeding from an infinite liberty within. This power of self-limitation is necessarily inherent in the boundless All-Existent. The Infinite would not be the Infinite if it could not assume a manifold finiteness; the Absolute would not be the Absolute if it were denied in knowledge and power and will and manifestation of being a boundless capacity of self-determination. This Supermind then is the Truth or Real-Idea, inherent in all cosmic force and existence, which is necessary, itself remaining infinite, to determine and combine and uphold relation and order and the great lines of the manifestation. In the language of the Vedic Rishis, as

⁴ The Seer, the Thinker, He who becomes everywhere, the Self-existent.

— *Isha Upanishad*, Verse 8.

infinite Existence, Consciousness and Bliss are the three highest and hidden Names of the Nameless, so this Supermind is the fourth Name⁵—fourth to That in its descent, fourth to us in our ascension.

But Mind, Life and Matter, the lower trilogy, are also indispensable to all cosmic being, not necessarily in the form or with the action and conditions which we know upon earth or in this material universe, but in some kind of action, however luminous, however puissant, however subtle. For Mind is essentially that faculty of Supermind which measures and limits, which fixes a particular centre and views from that the cosmic movement and its interactions. Granted that in a particular world, plane or cosmic arrangement, mind need not be limited, or rather that the being who uses mind as a subordinate faculty need not be incapable of seeing things from other centres or standpoints or even from the real Centre of all or in the vastness of a universal self-diffusion, still if he is not capable of fixing himself normally in his own firm standpoint for certain purposes of the divine activity, if there is only the universal self-diffusion or only infinite centres without some determining or freely limiting action for each, then there is no cosmos but only a Being musing within Himself infinitely as a creator or poet may muse freely, not plastically, before he proceeds to the determining work of creation. Such a state must exist somewhere in the infinite scale of existence, but it is not what we understand by a cosmos. Whatever order there may be in it, must be a sort of unfixed, unbinding order such as Supermind might evolve before it had proceeded to the work of fixed development, measurement and interaction of relations. For that measurement and interaction Mind is necessary, though it need not be aware of itself as anything but a subordinate action of Supermind nor develop the interaction of relations on the basis of a self-imprisoned egoism such as we see active in terrestrial Nature.

Mind once existent, Life and Form of substance follow; for life is simply the determination of force and action, of relation

⁵ *Turiyam svid*, “a certain Fourth”, also called *turiyam dhāma*, the fourth placing or poise of existence.

and interaction of energy from many fixed centres of consciousness,—fixed, not necessarily in place or time, but in a persistent coexistence of beings or soul-forms of the Eternal supporting a cosmic harmony. That life may be very different from life as we know or conceive it, but essentially it would be the same principle at work which we see here figured as vitality,—the principle to which the ancient Indian thinkers gave the name of Vayu or Prana, the life-stuff, the substantial will and energy in the cosmos working out into determined form and action and conscious dynamis of being. Substance too might be very different from our view and sense of material body, much more subtle, much less rigidly binding in its law of self-division and mutual resistance, and body or form might be an instrument and not a prison, yet for the cosmic interaction some determination of form and substance would always be necessary, even if it be only a mental body or something yet more luminous, subtle and puissantly and freely responsive than the freest mental body.

It follows that wherever Cosmos is, there, even if only one principle be initially apparent, even if at first that seem to be the sole principle of things and everything else that may appear afterwards in the world seem to be no more than its forms and results and not in themselves indispensable to cosmic existence, such a front presented by being can only be an illusory mask or appearance of its real truth. Where one principle is manifest in Cosmos, there all the rest must be not merely present and passively latent, but secretly at work. In any given world its scale and harmony of being may be openly in possession of all seven at a higher or lower degree of activity; in another they may be all involved in one which becomes the initial or fundamental principle of evolution in that world, but evolution of the involved there must be. The evolution of the sevenfold power of being, the realisation of its septuple Name, must be the destiny of any world which starts apparently from the involution of all in one power.⁶ Therefore the material universe

⁶ In any given world there need not be an involution but only a subordination of the other principles to one or their inclusion in one; then evolution is not a necessity of that world-order.

was bound in the nature of things to evolve from its hidden life apparent life, from its hidden mind apparent mind, and it must in the same nature of things evolve from its hidden Supermind apparent Supermind and from the concealed Spirit within it the triune glory of Sachchidananda. The only question is whether the earth is to be a scene of that emergence or the human creation on this or any other material scene, in this or any other cycle of the large wheelings of Time, its instrument and vehicle. The ancient seers believed in this possibility for man and held it to be his divine destiny; the modern thinker does not even conceive of it or, if he conceived, would deny or doubt. If he sees a vision of the Superman, it is in the figure of increased degrees of mentality or vitality; he admits no other emergence, sees nothing beyond these principles, for these have traced for us up till now our limit and circle. In this progressive world, with this human creature in whom the divine spark has been kindled, real wisdom is likely to dwell with the higher aspiration rather than with the denial of aspiration or with the hope that limits and circumscribes itself within those narrow walls of apparent possibility which are only our intermediate house of training. In the spiritual order of things, the higher we project our view and our aspiration, the greater the Truth that seeks to descend upon us, because it is already there within us and calls for its release from the covering that conceals it in manifested Nature.

Chapter XXVIII

Supermind, Mind and the Overmind Maya

There is a Permanent, a Truth hidden by a Truth where the Sun unyokes his horses. The ten hundreds (of his rays) came together — That One. I saw the most glorious of the Forms of the Gods.

*Rig Veda.*¹

The face of Truth is hidden by a golden lid; that remove, O Fostering Sun, for the Law of the Truth, for sight. O Sun, O sole Seer, marshal thy rays, gather them together, — let me see of thee thy happiest form of all; that Conscious Being everywhere, He am I.

*Isha Upanishad.*²

The Truth, the Right, the Vast.

*Atharva Veda.*³

It became both truth and falsehood. It became the Truth, even all this that is.

*Taittiriya Upanishad.*⁴

ONE POINT remains to be cleared which we have till now left in obscurity, the process of the lapse into the Ignorance; for we have seen that nothing in the original nature of Mind, Life or Matter necessitates a fall from Knowledge. It has been shown indeed that division of consciousness is the basis of the Ignorance, a division of individual consciousness from the cosmic and the transcendent of which yet it is an intimate part, in essence inseparable, a division of Mind from the supramental Truth of which it should be a subordinate action, of Life from the original Force of which it is one energism, of Matter from the original Existence of which it is one form of

¹ V. 62. 1.

² Verses 15, 16.

³ XII. 1. 1.

⁴ II. 6.

substance. But it has still to be made clear how this division came about in the Indivisible, by what peculiar self-diminishing or self-effacing action of Consciousness-Force in the Being; for since all is a movement of that Force, only by some such action obscuring its own plenary light and power can there have arisen the dynamic and effective phenomenon of the Ignorance. But this problem can be left over to be treated in a more close examination of the dual phenomenon of Knowledge-Ignorance which makes our consciousness a blend of light and darkness, a half-light between the full day of the supramental Truth and the night of the material Inconscience. All that is necessary to note at present is that it must be in its essential character an exclusive concentration on one movement and status of Conscious Being, which puts all the rest of consciousness and being behind and veils it from that one movement's now partial knowledge.

Still there is one aspect of this problem which must be immediately considered; it is the gulf created between Mind as we know it and the supramental Truth-Consciousness of which we have found Mind in its origin to be a subordinate process. For this gulf is considerable and, if there are no gradations between the two levels of consciousness, a transition from one to the other, either in the descending involution of Spirit into Matter or the corresponding evolution in Matter of the concealed grades leading back to the Spirit, seems in the highest degree improbable, if not impossible. For Mind as we know it is a power of the Ignorance seeking for Truth, groping with difficulty to find it, reaching only mental constructions and representations of it in word and idea, in mind formations, sense formations,—as if bright or shadowy photographs or films of a distant Reality were all that it could achieve. Supermind, on the contrary, is in actual and natural possession of the Truth and its formations are forms of the Reality, not constructions, representations or indicative figures. No doubt, the evolving Mind in us is hampered by its encasement in the obscurity of this life and body, and the original Mind principle in the involutionary descent is a thing of greater power to which we have not fully reached, able to act with freedom in its own sphere or province, to build

more revelatory constructions, more minutely inspired formations, more subtle and significant embodiments in which the light of Truth is present and palpable. But still that too is not likely to be essentially different in its characteristic action, for it too is a movement into the Ignorance, not a still unseparated portion of the Truth-Consciousness. There must be somewhere in the descending and ascending scale of Being an intermediate power and plane of consciousness, perhaps something more than that, something with an original creative force, through which the involutionary transition from Mind in the Knowledge to Mind in the Ignorance was effected and through which again the evolutionary reverse transition becomes intelligible and possible. For the involutionary transition this intervention is a logical imperative, for the evolutionary it is a practical necessity. For in the evolution there are indeed radical transitions, from indeterminate Energy to organised Matter, from inanimate Matter to Life, from a subconscious or submental to a perceptive and feeling and acting Life, from primitive animal mentality to conceptional reasoning Mind observing and governing Life and observing itself also, able to act as an independent entity and even to seek consciously for self-transcendence; but these leaps, even when considerable, are to some extent prepared by slow gradations which make them conceivable and feasible. There can be no such immense hiatus as seems to exist between supramental Truth-Consciousness and the Mind in the Ignorance.

But if such intervening gradations exist, it is clear that they must be superconscious to human mind which does not seem to have in its normal state any entry into these higher grades of being. Man is limited in his consciousness by mind and even by a given range or scale of mind: what is below his mind, submental or mental but neither to his scale, readily seems to him subconscious or not distinguishable from complete unconsciousness; what is above it is to him superconscious and he is almost inclined to regard it as void of awareness, a sort of luminous Inconsciousness. Just as he is limited to a certain scale of sounds or of colours and what is above or below that scale is to him inaudible and invisible or at least indistinguishable, so is it with his scale of

mental consciousness, confined at either extremity by an incapacity which marks his upper and his nether limit. He has no sufficient means of communication even with the animal who is his mental congener, though not his equal, and he is even capable of denying mind or real consciousness to it because its modes are other and narrower than those with which in himself and his kind he is familiar; he can observe submental being from outside but cannot at all communicate with it or enter intimately into its nature. Equally the superconscious is to him a closed book which may well be filled only with empty pages. At first sight, then, it would appear as if he had no means of contact with these higher gradations of consciousness: if so, they cannot act as links or bridges and his evolution must cease with his accomplished mental range and cannot exceed it; Nature in drawing these limits has written finis to his upward endeavour.

But when we look more closely, we perceive that this normality is deceptive and that in fact there are several directions in which human mind reaches beyond itself, tends towards self-exceeding; these are precisely the necessary lines of contact or veiled or half-veiled passages which connect it with higher grades of consciousness of the self-manifesting Spirit. First, we have noted the place Intuition occupies in the human means of knowledge, and Intuition is in its very nature a projection of the characteristic action of these higher grades into the mind of Ignorance. It is true that in human mind its action is largely hidden by the interventions of our normal intelligence; a pure intuition is a rare occurrence in our mental activity: for what we call by the name is usually a point of direct knowledge which is immediately caught and coated over with mental stuff, so that it serves only as an invisible or a very tiny nucleus of a crystallisation which is in its mass intellectual or otherwise mental in character; or else the flash of intuition is quickly replaced or intercepted, before it has a chance of manifesting itself, by a rapid imitative mental movement, insight or quick perception or some swift-leaping process of thought which owes its appearance to the stimulus of the coming intuition but obstructs its entry or covers it with a substituted mental suggestion true or erroneous but in either case

not the authentic intuitive movement. Nevertheless, the fact of this intervention from above, the fact that behind all our original thinking or authentic perception of things there is a veiled, a half-veiled or a swift unveiled intuitive element is enough to establish a connection between mind and what is above it; it opens a passage of communication and of entry into the superior spirit-ranges. There is also the reaching out of mind to exceed the personal ego limitation, to see things in a certain impersonality and universality. Impersonality is the first character of cosmic self; universality, non-limitation by the single or limiting point of view, is the character of cosmic perception and knowledge: this tendency is therefore a widening, however rudimentary, of these restricted mind areas towards cosmicity, towards a quality which is the very character of the higher mental planes,—towards that superconscious cosmic Mind which, we have suggested, must in the nature of things be the original mind-action of which ours is only a derivative and inferior process. Again, there is not an entire absence of penetration from above into our mental limits. The phenomena of genius are really the result of such a penetration,—veiled no doubt, because the light of the superior consciousness not only acts within narrow limits, usually in a special field, without any regulated separate organisation of its characteristic energies, often indeed quite fitfully, erratically and with a supernormal or abnormal irresponsible governance, but also in entering the mind it subdues and adapts itself to mind substance so that it is only a modified or diminished dynamis that reaches us, not all the original divine luminosity of what might be called the overhead consciousness beyond us. Still the phenomena of inspiration, of revelatory vision or of intuitive perception and intuitive discernment, surpassing our less illumined or less powerful normal mind-action, are there and their origin is unmistakable. Finally, there is the vast and multitudinous field of mystic and spiritual experience, and here the gates already lie wide open to the possibility of extending our consciousness beyond its present limits,—unless, indeed, by an obscurantism that refuses to inquire or an attachment to our boundaries of mental normality we shut them or turn

away from the vistas they open before us. But in our present investigation we cannot afford to neglect the possibilities which these domains of mankind's endeavour bring near to us, or the added knowledge of oneself and of the veiled Reality which is their gift to human mind, the greater light which arms them with the right to act upon us and is the innate power of their existence.

There are two successive movements of consciousness, difficult but well within our capacity, by which we can have access to the superior gradations of our conscious existence. There is first a movement inward by which, instead of living in our surface mind, we break the wall between our external and our now subliminal self; this can be brought about by a gradual effort and discipline or by a vehement transition, sometimes a forceful involuntary rupture,—the latter by no means safe for the limited human mind accustomed to live securely only within its normal limits,—but in either way, safe or unsafe, the thing can be done. What we discover within this secret part of ourselves is an inner being, a soul, an inner mind, an inner life, an inner subtle-physical entity which is much larger in its potentialities, more plastic, more powerful, more capable of a manifold knowledge and dynamism than our surface mind, life or body; especially, it is capable of a direct communication with the universal forces, movements, objects of the cosmos, a direct feeling and opening to them, a direct action on them and even a widening of itself beyond the limits of the personal mind, the personal life, the body, so that it feels itself more and more a universal being no longer limited by the existing walls of our too narrow mental, vital, physical existence. This widening can extend itself to a complete entry into the consciousness of cosmic Mind, into unity with the universal Life, even into a oneness with universal Matter. That, however, is still an identification either with a diminished cosmic truth or with the cosmic Ignorance.

But once this entry into the inner being is accomplished, the inner Self is found to be capable of an opening, an ascent upwards into things beyond our present mental level; that is the second spiritual possibility in us. The first most ordinary result is

a discovery of a vast static and silent Self which we feel to be our real or our basic existence, the foundation of all else that we are. There may be even an extinction, a Nirvana both of our active being and of the sense of self into a Reality that is indefinable and inexpressible. But also we can realise that this self is not only our own spiritual being but the true self of all others; it presents itself then as the underlying truth of cosmic existence. It is possible to remain in a Nirvana of all individuality, to stop at a static realisation or, regarding the cosmic movement as a superficial play or illusion imposed on the silent Self, to pass into some supreme immobile and immutable status beyond the universe. But another less negative line of supernormal experience also offers itself; for there takes place a large dynamic descent of light, knowledge, power, bliss or other supernormal energies into our self of silence, and we can ascend too into higher regions of the Spirit where its immobile status is the foundation of those great and luminous energies. It is evident in either case that we have risen beyond the mind of Ignorance into a spiritual state; but, in the dynamic movement, the resultant greater action of Consciousness-Force may present itself either simply as a pure spiritual dynamis not otherwise determinate in its character or it may reveal a spiritual mind-range where mind is no longer ignorant of the Reality,—not yet a supermind level, but deriving from the supramental Truth-Consciousness and still luminous with something of its knowledge.

It is in the latter alternative that we find the secret we are seeking, the means of the transition, the needed step towards a supramental transformation; for we perceive a graduality of ascent, a communication with a more and more deep and immense light and power from above, a scale of intensities which can be regarded as so many stairs in the ascension of Mind or in a descent into Mind from That which is beyond it. We are aware of a sealike downpour of masses of a spontaneous knowledge which assumes the nature of Thought but has a different character from the process of thought to which we are accustomed; for there is nothing here of seeking, no trace of mental construction, no labour of speculation or difficult

discovery; it is an automatic and spontaneous knowledge from a Higher Mind that seems to be in possession of Truth and not in search of hidden and withheld realities. One observes that this Thought is much more capable than the mind of including at once a mass of knowledge in a single view; it has a cosmic character, not the stamp of an individual thinking. Beyond this Truth-Thought we can distinguish a greater illumination instinct with an increased power and intensity and driving force, a luminosity of the nature of Truth-Sight with thought formulation as a minor and dependent activity. If we accept the Vedic image of the Sun of Truth,—an image which in this experience becomes a reality,—we may compare the action of the Higher Mind to a composed and steady sunshine, the energy of the Illumined Mind beyond it to an outpouring of massive lightnings of flaming sun-stuff. Still beyond can be met a yet greater power of the Truth-Force, an intimate and exact Truth-vision, Truth-thought, Truth-sense, Truth-feeling, Truth-action, to which we can give in a special sense the name of Intuition; for though we have applied that word for want of a better to any supra-intellectual direct way of knowing, yet what we actually know as intuition is only one special movement of self-existent knowledge. This new range is its origin; it imparts to our intuitions something of its own distinct character and is very clearly an intermediary of a greater Truth-Light with which our mind cannot directly communicate. At the source of this Intuition we discover a superconscious cosmic Mind in direct contact with the Supramental Truth-Consciousness, an original intensity determinant of all movements below it and all mental energies,—not Mind as we know it, but an Overmind that covers as with the wide wings of some creative Oversoul this whole lower hemisphere of Knowledge-Ignorance, links it with that greater Truth-Consciousness while yet at the same time with its brilliant golden Lid it veils the face of the greater Truth from our sight, intervening with its flood of infinite possibilities as at once an obstacle and a passage in our seeking of the spiritual law of our existence, its highest aim, its secret Reality. This then is the occult link we were looking for; this is the Power that

at once connects and divides the supreme Knowledge and the cosmic Ignorance.

In its nature and law the Overmind is a delegate of the Supermind Consciousness, its delegate to the Ignorance. Or we might speak of it as a protective double, a screen of dissimilar similarity through which Supermind can act indirectly on an Ignorance whose darkness could not bear or receive the direct impact of a supreme Light. Even, it is by the projection of this luminous Overmind corona that the diffusion of a diminished light in the Ignorance and the throwing of that contrary shadow which swallows up in itself all light, the Inconscience, became at all possible. For Supermind transmits to Overmind all its realities, but leaves it to formulate them in a movement and according to an awareness of things which is still a vision of Truth and yet at the same time a first parent of the Ignorance. A line divides Supermind and Overmind which permits a free transmission, allows the lower Power to derive from the higher Power all it holds or sees, but automatically compels a transitional change in the passage. The integrality of the Supermind keeps always the essential truth of things, the total truth and the truth of its individual self-determinations clearly knit together; it maintains in them an inseparable unity and between them a close interpenetration and a free and full consciousness of each other: but in Overmind this integrality is no longer there. And yet the Overmind is well aware of the essential Truth of things; it embraces the totality; it uses the individual self-determinations without being limited by them: but although it knows their oneness, can realise it in a spiritual cognition, yet its dynamic movement, even while relying on that for its security, is not directly determined by it. Overmind Energy proceeds through an illimitable capacity of separation and combination of the powers and aspects of the integral and indivisible all-comprehending Unity. It takes each Aspect or Power and gives to it an independent action in which it acquires a full separate importance and is able to work out, we might say, its own world of creation. Purusha and Prakriti, Conscious Soul and executive Force of Nature, are in the supramental harmony a two-aspected single truth, being and dynamis

of the Reality; there can be no disequilibrium or predominance of one over the other. In Overmind we have the origin of the cleavage, the trenchant distinction made by the philosophy of the Sankhyas in which they appear as two independent entities, Prakriti able to dominate Purusha and cloud its freedom and power, reducing it to a witness and recipient of her forms and actions, Purusha able to return to its separate existence and abide in a free self-sovereignty by rejection of her original overclouding material principle. So with the other aspects or powers of the Divine Reality, One and Many, Divine Personality and Divine Impersonality, and the rest; each is still an aspect and power of the one Reality, but each is empowered to act as an independent entity in the whole, arrive at the fullness of the possibilities of its separate expression and develop the dynamic consequences of that separateness. At the same time in Overmind this separateness is still founded on the basis of an implicit underlying unity; all possibilities of combination and relation between the separated Powers and Aspects, all interchanges and mutualities of their energies are freely organised and their actuality always possible.

If we regard the Powers of the Reality as so many Godheads, we can say that the Overmind releases a million Godheads into action, each empowered to create its own world, each world capable of relation, communication and interplay with the others. There are in the Veda different formulations of the nature of the Gods: it is said they are all one Existence to which the sages give different names; yet each God is worshipped as if he by himself is that Existence, one who is all the other Gods together or contains them in his being; and yet again each is a separate Deity acting sometimes in unison with companion deities, sometimes separately, sometimes even in apparent opposition to other Godheads of the same Existence. In the Supermind all this would be held together as a harmonised play of the one Existence; in the Overmind each of these three conditions could be a separate action or basis of action and have its own principle of development and consequences and yet each keep the power to combine with the others in a more composite harmony. As

with the One Existence, so with its Consciousness and Force. The One Consciousness is separated into many independent forms of consciousness and knowledge; each follows out its own line of truth which it has to realise. The one total and many-sided Real-Idea is split up into its many sides; each becomes an independent Idea-Force with the power to realise itself. The one Consciousness-Force is liberated into its million forces, and each of these forces has the right to fulfil itself or to assume, if needed, a hegemony and take up for its own utility the other forces. So too the Delight of Existence is loosed out into all manner of delights and each can carry in itself its independent fullness or sovereign extreme. Overmind thus gives to the One Existence-Consciousness-Bliss the character of a teeming of infinite possibilities which can be developed into a multitude of worlds or thrown together into one world in which the endlessly variable outcome of their play is the determinant of the creation, of its process, its course and its consequence.

Since the Consciousness-Force of the eternal Existence is the universal creatrix, the nature of a given world will depend on whatever self-formulation of that Consciousness expresses itself in that world. Equally, for each individual being, his seeing or representation to himself of the world he lives in will depend on the poise or make which that Consciousness has assumed in him. Our human mental consciousness sees the world in sections cut by the reason and sense and put together in a formation which is also sectional; the house it builds is planned to accommodate one or another generalised formulation of Truth, but excludes the rest or admits some only as guests or dependents in the house. Overmind Consciousness is global in its cognition and can hold any number of seemingly fundamental differences together in a reconciling vision. Thus the mental reason sees Person and the Impersonal as opposites: it conceives an impersonal Existence in which person and personality are fictions of the Ignorance or temporary constructions; or, on the contrary, it can see Person as the primary reality and the impersonal as a mental abstraction or only stuff or means of manifestation. To the Overmind intelligence these are separable Powers of the one Existence which

can pursue their independent self-affirmation and can also unite together their different modes of action, creating both in their independence and in their union different states of consciousness and being which can be all of them valid and all capable of coexistence. A purely impersonal existence and consciousness is true and possible, but also an entirely personal consciousness and existence; the Impersonal Divine, Nirguna Brahman, and the Personal Divine, Saguna Brahman, are here equal and coexistent aspects of the Eternal. Impersonality can manifest with person subordinated to it as a mode of expression; but, equally, Person can be the reality with impersonality as a mode of its nature: both aspects of manifestation face each other in the infinite variety of conscious Existence. What to the mental reason are irreconcilable differences present themselves to the Overmind intelligence as coexistent correlatives; what to the mental reason are contraries are to the Overmind intelligence complementaries. Our mind sees that all things are born from Matter or material Energy, exist by it, go back into it; it concludes that Matter is the eternal factor, the primary and ultimate reality, Brahman. Or it sees all as born of Life-Force or Mind, existing by Life or by Mind, going back into the universal Life or Mind, and it concludes that this world is a creation of the cosmic Life-Force or of a cosmic Mind or Logos. Or again it sees the world and all things as born of, existing by and going back to the Real-Idea or Knowledge-Will of the Spirit or to the Spirit itself and it concludes on an idealistic or spiritual view of the universe. It can fix on any of these ways of seeing, but to its normal separative vision each way excludes the others. Overmind consciousness perceives that each view is true of the action of the principle it erects; it can see that there is a material world-formula, a vital world-formula, a mental world-formula, a spiritual world-formula, and each can predominate in a world of its own and at the same time all can combine in one world as its constituent powers. The self-formulation of Conscious Force on which our world is based as an apparent Inconscience that conceals in itself a supreme Conscious-Existence and holds all the powers of Being together in its inconscient secrecy, a world of universal Matter

realising in itself Life, Mind, Overmind, Supermind, Spirit, each of them in its turn taking up the others as means of its self-expression, Matter proving in the spiritual vision to have been always itself a manifestation of the Spirit, is to the Overmind view a normal and easily realisable creation. In its power of origination and in the process of its executive dynamis Overmind is an organiser of many potentialities of Existence, each affirming its separate reality but all capable of linking themselves together in many different but simultaneous ways, a magician craftsman empowered to weave the multicoloured warp and woof of manifestation of a single entity in a complex universe.

In this simultaneous development of multitudinous independent or combined Powers or Potentials there is yet — or there is as yet — no chaos, no conflict, no fall from Truth or Knowledge. The Overmind is a creator of truths, not of illusions or falsehoods: what is worked out in any given overmental energism or movement is the truth of the Aspect, Power, Idea, Force, Delight which is liberated into independent action, the truth of the consequences of its reality in that independence. There is no exclusiveness asserting each as the sole truth of being or the others as inferior truths: each God knows all the Gods and their place in existence; each Idea admits all other ideas and their right to be; each Force concedes a place to all other forces and their truth and consequences; no delight of separate fulfilled existence or separate experience denies or condemns the delight of other existence or other experience. The Overmind is a principle of cosmic Truth and a vast and endless catholicity is its very spirit; its energy is an all-dynamism as well as a principle of separate dynamisms: it is a sort of inferior Supermind, — although it is concerned predominantly not with absolutes, but with what might be called the dynamic potentials or pragmatic truths of Reality, or with absolutes mainly for their power of generating pragmatic or creative values, although, too, its comprehension of things is more global than integral, since its totality is built up of global wholes or constituted by separate independent realities uniting or coalescing together, and although the essential unity is grasped by it and felt to be basic of things and pervasive

in their manifestation, but no longer as in the Supermind their intimate and ever-present secret, their dominating continent, the overt constant builder of the harmonic whole of their activity and nature.

If we would understand the difference of this global Overmind Consciousness from our separative and only imperfectly synthetic mental consciousness, we may come near to it if we compare the strictly mental with what would be an overmental view of activities in our material universe. To the Overmind, for example, all religions would be true as developments of the one eternal religion, all philosophies would be valid each in its own field as a statement of its own universe-view from its own angle, all political theories with their practice would be the legitimate working out of an Idea Force with its right to application and practical development in the play of the energies of Nature. In our separative consciousness, imperfectly visited by glimpses of catholicity and universality, these things exist as opposites; each claims to be the truth and taxes the others with error and falsehood, each feels impelled to refute or destroy the others in order that itself alone may be the Truth and live: at best, each must claim to be superior, admit all others only as inferior truth-expressions. An overmental Intelligence would refuse to entertain this conception or this drift to exclusiveness for a moment; it would allow all to live as necessary to the whole or put each in its place in the whole or assign to each its field of realisation or of endeavour. This is because in us consciousness has come down completely into the divisions of the Ignorance; Truth is no longer either an Infinite or a cosmic whole with many possible formulations, but a rigid affirmation holding any other affirmation to be false because different from itself and entrenched in other limits. Our mental consciousness can indeed arrive in its cognition at a considerable approach towards a total comprehensiveness and catholicity, but to organise that in action and life seems to be beyond its power. Evolutionary Mind, manifest in individuals or collectivities, throws up a multiplicity of divergent view-points, divergent lines of action and lets them work themselves out side by side or in collision

or in a certain intermixture; it can make selective harmonies, but it cannot arrive at the harmonic control of a true totality. Cosmic Mind must have even in the evolutionary Ignorance, like all totalities, such a harmony, if only of arranged accords and discords; there is too in it an underlying dynamism of oneness: but it carries the completeness of these things in its depths, perhaps in a supermind-overmind substratum, but does not impart it to individual Mind in the evolution, does not bring it or has not yet brought it from the depths to the surface. An Overmind world would be a world of harmony; the world of Ignorance in which we live is a world of disharmony and struggle.

And still we can recognise at once in the Overmind the original cosmic Maya, not a Maya of Ignorance but a Maya of Knowledge, yet a Power which has made the Ignorance possible, even inevitable. For if each principle loosed into action must follow its independent line and carry out its complete consequences, the principle of separation must also be allowed its complete course and arrive at its absolute consequence; this is the inevitable descent, *facilis descensus*, which Consciousness, once it admits the separative principle, follows till it enters by obscuring infinitesimal fragmentation, *tucchyena*,⁵ into the material Inconscience,—the Inconscient Ocean of the Rig Veda,—and if the One is born from that by its own greatness, it is still at first concealed by a fragmentary separative existence and consciousness which is ours and in which we have to piece things together to arrive at a whole. In that slow and difficult emergence a certain semblance of truth is given to the dictum of Heraclitus that War is the father of all things; for each idea, force, separate consciousness, living being by the very necessity of its ignorance enters into collision with others and tries to live and grow and fulfil itself by independent self-assertion, not by harmony with the rest of existence. Yet there is still the unknown underlying Oneness which compels us to strive slowly towards some form of harmony, of interdependence, of concording of discords, of a difficult unity. But it is only by the evolution in us

⁵ *Rig Veda*, X. 129. 3.

of the concealed superconscious powers of cosmic Truth and of the Reality in which they are one that the harmony and unity we strive for can be dynamically realised in the very fibre of our being and all its self-expression and not merely in imperfect attempts, incomplete constructions, ever-changing approximations. The higher ranges of spiritual Mind have to open upon our being and consciousness and also that which is beyond even spiritual Mind must appear in us if we are to fulfil the divine possibility of our birth into cosmic existence.

Overmind in its descent reaches a line which divides the cosmic Truth from the cosmic Ignorance; it is the line at which it becomes possible for Consciousness-Force, emphasising the separateness of each independent movement created by Overmind and hiding or darkening their unity, to divide Mind by an exclusive concentration from the overmental source. There has already been a similar separation of Overmind from its supramental source, but with a transparency in the veil which allows a conscious transmission and maintains a certain luminous kinship; but here the veil is opaque and the transmission of the Overmind motives to the Mind is occult and obscure. Mind separated acts as if it were an independent principle, and each mental being, each basic mental idea, power, force stands similarly on its separate self; if it communicates or combines with or contacts others, it is not with the catholic universality of the Overmind movement, on a basis of underlying oneness, but as independent units joining to form a separate constructed whole. It is by this movement that we pass from the cosmic Truth into the cosmic Ignorance. The cosmic Mind on this level, no doubt, comprehends its own unity, but it is not aware of its own source and foundation in the Spirit or can only comprehend it by the intelligence, not in any enduring experience; it acts in itself as if by its own right and works out what it receives as material without direct communication with the source from which it receives it. Its units also act in ignorance of each other and of the cosmic whole except for the knowledge that they can get by contact and communication,—the basic sense of identity and the mutual penetration and understanding that comes from it

are no longer there. All the actions of this Mind Energy proceed on the opposite basis of the Ignorance and its divisions and, although they are the results of a certain conscious knowledge, it is a partial knowledge, not a true and integral self-knowledge, nor a true and integral world-knowledge. This character persists in Life and in subtle Matter and reappears in the gross material universe which arises from the final lapse into the Inconscience.

Yet, as in our subliminal or inner Mind, so in this Mind also a larger power of communication and mutuality still remains, a freer play of mentality and sense than human mind possesses, and the Ignorance is not complete; a conscious harmony, an interdependent organisation of right relations is more possible: mind is not yet perturbed by blind Life forces or obscured by irresponsive Matter. It is a plane of Ignorance, but not yet of falsehood or error,— or at least the lapse into falsehood and error is not yet inevitable; this Ignorance is limitative, but not necessarily falsificative. There is limitation of knowledge, an organisation of partial truths, but not a denial or opposite of truth or knowledge. This character of an organisation of partial truths on a basis of separative knowledge persists in Life and subtle Matter, for the exclusive concentration of Consciousness-Force which puts them into separative action does not entirely sever or veil Mind from Life or Mind and Life from Matter. The complete separation can take place only when the stage of Inconscience has been reached and our world of manifold Ignorance arises out of that tenebrous matrix. These other still conscient stages of the involution are indeed organisations of Conscious Force in which each lives from his own centre, follows out his own possibilities, and the predominant principle itself, whether Mind, Life or Matter, works out things on its own independent basis; but what is worked out are truths of itself, not illusions or a tangle of truth and falsehood, knowledge and ignorance. But when by an exclusive concentration on Force and Form Consciousness-Force seems phenomenally to separate Consciousness from Force, or when it absorbs Consciousness in a blind sleep lost in Form and Force, then Consciousness has to struggle back to itself by a fragmentary evolution which

necessitates error and makes falsehood inevitable. Nevertheless, these things too are not illusions that have sprung out of an original Non-Existence; they are, we might say, the unavoidable truths of a world born out of Inconscience. For the Ignorance is still in reality a knowledge seeking for itself behind the original mask of Inconscience; it misses and finds; its results, natural and even inevitable on their own line, are the true consequence of the lapse,—in a way, even, the right working of the recovery from the lapse. Existence plunging into an apparent Non-Existence, Consciousness into an apparent Inconscience, Delight of existence into a vast cosmic insensibility are the first result of the fall and, in the return from it by a struggling fragmentary experience, the rendering of Consciousness into the dual terms of truth and falsehood, knowledge and error, of Existence into the dual terms of life and death, of Delight of existence into the dual terms of pain and pleasure are the necessary process of the labour of self-discovery. A pure experience of Truth, Knowledge, Delight, imperishable existence would here be itself a contradiction of the truth of things. It could only be otherwise if all beings in the evolution were quiescently responsive to the psychic element within them and to the Supermind underlying Nature's operations; but here there comes in the Overmind law of each Force working out its own possibilities. The natural possibilities of a world in which an original Inconscience and a division of consciousness are the main principles, would be the emergence of Forces of Darkness impelled to maintain the Ignorance by which they live, an ignorant struggle to know originative of falsehood and error, an ignorant struggle to live engendering wrong and evil, an egoistic struggle to enjoy, parent of fragmentary joys and pains and sufferings; these are therefore the inevitable first-imprinted characters, though not the sole possibilities of our evolutionary existence. Still, because the Non-Existence is a concealed Existence, the Inconscience a concealed Consciousness, the insensibility a masked and dormant Ananda, these secret realities must emerge; the hidden Overmind and Supermind too must in the end fulfil themselves in this apparently opposite organisation from a dark Infinite.

Two things render that culmination more facile than it would otherwise be. Overmind in the descent towards material creation has originated modifications of itself,—Intuition especially with its penetrative lightning flashes of truth lighting up local points and stretches of country in our consciousness,—which can bring the concealed truth of things nearer to our comprehension, and, by opening ourselves more widely first in the inner being and then as a result in the outer surface self also to the messages of these higher ranges of consciousness, by growing into them, we can become ourselves also intuitive and overmental beings, not limited by the intellect and sense, but capable of a more universal comprehension and a direct touch of truth in its very self and body. In fact flashes of enlightenment from these higher ranges already come to us, but this intervention is mostly fragmentary, casual or partial; we have still to begin to enlarge ourselves into their likeness and organise in us the greater Truth activities of which we are potentially capable. But, secondly, Overmind, Intuition, even Supermind not only must be, as we have seen, principles inherent and involved in the Inconscience from which we arise in the evolution and inevitably destined to evolve, but are secretly present, occult actively with flashes of intuitive emergence in the cosmic activity of Mind, Life and Matter. It is true that their action is concealed and, even when they emerge, it is modified by the medium, material, vital, mental in which they work and not easily recognisable. Supermind cannot manifest itself as the Creator Power in the universe from the beginning, for if it did, the Ignorance and Inconscience would be impossible or else the slow evolution necessary would change into a rapid transformation scene. Yet at every step of the material energy we can see the stamp of inevitability given by a supramental creator, in all the development of life and mind the play of the lines of possibility and their combination which is the stamp of Overmind intervention. As Life and Mind have been released in Matter, so too must in their time these greater powers of the concealed Godhead emerge from the involution and their supreme Light descend into us from above.

A divine Life in the manifestation is then not only possible

as the high result and ransom of our present life in the Ignorance but, if these things are as we have seen them, it is the inevitable outcome and consummation of Nature's evolutionary endeavour.

END OF BOOK ONE

Book Two

The Knowledge and the Ignorance — The Spiritual Evolution

Part I

The Infinite Consciousness and the Ignorance

Chapter I

Indeterminates, Cosmic Determinations and the Indeterminable

The Unseen with whom there can be no pragmatic relations, unseizable, featureless, unthinkable, undesignable by name, whose substance is the certitude of One Self, in whom world-existence is stilled, who is all peace and bliss — that is the Self, that is what must be known. *Mandukya Upanishad.*¹

One sees it as a mystery or one speaks of it or hears of it as a mystery, but none knows it. *Gita.*²

When men seek after the Immutable, the Indeterminable, the Unmanifest, the All-Pervading, the Unthinkable, the Summit Self, the Immobile, the Permanent,—equal in mind to all, intent on the good of all beings, it is to Me that they come.

*Gita.*³

High beyond the Intelligence is the Great Self, beyond the Great Self is the Unmanifest, beyond the Unmanifest is the Conscious Being. There is nothing beyond the Being,—that is the extreme ultimate, that the supreme goal.

*Katha Upanishad.*⁴

Rare is the great of soul to whom all is the Divine Being.

*Gita.*⁵

A CONSCIOUSNESS-FORCE, everywhere inherent in Existence, acting even when concealed, is the creator of the worlds, the occult secret of Nature. But in our material world and in our own being consciousness has a double aspect;

¹ Verse 7. ² II. 29. ³ XII. 3, 4. ⁴ I. 3. 10, 11. ⁵ *vāsudevaḥ sarvamiti*, VII. 19.

there is a force of Knowledge, there is a force of Ignorance. In the infinite consciousness of a self-aware infinite Existence knowledge must be everywhere implicit or operative in the very grain of its action; but we see here at the beginning of things, apparent as the base or the nature of the creative world-energy, an Inconscience, a total Nescience. This is the stock with which the material universe commences: consciousness and knowledge emerge at first in obscure infinitesimal movements, at points, in little quanta which associate themselves together; there is a tardy and difficult evolution, a slowly increasing organisation and ameliorated mechanism of the workings of consciousness, more and more gains are written on the blank slate of the Nescience. But still these have the appearance of gathered acquisitions and constructions of a seeking Ignorance which tries to know, to understand, to discover, to change slowly and strugglingly into knowledge. As Life here establishes and maintains its operations with difficulty on a foundation and in an environment of general Death, first in infinitesimal points of life, in quanta of life-form and life-energy, in increasing aggregates that create more and more complex organisms, an intricate life-machinery, Consciousness also establishes and maintains a growing but precarious light in the darkness of an original Nescience and a universal Ignorance.

Moreover the knowledge gained is of phenomena, not of the reality of things or of the foundations of existence. Wherever our consciousness meets what seems to be a foundation, that foundation wears the appearance of a blank,—when it is not a void,—an original state which is featureless and a multitude of consequences which are not inherent in the origin and which nothing in it seems to justify or visibly to necessitate; there is a mass of superstructure which has no clear native relation to the fundamental existence. The first aspect of cosmic existence is an Infinite which is to our perception an indeterminate, if not indeterminable. In this Infinite the universe itself, whether in its aspect of Energy or its aspect of structure, appears as an indeterminate determination, a “boundless finite”,—paradoxical but necessary expressions which would seem to indicate that we are

face to face with a suprarational mystery as the base of things; in that universe arise — from where? — a vast number and variety of general and particular determinates which do not appear to be warranted by anything perceptible in the nature of the Infinite, but seem to be imposed — or, it may be, self-imposed — upon it. We give to the Energy which produces them the name of Nature, but the word conveys no meaning unless it is that the nature of things is what it is by virtue of a Force which arranges them according to an inherent Truth in them; but the nature of that Truth itself, the reason why these determinates are what they are is nowhere visible. It has been possible indeed for human Science to detect the process or many processes of material things, but this knowledge does not throw any light on the major question; we do not know even the rationale of the original cosmic processes, for the results do not present themselves as their necessary but only their pragmatic and actual consequence. In the end we do not know how these determinates came into or out of the original Indeterminate or Indeterminable on which they stand forth as on a blank and flat background in the riddle of their ordered occurrence. At the origin of things we are faced with an Infinite containing a mass of unexplained finites, an Indivisible full of endless divisions, an Immutable teeming with mutations and differentiae. A cosmic paradox is the beginning of all things, a paradox without any key to its significance.

It is possible indeed to question the need of positing an Infinite which contains our formed universe, although this conception is imperatively demanded by our mind as a necessary basis to its conceptions, — for it is unable to fix or assign a limit whether in Space or Time or essential existence beyond which there is nothing or before or after which there is nothing, — although too the alternative is a Void or Nihil which can be only an abyss of the Infinite into which we refuse to look; an infinite mystic zero of Non-Existence would replace an infinite x as a necessary postulate, a basis for our seeing of all that is to us existence. But even if we refuse to recognise anything as real except the limitless expanding finite of the material universe and its teeming determinations, the enigma remains the same.

Infinite existence, infinite non-being or boundless finite, all are to us original indeterminates or indeterminables; we can assign to them no distinct characters or features, nothing which would predetermine their determinations. To describe the fundamental character of the universe as Space or Time or Space-Time does not help us; for even if these are not abstractions of our intelligence which we impose by our mental view on the cosmos, the mind's necessary perspective of its picture, these too are indeterminates and carry in themselves no clue to the origin of the determinations that take place in them; there is still no explanation of the strange process by which things are determined or of their powers, qualities and properties, no revelation of their true nature, origin and significance.

Actually to our Science this infinite or indeterminate Existence reveals itself as an Energy, known not by itself but by its works, which throws up in its motion waves of energism and in them a multitude of infinitesimals; these, grouping themselves to form larger infinitesimals, become a basis for all the creations of the Energy, even those farthest away from the material basis, for the emergence of a world of organised Matter, for the emergence of Life, for the emergence of Consciousness, for all the still unexplained activities of evolutionary Nature. On the original process are erected a multitude of processes which we can observe, follow, can take advantage of many of them, utilise; but they are none of them, fundamentally, explicable. We know now that different groupings and a varying number of electric infinitesimals can produce or serve as the constituent occasion — miscalled the cause, for here there seems to be only a necessary antecedent condition — for the appearance of larger atomic infinitesimals of different natures, qualities, powers; but we fail to discover how these different dispositions can come to constitute these different atoms, — how the differentiae in the constituent occasion or cause necessitate the differentiae in the constituted outcome or result. We know also that certain combinations of certain invisible atomic infinitesimals produce or occasion new and visible determinations quite different in nature, quality and power from the constituent infinitesimals; but we fail to discover,

for instance, how a fixed formula for the combination of oxygen and hydrogen comes to determine the appearance of water which is evidently something more than a combination of gases, a new creation, a new form of substance, a material manifestation of a quite new character. We see that a seed develops into a tree, we follow the line of the process of production and we utilise it; but we do not discover how a tree can grow out of a seed, how the life and form of the tree come to be implied in the substance or energy of the seed or, if that be rather the fact, how the seed can develop into a tree. We know that genes and chromosomes are the cause of hereditary transmissions, not only of physical but of psychological variations; but we do not discover how psychological characteristics can be contained and transmitted in this inconscious material vehicle. We do not see or know, but it is expounded to us as a cogent account of Nature-process, that a play of electrons, of atoms and their resultant molecules, of cells, glands, chemical secretions and physiological processes manages by their activity on the nerves and brain of a Shakespeare or a Plato to produce or could be perhaps the dynamic occasion for the production of a *Hamlet* or a *Symposium* or a *Republic*; but we fail to discover or appreciate how such material movements could have composed or necessitated the composition of these highest points of thought and literature: the divergence here of the determinants and the determination becomes so wide that we are no longer able to follow the process, much less understand or utilise. These formulae of Science may be pragmatically correct and infallible, they may govern the practical how of Nature's processes, but they do not disclose the intrinsic how or why; rather they have the air of the formulae of a cosmic Magician, precise, irresistible, automatically successful each in its field, but their rationale is fundamentally unintelligible.

There is more to perplex us; for we see the original indeterminate Energy throwing out general determinates of itself,—we might equally in their relation to the variety of their products call them generic indeterminates,—with their appropriate states of substance and determined forms of that substance: the latter are numerous, sometimes innumerable variations on the

substance-energy which is their base: but none of these variations seems to be predetermined by anything in the nature of the general indeterminate. An electric Energy produces positive, negative, neutral forms of itself, forms that are at once waves and particles; a gaseous state of energy-substance produces a considerable number of different gases; a solid state of energy-substance from which results the earth principle develops into different forms of earth and rock of many kinds and numerous minerals and metals; a life principle produces its vegetable kingdom teeming with a countless foison of quite different plants, trees, flowers; a principle of animal life produces an enormous variety of genus, species, individual variations: so it proceeds into human life and mind and its mind-types towards the still unwritten end or perhaps the yet occult sequel of that unfinished evolutionary chapter. Throughout there is the constant rule of a general sameness in the original determinate and, subject to this substantial sameness of basic substance and nature, a profuse variation in the generic and individual determinates; an identical law obtains of sameness or similarity in the genus or species with numerous variations often meticulously minute in the individual. But we do not find anything in any general or generic determinate necessitating the variant determinations that result from it. A necessity of immutable sameness at the base, of free and unaccountable variations on the surface seems to be the law; but who or what necessitates or determines? What is the rationale of the determination, what is its original truth or its significance? What compels or impels this exuberant play of varying possibilities which seem to have no aim or meaning unless it be the beauty or delight of creation? A Mind, a seeking and curious inventive Thought, a hidden determining Will might be there, but there is no trace of it in the first and fundamental appearance of material Nature.

A first possible explanation points to a self-organising dynamic Chance that is at work,—a paradox necessitated by the appearance of inevitable order on one side, of unaccountable freak and fantasy on the other side of the cosmic phenomenon we call Nature. An inconscient and inconsequent Force, we

may say, that acts at random and creates this or that by a general chance without any determining principle,—determinations coming in only as the result of a persistent repetition of the same rhythm of action and succeeding because only this repetitive rhythm could succeed in keeping things in being,—this is the energy of Nature. But this implies that somewhere in the origin of things there is a boundless Possibility or a womb of innumerable possibilities that are manifested out of it by the original Energy,—an incalculable Inconscient which we find some embarrassment in calling either an Existence or a Non-Existence; for without some such origin and basis the appearance and the action of the Energy is unintelligible. Yet an opposite aspect of the nature of the cosmic phenomenon as we see it appears to forbid the theory of a random action generating a persistent order. There is too much of an iron insistence on order, on a law basing the possibilities. One would be justified rather in supposing that there is an inherent imperative Truth of things unseen by us, but a Truth capable of manifold manifestation, throwing out a multitude of possibilities and variants of itself which the creative Energy by its action turns into so many realised actualities. This brings us to a second explanation — a mechanical necessity in things, its workings recognisable by us as so many mechanical laws of Nature;—the necessity, we might say, of some such secret inherent Truth of things as we have supposed, governing automatically the processes we observe in action in the universe. But a theory of mechanical Necessity by itself does not elucidate the free play of the endless unaccountable variations which are visible in the evolution: there must be behind the Necessity or in it a law of unity associated with a coexistent but dependent law of multiplicity, both insisting on manifestation; but the unity of what, the multiplicity of what? Mechanical Necessity can give no answer. Again the emergence of consciousness out of the Inconscient is a stumbling-block in the way of this theory; for it is a phenomenon which can have no place in an all-pervading truth of inconscient mechanical Necessity. If there is a necessity which compels the emergence, it can be only this, that there is already a consciousness concealed

in the Inconscient, waiting for evolution and when all is ready breaking out from its prison of apparent Nescience. We may indeed get rid of the difficulty of the imperative order of things by supposing that it does not exist, that determinism in Nature is imposed on it by our thought which needs such an imperative order to enable it to deal with its surroundings, but in reality there is no such thing; there is only a Force experimenting in a random action of infinitesimals which build up in their general results different determinations by a repetitive persistence operative in the sum of their action; thus we go back from Necessity to Chance as the basis of our existence. But what then is this Mind, this Consciousness which differs so radically from the Energy that produced it that for its action it has to impose its idea and need of order on the world she has made and in which it is obliged to live? There would then be the double contradiction of consciousness emerging from a fundamental Inconscience and of a Mind of order and reason manifesting as the brilliant final consequence of a world created by inconscient Chance. These things may be possible, but they need a better explanation than any yet given before we can accord to them our acceptance.

This opens the way for other explanations which make Consciousness the creator of this world out of an apparent original Inconscience. A Mind, a Will seems to have imagined and organised the universe, but it has veiled itself behind its creation; its first erection has been this screen of an inconscient Energy and a material form of substance, at once a disguise of its presence and a plastic creative basis on which it could work as an artisan uses for his production of forms and patterns a dumb and obedient material. All these things we see around us are then the thoughts of an extra-cosmic Divinity, a Being with an omnipotent and omniscient Mind and Will, who is responsible for the mathematical law of the physical universe, for its artistry of beauty, for its strange play of samenesses and variations, of concordances and discords, of combining and intermingling opposites, for the drama of consciousness struggling to exist and seeking to affirm itself in an inconscient universal order. The fact that this Divinity is invisible to us, undiscoverable by our mind

and senses, offers no difficulty, since self-evidence or direct sign of an extra-cosmic Creator could not be expected in a cosmos which is void of his presence: the patent signals everywhere of the works of an Intelligence, of law, design, formula, adaptation of means to end, constant and inexhaustible invention, fantasy even but restrained by an ordering Reason might be considered sufficient proof of this origin of things. Or if this Creator is not entirely supracosmic, but is also immanent in his works, even then there need be no other sign of him,—except indeed to some consciousness evolving in this inconscient world, but only when its evolution reached a point at which it could become aware of the indwelling Presence. The intervention of this evolving consciousness would not be a difficulty, since there would be no contradiction of the basic nature of things in its appearance; an omnipotent Mind could easily infuse something of itself into its creatures. One difficulty remains; it is the arbitrary nature of the creation, the incomprehensibility of its purpose, the crude meaninglessness of its law of unnecessary ignorance, strife and suffering, its ending without a denouement or issue. A play? But why this stamp of so many undivine elements and characters in the play of One whose nature must be supposed to be divine? To the suggestion that what we see worked out in the world is the thoughts of God, the retort can be made that God could well have had better thoughts and the best thought of all would have been to refrain from the creation of an unhappy and unintelligible universe. All theistic explanations of existence starting from an extra-cosmic Deity stumble over this difficulty and can only evade it; it would disappear only if the Creator were, even though exceeding the creation, yet immanent in it, himself in some sort both the player and the play, an Infinite casting infinite possibilities into the form of an evolutionary cosmic order.

On that hypothesis, there must be behind the action of the material Energy a secret involved Consciousness, cosmic, infinite, building up through the action of that frontal Energy its means of an evolutionary manifestation, a creation out of itself in the boundless finite of the material universe. The apparent inconscience of the material Energy would be an indispensable

condition for the structure of the material world-substance in which this Consciousness intends to involve itself so that it may grow by evolution out of its apparent opposite; for without some such device a complete involution would be impossible. If there is such a creation by the Infinite out of itself, it must be the manifestation, in a material disguise, of truths or powers of its own being: the forms or vehicles of these truths or powers would be the basic general or fundamental determinates we see in Nature; the particular determinates, which otherwise are unaccountable variations that have emerged from the vague general stuff in which they originate, would be the appropriate forms or vehicles of the possibilities that the truths or powers residing in these fundamentals bore within them. The principle of free variation of possibilities natural to an infinite Consciousness would be the explanation of the aspect of Inconscient Chance of which we are aware in the workings of Nature, — inconscient only in appearance and so appearing because of the complete involution in Matter, because of the veil with which the secret Consciousness has disguised its presence. The principle of truths, real powers of the Infinite imperatively fulfilling themselves would be the explanation of the opposite aspect of a mechanical Necessity which we see in Nature, — mechanical in appearance only and so appearing because of the same veil of Inconscience. It would then be perfectly intelligible why the Inconscient does its works with a constant principle of mathematical architecture, of design, of effective arrangement of numbers, of adaptation of means to ends, of inexhaustible device and invention, one might almost say, a constant experimental skill and an automatism of purpose. The appearance of consciousness out of an apparent Inconscience would also be no longer inexplicable.

All the unexplained processes of Nature would find their meaning and their place if this hypothesis proved to be tenable. Energy seems to create substance, but, in reality, as existence is inherent in Consciousness-Force, so also substance would be inherent in Energy, — the Energy a manifestation of the Force, substance a manifestation of the secret Existence. But as it is a spiritual substance, it would not be apprehended by the material

sense until it is given by Energy the forms of Matter seizable by that sense. One begins to understand also how arrangement of design, quantity and number can be a base for the manifestation of quality and property; for design, quantity and number are powers of existence-substance, quality and property are powers of the consciousness and its force that reside in the existence; they can then be made manifest and operative by a rhythm and process of substance. The growth of the tree out of the seed would be accounted for, like all other similar phenomena, by the indwelling presence of what we have called the Real-Idea; the Infinite's self-perception of the significant form, the living body of its power of existence that has to emerge from its own self-compression in energy-substance, would be carried internally in the form of the seed, carried in the occult consciousness involved in that form, and would naturally evolve out of it. There would be no difficulty either in understanding on this principle how infinitesimals of a material character like the gene and the chromosome can carry in them psychological elements to be transmitted to the physical form that has to emerge from the human seed; it would be at bottom on the same principle in the objectivity of Matter as that which we find in our subjective experience,—for we see that the subconscious physical carries in it a mental psychological content, impressions of past events, habits, fixed mental and vital formations, fixed forms of character, and sends them up by an occult process to the waking consciousness, thus originating or influencing many activities of our nature.

On the same basis there would be no difficulty in understanding why the physiological functionings of the body help to determine the mind's psychological actions: for the body is not mere unconscious Matter; it is a structure of a secretly conscious Energy that has taken form in it. Itself occultly conscious, it is, at the same time, the vehicle of expression of an overt Consciousness that has emerged and is self-aware in our physical energy-substance. The body's functionings are a necessary machinery or instrumentation for the movements of this mental Inhabitant; it is only by setting the corporeal instrument in motion that

the Conscious Being emerging, evolving in it can transmit its mind formations, will formations and turn them into a physical manifestation of itself in Matter. The capacity, the processes of the instrument must to a certain extent reshape the mind formations in their transition from mental shape into physical expression; its workings are necessary and must exercise their influence before that expression can become actual. The bodily instrument may even in some directions dominate its user; it may too by a force of habit suggest or create involuntary reactions of the consciousness inhabiting it before the waking Mind and Will can control or interfere. All this is possible because the body has a "subconscious" consciousness of its own which counts in our total self-expression; even, if we look at this outer instrumentation only, we can conclude that body determines mind, but this is only a minor truth and the major Truth is that mind determines body. In this view a still deeper Truth becomes conceivable; a spiritual entity ensouling the substance that veils it is the original determinant of both mind and body. On the other side, in the opposite order of process,—that by which the mind can transmit its ideas and commands to the body, can train it to be an instrument for new action, can even so impress it with its habitual demands or orders that the physical instinct carries them out automatically even when the mind is no longer consciously willing them, those also more unusual but well attested by which to an extraordinary and hardly limitable extent the mind can learn to determine the reactions of the body even to the overriding of its normal law or conditions of action,—these and other otherwise unaccountable aspects of the relation between these two elements of our being become easily understandable: for it is the secret consciousness in the living matter that receives from its greater companion; it is this in the body that in its own involved and occult fashion perceives or feels the demand on it and obeys the emerged or evolved consciousness which presides over the body. Finally, the conception of a divine Mind and Will creating the cosmos becomes justifiable, while at the same time the perplexing elements in it which our reasoning mentality refuses to ascribe to an arbitrary fiat of the Creator,

find their explanation as inevitable phenomena of a Consciousness emerging with difficulty out of its opposite — but with the mission to override these contrary phenomena and manifest by a slow and difficult evolution its greater reality and true nature.

But an approach from the material end of Existence cannot give us any certitude of validity for this hypothesis or for that matter for any other explanation of Nature and her procedure: the veil cast by the original Inconscience is too thick for the Mind to pierce and it is behind this veil that is hidden the secret origination of what is manifested; there are seated the truths and powers underlying the phenomena and processes that appear to us in the material front of Nature. To know with greater certitude we must follow the curve of evolving consciousness until it arrives at a height and largeness of self-enlightenment in which the primal secret is self-discovered; for presumably it must evolve, must eventually bring out what was held from the beginning by the occult original Consciousness in things of which it is a gradual manifestation. In Life it would be clearly hopeless to seek for the truth; for Life begins with a formulation in which consciousness is still submental and therefore to us as mental beings appears as inconscient or at most subconscious, and our own investigation into this stage of life studying it from outside cannot be more fruitful of the secret truth than our examination of Matter. Even when mind develops in life, its first functional aspect is a mentality involved in action, in vital and physical needs and preoccupations, in impulses, desires, sensations, emotions, unable to stand back from these things and observe and know them. In the human mind there is the first hope of understanding, discovery, a free comprehension; here we might seem to be coming to the possibility of self-knowledge and world-knowledge. But in fact our mind can at first only observe facts and processes and for the rest it has to make deductions and inferences, to construct hypotheses, to reason, to speculate. In order to discover the secret of Consciousness it would have to know itself and determine the reality of its own being and process; but as in animal life the emerging Consciousness is involved in vital action and movement, so in the human being

mind-consciousness is involved in its own whirl of thoughts, an activity in which it is carried on without rest and in which its very reasonings and speculations are determined in their tendency, trend, conditions by its own temperament, mental turn, past formation and line of energy, inclination, preference, an inborn natural selection,—we do not freely determine our thinking according to the truth of things, it is determined for us by our nature. We can indeed stand back with a certain detachment and observe the workings of the mental Energy in us; but it is still only its process that we see and not any original source of our mental determinations: we can build theories and hypotheses of the process of Mind, but a veil is still there over the inner secret of ourselves, our consciousness, our total nature.

It is only when we follow the yogic process of quieting the mind itself that a profounder result of our self-observation becomes possible. For first we discover that mind is a subtle substance, a general determinate—or generic indeterminate—which mental energy when it operates throws into forms or particular determinations of itself, thoughts, concepts, percepts, mental sentiments, activities of will and reactions of feeling, but which, when the energy is quiescent, can live either in an inert torpor or in an immobile silence and peace of self-existence. Next we see that the determinations of our mind do not all proceed from itself; for waves and currents of mental energy enter into it from outside: these take form in it or appear already formed from some universal Mind or from other minds and are accepted by us as our own thinking. We can perceive also an occult or subliminal mind in ourselves from which thoughts and perceptions and will-impulses and mental feelings arise; we can perceive too higher planes of consciousness from which a superior mind energy works through us or upon us. Finally we discover that that which observes all this is a mental being supporting the mind substance and mind energy; without this presence, their upholder and source of sanctions, they could not exist or operate. This mental being or Purusha first appears as a silent witness and, if that were all, we would have to accept the determinations of mind as a phenomenal activity imposed upon

the being by Nature, by Prakriti, or else as a creation presented to it by Prakriti, a world of thought which Nature constructs and offers to the observing Purusha. But afterwards we find that the Purusha, the mental being, can depart from its posture of a silent or accepting Witness; it can become the source of reactions, accept, reject, even rule and regulate, become the giver of the command, the knower. A knowledge also arises that this mind-substance manifests the mental being, is its own expressive substance and the mental energy is its own consciousness-force, so that it is reasonable to conclude that all mind determinations arise from the being of the Purusha. But this conclusion is complicated by the fact that from another view-point our personal mind seems to be little more than a formation of universal Mind, an engine for the reception, modification, propagation of cosmic thought-waves, idea-currents, will-suggestions, waves of feeling, sense-suggestions, form-suggestions. It has no doubt its own already realised expression, predispositions, propensities, personal temperament and nature; what comes from the universal can only find a place there if it is accepted and assimilated into the self-expression of the individual mental being, the personal Prakriti of the Purusha. But still, in view of these complexities, the question remains entire whether all this evolution and action is a phenomenal creation by some universal Energy presented to the mental being or an activity imposed by Mind-Energy on the Purusha's indeterminate, perhaps indeterminable existence, or whether the whole is something predetermined by some dynamic truth of Self within and only manifested on the mind surface. To know that we would have to touch or to enter into a cosmic state of being and consciousness to which the totality of things and their integral principle would be better manifest than to our limited mind experience.

Overmind consciousness is such a state or principle beyond individual mind, beyond even universal mind in the Ignorance; it carries in itself a first direct and masterful cognition of cosmic truth: here then we might hope to understand something of the original working of things, get some insight into the fundamental movements of cosmic Nature. One thing indeed becomes clear;

it is self-evident here that both the individual and the cosmos come from a transcendent Reality which takes form in them: the mind and life of the individual being, its self in nature must therefore be a partial self-expression of the cosmic Being and, both through that and directly, a self-expression of the transcendent Reality,—a conditional and half-veiled expression it may be, but still that is its significance. But also we see that what the expression shall be is also determined by the individual himself: only what he can in his nature receive, assimilate, formulate, his portion of the cosmic being or of the Reality, can find shape in his mind and life and physical parts; something that derives from the Reality, something that is in the cosmos he expresses, but in the terms of his own self-expression, in the terms of his own nature. But the original question set out for us by the phenomenon of the universe is not solved by the Overmind knowledge,—the question, in this case, whether the building of thought, experience, world of perceptions of the mental Person, the mind Purusha, is truly a self-expression, a self-determination proceeding from some truth of his own spiritual being, a manifestation of that truth's dynamic possibilities, or whether it is not rather a creation or construction presented to him by Nature, by Prakriti, and only in the sense of being individualised in his personal formation of that Nature can it be said to be his own or dependent on him; or, again, it might be a play of a cosmic Imagination, a fantasia of the Infinite imposed on the blank indeterminable of his own eternal pure existence. These are the three views of creation that seem to have an equal chance of being right, and mind is incapable of definitely deciding between them; for each view is armed with its own mental logic and its appeal to intuition and experience. Overmind seems to add to the perplexity, for the overmental view of things allows each possibility to formulate itself in its own independent right and realise its own existence in cognition, in dynamic self-presentation, in substantiating experience.

In Overmind, in all the higher ranges of the mind, we find recurring the dichotomy of a pure silent self without feature or qualities or relations, self-existent, self-poised, self-sufficient,

and the mighty dynamis of a determinative knowledge-power, of a creative consciousness and force which precipitates itself into the forms of the universe. This opposition which is yet a collocation, as if these two were correlatives or complementaries, although apparent contradictions of each other, sublimates itself into the coexistence of an impersonal Brahman without qualities, a fundamental divine Reality free from all relations or determinates, and a Brahman with infinite qualities, a fundamental divine Reality who is the source and container and master of all relations and determinations—Nirguna, Saguna. If we pursue the Nirguna into a farthest possible self-experience, we arrive at a supreme Absolute void of all relations and determinations, the ineffable first and last word of existence. If we enter through the Saguna into some ultimate possible of experience, we arrive at a divine Absolute, a personal supreme and omnipresent Godhead, transcendent as well as universal, an infinite Master of all relations and determinations who can uphold in his being a million universes and pervade each with a single ray of his self-light and a single degree of his ineffable existence. The Overmind consciousness maintains equally these two truths of the Eternal which face the mind as mutually exclusive alternatives; it admits both as supreme aspects of one Reality: somewhere, then, behind them there must be a still greater Transcendence which originates them or upholds them both in its supreme Eternity. But what can that be of which such opposites are equal truths, unless it be an original indeterminable Mystery of which any knowledge, any understanding by the mind is impossible? We can know it indeed to some degree, in some kind of experience or realisation, by its aspects, powers, constant series of fundamental negatives and positives through which we have to pursue it, independently in either or integrally in both together; but in the last resort it seems to escape even from the highest mentality and remain unknowable.

But if the supreme Absolute is indeed a pure Indeterminable, then no creation, no manifestation, no universe is possible. And yet the universe exists. What then is it that creates this contradiction, is able to effect the impossible, bring this insoluble

riddle of self-division into existence? A Power of some kind it must be, and since the Absolute is the sole reality, the one origin of all things, this Power must proceed from it, must have some relation with it, a connection, a dependence. For if it is quite other than the supreme Reality, a cosmic Imagination imposing its determinations on the eternal blank of the Indeterminable, then the sole existence of an absolute Parabrahman is no longer admissible; there is then a dualism at the source of things—not substantially different from the Sankhya dualism of Soul and Nature. If it is a Power, the sole Power indeed, of the Absolute, we have this logical impossibility that the existence of the Supreme Being and the Power of his existence are entirely opposite to each other, two supreme contradictions; for Brahman is free from all possibility of relations and determinations, but Maya is a creative Imagination imposing these very things upon It, an originator of relations and determinations of which Brahman must necessarily be the supporter and witness,—to the logical reason an inadmissible formula. If it is accepted, it can only be as a suprarational mystery, something neither real nor unreal, inexplicable in its nature, *anirvacanīya*. But the difficulties are so great that it can be accepted only if it imposes itself irresistibly as the inevitable ultimate, the end and summit of metaphysical inquiry and spiritual experience. For even if all things are illusory creations, they must have at least a subjective existence and they can exist nowhere except in the consciousness of the Sole Existence; they are then subjective determinations of the Indeterminable. If, on the contrary, the determinations of this Power are real creations, out of what are they determined, what is their substance? It is not possible that they are made out of a Nothing, a Non-Existence other than the Absolute; for that will erect a new dualism, a great positive Zero over against the greater indeterminable x we have supposed to be the one Reality. It is evident therefore that the Reality cannot be a rigid Indeterminable. Whatever is created must be of it and in it, and what is of the substance of the utterly Real must itself be real: a vast baseless negation of reality purporting to be real cannot be the sole outcome of the eternal Truth, the Infinite

Existence. It is perfectly understandable that the Absolute is and must be indeterminable in the sense that it cannot be limited by any determination or any sum of possible determinations, but not in the sense that it is incapable of self-determination. The Supreme Existence cannot be incapable of creating true self-determinations of its being, incapable of upholding a real self-creation or manifestation in its self-existent infinite.

Overmind, then, gives us no final and positive solution; it is in a supramental cognition beyond it that we are left to seek for an answer. A Supramental Truth-consciousness is at once the self-awareness of the Infinite and Eternal and a power of self-determination inherent in that self-awareness; the first is its foundation and status, the second is its power of being, the dynamis of its self-existence. All that a timeless eternity of self-awareness sees in itself as truth of being, the conscious power of its being manifests in Time-eternity. To Supermind therefore the Supreme is not a rigid Indeterminable, an all-negating Absolute; an infinite of being complete to itself in its own immutable purity of existence, its sole power a pure consciousness able only to dwell on the being's changeless eternity, on the immobile delight of its sheer self-existence, is not the whole Reality. The Infinite of Being must also be an Infinite of Power; containing in itself an eternal repose and quiescence, it must also be capable of an eternal action and creation: but this too must be an action in itself, a creation out of its own self eternal and infinite, since there could be nothing else out of which it could create; any basis of creation seeming to be other than itself must be still really in itself and of itself and could not be something foreign to its existence. An infinite Power cannot be solely a Force resting in a pure inactive sameness, an immutable quiescence; it must have in it endless powers of its being and energy: an infinite Consciousness must hold within it endless truths of its own self-awareness. These in action would appear to our cognition as aspects of its being, to our spiritual sense as powers and movements of its dynamis, to our aesthetics as instruments and formulations of its delight of existence. Creation would then be a self-manifestation: it would be an ordered deploying of the infinite possibilities of the Infinite.

But every possibility implies a truth of being behind it, a reality in the Existential; for without that supporting truth there could not be any possibles. In manifestation a fundamental reality of the Existential would appear to our cognition as a fundamental spiritual aspect of the Divine Absolute; out of it would emerge all its possible manifestations, its innate dynamisms: these again must create or rather bring out of a non-manifest latency their own significant forms, expressive powers, native processes; their own being would develop their own becoming, *svarūpa*, *svabhāva*. This then would be the complete process of creation: but in our mind we do not see the complete process, we see only possibilities that determine themselves into actualities and, though we infer or conjecture, we are not sure of a necessity, a predetermining truth, an imperative behind them which capacitates the possibilities, decides the actualities. Our mind is an observer of actuals, an inventor or discoverer of possibilities, but not a seer of the occult imperatives that necessitate the movements and forms of a creation: for in the front of universal existence there are only forces determining results by some balance of the meeting of their powers; the original Determinant or determinants, if it or they exist, are veiled from us by our ignorance. But to the supramental Truth-Consciousness these imperatives would be apparent, would be the very stuff of its seeing and experience: in the supramental creative process the imperatives, the nexus of possibilities, the resultant actualities would be a single whole, an indivisible movement; the possibilities and actualities would carry in themselves the inevitability of their originating imperative,—all their results, all their creation would be the body of the Truth which they manifest in predetermined significant forms and powers of the All-Existence.

Our fundamental cognition of the Absolute, our substantial spiritual experience of it is the intuition or the direct experience of an infinite and eternal Existence, an infinite and eternal Consciousness, an infinite and eternal Delight of Existence. In overmental and mental cognition it is possible to make discrete and even to separate this original unity into three self-existent aspects: for we can experience a pure causeless eternal Bliss so

intense that we are that alone; existence, consciousness seem to be swallowed up in it, no longer ostensibly in presence; a similar experience of pure and absolute consciousness and a similar exclusive identity with it is possible, and there can be too a like identifying experience of pure and absolute existence. But to a supermind cognition these three are always an inseparable Trinity, even though one can stand in front of the others and manifest its own spiritual determinates; for each has its primal aspects or its inherent self-formations, but all of these together are original to the triune Absolute. Love, Joy and Beauty are the fundamental determinates of the Divine Delight of Existence, and we can see at once that these are of the very stuff and nature of that Delight: they are not alien impositions on the being of the Absolute or creations supported by it but outside it; they are truths of its being, native to its consciousness, powers of its force of existence. So too is it with the fundamental determinates of the absolute consciousness,—knowledge and will; they are truths and powers of the original Consciousness-Force and are inherent in its very nature. This authenticity becomes still more evident when we regard the fundamental spiritual determinates of the absolute Existence; they are its triune powers, necessary first postulates for all its self-creation or manifestation,—Self, the Divine, the Conscious Being; Atman, Ishwara, Purusha.

If we pursue the process of self-manifestation farther, we shall see that each of these aspects or powers reposes in its first action on a triad or trinity; for Knowledge inevitably takes its stand in a trinity of the Knower, the Known and Knowledge; Love finds itself in a trinity of the Lover, the Beloved and Love; Will is self-fulfilled in a trinity of the Lord of the Will, the object of the Will and the executive Force; Joy has its original and utter gladness in a trinity of the Enjoyer, the Enjoyed and the Delight that unites them; Self as inevitably appears and finds its manifestation in a trinity of Self as subject, Self as object and self-awareness holding together Self as subject-object. These and other primal powers and aspects assume their status among the fundamental spiritual self-determinations of the Infinite; all others are determinates of the fundamental spiritual

determinates, significant relations, significant powers, significant forms of being, consciousness, force, delight,—energies, conditions, ways, lines of the truth-process of the Consciousness-Force of the Eternal, imperatives, possibilities, actualities of its manifestation. All this deploying of powers and possibilities and their inherent consequences is held together by supermind cognition in an intimate oneness; it keeps them founded consciously on the original Truth and maintained in the harmony of the truths they manifest and are in their nature. There is here no imposition of imaginations, no arbitrary creation, neither is there any division, fragmentation, irreconcilable contrariety or disparateness. But in Mind of Ignorance these phenomena appear; for there a limited consciousness sees and deals with everything as if all were separate objects of cognition or separate existences and it seeks so to know, possess and enjoy them and gets mastery over them or suffers their mastery: but, behind its ignorance, what the soul in it is seeking for is the Reality, the Truth, the Consciousness, the Power, the Delight by which they exist; the mind has to learn to awaken to this true seeking and true knowledge veiled within itself, to the Reality from which all things hold their truth, to the Consciousness of which all consciousnesses are entities, to the Power from which all get what force of being they have within them, to the Delight of which all delights are partial figures. This limitation of consciousness and this awakening to the integrality of consciousness are also a process of self-manifestation, are a self-determination of the Spirit; even when contrary to the Truth in their appearances, the things of the limited consciousness have in their deeper sense and reality a divine significance; they too bring out a truth or a possibility of the Infinite. Of some such nature, as far as it can be expressed in mental formulas, would be the supramental cognition of things which sees the one Truth everywhere and would so arrange its account to us of our existence, its report of the secret of creation and the significance of the universe.

At the same time indeterminability is also a necessary element in our conception of the Absolute and in our spiritual experience: this is the other side of the supramental regard on

being and on things. The Absolute is not limitable or definable by any one determination or by any sum of determinations; on the other side, it is not bound down to an indeterminable vacancy of pure existence. On the contrary, it is the source of all determinations: its indeterminability is the natural, the necessary condition both of its infinity of being and its infinity of power of being; it can be infinitely all things because it is no thing in particular and exceeds any definable totality. It is this essential indeterminability of the Absolute that translates itself into our consciousness through the fundamental negating positives of our spiritual experience, the immobile immutable Self, the Nirguna Brahman, the Eternal without qualities, the pure featureless One Existence, the Impersonal, the Silence void of activities, the Non-being, the Ineffable and the Unknowable. On the other side it is the essence and source of all determinations, and this dynamic essentiality manifests to us through the fundamental affirming positives in which the Absolute equally meets us; for it is the Self that becomes all things, the Saguna Brahman, the Eternal with infinite qualities, the One who is the Many, the infinite Person who is the source and foundation of all persons and personalities, the Lord of creation, the Word, the Master of all works and action; it is that which being known all is known: these affirmatives correspond to those negatives. For it is not possible in a supralental cognition to split asunder the two sides of the One Existence,—even to speak of them as sides is excessive, for they are in each other, their coexistence or one-existence is eternal and their powers sustaining each other found the self-manifestation of the Infinite.

But neither is the separate cognition of them entirely an illusion or a complete error of the Ignorance; this too has its validity for spiritual experience. For these primary aspects of the Absolute are fundamental spiritual determinates or indeterminates answering at this spiritual end or beginning to the general determinates or generic indeterminates of the material end or inconscient beginning of the descending and ascending Manifestation. Those that seem to us negative carry in them the freedom of the Infinite from limitation by its own determinations; their

realisation disengages the spirit within, liberates us and enables us to participate in this supremacy: thus, when once we pass into or through the experience of immutable self, we are no longer bound and limited in the inner status of our being by the determinations and creations of Nature. On the other, the dynamic side, this original freedom enables the Consciousness to create a world of determinations without being bound by it: it enables it also to withdraw from what it has created and re-create in a higher truth-formula. It is on this freedom that is based the spirit's power of infinite variation of the truth-possibilities of existence and also its capacity to create, without tying itself to its workings, any and every form of Necessity or system of order: the individual being too by experience of these negating absolutes can participate in that dynamic liberty, can pass from one order of self-formulation to a higher order. At the stage when from the mental it has to move towards its supramental status, one most liberatingly helpful, if not indispensable experience that may intervene is the entry into a total Nirvana of mentality and mental ego, a passage into the silence of the Spirit. In any case, a realisation of the pure Self must always precede the transition to that mediating eminence of the consciousness from which a clear vision of the ascending and descending stairs of manifested existence is commanded and the possession of the free power of ascent and descent becomes a spiritual prerogative. An independent completeness of identity with each of the primal aspects and powers—not narrowing as in the mind into a sole engrossing experience seeming to be final and integral, for that would be incompatible with the realisation of the unity of all aspects and powers of existence—is a capacity inherent in consciousness in the Infinite; that indeed is the base and justification of the overmind cognition and its will to carry each aspect, each power, each possibility to its independent fullness. But the Supermind keeps always and in every status or condition the spiritual realisation of the Unity of all; the intimate presence of that unity is there even within the completest grasp of each thing, each state given its whole delight of itself, power and value: there is thus no losing sight

of the affirmative aspects even when there is the full acceptance of the truth of the negative. The Overmind keeps still the sense of this underlying Unity; that is for it the secure base of the independent experience. In Mind the knowledge of the unity of all aspects is lost on the surface, the consciousness is plunged into engrossing, exclusive separate affirmations; but there too, even in the Mind's ignorance, the total reality still remains behind the exclusive absorption and can be recovered in the form of a profound mental intuition or else in the idea or sentiment of an underlying truth of integral oneness; in the spiritual mind this can develop into an ever-present experience.

All aspects of the omnipresent Reality have their fundamental truth in the Supreme Existence. Thus even the aspect or power of Inconscience, which seems to be an opposite, a negation of the eternal Reality, yet corresponds to a Truth held in itself by the self-aware and all-conscious Infinite. It is, when we look closely at it, the Infinite's power of plunging the consciousness into a trance of self-involution, a self-oblivion of the Spirit veiled in its own abysses where nothing is manifest but all inconceivably is and can emerge from that ineffable latency. In the heights of Spirit this state of cosmic or infinite trance-sleep appears to our cognition as a luminous uttermost Superconsciousness: at the other end of being it offers itself to cognition as the Spirit's potency of presenting to itself the opposites of its own truths of being — an abyss of non-existence, a profound Night of inconscience, a fathomless swoon of insensibility from which yet all forms of being, consciousness and delight of existence can manifest themselves, — but they appear in limited terms, in slowly emerging and increasing self-formulations, even in contrary terms of themselves; it is the play of a secret all-being, all-delight, all-knowledge, but it observes the rules of its own self-oblivion, self-opposition, self-limitation until it is ready to surpass it. This is the Inconscience and Ignorance that we see at work in the material universe. It is not a denial, it is one term, one formula of the infinite and eternal Existence.

It is important to observe here the sense that is acquired in such a total cognition of cosmic being by the phenomenon

of the Ignorance, its assigned place in the spiritual economy of the universe. If all that we experience were an imposition, an unreal creation in the Absolute, both cosmic and individual existence would be in their very nature an Ignorance; the sole real knowledge would be the indeterminable self-awareness of the Absolute. If all were the erection of a temporal and phenomenal creation over against the reality of the witnessing timeless Eternal and if the creation were not a manifestation of the Reality but an arbitrary self-effective cosmic construction, that too would be a sort of imposition. Our knowledge of the creation would be the knowledge of a temporary structure of evanescent consciousness and being, a dubious Becoming that passes across the vision of the Eternal, not a knowledge of Reality; that too would be an Ignorance. But if all is a manifestation of the Reality and itself real by the constituting immanence, the substantiating essence and presence of the Reality, then the awareness of individual being and world-being would be in its spiritual origin and nature a play of the infinite self-knowledge and all-knowledge: ignorance could be only a subordinate movement, a suppressed or restricted cognition or a partial and imperfect evolving knowledge with the true and total self-awareness and all-awareness concealed both in it and behind it. It would be a temporary phenomenon, not the cause and essence of cosmic existence; its inevitable consummation would be a return of the spirit, not out of the cosmos to a sole supracosmic self-awareness, but even in the cosmos itself to an integral self-knowledge and all-knowledge.

It might be objected that the supramental cognition is, after all, not the final truth of things. Beyond the supramental plane of consciousness which is an intermediate step from overmind and mind to the complete experience of Sachchidananda, are the greatest heights of the manifested Spirit: here surely existence would not at all be based on the determination of the One in multiplicity, it would manifest solely and simply a pure identity in oneness. But the supramental truth-consciousness would not be absent from these planes, for it is an inherent power of Sachchidananda: the difference would be that the determinations

would not be demarcations, they would be plastic, interfused, each a boundless finite. For there all is in each and each is in all radically and integrally,—there would be to the utmost a fundamental awareness of identity, a mutual inclusion and interpenetration of consciousness: knowledge as we envisage it would not exist, because it would not be needed, since all would be direct action of consciousness in being itself, identical, intimate, intrinsically self-aware and all-aware. But still relations of consciousness, relations of mutual delight of existence, relations of self-power of being with self-power of being would not be excluded; these highest spiritual planes would not be a field of blank indeterminability, a vacancy of pure existence.

It might be said again that, even so, in Sachchidananda itself at least, above all worlds of manifestation, there could be nothing but the self-awareness of pure existence and consciousness and a pure delight of existence. Or, indeed, this triune being itself might well be only a trinity of original spiritual self-determinations of the Infinite; these too, like all determinations, would cease to exist in the ineffable Absolute. But our position is that these must be inherent truths of the supreme being; their utmost reality must be pre-existent in the Absolute even if they are ineffably other there than what they are in the spiritual mind's highest possible experience. The Absolute is not a mystery of infinite blankness nor a supreme sum of negations; nothing can manifest that is not justified by some self-power of the original and omnipresent Reality.

Chapter II

Brahman, Purusha, Ishwara — Maya, Prakriti, Shakti

It is there in beings indivisible and as if divided. *Gita.*¹

Brahman, the Truth, the Knowledge, the Infinite.
*Taittiriya Upanishad.*²

Know Purusha and Prakriti to be both eternal without beginning.
*Gita.*³

One must know Maya as Prakriti and the Master of Maya as
the great Lord of all. *Swetasvatara Upanishad.*⁴

It is the might of the Godhead in the world that turns the
wheel of Brahman. Him one must know, the supreme Lord of
all lords, the supreme Godhead above all godheads. Supreme
too is his Shakti and manifold the natural working of her
knowledge and her force. One Godhead, occult in all beings,
the inner Self of all beings, the all-pervading, absolute without
qualities, the overseer of all actions, the witness, the knower.
*Swetasvatara Upanishad.*⁵

THREE is then a supreme Reality eternal, absolute and infinite. Because it is absolute and infinite, it is in its essence indeterminable. It is indefinable and inconceivable by finite and defining Mind; it is ineffable by a mind-created speech; it is describable neither by our negations, *neti neti*,— for we cannot limit it by saying it is not this, it is not that,— nor by our affirmations, for we cannot fix it by saying it is this,

¹ XIII. 17. ² II. 1. ³ XIII. 20. ⁴ IV. 10. ⁵ VI. 1, 7, 8, 11.

it is that, *iti iti*. And yet, though in this way unknowable to us, it is not altogether and in every way unknowable; it is self-evident to itself and, although inexpressible, yet self-evident to a knowledge by identity of which the spiritual being in us must be capable; for that spiritual being is in its essence and its original and intimate reality not other than this Supreme Existence.

But although thus indeterminable to Mind, because of its absoluteness and infinity, we discover that this Supreme and Eternal Infinite determines itself to our consciousness in the universe by real and fundamental truths of its being which are beyond the universe and in it and are the very foundation of its existence. These truths present themselves to our conceptual cognition as the fundamental aspects in which we see and experience the omnipresent Reality. In themselves they are seized directly, not by intellectual understanding but by a spiritual intuition, a spiritual experience in the very substance of our consciousness; but they can also be caught at in conception by a large and plastic idea and can be expressed in some sort by a plastic speech which does not insist too much on rigid definition or limit the wideness and subtlety of the idea. In order to express this experience or this idea with any nearness a language has to be created which is at once intuitively metaphysical and revealingly poetic, admitting significant and living images as the vehicle of a close, suggestive and vivid indication,—a language such as we find hammered out into a subtle and pregnant massiveness in the Veda and the Upanishads. In the ordinary tongue of metaphysical thought we have to be content with a distant indication, an approximation by abstractions, which may still be of some service to our intellect, for it is this kind of speech which suits our method of logical and rational understanding; but if it is to be of real service, the intellect must consent to pass out of the bounds of a finite logic and accustom itself to the logic of the Infinite. On this condition alone, by this way of seeing and thinking, it ceases to be paradoxical or futile to speak of the Ineffable: but if we insist on applying a finite logic to the Infinite, the omnipresent Reality will escape us and we shall grasp instead an abstract shadow, a dead form petrified into speech or a hard

incisive graph which speaks of the Reality but does not express it. Our way of knowing must be appropriate to that which is to be known; otherwise we achieve only a distant speculation, a figure of knowledge and not veritable knowledge.

The supreme Truth-aspect which thus manifests itself to us is an eternal and infinite and absolute self-existence, self-awareness, self-delight of being; this founds all things and secretly supports and pervades all things. This Self-existence reveals itself again in three terms of its essential nature,—self, conscious being or spirit, and God or the Divine Being. The Indian terms are more satisfactory,—Brahman the Reality is Atman, Purusha, Ishwara; for these terms grew from a root of Intuition and, while they have a comprehensive preciseness, are capable of a plastic application which avoids both vagueness in the use and the rigid snare of a too limiting intellectual concept. The Supreme Brahman is that which in Western metaphysics is called the Absolute: but Brahman is at the same time the omnipresent Reality in which all that is relative exists as its forms or its movements; this is an Absolute which takes all relativities in its embrace. The Upanishads affirm that all this is the Brahman; Mind is Brahman, Life is Brahman, Matter is Brahman; addressing Vayu, the Lord of Air, of Life, it is said “O Vayu, thou art manifest Brahman”; and, pointing to man and beast and bird and insect, each separately is identified with the One,—“O Brahman, thou art this old man and boy and girl, this bird, this insect.” Brahman is the Consciousness that knows itself in all that exists; Brahman is the Force that sustains the power of God and Titan and Demon, the Force that acts in man and animal and the forms and energies of Nature; Brahman is the Ananda, the secret Bliss of existence which is the ether of our being and without which none could breathe or live. Brahman is the inner Soul in all; it has taken a form in correspondence with each created form which it inhabits. The Lord of Beings is that which is conscious in the conscious being, but he is also the Conscious in inconscient things, the One who is master and in control of the many that are passive in the hands of Force-Nature. He is the Timeless and Time; He is Space and all that

is in Space; He is Causality and the cause and the effect: He is the thinker and his thought, the warrior and his courage, the gambler and his dice-throw. All realities and all aspects and all semblances are the Brahman; Brahman is the Absolute, the Transcendent and incommunicable, the Supracosmic Existence that sustains the cosmos, the Cosmic Self that upholds all beings, but It is too the self of each individual: the soul or psychic entity is an eternal portion of the Ishwara; it is his supreme Nature or Consciousness-Force that has become the living being in a world of living beings. The Brahman alone is, and because of It all are, for all are the Brahman; this Reality is the reality of everything that we see in Self and Nature. Brahman, the Ishwara, is all this by his Yoga-Maya, by the power of his Consciousness-Force put out in self-manifestation: he is the Conscious Being, Soul, Spirit, Purusha, and it is by his Nature, the force of his conscious self-existence that he is all things; he is the Ishwara, the omniscient and omnipotent All-ruler, and it is by his Shakti, his conscious Power, that he manifests himself in Time and governs the universe. These and similar statements taken together are all-comprehensive: it is possible for the mind to cut and select, to build a closed system and explain away all that does not fit within it; but it is on the complete and many-sided statement that we must take our stand if we have to acquire an integral knowledge.

An absolute, eternal and infinite Self-existence, Self-awareness, Self-delight of being that secretly supports and pervades the universe even while it is also beyond it, is, then, the first truth of spiritual experience. But this truth of being has at once an impersonal and a personal aspect; it is not only Existence, it is the one Being absolute, eternal and infinite. As there are three fundamental aspects in which we meet this Reality,—Self, Conscious Being or Spirit and God, the Divine Being, or to use the Indian terms, the absolute and omnipresent Reality, Brahman, manifest to us as Atman, Purusha, Ishwara,—so too its power of Consciousness appears to us in three aspects: it is the self-force of that consciousness conceptively creative of all things, Maya; it is Prakriti, Nature or Force made dynamically

executive, working out all things under the witnessing eye of the Conscious Being, the Self or Spirit; it is the conscious Power of the Divine Being, Shakti, which is both conceptively creative and dynamically executive of all the divine workings. These three aspects and their powers base and comprise the whole of existence and all Nature and, taken together as a single whole, they reconcile the apparent disparateness and incompatibility of the supracosmic Transcendence, the cosmic universality and the separateness of our individual existence; the Absolute, cosmic Nature and ourselves are linked in oneness by this triune aspect of the one Reality. For taken by itself the existence of the Absolute, the Supreme Brahman, would be a contradiction of the relative universe and our own real existence would be incompatible with its sole incommunicable Reality. But the Brahman is at the same time omnipresent in all relativities; it is the Absolute independent of all relatives, the Absolute basing all relatives, the Absolute governing, pervading, constituting all relatives; there is nothing that is not the omnipresent Reality. In observing the triple aspect and the triple power we come to see how this is possible.

If we look at this picture of the Self-Existence and its works as a unitary unlimited whole of vision, it stands together and imposes itself by its convincing totality: but to the analysis of the logical intellect it offers an abundance of difficulties, such as all attempts to erect a logical system out of a perception of an illimitable Existence must necessarily create; for any such endeavour must either effect consistency by an arbitrary sectioning of the complex truth of things or else by its comprehensiveness become logically untenable. For we see that the Indeterminable determines itself as infinite and finite, the Immutable admits a constant mutability and endless differences, the One becomes an innumerable multitude, the Impersonal creates or supports personality, is itself a Person; the Self has a nature and is yet other than its nature; Being turns into becoming and yet it is always itself and other than its becomings; the Universal individualises itself and the Individual universalises himself; Brahman is at once void of qualities and capable of infinite qualities, the

Lord and Doer of works, yet a non-doer and a silent witness of the workings of Nature. If we look carefully at these workings of Nature, once we put aside the veil of familiarity and our unthinking acquiescence in the process of things as natural because so they always happen, we discover that all she does in whole or in parts is a miracle, an act of some incomprehensible magic. The being of the Self-existence and the world that has appeared in it are, each of them and both together, a suprarational mystery. There seems to us to be a reason in things because the processes of the physical finite are consistent to our view and their law determinable, but this reason in things, when closely examined, seems to stumble at every moment against the irrational or infrarational and the suprarational: the consistency, the determinability of process seems to lessen rather than increase as we pass from matter to life and from life to mentality; if the finite consents to some extent to look as if it were rational, the infinitesimal refuses to be bound by the same laws and the infinite is unseizable. As for the action of the universe and its significance, it escapes us altogether; if Self, God or Spirit there be, his dealings with the world and us are incomprehensible, offer no clue that we can follow. God and Nature and even ourselves move in a mysterious way which is only partially and at points intelligible, but as a whole escapes our comprehension. All the works of Maya look like the production of a suprarational magical Power which arranges things according to its wisdom or its phantasy, but a wisdom which is not ours and a phantasy which baffles our imagination. The Spirit that manifests things or manifests itself in them so obscurely, looks to our reason like a Magician and his power or Maya a creative magic: but magic can create illusions or it can create astounding realities, and we find it difficult to decide which of these suprarational processes faces us in this universe.

But, in fact, the cause of this impression must necessarily be sought not in anything illusory or fantastic in the Supreme or the universal Self-existence, but in our own inability to seize the supreme clue to its manifold existence or discover the secret plan and pattern of its action. The Self-existent is the Infinite and

its way of being and of action must be the way of the Infinite, but our consciousness is limited, our reason built upon things finite: it is irrational to suppose that a finite consciousness and reason can be a measure of the Infinite; this smallness cannot judge that Immensity; this poverty bound to a limited use of its scanty means cannot conceive the opulent management of those riches; an ignorant half-knowledge cannot follow the motions of an All-Knowledge. Our reasoning is based upon our experience of the finite operations of physical Nature, on an incomplete observation and uncertain understanding of something that acts within limits; it has organised on that basis certain conceptions which it seeks to make general and universal, and whatever contradicts or departs from these conceptions it regards as irrational, false or inexplicable. But there are different orders of the reality and the conceptions, measures, standards suitable to one need not be applicable to another order. Our physical being is built first upon an aggregate of infinitesimals, electrons, atoms, molecules, cells; but the law of action of these infinitesimals does not explain all the physical workings even of the human body, much less can they cover all the law and process of action of man's supraphysical parts, his life movements and mind movements and soul movements. In the body finites have been formed with their own habits, properties, characteristic ways of action; the body itself is a finite which is not a mere aggregate of these smaller finites which it uses as parts, organs, constituent instruments of its operations; it has developed a being and has a general law which surpasses its dependence upon these elements or constituents. The life and mind again are supraphysical finites with a different and more subtle mode of operation of their own, and no dependence on the physical parts for instrumentation can annul their intrinsic character; there is something more and other in our vital and mental being and vital and mental forces than the functioning of a physical body. But, again, each finite is in its reality or has behind it an Infinite which has built and supports and directs the finite it has made as its self-figure; so that even the being and law and process of the finite cannot be totally understood without a knowledge of that which is occult within or

behind it: our finite knowledge, conceptions, standards may be valid within their limits, but they are incomplete and relative. A law founded upon an observation of what is divided in Space and Time cannot be confidently applied to the being and action of the Indivisible; not only it cannot be applied to the spaceless and timeless Infinite, but it cannot be applied even to a Time Infinite or a Space Infinite. A law and process binding for our superficial being need not be binding on what is occult within us. Again our intellect, founding itself on reason, finds it difficult to deal with what is infrarational; life is infrarational and we find that our intellectual reason applying itself to life is constantly forcing upon it a control, a measure, an artificial procrustean rule that either succeeds in killing or petrifying life or constrains it into rigid forms and conventions that lame and imprison its capacity or ends by a bungle, a revolt of life, a decay or disruption of the systems and superstructures built upon it by our intelligence. An instinct, an intuition is needed which the intellect has not at its command and does not always listen to when it comes in of itself to help the mental working. But still more difficult must it be for our reason to understand and deal with the suprarational; the suprarational is the realm of the spirit, and in the largeness, subtlety, profundity, complexity of its movement the reason is lost; here intuition and inner experience alone are the guide, or, if there is any other, it is that of which intuition is only a sharp edge, an intense projected ray,—the final enlightenment must come from the suprarational Truth-consciousness, from a supramental vision and knowledge.

But the being and action of the Infinite must not be therefore regarded as if it were a magic void of all reason; there is, on the contrary, a greater reason in all the operations of the Infinite, but it is not a mental or intellectual, it is a spiritual and supramental reason: there is a logic in it, because there are relations and connections infallibly seen and executed; what is magic to our finite reason is the logic of the Infinite. It is a greater reason, a greater logic because it is more vast, subtle, complex in its operations: it comprehends all the data which our observation fails to seize, it deduces from them results which neither our deduction nor

induction can anticipate, because our conclusions and inferences have a meagre foundation and are fallible and brittle. If we observe a happening, we judge and explain it from the result and from a glimpse of its most external constituents, circumstances or causes; but each happening is the outcome of a complex nexus of forces which we do not and cannot observe, because all forces are to us invisible,— but they are not invisible to the spiritual vision of the Infinite: some of them are actualities working to produce or occasion a new actuality, some are possibles that are near to the pre-existent actuals and in a way included in their aggregate; but there can intervene always new possibilities that suddenly become dynamic potentials and add themselves to the nexus, and behind all are imperatives or an imperative which these possibilities are labouring to actualise. Moreover, out of the same nexus of forces different results are possible; what will come out of them is determined by a sanction which was no doubt waiting and ready all the time but seems to come in rapidly to intervene and alter everything, a decisive divine imperative. All this our reason cannot grasp because it is the instrument of an ignorance with a very limited vision and a small stock of accumulated and not always very certain or reliable knowledge and because too it has no means of direct awareness; for this is the difference between intuition and intellect, that intuition is born of a direct awareness while intellect is an indirect action of a knowledge which constructs itself with difficulty out of the unknown from signs and indications and gathered data. But what is not evident to our reason and senses, is self-evident to the Infinite Consciousness, and, if there is a Will of the Infinite, it must be a Will that acts in this full knowledge and is the perfect spontaneous result of a total self-evidence. It is neither a hampered evolutionary Force bound by what it has evolved nor an imaginative Will acting in the void upon a free caprice; it is the truth of the Infinite affirming itself in the determinations of the finite.

It is evident that such a Consciousness and Will need not act in harmony with the conclusions of our limited reason or according to a procedure familiar to it and approved of by our

constructed notions or in subjection to an ethical reason working for a limited and fragmentary good; it might and does admit things deemed by our reason irrational and unethical because that was necessary for the final and total Good and for the working out of a cosmic purpose. What seems to us irrational or reprehensible in relation to a partial set of facts, motives, desiderata might be perfectly rational and approvable in relation to a much vaster motive and totality of data and desiderata. Reason with its partial vision sets up constructed conclusions which it strives to turn into general rules of knowledge and action and it compels into its rule by some mental device or gets rid of what does not suit with it: an infinite Consciousness would have no such rules, it would have instead large intrinsic truths governing automatically conclusion and result, but adapting them differently and spontaneously to a different total of circumstances, so that by this pliability and free adaptation it might seem to the narrower faculty to have no standards whatever. In the same way, we cannot judge of the principle and dynamic operation of infinite being by the standards of finite existence,—what might be impossible for the one would be normal and self-evidently natural states and motives for the greater freer Reality. It is this that makes the difference between our fragmentary mind consciousness constructing integers out of its fractions and an essential and total consciousness, vision and knowledge. It is not indeed possible, so long as we are compelled to use reason as our main support, for it to abdicate altogether in favour of an undeveloped or half-organised intuition; but it is imperative on us in a consideration of the Infinite and its being and action to enforce on our reason an utmost plasticity and open it to an awareness of the larger states and possibilities of that which we are striving to consider. It will not do to apply our limited and limiting conclusions to That which is illimitable. If we concentrate only on one aspect and treat it as the whole, we illustrate the story of the blind men and the elephant; each of the blind inquirers touched a different part and concluded that the whole animal was some object resembling the part of which he had had the touch. An experience of some one aspect of the

Infinite is valid in itself; but we cannot generalise from it that the Infinite is that alone, nor would it be safe to view the rest of the Infinite in the terms of that aspect and exclude all other view-points of spiritual experience. The Infinite is at once an essentiality, a boundless totality and a multitude; all these have to be known in order to know truly the Infinite. To see the parts alone and the totality not at all or only as a sum of the parts is a knowledge, but also at the same time an ignorance; to see the totality alone and ignore the parts is also a knowledge and at the same time an ignorance, for a part may be greater than the whole because it belongs to the transcendence; to see the essence alone because it takes us back straight towards the transcendence and negate the totality and the parts is a penultimate knowledge, but here too there is a capital ignorance. A whole knowledge must be there and the reason must become plastic enough to look at all sides, all aspects and seek through them for that in which they are one.

Thus too, if we see only the aspect of self, we may concentrate on its static silence and miss the dynamic truth of the Infinite; if we see only the Ishwara, we may seize the dynamic truth but miss the eternal status and the infinite silence, become aware of only dynamic being, dynamic consciousness, dynamic delight of being, but miss the pure existence, pure consciousness, pure bliss of being. If we concentrate on Purusha-Prakriti alone, we may see only the dichotomy of Soul and Nature, Spirit and Matter, and miss their unity. In considering the action of the Infinite we have to avoid the error of the disciple who thought of himself as the Brahman, refused to obey the warning of the elephant-driver to budge from the narrow path and was taken up by the elephant's trunk and removed out of the way; "You are no doubt the Brahman," said the master to his bewildered disciple, "but why did you not obey the driver Brahman and get out of the path of the elephant Brahman?" We must not commit the mistake of emphasising one side of the Truth and concluding from it or acting upon it to the exclusion of all other sides and aspects of the Infinite. The realisation "I am That" is true, but we cannot safely proceed on it unless we realise also that all is

That; our self-existence is a fact, but we must also be aware of other selves, of the same Self in other beings and of That which exceeds both own-self and other-self. The Infinite is one in a multiplicity and its action is only seizable by a supreme Reason which regards all and acts as a one-awareness that observes itself in difference and respects its own differences, so that each thing and each being has its form of essential being and its form of dynamic nature, *svarīpa*, *svadharma*, and all are respected in the total working. The knowledge and action of the Infinite is one in an unbound variability: it would be from the point of view of the infinite Truth equally an error to insist either on a sameness of action in all circumstances or on a diversity of action without any unifying truth and harmony behind the diversity. In our own principle of conduct, if we sought to act in this greater Truth, it would be equally an error to insist on our self alone or to insist on other selves alone; it is the Self of all on which we have to found a unity of action and a total, infinitely plastic yet harmonious diversity of action; for that is the nature of the working of the Infinite.

If we look from this view-point of a larger more plastic reason, taking account of the logic of the Infinite, at the difficulties which meet our intelligence when it tries to conceive the absolute and omnipresent Reality, we shall see that the whole difficulty is verbal and conceptual and not real. Our intelligence looks at its concept of the Absolute and sees that it must be indeterminable and at the same time it sees a world of determinations which emanates from the Absolute and exists in it,—for it can emanate from nowhere else and can exist nowhere else; it is further baffled by the affirmation, also hardly disputable on the premisses, that all these determinates are nothing else than this very indeterminable Absolute. But the contradiction disappears when we understand that the indeterminability is not in its true sense negative, not an imposition of incapacity on the Infinite, but positive, a freedom within itself from limitation by its own determinations and necessarily a freedom from all external determination by anything not itself, since there is no real possibility of such a not-self coming into existence. The Infinite is illimitably

free, free to determine itself infinitely, free from all restraining effect of its own creations. In fact the Infinite does not create, it manifests what is in itself, in its own essence of reality; it is itself that essence of all reality and all realities are powers of that one Reality. The Absolute neither creates nor is created,—in the current sense of making or being made; we can speak of creation only in the sense of the Being becoming in form and movement what it already is in substance and status. Yet we have to emphasise its indeterminability in that special and positive sense, not as a negation but as an indispensable condition of its free infinite self-determination, because without that the Reality would be a fixed eternal determinate or else an indeterminate fixed and bound to a sum of possibilities of determination inherent within it. Its freedom from all limitation, from any binding by its own creation cannot be itself turned into a limitation, an absolute incapacity, a denial of all freedom of self-determination; it is this that would be a contradiction, it would be an attempt to define and limit by negation the infinite and illimitable. Into the central fact of the two sides of the nature of the Absolute, the essential and the self-creative or dynamic, no real contradiction enters; it is only a pure infinite essence that can formulate itself in infinite ways. One statement is complementary to the other, there is no mutual cancellation, no incompatibility; it is only the dual statement of a single inescapable fact by human reason in human language.

The same conciliation occurs everywhere, when we look with a straight and accurate look on the truth of the Reality. In our experience of it we become aware of an Infinite essentially free from all limitation by qualities, properties, features; on the other hand, we are aware of an Infinite teeming with innumerable qualities, properties, features. Here again the statement of illimitable freedom is positive, not negative; it does not negate what we see, but on the contrary provides the indispensable condition for it, it makes possible a free and infinite self-expression in quality and feature. A quality is the character of a power of conscious being; or we may say that the consciousness of being expressing what is in it makes the power it brings out

recognisable by a native stamp on it which we call quality or character. Courage as a quality is such a power of being, it is a certain character of my consciousness expressing a formulated force of my being, bringing out or creating a definite kind of force of my nature in action. So too the power of a drug to cure is its property, a special force of being native to the herb or mineral from which it is produced, and this speciality is determined by the Real-Idea concealed in the involved consciousness which dwells in the plant or mineral; the idea brings out in it what was there at the root of its manifestation and has now come out thus empowered as the force of its being. All qualities, properties, features are such powers of conscious being thus put forth from itself by the Absolute; It has everything within It, It has the free power to put all forth;⁶ yet we cannot define the Absolute as a quality of courage or a power of healing, we cannot even say that these are a characteristic feature of the Absolute, nor can we make up a sum of qualities and say "that is the Absolute". But neither can we speak of the Absolute as a pure blank incapable of manifesting these things; on the contrary, all capacity is there, the powers of all qualities and characters are there inherent within it. The mind is in a difficulty because it has to say, "The Absolute or Infinite is none of these things, these things are not the Absolute or Infinite" and at the same time it has to say, "The Absolute is all these things, they are not something else than That, for That is the sole existence and the all-existence." Here it is evident that it is an undue finiteness of thought conception and verbal expression which creates the difficulty, but there is in reality none; for it would be evidently absurd to say that the Absolute is courage or curing-power, or to say that courage and curing-power are the Absolute, but it would be equally absurd to deny the capacity of the Absolute to put forth courage or curing-power as self-expressions in its manifestation. When the logic of the finite fails us, we have to see with a direct and unbound vision what is behind in the logic of the Infinite. We can then realise

⁶ The word for creation in Sanskrit means a loosing or putting forth of what is in the being.

that the Infinite is infinite in quality, feature, power, but that no sum of qualities, features, powers can describe the Infinite.

We see that the Absolute, the Self, the Divine, the Spirit, the Being is One; the Transcendental is one, the Cosmic is one: but we see also that beings are many and each has a self, a spirit, a like yet different nature. And since the spirit and essence of things is one, we are obliged to admit that all these many must be that One, and it follows that the One is or has become many; but how can the limited or relative be the Absolute and how can man or beast or bird be the Divine Being? But in erecting this apparent contradiction the mind makes a double error. It is thinking in the terms of the mathematical finite unit which is sole in limitation, the one which is less than two and can become two only by division and fragmentation or by addition and multiplication; but this is an infinite Oneness, it is the essential and infinite Oneness which can contain the hundred and the thousand and the million and billion and trillion. Whatever astronomic or more than astronomic figures you heap and multiply, they cannot overpass or exceed that Oneness; for, in the language of the Upanishad, it moves not, yet is always far in front when you would pursue and seize it. It can be said of it that it would not be the infinite Oneness if it were not capable of an infinite multiplicity; but that does not mean that the One is plural or can be limited or described as the sum of the Many: on the contrary, it can be the infinite Many because it exceeds all limitation or description by multiplicity and exceeds at the same time all limitation by finite conceptual oneness. Pluralism is an error because, though there is the spiritual plurality, the many souls are dependent and interdependent existences; their sum also is not the One nor is it the cosmic totality; they depend on the One and exist by its Oneness: yet the plurality is not unreal, it is the One Soul that dwells as the individual in these many souls and they are eternal in the One and by the one Eternal. This is difficult for the mental reason which makes an opposition between the Infinite and the finite and associates finiteness with plurality and infinity with oneness; but in the logic of the Infinite there is no such opposition and the eternity of the Many in the

One is a thing that is perfectly natural and possible.

Again, we see that there is an infinite pure status and immobile silence of the Spirit; we see too that there is a boundless movement of the Spirit, a power, a dynamic spiritual all-containing self-extension of the Infinite. Our conceptions foist upon this perception, in itself valid and accurate, an opposition between the silence and status and the dynamis and movement, but to the reason and the logic of the Infinite there can be no such opposition. A solely silent and static Infinite, an Infinite without an infinite power and dynamis and energy is inadmissible except as the perception of an aspect; a powerless Absolute, an impotent Spirit is unthinkable: an infinite energy must be the dynamis of the Infinite, an all-power must be the potency of the Absolute, an illimitable force must be the force of the Spirit. But the silence, the status are the basis of the movement, an eternal immobility is the necessary condition, field, essence even, of the infinite mobility, a stable being is the condition and foundation of the vast action of the Force of being. It is when we arrive at something of this silence, stability, immobility that we can base on it a force and energy which in our superficial restless state would be inconceivable. The opposition we make is mental and conceptual; in reality, the silence of the Spirit and the dynamis of the Spirit are complementary truths and inseparable. The immutable silent Spirit may hold its infinite energy silent and immobile within it, for it is not bound by its own forces, is not their subject or instrument, but it does possess them, does release them, is capable of an eternal and infinite action, does not weary or need to stop, and yet all the time its silent immobility inherent in its action and movement is not for a moment shaken or disturbed or altered by its action and movement; the witness silence of the Spirit is there in the very grain of all the voices and workings of Nature. These things may be difficult for us to understand because our own surface finite capacity in either direction is limited and our conceptions are based on our limitations; but it should be easy to see that these relative and finite conceptions do not apply to the Absolute and Infinite.

Our conception of the Infinite is formlessness, but everywhere we see form and forms surrounding us and it can be and is affirmed of the Divine Being that he is at once Form and the Formless. For here too the apparent contradiction does not correspond to a real opposition; the Formless is not a negation of the power of formation, but the condition for the Infinite's free formation: for otherwise there would be a single Form or only a fixity or sum of possible forms in a finite universe. The formlessness is the character of the spiritual essence, the spirit-substance of the Reality; all finite realities are powers, forms, self-shapings of that substance: the Divine is formless and nameless, but by that very reason capable of manifesting all possible names and shapes of being. Forms are manifestations, not arbitrary inventions out of nothing; for line and colour, mass and design which are the essentials of form carry always in them a significance, are, it might be said, secret values and significances of an unseen reality made visible; it is for that reason that figure, line, hue, mass, composition can embody what would be otherwise unseen, can convey what would be otherwise occult to the sense. Form may be said to be the innate body, the inevitable self-revelation of the formless, and this is true not only of external shapes, but of the unseen formations of mind and life which we seize only by our thought and those sensible forms of which only the subtle grasp of the inner consciousness can become aware. Name in its deeper sense is not the word by which we describe the object, but the total of power, quality, character of the reality which a form of things embodies and which we try to sum up by a designating sound, a knowable name, *Nomen*. *Nomen* in this sense, we might say, is *Numen*; the secret Names of the Gods are their power, quality, character of being caught up by the consciousness and made conceivable. The Infinite is nameless, but in that namelessness all possible names, Numens of the gods, the names and forms of all realities, are already envisaged and prefigured, because they are there latent and inherent in the All-Existence.

It becomes clear from these considerations that the coexistence of the Infinite and the finite, which is the very nature

of universal being, is not a juxtaposition or mutual inclusion of two opposites, but as natural and inevitable as the relation of the principle of Light and Fire with the suns. The finite is a frontal aspect and a self-determination of the Infinite; no finite can exist in itself and by itself, it exists by the Infinite and because it is of one essence with the Infinite. For by the Infinite we do not mean solely an illimitable self-extension in Space and Time, but something that is also spaceless and timeless, a self-existent Indefinable and Illimitable which can express itself in the infinitesimal as well as in the vast, in a second of time, in a point of space, in a passing circumstance. The finite is looked upon as a division of the Indivisible, but there is no such thing: for this division is only apparent; there is a demarcation, but no real separation is possible. When we see with the inner vision and sense and not with the physical eye a tree or other object, what we become aware of is an infinite one Reality constituting the tree or object, pervading its every atom and molecule, forming them out of itself, building the whole nature, process of becoming, operation of indwelling energy; all of these are itself, are this infinite, this Reality: we see it extending indivisibly and uniting all objects so that none is really separate from it or quite separate from other objects. "It stands" says the Gita "undivided in beings and yet as if divided." Thus each object is that Infinite and one in essential being with all other objects that are also forms and names — powers, numens — of the Infinite.

This incoercible unity in all divisions and diversities is the mathematics of the Infinite, indicated in a verse of the Upanishads — "This is the complete and That is the complete; subtract the complete from the complete, the complete is the remainder." For so too it may be said of the infinite self-multiplication of the Reality that all things are that self-multiplication; the One becomes Many, but all these Many are That which was already and is always itself and in becoming the Many remains the One. There is no division of the One by the appearance of the finite, for it is the one Infinite that appears to us as the many finite: the creation adds nothing to the Infinite; it remains after creation what it was before. The Infinite is not a sum of things, it is

That which is all things and more. If this logic of the Infinite contradicts the conceptions of our finite reason, it is because it exceeds it and does not base itself on the data of the limited phenomenon, but embraces the Reality and sees the truth of all phenomena in the truth of the Reality; it does not see them as separate beings, movements, names, forms, things; for that they cannot be, since they could be that only if they were phenomena in the Void, things without a common basis or essence, fundamentally unconnected, connected only by coexistence and pragmatic relation, not realities which exist by their root of unity and, so far as they can be considered independent, are secured in their independence of outer or inner figure and movement only by their perpetual dependence on their parent Infinite, their secret identity with the one Identical. The Identical is their root, their cause of form, the one power of their varying powers, their constituting substance.

The Identical to our notions is the Immutable; it is ever the same through eternity, for if it is or becomes subject to mutation or if it admits of differences, it ceases to be identical; but what we see everywhere is an infinitely variable fundamental oneness which seems the very principle of Nature. The basic Force is one, but it manifests from itself innumerable forces; the basic substance is one, but it develops many different substances and millions of unlike objects; mind is one but differentiates itself into many mental states, mind-formations, thoughts, perceptions differing from each other and entering into harmony or into conflict; life is one, but the forms of life are unlike and innumerable; humanity is one in nature, but there are different race types and every individual man is himself and in some way unlike others; Nature insists on tracing lines of difference on the leaves of one tree; she drives differentiation so far that it has been found that the lines on one man's thumb are different from the lines of every other man's thumb so that he can be identified by that differentiation alone,—yet fundamentally all men are alike and there is no essential difference. Oneness or sameness is everywhere, differentiation is everywhere; the indwelling Reality has built the universe on the principle of the development of one

seed into a million different fashions. But this again is the logic of the Infinite; because the essence of the Reality is immutably the same, it can assume securely these innumerable differences of form and character and movement, for even if they were multiplied a trillionfold, that would not affect the underlying immutability of the eternal Identical. Because the Self and Spirit in things and beings is one everywhere, therefore Nature can afford this luxury of infinite differentiation: if there were not this secure basis which brings it about that nothing changes yet all changes, all her workings and creations would in this play collapse into disintegration and chaos; there would be nothing to hold her disparate movements and creations together. The immutability of the Identical does not consist in a monotone of changeless sameness incapable of variation; it consists in an unchangeableness of being which is capable of endless formation of being, but which no differentiation can destroy or impair or minimise. The Self becomes insect and bird and beast and man, but it is always the same Self through these mutations because it is the One who manifests himself infinitely in endless diversity. Our surface reason is prone to conclude that the diversity may be unreal, an appearance only, but if we look a little deeper we shall see that a real diversity brings out the real Unity, shows it as it were in its utmost capacity, reveals all that it can be and is in itself, delivers from its whiteness of hue the many tones of colour that are fused together there; Oneness finds itself infinitely in what seems to us to be a falling away from its oneness, but is really an inexhaustible diverse display of unity. This is the miracle, the Maya of the universe, yet perfectly logical, natural and a matter of course to the self-vision and self-experience of the Infinite.

For the Maya of Brahman is at once the magic and the logic of an infinitely variable Oneness; if, indeed, there were only a rigid monotone of limited oneness and sameness, there would be no place for reason and logic, for logic consists in the right perceptions of relations: the highest work of reason is to find the one substance, the one law, the cementing latent reality connecting and unifying the many, the different, the discordant

and disparate. All universal existence moves between these two terms, a diversification of the One, a unification of the many and diverse, and that must be because the One and the Many are fundamental aspects of the Infinite. For what the divine Self-knowledge and All-knowledge brings out in its manifestation must be a truth of its being and the play of that truth is its Lila.

This, then, is the logic of the way of universal being of Brahman and the basic working of the reason, the infinite intelligence of Maya. As with the being of Brahman, so with its consciousness, Maya: it is not bound to a finite restriction of itself or to one state or law of its action; it can be many things simultaneously, have many co-ordinated movements which to the finite reason may seem contradictory; it is one but innumerably manifold, infinitely plastic, inexhaustibly adaptable. Maya is the supreme and universal consciousness and force of the Eternal and Infinite and, being by its very nature unbound and illimitable, it can put forth many states of consciousness at a time, many dispositions of its Force, without ceasing to be the same consciousness-force for ever. It is at once transcendental, universal and individual; it is the supreme supracosmic Being that is aware of itself as All-Being, as the Cosmic Self, as the Consciousness-force of cosmic Nature, and at the same time experiences itself as the individual being and consciousness in all existences. The individual consciousness can see itself as limited and separate, but can also put off its limitations and know itself as universal and again as transcendent of the universe; this is because there is in all these states or positions or underlying them the same triune consciousness in a triple status. There is then no difficulty in the One thus seeing or experiencing itself triply, whether from above in the Transcendent Existence or from between in the Cosmic Self or from below in the individual conscious being. All that is necessary for this to be accepted as natural and logical is to admit that there can be different real statuses of consciousness of the One Being, and that cannot be impossible for an Existence which is free and infinite and cannot be tied to a single condition; a free power of self-variation must be natural to a consciousness that is infinite. If the possibility of a manifold status of consciousness

is admitted, no limit can be put to the ways of its variation of status, provided the One is aware of itself simultaneously in all of them; for the One and Infinite must be thus universally conscious. The only difficulty, which a further consideration may solve, is to understand the connections between a status of limited or constructed consciousness like ours, a status of ignorance, and the infinite self-knowledge and all-knowledge.

A second possibility of the Infinite Consciousness that must be admitted is its power of self-limitation or secondary self-formation into a subordinate movement within the integral il-limitable consciousness and knowledge; for that is a necessary consequence of the power of self-determination of the Infinite. Each self-determination of the self-being must have its own awareness of its self-truth and its self-nature; or, if we prefer so to put it, the Being in that determination must be so self-aware. Spiritual individuality means that each individual self or spirit is a centre of self-vision and all-vision; the circumference —the boundless circumference, as we may say,— of this vision may be the same for all, but the centre may be different,— not located as in a spatial point in a spatial circle, but a psychological centre related with others through a coexistence of the diversely conscious Many in the universal being. Each being in a world will see the same world, but see it from its own self-being according to its own way of self-nature: for each will manifest its own truth of the Infinite, its own way of self-determination and of meeting the cosmic determinations; its vision by the law of unity in variety will no doubt be fundamentally the same as that of others, but it will still develop its own differentiation, —as we see all human beings conscious in the one human way of the same cosmic things, yet always with an individual difference. This self-limitation would be, not fundamental, but an individual specialisation of a common universality or totality; the spiritual individual would act from his own centre of the one Truth and according to his self-nature, but on a common basis and not with any blindness to other-self and other-nature. It would be consciousness limiting its action with full knowledge, not a movement of ignorance. But apart from this individualising

self-limitation, there must also be in the consciousness of the Infinite a power of cosmic limitation; it must be able to limit its action so as to base a given world or universe and to keep it in its own order, harmony, self-building; for the creation of a universe necessitates a special determination of the Infinite Consciousness to preside over that world and a holding back of all that is not needed for that movement. In the same way the putting forth of an independent action of some power like Mind, Life or Matter must have as its support a similar principle of self-limitation. It cannot be said that such a movement must be impossible for the Infinite, because it is illimitable; on the contrary, this must be one of its many powers; for its powers too are illimitable: but this also, like other self-determinations, other finite buildings, would not be a separation or a real division, for all the Infinite Consciousness would be around and behind it and supporting it and the special movement itself would be intrinsically aware not only of itself, but, in essence, of all that was behind it. This would be so, inevitably, in the integral consciousness of the Infinite: but we can suppose also that an intrinsic though not an active awareness of this kind, demarcating itself, yet indivisible, might be there too in the total self-consciousness of the movement of the Finite. This much cosmic or individual conscious self-limitation would evidently be possible to the Infinite and can be accepted by a larger reason as one of its spiritual possibilities; but so far, on this basis, any division or ignorant separation or binding and blinding limitation such as is apparent in our own consciousness would be unaccountable.

But a third power or possibility of the Infinite Consciousness can be admitted, its power of self-absorption, of plunging into itself, into a state in which self-awareness exists but not as knowledge and not as all-knowledge; the all would then be involved in pure self-awareness, and knowledge and the inner consciousness itself would be lost in pure being. This is, luminously, the state which we call the Superconscious in an absolute sense,—although most of what we call superconscious is in reality not that but only a higher conscient, something that is conscious to itself and only superconscious to our own limited

level of awareness. This self-absorption, this trance of infinity is again, no longer luminously but darkly, the state which we call the Inconscient; for the being of the Infinite is there though by its appearance of inconscience it seems to us rather to be an infinite non-being: a self-oblivious intrinsic consciousness and force are there in that apparent non-being, for by the energy of the Inconscient an ordered world is created; it is created in a trance of self-absorption, the force acting automatically and with an apparent blindness as in a trance, but still with the inevitability and power of truth of the Infinite. If we take a step further and admit that a special or a restricted and partial action of self-absorption is possible to the Infinite, an action not always of its infinity concentrated limitlessly in itself, but confined to a special status or to an individual or cosmic self-determination, we have then the explanation of the concentrated condition or status by which it becomes aware separately of one aspect of its being. There can then be a fundamental double status such as that of the Nirguna standing back from the Saguna and absorbed in its own purity and immobility, while the rest is held back behind a veil and not admitted within that special status. In the same way we could account for the status of consciousness aware of one field of being or one movement of it, while the awareness of all the rest would be held behind and veiled or, as it were, cut off by a waking trance of dynamic concentration from the specialised or limited awareness occupied only with its own field or movement. The totality of the infinite consciousness would be there, not abolished, recoverable, but not evidently active, active only by implication, by inherence or by the instrumentality of the limited awareness, not in its own manifest power and presence. It will be evident that all these three powers can be accepted as possible to the dynamics of the Infinite Consciousness, and it is by considering the many ways in which they can work that we may get a clue to the operations of Maya.

This throws light incidentally on the opposition made by our minds between pure consciousness, pure existence, pure bliss and the abundant activity, the manifold application, the endless vicissitudes of being, consciousness and delight of being

that take place in the universe. In the state of pure consciousness and pure being we are aware of that only, simple, immutable, self-existent, without form or object, and we feel that to be alone true and real. In the other or dynamic state we feel its dynamism to be perfectly true and natural and are even capable of thinking that no such experience as that of pure consciousness is possible. Yet it is now evident that to the Infinite Consciousness both the static and the dynamic are possible; these are two of its statuses and both can be present simultaneously in the universal awareness, the one witnessing the other and supporting it or not looking at it and yet automatically supporting it; or the silence and status may be there penetrating the activity or throwing it up like an ocean immobile below throwing up a mobility of waves on its surface. This is also the reason why it is possible for us in certain conditions of our being to be aware of several different states of consciousness at the same time. There is a state of being experienced in Yoga in which we become a double consciousness, one on the surface, small, active, ignorant, swayed by thoughts and feelings, grief and joy and all kinds of reactions, the other within calm, vast, equal, observing the surface being with an immovable detachment or indulgence or, it may be, acting upon its agitation to quiet, enlarge, transform it. So too we can rise to a consciousness above and observe the various parts of our being, inner and outer, mental, vital and physical and the subconscious below all, and act upon one or other or the whole from that higher status. It is possible also to go down from that height or from any height into any of these lower states and take its limited light or its obscurity as our place of working while the rest that we are is either temporarily put away or put behind or else kept as a field of reference from which we can get support, sanction or light and influence or as a status into which we can ascend or recede and from it observe the inferior movements. Or we can plunge into trance, get within ourselves and be conscious there while all outward things are excluded; or we can go beyond even this inner awareness and lose ourselves in some deeper other consciousness or some high superconsciousness. There is also a pervading equal consciousness

into which we can enter and see all ourselves with one enveloping glance or omnipresent awareness one and indivisible. All this which looks strange and abnormal or may seem fantastic to the surface reason acquainted only with our normal status of limited ignorance and its movements divided from our inner higher and total reality, becomes easily intelligible and admissible in the light of the larger reason and logic of the Infinite or by the admission of the greater illimitable powers of the Self, the Spirit in us which is of one essence with the Infinite.

Brahman the Reality is the self-existent Absolute and Maya is the Consciousness and Force of this self-existence; but with regard to the universe Brahman appears as the Self of all existence, Atman, the cosmic Self, but also as the Supreme Self transcendent of its own cosmicity and at the same time individual-universal in each being; Maya can then be seen as the self-power, Atma-Shakti, of the Atman. It is true that when we first become aware of this Aspect, it is usually in a silence of the whole being or at the least in a silence within which draws back or stands away from the surface action; this Self is then felt as a status in silence, an immobile immutable being, self-existent, pervading the whole universe, omnipresent in all, but not dynamic or active, aloof from the ever mobile energy of Maya. In the same way we can become aware of it as the Purusha, separate from Prakriti, the Conscious Being standing back from the activities of Nature. But this is an exclusive concentration which limits itself to a spiritual status and puts away from it all activity in order to realise the freedom of Brahman the self-existent Reality from all limitation by its own action and manifestation: it is an essential realisation, but not the total realisation. For we can see that the Conscious-Power, the Shakti that acts and creates, is not other than the Maya or all-knowledge of Brahman; it is the Power of the Self; Prakriti is the working of the Purusha, Conscious Being active by its own Nature: the duality then of Soul and World-Energy, silent Self and the creative Power of the Spirit, is not really something dual and separate, it is biune. As we cannot separate Fire and the power of Fire, it has been said, so we cannot separate the Divine Reality and its Consciousness-Force,

Chit-Shakti. This first realisation of Self as something intensely silent and purely static is not the whole truth of it, there can also be a realisation of Self in its power, Self as the condition of world-activity and world-existence. However, the Self is a fundamental aspect of Brahman, but with a certain stress on its impersonality; therefore the Power of the Self has the appearance of a Force that acts automatically with the Self sustaining it, witness and support and originator and enjoyer of its activities but not involved in them for a moment. As soon as we become aware of the Self, we are conscious of it as eternal, unborn, unembodied, uninvolved in its workings: it can be felt within the form of being, but also as enveloping it, as above it, surveying its embodiment from above, *adhyakṣa*; it is omnipresent, the same in everything, infinite and pure and intangible for ever. This Self can be experienced as the Self of the individual, the Self of the thinker, doer, enjoyer, but even so it always has this greater character; its individuality is at the same time a vast universality or very readily passes into that, and the next step to that is a sheer transcendence or a complete and ineffable passing into the Absolute. The Self is that aspect of the Brahman in which it is intimately felt as at once individual, cosmic, transcendent of the universe. The realisation of the Self is the straight and swift way towards individual liberation, a static universality, a Nature-transcendence. At the same time there is a realisation of Self in which it is felt not only sustaining and pervading and enveloping all things, but constituting everything and identified in a free identity with all its becomings in Nature. Even so, freedom and impersonality are always the character of the Self. There is no appearance of subjection to the workings of its own Power in the universe, such as the apparent subjection of the Purusha to Prakriti. To realise the Self is to realise the eternal freedom of the Spirit.

The Conscious Being, Purusha, is the Self as originator, witness, support and lord and enjoyer of the forms and works of Nature. As the aspect of Self is in its essential character transcendental even when involved and identified with its universal and individual becomings, so the Purusha aspect is characteristically

universal-individual and intimately connected with Nature even when separated from her. For this conscious Spirit while retaining its impersonality and eternity, its universality, puts on at the same time a more personal aspect;⁷ it is the impersonal-personal being in Nature from whom it is not altogether detached, for it is always coupled with her: Nature acts for the Purusha and by its sanction, for its will and pleasure; the Conscious Being imparts its consciousness to the Energy we call Nature, receives in that consciousness her workings as in a mirror, accepts the forms which she, the executive cosmic Force, creates and imposes on it, gives or withdraws its sanction from her movements. The experience of Purusha-Prakriti, the Spirit or Conscious Being in its relations to Nature, is of immense pragmatic importance; for on these relations the whole play of the consciousness depends in the embodied being. If the Purusha in us is passive and allows Nature to act, accepting all she imposes on him, giving a constant automatic sanction, then the soul in mind, life, body, the mental, vital, physical being in us, becomes subject to our nature, ruled by its formation, driven by its activities; that is the normal state of our ignorance. If the Purusha in us becomes aware of itself as the Witness and stands back from Nature, that is the first step to the soul's freedom; for it becomes detached, and it is possible then to know Nature and her processes and in all independence, since we are no longer involved in her works, to accept or not to accept, to make the sanction no longer automatic but free and effective; we can choose what she shall do or not do in us, or we can stand back altogether from her works and withdraw into the Self's spiritual silence, or we can reject her present formations and rise to a spiritual level of existence and from there re-create our existence. The Purusha can cease to be subject, *anisa*, and become lord of its nature, *isvara*.

In the philosophy of the Sankhyas we find developed most thoroughly the metaphysical idea of Purusha-Prakriti.

⁷ The Sankhya philosophy stresses this personal aspect, makes the Purusha many, plural, and assigns universality to Nature; in this view each soul is an independent existence although all souls experience a common universal Nature.

These two are eternally separate entities, but in relation to each other. Prakriti is Nature-power, an executive Power, it is Energy apart from Consciousness; for Consciousness belongs to the Purusha, Prakriti without Purusha is inert, mechanical, inconscient. Prakriti develops as its formal self and basis of action primal Matter and in it manifests life and sense and mind and intelligence; but intelligence too, since it is part of Nature and its product in primal Matter, is also inert, mechanical, inconscient,—a conception which sheds a certain light on the order and perfectly related workings of the Inconscient in the material universe: it is the light of the soul, the Spirit, that is imparted to the mechanical workings of sense-mind and intelligence, they become conscious by its consciousness, even as they become active only by the assent of the spirit. The Purusha becomes free by drawing back from Prakriti; it becomes master of her by refusing to be involved in Matter. Nature acts by three principles, modes or qualities of its stuff and its action, which in us become the fundamental modes of our psychological and physical substance and its workings, the principle of inertia, the principle of kinesis and the principle of balance, light and harmony: when these are in unequal motion, her action takes place; when they fall into equilibrium she passes into quiescence. Purusha, conscious being, is plural, not one and single, while Nature is one: it would seem to follow that whatever principle of oneness we find in existence belongs to Nature, but each soul is independent and unique, sole to itself and separate whether in its enjoyment of Nature or its liberation from Nature. All these positions of the Sankhya we find to be perfectly valid in experience when we come into direct inner contact with the realities of individual soul and universal Nature; but they are pragmatic truths and we are not bound to accept them as the whole or the fundamental truth either of self or of Nature. Prakriti presents itself as an inconscient Energy in the material world, but, as the scale of consciousness rises, she reveals herself more and more as a conscious force and we perceive that even her inconscience concealed a secret consciousness; so too conscious being is many in its individual

souls, but in its self we can experience it as one in all and one in its own essential existence. Moreover, the experience of soul and Nature as dual is true, but the experience of their unity has also its validity. If Nature or Energy is able to impose its forms and workings on Being, it can only be because it is Nature or Energy of Being and so the Being can accept them as its own; if the Being can become lord of Nature, it must be because it is its own Nature which it had passively watched doing its work, but can control and master; even in its passivity its consent is necessary to the action of Prakriti and this relation shows sufficiently that the two are not alien to each other. The duality is a position taken up, a double status accepted for the operations of the self-manifestation of the being; but there is no eternal and fundamental separateness and dualism of Being and its Consciousness-Force, of the Soul and Nature.

It is the Reality, the Self, that takes the position of the Conscious Being regarding and accepting or ruling the works of its own Nature. An apparent duality is created in order that there may be a free action of Nature working itself out with the support of the Spirit and again a free and masterful action of the Spirit controlling and working out Nature. This duality is also necessary that the Spirit may be at any time at liberty to draw back from any formation of its Nature and dissolve all formation or accept or enforce a new or a higher formation. These are very evident possibilities of the Spirit in its dealings with its own Force and they can be observed and verified in our own experience; they are logical results of the powers of the Infinite Consciousness, powers which we have seen to be native to its infinity. The Purusha aspect and the Prakriti aspect go always together and whatever status Nature or Consciousness-force in action assumes, manifests or develops, there is a corresponding status of the Spirit. In its supreme status the Spirit is the supreme Conscious Being, Purushottama, and the Consciousness-Force is his supreme Nature, Para-Prakriti. In each status of the gradations of Nature, the Spirit takes a poise of its being proper to that gradation; in Mind-Nature it becomes the mental being,

in Life-Nature it becomes the vital being, in nature of Matter it becomes the physical being, in supermind it becomes the Being of Knowledge; in the supreme spiritual status it becomes the Being of Bliss and pure Existence. In us, in the embodied individual, it stands behind all as the psychic Entity, the inner Self supporting the other formulations of our consciousness and spiritual existence. The Purusha, individual in us, is cosmic in the cosmos, transcendent in the transcendence: the identity with the Self is apparent, but it is the Self in its pure impersonal-personal status of a Spirit in things and beings — impersonal because undifferentiated by personal quality, personal because it presides over the individualisations of self in each individual — which deals with the works of its Consciousness-force, its executive force of self-nature, in whatever poise is necessary for that purpose.

But it is evident that whatever the posture taken or relation formed in any individual nodus of Purusha-Prakriti, the Being is in a fundamental cosmic relation lord or ruler of its nature: for even when it allows Nature to have its own way with it, its consent is necessary to support her workings. This comes out in its fullest revelation in the third aspect of the Reality, the Divine Being who is the master and creator of the universe. Here the supreme Person, the Being in its transcendental and cosmic consciousness and force, comes to the front, omnipotent, omniscient, the controller of all energies, the Conscious in all that is conscious or inconscient, the Inhabitant of all souls and minds and hearts and bodies, the Ruler or Overruler of all works, the Enjoyer of all delight, the Creator who has built all things in his own being, the All-Person of whom all beings are personalities, the Power from whom are all powers, the Self, the Spirit in all, by his being the Father of all that is, in his Consciousness-Force the Divine Mother, the Friend of all creatures, the All-blissful and All-beautiful of whom beauty and joy are the revelation, the All-Beloved and All-Lover. In a certain sense, so seen and understood, this becomes the most comprehensive of the aspects of the Reality, since here all are united in a single formulation; for the Ishwara is supracosmic as well as intracosmic; He is

that which exceeds and inhabits and supports all individuality; He is the supreme and universal Brahman, the Absolute, the supreme Self, the supreme Purusha.⁸ But, very clearly, this is not the personal God of popular religions, a being limited by his qualities, individual and separate from all others; for all such personal gods are only limited representations or names and divine personalities of the one Ishwara. Neither is this the Saguna Brahman active and possessed of qualities, for that is only one side of the being of the Ishwara; the Nirguna immobile and without qualities is another aspect of His existence. Ishwara is Brahman the Reality, Self, Spirit, revealed as possessor, enjoyer of his own self-existence, creator of the universe and one with it, Pantheos, and yet superior to it, the Eternal, the Infinite, the Ineffable, the Divine Transcendence.

The sharp opposition made between personality and impersonality by our mental way of thinking is a creation of the mind based on the appearances of the material world; for here in terrestrial existence the Inconscient from which everything takes its origin appears as something entirely impersonal; Nature, the inconscient Energy, is entirely impersonal in her manifest essence and dealings; all Forces wear this mask of impersonality, all qualities and powers, Love and Delight and Consciousness itself, have this aspect. Personality makes its apparition as a creation of consciousness in an impersonal world; it is a limitation by a restricted formation of powers, qualities, habitual forces of the nature-action, an imprisonment in a limited circle of self-experience which we have to transcend,—to lose personality is necessary if we are to gain universality, still more necessary if we are to rise into the Transcendence. But what we thus call personality is only a formation of superficial consciousness; behind it is the Person who takes on various personalities, who can have at the same time many personalities but is himself one, real, eternal. If we look at things from a larger point of view, we might say that what is impersonal is only a power of the Person: existence itself has no meaning without an Existential, consciousness has no

⁸ *Gita.*

standing-place if there is none who is conscious, delight is useless and invalid without an enjoyer, love can have no foundation or fulfilment if there is no lover, all-power must be otiose if there is not an Almighty. For what we mean by Person is conscious being; even if this emerges here as a term or product of the Inconscient, it is not that in reality: for it is the Inconscient itself that is a term of the secret Consciousness; what emerges is greater than that in which it emerges, as Mind is greater than Matter, Soul than Mind; Spirit, most secret of all, the supreme emergence, the last revelation, is the greatest of all, and Spirit is the Purusha, the All-Person, the omnipresent Conscious Being. It is the mind's ignorance of this true Person in us, its confusion of person with our experience of ego and limited personality, the misleading phenomenon of the emergence of limited consciousness and personality in an inconscient existence that have made us create an opposition between these two aspects of the Reality, but in truth there is no opposition. An eternal infinite self-existence is the supreme reality, but the supreme transcendent eternal Being, Self and Spirit,—an infinite Person, we may say, because his being is the essence and source of all personality,—is the reality and meaning of self-existence: so too the cosmic Self, Spirit, Being, Person is the reality and meaning of cosmic existence; the same Self, Spirit, Being or Person manifesting its multiplicity is the reality and meaning of individual existence.

If we admit the Divine Being, the supreme Person and All-Person as the Ishwara, a difficulty arises in understanding his rule or government of world-existence, because we immediately transfer to him our mental conception of a human ruler; we picture him as acting by the mind and mental will in an omnipotent arbitrary fashion upon a world on which he imposes his mental conceptions as laws, and we conceive of his will as a free caprice of his personality. But there is no need for the Divine Being to act by an arbitrary will or idea as an omnipotent yet ignorant human being—if such an omnipotence were possible—might do: for he is not limited by mind; he has an all-consciousness in which he is aware of the truth of all things and aware of his own all-wisdom working them out according to the truth

that is in them, their significance, their possibility or necessity, the imperative selfness of their nature. The Divine is free and not bound by laws of any making, but still he acts by laws and processes because they are the expression of the truth of things,—not their mechanical, mathematical or other outward truth alone, but the spiritual reality of what they are, what they have become and have yet to become, what they have it within themselves to realise. He is himself present in the working, but he also exceeds and can overrule it; for on one side Nature works according to her limited complex of formulas and is informed and supported in their execution by the Divine Presence, but on the other side there is an overseeing, a higher working and determination, even an intervention, free but not arbitrary, often appearing to us magical and miraculous because it proceeds and acts upon Nature from a divine Supernature: Nature here is a limited expression of that Supernature and open to intervention or mutation by its light, its force, its influence. The mechanical, mathematical, automatic law of things is a fact, but within it there is a spiritual law of consciousness at work which gives to the mechanical steps of Nature's forces an inner turn and value, a significant rightness and a secretly conscious necessity, and above it there is a spiritual freedom that knows and acts in the supreme and universal truth of the Spirit. Our view of the divine government of the world or of the secret of its action is either incurably anthropomorphic or else incurably mechanical; both the anthropomorphism and mechanism have their elements of truth, but they are only a side, an aspect, and the real truth is that the world is governed by the One in all and over all who is infinite in his consciousness and it is according to the law and logic of an infinite consciousness that we ought to understand the significance and building and movement of the universe.

If we regard this aspect of the one Reality and put it in close connection with the other aspects, we can get a complete view of the relation between the eternal Self-Existence and the dynamics of the Consciousness-Force by which it manifests the universe. If we place ourselves in a silent Self-existence immobile, static, inactive, it will appear that a conceptive Consciousness-Force,

Maya, able to effectuate all its conceptions, a dynamic consort of the Self of silence, is doing everything; it takes its stand on the fixed unmoving eternal status and casts the spiritual substance of being into all manner of forms and movements to which its passivity consents or in which it takes its impartial pleasure, its immobile delight of creative and mobile existence. Whether this be a real or an illusory existence, that must be its substance and significance. Consciousness is at play with Being, Force of Nature does what it wills with Existence and makes it the stuff of her creations, but secretly the consent of the Being must be there at every step to make this possible. There is an evident truth in this perception of things; it is what we see happening everywhere in us and around us; it is a truth of the universe and must answer to a fundamental truth-aspect of the Absolute. But when we step back from the outer dynamic appearances of things, not into a witness Silence, but into an inner dynamic participating experience of the Spirit, we find that this Consciousness-Force, Maya, Shakti, is itself the power of the Being, the Self-Existent, the Ishwara. The Being is lord of her and of all things, we see him doing everything in his own sovereignty as the creator and ruler of his own manifestation; or, if he stands back and allows freedom of action to the forces of Nature and her creatures, his sovereignty is still innate in the permission, at every step his tacit sanction, "Let it be so", *tathāstu*, is there implicit; for otherwise nothing could be done or happen. Being and its Consciousness-Force, Spirit and Nature cannot be fundamentally dual: what Nature does, is really done by the Spirit. This too is a truth that becomes evident when we go behind the veil and feel the presence of a living Reality which is everything and determines everything, is the All-powerful and the All-ruler; this too is a fundamental truth-aspect of the Absolute.

Again, if we remain absorbed in the Silence, the creative Consciousness and her works disappear into the Silence; Nature and the creation for us cease to exist or be real. On the other hand, if we look exclusively at the Being in its aspect of the sole-existent Person and Ruler, the Power or Shakti by which he does all things disappears into his uniqueness or becomes an

attribute of His cosmic personality; the absolute monarchy of the one Being becomes our perception of the universe. Both these experiences create many difficulties for the mind due to its non-perception of the reality of the Self-Power whether in quiescence or in action, or to a too exclusively negative experience of the Self, or to the too anthropomorphic character our conceptions attach to the Supreme Being as Ruler. It is evident that we are looking at an Infinite of which the Self-Power is capable of many movements, all of them valid. If we look again more largely and take account of both the impersonal and the personal truth of things as one truth, if in that light, the light of personality in impersonality, we see the biune aspect of Self and Self-Power, then in the Person Aspect a dual Person emerges, Ishwara-Shakti, the Divine Self and Creator and the Divine Mother and Creatrix of the universe; there becomes apparent to us the mystery of the masculine and feminine cosmic Principles whose play and interaction are necessary for all creation. In the superconscious truth of the Self-Existence these two are fused and implied in each other, one and indistinguishable, but in the spiritual-pragmatic truth of the dynamism of the universe, they emerge and become active; the Divine Mother-Energy as the universal creatrix, Maya, Para-Prakriti, Chit-Shakti, manifests the cosmic Self and Ishwara and her own self-power as a dual principle; it is through her that the Being, the Self, the Ishwara, acts and he does nothing except by her; though his Will is implicit in her, it is she who works out all as the supreme Consciousness-Force who holds all souls and beings within her and as executive Nature; all exists and acts according to Nature, all is the Consciousness-Force manifesting and playing with the Being in millions of forms and movements into which she casts his existence. If we draw back from her workings, then all can fall into quiescence and we can enter into the silence, because she consents to cease from her dynamic activity; but it is in her quiescence and silence that we are quiescent and cease. If we would affirm our independence of Nature, she reveals to us the supreme and omnipresent power of the Ishwara and ourselves as beings of his being, but that power is herself and we are that in her supernature. If we would realise

a higher formation or status of being, then it is still through her, through the Divine Shakti, the Consciousness-Force of the Spirit that it has to be done; our surrender must be to the Divine Being through the Divine Mother: for it is towards or into the supreme Nature that our ascension has to take place and it can only be done by the supramental Shakti taking up our mentality and transforming it into her supramentality. Thus we see that there is no contradiction or incompatibility between these three aspects of Existence, or between them in their eternal status and the three modes of its Dynamis working in the universe. One Being, one Reality as Self bases, supports, informs, as Purusha or Conscious Being experiences, as Ishwara wills, governs and possesses its world of manifestation created and kept in motion and action by its own Consciousness-Force or Self-Power,—Maya, Prakriti, Shakti.

A certain difficulty arises for our mind in reconciling these different faces or fronts of the One Self and Spirit, because we are obliged to use abstract conceptions and defining words and ideas for something that is not abstract, something that is spiritually living and intensely real. Our abstractions get fixed into differentiating concepts with sharp lines between them: but the Reality is not of that nature; its aspects are many but shade off into each other. Its truth could only be rendered by ideas and images metaphysical and yet living and concrete,—images which might be taken by the pure Reason as figures and symbols but are more than that and mean more to the intuitive vision and feeling, for they are realities of a dynamic spiritual experience. The impersonal truth of things can be rendered into the abstract formulas of the pure reason, but there is another side of truth which belongs to the spiritual or mystic vision and without that inner vision of realities the abstract formulation of them is insufficiently alive, incomplete. The mystery of things is the true truth of things; the intellectual presentation is only truth in representation, in abstract symbols, as if in a cubist art of thought-speech, in geometric figure. It is necessary in a philosophic inquiry to confine oneself mostly to this intellectual presentation, but it is as well to remember that this is only the

abstraction of the Truth and to seize it completely or express it completely there is needed a concrete experience and a more living and full-bodied language.

Here it becomes opportune to see how in this aspect of the Reality we must regard the relation we have discovered between the One and the Many; this amounts to a determination of the true connection between the individual and the Divine Being, between the Soul and the Ishwara. In the normal theistic conception the Many are created by God; made by him as a potter might make a vessel, they are dependent on him as are creatures on their creator. But in this larger view of the Ishwara the Many are themselves the Divine One in their inmost reality, individual selves of the supreme and universal Self-Existence, eternal as he is eternal but eternal in his being: our material existence is indeed a creation of Nature, but the soul is an immortal portion of the Divinity and behind it is the Divine Self in the natural creature. Still the One is the fundamental Truth of existence, the Many exist by the One and there is therefore an entire dependence of the manifested being on the Ishwara. This dependence is concealed by the separative ignorance of the ego which strives to exist in its own right, although at every step it is evidently dependent on the cosmic Power that created it, moved by it, a part of its cosmic being and action; this effort of the ego is clearly a misprision, an erroneous reflection of the truth of the self-existence that is within us. It is true that there is something in us, not in the ego but in the self and inmost being, that surpasses cosmic Nature and belongs to the Transcendence. But this too finds itself independent of Nature only by dependence on a higher Reality; it is through self-giving or surrender of soul and nature to the Divine Being that we can attain to our highest self and supreme Reality, for it is the Divine Being who is that highest self and that supreme Reality, and we are self-existent and eternal only in his eternity and by his self-existence. This dependence is not contradictory of the Identity, but is itself the door to the realisation of the Identity,—so that here again we meet that phenomenon of duality expressing unity, proceeding from unity and opening back into unity, which is the constant

secret and fundamental operation of the universe. It is this truth of the consciousness of the Infinite that creates the possibility of all relations between the many and the One, among which the realisation of oneness by the mind, the presence of oneness in the heart, the existence of oneness in all the members is a highest peak, and yet it does not annul but confirms all the other personal relations and gives them their fullness, their complete delight, their entire significance. This too is the magic, but also the logic of the Infinite.

One problem still remains to be solved, and it can be solved on the same basis; it is the problem of the opposition between the Non-Manifest and the manifestation. For it might be said that all that has been advanced hitherto may be true of the manifestation, but the manifestation is a reality of an inferior order, a partial movement derived from the Non-Manifest Reality and, when we enter into that which is supremely Real, these truths of the universe cease to have any validity. The Non-Manifest is the timeless, the utterly eternal, an irreducible absolute self-existence to which the manifestation and its limitations can give no clue or only a clue that by its insufficiency is illusory and deceptive. This raises the problem of the relation of Time to the timeless Spirit; for we have supposed on the contrary that what is in unmanifestation in the Timeless Eternal is manifested in Time-Eternity. If that is so, if the temporal is an expression of the Eternal, then however different the conditions, however partial the expression, yet what is fundamental in the Time-expression must be in some way pre-existent in the Transcendence and drawn from the timeless Reality. For if not, these fundamentals must come into it direct from an Absolute which is other than Time or Timelessness, and the Timeless Spirit must be a supreme spiritual negation, an indeterminable basing the Absolute's freedom from limitation by what is formulated in Time,—it must be the negative to the Time positive, in the same relation to it as the Nirguna to the Saguna. But, in fact, what we mean by the Timeless is a spiritual status of existence not subject to the time movement or to the successive or the relative time-experience of a past, present and future. The timeless Spirit is not necessarily a

blank; it may hold all in itself, but in essence, without reference to time or form or relation or circumstance, perhaps in an eternal unity. Eternity is the common term between Time and the Timeless Spirit. What is in the Timeless unmanifested, implied, essential, appears in Time in movement, or at least in design and relation, in result and circumstance. These two then are the same Eternity or the same Eternal in a double status; they are a twofold status of being and consciousness, one an eternity of immobile status, the other an eternity of motion in status.

The original status is that of the Reality timeless and spaceless; Space and Time would be the same Reality self-extended to contain the deployment of what was within it. The difference would be, as in all the other oppositions, the Spirit looking at itself in essence and principle of being and the same Spirit looking at itself in the dynamism of its essence and principle. Space and Time are our names for this self-extension of the one Reality. We are apt to see Space as a static extension in which all things stand or move together in a fixed order; we see Time as a mobile extension which is measured by movement and event: Space then would be Brahman in self-extended status; Time would be Brahman in self-extended movement. But this may be only a first view and inaccurate: Space may be really a constant mobile, the constancy and the persistent time-relation of things in it creating the sense of stability of Space, the mobility creating the sense of time-movement in stable Space. Or, again, Space would be Brahman extended for the holding together of forms and objects; Time would be Brahman self-extended for the deployment of the movement of self-power carrying forms and objects; the two would then be a dual aspect of one and the same self-extension of the cosmic Eternal.

A purely physical Space might be regarded as in itself a property of Matter; but Matter is a creation of Energy in movement. Space therefore in the material world could be either a fundamental self-extension of material Energy or its self-formed existence-field, its representation of the Inconscient Infinity in which it is acting, a figure in which it accommodates the formulas and movements of its own action and self-creation.

Time would be itself the course of that movement or else an impression created by it, an impression of something that presents itself to us as regularly successive in its appearance,—a division or a continuum upholding the continuity of movement and yet marking off its successions,—because the movement itself is regularly successive. Or else Time could be a dimension of Space necessary for the complete action of the Energy, but not understood by us as such because it is seen by our conscious subjectivity as something itself subjective, felt by our mind, not perceived by our senses, and therefore not recognised as a dimension of Space which has to us the appearance of a sense-created or sense-perceived objective extension.

In any case, if Spirit is the fundamental reality, Time and Space must either be conceptive conditions under which the Spirit sees its own movement of energy or else they must be fundamental conditions of the Spirit itself which assume a different appearance or status according to the status of consciousness in which they manifest. In other words there is a different Time and Space for each status of our consciousness and even different movements of Time and Space within each status; but all would be renderings of a fundamental spiritual reality of Time-Space. In fact, when we go behind physical Space, we become aware of an extension on which all this movement is based and this extension is spiritual and not material; it is Self or Spirit containing all action of its own Energy. This origin or basic reality of Space begins to become apparent when we draw back from the physical: for then we become aware of a subjective Space-extension in which mind itself lives and moves and which is other than physical Space-Time, and yet there is an interpenetration; for our mind can move in its own space in such a way as to effectuate a movement also in space of Matter or act upon something distant in space of Matter. In a still deeper condition of consciousness we are aware of a pure spiritual Space; in this awareness Time may no longer seem to exist, because all movement ceases, or, if there is a movement or happening, it can take place independent of any observable Time sequence.

If we go behind Time by a similar inward motion, drawing back from the physical and seeing it without being involved in it, we discover that Time observation and Time movement are relative, but Time itself is real and eternal. Time observation depends not only on the measures used, but on the consciousness and the position of the observer: moreover, each state of consciousness has a different Time relation; Time in Mind consciousness and Mind Space has not the same sense and measure of its movements as in physical Space; it moves there quickly or slowly according to the state of the consciousness. Each state of consciousness has its own Time and yet there can be relations of Time between them; and when we go behind the physical surface, we find several different Time statuses and Time movements coexistent in the same consciousness. This is evident in dream Time where a long sequence of happenings can occur in a period which corresponds to a second or a few seconds of physical Time. There is then a certain relation between different Time statuses but no ascertainable correspondence of measure. It would seem as if Time had no objective reality, but depends on whatever conditions may be established by action of consciousness in its relation to status and motion of being: Time would seem to be purely subjective. But, in fact, Space also would appear by the mutual relation of Mind-Space and Matter-Space to be subjective; in other words, both are the original spiritual extension, but it is rendered by mind in its purity into a subjective mind-field and by sense-mind into an objective field of sense-perception. Subjectivity and objectivity are only two sides of one consciousness, and the cardinal fact is that any given Time or Space or any given Time-Space as a whole is a status of being in which there is a movement of the consciousness and force of the being, a movement that creates or manifests events and happenings; it is the relation of the consciousness that sees and the force that formulates the happenings, a relation inherent in the status, which determines the sense of Time and creates our awareness of Time-movement, Time-relation, Time-measure. In its fundamental truth the original status of Time behind all its variations is nothing else than the eternity of the Eternal, just as

the fundamental truth of Space, the original sense of its reality, is the infinity of the Infinite.

The Being can have three different states of its consciousness with regard to its own eternity. The first is that in which there is the immobile status of the Self in its essential existence, self-absorbed or self-conscious, but in either case without development of consciousness in movement or happening; this is what we distinguish as its timeless eternity. The second is its whole-consciousness of the successive relations of all things belonging to a destined or an actually proceeding manifestation, in which what we call past, present and future stand together as if in a map or settled design or very much as an artist or painter or architect might hold all the detail of his work viewed as a whole, intended or reviewed in his mind or arranged in a plan for execution; this is the stable status or simultaneous integrality of Time. This seeing of Time is not at all part of our normal awareness of events as they happen, though our view of the past, because it is already known and can be regarded in the whole, may put on something of this character; but we know that this consciousness exists because it is possible in an exceptional state to enter into it and see things from the view-point of this simultaneity of Time-vision. The third status is that of a processive movement of Consciousness-Force and its successive working out of what has been seen by it in the static vision of the Eternal; this is the Time movement. But it is in one and the same Eternity that this triple status exists and the movement takes place; there are not really two eternities, one an eternity of status, another an eternity of movement, but there are different statuses or positions taken by Consciousness with regard to the one Eternity. For it can see the whole Time development from outside or from above the movement; it can take a stable position within the movement and see the before and the after in a fixed, determined or destined succession; or it can take instead a mobile position in the movement, itself move with it from moment to moment and see all that has happened receding back into the past and all that has to happen coming towards it from the future; or else it may concentrate on the moment it occupies and

see nothing but what is in that moment and immediately around or behind it. All these positions can be taken by the being of the Infinite in a simultaneous vision or experience. It can see Time from above and inside Time, exceeding it and not within it; it can see the Timeless develop the Time-movement without ceasing to be timeless, it can embrace the whole movement in a static and a dynamic vision and put out at the same time something of itself into the moment-vision. This simultaneity may seem to the finite consciousness tied to the moment-vision a magic of the Infinite, a magic of Maya; to its own way of perception which needs to limit, to envisage one status only at a time in order to harmonise, it would give a sense of confused and inconsistent unreality. But to an infinite consciousness such an integral simultaneity of vision and experience would be perfectly logical and consistent; all could be elements of a whole-vision capable of being closely related together in a harmonious arrangement, a multiplicity of view bringing out the unity of the thing seen, a diverse presentation of concomitant aspects of the One Reality.

If there can be this simultaneous multiplicity of self-presentation of one Reality, we see that there is no impossibility in the coexistence of a Timeless Eternal and a Time Eternity. It would be the same Eternity viewed by a dual self-awareness and there could be no opposition between them; it would be a correlation of two powers of the self-awareness of the infinite and eternal Reality,—a power of status and non-manifestation, a power of self-effecting action and movement and manifestation. Their simultaneity, however contradictory and difficult to reconcile it might seem to our finite surface seeing, would be intrinsic and normal to the Maya or eternal self-knowledge and all-knowledge of Brahman, the eternal and infinite knowledge and wisdom-power of the Ishwara, the consciousness-force of the self-existent Sachchidananda.

Chapter III

The Eternal and the Individual

He am I.

*Isha Upanishad.*¹

It is an eternal portion of Me that has become the living being in a world of living beings. . . . The eye of knowledge sees the Lord abiding in the body and enjoying and going forth from it.

*Gita.*²

Two birds beautiful of wing, friends and comrades, cling to a common tree, and one eats the sweet fruit, the other regards him and eats not. . . . Where winged souls cry the discoveries of knowledge over their portion of immortality, there the Lord of all, the Guardian of the World took possession of me, he the Wise, me the ignorant.

*Rig Veda.*³

THREE is then a fundamental truth of existence, an Omnipresent Reality, omnipresent above the cosmic manifestation and in it and immanent in each individual. There is also a dynamic power of this Omnipresence, a creative or self-manifesting action of its infinite Consciousness-Force. There is as a phase or movement of the self-manifestation a descent into an apparent material inconscience, an awakening of the individual out of the Inconscience and an evolution of his being into the spiritual and supramental consciousness and power of the Reality, into his own universal and transcendent Self and source of existence. It is on this foundation that we have to base our conception of a truth in our terrestrial being and the possibility of a divine Life in material Nature. There our chief need is to discover the origin and nature of the Ignorance

¹ Verse 16. ² XV. 7, 10. ³ I. 164. 20, 21.

which we see emerging out of the unconsciousness of matter or disclosing itself within a body of matter and the nature of the Knowledge that has to replace it, to understand too the process of Nature's self-unfolding and the soul's recovery. For in fact the Knowledge is there concealed in the Ignorance itself; it has rather to be unveiled than acquired: it reveals itself rather than is learned, by an inward and upward self-unfolding. But first it will be convenient to meet and get out of the way one difficulty that inevitably arises, the difficulty of admitting that, even given the immanence of the Divine in us, even given our individual consciousness as a vehicle of progressive evolutionary manifestation, the individual is in any sense eternal or that there can be any persistence of individuality after liberation has been attained by unity and self-knowledge.

This is a difficulty of the logical reason and must be met by a larger and more catholic enlightening reason. Or if it is a difficulty of spiritual experience, it can only be met by a wider resolving experience. It can indeed be met also by a dialectical battle, a logomachy of the logical mind; but that by itself is an artificial method, often a futile combat in the clouds and always inconclusive. Logical reasoning is useful and indispensable in its own field in order to give the mind a certain clearness, precision and subtlety in dealing with its own ideas and word-symbols, so that our perception of the truths which we arrive at by observation and experience or which physically, psychologically or spiritually we have seen, may be as little as possible obscured by the confusions of our average human intelligence, its proneness to take appearance for fact, its haste to be misled by partial truth, its exaggerated conclusions, its intellectual and emotional partialities, its incompetent bunglings in that linking of truth to truth by which alone we can arrive at a complete knowledge. We must have a clear, pure, subtle and flexible mind in order that we may fall as little as possible into that ordinary mental habit of our kind which turns truth itself into a purveyor of errors. That clarification the habit of clear logical reasoning culminating in the method of metaphysical dialectics does help to accomplish and its part in the preparation of knowledge is therefore very

great. But by itself it cannot arrive either at the knowledge of the world or the knowledge of God, much less reconcile the lower and the higher realisation. It is much more efficiently a guardian against error than a discoverer of truth,—although by deduction from knowledge already acquired it may happen upon new truths and indicate them for experience or for the higher and larger truth-seeing faculties to confirm. In the more subtle field of synthetical or unifying knowledge the logical habit of mind may even become a stumbling-block by the very faculty which gives it its peculiar use; for it is so accustomed to making distinctions and dwelling upon distinctions and working by distinctions that it is always a little at sea when distinctions have to be overridden and overpassed. Our object, then, in considering the difficulties of the normal mind when face to face with the experience of cosmic and transcendental unity by the individual, must be solely to make more clear to ourselves, first, the origin of the difficulties and the escape from them and by that, what is more important, the real nature of the unity at which we arrive and of the culmination of the individual when he becomes one with all creatures and dwells in the oneness of the Eternal.

The first difficulty for the reason is that it has always been accustomed to identify the individual self with the ego and to think of it as existing only by the limitations and exclusions of the ego. If that were so, then by the transcendence of the ego the individual would abolish his own existence; our end would be to disappear and dissolve into some universality of matter, life, mind or spirit or else some indeterminate from which our egoistic determinations of individuality have started. But what is this strongly separative self-experience that we call ego? It is nothing fundamentally real in itself but only a practical construction of our consciousness devised to centralise the activities of Nature in us. We perceive a formation of mental, physical, vital experience which distinguishes itself from the rest of being, and that is what we think of as ourselves in nature—this individualisation of being in becoming. We then proceed to conceive of ourselves as something which has thus individualised itself and only exists so long as it is individualised,—a temporary or at least a

temporal becoming; or else we conceive of ourselves as someone who supports or causes the individualisation, an immortal being perhaps but limited by its individuality. This perception and this conception constitute our ego-sense. Normally, we go no farther in our knowledge of our individual existence.

But in the end we have to see that our individualisation is only a superficial formation, a practical selection and limited conscious synthesis for the temporary utility of life in a particular body, or else it is a constantly changing and developing synthesis pursued through successive lives in successive bodies. Behind it there is a consciousness, a Purusha, who is not determined or limited by his individualisation or by this synthesis but on the contrary determines, supports and yet exceeds it. That which he selects from in order to construct this synthesis, is his total experience of the world-being. Therefore our individualisation exists by virtue of the world-being, but also by virtue of a consciousness which uses the world-being for experience of its possibilities of individuality. These two powers, Person and his world-material, are both necessary for our present experience of individuality. If the Purusha with his individualising synthesis of consciousness were to disappear, to merge, to annul himself in any way, our constructed individuality would cease because the Reality that supported it would no longer be in presence; if, on the other hand, the world-being were to dissolve, merge, disappear, then also our individualisation would cease, for the material of experience by which it effectuates itself would be wanting. We have then to recognise these two terms of our existence, a world-being and an individualising consciousness which is the cause of all our self-experience and world-experience.

But we see farther that in the end this Purusha, this cause and self of our individuality, comes to embrace the whole world and all other beings in a sort of conscious extension of itself and to perceive itself as one with the world-being. In its conscious extension of itself it exceeds the primary experience and abolishes the barriers of its active self-limitation and individualisation; by its perception of its own infinite universality it goes beyond all consciousness of separative individuality or limited

soul-being. By that very fact the individual ceases to be the self-limiting ego; in other words, our false consciousness of existing only by self-limitation, by rigid distinction of ourselves from the rest of being and becoming is transcended; our identification of ourselves with our personal and temporal individualisation in a particular mind and body is abolished. But is all truth of individuality and individualisation abolished? does the Purusha cease to exist or does he become the world-Purusha and live intimately in innumerable minds and bodies? We do not find it to be so. He still individualises and it is still he who exists and embraces this wider consciousness while he individualises: but the mind no longer thinks of a limited temporary individualisation as all ourselves but only as a wave of becoming thrown up from the sea of its being or else as a form or centre of universality. The soul still makes the world-becoming the material for individual experience, but instead of regarding it as something outside and larger than itself on which it has to draw, by which it is affected, with which it has to make accommodations, it is aware of it subjectively as within itself; it embraces both its world-material and its individualised experience of spatial and temporal activities in a free and enlarged consciousness. In this new consciousness the spiritual individual perceives its true self to be one in being with the Transcendence and seated and dwelling within it, and no longer takes its constructed individuality as anything more than a formation for world-experience.

Our unity with the world-being is the consciousness of a Self which at one and the same time cosmicises in the world and individualises through the individual Purusha, and both in that world-being and in this individual being and in all individual beings it is aware of the same Self manifesting and experiencing its various manifestations. That then is a Self which must be one in its being,—otherwise we could not have this experience of unity,—and yet must be capable in its very unity of cosmic differentiation and multiple individuality. The unity is its being,—yes, but the cosmic differentiation and the multiple individuality are the power of its being which it is constantly displaying and which it is its delight and the nature of its consciousness to

display. If then we arrive at unity with that, if we even become entirely and in every way that being, why should the power of its being be excised and why at all should we desire or labour to excise it? We should then only diminish the scope of our unity with it by an exclusive concentration accepting the divine being but not accepting our part in the power and consciousness and infinite delight of the Divine. It would in fact be the individual seeking peace and rest of union in a motionless identity, but rejecting delight and various joy of union in the nature and act and power of the divine Existence. That is possible, but there is no necessity to uphold it as the ultimate aim of our being or as our ultimate perfection.

Or the one possible reason would be that in the power, the act of consciousness there is not real union and that only in the status of consciousness is there perfect undifferentiated unity. Now in what we may call the waking union of the individual with the Divine, as opposed to a falling asleep or a concentration of the individual consciousness in an absorbed identity, there is certainly and must be a differentiation of experience. For in this active unity the individual Purusha enlarges its active experience also as well as its static consciousness into a way of union with this Self of his being and of the world-being, and yet individualisation remains and therefore differentiation. The Purusha is aware of all other individuals as selves of himself; he may by a dynamic union become aware of their mental and practical action as occurring in his universal consciousness, just as he is aware of his own mental and practical action; he may help to determine their action by subjective union with them: but still there is a practical difference. The action of the Divine in himself is that with which he is particularly and directly concerned; the action of the Divine in his other selves is that with which he is universally concerned, not directly, but through and by his union with them and with the Divine. The individual therefore exists though he exceeds the little separative ego; the universal exists and is embraced by him but it does not absorb and abolish all individual differentiation, even though by his universalising himself the limitation which we call the ego is overcome.

Now we may get rid of this differentiation by plunging into the absorption of an exclusive unity, but to what end? For perfect union? But we do not forfeit that by accepting the differentiation any more than the Divine forfeits His oneness by accepting it. We have the perfect union in His being and can absorb ourselves in it at any time, but we have also this other differentiated unity and can emerge into it and act freely in it at any time without losing oneness: for we have merged the ego and are absolved from the exclusive stresses of our mentality. Then for peace and rest? But we have the peace and rest by virtue of our unity with Him, even as the Divine possesses for ever His eternal calm in the midst of His eternal action. Then for the mere joy of getting rid of all differentiation? But that differentiation has its divine purpose: it is a means of greater unity, not as in the egoistic life a means of division; for we enjoy by it our unity with our other selves and with God in all, which we exclude by our rejection of His multiple being. In either experience it is the Divine in the individual possessing and enjoying in one case the Divine in His pure unity or in the other the Divine in that and in the unity of the cosmos; it is not the absolute Divine recovering after having lost His unity. Certainly, we may prefer the absorption in a pure exclusive unity or a departure into a supracosmic transcendence, but there is in the spiritual truth of the Divine Existence no compelling reason why we should not participate in this large possession and bliss of His universal being which is the fulfilment of our individuality.

But we see farther that it is not solely and ultimately the cosmic being into which our individual being enters but something in which both are unified. As our individualisation in the world is a becoming of that Self, so is the world too a becoming of that Self. The world-being includes always the individual being; therefore these two becomings, the cosmic and the individual, are always related to each other and in their practical relation mutually dependent. But we find that the individual being also comes in the end to include the world in its consciousness, and since this is not by an abolition of the spiritual individual, but by his coming to his full, large and perfect self-consciousness, we

must suppose that the individual always included the cosmos, and it is only the surface consciousness which by ignorance failed to possess that inclusion because of its self-limitation in ego. But when we speak of the mutual inclusion of the cosmic and the individual, the world in me, I in the world, all in me, I in all, — for that is the liberated self-experience, — we are evidently travelling beyond the language of the normal reason. That is because the words we have to use were minted by mind and given their values by an intellect bound to the conceptions of physical Space and circumstance and using for the language of a higher psychological experience figures drawn from the physical life and the experience of the senses. But the plane of consciousness to which the liberated human being arises is not dependent upon the physical world, and the cosmos which we thus include and are included in is not the physical cosmos, but the harmonically manifest being of God in certain great rhythms of His conscious-force and self-delight. Therefore this mutual inclusion is spiritual and psychological; it is a translation of the two forms of the Many, all and individual, into a unifying spiritual experience, — a translation of the eternal unity of the One and the Many; for the One is the eternal unity of the Many differentiating and undifferentiating itself in the cosmos. This means that cosmos and individual are manifestations of a transcendent Self who is indivisible being although he seems to be divided or distributed; but he is not really divided or distributed but indivisibly present everywhere. Therefore all is in each and each is in all and all is in God and God in all; and when the liberated soul comes into union with this Transcendent, it has this self-experience of itself and cosmos which is translated psychologically into a mutual inclusion and a persistent existence of both in a divine union which is at once a oneness and a fusion and an embrace.

The normal experience of the reason therefore is not applicable to these higher truths. In the first place the ego is the individual only in the ignorance; there is a true individual who is not the ego and still has an eternal relation with all other individuals which is not egoistic or self-separative, but of which the essential character is practical mutuality founded in essential

unity. This mutuality founded in unity is the whole secret of the divine existence in its perfect manifestation; it must be the basis of anything to which we can give the name of a divine life. But, secondly, we see that the whole difficulty and confusion into which the normal reason falls is that we are speaking of a higher and illimitable self-experience founded on divine infinities and yet are applying to it a language formed by this lower and limited experience which finds itself on finite appearances and the separative definitions by which we try to distinguish and classify the phenomena of the material universe. Thus we have to use the word individual and speak of the ego and the true individual, just as we speak sometimes of the apparent and the real Man. Evidently, all these words, man, apparent, real, individual, true, have to be taken in a very relative sense and with a full awareness of their imperfection and inability to express the things that we mean. By individual we mean normally something that separates itself from everything else and stands apart, though in reality there is no such thing anywhere in existence; it is a figment of our mental conceptions useful and necessary to express a partial and practical truth. But the difficulty is that the mind gets dominated by its words and forgets that the partial and practical truth becomes true truth only by its relation to others which seem to the reason to contradict it, and that taken by itself it contains a constant element of falsity. Thus when we speak of an individual we mean ordinarily an individualisation of mental, vital, physical being separate from all other beings, incapable of unity with them by its very individuality. If we go beyond these three terms of mind, life and body, and speak of the soul or individual self, we still think of an individualised being separate from all others, incapable of unity and inclusive mutuality, capable at most of a spiritual contact and soul-sympathy. It is therefore necessary to insist that by the true individual we mean nothing of the kind, but a conscious power of being of the Eternal, always existing by unity, always capable of mutuality. It is that being which by self-knowledge enjoys liberation and immortality.

But we have to carry still farther the conflict between the

normal and the higher reason. When we speak of the true individual as a conscious power of being of the Eternal, we are still using intellectual terms,—we cannot help it, unless we plunge into a language of pure symbols and mystic values of speech,—but, what is worse, we are, in the attempt to get away from the idea of the ego, using a too abstract language. Let us say, then, a conscious being who is for our valuations of existence a being of the Eternal in his power of individualising self-experience; for it must be a concrete being — and not an abstract power — who enjoys immortality. And then we get to this that not only am I in the world and the world in me, but God is in me and I am in God; by which yet it is not meant that God depends for His existence on man, but that He manifests Himself in that which He manifests within Himself; the individual exists in the Transcendent, but all the Transcendent is there concealed in the individual. Further I am one with God in my being and yet I can have relations with Him in my experience. I, the liberated individual, can enjoy the Divine in His transcendence, unified with Him, and enjoy at the same time the Divine in other individuals and in His cosmic being. Evidently we have arrived at certain primary relations of the Absolute and they can only be intelligible to the mind if we see that the Transcendent, the individual, the cosmic being are the eternal powers of consciousness — we fall again, this time without remedy, into a wholly abstract language,—of an absolute existence, a unity yet more than a unity, which so expresses itself to its own consciousness in us, but which we cannot adequately speak of in human language and must not hope to describe either by negative or positive terms to our reason, but can only hope to indicate it to the utmost power of our language.

But the normal mind, which has no experience of these things that are so powerfully real to the liberated consciousness, may well revolt against what may seem to it nothing more than a mass of intellectual contradictions. It may say, "I know very well what the Absolute is; it is that in which there are no relations. The Absolute and the relative are irreconcilable opposites; in the relative there is nowhere anything absolute, in the Absolute there can be nothing relative. Anything which contradicts these

first data of my thought, is intellectually false and practically impossible. These other statements also contradict my law of contradictions which is that two opposing and conflicting affirmations cannot both be true. It is impossible that there should be oneness with God and yet a relation with Him such as this of the enjoyment of the Divine. In oneness there is no one to enjoy except the One and nothing to be enjoyed except the One. God, the individual and the cosmos must be three different actualities, otherwise there could be no relations between them. Either they are eternally different or they are different in present time, although they may have originally been one undifferentiated existence and may eventually re-become one undifferentiated existence. Unity was perhaps and will be perhaps, but it is not now and cannot be so long as cosmos and the individual endure. The cosmic being can only know and possess the transcendent unity by ceasing to be cosmic; the individual can only know and possess the cosmic or the transcendental unity by ceasing from all individuality and individualisation. Or if unity is the one eternal fact, then cosmos and individual are non-existent; they are illusions imposed on itself by the Eternal. That may well involve a contradiction or an unreconciled paradox; but I am willing to admit a contradiction in the Eternal which I am not compelled to think out, rather than a contradiction here of my primary conceptions which I am compelled to think out logically and to practical ends. I am on this supposition able either to take the world as practically real and think and act in it or to reject it as an unreality and cease to think and act; I am not compelled to reconcile contradictions, not called on to be conscious of and conscious in something beyond myself and world and yet deal from that basis, as God does, with a world of contradictions. The attempt to be as God while I am still an individual or to be three things at a time seems to me to involve a logical confusion and a practical impossibility." Such might well be the attitude of the normal reason, and it is clear, lucid, positive in its distinctions; it involves no extraordinary gymnastics of the reason trying to exceed itself and losing itself in shadows and half-lights or any kind of mysticism, or at least there is only one

original and comparatively simple mysticism free from all other difficult complexities. Therefore it is the reasoning which is the most satisfactory to the simply rational mind. Yet is there here a triple error, the error of making an unbridgeable gulf between the Absolute and the relative, the error of making too simple and rigid and extending too far the law of contradictions and the error of conceiving in terms of Time the genesis of things which have their origin and first habitat in the Eternal.

We mean by the Absolute something greater than ourselves, greater than the cosmos which we live in, the supreme reality of that transcendent Being which we call God, something without which all that we see or are conscious of as existing, could not have been, could not for a moment remain in existence. Indian thought calls it Brahman, European thought the Absolute because it is a self-existent which is absolved of all bondage to relativities. For all relatives can only exist by something which is the truth of them all and the source and continent of their powers and properties and yet exceeds them all; it is something of which not only each relativity itself, but also any sum we can make of all relatives that we know, can only be—in all that we know of them—a partial, inferior or practical expression. We see by reason that such an Absolute must exist; we become by spiritual experience aware of its existence: but even when we are most aware of it, we cannot describe it because our language and thought can deal only with the relative. The Absolute is for us the Ineffable.

So far there need be no real difficulty nor confusion. But we readily go on, led by the mind's habit of oppositions, of thinking by distinctions and pairs of contraries, to speak of it as not only not bound by the limitations of the relative, but as if it were bound by its freedom from limitations, inexorably empty of all power for relations and in its nature incapable of them, something hostile in its whole being to relativity and its eternal contrary. By this false step of our logic we get into an impasse. Our own existence and the existence of the universe become not only a mystery, but logically inconceivable. For we get by that to an Absolute which is incapable of relativity and exclusive of all

relatives and yet the cause or at least the support of relativity and the container, truth and substance of all relatives. We have then only one logical-illogical way of escape out of the impasse; we have to suppose the imposition of the world as a self-effective illusion or an unreal temporal reality, on the eternity of the formless relationless Absolute. This imposition is made by our misleading individual consciousness which falsely sees Brahman in the figure of the cosmos — as a man mistakes a rope for a serpent; but since either our individual consciousness is itself a relative supported by the Brahman and only existent by it, not a real reality, or since in its reality it is itself the Brahman, it is the Brahman after all which imposes on itself in us this delusion and mistakes in some figure of its own consciousness an existent rope for a non-existent snake, imposes on its own indeterminable pure Reality the semblance of a universe, or if it does not impose it on its own consciousness, it is on a consciousness derived from it and dependent on it, a projection of itself into Maya. By this explanation nothing is explained; the original contradiction stands where it was, unreconciled, and we have only stated it over again in other terms. It looks as if, by attempting to arrive at an explanation by means of intellectual reasoning, we have only befogged ourselves by the delusion of our own uncompromising logic: we have imposed on the Absolute the imposition which our too presumptuous reasoning has practised on our own intelligence; we have transformed our mental difficulty in understanding the world-manifestation into an original impossibility for the Absolute to manifest itself in world at all. But the Absolute, obviously, finds no difficulty in world-manifestation and no difficulty either in a simultaneous transcendence of world-manifestation; the difficulty exists only for our mental limitations which prevent us from grasping the supramental rationality of the coexistence of the infinite and the finite or seizing the nodus of the unconditioned with the conditioned. For our intellectual rationality these are opposites; for the absolute reason they are interrelated and not essentially conflicting expressions of one and the same reality. The consciousness of infinite Existence is other than our mind-consciousness and sense-consciousness, greater and more

capacious, for it includes them as minor terms of its workings, and the logic of infinite Existence is other than our intellectual logic. It reconciles in its great primal facts of being what to our mental view, concerned as it is with words and ideas derived from secondary facts, are irreconcilable contraries.

Our mistake is that in trying to define the indefinable we think we have succeeded when we have described by an all-exclusive negation this Absolute which we are yet compelled to conceive of as a supreme positive and the cause of all positives. It is not surprising that so many acute thinkers, with their eye on the facts of being and not on verbal distinctions, should be driven to infer that the Absolute is a fiction of the intelligence, an idea born of words and verbal dialectics, a zero, non-existent, and to conclude that an eternal Becoming is the only truth of our existence. The ancient sages spoke indeed of Brahman negatively,—they said of it, *neti neti*, it is not this, it is not that,—but they took care also to speak of it positively; they said of it too, it is this, it is that, it is all: for they saw that to limit it either by positive or negative definitions was to fall away from its truth. Brahman, they said, is Matter, is Life, is Mind, is Supermind, is cosmic Delight, is Sachchidananda; yet it cannot really be defined by any of these things, not even by our largest conception of Sachchidananda. In the world as we see it, for our mental consciousness however high we carry it, we find that to every positive there is a negative. But the negative is not a zero,—indeed whatever appears to us a zero is packed with force, teeming with power of existence, full of actual or potential contents. Neither does the existence of the negative make its corresponding positive non-existent or an unreality; it only makes the positive an incomplete statement of the truth of things and even, we may say, of the positive's own truth. For the positive and the negative exist not only side by side, but in relation to each other and by each other; they complete and would to the all-view, which a limited mind cannot reach, explain one another. Each by itself is not really known; we only begin to know it in its deeper truth when we can read into it the suggestions of its apparent opposite. It is through such a profounder catholic intuition and

not by exclusive logical oppositions that our intelligence ought to approach the Absolute.

The positives of the Absolute are its various statements of itself to our consciousness; its negatives bring in the rest of its absolute positivity by which its limitation to these first statements is denied. We have, to begin with, its large primary relations such as the infinite and the finite, the conditioned and unconditioned, the qualitied and unqualitied; in each pair the negative conceals the whole power of the corresponding positive which is contained in it and emerges from it: there is no real opposition. We have, in a less subtle order of truths, the transcendent and the cosmic, the universal and the individual; here we have seen that each member of these pairs is contained in its apparent opposite. The universal particularises itself in the individual; the individual contains in himself all the generalities of the universal. The universal consciousness finds all itself by the variations of numberless individuals, not by suppressing variations; the individual consciousness fulfils all itself when it is universalised into sympathy and identity with the cosmic, not by limiting itself in the ego. So too the cosmic contains in all itself and in each thing in it the complete immanence of the transcendent; it maintains itself as the world-being by the consciousness of its own transcendent reality, it finds itself in each individual being by the realisation of the divine and transcendent in that being and in all existences. The transcendent contains, manifests, constitutes the cosmos and by manifesting it manifests or discovers, as we may say in the old poetic sense of that word, its own infinite harmonic varieties. But even in the lower orders of the relative we find this play of negative and positive, and through the divine reconciliation of its terms, not by excising them or carrying their opposition to the bitter end, we have to arrive at the Absolute. For there in the Absolute all this relativity, all this varying rhythmic self-statement of the Absolute, finds, not its complete denial, but its reason for existence and its justification, not its conviction as a lie, but the source and principle of its truth. Cosmos and individual go back to something in the Absolute which is the true truth of individuality, the true truth of cosmic

being and not their denial and conviction of their falsity. The Absolute is not a sceptical logician denying the truth of all his own statements and self-expressions, but an existence so utterly and so infinitely positive that no finite positive can be formulated which can exhaust it or bind it down to its definitions.

It is evident that if such is the truth of the Absolute, we cannot bind it either by our law of contradictions. That law is necessary to us in order that we may posit partial and practical truths, think out things clearly, decisively and usefully, classify, act, deal with them effectively for particular purposes in our divisions of Space, distinctions of form and property, moments of Time. It represents a formal and strongly dynamic truth of existence in its practical workings which is strongest in the most outward term of things, the material, but becomes less and less rigidly binding as we go upward in the scale, mount on the more subtle rungs of the ladder of being. It is especially necessary for us in dealing with material phenomena and forces; we have to suppose them to be one thing at a time, to have one power at a time and to be limited by their ostensible and practically effective capacities and properties; otherwise we cannot deal with them. But even there, as human thought is beginning to realise, the distinctions made by the intellect and the classifications and practical experiments of Science, while perfectly valid in their own field and for their own purpose, do not represent the whole or the real truth of things, whether of things in the whole or of the thing by itself which we have classified and set artificially apart, isolated for separate analysis. By that isolation we are indeed able to deal with it very practically, very effectively, and we think at first that the effectiveness of our action proves the entire and sufficient truth of our isolating and analysing knowledge. Afterwards we find that by getting beyond it we can arrive at a greater truth and a greater effectivity.

The isolation is certainly necessary for first knowledge. A diamond is a diamond and a pearl a pearl, each thing of its own class, existing by its distinction from all others, each distinguished by its own form and properties. But each has also properties and elements which are common to both and others

which are common to material things in general. And in reality each does not exist only by its distinctions, but much more essentially by that which is common to both; and we get back to the very basis and enduring truth of all material things only when we find that all are the same thing, one energy, one substance or, if you like, one universal motion which throws up, brings out, combines, realises these different forms, these various properties, these fixed and harmonised potentialities of its own being. If we stop short at the knowledge of distinctions, we can deal only with diamond and pearl as they are, fix their values, uses, varieties, make the best ordinary use and profit of them; but if we can get to the knowledge and control of their elements and the common properties of the class to which they belong, we may arrive at the power of making either a diamond or pearl at our pleasure: go farther still and master that which all material things are in their essence and we may arrive even at the power of transmutation which would give the greatest possible control of material Nature. Thus the knowledge of distinctions arrives at its greatest truth and effective use when we arrive at the deeper knowledge of that which reconciles distinctions in the unity behind all variations. That deeper knowledge does not deprive the other and more superficial of effectivity nor convict it of vanity. We cannot conclude from our ultimate material discovery that there is no original substance or Matter, only energy manifesting substance or manifesting as substance,—that diamond and pearl are non-existent, unreal, only true to the illusion of our senses of perception and action, that the one substance, energy or motion is the sole eternal truth and that therefore the best or only rational use of our science would be to dissolve diamond and pearl and everything else that we can dissolve into this one eternal and original reality and get done with their forms and properties for ever. There is an essentiality of things, a commonality of things, an individuality of things; the commonality and individuality are true and eternal powers of the essentiality: that transcends them both, but the three together and not one by itself are the eternal terms of existence.

This truth which we can see, though with difficulty and

under considerable restrictions, even in the material world where the subtler and higher powers of being have to be excluded from our intellectual operations, becomes clearer and more powerful when we ascend in the scale. We see the truth of our classifications and distinctions, but also their limits. All things, even while different, are yet one. For practical purposes plant, animal, man are different existences; yet when we look deeper we see that the plant is only an animal with an insufficient evolution of self-consciousness and dynamic force; the animal is man in the making; man himself is that animal and yet the something more of self-consciousness and dynamic power of consciousness that make him man; and yet again he is the something more which is contained and repressed in his being as the potentiality of the divine,—he is a god in the making. In each of these, plant, animal, man, god, the Eternal is there containing and repressing himself as it were in order to make a certain statement of his being. Each is the whole Eternal concealed. Man himself, who takes up all that went before him and transmutes it into the term of manhood, is the individual human being and yet he is all mankind, the universal man acting in the individual as a human personality. He is all and yet he is himself and unique. He is what he is, but he is also the past of all that he was and the potentiality of all that he is not. We cannot understand him if we look only at his present individuality, but we cannot understand him either if we look only at his commonality, his general term of manhood, or go back by exclusion from both to an essentiality of his being in which his distinguishing manhood and his particularising individuality seem to disappear. Each thing is the Absolute, all are that One, but in these three terms always the Absolute makes its statement of its developed self-existence. We are not, because of the essential unity, compelled to say that all God's various action and workings are vain, worthless, unreal, phenomenal, illusory, and that the best and only rational or super-rational use we can make of our knowledge is to get away from them, dissolve our cosmic and individual existence into the essential being and get rid of all becoming as a futility for ever.

In our practical dealings with life we have to arrive at the

same truth. For certain practical ends we have to say that a thing is good or bad, beautiful or ugly, just or unjust and act upon that statement; but if we limit ourselves by it, we do not get at real knowledge. The law of contradictions here is only valid in so far as two different and opposite statements cannot be true of the same thing at the same time, in the same field, in the same respect, from the same point of view and for the same practical purpose. A great war, destruction or violent all-upheaving revolution, for example, may present itself to us as an evil, a virulent and catastrophic disorder, and it is so in certain respects, results, ways of looking at it; but from others, it may be a great good, since it rapidly clears the field for a new good or a more satisfying order. No man is simply good or simply bad; every man is a mixture of contraries: even we find these contraries often inextricably mixed up in a single feeling, a single action. All kinds of conflicting qualities, powers, values meet together and run into each other to make up our action, life, nature. We can only understand entirely if we get to some sense of the Absolute and yet look at its workings in all the relativities which are being manifested,—look not only at each by itself, but each in relation to all and to that which exceeds and reconciles them all. In fact we can only know by getting to the divine view and purpose in things and not merely looking at our own, though our own limited human view and momentary purpose have their validity in the cadre of the All. For behind all relativities there is this Absolute which gives them their being and their justification. No particular act or arrangement in the world is by itself absolute justice; but there is behind all acts and arrangements something absolute which we call justice, which expresses itself through their relativities and which we would realise if our view and knowledge were comprehensive instead of being as they are partial, superficial, limited to a few ostensible facts and appearances. So too there is an absolute good and an absolute beauty: but we can only get a glimpse of it if we embrace all things impartially and get beyond their appearances to some sense of that which, between them, all and each are by their complex terms trying to state and work out; not an indeterminate,—for the indeterminate,

being only the original stuff or perhaps the packed condition of determinations, would explain by itself nothing at all,—but the Absolute. We can indeed follow the opposite method of breaking up all things and refusing to look at them as a whole and in relation to that which justifies them and so create an intellectual conception of absolute evil, absolute injustice, the absolute hideousness, painfulness, triviality, vulgarity or vanity of all things; but that is to pursue to its extreme the method of the Ignorance whose view is based upon division. We cannot rightly so deal with the divine workings. Because the Absolute expresses itself through relativities the secret of which we find it difficult to fathom, because to our limited view everything appears to be a purposeless play of oppositions and negatives or a mass of contradictions, we cannot conclude that our first limited view is right or that all is a vain delusion of the mind and has no reality. Nor can we solve all by an original unreconciled contradiction which is to explain all the rest. The human reason is wrong in attaching a separate and definitive value to each contradiction by itself or getting rid of one by altogether denying the other; but it is right in refusing to accept as final and as the last word the coupling of contradictions which have in no way been reconciled together or have not found their source and significance in something beyond their opposition.

We cannot, either, effect a reconciliation or explanation of the original contradictions of existence by taking refuge in our concept of Time. Time, as we know or conceive it, is only our means of realising things in succession, it is a condition and cause of conditions, varies on different planes of existence, varies even for beings on one and the same plane: that is to say, it is not an Absolute and cannot explain the primary relations of the Absolute. They work themselves out in detail by Time and seem to our mental and vital being to be determined by it; but that seeming does not carry us back to their sources and principles. We make the distinction of conditioned and unconditioned and we imagine that the unconditioned became conditioned, the Infinite became finite at some date in Time, and may cease to be finite at some other date in Time, because it so appears to us in details,

particulars or with regard to this or that system of things. But if we look at existence as a whole, we see that infinite and finite coexist and exist in and by each other. Even if our universe were to disappear and reappear rhythmically in Time, as was the old belief, that too would be only a large detail and would not show that at a particular time all condition ceases in the whole range of infinite existence and all Being becomes the unconditioned, at another it again takes on the reality or the appearance of conditions. The first source and the primary relations lie beyond our mental divisions of Time, in the divine timelessness or else in the indivisible or eternal Time of which our divisions and successions are only figures in a mental experience.

There we see that all meets and all principles, all persistent realities of existence,—for the finite as a principle of being is as persistent as the infinite,—stand in a primary relation to each other in a free, not an exclusive unity of the Absolute, and that the way they present themselves to us in a material or a mental world is only a working out of them in secondary, tertiary or yet lower relativities. The Absolute has not become the contrary of itself and assumed at a certain date real or unreal relativities of which it was originally incapable, nor has the One become by a miracle the Many, nor the unconditioned deviated into the conditioned, nor the unqualified sprouted out into qualities. These oppositions are only the conveniences of our mental consciousness, our divisions of the indivisible. The things they represent are not fictions, they are realities, but they are not rightly known if they are set in irreconcilable opposition to or separation from each other; for there is no such irreconcilable opposition or separation of them in the all-view of the Absolute. This is the weakness not only of our scientific divisions and metaphysical distinctions, but of our exclusive spiritual realisations which are only exclusive because to arrive at them we have to start from our limiting and dividing mental consciousness. We have to make the metaphysical distinctions in order to help our intelligence towards a truth which exceeds it, because it is only so that it can escape from the confusions of our first undistinguishing mental view of things; but if we

bind ourselves by them to the end, we make chains of what should only have been first helps. We have to make use too of distinct spiritual realisations which may at first seem contrary to each other, because as mental beings it is difficult or impossible for us to seize at once largely and completely what is beyond our mentality; but we err if we intellectualise them into sole truths,—as when we assert that the Impersonal must be the one ultimate realisation and the rest creation of Maya or declare the Saguna, the Divine in its qualities, to be that and thrust away the impersonality from our spiritual experience. We have to see that both these realisations of the great spiritual seekers are equally valid in themselves, equally invalid against each other; they are one and the same Reality experienced on two sides which are both necessary for the full knowledge and experience of each other and of that which they both are. So is it with the One and the Many, the finite and the infinite, the transcendent and the cosmic, the individual and the universal; each is the other as well as itself and neither can be entirely known without the other and without exceeding their appearance of contrary oppositions.

We see then that there are three terms of the one existence, transcendent, universal and individual, and that each of these always contains secretly or overtly the two others. The Transcendent possesses itself always and controls the other two as the basis of its own temporal possibilities; that is the Divine, the eternal all-possessing God-consciousness, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, which informs, embraces, governs all existences. The human being is here on earth the highest power of the third term, the individual, for he alone can work out at its critical turning-point that movement of self-manifestation which appears to us as the involution and evolution of the divine consciousness between the two terms of the Ignorance and the Knowledge. The power of the individual to possess in his consciousness by self-knowledge his unity with the Transcendent and the universal, with the One Being and all beings and to live in that knowledge and transform his life by it, is that which makes the working out of the divine self-manifestation through the individual possible; and the arrival of the individual—not

in one but in all — at the divine life is the sole conceivable object of the movement. The existence of the individual is not an error in some self of the Absolute which that self afterwards discovers; for it is impossible that the absolute self-awareness or anything that is one with it should be ignorant of its own truth and its own capacities and betrayed by that ignorance either into a false idea of itself which it has to correct or an impracticable venture which it has to renounce. Neither is the individual existence a subordinate circumstance in a divine play or Lila, a play which consists in a continual revolution through unending cycles of pleasure and suffering without any higher hope in the Lila itself or any issue from it except the occasional escape of a few from time to time out of their bondage to this ignorance. We might be compelled to hold that ruthless and disastrous view of God's workings if man had no power of self-transcendence or no power of transforming by self-knowledge the conditions of the play nearer and nearer to the truth of the divine Delight. In that power lies the justification of individual existence; the individual and the universal unfolding in themselves the divine light, power, joy of transcendent Sachchidananda always manifest above them, always secret behind their surface appearances, this is the hidden intention, the ultimate significance of the divine play, the Lila. But it is in themselves, in their transformation but also their persistence and perfect relations, not in their self-annihilation that that must be unfolded. Otherwise there would be no reason for their ever having existed; the possibility of the Divine's unfolding in the individual is the secret of the enigma; his presence there and this intention of self-unfolding are the key to the world of Knowledge-Ignorance.

Chapter IV

The Divine and the Undivine

The Seer, the Thinker, the Self-existent who becomes everywhere has ordered perfectly all things from years sempiternal.

*Isha Upanishad.*¹

Many purified by knowledge have come to My state of being. . . . They have reached likeness in their law of being to Me.

*Gita.*²

Know That for the Brahman and not this which men cherish here.

*Kena Upanishad.*³

One controlling inner Self of all beings. . . . As the Sun, the eye of the world, is not touched by the external faults of vision, so this inner Self in beings is not touched by the sorrow of the world.

*Katha Upanishad.*⁴

The Lord abides in the heart of all beings.

*Gita.*⁵

THE UNIVERSE is a manifestation of an infinite and eternal All-Existence: the Divine Being dwells in all that is; we ourselves are that in our self, in our own deepest being; our soul, the secret indwelling psychic entity, is a portion of the Divine Consciousness and Essence. This is the view we have taken of our existence; but at the same time we speak of a divine life as the culmination of the evolutionary process, and the use of the phrase implies that our present life is undivine and all the life too that is below us. At the first glance this looks like a self-contradiction; instead of making a distinction between the divine life we aspire for and a present undivine existence, it would be

¹ Verse 8.

² IV. 10; XIV. 2.

³ I. 4.

⁴ II. 2. 12, 11.

⁵ XVIII. 61.

more logical to speak of an ascent from level to higher level of a divine manifestation. It may be admitted that essentially, if we look at the inner reality alone and discount the suggestions of the outer figure, such might be the nature of the evolution, the change we have to undergo in Nature; so it would appear perhaps to the impartial eye of a universal vision untroubled by our dualities of knowledge and ignorance, good and evil, happiness and suffering and participating in the untrammelled consciousness and delight of Sachchidananda. And yet, from the practical and relative point of view as distinguished from an essential vision, the distinction between the divine and the undivine has an insistent value, a very pressing significance. This then is an aspect of the problem which it is necessary to bring into the light and assess its true importance.

The distinction between the divine and the undivine life is in fact identical with the root distinction between a life of Knowledge lived in self-awareness and in the power of the Light and a life of Ignorance,— at any rate it so presents itself in a world that is slowly and with difficulty evolving out of an original Inconscience. All life that has still this Inconscience for its basis is stamped with the mark of a radical imperfection; for even if it is satisfied with its own type, it is a satisfaction with something incomplete and inharmonious, a patchwork of discords: on the contrary, even a purely mental or vital life might be perfect within its limits if it were based on a restricted but harmonious self-power and self-knowledge. It is this bondage to a perpetual stamp of imperfection and disharmony that is the mark of the undivine; a divine life, on the contrary, even if progressing from the little to the more, would be at each stage harmonious in its principle and detail: it would be a secure ground upon which freedom and perfection could naturally flower or grow towards their highest stature, refine and expand into their most subtle opulence. All imperfections, all perfections have to be taken into view in our consideration of the difference between an undivine and a divine existence: but ordinarily, when we make the distinction, we do it as human beings struggling under the pressure of life and the difficulties of our conduct

amidst its immediate problems and perplexities; most of all we are thinking of the distinction we are obliged to make between good and evil or of that along with its kindred problem of the duality, the blend in us of happiness and suffering. When we seek intellectually for a divine presence in things, a divine origin of the world, a divine government of its workings, the presence of evil, the insistence on suffering, the large, the enormous part offered to pain, grief and affliction in the economy of Nature are the cruel phenomena which baffle our reason and overcome the instinctive faith of mankind in such an origin and government or in an all-seeing, all-determining and omnipresent Divine Immanence. Other difficulties we could solve more easily and happily and make some shift to be better satisfied with the ready conclusiveness of our solutions. But this standard of judgment is not sufficiently comprehensive and it is supported upon a too human point of view; for to a wider outlook evil and suffering appear only as a striking aspect, they are not the whole defect, not even the root of the matter. The sum of the world's imperfections is not made up only of these two deficiencies; there is more than the fall, if fall there was, of our spiritual or material being from good and from happiness or our nature's failure to overcome evil and suffering. Besides the deficiency of the ethical and hedonistic satisfactions demanded by our being, the paucity of Good and Delight in our world-experience, there is also the deficiency of other divine degrees: for Knowledge, Truth, Beauty, Power, Unity are, they too, the stuff and elements of a divine life, and these are given to us in a scanty and grudging measure; yet all are, in their absolute, powers of the Divine Nature.

It is not possible then to limit the description of our and the world's undivine imperfection solely to moral evil or sensational suffering; there is more in the world-enigma than their double problem,—for they are only two strong results of a common principle. It is the general principle of imperfection that we have to admit and consider. If we look closely at this general imperfection, we shall see that it consists first in a limitation in us of the divine elements which robs them of their divinity, then in a various many-branching distortion, a perversion, a contrary

turn, a falsifying departure from some ideal Truth of being. To our minds which do not possess that Truth but can conceive it, this departure presents itself either as a state from which we have lapsed spiritually or as a possibility or promise which we cannot fulfil, cannot realise because it exists only as an ideal. There has been either a lapse of the inner spirit from a greater consciousness and knowledge, delight, love and beauty, power and capacity, harmony and good, or else there is a failure of our struggling nature, an impotence to achieve what we instinctively see to be divine and desirable. If we penetrate to the cause of the fall or the failure, we shall find that all proceeds from the one primal fact that our being, consciousness, force, experience of things represent—not in their very self, but in their surface pragmatic nature—a principle or an effective phenomenon of division or rupture in the unity of the Divine Existence. This division becomes in its inevitable practical effect a limitation of the divine consciousness and knowledge, the divine delight and beauty, the divine power and capacity, the divine harmony and good: there is a limitation of completeness and wholeness, a blindness in our vision of these things, a lameness in our following of them, in our experience of them a fragmentation, a diminution of power and intensity, a lowering of quality,—the mark of a descent from spiritual heights or else of a consciousness emerging from the insensible neutral monotone of the Inconscience; the intensities which are normal and natural on higher ranges are in us lost or toned down so as to harmonise with the blacks and greys of our material existence. There arises too by a secondary ulterior effect a perversion of these highest things; in our limited mentality unconsciousness and wrong consciousness intervene, ignorance covers our whole nature and—by the misapplication or misdirection of an imperfect will and knowledge, by automatic reactions of our diminished consciousness-force and the inept poverty of our substance—contradictions of the divine elements are formed, incapacity, inertia, falsehood, error, pain and grief, wrong-doing, discord, evil. There is too, always, somewhere hidden in our selves, nursed in our recesses, even when not overtly felt in the

conscious nature, even when rejected by the parts of us which these things torture, an attachment to this experience of division, a clinging to the divided way of being which prevents the excision of these unhappinesses or their rejection and removal. For since the principle of Consciousness-Force and Ananda is at the root of all manifestation, nothing can endure if it has not a will in our nature, a sanction of the Purusha, a sustained pleasure in some part of the being, even though it be a secret or a perverse pleasure, to keep it in continuance.

When we say that all is a divine manifestation, even that which we call undivine, we mean that in its essentiality all is divine even if the form baffles or repels us. Or, to put it in a formula to which it is easier for our psychological sense of things to give its assent, in all things there is a presence, a primal Reality,—the Self, the Divine, Brahman,—which is for ever pure, perfect, blissful, infinite: its infinity is not affected by the limitations of relative things; its purity is not stained by our sin and evil; its bliss is not touched by our pain and suffering; its perfection is not impaired by our defects of consciousness, knowledge, will, unity. In certain images of the Upanishads the divine Purusha is described as the one Fire which has entered into all forms and shapes itself according to the form, as the one Sun which illumines all impartially and is not affected by the faults of our seeing. But this affirmation is not enough; it leaves the problem unsolved, why that which is in itself ever pure, perfect, blissful, infinite, should not only tolerate but seem to maintain and encourage in its manifestation imperfection and limitation, impurity and suffering and falsehood and evil: it states the duality that constitutes the problem, but does not solve it.

If we simply leave these two dissonant facts of existence standing in each other's presence, we are driven to conclude that there is no reconciliation possible; all we can do is to cling as much as we can to a deepening sense of the joy of the pure and essential Presence and do the best we may with the discordant externality, until we can impose in its place the law of its divine contrary. Or else we have to seek for an escape rather than a

solution. For we can say that the inner Presence alone is a Truth and the discordant externality is a falsehood or illusion created by a mysterious principle of Ignorance; our problem is to find some way of escape out of the falsehood of the manifested world into the truth of the hidden Reality. Or we may hold with the Buddhist that there is no need of explanation, since there is this one practical fact of the imperfection and impermanence of things and no Self, Divine or Brahman, for that too is an illusion of our consciousness: the one thing that is necessary for liberation is to get rid of the persistent structure of ideas and persistent energy of action which maintain a continuity in the flux of the impermanence. On this road of escape we achieve self-extinction in Nirvana; the problem of things gets itself extinguished by our own self-extinction. This is a way out, but it does not look like the true and only way, nor are the other solutions altogether satisfactory. It is a fact that by excluding the discordant manifestation from our inner consciousness as a superficial externality, by insisting only on the pure and perfect Presence, we can achieve individually a deep and blissful sense of this silent Divinity, can enter into the sanctuary, can live in the light and the rapture. An exclusive inner concentration on the Real, the Eternal is possible, even a self-immersion by which we can lose or put away the dissonances of the universe. But there is too somewhere deep down in us the need of a total consciousness, there is in Nature a secret universal seeking for the whole Divine, an impulsion towards some entire awareness and delight and power of existence; this need of a whole being, a total knowledge, this integral will in us is not fully satisfied by these solutions. So long as the world is not divinely explained to us, the Divine remains imperfectly known; for the world too is That and, so long as it is not present to our consciousness and possessed by our powers of consciousness in the sense of the divine being, we are not in possession of the whole Divinity.

It is possible to escape from the problem otherwise; for, admitting always the essential Presence, we can endeavour to justify the divinity of the manifestation by correcting the human view of perfection or putting it aside as a too limited mental

standard. We may say that not only is the Spirit in things absolutely perfect and divine, but each thing also is relatively perfect and divine in itself, in its expression of what it has to express of the possibilities of existence, in its assumption of its proper place in the complete manifestation. Each thing is divine in itself because each is a fact and idea of the divine being, knowledge and will fulfilling itself infallibly in accordance with the law of that particular manifestation. Each being is possessed of the knowledge, the force, the measure and kind of delight of existence precisely proper to its own nature; each works in the gradations of experience decreed by a secret inherent will, a native law, an intrinsic power of the self, an occult significance. It is thus perfect in the relation of its phenomena to the law of its being; for all are in harmony with that, spring out of it, adapt themselves to its purpose according to the infallibility of the divine Will and Knowledge at work within the creature. It is perfect and divine also in relation to the whole, in its proper place in the whole; to that totality it is necessary and in it it fulfils a part by which the perfection actual and progressive of the universal harmony, the adaptation of all in it to its whole purpose and its whole sense is helped and completed. If to us things appear undivine, if we hasten to condemn this or that phenomenon as inconsistent with the nature of a divine being, it is because we are ignorant of the sense and purpose of the Divine in the world in its entirety. Because we see only parts and fragments, we judge of each by itself as if it were the whole, judge also the external phenomena without knowing their secret sense; but by doing so we vitiate our valuation of things, put on it the stamp of an initial and fundamental error. Perfection cannot reside in the thing in its separateness, for that separateness is an illusion; perfection is the perfection of the total divine harmony.

All this may be true up to a certain point and so far as it goes; but this also is a solution incomplete by itself and it cannot give us an entire satisfaction. It takes insufficient account of the human consciousness and the human view from which we have to start; it does not give us the vision of the harmony it alleges, and so it cannot meet our demand or convince, but only

contradicts by a cold intellectual conception our acute human sense of the reality of evil and imperfection; it gives too no lead to the psychic element in our nature, the soul's aspiration towards light and truth and towards a spiritual conquest, a victory over imperfection and evil. By itself, this view of things amounts to little more than the facile dogma which tells us that all that is right, because all is perfectly decreed by the divine Wisdom. It supplies us with nothing better than a complacent intellectual and philosophic optimism: no light is turned on the disconcerting facts of pain, suffering and discord to which our human consciousness bears constant and troubling witness; at most there is a suggestion that in the divine reason of things there is a key to these things to which we have no access. This is not a sufficient answer to our discontent and our aspiration which, however ignorant in their reactions, however mixed their mental motives, must correspond to a divine reality deeper down in our being. A Divine Whole that is perfect by reason of the imperfection of its parts, runs the risk of itself being only perfect in imperfection, because it fulfils entirely some stage in an unaccomplished purpose; it is then a present but not an ultimate Totality. To it we could apply the Greek saying, *Theos ouk estin alla gignetai*, the Divine is not yet in being, but is becoming. The true Divine would then be secret within us and perhaps supreme above us; to find the Divine within us and above us would be the real solution, to become perfect as That is perfect, to attain liberation by likeness to it or by attaining to the law of its nature, *sādr̥syā, sādharmya*.

If the human consciousness were bound to the sense of imperfection and the acceptance of it as the law of our life and the very character of our existence,—a reasoned acceptance that could answer in our human nature to the blind animal acceptance of the animal nature,—then we might say that what we are marks the limit of the divine self-expression in us; we might believe too that our imperfections and sufferings worked for the general harmony and perfection of things and console ourselves with this philosophic balm offered for our wounds, satisfied to move among the pitfalls of life with as much rational

prudence or as much philosophic sagacity and resignation as our incomplete mental wisdom and our impatient vital parts permitted. Or else, taking refuge in the more consoling fervours of religion, we might submit to all as the will of God in the hope or the faith of recompense in a Paradise beyond where we shall enter into a happier existence and put on a more pure and perfect nature. But there is an essential factor in our human consciousness and its workings which, no less than the reason, distinguishes it entirely from the animal; there is not only a mental part in us which recognises the imperfection, there is a psychic part which rejects it. Our soul's dissatisfaction with imperfection as a law of life upon earth, its aspiration towards the elimination of all imperfections from our nature, not only in a heaven beyond where it would be automatically impossible to be imperfect, but here and now in a life where perfection has to be conquered by evolution and struggle, are as much a law of our being as that against which they revolt; they too are divine, — a divine dissatisfaction, a divine aspiration. In them is the inherent light of a power within which maintains them in us so that the Divine may not only be there as a hidden Reality in our spiritual secracies but unfold itself in the evolution of Nature.

In this light we can admit that all works perfectly towards a divine end by a divine wisdom and therefore each thing is in that sense perfectly fitted in its place; but we say that that is not the whole of the divine purpose. For what is only justifiable, finds its perfect sense and satisfaction by what can and will be. There is, no doubt, a key in the divine reason that would justify things as they are by revealing their right significance and true secret as other, subtler, deeper than their outward meaning and phenomenal appearance which is all that can normally be caught by our present intelligence: but we cannot be content with that belief, to search for and find the spiritual key of things is the law of our being. The sign of the finding is not a philosophic intellectual recognition and a resigned or sage acceptance of things as they are because of some divine sense and purpose in them which is beyond us; the real sign is an elevation towards the spiritual knowledge and power which will transform the law

and phenomena and external forms of our life nearer to a true image of that divine sense and purpose. It is right and reasonable to endure with equanimity suffering and subjection to defect as the immediate will of God, a present law of imperfection laid on our members, but on condition that we recognise it also as the will of God in us to transcend evil and suffering, to transform imperfection into perfection, to rise into a higher law of Divine Nature. In our human consciousness there is the image of an ideal truth of being, a divine nature, an incipient godhead: in relation to that higher truth our present state of imperfection can be relatively described as an undivine life and the conditions of the world from which we start as undivine conditions; the imperfections are the indication given to us that they are there as first disguises, not as the intended expression of the divine being and the divine nature. It is a Power within us, the concealed Divinity, that has lit the flame of aspiration, pictures the image of the ideal, keeps alive our discontent and pushes us to throw off the disguise and to reveal or, in the Vedic phrase, to form and disclose the Godhead in the manifest spirit, mind, life and body of this terrestrial creature. Our present nature can only be transitional, our imperfect status a starting-point and opportunity for the achievement of another higher, wider and greater that shall be divine and perfect not only by the secret spirit within it but in its manifest and most outward form of existence.

But these conclusions are only first reasonings or primary intuitions founded on our inner self-experience and the apparent facts of universal existence. They cannot be entirely validated unless we know the real cause of ignorance, imperfection and suffering and their place in the cosmic purpose or cosmic order. There are three propositions about God and the world,—if we admit the Divine Existence,—to which the general reason and consciousness of mankind bear witness; but, one of the three, —which is yet necessitated by the character of the world we live in,—does not harmonise with the two others, and by this disharmony the human mind is thrown into great perplexities of contradiction and driven to doubt and denial. For, first, we find

affirmed an omnipresent Divinity and Reality pure, perfect and blissful, without whom, apart from whom nothing could exist, since all exists only by him and in his being. All thinking on the subject that is not atheistic or materialistic or else primitive and anthropomorphic, has to start from this admission or to arrive at this fundamental concept. It is true that certain religions seem to suppose an extracosmic Deity who has created a world outside and apart from his own existence; but when they come to construct a theology or spiritual philosophy, these too admit omnipresence or immanence,—for this omnipresence imposes itself, is a necessity of spiritual thinking. If there is such a Divinity, Self or Reality, it must be everywhere, one and indivisible, nothing can possibly exist apart from its existence; nothing can be born from another than That; there can be nothing unsupported by That, independent of It, unfilled by the breath and power of Its being. It has been held indeed that the ignorance, the imperfection, the suffering of this world are not supported by the Divine Existence; but we have then to suppose two Gods, an Ormuzd of the good and an Ahriman of the evil or, perhaps, a perfect supracosmic and immanent Being and an imperfect cosmic Demiurge or separate undivine Nature. This is a possible conception but improbable to our highest intelligence,—it can only be at most a subordinate aspect, not the original truth or the whole truth of things; nor can we suppose that the one Self and Spirit in all and the one Power creator of all are different, contrary in the character of their being, separate in their will and purpose. Our reason tells us, our intuitive consciousness feels, and their witness is confirmed by spiritual experience, that the one pure and absolute Existence exists in all things and beings even as all things and beings exist in It and by It, and nothing can be or happen without this indwelling and all-supporting Presence.

A second affirmation which our mind naturally accepts as the consequence of the first postulate, is that by the supreme consciousness and the supreme power of this omnipresent Divinity in its perfect universal knowledge and divine wisdom all things are ordered and governed in their fundamental relations

and their process. But, on the other hand, the actual process of things, the actual relations which we see are, as presented to our human consciousness, relations of imperfection, of limitation; there appears a disharmony, even a perversion, something that is the contrary of our conception of the Divine Existence, a very apparent denial or at least a disfigurement or disguise of the Divine Presence. There arises then a third affirmation of the Divine Reality and the world reality as different in essence or in order, so different that we have to draw away from one to reach the other; if we would find the Divine Inhabitant, we must reject the world he inhabits, governs, has created or manifested in his own existence. The first of these three propositions is inevitable; the second also must stand if the omnipresent Divine has anything at all to do with the world he inhabits and with its manifestation, building, maintenance and government: but the third seems also self-evident and yet it is incompatible with its precedents, and this dissonance confronts us with a problem which appears to be incapable of satisfactory solution.

It is not difficult by some construction of the philosophic reason or of theological reasoning to circumvent the difficulty. It is possible to erect a fainéant Deity, like the gods of Epicurus, blissful in himself, observing but indifferent to a world conducted or misconducted by a mechanical law of Nature. It is open to us to posit a Witness Self, a silent Soul in things, a Purusha who allows Nature to do what she will and is content to reflect all her order and all her disorders in his passive and stainless consciousness,—or a supreme Self absolute, inactive, free from all relations, unconcerned with the works of the cosmic Illusion or Creation which has mysteriously or paradoxically originated from It or over against It to tempt and afflict a world of temporal creatures. But all these solutions do no more than reflect the apparent dissonance of our twofold experience; they do not attempt to reconcile, neither do they solve or explain it, but only reaffirm it by an open or covert dualism and an essential division of the Indivisible. Practically, there is affirmed a dual Godhead, Self or Soul and Nature: but Nature, the Power in things, cannot be anything else than a power of the Self, the Soul,

the essential Being of things; her works cannot be altogether independent of Soul or Self, cannot be her own contrary result and working unaffected by its consent or refusal or a violence of mechanical Force imposed on an inertia of mechanical Passivity. It is possible again to posit an observing inactive Self and an active creating Godhead; but this device cannot serve us, for in the end these two must really be one in a dual aspect,—the Godhead the active aspect of the observing Self, the Self a witness of its own Godhead in action. A discord, a gulf between the Self in knowledge and the same Self in its works needs explanation, but it presents itself as unexplained and inexplicable. Or, again, we can posit a double consciousness of Brahman the Reality, one static and one dynamic, one essential and spiritual in which it is Self perfect and absolute, another formative, pragmatic, in which it becomes not-self and with which its absoluteness and perfection have no concern of participation; for it is only a temporal formation in the timeless Reality. But to us who even if only half-existent, half-conscious, yet inhabit the Absolute's half-dream of living and are compelled by Nature to have in it a terrible and insistent concern and to deal with it as real, this wears the appearance of an obvious mystification; for this temporal consciousness and its formations are also in the end a Power of the one Self, depend upon it, can exist only by it; what exists by the power of the Reality cannot be unrelated to It or That unrelated to the world of its own Power's making. If the world exists by the supreme Spirit, so also its ordering and relations must exist by the power of the Spirit; its law must be according to some law of the spiritual consciousness and existence. The Self, the Reality must be aware of and aware in the world-consciousness which exists in its being; a power of the Self, the Reality must be constantly determining or at least sanctioning its phenomena and operations: for there can be no independent power, no Nature not derived from the original and eternal Self-Existence. If it does no more, it must still be originating or determining the universe through the mere fact of its conscious omnipresence. It is, no doubt, a truth of spiritual experience that there is a status of peace and silence in the Infinite behind the

cosmic activity, a Consciousness that is the immobile Witness of the creation; but this is not the whole of spiritual experience, and we cannot hope to find in one side only of knowledge a fundamental and total explanation of the Universe.

Once we admit a divine government of the universe, we must conclude that the power to govern is complete and absolute; for otherwise we are obliged to suppose that a being and consciousness infinite and absolute has a knowledge and will limited in their control of things or hampered in their power of working. It is not impossible to concede that the supreme and immanent Divinity may leave a certain freedom of working to something that has come into being in his perfection but is itself imperfect and the cause of imperfection, to an ignorant or inconscient Nature, to the action of the human mind and will, even to a conscious Power or Forces of darkness and evil that take their stand upon the reign of a basic Inconscience. But none of these things are independent of Its own existence, nature and consciousness and none of them can act except in Its presence and by Its sanction or allowance. Man's freedom is relative and he cannot be held solely responsible for the imperfection of his nature. Ignorance and inconscience of Nature have arisen, not independently, but in the one Being; the imperfection of her workings cannot be entirely foreign to some will of the Immanence. It may be conceded that forces set in motion are allowed to work themselves out according to the law of their movement; but what divine Omniscience and Omnipotence has allowed to arise and act in Its omnipresence, Its all-existence, we must consider It to have originated and decreed, since without the fiat of the Being they could not have been, could not remain in existence. If the Divine is at all concerned with the world He has manifested, there is no other Lord than He and from that necessity of His original and universal being there can eventually be no escape or departure. It is on the foundation of this self-evident consequence of our first premiss, without any evasion of its implications, that we have to consider the problem of imperfection, suffering and evil.

And first we must realise that the existence of ignorance,

error, limitation, suffering, division and discord in the world need not by itself, as we too hastily imagine, be a denial or a disproof of the divine being, consciousness, power, knowledge, will, delight in the universe. They can be that if we have to take them by themselves separately, but need not be so taken if we get a clear vision of their place and significance in a complete view of the universal workings. A part broken off from the whole may be imperfect, ugly, incomprehensible; but when we see it in the whole, it recovers its place in the harmony, it has a meaning and a use. The Divine Reality is infinite in its being; in this infinite being, we find limited being everywhere, —that is the apparent fact from which our existence here seems to start and to which our own narrow ego and its ego-centric activities bear constant witness. But, in reality, when we come to an integral self-knowledge, we find that we are not limited, for we also are infinite. Our ego is only a face of the universal being and has no separate existence; our apparent separative individuality is only a surface movement and behind it our real individuality stretches out to unity with all things and upward to oneness with the transcendent Divine Infinity. Thus our ego, which seems to be a limitation of existence, is really a power of infinity; the boundless multiplicity of beings in the world is a result and signal evidence, not of limitation or finiteness, but of that illimitable Infinity. Apparent division can never erect itself into a real separateness; there is supporting and overriding it an indivisible unity which division itself cannot divide. This fundamental world-fact of ego and apparent division and their separative workings in the world existence is no denial of the Divine Nature of unity and indivisible being; they are the surface results of an infinite multiplicity which is a power of the infinite Oneness.

There is then no real division or limitation of being, no fundamental contradiction of the omnipresent Reality; but there does seem to be a real limitation of consciousness: there is an ignorance of self, a veiling of the inner Divinity, and all imperfection is its consequence. For we identify ourselves mentally, vitally, physically with this superficial ego-consciousness which

is our first insistent self-experience; this does impose on us, not a fundamentally real, but a practical division with all the untoward consequences of that separateness from the Reality. But here again we have to discover that from the point of view of God's workings, whatever be our reactions or our experience on the surface, this fact of ignorance is itself an operation of knowledge and not a true ignorance. Its phenomenon of ignorance is a superficial movement; for behind it is an indivisible all-consciousness: the ignorance is a frontal power of that all-consciousness which limits itself in a certain field, within certain boundaries to a particular operation of knowledge, a particular mode of conscious working, and keeps back all the rest of its knowledge in waiting as a force behind it. All that is thus hidden is an occult store of light and power for the All-Consciousness to draw upon for the evolution of our being in Nature; there is a secret working which fills up all the deficiencies of the frontal Ignorance, acts through its apparent stumblings, prevents them from leading to another final result than that which the All-Knowledge has decreed, helps the soul in the Ignorance to draw from its experience, even from the natural personality's sufferings and errors, what is necessary for its evolution and to leave behind what is no longer utilisable. This frontal power of Ignorance is a power of concentration in a limited working, much like that power in our human mentality by which we absorb ourselves in a particular object and in a particular work and seem to use only so much knowledge, only such ideas as are necessary for it,—the rest, which are alien to it or would interfere with it, are put back for the moment: yet, in reality, all the time it is the indivisible consciousness which we are that has done the work to be done, seen the thing that has to be seen,—that and not any fragment of consciousness or any exclusive ignorance in us is the silent knower and worker: so is it too with this frontal power of concentration of the All-Consciousness within us.

In our valuation of the movements of our consciousness this ability of concentration is rightly held to be one of the greatest powers of the human mentality. But equally the power

of putting forth what seems to be an exclusive working of limited knowledge, that which presents itself to us as ignorance, must be considered one of the greatest powers of the divine Consciousness. It is only a supreme self-possessing Knowledge which can thus be powerful to limit itself in the act and yet work out perfectly all its intentions through that apparent ignorance. In the universe we see this supreme self-possessing Knowledge work through a multitude of ignorances, each striving to act according to its own blindness, yet through them all it constructs and executes its universal harmonies. More, the miracle of its omniscience appears most strikingly of all in what seems to us the action of an Inconscient, when through the complete or the partial nescience — more thick than our ignorance — of the electron, atom, cell, plant, insect, the lowest forms of animal life, it arranges perfectly its order of things and guides the instinctive impulse or the inconscient impetus to an end possessed by the All-Knowledge but held behind a veil, not known by the instrumental form of existence, yet perfectly operative within the instinct or the impetus. We may say then that this action of the ignorance or nescience is no real ignorance, but a power, a sign, a proof of an omniscient self-knowledge and all-knowledge. If we need any personal and inner witness to this indivisible all-consciousness behind the ignorance, — all Nature is its external proof, — we can get it with any completeness only in our deeper inner being or larger and higher spiritual state when we draw back behind the veil of our own surface ignorance and come into contact with the divine Idea and Will behind it. Then we see clearly enough that what we have done by ourselves in our ignorance was yet overseen and guided in its result by the invisible Omniscience; we discover a greater working behind our ignorant working and begin to glimpse its purpose in us: then only can we see and know what now we worship in faith, recognise wholly the pure and universal Presence, meet the Lord of all being and all Nature.

As with the cause, — the Ignorance, — so is it with the consequences of the Ignorance. All this that seems to us incapacity, weakness, impotence, limitation of power, our will's hampered

struggle and fettered labour, takes from the point of view of the Divine in his self-workings the aspect of a just limitation of an omniscient power by the free will of that Power itself so that the surface energy shall be in exact correspondence with the work that it has to do, with its attempt, its allotted success or its destined because necessary failure, with the balance of the sum of forces in which it is a part and with the larger result of which its own results are an indivisible portion. Behind this limitation of power is the All-Power and in the limitation that All-Power is at work; but it is through the sum of many limited workings that the indivisible Omnipotence executes infallibly and sovereignly its purposes. This power to limit its force and to work through that self-limitation, by what we call labour, struggle, difficulty, by what seems to us a series of failures or half-baulked successes and through them to achieve its secret intention, is not therefore a sign, proof or reality of weakness, but a sign, proof, reality—the greatest possible—of an absolute omnipotence.

As to suffering, which is so great a stumbling-block to our understanding of the universe, it is evidently a consequence of the limitation of consciousness, the restriction of force which prevents us from mastering or assimilating the touch of what is to us other-force: the result of this incapacity and disharmony is that the delight of the touch cannot be seized and it affects our sense with a reaction of discomfort or pain, a defect or excess, a discord resultant in inner or outer injury, born of division between our power of being and the power of being that meets us. Behind in our self and spirit is the All-Delight of the universal being which takes its account of the contact, a delight first in the enduring and then in the conquest of the suffering and finally in its transmutation that shall come hereafter; for pain and suffering are a perverse and contrary term of the delight of existence and they can turn into their opposite, even into the original All-Delight, Ananda. This All-Delight is not present in the universal alone, but it is here secret in ourselves, as we discover when we go back from our outward consciousness into the Self within us; the psychic being in us takes its account even of its most perverse or contrary as well as its more benign experiences and grows by the

rejection of them or acceptance; it extracts a divine meaning and use from our most poignant sufferings, difficulties, misfortunes. Nothing but this All-Delight could dare or bear to impose such experiences on itself or on us; nothing else could turn them thus to its own utility and our spiritual profit. So too nothing but an inalienable harmony of being inherent in an inalienable unity of being would throw out so many harshest apparent discords and yet force them to its purpose so that in the end they are unable to do anything else but to serve and secure, and even themselves change into elements that constitute, a growing universal rhythm and ultimate harmony. At every turn it is the divine Reality which we can discover behind that which we are yet compelled by the nature of the superficial consciousness in which we dwell to call undivine and in a sense are right in using that appellation; for these appearances are a veil over the Divine Perfection, a veil necessary for the present, but not at all the true and complete figure.

But even when we thus regard the universe, we cannot and ought not to dismiss as entirely and radically false and unreal the values that are given to it by our own limited human consciousness. For grief, pain, suffering, error, falsehood, ignorance, weakness, wickedness, incapacity, non-doing of what should be done and wrong-doing, deviation of will and denial of will, egoism, limitation, division from other beings with whom we should be one, all that makes up the effective figure of what we call evil, are facts of the world-consciousness, not fictions and unrealities, although they are facts whose complete sense or true value is not that which we assign to them in our ignorance. Still our sense of them is part of a true sense, our values of them are necessary to their complete values. One side of the truth of these things we discover when we get into a deeper and larger consciousness; for we find then that there is a cosmic and individual utility in what presents itself to us as adverse and evil. For without experience of pain we would not get all the infinite value of the divine delight of which pain is in travail; all ignorance is a penumbra which environs an orb of knowledge, every error is significant of the possibility and the effort of a

discovery of truth; every weakness and failure is a first sounding of gulfs of power and potentiality; all division is intended to enrich by an experience of various sweetness of unification the joy of realised unity. All this imperfection is to us evil, but all evil is in travail of the eternal good; for all is an imperfection which is the first condition — in the law of life evolving out of Inconscience — of a greater perfection in the manifesting of the hidden divinity. But at the same time our present feeling of this evil and imperfection, the revolt of our consciousness against them is also a necessary valuation; for if we have first to face and endure them, the ultimate command on us is to reject, to overcome, to transform the life and the nature. It is for that end that their insistence is not allowed to slacken; the soul must learn the results of the Ignorance, must begin to feel their reactions as a spur to its endeavour of mastery and conquest and finally to a greater endeavour of transformation and transcendence. It is possible, when we live inwardly in the depths, to arrive at a state of vast inner equality and peace which is untouched by the reactions of the outer nature, and that is a great but incomplete liberation, — for the outer nature too has a right to deliverance. But even if our personal deliverance is complete, still there is the suffering of others, the world travail, which the great of soul cannot regard with indifference. There is a unity with all beings which something within us feels and the deliverance of others must be felt as intimate to its own deliverance.

This then is the law of the manifestation, the reason of the imperfection here. True, it is a law of manifestation only and, even, a law special to this movement in which we live, and we may say that it need not have been — if there were no movement of manifestation or not this movement; but, the manifestation and the movement being given, the law is necessary. It is not enough simply to say that the law and all its circumstances are an unreality created by the mental consciousness, non-existent in God, and to be indifferent to these dualities or to get out of the manifestation into God's pure being is the only wisdom. It is true they are creations of mind Consciousness, but Mind is only secondarily responsible; in a deeper reality they are, as we have

seen already, creations of the Divine Consciousness projecting mind away from its all-knowledge so as to realise these opposite or contrary values of its all-power, all-knowledge, all-delight, all-being and unity. Obviously, this action and these fruits of the Divine Consciousness can be called by us unreal in the sense of not being the eternal and fundamental truth of being or can be taxed with falsehood because they contradict what is originally and eventually the truth of being; but, all the same, they have their persistent reality and importance in our present phase of the manifestation, nor can they be a mere mistake of the Divine Consciousness without any meaning in the divine wisdom, without any purpose of the divine joy, power and knowledge to justify their existence. Justification there must be even if it reposes for us upon a mystery which may confront us, so long as we live in a surface experience, as an insoluble riddle.

But if, accepting this side of Nature, we say that all things are fixed in their statutory and stationary law of being, and man too must be fixed in his imperfections, his ignorance and sin and weakness and vileness and suffering, our life loses its true significance. Man's perpetual attempt to arise out of the darkness and insufficiency of his nature can then have no issue in the world itself, in life itself; its one issue, if there is any, must be by an escape out of life, out of the world, out of his human existence and therefore out of its eternally unsatisfactory law of imperfect being, either into a heaven of the gods or of God or into the pure ineffability of the Absolute. If so, man can never really deliver out of the ignorance and falsehood the truth and knowledge, out of the evil and ugliness the good and beauty, out of the weakness and vileness the power and glory, out of the grief and suffering the joy and delight which are contained in the Spirit behind them and of which these contradictions are the first adverse and contrary conditions of emergence. All he can do is to cut the imperfections away from him and over-pass too their balancing opposites, imperfect also,—leave with the ignorance the human knowledge, with the evil the human good, with the weakness the human strength and power, with the strife and suffering the human love and joy; for these are

in our present nature inseparably entwined together, look like conjoint dualities, negative pole and positive pole of the same unreality, and since they cannot be elevated and transformed, they must be both abandoned: humanity cannot be fulfilled in divinity; it must cease, be left behind and rejected. Whether the result will be an individual enjoyment of the absolute divine nature or of the Divine Presence or a Nirvana in the featureless Absolute, is a point on which religions and philosophies differ: but in either case human existence on earth must be taken as condemned to eternal imperfection by the very law of its being; it is perpetually and unchangeably an undivine manifestation in the Divine Existence. The soul by taking on manhood, perhaps by the very fact of birth itself, has fallen from the Divine, has committed an original sin or error which it must be man's spiritual aim, as soon as he is enlightened, thoroughly to cancel, unflinchingly to eliminate.

In that case, the only reasonable explanation of such a paradoxical manifestation or creation is that it is a cosmic game, a Lila, a play, an amusement of the Divine Being. It may be He pretends to be undivine, wears that appearance like the mask or make-up of an actor for the sole pleasure of the pretence or the drama. Or else He has created the undivine, created ignorance, sin and suffering just for the joy of a manifold creation. Or, perhaps, as some religions curiously suppose, He has done this so that there may be inferior creatures who will praise and glorify Him for his eternal goodness, wisdom, bliss and omnipotence and try feebly to come an inch nearer to the goodness in order to share the bliss, on pain of punishment — by some supposed eternal — if, as the vast majority must by their very imperfection, they fail in their endeavour. But to the doctrine of such a Lila so crudely stated there is always possible the retort that a God, himself all-blissful, who delights in the suffering of creatures or imposes such suffering on them for the faults of his own imperfect creation, would be no Divinity and against Him the moral being and intelligence of humanity must revolt or deny His existence. But if the human soul is a portion of the Divinity, if it is a divine Spirit in man that puts on this imperfection and

in the form of humanity consents to bear this suffering, or if the soul in humanity is meant to be drawn to the Divine Spirit and is His associate in the play of imperfection here, in the delight of perfect being otherwhere, the Lila may still remain a paradox, but it ceases to be a cruel or revolting paradox; it can at most be regarded as a strange mystery and to the reason inexplicable. To explain it there must be two missing elements, a conscious assent by the soul to this manifestation and a reason in the All-Wisdom that makes the play significant and intelligible.

The strangeness of the play diminishes, the paradox loses its edge of sharpness if we discover that, although fixed grades exist each with its appropriate order of nature, they are only firm steps for a progressive ascent of the souls embodied in forms of matter, a progressive divine manifestation which rises from the Inconscient to the superconscious or all-conscious status with the human consciousness as its decisive point of transition. Imperfection becomes then a necessary term of the manifestation: for, since all the divine nature is concealed but present in the Inconscient, it must be gradually delivered out of it; this graduation necessitates a partial unfolding, and this partial character or incompleteness of the unfolding necessitates imperfection. An evolutionary manifestation demands a mid-stage with gradations above and under it,—precisely such a stage as the mental consciousness of man, part knowledge, part ignorance, a middle power of being still leaning on the Inconscient but slowly rising towards the all-conscious Divine Nature. A partial unfolding implying imperfection and ignorance may take as its inevitable companion, perhaps its basis for certain movements, an apparent perversion of the original truth of being. For the ignorance or imperfection to endure there must be a seeming contrary of all that characterises the divine nature, its unity, its all-consciousness, its all-power, its all-harmony, its all-good, its all-delight; there must appear limitation, discord, unconsciousness, disharmony, incapacity, insensibility and suffering, evil. For without that perversion imperfection could have no strong standing-ground, could not so freely manifest and maintain its nature as against the presence of the underlying Divinity. A

partial knowledge is imperfect knowledge and imperfect knowledge is to that extent ignorance, a contrary of the divine nature: but in its outlook on what is beyond its knowledge, this contrary negative becomes a contrary positive; it originates error, wrong knowledge, wrong dealing with things, with life, with action; the wrong knowledge becomes a wrong will in the nature, at first, it may be, wrong by mistake, but afterwards wrong by choice, by attachment, by delight in the falsehood,—the simple contrary turns into a complex perversion. Inconscience and ignorance once admitted, these form a natural result in a logical sequence and have to be admitted also as necessary factors. The only question is the reason why this kind of progressive manifestation was itself necessary; that is the sole point left obscure to the intelligence.

A manifestation of this kind, self-creation or *Lila*, would not seem justifiable if it were imposed on the unwilling creature; but it will be evident that the assent of the embodied spirit must be there already, for *Prakriti* cannot act without the assent of the *Purusha*. There must have been not only the will of the Divine *Purusha* to make the cosmic creation possible, but the assent of the individual *Purusha* to make the individual manifestation possible. But it may be said that the reason for the Divine Will and delight in such a difficult and tormented progressive manifestation and the reason for the soul's assent to it is still a mystery. But it is not altogether a mystery if we look at our own nature and can suppose some kindred movement of being in the beginning as its cosmic origin. On the contrary, a play of self-concealing and self-finding is one of the most strenuous joys that conscious being can give to itself, a play of extreme attractiveness. There is no greater pleasure for man himself than a victory which is in its very principle a conquest over difficulties, a victory in knowledge, a victory in power, a victory in creation over the impossibilities of creation, a delight in the conquest over an anguished toil and a hard ordeal of suffering. At the end of separation is the intense joy of union, the joy of a meeting with a self from which we were divided. There is an attraction in ignorance itself because it provides us with the joy of discovery,

the surprise of new and unforeseen creation, a great adventure of the soul; there is a joy of the journey and the search and the finding, a joy of the battle and the crown, the labour and the reward of labour. If delight of existence be the secret of creation, this too is one delight of existence; it can be regarded as the reason or at least one reason of this apparently paradoxical and contrary Lila. But, apart from this choice of the individual Purusha, there is a deeper truth inherent in the original Existence which finds its expression in the plunge into Inconscience; its result is a new affirmation of Sachchidananda in its apparent opposite. If the Infinite's right of various self-manifestation is granted, this too as a possibility of its manifestation is intelligible and has its profound significance.

Chapter V

The Cosmic Illusion; Mind, Dream and Hallucination

Thou who hast come to this transient and unhappy world,
turn to Me.

*Gita.*¹

This Self is a self of Knowledge, an inner light in the heart; he is the conscious being common to all the states of being and moves in both worlds. He becomes a dream-self and passes beyond this world and its forms of death. . . . There are two planes of this conscious being, this and the other worlds; a third state is their place of joining, the state of dream, and when he stands in this place of their joining, he sees both planes of his existence, this world and the other world. When he sleeps, he takes the substance of this world in which all is and himself undoes and himself builds by his own illumination, his own light; when this conscious being sleeps, he becomes luminous with his self-light. . . . There are no roads nor chariots, nor joys nor pleasures, nor tanks nor ponds nor rivers, but he creates them by his own light, for he is the maker. By sleep he casts off his body and unsleeping sees those that sleep; he preserves by his life-breath this lower nest and goes forth, immortal, from his nest; immortal, he goes where he wills, the golden Purusha, the solitary Swan. They say, “the country of waking only is his, for the things which he sees when awake, these only he sees when asleep”; but there he is his own self-light.

*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*²

What is seen and what is not seen, what is experienced and what is not experienced, what is and what is not, — all it sees, it is all and sees.

*Prasna Upanishad.*³

¹ IX. 33. ² IV. 3. 7, 9-12, 14. ³ IV. 5.

ALL HUMAN thought, all mental man's experience moves between a constant affirmation and negation; there is for his mind no truth of idea, no result of experience that cannot be affirmed, none that cannot be negated. It has negated the existence of the individual being, negated the existence of the cosmos, negated the existence of any immanent or underlying Reality, negated any Reality beyond the individual and the cosmos; but it is also constantly affirming these things — sometimes one of them solely or any two or all of them together. It has to do so because our thinking mind is in its very nature an ignorant dealer in possibilities, not possessing the truth behind any of them, but sounding and testing each in turn or many together if so perchance it may get at some settled belief or knowledge about them, some certitude; yet, living in a world of relativities and possibilities, it can arrive at no final certainty, no absolute and abiding conviction. Even the actual, the realised can present itself to our mentality as a "may be or may not be", *syād vā na syād vā*, or as an "is" under the shadow of the "might not have been" and wearing the aspect of that which will not be hereafter. Our life-being is also afflicted by the same incertitude; it can rest in no aim of living from which it can derive a sure or final satisfaction or to which it can assign an enduring value. Our nature starts from facts and actualities which it takes for real; it is pushed beyond them into a pursuit of uncertain possibilities and led eventually to question all that it took as real. For it proceeds from a fundamental ignorance and has no hold on assured truth; all the truths on which it relies for a time are found to be partial, incomplete and questionable.

At the outset man lives in his physical mind which perceives the actual, the physical, the objective and accepts it as fact and this fact as self-evident truth beyond question; whatever is not actual, not physical, not objective it regards as unreal or unrealised, only to be accepted as entirely real when it has succeeded in becoming actual, becoming a physical fact, becoming objective: its own being too it regards as an objective fact, warranted to be real by its existence in a visible and sensible body; all other

subjective beings and things it accepts on the same evidence in so far as they can become objects of our external consciousness or acceptable to that part of the reason which builds upon the data supplied by that consciousness and relies upon them as the one solid basis of knowledge. Physical Science is a vast extension of this mentality: it corrects the errors of the sense and pushes beyond the first limitations of the sense-mind by discovering means of bringing facts and objects not seizable by our corporeal organs into the field of objectivity; but it has the same standard of reality, the objective, the physical actuality; its test of the real is possibility of verification by positive reason and objective evidence.

But man also has a life-mind, a vital mentality which is an instrument of desire: this is not satisfied with the actual, it is a dealer in possibilities; it has the passion for novelty and is seeking always to extend the limits of experience for the satisfaction of desire, for enjoyment, for an enlarged self-affirmation and aggrandisement of its terrain of power and profit. It desires, enjoys, possesses actualities, but it hunts also after unrealised possibilities, is ardent to materialise them, to possess and enjoy them also. It is not satisfied with the physical and objective only, but seeks too a subjective, an imaginative, a purely emotive satisfaction and pleasure. If there were not this factor, the physical mind of man left to itself would live like the animal, accepting his first actual physical life and its limits as his whole possibility, moving in material Nature's established order and asking for nothing beyond it. But this vital mind, this unquiet life-will comes in with its demands and disturbs this inert or routine satisfaction which lives penned within the bounds of actuality; it enlarges always desire and craving, creates a dissatisfaction, an unrest, a seeking for something more than what life seems able to give it: it brings about a vast enlargement of the field of physical actuality by the actualisation of our unrealised possibilities, but also a constant demand for more and always more, a quest for new worlds to conquer, an incessant drive towards an exceeding of the bounds of circumstance and a self-exceeding. To add to this cause of unrest and incertitude there comes in a thinking

mind that inquires into everything, questions everything, builds up affirmations and unbuilds them, erects systems of certitude but finally accepts none of them as certain, affirms and questions the evidence of the senses, follows out the conclusions of the reason but undoes them again to arrive at different or quite opposite conclusions, and continues indefinitely if not *ad infinitum* this process. This is the history of human thought and human endeavour, a constant breaking of bounds only to move always in the same spirals enlarged perhaps but following the same or constantly similar curves of direction. The mind of humanity, ever seeking, ever active, never arrives at a firmly settled reality of life's aims and objects or at a settled reality of its own certitudes and convictions, an established foundation or firm formation of its idea of existence.

At a certain point of this constant unrest and travail even the physical mind loses its conviction of objective certitude and enters into an agnosticism which questions all its own standards of life and knowledge, doubts whether all this is real or else whether all, even if real, is not futile; the vital mind, baffled by life and frustrated or else dissatisfied with all its satisfactions, overtaken by a deep disgust and disappointment, finds that all is vanity and vexation of spirit and is ready to reject life and existence as an unreality, all that it hunted after as an illusion, Maya; the thinking mind, unbuilding all its affirmations, discovers that all are mere mental constructions and there is no reality in them or else that the only reality is something beyond this existence, something that has not been made or constructed, something Absolute and Eternal,—all that is relative, all that is of time is a dream, a hallucination of the mind or a vast delirium, an immense cosmic Illusion, a delusive figure of apparent existence. The principle of negation prevails over the principle of affirmation and becomes universal and absolute. Thence arise the great world-negating religions and philosophies; thence too a recoil of the life-motive from itself and a seeking after a life elsewhere flawless and eternal or a will to annul life itself in an immobile Reality or an original Non-Existence. In India the philosophy of world-negation has been given formulations of supreme power

and value by two of the greatest of her thinkers, Buddha and Shankara. There have been, intermediate or later in time, other philosophies of considerable importance, some of them widely accepted, formulated with much acumen of thought by men of genius and spiritual insight, which disputed with more or less force and success the conclusions of these two great metaphysical systems, but none has been put forward with an equal force of presentation or drive of personality or had a similar massive effect. The spirit of these two remarkable spiritual philosophies —for Shankara in the historical process of India's philosophical mind takes up, completes and replaces Buddha,— has weighed with a tremendous power on her thought, religion and general mentality: everywhere broods its mighty shadow, everywhere is the impress of the three great formulas, the chain of Karma, escape from the wheel of rebirth, Maya. It is necessary therefore to look afresh at the Idea or Truth behind the negation of cosmic existence and to consider, however briefly, what is the value of its main formulations or suggestions, on what reality they stand, how far they are imperative to the reason or to experience. For the present it will be enough to throw a regard on the principal ideas which are grouped around the conception of the great cosmic Illusion, Maya, and to set against them those that are proper to our own line of thought and vision; for both proceed from the conception of the One Reality, but one line leads to a universal Illusionism, the other to a universal Realism,— an unreal or real-unreal universe reposing on a transcendent Reality or a real universe reposing on a Reality at once universal and transcendent or absolute.

In itself and by itself the vital being's aversion, the life-mind's recoil from life cannot be taken as valid or conclusive. Its strongest motive is a sense of disappointment and an acceptance of frustration which has no greater claim to conclusiveness than the idealist's opposite motive of invariable hope and his faith and will to realise. Nevertheless there is a certain validity in the mental support of this sense of frustration, in the perception at which the thinking mind arrives that there is an illusion behind all human effort and terrestrial endeavour, the illusion of his

political and social gospels, the illusion of his ethical efforts at perfection, the illusion of philanthropy and service, the illusion of works, the illusion of fame, power, success, the illusion of all achievement. Human social and political endeavour turns always in a circle and leads nowhere; man's life and nature remain always the same, always imperfect, and neither laws nor institutions nor education nor philosophy nor morality nor religious teachings have succeeded in producing the perfect man, still less a perfect humanity,—straighten the tail of the dog as you will, it has been said, it always resumes its natural curve of crookedness. Altruism, philanthropy and service, Christian love or Buddhist compassion have not made the world a whit happier, they only give infinitesimal bits of momentary relief here and there, throw drops on the fire of the world's suffering. All aims are in the end transitory and futile, all achievements unsatisfying or evanescent; all works are so much labour of effort and success and failure which consummate nothing definitive: whatever changes are made in human life are of the form only and these forms pursue each other in a futile circle; for the essence of life, its general character remains the same for ever. This view of things may be exaggerated, but it has an undeniable force; it is supported by the experience of man's centuries and it carries in itself a significance which at one time or another comes upon the mind with an overwhelming air of self-evidence. Not only so, but if it is true that the fundamental laws and values of terrestrial existence are fixed or that it must always turn in repeated cycles,—and this has been for long a very prevalent notion,—then this view of things in the end is hardly escapable. For imperfection, ignorance, frustration and suffering are a dominant factor of the existing world-order, the elements contrary to them, knowledge, happiness, success, perfection are constantly found to be deceptive or inconclusive: the two opposites are so inextricably mixed that, if this state of things is not a motion towards a greater fulfilment, if this is the permanent character of the world-order, then it is hard to avoid the conclusion that all here is either the creation of an unconscious Energy, which would account for the incapacity of an apparent consciousness to arrive at anything, or

intentionally a world of ordeal and failure, the issue being not here but elsewhere, or even a vast and aimless cosmic Illusion.

Among these alternative conclusions the second, as it is usually put before us, offers no ground for the philosophic reason, since we have no satisfying indication of the connection between the here and the elsewhere which are posited against each other but not explained in the inevitability of their relations, and there is no light cast on the necessity or fundamental significance of the ordeal and failure. It could only be intelligible,—except as the mysterious will of an arbitrary Creator,—if there was a choice by immortal spirits to try the adventure of the Ignorance and a necessity for them to learn the nature of a world of Ignorance in order that they might reject it. But such a creative motive, necessarily incidental and quite temporary in its incidence, with the earth as its casual field of experience, could hardly by itself account for the immense and enduring phenomenon of this complex universe. It can become an operative part of a satisfactory explanation if this world is the field for the working out of a greater creative motive, if it is a manifestation of a divine Truth or a divine Possibility in which under certain conditions an initiating Ignorance must intervene as a necessary factor, and if the arrangement of this universe contains in it a compulsion of the Ignorance to move towards Knowledge, of the imperfect manifestation to grow into perfection, of the frustration to serve as steps towards a final victory, of the suffering to prepare an emergence of the divine Delight of Being. In that case the sense of disappointment, frustration, illusion and the vanity of all things would not be valid; for the aspects that seem to justify it would be only the natural circumstances of a difficult evolution: all the stress of struggle and effort, success and failure, joy and suffering, the mixture of ignorance and knowledge would be the experience needed for the soul, mind, life and physical part to grow into the full light of a spiritual perfected being. It would reveal itself as the process of an evolutionary manifestation; there would be no need to bring in the fiat of an arbitrary Omnipotence or a cosmic Illusion, a phantasy of meaningless Maya.

But there is too a higher mental and spiritual basis for the philosophy of world-negation and here we are on more solid ground: for it can be contended that the world is in its very nature an illusion and no reasoning from the features and circumstances of an Illusion could justify it or raise it into a Reality, —there is only one Reality, the transcendent, the supracosmic: no divine fulfilment, even if our life were to grow into the life of gods, could nullify or cancel the original unreality which is its fundamental character; for that fulfilment would be only the bright side of an Illusion. Or even if not absolutely an illusion, it would be a reality of an inferior order and must come to an end by the soul's recognition that the Brahman alone is true, that there is nothing but the transcendent and immutable Absolute. If this is the one Truth, then all ground is cut away from under our feet; the divine Manifestation, the victory of the soul in Matter, its mastery over existence, the divine life in Nature would itself be a falsehood or at least something not altogether real imposed for a time on the sole true Reality. But here all turns on the mind's conception or the mental being's experience of Reality and how far that conception is valid or how far that experience is imperative,—even if it is a spiritual experience, how far it is absolutely conclusive, solely imperative.

The cosmic Illusion is sometimes envisaged — though that is not the accepted position — as something that has the character of an unreal subjective experience; it is then — or may be — a figure of forms and movements that arises in some eternal sleep of things or in a dream-consciousness and is temporarily imposed on a pure and featureless self-aware Existence; it is a dream that takes place in the Infinite. In the philosophies of the Mayavadins — for there are several systems alike in their basis but not altogether and at every point coincident with each other, — the analogy of dream is given, but as an analogy only, not as the intrinsic character of the world-illusion. It is difficult for the positive physical mind to admit the idea that ourselves, the world and life, the sole thing to which our consciousness bears positive witness, are nonexistent, a cheat imposed on us by that consciousness: certain analogies are brought forward,

the analogies especially of dream and hallucination, in order to show that it is possible for the experiences of the consciousness to seem to it real and yet prove to be without any basis or without a sufficient basis in reality; as a dream is real to the dreamer so long as he sleeps but waking shows it to be unreal, so our experience of world seems to us positive and real but, when we stand back from the illusion, we shall find that it had no reality. But it may be as well to give the dream analogy its full value and see whether our sense of world-experience has in any way a similar basis. For the idea of the world as a dream, whether it be a dream of the subjective mind or a dream of the soul or a dream in the Eternal, is often entertained and it powerfully enforces the illusionist tendency in human feeling and thinking. If it has no validity, we must definitely see that and the reasons of its inapplicability and set it aside well out of the way; if it has some validity, we must see what it is and how far it goes. If the world is an illusion, but not a dream illusion, that distinction too must be put on a secure basis.

Dream is felt to be unreal, first, because it ceases and has no farther validity when we pass from one status of consciousness to another which is our normal status. But this is not by itself a sufficient reason: for it may well be that there are different states of consciousness each with its own realities; if the consciousness of one state of things fades back and its contents are lost or, even when caught in memory, seem to be illusory as soon as we pass into another state, that would be perfectly normal, but it would not prove the reality of the state in which we now are and the unreality of the other which we have left behind us. If earth circumstances begin to seem unreal to a soul passing into a different world or another plane of consciousness, that would not prove their unreality; similarly, the fact that world-existence seems unreal to us when we pass into the spiritual silence or into some Nirvana, does not of itself prove that the cosmos was all the time an illusion. The world is real to the consciousness dwelling in it, an unconditioned existence is real to the consciousness absorbed in Nirvana; that is all that is established. But the second reason for refusing credit to our sleep experience

is that a dream is something evanescent without antecedents and without a sequel; ordinarily, too, it is without any sufficient coherence or any significance intelligible to our waking being. If our dreams wore like our waking life an aspect of coherence, each night taking up and carrying farther a past continuous and connected sleep experience as each day takes up again our waking world-experience, then dreams would assume to our mind quite another character. There is therefore no analogy between a dream and waking life; these are experiences quite different in their character, validity, order. Our life is accused of evanescence and often it is accused too, as a whole, of a lack of inner coherence and significance; but its lack of complete significance may be due to our lack or limitation of understanding: actually, when we go within and begin to see it from within, it assumes a complete connected significance; at the same time whatever lack of inner coherence was felt before disappears and we see that it was due to the incoherence of our own inner seeing and knowledge and was not at all a character of life. There is no surface incoherence in life, it rather appears to our minds as a chain of firm sequences, and, if that is a mental delusion, as is sometimes alleged, if the sequence is created by our minds and does not actually exist in life, that does not remove the difference of the two states of consciousness. For in dream the coherence given by an observing inner consciousness is absent, and whatever sense of sequence there is seems to be due to a vague and false imitation of the connections of waking life, a subconscious mimesis, but this imitative sequence is shadowy and imperfect, fails and breaks always and is often wholly absent. We see too that the dream-consciousness seems to be wholly devoid of that control which the waking consciousness exercises to a certain extent over life-circumstances; it has the Nature-automatism of a subconscious construction and nothing of the conscious will and organising force of the evolved mind of the human being. Again the evanescence of a dream is radical and one dream has no connection with another; but the evanescence of the waking life is of details,—there is no evidence of evanescence in the connected totality of world-experience. Our bodies perish but

souls proceed from birth to birth through the ages: stars and planets may disappear after a lapse of aeons or of many light-cycles, but universe, cosmic existence may well be a permanent as it is certainly a continuous activity; there is nothing to prove that the Infinite Energy which creates it has an end or a beginning either of itself or of its action. So far there is too great a disparateness between dream-life and waking life to make the analogy applicable.

But it may be questioned whether our dreams are indeed totally unreal and without significance, whether they are not a figure, an image-record or a symbolic transcript or representation of things that are real. For that we have to examine, however summarily, the nature of sleep and of dream phenomena, their process of origination and their provenance. What happens in sleep is that our consciousness withdraws from the field of its waking experiences; it is supposed to be resting, suspended or in abeyance, but that is a superficial view of the matter. What is in abeyance is the waking activities, what is at rest is the surface mind and the normal conscious action of the bodily part of us; but the inner consciousness is not suspended, it enters into new inner activities, only a part of which, a part happening or recorded in something of us that is near to the surface, we remember. There is maintained in sleep, thus near the surface, an obscure subconscious element which is a receptacle or passage for our dream experiences and itself also a dream-builder; but behind it is the depth and mass of the subliminal, the totality of our concealed inner being and consciousness which is of quite another order. Normally it is a subconscious part in us, intermediate between consciousness and pure inconscience, that sends up through this surface layer its formations in the shape of dreams, constructions marked by an apparent inconsequence and incoherence. Many of these are fugitive structures built upon circumstances of our present life selected apparently at random and surrounded with a phantasy of variation; others call back the past, or rather selected circumstances and persons of the past, as a starting-point for similar fleeting edifices. There are other dreams of the subconscious which seem to be pure phantasy

without any such initiation or basis; but the new method of psycho-analysis, trying to look for the first time into our dreams with some kind of scientific understanding, has established in them a system of meanings, a key to things in us which need to be known and handled by the waking consciousness; this of itself changes the whole character and value of our dream-experience. It begins to look as if there were something real behind it and as if too that something were an element of no mean practical importance.

But the subconscious is not our sole dream-builder. The subconscious in us is the extreme border of our secret inner existence where it meets the Inconscient, it is a degree of our being in which the Inconscient struggles into a half consciousness; the surface physical consciousness also, when it sinks back from the waking level and retrogresses towards the Inconscient, retires into this intermediate subconscience. Or, from another view-point, this nether part of us may be described as the antechamber of the Inconscient through which its formations rise into our waking or our subliminal being. When we sleep and the surface physical part of us, which is in its first origin here an output from the Inconscient, relapses towards the originating inconscience, it enters into this subconscious element, antechamber or substratum, and there it finds the impressions of its past or persistent habits of mind and experiences,—for all have left their mark on our subconscious part and have there a power of recurrence. In its effect on our waking self this recurrence often takes the form of a reassertion of old habits, impulses dormant or suppressed, rejected elements of the nature, or it comes up as some other not so easily recognisable, some peculiar disguised or subtle result of these suppressed or rejected but not erased impulses or elements. In the dream consciousness the phenomenon is an apparently fanciful construction, a composite of figures and movements built upon or around the buried impressions with a sense in them that escapes the waking intelligence because it has no clue to the subconscious's system of significances. After a time this subconscious activity appears to sink back into complete inconscience and we speak of this state as deep dreamless sleep;

thence we emerge again into the dream-shallows or return to the waking surface.

But, in fact, in what we call dreamless sleep, we have gone into a profounder and denser layer of the subconscious, a state too involved, too immersed or too obscure, dull and heavy to bring to the surface its structures, and we are dreaming there but unable to grasp or retain in the recording layer of subconscience these more obscure dream figures. Or else, it may be, the part of our mind which still remains active in the sleep of the body has entered into the inner domains of our being, the subliminal mental, the subliminal vital, the subtle-physical, and is there lost to all active connection with the surface parts of us. If we are still in the nearer depths of these regions, the surface subconscious which is our sleep-wakefulness records something of what we experience in these depths; but it records it in its own transcription, often marred by characteristic incoherences and always, even when most coherent, deformed or cast into figures drawn from the world of waking experience. But if we have gone deeper inward, the record fails or cannot be recovered and we have the illusion of dreamlessness; but the activity of the inner dream consciousness continues behind the veil of the now mute and inactive subconscious surface. This continued dream activity is revealed to us when we become more inwardly conscious, for then we get into connection with the heavier and deeper subconscious stratum and can be aware—at the time or by a retracing or recovering through memory—of what happened when we sank into these torpid depths. It is possible too to become conscious deeper within our subliminal selves and we are then aware of experiences on other planes of our being or even in supraphysical worlds to which sleep gives us a right of secret entry. A transcript of such experiences reaches us; but the transcriber here is not the subconscious, it is the subliminal, a greater dream-builder.

If the subliminal thus comes to the front in our dream consciousness, there is sometimes an activity of our subliminal intelligence,—dream becomes a series of thoughts, often strangely or vividly figured, problems are solved which our

waking consciousness could not solve, warnings, premonitions, indications of the future, veridical dreams replace the normal subconscious incoherence. There can come also a structure of symbol images, some of a mental character, some of a vital nature: the former are precise in their figures, clear in their significance; the latter are often complex and baffling to our waking consciousness, but, if we can seize the clue, they reveal their own sense and peculiar system of coherence. Finally, there can come to us the records of happenings seen or experienced by us on other planes of our own being or of universal being into which we enter: these have sometimes, like the symbolic dreams, a strong bearing on our own inner and outer life or the life of others, reveal elements of our or their mental being and life-being or disclose influences on them of which our waking self is totally ignorant; but sometimes they have no such bearing and are purely records of other organised systems of consciousness independent of our physical existence. The subconscious dreams constitute the bulk of our most ordinary sleep-experience and they are those which we usually remember; but sometimes the subliminal builder is able to impress our sleep consciousness sufficiently to stamp his activities on our waking memory. If we develop our inner being, live more inwardly than most men do, then the balance is changed and a larger dream consciousness opens before us; our dreams can take on a subliminal and no longer a subconscious character and can assume a reality and significance.

It is even possible to become wholly conscious in sleep and follow throughout from beginning to end or over large stretches the stages of our dream experience; it is found that then we are aware of ourselves passing from state after state of consciousness to a brief period of luminous and peaceful dreamless rest, which is the true restorer of the energies of the waking nature, and then returning by the same way to the waking consciousness. It is normal, as we thus pass from state to state, to let the previous experiences slip away from us; in the return only the more vivid or those nearest to the waking surface are remembered: but this can be remedied,—a greater retention is possible or the

power can be developed of going back in memory from dream to dream, from state to state, till the whole is once more before us. A coherent knowledge of sleep life, though difficult to achieve or to keep established, is possible.

Our subliminal self is not, like our surface physical being, an outcome of the energy of the Inconscious; it is a meeting-place of the consciousness that emerges from below by evolution and the consciousness that has descended from above for involution. There is in it an inner mind, an inner vital being of ourselves, an inner or subtle-physical being larger than our outer being and nature. This inner existence is the concealed origin of almost all in our surface self that is not a construction of the first inconscient World-Energy or a natural developed functioning of our surface consciousness or a reaction of it to impacts from the outside universal Nature,—and even in this construction, these functionings, these reactions the subliminal takes part and exercises on them a considerable influence. There is here a consciousness which has a power of direct contact with the universal unlike the mostly indirect contacts which our surface being maintains with the universe through the sense-mind and the senses. There are here inner senses, a subliminal sight, touch, hearing; but these subtle senses are rather channels of the inner being's direct consciousness of things than its informants: the subliminal is not dependent on its senses for its knowledge, they only give a form to its direct experience of objects; they do not, so much as in waking mind, convey forms of objects for the mind's documentation or as the starting-point or basis for an indirect constructive experience. The subliminal has the right of entry into the mental and vital and subtle-physical planes of the universal consciousness, it is not confined to the material plane and the physical world; it possesses means of communication with the worlds of being which the descent towards involution created in its passage and with all corresponding planes or worlds that may have arisen or been constructed to serve the purpose of the re-ascent from Inconscience to Superconsciousness. It is into this large realm of interior existence that our mind and vital being retire when they withdraw from the surface activities

whether by sleep or inward-drawn concentration or by the inner plunge of trance.

Our waking state is unaware of its connection with the subliminal being, although it receives from it—but without any knowledge of the place of origin—the inspirations, intuitions, ideas, will-suggestions, sense-suggestions, urges to action that rise from below or from behind our limited surface existence. Sleep like trance opens the gate of the subliminal to us; for in sleep, as in trance, we retire behind the veil of the limited waking personality and it is behind this veil that the subliminal has its existence. But we receive the records of our sleep experience through dream and in dream figures and not in that condition which might be called an inner waking and which is the most accessible form of the trance state, nor through the supernormal clarities of vision and other more luminous and concrete ways of communication developed by the inner subliminal cognition when it gets into habitual or occasional conscious connection with our waking self. The subliminal, with the subconscious as an annexe of itself,—for the subconscious is also part of the behind-the-veil entity,—is the seer of inner things and of supraphysical experiences; the surface subconscious is only a transcriber. It is for this reason that the Upanishad describes the subliminal being as the Dream Self because it is normally in dreams, visions, absorbed states of inner experience that we enter into and are part of its experiences,—just as it describes the superconscious as the Sleep Self because normally all mental or sensory experiences cease when we enter this superconscious. For in the deeper trance into which the touch of the superconscious plunges our mentality, no record from it or transcript of its contents can normally reach us; it is only by an especial or an unusual development, in a supernormal condition or through a break or rift in our confined normality, that we can be on the surface conscious of the contacts or messages of the Superconscious. But, in spite of these figurative names of dream-state and sleep-state, the field of both these states of consciousness was clearly regarded as a field of reality no less than that of the waking state in which our movements of perceptive

consciousness are a record or transcript of physical things and of our contacts with the physical universe. No doubt, all the three states can be classed as parts of an illusion, our experiences of them can be ranked together as constructions of an illusory consciousness, our waking state no less illusory than our dream state or sleep state, since the only true truth or real reality is the incommunicable Self or One-Existence (Atman, Adwaita) which is the fourth state of the Self described by the Vedanta. But it is equally possible to regard and rank them together as three different orders of one Reality or as three states of consciousness in which is embodied our contact with three different grades of self-experience and world-experience.

If this is a true account of dream experience, dreams can no longer be classed as a mere unreal figure of unreal things temporarily imposed upon our half-unconsciousness as a reality; the analogy therefore fails even as an illustrative support for the theory of the cosmic Illusion. It may be said, however, that our dreams are not themselves realities but only a transcript of reality, a system of symbol-images, and our waking experience of the universe is similarly not a reality but only a transcript of reality, a series or collection of symbol-images. It is quite true that primarily we see the physical universe only through a system of images impressed or imposed on our senses and so far the contention is justified; it may also be admitted that in a certain sense and from one view-point our experiences and activities can be considered as symbols of a truth which our lives are trying to express but at present only with a partial success and an imperfect coherence. If that were all, life might be described as a dream-experience of self and things in the consciousness of the Infinite. But although our primary evidence of the objects of the universe consists of a structure of sense images, these are completed, validated, set in order by an automatic intuition in the consciousness which immediately relates the image with the thing imaged and gets the tangible experience of the object, so that we are not merely regarding or reading a translation or sense-transcript of the reality but looking through the sense-image to the reality. This adequacy is amplified too by the action

of a reason which fathoms and understands the law of things sensed and can observe scrupulously the sense-transcript and correct its errors. Therefore we may conclude that we experience a real universe through our imaged sense-transcript by the aid of the intuition and the reason,—an intuition which gives us the touch of things and a reason which investigates their truth by its conceptional knowledge. But we must note also that even if our image view of the universe, our sense-transcript, is a system of symbol images and not an exact reproduction or transcription, a literal translation, still a symbol is a notation of something that is, a transcript of realities. Even if our images are incorrect, what they endeavour to image are realities, not illusions; when we see a tree or a stone or an animal, it is not a non-existent figure, a hallucination that we are seeing; we may not be sure that the image is exact, we may concede that other-sense might very well see it otherwise, but still there is something there that justifies the image, something with which it has more or less correspondence. But in the theory of Illusion the only reality is an indeterminable featureless pure Existence, Brahman, and there is no possibility of its being translated or mistranslated into a system of symbol-figures, for that could only be if this Existence had some determinate contents or some unmanifested truths of its being which could be transcribed into the forms or names given to them by our consciousness: a pure Indeterminable cannot be rendered by a transcript, a multitude of representative differentiae, a crowd of symbols or images; for there is in it only a pure Identity, there is nothing to transcribe, nothing to symbolise, nothing to image. Therefore the dream analogy fails us altogether and is better put out of the way; it can always be used as a vivid metaphor of a certain attitude our mind can take towards its experiences, but it has no value for a metaphysical inquiry into the reality and fundamental significances or the origin of existence.

If we take up the analogy of hallucination, we find it hardly more helpful for a true understanding of the theory of cosmic Illusion than the dream analogy. Hallucinations are of two kinds, mental or ideative and visual or in some way sensory. When we

see an image of things where those things are not, it is an erroneous construction of the senses, a visual hallucination; when we take for an objective fact a thing which is a subjective structure of the mind, a constructive mental error or an objectivised imagination or a misplaced mental image, it is a mental hallucination. An example of the first is the mirage, an example of the second is the classic instance of a rope taken for a snake. In passing we may note that there are many things called hallucinations which are not really that but symbol images sent up from the subliminal or experiences in which the subliminal consciousness or sense comes to the surface and puts us into contact with supraphysical realities; thus the cosmic consciousness which is our entry by a breaking down of our mental limitations into the sense of a vast reality, has been classed, even in admitting it, as a hallucination. But, taking only the common hallucination, mental or visual, we observe that it seems to be at first sight a true example of what is called imposition in the philosophic theory; it is the placement of an unreal figure of things on a reality, of a mirage upon the bare desert air, of the figure of a non-present snake on the present and real rope. The world, we may contend, is such a hallucination, an imposition of a non-existent unreal figure of things on the bare ever-present sole reality of the Brahman. But then we note that in each case the hallucination, the false image is not of something quite non-existent; it is an image of something existent and real but not present in the place on which it has been imposed by the mind's error or by a sense error. A mirage is the image of a city, an oasis, running water or of other absent things, and if these things did not exist, the false image of them, whether raised up by the mind or reflected in the desert air, would not be there to delude the mind with a false sense of reality. A snake exists and its existence and form are known to the victim of the momentary hallucination: if it had not been so, the delusion would not have been created; for it is a form resemblance of the seen reality to another reality previously known elsewhere that is the origin of the error. The analogy therefore is unhelpful; it would be valid only if our image of the universe were a falsity reflecting a true universe which is not here but elsewhere or else if it were a

false imaged manifestation of the Reality replacing in the mind or covering with its distorted resemblance a true manifestation. But here the world is a non-existent form of things, an illusory construction imposed on the bare Reality, on the sole Existence which is for ever empty of things and formless: there would be a true analogy only if our vision constructed in the void air of the desert a figure of things that exist nowhere, or else if it imposed on a bare ground both rope and snake and other figures that equally existed nowhere.

It is clear that in this analogy two quite different kinds of illusion not illustrative of each other are mistakenly put together as if they were identical in nature. All mental or sense hallucinations are really misrepresentations or misplacements or impossible combinations or false developments of things that are in themselves existent or possible or in some way within or allied to the province of the real. All mental errors and illusions are the result of an ignorance which miscombines its data or proceeds falsely upon a previous or present or possible content of knowledge. But the cosmic Illusion has no basis of actuality, it is an original and all-originating illusion; it imposes names, figures, happenings that are pure inventions on a Reality in which there never were and never will be any happenings, names or figures. The analogy of mental hallucination would only be applicable if we admit a Brahman without names, forms or relations and a world of names, forms and relations as equal realities imposed one upon the other, the rope in the place of the snake, or the snake in the place of the rope,— an attribution, it might be, of the activities of the Saguna to the quiescence of the Nirguna. But if both are real, both must be either separate aspects of the Reality or co-ordinate aspects, positive and negative poles of the one Existence. Any error or confusion of Mind between them would not be a creative cosmic Illusion, but only a wrong perception of realities, a wrong relation created by the Ignorance.

If we scrutinise other illustrations or analogies that are offered to us for a better understanding of the operation of Maya, we detect in all of them an inapplicability that deprives them of their force and value. The familiar instance of mother-of-pearl

and silver turns also, like the rope and snake analogy, upon an error due to a resemblance between a present real and another and absent real; it can have no application to the imposition of a multiple and mutable unreality upon a sole and unique immutable Real. In the example of an optical illusion duplicating or multiplying a single object, as when we see two moons instead of one, there are two or more identical forms of the one object, one real, one — or the rest — an illusion: this does not illustrate the juxtaposition of world and Brahman; for in the operation of Maya there is a much more complex phenomenon,—there is indeed an illusory multiplication of the Identical imposed upon its one and ever-unalterable Identity, the One appearing as many, but upon that is imposed an immense organised diversity in nature, a diversity of forms and movements which have nothing to do with the original Real. Dreams, visions, the imagination of the artist or poet can present such an organised diversity which is not real; but it is an imitation, a mimesis of a real and already existent organised diversity, or it starts from such a mimesis and even in the richest variation or wildest invention some mimetic element is observable. There is here no such thing as the operation attributed to Maya in which there is no mimesis but a pure and radically original creation of unreal forms and movements that are non-existent anywhere and neither imitate nor reflect nor alter and develop anything discoverable in the Reality. There is nothing in the operations of Mind illusion that throws light upon this mystery; it is, as a stupendous cosmic Illusion of this kind must be, *sui generis*, without parallel. What we see in the universe is that a diversity of the identical is everywhere the fundamental operation of cosmic Nature; but here it presents itself, not as an illusion, but as a various real formation out of a one original substance. A Reality of Oneness manifesting itself in a reality of numberless forms and powers of its being is what we confront everywhere. There is no doubt in its process a mystery, even a magic, but there is nothing to show that it is a magic of the unreal and not a working of a Consciousness and Force of being of the omnipotent Real, a self-creation operated by an eternal self-knowledge.

This at once raises the question of the nature of Mind, the parent of these illusions, and its relation to the original Existence. Is mind the child and instrument of an original Illusion, or is it itself a primal miscreating Force or Consciousness? or is the mental ignorance a misprision of the truths of Existence, a deviation from an original Truth-Consciousness which is the real world-builder? Our own mind, at any rate, is not an original and primary creative power of Consciousness; it is, and all mind of the same character must be, derivative, an instrumental demiurge, an intermediary creator. It is likely then that analogies from the errors of mind, which are the outcome of an intermediate Ignorance, may not truly illustrate the nature or action of an original creative Illusion, an all-inventing and all-constructing Maya. Our mind stands between a superconscious and an unconscious and receives from both these opposite powers: it stands between an occult subliminal existence and an outward cosmic phenomenon; it receives inspirations, intuitions, imaginations, impulsions to knowledge and action, figures of subjective realities or possibilities from the unknown inner source; it receives the figures of realised actualities and their suggestions of further possibility from the observed cosmic phenomenon. What it receives are truths essential, possible or actual; it starts from the realised actualities of the physical universe and it brings out from them in its subjective action the unrealised possibilities which they contain or suggest or to which it can arrive by proceeding from them as a starting-point: it selects some out of these possibilities for a subjective action and plays with imagined or inwardly constructed forms of them; it chooses others for objectivisation and attempts to realise them. But it receives inspirations also from above and within, from invisible sources and not only from the impacts of the visible cosmic phenomenon; it sees truths other than those suggested by the actual physicality around it, and here too it plays subjectively with transmitted or constructed forms of these truths or it selects for objectivisation, attempts to realise.

Our mind is an observer and user of actualities, a diviner or recipient of truths not yet known or actualised, a dealer

in possibilities that mediate between the truth and actuality. But it has not the omniscience of an infinite Consciousness; it is limited in knowledge and has to supplement its restricted knowledge by imagination and discovery. It does not, like the infinite Consciousness, manifest the known, it has to discover the unknown; it seizes the possibilities of the Infinite, not as results or variations of forms of a latent Truth, but as constructions or creations, figments of its own boundless imagination. It has not the omnipotence of an infinite conscious Energy; it can only realise or actualise what the cosmic Energy will accept from it or what it has the strength to impose or introduce into the sum of things because the secret Divinity, superconscious or subliminal, which uses it intends that that should be expressed in Nature. Its limitation of Knowledge constitutes by incompleteness, but also by openness to error, an Ignorance. In dealing with actualities it may misobserve, misuse, miscreate; in dealing with possibilities it may miscompose, miscombine, misapply, misplace; in its dealings with truths revealed to it it may deform, misrepresent, disharmonise. It may also make constructions of its own which have no correspondence with the things of actual existence, no potentiality of realisation, no support from the truth behind them; but still these constructions start from an illegitimate extension of actualities, catch at unpermitted possibilities, or turn truths to an application which is not applicable. Mind creates, but it is not an original creator, not omniscient or omnipotent, not even an always efficient demiurge. Maya, the Illusive Power, on the contrary, must be an original creator, for it creates all things out of nothing — unless we suppose that it creates out of the substance of the Reality, but then the things it creates must be in some way real; it has a perfect knowledge of what it wishes to create, a perfect power to create whatever it chooses, omniscient and omnipotent though only over its own illusions, harmonising them and linking them together with a magical sureness and sovereign energy, absolutely effective in imposing its own formations or figments passed off as truths, possibilities, actualities on the creature intelligence.

Our mind works best and with a firm confidence when it

is given a substance to work on or at least to use as a basis for its operations, or when it can handle a cosmic force of which it has acquired the knowledge,—it is sure of its steps when it has to deal with actualities; this rule of dealing with objectivised or discovered actualities and proceeding from them for creation is the reason of the enormous success of physical Science. But here there is evidently no creation of illusions, no creation of non-existence *in vacuo* and turning them into apparent actualities such as is attributed to the cosmic Illusion. For Mind can only create out of substance what is possible to the substance, it can only do with the force of Nature what is in accordance with her realisable energies; it can only invent or discover what is already contained in the truth and potentiality of Nature. On the other side, it receives inspirations for creation from within itself or from above: but these can only take form if they are truths or potentials, not by the mind's own right of invention; for if the mind erects what is neither true nor potential, that cannot be created, cannot become actual in Nature. Maya, on the contrary, if it creates on the basis of the Reality, yet erects a superstructure which has nothing to do with the Reality, is not true or potential in it; if it creates out of the substance of the Reality, it makes out of it things that are not possible to it or in accordance with it,—for it creates forms and the Reality is supposed to be a Formless incapable of form, it creates determinations and the Reality is supposed to be absolutely indeterminable.

But our mind has the faculty of imagination; it can create and take as true and real its own mental structures: here, it might be thought, is something analogous to the action of Maya. Our mental imagination is an instrument of Ignorance; it is the resort or device or refuge of a limited capacity of knowledge, a limited capacity of effective action. Mind supplements these deficiencies by its power of imagination: it uses it to extract from things obvious and visible the things that are not obvious and visible; it undertakes to create its own figures of the possible and the impossible; it erects illusory actuals or draws figures of a conjectured or constructed truth of things that are not true to outer experience. That is at least the appearance

of its operation; but, in reality, it is the mind's way or one of its ways of summoning out of Being its infinite possibilities, even of discovering or capturing the unknown possibilities of the Infinite. But, because it cannot do this with knowledge, it makes experimental constructions of truth and possibility and a yet unrealised actuality: as its power of receiving inspirations of Truth is limited, it imagines, hypothesises, questions whether this or that may not be truths; as its force to summon real potentials is narrow and restricted, it erects possibilities which it hopes to actualise or wishes it could actualise; as its power to actualise is cramped and confined by the material world's oppositions, it figures subjective actualisations to satisfy its will of creation and delight of self-presentation. But it is to be noted that through the imagination it does receive a figure of truth, does summon possibilities which are afterwards realised, does often by its imagination exercise an effective pressure on the world's actualities. Imaginations that persist in the human mind, like the idea of travel in the air, end often by self-fulfilment; individual thought-formations can actualise themselves if there is sufficient strength in the formation or in the mind that forms it. Imaginations can create their own potentiality, especially if they are supported in the collective mind, and may in the long run draw on themselves the sanction of the cosmic Will. In fact all imaginations represent possibilities: some are able one day to actualise in some form, perhaps a very different form of actuality; more are condemned to sterility because they do not enter into the figure or scheme of the present creation, do not come within the permitted potentiality of the individual or do not accord with the collective or the generic principle or are alien to the nature or destiny of the containing world-existence.

Thus the mind's imaginations are not purely and radically illusory: they proceed on the basis of its experience of actualities or at least set out from that, are variations upon actuality, or they figure the "may-be"s or "might-be"s of the Infinite, what could be if other truths had manifested, if existing potentials had been otherwise arranged or other possibilities than those already admitted became potential. Moreover, through

this faculty forms and powers of other domains than that of the physical actuality communicate with our mental being. Even when the imaginations are extravagant or take the form of hallucinations or illusions, they proceed with actuals or possibles for their basis. The mind creates the figure of a mermaid, but the phantasy is composed of two actualities put together in a way that is outside the earth's normal potentiality; angels, griffins, chimeras are constructed on the same principle: sometimes the imagination is a memory of former actualities as in the mythical figure of the dragon, sometimes it is a figure or a happening that is real or could be real on other planes or in other conditions of existence. Even the illusions of the maniac are founded on an extravagant misfitting of actuals, as when the lunatic combines himself, kingship and England and sits in imagination on the throne of the Plantagenets and Tudors. Again, when we look into the origin of mental error, we find normally that it is a miscombination, misplacement, misuse, misunderstanding or misapplication of elements of experience and knowledge. Imagination itself is in its nature a substitute for a truer consciousness's faculty of intuition of possibility: as the mind ascends towards the truth-consciousness, this mental power becomes a truth imagination which brings the colour and light of the higher truth into the limited adequacy or inadequacy of the knowledge already achieved and formulated and, finally, in the transforming light above it gives place wholly to higher truth-powers or itself turns into intuition and inspiration; the Mind in that uplifting ceases to be a creator of delusions and an architect of error. Mind then is not a sovereign creator of things non-existent or erected in a void: it is an ignorance trying to know; its very illusions start from a basis of some kind and are the results of a limited knowledge or a half-ignorance. Mind is an instrument of the cosmic Ignorance, but it does not seem to be or does not act like a power or an instrument of a cosmic Illusion. It is a seeker and discoverer or a creator or would-be creator of truths, possibilities and actualities, and it would be rational to suppose that the original Consciousness and Power, from which mind must be a derivation, is also a creator of truths,

possibilities and actualities, not limited like mind but cosmic in its scope, not open to error, because free from all ignorance, a sovereign instrument or a self-power of a supreme Omniscience and Omnipotence, an eternal Wisdom and Knowledge.

This then is the dual possibility that arises before us. There is, we may suppose, an original consciousness and power creative of illusions and unrealities with mind as its instrument or medium in the human and animal consciousness, so that the differentiated universe we see is unreal, a fiction of Maya, and only some indeterminable and undifferentiated Absolute is real. Or there is, we may equally suppose, an original, a supreme or cosmic Truth-Consciousness creative of a true universe, but with mind acting in that universe as an imperfect consciousness, ignorant, partly knowing, partly not knowing,—a consciousness which is by its ignorance or limitation of knowledge capable of error, mispresentation, mistaken or misdirected development from the known, of uncertain gropings towards the unknown, of partial creations and buildings, a constant half-position between truth and error, knowledge and nescience. But this ignorance in fact proceeds, however stumblingly, upon knowledge and towards knowledge; it is inherently capable of shedding the limitation, the mixture, and can turn by that liberation into the Truth-Consciousness, into a power of the original Knowledge. Our inquiry has so far led rather in the second direction; it points towards the conclusion that the nature of our consciousness is not of a character that would justify the hypothesis of a Cosmic Illusion as the solution of its problem. A problem exists, but it consists in the mixture of Knowledge with Ignorance in our cognition of self and things, and it is the origin of this imperfection that we have to discover. There is no need of bringing in an original power of Illusion always mysteriously existent in the eternal Reality or else intervening and imposing a world of non-existent forms on a Consciousness or Superconsciousness that is for ever pure, eternal and absolute.

Chapter VI

Reality and the Cosmic Illusion

The Eternal is true; the world is a lie. *Vivekachudamani.*¹

The Master of Maya creates this world by his Maya and within it is confined another; one should know his Maya as Nature and the Master of Maya as the great Lord of all.

*Swetasvatara Upanishad.*²

The Purusha is all this that is, what has been and what is yet to be; he is the master of Immortality and he is whatever grows by food. *Swetasvatara Upanishad.*³

All is the Divine Being. *Gita.*⁴

BUT SO far we have only cleared a part of the foreground of the field of inquiry; in the background the problem remains unsolved and entire. It is the problem of the nature of the original Consciousness or Power that has created or conceptively constructed or manifested the universe, and the relation to it of our world-cognition, — in sum, whether the universe is a figment of consciousness imposed on our mind by a supreme force of Illusion or a true formation of being experienced by us with a still ignorant but an increasing knowledge. And the true question is not of Mind alone or of a cosmic dream or a cosmic hallucination born of Mind, but of the nature of the Reality, the validity of the creative action that takes place in it or is imposed upon it, the presence or absence of a real content in its or our consciousness and its or our regard on the universe. On behalf of Illusionism it can be answered to the position put forward by us with regard to the truth of existence that all this

¹ Verse 20.

² IV. 9, 10.

³ III. 15.

⁴ VII. 19.

might be valid within the bounds of the cosmic Illusion; it is the system, the pragmatic machinery by which Maya works and maintains herself in the Ignorance: but the truths, possibilities, actualities of the cosmic system are true and actual only within the Illusion, outside that magic circle they have no validity; they are not abiding and eternal realities; all are temporary figures, the works of Knowledge no less than the works of Ignorance. It can be conceded that knowledge is a useful instrument of the Illusion of Maya, for escaping from herself, for destroying herself in the Mind; spiritual knowledge is indispensable: but the one true truth, the only abiding reality beyond all duality of knowledge and ignorance is the eternal relationless Absolute or the Self, the eternal pure Existence. All here turns on the mind's conception and the mental being's experience of reality; for according to the mind's experience or conception of reality will be its interpretation of data otherwise identical, the facts of the Cosmos, individual experience, the realisation of the supreme Transcendence. All mental cognition depends on three elements, the percipient, the perception and the thing perceived or percept. All or any of these three can be affirmed or denied reality; the question then is which of these, if any, are real and to what extent or in what manner. If all three are rejected as instruments of a cosmic Illusion, the farther and consequent question arises, is there then a reality outside them and, if so, what is the relation between the Reality and the Illusion?

It is possible to affirm the reality of the percept, of the objective universe, and deny or diminish the reality of the percipient individual and his perceptive consciousness. In the theory of the sole reality of Matter consciousness is only an operation of Matter-energy in Matter, a secretion or vibration of the brain-cells, a physical reception of images and a brain response, a reflex action or a reaction of Matter to the contacts of Matter. Even if the rigidity of this affirmation is relaxed and consciousness otherwise accounted for, still it is no more than a temporary and derivative phenomenon, not the enduring Reality. The percipient individual is himself only a body and brain capable of the mechanical reactions we generalise under the name of

consciousness: the individual has only a relative value and a temporary reality. But if Matter turns out to be itself unreal or derivative and simply a phenomenon of Energy, as seems now to be the probability, then Energy remains as the sole Reality; the percipient, his perception, the perceived object are only phenomena of Energy. But an Energy without a Being or Existence possessing it or a Consciousness supplying it, an Energy working originally in the void,—for the material field in which we see it at work is itself a creation,—looks itself very much like a mental construction, an unreality: or it might be a temporary inexplicable outbreak of motion which might cease at any time to create phenomena; the Void of the Infinite alone would be enduring and real. The Buddhist theory of the percipient and the perception and the percept as a construction of Karma, the process of some cosmic fact of Action, gave room to such a conclusion; for it led logically to the affirmation of the Non-Being, Void or Nihil. It is possible indeed that what is at work is not an Energy, but a Consciousness; as Matter reduces itself to Energy seizable by us not in itself but in its results and workings, so Energy could be reduced to action of a Consciousness seizable by us not in itself but in its results and workings. But if this Consciousness is supposed to work similarly in a Void, we are exposed to the same conclusion, that it is a creator of temporary phenomenal illusions and itself illusory; Void, an infinite Zero, an original Non-Existence is alone the enduring Reality. But these conclusions are not binding; for behind this Consciousness seizable in its works only there may be an invisible original Existence: a Conscious-Energy of that Existence could then be a reality; its creations too, made out of an infinitesimal substance of being impalpable to the senses but revealed to them at a certain stage of the action of Energy as Matter, would be real, as also the individual emerging as a conscious being of the original Existence in a world of Matter. This original Reality might be a cosmic spiritual Existence, a Pantheos, or it might have some other status; but in any case there would be, not a universal illusion or mere phenomenon, but a true universe.

In the classical theory of Illusionism a sole and supreme

spiritual Existence is accepted as the one Reality: it is by its essentiality the Self, yet the natural beings of which it is the Self are only temporary appearances; it is in its absoluteness the substratum of all things, but the universe erected on the substratum is either a non-existence, a semblance, or else in some way unreally real; it is a cosmic illusion. For the Reality is one without a second, it is immutable in eternity, it is the sole Existence; there is nothing else, there are no true becomings of this Being: it is and must for ever remain void of name, feature, formation, relation, happening; if it has a Consciousness, it can only be a pure consciousness of its own absolute being. But what then is the relation between the Reality and the Illusion? By what miracle or mystery does the Illusion come to be or how does it manage to appear or to abide in Time for ever?

As only Brahman is real, only a consciousness or a power of Brahman could be a real creator and a creator of realities. But since there can be no other reality than Brahman pure and absolute, there can be no true creative power of Brahman. A Brahman-consciousness aware of real beings, forms and happenings would signify a truth of the Becoming, a spiritual and material reality of the universe, which the experience of the supreme Truth negates and nullifies and with which its sole existence is logically incompatible. Maya's creation is a presentation of beings, names, forms, happenings, things, impossible to accept as true, contradictory of the indeterminable purity of the One Existence. Maya then is not real, it is non-existent: Maya is itself an illusion, the parent of numberless illusions. But still this illusion and its works have some kind of existence and so must in some way be real: moreover, the universe does not exist in a Void but stands because it is imposed on Brahman, it is based in a way on the one Reality; we ourselves in the Illusion attribute its forms, names, relations, happenings to the Brahman, become aware of all things as the Brahman, see the Reality through these unrealities. There is then a reality in Maya; it is at the same time real and unreal, existent and non-existent; or, let us say, it is neither real nor unreal: it is a paradox, a suprarational enigma. But what then is this mystery, or is it insoluble? how comes this

illusion to intervene in Brahman-existence? what is the nature of this unreal reality of Maya?

At first sight one is compelled to suppose that Brahman must be in some way the percipient of Maya,—for Brahman is the sole Reality, and if he is not the percipient, who then perceives the Illusion? Any other percipient is not in existence; the individual who is in us the apparent witness is himself phenomenal and unreal, a creation of Maya. But if Brahman is the percipient, how is it possible that the illusion can persist for a moment, since the true consciousness of the Percipient is consciousness of self, an awareness solely of its own pure self-existence? If Brahman perceives the world and things with a true consciousness, then they must all be itself and real; but since they are not the pure self-existence, but at best are forms of it and are seen through a phenomenal Ignorance, this realistic solution is not possible. Yet we have to accept, provisionally at least, the universe as a fact, an impossibility as a thing that is, since Maya is there and her works persist and obsess the spirit with the sense, however false, of their reality. It is on this basis that we have, then, to face and solve the dilemma.

If Maya is in some way real, the conclusion imposes itself that Brahman the Reality is in that way the percipient of Maya. Maya may be his power of differentiating perception, for the power of Maya consciousness which distinguishes it from the true consciousness of sole spiritual Self is its creative perception of difference. Or Maya must be at least, if this creation of difference is considered to be only a result and not the essence of Maya-force, some power of Brahman's consciousness,—for it is only a consciousness that can see or create an illusion and there cannot be another original or originating consciousness than that of Brahman. But since Brahman is also self-aware for ever, there must be a double status of Brahman-Consciousness, one conscious of the sole Reality, the other conscious of the unrealities to which by its creative perception of them it gives some kind of apparent existence. These unrealities cannot be made of the substance of the Reality, for then they also must be real. In this view one cannot accept the assertion of the Upanishads that

the world is made out of the supreme Existence, is a becoming, an outcome or product of the eternal Being. Brahman is not the material cause of the universe: our nature — as opposed to our self — is not made of its spiritual substance; it is constructed out of the unreal reality of Maya. But, on the contrary, our spiritual being is of that substance, is indeed the Brahman; Brahman is above Maya, but he is also the percipient of his creations both from above and from within Maya. This dual consciousness offers itself as the sole plausible explanation of the riddle of a real eternal Percipient, an unreal Percept, and a Perception that is a half-real creator of unreal percepts.

If there is not this dual consciousness, if Maya is the sole conscious power of Brahman, then one of two things must be true: either the reality of Maya as a power is that it is a subjective action of Brahman-consciousness emerging out of its silence and superconscious immobility and passing through experiences that are real because they are part of the consciousness of Brahman but unreal because they are not part of Its being, or else Maya is Brahman's power of cosmic Imagination inherent in his eternal being creating out of nothing names, forms and happenings that are not in any way real. In that case Maya would be real, but her works entirely fictitious, pure imaginations: but can we affirm Imagination as the sole dynamic or creative power of the Eternal? Imagination is a necessity for a partial being with an ignorant consciousness; for it has to supplement its ignorance by imaginations and conjectures: there can be no place for such a movement in the sole consciousness of a sole Reality which has no reason to construct unrealities, for it is ever pure and self-complete. It is difficult to see what in its own being could impel or induce such a Sole Existence complete in its very essence, blissful in its eternity, containing nothing to be manifested, timelessly perfect, to create an unreal Time and Space and people it to all eternity with an interminable cosmic show of false images and happenings. This solution is logically untenable.

The other solution, the idea of a purely subjective unreal reality, starts from the distinction made by the mind in physical Nature between its subjective and objective experiences; for it is

the objective alone of which it is sure as entirely and solidly real. But such a distinction could hardly exist in Brahman-consciousness since here there is either no subject and no object or Brahman itself is the sole possible subject of its consciousness and the sole possible object; there could be nothing externally objective to Brahman, since there is nothing else than Brahman. This idea, then, of a subjective action of consciousness creating a world of fictions other than or distorting the sole true object looks like an imposition on the Brahman by our mind; it imposes on the pure and perfect Reality a feature of its own imperfection, not truly attributable to the perception of a Supreme Being. On the other hand, the distinction between the consciousness and the being of Brahman could not be valid, unless Brahman being and Brahman consciousness are two distinct entities,—the consciousness imposing its experiences on the pure existence of the being but unable to touch or affect or penetrate it. Brahman, then, whether as the supreme sole Self-Existence or the Self of the real-unreal individual in Maya, would be aware by his true consciousness of the illusions imposed on him and would know them as illusions; only some energy of Maya-nature or something in it would be deluded by its own inventions,—or else, not being really deluded, still persist in behaving and feeling as if it were deluded. This duality is what happens to our consciousness in the Ignorance when it separates itself from the works of Nature and is aware within of the Self as the sole truth and the rest as not-self and not-real, but has on the surface to act as if the rest too were real. But this solution negates the sole and indivisible pure existence and pure awareness of the Brahman; it creates a dualism within its featureless unity which is not other in its purport than the dualism of the double Principle in the Sankhya view of things, Purusha and Prakriti, Soul and Nature. These solutions then must be put aside as untenable, unless we modify our first view of the Reality and concede to it a power of manifold status of consciousness or a power of manifold status of existence.

But, again, the dual consciousness, if we admit it, cannot be explained as a dual power of Knowledge-Ignorance valid

for the Supreme Existence as it is for us in the universe. For we cannot suppose that Brahman is at all subject to Maya, since that would mean a principle of Ignorance clouding the Eternal's self-awareness; it would be to impose the limitations of our own consciousness on the eternal Reality. An Ignorance which occurs or intervenes in the course of manifestation as a result of a subordinate action of Consciousness and as part of a divine cosmic plan and its evolutionary meaning, is one thing and is logically conceivable; a meaningless ignorance or illusion eternal in the original consciousness of the Reality is another thing and not easily conceivable; it appears as a violent mental construction which has no likelihood of validity in the truth of the Absolute. The dual consciousness of Brahman must be in no way an ignorance, but a self-awareness coexistent with a voluntary will to erect a universe of illusions which are held in a frontal perception aware at once of self and the illusory world, so that there is no delusion, no feeling of its reality. The delusion takes place only in the illusory world itself, and the Self or Brahman in the world either enjoys with a free participation or witnesses, itself separate and intangible, the play which lays its magical spell only upon the Nature-mind created for her action by Maya. But this would seem to signify that the Eternal, not content with its pure absolute existence, has the need to create, to occupy itself throughout Time with a drama of names and forms and happenings; it needs, being sole, to see itself as many, being peace and bliss and self-knowledge to observe an experience or representation of mingled knowledge and ignorance, delight and suffering, unreal existence and escape from unreal existence. For the escape is for the individual being constructed by Maya; the Eternal does not need to escape and the play continues its cycle for ever. Or if not the need, there is the will to so create, or there is the urge or the automatic action of these contraries: but, if we consider the sole eternity of pure existence attributed to the Reality, all alike, need, will, urge or automatism, are equally impossible and incomprehensible. This is an explanation of a sort, but it is an explanation which leaves the mystery still beyond logic or comprehension; for this dynamic consciousness of the

Eternal is a direct contradiction of its static and real nature. A Will or Power to create or manifest is undoubtedly there: but, if it is a will or power of the Brahman, it can only be for a creation of realities of the Real or a manifestation of the timeless process of its being in Time-eternity; for it seems incredible that the sole power of the Reality should be to manifest something contrary to itself or to create non-existent things in an illusory universe.

There is so far no satisfying answer to the riddle: but it may be that we err in attributing any kind of reality, however illusory at bottom, to Maya or her works: the true solution lies in facing courageously the mystery of its and their utter unreality. This absolute unreality seems to be envisaged by certain formulations of Illusionism or by certain arguments put forward in its favour. This side then of the problem has to pass under consideration before we can examine with confidence the solutions that rest on a relative or partial reality of the universe. There is indeed a line of reasoning which gets rid of the problem by excluding it; it affirms that the question how the Illusion generated, how the universe manages to be there in the pure existence of Brahman, is illegitimate: the problem does not exist, because the universe is non-existent, Maya is unreal, Brahman is the sole truth, alone and self-existent for ever. Brahman is not affected by any illusory consciousness, no universe has come into existence within its timeless reality. But this evasion of the difficulty is either a sophism which means nothing, an acrobacy of verbal logic, the logical reason hiding its head in the play of words and ideas and refusing to see or to solve a real and baffling difficulty, or else it means too much, since in effect it gets rid of all relation of Maya to Brahman by affirming her as an independent absolute non-reality along with the universe created by her. If a real universe does not exist, a cosmic Illusion exists and we are bound to inquire how it came into being or how it manages to exist, what is its relation or non-relation to the Reality, what is meant by our own existence in Maya, by our subjugation to her cycles, by our liberation from her. For in this view we have to suppose that Brahman is not the percipient of Maya or her works, Maya herself is not a power of Brahman-consciousness: Brahman is

superconscious, immersed in its own pure being or is conscious only of its own absoluteness; it has nothing to do with Maya. But in that case either Maya cannot exist even as an illusion or there would be a dual Entity or two entities, a real Eternal superconscious or conscious only of itself and an illusive Power that creates and is conscious of a false universe. We are back on the horns of the dilemma and with no prospect of getting free from our impalement on it, unless we escape by concluding that since all philosophy is part of Maya, all philosophy is also an illusion, problems abound but no conclusion is possible. For what we are confronted with is a pure static and immutable Reality and an illusory dynamism, the two absolutely contradictory of each other, with no greater Truth beyond them in which their secret can be found and their contradictions discover a reconciling issue.

If Brahman is not the percipient, then the percipient must be the individual being: but this percipient is created by the Illusion and unreal; the percept, the world, is an illusion created by an Illusion and unreal; the perceiving consciousness is itself an illusion and therefore unreal. But this deprives everything of significance, our spiritual existence and our salvation from Maya no less than our temporal existence and our immersion in Maya; all are of an equal unreality and unimportance. It is possible to take a less rigid standpoint and hold that Brahman as Brahman has nothing to do with Maya, is eternally free from all illusion or any commerce with illusion, but Brahman as the individual percipient or as the Self of all being here has entered into Maya and can in the individual withdraw from it, and this withdrawal is for the individual an act of supreme importance. But here a dual being is imposed on Brahman and a reality attributed to something that belongs to the cosmic Illusion,—to the individual being of Brahman in Maya, for Brahman as the Self of all is not even phenomenally bound and does not need to escape from her: moreover, salvation cannot be of importance if bondage is unreal and bondage cannot be real unless Maya and her world are real. The absolute unreality of Maya disappears and gives place to a very comprehensive even if perhaps only a

practical and temporal reality. To avoid this conclusion it may be said that our individuality is unreal, it is Brahman who withdraws from a reflection of itself in the figment of individuality and its extinction is our release, our salvation: but Brahman, always free, cannot suffer by bondage or profit by salvation, and a reflection, a figment of individuality is not a thing that can need salvation. A reflection, a figment, a mere image in the deceptive mirror of Maya cannot suffer a real bondage or profit by a real salvation. If it be said that it is a conscious reflection or figment and therefore can really suffer and enter into the bliss of release, the question arises whose is the consciousness that so suffers in this fictitious existence,—for there can be no real consciousness except that of the One Existence; so that once more there is established a dual consciousness for Brahman, a consciousness or superconsciousness free from the illusion and a consciousness subject to the illusion, and we have again substantiated a certain reality of our existence and experience in Maya. For if our being is that of the Brahman, our consciousness something of the consciousness of the Brahman, with whatever qualification, it is to that extent real,—and if our being, why not the being of the universe?

It may finally be put forward as a solution that the percipient individual and the percept universe are unreal, but Maya by imposing itself on Brahman acquires a certain reality, and that reality lends itself to the individual and to its experience in the cosmic Illusion which endures so long as it is subject to the illusion. But, again, for whom is the experience valid, the reality acquired while it endures, and for whom does it cease by liberation, extinction or withdrawal? For an illusory unreal being cannot put on reality and suffer from a real bondage or escape from it by a real act of evasion or self-extinction; it can only seem to some real self or being to exist, but in that case this real self must in some way or in some degree have become subject to Maya. It must either be the consciousness of Brahman that projects itself into a world of Maya and issues from Maya or it must be the being of Brahman that puts forth something of itself, its reality, into Maya and withdraws it again

from Maya. Or what again is this Maya that imposes itself on Brahman? from where does it come if it is not already in Brahman, an action of the eternal Consciousness or the eternal Superconscious? It is only if a being or a consciousness of the Reality undergoes the consequences of the Illusion that the cycles of the Illusion can put on any reality or have any importance except as a dance of phantasmagoric marionettes with which the Eternal amuses himself, a puppet-show in Time. We are driven back to the dual being of Brahman, the dual consciousness of Brahman involved in the Illusion and free from the Illusion, and a certain phenomenal truth of being for Maya: there can be no solution of our existence in the universe if that existence and the universe itself have no reality,—even though the reality be only partial, restricted, derivative. But what can be the reality of an original universal and fundamentally baseless Illusion? The only possible answer is that it is a suprarational mystery, inexplicable and ineffable,—*anirvacanīya*.

There are, however, two possible replies to the difficulty, if we get rid of the idea of absolute unreality and admit a qualification or compromise. A basis can be created for a subjective illusion-consciousness which is yet part of Being, if we accept in the sense of an illusory subjective world-awareness the account of sleep and dream creation given to us in the Upanishads. For the affirmation there is that Brahman as Self is fourfold; the Self is Brahman and all that is is the Brahman, but all that is is the Self seen by the Self in four states of its being. In the pure self-status neither consciousness nor unconsciousness as we conceive it can be affirmed about Brahman; it is a state of superconsciousness absorbed in its self-existence, in a self-silence or a self-ecstasy, or else it is the status of a free Superconscious containing or basing everything but involved in nothing. But there is also a luminous status of sleep-self, a massed consciousness which is the origin of cosmic existence; this state of deep sleep in which yet there is the presence of an omnipotent Intelligence is the seed state or causal condition from which emerges the cosmos;—this and the dream-self which is the continent of all subtle, subjective or supraphysical experience, and the self of waking which is the

support of all physical experience, can be taken as the whole field of Maya. As a man in deep sleep passes into dreams in which he experiences self-constructed unstable structures of name, form, relation, happenings, and in the waking state externalises himself in the more apparently stable but yet transient structures of the physical consciousness, so the Self develops out of a state of massed consciousness its subjective and its objective cosmic experience. But the waking state is not a true waking from this original and causal sleep; it is only a full emergence into a gross external and objective sense of the positive reality of objects of consciousness as opposed to the subtle subjective dream-awareness of those objects: the true waking is a withdrawal from both objective and subjective consciousness and from the massed causal Intelligence into the superconsciousness superior to all consciousness; for all consciousness and all unconsciousness is Maya. Here, we may say, Maya is real because it is the self's experience of the Self, something of the Self enters into it, is affected by its happenings because it accepts them, believes in them, they are to it real experiences, creations out of its conscious being; but it is unreal because it is a sleep state, a dream state, an eventually transient waking state, not the true status of the superconscious Reality. Here there is no actual dichotomy of being itself, but there is a multiplicity of status of the one Being; there is no original dual consciousness implying a Will in the Uncreated to create illusory things out of non-existence, but there is One Being in states of superconsciousness and consciousness each with its own nature of self-experience. But the lower states, although they have a reality, are yet qualified by a building and seeing of subjective self-constructions which are not the Real. The One Self sees itself as many, but this multiple existence is subjective; it has a multiplicity of its states of consciousness, but this multiplicity also is subjective; there is a reality of subjective experience of a real Being, but no objective universe.

It may be noted, however, that nowhere in the Upanishads is it actually laid down that the threefold status is a condition of illusion or the creation of an unreality; it is constantly affirmed that all this that is,—this universe we are now supposing to

have been constructed by Maya,— is the Brahman, the Reality. The Brahman becomes all these beings; all beings must be seen in the Self, the Reality, and the Reality must be seen in them, the Reality must be seen as being actually all these beings; for not only the Self is Brahman, but all is the Self, all this that is is the Brahman, the Reality. That emphatic asseveration leaves no room for an illusory Maya; but still the insistent denial that there is anything other than or separate from the experiencing self, certain phrases used and the description of two of the states of consciousness as sleep and dream may be taken as if they annulled the emphasis on the universal Reality; these passages open the gates to the illusionist idea and have been made the foundation for an uncompromising system of that nature. If we take this fourfold status as a figure of the Self passing from its superconscious state, where there is no subject or object, into a luminous trance in which superconsciousness becomes a massed consciousness out of which the subjective status of being and the objective come into emergence, then we get according to our view of things either a possible process of illusionary creation or a process of creative Self-knowledge and All-knowledge.

In fact, if we can judge from the description of the three lower states of Self as the all-wise Intelligence,⁵ the Seer of the subtle and the Seer of the gross material existence, this sleep state and this dream state seem to be figurative names for the superconscious and the subliminal which are behind and beyond our waking status; they are so named and figured because it is through dream and sleep—or trance which can be regarded

⁵ *Prājña*. Yajnavalkya in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad states very positively that there are two planes or states of the being which are two worlds, and that in the dream state one can see both worlds, for the dream state is intermediate between them, it is their joining-plane. This makes it clear that he is speaking of a subliminal condition of the consciousness which can carry in it communications between the physical and the supraphysical worlds. The description of the dreamless sleep state applies both to deep sleep and to the condition of trance in which one enters into a massed consciousness containing in it all the powers of being but all compressed within itself and concentrated solely on itself and, when active, then active in a consciousness where all is the self; this is, clearly, a state admitting us into the higher planes of the spirit normally now superconscious to our waking being.

as a kind of dream or sleep—that the surface mental consciousness normally passes out of the perception of objective things into the inner subliminal and the superior supramental or overmental status. In that inner condition it sees the supra-physical realities in transcribing figures of dream or vision or, in the superior status, it loses itself in a massed consciousness of which it can receive no thought or image. It is through this subliminal and this superconscious condition that we can pass into the supreme superconsciousness of the highest state of self-being. If we make the transition, not through dream trance or sleep trance, but through a spiritual awakening into these higher states, we become aware in all of them of the one omnipresent Reality; there need be no perception of an illusionary Maya, there is only an experience of the passage from Mind to what is beyond it so that our mental structure of the universe ceases to be valid and another reality of it is substituted for the ignorant mental knowledge. In this transition it is possible to be awake to all the states of being together in a harmonised and unified experience and to see the Reality everywhere. But if we plunge by a trance of exclusive concentration into a mystic sleep state or pass abruptly in waking Mind into a state belonging to the Superconscious, then the mind can be seized in the passage by a sense of the unreality of the cosmic Force and its creations; it passes by a subjective abolition of them into the supreme superconsciousness. This sense of unreality and this sublimating passage are the spiritual justification for the idea of a world created by Maya; but this consequence is not conclusive, since a larger and more complete conclusion superseding it is possible to spiritual experience.

All these and other solutions of the nature of Maya fail to satisfy because they have no conclusiveness: they do not establish the inevitability of the illusionist hypothesis which, to be accepted, needs to be inevitable; they do not bridge the chasm between the presumed true nature of the eternal Reality and the paradoxical and contrary character of the cosmic Illusion. At the most a process is indicated that claims to make the co-existence of the two opposites conceivable and intelligible; but

it has no such force of certitude or illuminating convincingness effectively curing the improbability that its acceptance would be obligatory on the intelligence. The theory of the cosmic Illusion gets rid of an original contradiction, a problem and mystery which may be otherwise soluble, by erecting another contradiction, a new problem and mystery which is irreconcilable in its terms and insoluble. For we start with the conception or experience of an absolute Reality which is in its nature eternally one, supracosmic, static, immobile, immutable, self-aware of its pure existence, and a phenomenon of cosmos, dynamism, motion, mutability, modifications of the original pure existence, differentiation, infinite multiplicity. This phenomenon is got rid of by declaring it to be a perpetual Illusion, Maya. But this brings in, in effect, a self-contradictory dual status of consciousness of the One to annul a self-contradictory dual status of being of the One. A phenomenal truth of multiplicity of the One is annulled by setting up a conceptual falsehood in the One creating an unreal multiplicity. The One for ever self-aware of its pure existence entertains a perpetual imagination or illusory construction of itself as an infinite multiplicity of ignorant and suffering beings unaware of self who have to wake one by one to awareness of self and cease individually to be.

In face of this solution of a perplexity by a new perplexity we begin to suspect that our original premiss must have been somewhere incomplete,—not an error, but only a first statement and indispensable foundation. We begin to envisage the Reality as an eternal oneness, status, immutable essence of pure existence supporting an eternal dynamis, motion, infinite multiplicity and diversity of itself. The immutable status of oneness brings out of itself the dynamis, motion and multiplicity,—the dynamis, motion and multiplicity not abrogating but bringing into relief the eternal and infinite oneness. If the consciousness of Brahman can be dual in status or action or even manifold, there seems to be no reason why Brahman should be incapable of a dual status or a manifold real self-experience of its being. The cosmic consciousness would then be, not a creative Illusion, but an experience of some truth of the Absolute. This explanation, if

worked out, might prove to be more comprehensive and spiritually fecund, more harmonic in its juncture of the two terms of our self-experience, and it would be at least as logically tenable as the idea of an eternal Reality supporting in perpetuity an eternal illusion real only to an infinite multiplicity of ignorant and suffering beings who escape one by one from the obscurity and pain of Maya, each one by a separate extinction of itself in Maya.

In a second possible answer on the illusionist basis to the problem, in the philosophy of Shankara which may be described as a qualified Illusionism, an answer which is presented with a force and comprehensiveness that are extraordinarily impressive, we make a first step towards this solution. For this philosophy affirms a qualified reality for Maya; it characterises it indeed as an ineffable and unaccountable mystery, but at the same time it does present us with a rational solution, at first sight thoroughly satisfactory, of the opposition which afflicts our mind; it accounts for our sense of the persistent and pressing reality of the universe and our sense of the inconclusiveness, insufficiency, vanity, evanescence, a certain unreality of life and phenomena. For we find a distinction made between two orders of reality, transcendental and pragmatic, absolute and phenomenal, eternal and temporal,—the former the reality of the pure being of Brahman, absolute and supracosmic and eternal, the latter the reality of Brahman in Maya, cosmic, temporal and relative. Here we get a reality for ourselves and the universe: for the individual self is really Brahman; it is Brahman who within the field of Maya seems phenomenally to be subjected to her as the individual and in the end releases the relative and phenomenal individual into his eternal and true being. In the temporal field of relativities our experience of the Brahman who has become all beings, the Eternal who has become universal and individual, is also valid; it is indeed a middle step of the movement in Maya towards liberation from Maya. The universe too and its experiences are real for the consciousness in Time and that consciousness is real. But the question of the nature and extent of this reality at once arises: for the universe and

ourselves may be a true reality though of a lesser order, or they may be partly real, partly unreal, or they may be an unreal reality. If they are at all a true reality, there is no place for any theory of Maya; there is no illusory creation. If they are partly real, partly unreal, the fault must lie in something wrong either in the cosmic self-awareness or in our own seeing of ourselves and the universe which produces an error of being, an error of knowledge, an error in the dynamis of existence. But that error can amount only to an ignorance or a mixed knowledge and ignorance, and what needs to be explained then is not an original Cosmic Illusion but the intervention of Ignorance in the creative consciousness or in the dynamic action of the Eternal and Infinite. But if universe and ourselves are an unreal reality, if to a transcendental consciousness all this has no truth of existence and its apparent reality ceases once we step out of the field proper to Maya, then the concession accorded with one hand is taken away by the other; for what was conceded as a truth turns out to have been all the time an illusion. Maya and cosmos and ourselves are both real and unreal,— but the reality is an unreal reality, real only to our ignorance, unreal to any true knowledge.

It is difficult to see why, once any reality is conceded to ourselves and to the universe, it should not be a true reality within its limits. It may be admitted that the manifestation must be on its surface a more restricted reality than the Manifested; our universe is, we may say, one of the rhythms of Brahman and not, except in its essential being, the whole reality: but that is not a sufficient reason for it to be set aside as unreal. It is no doubt so felt by mind withdrawing from itself and its structures: but this is only because the mind is an instrument of Ignorance and, when it withdraws from its constructions, from its ignorant and imperfect picture of the universe, it is impelled to regard them as nothing more than its own fictions and formations, unfounded, unreal; the gulf between its ignorance and the supreme Truth and Knowledge disables it from discovering the true connections of the transcendent Reality and the cosmic Reality. In a higher status of consciousness the difficulty disappears, the connection

is established; the sense of unreality recedes and a theory of illusion becomes superfluous and inapplicable. It cannot be the final truth that the Supreme Consciousness has no regard upon the universe or that it regards it as a fiction which its self in Time upholds as real. The cosmic can only exist by dependence on the supracosmic, Brahman in Time must have some significance for Brahman in timeless eternity; otherwise there could be no self and spirit in things and therefore no basis for the temporal existence.

But the universe is condemned as ultimately unreal because it is temporary and not eternal, a perishable form of being imposed on the Formless and Imperishable. This relation can be illustrated by the analogy of earth and the pot made out of earth: the pot and other forms so created perish and go back to the reality, earth, they are only evanescent forms; when they disappear there is left the formless and essential earth and nothing else. But this analogy can tell more convincingly the other way; for the pot is real by right of its being made out of the substance of earth which is real; it is not an illusion and, even when it is dissolved into the original earth, its past existence cannot be thought to have been unreal or an illusion. The relation is not that of an original reality and a phenomenal unreality, but of an original, — or, if we go back from earth to the invisible substratum and constituent ether, an eternal and non-manifest, — to a resultant and dependent, a temporal and manifested reality. Moreover, the pot form is an eternal possibility of earth substance, or ethereal substance, and while the substance exists the form can always be manifested. A form may disappear, but it only passes out of manifestation into non-manifestation; a world may disappear, but there is no proof that world-existence is an evanescent phenomenon: on the contrary, we may suppose that the power of manifestation is inherent in Brahman and continues to act either continuously in Time-eternity or in an eternal recurrence. The cosmic is a different order of the Real from the supracosmic Transcendence, but there is no need to take it as in any way non-existent or unreal to that Transcendence. For the purely intellectual conception that only the Eternal is real, whether we

take it in the sense that reality depends on perpetual duration or that the timeless only is true, is an ideative distinction, a mental construction; it is not binding on a substantial and integral experience. Time is not necessarily cancelled out of existence by timeless Eternity; their relation is only verbally a relation of contradiction; in fact, it is more likely to be a relation of dependence.

Similarly, the reasoning which cancels the dynamics of the Absolute, the imposition of the stigma of unreal reality on the pragmatic truth of things because it is pragmatic, is difficult to accept; for the pragmatic truth is after all not something quite other, quite separate and unconnected with spiritual truth, it is a result of the energy or a motion of the dynamic activity of the Spirit. A distinction must, no doubt, be made between the two, but the idea of an entire opposition can rest only on the postulate that a silent and quiescent status is the Eternal's true and whole being; but in that case we must conclude that there is nothing dynamic in the Absolute and all dynamism is a contradiction of the supreme nature of the Divine and Eternal. But if a temporal or cosmic reality of any kind exists, there must be a power, an inherent dynamic force of the Absolute which brought it into being, and there is no reason to suppose that the power of the Absolute can do nothing but create illusions. On the contrary, the Power that creates must be the force of an omnipotent and omniscient Consciousness; the creations of the absolutely Real should be real and not illusions, and since it is the One Existence, they must be self-creations, forms of a manifestation of the Eternal, not forms of Nothing erected out of the original Void — whether a void being or a void consciousness — by Maya.

At the basis of the refusal to recognise the universe as real is the concept or experience of the Reality as immutable, featureless, non-active and realised through a consciousness that has itself fallen into a status of silence and is immobile. The universe is a result of dynamis in movement, it is force of being throwing itself out in action, energy at work, whether that energy be conceptional or mechanical or a spiritual, mental, vital or

material dynamis; it can thus be regarded as a contradiction—or a derogation from self—of the static and immobile eternal Reality, therefore unreal. But as a concept this position of the thought has no inevitability; there is no reason why we should not conceive of the Reality as at once static and dynamic. It is perfectly rational to suppose that the eternal status of being of the Reality contains in it an eternal force of being, and this dynamis must necessarily carry in itself a power of action and movement, a kinesis; both status of being and movement of being can be real. There is no reason either why they should not be simultaneous; on the contrary, simultaneity is demanded,—for all energy, all kinetic action has to support itself on status or by status if it is to be effective or creative; otherwise there will be no solidity of anything created, only a constant whirl without any formation: status of being, form of being are necessary to kinesis of being. Even if energy be the primal reality, as it seems to be in the material world, still it has to create status of itself, lasting forms, duration of beings in order to have a support for its action: the status may be temporary, it may be only a balance or equilibrium of substance created and maintained by a constant kinesis, but while it endures it is real and, after it ceases, we still regard it as something that was real. The principle of a supporting status for action is a permanent principle, and its action is constant in Time-eternity. When we discover the stable Reality underlying all this movement of energy and this creation of forms, we do indeed perceive that the status of created forms is only temporary; there is a stability of repetition of the kinesis in a same persistent action and figure of movement which maintains substance of being in stable form of itself: but this stability is created, and the one permanent and self-existent status is that of the eternal Being whose Energy erected the forms. But we need not therefore conclude that the temporary forms are unreal; for the energy of the being is real and the forms made by it are forms of the being. In any case the status of the being and the eternal dynamis of the being are both real, and they are simultaneous; the status admits of action of dynamis and the action does not abrogate the status. We must therefore conclude that eternal

status and eternal dynamis are both true of the Reality which itself surpasses both status and dynamis; the immobile and the mobile Brahman are both the same Reality.

But in experience we find that for us it is, normally, a quiescence that brings in the stable realisation of the eternal and the infinite: it is in silence or quietude that we feel most firmly the Something that is behind the world shown to us by our mind and senses. Our cognitive action of thought, our action of life and being seem to overlay the truth, the reality; they grasp the finite but not the infinite, they deal with the temporal and not the eternal Real. It is reasoned that this is so because all action, all creation, all determining perception limits; it does not embrace or grasp the Reality, and its constructions disappear when we enter into the indivisible and indeterminable consciousness of the Real: these constructions are unreal in eternity, however real they may seem or be in Time. Action leads to ignorance, to the created and finite; kinesis and creation are a contradiction of the immutable Reality, the pure uncreated Existence. But this reasoning is not wholly valid because it is looking at perception and action only as they are in our mental cognition of the world and its movement; but that is the experience of our surface being regarding things from its shifting motion in Time, a regard itself superficial, fragmentary and delimited, not total, not plunging into the inner sense of things. In fact we find that action need not bind or limit, if we get out of this moment-cognition into a status of cognition of the eternal proper to the true consciousness. Action does not bind or limit the liberated man; action does not bind or limit the Eternal: but we can go farther and say that action does not bind or limit our own true being at all. Action has no such effect on the spiritual Person or Purusha or on the psychic entity within us, it binds or limits only the surface constructed personality. This personality is a temporary expression of our self-being, a changing form of it, empowered to exist by it, dependent on it for substance and endurance,— temporary, but not unreal. Our thought and action are means for this expression of ourselves and, as the expression is incomplete and evolutive, as it is a development of our natural being in Time, thought

and action help it to develop, to change, to alter and expand its limits, but at the same time to maintain limits; in that sense they are limiting and binding; they are themselves an incomplete mode of self-revelation. But when we go back into ourselves, into the true self and person, there is no longer a binding or limitation by the limits of action or perception; both arise as expressions of consciousness and expressions of force of the self operative for a free self-determination of its nature-being, for the self-unrolling, the becoming in time of something that is itself illimitable. The limitation, which is a necessary circumstance of an evolutive self-determination, might be an abrogation of self or derogation from self, from Reality, and therefore itself unreal, if it altered the essentiality or totality of the being; it would be a bondage of the spirit and therefore illegitimate if it obscured, by an alien imposition proceeding from a force that is not-self, the Consciousness that is the inmost witness and creator of our world-existence, or if it constructed something contrary to the Being's consciousness of self or will of becoming. But the essence of being remains the same in all action and formation, and the limitations freely accepted do not take from the being's totality; they are accepted and self-imposed, not imposed from outside, they are a means of expression of our totality in the movement of Time, an order of things imposed by our inner spiritual being on our outer nature-being, not a bondage inflicted on the ever-free spirit. There is therefore no reason to conclude from the limitations of perception and action that the movement is unreal or that the expression, formation or self-creation of the Spirit is unreal. It is a temporal order of reality, but it is still a reality of the Real, not something else. All that is in the kinesis, the movement, the action, the creation, is the Brahman; the becoming is a movement of the being; Time is a manifestation of the Eternal. All is one Being, one Consciousness, one even in infinite multiplicity, and there is no need to bisect it into an opposition of transcendent Reality and unreal cosmic Maya.

In the philosophy of Shankara one feels the presence of a conflict, an opposition which this powerful intellect has stated with full force and masterfully arranged rather than solved with

any finality,—the conflict of an intuition intensely aware of an absolute transcendent and inmost Reality and a strong intellectual reason regarding the world with a keen and vigorous rational intelligence. The intellect of the thinker regards the phenomenal world from the standpoint of the reason; reason is there the judge and the authority and no suprarational authority can prevail against it: but behind the phenomenal world is a transcendent Reality which the intuition alone can see; there reason—at least a finite dividing limited reason—cannot prevail against the intuitive experience, it cannot even relate the two, it cannot therefore solve the mystery of the universe. The reason has to affirm the reality of the phenomenal existence, to affirm its truths as valid; but they are valid only in that phenomenal existence. This phenomenal existence is real because it is a temporal phenomenon of the eternal Existence, the Reality: but it is not itself that Reality and, when we pass beyond the phenomenon to the Real, it still exists but is no longer valid to our consciousness; it is therefore unreal. Shankara takes up this contradiction, this opposition which is normal to our mental consciousness when it becomes aware of both sides of existence and stands between them; he resolves it by obliging the reason to recognise its limits, in which its unimpaired sovereignty is left to it within its own cosmic province, and to acquiesce in the soul's intuition of the transcendent Reality and to support, by a dialectic which ends by dissolving the whole cosmic phenomenal and rational-practical edifice of things, its escape from the limitations constructed and imposed on the mind by Maya. The explanation of cosmic existence by which this is brought about seems to be—or so we may translate it to our understanding, for there have been different expositions of this profound and subtle philosophy,—that there is a Transcendence which is for ever self-existent and immutable and a world which is only phenomenal and temporal. The eternal Reality manifests itself in regard to the phenomenal world as Self and Ishwara. The Ishwara by his Maya, his power of phenomenal creation, constructs this world as a temporal phenomenon, and this phenomenon of things which do not exist in the utterly Real is imposed by

Maya through our concepitive and perceptive consciousness on the superconscious or purely self-conscious Reality. Brahman the Reality appears in the phenomenal existence as the Self of the living individual; but when the individuality of the individual is dissolved by intuitive knowledge, the phenomenal being is released into self-being: it is no longer subject to Maya and by its release from the appearance of individuality it is extinguished in the Reality; but the world continues to exist without beginning or end as the Mayic creation of the Ishwara.

This is an arrangement which puts into relation with each other the data of the spiritual intuition and the data of the reason and sense, and it opens to us a way out from their contradiction, a spiritual and practical issue: but it is not a solution, it does not resolve the contradiction. Maya is real and unreal; the world is not a mere illusion, for it exists and is real in Time, but eventually and transcendentally it turns out to be unreal. This creates an ambiguity which extends beyond itself and touches all that is not the pure self-existence. Thus the Ishwara, though he is undeluded by Maya and the creator of Maya, seems himself to be a phenomenon of Brahman and not the ultimate Reality, he is real only with regard to the Time-world he creates; the individual self has the same ambiguous character. If Maya were to cease altogether from its operations, Ishwara, the world and the individual would no longer be there; but Maya is eternal, Ishwara and the world are eternal in Time, the individual endures so long as he does not annul himself by knowledge. Our thought on these premisses has to take refuge in the conception of an ineffable suprarational mystery which is to the intellect insoluble. But, faced with this ambiguity, this admission of an insoluble mystery at the commencement of things and at the end of the process of thought, we begin to suspect that there is a link missing. Ishwara is not himself a phenomenon of Maya, he is real; he must then be the manifestation of a truth of the Transcendence, or he must be the Transcendent itself dealing with a cosmos manifested in his own being. If the world is at all real, it also must be the manifestation of a truth of the Transcendence; for only that can have any reality. If the individual has the power

of self-discovery and entrance into the transcendent eternity and his liberation has so great an importance, it must be because he too is a reality of the Transcendence; he has to discover himself individually, because his individuality also has some truth of itself in the Transcendence which is veiled from it and which it has to recover. It is an ignorance of self and world that has to be overcome and not an illusion, a figment of individuality and world-existence.

It becomes evident that as the Transcendence is suprarational and seizable only by an intuitive experience and realisation, so also the mystery of the universe is suprarational. It has to be so since it is a phenomenon of the transcendent Reality, and it would not, if it were otherwise, be insoluble by the intellectual reason. But if so, we have to pass beyond the intellect in order to bridge the gulf and penetrate the mystery; to leave an unsolved contradiction cannot be the final solution. It is the intellectual reason that crystallises and perpetuates an apparent contradiction by creating its opposite or dividing concepts of the Brahman, the Self, the Ishwara, the individual being, the supreme consciousness or superconsciousness and the Mayic world-consciousness. If Brahman alone exists, all these must be Brahman, and in Brahman-consciousness the division of these concepts must disappear in a reconciling self-vision; but we can arrive at their true unity only by passing beyond the intellectual Reason and finding out through spiritual experience where they meet and become one and what is the spiritual reality of their apparent divergence. In fact, in the Brahman-consciousness the divergences cannot exist, they must by our passage into it converge into unity; the divisions of the intellectual reason may correspond to a reality, but it must be then the reality of a manifold Oneness. The Buddha applied his penetrating rational intellect supported by an intuitive vision to the world as our mind and sense see it and discovered the principle of its construction and the way of release from all constructions, but he refused to go farther. Shankara took the farther step and regarded the suprarational Truth, which Buddha kept behind the veil as realisable by cancellation of the constructions of consciousness but

beyond the scope of the reason's discovery. Shankara, standing between the world and the eternal Reality, saw that the mystery of the world must be ultimately suprarational, not conceivable or expressible by our reason, *anirvacanīya*; but he maintained the world as seen by the reason and sense as valid and had therefore to posit an unreal reality, because he did not take one step still farther. For to know the real truth of the world, its reality, it must be seen from the suprarational awareness, from the view of the Superconsciousness that maintains and surpasses and by surpassing knows it in its truth, and no longer from the view of the consciousness that is maintained by it and surpassed by it and therefore does not know it or knows it only by its appearance. It cannot be that to that self-creative supreme consciousness the world is an incomprehensible mystery or that it is to it an illusion that is yet not altogether an illusion, a reality that is yet unreal. The mystery of the universe must have a divine sense to the Divine; it must have a significance or a truth of cosmic being that is luminous to the Reality that upholds it with its transcending and yet immanent superconsciousness.

If the Reality alone exists and all is the Reality, the world also cannot be excluded from that Reality; the universe is real. If it does not reveal to us in its forms and powers the Reality that it is, if it seems only a persistent and yet changing movement in Space and Time, this must be not because it is unreal or because it is not at all That, but because it is a progressive self-expression, a manifestation, an evolving self-development of That in Time which our consciousness cannot yet see in its total or its essential significance. In this sense we can say that it is That and not That, — because it does not disclose all the Reality through any form or sum of its forms of self-expression; but still all its forms are forms of the substance and being of that Reality. All finites are in their spiritual essence the Infinite and, if we look deep enough into them, manifest to intuition the Identical and Infinite. It is contended indeed that the universe cannot be a manifestation because the Reality has no need of manifestation, since it is for ever manifest to itself; but so equally it can be said that the Reality has no need of self-illusion or illusion of any kind,

no need to create a Mayic universe. The Absolute can have no need of anything; but still there can be — not coercive of its freedom, not binding on it, but an expression of its self-force, the result of its Will to become, — an imperative of a supreme self-effectuating Force, a necessity of self-creation born of the power of the Absolute to see itself in Time. This imperative represents itself to us as a Will to create, a Will of self-expression; but it may be better represented as a force of being of the Absolute which displays itself as a power of itself in action. If the Absolute is self-evident to itself in eternal Timelessness, it can also be self-manifest to itself in eternal motion of Time. Even if the universe is only a phenomenal reality, still it is a manifestation or phenomenon of Brahman; for since all is Brahman, phenomenon and manifestation must be the same thing: the imputation of unreality is a superfluous conception, otiose and unnecessarily embarrassing, since whatever distinction is needed is already there in the concept of Time and the timeless Eternal and the concept of manifestation.

The one thing that can be described as an unreal reality is our individual sense of separateness and the conception of the finite as a self-existent object in the Infinite. This conception, this sense are pragmatically necessary for the operations of the surface individuality and are effective and justified by their effects; they are therefore real to its finite reason and finite self-experience: but once we step back from the finite consciousness into the consciousness of the essential and infinite, from the apparent to the true Person, the finite or the individual still exists but as being and power and manifestation of the Infinite; it has no independent or separate reality. Individual independence, entire separateness are not necessary for individual reality, do not constitute it. On the other hand, the disappearance of these finite forms of the manifestation is evidently a factor in the problem, but does not by itself convict them of unreality; the disappearance may be only a withdrawal from manifestation. The cosmic manifestation of the Timeless takes place in the successions of Time: its forms must therefore be temporary in their appearance on the surface, but they are eternal in their essential power of

manifestation; for they are held always implicit and potential in the essence of things and in the essential consciousness from which they emerge: timeless consciousness can always turn their abiding potentiality into terms of time actuality. The world would be unreal only if itself and its forms were images without substance of being, figments of consciousness presented to itself by the Reality as pure figments and then abolished for ever. But if manifestation or the power of manifestation is eternal, if all is the being of Brahman, the Reality, then this unreality or illusoriness cannot be the fundamental character of things or of the cosmos in which they make their appearance.

A theory of Maya in the sense of illusion or the unreality of cosmic existence creates more difficulties than it solves; it does not really solve the problem of existence, but rather renders it for ever insoluble. For, whether Maya be an unreality or a non-real reality, the ultimate effects of the theory carry in them a devastating simplicity of nullification. Ourselves and the universe fade away into nothingness or else keep for a time only a truth which is little better than a fiction. In the thesis of the pure unreality of Maya, all experience, all knowledge as well as all ignorance, the knowledge that frees us no less than the ignorance that binds us, world-acceptance and world-refusal, are two sides of an illusion; for there is nothing to accept or refuse, nobody to accept or refuse it. All the time it was only the immutable superconscious Reality that at all existed; the bondage and release were only appearances, not a reality. All attachment to world-existence is an illusion, but the call for liberation is also a circumstance of the illusion; it is something that was created in Maya which by its liberation is extinguished in Maya. But this nullification cannot be compelled to stop short in its devastating advance at the boundary fixed for it by a spiritual Illusionism. For if all other experiences of the individual consciousness in the universe are illusions, then what guarantee is there that its spiritual experiences are not illusions, including even its absorbed self-experience of the supreme Self which is conceded to us as utterly real? For if cosmos is untrue, our experience of the cosmic consciousness, of the universal Self, of

Brahman as all these beings or as the self of all these beings, the One in all, all in the One has no secure foundation, since it reposes in one of its terms on an illusion, on a construction of Maya. That term, the cosmic term, has to crumble, for all these beings which we saw as the Brahman were illusions; then what is our assurance of our experience of the other term, the pure Self, the silent, static or absolute Reality, since that too comes to us in a mind moulded of delusion and formed in a body created by an Illusion? An overwhelming self-evident convincingness, an experience of absolute authenticity in the realisation or experience is not an unanswerable proof of sole reality or sole finality: for other spiritual experiences such as that of the omnipresent Divine Person, Lord of a real Universe, have the same convincing, authentic and final character. It is open to the intellect which has once arrived at the conviction of the unreality of all other things, to take a farther step and deny the reality of Self and of all existence. The Buddhists took this last step and refused reality to the Self on the ground that it was as much as the rest a construction of the mind; they cut not only God but the eternal Self and impersonal Brahman out of the picture.

An uncompromising theory of Illusion solves no problem of our existence; it only cuts the problem out for the individual by showing him a way of exit: in its extreme form and effect, our being and its action become null and without sanction, its experience, aspiration, endeavour lose their significance; all, the one incommunicable relationless Truth excepted and the turning away to it, become equated with illusion of being, are part of a universal Illusion and themselves illusions. God and ourselves and the universe become myths of Maya; for God is only a reflection of Brahman in Maya, ourselves are only a reflection of Brahman in illusory individuality, the world is only an imposition on the Brahman's incommunicable self-existence. There is a less drastic nullification if a certain reality is admitted for the being even within the illusion, a certain validity for the experience and knowledge by which we grow into the spirit: but this is only if the temporal has a valid reality and the experience in it has a real validity, and in that case what we

are in front of is not an illusion taking the unreal for real but an ignorance misapprehending the real. Otherwise if the beings of whom Brahman is the self are illusory, its selfhood is not valid, it is part of an illusion; the experience of self is also an illusion: the experience "I am That" is vitiated by an ignorant conception, for there is no I, only That; the experience "I am He" is doubly ignorant, for it assumes a conscious Eternal, a Lord of the universe, a Cosmic Being, but there can be no such thing if there is no reality in the universe. A real solution of existence can only stand upon a truth that accounts for our existence and world-existence, reconciles their truth, their right relation and the truth of their relation to whatever transcendent Reality is the source of everything. But this implies some reality of individual and cosmos, some true relation of the One Existence and all existences, of relative experience and of the Absolute.

The theory of Illusion cuts the knot of the world problem, it does not disentangle it; it is an escape, not a solution: a flight of the spirit is not a sufficient victory for the being embodied in this world of the becoming; it effects a separation from Nature, not a liberation and fulfilment of our nature. This eventual outcome satisfies only one element, sublimates only one impulse of our being; it leaves the rest out in the cold to perish in the twilight of the unreal reality of Maya. As in Science, so in metaphysical thought, that general and ultimate solution is likely to be the best which includes and accounts for all so that each truth of experience takes its place in the whole: that knowledge is likely to be the highest knowledge which illuminates, integralises, harmonises the significance of all knowledge and accounts for, finds the basic and, one might almost say, the justifying reason of our ignorance and illusion while it cures them; this is the supreme experience which gathers together all experience in the truth of a supreme and all-reconciling oneness. Illusionism unifies by elimination; it deprives all knowledge and experience, except the one supreme merger, of reality and significance.

But this debate belongs to the domain of the pure reason and the final test of truths of this order is not reason but spiritual illumination verified by abiding fact of spirit; a single decisive

spiritual experience may undo a whole edifice of reasonings and conclusions erected by the logical intelligence. Here the theory of Illusionism is in occupation of a very solid ground; for, although it is in itself no more than a mental formulation, the experience it formulates into a philosophy accompanies a most powerful and apparently final spiritual realisation. It comes upon us with a great force of awakening to reality when the thought is stilled, when the mind withdraws from its constructions, when we pass into a pure selfhood void of all sense of individuality, empty of all cosmic contents: if the spiritualised mind then looks at individual and cosmos, they may well seem to it to be an illusion, a scheme of names and figures and movements falsely imposed on the sole reality of the Self-Existent. Or even the sense of self becomes inadequate; both knowledge and ignorance disappear into sheer Consciousness and consciousness is plunged into a trance of pure superconscious existence. Or even existence ends by becoming too limiting a name for that which abides solely for ever; there is only a timeless Eternal, a spaceless Infinite, the utterness of the Absolute, a nameless Peace, an overwhelming single objectless Ecstasy. There can certainly be no doubt of the validity — complete within itself — of this experience; there can be no denial of the overwhelming decisive convincingness — *ekātma-pratyaya-sāram* — with which this realisation seizes the consciousness of the spiritual seeker. But still all spiritual experience is experience of the Infinite and it takes a multitude of directions; some of them — and not this alone — are so close to the Divine and the Absolute, so penetrated with the reality of Its presence or with the ineffable peace and power of the liberation from all that is less than It, that they carry with them this overwhelming sense of finality complete and decisive. There are a hundred ways of approaching the Supreme Reality and, as is the nature of the way taken, so will be the nature of the ultimate experience by which one passes into That which is ineffable, That of which no report can be given to the mind or expressed by any utterance. All these definitive culminations may be regarded as penultimates of the one Ultimate; they are steps by which the soul crosses the limits of Mind into the

Absolute. Is then this realisation of passing into a pure immobile self-existence or this Nirvana of the individual and the universe one among these penultimates, or is it itself the final and absolute realisation which is at the end of every journey and transcends and eliminates all lesser experience? It claims to stand behind and supersede, to sublate and to eliminate every other knowledge; if that is really so, then its finality must be accepted as conclusive. But, against this pretension, it has been claimed that it is possible to travel beyond by a greater negation or a greater affirmation,—to extinguish self in Non-Being or to pass through the double experience of cosmic consciousness and Nirvana of world-consciousness in the One Existence to a greater Divine Union and Unity which holds both these realisations in its vast integral Reality. It is said that beyond the duality and the non-duality there is That in which both are held together and find their truth in a Truth which is beyond them. A consummating experience which proceeds by the exceeding and elimination of all other possible but lesser experiences is, as a step towards the Absolute, admissible. A supreme experience which affirms and includes the truth of all spiritual experience, gives to each its own absolute, integralises all knowledge and experience in a supreme reality, might be the one step farther that is at once a largest illuminating and transforming Truth of all things and a highest infinite Transcendence. The Brahman, the supreme Reality, is That which being known all is known; but in the illusionist solution it is That, which being known, all becomes unreal and an incomprehensible mystery: in this other experience, the Reality being known, all assumes its true significance, its truth to the Eternal and Absolute.

All truths, even those which seem to be in conflict, have their validity, but they need a reconciliation in some largest Truth which takes them into itself; all philosophies have their value,—if for nothing else, then because they see the Self and the universe from a point of view of the spirit's experience of the many-sided Manifestation and in doing so shed light on something that has to be known in the Infinite. All spiritual experiences are true, but they point towards some highest and

widest reality which admits their truth and exceeds it. This is, we may say, a sign of the relativity of all truth and all experience, since both vary with the outlook and the inlook of the knowing and experiencing mind and being; each man is said to have his own religion according to his own nature, but so too each man may be said to have his own philosophy, his own way of seeing and experience of existence, though only a few can formulate it. But from another point of view this variety testifies rather to the infinity of aspects of the Infinite; each catches a partial glimpse or a whole glimpse of one or more aspects or contacts or enters into it in his mental or his spiritual experience. To the mind at a certain stage all these view-points begin to lose their definitiveness in a large catholicity or a complex tolerant incertitude, or all the rest may fall away from it and yield place to an ultimate truth or a single absorbing experience. It is then that it is liable to feel the unreality of all that it has seen and thought and taken as part of itself or its universe. This "all" becomes to it a universal unreality or a many-sided fragmental reality without a principle of unification; as it passes into the negativating purity of an absolute experience, all falls away from it and there remains only a silent and immobile Absolute. But the consciousness might be called to go farther and see again all it has left in the light of a new spiritual vision: it may recover the truth of all things in the truth of the Absolute; it may reconcile the negation of Nirvana and the affirmation of the cosmic consciousness in a single regard of That of which both are the self-expressions. In the passage from mental to overmind cognition this many-sided unity is the leading experience; the whole manifestation assumes the appearance of a singular and mighty harmony which reaches its greatest completeness when the soul stands on the border between Overmind and Supermind and looks back with a total view upon existence.

This is at least a possibility that we have to explore and pursue this view of things to its ultimate consequence. A consideration of the possibility of a great cosmic Illusion as the explanation of the enigma of being had to be undertaken because this view and experience of things presents itself powerfully at

the end of the mental spiral where that reaches its point of breaking or point of cessation; but once it is ascertained that it is not the obligatory end of a scrupulous inquiry into the ultimate truth, we can leave it aside or refer to it only when needed in connection with some line of a more plastic course of thought and reasoning. Our regard can now be concentrated on the problem that is left by the exclusion of the illusionist solution, the problem of the Knowledge and the Ignorance.

All turns round the question "What is Reality?" Our cognitive consciousness is limited, ignorant, finite; our conceptions of reality depend on our way of contact with existence in this limited consciousness and may be very different from the way in which an original and ultimate Consciousness sees it. It is necessary to distinguish between the essential Reality, the phenomenal reality dependent upon it and arising out of it, and the restricted and often misleading experience or notion of either that is created by our sense-experience and our reason. To our sense the earth is flat and, for most immediate practical purposes, within a limit, we have to follow the sense reality and deal with the flatness as if it were a fact; but in true phenomenal reality the flatness of the earth is unreal, and Science seeking for the truth of the phenomenal reality in things has to treat it as approximately round. In a host of details Science contradicts the evidence of the senses as to the real truth of phenomena; but, still, we have to accept the cadre provided by our senses because the practical relations with things which they impose on us have validity as an effect of reality and cannot be disregarded. Our reason, relying on the senses and exceeding them, constructs its own canons or notions of the real and unreal, but these canons vary according to the standpoint taken by the reasoning observer. The physical scientist probing into phenomena erects formulas and standards based on the objective and phenomenal reality and its processes: to his view mind may appear as a subjective result of Matter and self and spirit as unreal; at any rate he has to act as if matter and energy alone existed and mind were only an observer of an independent physical reality which is unaffected

by any mental processes⁶ or any presence or intervention of a cosmic Intelligence. The psychologist, probing independently into mind consciousness and mind unconsciousness, discovers another domain of realities, subjective in its character, which has its own law and process; to him Mind may even come to appear as the key of the real, Matter as only a field for mind, and spirit apart from mind as something unreal. But there is a farther probing which brings up the truth of self and spirit and establishes a greater order of the real in which there is a reversal of our view both of the subjective mind realities and objective physical realities so that they are seen as things phenomenal, secondary, dependent upon the truth of self and the realities of the spirit. In this deeper search into things mind and matter begin to wear the appearance of a lesser order of the real and may easily come to appear unreal.

But it is the reason accustomed to deal with the finite that makes these exclusions; it cuts the whole into segments and can select one segment of the whole as if it were the entire reality. This is necessary for its action since its business is to deal with the finite as finite, and we have to accept for practical purposes and for the reason's dealings with the finite the cadre it gives us, because it is valid as an effect of reality and so cannot be disregarded. When we come to the experience of the spiritual which is itself the whole or contains the whole in itself, our mind carries there too its segmenting reason and the definitions necessary to a finite cognition; it cuts a line of section between the infinite and the finite, the spirit and its phenomena or manifestations, and dubs those as real and these as unreal. But an original and ultimate consciousness embracing all the terms of existence in a single integral view would see the whole in its spiritual essential reality and the phenomenon as a phenomenon or manifestation of that reality. If this greater spiritual consciousness saw in things only unreality and an entire disconnection with the truth of the spirit, it could not have — if it were itself a Truth-consciousness

⁶ This position has been shaken by the theory of Relativity, but it must hold as a pragmatic basis for experiment and affirmation of the scientific fact.

— any reason for maintaining them in continuous or recurrent existence through all Time: if it so maintains them, it is because they are based on the realities of the spirit. But, necessarily, when thus integrally seen, the phenomenal reality would take on another appearance than when it is viewed by the reason and sense of the finite being; it would have another and deeper reality, another and greater significance, another and more subtle and complex process of its movements of existence. The canons of reality and all the forms of thought created by the finite reason and sense would appear to the greater consciousness as partial constructions with an element of truth in them and an element of error; these constructions might therefore be described as at once real and unreal, but the phenomenal world itself would not become either unreal or unreal-real by that fact: it would put on another reality of a spiritual character; the finite would reveal itself as a power, a movement, a process of the Infinite.

An original and ultimate consciousness would be a consciousness of the Infinite and necessarily unitarian in its view of diversity, integral, all-accepting, all-embracing, all-discriminating because all-determining, an indivisible whole-vision. It would see the essence of things and regard all forms and movements as phenomenon and consequence of the essential Reality, motions and formations of its power of being. It is held by the reason that truth must be empty of any conflict of contradictions: if so, since the phenomenal universe is or seems to be the contrary of the essential Brahman it must be unreal; since individual being is the contrary of both transcendence and universality, it must be unreal. But what appear as contradictions to a reason based on the finite may not be contradictions to a vision or a larger reason based on the infinite. What our mind sees as contraries may be to the infinite consciousness not contraries but complementaries: essence and phenomenon of the essence are complementary to each other, not contradictory,— the phenomenon manifests the essence; the finite is a circumstance and not a contradiction of the infinite; the individual is a self-expression of the universal and the transcendent,— it is not a contradiction or something quite other than it, it is the universal concentrated and selective, it is

one with the Transcendent in its essence of being and its essence of nature. In the view of this unitarian comprehensive seeing there is nothing contradictory in a formless Essence of being that carries a multitude of forms, or in a status of the Infinite supporting a kinesis of the Infinite, or in an infinite Oneness expressing itself in a multiplicity of beings and aspects and powers and movements, for they are beings and aspects and powers and movements of the One. A world-creation on this basis is a perfectly natural and normal and inevitable movement which in itself raises no problem, since it is exactly what one must expect in an action of the Infinite. All the intellectual problem and difficulty is raised by the finite reason cutting, separating, opposing the power of the Infinite to its being, its kinesis to its status, its natural multiplicity to its essential oneness, segmenting self, opposing Spirit to Nature. To understand truly the world-process of the Infinite and the Time-process of the Eternal, the consciousness must pass beyond this finite reason and the finite sense to a larger reason and spiritual sense in touch with the consciousness of the Infinite and responsive to the logic of the Infinite which is the very logic of being itself and arises inevitably from its self-operation of its own realities, a logic whose sequences are not the steps of thought but the steps of existence.

But what has been thus described, it may be said, is only a cosmic consciousness and there is the Absolute: the Absolute cannot be limited; since universe and individual limit and divide the Absolute, they must be unreal. It is self-evident indeed that the Absolute cannot be limited; it can be limited neither by formlessness nor by form, neither by unity nor by multiplicity, neither by immobile status nor by dynamic mobility. If it manifests form, form cannot limit it; if it manifests multiplicity, multiplicity cannot divide it; if it manifests motion and becoming, motion cannot perturb nor becoming change it: it cannot be limited any more than it can be exhausted by self-creation. Even material things have this superiority to their manifestation; earth is not limited by the vessels made from it, nor air by the winds that move in it, nor the sea by the waves that rise on its surface. This impression

of limitation belongs only to the mind and sense which see the finite as if it were an independent entity separating itself from the Infinite or something cut out of it by limitation: it is this impression that is illusory, but neither the infinite nor the finite is an illusion; for neither exists by the impressions of the sense or the mind, they depend for their existence on the Absolute.

The Absolute is in itself indefinable by reason, ineffable to the speech; it has to be approached through experience. It can be approached through an absolute negation of existence, as if it were itself a supreme Non-Existence, a mysterious infinite Nihil. It can be approached through an absolute affirmation of all the fundamentals of our own existence, through an absolute of Light and Knowledge, through an absolute of Love or Beauty, through an absolute of Force, through an absolute of peace or silence. It can be approached through an inexpressible absolute of being or of consciousness, or of power of being, or of delight of being, or through a supreme experience in which these things become inexpressibly one; for we can enter into such an ineffable state and, plunged into it as if into a luminous abyss of existence, we can reach a superconsciousness which may be described as the gate of the Absolute. It is supposed that it is only through a negation of individual and cosmos that we can enter into the Absolute. But in fact the individual need only deny his own small separate ego-existence; he can approach the Absolute through a sublimation of his spiritual individuality taking up the cosmos into himself and transcending it; or he may negate himself altogether, but even so it is still the individual who by self-exceeding enters into the Absolute. He may enter also by a sublimation of his being into a supreme existence or super-existence, by a sublimation of his consciousness into a supreme consciousness or superconsciousness, by a sublimation of his and all delight of being into a super-delight or supreme ecstasy. He can make the approach through an ascension in which he enters into cosmic consciousness, assumes it into himself and raises himself and it into a state of being in which oneness and multiplicity are in perfect harmony and unison in a supreme status of manifestation where all are in each and each in all

and all in the one without any determining individuation — for the dynamic identity and mutuality have become complete; on the path of affirmation it is this status of the manifestation that is nearest to the Absolute. This paradox of an Absolute which can be realised through an absolute negation and through an absolute affirmation, in many ways, can only be accounted for to the reason if it is a supreme Existence which is so far above our notion and experience of existence that it can correspond to our negation of it, to our notion and experience of non-existence; but also, since all that exists is That, whatever its degree of manifestation, it is itself the supreme of all things and can be approached through supreme affirmations as through supreme negations. The Absolute is the ineffable *x* overtopping and underlying and immanent and essential in all that we can call existence or non-existence.

It is our first premiss that the Absolute is the supreme reality; but the issue is whether all else that we experience is real or unreal. A distinction is sometimes made between being and existence, and it is supposed that being is real but existence or what manifests as such is unreal. But this can stand only if there is a rigid distinction, a cut and separation between the uncreated Eternal and created existences; the uncreated Being can then be taken as alone real. This conclusion does not follow if what exists is form of Being and substance of Being; it would be unreal only if it were a form of Non-Being, *asat*, created out of the Void, *śūnya*. The states of existence through which we approach and enter into the Absolute must have their truth, for the untrue and unreal cannot lead into the Real: but also what issues from the Absolute, what the Eternal supports and informs and manifests in itself, must have a reality. There is the unmanifest and there is the manifestation, but a manifestation of the Real must itself be real; there is the Timeless and there is the process of things in Time, but nothing can appear in Time unless it has a basis in the timeless Reality. If my self and spirit are real, my thoughts, feelings, powers of all kinds, which are its expressions, cannot be unreal; my body, which is the form it puts out in itself and which at the same time it inhabits, cannot be a

nothing or a mere unsubstantial shadow. The only reconciling explanation is that timeless eternity and time eternity are two aspects of the Eternal and Absolute and both are real, but in a different order of reality: what is unmanifest in the Timeless manifests itself in Time; each thing that exists is real in its own degree of the manifestation and is so seen by the consciousness of the Infinite.

All manifestation depends upon being, but also upon consciousness and its power or degree; for as is the status of consciousness, so will be the status of being. Even the Inconscient is a status and power of involved consciousness in which being is plunged into another and opposite state of non-manifestation resembling non-existence so that out of it all in the material universe may be manifested; so too the superconscious is consciousness taken up into an absolute of being. For there is a superconscious status in which consciousness seems to be luminously involved in being and as if unaware of itself; all consciousness of being, all knowledge, self-vision, force of being, seem to emerge from that involved state or to appear in it: this emergence, in our view of it, may appear to be an emergence into a lesser reality, but in fact both the superconsciousness and the consciousness are and regard the same Real. There is also a status of the Supreme in which no distinction can be made between being and consciousness,—for they are too much one there to be thus differentiated,—but this supreme status of being is also a supreme status of the power of being and therefore of the power of consciousness; for the force of being and the force of its consciousness are one there and cannot be separated: it is this unification of eternal Being with the eternal Consciousness-Force that is the status of the supreme Ishwara, and its force of being is the dynamis of the Absolute. This status is not a negation of cosmos; it carries in itself the essence and power of all cosmic existence.

But still unreality is a fact of cosmic existence, and if all is the Brahman, the Reality, we have to account for this element of unreality in the Real. If the unreal is not a fact of being, it must be an act or a formation of consciousness, and is there not

then a status or degree of consciousness in which its acts and formations are wholly or partly unreal? If this unreality cannot be attributed to an original cosmic Illusion, to Maya, there is still in the universe itself a power of illusion of Ignorance. It is in the power of the Mind to conceive things that are not real, it is in its power even to create things that are not real or not wholly real; its very view of itself and universe is a construction that is not wholly real or wholly unreal. Where does this element of unreality begin and where does it stop, and what is its cause and what ensues on the removal of both the cause and the consequence? Even if all cosmic existence is not in itself unreal, cannot that description be applied to the world of Ignorance in which we live, this world of constant change and birth and death and frustration and suffering, and does not the removal of the Ignorance abolish for us the reality of the world which it creates, or is not a departure out of it the natural and only issue? This would be valid, if our ignorance were a pure ignorance without any element of truth or knowledge in it. But in fact our consciousness is a mixture of the true and the false; its acts and creations are not a pure invention, a baseless structure. The structure it builds, its form of things or form of the universe, is not a mixture of reality and the unreal so much as a half comprehension, a half expression of the real, and, since all consciousness is force and therefore potentially creative, our ignorance has the result of wrong creation, wrong manifestation, wrong action or misconceived and misdirected energy of the being. All world-existence is manifestation, but our ignorance is the agent of a partial, limited and ignorant manifestation,—in part an expression but in part also a disguise of the original being, consciousness and delight of existence. If this state of things is permanent and unalterable, if our world must always move in this circle, if some Ignorance is the cause of all things and all action here and not a condition and circumstance, then indeed the cessation of individual ignorance could only come by an escape of the individual from world-being, and a cessation of the cosmic ignorance would be the destruction of world-being. But if this world has at its root an evolutionary principle, if

our ignorance is a half-knowledge evolving towards knowledge, another account and another issue and spiritual result of our existence in material Nature, a greater manifestation here becomes possible.

A farther distinction has to be made in our conceptions of unreality, so as to avoid a possible confusion in our dealings with this problem of the Ignorance. Our mind, or a part of it, has a pragmatic standard of reality; it insists on a standard of fact, of actuality. All that is fact of existence is to it real, but for it this factuality or reality of the actual is limited to the phenomena of this terrestrial existence in the material universe. But terrestrial or material existence is only a part manifestation, it is a system of actualised possibilities of the Being which does not exclude all other possibilities not yet actualised or not actualised here. In a manifestation in Time new realities can emerge, truths of being not yet realised can put forth their possibilities and become actual in the physical and terrestrial existence; other truths of being there may be that are supraphysical and belong to another domain of manifestation, not realised here but still real. Even what is nowhere actual in any universe, may be a truth of being, a potential of being, and cannot, because it is not yet expressed in form of existence, be taxed as unreal. But our mind or this part of it still insists on its pragmatic habit or conception of the real which admits only the factual and actual as true and is prone to regard all else as unreal. There is then for this mind an unreality which is of a purely pragmatic nature: it consists in the formulation of things which are not necessarily unreal in themselves but are not realised or perhaps cannot be realised by ourselves or in present circumstances or in our actual world of being; this is not a true unreality, it is not an unreal but an unrealised, not an unreal of being but only an unreal of present or known fact. There is, again, an unreality which is conceptual and perceptive and is caused by an erroneous conception and perception of the real: this too is not or need not be an unreality of being, it is only a false construction of consciousness due to limitation by Ignorance. These and other secondary movements of our ignorance are not the heart of the problem, for that turns

upon a more general affliction of our consciousness and the world-consciousness here; it is the problem of the cosmic Ignorance. For our whole view and experience of existence labours under a limitation of consciousness which is not ours alone but seems to be at the basis of the material creation. Instead of the original and ultimate Consciousness which sees reality as a whole, we see active here a limited consciousness and either a partial and unfinished creation or a cosmic kinesis that moves in a perpetual circle of meaningless change. Our consciousness sees a part and parts only of the Manifestation,—if manifestation it be,—and treats it or them as if they were separate entities; all our illusions and errors arise from a limited separative awareness which creates unrealities or misconceives the Real. But the problem becomes still more enigmatic when we perceive that our material world seems to arise directly, not out of any original Being and Consciousness, but out of a status of Inconscience and apparent Non-Existence; our ignorance itself is something that has appeared as if with difficulty and struggle out of the Inconscience.

This then is the mystery,—how did an illimitable consciousness and force of integral being enter into this limitation and separateness? how could this be possible and, if its possibility has to be admitted, what is its justification in the Real and its significance? It is the mystery not of an original Illusion, but of the origin of the Ignorance and Inconscience and of the relations of Knowledge and Ignorance to the original Consciousness or Superconsciousness.

Chapter VII

The Knowledge and the Ignorance

Let the Knower distinguish the Knowledge and the Ignorance.
*Rig Veda.*¹

Two are there, hidden in the secrecy of the Infinite, the Knowledge and the Ignorance; but perishable is the Ignorance, immortal is the Knowledge; another than they is He who rules over both the Knowledge and the Ignorance.

*Swetasvatara Upanishad.*²

Two Unborn, the Knower and one who knows not, the Lord and one who has not mastery: one Unborn and in her are the object of enjoyment and the enjoyer.

*Swetasvatara Upanishad.*³

Two are joined together, powers of Truth, powers of Maya,—they have built the Child and given him birth and they nourish his growth.
*Rig Veda.*⁴

TN OUR scrutiny of the seven principles of existence it was found that they are one in their essential and fundamental reality: for if even the matter of the most material universe is nothing but a status of being of Spirit made an object of sense, envisaged by the Spirit's own consciousness as the stuff of its forms, much more must the life-force that constitutes itself into form of Matter, and the mind-consciousness that throws itself out as Life, and the Supermind that develops Mind as one of its powers, be nothing but Spirit itself modified in apparent substance and in dynamism of action, not modified in real essence. All are powers of one Power of being and not other

¹ IV. 2. 11. ² V. 1. ³ I. 9. ⁴ X. 5. 3.

than that All-Existence, All-Consciousness, All-Will, All-Delight which is the true truth behind every appearance. And they are not only one in their reality, but also inseparable in the sevenfold variety of their action. They are the seven colours of the light of the divine consciousness, the seven rays of the Infinite, and by them the Spirit has filled in on the canvas of his self-existence conceptually extended, woven of the objective warp of Space and the subjective woof of Time, the myriad wonders of his self-creation great, simple, symmetrical in its primal laws and vast framings, infinitely curious and intricate in its variety of forms and actions and the complexities of relation and mutual effect of all upon each and each upon all. These are the seven Words of the ancient sages; by them have been created and in the light of their meaning are worked out and have to be interpreted the developed and developing harmonies of the world we know and the worlds behind of which we have only an indirect knowledge. The Light, the Sound is one; their action is sevenfold.

But here there is a world based upon an original Inconscience; here consciousness has formulated itself in the figure of an ignorance labouring towards knowledge. We have seen that there is no essential reason either in the nature of Being itself or in the original character and fundamental relations of its seven principles for this intrusion of Ignorance, of discord into the harmony, of darkness into the light, of division and limitation into the self-conscious infinity of the divine creation. For we can conceive, and since we can, the Divine can still more conceive — and since there is the conception, there must somewhere be the execution, the creation actual or intended, — a universal harmony into which these contrary elements do not enter. The Vedic seers were conscious of such a divine self-manifestation and looked on it as the greater world beyond this lesser, a freer and wider plane of consciousness and being, the truth-creation of the Creator which they described as the seat or own home of the Truth, as the vast Truth, or the Truth, the Right, the Vast,⁵ or again as a Truth hidden by a Truth where the Sun of Knowledge

⁵ *sadanam rtasya, sve dame rtasya, rtasya bṛhate, rtam satyam bṛhat.*

finishes his journey and unyokes his horses, where the thousand rays of consciousness stand together so that there is That One, the supreme form of the Divine Being. But this world in which we live seemed to them to be a mingled weft in which truth is disfigured by an abundant falsehood, *anṛtasya bhūreḥ*;⁶ here the one light has to be born by its own vast force out of an initial darkness or sea of Inconscience;⁷ immortality and godhead have to be built up out of an existence which is under the yoke of death, ignorance, weakness, suffering and limitation. This self-building they figured as the creation by man in himself of that other world or high ordered harmony of infinite being which already exists perfect and eternal in the Divine Infinite. The lower is for us the first condition of the higher; the darkness is the dense body of the light, the Inconscient guards in itself all the concealed Superconscious, the powers of the division and falsehood hold from us but also for us and to be conquered from them the riches and substance of the unity and the truth in their cave of subconsciousness. This was in their view, expressed in the highly figured enigmatic language of the early mystics, the sense and justification of man's actual existence and his conscious or unconscious Godward effort, his conception so paradoxical at first sight in a world which seems its very opposite, his aspiration so impossible to a superficial view in a creature so ephemeral, weak, ignorant, limited, towards a plenitude of immortality, knowledge, power, bliss, a divine and imperishable existence.

For, as a matter of fact, while the very keyword of the ideal creation is a plenary self-consciousness and self-possession in the infinite Soul and a perfect oneness, the keyword of the creation of which we have present experience is the very opposite; it is an original inconscience developing in life into a limited and divided self-consciousness, an original inert subjection to the drive of a blind self-existent Force developing in life into a struggle of the self-conscious being to possess himself and all things and

⁶ *Rig Veda*, VII. 60. 5.

⁷ *apraketāni salilam*.

to establish in the kingdom of this unseeing mechanic Force the reign of an enlightened Will and Knowledge. And because the blind mechanic Force—we know now really that it is no such thing—confronts us everywhere, initial, omnipresent, the fundamental law, the great total energy, and because the only enlightened will we know, our own, appears as a subsequent phenomenon, a result, a partial, subordinate, circumscribed, sporadic energy, the struggle seems to us at the best a very precarious and doubtful venture. The Inconscient to our perceptions is the beginning and the end; the self-conscious soul seems hardly more than a temporary accident, a fragile blossom upon this great, dark and monstrous Ashwattha-tree of the universe. Or if we suppose the soul to be eternal, it appears at least as a foreigner, an alien and not over well-treated guest in the reign of this vast Inconscience. If not an accident in the inconscient Darkness, it is perhaps a mistake, a stumble downwards of the superconscious Light.

If this view of things had a complete validity, then only the absolute idealist, sent perhaps out of some higher existence, unable to forget his mission, stung into indomitable enthusiasm by a divine oestrus or sustained in a calm and infinite fortitude by the light and force and voice of the unseen Godhead, could persist under such circumstances in holding up before himself, much more before an incredulous or doubting world, the hope of a full success for the human endeavour. Actually, for the most part, men either reject it from the beginning or turn away from it eventually, after some early enthusiasm, as a proved impossibility. The consistent materialist seeks a partial and short-lived power, knowledge, happiness, so much only as the dominant inconscient order of Nature will allow to the struggling self-consciousness of man if he accepts his limitations, obeys her laws and makes as good a use of them by his enlightened will as their inexorable mechanism will tolerate. The religionist seeks his reign of enlightened will, love or divine being, his kingdom of God, in that other world where they are unalloyed and eternal. The philosophic mystic rejects all as a mental illusion and aspires to self-extinction in some Nirvana or else an immersion in the

featureless Absolute; if the soul or mind of the illusion-driven individual has dreamed of a divine realisation in this ephemeral world of the Ignorance, it must in the end recognise its mistake and renounce its vain endeavour. But still, since there are these two sides of existence, the ignorance of Nature and the light of the Spirit, and since there is behind them the One Reality, the reconciliation or at any rate the bridging of the gulf forecast in the mystic parables of the Veda ought to be possible. It is a keen sense of this possibility which has taken different shapes and persisted through the centuries,—the perfectibility of man, the perfectibility of society, the Alwar's vision of the descent of Vishnu and the Gods upon earth, the reign of the saints, *sādhūnām rājyam*, the city of God, the millennium, the new heaven and earth of the Apocalypse. But these intuitions have lacked a basis of assured knowledge and the mind of man has remained swinging between a bright future hope and a grey present certitude. But the grey certitude is not so certain as it looks and a divine life evolving or preparing in earth Nature need not be a chimera. All acceptations of our defeat or our limitation start from the implied or explicit recognition, first, of an essential dualism and, then, of an irreconcilable opposition between the dual principles, between the Conscient and the Inconscient, between Heaven and Earth, between God and the World, between the limitless One and the limited Many, between the Knowledge and the Ignorance. We have arrived by the train of our reasoning at the conclusion that this need be no more than an error of the sense-mind and the logical intellect founded upon a partial experience. We have seen that there can be and is a perfectly rational basis for the hope of our victory; for the lower term of being in which we now live contains in itself the principle and intention of that which exceeds it and it is by its own self-exceeding and transformation into that that it can find and develop into a complete form its own real essence.

But there is one point in the reasoning which till now we have left somewhat obscure, and it is precisely in this matter of the coexistence of the Knowledge and the Ignorance. Admittedly, we start here from conditions which are the opposite of

the ideal divine Truth and all the circumstances of that opposition are founded upon the being's ignorance of himself and of the Self of all, outcome of an original cosmic Ignorance whose result is self-limitation and the founding of life on division in being, division in consciousness, division in will and force, division in delight, division and limitation in knowledge, power, love with, as consequence, the positive opposite phenomena of egoism, obscuration, incapacity, misuse of knowledge and will, disharmony, weakness and suffering. We have found that this Ignorance, although shared by Matter and Life, has its roots in the nature of Mind whose very office it is to measure off, limit, particularise and thereby divide. But Mind also is a universal principle, is One, is Brahman, and therefore it has a tendency to a unifying and universalising knowledge as well as to that which marks off and particularises. The particularising faculty of Mind only becomes Ignorance when it separates itself from the higher principles of which it is a power and acts not only with its characteristic tendency, but also with a tendency to exclude the rest of knowledge, to particularise first and foremost and always and to leave unity as a vague concept to be approached only afterwards, when particularisation is complete, and through the sum of particulars. This exclusiveness is the very soul of Ignorance.

We must then seize hold on this strange power of Consciousness which is the root of our ills, examine the principle of its operation and detect not only its essential nature and origin, but its power and process of operation and its last end and means of removal. How is it that the Ignorance exists? How has any principle or power in the infinite self-awareness been able to put self-knowledge behind it and exclude all but its own characteristic limited action? Certain thinkers⁸ have

⁸ Buddha refused to consider the metaphysical problem; the process by which our unreal individuality is constructed and a world of suffering maintained in existence and the method of escape from it is all that is of importance. Karma is a fact; the construction of objects, of an individuality not truly existent is the cause of suffering: to get rid of Karma, individuality and suffering must be our one objective; by that elimination we shall pass into whatever may be free from these things, permanent, real: the way of liberation alone matters.

declared that the problem is insoluble, it is an original mystery and is intrinsically incapable of explanation; only the fact and the process can be stated: or else the question of the nature of the supreme original Existence or Non-existence is put aside as either unanswerable or unnecessary to answer. One can say that Maya with its fundamental principle of ignorance or illusion simply is, and this power of Brahman has the double force of Knowledge and Ignorance inherently potential in it; all we have to do is to recognise the fact and find a means of escape out of the Ignorance — through the Knowledge, but into what is beyond both Knowledge and Ignorance — by renunciation of life, by recognition of the universal impermanency of things and the vanity of cosmic existence.

But our mind cannot remain satisfied — the mind of Buddhism itself did not remain satisfied — with this evasion at the very root of the whole matter. In the first place, these philosophies, while thus putting aside the root question, do actually make far-reaching assertions that assume, not only a certain operation and symptoms, but a certain fundamental nature of the Ignorance from which their prescription of remedies proceeds; and it is obvious that without such a radical diagnosis no prescription of remedies can be anything but an empiric dealing. But if we are to evade the root-question, we have no means of judging whether the assertions advanced are correct or the remedies prescribed the right ones, or whether there are not others which without being so violent, destructively radical or of the nature of a surgical mutilation or extinction of the patient may yet bring a more integral and natural cure. Secondly, it is always the business of man the thinker to know. He may not be able by mental means to know the essentiality of the Ignorance or of anything in the universe in the sense of defining it, because the mind can only know things in that sense by their signs, characters, forms, properties, functionings, relations to other things, not in their occult self-being and essence. But we can pursue farther and farther, clarify more and more accurately our observation of the phenomenal character and operation of the Ignorance until we get the right revealing word, the right

indicating sense of the thing and so come to know it, not by intellect but by vision and experience of the truth, by realising the truth in our own being. The whole process of man's highest intellectual knowledge is through this mental manipulation and discrimination to the point where the veil is broken and he can see; at the end spiritual knowledge comes in to help us to become what we see, to enter into the Light in which there is no Ignorance.

It is true that the first origin of the Ignorance is beyond us as mental beings because our intelligence lives and moves within the Ignorance itself and does not reach up to the point or ascend on to the plane where that separation took place of which the individual mind is the result. But this is true of the first origin and fundamental truth of all things, and on this principle we should have to rest satisfied with a general agnosticism. Man has to work in the Ignorance, to learn under its conditions, to know it up to its farthest point so that he may arrive at its borders where it meets the Truth, touch its final lid of luminous obscuration and develop the faculties which enable him to overstep that powerful but really unsubstantial barrier.

We have then to scrutinise more closely than we have yet done the character and operation of this principle or this power of Ignorance and arrive at a clearer conception of its nature and origin. And first we must fix firmly in our minds what we mean by the word itself. The distinction between the Knowledge and the Ignorance begins with the hymns of the Rig Veda. Here knowledge appears to signify a consciousness of the Truth, the Right, *satyam rtam*, and of all that is of the order of the Truth and Right; ignorance is an unconsciousness, *acitti*, of the Truth and Right, an opposition to its workings and a creation of false or adverse workings. Ignorance is the absence of the divine eye of perception which gives us the sight of the supramental Truth; it is the non-perceiving principle in our consciousness as opposed to the truth-perceiving conscious vision and knowledge.⁹ In its actual operation this non-perceiving is not an entire inconscience,

⁹ *acitti* and *citti*.

the inconscient sea from which this world has arisen,¹⁰ but either a limited or a false knowledge, a knowledge based on the division of undivided being, founded upon the fragmentary, the little, opposed to the opulent, vast and luminous completeness of things; it is a cognition which by the opportunity of its limitations is turned into falsehood and supported in that aspect by the Sons of Darkness and Division, enemies of the divine endeavour in man, the assailants, robbers, coverers of his light of knowledge. It was therefore regarded as an undivine Maya,¹¹ that which creates false mental forms and appearances,— and hence the later significance of this word which seems to have meant originally a formative power of knowledge, the true magic of the supreme Mage, the divine Magician, but was also used for the adverse formative power of a lower knowledge, the deceit, illusion and deluding magic of the Rakshasa. The divine Maya is the knowledge of the Truth of things, its essence, law, operation, which the gods possess and on which they found their own eternal action and creation¹² and their building of their powers in the human being. This idea of the Vedic mystics can in a more metaphysical thought and language be translated into the conception that the Ignorance is in its origin a dividing mental knowledge which does not grasp the unity, essence, self-law of things in their one origin and in their universality, but works rather upon divided particulars, separate phenomena, partial relations, as if they were the truth we had to seize or as if they could really be understood at all without going back behind the division to the unity, behind the dispersion to the universality. The Knowledge is that which tends towards unification and, attaining to the supramental faculty, seizes the oneness, the essence, the self-law of existence and views and deals with the multiplicity of things out of that light and plenitude, in some sort as does the Divine Himself from the highest height whence He embraces the world. It must be noted however that the Ignorance in this conception of it is still a kind of knowledge, but, because it is limited, it is

¹⁰ *apraketam salilam.*

¹¹ *adevī māyā.*

¹² *devānām adabdhā vratāni.*

open at any point to the intrusion of falsehood and error; it turns into a wrong conception of things which stands in opposition to the true Knowledge.

In the Vedantic thought of the Upanishad we find the original Vedic terms replaced by the familiar antinomy of Vidya and Avidya, and with the change of terms there has come a certain development of significance: for since the nature of the Knowledge is to find the Truth and the fundamental Truth is the One, — the Veda speaks repeatedly of it as “That Truth” and “That One”, — Vidya, Knowledge in its highest spiritual sense, came to mean purely and trenchantly the knowledge of the One, Avidya, Ignorance, purely and trenchantly the knowledge of the divided Many divorced, as in our world it is divorced, from the unifying consciousness of the One Reality. The complex associations, the rich contents, the luminous penumbra of varied and corollary ideas and significant figures which belonged to the conception of the Vedic words, were largely lost in a language more precise and metaphysical, less psychological and flexible. Still the later exaggerated idea of absolute separation from the true truth of Self and Spirit, of an original illusion, of a consciousness that can be equated with dream or with hallucination, did not at first enter into the Vedantic conception of the Ignorance. If in the Upanishads it is declared that the man who lives and moves within the Ignorance, wanders about stumbling like a blind man led by the blind and returns ever to the net of Death which is spread wide for him, it is also affirmed elsewhere in the Upanishads that he who follows after the Knowledge only, enters as if into a blinder darkness than he who follows after the Ignorance and that the man who knows Brahman as both the Ignorance and the Knowledge, as both the One and the Many, as both the Becoming and the Non-Becoming, crosses by the Ignorance, by the experience of the Multiplicity, beyond death and by the Knowledge takes possession of Immortality. For the Self-existent has really become these many existences; the Upanishad can say to the Divine Being, in all solemnity and with no thought to mislead, “Thou *art* this old man walking with his staff, yonder boy and girl, this blue-winged bird, that red of eye”, not “Thou

seemest to be these things" to the self-deluding mind of the Ignorance. The status of becoming is inferior to the status of Being, but still it is the Being that becomes all that is in the universe.

But the development of the separative distinction could not stop here; it had to go to its logical extreme. Since the knowledge of the One is Knowledge and the knowledge of the Many is Ignorance, there can be, in a rigidly analytic and dialectical view, nothing but pure opposition between the things denoted by the two terms; there is no essential unity between them, no reconciliation possible. Therefore Vidya alone is Knowledge, Avidya is pure Ignorance; and, if pure Ignorance takes a positive form, it is because it is not merely a not-knowing of Truth, but a creation of illusions and delusions, of seemingly real unrealities, of temporarily valid falsehoods. Obviously then, the object matter of Avidya can have no true and abiding existence; the Many are an illusion, the world has no real being. Undoubtedly it has a sort of existence while it lasts, as a dream has or the long-continued hallucination of a delirious or a demented brain, but no more. The One has not become and can never become Many; the Self has not and cannot become all these existences; Brahman has not manifested and cannot manifest a real world in itself: it is only the Mind or some principle of which Mind is a result that thrusts names and forms upon the featureless unity which is alone real and, being essentially featureless, cannot manifest real feature and variation; or else, if it manifests these things, then that is a temporal and temporary reality which vanishes and is convicted of unreality by the illumination of true knowledge.

Our view of the ultimate Reality and of the true nature of Maya has compelled us to depart from these later fine excesses of the dialectical intellect and return to the original Vedantic conception. While giving every tribute to the magnificent fearlessness of these extreme conclusions, to the uncompromising logical force and acuity of these speculations, inexpugnable so long as the premisses are granted, admitting the truth of two of the main contentions, the sole Reality of the Brahman and the fact that our normal conceptions about ourselves and

world-existence are stamped with ignorance, are imperfect, are misleading, we are obliged to withdraw from the hold so powerfully laid by this conception of Maya on the intelligence. But the obsession of this long-established view of things cannot be removed altogether so long as we do not fathom the true nature of the Ignorance and the true and total nature of the Knowledge. For if these two are independent, equal and original powers of the Consciousness, then the possibility of a cosmic Illusion pursues us. If Ignorance is the very character of cosmic existence, then our experience of the universe, if not the universe itself, becomes illusory. Or, if Ignorance is not the very grain of our natural being, but still an original and eternal power of Consciousness, then, while there can be a truth of cosmos, it may be impossible for a being in the universe, while he is in it, to know its truth: he can only arrive at real knowledge by passing beyond mind and thought, beyond this world-formation, and viewing all things from above in some supracosmic or super-cosmic consciousness like those who have become of one nature with the Eternal and dwell in Him, unborn in the creation and unafflicted by the cataclysmic destruction of the worlds below them.¹³ But the solution of this problem cannot be satisfactorily pursued and reached on the basis of an examination of words and ideas or a dialectical discussion; it must be the result of a total observation and penetration of the relevant facts of consciousness — both those of the surface and those below or above our surface level or behind our frontal surface — and a successful fathoming of their significance.

For the dialectical intellect is not a sufficient judge of essential or spiritual truths; moreover, very often, by its propensity to deal with words and abstract ideas as if they were binding realities, it wears them as chains and does not look freely beyond them to the essential and total facts of our existence. Intellectual statement is an account to our intelligence and a justification by reasoning of a seeing of things which pre-exists in our turn of mind or temperament or in some tendency of our nature and

¹³ *Gita.*

secretly predetermines the very reasoning that claims to lead to it. That reasoning itself can be conclusive only if the perception of things on which it rests is both a true and a whole seeing. Here what we have to see truly and integrally is the nature and validity of our consciousness, the origin and scope of our mentality; for then alone can we know the truth of our being and nature and of world-being and world-nature. Our principle in such an inquiry must be to see and know; the dialectical intellect is to be used only so far as it helps to clarify our arrangement and justify our expression of the vision and the knowledge, but it cannot be allowed to govern our conceptions and exclude truth that does not fall within the rigid frame of its logic. Illusion, knowledge and ignorance are terms or results of our consciousness, and it is only by looking deeply into our consciousness that we can discover and determine the character and relations of the Knowledge and the Ignorance or of the Illusion, if it exists, and the Reality. Being is no doubt the fundamental object of inquiry, things in themselves and things in their nature; but it is only through consciousness that we can approach Being. Or if it be maintained that we can only reach Being, enter into the Real, because it is superconscious, through extinction or transcendence of consciousness or through its self-transcendence and self-transformation, it is still through consciousness that we must arrive at the knowledge of this necessity and the process or power of execution of this extinction or this self-transcendence, this transformation: then, through consciousness, to know of the Superconscious Truth becomes the supreme need and to discover the power and process of consciousness by which it can pass into superconsciousness, the supreme discovery.

But in ourselves consciousness seems to be identical with Mind; in any case Mind is so dominant a factor of our being that to examine its fundamental movements is the first necessity. In fact, however, Mind is not the whole of us; there is also in us a life and a body, a subconscience and an inconscience; there is a spiritual entity whose origin and secret truth carry us into an occult inward consciousness and a superconsciousness. If Mind were all or if the nature of the original Consciousness in things were

of the nature of Mind, Illusion or Ignorance might conceivably be regarded as the source of our natural existence: for limitation of knowledge and obscuration of knowledge by Mind-nature create error and illusion, illusions created by Mind-action are among the first facts of our consciousness. It might therefore be conceivably held that Mind is the matrix of an Ignorance which makes us create or represent to ourselves a false world, a world that is nothing more than a subjective construction of the consciousness. Or else Mind might be the matrix in which some original Illusion or Ignorance, Maya or Avidya, cast the seed of a false impermanent universe; Mind would still be the mother,—a “barren mother” since the child would be unreal,—and Maya or Avidya could be looked at as a sort of grandmother of the universe; for Mind itself would be a production or reproduction of Maya. But it is difficult to discern the physiognomy of this obscure and enigmatic ancestress; for we have then to impose a cosmic imagination or an illusion-consciousness on the eternal Reality; Brahman the Reality must itself either be or have or support a constructing Mind or some constructive consciousness greater than Mind but of an analogous nature, must be by its activity or its sanction the creator and even perhaps in some sort by participation a victim, like Mind, of its own illusion and error. It would not be less perplexing if Mind were simply a medium or mirror in which there falls the reflection of an original illusion or a false image or shadow of the Reality. For the origin of this medium of reflection would be inexplicable and the origin also of the false image cast upon it would be inexplicable. An indeterminable Brahman could only be reflected as something indeterminable, not as a manifold universe. Or if it be the inequality of the reflecting medium, its nature as of rippling and restless water that creates broken images of the Reality, still it would be broken and distorted reflections of the Truth that would appear there, not a pullulation of false names and images of things that had no source or basis of existence in the Reality. There must be some manifold truth of the one Reality which is reflected, however falsely or imperfectly, in the manifold images of the mind’s universe. It could then very well be that the

world might be a reality and only the mind's construction of it or picture of it erroneous or imperfect. But this would imply that there is a Knowledge, other than our mental thought and perception which is only an attempt at knowing, a true cognition which is aware of the Reality and aware also in it of the truth of a real universe.

For if we found that the highest Reality and an ignorant Mind alone exist, we might have no choice but to admit the Ignorance as an original power of the Brahman and to accept as the source of all things Avidya or Maya. Maya would be an eternal power of the self-aware Brahman to delude itself or rather to delude something that seems to be itself, something created by Maya; Mind would be the ignorant consciousness of a soul that exists only as a part of Maya. Maya would be the Brahman's power to foist name and form upon itself, Mind its power to receive them and take them for realities. Or Maya would be Brahman's power to create illusions knowing them to be illusions, Mind its power to receive illusions forgetting that they are illusions. But if Brahman is essentially and always one in self-awareness, this trick would not be possible. If Brahman can divide itself in that fashion, at once knowing and not knowing or one part knowing and the other not knowing, or even if it can put something of itself into Maya, then Brahman must be capable of a double—or a manifold—action of consciousness, one a consciousness of Reality, the other a consciousness of illusion, or one an ignorant consciousness and the other a superconscience. This duality or manifoldness seems at first sight logically impossible, yet it must be on this hypothesis the crucial fact of existence, a spiritual mystery, a suprarational paradox. But once we admit the origin of things as a suprarational mystery, we can equally or preferably accept this other crucial fact of the One becoming or being always many and the Many being or becoming the One; this too is at first view dialectically impossible, a suprarational paradox, yet it presents itself to us as an eternal fact and law of existence. But if that is accepted, there is then no longer any need for the intervention of an illusive Maya. Or, equally, we can accept, as we have accepted, the conception of

an Infinite and Eternal which is capable, by the infinite power of its consciousness, of manifesting the fathomless and illimitable Truth of its being in many aspects and processes, in innumerable expressive forms and movements; these aspects, processes, forms, movements could be regarded as real expressions, real consequences of its infinite Reality; even the Inconscience and Ignorance could then be accepted among them as reverse aspects, as powers of an involved consciousness and a self-limited knowledge brought forward because necessary to a certain movement in Time, a movement of involution and evolution of the Reality. If suprarational in its basis, this total conception is not altogether a paradox; it only demands a change, an enlargement in our conceptions of the Infinite.

But the real world cannot be known and none of these possibilities can be put to the test if we consider Mind alone or only Mind's power for ignorance. Mind has a power also for truth; it opens its thought-chamber to Vidya as well as to Avidya, and if its starting-point is Ignorance, if its passage is through crooked ways of error, still its goal is always Knowledge: there is in it an impulse of truth-seeking, a power — even though secondary and limited — of truth-finding and truth-creation. Even if it is only images or representations or abstract expressions of truth that it can show us, still these are in their own manner truth-reflections or truth-formations, and the realities of which they are forms are present in their more concrete truth in some deeper depth or on some higher level of power of our consciousness. Matter and life may be the form of realities of which Mind touches only an incomplete figure; Spirit may have secret and supernal realities of which Mind is only a partial and rudimentary receiver, transcriber or transmitter. It would then be only by an examination of other supramental and inframental as well as higher and deeper mental powers of consciousness that we can arrive at the whole reality. And in the end all depends on the truth of the supreme Consciousness — or the superconsciousness — that belongs to the highest Reality and the relation to it of Mind, Supermind, Infra-Mind and the Inconscience.

All indeed changes when we penetrate the lower and the

higher depths of consciousness and unite them in the one omnipresent Reality. If we take the facts of our and the world's being, we find existence to be one always,—a unity governs even its utmost multiplicity; but the multiplicity is also on the face of things undeniable. We have found unity pursuing us everywhere: even, when we go below the surface, we find that there is no binding dualism; the contradictions and oppositions which the intellect creates exist only as aspects of the original Truth; oneness and multiplicity are poles of the same Reality; the dualities that trouble our consciousness are contrasted truths of one and the same Truth of being. All multiplicity resolves itself into a manifoldness of the one Being, the one Consciousness of Being, the one Delight of Being. Thus in the duality of pleasure and pain, we have seen that pain is a contrary effect of the one delight of existence resulting from the weakness of the recipient, his inability to assimilate the force that meets him, his incapacity to bear the touch of delight that would otherwise be felt in it; it is a perverse reaction of Consciousness to Ananda, not itself a fundamental opposite of Ananda: this is shown by the significant fact that pain can pass into pleasure and pleasure into pain and both resolve into the original Ananda. So too every form of weakness is really a particular working of the one divine Will-Force or the one Cosmic Energy; weakness in that Force means its power to hold back, measure, relate in a particular way its action of Force; incapacity or weakness is the Self's withholding of its force-completeness or an insufficient reaction of Force, not its fundamental opposite. If this is so, then also it may be, and should be in the nature of things, that what we call Ignorance is not really anything else than a power of the one divine Knowledge-Will or Maya; it is the capacity of the One Consciousness similarly to regulate, to hold back, measure, relate in a particular way the action of its Knowledge. Knowledge and Ignorance will then be, not two irreconcilable principles, one creative of world-existence, the other intolerant and destructive of it, but two coexistent powers both present in the universe itself, diversely operating in the conduct of its processes but one in their essence and able to pass by a natural

transmutation into each other. But in their fundamental relation Ignorance would not be an equal coexistent, it would be dependent on Knowledge, a limitation or a contrary action of Knowledge.

To know, we have always to dissolve the rigid constructions of the ignorant and self-willed intellect and look freely and flexibly at the facts of existence. Its fundamental fact is consciousness which is power, and we actually see that this power has three ways of operating. First, we find that there is a consciousness behind all, embracing all, within all, which is eternally, universally, absolutely aware of itself whether in unity or multiplicity or in both simultaneously or beyond both in its sheer absolute. This is the plenitude of the supreme divine self-knowledge; it is also the plenitude of the divine all-knowledge. Next, at the other pole of things, we see this consciousness dwelling upon apparent oppositions in itself, and the most extreme antinomy of all reaches its acme in what seems to us to be a complete nescience of itself, an effective, dynamic, creative Inconscience, though we know that this is merely a surface appearance and that the divine Knowledge works with a sovereign security and sureness within the operations of the Inconscient. Between these two oppositions and as a intermediary term we see Consciousness working with a partial, limited self-awareness which is equally superficial, for behind it and acting through it is the divine All-Knowledge. Here in its intermediate status, it seems to be a standing compromise between the two opposites, between the supreme Consciousness and the Nescience, but may prove rather in a larger view of our data to be an incomplete emergence of the Knowledge to the surface. This compromise or imperfect emergence we call the Ignorance, from our own point of view, because ignorance is our own characteristic way of the soul's self-withholding of complete self-knowledge. The origin of these three poises of the power of consciousness and their exact relation is what we have, if possible, to discover.

If we discovered that Ignorance and Knowledge were two independent powers of Consciousness, it might then be that we would have to pursue their difference up to the highest point

of Consciousness where they would cease only in an Absolute from which both of them had issued together.¹⁴ It might then be concluded that the only real knowledge is the truth of the superconscious Absolute and that truth of consciousness, truth of cosmos, truth of ourselves in cosmos is at best a partial figure burdened always with a concomitant presence, an encircling penumbra, a pursuing shadow of Ignorance. It might even be that an absolute Knowledge establishing truth, harmony, order and an absolute Inconscience basing a play of fantasy, disharmony and disorder, supporting inexorably its extreme of falsehood, wrong and suffering, a Manichean double principle of conflicting and intermingling light and darkness, good and evil, stand at the root of cosmic existence. The idea of certain thinkers that there is an absolute good but also an absolute evil, both of them an approach to the Absolute, might assume consistence. But if we find that Knowledge and Ignorance are light and shadow of the same consciousness, that the beginning of Ignorance is a limitation of Knowledge, that it is the limitation that opens the door to a subordinate possibility of partial illusion and error, that this possibility takes full body after a purposeful plunge of Knowledge into a material Inconscience but that Knowledge too emerges along with an emerging Consciousness out of the Inconscience, then we can be sure that this fullness of Ignorance is by its own evolution changing back into a limited Knowledge and can feel the assurance that the limitation itself will be removed and the full truth of things become apparent, the cosmic Truth free itself from the cosmic Ignorance. In fact, what is happening is that the Ignorance is seeking and preparing to transform itself by a progressive illumination of its darknesses into the Knowledge that is already concealed within it; the cosmic truth manifested in its real essence and figure would by that transformation reveal itself as essence and figure of the

¹⁴ In the Upanishads Vidya and Avidya are spoken of as eternal in the supreme Brahman; but this can be accepted in the sense of the consciousness of the multiplicity and the consciousness of the Oneness which by coexistence in the supreme self-awareness became the basis of the Manifestation; they would there be two sides of an eternal self-knowledge.

supreme omnipresent Reality. It is from this interpretation of existence that we have started, but to verify it we must observe the structure of our surface consciousness and its relation to what is within it and above and below it; for so best we can distinguish the nature and scope of the Ignorance. In that process there will appear the nature and scope also of that of which the Ignorance is a limitation and deformation, the Knowledge,—in its totality the spiritual being's abiding self-knowledge and world-knowledge.

Chapter VIII

Memory, Self-Consciousness and the Ignorance

Some speak of the self-nature of things, others say that it is Time.
*Svetasvatara Upanishad.*¹

Two are the forms of Brahman, Time and the Timeless.
*Maitri Upanishad.*²

Night was born and from Night the flowing ocean of being and on the ocean Time was born to whom is subjected every seeing creature.
*Rig Veda.*³

Memory is greater: without memory men could think and know nothing. . . . As far as goes the movement of Memory, there he ranges at will.
*Chhandogya Upanishad.*⁴

This is he who is that which sees, touches, hears, smells, tastes, thinks, understands, acts in us, a conscious being, a self of knowledge.
*Prasna Upanishad.*⁵

IN ANY survey of the dual character of our consciousness we have first to look at the Ignorance,—for Ignorance trying to turn into Knowledge is our normal status. To begin with, it is necessary to consider some of the essential movements of this partial awareness of self and things which works in us as a mediator between the complete self-knowledge and all-knowledge and the complete Inconscience, and, from that starting-point, find its relation to the greater Consciousness below our surface. There is a line of thought in which great stress is laid upon the action of memory: it has even been said that Memory is the

¹ VI. 1. ² VI. 15. ³ X. 190. 1, 2. ⁴ VII. 13. ⁵ IV. 9.

man,— it is memory that constitutes our personality and holds cemented the foundation of our psychological being; for it links together our experiences and relates them to one and the same individual entity. This is an idea which takes its stand on our existence in the succession of Time and accepts process as the key to essential Truth, even when it does not regard the whole of existence as process or as cause and effect in the development of some kind of self-regulating Energy, as Karma. But process is merely a utility; it is a habitual adoption of certain effective relations which might in the infinite possibility of things have been arranged otherwise, for the production of effects which might equally have been quite different. The real truth of things lies not in their process, but behind it, in whatever determines, effects or governs the process; not in effectuation so much as in the Will or Power that effects, and not so much in Will or Power as in the Consciousness of which Will is the dynamic form and in the Being of which Power is the dynamic value. But memory is only a process of consciousness, a utility; it cannot be the substance of being or the whole of our personality: it is simply one of the workings of consciousness as radiation is one of the workings of Light. It is Self that is the man: or, if we regard only our normal surface existence, Mind is the man,— for man is the mental being. Memory is only one of the many powers and processes of the Mind, which is at present the chief action of Consciousness-Force in our dealings with self, world and Nature.

Nevertheless, it is as well to begin with this phenomenon of memory when we consider the nature of the Ignorance in which we dwell; for it may give the key to certain important aspects of our conscious existence. We see that there are two applications which the mind makes of its faculty or process of memory, memory of self, memory of experience. First, radically, it applies memory to the fact of our conscious-being and relates that to Time. It says, "I am now, I was in the past, I shall therefore be in the future, it is the same I in all the three ever unstable divisions of Time." Thus it tries to render to itself in the terms of Time an account of that which it feels to be the fact, but

cannot know or prove to be true, the eternity of the conscious being. By memory Mind can only know of itself in the past, by direct self-awareness only in the moment of the present, and it is only by extension of and inference from this self-awareness and from the memory which tells us that for some time awareness has been continuously existent that mind can conceive of itself in the future. The extent of the past and the future it cannot fix; it can only carry back the past to the limit of its memory and infer from the evidence of others and the facts of life it observes around it that the conscious being already was in times which it can no longer remember. It knows that it existed in an infant unreasoning state of the mind to which memory has lost its link; whether it existed before physical birth, the mortal mind owing to the gap of memory cannot determine. Of the future it knows nothing at all; of its existing in the next moment it can only have a moral certainty which some happening of that moment can prove to be an error because what it saw was no more than a dominant probability; much less can it know whether or no physical dissolution is the end of the conscious being. Yet it has this sense of a persistent continuity which easily extends itself into a conviction of eternity.

This conviction may be either the reflection in the mind of an endless past which it has forgotten but of which something in it retains the formless impression, or it may be the shadow of a self-knowledge which comes to the mind from a higher or a deeper plane of our being where we are really aware of our eternal self-existence. Or, conceivably, it might be a hallucination; just as we cannot sense or realise in our foreseeing consciousness the fact of death and can only live in the feeling of continued existence, cessation being to us an intellectual conception we can hold with certainty, even imagine with vividness, but never actually realise because we live only in the present, yet death, cessation or interruption at least of our actual mode of being is a fact and the sense or prevision of continued existence in the future in the physical body becomes beyond a point we cannot now fix a hallucination, a false extension or a misapplication of our present mental impression of conscious being,— so conceivably

it might be with this mental idea or impression of conscious eternity. Or it might be a false transference to ourselves of the perception of a real eternity conscient or inconscient other than ourselves, the eternity of the universe or of something which exceeds the universe. The mind seizing this fact of eternity may falsely transfer it to our own conscious being which may be nothing more than a transient phenomenon of that only true eternal.

These questions our surface mind by itself has no means of solving; it can only speculate upon them endlessly and arrive at more or less well-reasoned opinions. The belief in our immortality is only a faith, the belief in our mortality is only a faith. It is impossible for the materialist to prove that our consciousness ends with the death of the body; for he may indeed show that there is as yet no convincing proof that anything in us consciously survives, but equally there is and there can be in the nature of things no proof that our conscious self does not outlast the physical dissolution. Survival of the body by the human personality may hereafter be proved even to the satisfaction of the sceptic; but even then what will be established will only be a greater continuity and not the eternity of the conscious being.

In fact, if we look at the mind's concept of this eternity, we see that it comes only to a continuous succession of moments of being in an eternal Time. Therefore it is Time that is eternal and not the continuously momentary conscious being. But, on the other hand, there is nothing in mind-evidence to show that eternal Time really exists or that Time itself is anything more than the conscious being's way of looking at some uninterrupted continuity or, it may be, eternity of existence as an indivisible flow which it conceptually measures by the successions and simultaneities of the experiences through which alone that existence is represented to it. If there is an eternal Existence which is a conscious being, it must be beyond Time which it contains, timeless as we say; it must be the Eternal of the Vedanta who, we may then conjecture, uses Time only as a conceptual perspective for His view of His self-manifestation. But the timeless self-knowledge of this Eternal is beyond mind; it is a supramental

knowledge superconscient to us and only to be acquired by the stilling or transcending of the temporal activity of our conscious mind, by an entry into Silence or a passage through Silence into the consciousness of eternity.

From all this the one great fact emerges that the very nature of our mind is Ignorance; not an absolute nescience, but a limited and conditioned knowledge of being, limited by a realisation of its present, a memory of its past, an inference of its future, conditioned therefore by a temporal and successive view of itself and its experiences. If real existence is a temporal eternity, then the mind has not the knowledge of real being: for even its own past it loses in the vague of oblivion except for the little that memory holds; it has no possession of its future which is withheld from it in a great blank of ignorance; it has only a knowledge of its present changing from moment to moment in a helpless succession of names, forms, happenings, the march or flux of a cosmic kinesis which is too vast for its control or its comprehension. On the other hand, if real existence is a time-transcending eternity, the mind is still more ignorant of it; for it only knows the little of it that it can itself seize from moment to moment by fragmentary experience of its surface self-manifestation in Time and Space.

If, then, mind is all or if the apparent mind in us is the index of the nature of our being, we can never be anything more than an Ignorance fleeting through Time and catching at knowledge in a most scanty and fragmentary fashion. But if there is a power of self-knowledge beyond mind which is timeless in essence and can look on Time, perhaps with a simultaneous all-relating view of past, present and future, but in any case as a circumstance of its own timeless being, then we have two powers of consciousness, Knowledge and Ignorance, the Vedantic Vidya and Avidya. These two must be, then, either different and unconnected powers, separately born as well as diverse in their action, separately self-existent in an eternal dualism, or else, if there is a connection between them, it must be this that consciousness as Knowledge knows its timeless self and sees Time within itself, while consciousness as Ignorance is a partial

and superficial action of the same Knowledge which sees rather itself in Time, veiling itself in its own conception of temporal being, and can only by the removal of the veil return to eternal self-knowledge.

For it would be irrational to suppose that the superconscious Knowledge is so aloof and separate as to be incapable of knowing Time and Space and Causality and their works; for then it would be only another kind of Ignorance, the blindness of the absolute being answering to the blindness of the temporal being as positive pole and negative pole of a conscious existence which is incapable of knowing all itself, but either knows only itself and does not know its works or knows only its works and does not know itself,—an absurdly symmetrical equipollence in mutual rejection. From the larger point of view, the ancient Vedantic, we must conceive of ourselves not as a dual being, but as one conscious existence with a double phase of consciousness: one of them is conscient or partly conscient in our mind, the other superconscient to mind; one, a knowledge situated in Time, works under its conditions and for that purpose puts its self-knowledge behind it, the other, timeless, works out with mastery and knowledge its own self-determined conditions of Time; one knows itself only by its growth in Time-experience, the other knows its timeless self and consciously manifests itself in Time-experience.

We realise now what the Upanishad meant when it spoke of Brahman as being both the Knowledge and the Ignorance and of the simultaneous knowledge of Brahman in both as the way to immortality. Knowledge is the inherent power of consciousness of the timeless, spaceless, unconditioned Self which shows itself in its essence as a unity of being; it is this consciousness that alone is real and complete knowledge because it is an eternal transcendence which is not only self-aware but holds in itself, manifests, originates, determines, knows the temporally eternal successions of the universe. Ignorance is the consciousness of being in the successions of Time, divided in its knowledge by dwelling in the moment, divided in its conception of self-being by dwelling in the divisions of Space and the relations of circumstance,

self-prisoned in the multiple working of the unity. It is called the Ignorance because it has put behind it the knowledge of unity and by that very fact is unable to know truly or completely either itself or the world, either the transcendent or the universal reality. Living within the Ignorance, from moment to moment, from field to field, from relation to relation, the conscious soul stumbles on in the error of a fragmentary knowledge.⁶ It is not a nescience, but a view and experience of the reality which is partly true and partly false, as all knowledge must be which ignores the essence and sees only fugitive parts of the phenomenon. On the other hand, to be shut up in a featureless consciousness of unity, ignorant of the manifest Brahman, is described as itself also a blind darkness. In truth, neither is precisely darkness, but one is the dazzling by a concentrated Light, the other the illusive proportions of things seen in a dispersed, hazy and broken light, half mist, half seeing. The divine consciousness is not shut up in either, but holds the immutable One and the mutable Many in one eternal all-relating, all-uniting self-knowledge.

Memory, in the dividing consciousness, is a crutch upon which mind supports itself as it stumbles on driven helplessly, without possibility of stay or pause, in the rushing speed of Time. Memory is a poverty-stricken substitute for an integral direct abiding consciousness of self and a direct integral or global perception of things. Mind can only have the direct consciousness of self in the moment of its present being; it can only have some half-direct perception of things as they are offered to it in the present moment of time and the immediate field of space and seized by the senses. It makes up for its deficiency by memory, imagination, thought, idea-symbols of various kinds. Its senses are devices by which it lays hold on the appearances of things in the present moment and in the immediate space; memory, imagination, thought are devices by which it represents to itself, still less directly, the appearances of things beyond the present

⁶ *avidyāyām antare vartamānāḥ . . . jaṅghanyamānāḥ pari�anti mūḍhāḥ andhenāiva nīyamānāḥ yathāndhāḥ*. “Living and moving within the Ignorance, they go round and round stumbling and battered, men deluded, like the blind led by one who is blind.” — *Mundaka Upanishad*, I. 2. 8.

moment and the immediate space. The one thing which is not a device is its direct self-consciousness in the present moment. Therefore through that it can most easily lay hold on the fact of eternal being, on the reality; all the rest it is tempted, when it considers things narrowly, to look on not merely as phenomenon, but as, possibly, error, ignorance, illusion, because they no longer appear to it directly real. So the Illusionist considers them; the only thing he holds to be truly real is that eternal self which lies behind the mind's direct present self-consciousness. Or else, like the Buddhist, one comes to regard even that eternal self as an illusion, a representation, a subjective image, a mere imagination or false sensation and false idea of being. Mind becomes to its own view a fantastic magician, its works and itself at once strangely existent and non-existent, a persistent reality and yet a fleeting error which it accounts for or does not account for, but in any case is determined to slay and get done with both itself and its works so that it may rest, may cease in the timeless repose of the Eternal from the vain representation of appearances.

But, in truth, our sharp distinctions made between the without and the within, the present and the past self-consciousness are tricks of the limited unstable action of mind. Behind the mind and using it as its own surface activity there is a stable consciousness in which there is no binding conceptual division between itself in the present and itself in the past and future; and yet it knows itself in Time, in the present, past and future, but at once, with an undivided view which embraces all the mobile experiences of the Time-self and holds them on the foundation of the immobile timeless self. This consciousness we can become aware of when we draw back from the mind and its activities or when these fall silent. But we see first its immobile status, and if we regard only the immobility of the self, we may say of it that it is not only timeless, but actionless, without movement of idea, thought, imagination, memory, will, self-sufficient, self-absorbed and therefore void of all action of the universe. That then becomes alone real to us and the rest a vain symbolising in non-existent forms — or forms corresponding to nothing truly existent — and therefore a dream. But this self-absorption is only

an act and resultant state of our consciousness, just as much as was the self-dispersion in thought and memory and will. The real self is the eternal who is obviously capable of both the mobility in Time and the immobility basing Time,—simultaneously, otherwise they could not both exist; nor, even, could one exist and the other create seemings. This is the supreme Soul, Self and Being⁷ of the Gita who upholds both the immobile and the mobile being as the self and lord of all existence.

So far we arrive by considering mind and memory mainly in regard to the primary phenomenon of mental self-consciousness in Time. But if we consider them with regard to self-experience as well as self-consciousness and other-experience as well as self-experience, we shall find that we arrive at the same result with richer contents and a still clearer light on the nature of the Ignorance. At present, let us thus express what we have seen,—an eternal conscious being who supports the mobile action of mind on a stable immobile self-consciousness free from the action of Time and who, while with a knowledge superior to mind he embraces all the movement of Time, dwells by the action of mind in that movement. As the surface mental entity moving from moment to moment, not observing his essential self but only his relation to his experiences of the Time-movement, in that movement keeping the future from himself in what appears to be a blank of Ignorance and non-existence but is an unrealised fullness, grasping knowledge and experience of being in the present, putting it away in the past which again appears to be a blank of Ignorance and non-existence partly lighted, partly saved and stored up by memory, he puts on the aspect of a thing fleeting and uncertain seizing without stability upon things fleeting and uncertain. But in reality, we shall find, he is always the same Eternal who is for ever stable and self-possessed in His supramental knowledge and what he seizes on is also for ever stable and eternal; for it is himself that he is mentally experiencing in the succession of Time.

Time is the great bank of conscious existence turned into

⁷ *para puruṣa, paramātman, parabrahman.*

values of experience and action: the surface mental being draws upon the past (and the future also) and coins it continually into the present; he accounts for and stores up the gains he has gathered in what we call the past, not knowing how ever-present is the past in us; he uses as much of it as he needs as coin of knowledge and realised being and pays it out as coin of mental, vital and physical action in the commerce of the present which creates to his view the new wealth of the future. Ignorance is a utilisation of the Being's self-knowledge in such a way as to make it valuable for Time-experience and valid for Time-activity; what we do not know is what we have not yet taken up, coined and used in our mental experience or have ceased to coin or use. Behind, all is known and all is ready for use according to the will of the Self in its dealings with Time and Space and Causality. One might almost say that our surface being is only the deeper eternal Self in us throwing itself out as the adventurer in Time, a gambler and speculator in infinite possibilities, limiting itself to the succession of moments so that it may have all the surprise and delight of the adventure, keeping back its self-knowledge and complete self-being so that it may win again what it seems to have lost, reconquering all itself through the chequered joy and pain of an aeonic passion and seeking and endeavour.

Chapter IX

Memory, Ego and Self-Experience

Here this God, the Mind, in its dream experiences again and again what once was experienced; what has been seen and what has not been seen, what has been heard and what has not been heard, what has been experienced and what has not been experienced, what is and what is not, all it sees, it is all and sees.

Prasna Upanishad.¹

To dwell in our true being is liberation; the sense of ego is a fall from the truth of our being.

Mahopanishad.²

One in many births, a single ocean holder of all streams of movement, sees our hearts.

Rig Veda.³

THE DIRECT self-consciousness of the mental being, that by which it becomes aware of its own nameless and formless existence behind the flow of a differentiated self-experience, of its eternal soul-substance behind the mental formations of that substance, of its self behind the ego, goes behind mentality to the timelessness of an eternal present; it is that in it which is ever the same and unaffected by the mental distinction of past, present and future. It is also unaffected by the distinctions of space or of circumstance; for if the mental being ordinarily says of itself, "I am in the body, I am here, I was there, I shall be elsewhere", yet when it learns to fix itself in this direct self-consciousness, it very soon perceives that this is the language of its changing self-experience which only expresses the relations of its surface consciousness to the environment and to externalities. Distinguishing these, detaching itself from

¹ IV. 5. ² V. 2. ³ X. 5. 1.

these, it perceives that the self of which it is directly conscious does not in any way change by these outward changes, but is always the same, unaffected by the mutations of the body or of the mentality or of the field in which these move and act. It is in its essence featureless, relationless, without any other character than that of pure conscious existence self-sufficient and eternally satisfied with pure being, self-blissful. Thus we become aware of the stable Self, the eternal "Am", or rather the immutable "Is" without any category of personality or Time.

But this consciousness of Self, as it is timeless, so is capable also of freely regarding Time as a thing reflected in it and as either the cause or the subjective field of a changing experience. It is then the eternal "I am", the unchanging consciousness on whose surface changes of conscious experience occur in the process of Time. The surface consciousness is constantly adding to its experience or rejecting from its experience, and by every addition it is modified and by every rejection also it is modified; although that deeper self which supports and contains this mutation remains unmodified, the outer or superficial self is constantly developing its experience so that it can never say of itself absolutely, "I am the same that I was a moment ago." Those who live in this surface Time-self and have not the habit of drawing back inward towards the immutable or the capacity of dwelling in it, are even incapable of thinking of themselves apart from this ever self-modifying mental experience. That is for them their self and it is easy for them, if they look with detachment at its happenings, to agree with the conclusion of the Buddhist Nihilists that this self is in fact nothing but a stream of idea and experience and mental action, the persistent flame which is yet never the same flame, and to conclude that there is no such thing as a real self, but only a flow of experience and behind it Nihil: there is experience of knowledge without a Knower, experience of being without an Existential; there are simply a number of elements, parts of a flux without a real whole, which combine to create the illusion of a Knower and Knowledge and the Known, the illusion of an Existential and existence and the experience of existence. Or they can conclude that Time is the only real existence and

they themselves are its creatures. This conclusion of an illusory existent in a real or unreal world is as inevitable to this kind of withdrawal as is the opposite conclusion of a real Existence but an illusory world to the thinker who, dwelling on the immobile self, observes everything else as a mutable not-self; he comes eventually to regard the latter as the result of a deluding trick of consciousness.

But let us look a little at this surface consciousness without theorising, studying it only in its facts. We see it first as a purely subjective phenomenon. There is a constant rapid shifting of Time-point which it is impossible to arrest for a moment. There is a constant changing, even when there is no shifting of Space-circumstance, a change both in the body or form of itself which the consciousness directly inhabits and the environing body or form of things in which it less directly lives. It is equally affected by both, though more vividly, because directly, by the smaller than by the larger habitation, by its own body than by the body of the world, because only of the changes in its own body is it directly conscious and of the body of the world only indirectly through the senses and the effects of the macrocosm on the microcosm. This change of the body and the surroundings is not so insistently obvious or not so obviously rapid as the swift mutation of Time; yet it is equally real from moment to moment and equally impossible to arrest. But we see that the mental being only regards all this mutation so far as it produces effects upon its own mental consciousness, generates impressions and changes in its mental experience and mental body, because only through the mind can it be aware of its changing physical habitation and its changing world-experience. Therefore there is, as well as a shifting or change of Time-point and Space-field, a constant modifying change of the sum of circumstances experienced in Time and Space and as the result a constant modification of the mental personality which is the form of our superficial or apparent self. All this change of circumstance is summed up in philosophical language as causality; for in this stream of the cosmic movement the antecedent state seems to be the cause of a subsequent state, or else this subsequent state seems to be the

result of a previous action of persons, objects or forces: yet in fact what we call cause may very well be only circumstance. Thus the mind has over and above its direct self-consciousness a more or less indirect mutable self-experience which it divides into two parts, its subjective experience of the ever-modified mental states of its personality and its objective experience of the ever-changing environment which seems partly or wholly to cause and is yet at the same time itself affected by the workings of that personality. But all this experience is at bottom subjective; for even the objective and external is only known to mind in the form of subjective impressions.

Here the part played by Memory increases greatly in importance; for while all that it can do for the mind with regard to its direct self-consciousness is to remind it that it existed and was the same in the past as in the present, it becomes in our differentiated or surface self-experience an important power linking together past and present experiences, past and present personality, preventing chaos and dissociation and assuring the continuity of the stream in the surface mind. Still even here we must not exaggerate the function of memory or ascribe to it that part of the operations of consciousness which really belongs to the activity of other power-aspects of the mental being. It is not the memory alone which constitutes the ego-sense; memory is only a mediator between the sense-mind and the co-ordinating intelligence: it offers to the intelligence the past data of experience which the mind holds somewhere within but cannot carry with it in its running from moment to moment on the surface.

A little analysis will make this apparent. We have in all functionings of the mentality four elements, the object of mental consciousness, the act of mental consciousness, the occasion and the subject. In the self-experience of the self-observing inner being, the object is always some state or movement or wave of the conscious being, anger, grief or other emotion, hunger or other vital craving, impulse or inner life reaction or some form of sensation, perception or thought activity. The act is some kind of mental observation and conceptual valuation of this movement or wave or else a mental sensation of it in which

observation and valuation may be involved and even lost,— so that in this act the mental person may either separate the act and the object by a distinguishing perception or confuse them together indistinguishably. That is to say, he may either simply become a movement, let us put it, of angry consciousness, not at all standing back from that activity, not reflecting or observing himself, not controlling the feeling or the accompanying action, or he may observe what he becomes and reflect on it, with this seeing or perception in his mind "I am angry". In the former case the subject or mental person, the act of conscious self-experience and the substantial angry becoming of the mind which is the object of the self-experience, are all rolled up into one wave of conscious-force in movement; but in the latter there is a certain rapid analysis of its constituents and the act of self-experience partly detaches itself from the object. Thus by this act of partial detachment we are able not only to experience ourselves dynamically in the becoming, in the process of movement of conscious-force itself, but to stand back, perceive and observe ourselves and, if the detachment is sufficient, to control our feeling and action, control to some extent our becoming.

However, there is usually a defect even in this act of self-observation; for there is indeed a partial detachment of the act from the object, but not of the mental person from the mental act: the mental person and the mental action are involved or rolled up in each other; nor is the mental person sufficiently detached or separated either from the emotional becoming. I am aware of myself in an angry becoming of my conscious stuff of being and in a thought-perception of this becoming: but all thought-perception also is a becoming and not myself, and this I do not yet sufficiently realise; I am identified with my mental activities or involved in them, not free and separate. I do not yet directly become aware of myself apart from my becomings and my perception of them, apart from the forms of active consciousness which I assume in the waves of the sea of conscious force which is the stuff of my mental and life nature. It is when I entirely detach the mental person from his act of self-experience that I become fully aware first, of the sheer ego

and, in the end, of the witness self or the thinking mental Person, the something or someone who becomes angry and observes it but is not limited or determined in his being by the anger or the perception. He is, on the contrary, a constant factor aware of an unlimited succession of conscious movements and conscious experiences of movements and aware of his own being in that succession; but he can be aware of it also behind that succession, supporting it, containing it, always the same in fact of being and force of being beyond the changing forms or arrangements of his conscious force. He is thus the Self that is immutably and at the same time the Self that becomes eternally in the succession of Time.

It is evident that there are not really two selves, but one conscious being which throws itself up in the waves of conscious force so as to experience itself in a succession of changing movements of itself, by which it is not really changed, increased or diminished,—any more than the original stuff of Matter or Energy in the material world is increased or diminished by the constantly changing combinations of the elements,—although it seems to be changed to the experiencing consciousness so long as it lives only in the knowledge of the phenomenon and does not get back to the knowledge of the original being, substance or Force. When it does get back to that deeper knowledge, it does not condemn the observed phenomenon as unreal, but it perceives an immutable being, energy or real substance not phenomenal, not subject in itself to the senses; it sees at the same time a becoming or real phenomenon of that being, energy or substance. This becoming we call phenomenon because, actually, as things are with us now, it manifests itself to the consciousness under the conditions of sense-perception and sense-relation and not directly to the consciousness itself in its pure and unconditioned embracing and totally comprehending knowledge. So with the Self,—it is, immutably, to our direct self-consciousness; it manifests itself mutably in various becomings to the mind-sense and the mental experience—therefore, as things are with us now, not directly to the pure unconditioned knowledge of the consciousness, but to it under the conditions of our mentality.

It is this succession of experiences and it is this fact of an indirect or secondary action of the experiencing consciousness under the conditions of our mentality that bring in the device of Memory. For a primary condition of our mentality is division by the moments of Time; there is an inability to get its experience or to hold its experiences together except under the conditions of this self-division by the moments of Time. In the immediate mental experience of a wave of becoming, a conscious movement of being, there is no action or need of memory. I become angry, — it is an act of sensation, not of memory; I observe that I am angry, — it is an act of perception, not of memory. Memory only comes in when I begin to relate my experience to the successions of Time, when I divide my becoming into past, present and future, when I say, "I was angry a moment ago", or "I have become angry and am still in anger", or "I was angry once and will be again if there is the same occasion." Memory may indeed come immediately and directly into the becoming, if the occasion of the movement of consciousness is itself wholly or partly a thing of the past, — for example, if there is a recurrence of emotion, such as grief or anger, caused by memory of past wrong or suffering and not by any immediate occasion in the present or else caused by an immediate occasion reviving the memory of a past occasion. Because we cannot keep the past in us on the surface of the consciousness, — though it is always there behind, within, subliminally present and often even active, — therefore we have to recover it as something that is lost or is no longer existent, and this we do by that repetitive and linking action of the thought-mind which we call memory, — just as we summon things which are not within the actual field of our limited superficial mind-experience by the action of the thought-mind which we call imagination, that greater power in us and high summoner of all possibilities realisable or unrealisable into the field of our ignorance.

Memory is not the essence of persistent or continuous experience even in the succession of Time and would not be necessary at all if our consciousness were of an undivided movement, if it had not to run from moment to moment with a loss of direct

grasp on the last and an entire ignorance or non-possession of the next. All experience or substance of becoming in Time is a flowing stream or sea not divided in itself, but only divided in the observing consciousness by the limited movement of the Ignorance which has to leap from moment to moment like a dragon-fly darting about on the surface of the stream: so too all substance of being in Space is a flowing sea not divided in itself, but only divided in the observing consciousness because our sense-faculty is limited in its grasp, can see only a part and is therefore bound to observe forms of substance as if they were separate things in themselves, independent of the one substance. There is indeed an arrangement of things in Space and Time, but no gap or division except to our ignorance, and it is to bridge the gaps and connect the divisions created by the ignorance of Mind that we call in the aid of various devices of the mind-consciousness, of which memory is only one device.

There is then in me this flowing stream of the world-sea, and anger or grief or any other inner movement can occur as a long-continued wave of the continuous stream. This continuity is not constituted by force of memory, although memory may help to prolong or repeat the wave when by itself it would have died away into the stream; the wave simply occurs and continues as a movement of conscious-force of my being carried forward by its own original impulsion of disturbance. Memory comes in to prolong the disturbance by a recurrence of the thinking mind to the occasion of anger or of the feeling mind to the first impulse of anger by which it justifies itself in a repetition of the disturbance; otherwise the perturbation would spend itself and only recur when the occasion itself was actually repeated. The natural recurrence of the wave, the same or a similar occasion causing the same disturbance, is not any more than its isolated occurrence a result of memory, although memory may help to fortify it and make the mind more subject to it. There is rather the same relation of repeated occasion and repeated result and movement in the more fluid energy and variable substance of mind as that we see presented mechanically by the repetition of the same cause and effect in the less variable operations of

the energy and substance of the material world. We may say, if we like, that there is a subconscious memory in all energy of Nature which repeats invariably the same relation of energy and result; but then we enlarge illimitably the connotation of the word. In reality, we can only state a law of repetition in the action of the waves of conscious-force by which it regularises these movements of its own substance. Memory, properly speaking, is merely the device by which the witnessing Mind helps itself to link together these movements and their occurrence and recurrences in the successions of Time for Time-experience, for increasing use by a more and more co-ordinating will and for a constantly developing valuation by a more and more co-ordinating reason. It is a great, an indispensable but not the only factor in the process by which the Inconscience from which we start develops full self-consciousness, and by which the Ignorance of the mental being develops conscious knowledge of itself in its becomings. This development continues until the co-ordinating mind of knowledge and mind of will are fully able to possess and use all the material of self-experience. Such at least is the process of evolution as we see it governing the development of Mind out of the self-absorbed and apparently mindless energy in the material world.

The ego-sense is another device of mental Ignorance by which the mental being becomes aware of himself,—not only of the objects, occasions and acts of his activity, but of that which experiences them. At first it might seem as if the ego-sense were actually constituted by memory, as if it were memory that told us, "It is the same I who was angry some time ago and am again or still angry now." But, in reality, all that the memory can tell us by its own power is that it is the same limited field of conscious activity in which the same phenomenon has occurred. What happens is that there is a repetition of the mental phenomenon, of that wave of becoming in the mind-substance of which the mind-sense is immediately aware; memory comes in to link these repetitions together and enables the mind-sense to realise that it is the same mind-substance which is taking the same dynamic form and the same mind-sense which is experiencing it. The

ego-sense is not a result of memory or built by memory, but already and always there as a point of reference or as something in which the mind-sense concentrates itself so as to have a co-ordinant centre instead of sprawling incoherently all over the field of experience; ego-memory reinforces this concentration and helps to maintain it, but does not constitute it. Possibly, in the lower animal the sense of ego, the sense of individuality would not, if analysed, go much farther than a sensational imprecise or less precise realisation of continuity and identity and separateness from others in the moments of Time. But in man there is in addition a co-ordinating mind of knowledge which, basing itself on the united action of the mind-sense and the memory, arrives at the distinct idea — while it retains also the first constant intuitive perception — of an ego which senses, feels, remembers, thinks, and which is the same whether it remembers or does not remember. This conscious mind-substance, it says, is always that of one and the same conscious person who feels, ceases to feel, remembers, forgets, is superficially conscious, sinks back from superficial consciousness into sleep; he is the same before the organisation of memory and after it, in the infant and in the dotard, in sleep and in waking, in apparent consciousness and apparent unconsciousness; he and no other did the acts which he forgets as well as the acts which he remembers; he is persistently the same behind all changes of his becoming or his personality. This action of knowledge in man, this co-ordinating intelligence, this formulation of self-consciousness and self-experience is higher than the memory-ego and sense-ego of the animal and therefore, we may suppose, nearer to real self-knowledge. We may even come to realise, if we study the veiled as well as the uncovered action of Nature, that all ego-sense, all ego-memory has at its back, is in fact a pragmatic contrivance of a secret co-ordinating power or mind of knowledge, present in the universal conscious-force, of which the reason in man is the overt form at which our evolution arrives, — a form still limited and imperfect in its modes of action and constituting principle. There is a subconscious knowledge even in the Inconscient, a greater intrinsic Reason in things which impose co-ordination,

that is to say, a certain rationality, upon the wildest movements of the universal becoming.

The importance of Memory becomes apparent in the well-observed phenomenon of double personality or dissociation of personality in which the same man has two successive or alternating states of his mind and in each remembers and co-ordinates perfectly only what he was or did in that state of mind and not what he was or did in the other. This can be associated with an organised idea of different personality, for he thinks in one state that he is one person and in the other that he is quite another with a different name, life and feelings. Here it would seem that memory is the whole substance of personality. But, on the other side, we must see that dissociation of memory occurs also without dissociation of personality, as when a man in the state of hypnosis takes up a range of memories and experiences to which his waking mind is a stranger but does not therefore think himself another person, or as when one who has forgotten the past events of his life and perhaps even his name, still does not change his ego-sense and personality. And there is possible too a state of consciousness in which, although there is no gap of memory, yet by a rapid development the whole being feels itself changed in every mental circumstance and the man feels born into a new personality, so that, if it were not for the co-ordinating mind, he would not at all accept his past as belonging to the person he now is, although he remembers perfectly well that it was in the same form of body and same field of mind-substance that it occurred. Mind-sense is the basis, memory the thread on which experiences are strung by the self-experiencing mind: but it is the co-ordinating faculty of mind which, relating together all the material that memory provides and all its linkings of past, present and future, relates them also to an "I" who is the same in all the moments of Time and in spite of all the changes of experience and personality.

The ego-sense is only a preparatory device and a first basis for the development of real self-knowledge in the mental being. Developing from unconsciousness to self-consciousness, from nescience of self and things to knowledge of self and things, the Mind in

forms arrives thus far that it is aware of all its superficially conscious becoming as related to an "I" which it always is. That "I" it partly identifies with the conscious becoming, partly thinks of it as something other than the becoming and superior to it, even perhaps eternal and unchanging. In the last resort, by the aid of its reason which distinguishes in order to co-ordinate, it may fix its self-experience on the becoming only, on the constantly changing self and reject the idea of something other than it as a fiction of the mind; there is then no being, only becoming. Or it may fix its self-experience into a direct consciousness of its own eternal being and reject the becoming, even when it is compelled to be aware of it, as a fiction of the mind and the senses or the vanity of a temporary inferior existence.

But it is evident that a self-knowledge based on the separative ego-sense is imperfect and that no knowledge founded upon it alone or primarily or on a reaction against it can be secure or assured of completeness. First, it is a knowledge of our superficial mental activity and its experiences and, with regard to all the large rest of our becoming that is behind, it is an Ignorance. Secondly, it is a knowledge only of being and becoming as limited to the individual self and its experiences; all the rest of the world is to it not-self, something, that is to say, which it does not realise as part of its own being but as some outside existence presented to its separate consciousness. This happens because it has no direct conscious knowledge of this larger existence and nature such as the individual has of his own being and becoming. Here too there is a limited knowledge asserting itself in the midst of a vast Ignorance. Thirdly, the true relation between the being and the becoming has not been worked out on the basis of perfect self-knowledge but rather by the Ignorance, by a partial knowledge. As a consequence the mind in its impetus towards an ultimate knowledge attempts through the co-ordinating and dissociating will and reason on the basis of our present experience and possibilities to drive at a trenchant conclusion which cuts away one side of existence. All that has been established is that the mental being can on one side absorb himself in direct self-consciousness to the apparent

exclusion of all becoming and can on the other side absorb himself in the becoming to the apparent exclusion of all stable self-consciousness. Both sides of the mind, separating as antagonists, condemn what they reject as unreal or else as only a play of the conscious mind; to one or the other, either the Divine, the Self, or the world is only relatively real so long as the mind persists in creating them, the world an effective dream of Self, or God and Self a mental construction or an effective hallucination. The true relation has not been seized, because these two sides of existence must always appear discordant and unreconciled to our intelligence so long as there is only a partial knowledge. An integral knowledge is the aim of the conscious evolution; a clean cut of the consciousness shearing apart one side and leaving the other cannot be the whole truth of self and things. For if some immobile Self were all, there could be no possibility of world-existence; if mobile Nature were all, there might be a cycle of universal becoming, but no spiritual foundation for the evolution of the Conscient out of the Inconscient and for the persistent aspiration of our partial Consciousness or Ignorance to exceed itself and arrive at the whole conscious Truth of its being and the integral conscious knowledge of all Being.

Our surface existence is only a surface and it is there that there is the full reign of the Ignorance; to know we have to go within ourselves and see with an inner knowledge. All that is formulated on the surface is a small and diminished representation of our secret greater existence. The immobile self in us is found only when the outer mental and vital activities are quieted; for since it is seated deep within and is represented on the surface only by the intuitive sense of self-existence and misrepresented by the mental, vital, physical ego-sense, its truth has to be experienced in the mind's silence. But also the dynamic parts of our surface being are similarly diminished figures of greater things that are there in the depths of our secret nature. The surface memory itself is a fragmentary and ineffective action pulling out details from an inner subliminal memory which receives and records all our world-experience, receives and records even what the mind has not observed, understood or noticed. Our

surface imagination is a selection from a vaster more creative and effective subliminal image-building power of consciousness. A mind with immeasurably wider and more subtle perceptions, a life-energy with a greater dynamism, a subtle-physical substance with a larger and finer receptivity are building out of themselves our surface evolution. A psychic entity is there behind these occult activities which is the true support of our individualisation; the ego is only an outward false substitute: for it is this secret soul that supports and holds together our self-experience and world-experience; the mental, vital, physical, external ego is a superficial construction of Nature. It is only when we have seen both our self and our nature as a whole, in the depths as well as on the surface, that we can acquire a true basis of knowledge.

Chapter X

Knowledge by Identity and Separative Knowledge

They see the Self in the Self by the Self. *Gita.*¹

Where there is duality, there other sees other, other hears, touches, thinks of, knows other. But when one sees all as the Self, by what shall one know it? it is by the Self that one knows all this that is. . . . All betrays him who sees all elsewhere than in the Self; for all this that is is the Brahman, all beings and all this that is are this Self. *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*²

The Self-Existent has pierced the doors of sense outward, therefore one sees things outwardly and sees not in one's inner being. Rarely a sage desiring immortality, his sight turned inward, sees the Self face to face. *Katha Upanishad.*³

There is no annihilation of the seeing of the seer, the speaking of the speaker . . . the hearing of the hearer . . . the knowing of the knower, for they are indestructible; but it is not a second or other than and separate from himself that he sees, speaks to, hears, knows. *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*⁴

OUR SURFACE cognition, our limited and restricted mental way of looking at our self, at our inner movements and at the world outside us and its objects and happenings, is so constituted that it derives in different degrees from a fourfold order of knowledge. The original and fundamental way of knowing, native to the occult self in things, is a knowledge by identity; the second, derivative,

¹ VI. 20. ² IV. 5. 15, 7. ³ II. 1. 1. ⁴ IV. 3. 23-30.

is a knowledge by direct contact associated at its roots with a secret knowledge by identity or starting from it, but actually separated from its source and therefore powerful but incomplete in its cognition; the third is a knowledge by separation from the object of observation, but still with a direct contact as its support or even a partial identity; the fourth is a completely separative knowledge which relies on a machinery of indirect contact, a knowledge by acquisition which is yet, without being conscious of it, a rendering or bringing up of the contents of a pre-existent inner awareness and knowledge. A knowledge by identity, a knowledge by intimate direct contact, a knowledge by separative direct contact, a wholly separative knowledge by indirect contact are the four cognitive methods of Nature.

The first way of knowing in its purest form is illustrated in the surface mind only by our direct awareness of our own essential existence: it is a knowledge empty of any other content than the pure fact of self and being; of nothing else in the world has our surface mind the same kind of awareness. But in the knowledge of the structure and movements of our subjective consciousness some element of awareness by identity does enter; for we can project ourselves with a certain identification into these movements. It has already been noted how this can happen in the case of an uprush of wrath which swallows us up so that for the moment our whole consciousness seems to be a wave of anger: other passions, love, grief, joy have the same power to seize and occupy us; thought also absorbs and occupies, we lose sight of the thinker and become the thought and the thinking. But very ordinarily there is a double movement; a part of ourselves becomes the thought or the passion, another part of us either accompanies it with a certain adherence or follows it closely and knows it by an intimate direct contact which falls short of identification or entire self-oblivion in the movement.

This identification is possible, and also this simultaneous separation and partial identification, because these things are becoming of our being, determinations of our mind stuff and mind energy, of our life stuff and life energy; but, since they are only a small part of us, we are not bound to be identified

and occupied,—we can detach ourselves, separate the being from its temporary becoming, observe it, control it, sanction or prevent its manifestation: we can, in this way, by an inner detachment, a mental or spiritual separateness, partially or even fundamentally liberate ourselves from the control of mind nature or vital nature over the being and assume the position of the witness, knower and ruler. Thus we have a double knowledge of the subjective movement: there is an intimate knowledge, by identity, of its stuff and its force of action, more intimate than we could have by any entirely separative and objective knowledge such as we get of things outside us, things that are to us altogether not-self; there is at the same time a knowledge by detached observation, detached but with a power of direct contact, which frees us from engrossment by the Nature-energy and enables us to relate the movement to the rest of our own existence and world existence. If we are without this detachment, we lose our self of being and mastering knowledge in the nature self of becoming and movement and action and, though we know intimately the movement, we do not know it dominantly and fully. This would not be the case if we carried into our identification with the movement our identity with the rest of our subjective existence,—if, that is to say, we could plunge wholly into the wave of becoming and at the same time be in the very absorption of the state or act the mental witness, observer, controller; but this we cannot easily do, because we live in a divided consciousness in which the vital part of us—our life nature of force and desire and passion and action—tends to control or swallow up the mind, and the mind has to avoid this subjection and control the vital, but can only succeed in the effort by keeping itself separate; for if it identifies itself, it is lost and hurried away in the life movement. Nevertheless a kind of balanced double identity by division is possible, though it is not easy to keep the balance; there is a self of thought which observes and permits the passion for the sake of the experience—or is obliged by some life-stress to permit it,—and there is a self of life which allows itself to be carried along in the movement of Nature. Here, then, in our subjective experience, we have a

field of the action of consciousness in which three movements of cognition can meet together, a certain kind of knowledge by identity, a knowledge by direct contact and, dependent upon them, a separative knowledge.

In thought separation of the thinker and the thinking is more difficult. The thinker is plunged and lost in the thought or carried in the thought current, identified with it; it is not usually at the time of or in the very act of thinking that he can observe or review his thoughts,—he has to do that in retrospect and with the aid of memory or by a critical pause of corrective judgment before he proceeds further: but still a simultaneity of thinking and conscious direction of the mind's action can be achieved partially when the thought does not engross, entirely when the thinker acquires the faculty of stepping back into the mental self and standing apart there from the mental energy. Instead of being absorbed in the thought with at most a vague feeling of the process of thinking, we can see the process by a mental vision, watch our thoughts in their origination and movement and, partly by a silent insight, partly by a process of thought upon thought, judge and evaluate them. But whatever the kind of identification, it is to be noted that the knowledge of our internal movements is of a double nature, separation and direct contact: for even when we detach ourselves, this close contact is maintained; our knowledge is always based on a direct touch, on a cognition by direct awareness carrying in it a certain element of identity. The more separative attitude is ordinarily the method of our reason in observing and knowing our inner movements; the more intimate is the method of our dynamic part of mind associating itself with our sensations, feelings and desires: but in this association too the thinking mind can intervene and exercise a separative dissociated observation and control over both the dynamic self-associating part of mind and the vital or physical movement. All the observable movements of our physical being also are known and controlled by us in both these ways, the separative and the intimate; we feel the body and what it is doing intimately as part of us, but the mind is separate from it and can exercise a detached control over its movements.

This gives to our normal knowledge of our subjective being and nature, incomplete and largely superficial though it still is, yet, so far as it goes, a certain intimacy, immediacy and directness. That is absent in our knowledge of the world outside us and its movements and objects: for there, since the thing seen or experienced is not-self, not experienced as part of us, no entirely direct contact of consciousness with the object is possible; an instrumentation of sense has to be used which offers us, not immediate intimate knowledge of it, but a figure of it as a first datum for knowledge.

In the cognition of external things, our knowledge has an entirely separative basis; its whole machinery and process are of the nature of an indirect perception. We do not identify ourselves with external objects, not even with other men though they are beings of our own nature; we cannot enter into their existence as if it were our own, we cannot know them and their movements with the directness, immediateness, intimacy with which we know — even though incompletely — ourselves and our movements. But not only identification lacks, direct contact also is absent; there is no direct touch between our consciousness and their consciousness, our substance and their substance, our self of being and their self-being. The only seemingly direct contact with them or direct evidence we have of them is through the senses; sight, hearing, touch seem to initiate some kind of a direct intimacy with the object of knowledge: but this is not so really, not a real directness, a real intimacy, for what we get by our sense is not the inner or intimate touch of the thing itself, but an image of it or a vibration or nerve message in ourselves through which we have to learn to know it. These means are so ineffective, so exiguous in their poverty that, if that were the whole machinery, we could know little or nothing or only achieve a great blur of confusion. But there intervenes a sense-mind intuition which seizes the suggestion of the image or vibration and equates it with the object, a vital intuition which seizes the energy or figure of power of the object through another kind of vibration created by the sense contact, and an intuition of the perceptive mind which at once forms a right

idea of the object from all this evidence. Whatever is deficient in the interpretation of the image thus constructed is filled up by the intervention of the reason or the total understanding intelligence. If the first composite intuition were the result of a direct contact or if it summarised the action of a total intuitive mentality master of its perceptions, there would be no need for the intervention of the reason except as a discoverer or organiser of knowledge not conveyed by the sense and its suggestions: it is, on the contrary, an intuition working on an image, a sense document, an indirect evidence, not working upon a direct contact of consciousness with the object. But since the image or vibration is a defective and summary documentation and the intuition itself limited and communicated through an obscure medium, acting in a blind light, the accuracy of our intuitional interpretative construction of the object is open to question or at least likely to be incomplete. Man has had perforce to develop his reason in order to make up for the deficiencies of his sense instrumentation, the fallibility of his physical mind's perceptions and the paucity of its interpretation of its data.

Our world-knowledge is therefore a difficult structure made up of the imperfect documentation of the sense image, an intuitional interpretation of it by perceptive mind, life-mind and sense-mind, and a supplementary filling up, correction, addition of supplementary knowledge, co-ordination, by the reason. Even so our knowledge of the world we live in is narrow and imperfect, our interpretations of its significances doubtful: imagination, speculation, reflection, impartial weighing and reasoning, inference, measurement, testing, a further correction and amplification of sense evidence by Science,—all this apparatus had to be called in to complete the incompleteness. After all that the result still remains a half-certain, half-dubious accumulation of acquired indirect knowledge, a mass of significant images and ideative representations, abstract thought counters, hypotheses, theories, generalisations, but also with all that a mass of doubts and a never-ending debate and inquiry. Power has come with knowledge, but our imperfection of knowledge leaves us without any idea of the true use of the power, even of the aim towards

which our utilisation of knowledge and power should be turned and made effective. This is worsened by the imperfection of our self-knowledge which, such as it is, meagre and pitifully insufficient, is of our surface only, of our apparent phenomenal self and nature and not of our true self and the true meaning of our existence. Self-knowledge and self-mastery are wanting in the user, wisdom and right will in his use of world-power and world-knowledge.

It is evident that our state on the surface is indeed a state of knowledge, so far as it goes, but a limited knowledge enveloped and invaded by ignorance and, to a very large extent, by reason of its limitation, itself a kind of ignorance, at best a mixed knowledge-ignorance. It could not be otherwise since our awareness of the world is born of a separative and surface observation with only an indirect means of cognition at its disposal; our knowledge of ourselves, though more direct, is stultified by its restriction to the surface of our being, by an ignorance of our true self, the true sources of our nature, the true motive-forces of our action. It is quite evident that we know ourselves with only a superficial knowledge,—the sources of our consciousness and thought are a mystery; the true nature of our mind, emotions, sensations is a mystery; our cause of being and our end of being, the significance of our life and its activities are a mystery: this could not be if we had a real self-knowledge and a real world-knowledge.

If we look for the reason of this limitation and imperfection, we shall find first that it is because we are concentrated on our surface; the depths of self, the secrets of our total nature are shut away from us behind a wall created by our externalising consciousness—or created for it so that it can pursue its activity of ego-centric individualisation of the mind, life and body uninvaded by the deeper and wider truth of our larger existence: through this wall we can look into our inner self and reality only through crevices and portholes and we see little there but a mysterious dimness. At the same time our consciousness has to defend its ego-centric individualisation, not only against its own deeper self of oneness and infinity, but against the cosmic

infinite; it builds up a wall of division here also and shuts out all that is not centred round its ego, excludes it as the not-self. But since it has to live with this not-self,—for it belongs to it, depends upon it, is an inhabitant within it,—it must maintain some means of communication; it has too to make excursions out of its wall of ego and wall of self-restriction within the body in order to cater for those needs which the not-self can supply to it: it must learn to know in some way all that surrounds it so as to be able to master it and make it as far as possible a servant to the individual and collective human life and ego. The body provides our consciousness with the gates of the senses through which it can establish the necessary communication and means of observation and action upon the world, upon the not-self outside it; the mind uses these means and invents others that supplement them and it succeeds in establishing some construction, some system of knowledge which serves its immediate purpose or its general will to master partially and use this huge alien environmental existence or deal with it where it cannot master it. But the knowledge it gains is objective; it is mainly a knowledge of the surface of things or of what is just below the surface, pragmatic, limited and insecure. Its defence against the invasion of the cosmic energy is equally insecure and partial: in spite of its notice of no entry without permission, it is subtly and invisibly invaded by the world, enveloped by the not-self and moulded by it; its thought, its will, its emotional and its life energy are penetrated by waves and currents of thought, will, passion, vital impacts, forces of all kinds from others and from universal Nature. Its wall of defence becomes a wall of obscuration which prevents it from knowing all this interaction; it knows only what comes through the gates of sense or through mental perceptions of which it cannot be sure or through what it can infer or build up from its gathered sense data; all the rest is to it a blank of nescience.

It is, then, this double wall of self-imprisonment, this self-fortification in the bounds of a surface ego, that is the cause of our limited knowledge or ignorance, and if this self-imprisonment were the whole character of our existence, the

ignorance would be irremediable. But, in fact, this constant outer ego-building is only a provisional device of the Consciousness-Force in things so that the secret individual, the spirit within, may establish a representative and instrumental formation of itself in physical nature, a provisional individualisation in the nature of the Ignorance, which is all that can at first be done in a world emerging out of a universal Inconscience. Our self-ignorance and our world-ignorance can only grow towards integral self-knowledge and integral world-knowledge in proportion as our limited ego and its half-blind consciousness open to a greater inner existence and consciousness and a true self-being and become aware too of the not-self outside it also as self,—on one side a Nature constituent of our own nature, on the other an Existence which is a boundless continuation of our own self-being. Our being has to break the walls of ego-consciousness which it has created, it has to extend itself beyond its body and inhabit the body of the universe. In place of its knowledge by indirect contact, or in addition to it, it must arrive at a knowledge by direct contact and proceed to a knowledge by identity. Its limited finite of self has to become a boundless finite and an infinite.

But the first of these two movements, the awakening to our inner realities, imposes itself as the prior necessity because it is by this inward self-finding that the second—the cosmic self-finding—can become entirely possible: we have to go into our inner being and learn to live in it and from it; the outer mind and life and body must become for us only an antechamber. All that we are on the outside is indeed conditioned by what is within, occult, in our inner depths and recesses; it is thence that come the secret initiatives, the self-effective formations; our inspirations, our intuitions, our life-motives, our mind's preferences, our will's selections are actuated from there,—in so far as they are not shaped or influenced by an insistence, equally hidden, of a surge of cosmic impacts: but the use we make of these emergent powers and these influences is conditioned, largely determined and, above all, very much limited by our outermost nature. It is then the knowledge of this inner initiating self coupled with the

accurate perception of the outer instrumental self and the part played by both of them in our building that we have to discover.

On the surface we know only so much of our self as is formulated there and of even this only a portion; for we see our total surface being in a general vagueness dotted and sectioned by points or figures of precision: even what we discover by a mental introspection is only a sum of sections; the entire figure and sense of our personal formation escapes our notice. But there is also a distorting action which obscures and disfigures even this limited self-knowledge; our self-view is vitiated by the constant impact and intrusion of our outer life-self, our vital being, which seeks always to make the thinking mind its tool and servant: for our vital being is not concerned with self-knowledge but with self-affirmation, desire, ego. It is therefore constantly acting on mind to build for it a mental structure of apparent self that will serve these purposes; our mind is persuaded to present to us and to others a partly fictitious representative figure of ourselves which supports our self-affirmation, justifies our desires and actions, nourishes our ego. This vital intervention is not indeed always in the direction of self-justification and assertion; it turns sometimes towards self-depreciation and a morbid and exaggerated self-criticism: but this too is an ego-structure, a reverse or negative egoism, a poise or pose of the vital ego. For in this vital ego there is frequently a mixture of the charlatan and mountebank, the poser and actor; it is constantly taking up a role and playing it to itself and to others as its public. An organised self-deception is thus added to an organised self-ignorance; it is only by going within and seeing these things at their source that we can get out of this obscurity and tangle.

For a larger mental being is there within us, a larger inner vital being, even a larger inner subtle-physical being other than our surface body-consciousness, and by entering into this or becoming it, identifying ourselves with it, we can observe the springs of our thoughts and feelings, the sources and motives of our action, the operative energies that build up our surface personality. For we discover and can know the inner being that secretly thinks and perceives in us, the vital being that secretly

feels and acts upon life through us, the subtle-physical being that secretly receives and responds to the contacts of things through our body and its organs. Our surface thought, feeling, emotion is a complexity and confusion of impulsions from within and impacts from outside us; our reason, our organising intelligence can impose on it only an imperfect order: but here within we find the separate sources of our mental, our vital and our physical energisms and can see clearly the pure operations, the distinct powers, the composing elements of each and their interplay in a clear light of self-vision. We find that the contradictions and the struggles of our surface consciousness are largely due to the contrary or mutually discordant tendencies of our mental, vital and physical parts opposing and unreconciled with each other and these again to the discord of many different inner possibilities of our being and even of different personalities on each level in us which are behind the intermixed disposition and differing tendencies of our surface nature. But while on the surface their action is mixed together, confused and conflicting, here in our depths they can be seen and worked upon in their independent and separate nature and action and a harmonisation of them by the mental being in us, leader of the life and body,⁵ — or, better, by the central psychic entity, — is not so difficult, provided we have the right psychic and mental will in the endeavour: for if it is with the vital-ego motive that we make the entry into the subliminal being, it may result in serious dangers and disaster or at the least an exaggeration of ego, self-affirmation and desire, an enlarged and more powerful ignorance instead of an enlarged and more powerful knowledge. Moreover, we find in this inner or subliminal being the means of directly distinguishing between what rises from within and what comes to us from outside, from others or from universal Nature, and it becomes possible to exercise a control, a choice, a power of willed reception, rejection and selection, a clear power of self-building and harmonisation which we do not possess or can operate very imperfectly in our composed surface personality but which is the prerogative of

⁵ *manomayah prāṇasārīranetā* — Mundaka Upanishad, 2. 2. 7.

our inner Person. For by this entry into the depths the inner being, no longer quite veiled, no longer obliged to exercise a fragmentary influence on its outer instrumental consciousness, is able to formulate itself more luminously in our life in the physical universe.

In its essence the inner being's knowledge has the same elements as the outer mind's surface knowledge, but there is between them the difference between a half blindness and a greater clarity of consciousness and vision due to a more direct and powerful instrumentation and a better arrangement of the elements of knowledge. Knowledge by identity, on the surface a vague inherent sense of our self-existence and a partial identification with our inner movements, can here deepen and enlarge itself from that indistinct essential perception and limited sensation to a clear and direct intrinsic awareness of the whole entity within: we can enter into possession of our whole conscious mental being and life being and arrive at a close intimacy of direct penetrating and enveloping contact with the total movements of our mental and vital energy; we meet clearly and closely and are — but more freely and understandingly — all the becomings of ourself, the whole self-expression of the Purusha on the present levels of our nature. But also there is or can be along with this intimacy of knowledge a detached observation of the actions of the nature by the Purusha and a great possibility, through this double status of knowledge, of a complete control and understanding. All the movements of the surface being can be seen with a complete detachment, but also with a direct sight in the consciousness by which the self-delusions and mistakes of self of the outer consciousness can be dispelled; there is a keener mental vision, a clearer and more accurate mental feeling of our subjective becoming, a vision which at once knows, commands and controls the whole nature. If the psychic and mental parts in us are strong, the vital comes under mastery and direction to an extent hardly possible to the surface mentality; even the body and the physical energies can be taken up by the inner mind and will and turned into a more plastic instrumentation of the soul, the psychic being. On the other hand, if the mental and

psychic parts are weak and the vital strong and unruly, power is increased by entry into the inner vital, but discrimination and detached vision are deficient; the knowledge, even if increased in force and range, remains turbid and misleading; intelligent self-control may give place to a vast undisciplined impetus or a rigidly disciplined but misguided egoistic action. For the subliminal is still a movement of the Knowledge-Ignorance; it has in it a greater knowledge, but the possibility also of a greater because more self-affirming ignorance. This is because, though an increased self-knowledge is normal here, it is not at once an integral knowledge: an awareness by direct contact, which is the principal power of the subliminal, is not sufficient for that; for it may be contact with greater becomings and powers of Knowledge, but also with greater becomings and powers of the Ignorance.

But the subliminal being has also a larger direct contact with the world; it is not confined like the surface Mind to the interpretation of sense-images and sense-vibrations supplemented by the mental and vital intuition and the reason. There is indeed an inner sense in the subliminal nature, a subtle sense of vision, hearing, touch, smell and taste; but these are not confined to the creation of images of things belonging to the physical environment,—they can present to the consciousness visual, auditory, tactual and other images and vibrations of things beyond the restricted range of the physical senses or belonging to other planes or spheres of existence. This inner sense can create or present images, scenes, sounds that are symbolic rather than actual or that represent possibilities in formation, suggestions, thoughts, ideas, intentions of other beings, image forms also of powers or potentialities in universal Nature; there is nothing that it cannot image or visualise or turn into sensory formations. It is the subliminal in reality and not the outer mind that possesses the powers of telepathy, clairvoyance, second sight and other supernormal faculties whose occurrence in the surface consciousness is due to openings or rifts in the wall erected by the outer personality's unseeing labour of individualisation and interposed between itself and the inner domain of our being.

It should be noted, however, that owing to this complexity the action of the subliminal sense can be confusing or misleading, especially if it is interpreted by the outer mind to which the secret of its operations is unknown and its principles of sign construction and symbolic figure-languages foreign; a greater inner power of intuition, tact, discrimination is needed to judge and interpret rightly its images and experiences. It is still the fact that they add immensely to our possible scope of knowledge and widen the narrow limits in which our sense-bound outer physical consciousness is circumscribed and imprisoned.

But more important is the power of the subliminal to enter into a direct contact of consciousness with other consciousness or with objects, to act without other instrumentation, by an essential sense inherent in its own substance, by a direct mental vision, by a direct feeling of things, even by a close envelopment and intimate penetration and a return with the contents of what is enveloped or penetrated, by a direct intimation or impact on the substance of mind itself, not through outward signs or figures,—a revealing intimation or a self-communicating impact of thoughts, feelings, forces. It is by these means that the inner being achieves an immediate, intimate and accurate spontaneous knowledge of persons, of objects, of the occult and to us intangible energies of world-Nature that surround us and impinge upon our own personality, physicality, mind-force and life-force. In our surface mentality we are sometimes aware of a consciousness that can feel or know the thoughts and inner reactions of others or become aware of objects or happenings without any observable sense-intervention or otherwise exercise powers supernormal to our ordinary capacity; but these capacities are occasional, rudimentary, vague. Their possession is proper to our concealed subliminal self and, when they emerge, it is by a coming to the surface of its powers or operations. These emergent operations of the subliminal being or some of them are now fragmentarily studied under the name of psychic phenomena,—although they have ordinarily nothing to do with the *psyche*, the soul, the inmost entity in us, but only with the inner mind, the inner vital, the subtle-physical parts

of our subliminal being; but the results cannot be conclusive or sufficiently ample because they are sought for by methods of inquiry and experiment and standards of proof proper to the surface mind and its system of knowledge by indirect contact. Under these conditions they can be investigated only in so far as they are able to manifest in that mind to which they are exceptional, abnormal or supernormal, and therefore comparatively rare, difficult, incomplete in their occurrence. It is only if we can open up the wall between the outer mind and the inner consciousness to which such phenomena are normal, or if we can enter freely within or dwell there, that this realm of knowledge can be truly explained and annexed to our total consciousness and included in the field of operation of our awakened force of nature.

In our surface mind we have no direct means of knowing even other men who are of our own kind and have a similar mentality and are vitally and physically built on the same model. We can acquire a general knowledge of the human mind and the human body and apply it to them with the aid of the many constant and habitual outer signs of the human inner movements with which we are familiar; these summary judgments can be farther eked out by our experience of personal character and habits, by instinctive application of what self-knowledge we have to our understanding and judgment of others, by inference from speech and conduct, by insight of observation and insight of sympathy. But the results are always incomplete and very frequently deceptive: our inferences are as often as not erroneous constructions, our interpretation of the outward signs a mistaken guess-work, our application of general knowledge or our self-knowledge baffled by elusive factors of personal difference, our very insight uncertain and unreliable. Human beings therefore live as strangers to each other, at best tied by a very partial sympathy and mutual experience; we do not know enough, do not know as well as we know ourselves—and that itself is little—even those nearest to us. But in the subliminal inner consciousness it is possible to become directly aware of the thoughts and feelings around us, to feel their impact, to

see their movements; to read a mind and a heart becomes less difficult, a less uncertain venture. There is a constant mental, vital, subtle-physical interchange going on between all who meet or live together, of which they are themselves unaware except in so far as its impacts and interpenetrations touch them as sensible results of speech and action and outer contact: for the most part it is subtly and invisibly that this interchange takes place; for it acts indirectly, touching the subliminal parts and through them the outer nature. But when we grow conscious in these subliminal parts, that brings consciousness also of all this interaction and subjective interchange and intermingling, with the result that we need no longer be involuntary subjects of their impact and consequence, but can accept or reject, defend ourselves or isolate. At the same time, our action on others need no longer be ignorant or involuntary and often unintentionally harmful; it can be a conscious help, a luminous interchange and a fruitful accommodation, an approach towards an inner understanding or union, not as now a separative association with only a limited intimacy or unity, restricted by much non-understanding and often burdened or endangered by a mass of misunderstanding, of mutual misinterpretation and error.

Equally important would be the change in our dealings with the impersonal forces of the world that surround us. These we know only by their results, by the little that we can seize of their visible action and consequence. Among them it is mostly the physical world-forces of which we have some knowledge, but we live constantly in the midst of a whirl of unseen mind-forces and life-forces of which we know nothing, we are not even aware of their existence. To all this unseen movement and action the subliminal inner consciousness can open our awareness, for it has a knowledge of it by direct contact, by inner vision, by a psychic sensitiveness; but at present it can only enlighten our obtuse superficiality and outwardness by unexplained warnings, premonitions, attractions and repulsions, ideas, suggestions, obscure intuitions, the little it can get through imperfectly to the surface. The inner being not only contacts directly and concretely the immediate motive and movement of these universal

forces and feels the results of their present action, but it can to a certain extent forecast or see ahead their farther action; there is a greater power in our subliminal parts to overcome the time barrier, to have the sense or feel the vibration of coming events, of distant happenings, even to look into the future. It is true that this knowledge proper to the subliminal being is not complete; for it is a mixture of knowledge and ignorance and it is capable of erroneous as well as of true perception, since it works not by knowledge by identity, but by a knowledge through direct contact and this is also a separative knowledge, though more intimate even in separation than anything that is commanded by our surface nature. But the mixed capacity of the inner mental and vital nature for a greater ignorance as well as a greater knowledge can be cured by going still deeper behind it to the psychic entity which supports our individual life and body. There is indeed a soul-personality, representative of this entity, already built up within us, which puts forward a fine psychic element in our natural being: but this finer factor in our normal make-up is not yet dominant and has only a limited action. Our soul is not the overt guide and master of our thought and acts; it has to rely on the mental, vital, physical instruments for self-expression and is constantly overpowered by our mind and life-force: but if once it can succeed in remaining in constant communion with its own larger occult reality,—and this can only happen when we go deep into our subliminal parts,—it is no longer dependent, it can become powerful and sovereign, armed with an intrinsic spiritual perception of the truth of things and a spontaneous discernment which separates that truth from the falsehood of the Ignorance and Inconscience, distinguishes the divine and the undivine in the manifestation and so can be the luminous leader of our other parts of nature. It is indeed when this happens that there can be the turning-point towards an integral transformation and an integral knowledge.

These are the dynamic functionings and pragmatic values of the subliminal cognition; but what concerns us in our present inquiry is to learn from its way of action the exact character of this deeper and larger cognition and how it is related to

true knowledge. Its main character is a knowledge by the direct contact of consciousness with its object or of consciousness with other consciousness; but in the end we discover that this power is an outcome of a secret knowledge by identity, a translation of it into a separative awareness of things. For as in the indirect contact proper to our normal consciousness and surface cognition it is the meeting or friction of the living being with the existence outside it that awakens the spark of conscious knowledge, so here it is some contact that sets in action a pre-existent secret knowledge and brings it to the surface. For consciousness is one in the subject and the object, and in the contact of existence with existence this identity brings to light or awakens in the self the dormant knowledge of this other self outside it. But while this pre-existent knowledge comes up in the surface mind as a knowledge acquired, it arises in the subliminal as a thing seen, caught from within, remembered as it were, or, when it is fully intuitive, self-evident to the inner awareness; or it is taken in from the object contacted but with an immediate response as to something intimately recognisable. In the surface consciousness knowledge represents itself as a truth seen from outside, thrown on us from the object, or as a response to its touch on the sense, a perceptive reproduction of its objective actuality. Our surface mind is obliged to give to itself this account of its knowledge, because the wall between itself and the outside world is pierced by the gates of sense and it can catch through these gates the surface of outward objects though not what is within them, but there is no such ready-made opening between itself and its own inner being: since it is unable to see what is within its deeper self or observe the process of the knowledge coming from within, it has no choice but to accept what it does see, the external object, as the cause of its knowledge. Thus all our mental knowing of things represents itself to us as objective, a truth imposed on us from outside; our knowledge is a reflection or responsive construction reproducing in us a figure or picture or a mental scheme of something that is not in our own being. In fact, it is a hidden deeper response to the contact, a response coming from within that throws up from there an inner knowledge of the

object, the object being itself part of our larger self; but owing to the double veil, the veil between our inner self and our ignorant surface self and the veil between that surface self and the object contacted, it is only an imperfect figure or representation of the inner knowledge that is formed on the surface.

This affiliation, this concealed method of our knowledge, obscure and non-evident to our present mentality, becomes clear and evident when the subliminal inner being breaks its boundaries of individuality and, carrying our surface mind with it, enters into the cosmic consciousness. The subliminal is separated from the cosmic through a limitation by the subtler sheaths of our being, its mental, vital, subtle-physical sheaths, just as the surface nature is separated from universal Nature by the gross physical sheath, the body; but the circumscribing wall around it is more transparent, is indeed less a wall than a fence. The subliminal has besides a formation of consciousness which projects itself beyond all these sheaths and forms a circumconscient, an environing part of itself, through which it receives the contacts of the world and can become aware of them and deal with them before they enter. The subliminal is able to widen indefinitely this circumconscient envelope and more and more enlarge its self-projection into the cosmic existence around it. A point comes where it can break through the separation altogether, unite, identify itself with cosmic being, feel itself universal, one with all existence. In this freedom of entry into cosmic self and cosmic nature there is a great liberation of the individual being; it puts on a cosmic consciousness, becomes the universal individual. Its first result, when it is complete, is the realisation of the cosmic spirit, the one self inhabiting the universe, and this union may even bring about a disappearance of the sense of individuality, a merger of the ego into the world-being. Another common result is an entire openness to the universal Energy so that it is felt acting through the mind and life and body and the sense of individual action ceases. But more usually there are results of less amplitude; there is a direct awareness of universal being and nature, there is a greater openness of the mind to the cosmic Mind and its energies, to the cosmic Life and its energies, to

cosmic Matter and its energies. A certain sense of unity of the individual with the cosmic, a perception of the world held within one's consciousness as well as of one's own intimate inclusion in the world consciousness can become frequent or constant in this opening; a greater feeling of unity with other beings is its natural consequence. It is then that the existence of the cosmic Being becomes a certitude and a reality and is no longer an ideative perception.

But the cosmic consciousness of things is founded upon knowledge by identity; for the universal Spirit knows itself as the Self of all, knows all as itself and in itself, knows all nature as part of its nature. It is one with all that it contains and knows it by that identity and by a containing nearness; for there is at the same time an identity and an exceeding, and, while from the point of view of the identification there is a oneness and complete knowledge, so from the point of view of the exceeding there is an inclusion and a penetration, an enveloping cognition of each thing and all things, a penetrating sense and vision of each thing and all things. For the cosmic Spirit inhabits each and all, but is more than all; there is therefore in its self-view and world-view a separative power which prevents the cosmic consciousness from being imprisoned in the objects and beings in which it dwells: it dwells within them as an all-pervading spirit and power; whatever individualisation takes place is proper to the person or object, but is not binding on the cosmic Being. It becomes each thing without ceasing from its own larger all-containing existence. Here then is a large universal identity containing smaller identities; for whatever separative cognition exists in or enters into the cosmic consciousness must stand on this double identity and does not contradict it. If there is any need of a drawing back and a knowledge by separation plus contact, it is yet a separateness in identity, a contact in identity; for the object contained is part of the self of that which contains it. It is only when a more drastic separativeness intervenes, that the identity veils itself and throws up a lesser knowledge, direct or indirect, which is unaware of its source; yet is it always the sea of identity which throws up to

the surface the waves or the spray of a direct or an indirect knowledge.

This is on the side of consciousness; on the side of action, of the cosmic energies, it is seen that they move in masses, waves, currents constantly constituting and reconstituting beings and objects, movements and happenings, entering into them, passing through them, forming themselves in them, throwing themselves out from them on other beings and objects. Each natural individual is a receptacle of these cosmic forces and a dynamo for their propagation; there passes from each to each a constant stream of mental and vital energies, and these run too in cosmic waves and currents no less than the forces of physical Nature. All this action is veiled from our surface mind's direct sense and knowledge, but it is known and felt by the inner being, though only through a direct contact; when the being enters into the cosmic consciousness, it is still more widely, inclusively, intimately aware of this play of cosmic forces. But although the knowledge is then more complete, the dynamisation of this knowledge can only be partial; for while a fundamental or static unification with the cosmic self is possible, the active dynamic unification with cosmic Nature must be incomplete. On the level of mind and life, even with the loss of the sense of a separate self-existence, the energisms must be in their very nature a selection through individualisation; the action is that of the cosmic Energy, but the individual formation of it in the living dynamo remains the method of its working. For the very use of the dynamo of individuality is to select, to concentrate and formulate selected energies and throw them out in formed and canalised currents: the flow of a total energy would mean that this dynamo had no further use, could be abolished or put out of action; instead of an activity of individual mind, life, body there would be only an individual but impersonal centre or channel through which the universal forces would flow unimpeded and unselective. This can happen, but it would imply a higher spiritualisation far exceeding the normal mental level. In the static seizure of the cosmic knowledge by identity, the subliminal universalised may feel itself one with the cosmic self and the secret self of all

others: but the dynamisation of that knowledge would not go farther than a translation of this sense of identity into a greater power and intimacy of direct contact of consciousness with all, a greater, more intimate, more powerful and efficient impact of the force of consciousness on things and persons, a capacity too of an effective inclusion and penetration, of a dynamised intimate vision and feeling and other powers of cognition and action proper to this larger nature.

In the subliminal, therefore, even enlarged into the cosmic consciousness, we get a greater knowledge but not the complete and original knowledge. To go farther and see what the knowledge by identity is in its purity and in what way and to what extent it originates, admits or uses the other powers of knowledge, we have to go beyond the inner mind and life and subtle-physical to the two other ends of the subliminal, interrogate the subconscious and contact or enter into the superconscious. But in the subconscious all is blind, an obscure universalism such as is seen in the mass consciousness, an obscure individualism either abnormal to us or ill-formed and instinctive: here, in the subconscious, a dark knowledge by identity, such as we find already in the Inconscience, is the basis, but it does not reveal itself and its secret. The superior superconscious ranges are based upon the spiritual consciousness free and luminous, and it is there that we can trace the original power of knowledge and perceive the origin and difference of the two distinct orders, knowledge by identity and separative knowledge.

In the supreme timeless Existence, as far as we know it by reflection in spiritual experience, existence and consciousness are one. We are accustomed to identify consciousness with certain operations of mentality and sense and, where these are absent or quiescent, we speak of that state of being as unconscious. But consciousness can exist where there are no overt operations, no signs revealing it, even where it is withdrawn from objects and absorbed in pure existence or involved in the appearance of non-existence. It is intrinsic in being, self-existent, not abolished by quiescence, by inaction, by veiling or covering, by inert absorption or involution; it is there in the being, even when its state

seems to be dreamless sleep or a blind trance or an annulment of awareness or an absence. In the supreme timeless status where consciousness is one with being and immobile, it is not a separate reality, but simply and purely the self-awareness inherent in existence. There is no need of knowledge nor is there any operation of knowledge. Being is self-evident to itself: it does not need to look at itself in order to know itself or learn that it is. But if this is evidently true of pure existence, it is also true of the primal All-Existence; for just as spiritual Self-existence is intrinsically aware of its self, so it is intrinsically aware of all that is in its being: this is not by an act of knowledge formulated in a self-regard, a self-observation, but by the same inherent awareness; it is intrinsically all-conscious of all that is by the very fact that all is itself. Thus conscious of its timeless self-existence, the Spirit, the Being is aware in the same way — intrinsically, absolutely, totally, without any need of a look or act of knowledge, because it is all, — of Time-Existence and of all that is in Time. This is the essential awareness by identity; if applied to cosmic existence, it would mean an essential self-evident automatic consciousness of universe by the Spirit because it is everything and everything is its being.

But there is another status of spiritual awareness which seems to us to be a development from this state and power of pure self-consciousness, perhaps even a first departure, but is in fact normal and intimate to it; for the awareness by identity is always the very stuff of all the Spirit's self-knowledge, but it admits within itself, without changing or modifying its own eternal nature, a subordinate and simultaneous awareness by inclusion and by indwelling. The Being, the Self-existent sees all existences in its one existence; it contains them all and knows them as being of its being, consciousness of its consciousness, power of its power, bliss of its bliss; it is at the same time, necessarily, the Self in them and knows all in them by its pervasively indwelling selfness: but still all this awareness exists intrinsically, self-evidently, automatically, without the need of any act, regard or operation of knowledge; for knowledge here is not an act, but a state pure, perpetual and inherent. At the

base of all spiritual knowledge is this consciousness of identity and by identity, which knows or is simply aware of all as itself. Translated into our way of consciousness this becomes the triple knowledge thus formulated in the Upanishad, "He who sees all existences in the Self", "He who sees the Self in all existences", "He in whom the Self has become all existences",—inclusion, indwelling and identity: but in the fundamental consciousness this seeing is a spiritual self-sense, a seeing that is self-light of being, not a separative regard or a regard upon self turning that self into object. But in this fundamental self-experience a regard of consciousness can manifest which, though inherently possible, an inevitably self-contained power of spirit, is not a first active element of the absorbed intrinsic self-luminousness and self-evidence of the supreme consciousness. This regard belongs to or brings in another status of the supreme spiritual consciousness, a status in which knowledge as we know it begins; there is a state of consciousness and in it, intimate to it there is an act of knowing: the Spirit regards itself, it becomes the knower and the known, in a way the subject and object—or rather the subject-object in one—of its own self-knowledge. But this regard, this knowledge is still intrinsic, still self-evident, an act of identity; there is no beginning of what we experience as separative knowledge.

But when the subject draws a little back from itself as object, then certain tertiary powers of spiritual knowledge, of knowledge by identity, take their first origin, which are the sources of our own normal modes of knowledge. There is a spiritual intimate vision, a spiritual pervasive entry and penetration, a spiritual feeling in which one sees all as oneself, feels all as oneself, contacts all as oneself. There is a power of spiritual perception of the object and all that it contains or is, perceived in an enveloping and pervading identity, the identity itself constituting the perception. There is a spiritual conception that is the original substance of thought, not the thought that discovers the unknown, but that which brings out the intrinsically known from oneself and places it in self-space, in an extended being of self-awareness, as an object of conceptual self-knowledge. There

is a spiritual emotion, a spiritual sense, there is an intermingling of oneness with oneness, of being with being, of consciousness with consciousness, of delight of being with delight of being. There is a joy of intimate separateness in identity, of relations of love joined with love in a supreme unity, a delight of the many powers, truths, beings of the eternal oneness, of the forms of the Formless; all the play of the becoming in the being founds its self-expression upon these powers of the consciousness of the Spirit. But in their spiritual origin all these powers are essential, not instrumental, not organised, devised or created; they are the luminous self-aware substance of the spiritual Identical made active on itself and in itself, spirit made sight, spirit vibrant as feeling, spirit self-luminous as perception and conception. All is in fact the knowledge by identity, self-powered, self-moving in its multitudinous selfhood of one-awareness. The Spirit's infinite self-experience moves between sheer identity and a multiple identity, a delight of intimately differentiated oneness and an absorbed self-rapture.

A separative knowledge arises when the sense of differentiation overpowers the sense of identity; the self still cognises its identity with the object but pushes to its extreme the play of intimate separateness. At first there is not a sense of self and not-self, but only of self and other-self. A certain knowledge of identity and by identity is still there, but it tends to be first overstructured, then submerged, then so replaced by knowledge through interchange and contact that it figures as a secondary awareness, as if it were a result and no longer the cause of the mutual contact, the still pervasive and enveloping touch, the interpenetrating intimacy of the separate selves. Finally, identity disappears behind the veil and there is the play of being with other beings, consciousness with other consciousness: an underlying identity is still there, but it is not experienced; its place is taken by a direct seizing and penetrating contact, intermingling, interchange. It is by this interaction that a more or less intimate knowledge, mutual awareness or awareness of the object remains possible. There is no feeling of self meeting self, but there is a mutuality; there is not yet an entire separateness, a complete

otherness and ignorance. This is a diminished consciousness, but it retains some power of the original knowledge curtailed by division, by the loss of its primal and essential completeness, operating by division, effecting closeness but not oneness. The power of inclusion of the object in the consciousness, of an enveloping awareness and knowledge is there; but it is the inclusion of a now externalised existence which has to be made an element of our self by an attained or recovered knowledge, by a dwelling of consciousness upon the object, a concentration, a taking possession of it as part of the existence. The power of penetration is there, but it has no natural pervasiveness and does not lead to identity; it gathers what it can, takes what is thus acquired and carries the contents of the object of knowledge to the subject. There can still be a direct and penetrating contact of consciousness with consciousness creating a vivid and intimate knowledge, but it is confined to the points or to the extent of the contact. There is still a direct sense, consciousness-sight, consciousness-feeling which can see and feel what is within the object as well as its outside and surface. There is still a mutual penetration and interchange between being and being, between consciousness and consciousness, waves of thought, of feeling, of energy of all kinds which may be a movement of sympathy and union or of opposition and struggle. There can be an attempt at unification by possession of others or through one's own acceptance of possession by other consciousness or other being; or there can be a push towards union by reciprocal inclusion, pervasion, mutual possession. Of all this action and interaction the knower by direct contact is aware and it is on this basis that he arranges his relations with the world around him. This is the origin of knowledge by direct contact of consciousness with its object, which is normal to our inner being but foreign or only imperfectly known to our surface nature.

This first separative ignorance is evidently still a play of knowledge but of a limited separative knowledge, a play of divided being working upon a reality of underlying unity and arriving only at an imperfect result or outcome of the concealed oneness. The complete intrinsic awareness of identity and the

act of knowledge by identity belong to the higher hemisphere of existence: this knowledge by direct contact is the main character of the highest supraphysical mental planes of consciousness, those to which our surface being is closed in by a wall of ignorance; in a diminished and more separative form it is a property of the lesser supraphysical planes of mind; it is or can be an element in all that is supraphysical. It is the main instrumentation of our subliminal self, its central means of awareness; for the subliminal self or inner being is a projection from these higher planes to meet the subconscious and it inherits the character of consciousness of its planes of origin with which it is intimately associated and in touch by kinship. In our outer being we are children of the Inconscience; our inner being makes us inheritors of the higher heights of mind and life and spirit: the more we open inwards, go inwards, live inwards, receive from within, the more we draw away from subjection to our inconscient origin and move towards all which is now superconscious to our ignorance.

Ignorance becomes complete with the entire separation of being from being: the direct contact of consciousness with consciousness is then entirely veiled or heavily overlaid, even though it still goes on within our subliminal parts, just as there is also, though wholly concealed and not directly operative, the underlying secret identity and oneness. There is on the surface a complete separateness, a division into self and not-self; there is the necessity of dealing with the not-self, but no direct means of knowing it or mastering it. Nature then creates indirect means, a contact by physical organs of sense, a penetration of outside impacts through the nerve currents, a reaction of mind and its co-ordinations acting as an aid and supplement to the activity of the physical organs,—all of them methods of an indirect knowledge; for the consciousness is forced to rely on these instruments and cannot act directly on the object. To these means is added a reason, intelligence and intuition which seize on the communications thus indirectly brought to them, put all in order and utilise their data to get as much knowledge and mastery and possession of the not-self or as much partial unity

with it as the original division allows to the separated being. These means are obviously insufficient and often inefficient, and the indirect basis of the mind's operations afflicts knowledge with a fundamental incertitude; but this initial insufficiency is inherent in the very nature of our material existence and of all still undelivered existence that emerges from the Inconscience.

The Inconscience is an inverse reproduction of the supreme superconsciousness: it has the same absoluteness of being and automatic action, but in a vast involved trance; it is being lost in itself, plunged in its own abyss of infinity. Instead of a luminous absorption in self-existence there is a tenebrous involution in it, the darkness veiled within darkness of the Rig Veda, *tama āśit tamasā gūdham*, which makes it look like Non-Existence; instead of a luminous inherent self-awareness there is a consciousness plunged into an abyss of self-oblivion, inherent in being but not awake in being. Yet is this involved consciousness still a concealed knowledge by identity; it carries in it the awareness of all the truths of existence hidden in its dark infinite and, when it acts and creates,—but it acts first as Energy and not as Consciousness,—everything is arranged with the precision and perfection of an intrinsic knowledge. In all material things reside a mute and involved Real-Idea, a substantial and self-effective intuition, an eyeless exact perception, an automatic intelligence working out its unexpressed and unthought conceptions, a blindly seeing sureness of sight, a dumb infallible sureness of suppressed feeling coated in insensibility, which effectuate all that has to be effected. All this state and action of the Inconscient corresponds very evidently with the same state and action of the pure Superconsciousness, but translated into terms of self-darkness in place of the original self-light. Intrinsic in the material form, these powers are not possessed by the form, but yet work in its mute subconscience.

We can, in this knowledge, understand more clearly the stages of the emergence of consciousness from involution to its evolved appearance, of which we have already attempted some general conception. The material existence has only a physical, not a mental individuality, but there is a subliminal

Presence in it, the one Conscious in unconscious things, that determines the operation of its indwelling energies. If, as has been affirmed, a material object receives and retains the impression of the contacts of things around it and energies emanate from it, so that an occult knowledge can become aware of its past, can make us conscious of these emanating influences, the intrinsic unorganised Awareness pervading the form but not yet enlightening it must be the cause of this receptivity and these capacities. What we see from outside is that material objects like plants and minerals have their powers, properties and inherent influences, but as there is no faculty or means of communication, it is only by being brought into contact with person or object or by a conscious utilisation by living beings that their influences can become active,—such a utilisation is the practical side of more than one human science. But still these powers and influences are attributes of Being, not of mere indeterminate substance, they are forces of the Spirit emerging by Energy from its self-absorbed Inconscience. This first crude mechanical action of an inherent absorbed conscious energy opens in the primary forms of life into submental life-vibrations that imply an involved sensation; there is a seeking for growth, light, air, life-room, a blind feeling out, which is still internal and confined within the immobile being, unable to formulate its instincts, to communicate, to externalise itself. An immobility not organised to establish living relations, it endures and absorbs contacts, involuntarily inflicts but cannot voluntarily impose them; the inconscience is still dominant, still works out everything by the secret involved knowledge by identity, it has not yet developed the surface contactual means of a conscious knowledge. This further development begins with overtly conscious life; what we see in it is the imprisoned consciousness struggling out to the surface: it is under the compulsion of this struggle that the separated living being strives, however blindly at first and within narrow limits, to enter into conscious relations with the rest of the world-being outside it. It is by the growing amount of contacts that it can receive and respond to and by the growing amount of contacts that it can put out from itself or impose in

order to satisfy its needs and impulsions that the being of living matter develops its consciousness, grows from inconscience or subconsciousness into a limited separative knowledge.

We see then all the powers inherent in the original self-existent spiritual Awareness slowly brought out and manifested in this growing separative consciousness; they are activities suppressed but native to the secret and involved knowledge by identity and they now emerge by degrees in a form strangely diminished and tentative. First, there emerges a crude or veiled sense which develops into precise sensations aided by a vital instinct or concealed intuition; then a life-mind perception manifests and at its back an obscure consciousness-sight and feeling of things; emotion vibrates out and seeks an interchange with others; last arises to the surface conception, thought, reason comprehending and apprehending the object, combining its data of knowledge. But all are incomplete, still maimed by the separative ignorance and the first obscuring inconscience; all are dependent on the outward means, not empowered to act in their own right: consciousness cannot act directly on consciousness; there is a constructive envelopment and penetration of things by the mind consciousness, but not a real possession; there is no knowledge by identity. Only when the subliminal is able to force upon the frontal mind and sense some of its secret activities pure and untranslated into the ordinary forms of mental intelligence, does a rudimentary action of the deeper methods lift itself to the surface; but such emergences are still an exception, they strike across the normality of our acquired and learned knowledge with a savour of the abnormal and the supernormal. It is only by an opening to our inner being or an entry into it that a direct intimate awareness can be added to the outer indirect awareness. It is only by our awakening to our inmost soul or superconscious self that there can be a beginning of the spiritual knowledge with identity as its basis, its constituent power, its intrinsic substance.

Chapter XI

The Boundaries of the Ignorance

One who thinks there is this world and no other.

*Katha Upanishad.*¹

Extended within the Infinite, . . . headless and footless, concealing his two ends.²

*Rig Veda.*³

He who has the knowledge “I am Brahman” becomes all this that is; but whoever worships another divinity than the One Self and thinks, “Other is he and I am other”, he knows not.

*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*⁴

This Self is fourfold — the Self of Waking who has the outer intelligence and enjoys external things, is its first part; the Self of Dream who has the inner intelligence and enjoys things subtle, is its second part; the Self of Sleep, unified, a massed intelligence, blissful and enjoying bliss, is the third part . . . the lord of all, the omniscient, the inner Control. That which is unseen, indefinable, self-evident in its one selfhood, is the fourth part: this is the Self, this is that which has to be known.

*Mandukya Upanishad.*⁵

A conscious being, no larger than a man’s thumb, stands in the centre of our self; he is master of the past and the present; . . . he is today and he is tomorrow.

*Katha Upanishad.*⁶

IT IS now possible to review in its larger lines this Ignorance, or this separative knowledge labouring towards identical knowledge, which constitutes our human mentality and, in an obscurer form, all consciousness that has evolved below our

¹ I. 2. 6.

² Head and feet, the superconscious and the inconscient.

³ IV. I. 7, 11. ⁴ I. 4. 10. ⁵ Verses 2-7. ⁶ II. 1. 12, 13.

level. We see that in us it consists of a succession of waves of being and force, pressing from outside and rising from within, which become stuff of consciousness and formulate in a mental cognition and mentalised sensation of self and things in Time and Space. Time presents itself to us as a flow of dynamic movement, Space as an objective field of contents for the experience of this imperfect and developing awareness. By immediate awareness the mental being mobile in Time lives perpetually in the present; by memory he saves a certain part of his experience of self and things from streaming away from him entirely into the past; by thought and will and action, by mind energy, life energy, body energy he utilises it for what he becomes in the present and is yet to become hereafter; the force of being in him that has made him what he is works to prolong, develop and amplify his becoming in the future. All this insecurely held material of self-expression and experience of things, this partial knowledge accumulated in the succession of Time, is co-ordinated for him by perception, memory, intelligence and will to be utilised for an ever-new or ever-repeated becoming and for the mental, vital, physical action which helps him to grow into what he is to be and to express what he already is. The present totality of all this experience of consciousness and output of energy is co-ordinated for relation to his being, gathered into consistency around an ego-sense which formulates the habit of response of self-experience to the contacts of Nature in a persistent limited field of conscious being. It is this ego-sense that gives a first basis of coherence to what otherwise might be a string or mass of floating impressions: all that is so sensed is referred to a corresponding artificial centre of mental consciousness in the understanding, the ego-idea. This ego-sense in the life stuff and this ego-idea in the mind maintain a constructed symbol of self, the separative ego, which does duty for the hidden real self, the spirit or true being. The surface mental individuality is, in consequence, always ego-centric; even its altruism is an enlargement of its ego: the ego is the lynch-pin invented to hold together the motion of our wheel of nature. The necessity of centralisation around the ego continues until there is no longer need of any such device or contrivance because there

has emerged the true self, the spiritual being, which is at once wheel and motion and that which holds all together, the centre and the circumference.

But the moment we study ourselves, we find that the self-experience which we thus co-ordinate and consciously utilise for life, is a small part even of our waking individual consciousness. We fasten only upon a very limited number of the mental sensations and perceptions of self and things which come up into our surface consciousness in our continual present: of these again memory saves up only a scanty part from the oblivious gulf of the past; of the storings of memory our intelligence utilises only a small portion for co-ordinated knowledge, will utilises a still smaller percentage for action. A narrow selection, a large rejection or reservation, a miserly-spendthrift system of waste of material and unemployment of resources and a scanty and disorderly modicum of useful spending and utilisable balance seems to be the method of Nature in our conscious becoming even as it is in the field of the material universe. But this is only in appearance, for it would be a wholly untrue account to say that all that is not thus saved up and utilised is destroyed, becomes null and has passed away ineffectually and in vain. A great part of it has been quietly used by Nature herself to form us and actuates that sufficiently large mass of our growth and becoming and action for which our conscious memory, will and intelligence are not responsible. A still greater part is used by her as a store from which she draws and which she utilises, while we ourselves have utterly forgotten the origin and provenance of this material which we find ourselves employing with a deceptive sense of creation; for we imagine we are creating this new material of our work, when we are only combining results out of that which we have forgotten but Nature in us has remembered. If we admit rebirth as part of her system, we shall realise that all experience has its use; for all experience counts in this prolonged building and nothing is rejected except what has exhausted its utility and would be a burden on the future. A judgment from what appears now in our conscious surface is fallacious: for when we study and understand, we perceive that

only a little of her action and growth in us is conscious; the bulk of it is carried on subconsciously as in the rest of her material life. We are not only what we know of ourselves but an immense more which we do not know; our momentary personality is only a bubble on the ocean of our existence.

A superficial observation of our waking consciousness shows us that of a great part of our individual being and becoming we are quite ignorant; it is to us the Inconscient, just as much as the life of the plant, the metal, the earth, the elements. But if we carry our knowledge farther, pushing psychological experiment and observation beyond their normal bounds, we find how vast is the sphere of this supposed Inconscient or this subconscious in our total existence,—the subconscious, so seeming and so called by us because it is a concealed consciousness,—and what a small and fragmentary portion of our being is covered by our waking self-awareness. We arrive at the knowledge that our waking mind and ego are only a superimposition upon a submerged, a subliminal self,—for so that self appears to us,—or, more accurately, an inner being, with a much vaster capacity of experience; our mind and ego are like the crown and dome of a temple jutting out from the waves while the great body of the building is submerged under the surface of the waters.

This concealed self and consciousness is our real or whole being, of which the outer is a part and a phenomenon, a selective formation for a surface use. We perceive only a small number of the contacts of things which impinge upon us; the inner being perceives all that enters or touches us and our environment. We perceive only a part of the workings of our life and being; the inner being perceives so much that we might almost suppose that nothing escapes its view. We remember only a small selection from our perceptions, and of these even we keep a great part in a store-room where we cannot always lay our hand upon what we need; the inner being retains everything that it has ever received and has it always ready to hand. We can form into co-ordinated understanding and knowledge only so much of our perceptions and memories as our trained intelligence and mental

capacity can grasp in their sense and appreciate in their relations: the intelligence of the inner being needs no training, but preserves the accurate form and relations of all its perceptions and memories and,—though this is a proposition which may be considered doubtful or difficult to concede in its fullness,—can grasp immediately, when it does not possess already, their significance. And its perceptions are not confined, as are ordinarily those of the waking mind, to the scanty gleanings of the physical senses, but extend far beyond and use, as telepathic phenomena of many kinds bear witness, a subtle sense the limits of which are too wide to be easily fixed. The relations between the surface will or impulsion and the subliminal urge, mistakenly described as unconscious or subconscious, have not been properly studied except in regard to unusual and unorganised manifestations and to certain morbidly abnormal phenomena of the diseased human mind; but if we pursue our observation far enough, we shall find that the cognition and will or impulsive force of the inner being really stand behind the whole conscious becoming; the latter represents only that part of its secret endeavour and achievement which rises successfully to the surface of our life. To know our inner being is the first step towards a real self-knowledge.

If we undertake this self-discovery and enlarge our knowledge of the subliminal self, so conceiving it as to include in it our lower subconscious and upper superconscious ends, we shall discover that it is really this which provides the whole material of our apparent being and that our perceptions, our memories, our effectuations of will and intelligence are only a selection from its perceptions, memories, activities and relations of will and intelligence; our very ego is only a minor and superficial formulation of its self-consciousness and self-experience. It is, as it were, the urgent sea out of which the waves of our conscious becoming arise. But what are its limits? how far does it extend? what is its fundamental nature? Ordinarily, we speak of a subconscious existence and include in this term all that is not on the waking surface. But the whole or the greater part of the inner or subliminal self can hardly be characterised by that epithet; for when we say subconscious, we think readily

of an obscure unconsciousness or half-consciousness or else a submerged consciousness below and in a way inferior to and less than our organised waking awareness or, at least, less in possession of itself. But we find, when we go within, that somewhere in our subliminal part,—though not co-extensive with it since it has also obscure and ignorant regions,—there is a consciousness much wider, more luminous, more in possession of itself and things than that which wakes upon our surface and is the percipient of our daily hours; that is our inner being, and it is this which we must regard as our subliminal self and set apart the subconscious as an inferior, a lowest occult province of our nature. In the same way there is a superconscious part of our total existence in which there is what we discover to be our highest self, and this too we can set apart as a higher occult province of our nature.

But what then is the subconscious and where does it begin and how is it related to our surface being or to the subliminal of which it would seem more properly to be a province? We are aware of our body and know that we have a physical existence, even very largely identify ourselves with it, and yet most of its operations are really subconscious to our mental being; not only does the mind take no part in them but, as we suppose, our most physical being has no awareness of its own hidden operations or, by itself, of its own existence; it knows or rather feels only so much of itself as is enlightened by mind-sense and observable by intelligence. We are aware of a vitality working in this bodily form and structure as in the plant or lower animal, a vital existence which is also for the most part subconscious to us, for we only observe some of its movements and reactions. We are partly aware of its operations, but not by any means of all or most of them, and rather of those which are abnormal than those which are normal; its wants impress themselves more forcibly upon us than its satisfactions, its diseases and disorders than its health and its regular rhythm, its death is more poignant to us than its life is vivid: we know as much of it as we can consciously observe and use or as much as forces itself upon us by pain and pleasure and other sensations or as a cause of nervous or

physical reaction and disturbance, but no more. Accordingly, we suppose that this vital-physical part of us also is not conscious of its own operations or has only a suppressed consciousness or no-consciousness like the plant or an inchoate consciousness like the incipient animal; it becomes conscious only so far as it is enlightened by mind and observable by intelligence.

This is an exaggeration and a confusion due to our identification of consciousness with mentality and mental awareness. Mind identifies itself to a certain extent with the movements proper to physical life and body and annexes them to its mentality, so that all consciousness seems to us to be mental. But if we draw back, if we separate the mind as witness from these parts of us, we can discover that life and body—even the most physical parts of life—have a consciousness of their own, a consciousness proper to an obscurer vital and to a bodily being, even such an elemental awareness as primitive animal forms may have, but in us partly taken up by the mind and to that extent mentalised. Yet it has not, in its independent motion, the mental awareness which we enjoy; if there is mind in it, it is mind involved and implicit in the body and in the physical life: there is no organised self-consciousness, but only a sense of action and reaction, movement, impulse and desire, need, necessary activities imposed by Nature, hunger, instinct, pain, insensibility and pleasure. Although thus inferior, it has this awareness obscure, limited and automatic; but since it is less in possession of itself, void of what to us is the stamp of mentality, we may justly call it the submental, but not so justly the subconscious part of our being. For when we stand back from it, when we can separate our mind from its sensations, we perceive that this is a nervous and sensational and automatically dynamic mode of consciousness, a gradation of awareness different from the mind: it has its own separate reactions to contacts and is sensitive to them in its own power of feeling; it does not depend for that on the mind's perception and response. The true subconscious is other than this vital or physical substratum; it is the Inconscient vibrating on the borders of consciousness, sending up its motions to be changed into conscious stuff, swallowing into its depths

impressions of past experience as seeds of unconscious habit and returning them constantly but often chaotically to the surface consciousness, missioning upwards much futile or perilous stuff of which the origin is obscure to us, in dream, in mechanical repetitions of all kinds, in untraceable impulsions and motives, in mental, vital, physical perturbations and upheavals, in dumb automatic necessities of our obscurest parts of nature.

But the subliminal self has not at all this subconscious character: it is in full possession of a mind, a life-force, a clear subtle-physical sense of things. It has the same capacities as our waking being, a subtle sense and perception, a comprehensive extended memory and an intensive selecting intelligence, will, self-consciousness; but even though the same in kind, they are wider, more developed, more sovereign. And it has other capacities which exceed those of our mortal mind because of a power of direct awareness of the being, whether acting in itself or turned upon its object, which arrives more swiftly at knowledge, more swiftly at effectivity of will, more deeply at understanding and satisfaction of impulse. Our surface mind is hardly a true mentality, so involved, bound, hampered, conditioned is it by the body and bodily life and the limitations of the nerve-system and the physical organs. But the subliminal self has a true mentality superior to these limitations; it exceeds the physical mind and physical organs although it is aware of them and their works and is, indeed, in a large degree their cause or creator. It is only subconscious in the sense of not bringing all or most of itself to the surface, it works always behind the veil: it is rather a secret intraconscious and circumconscious than a subconscious; for it envelops quite as much as it supports the outer nature. This description is no doubt truest of the deeper parts of the subliminal; in other layers of it nearer to our surface there is a more ignorant action and those who, penetrating within, pause in the zones of lesser coherence or in the No-man's-land between the subliminal and the surface, may fall into much delusion and confusion: but that too, though ignorant, is not of the nature of the subconscious; the confusion of these intermediate zones has no kinship to the Inconscience.

We might say then that there are three elements in the totality of our being: there is the submental and the subconscious which appears to us as if it were inconscient, comprising the material basis and a good part of our life and body; there is the subliminal, which comprises the inner being, taken in its entirety of inner mind, inner life, inner physical with the soul or psychic entity supporting them; there is this waking consciousness which the subliminal and the subconscious throw up on the surface, a wave of their secret surge. But even this is not an adequate account of what we are; for there is not only something deep within behind our normal self-awareness, but something also high above it: that too is ourselves, other than our surface mental personality, but not outside our true self; that too is a country of our spirit. For the subliminal proper is no more than the inner being on the level of the Knowledge-Ignorance, luminous, powerful and extended indeed beyond the poor conception of our waking mind, but still not the supreme or the whole sense of our being, not its ultimate mystery. We become aware, in a certain experience, of a range of being superconscious to all these three, aware too of something, a supreme highest Reality sustaining and exceeding them all, which humanity speaks of vaguely as Spirit, God, the Oversoul: from these superconscious ranges we have visitations and in our highest being we tend towards them and to that supreme Spirit. There is then in our total range of existence a superconsciousness as well as a subconscious and in conscience, overarching and perhaps enveloping our subliminal and our waking selves, but unknown to us, seemingly unattainable and incommunicable.

But with the extension of our knowledge we discover what this spirit or oversoul is: it is ultimately our own highest deepest vastest Self, it is apparent on its summits or by reflection in ourselves as Sachchidananda creating us and the world by the power of His divine Knowledge-Will, spiritual, supramental, truth-conscious, infinite. That is the real Being, Lord and Creator, who, as the Cosmic Self veiled in Mind and Life and Matter, has descended into that which we call the Inconscient and constitutes and directs its subconscious existence by His supramental

will and knowledge, has ascended out of the Inconscient and dwells in the inner being constituting and directing its subliminal existence by the same will and knowledge, has cast up out of the subliminal our surface existence and dwells secretly in it overseeing with the same supreme light and mastery its stumbling and groping movements. If the subliminal and subconscious may be compared to a sea which throws up the waves of our surface mental existence, the superconscious may be compared to an ether which constitutes, contains, overroofs, inhabits and determines the movements of the sea and its waves. It is there in this higher ether that we are inherently and intrinsically conscious of our self and spirit, not as here below by a reflection in silent mind or by acquisition of the knowledge of a hidden Being within us; it is through it, through that ether of superconsciousness, that we can pass to a supreme status, knowledge, experience. Of this superconscious existence through which we can arrive at the highest status of our real, our supreme Self, we are normally even more ignorant than of the rest of our being; yet is it into the knowledge of it that our being emerging out of the involution in Inconscience is struggling to evolve. This limitation to our surface existence, this unconsciousness of our highest as of our inmost self, is our first, our capital ignorance.

We exist superficially by a becoming in Time; but here again out of that becoming in Time the surface mind, which we call ourselves, is ignorant of all the long past and the long future, aware only of the little life which it remembers and not of all even of that; for much of it is lost to its observation, much to its memory. We readily believe,—for the simple and compelling but insufficient reason that we do not remember, have not perceived, are not informed of anything else,—that we came into existence first by our physical birth into this life and shall cease to exist by the death of this body and the cessation of this brief physical activity. But while this is true of our physical mentality and physical vitality, our corporeal sheath, for they have been constituted at our birth and are dissolved by death, it is not true of our real becoming in Time. For our real self in the cosmos is the Superconscious which becomes the subliminal

self and throws up this apparent surface self to act out the brief and limited part assigned to it between birth and death as a present living and conscious self-formation of the being in the stuff of a world of inconscient Nature. The true being which we are no more dies by the cessation of one life than the actor ceases to exist when he has finished one of his parts or the poet when he has poured out something of himself in one of his poems; our mortal personality is only such a role or such a creative self-expression. Whether or no we accept the theory of many births of the same soul or psychic being in various human bodies upon this earth, certain it is that our becoming in Time goes far back into the past and continues far on into the future. For neither the superconscious nor the subliminal can be limited by a few moments of Time: the one is eternal and Time is only one of its modes; to the other, to the subliminal, it is an infinite field of various experience and the very existence of the being presupposes all the past for its own and equally all the future. Yet of this past which alone explains our present being, our mind knows, if knowledge it can be called, only this actual physical existence and its memories: of the future which alone explains the constant trend of our becoming, it knows nothing. So fixed are we in the experience of our ignorance that we even insist that the one can be known only by its vestiges and the other cannot be known, because the future is not yet and the past is no longer in existence; yet are they both here in us, the past involved and active, the future ready to evolve in the continuity of the secret spirit. This is another limiting and frustrating ignorance.

But even here the self-ignorance of man does not end; for not only is he ignorant of his superconscious Self, of his subliminal self, of his subconscious self, he is ignorant of his world in which he presently lives, which constantly acts on and through him and on which and by which he has to act. And the stamp of his ignorance is this, that he regards it as something quite separate from him, as not-self because it is other than his individual nature-formation and his ego. So too when he confronts his superconscious Self, he thinks of it first as something quite other than he, an external, even extracosmic God; when he confronts

and becomes aware of his subliminal self, it seems to him at first another greater person or another consciousness than his own which can support and guide him. Of the world he regards only one little foam-bubble, his life and body, as himself. But when we get into our subliminal consciousness, we find it extending itself to be commensurate with its world; when we get into our superconscious Self, we find that the world is only its manifestation and that all in it is the One, all in it is our self. We see that there is one indivisible Matter of which our body is a knot, one indivisible Life of which our life is an eddy, one indivisible Mind of which our mind is a receiving and recording, forming or translating and transmitting station, one indivisible Spirit of which our soul and individual being are a portion or a manifestation. It is the ego-sense which clinches the division and in which the ignorance we superficially are finds its power to maintain the strong though always permeable walls it has created to be its own prison. Ego is the most formidable of the knots which keep us tied to the Ignorance.

As we are ignorant of our existence in Time except the small hour which we remember, so we are ignorant of ourselves in Space except the small span of which we are mentally and sensationnally conscious, the single body that moves there and the mind and life which are identified with it, and we regard the environment as a not-self we have to deal with and use: it is this identification and this conception that form the life of the ego. Space according to one view is only the coexistence of things or of souls; the Sankhya affirms the plurality of souls and their independent existence, and their coexistence is then only possible by the unity of Nature-force, their field of experience, Prakriti: but, even granting this, the coexistence is there and it is in the end coexistence in one Being. Space is the self-conceptive extension of that one Being; it is the one spiritual Existence displaying the field of movement of its Conscious-Force in its own self as Space. Because that Conscious-Force concentrates in manifold bodies, lives, minds and the soul presides over one of them, therefore our mentality is concentrated in this and regards this as itself and all the rest as not-self, just as it regards

its one life on which it concentrates by a similar ignorance as its whole term of existence cut off from the past and the future. Yet we cannot really know our own mentality without knowing the one Mind, our own vitality without knowing the one Life, our own body without knowing the one Matter; for not only is their nature determined by the nature of that, but by that their activities are at every moment being influenced and determined. But, with all this sea of being flowing in on us, we do not participate in its consciousness, but know of it only so much as can be brought into the surface of our minds and co-ordinated there. The world lives in us, thinks in us, forms itself in us; but we imagine that it is we who live, think, become separately by ourselves and for ourselves. As we are ignorant of our timeless, of our superconscious, of our subliminal and subconscious selves, so are we ignorant of our universal self. This alone saves us that ours is an ignorance which is full of the impulse and strives irresistibly, eternally, by the very law of its being towards the realisation of self-possession and self-knowledge. A many-sided Ignorance striving to become an all-embracing Knowledge is the definition of the consciousness of man the mental being,—or, looking at it from another side, we may say equally that it is a limited separative awareness of things striving to become an integral consciousness and an integral Knowledge.

Chapter XII

The Origin of the Ignorance

By energism of consciousness¹ Brahman is massed; from that Matter is born and from Matter Life and Mind and the worlds.
*Mundaka Upanishad.*²

He desired, "May I be Many". He concentrated in Tapas, by Tapas he created the world; creating, he entered into it; entering, he became the existent and the beyond-existence, he became the expressed and the unexpressed, he became knowledge and ignorance, he became the truth and the falsehood: he became the truth, even all this whatsoever that is. "That Truth" they call him.
*Taittiriya Upanishad.*³

Energism of consciousness⁴ is Brahman.
*Taittiriya Upanishad.*⁵

IT BECOMES necessary and possible, now that so much has been fixed, to consider at close quarters the problem of the Ignorance from the point of view of its pragmatic origin, the process of consciousness which brought it into existence. It is on the basis of an integral Oneness as the truth of existence that we have to consider the problem and see how far the different possible solutions are on this basis applicable. How could this manifold ignorance or this narrowly self-limiting and separative knowledge arise and come into action or maintain itself in action in an absolute Being who must be absolute consciousness and therefore cannot be subject to ignorance? How is even an apparent division effectively operated and kept in continuance in the Indivisible? The Being, integrally one, cannot be ignorant of itself; and since all things are itself, conscious modifications,

¹ Tapas. ² I. 1. 8. ³ II. 6. ⁴ Tapas. ⁵ III. 2-5.

determinations of its being, it cannot either be ignorant of things, of their true nature, of their true action. But though we say that we are That, that the Jivatman or individual self is no other than the Paramatman, no other than the Absolute, yet we are certainly ignorant both of ourselves and things, from which this contradiction results that what must be in its very grain incapable of ignorance is yet capable of it, and has plunged itself into it by some will of its being or some necessity or possibility of its nature. We do not ease the difficulty if we plead that Mind, which is the seat of ignorance, is a thing of Maya, non-existent, not-Brahman, and that Brahman, the Absolute, the sole Existence cannot in any way be touched by the ignorance of mind which is part of the illusory being, Asat, the non-existence. This is an escape which is not open to us if we admit an integral Oneness: for then it is evident that, in making so radical a distinction and at the same time cancelling it by terming it illusory, we are using the magic or Maya of thought and word in order to conceal from ourselves the fact that we are dividing and denying the unity of the Brahman; for we have erected two opposite powers, Brahman incapable of illusion and self-illusory Maya, and pitchforked them into an impossible unity. If Brahman is the sole existence, Maya can be nothing but a power of Brahman, a force of his consciousness or a result of his being; and if the Jivatman, one with Brahman, is subject to its own Maya, the Brahman in it is subject to Maya. But this is not intrinsically or fundamentally possible: the subjection can only be a submission of something in Nature to an action of Nature which is part of the conscious and free movement of the Spirit in things, a play of its own self-manifesting Omniscience. Ignorance must be part of the movement of the One, a development of its consciousness knowingly adopted, to which it is not forcibly subjected but which it uses for its cosmic purpose.

It is not open to us to get rid of the whole difficulty by saying that the Jivatman and the Supreme are not one, but eternally different, the one subject to ignorance, the other absolute in being and consciousness and therefore in knowledge; for this contradicts the supreme experience and the whole experience

which is that of unity in being, whatever difference there may be in the action of Nature. It is easier to accept the fact of unity in difference which is so evident and pervasive in all the building of the universe and satisfy ourselves with the statement that we are one, yet different, one in essential being and therefore in essential nature, different in soul-form and therefore in active nature. But we thereby only state the fact, leaving the difficulty raised by the fact unsolved, how that which belongs in the essence of its being to the unity of the Absolute and should therefore be one with it and with all in consciousness, comes to be divided in its dynamic form of self and its activity and subject to Ignorance. It is also to be noted that the statement would not be wholly true, since it is possible for the Jivatman to enter into unity with the active nature of the One and not only into a static essential oneness. Or we may escape the difficulty by saying that beyond or above existence and its problems there is the Unknowable which is beyond or above our experience, and that the action of Maya has already begun in the Unknowable before the world began and therefore is itself unknowable and inexplicable in its cause and its origin. This would be a sort of idealistic as opposed to a materialistic Agnosticism. But all Agnosticism is subject to this objection that it may be nothing but our refusal to know, a too ready embracing of an apparent and present restriction or constriction of consciousness, a sense of impotence which may be permitted to the immediate limitations of the mind but not to the Jivatman who is one with the Supreme. The Supreme must surely know himself and the cause of ignorance, and therefore the Jivatman has no ground to despair of any knowledge or deny his capacity of knowing the integral Supreme and the original cause of his own present ignorance.

The Unknowable, if it is at all, may be a supreme state of Sachchidananda beyond our highest conceptions of existence, consciousness and bliss; that is what was evidently meant by the Asat, the Non-Existent of the Taittiriya Upanishad, which alone was in the beginning and out of which the existent was born, and possibly too it may be the inmost sense of the Nirvana of the Buddha: for the dissolution of our present state

by Nirvana may be a reaching to some highest state beyond all notion or experience of self even, an ineffable release from our sense of existence. Or it may be the Upanishad's absolute and unconditioned bliss which is beyond expression and beyond understanding, because it surpasses all that we can conceive of or describe as consciousness and existence. This is the sense in which we have already accepted it; for the acceptation commits us only to a refusal to put a limit to the ascension of the Infinite. Or, if it is not this, if it is something quite different from existence, even from an unconditioned existence, it must be the absolute Non-Being of the nihilistic thinker.

But out of absolute Nothingness nothing can come, not even anything merely apparent, not even an illusion; and if the absolute Non-existence is not that, then it can only be an absolute eternally unrealised Potentiality, an enigmatic zero of the Infinite out of which relative potentialities may at any time emerge, but only some actually succeed in emerging into phenomenal appearance. Out of this Non-existence anything may arise, and there is no possibility of saying what or why; it is for all practical purposes a seed of absolute chaos out of which by some happy—or rather unhappy—accident there has emerged the order of a universe. Or we may say that there is no real order of the universe; what we take for such is a persistent habit of the senses and the life and a figment of the mind and it is useless to seek for an ultimate reason of things. Out of an absolute chaos all paradox and absurdity can be born, and the world is such a paradox, a mysterious sum of contraries and puzzles, or, it may be, in effect, as some have felt or thought, a huge error, a monstrous, an infinite delirium. Of such a universe not an absolute Consciousness and Knowledge, but an absolute Inconscience and Ignorance may be the source. Anything may be true in such a cosmos: everything may have been born out of nothing; thinking mind may be only a disease of unthinking Force or inconscient Matter; dominant order, which we suppose to be existence according to the truth of things, may be really the mechanical law of an eternal self-ignorance and not the self-evolution of a supreme self-ruling conscious

Will; perpetual existence may be the constant phenomenon of an eternal Nihil. All opinions about the origins of things become of an equal force, since all are equally valid or invalid; for all become equally possible where there is no sure starting-point and no ascertainable goal of the revolutions of the becoming. All these opinions have been held by the human mind and in all there has been profit, even if we regard them as errors; for errors are permitted to the mind because they open doors upon truth, negatively by destroying opposite errors, positively by preparing an element in a new constructive hypothesis. But, pushed too far, this view of things leads to the negation of the whole aim of philosophy, which seeks for knowledge and not for chaos and which cannot fulfil itself if the last word of knowledge is the Unknowable, but only if it is something, to use the words of the Upanishad, which being known all is known. The Unknowable — not absolutely unknowable, but beyond mental knowledge — can only be a higher degree in the intensity of being of that Something, a degree beyond the loftiest summit attainable by mental beings, and, if it were known as it must be known to itself, that discovery would not destroy entirely what is given us by our supreme possible knowledge but rather carry it to a higher fulfilment and larger truth of what it has already gained by self-vision and self-experience. It is then this Something, an Absolute which can be so known that all truths can stand in it and by it and find there their reconciliation, that we must discover as our starting-point and keep as our constant base of thinking and seeing and by it find a solution of the problem; for it is That alone that can carry in it a key to the paradoxes of the universe.

This Something is, as Vedanta insists and as we have throughout insisted, in its manifest nature Sachchidananda, a trinity of absolute existence, consciousness and bliss. It is from this primal truth that we must start in approaching the problem, and it is evident then that the solution must be found in an action of consciousness manifesting itself as knowledge and yet limiting that knowledge in such a way as to create the phenomenon of the Ignorance,— and since the Ignorance is a

phenomenon of the dynamic action of Force of Consciousness, not an essential fact but a creation, a consequence of that action, it is this Force aspect of Consciousness that it will be fruitful to consider. Absolute consciousness is in its nature absolute power; the nature of Chit is Shakti: Force or Shakti concentrated and energised for cognition or for action in a realising power effective or creative, the power of conscious being dwelling upon itself and bringing out, as it were, by the heat of its incubation⁶ the seed and development of all that is within it or, to use a language convenient to our minds, of all its truths and potentialities, has created the universe. If we examine our own consciousness, we shall see that this power of its energy applying itself to its object is really the most positive dynamic force it has; by that it arrives at all its knowledge and its action and its creation. But for us there are two objects on which the dynamism within can act, ourselves, the internal world, and others, whether creatures or things, the external world around us. To Sachchidananda this distinction with its effective and operative consequences does not apply in the same way as for us, because all is himself and within himself and there is no such division as we make by the limitations of our mind. Secondly, in us only a part of the force of our being is identified with our voluntary action, with our will engaged in mental or other activity, the rest is to our surface mental awareness involuntary in its action or subconscious or superconscious, and from this division also a great number of important practical consequences emerge: but in Sachchidananda this division too and its consequences do not apply, since all is his one indivisible self and all action and result

⁶ Tapas means literally heat, afterwards any kind of energism, askesis, austerity of conscious force acting upon itself or its object. The world was created by Tapas in the form, says the ancient image, of an egg, which being broken, again by Tapas, heat of incubation of conscious force, the Purusha emerged, Soul in Nature, like a bird from the egg. It may be observed that the usual translation of the word *tapasyā* in English books, "penance", is quite misleading—the idea of penance entered rarely into the austerities practised by Indian ascetics. Nor was mortification of the body the essence even of the most severe and self-afflicting austerities; the aim was rather an overpassing of the hold of the bodily nature on the consciousness or else a supernormal energising of the consciousness and will to gain some spiritual or other object.

are movements of his one indivisible will, his consciousness-force in dynamic operation. Tapas is the nature of action of his consciousness as of ours, but it is the integral Tapas of an integral consciousness in an indivisible Existence.

But here a question may arise, since there is a passivity in Existence and in Nature as well as an activity, immobile status as well as kinesis, what is the place and role of this Force, this power and its concentration in regard to a status where there is no play of energy, where all is immobile. In ourselves we habitually associate our Tapas, our conscious force, with active consciousness, with energy in play and in internal or external act and motion. That which is passive in us produces no action or only an involuntary or mechanical action, and we do not associate it with our will or conscious force; still, since there too there is the possibility of action or the emergence of an automatic activity, it must have at least a passively responsive or automatic conscious force in it; or there is in it either a secretly positive or a negative and inverse Tapas. It may also be that there is a larger conscious force, power or will in our being unknown to us which is behind this involuntary action,— if not a will, at least a force of some kind which itself initiates action or else responds to the contacts, suggestions, stimulations of the universal Energy. In Nature also we know that things stable, inert or passive are yet maintained in their energy by a secret and unceasing motion, an energy in action upholding the apparent immobility. Here too, then, all is due to the presence of Shakti, to the action of its power in concentration, its Tapas. But beyond this, beyond this relative aspect of status and kinesis, we find that we have the power to arrive at what seems to us an absolute passivity or immobility of our consciousness in which we cease from all mental and physical activity. There seem, then, to be an active consciousness in which consciousness works as an energy throwing up knowledge and activity out of itself and of which therefore Tapas is the character, and a passive consciousness in which consciousness does not act as an energy, but only exists as a status and of which therefore absence of Tapas or force in action is the character. Is the apparent absence of Tapas in this state

real, or is there such an effective distinction in Sachchidananda? It is affirmed that there is: the dual status of Brahman, quiescent and creative, is indeed one of the most important and fruitful distinctions in Indian philosophy; it is besides a fact of spiritual experience.

Here let us observe, first, that by this passivity in ourselves we arrive from particular and broken knowledge at a greater, a one and a unifying knowledge; secondly, that if, in the state of passivity, we open ourselves entirely to what is beyond, we can become aware of a Power acting upon us which we feel to be not our own in the limited egoistic sense, but universal or transcendental, and that this Power works through us for a greater play of knowledge, a greater play of energy, action and result, which also we feel to be not our own, but that of the Divine, of Sachchidananda, ourselves only its field or channel. The result happens in both cases because our individual consciousness rests from an ignorant limited action and opens itself to the supreme status or to the supreme action. In the latter, the more dynamic opening, there is power and play of knowledge and action, and that is Tapas; but in the former also, in the static consciousness, there is evidently a power for knowledge and a concentration of knowledge or at least a concentration of consciousness in immobility and a self-realisation, and that too is Tapas. Therefore it would seem that Tapas, concentration of power of consciousness, is the character of both the passive and the active consciousness of Brahman, and that our own passivity also has a certain character of an unseen supporting or instrumentalising Tapas. It is a concentration of energy of consciousness that sustains, while it lasts, all creation, all action and kinesis; but it is also a concentration of power of consciousness that supports inwardly or informs all status, even the most immobile passivity, even an infinite stillness or an eternal silence.

But still, it may be said, these are in the end two different things, and this is shown by their difference of opposite results; for a resort to the passivity of Brahman leads to the cessation of this existence and a resort to the active Brahman leads to its continuance. But here too, let us observe that this distinction

arises by a movement of the individual soul from one poise to another, from the poise of Brahman-consciousness in the world, where it is a fulcrum for the universal action, to or towards the poise of Brahman-consciousness beyond the world, where it is a power for the withholding of energy from the universal action. Moreover, if it is by energy of Tapas that the dispensing of force of being in the world-action is accomplished, it is equally by the energy of Tapas that the drawing back of that force of being is accomplished. The passive consciousness of Brahman and its active consciousness are not two different, conflicting and incompatible things; they are the same consciousness, the same energy, at one end in a state of self-reservation, at the other cast into a motion of self-giving and self-deploying, like the stillness of a reservoir and the coursing of the channels which flow from it. In fact, behind every activity there is and must be a passive power of being from which it arises, by which it is supported, which even, we see in the end, governs it from behind without being totally identified with it—in the sense at least of being itself all poured out into the action and indistinguishable from it. Such a self-exhausting identification is impossible; for no action, however vast, exhausts the original power from which it proceeds, leaving nothing behind it in reserve. When we get back into our own conscious being, when we stand back from our own action and see how it is done, we discover that it is our whole being which stands behind any particular act or sum of activities, passive in the rest of its integrality, active in its limited dispensation of energy; but that passivity is not an incapable inertia, it is a poise of self-reserved energy. A similar truth must apply still more completely to the conscious being of the Infinite, whose power, in silence of status as in creation, must also be infinite.

It is immaterial for the moment to inquire whether the passivity out of which all emerges is absolute or only relative to the observable action from which it holds back. It is enough to note that, though we make the distinction for the convenience of our minds, there is not a passive Brahman and an active Brahman, but one Brahman, an Existence which reserves Its Tapas in what

we call passivity and gives Itself in what we call Its activity. For the purposes of action, these are two poles of one being or a double power necessary for creation; the action proceeds on its circuit from the reservation and returns to it, presumably, the energies that were derived, to be again thrown out in a fresh circuit. The passivity of Brahman is Tapas or concentration of Its being dwelling upon Itself in a self-absorbed concentration of Its immobile energy; the activity is Tapas of Its being releasing what It held out of that incubation into mobility and travelling in a million waves of action, dwelling still upon each as It travels and liberating in it the being's truths and potentialities. There too is a concentration of force, but a multiple concentration, which seems to us a diffusion. But it is not really a diffusion, but a deploying; Brahman does not cast Its energy out of Itself to be lost in some unreal exterior void, but keeps it at work within Its being, conserving it unabridged and undiminished in all its continual process of conversion and transmutation. The passivity is a great conservation of Shakti, of Tapas supporting a manifold initiation of movement and transmutation into forms and happenings; the activity is a conservation of Shakti, of Tapas in the movement and transmutation. As in ourselves, so in Brahman, both are relative to each other, both simultaneously coexist, pole and pole in the action of one Existence.

The Reality then is neither an eternal passivity of immobile Being nor an eternal activity of Being in movement, nor is It an alternation in Time between these two things. Neither in fact is the sole absolute truth of Brahman's reality; their opposition is only true of It in relation to the activities of Its consciousness. When we perceive Its deployment of the conscious energy of Its being in the universal action, we speak of It as the mobile active Brahman; when we perceive Its simultaneous reservation of the conscious energy of Its being kept back from the action, we speak of It as the immobile passive Brahman,—Saguna and Nirguna, Kshara and Akshara: otherwise the terms would have no meaning; for there is one reality and not two independent realities, one immobile, the other mobile. In the ordinary view of the soul's evolution into the action, *pravrtti*, and its involution

into the passivity, *nivṛtti*, it is supposed that in the action the individual soul becomes ignorant, nescient of its passive which is supposed to be its true being, and in the passivity it becomes finally nescient of its active which is supposed to be its false or only apparent being. But this is because these two movements take place alternately for us, as in our sleep and waking; we pass in waking into nescience of our sleeping condition, in sleep into nescience of our waking being. But this happens because only part of our being performs this alternative movement and we falsely think of ourselves as only that partial existence: but we can discover by a deeper psychological experience that the larger being in us is perfectly aware of all that happens even in what is to our partial and superficial being a state of unconsciousness; it is limited neither by sleep nor by waking. So it is in our relations with Brahman who is our real and integral being. In the ignorance we identify ourselves with only a partial consciousness, mental or spiritual-mental in its nature, which becomes nescient of its self of status by movement; in this part of us, when we lose the movement, we lose at the same time our hold on our self of action by entering into passivity. By an entire passivity the mind falls asleep or enters into trance or else is liberated into a spiritual silence; but though it is a liberation from the ignorance of the partial being in its flux of action, it is earned by putting on a luminous nescience of the dynamic Reality or a luminous separation from it: the spiritual-mental being remains self-absorbed in a silent essential status of existence and becomes either incapable of active consciousness or repugnant to all activity; this release of silence is a status through which the soul passes in its journey towards the Absolute. But there is a greater fulfilment of our true and integral being in which both the static and the dynamic sides of the self are liberated and fulfilled in That which upholds both and is limited neither by action nor by silence.

For Brahman does not pass alternately from passivity to activity and back to passivity by cessation of Its dynamic force of being. If that were really true of the integral Reality, then, while the universe continued, there would be no passive Brahman

in existence, all would be action, and, if our universe were dissolved, there would be no active Brahman, all would become cessation and immobile stillness. But this is not so, for we can become aware of an eternal passivity and self-concentrated calm penetrating and upholding all the cosmic activity and all its multiply concentrated movement,— and this could not be if, so long as any activity continued, the concentrated passivity did not exist supporting it and within it. Integral Brahman possesses both the passivity and the activity simultaneously and does not pass alternately from one to the other as from a sleep to a waking: it is only some partial activity in us which seems to do that, and we by identifying ourselves with that partial activity have the appearance of this alternation from one nescience to another nescience; but our true, our integral being is not subject to these opposites and it does not need to become unaware of its dynamic self in order to possess its self of silence. When we get the integral knowledge and the integral liberation of both soul and nature free from the disabilities of the restricted partial and ignorant being, we too can possess the passivity and the activity with a simultaneous possession, exceeding both these poles of the universality, limited by neither of these powers of the Self in its relation or non-relation to Nature.

The Supreme, it has been declared in the Gita, exceeds both the immobile self and the mobile being; even put together they do not represent all he is. For obviously we do not mean, when we speak of his possessing them simultaneously, that he is the sum of a passivity and an activity, an integer made of those two fractions, passive with three fourths of himself, active with one fourth of his existence. In that case, Brahman might be a sum of nesciences, the passive three fourths not only indifferent to but quite ignorant of all that the activity is doing, the active one fourth quite unaware of the passivity and unable to possess it except by ceasing from action. Even, Brahman the sum might amount to something quite different from his two fractions, something, as it were, up and aloof, ignorant of and irresponsible for anything which some mystic Maya was at once obstinately doing and rigidly abstaining from doing in the two fractions of

his existence. But it is clear that Brahman the Supreme Being must be aware both of the passivity and the activity and regard them not as his absolute being, but as opposite, yet mutually satisfying terms of his universalities. It cannot be true that Brahman, by an eternal passivity, is unaware, entirely separated from his own activities; free, he contains them in himself, supports them with his eternal power of calm, initiates them from his eternal poise of energy. It must be equally untrue that Brahman in his activity is unaware of or separated from his passivity; omnipresent, he is there supporting the action, possesses it always in the heart of the movement and is eternally calm and still and free and blissful in all the whirl of its energies. Nor in either silence or action can he be at all unaware of his absolute being, but knows that all he expresses through them draws its value and power from the power of that absolute existence. If it seems otherwise to our experience, it is because we identify with one aspect and by that exclusiveness fail to open ourselves to the integral Reality.

There necessarily follows an important first result, already arrived at from other view-points, that the Ignorance cannot have the origin of its existence or the starting-point of its dividing activities in the absolute Brahman or in integral Sachchidananda; it belongs only to a partial action of the being with which we identify ourselves, just as in the body we identify ourselves with that partial and superficial consciousness which alternates between sleep and waking: it is indeed this identification putting aside all the rest of the Reality behind us that is the constituting cause of the Ignorance. And if Ignorance is not an element or power proper to the absolute nature of the Brahman or to Its integrality, there can be no original and primal Ignorance. Maya, if it be an original power of the consciousness of the Eternal, cannot itself be an ignorance or in any way akin to the nature of ignorance, but must be a transcendent and universal power of self-knowledge and all-knowledge; ignorance can only intervene as a minor and subsequent movement, partial and relative. Is it then something inherent in the multiplicity of souls? Does it come into being immediately Brahman views himself in the

multiplicity, and does that multiplicity consist of a sum of souls each in its very nature fractional and divided from all the others in consciousness, unable to become aware of them at all except as things external to it, linked at most by communication from body to body or mind to mind, but incapable of unity? But we have seen that this is only what we seem to be in our most superficial layer of consciousness, the external mind and the physical; when we get back into a subtler, deeper, larger action of our consciousness, we find the walls of division becoming thinner and in the end there is left no wall of division, no Ignorance.

Body is the outward sign and lowest basis of the apparent division which Nature plunging into ignorance and self-nescience makes the starting-point for the recovery of unity by the individual soul, unity even in the midst of the most exaggerated forms of her multiple consciousness. Bodies cannot communicate with each other except by external means and through a gulf of externality; cannot penetrate each other except by division of the penetrated body or by taking advantage of some gap in it, some pre-existent division; cannot unite except by a breaking up and devouring, a swallowing and absorption and so an assimilation, or at most a fusion in which both forms disappear. Mind too, when identified with body, is hampered by its limitations; but in itself it is more subtle and two minds can penetrate each other without hurt or division, can interchange their substance without mutual injury, can in a way become parts of each other: still mind too has its own form which is separative of it from other minds and is apt to take its stand on this separateness. When we get back to soul-consciousness, the obstacles to unity lessen and finally cease to exist altogether. The soul can in its consciousness identify itself with other souls, can contain them and enter into and be contained by them, can realise its unity with them; and this can take place, not in a featureless and indistinguishable sleep, not in a Nirvana in which all distinctions and individualities of soul and mind and body are lost, but in a perfect waking which observes and takes account of all distinctions but exceeds them.

Therefore ignorance and self-limiting division are not inherent and insuperable in the multiplicity of souls, are not the very nature of the multiplicity of Brahman. Brahman, as he exceeds the passivity and the activity, so too exceeds the unity and multiplicity. He is one in himself, but not with a self-limiting unity exclusive of the power of multiplicity, such as is the separated unity of the body and the mind; he is not the mathematical integer, one, which is incapable of containing the hundred and is therefore less than the hundred. He contains the hundred, is one in all the hundred. One in himself, he is one in the many and the many are one in him. In other words, Brahman in his unity of spirit is aware of his multiplicity of souls and in the consciousness of his multiple souls is aware of the unity of all souls. In each soul he, the immanent Spirit, the Lord in each heart, is aware of his oneness. The Jivatman illumined by him, aware of its unity with the One, is also aware of its unity with the many. Our superficial consciousness, identified with body and with divided life and dividing mind, is ignorant; but that also can be illumined and made aware. Multiplicity, then, is not the necessary cause of the ignorance.

Ignorance, as we have already stated, comes in at a later stage, as a later movement, when mind is separated from its spiritual and supramental basis, and culminates in this earth-life where the individual consciousness in the many identifies itself by dividing mind with the form, which is the only safe basis of division. But what is the form? It is, at least as we see it here, a formation of concentrated energy, a knot of the force of consciousness in its movement, a knot maintained in being by a constant whirl of action; but whatever transcendent truth or reality it proceeds from or expresses, it is not in any part of itself in manifestation durable or eternal. It is not eternal in its integrality, nor in its constituting atoms; for they can be disintegrated by dissolving the knot of energy in constant concentrated action which is the sole thing that maintains their apparent stability. It is a concentration of Tapas in movement of force on the form maintaining it in being which sets up the physical basis of division. But all things in the activity are, we

have seen, a concentration of Tapas in movement of force upon its object. The origin of the Ignorance must then be sought for in some self-absorbed concentration of Tapas, of Conscious-Force in action on a separate movement of the Force; to us this takes the appearance of mind identifying itself with the separate movement and identifying itself also in the movement separately with each of the forms resulting from it. So it builds a wall of separation which shuts out the consciousness in each form from awareness of its own total self, of other embodied consciousnesses and of universal being. It is here that we must look for the secret of the apparent ignorance of the embodied mental being as well as of the great apparent unconsciousness of physical Nature. We have to ask ourselves what is the nature of this absorbing, this separating, this self-forgetful concentration which is the obscure miracle of the universe.

Chapter XIII

Exclusive Concentration of Consciousness-Force and the Ignorance

From the kindled fire of Energy of Consciousness Truth was born and the Law of Truth; from that the Night, from the Night the flowing ocean of being.

*Rig Veda.*¹

SINCE Brahman is in the essentiality of its universal being a unity and a multiplicity aware of each other and in each other and since in its reality it is something beyond the One and the Many, containing both, aware of both, Ignorance can only come about as a subordinate phenomenon by some concentration of consciousness absorbed in a part knowledge or a part action of the being and excluding the rest from its awareness. There may be either a concentration of the One in itself to the exclusion of the Many or of the Many in their own action to the exclusion of the all-awareness of the One, or of the individual being in himself to the exclusion both of the One and the rest of the Many who are then to him separated units not included in his direct awareness. Or again there may be or there may intervene at a certain point some general rule of exclusive concentration, operative in all these three directions, a concentration of separative active consciousness in a separative movement; but this takes place not in the true self, but in the force of active being, in Prakriti.

This hypothesis we adopt in preference to the others, because none of the others taken by itself will hold or will square

¹ X. 190. 1.

with all the facts of existence. Integral Brahman cannot be in its integrality the source of the Ignorance, because its integrality is in its very nature all-consciousness. The One cannot in its integral conscious being exclude the Many from itself, because the Many would not then at all exist; at most it can stand back somewhere in its consciousness from the cosmic play so as to enable a similar movement in the individual being. The Many in the integrality or in each self of the Many cannot be really ignorant of the One or of others, because by the Many we mean the same divine Self in all, individualised indeed, but still one in conscious being with all in a single universality and one too with the original and transcendent Being. Ignorance is therefore not the natural character of the consciousness of the soul, even of the individual soul; it is the outcome of some particularising action in the executive Conscious-Force when it is absorbed in its works and forgetful of self and of the total reality of the nature. This action cannot be that of the whole being or of the whole force of being,—for the character of that completeness is whole consciousness and not partial consciousness,—it must be a superficial or partial movement absorbed in a superficial or partial action of the consciousness and the energy, concentrated in its formation, oblivious of all else that is not included in the formation or not there overtly operative. Ignorance is Nature's purposeful oblivion of the Self and the All, leaving them aside, putting them behind herself in order to do solely what she has to do in some outer play of existence.

In the infinity of being and its infinite awareness concentration of consciousness, Tapas, is always present as an inherent power of Consciousness-Force: it is a self-held or self-gathered dwelling of the eternal Awareness in itself and on itself or on its object; but the object is always in some way itself, its own being or a manifestation and movement of its being. The concentration may be essential; it may be even a sole indwelling or an entire absorption in the essence of its own being, a luminous or else a self-oblivious self-immersion. Or it may be an integral or else a total-multiple or a part-multiple concentration. Or it may be a single separative regard on one field of its being or movement,

a single-pointed concentration in one centre or an absorption in one objective form of its self-existence. The first, the essential, is at one end the superconscious Silence and at the other end the Inconscience; the second, the integral, is the total consciousness of Sachchidananda, the supramental concentration; the third, the multiple, is the method of the totalising or global overmental awareness; the fourth, the separative, is the characteristic nature of the Ignorance. The supreme integrality of the Absolute holds all these states or powers of its consciousness together as a single indivisible being looking at all itself in manifestation with a simultaneous self-vision.

Concentration in this sense of self-held dwelling in itself or on itself as object may be said then to belong to the very nature of conscious being. For, although there is an infinite extension of consciousness and a diffusion of consciousness, it is a self-held self-contained extension or a self-held self-contained diffusion. Although there may seem to be a dispersion of its energies, that is in reality a form of distribution, and is only possible in a superficial field because it is supported by an underlying self-held concentration. An exclusive concentration on or in a single subject or object or domain of being or movement is not a denial or departure from the Spirit's awareness, it is one form of the self-gathering of the power of Tapas. But when the concentration is exclusive, it brings about a holding back behind it of the rest of self-knowledge. It may be aware of the rest all the time, yet act as if it were not aware of it; that would not be a state or act of Ignorance: but if the consciousness erects by the concentration a wall of exclusion limiting itself to a single field, domain or habitation in the movement so that it is aware only of that or aware of all the rest as outside itself, then we have a principle of self-limiting knowledge which can result in a separative knowledge and culminate in a positive and effective ignorance.

We can get some glimpse of what this means, to what it amounts in action, when we look at the nature of exclusive concentration in mental man, in our own consciousness. First of all, we must note that what we mean ordinarily by the man

is not his inner self, but only a sum of apparent continuous movement of consciousness and energy in past, present and future to which we give this name. It is this that in appearance does all the works of the man, thinks all his thoughts, feels all his emotions. This energy is a movement of Consciousness-Force concentrated on a temporal stream of inward and outward workings. But we know that behind this stream of energy there is a whole sea of consciousness which is aware of the stream, but of which the stream is unaware; for this sum of surface energy is a selection, an outcome from all the rest that is invisible. That sea is the subliminal self, the superconscious, the subconscious, the intraconscious and circumconscious being, and holding it all together the soul, the psychic entity. The stream is the natural, the superficial man. In this superficial man Tapas, the being's dynamic force of consciousness, is concentrated on the surface in a certain mass of superficial workings; all the rest of itself it has put behind and may be vaguely aware of it there in the unformulated back of its conscious existence, but is not aware of it in this superficial absorbed movement in front. It is not precisely, at any rate in that back or in the depths, ignorant of itself in any essential sense of the word, but for the purposes of its superficial movement and within that movement only it is oblivious of its real, its greater self, by absorption, by exclusive concentration on what it is superficially doing. Yet it is really the hidden sea and not the superficial stream which is doing all the action: it is the sea that is the source of this movement, not the conscious wave it throws up, whatever the consciousness of the wave, absorbed in its movement, living in that, seeing nothing else but that, may think about the matter. And that sea, the real self, the integral conscious being, the integral force of being, is not ignorant; even the wave is not essentially ignorant, — for it contains within itself all the consciousness it has forgotten and but for that it could not act or endure at all, — but it is self-oblivious, absorbed in its own movement, too absorbed to note anything else than the movement while that continues to preoccupy it. A limited practical self-oblivion, not an essential and binding self-ignorance, is the nature of this exclusive

concentration which is yet the root of that which works as the Ignorance.

So too we see that man, though a really indivisible stream of Tapas, of conscious energy in Time, capable of acting in the present only by the sum of his past force of working, creating already his future by his past and his present action, yet lives absorbed in the present moment, lives from moment to moment, and is therefore in this superficial action of consciousness ignorant of his future and ignorant of his past except for that small part of it which at any moment he may recall to him by memory. He does not, however, live in the past; what he recalls is not the past itself, but only the ghost of it, a conceptual shadow of a reality which is now to him dead, non-existent, no longer in being. But all this is an action of the superficial ignorance. The true consciousness within is not unaware of its past; it holds it there, not necessarily in memory but in being, still active, living, ready with its fruits, and sends it up from time to time in memory or more concretely in result of past action or past causes to the superficial conscious being, — that is indeed the true rationale of what is called Karma. It is or can be aware too of the future, for there is somewhere in the inner being a field of cognition open to future knowledge, a prospective as well as a retrospective Time-sense, Time-vision, Time-perception; something in it lives indivisibly in the three times and contains all their apparent divisions, holds the future ready for manifestation within it. Here, then, in this habit of living in the present, we have a second absorption, a second exclusive concentration which complicates and farther limits the being, but simplifies the apparent course of the action by relating it not to the whole infinite course of Time, but to a definite succession of moments.

Therefore in his superficial consciousness man is to himself dynamically, practically, the man of the moment, not the man of the past who once was but is no longer in existence, nor the man of the future who is not yet in being; it is by memory that he links himself with the one, by anticipation with the other: a continuous ego-sense runs through the three times, but this is a centralising mental construction, not an essential or an extended

existence containing what was, is and will be. An intuition of self is behind it, but that is an underlying identity, unaffected by the changes of his personality; in his surface formation of being he is not that but what he is at the moment. Yet all the time this existence in the moment is not the real or the whole truth of his being, but only a practical or pragmatic truth for the purposes of the superficial movement of his life and within its limits. It is a truth, not an unreality, but a truth only in its positive part; in its negative parts it is an ignorance, and this negative ignorance limits and often distorts even the practical truth, so that the conscious life of man proceeds according to an ignorance, a partial, a half-true half-false knowledge, not according to the real truth of himself of which he is oblivious. Yet because his real self is the true determinator and governs all secretly from behind, it is after all a knowledge behind which really determines the formed course of his existence; the superficial ignorance erects a necessary limiting outline and supplies the factors by which the outward colour and turn needed for his present human life and his present moment are given to his consciousness and his action. In the same way and for the same reason man identifies himself solely with the name and form he wears in his present existence; he is ignorant of his past before birth even as of his future after death. Yet all that he forgets is contained, present and effective, in the all-retaining integral consciousness within him.

There is a minor pragmatic use of exclusive concentration on the surface which may also give us an indication in spite of its temporary character. The superficial man living from moment to moment plays, as it were, several parts in his present life and, while he is busy with each part, he is capable of an exclusive concentration, an absorption in it, by which he forgets the rest of himself, puts it behind him for the moment, is to that extent self-oblivious. The man is for the moment the actor, the poet, the soldier or whatever else he may have been constituted and formed into by some peculiar and characteristic action of his force of being, his Tapas, his past conscious energy and by the action which develops from it. Not only is he apt to deliver

himself up to this exclusive concentration in a part of himself for the time being, but his success in the action very largely depends on the completeness with which he can thus put aside the rest of himself and live only in his immediate work. Yet all the time we can see that it is the whole man who is really doing the action and not merely this particular part of him; what he does, the way he does it, the elements he brings into it, the stamp he gives to his work depends on his whole character, mind, information, genius, all that the past of him has made him,—and not his past in this life only, but in other lives, and again not only his past, but the past, the present and the predestined future both of himself and the world around him are the determinants of his work. The present actor, poet or soldier in him is only a separative determination of his Tapas; it is his force of being organised for a particular kind of action of its energy, a separative movement of Tapas which is able—and this ability is not a weakness, a deficiency, but a great power of the consciousness—to absorb itself in that particular working to the temporary self-oblivion of the rest of itself, even though that rest is present all the time at the back of the consciousness and in the work itself and is active or has its influence in the shaping of the work. This active self-oblivion of the man in his work and the part he plays, differs from the other, the deeper self-oblivion, in that the wall of separation is less phenomenally and not at all enduringly complete; the mind can dissolve its concentration and go back from its work at any time to the consciousness of the larger self of which this was a partial action. The superficial or apparent man cannot so go back at will to the real man within him; he can only do it to some extent abnormally or supernormally in exceptional conditions of his mentality or, more permanently and completely, as the fruit of a long and arduous self-training, self-deepening, self-heightening, self-expansion. Still he can go back; therefore the difference is phenomenal only, not essential: it is, in essence, in both cases the same movement of exclusive concentration, of absorption in a particular aspect of himself, action, movement of force, though with different circumstances and another manner of working.

This power of exclusive concentration is not confined to absorption in a particular character or type of working of one's larger self, but extends to a complete self-forgetfulness in the particular action in which we happen at the moment to be engaged. The actor in moments of great intensity forgets that he is an actor and becomes the part that he is playing on the stage; not that he really thinks himself Rama or Ravana, but that he identifies himself for the time being with the form of character and action which the name represents and so completely as to forget the real man who is playing it. So the poet forgets himself, the man, the worker, in his work and is for the moment only the inspired impersonal energy which works itself out in formation of word and rhythm; of all else he is oblivious. The soldier forgets himself in the act and becomes the charge and the fury and the slaying. In the same way the man who is overcome by intense anger, forgets himself as it is commonly said, or as it has been still more aptly and forcibly put, becomes anger: and these terms express a real truth which is not the whole truth of the man's being at the time, but a practical fact of his conscious energy in action. He does forget himself, forgets all the rest of himself with its other impulses and powers of self-restraint and self-direction, so that he acts simply as the energy of the passion which preoccupies him, becomes that energy for the time being. This is as far as self-forgetfulness can go in the normal active human psychology; for it must return soon to the wider self-aware consciousness of which this self-forgetfulness is only a temporary movement.

But in the larger universal consciousness there must be a power of carrying this movement to its absolute point, to the greatest extreme possible for any relative movement to reach, and this point is reached, not in human unconsciousness which is not abiding and always refers back to the awakened conscious being that man normally and characteristically is, but in the inconscience of material Nature. This inconscience is no more real than the ignorance of exclusive concentration in our temporary being which limits the waking consciousness of man; for as in us, so in the atom, the metal, the plant, in every form of material

Nature, in every energy of material Nature, there is, we know, a secret soul, a secret will, a secret intelligence at work, other than the mute self-oblivious form, the Conscient—conscient even in unconscious things—of the Upanishad, without whose presence and informing conscious-force or Tapas no work of Nature could be done. What is inconscient there is the Prakriti, the formal, the motional action of the energy absorbed in the working, identified with it, to such an extent as to be bound in a sort of trance or swoon of concentration, unable to go back, while imprisoned in that form, to its real self, to the integral conscious being and the integral force of conscious being which it has put behind it, of which in its ecstatic trance of mere working and energy it has become oblivious. Prakriti, the executive Force, becomes unaware of Purusha, the Conscious Being, holds him hidden within herself and becomes again slowly aware only with the emergence of consciousness from this swoon of the Inconscience. Purusha indeed consents to assume the apparent form of itself which Prakriti constructs for it; it seems to become the Inconscient, the physical being, the vital being, the mental being: but in all these it remains still in reality itself; the light of the secret conscious Being supports and informs the action of the inconscient or emergingly conscious energy of Nature.

The inconscience is superficial like the ignorance of the waking human mind or the inconscience or subconscience of his sleeping mind, and within it is the All-conscient; it is entirely phenomenal, but it is the complete phenomenon. So complete is it that it is only by an impulsion of evolutionary consciousness emerging into other forms less imprisoned by this inconscient method of working that it can come back to itself, recover in the animal a partial awareness, then in man at his highest some possibility of approach to a first more complete though still superficial initiation of a truly conscious working. But still, as in the case of the superficial and the real man where there is also a similar though lesser inability, the difference is phenomenal only. Essentially, in the universal order of things, the inconscience of material Nature is the same exclusive concentration, the same absorption in the work and the energy as in the self-limitation

of the waking human mind, or the concentration of the self-forgetting mind in its working; it is only that self-limitation carried to a farthest point of self-forgetfulness which becomes, not a temporary action, but the law of its action. Nescience in Nature is the complete self-ignorance; the partial knowledge and general ignorance of man is a partial self-ignorance marking in her evolutionary order a return towards self-knowledge: but both are and all ignorance is, when examined, a superficially exclusive self-forgetful concentration of Tapas, of the conscious energy of being in a particular line or section of its movement of which alone it is aware or which alone it seems to be on the surface. The ignorance is effective within the bounds of that movement and valid for its purposes, but phenomenal, partial, superficial, not essentially real, not integral. We have to use the word "real" necessarily in a quite limited and not in its absolute sense; for the ignorance is real enough, but it is not the whole truth of our being and by regarding it by itself even its truth is misrepresented to our outer awareness. In that true truth of itself it is an involved Consciousness and Knowledge evolving back to itself, but it is dynamically effective as an Inconscience and an Ignorance.

This being the root-nature of the Ignorance, a practical truth of a phenomenally but not really dividing, of a limiting and separative conscious energy absorbed in its works to the apparent forgetfulness of its integral and real self, we may answer the questions that arise of the why, the where and the how of this movement. The reason for the Ignorance, its necessity, becomes clear enough once we have seen that without it the object of the manifestation of our world would be impossible, could not be done at all, or not completely, or not in the way in which it should be and is done. Each side of the manifold Ignorance has its justification, which is only a part of the one general necessity. Man, living in his timeless being, could not have thrown himself into the stream of Time with that movement of subjection to its flux from moment to moment which is the nature of his present living. Living in his superconscious or subliminal self, he could not have worked out from the knot of his individual

mentality the relations which he has to ravel and unravel with the world about him, or would have to do it in a radically different fashion. Living in the universal self and not in the egoistic separative consciousness, he could not evolve that separate action, personality, outlook from himself as the sole or the initial centre and point of reference which is the contribution of the ego-sense to the world-workings. He has to put on the temporal, the psychological, the egoistic ignorance in order to protect himself against the light of the infinite and the largeness of the universal, so as to develop behind this defence his temporal individuality in the cosmos. He has to live as if in this one life and put on the ignorance of his infinite past and his future: for otherwise, if the past were present to him, he could not work out his present selected relations with his environment in the way intended; his knowledge would be too great for him, it would necessarily alter the whole spirit and balance and form of his action. He has to live in the mind absorbed by this bodily life and not in the supermind; for otherwise all these protecting walls of ignorance created by the limiting, dividing, differentiating power of mind would not be built or would become too thin and transparent for his purpose.

That purpose for which all this exclusive concentration we call the Ignorance is necessary, is to trace the cycle of self-oblivion and self-discovery for the joy of which the Ignorance is assumed in Nature by the secret spirit. It is not that all cosmic manifestation would otherwise become impossible; but it would be a quite different manifestation from the one in which we live; it would be confined to the higher worlds of the divine Existence or to a typal non-evolving cosmos where each being lived in the whole light of its own law of nature, and this obverse manifestation, this evolving cycle, would be impossible. What is here the goal would be then the eternal condition; what is here a stage would be the perpetuated type of existence. It is to find himself in the apparent opposites of his being and his nature that Sachchidananda descends into the material Nescience and puts on its phenomenal ignorance as a superficial mask in which he hides himself from his own conscious energy, leaving it self-forgetful

and absorbed in its works and forms. It is in those forms that the slowly awaking soul has to accept the phenomenal action of an ignorance which is really knowledge awaking progressively out of the original nescience, and it is in the new conditions created by these workings that it has to rediscover itself and divinely transform by that light the life which is thus labouring to fulfil the purpose of its descent into the Inconscience. Not to return as speedily as may be to heavens where perfect light and joy are eternal or to the supracosmic bliss is the object of this cosmic cycle, nor merely to repeat a purposeless round in a long unsatisfactory groove of ignorance seeking for knowledge and never finding it perfectly,—in that case the ignorance would be either an inexplicable blunder of the All-conscious or a painful and purposeless Necessity equally inexplicable,—but to realise the Ananda of the Self in other conditions than the supracosmic, in cosmic being, and to find its heaven of joy and light even in the oppositions offered by the terms of an embodied material existence, by struggle therefore towards the joy of self-discovery, would seem to be the true object of the birth of the soul in the human body and of the labour of the human race in the series of its cycles. The Ignorance is a necessary, though quite subordinate term which the universal Knowledge has imposed on itself that that movement might be possible,—not a blunder and a fall, but a purposeful descent, not a curse, but a divine opportunity. To find and embody the All-Delight in an intense summary of its manifoldness, to achieve a possibility of the infinite Existence which could not be achieved in other conditions, to create out of Matter a temple of the Divinity would seem to be the task imposed on the spirit born into the material universe.

The ignorance, we see, is not in the secret soul, but in the apparent Prakriti; nor does it belong to the whole of that Prakriti,—it cannot, for Prakriti is the action of the All-conscious,—but arises in some development from its original integrality of light and power. Where does that development take place, in what principle of being does it find its opportunity and starting-point? Not, certainly, in the infinite being, the infinite consciousness, the infinite delight which are the supreme planes of existence

and from which all else derives or descends into this obscurer ambiguous manifestation. There it can have no place. Not in the supermind; for in the supermind the infinite light and power are always present even in the most finite workings, and the consciousness of unity embraces the consciousness of diversity. It is on the plane of mind that this putting back of the real self-consciousness becomes possible. For mind is that power of the conscious being which differentiates and runs along the lines of differentiation with the sense of diversity prominent and characteristic and the sense of unity behind it only, not characteristic, not the very stuff of its workings. If by any chance this supporting sense of unity could be drawn back,—it is possessed by mind not in its own separate right, but because it has the supermind behind it, because it reflects the light of the supermind of which it is a derivative and secondary power,—if a veil could fall between mind and supermind shutting off the light of the Truth or letting it come through only in rays diffused, scattered, reflected but with distortion and division, then the phenomenon of the Ignorance would intervene. Such a veil exists, says the Upanishad, constituted by the action of Mind itself: it is in Overmind a golden lid which hides the face of the supramental Truth but reflects its image; in Mind it becomes a more opaque and smoky-luminous coverture. That action is the absorbed looking downward of Mind on the diversity which is its characteristic movement and away from the supreme unity which that diversity expresses, until it forgets altogether to remember and support itself by the unity. Even then the unity supports it and makes its activities possible, but the absorbed Energy is unaware of its own origin and greater, real self. Since Mind forgets that from which it derived, because of absorption in the workings of formative Energy, it becomes so far identified with that Energy as to lose hold even on itself, to become totally oblivious in a trance of work which it still supports in its somnambulist action, but of which it is no longer aware. This is the last stage of the descent of consciousness, an abysmal sleep, a fathomless trance of consciousness which is the profound basis of the action of material Nature.

It must be remembered, however, that when we speak of a partial movement of Consciousness-Force absorbed in its forms and actions, in a limited field of its working, this does not imply any real division of its integrality. The putting of the rest of itself behind it has only the effect of making all that rest occult to the frontal immediately active energy in the limited field of movement, but not of shutting it out of the field; in fact the integral Force is there though veiled by the Inconscience, and it is that integral Force supported by the integral self-being which through its frontal energy does all the work and inhabits all the forms created by the movement. It is to be noted also that in order to remove the veil of the Ignorance the conscious Force of being in us uses a reverse action of its power of exclusive concentration; it quiets the frontal movement of Prakriti in the individual consciousness and concentrates exclusively on the concealed inner being,—on the Self or on the true inner, psychic or mental or vital being, the Purusha,—to disclose it. But when it has done so, it need not remain in this opposite exclusiveness; it can resume its integral consciousness or a global consciousness which includes both being of Purusha and action of Prakriti, the soul and its instruments, the Self and the dynamisms of the Self-Power, *ātmaśakti*: it can then embrace its manifestation with a larger consciousness free from the previous limitation, free from the results of Nature's forgetfulness of the indwelling Spirit. Or it may quiet the whole working it has manifested, concentrate on a higher level of Self and Nature, raise the being to it and bring down the powers of the higher level to transform the previous manifestation: all that is so transformed is still included, but as a part of the higher dynamism and its higher values, in a new and greater self-creation. This is what can happen when the Consciousness-Force in our being decides to raise its evolution from the mental to the supramental level. In each case it is Tapas that is effective, but it acts in a different manner according to the thing that has to be done, according to the predetermined process, dynamism, self-deploying of the Infinite.

But still, even if this is the mechanism of the Ignorance, it may be asked whether it does not remain a mystery how

the All-conscious could, though in only a partial action of his conscious energy, succeed in arriving at even this superficial ignorance and inconsciousness. Even if it were so, it would be worth while to fix the exact action of this mystery, its nature, its limits, so that we may not be appalled by it and misled from the real purpose it serves and the opportunity it gives. But the mystery is a fiction of the dividing intellect which, because it finds or creates a logical opposition between two concepts, thinks there is a real opposition of the two facts observed and therefore an impossibility of coexistence and unity between them. This Ignorance is, as we have seen, really a power of the Knowledge to limit itself, to concentrate itself on the work in hand, an exclusive concentration in practice which does not prevent the full existence and working of the whole conscious being behind, but a working in the conditions chosen and self-imposed on the nature. All conscious self-limitation is a power for its special purpose, not a weakness; all concentration is a force of conscious being, not a disability. It is true that while the Supermind is capable of an integral, comprehensive, multiple, infinite self-concentration, this is dividing and limited; it is true also that it creates perverse as well as partial and, in so far, false or only half-true values of things: but we have seen the object of the limitation and of this partiality of knowledge; and the object being admitted, the power to fulfil it must be admitted also in the absolute force of the absolute Being. This power of self-limitation for a particular working, instead of being incompatible with the absolute conscious-force of that Being, is precisely one of the powers we should expect to exist among the manifold energies of the Infinite.

The Absolute is not really limited by putting forth in itself a cosmos of relations; it is the natural play of its absolute being, consciousness, force, self-delight. The Infinite is not limited by building up in itself an infinite series of interplaying finite phenomena; rather that is its natural self-expression. The One is not limited by its capacity for multiplicity in which it enjoys variously its own being; rather that is part of the true description of an infinite as opposed to a rigid, finite and conceptual unity.

So too the Ignorance, considered as a power of manifoldly self-absorbed and self-limiting concentration of the conscious being, is a natural capacity of variation in his self-conscious knowledge, one of the possible poises of relation of the Absolute in its manifestation, of the Infinite in its series of finite workings, of the One in its self-enjoyment in the Many. The power by self-absorption to become unaware of the world which yet at the same time continues in the being, is one extreme of this capacity of consciousness; the power by absorption in the cosmic workings to become ignorant of the self which all the time is carrying on those workings, is the reverse extreme. But neither really limits the integral self-aware existence of Sachchidananda which is superior to these apparent oppositions; even in their opposition they help to express and manifest the Ineffable.

Chapter XIV

The Origin and Remedy of Falsehood, Error, Wrong and Evil

The Lord accepts the sin and the virtue of none; because knowledge is veiled by Ignorance, mortal men are deluded.

*Gita.*¹

They live according to another idea of self than the reality, deluded, attached, expressing a falsehood,—as if by an enchantment they see the false as the true. *Maitri Upanishad.*²

They live and move in the Ignorance and go round and round, battered and stumbling, like blind men led by one who is blind. *Mundaka Upanishad.*³

One whose intelligence has attained to Unity, casts away from him both sin and virtue. *Gita.*⁴

He who has found the bliss of the Eternal is afflicted no more by the thought, “Why have I not done the good? Why have I done evil?” One who knows the self extricates himself from both these things. *Taittiriya Upanishad.*⁵

These are they who are conscious of the much falsehood in the world; they grow in the house of Truth, they are the strong and invincible sons of Infinity. *Rig Veda.*⁶

The first and the highest are truth; in the middle there is falsehood, but it is taken between the truth on both sides of it and it draws its being from the truth.⁷ *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*⁸

¹ V. 15.

² VII. 10.

³ I. 2. 8.

⁴ II. 50.

⁵ II. 9.

⁶ VII. 60. 5.

⁷ The truth of the physical reality and the truth of the spiritual and superconscious reality. Into the intermediate subjective and mental realities which stand between them, falsehood can enter, but it takes either truth from above or truth from below as the substance out of which it builds itself and both are pressing upon it to turn its misconstructions into truth of life and truth of spirit. ⁸ V. 5. 1.

IF IGNORANCE is in its nature a self-limiting knowledge oblivious of the integral self-awareness and confined to an exclusive concentration in a single field or upon a concealing surface of cosmic movement, what, in this view, are we to make of the problem which most poignantly preoccupies the mind of man when it is turned on the mystery of his own existence and of cosmic existence, the problem of evil? A limited knowledge supported by a secret All-Wisdom as an instrument for working out within the necessary limitations a restricted world-order may be admitted as an intelligible process of the universal Consciousness and Energy; but the necessity of falsehood and error, the necessity of wrong and evil or their utility in the workings of the omnipresent Divine Reality is less easily admissible. And yet if that Reality is what we have supposed it to be, there must be some necessity for the appearance of these contrary phenomena, some significance, some function that they had to serve in the economy of the universe. For in the complete and inalienable self-knowledge of the Brahman which is necessarily all-knowledge, since all this that is is the Brahman, such phenomena cannot have come in as a chance, an intervening accident, an involuntary forgetfulness or confusion of the Consciousness-Force of the All-Wise in the cosmos or an ugly contretemps for which the indwelling Spirit was not prepared and of which it is the prisoner erring in a labyrinth with the utmost difficulty of escape. Nor can it be an inexplicable mystery of being, original and eternal, of which the divine All-Teacher is incapable of giving an account to himself or to us. There must be behind it a significance of the All-Wisdom itself, a power of the All-Consciousness which permits and uses it for some indispensable function in the present workings of our self-experience and world-experience. This aspect of existence needs now to be examined more directly and determined in its origins and the limits of its reality and its place in Nature.

This problem may be taken up from three points of view,—its relation to the Absolute, the supreme Reality, its origin and place in the cosmic workings, its action and point of hold in the

individual being. It is evident that these contrary phenomena have no direct root in the supreme Reality itself, there is nothing there that has this character; they are creations of the Ignorance and Inconscience, not fundamental or primary aspects of the Being, not native to the Transcendence or to the infinite power of the Cosmic Spirit. It is sometimes reasoned that as Truth and Good have their absolutes, so Falsehood and Evil must also have their absolutes, or, if it is not so, then both must belong to the relativity only; Knowledge and Ignorance, Truth and Falsehood, Good and Evil exist only in relation to each other and beyond the dualities here they have no existence. But this is not the fundamental truth of the relation of these opposites; for, in the first place, Falsehood and Evil are, unlike Truth and Good, very clearly results of the Ignorance and cannot exist where there is no Ignorance: they can have no self-existence in the Divine Being, they cannot be native elements of the Supreme Nature. If, then, the limited Knowledge which is the nature of Ignorance renounces its limitations, if Ignorance disappears into Knowledge, evil and falsehood can no longer endure: for both are fruits of unconsciousness and wrong consciousness and, if true or whole consciousness is there replacing Ignorance, they have no longer any basis for their existence. There can therefore be no absolute of falsehood, no absolute of evil; these things are a by-product of the world-movement: the sombre flowers of falsehood and suffering and evil have their root in the black soil of the Inconscient. On the other hand, there is no such intrinsic obstacle to the absoluteness of Truth and Good: the relativity of truth and error, good and evil is a fact of our experience, but it is similarly a by-product, it is not a permanent factor native to existence; for it is true only of the valuations made by the human consciousness, true only of our partial knowledge and partial ignorance.

Truth is relative to us because our knowledge is surrounded by ignorance. Our exact vision stops short at outside appearances which are not the complete truth of things, and, if we go deeper, the illuminations we arrive at are guesses or inferences or intimations, not a sight of indubitable realities: our

conclusions are partial, speculative or constructed, our statement of them, which is the expression of our indirect contact with the reality, has the nature of representations or figures, word-images of thought perceptions that are themselves images, not embodiments of Truth itself, not directly real and authentic. These figures or representations are imperfect and opaque and carry with them their shadow of nescience or error; for they seem to deny or shut out other truths and even the truth they express does not get its full value: it is an end or edge of it that projects into form and the rest is left in the shadow unseen or disfigured or uncertainly visible. It might almost be said that no mental statement of things can be altogether true; it is not Truth bodied, pure and nude, but a draped figure,—often it is only the drapery that is visible. But this character does not apply to truth perceived by a direct action of consciousness or to the truth of knowledge by identity; our seeing there may be limited, but so far as it extends, it is authentic, and authenticity is a first step towards absoluteness: error may attach itself to a direct or identical vision of things by a mental accretion, by a mistaken or illegitimate extension or by the mind's misinterpretation, but it does not enter into the substance. This authentic or identical vision or experience of things is the true nature of knowledge and it is self-existent within the being, although rendered in our minds by a secondary formation that is unauthentic and derivative. Ignorance in its origin has not this self-existence or this authenticity; it exists by a limitation or absence or abeyance of knowledge, error by a deviation from truth, falsehood by a distortion of truth or its contradiction and denial. But it cannot be similarly said of knowledge that in its very nature it exists only by a limitation or absence or abeyance of ignorance: it may indeed emerge in the human mind partly by a process of such limitation or abeyance, by the receding of darkness from a partial light, or it may have the aspect of ignorance turning into knowledge; but in fact, it rises by an independent birth from our depths where it has a native existence.

Again, of good and evil it can be said that one exists by true consciousness, the other survives only by wrong consciousness:

if there is an unmixed true consciousness, good alone can exist; it is no longer mixed with evil or formed in its presence. Human values of good and evil, as of truth and error, are indeed uncertain and relative: what is held as truth in one place or time is held in another place or time to be error; what is regarded as good is elsewhere or in other times regarded as evil. We find too that what we call evil results in good, what we call good results in evil. But this untoward outcome of good producing evil is due to the confusion and mixture of knowledge and ignorance, to the penetration of true consciousness by wrong consciousness, so that there is an ignorant or mistaken application of our good, or it is due to the intervention of afflicting forces. In the opposite case of evil producing good, the happier and contradictory result is due to the intervention of some true consciousness and force acting behind and in spite of wrong consciousness and wrong will or it is due to the intervention of redressing forces. This relativity, this mixture is a circumstance of human mentality and the workings of the Cosmic Force in human life; it is not the fundamental truth of good and evil. It might be objected that physical evil, such as pain and most bodily suffering, is independent of knowledge and ignorance, of right and wrong consciousness, inherent in physical Nature: but, fundamentally, all pain and suffering are the result of an insufficient consciousness-force in the surface being which makes it unable to deal rightly with self and Nature or unable to assimilate and to harmonise itself with the contacts of the universal Energy; they would not exist if in us there were an integral presence of the luminous Consciousness and the divine Force of an integral Being. Therefore the relation of truth to falsehood, of good to evil is not a mutual dependence, but is in the nature of a contradiction as of light and shadow; a shadow depends on light for its existence, but light does not depend for its existence on the shadow. The relation between the Absolute and these contraries of some of its fundamental aspects is not that they are opposite fundamental aspects of the Absolute; falsehood and evil have no fundamentality, no power of infinity or eternal being, no self-existence even by latency in the Self-Existent, no authenticity of an original inherence.

It is no doubt a fact that once truth or good manifests, the conception of falsehood and evil becomes a possibility; for whenever there is an affirmation, its negation becomes conceivable. As the manifestation of existence, consciousness and delight made the manifestation of non-existence, inconscience, insensibility conceivable and, because conceivable, therefore in a way inevitable, for all possibilities push towards actuality until they reach it, so is it with these contraries of the aspects of the Divine Existence. It may be said on this ground that these opposites, since they must be immediately perceptible by the manifesting Consciousness on the very threshold of manifestation, can take rank as implied absolutes and are inseparable from all cosmic existence. But it must first be noted that it is only in cosmic manifestation that they become possible; they cannot pre-exist in the timeless being, for they are incompatible with the unity and bliss that are its substance. In cosmos also they cannot come into being except by a limitation of truth and good into partial and relative forms and by a breaking up of the unity of existence and consciousness into separative consciousness and separative being. For where there is oneness and complete mutuality of consciousness-force even in multiplicity and diversity, there truth of self-knowledge and mutual knowledge is automatic and error of self-ignorance and mutual ignorance is impossible. So too where truth exists as a whole on a basis of self-aware oneness, falsehood cannot enter and evil is shut out by the exclusion of wrong consciousness and wrong will and their dynamisation of falsehood and error. As soon as separateness enters, these things also can enter; but even this simultaneity is not inevitable. If there is sufficient mutuality, even in the absence of an active sense of oneness, and if the separate beings do not transgress or deviate from their norms of limited knowledge, harmony and truth can still be sovereign and evil will have no gate of entry. There is, therefore, no authentic inevitable cosmicity of falsehood and evil even as there is no absoluteness; they are circumstances or results that arise only at a certain stage when separativeness culminates in opposition and ignorance in a positive unconsciousness of knowledge and

a resultant wrong consciousness and wrong knowledge with its content of wrong will, wrong feeling, wrong action and wrong reaction. The question is at what juncture of cosmic manifestation the opposites enter in; for it may be either at some stage of the increasing involution of consciousness in separative mind and life or only after the plunge into inconscience. This resolves itself into the question whether falsehood, error, wrong and evil exist originally in the mental and vital planes and are native to mind and life or are proper only to the material manifestation because inflicted on mind and life there by the obscurity arising from the Inconscience. It may be questioned too whether, if they do exist in supraphysical mind and life, they were original and inevitable there; for they may rather have entered in as a consequence or a supraphysical extension from the material manifestation. Or, if that is untenable, it may be that they arose as an enabling supraphysical affirmation in the universal Mind and Life, a precedent necessity for their appearance in that manifestation to which they more naturally belong as an inevitable outcome of the creative Inconscience.

It was for a long time held by the human mind as a traditional knowledge that when we go beyond the material plane, these things are found to exist there also in worlds beyond us. There are in these planes of supraphysical experience powers and forms of vital mind and life that seem to be the prephysical foundation of the discordant, defective or perverse forms and powers of life-mind and life-force which we find in the terrestrial existence. There are forces, and subliminal experience seems to show that there are supraphysical beings embodying those forces, that are attached in their root-nature to ignorance, to darkness of consciousness, to misuse of force, to perversity of delight, to all the causes and consequences of the things that we call evil. These powers, beings or forces are active to impose their adverse constructions upon terrestrial creatures; eager to maintain their reign in the manifestation, they oppose the increase of light and truth and good and, still more, are antagonistic to the progress of the soul towards a divine consciousness and divine existence. It is this feature of existence that we see figured in the tradition of the

conflict between the Powers of Light and Darkness, Good and Evil, cosmic Harmony and cosmic Anarchy, a tradition universal in ancient myth and in religion and common to all systems of occult knowledge.

The theory of this traditional knowledge is perfectly rational and verifiable by inner experience, and it imposes itself if we admit the supraphysical and do not cabin ourselves in the acceptation of material being as the only reality. As there is a cosmic Self and Spirit pervading and upholding the universe and its beings, so too there is a cosmic Force that moves all things, and on this original cosmic Force depend and act many cosmic Forces that are its powers or arise as forms of its universal action. Whatever is formulated in the universe has a Force or Forces that support it, seek to fulfil or further it, find their foundation in its functioning, their account of success in its success and growth and domination, their self-fulfilment or their prolongation of being in its victory or survival. As there are Powers of Knowledge or Forces of the Light, so there are Powers of Ignorance and tenebrous Forces of the Darkness whose work is to prolong the reign of Ignorance and Inconscience. As there are Forces of Truth, so there are Forces that live by the Falsehood and support it and work for its victory; as there are powers whose life is intimately bound up with the existence, the idea and the impulse of Good, so there are Forces whose life is bound up with the existence and the idea and the impulse of Evil. It is this truth of the cosmic Invisible that was symbolised in the ancient belief of a struggle between the powers of Light and Darkness, Good and Evil for the possession of the world and the government of the life of man;—this was the significance of the contest between the Vedic Gods and their opponents, sons of Darkness and Division, figured in a later tradition as Titan and Giant and Demon, Asura, Rakshasa, Pisacha; the same tradition is found in the Zoroastrian Double Principle and the later Semitic opposition of God and his Angels on the one side and Satan and his hosts on the other,—invisible Personalities and Powers that draw man to the divine Light and Truth and Good or lure him into subjection to the undivine principle of Darkness and

Falsehood and Evil. Modern thought is aware of no invisible forces other than those revealed or constructed by Science; it does not believe that Nature is capable of creating any other beings than those around us in the physical world, men, beasts, birds, reptiles, fishes, insects, germs and animalculae. But if there are invisible cosmic forces physical in their nature that act upon the body of inanimate objects, there is no valid reason why there should not be invisible cosmic forces mental and vital in their nature that act upon his mind and his life force. And if Mind and Life, impersonal forces, form conscious beings or use persons to embody them in physical forms and in a physical world and can act upon Matter and through Matter, it is not impossible that on their own planes they should form conscious beings whose subtler substance is invisible to us or that they should be able to act from those planes on beings in physical Nature. Whatever reality or mythical unreality we may attach to the traditional figures of past human belief or experience, they would then be representations of things that are true in principle. In that case the first source of good and evil would be not in terrestrial life or in the evolution from the Inconscience, but in Life itself, their source would be supraphysical and they would be reflected here from a larger supraphysical Nature.

This is certain that when we go back into ourselves very deep away from the surface appearance, we find that the mind, heart and sensational being of man are moved by forces not under his own control and that he can become an instrument in the hands of Energies of a cosmic character without knowing the origin of his actions. It is by stepping back from the physical surface into his inner being and subliminal consciousness that he becomes directly aware of them and is able to know directly and deal with their action upon him. He grows aware of interventions which seek to lead him in one direction or another, of suggestions and impulsions which had disguised themselves as original movements of his own mind and against which he had to battle. He can realise that he is not a conscious creature inexplicably produced in an unconscious world out of a seed of inconscient Matter and moving about in an obscure self-ignorance, but an

embodied soul through whose action cosmic Nature is seeking to fulfil itself, the living ground of a vast debate between a darkness of Ignorance out of which it emerges here and a light of Knowledge which is growing upwards towards an unforeseen culmination. The Forces which seek to move him, and among them the Forces of good and evil, present themselves as powers of universal Nature; but they seem to belong not only to the physical universe, but to planes of Life and Mind beyond it. The first thing that we have to note of importance to the problem preoccupying us is that these Forces in their action seem often to surpass the measures of human relativity; they are in their larger action superhuman, divine, titanic or demoniac, but they may create their formations in him in large or in little, in his greatness or his smallness, they may seize and drive him at moments or for periods, they may influence his impulses or his acts or possess his whole nature. If that possession happens, he may himself be pushed to an excess of the normal humanity of good or evil; especially the evil takes forms which shock the sense of human measure, exceed the bounds of human personality, approach the gigantic, the inordinate, the immeasurable. It may then be questioned whether it is not a mistake to deny absoluteness to evil; for as there is a drive, an aspiration, a yearning in man towards an absolute truth, good, beauty, so these movements —as also the transcending intensities attainable by pain and suffering— seem to indicate the attempt at self-realisation of an absolute evil. But the immeasurable is not a sign of absoluteness: for the absolute is not in itself a thing of magnitude; it is beyond measure, not in the sole sense of vastness, but in the freedom of its essential being; it can manifest itself in the infinitesimal as well as in the infinite. It is true that as we pass from the mental to the spiritual, —and that is a passage towards the absolute,— a subtle wideness and an increasing intensity of light, of power, of peace, of ecstasy mark our passing out of our limitations: but this is at first only a sign of freedom, of height, of universality, not yet of an inward absoluteness of self-existence which is the essence of the matter. To this absoluteness pain and evil cannot attain, they are bound to limitation and they are

derivative. If pain becomes immeasurable, it ends itself or ends that in which it manifests, or collapses into insensibility or, in rare circumstances, it may turn into an ecstasy of Ananda. If evil became sole and immeasurable, it would destroy the world or destroy that which bore and supported it; it would bring things and itself back by disintegration into non-existence. No doubt the Powers that support darkness and evil attempt by the magnitude of their self-aggrandisement to reach an appearance of infinity, but immensity is all they can achieve and not infinity; or, at most, they are able to represent their element as a kind of abysmal infinite commensurate with the Inconscient, but it is a false infinite. Self-existence, in essence or by an eternal inheritance in the Self-existent, is the condition of absoluteness: error, falsehood, evil are cosmic powers, but relative in their nature, not absolute, since they depend for existence on the perversion or contradiction of their opposites and are not like truth and good self-existent absolutes, inherent aspects of the supreme Self-existent.

A second point of questioning emerges from the evidence given for the supraphysical and prephysical existence of these dark opposites: for that suggests that they may be after all original cosmic principles. But it is to be noted that their appearance does not extend higher than the lower supraphysical life-planes; they are “powers of the Prince of Air”, — air being in the ancient symbolism the principle of life and therefore of the mid-worlds where the vital principle is predominant and essential. The adverse opposites are not, then, primal powers of the cosmos, but creations of Life or of Mind in life. Their supraphysical aspects and influences on earth-nature can be explained by the coexistence of worlds of a descending involution with parallel worlds of an ascending evolution, not precisely created by earth-existence, but created as an annexe to the descending world-order and a prepared support for the evolutionary terrestrial formations; here evil may appear, not as inherent in all life, but as a possibility and a pre-formation that makes inevitable its formation in the evolutionary emergence of consciousness out of the Inconscient. However this may be, it is as an outcome

of the Inconscience that we can best watch and understand the origin of falsehood, error, wrong and evil, for it is in the return of Inconscience towards Consciousness that they can be seen taking their formation and it is there that they seem to be normal and even inevitable.

The first emergence from the Inconscient is Matter, and in Matter it would seem that falsehood and evil cannot exist, because both are created by a divided and ignorant surface consciousness and its reactions. There is no such active surface organisation of consciousness, no such reactions in material forces or objects: whatever indwelling secret consciousness there may be in them seems to be one, undifferentiated, mute; inertly inherent and intrinsic in the Energy that constitutes the object, it effectualises and maintains the form by the silent occult Idea in it, but is otherwise self-rapt in the form of energy it has created, uncommunicating and inexpressive. Even if it differentiates itself according to the form of Matter in a corresponding form of self-being, *rūpam rūpam pratirūpo babbhūva*,⁹ there is no psychological organisation, no system of conscious actions or reactions. It is only by contact with conscious beings that material objects exercise powers or influences which can be called good or evil: but that good or evil is determined by the contacted being's sense of help or harm, of benefit or injury from them; these values do not belong to the material object but to some Force that uses it or they are created by the consciousness that contacts it. Fire warms a man or burns him, but that is as involuntarily he meets it or voluntarily uses it; a medicinal herb cures or a poison kills, but the value of good or evil is brought into action by the user: it is to be observed too that a poison can cure as well as kill, a medicine kill or harm as well as cure or benefit. The world of pure Matter is neutral, irresponsible; these values insisted on by the human being do not exist in material Nature: as a superior Nature transcends the duality of good and evil, so this inferior Nature falls below it. The question may begin to assume a different aspect if we go behind physical knowledge and accept

⁹ *Katha Upanishad*, II. 2. 9.

the conclusions of an occult inquiry,—for here we are told that there are conscious influences that attach themselves to objects and these can be good or evil; but it might still be held that this does not affect the neutrality of the object which does not act by an individualised consciousness but only as it is utilised for good or for evil or for both together: the duality of good and evil is not native to the material principle, it is absent from the world of Matter.

The duality begins with conscious life and emerges fully with the development of mind in life; the vital mind, the mind of desire and sensation, is the creator of the sense of evil and of the fact of evil. Moreover, in animal life, the fact of evil is there, the evil of suffering and the sense of suffering, the evil of violence and cruelty and strife and deception, but the sense of moral evil is absent; in animal life there is no duality of sin or virtue, all action is neutral and permissible for the preservation of life and its maintenance and for the satisfaction of the life-instincts. The sensational values of good and evil are inherent in the form of pain and pleasure, vital satisfaction and vital frustration, but the mental idea, the moral response of the mind to these values are a creation of the human being. It does not follow, as might be hastily inferred, that they are unrealities, mental constructions only, and that the only true way to receive the activities of Nature is either a neutral indifference or an equal acceptance or, intellectually, an admission of all that she may do as a divine or a natural law in which everything is impartially admissible. That is indeed one side of the truth: there is an infrarational truth of Life and Matter which is impartial and neutral and admits all things as facts of Nature and serviceable for the creation, preservation or destruction of life, three necessary movements of the universal Energy which are all connectedly indispensable and, each in its own place, of equal value. There is too a truth of the detached reason which can look on all that is thus admitted by Nature as serviceable to her processes in life and matter and observe everything that is with an unmoved neutral impartiality and acceptance; this is a philosophic and scientific reason that witnesses and seeks to understand but considers it futile to judge

the activities of the cosmic Energy. There is too a suprarational truth formulating itself in spiritual experience which can observe the play of universal possibility, accept all impartially as the true and natural features and consequences of a world of ignorance and in conscience or admit all with calm and compassion as a part of the divine working, but, while it awaits the awakening of a higher consciousness and knowledge as the sole escape from what presents itself as evil, is ready with help and intervention where that is truly helpful and possible. But, nonetheless, there is also this other middle truth of consciousness which awakens us to the values of good and evil and the appreciation of their necessity and importance; this awakening, whatever may be the sanction or the validity of its particular judgments, is one of the indispensable steps in the process of evolutionary Nature.

But from what then does this awakening proceed? what is it in the human being that originates and gives its power and place to the sense of good and evil? If we regard only the process, we may agree that it is the vital mind that makes the distinction. Its first valuation is sensational and individual,—all that is pleasant, helpful, beneficial to the life-ego is good, all that is unpleasant, malefic, injurious or destructive is evil. Its next valuation is utilitarian and social: all that is considered helpful to the associated life, all that it demands from the individual in order to remain in association and to regulate association for the best maintenance, satisfaction, development, good order of the associated life and its units, is good; all that has in the view of the society a contrary effect or tendency is evil. But thinking mind then comes in with its own valuation and strives to find out an intellectual basis, an idea of law or principle, rational or cosmic, a law of Karma perhaps or an ethical system founded on reason or on an aesthetic, emotional or hedonistic basis. Religion brings in her sanctions; there is a word or law of God that enjoins righteousness even though Nature permits or stimulates its opposite,—or perhaps Truth and Righteousness are themselves God and there is no other Divinity. But, behind all this practical or rational enforcement of the human ethical instinct, there is a feeling that there is something deeper: all these standards are

either too narrow and rigid or complex and confused, uncertain, subject to alteration by a mental or a vital change or evolution; yet it is felt that there is a deeper abiding truth and something within us that can have the intuition of that truth,—in other words, that the real sanction is inward, spiritual and psychic. The traditional account of this inner witness is conscience, a power of perception in us half mental, half intuitive; but this is something superficial, constructed, unreliable: there is certainly within us, though less easily active, more masked by surface elements, a deeper spiritual sense, the soul's discernment, an inborn light within our nature.

What then is this spiritual or psychic witness or what is to it the value of the sense of good and evil? It may be maintained that the one use of the sense of sin and evil is that the embodied being may become aware of the nature of this world of unconsciousness and ignorance, awake to a knowledge of its evil and suffering and the relative nature of its good and happiness and turn away from it to that which is absolute. Or else its spiritual use may be to purify the nature by the pursuit of good and the negation of evil until it is ready to perceive the supreme good and turn from the world towards God, or, as in the Buddhistic ethical insistence, it may serve to prepare the dissolution of the ignorant ego-complex and the escape from personality and suffering. But also it may be that this awakening is a spiritual necessity of the evolution itself, a step towards the growth of the being out of the Ignorance into the truth of the divine unity and the evolution of a divine consciousness and a divine being. For much more than the mind or life which can turn either to good or to evil, it is the soul-personality, the psychic being, which insists on the distinction, though in a larger sense than the mere moral difference. It is the soul in us which turns always towards Truth, Good and Beauty, because it is by these things that it itself grows in stature; the rest, their opposites, are a necessary part of experience, but have to be outgrown in the spiritual increase of the being. The fundamental psychic entity in us has the delight of life and all experience as part of the progressive manifestation of the spirit, but the very principle of its delight of life is to gather

out of all contacts and happenings their secret divine sense and essence, a divine use and purpose so that by experience our mind and life may grow out of the Inconscience towards a supreme consciousness, out of the divisions of the Ignorance towards an integralising consciousness and knowledge. It is there for that and it pursues from life to life its ever-increasing upward tendency and insistence; the growth of the soul is a growth out of darkness into light, out of falsehood into truth, out of suffering into its own supreme and universal Ananda. The soul's perception of good and evil may not coincide with the mind's artificial standards, but it has a deeper sense, a sure discrimination of what points to the higher Light and what points away from it. It is true that as the inferior light is below good and evil, so the superior spiritual light is beyond good and evil; but this is not in the sense of admitting all things with an impartial neutrality or of obeying equally the impulses of good and evil, but in the sense that a higher law of being intervenes in which there is no longer any place or utility for these values. There is a self-law of supreme Truth which is above all standards; there is a supreme and universal Good inherent, intrinsic, self-existent, self-aware, self-moved and determined, infinitely plastic with the pure plasticity of the luminous consciousness of the supreme Infinite.

If, then, evil and falsehood are natural products of the Inconscience, automatic results of the evolution of life and mind from it in the processus of the Ignorance, we have to see how they arise, on what they depend for their existence and what is the remedy or escape. In the surface emergence of mental and vital consciousness from the Inconscience is to be found the process by which these phenomena come into being. Here there are two determining factors,—and it is these that are the efficient cause of the simultaneous emergence of falsehood and evil. First, there is an underlying, a still occult consciousness and power of inherent knowledge, and there is also an overlying layer of what might be called indeterminate or else ill-formed stuff of vital and physical consciousness; through this obscure difficult medium the emerging mentality has to force its way and has to

impose itself on it by a constructed and no longer an inherent knowledge, because this stuff is still full of nescience, heavily burdened and enveloped with the inconscience of Matter. Next, the emergence takes place in a separated form of life which has to affirm itself against a principle of inanimate material inertia and a constant pull of that material inertia towards disintegration and a relapse into the original inanimate Inconscience. This separated life-form has also to affirm itself, supported only by a limited principle of association, against an outside world which is, if not hostile to its existence, yet full of dangers and on which it has to impose itself, conquer life-room, arrive at expression and propagation, if it wishes to survive. The result of an emergence of consciousness in these conditions is the growth of a self-affirming vital and physical individual, a construction of Nature of life and matter with a concealed psychic or spiritual true individual behind it for which Nature is creating this outward means of expression. As mentality increases, this vital and material individual takes the more developed form of a constantly self-affirming mental, vital and physical ego. Our surface consciousness and type of existence, our natural being, has developed its present character under the compulsion of these two initial and basic facts of the evolutionary emergence.

In its first appearance consciousness has the semblance of a miracle, a power alien to Matter that manifests unaccountably in a world of inconscient Nature and grows slowly and with difficulty. Knowledge is acquired, created out of nothing as it were, learned, increased, accumulated by an ephemeral ignorant creature in whom at birth it is entirely absent or present only, not as knowledge, but in the form of an inherited capacity proper to the stage of development of this slowly learning ignorance. It might be conjectured that consciousness is only the original Inconscience mechanically recording the facts of existence on the brain-cells with a reflex or response in the cells automatically reading the record and dictating their answer; the record, reflex, response together constitute what appears to be consciousness. But this is evidently not the whole truth, for it might account for observation and mechanical action,—although it is not clear

how an unconscious record and response can turn into a conscious observation, a conscious sense of things and sense of self,—but does not credibly account for ideation, imagination, speculation, the free play of intellect with its observed material. The evolution of consciousness and knowledge cannot be accounted for unless there is already a concealed consciousness in things with its inherent and native powers emerging little by little. Further, the facts of animal life and the operations of the emergent mind in life impose on us the conclusion that there is in this concealed consciousness an underlying Knowledge or power of knowledge which by the necessity of the life-contacts with the environment comes to the surface.

The individual animal being in its first conscious self-affirmation has to rely on two sources of knowledge. As it is nescient and helpless, a small modicum of uninformed surface consciousness in a world unknown to it, the secret Conscious-Force sends up to this surface the minimum of intuition necessary for it to maintain its existence and go through the operations indispensable to life and survival. This intuition is not possessed by the animal, but possesses and moves it; it is something that manifests of itself in the grain of the vital and physical substance of consciousness under pressure of a need and for the needed occasion: but at the same time a surface result of this intuition accumulates and takes the form of an automatic instinct which works whenever the occasion for it recurs; this instinct belongs to the race and is imparted at birth to its individual members. The intuition, when it occurs or recurs, is unerring; the instinct is automatically correct as a rule, but can err, for it fails or blunders when the surface consciousness or an ill-developed intelligence interferes or if the instinct continues to act mechanically when, owing to changed circumstances, the need or the necessary circumstances are no longer there. The second source of knowledge is surface contact with the world outside the natural individual being; it is this contact which is the cause first of a conscious sensation and sense-perception and then of intelligence. If there were not an underlying consciousness, the contact would not create any

perception or reaction; it is because the contact stimulates into a feeling and a surface response the subliminal of a being already vitalised by the subconscious life-principle and its first needs and seekings that a surface awareness begins to form and develop. Intrinsically the emergence of a surface consciousness by force of life contacts is due to the fact that in both subject and object of the contact consciousness-force is already existent in a subliminal latency: when the life-principle is ready, sufficiently sensitive in the subject, the recipient of the contact, this subliminal consciousness emerges in a response to the stimulus which begins to constitute a vital or life mind, the mind of the animal, and then, in the course of the evolution, a thinking intelligence. The secret consciousness is rendered into surface sensation and perception, the secret force into surface impulse.

If this underlying subliminal consciousness were to come itself to the surface, there would be a direct meeting between the consciousness of the subject and the contents of the object and the result would be a direct knowledge; but this is not possible, first, because of the veto or obstruction of the Inconscience and, secondly, because the evolutionary intention is to develop slowly through an imperfect but growing surface awareness. The secret consciousness-force has therefore to limit itself to imperfect renderings in a surface vital and mental vibration and operation and is forced by the absence, holding back or insufficiency of the direct awareness to develop organs and instincts for an indirect knowledge. This creation of an external knowledge and intelligence takes place in an already prepared indeterminate conscious structure which is the earliest formation on the surface. At first this structure is only a minimum formation of consciousness with a vague sensational perception and a response-impulse; but, as more organised forms of life appear, this grows into a life-mind and vital intelligence largely mechanical and automatic in the beginning and concerned only with practical needs, desires and impulses. All this activity is in its initiation intuitive and instinctive; the underlying consciousness is translated in the surface substratum into automatic movements of the conscious stuff of life and body: the mind movements,

when they appear, are involved in these automatisms, they occur as a subordinate mental notation within the predominant vital sense-notation. But slowly mind starts its task of disengaging itself; it still works for the life-instinct, life-need and life-desire, but its own special characters emerge, observation, invention, device, intention, execution of purpose, while sensation and impulse add to themselves emotion and bring a subtler and finer affective urge and value into the crude vital reaction. Mind is still much involved in life and its highest purely mental operations are not in evidence; it accepts a large background of instinct and vital intuition as its support, and the intelligence developed, though always growing as the animal life-scale rises, is an added superstructure.

When human intelligence adds itself to the animal basis, this basis still remains present and active, but it is largely changed, subtilised and uplifted by conscious will and intention; the automatic life of instinct and vital intuition diminishes and cannot keep its original predominant proportion to the self-aware mental intelligence. Intuition becomes less purely intuitive: even when there is still a strong vital intuition, its vital character is concealed by mentalisation, and mental intuition is most often a mixture, not the pure article, for an alloy is added to make it mentally current and serviceable. In the animal also the surface consciousness can obstruct or alter the intuition but, because its capacity is less, it interferes less with the automatic, mechanical or instinctive action of Nature: in mental man when the intuition rises towards the surface, it is caught at once before it reaches and is translated into terms of mind-intelligence with a gloss or mental interpretation added which conceals the origin of the knowledge. Instinct also is deprived of its intuitive character by being taken up and mentalised and by that change becomes less sure, though more assisted, when not replaced, by the plastic power of adaptation of things and self-adaptation proper to the intelligence. The emergence of mind in life brings an immense increase of the range and capacity of the evolving consciousness-force; but it also brings an immense increase in the range and capacity of error. For evolving mind trails constantly error as

its shadow, a shadow that grows with the growing body of consciousness and knowledge.

If in the evolution the surface consciousness were always open to the action of intuition, the intervention of error would not be possible. For intuition is an edge of light thrust out by the secret supermind, and an emergent truth-consciousness, however limited, yet sure in its action, would be the consequence. Instinct, if it had to form, would be plastic to the intuition and adapt itself freely to evolutionary change and the change of inner or environing circumstance. Intelligence, if it had to form, would be subservient to intuition and would be its accurate mental expression; its brilliancy would perhaps be modulated to suit a diminished action serving as a minor, not, as it is now, a major function and movement, but it would not be erratic by deviation, would not by its parts of obscurity sink into the false or fallible. But this could not be, because the hold of Inconscience on the matter, the surface substance, in which mind and life have to express themselves, makes the surface consciousness obscure and unresponsive to the light within; it is impelled moreover to cherish this defect, to substitute more and more its own incomplete but better grasped clarities for the unaccountable inner intimations, because a rapid development of the truth-consciousness is not the intention in Nature. For the method chosen by her is a slow and difficult evolution of Inconscience developing into Ignorance and Ignorance forming itself into a mixed, modified and partial knowledge before it can be ready for transformation into a higher truth-consciousness and truth-knowledge. Our imperfect mental intelligence is a necessary stage of transition before this higher transformation can be made possible.

There are, in practical fact, two poles of the conscious being between which the evolutionary process works, one a surface nescience which has to change gradually into knowledge, the other a secret Consciousness-Force in which all power of knowledge is and which has slowly to manifest in the nescience. The surface nescience full of incomprehension and inapprehension can change into knowledge because consciousness is there involved

in it; if it were intrinsically an entire absence of consciousness, the change would be impossible: but still it works as an inconscious trying to be conscious; it is at first a nescience compelled by need and outer impact to feeling and response and then an ignorance labouring to know. The means used is a contact with the world and its forces and objects which, like the rubbing of tinders, creates a spark of awareness; the response from within is that spark leaping out into manifestation. But the surface nescience in receiving the response from an underlying source of knowledge subdues and changes it into something obscure and incomplete; there is an imperfect seizure or a misprision of the intuition that answers to the contact: still by this process an initiation of responsive consciousness, a first accumulation of ingrained or habitual instinctive knowledge begins, and there follows upon it first a primitive and then a developed capacity of receptive awareness, understanding, reply of action, previsional initiation of action,—an evolving consciousness which is half-knowledge, half-ignorance. All that is unknown is met on the basis of what is known; but as this knowledge is imperfect, as it receives imperfectly and responds imperfectly to the contacts of things, there can be a misprision of the new contact as well as a misprision or deformation of the intuitive response, a double source of error.

It is evident, in these conditions, that Error is a necessary accompaniment, almost a necessary condition and instrumentation, an indispensable step or stage in the slow evolution towards knowledge in a consciousness that begins from nescience and works in the stuff of a general nescience. The evolving consciousness has to acquire knowledge by an indirect means which does not give even a fragmentary certitude; for there is at first only a figure or a sign, an image or a vibration physical in character created by contact with the object and a resulting vital sensation which have to be interpreted by mind and sense and turned into a corresponding mental idea or figure. Things thus experienced and mentally known have to be related together; things unknown have to be observed, discovered, fitted into the already acquired sum of experience and knowledge. At each

step different possibilities of fact, significance, judgment, interpretation, relation present themselves; some have to be tested and rejected, others accepted and confirmed: to shut out error is impossible without limiting the chances of acquisition of knowledge. Observation is the first instrument of the mind, but observation itself is a complex process open at every step to the mistakes of the ignorant observing consciousness; misprision of the fact by the senses and the sense-mind, omission, wrong selection and putting together, unconscious additions made by a personal impression or personal reaction create a false or an imperfect composite picture; to these errors are added the errors of inference, judgment, interpretation of facts by the intelligence: when even the data are not sure or perfect, the conclusions built on them must also be insecure and imperfect.

Consciousness in its acquisition of knowledge proceeds from the known to the unknown; it builds a structure of acquired experience, memories, impressions, judgments, a composite mental plan of things which is of the nature of a shifting and ever modifiable fixity. In the reception of new knowledge, what comes in to be received is judged in the light of past knowledge and fitted into the structure; if it cannot properly fit, it is either dovetailed in anyhow or rejected: but the existing knowledge and its structures or standards may not be applicable to the new object or new field of knowledge, the fitting may be a misfitting or the rejection may be an erroneous response. To misprision and wrong interpretation of facts, there is added misapplication of knowledge, miscombination, misconstruction, misrepresentation, a complicated machinery of mental error. In all this enlightened obscurity of our mental parts a secret intuition is at work, a truth-urge that corrects or pushes the intelligence to correct what is erroneous, to labour towards a true picture of things and a true interpretative knowledge. But intuition itself is limited in the human mind by mental misprision of its intimations and is unable to act in its own right; for whether it be physical, vital or mental intuition, it has to present itself in order to be received, not nude and pure, but garbed with a mental coating or entirely enveloped in an ample mental vesture;

so disguised, its true nature cannot be recognised and its relation to mind and its office are not understood, its way of working is ignored by the hasty and half-aware human intelligence. There are intuitions of actuality, of possibility, of the determining truth behind things, but all are mistaken by the mind for each other. A great confusion of half-grasped material and an experimental building with it, a representation or mental structure of the figure of self and things rigid and yet chaotic, half formed and arranged half jumbled, half true half erroneous, but always imperfect, is the character of human knowledge.

Error by itself, however, would not amount to falsehood; it would only be an imperfection of truth, a trying, an essay of possibilities: for when we do not know, untried and uncertain possibilities have to be admitted and, even if as a result an imperfect or inapt structure of thought is built, yet it may justify itself by opening to fresh knowledge in unexpected directions and either its dissolution and rebuilding or the discovery of some truth it concealed might increase our cognition or our experience. In spite of the mixture created the growth of consciousness, intelligence and reason could arrive through this mixed truth to a clearer and truer figure of self-knowledge and world-knowledge. The obstruction of the original and enveloping unconsciousness would diminish, and an increasing mental consciousness would reach a clarity and wholeness which would enable the concealed powers of direct knowledge and intuitive process to emerge, utilise the prepared and enlightened instruments and make mind-intelligence their true agent and truth-builder on the evolutionary surface.

But here the second condition or factor of the evolution intervenes; for this seeking for knowledge is not an impersonal mental process hampered only by the general limitations of mind-intelligence: the ego is there, the physical ego, the life ego bent, not on self-knowledge and the discovery of the truth of things and the truth of life, but on vital self-affirmation; a mental ego is there also bent on its own personal self-affirmation and largely directed and used by the vital urge for its life-desire and life-purpose. For as mind develops, there develops also a mental

individuality with a personal drive of mind-tendency, a mental temperament, a mind formation of its own. This surface mental individuality is ego-centric; it looks at the world and things and happenings from its own standpoint and sees them not as they are but as they affect itself: in observing things it gives them the turn suitable to its own tendency and temperament, selects or rejects, arranges truth according to its own mental preference and convenience; observation, judgment, reason are all determined or affected by this mind-personality and assimilated to the needs of the individuality and the ego. Even when the mind aims most at a pure impersonality of truth and reason, a sheer impersonality is impossible to it; even the most trained, severe and vigilant intellect fails to observe the twists and turns it gives to truth in the reception of fact and idea and the construction of its mental knowledge. Here we have an almost inexhaustible source of distortion of truth, a cause of falsification, an unconscious or half-conscious will to error, an acceptance of ideas or facts not by a clear perception of the true and the false, but by preference, personal suitability, temperamental choice, pre-judgment. Here is a fruitful seed-plot for the growth of falsehood or a gate or many gates through which it can enter by stealth or by an usurping but acceptable violence. Truth too can enter in and take up its dwelling, not by its own right, but at the mind's pleasure.

In the terms of the Sankhya psychology we can distinguish three types of mental individuality,—that which is governed by the principle of obscurity and inertia, first-born of the Inconscience, tamasic; that which is governed by a force of passion and activity, kinetic, rajasic; that which is cast in the mould of the sattvic principle of light, harmony, balance. The tamasic intelligence has its seat in the physical mind: it is inert to ideas,—except to those which it receives inertly, blindly, passively from a recognised source or authority,—obscure in their reception, unwilling to enlarge itself, recalcitrant to new stimulus, conservative and immobile; it clings to its received structure of knowledge and its one power is repetitive practicality, but it is a power limited by the accustomed, the obvious, the established and familiar and already secure; it thrusts away all that is new

and likely to disturb it. The rajasic intelligence has its main seat in the vital mind and is of two kinds: one kind is defensive with violence and passion, assertive of its mental individuality and all that is in agreement with it, preferred by its volition, adapted to its outlook, but aggressive against all that is contrary to its mental ego-structure or unacceptable to its personal intellectuality; the other kind is enthusiastic for new things, passionate, insistent, impetuous, often mobile beyond measure, inconstant and ever restless, governed in its idea not by truth and light but by the zest of intellectual battle and movement and adventure. The sattwic intelligence is eager for knowledge, as open as it can be to it, careful to consider and verify and balance, to adjust and adapt to its view whatever confirms itself as truth, receiving all that it can assimilate, skilful to build truth in a harmonious intellectual structure: but, because its light is limited, as all mental light must be, it is unable to enlarge itself so as to receive equally all truth and all knowledge; it has a mental ego, even an enlightened one, and is determined by it in its observation, judgment, reasoning, mental choice and preference. In most men there is a predominance of one of these qualities but also a mixture; the same mind can be open and plastic and harmonic in one direction, kinetic and vital, hasty and prejudiced and ill-balanced in another, in yet another obscure and unreceptive. This limitation by personality, this defence of personality and refusal to receive what is unassimilable, is necessary for the individual being because in its evolution, at the stage reached, it has a certain self-expression, a certain type of experience and use of experience which must, for the mind and life at least, govern nature; that for the moment is its law of being, its dharma. This limitation of mind-consciousness by personality and of truth by mental temperament and preference must be the rule of our nature so long as the individual has not reached universality, is not yet preparing for mind-transcendence. But it is evident that this condition is inevitably a source of error and can at any moment be the cause of a falsification of knowledge, an unconscious or half-wilful self-deception, a refusal to admit true knowledge, a readiness to assert acceptable wrong knowledge as true knowledge.

This is in the field of cognition, but the same law applies to will and action. Out of ignorance a wrong consciousness is created which gives a wrong dynamic reaction to the contact of persons, things, happenings: the surface consciousness develops the habit of ignoring, misunderstanding or rejecting the suggestions to action or against action that come from the secret inmost consciousness, the psychic entity; it answers instead to unenlightened mental and vital suggestions, or acts in accordance with the demands and impulsions of the vital ego. Here the second of the primary conditions of the evolution, the law of a separate life-being affirming itself in a world which is not-self to it, comes into prominence and assumes an immense importance. It is here that the surface vital personality or life-self asserts its dominance, and this dominance of the ignorant vital being is a principal active source of discord and disharmony, a cause of inner and outer perturbations of the life, a mainspring of wrong-doing and evil. The natural vital element in us, in so far as it is unchecked or untrained or retains its primitive character, is not concerned with truth or right consciousness or right action; it is concerned with self-affirmation, with life-growth, with possession, with satisfaction of impulse, with all satisfactions of desire. This main need and demand of the life-self seems all-important to it; it would readily carry it out without any regard to truth or right or good or any other consideration: but because mind is there and has these conceptions, because the soul is there and has these soul-perceptions, it tries to dominate mind and get from it by dictation a sanction and order of execution for its own will of self-affirmation, a verdict of truth and right and good for its own vital assertions, impulses, desires; it is concerned with self-justification in order that it may have room for full self-affirmation. But if it can get the assent of mind, it is quite ready to ignore all these standards and set up only one standard, the satisfaction, growth, strength, greatness of the vital ego. The life-individual needs place, expansion, possession of its world, dominance and control of things and beings; it needs life-room, a space in the sun, self-assertion, survival. It needs these things for itself and for those with whom it associates itself, for its own

ego and for the collective ego; it needs them for its ideas, creeds, ideals, interests, imaginations: for it has to assert these forms of I-ness and my-ness and impose them on the world around it or, if it is not strong enough to do that, it has at least to defend and maintain them against others to the best of its power and contrivance. It may try to do it by methods it thinks or chooses to think or represent as right; it may try to do it by the naked use of violence, ruse, falsehood, destructive aggression, crushing of other life-formations: the principle is the same whatever the means or the moral attitude. It is not only in the realm of interests, but in the realm of ideas and the realm of religion that the vital being of man has introduced this spirit and attitude of self-affirmation and struggle and the use of violence, oppression and suppression, intolerance, aggression; it has imposed the principle of life-egoism on the domain of intellectual truth and the domain of the spirit. Into its self-affirmation the self-asserting life brings in hatred and dislike towards all that stands in the way of its expansion or hurts its ego; it develops as a means or as a passion or reaction of the life-nature cruelty, treachery and all kinds of evil: its satisfaction of desire and impulse takes no account of right and wrong, but only of the fulfilment of desire and impulse. For this satisfaction it is ready to face the risk of destruction and the actuality of suffering; for what it is pushed by Nature to aim at is not self-preservation alone, but life-affirmation and life-satisfaction, formulation of life-force and life-being.

It does not follow that this is all that the vital personality is in its native composition or that evil is its very nature. It is not primarily concerned with truth and good, but it can have the passion for truth and good as it has, more spontaneously, the passion for joy and beauty. In all that is developed by the life-force there is developed at the same time a secret delight somewhere in the being, a delight in good and a delight in evil, a delight in truth and a delight in falsehood, a delight in life and an attraction to death, a delight in pleasure and a delight in pain, in one's own suffering and the suffering of others, but also in one's own joy and happiness and good and the joy and happiness and good of others. For the force of life-affirmation affirms alike the

good and the evil: it has its impulses of help and association, of generosity, affection, loyalty, self-giving; it takes up altruism as it takes up egoism, sacrifices itself as well as destroys others; and in all its acts there is the same passion for life-affirmation, the same force of action and fulfilment. This character of vital being and its trend of existence in which what we term good and evil are items but not the mainspring, is evident in subhuman life; in the human being, since there a mental, moral and psychic discernment has developed, it is subjected to control or to camouflage, but it does not change its character. The vital being and its life-force and their drive towards self-affirmation are, in the absence of an overt action of soul-power and spiritual power, Atmashakti, Nature's chief means of effectuation, and without its support neither mind nor body can utilise their possibilities or realise their aim here in existence. It is only if the inner or true vital being replaces the outer life-personality that the drive of the vital ego can be wholly overcome and the life-force become the servant of the soul and a powerful instrumentation for the action of our true spiritual being.

This then is the origin and nature of error, falsehood, wrong and evil in the consciousness and will of the individual; a limited consciousness growing out of nescience is the source of error, a personal attachment to the limitation and the error born of it the source of falsity, a wrong consciousness governed by the life-ego the source of evil. But it is evident that their relative existence is only a phenomenon thrown up by the cosmic Force in its drive towards evolutionary self-expression, and it is there that we have to look for the significance of the phenomenon. For the emergence of the life-ego is, as we have seen, a machinery of cosmic Nature for the affirmation of the individual, for his self-disengagement from the indeterminate mass substance of the subconscious, for the appearance of a conscious being on a ground prepared by the Inconscience; the principle of life-affirmation of the ego is the necessary consequence. The individual ego is a pragmatic and effective fiction, a translation of the secret self into the terms of surface consciousness, or a subjective substitute for the true self in our surface experience:

it is separated by ignorance from other-self and from the inner Divinity, but it is still pushed secretly towards an evolutionary unification in diversity; it has behind itself, though finite, the impulse to the infinite. But this in the terms of an ignorant consciousness translates itself into the will to expand, to be a boundless finite, to take everything it can into itself, to enter into everything and possess it, even to be possessed if by that it can feel itself satisfied and growing in or through others or can take into itself by subjection the being and power of others or get thereby a help or an impulse for its life-affirmation, its life-delight, its enrichment of its mental, vital or physical existence.

But because it does these things as a separate ego for its separate advantage and not by conscious interchange and mutuality, not by unity, life-discord, conflict, disharmony arise, and it is the products of this life-discord and disharmony that we call wrong and evil. Nature accepts them because they are necessary circumstances of the evolution, necessary for the growth of the divided being; they are products of ignorance, supported by an ignorant consciousness that finds itself on division, by an ignorant will that works through division, by an ignorant delight of existence that takes the joy of division. The evolutionary intention acts through the evil as through the good; it has to utilise all because confinement to a limited good would imprison and check the intended evolution; it uses any available material and does what it can with it: this is the reason why we see evil coming out of what we call good and good coming out of what we call evil; and, if we see even what was thought to be evil coming to be accepted as good, what was thought to be good accepted as evil, it is because our standards of both are evolutionary, limited and mutable. Evolutionary Nature, the terrestrial cosmic Force, seems then at first to have no preference for either of these opposites, it uses both alike for its purpose. And yet it is the same Nature, the same Force that has burdened man with the sense of good and evil and insists on its importance: evidently, therefore, this sense also has an evolutionary purpose; it too must be necessary, it must be there so that man may leave certain

things behind him, move towards others, until out of good and evil he can emerge into some Good that is eternal and infinite.

But how is this evolutionary intention in Nature to fulfil itself, by what power, means, impulsion, what principle and process of selection and harmonisation? The method adopted by the mind of man through the ages has been always a principle of selection and rejection, and this has taken the forms of a religious sanction, a social or moral rule of life or an ethical ideal. But this is an empirical means which does not touch the root of the problem because it has no vision of the cause and origin of the malady it attempts to cure; it deals with the symptoms, but deals with them perfunctorily, not knowing what function they serve in the purpose of Nature and what it is in the mind and life that supports them and keeps them in being. Moreover, human good and evil are relative and the standards erected by ethics are uncertain as well as relative: what is forbidden by one religion or another, what is regarded as good or bad by social opinion, what is thought useful to society or noxious to it, what some temporary law of man allows or disallows, what is or is considered helpful or harmful to self or others, what accords with this or that ideal, what is prompted or discouraged by an instinct which we call conscience,—an amalgam of all these view-points is the determining heterogeneous idea, constitutes the complex substance, of morality; in all of them there is the constant mixture of truth and half-truth and error which pursues all the activities of our limiting mental Knowledge-Ignorance. A mental control over our vital and physical desires and instincts, over our personal and social action, over our dealings with others is indispensable to us as human beings, and morality creates a standard by which we can guide ourselves and establish a customary control; but the control is always imperfect and it is an expedient, not a solution: man remains always what he is and has ever been, a mixture of good and evil, sin and virtue, a mental ego with an imperfect command over his mental, vital and physical nature.

The endeavour to select, to retain from our consciousness and action all that seems to us good and reject all that seems to

us evil and so to re-form our being, to reconstitute and shape ourselves into the image of an ideal, is a more profound ethical motive, because it comes nearer to the true issue; it rests on the sound idea that our life is a becoming and that there is something which we have to become and be. But the ideals constructed by the human mind are selective and relative; to shape our nature rigidly according to them is to limit ourselves and make a construction where there should be growth into larger being. The true call upon us is the call of the Infinite and the Supreme; the self-affirmation and self-abnegation imposed on us by Nature are both movements towards that, and it is the right way of self-affirmation and self-negation taken together in place of the wrong, because ignorant, way of the ego and in place of the conflict between the yes and the no of Nature that we have to discover. If we do not discover that, either the push of life will be too strong for our narrow ideal of perfection, its instrumentation will break and it will fail to consummate and perpetuate itself, or at best a half result will be all that we shall obtain, or else the push away from life will present itself as the only remedy, the one way out of the otherwise invincible grasp of the Ignorance. This indeed is the way out usually indicated by religion; a divinely enjoined morality, a pursuit of piety, righteousness and virtue as laid down in a religious code of conduct, a law of God determined by some human inspiration, is put forward as a part of the means, the direction, by which we can tread the way that leads to the exit, the issue. But this exit leaves the problem where it was; it is only a way of escape for the personal being out of the unsolved perplexity of the cosmic existence. In ancient Indian spiritual thought there was a clearer perception of the difficulty; the practice of truth, virtue, right will and right doing was regarded as a necessity of the approach to spiritual realisation, but in the realisation itself the being arises to the greater consciousness of the Infinite and Eternal and shakes away from itself the burden of sin and virtue, for that belongs to the relativity and the Ignorance. Behind this larger truer perception lay the intuition that a relative good is a training imposed by World-Nature upon us so that we may pass through

it towards the true Good which is absolute. These problems are of the mind and the ignorant life, they do not accompany us beyond mind; as there is a cessation of the duality of truth and error in an infinite Truth-Consciousness, so there is a liberation from the duality of good and evil in an infinite Good, there is transcendence.

There can be no artificial escape from this problem which has always troubled humanity and from which it has found no satisfying issue. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil with its sweet and bitter fruits is secretly rooted in the very nature of the Inconscience from which our being has emerged and on which it still stands as a nether soil and basis of our physical existence; it has grown visibly on the surface in the manifold branchings of the Ignorance which is still the main bulk and condition of our consciousness in its difficult evolution towards a supreme consciousness and an integral awareness. As long as there is this soil with the unfound roots in it and this nourishing air and climate of Ignorance, the tree will grow and flourish and put forth its dual blossoms and its fruit of mixed nature. It would follow that there can be no final solution until we have turned our inconscience into the greater consciousness, made the truth of self and spirit our life-basis and transformed our ignorance into a higher knowledge. All other expedients will only be makeshifts or blind issues; a complete and radical transformation of our nature is the only true solution. It is because the Inconscience imposes its original obscurity on our awareness of self and things and because the Ignorance bases it on an imperfect and divided consciousness and because we live in that obscurity and division that wrong knowledge and wrong will are possible: without wrong knowledge there could be no error or falsehood, without error or falsehood in our dynamic parts there could be no wrong will in our members; without wrong will there could be no wrong-doing or evil: while these causes endure, the effects also will persist in our action and in our nature. A mental control can only be a control, not a cure; a mental teaching, rule, standard can only impose an artificial groove in which our action revolves mechanically or with difficulty and

which imposes a curbed and limited formation on the course of our nature. A total change of consciousness, a radical change of nature is the one remedy and the sole issue.

But since the root of the difficulty is a split, limited and separative existence, this change must consist in an integration, a healing of the divided consciousness of our being, and since that division is complex and many-sided, no partial change on one side of the being can be passed off as a sufficient substitute for the integral transformation. Our first division is that created by our ego and mainly, most forcefully, most vividly by our life-ego, which divides us from all other beings as not-self and ties us to our ego-centricity and the law of an egoistic self-affirmation. It is in the errors of this self-affirmation that wrong and evil first arise: wrong consciousness engenders wrong will in the members, in the thinking mind, in the heart, in the life-mind and the sensational being, in the very body-consciousness; wrong will engenders wrong action of all these instruments, a multiple error and many-branching crookedness of thought and will and sense and feeling. Nor can we deal rightly with others so long as they are to us others, beings who are strangers to ourselves and of whose inner consciousness, soul-need, mind-need, heart-need, life-need, body-need we know little or nothing. The modicum of imperfect sympathy, knowledge and good-will that the law, need and habit of association engender, is a poor quantum of what is required for a true action. A larger mind, a larger heart, a more ample and generous life-force can do something to help us or help others and avoid the worst offences, but this too is insufficient and will not prevent a mass of troubles and harms and collisions of our preferred good with the good of others. By the very nature of our ego and ignorance we affirm ourselves egoistically even when we most pride ourselves on selflessness and ignorantly even when we most pride ourselves on understanding and knowledge. Altruism taken as a rule of life does not deliver us; it is a potent instrument for self-enlargement and for correction of the narrower ego, but it does not abolish it nor transform it into the true self one with all; the ego of the altruist is as powerful and absorbing as the ego of the selfish and it is

often more powerful and insistent because it is a self-righteous and magnified ego. It helps still less if we do wrong to our soul, to our mind, life or body with the idea of subordinating our self to the self of others. To affirm our being rightly so that it may become one with all is the true principle, not to mutilate or immolate it. Self-immolation may be necessary at times, exceptionally, for a cause, in answer to some demand of the heart or for some right or high purpose but cannot be made the rule or nature of life; so exaggerated, it would only feed and exaggerate the ego of others or magnify some collective ego, not lead us or mankind to the discovery and affirmation of our or its true being. Sacrifice and self-giving are indeed a true principle and a spiritual necessity, for we cannot affirm our being rightly without sacrifice or without self-giving to something larger than our ego; but that too must be done with a right consciousness and will founded on a true knowledge. To develop the sattwic part of our nature, a nature of light, understanding, balance, harmony, sympathy, good-will, kindness, fellow-feeling, self-control, rightly ordered and harmonised action, is the best we can do in the limits of the mental formation, but it is a stage and not the goal of our growth of being. These are solutions by the way, palliatives, necessary means for a partial dealing with this root difficulty, provisional standards and devices given us as a temporary help and guidance because the true and total solution is beyond our present capacity and can only come when we have sufficiently evolved to see it and make it our main endeavour.

The true solution can intervene only when by our spiritual growth we can become one self with all beings, know them as part of our self, deal with them as if they were our other selves; for then the division is healed, the law of separate self-affirmation leading by itself to affirmation against or at the expense of others is enlarged and liberated by adding to it the law of our self-affirmation for others and our self-finding in their self-finding and self-realisation. It has been made a rule of religious ethics to act in a spirit of universal compassion, to love one's neighbour as oneself, to do to others as one would have them do to us, to feel the joy and grief of others as one's

own; but no man living in his ego is able truly and perfectly to do these things, he can only accept them as a demand of his mind, an aspiration of his heart, an effort of his will to live by a high standard and modify by a sincere endeavour his crude ego-nature. It is when others are known and felt intimately as oneself that this ideal can become a natural and spontaneous rule of our living and be realised in practice as in principle. But even oneness with others is not enough by itself, if it is a oneness with their ignorance; for then the law of ignorance will work and error of action and wrong action will survive even if diminished in degree and mellowed in incidence and character. Our oneness with others must be fundamental, not a oneness with their minds, hearts, vital selves, egos,—even though these come to be included in our universalised consciousness,—but a oneness in the soul and spirit, and that can only come by our liberation into soul-awareness and self-knowledge. To be ourselves liberated from ego and realise our true selves is the first necessity; all else can be achieved as a luminous result, a necessary consequence. That is one reason why a spiritual call must be accepted as imperative and take precedence over all other claims, intellectual, ethical, social, that belong to the domain of the Ignorance. For the mental law of good abides in that domain and can only modify and palliate; nothing can be a sufficient substitute for the spiritual change that can realise the true and integral good because through the spirit we come to the root of action and existence.

In the spiritual knowledge of self there are three steps of its self-achievement which are at the same time three parts of the one knowledge. The first is the discovery of the soul, not the outer soul of thought and emotion and desire, but the secret psychic entity, the divine element within us. When that becomes dominant over the nature, when we are consciously the soul and when mind, life and body take their true place as its instruments, we are aware of a guide within that knows the truth, the good, the true delight and beauty of existence, controls heart and intellect by its luminous law and leads our life and being towards spiritual completeness. Even within the obscure workings of the

Ignorance we have then a witness who discerns, a living light that illumines, a will that refuses to be misled and separates the mind's truth from its error, the heart's intimate response from its vibrations to a wrong call and wrong demand upon it, the life's true ardour and plenitude of movement from vital passion and the turbid falsehoods of our vital nature and its dark self-seekings. This is the first step of self-realisation, to enthron the soul, the divine psychic individual in the place of the ego. The next step is to become aware of the eternal self in us unborn and one with the self of all beings. This self-realisation liberates and universalises; even if our action still proceeds in the dynamics of the Ignorance, it no longer binds or misleads because our inner being is seated in the light of self-knowledge. The third step is to know the Divine Being who is at once our supreme transcendent Self, the Cosmic Being, foundation of our universality, and the Divinity within of which our psychic being, the true evolving individual in our nature, is a portion, a spark, a flame growing into the eternal Fire from which it was lit and of which it is the witness ever living within us and the conscious instrument of its light and power and joy and beauty. Aware of the Divine as the Master of our being and action, we can learn to become channels of his Shakti, the Divine Puissance, and act according to her dictates or her rule of light and power within us. Our action will not then be mastered by our vital impulse or governed by a mental standard, for she acts according to the permanent yet plastic truth of things,—not that which the mind constructs, but the higher, deeper and subtler truth of each movement and circumstance as it is known to the supreme knowledge and demanded by the supreme will in the universe. The liberation of the will follows upon the liberation in knowledge and is its dynamic consequence; it is knowledge that purifies, it is truth that liberates: evil is the fruit of a spiritual ignorance and it will disappear only by the growth of a spiritual consciousness and the light of spiritual knowledge. The division of our being from the being of others can only be healed by removing the divorce of our nature from the inner soul-reality, by abolishing the veil between our becoming and our self-being, by bridging the remoteness of

our individuality in Nature from the Divine Being who is the omnipresent Reality in Nature and above Nature.

But the last division to be removed is the scission between this Nature and the Supernature which is the Self-Power of the Divine Existence. Even before the dynamic Knowledge-Ignorance is removed, while it still remains as an inadequate instrumentation of the spirit, the supreme Shakti or Supernature can work through us and we can be aware of her workings; but it is then by a modification of her light and power so that it can be received and assimilated by the inferior nature of the mind, life and body. But this is not enough; there is needed an entire remoulding of what we are into a way and power of the divine Supernature. The integration of our being cannot be complete unless there is this transformation of the dynamic action; there must be an uplifting and change of the whole mode of Nature itself and not only some illumination and transmutation of the inner ways of the being. An eternal Truth-Consciousness must possess us and sublimate all our natural modes into its own modes of being, knowledge and action; a spontaneous truth-awareness, truth-will, truth-feeling, truth-movement, truth-action can then become the integral law of our nature.

END OF BOOK TWO, PART I

Chapter XXI

Kaa and the Evolution

A spiritual evolution, an evolution of consciousness in Kaa, is the
spirit, the imperceptible, of the mortal cortex. It happens & ceases by an impulse
of the Spirit, the True Self, in a mortal Experience. This was a & will be the
mortal Course, true when works with it or without. Stark Harry, when the flood
from Kaa was a physical move appears to be caused by an impulse, the impulse
a result of 2 things at once by which the mortal Course is set in motion
of about; but & then it stops, and little by little in form of rules which affect
firstly man & then stop & work, expansion in the form of helping rules, an
alteration in the human mind; little and sudden. It is not a steady, but
a steady long course, which all tends such as in a steady
long play till the end few forget chain in now the All general
the bonds & the will be occupying with the earth his light shadow
the original animal, the foretold reign of ignorance of body (the human)
but of ignorance of the heart, to act only as a machine, by Kaa, b-
lue of body developed, to increase power of wisdom and forbearance. This
he had & he had, he has still & tends constantly the play causing. He
is not & he is not & he is not & he is not & he is not & he is not & he is not
spiritual but material man & man hostile to the rest & to the
Creation. His brain & reptile brain - only white in the human
is a great cold in the Kaa body, the light of the experience ad as
before the dawn of the human race. Under light not to go away,
at a child's problem, the child by nature a good person, is
not fit for the function, the child is the form of rules of his body,
foregather of body like human of all his function, and at certain
time of growth, when he is made by a noble person, a natural
sense of spiritual evolution set by the body, and when the body
having its own will of the person began made and kept at last
by body, a man of a hundred millions will be at every place &
for all persons as it needed & the body of a man of a
certain place; the child by growth will be a child & the man
the man a working full of the will of the mind but the
natural spirit, & work & working full of the will of the body &
the mind begin to affect man. End date of the mind & father
and the form of a man the identity & soul is born from the identity
soul, the person able to make one of 5 million persons; and
that is a ship in many ages rules (subdues) a great kingdom of
ignorance & old animals called rules till a new birth of a
spiritual & the spirit of the soul.

But the spiritual & material existence is the childhood
of man, man grows & man grows & becomes the whole
in still living & the future additional growth, & the growth of the
spiritual & material person as is still going for the man to infinite ..

The manuscript of a chapter written in 1939-40

Chapter XXI

Man and the Evolution

The first revised typescript of Book Two, Chapter XXIII

Part II

The Knowledge and the Spiritual Evolution

Chapter XV

Reality and the Integral Knowledge

This Self is to be won by the Truth and by an integral knowledge.
*Mundaka Upanishad.*¹

Hear how thou shalt know Me in My totality . . . for even of
the seekers who have achieved, hardly one knows Me in all
the truth of My being.
*Gita.*²

THIS THEN is the origin, this the nature, these the boundaries of the Ignorance. Its origin is a limitation of knowledge, its distinctive character a separation of the being from its own integrality and entire reality; its boundaries are determined by this separative development of the consciousness, for it shuts us to our true self and to the true self and whole nature of things and obliges us to live in an apparent surface existence. A return or a progress to integrality, a disappearance of the limitation, a breaking down of separateness, an overpassing of boundaries, a recovery of our essential and whole reality must be the sign and opposite character of the inner turn towards Knowledge. There must be a replacement of a limited and separative by an essential and integral consciousness identified with the original truth and the whole truth of self and existence. The integral Knowledge is something that is already there in the integral Reality: it is not a new or still non-existent thing that has to be created, acquired, learned, invented or built up by the mind; it must rather be discovered or uncovered, it is a Truth that is self-revealed to a spiritual endeavour: for it is there veiled in our deeper and greater self; it is the very stuff of our own spiritual

¹ III. 1. 5. ² VII. 1, 3.

consciousness, and it is by awaking to it even in our surface self that we have to possess it. There is an integral self-knowledge that we have to recover and, because the world-self also is our self, an integral world-knowledge. A knowledge that can be learned or constructed by the mind exists and has its value, but that is not what is meant when we speak of the Knowledge and the Ignorance.

An integral spiritual consciousness carries in it a knowledge of all the terms of being; it links the highest to the lowest through all the mediating terms and achieves an indivisible whole. At the highest summit of things it opens to the reality, ineffable because superconscious to all but its own self-awareness, of the Absolute. At the lowest end of our being it perceives the Inconscience from which our evolution begins; but at the same time it is aware of the One and the All self-involved in those depths, it unveils the secret Consciousness in the Inconscience. Interpretative, revelatory, moving between these two extremes, its vision discovers the manifestation of the One in the Many, the identity of the Infinite in the disparity of things finite, the presence of the timeless Eternal in eternal Time; it is this seeing that illumines for it the meaning of the universe. This consciousness does not abolish the universe; it takes it up and transforms it by giving to it its hidden significance. It does not abolish the individual existence; it transforms the individual being and nature by revealing to them their true significance and enabling them to overcome their separateness from the Divine Reality and the Divine Nature.

An integral knowledge presupposes an integral Reality; for it is the power of a Truth-consciousness which is itself the consciousness of the Reality. But our idea and sense of Reality vary with our status and movement of consciousness, its sight, its stress, its intake of things; that sight or stress can be intensive and exclusive or extensive, inclusive and comprehensive. It is quite possible—and it is in its own field a valid movement for our thought and for a very high line of spiritual achievement—to affirm the existence of the ineffable Absolute, to emphasise its sole Reality and to negate and abolish for our self, to expunge from our idea and sense of reality, the individual being and the

cosmic creation. The reality of the individual is Brahman the Absolute; the reality of the cosmos is Brahman the Absolute: the individual is a phenomenon, a temporal appearance in the cosmos; the cosmos itself is a phenomenon, a larger and more complex temporal appearance. The two terms, Knowledge and Ignorance, belong only to this appearance; in order to reach an absolute superconsciousness both have to be transcended: ego-consciousness and cosmic consciousness are extinguished in that supreme transcendence and there remains only the Absolute. For the absolute Brahman exists only in its own identity and is beyond all other-knowledge; there the very idea of the knower and the known and therefore of the knowledge in which they meet and become one, disappears, is transcended and loses its validity, so that to mind and speech the absolute Brahman must remain always unattainable. In opposition to the view we have put forward or in completion of it,—the view of the Ignorance itself as only either a limited or an involved action of the divine Knowledge, limited in the partly conscious, involved in the inconscient,—we might say from this other end of the scale of things that Knowledge itself is only a higher Ignorance, since it stops short of the absolute Reality which is self-evident to Itself but to mind unknowable. This absolutism corresponds to a truth of thought and to a truth of supreme experience in the spiritual consciousness; but by itself it is not the whole of spiritual thought complete and comprehensive and it does not exhaust the possibilities of the supreme spiritual experience.

The absolutist view of reality, consciousness and knowledge is founded on one side of the earliest Vedantic thought, but it is not the whole of that thinking. In the Upanishads, in the inspired scripture of the most ancient Vedanta, we find the affirmation of the Absolute, the experience-concept of the utter and ineffable Transcendence; but we find also, not in contradiction to it but as its corollary, an affirmation of the cosmic Divinity, an experience-concept of the cosmic Self and the becoming of Brahman in the universe. Equally, we find the affirmation of the Divine Reality in the individual: this too is an experience-concept; it is seized upon not as an appearance, but as an

actual becoming. In place of a sole supreme exclusive affirmation negating all else than the transcendent Absolute we find a comprehensive affirmation carried to its farthest conclusion: this concept of Reality and of Knowledge enveloping in one view the cosmic and the Absolute coincides fundamentally with our own; for it implies that the Ignorance too is a half-veiled part of the Knowledge and world-knowledge a part of self-knowledge. The Isha Upanishad insists on the unity and reality of all the manifestations of the Absolute; it refuses to confine truth to any one aspect. Brahman is the stable and the mobile, the internal and the external, all that is near and all that is far whether spiritually or in the extension of Time and Space; it is the Being and all becomings, the Pure and Silent who is without feature or action and the Seer and Thinker who organises the world and its objects; it is the One who becomes all that we are sensible of in the universe, the Immanent and that in which he takes up his dwelling. The Upanishad affirms the perfect and the liberating knowledge to be that which excludes neither the Self nor its creations: the liberated spirit sees all these as becomings of the Self-existent in an internal vision and by a consciousness which perceives the universe within itself instead of looking out on it, like the limited and egoistic mind, as a thing other than itself. To live in the cosmic Ignorance is a blindness, but to confine oneself in an exclusive absolutism of Knowledge is also a blindness: to know Brahman as at once and together the Knowledge and the Ignorance, to attain to the supreme status at once by the Becoming and the Non-Becoming, to relate together realisation of the transcendent and the cosmic self, to achieve foundation in the supramundane and a self-aware manifestation in the mundane, is the integral knowledge; that is the possession of Immortality. It is this whole consciousness with its complete knowledge that builds the foundation of the Life Divine and makes its attainment possible. It follows that the absolute reality of the Absolute must be, not a rigid indeterminable oneness, not an infinity vacant of all that is not a pure self-existence attainable only by the exclusion of the many and the finite, but something which is beyond these definitions, beyond indeed

any description either positive or negative. All affirmations and negations are expressive of its aspects, and it is through both a supreme affirmation and a supreme negation that we can arrive at the Absolute.

On the one side, then, presented to us as the Reality, we have an absolute Self-Existence, an eternal sole self-being, and through the experience of the silent and inactive Self or the detached immobile Purusha we can move towards this featureless and relationless Absolute, negate the actions of the creative Power, whether that be an illusory Maya or a formative Prakriti, pass from all circling in cosmic error into the eternal Peace and Silence, get rid of our personal existence and find or lose ourselves in that sole true Existence. On the other side, we have a Becoming which is a true movement of Being, and both the Being and the Becoming are truths of one absolute Reality. The first view is founded on the metaphysical conception which formulates an extreme perception in our thought, an exclusive experience in our consciousness of the Absolute as a reality void of all relations and determinations: that imposes as its consequence a logical and practical necessity to deny the world of relativities as a falsity of unreal being, a non-existent (*Asat*), or at least a lower and evanescent, temporal and pragmatic self-experience, and to cut it away from the consciousness in order to arrive at liberation of the spirit from its false perceptions or its inferior creations. The second view is based on the conception of the Absolute as neither positively nor negatively limitable. It is beyond all relations in the sense that it is not bound by any relativities or limitable by them in its power of being: it cannot be tied down and circumscribed by our relative conceptions, highest or lowest, positive or negative; it is bound neither by our knowledge nor by our ignorance, neither by our concept of existence nor by our concept of non-existence. But neither can it be limited by any incapacity to contain, sustain, create or manifest relations: on the contrary, the power to manifest itself in infinity of unity and infinity of multiplicity can be regarded as an inherent force, sign, result of its very absoluteness, and this possibility is in itself a sufficient explanation of cosmic

existence. The Absolute cannot indeed be bound in its nature to manifest a cosmos of relations, but neither can it be bound not to manifest any cosmos. It is not itself a sheer emptiness; for a vacant Absolute is no Absolute,—our conception of a Void or Zero is only a conceptual sign of our mental inability to know or grasp it: it bears in itself some ineffable essentiality of all that is and all that can be; and since it holds in itself this essentiality and this possibility, it must also hold in itself in some way of its absoluteness either the permanent truth or the inherent, even if latent, realisable actuality of all that is fundamental to our or the world's existence. It is this realisable actuality actualised or this permanent truth deploying its possibilities that we call manifestation and see as the universe.

There is, then, in the conception or the realisation of the truth of the Absolute no inherent inevitable consequence of a rejection or a dissolution of the truth of the universe. The idea of an essentially unreal universe manifested somehow by an inexplicable Power of illusion, the Absolute Brahman regarding it not or aloof and not affecting it even as it is unaffected by it, is at bottom a carrying over, an imposing or imputation, *adhyāropa*, of an incapacity of our mental consciousness to That so as to limit it. Our mental consciousness, when it passes beyond its limits, loses its own way and means of knowledge and tends towards inactivity or cessation; it loses at the same time or tends to have no further hold on its former contents, no continuing conception of the reality of that which once was to it all that was real: we impute to absolute Parabrahman, conceived as non-manifest for ever, a corresponding inability or separation or aloofness from what has become or seems now to us unreal; it must, like our mind in its cessation or self-extinction, be by its very nature of pure absoluteness void of all connection with this world of apparent manifestation, incapable of any supporting cognition or dynamic maintenance of it that gives it a reality—or, if there is such a cognition, it must be of the nature of an Is that is not, a magical Maya. But there is no binding reason to suppose that this chasm must exist; what our relative human consciousness is or is not capable of, is no test or standard

of an absolute capacity; its conceptions cannot be applied to an absolute self-awareness: what is necessary for our mental ignorance in order to escape from itself cannot be the necessity of the Absolute which has no need of self-escape and no reason for refusing to cognise whatever is to it cognisable.

There is that unmanifest Unknowable; there is this manifest knowable, partly manifest to our ignorance, manifest entirely to the divine Knowledge which holds it in its own infinity. If it is true that neither our ignorance nor our utmost and widest mental knowledge can give us a hold of the Unknowable, still it is also true that, whether through our knowledge or through our ignorance, That variously manifests itself; for it cannot be manifesting something other than itself, since nothing else can exist: in this variety of manifestation there is that Oneness and through the diversity we can touch the Oneness. But even so, even accepting this coexistence, it is still possible to pass a final verdict and sentence of condemnation on the Becoming and decide on the necessity of a renunciation of it and a return into the absolute Being. This verdict can be based on the distinction between the real reality of the Absolute and the partial and misleading reality of the relative universe.

For we have in this unfolding of knowledge the two terms of the One and the Many, as we have the two terms of the finite and the infinite, of that which becomes and of that which does not become but for ever is, of that which takes form and of that which does not take form, of Spirit and Matter, of the supreme Superconscious and the nethermost Inconscience; in this dualism, and to get away from it, it is open to us to define Knowledge as the possession of one term and the possession of the other as Ignorance. The ultimate of our life would then be a drawing away from the lower reality of the Becoming to the greater reality of the Being, a leap from the Ignorance to the Knowledge and a rejection of the Ignorance, a departure from the many into the One, from the finite into the infinite, from form into the formless, from the life of the material universe into the Spirit, from the hold of the inconscient upon us into the superconscious Existence. In this solution there is supposed

to be a fixed opposition, an ultimate irreconcilability in each case between the two terms of our being. Or else, if both are a means of the manifestation of the Brahman, the lower is a false or imperfect clue, a means that must fail, a system of values that cannot ultimately satisfy us. Dissatisfied with the confusions of the multiplicity, disdainful of even the highest light and power and joy that it can reveal, we must drive beyond to the absolute one-pointedness and one-standingness in which all self-variation ceases. Unable by the claim of the Infinite upon us to dwell for ever in the bonds of the finite or to find there satisfaction and largeness and peace, we have to break all the bonds of individual and universal Nature, destroy all values, symbols, images, self-definitions, limitations of the illimitable and lose all littleness and division in the Self that is for ever satisfied with its own infinity. Disgusted with forms, disillusioned of their false and transient attractions, wearied and discouraged by their fleeting impermanence and vain round of recurrence, we must escape from the cycles of Nature into the formlessness and featurelessness of permanent Being. Ashamed of Matter and its grossness, impatient of the purposeless stir and trouble of Life, tired out by the goalless running of Mind or convinced of the vanity of all its aims and objects, we have to release ourselves into the eternal repose and purity of the Spirit. The Inconscient is a sleep or a prison, the conscient a round of strivings without ultimate issue or the wanderings of a dream: we must wake into the superconscious where all darkness of night and half-lights cease in the self-luminous bliss of the Eternal. The Eternal is our refuge; all the rest are false values, the Ignorance and its mazes, a self-bewilderment of the soul in phenomenal Nature.

Our conception of the Knowledge and the Ignorance rejects this negation and the oppositions on which it is founded: it points to a larger if more difficult issue of reconciliation. For we see that these apparently opposite terms of One and Many, Form and the Formless, Finite and Infinite, are not so much opposites as complements of each other; not alternating values of the Brahman which in its creation perpetually loses oneness to find itself in multiplicity and, unable to discover itself in multiplicity,

loses it again to recover oneness, but double and concurrent values which explain each other; not hopelessly incompatible alternatives, but two faces of the one Reality which can lead us to it by our realisation of both together and not only by testing each separately,— even though such separate testing may be a legitimate or even an inevitable step or part of the process of knowledge. Knowledge is no doubt the knowledge of the One, the realisation of the Being; Ignorance is a self-oblivion of Being, the experience of separateness in the multiplicity and a dwelling or circling in the ill-understood maze of becomings: but this is cured by the soul in the Becoming growing into knowledge, into awareness of the Being which becomes in the multiplicity all these existences and can so become because their truth is already there in its timeless existence. The integral knowledge of Brahman is a consciousness in possession of both together, and the exclusive pursuit of either closes the vision to one side of the truth of the omnipresent Reality. The possession of the Being who is beyond all becomings, brings to us freedom from the bonds of attachment and ignorance in the cosmic existence and brings by that freedom a free possession of the Becoming and of the cosmic existence. The knowledge of the Becoming is a part of knowledge; it acts as an Ignorance only because we dwell imprisoned in it, *avidyāyām antare*, without possessing the Oneness of the Being, which is its base, its stuff, its spirit, its cause of manifestation and without which it could not be possible.

In fact, the Brahman is one not only in a featureless oneness beyond all relation, but in the very multiplicity of the cosmic existence. Aware of the works of the dividing mind but not itself limited by it, It finds its oneness as easily in the many, in relations, in becoming as in any withdrawal from the many, from relations, from becoming. Ourselves also, to possess even its oneness fully, must possess it— since it is there, since all is that—in the infinite self-variation of the cosmos. The infinity of the multiplicity finds itself explained and justified only when it is contained and possessed in the infinity of the One; but also the infinity of the One pours itself out and possesses itself

in the infinity of the Many. To be capable of that outpouring of its energies as well as not to lose itself in it, not to recoil defeated from its boundlessness and endlessness of vicissitudes and differences as well as not to be self-divided by its variations, is the divine strength of the free Purusha, the conscious Soul in its possession of its own immortal self-knowledge. The finite self-variations of the Self in which the mind losing self-knowledge is caught and dispersed among the variations, are yet not the denials but the endless expression of the Infinite and have no other meaning or reason for existence: the Infinite too, while it possesses its delight of limitless being, finds also the joy of that very limitlessness in its infinite self-definition in the universe. The Divine Being is not incapable of taking innumerable forms because He is beyond all form in His essence, nor by assuming them does He lose His divinity, but pours out rather in them the delight of His being and the glories of His godhead; this gold does not cease to be gold because it shapes itself into all kinds of ornaments and coins itself into many currencies and values, nor does the Earth-Power, principle of all this figured material existence, lose her immutable divinity because she forms herself into habitable worlds, throws herself out in the hills and hollows and allows herself to be shaped into utensils of the hearth and household or as hard metal into the weapon and the engine. Matter,—substance itself, subtle or dense, mental or material,—is form and body of Spirit and would never have been created if it could not be made a basis for the self-expression of the Spirit. The apparent Inconscience of the material universe holds in itself darkly all that is eternally self-revealed in the luminous Superconscious; to reveal it in Time is the slow and deliberate delight of Nature and the aim of her cycles.

But there are other conceptions of reality, other conceptions of the nature of knowledge which demand consideration. There is the view that all that exists is a subjective creation of Mind, a structure of Consciousness, and that the idea of an objective reality self-existent, independent of Consciousness, is an illusion, since we have and can have no evidence of any such independent self-existence of things. This way of seeing may lead to the

affirmation of the creative Consciousness as the sole Reality or to the denial of all existence and the affirmation of Non-Existence or a nescient Zero as the sole Reality. For, in one view, the objects constructed by consciousness have no intrinsic reality, they are merely structures; even the consciousness that constructs them is itself only a flux of perceptions that assume an appearance of connection and continuity and create a sense of continuous time, but in reality these things have no stable basis as they are only an appearance of reality. This would mean that the reality is an eternal absence at once of all self-conscious existence and of all that constitutes movement of existence: Knowledge would mean a return to that from the appearance of the constructed universe. There would be a double and complete self-extinction, the disappearance of Purusha, the cessation or extinction of Prakriti; for the conscious Soul and Nature are the two terms of our being and comprehend all that we mean by existence, and the negation of both is the absolute Nirvana. What is real, then, must be either an Inconscience, in which this flux and these structures appear, or a Superconscious beyond all idea of self or existence. But this view of the universe is only true of the appearance of things when we regard our surface mind as the whole of consciousness; as a description of the working of that Mind it is valid: there, undoubtedly, all looks like a flux and a construction by an impermanent Consciousness. But this cannot prevail as a whole account of existence if there is a greater and deeper self-knowledge and world-knowledge, a knowledge by identity, a consciousness to which that knowledge is normal and a Being of which that consciousness is the eternal self-awareness; for then the subjective and the objective can be real and intimate to that consciousness and being, both can be something of itself, sides of its identity, authentic to its existence.

On the other hand, if the constructing Mind or Consciousness is real and the sole reality, then the universe of material beings and objects may have an existence, but it is purely subjective-structural, made by Consciousness out of itself, maintained by it, dissolving into it in their disappearance. For if there is nothing else, no essential Existence or Being supporting

the creative Power, and there is not, either, a sustaining Void or Nihil, then this Consciousness which creates everything must itself have or be an existence or a substance; if it can make structures, they must be constructions out of its own substance or forms of its own existence. A consciousness which is not that of an Existence or is not itself an existence, must be an unreality, a perceptive Force of a Void or in a Void raising there unreal structures made of nothing,— a proposition which is not easily acceptable unless all others prove to be invalid. It then becomes apparent that what we see as consciousness must be a Being or an Existence out of whose substance of consciousness all is created.

But if we thus get back to the biune or the dual reality of Being and Consciousness, we can either suppose with Vedanta one original Being or with Sankhya a plurality of beings to whom Consciousness or some Energy to which we attribute consciousness presents its structures. If a plurality of separate original beings alone is real, then, since each would be or create its own world in its own consciousness, the difficulty is to account for their relations in a single identical universe; there must be a one Consciousness or one Energy,— corresponding to the Sankhya idea of a single Prakriti which is the field of experience of many like Purushas,— in which they meet in an identical mind-constructed universe. This theory of things has the advantage of accounting for the multitude of souls and multitude of things and the oneness in diversity of their experience, while at the same time it gives a reality to the separate spiritual growth and destiny of the individual being. But if we can suppose a One Consciousness, or a One Energy, creating a multitude of figures of itself and accommodating in its world a plurality of beings, there is no difficulty in supposing a one original Being who supports or expresses himself in a plurality of beings,— souls or spiritual powers of his one-existence; it would follow also that all objects, all the figures of consciousness would be figures of the Being. It must then be asked whether this plurality and these figures are realities of the one Real Existence, or representative personalities and images only, or symbols or values created by

Mind to represent It. This would depend largely on whether it is only Mind as we know it that is in action or a deeper and greater Consciousness, of which Mind is a surface instrument, executrix of its initiations, medium of its manifestations. If it is the former, the universe constructed and seen by Mind can only have a subjective or symbolic or representative reality: if the latter, then the universe and its natural beings and objects can be true realities of the One Existence, forms or powers of its being manifested by its force of being. Mind would be only an interpreter between the universal Reality and the manifestations of its creative Consciousness-Force, Shakti, Prakriti, Maya.

It is clear that a Mind of the nature of our surface intelligence can be only a secondary power of existence. For it bears the stamp of incapacity and ignorance as a sign that it is derivative and not the original creatrix; we see that it does not know or understand the objects it perceives, it has no automatic control of them; it has to acquire a laboriously built knowledge and controlling power. This initial incapacity could not be there if these objects were the Mind's own structures, creations of its self-Power. It may be that this is so because individual mind has only a frontal and derivative power and knowledge and there is a universal Mind that is whole, endowed with omniscience, capable of omnipotence. But the nature of Mind as we know it is an Ignorance seeking for knowledge; it is a knower of fractions and worker of divisions striving to arrive at a sum, to piece together a whole,—it is not possessed of the essence of things or their totality: a universal Mind of the same character might know the sum of its divisions by force of its universality, but it would still lack the essential knowledge, and without the essential knowledge there could be no true integral knowledge. A consciousness possessing the essential and integral knowledge, proceeding from the essence to the whole and from the whole to the parts, would be no longer Mind, but a perfect Truth-Consciousness automatically possessed of inherent self-knowledge and world-knowledge. It is from this basis that we have to look at the subjective view of reality. It is true that there is no such thing as an objective reality independent of

consciousness; but at the same time there is a truth in objectivity and it is this, that the reality of things resides in something that is within them and is independent of the interpretation our mind gives to them and of the structures it builds upon its observation. These structures constitute the mind's subjective image or figure of the universe, but the universe and its objects are not a mere image or figure. They are in essence creations of consciousness, but of a consciousness that is one with being, whose substance is the substance of Being and whose creations too are of that substance, therefore real. In this view the world cannot be a purely subjective creation of Consciousness; the subjective and the objective truth of things are both real, they are two sides of the same Reality.

In a certain sense, to use the relative and suggestive phrasing of our human language, all things are the symbols through which we have to approach and draw nearer to That by which we and they exist. The infinity of unity is one symbol, the infinity of the multiplicity is another symbol: again, since each thing in the multiplicity points back to the unity, since each thing that we call finite is a representative figure, a form-front, a silhouette shadowing out something of the infinite, all that defines itself in the universe — all its objects, happenings, idea-formations, life-formations — are in their turn each a clue and a symbol. To our subjective mind the infinity of existence is one symbol, the infinity of non-existence is another symbol. The infinity of the Inconscient and the infinity of the Superconscient are two poles of the manifestation of the absolute Parabrahman, and our existence between these two poles and our passage from one to the other are a progressive seizing, a constant interpretation, a subjective building up in ourselves of this manifestation of the Unmanifest. Through such an unfolding of our self-existence we have to arrive at the consciousness of its ineffable Presence and of ourselves and the world and all that is and all that is not as the unveiling of that which never entirely unveils itself to anything other than its own self-light eternal and absolute.

But this way of seeing things belongs to the action of the mind interpreting the relation between the Being and the external

Becoming; it is valid as a dynamic mental representation corresponding to a certain truth of the manifestation, but subject to the proviso that these symbolic values of things do not make the things themselves mere significant counters, abstract symbols like mathematical formulae or other signs used by the mind for knowledge: for forms and happenings in the universe are realities significant of Reality; they are self-expressions of That, movements and powers of the Being. Each form is there because it is an expression of some power of That which inhabits it; each happening is a movement in the working out of some Truth of the Being in its dynamic process of manifestation. It is this significance that gives validity to the mind's interpretative knowledge, its subjective construction of the universe; our mind is primarily a percipient and interpreter, secondarily and derivatively a creator. This indeed is the value of all mental subjectivity that it reflects in it some truth of the Being which exists independently of the reflection,—whether that independence presents itself as a physical objectivity or a supraphysical reality perceived by the mind but not perceptible by the physical senses. Mind, then, is not the original constructor of the universe: it is an intermediate power valid for certain actualities of being; an agent, an intermediary, it actualises possibilities and has its share in the creation, but the real creatrix is a Consciousness, an Energy inherent in the transcendent and cosmic Spirit.

There is a precisely opposite view of reality and knowledge which affirms an objective Reality as the only entire truth and an objective knowledge as the sole entirely reliable knowledge. This view starts from the idea of physical existence as the one fundamental existence and the relegation of consciousness, mind, soul or spirit to the position of a temporary outcome of the physical Energy in its cosmic action,—if indeed soul or spirit has any existence. All that is not physical and objective has a lesser reality dependent on the physical and objective; it has to justify itself to the physical mind by objective evidence or a recognisable and verifiable relation to the truth of physical and external things before it can be given a passport of reality. But it is evident that this solution cannot be accepted in its

rigour, as it has no integrality in it but looks at only one side of existence, even only one province or district of existence, and leaves all the rest unexplained, without inherent reality, without significance. If pushed to its extreme, it would give to a stone or a plum-pudding a greater reality and to thought, love, courage, genius, greatness, the human soul and mind facing an obscure and dangerous world and getting mastery over it an inferior dependent reality or even an unsubstantial and evanescent reality. For in this view these things so great to our subjective vision are valid only as the reactions of an objective material being to an objective material existence; they are valid only in so far as they deal with objective realities and make themselves effective upon them: the soul, if it exists, is only a circumstance of an objectively real world-Nature. But it could be held, on the contrary, that the objective assumes value only as it has a relation to the soul; it is a field, an occasion, a means for the soul's progression in Time: the objective is created as a ground of manifestation for the subjective. The objective world is only an outward form of becoming of the Spirit; it is here a first form, a basis, but it is not the essential thing, the main truth of being. The subjective and objective are two necessary sides of the manifested Reality and of equal value, and in the range of the objective itself the supraphysical object of consciousness has as much right to acceptance as the physical objectivity; it cannot be *a priori* set aside as a subjective delusion or hallucination.

In fact, subjectivity and objectivity are not independent realities, they depend upon each other; they are the Being, through consciousness, looking at itself as subject on the object and the same Being offering itself to its own consciousness as object to the subject. The more partial view concedes no substantive reality to anything which exists only in the consciousness, or, to put it more accurately, to anything to which the inner consciousness or sense bears testimony but which the outer physical senses do not provide with a ground or do not substantiate. But the outer senses can bear a reliable evidence only when they refer their version of the object to the consciousness and that consciousness gives a significance to their report, adds to its

externality its own internal intuitive interpretation and justifies it by a reasoned adherence; for the evidence of the senses is always by itself imperfect, not altogether reliable and certainly not final, because it is incomplete and constantly subject to error. Indeed, we have no means of knowing the objective universe except by our subjective consciousness of which the physical senses themselves are instruments; as the world appears not only to that but in that, so it is to us. If we deny reality to the evidence of this universal witness for subjective or for supraphysical objectivities, there is no sufficient reason to concede reality to its evidence for physical objectivities; if the inner or the supraphysical objects of consciousness are unreal, the objective physical universe has also every chance of being unreal. In each case understanding, discrimination, verification are necessary; but the subjective and the supraphysical must have another method of verification than that which we apply successfully to the physical and external objective. Subjective experience cannot be referred to the evidence of the external senses; it has its own standards of seeing and its inner method of verification: so also supraphysical realities by their very nature cannot be referred to the judgment of the physical or sense mind except when they project themselves into the physical, and even then that judgment is often incompetent or subject to caution; they can only be verified by other senses and by a method of scrutiny and affirmation which is applicable to their own reality, their own nature.

There are different orders of reality; the objective and physical is only one order. It is convincing to the physical or externalising mind because it is directly obvious to the senses, while of the subjective and the supraphysical that mind has no means of knowledge except from fragmentary signs and data and inferences which are at every step liable to error. Our subjective movements and inner experiences are a domain of happenings as real as any outward physical happenings; but if the individual mind can know something of its own phenomena by direct experience, it is ignorant of what happens in the consciousness of others except by analogy with its own or such signs, data, inferences as its outward observation can give it.

I am therefore inwardly real to myself, but the invisible life of others has only an indirect reality to me except in so far as it impinges on my own mind, life and senses. This is the limitation of the physical mind of man, and it creates in him a habit of believing entirely only in the physical and of doubting or challenging all that does not come into accord with his own experience or his own scope of understanding or square with his own standard or sum of established knowledge.

This ego-centric attitude has in recent times been elevated into a valid standard of knowledge; it has been implicitly or explicitly held as an axiom that all truth must be referred to the judgment of the personal mind, reason and experience of every man or else it must be verified or at any rate verifiable by a common or universal experience in order to be valid. But obviously this is a false standard of reality and of knowledge, since this means the sovereignty of the normal or average mind and its limited capacity and experience, the exclusion of what is supernormal or beyond the average intelligence. In its extreme, this claim of the individual to be the judge of everything is an egoistic illusion, a superstition of the physical mind, in the mass a gross and vulgar error. The truth behind it is that each man has to think for himself, know for himself according to his capacity, but his judgment can be valid only on condition that he is ready to learn and open always to a larger knowledge. It is reasoned that to depart from the physical standard and the principle of personal or universal verification will lead to gross delusions and the admission of unverified truth and subjective phantasy into the realm of knowledge. But error and delusion and the introduction of personality and one's own subjectivity into the pursuit of knowledge are always present, and the physical or objective standards and methods do not exclude them. The probability of error is no reason for refusing to attempt discovery, and subjective discovery must be pursued by a subjective method of enquiry, observation and verification; research into the supraphysical must evolve, accept and test an appropriate means and methods other than those by which one examines the constituents of physical objects and the processes of Energy in material Nature.

To refuse to enquire upon any general ground preconceived and *a priori* is an obscurantism as prejudicial to the extension of knowledge as the religious obscurantism which opposed in Europe the extension of scientific discovery. The greatest inner discoveries, the experience of self-being, the cosmic consciousness, the inner calm of the liberated spirit, the direct effect of mind upon mind, the knowledge of things by consciousness in direct contact with other consciousness or with its objects, most spiritual experiences of any value, cannot be brought before the tribunal of the common mentality which has no experience of these things and takes its own absence or incapacity of experience as a proof of their invalidity or their non-existence. Physical truth or formulas, generalisations, discoveries founded upon physical observation can be so referred, but even there a training of capacity is needed before one can truly understand and judge; it is not every untrained mind that can follow the mathematics of relativity or other difficult scientific truths or judge of the validity either of their result or their process. All reality, all experience must indeed, to be held as true, be capable of verification by a same or similar experience; so, in fact, all men can have a spiritual experience and can follow it out and verify it in themselves, but only when they have acquired the capacity or can follow the inner methods by which that experience and verification are made possible. It is necessary to dwell for a moment on these obvious and elementary truths because the opposite ideas have been sovereign in a recent period of human mentality,—they are now only receding,—and have stood in the way of the development of a vast domain of possible knowledge. It is of supreme importance for the human spirit to be free to sound the depths of inner or subliminal reality, of spiritual and of what is still superconscious reality, and not to immure itself in the physical mind and its narrow domain of objective external solidities; for in that way alone can there come liberation from the Ignorance in which our mentality dwells and a release into a complete consciousness, a true and integral self-realisation and self-knowledge.

An integral knowledge demands an exploration, an unveiling of all the possible domains of consciousness and experience.

For there are subjective domains of our being which lie behind the obvious surface; these have to be fathomed and whatever is ascertained must be admitted within the scope of the total reality. An inner range of spiritual experience is one very great domain of human consciousness; it has to be entered into up to its deepest depths and its vastest reaches. The supraphysical is as real as the physical; to know it is part of a complete knowledge. The knowledge of the supraphysical has been associated with mysticism and occultism, and occultism has been banned as a superstition and a fantastic error. But the occult is a part of existence; a true occultism means no more than a research into supraphysical realities and an unveiling of the hidden laws of being and Nature, of all that is not obvious on the surface. It attempts the discovery of the secret laws of mind and mental energy, the secret laws of life and life-energy, the secret laws of the subtle-physical and its energies,— all that Nature has not put into visible operation on the surface; it pursues also the application of these hidden truths and powers of Nature so as to extend the mastery of the human spirit beyond the ordinary operations of mind, the ordinary operations of life, the ordinary operations of our physical existence. In the spiritual domain, which is occult to the surface mind in so far as it passes beyond normal and enters into supernormal experience, there is possible not only the discovery of the self and spirit, but the discovery of the uplifting, informing and guiding light of spiritual consciousness and the power of the spirit, the spiritual way of knowledge, the spiritual way of action. To know these things and to bring their truths and forces into the life of humanity is a necessary part of its evolution. Science itself is in its own way an occultism; for it brings to light the formulas which Nature has hidden and it uses its knowledge to set free operations of her energies which she has not included in her ordinary operations and to organise and place at the service of man her occult powers and processes, a vast system of physical magic,— for there is and can be no other magic than the utilisation of secret truths of being, secret powers and processes of Nature. It may even be found that a supraphysical knowledge is necessary for the completion of physical knowledge, because the

processes of physical Nature have behind them a supraphysical factor, a power and action mental, vital or spiritual which is not tangible to any outer means of knowledge.

All insistence on the sole or the fundamental validity of the objective real takes its stand on the sense of the basic reality of Matter. But it is now evident that Matter is by no means fundamentally real; it is a structure of Energy: it is becoming even a little doubtful whether the acts and creations of this Energy itself are explicable except as the motions of power of a secret Mind or Consciousness of which its processes and steps of structure are the formulas. It is therefore no longer possible to take Matter as the sole reality. The material interpretation of existence was the result of an exclusive concentration, a preoccupation with one movement of Existence, and such an exclusive concentration has its utility and is therefore permissible; in recent times it has justified itself by the many immense and the innumerable minute discoveries of physical Science. But a solution of the whole problem of existence cannot be based on an exclusive one-sided knowledge; we must know not only what Matter is and what are its processes, but what mind and life are and what are their processes, and one must know also spirit and soul and all that is behind the material surface: only then can we have a knowledge sufficiently integral for a solution of the problem. For the same reason those views of existence which arise from an exclusive or predominant preoccupation with Mind or with Life and regard Mind or Life as the sole fundamental reality, have not a sufficiently wide basis for acceptance. Such a preoccupation of exclusive concentration may lead to a fruitful scrutiny which sheds much light on Mind and Life, but cannot result in a total solution of the problem. It may very well be that an exclusive or predominant concentration on the subliminal being, regarding the surface existence as a mere system of symbols for an expression of its sole reality, might throw a strong light on the subliminal and its processes and extend vastly the powers of the human being, but it would not be by itself an integral solution or lead us successfully to the integral knowledge of Reality. In our view the Spirit, the Self is the fundamental reality of existence;

but an exclusive concentration on this fundamental reality to the exclusion of all reality of Mind, Life or Matter except as an imposition on the Self or unsubstantial shadows cast by the Spirit might help to an independent and radical spiritual realisation but not to an integral and valid solution of the truth of cosmic and individual existence.

An integral knowledge then must be a knowledge of the truth of all sides of existence both separately and in the relation of each to all and the relation of all to the truth of the Spirit. Our present state is an Ignorance and a many-sided seeking; it seeks for the truth of all things but,—as is evident from the insistence and the variety of the human mind's speculations as to the fundamental Truth which explains all others, the Reality at the basis of all things,—the fundamental truth of things, their basic reality must be found in some at once fundamental and universal Real; it is that which, once discovered, must embrace and explain all,—for “That being known all will be known”: the fundamental Real must necessarily be and contain the truth of all existence, the truth of the individual, the truth of the universe, the truth of all that is beyond the universe. The Mind, in seeking for such a Reality and testing each thing from Matter upwards to see if that might not be It, has not proceeded on a wrong intuition. All that is necessary is to carry the inquiry to its end and test the highest and ultimate levels of experience.

But since it is from the Ignorance that we proceed to the Knowledge, we have had first to discover the secret nature and full extent of the Ignorance. If we look at this Ignorance in which ordinarily we live by the very circumstance of our separative existence in a material, in a spatial and temporal universe, we see that on its obscurer side it reduces itself, from whatever direction we look at or approach it, into the fact of a many-sided self-ignorance. We are ignorant of the Absolute which is the source of all being and becoming; we take partial facts of being, temporal relations of the becoming for the whole truth of existence,—that is the first, the original ignorance. We are ignorant of the spaceless, timeless, immobile and immutable Self; we take the constant mobility and mutation of the cosmic

becoming in Time and Space for the whole truth of existence,—that is the second, the cosmic ignorance. We are ignorant of our universal self, the cosmic existence, the cosmic consciousness, our infinite unity with all being and becoming; we take our limited egoistic mentality, vitality, corporeality for our true self and regard everything other than that as not-self,—that is the third, the egoistic ignorance. We are ignorant of our eternal becoming in Time; we take this little life in a small span of Time, in a petty field of Space, for our beginning, our middle and our end,—that is the fourth, the temporal ignorance. Even within this brief temporal becoming we are ignorant of our large and complex being, of that in us which is superconscious, subconscious, intraconscious, circumconscious to our surface becoming; we take that surface becoming with its small selection of overtly mentalised experiences for our whole existence,—that is the fifth, the psychological ignorance. We are ignorant of the true constitution of our becoming; we take the mind or life or body or any two of these or all three for our true principle or the whole account of what we are, losing sight of that which constitutes them and determines by its occult presence and is meant to determine sovereignly by its emergence their operations,—that is the sixth, the constitutional ignorance. As a result of all these ignorances, we miss the true knowledge, government and enjoyment of our life in the world; we are ignorant in our thought, will, sensations, actions, return wrong or imperfect responses at every point to the questionings of the world, wander in a maze of errors and desires, strivings and failures, pain and pleasure, sin and stumbling, follow a crooked road, grope blindly for a changing goal,—that is the seventh, the practical ignorance.

Our conception of the Ignorance will necessarily determine our conception of the Knowledge and determine, therefore, since our life is the Ignorance at once denying and seeking after the Knowledge, the goal of human effort and the aim of the cosmic endeavour. Integral knowledge will then mean the cancelling of the sevenfold Ignorance by the discovery of what it misses and ignores, a sevenfold self-revelation within our consciousness:—it will mean the knowledge of the Absolute as the origin of all

things; the knowledge of the Self, the Spirit, the Being and of the cosmos as the Self's becoming, the becoming of the Being, a manifestation of the Spirit; the knowledge of the world as one with us in the consciousness of our true self, thus cancelling our division from it by the separative idea and life of ego; the knowledge of our psychic entity and its immortal persistence in Time beyond death and earth-existence; the knowledge of our greater and inner existence behind the surface; the knowledge of our mind, life and body in its true relation to the self within and the superconscious spiritual and supramental being above them; the knowledge, finally, of the true harmony and true use of our thought, will and action and a change of all our nature into a conscious expression of the truth of the Spirit, the Self, the Divinity, the integral spiritual Reality.

But this is not an intellectual knowledge which can be learned and completed in our present mould of consciousness; it must be an experience, a becoming, a change of consciousness, a change of being. This brings in the evolutionary character of the Becoming and the fact that our mental ignorance is only a stage in our evolution. The integral knowledge, then, can only come by an evolution of our being and our nature, and that would seem to signify a slow process in Time such as has accompanied the other evolutionary transformations. But as against that inference there is the fact that the evolution has now become conscious and its method and steps need not be altogether of the same character as when it was subconscious in its process. The integral knowledge, since it must result from a change of consciousness, can be gained by a process in which our will and endeavour have a part, in which they can discover and apply their own steps and method: its growth in us can proceed by a conscious self-transformation. It is necessary then to see what is likely to be the principle of this new process of evolution and what are the movements of the integral knowledge that must necessarily emerge in it,— or, in other words, what is the nature of the consciousness that must be the base of the life divine and how that life may be expected to be formed or to form itself, to materialise or, as one might say, to "realise".

Chapter XVI

The Integral Knowledge and the Aim of Life; Four Theories of Existence

When all the desires that cling to the heart are loosed away from it, then the mortal becomes immortal, even here he possesses the Eternal.

*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*¹

He becomes the Eternal and departs into the Eternal.

*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*²

This bodiless and immortal Life and Light is the Brahman.

*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*³

Long and narrow is the ancient Path,—I have touched it, I have found it,—the Path by which the wise, knowers of the Eternal, attaining to salvation, depart hence to the high world of Paradise.

*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*⁴

I am a son of Earth, the soil is my mother. . . . May she lavish on me her manifold treasure, her secret riches. . . . May we speak the beauty of thee, O Earth, that is in thy villages and forests and assemblies and war and battles.

*Atharva Veda.*⁵

May Earth, sovereign over the past and the future, make for us a wide world. . . . Earth that was the water on the Ocean and whose course the thinkers follow by the magic of their knowledge, she who has her heart of immortality covered up by the Truth in the supreme ether, may she establish for us light and power in that most high kingdom.

*Atharva Veda.*⁶

O Flame, thou foundest the mortal in a supreme immortality

¹ IV. 4. 7.

² IV. 4. 6.

³ IV. 4. 7.

⁴ IV. 4. 8.

⁵ XII. 1. 12, 44, 56.

⁶ XII. 1. 1, 8.

for increase of inspired Knowledge day by day; for the seer
 who has thirst for the dual birth, thou createst divine bliss
 and human joy.

*Rig Veda.*⁷

O Godhead, guard for us the Infinite and lavish the finite.

*Rig Veda.*⁸

BUT BEFORE we examine the principles and process of the evolutionary ascent of Consciousness, it is necessary to restate what our theory of integral knowledge affirms as fundamental truths of the Reality and its manifestation and what it admits as effectual sides and dynamic aspects but is unable to accept as sufficient for a total explanation of existence and the universe. For truth of knowledge must base truth of life and determine the aim of life; the evolutionary process itself is the development of a Truth of existence concealed here in an original Inconscience and brought out from it by an emerging Consciousness which rises from gradation to gradation of its self-unfolding until it can manifest in itself the integral reality of things and a total self-knowledge. On the nature of that Truth from which it starts and which it has to manifest must depend the course of the evolutionary development,—the steps of its process and their significance.

First, we affirm an Absolute as the origin and support and secret Reality of all things. The Absolute Reality is indefinable and ineffable by mental thought and mental language; it is self-existent and self-evident to itself, as all absolutes are self-evident, but our mental affirmatives and negatives, whether taken separatively or together, cannot limit or define it. But at the same time there is a spiritual consciousness, a spiritual knowledge, a knowledge by identity which can seize the Reality in its fundamental aspects and its manifested powers and figures. All that is comes within this description and, if seen by this knowledge in its own truth or its occult meaning, can be

⁷ I. 31. 7. ⁸ IV. 2. 11.

regarded as an expression of the Reality and itself a reality. This manifested reality is self-existent in these fundamental aspects; for all the basic realities are a bringing out of something that is eternal and inherently true in the Absolute; but all that is not fundamental, all that is temporary is phenomenal, is form and power dependent on the reality it expresses and is real by that and by its own truth of significance, the truth of what it carries in it, because it is that and not something fortuitous, not baseless, illusory, a vain constructed figure. Even what deforms and disguises, as falsehood deforms and disguises truth, evil deforms and disguises good, has a temporal reality as true consequences of the Inconscience; but these contrary figures, though real in their own field, are not essential but only contributory to the manifestation and serve it as a temporal form or power of its movement. The universal then is real by virtue of the Absolute of which it is a self-manifestation, and all that it contains is real by virtue of the universal to which it gives a form and figure.

The Absolute manifests itself in two terms, a Being and a Becoming. The Being is the fundamental reality; the Becoming is an effectual reality: it is a dynamic power and result, a creative energy and working out of the Being, a constantly persistent yet mutable form, process, outcome of its immutable formless essence. All theories that make the Becoming sufficient to itself are therefore half-truths, valid for some knowledge of the manifestation acquired by an exclusive concentration upon what they affirm and envisage, but otherwise valid only because the Being is not separate from the Becoming but present in it, constitutive of it, inherent in its every infinitesimal atom and in its boundless expansion and extension. Becoming can only know itself wholly when it knows itself as Being; the soul in the Becoming arrives at self-knowledge and immortality when it knows the Supreme and Absolute and possesses the nature of the Infinite and Eternal. To do that is the supreme aim of our existence; for that is the truth of our being and must therefore be the inherent aim, the necessary outcome of our becoming: this truth of our being becomes in the soul a necessity of manifestation, in matter a secret energy, in life an urge and tendency, a desire and a seeking, in mind

a will, aim, endeavour, purpose; to manifest what is from the first occult within it is the whole hidden trend of evolutionary Nature.

Therefore we accept the truth on which the philosophies of the supracosmic Absolute take their stand; Illusionism itself, even if we contest its ultimate conclusions, can still be accepted as the way in which the soul in mind, the mental being, has to see things in a spiritual-pragmatic experience when it cuts itself off from the Becoming in order to approach and enter into the Absolute. But also, since the Becoming is real and is inevitable in the very self-power of the Infinite and Eternal, this too is not a complete philosophy of existence. It is possible for the soul in the Becoming to know itself as the Being and possess the Becoming, to know itself as Infinite in essence but also as the Infinite self-expressed in the finite, the timeless Eternal regarding itself and its works in the founding status and the developing motion of Time-eternity. This realisation is the culmination of the Becoming; it is the fulfilment of the Being in its dynamic reality. This too then must be part of the total truth of things, for it alone gives a full spiritual significance to the universe and justifies the soul in manifestation; an explanation of things that deprives cosmic and individual existence of all significance cannot be the whole explanation or the solution it proposes the sole true issue.

The next affirmation which we put forward is that the fundamental reality of the Absolute is to our spiritual perception a Divine Existence, Consciousness and Delight of Being which is a supracosmic Reality, self-existent, but also the secret truth underlying the whole manifestation; for the fundamental truth of Being must necessarily be the fundamental truth of Becoming. All is a manifestation of That; for it dwells even in all that seem to be its opposites and its hidden compulsion on them to disclose it is the cause of evolution, on Inconscience to develop from itself its secret consciousness, on the apparent Non-Being to reveal in itself the occult spiritual existence, on the insensible neutrality of Matter to develop a various delight of being which must grow, setting itself free from its minor terms, its contrary dualities of

pain and pleasure, into the essential delight of existence, the spiritual Ananda.

The Being is one, but this oneness is infinite and contains in itself an infinite plurality or multiplicity of itself: the One is the All; it is not only an essential Existence, but an All-Existence. The infinite multiplicity of the One and the eternal unity of the Many are the two realities or aspects of one reality on which the manifestation is founded. By reason of this fundamental verity of the manifestation the Being presents itself to our cosmic experience in three poises,—the supracosmic Existence, the cosmic Spirit and the individual Self in the Many. But the multiplicity permits of a phenomenal division of consciousness, an effectual Ignorance in which the Many, the individuals, cease to become aware of the eternal self-existent Oneness and are oblivious of the oneness of the cosmic Self in which and by which they live, move and have their being. But, by force of the secret Unity, the soul in becoming is urged by its own unseen reality and by the occult pressure of evolutionary Nature to come out of this state of Ignorance and recover eventually the knowledge of the one Divine Being and its oneness with it and at the same time to recover its spiritual unity with all individual beings and the whole universe. It has to become aware not only of itself in the universe but of the universe in itself and of the Being of cosmos as its greater self; the individual has to universalise himself and in the same movement to become aware of his supracosmic transcendence. This triple aspect of the reality must be included in the total truth of the soul and of the cosmic manifestation, and this necessity must determine the ultimate trend of the process of evolutionary Nature.

All views of existence that stop short of the Transcendence and ignore it must be incomplete accounts of the truth of being. The pantheistic view of the identity of the Divine and the Universe is a truth, for all this that is is the Brahman: but it stops short of the whole truth when it misses and omits the supracosmic Reality. On the other side, every view that affirms the cosmos only and dismisses the individual as a by-product of the cosmic Energy, errs by laying too much emphasis

on one apparent factual aspect of the world-action; it is true only of the natural individual and is not even the whole truth of that: for the natural individual, the nature-being, is indeed a product of the universal Energy, but is at the same time a nature-personality of the soul, an expressive formation of the inner being and person, and this soul is not a perishable cell or a dissoluble portion of the cosmic Spirit, but has its original immortal reality in the Transcendence. It is a fact that the cosmic Being expresses itself through the individual being, but also it is a truth that the Transcendental Reality expresses itself through both the individual existence and the Cosmos; the soul is an eternal portion of the Supreme and not a fraction of Nature. But equally any view that sees the universe as existent only in the individual consciousness must very evidently be a fragmentary truth: it is justified by a perception of the universality of the spiritual individual and his power of embracing the whole universe in his consciousness; but neither the cosmos nor the individual consciousness is the fundamental truth of existence; for both depend upon and exist by the transcendental Divine Being.

This Divine Being, Sachchidananda, is at once impersonal and personal: it is an Existence and the origin and foundation of all truths, forces, powers, existences, but it is also the one transcendent Conscious Being and the All-Person of whom all conscious beings are the selves and personalities; for He is their highest Self and the universal indwelling Presence. It is a necessity for the soul in the universe—and therefore the inner trend of the evolutionary Energy and its ultimate intention—to know and to grow into this truth of itself, to become one with the Divine Being, to raise its nature to the Divine Nature, its existence into the Divine Existence, its consciousness into the Divine Consciousness, its delight of being into the divine Delight of Being, and to receive all this into its becoming, to make the becoming an expression of that highest Truth, to be possessed inwardly of the Divine Self and Master of its existence and to be at the same time wholly possessed by Him and moved by His Divine Energy and live and act in a complete self-giving

and surrender. On this side the dualistic and theistic views of existence which affirm the eternal real existence of God and the Soul and the eternal real existence and cosmic action of the Divine Energy, express also a truth of the integral existence; but their formulation falls short of the whole truth if it denies the essential unity of God and Soul or their capacity for utter oneness or ignores what underlies the supreme experience of the merger of the soul in the Divine Unity through love, through union of consciousness, through fusion of existence in existence.

The manifestation of the Being in our universe takes the shape of an involution which is the starting-point of an evolution,— Matter the nethermost stage, Spirit the summit. In the descent into involution there can be distinguished seven principles of manifested being, seven gradations of the manifesting Consciousness of which we can get a perception or a concrete realisation of their presence and immanence here or a reflected experience. The first three are the original and fundamental principles and they form universal states of consciousness to which we can rise; when we do so, we can become aware of supreme planes or levels of fundamental manifestation or self-formulation of the spiritual reality in which is put in front the unity of the Divine Existence, the power of the Divine Consciousness, the bliss of the Divine Delight of existence,— not concealed or disguised as here, for we can possess them in their full independent reality. A fourth principle of supramental truth-consciousness is associated with them; manifesting unity in infinite multiplicity, it is the characteristic power of self-determination of the Infinite. This quadruple power of the supreme existence, consciousness and delight constitutes an upper hemisphere of manifestation based on the Spirit's eternal self-knowledge. If we enter into these principles or into any plane of being in which there is the pure presence of the Reality, we find in them a complete freedom and knowledge. The other three powers and planes of being, of which we are even at present aware, form a lower hemisphere of the manifestation, a hemisphere of Mind, Life and Matter. These are in themselves powers of the superior principles; but wherever they manifest in

a separation from their spiritual sources, they undergo as a result a phenomenal lapse into a divided in place of the true undivided existence: this lapse, this separation creates a state of limited knowledge exclusively concentrated on its own limited world-order and oblivious of all that is behind it and of the underlying unity, a state therefore of cosmic and individual Ignorance.

In the descent into the material plane of which our natural life is a product, the lapse culminates in a total Inconscience out of which an involved Being and Consciousness have to emerge by a gradual evolution. This inevitable evolution first develops, as it is bound to develop, Matter and a material universe; in Matter, Life appears and living physical beings; in Life, Mind manifests and embodied thinking and living beings; in Mind, ever increasing its powers and activities in forms of Matter, the Supermind or Truth-Consciousness must appear, inevitably, by the very force of what is contained in the Inconscience and the necessity in Nature to bring it into manifestation. Supermind appearing manifests the Spirit's self-knowledge and whole knowledge in a supramental living being and must bring about by the same law, by an inherent necessity and inevitability, the dynamic manifestation here of the divine Existence, Consciousness and Delight of existence. It is this that is the significance of the plan and order of the terrestrial evolution; it is this necessity that must determine all its steps and degrees, its principle and its process. Mind, Life and Matter are the realised powers of the evolution and well-known to us; Supermind and the triune aspects of Sachchidananda are the secret principles which are not yet put in front and have still to be realised in the forms of the manifestation, and we know them only by hints and a partial and fragmentary action still not disengaged from the lower movement and therefore not easily recognisable. But their evolution too is part of the destiny of the soul in the Becoming,—there must be a realisation and dynamisation in earth-life and in Matter not only of Mind but of all that is above it, all that has descended indeed but is still concealed in earth-life and Matter.

Our theory of the integral knowledge admits Mind as a creative principle, a power of the Being, and assigns it its place in

the manifestation; it similarly accepts Life and Matter as powers of the Spirit and in them also is a creative Energy. But the view of things that makes Mind the sole or the supreme creative principle and the philosophies that assign to Life or Matter the same sole reality or predominance, are expressions of a half-truth and not the integral knowledge. It is true that when Matter first emerges it becomes the dominant principle; it seems to be and is within its own field the basis of all things, the constituent of all things, the end of all things: but Matter itself is found to be a result of something that is not Matter, of Energy, and this Energy cannot be something self-existent and acting in the Void, but can turn out and, when deeply scrutinised, seems likely to turn out to be the action of a secret Consciousness and Being: when the spiritual knowledge and experience emerge, this becomes a certitude,—it is seen that the creative Energy in Matter is a movement of the power of the Spirit. Matter itself cannot be the original and ultimate reality. At the same time the view that divorces Matter and Spirit and puts them as opposites is unacceptable; Matter is a form of Spirit, a habitation of Spirit, and here in Matter itself there can be a realisation of Spirit.

It is true again that Life when it emerges becomes dominant, turns Matter into an instrument for its manifestation, and begins to look as if it were itself the secret original principle which breaks out into creation and veils itself in the forms of Matter; there is a truth in this appearance and this truth must be admitted as a part of the integral knowledge. Life, though not the original Reality, is yet a form, a power of it which is missioned here as a creative urge in Matter. Life, therefore, has to be accepted as the means of our activity and the dynamic mould into which we have here to pour the Divine Existence; but it can so be accepted only because it is a form of a Divine Energy which is itself greater than the Life-force. The Life-principle is not the whole foundation and origin of things; its creative working cannot be perfected and sovereignly fulfilled or even find its true movement until it knows itself as an energy of the Divine Being and elevates and subtilises its action into a free channel for the outpourings of the superior Nature.

Mind in its turn, when it emerges, becomes dominant; it uses Life and Matter as means of its expression, a field for its own growth and sovereignty, and it begins to look as if it were the true reality and the creator even as it is the witness of existence. But Mind also is a limited and derivative power; it is an outcome of Overmind or it is here a luminous shadow thrown by the divine Supermind: it can only arrive at its own perfection by admitting the light of a larger knowledge; it must transform its own more ignorant, imperfect and conflicting powers and values into the divinely effective potencies and harmonious values of the supramental truth-consciousness. All the powers of the lower hemisphere with their structures of the Ignorance can find their true selves only by a transformation in the light that descends to us from the higher hemisphere of an eternal self-knowledge.

All these three lower powers of being build upon the Inconscient and seem to be originated and supported by it: the black dragon of the Inconscience sustains with its vast wings and its back of darkness the whole structure of the material universe; its energies unroll the flux of things, its obscure intimations seem to be the starting-point of consciousness itself and the source of all life-impulse. The Inconscient, in consequence of this origination and predominance, is taken now by a certain line of enquiry as the real origin and creator. It has indeed to be accepted that an inconscient force, an inconscient substance are the starting-point of the evolution, but it is a conscious Spirit and not an inconscient Being that is emerging in the evolution. The Inconscient and its primary works are penetrated by a succession of higher and higher powers of being and are made subject to Consciousness so that its obstructions to the evolution, its circles of restriction, are slowly broken, the Python coils of its obscurity shot through by the arrows of the Sun-God; so are the limitations of our material substance diminished until they can be transcended and mind, life and body can be transformed through a possession of them by the greater law of divine Consciousness, Energy and Spirit. The integral knowledge admits the valid truths of all views of existence, valid in their own field, but it seeks to get rid of their limitations and negations

and to harmonise and reconcile these partial truths in a larger truth which fulfils all the many sides of our being in the one omnipresent Existence.

At this point we must take a step farther and begin to regard the metaphysical truth we have so stated as a determinant not only of our thought and inner movements but of our life direction, a guide to a dynamic solution of our self-experience and world-experience. Our metaphysical knowledge, our view of the fundamental truth of the universe and the meaning of existence, should naturally be the determinant of our whole conception of life and attitude to it; the aim of life, as we conceive it, must be structured on that basis. Metaphysical philosophy is an attempt to fix the fundamental realities and principles of being as distinct from its processes and the phenomena which result from those processes. But it is on the fundamental realities that the processes depend: our own process of life, its aim and method, should be in accordance with the truth of being that we see; otherwise our metaphysical truth can be only a play of the intellect without any dynamic importance. It is true that the intellect must seek after truth for its own sake without any illegitimate interference of a preconceived idea of life-utility. But still the truth, once discovered, must be realisable in our inner being and our outer activities: if it is not, it may have an intellectual but not an integral importance; a truth for the intellect, for our life it would be no more than the solution of a thought puzzle or an abstract unreality or a dead letter. Truth of being must govern truth of life; it cannot be that the two have no relation or interdependence. The highest significance of life to us, the fundamental truth of existence, must be also the accepted meaning of our own living, our aim, our ideal.

There are, roughly, from this view-point, four main theories, or categories of theory, with their corresponding mental attitudes and ideals in accordance with four different conceptions of truth of existence. These we may call the supracosmic, the cosmic and terrestrial, the supraterrestrial or other-worldly, and the integral or synthetic or composite, the theories that try to reconcile the three factors — or any two of them — which the

other views tend to isolate. In this last category would fall our view of our existence here as a Becoming with the Divine Being for its origin and its object, a progressive manifestation, a spiritual evolution with the supracosmic for its source and support, the other-worldly for a condition and connecting link and the cosmic and terrestrial for its field, and with human mind and life for its nodus and turning-point of release towards a higher and a highest perfection. Our regard then must be on the three first to see where they depart from the integralising view of life and how far the truths they stand on fit into its structure.

In the supracosmic view of things the supreme Reality is alone entirely real. A certain illusoriness, a sense of the vanity of cosmic existence and individual being is a characteristic turn of this seeing of things, but it is not essential, not an indispensable adjunct to its main thought-principle. In the extreme forms of its world-vision human existence has no real meaning; it is a mistake of the soul or a delirium of the will to live, an error or ignorance which somehow overcasts the absolute Reality. The only true truth is the supracosmic; or, in any case, the Absolute, the Parabrahman is the origin and goal of all existence, all else is an interlude without any abiding significance. If so, it would follow that the one thing to be done, the one wise and needful way of our being is to get away from all living, whether terrestrial or celestial, as soon as our inner evolution or some hidden law of the spirit makes that possible. True, the illusion is real to itself, the vanity pretends to be full of purpose; its laws and facts—they are only facts and not truths, empirical and not real realities—are binding on us so long as we rest in the error. But from any standpoint of real knowledge, in any view of the true truth of things, all this self-delusion would seem to be little better than the laws of a cosmic madhouse; so long as we are mad and have to remain in the madhouse, we are perforce subject to its rules and we must make, according to our temperament, the best or the worst of them, but always our proper aim is to get cured of our insanity and depart into light and truth and freedom. Whatever mitigations may be made in the severity of this logic, whatever concessions validating life and personality for the time

being, yet from this view-point the true law of living must be whatever rule can help us soonest to get back to self-knowledge and lead by the most direct road to Nirvana; the true ideal must be an extinction of the individual and the universal, a self-annulment in the Absolute. This ideal of self-extinction which is boldly and clearly proclaimed by the Buddhists, is in Vedantic thought a self-finding: but the self-finding of the individual by his growth into his true being in the Absolute would only be possible if both are interrelated realities; it could not apply to the final world-abolishing self-affirmation of the Absolute in an unreal or temporary individual by the annulment of the false personal being and by the destruction of all individual and cosmic existence for that individual consciousness,—however much these errors may go on, helplessly inevitable, in the world of Ignorance permitted by the Absolute, in a universal, eternal and indestructible Avidya.

But this idea of the total vanity of life is not altogether an inevitable consequence of the supracosmic theory of existence. In the Vedanta of the Upanishads, the Becoming of Brahman is accepted as a reality; there is room therefore for a truth of the Becoming: there is in that truth a right law of life, a permissible satisfaction of the hedonistic element in our being, its delight of temporal existence, an effective utilisation of its practical energy, of the executive force of consciousness in it; but, the truth and law of its temporal becoming once fulfilled, the soul has to turn back to its final self-realisation, for its natural highest fulfilment is a release, a liberation into its original being, its eternal self, its timeless reality. There is a circle of becoming starting from eternal Being and ending in it; or, from the point of view of the Supreme as a personal or superpersonal Reality, there is a temporary play, a game of becoming and living in the universe. Here, evidently, there is no other significance of life than the will of the Being to become, the will of consciousness and the urge of its force towards becoming, its delight of becoming; for the individual, when that is withdrawn from him or fulfilled in him and no longer active, the becoming ceases: but otherwise the universe persists or always comes back into manifestation,

because the will to become is eternal and must be so since it is the inherent will of an eternal Existence. It may be said that one defect in this view of things is the absence of any fundamental reality of the individual, of any abiding value and significance of his natural or his spiritual activity: but it can be replied that this demand for a permanent personal significance, for a personal eternity, is an error of our ignorant surface consciousness; the individual is a temporary becoming of the Being, and that is a quite sufficient value and significance. It may be added that in a pure or an absolute Existence there can be no values and significances: in the universe values exist and are indispensable, but only as relative and temporary buildings; there can be no absolute values, no eternal and self-existent significances in a Time-structure. This sounds conclusive enough and it seems that nothing more can be said about the matter. And yet the question remains over; for the stress on our individual being, the demand on it, the value put on individual perfection and salvation is too great to be dismissed as a device for a minor operation, the coiling and uncoiling of an insignificant spiral amid the vast circlings of the Eternal's becoming in the universe.

The cosmic-terrestrial view which we may take next as the exact opposite of the supracosmic, considers cosmic existence as real; it goes farther and accepts it as the only reality, and its view is confined, ordinarily, to life in the material universe. God, if God exists, is an eternal Becoming; or if God does not exist, then Nature,—whatever view we may take of Nature, whether we regard it as a play of Force with Matter or a great cosmic Life or even admit a universal impersonal Mind in Life and Matter,—is a perennial becoming. Earth is the field or it is one of the temporary fields, man is the highest possible form or only one of the temporary forms of the Becoming. Man individually may be altogether mortal; mankind also may survive only for a certain short period of the earth's existence; earth itself may bear life only for a rather longer period of its duration in the solar system; that system may itself one day come to an end or at least cease to be an active or productive factor in the Becoming; the universe we live in may itself dissolve or contract again into

the seed-state of its Energy: but the principle of Becoming is eternal—or at least as eternal as anything can be in the obscure ambiguity of existence. It is indeed possible to suppose a persistence of man the individual as a psychic entity in Time, a continuous terrestrial or cosmic ensouling or reincarnation without any after-life or other-life elsewhere: in that case one may either suppose an ideal of constantly increasing perfection or approach to perfection or a growth towards an enduring felicity somewhere in the universe as the aim of this endless Becoming. But in an extreme terrestrial view this is with difficulty tenable. Certain speculations of human thought have tended in this direction, but they have not taken a substantial body. A perpetual persistence in the Becoming is usually associated with the acceptance of a greater supraterrestrial existence.

In the ordinary view of a sole terrestrial life or a restricted transient passage in the material universe,—for possibly there may be thinking living beings in other planets,—an acceptance of man's mortality and a passive endurance of it or an active dealing with a limited personal or collective life and life-aims are the only choice possible. The one high and reasonable course for the individual human being,—unless indeed he is satisfied with pursuing his personal purposes or somehow living his life until it passes out of him,—is to study the laws of the Becoming and take the best advantage of them to realise, rationally or intuitively, inwardly or in the dynamism of life, its potentialities in himself or for himself or in or for the race of which he is a member; his business is to make the most of such actualities as exist and to seize on or to advance towards the highest possibilities that can be developed here or are in the making. Only mankind as a whole can do this with entire effect, by the mass of individual and collective action, in the process of time, in the evolution of the race experience: but the individual man can help towards it in his own limits, can do all these things for himself to a certain extent in the brief space of life allotted to him; but, especially, his thought and action can be a contribution towards the present intellectual, moral and vital welfare and the future progress of the race. He is capable of a certain nobility

of being; an acceptance of his inevitable and early individual annihilation does not preclude him from making a high use of the will and thought which have been developed in him or from directing them to great ends which shall or may be worked out by humanity. Even the temporary character of the collective being of humanity does not so very much matter,—except in the most materialist view of existence; for so long as the universal Becoming takes the form of human body and mind, the thought, the will it has developed in its human creature will work itself out and to follow that intelligently is the natural law and best rule of human life. Humanity and its welfare and progress during its persistence on earth provide the largest field and the natural limits for the terrestrial aim of our being; the superior persistence of the race and the greatness and importance of the collective life should determine the nature and scope of our ideals. But if the progress or welfare of humanity be excluded as not our business or as a delusion, the individual is there; to achieve his greatest possible perfection or make the most of his life in whatever way his nature demands will then be life's significance.

The supraterrestrial view admits the reality of the material cosmos and it accepts the temporary duration of earth and human life as the first fact we have to start from; but it adds to it a perception of other worlds or planes of existence which have an eternal or at least a more permanent duration; it perceives behind the mortality of the bodily life of man the immortality of the soul within him. A belief in the immortality, the eternal persistence of the individual human spirit apart from the body is the keyword of this conception of life. That of itself necessitates its other belief in higher planes of existence than the material or terrestrial, since for a disembodied spirit there can be no abiding place in a world whose every operation depends upon some play of force, whether spiritual, mental, vital or material, in and with the forms of Matter. There arises from this view of things the idea that the true home of man is beyond and that the earth life is in some way or other only an episode of his immortality or a deviation from a celestial and spiritual into a material existence.

But what then is the character, the origin and the end of

this deviation? There is first the idea of certain religions, long persistent but now greatly shaken or discredited, that man is a being primarily created as a material living body upon earth into which a newly born divine soul is breathed or else with which it is associated by the fiat of an almighty Creator. A solitary episode, this life is his one opportunity from which he departs to a world of eternal bliss or to a world of eternal misery either according as the general or preponderant balance of his acts is good or evil or according as he accepts or rejects, knows or ignores a particular creed, mode of worship, divine mediator, or else according to the arbitrary predestining caprice of his Creator. But that is the supraterrestrial theory of life in its least rational form of questionable creed or dogma. Taking the idea of the creation of a soul by the physical birth as our starting-point, we may still suppose that by a natural law, common to all, the rest of its existence has to be pursued beyond in a supraterrestrial plane, when the soul has shaken off from it its original matrix of matter like a butterfly escaped from the chrysalis and disporting itself in the air on its light and coloured wings. Or we may suppose preferably a preterrestrial existence of the soul, a fall or descent into matter and a reascension into celestial being. If we admit the soul's pre-existence, there is no reason to exclude this last possibility as an occasional spiritual occurrence,—a being belonging to another plane of existence may, conceivably, assume for some purpose the human body and nature: but this is not likely to be the universal principle of earth-existence or a sufficient rationale for the creation of the material universe.

It is also sometimes supposed that the solitary life on earth is a stage only and the development of the being nearer to its original glory occurs in a succession of worlds which are so many other stages of its growth, stadia of its journey. The material universe, or earth especially, will then be a sumptuously appointed field created by a divine power, wisdom or caprice for the enacting of this interlude. According to the view we choose to take of the matter, we shall see in it a place of ordeal, a field of development or a scene of spiritual fall and exile. There is too an Indian view which regards the world as a garden of the

divine Lila, a play of the divine Being with the conditions of cosmic existence in this world of an inferior Nature; the soul of man takes part in the Lila through a protracted series of births, but it is destined to reascend at last into the proper plane of the Divine Being and there enjoy an eternal proximity and communion: this gives a certain rationale to the creative process and the spiritual adventure which is either absent or not clearly indicated in the other accounts of this kind of soul movement or soul cycle. Always there are three essential characteristics in all these varying statements of the common principle:—first, the belief in the individual immortality of the human spirit; secondly, as a necessary consequence, the idea of its sojourn on earth as a temporary passage or a departure from its highest eternal nature and of a heaven beyond as its proper habitation; thirdly, an emphasis on the development of the ethical and spiritual being as the means of ascension and therefore the one proper business of life in this world of Matter.

These are the three fundamental ways of seeing, each with its mental attitude towards life, that can be adopted with regard to our existence; the rest are usually midway stations or else variations or composites which attempt to adapt themselves more freely to the complexity of the problem. For, practically, it is impossible for man taken as a race, whatever a few individuals may succeed in doing, to guide his life permanently or wholly by the leading motive of any of these three attitudes, uniquely, to the exclusion of the others' claim upon his nature. A confused amalgam of two or more of them, a conflict or division of his life-motives between them or some attempt at synthesis is his way of dealing with the various impulses of his complex being and the intuitions of his mind to which they appeal for their sanction. Almost all men normally devote the major part of their energy to the life on earth, to the terrestrial needs, interests, desires, ideals of the individual and the race. It could not be otherwise; for the care of the body, the sufficient development and satisfaction of the vital and the mental being of man, the pursuit of high individual and large collective ideals which start from the idea of an attainable human perfection or nearer approach to

perfection through his normal development, are imposed upon us by the very character of our terrestrial being; they are part of its law, its natural impulse and rule, its condition of growth, and without these things man could not attain to his full manhood. Any view of our being which neglects, unduly belittles or intolerantly condemns them, is therefore by that very fact, whatever its other truth or merit or utility, or whatever its suitability to individuals of a certain temperament or in a certain stage of spiritual evolution, unfit to be the general and complete rule of human living. Nature takes good care that the race shall not neglect these aims which are a necessary part of her evolution; for they fall within the method and stages of the divine plan in us, and a vigilance for her first steps and for the maintenance of their mental and material ground is a preoccupation which she cannot allow to go into the background, since these things belong to the foundation and body of her structure.

But also she has implanted in us a sense that there is something in our composition which goes beyond this first terrestrial nature of humanity. For this reason the race cannot accept or follow for a very long time any view of being which ignores this higher and subtler sense and labours to confine us entirely to a purely terrestrial way of living. The intuition of a beyond, the idea and feeling of a soul and spirit in us which is other than the mind, life and body or is greater, not limited by their formula, returns upon us and ends by resuming possession. The ordinary man satisfies this sense easily enough by devoting to it his exceptional moments or the latter part of his life when age shall have blunted the zest of his earthly nature, or by recognising it as something behind or above his normal action to which he can more or less imperfectly direct his natural being: the exceptional man turns to the supraterrestrial as the one aim and law of living and diminishes or mortifies as much as possible his earthly parts in the hope of developing his celestial nature. There have been epochs in which the supraterrestrial view has gained a very powerful hold and there has been a vacillation between an imperfect human living which cannot take its large natural expansion and a sick ascetic longing for the celestial life

which also does not acquire in more than a few its best pure and happy movement. This is a sign of the creation of some false war in the being by the setting up of a standard or a device that ignores the law of evolutionary capacity or an overstress that misses the reconciling equation which must exist somewhere in a divine dispensation of our nature.

But, finally, there must open in us, as our mental life deepens and subtler knowledge develops, the perception that the terrestrial and the supraterrestrial are not the only terms of being; there is something which is supracosmic and the highest remote origin of our existence. This perception is easily associated by spiritual enthusiasm, by the height and ardour of the soul's aspiration, by the philosophic aloofness or the strict logical intolerance of our intellect, by the eagerness of our will or by a sick disgust in our vital being discouraged by the difficulties or disappointed by the results of life,— by any or all of these motive-forces,— with a sense of the entire vanity and unreality of all else than this remote Supreme, the vanity of human life, the unreality of cosmic existence, the bitter ugliness and cruelty of earth, the insufficiency of heaven, the aimlessness of the repetition of births in the body. Here again the ordinary man cannot really live with these ideas; they can only give at most a greyness and restless dissatisfaction to the life in which he must still continue: but the exceptional man abandons all to follow the truth he has seen and for him they can be the needed food of his spiritual impulse or a stimulus to the one achievement that is now for him the one thing that matters. Periods and countries there have been, in which this view of being has become very powerful; a considerable part of the race has swerved aside to the life of the ascetic,— not always with a real call to it,— the rest adhered to the normal life but with an underlying belief in its unreality, a belief which can bring about by too much reiteration and insistence an unnerving of the life-impulse and an increasing littleness of its motives, or even, by a subtle reaction, an absorption in an ordinary narrow living through a missing of our natural response to the Divine Being's larger joy in cosmic existence and a failure of the great progressive human idealism

by which we are spurred to a collective self-development and a noble embrace of the battle and the labour. Here again there is a sign of some insufficiency in the statement of the supracosmic Reality, perhaps an overstatement or a mistaken opposition, a missing of the divine equation, of the total sense of creation and the entire will of the Creator.

That equation can only be found if we recognise the purport of our whole complex human nature in its right place in the cosmic movement; what is needed is to give its full legitimate value to each part of our composite being and many-sided aspiration and find out the key of their unity as well as their difference. The finding must be by a synthesis or an integration and, since development is clearly the law of the human soul, it is most likely to be discovered by an evolutionary synthesis. A synthesis of this kind was attempted in the ancient Indian culture. It accepted four legitimate motives of human living,— man's vital interests and needs, his desires, his ethical and religious aspiration, his ultimate spiritual aim and destiny,— in other words, the claims of his vital, physical and emotional being, the claims of his ethical and religious being governed by a knowledge of the law of God and Nature and man, and the claims of his spiritual longing for the Beyond for which he seeks satisfaction by an ultimate release from an ignorant mundane existence. It provided for a period of education and preparation based on this idea of life, a period of normal living to satisfy human desires and interests under the moderating rule of the ethical and religious part in us, a period of withdrawal and spiritual preparation, and a last period of renunciation of life and release into the spirit. Evidently, if applied as a universal rule, this prescribed norm, this delineation of the curve of our journey, would miss the fact that it is impossible for all to trace out the whole circle of development in a single short lifetime; but it was modified by the theory of a complete evolution pursued through a long succession of rebirths before one could be fit for a spiritual liberation. This synthesis with its spiritual insight, largeness of view, symmetry, completeness did much to raise the tone of human life; but eventually it collapsed: its place was occupied by an exaggeration of the impulse of

renunciation which destroyed the symmetry of the system and cut it into two movements of life in opposition to each other, the normal life of interests and desires with an ethical and religious colouring and the abnormal or supernormal inner life founded on renunciation. The old synthesis in fact contained in itself the seed of this exaggeration and could not but lapse into it: for if we regard the escape from life as our desirable end, if we omit to hold up any high offer of life-fulfilment, if life has not a divine significance in it, the impatience of the human intellect and will must end by driving at a short cut and getting rid as much as possible of any more tedious and dilatory processes; if it cannot do that or if it is incapable of following the short cut, it is left with the ego and its satisfactions but with nothing greater to be achieved here. Life is split into the spiritual and the mundane and there can only be an abrupt transition, not a harmony or reconciliation of these parts of our nature.

A spiritual evolution, an unfolding here of the Being within from birth to birth, of which man becomes the central instrument and human life at its highest offers the critical turning-point, is the link needed for the reconciliation of life and spirit; for it allows us to take into account the total nature of man and to recognise the legitimate place of his triple attraction, to earth, to heaven and to the supreme Reality. But a complete solution of its oppositions can be arrived at only on this basis that the lower consciousness of mind, life and body cannot arrive at its full meaning until it is taken up, restated, transformed by the light and power and joy of the higher spiritual consciousness, while the higher too does not stand in its full right relation to the lower by mere rejection, but by this assumption and domination, this taking up of its unfulfilled values, this restatement and transformation,—a spiritualising and supramentalising of the mental, vital and physical nature. The terrestrial ideal, which has been so powerful in the modern mind, restored man and his life on earth and the collective hope of the race to a prominent position and created an insistent demand for a solution; this is the good it has accomplished. But by overdoing and exclusiveness it unduly limited man's scope, it

ignored that which is the highest and in the end the largest thing in him, and by this limitation it missed the full pursuit of its own object. If mind were the highest thing in man and Nature, then indeed this frustration might not result; still, the limitation of scope would be there, a narrow possibility, a circumscribed prospect. But if mind is only a partial unfolding of consciousness and there are powers beyond of which Nature in our race is capable, then not only does our hope upon earth, let alone what is beyond it, depend upon their development, but this becomes the one proper road of our evolution.

Mind and life themselves cannot grow into their fullness except by the opening up of the larger and greater consciousness to which mind only approaches. Such a larger and greater consciousness is the spiritual, for the spiritual consciousness is not only higher than the rest but more embracing. Universal as well as transcendent, it can take up mind and life into its light and give them the true and utmost realisation of all for which they are seeking: for it has a greater instrumentality of knowledge, a fountain of deeper power and will, an unlimited reach and intensity of love and joy and beauty. These are the things for which our mind, life and body are seeking, knowledge, power and joy, and to reject that by which all these arrive at their utmost plenitude is to shut them out from their own highest consummation. An opposite exaggeration demanding only some colourless purity of spiritual existence nullifies the creative action of the spirit and excludes from us all that the Divine manifests in its being: it leaves room only for an evolution without sense or fulfilment,— for a cutting off of all that has been evolved is the sole culmination; it turns the process of our being into the meaningless curve of a plunge into Ignorance and return out of it or erects a wheel of cosmic Becoming with only an escape-issue. The intermediary, the supraterrestrial aspiration cuts short the fulfilment of the being above by not proceeding to its highest realisation of oneness and diminishes it below by not allowing a proper amplitude of sense to its presence in the material universe and its acceptance of life in an earthly body. A large relation of unity, an integration, restores the balance, illumines

the whole truth of being and links together the steps of Nature.

In this integration the supracosmic Reality stands as the supreme Truth of being; to realise it is the highest reach of our consciousness. But it is this highest Reality which is also the cosmic being, the cosmic consciousness, the cosmic will and life: it has put these things forth, not outside itself but in its own being, not as an opposite principle but as its own self-unfolding and self-expression. Cosmic being is not a meaningless freak or phantasy or a chance error; there is a divine significance and truth in it: the manifold self-expression of the spirit is its high sense, the Divine itself is the key of its enigma. A perfect self-expression of the spirit is the object of our terrestrial existence. This cannot be achieved if we have not grown conscious of the supreme Reality; for it is only by the touch of the Absolute that we can arrive at our own absolute. But neither can it be done to the exclusion of the cosmic Reality: we must become universal, for without an opening into universality the individual remains incomplete. The individual separating himself from the All to reach the Highest, loses himself in the supreme heights; including in himself the cosmic consciousness, he recovers his wholeness of self and still keeps his supreme gain of transcendence; he fulfils it and himself in the cosmic completeness. A realised unity of the transcendent, the universal and the individual is an indispensable condition for the fullness of the self-expressing spirit: for the universe is the field of its totality of self-expression, while it is through the individual that its evolutionary self-unfolding here comes to its acme. But this supposes not only a real being of the individual, but the revelation of our secret eternal oneness with the Supreme and with all cosmic existence. In his self-integration the soul of the individual must awake to universality and to transcendence.

The supraterrestrial existence is also a truth of being; for the material is not the only plane of our existence; other planes of consciousness there are to which we can attain and which have already their hidden links with us: not to reach up to whatever greater regions of the soul are open to us, not to have the experience of them, not to know and manifest their law in

ourselves is to fall short of the height and fullness of our being. But worlds of a higher consciousness are not the only possible scene and habitation of the perfected soul; nor can we find in any unchanging typal world the final or total sense of the Spirit's self-expression in the cosmos: the material world, this earth, this human life are a part of the Spirit's self-expression and have their divine possibility; that possibility is evolutionary and it contains the possibilities of all the other worlds in it, unrealised but realisable. Earth-life is not a lapse into the mire of something undivine, vain and miserable, offered by some Power to itself as a spectacle or to the embodied soul as a thing to be suffered and then cast away from it: it is the scene of the evolutionary unfolding of the being which moves towards the revelation of a supreme spiritual light and power and joy and oneness, but includes in it also the manifold diversity of the self-achieving spirit. There is an all-seeing purpose in the terrestrial creation; a divine plan is working itself out through its contradictions and perplexities which are a sign of the many-sided achievement towards which are being led the soul's growth and the endeavour of Nature.

It is true that the soul can ascend into worlds of a greater consciousness beyond the earth, but it is also true that the power of these worlds, the power of a greater consciousness has to develop itself here; the embodiment of the soul is the means for that embodiment. All the higher powers of Consciousness exist because they are powers of the Supreme Reality. Our terrestrial being has also the same truth; it is a becoming of the One Reality which has to embody in itself these greater powers. Its present appearance is a veiled and partial figure and to limit ourselves to that first figure, to the present formula of an imperfect humanity, is to exclude our divine potentialities; we have to bring a wider meaning into our human life and manifest in it the much more that we secretly are. Our mortality is only justified in the light of our immortality; our earth can know and be all itself only by opening to the heavens; the individual can see himself aright and use his world divinely only when he has entered into greater planes of being and seen the light of the Supreme and lived in the being and power of the Divine and Eternal.

An integration of this kind would not be possible if a spiritual evolution were not the sense of our birth and terrestrial existence; the evolution of mind, life and spirit in Matter is the sign that this integration, this completed manifestation of a secret self contained in it is its significance. A complete involution of all that the Spirit is and its evolutionary self-unfolding are the double term of our material existence. There is a possibility of self-expression by an always unveiled luminous development of the being, a possibility also of various expression in perfect types fixed and complete in their own nature: that is the principle of becoming in the higher worlds; they are typal and not evolutionary in their life principle; they exist each in its own perfection, but within the limits of a stationary world-formula. But there is also a possibility of self-expression by self-finding, a deployment which takes the form and goes through the progression of a self-veiling and an adventure of self-recovery: that is the principle of becoming in this universe of which an involution of consciousness and concealment of the spirit in Matter is the first appearance.

An involution of spirit in the Inconscience is the beginning; an evolution in the Ignorance with its play of the possibilities of a partial developing knowledge is the middle, and the cause of the anomalies of our present nature,—our imperfection is the sign of a transitional state, a growth not yet completed, an effort that is finding its way; a consummation in a deployment of the spirit's self-knowledge and the self-power of its divine being and consciousness is the culmination: these are the three stages of this cycle of the spirit's progressive self-expression in life. The two stages that have already their play seem at first sight to deny the possibility of the later consummating stage of the cycle, but logically they imply its emergence; for if the inconscience has evolved consciousness, the partial consciousness already reached must surely evolve into complete consciousness. It is a perfected and divinised life for which the earth-nature is seeking, and this seeking is a sign of the Divine Will in Nature. Other seekings also there are and these too find their means of self-fulfilment; a withdrawal into the supreme peace or ecstasy, a

withdrawal into the bliss of the Divine Presence are open to the soul in earth-existence: for the Infinite in its manifestation has many possibilities and is not confined by its formulations. But neither of these withdrawals can be the fundamental intention in the Becoming itself here; for then an evolutionary progression would not have been undertaken,—such a progression here can only have for its aim a self-fulfilment here: a progressive manifestation of this kind can only have for its soul of significance the revelation of Being in a perfect Becoming.

Chapter XVII

The Progress to Knowledge— God, Man and Nature

Thou art That, O Swetaketu. *Chhandogya Upanishad.*¹

The living being is none else than the Brahman, the whole world is the Brahman. *Vivekachudamani.*²

My supreme Nature has become the living being and this world is upheld by it. All beings have this for their source of birth. *Gita.*³

Thou art man and woman, boy and girl; old and worn thou walkest bent over a staff; . . . thou art the blue bird and the green and the scarlet-eyed. . . . *Swetasvatara Upanishad.*⁴

This whole world is filled with beings who are His members. *Swetasvatara Upanishad.*⁵

AN INVOLUTION of the Divine Existence, the spiritual Reality, in the apparent unconsciousness of Matter is the starting-point of the evolution. But that Reality is in its nature an eternal Existence, Consciousness, Delight of Existence: the evolution must then be an emergence of this Existence, Consciousness, Delight of Existence, not at first in its essence or totality but in evolutionary forms that express or disguise it. Out of the Inconscient, Existence appears in a first evolutionary form as substance of Matter created by an inconscient Energy. Consciousness, involved and non-apparent in Matter, first emerges in the guise of vital vibrations, animate but

¹ VI. 8. 7.

² Verse 479.

³ VII. 5, 6.

⁴ IV. 3, 4.

⁵ IV. 10.

subconscious; then, in imperfect formulations of a conscient life, it strives towards self-finding through successive forms of that material substance, forms more and more adapted to its own completer expression. Consciousness in life, throwing off the primal insensibility of a material inanimation and nescience, labours to find itself more and more entirely in the Ignorance which is its first inevitable formulation; but it achieves at first only a primary mental perception and a vital awareness of self and things, a life perception which in its first forms depends on an internal sensation responsive to the contacts of other life and of Matter. Consciousness labours to manifest as best it can through the inadequacy of sensation its own inherent delight of being; but it can only formulate a partial pain and pleasure. In man the energising Consciousness appears as Mind more clearly aware of itself and things; this is still a partial and limited, not an integral power of itself, but a first conceptive potentiality and promise of integral emergence is visible. That integral emergence is the goal of evolving Nature.

Man is there to affirm himself in the universe, that is his first business, but also to evolve and finally to exceed himself: he has to enlarge his partial being into a complete being, his partial consciousness into an integral consciousness; he has to achieve mastery of his environment but also world-union and world-harmony; he has to realise his individuality but also to enlarge it into a cosmic self and a universal and spiritual delight of existence. A transformation, a chastening and correction of all that is obscure, erroneous and ignorant in his mentality, an ultimate arrival at a free and wide harmony and luminousness of knowledge and will and feeling and action and character, is the evident intention of his nature; it is the ideal which the creative Energy has imposed on his intelligence, a need implanted by her in his mental and vital substance. But this can only be accomplished by his growing into a larger being and a larger consciousness: self-enlarge^m, self-fulfilment, self-evolution from what he partially and temporarily is in his actual and apparent nature to what he completely is in his secret self and spirit and therefore can become even in his manifest existence, is the object

of his creation. This hope is the justification of his life upon earth amidst the phenomena of the cosmos. The outer apparent man, an ephemeral being subject to the constraints of his material embodiment and imprisoned in a limited mentality, has to become the inner real Man, master of himself and his environment and universal in his being. In a more vivid and less metaphysical language, the natural man has to evolve himself into the divine Man; the sons of Death have to know themselves as the children of Immortality. It is on this account that the human birth can be described as the turning-point in the evolution, the critical stage in earth-nature.

It follows at once that the knowledge we have to arrive at is not truth of the intellect; it is not right belief, right opinions, right information about oneself and things,—that is only the surface mind's idea of knowledge. To arrive at some mental conception about God and ourselves and the world is an object good for the intellect but not large enough for the Spirit; it will not make us the conscious sons of Infinity. Ancient Indian thought meant by knowledge a consciousness which possesses the highest Truth in a direct perception and in self-experience; to become, to be the Highest that we know is the sign that we really have the knowledge. For the same reason, to shape our practical life, our actions as far as may be in consonance with our intellectual notions of truth and right or with a successful pragmatic knowledge,—an ethical or a vital fulfilment,—is not and cannot be the ultimate aim of our life; our aim must be to grow into our true being, our being of Spirit, the being of the supreme and universal Existence, Consciousness, Delight, Sachchidananda.

All our existence depends on that Existence, it is that which is evolving in us; we are a being of that Existence, a state of consciousness of that Consciousness, an energy of that conscious Energy, a will-to-delight of being, delight of consciousness, delight of energy born of that Delight: this is the root principle of our existence. But our surface formulation of these things is not that, it is a mistranslation into the terms of the Ignorance. Our I is not that spiritual being which can look on the Divine

Existence and say, "That am I"; our mentality is not that spiritual consciousness; our will is not that force of consciousness; our pain and pleasure, even our highest joys and ecstasies are not that delight of being. On the surface we are still an ego figuring self, an ignorance turning into knowledge, a will labouring towards true force, a desire seeking for the delight of existence. To become ourselves by exceeding ourselves,— so we may turn the inspired phrases of a half-blind seer who knew not the self of which he spoke,— is the difficult and dangerous necessity, the cross surmounted by an invisible crown which is imposed on us, the riddle of the true nature of his being proposed to man by the dark Sphinx of the Inconscience below and from within and above by the luminous veiled Sphinx of the infinite Consciousness and eternal Wisdom confronting him as an inscrutable divine Maya. To exceed ego and be our true self, to be aware of our real being, to possess it, to possess a real delight of being, is therefore the ultimate meaning of our life here; it is the concealed sense of our individual and terrestrial existence.

Intellectual knowledge and practical action are devices of Nature by which we are able to express so much of our being, consciousness, energy, power of enjoyment as we have been able to actualise in our apparent nature and by which we attempt to know more, express and actualise more, grow always more into the much that we have yet to actualise. But our intellect and mental knowledge and will of action are not our only means, not all the instruments of our consciousness and energy: our nature, the name which we give to the Force of being in us in its actual and potential play and power, is complex in its ordering of consciousness, complex in its instrumentation of force. Every discovered or discoverable term and circumstance of that complexity which we can get into working order, we need to actualise in the highest and finest values possible to us and to use in its widest and richest powers for the one object. That object is to become, to be conscious, to increase continually in our realised being and awareness of self and things, in our actualised force and joy of being, and to express that becoming dynamically in such an action on the world and ourselves that we

and it shall grow more and always yet more towards the highest possible reach, largest possible breadth of universality and infinity. All man's age-long effort, his action, society, art, ethics, science, religion, all the manifold activities by which he expresses and increases his mental, vital, physical, spiritual existence, are episodes in the vast drama of this endeavour of Nature and have behind their limited apparent aims no other true sense or foundation. For the individual to arrive at the divine universality and supreme infinity, live in it, possess it, to be, know, feel and express that alone in all his being, consciousness, energy, delight of being is what the ancient seers of the Veda meant by the Knowledge; that was the Immortality which they set before man as his divine culmination.

But by the nature of his mentality, by his inlook into himself and his outlook on the world, by his original limitation in both through sense and body to the relative, the obvious and the apparent, man is obliged to move step by step and at first obscurely and ignorantly in this immense evolutionary movement. It is not possible for him to envisage being at first in the completeness of its unity: it presents itself to him through diversity, and his search for knowledge is preoccupied with three principal categories which sum up for him all its diversity; himself,—man or individual soul,—God, and Nature. The first is that of which alone he is directly aware in his normal ignorant being; he sees himself, the individual, separate apparently in its existence, yet always inseparable from the rest of being, striving to be sufficient, yet always insufficient to itself, since never has it been known to come into existence or to exist or to culminate in its existence apart from the rest, without their aid and independently of universal being and universal nature. Secondly, there is that which he knows only indirectly by his mind and bodily senses and its effects upon them, yet must strive always to know more and more completely: for he sees also this rest of being with which he is so closely identified and yet from which he is so separate,—the cosmos, world, Nature, other individual existences whom he perceives as always like himself and yet always unlike; for they are the same in nature

even to the plant and the animal and yet different in nature. Each seems to go its own way, to be a separate being, and yet each is impelled by the same movement and follows in its own grade the same vast curve of evolution as himself. Finally, he sees or rather divines something else which he does not know at all except quite indirectly; for he knows it only through himself and that at which his being aims, through the world and that at which it seems to point and which it is either striving obscurely to reach and express by its imperfect figures or, at least, finds them without knowing it on their secret relation to that invisible Reality and occult Infinite.

This third and unknown, this *tertium quid*, he names God; and by the word he means somewhat or someone who is the Supreme, the Divine, the Cause, the All, one of these things or all of them at once, the perfection or the totality of all that here is partial or imperfect, the absolute of all these myriad relativities, the Unknown by learning of whom the real secret of the known can become to him more and more intelligible. Man has tried to deny all these categories,—he has tried to deny his own real existence, he has tried to deny the real existence of the cosmos, he has tried to deny the real existence of God. But behind all these denials we see the same constant necessity of his attempt at knowledge; for he feels the need of arriving at a unity of these three terms, even if it can only be done by suppressing two of them or merging them in the other that is left. To do that he affirms only himself as cause and all the rest as mere creations of his mind, or he affirms only Nature and all the rest as nothing but phenomena of Nature-Energy, or he affirms only God, the Absolute, and all the rest as no more than illusions which That thrusts upon itself or on us by an inexplicable Maya. None of these denials can wholly satisfy, none solves the entire problem or can be indisputable and definitive,—least of all the one to which his sense-governed intellect is most prone, but in which it can never persist for long; the denial of God is a denial of his true quest and his own supreme Ultimate. The ages of naturalistic atheism have always been short-lived because they can never satisfy the secret knowledge in man: that cannot be the

final Veda because it does not correspond with the Veda within which all mental knowledge is labouring to bring out; from the moment that this lack of correspondence is felt, a solution, however skilful it may be and however logically complete, has been judged by the eternal Witness in man and is doomed: it cannot be the last word of Knowledge.

Man as he is is not sufficient to himself, nor separate, nor is he the Eternal and the All; therefore by himself he cannot be the explanation of the cosmos of which his mind, life and body are so evidently an infinitesimal detail. The visible cosmos too, he finds, is not sufficient to itself, nor does it explain itself even by its unseen material forces; for there is too much that he finds both in the world and in himself which is beyond them and of which they seem only to be a face, an epidermis or even a mask. Neither his intellect, nor his intuitions, nor his feeling can do without a One or a Oneness to whom or to which these world-forces and himself may stand in some relation which supports them and gives them their significance. He feels that there must be an Infinite which holds these finites, is in, behind and about all this visible cosmos, bases the harmony and interrelation and essential oneness of multitudinous things. His thought needs an Absolute on which these innumerable and finite relativities depend for their existence, an ultimate Truth of things, a creating Power or Force or a Being who originates and upholds all these innumerable beings in the universe. Let him call it what he will, he must arrive at a Supreme, a Divine, a Cause, an Infinite and Eternal, a Permanent, a Perfection to which all tends and aspires, or an All to which everything perpetually and invisibly amounts and without which they could not be.

Yet even this Absolute he cannot really affirm by itself and to the exclusion of the two other categories; for then he has only made a violent leap away from the problem he is here to solve, and he himself and the cosmos remain an inexplicable mystification or a purposeless mystery. A certain part of his intellect and his longing for rest may be placated by such a solution, just as his physical intelligence is easily satisfied by a denial of the Beyond and a deification of material Nature; but

his heart, his will, the strongest and intensest parts of his being remain without a meaning, void of purpose or justification, or become merely a random foolishness agitating itself like a vain and restless shadow against the eternal repose of the pure Existence or amidst the eternal inconscience of the universe. As for the cosmos, it remains there in the singular character of a carefully constructed lie of the Infinite, a monstrously aggressive and yet really non-existent anomaly, a painful and miserable paradox with false shows of wonder and beauty and delight. Or else it is a huge play of blind organised Energy without significance and his own being a temporary minute anomaly incomprehensibly occurring in that senseless vastness. That way no satisfying fulfilment lies for the consciousness, the energy that has manifested itself in the world and in man: the mind needs to find something that links all together, something by which Nature is fulfilled in man and man in Nature and both find themselves in God, because the Divine is ultimately self-revealed in both man and Nature.

An acceptance, a perception of the unity of these three categories is essential to the Knowledge; it is towards their unity as well as their integrality that the growing self-consciousness of the individual opens out and at which it must arrive if it is to be satisfied of itself and complete. For without the realisation of unity the knowledge of none of the three can be entire; their unity is for each the condition of its own integrality. It is, again, by knowing each in its completeness that all three meet in our consciousness and become one; it is in a total knowledge that all knowing becomes one and indivisible. Otherwise it is only by division and rejection of two of them from the third that we could get at any kind of oneness. Man therefore has to enlarge his knowledge of himself, his knowledge of the world and his knowledge of God until in their totality he becomes aware of their mutual indwelling and oneness. For so long as he knows them only in part, there will be an incompleteness resulting in division, and so long as he has not realised them in a reconciling unity, he will not have found their total truth or the fundamental significances of existence.

This is not to say that the Supreme is not self-existent and self-sufficient; God exists in Himself and not by virtue of the cosmos or of man, while man and cosmos exist by virtue of God and not in themselves except in so far as their being is one with the being of God. But still they are a manifestation of the power of God and even in His eternal existence their spiritual reality must in some way be present or implied, since otherwise there would be no possibility of their manifestation or, manifested, they would have no significance. What appears here as man is an individual being of the Divine; the Divine extended in multiplicity is the Self of all individual existences.⁶ Moreover, it is through the knowledge of self and the world that man arrives at the knowledge of God and he cannot attain to it otherwise. It is not by rejecting God's manifestation, but by rejecting his own ignorance of it and the results of his ignorance, that he can best lift up and offer the whole of his being and consciousness and energy and joy of being into the Divine Existence. He may do this through himself, one manifestation, or he may do it through the universe, another manifestation. Arriving through himself alone, it is possible for him to plunge into an individual immerscence or absorption in the Indefinable and to lose the universe. Arriving through the universe alone, he can sink his individuality either in the impersonality of universal being or in a dynamic self of universal Conscious-Force; he merges into the universal self or he becomes an impersonal channel of the cosmic Energy. Arriving through the equal integrality of both and seizing through them and beyond them on all the aspects of the Divine, he exceeds both and fulfils them in that exceeding: he possesses the Divine in his being, even as he is enveloped, penetrated, pervaded, possessed by the Divine Being, Consciousness, Light, Power, Delight, Knowledge; he possesses God in himself and God in the universe. The All-Knowledge justifies to him its creation of himself and justifies by him perfected its creation of the world it has made. All this becomes entirely real and effective by an ascension into a supramental

⁶ *eko vaśī sarvabhūtarātmā*—*Katha Upanishad*, II. 2. 12.

and supreme supernature and the descent of its powers into the manifestation; but even while that consummation is still difficult and distant, the true knowledge can be made subjectively real by a spiritual reflection or reception in mind-life-body Nature.

But this spiritual truth and true aim of his being is not allowed to appear till late in his journey: for the early preparatory business of man in the evolutionary steps of Nature is to affirm, to make distinct and rich, to possess firmly, powerfully and completely his own individuality. As a consequence, he has in the beginning principally to occupy himself with his own ego. In this egoistic phase of his evolution the world and others are less important to him than himself, are indeed only important as aids and occasions for his self-affirmation. God too at this stage is less important to him than he is to himself, and therefore in earlier formations, on the lower levels of religious development, God or the gods are treated as if they existed for man, as supreme instruments for the satisfaction of his desires, his helpers in his task of getting the world in which he lives to satisfy his needs and wants and ambitions. This primary egoistic development with all its sins and violences and crudities is by no means to be regarded, in its proper place, as an evil or an error of Nature; it is necessary for man's first work, the finding of his own individuality and its perfect disengagement from the lower subconscious in which the individual is overpowered by the mass consciousness of the world and entirely subject to the mechanical workings of Nature. Man the individual has to affirm, to distinguish his personality against Nature, to be powerfully himself, to evolve all his human capacities of force and knowledge and enjoyment so that he may turn them upon her and upon the world with more and more mastery and force; his self-discriminating egoism is given him as a means for this primary purpose. Until he has thus developed his individuality, his personality, his separate capacity, he cannot be fit for the greater work before him or successfully turn his faculties to higher, larger and more divine ends. He has to affirm himself in the Ignorance before he can perfect himself in the Knowledge.

For the initiation of the evolutionary emergence from the Inconscient works out by two forces, a secret cosmic consciousness and an individual consciousness manifest on the surface. The secret cosmic consciousness remains secret and subliminal to the surface individual; it organises itself on the surface by the creation of separate objects and beings. But while it organises the separate object and the body and mind of the individual being, it creates also collective powers of consciousness which are large subjective formations of cosmic Nature; but it does not provide for them an organised mind and body, it bases them on the group of individuals, develops for them a group mind, a changing yet continuous group body. It follows that only as the individuals become more and more conscious can the group-being also become more and more conscious; the growth of the individual is the indispensable means for the inner growth as distinguished from the outer force and expansion of the collective being. This indeed is the dual importance of the individual that it is through him that the cosmic spirit organises its collective units and makes them self-expressive and progressive and through him that it raises Nature from the Inconscience to the Superconscious and exalts it to meet the Transcendent. In the mass the collective consciousness is near to the Inconscient; it has a subconscious, an obscure and mute movement which needs the individual to express it, to bring it to light, to organise it and make it effective. The mass consciousness by itself moves by a vague, half-formed or unformed subliminal and commonly subconscious impulse rising to the surface; it is prone to a blind or half-seeing unanimity which suppresses the individual in the common movement: if it thinks, it is by the motto, the slogan, the watchword, the common crude or formed idea, the traditional, the accepted customary notion; it acts, when not by instinct or on impulse, then by the rule of the pack, the herd mentality, the type law. This mass consciousness, life, action can be extraordinarily effective if it can find an individual or a few powerful individuals to embody, express, lead, organise it; its sudden crowd-movements can also be irresistible for the moment like the motion of an avalanche or the rush of a tempest. The suppression or entire

subordination of the individual in the mass consciousness can give a great practical efficiency to a nation or a community if the subliminal collective being can build a binding tradition or find a group, a class, a head to embody its spirit and direction; the strength of powerful military states, of communities with a tense and austere culture rigidly imposed on its individuals, the success of the great world-conquerors, had behind it this secret of Nature. But this is an efficiency of the outer life, and that life is not the highest or last term of our being. There is a mind in us, there is a soul and spirit, and our life has no true value if it has not in it a growing consciousness, a developing mind, and if life and mind are not an expression, an instrument, a means of liberation and fulfilment for the soul, the indwelling Spirit.

But the progress of the mind, the growth of the soul, even of the mind and soul of the collectivity, depends on the individual, on his sufficient freedom and independence, on his separate power to express and bring into being what is still unexpressed in the mass, still undeveloped from the subconscious or not yet brought out from within or brought down from the Super-consciousness. The collectivity is a mass, a field of formation; the individual is the diviner of truth, the form-maker, the creator. In the crowd the individual loses his inner direction and becomes a cell of the mass body moved by the collective will or idea or the mass impulse. He has to stand apart, affirm his separate reality in the whole, his own mind emerging from the common mentality, his own life distinguishing itself in the common life-uniformity, even as his body has developed something unique and recognisable in the common physicality. He has, even, in the end to retire into himself in order to find himself, and it is only when he has found himself that he can become spiritually one with all; if he tries to achieve that oneness in the mind, in the vital, in the physical and has not yet a sufficiently strong individuality, he may be overpowered by the mass consciousness and lose his soul fulfilment, his mind fulfilment, his life fulfilment, become only a cell of the mass body. The collective being may then become strong and dominant, but it is likely to lose its plasticity, its evolutionary movement: the great evolutionary

periods of humanity have taken place in communities where the individual became active, mentally, vitally or spiritually alive. For this reason Nature invented the ego that the individual might disengage himself from the unconscious or subconscious of the mass and become an independent living mind, life-power, soul, spirit, co-ordinating himself with the world around him but not drowned in it and separately nonexistent and ineffective. For the individual is indeed part of the cosmic being, but he is also something more, he is a soul that has descended from the Transcendence. This he cannot manifest at once, because he is too near to the cosmic Inconscious, not near enough to the original Superconscious; he has to find himself as the mental and vital ego before he can find himself as the soul or spirit.

Still, to find his egoistic individuality is not to know himself; the true spiritual individual is not the mind ego, the life ego, the body ego: predominantly, this first movement is a work of will, of power, of egoistic self-effectuation and only secondarily of knowledge. Therefore a time must come when man has to look below the obscure surface of his egoistic being and attempt to know himself; he must set out to find the real man: without that he would be stopping short at Nature's primary education and never go on to her deeper and larger teachings; however great his practical knowledge and efficiency, he would be only a little higher than the animals. First, he has to turn his eyes upon his own psychology and distinguish its natural elements,—ego, mind and its instruments, life, body,—until he discovers that his whole existence stands in need of an explanation other than the working of the natural elements and of a goal for its activities other than an egoistic self-affirmation and satisfaction. He may seek it in Nature and mankind and thus start on his way to the discovery of his unity with the rest of his world: he may seek it in supernature, in God, and thus start on his way to the discovery of his unity with the Divine. Practically, he attempts both paths and, continually wavering, continually seeks to fix himself in the successive solutions that may be best in accordance with the various partial discoveries he has made on his double line of search and finding.

But through it all what he is in this stage still insistently seeking to discover, to know, to fulfil is himself; his knowledge of Nature, his knowledge of God are only helps towards self-knowledge, towards the perfection of his being, towards the attainment of the supreme object of his individual self-existence. Directed towards Nature and the cosmos, it may take upon itself the figure of self-knowledge, self-mastery—in the mental and vital sense—and mastery of the world in which we find ourselves: directed towards God, it may take also this figure but in a higher spiritual sense of world and self, or it may assume that other, so familiar and decisive to the religious mind, the seeking for an individual salvation whether in heavens beyond or by a separate emergence in a supreme Self or a supreme Non-Self,— beatitude or Nirvana. Throughout, however, it is the individual who is seeking individual self-knowledge and the aim of his separate existence, with all the rest, even altruism and the love and service of mankind, self-effacement or self-annihilation, thrown in—with whatever subtle disguises—as helps and means towards that one great preoccupation of his realised individuality. This may seem to be only an expanded egoism, and the separative ego would then be the truth of man's being persistent in him to the end or till at last he is liberated from it by his self-extinction in the featureless eternity of the Infinite. But there is a deeper secret behind which justifies his individuality and its demand, the secret of the spiritual and eternal individual, the Purusha.

It is because of the spiritual Person, the Divinity in the individual, that perfection or liberation—salvation, as it is called in the West—has to be individual and not collective; for whatever perfection of the collectivity is to be sought after, can come only by the perfection of the individuals who constitute it. It is because the individual is That, that to find himself is his great necessity. In his complete surrender and self-giving to the Supreme it is he who finds his perfect self-finding in a perfect self-offering. In the abolition of the mental, vital, physical ego, even of the spiritual ego, it is the formless and limitless Individual that has the peace and joy of its escape into its own

infinity. In the experience that he is nothing and no one, or everything and everyone, or the One which is beyond all things and absolute, it is the Brahman in the individual that effectuates this stupendous merger or this marvellous joining, Yoga, of its eternal unit of being with its vast all-comprehending or supreme all-transcending unity of eternal existence. To get beyond the ego is imperative, but one cannot get beyond the self—except by finding it supremely, universally. For the self is not the ego; it is one with the All and the One and in finding it it is the All and the One that we discover in our self: the contradiction, the separation disappears, but the self, the spiritual reality remains, united with the One and the All by that delivering disappearance.

The higher self-knowledge begins therefore as soon as man has got beyond his preoccupation with the relation of Nature and God to his superficial being, his most apparent self. One step is to know that this life is not all, to get at the conception of his own temporal eternity, to realise, to become concretely aware of that subjective persistence which is called the immortality of the soul. When he knows that there are states beyond the material and lives behind and before him, at any rate a pre-existence and a subsequent existence, he is on the way to get rid of his temporal ignorance by enlarging himself beyond the immediate moments of Time into the possession of his own eternity. Another step forward is to learn that his surface waking state is only a small part of his being, to begin to fathom the abyss of the Inconscient and depths of the subconscious and subliminal and scale the heights of the superconscious; so he commences the removal of his psychological self-ignorance. A third step is to find out that there is something in him other than his instrumental mind, life and body, not only an immortal ever-developing individual soul that supports his nature but an eternal immutable self and spirit, and to learn what are the categories of his spiritual being, until he discovers that all in him is an expression of the spirit and distinguishes the link between his lower and his higher existence; thus he sets out to remove his constitutional self-ignorance. Discovering self and spirit he discovers God; he finds out that there is a Self beyond the temporal: he comes to the vision of that

Self in the cosmic consciousness as the divine Reality behind Nature and this world of beings; his mind opens to the thought or the sense of the Absolute of whom self and the individual and the cosmos are so many faces; the cosmic, the egoistic, the original ignorance begin to lose the rigidness of their hold upon him. In his attempt to cast his existence into the mould of this enlarging self-knowledge his whole view and motive of life, thought and action are progressively modified and transformed; his practical ignorance of himself, his nature and his object of existence diminishes: he has set his step on the path which leads out of the falsehood and suffering of a limited and partial into the perfect possession and enjoyment of a true and complete existence.

In the course of this progress he discovers step by step the unity of the three categories with which he started. For, first, he finds that in his manifest being he is one with cosmos and Nature; mind, life and body, the soul in the succession of Time, the conscious, subconscious and superconscious, — these in their various relations and the result of their relations are cosmos and are Nature. But he finds too that in all which stands behind them or on which they are based, he is one with God; for the Absolute, the Spirit, the Self spaceless and timeless, the Self manifest in the cosmos and Lord of Nature, — all this is what we mean by God, and in all this his own being goes back to God and derives from it; he is the Absolute, the Self, the Spirit self-projected in a multiplicity of itself into cosmos and veiled in Nature. In both of these realisations he finds his unity with all other souls and beings, — relatively in Nature, since he is one with them in mind, vitality, matter, soul, every cosmic principle and result, however various in energy and act of energy, disposition of principle and disposition of result, but absolutely in God, because the one Absolute, the one Self, the one Spirit is ever the Self of all and the origin, possessor and enjoyer of their multitudinous diversities. The unity of God and Nature cannot fail to manifest itself to him: for he finds in the end that it is the Absolute who is all these relativities; he sees that it is the Spirit of whom every other principle is a manifestation; he discovers that it is the Self who

has become all these becomings; he feels that it is the Shakti or Power of being and consciousness of the Lord of all beings which is Nature and is acting in the cosmos. Thus in the progress of our self-knowledge we arrive at that by the discovery of which all is known as one with our self and by the possession of which all is possessed and enjoyed in our own self-existence.

Equally, by virtue of this unity, the knowledge of the universe must lead the mind of man to the same large revelation. For he cannot know Nature as Matter and Force and Life without being driven to scrutinise the relation of mental consciousness with these principles, and once he knows the real nature of mind, he must go inevitably beyond every surface appearance. He must discover the will and intelligence secret in the works of Force, operative in material and vital phenomena; he must perceive it as one in the waking consciousness, the subconscious and the superconscious: he must find the soul in the body of the material universe. Pursuing Nature through these categories in which he recognises his unity with the rest of the cosmos, he finds a Supernature behind all that is apparent, a supreme power of the Spirit in Time and beyond Time, in Space and beyond Space, a conscious Power of the Self who by her becomes all becomings, of the Absolute who by her manifests all relativities. He knows her, in other words, not only as material Energy, Life-Force, Mind-Energy, the many faces of Nature, but as the power of Knowledge-Will of the Divine Lord of being, the Consciousness-Force of the self-existent Eternal and Infinite.

The quest of man for God, which becomes in the end the most ardent and enthralling of all his quests, begins with his first vague questionings of Nature and a sense of something unseen both in himself and her. Even if, as modern Science insists, religion started from animism, spirit-worship, demon-worship and the deification of natural forces, these first forms only embody in primitive figures a veiled intuition in the subconscious, an obscure and ignorant feeling of hidden influences and incalculable forces, or a vague sense of being, will, intelligence in what seems to us inconscient, of the invisible behind the visible, of the secretly conscious spirit in things distributing itself in every

working of energy. The obscurity and primitive inadequacy of the first perceptions do not detract from the value or the truth of this great quest of the human heart and mind, since all our seekings — including Science itself — must start from an obscure and ignorant perception of hidden realities and proceed to the more and more luminous vision of the Truth which at first comes to us masked, draped, veiled by the mists of the Ignorance. Anthropomorphism is an imaged recognition of the truth that man is what he is because God is what He is and that there is one soul and body of things, humanity even in its incompleteness the most complete manifestation yet achieved here and divinity the perfection of what in man is imperfect. That he sees himself everywhere and worships that as God is also true; but here too he has laid confusedly the groping hand of Ignorance on a truth — that his being and the Being are one, that this is a partial reflection of That, and that to find his greater Self everywhere is to find God and to come near to the Reality in things, the Reality of all existence.

A unity behind diversity and discord is the secret of the variety of human religions and philosophies; for they all get at some image or some side clue, touch some portion of the one Truth or envisage some one of its myriad aspects. Whether they see dimly the material world as the body of the Divine, or life as a great pulsation of the breath of Divine Existence, or all things as thoughts of the cosmic Mind, or realise that there is a Spirit which is greater than these things, their subtler and yet more wonderful source and creator, — whether they find God only in the Inconscient or as the one Conscious in inconscient things or as an ineffable superconscious Existence to reach whom we must leave behind our terrestrial being and annul the mind, life and body, or, overcoming division, see that He is all these at once and accept fearlessly the large consequences of that vision, — whether they worship Him with universality as the cosmic Being or limit Him and themselves, like the Positivist, in humanity only or, on the contrary, carried away by the vision of the timeless and spaceless Immutable, reject Him in Nature and Cosmos, — whether they adore Him in various

strange or beautiful or magnified forms of the human ego or for His perfect possession of the qualities to which man aspires, his Divinity revealed to them as a supreme Power, Love, Beauty, Truth, Righteousness, Wisdom,—whether they perceive Him as the Lord of Nature, Father and Creator, or as Nature herself and the universal Mother, pursue Him as the Lover and attracter of souls or serve Him as the hidden Master of all works, bow down before the one God or the manifold Deity, the one divine Man or the one Divine in all men or, more largely, discover the One whose presence enables us to become unified in consciousness or in works or in life with all beings, unified with all things in Time and Space, unified with Nature and her influences and even her inanimate forces,—the truth behind must ever be the same because all is the one Divine Infinite whom all are seeking. Because everything is that One, there must be this endless variety in the human approach to its possession; it was necessary that man should find God thus variously in order that he might come to know Him entirely. But it is when knowledge reaches its highest aspects that it is possible to arrive at its greatest unity. The highest and widest seeing is the wisest; for then all knowledge is unified in its one comprehensive meaning. All religions are seen as approaches to a single Truth, all philosophies as divergent view-points looking at different sides of a single Reality, all Sciences meet together in a supreme Science. For that which all our mind-knowledge and sense-knowledge and suprasensuous vision is seeking, is found most integrally in the unity of God and man and Nature and all that is in Nature.

The Brahman, the Absolute is the Spirit, the timeless Self, the Self possessing Time, Lord of Nature, creator and continent of the cosmos and immanent in all existences, the Soul from whom all souls derive and to whom they are drawn,—that is the truth of Being as man's highest God-conception sees it. The same Absolute revealed in all relativities, the Spirit who embodies Himself in cosmic Mind and Life and Matter and of whom Nature is the self of energy so that all she seems to create is the Self and Spirit variously manifested in His own being to His own conscious force for the delight of His various existence,—this

is the truth of being to which man's knowledge of Nature and cosmos is leading him and which he will reach when his Nature-knowledge unites itself with his God-knowledge. This truth of the Absolute is the justification of the cycles of the world; it is not their denial. It is the Self-Being that has become all these becomings; the Self is the eternal unity of all these existences,— I am He. Cosmic energy is not other than the conscious force of that Self-existent: by that energy It takes through universal nature innumerable forms of itself; through its divine nature It can, embracing the universal but transcendent of it, arrive in them at the individual possession of its complete existence, when its presence and power are felt in one, in all and in the relations of one with all;—this is the truth of being to which man's entire knowledge of himself in God and in Nature rises and widens. A triune knowledge, the complete knowledge of God, the complete knowledge of himself, the complete knowledge of Nature, gives him his high goal; it assigns a vast and full sense to the labour and effort of humanity. The conscious unity of the three, God, soul and Nature, in his own consciousness is the sure foundation of his perfection and his realisation of all harmonies: this will be his highest and widest state, his status of a divine consciousness and a divine life and its initiation the starting-point for his entire evolution of his self-knowledge, world-knowledge, God-knowledge.

Chapter XVIII

The Evolutionary Process — Ascent and Integration

As he mounts from peak to peak, . . . Indra makes him conscious of that goal of his movement. *Rig Veda.*¹

A son of the two Mothers, he attains to kingship in his discoveries of knowledge, he moves on the summit, he dwells in his high foundation. *Rig Veda.*²

I have arisen from earth to the mid-world, I have arisen from the mid-world to heaven, from the level of the firmament of heaven I have gone to the Sun-world, the Light.³

*Yajur Veda.*⁴

IT IS now possible and necessary, since we have formed a sufficiently clear idea of the significance of the evolutionary manifestation in earth-nature and the final turn it is taking or destined to take, to direct a more understanding regard on the principles of the process by which it has arrived at its present level and by which, presumably, with whatever modifications, its final development, its passage from our still dominant mental ignorance to a supramental consciousness and an integral knowledge, will be governed and made effective. For we find that cosmic Nature is constant in its general law of action, since that depends on a Truth of things which is invariable in principle although in detail of application abundantly variable. At the outset, we can easily see that, since this is an evolution

¹ I. 10. 2. ² III. 55. 7.

³ The four planes of Matter, Life, pure Mind and Supermind.

⁴ 17. 67.

out of a material Inconscience into spiritual consciousness, an evolutionary self-building of Spirit on a base of Matter, there must be in the process a development of a triple character. An evolution of forms of Matter more and more subtly and intricately organised so as to admit the action of a growing, a more and more complex and subtle and capable organisation of consciousness is the indispensable physical foundation. An upward evolutionary progress of the consciousness itself from grade to higher grade, an ascent, is the evident spiral line or emerging curve that, on this foundation, the evolution must describe. A taking up of what has already been evolved into each higher grade as it is reached and a transformation more or less complete so as to admit of a total changed working of the whole being and nature, an integration, must be also part of the process, if the evolution is to be effective.

The end of this triple process must be a radical change of the action of the Ignorance into an action of Knowledge, of our basis of inconscience into a basis of complete consciousness,—a completeness which exists at present only in what is to us the superconscious. Each ascent will bring with it a partial change and modification of the old nature taken up and subjected to a new fundamental principle; the inconscience will be turned into a partial consciousness, an ignorance seeking for more and more knowledge and mastery: but at some point there must be an ascent which substitutes the principle of knowledge, of a fundamental true consciousness, the consciousness of the Spirit, for the inconscience and ignorance. An evolution in the Inconscience is the beginning, an evolution in the Ignorance is the middle, but the end is the liberation of the spirit into its true consciousness and an evolution in the Knowledge. This is actually what we find to be the law and method of the process which has hitherto been followed and by all signs is likely to be followed in her future working by evolutionary Nature. A first involutionary foundation in which originates all that has to evolve, an emergence and action of the involved powers in or upon that foundation in an ascending series, and a culminating emergence of the highest power of all as the agent of a

supreme manifestation are the necessary stages of the journey of evolutionary Nature.

An evolutionary process must be by the very terms of the problem to be solved a development, in some first established basic principle of being or substance, of something that that basic principle holds involved in itself or else admits from outside itself and modifies by the admission; for it must necessarily modify by its own law of nature all that enters into it and is not already part of its own nature. This must be so even if it is a creative evolution in the sense of manifesting always new powers of existence that are not native to the first foundation but introduced into it, accepted into an original substance. If, on the contrary, there is already there in involution,—present in the first foundation, but not yet manifested or not yet organised,—the new principle or power of existence that has to be evolved, then, when it appears, it will still have to accept modification by the nature and law of the basic substance: but also it will modify that substance by its own power, its own law of nature. If, further, it is aided by a descent of its own principle already established in its own full force above the field of evolution and pressing down into that field to possess it, then the new power may even establish itself as a dominant element and considerably or radically change the consciousness and action of the world in which it emerges or into which it enters. But its force to modify or change or to revolutionise the law and working of the original substance chosen as the evolutionary matrix will depend upon its own essential potency. It is not likely that it will be able to bring about an entire transformation if it is not itself the original Principle of Existence, if it is only derivative, an instrumental power and not the first puissance.

Here the evolution takes place in a material universe; the foundation, the original substance, the first established all-conditioning status of things is Matter. Mind and Life are evolved in Matter, but they are limited and modified in their action by the obligation to use its substance for their instrumentation and by their subjection to the law of material Nature even while they modify what they undergo and use. For they

do transform its substance, first into living substance and then into conscious substance; they succeed in changing its inertia, immobility and inconscience into a movement of consciousness, feeling and life. But they do not succeed in transforming it altogether; they cannot make it altogether alive or altogether conscious: life-nature evolving is bound to death; mind evolving is materialised as well as vitalised; it finds itself rooted in inconscience, limited by ignorance; it is moved by uncontrolled life-forces which drive and use it, it is mechanised by the physical forces on which it has to depend for its own self-expression. This is a sign that neither Mind nor Life is the original creative Power; they, like Matter, are intermediaries, successive and seried instruments of the evolutionary process. If a material energy is not that original Power, then we must seek for it in something above Mind or Life; there must be a deeper occult Reality which has yet to disclose itself in Nature.

An original creative or evolutionary Power there must be: but, although Matter is the first substance, the original and ultimate Power is not an inconscient material Energy; for then life and consciousness would be absent, since Inconscience cannot evolve consciousness nor an inanimate Force evolve life. There must be, therefore, since Mind and Life also are not that, a secret Consciousness greater than Life Consciousness or Mind Consciousness, an Energy more essential than the material Energy. Since it is greater than Mind, it must be a supramental Consciousness-Force; since it is a power of essential substance other than Matter, it must be the power of that which is the supreme essence and substance of all things, a power of the Spirit. There is a creative energy of Mind and a creative Life-Force, but they are instrumental and partial, not original and decisive: Mind and Life do indeed modify the material substance they inhabit and its energies and are not merely determined by them, but the extent and way of this mutual modification and determination are fixed by the inhabitant and all-containing Spirit through a secret indwelling light and force of supermind, an occult gnosis,—an invisible self-knowledge and all-knowledge. If there is to be an entire transformation, it can only be by the

full emergence of the law of the spirit; its power of supermind or gnosis must have entered into Matter and it must evolve in Matter. It must change the mental into the supramental being, make the inconscient in us conscious, spiritualise our material substance, erect its law of gnostic consciousness in our whole evolutionary being and nature. This must be the culminating emergence or, at least, that stage in the emergence which first decisively changes the nature of the evolution by transforming its action of Ignorance and its basis of Inconscience.

This movement of evolution, of a progressive self-manifestation of the Spirit in a material universe, has to make its account at every step with the fact of the involution of consciousness and force in the form and activity of material substance. For it proceeds by an awakening of the involved consciousness and force and its ascent from principle to principle, from grade to grade, from power to power of the secret Spirit, but this is not a free transference to a higher status. The law of action, the force of action of each grade or power in its emergence is determined, not by its own free, full and pure law of nature or vim of energy, but partly by the material organisation provided for it and partly by its own status, achieved degree, accomplished fact of consciousness which it has been able to impose upon Matter. Its effectivity is in some sort made up of a balance between the actual extent of this evolutionary emergence and the countervailing extent to which the emergent power is still enveloped, penetrated, diminished by the domination and continuing grip of the Inconscience. Mind as we see it is not mind pure and free, but mind clouded and diminished by an enveloping nescience, mind labouring and struggling to deliver knowledge out of that nescience. All depends upon the more or less involved or more or less evolved condition of consciousness,—quite involved in inconscient matter, hesitating on the verge between involution and conscious evolution in the first or non-animal forms of life in matter, consciously evolving but greatly limited and hampered in mind housed in a living body, destined to be fully evolved by the awakening of the supermind in the embodied mental being and nature.

To each grade in this series achieved by the evolving Consciousness belongs its appropriate class of existences,— one by one there appear material forms and forces, vegetable life, animals and half-animal man, developed human beings, imperfectly evolved or more evolved spiritual beings: but because of the continuity of the evolutionary process there is no rigid separation between them; each new advance or formation takes up what was before. The animal takes up into himself living and inanimate Matter; man takes up both along with the animal existence. There are furrows left by the transitional process or separating demarcations settled by the fixed habit of Nature: but these distinguish one series from another, serve perhaps to prevent a fall back of what has been evolved, they do not cancel or cut the continuity of the evolution. The evolving Consciousness passes from one grade to another or from one series of steps to another either by an imperceptible process or by some bound or crisis or, perhaps, by an intervention from above,— some descent or ensouling or influence from higher planes of Nature. But, by whatever means, the Consciousness secretly indwelling in matter, the occult Inhabitant, is able thus to make its way upward from the lower to the higher gradations, taking up what it was into what it is and preparing to take up both into what it will be. Thus, having first laid down a basis of material being, material forms, forces, existences in which it seems to be lying inconscient, though in reality, as we know now, always subconsciously at work, it is able to manifest life and living beings, to manifest mind and mental beings in a material world, and must therefore be able to manifest there supermind also and supramental beings. Thus has come about the present status of the evolution of which man is the now apparent culmination but not the real ultimate summit; for he is himself a transitional being and stands at the turning-point of the whole movement. Evolution, being thus continuous, must have at any given moment a past with its fundamental results still in evidence, a present in which the results it is labouring over are in process of becoming, a future in which still unevolved powers and forms of being must appear till there is the full and

perfect manifestation. The past has been the history of a slow and difficult subconscious working with effects on the surface, — it has been an unconscious evolution; the present is a middle stage, an uncertain spiral in which the human intelligence is used by the secret evolutionary Force of being and participates in its action without being fully taken into confidence, — it is an evolution slowly becoming conscious of itself; the future must be a more and more conscious evolution of the spiritual being until it is fully delivered into a self-aware action by the emergent gnostic principle.

The first foundation in this emergence, the creation of forms of Matter, first of inconscient and inanimate, then of living and thinking Matter, the appearance of more and more organised bodies adapted to express a greater power of consciousness, has been studied from the physical side, the side of form-building, by Science; but very little light has been shed on the inner side, the side of consciousness, and what little has been observed is rather of its physical basis and instrumentation than of the progressive operations of Consciousness in its own nature. In the evolution, as it has been observed so far, although a continuity is there, — for Life takes up Matter and Mind takes up submental Life, the Mind of intelligence takes up the mind of life and sensation, — the leap from one grade of consciousness in the series to another grade seems to our eyes immense, the crossing of the gulf whether by bridge or by leap impossible; we fail to discover any concrete and satisfactory evidence of its accomplishment in the past or of the manner in which it was accomplished. Even in the outward evolution, even in the development of physical forms where the data are clearly in evidence, there are missing links that remain always missing; but in the evolution of consciousness the passage is still more difficult to account for, for it seems more like a transformation than a passage. It may be, however, that, by our incapacity to penetrate the subconscious, to sound the submental or to understand sufficiently a lower mentality different from ours, we are unable to observe the minute gradations, not only in each degree of the series, but on the borders between grade and grade: the scientist who does observe minutely the physical

data, has been driven to believe in the continuity of evolution in spite of the gaps and missing links; if we could observe similarly the inner evolution, we could, no doubt, discover the possibility and the mode of these formidable transitions. But still there is a real, a radical difference between grade and grade, so much so that the passage from one to another seems a new creation, a miracle of metamorphosis rather than a natural predictable development or quiet passing from one state of being to another with its well-marked steps arranged in an easy sequence.

These gulfs appear deeper, but less wide, as we rise higher in the scale of Nature. If there are rudiments of life-reaction in the metal, as has been recently contended, it may be identical with life-reaction in the plant in its essence, but what might be called the vital-physical difference is so considerable that one seems to us inanimate, the other, though not apparently conscious, might be called a living creature. Between the highest plant life and lowest animal the gulf is visibly deeper, for it is the difference between mind and the entire absence of any apparent or even rudimentary movement of mind: in the one the stuff of mental consciousness is unawakened though there is a life of vital reactions, a suppressed or subconscious or perhaps only submental sense vibration which seems to be intensely active; in the other, though the life is at first less automatic and secure in the subconscious way of living and in its own new way of overt consciousness imperfectly determined, still mind is awakened,—there is a conscious life, a profound transition has been made. But the community of the phenomenon of life between plant and animal, however different their organisation, narrows the gulf, even though it does not fill in its profundity. Between the highest animal and the lowest man there is a still deeper though narrower gulf to be crossed, the gulf between sense-mind and the intellect: for however we may insist on the primitive nature of the savage, we cannot alter the fact that the most primitive human being has above and beyond the sense-mind, emotional vitality and primary practical intelligence which we share with the animals, a human intellect and is capable—in whatever limits—of reflection, ideas, conscious invention, religious and ethical

thought and feeling, everything fundamental of which man as a race is capable; he has the same kind of intelligence, it differs only in its past instruction and formative training and the degree of its developed capacity, intensity and activity. Still, in spite of these dividing furrows, we can no longer suppose that God or some Demiurge has manufactured each genus and species ready-made in body and in consciousness and left the matter there, having looked upon his work and seen that it was good. It has become evident that a secretly conscious or an inconscient Energy of creation has effected the transition by swift or slow degrees, by whatever means, devices, biological, physical or psychological machinery,—perhaps, having made it, did not care to preserve as distinct forms what were only stepping-stones and had no longer any function nor served any purpose in evolutionary Nature. But this explanation of the gaps is little more than a hypothesis which as yet we cannot sufficiently substantiate. It is probable at any rate that the reason for these radical differences is to be found in the working of the inner Force and not in the outer process of the evolutionary transition; if we look at it more deeply from that inner side, the difficulty of understanding ceases and these transitions become intelligible and indeed inevitable by the very nature of the evolutionary process and its principle.

For if we look, not at the scientific or physical aspects, but at the psychological side of the question and inquire in what precisely the difference lies, we shall see that it consists in the rise of consciousness to another principle of being. The metal is fixed in the inconscient and inanimate principle of matter; even if we can suppose that it has some reactions suggestive of life in it or at least of rudimentary vibrations that in the plant developed into life, still it is not at all characteristically a form of life; it is characteristically a form of matter. The plant is fixed in a subconscious action of the principle of life,—not that it is not subject to matter or devoid of reactions that find their full meaning only in mind, for it seems to have submental reactions that in us are the foundation of pleasure and pain or of attraction and repulsion; but still it is a form of life, not of mere matter, nor is it, so far as we know, at all a mind-conscious

being. Man and the animal are both mentally conscious beings: but the animal is fixed in vital mind and mind-sense and cannot exceed its limitations, while man has received into his sense-mind the light of another principle, the intellect, which is really at once a reflection and a degradation of the supermind, a ray of gnosis seized by the sense-mentality and transformed by it into something other than its source: for it is agnostic like the sense-mind in which and for which it works, not gnostic; it seeks to lay hold on knowledge, because it does not possess it, it does not like supermind hold knowledge in itself as its natural prerogative. In other words, in each of these forms of existence the universal being has fixed its action of consciousness in a different principle or, as between man and animal, in the modification of a lower by a higher though still not a highest-grade principle. It is this stride from one principle of being to another quite different principle of being that creates the transitions, the furrows, the sharp lines of distance, and makes, not all the difference, but still a radical characteristic difference between being and being in their nature.

But it must be observed that this ascent, this successive fixing in higher and higher principles, does not carry with it the abandonment of the lower grades, any more than a status of existence in the lower grades means the entire absence of the higher principles. This heals the objection against the evolutionary theory created by these sharp lines of difference; for if the rudiments of the higher are present in the lower creation and the lower characters are taken up into the higher evolved being, that of itself constitutes an indubitable evolutionary process. What is necessary is a working that brings the lower gradation of being to a point at which the higher can manifest in it; at that point a pressure from some superior plane where the new power is dominant may assist towards a more or less rapid and decisive transition by a bound or a series of bounds,—a slow, creeping, imperceptible or even occult action is followed by a run and an evolutionary saltus across the border. It is in some such way that the transition from the lower to higher grades of consciousness seems to have been made in Nature.

In fact, life, mind, supermind are present in the atom, are

at work there, but invisible, occult, latent in a subconscious or apparently unconscious action of the Energy; there is an informing Spirit, but the outer force and figure of being, what we might call the formal or form existence as distinguished from the immanent or secretly governing consciousness, is lost in the physical action, is so absorbed into it as to be fixed in a stereotyped self-oblivion unaware of what it is and what it is doing. The electron and atom are in this view eternal somnambulists; each material object contains an outer or form consciousness involved, absorbed in the form, asleep, seeming to be an unconsciousness driven by an unknown and unfelt inner Existence,—he who is awake in the sleeper, the universal Inhabitant of the Upanishads,—an outer absorbed form-consciousness which, unlike that of the human somnambulist, has never been awake and is not always or ever on the point of waking. In the plant this outer form-consciousness is still in the state of sleep, but a sleep full of nervous dreams, always on the point of waking, but never waking. Life has appeared; in other words, force of concealed conscious being has been so much intensified, has raised itself to such a height of power as to develop or become capable of a new principle of action, that which we see as vitality, life-force. It has become vitally responsive to existence, though not mentally aware, and has put forth a new grade of activities of a higher and subtler value than any purely physical action. At the same time, it is capable of receiving and turning into these new life-values, into motions and phenomena of a vibration of vitality, life-contacts and physical contacts from other forms than its own and from universal Nature. This is a thing which forms of mere matter cannot do; they cannot turn contacts into life-values or any kind of value, partly because their power of reception,—although it exists, if occult evidence is to be trusted,—is not sufficiently awake to do anything but dumbly receive and imperceptibly react, partly because the energies transmitted by the contacts are too subtle to be utilised by the crude inorganic density of formed Matter. Life in the tree is determined by its physical body, but it takes up the physical existence and gives it a new value or system of values,—the life-value.

The transition to the mind and sense that appear in the animal being, that which we call conscious life, is operated in the same manner. The force of being is so much intensified, rises to such a height as to admit or develop a new principle of existence,—apparently new at least in the world of Matter,—mentality. Animal being is mentally aware of existence, its own and others, puts forth a higher and subtler grade of activities, receives a wider range of contacts, mental, vital, physical, from forms other than its own, takes up the physical and vital existence and turns all it can get from them into sense values and vital-mind values. It senses body, it senses life, but it senses also mind; for it has not only blind nervous reactions, but conscious sensations, memories, impulses, volitions, emotions, mental associations, the stuff of feeling and thought and will. It has even a practical intelligence, founded on memory, association, stimulating need, observation, a power of device; it is capable of cunning, strategy, planning; it can invent, adapt to some extent its inventions, meet in this or that detail the demand of new circumstance. All is not in it a half-conscious instinct; the animal prepares human intelligence.

But when we come to man, we see the whole thing becoming conscious; the world, which he epitomises, begins in him to reveal to itself its own nature. The higher animal is not the somnambulist,—as the very lowest animal forms still mainly or almost are,—but it has only a limited waking mind, capable of just what is necessary for its vital existence: in man the conscious mentality enlarges its wakefulness and, though not at first fully self-conscious, though still conscious only on the surface, can open more and more to his inner and integral being. As in the two lower ascents, there is a heightening of the force of conscious existence to a new power and a new range of subtle activities; there is a transition from vital mind to reflecting and thinking mind, there is developed a higher power of observation and invention, taking up and connecting data, conscious of process and result, a force of imagination and aesthetic creation, a higher more plastic sensibility, the co-ordinating and interpreting reason, the values no longer of a reflex or reactive but of a

mastering, understanding, self-detaching intelligence. As in the lower ascents, so here there is also a widening of the range of consciousness; man is able to take in more of the world and of himself as well as to give to this knowledge higher and completer figures of conscious experience. So, too, there is here also the third constant element of the ascension; mind takes up the lower grades and gives to their action and reaction intelligent values. Man has not only like the animal the sense of his body and life, but an intelligent sense and idea of life and a conscious and observant perception of body. He takes up too the mental life of the animal, as well as the material and bodily; although he loses something in the process, he gives to what he retains a higher value; he has the intelligent sense and the idea of his sensations, emotions, volitions, impulses, mental associations; what was crude stuff of thought and feeling and will, capable only of gross determinations, he turns into the finished work and artistry of these things. For the animal too thinks, but in an automatic way based mainly on a mechanical series of memories and mental associations, accepting quickly or slowly the suggestions of Nature and only awakened to a more conscious personal action when there is need of close observation and device; it has some first crude stuff of practical reason, but not the formed ideative and reflective faculty. The awaking consciousness in the animal is the unskilled primitive artisan of mind, in man it is the skilled craftsman and can become,—but this he does not attempt sufficiently,—not only the artist, but master and adept.

But here we have to observe two particularities of this human and at present highest development, which bring us to the heart of the matter. First, this taking up of the lower parts of life reveals itself as a turning downward of the master eye of the secret evolving spirit or of the universal Being in the individual from the height to which he has reached on all that now lies below him, a gazing down with the double or twin power of the being's consciousness-force,—the power of will, the power of knowledge,—so as to understand from this new, different and wider range of consciousness and perception and nature the lower life and its possibilities and to raise it up, it also, to a

higher level, to give it higher values, to bring out of it higher potentialities. And this he does because evidently he does not intend to kill or destroy it, but, delight of existence being his eternal business and a harmony of various strains, not a sweet but monotonous melody the method of his music, he wishes to include the lower notes also and, by surcharging them with a deeper and finer significance, get more delight out of them than was possible in the cruder formulation. Still in the end he lays on them as a condition for his continued acceptance their consent to admit the higher values and, until they do consent, he can deal harshly enough with them even to trampling them under foot when he is bent on perfection and they are rebellious. And that indeed is the true inmost aim and meaning of ethics, discipline and askesis, to lesson and tame, purify and prepare to be fit instruments the vital and physical and lower mental life so that they may be transformed into notes of the higher mental and eventually the supramental harmony, but not to mutilate and destroy them. Ascent is the first necessity, but an integration is an accompanying intention of the spirit in Nature.

This downward eye of knowledge and will with a view to an all-round heightening, deepening and subtler, finer and richer intensification is the secret Spirit's way from the beginning. The plant soul takes, as we may say, a nervous-material view of its whole physical existence so as to get out of it all the vital-physical intensity possible; for it seems to have some intense excitations of a mute life-vibration in it,—perhaps, though that is difficult for us to imagine, more intense relatively to its lower rudimentary scale than the animal mind and body in its higher and more powerful scale could tolerate. The animal being takes a mentalised sense-view of its vital and physical existence so as to get out of it all the sense value possible, much acuter in many respects than man's as mere sensation or sense-emotion or satisfaction of vital desire and pleasure. Man, looking downward from the plane of will and intelligence, abandons these lower intensities, but in order to get out of mind and life and sense a higher intensity in other values, intellectual, aesthetic, moral, spiritual, mentally dynamic or practical—as he terms it; by these higher elements

he enlarges, subtilises and elevates his use of life-values. He does not abandon the animal reactions and enjoyments, but more lucidly, finely and sensitively mentalises them. This he does even on his normal and his lower levels, but, as he develops, he puts his lower being to a severer test, begins to demand from it on pain of rejection something like a transformation: that is the mind's way of preparing for a spiritual life still beyond it.

But man not only turns his gaze downward and around him, when he has reached his higher level, but upward towards what is above him and inward towards what is occult within him. In him not only the downward gaze of the universal Being in the evolution has become conscious, but its conscious upward and inward gaze also develops. The animal lives as if satisfied with what Nature has done for it; if there is any upward gaze of the secret spirit within its animal being, it has nothing consciously to do with it, that is still Nature's business: it is man who first makes this upward gaze consciously his own business. For already by his possession of intelligent will, deformed ray of the gnosis though it be, he begins to put on the double nature of Sachchidananda; he is no longer, like the animal, an undeveloped conscious being entirely driven by Prakriti, a slave of the executive Force, played with by the mechanical energies of Nature, but has begun to be a developing conscious soul or Purusha interfering with what was her sole affair, wishing to have a say in it and eventually to be the master. He cannot do it yet, he is too much in her meshes, too much involved in her established mechanism: but he feels,—though as yet too vaguely and uncertainly,—that the spirit within him wishes to rise to yet higher heights, to widen its bounds; something within, something occult, knows that it is not the intention of the deeper conscious Soul-Nature, the Purusha-Prakriti, to be satisfied with his present lowness and limitations. To climb to higher altitudes, to get a greater scope, to transform his lower nature, this is always a natural impulse of man as soon as he has made his place for himself in the physical and vital world of earth and has a little leisure to consider his farther possibilities. It must be so not because of any false and pitiful imaginative illusion in him, but,

first, because he is the imperfect, still developing mental being and must strive for more development, for perfection, and still more because he is capable, unlike other terrestrial creatures, of becoming aware of what is deeper than mind, of the soul within him, and of what is above the mind, of supermind, of spirit, capable of opening to it, admitting it, rising towards it, taking hold of it. It is in his human nature, in all human nature, to exceed itself by conscious evolution, to climb beyond what he is. Not individuals only, but in time the race also, in a general rule of being and living if not in all its members, can have the hope, if it develops a sufficient will, to rise beyond the imperfections of our present very undivine nature and to ascend at least to a superior humanity, to rise nearer, even if it cannot absolutely reach, to a divine manhood or supermanhood. At any rate, it is the compulsion of evolutionary Nature in him to strive to develop upward, to erect the ideal, to make the endeavour.

But where is the limit of effectuation in the evolutionary being's self-becoming by self-exceeding? In mind itself there are grades of the series and each grade again is a series in itself; there are successive elevations which we may conveniently call planes and sub-planes of the mental consciousness and the mental being. The development of our mental self is largely an ascent of this stair; we can take our stand on any one of them, while yet maintaining a dependence on the lower stages and a power of occasional ascension to higher levels or of a response to influences from our being's superior strata. At present we still normally take our first secure stand on the lowest sub-plane of the intelligence, which we may call the physical-mental, because it depends for its evidence of fact and sense of reality on the physical brain, the physical sense-mind, the physical sense-organs; there we are the physical man who attaches most importance to objective things and to his outer life, has little intensity of the subjective or inner existence and subordinates whatever he has of it to the greater claims of exterior reality. The physical man has a vital part, but it is mainly made up of the smaller instinctive and impulsive formations of life-consciousness emerging from the subconscious, along with a customary crowd or round of sensations, desires,

hopes, feelings, satisfactions which are dependent on external things and external contacts and concerned with the practical, the immediately realisable and possible, the habitual, the common and average. He has a mental part, but this too is customary, traditional, practical, objective, and respects what belongs to the domain of mind mostly for its utility for the support, comfort, use, satisfaction and entertainment of his physical and sensational existence. For the physical mind takes its stand on matter and the material world, on the body and the bodily life, on sense-experience and on a normal practical mentality and its experience. All that is not of this order, the physical mind builds up as a restricted superstructure dependent upon the external sense-mentality. Even so, it regards these higher contents of life as either helpful adjuncts or a superfluous but pleasant luxury of imaginations, feelings and thought-abstractions, not as inner realities; or, even if it receives them as realities, it does not feel them concretely and substantially in their own proper substance, subtler than the physical substance and its grosser concreteness, — it treats them as a subjective, less substantial extension from physical realities. It is inevitable that the human being should thus take his first stand on Matter and give the external fact and external existence its due importance; for this is Nature's first provision for our existence, on which she insists greatly: the physical man is emphasised in us and is multiplied abundantly in the world by her as her force for conservation of the secure, if somewhat inert, material basis on which she can maintain herself while she attempts her higher human developments; but in this mental formation there is no power for progress or only for a material progress. It is our first mental status, but the mental being cannot remain always at this lowest rung of the human evolutionary ladder.

Above physical mind and deeper within than physical sensation, there is what we may call an intelligence of the life-mind, dynamic, vital, nervous, more open, though still obscurely, to the psychic, capable of a first soul-formation, though only of an obscurer life-soul,—not the psychic being, but a frontal formation of the vital Purusha. This life-soul concretely senses

and contacts the things of the life-world, and tries to realise them here; it attaches immense importance to the satisfaction and fulfilment of the life-being, the life-force, the vital nature: it looks on physical existence as a field for the life-impulses' self-fulfilment, for the play of ambition, power, strong character, love, passion, adventure, for the individual, the collective, the general human seeking and hazard and venture, for all kinds of life-experiment and new life-experience, and but for this saving element, this greater power, interest, significance, the physical existence would have for it no value. This life mentality is supported by our secret subliminal vital being and is in veiled contact with a life-world to which it can easily open and so feel the unseen dynamic forces and realities behind the material universe. There is an inner life-mind which does not need for its perceptions the evidence of the physical senses, is not limited by them; for on this level our inner life and the inner life of the world become real to us independent of the body and of the symbols of the physical world which alone we call natural phenomena, as if Nature had no greater phenomena and no greater realities than those of gross Matter. The vital man, moulded consciously or unconsciously by these influences, is the man of desire and sensation, the man of force and action, the man of passion and emotion, the kinetic individual: he may and does lay great stress on the material existence, but he gives it, even when most pre-occupied with its present actualities, a push for life-experience, for force of realisation, for life-extension, for life-power, for life-affirmation and life-expansion which is Nature's first impetus towards enlargement of the being; at a highest intensity of this life impetus, he becomes the breaker of bonds, the seeker of new horizons, the disturber of the past and present in the interest of the future. He has a mental life which is often enslaved to the vital force and its desires and passions, and it is these he seeks to satisfy through the mind: but when he interests himself strongly in mental things, he can become the mental adventurer, the opener of the way to new mind-formations or the fighter for an idea, the sensitive type of artist, the dynamic poet of life or the prophet or champion of a cause. The vital mind is kinetic and

therefore a great force in the working of evolutionary Nature.

Above this level of vital mentality and yet more only extended, is a mind-plane of pure thought and intelligence to which the things of the mental world are the most important realities; those who are under its influence, the philosopher, thinker, scientist, intellectual creator, the man of the idea, the man of the written or spoken word, the idealist and dreamer are the present mental being at his highest attained summit. This mental man has his life-part, his life of passions and desires and ambitions and life-hopes of all kinds and his lower sensational and physical existence, and this lower part can often equibalance or weigh down his nobler mental element so that, although it is the highest portion of him, it does not become dominant and formative in his whole nature: but this is not typical of him in his greatest development, for there the vital and physical are controlled and subjected by the thinking will and intelligence. The mental man cannot transform his nature, but he can control and harmonise it and lay on it the law of a mental ideal, impose a balance or a sublimating and refining influence, and give a high consistency to the multipersonal confusion and conflict or the summary patch-work of our divided and half-constructed being. He can be the observer and governor of his own mind and life, can consciously develop them and become to that extent a self-creator.

This mind of pure intelligence has behind it our inner or subliminal mind which senses directly all the things of the mind-plane, is open to the action of a world of mental forces, and can feel the ideative and other imponderable influences which act upon the material world and the life-plane but which at present we can only infer and cannot directly experience: these intangibles and imponderables are to the mental man real and patent and he regards them as truths demanding to be realised in our or the earth's nature. On the inner plane mind and mind-soul independent of the body can become to us an entire reality, and we can consciously live in them as much as in the body. Thus to live in mind and the things of the mind, to be an intelligence rather than a life and a body, is our highest position, short of spirituality, in the degrees of Nature. The mental man, the man

of a self-dominating and self-formative mind and will conscious of an ideal and turned towards its realisation, the high intellect, the thinker, the sage, less kinetic and immediately effective than the vital man, who is the man of action and outer swift life-fulfilment, but as powerful and eventually even more powerful to open new vistas to the race, is the normal summit of Nature's evolutionary formation on the human plane. These three degrees of mentality, clear in themselves, but most often mixed in our composition, are to our ordinary intelligence only psychological types that happen to have developed, and we do not discover any other significance in them; but in fact they are full of significance, for they are the steps of Nature's evolution of mental being towards its self-exceeding, and, as thinking mind is the highest step she can now attain, the perfected mental man is the rarest and highest of her normal human creatures. To go farther she has to bring into the mind and make active in mind, life and body the spiritual principle.

For these are her evolutionary figures built out of the surface mentality; to do more she has to use more amply the unseen material hidden below our surface, to dive inwards and bring out the secret soul, the psyche, or to ascend above our normal mental level into planes of intuitive consciousness dense with light derived from the spiritual gnosis, ascending planes of pure spiritual mind in which we are in direct contact with the infinite, in touch with the self and highest reality of things, Sachchidananda. In ourselves, behind our surface natural being, there is a soul, an inner mind, an inner life-part which can open to these heights as well as to the occult spirit within us, and this double opening is the secret of a new evolution; by that breaking of lids and walls and boundaries the consciousness rises to a greater ascent and a larger integration which, as the evolution of mind has mentalised, so will by this new evolution spiritualise all the powers of our nature. For the mental man has not been Nature's last effort or highest reach,—though he has been, in general, more fully evolved in his own nature than those who have achieved themselves below or aspired above him; she has pointed man to a yet higher and more difficult

level, inspired him with the ideal of a spiritual living, begun the evolution in him of a spiritual being. The spiritual man is her supreme supernormal effort of human creation; for, having evolved the mental creator, thinker, sage, prophet of an ideal, the self-controlled, self-disciplined, harmonised mental being, she has tried to go higher and deeper within and call out into the front the soul and inner mind and heart, call down from above the forces of the spiritual mind and higher mind and overmind and create under their light and by their influence the spiritual sage, seer, prophet, God-lover, Yogin, gnostic, Sufi, mystic.

This is man's only way of true self-exceeding: for so long as we live in the surface being or found ourselves wholly on Matter, it is impossible to go higher and vain to expect that there can be any new transition of a radical character in our evolutionary being. The vital man, the mental man have had an immense effect upon the earth-life, they have carried humanity forward from the mere human animal to what it is now. But it is only within the bounds of the already established evolutionary formula of the human being that they can act; they can enlarge the human circle but not change or transform the principle of consciousness or its characteristic operation. Any attempt to heighten inordinately the mental or exaggerate inordinately the vital man,—a Nietzschean supermanhood, for example,—can only colossalise the human creature, it cannot transform or divinise him. A different possibility opens if we can live within in the inner being and make it the direct ruler of life or station ourselves on the spiritual and intuitive planes of being and from there and by their power transmute our nature.

The spiritual man is the sign of this new evolution, this new and higher endeavour of Nature. But this evolution differs from the past process of the evolutionary Energy in two respects: it is conducted by a conscious effort of the human mind, and it is not confined to a conscious progression of the surface nature, but is accompanied by an attempt to break the walls of the Ignorance and extend ourselves inward into the secret principle of our present being and outward into cosmic being

as well as upward towards a higher principle. Up till now what Nature had achieved was an enlarging of the bounds of our surface Knowledge-Ignorance; what is attempted in the spiritual endeavour is to abolish the Ignorance, to go inwards and discover the soul and to become united in consciousness with God and with all existence. This is the final aim of the mental stage of evolutionary Nature in man; it is the initial step towards a radical transmutation of the Ignorance into the Knowledge. The spiritual change begins by an influence of the inner being and the higher spiritual mind, an action felt and accepted on the surface; but this by itself can lead only to an illumined mental idealism or to the growth of a religious mind, a religious temperament and some devotion in the heart and piety in the conduct; it is a first approach of mind to spirit, but it cannot make a radical change: more has to be done, we have to live deeper within, we have to exceed our present consciousness and surpass our present status of Nature.

It is evident that if we can live thus deeper within and put out steadily the inner forces into the outer instrumentation or raise ourselves to dwell on higher and wider levels and bring their powers to bear on physical existence, not merely receive influences descending from them, which is all we can now do, there could begin a heightening of our force of conscious being so as to create a new principle of consciousness, a new range of activities, new values for all things, a widening of our consciousness and life, a taking up and transformation of the lower grades of our existence,—in brief, the whole evolutionary process by which the Spirit in Nature creates a higher type of being. Each step could mean a pace, however distant from the goal, or a close approach leading to a larger and more divine being, a larger and more divine force and consciousness, knowledge and will, sense of existence and delight in existence; there could be an initial unfolding towards the divine life. All religion, all occult knowledge, all supernormal (as opposed to abnormal) psychological experience, all Yoga, all psychic experience and discipline are sign-posts and directions pointing us upon that road of progress of the occult self-unfolding spirit.

But the human race is still weighted by a certain gravitation towards the physical, it obeys still the pull of our yet unconquered earth-matter; it is dominated by the brain-mind, the physical intelligence: thus held back by many ties, it hesitates before the indication or falls back before the too tense demand of the spiritual effort. It has, too, still a great capacity for sceptical folly, an immense indolence, an enormous intellectual and spiritual timidity and conservatism when called out of the grooves of habit: even the constant evidence of life itself that where it chooses to conquer it can conquer,—witness the miracles of that quite inferior power, physical Science,—does not prevent it from doubting; it repels the new call and leaves the response to a few individuals. But that is not enough if the step forward is to be for humanity; for it is only if the race advances that, for it, the victories of the Spirit can be secure. For then, even if there is a lapse of Nature, a fall in her effort, the Spirit within, employing a secret memory,—sometimes represented on the lower side, that of downward gravitation, as an atavistic force in the race, but really the force of a persistent memory in Nature which can pull us either upward or downward,—will call it upward again and the next ascent will be both easier and more lasting, because of the past endeavour; for that endeavour and its impulse and its result cannot but remain stored in the subconscious mind of humanity. Who can say what victories of the kind may have been achieved in our past cycles and how near may be the next ascension? It is not indeed necessary or possible that the whole race should transform itself from mental into spiritual beings, but a general admission of the ideal, a widespread endeavour, a conscious concentration are needed to carry the stream of tendency to its definitive achievement. Otherwise what will be ultimately accomplished is an achievement by the few initiating a new order of beings, while humanity will have passed sentence of unfitness on itself and may fall back into an evolutionary decline or a stationary immobility; for it is the constant upward effort that has kept humanity alive and maintained for it its place in the front of creation.

The principle of the process of evolution is a foundation, from that foundation an ascent, in that ascent a reversal of consciousness and, from the greater height and wideness gained, an action of change and new integration of the whole nature. The first foundation is Matter; the ascent is that of Nature; the integration is an at first unconscious or half-conscious automatic change of Nature by Nature. But as soon as a more completely conscious participation of the being has begun in these workings of Nature, a change in the functioning of the process is inevitable. The physical foundation of Matter remains, but Matter can no longer be the foundation of the consciousness; consciousness itself will be no longer in its origin a welling up from the Inconscient or a concealed flow from an occult inner subliminal force under the pressure of contacts from the universe. The foundation of the developing existence will be the new spiritual status above or the unveiled soul status within us; it is a flow of light and knowledge and will from above and a reception from within that will determine the reactions of the being to cosmic experience. The whole concentration of the being will be shifted from below upwards and from without inwards; our higher and inner being now unknown to us will become ourselves, and the outer or surface being which we now take for ourselves will be only an open front or an annexe through which the true being meets the universe. The outer world itself will become inward to the spiritual awareness, a part of itself, intimately embraced in a knowledge and feeling of unity and identity, penetrated by an intuitive regard of the mind, responded to by the direct contact of consciousness with consciousness, taken into an achieved integrality. The old inconscient foundation itself will be made conscious in us by the inflow of light and awareness from above and its depths annexed to the heights of the spirit. An integral consciousness will become the basis of an entire harmonisation of life through the total transformation, unification, integration of the being and the nature.

Chapter XIX

Out of the Sevenfold Ignorance towards the Sevenfold Knowledge

Seven steps has the ground of the Ignorance, seven steps has
the ground of the Knowledge. *Mahopanishad.*¹

He found the vast Thought with seven heads that is born of the Truth; he created some fourth world and became universal. . . . The Sons of Heaven, the Heroes of the Omnipotent, thinking the straight thought, giving voice to the Truth, founded the plane of illumination and conceived the first abode of the Sacrifice. . . . The Master of Wisdom cast down the stone defences and called to the Herds of Light, . . . the herds that stand in the secrecy on the bridge over the Falsehood between two worlds below and one above; desiring Light in the darkness, he brought upward the Ray-Herds and uncovered from the veil the three worlds; he shattered the city that lies hidden in ambush, and cut the three out of the Ocean, and discovered the Dawn and the Sun and the Light and the Word of Light.

*Rig Veda.*²

The Master of Wisdom in his first coming to birth in the supreme ether of the great Light,—many his births, seven his mouths of the Word, seven his Rays,—scatters the darknesses with his cry. *Rig Veda.*³

ALL EVOLUTION is in essence a heightening of the force of consciousness in the manifest being so that it may be raised into the greater intensity of what is still unmanifest, from matter into life, from life into mind, from the mind into

¹ V. 1. ² X. 67. 1–5. ³ IV. 50. 4.

the spirit. It is this that must be the method of our growth from a mental into a spiritual and supramental manifestation, out of a still half-animal humanity into a divine being and a divine living. There must be achieved a new spiritual height, wideness, depth, subtlety, intensity of our consciousness, of its substance, its force, its sensibility, an elevation, expansion, plasticity, integral capacity of our being, and an assumption of mind and all that is below mind into that larger existence. In a future transformation the character of the evolution, the principle of evolutionary process, although modified, will not fundamentally change but, on a vaster scale and in a liberated movement, royally continue. A change into a higher consciousness or state of being is not only the whole aim and process of religion, of all higher askesis, of Yoga, but it is also the very trend of our life itself, the secret purpose found in the sum of its labour. The principle of life in us seeks constantly to confirm and perfect itself on the planes of mind, vitality and body which it already possesses; but it is self-driven also to go beyond and transform these gains into means for the conscious spirit to unfold in Nature. If it is merely some part of ourselves, intellect, heart, will or vital desire-self, which, dissatisfied with its own imperfection and with the world, strives to get away from it to a greater height of existence, content to leave the rest of the nature to take care of itself or to perish, then such a result of total transformation would not eventuate — or, at least, would not eventuate here. But this is not the integral trend of our existence; there is a labour of Nature in us to ascend with all ourself into a higher principle of being than it has yet evolved here, but it is not her whole will in this ascension to destroy herself in order that that higher principle may be exclusively affirmed by the rejection and extinction of Nature. To heighten the force of consciousness until it passes from a mental, vital and physical instrumentation into the essence and power of the spirit is the indispensable thing, but that is not the sole object or all the thing to be done.

Our call must be to live on a new height in all our being: we have not, in order to reach that height, to drop back our dynamic parts into the indeterminate stuff of Nature and abide

by this liberating loss in a blissful quiescence of the Spirit; that can always be done and it brings a great repose and freedom, but what Nature herself attends from us is that the whole of what we are should rise into the spiritual consciousness and become a manifest and manifold power of the spirit. An integral transformation is the integral aim of the Being in Nature; this is the inherent sense of her universal urge of self-transcendence. It is for this reason that the process of Nature is not confined to a heightening of herself into a new principle; the new height is not a narrow intense pinnacle, it brings with it a widening and establishes a larger field of life in which the power of the new principle may have sufficient play and room for its emergence. This action of elevation and expansion is not confined to an utmost possible largeness in the essential play of the new principle itself; it includes a taking up of that which is lower into the higher values: the divine or spiritual life will not only assume into itself the mental, vital, physical life transformed and spiritualised, but it will give them a much wider and fuller play than was open to them so long as they were living on their own level. Our mental, physical, vital existence need not be destroyed by our self-exceeding, nor are they lessened and impaired by being spiritualised; they can and do become much richer, greater, more powerful and more perfect: in their divine change they break into possibilities which in their unspiritualised condition could not be practicable or imaginable.

This evolution, this process of heightening and widening and integralisation, is in its nature a growth and an ascent out of the sevenfold ignorance into the integral knowledge. The crux of that ignorance is the constitutional; it resolves itself into a manifold ignorance of the true character of our becoming, an unawareness of our total self, of which the key is a limitation by the plane we inhabit and by the present predominant principle of our nature. The plane we inhabit is the plane of Matter; the present predominant principle in our nature is the mental intelligence with the sense-mind, which depends upon Matter, as its support and pedestal. As a consequence, the preoccupation of the mental intelligence and its powers with the material

existence as it is shown to it through the senses, and with life as it has been formulated in a compromise between life and matter, is a special stamp of the constitutional Ignorance. This natural materialism or materialised vitalism, this clamping of ourselves to our beginnings, is a form of self-restriction narrowing the scope of our existence which is very insistent on the human being. It is a first necessity of his physical existence, but is afterwards forged by a primal ignorance into a chain that hampers his every step upwards: the attempt to grow out of this limitation of the wholeness, power and truth of the spirit by the materialised mental intelligence and out of this subjection of the soul to material Nature is the first step towards a real progress of our humanity. For our ignorance is not entire; it is a limitation of consciousness,—it is not the complete nescience which is the stamp of the same Ignorance in purely material existences, those which have not only matter for their plane but matter for their dominant principle. It is a partial, a limiting, a dividing and, very largely, a falsifying knowledge; out of that limitation and falsification we have to grow into the truth of our spiritual being.

This preoccupation with life and matter is at the beginning right and necessary because the first step that man has to take is to know and possess this physical existence as well as he can by applying his thought and intelligence to such experience of it as his sense-mind can give to him; but this is only a preliminary step and, if we stop there, we have made no real progress: we are where we were and have gained only more physical elbow-room to move about in and more power for our mind to establish a relative knowledge and an insufficient and precarious mastery and for our life-desire to push things about and jostle and hustle around amid the throng of physical forces and existences. The utmost widening of a physical objective knowledge, even if it embrace the most distant solar systems and the deepest layers of the earth and sea and the most subtle powers of material substance and energy, is not the essential gain for us, not the one thing which it is most needful for us to acquire. That is why the gospel of materialism, in spite of the dazzling triumphs

of physical Science, proves itself always in the end a vain and helpless creed, and that too is why physical Science itself with all its achievements, though it may accomplish comfort, can never achieve happiness and fullness of being for the human race. Our true happiness lies in the true growth of our whole being, in a victory throughout the total range of our existence, in mastery of the inner as well as and more than the outer, the hidden as well as the overt nature; our true completeness comes not by describing wider circles on the plane where we began, but by transcendence. It is for this reason that, after the first necessary foundation in life and matter, we have to heighten our force of consciousness, deepen, widen, subtilise it; we must first liberate our mental selves and enter into a freer, finer and nobler play of our mental existence: for the mental is much more than the physical our true existence, because we are even in our instrumental or expressive nature predominantly mind and not matter, mental much rather than physical beings. That growth into the full mental being is the first transitional movement towards human perfection and freedom; it does not actually perfect, it does not liberate the soul, but it lifts us one step out of the material and vital absorption and prepares the loosening of the hold of the Ignorance.

Our gain in becoming more perfect mental beings is that we get to the possibility of a subtler, higher and wider existence, consciousness, force, happiness and delight of being; in proportion as we rise in the scale of mind, a greater power of these things comes to us: our mental consciousness acquires for itself at the same time more vision and power and more subtlety and plasticity, and we are able to embrace more of the vital and physical existence itself, to know it better, to use it better, to give it nobler values, a broader range, a more sublimated action, — an extended scale, higher issues. Man is in his characteristic power of nature a mental being, but in the first steps of his emergence he is more of the mentalised animal, preoccupied like the animal with his bodily existence; he employs his mind for the uses, interests, desires of the life and the body, as their servant and minister, not yet as their sovereign and master. It is as he

grows in mind and in proportion as his mind asserts its selfhood and independence against the tyranny of life and matter, that he grows in stature. On one side, mind by its emancipation controls and illuminates the life and physicality; on the other, the purely mental aims, occupations, pursuits of knowledge begin to get a value. The mind liberated from a lower control and preoccupation introduces into life a government, an uplifting, a refinement, a finer balance and harmony; the vital and physical movements are directed and put into order, transformed even as far as they can be by a mental agency; they are taught to be the instruments of reason and obedient to an enlightened will, an ethical perception and an aesthetic intelligence: the more this can be accomplished, the more the race becomes truly human, a race of mental beings.

It is this perception of life that was put in front by the Greek thinkers, and it is a vivid flowering in the sunlight of this ideal that imparts so great a fascination to Hellenic life and culture. In later times this perception was lost and, when it came back, it returned much diminished, mixed with more turbid elements: the perturbation of a spiritual ideal imperfectly grasped by the understanding and not at all realised in the life's practice but present with its positive and negative mental and moral influences, and over against it the pressure of a dominant, an inordinate vital urge which could not get its free self-satisfied movement, stood in the way of the sovereignty of the mind and the harmony of life, its realised beauty and balance. An opening to higher ideals, a greater range of life was gained, but the elements of a new idealism were only cast into its action as an influence, could not dominate and transform it and, finally, the spiritual endeavour, thus ill-understood and unrealised, was thrown aside: its moral effects remained, but, deprived of the sustaining spiritual element, dwindled towards ineffectivity; the vital urge, assisted by an immense development of physical intelligence, became the preoccupation of the race. An imposing increase of a certain kind of knowledge and efficiency was the first result; the most recent outcome has been a perilous spiritual ill-health and a vast disorder.

For mind itself is not enough; even its largest play of intelligence creates only a qualified half-light. A surface mental knowledge of the physical universe is a still more imperfect guide; for the thinking animal it might be enough, but not for a race of mental beings in labour of a spiritual evolution. Even the truth of physical things cannot be entirely known, nor can the right use of our material existence be discovered by physical Science and an outward knowledge alone or made possible by the mastery of physical and mechanical processes alone: to know, to use rightly we must go beyond the truth of physical phenomenon and process, we must know what is within and behind it. For we are not merely embodied minds; there is a spiritual being, a spiritual principle, a spiritual plane of Nature. Into that we have to heighten our force of consciousness, to widen by that still more largely, even universally and infinitely, our range of being and our field of action, to take up by that our lower life and use it for greater ends and on a larger plan, in the light of the spiritual truth of existence. Our labour of mind and struggle of life cannot come to any solution until we have gone beyond the obsessing lead of an inferior Nature, integralised our natural being in the being and consciousness, learned to utilise our natural instruments by the force and for the joy of the Spirit. Then only can the constitutional ignorance, the ignorance of the real build of our existence from which we suffer, change into a true and effective knowledge of our being and becoming. For what we are is spirit,—at present using mind predominantly, life and body subordinately, with matter for our original field but not our only field of experience; but this is only at present. Our imperfect mental instrumentation is not the last word of our possibilities; for there are in us, dormant or invisibly and imperfectly active, other principles beyond mind and closer to the spiritual nature, there are more direct powers and luminous instruments, there is a higher status, there are greater ranges of dynamic action than those that belong to our present physical, vital and mental existence. These can become our own status, part of our being, they can be principles, powers and instruments of our own enlarged nature. But for that it is

not enough to be satisfied with a vague or an ecstatic ascent into spirit or a formless exaltation through the touch of its infinities; their principle has to evolve, as life has evolved, as mind has evolved, and organise its own instrumentation, its own satisfaction. Then we shall possess the true constitution of our being and we shall have conquered the Ignorance.

The conquest of our constitutional ignorance cannot be complete, cannot become integrally dynamic, if we have not conquered our psychological ignorance; for the two are bound up together. Our psychological ignorance consists in a limitation of our self-knowledge to that little wave or superficial stream of our being which is the conscious waking self. This part of our being is an original flux of formless or only half-formulated movements carried on in an automatic continuity, supported and held together by an active surface memory and a passive underlying consciousness in its flow from moment to moment of time, organised and interpreted by our reason and our witnessing and participating intelligence. Behind it is an occult existence and energy of our secret being without which the superficial consciousness and activity could not have existed or acted. In Matter only an activity is manifest,—inconscient in the outside of things which is all we know; for the indwelling Consciousness in Matter is secret, subliminal, not manifested in the inconscient form and the involved energy: but in us consciousness has become partly manifest, partly awake. But this consciousness is hedged and imperfect; it is bound by its habitual self-limitation and moves in a restricted circle,—except when there are flashes, intimations or upsurgings from the secrecy within us which break the limits of the formation or flow beyond them or widen the circle. But these occasional visitations cannot enlarge us far beyond our present capacities, are not enough to revolutionise our status. That can only be done if we can bring into it the higher undeveloped lights and powers potential in our being and get them consciously and normally into play; for this we must be able to draw freely from those ranges of our being to which they are native but which are at present subconscious or rather secretly intraconscious and circumconscious or else

superconscious to us. Or,—the yet more that is also possible,—we must enter into these inner and higher parts of ourselves by an inward plunge or disciplined penetration and bring back with us to the surface their secrets. Or, achieving a still more radical change of our consciousness, we must learn to live within and no longer on the surface and be and act from the inner depths and from a soul that has become sovereign over the nature.

That part of us which we can strictly call subconscious because it is below the level of mind and conscious life, inferior and obscure, covers the purely physical and vital elements of our constitution of bodily being, unmentalised, unobserved by the mind, uncontrolled by it in their action. It can be held to include the dumb occult consciousness, dynamic but not sensed by us, which operates in the cells and nerves and all the corporeal stuff and adjusts their life process and automatic responses. It covers also those lowest functionings of submerged sense-mind which are more operative in the animal and in plant life; in our evolution we have overpassed the need of any large organised action of this element, but it remains submerged and obscurely at work below our conscious nature. This obscure activity extends to a hidden and hooded mental substratum into which past impressions and all that is rejected from the surface mind sink and remain there dormant and can surge up in sleep or in any absence of the mind, taking dream forms, forms of mechanical mind action or suggestion, forms of automatic vital reaction or impulse, forms of physical abnormality or nervous perturbation, forms of morbidity, disease, unbalance. Out of the subconscious we bring ordinarily so much to the surface as our waking sense-mind and intelligence need for their purpose; in so bringing them up we are not aware of their nature, origin, operation and do not apprehend them in their own values but by a translation into the values of our waking human sense and intelligence. But the risings of the subconscious, its effects upon the mind and body, are mostly automatic, uncalled for and involuntary; for we have no knowledge and therefore no control of the subconscious. It is only by an experience abnormal to us, most commonly in illness or some disturbance of balance, that we can become directly

aware of something in the dumb world, dumb but very active, of our bodily being and vitality or grow conscious of the secret movements of the mechanical subhuman physical and vital mind which underlies our surface,— a consciousness which is ours but seems not ours because it is not part of our known mentality. This and much more lives concealed in the subconscious.

A descent into the subconscious would not help us to explore this region, for it would plunge us into incoherence or into sleep or a dull trance or a comatose torpor. A mental scrutiny or insight can give us some indirect and constructive idea of these hidden activities; but it is only by drawing back into the subliminal or by ascending into the superconscious and from there looking down or extending ourselves into these obscure depths that we can become directly and totally aware and in control of the secrets of our subconscious physical, vital and mental nature. This awareness, this control are of the utmost importance. For the subconscious is the Inconscient in the process of becoming conscious; it is a support and even a root of our inferior parts of being and their movements. It sustains and reinforces all in us that clings most and refuses to change, our mechanical recurrences of unintelligent thought, our persistent obstinacies of feeling, sensation, impulse, propensity, our uncontrolled fixities of character. The animal in us,— the infernal also,— has its lair of retreat in the dense jungle of the subconscious. To penetrate there, to bring in light and establish a control, is indispensable for the completeness of any higher life, for any integral transformation of the nature.

The part of us that we have characterised as intraconscious and circumconscious is a still more potent and much more valuable element in the constitution of our being. It includes the large action of an inner intelligence and inner sense-mind, of an inner vital, even of an inner subtle-physical being which upholds and embraces our waking consciousness, which is not brought to the front, which is subliminal, in the modern phrase. But when we can enter and explore this hidden self, we find that our waking sense and intelligence are for the most part a selection from what we secretly are or can be, an exteriorised and much

mutilated and vulgarised edition of our real, our hidden being or an upthrow from its depths. Our surface being has been formed with this subliminal help by an evolution out of the Inconscient for the utility of our present mental and physical life on earth; this that is behind is a formation mediating between the Inconscient and the larger planes of Life and Mind which have been created by the involutionary descent and whose pressure has helped to bring about the evolution of mind and life in Matter. Our surface responses to physical existence have at their back the support of an activity in these veiled parts, are often responses from them modified by a surface mental rendering. But also that large part of our mentality and vitality which is not a response to the outside world but lives for itself or throws itself out on material existence to use and possess it, our personality, is the outcome, the amalgamated formulation of powers, influences, motives proceeding from this potent intraconscient secrecy.

Again, the subliminal extends itself into an enveloping consciousness through which it receives the shock of the currents and wave-circuits pouring upon us from the universal Mind, universal Life, universal subtler Matter-forces. These, unperceived by us on the surface, are perceived and admitted by our subliminal self and turned into formations which can powerfully affect our existence without our knowledge. If the wall that separates this inner existence from the outer self were penetrated, we could know and deal with the sources of our present mind energies and life action and could control instead of undergoing their results. But though large parts of it can be thus known by a penetration and looking within or a freer communication, it is only by going inward behind the veil of superficial mind and living within, in an inner mind, an inner life, an inmost soul of our being that we can be fully self-aware, — by this and by rising to a higher plane of mind than that which our waking consciousness inhabits. An enlargement and completion of our present evolutionary status, now still so hampered and truncated, would be the result of such an inward living; but an evolution beyond it can come only by our becoming conscious in what is now superconscious to us, by an ascension to the native heights of the Spirit.

In the superconscious beyond our present level of awareness are included the higher planes of mental being as well as the native heights of supramental and pure spiritual being. The first indispensable step in an upward evolution would be to elevate our force of consciousness into those higher parts of Mind from which we already receive, but without knowing the source, much of our larger mental movements, those, especially, that come with a greater power and light, the revelatory, the inspirational, the intuitive. On these mental heights, in these largenesses, if the consciousness could succeed in reaching them or maintain and centre itself there, something of the direct presence and power of the spirit, something even—however secondary or indirect—of the supermind could receive a first expression, could make itself initially manifest, could intervene in the government of our lower being and help to remould it. Afterwards, by the force of that remoulded consciousness, the course of our evolution could rise by a sublimer ascent and get beyond the mental into the supramental and the supreme spiritual nature. It is possible without an actual ascent into these at present superconscious mental planes or without a constant or permanent living in them, by openness to them, by reception of their knowledge and influences, to get rid to a certain extent of our constitutional and psychological ignorance; it is possible to be aware of ourselves as spiritual beings and to spiritualise, though imperfectly, our normal human life and consciousness. There could be a conscious communication and guidance from this greater more luminous mentality and a reception of its enlightening and transforming forces. That is within the reach of the highly developed or the spiritually awakened human being; but it would not be more than a preliminary stage. To reach an integral self-knowledge, an entire consciousness and power of being, there is necessary an ascent beyond the plane of our normal mind. Such an ascent is at present possible in an absorbed superconscious; but that could lead only to an entry into the higher levels in a state of immobile or ecstatic trance. If the control of that highest spiritual being is to be brought into our waking life, there must be a conscious heightening and widening into immense ranges of new being,

new consciousness, new potentialities of action, a taking up—as integral as possible—of our present being, consciousness, activities and a transmutation of them into divine values which would effect a transfiguration of our human existence. For wherever a radical transition has to be made, there is always this triple movement—ascent, widening of field and base, integration—in Nature's method of self-transcendence.

Any such evolutionary change must necessarily be associated with a rejection of our present narrowing temporal ignorance. For not only do we now live from moment to moment of time, but our whole view is limited to our life in the present body between a single birth and death. As our regard does not go farther back in the past, so it does not extend farther out into the future; thus we are limited by our physical memory and awareness of the present life in a transient corporeal formation. But this limitation of our temporal consciousness is intimately dependent upon the preoccupation of our mentality with the material plane and life in which it is at present acting; the limitation is not a law of the spirit but a temporary provision for an intended first working of our manifested nature. If the preoccupation is relaxed or put aside, an extension of the mind effected, an opening into the subliminal and superconscious, into the inner and higher being created, it is possible to realise our persistent existence in time as well as our eternal existence beyond it. This is essential if we are to get our self-knowledge into the right focus; for at present our whole consciousness and action are vitiated by an error of spiritual perspective which prevents us from seeing in right proportion and relation the nature, purpose and conditions of our being. A belief in immortality is made so vital a point in most religions because it is a self-evident necessity if we are to rise above the identity with the body and its preoccupation with the material level. But a belief is not sufficient to alter radically this mistake of perspective: the true self-knowledge of our being in time can come to us only when we live in the consciousness of our immortality; we have to awaken to a concrete sense of our perpetual being in Time and of our timeless existence.

For immortality in its fundamental sense does not mean merely some kind of personal survival of the bodily death; we are immortal by the eternity of our self-existence without beginning or end, beyond the whole succession of physical births and deaths through which we pass, beyond the alternations of our existence in this and other worlds: the spirit's timeless existence is the true immortality. There is, no doubt, a secondary meaning of the word which has its truth; for, corollary to this true immortality, there exists a perpetual continuity of our temporal existence and experience from life to life, from world to world after the dissolution of the physical body: but this is a natural consequence of our timelessness which expresses itself here as a perpetuity in eternal Time. The realisation of timeless immortality comes by the knowledge of self in the Non-birth and Non-becoming and of the changeless spirit within us: the realisation of time-immortality comes by the knowledge of self in the Birth and Becoming and is translated into a sense of the persistent identity of the soul through all changes of mind and life and body; this too is not a mere survival, it is timelessness translated into the Time manifestation. By the first realisation we become free from obscuring subjection to the chain of birth and death, that supreme object of so many Indian disciplines; by the second realisation added to the first we are able to possess freely, with right knowledge, without ignorance, without bondage by the chain of our actions, the experiences of the spirit in its successions of time-eternity. A realisation of timeless existence by itself might not include the truth of that experience of persistent self in eternal Time; a realisation of survival of death by itself might still give room for a beginning or end to our existence. But, in either realisation truly envisaged as side and other side of one truth, to exist consciously in eternity and not in the bondage of the hour and the succession of the moments is the substance of the change: so to exist is a first condition of the divine consciousness and the divine life. To possess and govern from that inner eternity of being the course and process of the becoming is the second, the dynamic condition with, as its practical outcome, a spiritual self-possession and self-mastery. These changes are possible only

by a withdrawal from our absorbing material preoccupation,—that does not necessitate a rejection or neglect of the life in the body,—and a constant living on the inner and higher planes of the mind and the spirit. For the heightening of our consciousness into its spiritual principle is effectuated by an ascent and a stepping back inward—both these movements are essential—out of our transient life from moment to moment into the eternal life of our immortal consciousness; but with it there comes also a widening of our range of consciousness and field of action in time and a taking up and a higher use of our mental, our vital, our corporeal existence. There arises a knowledge of our being, no longer as a consciousness dependent on the body, but as an eternal spirit which uses all the worlds and all lives for various self-experience; we see it to be a spiritual entity possessed of a continuous soul-life perpetually developing its activities through successive physical existences, a being determining its own becoming. In that knowledge, not ideative but felt in our very substance, it becomes possible to live, not as slaves of a blind Karmic impulsion, but as masters—subject only to the Divine within us—of our being and nature.

At the same time we get rid of the egoistic ignorance; for so long as we are at any point bound by that, the divine life must either be unattainable or imperfect in its self-expression. For the ego is a falsification of our true individuality by a limiting self-identification of it with this life, this mind, this body: it is a separation from other souls which shuts us up in our own individual experience and prevents us from living as the universal individual: it is a separation from God, our highest Self, who is the one Self in all existences and the divine Inhabitant within us. As our consciousness changes into the height and depth and wideness of the spirit, the ego can no longer survive there: it is too small and feeble to subsist in that vastness and dissolves into it; for it exists by its limits and perishes by the loss of its limits. The being breaks out of its imprisonment in a separated individuality, becomes universal, assumes a cosmic consciousness in which it identifies itself with the self and spirit, the life, the mind, the body of all beings. Or it breaks out upward into a supreme

pinnacle and infinity and eternity of self-existence independent of its cosmic or its individual existence. The ego collapses, losing its wall of separation, into the cosmic immensity; or it falls into nothingness, unable to breathe in the heights of the spiritual ether. If something of its movements remains by habit of Nature, yet these also fall away and are replaced by a new impersonal-personal seeing, feeling, action. This disappearance of the ego does not bring with it the destruction of our true individuality, our spiritual existence, for that was always universal and one with the Transcendence; but there is a transformation which replaces the separative ego by the Purusha, a conscious face and figure of the universal being and a self and power of the transcendent Divine in cosmic Nature.

In the same movement, by the very awakening into the spirit, there is a dissolution of the cosmic ignorance; for we have the knowledge of ourselves as our timeless immutable self possessing itself in cosmos and beyond cosmos: this knowledge becomes the basis of the Divine Play in time, reconciles the one and the many, the eternal unity and the eternal multiplicity, reunites the soul with God and discovers the Divine in the universe. It is by this realisation that we can approach the Absolute as the source of all circumstances and relations, possess the world in ourselves in an utmost wideness and in a conscient dependence on its source, and by so taking it up raise it and realise through it the absolute values that converge into the Absolute. If our self-knowledge is thus made complete in all its essentials, our practical ignorance which in its extreme figures itself as wrong-doing, suffering, falsehood, error and is the cause of all life's confusions and discords, will yield its place to the right will of self-knowledge and its false or imperfect values recede before the divine values of the true Consciousness-Force and Ananda. For right consciousness, right action and right being, not in the imperfect human sense of our petty moralities but in the large and luminous movement of a divine living, the conditions are union with God, unity with all beings, a life governed and formed from within outwards in which the source of all thought, will and action shall be the Spirit working through the truth and

the divine law which are not built and constructed by the mind of Ignorance but are self-existent and spontaneous in their self-fulfilment, not so much a law as the truth acting in its own consciousness and in a free luminous plastic automatic process of its knowledge.

This would seem to be the method and the result of the conscious spiritual evolution; a transformation of the life of the Ignorance into the divine life of the truth-conscious spirit, a change from the mental into a spiritual and supramental way of being, a self-expansion out of the sevenfold ignorance into the sevenfold knowledge. This transformation would be the natural completion of the upward process of Nature as it heightens the forces of consciousness from principle to higher principle until the highest, the spiritual principle, becomes expressed and dominant in her, takes up cosmic and individual existence on the lower planes into its truth and transforms all into a conscious manifestation of the Spirit. The true individual, the spiritual being, emerges, individual yet universal, universal yet self-transcendent: life no longer appears as a formation of things and an action of being created by the separative Ignorance.

Chapter XX

The Philosophy of Rebirth

An end have these bodies of an embodied soul that is eternal; it is not born nor dies nor is it that having been it will not be again. It is unborn, ancient, everlasting; it is not slain with the slaying of the body. As a man casts from him his worn-out garments and takes others that are new, so the embodied being casts off its bodies and joins itself to others that are new. Certain is the death of that which is born and certain is the birth of that which dies.

*Gita.*¹

There is a birth and growth of the self. According to his actions the embodied being assumes forms successively in many places; many forms gross and subtle he assumes by force of his own qualities of nature.

*Swetasvatara Upanishad.*²

BIRTH is the first spiritual mystery of the physical universe, death is the second which gives its double point of perplexity to the mystery of birth; for life, which would otherwise be a self-evident fact of existence, becomes itself a mystery by virtue of these two which seem to be its beginning and its end and yet in a thousand ways betray themselves as neither of these things, but rather intermediate stages in an occult processus of life. At first sight birth might seem to be a constant outburst of life in a general death, a persistent circumstance in the universal lifelessness of Matter. On a closer examination it begins to be more probable that life is something involved in Matter or even an inherent power of the Energy that creates Matter, but able to appear only when it gets the necessary conditions for the affirmation of its characteristic phenomena and for an appropriate

¹ II. 18, 20, 22, 27. ² V. 11, 12.

self-organisation. But in the birth of life there is something more that participates in the emergence,—there is an element which is no longer material, a strong upsurging of some flame of soul, a first evident vibration of the spirit.

All the known circumstances and results of birth presuppose an unknown before, and there is a suggestion of universality, a will of persistence of life, an inconclusiveness in death which seem to point to an unknown hereafter. What were we before birth and what are we after death, are the questions, the answer of the one depending upon that of the other, which the intellect of man has put to itself from the beginning without even now resting in any final solution. The intellect indeed can hardly give the final answer: for that must in its very nature lie beyond the data of the physical consciousness and memory, whether of the race or the individual, yet these are the sole data which the intellect is in the habit of consulting with something like confidence. In this poverty of materials and this incertitude it wheels from one hypothesis to another and calls each in turn a conclusion. Moreover, the solution depends upon the nature, source and object of the cosmic movement, and as we determine these, so we shall have to conclude about birth and life and death, the before and the hereafter.

The first question is whether the before and the after are purely physical and vital or in some way, and more predominantly, mental and spiritual. If Matter were the principle of the universe, as the materialist alleges, if the truth of things were to be found in the first formula arrived at by Bhrigu, son of Varuna, when he meditated upon the eternal Brahman, "Matter is the Eternal, for from Matter all beings are born and by Matter all beings exist and to Matter all beings depart and return," then no farther questioning would be possible. The before of our bodies would be a gathering of their constituents out of various physical elements through the instrumentality of the seed and food and under the influence perhaps of occult but always material energies, and the before of our conscious being a preparation by heredity or by some other physically vital or physically mental operation in universal Matter specialising its action and building

the individual through the bodies of our parents, through seed and gene and chromosome. The after of the body would be a dissolution into the material elements and the after of the conscious being a relapse into Matter with some survival of the effects of its activity in the general mind and life of humanity: this last quite illusory survival would be our only chance of immortality. But since the universality of Matter can no longer be held as giving any sufficient explanation of the existence of Mind,—and indeed Matter itself can no longer be explained by Matter alone, for it does not appear to be self-existent,—we are thrown back from this easy and obvious solution to other hypotheses.

One of these is the old religious myth and dogmatic mystery of a God who creates constantly immortal souls out of his own being or else by his “breath” or life-power entering, it is to be presumed, into material Nature or rather into the bodies he creates in it and vivifying them internally with a spiritual principle. As a mystery of faith this can hold and need not be examined, for the mysteries of faith are intended to be beyond question and scrutiny; but for reason and philosophy it lacks convincingness and does not fit into the known order of things. For it involves two paradoxes which need more justification before they can even be accorded any consideration; first, the hourly creation of beings who have a beginning in time but no end in time, and are, moreover, born by the birth of the body but do not end by the death of the body; secondly, their assumption of a ready-made mass of combined qualities, virtues, vices, capacities, defects, temperamental and other advantages and handicaps, not made by them at all through growth, but made for them by arbitrary fiat,—if not by law of heredity,—yet for which and for the perfect use of which they are held responsible by their Creator.

We may maintain — provisionally, at least, — certain things as legitimate presumptions of the philosophic reason and fairly throw the burden of disproving them on their denier. Among these postulates is the principle that that which has no end must necessarily have had no beginning; all that begins or is created

has an end by cessation of the process that created and maintains it or the dissolution of the materials of which it is compounded or the end of the function for which it came into being. If there is an exception to this law, it must be by a descent of spirit into matter animating matter with divinity or giving matter its own immortality; but the spirit itself which so descends is immortal, not made or created. If the soul was created to animate the body, if it depended on the body for its coming into existence, it can have no reason or basis for existence after the disappearance of the body. It is naturally to be supposed that the breath or power given for the animation of the body would return at its final dissolution to its Maker. If, on the contrary, it still persists as an immortal embodied being, there must be a subtle or psychic body in which it continues, and it is fairly certain that this psychic body and its inhabitant must be pre-existent to the material vehicle: it is irrational to suppose that they were created originally to inhabit that brief and perishable form; an immortal being cannot be the outcome of so ephemeral an incident in creation. If the soul remains but in a disembodied condition, then it can have had no original dependence on a body for its existence; it must have subsisted as an unembodied spirit before birth even as it persists in its disembodied spiritual entity after death.

Again, we can assume that where we see in Time a certain stage of development, there must have been a past to that development. Therefore, if the soul enters this life with a certain development of personality, it must have prepared it in other precedent lives here or elsewhere. Or, if it only takes up a ready-made life and personality not prepared by it, prepared perhaps by a physical, vital and mental heredity, it must itself be something quite independent of that life and personality, something which is only fortuitously connected with the mind and body and cannot therefore be really affected by what is done or developed in this mental and bodily living. If the soul is real and immortal, not a constructed being or figure of being, it must also be eternal, beginningless in the past even as endless in the future; but, if eternal, it must be either a changeless self

unaffected by life and its terms or a timeless Purusha, an eternal and spiritual Person manifesting or causing in time a stream of changing personality. If it is such a Person, it can only manifest this stream of personality in a world of birth and death by the assumption of successive bodies,—in a word, by constant or by repeated rebirth into the forms of Nature.

But the immortality or eternity of the soul does not at once impose itself, even if we reject the explanation of all things by eternal Matter. For we have also the hypothesis of the creation of a temporary or apparent soul by some power of the original Unity from which all things began, by which they live and into which they cease. On one side, we can erect upon the foundation of certain modern ideas or discoveries the theory of a cosmic Inconscient creating a temporary soul, a consciousness which after a brief play is extinguished and goes back into the Inconscient. Or there may be an eternal Becoming, which manifests itself in a cosmic Life-force with the appearance of Matter as one objective end of its operations and the appearance of Mind as the other subjective end, the interaction of these two phenomena of Life-force creating our human existence. On the other side, we have the old theory of a sole-existing Superconscious, an eternal unmodifiable Being which admits or creates by Maya an illusion of individual soul-life in this world of phenomenal Mind and Matter, both of them ultimately unreal,—even if they have or assume a temporary and phenomenal reality,—since one unmodifiable and eternal Self or Spirit is the only entity. Or we have the Buddhist theory of a Nihil or Nirvana and, somehow imposed upon that, an eternal action or energy of successive becoming, Karma, which creates the illusion of a persistent self or soul by a constant continuity of associations, ideas, memories, sensations, images. In their effect upon the life problem all these three explanations are practically one; for even the Superconscious is for the purposes of the universal action an equivalent of the Inconscient; it can be aware only of its own unmodifiable self-existence: the creation of a world of individual beings by Maya is an imposition on this self-existence; it takes place, perhaps, in a sort of self-absorbed sleep of consciousness,

susupti,³ out of which yet all active consciousness and modification of phenomenal becoming emerge, just as in the modern theory our consciousness is an impermanent development out of the Inconscient. In all three theories the apparent soul or spiritual individuality of the creature is not immortal in the sense of eternity, but has a beginning and an end in Time, is a creation by Maya or by Nature-Force or cosmic Action out of the Inconscient or Superconscious, and is therefore impermanent in its existence. In all three rebirth is either unnecessary or else illusory; it is either the prolongation by repetition of an illusion, or it is an additional revolving wheel among the many wheels of the complex machinery of the Becoming, or it is excluded since a single birth is all that can be asked for by a conscious being fortuitously engendered as part of an inconscient creation.

In these views, whether we suppose the one Eternal Existence to be a vital Becoming or an immutable and unmodifiable spiritual Being or a nameless and formless Non-being, that which we call the soul can be only a changing mass or stream of phenomena of consciousness which has come into existence in the sea of real or illusory becoming and will cease to exist there,—or, it may be, it is a temporary spiritual substratum, a conscious reflection of the Superconscious Eternal which by its presence supports the mass of phenomena. It is not eternal, and its only immortality is a greater or less continuity in the Becoming. It is not a real and always existent Person who maintains and experiences the stream or mass of phenomena. That which supports them, that which really and always exists, is either the one eternal Becoming or the one eternal and impersonal Being or the continual stream of Energy in its workings. For a theory of this kind it is not indispensable that a psychic entity always the same should persist and assume body after body, form after form, until it is dissolved at last by some process annulling altogether the original impetus which created this cycle. It is quite possible that as each form is developed, a consciousness

³ Prajna of the Mandukya Upanishad, the Self situated in deep sleep, is the lord and creator of things.

develops corresponding to the form, and as the form dissolves, the corresponding consciousness dissolves with it; the One which forms all, alone endures for ever. Or, as the body is gathered out of the general elements of Matter and begins its life with birth and ends with death, so the consciousness may be developed out of the general elements of mind and equally begin with birth and end with death. Here too, the One who supplies by Maya or otherwise the force which creates the elements, is the sole reality that endures. In none of these theories of existence is rebirth an absolute necessity or an inevitable result of the theory.⁴

As a matter of fact, however, we find a great difference; for the old theories affirm, the modern denies rebirth as a part of the universal process. Modern thought starts from the physical body as the basis of our existence and recognises the reality of no other world except this material universe. What it sees here is a mental consciousness associated with the life of the body, giving in its birth no sign of previous individual existence and leaving in its end no sign of subsequent individual existence. What was before birth is the material energy with its seed of life, or at best an energy of life-force, which persists in the seed transmitted by the parents and gives, by its mysterious infusion of past developments into that trifling vehicle, a particular mental and physical stamp to the new individual mind and body thus strangely created. What remains after death is the same material energy or life-force persisting in the seed transmitted to the children and active for the farther development of the mental and physical life carried with it. Nothing is left of us except what we so transmit to others or what the Energy which shaped the individual by its pre-existent and its surrounding action, by birth and by environment, may take as the result of his life and works into its subsequent action; whatever may help by chance or by physical law to build the mental and vital constituents

⁴ In the Buddhist theory rebirth is imperative because Karma compels it; not a soul, but Karma is the link of an apparently continuing consciousness,—for the consciousness changes from moment to moment: there is this apparent continuity of consciousness, but there is no real immortal soul taking birth and passing through the death of the body to be reborn in another body.

and environment of other individuals, that alone can have any survival. Behind both the mental and the physical phenomena there is perhaps a universal Life of which we are individualised, evolutionary and phenomenal becomings. This universal Life creates a real world and real beings, but the conscious personality in these beings is not, or at least it need not be, the sign or the shape of consciousness of an eternal nor even of a persistent soul or supraphysical Person: there is nothing in this formula of existence compelling us to believe in a psychic entity that outlasts the death of the body. There is here no reason and little room for the admission of rebirth as a part of the scheme of things.

But what if it were found with the increase of our knowledge, as certain researches and discoveries seem to presage, that the dependence of the mental being or the psychic entity in us on the body is not so complete as we at first naturally conclude it to be from the study of the data of physical existence and the physical universe alone? What if it were found that the human personality survives the death of the body and moves between other planes and this material universe? The prevalent modern idea of a temporary conscious existence would then have to broaden itself and admit a Life that has a wider range than the physical universe and admit too a personal individuality not dependent on the material body. It might have practically to readopt the ancient idea of a subtle form or body inhabited by a psychic entity. A psychic or soul entity, carrying with it the mental consciousness, or, if there be no such original soul, then the evolved and persistent mental individual would continue after death in this subtle persistent form, which must have been either created for it before this birth or by the birth itself or during the life. For either a psychic entity pre-exists in other worlds in a subtle form and comes from there with it to its brief earthly sojourn, or the soul develops here in the material world itself, and with it a psychic body is developed in the course of Nature and persists after death in other worlds or by reincarnation here. These would be the two possible alternatives.

An evolving universal Life may have developed on earth the growing personality that has now become ourselves, before it

entered a human body at all; the soul in us may have evolved in lower life-shapes before man was created. In that case, our personality has previously inhabited animal forms, and the subtle body would be a plastic formation carried from birth to birth but adapting itself to whatever physical shape the soul inhabits. Or the evolving Life may be able to build a personality capable of survival, but only in the human form when that is created. This would happen by the force of a sudden growth of mental consciousness, and at the same time a sheath of subtle mind-substance might develop and help to individualise this mental consciousness and would then function as an inner body, just as the gross physical form by its organisation at once individualises and houses the animal mind and life. On the former supposition, we must admit that the animal too survives the dissolution of the physical body and has some kind of soul formation which after death occupies other animal forms on earth and finally a human body. For there is little likelihood that the animal soul passes beyond earth and enters other planes of life than the physical and constantly returns here until it is ready for the human incarnation; the animal's conscious individualisation does not seem sufficient to bear such a transfer or to adapt itself to an other-worldly existence. On the second supposition, the power thus to survive the death of the physical body in other states of existence would only arrive with the human stage of the evolution. If, indeed, the soul is not such a constructed personality evolved by Life, but a persistent unevolving reality with a terrestrial life and body as its necessary field, the theory of rebirth in the sense of Pythagorean transmigration would have to be admitted. But if it is a persistent evolving entity capable of passing beyond the terrestrial stage, then the Indian idea of a passage to other worlds and a return to terrestrial birth would become possible and highly probable. But it would not be inevitable; for it might be supposed that the human personality, once capable of attaining to other planes, need not return from them: it would naturally, in the absence of some greater compelling reason, pursue its existence upon the higher plane to which it had arisen; it would have finished with the

terrestrial life-evolution. Only if faced with actual evidence of a return to earth, would a larger supposition be compulsory and the admission of a repeated rebirth in human forms become inevitable.

But even then the developing vitalistic theory need not spiritualise itself, need not admit the real existence of a soul or its immortality or eternity. It might regard the personality still as a phenomenal creation of the universal Life by the interaction of life consciousness and physical form and force, but with a wider, more variable and subtler action of both upon each other and another history than it had at first seen to be possible. It might even arrive at a sort of vitalistic Buddhism, admitting Karma, but admitting it only as the action of a universal Life-force; it would admit as one of its results the continuity of the stream of personality in rebirth by mental association, but might deny any real self for the individual or any eternal being other than this ever-active vital Becoming. On the other hand, it might, obeying a turn of thought which is now beginning to gain a little in strength, admit a universal Self or cosmic Spirit as the primal reality and Life as its power or agent and so arrive at a form of spiritualised vital Monism. In this theory too a law of rebirth would be possible but not inevitable; it might be a phenomenal fact, an actual law of life, but it would not be a logical result of the theory of being and its inevitable consequence.

Adwaita of the Mayavada, like Buddhism, started with the already accepted belief—part of the received stock of an antique knowledge—of supraphysical planes and worlds and a commerce between them and ours which determined a passage from earth and, though this seems to have been a less primitive discovery, a return to earth of the human personality. At any rate their thought had behind it an ancient perception and even experience, or at least an age-long tradition, of a before and after for the personality which was not confined to the experience of the physical universe; for they based themselves on a view of self and world which already regarded a supraphysical consciousness as the primary phenomenon and physical being as only a secondary and dependent phenomenon. It was around these data

that they had to determine the nature of the eternal Reality and the origin of the phenomenal becoming. Therefore they admitted the passage of the personality from this to other worlds and its return into form of life upon earth; but the rebirth thus admitted was not in the Buddhistic view a real rebirth of a real spiritual Person into the forms of material existence. In the later Adwaita view the spiritual reality was there, but its apparent individuality and therefore its birth and rebirth were part of a cosmic illusion, a deceptive but effective construction of universal Maya.

In Buddhistic thought the existence of the Self was denied, and rebirth could only mean a continuity of the ideas, sensations and actions which constituted a fictitious individual moving between different worlds,—let us say, between differently organised planes of idea and sensation; for, in fact, it is only the conscious continuity of the flux that creates a phenomenon of self and a phenomenon of personality. In the Adwaitic Mayavada there was the admission of a Jivatman, an individual self, and even of a real self of the individual;⁵ but this concession to our normal language and ideas ends by being only apparent. For it turns out that there is no real and eternal individual, no "I" or "you", and therefore there can be no real self of the individual, even no true universal self, but only a Self apart from the universe, ever unborn, ever unmodified, ever unaffected by the mutations of phenomena. Birth, life, death, the whole mass of individual and cosmic experience, become in the last resort no more than an illusion or a temporary phenomenon; even bondage and release can be only such an illusion, a part of temporal phenomena: they amount only to the conscious continuity of the illusory experiences of the ego, itself a creation of the great Illusion, and the cessation of the continuity and the consciousness into the superconsciousness of That which alone was, is and ever will be, or rather which has nothing to do with Time, is for ever unborn, timeless and ineffable.

⁵ The Self in this view is one, it cannot be many or multiply itself; there cannot therefore be any true individual, only at most a one Self omnipresent and animating each mind and body with the idea of an "I".

Thus while in the vitalistic view of things there is a real universe and a real though brief temporary becoming of individual life which, even though there is no ever-enduring Purusha, yet gives a considerable importance to our individual experience and actions,—for these are truly effective in a real becoming,—in the Mayavada theory these things have no real importance or true effect, but only something like a dream-consequence. For even release takes place only in the cosmic dream or hallucination by the recognition of the illusion and the cessation of the individualised mind and body; in reality, there is no one bound and no one released, for the sole-existent Self is untouched by these illusions of the ego. To escape from the all-destroying sterility which would be the logical result, we have to lend a practical reality, however false it may be eventually, to this dream-consequence and an immense importance to our bondage and individual release, even though the life of the individual is phenomenal only and to the one real Self both the bondage and the release are and cannot but be non-existent. In this compulsory concession to the tyrannous falsehood of Maya the sole true importance of life and experience must lie in the measure in which they prepare for the negation of life, for the self-elimination of the individual, for the end of the cosmic illusion.

This, however, is an extreme view and consequence of the monistic thesis, and the older Adwaita Vedantism starting from the Upanishads does not go so far. It admits an actual and temporal becoming of the Eternal and therefore a real universe; the individual too assumes a sufficient reality, for each individual is in himself the Eternal who has assumed name and form and supports through him the experiences of life turning on an ever-circling wheel of birth in the manifestation. The wheel is kept in motion by the desire of the individual, which becomes the effective cause of rebirth and by the mind's turning away from the knowledge of the eternal self to the preoccupations of the temporal becoming. With the cessation of this desire and of this ignorance, the Eternal in the individual draws away from the mutations of individual personality and experience into his timeless, impersonal and immutable being.

But this reality of the individual is quite temporal; it has no enduring foundation, not even a perpetual recurrence in Time. Rebirth, though a very important actuality in this account of the universe, is not an inevitable consequence of the relation between individuality and the purpose of the manifestation. For the manifestation seems to have no purpose except the will of the Eternal towards world-creation and it can end only by that will's withdrawal: this cosmic will could work itself out without any machinery of rebirth and the individual's desire maintaining it; for his desire can be only a spring of the machinery, it could not be the cause or the necessary condition of cosmic existence, since he is himself in this view a result of the creation and not in existence prior to the Becoming. The will to creation could then accomplish itself through a temporary assumption of individuality in each name and form, a single life of many impermanent individuals. There would be a self-shaping of the one consciousness in correspondence with the type of each created being, but it could very well begin in each individual body with the appearance of the physical form and end with its cessation. Individual would follow individual as wave follows wave, the sea remaining always the same;⁶each formation of conscious being would surge up from the universal, roll for its allotted time and then sink back into the Silence. The necessity for this purpose of an individualised consciousness persistently continuous, assuming name after name and form after form and moving between different planes backward and forward, is not apparent and, even as a possibility, does not strongly impose itself; still less is there any room for an evolutionary progress inevitably

⁶ Dr. Schweitzer in his book on Indian thought asserts that this was the real sense of the Upanishadic teachings and rebirth was a later invention. But there are numerous important passages in almost all the Upanishads positively affirming rebirth and, in any case, the Upanishads admit the survival of the personality after death and its passage into other worlds which is incompatible with this interpretation. If there is survival in other worlds and also a final destiny of liberation into the Brahman for souls embodied here, rebirth imposes itself, and there is no reason to suppose that it was a later theory. The writer has evidently been moved by the associations of Western philosophy to read a merely pantheistic sense into the more subtle and complex thought of the ancient Vedanta.

pursued from form to higher form such as must be supposed by a theory of rebirth that affirms the involution and evolution of the Spirit in Matter as the significant formula of our terrestrial existence.

It is conceivable that so the Eternal may have actually chosen to manifest or rather to conceal himself in the body; he may have willed to become or to appear as an individual passing from birth to death and from death to new life in a cycle of persistent and recurrent human and animal existence. The One Being personalised would pass through various forms of becoming at fancy or according to some law of the consequences of action, till the close came by an enlightenment, a return to Oneness, a withdrawal of the Sole and Identical from that particular individualisation. But such a cycle would have no original or final determining Truth which would give it any significance. There is nothing for which it would be necessary; it would be purely a play, a *Lila*. But if it is once admitted that the Spirit has involved itself in the Inconscience and is manifesting itself in the individual being by an evolutionary gradation, then the whole process assumes meaning and consistence; the progressive ascent of the individual becomes a key-note of this cosmic significance, and the rebirth of the soul in the body becomes a natural and unavoidable consequence of the truth of the Becoming and its inherent law. Rebirth is an indispensable machinery for the working out of a spiritual evolution; it is the only possible effective condition, the obvious dynamic process of such a manifestation in the material universe.

Our explanation of the evolution in Matter is that the universe is a self-creative process of a supreme Reality whose presence makes spirit the substance of things,—all things are there as the spirit's powers and means and forms of manifestation. An infinite existence, an infinite consciousness, an infinite force and will, an infinite delight of being is the Reality secret behind the appearances of the universe; its divine Supermind or Gnosis has arranged the cosmic order, but arranged it indirectly through the three subordinate and limiting terms of which we are conscious here, Mind, Life and Matter. The material universe is

the lowest stage of a downward plunge of the manifestation, an involution of the manifested being of this triune Reality into an apparent nescience of itself, that which we now call the Inconscient; but out of this nescience the evolution of that manifested being into a recovered self-awareness was from the very first inevitable. It was inevitable because that which is involved, must evolve; for it is not only there as an existence, a force hidden in its apparent opposite, and every such force must in its inmost nature be moved to find itself, to realise itself, to release itself into play, but it is the reality of that which conceals it, it is the self which the Nescience has lost and which therefore it must be the whole secret meaning, the constant drift of its action to seek for and recover. It is through the conscious individual being that this recovery is possible; it is in him that the evolving consciousness becomes organised and capable of awaking to its own Reality. The immense importance of the individual being, which increases as he rises in the scale, is the most remarkable and significant fact of a universe which started without consciousness and without individuality in an undifferentiated Nescience. This importance can only be justified if the Self as individual is no less real than the Self as cosmic Being or Spirit and both are powers of the Eternal. It is only so that can be explained the necessity for the growth of the individual and his discovery of himself as a condition for the discovery of the cosmic Self and Consciousness and of the supreme Reality. If we adopt this solution, this is the first result, the reality of the persistent individual; but from that first consequence the other result follows, that rebirth of some kind is no longer a possible machinery which may or may not be accepted, it becomes a necessity, an inevitable outcome of the root nature of our existence.

For it is no longer sufficient to suppose an illusory or temporary individual, created in each form by the play of consciousness; individuality can no longer be conceived as an accompaniment of play of consciousness in figure of body which may or may not survive the form, may or may not prolong its false continuity of self from form to form, from life to life, but which certainly need not do it. In this world

what we seem at first to see is individual replacing individual without any continuity, the form dissolving, the false or transient individuality dissolving with it, while the universal Energy or some universal Being alone remains for ever; that might very well be the whole principle of cosmic manifestation. But if the individual is a persistent reality, an eternal portion or power of the Eternal, if his growth of consciousness is the means by which the Spirit in things discloses its being, the cosmos reveals itself as a conditioned manifestation of the play of the eternal One in the being of Sachchidananda with the eternal Many. Then, secure behind all the changings of our personality, upholding the stream of its mutations, there must be a true Person, a real spiritual Individual, a true Purusha. The One extended in universality exists in each being and affirms himself in this individuality of himself. In the individual he discloses his total existence by oneness with all in the universality. In the individual he discloses too his transcendence as the Eternal in whom all the universal unity is founded. This trinity of self-manifestation, this prodigious Lila of the manifold Identity, this magic of Maya or protean miracle of the conscious truth of being of the Infinite, is the luminous revelation which emerges by a slow evolution from the original Inconscience.

If there were no need of self-finding but only an eternal enjoyment of this play of the being of Sachchidananda,—and such an eternal enjoyment is the nature of certain supreme states of conscious existence,—then evolution and rebirth need not have come into operation. But there has been an involution of this unity into the dividing Mind, a plunge into self-oblivion by which the ever-present sense of the complete oneness is lost, and the play of separative difference—phenomenal, because the real unity in difference remains unabridged behind,—comes into the forefront as a dominant reality. This play of difference has found its utmost term of the sense of division by the precipitation of the dividing Mind into a form of body in which it becomes conscious of itself as a separate ego. A dense and solid basis has been laid for this play of division in a world of separative forms of Matter by an involution of the active self-consciousness of Sachchidananda

into a phenomenal Nescience. It is this foundation in Nescience that makes the division secure because it imperatively opposes a return to the consciousness of unity; but still, though effectively obstructive, it is phenomenal and terminable because within it, above it, supporting it is the all-conscious Spirit and the apparent Nescience turns out to be only a concentration, an exclusive action of consciousness tranced into self-forgetfulness by an abysmal plunge into the absorption of the formative and creative material process. In a phenomenal universe so created, the separative form becomes the foundation and the starting-point of all its life action; therefore the individual Purusha in working out its cosmic relations with the One has in this physical world to base himself upon the form, to assume a body; it is the body that he must make his own foundation and the starting-point for his development of the life and mind and spirit in the physical existence. That assumption of body we call birth, and in it only can take place here the development of self and the play of relations between the individual and the universal and all other individuals; in it only can there be the growth by a progressive development of our conscious being towards a supreme recovery of unity with God and with all in God: all the sum of what we call Life in the physical world is a progress of the soul and proceeds by birth into the body and has that for its fulcrum, its condition of action and its condition of evolutionary persistence.

Birth then is a necessity of the manifestation of the Purusha on the physical plane; but his birth, whether the human or any other, cannot be in this world-order an isolated accident or a sudden excursion of a soul into physicality without any preparing past to it or any fulfilling hereafter. In a world of involution and evolution, not of physical form only, but of conscious being through life and mind to spirit, such an isolated assumption of life in the human body could not be the rule of the individual soul's existence; it would be a quite meaningless and inconsequential arrangement, a freak for which the nature and system of things here have no place, a contrary violence which would break the rhythm of the Spirit's self-manifestation. The intrusion

of such a rule of individual soul-life into an evolutionary spiritual progression would make it an effect without cause and a cause without effect; it would be a fragmentary present without a past or a future. The life of the individual must have the same rhythm of significance, the same law of progression as the cosmic life; its place in that rhythm cannot be a stray purposeless intervention, it must be an abiding instrumentation of the cosmic purpose. Neither in such an order can we explain an isolated advent, a one birth of the soul in the human body which would be its first and last experience of the kind, by a previous existence in other worlds with a future before it in yet other fields of experience. For here life upon earth, life in the physical universe is not and cannot be a casual perch for the wanderings of the soul from world to world; it is a great and slow development needing, as we now know, incalculable spaces of Time for its evolution. Human life is itself only a term in a graded series, through which the secret Spirit in the universe develops gradually his purpose and works it out finally through the enlarging and ascending individual soul-consciousness in the body. This ascent can only take place by rebirth within the ascending order; an individual visit coming across it and progressing on some other line elsewhere could not fit into the system of this evolutionary existence.

Nor is the human soul, the human individual, a free wanderer capriciously or lightly hastening from field to field according to its unfettered choice or according to its free and spontaneously variable action and result of action. That is a radiant thought of pure spiritual liberty which may have its truth in planes beyond or in an eventual release, but is not true at first of the earth-life, of life in the physical universe. The human birth in this world is on its spiritual side a complex of two elements, a spiritual Person and a soul of personality; the former is man's eternal being, the latter is his cosmic and mutable being. As the spiritual impersonal person he is one in his nature and being with the freedom of Sachchidananda who has here consented to or willed his involution in the Nescience for a certain round of soul-experience, impossible otherwise, and presides secretly over its evolution. As the soul of personality he

is himself part of that long development of the soul-experience in the forms of Nature; his own evolution must follow the laws and the lines of the universal evolution. As a spirit he is one with the Transcendence which is immanent in the world and comprehensive of it; as a soul he is at once one with and part of the universality of Sachchidananda self-expressed in the world: his self-expression must go through the stages of the cosmic expression, his soul-experience follow the revolutions of the wheel of Brahman in the universe.

The universal Spirit in things involved in the Nescience of the physical universe evolves its nature self in a succession of physical forms up the graded series of Matter, Life, Mind and Spirit. It emerges first as a secret soul in material forms quite subject on the surface to the nescience; it develops as a soul still secret but about to emerge in vital forms that stand on the borders between nescience and the partial light of consciousness which is our ignorance; it develops still farther as the initially conscious soul in the animal mind and, finally, as the more outwardly conscious, but not yet fully conscious soul in man: the consciousness is there throughout in our occult parts of being, the development is in the manifesting Nature. This evolutionary development has a universal as well as an individual aspect: the Universal develops the grades of its being and the ordered variation of the universality of itself in the series of its evolved forms of being; the individual soul follows the line of this cosmic series and manifests what is prepared in the universality of the Spirit. The universal Man, the cosmic Purusha in humanity, is developing in the human race the power that has grown into humanity from below it and shall yet grow to supermind and spirit and become the Godhead in man who is aware of his true and integral self and the divine universality of his nature. The individual must have followed this line of development; he must have presided over a soul-experience in the lower forms of life before he took up the human evolution: as the One was capable of assuming in its universality these lower forms of the plant and animal, so must the individual, now human, have been capable of assuming them in his previous stages of existence. He

now appears as a human soul, the Spirit accepting the inner and outer form of humanity, but he is not limited by this form any more than he was limited by the plant or animal forms previously assumed by him; he can pass on from it to a greater self-expression in a higher scale of Nature.

To suppose otherwise would be to suppose that the spirit which now presides over the human soul-experience was originally formed by a human mentality and the human body, exists by that and cannot exist apart from it, cannot ever go below or above it. In fact, it would then be reasonable to suppose that it is not immortal but has come into existence by the appearance of the human mind and body in the evolution and would disappear by their disappearance. But body and mind are not the creators of the spirit, the spirit is the creator of the mind and body; it develops these principles out of its being, it is not developed into being out of them, it is not a compound of their elements or a resultant of their meeting. If it appears to evolve out of mind and body, that is because it gradually manifests itself in them and not because it is created by them or exists by them; as it manifests, they are revealed as subordinate terms of its being and are to be finally taken up out of their present imperfection and transformed into visible forms and instruments of the spirit. Our conception of the spirit is of something which is not constituted by name and form, but assumes various forms of body and mind according to the various manifestations of its soul-being. This it does here by a successive evolution; it evolves successive forms and successive strata of consciousness: for it is not bound always to assume one form and no other or to possess one kind of mentality which is its sole possible subjective manifestation. The soul is not bound by the formula of mental humanity: it did not begin with that and will not end with it; it had a prehuman past, it has a superhuman future.

What we see of Nature and of human nature justifies this view of a birth of the individual soul from form to form until it reaches the human level of manifested consciousness which is its instrument for rising to yet higher levels. We see that Nature develops from stage to stage and in each stage takes up its past

and transforms it into stuff of its new development. We see too that human nature is of the same make; all the earth-past is there in it. It has an element of matter taken up by life, an element of life taken up by mind, an element of mind which is being taken up by spirit: the animal is still present in its humanity; the very nature of the human being presupposes a material and a vital stage which prepared his emergence into mind and an animal past which moulded a first element of his complex humanity. And let us not say that this is because material Nature developed by evolution his life and his body and his animal mind, and only afterwards did a soul descend into the form so created: there is a certain truth behind this idea, but not the truth which that formula would suggest. For that supposes a gulf between soul and body, between soul and life, between soul and mind, which does not exist; there is no body without soul, no body that is not itself a form of soul: Matter itself is substance and power of spirit and could not exist if it were anything else, for nothing can exist which is not substance and power of Brahman; and if Matter, then still more clearly and certainly Life and Mind must be that and ensouled by the presence of the Spirit. If Matter and Life had not already been ensouled, man could not have appeared or only as an intervention or an accident, not as a part of the evolutionary order.

We arrive then necessarily at this conclusion that human birth is a term at which the soul must arrive in a long succession of rebirths and that it has had for its previous and preparatory terms in the succession the lower forms of life upon earth; it has passed through the whole chain that life has strung in the physical universe on the basis of the body, the physical principle. Then the farther question arises whether, humanity once attained, this succession of rebirths still continues and, if so, how, by what series or by what alternations. And, first, we have to ask whether the soul, having once arrived at humanity, can go back to the animal life and body, a retrogression which the old popular theories of transmigration have supposed to be an ordinary movement. It seems impossible that it should so go back with any entirety, and for this reason that the transit from animal to

human life means a decisive conversion of consciousness, quite as decisive as the conversion of the vital consciousness of the plant into the mental consciousness of the animal. It is surely impossible that a conversion so decisive made by Nature should be reversed by the soul and the decision of the spirit within her come, as it were, to naught. It could only be possible for human souls, supposing such to exist, in whom the conversion was not decisive, souls that had developed far enough to make, occupy or assume a human body, but not enough to ensure the safety of this assumption, not enough to remain secure in its achievement and faithful to the human type of consciousness. Or at most there might be, supposing certain animal propensities to be vehement enough to demand a separate satisfaction quite of their own kind, a sort of partial rebirth, a loose holding of an animal form by a human soul, with an immediate subsequent reversion to its normal progression. The movement of Nature is always sufficiently complex for us not to deny dogmatically such a possibility, and, if it be a fact, then there may exist this modicum of truth behind the exaggerated popular belief which assumes an animal rebirth of the soul once lodged in man to be quite as normal and possible as a human reincarnation. But whether the animal reversion is possible or not, the normal law must be the recurrence of birth in new human forms for a soul that has once become capable of humanity.

But why a succession of human births and not one alone? For the same reason that has made the human birth itself a culminating point of the past succession, the previous upward series,—it must be so by the very necessity of the spiritual evolution. For the soul has not finished what it has to do by merely developing into humanity; it has still to develop that humanity into its higher possibilities. Obviously, the soul that lodges in a Caribbee or an untaught primitive or an Apache of Paris or an American gangster, has not yet exhausted the necessity of human birth, has not developed all its possibilities or the whole meaning of humanity, has not worked out all the sense of Sachchidananda in the universal Man; neither has the soul lodged in a vitalistic European occupied with dynamic production and vital pleasure

or in an Asiatic peasant engrossed in the ignorant round of the domestic and economic life. We may reasonably doubt whether even a Plato or a Shankara marks the crown and therefore the end of the outflowering of the spirit in man. We are apt to suppose that these may be the limit, because these and others like them seem to us the highest point which the mind and soul of man can reach, but that may be the illusion of our present possibility. There may be a higher or at least a larger possibility which the Divine intends yet to realise in man, and, if so, it is the steps built by these highest souls which were needed to compose the way up to it and to open the gates. At any rate this present highest point at least must be reached before we can write finis on the recurrence of the human birth for the individual. Man is there to move from the ignorance and from the little life which he is in his mind and body to the knowledge and the large divine life which he can compass by the unfolding of the spirit. At least the opening out of the spirit in him, the knowledge of his real self and the leading of the spiritual life must be attained before he can go definitively and for ever elsewhere. There may too be beyond this initial culmination a greater flowering of the spirit in the human life of which we have as yet only the first intimations; the imperfection of Man is not the last word of Nature, but his perfection too is not the last peak of the Spirit.

This possibility becomes a certitude if the present leading principle of the mind as man has developed it, the intellect, is not its highest principle. If mind itself has other powers as yet only imperfectly possessed by the highest types of the human individual, then a prolongation of the line of evolution and consequently of the ascending line of rebirth to embody them is inevitable. If supermind also is a power of consciousness concealed here in the evolution, the line of rebirth cannot stop even there; it cannot cease in its ascent before the mental has been replaced by the supramental nature and an embodied supramental being becomes the leader of terrestrial existence.

This then is the rational and philosophical foundation for a belief in rebirth; it is an inevitable logical conclusion if there exists at the same time an evolutionary principle in the Earth-

Nature and a reality of the individual soul born into evolutionary Nature. If there is no soul, then there can be a mechanical evolution without necessity or significance and birth is only part of this curious but senseless machinery. If the individual is only a temporary formation beginning and ending with the body, then evolution can be a play of the All-Soul or Cosmic Existence mounting through a progression of higher and higher species towards its own utmost possibility in this Becoming or to its highest conscious principle; rebirth does not exist and is not needed as a mechanism of that evolution. Or, if the All-Existence expresses itself in a persistent but illusory individuality, rebirth becomes a possibility or an illusory fact, but it has no evolutionary necessity and is not a spiritual necessity; it is only a means of accentuating and prolonging the illusion up to its utmost time-limit. If there is an individual soul or Purusha not dependent on the body but inhabiting and using it for its purpose, then rebirth begins to be possible, but it is not a necessity if there is no evolution of the soul in Nature: the presence of the individual soul in an individual body may be a passing phenomenon, a single experience without a past here or a future; its past and its future may be elsewhere. But if there is an evolution of consciousness in an evolutionary body and a soul inhabiting the body, a real and conscious individual, then it is evident that it is the progressive experience of that soul in Nature which takes the form of this evolution of consciousness: rebirth is self-evidently a necessary part, the sole possible machinery of such an evolution. It is as necessary as birth itself; for without it birth would be an initial step without a sequel, the starting of a journey without its farther steps and arrival. It is rebirth that gives to the birth of an incomplete being in a body its promise of completeness and its spiritual significance.

Chapter XXI

The Order of the Worlds

Seven are these worlds in which move the life-forces that are hidden within the secret heart as their dwelling-place seven by seven.

*Mundaka Upanishad.*¹

May the Peoples of the five Births accept my sacrifice, those who are born of the Light and worthy of worship; may Earth protect us from earthly evil and the Mid-Region from calamity from the gods. Follow the shining thread spun out across the mid-world, protect the luminous paths built by the thought; weave an inviolate work, become the human being, create the divine race.... Seers of truth are you, sharpen the shining spears with which you cut the way to that which is Immortal; knowers of the secret planes, form them, the steps by which the gods attained to immortality.

*Rig Veda.*²

This is the eternal Tree with its root above and its branches downward; this is Brahman, this is the Immortal; in it are lodged all the worlds and none goes beyond it. This and That are one.

*Katha Upanishad.*³

IF A spiritual evolution of consciousness in the material world and a constant or repeated rebirth of the individual into an earthly body are admitted, the next question that arises is whether this evolutionary movement is something separate and complete in itself or part of a larger universal totality of which the material world is only one province. This question has already its answer implied in the gradations of the involution which precede the evolution and make it possible; for, if that precedence is a fact, there must be worlds or at least planes

¹ II. 1. 8. ² X. 53. 5, 6, 10. ³ II. 3. 1.

of higher being and they must have some connection with the evolution which has been made possible by their existence. It may be that all they do for us is by their effective presence or pressure on the earth-consciousness to liberate the involved principles of life and mind and spirit and enable them to manifest and assert their reign in material Nature. But it would be in the highest degree improbable that the connection and intervention should cease there; there is likely to be a sustained, if veiled, commerce between material life and the life of the other planes of existence. It is necessary now to look more closely into this problem, regard it in itself and determine the nature and limits of this connection and intercommunication, in so far as it affects the theory of evolution and rebirth in material Nature.

The descent of the Soul into the Ignorance can be thought of as an abrupt precipitation or immediate lapse of a pure spiritual being out of the superconscious spiritual Reality into the first inconscience and the subsequent evolving phenomenal life of material Nature. If that were so, there might be the Absolute above and the Inconscient below, with the material world created out of it, and the issue, the return back would then be a similar abrupt or precipitous transit from a material embodied world-being into the transcendent Silence. There would be no intermediate powers or realities other than Matter and Spirit, no other planes than the material, no other worlds than the world of Matter. But this idea is too trenchant and simple a construction and cannot outlive a wider view of the complex nature of existence.

There are, no doubt, several possible originations of cosmic existence by which such an extreme and rigid world-balance-ment could have conceivably come into being. There could have been a conception of this kind and a fiat in an All-Will, or an idea, a movement of the soul towards an egoistic material life of the Ignorance. The eternal individual soul urged by some inexplicable desire arising within it can be supposed to have sought the adventure of the darkness and taken a plunge from its native Light into the depths of a Nescience out of which arose this world of Ignorance; or a collectivity of souls may

have been so moved, the Many: for an individual being cannot constitute a cosmos; a cosmos must be either impersonal or multipersonal or the creation or self-expression of a universal or infinite Being. This desire may have drawn down an All-Soul with it to build a world based upon the power of the Inconscient. If not that, then the eternally omniscient All-Soul itself may have abruptly plunged its self-knowledge into this darkness of the Inconscience, carrying the individual souls within it to begin their upward evolution through an ascending scale of life and consciousness. Or, if the individual is not pre-existent, if we are only a creation of the All-consciousness or a fiction of the phenomenal Ignorance, either creatrix may have conceived all these myriads of individual beings by the evolution of names and forms out of an original indiscriminate Prakriti; the soul would be a temporary product of the indiscriminate stuff of inconscient force-substance which is the first appearance of things in the material universe.

On that supposition, or on any of them, there could be only two planes of existence: on one side there is the material universe created out of the Inconscient by the blind nescience of Force or Nature obedient perhaps to some inner unfelt Self which governs its somnambulist activities; on the other side there is the superconscious One to which we return out of the Inconscience and Ignorance. Or else we may imagine that there is one plane only, the material existence; there is no superconscious apart from the Soul of the material universe. If we find that there are other planes of conscious being and that there already exist other worlds than the material universe, these ideas might become difficult to substantiate; but we can escape from that annulment if we suppose that these worlds have been subsequently created by or for the evolving Soul in the course of its ascent out of the Inconscience. In any of these views the whole cosmos would be an evolution out of the Inconscient, either with the material universe as its sole and sufficient stage and scene or else with an ascending scale of worlds, one evolving out of the other, helping to grade our return to the original Reality. Our own view has been that the cosmos is a self-graded devolution

out of the superconscious Sachchidananda; but in this idea it would be nothing but an evolution of the Inconscience towards some kind of knowledge sufficient to allow, by the annihilation of some primal ignorance or some originating desire, the extinction of a misbegotten soul or an escape out of a mistaken world-adventure.

But such theories either imply a premier importance and originating power of mind or a premier importance of the individual being; both have indeed a great place, but the one eternal Spirit is the original power and the original existence. Idea, conceptively creative,—not the Real-Idea which is Being aware of what is in itself and automatically self-creative by the force of that Truth-awareness,—is a movement of the mind; desire is a movement of life in mind; life and mind then must be pre-existent powers and must have been the determinants of the creation of the material world, and in that case they can equally create worlds of their own supraphysical nature. Or else we must suppose that what acted was not desire in an individual or a universal Mind or Life, but a will in the Spirit,—a will of Being deploying something of itself or of its Consciousness, realising a creative idea or a self-knowledge or an urge of its self-active Force or a turn to a certain formulation of its delight of existence. But if the world has been created, not by the universal Delight of existence, but for the desire of the individual soul, its caprice of an ignorant egoistic enjoyment, then the mental Individual and not the Cosmic Being or a Transcendent Divinity should be the creator and witness of the universe. In the past trend of human thought the individual being has always loomed enormously large in the front plan of things and in the premier dimensions of importance; if these proportions could still be maintained, this origination might conceivably be admitted: for a will towards the life of the Ignorance or an assent to it in the individual Purusha must indeed be part of the operative movement of Consciousness in the involutionary descent of the Spirit into material Nature. But the world cannot be a creation of the individual mind or a theatre erected by it for its own play of consciousness; nor can it have been created solely for

the play and the satisfaction or frustration of the ego. As we awake to a sense of the premier importance of the universal and the dependence of the individual upon it, a theory of this kind becomes an impossibility to our intelligence. The world is too vast in its movement for such an account of its working to be credible; only a cosmic Power or a cosmic Being can be the creator and the upholder of the cosmos and it must have too a cosmic and not only an individual reality, significance or purpose.

Accordingly, this world-creating or participating Individual and its desire or assent to the Ignorance must have been awake before the world at all existed; it must have been there as an element in some supracosmic Superconscious from which it comes and to which it returns out of the life of the ego: we must suppose an original immanence of the Many in the One. It becomes then conceivable that a will or an impetus or a spiritual necessity may have stirred, in some transmundane Infinite, in some of the Many which precipitated them downward and compelled the creation of this world of the Ignorance. But since the One is the premier fact of existence, since the Many depend upon the One, are souls of the One, beings of the Being, this truth must determine also the fundamental principle of the cosmic existence. There we see that the universal precedes the individual, gives it its field, is that in which it exists cosmically even though its origin is in the Transcendence. The individual soul lives here by the All-Soul and depends upon it; the All-Soul very evidently does not exist by the individual or depend upon it: it is not a sum of individual beings, a pluralistic totality created by the conscious life of individuals; if an All-Soul exists, it must be the one Cosmic Spirit supporting the one cosmic Force in its works, and it repeats here, modified in the terms of cosmic existence, the primary relation of the dependence of the Many on the One. It is inconceivable that the Many should have independently or by a departure from the One Will desired cosmic existence and forced by their desire the supreme Sachchidananda to descend unwillingly or tolerantly into the Nescience; that would be to reverse altogether the true dependence of things. If the world was directly originated by the

will or the spiritual impetus of the Many, which is possible and even probable in a certain sense, there must still have been first a Will in Sachchidananda to that end; otherwise the impetus — translating here the All-Will into desire, for what becomes desire in the ego is Will in the Spirit, — could not have arisen anywhere. The One, the All-Soul, by whom alone the consciousness of the Individual is determined, must first accept the veil of inconscient Nature before the Individual too can put on the veil of the Ignorance in the material universe.

But once we admit this Will of the supreme and cosmic Being as the indispensable condition of the existence of the material universe, it is no longer possible to accept Desire as the creative principle; for desire has no place in the Supreme or in the All-being. It can have nothing to desire; desire is the result of incompleteness, of insufficiency, of something that is not possessed or enjoyed and which the being seeks for possession or enjoyment. A supreme and universal Being can have the delight of its all-existence, but to that delight desire must be foreign, — it can only be the appanage of the incomplete evolutionary ego which is a product of the cosmic action. Moreover, if the All-consciousness of the Spirit has willed to plunge into the inconscience of Matter, it must be because that was a possibility of its self-creation or manifestation. But a sole material universe and an evolution there out of inconscience into spiritual consciousness cannot be the one solitary and limited possibility of manifestation of the All-being. That could only be if Matter were the original power and form of manifested being and the spirit had no other choice, could not manifest except through Inconscience into Matter as a basis. This would bring us to a materialistic evolutionary Pantheism; we would have to regard the beings who people the universe as souls of the One, souls born here in It and evolving upward through inanimate, animate and mentally developed forms till the recovery of their complete and undivided life in the superconscious Pantheos and its cosmic Oneness would intervene as the end and goal of their evolution. In that case, everything has evolved here; life, mind, soul have arisen out of the One in the material universe by the force of its

hidden being, and everything will fulfil itself here in the material universe. There is then no separate plane of the Superconscious, for the Superconscious is here only, not elsewhere; there are no supraphysical worlds; there is no action of supraphysical principles exterior to Matter, no pressure of an already existent Mind and Life upon the material plane.

It has then to be asked what are mind and life, and it may be answered that they are products of Matter or of the Energy in Matter. Or else they are forms of consciousness that arise as results of an evolution from Inconscience to Superconsciousness: consciousness itself is only a bridge of transition; it is spirit becoming partially aware of itself before plunging into its normal trance of luminous superconsciousness. Even if there proved to be planes of larger life and mind, they would only be subjective constructions of this intermediary consciousness erected on the way to that spiritual culmination. But the difficulty here is that mind and life are too different from Matter to be products of Matter; Matter itself is a product of Energy, and mind and life must be regarded as superior products of the same Energy. If we admit the existence of a cosmic Spirit, the Energy must be spiritual; life and mind must be independent products of a spiritual energy and themselves powers of manifestation of the Spirit. It then becomes irrational to suppose that Spirit and Matter alone exist, that they are the two confronting realities and that Matter is the sole possible basis of the manifestation of spirit; the idea of a sole material world becomes immediately untenable. Spirit must be capable of basing its manifestation on the Mind principle or on the Life principle and not only on the principle of Matter; there can then be and logically there should be worlds of Mind and worlds of Life; there may even be worlds founded on a subtler and more plastic, more conscious principle of Matter.

Three questions then arise, interrelated or interdependent: — whether there is any evidence or any true intimation of the existence of such other worlds; whether, if they exist, they are of the nature we have indicated, arising or descending in the order and within the rationale of a hierarchical series between Matter

and Spirit; if that is their scale of being, are they otherwise quite independent and unconnected, or is there a relation and interaction of the higher worlds on the world of Matter? It is a fact that mankind almost from the beginning of its existence or so far back as history or tradition can go, has believed in the existence of other worlds and in the possibility of communication between their powers and beings and the human race. In the last rationalistic period of human thought from which we are emerging, this belief has been swept aside as an age-long superstition; all evidence or intimations of its truth have been rejected *a priori* as fundamentally false and undeserving of inquiry because incompatible with the axiomatic truth that only Matter and the material world and its experiences are real; all other experience purporting to be real must be either a hallucination or an imposture or a subjective result of superstitious credulity and imagination or else, if a fact, then other than what it purported to be and explicable by a physical cause: no evidence could be accepted of such a fact unless it is objective and physical in its character; even if the fact be very apparently supraphysical, it cannot be accepted as such unless it is totally unexplainable by any other imaginable hypothesis or conceivable conjecture.

It should be evident that this demand for physically valid proof of a supraphysical fact is irrational and illogical; it is an irrelevant attitude of the physical mind which assumes that only the objective and physical is fundamentally real and puts aside all else as merely subjective. A supraphysical fact may impinge on the physical world and produce physical results; it may even produce an effect on our physical senses and become manifest to them, but that cannot be its invariable action and most normal character or process. Ordinarily, it must produce a direct effect or a tangible impression on our mind and our life-being, which are the parts of us that are of the same order as itself, and can only indirectly and through them, if at all, influence the physical world and physical life. If it objectivises itself, it must be to a subtler sense in us and only derivatively to the outward physical sense. This derivative objectivisation is certainly

possible; if there is an association of the action of the subtle body and its sense-organisation with the action of the material body and its physical organs, then the supraphysical can become outwardly sensible to us. This is what happens, for example, with the faculty called second sight; it is the process of all those psychic phenomena which seem to be seen and heard by the outer senses and are not sensed inwardly through representative or interpretative or symbolic images which bear the stamp of an inner experience or have an evident character of formations in a subtle substance. There can, then, be various kinds of evidence of the existence of other planes of being and communication with them; objectivisation to the outer sense, subtle-sense contacts, mind contacts, life contacts, contacts through the subliminal in special states of consciousness exceeding our ordinary range. Our physical mind is not the whole of us nor, even though it dominates almost the whole of our surface consciousness, the best or greatest part of us; reality cannot be restricted to a sole field of this narrowness or to the dimensions known within its rigid circle.

If it be said that subjective experience or subtle-sense images can easily be deceptive, since we have no recognised method or standard of verification and a too great tendency to admit the extraordinary and miraculous or supernatural at its face value, this may be admitted: but error is not the prerogative of the inner subjective or subliminal parts of us, it is also an appanage of the physical mind and its objective methods and standards, and such liability to error cannot be a reason for shutting out a large and important domain of experience; it is a reason rather for scrutinising it and finding out in it its own true standards and its characteristic, appropriate and valid means of verification. Our subjective being is the basis of our objective experience, and it is not probable that only its physical objectivisations are true and the rest unreliable. The subliminal consciousness, when rightly interrogated, is a witness to truth and its testimony is confirmed again and again even in the physical and the objective field; that testimony cannot, then, be disregarded when it calls our attention to things within us or to things that belong to planes

or worlds of a supraphysical experience. At the same time belief by itself is not evidence of reality; it must base itself on something more valid before one can accept it. It is evident that the beliefs of the past are not a sufficient basis for knowledge, even though they cannot be entirely neglected: for a belief is a mental construction and may be a wrong building; it may often answer to some inner intimation and then it has a value, but, as often as not, it disfigures the intimation, usually by a translation into terms familiar to our physical and objective experience, such as that which converted the hierarchy of the planes into a physical hierarchy or geographical space-extension, turned the rarer heights of subtle substance into material heights and placed the abodes of the gods on the summits of physical mountains. All truth supraphysical or physical must be founded not on mental belief alone, but on experience,—but in each case experience must be of the kind, physical, subliminal or spiritual, which is appropriate to the order of the truths into which we are empowered to enter; their validity and significance must be scrutinised, but according to their own law and by a consciousness which can enter into them and not according to the law of another domain or by a consciousness which is capable only of truths of another order; so alone can we be sure of our steps and enlarge firmly our sphere of knowledge.

If we scrutinise the intimations of supraphysical world-realities which we receive in our inner experience and compare with it the account of such intimations that has continued to come down to us from the beginnings of human knowledge, and if we attempt an interpretation and a summarised order, we shall find that what this inner experience most intimately conveys to us is the existence and action upon us of larger planes of being and consciousness than the purely material plane, with its restricted existence and action, of which we are aware in our narrow terrestrial formula. These domains of larger being are not altogether remote and separate from our own being and consciousness; for, though they subsist in themselves and have their own play and process and formulations of existence and experience, yet at the same time they penetrate and envelop the

physical plane with their invisible presence and influences, and their powers seem to be here in the material world itself behind its action and objects. There are two main orders of experience in our contact with them; one is purely subjective, though in its subjectivity sufficiently vivid and palpable, the other is more objective. In the subjective order, we find that what shapes itself to us as a life-intention, life-impulse, life-formulation here, already exists in a larger, more subtle, more plastic range of possibilities, and these pre-existent forces and formations are pressing upon us to realise themselves in the physical world also; but only a part succeeds in getting through and even that emerges partially in a form and circumstance more proper to the system of terrestrial law and sequence. This precipitation takes place, normally, without our knowledge; we are not aware of the action of these Powers, Forces and Influences upon us, but take them as formations of our own life and mind, even when our reason or will repudiates them and strives not to be mastered: but when we go inwards away from the restricted surface consciousness and develop a subtler sense and deeper awareness, we begin to get an intimation of the origin of these movements and are able to watch their action and process, to accept or reject or modify, to allow them passage and use of our mind and will and our life and members or refuse it. In the same way we become aware of larger domains of mind, a play, experience, formation of a greater plasticity, a teeming profusion of all possible mental formulations, and we feel their contacts with us and their powers and influences acting upon our parts of mind in the same occult manner as those others that act upon our parts of life. This kind of experience is, primarily, of a purely subjective character, a pressure of ideas, suggestions, emotional formations, impulsions to sensation, action, dynamic experience. However large a part of this pressure may be traced to our own subliminal self or to the siege of universal Mind-forces or Life-forces belonging to our own world, there is an element which bears the stamp of another origin, an insistent supraterrestrial character.

But the contacts do not stop here: for there is also an

opening of our mind and life parts to a great range of subjective-objective experiences in which these planes present themselves no longer as extensions of subjective being and consciousness, but as worlds; for the experiences there are organised as they are in our own world, but on a different plan, with a different process and law of action and in a substance which belongs to a supraphysical Nature. This organisation includes, as on our earth, the existence of beings who have or take forms, manifest themselves or are naturally manifested in an embodying substance, but a substance other than ours, a subtle substance tangible only to subtle sense, a supraphysical form-matter. These worlds and beings may have nothing to do with ourselves and our life, they may exercise no action upon us; but often also they enter into secret communication with earth-existence, obey or embody and are the intermediaries and instruments of the cosmic powers and influences of which we have a subjective experience, or themselves act by their own initiation upon the terrestrial world's life and motives and happenings. It is possible to receive help or guidance or harm or misguidance from these beings; it is possible even to become subject to their influence, to be possessed by their invasion or domination, to be instrumentalised by them for their good or evil purpose. At times the progress of earthly life seems to be a vast field of battle between supraphysical Forces of either character, those that strive to uplift, encourage and illumine and those that strive to deflect, depress or prevent or even shatter our upward evolution or the soul's self-expression in the material universe. Some of these Beings, Powers or Forces are such that we think of them as divine; they are luminous, benignant or powerfully helpful: there are others that are Titanic, gigantic or demoniac, inordinate Influences, instigators or creators often of vast and formidable inner upheavals or of actions that overpass the normal human measure. There may also be an awareness of influences, presences, beings that do not seem to belong to other worlds beyond us but are here as a hidden element behind the veil in terrestrial nature. As contact with the supraphysical is possible, a contact can also take place subjective or objective—or at least objectivised—

between our own consciousness and the consciousness of other once embodied beings who have passed into a supraphysical status in these other regions of existence. It is possible also to pass beyond a subjective contact or a subtle-sense perception and, in certain subliminal states of consciousness, to enter actually into other worlds and know something of their secrets. It is the more objective order of other-worldly experience that seized most the imagination of mankind in the past, but it was put by popular belief into a gross-objective statement which unduly assimilated these phenomena to those of the physical world with which we are familiar; for it is the normal tendency of our mind to turn everything into forms or symbols proper to its own kind and terms of experience.

This has always been, put into its most generalised terms, the normal range and character of other-worldly belief and experience in all periods of the past of the race; names and forms differ, but the general features have been strikingly similar in all countries and ages. What exact value are we to put upon these persistent beliefs or upon this mass of supernormal experience? It is not possible for anyone who has had these contacts with any intimacy and not only by scattered abnormal accidents, to put them aside as mere superstition or hallucination; for they are too insistent, real, effective, organic in their pressure, too constantly confirmed by their action and results to be so flung aside: an appreciation, an interpretation, a mental organisation of this side of our capacity of experience is indispensable.

One explanation which can be put forward is that man himself creates the supraphysical worlds which he inhabits or thinks he inhabits after death, creates the gods, as ran the ancient phrase,—it is claimed even that God himself was created by man, was a myth of his consciousness, and has now been abolished by man! All these things then may be a sort of myth of the developing consciousness in which it is able to dwell, a captive in its own buildings, and by a kind of realising dynamisation maintain itself in its own imaginations. But pure imaginations they are not, they can only be so treated by us so long as the things they represent, however incorrectly, are not

part of our own experience. Yet there may conceivably be myths and imaginations that are used by the power of the creative Consciousness-Force to materialise its own idea-forces; these potent images may take form and body, endure in some subtly materialised world of thought and react on their creator: if so, we might suppose that the other worlds are buildings of this character. But if that were so, if a subjective consciousness can thus create worlds and beings, it might well be that the objective world also is a myth of Consciousness or even of our consciousness, or that Consciousness itself is a myth of the original Nescience. Thus, on this line of thinking, we swing back towards a view of the universe in which all things assume a certain hue of unreality except the all-productive Inconscience out of which they are created, the Ignorance which creates them and, it may be, a superconscious or inconscient impersonal Being into whose indifference all finally disappears or goes back and ceases there.

But we have no proof and there is no likelihood that man's mind can create in this way a world where none was before, create *in vacuo* without a substance to build in or build on, though it may well be that it can add something to a world already made. Mind is indeed a potent agency, more potent than we readily imagine; it can make formations which effectuate themselves in our own or others' consciousness and lives and even have an effect on inconscient Matter; but an entirely original creation in the void is beyond its possibilities. What we can rather hazard is that as it grows, man's mind enters into relation with new ranges of being and consciousness not at all created by him, new to him, already pre-existent in the All-Existence. In his increasing inner experience he opens up new planes of being in himself; as the secret centres of his consciousness dissolve their knots, he becomes able through them to conceive of those larger realms, to receive direct influences from them, to enter into them, to image them in his terrestrial mind and inner sense. He does create images, symbol-forms, reflective shapes of them with which his mind can deal; in this sense only he creates the Divine Image that he worships, creates the forms of the gods, creates new planes and worlds within him, and through these images the real worlds and

powers that overtop our existence are able to take possession of the consciousness in the physical world, to pour into it their potencies, to transform it with the light of their higher being. But all this is not a creation of the higher worlds of being; it is a revelation of them to the consciousness of the soul on the material plane as it develops out of the Nescience. It is a creation of their forms here by a reception of their powers; there is an enlargement of our subjective life on this plane by the discovery of its true relation with higher planes of its own being from which it was separated by the veil of the material Nescience. This veil exists because the soul in the body has put behind it these greater possibilities in order that it might concentrate exclusively its consciousness and force upon its primary work in this physical world of being; but that primary work can have a sequel only by the veil being at least partially lifted or else made penetrable so that the higher planes of mind, life and spirit may pour their significances into human existence.

It is possible to suppose that these higher planes and worlds have been created subsequently to the manifestation of the material cosmos, to aid the evolution or in some sense as a result of it. This is a notion which the physical mind, starting in all its ideas from the material universe as the one thing which it knows, has analysed and can deal with in a beginning of mastery, might easily tend to accept, if obliged to admit a supraphysical existence; it could then keep the material, the Inconscience, as the starting-point and support of all being, as it is undoubtedly the starting-point for us of the evolutionary movement of which the material world is the scene. Our mind could still keep matter and material force as the first existence,—so accepted and cherished by it because it is the first thing that it knows, the one thing that is always securely present and knowable,—and maintain the spiritual and the supraphysical in a dependence upon the assured foundation in Matter.⁴ But how then were these

⁴ There are certain expressions in the Rig Veda which seem to embody this view. Earth (the material principle) is spoken of as the foundation of all the worlds or the seven worlds are described as the seven planes of Earth.

other worlds created, by what force, by what instrumentality? It might be the Life and Mind developing out of the Inconscient which have at the same time developed these other worlds or planes in the subliminal consciousness of the living beings who appear in it. To the subliminal being in life and after death,—for it is the inner being that survives the death of the body,—these worlds might be real because sensible to its wider range of consciousness; it would move in them with that sense of reality, derivative perhaps but convincing, and it would send up its experience of them as belief and imagination to the surface being. This is a possible account, if we accept Consciousness as the real creative Power or agent and all things as formations of consciousness; but it would not give to the supraphysical planes of being the unsubstantiality or less palpable reality which the physical mind would like to attach to them; they would have the same reality in themselves as the physical world or plane of physical experience has in its own order.

If in this or some other way the higher worlds were developed subsequently to the creation of the material world, the primary creation, by a larger secret evolution out of the Inconscient, it must have been done by some All-Soul in its emergence, by a process of which we can have no knowledge and for the purpose of the evolution here, as adjuncts to it or as its larger consequences, so that life and mind and spirit might be able to move in fields of a freer scope with a repercussion of these greater powers and experiences on the material self-expression. But against this hypothesis there stands the fact that we find these higher worlds in our vision and experience of them to be in no way based upon the material universe, in no way its results, but rather greater terms of being, larger and freer ranges of consciousness, and all the action of the material plane looks more like the result and not the origin of these greater terms, derivatory from them, even partly dependent on them in its evolutionary endeavour. Immense ranges of powers, influences, phenomena descend covertly upon us from the overmind and the higher mental and vital ranges, but of these only a part, a selection, as it were, or restricted number can stage and realise

themselves in the order of the physical world; the rest await their time and proper circumstance for revelation in physical term and form, for their part in the terrestrial⁵ evolution which is at the same time an evolution of all the powers of the spirit.

This character of the other worlds defeats all our attempts to give the premier importance to our own plane of being and to our own part in the mundane manifestation. We do not create God as a myth of our consciousness, but are instruments for a progressive manifestation of the Divine in the material being. We do not create the gods, his powers, but rather such divinity as we manifest is the partial reflection and the shaping here of eternal godheads. We do not create the higher planes, but are intermediaries by which they reveal their light, power, beauty in whatever form and scope can be given to them by Nature-force on the material plane. It is the pressure of the life-world which enables life to evolve and develop here in the forms we already know; it is that increasing pressure which drives it to aspire in us to a greater revelation of itself and will one day deliver the mortal from his subjection to the narrow limitations of his present incompetent and restricting physicality. It is the pressure of the mind-world which evolves and develops mind here and helps us to find a leverage for our mental self-uplifting and expansion, so that we may hope to enlarge continually our self of intelligence and even to break the prison walls of our matter-bound physical mentality. It is the pressure of the supramental and spiritual worlds which is preparing to develop here the manifest power of the spirit and by it open our being on the physical plane into the freedom and infinity of the superconscient Divine; that contact, that pressure can alone liberate from the apparent Inconscience, which was our starting-point, the all-conscious Godhead concealed in us. In this order of things our human consciousness is the instrument, the intermediary; it is the point in the development of light and power out of the

⁵ Necessarily, by terrestrial we do not mean this one earth and its period of duration, but use earth in the wider root-sense of the Vedantic Prithivi, the earth-principle creating habitations of physical form for the soul.

Inconscience at which liberation becomes possible: a greater role than this we cannot attribute to it, but this is great enough, for it makes our humanity all-important for the supreme purpose of evolutionary Nature.

At the same time there are some elements in our subliminal experience which raise a point of question against any invariable priority of the other worlds to the material existence. One such indication is that in the vision of after-death experience there is a persistent tradition of residence in conditions which seem to be a supraphysical prolongation of earth-conditions, earth-nature, earth-experience. Another is that, in the life-worlds especially, we find formulations which seem to resemble the inferior movements of earth-existence; here are already embodied the principles of darkness, falsehood, incapacity and evil which we have supposed to be consequent upon the evolution out of the material Inconscience. It seems even to be the fact that the vital worlds are the natural home of the Powers that most disturb human life; this is indeed logical, for it is through our vital being that they sway us and they must therefore be powers of a larger and more powerful life-existence. The descent of Mind and Life into evolution need not have created any such untoward developments of the limitation of being and consciousness: for this descent is in its nature a limitation of knowledge; existence and cognition and delight of being confine themselves in a lesser truth and good and beauty and its inferior harmony, and move according to that law of a narrower light, but in such a movement darkness and suffering and evil are not obligatory phenomena. If we find them existing in these worlds of other mind and other life, even though not pervading it but only occupying their separate province, we must either conclude that they have come into existence by a projection out of the inferior evolution, upward from below, by something in the subliminal parts of Nature bursting there into a larger formation of the evil created here, or that they were already created as part of a parallel gradation to the involutionary descent, a gradation forming a stair for evolutionary ascension towards Spirit just as the involutionary was a stair of the descent of the

Spirit. In the latter hypothesis the ascending gradation might have a double purpose. For it would contain pre-formations of the good and evil that must evolve in the earth as part of the struggle necessary for the evolutionary growth of the Soul in Nature; these would be formations existing for themselves, for their own independent satisfaction, formations that would present the full type of these things, each in its separate nature, and at the same time they would exercise on evolutionary beings their characteristic influence.

These worlds of a larger life would then hold in themselves both the more luminous and the darker formations of our world's life in a medium in which they could arrive freely at their independent expression, their own type's full freedom and natural completeness and harmony for good or for evil,—if indeed that distinction applies in these ranges,—a completeness and independence impossible here in our existence where all is mingled in the complex interaction necessary to the field of a many-sided evolution leading towards a final integration. For we find what we call false, dark or evil seems there to have a truth of its own and to be entirely content with its own type because it possesses that in a full expression which creates in it a sense of a satisfied power of its own being, an accord, a complete adaptation of all its circumstances to its principle of existence; it enjoys there its own consciousness, its own self-power, its own delight of being, obnoxious to our minds but to itself full of the joy of satisfied desire. Those life impulses which are to earth-nature inordinate and out of measure and appear here as perverse and abnormal, find in their own province of being an independent fulfilment and an unrestricted play of their type and principle. What is to us divine or titanic, Rakshasic, demoniac and therefore supernatural, is, each in its own domain, normal to itself and gives to the beings that embody these things the feeling of self-nature and the harmony of their own principle. Discord itself, struggle, incapacity, suffering enter into a certain kind of life-satisfaction which would feel itself baulked or deficient without them. When these powers are seen in their isolated working, building their own life-edifices, as they do in those secret worlds

where they dominate, we perceive more clearly their origin and reason of existence and the reason also for the hold they have on human life and the attachment of man to his own imperfections, to his life-drama of victory and failure, happiness and suffering, laughter and tears, sin and virtue. Here on earth these things exist in an unsatisfied and therefore unsatisfactory and obscure state of struggle and mixture, but there reveal their secret and their motive of being because they are there established in their native power and full form of nature in their own world and their own exclusive atmosphere. Man's heavens and hells or worlds of light and worlds of darkness, however imaginative in their building, proceed from a perception of these powers existing in their own principle and throwing their influences on him in life from a beyond-life which provides the elements of his evolutionary existence.

In the same way as the powers of Life are self-founded, perfect and full in a greater Life beyond us, so too the powers of Mind, its ideas and principles that influence our earth-being, are found to have in the greater Mind-world their own field of fullness of self-nature, while here in human existence they throw out only partial formations which have much difficulty in establishing themselves because of their meeting and mixture with other powers and principles; this meeting, this mixture curbs their completeness, alloys their purity, disputes and defeats their influence. These other worlds, then, are not evolutionary, but typal; but it is one though not the sole reason of their existence that they provide things that must arise in the involutionary manifestation as well as things thrown up in the evolution with a field of satisfaction of their own significance where they can exist in their own right; this established condition is a base from which their functions and workings can be cast as elements into the complex process of evolutionary Nature.

If we look from this point of view at man's traditional accounts of other-worldly existence, we shall find that mostly they point to worlds of a larger life liberated from the restrictions and imperfections or incompletenesses of life in earth-nature. These accounts are evidently built largely by imagination, but

there is an element also of intuition and divination, a feeling of what life can be and surely is in some domain of its manifested or its realisable nature; there is also an element of true subliminal contact and experience. But the mind of man translates what he sees or receives or contacts from other-nature into figures proper to his own consciousness; they are his translations of supraphysical realities into his own significant forms and images and through these forms and images he enters into communication with the realities and can make them to a certain degree present and effective. The experience of an after-death continuance of a modified earth-life may be explained as due to this kind of translation; but it is also explainable partly as the creation of a subjective post-mortual state in which he still lives in figures of habitual experience before he enters into other-worldly realities, partly as a passage through life-worlds where the type of things expresses itself in formations originative of those to which he was attached in his earthly body or akin to them and therefore exercises a natural attraction on the vital being after its exit from the body. But, apart from these subtler life-states, the traditional accounts of other-worldly existence contain, though as a rarer more elevated element not included in the popular notion of these things, a higher grade of states of existence which are clearly of a mental and not a vital character and others founded on some spiritual-mental principle; these higher principles are formulated in states of being into which our inner experience can rise or the soul enter. The principle of gradation we have accepted is therefore justified provided we recognise that it is one way of organising our experience and that other ways proceeding from other view-points are possible. For a classification can always be valid from the principle and view-point adopted by it while from other principles and viewpoints another classification of the same things can be equally valid. But for our purpose the system we have chosen is of the greatest value because it is fundamental and answers to a truth of the manifestation which is of the utmost practical importance; it helps us to understand our own constituted existence and the course of the involution and the evolutionary motion of Nature.

At the same time we see that the other worlds are not things quite apart from the material universe and earth-nature, but penetrate and envelop it with their influences and have on it a secret incidence of formative and directive force which is not easily calculable. This organisation of our other-worldly knowledge and experience supplies us with the clue to the nature and lines of action of this incidence.

The existence and influence of other worlds are a fact of primary importance for the possibilities and for the scope of our evolution in terrestrial Nature. For if the physical universe were the only field of manifestation of the infinite Reality and at the same time the field of its whole manifestation, we should have to suppose that, since all the principles of its being from Matter to Spirit are entirely involved in the apparently inconscient Force which is the basis of the first workings of this universe, they are being evolved by it here completely and here solely, without any other aid or pressure except that of the secret Superconsciousness within it. There would then be a system of things in which the principle of Matter must always remain the first principle, the essential and original determining condition of manifested existence. Spirit might indeed in the end arrive to a limited extent at its natural domination; it might make its basis of physical matter a more elastic instrument not altogether prohibitive of the action of its own highest law and nature or opposed to that action, as it now is in its inelastic resistance. But Spirit would always be dependent upon Matter for its field and its manifestation; it could have no other field: it could not get outside it to another kind of manifestation; and within it also it could not very well liberate any other principle of its being into sovereignty over the material foundation; Matter would remain the one persistent determinant of its manifestation. Life could not become dominant and determinative, Mind could not become the master and creator; their boundaries of capacity would be fixed by the capacities of Matter, which they might enlarge or modify but would not be able to transform radically or liberate. There would be no place for any free and full manifestation of any power of the being, all would be limited

for ever by the conditions of an obscuring material formation. Spirit, Mind, Life would have no native field or complete scope of their own characteristic power and principle. It is not easy to believe in the inevitability of this self-limitation if Spirit is the creator and these principles have an independent existence and are not products, results or phenomena of the energy of Matter.

But, given the fact that the infinite Reality is free in the play of its consciousness, it is not bound to involve itself in the nescience of Matter before it can at all manifest. It is possible for it to create just the contrary order of things, a world in which the unity of spiritual being is the matrix and first condition of any formation or action, the Energy at work is a self-aware spiritual existence in movement, and all its names and forms are a self-conscious play of the spiritual unity. Or it might be an order in which the Spirit's innate power of conscious Force or Will would realise freely and directly its own possibilities in itself and not, as here, through the restricting medium of the Life-Force in matter; that realisation would be at once the first principle of the manifestation and the object of all its free and blissful action. It might be an order, again, in which the free play of an infinite mutual self-delight in a multiplicity of beings conscious not only of their concealed or underlying eternal unity but of their present joy of oneness would be the object; in such a system the action of the principle of self-existent Bliss would be the first principle and the universal condition. Again, it might be a world-order in which the Supermind would be the dominant principle from the beginning; the nature of the manifestation would then be a multiplicity of beings finding through the free and luminous play of their divine individuality all the manifold joy of their difference in oneness.

Nor need the series stop here: for we observe that with us Mind is hampered by Life in Matter and finds all the difficulty possible in dominating the resistance of these two different powers and that Life itself is similarly restricted by the mortality, the inertia and the instability of Matter; but evidently there can be a world-order in which neither of these two disabilities forms part of the first conditions of existence. There is the possibility

of a world in which Mind would be from the first dominant, free to work upon its own substance or matter as a quite plastic material, or where Matter would be quite evidently the result of the universal Mind-Force working itself out in life. It is that even here in reality; but here the Mind-Force is involved from the beginning, for a long time subconscious, and, even when it has emerged, never in free possession of itself, but subject to its encasing material, while there it would be in possession of itself and master of its material, which would be much more subtle and elastic than in a predominantly physical universe. So too Life might have its own world-order where it would be sovereign, able to deploy its own more elastic and freely variable desires and tendencies, not menaced at every moment by disintegrating forces and therefore occupied chiefly with the care of self-preservation and restricted in its play by this state of precarious tension which limits its instincts of free formation, free self-gratification and free adventure. The separate dominance of each principle of being is an eternal possibility in the manifestation of being,—given always that they are principles distinct in their dynamic power and mode of working, even though one in original substance.

That could make no difference if all this were only a philosophical possibility or a potentiality in the being of Sachchidananda which it never realises or has not yet realised, or, if realised, has not brought within the scope of the consciousness of beings living in the physical universe. But all our spiritual and psychic experience bears affirmative witness, brings us always a constant and, in its main principles, an invariable evidence of the existence of higher worlds, freer planes of existence. Not having bound ourselves down, like so much of modern thought, to the dogma that only physical experience or experience based upon the physical sense is true, the analysis of physical experience by the reason alone verifiable, and all else only result of physical experience and physical existence and anything beyond this an error, self-delusion and hallucination, we are free to accept this evidence and to admit the reality of these planes. We see that they are, practically, different harmonies from the harmony of the

physical universe; they occupy, as the word "plane" suggests, a different level in the scale of being and adopt a different system and ordering of its principles. We need not inquire, for our present purpose, whether they coincide in time and space with our own world or move in a different field of space and in another stream of time,—in either case it is in a more subtle substance and with other movements. All that directly concerns us is to know whether they are different universes, each complete in itself and in no way meeting, intercrossing or affecting the others, or are rather different scales of one graded and interwoven system of being, parts therefore of one complex universal system. The fact that they can enter into the field of our mental consciousness would naturally suggest the validity of the second alternative, but it would not by itself be altogether conclusive. But what we find is that these higher planes are actually at every moment acting upon and in communication with our own plane of being, although this action is naturally not present to our ordinary waking or outer consciousness, because that is for the most part limited to a reception and utilisation of the contacts of the physical world: but the moment we either go back into our subliminal being or enlarge our waking consciousness beyond the scope of the physical contacts, we become aware of something of this higher action. We find even that the human being can project himself partially into these higher planes under certain conditions, even while in the body; *a fortiori* must he be able to do it when out of the body, and to do it then completely, since there is no longer the disabling condition of the physical life bound down to the body. The consequences of this relation and this power of transference are of immense importance. On the one side they immediately justify, at any rate as an actual possibility, the ancient tradition of at least a temporary sojourn of the human conscious being in other worlds than the physical after the dissolution of the physical body. On the other side they open to us the possibility of an action of the higher planes on the material existence which can liberate the powers they represent, the powers of life, mind and spirit for the evolutionary intention

inherent within Nature by the very fact of their embodiment in Matter.

These worlds are not in their original creation subsequent in order to the physical universe but prior to it,—prior, if not in time, in their consequential sequence. For even if there is an ascending as well as a descending gradation, this ascending gradation must be in its first nature a provision for the evolutionary emergence in Matter, a formative power for its endeavour, contributing to it helpful and adverse elements, and not a mere consequence of the terrestrial evolution; for that is neither a rational probability nor has it a spiritual or dynamic and pragmatic sense. In other words, the higher worlds have not come into being by a pressure from the lower physical universe,—let us say, from Sachchidananda in the physical Inconscience, or else by the urge of his being as it emerges from the Inconscience into life and mind and spirit and experiences the necessity of creating worlds or planes in which those principles shall have a freer play and in which the human soul may strengthen its vital, mental or spiritual tendencies. Still less are they the creations of the human soul itself, whether its dreams or the result of the constant self-projections of mankind in its dynamic and creative being beyond the limits of the physical consciousness. The only thing that man clearly creates in this direction is the reflex images of these planes in his own embodied consciousness and the fitness of his own soul to respond to them, to become aware of them, to participate consciously in the interweaving of their influences with the action of the physical plane. He may indeed contribute the results or projections of his own higher vital and mental action to the action of these planes: but, if so, these projections are, after all, only a return of the higher planes upon themselves, a return from the earth of their powers which have come down from them to the earth-mind, since this higher vital and mental action is itself the result of influences transmitted from above. It is possible also that he can create a certain kind of subjective annexe to these supraphysical planes, or at least to the lower of them, environments of a half-unreal character which are rather self-created envelopes of his conscious mind and life than true

worlds; they are the reflections of his own being, an artificial environment corresponding to his attempt during life to image these other worlds,—heavens and hells projected by the image-creating faculty in his human power of conscious being. But neither of these two contributions at all means a total creation of a real plane of being founded and acting on its own separate principle.

These planes or systems are then at least coeval and coexistent with that which presents itself to us as the physical universe. We have been led to conclude that the development of life, mind and spirit in the physical being presupposes their existence; for these powers are developed here by two co-operating forces, an upward-tending force from below, an upward-drawing and downward-pressing force from above. For there is the necessity in the Inconscious of bringing out what is latent within it, and there is the pressure of the superior principles in the higher planes which not only aids this general necessity to realise itself, but may very largely determine the special ways in which it is eventually realised. It is this upward-drawing action and this pressure, this insistence from above, which explain the constant influence of the spiritual, mental and vital worlds upon the physical plane. It is evident that, given a complex universe and seven principles interwoven in every part of its system and naturally therefore drawn to act upon and respond to each other wherever they can at all get at one another, such an action, such a constant pressure and influence, is an inevitable consequence, must be inherent in the very nature of the manifested universe.

A secret continuous action of the higher powers and principles from their own planes upon terrestrial being and nature through the subliminal self, which is itself a projection from those planes into the world born of the Inconscience, must have an effect and a significance. Its first effect has been the liberation of life and mind out of Matter; its last effect has been to assist the emergence of a spiritual consciousness, a spiritual will and spiritual sense of existence in the terrestrial being so that he is no longer solely preoccupied with his outermost life or with that and mental pursuits and interests, but has learned to look

within, to discover his inner being, his spiritual self, to aspire to overpass earth and her limitations. As he grows more and more inward, his boundaries mental, vital, spiritual begin to broaden, the bonds that held life, mind, soul to their first limitations loosen or snap, and man the mental being begins to have a glimpse of a larger kingdom of self and world closed to the first earth-life. No doubt, so long as he lives mainly on his surface, he can only build a sort of superstructure ideal and imaginative and ideative upon the ground of his normal narrow existence. But if he makes the inward movement which his own highest vision has held up before him as his greatest spiritual necessity, then he will find there in his inner being a larger consciousness, a larger life. An action from within and an action from above can overcome the predominance of the material formula, diminish and finally put an end to the power of the Inconscience, reverse the order of the consciousness, substitute the spirit for Matter as his conscious foundation of being and liberate its higher powers to their complete and characteristic expression in the life of the soul embodied in Nature.

Chapter XXII

Rebirth and Other Worlds; Karma, the Soul and Immortality

He passes in his departure from this world to the physical Self; he passes to the Self of life; he passes to the Self of mind; he passes to the Self of knowledge; he passes to the Self of bliss; he moves through these worlds at will.

*Taittiriya Upanishad.*¹

They say indeed that the conscious being is made of desire. But of whatsoever desire he comes to be, he comes to be of that will, and of whatever will he comes to be, he does that action, and whatever his action, to (the result of) that he reaches. . . . Adhered to by his Karma,² he goes in his subtle body to wherever his mind cleaves, then, coming to the end of his Karma, even of whatsoever action he does here, he returns from that world to this world for Karma.

*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*³

Equipped with qualities, a doer of works and creator of their consequences, he reaps the result of his actions; he is the ruler of the life and he moves in his journey according to his own acts; he has idea and ego and is to be known by the qualities of his intelligence and his quality of self. Smaller than the hundredth part of the tip of a hair, the soul of the living being is capable of infinity. Male is he not nor female nor neuter, but is joined to whatever body he takes as his own.

*Swetasvatara Upanishad.*⁴

¹ III. 10. 5.

² Action, *karma*. In the view expressed in this verse of the Upanishad the Karma or action of this life is exhausted by the life in the world beyond in which its results are fulfilled and the soul returns to earth for fresh Karma. The cause of birth in this world, of Karma, of the soul's passage to other-world existence and its return here is, throughout, the soul's own consciousness, will and desire. ³ IV. 4. 5, 6. ⁴ V. 7-10.

Mortals, they achieved immortality.

*Rig Veda.*⁵

OUR FIRST conclusion on the subject of reincarnation has been that the rebirth of the soul in successive terrestrial bodies is an inevitable consequence of the original significance and process of the manifestation in earth-nature; but this conclusion leads to farther problems and farther results which it is necessary to elucidate. There arises first the question of the process of rebirth; if that process is not quickly successive, birth immediately following death of the body so as to maintain an uninterrupted series of lives of the same person, if there are intervals, that in its turn raises the question of the principle and process of the passage to other worlds, which must be the scene of these intervals, and the return to earth-life. A third question is the process of the spiritual evolution itself and the mutations which the soul undergoes in its passage from birth to birth through the stages of its adventure.

If the physical universe were the sole manifested world, or if it were a quite separate world, rebirth as a part of the evolutionary process would be confined to a constant succession of direct transmigrations from one body to another; death would be immediately followed by a new birth without any possibility of an interval,—the passage of the soul would be a spiritual circumstance in the uninterrupted series of a compulsory, mechanical, material procedure. The soul would have no freedom from Matter; it would be perpetually bound to its instrument, the body, and dependent on it for the continuity of its manifested existence. But we have found that there is a life on other planes after death and before the subsequent rebirth, a life consequent on the old and preparatory of the new stage of terrestrial existence. Other planes coexist with ours, are part of one complex system and act constantly upon the physical which is their own final and lowest term, receive its reactions, admit a secret communication and commerce. Man can become conscious of these

⁵ I. 110. 4.

planes, can even in certain states project his conscious being into them, partly in life, presumably therefore with a full completeness after the dissolution of the body. Such a possibility of projection into other worlds or planes of being becomes then sufficiently actual to necessitate practically its own realisation, immediately and perhaps invariably following on human earth-life if man is from the beginning endowed with such a power of self-transference, eventual if he only arrives at it by a gradual progression. For it is possible that at the beginning he would not be sufficiently developed to carry on his life or his mind into larger life-worlds or mind-worlds and would be compelled to accept an immediate transmigration from one earthly body to another as his only present possibility of persistence.

The necessity for an interregnum between birth and birth and a passage to other worlds arises from a double cause: there is an attraction of the other planes for the mental and the vital being in man's composite nature due to their affinity with these levels, and there is the utility or even the need of an interval for assimilation of the completed life-experience, a working out of what has to be discarded, a preparation for the new embodiment and the new terrestrial experience. But this need of a period of assimilation and this attraction of other worlds for kindred parts of our being may become effective only when the mental and vital individuality has been sufficiently developed in the half-animal physical man; until then they might not exist or might not be active: the life experiences would be too simple and elementary to need assimilation and the natural being too crude to be capable of a complex assimilative process; the higher parts would not be sufficiently developed to lift themselves to higher planes of existence. There can be, then, in the absence of such connections with other worlds, a theory of rebirth which admits only of a constant transmigration; here the existence of other worlds and the sojourn of the soul in other planes are not an actual or at any stage a necessary part of the system. There can be another theory in which this passage is the obligatory rule for all and there is no immediate rebirth; the soul needs an interval of preparation for the new incarnation and new experience. A

compromise between the two theories is also possible; the transmigration may be the first rule prevailing while the soul is yet unripe for a higher world-existence; the passage to other planes would be the subsequent law. There may even be a third stage, as is sometimes suggested, in which the soul is so powerfully developed, its natural parts so spiritually alive that it needs no interval, but can immediately resume birth for a more rapid evolution without the retardation of a period of intermittence.

In the popular ideas which derive from the religions that admit reincarnation, there is an inconsistency which, after the manner of popular beliefs, they have been at no pains to reconcile. On the one hand, there is the belief, vague enough but fairly general, that death is followed immediately or with something like immediateness by the assumption of another body. On the other hand, there is the old religious dogma of a life after death in hells and heavens or, it may be, in other worlds or degrees of being, which the soul has acquired or incurred by its merits or demerits in this physical existence; the return to earth intervenes only when that merit and demerit are exhausted and the being is ready for another terrestrial life. This inconsistency would disappear if we admit a variable movement dependent on the stage of evolution which the soul has reached in its manifestation in Nature; all would then turn on the degree of its capacity for entering a higher status than the earthly life. But in the ordinary notion of reincarnation the idea of a spiritual evolution is not explicit, it is only implied in the fact that the soul has to reach the point at which it becomes capable of transcending the necessity of rebirth and returning to its eternal source; but if there is no gradual and graded evolution, this point can be as well reached by a chaotic zigzag movement of which the law is not easily determinable. The definitive solution of the question depends on psychic inquiry and experience; here we can only consider whether there is in the nature of things or in the logic of the evolutionary process any apparent or inherent necessity for either movement, for the immediate transition from body to body or for the retardation or interval before a new reincarnation of the self-embodying psychic principle.

A sort of half necessity for the life in other worlds, a dynamic and practical rather than an essential necessity, arises from the very fact that the different world-principles are interwoven with each other and in a way interdependent and the effect that this fact must have upon the process of our spiritual evolution. But this might be counteracted for a time by the greater pull or attraction of the earth or the preponderant physicality of the evolving nature. Our belief in the birth of an ascending soul into the human form and its repeated rebirth in that form, without which it cannot complete its human evolution, rests, from the point of view of the reasoning intelligence, on the basis that the progressive transit of the soul into higher and higher grades of the earthly existence and, once it has reached the human level, its repeated human birth compose a sequence necessary for the growth of the nature; one brief human life upon earth is evidently insufficient for the evolutionary purpose. In the early stages of a series of human reincarnations, during a period of rudimentary humanity, there is a certain possibility at first sight of an often repeated immediate transmigration,—the repeated assumption of a new human form in a fresh birth immediately the previous body has been dissolved by a cessation or expulsion of the organised life-energy and the consequent physical disintegration which we call death. But what necessity of the evolutionary process would compel such a series of immediate rebirths? Evidently, it could only be imperative so long as the psychic individuality — not the secret soul-entity itself but the soul-formation in the natural being — is little evolved, insufficiently developed, so insufficiently formed that it could not abide except by dependence upon the uninterrupted continuance of this life's mental, vital and physical individuality: unable as yet to persist in itself, discard its past mind-formation and life-formation and build after a useful interval new formations, it would be obliged to transfer at once its rudimentary crude personality for preservation to a new body. It is doubtful whether we should be justified in attributing any such entirely insufficient development to a being so strongly individualised that it has got as far as the human consciousness. Even at his lowest normality the human individual is still a soul

acting through a distinct mental being, however ill-formed his mind may be, however limited and dwarfed, however engrossed and encased in the physical and vital consciousness and unable or unwilling to detach itself from its lower formations. Yet we may suppose that there is a downward attachment so strong as to compel the being to hasten at once to a resumption of the physical life because his natural formation is not really fit for anything else or at home on any higher plane. Or, again, the life-experience might be so brief and incomplete as to compel the soul to an immediate rebirth for its continuance. Other needs, influences or causes there may be in the complexity of Nature-process, such as a strong will of earthly desire pressing for fulfilment, which would enforce an immediate transmigration of the same persistent form of personality into a new body. But still the alternative process of a reincarnation, a rebirth of the Person not only into a new body but into a new formation of the personality, would be the normal line taken by the psychic entity once it had reached the human stage of its evolutionary cycle.

For the soul personality, as it develops, must get sufficient power over its own nature-formation and a sufficient self-expressive mental and vital individuality to persist without the support of the material body, as well as to overcome any excessive detaining attachment to the physical plane and the physical life: it would be sufficiently evolved to subsist in the subtle body which we know to be the characteristic case or sheath and the proper subtle-physical support of the inner being. It is the soul-person, the psychic being, that survives and carries mind and life with it on its journey, and it is in the subtle body that it passes out of its material lodging; both then must be sufficiently developed for the transit. But a transference to planes of mind existence or life existence implies also a mind and life sufficiently formed and developed to pass without disintegration and exist for a time on these higher levels. If these conditions were satisfied, a sufficiently developed psychic personality and subtle body and a sufficiently developed mental and vital personality, survival of the soul-person without an

immediate new-birth would be secured and the pull of the other worlds would become operative. But this by itself would mean a return to earth with the same mental and vital personality and there would be no free evolution in the new birth. There must be an individuation of the psychic person itself sufficient for it not to depend on its past mind and life formations any more than on its past body, but to shed them too in time and proceed to a new formation for new experience. For this discarding of the old and preparation of new forms the soul must dwell for some time between two births somewhere else than on the entirely material plane in which we now move; for here there would be no abiding place for a disembodied spirit. A brief stay might indeed be possible if there are subtle envelopes of the earth-existence which belong to earth but are of a vital or mental character: but even then there would be no reason for the soul to linger there for a long period, unless it is still burdened with an overpowering attachment to the earth-life. A survival of the material body by the personality implies a supraphysical existence, and this can only be in some plane of being proper to the evolutionary stage of the consciousness or, if there is no evolution, in a temporary second home of the spirit which would be its natural place of sojourn between life and life,—unless indeed it is its original world from which it does not return into material Nature.

Where then would the temporary dwelling in the supraphysical take place? what would be the soul's other habitat? It might seem that it ought to be on a mental plane, in mental worlds, both because on man the mental being the attraction of that plane, already active in life, must prevail when there is not the obstacle of the attachment to the body, and because the mental plane should be, evidently, the native and proper habitat of a mental being. But this does not automatically follow, because of the complexity of man's being; he has a vital as well as a mental existence,—his vital part often more powerful and prominent than the mental,—and behind the mental being is a soul of which it is the representative. There are, besides, many planes or levels of world-existence and the soul has to pass through

them to reach its natural home. In the physical plane itself or close to it there are believed to be layers of greater and greater subtlety which may be regarded as sub-planes of the physical with a vital and a mental character; these are at once surrounding and penetrating strata through which the interchange between the higher worlds and the physical world takes place. It might then be possible for the mental being, so long as its mentality is not sufficiently developed, so long as it is restricted mainly to the more physical forms of mind and life activity, to be caught and delayed in these media. It might even be obliged to rest there entirely between birth and birth; but this is not probable and could only happen if and in so far as its attachment to the earth-forms of its activity was so great as to preclude or hamper the completion of the natural upward movement. For the post-mortal state of the soul must correspond in some way to the development of the being on earth, since this after-life is not a free upward return from a temporary downward deviation into mortality, but a normal recurrent circumstance which intervenes to help out the process of a difficult spiritual evolution in the physical existence. There is a relation which the human being in his evolution on earth develops with higher planes of existence, and that must have a predominant effect on his internatal dwelling in these planes; it must determine his direction after death and determine too the place, period and character of his self-experience there.

It may be also that he may linger for a time in one of those annexes of the other worlds created by his habitual beliefs or by the type of his aspirations in the mortal body. We know that he creates images of these superior planes, which are often mental translations of certain elements in them, and erects his images into a system, a form of actual worlds; he builds up also desire worlds of many kinds to which he attaches a strong sense of inner reality: it is possible that these constructions may be so strong as to create for him an artificial post-mortal environment in which he may linger. For the image-making power of the human mind, its imagination, which is in his physical life only an indispensable aid to his acquisition of knowledge and his

life-creation, may in a higher scale become a creative force which would enable the mental being to live for a while amid its own images until they were dissolved by the soul's pressure. All these buildings are of the nature of larger life constructions; in them his mind translates some of the real conditions of the greater mental and vital worlds into terms of his physical experience magnified, prolonged, extended to a condition beyond physicality: he carries by this translation the vital joy and vital suffering of the physical being into supraphysical conditions in which they have a greater scope, fullness and endurance. These constructive environments must therefore be considered, so far as they have any supraphysical habitat, as annexes of the vital or of the lower mental planes of existence.

But there are also the true vital worlds, — original constructions, organised developments, native habitats of the universal life-principle, the cosmic vital Anima, acting in its own field and in its own nature. On his internatal journey he may be held there for a period by force of the predominantly vital character of the influences which have shaped his earthly existence, — for these influences are native to the vital world and their hold on him would detain him for a while in their proper province: he may be kept in the grasp of that which held him in its grasp even in the physical being. Any residence of the soul in annexes or in its own constructions could be only a transitional stage of the consciousness in its passage from the physical to the supraphysical state; it must pass from these structures into the true worlds of supraphysical Nature. It may enter at once into the worlds of other-life, or it may remain first, as a transitional stage, in some region of subtle-physical experience whose surroundings may seem to it a prolongation of the circumstances of physical life, but in freer conditions proper to a subtler medium and in some kind of happy perfection of mind or life or a finer bodily existence. Beyond these subtle-physical planes of experience and the life-worlds there are also mental or spiritual-mental planes to which the soul seems to have an internatal access and into which it may pursue its internatal journey; but it is not likely to live consciously there if there has not been a sufficient mental or

soul development in this life. For these levels must normally be the highest the evolving being can internatally inhabit, since one who has not gone beyond the mental rung in the ladder of being would not be able to ascend to any supramental or overmental state; or if he had so developed as to overleap the mental level and could attain so far, it might not be possible for him to return so long as the physical evolution has not developed here an organisation of an overmental or supramental life in Matter.

But, even so, the mental worlds are not likely to be the last normal stage of the after-death passage; for man is not entirely mental: it is the soul, the psychic being, and not the mind, that is the traveller between death and birth, and the mental being is only a predominant element in the figure of its self-expression. There must then be a final resort to a plane of pure psychic existence in which the soul would await rebirth; there it could assimilate the energies of its past experience and life and prepare its future. Ordinarily, the normally developed human being, who has risen to a sufficient power of mentality, might be expected to pass successively through all these planes, subtle-physical, vital and mental, on his way to his psychic habitation. At each stage he would exhaust and get rid of the fractions of formed personality structure, temporary and superficial, that belonged to the past life; he would cast off his mind sheath and life sheath as he had already cast off his body sheath: but the essence of the personality and its mental, vital and physical experiences would remain in latent memory or as a dynamic potency for the future. But if the development of mind were insufficient, it is possible that it would not be able to go consciously beyond the vital level and the being would either fall back from there, returning from its vital heavens or purgatories to earth, or, more consistently, would pass at once into a kind of psychic assimilative sleep co-extensive with the internatal period; to be awake in the highest planes a certain development would be indispensable.

All this, however, is a matter of dynamic probability, and that, though amounting in practice to a necessity, though justified by certain facts of subliminal experience, is still for the reasoning mind not in itself quite conclusive. We have to ask

whether there is any more essential necessity for these internatal intervals, or at least any of so great a dynamic power as to lead to an irresistible conclusion. We shall find one such necessity in the decisive part played by the higher planes in the earth-evolution and the relation that it has created between them and the evolving soul-consciousness. Our development takes place very largely by their superior but hidden action upon the earth-plane. All is contained in the unconscious or the subconscious, but in potentiality; it is the action from above that helps to compel an emergence. A continuance of that action is necessary to shape and determine the progression of the mental and vital forms which our evolution takes in material nature; for these progressive movements cannot find their full momentum or sufficiently develop their implications against the resistance of an unconscious or inert and ignorant material Nature except by a constant though occult resort to higher supraphysical forces of their own character. This resort, the action of this veiled alliance, takes place principally in our subliminal being and not on the surface: it is from there that the active power of our consciousness emerges, and all that it realises it sends back constantly into the subliminal being to be stored up, developed and re-emerge in stronger forms hereafter. This interaction of our larger hidden being and our surface personality is the main secret of the rapid development that operates in man once he has passed beyond the lower stages of mind immersed in Matter.

This resort must continue in the internatal stage; for a new birth, a new life is not a taking up of the development exactly where it stopped in the last, it does not merely repeat and continue our past surface personality and formation of nature. There is an assimilation, a discarding and strengthening and rearrangement of the old characters and motives, a new ordering of the developments of the past and a selection for the purposes of the future without which the new start cannot be fruitful or carry forward the evolution. For each birth is a new start; it develops indeed from the past, but is not its mechanical continuation: rebirth is not a constant reiteration but a progression, it is the machinery of an evolutionary process.

Part of this rearrangement, the discarding especially of past strong vibrations of the personality, can only be effected by an exhaustion of the push of previous mental, vital, physical motives after death, and this internatal liberation or lightening of impedimenta must be put through on the planes proper to the motives that are to be discarded or otherwise manipulated, those planes which are themselves of that nature; for it is only there that the soul can still continue the activities which have to be exhausted and rejected from the consciousness so that it can pass on to a new formation. It is probable also that the integrating positive preparation would be carried out and the character of the new life would be decided by the soul itself in a resort to its native habitat, a plane of psychic repose, where it would draw all back into itself and await its new stage in the evolution. This would mean a passage of the soul progressively through subtle-physical, vital and mental worlds to the psychic dwelling-place from which it would return to its terrestrial pilgrimage. The terrestrial gathering up and development of the materials thus prepared, their working out in the earth life would be the consequence of this internatal resort, and the new birth would be a field of the resultant activity, a new stadium or spiral curve in the individual evolution of the embodied spirit.

For when we say that the soul on earth evolves successively the physical, the vital, the mental, the spiritual being, we do not mean that it creates them and that they had no previous existence. On the contrary, what it does is to manifest these principles of its spiritual entity under the conditions imposed by a world of physical Nature; this manifestation takes the form of a structure of frontal personality which is a translation of the inner self into the terms and possibilities of the physical existence. In fact we must accept the ancient idea that man has within him not only the physical soul or Purusha with its appropriate nature, but a vital, a mental, a psychic, a supramental, a supreme spiritual being;⁶ and either the whole or the greater presence or force of them is concealed in his subliminal

⁶ *Taittiriya Upanishad.*

or latent and unformulated in his superconscious parts. He has to bring forward their powers in his active consciousness and to awake to them in its knowledge. But each of these powers of his being is in relation with its own proper plane of existence and all have their roots there. It is through them that there takes place the subliminal resort of the being to the shaping influences from above, a resort which may become more and more conscious as we develop. It is logical then that according to the development of their powers in our conscious evolution should be the internatal resort which this nature of our birth here and its evolutionary object and process necessitate. The circumstances and the stages of that resort must be complex and not of the crudely and trenchantly simple character which the popular religions imagine: but in itself it can be accepted as an inevitable consequence of the very origin and nature of the soul-life in the body. All is a closely woven web, an evolution and an interaction whose links have been forged by a Conscious-Force following out the truth of its own motives according to a dynamic logic of these finite workings of the Infinite.

If this view of rebirth and the soul's temporary passage into other planes of existence is correct, both rebirth and the after-life assume a different significance from the colour put on them by the long-current belief about reincarnation and the after-death sojourn in worlds beyond us. Reincarnation is commonly supposed to have two aspects, metaphysical and moral, an aspect of spiritual necessity, an aspect of cosmic justice and ethical discipline. The soul—in this view or for this purpose supposed to have a real individual existence—is on earth as a result of desire and ignorance; it has to remain on earth or return to it always so long as it has not wearied of desire and awakened to the fact of its ignorance and to the true knowledge. This desire compels it to return always to a new body; it must follow always the revolving wheel of birth till it is enlightened and liberated. It does not, however, remain always on earth, but alternates between earth and other worlds, celestial and infernal, where it exhausts its accumulated store of merit or demerit due to the enactment of sin or virtue and then returns to the earth and to some

kind of terrestrial body, sometimes human, sometimes animal, sometimes even vegetable. The nature of this new incarnation and its fortunes are determined automatically by the soul's past actions, Karma; if the sum of past action was good, the birth is in the higher form, the life happy or successful or unaccountably fortunate; if bad, a lower form of Nature may house us or the life, if human, will be unhappy, unsuccessful, full of suffering and misfortune. If our past actions and character were mixed, then Nature, like a good accountant, gives us, according to the pitch and values of our former conduct, a well-assorted payment of mixed happiness and suffering, success and failure, the rarest good luck and the severest ill-fortune. At the same time a strong personal will or desire in the past life may also determine our new avatar. A mathematical aspect is often given to these payments of Nature, for we are supposed to incur a precise penalty for our misdeeds, undergo or return the replica or equivalent of what we have inflicted or enacted; the inexorable rule of a tooth for a tooth is a frequent principle of the Karmic Law: for this Law is an arithmetician with his abacus as well as a judge with his code of penalties for long-past crimes and misdemeanours. It is also to be noted that in this system there is a double punishment and a double reward for sin and virtue; for the sinner is first tortured in hell and afterwards afflicted for the same sins in another life here and the righteous or the puritan is rewarded with celestial joys and afterwards again pampered for the same virtues and good deeds in a new terrestrial existence.

These are very summary popular notions and offer no foothold to the philosophic reason and no answer to a search for the true significance of life. A vast world-system which exists only as a convenience for turning endlessly on a wheel of Ignorance with no issue except a final chance of stepping out of it, is not a world with any real reason for existence. A world which serves only as a school of sin and virtue and consists of a system of rewards and whippings, does not make any better appeal to our intelligence. The soul or spirit within us, if it is divine, immortal or celestial, cannot be sent here solely to be put to school for this kind of crude and primitive moral

education; if it enters into the Ignorance, it must be because there is some larger principle or possibility of its being that has to be worked out through the Ignorance. If, on the other hand, it is a being from the Infinite plunged for some cosmic purpose into the obscurity of Matter and growing to self-knowledge within it, its life here and the significance of that life must be something more than that of an infant coddled and whipped into virtuous ways; it must be a growth out of an assumed ignorance towards its own full spiritual stature with a final passage into an immortal consciousness, knowledge, strength, beauty, divine purity and power, and for such a spiritual growth this law of Karma is all too puerile. Even if the soul is something created, an infant being that has to learn from Nature and grow into immortality, it must be by a larger law of growth and not by some divine code of primitive and barbaric justice. This idea of Karma is a construction of the smaller part of the human vital mind concerned with its petty rules of life and its desires and joys and sorrows and erecting their puny standards into the law and aim of the cosmos. These notions cannot be acceptable to the thinking mind; they have too evidently the stamp of a construction fashioned by our human ignorance.

But the same solution can be elevated to a higher level of reason and given a greater plausibility and the colour of a cosmic principle. For, first, it may be based on the unassailable ground that all energies in Nature must have their natural consequence; if any are without visible result in the present life, it may well be that the outcome is only delayed, not withheld for ever. Each being reaps the harvest of his works and deeds, the returns of the action put forth by the energies of his nature, and those which are not apparent in his present birth must be held over for a subsequent existence. It is true that the result of the energies and actions of the individual may accrue not to himself but to others when he is gone; for that we see constantly happening, — it happens indeed even during a man's lifetime that the fruits of his energies are reaped by others; but this is because there is a solidarity and a continuity of life in Nature and the individual cannot altogether, even if he so wills, live for himself alone. But,

if there is a continuity of his own life by rebirth for the individual and not only a continuity of the mass life and the cosmic life, if he has an ever-developing self, nature and experience, then it is inevitable that for him too the working of his energies should not be cut off abruptly but must bear their consequence at some time in his continuous and developing existence. Man's being, nature, circumstances of life are the result of his own inner and outer activities, not something fortuitous and inexplicable: he is what he has made himself; the past man was the father of the man that now is, the present man is the father of the man that will be. Each being reaps what he sows; from what he does he profits, for what he does he suffers. This is the law and chain of Karma, of Action, of the work of Nature-Energy, and it gives a meaning to the total course of our existence, nature, character, action which is absent from other theories of life. It is evident on this principle that a man's past and present Karma must determine his future birth and its happenings and circumstances; for these too must be the fruit of his energies: all that he was and did in the past must be the creator of all that he now is and experiences in his present, and all that he is and is doing in the present must be the creator of what he will be and experience in the future. Man is the creator of himself; he is the creator also of his fate. All this is perfectly rational and unexceptionable so far as it goes and the law of Karma may be accepted as a fact, as part of the cosmic machinery; for it is so evident — rebirth once admitted — as to be practically indisputable.

There are, however, two riders to this first proposition which are less general and authentic and bring in a doubtful note; for though they may be true in part, they are overstated and create a wrong perspective, because they are put forward as the whole sense of Karma. The first is that as is the nature of the energies so must be the nature of the results, — the good must bring good results, the evil must bring evil results: the second is that the master word of Karma is justice and therefore good deeds must bear the fruit of happiness and good fortune and evil deeds must bear the fruit of sorrow, misery and ill-fortune. Since there must be a cosmic justice which is looking on and controlling in some

way the immediate and visible operations of Nature in life, but is not apparent to us in the facts of life as seen by us, it must be present and evident in the totality of her unseen dealings; it must be the subtle and hardly visible, but strong and firm secret thread that holds together the otherwise incoherent details of her dealings with her creatures. If it be asked why actions alone, good or bad deeds alone, should have a result, it might be conceded that good or evil thoughts, feelings, actions have all their corresponding results, but since action is the greater part of life and the test and formulated power of a man's values of being, since also he is not always responsible for his thoughts and feelings, as they are often involuntary, but is or must be held responsible for what he does, as that is subject to his choice, it is mainly his actions that construct his fate; they are the chief or the most forceful determinants of his being and his future. This is the whole law of Karma.

But we have first to observe that a law or chain of Karma is only an outward machinery and cannot be elevated to a greater position as the sole and absolute determinant of the life-workings of the cosmos, unless the cosmos is itself entirely mechanical in its character. It is indeed held by many that all is Law and Process and there is no conscious Being or Will in or behind the cosmos; if so, here is a Law and Process that satisfies our human reason and our mental standards of right and justice and it has the beauty and truth of a perfect symmetry and a mathematical accuracy of working. But all is not Law and Process, there is also Being and Consciousness; there is not only a machinery but a Spirit in things, not only Nature and law of cosmos but a cosmic Spirit, not only a process of mind and life and body but a soul in the natural creature. If it were not so, there could be no rebirth of a soul and no field for a law of Karma. But if the fundamental truth of our being is spiritual and not mechanical, it must be ourself, our soul that fundamentally determines its own evolution, and the law of Karma can only be one of the processes it uses for that purpose: our Spirit, our Self must be greater than its Karma. There is Law, but there is also spiritual freedom. Law and Process are one side of our existence

and their reign is over our outer mind, life and body, for these are mostly subject to the mechanism of Nature. But even here their mechanical power is absolute only over body and matter; for Law becomes more complex and less rigid, Process more plastic and less mechanical when there comes in the phenomenon of life, and yet more is this so when mind intervenes with its subtlety; an inner freedom already begins to intervene and, the more we go within, the soul's power of choice is increasingly felt: for Prakriti is the field of law and process, but the soul, the Purusha, is the giver of the sanction, *anumantā*, and even if ordinarily it chooses to remain a witness and concede an automatic sanction, it can be, if it wills, the master of its nature, Ishwara.

It is not conceivable that the spirit within is an automaton in the hands of Karma, a slave in this life of its past actions; the truth must be less rigid and more plastic. If a certain amount of results of past Karma is formulated in the present life, it must be with the consent of the psychic being which presides over the new formation of its earth-experience and assents not merely to an outward compulsory process, but to a secret Will and Guidance. That secret Will is not mechanical, but spiritual; the guidance comes from an Intelligence which may use mechanical processes but is not their subject. Self-expression and experience are what the soul seeks by its birth into the body; whatever is necessary for the self-expression and experience of this life, whether it intervenes as an automatic outcome of past lives or as a free selection of results and a continuity or as a new development, whatever is a means of creation of the future, that will be formulated: for the principle is not the working out of a mechanism of Law, but the development of the nature through cosmic experience so that eventually it may grow out of the Ignorance. There must therefore be two elements, Karma as an instrument, but also the secret Consciousness and Will within working through the mind, life and body as the user. Fate, whether purely mechanical or created by ourselves, a chain of our own manufacture, is only one factor of existence; Being and its consciousness and its will are a still more important factor. In Indian astrology which considers all life circumstances to be

Karma, mostly predetermined or indicated in the graph of the stars, there is still provision made for the energy and force of the being which can change or cancel part or much of what is so written or even all but the most imperative and powerful bindings of Karma. This is a reasonable account of the balance: but there is also to be added to the computation the fact that destiny is not simple but complex; the destiny which binds our physical being, binds it so long or in so far as a greater law does not intervene. Action belongs to the physical part of us, it is the physical outcome of our being; but behind our surface is a freer life power, a freer mind power which has another energy and can create another destiny and bring it in to modify the primary plan, and when the soul and self emerges, when we become consciously spiritual beings, that change can cancel or wholly remodel the graph of our physical fate. Karma, then,—or at least any mechanical law of Karma,—cannot be accepted as the sole determinant of circumstances and the whole machinery of rebirth and of our future evolution.

But this is not all; for the statement of the Law errs by an over-simplification and the arbitrary selection of a limited principle. Action is a resultant of the energy of the being, but this energy is not of one sole kind; the consciousness-force of the spirit manifests itself in many kinds of energies: there are inner activities of mind, activities of life, of desire, passion, impulse, character, activities of the senses and the body, a pursuit of truth and knowledge, a pursuit of beauty, a pursuit of ethical good or evil, a pursuit of power, love, joy, happiness, fortune, success, pleasure, life satisfactions of all kinds, life enlargement, a pursuit of individual or collective objects, a pursuit of the health, strength, capacity, satisfaction of the body. All this makes an exceedingly complex sum of the manifold experience and many-sided action of the spirit in life, and its variety cannot be set aside in favour of a single principle, neither can it be hammered into so many sections of the single duality of ethical good and evil; ethics, the maintenance of human standards of morality, cannot, therefore, be the sole preoccupation of the cosmic Law or the sole principle of determination of the working of Karma.

If it is true that the nature of the energy put forth must determine the nature of the result or outcome, all these differences in the nature of the energy have to be taken into account and each must have its appropriate consequence. An energy of seeking for truth and knowledge must have as its natural outcome,—its reward or recompense, if you will,—a growth into truth, an increase in knowledge; an energy used for falsehood should result in an increase of falsehood in the nature and a deeper immersion in the Ignorance. An energy of pursuit of beauty should have as its outcome an increase in the sense of beauty, the enjoyment of beauty or, if so directed, in the beauty and harmony of the life and the nature. A pursuit of physical health, strength and capacity should create the strong man or the successful athlete. An energy put out in the pursuit of ethical good must have as its outcome or reward or recompense an increase in virtue, the happiness of ethical growth or the sunny felicity and poise and purity of a simple and natural goodness, while the punishment of opposite energies would be a deeper plunge into evil, a greater disharmony and perversion of the nature and, in case of excess, a great spiritual perdition, *mahatī vinastīḥ*. An energy put forward for power or other vital ends must lead to an increase of the capacity for commanding these results or to the development of a vital strength and plenitude. This is the ordinary disposition of things in Nature and, if justice be demanded of her, this surely is justice that the energy and capacity put forward should have in its own kind its fitting response from her. The prize of the race is assigned by her to the swift, the victory in battle to the brave and strong and skilful, the rewards of knowledge to the capable intellect and the earnest seeker: these things she will not give to the good man who is sluggish or weak or skilless or stupid merely because he is righteous or respectable; if he covets these other powers of life, he must qualify for them and put forward the right kind of energy. If Nature did otherwise, she could well be accused of injustice; there is no reason to accuse her of injustice for this perfectly right and normal arrangement or to demand from her a rectification of the balance in a future life so that the good man may be given as a natural reward

for his virtue a high post or a large bank balance or a happy, easy and well-appointed life. That cannot be the significance of rebirth or a sufficient basis for a cosmic law of Karma.

There is indeed in our life a very large element of what we call luck or fortune, which baulks our effort of result or gives the prize without effort or to an inferior energy: the secret cause of these caprices of Destiny—or causes, for the roots of Fortune may be manifold,—must be no doubt partly sought for in our hidden past; but it is difficult to accept the simple solution that good luck is a return for a forgotten virtuous action in a past life and bad luck a return for a sin or crime. If we see the righteous man suffering here, it is difficult to believe that this paragon of virtue was in the last life a scoundrel and is paying, even after his exemplary conversion by a new birth, for sins he then committed; nor if the wicked triumphs, can we easily suppose that he was in his last life a saint who has suddenly taken a wrong turn but continues to receive a cash return for his previous virtue. A total change of this kind between life and life is possible though not likely to be frequent, but to saddle the new opposite personality with the rewards or punishments of the old looks like a purposeless and purely mechanical procedure. This and many other difficulties arise, and the too simple logic of the correlation is not so strong as it claims to be; the idea of retribution of Karma as a compensation for the injustice of life and Nature is a feeble basis for the theory, for it puts forward a shallow and superficial human feeling and standard as the sense of the cosmic Law and is based on an unsound reasoning; there must be some other and stronger foundation for the law of Karma.

Here, as so often, the error comes by our forcing a standard which is the creation of our human mind into the larger, freer and more comprehensive ways of the cosmic Intelligence. In the action attributed to the law of Karma two values are selected out of the many created by Nature, moral good and evil, sin and virtue, and vital-physical good and evil, outward happiness and suffering, outward good fortune and ill-fortune, and it is supposed that there must be an equation between them, the

one must be the reward or punishment of the other, the final sanction which it receives in the secret justice of Nature. This collocation is evidently made from the view-point of a common vital-physical desire in our members: because happiness and good fortune are what the lower part of our vital being most desires, misfortune and suffering what it most hates and dreads, it proceeds, when it accepts the moral demand upon it for the curbing of its propensities, for self-restraint from doing evil and self-exertion towards doing what is good, to strike a bargain, to erect a cosmic Law which will compensate it for this strenuous self-compulsion and help it by the dread of punishment to adhere to its difficult path of self-denial. But the truly ethical being does not need a system of rewards and punishments to follow the path of good and shun the path of evil; virtue to him is its own reward, sin brings with it its own punishment in the suffering of a fall from his own law of nature: this is the true ethical standard. On the contrary, a system of rewards and punishments debases at once the ethical values of good, turns virtue into selfishness, a commercial bargain of self-interest, and replaces the right motive of abstinence from evil by a baser motive. Human beings have erected the rule of reward and punishment as a social necessity in order to restrain the doing of things harmful to the community and encourage what is helpful to it; but to erect this human device into a general law of cosmic Nature or a law of the supreme Being or the supreme law of existence is a procedure of doubtful value. It is human, but also puerile, to impose the insufficient and narrow standards of our own Ignorance on the larger and more intricate operations of cosmic Nature or on the action of the supreme Wisdom and supreme Good which draws or raises us towards itself by a spiritual power working slowly in ourselves through our inner being and not by a law of temptation and compulsion upon our outer vital nature. If the soul is passing through an evolution by a many-sided and complex experience, any law of Karma or return to action and output of Energy, if it is to fit itself into that experience, must also be complex and cannot be of a simple and exiguous texture or rigid and one-sided in its incidence.

At the same time, a partial truth of fact, not of fundamental or general principle, may be admitted for this doctrine; for although the lines of the action of energy are distinct and independent, they can act together and upon each other, though not by any rigidly fixed law of correspondence. It is possible that in the total method of the returns of Nature there intervenes a strand of connection or rather of interaction between vital-physical good and ill and ethical good and ill, a limited correspondence and meeting-point between divergent dualities not amounting to an inseparable coherence. Our own varying energies, desires, movements are mixed together in their working and can bring about a mixed result: our vital part does demand substantial and external rewards for virtue, for knowledge, for every intellectual, aesthetic, moral or physical effort; it believes firmly in punishment for sin and even for ignorance. This may well either create or else reply to a corresponding cosmic action; for Nature takes us as we are and to some extent suits her movements to our need or our demands on her. If we accept the action of invisible Forces upon us, there may be also invisible Forces in Life-Nature that belong to the same plane of Consciousness-Force as this part of our being, Forces that move according to the same plan or the same power-motive as our lower vital nature. It can be often observed that when a self-assertive vital egoism goes on trampling on its way without restraint or scruple all that opposes its will or desire, it raises a mass of reactions against itself, reactions of hatred, antagonism, unease in men which may have their result now or hereafter, and still more formidable adverse reactions in universal Nature. It is as if the patience of Nature, her willingness to be used were exhausted; the very forces that the ego of the strong vital man seized and bent to its purpose rebel and turn against him, those he had trampled on rise up and receive power for his downfall: the insolent vital force of Man strikes against the throne of Necessity and is dashed to pieces or the lame foot of Punishment reaches at last the successful offender. This reaction to his energies may come upon him in another life and not at once, it may be a burden of consequence he takes up in his return to the field of these Forces; it may

happen on a small as well as a large scale, to the small vital being and his small errors as well as in these larger instances. For the principle will be the same; the mental being in us seeking for success by a misuse of force which Nature admits but reacts in the end against it, receives the adverse return in the guise of defeat and suffering and failure. But the promotion of this minor line of causes and results to the status of an invariable absolute Law or the whole cosmic rule of action of a supreme Being is not valid; they belong to a middle region between the inmost or supreme Truth of things and the impartiality of material Nature.

In any case the reactions of Nature are not in essence meant as reward or punishment; that is not their fundamental value, which is rather an inherent value of natural relations and, in so far as it affects the spiritual evolution, a value of the lessons of experience in the soul's cosmic training. If we touch fire, it burns, but there is no principle of punishment in this relation of cause and effect, it is a lesson of relation and a lesson of experience; so in all Nature's dealings with us there is a relation of things and there is a corresponding lesson of experience. The action of the cosmic Energy is complex and the same Forces may act in different ways according to circumstances, to the need of the being, to the intention of the Cosmic Power in its action; our life is affected not only by its own energies but by the energies of others and by universal Forces, and all this vast interplay cannot be determined in its results solely by the one factor of an all-governing moral law and its exclusive attention to the merits and demerits, the sins and virtues of individual human beings. Nor can good fortune and evil fortune, pleasure and pain, happiness and misery and suffering be taken as if they existed merely as incentives and deterrents to the natural being in its choice of good and evil. It is for experience, for growth of the individual being that the soul enters into rebirth; joy and grief, pain and suffering, fortune and misfortune are parts of that experience, means of that growth: even, the soul may of itself accept or choose poverty, misfortune and suffering as helpful to its growth, stimulants of a rapid development, and reject riches and prosperity and success as dangerous and conducive to a

relaxation of its spiritual effort. Happiness and success bringing happiness are, no doubt, a legitimate demand of humanity; it is an attempt of life and matter to catch a pale reflection or a gross image of felicity: but a superficial happiness and material success, however desirable to our vital nature, are not the main object of our existence; if that had been the intention, life would have been otherwise arranged in the cosmic ordinance of things. All the secret of the circumstances of rebirth centres around the one capital need of the soul, the need of growth, the need of experience; that governs the line of its evolution and all the rest is accessory. Cosmic existence is not a vast administrative system of universal justice with a cosmic Law of recompense and retribution as its machinery or a divine Legislator and Judge at its centre. It is seen by us first as a great automatic movement of energy of Nature, and in it emerges a self-developing movement of consciousness, a movement therefore of Spirit working out its own being in the motion of energy of Nature. In this motion takes place the cycle of rebirth, and in that cycle the soul, the psychic being, prepares for itself,—or the Divine Wisdom or the cosmic Consciousness-Force prepares for it and through its action,—whatever is needed for the next step in its evolution, the next formation of personality, the coming nexus of necessary experiences constantly provided and organised out of the continuous flux of past, present and future energies for each new birth, for each new step of the spirit backward or forward or else still in a circle, but always a step in the growth of the being towards its destined self-unfolding in Nature.

This brings us to another element of the ordinary conception of rebirth which is not acceptable, since it is an obvious error of the physical mind,—the idea of the soul itself as a limited personality which survives unchanged from one birth to another. This too simple and superficial idea of the soul and personality is born of the physical mind's inability to look beyond its own apparent self-formation in this single existence. In its conception, what returns in the reincarnation must be not only the same spiritual being, the same psychic entity, but the same formation of nature that inhabited the body of the last birth; the body

changes, the circumstances are different, but the form of the being, the mind, the character, the disposition, temperament, tendencies are the same: John Smith in his new life is the same John Smith that he was in his last avatar. But if that were so, there would be no spiritual utility or meaning at all in rebirth; for there would be the repetition of the same little personality, the same small mental and vital formation to the end of Time. For the growth of the embodied being towards the full stature of its reality, not only a new experience, but a new personality is indispensable; to repeat the same personality would only be helpful if something had been incomplete in its formation of its experience which needed to be worked out in the same cadre of self, in the same building of mind and with the same formed capacity of energy. But normally this would be quite otiose: the soul that has been John Smith cannot gain anything or fulfil itself by remaining John Smith for ever; it cannot achieve growth or perfection by repeating the same character, interests, occupations, types of inner and outer movements for ever. Our life and rebirth would be always the same recurring decimal; it would be not an evolution but the meaningless continuity of an eternal repetition. Our attachment to our present personality demands such a continuity, such a repetition; John Smith wants to be John Smith for ever: but the demand is obviously ignorant and, if it were satisfied, that would be a frustration, not a fulfilment. It is only by a change of outer self, a constant progression of the nature, a growth in the spirit that we can justify our existence.

Personality is only a temporary mental, vital, physical formation which the being, the real Person, the psychic entity, puts forward on the surface,—it is not the self in its abiding reality. In each return to earth the Person, the Purusha, makes a new formation, builds a new personal quantum suitable for a new experience, for a new growth of its being. When it passes from its body, it keeps still the same vital and mental form for a time, but the forms or sheaths dissolve and what is kept is only the essential elements of the past quantum, of which some will but some may not be used in the next incarnation. The essential form of the past personality may remain as one element among

many, one personality among many personalities of the same Person, but in the background, in the subliminal behind the veil of the surface mind and life and body, contributing from there whatever is needed of itself to the new formation; but it will not itself be the whole formation or build anew the old unchanged type of nature. It may even be that the new quantum or structure of being will exhibit a quite contrary character and temperament, quite other capacities, other very different tendencies; for latent potentials may be ready to emerge, or something already in action but inchoate may have been held back in the last life which needed to be worked out but was kept over for a later and more suitable combination of the possibilities of the nature. All the past is indeed there, with its accelerated impetus and potentialities for the formation of the future, but all of it is not ostensibly present and active. The greater the variety of formations that have existed in the past and can be utilised, the more rich and multitudinous the accumulated buildings of experience, the more their essential result of capacity for knowledge, power, action, character, manifold response to the universe can be brought forward and harmonised in the new birth, the more numerous the veiled personalities mental, vital, subtle-physical that combine to enrich the new personality on the surface, the greater and more opulent will be that personality and the nearer to the possible transition out of the completed mental stage of evolution to something beyond it. Such a complexity and gathering up of many personalities in one person can be a sign of a very advanced stage of the individual's evolution when there is a strong central being that holds all together and works towards harmonisation and integration of the whole many-sided movement of the nature. But this opulent taking up of the past would not be a repetition of personality; it would be a new formation and large consummation. It is not as a machinery for the persistent renewal or prolongation of an unchanging personality that rebirth exists, but as a means for the evolution of the spiritual being in Nature.

It becomes at once evident that in this plan of rebirth the false importance which our mind attaches to the memory of past

lives disappears altogether. If indeed rebirth were governed by a system of rewards and punishments, if life's whole intention were to teach the embodied spirit to be good and moral,— supposing that that is the intention in the dispensation of Karma and it is not what it looks like in this presentation of it, a mechanical law of recompense and retribution without any reformatory meaning or purpose,— then there is evidently a great stupidity and injustice in denying to the mind in its new incarnation all memory of its past births and actions. For it deprives the reborn being of all chance to realise why he is rewarded or punished or to get any advantage from the lesson of the profitableness of virtue and the unprofitableness of sin vouchsafed to him or inflicted on him. Even, since life seems often to teach the opposite lesson,— for he sees the good suffer for their goodness and the wicked prosper by their wickedness,— he is rather likely to conclude in this perverse sense, because he has not the memory of an assured and constant result of experience which would show him that the suffering of the good man was due to his past wickedness and the prosperity of the sinner due to the splendour of his past virtues, so that virtue is the best policy in the long run for any reasonable and prudent soul entering into this dispensation of Nature. It might be said that the psychic being within remembers; but such a secret memory would seem to have little effect or value on the surface. Or it may be said that it realises what has happened and learns its lesson when it reviews and assimilates its experiences after issuing from the body: but this intermittent memory does not very apparently help in the next birth; for most of us persist in sin and error and show no tangible signs of having profited by the teaching of our past experience.

But if a constant development of being by a developing cosmic experience is the meaning and the building of a new personality in a new birth is the method, then any persistent or complete memory of the past life or lives might be a chain and a serious obstacle: it would be a force for prolonging the old temperament, character, preoccupations, and a tremendous burden hampering the free development of the new personality

and its formulation of new experience. A clear and detailed memory of past loves, hatreds, rancours, attachments, connections would be equally a stupendous inconvenience; for it would bind the reborn being to a useless repetition or a compulsory continuation of his surface past and stand heavily in the way of his bringing out new possibilities from the depths of the spirit. If, indeed, a mental learning of things were the heart of the matter, if that were the process of our development, memory would have a great importance: but what happens is a growth of the soul personality and a growth of the nature by an assimilation into our substance of being, a creative and effective absorption of the essential results of past energies; in this process conscious memory is of no importance. As the tree grows by a subconscious or unconscious assimilation of action of sun and rain and wind and absorption of earth-elements, so the being grows by a subliminal or intraconscious assimilation and absorption of its results of past becoming and an output of potentialities of future becoming. The law that deprives us of the memory of past lives is a law of the cosmic Wisdom and serves, not diserves its evolutionary purpose.

The absence of any memory of past existences is wrongly and very ignorantly taken as a disproof of the actuality of rebirth; for if even in this life it is difficult to keep all the memories of our past, if they often fade into the background or fade out altogether, if no recollection remains of our infancy, and yet with all this hiatus of memory we can grow and be, if the mind is even capable of total loss of memory of past events and its own identity and yet it is the same being who is there and the lost memory can one day be recovered, it is evident that so radical a change as a transition to other worlds followed by new birth in a new body ought normally to obliterate altogether the surface or mental memory, and yet that would not annul the identity of the soul or the growth of the nature. This obliteration of the surface mental memory is all the more certain and quite inevitable if there is a new personality of the same being and a new instrumentation which takes the place of the old, a new mind, a new life, a new body: the new brain cannot be expected to carry

in itself the images held by the old brain; the new life or mind cannot be summoned to keep the deleted impressions of the old mind and life that have been dissolved and exist no more. There is, no doubt, the subliminal being which may remember, since it does not suffer from the disabilities of the surface; but the surface mind is cut off from the subliminal memory which alone might retain some clear recollection or distinct impression of past lives. This separation is necessary because the new personality has to be built up on the surface without conscious reference to what is within; as with all the rest of the superficial being, so our surface personality too is indeed formed by an action from within, but of that action it is not conscious, it seems to itself to be self-formed or ready-made or formed by some ill-understood action of universal Nature. And yet fragmentary recollections of past births do sometimes remain in spite of these almost insuperable obstacles; there are even a very few cases of astonishingly exact and full memory in the child mind. Finally, at a certain stage of development of the being when the inner begins to predominate over the outer and come to the front, past-life memory does sometimes begin to emerge as if from some submerged layer, but more readily in the shape of a perception of the stuff and power of past personalities that are effective in the composition of the being in the present life than in any precise and accurate detail of event and circumstance, although this too can recur in parts or be recovered by concentration from the subliminal vision, from some secret memory or from our inner conscious-substance. But this detailed memory is of minor importance to Nature in her normal work and she makes small or no provision for it: it is the shaping of the future evolution of the being with which she is concerned; the past is put back, kept behind the veil and used only as an occult source of materials for the present and the future.

This conception of the Person and Personality, if accepted, must modify at the same time our current ideas about the immortality of the soul; for, normally, when we insist on the soul's undying existence, what is meant is the survival after death of a definite unchanging personality which was and will always

remain the same throughout eternity. It is the very imperfect superficial "I" of the moment, evidently regarded by Nature as a temporary form and not worth preservation, for which we demand this stupendous right to survival and immortality. But the demand is extravagant and cannot be conceded; the "I" of the moment can only merit survival if it consents to change, to be no longer itself but something else, greater, better, more luminous in knowledge, more moulded in the image of the eternal inner beauty, more and more progressive towards the divinity of the secret Spirit. It is that secret spirit or divinity of Self in us which is imperishable, because it is unborn and eternal. The psychic entity within, its representative, the spiritual individual in us, is the Person that we are; but the "I" of this moment, the "I" of this life is only a formation, a temporary personality of this inner Person: it is one step of the many steps of our evolutionary change, and it serves its true purpose only when we pass beyond it to a farther step leading nearer to a higher degree of consciousness and being. It is the inner Person that survives death, even as it pre-exists before birth; for this constant survival is a rendering of the eternity of our timeless spirit into the terms of Time.

What our normal demand of survival asks for is a similar survival for our mind, our life, even our body; the dogma of the resurrection of the body attests to this last demand,—even as it has been the root of the age-long effort of man to discover the elixir of immortality or any means magical, alchemic or scientific to conquer physically the death of the body. But this aspiration could only succeed if the mind, life or body could put on something of the immortality and divinity of the indwelling spirit. There are certain circumstances in which the survival of the outer mental personality representative of the inner mental Purusha could be possible. It could happen if our mental being came to be so powerfully individualised on the surface and so much one with the inner mind and inner mental Purusha and at the same time so open plastically to the progressive action of the Infinite that the soul no longer needed to dissolve the old form of mind and create a new one in order to progress. A similar individualisation, integration and openness of the vital being on

the surface would alone make possible a similar survival of the life-part in us, the outer vital personality representative of the inner life-being, the vital Purusha. What would really happen then is that the wall between the inner self and the outer man would have broken down and the permanent mental and vital being from within, the mental and vital representatives of the immortal psychic entity, would govern the life. Our mind nature and our life nature could then be a continuous progressive expression of the soul and not a nexus of successive formations preserved only in their essence. Our mental personality and life personality would then subsist without dissolution from birth to birth; they would be in this sense immortal, persistently surviving, continuous in their sense of identity. This would be evidently an immense victory of soul and mind and life over the Inconscience and the limitations of material Nature.

But such a survival could only persist in the subtle body; the being would still have to discard its physical form, pass to other worlds and in its return put on a new body. The awakened mental Purusha and vital Purusha, preserving the mind sheath and the life sheath of the subtle body which are usually discarded, would return with them into a new birth and keep a vivid and sustained sense of a permanent being of mind and life constituted by the past and continuing into the present and future; but the basis of physical existence, the material body, could not be preserved even by this change. The physical being could only endure, if by some means its physical causes of decay and disruption could be overcome⁷ and at the same time it could be made so plastic and progressive in its structure and its functioning that it would answer to each change demanded of it by the progress of the inner Person; it must be able to keep pace with the soul in its formation of self-expressive personality,

⁷ Even if Science — physical Science or occult Science — were to discover the necessary conditions or means for an indefinite survival of the body, still, if the body could not adapt itself so as to become a fit instrument of expression for the inner growth, the soul would find some way to abandon it and pass on to a new incarnation. The material or physical causes of death are not its sole or its true cause; its true inmost reason is the spiritual necessity for the evolution of a new being.

its long unfolding of a secret spiritual divinity and the slow transformation of the mental into the divine mental or spiritual existence. This consummation of a triple immortality,—immortality of the nature completing the essential immortality of the spirit and the psychic survival of death,—might be the crown of rebirth and a momentous indication of the conquest of the material Inconscience and Ignorance even in the very foundation of the reign of Matter. But the true immortality would still be the eternity of the spirit; the physical survival could only be relative, terminable at will, a temporal sign of the spirit's victory here over Death and Matter.

Chapter XXIII

Man and the Evolution

The one Godhead secret in all beings, all-pervading, the inner Self of all, presiding over all action, witness, conscious knower and absolute . . . the One in control over the many who are passive to Nature, fashions one seed in many ways.

*Swetasvatara Upanishad.*¹

The Godhead moves in this Field modifying each web of things separately in many ways. . . . One, he presides over all wombs and natures; himself the womb of all, he is that which brings to ripeness the nature of the being and he gives to all who have to be matured their result of development and appoints all qualities to their workings. *Swetasvatara Upanishad.*²

He fashions one form of things in many ways.

*Katha Upanishad.*³

Who has perceived this truth occult, that the Child gives being to the Mothers by the workings of his nature? An offspring from the lap of many Waters, he comes forth from them a seer possessed of his whole law of nature. Manifested, he grows in the lap of their crookednesses and becomes high, beautiful and glorious. *Rig Veda.*⁴

From the non-being to true being, from the darkness to the Light, from death to Immortality.

*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*⁵

ASPIRITUAL evolution, an evolution of consciousness in Matter in a constant developing self-formation till the form can reveal the indwelling spirit, is then the keynote, the central significant motive of the terrestrial existence.

¹ VI. 11, 12. ² V. 3-5. ³ II. 2. 12. ⁴ I. 95. 4, 5. ⁵ I. 3. 28.

This significance is concealed at the outset by the involution of the Spirit, the Divine Reality, in a dense material Inconscience; a veil of Inconscience, a veil of insensibility of Matter hides the universal Consciousness-Force which works within it, so that the Energy, which is the first form the Force of creation assumes in the physical universe, appears to be itself inconscient and yet does the works of a vast occult Intelligence. The obscure mysterious creatrix ends indeed by delivering the secret consciousness out of its thick and tenebrous prison; but she delivers it slowly, little by little, in minute infinitesimal drops, in thin jets, in small vibrant concretions of energy and substance, of life, of mind, as if that were all she could get out through the crass obstacle, the dull reluctant medium of an inconscient stuff of existence. At first she houses herself in forms of Matter which appear to be altogether unconscious, then struggles towards mentality in the guise of living Matter and attains to it imperfectly in the conscious animal. This consciousness is at first rudimentary, mostly a half subconscious or just conscious instinct; it develops slowly till in more organised forms of living Matter it reaches its climax of intelligence and exceeds itself in Man, the thinking animal who develops into the reasoning mental being but carries along with him even at his highest elevation the mould of original animality, the dead weight of subconscience of body, the downward pull of gravitation towards the original Inertia and Nescience, the control of an inconscient material Nature over his conscious evolution, its power for limitation, its law of difficult development, its immense force for retardation and frustration. This control by the original Inconscience over the consciousness emerging from it takes the general shape of a mentality struggling towards knowledge but itself, in what seems to be its fundamental nature, an Ignorance. Thus hampered and burdened, mental man has still to evolve out of himself the fully conscious being, a divine manhood or a spiritual and supramental supermanhood which shall be the next product of the evolution. That transition will mark the passage from the evolution in the Ignorance to a greater evolution in the Knowledge, founded and proceeding in the light of the Superconscious and

no longer in the darkness of the Ignorance and Inconscience.

This terrestrial evolutionary working of Nature from Matter to Mind and beyond it has a double process: there is an outward visible process of physical evolution with birth as its machinery,—for each evolved form of body housing its own evolved power of consciousness is maintained and kept in continuity by heredity; there is, at the same time, an invisible process of soul evolution with rebirth into ascending grades of form and consciousness as its machinery. The first by itself would mean only a cosmic evolution; for the individual would be a quickly perishing instrument, and the race, a more abiding collective formulation, would be the real step in the progressive manifestation of the cosmic Inhabitant, the universal Spirit: rebirth is an indispensable condition for any long duration and evolution of the individual being in the earth-existence. Each grade of cosmic manifestation, each type of form that can house the indwelling spirit, is turned by rebirth into a means for the individual soul, the psychic entity, to manifest more and more of its concealed consciousness; each life becomes a step in a victory over Matter by a greater progression of consciousness in it which shall make eventually Matter itself a means for the full manifestation of the Spirit.

But this account of the process and meaning of the terrestrial creation is at every point exposed to challenge in the mind of man himself, because the evolution is still half-way on its journey, is still in the Ignorance, is still seeking in the mind of a half-evolved humanity for its own purpose and significance. It is possible to challenge the theory of evolution on the ground that it is insufficiently founded and that it is superfluous as an explanation of the process of terrestrial existence. It is open to doubt, even if evolution is granted, whether man has the capacity to develop into a higher evolutionary being. It is open also to doubt whether the evolution is likely to go any farther than it has gone already or whether a supramental evolution, the appearance of a consummated Truth-Consciousness, a being of Knowledge, is at all probable in the fundamental Ignorance of the earthly Nature. Another construction neither teleological

nor evolutionary can be put on the workings of the Spirit in the manifestation here, and it may be as well before proceeding farther to formulate succinctly the line of thinking which makes such a construction possible.

Admitting that the creation is a manifestation of the Timeless Eternal in a Time Eternity, admitting that there are the seven grades of Consciousness and that the material Inconscience has been laid down as a basis for the reascent of the Spirit, admitting that rebirth is a fact, a part of the terrestrial order, still a spiritual evolution of the individual being is not an inevitable consequence of any of these admissions or even of all of them together. It is possible to take another view of the spiritual significance and the inner process of terrestrial existence. If each thing created is a form of the manifest Divine Existence, each is divine in itself by the spiritual presence within it, whatever its appearance, its figure or character in Nature. In each form of manifestation the Divine takes the delight of existence and there is no need of change or progress within it. Whatever ordered display or hierarchy of actualised possibilities is necessitated by the nature of the Infinite Being, is sufficiently provided for by the numberless variation, the teeming multitude of forms, types of consciousness, natures that we see everywhere around us. There is no teleological purpose in creation and there cannot be, for all is there in the Infinite: the Divine has nothing that he needs to gain or that he has not; if there is creation and manifestation, it is for the delight of creation, of manifestation, not for any purpose. There is then no reason for an evolutionary movement with a culmination to be reached or an aim to be worked out and effectuated or a drive towards ultimate perfection.

In fact we see that the principles of creation are permanent and unchanging: each type of being remains itself and does not try nor has any need to become other than itself; granting that some types of existence disappear and others come into being, it is because the Consciousness-Force in the universe withdraws its life-delight from those that perish and turns to create others for its pleasure. But each type of life, while it lasts, has its own pattern and remains faithful with whatever minor variations to

that pattern: it is bound to its own consciousness and cannot get away from it into other-consciousness; limited by its own nature, it cannot transgress these boundaries and pass into other-nature. If the Consciousness-Force of the Infinite has manifested Life after manifesting Matter and Mind after manifesting Life, it does not follow that it will proceed to manifest Supermind as the next terrestrial creation. For Mind and Supermind belong to quite different hemispheres, Mind to the lower status of the Ignorance, Supermind to the higher status of the Divine Knowledge. This world is a world of the Ignorance and intended to be that only; there need be no intention to bring down the powers of the higher hemisphere into the lower half of existence or to manifest their concealed presence there; for, if they are at all existent here, it is in an occult incommunicable immanence and only to maintain the creation, not to perfect it. Man is the summit of this ignorant creation; he has reached the utmost consciousness and knowledge of which it is capable: if he tries to go farther, he will only revolve in larger cycles of his own mentality. For that is the curve of his existence here, a finite circling which carries the mind in its revolutions and returns always to the point from which it started; mind cannot go outside its own cycle,— all idea of a straight line of movement or of progress reaching infinitely upward or sidewise into the Infinite is a delusion. If the soul of man is to go beyond humanity, to reach either a supramental or a still higher status, it must pass out of this cosmic existence, either to a plane or world of bliss and knowledge or into the unmanifest Eternal and Infinite.

It is true that Science now affirms an evolutionary terrestrial existence: but if the facts with which Science deals are reliable, the generalisations it hazards are short-lived; it holds them for some decades or some centuries, then passes to another generalisation, another theory of things. This happens even in physical Science where the facts are solidly ascertainable and verifiable by experiment: in psychology,— which is relevant here, for the evolution of consciousness comes into the picture,— its instability is still greater; it passes there from one theory to another before the first is well-founded; indeed, several conflicting theories hold the

field together. No firm metaphysical building can be erected upon these shifting quicksands. Heredity upon which Science builds its concept of life evolution, is certainly a power, a machinery for keeping type or species in unchanged being: the demonstration that it is also an instrument for persistent and progressive variation is very questionable; its tendency is conservative rather than evolutionary,—it seems to accept with difficulty the new character that the Life-Force attempts to force upon it. All the facts show that a type can vary within its own specification of nature, but there is nothing to show that it can go beyond it. It has not yet been really established that ape-kind developed into man; for it would rather seem that a type resembling the ape, but always characteristic of itself and not of apehood, developed within its own tendencies of nature and became what we know as man, the present human being. It is not even established that inferior races of man developed out of themselves the superior races; those of an inferior organisation and capacity perished, but it has not been shown that they left behind the human races of today as their descendants: but still such a development within the type is imaginable. The progress of Nature from Matter to Life, from Life to Mind, may be conceded: but there is no proof yet that Matter developed into Life or Life-energy into Mind-energy; all that can be conceded is that Life has manifested in Matter, Mind in living Matter. For there is no sufficient proof that any vegetable species developed into an animal existence or that any organisation of inanimate matter developed into a living organism. Even if it be discovered hereafter that under certain chemical or other conditions life makes its appearance, all that will be established by this coincidence is that in certain physical circumstances life manifests, not that certain chemical conditions are constituents of life, are its elements or are the evolutionary cause of a transformation of inanimate into animate matter. Here as elsewhere each grade of being exists in itself and by itself, is manifested according to its own character by its own proper energy, and the gradations above or below it are not origins and resultant sequences but only degrees in the continuous scale of earth-nature.

If it be asked, how then did all these various gradations and types of being come into existence, it can be answered that, fundamentally, they were manifested in Matter by the Consciousness-Force in it, by the power of the Real-Idea building its own significant forms and types for the indwelling Spirit's cosmic existence: the practical or physical method might vary considerably in different grades or stages, although a basic similarity of line may be visible; the creative Power might use not one but many processes or set many forces to act together. In Matter the process is a creation of infinitesimals charged with an immense energy, their association by design and number, the manifestation of larger infinitesimals on that primary basis, the grouping and association of these together to found the appearance of sensible objects, earth, water, minerals, metals, the whole material kingdom. In life also the Consciousness-Force begins with infinitesimal forms of vegetable life and infinitesimal animalcules; it creates an original plasm and multiplies it, creates the living cell as a unit, creates other kinds of minute biological apparatus like the seed or the gene, uses always the same method of grouping and association so as to build by a various operation various living organisms. A constant creation of types is visible, but that is no indubitable proof of evolution. The types are sometimes distant from each other, sometimes closely similar, sometimes identical in basis but different in detail; all are patterns, and such a variation in patterns with an identical rudimentary basis for all is the sign of a conscious Force playing with its own Idea and developing by it all kinds of possibilities of creation. Animal species in coming into birth may begin with a like rudimentary embryonic or fundamental pattern for all, it may follow out up to a stage certain similarities of development on some or all of its lines; there may too be species that are twy-natured, amphibious, intermediate between one type and another: but all this need not mean that the types developed one from another in an evolutionary series. Other forces than hereditary variation have been at work in bringing about the appearance of new characteristics; there are physical forces such as food, light-rays and others that we are only beginning to

know, there are surely others which we do not yet know; there are at work invisible life forces and obscure psychological forces. For these subtler powers have to be admitted even in the physical evolutionary theory to account for natural selection; if the occult or subconscious energy in some types answers to the need of the environment, in others remains unresponsive and unable to survive, this is clearly the sign of a varying life-energy and psychology, of a consciousness and a force other than the physical at work making for variation in Nature. The problem of the method of operation is still too full of obscure and unknown factors for any at present possible structure of theory to be definitive.

Man is a type among many types so constructed, one pattern among the multitude of patterns in the manifestation in Matter. He is the most complex that has been created, the richest in content of consciousness and the curious ingeniousness of his building; he is the head of the earthly creation, but he does not exceed it. Even as others, so he too has his own native law, limits, special kind of existence, *svabhāva, svadharma*; within those limits he can extend and develop, but he cannot go outside them. If there is a perfection to which he has to arrive, it must be a perfection in his own kind, within his own law of being,—the full play of it, but by observation of its mode and measure, not by transcendence. To exceed himself, to grow into the superman, to put on the nature and capacities of a god would be a contradiction of his self-law, impracticable and impossible. Each form and way of being has its own appropriate way of the delight of being; to seek through the mind the mastery and use and enjoyment of the environment of which he is capable is rightly man the mental being's objective: but to look beyond, to run after an ulterior object or aim of existence, to aspire to surpass the mental stature is to bring in a teleological element into existence which is not visible in the cosmic structure. If a supramental being is to appear in the terrestrial creation, it must be a new and independent manifestation; just as life and mind have manifested in Matter, so supermind must manifest there and the secret Conscious-Energy must create the necessary

patterns for this new grade of its potencies. But there is no sign of any such intention in the operations of Nature.

But if a superior creation is intended, then, certainly, it is not out of man that the new grade, type or pattern can develop; for in that case there would be some race or kind or make of human beings that has already the material of the superman in it, just as the peculiar animal being that developed into humanity had the essential elements of human nature already potential or present in it: there is no such race, kind or type, at most there are only spiritualised mental beings who are seeking to escape out of the terrestrial creation. If by any occult law of Nature such a human development of the supramental being is intended, it could only be by a few in humanity detaching themselves from the race so as to become a first foundation for this new pattern of being. There is no reason to suppose that the whole race could develop this perfection; it cannot be a possibility generalised in the human creature.

If indeed man has evolved in Nature out of the animal, yet now we see that no other animal type shows any signs of an evolution beyond itself; if then there was this evolutionary stress in the animal kingdom, it must have sunk back into quiescence as soon as the object was fulfilled by man's appearance: so too if there is any such stress for a new step in evolution, for self-exceeding, it is likely to subside into quiescence as soon as its object is fulfilled by the supramental being's appearance. But there is no such stress in reality: the idea of human progress itself is very probably an illusion, for there is no sign that man, once emerged from the animal stage, has radically progressed during his race history; at most he has advanced in knowledge of the physical world, in Science, in the handling of his surroundings, in his purely external and utilitarian use of the secret laws of Nature. But otherwise he is what he always was in the early beginnings of civilisation: he continues to manifest the same capacities, the same qualities and defects, the same efforts, blunders, achievements, frustrations. If progress there has been, it is in a circle, at most perhaps in a widening circle. Man today is not wiser than the ancient seers and sages and thinkers, not

more spiritual than the great seekers of old, the first mighty mystics, not superior in arts and crafts to the ancient artists and craftsmen; the old races that have disappeared showed as potent an intrinsic originality, invention, capacity of dealing with life and, if modern man in this respect has gone a little farther, not by any essential progress but in degree, scope, abundance, it is because he has inherited the achievements of his forerunners. Nothing warrants the idea that he will ever hew his way out of the half-knowledge half-ignorance which is the stamp of his kind, or, even if he develops a higher knowledge, that he can break out of the utmost boundary of the mental circle.

It is tempting and not illogical to regard rebirth as the potential means of a spiritual evolution, the factor that makes it possible, but still it is not certain, granting rebirth to be a fact, that this is its significance. All the ancient theories about reincarnation supposed it to be a constant transmigration of the soul from animal to human, but also from human to animal bodies: the Indian idea added the explanation of Karma, of a return for good or evil done, of a result of past will and effort; but there was no suggestion of a progressive evolution from type to higher type, still less of birth into a kind of being that has never yet existed but has still to evolve in the future. If evolution there is, then man is the last stage, because through him there can be the rejection of terrestrial or embodied life and an escape into some heaven or Nirvana. That was the end envisaged by the ancient theories and, since this is fundamentally and unchangeably a world of Ignorance,—even if all cosmic existence is not in its nature a state of Ignorance,—that escape is likely to be the true end of the cycle.

This is a line of reasoning that has a considerable cogency and importance, and it was necessary to state it, even if too briefly for its importance, in order to meet it. For although some of its propositions are valid, its view of things is not complete and its cogency is not conclusive. And first we may without much difficulty get rid of the objection to the teleological element which the idea of a predetermined evolution from inconscience to superconscience, the development of a rising order of beings

with a culminating transition from the life of the Ignorance to a life in the Knowledge, brings into the structure of the terrestrial existence. The objection to a teleological cosmos can be based on two very different grounds,— a scientific reasoning proceeding on the assumption that all is the work of an Inconscient Energy which acts automatically by mechanical processes and can have no element of purpose in it, and a metaphysical reasoning which proceeds on the perception that the Infinite and Universal has everything in it already, that it cannot have something unaccomplished to accomplish, something to add to itself, to work out, to realise, and there can therefore be in it no element of progress, no original or emergent purpose.

The scientific or materialist objection cannot maintain its validity if there is a secret Consciousness in or behind the apparently Inconscient Energy in Matter. Even in the Inconscient there seems to be at least an urge of inherent necessity producing the evolution of forms and in the forms a developing Consciousness, and it may well be held that this urge is the evolutionary will of a secret Conscious Being and its push of progressive manifestation the evidence of an innate intention in the evolution. This is a teleological element and it is not irrational to admit it: for the conscious or even the Inconscient nisus arises from a truth of conscious being that has become dynamic and set out to fulfil itself in an automatic process of material Nature; the teleology, the element of purpose in the nisus is the translation of self-operative Truth of Being into terms of self-effective Will-Power of that Being, and, if consciousness is there, such a Will-Power must also be there and the translation is normal and inevitable. Truth of being inevitably fulfilling itself would be the fundamental fact of the evolution, but Will and its purpose must be there as part of the instrumentation, as an element in the operative principle.

The metaphysical objection is more serious; for it seems self-evident that the Absolute can have no purpose in manifestation except the delight of manifestation itself: an evolutionary movement in Matter as part of the manifestation must fall within this universal statement; it can be there only for the delight of

the unfolding, the progressive execution, the objectless series self-revelation. A universal totality may also be considered as something complete in itself; as a totality, it has nothing to gain or to add to its fullness of being. But here the material world is not an integral totality, it is part of a whole, a grade in a gradation; it may admit in it, therefore, not only the presence of undeveloped immaterial principles or powers belonging to the whole that are involved within its matter, but also a descent into it of the same powers from the higher gradations of the system to deliver their kindred movements here from the strictness of a material limitation. A manifestation of the greater powers of Existence till the whole being itself is manifest in the material world in the terms of a higher, a spiritual creation, may be considered as the teleology of the evolution. This teleology does not bring in any factor that does not belong to the totality; it proposes only the realisation of the totality in the part. There can be no objection to the admission of a teleological factor in a part movement of the universal totality, if the purpose, — not a purpose in the human sense, but the urge of an intrinsic Truth necessity conscious in the will of the indwelling Spirit, — is the perfect manifestation there of all the possibilities inherent in the total movement. All exists here, no doubt, for the delight of existence, all is a game or Lila; but a game too carries within itself an object to be accomplished and without the fulfilment of that object would have no completeness of significance. A drama without denouement may be an artistic possibility — existing only for the pleasure of watching the characters and the pleasure in problems posed without a solution or with a forever suspended dubious balance of solution; the drama of the earth evolution might conceivably be of that character, but an intended or inherently predetermined denouement is also and more convincingly possible. Ananda is the secret principle of all being and the support of all activity of being; but Ananda does not exclude a delight in the working out of a Truth inherent in being, immanent in the Force or Will of being, upheld in the hidden self-awareness of its Consciousness-Force which is the dynamic and executive agent of all its activities and the knower of their significance.

A theory of spiritual evolution is not identical with a scientific theory of form-evolution and physical life-evolution; it must stand on its own inherent justification: it may accept the scientific account of physical evolution as a support or an element, but the support is not indispensable. The scientific theory is concerned only with the outward and visible machinery and process, with the detail of Nature's execution, with the physical development of things in Matter and the law of development of life and mind in Matter; its account of the process may have to be considerably changed or may be dropped altogether in the light of new discovery, but that will not affect the self-evident fact of a spiritual evolution, an evolution of Consciousness, a progression of the soul's manifestation in material existence. In its outward aspects this is what the theory of evolution comes to,—there is in the scale of terrestrial existence a development of forms, of bodies, a progressively complex and competent organisation of matter, of life in matter, of consciousness in living matter; in this scale, the better organised the form, the more it is capable of housing a better organised, a more complex and capable, a more developed or evolved life and consciousness. Once the evolutionary hypothesis is put forward and the facts supporting it are marshalled, this aspect of the terrestrial existence becomes so striking as to appear indisputable. The precise machinery by which this is done or the exact genealogy or chronological succession of types of being is a secondary, though in itself an interesting and important question; the development of one form of life out of a precedent less evolved form, natural selection, the struggle for life, the survival of acquired characteristics may or may not be accepted, but the fact of a successive creation with a developing plan in it is the one conclusion which is of primary consequence. Another self-evident conclusion is that there is a graduated necessary succession in the evolution, first the evolution of Matter, next the evolution of Life in Matter, then the evolution of Mind in living Matter, and in this last stage an animal evolution followed by a human evolution. The first three terms of the succession are too evident to be disputable. It may be debated whether there was a succession

of man to animal or a simultaneous initial development, man outstripping the animal in mind evolution; a theory has even been put forward that man was not the last, but the first and eldest of the animal species. This priority of man is an ancient conception, but it was not universal; it is born of the sense of the clear supremacy of man among earthly creatures, the dignity of this supremacy seeming to demand a priority of birth: but in evolutionary fact the superior is not prior but posterior in appearance, the less developed precedes the more developed and prepares it.

In fact, the idea of the priority of the lower forms of life is not altogether absent in ancient thinking. Apart from mythical accounts of creation, we find already in ancient and mediaeval thought in India utterances that favour the priority of the animal over man in the time succession in a sense that agrees with the modern evolutionary conception. An Upanishad declares that the Self or Spirit after deciding on life creation first formed animal kinds like the cow and horse, but the gods,—who are in the thought of the Upanishads powers of Consciousness and powers of Nature,—found them to be insufficient vehicles, and the Spirit finally created the form of man which the gods saw to be excellently made and sufficient and they entered into it for their cosmic functions. This is a clear parable of the creation of more and more developed forms till one was found that was capable of housing a developed consciousness. In the Puranas it is stated that the tamasic animal creation was the first in time. Tamas is the Indian word for the principle of inertia of consciousness and force: a consciousness dull and sluggish and incompetent in its play is said to be tamasic; a force, a life-energy that is indolent and limited in its capacity, bound to a narrow range of instinctive impulses, not developing, not seeking farther, not urged to a greater kinetic action or a more luminously conscious action, would be assigned to the same category. The animal, in whom there is this less developed force of consciousness, is prior in creation; the more developed human consciousness, in which there is a greater force of kinetic mind-energy and light of perception, is a later creation. The Tantra

speaks of a soul fallen from its status passing through many lacs of births in plant and animal forms before it can reach the human level and be ready for salvation. Here, again, there is implied the conception of vegetable and animal life-forms as the lower steps of a ladder, humanity as the last or culminating development of the conscious being, the form which the soul has to inhabit in order to be capable of the spiritual motive and a spiritual issue out of mentality, life and physicality. This is indeed the normal conception, and it recommends itself so strongly both to reason and intuition that it hardly needs debate,—the conclusion is almost unescapable.

It is against this background of a developing evolutionary process that we have to look at man, his origin and first appearance, his status in the manifestation. There are here two possibilities; either there was the sudden appearance of a human body and consciousness in the earth nature, an abrupt creation or independent automatic manifestation of reasoning mentality in the material world intervening upon a previous similar manifestation of subconscious life-forms and of living conscious bodies in Matter, or else there was an evolution of humanity out of animal being, slow perhaps in its preparation and in its stages of development, but with strong leaps of change at the decisive points of the transition. The latter theory offers no difficulty: for it is certain that changes of characteristics in the type, though not of the fundamental type itself, can be brought about in species or genus,—indeed this has already been done by man himself and its possibilities are being strikingly worked out on a small scale by experimental Science,—and it may fairly be assumed that the secretly conscious Energy in Nature could effect large-scale operations of the kind and bring about considerable and decisive developments by means of its own creative conventions. The necessary condition for the change from the normal animal to the human character of existence would be a development of the physical organisation which would capacitate a rapid progression, a reversal or turnover of the consciousness, a reaching to a new height and a looking down from it at the lower stages, a heightening and widening of capacity which would enable

the being to take up the old animal faculties with a larger and more plastic, a human intelligence, and at the same time or later to develop greater and subtler powers proper to the new type of being, powers of reason, reflection, complex observation, organised invention, thought and discovery. If there is an emergent Consciousness-Force, there would be no difficulty in the transition, the instrument being provided, except the difficulty of the obstruction and resistance of the material Inconscience. The animal has already some of the corresponding qualities on a limited scale, for action only, in a rudimentary organisation crude and simple, with a very inferior scope and plasticity, a narrower and more casual command of the faculty; but especially the working of these faculties is more mechanical, less deliberate, marked with the character of an automatism of Nature Energy driving an operation of primitive consciousness and not, as in man, of a conscious Energy observing and to a great extent directing and governing and deliberately changing or modifying its own operations. Other animal habits of consciousness are not fundamentally different from man's; all he had to do was to develop and enlarge them on a higher mental level and wherever possible, to mentalise, refine, subtilise,—in brief, to bring to them the enlightenment of his new understanding and intellectual capacity and a power of reasoned control denied to the animal. This change or reversal once effected, the power of the human mind to work upon itself and things, create, know, speculate, would develop in the course of his evolution, even if, as is conceivable, they were at the beginning small in scope, nearer to the animal, still comparatively simple and crude in their action. Such a reversal has been made in each radical transition of Nature: life-force emerging turns upon Matter, imposes a vital content on the operations of material Energy while it develops also its own new movements and operations; life-mind emerges in life-force and Matter and imposes its content of consciousness on their operations while it develops also its own action and faculties; a new greater emergence and reversal, the emergence of humanity, is in line with Nature's precedents; it would be a new application of the general principle.

This theory is therefore easy to accept: its working is intelligible. But the other hypothesis presents considerable difficulties. On the side of consciousness the new manifestation, the human, could be accounted for by an upsurge of concealed Consciousness from the involution in universal Nature. But in that case it must have had some material form already existent for its vehicle of emergence, the vehicle being adapted by the force of the emergence itself to the needs of a new inner creation; or else a rapid divergence from previous physical types or patterns may have brought a new being into existence. But whichever the hypothesis accepted, this means an evolutionary process,—there is only a difference in the method and machinery of the divergence or transition. Or there may have been, on the contrary, not an upsurgence but a descent of mentality from a mind plane above us, perhaps the descent of a soul or mental being into terrestrial Nature. The difficulty would then be the appearance of the human body, too complex and difficult an organ to have been suddenly created or manifested; for such a miraculous speed of process, though quite possible on a supraphysical plane of being, does not seem to figure among the normal possibles or potentials of the material Energy. It could only happen there by an intervention of a supraphysical force or law of Nature or by a creator Mind acting with full power and directly on Matter. An action of a supraphysical Force and a creator may be conceded in every new appearance in Matter; each such appearance is at bottom a miracle operated by a secret Consciousness supported by a veiled Mind Energy or Life Energy: but the action is nowhere seen to be direct, overt, self-sufficient; it is always superimposed on an already realised physical basis and acts by an extension of some established process of Nature. It is more conceivable that there was an opening of some existing body to a supraphysical influx so that it was transformed into a new body; but no such event can lightly be assumed to have taken place in the past history of material Nature: in order to happen it would seem to need either the conscious intervention of an invisible mental being to form the body he intended to inhabit or else a previous development of a mental being in Matter itself

who would be already able to receive a supraphysical power and impose it on the rigid and narrow formulas of his physical existence. Otherwise we must suppose that there was a pre-existent body already so much evolved as to be fitted for the reception of a vast mental influx or capable of a pliable response to the descent into it of a mental being. But this would suppose a previous evolution of mind in body to the point at which such a receptivity would be possible. It is quite conceivable that such an evolution from below and such a descent from above co-operated in the appearance of humanity in earth-nature. The secret psychical entity already there in the animal might have itself called down the mental being, the mind Purusha, into the realm of living Matter in order to take up the vital-mental energy already at work and lift it into a higher mentality. But this would still be a process of evolution, the higher plane only intervening to assist the appearance and enlargement of its own principle in terrestrial Nature.

Next, it may be conceded that each type or pattern of consciousness and being in the body, once established, has to be faithful to the law of being of that type, to its own design and rule of nature. But it may also very well be that part of the law of the human type is its impulse towards self-exceeding, that the means for a conscious transition has been provided for among the spiritual powers of man; the possession of such a capacity may be a part of the plan on which the creative Energy has built him. It may be conceded that what man has up till now principally done is to act within the circle of his nature, on a spiral of nature movement, sometimes descending, sometimes ascending,—there has been no straight line of progress, no indisputable, fundamental or radical exceeding of his past nature: what he has done is to sharpen, subtilise, make a more and more complex and plastic use of his capacities. It cannot truly be said that there has been no such thing as human progress since man's appearance or even in his recent ascertainable history; for however great the ancients, however supreme some of their achievements and creations, however impressive their powers of spirituality, of intellect or of character, there has been in later developments an increasing

subtlety, complexity, manifold development of knowledge and possibility in man's achievements, in his politics, society, life, science, metaphysics, knowledge of all kinds, art, literature; even in his spiritual endeavour, less surprisingly lofty and less massive in power of spirituality than that of the ancients, there has been this increasing subtlety, plasticity, sounding of depths, extension of seeking. There have been falls from a high type of culture, a sharp temporary descent into a certain obscurantism, cessations of the spiritual urge, plunges into a barbaric natural materialism; but these are temporary phenomena, at worst a downward curve of the spiral of progress. This progress has not indeed carried the race beyond itself, into a self-exceeding, a transformation of the mental being. But that was not to be expected; for the action of evolutionary Nature in a type of being and consciousness is first to develop the type to its utmost capacity by just such a subtilisation and increasing complexity till it is ready for her bursting of the shell, the ripened decisive emergence, reversal, turning over of consciousness on itself that constitutes a new stage in the evolution. If it be supposed that her next step is the spiritual and supramental being, the stress of spirituality in the race may be taken as a sign that that is Nature's intention, the sign too of the capacity of man to operate in himself or aid her to operate the transition. If the appearance in animal being of a type similar in some respects to the ape-kind but already from the beginning endowed with the elements of humanity was the method of the human evolution, the appearance in the human being of a spiritual type resembling mental-animal humanity but already with the stamp of the spiritual aspiration on it would be the obvious method of Nature for the evolutionary production of the spiritual and supramental being.

It is pertinently suggested that if such an evolutionary culmination is intended and man is to be its medium, it will only be a few especially evolved human beings who will form the new type and move towards the new life; that once done, the rest of humanity will sink back from a spiritual aspiration no longer necessary for Nature's purpose and remain quiescent in its normal status. It can equally be reasoned that the human

gradation must be preserved if there is really an ascent of the soul by reincarnation through the evolutionary degrees towards the spiritual summit; for otherwise the most necessary of all the intermediate steps will be lacking. It must be conceded at once that there is not the least probability or possibility of the whole human race rising in a block to the supramental level; what is suggested is nothing so revolutionary and astonishing, but only the capacity in the human mentality, when it has reached a certain level or a certain point of stress of the evolutionary impetus, to press towards a higher plane of consciousness and its embodiment in the being. The being will necessarily undergo by this embodiment a change from the normal constitution of its nature, a change certainly of its mental and emotional and sensational constitution and also to a great extent of the body-consciousness and the physical conditioning of our life and energies; but the change of consciousness will be the chief factor, the initial movement, the physical modification will be a subordinate factor, a consequence. This transmutation of the consciousness will always remain possible to the human being when the flame of the soul, the psychic kindling, becomes potent in heart and mind and the nature is ready. The spiritual aspiration is innate in man; for he is, unlike the animal, aware of imperfection and limitation and feels that there is something to be attained beyond what he now is: this urge towards self-exceeding is not likely ever to die out totally in the race. The human mental status will be always there, but it will be there not only as a degree in the scale of rebirth, but as an open step towards the spiritual and supramental status.

It must be observed that the appearance of human mind and body on the earth marks a crucial step, a decisive change in the course and process of the evolution; it is not merely a continuation of the old lines. Up till this advent of a developed thinking mind in Matter evolution had been effected, not by the self-aware aspiration, intention, will or seeking of the living being, but subconsciously or subliminally by the automatic operation of Nature. This was so because the evolution began from the Inconscience and the secret Consciousness had not

emerged sufficiently from it to operate through the self-aware participating individual will of its living creature. But in man the necessary change has been made,—the being has become awake and aware of himself; there has been made manifest in Mind its will to develop, to grow in knowledge, to deepen the inner and widen the outer existence, to increase the capacities of the nature. Man has seen that there can be a higher status of consciousness than his own; the evolutionary oestrus is there in his parts of mind and life, the aspiration to exceed himself is delivered and articulate within him: he has become conscious of a soul, discovered the self and spirit. In him, then, the substitution of a conscious for a subconscious evolution has become conceivable and practicable, and it may well be concluded that the aspiration, the urge, the persistent endeavour in him is a sure sign of Nature's will for a higher way of fulfilment, the emergence of a greater status.

In the previous stages of the evolution Nature's first care and effort had to be directed towards a change in the physical organisation, for only so could there be a change of consciousness; this was a necessity imposed by the insufficiency of the force of consciousness already in formation to effect a change in the body. But in man a reversal is possible, indeed inevitable; for it is through his consciousness, through its transmutation and no longer through a new bodily organism as a first instrumentation that the evolution can and must be effected. In the inner reality of things a change of consciousness was always the major fact, the evolution has always had a spiritual significance and the physical change was only instrumental; but this relation was concealed by the first abnormal balance of the two factors, the body of the external Inconscience outweighing and obscuring in importance the spiritual element, the conscious being. But once the balance has been righted, it is no longer the change of body that must precede the change of consciousness; the consciousness itself by its mutation will necessitate and operate whatever mutation is needed for the body. It has to be noted that the human mind has already shown a capacity to aid Nature in the evolution of new types of plant and animal; it has created

new forms of its environment, developed by knowledge and discipline considerable changes in its own mentality. It is not an impossibility that man should aid Nature consciously also in his own spiritual and physical evolution and transformation. The urge to it is already there and partly effective, though still incompletely understood and accepted by the surface mentality; but one day it may understand, go deeper within itself and discover the means, the secret energy, the intended operation of the Consciousness-Force within which is the hidden reality of what we call Nature.

All these are conclusions that can be arrived at even from the observation of the outward phenomena of Nature's progression, her surface evolution of being and of consciousness in the physical birth and the body. But there is the other, the invisible factor; there is rebirth, the progress of the soul by ascent from grade to grade of the evolving existence, and in the grades to higher and higher types of bodily and mental instrumentation. In this progression the psychic entity is still veiled, even in man the conscious mental being, by its instruments, by mind and life and body; it is unable to manifest fully, held back from coming to the front where it can stand out as the master of its nature, obliged to submit to a certain determination by the instruments, to a domination of Purusha by Prakriti. But in man the psychic part of the personality is able to develop with a much greater rapidity than in the inferior creation, and a time can arrive when the soul entity is close to the point at which it will emerge from behind the veil into the open and become the master of its instrumentation in Nature. But this will mean that the secret indwelling spirit, the Daemon, the Godhead within is on the point of emergence; and, when it emerges, it can hardly be doubted that its demand will be, as indeed it already is in the mind itself when it undergoes the inner psychic influence, for a diviner, a more spiritual existence. In the nature of the earth life where the mind is an instrument of the Ignorance, this can only be effected by a change of consciousness, a transition from a foundation in Ignorance to a foundation in Knowledge, from the mental to a supramental consciousness, a supramental instrumentation of Nature.

There is no conclusive validity in the reasoning that because this is a world of Ignorance, such a transformation can only be achieved by a passage to a heaven beyond or cannot be achieved at all and the demand of the psychic entity is itself ignorant and must be replaced by a merger of the soul in the Absolute. This conclusion could only be solely valid if Ignorance were the whole meaning, substance and power of the world-manifestation or if there were no element in world-Nature itself through which there could be an exceeding of the ignorant mentality that still burdens our present status of being. But the Ignorance is only a portion of this world-Nature; it is not the whole of it, not the original power or creator: it is in its higher origin a self-limiting Knowledge and even in its lower origin, its emergence out of the sheer material Inconscience, it is a suppressed Consciousness labouring to find, to recover itself, to manifest Knowledge, which is its true character, as the foundation of existence. In universal Mind itself there are ranges above our mentality which are instruments of the cosmic truth-cognition, and into these the mental being can surely rise; for already it rises towards them in supernormal conditions or receives from them without yet knowing or possessing them intuitions, spiritual intimations, large influxes of illumination or spiritual capacity. All these ranges are conscious of what is beyond them, and the highest of them is directly open to the Supermind, aware of the Truth-consciousness which exceeds it. Moreover, in the evolving being itself, those greater powers of consciousness are here, supporting mind-truth, underlying its action which screens them; this Supermind and those Truth-powers uphold Nature by their secret presence: even, truth of mind is their result, a diminished operation, a representation in partial figures. It is, therefore, not only natural but seems inevitable that these higher powers of Existence should manifest here in Mind as Mind itself has manifested in Life and Matter.

Man's urge towards spirituality is the inner driving of the spirit within him towards emergence, the insistence of the Consciousness-Force of the being towards the next step of its manifestation. It is true that the spiritual urge has been

largely other-worldly or turned at its extreme towards a spiritual negation and self-annihilation of the mental individual; but this is only one side of its tendency maintained and made dominant by the necessity of passing out of the kingdom of the fundamental Inconscience, overcoming the obstacle of the body, casting away the obscure vital, getting rid of the ignorant mentality, the necessity to attain first and foremost, by a rejection of all these impediments to spiritual being, to a spiritual status. The other, the dynamic side of the spiritual urge has not been absent,—the aspiration to a spiritual mastery and mutation of Nature, to a spiritual perfection of the being, a divinisation of the mind, the heart and the very body: there has even been the dream or a psychic prevision of a fulfilment exceeding the individual transformation, a new earth and heaven, a city of God, a divine descent upon earth, a reign of the spiritually perfect, a kingdom of God not only within us but outside, in a collective human life. However obscure may have been some of the forms taken by this aspiration, the indication they contain of the urge of the occult spiritual being within to emergence in earth-nature is unmistakable.

If a spiritual unfolding on earth is the hidden truth of our birth into Matter, if it is fundamentally an evolution of consciousness that has been taking place in Nature, then man as he is cannot be the last term of that evolution: he is too imperfect an expression of the spirit, mind itself a too limited form and instrumentation; mind is only a middle term of consciousness, the mental being can only be a transitional being. If, then, man is incapable of exceeding mentality, he must be surpassed and supermind and superman must manifest and take the lead of the creation. But if his mind is capable of opening to what exceeds it, then there is no reason why man himself should not arrive at supermind and supermanhood or at least lend his mentality, life and body to an evolution of that greater term of the Spirit manifesting in Nature.

Chapter XXIV

The Evolution of the Spiritual Man

Even as men come to Me, so I accept them. It is my path that men follow from all sides. . . . Whatever form the worshipper chooses to worship with faith, I set in him firm faith in it, and with that faith he puts his yearning into his adoration and gets his desire dispensed by me. But limited is that fruit. Those whose sacrifice is to the gods, to elemental spirits, reach the gods, reach the elemental spirits, but those whose sacrifice is to Me, to Me they come.

Gita.¹

In these there is not the Wonder and the Might; the truths occult exist not for the mind of the ignorant.

Rig Veda.²

As a seer working out the occult truths and their discoveries of knowledge, he brought into being the seven Craftsmen of heaven and in the light of day they spoke and wrought the things of their wisdom.

Rig Veda.³

Seer-wisdoms, secret words that speak their meaning to the seer.

Rig Veda.⁴

None knows the birth of these; they know each other's way of begetting: but the Wise perceives these hidden mysteries, even that which the great Goddess, the many-hued Mother, bears as her teat of knowledge.

Rig Veda.⁵

Made certain of the meaning of the highest spiritual knowledge, purified in their being.

Mundaka Upanishad.⁶

He strives by these means and has the knowledge: in him this spirit enters into its supreme status. . . . Satisfied in knowledge, having built up their spiritual being, the Wise, in union with

¹ IV. 11; VII. 21-23; IX. 25.

² VII. 61. 5.

³ IV. 16. 3.

⁴ IV. 3. 16.

⁵ VII. 56. 2, 4.

⁶ III. 2. 6.

the spiritual self, reach the Omnipresent everywhere and enter
into the All.

*Mundaka Upanishad.*⁷

IN THE earliest stages of evolutionary Nature we are met by the dumb secrecy of her inconscience; there is no revelation of any significance or purpose in her works, no hint of any other principles of being than that first formulation which is her immediate preoccupation and seems to be for ever her only business: for in her primal works Matter alone appears, the sole dumb and stark cosmic reality. A Witness of creation, if there had been one conscious but uninstructed, would only have seen appearing out of a vast abyss of an apparent non-existence an Energy busy with the creation of Matter, a material world and material objects, organising the infinity of the Inconscient into the scheme of a boundless universe or a system of countless universes that stretched around him into Space without any certain end or limit, a tireless creation of nebulae and star-clusters and suns and planets, existing only for itself, without a sense in it, empty of cause or purpose. It might have seemed to him a stupendous machinery without a use, a mighty meaningless movement, an aeonic spectacle without a witness, a cosmic edifice without an inhabitant; for he would have seen no sign of an indwelling Spirit, no being for whose delight it was made. A creation of this kind could only be the outcome of an inconscient Energy or an illusion-cinema, a shadow play or puppet play of forms reflected on a superconscious indifferent Absolute. He would have seen no evidence of a soul and no hint of mind or life in this immeasurable and interminable display of Matter. It would not have seemed to him possible or imaginable that there could at all be in this desert universe for ever inanimate and insensible an outbreak of teeming life, a first vibration of something occult and incalculable, alive and conscious, a secret spiritual entity feeling its way towards the surface.

But after some aeons, looking out once more on that vain

⁷ III. 2. 4, 5.

panorama, he might have detected in one small corner at least of the universe this phenomenon, a corner where Matter had been prepared, its operations sufficiently fixed, organised, made stable, adapted as a scene of a new development,—the phenomenon of a living matter, a life in things that had emerged and become visible: but still the Witness would have understood nothing, for evolutionary Nature still veils her secret. He would have seen a Nature concerned only with establishing this outburst of life, this new creation, but life living for itself with no significance in it,—a wanton and abundant creatrix busy scattering the seed of her new power and establishing a multitude of its forms in a beautiful and luxurious profusion or, later, multiplying endlessly genus and species for the pure pleasure of creation: a small touch of lively colour and movement would have been flung into the immense cosmic desert and nothing more. The Witness could not have imagined that a thinking mind would appear in this minute island of life, that a consciousness could awake in the Inconscient, a new and greater subtler vibration come to the surface and betray more clearly the existence of the submerged Spirit. It would have seemed to him at first that Life had somehow become aware of itself and that was all; for this scanty new-born mind seemed to be only a servant of life, a contrivance to help life to live, a machinery for its maintenance, for attack and defence, for certain needs and vital satisfactions, for the liberation of life-instinct and life-impulse. It could not have seemed possible to him that in this little life, so inconspicuous amid the immensities, in one sole species out of this petty multitude, a mental being would emerge, a mind serving life still but also making life and matter its servants, using them for the fulfilment of its own ideas, will, wishes,—a mental being who would create all manner of utensils, tools, instruments out of Matter for all kinds of utilities, erect out of it cities, houses, temples, theatres, laboratories, factories, chisel from it statues and carve cave-cathedrals, invent architecture, sculpture, painting, poetry and a hundred crafts and arts, discover the mathematics and physics of the universe and the hidden secret of its structure, live for the sake of mind

and its interests, for thought and knowledge, develop into the thinker, the philosopher and scientist and, as a supreme defiance to the reign of Matter, awake in himself to the hidden Godhead, become the hunter after the invisible, the mystic and the spiritual seeker.

But if after several ages or cycles the Witness had looked again and seen this miracle in full process, even then perhaps, obscured by his original experience of the sole reality of Matter in the universe, he would still not have understood; it would still seem impossible to him that the hidden Spirit could wholly emerge, complete in its consciousness, and dwell upon the earth as the self-knower and world-knower, Nature's ruler and possessor. "Impossible!" he might say, "all that has happened is nothing much, a little bubbling of sensitive grey stuff of brain, a queer freak in a bit of inanimate Matter moving about on a small dot in the Universe." On the contrary, a new Witness intervening at the end of the story, informed of the past developments but unobsessed by the deception of the beginning, might cry out, "Ah, then, this was the intended miracle, the last of many,—the Spirit that was submerged in the Inconscience has broken out from it and now inhabits, unveiled, the form of things which, veiled, it had created as its dwelling-place and the scene of its emergence." But in fact a more conscious Witness might have discovered the clue at an early period of the unfolding, even in each step of its process; for at each stage Nature's mute secrecy, though still there, diminishes; a hint is given of the next step, a more overtly significant preparation is visible. Already, in what seems to be inconscient in Life, the signs of sensation coming towards the surface are visible; in moving and breathing life the emergence of sensitive mind is apparent and the preparation of thinking mind is not entirely hidden, while in thinking mind, when it develops, there appear at an early stage the rudimentary strivings and afterwards the more developed seekings of a spiritual consciousness. As plant life contains in itself the obscure possibility of the conscious animal, as the animal mind is astir with the movements of feeling and perception and the rudiments of conception that are the first ground for man the thinker, so

man the mental being is sublimated by the endeavour of the evolutionary Energy to develop out of him the spiritual man, the fully conscious being, man exceeding his first material self and discoverer of his true self and highest nature.

But if this is to be accepted as the intention in Nature, there are two questions that put themselves at once and call for a definitive answer,—first, the exact nature of the transition from mental to spiritual being and, when that is given, the process and method of the evolution of the spiritual out of the mental man. It would at first sight seem evident that as each gradation emerges not only out of its precedent grade but in it, as life emerges in matter and is largely limited and determined in its self-expression by its material conditions, as mind emerges in life-in-matter and is similarly limited and determined in its self-expression by life conditions and material conditions, so spirit too must emerge in a mind embodied in life-in-matter and must be largely limited and determined by the mental conditions in which it has its roots as well as the life conditions, the material conditions of its existence here. It might even be maintained that, if there has been any evolution of the spiritual in us, it is only as a part of the mental evolution, a special operation of man's mentality; the spiritual element is not a distinct or separate entity and cannot have an independent emergence or a supramental future. The mental being can develop a spiritual interest or preoccupation and may evolve perhaps in consequence a spiritual as well as an intellectual mentality, a fine soul-flower of his mental life. The spiritual may become a predominant trend in some men just as in others there is a predominant artistic or pragmatic trend; but there can be no such thing as a spiritual being taking up and transforming the mental into the spiritual nature. There is no evolution of the spiritual man; there is only an evolution of a new and possibly a finer and rarer element in a mental being. This then is what has to be brought out,—the clear distinction between the spiritual and the mental, the nature of this evolution and the factors which make it possible and inevitable that there should be this emergence of the spirit in its true distinct character, not remaining, as it now for the most part is in its

process or seems to be in its way of appearance, a subordinate or a dominating feature of our mentality, but defining itself as a new power which will finally overtop the mental part and replace it as the leader of the life and nature.

It is quite true that to a surface view life seems only an operation of Matter, mind an activity of life, and it might seem to follow that what we call the soul or spirit is only a power of mentality, soul a fine form of mind, spirituality a high activity of the embodied mental being. But this is a superficial view of things due to the thought's concentrating on the appearance and process and not looking at what lies behind the process. One might as well on the same lines have concluded that electricity is only a product or operation of water and cloud matter, because it is in such a field that lightning emerges; but a deeper inquiry has shown that both cloud and water have, on the contrary, the energy of electricity as their foundation, their constituent power or energy-substance: that which seems to be a result is —in its reality, though not in its form—the origin; the effect is in the essence pre-existent to the apparent cause, the principle of the emergent activity precedent to its present field of action. So it is throughout evolutionary Nature; Matter could not have become animate if the principle of life had not been there constituting Matter and emerging as a phenomenon of life-in-matter; life-in-matter could not have begun to feel, perceive, think, reason, if the principle of mind had not been there behind life and substance, constituting it as its field of operation and emergent in the phenomenon of a thinking life and body: so too spirituality emerging in mind is the sign of a power which itself has founded and constituted life, mind and body and is now emerging as a spiritual being in a living and thinking body. How far this emergence will go, whether it will become dominant and transform its instrument, is a subsequent question; but what is necessary first to posit is the existence of spirit as something else than mind and greater than mind, spirituality as something other than mentality and the spiritual being therefore as something distinct from the mental being: spirit is a final evolutionary emergence because it is the original involutionary element and

factor. Evolution is an inverse action of the involution: what is an ultimate and last derivation in the involution is the first to appear in the evolution; what was original and primal in the involution is in the evolution the last and supreme emergence.

It is true again that it is difficult for man's mind to distinguish entirely the soul or self or any spiritual element in him from the mental and vital formation in which it makes its appearance; but that is only so long as the emergence is not complete. In the animal mind is not quite distinct from its own life-matrix and life-matter; its movements are so involved in the life movements that it cannot detach itself from them, cannot stand separate and observe them; but in man mind has become separate, he can become aware of his mental operations as distinct from his life operations, his thought and will can disengage themselves from his sensations and impulses, desires and emotional reactions, can become detached from them, observe and control them, sanction or cancel their functioning: he does not as yet know the secrets of his being well enough to be aware of himself decisively and with certitude as a mental being in a life and body, but he has that impression and can take inwardly that position. So too at first soul in man does not appear as something quite distinct from mind and from mentalised life; its movements are involved in the mind movements, its operations seem to be mental and emotional activities; the mental human being is not aware of a soul in him standing back from the mind and life and body, detaching itself, seeing and controlling and moulding their action and formation: but, as the inner evolution proceeds, this is precisely what can, must and does happen,—it is the long-delayed but inevitable next step in our evolutionary destiny. There can be a decisive emergence in which the being separates itself from thought and sees itself in an inner silence as the spirit in mind, or separates itself from the life movements, desires, sensations, kinetic impulses and is aware of itself as the spirit supporting life, or separates itself from the body sense and knows itself as a spirit ensouling Matter: this is the discovery of ourselves as the Purusha, a mental being or a life-soul or a subtle self supporting the body. This is taken by many as a sufficient

discovery of the true self and in a certain sense they are right; for it is the self or spirit that so represents itself in regard to the activities of Nature, and this revelation of its presence is enough to disengage the spiritual element: but self-discovery can go farther, it can even put aside all relation to form or action of Nature. For it is seen that these selves are representations of a divine Entity to which mind, life and body are only forms and instruments: we are then the Soul looking at Nature, knowing all her dynamisms in us, not by mental perception and observation, but by an intrinsic consciousness and its direct sense of things and its intimate exact vision, able therefore by its emergence to put a close control on our nature and change it. When there is a complete silence in the being, either a stillness of the whole being or a stillness behind unaffected by surface movements, then we can become aware of a Self, a spiritual substance of our being, an existence exceeding even the soul individuality, spreading itself into universality, surpassing all dependence on any natural form or action, extending itself upward into a transcendence of which the limits are not visible. It is these liberations of the spiritual part in us which are the decisive steps of the spiritual evolution in Nature.

It is only through these decisive movements that the true character of the evolution becomes evident; for till then there are only preparatory movements, a pressure of the psychic Entity on the mind, life and body to develop a true soul action, a pressure of the spirit or self for liberation from the ego, from the surface ignorance, a turning of the mind and life towards some occult Reality,—preliminary experiences, partial formulations of a spiritualised mind, a spiritualised life, but no complete change, no probability of an entire unveiling of the soul or self or a radical transformation of the nature. When there is the decisive emergence, one sign of it is the status or action in us of an inherent, intrinsic, self-existent consciousness which knows itself by the mere fact of being, knows all that is in itself in the same way, by identity with it, begins even to see all that to our mind seems external in the same manner, by a movement of identity or by an intrinsic direct consciousness which envelops,

penetrates, enters into its object, discovers itself in the object, is aware in it of something that is not mind or life or body. There is, then, evidently a spiritual consciousness which is other than the mental, and it testifies to the existence of a spiritual being in us which is other than our surface mental personality. But at first this consciousness may confine itself to a status of being separate from the action of our ignorant surface nature, observing it, limiting itself to knowledge, to a seeing of things with a spiritual sense and vision of existence. For action it may still depend upon the mental, vital, bodily instruments, or it may allow them to act according to their own nature and itself remain satisfied with self-experience and self-knowledge, with an inner liberation, an eventual freedom: but it may also and usually does exercise a certain authority, governance, influence on thought, life movement, physical action, a purifying uplifting control compelling them to move in a higher and purer truth of themselves, to obey or be an instrumentation of an influx of some diviner Power or a luminous direction which is not mental but spiritual and can be recognised as having a certain divine character,—the inspiration of a greater Self or the command of the Ruler of all being, the Ishwara. Or the nature may obey the psychic entity's intimations, move in an inner light, follow an inner guidance. This is already a considerable evolution and amounts to a beginning at least of a psychic and spiritual transformation. But it is possible to go farther; for the spiritual being, once inwardly liberated, can develop in mind the higher states of being that are its own natural atmosphere and bring down a supramental energy and action which are proper to the Truth-consciousness; the ordinary mental instrumentation, life-instrumentation, physical instrumentation even, could then be entirely transformed and become parts no longer of an ignorance however much illumined, but of a supramental creation which would be the true action of a spiritual truth-consciousness and knowledge.

At first this truth of the spirit and of spirituality is not self-evident to the mind; man becomes mentally aware of his soul as something other than his body, superior to his normal mind and

life, but he has no clear sense of it, only a feeling of some of its effects on his nature. As these effects take a mental form or a life form, the difference is not firmly and trenchantly drawn, the soul perception does not acquire a distinct and assured independence. Very commonly indeed, a complex of half-effects of the psychic pressure on the mental and vital parts, a formation mixed with mental aspiration and vital desires, is mistaken for the soul, just as the separative ego is taken for the self, although the self in its true being is universal as well as individual in its essence,—or just as a mixture of mental aspiration and vital enthusiasm and ardour uplifted by some kind of strong or high belief or self-dedication or altruistic eagerness is mistaken for spirituality. But this vagueness and these confusions are inevitable as a temporary stage of the evolution which, because ignorance is its starting-point and the whole stamp of our first nature, must necessarily begin with an imperfect intuitive perception and an instinctive urge or seeking without any acquired experience or clear knowledge. Even the formations which are the first effects of the perception or urge or the first indices of a spiritual evolution, must inevitably be of this incomplete and tentative nature. But the error so created comes very much in the way of a true understanding, and it must therefore be emphasised that spirituality is not a high intellectuality, not idealism, not an ethical turn of mind or moral purity and austerity, not religiosity or an ardent and exalted emotional fervour, not even a compound of all these excellent things; a mental belief, creed or faith, an emotional aspiration, a regulation of conduct according to a religious or ethical formula are not spiritual achievement and experience. These things are of considerable value to mind and life; they are of value to the spiritual evolution itself as preparatory movements disciplining, purifying or giving a suitable form to the nature; but they still belong to the mental evolution,—the beginning of a spiritual realisation, experience, change is not yet there. Spirituality is in its essence an awakening to the inner reality of our being, to a spirit, self, soul which is other than our mind, life and body, an inner aspiration to know, to feel, to be that, to enter into contact with the greater Reality beyond

and pervading the universe which inhabits also our own being, to be in communion with It and union with It, and a turning, a conversion, a transformation of our whole being as a result of the aspiration, the contact, the union, a growth or waking into a new becoming or new being, a new self, a new nature.

In fact, the creative Consciousness-Force in our earth existence has to lead forward, in an almost simultaneous process but with a considerable priority and greater stress of the inferior element, a double evolution. There is an evolution of our outward nature, the nature of the mental being in the life and body, and there is within it, pressing forward for self-revelation because with the emergence of mind that revelation is becoming possible, a preparation at least, even the beginning of an evolution of our inner being, our occult subliminal and spiritual nature. But Nature's major preoccupation must necessarily be still and for a long time the evolution of mind to its greatest possible range, height, subtlety; for only so can be prepared the unveiling of an entirely intuitive intelligence, of overmind, of supermind, the difficult passage to a higher instrumentation of the Spirit. If the sole intention were the revelation of the essential spiritual Reality and a cessation of our being into its pure existence, this insistence on the mental evolution would have no purpose: for at every point of the nature there can be a breaking out of the spirit and an absorption of our being into it; an intensity of the heart, a total silence of the mind, a single absorbing passion of the will would be enough to bring about that culminating movement. If Nature's final intention were other-worldly, then too the same law would hold; for everywhere, at any point of the nature, there can be a sufficient power of the other-worldly urge to break through and away from the terrestrial action and enter into a spiritual elsewhere. But if her intention is a comprehensive change of the being, this double evolution is intelligible and justifies itself; for it is for that purpose indispensable.

This, however, imposes a difficult and slow spiritual advance: for, first, the spiritual emergence has to wait at each step for the instruments to be ready; next, as the spiritual formation emerges, it is mixed inextricably with the powers,

motives, impulses of an imperfect mind, life and body,—there is a pull on it to accept and serve these powers, motives and impulses, a downward gravitation and perilous mixture, a constant temptation to fall or deviation, at least a fettering, a weight, a retardation; there is a necessity to return upon a step gained in order to bring up something of the nature which hangs back and prevents a farther step; finally, there is, by the very character of mind in which it has to work, a limitation of the emerging spiritual light and power and a compulsion on it to move by segments, to follow one line or another and leave altogether or leave till later on the achievement of its own totality. This hampering, this obstacle of the mind, life and body,—the heavy inertia and persistence of the body, the turbid passions of the life-part, the obscurity and doubting incertitudes, denials, other-formulations of the mind,—is an impediment so great and intolerable that the spiritual urge becomes impatient and tries rigorously to quell these opponents, to reject the life, to mortify the body, to silence the mind and achieve its own separate salvation, spirit departing into pure spirit and rejecting from it altogether an undivine and obscure Nature. Apart from the supreme call, the natural push of the spiritual part in us to return to its own highest element and status, this aspect of vital and physical Nature as an impediment to pure spirituality is a compelling reason for asceticism, for illusionism, for the tendency to other-worldliness, the urge towards withdrawal from life, the passion for a pure and unmixed Absolute. A pure spiritual absolutism is a movement of the self towards its own supreme selfhood, but it is also indispensable for Nature's own purpose; for without it the mixture, the downward gravitation would make the spiritual emergence impossible. The extremist of this absolutism, the solitary, the ascetic, is the standard-bearer of the spirit, his ochre robe is its flag, the sign of a refusal of all compromise,—as indeed the struggle of emergence cannot end by a compromise, but only by an entire spiritual victory and the complete surrender of the lower nature. If that is impossible here, then indeed it must be achieved elsewhere; if Nature refuses submission to the emerging spirit, then the soul must

withdraw from her. There is thus a dual tendency in the spiritual emergence, on one side a drive towards the establishment at all cost of the spiritual consciousness in the being, even to the rejection of Nature, on the other side a push towards the extension of spirituality to our parts of nature. But until the first is fully achieved, the second can only be imperfect and halting. It is the foundation of the pure spiritual consciousness that is the first object in the evolution of the spiritual man, and it is this and the urge of that consciousness towards contact with the Reality, the Self or the Divine Being that must be the first and foremost or even, till it is perfectly accomplished, the sole preoccupation of the spiritual seeker. It is the one thing needful that has to be done by each on whatever line is possible to him, by each according to the spiritual capacity developed in his nature.

In considering the achieved course of the evolution of the spiritual being, we have to regard it from two sides,—a consideration of the means, the lines of development utilised by Nature and a view of the actual results achieved by it in the human individual. There are four main lines which Nature has followed in her attempt to open up the inner being,—religion, occultism, spiritual thought and an inner spiritual realisation and experience: the three first are approaches, the last is the decisive avenue of entry. All these four powers have worked by a simultaneous action, more or less connected, sometimes in a variable collaboration, sometimes in dispute with each other, sometimes in a separate independence. Religion has admitted an occult element in its ritual, ceremony, sacraments; it has leaned upon spiritual thinking, deriving from it sometimes a creed or theology, sometimes its supporting spiritual philosophy,—the former, ordinarily, is the occidental method, the latter the oriental: but spiritual experience is the final aim and achievement of religion, its sky and summit. But also religion has sometimes banned occultism or reduced its own occult element to a minimum; it has pushed away the philosophic mind as a dry intellectual alien, leaned with all its weight on creed and dogma, pietistic emotion and fervour and moral conduct; it has

reduced to a minimum or dispensed with spiritual realisation and experience. Occultism has sometimes put forward a spiritual aim as its goal, and followed occult knowledge and experience as an approach to it, formulated some kind of mystic philosophy: but more often it has confined itself to occult knowledge and practice without any spiritual vistas; it has turned to thaumaturgy or mere magic or even deviated into diabolism. Spiritual philosophy has very usually leaned on religion as its support or its way to experience; it has been the outcome of realisation and experience or built its structures as an approach to it: but it has also rejected all aid—or all impediment—of religion and proceeded in its own strength, either satisfied with mental knowledge or confident to discover its own path of experience and effective discipline. Spiritual experience has used all the three means as a starting-point, but it has also dispensed with them all, relying on its own pure strength: discouraging occult knowledge and powers as dangerous lures and entangling obstacles, it has sought only the pure truth of the spirit; dispensing with philosophy, it has arrived instead through the heart's fervour or a mystic inward spiritualisation; putting behind it all religious creed, worship and practice and regarding them as an inferior stage or first approach, it has passed on, leaving behind it all these supports, nude of all these trappings, to the sheer contact of the spiritual Reality. All these variations were necessary; the evolutionary endeavour of Nature has experimented on all lines in order to find her true way and her whole way towards the supreme consciousness and the integral knowledge.

For each of these means or approaches corresponds to something in our total being and therefore to something necessary to the total aim of her evolution. There are four necessities of man's self-expansion if he is not to remain this being of the surface ignorance seeking obscurely after the truth of things and collecting and systematising fragments and sections of knowledge, the small limited and half-competent creature of the cosmic Force which he now is in his phenomenal nature. He must know himself and discover and utilise all his potentialities: but to know himself and the world completely he must go behind his own and

its exterior, he must dive deep below his own mental surface and the physical surface of Nature. This he can only do by knowing his inner mental, vital, physical and psychic being and its powers and movements and the universal laws and processes of the occult Mind and Life which stand behind the material front of the universe: that is the field of occultism, if we take the word in its widest significance. He must know also the hidden Power or Powers that control the world: if there is a Cosmic Self or Spirit or a Creator, he must be able to enter into relation with It or Him and be able to remain in whatever contact or communion is possible, get into some kind of tune with the master Beings of the universe or with the universal Being and its universal will or a supreme Being and His supreme will, follow the law It gives him and the assigned or revealed aim of his life and conduct, raise himself towards the highest height that It demands of him in his life now or in his existence hereafter; if there is no such universal or supreme Spirit or Being, he must know what there is and how to lift himself to it out of his present imperfection and impotence. This approach is the aim of religion: its purpose is to link the human with the Divine and in so doing sublimate the thought and life and flesh so that they may admit the rule of the soul and spirit. But this knowledge must be something more than a creed or a mystic revelation; his thinking mind must be able to accept it, to correlate it with the principle of things and the observed truth of the universe: this is the work of philosophy, and in the field of the truth of the spirit it can only be done by a spiritual philosophy, whether intellectual in its method or intuitive. But all knowledge and endeavour can reach its fruition only if it is turned into experience and has become a part of the consciousness and its established operations; in the spiritual field all this religious, occult or philosophical knowledge and endeavour must, to bear fruition, end in an opening up of the spiritual consciousness, in experiences that found and continually heighten, expand and enrich that consciousness and in the building of a life and action that is in conformity with the truth of the spirit: this is the work of spiritual realisation and experience.

In the very nature of things all evolution must proceed at

first by a slow unfolding; for each new principle that evolves its powers has to make its way out of an involution in Inconscience and Ignorance. It has a difficult task in pulling itself out of the involution, out of the hold of the obscurity of the original medium, against the pull and strains, the instinctive opposition and obstruction of the Inconscience and the hampering mixture and blind obstinate retardations of the Ignorance. Nature affirms at first a vague urge and tendency which is a sign of the push of the occult, subliminal, submerged reality towards the surface; there are then small half-suppressed hints of the thing that is to be, imperfect beginnings, crude elements, rudimentary appearances, small, insignificant, hardly recognisable quanta. Afterwards there are small or large formations; a more characteristic and recognisable quality begins to show itself, first partially, here and there or in a low intensity, then more vivid, more formative; finally, there is the decisive emergence, a reversal of the consciousness, the beginning of the possibility of its radical change: but still much has to be done in every direction, a long and difficult growth towards perfection lies before the evolutionary endeavour. The thing done has not only to be confirmed, secured against relapse and the downward gravitation, against failure and extinction, but opened out into all the fields of its possibilities, its totality of entire self-achievement, its utmost height, subtlety, riches, wideness; it has to become dominant, all-embracing, comprehensive. This is everywhere the process of Nature and to ignore it is to miss the intention in her works and get lost in the maze of her procedure.

It is this process that has taken place in the evolution of religion in the human mind and consciousness; the work done by it for humanity cannot be understood or properly appreciated if we ignore the conditions of the process and their necessity. It is evident that the first beginnings of religion must be crude and imperfect, its development hampered by mixtures, errors, concessions to the human mind and vital part which may often be of a very unspiritual character. Ignorant and injurious and even disastrous elements may creep in and lead to error and evil; the dogmatism of the human mind, its self-assertive narrowness, its

intolerant and challenging egoism, its attachment to its limited truths and still greater attachment to its errors, or the violence, fanaticism, militant and oppressive self-affirmation of the vital, its treacherous action on the mind in order to get a sanction for its own desires and propensities, may very easily invade the religious field and baulk religion of its higher spiritual aim and character; under the name of religion much ignorance may hide, many errors and an extensive wrong-building be permitted, many crimes even and offences against the spirit be committed. But this chequered history belongs to all human effort and, if it were to count against the truth and necessity of religion, would count also against the truth and necessity of every other line of human endeavour, against all man's action, his ideals, his thought, his art, his science.

Religion has opened itself to denial by its claim to determine the truth by divine authority, by inspiration, by a sacrosanct and infallible sovereignty given to it from on high; it has sought to impose itself on human thought, feeling, conduct without discussion or question. This is an excessive and premature claim, although imposed in a way on the religious idea by the imperative and absolute character of the inspirations and illuminations which are its warrant and justification and by the necessity of faith as an occult light and power from the soul amidst the mind's ignorance, doubts, weakness, incertitudes. Faith is indispensable to man, for without it he could not proceed forward in his journey through the Unknown; but it ought not to be imposed, it should come as a free perception or an imperative direction from the inner spirit. A claim to unquestioned acceptance could only be warranted if the spiritual effort had already achieved man's progression to the highest Truth-consciousness total and integral, free from all ignorant mental and vital mixture. This is the ultimate object before us, but it has not yet been accomplished, and the premature claim has obscured the true work of the religious instinct in man, which is to lead him towards the Divine Reality, to formulate all that he has yet achieved in that direction and to give to each human being a mould of spiritual discipline, a way of seeking, touching, nearing the Divine Truth,

a way which is proper to the potentialities of his nature.

The wide and supple method of evolutionary Nature providing the amplest scope and preserving the true intention of the religious seeking of the human being can be recognised in the development of religion in India, where any number of religious formulations, cults and disciplines have been allowed, even encouraged to subsist side by side and each man was free to accept and follow that which was congenial to his thought, feeling, temperament, build of the nature. It is right and reasonable that there should be this plasticity, proper to an experimental evolution: for religion's real business is to prepare man's mind, life and bodily existence for the spiritual consciousness to take it up; it has to lead him to that point where the inner spiritual light begins fully to emerge. It is at this point that religion must learn to subordinate itself, not to insist on its outer characters, but give full scope to the inner spirit itself to develop its own truth and reality. In the meanwhile it has to take up as much of man's mentality, vitality, physicality as it can and give all his activities a turn towards the spiritual direction, the revelation of a spiritual meaning in them, the imprint of a spiritual refinement, the beginning of a spiritual character. It is in this attempt that the errors of religion come in, for they are caused by the very nature of the matter with which it is dealing,—that inferior stuff invades the very forms that are meant to serve as intermediaries between the spiritual and the mental, vital or physical consciousness, and often it diminishes, degrades and corrupts them: but it is in this attempt that lies religion's greatest utility as an intercessor between spirit and nature. Truth and error live always together in the human evolution and the truth is not to be rejected because of its accompanying errors, though these have to be eliminated,—often a difficult business and, if crudely done, resulting in surgical harm inflicted on the body of religion; for what we see as error is very frequently the symbol or a disguise or a corruption or malformation of a truth which is lost in the brutal radicality of the operation,—the truth is cut out along with the error. Nature herself very commonly permits the good corn and the tares and weeds to grow together for a long time, because

only so is her own growth, her free evolution possible.

Evolutionary Nature in her first awakening of man to a rudimentary spiritual consciousness must begin with a vague sense of the Infinite and the Invisible surrounding the physical being, a sense of the limitation and impotence of human mind and will and of something greater than himself concealed in the world, of Potencies beneficent or maleficent which determine the results of his action, a Power that is behind the physical world he lives in and has perhaps created it and him, or Powers that inform and rule her movements while they themselves perhaps are ruled by the greater Unknown that is beyond them. He had to determine what they are and find means of communication so that he might propitiate them or call them to his aid; he sought also for means by which he could find out and control the springs of the hidden movements of Nature. This he could not do at once by his reason because his reason could at first deal only with physical facts, but this was the domain of the Invisible and needed a supraphysical vision and knowledge; he had to do it by an extension of the faculty of intuition and instinct which was already there in the animal. This faculty, prolonged in the thinking being and mentalised, must have been more sensitive and active in early man, though still mostly on a lower scale, for he had to rely on it largely for all his first necessary discoveries: he had to rely also on the aid of subliminal experience; for the subliminal too must have been more active, more ready to upsurge in him, more capable of formulating its phenomena on the surface, before he learned to depend completely on his intellect and senses. The intuitions that he thus received by contact with Nature, his mind systematised and so created the early forms of religion. This active and ready power of intuition also gave him the sense of supraphysical forces behind the physical, and his instinct and a certain subliminal or supernormal experience of supraphysical beings with whom he could somehow communicate turned him towards the discovery of effective and canalising means for a dynamic utilisation of this knowledge; so were created magic and the other early forms of occultism. At some time it must have dawned on him

that he had something in him which was not physical, a soul that survived the body; certain supernormal experiences which became active because of the pressure to know the invisible, must have helped to formulate his first crude ideas of this entity within him. It would only be later that he began to realise that what he perceived in the action of the universe was also there in some form within him and that in him also were elements that responded to invisible powers and forces for good or for evil; so would begin his religio-ethical formations and his possibilities of spiritual experience. An amalgam of primitive intuitions, occult ritual, religio-social ethics, mystical knowledge or experiences symbolised in myth but with their sense preserved by a secret initiation and discipline is the early, at first very superficial and external stage of human religion. In the beginning these elements were, no doubt, crude and poor and defective, but they acquired depth and range and increased in some cultures to a great amplitude and significance.

But as the mental and life development increased, — for that is Nature's first preoccupation in man and she does not hesitate to push it forward at the cost of other elements that will need to be taken up fully hereafter, — there is a tendency towards intellectualisation, and the first necessary intuitive, instinctive and subliminal formations are overlaid with the structures erected by a growing force of reason and mental intelligence. As man discovers the secrets and processes of physical Nature, he moves more and more away from his early recourse to occultism and magic; the presence and felt influence of gods and invisible powers recedes as more and more is explained by natural workings, the mechanical procedure of Nature: but he still feels the need of a spiritual element and spiritual factors in his life and therefore keeps for a time the two activities running together. But the occult elements of religion, though still held as beliefs or preserved but also buried in rites and myths, lose their significance and diminish and the intellectual element increases; finally, where and when the intellectualising tendency becomes too strong, there is a movement to cut out everything but creed, institution, formal practice and ethics. Even the element of spiritual

experience dwindle and it is considered sufficient to rely only on faith, emotional fervour and moral conduct; the first amalgam of religion, occultism and mystic experience is disrupted, and there is a tendency, not by any means universal or complete but still pronounced or visible, for each of these powers to follow its own way to its own goal in its own separate and free character. A complete denial of religion, occultism and all that is supra-physical is the last outcome of this stage, a hard dry paroxysm of the superficial intellect hacking away the sheltering structures that are refuges for the deeper parts of our nature. But still evolutionary Nature keeps alive her ulterior intentions in the minds of a few and uses man's greater mental evolution to raise them to a higher plane and deeper issues. In the present time itself, after an age of triumphant intellectuality and materialism, we can see evidences of this natural process,—a return towards inner self-discovery, an inner seeking and thinking, a new attempt at mystic experience, a groping after the inner self, a reawakening to some sense of the truth and power of the spirit begins to manifest itself; man's search after his self and soul and a deeper truth of things tends to revive and resume its lost force and to give a fresh life to the old creeds, erect new faiths or develop independently of sectarian religions. The intellect itself, having reached near to the natural limits of the capacity of physical discovery, having touched its bedrock and found that it explains nothing more than the outer process of Nature, has begun, still tentatively and hesitatingly, to direct an eye of research on the deeper secrets of the mind and the life force and on the domain of the occult which it had rejected *a priori*, in order to know what there may be in it that is true. Religion itself has shown its power of survival and is undergoing an evolution the final sense of which is still obscure. In this new phase of the mind that we see beginning, however crudely and hesitatingly, there can be detected the possibility of a pressure towards some decisive turn and advance of the spiritual evolution in Nature. Religion, rich but with a certain obscurity in her first infrarational stage, had tended under the overweight of the intellect to pass into a clear but bare rational interspace; but it must in the end follow

the upward curve of the human mind and rise more fully at its summits towards its true or greatest field in the sphere of a suprarational consciousness and knowledge.

If we look at the past, we can still see the evidences of this line of natural evolution, although most of its earlier stages are hidden from us in the unwritten pages of prehistory. It has been contended that religion in its beginnings was nothing but a mass of animism, fetishism, magic, totemism, taboo, myth, superstitious symbol, with the medicine-man as priest, a mental fungus of primitive human ignorance,—later on at its best a form of Nature-worship. It could well have been so in the primitive mind, though we have to add the proviso that behind much of its beliefs and practices there may have been a truth of an inferior but very effective kind that we have lost with our superior development. Primitive man lives much in a low and small province of his life-being, and this corresponds on the occult plane to an invisible Nature which is of a like character and whose occult powers can be called into activity by a knowledge and methods to which the lower vital intuitions and instincts may open a door of access. This might be formulated in a first stage of religious belief and practice which would be occult after a crude inchoate fashion in its character and interests, not yet spiritual; its main element would be a calling in of small life-powers and elemental beings to the aid of small life-desires and a rude physical welfare.

But this primitive stage,—if it is indeed such and not, in what we still see of it, a fall or a vestige, a relapse from a higher knowledge belonging to a previous cycle of civilisation or the debased remnants of a dead or obsolete culture,—can have been only a beginning. It was followed, after whatever stages, by the more advanced type of religion of which we have a record in the literature or surviving documents of the early civilised peoples. This type, composed of a polytheistic belief and worship, a cosmology, a mythology, a complexus of ceremonies, practices, ritual and ethical obligations interwoven sometimes deeply into the social system, was ordinarily a national or tribal religion intimately expressive of the stage of evolution of thought and life

reached by the community. In the outer structure we still miss the support of a deeper spiritual significance, but this gap was filled in in the greater more developed cultures by a strong background of occult knowledge and practices or else by carefully guarded mysteries with a first element of spiritual wisdom and discipline. Occultism occurs more often as an addition or superstructure, but is not always present; the worship of divine powers, sacrifice, a surface piety and social ethics are the main factors. A spiritual philosophy or idea of the meaning of life seems at first to be absent, but its beginnings are often contained in the myths and mysteries and in one or two instances fully emerge out of them so that it assumes a strong separate existence.

It is possible indeed that it is the mystic or the incipient occultist who was everywhere the creator of religion and imposed his secret discoveries in the form of belief, myth and practice on the mass human mind; for it is always the individual who receives the intuitions of Nature and takes the step forward dragging or drawing the rest of humanity behind him. But even if we give the credit of this new creation to the subconscious mass mind, it is the occultist and mystic element in that mind which created it and it must have found individuals through whom it could emerge; for a mass experience or discovery or expression is not the first method of Nature; it is at some one point or a few points that the fire is lit and spreads from hearth to hearth, from altar to altar. But the spiritual aspiration and experience of the mystics was usually casketed in secret formulas and given only to a few initiates; it was conveyed to the rest or rather preserved for them in a mass of religious or traditional symbols. It is these symbols that were the heart's core of religion in the mind of an early humanity.

Out of this second stage there emerged a third which tried to liberate the secret spiritual experience and knowledge and put it at the disposal of all as a truth that could have a common appeal and must be made universally available. A tendency prevailed, not only to make the spiritual element the very kernel of the religion, but to render it attainable to all the worshippers by an exoteric teaching; as each esoteric school had had its system of

knowledge and discipline, so now each religion was to have its system of knowledge, its creed and its spiritual discipline. Here, in these two forms of the spiritual evolution, the esoteric and the exoteric, the way of the mystic and the way of the religious man, we see a double principle of evolutionary Nature, the principle of intensive and concentrated evolution in a small space and the principle of expansion and extension so that the new creation may be generalised in as large a field as possible. The first is the concentrated dynamic and effective movement; the second tends towards diffusion and status. As a result of this new development, the spiritual aspiration at first carefully treasured by a few became more generalised in mankind, but it lost in purity, height and intensity. The mystics founded their endeavour on a power of suprarational knowledge, intuitive, inspired, revelatory and on the force of the inner being to enter into occult truth and experience: but these powers are not possessed by men in the mass or possessed only in a crude, undeveloped and fragmentary initial form on which nothing could be safely founded; so for them in this new development the spiritual truth had to be clothed in intellectual forms of creed and doctrine, in emotional forms of worship and in a simple but significant ritual. At the same time the strong spiritual nucleus became mixed, diluted, alloyed; it tended to be invaded and aped by the lower elements of mind and life and physical nature. It was this mixture and alloy and invasion of the spurious, this profanation of the mysteries and the loss of their truth and significance, as well as the misuse of the occult power that comes by communication with invisible forces, that was most dreaded by the early mystics and prevented by secrecy, by strict discipline, by restriction to the few fit initiates. Another untoward result or peril of the diffusive movement and the consequent invasion has been the intellectual formalisation of spiritual knowledge into dogma and the materialisation of living practice into a dead mass of cult and ceremony and ritual, a mechanisation by which the spirit was bound to depart in course of time from the body of the religion. But this risk had to be taken, for the expansive movement was an inherent necessity of the spiritual urge in evolutionary Nature.

Thus came into being the religions which rely mainly or in the mass on creed and ritual for some spiritual result, but yet hold because of their truth of experience, the fundamental inner reality that was initially present in them and persists so long as there are men to continue or renew it, a means for those who are touched by the spiritual impulse to realise the Divine and liberate the spirit. This development has led farther to a division into two tendencies, catholic and protestant, one a tendency towards some conservation of the original plastic character of religion, its many-sidedness and appeal to the whole nature of the human being, the other disruptive of this catholicity and insistent on a pure reliance on belief, worship and conduct simplified so as to make a quick and ready appeal to the common reason, heart and ethical will. This turn has tended to create an excessive rationalisation, a discrediting and condemnation of most of the occult elements which seek to establish a communication with what is invisible, a reliance on the surface mind as the sufficient vehicle of the spiritual endeavour; a certain dryness and a narrowness and paucity of the spiritual life have been a frequent consequence. Moreover, the intellect having denied so much, cast out so much, has found ample room and opportunity to deny more until it denies all, to negate spiritual experience and cast out spirituality and religion, leaving only intellect itself as the sole surviving power. But intellect void of the spirit can only pile up external knowledge and machinery and efficiency and ends in a drying up of the secret springs of vitality and a decadence without any inner power to save the life or create a new life or any other way out than death and disintegration and a new beginning out of the old Ignorance.

It would have been possible for the evolutionary principle to have preserved its pristine wholeness of movement while pressing on, by an expansion and not a disruption of the wiser ancient harmony, to a greater synthesis of the principle of concentration and the principle of diffusion. In India, we have seen, there has been a persistence of the original intuition and total movement of evolutionary Nature. For religion in India limited itself by no one creed or dogma; it not only admitted a vast number of

different formulations, but contained successfully within itself all the elements that have grown up in the course of the evolution of religion and refused to ban or excise any: it developed occultism to its utmost limits, accepted spiritual philosophies of all kinds, followed to its highest, deepest or largest outcome every possible line of spiritual realisation, spiritual experience, spiritual self-discipline. Its method has been the method of evolutionary Nature herself, to allow all developments, all means of communication and action of the spirit upon the members, all ways of communion between man and the Supreme or Divine, to follow every possible way of advance to the goal and test it even to its extreme. All stages of spiritual evolution are there in man and each has to be allowed or provided with its means of approach to the spirit, an approach suited to its capacity, *adhikāra*. Even the primitive forms that survived were not banned but were lifted to a deeper significance, while still there was the pressure to the highest spiritual pinnacles in the rarest supreme ether. Even the exclusive credal type of religion was not itself excluded; provided its affinity to the general aim and principle was clear, it was admitted into the infinite variety of the general order. But this plasticity sought to support itself on a fixed religio-social system, which it permeated with the principle of a graded working out of the human nature turned at its height towards a supreme spiritual endeavour; this social fixity, which was perhaps necessary at one time for unity of life if not also as a settled and secure basis for the spiritual freedom, has been on one side a power for preservation but also the one obstacle to the native spirit of entire catholicity, an element of excessive crystallisation and restriction. A fixed basis may be indispensable, but if settled in essence, this also must be in its forms capable of plasticity, evolutionary change; it must be an order, but a growing order.

Nevertheless, the principle of this great and many-sided religious and spiritual evolution was sound, and by taking up in itself the whole of life and of human nature, by encouraging the growth of intellect and never opposing it or putting bounds to its freedom, but rather calling it in to the aid of the spiritual seeking, it prevented the conflict or the undue predominance

which in the Occident led to the restriction and drying up of the religious instinct and the plunge into pure materialism and secularism. A method of this plastic and universal kind, admitting but exceeding all creeds and forms and allowing every kind of element, may have numerous consequences which might be objected to by the purist, but its great justifying result has been an unexampled multitudinous richness and a more than millennial persistence and impregnable durability, generality, universality, height, subtlety and many-sided wideness of spiritual attainment and seeking and endeavour. It is indeed only by such a catholicity and plasticity that the wider aim of the evolution can work itself out with any fullness. The individual demands from religion a door of opening into spiritual experience or a means of turning towards it, a communion with God or a definite light of guidance on the way, a promise of the hereafter or a means of a happier supraterrestrial future; these needs can be met on the narrower basis of credal belief and sectarian cult. But there is also the wider purpose of Nature to prepare and further the spiritual evolution in man and turn him into a spiritual being; religion serves her as a means for pointing his effort and his ideal in that direction and providing each one who is ready with the possibility of taking a step upon the way towards it. This end she serves by the immense variety of the cults she has created, some final, standardised and definitive, others more plastic, various and many-sided. A religion which is itself a congeries of religions and which at the same time provides each man with his own turn of inner experience, would be the most in consonance with this purpose of Nature: it would be a rich nursery of spiritual growth and flowering, a vast multiform school of the soul's discipline, endeavour, self-realisation. Whatever errors Religion has committed, this is her function and her great and indispensable utility and service,—the holding up of this growing light of guidance on our way through the mind's ignorance towards the Spirit's complete consciousness and self-knowledge.

Occultism is in its essence man's effort to arrive at a knowledge of secret truths and potentialities of Nature which will lift him out of slavery to his physical limits of being, an attempt

in particular to possess and organise the mysterious, occult, outwardly still undeveloped direct power of Mind upon Life and of both Mind and Life over Matter. There is at the same time an endeavour to establish communication with worlds and entities belonging to the supraphysical heights, depths and intermediate levels of cosmic Being and to utilise this communion for the mastery of a higher Truth and for a help to man in his will to make himself sovereign over Nature's powers and forces. This human aspiration takes its stand on the belief, intuition or intimation that we are not mere creatures of the mud, but souls, minds, wills that can know all the mysteries of this and every world and become not only Nature's pupils but her adepts and masters. The occultist sought to know the secret of physical things also and in this effort he furthered astronomy, created chemistry, gave an impulse to other sciences, for he utilised geometry also and the science of numbers; but still more he sought to know the secrets of supernature. In this sense occultism might be described as the science of the supernatural; but it is in fact only the discovery of the supraphysical, the surpassing of the material limit,—the heart of occultism is not the impossible chimera which hopes to go beyond or outside all force of Nature and make pure phantasy and arbitrary miracle omnipotently effective. What seems to us supernatural is in fact either a spontaneous irruption of the phenomena of other-Nature into physical Nature or, in the work of the occultist, a possession of the knowledge and power of the higher orders or grades of cosmic Being and Energy and the direction of their forces and processes towards the production of effects in the physical world by seizing on possibilities of interconnection and means for a material effectuality. There are powers of the mind and the life-force which have not been included in Nature's present systematisation of mind and life in matter, but are potential and can be brought to bear upon material things and happenings or even brought in and added to the present systematisation so as to enlarge the control of mind over our own life and body or to act on the minds, lives, bodies of others or on the movements of cosmic Forces. The modern admission of hypnotism is an example of such a discovery

and systematised application,—though still narrow and limited, limited by its method and formula,—of occult powers which otherwise touch us only by a casual or a hidden action whose process is unknown to us or imperfectly caught by a few; for we are all the time undergoing a battery of suggestions, thought suggestions, impulse suggestions, will suggestions, emotional and sensational suggestions, thought waves, life waves that come on us or into us from others or from the universal Energy, but act and produce their effects without our knowledge. A systematised endeavour to know these movements and their law and possibilities, to master and use the power or Nature-force behind them or to protect ourselves from them would fall within one province of occultism: but it would only be a small part even of that province; for wide and multiple are the possible fields, uses, processes of this vast range of little explored Knowledge.

In modern times, as physical Science enlarged its discoveries and released the secret material forces of Nature into an action governed by human knowledge for human use, occultism receded and was finally set aside on the ground that the physical alone is real and mind and life are only departmental activities of Matter. On this basis, believing material Energy to be the key of all things, Science has attempted to move towards a control of mind and life processes by a knowledge of the material instrumentation and process of our normal and abnormal mind and life functionings and activities; the spiritual is ignored as only one form of mentality. It may be observed in passing that if this endeavour succeeded, it might not be without danger for the existence of the human race, even as now are certain other scientific discoveries misused or clumsily used by a humanity mentally and morally unready for the handling of powers so great and perilous; for it would be an artificial control applied without any knowledge of the secret forces which underlie and sustain our existence. Occultism in the West could be thus easily pushed aside because it never reached its majority, never acquired ripeness and a philosophic or sound systematic foundation. It indulged too freely in the romance of the supernatural or made the mistake of concentrating its major effort on the discovery of formulas

and effective modes for using supernormal powers. It deviated into magic white and black or into a romantic or thaumaturgic paraphernalia of occult mysticism and the exaggeration of what was after all a limited and scanty knowledge. These tendencies and this insecurity of mental foundation made it difficult to defend and easy to discredit, a target facile and vulnerable. In Egypt and the East this line of knowledge arrived at a greater and more comprehensive endeavour: this ampler maturity can be seen still intact in the remarkable system of the Tantras; it was not only a many-sided science of the supernormal but supplied the basis of all the occult elements of religion and even developed a great and powerful system of spiritual discipline and self-realisation. For the highest occultism is that which discovers the secret movements and dynamic supernormal possibilities of mind and life and spirit and uses them in their native force or by an applied process for the greater effectivity of our mental, vital and spiritual being.

Occultism is associated in popular idea with magic and magical formulae and a supposed mechanism of the supernatural. But this is only one side, nor is it altogether a superstition as is vainly imagined by those who have not looked deeply or at all at this covert side of secret Nature-Force or experimented with its possibilities. Formulas and their application, a mechanisation of latent forces, can be astonishingly effective in the occult use of mind power and life power just as it is in physical Science, but this is only a subordinate method and a limited direction. For mind and life forces are plastic, subtle and variable in their action and have not the material rigidity; they need a subtle and plastic intuition in the knowledge of them, in the interpretation of their action and process and in their application,—even in the interpretation and action of their established formulas. An overstress on mechanisation and rigid formulation is likely to result in sterilisation or a formalised limitation of knowledge and, on the pragmatic side, to much error, ignorant convention, misuse and failure. Now that we are outgrowing the superstition of the sole truth of Matter, a swing backward towards the old occultism and to new formulations, as well as to a scientific

investigation of the still hidden secrets and powers of mind and a close study of psychic and abnormal or supernormal psychological phenomena, is possible and, in parts, already visible. But if it is to fulfil itself, the true foundation, the true aim and direction, the necessary restrictions and precautions of this line of inquiry have to be rediscovered; its most important aim must be the discovery of the hidden truths and powers of the mind-force and the life-power and the greater forces of the concealed spirit. Occult science is, essentially, the science of the subliminal, the subliminal in ourselves and the subliminal in world-nature, and of all that is in connection with the subliminal, including the subconscious and the superconscious, and the use of it as part of self-knowledge and world-knowledge and for the right dynamisation of that knowledge.

An intellectual approach to the highest knowledge, the mind's possession of it, is an indispensable aid to this movement of Nature in the human being. Ordinarily, on our surface, man's chief instrument of thought and action is the reason, the observing, understanding and arranging intellect. In any total advance or evolution of the spirit, not only the intuition, insight, inner sense, the heart's devotion, a deep and direct life-experience of the things of the spirit have to be developed, but the intellect also must be enlightened and satisfied; our thinking and reflecting mind must be helped to understand, to form a reasoned and systematised idea of the goal, the method, the principles of this highest development and activity of our nature and the truth of all that lies behind it. Spiritual realisation and experience, an intuitive and direct knowledge, a growth of inner consciousness, a growth of the soul and of an intimate soul perception, soul vision and a soul sense, are indeed the proper means of this evolution: but the support of the reflective and critical reason is also of great importance; if many can dispense with it, because they have a vivid and direct contact with inner realities and are satisfied with experience and insight, yet in the whole movement it is indispensable. If the supreme truth is a spiritual Reality, then the intellect of man needs to know what is the nature of that original Truth and the principle of its

relations to the rest of existence, to ourselves and the universe. The intellect is not capable by itself of bringing us into touch with the concrete spiritual reality, but it can help by a mental formulation of the truth of the Spirit which explains it to the mind and can be applied even in the more direct seeking: this help is of a capital importance.

Our thinking mind is concerned mainly with the statement of general spiritual truth, the logic of its absolute and the logic of its relativities, how they stand to each other or lead to each other, and what are the mental consequences of the spiritual theorem of existence. But besides this understanding and intellectual statement which is its principal right and share, the intellect seeks to exercise a critical control; it may admit the ecstatic or other concrete spiritual experiences, but its demand is to know on what sure and well-ordered truths of being they are founded. Indeed, without such a truth known and verifiable, our reason might find these experiences insecure and unintelligible, might draw back from them as possibly not founded on truth or else distrust them in their form, if not in their foundation, as affected by an error, even an aberration of the imaginative vital mind, the emotions, the nerves or the senses; for these might be misled, in their passage or transference from the physical and sensible to the invisible, into a pursuit of deceiving lights or at least to a misreception of things valid in themselves but marred by a wrong or imperfect interpretation of what is experienced or a confusion and disorder of the true spiritual values. If reason finds itself obliged to admit the dynamics of occultism, there too it will be most concerned with the truth and right system and real significance of the forces that it sees brought into play; it must inquire whether the significance is that which the occultist attaches to it or something other and perhaps deeper which has been misinterpreted in its essential relations and values or not given its true place in the whole of experience. For the action of our intellect is primarily the function of understanding, but secondarily critical and finally organising, controlling and formative.

The means by which this need can be satisfied and with which our nature of mind has provided us is philosophy, and

in this field it must be a spiritual philosophy. Such systems have arisen in numbers in the East; for almost always, wherever there has been a considerable spiritual development, there has arisen from it a philosophy justifying it to the intellect. The method was at first an intuitive seeing and an intuitive expression, as in the fathomless thought and profound language of the Upanishads, but afterwards there was developed a critical method, a firm system of dialectics, a logical organisation. The later philosophies were an intellectual account⁸ or a logical justification of what had been found by inner realisation; or they provided, themselves, a mental ground or a systematised method for realisation and experience.⁹ In the West where the syncretic tendency of the consciousness was replaced by the analytic and separative, the spiritual urge and the intellectual reason parted company almost at the outset; philosophy took from the first a turn towards a purely intellectual and ratiocinative explanation of things. Nevertheless, there were systems like the Pythagorean, Stoic and Epicurean, which were dynamic not only for thought but for conduct of life and developed a discipline, an effort at inner perfection of the being; this reached a higher spiritual plane of knowledge in later Christian or Neo-pagan thought-structures where East and West met together. But later on the intellectualisation became complete and the connection of philosophy with life and its energies or spirit and its dynamism was either cut or confined to the little that the metaphysical idea can impress on life and action by an abstract and secondary influence. Religion has supported itself in the West not by philosophy but by a credal theology; sometimes a spiritual philosophy emerges by sheer force of individual genius, but it has not been as in the East a necessary adjunct to every considerable line of spiritual experience and endeavour. It is true that a philosophic development of spiritual thought is not entirely indispensable; for the truths of spirit can be reached more directly and completely by intuition and by a concrete inner contact. It must also be said

⁸ E.g., the Gita.

⁹ E.g., the Yoga philosophy of Patanjali.

that the critical control of the intellect over spiritual experience can be hampering and unreliable, for it is an inferior light turned upon a field of higher illumination; the true controlling power is an inner discrimination, a psychic sense and tact, a superior intervention of guidance from above or an innate and luminous inner guidance. But still this line of development too is necessary, because there must be a bridge between the spirit and the intellectual reason: the light of a spiritual or at least a spiritualised intelligence is necessary for the fullness of our total inner evolution, and without it, if another deeper guidance is lacking, the inner movement may be erratic and undisciplined, turbid and mixed with unspiritual elements or one-sided or incomplete in its catholicity. For the transformation of the Ignorance into the integral Knowledge the growth in us of a spiritual intelligence ready to receive a higher light and canalise it for all the parts of our nature is an intermediate necessity of great importance.

But none of these three lines of approach can by themselves entirely fulfil the greater and ulterior intention of Nature; they cannot create in mental man the spiritual being, unless and until they open the door to spiritual experience. It is only by an inner realisation of what these approaches are seeking after, by an overwhelming experience or by many experiences building up an inner change, by a transmutation of the consciousness, by a liberation of the spirit from its present veil of mind, life and body that there can emerge the spiritual being. That is the final line of the soul's progress towards which the others are pointing and, when it is ready to disengage itself from the preliminary approaches, then the real work has begun and the turning-point of the change is no longer distant. Till then all that the human mental being has reached is a familiarity with the idea of things beyond him, with the possibility of an other-worldly movement, with the ideal of some ethical perfection; he may have made too some contact with greater Powers or Realities which help his mind or heart or life. A change there may be, but not the transmutation of the mental into the spiritual being. Religion and its thought and ethics and occult mysticism in ancient times produced the priest and the mage, the man of piety, the just man,

the man of wisdom, many high points of mental manhood; but it is only after spiritual experience through the heart and mind began that we see arise the saint, the prophet, the Rishi, the Yogi, the seer, the spiritual sage and the mystic, and it is the religions in which these types of spiritual manhood came into being that have endured, covered the globe and given mankind all its spiritual aspiration and culture.

When spirituality disengages itself in the consciousness and puts on its distinctive character, it is only at first a small kernel, a growing tendency, an exceptional light of experience amidst the great mass of normal unenlightened human mind, vitality, physicality which forms the outer self and engrosses our natural preoccupation. There are tentative beginnings and a slow evolution and hesitating emergence. An earlier first preliminary form of it creates a certain kind of religiosity which is not the pure spiritual temperament, but is of the nature of mind or life seeking or finding in itself a spiritual support or factor; in this stage man is mostly preoccupied with the utilisation of such contacts as he can get or construct with what is beyond him to help or serve his mental ideas or moral ideals or his vital and physical interests; the true turn to some spiritual change has not come. The first true formations take the shape of a spiritualisation of our natural activities, a permeating influence on them or a direction: there is a preparatory influence or influx in some part or tendency of the mind or life,— a spiritualised turn of thought with uplifting illuminations, or a spiritualised turn of the emotional or the aesthetic being, a spiritualised ethical formation in the character, a spiritualised urge in some life-action or other dynamic vital movement of the nature. An awareness comes perhaps of an inner light, of a guidance or a communion, of a greater Control than the mind and will to which something in us obeys; but all is not yet recast in the mould of that experience. But when these intuitions and illuminations grow in insistence and canalise themselves, make a strong inner formation and claim to govern the whole life and take over the nature, then there begins the spiritual formation of the being; there emerges the saint, the devotee, the spiritual sage, the seer, the prophet, the servant of

God, the soldier of the spirit. All these take their stand on one part of the natural being lifted up by a spiritual light, power or ecstasy. The sage and seer live in the spiritual mind, their thought or their vision is governed and moulded by an inner or a greater divine light of knowledge; the devotee lives in the spiritual aspiration of the heart, its self-offering and its seeking; the saint is moved by the awakened psychic being in the inner heart grown powerful to govern the emotional and vital being; the others stand in the vital kinetic nature driven by a higher spiritual energy and turned by it towards an inspired action, a God-given work or mission, the service of some divine Power, idea or ideal. The last or highest emergence is the liberated man who has realised the Self and Spirit within him, entered into the cosmic consciousness, passed into union with the Eternal and, so far as he still accepts life and action, acts by the light and energy of the Power within him working through his human instruments of Nature. The largest formulation of this spiritual change and achievement is a total liberation of soul, mind, heart and action, a casting of them all into the sense of the cosmic Self and the Divine Reality.¹⁰ The spiritual evolution of the individual has then found its way and thrown up its range of Himalayan eminences and its peaks of highest nature. Beyond this height and largeness there opens only the supramental ascent or the incommunicable Transcendence.

This then has been up till now the course of Nature's evolution of the spiritual man in the human mental being, and it may be questioned what is the exact sum of this achievement and its actual significance. In the recent reaction towards the life of the mind in Matter, this great direction and this rare change have been stigmatised as no true evolution of consciousness but rather a sublimated crudity of ignorance deviating from the true human evolution, which should be solely an evolution of life-power, the practical physical mind, the reason governing thought and conduct and the discovering and organising intelligence. In this epoch religion was pushed aside as an out-of-date superstition

¹⁰ This is the essence of the spiritual ideal and realisation held before us by the Gita.

and spiritual realisation and experience discredited as a shadowy mysticism; the mystic in this view is the man who turns aside into the unreal, into occult regions of a self-constructed land of chimeras and loses his way there. This judgment proceeds from a view of things which is itself bound to pass into discredit, because it depends ultimately on the false perception of the material as alone real and the outward life as alone of importance. But apart from this extreme materialistic view of things, it can be and is still held by the intellect and the physical mind eager for human life-fulfilment,— and that is the prevalent mentality, the dominant modern trend,— that the spiritual tendency in humanity has come to very little; it has not solved the problem of life nor any of the problems with which humanity is at grips. The mystic either detaches himself from life as the other-worldly ascetic or the aloof visionary and therefore cannot help life, or else he brings no better solution or result than the practical man or the man of intellect and reason: by his intervention he rather disturbs the human values, distorts them with his alien and unverifiable light obscure to the human understanding and confuses the plain practical and vital issues life puts before us.

But this is not the standpoint from which the true significance of the spiritual evolution in man or the value of spirituality can be judged or assessed; for its real work is not to solve human problems on the past or present mental basis, but to create a new foundation of our being and our life and knowledge. The ascetic or other-worldly tendency of the mystic is an extreme affirmation of his refusal to accept the limitations imposed by material Nature: for his very reason of being is to go beyond her; if he cannot transform her, he must leave her. At the same time the spiritual man has not stood back altogether from the life of humanity; for the sense of unity with all beings, the stress of a universal love and compassion, the will to spend the energies for the good of all creatures,¹¹ are central to the

¹¹ *Gita*. The Buddhist elevation of universal compassion, *karuṇā*, and sympathy (*vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam*, the whole earth is my family), to be the highest principle of action, the Christian emphasis on love indicate this dynamic side of the spiritual being.

dynamic outflowering of the spirit: he has turned therefore to help, he has guided as did the ancient Rishis or the prophets, or stooped to create and, where he has done so with something of the direct power of the Spirit, the results have been prodigious. But the solution of the problem which spirituality offers is not a solution by external means, though these also have to be used, but by an inner change, a transformation of the consciousness and nature.

If no decisive but only a contributory result, an accretion of some new finer elements to the sum of the consciousness, has been the general consequence and there has been no life-transformation, it is because man in the mass has always deflected the spiritual impulsion, recanted from the spiritual ideal or held it only as a form and rejected the inward change. Spirituality cannot be called upon to deal with life by a non-spiritual method or attempt to cure its ills by the panaceas, the political, social or other mechanical remedies which the mind is constantly attempting and which have always failed and will continue to fail to solve anything. The most drastic changes made by these means change nothing; for the old ills exist in a new form: the aspect of the outward environment is altered, but man remains what he was; he is still an ignorant mental being misusing or not effectively using his knowledge, moved by ego and governed by vital desires and passions and the needs of the body, unspiritual and superficial in his outlook, ignorant of his own self and the forces that drive and use him. His life constructions have a value as expressions of his individual and collective being in the stage to which they have reached or as a machinery for the convenience and welfare of his vital and physical parts and a field and medium for his mental growth, but they cannot take him beyond his present self or serve as a machinery to transform him; his and their perfection can only come by his farther evolution. Only a spiritual change, an evolution of his being from the superficial mental towards the deeper spiritual consciousness, can make a real and effective difference. To discover the spiritual being in himself is the main business of the spiritual man and to help others towards the

same evolution is his real service to the race; till that is done, an outward help can succour and alleviate, but nothing or very little more is possible.

It is true that the spiritual tendency has been to look more beyond life than towards life. It is true also that the spiritual change has been individual and not collective; its result has been successful in the man, but unsuccessful or only indirectly operative in the human mass. The spiritual evolution of Nature is still in process and incomplete,— one might almost say, still only beginning,— and its main preoccupation has been to affirm and develop a basis of spiritual consciousness and knowledge and to create more and more a foundation or formation for the vision of that which is eternal in the truth of the spirit. It is only when Nature has fully confirmed this intensive evolution and formation through the individual that anything radical of an expanding or dynamically diffusive character can be expected or any attempt at collective spiritual life,— such attempts have been made, but mostly as a field of protection for the growth of the individual's spirituality,— acquire a successful permanence. For till then the individual must be preoccupied with his own problem of entirely changing his mind and life into conformity with the truth of the spirit which he is achieving or has achieved in his inner being and knowledge. Any premature attempt at a large-scale collective spiritual life is exposed to vitiation by some incompleteness of the spiritual knowledge on its dynamic side, by the imperfections of the individual seekers and by the invasion of the ordinary mind and vital and physical consciousness taking hold of the truth and mechanising, obscuring or corrupting it. The mental intelligence and its main power of reason cannot change the principle and persistent character of human life, it can only effect various mechanisations, manipulations, developments and formulations. But neither is mind as a whole, even spiritualised, able to change it; spirituality liberates and illumines the inner being, it helps mind to communicate with what is higher than itself, to escape even from itself, it can purify and uplift by the inner influence the outward nature of individual human beings: but so long as it has to work in the

human mass through mind as the instrument, it can exercise an influence on the earth-life but not bring about a transformation of that life. For this reason there has been a prevalent tendency in the spiritual mind to be satisfied with such an influence and in the main to seek fulfilment in other-life elsewhere or to abandon altogether any outward-going endeavour and concentrate solely on an individual spiritual salvation or perfection. A higher instrumental dynamis than mind is needed to transform totally a nature created by the Ignorance.

Another objection to the mystic and his knowledge is urged, not against its effect upon life but against his method of the discovery of Truth and against the Truth that he discovers. One objection to the method is that it is purely subjective, not true independently of the personal consciousness and its constructions, not verifiable. But this ground of cavil has no great value; for the object of the mystic is self-knowledge and God-knowledge, and that can only be arrived at by an inward and not by an outward gaze. Or it is the supreme Truth of things that he seeks, and that too cannot be arrived at by an outward inquiry through the senses or by any scrutiny or research that finds itself on outsides and surfaces or by speculation based on the uncertain data of an indirect means of knowledge. It must come by a direct vision or contact of the consciousness with the soul and body of the Truth itself or through a knowledge by identity, by the self that becomes one with the self of things and with their truth of power and their truth of essence. But it is urged that the actual result of this method is not one truth common to all, there are great differences; the conclusion suggested is that this knowledge is not truth at all but a subjective mental formation. But this objection is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of spiritual knowledge. Spiritual truth is a truth of the spirit, not a truth of the intellect, not a mathematical theorem or a logical formula. It is a truth of the Infinite, one in an infinite diversity, and it can assume an infinite variety of aspects and formations: in the spiritual evolution it is inevitable that there should be a many-sided passage and reaching to the one Truth, a many-sided seizing of it; this many-sidedness is the sign of the

approach of the soul to a living reality, not to an abstraction or a constructed figure of things that can be petrified into a dead or stony formula. The hard logical and intellectual notion of truth as a single idea which all must accept, one idea or system of ideas defeating all other ideas or systems, or a single limited fact or single formula of facts which all must recognise, is an illegitimate transference from the limited truth of the physical field to the much more complex and plastic field of life and mind and spirit.

This transference has been responsible for much harm; it brings into thought narrowness, limitation, an intolerance of the necessary variation and multiplicity of view-points without which there can be no totality of truth-finding, and by the narrowness and limitation much obstinacy in error. It reduces philosophy to an endless maze of sterile disputes; religion has been invaded by this misprision and infected with credal dogmatism, bigotry and intolerance. The truth of the spirit is a truth of being and consciousness and not a truth of thought: mental ideas can only represent or formulate some facet, some mind-translated principle or power of it or enumerate its aspects, but to know it one has to grow into it and be it; without that growing and being there can be no true spiritual knowledge. The fundamental truth of spiritual experience is one, its consciousness is one, everywhere it follows the same general lines and tendencies of awakening and growth into spiritual being; for these are the imperatives of the spiritual consciousness. But also there are, based on those imperatives, numberless possibilities of variation of experience and expression: the centralisation and harmonisation of these possibles, but also the intensive sole following out of any line of experience are both of them necessary movements of the emerging spiritual Conscious-Force within us. Moreover, the accommodation of mind and life to the spiritual truth, its expression in them, must vary with the mentality of the seeker so long as he has not risen above all need of such accommodation or such limiting expression. It is this mental and vital element which has created the oppositions that still divide spiritual seekers or enter into their differing

affirmations of the truth that they experience. This difference and variation is needed for the freedom of spiritual search and spiritual growth: to overpass differences is quite possible, but that is most easily done in pure experience; in mental formulation the difference must remain until one can exceed mind altogether and in a highest consciousness integralise, unify and harmonise the many-sided truth of the Spirit.

In the evolution of the spiritual man there must necessarily be many stages and in each stage a great variety of individual formations of the being, the consciousness, the life, the temperament, the ideas, the character. The nature of instrumental mind and the necessity of dealing with the life must of itself create an infinite variety according to the stage of development and the individuality of the seeker. But, apart from that, even the domain of pure spiritual self-realisation and self-expression need not be a single white monotone, there can be a great diversity in the fundamental unity; the supreme Self is one, but the souls of the Self are many and, as is the soul's formation of nature, so will be its spiritual self-expression. A diversity in oneness is the law of the manifestation; the supramental unification and integration must harmonise these diversities, but to abolish them is not the intention of the Spirit in Nature.

Chapter XXV

The Triple Transformation

A conscious being is in the centre of the self, who rules past and future; he is like a fire without smoke. . . . That, one must disengage with patience from one's own body.

*Katha Upanishad.*¹

An intuition in the heart sees that truth. *Rig Veda.*²

I abide in the spiritual being and from there destroy the darkness born of ignorance with the shining lamp of knowledge.

*Gita.*³

These rays are directed downwards, their foundation is above: may they be set deep within us. . . . O Varuna, here awake, make wide thy reign; may we abide in the law of thy workings and be blameless before the Mother Infinite. *Rig Veda.*⁴

The Swan that settles in the purity . . . born of the Truth, — itself the Truth, the Vast. *Katha Upanishad.*⁵

IF IT is the sole intention of Nature in the evolution of the spiritual man to awaken him to the supreme Reality and release him from herself, or from the Ignorance in which she as the Power of the Eternal has masked herself, by a departure into a higher status of being elsewhere, if this step in the evolution is a close and an exit, then in the essence her work has been already accomplished and there is nothing more to be done. The ways have been built, the capacity to follow them has been developed, the goal or last height of the creation is manifest; all that is left is for each soul to reach individually the right stage and turn

¹ II. 1. 12, 13; II. 3. 17.
⁵ II. 2. 2.

² I. 24. 12.

³ X. 11.

⁴ I. 24. 7, 11, 15.

of its development, enter into the spiritual ways and pass by its own chosen path out of this inferior existence. But we have supposed that there is a farther intention,—not only a revelation of the Spirit, but a radical and integral transformation of Nature. There is a will in her to effectuate a true manifestation of the embodied life of the Spirit, to complete what she has begun by a passage from the Ignorance to the Knowledge, to throw off her mask and to reveal herself as the luminous Consciousness-Force carrying in her the eternal Existence and its universal Delight of being. It then becomes obvious that there is something not yet accomplished, there becomes clear to view the much that has still to be done, *bhūri aspaṣṭa kartvam*; there is a height still to be reached, a wideness still to be covered by the eye of vision, the wing of the will, the self-affirmation of the spirit in the material universe. What the evolutionary Power has done is to make a few individuals aware of their souls, conscious of their selves, aware of the eternal being that they are, to put them into communion with the Divinity or the Reality which is concealed by her appearances: a certain change of nature prepares, accompanies or follows upon this illumination, but it is not the complete and radical change which establishes a secure and settled new principle, a new creation, a permanent new order of being in the field of terrestrial Nature. The spiritual man has evolved, but not the supramental being who shall thenceforward be the leader of that Nature.

This is because the principle of spirituality has yet to affirm itself in its own complete right and sovereignty; it has been up till now a power for the mental being to escape from itself or to refine and raise itself to a spiritual poise, it has availed for the release of the Spirit from mind and for the enlargement of the being in a spiritualised mind and heart, but not—or rather not yet sufficiently—for the self-affirmation of the Spirit in its own dynamic and sovereign mastery free from the mind's limitations and from the mental instrumentation. The development of another instrumentation has begun, but has yet to become total and effective; it has besides to cease to be a purely individual self-creation in an original Ignorance, something supernormal to

earth-life that must always be acquired as an individual achievement by a difficult endeavour. It must become the normal nature of a new type of being; as mind is established here on a basis of Ignorance seeking for Knowledge and growing into Knowledge, so supermind must be established here on a basis of Knowledge growing into its own greater Light. But this cannot be so long as the spiritual-mental being has not risen fully to supermind and brought down its powers into terrestrial existence. For the gulf between mind and supermind has to be bridged, the closed passages opened and roads of ascent and descent created where there is now a void and a silence. This can be done only by the triple transformation to which we have already made a passing reference: there must first be the psychic change, the conversion of our whole present nature into a soul-instrumentation; on that or along with that there must be the spiritual change, the descent of a higher Light, Knowledge, Power, Force, Bliss, Purity into the whole being, even into the lowest recesses of the life and body, even into the darkness of our subconsciousness; last, there must supervene the supramental transmutation,—there must take place as the crowning movement the ascent into the supermind and the transforming descent of the supramental Consciousness into our entire being and nature.

At the beginning the soul in Nature, the psychic entity, whose unfolding is the first step towards a spiritual change, is an entirely veiled part of us, although it is that by which we exist and persist as individual beings in Nature. The other parts of our natural composition are not only mutable but perishable; but the psychic entity in us persists and is fundamentally the same always: it contains all essential possibilities of our manifestation but is not constituted by them; it is not limited by what it manifests, not contained by the incomplete forms of the manifestation, not tarnished by the imperfections and impurities, the defects and depravations of the surface being. It is an ever-pure flame of the divinity in things and nothing that comes to it, nothing that enters into our experience can pollute its purity or extinguish the flame. This spiritual stuff is immaculate and luminous and, because it is perfectly luminous,

it is immediately, intimately, directly aware of truth of being and truth of nature; it is deeply conscious of truth and good and beauty because truth and good and beauty are akin to its own native character, forms of something that is inherent in its own substance. It is aware also of all that contradicts these things, of all that deviates from its own native character, of falsehood and evil and the ugly and the unseemly; but it does not become these things nor is it touched or changed by these opposites of itself which so powerfully affect its outer instrumentation of mind, life and body. For the soul, the permanent being in us, puts forth and uses mind, life and body as its instruments, undergoes the envelopment of their conditions, but it is other and greater than its members.

If the psychic entity had been from the beginning unveiled and known to its ministers, not a secluded King in a screened chamber, the human evolution would have been a rapid soul-outflowering, not the difficult, chequered and disfigured development it now is; but the veil is thick and we know not the secret Light within us, the light in the hidden crypt of the heart's innermost sanctuary. Intimations rise to our surface from the psyche, but our mind does not detect their source; it takes them for its own activities because, before even they come to the surface, they are clothed in mental substance: thus ignorant of their authority, it follows or does not follow them according to its bent or turn at the moment. If the mind obeys the urge of the vital ego, then there is little chance of the psyche at all controlling the nature or manifesting in us something of its secret spiritual stuff and native movement; or, if the mind is over-confident to act in its own smaller light, attached to its own judgment, will and action of knowledge, then also the soul will remain veiled and quiescent and wait for the mind's farther evolution. For the psychic part within is there to support the natural evolution, and the first natural evolution must be the development of body, life and mind, successively, and these must act each in its own kind or together in their ill-assorted partnership in order to grow and have experience and evolve. The soul gathers the essence of all our mental, vital and bodily experience and assimilates it for

the farther evolution of our existence in Nature; but this action is occult and not obtruded on the surface. In the early material and vital stages of the evolution of being there is indeed no consciousness of soul; there are psychic activities, but the instrumentation, the form of these activities are vital and physical — or mental when the mind is active. For even the mind, so long as it is primitive or is developed but still too external, does not recognise their deeper character. It is easy to regard ourselves as physical beings or beings of life or mental beings using life and body and to ignore the existence of the soul altogether: for the only definite idea that we have of the soul is of something that survives the death of our bodies; but what this is we do not know because even if we are conscious sometimes of its presence, we are not normally conscious of its distinct reality nor do we feel clearly its direct action in our nature.

As the evolution proceeds, Nature begins slowly and tentatively to manifest our occult parts; she leads us to look more and more within ourselves or sets out to initiate more clearly recognisable intimations and formations of them on the surface. The soul in us, the psychic principle, has already begun to take secret form; it puts forward and develops a soul personality, a distinct psychic being to represent it. This psychic being remains still behind the veil in our subliminal part, like the true mental, the true vital or the true or subtle physical being within us: but, like them, it acts on the surface life by the influences and intimations it throws up upon that surface; these form part of the surface aggregate which is the conglomerate effect of the inner influences and upsurgings, the visible formation and superstructure which we ordinarily experience and think of as ourselves. On this ignorant surface we become dimly aware of something that can be called a soul as distinct from mind, life or body; we feel it not only as our mental idea or vague instinct of ourselves, but as a sensible influence in our life and character and action. A certain sensitive feeling for all that is true and good and beautiful, fine and pure and noble, a response to it, a demand for it, a pressure on mind and life to accept and formulate it in our thought, feelings, conduct, character is the most usually

recognised, the most general and characteristic, though not the sole sign of this influence of the psyche. Of the man who has not this element in him or does not respond at all to this urge, we say that he has no soul. For it is this influence that we can most easily recognise as a finer or even a diviner part in us and the most powerful for the slow turning towards some aim at perfection in our nature.

But this psychic influence or action does not come up to the surface quite pure or does not remain distinct in its purity; if it did, we would be able to distinguish clearly the soul element in us and follow consciously and fully its dictates. An occult mental and vital and subtle-physical action intervenes, mixes with it, tries to use it and turn it to its own profit, dwarfs its divinity, distorts or diminishes its self-expression, even causes it to deviate and stumble or stains it with the impurity, smallness and error of mind and life and body. After it reaches the surface, thus alloyed and diminished, it is taken hold of by the surface nature in an obscure reception and ignorant formation, and there is or can be by this cause a still further deviation and mixture. A twist is given, a wrong direction is imparted, a wrong application, a wrong formation, an erroneous result of what is in itself pure stuff and action of our spiritual being; a formation of consciousness is accordingly made which is a mixture of the psychic influence and its intimations jumbled with mental ideas and opinions, vital desires and urges, habitual physical tendencies. There coalesce too with the obscured soul-influence the ignorant though well-intentioned efforts of these external parts towards a higher direction; a mental ideation of a very mixed character, often obscure even in its idealism, sometimes even disastrously mistaken, a fervour and passion of the emotional being throwing up its spray and foam of feelings, sentiments, sentimentalisms, a dynamic enthusiasm of the life-parts, eager responses of the physical, the thrills and excitements of nerve and body,— all these influences coalesce in a composite formation which is frequently taken as the soul and its mixed and confused action for the soul-stir, for a psychic development and action or a realised inner influence. The psychic entity is itself free from

stain or mixture, but what comes up from it is not protected by that immunity; therefore this confusion becomes possible.

Moreover, the psychic being, the soul personality in us, does not emerge full-grown and luminous; it evolves, passes through a slow development and formation; its figure of being may be at first indistinct and may afterwards remain for a long time weak and undeveloped, not impure but imperfect: for it rests its formation, its dynamic self-building on the power of soul that has been actually and more or less successfully, against the resistance of the Ignorance and Inconscience, put forth in the evolution upon the surface. Its appearance is the sign of a soul-emergence in Nature, and if that emergence is as yet small and defective, the psychic personality also will be stunted or feeble. It is too, by the obscurity of our consciousness, separated from its inner reality, in imperfect communication with its own source in the depths of the being; for the road is as yet ill-built, easily obstructed, the wires often cut or crowded with communications of another kind and proceeding from another origin: its power to impress what it receives upon the outer instruments is also imperfect; in its penury it has for most things to rely on these instruments and it forms its push to expression and action on their data and not solely on the unerring perceptions of the psychic entity. In these conditions it cannot prevent the true psychic light from being diminished or distorted in the mind into a mere idea or opinion, the psychic feeling in the heart into a fallible emotion or mere sentiment, the psychic will to action in the life-parts into a blind vital enthusiasm or a fervid excitement: it even accepts these mistranslations for want of something better and tries to fulfil itself through them. For it is part of the work of the soul to influence mind and heart and vital being and turn their ideas, feelings, enthusiasms, dynamisms in the direction of what is divine and luminous; but this has to be done at first imperfectly, slowly and with a mixture. As the psychic personality grows stronger, it begins to increase its communion with the psychic entity behind it and improve its communications with the surface: it can transmit its intimations to the mind and heart and life with a greater purity and force; for it is more able to

exercise a strong control and react against false mixtures; now more and more it makes itself distinctly felt as a power in the nature. But even so this evolution would be slow and long if left solely to the difficult automatic action of the evolutionary Energy; it is only when man awakes to the knowledge of the soul and feels a need to bring it to the front and make it the master of his life and action that a quicker conscious method of evolution intervenes and a psychic transformation becomes possible.

This slow development can be aided by the mind's clear perception and insistence on something within that survives the death of the body and an effort to know its nature. But at first this knowledge is impeded by the fact that there are many elements in us, many formations which present themselves as soul elements and can be mistaken for the psyche. In the early Greek and some other traditions about the after-life, the descriptions given show very clearly that what was then mistaken for the soul was a subconscious formation, a subphysical impression-mould or shadow-form of the being or else a wraith or ghost of the personality. This ghost, which is mistakenly called the spirit, is sometimes a vital formation reproducing the man's characteristics, his surface life-mannerisms, sometimes a subtle-physical prolongation of the surface form of the mind-shell: at best it is a sheath of the life personality which still remains in the front for some time after the departure from the body. Apart from these confusions born of an after-death contact with discarded phantasms or remnants of the sheaths of the personality, the difficulty is due to our ignorance of the subliminal parts of our nature and the form and powers of the conscious being or Purusha which preside over their action; owing to this inexperience we can easily mistake something of the inner mind or vital self for the psyche. For as Being is one yet multiple, so also the same law prevails in ourselves and our members; the spirit, the Purusha is one but it adapts itself to the formations of Nature. Over each grade of our being a power of the Spirit presides; we have within us and discover when we go deep enough inwards a mind-self, a life-self, a physical self; there is a being of mind, a mental Purusha, expressing something of itself on our surface

in the thoughts, perceptions, activities of our mind nature, a being of life which expresses something of itself in the impulses, feelings, sensations, desires, external life activities of our vital nature, a physical being, a being of the body which expresses something of itself in the instincts, habits, formulated activities of our physical nature. These beings or part selves of the self in us are powers of the Spirit and therefore not limited by their temporary expression, for what is thus formulated is only a fragment of its possibilities; but the expression creates a temporary mental, vital or physical personality which grows and develops even as the psychic being or soul personality grows and develops within us. Each has its own distinct nature, its influence, its action on the whole of us; but on our surface all these influences and all this action, as they come up, mingle and create an aggregate surface being which is a composite, an amalgam of them all, an outer persistent and yet shifting and mobile formation for the purposes of this life and its limited experience.

But this aggregate is, because of its composition, a heterogeneous compound, not a single harmonious and homogeneous whole. This is the reason why there is a constant confusion and even a conflict in our members which our mental reason and will are moved to control and harmonise and have often much difficulty in creating out of their confusion or conflict some kind of order and guidance; even so, ordinarily, we drift too much or are driven by the stream of our nature and act from whatever in it comes uppermost at the time and seizes the instruments of thought and action,—even our seemingly deliberate choice is more of an automatism than we imagine; our co-ordination of our multifarious elements and of our consequent thoughts, feelings, impulses, actions by the reason and will is incomplete and a half-measure. In animal being Nature acts by her own mental and vital intuitions; she works out an order by the compulsion of habit and instinct which the animal implicitly obeys, so that the shiftings of its consciousness do not matter. But man cannot altogether act in the same way without forfeiting his prerogative of manhood; he cannot leave his being to be a chaos of instincts and impulses regulated by the automatism of Nature: mind has

become conscious in him and is therefore self-compelled to make some attempt, however elementary in many, to see and control and in the end more and more perfectly harmonise the manifold components, the different and conflicting tendencies that seem to make up his surface being. He does succeed in setting up a sort of regulated chaos or ordered confusion in him, or at least succeeds in thinking that he is directing himself by his mind and will, even though in fact that direction is only partial; for not only a disparate consortium of habitual motive-forces but also newly emergent vital and physical tendencies and impulses, not always calculable or controllable, and many incoherent and inharmonious mental elements use his reason and will, enter into and determine his self-building, his nature-development, his life action. Man is in his self a unique Person, but he is also in his manifestation of self a multiperson; he will never succeed in being master of himself until the Person imposes itself on his multipersonality and governs it: but this can only be imperfectly done by the surface mental will and reason; it can be perfectly done only if he goes within and finds whatever central being is by its predominant influence at the head of all his expression and action. In inmost truth it is his soul that is this central being, but in outer fact it is often one or other of the part beings in him that rules, and this representative of the soul, this deputy self he can mistake for the inmost soul principle.

This rule of different selves in us is at the root of the stages of the development of human personality which we have already had occasion to differentiate, and we can reconsider them now from the point of view of the government of the nature by the inner principle. In some human beings it is the physical Purusha, the being of body, who dominates the mind, will and action; there is then created the physical man mainly occupied with his corporeal life and habitual needs, impulses, life habits, mind habits, body habits, looking very little or not at all beyond that, subordinating and restricting all his other tendencies and possibilities to that narrow formation. But even in the physical man there are other elements and he cannot live altogether as the human animal concerned with birth and death and procreation

and the satisfaction of common impulses and desires and the maintenance of the life and the body: this is his normal type of personality, but it is crossed, however feebly, with influences by which he can proceed, if they are developed, to a higher human evolution. If the inner subtle-physical Purusha insists, he can arrive at the idea of a finer, more beautiful and perfect physical life and hope or attempt to realise it in his own or in the collective or group existence. In others it is the vital self, the being of life, who dominates and rules the mind, the will, the action; then is created the vital man, concerned with self-affirmation, self-aggrandisement, life-enlargement, satisfaction of ambition and passion and impulse and desire, the claims of his ego, domination, power, excitement, battle and struggle, inner and outer adventure: all else is incidental or subordinated to this movement and building and expression of the vital ego. But still in the vital man too there are or can be other elements of a growing mental or spiritual character, even if these happen to be less developed than his life-personality and life-power. The nature of the vital man is more active, stronger and more mobile, more turbulent and chaotic, often to the point of being quite unregulated, than that of the physical man who holds on to the soil and has a certain material poise and balance, but it is more kinetic and creative: for the element of the vital being is not earth but air; it has more movement, less status. A vigorous vital mind and will can grasp and govern the kinetic vital energies, but it is more by a forceful compulsion and constraint than by a harmonisation of the being. If, however, a strong vital personality, mind and will can get the reasoning intelligence to give it a firm support and be its minister, then a certain kind of forceful formation can be made, more or less balanced but always powerful, successful and effective, which can impose itself on the nature and environment and arrive at a strong self-affirmation in life and action. This is the second step of harmonised formulation possible in the ascent of the nature.

At a higher stage of the evolution of personality the being of mind may rule; there is then created the mental man who lives predominantly in the mind as the others live in the vital

or the physical nature. The mental man tends to subordinate to his mental self-expression, mental aims, mental interests or to a mental idea or ideal the rest of his being: because of the difficulty of this subordination and its potent effect when achieved, it is at once more difficult for him and easier to arrive at a harmony of his nature. It is easier because the mental will once in control can convince by the power of the reasoning intelligence and at the same time dominate, compress or suppress the life and the body and their demands, arrange and harmonise them, force them to be its instruments, even reduce them to a minimum so that they shall not disturb the mental life or pull it down from its ideative or idealising movement. It is more difficult because life and body are the first powers and, if they are in the least strong, can impose themselves with an almost irresistible insistence on the mental ruler. Man is a mental being and the mind is the leader of his life and body; but this is a leader who is much led by his followers and has sometimes no other will than what they impose on him. Mind in spite of its power is often impotent before the inconscient and subconscious which obscure its clarity and carry it away on the tide of instinct or impulse; in spite of its clarity it is fooled by vital and emotional suggestions into giving sanction to ignorance and error, to wrong thought and to wrong action, or it is obliged to look on while the nature follows what it knows to be wrong, dangerous or evil. Even when it is strong and clear and dominant, Mind, though it imposes a certain, a considerable mentalised harmony, cannot integrate the whole being and nature. These harmonisations by an inferior control are, besides, inconclusive, because it is one part of the nature which dominates and fulfils itself while the others are coerced and denied their fullness. They can be steps on the way, but not final; therefore in most men there is no such sole dominance and effected partial harmony, but only a predominance and for the rest an unstable equilibrium of a personality half formed, half in formation, sometimes a disequilibrium or unbalance due to the lack of a central government or the disturbance of a formerly achieved partial poise. All must be transitional until a first, though not a final, true harmonisation is achieved by finding our

real centre. For the true central being is the soul, but this being stands back and in most human natures is only the secret witness or, one might say, a constitutional ruler who allows his ministers to rule for him, delegates to them his empire, silently assents to their decisions and only now and then puts in a word which they can at any moment override and act otherwise. But this is so long as the soul personality put forward by the psychic entity is not yet sufficiently developed; when this is strong enough for the inner entity to impose itself through it, then the soul can come forward and control the nature. It is by the coming forward of this true monarch and his taking up of the reins of government that there can take place a real harmonisation of our being and our life.

A first condition of the soul's complete emergence is a direct contact in the surface being with the spiritual Reality. Because it comes from that, the psychic element in us turns always towards whatever in phenomenal Nature seems to belong to a higher Reality and can be accepted as its sign and character. At first, it seeks this Reality through the good, the true, the beautiful, through all that is pure and fine and high and noble: but although this touch through outer signs and characters can modify and prepare the nature, it cannot entirely or most inwardly and profoundly change it. For such an inmost change the direct contact with the Reality itself is indispensable since nothing else can so deeply touch the foundations of our being and stir it or cast the nature by its stir into a ferment of transmutation. Mental representations, emotional and dynamic figures have their use and value; Truth, Good and Beauty are in themselves primary and potent figures of the Reality, and even in their forms as seen by the mind, as felt by the heart, as realised in the life can be lines of an ascent: but it is in a spiritual substance and being of them and of itself that That which they represent has to come into our experience.

The soul may attempt to achieve this contact mainly through the thinking mind as intermediary and instrument; it puts a psychic impression on the intellect and the larger mind of insight and intuition and turns them in that direction.

At its highest the thinking mind is drawn always towards the impersonal; in its search it becomes conscious of a spiritual essence, an impersonal Reality which expresses itself in all these outward signs and characters but is more than any formation or manifesting figure. It feels something of which it becomes intimately and invisibly aware,—a supreme Truth, a supreme Good, a supreme Beauty, a supreme Purity, a supreme Bliss; it bears the increasing touch, less and less impalpable and abstract, more and more spiritually real and concrete, the touch and pressure of an Eternity and Infinity which is all this that is and more. There is a pressure from this Impersonality that seeks to mould the whole mind into a form of itself; at the same time the impersonal secret and law of things becomes more and more visible. The mind develops into the mind of the sage, at first the high mental thinker, then the spiritual sage who has gone beyond the abstractions of thought to the beginnings of a direct experience. As a result the mind becomes pure, large, tranquil, impersonal; there is a similar tranquillising influence on the parts of life: but otherwise the result may remain incomplete; for the mental change leads more naturally towards an inner status and an outer quietude, but, poised in this purifying quietism, not drawn like the vital parts towards a discovery of new life-energies, does not press for a full dynamic effect on the nature.

A higher endeavour through the mind does not change this balance; for the tendency of the spiritualised mind is to go on upwards and, since above itself the mind loses its hold on forms, it is into a vast formless and featureless impersonality that it enters. It becomes aware of the unchanging Self, the sheer Spirit, the pure bareness of an essential Existence, the formless Infinite and the nameless Absolute. This culmination can be arrived at more directly by tending immediately beyond all forms and figures, beyond all ideas of good or evil or true or false or beautiful or unbeautiful to That which exceeds all dualities, to the experience of a supreme oneness, infinity, eternity or other ineffable sublimation of the mind's ultimate and extreme percept of Self or Spirit. A spiritualised consciousness is achieved and the life

falls quiet, the body ceases to need and to clamour, the soul itself merges into the spiritual silence. But this transformation through the mind does not give us the integral transformation; the psychic transmutation is replaced by a spiritual change on the rare and high summits, but this is not the complete divine dynamisation of Nature.

A second approach made by the soul to the direct contact is through the heart: this is its own more close and rapid way because its occult seat is there, just behind in the heart-centre, in close contact with the emotional being in us; it is consequently through the emotions that it can act best at the beginning with its native power, with its living force of concrete experience. It is through a love and adoration of the All-beautiful and All-blissful, the All-Good, the True, the spiritual Reality of love, that the approach is made; the aesthetic and emotional parts join together to offer the soul, the life, the whole nature to that which they worship. This approach through adoration can get its full power and impetus only when the mind goes beyond impersonality to the awareness of a supreme Personal Being: then all becomes intense, vivid, concrete; the heart's emotion, feeling, spiritualised sense reach their absolute; an entire self-giving becomes possible, imperative. The nascent spiritual man makes his appearance in the emotional nature as the devotee, the bhakta; if, in addition, he becomes directly aware of his soul and its dictates, unites his emotional with his psychic personality and changes his life and vital parts by purity, God-ecstasy, the love of God and men and all creatures into a thing of spiritual beauty, full of divine light and good, he develops into the saint and reaches the highest inner experience and most considerable change of nature proper to this way of approach to the Divine Being. But for the purpose of an integral transformation this too is not enough; there must be a transmutation of the thinking mind and all the vital and physical parts of consciousness in their own character.

This larger change can be partly attained by adding to the experiences of the heart a consecration of the pragmatic will which must succeed in carrying with it — for otherwise it

cannot be effective—the adhesion of the dynamic vital part which supports the mental dynamis and is our first instrument of outer action. This consecration of the will in works proceeds by a gradual elimination of the ego-will and its motive-power of desire; the ego subjects itself to some higher law and finally effaces itself, seems not to exist or exists only to serve a higher Power or a higher Truth or to offer its will and acts to the Divine Being as an instrument. The law of being and action or the light of Truth which then guides the seeker, may be a clarity or power or principle which he perceives on the highest height of which his mind is capable; or it may be a truth of the divine Will which he feels present and working within him or guiding him by a Light or a Voice or a Force or a divine Person or Presence. In the end by this way one arrives at a consciousness in which one feels the Force or Presence acting within and moving or governing all the actions and the personal will is entirely surrendered or identified with that greater Truth-Will, Truth-Power or Truth-Presence. A combination of all these three approaches, the approach of the mind, the approach of the will, the approach of the heart, creates a spiritual or psychic condition of the surface being and nature in which there is a larger and more complex openness to the psychic light within us and to the spiritual Self or the Ishwara, to the Reality now felt above and enveloping and penetrating us. In the nature there is a more powerful and many-sided change, a spiritual building and self-creation, the appearance of a composite perfection of the saint, the selfless worker and the man of spiritual knowledge.

But, for this change to arrive at its widest totality and profound completeness, the consciousness has to shift its centre and its static and dynamic position from the surface to the inner being; it is there that we must find the foundation for our thought, life and action. For to stand outside on our surface and to receive from the inner being and follow its intimations is not a sufficient transformation; one must cease to be the surface personality and become the inner Person, the Purusha. But this is difficult, first because the outer nature opposes the movement and clings to its normal accustomed poise and externalised way

of existence and, in addition, because there is a long way from the surface to the depths in which the psychic entity is veiled from us, and this intervening space is filled with a subliminal nature and nature-movements which are not by any means all of them favourable to the completion of the inward movement. The outer nature has to undergo a change of poise, a quieting, a purification and fine mutation of its substance and energy by which the many obstacles in it rarefy, drop away or otherwise disappear; it then becomes possible to pass through to the depths of our being and from the depths so reached a new consciousness can be formed, both behind the exterior self and in it, joining the depths to the surface. There must grow up within us or there must manifest a consciousness more and more open to the deeper and the higher being, more and more laid bare to the cosmic Self and Power and to what comes down from the Transcendence, turned to a higher Peace, permeable to a greater light, force and ecstasy, a consciousness that exceeds the small personality and surpasses the limited light and experience of the surface mind, the limited force and aspiration of the normal life consciousness, the obscure and limited responsiveness of the body.

Even before the tranquillising purification of the outer nature has been effected or before it is sufficient, one can still break down the wall screening our inner being from our outer awareness by a strong force of call and aspiration, a vehement will or violent effort or an effective discipline or process; but this may be a premature movement and is not without its serious dangers. In entering within one may find oneself amidst a chaos of unfamiliar and supernormal experiences to which one has not the key or a press of subliminal or cosmic forces, subconscious, mental, vital, subtle-physical, which may unduly sway or chaotically drive the being, encircle it in a cave of darkness, or keep it wandering in a wilderness of glamour, allurement, deception, or push it into an obscure battlefield full of secret and treacherous and misleading or open and violent oppositions; beings and voices and influences may appear to the inner sense and vision and hearing claiming to be the Divine Being or His messengers or Powers and Godheads of the Light or guides of the path to

realisation, while in truth they are of a very different character. If there is too much egoism in the nature of the seeker or a strong passion or an excessive ambition, vanity or other dominating weakness, or an obscurity of the mind or a vacillating will or a weakness of the life-force or an unsteadiness in it or want of balance, he is likely to be seized on through these deficiencies and to be frustrated or to deviate, misled from the true way of the inner life and seeking into false paths, or to be left wandering about in an intermediate chaos of experiences and fail to find his way out into the true realisation. These perils were well-known to a past spiritual experience and have been met by imposing the necessity of initiation, of discipline, of methods of purification and testing by ordeal, of an entire submission to the directions of the path-finder or path-leader, one who has realised the Truth and himself possesses and is able to communicate the light, the experience, a guide who is strong to take by the hand and carry over difficult passages as well as to instruct and point out the way. But even so the dangers will be there and can only be surmounted if there is or there grows up a complete sincerity, a will for purity, a readiness for obedience to the Truth, for surrender to the Highest, a readiness to lose or to subject to a divine yoke the limiting and self-affirming ego. These things are the sign that the true will for realisation, for conversion of the consciousness, for transformation is there, the necessary stage of the evolution has been reached: in that condition the defects of nature which belong to the human being cannot be a permanent obstacle to the change from the mental to the spiritual status; the process may never be entirely easy, but the way will have been made open and practicable.

One effective way often used to facilitate this entry into the inner self is the separation of the Purusha, the conscious being, from the Prakriti, the formulated nature. If one stands back from the mind and its activities so that they fall silent at will or go on as a surface movement of which one is the detached and disinterested witness, it becomes possible eventually to realise oneself as the inner Self of mind, the true and pure mental being, the Purusha; by similarly standing back from the life activities,

it is possible to realise oneself as the inner Self of life, the true and pure vital being, the Purusha; there is even a Self of body of which, by standing back from the body and its demands and activities and entering into a silence of the physical consciousness watching the action of its energy, it is possible to become aware, a true and pure physical being, the Purusha. So too, by standing back from all these activities of nature successively or together, it becomes possible to realise one's inner being as the silent impersonal self, the witness Purusha. This will lead to a spiritual realisation and liberation, but will not necessarily bring about a transformation; for the Purusha, satisfied to be free and himself, may leave the Nature, the Prakriti, to exhaust its accumulated impetus by an unsupported action, a mechanical continuance not renewed and reinforced or vivified and prolonged by his consent, and use this rejection as a means of withdrawing from all nature. The Purusha has to become not only the witness but the knower and source, the master of all the thought and action, and this can only be partially done so long as one remains on the mental level or has still to use the ordinary instrumentation of mind, life and body. A certain mastery can indeed be achieved, but mastery is not transformation; the change made by it cannot be sufficient to be integral: for that it is essential to get back, beyond mind-being, life-being, body-being, still more deeply inward to the psychic entity inmost and profoundest within us — or else to open to the superconscious highest domains. For this penetration into the luminous crypt of the soul one has to get through all the intervening vital stuff to the psychic centre within us, however long, tedious or difficult may be the process. The method of detachment from the insistence of all mental and vital and physical claims and calls and impulsions, a concentration in the heart, austerity, self-purification and rejection of the old mind movements and life movements, rejection of the ego of desire, rejection of false needs and false habits, are all useful aids to this difficult passage: but the strongest, most central way is to found all such or other methods on a self-offering and surrender of ourselves and of our parts of nature to the Divine Being, the Ishwara. A strict obedience to the wise and intuitive

leading of a Guide is also normal and necessary for all but a few specially gifted seekers.

As the crust of the outer nature cracks, as the walls of inner separation break down, the inner light gets through, the inner fire burns in the heart, the substance of the nature and the stuff of consciousness refine to a greater subtlety and purity, and the deeper psychic experiences, those which are not solely of an inner mental or inner vital character, become possible in this subtler, purer, finer substance; the soul begins to unveil itself, the psychic personality reaches its full stature. The soul, the psychic entity, then manifests itself as the central being which upholds mind and life and body and supports all the other powers and functions of the Spirit; it takes up its greater function as the guide and ruler of the nature. A guidance, a governance begins from within which exposes every movement to the light of Truth, repels what is false, obscure, opposed to the divine realisation: every region of the being, every nook and corner of it, every movement, formation, direction, inclination of thought, will, emotion, sensation, action, reaction, motive, disposition, propensity, desire, habit of the conscious or subconscious physical, even the most concealed, camouflaged, mute, recondite, is lighted up with the unerring psychic light, their confusions dissipated, their tangles disentangled, their obscurities, deceptions, self-deceptions precisely indicated and removed; all is purified, set right, the whole nature harmonised, modulated in the psychic key, put in spiritual order. This process may be rapid or tardy according to the amount of obscurity and resistance still left in the nature, but it goes on unfalteringly so long as it is not complete. As a final result the whole conscious being is made perfectly apt for spiritual experience of every kind, turned towards spiritual truth of thought, feeling, sense, action, tuned to the right responses, delivered from the darkness and stubbornness of the tamasic inertia, the turbidities and turbulences and impurities of the rajasic passion and restless unharmonised kinetism, the enlightened rigidities and sattvic limitations or poised balancements of constructed equilibrium which are the character of the Ignorance.

This is the first result, but the second is a free inflow of all kinds of spiritual experience, experience of the Self, experience of the Ishwara and the Divine Shakti, experience of cosmic consciousness, a direct touch with cosmic forces and with the occult movements of universal Nature, a psychic sympathy and unity and inner communication and interchanges of all kinds with other beings and with Nature, illuminations of the mind by knowledge, illuminations of the heart by love and devotion and spiritual joy and ecstasy, illuminations of the sense and the body by higher experience, illuminations of dynamic action in the truth and largeness of a purified mind and heart and soul, the certitudes of the divine light and guidance, the joy and power of the divine force working in the will and the conduct. These experiences are the result of an opening outward of the inner and inmost being and nature; for then there comes into play the soul's power of unerring inherent consciousness, its vision, its touch on things which is superior to any mental cognition; there is there, native to the psychic consciousness in its pure working, an immediate sense of the world and its beings, a direct inner contact with them and a direct contact with the Self and with the Divine,—a direct knowledge, a direct sight of Truth and of all truths, a direct penetrating spiritual emotion and feeling, a direct intuition of right will and right action, a power to rule and to create an order of the being not by the gropings of the superficial self, but from within, from the inner truth of self and things and the occult realities of Nature.

Some of these experiences can come by an opening of the inner mental and vital being, the inner and larger and subtler mind and heart and life within us, without any full emergence of the soul, the psychic entity, since there too there is a power of direct contact of consciousness: but the experience might then be of a mixed character; for there could be an emergence not only of the subliminal knowledge but of the subliminal ignorance. An insufficient expansion of the being, a limitation by mental idea, by narrow and selective emotion or by the form of the temperament so that there would be only an imperfect self-creation and action and not the free soul-emergence, could easily occur. In the

absence of any or of a complete psychic emergence, experiences of certain kinds, experiences of a greater knowledge and force, a surpassing of the ordinary limits, might lead to a magnified ego and even bring about instead of an outflowering of what is divine or spiritual an uprush of the titanic or demoniac, or might call in agencies and powers which, though not of this disastrous type, are of a powerful but inferior cosmic character. But the rule and guidance of the soul brings into all experience the tendency of light, of integration, of harmony and intimate rightness which is native to the psychic essence. A psychic or, more widely speaking, a psycho-spiritual transformation of this kind would be already a vast change of our mental human nature.

But all this change and all this experience, though psychic and spiritual in essence and character, would still be, in its parts of life-effectuation, on the mental, vital and physical level; its dynamic spiritual outcome⁶ would be a flowering of the soul in mind and life and body, but in act and form it would be circumscribed within the limitations — however enlarged, uplifted and rarefied — of an inferior instrumentation. It would be a reflected and modified manifestation of things whose full reality, intensity, largeness, oneness and diversity of truth and power and delight are above us, above mind and therefore above any perfection, within mind's own formula, of the foundations or superstructure of our present nature. A highest spiritual transformation must intervene on the psychic or psycho-spiritual change; the psychic movement inward to the inner being, the Self or Divinity within us, must be completed by an opening upward to a supreme spiritual status or a higher existence. This can be done by our opening into what is above us, by an ascent of consciousness into the ranges of overmind and supramental nature in which the sense of self and spirit is ever unveiled and permanent and in which the self-luminous instrumentation of the self and spirit is not restricted or divided as in our mind-nature, life-nature, body-nature. This also the psychic change makes possible; for

⁶ The psychic and the spiritual opening with their experiences and consequences can lead away from life or to a Nirvana; but they are here being considered solely as steps in a transformation of the nature.

as it opens us to the cosmic consciousness now hidden from us by many walls of limiting individuality, so also it opens us to what is now superconscient to our normality because it is hidden from us by the strong, hard and bright lid of mind,—mind constricting, dividing and separative. The lid thins, is slit, breaks asunder or opens and disappears under the pressure of the psycho-spiritual change and the natural urge of the new spiritualised consciousness towards that of which it is an expression here. This effectuation of an aperture and its consequences may not at all take place if there is only a partial psychic emergence satisfied with the experience of the Divine Reality in the normal degrees of the spiritualised mind: but if there is any awakening to the existence of these higher supernormal levels, then an aspiration towards them may break the lid or operate a rift in it. This may happen long before the psycho-spiritual change is complete or even before it has well begun or proceeded far, because the psychic personality has become aware and has an eager concentration towards the superconscious. An early illumination from above or a rending of the upper velamen can come as an outcome of aspiration or some inner readiness, or it may even come uncalled-for or not called for by any conscious part of the mind,—perhaps by a secret subliminal necessity or by an action or pressure from the higher levels, by something which is felt as the touch of the Divine Being, the touch of the Spirit,—and its results can be exceedingly powerful. But if it is brought about by a premature pressure from below, it can be attended with difficulties and dangers which are absent when the full psychic emergence precedes this first admission to the superior ranges of our spiritual evolution. The choice, however, does not always rest with our will, for the operations of the spiritual evolution in us are very various, and according to the line it has followed will be the turn taken at any critical phase by the action of the Consciousness-Force in its urge towards a higher self-manifestation and formation of our existence.

If the rift in the lid of mind is made, what happens is an opening of vision to something above us or a rising up towards

it or a descent of its powers into our being. What we see by the opening of vision is an Infinity above us, an eternal Presence or an infinite Existence, an infinity of consciousness, an infinity of bliss,—a boundless Self, a boundless Light, a boundless Power, a boundless Ecstasy. It may be that for a long time all that is obtained is the occasional or frequent or constant vision of it and a longing and aspiration, but without anything further, because, although something in the mind, heart or other part of the being has opened to this experience, the lower nature as a whole is too heavy and obscure as yet for more. But there may be, instead of this first wide awareness from below or subsequently to it, an ascension of the mind to heights above: the nature of these heights we may not know or clearly discern, but some consequence of the ascent is felt; there is often too an awareness of infinite ascension and return but no record or translation of that higher state. This is because it has been superconscient to mind and therefore mind, when it rises into it, is unable at first to retain there its power of conscious discernment and defining experience. But when this power begins to awake and act, when mind becomes by degrees conscious in what was to it superconscient, then there begins a knowledge and experience of superior planes of existence. The experience is in accord with that which is brought to us by the first opening of vision: the mind rises into a higher plane of pure self, silent, tranquil, illimitable; or it rises into regions of light or of felicity, or into planes where it feels an infinite Power or a divine Presence or experiences the contact of a divine Love or Beauty or the atmosphere of a wider and greater and luminous Knowledge. In the return the spiritual impression abides; but the mental record is often blurred and remains as a vague or a fragmentary memory; the lower consciousness from which the ascent took place falls back to what it was, with only the addition of an unkept or a remembered but no longer dynamic experience. In time the ascent comes to be made at will and the consciousness brings back and retains some effect or some gain of its temporary sojourn in these higher countries of the spirit. These ascents take place for many in trance, but are perfectly possible in a concentration of the waking consciousness

or, where that consciousness has become sufficiently psychic, at any unconcentrated moment by an upward attraction or affinity. But these two types of contact with the superconscious, though they can be powerfully illuminating, ecstatic or liberating, are by themselves insufficiently effective: for the full spiritual transformation more is needed, a permanent ascension from the lower into the higher consciousness and an effectual permanent descent of the higher into the lower nature.

This is the third motion, the descent which is essential for bringing the permanent ascension, an increasing inflow from above, an experience of reception and retention of the descending spirit or its powers and elements of consciousness. This experience of descent can take place as a result of the other two movements or automatically before either has happened, through a sudden rift in the lid or a percolation, a downpour or an influx. A light descends and touches or envelops or penetrates the lower being, the mind, the life or the body; or a presence or a power or a stream of knowledge pours in waves or currents, or there is a flood of bliss or a sudden ecstasy; the contact with the superconscious has been established. For such experiences repeat themselves till they become normal, familiar and well-understood, revelatory of their contents and their significance which may have at first been involved and wrapped into secrecy by the figure of the covering experience. For a knowledge from above begins to descend, frequently, constantly, then uninterruptedly, and to manifest in the mind's quietude or silence; intuitions and inspirations, revelations born of a greater sight, a higher truth and wisdom, enter into the being, a luminous intuitive discrimination works which dispels all darkness of understanding or dazzling confusions, puts all in order; a new consciousness begins to form, the mind of a high wide self-existent thinking knowledge or an illumined or an intuitive or an overmental consciousness with new forces of thought or sight and a greater power of direct spiritual realisation which is more than thought or sight, a greater becoming in the spiritual substance of our present being; the heart and the sense become subtle, intense, large to embrace all existence, to see God, to feel

and hear and touch the Eternal, to make a deeper and closer unity of self and the world in a transcendent realisation. Other decisive experiences, other changes of consciousness determine themselves which are corollaries and consequences of this fundamental change. No limit can be fixed to this revolution; for it is in its nature an invasion by the Infinite.

This, effected little by little or in a succession of great and swift definitive experiences, is the process of the spiritual transformation. It achieves itself and culminates in an upward ascent often repeated by which in the end the consciousness fixes itself on a higher plane and from there sees and governs the mind, life and body; it achieves itself also in an increasing descent of the powers of the higher consciousness and knowledge which become more and more the whole normal consciousness and knowledge. A light and power, a knowledge and force are felt which first take possession of the mind and remould it, afterwards of the life part and remould that, finally of the little physical consciousness and leave it no longer little but wide and plastic and even infinite. For this new consciousness has itself the nature of infinity: it brings to us the abiding spiritual sense and awareness of the infinite and eternal with a great largeness of the nature and a breaking down of its limitations; immortality becomes no longer a belief or an experience but a normal self-awareness; the close presence of the Divine Being, his rule of the world and of our self and natural members, his force working in us and everywhere, the peace of the infinite, the joy of the infinite are now concrete and constant in the being; in all sights and forms one sees the Eternal, the Reality, in all sounds one hears it, in all touches feels it; there is nothing else but its forms and personalities and manifestations; the joy or adoration of the heart, the embrace of all existence, the unity of the spirit are abiding realities. The consciousness of the mental creature is turning or has been already turned wholly into the consciousness of the spiritual being. This is the second of the three transformations; uniting the manifested existence with what is above it, it is the middle step of the three, the decisive transition of the spiritually evolving nature.

If the spirit could from the first dwell securely on the superior heights and deal with a blank and virgin stuff of mind and matter, a complete spiritual transformation might be rapid, even facile: but the actual process of Nature is more difficult, the logic of her movement more manifold, contorted, winding, comprehensive; she recognises all the data of the task she has set to herself and is not satisfied with a summary triumph over her own complexities. Every part of our being has to be taken in its own nature and character, with all the moulds and writings of the past still there in it: each minutest portion and movement must either be destroyed and replaced if it is unfit, or, if it is capable, transmuted into the truth of the higher being. If the psychic change is complete, this can be done by a painless process, though still the programme must be long and scrupulous and the progress deliberate; but otherwise one has to be satisfied with a partial result or, if one's own scrupulousness of perfection or hunger of the spirit is insatiable, consent to a difficult, often painful and seemingly interminable action. For ordinarily the consciousness does not rise to the summits except in the highest moments; it remains on the mental level and receives descents from above, sometimes a single descent of some spiritual power that stays and moulds the being into something predominatingly spiritual, or a succession of descents bringing into it more and more of the spiritual status and dynamis: but unless one can live on the highest height reached, there cannot be the complete or more integral change. If the psychic mutation has not taken place, if there has been a premature pulling down of the higher Forces, their contact may be too strong for the flawed and impure material of Nature and its immediate fate may be that of the unbaked jar of the Veda which could not hold the divine Soma Wine; or the descending influence may withdraw or be spilt because the nature cannot contain or keep it. Again, if it is Power that descends, the egoistic mind or vital may try to seize on it for its own use and a magnified ego or a hunting after powers and self-aggrandising masteries may be the untoward result. The Ananda descending cannot be held if there is too much sexual impurity creating an intoxicant or degrading

mixture; the Power recedes, if there is ambition, vanity or other aggressive form of lower self, the Light if there is an attachment to obscurity or to any form of the Ignorance, the Presence if the chamber of the heart has not been made pure. Or some undivine Force may try to seize hold, not of the Power itself, for that withdraws, but of the result of force it leaves behind in the instrument and use it for the purposes of the Adversary. Even if none of these more disastrous faults or errors should take place, still the numerous mistakes of reception or the imperfections of the vessel may impede the transformation. The Power has to come at intervals and work meanwhile behind the veil or hold itself back through long periods of obscure assimilation or preparation of the recalcitrant parts of Nature; the Light has to work in darkness or semi-darkness on the regions in us that are still in the Night. At any moment the work may be stayed, personally for this life, because the nature is able to receive or assimilate no more,—for it has reached the present limits of its capacity,—or because the mind may be ready but the vital, when faced with a choice between the old life and the new, refuses, or if the vital accepts, the body may prove too weak, unfit or flawed for the necessary change of its consciousness and its dynamic transformation.

Moreover, the necessity of working out the change separately in each part of the being in its own nature and character compels the consciousness to descend into each in turn and act there according to its state and its possibility. If the work were done from above, from some spiritual height, there might be a sublimation or uplifting or the creation of a new structure compelled by the sheer force of the influence from above: but this change might not be accepted as native to itself by the lower being; it would not be a total growth, an integral evolution, but a partial and imposed formation, affecting or liberating some parts of the being, suppressing others or leaving them as they were; a creation from outside the normal nature, by imposition upon it, it could be durable in its entirety only as long as there was a maintenance of the creating influence. A descent of consciousness into the lower levels is therefore necessary, but in

this way also it is difficult to work out the full power of the higher principle; there is a modification, dilution, diminution which keeps up an imperfection and limitation in the results: the light of a greater knowledge comes down but gets blurred and modified, its significance misinterpreted or its truth mixed with mental and vital error, or the force, the power to fulfil itself is not commensurate with its light. A light and power of the overmind working in its own full right and in its own sphere is one thing, the same light working in the obscurity of the physical consciousness and under its conditions is something quite different and, owing to dilution and mixture, far inferior in its knowledge and force and results. A mutilated power, a partial effect or hampered movement is the consequence.

This is indeed the reason of the slow and difficult emergence of the Consciousness-Force in Nature: for mind and life have to descend into Matter and suit themselves to its conditions; changed and diminished by the obscurity and reluctant inertia of the substance and force in which they work, they are not able to make a complete transformation of their material into a fit instrument and a changed substance revelatory of their real and native power. The life consciousness is unable to effectuate the greatness and felicity of its mighty or beautiful impulses in the material existence; its impetus fails it, its force of effectuation is inferior to the truth of its conceptions, the form betrays the life intuition within it which it tries to render into terms of life being. The mind is unable to achieve its high ideas in the medium of life or matter without deductions and compromises which deprive them of their divinity; its clarities of knowledge and will are not matched by its force to mould this inferior substance to obey and express it: on the contrary, its own powers get affected, its will is divided, its knowledge confused and clouded by the turbidities of life and the incomprehension of Matter. Neither life nor mind succeeds in converting or perfecting the material existence, because they cannot attain to their own full force in these conditions; they need to call in a higher power to liberate and fulfil them. But the higher spiritual-mental powers also undergo the same disability when they descend into life and

matter; they can do much more, achieve much luminous change, but the modification, the limitation, the disparity between the consciousness that comes in and the force of effectuation that it can mentalise and materialise, are constantly there and the result is a diminished creation. The change made is often extraordinary, there is even something which looks like a total conversion and reversal of the state of consciousness and an uplifting of its movements, but it is not dynamically absolute.

Only the supermind can thus descend without losing its full power of action; for its action is always intrinsic and automatic, its will and knowledge identical and the result commensurate: its nature is a self-achieving Truth-consciousness and, if it limits itself or its working, it is by choice and intention, not by compulsion; in the limits it chooses its action and the results of its action are harmonious and inevitable. Again, overmind is, like mind, a dividing principle, and its characteristic operation is to work out in an independent formation a selected harmony; its global action enables it indeed to create a harmony whole and perfect in itself or to unite or fuse its harmonies together, to synthetise; but, labouring under the restrictions of mind, life and matter, it is obliged to do it by sections and their joinings. Its tendency of totality is hampered by its selective tendency which is accentuated by the nature of the mental and life material in which it is working here; what it can achieve is separate limited spiritual creations each perfect in itself, but not the integral knowledge and its manifestation. For this reason and because of the diminishing of its native light and power it is unable to do fully what is needed and has to call in a greater power, the supramental force, to liberate and fulfil it. As the psychic change has to call in the spiritual to complete it, so the first spiritual change has to call in the supramental transformation to complete it. For all these steps forward are, like those before them, transitional; the whole radical change in the evolution from a basis of Ignorance to a basis of Knowledge can only come by the intervention of the supramental Power and its direct action in earth-existence.

This then must be the nature of the third and final transformation which finishes the passage of the soul through the

Ignorance and bases its consciousness, its life, its power and form of manifestation on a complete and completely effective self-knowledge. The Truth-consciousness, finding evolutionary Nature ready, has to descend into her and enable her to liberate the supramental principle within her; so must be created the supramental and spiritual being as the first unveiled manifestation of the truth of the Self and Spirit in the material universe.

Chapter XXVI

The Ascent towards Supermind

Masters of the Truth-Light who make the Truth grow by the
Truth. *Rig Veda.*¹

Three powers of Speech that carry the Light in their front, . . .
a triple house of peace, a triple way of the Light. *Rig Veda.*²

Four other worlds of beauty he creates as his form when he
has grown by the Truths. *Rig Veda.*³

He is born a seer with the mind of discernment; an offspring
of the Truth, a birth set within in the secrecy, half arisen into
manifestation. *Rig Veda.*⁴

Possessed of a vast inspired wisdom, creators of the Light,
conscious all-knowers, growing in the Truth. *Rig Veda.*⁵

Beholding the higher Light beyond the darkness we came to
the divine Sun in the Godhead, to the highest Light of all.
*Rig Veda.*⁶

THE PSYCHIC transformation and the first stages of the spiritual transformation are well within our conception; their perfection would be the perfection, wholeness, consummated unity of a knowledge and experience which is already part of things realised, though only by a small number of human beings. But the supramental change in its process carries us into less explored regions; it initiates a vision of heights of consciousness which have indeed been glimpsed and visited, but have yet to be discovered and mapped in their completeness. The

¹ I. 23. 5.

² VII. 101. 1, 2.

³ IX. 70. 1.

⁴ IX. 68. 5.

⁵ X. 66. 1.

⁶ I. 50. 10.

highest of these peaks or elevated plateaus of consciousness, the supramental, lies far beyond the possibility of any satisfying mental scheme or map of it or any grasp of mental seeing and description. It would be difficult for the normal unillumined or untransformed mental conception to express or enter into something that is based on so different a consciousness with a radically different awareness of things; even if they were seen or conceived by some enlightenment or opening of vision, another language than the poor abstract counters used by our mind would be needed to translate them into terms by which their reality could become at all seizable by us. As the summits of human mind are beyond animal perception, so the movements of supermind are beyond the ordinary human mental conception: it is only when we have already had experience of a higher intermediate consciousness that any terms attempting to describe supramental being could convey a true meaning to our intelligence; for then, having experienced something akin to what is described, we could translate an inadequate language into a figure of what we knew. If the mind cannot enter into the nature of supermind, it can look towards it through these high and luminous approaches and catch some reflected impression of the Truth, the Right, the Vast which is the native kingdom of the free Spirit.

But even what can be said about the intermediate consciousness must perforce be inadequate; only certain abstract generalisations can be hazarded which may serve for an initial light of guidance. The one enabling circumstance here is that, however different in constitution and principle, the higher consciousness is still, in its evolutionary form, in what we can first achieve of it here, a supreme development of elements which are already present in ours in however rudimentary and diminished a figure and power of themselves. It is also a helpful fact that the logic of the process of evolutionary Nature continues, greatly modified in some of the rules of its working but essentially the same, in the ascension of the highest heights as in the lower beginnings; thus we can discover and follow to a certain extent the lines of her supreme procedure. For we have seen something of the nature

and law of the transition from intellectual to spiritual mind; from that achieved starting-point we can begin to trace the passage to a higher dynamic degree of the new consciousness and the farther transition from spiritual mind towards supermind. The indications must necessarily be very imperfect, for it is only some initial representations of an abstract and general character that can be arrived at by the method of metaphysical inquiry: the true knowledge and description must be left to the language of the mystic and the figures, at once more vivid and more recondite, of a direct and concrete experience.

The transition to Supermind through overmind is a passage from Nature as we know it into Super-Nature. It is by that very fact impossible for any effort of the mere Mind to achieve; our unaided personal aspiration and endeavour cannot reach it: our effort belongs to the inferior power of Nature; a power of the Ignorance cannot achieve by its own strength or characteristic or available methods what is beyond its own domain of Nature. All the previous ascensions have been effectuated by a secret Consciousness-Force operating first in Inconscience and then in the Ignorance: it has worked by an emergence of its involved powers to the surface, powers concealed behind the veil and superior to the past formulations of Nature, but even so there is needed a pressure of the same superior powers already formulated in their full natural force on their own planes; these superior planes create their own foundation in our subliminal parts and from there are able to influence the evolutionary process on the surface. Overmind and Supermind are also involved and occult in earth-Nature, but they have no formations on the accessible levels of our subliminal inner consciousness; there is as yet no overmind being or organised overmind nature, no supramental being or organised supermind nature acting either on our surface or in our normal subliminal parts: for these greater powers of consciousness are superconscious to the level of our ignorance. In order that the involved principles of Overmind and Supermind should emerge from their veiled secrecy, the being and powers of the superconscious must descend into us and uplift us and formulate themselves in our

being and powers; this descent is a *sine qua non* of the transition and transformation.

It is conceivable indeed that, without the descent, by a secret pressure from above, by a long evolution, our terrestrial Nature might succeed in entering into a close contact with the higher now superconscious planes and a formation of subliminal Overmind might take place behind the veil; as a result a slow emergence of the consciousness proper to these higher planes might awake on our surface. It is conceivable that in this way there might appear a race of mental beings thinking and acting not by the intellect or reasoning and reflecting intelligence, or not mainly by it, but by an intuitive mentality which would be the first step of an ascending change; this might be followed by an overmentalisation which would carry us to the borders beyond which lies the Supermind or divine Gnosis. But this process would inevitably be a long and toilsome endeavour of Nature. There is a possibility too that what would be achieved might only be an imperfect superior mentalisation; the new higher elements might strongly dominate the consciousness, but they would be still subjected to a modification of their action by the principle of an inferior mentality: there would be a greater expanded and illuminating knowledge, a cognition of a higher order; but it would still undergo a mixture subjecting it to the law of the Ignorance, as Mind undergoes limitation by the law of Life and Matter. For a real transformation there must be a direct and unveiled intervention from above; there would be necessary too a total submission and surrender of the lower consciousness, a cessation of its insistence, a will in it for its separate law of action to be completely annulled by transformation and lose all rights over our being. If these two conditions can be achieved even now by a conscious call and will in the spirit and a participation of our whole manifested and inner being in its change and elevation, the evolution, the transformation can take place by a comparatively swift conscious change; the supramental Consciousness-Force from above and the evolving Consciousness-Force from behind the veil acting on the awakened awareness and will of the mental human being would accomplish by their united power the

momentous transition. There would be no farther need of a slow evolution counting many millenniums for each step, the halting and difficult evolution operated by Nature in the past in the unconscious creatures of the Ignorance.

It is a first condition of this change that the mental Man we now are should become inwardly aware and in possession of his own deeper law of being and its processes; he must become the psychic and inner mental being master of his energies, no longer a slave of the movements of the lower Prakriti, in control of it, seated securely in a free harmony with a higher law of Nature. An increasing control of the individual over his own action of nature, a more and more conscious participation in the action of universal Nature, is a marked character, it is indeed a logical consequence, of the evolutionary principle and process. All action, all mental, vital, physical activities in the world are the operation of a universal Energy, a Consciousness-Force which is the power of the Cosmic Spirit working out the cosmic and individual truth of things. But since this creative Consciousness assumes in Matter a mask of inconscience and puts on the surface appearance of a blind universal Force executing a plan or organisation of things without seeming to know what it is doing, the first result is kin to this appearance; it is the phenomenon of an inconscient physical individualisation, a creation not of beings but of objects. These are formed existences with their own qualities, properties, power of being, character of being; but Nature's plan in them and organisation of them have to be worked out mechanically without any beginning of participation, initiation or conscious awareness in the individual object which emerges as the first dumb result and inanimate field of her action and creation. In animal life the Force begins to become slowly conscious on the surface and puts forth the form, no longer of an object, but of an individual being; but this imperfectly conscious individual, although it participates, senses, feels, yet only works out what the Force does in it without any clear intelligence or observation of what is being done; it seems to have no other choice or will than that which is imposed on it by its formed nature. In human mind there is the first appearance

of an observing intelligence that regards what is being done and of a will and choice that have become conscious; but the consciousness is still limited and superficial: the knowledge also is limited and imperfect, it is a partial intelligence, a half understanding, groping and empirical in great part or, if rational, then rational by constructions, theories, formulas. There is not as yet a luminous seeing which knows things by a direct grasp and arranges them with a spontaneous precision according to the seeing, according to the scheme of their inherent truth; although there is a certain element of instinct and intuition and insight which has some beginning of this power, the normal character of human intelligence is an inquiring reason or reflective thought which observes, supposes, infers, concludes, arrives by labour at a constructed truth, a constructed scheme of knowledge, a deliberately arranged action of its own making. Or rather this is what it strives to be and partly is; for its knowledge and will are constantly invaded, darkened or frustrated by forces of the being which are half-blind instruments of the mechanism of Nature.

This is evidently not the utmost of which consciousness is capable, not its last evolution and highest summit. A greater and more intimate intuition must be possible which would enter into the heart of things, be in luminous identity with the movements of Nature, assure to the being a clear control of his life or at least a harmony with his universe. It is only a free and entire intuitive consciousness which would be able to see and to grasp things by direct contact and penetrating vision or a spontaneous truth-sense born of an underlying unity or identity and arrange an action of Nature according to the truth of Nature. This would be a real participation by the individual in the working of the universal Consciousness-Force; the individual Purusha would become the master of his own executive energy and at the same time a conscious partner, agent, instrument of the Cosmic Spirit in the working of the universal Energy: the universal Energy would work through him, but he also would work through her and the harmony of the intuitive truth would make this double working a single action. A growing conscious participation of this higher and more intimate kind must be one accompaniment

of the transition from our present state of being to a state of supernature.

A harmonious other-world in which an intuitive mental intelligence of this kind and its control would be the rule, is conceivable; but in our plane of being, owing to the original intention and past history of the evolutionary plan, such a rule and control could with difficulty be stabilised and it is not likely that it could be complete, final and definitive. For an intuitive mentality intervening in a mixed mental, vital, physical consciousness would normally be forced to undergo a mixture with the inferior stuff of consciousness already evolved; in order to act on it, it would have to enter into it and, entering in it, would get entangled in it, penetrated by it, affected by the separative and partial character of our mind's action and the limitation and restricted force of the Ignorance. The action of intuitive intelligence is keen and luminous enough to penetrate and modify, but not large and whole enough to swallow up into itself and abolish the mass of the Ignorance and Inconscience; it could not effect an entire transformation of the whole consciousness into its own stuff and power. Still, even in our present state, a participation of a kind is there and our normal intelligence is sufficiently awake for the universal Conscious-Force to work through it and allow the intelligence and will to exercise a certain amount of direction of inner and outer circumstance, fumbling enough and at every moment dogged by error, capable only of a limited effect and power, not commensurate with the larger totality of her vast operations. In the evolution towards Supernature, this initial power of conscious participation in the universal working would enlarge in the individual into a more and more intimate and extended vision of her workings in himself, a sensitive perception of the course she was taking, a growing understanding or intuitive idea of the methods that had to be followed for a more rapid and more conscious self-evolution. As his inner psychic or occult inner mental being came more to the front, there would be a strengthened power of choice, of sanction, a beginning of authentic free will which would grow more and more effective. But this free will would be mostly in relation to his own workings of

Nature; it would mean only a freer, fuller and more immediately perceptive control of the motions of his own being: even there it could not be at first completely free, so long as it was imprisoned in the limits created by its own formations or combated by imperfection due to a mixture of the old and the new consciousness. Still there would be an increasing mastery and knowledge and an opening to a higher being and a higher nature.

Our notion of free will is apt to be tainted with the excessive individualism of the human ego and to assume the figure of an independent will acting on its own isolated account, in a complete liberty without any determination other than its own choice and single unrelated movement. This idea ignores the fact that our natural being is a part of cosmic Nature and our spiritual being exists only by the supreme Transcendence. Our total being can rise out of subjection to fact of present Nature only by an identification with a greater Truth and a greater Nature. The will of the individual, even when completely free, could not act in an isolated independence, because the individual being and nature are included in the universal Being and Nature and dependent on the all-overruling Transcendence. There could indeed be in the ascent a dual line. On one line the being could feel and behave as an independent self-existence uniting itself with its own impersonal Reality; it could, so self-conceived, act with a great force, but either this action would be still within an enlarged frame of its past and present self-formation of power of Nature or else it would be the cosmic or supreme Force that acted in it and there would be no personal initiation of action, no sense therefore of individual free will but only of an impersonal cosmic or supreme Will or Energy at its work. On the other line the being would feel itself a spiritual instrument and so act as a power of the Supreme Being, limited in its workings only by the potencies of the Supernature, which are without bounds or any restriction except its own Truth and self-law, and by the Will in her. But in either case there would be, as the condition of a freedom from the control of a mechanical action of Nature-forces, a submission to a greater conscious Power or an acquiescent unity of the individual being with its intention

and movement in his own and in the world's existence.

For the action of a new power of being in a higher range of consciousness might, even in its control on outer Nature, be extraordinarily effective, but only because of its light of vision and a consequent harmony or identification with the cosmic and transcendent Will; for it is when it becomes an instrumentation of a higher instead of a lower Power that the will of the being becomes free from a mechanical determinism by action and process of cosmic Mind-Energy, Life-Energy, Matter-Energy and an ignorant subjection to the drive of this inferior Nature. A power of initiation, even of an individual overseeing of world-forces could be there; but it would be an instrumental initiation, a delegated overseeing: the choice of the individual would receive the sanction of the Infinite because it was itself an expression of some truth of the Infinite. Thus the individuality would become more and more powerful and effective in proportion as it realised itself as a centre and formation of the universal and transcendent Being and Nature. For as the progression of the change proceeded, the energy of the liberated individual would be no longer the limited energy of mind, life and body, with which it started; the being would emerge into and put on—even as there would emerge in him and descend into him, assuming him into it—a greater light of Consciousness and a greater action of Force: his natural existence would be the instrumentation of a superior Power, an overmental and supramental Consciousness-Force, the power of the original Divine Shakti. All the processes of the evolution would be felt as the action of a supreme and universal Consciousness, a supreme and universal Force working in whatever way it chose, on whatever level, within whatever self-determined limits, a conscious working of the transcendent and cosmic Being, the action of the omnipotent and omniscient World-Mother raising the being into herself, into her supernature. In place of the Nature of Ignorance with the individual as its closed field and unconscious or half-conscious instrument, there would be a Super-Nature of the divine Gnosis and the individual soul would be its conscious, open and free field and instrument, a participant in its action, aware of its purpose and

process, aware too of its own greater Self, the universal, the transcendent Reality, and of its own Person as illimitably one with that and yet an individual being of Its being, an instrument and a spiritual centre.

A first opening towards this participation in an action of Supernature is a condition of the turn towards the last, the supramental transformation: for this transformation is the completion of a passage from the obscure harmony of a blind automatism with which Nature sets out to the luminous authentic spontaneity, the infallible motion of the self-existent truth of the Spirit. The evolution begins with the automatism of Matter and of a lower life in which all obeys implicitly the drive of Nature, fulfils mechanically its law of being and therefore succeeds in maintaining a harmony of its limited type of existence and action; it proceeds through the pregnant confusion of the mind and life of a humanity driven by this inferior Nature but struggling to escape from her limitations, to master and drive and use her; it emerges into a greater spontaneous harmony and automatic self-fulfilling action founded on the spiritual Truth of things. In this higher state the consciousness will see that Truth and follow the line of its energies with a full knowledge, with a strong participation and instrumental mastery, a complete delight in action and existence. There will be a luminous and enjoyed perfection of unity with all instead of a blind and suffered subjection of the individual to the universal, and at every moment the action of the universal in the individual and the individual in the universal will be enlightened and governed by the rule of the transcendent Supernature.

But this highest condition is difficult and must evidently take long to bring about; for the participation and consent of the Purusha to the transition is not sufficient, there must be also the consent and participation of the Prakriti. It is not only the central thought and will that have to acquiesce, but all the parts of our being must assent and surrender to the law of the spiritual Truth; all has to learn to obey the government of the conscious Divine Power in the members. There are obstinate difficulties in our being born of its evolutionary constitution which militate

against this assent. For some of these parts are still subject to the inconscience and subconscience and to the lower automatism of habit or so-called law of the nature,—mechanical habit of mind, habit of life, habit of instinct, habit of personality, habit of character, the ingrained mental, vital, physical needs, impulses, desires of the natural man, the old functionings of all kinds that are rooted there so deep that it would seem as if we had to dig to abysmal foundations in order to get them out: these parts refuse to give up their response to the lower law founded in the Inconscient; they continually send up to the conscious mind and life the old reactions and seek to reaffirm them there as the eternal rule of Nature. Other parts of the being are less obscure and mechanical and rooted in inconscience, but all are imperfect and attached to their imperfection and have their own obstinate reactions; the vital part is wedded to the law of self-affirmation and desire, the mind is attached to its own formed movements, and both are willingly obedient to the inferior law of the Ignorance. And yet the law of participation and the law of surrender are imperative; at each step of the transition the assent of the Purusha is needed and there must be too the consent of each part of the nature to the action of the higher power for its change. There must be then a conscious self-direction of the mental being in us towards this change, this substitution of Supernature for the old nature, this transcendence. The rule of conscious obedience to the higher truth of the spirit, the surrender of the whole being to the light and power that come from the Supernature, is a second condition which has to be accomplished slowly and with difficulty by the being itself before the supramental transformation can become at all possible.

It follows that the psychic and the spiritual transformation must be far advanced, even as complete as may be, before there can be any beginning of the third and consummating supramental change; for it is only by this double transmutation that the self-will of the Ignorance can be totally altered into a spiritual obedience to the remoulding truth and will of the greater Consciousness of the Infinite. A long, difficult stage of constant effort, energism, austerity of the personal will, *tapasyā*,

has ordinarily to be traversed before a more decisive stage can be reached in which a state of self-giving of all the being to the Supreme Being and the Supreme Nature can become total and absolute. There has to be a preliminary stage of seeking and effort with a central offering or self-giving of the heart and soul and mind to the Highest and a later mediate stage of total conscious reliance on its greater Power aiding the personal endeavour; that integral reliance again must grow into a final complete abandonment of oneself in every part and every movement to the working of the higher Truth in the nature. The totality of this abandonment can only come if the psychic change has been complete or the spiritual transformation has reached a very high state of achievement. For it implies a giving up by the mind of all its moulds, ideas, mental formations, of all opinion, of all its habits of intellectual observation and judgment to be replaced first by an intuitive and then by an overmind or supramental functioning which inaugurates the action of a direct Truth-consciousness, Truth-sight, Truth-discernment, a new consciousness which is in all its ways quite foreign to our mind's present nature. There is demanded too a similar giving up by the vital of its cherished desires, emotions, feelings, impulses, grooves of sensation, forceful mechanism of action and reaction to be replaced by a luminous, desireless, free and yet automatically self-determining force, the force of a centralised universal and impersonal knowledge, power, delight of which the life must become an instrument and an epiphany, but of which it has at present no inkling and no sense of its greater joy and strength for fulfilment. Our physical part has to give up its instincts, needs, blind conservative attachments, settled grooves of nature, its doubt and disbelief in all that is beyond itself, its faith in the inevitability of the fixed functionings of the physical mind, the physical life and the body, that they may be replaced by a new power which establishes its own greater law and functioning in form and force of Matter. Even the inconscient and subconscious have to become conscient in us, susceptible to the higher light, no longer obstructive to the fulfilling action of the Consciousness-Force, but more and more a mould and lower

basis of the Spirit. These things cannot be done so long as either mind, life or physical consciousness are the leading powers of being or have any dominance. The admission of such a change can only be brought about by a full emergence of the soul and inner being, the dominance of the psychic and spiritual will and a long working of their light and power on the parts of the being, a psychic and spiritual remoulding of the whole nature.

A unification of the entire being by a breaking down of the wall between the inner and outer nature,—a shifting of the position and centration of the consciousness from the outer to the inner self, a firm foundation on this new basis, a habitual action from this inner self and its will and vision and an opening up of the individual into the cosmic consciousness,—is another necessary condition for the supramental change. It would be chimerical to hope that the supreme Truth-consciousness can establish itself in the narrow formulation of our surface mind and heart and life, however turned towards spirituality. All the inner centres must have burst open and released into action their capacities; the psychic entity must be unveiled and in control. If this first change establishing the being in the inner and larger, a Yogic in place of an ordinary consciousness has not been done, the greater transmutation is impossible. Moreover the individual must have sufficiently universalised himself, he must have recast his individual mind in the boundlessness of a cosmic mentality, enlarged and vivified his individual life into the immediate sense and direct experience of the dynamic motion of the universal life, opened up the communications of his body with the forces of universal Nature, before he can be capable of a change which transcends the present cosmic formulation and lifts him beyond the lower hemisphere of universality into a consciousness belonging to its spiritual upper hemisphere. Besides he must have already become aware of what is now to him superconscious; he must be already a being conscious of the higher spiritual Light, Power, Knowledge, Ananda, penetrated by its descending influences, new-made by a spiritual change. It is possible for the spiritual opening to take place and its action to proceed before the psychic is far advanced or complete; for the spiritual

influence from above can awaken, assist and complete the psychic transmutation: all that is necessary is that there should be a sufficient stress of the psychic entity for the spiritual higher overture to take place. But the third, the supramental change does not admit of any premature descent of the highest Light; for it can only commence when the supramental Force begins to act directly, and this it does not do if the nature is not ready. For there is too great a disparity between the power of the supreme Force and the capacity of the ordinary nature; the inferior nature would either be unable to bear or, bearing, unable to respond and receive or, receiving, unable to assimilate. Till Nature is ready, the supramental Force has to act indirectly; it puts the intermediary powers of overmind or intuition in front, or it works through a modification of itself to which the already half-transformed being can be wholly or partially responsive.

The spiritual evolution obeys the logic of a successive unfolding; it can take a new decisive main step only when the previous main step has been sufficiently conquered: even if certain minor stages can be swallowed up or leaped over by a rapid and brusque ascension, the consciousness has to turn back to assure itself that the ground passed over is securely annexed to the new condition. It is true that the conquest of the spirit supposes the execution in one life or a few lives of a process that in the ordinary course of Nature would involve a slow and uncertain procedure of centuries or even of millenniums: but this is a question of the speed with which the steps are traversed; a greater or concentrated speed does not eliminate the steps themselves or the necessity of their successive surmounting. The increased rapidity is possible only because the conscious participation of the inner being is there and the power of the Supernature is already at work in the half-transformed lower nature, so that the steps which would otherwise have had to be taken tentatively in the night of Inconscience or Ignorance can now be taken in an increasing light and power of Knowledge. The first obscure material movement of the evolutionary Force is marked by an aeonic graduality; the movement of life progress proceeds slowly but still with a quicker step, it is concentrated into the figure of

millenniums; mind can still further compress the tardy leisureliness of Time and make long paces of the centuries; but when the conscious Spirit intervenes, a supremely concentrated pace of evolutionary swiftness becomes possible. Still, an involved rapidity of the evolutionary course swallowing up the stages can only come in when the power of the conscious Spirit has prepared the field and the supramental Force has begun to use its direct influence. All Nature's transformations do indeed wear the appearance of a miracle, but it is a miracle with a method: her largest strides are taken over an assured ground, her swiftest leaps are from a base that gives security and certainty to the evolutionary saltus; a secret all-wisdom governs everything in her, even the steps and processes that seem to be most unaccountable.

This law of Nature's procedure brings in the necessity of a gradation in the last transitional process, a climbing of degrees, an unfolding of higher and higher states that lead us from the spiritualised mind to supermind,—a steep passage that could not be accomplished otherwise. There are above us, we have seen, successive states, levels or graded powers of being overtaking our normal mind, hidden in our own superconscious parts, higher ranges of Mind, degrees of spiritual consciousness and experience; without them there would be no links, no helpful intervening spaces to make the immense ascension possible. It is indeed from these higher sources that the secret spiritual Power acts upon the being and by its pressure brings about the psychic transformation or the spiritual change; but in the early stages of our growth this action is not apparent, it remains occult and unseizable. At first what is necessary is that the pure touch of the spiritual force must intervene in mental nature: that awakening pressure must stamp itself upon mind and heart and life and give them their upward orientation; a subtle light or a great transmuting power must purify, refine and uplift their motions and suffuse them with a higher consciousness that does not belong to their own normal capacity and character. This can be done from within by an invisible action through the psychic entity and the psychic personality; a consciously felt descent from above is not indispensable. The presence of the spirit is there in every living

being, on every level, in all things, and because it is there, the experience of Sachchidananda, of the pure spiritual existence and consciousness, of the delight of a divine presence, closeness, contact can be acquired through the mind or the heart or the life-sense or even through the physical consciousness; if the inner doors are flung sufficiently open, the light from the sanctuary can suffuse the nearest and the farthest chambers of the outer being. The necessary turn or change can also be brought about by an occult descent of the spiritual force from above, in which the influx, the influence, the spiritual consequence is felt, but the higher source is unknown and the actual feeling of a descent is not there. A consciousness so touched may be so much uplifted that the being turns to an immediate union with the Self or with the Divine by departure from the evolution and, if that is sanctioned, no question of graduality or steps or method intervenes, the rupture with Nature can be decisive: for the law of departure, once it is made possible, is not or need not be the same as the law of the evolutionary transformation and perfection; it is or can be a leap, a breaking out of bonds rapid or immediate,—the spiritual evasion is secured and its only remaining sanction is the destined fall of the body. But if the transformation of earth life is intended, the first touch of spiritualisation must be followed by an awakening to the higher sources and energies, a seeking for them and an enlargement and heightening of the being into their characteristic status and a conversion of the consciousness to their greater law and dynamic nature. This change must go step by step, till the stair of the ascension is transcended and there is an emergence to those greatest wide-open spaces of which the Veda speaks, the native spaces of a consciousness which is supremely luminous and infinite.

For here there is the same process of evolution as in the rest of the movement of Nature; there is a heightening and widening of the consciousness, an ascent to a new level and a taking up of the lower levels, an assumption and new integration of the existence by a superior power of Being which imposes its own way of action and its character and force of substance-energy on as much as it can reach of the previously evolved

parts of nature. The demand for integration becomes at this highest stage of Nature's workings a point of cardinal importance. In the lower grades of the ascension the new assumption, the integration into a higher principle of consciousness, remains incomplete: the mind cannot wholly mentalise life and matter; there are considerable parts of the life being and the body which remain in the realm of the submental and the subconscious or inconscient. This is one serious obstacle to the mind's endeavour towards the perfection of the nature; for the continued share of the submental, the subconscious and inconscient in the government of the activities, by bringing in another law than that of the mental being, enables the conscious vital and the physical consciousness also to reject the law laid upon them by the mind and to follow their own impulses and instincts in defiance of the mental reason and the rational will of the developed intelligence. This makes it difficult for the mind to go beyond itself, to exceed its own level and spiritualise the nature; for what it cannot even make fully conscious, cannot securely mentalise and rationalise, it cannot spiritualise, since spiritualisation is a greater and more difficult integration. No doubt, by calling in the spiritual force, it can establish an influence and a preliminary change in some parts of the nature, especially in the thinking mind itself and in the heart which is nearest to its own province: but this change is not often a total perfection even within limits and what it does achieve is rare and difficult. The spiritual consciousness using the mind is employing an inferior means and, even though it brings in a divine light into the mind, a divine purity, passion, ardour into the heart or imposes a spiritual law upon the life, this new consciousness has to work within restrictions; for the most part it can only regulate or check the lower action of the life and rigorously control the body, but these members, even if refined or mastered, do not receive their spiritual fulfilment or undergo a perfection and transformation. For that it is necessary to bring in a higher dynamic principle which is native to the spiritual consciousness and by which, therefore, it can act in its own law and completer natural light and power and impose them upon the members.

But even this intervention of a new dynamic principle and this powerful imposition may take long to succeed; for the lower parts of the being have their own rights and, if they are to be truly transformed, they must be made to consent to their own transformation. This is difficult to bring about because the natural propensity of each part of us is to prefer its own self-law, its dharma, however inferior, to a superior law or dharma which it feels to be not its own; it clings to its own consciousness or unconsciousness, its own impulsions and reactions, its own dynamisation of being, its own way of the delight of existence. It clings to them all the more obstinately if that way be a contradiction of delight, a way of darkness and sorrow and pain and suffering; for that too has acquired its own perverse and opposite taste, *rasa*, its pleasure of darkness and sorrow, its sadistic or masochistic interest in pain and suffering. Even if this part of our being seeks better things, it is often obliged to follow the worse because they are its own, natural to its energy, natural to its substance. A complete and radical change can only be brought about by bringing in persistently the spiritual light and intimate experience of the spiritual truth, power, bliss into the recalcitrant elements until they too recognise that their own way of fulfilment lies there, that they are themselves a diminished power of the spirit and can recover by this new way of being their own truth and integral nature. This illumination is constantly opposed by the Forces of the lower nature and still more by the adverse Forces that live and reign by the world's imperfections and have laid down their formidable foundation on the black rock of the Inconscience.

An indispensable step towards overcoming this difficulty is the opening up of the inner being and its centres of action; for there the task that the surface mind could not achieve begins to be more possible. The inner mind, the inner life-consciousness and life-mind, the subtle-physical consciousness and its subtle-physical mentality, once liberated into action, create a larger, finer, greater mediating awareness able to communicate with the universal and with what is above them, able also to bring to bear their power on the whole range of the being, on the

submental, on the subconscious mind, on the subconscious life, even on the subconscious of the body: they can, though not wholly enlighten, yet to some extent open, penetrate, work upon the fundamental Inconscience. The spiritual Light, Power, Knowledge, Delight from above can then descend beyond the mind and heart, which are always the easiest to reach and illumine; occupying the whole nature from top to bottom, they can pervade more fully the life and the body and by a still profounder impact shake the foundations of the Inconscience. But even this larger mentalisation and vitalisation from within is still an inferior illumination: it can lessen but it does not get rid of the Ignorance; it assails and compels to recede but it does not overcome the powers and forces that maintain the subtle and secret rule of the Inconscience. The spiritual forces acting through this larger mentalisation and vitalisation can bring in a higher light, strength and joy; but the full spiritualisation, the completest new integration of consciousness, is at this stage still impossible. If the inmost being, the psychic, takes charge, then indeed a deeper mutation, not mental, can make the descent of spiritual force more effective; for the totality of the conscious being will have undergone a preliminary soul change which emancipates mind, life, body from the snare of their own imperfections and impurities. At this point, a greater spiritual dynamisation, the working of the higher powers of the spiritual mind and overmind, can fully intervene: they may indeed have started their work before, though only as influences; but under the new conditions they can uplift the central being towards their own level and commence the last new integration of the nature. These higher powers work already in the human unspiritualised mind, but indirectly and in a fragmentary and diminished action; they are changed into substance and power of mind before they can work, and that substance and power are illumined and intensified in their vibrations, exalted and ecstasised in some of their movements by this entry, but not transformed. But when the spiritualisation begins and, as its greater results manifest themselves,—silence of the mind, the admission of our being into the cosmic consciousness, the Nirvana of the little ego in the

sense of universal self, the contact with the Divine Reality, — the interventions of the higher dynamis and our openness to them can increase, they can assume a fuller, more direct, more characteristic power of their working, and this progression continues until some complete and mature action of them is possible. It is then that the turning of the spiritual towards the supramental transformation commences; for the heightening of the consciousness to higher and higher planes builds in us the gradation of the ascent to supermind, that difficult and supreme passage.

It is not to be supposed that the circumstances and the lines of the transition would be the same for all, for here we enter into the domain of the infinite: but, since there is behind all of them the unity of a fundamental truth, the scrutiny of a given line of ascent may be expected to throw light on the principle of all ascending possibilities; such a scrutiny of one line is all that can be attempted. This line is, as all must be, governed by the natural configuration of the stair of ascent: there are in it many steps, for it is an incessant gradation and there is no gap anywhere; but, from the point of view of the ascent of consciousness from our mind upwards through a rising series of dynamic powers by which it can sublimate itself, the gradation can be resolved into a stairway of four main ascents, each with its high level of fulfilment. These gradations may be summarily described as a series of sublimations of the consciousness through Higher Mind, Illumined Mind and Intuition into Overmind and beyond it; there is a succession of self-transmutations at the summit of which lies the Supermind or Divine Gnosis. All these degrees are gnostic in their principle and power; for even at the first we begin to pass from a consciousness based on an original Inconscience and acting in a general Ignorance or in a mixed Knowledge-Ignorance to a consciousness based on a secret self-existent Knowledge and first acted upon and inspired by that light and power and then itself changed into that substance and using entirely this new instrumentation. In themselves these grades are grades of energy-substance of the Spirit: for it must not be supposed, because we distinguish them according to their leading character, means and potency of knowledge, that they

are merely a method or way of knowing or a faculty or power of cognition; they are domains of being, grades of the substance and energy of the spiritual being, fields of existence which are each a level of the universal Consciousness-Force constituting and organising itself into a higher status. When the powers of any grade descend completely into us, it is not only our thought and knowledge that are affected,—the substance and very grain of our being and consciousness, all its states and activities are touched and penetrated and can be remoulded and wholly transmuted. Each stage of this ascent is therefore a general, if not a total, conversion of the being into a new light and power of a greater existence.

The gradation itself depends fundamentally upon a higher or lower substance, potency, intensity of vibrations of the being, of its self-awareness, of its delight of existence, of its force of existence. Consciousness, as we descend the scale, becomes more and more diminished and diluted,—dense indeed by its coarser crudity, but while that crudity of consistence compacts the stuff of Ignorance, it admits less and less the substance of light; it becomes thin in pure substance of consciousness and reduced in power of consciousness, thin in light, thin and weak in capacity of delight; it has to resort to a grosser thickness of its diminished stuff and to a strenuous output of its obscurer force to arrive at anything, but this strenuousness of effort and labour is a sign not of strength but of weakness. As we ascend, on the contrary, a finer but far stronger and more truly and spiritually concrete substance emerges, a greater luminosity and potent stuff of consciousness, a subtler, sweeter, purer and more powerfully ecstatic energy of delight. In the descent of these higher grades upon us it is this greater light, force, essence of being and consciousness, energy of delight that enter into mind, life, body, change and repair their diminished and diluted and incapable substance, convert it into its own higher and stronger dynamis of spirit and intrinsic form and force of reality. This can happen because all is fundamentally the same substance, the same consciousness, the same force, but in different forms and powers and degrees of itself: a taking up of the lower by

the higher is therefore a possible and, but for our second nature of inconscience, a spiritually natural movement; what was put forth from the superior status is enveloped and taken up into its own greater being and essence.

Our first decisive step out of our human intelligence, our normal mentality, is an ascent into a higher Mind, a mind no longer of mingled light and obscurity or half-light, but a large clarity of the spirit. Its basic substance is a unitarian sense of being with a powerful multiple dynamisation capable of the formation of a multitude of aspects of knowledge, ways of action, forms and significances of becoming, of all of which there is a spontaneous inherent knowledge. It is therefore a power that has proceeded from the Overmind,—but with the Supermind as its ulterior origin,—as all these greater powers have proceeded: but its special character, its activity of consciousness are dominated by Thought; it is a luminous thought-mind, a mind of spirit-born conceptual knowledge. An all-awareness emerging from the original identity, carrying the truths the identity held in itself, conceiving swiftly, victoriously, multitudinously, formulating and by self-power of the Idea effectually realising its conceptions, is the character of this greater mind of knowledge. This kind of cognition is the last that emerges from the original spiritual identity before the initiation of a separative knowledge, base of the Ignorance; it is therefore the first that meets us when we rise from conceptional and ratiocinative mind, our best-organised knowledge-power of the Ignorance, into the realms of the Spirit: it is, indeed, the spiritual parent of our conceptional mental ideation, and it is natural that this leading power of our mentality should, when it goes beyond itself, pass into its immediate source.

But here in this greater Thought there is no need of a seeking and self-critical ratiocination, no logical motion step by step towards a conclusion, no mechanism of express or implied deductions and inferences, no building or deliberate concatenation of idea with idea in order to arrive at an ordered sum or outcome of knowledge; for this limping action of our reason is a movement of Ignorance searching for knowledge, obliged

to safeguard its steps against error, to erect a selective mental structure for its temporary shelter and to base it on foundations already laid and carefully laid but never firm, because it is not supported on a soil of native awareness but imposed on an original soil of nescience. There is not here, either, that other way of our mind at its keenest and swiftest, a rapid hazardous divination and insight, a play of the searchlight of intelligence probing into the little known or the unknown. This higher consciousness is a Knowledge formulating itself on a basis of self-existent all-awareness and manifesting some part of its integrality, a harmony of its significances put into thought-form. It can freely express itself in single ideas, but its most characteristic movement is a mass ideation, a system or totality of truth-seeing at a single view; the relations of idea with idea, of truth with truth are not established by logic but pre-exist and emerge already self-seen in the integral whole. There is an initiation into forms of an ever-present but till now inactive knowledge, not a system of conclusions from premisses or data; this thought is a self-revelation of eternal Wisdom, not an acquired knowledge. Large aspects of truth come into view in which the ascending Mind, if it chooses, can dwell with satisfaction and, after its former manner, live in them as in a structure; but if progress is to be made, these structures can constantly expand into a larger structure or several of them combine themselves into a provisional greater whole on the way to a yet unachieved integrality. In the end there is a great totality of truth known and experienced but still a totality capable of infinite enlargement because there is no end to the aspects of knowledge, *nāsty anto vistarasya me*.

This is the Higher Mind in its aspect of cognition; but there is also the aspect of will, of dynamic effectuation of the Truth: here we find that this greater more brilliant Mind works always on the rest of the being, the mental will, the heart and its feelings, the life, the body, through the power of thought, through the idea-force. It seeks to purify through knowledge, to deliver through knowledge, to create by the innate power of knowledge. The idea is put into the heart or the life as a force to be accepted

and worked out; the heart and life become conscious of the idea and respond to its dynamisms and their substance begins to modify itself in that sense, so that the feelings and actions become the vibrations of this higher wisdom, are informed with it, filled with the emotion and the sense of it: the will and the life impulses are similarly charged with its power and its urge of self-effectuation; even in the body the idea works so that, for example, the potent thought and will of health replaces its faith in illness and its consent to illness, or the idea⁷ of strength calls in the substance, power, motion, vibration of strength; the idea generates the force and form proper to the idea and imposes it on our substance of mind, life or matter. It is in this way that the first working proceeds; it charges the whole being with a new and superior consciousness, lays a foundation of change, prepares it for a superior truth of existence.

It has here to be emphasised, in order to obviate a natural misconception which can easily arise when the superior power of the higher forces is first perceived or experienced, that these higher forces are not in their descent immediately all-powerful as they would naturally be in their own plane of action and in their own medium. In the evolution in Matter they have to enter into a foreign and inferior medium and work upon it; they encounter there the incapacities of our mind and life and body, meet with the unreceptiveness or blind refusal of the Ignorance, experience the negation and obstruction of the Inconscience. On their own level they work upon a basis of luminous consciousness and luminous substance of being and are automatically effective; but here they have to encounter an already and strongly formed foundation of Nescience,—not only the complete nescience of Matter, but the modified nescience of mind and heart and life. Thus the higher Idea descending into the developed mental intelligence has even there to overcome the barrage of a mass or system of formed ideas which belong to the Knowledge-Ignorance and the will to persistence and self-realisation of

⁷ The word expressing the idea has the same power if it is surcharged with the spiritual force; that is the rationale of the Indian use of the *mantra*.

these ideas; for all ideas are forces and have a formative or self-effective faculty greater or less according to the conditions,—even reducible to nil in practice when they have to deal with inconscient Matter, but still potential. There is thus ready-formed a power of resistance which opposes or minimises the effects of the descending Light, a resistance which may amount to a refusal, a rejection of the Light, or take the shape of an attempt to impair, subdue, ingeniously modify or adapt or perversely deform the light in order to suit it to the preconceived ideas of the Ignorance. If the preconceived or already formed ideas are dismissed and deprived of their right to persistence, they have still the right of recurrence, from outside, from their prevalence in universal Mind, or they may retire downwards into the vital, physical or subconscious parts and from thence resurge at the least opportunity to repossess their lost domain: for evolutionary Nature has to give this right of persistence to things once established by her in order to bring a sufficient steadiness and solidity to her steps. It is, moreover, the nature and claim of any Force in the manifestation to be, to survive, to effectuate itself wherever possible and as long as possible, and it is therefore that in a world of Ignorance all is achieved not only through a complexus but through a collision and struggle and intermixture of Forces. But for this highest evolution it is essential that all mixture of Ignorance with Knowledge should be abolished; an action and evolution through strife of forces must be replaced by an action and evolution through a harmony of forces: but this stage can only be reached by a last strife and an overcoming of the powers of Ignorance by the powers of Light and Knowledge. In the lower levels of the being, in the heart and life and body, the same phenomenon recurs and on a more intense scale; for here it is not ideas that have to be met but emotions, desires, impulses, sensations, vital needs and habits of the lower Nature; these, since they are less conscious than ideas, are blinder in their response and are more obstinately self-assertive: all have the same or a greater power of resistance and recurrence, or take refuge in the circumconscious universal Nature or in our own lower levels or in a seed-state in the subconscious and from there

have the power of new invasion or resurgence. This power of persistence, recurrence, resistance of established things in Nature is always the great obstacle which the evolutionary Force has to meet, which it has indeed itself created in order to prevent a too rapid transmutation even when that transmutation is its own eventual intention in things.

This obstacle will be there,—even though it may progressively diminish,—at each stage of this greater ascent. In order to allow at all to the higher Light an adequate entry and force of working, it is necessary to acquire a power for quietude of the nature, to compose, tranquillise, impress a controlled passivity or even an entire silence on mind and heart, life and body: but even so a continued opposition, overt and felt in the Force of the universal Ignorance or subliminal and obscure in the substance-energy of the individual's make of mind, his form of life, his body of Matter, an occult resistance or a revolt or reaffirmation of the controlled or suppressed energies of the ignorant nature, is always possible and, if anything in the being consents to them, they can resume dominance. A previously established psychic control is very desirable as that creates a general responsiveness and inhibits the revolt of the lower parts against the Light or their consent to the claims of the Ignorance. A preliminary spiritual transformation will also reduce the hold of the Ignorance; but neither of these influences altogether eliminates its obstruction and limitation: for these preliminary changes do not bring the integral consciousness and knowledge; the original basis of Nescience proper to the Inconscient will still be there needing at every turn to be changed, enlightened, diminished in its extent and in its force of reaction. The power of the spiritual Higher Mind and its idea-force, modified and diminished as it must be by its entrance into our mentality, is not sufficient to sweep out all these obstacles and create the gnostic being, but it can make a first change, a modification that will capacitate a higher ascent and a more powerful descent and further prepare an integration of the being in a greater Force of consciousness and knowledge.

This greater Force is that of the Illumined Mind, a Mind no longer of higher Thought, but of spiritual light. Here the

clarity of the spiritual intelligence, its tranquil daylight, gives place or subordinates itself to an intense lustre, a splendour and illumination of the spirit: a play of lightnings of spiritual truth and power breaks from above into the consciousness and adds to the calm and wide enlightenment and the vast descent of peace which characterise or accompany the action of the larger conceptual-spiritual principle, a fiery ardour of realisation and a rapturous ecstasy of knowledge. A downpour of inwardly visible Light very usually envelops this action; for it must be noted that, contrary to our ordinary conceptions, light is not primarily a material creation and the sense or vision of light accompanying the inner illumination is not merely a subjective visual image or a symbolic phenomenon: light is primarily a spiritual manifestation of the Divine Reality illuminative and creative; material light is a subsequent representation or conversion of it into Matter for the purposes of the material Energy. There is also in this descent the arrival of a greater dynamic, a golden drive, a luminous "enthousiasmos" of inner force and power which replaces the comparatively slow and deliberate process of the Higher Mind by a swift, sometimes a vehement, almost a violent impetus of rapid transformation.

The Illumined Mind does not work primarily by thought, but by vision; thought is here only a subordinate movement expressive of sight. The human mind, which relies mainly on thought, conceives that to be the highest or the main process of knowledge, but in the spiritual order thought is a secondary and a not indispensable process. In its form of verbal thought, it can almost be described as a concession made by Knowledge to the Ignorance, because that Ignorance is incapable of making truth wholly lucid and intelligible to itself in all its extent and manifold implications except through the clarifying precision of significant sounds; it cannot do without this device to give to ideas an exact outline and an expressive body. But it is evident that this is a device, a machinery; thought in itself, in its origin on the higher levels of consciousness, is a perception, a cognitive seizing of the object or of some truth of things which is a powerful but still a minor and secondary result of spiritual

vision, a comparatively external and superficial regard of the self upon the self, the subject upon itself or something of itself as object: for all there is a diversity and multiplicity of the self. In mind there is a surface response of perception to the contact of an observed or discovered object, fact or truth and a consequent conceptual formulation of it; but in the spiritual light there is a deeper perceptive response from the very substance of consciousness and a comprehending formulation in that substance, an exact figure or revelatory ideograph in the stuff of the being,—nothing more, no verbal representation is needed for the precision and completeness of this thought knowledge. Thought creates a representative image of Truth; it offers that to the mind as a means of holding Truth and making it an object of knowledge; but the body itself of Truth is caught and exactly held in the sunlight of a deeper spiritual sight to which the representative figure created by thought is secondary and derivative, powerful for communication of knowledge, but not indispensable for reception or possession of knowledge.

A consciousness that proceeds by sight, the consciousness of the seer, is a greater power for knowledge than the consciousness of the thinker. The perceptual power of the inner sight is greater and more direct than the perceptual power of thought: it is a spiritual sense that seizes something of the substance of Truth and not only her figure; but it outlines the figure also and at the same time catches the significance of the figure, and it can embody her with a finer and bolder revealing outline and a larger comprehension and power of totality than thought-conception can manage. As the Higher Mind brings a greater consciousness into the being through the spiritual idea and its power of truth, so the Illumined Mind brings in a still greater consciousness through a Truth Sight and Truth Light and its seeing and seizing power. It can effect a more powerful and dynamic integration; it illuminates the thought-mind with a direct inner vision and inspiration, brings a spiritual sight into the heart and a spiritual light and energy into its feeling and emotion, imparts to the life-force a spiritual urge, a truth inspiration that dynamises the action and exalts the life movements; it infuses into the sense

a direct and total power of spiritual sensation so that our vital and physical being can contact and meet concretely, quite as intensely as the mind and emotion can conceive and perceive and feel, the Divine in all things; it throws on the physical mind a transforming light that breaks its limitations, its conservative inertia, replaces its narrow thought-power and its doubts by sight and pours luminosity and consciousness into the very cells of the body. In the transformation by the Higher Mind the spiritual sage and thinker would find his total and dynamic fulfilment; in the transformation by the Illumined Mind there would be a similar fulfilment for the seer, the illumined mystic, those in whom the soul lives in vision and in a direct sense and experience: for it is from these higher sources that they receive their light and to rise into that light and live there would be their ascension to their native empire.

But these two stages of the ascent enjoy their authority and can get their own united completeness only by a reference to a third level; for it is from the higher summits where dwells the intuitionial being that they derive the knowledge which they turn into thought or sight and bring down to us for the mind's transmutation. Intuition is a power of consciousness nearer and more intimate to the original knowledge by identity; for it is always something that leaps out direct from a concealed identity. It is when the consciousness of the subject meets with the consciousness in the object, penetrates it and sees, feels or vibrates with the truth of what it contacts, that the intuition leaps out like a spark or lightning-flash from the shock of the meeting; or when the consciousness, even without any such meeting, looks into itself and feels directly and intimately the truth or the truths that are there or so contacts the hidden forces behind appearances, then also there is the outbreak of an intuitive light; or, again, when the consciousness meets the Supreme Reality or the spiritual reality of things and beings and has a contactual union with it, then the spark, the flash or the blaze of intimate truth-perception is lit in its depths. This close perception is more than sight, more than conception: it is the result of a penetrating and revealing touch which carries in it sight and conception as part of itself or as its

natural consequence. A concealed or slumbering identity, not yet recovering itself, still remembers or conveys by the intuition its own contents and the intimacy of its self-feeling and self-vision of things, its light of truth, its overwhelming and automatic certitude.

In the human mind the intuition is even such a truth-remembrance or truth-conveyance, or such a revealing flash or blaze breaking into a great mass of ignorance or through a veil of nescience: but we have seen that it is subject there to an invading mixture or a mental coating or an interception and substitution; there is too a manifold possibility of misinterpretation which comes in the way of the purity and fullness of its action. Moreover, there are seeming intuitions on all levels of the being which are communications rather than intuitions, and these have a very various provenance, value and character. The infrarational "mystic", so styled,—for to be a true mystic it is not sufficient to reject reason and rely on sources of thought or action of which one has no understanding,—is often inspired by such communications on the vital level from a dark and dangerous source. In these circumstances we are driven to rely mainly on the reason and are disposed even to control the suggestions of the intuition—or the pseudo-intuition, which is the more frequent phenomenon,—by the observing and discriminating intelligence; for we feel in our intellectual part that we cannot be sure otherwise what is the true thing and what the mixed or adulterated article or false substitute. But this largely discounts for us the utility of the intuition: for the reason is not in this field a reliable arbiter, since its methods are different, tentative, uncertain, an intellectual seeking; even though it itself really relies on a camouflaged intuition for its conclusions,—for without that help it could not choose its course or arrive at any assured finding,—it hides this dependence from itself under the process of a reasoned conclusion or a verified conjecture. An intuition passed in judicial review by the reason ceases to be an intuition and can only have the authority of the reason for which there is no inner source of direct certitude. But even if the mind became predominantly an intuitive mind reliant upon its

portion of the higher faculty, the co-ordination of its cognitions and its separated activities,—for in mind these would always be apt to appear as a series of imperfectly connected flashes,—would remain difficult so long as this new mentality has not a conscious liaison with its suprarational source or a self-uplifting access to a higher plane of consciousness in which an intuitive action is pure and native.

Intuition is always an edge or ray or outleap of a superior light; it is in us a projecting blade, edge or point of a far-off supermind light entering into and modified by some intermediate truth-mind substance above us and, so modified, again entering into and very much blinded by our ordinary or ignorant mind substance; but on that higher level to which it is native its light is unmixed and therefore entirely and purely veridical, and its rays are not separated but connected or massed together in a play of waves of what might almost be called in the Sanskrit poetic figure a sea or mass of "stable lightnings". When this original or native Intuition begins to descend into us in answer to an ascension of our consciousness to its level or as a result of our finding of a clear way of communication with it, it may continue to come as a play of lightning-flashes, isolated or in constant action; but at this stage the judgment of reason becomes quite inapplicable, it can only act as an observer or registrar understanding or recording the more luminous intimations, judgments and discriminations of the higher power. To complete or verify an isolated intuition or discriminate its nature, its application, its limitations, the receiving consciousness must rely on another completing intuition or be able to call down a massed intuition capable of putting all in place. For once the process of the change has begun, a complete transmutation of the stuff and activities of the mind into the substance, form and power of intuition is imperative; until then, so long as the process of consciousness depends upon the lower intelligence serving or helping out or using the intuition, the result can only be a survival of the mixed Knowledge-Ignorance uplifted or relieved by a higher light and force acting in its parts of Knowledge.

Intuition has a fourfold power. A power of revelatory truth-

seeing, a power of inspiration or truth-hearing, a power of truth-touch or immediate seizing of significance, which is akin to the ordinary nature of its intervention in our mental intelligence, a power of true and automatic discrimination of the orderly and exact relation of truth to truth,—these are the fourfold potencies of Intuition. Intuition can therefore perform all the action of reason— including the function of logical intelligence, which is to work out the right relation of things and the right relation of idea with idea,— but by its own superior process and with steps that do not fail or falter. It takes up also and transforms into its own substance not only the mind of thought, but the heart and life and the sense and physical consciousness: already all these have their own peculiar powers of intuition derivative from the hidden Light; the pure power descending from above can assume them all into itself and impart to these deeper heart-perceptions and life-perceptions and the divinations of the body a greater integrality and perfection. It can thus change the whole consciousness into the stuff of intuition; for it brings its own greater radiant movement into the will, into the feelings and emotions, the life-impulses, the action of sense and sensation, the very workings of the body consciousness; it recasts them in the light and power of truth and illumines their knowledge and their ignorance. A certain integration can thus take place, but whether it is a total integration must depend on the extent to which the new light is able to take up the subconscious and penetrate the fundamental Inconscience. Here the intuitive light and power may be hampered in its task because it is the edge of a delegated and modified supermind, but does not bring in the whole mass or body of the identity knowledge. The basis of Inconscience in our nature is too vast, deep and solid to be altogether penetrated, turned into light, transformed by an inferior power of the Truth-nature.

The next step of the ascent brings us to the Overmind; the intuitional change can only be an introduction to this higher spiritual overture. But we have seen that the Overmind, even when it is selective and not total in its action, is still a power of cosmic consciousness, a principle of global knowledge which

carries in it a delegated light from the supramental gnosis. It is, therefore, only by an opening into the cosmic consciousness that the overmind ascent and descent can be made wholly possible: a high and intense individual opening upwards is not sufficient, — to that vertical ascent towards summit Light there must be added a vast horizontal expansion of the consciousness into some totality of the Spirit. At the least, the inner being must already have replaced by its deeper and wider awareness the surface mind and its limited outlook and learned to live in a large universality; for otherwise the overmind view of things and the overmind dynamism will have no room to move in and effectuate its dynamic operations. When the overmind descends, the predominance of the centralising ego-sense is entirely subordinated, lost in largeness of being and finally abolished; a wide cosmic perception and feeling of a boundless universal self and movement replaces it: many motions that were formerly ego-centric may still continue, but they occur as currents or ripples in the cosmic wideness. Thought, for the most part, no longer seems to originate individually in the body or the person but manifests from above or comes in upon the cosmic mind-waves; all inner individual sight or intelligence of things is now a revelation or illumination of what is seen or comprehended, but the source of the revelation is not in one's separate self but in the universal knowledge; the feelings, emotions, sensations are similarly felt as waves from the same cosmic immensity breaking upon the subtle and the gross body and responded to in kind by the individual centre of the universality; for the body is only a small support or even less, a point of relation, for the action of a vast cosmic instrumentation. In this boundless largeness, not only the separate ego but all sense of individuality, even of a subordinated or instrumental individuality, may entirely disappear; the cosmic existence, the cosmic consciousness, the cosmic delight, the play of cosmic forces are alone left: if the delight or the centre of Force is felt in what was the personal mind, life or body, it is not with a sense of personality but as a field of manifestation, and this sense of the delight or of the action of Force is not confined to the person or the body but can

be felt at all points in an unlimited consciousness of unity which pervades everywhere.

But there can be many formulations of overmind consciousness and experience; for the overmind has a great plasticity and is a field of multiple possibilities. In place of an uncentred and unplaced diffusion there may be the sense of the universe in oneself or as oneself: but there too this self is not the ego; it is an extension of a free and pure essential self-consciousness or it is an identification with the All,—the extension or the identification constituting a cosmic being, a universal individual. In one state of the cosmic consciousness there is an individual included in the cosmos but identifying himself with all in it, with the things and beings, with the thought and sense, the joy and grief of others; in another state there is an inclusion of beings in oneself and a reality of their life as part of one's own being. Often there is no rule or governance of the immense movement, but a free play of universal Nature to which what was the personal being responds with a passive acceptance or a dynamic identity, while yet the spirit remains free and undisturbed by any bondage to the reactions of this passivity or this universal and impersonal identification and sympathy. But with a strong influence or full action of the overmind a very integral sense of governance, a complete supporting or overruling presence and direction of the cosmic Self or the Ishwara can come in and become normal; or a special centre may be revealed or created overtopping and dominating the physical instrument, individual in fact of existence, but impersonal in feeling and recognised by a free cognition as something instrumental to the action of a Transcendent and Universal Being. In the transition towards the supermind this centralising action tends towards the discovery of a true individual replacing the dead ego, a being who is in his essence one with the supreme Self, one with the universe in extension and yet a cosmic centre and circumference of the specialised action of the Infinite.

These are the general first results and create the normal foundation of the overmind consciousness in the evolved spiritual being, but its varieties and developments are innumerable.

The consciousness that thus acts is experienced as a consciousness of Light and Truth, a power, force, action full of Light and Truth, an aesthesis and sensation of beauty and delight universal and multitudinous in detail, an illumination in the whole and in all things, in the one movement and all movements, with a constant extension and play of possibilities which is infinite, even in its multitude of determinations endless and indeterminable. If the power of an ordering overmind gnosis intervenes, then there is a cosmic structure of the consciousness and action, but this is not like the rigid mental structures; it is plastic, organic, something that can grow and develop and stretch into the infinite. All spiritual experiences are taken up and become habitual and normal to the new nature; all essential experiences belonging to the mind, life, body are taken up and spiritualised, transmuted and felt as forms of the consciousness, delight, power of the infinite existence. Intuition, illumined sight and thought enlarge themselves; their substance assumes a greater substantiality, mass, energy, their movement is more comprehensive, global, many-faceted, more wide and potent in its truth-force: the whole nature, knowledge, aesthesis, sympathy, feeling, dynamism become more catholic, all-understanding, all-embracing, cosmic, infinite.

The overmind change is the final consummating movement of the dynamic spiritual transformation; it is the highest possible status-dynamis of the spirit in the spiritual-mind plane. It takes up all that is in the three steps below it and raises their characteristic workings to their highest and largest power, adding to them a universal wideness of consciousness and force, a harmonious concert of knowledge, a more manifold delight of being. But there are certain reasons arising from its own characteristic status and power that prevent it from being the final possibility of the spiritual evolution. It is a power, though the highest power, of the lower hemisphere; although its basis is a cosmic unity, its action is an action of division and interaction, an action taking its stand on the play of the multiplicity. Its play is, like that of all Mind, a play of possibilities; although it acts not in the Ignorance but with the knowledge of the truth of these possibilities, yet it

works them out through their own independent evolution of their powers. It acts in each cosmic formula according to the fundamental meaning of that formula and is not a power for a dynamic transcendence. Here in earth-life it has to work upon a cosmic formula whose basis is the entire nescience which results from the separation of Mind, Life and Matter from their own source and supreme origin. Overmind can bridge that division up to the point at which separative Mind enters into Overmind and becomes a part of its action; it can unite individual mind with cosmic mind on its highest plane, equate individual self with cosmic self and give to the nature an action of universality; but it cannot lead Mind beyond itself, and in this world of original Inconscience it cannot dynamise the Transcendence: for it is the supermind alone that is the supreme self-determining truth-action and the direct power of manifestation of that Transcendence. If then the action of evolutionary Nature ended here, the Overmind, having carried the consciousness to the point of a vast illumined universality and an organised play of this wide and potent spiritual awareness of utter existence, force-consciousness and delight, could only go farther by an opening of the gates of the Spirit into the upper hemisphere and a will to enable the soul to depart out of its cosmic formation into the Transcendence.

In the terrestrial evolution itself the overmind descent would not be able to transform wholly the Inconscience; all that it could do would be to transform in each man it touched the whole conscious being, inner and outer, personal and universally impersonal, into its own stuff and impose that upon the Ignorance illuminating it into cosmic truth and knowledge. But a basis of Nescience would remain; it would be as if a sun and its system were to shine out in an original darkness of Space and illumine everything as far as its rays could reach so that all that dwelt in the light would feel as if no darkness were there at all in their experience of existence. But outside that sphere or expanse of experience the original darkness would still be there and, since all things are possible in an overmind structure, could reinvade the island of light created within its empire. Moreover, since

Overmind deals with different possibilities, its natural action would be to develop the separate possibility of one or more or numerous dynamic spiritual formulations to their utmost or combine or harmonise several possibilities together; but this would be a creation or a number of creations in the original terrestrial creation, each complete in its separate existence. The evolved spiritual individual would be there, there might evolve also a spiritual community or communities in the same world as mental man and the vital being of the animal, but each working out its independent existence in a loose relation within the terrestrial formula. The supreme power of the principle of unity taking all diversities into itself and controlling them as parts of the unity, which must be the law of the new evolutionary consciousness, would not as yet be there. Also by this much evolution there could be no security against the downward pull or gravitation of the Inconscience which dissolves all the formations that life and mind build in it, swallows all things that arise out of it or are imposed upon it and disintegrates them into their original matter. The liberation from this pull of the Inconscience and a secured basis for a continuous divine or gnostic evolution would only be achieved by a descent of the Supermind into the terrestrial formula, bringing into it the supreme law and light and dynamis of the spirit and penetrating with it and transforming the inconscience of the material basis. A last transition from Overmind to Supermind and a descent of Supermind must therefore intervene at this stage of evolutionary Nature.

Overmind and its delegated powers, taking up and penetrating mind and the life and body dependent upon mind, would subject all to a greatening process; at each step of this process a greater power and a higher intensity of gnosis less and less mixed with the loose, diffused, diminishing and diluting stuff of mind could establish itself: but all gnosis is in its origin power of supermind, so that this would mean a greater and greater influx of a half-veiled and indirect supramental light and power into the nature. This would continue until the point was reached at which overmind would begin itself to be transformed

into supermind; the supramental consciousness and force would take up the transformation directly into its own hands, reveal to the terrestrial mind, life, bodily being their own spiritual truth and divinity and, finally, pour into the whole nature the perfect knowledge, power, significance of the supramental existence. The soul would pass beyond the borders of the Ignorance and cross its original line of departure from the supreme Knowledge: it would enter into the integrality of the supramental gnosis; the descent of the gnostic Light would effectuate a complete transformation of the Ignorance.

This or something more largely planned on these lines might be regarded as the schematic, logical or ideal account of the spiritual transformation, a structural map of the ascent to the supramental summit, looked at as a succession of separate steps, each accomplished before the passage to the next commences. It would be as if the soul, putting forth an organised natural individuality, were a traveller mounting the degrees of consciousness cut out in universal Nature, each ascent carrying it totally as a definite integer, as a separate body of conscious being, from one state of its existence to the next in order. This is so far correct that a sufficient integration of one status has to be complete before an ascent to the next higher station can be entirely secure: this clear succession might also be the course followed by a few even in the early stages of this evolution, and it might become too a normal process after the whole stair-flight of the evolution had been built and made safe. But evolutionary Nature is not a logical series of separate segments; it is a totality of ascending powers of being which interpenetrate and dovetail and exercise in their action on each other a power of mutual modification. When the higher descends into the lower consciousness, it alters the lower but is also modified and diminished by it; when the lower ascends, it is sublimated but at the same time qualifies the sublimating substance and power. This interaction creates an abundant number of different intermediate and interlocked degrees of the force and consciousness of being, but it also makes it difficult to bring about a complete integration of all the powers under the full control of any one power. For this reason there

is not actually a series of simple clear-cut and successive stages in the individual's evolution; there is instead a complexity and a partly determinate, partly confused comprehensiveness of the movement. The soul may still be described as a traveller and climber who presses towards his high goal by step on step, each of which he has to build up as an integer but must frequently re-descend in order to rebuild and make sure of the supporting stair so that it may not crumble beneath him: but the evolution of the whole consciousness has rather the movement of an ascending ocean of Nature; it can be compared to a tide or a mounting flux, the leading fringe of which touches the higher degrees of a cliff or hill while the rest is still below. At each stage the higher parts of the nature may be provisionally but incompletely organised in the new consciousness while the lower are in a state of flux or formation, partly moving in the old way though influenced and beginning to change, partly belonging to the new kind but still imperfectly achieved and not yet firm in the change. Another image might be that of an army advancing in columns which annexes new ground, while the main body is still behind in a territory overrun but too large to be effectively occupied, so that there has to be a frequent halt and partial return to the traversed areas for consolidation and assurance of the hold on the occupied country and assimilation of its people. A rapid conquest might be possible, but it would be of the nature of an encampment or a domination established in a foreign country; it would not be the assumption, total assimilation, integration needed for the entire supramental change.

This entails certain consequences which modify the clear successions of the evolution and prevent it from following the cleanly determined and firmly arranged course which our logical intelligence demands from Nature but seldom gets from her. As life and mind begin to appear when the organisation of Matter is sufficient to admit them but the more complex and perfect organisation of Matter comes with the evolution of life and mind, as mind appears when life is sufficiently organised to admit of a developed vibration of consciousness but life receives its full organisation and development only after mind can act upon it, as

the spiritual evolution begins when man as mind is capable of the movements of spirituality but mind also rises to its own highest perfection by the growth of the intensities and luminosities of the spirit, so it is with this higher evolution of the ascending powers of the Spirit. As soon as there is a sufficient spiritual development, something of intuition, illumination of the being, the movements of the higher spiritual grades of Consciousness begins to manifest,—sometimes one, sometimes the other or all together, and they do not wait for each power in the series to complete itself before a higher power comes into action. An Overmind light and power may descend in some sort, create a partial form of itself in the being and take a leading part or supervise or intervene while the intuitive and illumining mind and higher mind are still incomplete; these would then remain in the whole, acting along with the greater Power, often penetrated or sublimated by it or rising into it to form a greater or overmind intuition, a greater or overmind illumination, a greater or overmind spiritual thinking. This intricate action takes place because each descending power by its intensity of pressure on the nature and uplifting effect makes the being already capable of a still higher invasion before that earlier power itself is complete in its self-formation; but also it happens because the work of assumption and transformation of the lower nature can with difficulty be done if a higher and higher intervention does not take place. The illumination and the higher thought need the help of the intuition, the intuition needs the help of the overmind to combat the darkness or ignorance in which they labour and to give them their own fullness. Still, it is not possible in the end for the overmind status and integration to be complete until the higher mind and the illumined mind have been integrated and taken up into the intuition and the intuition itself subsequently integrated and taken up into the all-enlarging and all-sublimating overmind energy. The law of the gradation has to be satisfied even in the complexity of the process of evolutionary Nature.

A further cause of complexity arises from the need of integration itself; for the process is not only an ascent of the soul to a

higher status, but a descent of the higher consciousness so gained to take up and transform the inferior nature. But this nature has a density of previous formation which resists and obstructs the descent; even when the higher power has broken the barrier and descended and is at work, we have seen that the nature of the Ignorance resists and obstructs the working, that it either strives to refuse transformation altogether or tries to modify the new power into some conformity with its own workings, or even throws itself upon it to seize and degrade and enslave it to its own way of action and lower purpose. Ordinarily, in their task of assumption and assimilation of this difficult stuff of Nature, the higher powers descend first into the mind and occupy the mind centres because these are nearest to themselves in intelligence and knowledge-power; if they descend first into the heart or into the vital being of force and sensation, as they sometimes do because these happen to be in some individuals more open and call them first, the results are more mixed and dubious, imperfect and insecure than if things happen in the logical order. But, even in its normal working when it takes up the being part by part in the natural order of descent, the descending power is not able to bring about a total occupation and transformation of each before it goes farther. It can only effect a general and incomplete occupation, so that the workings of each remain still partly of the new higher, partly of a mixed, partly of the old unchanged lower order. All the mind in its whole range cannot be transmuted at once, for the mind centres are not a region isolated from the rest of the being; the mind action is penetrated by the action of the vital and physical parts, and in those parts themselves are lower formations of mind, a vital mind, a physical mind, and these have to be changed before there can be an entire transformation of the mental being. The higher transforming power has, therefore, to descend, as soon as may be and without waiting for an integral mental change, into the heart so as to occupy and change the emotional nature, and afterwards into the inferior vital centres to occupy and change the whole vital and kinetic and sensational nature, and, finally, into the physical centres so as to occupy and change the whole

physical nature. But even this finality is not final, for there are still left the subconscious parts and the inconscient foundation. The intricacy, the interwoven action of these powers and parts of the being is so great that it may almost be said that in this change nothing is accomplished until all is accomplished. There is a tide and ebb, the forces of the old nature receding and again partially occupying their old dominions, effectuating a slow retreat with rear-line actions and return attacks and aggressions, the higher influx occupying each time more conquered territory but imperfectly sure of sovereignty so long as anything is left that has not become part of its luminous regime.

A third complexity is brought in by the power of the consciousness to live in more than one status at a time; especially, a difficulty is created by the division of our being into an inner and an outer or surface nature and the farther intricacy of a secret circumconscious or environmental consciousness in which are determined our unseen connections with the world outside us. In the spiritual opening, it is the awakened inner being that readily receives and assimilates the higher influences and puts on the higher nature; the external surface self, more entirely moulded by the forces of the Ignorance and Inconscience, is slower to awake, slower to receive, slower to assimilate. There is therefore a long stage in which the inner being is sufficiently transformed but the outer is still involved in a mixed and difficult movement of imperfect change. This disparity repeats itself at each step of the ascent; for in each change the inner being follows more readily, the outer limps after, reluctant or else incompetent in spite of its aspiration and desire: this necessitates a constantly repeated labour of assumption, adaptation, orientation, a labour reproduced in new terms always but always the same in principle. But even when the outer and the inner nature of the individual are unified in a harmonised spiritual consciousness, that still more external but occult part of him in which his being mixes with the being of the outside world and through which the outside world invades his consciousness remains a field of imperfection. There is necessarily a commerce here between disparate influences: the inner spiritual influence is met by quite opposite influences

strong in their control of the present world-order; the new spiritual consciousness has to bear the shock of the dominant and established unspiritualised powers of the Ignorance. This creates a difficulty which is of capital importance in all stages of the spiritual evolution and its urge towards a change of the nature.

A subjective spirituality can be established which refuses or minimises commerce with the world or is content to witness its action and throw back or throw out its invading influences without allowing any reaction to them or admitting their intrusion: but if the inner spirituality is to be objectivised in a free world-action, if the individual has to project himself into the world and in a sense take the world into himself, this cannot be dynamically done without receiving the world influences through one's own circumconscient or environmental being. The spiritual inner consciousness has then to deal with these influences in such a way that, as soon as they approach or enter, they become either obliterated and without result or transformed by their very entry into its own mode and substance. Or it may force them to receive the spiritual influence and return with a transforming power on the world they come from, for such a compulsion on the lower universal Nature is part of a perfect spiritual action. But for that the circumconscient or environmental being must be so steeped in the spiritual light and spiritual substance that nothing can enter into it without undergoing this transformation: the invading external influences have not to bring in at all their lower awareness, their lower sight, their lower dynamism. But this is a difficult perfection, because ordinarily the circumconscient is not wholly our own formed and realised self but ourself plus the external world-nature. It is, for this reason, always easier to spiritualise the inner self-sufficient parts than to transform the outer action; a perfection of introspective, indwelling or subjective spirituality aloof from the world or self-protected against it is easier than a perfection of the whole nature in a dynamic, kinetic spirituality objectivised in the life, embracing the world, master of its environment, sovereign in its commerce with world-nature. But since the integral transformation must embrace fully the dynamic being and take up into it the life of

action and the world-self outside us, this completer change is demanded of the evolving nature.

The essential difficulty comes from the fact that the substance of our normal being is moulded out of the Inconscience. Our ignorance is a growth of knowledge in a substance of being which is nescient; the consciousness it develops, the knowledge it establishes are always dogged, penetrated, enveloped by this nescience. It is this substance of nescience that has to be transformed into a substance of superconsciousness, a substance in which consciousness and a spiritual awareness are always there even when they are not active, not expressed, not put into form of knowledge. Till that is done, the nescience invades or encompasses or even swallows up and absorbs into its oblivious darkness all that enters into it; it compels the descending light to compromise with the lesser light it enters: there is a mixture, a diminution and dilution of itself, a diminution, a modification, an incomplete authenticity of its truth and power. Or, at the least, the nescience limits its truth and circumscribes its force, segments its applicability and its range; its truth of principle is barred from a full truth of individual realisation or from an achieved truth of cosmic practice. Thus love as a law of life can affirm itself practically as an inner active principle; but unless it occupies the whole substance of being, the entire individual feeling and action cannot be moulded by the law of love: even if perfected in the individual, it can be rendered unilateral and ineffective by the general nescience which is blind to it and hostile, or it is forced to circumscribe its range of cosmic application. A full action in harmony with a new law of the being is always difficult in human nature; for in the substance of the Inconscience there is a self-protective law of blind imperative Necessity which limits the play of the possibilities that emerge from it or enter into it and prevents them from establishing their free action and result or realising the intensity of their own absolute. A mixed, relative, curbed and diminished play is all that is conceded to them: otherwise they would cancel the frame of Inconscience and violently perturb without effectively changing the basis of the world-order; for none of them have in their mental or vital

play the divine power to replace this dark original principle and organise a totally new world-order.

A transformation of human nature can only be achieved when the substance of the being is so steeped in the spiritual principle that all its movements are a spontaneous dynamism and a harmonised process of the spirit. But even when the higher powers and their intensities enter into the substance of the Inconscience, they are met by this blind opposing Necessity and are subjected to this circumscribing and diminishing law of the nescient substance. It opposes them with its strong titles of an established and inexorable Law, meets always the claim of life with the law of death, the demand of Light with the need of a relief of shadow and a background of darkness, the sovereignty and freedom and dynamism of the spirit with its own force of adjustment by limitation, demarcation by incapacity, foundation of energy on the repose of an original Inertia. There is an occult truth behind its negations which only the Supermind with its reconciliation of contraries in the original Reality can take up and so discover the pragmatic solution of the enigma. Only the supramental Force can entirely overcome this difficulty of the fundamental Nescience; for with it enters an opposite and luminous imperative Necessity which underlies all things and is the original and final self-determining truth-force of the self-existent Infinite. This greater luminous spiritual Necessity and its sovereign imperative alone can displace or entirely penetrate, transform into itself and so replace the blind Ananke of the Inconscience.

A supramental change of the whole substance of the being and therefore necessarily of all its characters, powers, movements takes place when the involved supermind in Nature emerges to meet and join with the supramental light and power descending from Supernature. The individual must be the instrument and first field of the transformation; but an isolated individual transformation is not enough and may not be wholly feasible. Even when achieved, the individual change will have a permanent and cosmic significance only if the individual becomes a centre and a sign for the establishment

of the supramental Consciousness-Force as an overtly operative power in the terrestrial workings of Nature,—in the same way in which thinking Mind has been established through the human evolution as an overtly operative power in Life and Matter. This would mean the appearance in the evolution of a gnostic being or Purusha and a gnostic Prakriti, a gnostic Nature. There must be an emergent supramental Consciousness-Force liberated and active within the terrestrial whole and an organised supramental instrumentation of the Spirit in the life and the body,—for the body consciousness also must become sufficiently awake to be a fit instrument of the workings of the new supramental Force and its new order. Till then any intermediate change could be only partial or insecure; an overmind or intuitive instrumentation of Nature could be developed, but it would be a luminous formation imposed on a fundamental and environmental Inconscience. A supramental principle and its cosmic operation once established permanently on its own basis, the intervening powers of Overmind and spiritual Mind could found themselves securely upon it and reach their own perfection; they would become in the earth-existence a hierarchy of states of consciousness rising out of Mind and physical life to the supreme spiritual level. Mind and mental humanity would remain as one step in the spiritual evolution; but other degrees above it would be there formed and accessible by which the embodied mental being, as it became ready, could climb into the gnosis and change into an embodied supramental and spiritual being. On this basis the principle of a divine life in terrestrial Nature would be manifested; even the world of ignorance and inconscience might discover its own submerged secret and begin to realise in each lower degree its divine significance.

Chapter XXVII

The Gnostic Being

A perfect path of the Truth has come into being for our journey
to the other shore beyond the darkness. *Rig Veda.*¹

O Truth-Conscious, be conscious of the Truth, cleave out
many streams of the Truth. *Rig Veda.*²

O Flame, O Wine, your force has become conscious; you have
discovered the One Light for the many. *Rig Veda.*³

Pure-white and dual in her largenesses, she follows effectively,
like one who knows, the path of the Truth and diminishes not
its directions. *Rig Veda.*⁴

By the Truth they hold the Truth that holds all, in the power
of the Sacrifice, in the supreme ether. *Rig Veda.*⁵

O Immortal, thou art born in mortals in the law of the Truth,
of Immortality, of Beauty. . . . Born from the Truth, he grows
by the Truth,—a King, a Godhead, the Truth, the Vast.

*Rig Veda.*⁶

AS WE reach in our thought the line at which the evolution
of mind into overmind passes over into an evolution of
overmind into supermind, we are faced with a difficulty
which amounts almost to an impossibility. For we are moved to
seek for some precise idea, some clear mental description of the
supramental or gnostic existence of which evolutionary Nature
in the Ignorance is in travail; but by crossing this extreme line
of sublimated mind the consciousness passes out of the sphere,

¹ I. 46. 11.

² V. 12. 2.

³ I. 93. 4.

⁴ V. 80. 4.

⁵ V. 15. 2.

⁶ IX. 110. 4; 108. 8.

exceeds the characteristic action and escapes from the grasp, of mental perception and knowledge. It is evident indeed that supramental nature must be a perfect integration and consummation of spiritual nature and experience: it would also contain in itself, by the very character of the evolutionary principle, though it would not be limited to that change, a total spiritualisation of mundane Nature; our world-experience would be taken up in this step of our evolution and, by a transformation of its parts of divinity, a creative rejection of its imperfections and disguises, reach some divine truth and plenitude. But these are general formulas and give us no precise idea of the change. Our normal perception or imagination or formulation of things spiritual and things mundane is mental, but in the gnostic change the evolution crosses a line beyond which there is a supreme and radical reversal of consciousness and the standards and forms of mental cognition are no longer sufficient: it is difficult for mental thought to understand or describe supramental nature.

Mental nature and mental thought are based on a consciousness of the finite; supramental nature is in its very grain a consciousness and power of the Infinite. Supramental Nature sees everything from the standpoint of oneness and regards all things, even the greatest multiplicity and diversity, even what are to the mind the strongest contradictions, in the light of that oneness; its will, ideas, feelings, sense are made of the stuff of oneness, its actions proceed upon that basis. Mental Nature, on the contrary, thinks, sees, wills, feels, senses with division as a starting-point and has only a constructed understanding of unity; even when it experiences oneness, it has to act from the oneness on a basis of limitation and difference. But the supramental, the divine life is a life of essential, spontaneous and inherent unity. It is impossible for the mind to forecast in detail what the supramental change must be in its parts of life action and outward behaviour or lay down for it what forms it shall create for the individual or the collective existence. For the mind acts by intellectual rule or device or by reasoned choice of will or by mental impulse or in obedience to life impulse; but supramental nature does not act by mental idea or rule or in subjection to any inferior impulse: each

of its steps is dictated by an innate spiritual vision, a comprehensive and exact penetration into the truth of all and the truth of each thing; it acts always according to inherent reality, not by the mental idea, not according to an imposed law of conduct or a constructive thought or perceptive contrivance. Its movement is calm, self-possessed, spontaneous, plastic; it arises naturally and inevitably out of a harmonic identity of the truth which is felt in the very substance of the conscious being, a spiritual substance which is universal and therefore intimately one with all that is included in its cognition of existence. A mental description of supramental nature could only express itself either in phrases which are too abstract or in mental figures which might turn it into something quite different from its reality. It would not seem to be possible, therefore, for the mind to anticipate or indicate what a supramental being shall be or how he shall act; for here mental ideas and formulations cannot decide anything or arrive at any precise definition or determination, because they are not near enough to the law and self-vision of supramental Nature. At the same time certain deductions can be made from the very fact of this difference of nature which might be valid at least for a general description of the passage from Overmind to Supermind or might vaguely construct for us an idea of the first status of the evolutionary supramental existence.

This passage is the stage at which the supermind gnosis can take over the lead of the evolution from the overmind and build the first foundations of its own characteristic manifestation and unveiled activities; it must be marked therefore by a decisive but long-prepared transition from an evolution in the Ignorance to an always progressive evolution in the Knowledge. It will not be a sudden revelation and effectuation of the absolute Supermind and the supramental being as they are in their own plane, the swift apocalypse of a truth-conscious existence ever self-fulfilled and complete in self-knowledge; it will be the phenomenon of the supramental being descending into a world of evolutionary becoming and forming itself there, unfolding the powers of the gnosis within the terrestrial nature. This is indeed the principle of all terrestrial being; for the process of earth-existence is the

play of an infinite Reality concealing itself first in a succession of obscurely limited, opaque and incomplete half-figures which by their imperfection and character of disguise distort the truth of which they are in labour, but afterwards arriving more and more at half-luminous figures of itself which can become, once there is the supramental descent, a true progressive revelation. The descent from original supermind, the assumption of evolutionary supermind is a step which the supramental gnosis can very well undertake and accomplish without changing its own essential character. It can assume the formula of a truth-conscious existence founded in an inherent self-knowledge but at the same time taking up into itself mental nature and nature of life and material body. For the supermind as the truth-consciousness of the Infinite has in its dynamic principle the infinite power of a free self-determination. It can hold all knowledge in itself and yet put forward in formulation only what is needed at each stage of an evolution; it formulates whatever is in accordance with the Divine Will in manifestation and the truth of the thing to be manifested. It is by this power that it is able to hold back its knowledge, hide its own character and law of action and manifest overmind and under overmind a world of ignorance in which the being wills on its surface not to know and even puts itself under the control of a pervading Nescience. But in this new stage the veil thus put on will be lifted; the evolution at every step will move in the power of the truth-consciousness and its progressive determinations will be made by a conscious Knowledge and not in the forms of an Ignorance or Inconscience.

As there has been established on earth a mental Consciousness and Power which shapes a race of mental beings and takes up into itself all of earthly nature that is ready for the change, so now there will be established on earth a gnostic Consciousness and Power which will shape a race of gnostic spiritual beings and take up into itself all of earth-nature that is ready for this new transformation. It will also receive into itself from above, progressively, from its own domain of perfect light and power and beauty all that is ready to descend from that domain into terrestrial being. For the evolution proceeded in the past by the

upsurging, at each critical stage, of a concealed Power from its involution in the Inconscience, but also by a descent from above, from its own plane, of that Power already self-realised in its own higher natural province. In all these previous stages there has been a division between surface self and consciousness and subliminal self and consciousness; the surface was formed mainly under the push of the upsurging force from below, by the Inconscient developing a slowly emergent formulation of a concealed force of the spirit, the subliminal partly in this way but mainly by a simultaneous influx of the largeness of the same force from above: a mental or a vital being descended into the subliminal parts and formed from its secret station there a mental or a vital personality on the surface. But before the supramental change can begin, the veil between the subliminal and the surface parts must have been already broken down; the influx, the descent will be in the entire consciousness as a whole, it will not take place partly behind a veil: the process will be no longer a concealed, obscure and ambiguous procedure but an open outflowering consciously felt and followed by the whole being in its transmutation. In other respects the process will be identical,— a supramental inflow from above, the descent of a gnostic being into the nature, and an emergence of the concealed supramental force from below; the influx and the unveiling between them will remove what is left of the nature of the Ignorance. The rule of the Inconscient will disappear: for the Inconscience will be changed by the outburst of the greater secret Consciousness within it, the hidden Light, into what it always was in reality, a sea of the secret Superconsciousness. A first formation of a gnostic consciousness and nature will be the consequence.

The creation of a supramental being, nature, life on earth, will not be the sole result of this evolution; it will also carry with it the consummation of the steps that have led up to it: for it will confirm in possession of terrestrial birth the overmind, the intuition and the other gradations of the spiritual nature-force and establish a race of gnostic beings and a hierarchy, a shining ladder of ascending degrees and successive constituent

formations of the gnostic light and power in earth-nature. For the description of gnosis applies to all consciousness that is based upon Truth of being and not upon the Ignorance or Nescience. All life and living beings ready to rise beyond the mental ignorance, but not ready yet for the supramental height, would find in a sort of echelon or a scale with overlapping degrees their assured basis, their intermediate steps of self-formation, their expression of realised capacity of spiritual existence on the way to the supreme Reality. But also the presence of the liberated and now sovereign supramental light and force at the head of evolutionary Nature might be expected to have its consequences in the whole evolution. An incidence, a decisive stress would affect the life of the lower evolutionary stages; something of the light, something of the force would penetrate downwards and awaken into a greater action the hidden Truth-Power everywhere in Nature. A dominant principle of harmony would impose itself on the life of the Ignorance; the discord, the blind seeking, the clash of struggle, the abnormal vicissitudes of exaggeration and depression and unsteady balance of the unseeing forces at work in their mixture and conflict, would feel the influence and yield place to a more orderly pace and harmonic steps of the development of being, a more revealing arrangement of progressing life and consciousness, a better life-order. A freer play of intuition and sympathy and understanding would enter into human life, a clearer sense of the truth of self and things and a more enlightened dealing with the opportunities and difficulties of existence. Instead of a constant intermixed and confused struggle between the growth of Consciousness and the power of the Inconscience, between the forces of light and the forces of darkness, the evolution would become a graded progression from lesser light to greater light; in each stage of it the conscious beings belonging to that stage would respond to the inner Consciousness-Force and expand their own law of cosmic Nature towards the possibility of a higher degree of that Nature. This is at least a strong possibility and might be envisaged as the natural consequence of the direct action of supermind on the evolution. This intervention would not annul

the evolutionary principle, for supermind has the power of withholding or keeping in reserve its force of knowledge as well as the power of bringing it into full or partial action; but it would harmonise, steady, facilitate, tranquillise and to a great extent hedonise the difficult and afflicted process of the evolutionary emergence.

There is something in the nature of supermind itself that would make this great result inevitable. It is in its foundation a unitarian and integralising and harmonic consciousness, and in its descent and evolutionary working out of the diversity of the Infinite it would not lose its unitarian trend, its push towards integralisation or its harmonic influence. The Overmind follows out diversities and divergent possibilities on their own lines of divergence: it can allow contradictions and discords, but it makes them elements of a cosmic whole so that they are forced, however unwittingly and in spite of themselves, to contribute their share to its wholeness. Or we may say that it accepts and even encourages contradictions, but obliges them to support each other's existence so that there may be divergent roads of being and consciousness and experience that lead away from the One and from each other but still maintain themselves on the Oneness and can lead back again each on its own path to the Oneness. That is the secret sense even of our own world of Ignorance which works from the Inconscience but with the underlying cosmicity of the overmind principle. But the individual being in such a creation does not possess this secret principle in knowledge and does not base upon it his action. An overmind being here would perceive this secret; but he might still work on his own lines of Nature and law of action, Swabhava, Swadharma, according to the inspiration, the dynamic control or the inner governance of the Spirit or the Divine within him and leave the rest to their own line in the whole: an overmind creation of knowledge in the Ignorance might therefore be something separate from the surrounding world of Ignorance and guarded from it by the luminous encircling and separating wall of its own principle. The supramental gnostic being, on the contrary, would not only found all his living on an intimate sense and

effective realisation of harmonic unity in his own inner and outer life or group life, but would create a harmonic unity also with the still surviving mental world, even if that world remained altogether a world of Ignorance. For the gnostic consciousness in him would perceive and bring out the evolving truth and principle of harmony hidden in the formations of the Ignorance; it would be natural to his sense of integrality and it would be within his power to link them in a true order with his own gnostic principle and the evolved truth and harmony of his own greater life-creation. That might be impossible without a considerable change in the life of the world, but such a change would be a natural consequence of the appearance of a new Power in Nature and its universal influence. In the emergence of the gnostic being would be the hope of a more harmonious evolutionary order in terrestrial Nature.

A supramental or gnostic race of beings would not be a race made according to a single type, moulded in a single fixed pattern; for the law of the supermind is unity fulfilled in diversity, and therefore there would be an infinite diversity in the manifestation of the gnostic consciousness although that consciousness would still be one in its basis, in its constitution, in its all-revealing and all-uniting order. It is evident that the triple status of the supermind would reproduce itself as a principle in this new manifestation: there would be below it and yet belonging to it the degrees of the overmind and intuitive gnosis with the souls that had realised these degrees of the ascending consciousness; there would be also at the summit, as the evolution in Knowledge proceeded, individual beings who would ascend beyond a supermind formulation and reach from the highest height of supermind to the summits of unitarian self-realisation in the body which must be the last and supreme state of the epiphany of the Creation. But in the supramental race itself, in the variation of its degrees, the individuals would not be cast according to a single type of individuality; each would be different from the other, a unique formation of the Being, although one with all the rest in foundation of self and sense of oneness and in the principle of his being. It is only this general principle of

the supramental existence of which we can attempt to form an idea however diminished by the limitations of mental thought and mental language. A more living picture of the gnostic being supermind only could make; for the mind some abstract outlines of it are alone possible.

The gnosis is the effective principle of the Spirit, a highest dynamis of the spiritual existence. The gnostic individual would be the consummation of the spiritual man; his whole way of being, thinking, living, acting would be governed by the power of a vast universal spirituality. All the trinities of the Spirit would be real to his self-awareness and realised in his inner life. All his existence would be fused into oneness with the transcendent and universal Self and Spirit; all his action would originate from and obey the supreme Self and Spirit's divine governance of Nature. All life would have to him the sense of the Conscious Being, the Purusha within, finding its self-expression in Nature; his life and all its thoughts, feelings, acts would be filled for him with that significance and built upon that foundation of its reality. He would feel the presence of the Divine in every centre of his consciousness, in every vibration of his life-force, in every cell of his body. In all the workings of his force of Nature he would be aware of the workings of the supreme World-Mother, the Supernature; he would see his natural being as the becoming and manifestation of the power of the World-Mother. In this consciousness he would live and act in an entire transcendent freedom, a complete joy of the spirit, an entire identity with the cosmic self and a spontaneous sympathy with all in the universe. All beings would be to him his own selves, all ways and powers of consciousness would be felt as the ways and powers of his own universality. But in that inclusive universality there would be no bondage to inferior forces, no deflection from his own highest truth: for this truth would envelop all truth of things and keep each in its own place, in a relation of diversified harmony,— it would not admit any confusion, clash, infringing of boundaries, any distortion of the different harmonies that constitute the total harmony. His own life and the world life would be to him like a perfect work of art; it would be as if

the creation of a cosmic and spontaneous genius infallible in its working out of a multitudinous order. The gnostic individual would be in the world and of the world, but would also exceed it in his consciousness and live in his self of transcendence above it; he would be universal but free in the universe, individual but not limited by a separative individuality. The true Person is not an isolated entity, his individuality is universal; for he individualises the universe: it is at the same time divinely emergent in a spiritual air of transcendental infinity, like a high cloud-surpassing summit; for he individualises the divine Transcendence.

The three powers which present themselves to our life as the three keys to its mystery are the individual, the cosmic entity and the Reality present in both and beyond them. These three mysteries of existence would find in the life of the supramental being a united fulfilment of their harmony. He will be the perfected and complete individual, fulfilled in the satisfaction of his growth and self-expression; for all his elements would be carried to a highest degree and integrated in some kind of comprehensive largeness. What we are striving towards is completeness and harmony; an imperfection and incapacity or a discord of our nature is that from which inwardly we most suffer. But this is because of our incompleteness of being, our imperfect self-knowledge, our imperfect possession of our self and our nature. A complete self-knowledge in all things and at all moments is the gift of the supramental gnosis and with it a complete self-mastery, not merely in the sense of control of Nature but in the sense of a power of perfect self-expression in Nature. Whatever knowledge of self there would be, would be perfectly embodied in the will of the self, the will perfectly embodied in the action of the self; the result would be the self's complete dynamic self-formulation in its own nature. In the lower grades of gnostic being, there would be a limitation of self-expression according to the variety of the nature, a limited perfection in order to formulate some side, element or combined harmony of elements of some Divine Totality, a restricted selection of powers from the cosmic figure of the infinitely manifold One. But in the supramental being this need of limitation for perfection would

disappear; the diversity would not be secured by limitation but by a diversity in the power and hue of the Supernature: the same whole of being and the same whole of nature would express themselves in an infinitely diverse fashion; for each being would be a new totality, harmony, self-equation of the One Being. What would be expressed in front or held behind at any moment would depend not on capacity or incapacity, but on the dynamic self-choice of the Spirit, its delight of self-expression, on the truth of the Divine's will and joy of itself in the individual and, subordinately, on the truth of the thing that had to be done through the individual in the harmony of the totality. For the complete individual is the cosmic individual, since only when we have taken the universe into ourselves—and transcended it—can our individuality be complete.

The supramental being in his cosmic consciousness seeing and feeling all as himself would act in that sense; he would act in a universal awareness and a harmony of his individual self with the total self, of his individual will with the total will, of his individual action with the total action. For what we most suffer from in our outer life and its reactions upon our inner life is the imperfection of our relations with the world, our ignorance of others, our disharmony with the whole of things, our inability to equate our demand on the world with the world's demand on us. There is a conflict—a conflict from which there seems to be no ultimate issue except an escape from both world and self—between our self-affirmation and a world on which we have to impose that affirmation, a world which seems to be too large for us and to pass indifferently over our soul, mind, life, body in the sweep of its course to its goal. The relation of our course and goal to the world's is unapparent to us, and to harmonise ourselves with it we have either to enforce ourselves upon it and make it subservient to us or suppress ourselves and become subservient to it or else to compass a difficult balance between these two necessities of the relation between the individual personal destiny and the cosmic whole and its hidden purpose. But for the supramental being living in a cosmic consciousness the difficulty would not exist, since he has

no ego; his cosmic individuality would know the cosmic forces and their movement and their significance as part of himself, and the truth-consciousness in him would see the right relation at each step and find the dynamic right expression of that relation.

For in fact both individual and universe are simultaneous and interrelated expressions of the same transcendent Being; even though in the Ignorance and under its law there is mal-adjustment and conflict, yet there must be a right relation, an equation to which all arrives but which is missed by our blindness of ego, our attempt to affirm the ego and not the Self one in all. The supramental consciousness has that truth of relation in itself as its natural right and privilege, since it is the supermind that determines the cosmic relations and the relations of the individual with the universe, determines them freely and sovereignly as a power of the Transcendence. In the mental being even the pressure of the cosmic consciousness overpowering the ego and an awareness of the transcendent Reality might not of themselves bring about a dynamic solution; for there might still be an incompatibility between its liberated spiritual mentality and the obscure life of the cosmic Ignorance which the mind would not have the power to solve or overcome. But in the supramental being, not only statically conscious but fully dynamic and acting in the creative light and power of the Transcendence, the supramental light, the truth light, *ṛtam jyotiḥ*, would have that power. For there would be a unity with the cosmic self, but not a bondage to the Ignorance of cosmic Nature in its lower formulation; there would on the contrary be a power to act in the light of the Truth on that Ignorance. A large universality of self-expression, a large harmonic universality of world-being would be the very sign of the supramental Person in his gnostic nature.

The existence of the supramental being would be the play of a manifoldly and multiply manifesting truth-power of one-existence and one-consciousness for the delight of one-existence. Delight of the manifestation of the Spirit in its truth of being would be the sense of the gnostic life. All its movements would be a formulation of the truth of the spirit, but also of the joy of

the spirit,—an affirmation of spiritual existence, an affirmation of spiritual consciousness, an affirmation of spiritual delight of being. But this would not be what self-affirmation tends to be in us in spite of the underlying unity, something ego-centric, separative, opposed or indifferent or insufficiently alive to the self-affirmation of others or their demand on existence. One in self with all, the supramental being will seek the delight of self-manifestation of the Spirit in himself but equally the delight of the Divine in all: he will have the cosmic joy and will be a power for bringing the bliss of the spirit, the joy of being to others; for their joy will be part of his own joy of existence. To be occupied with the good of all beings, to make the joy and grief of others one's own has been described as a sign of the liberated and fulfilled spiritual man. The supramental being will have no need, for that, of an altruistic self-effacement, since this occupation will be intimate to his self-fulfilment, the fulfilment of the One in all, and there will be no contradiction or strife between his own good and the good of others: nor will he have any need to acquire a universal sympathy by subjecting himself to the joys and griefs of creatures in the Ignorance; his cosmic sympathy will be part of his inborn truth of being and not dependent on a personal participation in the lesser joy and suffering; it will transcend what it embraces and in that transcendence will be its power. His feeling of universality, his action of universality will be always a spontaneous state and natural movement, an automatic expression of the Truth, an act of the joy of the spirit's self-existence. There could be in it no place for limited self or desire or for the satisfaction or frustration of the limited self or the satisfaction or frustration of desire, no place for the relative and dependent happiness and grief that visit and afflict our limited nature; for these are things that belong to the ego and the Ignorance, not to the freedom and truth of the Spirit.

The gnostic being has the will of action but also the knowledge of what is to be willed and the power to effectuate its knowledge; it will not be led from ignorance to do what is not to be done. Moreover, its action is not the seeking for a

fruit or result; its joy is in being and doing, in pure state of spirit, in pure act of spirit, in the pure bliss of the spirit. As its static consciousness will contain all in itself and must be, therefore, for ever self-fulfilled, so its dynamis of consciousness will find in each step and in each act a spiritual freedom and a self-fulfilment. All will be seen in its relation to the whole, so that each step will be luminous and joyous and satisfying in itself because each is in unison with a luminous totality. This consciousness, this living in the spiritual totality and acting from it, a satisfied totality in essence of being and a satisfied totality in the dynamic movement of being, the sense of the relations of that totality accompanying each step, is indeed the very mark of a supramental consciousness and distinguishes it from the disintegrated, ignorantly successive steps of our consciousness in the Ignorance. The gnostic existence and delight of existence is a universal and total being and delight, and there will be the presence of that totality and universality in each separate movement: in each there will be, not a partial experience of self or a fractional bit of its joy, but the sense of the whole movement of an integral being and the presence of its entire and integral bliss of being, Ananda. The gnostic being's knowledge self-realised in action will be, not an ideative knowledge, but the Real-Idea of the supermind, the instrumentation of an essential light of Consciousness; it will be the self-light of all the reality of being and becoming pouring itself out continually and filling every particular act and activity with the pure and whole delight of its self-existence. For an infinite consciousness with its knowledge by identity there is in each differentiation the joy and experience of the Identical, in each finite is felt the Infinite.

An evolution of gnostic consciousness brings with it a transformation of our world-consciousness and world-action: for it takes up into the new power of awareness not only the inner existence but our outer being and our world-being; there is a remaking of both, an integration of them in the sense and power of the spiritual existence. There must come upon us in the change at once a reversal and rejection of our present way of existence and a fulfilment of its inner trend and tendency. For we stand

now between these two terms, an outer world of Life and Matter that has made us and a remaking of the world by ourselves in the sense of the evolving Spirit. Our present way of living is at once a subjection to Life-Force and Matter and a struggle with Life and Matter. In its first appearance an outer existence creates by our reactions to it an inner or mental existence; if we shape ourselves at all, it is in most men less by the conscious pressure of a free soul or intelligence from within than by a response to our environment and the world-Nature acting upon us: but what we move towards in the development of our conscious being is an inner existence creating by its knowledge and power its own outer form of living and self-expressive environment of living. In the gnostic nature this movement will have consummated itself; the nature of living will be an accomplished inner existence whose light and power will take perfect body in the outer life. The gnostic being will take up the world of Life and Matter, but he will turn and adapt it to his own truth and purpose of existence; he will mould life itself into his own spiritual image, and this he will be able to do because he has the secret of a spiritual creation and is in communion and oneness with the Creator within him. This will be first effective in the shaping of his own inner and outer individual existence, but the same power and principle will operate in any common gnostic life; the relations of gnostic being with gnostic being will be the expression of their one gnostic self and supernature shaping into a significant power and form of itself the whole common existence.

In all spiritual living the inner life is the thing of first importance; the spiritual man lives always within, and in a world of the Ignorance that refuses to change he has to be in a certain sense separate from it and to guard his inner life against the intrusion and influence of the darker forces of the Ignorance: he is out of the world even when he is within it; if he acts upon it, it is from the fortress of his inner spiritual being where in the inmost sanctuary he is one with the Supreme Existence or the soul and God are alone together. The gnostic life will be an inner life in which the antinomy of the inner and the outer,

the self and the world will have been cured and exceeded. The gnostic being will have indeed an inmost existence in which he is alone with God, one with the Eternal, self-plunged into the depths of the Infinite, in communion with its heights and its luminous abysses of secrecy; nothing will be able to disturb or to invade these depths or bring him down from the summits, neither the world's contents nor his action nor all that is around him. This is the transcendence aspect of the spiritual life and it is necessary for the freedom of the spirit; for otherwise the identity in Nature with the world would be a binding limitation and not a free identity. But at the same time God-love and the delight of God will be the heart's expression of that inner communion and oneness, and that delight and love will expand itself to embrace all existence. The peace of God within will be extended in the gnostic experience of the universe into a universal calm of equality not merely passive but dynamic, a calm of freedom in oneness dominating all that meets it, tranquillising all that enters into it, imposing its law of peace on the supramental being's relations with the world in which he is living. Into all his acts the inner oneness, the inner communion will attend him and enter into his relations with others, who will not be to him others but selves of himself in the one existence, his own universal existence. It is this poise and freedom in the spirit that will enable him to take all life into himself while still remaining the spiritual self and to embrace even the world of the Ignorance without himself entering into the Ignorance.

For his experience of cosmic existence will be, by its form of nature and by an individualised centration, that of one living in the universe but, at the same time, by self-diffusion and extension in oneness, that of one who carries the universe and all its beings within him. This extended state of being will not only be an extension in oneness of self or an extension in captive idea and vision, but an extension of oneness in heart, in sense, in a concrete physical consciousness. He will have the cosmic consciousness, sense, feeling, by which all objective life will become part of his subjective existence and by which he will realise, perceive, feel, see, hear the Divine in all forms; all

forms and movements will be realised, sensed, seen, heard, felt as if taking place within his own vast self of being. The world will be connected not only with his outer but with his inner life. He will not meet the world only in its external form by an external contact; he will be inwardly in contact with the inner self of things and beings: he will meet consciously their inner as well as their outer reactions; he will be aware of that within them of which they themselves will not be aware, act upon all with an inner comprehension, encounter all with a perfect sympathy and sense of oneness but also an independence which is not overmastered by any contact. His action on the world will be largely an inner action by the power of the spirit, by the spiritual-supramental idea-force formulating itself in the world, by the secret unspoken word, by the power of the heart, by the dynamic life-force, by the enveloping and penetrating power of the self one with all things; the outer expressed and visible action will be only a fringe, a last projection of this vaster single total of activity.

At the same time the universal inner life of the individual will not be confined to an inner pervasive and inclusive contact with the physical world alone: it will extend beyond it through the full realisation of the subliminal inner being's natural connection with other planes of being; a knowledge of their powers and influences will have become a normal element of the inner experience, and the happenings of this world will be seen not solely in their external aspect but also in the light of all that is secret behind the physical and terrestrial creation and movement. A gnostic being will possess not only a truth-conscious control of the realised spirit's power over its physical world, but also the full power of the mental and vital planes and the use of their greater forces for the perfection of the physical existence. This greater knowledge and wider hold of all existence will enormously increase the power of instrumentation of the gnostic being on his surroundings and on the world of physical Nature.

In the Self-Existence of which supermind is the dynamic Truth-consciousness, there can be no aim of being except to be, no aim of consciousness except to be conscious of being, no aim

of delight of being other than its delight; all is a self-existent and self-sufficient Eternity. Manifestation, becoming, has in its original supramental movement the same character; it sustains in a self-existent and self-sufficient rhythm an activity of being which sees itself as a manifold becoming, an activity of consciousness which takes the form of a manifold self-knowledge, an activity of force of conscious existence which exists for the glory and beauty of its own manifold power of being, an activity of delight which assumes innumerable forms of delight. The existence and consciousness of the supramental being here in Matter will have fundamentally the same nature, but with subordinate characters which mark the difference between supermind in its own plane and supermind working in its manifested power in the earth existence. For here there will be an evolving being, an evolving consciousness, an evolving delight of existence. The gnostic being will appear as the sign of an evolution from the consciousness of the Ignorance into the consciousness of Sach-chidananda. In the Ignorance one is there primarily to grow, to know and to do, or, more exactly, to grow into something, to arrive by knowledge at something, to get something done. Imperfect, we have no satisfaction of our being, we must perforce strive with labour and difficulty to grow into something we are not; ignorant and burdened with a consciousness of our ignorance, we have to arrive at something by which we can feel that we know; bounded with incapacity, we have to hunt after strength and power; afflicted with a consciousness of suffering, we have to try to get something done by which we catch at some pleasure or lay hold on some satisfying reality of life. To maintain existence is, indeed, our first occupation and necessity, but it is only a starting-point: for the mere maintenance of an imperfect existence chequered with suffering cannot be sufficient as an aim of our being; the instinctive will of existence, the pleasure of existence, which is all that the Ignorance can make out of the secret underlying Power and Ananda, has to be supplemented by the need to do and become. But what to do and what to become is not clearly known to us; we get what knowledge we can, what power, strength, purity, peace we can, what delight we

can, become what we can. But our aims and our effort towards their achievement and the little we can hold as our gains turn into meshes by which we are bound; it is these things that become for us the object of life: to know our souls and to be our selves, which must be the foundation of our true way of being, is a secret that escapes us in our preoccupation with an external learning, an external construction of knowledge, the achievement of an external action, an external delight and pleasure. The spiritual man is one who has discovered his soul: he has found his self and lives in that, is conscious of it, has the joy of it; he needs nothing external for his completeness of existence. The gnostic being starting from this new basis takes up our ignorant becoming and turns it into a luminous becoming of knowledge and a realised power of being. All therefore that is our attempt to be in the Ignorance, he will fulfil in the Knowledge. All knowledge he will turn into a manifestation of the self-knowledge of being, all power and action into a power and action of the self-force of being, all delight into a universal delight of self-existence. Attachment and bondage will fall away, because at each step and in each thing there will be the full satisfaction of self-existence, the light of the consciousness fulfilling itself, the ecstasy of delight of existence finding itself. Each stage of the evolution in the knowledge will be an unfolding of this power and will of being and this joy to be, a free becoming supported by the sense of the Infinite, the bliss of the Brahman, the luminous sanction of the Transcendence.

The supramental transformation, the supramental evolution must carry with it a lifting of mind, life and body out of themselves into a greater way of being in which yet their own ways and powers would be, not suppressed or abolished, but perfected and fulfilled by the self-exceeding. For in the Ignorance all paths are the paths of the spirit seeking for itself blindly or with a growing light; the gnostic being and life would be the spirit's self-discovery and its seeing and reaching of the aims of all these paths but in the greater way of its own revealed and conscious truth of being. Mind seeks for light, for knowledge,—for knowledge of the one truth basing all, an essential truth of self

and things, but also of all truth of diversity of that oneness, all its detail, circumstance, manifold way of action, form, law of movement and happening, various manifestation and creation; for thinking mind the joy of existence is discovery and the penetration of the mystery of creation that comes with knowledge. This the gnostic change will fulfil in an ample measure; but it will give it a new character. It will act not by the discovery of the unknown, but by the bringing out of the known; all will be the finding "of the self by the self in the self". For the self of the gnostic being will not be the mental ego but the Spirit that is one in all; he will see the world as a universe of the Spirit. The finding of the one truth underlying all things will be the Identical discovering identity and identical truth everywhere and discovering too the power and workings and relations of that identity. The revelation of the detail, the circumstance, the abundant ways and forms of the manifestation will be the unveiling of the endless opulence of the truths of that identity, its forms and powers of self, its curious manifoldness and multiplicity of form bringing out infinitely its oneness. This knowledge will proceed by identification with all, by entering into all, by a contact bringing with it a leap of self-discovery and a flame of recognition, a greater and surer intuition of truth than the mind can reach; there will be an intuition too of the means of embodying and utilising the truth seen, an operative intuition of its dynamic processes, a direct intimate awareness guiding the life and the physical senses in every step of their action and service to the Spirit when they have to be called in as instruments for the effectuation of process in life and matter.

A replacement of intellectual seeking by supramental identity and gnostic intuition of the contents of the identity, an omnipresence of spirit with its light penetrating the whole process of knowledge and all its use, so that there is an integration between the knower, knowledge and the thing known, between the operating consciousness, the instrumentation and the thing done, while the single self watches over the whole integrated movement and fulfils itself intimately in it, making it a flawless unit of self-effectuation, will be the character of

each gnostic movement of knowledge and action of knowledge. Mind, observing and reasoning, labours to detach itself and see objectively and truly what it has to know; it tries to know it as not-self, independent other-reality not affected by process of personal thinking or by any presence of self: the gnostic consciousness will at once intimately and exactly know its object by a comprehending and penetrating identification with it. It will overpass what it has to know, but it will include it in itself; it will know the object as part of itself as it might know any part or movement of its own being, without any narrowing of itself by the identification or snaring of its thought in it so as to be bound or limited in knowledge. There will be the intimacy, accuracy, fullness of a direct internal knowledge, but not that misleading by personal mind by which we constantly err, because the consciousness will be that of a universal and not a restricted and ego-bound person. It will proceed towards all knowledge, not setting truth against truth to see which will stand and survive, but completing truth by truth in the light of the one Truth of which all are the aspects. All idea and vision and perception will have this character of an inner seeing, an intimate extended self-perception, a large self-integrating knowledge, an indivisible whole working itself out by light acting upon light in a self-executing harmony of truth-being. There will be an unfolding, not as a delivery of light out of darkness, but as a delivery of light out of itself; for if an evolving supramental Consciousness holds back part of its contents of self-awareness behind in itself, it does this not as a step or by an act of Ignorance, but as the movement of a deliberate bringing out of its timeless knowledge into a process of Time-manifestation. A self-illumination, a revelation of light out of light will be the method of cognition of this evolutionary supramental Nature.

As mind seeks for light, for the discovery of knowledge and for mastery by knowledge, so life seeks for the development of its own force and for mastery by force: its quest is for growth, power, conquest, possession, satisfaction, creation, joy, love, beauty; its joy of existence is in a constant self-expression, development, diverse manifoldness of action, creation, enjoyment,

an abundant and strong intensity of itself and its power. The gnostic evolution will lift that to its highest and fullest expression, but it will not act for the power, satisfaction, enjoyment of the mental or vital ego, for its narrow possession of itself and its eager ambitious grasp on others and on things or for its greater self-affirmation and magnified embodiment; for in that way no spiritual fullness and perfection can come. The gnostic life will exist and act for the Divine in itself and in the world, for the Divine in all; the increasing possession of the individual being and the world by the Divine Presence, Light, Power, Love, Delight, Beauty will be the sense of life to the gnostic being. In the more and more perfect satisfaction of that growing manifestation will be the individual's satisfaction: his power will be the instrumentation of the power of Supernature for bringing in and extending that greater life and nature; whatever conquest and adventure will be there, will be for that only and not for the reign of any individual or collective ego. Love will be for him the contact, meeting, union of self with self, of spirit with spirit, a unification of being, a power and joy and intimacy and closeness of soul to soul, of the One to the One, a joy of identity and the consequences of a diverse identity. It is this joy of an intimate self-revealing diversity of the One, the multitudinous union of the One and a happy interaction in the identity, that will be for him the full revealed sense of life. Creation aesthetic or dynamic, mental creation, life creation, material creation will have for him the same sense. It will be the creation of significant forms of the Eternal Force, Light, Beauty, Reality,—the beauty and truth of its forms and bodies, the beauty and truth of its powers and qualities, the beauty and truth of its spirit, its formless beauty of self and essence.

As a consequence of the total change and reversal of consciousness establishing a new relation of spirit with mind and life and matter, and a new significance and perfection in the relation, there will be a reversal, a perfecting new significance also of the relations between the spirit and the body it inhabits. In our present way of living the soul expresses itself, as best it can or as badly as it must, through the mind and the vitality, or, more

often, allows the mind and the vitality to act with its support: the body is the instrument of this action. But the body, even in obeying, limits and determines the mind's and the life's self-expression by the limited possibilities and acquired character of its own physical instrumentation; it has besides a law of its own action, a movement and will or force or urge of movement of its own subconscious or half-emerged conscious power of being which they can only partially — and even in that part more by an indirect than by a direct or, if direct, then more by a subconscious than a willed and conscious action — influence or alter. But in the gnostic way of being and living the will of the spirit must directly control and determine the movements and law of the body. For the law of the body arises from the subconscious or inconscient: but in the gnostic being the subconscious will have become conscious and subject to the supramental control, penetrated with its light and action; the basis of inconscience with its obscurity and ambiguity, its obstruction or tardy responses will have been transformed into a lower or supporting superconscious by the supramental emergence. Already even in the realised higher-mind being and in the intuitive and overmind being the body will have become sufficiently conscious to respond to the influence of the Idea and the Will-Force so that the action of mind on the physical parts, which is rudimentary, chaotic and mostly involuntary in us, will have developed a considerable potency: but in the supramental being it is the consciousness with the Real-Idea in it which will govern everything. This real-idea is a truth-perception which is self-effective; for it is the idea and will of the spirit in direct action and originates a movement of the substance of being which must inevitably effectuate itself in state and act of being. It is this dynamic irresistible spiritual realism of the Truth-consciousness in the highest degree of itself that will have here grown conscient and consciously competent in the evolved gnostic being: it will not act as now, veiled in an apparent inconscience and self-limited by law of mechanism, but as the sovereign Reality in self-effectuating action. It is this that will rule the existence with an entire knowledge and power and include in its rule the functioning and action of the body. The

body will be turned by the power of the spiritual consciousness into a true and fit and perfectly responsive instrument of the Spirit.

This new relation of the spirit and the body assumes—and makes possible—a free acceptance of the whole of material Nature in place of a rejection; the drawing back from her, the refusal of all identification or acceptance, which is the first normal necessity of the spiritual consciousness for its liberation, is no longer imperative. To cease to be identified with the body, to separate oneself from the body-consciousness, is a recognised and necessary step whether towards spiritual liberation or towards spiritual perfection and mastery over Nature. But, this redemption once effected, the descent of the spiritual light and force can invade and take up the body also and there can be a new liberated and sovereign acceptance of material Nature. That is possible, indeed, only if there is a changed communion of the Spirit with Matter, a control, a reversal of the present balance of interaction which allows physical Nature to veil the Spirit and affirm her own dominance. In the light of a larger knowledge Matter also can be seen to be the Brahman, a self-energy put forth by the Brahman, a form and substance of Brahman; aware of the secret consciousness within material substance, secure in this larger knowledge, the gnostic light and power can unite itself with Matter, so seen, and accept it as an instrument of a spiritual manifestation. A certain reverence, even, for Matter and a sacramental attitude in all dealings with it is possible. As in the Gita the act of the taking of food is spoken of as a material sacrament, a sacrifice, an offering of Brahman to Brahman by Brahman, so also the gnostic consciousness and sense can view all the operations of Spirit with Matter. The Spirit has made itself Matter in order to place itself there as an instrument for the well-being and joy, *yogakṣema*, of created beings, for a self-offering of universal physical utility and service. The gnostic being, using Matter but using it without material or vital attachment or desire, will feel that he is using the Spirit in this form of itself with its consent and sanction for its own purpose. There will be in him a certain respect for physical things, an

awareness of the occult consciousness in them, of its dumb will of utility and service, a worship of the Divine, the Brahman in what he uses, a care for a perfect and faultless use of his divine material, for a true rhythm, ordered harmony, beauty in the life of Matter, in the utilisation of Matter.

As a result of this new relation between the Spirit and the body, the gnostic evolution will effectuate the spiritualisation, perfection and fulfilment of the physical being; it will do for the body as for the mind and life. Apart from the obscurity, frailties and limitations, which this change will overcome, the body-consciousness is a patient servant and can be in its large reserve of possibilities a potent instrument of the individual life, and it asks for little on its own account: what it craves for is duration, health, strength, physical perfection, bodily happiness, liberation from suffering, ease. These demands are not in themselves unacceptable, mean or illegitimate, for they render into the terms of Matter the perfection of form and substance, the power and delight which should be the natural outflowing, the expressive manifestation of the Spirit. When the gnostic Force can act in the body, these things can be established; for their opposites come from a pressure of external forces on the physical mind, on the nervous and material life, on the body-organism, from an ignorance that does not know how to meet these forces or is not able to meet them rightly or with power, and from some obscurity, pervading the stuff of the physical consciousness and distorting its responses, that reacts to them in a wrong way. A supramental self-acting self-effectuating awareness and knowledge, replacing this ignorance, will liberate and restore the obscured and spoiled intuitive instincts in the body and enlighten and supplement them with a greater conscious action. This change would institute and maintain a right physical perception of things, a right relation and right reaction to objects and energies, a right rhythm of mind, nerve and organism. It would bring into the body a higher spiritual power and a greater life-force unified with the universal life-force and able to draw on it, a luminous harmony with material Nature and the vast and calm touch of the eternal repose which can give

to it its diviner strength and ease. Above all,—for this is the most needed and fundamental change,—it will flood the whole being with a supreme energy of Consciousness-Force which would meet, assimilate or harmonise with itself all the forces of existence that surround and press upon the body.

It is the incompleteness and weakness of the Consciousness-Force manifested in the mental, vital and physical being, its inability to receive or refuse at will, or, receiving, to assimilate or harmonise the contacts of the universal Energy cast upon it, that is the cause of pain and suffering. In the material realm Nature starts with an entire insensibility, and it is a notable fact that either a comparative insensibility or a deficient sensibility or, more often, a greater endurance and hardness to suffering is found in the beginnings of life, in the animal, in primitive or less developed man; as the human being grows in evolution, he grows in sensibility and suffers more keenly in mind and life and body. For the growth in consciousness is not sufficiently supported by a growth in force; the body becomes more subtle, more finely capable, but less solidly efficient in its external energy: man has to call in his will, his mental power to dynamise, correct and control his nervous being, force it to the strenuous tasks he demands from his instruments, steel it against suffering and disaster. In the spiritual ascent this power of the consciousness and its will over the instruments, the control of spirit and inner mind over the outer mentality and the nervous being and the body, increases immensely; a tranquil and wide equality of the spirit to all shocks and contacts comes in and becomes the habitual poise, and this can pass from the mind to the vital parts and establish there too an immense and enduring largeness of strength and peace; even in the body this state may form itself and meet inwardly the shocks of grief and pain and all kinds of suffering. Even, a power of willed physical insensibility can intervene or a power of mental separation from all shock and injury can be acquired which shows that the ordinary reactions and the debile submission of the bodily self to the normal habits of response of material Nature are not obligatory or unalterable. Still more significant is the power that comes on the level of spiritual mind

or overmind to change the vibrations of pain into vibrations of Ananda: even if this were to go only up to a certain point, it indicates the possibility of an entire reversal of the ordinary rule of the reacting consciousness; it can be associated too with a power of self-protection that turns away the shocks that are more difficult to transmute or to endure. The gnostic evolution at a certain stage must bring about a completeness of this reversal and of this power of self-protection which will fulfil the claim of the body for immunity and serenity of its being and for deliverance from suffering and build in it a power for the total delight of existence. A spiritual Ananda can flow into the body and inundate cell and tissue; a luminous materialisation of this higher Ananda could of itself bring about a total transformation of the deficient or adverse sensibilities of physical Nature.

An aspiration, a demand for the supreme and total delight of existence is there secretly in the whole make of our being, but it is disguised by the separation of our parts of nature and their differing urge and obscured by their inability to conceive or seize anything more than a superficial pleasure. In the body consciousness this demand takes shape as a need of bodily happiness, in our life parts as a yearning for life happiness, a keen vibrant response to joy and rapture of many kinds and to all surprise of satisfaction; in the mind it shapes into a ready reception of all forms of mental delight; on a higher level it becomes apparent in the spiritual mind's call for peace and divine ecstasy. This trend is founded in the truth of the being; for Ananda is the very essence of the Brahman, it is the supreme nature of the omnipresent Reality. The supermind itself in the descending degrees of the manifestation emerges from the Ananda and in the evolutionary ascent merges into the Ananda. It is not, indeed, merged in the sense of being extinguished or abolished but is there inherent in it, indistinguishable from the self of awareness and the self-effectuating force of the Bliss of Being. In the involutionary descent as in the evolutionary return supermind is supported by the original Delight of Existence and carries that in it in all its activities as their sustaining essence; for Consciousness, we may say, is its parent power in the Spirit, but Ananda is the spiritual

matrix from which it manifests and the maintaining source into which it carries back the soul in its return to the status of the Spirit. A supramental manifestation in its ascent would have as a next sequence and culmination of self-result a manifestation of the Bliss of the Brahman: the evolution of the being of gnosis would be followed by an evolution of the being of bliss; an embodiment of gnostic existence would have as its consequence an embodiment of the beatific existence. Always in the being of gnosis, in the life of the gnosis some power of the Ananda would be there as an inseparable and pervading significance of supramental self-experience. In the liberation of the soul from the Ignorance the first foundation is peace, calm, the silence and quietude of the Eternal and Infinite; but a consummate power and greater formation of the spiritual ascension takes up this peace of liberation into the bliss of a perfect experience and realisation of the eternal beatitude, the bliss of the Eternal and Infinite. This Ananda would be inherent in the gnostic consciousness as a universal delight and would grow with the evolution of the gnostic nature.

It has been held that ecstasy is a lower and transient passage, the peace of the Supreme is the supreme realisation, the consummate abiding experience. This may be true on the spiritual-mind plane: there the first ecstasy felt is indeed a spiritual rapture, but it can be and is very usually mingled with a supreme happiness of the vital parts taken up by the spirit; there is an exaltation, exultation, excitement, a highest intensity of the joy of the heart and the pure inner soul-sensation that can be a splendid passage or an uplifting force but is not the ultimate permanent foundation. But in the highest ascents of the spiritual bliss there is not this vehement exaltation and excitement; there is instead an illimitable intensity of participation in an eternal ecstasy which is founded on the eternal Existence and therefore on a beatific tranquillity of eternal peace. Peace and ecstasy cease to be different and become one. The supermind, reconciling and fusing all differences as well as all contradictions, brings out this unity; a wide calm and a deep delight of all-existence are among its first steps of self-realisation, but this calm and this delight rise

together, as one state, into an increasing intensity and culminate in the eternal ecstasy, the bliss that is the Infinite. In the gnostic consciousness at any stage there would be always in some degree this fundamental and spiritual conscious delight of existence in the whole depth of the being; but also all the movements of Nature would be pervaded by it, and all the actions and reactions of the life and the body: none could escape the law of the Ananda. Even before the gnostic change there can be a beginning of this fundamental ecstasy of being translated into a manifold beauty and delight. In the mind, it translates into a calm or intense delight of spiritual perception and vision and knowledge, in the heart into a wide or deep or passionate delight of universal union and love and sympathy and the joy of beings and the joy of things. In the will and vital parts it is felt as the energy of delight of a divine life-power in action or a beatitude of the senses perceiving and meeting the One everywhere, perceiving as their normal aesthesis of things a universal beauty and a secret harmony of creation of which our mind can catch only imperfect glimpses or a rare supernormal sense. In the body it reveals itself as an ecstasy pouring into it from the heights of the spirit and the peace and bliss of a pure and spiritualised physical existence. A universal beauty and glory of being begins to manifest; all objects reveal hidden lines, vibrations, powers, harmonic significances concealed from the normal mind and the physical sense. In the universal phenomenon is revealed the eternal Ananda.

These are the first major results of the spiritual transformation that follow as a necessary consequence of the nature of Supermind. But if there is to be not only a perfection of the inner existence, of the consciousness, of an inner delight of existence, but a perfection of the life and action, two other questions present themselves from our mental view-point which have to our human thought about our life and its dynamisms a considerable, even a premier importance. First, there is the place of personality in the gnostic being,—whether the status, the building of the being will be quite other than what we experience as the form and life of the person or similar. If there is a personality and it is in any way responsible for its actions,

there intervenes, next, the question of the place of the ethical element and its perfection and fulfilment in the gnostic nature. Ordinarily, in the common notion, the separative ego is our self and, if ego has to disappear in a transcendental or universal Consciousness, personal life and action must cease; for, the individual disappearing, there can only be an impersonal consciousness, a cosmic self: but if the individual is altogether extinguished, no further question of personality or responsibility or ethical perfection can arise. According to another line of ideas the spiritual person remains, but liberated, purified, perfected in nature in a celestial existence. But here we are still on earth, and yet it is supposed that the ego personality is extinguished and replaced by a universalised spiritual individual who is a centre and power of the transcendent Being. It might be deduced that this gnostic or supramental individual is a self without personality, an impersonal Purusha. There could be many gnostic individuals but there would be no personality, all would be the same in being and nature. This, again, would create the idea of a void or blank of pure being from which an action and function of experiencing consciousness would arise, but without a construction of differentiated personality such as that which we now observe and regard as ourselves on our surface. But this would be a mental rather than a supramental solution of the problem of a spiritual individuality surviving ego and persisting in experience. In the supermind consciousness personality and impersonality are not opposite principles; they are inseparable aspects of one and the same reality. This reality is not the ego but the being, who is impersonal and universal in his stuff of nature, but forms out of it an expressive personality which is his form of self in the changes of Nature.

Impersonality is in its source something fundamental and universal; it is an existence, a force, a consciousness that takes on various shapes of its being and energy; each such shape of energy, quality, power or force, though still in itself general, impersonal and universal, is taken by the individual being as material for the building of his personality. Thus impersonality is in the original undifferentiated truth of things the pure

substance of nature of the Being, the Person; in the dynamic truth of things it differentiates its powers and lends them to constitute by their variations the manifestation of personality. Love is the nature of the lover, courage the nature of the warrior; love and courage are impersonal and universal forces or formulations of the cosmic Force, they are the spirit's powers of its universal being and nature. The Person is the Being supporting what is thus impersonal, holding it in himself as his, his nature of self; he is that which is the lover and warrior. What we call the personality of the Person is his expression in nature-status and nature-action,—he himself being in his self-existence, originally and ultimately, much more than that; it is the form of himself that he puts forth as his manifested already developed natural being or self in nature. In the formed limited individual it is his personal expression of what is impersonal, his personal appropriation of it, we may say, so as to have a material with which he can build a significant figure of himself in manifestation. In his formless unlimited self, his real being, the true Person or Purusha, he is not that, but contains in himself boundless and universal possibilities; but he gives to them, as the divine Individual, his own turn in the manifestation so that each among the Many is a unique self of the one Divine. The Divine, the Eternal, expresses himself as existence, consciousness, bliss, wisdom, knowledge, love, beauty, and we can think of him as these impersonal and universal powers of himself, regard them as the nature of the Divine and Eternal; we can say that God is Love, God is Wisdom, God is Truth or Righteousness: but he is not himself an impersonal state or abstract of states or qualities; he is the Being, at once absolute, universal and individual. If we look at it from this basis, there is, very clearly, no opposition, no incompatibility, no impossibility of a coexistence or one-existence of the Impersonal and the Person; they are each other, live in one another, melt into each other, and yet in a way can appear as if different ends, sides, obverse and reverse of the same Reality. The gnostic being is of the nature of the Divine and therefore repeats in himself this natural mystery of existence.

A supramental gnostic individual will be a spiritual Person,

but not a personality in the sense of a pattern of being marked out by a settled combination of fixed qualities, a determined character; he cannot be that since he is a conscious expression of the universal and the transcendent. But neither can his being be a capricious impersonal flux throwing up at random waves of various form, waves of personality as it pours through Time. Something like this may be felt in men who have no strong centralising Person in their depths but act from a sort of confused multipersonality according to whatever element in them becomes prominent at the time; but the gnostic consciousness is a consciousness of harmony and self-knowledge and self-mastery and would not present such a disorder. There are, indeed, varying notions of what constitutes personality and what constitutes character. In one view personality is regarded as a fixed structure of recognisable qualities expressing a power of being; but another idea distinguishes personality and character, personality as a flux of self-expressive or sensitive and responsive being, character as a formed fixity of Nature's structure. But flux of nature and fixity of nature are two aspects of being neither of which, nor indeed both together, can be a definition of personality. For in all men there is a double element, the unformed though limited flux of being or Nature out of which personality is fashioned and the personal formation out of that flux. The formation may become rigid and ossify or it may remain sufficiently plastic to change constantly and develop; but it develops out of the formative flux, by a modification or enlargement or remoulding of the personality, not, ordinarily, by an abolition of the formation already made and the substitution of a new form of being,—this can only occur in an abnormal turn or a supernormal conversion. But besides this flux and this fixity there is also a third and occult element, the Person behind of whom the personality is a self-expression; the Person puts forward the personality as his role, character, *persona*, in the present act of his long drama of manifested existence. But the Person is larger than his personality, and it may happen that this inner largeness overflows into the surface formation; the result is a self-expression of being which can no longer be described

by fixed qualities, normalities of mood, exact lineaments, or marked out by any structural limits. But neither is it a mere indistinguishable, quite amorphous and unseizable flux: though its acts of nature can be characterised but not itself, still it can be distinctively felt, followed in its action, it can be recognised, though it cannot easily be described; for it is a power of being rather than a structure. The ordinary restricted personality can be grasped by a description of the characters stamped on its life and thought and action, its very definite surface building and expression of self; even if we may miss whatever was not so expressed, that might seem to detract little from the general adequacy of our understanding, because the element missed is usually little more than an amorphous raw material, part of the flux, not used to form a significant part of the personality. But such a description would be pitifully inadequate to express the Person when its Power of Self within manifests more amply and puts forward its hidden daemonic force in the surface composition and the life. We feel ourselves in presence of a light of consciousness, a potency, a sea of energy, can distinguish and describe its free waves of action and quality, but not fix itself; and yet there is an impression of personality, the presence of a powerful being, a strong, high or beautiful recognisable Someone, a Person, not a limited creature of Nature but a Self or Soul, a Purusha. The gnostic Individual would be such an inner Person unveiled, occupying both the depths—no longer self-hidden—and the surface in a unified self-awareness; he would not be a surface personality partly expressive of a larger secret being, he would be not the wave but the ocean: he would be the Purusha, the inner conscious Existence self-revealed, and would have no need of a carved expressive mask or *persona*.

This, then, would be the nature of the gnostic Person, an infinite and universal being revealing—or, to our mental ignorance, suggesting—its eternal self through the significant form and expressive power of an individual and temporal self-manifestation. But the individual nature-manifestation, whether strong and distinct in outline or multitudinous and protean but still harmonic, would be there as an index of the being, not as

the whole being: that would be felt behind, recognisable but indefinable, infinite. The consciousness also of the gnostic Person would be an infinite consciousness throwing up forms of self-expression, but aware always of its unbound infinity and universality and conveying the power and sense of its infinity and universality even in the finiteness of the expression,— by which, moreover, it would not be bound in the next movement of farther self-revelation. But this would still not be an unregulated unrecognisable flux but a process of self-revelation making visible the inherent truth of its powers of existence according to the harmonic law natural to all manifestation of the Infinite.

All the character of the life and action of the gnostic being would arise self-determined out of this nature of his gnostic individuality. There could be in it no separate problem of an ethical or any similar content, any conflict of good and evil. There could indeed be no problem at all, for problems are the creations of mental ignorance seeking for knowledge and they cannot exist in a consciousness in which knowledge arises self-born and the act is self-born out of the knowledge, out of a pre-existent truth of being conscious and self-aware. An essential and universal spiritual truth of being manifesting itself, freely fulfilling itself in its own nature and self-effectuating consciousness, a truth of being one in all even in an infinite diversity of its truth and making all to be felt as one, would also be in its very nature an essential and universal good manifesting itself, fulfilling itself in its own nature and self-effectuating consciousness, a truth of good one in all and for all even in an infinite diversity of its good. The purity of the eternal Self-existence would pour itself into all the activities, making and keeping all things pure; there could be no ignorance leading to wrong will and falsehood of the steps, no separative egoism inflicting by its ignorance and separate contrary will harm on oneself or harm on others, self-driven to a wrong dealing with one's own soul, mind, life or body or a wrong dealing with the soul, mind, life, body of others, which is the practical sense of all human evil. To rise beyond virtue and sin, good and evil is an essential part of the Vedantic idea of liberation, and there is in this correlation a self-evident

sequence. For liberation signifies an emergence into the true spiritual nature of being where all action is the automatic self-expression of that truth and there can be nothing else. In the imperfection and conflict of our members there is an effort to arrive at a right standard of conduct and to observe it; that is ethics, virtue, merit, *pūṇya*, to do otherwise is sin, demerit, *pāpa*. Ethical mind declares a law of love, a law of justice, a law of truth, laws without number, difficult to observe, difficult to reconcile. But if oneness with others, oneness with truth is already the essence of the realised spiritual nature, there is no need of a law of truth or of love,—the law, the standard has to be imposed on us now because there is in our natural being an opposite force of separateness, a possibility of antagonism, a force of discord, ill-will, strife. All ethics is a construction of good in a Nature which has been smitten with evil by the powers of darkness born of the Ignorance, even as it is expressed in the ancient legend of the Vedanta. But where all is self-determined by truth of consciousness and truth of being, there can be no standard, no struggle to observe it, no virtue or merit, no sin or demerit of the nature. The power of love, of truth, of right will be there, not as a law mentally constructed but as the very substance and constitution of the nature and, by the integration of the being, necessarily also the very stuff and constituting nature of the action. To grow into this nature of our true being, a nature of spiritual truth and oneness, is the liberation attained by an evolution of the spiritual being: the gnostic evolution gives us the complete dynamism of that return to ourselves. Once that is done, the need of standards of virtue, dharmas, disappears; there is the law and self-order of the liberty of the spirit, there can be no imposed or constructed law of conduct, dharma. All becomes a self-flow of spiritual self-nature, Swadharma of Swabhava.

Here we touch the kernel of the dynamic difference between life in the mental ignorance and life in the gnostic being and nature. It is the difference between an integral fully conscious being in full possession of its own truth of existence and working out that truth in its own freedom, free from all constructed laws, while yet its life is a fulfilment of all true laws of becoming in

their essence of meaning, and an ignorant self-divided existence which seeks for its own truth and tries to construct its findings into laws and construct its life according to a pattern so made. All true law is the right motion and process of a reality, an energy or power of being in action fulfilling its own inherent movement self-implied in its own truth of existence. This law may be inconscient and its working appear to be mechanical,—that is the character or, at least, the appearance of law in material Nature: it may be a conscious energy, freely determined in its action by the consciousness in the being aware of its own imperative of truth, aware of its plastic possibilities of self-expression of that truth, aware, always in the whole and at each moment in the detail, of the actualities it has to realise; this is the figure of the law of the spirit. An entire freedom of the spirit, an entire self-existent order self-creating, self-effectuating, self-secure in its own natural and inevitable movement, is the character of this dynamis of the gnostic supernature.

At the summit of being is the Absolute with its absolute freedom of infinity but also its absolute truth of itself and power of that truth of being; these two things repeat themselves in the life of the spirit in supernature. All action there is the action of the supreme Self, the supreme Ishwara in the truth of the supernature. It is at once the truth of the being of the self and the truth of the will of the Ishwara one with that truth—a biune reality—which expresses itself in each individual gnostic being according to his supernature. The freedom of the gnostic individual is the freedom of his spirit to fulfil dynamically the truth of his being and the power of his energies in life; but this is synonymous with an entire obedience of his nature to the truth of Self manifested in his existence and to the will of the Divine in him and all. This All-Will is one in each gnostic individual and in many gnostic individuals and in the conscious All which holds and contains them in itself; it is conscious of itself in each gnostic being and is there one with his own will, and at the same time he is conscious of the same Will, the same Self and Energy variously active in all. Such a gnostic consciousness and gnostic will aware of its oneness in many gnostic individuals, aware of

its concordant totality and the meaning and meeting-point of its diversities, must assure a symphonic movement, a movement of unity, harmony, mutuality in the action of the whole. It assures at the same time in the individual a unity and symphonic concord of all the powers and movements of his being. All energies of being seek their self-expression and at their highest seek their absolute; this they find in the supreme Self, and they find at the same time their supreme oneness, harmony and mutuality of united and common self-expression in its all-seeing and all-uniting dynamic power of self-determination and self-effectuation, the supramental gnosis. A separate self-existent being could be at odds with other separate beings, at variance with the universal All in which they coexist, in a state of contradiction with any supreme Truth that was willing its self-expression in the universe; this is what happens to the individual in the Ignorance, because he takes his stand on the consciousness of a separate individuality. There can be a similar conflict, discord, disparity between the truths, the energies, qualities, powers, modes of being that act as separate forces in the individual and in the universe. A world full of conflict, a conflict in ourselves, a conflict of the individual with the world around him are normal and inevitable features of the separative consciousness of the Ignorance and our ill-harmonised existence. But this cannot happen in the gnostic consciousness because there each finds his complete self and all find their own truth and the harmony of their different motions in that which exceeds them and of which they are the expression. In the gnostic life, therefore, there is an entire accord between the free self-expression of the being and his automatic obedience to the inherent law of the supreme and universal Truth of things. These are to him interconnected sides of the one Truth; it is his own supreme truth of being which works itself out in the whole united truth of himself and things in one supernature. There is also an entire accord between all the many and different powers of the being and their action; for even those that are contradictory in their apparent motion and seem in our mental experience of them to enter into conflict, fit themselves and their action naturally into each other, because each has its self-truth

and its truth of relation to the others and this is self-found and self-formed in the gnostic supernature.

In the supramental gnostic nature there will therefore be no need of the mental rigid way and hard style of order, a limiting standardisation, an imposition of a fixed set of principles, the compulsion of life into one system or pattern which is alone valid because it is envisaged by mind as the one right truth of being and conduct. For such a standard cannot include and such a structure cannot take up into itself the whole of life, nor can it adapt itself freely to the pressure of the All-life or to the needs of the evolutionary Force; it has to escape from itself or to escape from its self-constructed limits by its own death, by disintegration or by an intense conflict and revolutionary disturbance. Mind has thus to select its limited rule and way of life, because it is itself bound and limited in vision and capacity; but gnostic being takes up into itself the whole of life and existence, fulfilled, transmuted into the harmonic self-expression of a vast Truth one and diverse, infinitely one, infinitely multiple. The knowledge and action of the gnostic being would have the wideness and plasticity of an infinite freedom. This knowledge would grasp its objects as it went in the largeness of the whole; it would be bound only by the integral truth of the whole and the complete and inmost truth of the object, but not by the formed idea or fixed mental symbols by which the mind is caught and held and confined in them so as to lose the freedom of its knowledge. The entire activity also would be unbound by an obligation of unelastic rule or by the obligation of a past state or action or by its compelling consequence, Karma; it would have the sequent but self-guided and self-evolving plasticity of the Infinite acting directly upon its own finites. This movement will not create a flux or chaos, but a liberated and harmonic Truth-expression; there would be a free self-determination of the spiritual being in a plastic entirely conscious nature.

In the consciousness of the Infinite individuality does not break up nor circumscribe cosmicity, cosmicity does not contradict transcendence. The gnostic being living in the consciousness of the Infinite will create his own self-manifestation

as an individual, but he will do so as a centre of a larger universality and yet at the same time a centre of the transcendence. A universal individual, all his action would be in harmony with the cosmic action, but, owing to his transcendence, it would not be limited by a temporary inferior formulation or at the mercy of any or every cosmic force. His universality would embrace even the Ignorance around him in its larger self, but, while intimately aware of it, he would not be affected by it: he would follow the greater law of his transcendent individuality and express its gnostic truth in his own way of being and action. His life would be a free harmonic expression of the self; but, since his highest self would be one with the being of the Ishwara, a natural divine government of his self-expression by the Ishwara, by his highest self, and by the Supernature, his own supreme nature, would automatically bring into the knowledge, the life, the action a large and unbound but perfect order. The obedience of his individual nature to the Ishwara and the Supernature would be a natural consonance and indeed the very condition of the freedom of the self, since it would be an obedience to his own supreme being, a response to the Source of all his existence. The individual nature would be nothing separate, it would be a current of the Supernature. All antinomy of the Purusha and the Prakriti, that curious division and unbalance of the Soul and Nature which afflicts the Ignorance, would be entirely removed; for the nature would be the outflowing of the self-force of the Person and the Person would be the outflowing of the supreme Nature, the supramental power of being of the Ishwara. It is this supreme truth of his being, an infinitely harmonic principle, that would create the order of his spiritual freedom, an authentic, automatic and plastic order.

In the lower existence the order is automatic, the binding of Nature complete, her groove firm and imperative: the cosmic Consciousness-Force evolves a pattern of Nature and its habitual mould or fixed round of action and obliges the infra-rational being to live and act according to the pattern and in the mould or round made for it. Mind in man starts with this prearranged pattern and routine, but, as it evolves, it enlarges

the design and expands the mould and tries to replace this fixed unconscious or half-conscious law of automatism by an order based on ideas and significances and accepted life-motives, or it attempts an intelligent standardisation and a framework determined by rational purpose, utility and convenience. There is nothing really binding or permanent in man's knowledge-structures or his life-structures; but still he cannot but create standards of thought, knowledge, personality, life, conduct and, more or less consciously and completely, base his existence on them or, at least, try his best to frame his life in the ideative cadre of his chosen or accepted dharmas. In the passage to the spiritual life the supreme ideal held up is, on the contrary, not law, but liberty in the spirit; the spirit breaks through all formulas to find its self and, if it has still to be concerned with expression, it must arrive at the liberty of a free and true instead of an artificial expression, a true and spontaneous spiritual order. "Abandon all dharmas, all standards and rules of being and action, and take refuge in Me alone", is the summit rule of the highest existence held up by the Divine Being to the seeker. In the seeking for this freedom, in the liberation from constructed law into law of self and spirit, in the casting away of the mental control in order to substitute for it the control of the spiritual Reality, an abandonment of the lower constructed truth of mind for the higher essential truth of being, it is possible to pass through a stage in which there is an inner freedom but a lack of outer order,—an action in the flux of nature childlike or inert like a leaf lying passive or driven by the wind or even incoherent or extravagant in outer semblance. It is possible also to arrive at a temporary ordered spiritual expression of the self which is sufficient for the stage one can reach for a time or in this life; or it may be a personal order of self-expression valid according to the norm of what one has already realised of the spiritual truth but afterwards changing freely by the force of spirituality to express the yet larger truth that one goes on to realise. But the supramental gnostic being stands in a consciousness in which knowledge is self-existent and manifests itself according to the order self-determined by the Will of the Infinite in the

supernature. This self-determination according to a self-existent knowledge replaces the automatism of Nature and the standards of Mind by the spontaneity of a Truth self-aware and self-active in the very grain of the existence.

In the gnostic being this self-determining knowledge freely obedient to self-truth and the total truth of Being would be the very law of his existence. In him Knowledge and Will become one and cannot be in conflict; Truth of spirit and life become one and cannot be at variance: in the self-effectuation of his being there can be no strife or disparity or divergence between the spirit and the members. The two principles of freedom and order, which in mind and life are constantly representing themselves as contraries or incompatibles, though they have no need to be that if freedom is guarded by knowledge and order based upon truth of being, are in the supermind consciousness native to each other and even fundamentally one. This is so because both are inseparable aspects of the inner spiritual truth and therefore their determinations are one; they are inherent in each other, for they arise from an identity and therefore in action coincide in a natural identity. The gnostic being does not in any way or degree feel his liberty infringed by the imperative order of his thought or actions, because that order is intrinsic and spontaneous; he feels both his liberty and the order of his liberty to be one truth of his being. His liberty of knowledge is not a freedom to follow falsehood or error, for he does not need like the mind to pass through the possibility of error in order to know,—on the contrary, any such deviation would be a departure from his plenitude of the gnostic self, it would be a diminution of his self-truth and alien and injurious to his being; for his freedom is a freedom of light, not of darkness. His liberty of action is not a licence to act upon wrong will or the impulsions of the Ignorance, for that too would be alien to his being, a restriction and diminution of it, not a liberation. A drive for fulfilment of falsehood or wrong will would be felt by him, not as a movement towards freedom, but as a violence done to the liberty of the spirit, an invasion and imposition, an inroad upon his supernature, a tyranny of some alien Nature.

A supramental consciousness must be fundamentally a Truth-consciousness, a direct and inherent awareness of the truth of being and the truth of things; it is a power of the Infinite knowing and working out its finites, a power of the Universal knowing and working out its oneness and detail, its cosmicity and its individualities; self-possessed of Truth, it would not have to seek for the Truth or suffer from the liability to miss it as does the mind of the Ignorance. The evolved gnostic being would have entered into this truth-consciousness of the Infinite and Universal, and it would be that which would determine for him and in him all his individual seeing and action. His would be a consciousness of universal identity and a consequent or rather inherent Truth-knowledge, Truth-sight, Truth-feeling, Truth-will, Truth-sense and Truth-dynamis of action implicit in his identity with the One or spontaneously arising from his identity with the All. His life would be a movement in the steps of a spiritual liberty and largeness replacing the law of the mental idea and the law of vital and physical need and desire and the compulsion of a surrounding life; his life and action would be bound by nothing else than the Divine Wisdom and Will acting on him and in him according to its Truth-consciousness. An absence of an imposed construction of law might be expected to lead in the life of the human ignorance, because of the separateness of the human ego and its smallness, the necessity it feels to impinge on and possess and utilise other life, to a chaos of conflict, licence and egoistic disorder; but this could not exist in the life of the gnostic being. For in the gnostic truth-consciousness of a supramental being there must necessarily be a truth of relation of all the parts and movements of the being,—whether the being of the individual or the being of any gnostic collectivity,—a spontaneous and luminous oneness and wholeness in all the movements of the consciousness and all the action of the life. There could be no strife of the members; for not only the knowledge and will consciousness but the heart consciousness and life consciousness and body consciousness, what are in us the emotional, vital or physical parts of nature, would be included in this integrated

harmony of wholeness and oneness. In our language we might say that the supermind knowledge-will of the gnostic being would have a perfect control of the mind, heart, life and body; but this description could apply only to the transitional stage when the supernature was remoulding these members into its own nature: once that transition was concluded, there would be no need of control, for all would be one unified consciousness and therefore would act as a whole in a spontaneous integrality and unity.

In a gnostic being there could be no conflict between self-affirmation of the ego and a control by super-ego; for since in his action of life the gnostic individual would at once express himself, his truth of being, and work out the Divine Will, since he would know the Divine as his true self and the source and constituent of his spiritual individuality, these two springs of his conduct would not only be simultaneous in a single action, but they would be one and the same motor-force. This motive power would act in each circumstance according to the truth of the circumstance, with each being according to its need, nature, relation, in each event according to the demand of the Divine Will upon that event: for all here is the result of a complexus and a close nexus of many forces of one Force, and the gnostic consciousness and Truth-Will would see the truth of these forces, of each and of all together, and put forth the necessary impact or intervention on the complex of forces to carry out what was willed to be done through itself, that and no more. In consequence of the Identity present everywhere, ruling everything and harmonising all diversities, there would be no play of a separative ego bent on its own separate self-affirmation; the will of the self of the gnostic being would be one with the will of the Ishwara, it would not be a separative or contrary self-will. It would have the joy of action and result but would be free from all ego claim, attachment to action or demand of result; it would do what it saw had to be done and was moved to do. In mental nature there can be an opposition or disparity between self-effort and obedience to the Higher Will, for there the self or apparent person sees itself as different from the supreme Being,

Will or Person; but here the person is being of the Being and the opposition or disparity does not arise. The action of the person is the action of the Ishwara in the person, of the One in the many, and there can be no reason for a separative assertion of self-will or pride of independence.

On this fact that the Divine Knowledge and Force, the supreme Supernature, would act through the gnostic being with his full participation, is founded the freedom of the gnostic being; it is this unity that gives him his liberty. The freedom from law, including the moral law, so frequently affirmed of the spiritual being, is founded on this unity of its will with the will of the Eternal. All the mental standards would disappear because all necessity for them would cease; the higher authentic law of identity with the Divine Self and identity with all beings would have replaced them. There would be no question of selfishness or altruism, of oneself and others, since all are seen and felt as the one self and only what the supreme Truth and Good decided would be done. There would be in the action a pervasive feeling of a self-existent universal love, sympathy, oneness, but the feeling would penetrate, colour and move in the act, not solely dominate or determine it; it would not stand for itself in opposition to the larger truth of things or dictate a personally impelled departure from the divinely willed true movement. This opposition and departure can happen in the Ignorance where love or any other strong principle of the nature can be divorced from wisdom even as it can be divorced from power; but in the supermind gnosis all powers are intimate to each other and act as one. In the gnostic person the Truth-Knowledge would lead and determine and all the other forces of the being concur in the action: there would be no place for disharmony or conflict between the powers of the nature. In all action there is an imperative of existence that seeks to be fulfilled; a truth of being not yet manifested has to be manifested or a truth manifesting has to be evolved and achieved and perfected in manifestation or, if already achieved, to take its delight of being and self-effectuation. In the half-light and half-power of the Ignorance the imperative is secret or only half-revealed and the

push to fulfilment is an imperfect, struggling, partly frustrated movement: but in the gnostic being and life the imperatives of being would be felt within, intimately perceived and brought into action; there would be a free play of their possibilities; there would be an actualisation in accordance with the truth of circumstance and the intention in the Supernature. All this would be seen in the knowledge and develop itself in act; there would be no uncertain combat or torment of forces at work; a disharmony of the being, a contradictory working of the consciousness could have no place: the imposition of an external standardisation of mechanised law would be entirely superfluous where there is this inherence of truth and its spontaneous working in act of nature. A harmonic action, a working out of the divine motive, an execution of the imperative truth of things would be the law and natural dynamics of the whole existence.

A knowledge by identity using the powers of the integrated being for richness of instrumentation would be the principle of the supramental life. In the other grades of the gnostic being, although a truth of spiritual being and consciousness would fulfil itself, the instrumentation would be of a different order. A Higher-Mental being would act through the truth of thought, the truth of the idea and accomplish that in the life-action: but in the supramental gnosis thought is a derivative movement, it is a formulation of truth-vision and not the determining or the main driving force; it would be an instrument for expression of knowledge more than for arrival at knowledge or for action,— or it would intervene in action only as a penetrating point of the body of identity-will and identity-knowledge. So too in the illumined gnostic being truth-vision and in the intuitive gnostic being a direct truth-contact and perceptive truth-sense would be the mainspring of action. In the overmind a comprehensive immediate grasp of the truth of things and the principle of being of each thing and all its dynamic consequences would originate and gather up a great wideness of gnostic vision and thought and create a foundation of knowledge and action; this largeness of being and seeing and doing would be the varied result of an underlying identity-consciousness, but the identity itself

would not be in the front as the very stuff of the consciousness or the very force of the action. But in the supramental gnosis all this luminous immediate grasp of the truth of things, truth-sense, truth-vision, truth-thought would get back into its source of identity-consciousness and subsist as a single body of its knowledge. The identity-consciousness would lead and contain everything; it would manifest as an awareness in the very grain of the being's substance putting forth its inherent self-fulfilling force and determining itself dynamically in form of consciousness and form of action. This inherent awareness is the origin and principle of the working of supramental gnosis; it could be sufficient in itself with no need of anything to formulate or embody it: but the play of illumined vision, the play of a radiant thought, the play of all other movements of the spiritual consciousness would not be absent; there would be a free instrumentation of them for their own brilliant functioning, for a divine richness and diversity, for a manifold delight of self-manifestation, for the joy of the powers of the Infinite. In the intermediate stages or degrees of the gnosis there might be the manifestation of various and separate expressions of the aspects of the divine Being and Nature, a soul and life of love, a soul and life of divine light and knowledge, a soul and life of divine power and sovereign action and creation, and innumerable other forms of divine life; on the supramental height all would be taken up into a manifold unity, a supreme integration of being and life. A fulfilment of the being in a luminous and blissful integration of its states and powers and their satisfied dynamic action would be the sense of the gnostic existence.

All supramental gnosis is a twofold Truth-consciousness, a consciousness of inherent self-knowledge and, by identity of self and world, of intimate world-knowledge; this knowledge is the criterion, the characteristic power of the gnosis. But this is not a purely ideative knowledge, it is not consciousness observing, forming ideas, trying to carry them out; it is an essential light of consciousness, the self-light of all the realities of being and becoming, the self-truth of being determining, formulating and effectuating itself. To be, not to know, is the object of

the manifestation; knowledge is only the instrumentation of an operative consciousness of being. This would be the gnostic life on earth, a manifestation or play of truth-conscious being, being grown aware of itself in all things, no longer lost to consciousness of itself, no longer plunged into a self-oblivion or a half-oblivion of its real existence brought about by absorption in form and action, but using form and action with a delivered spiritual power for its free and perfect self-expression, no longer seeking for its own lost or forgotten or veiled and hidden significance or significances, no longer bound, but delivered from in conscience and ignorance, aware of its own truths and powers, determining freely in a movement always concurrent and in tune in every detail with its supreme and universal Reality its manifestation, the play of its substance, the play of its consciousness, the play of its force of existence, the play of its delight of existence.

In the gnostic evolution there would be a great diversity in the poise, status, harmonised operations of consciousness and force and delight of existence. There would naturally appear in time many grades of the farther ascent of the evolutive supermind to its own summits; but in all there would be the common basis and principle. In the manifestation the Spirit, the Being, while knowing all itself, is not bound to put forth all itself in the actual front of formation and action which is its immediate power and degree of self-expression: it may put forth a frontal self-expression and hold all the rest of itself behind in an unexpressed delight of self-being. That All behind and its delight would find itself in the front, know itself in it, maintain and suffuse the expression, the manifestation with its own presence and feeling of totality and infinity. This frontal formation with all the rest behind it and held in power of being within it would be an act of self-knowledge, not an act of Ignorance; it would be a luminous self-expression of the Superconsciousness and not an upthrow from the Inconscience. A great harmonised variation would thus be an element in the beauty and completeness of the evolution of the gnostic consciousness and existence. Even in dealing with the mind of ignorance around it, as in dealing with the still lower degrees of the gnostic evolution, the supramental

life would use this innate power and movement of its Truth of being: it would relate in the light of that integral Reality its own truth of being with the truth of being that is behind the Ignorance; it would found all relations upon the common spiritual unity, accept and harmonise the manifested difference. The gnostic Light would ensure the right relation and action or reaction of each upon each in every circumstance; the gnostic power or influence would affirm always a symphonic effectuation, secure the right relation of the more developed and the less developed life and impose by its influence a greater harmony on the lower existence.

This would be the nature of the being, life and action of the gnostic individual so far as we can follow the evolution with our mental conception up to that point where it will emerge out of overmind and cross the border into supramental gnosis. This nature of the gnosis would evidently determine all the relations of the life or group-life of gnostic beings; for a gnostic collectivity would be a collective soul-power of the Truth-consciousness, even as the gnostic individual would be an individual soul-power of it: it would have the same integration of life and action in unison, the same realised and conscious unity of being, the same spontaneity, intimate oneness-feeling, one and mutual truth-vision and truth-sense of self and each other, the same truth-action in the relation of each with each and all with all; this collectivity would be and act not as a mechanical but a spiritual integer. A similar inevitability of the union of freedom and order would be the law of the collective life; it would be a freedom of the diverse play of the Infinite in divine souls, an order of the conscious unity of souls which is the law of the supramental Infinite. Our mental rendering of oneness brings into it the rule of sameness; a complete oneness brought about by the mental reason drives towards a thoroughgoing standardisation as its one effective means,—only minor shades of differentiation would be allowed to operate: but the greatest richness of diversity in the self-expression of oneness would be the law of the gnostic life. In the gnostic consciousness difference would not lead to discord but to a spontaneous natural adaptation, a sense of

complementary plenitude, a rich many-sided execution of the thing to be collectively known, done, worked out in life. For the difficulty in mind and life is created by ego, by separation of integers into component parts which figure as contraries, opposites, disparates: all in which they separate from each other is easily felt, affirmed and stressed; that in which they meet, whatever holds their divergences together, is largely missed or found with difficulty; everything has to be done by an overcoming or an adjustment of difference, by a constructed unity. There is, indeed, an underlying principle of oneness and Nature insists on its emergence in a construction of unity; for she is collective and communal as well as individual and egoistic and has her instrumentation of associativeness, sympathies, common needs, interests, attractions, affinities as well as her more brutal means of unification: but her secondary imposed and too prominent basis of ego-life and ego-nature overlays the unity and afflicts all its constructions with imperfection and insecurity. A farther difficulty is created by the absence or rather the imperfection of intuition and direct inner contact making each a separate being forced to learn with difficulty the other's being and nature, to arrive at understanding and mutuality and harmony from outside instead of inwardly through a direct sense and grasp, so that all mental and vital interchange is hampered, rendered ego-tainted or doomed to imperfection and incompleteness by the veil of mutual ignorance. In the collective gnostic life the integrating truth-sense, the concording unity of gnostic nature would carry all divergences in itself as its own opulence and turn a multitudinous thought, action, feeling into the unity of a luminous life-whole. This would be the evident principle, the inevitable result of the very character of the Truth-Consciousness and its dynamic realisation of the spiritual unity of all being. This realisation, the key to the perfection of life, difficult to arrive at on the mental plane, difficult even when realised to dynamise or organise, would be naturally dynamic, spontaneously self-organised in all gnostic creation and gnostic life.

This much is easily understandable if we regard the gnostic beings as living their own life without any contact with a life

of the Ignorance. But by the very fact of the evolution here the gnostic manifestation would be a circumstance, though a decisive circumstance, in the whole: there would be a continuance of the lower degrees of the consciousness and life, some maintaining the manifestation in the Ignorance, some mediating between it and the manifestation in the gnosis; these two forms of being and life would either exist side by side or interpenetrate. In either case the gnostic principle might be expected, if not at once, yet finally to dominate the whole. The higher spiritualmental degrees would be in touch with the supramental principle now overtly supporting them and holding them together and would be delivered from the once enveloping hold of the Ignorance and Inconscience. As manifestations of the truth of being, though in a qualified and modified degree, they would draw all their light and energy from the supramental gnosis and would be in large contact with its instrumental powers; they would themselves be conscious motive-powers of the spirit and, although not yet in the full force of their entirely realised spiritual substance, they would not be subjected to a lesser instrumentation fragmented, diluted, diminished, obscured by the substance of the Nescience. All Ignorance rising or entering into the overmind, into the intuitive, into the illumined or higher-mind being would cease to be ignorance; it would enter into the light, realise in that light the truth which it had covered with its darkness and undergo a liberation, transmutation, new state of consciousness and being which would assimilate it to these higher states and prepare it for the supramental status. At the same time the involved principle of the gnosis, acting now as an overt, arisen and constantly dynamic force and no longer only as a concealed power with a secret origination or a veiled support of things or an occasional intervention as its only function, would be able to lay something of its law of harmony on the still existing Inconscience and Ignorance. For the secret gnostic power concealed in them would act with a greater strength of its support and origination, a freer and more powerful intervention; the beings of the Ignorance, influenced by the light of the gnosis through their association with gnostic beings and through the evolved

and effective presence of the supramental Being and Power in earth-nature, would be more conscious and responsive. In the untransformed part of humanity itself there might well arise a new and greater order of mental human beings; for the directly intuitive or partly intuitivised but not yet gnostic mental being, the directly or partly illumined mental being, the mental being in direct or part communion with the higher-thought plane would emerge: these would become more and more numerous, more and more evolved and secure in their type, and might even exist as a formed race of higher humanity leading upwards the less evolved in a true fraternity born of the sense of the manifestation of the One Divine in all beings. In this way, the consummation of the highest might mean also a lesser consummation in its own degree of what must remain still below. At the higher end of the evolution the ascending ranges and summits of supermind would begin to rise towards some supreme manifestation of the pure spiritual existence, consciousness and delight of being of Sachchidananda.

A question might arise whether the gnostic reversal, the passage into a gnostic evolution and beyond it would not mean sooner or later the cessation of the evolution from the Inconscience, since the reason for that obscure beginning of things here would cease. This depends on the farther question whether the movement between the Superconscious and the Inconscience as the two poles of existence is an abiding law of the material manifestation or only a provisional circumstance. The latter supposition is difficult to accept because of the tremendous force of pervasiveness and durability with which the inconscient foundation has been laid for the whole material universe. Any complete reversal or elimination of the first evolutionary principle would mean the simultaneous manifestation of the secret involved consciousness in every part of this vast universal Inconscience; a change in a particular line of Nature such as the earth-line could not have any such all-pervading effect: the manifestation in earth-nature has its own curve and the completion of that curve is all that we have to consider. Here this much might be hazarded that in the final result of the revelatory creation or

reproduction of the upper hemisphere of conscious being in the lower triplicity the evolution here, though remaining the same in its degrees and stages, would be subjected to the law of harmony, the law of unity in diversity and of diversity working out unity: it would be no longer an evolution through strife; it would become a harmonious development from stage to stage, from lesser to greater light, from type to higher type of the power and beauty of a self-unfolding existence. It would only be otherwise if for some reason the law of struggle and suffering still remained necessary for the working out of that mysterious possibility in the Infinite whose principle underlies the plunge into the Inconscience. But for the earth-nature it would seem as if this necessity might be exhausted once the supramental gnosis had emerged from the Inconscience. A change would begin with its firm appearance; that change would be consummated when the supramental evolution became complete and rose into the greater fullness of a supreme manifestation of the Existence-Consciousness-Delight, Sachchidananda.

Chapter XXVIII

The Divine Life

O seeing Flame, thou carriest man of the crooked ways into
the abiding truth and the knowledge. *Rig Veda.*¹

I purify earth and heaven by the Truth. *Rig Veda.*²

His ecstasy, in one who holds it, sets into motion the two
births, the human self-expression and the divine, and moves
between them. *Rig Veda.*³

May the invincible rays of his intuition be there seeking im-
mortality, pervading both the births; for by them he sets
flowing in one movement human strengths and things divine.
*Rig Veda.*⁴

Let all accept thy will when thou art born a living god from
the dry tree, that they may attain to divinity and reach by the
speed of thy movements to possession of the Truth and the
Immortality. *Rig Veda.*⁵

OUR ENDEAVOUR has been to discover what is the reality and significance of our existence as conscious beings in the material universe and in what direction and how far that significance once discovered leads us, to what human or divine future. Our existence here may indeed be an inconsequential freak of Matter itself or of some Energy building up Matter, or it may be an inexplicable freak of the Spirit. Or, again, our existence here may be an arbitrary fantasy of a supracosmic Creator. In that case it has no essential significance, — no significance at all if Matter or an unconscious Energy is the

¹ I. 31. 6. ² I. 133. 1. ³ IX. 86. 42. ⁴ IX. 70. 3. ⁵ I. 68. 2.

fantasy-builder, for then it is at best the stray description of a wandering spiral of Chance or the hard curve of a blind Necessity; it can have only an illusory significance which vanishes into nothingness if it is an error of the Spirit. A conscious Creator may indeed have put a meaning into our existence, but it must be discovered by a revelation of his will and is not self-implied in the self-nature of things and discoverable there. But if there is a self-existent Reality of which our existence here is a result, then there must be a truth of that Reality which is manifesting, working itself out, evolving here, and that will be the significance of our own being and life. Whatever that Reality may be, it is something that has taken upon itself the aspect of a becoming in Time,—an indivisible becoming, for our present and our future carry in themselves, transformed, made other, the past that created them, and the past and present already contained and now contain in themselves, invisible to us because still unmanifested, unevolved, their own transformation into the still uncreated future. The significance of our existence here determines our destiny: that destiny is something that already exists in us as a necessity and a potentiality, the necessity of our being's secret and emergent reality, a truth of its potentialities that is being worked out; both, though not yet realised, are even now implied in what has been already manifested. If there is a Being that is becoming, a Reality of existence that is unrolling itself in Time, what that being, that reality secretly is is what we have to become, and so to become is our life's significance.

It is consciousness and life that must be the keywords to what is being thus worked out in Time; for without them Matter and the world of Matter would be a meaningless phenomenon, a thing that has just happened by Chance or by an unconscious Necessity. But consciousness as it is, life as it is cannot be the whole secret; for both are very clearly something unfinished and still in process. In us consciousness is Mind, and our mind is ignorant and imperfect, an intermediate power that has grown and is still growing towards something beyond itself: there were lower levels of consciousness that came before it and out of which it arose, there must very evidently be higher levels to

which it is itself arising. Before our thinking, reasoning, reflecting mind there was a consciousness unthinking but living and sentient, and before that there was the subconscious and the unconscious; after us or in our yet unevolved selves there is likely to be waiting a greater consciousness, self-luminous, not dependent on constructive thought: our imperfect and ignorant thought-mind is certainly not the last word of consciousness, its ultimate possibility. For the essence of consciousness is the power to be aware of itself and its objects, and in its true nature this power must be direct, self-fulfilled and complete: if it is in us indirect, incomplete, unfulfilled in its workings, dependent on constructed instruments, it is because consciousness here is emerging from an original veiling Inconscience and is yet burdened and enveloped with the first Nescience proper to the Inconscient; but it must have the power to emerge completely, its destiny must be to evolve into its own perfection which is its true nature. Its true nature is to be wholly aware of its objects, and of these objects the first is self, the being which is evolving its consciousness here, and the rest is what we see as not-self,— but if existence is indivisible, that too must in reality be self: the destiny of evolving consciousness must be, then, to become perfect in its awareness, entirely aware of self and all-aware. This perfect and natural condition of consciousness is to us a superconsciousness, a state which is beyond us and in which our mind, if suddenly transferred to it, could not at first function; but it is towards that superconsciousness that our conscious being must be evolving. But this evolution of our consciousness to a superconsciousness or supreme of itself is possible only if the Inconscience which is our basis here is really itself an involved Superconsciousness; for what is to be in the becoming of the Reality in us must be already there involved or secret in its beginning. Such an involved Being or Power we can well conceive the Inconscient to be when we closely regard this material creation of an unconscious Energy and see it labouring out with curious construction and infinite device the work of a vast involved Intelligence and see, too, that we ourselves are something of that Intelligence evolving out of its involution, an emerging consciousness whose emergence

cannot stop short on the way until the Involved has evolved and revealed itself as a supreme totally self-aware and all-aware Intelligence. It is this to which we have given the name of Supermind or Gnosis. For that evidently must be the consciousness of the Reality, the Being, the Spirit that is secret in us and slowly manifesting here; of that Being we are the becomings and must grow into its nature.

If consciousness is the central secret, life is the outward indication, the effective power of being in Matter; for it is that which liberates consciousness and gives it its form or embodiment of force and its effectuation in material act. If some revelation or effectuation of itself in Matter is the ultimate aim of the evolving Being in its birth, life is the exterior and dynamic sign and index of that revelation and effectuation. But life also, as it is now, is imperfect and evolving; it evolves through growth of consciousness even as consciousness evolves through greater organisation and perfection of life: a greater consciousness means a greater life. Man, the mental being, has an imperfect life because mind is not the first and highest power of consciousness of the Being; even if mind were perfected, there would be still something yet to be realised, not yet manifested. For what is involved and emergent is not a Mind, but a Spirit, and mind is not the native dynamism of consciousness of the Spirit; supermind, the light of gnosis, is its native dynamism. If then life has to become a manifestation of the Spirit, it is the manifestation of a spiritual being in us and the divine life of a perfected consciousness in a supramental or gnostic power of spiritual being that must be the secret burden and intention of evolutionary Nature.

All spiritual life is in its principle a growth into divine living. It is difficult to fix the frontier where the mental ceases and the divine life begins, for the two project into each other and there is a long space of their intermingled existence. A great part of this interspace,—when the spiritual urge does not turn away from earth or world altogether,—can be seen as the process of a higher life in the making. As the mind and life become illumined with the light of the spirit, they put on or reflect something of the divinity, the secret greater Reality, and this must increase

until the interspace has been crossed and the whole existence is unified in the full light and power of the spiritual principle. But, for the full and perfect fulfilment of the evolutionary urge, this illumination and change must take up and re-create the whole being, mind, life and body: it must be not only an inner experience of the Divinity, but a remoulding of both the inner and outer existence by its power; it must take form not only in the life of the individual but as a collective life of gnostic beings established as a highest power and form of the becoming of the Spirit in the earth-nature. For this to be possible the spiritual entity in us must have developed its own integralised perfection not only of the inner state of the being but of the outgoing power of the being and, with that perfection and as a necessity of its complete action, it must have evolved its own dynamis and instrumentation of the outer existence.

There can undoubtedly be a spiritual life within, a kingdom of heaven within us which is not dependent on any outer manifestation or instrumentation or formula of external being. The inner life has a supreme spiritual importance and the outer has a value only in so far as it is expressive of the inner status. However the man of spiritual realisation lives and acts and behaves, in all ways of his being and acting, it is said in the Gita, "he lives and moves in Me"; he dwells in the Divine, he has realised the spiritual existence. The spiritual man living in the sense of the spiritual self, in the realisation of the Divine within him and everywhere, would be living inwardly a divine life and its reflection would fall on his outer acts of existence, even if they did not pass — or did not seem to pass — beyond the ordinary instrumentation of human thought and action in this world of earth-nature. This is the first truth and the essence of the matter; but still, from the point of view of a spiritual evolution, this would be only an individual liberation and perfection in an unchanged environmental existence: for a greater dynamic change in earth-nature itself, a spiritual change of the whole principle and instrumentation of life and action, the appearance of a new order of beings and a new earth-life must be envisaged in our idea of the total consummation, the divine issue.

Here the gnostic change assumes a primary importance; all that precedes can be considered as an upbuilding and a preparation for this transmuting reversal of the whole nature. For it is a gnostic way of dynamic living that must be the fulfilled divine life on earth, a way of living that develops higher instruments of world-knowledge and world-action for the dynamisation of consciousness in the physical existence and takes up and transforms the values of a world of material Nature.

But always the whole foundation of the gnostic life must be by its very nature inward and not outward. In the life of the spirit it is the spirit, the inner Reality, that has built up and uses the mind, vital being and body as its instrumentation; thought, feeling and action do not exist for themselves, they are not an object, but the means; they serve to express the manifested divine Reality within us: otherwise, without this inwardness, this spiritual origination, in a too externalised consciousness or by only external means, no greater or divine life is possible. In our present life of Nature, in our externalised surface existence, it is the world that seems to create us; but in the turn to the spiritual life it is we who must create ourselves and our world. In this new formula of creation, the inner life becomes of the first importance and the rest can be only its expression and outcome. It is this, indeed, that is indicated by our own strivings towards perfection, the perfection of our own soul and mind and life and the perfection of the life of the race. For we are given a world which is obscure, ignorant, material, imperfect, and our external conscious being is itself created by the energies, the pressure, the moulding operations of this vast mute obscurity, by physical birth, by environment, by a training through the impacts and shocks of life; and yet we are vaguely aware of something that is there in us or seeking to be, something other than what has been thus made, a spirit self-existent, self-determining, pushing the nature towards the creation of an image of its own occult perfection or Idea of perfection. There is something that grows in us in answer to this demand, that strives to become the image of a divine Somewhat, and is impelled also to labour at the world outside that has been given to it and to remake that too

in a greater image, in the image of its own spiritual and mental and vital growth, to make our world too something created according to our own mind and self-conceiving spirit, something new, harmonious, perfect.

But our mind is obscure, partial in its notions, misled by opposite surface appearances, divided between various possibilities; it is led in three different directions to any of which it may give an exclusive preference. Our mind, in its search for what must be, turns towards a concentration on our own inner spiritual growth and perfection, on our own individual being and inner living; or it turns towards a concentration on an individual development of our surface nature, on the perfection of our thought and outer dynamic or practical action on the world, on some idealism of our personal relation with the world around us; or it turns rather towards a concentration on the outer world itself, on making it better, more suited to our ideas and temperament or to our conception of what should be. On one side there is the call of our spiritual being which is our true self, a transcendent reality, a being of the Divine Being, not created by the world, able to live in itself, to rise out of world to transcendence; on the other side there is the demand of the world around us which is a cosmic form, a formulation of the Divine Being, a power of the Reality in disguise. There is too the divided or double demand of our being of Nature which is poised between these two terms, depends on them and connects them; for it is apparently made by the world and yet, because its true creator is in ourselves and the world instrumentation that seems to make it is only the means first used, it is really a form, a disguised manifestation of a greater spiritual being within us. It is this demand that mediates between our preoccupation with an inward perfection or spiritual liberation and our preoccupation with the outer world and its formation, insists on a happier relation between the two terms and creates the ideal of a better individual in a better world. But it is within us that the Reality must be found and the source and foundation of a perfected life; no outward formation can replace it: there must be the true self realised within if there is to be the true life realised in world and Nature.

In the growth into a divine life the spirit must be our first preoccupation; until we have revealed and evolved it in our self out of its mental, vital, physical wrappings and disguises, extricated it with patience from our own body, as the Upanishad puts it, until we have built up in ourselves an inner life of the spirit, it is obvious that no outer divine living can become possible. Unless, indeed, it is a mental or vital godhead that we perceive and would be,—but even then the individual mental being or the being of power and vital force and desire in us must grow into a form of that godhead before our life can be divine in that inferior sense, the life of the infraspiritual superman, mental demi-god or vital Titan, Deva or Asura. This inner life once created, to convert our whole surface being, our thought, feeling, action in the world, into a perfect power of that inner life, must be our other preoccupation. Only if we live in that deeper and greater way in our dynamic parts, can there be a force for creating a greater life or the world be remade whether in some power or perfection of Mind and Life or the power and perfection of the Spirit. A perfected human world cannot be created by men or composed of men who are themselves imperfect. Even if all our actions are scrupulously regulated by education or law or social or political machinery, what will be achieved is a regulated pattern of minds, a fabricated pattern of lives, a cultivated pattern of conduct; but a conformity of this kind cannot change, cannot re-create the man within, it cannot carve or cut out a perfect soul or a perfect thinking man or a perfect or growing living being. For soul and mind and life are powers of being and can grow but cannot be cut out or made; an outer process or formation can assist or can express soul and mind and life but cannot create or develop it. One can indeed help the being to grow, not by an attempt at manufacture, but by throwing on it stimulating influences or by lending to it one's forces of soul or mind or life; but even so the growth must still come from within it, determining from there what shall be made of these influences and forces, and not from outside. This is the first truth that our creative zeal and aspiration have to learn, otherwise all our human endeavour is foredoomed to turn in

a futile circle and can end only in a success that is a specious failure.

To be or become something, to bring something into being is the whole labour of the force of Nature; to know, feel, do are subordinate energies that have a value because they help the being in its partial self-realisation to express what it is and help it too in its urge to express the still more not yet realised that it has to be. But knowledge, thought, action,—whether religious, ethical, political, social, economic, utilitarian or hedonistic, whether a mental, vital or physical form or construction of existence,—cannot be the essence or object of life; they are only activities of the powers of being or the powers of its becoming, dynamic symbols of itself, creations of the embodied spirit, its means of discovering or formulating what it seeks to be. The tendency of man's physical mind is to see otherwise and to turn the true method of things upside down, because it takes as essential or fundamental the surface forces or appearances of Nature; it accepts her creation by a visible or exterior process as the essence of her action and does not see that it is only a secondary appearance and covers a greater secret process: for Nature's occult process is to reveal the being through the bringing out of its powers and forms, her external pressure is only a means of awakening the involved being to the need of this evolution, of this self-formation. When the spiritual stage of her evolution is reached, this occult process must become the whole process; to get through the veil of forces and get at their secret mainspring, which is the spirit itself, is of cardinal importance. To become ourselves is the one thing to be done; but the true ourself is that which is within us, and to exceed our outer self of body, life and mind is the condition for this highest being, which is our true and divine being, to become self-revealed and active. It is only by growing within and living within that we can find it; once that is done, to create from there the spiritual or divine mind, life, body and through this instrumentation to arrive at the creation of a world which shall be the true environment of a divine living,—this is the final object that Force of Nature has set before us. This then is the first necessity, that the individual,

each individual, shall discover the spirit, the divine reality within him and express that in all his being and living. A divine life must be first and foremost an inner life; for since the outward must be the expression of what is within, there can be no divinity in the outer existence if there is not the divinisation of the inner being. The Divinity in man dwells veiled in his spiritual centre; there can be no such thing as self-exceeding for man or a higher issue for his existence if there is not in him the reality of an eternal self and spirit.

To be and to be fully is Nature's aim in us; but to be fully is to be wholly conscious of one's being: unconsciousness, half consciousness or deficient consciousness is a state of being not in possession of itself; it is existence, but not fullness of being. To be aware wholly and integrally of oneself and of all the truth of one's being is the necessary condition of true possession of existence. This self-awareness is what is meant by spiritual knowledge: the essence of spiritual knowledge is an intrinsic self-existent consciousness; all its action of knowledge, indeed all its action of any kind, must be that consciousness formulating itself. All other knowledge is consciousness oblivious of itself and striving to return to its own awareness of itself and its contents; it is self-ignorance labouring to transform itself back into self-knowledge.

But also, since consciousness carries in itself the force of existence, to be fully is to have the intrinsic and integral force of one's being; it is to come into possession of all one's force of self and of all its use. To be merely, without possessing the force of one's being or with a half-force or deficient force of it, is a mutilated or diminished existence; it is to exist, but it is not fullness of being. It is possible, indeed, to exist only in status, with the force of being self-gathered and immobile in the self; but, even so, to be in dynamis as well as in status is the integrality of existence: power of self is the sign of the divinity of self,— a powerless spirit is no spirit. But, as the spiritual consciousness is intrinsic and self-existent, so too this force of our spiritual being must be intrinsic, automatic in action, self-existent and self-fulfilling. What instrumentality it uses, must be

part of itself; even any external instrumentality it uses must be made part of itself and expressive of its being. Force of being in conscious action is will; and whatever is the conscious will of the spirit, its will of being and becoming, that all the existence must be able harmonically to fulfil. Whatever action or energy of action has not this sovereignty or is not master of the machinery of action, carries in it by that defect the sign of an imperfection of the force of being, of a division or disabling segmentation of the consciousness, of an incompleteness in the manifestation of the being.

Lastly, to be fully is to have the full delight of being. Being without delight of being, without an entire delight of itself and all things is something neutral or diminished; it is existence, but it is not fullness of being. This delight too must be intrinsic, self-existent, automatic; it cannot be dependent on things outside itself: whatever it delights in, it makes part of itself, has the joy of it as part of its universality. All undelight, all pain and suffering are a sign of imperfection, of incompleteness; they arise from a division of being, an incompleteness of consciousness of being, an incompleteness of the force of being. To become complete in being, in consciousness of being, in force of being, in delight of being and to live in this integrated completeness is the divine living.

But, again, to be fully is to be universally. To be in the limitations of a small restricted ego is to exist, but it is an imperfect existence: in its very nature it is to live in an incomplete consciousness, an incomplete force and delight of existence. It is to be less than oneself and it brings an inevitable subjection to ignorance, weakness and suffering: or even if by some divine composition of the nature it could exclude these things, it would be to live in a limited scope of existence, a limited consciousness and power and joy of existence. All being is one and to be fully is to be all that is. To be in the being of all and to include all in one's being, to be conscious of the consciousness of all, to be integrated in force with the universal force, to carry all action and experience in oneself and feel it as one's own action and experience, to feel all selves as one's own self, to feel all delight

of being as one's own delight of being is a necessary condition of the integral divine living.

But thus to be universally in the fullness and freedom of one's universality, one must be also transcendently. The spiritual fullness of the being is eternity; if one has not the consciousness of timeless eternal being, if one is dependent on body or embodied mind or embodied life, or dependent on this world or that world or on this condition of being or that condition of being, that is not the reality of self, not the fullness of our spiritual existence. To live only as a self of body or be only by the body is to be an ephemeral creature, subject to death and desire and pain and suffering and decay and decadence. To transcend, to exceed consciousness of body, not to be held in the body or by the body, to hold the body only as an instrument, a minor outward formation of self, is a first condition of divine living. Not to be a mind subject to ignorance and restriction of consciousness, to transcend mind and handle it as an instrument, to control it as a surface formation of self, is a second condition. To be by the self and spirit, not to depend upon life, not to be identified with it, to transcend it and control and use it as an expression and instrumentation of the self, is a third condition. Even the bodily life does not possess its own full being in its own kind if the consciousness does not exceed the body and feel its physical oneness with all material existence; the vital life does not possess its own full living in its own kind if the consciousness does not exceed the restricted play of an individual vitality and feel the universal life as its own and its oneness with all life. The mentality is not a full conscious existence or activity in its own kind if one does not exceed the individual mental limits and feel a oneness with universal Mind and with all minds and enjoy one's integrality of consciousness fulfilled in their wealth of difference. But one must transcend not only the individual formula but the formula of the universe, for only so can either the individual or the universal existence find its own true being and a perfect harmonisation; both are in their outer formulation incomplete terms of the Transcendence, but they are that in their essence, and it is only by becoming conscious of that essence that

individual consciousness or universal consciousness can come to its own fullness and freedom of reality. Otherwise the individual may remain subject to the cosmic movement and its reactions and limitations and miss his entire spiritual freedom. He must enter into the supreme divine Reality, feel his oneness with it, live in it, be its self-creation: all his mind, life, physicality must be converted into terms of its supernature; all his thought, feelings, actions must be determined by it and be it, its self-formation. All this can become complete in him only when he has evolved out of the Ignorance into the Knowledge and through the Knowledge into the supreme Consciousness and its dynamis and supreme delight of existence; but some essentiality of these things and their sufficient instrumentation can come with the first spiritual change and culminate in the life of the gnostic supernature.

These things are impossible without an inward living; they cannot be reached by remaining in an external consciousness turned always outwards, active only or mainly on and from the surface. The individual being has to find himself, his true existence; he can only do this by going inward, by living within and from within: for the external or outer consciousness or life separated from the inner spirit is the field of the Ignorance; it can only exceed itself and exceed the Ignorance by opening into the largeness of an inner self and life. If there is a being of the transcendence in us, it must be there in our secret self; on the surface there is only an ephemeral being of nature, made by limit and circumstance. If there is a self in us capable of largeness and universality, able to enter into a cosmic consciousness, that too must be within our inner being; the outer consciousness is a physical consciousness bound to its individual limits by the triple cord of mind, life and body: any external attempt at universality can only result either in an aggrandisement of the ego or an effacement of the personality by its extinction in the mass or subjugation to the mass. It is only by an inner growth, movement, action that the individual can freely and effectively universalise and transcendentalise his being. There must be for the divine living a transference of the centre and immediate source of dynamic effectuation of the being from out inward;

for there the soul is seated, but it is veiled or half veiled and our immediate being and source of action is for the present on the surface. In men, says the Upanishad, the Self-Existent has cut the doors of consciousness outward, but a few turn the eye inward and it is these who see and know the Spirit and develop the spiritual being. Thus to look into ourselves and see and enter into ourselves and live within is the first necessity for transformation of nature and for the divine life.

This movement of going inward and living inward is a difficult task to lay upon the normal consciousness of the human being; yet there is no other way of self-finding. The materialistic thinker, erecting an opposition between the extrovert and the introvert, holds up the extrovert attitude for acceptance as the only safety: to go inward is to enter into darkness or emptiness or to lose the balance of the consciousness and become morbid; it is from outside that such inner life as one can construct is created, and its health is assured only by a strict reliance on its wholesome and nourishing outer sources, — the balance of the personal mind and life can only be secured by a firm support on external reality, for the material world is the sole fundamental reality. This may be true for the physical man, the born extrovert, who feels himself to be a creature of outward Nature; made by her and dependent on her, he would lose himself if he went inward: for him there is no inner being, no inner living. But the introvert of this distinction also has not the inner life; he is not a seer of the true inner self and of inner things, but the small mental man who looks superficially inside himself and sees there not his spiritual self but his life-ego, his mind-ego and becomes unhealthily preoccupied with the movements of this little pitiful dwarf creature. The idea or experience of an inner darkness when looking inwards is the first reaction of a mentality which has lived always on the surface and has no realised inner existence; it has only a constructed internal experience which depends on the outside world for the materials of its being. But to those into whose composition there has entered the power of a more inner living, the movement of going within and living within brings not a darkness or dull emptiness but an

enlargement, a rush of new experience, a greater vision, a larger capacity, an extended life infinitely more real and various than the first pettiness of the life constructed for itself by our normal physical humanity, a joy of being which is larger and richer than any delight in existence that the outer vital man or the surface mental man can gain by their dynamic vital force and activity or subtlety and expansion of the mental existence. A silence, an entry into a wide or even immense or infinite emptiness is part of the inner spiritual experience; of this silence and void the physical mind has a certain fear, the small superficially active thinking or vital mind a shrinking from it or dislike,—for it confuses the silence with mental and vital incapacity and the void with cessation or non-existence: but this silence is the silence of the spirit which is the condition of a greater knowledge, power and bliss, and this emptiness is the emptying of the cup of our natural being, a liberation of it from its turbid contents so that it may be filled with the wine of God; it is the passage not into non-existence but to a greater existence. Even when the being turns towards cessation, it is a cessation not in non-existence but into some vast ineffable of spiritual being or the plunge into the incommunicable superconsciousness of the Absolute.

In fact, this inward turning and movement is not an imprisonment in personal self, it is the first step towards a true universality; it brings to us the truth of our external as well as the truth of our internal existence. For this inner living can extend itself and embrace the universal life, it can contact, penetrate, englobe the life of all with a much greater reality and dynamic force than is in our surface consciousness at all possible. Our utmost universalisation on the surface is a poor and limping endeavour,—it is a construction, a make-believe and not the real thing: for in our surface consciousness we are bound to separation of consciousness from others and wear the fetters of the ego. There our very selflessness becomes more often than not a subtle form of selfishness or turns into a larger affirmation of our ego; content with our pose of altruism, we do not see that it is a veil for the imposition of our individual self, our ideas, our mental and vital personality, our need of ego-enlarge-

upon the others whom we take up into our expanded orbit. So far as we really succeed in living for others, it is done by an inner spiritual force of love and sympathy; but the power and field of effectuality of this force in us are small, the psychic movement that prompts it is incomplete, its action often ignorant because there is contact of mind and heart but our being does not embrace the being of others as ourselves. An external unity with others must always be an outward joining and association of external lives with a minor inner result; the mind and heart attach their movements to this common life and the beings whom we meet there; but the common external life remains the foundation,—the inward constructed unity, or so much of it as can persist in spite of mutual ignorance and discordant egoisms, conflict of minds, conflict of hearts, conflict of vital temperaments, conflict of interests, is a partial and insecure superstructure. The spiritual consciousness, the spiritual life reverses this principle of building; it bases its action in the collective life upon an inner experience and inclusion of others in our own being, an inner sense and reality of oneness. The spiritual individual acts out of that sense of oneness which gives him immediate and direct perception of the demand of self on other self, the need of the life, the good, the work of love and sympathy that can truly be done. A realisation of spiritual unity, a dynamisation of the intimate consciousness of one-being, of one self in all beings, can alone found and govern by its truth the action of the divine life.

In the gnostic or divine being, in the gnostic life, there will be a close and complete consciousness of the self of others, a consciousness of their mind, life, physical being which are felt as if they were one's own. The gnostic being will act, not out of a surface sentiment of love and sympathy or any similar feeling, but out of this close mutual consciousness, this intimate oneness. All his action in the world will be enlightened by a truth of vision of what has to be done, a sense of the will of the Divine Reality in him which is also the Divine Reality in others, and it will be done for the Divine in others and the Divine in all, for the effectuation of the truth of purpose of the All as seen

in the light of the highest Consciousness and in the way and by the steps through which it must be effectuated in the power of the Supernature. The gnostic being finds himself not only in his own fulfilment, which is the fulfilment of the Divine Being and Will in him, but in the fulfilment of others; his universal individuality effectuates itself in the movement of the All in all beings towards its greater becoming. He sees a divine working everywhere; what goes out from him into the sum of that divine working, from the inner Light, Will, Force that works in him, is his action. There is no separative ego in him to initiate anything; it is the Transcendent and Universal that moves out through his universalised individuality into the action of the universe. As he does not live for a separate ego, so too he does not live for the purpose of any collective ego; he lives in and for the Divine in himself, in and for the Divine in the collectivity, in and for the Divine in all beings. This universality in action, organised by the all-seeing Will in the sense of the realised oneness of all, is the law of his divine living.

It is, then, this spiritual fulfilment of the urge to individual perfection and an inner completeness of being that we mean first when we speak of a divine life. It is the first essential condition of a perfected life on earth, and we are therefore right in making the utmost possible individual perfection our first supreme business. The perfection of the spiritual and pragmatic relation of the individual with all around him is our second preoccupation; the solution of this second desideratum lies in a complete universality and oneness with all life upon earth which is the other concomitant result of an evolution into the gnostic consciousness and nature. But there still remains the third desideratum, a new world, a change in the total life of humanity or, at the least, a new perfected collective life in the earth-nature. This calls for the appearance not only of isolated evolved individuals acting in the unevolved mass, but of many gnostic individuals forming a new kind of beings and a new common life superior to the present individual and common existence. A collective life of this kind must obviously constitute itself on the same principle as the life of the gnostic individual. In our present human

existence there is a physical collectivity held together by the common physical life-fact and all that arises from it, community of interests, a common civilisation and culture, a common social law, an aggregate mentality, an economic association, the ideals, emotions, endeavours of the collective ego with the strand of individual ties and connections running through the whole and helping to keep it together. Or, where there is a difference in these things, opposition, conflict, a practical accommodation or an organised compromise is enforced by the necessity of living together; there is erected a natural or a constructed order. This would not be the gnostic divine way of collective living; for there what would bind and hold all together would be, not the fact of life creating a sufficiently united social consciousness, but a common consciousness consolidating a common life. All will be united by the evolution of the Truth-consciousness in them; in the changed way of being which this consciousness would bring about in them, they will feel themselves to be embodiments of a single self, souls of a single Reality; illumined and motived by a fundamental unity of knowledge, actuated by a fundamental unified will and feeling, a life expressing the spiritual Truth would find through them its own natural forms of becoming. An order there would be, for truth of oneness creates its own order: a law or laws of living there might be, but these would be self-determined; they would be an expression of the truth of a spiritually united being and the truth of a spiritually united life. The whole formation of the common existence would be a self-building of the spiritual forces that must work themselves out spontaneously in such a life: these forces would be received inwardly by the inner being and expressed or self-expressed in a native harmony of idea and action and purpose.

An increasing mechanisation, a standardisation, a fixing of all into a common mould in order to ensure harmony is the mental method, but that would not be the law of this living. There would be a considerable free diversity between different gnostic communities; each would create its own body of the life of the spirit: there would be, too, a considerable free diversity in the self-expression of the individuals of a single community. But

this free diversity would not be a chaos or create any discord; for a diversity of one Truth of knowledge and one Truth of life would be a correlation and not an opposition. In a gnostic consciousness there would be no ego-insistence on personal idea and no push or clamour of personal will and interest: there would be instead the unifying sense of a common Truth in many forms, a common self in many consciousnesses and bodies; there would be a universality and plasticity which saw and expressed the One in many figures of itself and worked out oneness in all diversities as the inherent law of the Truth-consciousness and its truth of nature. A single Consciousness-Force, of which all would be aware and see themselves as its instruments, would act through all and harmonise their action together. The gnostic being would feel a single consonant Force of supernature acting in all: he would accept its formation in himself and obey or use the knowledge and power it gave him for the divine work, but he would be under no urge or compulsion to set the power and knowledge in him against the power and knowledge of others or affirm himself as an ego striving against other egos. For the spiritual self has its own inalienable joy and plenitude inviolable in all conditions, its own infinity of truth of being: that it feels always in fullness whatever may be the outward formulation. The truth of the spirit within would not depend on a particular formulation; it would have no need, therefore, to struggle for any particular outward formulation and self-affirmation: forms would arise of themselves plastically, in suitable relation to other formulations and each in its own place in the whole formulation. Truth of gnostic consciousness and being establishing itself can find its harmony with all other truth of being around it. A spiritual or gnostic being would feel his harmony with the whole gnostic life around him, whatever his position in the whole. According to his place in it he would know how to lead or to rule, but also how to subordinate himself; both would be to him an equal delight: for the spirit's freedom, because it is eternal, self-existent and inalienable, can be felt as much in service and willing subordination and adjustment with other selves as in power and rule. An inner spiritual freedom can accept its

place in the truth of an inner spiritual hierarchy as well as in the truth, not incompatible with it, of a fundamental spiritual equality. It is this self-arrangement of Truth, a natural order of the spirit, that would exist in a common life of different degrees and stages of the evolving gnostic being. Unity is the basis of the gnostic consciousness, mutuality the natural result of its direct awareness of oneness in diversity, harmony the inevitable power of the working of its force. Unity, mutuality and harmony must therefore be the inescapable law of a common or collective gnostic life. What forms it might take would depend upon the will of evolutionary manifestation of the Supernature, but this would be its general character and principle.

This is the whole sense and the inherent law and necessity of the passage from the purely mental and material being and life to the spiritual and supramental being and life, that the liberation, perfection, self-fulfilment for which the being in the Ignorance is seeking can only be reached by passing out of his present nature of Ignorance into a nature of spiritual self-knowledge and world-knowledge. This greater nature we speak of as Supernature because it is beyond his actual level of consciousness and capacity; but in fact it is his own true nature, the height and completeness of it, to which he must arrive if he is to find his real self and whole possibility of being. Whatever happens in Nature must be the result of Nature, the effectuation of what is implied or inherent in it, its inevitable fruit and consequence. If our nature is a fundamental Inconscience and Ignorance arriving with difficulty at an imperfect knowledge, an imperfect formulation of consciousness and being, the results in our being, life and action and creation must be, as they now are, a constant imperfection and insecure half result, an imperfect mentality, an imperfect life, an imperfect physical existence. We seek to construct systems of knowledge and systems of life by which we can arrive at some perfection of our existence, some order of right relations, right use of mind, right use and happiness and beauty of life, right use of the body. But what we achieve is a constructed half-rightness mixed with much that is wrong and unlovely and unhappy; our successive constructions, because of the vice in them and because

mind and life cannot rest permanently anywhere in their seeking, are exposed to destruction, decadence, disruption of their order, and we pass from them to others which are not more finally successful or enduring, even if on one side or another they may be richer and fuller or more rationally plausible. It cannot be otherwise, because we can construct nothing which goes beyond our nature; imperfect, we cannot construct perfection, however wonderful may seem to us the machinery our mental ingenuity invents, however externally effective. Ignorant, we cannot construct a system of entirely true and fruitful self-knowledge or world-knowledge: our science itself is a construction, a mass, of formulas and devices; masterful in knowledge of processes and in the creation of apt machinery, but ignorant of the foundations of our being and of world-being, it cannot perfect our nature and therefore cannot perfect our life.

Our nature, our consciousness is that of beings ignorant of each other, separated from each other, rooted in a divided ego, who must strive to establish some kind of relation between their embodied ignorances; for the urge to union and forces making for union are there in Nature. Individual and group harmonies of a comparative and qualified completeness are created, a social cohesion is accomplished; but in the mass the relations formed are constantly marred by imperfect sympathy, imperfect understanding, gross misunderstandings, strife, discord, unhappiness. It cannot be otherwise so long as there is no true union of consciousness founded upon a nature of self-knowledge, inner mutual knowledge, inner realisation of unity, concord of our inner forces of being and inner forces of life. In our social building we labour to establish some approach to unity, mutuality, harmony, because without these things there can be no perfect social living; but what we build is a constructed unity, an association of interests and egos enforced by law and custom and imposing an artificial constructed order in which the interests of some prevail over the interests of others and only a half accepted half enforced, half natural half artificial accommodation keeps the social whole in being. Between community and community there is a still worse accommodation with a constant recurrence

of the strife of collective ego with collective ego. This is the best that we can do and all our persistent readjustments of the social order can bring us nothing better than an imperfect structure of life.

It is only if our nature develops beyond itself, if it becomes a nature of self-knowledge, mutual understanding, unity, a nature of true being and true life that the result can be a perfection of ourselves and our existence, a life of true being, a life of unity, mutuality, harmony, a life of true happiness, a harmonious and beautiful life. If our nature is fixed in what it is, what it has already become, then no perfection, no real and enduring happiness is possible in earthly life; we must seek it not at all and do the best we can with our imperfections, or we must seek it elsewhere, in a supraterrestrial hereafter, or we must go beyond all such seeking and transcend life by an extinction of nature and ego in some Absolute from which this strange and unsatisfactory being of ours has come into existence. But if in us there is a spiritual being which is emerging and our present state is only an imperfection of half-emergence, if the Inconscient is a starting-point containing in itself the potency of a superconsciousness and supernature which has to evolve, a veil of apparent Nescience in which that greater consciousness is concealed and from which it has to unfold itself, if an evolution of being is the law, then what we are seeking for is not only possible but part of the eventual necessity of things. It is our spiritual destiny to manifest and become that supernature,—for it is the nature of our true self, our still occult, because unevolved, whole being. A nature of unity will then bring inevitably its life-result of unity, mutuality, harmony. An inner life awakened to a full consciousness and to a full power of consciousness will bear its inevitable fruit in all who have it, self-knowledge, a perfected existence, the joy of a satisfied being, the happiness of a fulfilled nature.

An innate character of the gnostic consciousness and the instrumentation of supernature is a wholeness of sight and action, a unity of knowledge with knowledge, a reconciliation of all that seems contrary in our mental seeing and knowing, an identity of Knowledge and Will acting as a single power in

perfect unison with the truth of things; this inborn character of supernature is the foundation of the perfect unity, mutuality, harmony of its action. In the mental being there is a discord of its constructed knowledge with the real or the whole truth of things, so that even what is true in it is often or is eventually ineffective or only partially effective. Our discoveries of truth are overthrown, our passionate effectuations of truth are frustrated; often the result of our action becomes part of a scheme we did not intend for a purpose whose legitimacy we would not acknowledge, or the truth of the idea is deceived by the actual outcome of its pragmatic success. Even if there is a successful realisation of the idea, yet because the idea is incomplete, an isolated construction of the mind separate from the one and whole truth of things, its success must sooner or later end in disillusionment and a new endeavour. The discordance of our seeing and our notions with the true truth and the whole truth of things, the partiality and superficiality of our mind's deceptive constructions, is the cause of our frustration. But there is also not only a discord of knowledge with knowledge but of will with will and of knowledge with will in the same being, a division and disharmony between them, so that where the knowledge is ripe or sufficient, some will in the being opposes it or the will fails it; where the will is powerful, vehement or firmly or forcefully effective, knowledge guiding it to its right use is lacking. All kinds of disparity and maladjustment and incompleteness of our knowledge, will, capacity, executive force and dealing intervene constantly in our action, our working out of life, and are an abundant source of imperfection or ineffectivity. These disorders, defects and disharmonies are normal to a status and energy of Ignorance and can only be dissolved by a greater light than that of mind nature or life nature. An identity and authenticity and a harmony of truth with truth are the native character of all gnostic seeing and action; as the mind grows into the gnosis, our mental seeing and action lifted into the gnostic light or visited and ruled by it would begin to partake of this character and, even if still restricted and within limits, must become much more perfect and within these limits effective: the

causes of our incapacity and frustration would begin to diminish and disappear. But also the larger existence will invade the mind with the potencies of a greater consciousness and a greater force, a bringing out of new powers of the being. Knowledge is power and act of consciousness, Will is conscious power and conscious act of force of being; both in the gnostic being will reach greater magnitudes than any we now know, a higher degree of themselves, a richer instrumentation: for wherever there is an increase of consciousness, there is an increase of the potential force and the actual power of the existence.

In the terrestrial formulation of Knowledge and Power, this correlation is not altogether apparent because there consciousness itself is concealed in an original Inconscience and the natural strength and rhythm of its powers in their emergence are diminished and disturbed by the discordances and the veils of the Ignorance. The Inconscient there is the original, potent and automatically effective Force, the conscious mind is only a small labouring agent; but that is because the conscious mind in us has a limited individual action and the Inconscient is an immense action of a universal concealed Consciousness: the cosmic Force, masked as a material Energy, hides from our view by its insistent materiality of process the occult fact that the working of the Inconscient is really the expression of a vast universal Life, a veiled universal Mind, a hooded Gnosis, and without these origins of itself it could have no power of action, no organising coherence. Life-Force also in the material world seems to be more dynamic and effective than Mind; our Mind is free and fully powerful in idea and cognition only: its force of action, its power of effectuation outside this mental field is obliged to work with life and matter as instruments and, under the conditions imposed on it by life and matter, our mind is hampered and half effective. But even so we see that Nature-force in the mental being is much more powerful to deal with himself and with life and matter than Nature-force in the animal; it is the greater force of consciousness and knowledge, the greater emerged force of being and will that constitute this superiority. In human life itself the vital man seems to have a stronger dynamis of action than

the mental man because of his superiority in kinetic life-force: the intellectual tends to be effective in thought but ineffective in power over the world, while the kinetic vital man of action dominates life. But it is his use of mind that enables him to arrive at a full exploitation of this superiority, and in the end the mental man by his power of knowledge, his science, is able to extend the mastery of existence far beyond what life in matter could accomplish by its own agencies or what the vital man could accomplish with his life-force and life-instinct without that increase of effective knowledge. An immensely greater power over existence and over Nature must come when a still greater consciousness emerges and replaces the hampered operations of the mental Energy in our too individualised and restricted force of existence.

A certain fundamental subjection of mind to life and matter and an acceptance of this subjection, an inability to make the law of Mind directly dominant and modify by its powers the blinder law and operations of these inferior forces of being, remains even in the midst of our greatest mental mastery over self and things; but this limitation is not insuperable. It is the interest of occult knowledge that it shows us—and a dynamic force of spiritual knowledge brings us the same evidence—that this subjection of Mind to Matter, of the spirit to a lesser law of life is not what it at first appears to be, a fundamental condition of things, an inviolable and unalterable rule of Nature. The greatest, most momentous natural discovery that man can make is this that mind, and still more the force of the spirit, can in many tried and yet untried ways and in all directions—by its own nature and direct power and not only by devices and contrivances such as the superior material instrumentation discovered by physical Science—overcome and control life and matter. In the evolution of the gnostic supernature this direct power of consciousness, this direct action of the force of the being, its free mastery and control of life and matter, would be consummated and reach their acme. For the greater knowledge of the gnostic being would not be in the main an outwardly acquired or learned knowledge, but the result of an evolution of consciousness and

of the force of consciousness, a new dynamisation of the being. As a consequence, he would awake to and possess many things, a clear and complete knowledge of self, a direct knowledge of others, a direct knowledge of hidden forces, a direct knowledge of the occult mechanism of mind and life and matter, which are beyond our present attainment. This new knowledge and action of knowledge would be based on an immediate intuitive consciousness of things and an immediate intuitive control of things; an operative insight, now supernormal to us, would be the normal functioning of this consciousness, and an integral assured effectivity both in the mass of action and in its detail would be the outcome of the change. For the gnostic being would be in unison and communion with the Consciousness-Force that is at the root of everything: his vision and his will would be the channel of the supramental Real-Idea, the self-effective Truth-Force; his action would be a free manifestation of the power and workings of the root Force of existence, the force of an all-determining conscious spirit whose formulations of consciousness work out inevitably in mind, life and matter. Acting in the light and power of the supramental knowledge, the evolving gnostic being would be more and more master of himself, master of the forces of consciousness, master of the energies of Nature, master of his instrumentation of life and matter. In the lesser status, the intermediate stages or formations of the evolving gnostic nature this power would not be present in its fullness: but in some degree of its activities it would be there; incipient and increasing with the ascent of the scale, it would be a natural concomitant of the growth of consciousness and knowledge.

A new power and powers of consciousness would be, then, an inevitable consequence of an evolution of Consciousness-Force passing beyond mind to a superior cognitive and dynamic principle. In their essential nature these new powers must have the character of a control of mind over life and matter, of the conscious life-will and life-force over matter, of the spirit over mind, life and matter; they would have the character also of a breaking down of the barriers between soul and soul, mind and

mind, life and life: such a change would be indispensable for the instrumentation of the gnostic life. For a total gnostic or divine living would include not only the individual life of the being but the life of others made one with the individual in a common uniting consciousness. Such a life must have for its main constituting power a spontaneous and innate, not a constructed, unity and harmony; this can only come by a greater identity of being and consciousness between individual and individual unified in their spiritual substance, feeling themselves to be self and self of one self-existence, acting in a greater unitarian force of knowledge, a greater power of the being. There must be an inner and direct mutual knowledge based upon a consciousness of oneness and identity, a consciousness of each other's being, thought, feeling, inner and outer movements, a conscious communication of mind with mind, of heart with heart, a conscious impact of life upon life, a conscious interchange of forces of being with forces of being; in any absence or deficiency of these powers and their intimate light there could not be a real or complete unity or a real and complete natural fitting of each individual's being, thought, feeling, inner and outer movements with those of the individuals around him. A growing basis and structure of conscious unanimism, we might say, would be the character of this more evolved life.

Harmony is the natural rule of the spirit, it is the inherent law and spontaneous consequence of unity in multiplicity, of unity in diversity, of a various manifestation of oneness. In a pure and blank unity there could be indeed no place for harmony, for there is nothing to harmonise; in a complete or a governing diversity there must be either discord or a fitting together of differences, a constructed harmony. But in a gnostic unity in multiplicity the harmony would be there as a spontaneous expression of the unity, and this spontaneous expression presupposes a mutuality of consciousness aware of other consciousness by a direct inner contact and interchange. In infrarational life harmony is secured by an instinctive oneness of nature and oneness of the action of the nature, an instinctive communication, an instinctive or direct vital-intuitional sense-understanding by

which the individuals of an animal or insect community are able to co-operate. In human life this is replaced by understanding through sense-knowledge and mental perception and communication of ideas by speech, but the means that have to be used are imperfect and the harmony and co-operation incomplete. In a gnostic life, a life of superreason and supernature, a self-aware spiritual unity of being and a spiritual conscious community and interchange of nature would be the deep and ample root of understanding: this greater life would have evolved new and superior means and powers of uniting consciousness inwardly with consciousness; intimacy of consciousness communicating inwardly and directly with consciousness, thought with thought, vision with vision, sense with sense, life with life, body-awareness with body-awareness, would be its natural basic instrumentation. All these new powers taking up the old outward instruments and using them as a subordinate means with a far greater power and to more purpose would be put to the service of the self-expression of the spirit in a profound oneness of being and life.

An evolution of innate and latent but as yet unevolved powers of consciousness is not considered admissible by the modern mind, because these exceed our present formulation of Nature and, to our ignorant preconceptions founded on a limited experience, they seem to belong to the supernatural, to the miraculous and occult; for they surpass the known action of material Energy which is now ordinarily accepted as the sole cause and mode of things and the sole instrumentation of the World-Force. A human working of marvels, by the conscious being discovering and developing an instrumentation of material forces overpassing anything that Nature has herself organised, is accepted as a natural fact and an almost unlimited prospect of our existence; an awakening, a discovery, an instrumentation of powers of consciousness and of spiritual, mental and life forces overpassing anything that Nature or man has yet organised is not admitted as possible. But there would be nothing supernatural or miraculous in such an evolution, except in so far as it would be a supernature or superior nature to ours just as human

nature is a supernature or superior nature to that of animal or plant or material objects. Our mind and its powers, our use of reason, our mental intuition and insight, speech, possibilities of philosophical, scientific, aesthetic discovery of the truths and potencies of being and a control of its forces are an evolution that has taken place: yet it would seem impossible if we took our stand on the limited animal consciousness and its capacities; for there is nothing there to warrant so prodigious a progression. But still there are vague initial manifestations, rudimentary elements or arrested possibilities in the animal to which our reason and intelligence with their extraordinary developments stand as an unimaginable journey from a poor and unpromising point of departure. The rudiments of spiritual powers belonging to the gnostic supernature are similarly there even in our ordinary composition, but only occasionally and sparsely active. It is not irrational to suppose that at this much higher stage of the evolution a similar but greater progression starting from these rudimentary beginnings might lead to another immense development and departure.

In mystic experience,—when there is an opening of the inner centres, or in other ways, spontaneously or by will or endeavour or in the very course of the spiritual growth,—new powers of consciousness have been known to develop; they present themselves as if an automatic consequence of some inner opening or in answer to a call in the being, so much so that it has been found necessary to recommend to the seeker not to hunt after these powers, not to accept or use them. This rejection is logical for those who seek to withdraw from life; for all acceptance of greater power would bind to life or be a burden on the bare and pure urge towards liberation. An indifference to all other aims and issues is natural for the God-lover who seeks God for His own sake and not for power or any other inferior attraction; the pursuit of these alluring but often dangerous forces would be a deviation from his purpose. A similar rejection is a necessary self-restraint and a spiritual discipline for the immature seeker, since such powers may be a great, even a deadly peril; for their supernormality may easily

feed in him an abnormal exaggeration of the ego. Power in itself may be dreaded as a temptation by the aspirant to perfection, because power can abase as well as elevate; nothing is more liable to misuse. But when new capacities come as an inevitable result of the growth into a greater consciousness and a greater life and that growth is part of the very aim of the spiritual being within us, this bar does not operate; for a growth of the being into supernature and its life in supernature cannot take place or cannot be complete without bringing with it a greater power of consciousness and a greater power of life and the spontaneous development of an instrumentation of knowledge and force normal to that supernature. There is nothing in this future evolution of the being which could be regarded as irrational or incredible; there is nothing in it abnormal or miraculous: it would be the necessary course of the evolution of consciousness and its forces in the passage from the mental to the gnostic or supramental formulation of our existence. This action of the forces of supernature would be a natural, normal and spontaneously simple working of the new higher or greater consciousness into which the being enters in the course of his self-evolution; the gnostic being accepting the gnostic life would develop and use the powers of this greater consciousness, even as man develops and uses the powers of his mental nature.

It is evident that such an increase of the power or powers of consciousness would be not only normal but indispensable to a greater and more perfect life. Human life with its partial harmony, in so far as that is not maintained by the imposition of a settled law and order on the constituent individuals through a partly willing, partly induced, partly forced or unavoidable acceptance, reposes on the agreement of the enlightened or interested elements in their mind, heart, life-sense, an assent to a composite body of common ideas, desires, vital satisfactions, aims of existence. But there is in the mass of constituting individuals an imperfect understanding and knowledge of the ideas, life-aims, life-motives which they have accepted, an imperfect power in their execution, an imperfect will to maintain them always unimpaired, to carry them out fully or to bring the life

to a greater perfection: there is an element of struggle and discord, a mass of repressed or unfulfilled desires and frustrated wills, a simmering suppressed unsatisfaction or an awakened or eruptive discontent of unequally satisfied interests; there are new ideas, life-motives that break in and cannot be correlated without upheaval and disturbance; there are life-forces at work in human beings and their environment that are at variance with the harmony that has been constructed, and there is not the full power to overcome the discord and dislocations created by a clashing diversity of mind and life and by the attack of disrupting forces in universal Nature. What is lacking is a spiritual knowledge and spiritual power, a power over self, a power born of inner unification with others, a power over the surrounding or invading world-forces, a full-visioned and fully equipped power of effectuation of knowledge; it is these capacities missing or defective in us that belong to the very substance of gnostic being, for they are inherent in the light and dynamis of the gnostic nature.

But, in addition to the imperfect accommodation of the minds, hearts, lives of the constituting individuals in a human society, the mind and the life of the individual himself are actuated by forces that are not in accord with each other; our attempts to accord them are imperfect, and still more imperfect is our force to put any one of them into integral or satisfying execution in life. Thus the law of love and sympathy is natural to our consciousness; as we grow in spirit, its demand on us increases: but there is also the demand of the intellect, the push of the vital force and its impulses in us, the claim and pressure of many other elements that do not coincide with the law of love and sympathy, nor do we know how to fit them all into the whole law of existence or to render any or all of them either justly and entirely effective or imperative. In order to make them concordant and actively fruitful in the whole being and whole life, we have to grow into a more complete spiritual nature; we have, by that growth, to live in the light and force of a higher and larger and more integral consciousness of which knowledge and power, love and sympathy and play of life-will are all natural

and ever-present accorded elements; we have to move and act in a light of Truth which sees intuitively and spontaneously the thing to be done and the way to do it and intuitively and spontaneously fulfils itself in the act and the force,—taking up into that intuitive spontaneity of their truth, into its simple spiritual and supreme normality, the complexity of our forces of being and suffusing with their harmonised realities all the steps of Nature.

It should be evident that no rationalised piecing together or ingenuity of mental construction can accord or harmonise this complexity; it is only the intuition and self-knowledge of an awakened spirit that can do it. That would be the nature of the evolved supramental being and his existence; his spiritual sight and sense would take up all the forces of the being in a unifying consciousness and bring them into a normality of accorded action: for this accord and concord are the true normality of the spirit; the discord, the disharmony of our life and nature is abnormal to it although it is normal to the life of the Ignorance. It is indeed because it is not normal to the spirit that a knowledge within us is dissatisfied and strives towards a greater harmony in our existence. This accord and concord of the whole being, which is natural to the gnostic individual, would be equally natural to a community of gnostic beings; for it would rest on a union of self with self in the light of a common and mutual self-awareness. It is true that in the total terrestrial existence of which the gnostic life would be a part, there would be still continuing within it a life belonging to a less evolved order; the intuitive and gnostic life would have to fit into this total existence and carry into it as much of its own law of unity and harmony as may be possible. Here the law of spontaneous harmony might seem to be inapplicable, since the relation of the gnostic life with the ignorant life around it would not be founded on a mutuality of self-knowledge and a sense of one being and common consciousness; it would be a relation of action of knowledge to action of ignorance. But this difficulty need not be so great as it seems now to us; for the gnostic knowledge would carry in it a perfect understanding of the consciousness

of the Ignorance, and it would not be impossible, therefore, for an assured gnostic life to harmonise its existence with that of all the less developed life coexistent with it in the earth-nature.

If this is our evolutionary destiny, it remains for us to see where we stand at this juncture in the evolutionary progression,—a progression which has been cyclic or spiral rather than in a straight line or has at least journeyed in a very zigzag swinging curve of advance,—and what prospect there is of any turn towards a decisive step in the near or measurable future. In our human aspiration towards a personal perfection and the perfection of the life of the race the elements of the future evolution are foreshadowed and striven after, but in a confusion of half-enlightened knowledge; there is a discord between the necessary elements, an opposing emphasis, a profusion of rudimentary unsatisfying and ill-accorded solutions. These sway between the three principal preoccupations of our idealism,—the complete single development of the human being in himself, the perfectibility of the individual, a full development of the collective being, the perfectibility of society, and, more pragmatically restricted, the perfect or best possible relations of individual with individual and society and of community with community. An exclusive or dominant emphasis is laid sometimes on the individual, sometimes on the collectivity or society, sometimes on a right and balanced relation between the individual and the collective human whole. One idea holds up the growing life, freedom or perfection of the human individual as the true object of our existence,—whether the ideal be merely a free self-expression of the personal being or a self-governed whole of complete mind, fine and ample life and perfect body, or a spiritual perfection and liberation. In this view society is there only as a field of activity and growth for the individual man and serves best its function when it gives as far as possible a wide room, ample means, a sufficient freedom or guidance of development to his thought, his action, his growth, his possibility of fullness of being. An opposite idea gives the collective life the first or the sole importance; the existence, the growth of the race is all: the individual has to live for the society or for mankind,

or, even, he is only a cell of the society, he has no other use or purpose of birth, no other meaning of his presence in Nature, no other function. Or it is held that the nation, the society, the community is a collective being, revealing its soul in its culture, power of life, ideals, institutions, all its ways of self-expression; the individual life has to cast itself in that mould of culture, serve that power of life, consent only to exist as an instrument for the maintenance and efficiency of the collective existence. In another idea the perfection of man lies in his ethical and social relations with other men; he is a social being and has to live for society, for others, for his utility to the race: the society also is there for the service of all, to give them their right relation, education, training, economic opportunity, right frame of life. In the ancient cultures the greatest emphasis was laid on the community and the fitting of the individual into the community, but also there grew up an idea of the perfected individual; in ancient India it was the idea of the spiritual individual that was dominant, but the society was of extreme importance because in it and under its moulding influence the individual had to pass first through the social status of the physical, vital, mental being with his satisfaction of interest, desire, pursuit of knowledge and right living before he could reach fitness for a truer self-realisation and a free spiritual existence. In recent times the whole stress has passed to the life of the race, to a search for the perfect society, and latterly to a concentration on the right organisation and scientific mechanisation of the life of mankind as a whole; the individual now tends more to be regarded only as a member of the collectivity, a unit of the race whose existence must be subordinated to the common aims and total interest of the organised society, and much less or not at all as a mental or spiritual being with his own right and power of existence. This tendency has not yet reached its acme everywhere, but everywhere it is rapidly increasing and heading towards dominance.

Thus, in the vicissitudes of human thought, on one side the individual is moved or invited to discover and pursue his own self-affirmation, his own development of mind and life and body, his own spiritual perfection; on the other he is called on to efface

and subordinate himself and to accept the ideas, ideals, will, instincts, interests of the community as his own. He is moved by Nature to live for himself and by something deep within him to affirm his individuality; he is called upon by society and by a certain mental idealism to live for humanity or for the greater good of the community. The principle of self and its interest is met and opposed by the principle of altruism. The State erects its godhead and demands his obedience, submission, subordination, self-immolation; the individual has to affirm against this exorbitant claim the rights of his ideals, his ideas, his personality, his conscience. It is evident that all this conflict of standards is a groping of the mental Ignorance of man seeking to find its way and grasping different sides of the truth but unable by its want of integrality in knowledge to harmonise them together. A unifying and harmonising knowledge can alone find the way, but that knowledge belongs to a deeper principle of our being to which oneness and integrality are native. It is only by finding that in ourselves that we can solve the problem of our existence and with it the problem of the true way of individual and communal living.

There is a Reality, a truth of all existence which is greater and more abiding than all its formations and manifestations; to find that truth and Reality and live in it, achieve the most perfect manifestation and formation possible of it, must be the secret of perfection whether of individual or communal being. This Reality is there within each thing and gives to each of its formations its power of being and value of being. The universe is a manifestation of the Reality, and there is a truth of the universal existence, a Power of cosmic being, an all-self or world-spirit. Humanity is a formation or manifestation of the Reality in the universe, and there is a truth and self of humanity, a human spirit, a destiny of human life. The community is a formation of the Reality, a manifestation of the spirit of man, and there is a truth, a self, a power of the collective being. The individual is a formation of the Reality, and there is a truth of the individual, an individual self, soul or spirit that expresses itself through the individual mind, life and body and can express itself too

in something that goes beyond mind, life and body, something even that goes beyond humanity. For our humanity is not the whole of the Reality or its best possible self-formation or self-expression,—the Reality has assumed before man existed an infrahuman formation and self-creation and can assume after him or in him a suprahuman formation and self-creation. The individual as spirit or being is not confined within his humanity; he has been less than human, he can become more than human. The universe finds itself through him even as he finds himself in the universe, but he is capable of becoming more than the universe, since he can surpass it and enter into something in himself and in it and beyond it that is absolute. He is not confined within the community; although his mind and life are, in a way, part of the communal mind and life, there is something in him that can go beyond them. The community exists by the individual, for its mind and life and body are constituted by the mind and life and body of its composing individuals; if that were abolished or disaggregated, its own existence would be abolished or disaggregated, though some spirit or power of it might form again in other individuals: but the individual is not a mere cell of the collective existence; he would not cease to exist if separated or expelled from the collective mass. For the collectivity, the community is not even the whole of humanity and it is not the world: the individual can exist and find himself elsewhere in humanity or by himself in the world. If the community has a life dominating that of the individuals which constitute it, still it does not constitute their whole life. If it has its being which it seeks to affirm by the life of the individuals, the individual also has a being of his own which he seeks to affirm in the life of the community. But he is not tied to that, he can affirm himself in another communal life, or, if he is strong enough, in a nomad existence or in an eremite solitude where, if he cannot pursue or achieve a complete material living, he can spiritually exist and find his own reality and indwelling self of being.

The individual is indeed the key of the evolutionary movement; for it is the individual who finds himself, who becomes conscious of the Reality. The movement of the collectivity is a

largely subconscious mass movement; it has to formulate and express itself through the individuals to become conscious: its general mass consciousness is always less evolved than the consciousness of its most developed individuals, and it progresses in so far as it accepts their impress or develops what they develop. The individual does not owe his ultimate allegiance either to the State which is a machine or to the community which is a part of life and not the whole of life: his allegiance must be to the Truth, the Self, the Spirit, the Divine which is in him and in all; not to subordinate or lose himself in the mass, but to find and express that truth of being in himself and help the community and humanity in its seeking for its own truth and fullness of being must be his real object of existence. But the extent to which the power of the individual life or the spiritual Reality within it becomes operative, depends on his own development: so long as he is undeveloped, he has to subordinate in many ways his undeveloped self to whatever is greater than it. As he develops, he moves towards a spiritual freedom, but this freedom is not something entirely separate from all-existence; it has a solidarity with it because that too is the self, the same spirit. As he moves towards spiritual freedom, he moves also towards spiritual oneness. The spiritually realised, the liberated man is preoccupied, says the Gita, with the good of all beings; Buddha discovering the way of Nirvana must turn back to open that way to those who are still under the delusion of their constructive instead of their real being — or non-being; Vivekananda, drawn by the Absolute, feels also the call of the disguised Godhead in humanity and most the call of the fallen and the suffering, the call of the self to the self in the obscure body of the universe. For the awakened individual the realisation of his truth of being and his inner liberation and perfection must be his primary seeking, — first, because that is the call of the Spirit within him, but also because it is only by liberation and perfection and realisation of the truth of being that man can arrive at truth of living. A perfected community also can exist only by the perfection of its individuals, and perfection can come only by the discovery and affirmation in life by each of his own spiritual being and

the discovery by all of their spiritual unity and a resultant life unity. There can be no real perfection for us except by our inner self and truth of spiritual existence taking up all truth of the instrumental existence into itself and giving to it oneness, integration, harmony. As our only real freedom is the discovery and disengagement of the spiritual Reality within us, so our only means of true perfection is the sovereignty and self-effectuation of the spiritual Reality in all the elements of our nature.

Our nature is complex and we have to find a key to some perfect unity and fullness of its complexity. Its first evolutionary basis is the material life: Nature began with that and man also has to begin with it; he has first to affirm his material and vital existence. But if he stops there, there can be for him no evolution; his next and greater preoccupation must be to find himself as a mental being in a material life — both individual and social — as perfected as possible. This was the direction which the Hellenic idea gave to European civilisation, and the Roman reinforced — or weakened — it with the ideal of organised power: the cult of reason, the interpretation of life by an intellectual thought critical, utilitarian, organising and constructive, the government of life by Science are the last outcome of this inspiration. But in ancient times the higher creative and dynamic element was the pursuit of an ideal truth, good and beauty and the moulding of mind, life and body into perfection and harmony by this ideal. Beyond and above this preoccupation, as soon as mind is sufficiently developed, there awakes in man the spiritual preoccupation, the discovery of a self and inmost truth of being and the release of man's mind and life into the truth of the Spirit, its perfection by the power of the Spirit, the solidarity, unity, mutuality of all beings in the Spirit. This was the Eastern ideal carried by Buddhism and other ancient disciplines to the coasts of Asia and Egypt and from there poured by Christianity into Europe. But these motives, burning for a time like dim torchlights in the confusion and darkness created by the barbaric flood that had submerged the old civilisations, have been abandoned by the modern spirit which has found another light, the light of Science. What the modern spirit has sought for is the economic

social ultimate,—an ideal material organisation of civilisation and comfort, the use of reason and science and education for the generalisation of a utilitarian rationality which will make the individual a perfected social being in a perfected economic society. What remained from the spiritual ideal was—for a time—a mentalised and moralised humanitarianism relieved of all religious colouring and a social ethicism which was deemed all-sufficient to take the place of a religious and individual ethic. It was so far that the race had reached when it found itself hurried forward by its own momentum into a subjective chaos and a chaos of its life in which all received values were overthrown and all firm ground seemed to disappear from its social organisation, its conduct and its culture.

For this ideal, this conscious stress on the material and economic life was in fact a civilised reversion to the first state of man, his early barbaric state and its preoccupation with life and matter, a spiritual retrogression with the resources of the mind of a developed humanity and a fully evolved Science at its disposal. As an element in the total complexity of human life this stress on a perfected economic and material existence has its place in the whole: as a sole or predominant stress it is for humanity itself, for the evolution itself full of danger. The first danger is a resurgence of the old vital and material primitive barbarian in a civilised form; the means Science has put at our disposal eliminates the peril of the subversion and destruction of an effete civilisation by stronger primitive peoples, but it is the resurgence of the barbarian in ourselves, in civilised man, that is the peril, and this we see all around us. For that is bound to come if there is no high and strenuous mental and moral ideal controlling and uplifting the vital and physical man in us and no spiritual ideal liberating him from himself into his inner being. Even if this relapse is escaped, there is another danger,—for a cessation of the evolutionary urge, a crystallisation into a stable comfortable mechanised social living without ideal or outlook is another possible outcome. Reason by itself cannot long maintain the race in its progress; it can do so only if it is a mediator between the life and body and something higher and

greater within him; for it is the inner spiritual necessity, the push from what is there yet unrealised within him that maintains in him, once he has attained to mind, the evolutionary stress, the spiritual nisus. That renounced, he must either relapse and begin all over again or disappear like other forms of life before him as an evolutionary failure, through incapacity to maintain or to serve the evolutionary urge. At the best he will remain arrested in some kind of mediary typal perfection, like other animal kinds, while Nature pursues her way beyond him to a greater creation.

At present mankind is undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which is concealed a choice of its destiny; for a stage has been reached in which the human mind has achieved in certain directions an enormous development while in others it stands arrested and bewildered and can no longer find its way. A structure of the external life has been raised up by man's ever-active mind and life-will, a structure of an unmanageable hugeness and complexity, for the service of his mental, vital, physical claims and urges, a complex political, social, administrative, economic, cultural machinery, an organised collective means for his intellectual, sensational, aesthetic and material satisfaction. Man has created a system of civilisation which has become too big for his limited mental capacity and understanding and his still more limited spiritual and moral capacity to utilise and manage, a too dangerous servant of his blundering ego and its appetites. For no greater seeing mind, no intuitive soul of knowledge has yet come to his surface of consciousness which could make this basic fullness of life a condition for the free growth of something that exceeded it. This new fullness of the means of life might be, by its power for a release from the incessant unsatisfied stress of his economic and physical needs, an opportunity for the full pursuit of other and greater aims surpassing the material existence, for the discovery of a higher truth and good and beauty, for the discovery of a greater and diviner spirit which would intervene and use life for a higher perfection of the being: but it is being used instead for the multiplication of new wants and an aggressive expansion of the collective ego. At the same time Science has put at his disposal

many potencies of the universal Force and has made the life of humanity materially one; but what uses this universal Force is a little human individual or communal ego with nothing universal in its light of knowledge or its movements, no inner sense or power which would create in this physical drawing together of the human world a true life unity, a mental unity or a spiritual oneness. All that is there is a chaos of clashing mental ideas, urges of individual and collective physical want and need, vital claims and desires, impulses of an ignorant life-push, hungers and calls for life satisfaction of individuals, classes, nations, a rich fungus of political and social and economic nostrums and notions, a hustling medley of slogans and panaceas for which men are ready to oppress and be oppressed, to kill and be killed, to impose them somehow or other by the immense and too formidable means placed at his disposal, in the belief that this is his way out to something ideal. The evolution of human mind and life must necessarily lead towards an increasing universality; but on a basis of ego and segmenting and dividing mind this opening to the universal can only create a vast pullulation of unaccorded ideas and impulses, a surge of enormous powers and desires, a chaotic mass of unassimilated and intermixed mental, vital and physical material of a larger existence which, because it is not taken up by a creative harmonising light of the spirit, must welter in a universalised confusion and discord out of which it is impossible to build a greater harmonic life. Man has harmonised life in the past by organised ideation and limitation; he has created societies based on fixed ideas or fixed customs, a fixed cultural system or an organic life-system, each with its own order; the throwing of all these into the melting-pot of a more and more intermingling life and a pouring in of ever new ideas and motives and facts and possibilities call for a new, a greater consciousness to meet and master the increasing potentialities of existence and harmonise them. Reason and Science can only help by standardising, by fixing everything into an artificially arranged and mechanised unity of material life. A greater whole-being, whole-knowledge, whole-power is needed to weld all into a greater unity of whole-life.

A life of unity, mutuality and harmony born of a deeper and wider truth of our being is the only truth of life that can successfully replace the imperfect mental constructions of the past which were a combination of association and regulated conflict, an accommodation of egos and interests grouped or dovetailed into each other to form a society, a consolidation by common general life-motives, a unification by need and the pressure of struggle with outside forces. It is such a change and such a reshaping of life for which humanity is blindly beginning to seek, now more and more with a sense that its very existence depends upon finding the way. The evolution of mind working upon life has developed an organisation of the activity of mind and use of Matter which can no longer be supported by human capacity without an inner change. An accommodation of the ego-centric human individuality, separative even in association, to a system of living which demands unity, perfect mutuality, harmony, is imperative. But because the burden which is being laid on mankind is too great for the present littleness of the human personality and its petty mind and small life-instincts, because it cannot operate the needed change, because it is using this new apparatus and organisation to serve the old infraspiritual and infrarational life-self of humanity, the destiny of the race seems to be heading dangerously, as if impatiently and in spite of itself, under the drive of the vital ego seized by colossal forces which are on the same scale as the huge mechanical organisation of life and scientific knowledge which it has evolved, a scale too large for its reason and will to handle, into a prolonged confusion and perilous crisis and darkness of violent shifting incertitude. Even if this turns out to be a passing phase or appearance and a tolerable structural accommodation is found which will enable mankind to proceed less catastrophically on its uncertain journey, this can only be a respite. For the problem is fundamental and in putting it evolutionary Nature in man is confronting herself with a critical choice which must one day be solved in the true sense if the race is to arrive or even to survive. The evolutionary nisus is pushing towards a development of the cosmic Force in terrestrial life which needs a larger mental and

vital being to support it, a wider mind, a greater wider more conscious unanimised Life-Soul, Anima, and that again needs an unveiling of the supporting Soul and spiritual Self within to maintain it.

A rational and scientific formula of the vitalistic and materialistic human being and his life, a search for a perfected economic society and the democratic cultus of the average man are all that the modern mind presents us in this crisis as a light for its solution. Whatever the truth supporting these ideas, this is clearly not enough to meet the need of a humanity which is missioned to evolve beyond itself or, at any rate, if it is to live, must evolve far beyond anything that it at present is. A life-instinct in the race and in the average man himself has felt the inadequacy and has been driving towards a reversal of values or a discovery of new values and a transfer of life to a new foundation. This has taken the form of an attempt to find a simple and ready-made basis of unity, mutuality, harmony for the common life, to enforce it by a suppression of the competitive clash of egos and so to arrive at a life of identity for the community in place of a life of difference. But to realise these desirable ends the means adopted have been the forcible and successful materialisation of a few restricted ideas or slogans enthroned to the exclusion of all other thought, the suppression of the mind of the individual, a mechanised compression of the elements of life, a mechanised unity and drive of the life-force, a coercion of man by the State, the substitution of the communal for the individual ego. The communal ego is idealised as the soul of the nation, the race, the community; but this is a colossal and may turn out to be a fatal error. A forced and imposed unanimity of mind, life, action raised to their highest tension under the drive of something which is thought to be greater, the collective soul, the collective life, is the formula found. But this obscure collective being is not the soul or self of the community; it is a life-force that rises from the subconscious and, if denied the light of guidance by the reason, can be driven only by dark massive forces which are powerful but dangerous for the race because they are alien to the conscious evolution of which man is the trustee and bearer.

It is not in this direction that evolutionary Nature has pointed mankind; this is a reversion towards something that she had left behind her.

Another solution that is attempted reposes still on the materialistic reason and a unified organisation of the economic life of the race; but the method that is being employed is the same, a forced compression and imposed unanimity of mind and life and a mechanical organisation of the communal existence. A unanimity of this kind can only be maintained by a compression of all freedom of thought and life, and that must bring about either the efficient stability of a termite civilisation or a drying up of the springs of life and a swift or slow decadence. It is through the growth of consciousness that the collective soul and its life can become aware of itself and develop; the free play of mind and life is essential for the growth of consciousness: for mind and life are the soul's only instrumentation until a higher instrumentation develops; they must not be inhibited in their action or rendered rigid, unplastic and unprogressive. The difficulties or disorders engendered by the growth of the individual mind and life cannot be healthily removed by the suppression of the individual; the true cure can only be achieved by his progression to a greater consciousness in which he is fulfilled and perfected.

An alternative solution is the development of an enlightened reason and will of the normal man consenting to a new socialised life in which he will subordinate his ego for the sake of the right arrangement of the life of the community. If we inquire how this radical change is to be brought about, two agencies seem to be suggested, the agency of a greater and better mental knowledge, right ideas, right information, right training of the social and civic individual and the agency of a new social machinery which will solve everything by the magic of the social machine cutting humanity into a better pattern. But it has not been found in experience, whatever might have once been hoped, that education and intellectual training by itself can change man; it only provides the human individual and collective ego with better information and a more efficient machinery for its self-affirmation, but leaves it the same unchanged human ego. Nor

can human mind and life be cut into perfection — even into what is thought to be perfection, a constructed substitute, — by any kind of social machinery; matter can be so cut, thought can be so cut, but in our human existence matter and thought are only instruments for the soul and the life-force. Machinery cannot form the soul and life-force into standardised shapes; it can at best coerce them, make soul and mind inert and stationary and regulate the life's outward action; but if this is to be effectively done, coercion and compression of the mind and life are indispensable and that again spells either unprogressive stability or decadence. The reasoning mind with its logical practicality has no other way of getting the better of Nature's ambiguous and complex movements than a regulation and mechanisation of mind and life. If that is done, the soul of humanity will either have to recover its freedom and growth by a revolt and a destruction of the machine into whose grip it has been cast or escape by a withdrawal into itself and a rejection of life. Man's true way out is to discover his soul and its self-force and instrumentation and replace by it both the mechanisation of mind and the ignorance and disorder of life-nature. But there would be little room and freedom for such a movement of self-discovery and self-effectuation in a closely regulated and mechanised social existence.

There is the possibility that in the swing back from a mechanistic idea of life and society the human mind may seek refuge in a return to the religious idea and a society governed or sanctioned by religion. But organised religion, though it can provide a means of inner uplift for the individual and preserve in it or behind it a way for his opening to spiritual experience, has not changed human life and society; it could not do so because, in governing society, it had to compromise with the lower parts of life and could not insist on the inner change of the whole being; it could insist only on a credal adherence, a formal acceptance of its ethical standards and a conformity to institution, ceremony and ritual. Religion so conceived can give a religio-ethical colour or surface tinge, — sometimes, if it maintains a strong kernel of inner experience, it can generalise to some extent an incomplete spiritual tendency; but it does not transform the race, it cannot

create a new principle of the human existence. A total spiritual direction given to the whole life and the whole nature can alone lift humanity beyond itself. Another possible conception akin to the religious solution is the guidance of society by men of spiritual attainment, the brotherhood or unity of all in the faith or in the discipline, the spiritualisation of life and society by the taking up of the old machinery of life into such a unification or inventing a new machinery. This too has been attempted before without success; it was the original founding idea of more than one religion: but the human ego and vital nature were too strong for a religious idea working on the mind and by the mind to overcome its resistance. It is only the full emergence of the soul, the full descent of the native light and power of the Spirit and the consequent replacement or transformation and uplifting of our insufficient mental and vital nature by a spiritual and supramental supernature that can effect this evolutionary miracle.

At first sight this insistence on a radical change of nature might seem to put off all the hope of humanity to a distant evolutionary future; for the transcendence of our normal human nature, a transcendence of our mental, vital and physical being, has the appearance of an endeavour too high and difficult and at present, for man as he is, impossible. Even if it were so, it would still remain the sole possibility for the transmutation of life; for to hope for a true change of human life without a change of human nature is an irrational and unspiritual proposition; it is to ask for something unnatural and unreal, an impossible miracle. But what is demanded by this change is not something altogether distant, alien to our existence and radically impossible; for what has to be developed is there in our being and not something outside it: what evolutionary Nature presses for, is an awakening to the knowledge of self, the discovery of self, the manifestation of the self and spirit within us and the release of its self-knowledge, its self-power, its native self-instrumentation. It is, besides, a step for which the whole of evolution has been a preparation and which is brought closer at each crisis of human destiny when the mental and vital evolution of the being touches

a point where intellect and vital force reach some acme of tension and there is a need either for them to collapse, to sink back into a torpor of defeat or a repose of unprogressive quiescence or to rend their way through the veil against which they are straining. What is necessary is that there should be a turn in humanity felt by some or many towards the vision of this change, a feeling of its imperative need, the sense of its possibility, the will to make it possible in themselves and to find the way. That trend is not absent and it must increase with the tension of the crisis in human world-destiny; the need of an escape or a solution, the feeling that there is no other solution than the spiritual cannot but grow and become more imperative under the urgency of critical circumstance. To that call in the being there must always be some answer in the Divine Reality and in Nature.

The answer might, indeed, be only individual; it might result in a multiplication of spiritualised individuals or even, conceivably though not probably, a gnostic individual or individuals isolated in the unspiritualised mass of humanity. Such isolated realised beings must either withdraw into their secret divine kingdom and guard themselves in a spiritual solitude or act from their inner light on mankind for what little can be prepared in such conditions for a happier future. The inner change can begin to take shape in a collective form only if the gnostic individual finds others who have the same kind of inner life as himself and can form with them a group with its own autonomous existence or else a separate community or order of beings with its own inner law of life. It is this need of a separate life with its own rule of living adapted to the inner power or motive force of the spiritual existence and creating for it its native atmosphere that has expressed itself in the past in the formation of the monastic life or in attempts of various kinds at a new separate collective living self-governed and other in its spiritual principle than the ordinary human life. The monastic life is in its nature an association of other-worldly seekers, men whose whole attempt is to find and realise in themselves the spiritual reality and who form their common existence by rules of living which help them in that endeavour. It is not usually an effort to create a new

life-formation which will exceed the ordinary human society and create a new world-order. A religion may hold that eventual prospect before it or attempt some first approach to it, or a mental idealism may make the same endeavour. But these attempts have always been overcome by the persistent in-consciousness and ignorance of our human vital nature; for that nature is an obstacle which no mere idealism or incomplete spiritual aspiration can change in its recalcitrant mass or permanently dominate. Either the endeavour fails by its own imperfection or it is invaded by the imperfection of the outside world and sinks from the shining height of its aspiration to something mixed and inferior on the ordinary human level. A common spiritual life meant to express the spiritual and not the mental, vital and physical being must found and maintain itself on greater values than the mental, vital, physical values of the ordinary human society; if it is not so founded, it will be merely the normal human society with a difference. An entirely new consciousness in many individuals transforming their whole being, transforming their mental, vital and physical nature-self, is needed for the new life to appear; only such a transformation of the general mind, life, body nature can bring into being a new worthwhile collective existence. The evolutionary nisus must tend not merely to create a new type of mental beings but another order of beings who have raised their whole existence from our present mentalised animality to a greater spiritual level of the earth-nature.

Any such complete transformation of the earth-life in a number of human beings could not establish itself altogether at once; even when the turning-point has been reached, the decisive line crossed, the new life in its beginnings would have to pass through a period of ordeal and arduous development. A general change from the old consciousness taking up the whole life into the spiritual principle would be the necessary first step; the preparation for this might be long and the transformation itself once begun proceed by stages. In the individual it might after a certain point be rapid and even effect itself by a bound, an evolutionary saltus; but an individual transformation would not be the creation of a new type of beings or a new collective life.

One might conceive of a number of individuals thus evolving separately in the midst of the old life and then joining together to establish the nucleus of the new existence. But it is not likely that Nature would operate in this fashion, and it would be difficult for the individual to arrive at a complete change while still enclosed in the life of the lower nature. At a certain stage it might be necessary to follow the age-long device of the separate community, but with a double purpose, first to provide a secure atmosphere, a place and life apart, in which the consciousness of the individual might concentrate on its evolution in surroundings where all was turned and centred towards the one endeavour and, next, when things were ready, to formulate and develop the new life in those surroundings and in this prepared spiritual atmosphere. It might be that, in such a concentration of effort, all the difficulties of the change would present themselves with a concentrated force; for each seeker, carrying in himself the possibilities but also the imperfections of a world that has to be transformed, would bring in not only his capacities but his difficulties and the oppositions of the old nature and, mixed together in the restricted circle of a small and close common life, these might assume a considerably enhanced force of obstruction which would tend to counterbalance the enhanced power and concentration of the forces making for the evolution. This is a difficulty that has broken in the past all the efforts of mental man to evolve something better and more true and harmonious than the ordinary mental and vital life. But if Nature is ready and has taken her evolutionary decision or if the power of the Spirit descending from the higher planes is sufficiently strong, the difficulty would be overcome and a first evolutionary formation or formations would be possible.

But if an entire reliance upon the guiding Light and Will and a luminous expression of the truth of the Spirit in life are to be the law, that would seem to presuppose a gnostic world, a world in which the consciousness of all its beings was founded on this basis; there it can be understood that the life-interchange of gnostic individuals in a gnostic community or communities would be by its very nature an understanding and harmonious

process. But here, actually, there would be a life of gnostic beings proceeding within or side by side with a life of beings in the Ignorance, attempting to emerge in it or out of it, and yet the law of the two lives would seem to be contrary and to offend against each other. A complete seclusion or separation of the life of a spiritual community from the life of the Ignorance would then seem to impose itself: for otherwise a compromise between the two lives would be necessary and with the compromise a danger of contamination or incompleteness of the greater existence; two different and incompatible principles of existence would be in contact and, even though the greater would influence the lesser, the smaller life would also have its effect on the greater, since such mutual impact is the law of all contiguity and interchange. It might even be questioned whether conflict and collision would not be the first rule of their relation, since in the life of the Ignorance there is present and active the formidable influence of those forces of Darkness, supporters of evil and violence, whose interest it is to contaminate or destroy all higher Light that enters into the human existence. An opposition and intolerance or even a persecution of all that is new or tries to rise above or break away from the established order of the human Ignorance, or if it is victorious, an intrusion of the lower forces into it, an acceptance by the world more dangerous than its opposition, and in the end an extinction, a lowering or a contamination of the new principle of life, have been a frequent phenomenon of the past; that opposition might be still more violent and a frustration might be still more likely if a radically new light or new power were to claim the earth for its heritage. But it is to be supposed that the new and completer light would bring also a new and completer power. It might not be necessary for it to be entirely separate; it might establish itself in so many islets and from there spread through the old life, throwing out upon it its own influences and filtrations, gaining upon it, bringing to it a help and illumination which a new aspiration in mankind might after a time begin to understand and welcome.

But these are evidently problems of the transition, of the evolution before the full and victorious reversal of the manifesting

Force has taken place and the life of the gnostic being becomes as much as that of the mental being an established part of the terrestrial world-order. If we suppose the gnostic consciousness to be established in the earth-life, the power and knowledge at its disposal would be much greater than the power and knowledge of mental man, and the life of a community of gnostic beings, supposing it to be separate, would be as safe against attack as the organised life of man against any attack by a lower species. But as this knowledge and the very principle of the gnostic nature would ensure a luminous unity in the common life of gnostic beings, so also it would be sufficient to ensure a dominating harmony and reconciliation between the two types of life. The influence of the supramental principle on earth would fall upon the life of the Ignorance and impose harmony on it within its limits. It is conceivable that the gnostic life would be separate, but it would surely admit within its borders as much of human life as was turned towards spirituality and in progress towards the heights; the rest might organise itself mainly on the mental principle and on the old foundations, but, helped and influenced by a recognisable greater knowledge, it would be likely to do so on lines of a completer harmonisation of which the human collectivity is not yet capable. Here also, however, the mind can only forecast probabilities and possibilities; the supramental principle in Supernature would itself determine according to the truth of things the balance of a new world-order.

A gnostic Supernature transcends all the values of our normal ignorant Nature; our standards and values are created by ignorance and therefore cannot determine the life of Supernature. At the same time our present nature is a derivation from Supernature and is not a pure ignorance but a half-knowledge; it is therefore reasonable to suppose that whatever spiritual truth there is in or behind its standards and values will reappear in the higher life, not as standards, but as elements transformed, uplifted out of the ignorance and raised into the true harmony of a more luminous existence. As the universalised spiritual individual sheds the limited personality, the ego, as he rises beyond mind to a completer knowledge in Supernature, the conflicting

ideals of the mind must fall away from him, but what is true behind them will remain in the life of Supernature. The gnostic consciousness is a consciousness in which all contradictions are cancelled or fused into each other in a higher light of seeing and being, in a unified self-knowledge and world-knowledge. The gnostic being will not accept the mind's ideals and standards; he will not be moved to live for himself, for his ego, or for humanity or for others or for the community or for the State; for he will be aware of something greater than these half-truths, of the Divine Reality, and it is for that he will live, for its will in himself and in all, in a spirit of large universality, in the light of the will of the Transcendence. For the same reason there can be no conflict between self-affirmation and altruism in the gnostic life, for the self of the gnostic being is one with the self of all,—no conflict between the ideal of individualism and the collective ideal, for both are terms of a greater Reality and only in so far as either expresses the Reality or their fulfilment serves the will of the Reality, can they have a value for his spirit. But at the same time what is true in the mental ideals and dimly figured in them will be fulfilled in his existence; for while his consciousness exceeds the human values so that he cannot substitute mankind or the community or the State or others or himself for God, the affirmation of the Divine in himself and a sense of the Divine in others and the sense of oneness with humanity, with all other beings, with all the world because of the Divine in them and a lead towards a greater and better affirmation of the growing Reality in them will be part of his life action. But what he shall do will be decided by the Truth of the Knowledge and Will in him, a total and infinite Truth that is not bound by any single mental law or standard but acts with freedom in the whole reality, with respect for each truth in its place and with a clear knowledge of the forces at work and the intention in the manifesting Divine Nisus at each step of cosmic evolution and in each event and circumstance.

All life for the achieved spiritual or gnostic consciousness must be the manifestation of the realised truth of spirit; only what can transform itself and find its own spiritual self in that

greater Truth and fuse itself into its harmony can be accorded a life-acceptance. What will so survive the mind cannot determine, for the supramental gnosis will itself bring down its own truth and that truth will take up whatever of itself has been put forth in our ideals and realisations of mind and life and body. The forms it has taken there may not survive, for they are not likely to be suitable without change or replacement in the new existence; but what is real and abiding in them or even in their forms will undergo the transformation necessary for survival. Much that is normal to human life would disappear. In the light of gnosis the many mental idols, constructed principles and systems, conflicting ideals which man has created in all domains of his mind and life, could command no acceptance or reverence; only the truth, if any, which these specious images conceal, could have a chance of entry as elements of a harmony founded on a much wider basis. It is evident that in a life governed by the gnostic consciousness war with its spirit of antagonism and enmity, its brutality, destruction and ignorant violence, political strife with its perpetual conflict, frequent oppression, dishonesties, turpitudes, selfish interests, its ignorance, ineptitude and muddle could have no ground for existence. The arts and the crafts would exist, not for any inferior mental or vital amusement, entertainment of leisure and relieving excitement or pleasure, but as expressions and means of the truth of the spirit and the beauty and delight of existence. Life and the body would be no longer tyrannous masters demanding nine tenths of existence for their satisfaction, but means and powers for the expression of the spirit. At the same time, since matter and the body are accepted, the control and the right use of physical things would be a part of the realised life of the spirit in the manifestation in earth-nature.

It is almost universally supposed that spiritual life must necessarily be a life of ascetic spareness, a pushing away of all that is not absolutely needed for the bare maintenance of the body; and this is valid for a spiritual life which is in its nature and intention a life of withdrawal from life. Even apart from that ideal, it might be thought that the spiritual turn must always make for

an extreme simplicity, because all else would be a life of vital desire and physical self-indulgence. But from a wider standpoint this is a mental standard based on the law of the Ignorance of which desire is the motive; to overcome the Ignorance, to delete the ego, a total rejection not only of desire but of all the things that can satisfy desire may intervene as a valid principle. But this standard or any mental standard cannot be absolute nor can it be binding as a law on the consciousness that has arisen above desire; a complete purity and self-mastery would be in the very grain of its nature and that would remain the same in poverty or in riches: for if it could be shaken or sullied by either, it would not be real or would not be complete. The one rule of the gnostic life would be the self-expression of the Spirit, the will of the Divine Being; that will, that self-expression could manifest through extreme simplicity or through extreme complexity and opulence or in their natural balance,—for beauty and plenitude, a hidden sweetness and laughter in things, a sunshine and gladness of life are also powers and expressions of the Spirit. In all directions the Spirit within determining the law of the nature would determine the frame of the life and its detail and circumstance. In all there would be the same plastic principle; a rigid standardisation, however necessary for the mind's arrangement of things, could not be the law of the spiritual life. A great diversity and liberty of self-expression based on an underlying unity might well become manifest; but everywhere there would be harmony and truth of order.

A life of gnostic beings carrying the evolution to a higher supramental status might fitly be characterised as a divine life; for it would be a life in the Divine, a life of the beginnings of a spiritual divine light and power and joy manifested in material Nature. That might be described, since it surpasses the mental human level, as a life of spiritual and supramental supermanhood. But this must not be confused with past and present ideas of supermanhood; for supermanhood in the mental idea consists of an overtopping of the normal human level, not in kind but in degree of the same kind, by an enlarged personality, a magnified and exaggerated ego, an increased power of mind, an

increased power of vital force, a refined or dense and massive exaggeration of the forces of the human Ignorance; it carries also, commonly implied in it, the idea of a forceful domination over humanity by the superman. That would mean a supermanhood of the Nietzschean type; it might be at its worst the reign of the "blonde beast" or the dark beast or of any and every beast, a return to barbaric strength and ruthlessness and force: but this would be no evolution, it would be a reversion to an old strenuous barbarism. Or it might signify the emergence of the Rakshasa or Asura out of a tense effort of humanity to surpass and transcend itself, but in the wrong direction. A violent and turbulent exaggerated vital ego satisfying itself with a supreme tyrannous or anarchic strength of self-fulfilment would be the type of a Rakshasic supermanhood: but the giant, the ogre or devourer of the world, the Rakshasa, though he still survives, belongs in spirit to the past; a larger emergence of that type would be also a retrograde evolution. A mighty exhibition of an overpowering force, a self-possessed, self-held, even, it may be, an ascetically self-restrained mind-capacity and life-power, strong, calm or cold or formidable in collected vehemence, subtle, dominating, a sublimation at once of the mental and vital ego, is the type of the Asura. But earth has had enough of this kind in her past and its repetition can only prolong the old lines; she can get no true profit for her future, no power of self-exceeding, from the Titan, the Asura: even a great or supernormal power in it could only carry her on larger circles of her old orbit. But what has to emerge is something much more difficult and much more simple; it is a self-realised being, a building of the spiritual self, an intensity and urge of the soul and the deliverance and sovereignty of its light and power and beauty,—not an egoistic supermanhood seizing on a mental and vital domination over humanity, but the sovereignty of the Spirit over its own instruments, its possession of itself and its possession of life in the power of the spirit, a new consciousness in which humanity itself shall find its own self-exceeding and self-fulfilment by the revelation of the divinity that is striving for birth within it. This is the sole true supermanhood and the

one real possibility of a step forward in evolutionary Nature.

This new status would indeed be a reversal of the present law of human consciousness and life, for it would reverse the whole principle of the life of the Ignorance. It is for the taste of the Ignorance, its surprise and adventure, one might say, that the soul has descended into the Inconscience and assumed the disguise of Matter, for the adventure and the joy of creation and discovery, an adventure of the spirit, an adventure of the mind and life and the hazardous surprises of their working in Matter, for the discovery and conquest of the new and the unknown; all this constitutes the enterprise of life and all this, it might seem, would cease with the cessation of the Ignorance. Man's life is made up of the light and the darkness, the gains and losses, the difficulties and dangers, the pleasures and pains of the Ignorance, a play of colours moving on a soil of the general neutrality of Matter which has as its basis the nescience and insensibility of the Inconscient. To the normal life-being an existence without the reactions of success and frustration, vital joy and grief, peril and passion, pleasure and pain, the vicissitudes and uncertainties of fate and struggle and battle and endeavour, a joy of novelty and surprise and creation projecting itself into the unknown, might seem to be void of variety and therefore void of vital savour. Any life surpassing these things tends to appear to it as something featureless and empty or cast in the figure of an immutable sameness; the human mind's picture of heaven is the incessant repetition of an eternal monotone. But this is a misconception; for an entry into the gnostic consciousness would be an entry into the Infinite. It would be a self-creation bringing out the Infinite infinitely into form of being, and the interest of the Infinite is much greater and multitudinous as well as more imperishably delightful than the interest of the finite. The evolution in the Knowledge would be a more beautiful and glorious manifestation with more vistas ever unfolding themselves and more intensive in all ways than any evolution could be in the Ignorance. The delight of the Spirit is ever new, the forms of beauty it takes innumerable, its godhead ever young and the taste of delight, *rasa*, of the Infinite eternal and inexhaustible. The

gnostic manifestation of life would be more full and fruitful and its interest more vivid than the creative interest of the Ignorance; it would be a greater and happier constant miracle.

If there is an evolution in material Nature and if it is an evolution of being with consciousness and life as its two key-terms and powers, this fullness of being, fullness of consciousness, fullness of life must be the goal of development towards which we are tending and which will manifest at an early or later stage of our destiny. The self, the spirit, the reality that is disclosing itself out of the first inconscience of life and matter, would evolve its complete truth of being and consciousness in that life and matter. It would return to itself—or, if its end as an individual is to return into its Absolute, it could make that return also,—not through a frustration of life but through a spiritual completeness of itself in life. Our evolution in the Ignorance with its chequered joy and pain of self-discovery and world-discovery, its half fulfilments, its constant finding and missing, is only our first state. It must lead inevitably towards an evolution in the Knowledge, a self-finding and self-unfolding of the Spirit, a self-revelation of the Divinity in things in that true power of itself in Nature which is to us still a Supernature.

THE END

Note on the Text

THE LIFE DIVINE first appeared in fifty-four monthly instalments in the philosophical review *Arya* between August 1914 and January 1919. Each instalment was written immediately before its publication.

Sri Aurobindo did not do any work for *The Life Divine* as we know it before June 1914; but between 1912 and the early part of 1914, he wrote three incomplete drafts of a commentary on the Isha Upanishad that he called “The Life Divine”. Each of these drafts contains long discussions of philosophical issues. In August 1914, along with the first chapter of *The Life Divine*, he published the first instalment of a translation and analysis of the Isha Upanishad. From this point on, he kept his Upanishadic interpretation separate from his original philosophical writing. In writing *The Life Divine* he only occasionally made reference to the Upanishads and other Vedantic texts. He put the heading “Book I / The Affirmations of Vedanta” above the title of the first chapter in the *Arya*, but made no mention of this division in subsequent chapters. Elsewhere he acknowledged his indebtedness to the Vedantic tradition while at the same time affirming that his philosophy owed more to inner experience than to the reading of texts:

My philosophy was formed first by study of the Upanishads and the Gita; the Veda came later. They were the basis of my first practice of Yoga; I tried to realise what I read in my spiritual experience and succeeded; in fact I was never satisfied till experience came and it was on this experience that later on I founded my philosophy. . . . The other source of my philosophy was the knowledge that flowed from above when I sat in meditation, especially from the level of the Higher Mind when I reached that level. . . . This source was exceedingly catholic and many-sided and all sorts of ideas came in which might have belonged to conflicting philosophies but they were here reconciled in a large synthetic whole.

Between 1921 and 1939, Sri Aurobindo undertook the revision of chapters of *The Life Divine* on two occasions. He did this work

(1) on pages torn from copies of the *Arya* and (2) in his bound set of the journal. In both cases he lightly revised selected chapters. All told, thirty of the first thirty-two *Arya* chapters received some revision. But he did not consult this work when, in the beginning of 1939, he began a systematic revision of the entire *Life Divine* with a view to bringing it out as a book. This revision work is described below.

The revised *Life Divine* was published in two Volumes in 1939 and 1940 by the Arya Publishing House, Calcutta. It should be noted that these "Volumes" were the two main structural divisions of the work; the same divisions are now called "Books". The 1939–40 edition of *The Life Divine* consisted of three physical volumes, one for "Volume I" (Book One) and two for "Volume II" (Book Two). Subsequent editions of the work were published sometimes in two physical volumes and sometimes in one.

The revision of the two Volumes (Books) will be considered separately.

THE REVISION OF VOLUME I (BOOK ONE)

"Volume I" (Book One) of the *The Life Divine*, "Thoroughly Revised and Enlarged", was published in November 1939. It consists of twenty-eight chapters. The first twenty-seven correspond to the first twenty-seven chapters of the *Arya* text; the twenty-eighth was newly written in 1939. The revision was carried out in two stages. First, at some point (possibly before 1939), Sri Aurobindo made some changes on a typed copy of the *Arya* text.¹ These changes were transferred from the typed copy to the galley proofs by his secretary. Sri Aurobindo then made further changes directly on the proofs. The chapters that were revised in this way do not differ substantially from the *Arya* text. The only chapters of Volume I (Book One) that received extensive revision are XIX, "Life", and XXIII, "The Double Soul in Man". In each of these chapters, Sri Aurobindo made fairly substantial alterations to the existing text, and also wrote a long addition (two printed pages in XIX, six in XXIII). It would appear that he wrote the new chapter, XXVIII,

¹ It is interesting to note that this revision work was less extensive than the unused pre-1939 revision work referred to above.

after completing his revision of the twenty-seven existing chapters. He corrected chapters XIX, XXIII and XXVIII along with the other chapters when he saw the page proofs.

In December 1940, after he had completed the recasting of Volume II (Book Two), Sri Aurobindo expressed some dissatisfaction with the revision of the earlier Volume. "If I had to write the first volume of *The Life Divine* again", he is reported to have said, "I would add to it to make the argument more full."

THE REVISION OF VOLUME II (BOOK TWO)

Volume II (Book Two) of *The Life Divine*, "Recast and Enlarged", was published in July 1940. Sri Aurobindo's revision, which was far more extensive than that of Volume I, may be broken down into four operations: the revision of *Arya* chapters directly on pages from the *Arya*; the writing of new passages or new chapters; the correction and further revision of successive typed copies of the revised or new chapters; and the correction and further revision of galley and page proofs. It is not possible to reconstruct the exact sequence in which he did this work, but it may be supposed that he began with the revision of the *Arya* chapters, taking them up more or less in order, and writing new material when required. His revision of typescripts had to wait until the various chapters were typed by his secretary. Once he had finished revising the typescripts, the manuscript was sent to the press in Calcutta, after which he revised the proofs.

In its recast form, Volume II (Book Two) consists of twenty-eight chapters. Sri Aurobindo numbered them in a single sequence but divided them into two parts, each of which contains fourteen chapters. In all, fourteen of the twenty-eight chapters correspond to a single *Arya* chapter, two include material from two *Arya* chapters, while twelve chapters were newly written. See Tables I and II.

The sixteen chapters that correspond to *Arya* chapters may be placed in two categories: (1) those that are made up entirely of *Arya* material, revised and enlarged; (2) those that are made up partly of revised *Arya* material and partly of new material. The newly written chapters stand apart as a separate category (3). (In Tables I and II these three categories are indicated by superscript numbers 1, 2 and

3.) The chapters falling in each of these categories will be considered separately.

(1) *Revised Arya Chapters*

Twelve chapters in the revised edition correspond to chapters in the *Arya*, namely revised chapters III, IV, VII, VIII, IX, XI, XII, XIII, XVII, XVIII, XIX and XX. Sri Aurobindo began work on these chapters by writing corrections and additions, some of them lengthy, on pages from the *Arya*. Occasionally he deleted paragraphs, longer passages or entire pages. Once he had completed a chapter, he gave it to his secretary for typing. When he got the typescript back, he made further revisions, particularly to passages that had been heavily revised or newly written during the earlier stage. The final manuscript of certain chapters that had received little revision was typed directly from the first revised typescript. In other cases, one or more intermediate typescripts were prepared and revised before the final form was reached.

Of the twelve chapters under consideration, III, VIII and IX are the least revised; IV, VII, XI, XII, XIII, XVII, XIX and XX are quite heavily revised, though they still follow the general structure of the corresponding *Arya* chapters; and XVIII is so thoroughly revised that it may be considered to be practically rewritten.

(2) *Partly New Chapters*

Four chapters in the revised edition, XV, XVI, XXI and XXII, consist of a combination of material from the *Arya*, revised in the manner described above, and entirely new material composed in the manner described below. The mode of combination differs from case to case. Chapters XVI and XXII each started as a single *Arya* chapter, to which was added an approximately equal amount of new material in such a way that the original structure of the chapter was preserved to a great extent. Chapters XV and XXI were composed of revised passages from a single *Arya* chapter (in the first case) or two *Arya* chapters (in the second case), which were combined with newly written material in such a way that the *Arya* material was absorbed in the new structure. The revision of the *Arya* portions of Chapter XXI was so extensive,

and their integration with the new material so thorough, that it may almost be considered a new chapter.

(3) *New Chapters*

Twelve chapters in the revised version are, from the point of view of composition, entirely new. These new chapters are I, II, V, VI, X, XIV and the last six: XXIII to XXVIII. Sri Aurobindo wrote the first drafts on loose sheets of bond paper. His handwriting flows on with little sign of hesitation; there are few cancellations and hardly any rewording of sentences. At times, however, he cancelled and rewrote whole passages, or left off work and recommenced on a different sheet of paper. Often he proceeded fairly continuously from the beginning of the chapter to the end. In other cases, however, he wrote and revised two or more parts of a chapter separately and then combined them, or else wrote and revised a draft and then integrated it in a longer draft that widened the scope of the chapter. Once a chapter had reached its full extent, it was typed for further revision. At this point, he often introduced stylistic changes, as well as new ideas. The process of typing and revision was generally repeated two or three times.

The twelve new chapters appear to have been written from scratch without any direct reference to material in the *Arya*. It is worth noting, however, that some new chapters have titles very similar to those of *Arya* chapters, and deal with similar themes. The clearest of such correspondences are between new Chapter XXIII, “Man and the Evolution”, and *Arya* Chapter XXXVI, “Man and the Evolutionary Movement”; and between new Chapter XXVII, “The Gnostic Being”, and *Arya* Chapters LI and LII, “The Necessity of the Gnostic Being” and “The Spiritual Gnostic Being”. When setting aside *Arya* Chapter XL, “The Fundamental Character of the Ignorance”, Sri Aurobindo wrote a note to his secretary indicating that it was to be replaced by a new chapter (later expanded into two chapters, V and VI). But in all these cases, the new chapters do not have any obvious verbal relationship to the ones they replaced.

MOTTOES

All chapters of the revised edition of *The Life Divine* have, below the title, translated quotations from the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita and other Sanskrit texts. Sri Aurobindo called these quotations "mottoes". The mottoes for the chapters making up Volume I (Book One) are for the most part the same as those that had appeared in the corresponding *Arya* chapters. Of the chapters making up Volume II (Book Two), only VII, IX, XVI and XVIII retain mottoes that had appeared in the *Arya*. All the other mottoes in Volume II were selected by Sri Aurobindo from a collection prepared for the purpose by A. B. Purani. Sri Aurobindo chose texts from Purani's collection and translated them into English.

PRINTING HISTORY AFTER 1940

A second edition of "Volume I", lightly revised by the author, was published by the Arya Publishing House in 1943. A second edition of "Volume II" was brought out (in one physical volume) by the same publisher in 1944. A third edition of "Volume I" came out in 1947.

In 1955, a fourth Indian edition of *The Life Divine* was published by the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education in one physical volume. This edition was reprinted in 1960. A fifth edition was brought out in 1970 by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram as part of the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library. This edition was reprinted twelve times between 1970 and 1997, sometimes in two and sometimes in one physical volume. In the impressions of 1977 and 1980, the editors introduced a few corrections of obvious typographical and other errors. The impression of 1982 incorporated several revisions that Sri Aurobindo had made in his copy of the first edition, which had only recently come to light. In 2001 a sixth edition, based on the fifth edition but freshly typeset and with a new pagination, was published by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

A one-volume edition of *The Life Divine* was brought out by the Sri Aurobindo Library, New York, in 1949. In this first American edition the two "Volumes" were called "Books". (This change of the name of the primary structural division of *The Life Divine* was adopted

in the fifth Indian edition and retained in all subsequent editions including the present one.) This edition was reprinted in 1951 and 1965. A second American edition was published by the Lotus Light Press in 1990. This edition was reprinted in 1994 and 2000.

THE PRESENT EDITION

The present, seventh, Indian edition is issued as volumes 21 and 22 of THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO. The text has been checked against all editions published before 1950 and, when necessary, the original manuscripts.

TABLE I. Chapters XXVIII–LIII in the *Arya*
with corresponding chapters in the 1940 edition of Book Two

Ch. no. in <i>Arya</i>	Title in <i>Arya</i>	Ch. no. in 1940
XXVIII	The Knowledge and the Ignorance	VII ¹
XXIX	Memory, Self-Consciousness and the Ignorance	VIII ¹
XXX	Memory, Ego and Self-Experience	IX ¹
XXXI	The Boundaries of the Ignorance	XI ¹
XXXII	The Integral Knowledge	XV ²
XXXIII	The Progress to Knowledge	XVII ¹
XXXIV	Knowledge and Immortality	—
XXXV,1-2	The Eternal and the Individual	III ¹
XXXVI	Man and the Evolutionary Movement	—
XXXVII,1-2	From the Undivine to the Divine	IV ¹
XXXVIII	The Ascent and its Downward Eye	XVIII ¹
XXXIX	The Ascent out of the Ignorance	XIX ¹
XL	The Fundamental Character of the Ignorance	—
XLI	The Origin of the Ignorance	XII ¹
XLII	Exclusive Concentration of Tapas	XIII ¹
XLIII	The Order of the Worlds	XXI ²
XLIV	Rebirth	XX ¹
XLVI [sic]	The Philosophy of Rebirth	XX ¹
XLVII	Rebirth and Other Worlds	XXI ² , XXII ²
XLVIII	The Crown of Rebirth	—
XLIX	The Metaphysical Basis of the Divine Life	—
L	The Four Theories of Existence	XVI ²
LI	The Necessity of the Gnostic Being	—
LII	The Spiritual Gnostic Being	—
LIII	Conclusion	—

¹ Revised form of a chapter originally published in the *Arya*.

² Chapter comprising revised *Arya* material as well as new material.

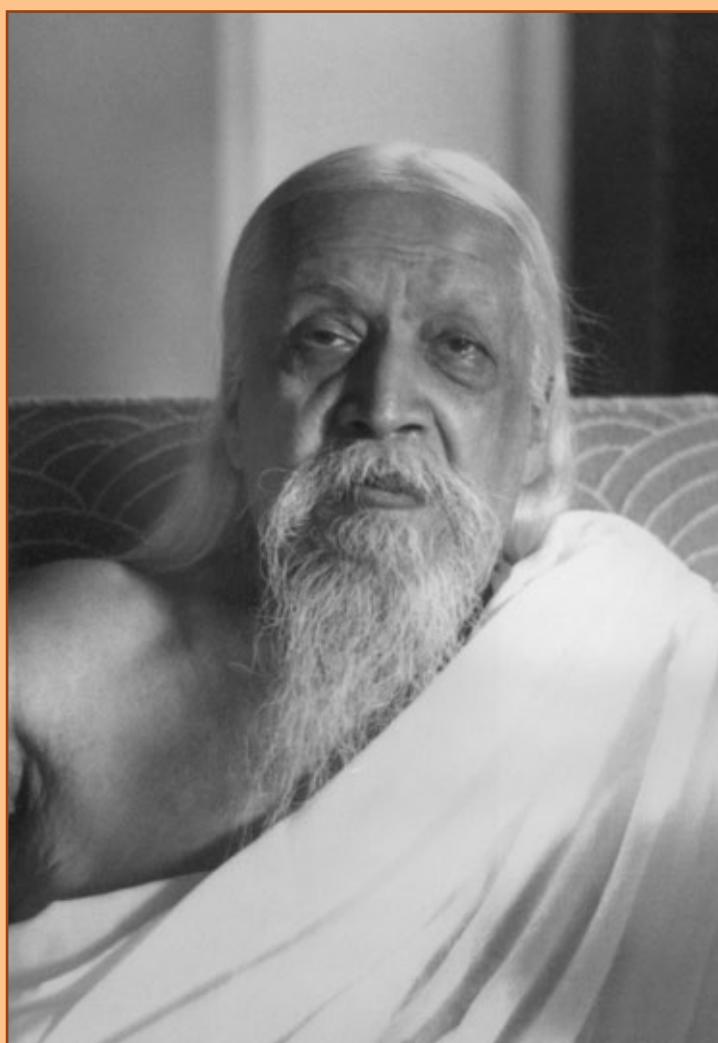
³ Entirely new chapter.

TABLE II. Chapters in the 1940 edition of Book Two
with corresponding *Arya* chapters

Ch. no. in 1940	Title in 1940	Ch. no. in <i>Arya</i>
I ³	Indeterminates, Cosmic Determinations and the Indeterminable	—
II ³	Brahman, Purusha, Ishwara — Maya, Prakriti, Shakti	—
III ¹	The Eternal and the Individual	XXXV
IV ¹	The Divine and the Undivine	XXXVII
V ³	The Cosmic Illusion; Mind, Dream and Hallucination	—
VI ³	Reality and the Cosmic Illusion	—
VII ¹	The Knowledge and the Ignorance	XXVIII
VIII ¹	Memory, Self-Consciousness and the Ignorance	XXIX
IX ¹	Memory, Ego and Self-Experience	XXX
X ³	Knowledge by Identity and Separative Knowledge	—
XI ¹	The Boundaries of the Ignorance	XXXI
XII ¹	The Origin of the Ignorance	XLI
XIII ¹	Exclusive Concentration of Consciousness-Force and the Ignorance	XLII
XIV ³	The Origin and Remedy of Falsehood, Error, Wrong and Evil	—
XV ²	Reality and the Integral Knowledge	XXXII
XVI ²	The Integral Knowledge and the Aim of Life; Four Theories of Existence	L
XVII ¹	The Progress to Knowledge — God, Man and Nature	XXXIII
XVIII ¹	The Evolutionary Process — Ascent and Integration	XXXVIII
XIX ¹	Out of the Sevenfold Ignorance towards the Sevenfold Knowledge	XXXIX
XX ¹	The Philosophy of Rebirth	XLIV & XLVI
XXI ²	The Order of the Worlds	XLIII & XLVII
XXII ²	Rebirth and Other Worlds; Karma, the Soul and Immortality	XLVII
XXIII ³	Man and the Evolution	—
XXIV ³	The Evolution of the Spiritual Man	—
XXV ³	The Triple Transformation	—
XXVI ³	The Ascent towards Supermind	—
XXVII ³	The Gnostic Being	—
XXVIII ³	The Divine Life	—

23-24

The Synthesis of Yoga



Sri Aurobindo

VOLUMES 23 and 24
THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO
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The Synthesis of Yoga

Publisher's Note

The Synthesis of Yoga first appeared serially in the monthly review *Arya* between August 1914 and January 1921. Each instalment was written immediately before its publication. The work was left incomplete when the *Arya* was discontinued. Sri Aurobindo never attempted to complete the *Synthesis*; he did, however, lightly revise the Introduction, thoroughly revise all of Part I, “The Yoga of Divine Works”, and significantly revise several chapters of Part II, “The Yoga of Integral Knowledge”. More than thirty years elapsed between the first appearance of the *Synthesis* in the *Arya* and the final stages of its incomplete revision. As a result, there are some differences of terminology between the revised and unrevised portions of the book.

In 1948 the chapters making up “The Yoga of Divine Works” were published as a book by the Sri Aurobindo Library, Madras. No other part of *The Synthesis of Yoga* appeared in book-form during Sri Aurobindo’s lifetime. In 1955 an edition comprising the Introduction and four Parts was brought out by the Sri Aurobindo International University Centre. The present edition, which has been checked against all manuscripts and printed texts, includes for the first time the author’s revisions to the Introduction and Chapters XV–XVII of Part II, and an incomplete continuation of Part IV entitled “The Supramental Time Consciousness”.

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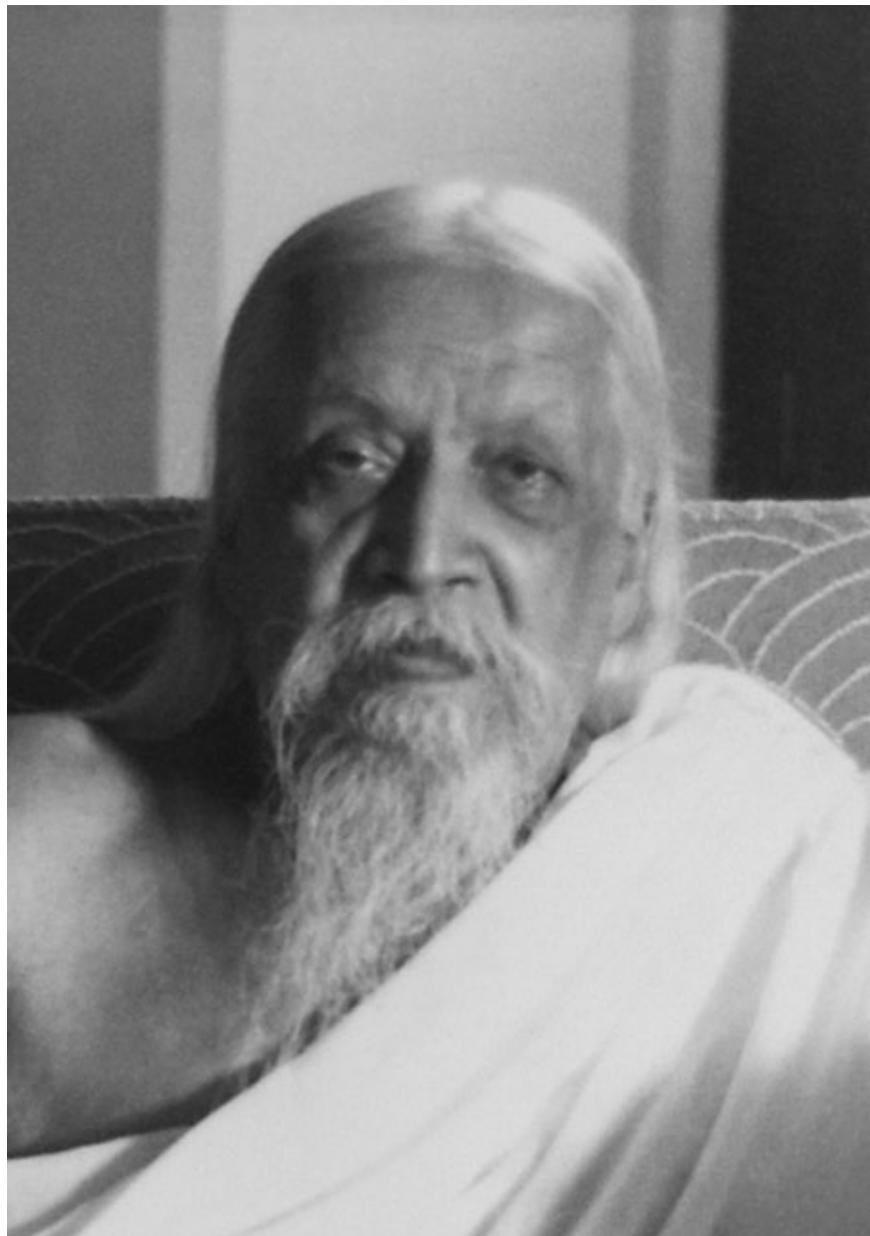
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The Synthesis of Yoga

“All life is Yoga.”



Sri Aurobindo in 1950

Introduction

The Conditions of the Synthesis

Chapter I

Life and Yoga

THREE are two necessities of Nature's workings which seem always to intervene in the greater forms of human activity, whether these belong to our ordinary fields of movement or seek those exceptional spheres and fulfilments which appear to us high and divine. Every such form tends towards a harmonised complexity and totality which again breaks apart into various channels of special effort and tendency, only to unite once more in a larger and more puissant synthesis. Secondly, development into forms is an imperative rule of effective manifestation; yet all truth and practice too strictly formulated becomes old and loses much, if not all, of its virtue; it must be constantly renovated by fresh streams of the spirit revivifying the dead or dying vehicle and changing it, if it is to acquire a new life. To be perpetually reborn is the condition of a material immortality. We are in an age, full of the throes of travail, when all forms of thought and activity that have in themselves any strong power of utility or any secret virtue of persistence are being subjected to a supreme test and given their opportunity of rebirth. The world today presents the aspect of a huge cauldron of Medea in which all things are being cast, shredded into pieces, experimented on, combined and recombined either to perish and provide the scattered material of new forms or to emerge rejuvenated and changed for a fresh term of existence. Indian Yoga, in its essence a special action or formulation of certain great powers of Nature, itself specialised, divided and variously formulated, is potentially one of these dynamic elements of the future life of humanity. The child of immemorial ages, preserved by its vitality and truth into our modern times, it is now emerging from the secret schools and ascetic retreats in which it had taken refuge and is seeking its place in the future sum of living human powers and utilities. But it has first to rediscover itself, bring to the surface

the profoundest reason of its being in that general truth and that unceasing aim of Nature which it represents, and find by virtue of this new self-knowledge and self-appreciation its own recovered and larger synthesis. Reorganising itself, it will enter more easily and powerfully into the reorganised life of the race which its processes claim to lead within into the most secret penetralia and upward to the highest altitudes of existence and personality.

In the right view both of life and of Yoga all life is either consciously or subconsciously a Yoga. For we mean by this term a methodised effort towards self-perfection by the expression of the secret potentialities latent in the being and — highest condition of victory in that effort — a union of the human individual with the universal and transcendent Existence we see partially expressed in man and in the Cosmos. But all life, when we look behind its appearances, is a vast Yoga of Nature who attempts in the conscious and the subconscious to realise her perfection in an ever-increasing expression of her yet unrealised potentialities and to unite herself with her own divine reality. In man, her thinker, she for the first time upon this Earth devises self-conscious means and willed arrangements of activity by which this great purpose may be more swiftly and puissantly attained. Yoga, as Swami Vivekananda has said, may be regarded as a means of compressing one's evolution into a single life or a few years or even a few months of bodily existence. A given system of Yoga, then, can be no more than a selection or a compression, into narrower but more energetic forms of intensity, of the general methods which are already being used loosely, largely, in a leisurely movement, with a profuser apparent waste of material and energy but with a more complete combination by the great Mother in her vast upward labour. It is this view of Yoga that can alone form the basis for a sound and rational synthesis of Yogic methods. For then Yoga ceases to appear something mystic and abnormal which has no relation to the ordinary processes of the World-Energy or the purpose she keeps in view in her two great movements of subjective and objective self-fulfilment; it reveals itself rather as an intense and exceptional use of powers that she has already manifested or is progressively

organising in her less exalted but more general operations.

Yogic methods have something of the same relation to the customary psychological workings of man as has the scientific handling of the force of electricity or of steam to their normal operations in Nature. And they, too, like the operations of Science, are formed upon a knowledge developed and confirmed by regular experiment, practical analysis and constant result. All Rajayoga, for instance, depends on this perception and experience that our inner elements, combinations, functions, forces, can be separated or dissolved, can be new-combined and set to novel and formerly impossible workings or can be transformed and resolved into a new general synthesis by fixed internal processes. Hathayoga similarly depends on this perception and experience that the vital forces and functions to which our life is normally subjected and whose ordinary operations seem set and indispensable, can be mastered and the operations changed or suspended with results that would otherwise be impossible and that seem miraculous to those who have not seized the rationale of their process. And if in some other of its forms this character of Yoga is less apparent, because they are more intuitive and less mechanical, nearer, like the Yoga of Devotion, to a supernal ecstasy or, like the Yoga of Knowledge, to a supernal infinity of consciousness and being, yet they too start from the use of some principal faculty in us by ways and for ends not contemplated in its everyday spontaneous workings. All methods grouped under the common name of Yoga are special psychological processes founded on a fixed truth of Nature and developing, out of normal functions, powers and results which were always latent but which her ordinary movements do not easily or do not often manifest.

But as in physical knowledge the multiplication of scientific processes has its disadvantages, as that tends, for instance, to develop a victorious artificiality which overwhelms our natural human life under a load of machinery and to purchase certain forms of freedom and mastery at the price of an increased servitude, so the preoccupation with Yogic processes and their exceptional results may have its disadvantages and losses. The

Yogin tends to draw away from the common existence and lose his hold upon it; he tends to purchase wealth of spirit by an impoverishment of his human activities, the inner freedom by an outer death. If he gains God, he loses life, or if he turns his efforts outward to conquer life, he is in danger of losing God. Therefore we see in India that a sharp incompatibility has been created between life in the world and spiritual growth and perfection, and although the tradition and ideal of a victorious harmony between the inner attraction and the outer demand remains, it is little or else very imperfectly exemplified. In fact, when a man turns his vision and energy inward and enters on the path of Yoga, he is popularly supposed to be lost inevitably to the great stream of our collective existence and the secular effort of humanity. So strongly has the idea prevailed, so much has it been emphasised by prevalent philosophies and religions that to escape from life is now commonly considered as not only the necessary condition, but the general object of Yoga. No synthesis of Yoga can be satisfying which does not, in its aim, reunite God and Nature in a liberated and perfected human life or, in its method, not only permit but favour the harmony of our inner and outer activities and experiences in the divine consummation of both. For man is precisely that term and symbol of a higher Existence descended into the material world in which it is possible for the lower to transfigure itself and put on the nature of the higher and the higher to reveal itself in the forms of the lower. To avoid the life which is given him for the realisation of that possibility, can never be either the indispensable condition or the whole and ultimate object of his supreme endeavour or of his most powerful means of self-fulfilment. It can only be a temporary necessity under certain conditions or a specialised extreme effort imposed on the individual so as to prepare a greater general possibility for the race. The true and full object and utility of Yoga can only be accomplished when the conscious Yoga in man becomes, like the subconscious Yoga in Nature, outwardly conterminous with life itself and we can once more, looking out both on the path and the achievement, say in a more perfect and luminous sense: "All life is Yoga."

Chapter II

The Three Steps of Nature

WE RECOGNISE then, in the past developments of Yoga, a specialising and separative tendency which, like all things in Nature, had its justifying and even imperative utility and we seek a synthesis of the specialised aims and methods which have, in consequence, come into being. But in order that we may be wisely guided in our effort, we must know, first, the general principle and purpose underlying this separative impulse and, next, the particular utilities upon which the method of each school of Yoga is founded. For the general principle we must interrogate the universal workings of Nature herself, recognising in her no merely specious and illusive activity of a distorting Maya, but the cosmic energy and working of God Himself in His universal being formulating and inspired by a vast, an infinite and yet a minutely selective Wisdom, *prajñā prasṛtā purāṇī* of the Upanishad, Wisdom that went forth from the Eternal since the beginning. For the particular utilities we must cast a penetrative eye on the different methods of Yoga and distinguish among the mass of their details the governing idea which they serve and the radical force which gives birth and energy to their processes of effectuation. Afterwards we may more easily find the one common principle and the one common power from which all derive their being and tendency, towards which all subconsciously move and in which, therefore, it is possible for all consciously to unite.

The progressive self-manifestation of Nature in man, termed in modern language his evolution, must necessarily depend upon three successive elements. There is that which is already evolved; there is that which, still imperfect, still partly fluid, is persistently in the stage of conscious evolution; and there is that which is to be evolved and may perhaps be already

displayed, if not constantly, then occasionally or with some regularity of recurrence, in primary formations or in others more developed and, it may well be, even in some, however rare, that are near to the highest possible realisation of our present humanity. For the march of Nature is not drilled to a regular and mechanical forward stepping. She reaches constantly beyond herself even at the cost of subsequent deplorable retreats. She has rushes; she has splendid and mighty outbursts; she has immense realisations. She storms sometimes passionately forward hoping to take the kingdom of heaven by violence. And these self-exceedings are the revelation of that in her which is most divine or else most diabolical, but in either case the most puissant to bring her rapidly forward towards her goal.

That which Nature has evolved for us and has firmly founded is the bodily life. She has effected a certain combination and harmony of the two inferior but most fundamentally necessary elements of our action and progress upon earth,—Matter, which, however the too ethereally spiritual may despise it, is our foundation and the first condition of all our energies and realisations, and the Life-Energy which is our means of existence in a material body and the basis there even of our mental and spiritual activities. She has successfully achieved a certain stability of her constant material movement which is at once sufficiently steady and durable and sufficiently pliable and mutable to provide a fit dwelling-place and instrument for the progressively manifesting god in humanity. This is what is meant by the fable in the Aitareya Upanishad which tells us that the gods rejected the animal forms successively offered to them by the Divine Self and only when man was produced, cried out, "This indeed is perfectly made," and consented to enter in. She has effected also a working compromise between the inertia of matter and the active Life that lives in and feeds on it, by which not only is vital existence sustained, but the fullest developments of mentality are rendered possible. This equilibrium constitutes the basic status of Nature in man and is termed in the language of Yoga his gross body composed

of the material or food sheath and the nervous system or vital vehicle.¹

If, then, this inferior equilibrium is the basis and first means of the higher movements which the universal Power contemplates and if it constitutes the vehicle in which the Divine here seeks to reveal Itself, if the Indian saying is true that the body is the instrument provided for the fulfilment of the right law of our nature, then any final recoil from the physical life must be a turning away from the completeness of the divine Wisdom and a renunciation of its aim in earthly manifestation. Such a refusal may be, owing to some secret law of their development, the right attitude for certain individuals, but never the aim intended for mankind. It can be, therefore, no integral Yoga which ignores the body or makes its annulment or its rejection indispensable to a perfect spirituality. Rather, the perfecting of the body also should be the last triumph of the Spirit and to make the bodily life also divine must be God's final seal upon His work in the universe. The obstacle which the physical presents to the spiritual is no argument for the rejection of the physical; for in the unseen providence of things our greatest difficulties are our best opportunities. A supreme difficulty is Nature's indication to us of a supreme conquest to be won and an ultimate problem to be solved; it is not a warning of an inextricable snare to be shunned or of an enemy too strong for us from whom we must flee.

Equally, the vital and nervous energies in us are there for a great utility; they too demand the divine realisation of their possibilities in our ultimate fulfilment. The great part assigned to this element in the universal scheme is powerfully emphasised by the catholic wisdom of the Upanishads. "As the spokes of a wheel in its nave, so in the Life-Energy is all established, the triple knowledge and the Sacrifice and the power of the strong and the purity of the wise. Under the control of the Life-Energy is all this that is established in the triple heaven."² It is therefore no integral Yoga that kills these vital energies, forces them into a nerveless quiescence or roots them out as the source

¹ *annakoṣa* and *prāṇakoṣa*. ² Prasna Upanishad II. 6 and 13.

of noxious activities. Their purification, not their destruction,—their transformation, control and utilisation is the aim in view with which they have been created and developed in us.

If the bodily life is what Nature has firmly evolved for us as her base and first instrument, it is our mental life that she is evolving as her immediate next aim and superior instrument. This in her ordinary exaltations is the lofty preoccupying thought in her; this, except in her periods of exhaustion and recoil into a reposeful and recuperating obscurity, is her constant pursuit wherever she can get free from the trammels of her first vital and physical realisations. For here in man we have a distinction which is of the utmost importance. He has in him not a single mentality, but a double and a triple, the mind material and nervous, the pure intellectual mind which liberates itself from the illusions of the body and the senses, and a divine mind above intellect which in its turn liberates itself from the imperfect modes of the logically discriminative and imaginative reason. Mind in man is first emmeshed in the life of the body, where in the plant it is entirely involved and in animals always imprisoned. It accepts this life as not only the first but the whole condition of its activities and serves its needs as if they were the entire aim of existence. But the bodily life in man is a base, not the aim, his first condition and not his last determinant. In the just idea of the ancients man is essentially the thinker, the Manu, the mental being who leads the life and the body,³ not the animal who is led by them. The true human existence, therefore, only begins when the intellectual mentality emerges out of the material and we begin more and more to live in the mind independent of the nervous and physical obsession and in the measure of that liberty are able to accept rightly and rightly to use the life of the body. For freedom and not a skilful subjection is the true means of mastery. A free, not a compulsory acceptance of the conditions, the enlarged and sublimated conditions of our physical being, is the high human ideal. But beyond this intellectual mentality is the divine.

The mental life thus evolving in man is not, indeed, a

³ *manomayah prāṇaśarīranetā*. Mundaka Upanishad II. 2. 8.

common possession. In actual appearance it would seem as if it were only developed to the fullest in individuals and as if there were great numbers and even the majority in whom it is either a small and ill-organised part of their normal nature or not evolved at all or latent and not easily made active. Certainly, the mental life is not a finished evolution of Nature; it is not yet firmly founded in the human animal. The sign is that the fine and full equilibrium of vitality and matter, the sane, robust, long-lived human body is ordinarily found only in races or classes of men who reject the effort of thought, its disturbances, its tensions, or think only with the material mind. Civilised man has yet to establish an equilibrium between the fully active mind and the body; he does not normally possess it. Indeed, the increasing effort towards a more intense mental life seems to create, frequently, an increasing disequilibrium of the human elements, so that it is possible for eminent scientists to describe genius as a form of insanity, a result of degeneration, a pathological morbidity of Nature. The phenomena which are used to justify this exaggeration, when taken not separately, but in connection with all other relevant data, point to a different truth. Genius is one attempt of the universal Energy to so quicken and intensify our intellectual powers that they shall be prepared for those more puissant, direct and rapid faculties which constitute the play of the supra-intellectual or divine mind. It is not, then, a freak, an inexplicable phenomenon, but a perfectly natural next step in the right line of her evolution. She has harmonised the bodily life with the material mind, she is harmonising it with the play of the intellectual mentality; for that, although it tends to a depression of the full animal and vital vigour, need not produce active disturbances. And she is shooting yet beyond in the attempt to reach a still higher level. Nor are the disturbances created by her process as great as is often represented. Some of them are the crude beginnings of new manifestations; others are an easily corrected movement of disintegration, often fruitful of fresh activities and always a small price to pay for the far-reaching results that she has in view.

We may perhaps, if we consider all the circumstances, come

to this conclusion that mental life, far from being a recent appearance in man, is the swift repetition in him of a previous achievement from which the Energy in the race had undergone one of her deplorable recoils. The savage is perhaps not so much the first forefather of civilised man as the degenerate descendant of a previous civilisation. For if the actuality of intellectual achievement is unevenly distributed, the capacity is spread everywhere. It has been seen that in individual cases even the racial type considered by us the lowest, the negro fresh from the perennial barbarism of Central Africa, is capable, without admixture of blood, without waiting for future generations, of the intellectual culture, if not yet of the intellectual accomplishment of the dominant European. Even in the mass men seem to need, in favourable circumstances, only a few generations to cover ground that ought apparently to be measured in the terms of millenniums. Either, then, man by his privilege as a mental being is exempt from the full burden of the tardy laws of evolution or else he already represents and with helpful conditions and in the right stimulating atmosphere can always display a high level of material capacity for the activities of the intellectual life. It is not mental incapacity, but the long rejection or seclusion from opportunity and withdrawal of the awakening impulse that creates the savage. Barbarism is an intermediate sleep, not an original darkness.

Moreover the whole trend of modern thought and modern endeavour reveals itself to the observant eye as a large conscious effort of Nature in man to effect a general level of intellectual equipment, capacity and farther possibility by universalising the opportunities which modern civilisation affords for the mental life. Even the preoccupation of the European intellect, the protagonist of this tendency, with material Nature and the externalities of existence is a necessary part of the effort. It seeks to prepare a sufficient basis in man's physical being and vital energies and in his material environment for his full mental possibilities. By the spread of education, by the advance of the backward races, by the elevation of depressed classes, by the multiplication of labour-saving appliances, by the movement

towards ideal social and economic conditions, by the labour of Science towards an improved health, longevity and sound physique in civilised humanity, the sense and drift of this vast movement translates itself in easily intelligible signs. The right or at least the ultimate means may not always be employed, but their aim is the right preliminary aim,— a sound individual and social body and the satisfaction of the legitimate needs and demands of the material mind, sufficient ease, leisure, equal opportunity, so that the whole of mankind and no longer only the favoured race, class or individual may be free to develop the emotional and intellectual being to its full capacity. At present the material and economic aim may predominate, but always, behind, there works or there waits in reserve the higher and major impulse.

And when the preliminary conditions are satisfied, when the great endeavour has found its base, what will be the nature of that farther possibility which the activities of the intellectual life must serve? If Mind is indeed Nature's highest term, then the entire development of the rational and imaginative intellect and the harmonious satisfaction of the emotions and sensibilities must be to themselves sufficient. But if, on the contrary, man is more than a reasoning and emotional animal, if beyond that which is being evolved, there is something that has to be evolved, then it may well be that the fullness of the mental life, the suppleness, flexibility and wide capacity of the intellect, the ordered richness of emotion and sensibility may be only a passage towards the development of a higher life and of more powerful faculties which are yet to manifest and to take possession of the lower instrument, just as mind itself has so taken possession of the body that the physical being no longer lives only for its own satisfaction but provides the foundation and the materials for a superior activity.

The assertion of a higher than the mental life is the whole foundation of Indian philosophy and its acquisition and organisation is the veritable object served by the methods of Yoga. Mind is not the last term of evolution, not an ultimate aim, but, like body, an instrument. It is even so termed in the language of

Yoga, the inner instrument.⁴ And Indian tradition asserts that this which is to be manifested is not a new term in human experience, but has been developed before and has even governed humanity in certain periods of its development. In any case, in order to be known it must at one time have been partly developed. And if since then Nature has sunk back from her achievement, the reason must always be found in some unrealised harmony, some insufficiency of the intellectual and material basis to which she has now returned, some over-specialisation of the higher to the detriment of the lower existence.

But what then constitutes this higher or highest existence to which our evolution is tending? In order to answer the question we have to deal with a class of supreme experiences, a class of unusual conceptions which it is difficult to represent accurately in any other language than the ancient Sanskrit tongue in which alone they have been to some extent systematised. The only approximate terms in the English language have other associations and their use may lead to many and even serious inaccuracies. The terminology of Yoga recognises besides the status of our physical and vital being, termed the gross body and doubly composed of the food sheath and the vital vehicle, besides the status of our mental being, termed the subtle body and singly composed of the mind sheath or mental vehicle,⁵ a third, supreme and divine status of supra-mental being, termed the causal body and composed of a fourth and a fifth vehicle⁶ which are described as those of knowledge and bliss. But this knowledge is not a systematised result of mental questionings and reasonings, not a temporary arrangement of conclusions and opinions in the terms of the highest probability, but rather a pure self-existent and self-luminous Truth. And this bliss is not a supreme pleasure of the heart and sensations with the experience of pain and sorrow as its background, but a delight also self-existent and independent of objects and particular experiences, a self-delight which is the very nature, the very stuff, as it were, of a transcendent and infinite existence.

⁴ *antahkarana*.

⁵ *manah-koṣa*.

⁶ *vijñānakoṣa* and *ānandakoṣa*.

Do such psychological conceptions correspond to anything real and possible? All Yoga asserts them as its ultimate experience and supreme aim. They form the governing principles of our highest possible state of consciousness, our widest possible range of existence. There is, we say, a harmony of supreme faculties, corresponding roughly to the psychological faculties of revelation, inspiration and intuition, yet acting not in the intuitive reason or the divine mind, but on a still higher plane, which see Truth directly face to face, or rather live in the truth of things both universal and transcendent and are its formulation and luminous activity. And these faculties are the light of a conscious existence superseding the egoistic and itself both cosmic and transcendent, the nature of which is Bliss. These are obviously divine and, as man is at present apparently constituted, superhuman states of consciousness and activity. A trinity of transcendent existence, self-awareness and self-delight⁷ is, indeed, the metaphysical description of the supreme Atman, the self-formulation, to our awakened knowledge, of the Unknowable whether conceived as a pure Impersonality or as a cosmic Personality manifesting the universe. But in Yoga they are regarded also in their psychological aspects as states of subjective existence to which our waking consciousness is now alien, but which dwell in us in a superconscious plane and to which, therefore, we may always ascend.

For, as is indicated by the name, causal body (*kārana*), as opposed to the two others which are instruments (*karana*), this crowning manifestation is also the source and effective power of all that in the actual evolution has preceded it. Our mental activities are, indeed, a derivation, selection and, so long as they are divided from the truth that is secretly their source, a deformation of the divine knowledge. Our sensations and emotions have the same relation to the Bliss, our vital forces and actions to the aspect of Will or Force assumed by the divine consciousness, our physical being to the pure essence of that Bliss and Consciousness. The evolution which we observe and of which

⁷ *saccidānanda*.

we are the terrestrial summit may be considered, in a sense, as an inverse manifestation, by which these supreme Powers in their unity and their diversity use, develop and perfect the imperfect substance and activities of Matter, of Life and of Mind so that they, the inferior modes, may express in mutable relativity an increasing harmony of the divine and eternal states from which they are born. If this be the truth of the universe, then the goal of evolution is also its cause, it is that which is immanent in its elements and out of them is liberated. But the liberation is surely imperfect if it is only an escape and there is no return upon the containing substance and activities to exalt and transform them. The immanence itself would have no credible reason for being if it did not end in such a transfiguration. But if human mind can become capable of the glories of the divine Light, human emotion and sensibility can be transformed into the mould and assume the measure and movement of the supreme Bliss, human action not only represent but feel itself to be the motion of a divine and non-egoistic Force and the physical substance of our being sufficiently partake of the purity of the supernal essence, sufficiently unify plasticity and durable constancy to support and prolong these highest experiences and agencies, then all the long labour of Nature will end in a crowning justification and her evolutions reveal their profound significance.

So dazzling is even a glimpse of this supreme existence and so absorbing its attraction that, once seen, we feel readily justified in neglecting all else for its pursuit. Even, by an opposite exaggeration to that which sees all things in Mind and the mental life as an exclusive ideal, Mind comes to be regarded as an unworthy deformation and a supreme obstacle, the source of an illusory universe, a negation of the Truth and itself to be denied and all its works and results annulled if we desire the final liberation. But this is a half-truth which errs by regarding only the actual limitations of Mind and ignores its divine intention. The ultimate knowledge is that which perceives and accepts God in the universe as well as beyond the universe; the integral Yoga is that which, having found the Transcendent, can return upon the universe and possess it, retaining the power freely to descend

as well as ascend the great stair of existence. For if the eternal Wisdom exists at all, the faculty of Mind also must have some high use and destiny. That use must depend on its place in the ascent and in the return and that destiny must be a fulfilment and transfiguration, not a rooting out or an annulling.

We perceive, then, these three steps in Nature, a bodily life which is the basis of our existence here in the material world, a mental life into which we emerge and by which we raise the bodily to higher uses and enlarge it into a greater completeness, and a divine existence which is at once the goal of the other two and returns upon them to liberate them into their highest possibilities. Regarding none of them as either beyond our reach or below our nature and the destruction of none of them as essential to the ultimate attainment, we accept this liberation and fulfilment as part at least and a large and important part of the aim of Yoga.

Chapter III

The Threefold Life

NATURE, then, is an evolution or progressive self-manifestation of an eternal and secret existence, with three successive forms as her three steps of ascent. And we have consequently as the condition of all our activities these three mutually interdependent possibilities, the bodily life, the mental existence and the veiled spiritual being which is in the involution the cause of the others and in the evolution their result. Preserving and perfecting the physical, fulfilling the mental, it is Nature's aim and it should be ours to unveil in the perfected body and mind the transcendent activities of the Spirit. As the mental life does not abrogate but works for the elevation and better utilisation of the bodily existence, so too the spiritual should not abrogate but transfigure our intellectual, emotional, aesthetic and vital activities.

For man, the head of terrestrial Nature, the sole earthly frame in which her full evolution is possible, is a triple birth. He has been given a living frame in which the body is the vessel and life the dynamic means of a divine manifestation. His activity is centred in a progressive mind which aims at perfecting itself as well as the house in which it dwells and the means of life that it uses, and is capable of awaking by a progressive self-realisation to its own true nature as a form of the Spirit. He culminates in what he always really was, the illumined and beatific spirit which is intended at last to irradiate life and mind with its now concealed splendours.

Since this is the plan of the divine Energy in humanity, the whole method and aim of our existence must work by the interaction of these three elements in the being. As a result of their separate formulation in Nature, man has open to him a choice between three kinds of life, the ordinary material existence, a life of mental activity and progress and the unchanging spiritual

beatitude. But he can, as he progresses, combine these three forms, resolve their discords into a harmonious rhythm and so create in himself the whole godhead, the perfect Man.

In ordinary Nature they have each their own characteristic and governing impulse.

The characteristic energy of bodily Life is not so much in progress as in persistence, not so much in individual self-enlargement as in self-repetition. There is, indeed, in physical Nature a progression from type to type, from the vegetable to the animal, from the animal to man; for even in inanimate Matter Mind is at work. But once a type is marked off physically, the chief immediate preoccupation of the terrestrial Mother seems to be to keep it in being by a constant reproduction. For Life always seeks immortality; but since individual form is impermanent and only the idea of a form is permanent in the consciousness that creates the universe,—for there it does not perish,—such constant reproduction is the only possible material immortality. Self-preservation, self-repetition, self-multiplication are necessarily, then, the predominant instincts of all material existence. Material life seems ever to move in a fixed cycle.

The characteristic energy of pure Mind is change, and the more our mentality acquires elevation and organisation, the more this law of Mind assumes the aspect of a continual enlargement, improvement and better arrangement of its gains and so of a continual passage from a smaller and simpler to a larger and more complex perfection. For Mind, unlike bodily life, is infinite in its field, elastic in its expansion, easily variable in its formations. Change, then, self-enlargement and self-improvement are its proper instincts. Mind too moves in cycles, but these are ever-enlarging spirals. Its faith is perfectibility, its watchword is progress.

The characteristic law of Spirit is self-existent perfection and immutable infinity. It possesses always and in its own right the immortality which is the aim of Life and the perfection which is the goal of Mind. The attainment of the eternal and the realisation of that which is the same in all things and beyond all things, equally blissful in universe and outside it, untouched by

the imperfections and limitations of the forms and activities in which it dwells, are the glory of the spiritual life.

In each of these forms Nature acts both individually and collectively; for the Eternal affirms Himself equally in the single form and in the group-existence, whether family, clan and nation or groupings dependent on less physical principles or the supreme group of all, our collective humanity. Man also may seek his own individual good from any or all of these spheres of activity, or identify himself in them with the collectivity and live for it, or, rising to a truer perception of this complex universe, harmonise the individual realisation with the collective aim. For as it is the right relation of the soul with the Supreme, while it is in the universe, neither to assert egoistically its separate being nor to blot itself out in the Indefinable, but to realise its unity with the Divine and the world and unite them in the individual, so the right relation of the individual with the collectivity is neither to pursue egoistically his own material or mental progress or spiritual salvation without regard to his fellows, nor for the sake of the community to suppress or maim his proper development, but to sum up in himself all its best and completest possibilities and pour them out by thought, action and all other means on his surroundings so that the whole race may approach nearer to the attainment of its supreme personalities.

It follows that the object of the material life must be to fulfil, above all things, the vital aim of Nature. The whole aim of the material man is to live, to pass from birth to death with as much comfort or enjoyment as may be on the way, but anyhow to live. He can subordinate this aim, but only to physical Nature's other instincts, the reproduction of the individual and the conservation of the type in the family, class or community. Self, domesticity, the accustomed order of the society and of the nation are the constituents of the material existence. Its immense importance in the economy of Nature is self-evident, and commensurate is the importance of the human type which represents it. He assures her of the safety of the framework she has made and of the orderly continuance and conservation of her past gains.

But by that very utility such men and the life they lead are

condemned to be limited, irrationally conservative and earth-bound. The customary routine, the customary institutions, the inherited or habitual forms of thought,—these things are the life-breath of their nostrils. They admit and jealously defend the changes compelled by the progressive mind in the past, but combat with equal zeal the changes that are being made by it in the present. For to the material man the living progressive thinker is an ideologue, dreamer or madman. The old Semites who stoned the living prophets and adored their memories when dead, were the very incarnation of this instinctive and unintelligent principle in Nature. In the ancient Indian distinction between the once born and the twice born, it is to this material man that the former description can be applied. He does Nature's inferior works; he assures the basis for her higher activities; but not to him easily are opened the glories of her second birth.

Yet he admits so much of spirituality as has been enforced on his customary ideas by the great religious outbursts of the past and he makes in his scheme of society a place, venerable though not often effective, for the priest or the learned theologian who can be trusted to provide him with a safe and ordinary spiritual pabulum. But to the man who would assert for himself the liberty of spiritual experience and the spiritual life, he assigns, if he admits him at all, not the vestment of the priest but the robe of the Sannyasin. Outside society let him exercise his dangerous freedom. So he may even serve as a human lightning-rod receiving the electricity of the Spirit and turning it away from the social edifice.

Nevertheless it is possible to make the material man and his life moderately progressive by imprinting on the material mind the custom of progress, the habit of conscious change, the fixed idea of progression as a law of life. The creation by this means of progressive societies in Europe is one of the greatest triumphs of Mind over Matter. But the physical nature has its revenge; for the progress made tends to be of the grosser and more outward kind and its attempts at a higher or a more rapid movement bring about great wearinesses, swift exhaustions, startling recoils.

It is possible also to give the material man and his life a moderate spirituality by accustoming him to regard in a religious spirit all the institutions of life and its customary activities. The creation of such spiritualised communities in the East has been one of the greatest triumphs of Spirit over Matter. Yet here, too, there is a defect; for this often tends only to the creation of a religious temperament, the most outward form of spirituality. Its higher manifestations, even the most splendid and puissant, either merely increase the number of souls drawn out of social life and so impoverish it or disturb the society for a while by a momentary elevation. The truth is that neither the mental effort nor the spiritual impulse can suffice, divorced from each other, to overcome the immense resistance of material Nature. She demands their alliance in a complete effort before she will suffer a complete change in humanity. But, usually, these two great agents are unwilling to make to each other the necessary concessions.

The mental life concentrates on the aesthetic, the ethical and the intellectual activities. Essential mentality is idealistic and a seeker after perfection. The subtle self, the brilliant Atman,¹ is ever a dreamer. A dream of perfect beauty, perfect conduct, perfect Truth, whether seeking new forms of the Eternal or revitalising the old, is the very soul of pure mentality. But it knows not how to deal with the resistance of Matter. There it is hampered and inefficient, works by bungling experiments and has either to withdraw from the struggle or submit to the grey actuality. Or else, by studying the material life and accepting the conditions of the contest, it may succeed, but only in imposing temporarily some artificial system which infinite Nature either rends and casts aside or disfigures out of recognition or by withdrawing her assent leaves as the corpse of a dead ideal. Few and far between have been those realisations of the dreamer in Man which the world has gladly accepted, looks back to with a fond memory and seeks, in its elements, to cherish.

¹ Who dwells in Dream, the inly conscious, the enjoyer of abstractions, the Brilliant. Mandukya Upanishad 4.

When the gulf between actual life and the temperament of the thinker is too great, we see as the result a sort of withdrawing of the Mind from life in order to act with a greater freedom in its own sphere. The poet living among his brilliant visions, the artist absorbed in his art, the philosopher thinking out the problems of the intellect in his solitary chamber, the scientist, the scholar caring only for their studies and their experiments, were often in former days, are even now not unoften the Sannyasins of the intellect. To the work they have done for humanity, all its past bears record.

But such seclusion is justified only by some special activity. Mind finds fully its force and action only when it casts itself upon life and accepts equally its possibilities and its resistances as the means of a greater self-perfection. In the struggle with the difficulties of the material world the ethical development of the individual is firmly shaped and the great schools of conduct are formed; by contact with the facts of life Art attains to vitality, Thought assures its abstractions, the generalisations of the philosopher base themselves on a stable foundation of science and experience.

This mixing with life may, however, be pursued for the sake of the individual mind and with an entire indifference to the forms of the material existence or the uplifting of the race. This indifference is seen at its highest in the Epicurean discipline and is not entirely absent from the Stoic; and even altruism does the works of compassion more often for its own sake than for the sake of the world it helps. But this too is a limited fulfilment. The progressive mind is seen at its noblest when it strives to elevate the whole race to its own level whether by sowing broadcast the image of its own thought and fulfilment or by changing the material life of the race into fresh forms, religious, intellectual, social or political, intended to represent more nearly that ideal of truth, beauty, justice, righteousness with which the man's own soul is illumined. Failure in such a field matters little; for the mere attempt is dynamic and creative. The struggle of Mind to elevate life is the promise and condition of the conquest of life by that which is higher even than Mind.

That highest thing, the spiritual existence, is concerned with what is eternal but not therefore entirely aloof from the transient. For the spiritual man the mind's dream of perfect beauty is realised in an eternal love, beauty and delight that has no dependence and is equal behind all objective appearances; its dream of perfect Truth in the supreme, self-existent, self-apparent and eternal Verity which never varies, but explains and is the secret of all variations and the goal of all progress; its dream of perfect action in the omnipotent and self-guiding Law that is inherent for ever in all things and translates itself here in the rhythm of the worlds. What is fugitive vision or constant effort of creation in the brilliant Self is an eternally existing Reality in the Self that knows² and is the Lord.

But if it is often difficult for the mental life to accommodate itself to the dully resistant material activity, how much more difficult must it seem for the spiritual existence to live on in a world that appears full not of the Truth but of every lie and illusion, not of Love and Beauty but of an encompassing discord and ugliness, not of the Law of Truth but of victorious selfishness and sin? Therefore the spiritual life tends easily in the saint and Sannyasin to withdraw from the material existence and reject it either wholly and physically or in the spirit. It sees this world as the kingdom of evil or of ignorance and the eternal and divine either in a far-off heaven or beyond where there is no world and no life. It separates itself inwardly, if not also physically, from the world's impurities; it asserts the spiritual reality in a spotless isolation. This withdrawal renders an invaluable service to the material life itself by forcing it to regard and even to bow down to something that is the direct negation of its own petty ideals, sordid cares and egoistic self-content.

But the work in the world of so supreme a power as spiritual force cannot be thus limited. The spiritual life also can return upon the material and use it as a means of its own greater

² The Unified, in whom conscious thought is concentrated, who is all delight and enjoyer of delight, the Wise. . . . He is the Lord of all, the Omniscient, the inner Guide. Mandukya Upanishad 5, 6.

fullness. Refusing to be blinded by the dualities, the appearances, it can seek in all appearances whatsoever the vision of the same Lord, the same eternal Truth, Beauty, Love, Delight. The Vedantic formula of the Self in all things, all things in the Self and all things as becomings of the Self is the key to this richer and all-embracing Yoga.

But the spiritual life, like the mental, may thus make use of this outward existence for the benefit of the individual with a perfect indifference to any collective uplifting of the merely symbolic world which it uses. Since the Eternal is for ever the same in all things and all things the same to the Eternal, since the exact mode of action and the result are of no importance compared with the working out in oneself of the one great realisation, this spiritual indifference accepts no matter what environment, no matter what action, dispassionately, prepared to retire as soon as its own supreme end is realised. It is so that many have understood the ideal of the Gita. Or else the inner love and bliss may pour itself out on the world in good deeds, in service, in compassion, the inner Truth in the giving of knowledge, without therefore attempting the transformation of a world which must by its inalienable nature remain a battlefield of the dualities, of sin and virtue, of truth and error, of joy and suffering.

But if Progress also is one of the chief terms of world-existence and a progressive manifestation of the Divine the true sense of Nature, this limitation also is invalid. It is possible for the spiritual life in the world, and it is its real mission, to change the material life into its own image, the image of the Divine. Therefore, besides the great solitaries who have sought and attained their self-liberation, we have the great spiritual teachers who have also liberated others and, supreme of all, the great dynamic souls who, feeling themselves stronger in the might of the Spirit than all the forces of the material life banded together, have thrown themselves upon the world, grappled with it in a loving wrestle and striven to compel its consent to its own transfiguration. Ordinarily, the effort is concentrated on a mental and moral change in humanity, but it may extend itself

also to the alteration of the forms of our life and its institutions so that they too may be a better mould for the inpourings of the Spirit. These attempts have been the supreme landmarks in the progressive development of human ideals and the divine preparation of the race. Every one of them, whatever its outward results, has left Earth more capable of Heaven and quickened in its tardy movements the evolutionary Yoga of Nature.

In India, for the last thousand years and more, the spiritual life and the material have existed side by side to the exclusion of the progressive mind. Spirituality has made terms for itself with Matter by renouncing the attempt at general progress. It has obtained from society the right of free spiritual development for all who assume some distinctive symbol, such as the garb of the Sannyasin, the recognition of that life as man's goal and those who live it as worthy of an absolute reverence, and the casting of society itself into such a religious mould that its most customary acts should be accompanied by a formal reminder of the spiritual symbolism of life and its ultimate destination. On the other hand, there was conceded to society the right of inertia and immobile self-conservation. The concession destroyed much of the value of the terms. The religious mould being fixed, the formal reminder tended to become a routine and to lose its living sense. The constant attempts to change the mould by new sects and religions ended only in a new routine or a modification of the old; for the saving element of the free and active mind had been exiled. The material life, handed over to the Ignorance, the purposeless and endless duality, became a leaden and dolorous yoke from which flight was the only escape.

The schools of Indian Yoga lent themselves to the compromise. Individual perfection or liberation was made the aim, seclusion of some kind from the ordinary activities the condition, the renunciation of life the culmination. The teacher gave his knowledge only to a small circle of disciples. Or if a wider movement was attempted, it was still the release of the individual soul that remained the aim. The pact with an immobile society was, for the most part, observed.

The utility of the compromise in the then actual state of the

world cannot be doubted. It secured in India a society which lent itself to the preservation and the worship of spirituality, a country apart in which as in a fortress the highest spiritual ideal could maintain itself in its most absolute purity unoverpowered by the siege of the forces around it. But it was a compromise, not an absolute victory. The material life lost the divine impulse to growth, the spiritual preserved by isolation its height and purity, but sacrificed its full power and serviceableness to the world. Therefore, in the divine Providence the country of the Yogins and the Sannyasins has been forced into a strict and imperative contact with the very element it had rejected, the element of the progressive Mind, so that it might recover what was now wanting to it.

We have to recognise once more that the individual exists not in himself alone but in the collectivity and that individual perfection and liberation are not the whole sense of God's intention in the world. The free use of our liberty includes also the liberation of others and of mankind; the perfect utility of our perfection is, having realised in ourselves the divine symbol, to reproduce, multiply and ultimately universalise it in others.

Therefore from a concrete view of human life in its threefold potentialities we come to the same conclusion that we had drawn from an observation of Nature in her general workings and the three steps of her evolution. And we begin to perceive a complete aim for our synthesis of Yoga.

Spirit is the crown of universal existence; Matter is its basis; Mind is the link between the two. Spirit is that which is eternal; Mind and Matter are its workings. Spirit is that which is concealed and has to be revealed; mind and body are the means by which it seeks to reveal itself. Spirit is the image of the Lord of the Yoga; mind and body are the means He has provided for reproducing that image in phenomenal existence. All Nature is an attempt at a progressive revelation of the concealed Truth, a more and more successful reproduction of the divine image.

But what Nature aims at for the mass in a slow evolution, Yoga effects for the individual by a rapid revolution. It works by a quickening of all her energies, a sublimation of all her

faculties. While she develops the spiritual life with difficulty and has constantly to fall back from it for the sake of her lower realisations, the sublimated force, the concentrated method of Yoga can attain directly and carry with it the perfection of the mind and even, if she will, the perfection of the body. Nature seeks the Divine in her own symbols: Yoga goes beyond Nature to the Lord of Nature, beyond universe to the Transcendent and can return with the transcendent light and power, with the fiat of the Omnipotent.

But their aim is one in the end. The generalisation of Yoga in humanity must be the last victory of Nature over her own delays and concealments. Even as now by the progressive mind in Science she seeks to make all mankind fit for the full development of the mental life, so by Yoga must she inevitably seek to make all mankind fit for the higher evolution, the second birth, the spiritual existence. And as the mental life uses and perfects the material, so will the spiritual use and perfect the material and the mental existence as the instruments of a divine self-expression. The ages when that is accomplished, are the legendary Satya or Krita³ Yugas, the ages of the Truth manifested in the symbol, of the great work done when Nature in mankind, illumined, satisfied and blissful, rests in the culmination of her endeavour.

It is for man to know her meaning, no longer misunderstanding, vilifying or misusing the universal Mother, and to aspire always by her mightiest means to her highest ideal.

³ Satya means Truth; Krita, effected or completed.

Chapter IV

The Systems of Yoga

THese relations between the different psychological divisions of the human being and these various utilities and objects of effort founded on them, such as we have seen them in our brief survey of the natural evolution, we shall find repeated in the fundamental principles and methods of the different schools of Yoga. And if we seek to combine and harmonise their central practices and their predominant aims, we shall find that the basis provided by Nature is still our natural basis and the condition of their synthesis.

In one respect Yoga exceeds the normal operation of cosmic Nature and climbs beyond her. For the aim of the Universal Mother is to embrace the Divine in her own play and creations and there to realise It. But in the highest flights of Yoga she reaches beyond herself and realises the Divine in Itself exceeding the universe and even standing apart from the cosmic play. Therefore by some it is supposed that this is not only the highest but also the one true or exclusively preferable object of Yoga.

Yet it is always through something which she has formed in her evolution that Nature thus overpasses her evolution. It is the individual heart that by sublimating its highest and purest emotions attains to the transcendent Bliss or the ineffable Nirvana, the individual mind that by converting its ordinary functionings into a knowledge beyond mentality knows its oneness with the Ineffable and merges its separate existence in that transcendent unity. And always it is the individual, the Self conditioned in its experience by Nature and working through her formations, that attains to the Self unconditioned, free and transcendent.

In practice three conceptions are necessary before there can be any possibility of Yoga; there must be, as it were, three consenting parties to the effort,—God, Nature and the human soul or, in more abstract language, the Transcendental, the Universal

and the Individual. If the individual and Nature are left to themselves, the one is bound to the other and unable to exceed appreciably her lingering march. Something transcendent is needed, free from her and greater, which will act upon us and her, attracting us upward to Itself and securing from her by good grace or by force her consent to the individual ascension.

It is this truth which makes necessary to every philosophy of Yoga the conception of the Ishwara, Lord, supreme Soul or supreme Self, towards whom the effort is directed and who gives the illuminating touch and the strength to attain. Equally true is the complementary idea so often enforced by the Yoga of devotion that as the Transcendent is necessary to the individual and sought after by him, so also the individual is necessary in a sense to the Transcendent and sought after by It. If the Bhakta seeks and yearns after Bhagavan, Bhagavan also seeks and yearns after the Bhakta.¹ There can be no Yoga of knowledge without a human seeker of the knowledge, the supreme subject of knowledge and the divine use by the individual of the universal faculties of knowledge; no Yoga of devotion without the human God-lover, the supreme object of love and delight and the divine use by the individual of the universal faculties of spiritual, emotional and aesthetic enjoyment; no Yoga of works without the human worker, the supreme Will, Master of all works and sacrifices, and the divine use by the individual of the universal faculties of power and action. However Monistic may be our intellectual conception of the highest truth of things, in practice we are compelled to accept this omnipresent Trinity.

For the contact of the human and individual consciousness with the divine is the very essence of Yoga. Yoga is the union of that which has become separated in the play of the universe with its own true self, origin and universality. The contact may take place at any point of the complex and intricately organised consciousness which we call our personality. It may be effected in the physical through the body; in the vital through the action of

¹ Bhakta, the devotee or lover of God; Bhagavan, God, the Lord of Love and Delight. The third term of the trinity is Bhagavat, the divine revelation of Love.

those functionings which determine the state and the experiences of our nervous being; through the mentality, whether by means of the emotional heart, the active will or the understanding mind, or more largely by a general conversion of the mental consciousness in all its activities. It may equally be accomplished through a direct awakening to the universal or transcendent Truth and Bliss by the conversion of the central ego in the mind. And according to the point of contact that we choose will be the type of the Yoga that we practise.

For if, leaving aside the complexities of their particular processes, we fix our regard on the central principle of the chief schools of Yoga still prevalent in India, we find that they arrange themselves in an ascending order which starts from the lowest rung of the ladder, the body, and ascends to the direct contact between the individual soul and the transcendent and universal Self. Hathayoga selects the body and the vital functionings as its instruments of perfection and realisation; its concern is with the gross body. Rajayoga selects the mental being in its different parts as its lever-power; it concentrates on the subtle body. The triple Path of Works, of Love and of Knowledge uses some part of the mental being, will, heart or intellect as a starting-point and seeks by its conversion to arrive at the liberating Truth, Beatitude and Infinity which are the nature of the spiritual life. Its method is a direct commerce between the human Purusha in the individual body and the divine Purusha who dwells in every body and yet transcends all form and name.

Hathayoga aims at the conquest of the life and the body whose combination in the food sheath and the vital vehicle constitutes, as we have seen, the gross body and whose equilibrium is the foundation of all Nature's workings in the human being. The equilibrium established by Nature is sufficient for the normal egoistic life; it is insufficient for the purpose of the Hathayogin. For it is calculated on the amount of vital or dynamic force necessary to drive the physical engine during the normal span of human life and to perform more or less adequately the various workings demanded of it by the individual life inhabiting this frame and the world-environment by which it is conditioned.

Hathayoga therefore seeks to rectify Nature and establish another equilibrium by which the physical frame will be able to sustain the inrush of an increasing vital or dynamic force of Prana indefinite, almost infinite in its quantity or intensity. In Nature the equilibrium is based upon the individualisation of a limited quantity and force of the Prana; more than that the individual is by personal and hereditary habit unable to bear, use or control. In Hathayoga, the equilibrium opens a door to the universalisation of the individual vitality by admitting into the body, containing, using and controlling a much less fixed and limited action of the universal energy.

The chief processes of Hathayoga are *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma*. By its numerous *āsanas* or fixed postures it first cures the body of that restlessness which is a sign of its inability to contain without working them off in action and movement the vital forces poured into it from the universal Life-Ocean, gives to it an extraordinary health, force and suppleness and seeks to liberate it from the habits by which it is subjected to ordinary physical Nature and kept within the narrow bounds of her normal operations. In the ancient tradition of Hathayoga it has always been supposed that this conquest could be pushed so far even as to conquer to a great extent the force of gravitation. By various subsidiary but elaborate processes the Hathayogin next contrives to keep the body free from all impurities and the nervous system unclogged for those exercises of respiration which are his most important instruments. These are called *prāṇāyāma*, the control of the breath or vital power; for breathing is the chief physical functioning of the vital forces. Pranayama, for the Hathayogin, serves a double purpose. First, it completes the perfection of the body. The vitality is liberated from many of the ordinary necessities of physical Nature; robust health, prolonged youth, often an extraordinary longevity are attained. On the other hand, Pranayama awakens the coiled-up serpent of the Pranic dynamism in the vital sheath and opens to the Yogin fields of consciousness, ranges of experience, abnormal faculties denied to the ordinary human life while it puissantly intensifies such normal powers and faculties as he already possesses.

These advantages can be farther secured and emphasised by other subsidiary processes open to the Hathayogin.

The results of Hathayoga are thus striking to the eye and impose easily on the vulgar or physical mind. And yet at the end we may ask what we have gained at the end of all this stupendous labour. The object of physical Nature, the preservation of the mere physical life, its highest perfection, even in a certain sense the capacity of a greater enjoyment of physical living have been carried out on an abnormal scale. But the weakness of Hathayoga is that its laborious and difficult processes make so great a demand on the time and energy and impose so complete a severance from the ordinary life of men that the utilisation of its results for the life of the world becomes either impracticable or is extraordinarily restricted. If in return for this loss we gain another life in another world within, the mental, the dynamic, these results could have been acquired through other systems, through Rajayoga, through Tantra, by much less laborious methods and held on much less exacting terms. On the other hand the physical results, increased vitality, prolonged youth, health, longevity are of small avail if they must be held by us as misers of ourselves, apart from the common life, for their own sake, not utilised, not thrown into the common sum of the world's activities. Hathayoga attains large results, but at an exorbitant price and to very little purpose.

Rajayoga takes a higher flight. It aims at the liberation and perfection not of the bodily, but of the mental being, the control of the emotional and sensational life, the mastery of the whole apparatus of thought and consciousness. It fixes its eyes on the *citta*, that stuff of mental consciousness in which all these activities arise, and it seeks, even as Hathayoga with its physical material, first to purify and to tranquillise. The normal state of man is a condition of trouble and disorder, a kingdom either at war with itself or badly governed; for the lord, the Purusha, is subjected to his ministers, the faculties, subjected even to his subjects, the instruments of sensation, emotion, action, enjoyment. Swarajya, self-rule, must be substituted for this subjection. First, therefore, the powers of order must be helped to overcome

the powers of disorder. The preliminary movement of Rajayoga is a careful self-discipline by which good habits of mind are substituted for the lawless movements that indulge the lower nervous being. By the practice of truth, by renunciation of all forms of egoistic seeking, by abstention from injury to others, by purity, by constant meditation and inclination to the divine Purusha who is the true lord of the mental kingdom, a pure, glad, clear state of mind and heart is established.

This is the first step only. Afterwards, the ordinary activities of the mind and sense must be entirely quieted in order that the soul may be free to ascend to higher states of consciousness and acquire the foundation for a perfect freedom and self-mastery. But Rajayoga does not forget that the disabilities of the ordinary mind proceed largely from its subjection to the reactions of the nervous system and the body. It adopts therefore from the Hathayogic system its devices of *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma*, but reduces their multiple and elaborate forms in each case to one simplest and most directly effective process sufficient for its own immediate object. Thus it gets rid of the Hathayogic complexity and cumbrousness while it utilises the swift and powerful efficacy of its methods for the control of the body and the vital functions and for the awakening of that internal dynamism, full of a latent supernormal faculty, typified in Yogic terminology by the *kundalini*, the coiled and sleeping serpent of Energy within. This done, the system proceeds to the perfect quieting of the restless mind and its elevation to a higher plane through concentration of mental force by the successive stages which lead to the utmost inner concentration or ingathered state of the consciousness which is called Samadhi.

By Samadhi, in which the mind acquires the capacity of withdrawing from its limited waking activities into freer and higher states of consciousness, Rajayoga serves a double purpose. It compasses a pure mental action liberated from the confusions of the outer consciousness and passes thence to the higher supra-mental planes on which the individual soul enters into its true spiritual existence. But also it acquires the capacity of that free and concentrated energising of consciousness on

its object which our philosophy asserts as the primary cosmic energy and the method of divine action upon the world. By this capacity the Yогin, already possessed of the highest supra-cosmic knowledge and experience in the state of trance, is able in the waking state to acquire directly whatever knowledge and exercise whatever mastery may be useful or necessary to his activities in the objective world. For the ancient system of Rajayoga aimed not only at Swarajya, self-rule or subjective empire, the entire control by the subjective consciousness of all the states and activities proper to its own domain, but included Samrajya as well, outward empire, the control by the subjective consciousness of its outer activities and environment.

We perceive that as Hathayoga, dealing with the life and body, aims at the supernormal perfection of the physical life and its capacities and goes beyond it into the domain of the mental life, so Rajayoga, operating with the mind, aims at a supernormal perfection and enlargement of the capacities of the mental life and goes beyond it into the domain of the spiritual existence. But the weakness of the system lies in its excessive reliance on abnormal states of trance. This limitation leads first to a certain aloofness from the physical life which is our foundation and the sphere into which we have to bring our mental and spiritual gains. Especially is the spiritual life, in this system, too much associated with the state of Samadhi. Our object is to make the spiritual life and its experiences fully active and fully utilisable in the waking state and even in the normal use of the functions. But in Rajayoga it tends to withdraw into a subliminal plane at the back of our normal experiences instead of descending and possessing our whole existence.

The triple Path of devotion, knowledge and works attempts the province which Rajayoga leaves unoccupied. It differs from Rajayoga in that it does not occupy itself with the elaborate training of the whole mental system as the condition of perfection, but seizes on certain central principles, the intellect, the heart, the will, and seeks to convert their normal operations by turning them away from their ordinary and external preoccupations and activities and concentrating them on the Divine. It

differs also in this,—and here from the point of view of an integral Yoga there seems to be a defect,—that it is indifferent to mental and bodily perfection and aims only at purity as a condition of the divine realisation. A second defect is that as actually practised it chooses one of the three parallel paths exclusively and almost in antagonism to the others instead of effecting a synthetic harmony of the intellect, the heart and the will in an integral divine realisation.

The Path of Knowledge aims at the realisation of the unique and supreme Self. It proceeds by the method of intellectual reflection, *vicāra*, to right discrimination, *viveka*. It observes and distinguishes the different elements of our apparent or phenomenal being and rejecting identification with each of them arrives at their exclusion and separation in one common term as constituents of Prakriti, of phenomenal Nature, creations of Maya, the phenomenal consciousness. So it is able to arrive at its right identification with the pure and unique Self which is not mutable or perishable, not determinable by any phenomenon or combination of phenomena. From this point the path, as ordinarily followed, leads to the rejection of the phenomenal worlds from the consciousness as an illusion and the final immergence without return of the individual soul in the Supreme.

But this exclusive consummation is not the sole or inevitable result of the Path of Knowledge. For, followed more largely and with a less individual aim, the method of Knowledge may lead to an active conquest of the cosmic existence for the Divine no less than to a transcendence. The point of this departure is the realisation of the supreme Self not only in one's own being but in all beings and, finally, the realisation of even the phenomenal aspects of the world as a play of the divine consciousness and not something entirely alien to its true nature. And on the basis of this realisation a yet further enlargement is possible, the conversion of all forms of knowledge, however mundane, into activities of the divine consciousness utilisable for the perception of the one and unique Object of knowledge both in itself and through the play of its forms and symbols. Such a method might well lead to the elevation of the whole range of human intellect

and perception to the divine level, to its spiritualisation and to the justification of the cosmic travail of knowledge in humanity.

The Path of Devotion aims at the enjoyment of the supreme Love and Bliss and utilises normally the conception of the supreme Lord in His personality as the divine Lover and enjoyer of the universe. The world is then realised as a play of the Lord, with our human life as its final stage, pursued through the different phases of self-concealment and self-revelation. The principle of Bhakti Yoga is to utilise all the normal relations of human life into which emotion enters and apply them no longer to transient worldly relations, but to the joy of the All-Loving, the All-Beautiful and the All-Blissful. Worship and meditation are used only for the preparation and increase of intensity of the divine relationship. And this Yoga is catholic in its use of all emotional relations, so that even enmity and opposition to God, considered as an intense, impatient and perverse form of Love, is conceived as a possible means of realisation and salvation. This path, too, as ordinarily practised, leads away from world-existence to an absorption, of another kind than the Monist's, in the Transcendent and Supra-cosmic.

But, here too, the exclusive result is not inevitable. The Yoga itself provides a first corrective by not confining the play of divine love to the relation between the supreme Soul and the individual, but extending it to a common feeling and mutual worship between the devotees themselves united in the same realisation of the supreme Love and Bliss. It provides a yet more general corrective in the realisation of the divine object of Love in all beings not only human but animal, easily extended to all forms whatsoever. We can see how this larger application of the Yoga of Devotion may be so used as to lead to the elevation of the whole range of human emotion, sensation and aesthetic perception to the divine level, its spiritualisation and the justification of the cosmic labour towards love and joy in our humanity.

The Path of Works aims at the dedication of every human activity to the supreme Will. It begins by the renunciation of all egoistic aim for our works, all pursuit of action for an interested aim or for the sake of a worldly result. By this renunciation it so

purifies the mind and the will that we become easily conscious of the great universal Energy as the true doer of all our actions and the Lord of that Energy as their ruler and director with the individual as only a mask, an excuse, an instrument or, more positively, a conscious centre of action and phenomenal relation. The choice and direction of the act is more and more consciously left to this supreme Will and this universal Energy. To That our works as well as the results of our works are finally abandoned. The object is the release of the soul from its bondage to appearances and to the reaction of phenomenal activities. Karmayoga is used, like the other paths, to lead to liberation from phenomenal existence and a departure into the Supreme. But here too the exclusive result is not inevitable. The end of the path may be, equally, a perception of the Divine in all energies, in all happenings, in all activities, and a free and unegoistic participation of the soul in the cosmic action. So followed it will lead to the elevation of all human will and activity to the divine level, its spiritualisation and the justification of the cosmic labour towards freedom, power and perfection in the human being.

We can see also that in the integral view of things these three paths are one. Divine Love should normally lead to the perfect knowledge of the Beloved by perfect intimacy, thus becoming a path of Knowledge, and to divine service, thus becoming a path of Works. So also should perfect Knowledge lead to perfect Love and Joy and a full acceptance of the works of That which is known; dedicated Works to the entire love of the Master of the Sacrifice and the deepest knowledge of His ways and His being. It is in this triple path that we come most readily to the absolute knowledge, love and service of the One in all beings and in the entire cosmic manifestation.

Chapter V

The Synthesis of the Systems

BY THE very nature of the principal Yogic schools, each covering in its operations a part of the complex human integer and attempting to bring out its highest possibilities, it will appear that a synthesis of all of them largely conceived and applied might well result in an integral Yoga. But they are so disparate in their tendencies, so highly specialised and elaborated in their forms, so long confirmed in the mutual opposition of their ideas and methods that we do not easily find how we can arrive at their right union.

An undiscriminating combination in block would not be a synthesis, but a confusion. Nor would a successive practice of each of them in turn be easy in the short span of our human life and with our limited energies, to say nothing of the waste of labour implied in so cumbrous a process. Sometimes, indeed, Hathayoga and Rajayoga are thus successively practised. And in a recent unique example, in the life of Ramakrishna Paramhansa, we see a colossal spiritual capacity first driving straight to the divine realisation, taking, as it were, the kingdom of heaven by violence, and then seizing upon one Yogic method after another and extracting the substance out of it with an incredible rapidity, always to return to the heart of the whole matter, the realisation and possession of God by the power of love, by the extension of inborn spirituality into various experience and by the spontaneous play of an intuitive knowledge. Such an example cannot be generalised. Its object also was special and temporal, to exemplify in the great and decisive experience of a master-soul the truth, now most necessary to humanity, towards which a world long divided into jarring sects and schools is with difficulty labouring, that all sects are forms and fragments of a single integral truth and all disciplines labour in their different ways towards one supreme experience. To know, be and possess

the Divine is the one thing needful and it includes or leads up to all the rest; towards this sole good we have to drive and this attained, all the rest that the divine Will chooses for us, all necessary form and manifestation, will be added.

The synthesis we propose cannot, then, be arrived at either by combination in mass or by successive practice. It must therefore be effected by neglecting the forms and outsides of the Yogic disciplines and seizing rather on some central principle common to all which will include and utilise in the right place and proportion their particular principles, and on some central dynamic force which is the common secret of their divergent methods and capable therefore of organising a natural selection and combination of their varied energies and different utilities. This was the aim which we set before ourselves at first when we entered upon our comparative examination of the methods of Nature and the methods of Yoga and we now return to it with the possibility of hazarding some definite solution.

We observe, first, that there still exists in India a remarkable Yogic system which is in its nature synthetical and starts from a great central principle of Nature, a great dynamic force of Nature; but it is a Yoga apart, not a synthesis of other schools. This system is the way of the Tantra. Owing to certain of its developments Tantra has fallen into discredit with those who are not Tantrics; and especially owing to the developments of its left-hand path, the Vama Marga, which not content with exceeding the duality of virtue and sin and instead of replacing them by spontaneous rightness of action seemed, sometimes, to make a method of self-indulgence, a method of unrestrained social immorality. Nevertheless, in its origin, Tantra was a great and puissant system founded upon ideas which were at least partially true. Even its twofold division into the right-hand and left-hand paths, Dakshina Marga and Vama Marga, started from a certain profound perception. In the ancient symbolic sense of the words Dakshina and Vama, it was the distinction between the way of Knowledge and the way of Ananda,—Nature in man liberating itself by right discrimination in power and practice of its own energies, elements and potentialities and Nature in man

liberating itself by joyous acceptance in power and practice of its own energies, elements and potentialities. But in both paths there was in the end an obscuration of principles, a deformation of symbols and a fall.

If, however, we leave aside, here also, the actual methods and practices and seek for the central principle, we find, first, that Tantra expressly differentiates itself from the Vedic methods of Yoga. In a sense, all the schools we have hitherto examined are Vedantic in their principle; their force is in knowledge, their method is knowledge, though it is not always discernment by the intellect, but may be, instead, the knowledge of the heart expressed in love and faith or a knowledge in the will working out through action. In all of them the lord of the Yoga is the Purusha, the Conscious Soul that knows, observes, attracts, governs. But in Tantra it is rather Prakriti, the Nature-Soul, the Energy, the Will-in-Power executive in the universe. It was by learning and applying the intimate secrets of this Will-in-Power, its method, its Tantra, that the Tantric Yогin pursued the aims of his discipline,—mastery, perfection, liberation, beatitude. Instead of drawing back from manifested Nature and its difficulties, he confronted them, seized and conquered. But in the end, as is the general tendency of Prakriti, Tantric Yoga largely lost its principle in its machinery and became a thing of formulae and occult mechanism still powerful when rightly used but fallen from the clarity of their original intention.

We have in this central Tantric conception one side of the truth, the worship of the Energy, the Shakti, as the sole effective force for all attainment. We get the other extreme in the Vedantic conception of the Shakti as a power of Illusion and in the search after the silent inactive Purusha as the means of liberation from the deceptions created by the active Energy. But in the integral conception the Conscious Soul is the Lord, the Nature-Soul is his executive Energy. Purusha is of the nature of Sat, the being of conscious self-existence pure and infinite; Shakti or Prakriti is of the nature of Chit,—it is power of the Purusha's self-conscious existence, pure and infinite. The relation of the two exists between the poles of rest and action. When the Energy is absorbed

in the bliss of conscious self-existence, there is rest; when the Purusha pours itself out in the action of its Energy, there is action, creation and the enjoyment or Ananda of becoming. But if Ananda is the creator and begetter of all becoming, its method is Tapas or force of the Purusha's consciousness dwelling upon its own infinite potentiality in existence and producing from it truths of conception or real Ideas, *vijnāna*, which, proceeding from an omniscient and omnipotent Self-existence, have the surety of their own fulfilment and contain in themselves the nature and law of their own becoming in the terms of mind, life and matter. The eventual omnipotence of Tapas and the infallible fulfilment of the Idea are the very foundation of all Yoga. In man we render these terms by Will and Faith,—a will that is eventually self-effective because it is of the substance of Knowledge and a faith that is the reflex in the lower consciousness of a Truth or real Idea yet unrealised in the manifestation. It is this self-certainty of the Idea which is meant by the Gita when it says, *yo yac-chraddhaḥ sa eva sah*, "whatever is a man's faith or the sure Idea in him, that he becomes."

We see, then, what from the psychological point of view,—and Yoga is nothing but practical psychology,—is the conception of Nature from which we have to start. It is the self-fulfilment of the Purusha through his Energy. But the movement of Nature is twofold, higher and lower, or, as we may choose to term it, divine and undivine. The distinction exists indeed for practical purposes only; for there is nothing that is not divine, and in a larger view it is as meaningless, verbally, as the distinction between natural and supernatural, for all things that are natural. All things are in Nature and all things are in God. But, for practical purposes, there is a real distinction. The lower Nature, that which we know and are and must remain so long as the faith in us is not changed, acts through limitation and division, is of the nature of Ignorance and culminates in the life of the ego; but the higher Nature, that to which we aspire, acts by unification and transcendence of limitation, is of the nature of Knowledge and culminates in the life divine. The passage from the lower to the higher is the aim of Yoga; and this passage

may effect itself by the rejection of the lower and escape into the higher,—the ordinary view-point,—or by the transformation of the lower and its elevation to the higher Nature. It is this, rather, that must be the aim of an integral Yoga.

But in either case it is always through something in the lower that we must rise into the higher existence, and the schools of Yoga each select their own point of departure or their own gate of escape. They specialise certain activities of the lower Prakriti and turn them towards the Divine. But the normal action of Nature in us is an integral movement in which the full complexity of all our elements is affected by and affects all our environments. The whole of life is the Yoga of Nature. The Yoga that we seek must also be an integral action of Nature, and the whole difference between the Yogi and the natural man will be this, that the Yogi seeks to substitute in himself for the integral action of the lower Nature working in and by ego and division the integral action of the higher Nature working in and by God and unity. If indeed our aim be only an escape from the world to God, synthesis is unnecessary and a waste of time; for then our sole practical aim must be to find out one path out of the thousand that lead to God, one shortest possible of short cuts, and not to linger exploring different paths that end in the same goal. But if our aim be a transformation of our integral being into the terms of God-existence, it is then that a synthesis becomes necessary.

The method we have to pursue, then, is to put our whole conscious being into relation and contact with the Divine and to call Him in to transform our entire being into His. Thus in a sense God Himself, the real Person in us, becomes the sadhaka of the sadhana¹ as well as the Master of the Yoga by whom the lower personality is used as the centre of a divine transfiguration and the instrument of its own perfection. In effect, the pressure of the Tapas, the force of consciousness in us dwelling in the Idea of the divine Nature upon that which we are in our entirety, produces

¹ *Sādhana*, the practice by which perfection, *siddhi*, is attained; *sādhaka*, the Yogi who seeks by that practice the *siddhi*.

its own realisation. The divine and all-knowing and all-effecting descends upon the limited and obscure, progressively illumines and energises the whole lower nature and substitutes its own action for all the terms of the inferior human light and mortal activity.

In psychological fact this method translates itself into the progressive surrender of the ego with its whole field and all its apparatus to the Beyond-ego with its vast and incalculable but always inevitable workings. Certainly, this is no short cut or easy sadhana. It requires a colossal faith, an absolute courage and above all an unflinching patience. For it implies three stages of which only the last can be wholly blissful or rapid,—the attempt of the ego to enter into contact with the Divine, the wide, full and therefore laborious preparation of the whole lower Nature by the divine working to receive and become the higher Nature, and the eventual transformation. In fact, however, the divine Strength, often unobserved and behind the veil, substitutes itself for our weakness and supports us through all our failings of faith, courage and patience. It “makes the blind to see and the lame to stride over the hills.” The intellect becomes aware of a Law that beneficently insists and a succour that upholds; the heart speaks of a Master of all things and Friend of man or a universal Mother who upholds through all stumbling. Therefore this path is at once the most difficult imaginable and yet, in comparison with the magnitude of its effort and object, the most easy and sure of all.

There are three outstanding features of this action of the higher when it works integrally on the lower nature. In the first place it does not act according to a fixed system and succession as in the specialised methods of Yoga, but with a sort of free, scattered and yet gradually intensive and purposeful working determined by the temperament of the individual in whom it operates, the helpful materials which his nature offers and the obstacles which it presents to purification and perfection. In a sense, therefore, each man in this path has his own method of Yoga. Yet are there certain broad lines of working common to all which enable us to construct not indeed a routine system, but

yet some kind of Shastra or scientific method of the synthetic Yoga.

Secondly, the process, being integral, accepts our nature such as it stands organised by our past evolution and without rejecting anything essential compels all to undergo a divine change. Everything in us is seized by the hands of a mighty Artificer and transformed into a clear image of that which it now seeks confusedly to present. In that ever-progressive experience we begin to perceive how this lower manifestation is constituted and that everything in it, however seemingly deformed or petty or vile, is the more or less distorted or imperfect figure of some element or action in the harmony of the divine Nature. We begin to understand what the Vedic Rishis meant when they spoke of the human forefathers fashioning the gods as a smith forges the crude material in his smithy.

Thirdly, the divine Power in us uses all life as the means of this integral Yoga. Every experience and outer contact with our world-environment, however trifling or however disastrous, is used for the work, and every inner experience, even to the most repellent suffering or the most humiliating fall, becomes a step on the path to perfection. And we recognise in ourselves with opened eyes the method of God in the world, His purpose of light in the obscure, of might in the weak and fallen, of delight in what is grievous and miserable. We see the divine method to be the same in the lower and in the higher working; only in the one it is pursued tardily and obscurely through the subconscious in Nature, in the other it becomes swift and self-conscious and the instrument confesses the hand of the Master. All life is a Yoga of Nature seeking to manifest God within itself. Yoga marks the stage at which this effort becomes capable of self-awareness and therefore of right completion in the individual. It is a gathering up and concentration of the movements dispersed and loosely combined in the lower evolution.

An integral method and an integral result. First, an integral realisation of Divine Being; not only a realisation of the One in its indistinguishable unity, but also in its multitude of aspects which are also necessary to the complete knowledge of it by

the relative consciousness; not only realisation of unity in the Self, but of unity in the infinite diversity of activities, worlds and creatures.

Therefore, also, an integral liberation. Not only the freedom born of unbroken contact and identification of the individual being in all its parts with the Divine, *sāyujya-mukti*, by which it can become free² even in its separation, even in the duality; not only the *sālokya-mukti* by which the whole conscious existence dwells in the same status of being as the Divine, in the state of Sachchidananda; but also the acquisition of the divine nature by the transformation of this lower being into the human image of the Divine, *sādharmya-mukti*, and the complete and final release of all, the liberation of the consciousness from the transitory mould of the ego and its unification with the One Being, universal both in the world and the individual and transcendentally one both in the world and beyond all universe.

By this integral realisation and liberation, the perfect harmony of the results of Knowledge, Love and Works. For there is attained the complete release from ego and identification in being with the One in all and beyond all. But since the attaining consciousness is not limited by its attainment, we win also the unity in Beatitude and the harmonised diversity in Love, so that all relations of the play remain possible to us even while we retain on the heights of our being the eternal oneness with the Beloved. And by a similar wideness, being capable of a freedom in spirit that embraces life and does not depend upon withdrawal from life, we are able to become without egoism, bondage or reaction the channel in our mind and body for a divine action poured out freely upon the world.

The divine existence is of the nature not only of freedom, but of purity, beatitude and perfection. An integral purity which shall enable on the one hand the perfect reflection of the divine Being in ourselves and on the other the perfect outpouring of its Truth and Law in us in the terms of life and through the right

² As the Jivanmukta, who is entirely free even without dissolution of the bodily life in a final Samadhi.

functioning of the complex instrument we are in our outer parts, is the condition of an integral liberty. Its result is an integral beatitude, in which there becomes possible at once the Ananda of all that is in the world seen as symbols of the Divine and the Ananda of that which is not-world. And it prepares the integral perfection of our humanity as a type of the Divine in the conditions of the human manifestation, a perfection founded on a certain free universality of being, of love and joy, of play of knowledge and of play of will in power and will in unegoistic action. This integrality also can be attained by the integral Yoga.

Perfection includes perfection of mind and body, so that the highest results of Rajayoga and Hathayoga should be contained in the widest formula of the synthesis finally to be effected by mankind. At any rate a full development of the general mental and physical faculties and experiences attainable by humanity through Yoga must be included in the scope of the integral method. Nor would these have any *raison d'être* unless employed for an integral mental and physical life. Such a mental and physical life would be in its nature a translation of the spiritual existence into its right mental and physical values. Thus we would arrive at a synthesis of the three degrees of Nature and of the three modes of human existence which she has evolved or is evolving. We would include in the scope of our liberated being and perfected modes of activity the material life, our base, and the mental life, our intermediate instrument.

Nor would the integrality to which we aspire be real or even possible, if it were confined to the individual. Since our divine perfection embraces the realisation of ourselves in being, in life and in love through others as well as through ourselves, the extension of our liberty and of its results in others would be the inevitable outcome as well as the broadest utility of our liberation and perfection. And the constant and inherent attempt of such an extension would be towards its increasing and ultimately complete generalisation in mankind.

The divinising of the normal material life of man and of his great secular attempt of mental and moral self-culture in the individual and the race by this integralisation of a widely perfect

spiritual existence would thus be the crown alike of our individual and of our common effort. Such a consummation being no other than the kingdom of heaven within reproduced in the kingdom of heaven without, would be also the true fulfilment of the great dream cherished in different terms by the world's religions.

The widest synthesis of perfection possible to thought is the sole effort entirely worthy of those whose dedicated vision perceives that God dwells concealed in humanity.

Part I
The Yoga of Divine Works

Chapter I

The Four Aids

YOGA-SIDDHI, the perfection that comes from the practice of Yoga, can be best attained by the combined working of four great instruments. There is, first, the knowledge of the truths, principles, powers and processes that govern the realisation — *śāstra*. Next comes a patient and persistent action on the lines laid down by this knowledge, the force of our personal effort — *utsāha*. There intervenes, third, uplifting our knowledge and effort into the domain of spiritual experience, the direct suggestion, example and influence of the Teacher — *guru*. Last comes the instrumentality of Time — *kāla*; for in all things there is a cycle of their action and a period of the divine movement.

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The supreme Shastra of the integral Yoga is the eternal Veda secret in the heart of every thinking and living being. The lotus of the eternal knowledge and the eternal perfection is a bud closed and folded up within us. It opens swiftly or gradually, petal by petal, through successive realisations, once the mind of man begins to turn towards the Eternal, once his heart, no longer compressed and confined by attachment to finite appearances, becomes enamoured, in whatever degree, of the Infinite. All life, all thought, all energising of the faculties, all experiences passive or active, become thenceforward so many shocks which disintegrate the teguments of the soul and remove the obstacles to the inevitable efflorescence. He who chooses the Infinite has been chosen by the Infinite. He has received the divine touch without which there is no awakening, no opening of the spirit; but once it is received, attainment is sure, whether conquered swiftly in the course of one human life or pursued patiently through many

stadia of the cycle of existence in the manifested universe.

Nothing can be taught to the mind which is not already concealed as potential knowledge in the unfolding soul of the creature. So also all perfection of which the outer man is capable, is only a realising of the eternal perfection of the Spirit within him. We know the Divine and become the Divine, because we are That already in our secret nature. All teaching is a revealing, all becoming is an unfolding. Self-attainment is the secret; self-knowledge and an increasing consciousness are the means and the process.

The usual agency of this revealing is the Word, the thing heard (*śruta*). The Word may come to us from within; it may come to us from without. But in either case, it is only an agency for setting the hidden knowledge to work. The word within may be the utterance of the inmost soul in us which is always open to the Divine; or it may be the word of the secret and universal Teacher who is seated in the hearts of all. There are rare cases in which none other is needed, for all the rest of the Yoga is an unfolding under that constant touch and guidance; the lotus of the knowledge discloses itself from within by the power of irradiating effulgence which proceeds from the Dweller in the lotus of the heart. Great indeed, but few are those to whom self-knowledge from within is thus sufficient and who do not need to pass under the dominant influence of a written book or a living teacher.

Ordinarily, the Word from without, representative of the Divine, is needed as an aid in the work of self-unfolding; and it may be either a word from the past or the more powerful word of the living Guru. In some cases this representative word is only taken as a sort of excuse for the inner power to awaken and manifest; it is, as it were, a concession of the omnipotent and omniscient Divine to the generality of a law that governs Nature. Thus it is said in the Upanishads of Krishna, son of Devaki, that he received a word of the Rishi Ghora and had the knowledge. So Ramakrishna, having attained by his own internal effort the central illumination, accepted several teachers in the different paths of Yoga, but always showed in the manner and swiftness

of his realisation that this acceptance was a concession to the general rule by which effective knowledge must be received as by a disciple from a Guru.

But usually the representative influence occupies a much larger place in the life of the sadhaka. If the Yoga is guided by a received written Shastra,—some Word from the past which embodies the experience of former Yogins,—it may be practised either by personal effort alone or with the aid of a Guru. The spiritual knowledge is then gained through meditation on the truths that are taught and it is made living and conscious by their realisation in the personal experience; the Yoga proceeds by the results of prescribed methods taught in a Scripture or a tradition and reinforced and illumined by the instructions of the Master. This is a narrower practice, but safe and effective within its limits, because it follows a well-beaten track to a long familiar goal.

For the sadhaka of the integral Yoga it is necessary to remember that no written Shastra, however great its authority or however large its spirit, can be more than a partial expression of the eternal Knowledge. He will use, but never bind himself even by the greatest Scripture. Where the Scripture is profound, wide, catholic, it may exercise upon him an influence for the highest good and of incalculable importance. It may be associated in his experience with his awakening to crowning verities and his realisation of the highest experiences. His Yoga may be governed for a long time by one Scripture or by several successively,—if it is in the line of the great Hindu tradition, by the Gita, for example, the Upanishads, the Veda. Or it may be a good part of his development to include in its material a richly varied experience of the truths of many Scriptures and make the future opulent with all that is best in the past. But in the end he must take his station, or better still, if he can, always and from the beginning he must live in his own soul beyond the limitations of the word that he uses. The Gita itself thus declares that the Yогin in his progress must pass beyond the written Truth,—*śabdabrahmātivartate*—beyond all that he has heard and all that he has yet to hear,—*śrotavyasya śrutasya ca*. For he is not

the sadhaka of a book or of many books; he is a sadhaka of the Infinite.

Another kind of Shastra is not Scripture, but a statement of the science and methods, the effective principles and way of working of the path of Yoga which the sadhaka elects to follow. Each path has its Shastra, either written or traditional, passing from mouth to mouth through a long line of Teachers. In India a great authority, a high reverence even is ordinarily attached to the written or traditional teaching. All the lines of the Yoga are supposed to be fixed and the Teacher who has received the Shastra by tradition and realised it in practice guides the disciple along the immemorial tracks. One often even hears the objection urged against a new practice, a new Yogic teaching, the adoption of a new formula, "It is not according to the Shastra." But neither in fact nor in the actual practice of the Yogins is there really any such entire rigidity of an iron door shut against new truth, fresh revelation, widened experience. The written or traditional teaching expresses the knowledge and experiences of many centuries systematised, organised, made attainable to the beginner. Its importance and utility are therefore immense. But a great freedom of variation and development is always practicable. Even so highly scientific a system as Rajayoga can be practised on other lines than the organised method of Patanjali. Each of the three paths of the *trimārga*¹ breaks into many bypaths which meet again at the goal. The general knowledge on which the Yoga depends is fixed, but the order, the succession, the devices, the forms must be allowed to vary; for the needs and particular impulsions of the individual nature have to be satisfied even while the general truths remain firm and constant.

An integral and synthetic Yoga needs especially not to be bound by any written or traditional Shastra; for while it embraces the knowledge received from the past, it seeks to organise it anew for the present and the future. An absolute liberty of experience and of the restatement of knowledge in new terms and new combinations is the condition of its self-formation.

¹ The triple path of Knowledge, Devotion and Works.

Seeking to embrace all life in itself, it is in the position not of a pilgrim following the highroad to his destination, but, to that extent at least, of a path-finder hewing his way through a virgin forest. For Yoga has long diverged from life and the ancient systems which sought to embrace it, such as those of our Vedic forefathers, are far away from us, expressed in terms which are no longer accessible, thrown into forms which are no longer applicable. Since then mankind has moved forward on the current of eternal Time and the same problem has to be approached from a new starting-point.

By this Yoga we not only seek the Infinite, but we call upon the Infinite to unfold himself in human life. Therefore the Shastra of our Yoga must provide for an infinite liberty in the receptive human soul. A free adaptability in the manner and the type of the individual's acceptance of the Universal and Transcendent into himself is the right condition for the full spiritual life in man. Vivekananda, pointing out that the unity of all religions must necessarily express itself by an increasing richness of variety in its forms, said once that the perfect state of that essential unity would come when each man had his own religion, when not bound by sect or traditional form he followed the free self-adaptation of his nature in its relations with the Supreme. So also one may say that the perfection of the integral Yoga will come when each man is able to follow his own path of Yoga, pursuing the development of his own nature in its upsurging towards that which transcends the nature. For freedom is the final law and the last consummation.

Meanwhile certain general lines have to be formed which may help to guide the thought and practice of the sadhaka. But these must take as much as possible the form of general truths, general statements of principle, the most powerful broad directions of effort and development rather than a fixed system which has to be followed as a routine. All Shastra is the outcome of past experience and a help to future experience. It is an aid and a partial guide. It puts up signposts, gives the names of the main roads and the already explored directions, so that the traveller may know whither and by what paths he is proceeding.

The rest depends on personal effort and experience and upon the power of the Guide.

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The development of the experience in its rapidity, its amplitude, the intensity and power of its results, depends primarily, in the beginning of the path and long after, on the aspiration and personal effort of the sadhaka. The process of Yoga is a turning of the human soul from the egoistic state of consciousness absorbed in the outward appearances and attractions of things to a higher state in which the Transcendent and Universal can pour itself into the individual mould and transform it. The first determining element of the siddhi is, therefore, the intensity of the turning, the force which directs the soul inward. The power of aspiration of the heart, the force of the will, the concentration of the mind, the perseverance and determination of the applied energy are the measure of that intensity. The ideal sadhaka should be able to say in the Biblical phrase, "My zeal for the Lord has eaten me up." It is this zeal for the Lord,—*utsāha*, the zeal of the whole nature for its divine results, *vyākulatā*, the heart's eagerness for the attainment of the Divine,—that devours the ego and breaks up the limitations of its petty and narrow mould for the full and wide reception of that which it seeks, that which, being universal, exceeds and, being transcendent, surpasses even the largest and highest individual self and nature.

But this is only one side of the force that works for perfection. The process of the integral Yoga has three stages, not indeed sharply distinguished or separate, but in a certain measure successive. There must be, first, the effort towards at least an initial and enabling self-transcendence and contact with the Divine; next, the reception of that which transcends, that with which we have gained communion, into ourselves for the transformation of our whole conscious being; last, the utilisation of our transformed humanity as a divine centre in the world. So long as the contact with the Divine is not in some considerable degree established, so long as there is not some measure of sustained

identity, *sāyujya*, the element of personal effort must normally predominate. But in proportion as this contact establishes itself, the sadhaka must become conscious that a force other than his own, a force transcending his egoistic endeavour and capacity, is at work in him and to this Power he learns progressively to submit himself and delivers up to it the charge of his Yoga. In the end his own will and force become one with the higher Power; he merges them in the divine Will and its transcendent and universal Force. He finds it thenceforward presiding over the necessary transformation of his mental, vital and physical being with an impartial wisdom and provident effectivity of which the eager and interested ego is not capable. It is when this identification and this self-merging are complete that the divine centre in the world is ready. Purified, liberated, plastic, illumined, it can begin to serve as a means for the direct action of a supreme Power in the larger Yoga of humanity or superhumanity, of the earth's spiritual progression or its transformation.

Always indeed it is the higher Power that acts. Our sense of personal effort and aspiration comes from the attempt of the egoistic mind to identify itself in a wrong and imperfect way with the workings of the divine Force. It persists in applying to experience on a supernormal plane the ordinary terms of mentality which it applies to its normal experiences in the world. In the world we act with the sense of egoism; we claim the universal forces that work in us as our own; we claim as the effect of our personal will, wisdom, force, virtue the selective, formative, progressive action of the Transcendent in this frame of mind, life and body. Enlightenment brings to us the knowledge that the ego is only an instrument; we begin to perceive and feel that these things are our own in the sense that they belong to our supreme and integral Self, one with the Transcendent, not to the instrumental ego. Our limitations and distortions are our contribution to the working; the true power in it is the Divine's. When the human ego realises that its will is a tool, its wisdom ignorance and childishness, its power an infant's groping, its virtue a pretentious impurity, and learns to trust itself to that which transcends it, that is its salvation. The

apparent freedom and self-assertion of our personal being to which we are so profoundly attached, conceal a most pitiable subjection to a thousand suggestions, impulsions, forces which we have made extraneous to our little person. Our ego, boasting of freedom, is at every moment the slave, toy and puppet of countless beings, powers, forces, influences in universal Nature. The self-abnegation of the ego in the Divine is its self-fulfilment; its surrender to that which transcends it is its liberation from bonds and limits and its perfect freedom.

But still, in the practical development, each of the three stages has its necessity and utility and must be given its time or its place. It will not do, it cannot be safe or effective to begin with the last and highest alone. It would not be the right course, either, to leap prematurely from one to another. For even if from the beginning we recognise in mind and heart the Supreme, there are elements of the nature which long prevent the recognition from becoming realisation. But without realisation our mental belief cannot become a dynamic reality; it is still only a figure of knowledge, not a living truth, an idea, not yet a power. And even if realisation has begun, it may be dangerous to imagine or to assume too soon that we are altogether in the hands of the Supreme or are acting as his instrument. That assumption may introduce a calamitous falsity; it may produce a helpless inertia or, magnifying the movements of the ego with the Divine Name, it may disastrously distort and ruin the whole course of the Yoga. There is a period, more or less prolonged, of internal effort and struggle in which the individual will has to reject the darkness and distortions of the lower nature and to put itself resolutely or vehemently on the side of the divine Light. The mental energies, the heart's emotions, the vital desires, the very physical being have to be compelled into the right attitude or trained to admit and answer to the right influences. It is only then, only when this has been truly done, that the surrender of the lower to the higher can be effected, because the sacrifice has become acceptable.

The personal will of the sadhaka has first to seize on the egoistic energies and turn them towards the light and the right;

once turned, he has still to train them to recognise that always, always to accept, always to follow that. Progressing, he learns, still using the personal will, personal effort, personal energies, to employ them as representatives of the higher Power and in conscious obedience to the higher Influence. Progressing yet farther, his will, effort, energy become no longer personal and separate, but activities of that higher Power and Influence at work in the individual. But there is still a sort of gulf or distance which necessitates an obscure process of transit, not always accurate, sometimes even very distorting, between the divine Origin and the emerging human current. At the end of the process, with the progressive disappearance of egoism and impurity and ignorance, this last separation is removed; all in the individual becomes the divine working.

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As the supreme Shastra of the integral Yoga is the eternal Veda secret in the heart of every man, so its supreme Guide and Teacher is the inner Guide, the World-Teacher, *jagad-guru*, secret within us. It is he who destroys our darkness by the resplendent light of his knowledge; that light becomes within us the increasing glory of his own self-revelation. He discloses progressively in us his own nature of freedom, bliss, love, power, immortal being. He sets above us his divine example as our ideal and transforms the lower existence into a reflection of that which it contemplates. By the inpouring of his own influence and presence into us he enables the individual being to attain to identity with the universal and transcendent.

What is his method and his system? He has no method and every method. His system is a natural organisation of the highest processes and movements of which the nature is capable. Applying themselves even to the pettiest details and to the actions the most insignificant in their appearance with as much care and thoroughness as to the greatest, they in the end lift all into the Light and transform all. For in his Yoga there is nothing too small to be used and nothing too great to be attempted. As the

servant and disciple of the Master has no business with pride or egoism because all is done for him from above, so also he has no right to despond because of his personal deficiencies or the stumblings of his nature. For the Force that works in him is impersonal — or superpersonal — and infinite.

The full recognition of this inner Guide, Master of the Yoga, lord, light, enjoyer and goal of all sacrifice and effort, is of the utmost importance in the path of integral perfection. It is immaterial whether he is first seen as an impersonal Wisdom, Love and Power behind all things, as an Absolute manifesting in the relative and attracting it, as one's highest Self and the highest Self of all, as a Divine Person within us and in the world, in one of his — or her — numerous forms and names or as the ideal which the mind conceives. In the end we perceive that he is all and more than all these things together. The mind's door of entry to the conception of him must necessarily vary according to the past evolution and the present nature.

This inner Guide is often veiled at first by the very intensity of our personal effort and by the ego's preoccupation with itself and its aims. As we gain in clarity and the turmoil of egoistic effort gives place to a calmer self-knowledge, we recognise the source of the growing light within us. We recognise it retrospectively as we realise how all our obscure and conflicting movements have been determined towards an end that we only now begin to perceive, how even before our entrance into the path of the Yoga the evolution of our life has been designedly led towards its turning-point. For now we begin to understand the sense of our struggles and efforts, successes and failures. At last we are able to seize the meaning of our ordeals and sufferings and can appreciate the help that was given us by all that hurt and resisted and the utility of our very falls and stumblings. We recognise this divine leading afterwards, not retrospectively but immediately, in the moulding of our thoughts by a transcendent Seer, of our will and actions by an all-embracing Power, of our emotional life by an all-attracting and all-assimilating Bliss and Love. We recognise it too in a more personal relation that from the first touched or at the last seizes us; we feel the

eternal presence of a supreme Master, Friend, Lover, Teacher. We recognise it in the essence of our being as that develops into likeness and oneness with a greater and wider existence; for we perceive that this miraculous development is not the result of our own efforts: an eternal Perfection is moulding us into its own image. One who is the Lord or Ishwara of the Yogic philosophies, the Guide in the conscious being (*caitya guru* or *antaryāmin*), the Absolute of the thinker, the Unknowable of the Agnostic, the universal Force of the materialist, the supreme Soul and the supreme Shakti, the One who is differently named and imaged by the religions, is the Master of our Yoga.

To see, know, become and fulfil this One in our inner selves and in all our outer nature, was always the secret goal and becomes now the conscious purpose of our embodied existence. To be conscious of him in all parts of our being and equally in all that the dividing mind sees as outside our being, is the consummation of the individual consciousness. To be possessed by him and possess him in ourselves and in all things is the term of all empire and mastery. To enjoy him in all experience of passivity and activity, of peace and of power, of unity and of difference is the happiness which the Jiva, the individual soul manifested in the world, is obscurely seeking. This is the entire definition of the aim of integral Yoga; it is the rendering in personal experience of the truth which universal Nature has hidden in herself and which she travails to discover. It is the conversion of the human soul into the divine soul and of natural life into divine living.

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The surest way towards this integral fulfilment is to find the Master of the secret who dwells within us, open ourselves constantly to the divine Power which is also the divine Wisdom and Love and trust to it to effect the conversion. But it is difficult for the egoistic consciousness to do this at all at the beginning. And, if done at all, it is still difficult to do it perfectly and in every strand of our nature. It is difficult at first because our

egoistic habits of thought, of sensation, of feeling block up the avenues by which we can arrive at the perception that is needed. It is difficult afterwards because the faith, the surrender, the courage requisite in this path are not easy to the ego-clouded soul. The divine working is not the working which the egoistic mind desires or approves; for it uses error in order to arrive at truth, suffering in order to arrive at bliss, imperfection in order to arrive at perfection. The ego cannot see where it is being led; it revolts against the leading, loses confidence, loses courage. These failings would not matter; for the divine Guide within is not offended by our revolt, not discouraged by our want of faith or repelled by our weakness; he has the entire love of the mother and the entire patience of the teacher. But by withdrawing our assent from the guidance we lose the consciousness, though not all the actuality—not, in any case, the eventuality—of its benefit. And we withdraw our assent because we fail to distinguish our higher Self from the lower through which he is preparing his self-revelation. As in the world, so in ourselves, we cannot see God because of his workings and, especially, because he works in us through our nature and not by a succession of arbitrary miracles. Man demands miracles that he may have faith; he wishes to be dazzled in order that he may see. And this impatience, this ignorance may turn into a great danger and disaster if, in our revolt against the divine leading, we call in another distorting Force more satisfying to our impulses and desires and ask it to guide us and give it the Divine Name.

But while it is difficult for man to believe in something unseen within himself, it is easy for him to believe in something which he can image as extraneous to himself. The spiritual progress of most human beings demands an extraneous support, an object of faith outside us. It needs an external image of God; or it needs a human representative,—Incarnation, Prophet or Guru; or it demands both and receives them. For according to the need of the human soul the Divine manifests himself as deity, as human divine or in simple humanity—using that thick disguise, which so successfully conceals the Godhead, for a means of transmission of his guidance.

The Hindu discipline of spirituality provides for this need of the soul by the conceptions of the Ishta Devata, the Avatar and the Guru. By the Ishta Devata, the chosen deity, is meant, — not some inferior Power, but a name and form of the transcendent and universal Godhead. Almost all religions either have as their base or make use of some such name and form of the Divine. Its necessity for the human soul is evident. God is the All and more than the All. But that which is more than the All, how shall man conceive? And even the All is at first too hard for him; for he himself in his active consciousness is a limited and selective formation and can open himself only to that which is in harmony with his limited nature. There are things in the All which are too hard for his comprehension or seem too terrible to his sensitive emotions and cowring sensations. Or, simply, he cannot conceive as the Divine, cannot approach or cannot recognise something that is too much out of the circle of his ignorant or partial conceptions. It is necessary for him to conceive God in his own image or in some form that is beyond himself but consonant with his highest tendencies and seizable by his feelings or his intelligence. Otherwise it would be difficult for him to come into contact and communion with the Divine.

Even then his nature calls for a human intermediary so that he may feel the Divine in something entirely close to his own humanity and sensible in a human influence and example. This call is satisfied by the Divine manifest in a human appearance, the Incarnation, the Avatar — Krishna, Christ, Buddha. Or if this is too hard for him to conceive, the Divine represents himself through a less marvellous intermediary, — Prophet or Teacher. For many who cannot conceive or are unwilling to accept the Divine Man, are ready to open themselves to the supreme man, terming him not incarnation but world-teacher or divine representative.

This also is not enough; a living influence, a living example, a present instruction is needed. For it is only the few who can make the past Teacher and his teaching, the past Incarnation and his example and influence a living force in their lives. For this need

also the Hindu discipline provides in the relation of the Guru and the disciple. The Guru may sometimes be the Incarnation or World-Teacher; but it is sufficient that he should represent to the disciple the divine wisdom, convey to him something of the divine ideal or make him feel the realised relation of the human soul with the Eternal.

The sadhaka of the integral Yoga will make use of all these aids according to his nature; but it is necessary that he should shun their limitations and cast from himself that exclusive tendency of egoistic mind which cries, "My God, my Incarnation, my Prophet, my Guru," and opposes it to all other realisation in a sectarian or a fanatical spirit. All sectarianism, all fanaticism must be shunned; for it is inconsistent with the integrity of the divine realisation.

On the contrary, the sadhaka of the integral Yoga will not be satisfied until he has included all other names and forms of Deity in his own conception, seen his own Ishta Devata in all others, unified all Avatars in the unity of Him who descends in the Avatar, welded the truth in all teachings into the harmony of the Eternal Wisdom.

Nor should he forget the aim of these external aids which is to awaken his soul to the Divine within him. Nothing has been finally accomplished if that has not been accomplished. It is not sufficient to worship Krishna, Christ or Buddha without, if there is not the revealing and the formation of the Buddha, the Christ or Krishna in ourselves. And all other aids equally have no other purpose; each is a bridge between man's unconverted state and the revelation of the Divine within him.

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The Teacher of the integral Yoga will follow as far as he may the method of the Teacher within us. He will lead the disciple through the nature of the disciple. Teaching, example, influence,—these are the three instruments of the Guru. But the wise Teacher will not seek to impose himself or his opinions on the passive acceptance of the receptive mind; he will throw in only

what is productive and sure as a seed which will grow under the divine fostering within. He will seek to awaken much more than to instruct; he will aim at the growth of the faculties and the experiences by a natural process and free expansion. He will give a method as an aid, as a utilisable device, not as an imperative formula or a fixed routine. And he will be on his guard against any turning of the means into a limitation, against the mechanising of process. His whole business is to awaken the divine light and set working the divine force of which he himself is only a means and an aid, a body or a channel.

The example is more powerful than the instruction; but it is not the example of the outward acts nor that of the personal character which is of most importance. These have their place and their utility; but what will most stimulate aspiration in others is the central fact of the divine realisation within him governing his whole life and inner state and all his activities. This is the universal and essential element; the rest belongs to individual person and circumstance. It is this dynamic realisation that the sadhaka must feel and reproduce in himself according to his own nature; he need not strive after an imitation from outside which may well be sterilising rather than productive of right and natural fruits.

Influence is more important than example. Influence is not the outward authority of the Teacher over his disciple, but the power of his contact, of his presence, of the nearness of his soul to the soul of another, infusing into it, even though in silence, that which he himself is and possesses. This is the supreme sign of the Master. For the greatest Master is much less a Teacher than a Presence pouring the divine consciousness and its constituting light and power and purity and bliss into all who are receptive around him.

And it shall also be a sign of the teacher of the integral Yoga that he does not arrogate to himself Guruhood in a humanly vain and self-exalting spirit. His work, if he has one, is a trust from above, he himself a channel, a vessel or a representative. He is a man helping his brothers, a child leading children, a Light kindling other lights, an awakened Soul awakening souls,

at highest a Power or Presence of the Divine calling to him other powers of the Divine.

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The sadhaka who has all these aids is sure of his goal. Even a fall will be for him only a means of rising and death a passage towards fulfilment. For once on this path, birth and death become only processes in the development of his being and the stages of his journey.

Time is the remaining aid needed for the effectivity of the process. Time presents itself to human effort as an enemy or a friend, as a resistance, a medium or an instrument. But always it is really the instrument of the soul.

Time is a field of circumstances and forces meeting and working out a resultant progression whose course it measures. To the ego it is a tyrant or a resistance, to the Divine an instrument. Therefore, while our effort is personal, Time appears as a resistance, for it presents to us all the obstruction of the forces that conflict with our own. When the divine working and the personal are combined in our consciousness, it appears as a medium and a condition. When the two become one, it appears as a servant and instrument.

The ideal attitude of the sadhaka towards Time is to have an endless patience as if he had all eternity for his fulfilment and yet to develop the energy that shall realise now and with an ever-increasing mastery and pressure of rapidity till it reaches the miraculous instantaneousness of the supreme divine Transformation.

Chapter II

Self-Consecration

ALL YOGA is in its nature a new birth; it is a birth out of the ordinary, the mentalised material life of man into a higher spiritual consciousness and a greater and diviner being. No Yoga can be successfully undertaken and followed unless there is a strong awakening to the necessity of that larger spiritual existence. The soul that is called to this deep and vast inward change, may arrive in different ways to the initial departure. It may come to it by its own natural development which has been leading it unconsciously towards the awakening; it may reach it through the influence of a religion or the attraction of a philosophy; it may approach it by a slow illumination or leap to it by a sudden touch or shock; it may be pushed or led to it by the pressure of outward circumstances or by an inward necessity, by a single word that breaks the seals of the mind or by long reflection, by the distant example of one who has trod the path or by contact and daily influence. According to the nature and the circumstances the call will come.

But in whatever way it comes, there must be a decision of the mind and the will and, as its result, a complete and effective self-consecration. The acceptance of a new spiritual idea-force and upward orientation in the being, an illumination, a turning or conversion seized on by the will and the heart's aspiration,—this is the momentous act which contains as in a seed all the results that the Yoga has to give. The mere idea or intellectual seeking of something higher beyond, however strongly grasped by the mind's interest, is ineffective unless it is seized on by the heart as the one thing desirable and by the will as the one thing to be done. For truth of the Spirit has not to be merely thought but to be lived, and to live it demands a unified single-mindedness of the being; so great a change as is contemplated by the Yoga is not to be effected by a divided will or by a small portion of the

energy or by a hesitating mind. He who seeks the Divine must consecrate himself to God and to God only.

If the change comes suddenly and decisively by an overpowering influence, there is no further essential or lasting difficulty. The choice follows upon the thought, or is simultaneous with it, and the self-consecration follows upon the choice. The feet are already set upon the path, even if they seem at first to wander uncertainly and even though the path itself may be only obscurely seen and the knowledge of the goal may be imperfect. The secret Teacher, the inner Guide is already at work, though he may not yet manifest himself or may not yet appear in the person of his human representative. Whatever difficulties and hesitations may ensue, they cannot eventually prevail against the power of the experience that has turned the current of the life. The call, once decisive, stands; the thing that has been born cannot eventually be stifled. Even if the force of circumstances prevents a regular pursuit or a full practical self-consecration from the first, still the mind has taken its bent and persists and returns with an ever-increasing effect upon its leading preoccupation. There is an ineluctable persistence of the inner being, and against it circumstances are in the end powerless, and no weakness in the nature can for long be an obstacle.

But this is not always the manner of the commencement. The sadhaka is often led gradually and there is a long space between the first turning of the mind and the full assent of the nature to the thing towards which it turns. There may at first be only a vivid intellectual interest, a forcible attraction towards the idea and some imperfect form of practice. Or perhaps there is an effort not favoured by the whole nature, a decision or a turn imposed by an intellectual influence or dictated by personal affection and admiration for someone who is himself consecrated and devoted to the Highest. In such cases, a long period of preparation may be necessary before there comes the irrevocable consecration; and in some instances it may not come. There may be some advance, there may be a strong effort, even much purification and many experiences other than those that are central or supreme; but the life will either be spent in

preparation or, a certain stage having been reached, the mind pushed by an insufficient driving-force may rest content at the limit of the effort possible to it. Or there may even be a recoil to the lower life,—what is called in the ordinary parlance of Yoga a fall from the path. This lapse happens because there is a defect at the very centre. The intellect has been interested, the heart attracted, the will has strung itself to the effort, but the whole nature has not been taken captive by the Divine. It has only acquiesced in the interest, the attraction or the endeavour. There has been an experiment, perhaps even an eager experiment, but not a total self-giving to an imperative need of the soul or to an unforsakable ideal. Even such imperfect Yoga has not been wasted; for no upward effort is made in vain. Even if it fails in the present or arrives only at some preparatory stage or preliminary realisation, it has yet determined the soul's future.

But if we desire to make the most of the opportunity that this life gives us, if we wish to respond adequately to the call we have received and to attain to the goal we have glimpsed, not merely advance a little towards it, it is essential that there should be an entire self-giving. The secret of success in Yoga is to regard it not as one of the aims to be pursued in life, but as the one and only aim, not as an important part of life, but as the whole of life.

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And since Yoga is in its essence a turning away from the ordinary material and animal life led by most men or from the more mental but still limited way of living followed by the few to a greater spiritual life, to the way divine, every part of our energies that is given to the lower existence in the spirit of that existence is a contradiction of our aim and our self-dedication. On the other hand, every energy or activity that we can convert from its allegiance to the lower and dedicate to the service of the higher is so much gained on our road, so much taken from the powers that oppose our progress. It is the difficulty of this wholesale conversion that is the source of all the stumblings in

the path of Yoga. For our entire nature and its environment, all our personal and all our universal self, are full of habits and of influences that are opposed to our spiritual rebirth and work against the whole-heartedness of our endeavour. In a certain sense we are nothing but a complex mass of mental, nervous and physical habits held together by a few ruling ideas, desires and associations,—an amalgam of many small self-repeating forces with a few major vibrations. What we propose in our Yoga is nothing less than to break up the whole formation of our past and present which makes up the ordinary material and mental man and to create a new centre of vision and a new universe of activities in ourselves which shall constitute a divine humanity or a superhuman nature.

The first necessity is to dissolve that central faith and vision in the mind which concentrate it on its development and satisfaction and interests in the old externalised order of things. It is imperative to exchange this surface orientation for the deeper faith and vision which see only the Divine and seek only after the Divine. The next need is to compel all our lower being to pay homage to this new faith and greater vision. All our nature must make an integral surrender; it must offer itself in every part and every movement to that which seems to the unregenerated sense-mind so much less real than the material world and its objects. Our whole being—soul, mind, sense, heart, will, life, body—must consecrate all its energies so entirely and in such a way that it shall become a fit vehicle for the Divine. This is no easy task; for everything in the world follows the fixed habit which is to it a law and resists a radical change. And no change can be more radical than the revolution attempted in the integral Yoga. Everything in us has constantly to be called back to the central faith and will and vision. Every thought and impulse has to be reminded in the language of the Upanishad that “That is the divine Brahman and not this which men here adore.” Every vital fibre has to be persuaded to accept an entire renunciation of all that hitherto represented to it its own existence. Mind has to cease to be mind and become brilliant with something beyond it. Life has to change into a thing vast and calm and intense and

powerful that can no longer recognise its old blind eager narrow self of petty impulse and desire. Even the body has to submit to a mutation and be no longer the clamorous animal or the impeding clod it now is, but become instead a conscious servant and radiant instrument and living form of the spirit.

The difficulty of the task has led naturally to the pursuit of easy and trenchant solutions; it has generated and fixed deeply the tendency of religions and of schools of Yoga to separate the life of the world from the inner life. The powers of this world and their actual activities, it is felt, either do not belong to God at all or are for some obscure and puzzling cause, Maya or another, a dark contradiction of the divine Truth. And on their own opposite side the powers of the Truth and their ideal activities are seen to belong to quite another plane of consciousness than that, obscure, ignorant and perverse in its impulses and forces, on which the life of the earth is founded. There appears at once the antinomy of a bright and pure kingdom of God and a dark and impure kingdom of the devil; we feel the opposition of our crawling earthly birth and life to an exalted spiritual God-consciousness; we become readily convinced of the incompatibility of life's subjection to Maya with the soul's concentration in pure Brahman existence. The easiest way is to turn away from all that belongs to the one and to retreat by a naked and precipitous ascent into the other. Thus arises the attraction and, it would seem, the necessity of the principle of exclusive concentration which plays so prominent a part in the specialised schools of Yoga; for by that concentration we can arrive through an uncompromising renunciation of the world at an entire self-consecration to the One on whom we concentrate. It is no longer incumbent on us to compel all the lower activities to the difficult recognition of a new and higher spiritualised life and train them to be its agents or executive powers. It is enough to kill or quiet them and keep at most the few energies necessary, on one side, for the maintenance of the body and, on the other, for communion with the Divine.

The very aim and conception of an integral Yoga debar us from adopting this simple and strenuous high-pitched process.

The hope of an integral transformation forbids us to take a short cut or to make ourselves light for the race by throwing away our impedimenta. For we have set out to conquer all ourselves and the world for God; we are determined to give him our becoming as well as our being and not merely to bring the pure and naked spirit as a bare offering to a remote and secret Divinity in a distant heaven or abolish all we are in a holocaust to an immobile Absolute. The Divine that we adore is not only a remote extra-cosmic Reality, but a half-veiled Manifestation present and near to us here in the universe. Life is the field of a divine manifestation not yet complete: here, in life, on earth, in the body,—*ihaiva*, as the Upanishads insist,—we have to unveil the Godhead; here we must make its transcendent greatness, light and sweetness real to our consciousness, here possess and, as far as may be, express it. Life then we must accept in our Yoga in order utterly to transmute it; we are forbidden to shrink from the difficulties that this acceptance may add to our struggle. Our compensation is that even if the path is more rugged, the effort more complex and bafflingly arduous, yet after a certain point we gain an immense advantage. For once our minds are reasonably fixed in the central vision and our wills are on the whole converted to the single pursuit, Life becomes our helper. Intent, vigilant, integrally conscious, we can take every detail of its forms and every incident of its movements as food for the sacrificial Fire within us. Victorious in the struggle, we can compel Earth herself to be an aid towards our perfection and can enrich our realisation with the booty torn from the Powers that oppose us.

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There is another direction in which the ordinary practice of Yoga arrives at a helpful but narrowing simplification which is denied to the sadhaka of the integral aim. The practice of Yoga brings us face to face with the extraordinary complexity of our own being, the stimulating but also embarrassing multiplicity of our personality, the rich endless confusion of Nature. To the ordinary man

who lives upon his own waking surface, ignorant of the self's depths and vastnesses behind the veil, his psychological existence is fairly simple. A small but clamorous company of desires, some imperative intellectual and aesthetic cravings, some tastes, a few ruling or prominent ideas amid a great current of unconnected or ill-connected and mostly trivial thoughts, a number of more or less imperative vital needs, alternations of physical health and disease, a scattered and inconsequent succession of joys and griefs, frequent minor disturbances and vicissitudes and rarer strong searchings and upheavals of mind or body, and through it all Nature, partly with the aid of his thought and will, partly without or in spite of it, arranging these things in some rough practical fashion, some tolerable disorderly order,—this is the material of his existence. The average human being even now is in his inward existence as crude and undeveloped as was the bygone primitive man in his outward life. But as soon as we go deep within ourselves,—and Yoga means a plunge into all the multiple profundities of the soul,—we find ourselves subjectively, as man in his growth has found himself objectively, surrounded by a whole complex world which we have to know and to conquer.

The most disconcerting discovery is to find that every part of us—intellect, will, sense-mind, nervous or desire self, the heart, the body—has each, as it were, its own complex individuality and natural formation independent of the rest; it neither agrees with itself nor with the others nor with the representative ego which is the shadow cast by some central and centralising self on our superficial ignorance. We find that we are composed not of one but many personalities and each has its own demands and differing nature. Our being is a roughly constituted chaos into which we have to introduce the principle of a divine order. Moreover, we find that inwardly too, no less than outwardly, we are not alone in the world; the sharp separateness of our ego was no more than a strong imposition and delusion; we do not exist in ourselves, we do not really live apart in an inner privacy or solitude. Our mind is a receiving, developing and modifying machine into which there is being constantly passed from

moment to moment a ceaseless foreign flux, a streaming mass of disparate materials from above, from below, from outside. Much more than half our thoughts and feelings are not our own in the sense that they take form out of ourselves; of hardly anything can it be said that it is truly original to our nature. A large part comes to us from others or from the environment, whether as raw material or as manufactured imports; but still more largely they come from universal Nature here or from other worlds and planes and their beings and powers and influences; for we are overtopped and environed by other planes of consciousness, mind planes, life planes, subtle matter planes, from which our life and action here are fed, or fed on, pressed, dominated, made use of for the manifestation of their forms and forces. The difficulty of our separate salvation is immensely increased by this complexity and manifold openness and subjection to the in-streaming energies of the universe. Of all this we have to take account, to deal with it, to know what is the secret stuff of our nature and its constituent and resultant motions and to create in it all a divine centre and a true harmony and luminous order.

In the ordinary paths of Yoga the method used for dealing with these conflicting materials is direct and simple. One or another of the principal psychological forces in us is selected as our single means for attaining to the Divine; the rest is quieted into inertia or left to starve in its smallness. The Bhakta, seizing on the emotional forces of the being, the intense activities of the heart, abides concentrated in the love of God, gathered up as into a single one-pointed tongue of fire; he is indifferent to the activities of thought, throws behind him the importunities of the reason, cares nothing for the mind's thirst for knowledge. All the knowledge he needs is his faith and the inspirations that well up from a heart in communion with the Divine. He has no use for any will to works that is not turned to the direct worship of the Beloved or the service of the temple. The man of Knowledge, self-confined by a deliberate choice to the force and activities of discriminative thought, finds release in the mind's hushed inward-drawn endeavour. He concentrates on the idea of the self, succeeds by a subtle inner discernment

in distinguishing its silent presence amid the veiling activities of Nature, and through the perceptive idea arrives at the concrete spiritual experience. He is indifferent to the play of the emotions, deaf to the hunger-call of passion, closed to the activities of Life, — the more blessed he, the sooner they fall away from him and leave him free, still and mute, the eternal non-doer. The body is his stumbling-block, the vital functions are his enemies; if their demands can be reduced to a minimum, that is his great good fortune. The endless difficulties that arise from the environing world are dismissed by erecting firmly against them a defence of outer physical and inner spiritual solitude; safe behind a wall of inner silence, he remains impassive and untouched by the world and by others. To be alone with oneself or alone with the Divine, to walk apart with God and his devotees, to entrench oneself in the single self-ward endeavour of the mind or Godward passion of the heart is the trend of these Yogas. The problem is solved by the excision of all but the one central difficulty which pursues the one chosen motive-force; into the midst of the dividing calls of our nature the principle of an exclusive concentration comes sovereignly to our rescue.

But for the sadhaka of the integral Yoga this inner or this outer solitude can only be incidents or periods in his spiritual progress. Accepting life, he has to bear not only his own burden, but a great part of the world's burden too along with it, as a continuation of his own sufficiently heavy load. Therefore his Yoga has much more of the nature of a battle than others; but this is not only an individual battle, it is a collective war waged over a considerable country. He has not only to conquer in himself the forces of egoistic falsehood and disorder, but to conquer them as representatives of the same adverse and inexhaustible forces in the world. Their representative character gives them a much more obstinate capacity of resistance, an almost endless right to recurrence. Often he finds that even after he has won persistently his own personal battle, he has still to win it over and over again in a seemingly interminable war, because his inner existence has already been so much enlarged that not only it contains his own being with its well-defined needs and experiences, but is in

solidarity with the being of others, because in himself he contains the universe.

Nor is the seeker of the integral fulfilment permitted to solve too arbitrarily even the conflict of his own inner members. He has to harmonise deliberate knowledge with unquestioning faith; he must conciliate the gentle soul of love with the formidable need of power; the passivity of the soul that lives content in transcendent calm has to be fused with the activity of the divine helper and the divine warrior. To him as to all seekers of the spirit there are offered for solution the oppositions of the reason, the clinging hold of the senses, the perturbations of the heart, the ambush of the desires, the clog of the physical body; but he has to deal in another fashion with their mutual and internal conflicts and their hindrance to his aim, for he must arrive at an infinitely more difficult perfection in the handling of all this rebel matter. Accepting them as instruments for the divine realisation and manifestation, he has to convert their jangling discords, to enlighten their thick darknesses, to transfigure them separately and all together, harmonising them in themselves and with each other,—integrally, omitting no grain or strand or vibration, leaving no iota of imperfection anywhere. An exclusive concentration, or even a succession of concentrations of that kind, can be in his complex work only a temporary convenience; it has to be abandoned as soon as its utility is over. An all-inclusive concentration is the difficult achievement towards which he must labour.

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Concentration is indeed the first condition of any Yoga, but it is an all-receiving concentration that is the very nature of the integral Yoga. A separate strong fixing of the thought, of the emotions or of the will on a single idea, object, state, inner movement or principle is no doubt a frequent need here also; but this is only a subsidiary helpful process. A wide massive opening, a harmonised concentration of the whole being in all its parts and through all its powers upon the One who is the All

is the larger action of this Yoga without which it cannot achieve its purpose. For it is the consciousness that rests in the One and that acts in the All to which we aspire; it is this that we seek to impose on every element of our being and on every movement of our nature. This wide and concentrated totality is the essential character of the Sadhana and its character must determine its practice.

But even though the concentration of all the being on the Divine is the character of the Yoga, yet is our being too complex a thing to be taken up easily and at once, as if we were taking up the world in a pair of hands, and set in its entirety to a single task. Man in his effort at self-transcendence has usually to seize on some one spring or some powerful leverage in the complicated machine that his nature is; this spring or lever he touches in preference to others and uses it to set the machine in motion towards the end that he has in view. In his choice it is always Nature itself that should be his guide. But here it must be Nature at her highest and widest in him, not at her lowest or in some limiting movement. In her lower vital activities it is desire that Nature takes as her most powerful leverage; but the distinct character of man is that he is a mental being, not a merely vital creature. As he can use his thinking mind and will to restrain and correct his life impulses, so too he can bring in the action of a still higher luminous mentality aided by the deeper soul in him, the psychic being, and supersede by these greater and purer motive-powers the domination of the vital and sensational force that we call desire. He can entirely master or persuade it and offer it up for transformation to its divine Master. This higher mentality and this deeper soul, the psychic element in man, are the two grappling hooks by which the Divine can lay hold upon his nature.

The higher mind in man is something other, loftier, purer, vaster, more powerful than the reason or logical intelligence. The animal is a vital and sensational being; man, it is said, is distinguished from the animal by the possession of reason. But that is a very summary, a very imperfect and misleading account of the matter. For reason is only a particular and limited

utilitarian and instrumental activity that proceeds from something much greater than itself, from a power that dwells in an ether more luminous, wider, illimitable. The true and ultimate, as distinguished from the immediate or intermediate importance of our observing, reasoning, inquiring, judging intelligence is that it prepares the human being for the right reception and right action of a Light from above which must progressively replace in him the obscure light from below that guides the animal. The latter also has a rudimentary reason, a kind of thought, a soul, a will and keen emotions; even though less developed, its psychology is yet the same in kind as man's. But all these capacities in the animal are automatically moved and strictly limited, almost even constituted by the lower nervous being. All animal perceptions, sensibilities, activities are ruled by nervous and vital instincts, cravings, needs, satisfactions, of which the nexus is the life-impulse and vital desire. Man too is bound, but less bound, to this automatism of the vital nature. Man can bring an enlightened will, an enlightened thought and enlightened emotions to the difficult work of his self-development; he can more and more subject to these more conscious and reflecting guides the inferior function of desire. In proportion as he can thus master and enlighten his lower self, he is man and no longer an animal. When he can begin to replace desire altogether by a still greater enlightened thought and sight and will in touch with the Infinite, consciously subject to a diviner will than his own, linked to a more universal and transcendent knowledge, he has commenced the ascent towards the superman; he is on his upward march towards the Divine.

It is, then, in the highest mind of thought and light and will or it is in the inner heart of deepest feeling and emotion that we must first centre our consciousness,—in either of them or, if we are capable, in both together,—and use that as our leverage to lift the nature wholly towards the Divine. The concentration of an enlightened thought, will and heart turned in unison towards one vast goal of our knowledge, one luminous and infinite source of our action, one imperishable object of our emotion is the starting-point of the Yoga. And the object of our seeking must be

the very fount of the Light which is growing in us, the very origin of the Force which we are calling to move our members. Our one objective must be the Divine himself to whom, knowingly or unknowingly, something always aspires in our secret nature. There must be a large, many-sided yet single concentration of the thought on the idea, the perception, the vision, the awakening touch, the soul's realisation of the one Divine. There must be a flaming concentration of the heart on the seeking of the All and Eternal and, when once we have found him, a deep plunging and immersion in the possession and ecstasy of the All-Beautiful. There must be a strong and immovable concentration of the will on the attainment and fulfilment of all that the Divine is and a free and plastic opening of it to all that he intends to manifest in us. This is the triple way of the Yoga.

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But on that which as yet we know not how shall we concentrate? And yet we cannot know the Divine unless we have achieved this concentration of our being upon him. A concentration which culminates in a living realisation and the constant sense of the presence of the One in ourselves and in all of which we are aware, is what we mean in Yoga by knowledge and the effort after knowledge. It is not enough to devote ourselves by the reading of Scriptures or by the stress of philosophic reasoning to an intellectual understanding of the Divine; for at the end of our long mental labour we might know all that has been said of the Eternal, possess all that can be thought about the Infinite and yet we might not know him at all. This intellectual preparation can indeed be the first stage in a powerful Yoga, but it is not indispensable: it is not a step which all need or can be called upon to take. Yoga would be impossible, except for a very few, if the intellectual figure of knowledge arrived at by the speculative or meditative Reason were its indispensable condition or a binding preliminary. All that the Light from above asks of us that it may begin its work is a call from the soul and a sufficient point of support in the mind. This support can be reached through an

insistent idea of the Divine in the thought, a corresponding will in the dynamic parts, an aspiration, a faith, a need in the heart. Any one of these may lead or predominate, if all cannot move in unison or in an equal rhythm. The idea may be and must in the beginning be inadequate; the aspiration may be narrow and imperfect, the faith poorly illumined or even, as not surely founded on the rock of knowledge, fluctuating, uncertain, easily diminished; often even it may be extinguished and need to be lit again with difficulty like a torch in a windy pass. But if once there is a resolute self-consecration from deep within, if there is an awakening to the soul's call, these inadequate things can be a sufficient instrument for the divine purpose. Therefore the wise have always been unwilling to limit man's avenues towards God; they would not shut against his entry even the narrowest portal, the lowest and darkest postern, the humblest wicket-gate. Any name, any form, any symbol, any offering has been held to be sufficient if there is the consecration along with it; for the Divine knows himself in the heart of the seeker and accepts the sacrifice.

But still the greater and wider the moving idea-force behind the consecration, the better for the seeker; his attainment is likely to be fuller and more ample. If we are to attempt an integral Yoga, it will be as well to start with an idea of the Divine that is itself integral. There should be an aspiration in the heart wide enough for a realisation without any narrow limits. Not only should we avoid a sectarian religious outlook, but also all one-sided philosophical conceptions which try to shut up the Ineffable in a restricting mental formula. The dynamic conception or impelling sense with which our Yoga can best set out would be naturally the idea, the sense of a conscious all-embracing but all-exceeding Infinite. Our uplook must be to a free, all-powerful, perfect and blissful One and Oneness in which all beings move and live and through which all can meet and become one. This Eternal will be at once personal and impersonal in his self-revelation and touch upon the soul. He is personal because he is the conscious Divine, the infinite Person who casts some broken reflection of himself in the myriad divine and undivine personalities of the universe. He is impersonal because he appears to us

as an infinite Existence, Consciousness and Ananda and because he is the fount, base and constituent of all existences and all energies, the very material of our being and mind and life and body, our spirit and our matter. The thought, concentrating on him, must not merely understand in an intellectual form that he exists, or conceive of him as an abstraction, a logical necessity; it must become a seeing thought able to meet him here as the Inhabitant in all, realise him in ourselves, watch and take hold on the movement of his forces. He is the one Existence: he is the original and universal Delight that constitutes all things and exceeds them: he is the one infinite Consciousness that composes all consciousnesses and informs all their movements: he is the one illimitable Being who sustains all action and experience: his will guides the evolution of things towards their yet unrealised but inevitable aim and plenitude. To him the heart can consecrate itself, approach him as the supreme Beloved, beat and move in him as in a universal sweetness of Love and a living sea of Delight. For his is the secret Joy that supports the soul in all its experiences and maintains even the errant ego in its ordeals and struggles till all sorrow and suffering shall cease. His is the Love and the Bliss of the infinite divine Lover who is drawing all things by their own path towards his happy oneness. On him the Will can unalterably fix as the invisible Power that guides and fulfils it and as the source of its strength. In the impersonality this actuating Power is a self-illumined Force that contains all results and calmly works until it accomplishes, in the personality an all-wise and omnipotent Master of the Yoga whom nothing can prevent from leading it to its goal. This is the faith with which the seeker has to begin his seeking and endeavour; for in all his effort here, but most of all in his effort towards the Unseen, mental man must perforce proceed by faith. When the realisation comes, the faith divinely fulfilled and completed will be transformed into an eternal flame of knowledge.

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Into all our endeavour upward the lower element of desire will

at first naturally enter. For what the enlightened will sees as the thing to be done and pursues as the crown to be conquered, what the heart embraces as the one thing delightful, that in us which feels itself limited and opposed and, because it is limited, craves and struggles, will seek with the troubled passion of an egoistic desire. This craving life-force or desire-soul in us has to be accepted at first, but only in order that it may be transformed. Even from the very beginning it has to be taught to renounce all other desires and concentrate itself on the passion for the Divine. This capital point gained, it has to be taught to desire, not for its own separate sake, but for God in the world and for the Divine in ourselves; it has to fix itself upon no personal spiritual gain, though of all possible spiritual gains we are sure, but on the great work to be done in us and others, on the high coming manifestation which is to be the glorious fulfilment of the Divine in the world, on the Truth that has to be sought and lived and enthroned for ever. But last, most difficult for it, more difficult than to seek with the right object, it has to be taught to seek in the right manner; for it must learn to desire, not in its own egoistic way, but in the way of the Divine. It must insist no longer, as the strong separative will always insists, on its own manner of fulfilment, its own dream of possession, its own idea of the right and the desirable; it must yearn to fulfil a larger and greater Will and consent to wait upon a less interested and ignorant guidance. Thus trained, Desire, that great unquiet harasser and troubler of man and cause of every kind of stumbling, will become fit to be transformed into its divine counterpart. For desire and passion too have their divine forms; there is a pure ecstasy of the soul's seeking beyond all craving and grief, there is a Will of Ananda that sits glorified in the possession of the supreme beatitudes.

When once the object of concentration has possessed and is possessed by the three master instruments, the thought, the heart and the will,—a consummation fully possible only when the desire-soul in us has submitted to the Divine Law,—the perfection of mind and life and body can be effectively fulfilled in our transmuted nature. This will be done, not for the personal satisfaction of the ego, but that the whole may constitute a fit

temple for the Divine Presence, a faultless instrument for the divine work. For that work can be truly performed only when the instrument, consecrated and perfected, has grown fit for a selfless action,— and that will be when personal desire and egoism are abolished, but not the liberated individual. Even when the little ego has been abolished, the true spiritual Person can still remain and God's will and work and delight in him and the spiritual use of his perfection and fulfilment. Our works will then be divine and done divinely; our mind and life and will, devoted to the Divine, will be used to help fulfil in others and in the world that which has been first realised in ourselves,— all that we can manifest of the embodied Unity, Love, Freedom, Strength, Power, Splendour, immortal Joy which is the goal of the Spirit's terrestrial adventure.

The Yoga must start with an effort or at least a settled turn towards this total concentration. A constant and unfailing will of consecration of all ourselves to the Supreme is demanded of us, an offering of our whole being and our many-chambered nature to the Eternal who is the All. The effective fullness of our concentration on the one thing needful to the exclusion of all else will be the measure of our self-consecration to the One who is alone desirable. But this exclusiveness will in the end exclude nothing except the falsehood of our way of seeing the world and our will's ignorance. For our concentration on the Eternal will be consummated by the mind when we see constantly the Divine in itself and the Divine in ourselves, but also the Divine in all things and beings and happenings. It will be consummated by the heart when all emotion is summed up in the love of the Divine,— of the Divine in itself and for itself, but love too of the Divine in all its beings and powers and personalities and forms in the Universe. It will be consummated by the will when we feel and receive always the divine impulsion and accept that alone as our sole motive force; but this will mean that, having slain to the last rebellious straggler the wandering impulses of the egoistic nature, we have universalised ourselves and can accept with a constant happy acceptance the one divine working in all things. This is the first fundamental siddhi of the integral Yoga.

It is nothing less than is meant in the end when we speak of the absolute consecration of the individual to the Divine. But this total fullness of consecration can only come by a constant progression when the long and difficult process of transforming desire out of existence is completed in an ungrudging measure. Perfect self-consecration implies perfect self-surrender.

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For here, there are two movements with a transitional stage between them, two periods of this Yoga,— one of the process of surrender, the other of its crown and consequence. In the first the individual prepares himself for the reception of the Divine into his members. For all this first period he has to work by means of the instruments of the lower Nature, but aided more and more from above. But in the later transitional stage of this movement our personal and necessarily ignorant effort more and more dwindles and a higher Nature acts; the eternal Shakti descends into this limited form of mortality and progressively possesses and transmutes it. In the second period the greater movement wholly replaces the lesser, formerly indispensable first action; but this can be done only when our self-surrender is complete. The ego person in us cannot transform itself by its own force or will or knowledge or by any virtue of its own into the nature of the Divine; all it can do is to fit itself for the transformation and make more and more its surrender to that which it seeks to become. As long as the ego is at work in us, our personal action is and must always be in its nature a part of the lower grades of existence; it is obscure or half-enlightened, limited in its field, very partially effective in its power. If a spiritual transformation, not a mere illuminating modification of our nature, is to be done at all, we must call in the Divine Shakti to effect that miraculous work in the individual; for she alone has the needed force, decisive, all-wise and illimitable. But the entire substitution of the divine for the human personal action is not at once entirely possible. All interference from below that would falsify the truth of the superior action must first be inhibited or rendered impotent,

and it must be done by our own free choice. A continual and always repeated refusal of the impulsions and falsehoods of the lower nature is asked from us and an insistent support to the Truth as it grows in our parts; for the progressive settling into our nature and final perfection of the incoming informing Light, Purity and Power needs for its development and sustenance our free acceptance of it and our stubborn rejection of all that is contrary to it, inferior or incompatible.

In the first movement of self-preparation, the period of personal effort, the method we have to use is this concentration of the whole being on the Divine that it seeks and, as its corollary, this constant rejection, throwing out, *katharsis*, of all that is not the true Truth of the Divine. An entire consecration of all that we are, think, feel and do will be the result of this persistence. This consecration in its turn must culminate in an integral self-giving to the Highest; for its crown and sign of completion is the whole nature's all-comprehending absolute surrender. In the second stage of the Yoga, transitional between the human and the divine working, there will supervene an increasing purified and vigilant passivity, a more and more luminous divine response to the Divine Force, but not to any other; and there will be as a result the growing inrush of a great and conscious miraculous working from above. In the last period there is no effort at all, no set method, no fixed sadhana; the place of endeavour and tapasya will be taken by a natural, simple, powerful and happy disclosing of the flower of the Divine out of the bud of a purified and perfected terrestrial nature. These are the natural successions of the action of the Yoga.

These movements are indeed not always or absolutely arranged in a strict succession to each other. The second stage begins in part before the first is completed; the first continues in part until the second is perfected; the last divine working can manifest from time to time as a promise before it is finally settled and normal to the nature. Always too there is something higher and greater than the individual which leads him even in his personal labour and endeavour. Often he may become, and remain for a time, wholly conscious, even in parts of his being

permanently conscious, of this greater leading behind the veil, and that may happen long before his whole nature has been purified in all its parts from the lower indirect control. Even, he may be thus conscious from the beginning; his mind and heart, if not his other members, may respond to that seizing and penetrating guidance with a certain initial completeness from the very first steps of the Yoga. But it is the constant and complete and uniform action of the great direct control that more and more distinguishes the transitional stage as it proceeds and draws to its close. This predominance of a greater diviner leading, not personal to ourselves, indicates the nature's increasing ripeness for a total spiritual transformation. It is the unmistakable sign that the self-consecration has not only been accepted in principle but is fulfilled in act and power. The Supreme has laid his luminous hand upon a chosen human vessel of his miraculous Light and Power and Ananda.

Chapter III

Self-Surrender in Works — The Way of the Gita

LIFE, NOT a remote silent or high-uplifted ecstatic Beyond-Life alone, is the field of our Yoga. The transformation of our superficial, narrow and fragmentary human way of thinking, seeing, feeling and being into a deep and wide spiritual consciousness and an integrated inner and outer existence and of our ordinary human living into the divine way of life must be its central purpose. The means towards this supreme end is a self-giving of all our nature to the Divine. Everything must be given to the Divine within us, to the universal All and to the transcendent Supreme. An absolute concentration of our will, our heart and our thought on that one and manifold Divine, an unreserved self-consecration of our whole being to the Divine alone — this is the decisive movement, the turning of the ego to That which is infinitely greater than itself, its self-giving and indispensable surrender.

The life of the human creature, as it is ordinarily lived, is composed of a half-fixed, half-fluid mass of very imperfectly ruled thoughts, perceptions, sensations, emotions, desires, enjoyments, acts, mostly customary and self-repeating, in part only dynamic and self-developing, but all centred around a superficial ego. The sum of movement of these activities eventuates in an internal growth which is partly visible and operative in this life, partly a seed of progress in lives hereafter. This growth of the conscious being, an expansion, an increasing self-expression, a more and more harmonised development of his constituent members is the whole meaning and all the pith of human existence. It is for this meaningful development of consciousness by thought, will, emotion, desire, action and experience, leading in the end to a supreme divine self-discovery, that Man, the

mental being, has entered into the material body. All the rest is either auxiliary and subordinate or accidental and otiose; that only matters which sustains and helps the evolution of his nature and the growth or rather the progressive unfolding and discovery of his self and spirit.

The aim set before our Yoga is nothing less than to hasten this supreme object of our existence here. Its process leaves behind the ordinary tardy method of slow and confused growth through the evolution of Nature. For the natural evolution is at its best an uncertain growth under cover, partly by the pressure of the environment, partly by a groping education and an ill-lighted purposeful effort, an only partially illumined and half-automatic use of opportunities with many blunders and lapses and relapses; a great portion of it is made up of apparent accidents and circumstances and vicissitudes,—though veiling a secret divine intervention and guidance. In Yoga we replace this confused crooked crab-motion by a rapid, conscious and self-directed evolution which is planned to carry us, as far as can be, in a straight line towards the goal set before us. In a certain sense it may be an error to speak of a goal anywhere in a progression which may well be infinite. Still we can conceive of an immediate goal, an ulterior objective beyond our present achievement towards which the soul in man can aspire. There lies before him the possibility of a new birth; there can be an ascent into a higher and wider plane of being and its descent to transform his members. An enlarged and illumined consciousness is possible that shall make of him a liberated spirit and a perfected force—and, if spread beyond the individual, it might even constitute a divine humanity or else a new, a supramental and therefore a superhuman race. It is this new birth that we make our aim: a growth into a divine consciousness is the whole meaning of our Yoga, an integral conversion to divinity not only of the soul but of all the parts of our nature.

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Our purpose in Yoga is to exile the limited outward-looking

ego and to enthroned God in its place as the ruling Inhabitant of the nature. And this means, first, to disinherit desire and no longer accept the enjoyment of desire as the ruling human motive. The spiritual life will draw its sustenance not from desire but from a pure and selfless spiritual delight of essential existence. And not only the vital nature in us whose stamp is desire, but the mental being too must undergo a new birth and a transfiguring change. Our divided, egoistic, limited and ignorant thought and intelligence must disappear; in its place there must stream in the catholic and faultless play of a shadowless divine illumination which shall culminate in the end in a natural self-existent Truth-consciousness free from groping half-truth and stumbling error. Our confused and embarrassed ego-centred small-motived will and action must cease and make room for the total working of a swiftly powerful, lucidly automatic, divinely moved and guided unfallen Force. There must be implanted and activised in all our doings a supreme, impersonal, unfaltering and unstumbling will in spontaneous and untroubled unison with the will of the Divine. The unsatisfying surface play of our feeble egoistic emotions must be ousted and there must be revealed instead a secret deep and vast psychic heart within that waits behind them for its hour; all our feelings, impelled by this inner heart in which dwells the Divine, will be transmuted into calm and intense movements of a twin passion of divine Love and manifold Ananda. This is the definition of a divine humanity or a supramental race. This, not an exaggerated or even a sublimated energy of human intellect and action, is the type of the superman whom we are called to evolve by our Yoga.

In the ordinary human existence an outgoing action is obviously three-fourths or even more of our life. It is only the exceptions, the saint and the seer, the rare thinker, poet and artist who can live more within themselves; these indeed, at least in the most intimate parts of their nature, shape themselves more in inner thought and feeling than in the surface act. But it is not either of these sides separated from the other, but rather a harmony of the inner and the outer life made one in fullness and transfigured into a play of something that is beyond them which

will create the form of a perfect living. A Yoga of works, a union with the Divine in our will and acts — and not only in knowledge and feeling — is then an indispensable, an inexpressibly important element of an integral Yoga. The conversion of our thought and feeling without a corresponding conversion of the spirit and body of our works would be a maimed achievement.

But if this total conversion is to be done, there must be a consecration of our actions and outer movements as much as of our mind and heart to the Divine. There must be accepted and progressively accomplished a surrender of our capacities of working into the hands of a greater Power behind us and our sense of being the doer and worker must disappear. All must be given for a more direct use into the hands of the divine Will which is hidden by these frontal appearances; for by that permitting Will alone is our action possible. A hidden Power is the true Lord and overruling Observer of our acts and only he knows through all the ignorance and perversion and deformation brought in by the ego their entire sense and ultimate purpose. There must be effected a complete transformation of our limited and distorted egoistic life and works into the large and direct outpouring of a greater divine Life, Will and Energy that now secretly supports us. This greater Will and Energy must be made conscious in us and master; no longer must it remain, as now, only a superconscious, upholding and permitting Force. There must be achieved an undistorted transmission through us of the all-wise purpose and process of a now hidden omniscient Power and omnipotent Knowledge which will turn into its pure, unobstructed, happily consenting and participating channel all our transmuted nature. This total consecration and surrender and this resultant entire transformation and free transmission make up the whole fundamental means and the ultimate aim of an integral Karmayoga.

Even for those whose first natural movement is a consecration, a surrender and a resultant entire transformation of the thinking mind and its knowledge, or a total consecration, surrender and transformation of the heart and its emotions, the consecration of works is a needed element in that change. Otherwise, although they may find God in other-life, they will not be

able to fulfil the Divine in life; life for them will be a meaningless undivine inconsequence. Not for them the true victory that shall be the key to the riddle of our terrestrial existence; their love will not be the absolute love triumphant over self, their knowledge will not be the total consciousness and the all-embracing knowledge. It is possible, indeed, to begin with knowledge or Godward emotion solely or with both together and to leave works for the final movement of the Yoga. But there is then this disadvantage that we may tend to live too exclusively within, subtilised in subjective experience, shut off in our isolated inner parts; there we may get incrusted in our spiritual seclusion and find it difficult later on to pour ourselves triumphantly outwards and apply to life our gains in the higher Nature. When we turn to add this external kingdom also to our inner conquests, we shall find ourselves too much accustomed to an activity purely subjective and ineffective on the material plane. There will be an immense difficulty in transforming the outer life and the body. Or we shall find that our action does not correspond with the inner light: it still follows the old accustomed mistaken paths, still obeys the old normal imperfect influences; the Truth within us continues to be separated by a painful gulf from the ignorant mechanism of our external nature. This is a frequent experience because in such a process the Light and Power come to be self-contained and unwilling to express themselves in life or to use the physical means prescribed for the Earth and her processes. It is as if we were living in another, a larger and subtler world and had no divine hold, perhaps little hold of any kind, upon the material and terrestrial existence.

But still each must follow his nature, and there are always difficulties that have to be accepted for some time if we are to pursue our natural path of Yoga. Yoga is after all primarily a change of the inner consciousness and nature, and if the balance of our parts is such that this must be done first with an initial exclusiveness and the rest left for later handling, we must accept the apparent imperfection of the process. Yet would the ideal working of an integral Yoga be a movement, even from the beginning, integral in its process and whole and many-sided in

its progress. In any case our present preoccupation is with a Yoga, integral in its aim and complete movement, but starting from works and proceeding by works although at each step more and more moved by a vivifying divine love and more and more illumined by a helping divine knowledge.

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The greatest gospel of spiritual works ever yet given to the race, the most perfect system of Karmayoga known to man in the past, is to be found in the Bhagavad Gita. In that famous episode of the Mahabharata the great basic lines of Karmayoga are laid down for all time with an incomparable mastery and the infallible eye of an assured experience. It is true that the path alone, as the ancients saw it, is worked out fully: the perfect fulfilment, the highest secret¹ is hinted rather than developed; it is kept back as an unexpressed part of a supreme mystery. There are obvious reasons for this reticence; for the fulfilment is in any case a matter for experience and no teaching can express it. It cannot be described in a way that can really be understood by a mind that has not the effulgent transmuting experience. And for the soul that has passed the shining portals and stands in the blaze of the inner light, all mental and verbal description is as poor as it is superfluous, inadequate and an impertinence. All divine consummations have perforce to be figured by us in the inapt and deceptive terms of a language which was made to fit the normal experience of mental man; so expressed, they can be rightly understood only by those who already know, and, knowing, are able to give these poor external terms a changed, inner and transfigured sense. As the Vedic Rishis insisted in the beginning, the words of the supreme wisdom are expressive only to those who are already of the wise. The Gita at its cryptic close may seem by its silence to stop short of that solution for which we are seeking; it pauses at the borders of the highest spiritual mind and does not cross them into the splendours of the supramental

¹ *rahasyam uttamam.*

Light. And yet its secret of dynamic, and not only static, identity with the inner Presence, its highest mystery of absolute surrender to the Divine Guide, Lord and Inhabitant of our nature, is the central secret. This surrender is the indispensable means of the supramental change and, again, it is through the supramental change that the dynamic identity becomes possible.

What then are the lines of Karmayoga laid down by the Gita? Its key principle, its spiritual method, can be summed up as the union of two largest and highest states or powers of consciousness, equality and oneness. The kernel of its method is an unreserved acceptance of the Divine in our life as in our inner self and spirit. An inner renunciation of personal desire leads to equality, accomplishes our total surrender to the Divine, supports a delivery from dividing ego which brings us oneness. But this must be a oneness in dynamic force and not only in static peace or inactive beatitude. The Gita promises us freedom for the spirit even in the midst of works and the full energies of Nature, if we accept subjection of our whole being to that which is higher than the separating and limiting ego. It proposes an integral dynamic activity founded on a still passivity; a largest possible action irrevocably based on an immobile calm is its secret, — free expression out of a supreme inward silence.

All things here are the one and indivisible eternal transcendent and cosmic Brahman that is in its seeming divided in things and creatures; in seeming only, for in truth it is always one and equal in all things and creatures and the division is only a phenomenon of the surface. As long as we live in the ignorant seeming, we are the ego and are subject to the modes of Nature. Enslaved to appearances, bound to the dualities, tossed between good and evil, sin and virtue, grief and joy, pain and pleasure, good fortune and ill fortune, success and failure, we follow helplessly the iron or gilt and iron round of the wheel of Maya. At best we have only the poor relative freedom which by us is ignorantly called free-will. But that is at bottom illusory, since it is the modes of Nature that express themselves through our personal will; it is force of Nature, grasping us, ungrasped by us that determines what we shall will and how we shall will it. Nature, not

an independent ego, chooses what object we shall seek, whether by reasoned will or unreflecting impulse, at any moment of our existence. If, on the contrary, we live in the unifying reality of the Brahman, then we go beyond the ego and overstep Nature. For then we get back to our true self and become the spirit; in the spirit we are above the impulsion of Nature, superior to her modes and forces. Attaining to a perfect equality in the soul, mind and heart, we realise our true self of oneness, one with all beings, one too with That which expresses itself in them and in all that we see and experience. This equality and this oneness are the indispensable twin foundation we must lay down for a divine being, a divine consciousness, a divine action. Not one with all, we are not spiritual, not divine. Not equal-souled to all things, happenings and creatures, we cannot see spiritually, cannot know divinely, cannot feel divinely towards others. The Supreme Power, the one Eternal and Infinite is equal to all things and to all beings; and because it is equal, it can act with an absolute wisdom according to the truth of its works and its force and according to the truth of each thing and of every creature.

This is also the only true freedom possible to man,—a freedom which he cannot have unless he outgrows his mental separateness and becomes the conscious soul in Nature. The only free will in the world is the one divine Will of which Nature is the executrix; for she is the master and creator of all other wills. Human free-will can be real in a sense, but, like all things that belong to the modes of Nature, it is only relatively real. The mind rides on a swirl of natural forces, balances on a poise between several possibilities, inclines to one side or another, settles and has the sense of choosing; but it does not see, it is not even dimly aware of the Force behind that has determined its choice. It cannot see it, because that Force is something total and to our eyes indeterminate. At most mind can only distinguish with an approach to clarity and precision some out of the complex variety of particular determinations by which this Force works out her incalculable purposes. Partial itself, the mind rides on a part of the machine, unaware of nine-tenths of its motor agencies in Time and environment, unaware of its past

preparation and future drift; but because it rides, it thinks that it is directing the machine. In a sense it counts: for that clear inclination of the mind which we call our will, that firm settling of the inclination which presents itself to us as a deliberate choice, is one of Nature's most powerful determinants; but it is never independent and sole. Behind this petty instrumental action of the human will there is something vast and powerful and eternal that oversees the trend of the inclination and presses on the turn of the will. There is a total Truth in Nature greater than our individual choice. And in this total Truth, or even beyond and behind it, there is something that determines all results; its presence and secret knowledge keep up steadily in the process of Nature a dynamic, almost automatic perception of the right relations, the varying or persistent necessities, the inevitable steps of the movement. There is a secret divine Will, eternal and infinite, omniscient and omnipotent, that expresses itself in the universality and in each particular of all these apparently temporal and finite inconscient or half-conscious things. This is the Power or Presence meant by the Gita when it speaks of the Lord within the heart of all existences who turns all creatures as if mounted on a machine by the illusion of Nature.

This divine Will is not an alien Power or Presence; it is intimate to us and we ourselves are part of it: for it is our own highest Self that possesses and supports it. Only, it is not our conscious mental will; it rejects often enough what our conscious will accepts and accepts what our conscious will rejects. For while this secret One knows all and every whole and each detail, our surface mind knows only a little part of things. Our will is conscious in the mind, and what it knows, it knows by the thought only; the divine Will is superconscious to us because it is in its essence supra-mental, and it knows all because it is all. Our highest Self which possesses and supports this universal Power is not our ego-self, not our personal nature; it is something transcendent and universal of which these smaller things are only foam and flowing surface. If we surrender our conscious will and allow it to be made one with the will of the Eternal, then, and then only, shall we attain to a true freedom; living in the divine

liberty, we shall no longer cling to this shackled so-called free-will, a puppet freedom ignorant, illusory, relative, bound to the error of its own inadequate vital motives and mental figures.

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A distinction has to be firmly seized in our consciousness, the capital distinction between mechanical Nature and the free Lord of Nature, between the Ishwara or single luminous divine Will and the many executive modes and forces of the universe.

Nature,—not as she is in her divine Truth, the conscious Power of the Eternal, but as she appears to us in the Ignorance,—is executive Force, mechanical in her steps, not consciously intelligent to our experience of her, although all her works are instinct with an absolute intelligence. Not in herself master, she is full of a self-aware Power² which has an infinite mastery and, because of this Power driving her, she rules all and exactly fulfils the work intended in her by the Ishwara. Not enjoying but enjoyed, she bears in herself the burden of all enjoyments. Nature as Prakriti is an inertly active Force,—for she works out a movement imposed upon her; but within her is One that knows,—some Entity sits there that is aware of all her motion and process. Prakriti works containing the knowledge, the mastery, the delight of the Purusha, the Being associated with her or seated within her; but she can participate in them only by subjection and reflection of that which fills her. Purusha knows and is still and inactive; he contains the action of Prakriti within his consciousness and knowledge and enjoys it. He gives the sanction to Prakriti's works and she works out what is sanctioned by him for his pleasure. Purusha himself does not execute; he maintains Prakriti in her action and allows her to express in energy and process and formed result what he perceives in his knowledge. This is the distinction made by the Sankhyas; and although it is not all the true truth, not in any way the highest truth either

² This Power is the conscious divine Shakti of the Ishwara, the transcendent and universal Mother.

of Purusha or of Prakriti, still it is a valid and indispensable practical knowledge in the lower hemisphere of existence.

The individual soul or the conscious being in a form may identify itself with this experiencing Purusha or with this active Prakriti. If it identifies itself with Prakriti, it is not master, enjoyer and knower, but reflects the modes and workings of Prakriti. It enters by its identification into that subjection and mechanical working which is characteristic of her. And even, by an entire immersion in Prakriti, this soul becomes inconscient or subconscious, asleep in her forms as in the earth and the metal or almost asleep as in plant life. There, in that inconscience, it is subject to the domination of tamas, the principle, the power, the qualitative mode of obscurity and inertia: sattwa and rajas are there, but they are concealed in the thick coating of tamas. Emerging into its own proper nature of consciousness but not yet truly conscious, because there is still too great a domination of tamas in the nature, the embodied being becomes more and more subject to rajas, the principle, the power, the qualitative mode of action and passion impelled by desire and instinct. There is then formed and developed the animal nature, narrow in consciousness, rudimentary in intelligence, rajaso-tamasic in vital habit and impulse. Emerging yet farther from the great Inconscience towards a spiritual status the embodied being liberates sattwa, the mode of light, and acquires a relative freedom and mastery and knowledge and with it a qualified and conditioned sense of inner satisfaction and happiness. Man, the mental being in a physical body, should be but is not, except in a few among this multitude of ensouled bodies, of this nature. Ordinarily he has too much in him of the obscure earth-inertia and a troubled ignorant animal life-force to be a soul of light and bliss or even a mind of harmonious will and knowledge. There is here in man an incomplete and still hampered and baffled ascension towards the true character of the Purusha, free, master, knower and enjoyer. For these are in human and earthly experience relative modes, none giving its single and absolute fruit; all are intermixed with each other and there is not the pure action of any one of them anywhere. It is their confused and inconstant interaction that

determines the experiences of the egoistic human consciousness swinging in Nature's uncertain balance.

The sign of the immersion of the embodied soul in Prakriti is the limitation of consciousness to the ego. The vivid stamp of this limited consciousness can be seen in a constant inequality of the mind and heart and a confused conflict and disharmony in their varied reactions to the touches of experience. The human reactions sway perpetually between the dualities created by the soul's subjection to Nature and by its often intense but narrow struggle for mastery and enjoyment, a struggle for the most part ineffective. The soul circles in an unending round of Nature's alluring and distressing opposites, success and failure, good fortune and ill fortune, good and evil, sin and virtue, joy and grief, pain and pleasure. It is only when, awaking from its immersion in Prakriti, it perceives its oneness with the One and its oneness with all existences that it can become free from these things and find its right relation to this executive world-Nature. Then it becomes indifferent to her inferior modes, equal-minded to her dualities, capable of mastery and freedom; it is seated above her as the high-throned knower and witness filled with the calm intense unalloyed delight of his own eternal existence. The embodied spirit continues to express its powers in action, but it is no longer involved in ignorance, no longer bound by its works; its actions have no longer a consequence within it, but only a consequence outside in Prakriti. The whole movement of Nature becomes to its experience a rising and falling of waves on the surface that make no difference to its own unfathomable peace, its wide delight, its vast universal equality or its boundless God-existence.³

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³ It is not indispensable for the Karmayoga to accept implicitly all the philosophy of the Gita. We may regard it, if we like, as a statement of psychological experience useful as a practical basis for the Yoga; here it is perfectly valid and in entire consonance with a high and wide experience. For this reason I have thought it well to state it here, as far as possible in the language of modern thought, omitting all that belongs to metaphysics rather than to psychology.

These are the conditions of our effort and they point to an ideal which can be expressed in these or in equivalent formulae.

To live in God and not in the ego; to move, vastly founded, not in the little egoistic consciousness, but in the consciousness of the All-Soul and the Transcendent.

To be perfectly equal in all happenings and to all beings, and to see and feel them as one with oneself and one with the Divine; to feel all in oneself and all in God; to feel God in all, oneself in all.

To act in God and not in the ego. And here, first, not to choose action by reference to personal needs and standards, but in obedience to the dictates of the living highest Truth above us. Next, as soon as we are sufficiently founded in the spiritual consciousness, not to act any longer by our separate will or movement, but more and more to allow action to happen and develop under the impulsion and guidance of a divine Will that surpasses us. And last, the supreme result, to be exalted into an identity in knowledge, force, consciousness, act, joy of existence with the Divine Shakti; to feel a dynamic movement not dominated by mortal desire and vital instinct and impulse and illusive mental free-will, but luminously conceived and evolved in an immortal self-delight and an infinite self-knowledge. For this is the action that comes by a conscious subjection and merging of the natural man into the divine Self and eternal Spirit; it is the Spirit that for ever transcends and guides this world-Nature.

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But by what practical steps of self-discipline can we arrive at this consummation?

The elimination of all egoistic activity and of its foundation, the egoistic consciousness, is clearly the key to the consummation we desire. And since in the path of works action is the knot we have first to loosen, we must endeavour to loosen it where it is centrally tied, in desire and in ego; for otherwise we shall cut only stray strands and not the heart of our bondage. These are the two knots of our subjection to this ignorant and

divided Nature, desire and ego-sense. And of these two desire has its native home in the emotions and sensations and instincts and from there affects thought and volition; ego-sense lives indeed in these movements, but it casts its deep roots also in the thinking mind and its will and it is there that it becomes fully self-conscious. These are the twin obscure powers of the obsessing world-wide Ignorance that we have to enlighten and eliminate.

In the field of action desire takes many forms, but the most powerful of all is the vital self's craving or seeking after the fruit of our works. The fruit we covet may be a reward of internal pleasure; it may be the accomplishment of some preferred idea or some cherished will or the satisfaction of the egoistic emotions, or else the pride of success of our highest hopes and ambitions. Or it may be an external reward, a recompense entirely material, — wealth, position, honour, victory, good fortune or any other fulfilment of vital or physical desire. But all alike are lures by which egoism holds us. Always these satisfactions delude us with the sense of mastery and the idea of freedom, while really we are harnessed and guided or ridden and whipped by some gross or subtle, some noble or ignoble, figure of the blind Desire that drives the world. Therefore the first rule of action laid down by the Gita is to do the work that should be done without any desire for the fruit, *niṣkāma karma*.

A simple rule in appearance, and yet how difficult to carry out with anything like an absolute sincerity and liberating entireness! In the greater part of our action we use the principle very little if at all, and then even mostly as a sort of counterpoise to the normal principle of desire and to mitigate the extreme action of that tyrant impulse. At best, we are satisfied if we arrive at a modified and disciplined egoism not too shocking to our moral sense, not too brutally offensive to others. And to our partial self-discipline we give various names and forms; we habituate ourselves by practice to the sense of duty, to a firm fidelity to principle, a stoical fortitude or a religious resignation, a quiet or an ecstatic submission to God's will. But it is not these things that the Gita intends, useful though they are in their place; it aims at something absolute, unmitigated, uncompromising, a

turn, an attitude that will change the whole poise of the soul. Not the mind's control of vital impulse is its rule, but the strong immobility of an immortal spirit.

The test it lays down is an absolute equality of the mind and the heart to all results, to all reactions, to all happenings. If good fortune and ill fortune, if respect and insult, if reputation and obloquy, if victory and defeat, if pleasant event and sorrowful event leave us not only unshaken but untouched, free in the emotions, free in the nervous reactions, free in the mental view, not responding with the least disturbance or vibration in any spot of the nature, then we have the absolute liberation to which the Gita points us, but not otherwise. The tiniest reaction is a proof that the discipline is imperfect and that some part of us accepts ignorance and bondage as its law and clings still to the old nature. Our self-conquest is only partially accomplished; it is still imperfect or unreal in some stretch or part or smallest spot of the ground of our nature. And that little pebble of imperfection may throw down the whole achievement of the Yoga!

There are certain semblances of an equal spirit which must not be mistaken for the profound and vast spiritual equality which the Gita teaches. There is an equality of disappointed resignation, an equality of pride, an equality of hardness and indifference: all these are egoistic in their nature. Inevitably they come in the course of the sadhana, but they must be rejected or transformed into the true quietude. There is too, on a higher level, the equality of the stoic, the equality of a devout resignation or a sage detachment, the equality of a soul aloof from the world and indifferent to its doings. These too are insufficient; first approaches they can be, but they are at most early soul-phases only or imperfect mental preparations for our entry into the true and absolute self-existent wide evenness of the spirit.

For it is certain that so great a result cannot be arrived at immediately and without any previous stages. At first we have to learn to bear the shocks of the world with the central part of our being untouched and silent, even when the surface mind, heart,

life are strongly shaken; unmoved there on the bedrock of our life, we must separate the soul watching behind or immune deep within from these outer workings of our nature. Afterwards, extending this calm and steadfastness of the detached soul to its instruments, it will become slowly possible to radiate peace from the luminous centre to the darker peripheries. In this process we may take the passing help of many minor phases; a certain stoicism, a certain calm philosophy, a certain religious exaltation may help us towards some nearness to our aim, or we may call in even less strong and exalted but still useful powers of our mental nature. In the end we must either discard or transform them and arrive instead at an entire equality, a perfect self-existent peace within and even, if we can, a total unassailable, self-poised and spontaneous delight in all our members.

But how then shall we continue to act at all? For ordinarily the human being acts because he has a desire or feels a mental, vital or physical want or need; he is driven by the necessities of the body, by the lust of riches, honours or fame, or by a craving for the personal satisfactions of the mind or the heart or a craving for power or pleasure. Or he is seized and pushed about by a moral need or, at least, the need or the desire of making his ideas or his ideals or his will or his party or his country or his gods prevail in the world. If none of these desires nor any other must be the spring of our action, it would seem as if all incentive or motive power had been removed and action itself must necessarily cease. The Gita replies with its third great secret of the divine life. All action must be done in a more and more Godward and finally a God-possessed consciousness; our works must be a sacrifice to the Divine and in the end a surrender of all our being, mind, will, heart, sense, life and body to the One must make God-love and God-service our only motive. This transformation of the motive force and very character of works is indeed its master idea; it is the foundation of its unique synthesis of works, love and knowledge. In the end not desire, but the consciously felt will of the Eternal remains as the sole driver of our action and the sole originator of its initiative.

Equality, renunciation of all desire for the fruit of our works, action done as a sacrifice to the supreme Lord of our nature and of all nature,— these are the three first Godward approaches in the Gita's way of Karmayoga.

Chapter IV

The Sacrifice, the Triune Path and the Lord of the Sacrifice

THE LAW of sacrifice is the common divine action that was thrown out into the world in its beginning as a symbol of the solidarity of the universe. It is by the attraction of this law that a divinising principle, a saving power descends to limit and correct and gradually to eliminate the errors of an egoistic and self-divided creation. This descent, this sacrifice of the Purusha, the Divine Soul submitting itself to Force and Matter so that it may inform and illuminate them, is the seed of redemption of this world of Inconscience and Ignorance. “For with sacrifice as their companion,” says the Gita, “the All-Father created these peoples.” The acceptance of the law of sacrifice is a practical recognition by the ego that it is neither alone in the world nor chief in the world. It is its admission that, even in this much fragmented existence, there is beyond itself and behind that which is not its own egoistic person, something greater and completer, a diviner All which demands from it subordination and service. Indeed, sacrifice is imposed and, where need be, compelled by the universal World-Force; it takes it even from those who do not consciously recognise the law,—inevitably, because this is the intrinsic nature of things. Our ignorance or our false egoistic view of life can make no difference to this eternal bedrock truth of Nature. For this is the truth in Nature, that this ego which thinks itself a separate independent being and claims to live for itself, is not and cannot be independent nor separate, nor can it live to itself even if it would, but rather all are linked together by a secret Oneness. Each existence is continually giving out perforce from its stock; out of its mental receipts from Nature or its vital and physical assets and acquisitions and belongings a stream goes to all that is around it. And

always again it receives something from its environment gratis or in return for its voluntary or involuntary tribute. For it is only by this giving and receiving that it can effect its own growth while at the same time it helps the sum of things. At length, though at first slowly and partially, we learn to make the conscious sacrifice; even, in the end, we take joy to give ourselves and what we envisage as belonging to us in a spirit of love and devotion to That which appears for the moment other than ourselves and is certainly other than our limited personalities. The sacrifice and the divine return for our sacrifice then become a gladly accepted means towards our last perfection; for it is recognised now as the road to the fulfilment in us of the eternal purpose.

But, most often, the sacrifice is done unconsciously, egoistically and without knowledge or acceptance of the true meaning of the great world-rite. It is so that the vast majority of earth-creatures do it; and, when it is so done, the individual derives only a mechanical minimum of natural inevitable profit, achieves by it only a slow painful progress limited and tortured by the smallness and suffering of the ego. Only when the heart, the will and the mind of knowledge associate themselves with the law and gladly follow it, can there come the deep joy and the happy fruitfulness of divine sacrifice. The mind's knowledge of the law and the heart's gladness in it culminate in the perception that it is to our own Self and Spirit and the one Self and Spirit of all that we give. And this is true even when our self-offering is still to our fellow-creatures or to lesser Powers and Principles and not yet to the Supreme. "Not for the sake of the wife," says Yajnavalkya in the Upanishad, "but for the sake of the Self is the wife dear to us." This in the lower sense of the individual self is the hard fact behind the coloured and passionate professions of egoistic love; but in a higher sense it is the inner significance of that love too which is not egoistic but divine. All true love and all sacrifice are in their essence Nature's contradiction of the primary egoism and its separative error; it is her attempt to turn from a necessary first fragmentation towards a recovered oneness. All unity between creatures is in its essence a self-finding, a fusion with that from which we have separated, a discovery of one's self in others.

But it is only a divine love and unity that can possess in the light what the human forms of these things seek for in the darkness. For the true unity is not merely an association and agglomeration like that of physical cells joined by a life of common interests; it is not even an emotional understanding, sympathy, solidarity or close drawing together. Only then are we really unified with those separated from us by the divisions of Nature, when we annul the division and find ourselves in that which seemed to us not ourselves. Association is a vital and physical unity; its sacrifice is that of mutual aid and concessions. Nearness, sympathy, solidarity create a mental, moral and emotional unity; theirs is a sacrifice of mutual support and mutual gratifications. But the true unity is spiritual; its sacrifice is a mutual self-giving, an interfusion of our inner substance. The law of sacrifice travels in Nature towards its culmination in this complete and unreserved self-giving; it awakens the consciousness of one common self in the giver and the object of the sacrifice. This culmination of sacrifice is the height even of human love and devotion when it tries to become divine; for there too the highest peak of love points into a heaven of complete mutual self-giving, its summit is the rapturous fusing of two souls into one.

This profounder idea of the world-wide law is at the heart of the teaching about works given in the Gita; a spiritual union with the Highest by sacrifice, an unreserved self-giving to the Eternal is the core of its doctrine. The vulgar conception of sacrifice is an act of painful self-immolation, austere self-mortification, difficult self-effacement; this kind of sacrifice may go even as far as self-mutilation and self-torture. These things may be temporarily necessary in man's hard endeavour to exceed his natural self; if the egoism in his nature is violent and obstinate, it has to be met sometimes by an answering strong internal repression and counterbalancing violence. But the Gita discourages any excess of violence done to oneself; for the self within is really the Godhead evolving, it is Krishna, it is the Divine; it has not to be troubled and tortured as the Titans of the world trouble and torture it, but to be increased, fostered, cherished, luminously opened to a divine light and strength and joy and wideness. It

is not one's self, but the band of the spirit's inner enemies that we have to discourage, expel, slay upon the altar of the growth of the spirit; these can be ruthlessly excised, whose names are desire, wrath, inequality, greed, attachment to outward pleasures and pains, the cohort of usurping demons that are the cause of the soul's errors and sufferings. These should be regarded not as part of oneself but as intruders and perverters of our self's real and diviner nature; these have to be sacrificed in the harsher sense of the word, whatever pain in going they may throw by reflection on the consciousness of the seeker.

But the true essence of sacrifice is not self-immolation, it is self-giving; its object not self-effacement, but self-fulfilment; its method not self-mortification, but a greater life, not self-mutilation, but a transformation of our natural human parts into divine members, not self-torture, but a passage from a lesser satisfaction to a greater Ananda. There is only one thing painful in the beginning to a raw or turbid part of the surface nature; it is the indispensable discipline demanded, the denial necessary for the merging of the incomplete ego. But for that there can be a speedy and enormous compensation in the discovery of a real greater or ultimate completeness in others, in all things, in the cosmic oneness, in the freedom of the transcendent Self and Spirit, in the rapture of the touch of the Divine. Our sacrifice is not a giving without any return or any fruitful acceptance from the other side; it is an interchange between the embodied soul and conscious Nature in us and the eternal Spirit. For even though no return is demanded, yet there is the knowledge deep within us that a marvellous return is inevitable. The soul knows that it does not give itself to God in vain; claiming nothing, it yet receives the infinite riches of the divine Power and Presence.

Last, there is to be considered the recipient of the sacrifice and the manner of the sacrifice. The sacrifice may be offered to others or it may be offered to divine Powers; it may be offered to the cosmic All or it may be offered to the transcendent Supreme. The worship given may take any shape from the dedication of a leaf or flower, a cup of water, a handful of rice, a loaf of bread, to consecration of all that we possess and the submission of all

that we are. Whoever the recipient, whatever the gift, it is the Supreme, the Eternal in things, who receives and accepts it, even if it be rejected or ignored by the immediate recipient. For the Supreme who transcends the universe, is yet here too, however veiled, in us and in the world and in its happenings; he is there as the omniscient Witness and Receiver of all our works and their secret Master. All our actions, all our efforts, even our sins and stumblings and sufferings and struggles are obscurely or consciously, known to us and seen or else unknown and in a disguise, governed in their last result by the One. All is turned towards him in his numberless forms and offered through them to the single Omnipresence. In whatever form and with whatever spirit we approach him, in that form and with that spirit he receives the sacrifice.

And the fruit also of the sacrifice of works varies according to the work, according to the intention in the work and according to the spirit that is behind the intention. But all other sacrifices are partial, egoistic, mixed, temporal, incomplete,—even those offered to the highest Powers and Principles keep this character: the result too is partial, limited, temporal, mixed in its reactions, effective only for a minor or intermediate purpose. The one entirely acceptable sacrifice is a last and highest and uttermost self-giving,—it is that surrender made face to face, with devotion and knowledge, freely and without any reserve to One who is at once our immanent Self, the environing constituent All, the Supreme Reality beyond this or any manifestation and, secretly, all these together, concealed everywhere, the immanent Transcendence. For to the soul that wholly gives itself to him, God also gives himself altogether. Only the one who offers his whole nature, finds the Self. Only the one who can give everything, enjoys the Divine All everywhere. Only a supreme self-abandonment attains to the Supreme. Only the sublimation by sacrifice of all that we are, can enable us to embody the Highest and live here in the immanent consciousness of the transcendent Spirit.



This, in short, is the demand made on us, that we should turn our whole life into a conscious sacrifice. Every moment and every movement of our being is to be resolved into a continuous and a devoted self-giving to the Eternal. All our actions, not less the smallest and most ordinary and trifling than the greatest and most uncommon and noble, must be performed as consecrated acts. Our individualised nature must live in the single consciousness of an inner and outer movement dedicated to Something that is beyond us and greater than our ego. No matter what the gift or to whom it is presented by us, there must be a consciousness in the act that we are presenting it to the one divine Being in all beings. Our commonest or most grossly material actions must assume this sublimated character; when we eat, we should be conscious that we are giving our food to that Presence in us; it must be a sacred offering in a temple and the sense of a mere physical need or self-gratification must pass away from us. In any great labour, in any high discipline, in any difficult or noble enterprise, whether undertaken for ourselves, for others or for the race, it will no longer be possible to stop short at the idea of the race, of ourselves or of others. The thing we are doing must be consciously offered as a sacrifice of works, not to these, but either through them or directly to the One Godhead; the Divine Inhabitant who was hidden by these figures must be no longer hidden but ever present to our soul, our mind, our sense. The workings and results of our acts must be put in the hands of that One in the feeling that that Presence is the Infinite and Most High by whom alone our labour and our aspiration are possible. For in his being all takes place; for him all labour and aspiration are taken from us by Nature and offered on his altar. Even in those things in which Nature is herself very plainly the worker and we only the witnesses of her working and its containers and supporters, there should be the same constant memory and insistent consciousness of a work and of its divine Master. Our very inspiration and respiration, our very heart-beats can and must be made conscious in us as the living rhythm of the universal sacrifice.

It is clear that a conception of this kind and its effective

practice must carry in them three results that are of a central importance for our spiritual ideal. It is evident, to begin with, that, even if such a discipline is begun without devotion, it leads straight and inevitably towards the highest devotion possible; for it must deepen naturally into the completest adoration imaginable, the most profound God-love. There is bound up with it a growing sense of the Divine in all things, a deepening communion with the Divine in all our thought, will and action and at every moment of our lives, a more and more moved consecration to the Divine of the totality of our being. Now these implications of the Yoga of works are also of the very essence of an integral and absolute Bhakti. The seeker who puts them into living practice makes in himself continually a constant, active and effective representation of the very spirit of self-devotion, and it is inevitable that out of it there should emerge the most engrossing worship of the Highest to whom is given this service. An absorbing love for the Divine Presence to whom he feels an always more intimate closeness, grows upon the consecrated worker. And with it is born or in it is contained a universal love too for all these beings, living forms and creatures that are habitations of the Divine—not the brief restless grasping emotions of division, but the settled selfless love that is the deeper vibration of oneness. In all the seeker begins to meet the one Object of his adoration and service. The way of works turns by this road of sacrifice to meet the path of Devotion; it can be itself a devotion as complete, as absorbing, as integral as any the desire of the heart can ask for or the passion of the mind can imagine.

Next, the practice of this Yoga demands a constant inward remembrance of the one central liberating knowledge, and a constant active externalising of it in works comes in too to intensify the remembrance. In all is the one Self, the one Divine is all; all are in the Divine, all are the Divine and there is nothing else in the universe,—this thought or this faith is the whole background until it becomes the whole substance of the consciousness of the worker. A memory, a self-dynamising meditation of this kind, must and does in its end turn into a profound and uninterrupted

vision and a vivid and all-embracing consciousness of that which we so powerfully remember or on which we so constantly meditate. For it compels a constant reference at each moment to the Origin of all being and will and action and there is at once an embracing and exceeding of all particular forms and appearances in That which is their cause and upholder. This way cannot go to its end without a seeing vivid and vital, as concrete in its way as physical sight, of the works of the universal Spirit everywhere. On its summits it rises into a constant living and thinking and willing and acting in the presence of the Supramental, the Transcendent. Whatever we see and hear, whatever we touch and sense, all of which we are conscious, has to be known and felt by us as That which we worship and serve; all has to be turned into an image of the Divinity, perceived as a dwelling-place of his Godhead, enveloped with the eternal Omnipresence. In its close, if not long before it, this way of works turns by communion with the Divine Presence, Will and Force into a way of Knowledge more complete and integral than any the mere creature intelligence can construct or the search of the intellect can discover.

Lastly, the practice of this Yoga of sacrifice compels us to renounce all the inner supports of egoism, casting them out of our mind and will and actions, and to eliminate its seed, its presence, its influence out of our nature. All must be done for the Divine; all must be directed towards the Divine. Nothing must be attempted for ourselves as a separate existence; nothing done for others, whether neighbours, friends, family, country or mankind or other creatures merely because they are connected with our personal life and thought and sentiment or because the ego takes a preferential interest in their welfare. In this way of doing and seeing all works and all life become only a daily dynamic worship and service of the Divine in the unbounded temple of his own vast cosmic existence. Life becomes more and more the sacrifice of the eternal in the individual constantly self-offered to the eternal Transcendence. It is offered in the wide sacrificial ground of the field of the eternal cosmic Spirit; and the Force too that offers it is the eternal Force, the omnipresent

Mother. Therefore is this way a way of union and communion by acts and by the spirit and knowledge in the act as complete and integral as any our Godward will can hope for or our soul's strength execute.

It has all the power of a way of works integral and absolute, but because of its law of sacrifice and self-giving to the Divine Self and Master, it is accompanied on its one side by the whole power of the path of Love and on the other by the whole power of the path of Knowledge. At its end all these three divine Powers work together, fused, united, completed, perfected by each other.

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The Divine, the Eternal is the Lord of our sacrifice of works and union with him in all our being and consciousness and in its expressive instruments is the one object of the sacrifice; the steps of the sacrifice of works must therefore be measured, first, by the growth in our nature of something that brings us nearer to divine Nature, but secondly also by an experience of the Divine, his presence, his manifestation to us, an increasing closeness and union with that Presence. But the Divine is in his essence infinite and his manifestation too is multitudinously infinite. If that is so, it is not likely that our true integral perfection in being and in nature can come by one kind of realisation alone; it must combine many different strands of divine experience. It cannot be reached by the exclusive pursuit of a single line of identity till that is raised to its absolute; it must harmonise many aspects of the Infinite. An integral consciousness with a multiform dynamic experience is essential for the complete transformation of our nature.

There is one fundamental perception indispensable towards any integral knowledge or many-sided experience of this Infinite. It is to realise the Divine in its essential self and truth unaltered by forms and phenomena. Otherwise we are likely to remain caught in the net of appearances or wander confusedly in a chaotic multitude of cosmic or particular aspects, and if we

avoid this confusion, it will be at the price of getting chained to some mental formula or shut up in a limited personal experience. The one secure and all-reconciling truth which is the very foundation of the universe is this that life is the manifestation of an uncreated Self and Spirit, and the key to life's hidden secret is the true relation of this Spirit with its own created existences. There is behind all this life the look of an eternal Being upon its multitudinous becomings; there is around and everywhere in it the envelopment and penetration of a manifestation in time by an unmanifested timeless Eternal. But this knowledge is valueless for Yoga if it is only an intellectual and metaphysical notion void of life and barren of consequence; a mental realisation alone cannot be sufficient for the seeker. For what Yoga searches after is not truth of thought alone or truth of mind alone, but the dynamic truth of a living and revealing spiritual experience. There must awake in us a constant indwelling and enveloping nearness, a vivid perception, a close feeling and communion, a concrete sense and contact of a true and infinite Presence always and everywhere. That Presence must remain with us as the living, pervading Reality in which we and all things exist and move and act, and we must feel it always and everywhere, concrete, visible, inhabiting all things; it must be patent to us as their true Self, tangible as their imperishable Essence, met by us closely as their inmost Spirit. To see, to feel, to sense, to contact in every way and not merely to conceive this Self and Spirit here in all existences and to feel with the same vividness all existences in this Self and Spirit, is the fundamental experience which must englobe all other knowledge.

This infinite and eternal Self of things is an omnipresent Reality, one existence everywhere; it is a single unifying presence and not different in different creatures; it can be met, seen or felt in its completeness in each soul or each form in the universe. For its infinity is spiritual and essential and not merely a boundlessness in Space or an endlessness in Time; the Infinite can be felt in an infinitesimal atom or in a second of time as convincingly as in the stretch of the aeons or the stupendous enormity of the intersolar spaces. The knowledge or experience of it can begin

anywhere and express itself through anything; for the Divine is in all, and all is the Divine.

This fundamental experience will yet begin differently for different natures and take long to develop all the Truth that it conceals in its thousand aspects. I see perhaps or feel in myself or as myself first the eternal Presence and afterwards only can extend the vision or sense of this greater self of mine to all creatures. I then see the world in me or as one with me. I perceive the universe as a scene in my being, the play of its processes as a movement of forms and souls and forces in my cosmic spirit; I meet myself and none else everywhere. Not, be it well noted, with the error of the Asura, the Titan, who lives in his own inordinately magnified shadow, mistakes ego for the self and spirit and tries to impose his fragmentary personality as the one dominant existence upon all his surroundings. For, having the knowledge, I have already seized this reality that my true self is the non-ego, so always my greater Self is felt by me either as an impersonal vastness or an essential Person containing yet beyond all personalities or as both these together; but in any case, whether Impersonal or illimitable Personal or both together, it is an ego-exceeding Infinite. If I have sought it out and found it first in the form of it I call myself rather than in others, it is only because there it is easiest for me, owing to the subjectivity of my consciousness, to find it, to know it at once and to realise it. But if the narrow instrumental ego does not begin to merge in this Self as soon as it is seen, if the smaller external mind-constructed I refuses to disappear into that greater permanent uncreated spiritual I, then my realisation is either not genuine or radically imperfect. There is somewhere in me an egoistic obstacle; some part of my nature has opposed a self-regarding and self-preserving denial to the all-swallowing truth of the Spirit.

On the other hand — and to some this is an easier way — I may see the Divinity first in the world outside me, not in myself but in others. I meet it there from the beginning as an indwelling and all-containing Infinite that is not bound up with all these

forms, creatures and forces which it bears on its surface. Or else I see and feel it as a pure solitary Self and Spirit which contains all these powers and existences, and I lose my sense of ego in the silent Omnipresence around me. Afterwards it is this that begins to pervade and possess my instrumental being and out of it seem to proceed all my impulsions to action, all my light of thought and speech, all the formations of my consciousness and all its relations and impacts with other soul-forms of this one worldwide Existence. I am already no longer this little personal self, but That with something of itself put forward which sustains a selected form of its workings in the universe.

There is another basic realisation, the most extreme of all, that yet comes sometimes as the first decisive opening or an early turn of the Yoga. It is the awakening to an ineffable high transcendent Unknowable above myself and above this world in which I seem to move, a timeless and spaceless condition or entity which is at once, in some way compelling and convincing to an essential consciousness in me, the one thing that is to it overwhelmingly real. This experience is usually accompanied by an equally compelling sense either of the dreamlike or shadowy illusoriness of all things here or else of their temporary, derivative and only half-real character. For a time at least all around me may seem to be a moving of cinematographic shadow forms or surface figures and my own action may appear as a fluid formulation from some Source ungrasped as yet and perhaps unseizable above or outside me. To remain in this consciousness, to carry out this initiation or follow out this first suggestion of the character of things would be to proceed towards the goal of dissolution of self and world in the Unknowable,—Moksha, Nirvana. But this is not the only line of issue; it is possible, on the contrary, for me to wait till through the silence of this timeless unfilled liberation I begin to enter into relations with that yet ungrasped Source of myself and my actions; then the void begins to fill, there emerges out of it or there rushes into it all the manifold Truth of the Divine, all the aspects and manifestations and many levels of a dynamic Infinite. At first this experience imposes on the mind and then on all our being an

absolute, a fathomless, almost an abysmal peace and silence. Overpowered and subjugated, stilled, liberated from itself, the mind accepts the Silence itself as the Supreme. But afterwards the seeker discovers that all is there for him contained or new-made in that silence or through it descends upon him from a greater concealed transcendent Existence. For this Transcendent, this Absolute is not a mere peace of signless emptiness; it has its own infinite contents and riches of which ours are debased and diminished values. If there were not that Source of all things, there could be no universe; all powers, all works and activities would be an illusion, all creation and manifestation would be impossible.

These are the three fundamental realisations, so fundamental that to the Yогin of the way of Knowledge they seem ultimate, sufficient in themselves, destined to overtop and replace all others. And yet for the integral seeker, whether accorded to him at an early stage suddenly and easily by a miraculous grace or achieved with difficulty after a long progress and endeavour, they are neither the sole truth nor the full and only clues to the integral truth of the Eternal, but rather the unfilled beginning, the vast foundation of a greater divine Knowledge. Other realisations there are that are imperatively needed and must be explored to the full limit of their possibilities; and if some of them appear to a first sight to cover only Divine Aspects that are instrumental to the activity of existence but not inherent in its essence, yet, when followed to their end through that activity to its everlasting Source, it is found that they lead to a disclosure of the Divine without which our knowledge of the Truth behind things would be left bare and incomplete. These seeming Instrumentals are the key to a secret without which the Fundamentals themselves would not unveil all their mystery. All the revelatory aspects of the Divine must be caught in the wide net of the integral Yoga.

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If a departure from the world and its activities, a supreme release and quietude were the sole aim of the seeker, the three great

fundamental realisations would be sufficient for the fulfilment of his spiritual life: concentrated in them alone he could suffer all other divine or mundane knowledge to fall away from him and himself unencumbered, depart into the eternal Silence. But he has to take account of the world and its activities, learn what divine truth there may be behind them and reconcile that apparent opposition between the Divine Truth and the manifest creation which is the starting-point of most spiritual experience. Here, on each line of approach that he can take, he is confronted with a constant Duality, a separation between two terms of existence that seem to be opposites and their opposition to be the very root of the riddle of the universe. Later, he may and does discover that these are the two poles of One Being, connected by two simultaneous currents of energy negative and positive in relation to each other, their interaction the very condition for the manifestation of what is within the Being, their reunion the appointed means for the reconciliation of life's discords and for the discovery of the integral truth of which he is the seeker.

For on one side he is aware of this Self everywhere, this everlasting Spirit-Substance — Brahman, the Eternal — the same self-existence here in time behind each appearance he sees or senses and timeless beyond the universe. He has this strong overpowering experience of a Self that is neither our limited ego nor our mind, life or body, world-wide but not outwardly phenomenal, yet to some spirit-sense in him more concrete than any form or phenomenon, universal yet not dependent for its being on anything in the universe or on the whole totality of the universe; if all this were to disappear, its extinction would make no difference to this Eternal of his constant intimate experience. He is sure of an inexpressible Self-Existence which is the essence of himself and all things; he is intimately aware of an essential Consciousness of which thinking mind and life-sense and body-sense are only partial and diminished figures, a Consciousness with an illimitable Force in it of which all energies are the outcome, but which is yet not explained or accounted for by the sum or power or nature of all these energies together; he feels, he lives in an inalienable self-existent Bliss which is not this lesser

transient joy or happiness or pleasure. A changeless imperishable infinity, a timeless eternity, a self-awareness which is not this receptive and reactive or tentacular mental consciousness, but is behind and above it and present too below it, even in what we call Inconscience, a oneness in which there is no possibility of any other existence, are the fourfold character of this settled experience. Yet this eternal Self-Existence is seen by him also as a conscious Time-Spirit bearing the stream of happenings, a self-extended spiritual Space containing all things and beings, a Spirit-Substance which is the very form and material of all that seems non-spiritual, temporary and finite. For all that is transitory, temporal, spatial, bounded, is yet felt by him to be in its substance and energy and power no other than the One, the Eternal, the Infinite.

And yet there is not only in him or before him this eternal self-aware Existence, this spiritual Consciousness, this infinity of self-illumined Force, this timeless and endless Beatitude. There is too, constant also to his experience, this universe in measurable Space and Time, some kind perhaps of boundless finite, and in it all is transient, limited, fragmentary, plural, ignorant, exposed to disharmony and suffering, seeking vaguely for some unrealised yet inherent harmony of oneness, unconscious or half-conscious or, even when most conscious, still tied to the original Ignorance and Inconscience. He is not always in a trance of peace or bliss and, even if he were, it would be no solution, for he knows that this would still be going on outside him and yet within some larger self of him as if for ever. At times these two states of his spirit seem to exist for him alternately according to his state of consciousness; at others they are there as two parts of his being, disparate and to be reconciled, two halves, an upper and a lower or an inner and an outer half of his existence. He finds soon that this separation in his consciousness has an immense liberative power; for by it he is no longer bound to the Ignorance, the Inconscience; it no longer appears to him the very nature of himself and things but an illusion which can be overcome or at least a temporary wrong self-experience, Maya. It is tempting to regard it as only a contradiction of the Divine,

an incomprehensible mystery-play, masque or travesty of the Infinite — and so it irresistibly seems to his experience at times, on one side the luminous verity of Brahman, on the other a dark illusion of Maya. But something in him will not allow him to cut existence thus permanently in two and, looking more closely, he discovers that in this half-light or darkness too is the Eternal — it is the Brahman who is here with this face of Maya.

This is the beginning of a growing spiritual experience which reveals to him more and more that what seemed to him dark incomprehensible Maya was all the time no other than the Consciousness-Puissance of the Eternal, timeless and illimitable beyond the universe, but spread out here under a mask of bright and dark opposites for the miracle of the slow manifestation of the Divine in Mind and Life and Matter. All the Timeless presses towards the play in Time; all in Time turns upon and around the timeless Spirit. If the separate experience was liberative, this unitive experience is dynamic and effective. For he now not only feels himself to be in his soul-substance part of the Eternal, in his essential self and spirit entirely one with the Eternal, but in his active nature an instrumentation of its omniscient and omnipotent Consciousness-Puissance. However bounded and relative its present play in him, he can open to a greater and greater consciousness and power of it and to that expansion there seems to be no assignable limit. A level spiritual and supramental of that Consciousness-Puissance seems even to reveal itself above him and lean to enter into contact, where there are not these trammels and limits, and its powers too are pressing upon the play in Time with the promise of a greater descent and a less disguised or no longer disguised manifestation of the Eternal. The once conflicting but now biune duality of Brahman-Maya stands revealed to him as the first great dynamic aspect of the Self of all selves, the Master of existence, the Lord of the world-sacrifice and of his sacrifice.

On another line of approach another Duality presents itself to the experience of the seeker. On one side he becomes aware of a witness recipient observing experiencing Consciousness which does not appear to act but for which all these activities inside

and outside us seem to be undertaken and continue. On the other side he is aware at the same time of an executive Force or an energy of Process which is seen to constitute, drive and guide all conceivable activities and to create a myriad forms visible to us and invisible and use them as stable supports for its incessant flux of action and creation. Entering exclusively into the witness consciousness he becomes silent, untouched, immobile; he sees that he has till now passively reflected and appropriated to himself the movements of Nature and it is by this reflection that they acquired from the witness soul within him what seemed a spiritual value and significance. But now he has withdrawn that ascription or mirroring identification; he is conscious only of his silent self and aloof from all that is in motion around it; all activities are outside him and at once they cease to be intimately real; they appear now mechanical, detachable, endable. Entering exclusively into the kinetic movement, he has an opposite self-awareness; he seems to his own perception a mass of activities, a formation and result of forces; if there is an active consciousness, even some kind of kinetic being in the midst of it all, yet there is no longer a free soul in it anywhere. These two different and opposite states of being alternate in him or else stand simultaneously over against each other; one silent in the inner being observes but is unmoved and does not participate; the other active in some outer or surface self pursues its habitual movements. He has entered into an intense separative perception of the great duality, Soul-Nature, Purusha-Prakriti.

But as the consciousness deepens, he becomes aware that this is only a first frontal appearance. For he finds that it is by the silent support, permission or sanction of this witness soul in him that this executive nature can work intimately or persistently upon his being; if the soul withdraws its sanction, the movements of Nature in their action upon and within him become a wholly mechanical repetition, vehement at first as if seeking still to enforce their hold, but afterwards less and less dynamic and real. More actively using this power of sanction or refusal, he perceives that he can, slowly and uncertainly at first,

more decisively afterwards, change the movements of Nature. Eventually in this witness soul or behind it is revealed to him the presence of a Knower and master Will in Nature, and all her activities more and more appear as an expression of what is known and either actively willed or passively permitted by this Lord of her existence. Prakriti herself now seems to be mechanical only in the carefully regulated appearance of her workings, but in fact a conscious Force with a soul within her, a self-aware significance in her turns, a revelation of a secret Will and Knowledge in her steps and figures. This Duality, in aspect separate, is inseparable. Wherever there is Prakriti, there is Purusha; wherever there is Purusha, there is Prakriti. Even in his inactivity he holds in himself all her force and energies ready for projection; even in the drive of her action she carries with her all his observing and mandatory consciousness as the whole support and sense of her creative purpose. Once more the seeker discovers in his experience the two poles of existence of One Being and the two lines or currents of their energy negative and positive in relation to each other which effect by their simultaneity the manifestation of all that is within it. Here too he finds that the separative aspect is liberative; for it releases him from the bondage of identification with the inadequate workings of Nature in the Ignorance. The unitive aspect is dynamic and effective; for it enables him to arrive at mastery and perfection; while rejecting what is less divine or seemingly undivine in her, he can rebuild her forms and movements in himself according to a nobler pattern and the law and rhythm of a greater existence. At a certain spiritual and supramental level the Duality becomes still more perfectly Two-in-one, the Master Soul with the Conscious Force within it, and its potentiality disowns all barriers and breaks through every limit. Thus this once separate, now biune Duality of Purusha-Prakriti is revealed to him in all its truth as the second great instrumental and effective aspect of the Soul of all souls, the Master of existence, the Lord of the Sacrifice.

On yet another line of approach the seeker meets another corresponding but in aspect distinct Duality in which the biune

character is more immediately apparent, — the dynamic Duality of Ishwara-Shakti. On one side he is aware of an infinite and self-existent Godhead in being who contains all things in an ineffable potentiality of existence, a Self of all selves, a Soul of all souls, a spiritual Substance of all substances, an impersonal inexpressible Existence, but at the same time an illimitable Person who is here self-represented in numberless personality, a Master of Knowledge, a Master of Forces, a Lord of love and bliss and beauty, a single Origin of the worlds, a self-manifester and self-creator, a Cosmic Spirit, a universal Mind, a universal Life, the conscious and living Reality supporting the appearance which we sense as unconscious inanimate Matter. On the other side he becomes aware of the same Godhead in effectuating consciousness and power put forth as a self-aware Force that contains and carries all within her and is charged to manifest it in universal Time and Space. It is evident to him that here there is one supreme and infinite Being represented to us in two different sides of itself, obverse and reverse in relation to each other. All is either prepared or pre-existent in the Godhead in Being and issues from it and is upheld by its Will and Presence; all is brought out, carried in movement by the Godhead in power; all becomes and acts and develops by her and in her its individual or its cosmic purpose. It is again a Duality necessary for the manifestation, creating and enabling that double current of energy which seems always necessary for the world-workings, two poles of the same Being, but here closer to each other and always very evidently carrying each the powers of the other in its essence and its dynamic nature. At the same time by the fact that the two great elements of the divine Mystery, the Personal and the Impersonal, are here fused together, the seeker of the integral Truth feels in the duality of Ishwara-Shakti his closeness to a more intimate and ultimate secret of the divine Transcendence and the Manifestation than that offered to him by any other experience.

For the Ishwari Shakti, divine Conscious-Force and World-Mother, becomes a mediatrix between the eternal One and the manifested Many. On one side, by the play of the energies which she brings from the One, she manifests the multiple Divine in the

universe, involving and evolving its endless appearances out of her revealing substance; on the other by the reascending current of the same energies she leads back all towards That from which they have issued so that the soul in its evolutionary manifestation may more and more return towards the Divinity there or here put on its divine character. There is not in her, although she devises a cosmic mechanism, the character of an inconscient mechanical Executrix which we find in the first physiognomy of Prakriti, the Nature-Force; neither is there that sense of an Unreality, creatrix of illusions or semi-illusions, which is attached to our first view of Maya. It is at once clear to the experiencing soul that here is a conscious Power of one substance and nature with the Supreme from whom she came. If she seems to have plunged us into the Ignorance and Inconscience in pursuance of a plan we cannot yet interpret, if her forces present themselves as all these ambiguous forces of the universe, yet it becomes visible before long that she is working for the development of the Divine Consciousness in us and that she stands above drawing us to her own higher entity, revealing to us more and more the very essence of the Divine Knowledge, Will and Ananda. Even in the movements of the Ignorance the soul of the seeker becomes aware of her conscious guidance supporting his steps and leading them slowly or swiftly, straight or by many detours out of the darkness into the light of a greater consciousness, out of mortality into immortality, out of evil and suffering towards a highest good and felicity of which as yet his human mind can form only a faint image. Thus her power is at once liberative and dynamic, creative, effective, — creative not only of things as they are, but of things that are to be; for, eliminating the twisted and tangled movements of his lower consciousness made of the stuff of the Ignorance, it rebuilds and new-makes his soul and nature into the substance and forces of a higher divine Nature.

In this Duality too there is possible a separative experience. At one pole of it the seeker may be conscious only of the Master of Existence putting forth on him His energies of knowledge, power and bliss to liberate and divinise; the Shakti may appear to him only an impersonal Force expressive of these things or

an attribute of the Ishwara. At the other pole he may encounter the World-Mother, creatrix of the universe, putting forth the Gods and the worlds and all things and existences out of her spirit-substance. Or even if he sees both aspects, it may be with an unequal separating vision, subordinating one to the other, regarding the Shakti only as a means for approaching the Ishwara. There results a one-sided tendency or a lack of balance, a power of effectuation not perfectly supported or a light of revelation not perfectly dynamic. It is when a complete union of the two sides of the Duality is effected and rules his consciousness that he begins to open to a fuller power that will draw him altogether out of the confused clash of Ideas and Forces here into a higher Truth and enable the descent of that Truth to illumine and deliver and act sovereignly upon this world of Ignorance. He has begun to lay his hand on the integral secret which in its fullness can be grasped only when he overpasses the double term that reigns here of Knowledge inextricably intertwined with an original Ignorance and crosses the border where spiritual mind disappears into supramental Gnosis. It is through this third and most dynamic dual aspect of the One that the seeker begins with the most integral completeness to enter into the deepest secret of the being of the Lord of the Sacrifice.

For it is behind the mystery of the presence of personality in an apparently impersonal universe — as in that of consciousness manifesting out of the Inconscient, life out of the inanimate, soul out of brute Matter — that is hidden the solution of the riddle of existence. Here again is another dynamic Duality more pervading than appears at first view and deeply necessary to the play of the slowly self-revealing Power. It is possible for the seeker in his spiritual experience, standing at one pole of the Duality, to follow Mind in seeing a fundamental Impersonality everywhere. The evolving soul in the material world begins from a vast impersonal Inconscience in which our inner sight yet perceives the presence of a veiled infinite Spirit; it proceeds with the emergence of a precarious consciousness and personality that even at their fullest have the look of an episode, but an episode that repeats itself in a constant series; it arises through experience

of life out of mind into an infinite, impersonal and absolute Superconsciousness in which personality, mind-consciousness, life-consciousness seem all to disappear by a liberating annihilation, Nirvana. At a lower pitch he still experiences this fundamental impersonality as an immense liberating force everywhere. It releases his knowledge from the narrowness of personal mind, his will from the clutch of personal desire, his heart from the bondage of petty mutable emotions, his life from its petty personal groove, his soul from ego, and it allows them to embrace calm, equality, wideness, universality, infinity. A Yoga of works would seem to require Personality as its mainstay, almost its source, but here too the impersonal is found to be the most direct liberating force; it is through a wide egoless impersonality that one can become a free worker and a divine creator. It is not surprising that the overwhelming power of this experience from the impersonal pole of the Duality should have moved the sages to declare this to be the one way and an impersonal Superconsciousness to be the sole truth of the Eternal.

But still to the seeker standing at the opposite pole of the Duality another line of experience appears which justifies an intuition deeply-seated behind the heart and in our very life-force, that personality, like consciousness, life, soul, is not a brief-lived stranger in an impersonal Eternity, but contains the very meaning of existence. This fine flower of the cosmic Energy carries in it a forecast of the aim and a hint of the very motive of the universal labour. As an occult vision opens in him, he becomes aware of worlds behind in which consciousness and personality hold an enormous place and assume a premier value; even here in the material world to this occult vision the inconsciousness of Matter fills with a secret pervading consciousness, its inanimation harbours a vibrant life, its mechanism is the device of an indwelling Intelligence, God and soul are everywhere. Above all stands an infinite conscious Being who is variously self-expressed in all these worlds; impersonality is only a first means of that expression. It is a field of principles and forces, an equal basis of manifestation; but these forces express themselves through beings, have conscious spirits at their head and are

the emanation of a One Conscious Being who is their source. A multiple innumerable personality expressing that One is the very sense and central aim of the manifestation and if now personality seems to be narrow, fragmentary, restrictive, it is only because it has not opened to its source or flowered into its own divine truth and fullness packing itself with the universal and the infinite. Thus the world-creation is no more an illusion, a fortuitous mechanism, a play that need not have happened, a flux without consequence; it is an intimate dynamism of the conscious and living Eternal.

This extreme opposition of view from the two poles of one Existence creates no fundamental difficulty for the seeker of the integral Yoga; for his whole experience has shown him the necessity of these double terms and their currents of Energy, negative and positive in relation to each other, for the manifestation of what is within the one Existence. For himself Personality and Impersonality have been the two wings of his spiritual ascension and he has the prevision that he will reach a height where their helpful interaction will pass into a fusion of their powers and disclose the integral Reality and release into action the original force of the Divine. Not only in the fundamental Aspects but in all the working of his sadhana he has felt their double truth and mutually complementary working. An impersonal Presence has dominated from above or penetrated and occupied his nature; a Light descending has suffused his mind, life-power, the very cells of his body, illumined them with knowledge, revealed him to himself down to his most disguised and unsuspected movements, exposing, purifying, destroying or brilliantly changing all that belonged to the Ignorance. A Force has poured into him in currents or like a sea, worked in his being and all its members, dissolved, new-made, reshaped, transfigured everywhere. A Bliss has invaded him and shown that it can make suffering and sorrow impossible and turn pain itself into divine pleasure. A Love without limits has joined him to all creatures or revealed to him a world of inseparable intimacy and unspeakable sweetness and beauty and begun to impose its law of perfection and its ecstasy even amidst the disharmony of terrestrial life. A spiritual

Truth and Right have convicted the good and evil of this world of imperfection or of falsehood and unveiled a supreme good and its clue of subtle harmony and its sublimation of action and feeling and knowledge. But behind all these and in them he has felt a Divinity who is all these things, a Bringer of Light, a Guide and All-Knower, a Master of Force, a Giver of Bliss, Friend, Helper, Father, Mother, Playmate in the world-game, an absolute Master of his being, his soul's Beloved and Lover. All relations known to human personality are there in the soul's contact with the Divine; but they rise towards superhuman levels and compel him towards a divine nature.

It is an integral knowledge that is being sought, an integral force, a total amplitude of union with the All and Infinite behind existence. For the seeker of the integral Yoga no single experience, no one Divine Aspect,—however overwhelming to the human mind, sufficient for its capacity, easily accepted as the sole or the ultimate reality,—can figure as the exclusive truth of the Eternal. For him the experience of the Divine Oneness carried to its extreme is more deeply embraced and amply fathomed by following out to the full the experience of the Divine Multiplicity. All that is true behind polytheism as well as behind monotheism falls within the scope of his seeking; but he passes beyond their superficial sense to human mind to grasp their mystic truth in the Divine. He sees what is aimed at by the jarring sects and philosophies and accepts each facet of the Reality in its own place, but rejects their narrownesses and errors and proceeds farther till he discovers the One Truth that binds them together. The reproach of anthropomorphism and anthropolatry cannot deter him,—for he sees them to be prejudices of the ignorant and arrogant reasoning intelligence, the abstracting mind turning on itself in its own cramped circle. If human relations as practised now by man are full of smallness and perversity and ignorance, yet are they disfigured shadows of something in the Divine and by turning them to the Divine he finds that of which they are a shadow and brings it down for manifestation in life. It is through the human exceeding itself and opening itself to a supreme plenitude that the Divine must manifest itself here, since

that comes inevitably in the course and process of the spiritual evolution, and therefore he will not despise or blind himself to the Godhead because it is lodged in a human body, *mānuṣīm tanum āśritam*. Beyond the limited human conception of God, he will pass to the one divine Eternal, but also he will meet him in the faces of the Gods, his cosmic personalities supporting the World-Play, detect him behind the mask of the Vibhutis, embodied World-Forces or human Leaders, reverence and obey him in the Guru, worship him in the Avatar. This will be to him his exceeding good fortune if he can meet one who has realised or is becoming That which he seeks for and can by opening to it in this vessel of its manifestation himself realise it. For that is the most palpable sign of the growing fulfilment, the promise of the great mystery of the progressive Descent into Matter which is the secret sense of the material creation and the justification of terrestrial existence.

Thus reveals himself to the seeker in the progress of the sacrifice the Lord of the sacrifice. At any point this revelation can begin; in any aspect the Master of the Work can take up the work in him and more and more press upon him and it for the unfolding of his presence. In time all the Aspects disclose themselves, separate, combine, fuse, are unified together. At the end there shines through it all the supreme integral Reality, unknowable to Mind which is part of the Ignorance, but knowable because self-aware in the light of a spiritual consciousness and a supramental knowledge.

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This revelation of a highest Truth or a highest Being, Consciousness, Power, Bliss and Love, impersonal and personal at once and so taking up both sides of our own being,—since in us also is the ambiguous meeting of a Person and a mass of impersonal principles and forces,—is at once the first aim and the condition of the ultimate achievement of the sacrifice. The achievement itself takes the shape of a union of our own existence with That which is thus made manifest to our vision and experience, and

the union has a threefold character. There is a union in spiritual essence, by identity; there is a union by the indwelling of our soul in this highest Being and Consciousness; there is a dynamic union of likeness or oneness of nature between That and our instrumental being here. The first is the liberation from the Ignorance and identification with the Real and Eternal, *mokṣa*, *sāyujya*, which is the characteristic aim of the Yoga of Knowledge. The second, the dwelling of the soul with or in the Divine, *sāmīpya*, *sālokya*, is the intense hope of all Yoga of love and beatitude. The third, identity in nature, likeness to the Divine, to be perfect as That is perfect, is the high intention of all Yoga of power and perfection or of divine works and service. The combined completeness of the three together, founded here on a multiple Unity of the self-manifesting Divine, is the complete result of the integral Yoga, the goal of its triple Path and the fruit of its triple sacrifice.

A union by identity may be ours, a liberation and change of our substance of being into that supreme Spirit-substance, of our consciousness into that divine Consciousness, of our soul-state into that ecstasy of spiritual beatitude or that calm eternal bliss of existence. A luminous indwelling in the Divine can be attained by us secure against any fall or exile into this lower consciousness of the darkness and the Ignorance, the soul ranging freely and firmly in its own natural world of light and joy and freedom and oneness. And since this is not merely to be attained in some other existence beyond but pursued and discovered here also, it can only be by a descent, by a bringing down of the Divine Truth, by the establishment here of the soul's native world of light, joy, freedom, oneness. A union of our instrumental being no less than of our soul and spirit must change our imperfect nature into the very likeness and image of Divine Nature; it must put off the blind, marred, mutilated, discordant movements of the Ignorance and put on the inherence of that light, peace, bliss, harmony, universality, mastery, purity, perfection; it must convert itself into a receptacle of divine knowledge, an instrument of divine Will-Power and Force of Being, a channel of divine Love, Joy and Beauty. This is the transformation to be effected,

an integral transformation of all that we now are or seem to be, by the joining — Yoga — of the finite being in Time with the Eternal and Infinite.

All this difficult result can become possible only if there is an immense conversion, a total reversal of our consciousness, a supernormal entire transfiguration of the nature. There must be an ascension of the whole being, an ascension of spirit chained here and trammelled by its instruments and its environment to sheer Spirit free above, an ascension of soul towards some blissful Super-soul, an ascension of mind towards some luminous Supermind, an ascension of life towards some vast Super-life, an ascension of our very physicality to join its origin in some pure and plastic spirit-substance. And this cannot be a single swift upsoaring but, like the ascent of the sacrifice described in the Veda, a climbing from peak to peak in which from each summit one looks up to the much more that has still to be done. At the same time there must be a descent too to affirm below what we have gained above: on each height we conquer we have to turn to bring down its power and its illumination into the lower mortal movement; the discovery of the Light for ever radiant on high must correspond with the release of the same Light secret below in every part down to the deepest caves of subconscious Nature. And this pilgrimage of ascension and this descent for the labour of transformation must be inevitably a battle, a long war with ourselves and with opposing forces around us which, while it lasts, may well seem interminable. For all our old obscure and ignorant nature will contend repeatedly and obstinately with the transforming Influence, supported in its lagging unwillingness or its stark resistance by most of the established forces of environing universal Nature; the powers and principalities and the ruling beings of the Ignorance will not easily give up their empire.

At first there may have to be a prolonged, often tedious and painful period of preparation and purification of all our being till it is ready and fit for an opening to a greater Truth and Light or to the Divine Influence and Presence. Even when centrally fitted, prepared, open already, it will still be long before

all our movements of mind, life and body, all the multiple and conflicting members and elements of our personality consent or, consenting, are able to bear the difficult and exacting process of the transformation. And hardest of all, even if all in us is willing, is the struggle we shall have to carry through against the universal forces attached to the present unstable creation when we seek to make the final supramental conversion and reversal of consciousness by which the Divine Truth must be established in us in its plenitude and not merely what they would more readily permit, an illumined Ignorance.

It is for this that a surrender and submission to That which is beyond us enabling the full and free working of its Power is indispensable. As that self-giving progresses, the work of the sacrifice becomes easier and more powerful and the prevention of the opposing Forces loses much of its strength, impulsion and substance. Two inner changes help most to convert what now seems difficult or impracticable into a thing possible and even sure. There takes place a coming to the front of some secret inmost soul within which was veiled by the restless activity of the mind, by the turbulence of our vital impulses and by the obscurity of the physical consciousness, the three powers which in their confused combination we now call our self. There will come about as a result a less impeded growth of a Divine Presence at the centre with its liberating Light and effective Force and an irradiation of it into all the conscious and subconscious ranges of our nature. These are the two signs, one marking our completed conversion and consecration to the great Quest, the other the final acceptance by the Divine of our sacrifice.

Chapter V

The Ascent of the Sacrifice—1

The Works of Knowledge—The Psychic Being

THIS THEN is in its foundations the integral knowledge of the Supreme and Infinite to whom we offer our sacrifice, and this the nature of the sacrifice itself in its triple character,—a sacrifice of works, a sacrifice of love and adoration, a sacrifice of knowledge. For even when we speak of the sacrifice of works by itself, we do not mean the offering only of our outward acts, but of all that is active and dynamic in us; our internal movements no less than our external doings are to be consecrated on the one altar. The inner heart of all work that is made into a sacrifice is a labour of self-discipline and self-perfection by which we can hope to become conscious and luminous with a Light from above poured into all our movements of mind, heart, will, sense, life and body. An increasing light of divine consciousness will make us close in soul and one by identity in our inmost being and spiritual substance with the Master of the world-sacrifice,—the supreme object of existence proposed by the ancient Vedanta; but also it will tend to make us one in our becoming by resemblance to the Divine in our nature, the mystic sense of the symbol of sacrifice in the sealed speech of the seers of the Veda.

But if this is to be the character of the rapid evolution from a mental to a spiritual being contemplated by the integral Yoga, a question arises full of many perplexities but of great dynamic importance. How are we to deal with life and works as they now are, with the activities proper to our still unchanged human nature? An ascension towards a greater consciousness, an occupation of our mind, life and body by its powers has been accepted as the outstanding object of the Yoga: but still life here, not some other-life elsewhere, is proposed as the immediate field of

the action of the Spirit,—a transformation, not an annihilation of our instrumental being and nature. What then becomes of the present activities of our being, activities of the mind turned towards knowledge and the expression of knowledge, activities of our emotional and sensational parts, activities of outward conduct, creation, production, the will turned towards mastery over men, things, life, the world, the forces of Nature? Are they to be abandoned and to be replaced by some other way of living in which a spiritualised consciousness can find its true expression and figure? Are they to be maintained as they are in their outward appearance, but transformed by an inner spirit in the act or enlarged in scope and liberated into new forms by a reversal of consciousness such as was seen on earth when man took up the vital activities of the animal to mentalise and extend and transfigure them by the infusion of reason, thinking will, refined emotion, an organised intelligence? Or is there to be an abandonment in part, a preservation only of such of them as can bear a spiritual change and, for the rest, the creation of a new life expressive, in its form no less than in its inspiration and motive-force, of the unity, wideness, peace, joy and harmony of the liberated spirit? It is this problem most of all that has exercised the minds of those who have tried to trace the paths that lead from the human to the Divine in the long journey of the Yoga.

Every kind of solution has been offered from the entire abandonment of works and life, so far as that is physically possible, to the acceptance of life as it is but with a new spirit animating and uplifting its movements, in appearance the same as they were but changed in the spirit behind them and therefore in their inner significance. The extreme solution insisted on by the world-shunning ascetic or the inward-turned ecstatalogical and self-oblivious mystic is evidently foreign to the purpose of an integral Yoga,—for if we are to realise the Divine in the world, it cannot be done by leaving aside the world-action and action itself altogether. At a less high pitch it was laid down by the religious mind in ancient times that one should keep only such actions as are in their nature part of the seeking, service or cult

of the Divine and such others as are attached to these or, in addition, those that are indispensable to the ordinary setting of life but done in a religious spirit and according to the injunctions of traditional religion and Scripture. But this is too formalist a rule for the fulfilment of the free spirit in works, and it is besides professedly no more than a provisional solution for tiding over the transition from life in the world to a life in the Beyond which still remains the sole ultimate purpose. An integral Yoga must lean rather to the catholic injunction of the Gita that even the liberated soul, living in the Truth, should still do all the works of life so that the plan of the universal evolution under a secret divine leading may not languish or suffer. But if all works are to be done with the same forms and on the same lines as they are now done in the Ignorance, our gain is only inward and our life is in danger of becoming the dubious and ambiguous formula of an inner Light doing the works of an outer Twilight, the perfect Spirit expressing itself in a mould of imperfection foreign to its own divine nature. If no better can be done for a time, — and during a long period of transition something like this does inevitably happen, — then so it must remain till things are ready and the spirit within is powerful enough to impose its own forms on the life of the body and the world outside; but this can be accepted only as a transitional stage and not as our soul's ideal or the ultimate goal of the passage.

For the same reason the ethical solution is insufficient; for an ethical rule merely puts a bit in the mouth of the wild horses of Nature and exercises over them a difficult and partial control, but it has no power to transform Nature so that she may move in a secure freedom fulfilling the intuitions that proceed from a divine self-knowledge. At best its method is to lay down limits, to coerce the devil, to put the wall of a relative and very doubtful safety around us. This or some similar device of self-protection may be necessary for a time whether in ordinary life or in Yoga; but in Yoga it can only be the mark of a transition. A fundamental transformation and a pure wideness of spiritual life are the aim before us and, if we are to reach it, we must find a deeper solution, a surer supra-ethical dynamic principle. To be spiritual

within, ethical in the outside life, this is the ordinary religious solution, but it is a compromise; the spiritualisation of both the inward being and the outward life and not a compromise between life and the spirit is the goal of which we are the seekers. Nor can the human confusion of values which obliterates the distinction between spiritual and moral and even claims that the moral is the only true spiritual element in our nature be of any use to us; for ethics is a mental control, and the limited erring mind is not and cannot be the free and ever-luminous spirit. It is equally impossible to accept the gospel that makes life the one aim, takes its elements fundamentally as they are and only calls in a half-spiritual or pseudo-spiritual light to flush and embellish it. Inadequate too is the very frequent attempt at a misalliance between the vital and the spiritual, a mystic experience within with an aestheticised intellectual and sensuous Paganism or exalted hedonism outside leaning upon it and satisfying itself in the glow of a spiritual sanction; for this too is a precarious and never successful compromise and it is as far from the divine Truth and its integrality as the puritanic opposite. These are all stumbling solutions of the fallible human mind groping for a transaction between the high spiritual summits and the lower pitch of the ordinary mind-motives and life-motives. Whatever partial truth may be hidden behind them, that truth can only be accepted when it has been raised to the spiritual level, tested in the supreme Truth-consciousness and extricated from the soil and error of the Ignorance.

In sum, it may be safely affirmed that no solution offered can be anything but provisional until a supramental Truth-consciousness is reached by which the appearances of things are put in their place and their essence revealed and that in them which derives straight from the spiritual essence. In the meanwhile our only safety is to find a guiding law of spiritual experience — or else to liberate a light within that can lead us on the way until that greater direct Truth-consciousness is reached above us or born within us. For all else in us that is only outward, all that is not a spiritual sense or seeing, the constructions, representations or conclusions of the intellect, the suggestions or

instigations of the life-force, the positive necessities of physical things are sometimes half-lights, sometimes false lights that can at best only serve for a while or serve a little and for the rest either detain or confuse us. The guiding law of spiritual experience can only come by an opening of human consciousness to the Divine Consciousness; there must be the power to receive in us the working and command and dynamic presence of the Divine Shakti and surrender ourselves to her control; it is that surrender and that control which bring the guidance. But the surrender is not sure, there is no absolute certitude of the guidance so long as we are besieged by mind formations and life impulses and instigations of ego which may easily betray us into the hands of a false experience. This danger can only be countered by the opening of a now nine-tenths concealed inmost soul or psychic being that is already there but not commonly active within us. That is the inner light we must liberate; for the light of this inmost soul is our one sure illumination so long as we walk still amidst the siege of the Ignorance and the Truth-consciousness has not taken up the entire control of our Godward endeavour. The working of the Divine Force in us under the conditions of the transition and the light of the psychic being turning us always towards a conscious and seeing obedience to that higher impulsion and away from the demands and instigations of the Forces of the Ignorance, these between them create an ever progressive inner law of our action which continues till the spiritual and supramental can be established in our nature. In the transition there may well be a period in which we take up all life and action and offer them to the Divine for purification, change and deliverance of the truth within them, another period in which we draw back and build a spiritual wall around us admitting through its gates only such activities as consent to undergo the law of the spiritual transformation, a third in which a free and all-embracing action, but with new forms fit for the utter truth of the Spirit, can again be made possible. These things, however, will be decided by no mental rule but in the light of the soul within us and by the ordaining force and progressive guidance of the Divine Power that secretly or overtly first impels, then

begins clearly to control and order and finally takes up the whole burden of the Yoga.

In accordance with the triple character of the sacrifice we may divide works too into a triple order, the works of Knowledge, the works of Love, the works of the Will-in-Life, and see how this more plastic spiritual rule applies to each province and effects the transition from the lower to the higher nature.

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It is natural from the point of view of the Yoga to divide into two categories the activities of the human mind in its pursuit of knowledge. There is the supreme supra-intellectual knowledge which concentrates itself on the discovery of the One and Infinite in its transcendence or tries to penetrate by intuition, contemplation, direct inner contact into the ultimate truths behind the appearances of Nature; there is the lower science which diffuses itself in an outward knowledge of phenomena, the disguises of the One and Infinite as it appears to us in or through the more exterior forms of the world-manifestation around us. These two, an upper and a lower hemisphere, in the form of them constructed or conceived by men within the mind's ignorant limits, have even there separated themselves, as they developed, with some sharpness.... Philosophy, sometimes spiritual or at least intuitive, sometimes abstract and intellectual, sometimes intellectualising spiritual experience or supporting with a logical apparatus the discoveries of the spirit, has claimed always to take the fixation of ultimate Truth as its province. But even when it did not separate itself on rarefied metaphysical heights from the knowledge that belongs to the practical world and the pursuit of ephemeral objects, intellectual Philosophy by its habit of abstraction has seldom been a power for life. It has been sometimes powerful for high speculation, pursuing mental Truth for its own sake without any ulterior utility or object, sometimes for a subtle gymnastic of the mind in a mistily bright cloud-land of words and ideas, but it has walked or acrobatised far from the more tangible realities of existence. Ancient

Philosophy in Europe was more dynamic, but only for the few; in India in its more spiritualised forms, it strongly influenced but without transforming the life of the race.... Religion did not attempt, like Philosophy, to live alone on the heights; its aim was rather to take hold of man's parts of life even more than his parts of mind and draw them Godwards; it professed to build a bridge between spiritual Truth and the vital and material human existence; it strove to subordinate and reconcile the lower to the higher, make life serviceable to God, Earth obedient to Heaven. It has to be admitted that too often this necessary effort had the opposite result of making Heaven a sanction for Earth's desires; for, continually, the religious idea has been turned into an excuse for the worship and service of the human ego. Religion, leaving constantly its little shining core of spiritual experience, has lost itself in the obscure mass of its ever extending ambiguous compromises with life: in attempting to satisfy the thinking mind, it more often succeeded in oppressing or fettering it with a mass of theological dogmas; while seeking to net the human heart, it fell itself vitiated and fell a prey to all the fanaticism, homicidal fury, savage or harsh turn for oppression, pullulating falsehood, obstinate attachment to ignorance to which that vital nature is prone; its desire to draw the physical in man towards God betrayed it into chaining itself to ecclesiastic mechanism, hollow ceremony and lifeless ritual. The corruption of the best produced the worst by that strange chemistry of the power of life which generates evil out of good even as it can also generate good out of evil. At the same time in a vain effort at self-defence against this downward gravitation, Religion was driven to cut existence into two by a division of knowledge, works, art, life itself into two opposite categories, the spiritual and the worldly, religious and mundane, sacred and profane; but this defensive distinction itself became conventional and artificial and aggravated rather than healed the disease.... On their side Science and Art and the knowledge of Life, although at first they served or lived in the shadow of Religion, ended by emancipating themselves, became

estranged or hostile, or have even recoiled with indifference, contempt or scepticism from what seem to them the cold, barren and distant or unsubstantial and illusory heights of unreality to which metaphysical Philosophy and Religion aspire. For a time the divorce has been as complete as the one-sided intolerance of the human mind could make it and threatened even to end in a complete extinction of all attempt at a higher or a more spiritual knowledge. Yet even in the earthward life a higher knowledge is indeed the one thing that is throughout needful, and without it the lower sciences and pursuits, however fruitful, however rich, free, miraculous in the abundance of their results, become easily a sacrifice offered without due order and to false gods; corrupting, hardening in the end the heart of man, limiting his mind's horizons, they confine in a stony material imprisonment or lead to a final baffling incertitude and disillusionment. A sterile agnosticism awaits us above the brilliant phosphorescence of a half-knowledge that is still the Ignorance.

A Yoga turned towards an all-embracing realisation of the Supreme will not despise the works or even the dreams, if dreams they are, of the Cosmic Spirit or shrink from the splendid toil and many-sided victory which he has assigned to himself in the human creature. But its first condition for this liberality is that our works in the world too must be part of the sacrifice offered to the Highest and to none else, to the Divine Shakti and to no other Power, in the right spirit and with the right knowledge, by the free soul and not by the hypnotised bondslave of material Nature. If a division of works has to be made, it is between those that are nearest to the heart of the sacred flame and those that are least touched or illumined by it because they are more at a distance, or between the fuel that burns strongly and brightly and the logs that if too thickly heaped on the altar may impede the ardour of the fire by their rather damp, heavy and diffused abundance. But, otherwise, apart from this division, all activities of knowledge that seek after or express Truth are in themselves rightful materials for a complete offering; none ought necessarily to be excluded from the wide framework of the divine life. The mental and physical sciences which examine into the laws and

forms and processes of things, those which concern the life of men and animals, the social, political, linguistic and historical and those which seek to know and control the labours and activities by which man subdues and utilises his world and environment, and the noble and beautiful Arts which are at once work and knowledge,—for every well-made and significant poem, picture, statue or building is an act of creative knowledge, a living discovery of the consciousness, a figure of Truth, a dynamic form of mental and vital self-expression or world-expression,—all that seeks, all that finds, all that voices or figures is a realisation of something of the play of the Infinite and to that extent can be made a means of God-realisation or of divine formation. But the Yогin has to see that it is no longer done as part of an ignorant mental life; it can be accepted by him only if by the feeling, the remembrance, the dedication within it, it is turned into a movement of the spiritual consciousness and becomes a part of its vast grasp of comprehensive illuminating knowledge.

For all must be done as a sacrifice, all activities must have the One Divine for their object and the heart of their meaning. The Yогin's aim in the sciences that make for knowledge should be to discover and understand the workings of the Divine Consciousness-Puissance in man and creatures and things and forces, her creative significances, her execution of the mysteries, the symbols in which she arranges the manifestation. The Yогin's aim in the practical sciences, whether mental and physical or occult and psychic, should be to enter into the ways of the Divine and his processes, to know the materials and means for the work given to us so that we may use that knowledge for a conscious and faultless expression of the spirit's mastery, joy and self-fulfilment. The Yогin's aim in the Arts should not be a mere aesthetic, mental or vital gratification, but, seeing the Divine everywhere, worshipping it with a revelation of the meaning of its own works, to express that One Divine in ideal forms, the One Divine in principles and forces, the One Divine in gods and men and creatures and objects. The theory that sees an intimate connection between religious aspiration and the truest and greatest Art is in essence right; but we must

substitute for the mixed and doubtful religious motive a spiritual aspiration, vision, interpreting experience. For the wider and more comprehensive the seeing, the more it contains in itself the sense of the hidden Divine in humanity and in all things and rises beyond a superficial religiosity into the spiritual life, the more luminous, flexible, deep and powerful will the Art be that springs from that high motive. The Yогin's distinction from other men is this that he lives in a higher and vaster spiritual consciousness; all his work of knowledge or creation must then spring from there: it must not be made in the mind,—for it is a greater truth and vision than mental man's that he has to express or rather that presses to express itself through him and mould his works, not for his personal satisfaction, but for a divine purpose.

At the same time the Yогin who knows the Supreme is not subject to any need or compulsion in these activities; for to him they are neither a duty nor a necessary occupation for the mind nor a high amusement, nor imposed even by the loftiest human purpose. He is not attached, bound and limited by any nor has he any personal motive of fame, greatness or personal satisfaction in these works; he can leave or pursue them as the Divine in him wills, but he need not otherwise abandon them in his pursuit of the higher integral knowledge. He will do these things just as the supreme Power acts and creates, for a certain spiritual joy in creation and expression or to help in the holding together and right ordering or leading of this world of God's workings. The Gita teaches that the man of knowledge shall by his way of life give to those who have not yet the spiritual consciousness, the love and habit of *all* works and not only of actions recognised as pious, religious or ascetic in their character; he should not draw men away from the world-action by his example. For the world must proceed in its great upward aspiring; men and nations must not be led to fall away from even an ignorant activity into a worse ignorance of inaction or to sink down into that miserable disintegration and tendency of dissolution which comes upon communities and peoples when there predominates the tamasic principle, the principle whether of obscure confusion and error

or of weariness and inertia. "For I too," says the Lord in the Gita, "have no need to do works, since there is nothing I have not or must yet gain for myself; yet I do works in the world: for if I did not do works, all laws would fall into confusion, the worlds would sink towards chaos and I would be the destroyer of these peoples." The spiritual life does not need, for its purity, to destroy interest in all things except the Inexpressible or to cut at the roots of the Sciences, the Arts and Life. It may well be one of the effects of an integral spiritual knowledge and activity to lift them out of their limitations, substitute for our mind's ignorant, limited, tepid or trepidant pleasure in them a free, intense and uplifting urge of delight and supply a new source of creative spiritual power and illumination by which they can be carried more swiftly and profoundly towards their absolute light in knowledge and their yet undreamed possibilities and most dynamic energy of content and form and practice. The one thing needful must be pursued first and always; but all things else come with it as its outcome and have not so much to be added to us as recovered and reshaped in its self-light and as portions of its self-expressive force.

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This then is the true relation between divine and human knowledge; it is not a separation into disparate fields, sacred and profane, that is the heart of the difference, but the character of the consciousness behind the working. All is human knowledge that proceeds from the ordinary mental consciousness interested in the outside or upper layers of things, in process, in phenomena for their own sake or for the sake of some surface utility or mental or vital satisfaction of Desire or of the Intelligence. But the same activity of knowledge can become part of the Yoga if it proceeds from the spiritual or spiritualising consciousness which seeks and finds in all that it surveys or penetrates the presence of the timeless Eternal and the ways of manifestation of the Eternal in Time. It is evident that the need of a concentration indispensable for the transition out of the Ignorance may make

it necessary for the seeker to gather together his energies and focus them only on that which will help the transition and to leave aside or subordinate for the time all that is not directly turned towards the one object. He may find that this or that pursuit of human knowledge with which he was accustomed to deal by the surface power of the mind still brings him by reason of this tendency or habit out of the depths to the surface or down from the heights which he has climbed or is nearing to lower levels. These activities then may have to be intermittent or put aside until, secure in a higher consciousness, he is able to turn its powers on all the mental fields; then, subjected to that light or taken up into it, they are turned, by the transformation of his consciousness, into a province of the spiritual and divine. All that cannot be so transformed or refuses to be part of a divine consciousness he will abandon without hesitation, but not from any preconceived prejudgment of its unfitness or its incapacity to be an element of the new inner life. There can be no fixed mental test or principle for these things; he will therefore follow no unalterable rule, but accept or repel an activity of the mind according to his feeling, insight or experience until the greater Power and Light are there to turn their unerring scrutiny on all that is below and choose or reject their material out of what the human evolution has prepared for the divine labour.

How precisely or by what stages this progression and change will take place must depend on the form, need and powers of the individual nature. In the spiritual domain the essence is always one, but there is yet an infinite variety and, at any rate in the integral Yoga, the rigidity of a strict and precise mental rule is seldom applicable; for, even when they walk in the same direction, no two natures proceed on exactly the same lines, in the same series of steps or with quite identical stages of their progress. It may yet be said that a logical succession of the states of progress would be very much in this order. First, there is a large turning in which all the natural mental activities proper to the individual nature are taken up or referred to a higher standpoint and dedicated by the soul in us, the psychic being, the priest of the sacrifice, to the divine service; next, there is an attempt at an ascent of the being

and a bringing down of the Light and Power proper to some new height of consciousness gained by its upward effort into the whole action of the knowledge. Here there may be a strong concentration on the inward central change of the consciousness and an abandonment of a large part of the outward-going mental life or else its relegation to a small and subordinate place. At different stages it or parts of it may be taken up again from time to time to see how far the new inner psychic and spiritual consciousness can be brought into its movements; but that compulsion of the temperament or the nature which in human beings necessitates one kind of activity or another and makes it seem almost an indispensable portion of the existence, will diminish and eventually no attachment will be left, no lower compulsion or driving force felt anywhere. Only the Divine will matter, the Divine alone will be the one need of the whole being; if there is any compulsion to activity it will be not that of implanted desire or of force of Nature, but the luminous driving of some greater Consciousness-Force which is becoming more and more the sole motive power of the whole existence. On the other hand, it is possible at any period of the inner spiritual progress that one may experience an extension rather than a restriction of the activities; there may be an opening of new capacities of mental creation and new provinces of knowledge by the miraculous touch of the Yoga-Shakti. Aesthetic feeling, the power of artistic creation in one field or many fields together, talent or genius of literary expression, a faculty of metaphysical thinking, any power of eye or ear or hand or mind-power may awaken where none was apparent before. The Divine within may throw these latent riches out from the depths in which they were hidden or a Force from above may pour down its energies to equip the instrumental nature for the activity or the creation of which it is meant to be a channel or a builder. But, whatever may be the method or the course of development chosen by the hidden Master of the Yoga, the common culmination of this stage is the growing consciousness of him alone as the mover, decider, shaper of all the movements of the mind and all the activities of knowledge.

There are two signs of the transformation of the seeker's mind of knowledge and works of knowledge from the process of the Ignorance to the process of a liberated consciousness working partly, then wholly in the light of the Spirit. There is first a central change of the consciousness and a growing direct experience, vision, feeling of the Supreme and the cosmic existence, the Divine in itself and the Divine in all things; the mind will be taken up into a growing preoccupation with this first and foremost and will feel itself heightening, widening into a more and more illumined means of expression of the one fundamental knowledge. But also the central Consciousness in its turn will take up more and more the outer mental activities of knowledge and turn them into a parcel of itself or an annexed province; it will infuse into them its more authentic movement and make a more and more spiritualised and illumined mind its instrument in these surface fields, its new conquests, as well as in its own deeper spiritual empire. And this will be the second sign, the sign of a certain completion and perfection, that the Divine himself has become the Knower and all the inner movements, including the activities of what was once a purely human mental action, have become his field of knowledge. There will be less and less individual choice, opinion, preference, less and less of intellectualisation, mental weaving, cerebral galley-slave labour; a Light within will see all that has to be seen, know all that has to be known, develop, create, organise. It will be the Inner Knower who will do in the liberated and universalised mind of the individual the works of an all-comprehending knowledge.

These two changes are the signs of a first effectuation in which the activities of the mental nature are lifted up, spiritualised, widened, universalised, liberated, led to a consciousness of their true purpose as an instrumentation of the Divine creating and developing its manifestation in the temporal universe. But this cannot be the whole scope of the transformation; for it is not in these limits that the integral seeker can cease from his ascension or confine the widening of his nature. For, if it were so, knowledge would still remain a working of the mind, liberated, universalised, spiritualised, but still, as all mind must be,

comparatively restricted, relative, imperfect in the very essence of its dynamism; it would reflect luminously great constructions of Truth, but not move in the domain where Truth is authentic, direct, sovereign and native. There is an ascension still to be made from this height, by which the spiritualised mind will exceed itself and transmute into a supramental power of knowledge. Already in the process of spiritualisation it will have begun to pass out of the brilliant poverty of the human intellect; it will mount successively into the pure broad reaches of a higher mind, and next into the gleaming belts of a still greater free Intelligence illumined with a Light from above. At this point it will begin to feel more freely, admit with a less mixed response the radiant beginnings of an Intuition, not illumined, but luminous in itself, true in itself, no longer entirely mental and therefore subjected to the abundant intrusion of error. Here too is not an end, for it must rise beyond into the very domain of that untruncated Intuition, the first direct light from the self-awareness of essential Being and, beyond it, attain that from which this light comes. For there is an Overmind behind Mind, a Power more original and dynamic which supports Mind, sees it as a diminished radiation from itself, uses it as a transmitting belt of passage downward or an instrument for the creations of the Ignorance. The last step of the ascension would be the surpassing of Overmind itself or its return into its own still greater origin, its conversion into the supramental light of the Divine Gnosis. For there in the supramental Light is the seat of a divine Truth-consciousness that has native in it, as no other consciousness below it can have, the power to organise the works of a Truth which is no longer tarnished by the shadow of the cosmic Inconscience and Ignorance. There to reach and thence to bring down a supramental dynamism that can transform the Ignorance is the distant but imperative supreme goal of the integral Yoga.

As the light of each of these higher powers is turned upon the human activities of knowledge, any distinction of sacred and profane, human and divine, begins more and more to fade until it is finally abolished as otiose; for whatever is touched and thoroughly penetrated by the Divine Gnosis is transfigured

and becomes a movement of its own Light and Power, free from the turbidity and limitations of the lower intelligence. It is not a separation of some activities, but a transformation of them all by the change of the informing consciousness that is the way of liberation, an ascent of the sacrifice of knowledge to a greater and ever greater light and force. All the works of mind and intellect must be first heightened and widened, then illumined, lifted into the domain of a higher Intelligence, afterwards translated into workings of a greater non-mental Intuition, these again transformed into the dynamic outpourings of the Overmind radiance, and those transfigured into the full light and sovereignty of the supramental Gnosis. It is this that the evolution of consciousness in the world carries prefigured but latent in its seed and in the straining tense intention of its process; nor can that process, that evolution cease till it has evolved the instruments of a perfect in place of its now imperfect manifestation of the Spirit.

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If knowledge is the widest power of the consciousness and its function is to free and illumine, yet love is the deepest and most intense and its privilege is to be the key to the most profound and secret recesses of the Divine Mystery. Man, because he is a mental being, is prone to give the highest importance to the thinking mind and its reason and will and to its way of approach and effectuation of Truth and, even, he is inclined to hold that there is no other. The heart with its emotions and incalculable movements is to the eye of his intellect an obscure, uncertain and often a perilous and misleading power which needs to be kept in control by the reason and the mental will and intelligence. And yet there is in the heart or behind it a profounder mystic light which, if not what we call intuition,—for that, though not of the mind, yet descends through the mind,—has yet a direct touch upon Truth and is nearer to the Divine than the human intellect in its pride of knowledge. According to the ancient teaching the seat of the immanent Divine, the hidden Purusha, is in the mystic heart,—the secret heart-cave, *ḥṛdaye guhāyām*,

as the Upanishads put it,—and, according to the experience of many Yogins, it is from its depths that there comes the voice or the breath of the inner oracle.

This ambiguity, these opposing appearances of depth and blindness are created by the double character of the human emotive being. For there is in front in man a heart of vital emotion similar to the animal's, if more variously developed; its emotions are governed by egoistic passion, blind instinctive affections and all the play of the life-impulses with their imperfections, perversions, often sordid degradations,—a heart besieged and given over to the lusts, desires, wraths, intense or fierce demands or little greeds and mean pettinesses of an obscure and fallen life-force and debased by its slavery to any and every impulse. This mixture of the emotive heart and the sensational hungering vital creates in man a false soul of desire; it is this that is the crude and dangerous element which the reason rightly distrusts and feels a need to control, even though the actual control or rather coercion it succeeds in establishing over our raw and insistent vital nature remains always very uncertain and deceptive. But the true soul of man is not there; it is in the true invisible heart hidden in some luminous cave of the nature: there under some infiltration of the divine Light is our soul, a silent inmost being of which few are even aware; for if all have a soul, few are conscious of their true soul or feel its direct impulse. There dwells the little spark of the Divine which supports the obscure mass of our nature and around it grows the psychic being, the formed soul or the real Man within us. It is as this psychic being in him grows and the movements of the heart reflect its divinations and impulsions that man becomes more and more aware of his soul, ceases to be a superior animal and, awakening to glimpses of the godhead within him, admits more and more its intimations of a deeper life and consciousness and an impulse towards things divine. It is one of the decisive moments of the integral Yoga when this psychic being, liberated, brought out from the veil to the front, can pour the full flood of its divinations, seeings and impulsions on the mind, life and body of man and begins to prepare the upbuilding of divinity in the earthly nature.

As in the works of knowledge, so in dealing with the workings of the heart, we are obliged to make a preliminary distinction between two categories of movements, those that are either moved by the true soul or aid towards its liberation and rule in the nature and those that are turned to the satisfaction of the unpurified vital nature. But the distinctions ordinarily laid down in this sense are of little use for the deeper spiritual purpose of Yoga. Thus a division can be made between religious emotions and mundane feelings and it can be laid down as a rule of spiritual life that the religious emotions alone should be cultivated and all worldly feelings and passions must be rejected and fall away from our existence. This in practice would mean the religious life of the saint or devotee, alone within with the Divine or linked only to others in a common God-love or at the most pouring out the fountains of a sacred, religious or pietistic love on the world outside. But religious emotion itself is too constantly invaded by the turmoil and obscurity of the vital movements and it is often either crude or narrow or fanatical or mixed with movements that are not signs of the spirit's perfection. It is evident besides that even at the best an intense figure of sainthood clamped in rigid hieratic lines is quite other than the wide ideal of an integral Yoga. A larger psychic and emotional relation with God and the world, more deep and plastic in its essence, more wide and embracing in its movements, more capable of taking up in its sweep the whole of life, is imperative.

A wider formula has been provided by the secular mind of man of which the basis is the ethical sense; for it distinguishes between the emotions sanctioned by the ethical sense and those that are egoistic and selfishly common and mundane. It is the works of altruism, philanthropy, compassion, benevolence, humanitarianism, service, labour for the well-being of man and all creatures that are to be our ideal; to shuffle off the coil of egoism and grow into a soul of self-abnegation that lives only or mainly for others or for humanity as a whole is the way of man's inner evolution according to this doctrine. Or if this is too secular and mental to satisfy the whole of our being, since there is a deeper religious and spiritual note there that is left

out of account by the humanitarian formula, a religio-ethical foundation can be provided for it—and such was indeed its original basis. To the inner worship of the Divine or the Supreme by the devotion of the heart or to the pursuit of the Ineffable by the seeking of a highest knowledge can be added a worship through altruistic works or a preparation through acts of love, of benevolence, of service to mankind or to those around us. It is indeed by the religio-ethical sense that the law of universal goodwill or universal compassion or of love and service to the neighbour, the Vedantic, the Buddhistic, the Christian ideal, was created; only by a sort of secular refrigeration extinguishing the fervour of the religious element in it could the humanitarian ideal disengage itself and become the highest plane of a secular system of mental and moral ethics. For in the religious system this law of works is a means that ceases when its object is accomplished or a side issue; it is a part of the cult by which one adores and seeks the Divinity or it is a penultimate step of the excision of self in the passage to Nirvana. In the secular ideal it is promoted into an object in itself; it becomes a sign of the moral perfection of the human being, or else it is a condition for a happier state of man upon earth, a better society, a more united life of the race. But none of these things satisfy the demand of the soul that is placed before us by the integral Yoga.

Altruism, philanthropy, humanitarianism, service are flowers of the mental consciousness and are at best the mind's cold and pale imitation of the spiritual flame of universal Divine Love. Not truly liberative from ego-sense, they widen it at most and give it a higher and larger satisfaction; impotent in practice to change man's vital life and nature, they only modify and palliate its action and daub over its unchanged egoistic essence. Or if they are intensely followed with an entire sincerity of the will, it is by an exaggerated amplification of one side of our nature; in that exaggeration there can be no clue for the full and perfect divine evolution of the many sides of our individualised being towards the universal and transcendent Eternal. Nor can the religio-ethical ideal be a sufficient guide,—for this is a compromise or compact of mutual concessions for mutual

support between a religious urge which seeks to get a closer hold on earth by taking into itself the higher turns of ordinary human nature and an ethical urge which hopes to elevate itself out of its own mental hardness and dryness by some touch of a religious fervour. In making this compact religion lowers itself to the mental level and inherits the inherent imperfections of mind and its inability to convert and transform life. The mind is the sphere of the dualities and, just as it is impossible for it to achieve any absolute Truth but only truths relative or mixed with error, so it is impossible for it to achieve any absolute good; for moral good exists as a counterpart and corrective to evil and has evil always for its shadow, complement, almost its reason for existence. But the spiritual consciousness belongs to a higher than the mental plane and there the dualities cease; for there falsehood confronted with the truth by which it profited through a usurping falsification of it and evil faced by the good of which it was a perversion or a lurid substitute, are obliged to perish for want of sustenance and to cease. The integral Yoga, refusing to rely upon the fragile stuff of mental and moral ideals, puts its whole emphasis in this field on three central dynamic processes,— the development of the true soul or psychic being to take the place of the false soul of desire, the sublimation of human into divine love, the elevation of consciousness from its mental to its spiritual and supramental plane by whose power alone both the soul and the life-force can be utterly delivered from the veils and prevarications of the Ignorance.

It is the very nature of the soul or the psychic being to turn towards the divine Truth as the sunflower to the sun; it accepts and clings to all that is divine or progressing towards divinity, and draws back from all that is a perversion or a denial of it, from all that is false and undivine. Yet the soul is at first but a spark and then a little flame of godhead burning in the midst of a great darkness; for the most part it is veiled in its inner sanctum and to reveal itself it has to call on the mind, the life-force and the physical consciousness and persuade them, as best they can, to express it; ordinarily, it succeeds at most in suffusing their outwardness with its inner light and modifying with its

purifying fineness their dark obscurities or their coarser mixture. Even when there is a formed psychic being able to express itself with some directness in life, it is still in all but a few a smaller portion of the being — “no bigger in the mass of the body than the thumb of a man” was the image used by the ancient seers — and it is not always able to prevail against the obscurity or ignorant smallness of the physical consciousness, the mistaken surenesses of the mind or the arrogance and vehemence of the vital nature. This soul is obliged to accept the human mental, emotive, sensational life as it is, its relations, its activities, its cherished forms and figures; it has to labour to disengage and increase the divine element in all this relative truth mixed with a continual falsifying error, this love turned to the uses of the animal body or the satisfaction of the vital ego, this life of an average manhood shot with rare and pale glimpses of godhead and the darker luridities of the demon and the brute. Unerring in the essence of its will, it is obliged often under the pressure of its instruments to submit to mistakes of action, wrong placement of feeling, wrong choice of person, errors in the exact form of its will, in the circumstances of its expression of the infallible inner ideal. Yet is there a divination within it which makes it a surer guide than the reason or than even the highest desire, and through apparent errors and stumblings its voice can still lead better than the precise intellect and the considering mental judgment. This voice of the soul is not what we call conscience — for that is only a mental and often conventional erring substitute; it is a deeper and more seldom heard call; yet to follow it when heard is wisest: even, it is better to wander at the call of one’s soul than to go apparently straight with the reason and the outward moral mentor. But it is only when the life turns towards the Divine that the soul can truly come forward and impose its power on the outer members; for, itself a spark of the Divine, to grow in flame towards the Divine is its true life and its very reason of existence.

At a certain stage in the Yoga when the mind is sufficiently quieted and no longer supports itself at every step on the sufficiency of its mental certitudes, when the vital has been steadied

and subdued and is no longer constantly insistent on its own rash will, demand and desire, when the physical has been sufficiently altered not to bury altogether the inner flame under the mass of its outwardness, obscurity or inertia, an inmost being, long hidden within and felt only in its rare influences, is able to come forward and illumine the rest and take up the lead of the Sadhana. Its character is a one-pointed orientation towards the Divine or the Highest, one-pointed and yet plastic in action and movement; it does not create a rigidity of direction like the one-pointed intellect or a bigotry of the regnant idea or impulse like the one-pointed vital force; it is at every moment and with a supple sureness that it points the way to the Truth, automatically distinguishes the right step from the false, extricates the divine or Godward movement from the clinging mixture of the undivine. Its action is like a searchlight showing up all that has to be changed in the nature; it has in it a flame of will insistent on perfection, on an alchemic transmutation of all the inner and outer existence. It sees the divine essence everywhere but rejects the mere mask and the disquising figure. It insists on Truth, on will and strength and mastery, on Joy and Love and Beauty, but on a Truth of abiding Knowledge that surpasses the mere practical momentary truth of the Ignorance, on an inward joy and not on mere vital pleasure,—for it prefers rather a purifying suffering and sorrow to degrading satisfactions,—on love winged upward and not tied to the stake of egoistic craving or with its feet sunk in the mire, on beauty restored to its priesthood of interpretation of the Eternal, on strength and will and mastery as instruments not of the ego but of the Spirit. Its will is for the divinisation of life, the expression through it of a higher Truth, its dedication to the Divine and the Eternal.

But the most intimate character of the psychic is its pressure towards the Divine through a sacred love, joy and oneness. It is a divine Love that it seeks most, it is the love of the Divine that is its spur, its goal, its star of Truth shining over the luminous cave of the nascent or the still obscure cradle of the new-born godhead within us. In the first long stage of its growth and immature existence it has leaned on earthly love, affection,

tenderness, goodwill, compassion, benevolence, on all beauty and gentleness and fineness and light and strength and courage, on all that can help to refine and purify the grossness and commonness of human nature; but it knows how mixed are these human movements at their best and at their worst how fallen and stamped with the mark of ego and self-deceptive sentimental falsehood and the lower self profiting by the imitation of a soul-movement. At once, emerging, it is ready and eager to break all the old ties and imperfect emotional activities and replace them by a greater spiritual Truth of love and oneness. It may still admit the human forms and movements, but on condition that they are turned towards the One alone. It accepts only the ties that are helpful, the heart's and mind's reverence for the Guru, the union of the God-seekers, a spiritual compassion for this ignorant human and animal world and its peoples, the joy and happiness and satisfaction of beauty that comes from the perception of the Divine everywhere. It plunges the nature inward towards its meeting with the immanent Divine in the heart's secret centre and, while that call is there, no reproach of egoism, no mere outward summons of altruism or duty or philanthropy or service will deceive or divert it from its sacred longing and its obedience to the attraction of the Divinity within it. It lifts the being towards a transcendent Ecstasy and is ready to shed all the downward pull of the world from its wings in its uprising to reach the One Highest; but it calls down also this transcendent Love and Beatitude to deliver and transform this world of hatred and strife and division and darkness and jarring Ignorance. It opens to a universal Divine Love, a vast compassion, an intense and immense will for the good of all, for the embrace of the World-Mother enveloping or gathering to her her children, the divine Passion that has plunged into the night for the redemption of the world from the universal Inconscience. It is not attracted or misled by mental imitations or any vital misuse of these great deep-seated Truths of existence; it exposes them with its detecting search-ray and calls down the entire truth of divine Love to heal these malformations, to deliver mental, vital, physical love from their insufficiencies or

their perversions and reveal to them their true abounding share of the intimacy and the oneness, the ascending ecstasy and the descending rapture.

All true Truth of love and of the works of love the psychic being accepts in their place: but its flame mounts always upward and it is eager to push the ascent from lesser to higher degrees of Truth, since it knows that only by the ascent to a highest Truth and the descent of that highest Truth can Love be delivered from the cross and placed upon the throne; for the cross is the sign of the Divine Descent barred and marred by the transversal line of a cosmic deformation which turns it into a stake of suffering and misfortune. Only by the ascent to the original Truth can the deformation be healed and all the works of love, as too all the works of knowledge and of life, be restored to a divine significance and become part of an integral spiritual existence.

Chapter VI

The Ascent of the Sacrifice—2

The Works of Love — The Works of Life

IT IS therefore through the sacrifice of love, works and knowledge with the psychic being as the leader and priest of the sacrifice that life itself can be transformed into its own true spiritual figure. If the sacrifice of knowledge rightly done is easily the largest and purest offering we can bring to the Highest, the sacrifice of love is not less demanded of us for our spiritual perfection; it is even more intense and rich in its singleness and can be made not less vast and pure. This pure wideness is brought into the intensity of the sacrifice of love when into all our activities there is poured the spirit and power of a divine infinite joy and the whole atmosphere of our life is suffused with an engrossing adoration of the One who is the All and the Highest. For then does the sacrifice of love attain its utter perfection when, offered to the divine All, it becomes integral, catholic and boundless, and when, uplifted to the Supreme, it ceases to be the weak, superficial and transient movement men call love and becomes a pure and grand and deep uniting Ananda.

Although it is a divine love for the supreme and universal Divine that must be the rule of our spiritual existence, this does not exclude altogether all forms of individual love or the ties that draw soul to soul in manifested existence. A psychic change is demanded, a divestiture of the masks of the Ignorance, a purification of the egoistic mental, vital and physical movements that prolong the old inferior consciousness; each movement of love, spiritualised, must depend no longer on mental preference, vital passion or physical craving, but on the recognition of soul by soul,—love restored to its fundamental spiritual and psychic essence with the mind, the vital, the physical as manifesting instruments and elements of that greater oneness.

In this change the individual love also is converted by a natural heightening into a divine love for the Divine Inhabitant immanent in a mind and soul and body occupied by the One in all creatures.

All love, indeed, that is adoration has a spiritual force behind it, and even when it is offered ignorantly and to a limited object, something of that splendour appears through the poverty of the rite and the smallness of its issues. For love that is worship is at once an aspiration and a preparation: it can bring even within its small limits in the Ignorance a glimpse of a still more or less blind and partial but surprising realisation; for there are moments when it is not we but the One who loves and is loved in us, and even a human passion can be uplifted and glorified by a slight glimpse of this infinite Love and Lover. It is for this reason that the worship of the god, the worship of the idol, the human magnet or ideal are not to be despised; for these are steps through which the human race moves towards that blissful passion and ecstasy of the Infinite which, even in limiting it, they yet represent for our imperfect vision when we have still to use the inferior steps Nature has hewn for our feet and admit the stages of our progress. Certain idolatries are indispensable for the development of our emotional being, nor will the man who knows be hasty at any time to shatter the image unless he can replace it in the heart of the worshipper by the Reality it figures. Moreover, they have this power because there is always something in them that is greater than their forms and, even when we reach the supreme worship, that abides and becomes a prolongation of it or a part of its catholic wholeness. Our knowledge is still imperfect in us, love incomplete if even when we know That which surpasses all forms and manifestations, we cannot still accept the Divine in creature and object, in man, in the kind, in the animal, in the tree, in the flower, in the work of our hands, in the Nature-Force which is then no longer to us the blind action of a material machinery but a face and power of the universal Shakti: for in these things too is the presence of the Eternal.

An ultimate inexpressible adoration offered by us to the

Transcendent, to the Highest,¹ to the Ineffable, is yet no complete worship if it is not offered to him wherever he manifests or wherever even he hides his godhead — in man² and object and every creature. An Ignorance is there no doubt which imprisons the heart, distorts its feelings, obscures the significance of its offering; all partial worship, all religion which erects a mental or a physical idol is tempted to veil and protect the truth in it by a certain cloak of ignorance and easily loses the truth in its image. But the pride of exclusive knowledge is also a limitation and a barrier. For there is, concealed behind individual love, obscured by its ignorant human figure, a mystery which the mind cannot seize, the mystery of the body of the Divine, the secret of a mystic form of the Infinite which we can approach only through the ecstasy of the heart and the passion of the pure and sublimated sense, and its attraction which is the call of the divine Flute-player, the mastering compulsion of the All-Beautiful, can only be seized and seize us through an occult love and yearning which in the end makes one the Form and the Formless, and identifies Spirit and Matter. It is that which the spirit in Love is seeking here in the darkness of the Ignorance and it is that which it finds when individual human love is changed into the love of the Immanent Divine incarnate in the material universe.

As with individual, so with universal Love; all that widening of the self through sympathy, goodwill, universal benevolence and beneficence, love of mankind, love of creatures, the attraction of all the myriad forms and presences that surround us, by which mentally and emotionally man escapes from the first limits of his ego, has to be taken up into a unifying divine love for the universal Divine. Adoration fulfilled in love, love in Ananda, — the surpassing love, the self-wrapped ecstasy of transcendent delight in the Transcendent which awaits us at the end of the path of Devotion, — has for its wider result a universal love for all beings, the Ananda of all that is; we perceive behind every veil the Divine, spiritually embrace in all forms the All-Beautiful. A

¹ *param bhāvam.* ² *mānuṣīn tanum āśritam.*

universal delight in his endless manifestation flows through us, taking in its surge every form and movement, but not bound or stationary in any and always reaching out to a greater and more perfect expression. This universal love is liberative and dynamic for transformation; for the discord of forms and appearances ceases to affect the heart that has felt the one Truth behind them all and understood their perfect significance. The impartial equality of soul of the selfless worker and knower is transformed by the magic touch of divine Love into an all-embracing ecstasy and million-bodied beatitude. All things become bodies and all movements the playings of the divine Beloved in his infinite house of pleasure. Even pain is changed and in their reaction and even in their essence things painful alter; the forms of pain fall away, there are created in their place the forms of Ananda.

This is in its essence the nature of the change of consciousness which turns existence itself into a glorified field of a Divine Love and Ananda. In its essence it begins for the seeker when he passes from the ordinary to the spiritual level and looks with a new heart of luminous vision and feeling on the world and self and others. It reaches its height when the spiritual becomes also the supramental level and then also it is possible not only to feel it in essence but realise it dynamically as a Power for the transformation of the whole inner life and the whole outer existence.

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It is not altogether difficult for the mind to envisage, even though it may be difficult for the human will with its many earth-ties to accept, this transformation of the spirit and nature of love from the character of a mixed and limited human emotion to a supreme and all-embracing divine passion. It is when we come to the works of love that a certain perplexity is likely to intervene. It is possible, as in a certain high exaggeration of the path of knowledge, to cut here also the knot of the problem, escape the difficulty of uniting the spirit of love with the crudities of the world-action by avoiding it; it is open to us, withdrawing

from outward life and action altogether, to live alone with our adoration of the Divine in the heart's silence. It is possible too to admit only those acts that are either in themselves an expression of love for the Divine, prayer, praise, symbolic acts of worship or subordinate activities that may be attached to these things and partake of their spirit, and to leave aside all else; the soul turns away to satisfy its inner longing in the absorbed or the God-centred life of the saint and devotee. It is possible, again, to open the doors of life more largely and to spend one's love of the Divine in acts of service to those around us and to the race; one can do the works of philanthropy, benevolence and beneficence, charity and succour to man and beast and every creature, transfigure them by a kind of spiritual passion, at least bring into their merely ethical appearance the greater power of a spiritual motive. This is indeed the solution most commonly favoured by the religious mind of today and we see it confidently advanced on all sides as the proper field of action of the God-seeker or of the man whose life is founded on divine love and knowledge. But the integral Yoga pushed towards a complete union of the Divine with the earth-life cannot stop short in this narrow province or limit this union within the lesser dimensions of an ethical rule of philanthropy and beneficence. All action must be made in it part of the God-life, our acts of knowledge, our acts of power and production and creation, our acts of joy and beauty and the soul's pleasure, our acts of will and endeavour and struggle and not our acts only of love and beneficent service. Its way to do these things will be not outward and mental, but inward and spiritual, and to that end it will bring into all activities, whatever they are, the spirit of divine love, the spirit of adoration and worship, the spirit of happiness in the Divine and in the beauty of the Divine so as to make all life a sacrifice of the works of the soul's love to the Divine, its cult of the Master of its existence.

It is possible so to turn life into an act of adoration to the Supreme by the spirit in one's works; for, says the Gita, "He who gives to me with a heart of adoration a leaf, a flower, a fruit or a cup of water, I take and enjoy that offering of his devotion"; and

it is not only any dedicated external gift that can be so offered with love and devotion, but all our thoughts, all our feelings and sensations, all our outward activities and their forms and objects can be such gifts to the Eternal. It is true that the special act or form of action has its importance, even a great importance, but it is the spirit in the act that is the essential factor; the spirit of which it is the symbol or materialised expression gives it its whole value and justifying significance. Or it may be said that a complete act of divine love and worship has in it three parts that are the expressions of a single whole,—a practical worship of the Divine in the act, a symbol of worship in the form of the act expressing some vision and seeking or some relation with the Divine, an inner adoration and longing for oneness or feeling of oneness in the heart and soul and spirit. It is so that life can be changed into worship,—by putting behind it the spirit of a transcendent and universal love, the seeking of oneness, the sense of oneness; by making each act a symbol, an expression of Godward emotion or a relation with the Divine; by turning all we do into an act of worship, an act of the soul's communion, the mind's understanding, the life's obedience, the heart's surrender.

In any cult the symbol, the significant rite or expressive figure is not only a moving and enriching aesthetic element, but a physical means by which the human being begins to make outwardly definite the emotion and aspiration of his heart, to confirm it and to dynamise it. For if without a spiritual aspiration worship is meaningless and vain, yet the aspiration also without the act and the form is a disembodied and, for life, an incompletely effective power. It is unhappily the fate of all forms in human life to become crystallised, purely formal and therefore effete, and although form and cult preserve always their power for the man who can still enter into their meaning, the majority come to use the ceremony as a mechanical rite and the symbol as a lifeless sign, and because that kills the soul of religion, cult and form have in the end to be changed or thrown aside altogether. There are those even to whom all cult and form are for this reason suspect and offensive; but few can dispense with the support of outward symbols and, even, a certain divine element

in human nature demands them always for the completeness of its spiritual satisfaction. Always the symbol is legitimate in so far as it is true, sincere, beautiful and delightful, and even one may say that a spiritual consciousness without any aesthetic or emotional content is not entirely or at any rate not integrally spiritual. In the spiritual life the basis of the act is a spiritual consciousness perennial and renovating, moved to express itself always in new forms or able to renew the truth of a form always by the flow of the spirit, and to so express itself and make every action a living symbol of some truth of the soul is the very nature of its creative vision and impulse. It is so that the spiritual seeker must deal with life and transmute its form and glorify it in its essence.

A supreme divine Love is a creative Power and, even though it can exist in itself silent and unchangeable, yet rejoices in external form and expression and is not condemned to be a speechless and bodiless godhead. It has even been said that creation itself was an act of love or at least the building up of a field in which Divine Love could devise its symbols and fulfil itself in act of mutuality and self-giving, and, if not the initial nature of creation, this may well be its ultimate object and motive. It does not so appear now because, even if a Divine Love is there in the world upholding all this evolution of creatures, yet the stuff of life and its action is made up of an egoistic formation, a division, a struggle of life and consciousness to exist and survive in an apparently indifferent, inclement or even hostile world of inanimate and inconscient Matter. In the confusion and obscurity of this struggle all are thrown against each other with a will in each to assert its own existence first and foremost and only secondarily to assert itself in others and very partially for others; for even man's altruism remains essentially egoistic and must be so till the soul finds the secret of the divine Oneness. It is to discover that at its supreme source, to bring it from within and to radiate it out up to the extreme confines of life that is turned the effort of the Yoga. All action, all creation must be turned into a form, a symbol of the cult, the adoration, the sacrifice; it must carry something that makes it bear in it

the stamp of a dedication, a reception and translation of the Divine Consciousness, a service of the Beloved, a self-giving, a surrender. This has to be done wherever possible in the outward body and form of the act; it must be done always in its inward emotion and an intensity that shows it to be an outflow from the soul towards the Eternal.

In itself the adoration in the act is a great and complete and powerful sacrifice that tends by its self-multiplication to reach the discovery of the One and make the radiation of the Divine possible. For devotion by its embodiment in acts not only makes its own way broad and full and dynamic, but brings at once into the harder way of works in the world the divinely passionate element of joy and love which is often absent in its beginning when it is only the austere spiritual Will that follows in a struggling uplifting tension the steep ascent, and the heart is still asleep or bound to silence. If the spirit of divine love can enter, the hardness of the way diminishes, the tension is lightened, there is a sweetness and joy even in the core of difficulty and struggle. The indispensable surrender of all our will and works and activities to the Supreme is indeed only perfect and perfectly effective when it is a surrender of love. All life turned into this cult, all actions done in the love of the Divine and in the love of the world and its creatures seen and felt as the Divine manifested in many disguises become by that very fact part of an integral Yoga.

It is the inner offering of the heart's adoration, the soul of it in the symbol, the spirit of it in the act, that is the very life of the sacrifice. If this offering is to be complete and universal, then a turning of all our emotions to the Divine is imperative. This is the intensest way of purification for the human heart, more powerful than any ethical or aesthetic catharsis could ever be by its half-power and superficial pressure. A psychic fire within must be lit into which all is thrown with the Divine Name upon it. In that fire all the emotions are compelled to cast off their grosser elements and those that are undivine perversions are burned away and the others discard their insufficiencies, till a spirit of largest love and a stainless divine delight arises out of the

flame and smoke and frankincense. It is the divine love which so emerges that, extended in inward feeling to the Divine in man and all creatures in an active universal equality, will be more potent for the perfectibility of life and a more real instrument than the ineffective mental ideal of brotherhood can ever be. It is this poured out into acts that could alone create a harmony in the world and a true unity between all its creatures; all else strives in vain towards that end so long as Divine Love has not disclosed itself as the heart of the delivered manifestation in terrestrial Nature.

It is here that the emergence of the secret psychic being in us as the leader of the sacrifice is of the utmost importance; for this inmost being alone can bring with it the full power of the spirit in the act, the soul in the symbol. It alone can assure, even while the spiritual consciousness is incomplete, the perennial freshness and sincerity and beauty of the symbol and prevent it from becoming a dead form or a corrupted and corrupting magic; it alone can preserve for the act its power with its significance. All the other members of our being, mind, life-force, physical or body consciousness, are too much under the control of the Ignorance to be a sure instrumentation and much less can they be a guide or the source of an unerring impulse. Always the greater part of the motive and action of these powers clings to the old law, the deceiving tablets, the cherished inferior movements of Nature and they meet with reluctance, alarm or revolt or obstructing inertia the voices and the forces that call and impel us to exceed and transform ourselves into a greater being and a wider Nature. In their major part the response is either a resistance or a qualified or temporising acquiescence; for even if they follow the call, they yet tend — when not consciously, then by automatic habit — to bring into the spiritual action their own natural disabilities and errors. At every moment they are moved to take egoistic advantage of the psychic and spiritual influences and can be detected using the power, joy or light these bring into us for a lower life-motive. Afterwards too, even when the seeker has opened to the Divine Love transcendental, universal or immanent, yet if he tries to pour it into life, he meets the

power of obscuration and perversion of these lower Nature-forces. Always they draw away towards pitfalls, pour into that higher intensity their diminishing elements, seek to capture the descending Power for themselves and their interests and degrade it into an aggrandised mental, vital or physical instrumentation for desire and ego. Instead of a Divine Love creator of a new heaven and a new earth of Truth and Light, they would hold it here prisoner as a tremendous sanction and glorifying force of sublimation to gild the mud of the old earth and colour with its rose and sapphire the old turbid unreal skies of sentimentalising vital imagination and mental idealised chimera. If that falsification is permitted, the higher Light and Power and Bliss withdraw, there is a fall back to a lower status; or else the realisation remains tied to an insecure half-way and mixture or is covered and even submerged by an inferior exaltation that is not the true Ananda. It is for this reason that Divine Love which is at the heart of all creation and the most powerful of all redeeming and creative forces has yet been the least frontally present in earthly life, the least successfully redemptive, the least creative. Human nature has been unable to bear it in its purity for the very reason that it is the most powerful, pure, rare and intense of all the divine energies; what little could be seized has been corrupted at once into a vital pietistic ardour, a defenceless religious or ethical sentimentalism, a sensuous or even sensual erotic mysticism of the roseate coloured mind or passionately turbid life-impulse and with these simulations compensated its inability to house the Mystic Flame that could rebuild the world with its tongues of sacrifice. It is only the inmost psychic being unveiled and emerging in its full power that can lead the pilgrim sacrifice unscathed through these ambushes and pitfalls; at each moment it catches, exposes, repels the mind's and the life's falsehoods, seizes hold on the truth of the Divine Love and Ananda and separates it from the excitement of the mind's ardours and the blind enthusiasms of the misleading life-force. But all things that are true at their core in mind and life and the physical being it extricates and takes with it in the journey till they stand on the heights, new in spirit and sublime in figure.

And yet even the leading of the inmost psychic being is not found sufficient until it has succeeded in raising itself out of this mass of inferior Nature to the highest spiritual levels and the divine spark and flame descended here have rejoined themselves to their original fiery Ether. For there is there no longer a spiritual consciousness still imperfect and half lost to itself in the thick sheaths of human mind, life and body, but the full spiritual consciousness in its purity, freedom and intense wideness. There, as it is the eternal Knower that becomes the Knower in us and mover and user of all knowledge, so it is the eternal All-Blissful who is the Adored attracting to himself the eternal divine portion of his being and joy that has gone out into the play of the universe, the infinite Lover pouring himself out in the multiplicity of his own manifested selves in a happy Oneness. All Beauty in the world is there the beauty of the Beloved, and all forms of beauty have to stand under the light of that eternal Beauty and submit themselves to the sublimating and transfiguring power of the unveiled Divine Perfection. All Bliss and Joy are there of the All-Blissful, and all inferior forms of enjoyment, happiness or pleasure are subjected to the shock of the intensity of its floods or currents and either they are broken to pieces as inadequate things under its convicting stress or compelled to transmute themselves into the forms of the Divine Ananda. Thus for the individual consciousness a Force is manifested which can deal sovereignly in it with the diminutions and degradations of the values of the Ignorance. At last it begins to be possible to bring down into life the immense reality and intense concreteness of the love and joy that are of the Eternal. Or at any rate it will be possible for our spiritual consciousness to raise itself out of mind into the supramental Light and Force and Vastness; there in the light and potency of the supramental Gnosis are the splendour and joy of a power of divine self-expression and self-organisation which could rescue and re-create even the world of the Ignorance into a figure of the Truth of the Spirit.

There in the supramental Gnosis is the fulfilment, the culminating height, the all-embracing extent of the inner adoration, the profound and integral union, the flaming wings of Love

upbearing the power and joy of a supreme Knowledge. For supramental Love brings an active ecstasy that surpasses the void passive peace and stillness which is the heaven of the liberated Mind and does not betray the deeper greater calm which is the beginning of the supramental silence. The unity of a love which is able to include in itself all differences without being diminished or abrogated by their present limitations and apparent dissonances is raised to its full potentiality on the supramental level. For there an intense oneness with all creatures founded on a profound oneness of the soul with the Divine can harmonise with a play of relations that only makes the oneness more perfect and absolute. The power of Love supramentalised can take hold of all living relations without hesitation or danger and turn them Godwards delivered from their crude, mixed and petty human settings and sublimated into the happy material of a divine life. For it is the very nature of the supramental experience that it can perpetuate the play of difference without forfeiting or in the least diminishing either the divine union or the infinite oneness. For a supramentalised consciousness it would be utterly possible to embrace all contacts with men and the world in a purified flame-force and with a transfigured significance, because the soul would then perceive always as the object of all emotion and all seeking for love or beauty the One Eternal and could spiritually use a wide and liberated life-urge to meet and join with that One Divine in all things and all creatures.

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Into the third and last category of the works of sacrifice can be gathered all that is directly proper to the Yoga of works; for here is its direct field of effectuation and major province. It covers the entire range of life's more visible activities; under it fall the multiform energies of the Will-to-Life throwing itself outward to make the most of material existence. It is here that an ascetic or other-worldly spirituality feels an insurmountable denial of the Truth which it seeks after and is compelled to turn away from terrestrial existence, rejecting it as for ever the dark

playground of an incurable Ignorance. Yet it is precisely these activities that are claimed for a spiritual conquest and divine transformation by the integral Yoga. Abandoned altogether by the more ascetic disciplines, accepted by others only as a field of temporary ordeal or a momentary, superficial and ambiguous play of the concealed spirit, this existence is fully embraced and welcomed by the integral seeker as a field of fulfilment, a field for divine works, a field of the total self-discovery of the concealed and indwelling spirit. A discovery of the Divinity in oneself is his first object, but a total discovery too of the Divinity in the world behind the apparent denial offered by its scheme and figures and, last, a total discovery of the dynamism of some transcendent Eternal; for by its descent this world and self will be empowered to break their disguising envelopes and become divine in revealing form and manifesting process as they now are secretly in their hidden essence.

This object of the integral Yoga must be accepted wholly by those who follow it, but the acceptance must not be in ignorance of the immense stumbling-blocks that lie in the way of the achievement; on the contrary we must be fully aware of the compelling cause of the refusal of so many other disciplines to regard even its possibility, much less its imperative character, as the true meaning of terrestrial existence. For here in the works of life in the earth-nature is the very heart of the difficulty that has driven Philosophy to its heights of aloofness and turned away even the eager eye of Religion from the malady of birth in a mortal body to a distant Paradise or a silent peace of Nirvana. A way of pure Knowledge is comparatively straightforward and easy to the tread of the seeker in spite of our mental limitations and the pitfalls of the Ignorance; a way of pure Love, although it has its stumbling-blocks and its sufferings and trials, can in comparison be as easy as the winging of a bird through the free azure. For Knowledge and Love are pure in their essence and become mixed and embarrassed, corrupted and degraded only when they enter into the ambiguous movement of the life-forces and are seized by them for the outward life's crude movements and obstinately inferior motives. Alone of the three powers Life

or at least a certain predominant Will-in-Life has the appearance of something impure, accursed or fallen in its very essence. At its contact, wrapped in its dull sheaths or caught in its iridescent quagmires, the divinities themselves become common and muddy and hardly escape from being dragged downwards into its perversions and disastrously assimilated to the demon and the Asura. A principle of dark and dull inertia is at its base; all are tied down by the body and its needs and desires to a trivial mind, petty desires and emotions, an insignificant repetition of small worthless functionings, needs, cares, occupations, pains, pleasures that lead to nothing beyond themselves and bear the stamp of an ignorance that knows not its own why and whither. This physical mind of inertia believes in no divinity other than its own small earth-gods; it aspires perhaps to a greater comfort, order, pleasure, but asks for no uplifting and no spiritual deliverance. At the centre we meet a stronger Will of life with a greater gusto, but it is a blinded Daemon, a perverted spirit and exults in the very elements that make of life a striving turmoil and an unhappy imbroglio. It is a soul of human or Titanic desire clinging to the garish colour, disordered poetry, violent tragedy or stirring melodrama of this mixed flux of good and evil, joy and sorrow, light and darkness, heady rapture and bitter torture. It loves these things and would have more and more of them or, even when it suffers and cries out against them, can accept or joy in nothing else; it hates and revolts against higher things and in its fury would trample, tear or crucify any diviner Power that has the presumption to offer to make life pure, luminous and happy and snatch from its lips the fiery brew of that exciting mixture. Another Will-in-Life there is that is ready to follow the ameliorating ideal Mind and is allured by its offer to extract some harmony, beauty, light, nobler order out of life, but this is a smaller part of the vital nature and can be easily over-powered by its more violent or darker duller yoke-comrades; nor does it readily lend itself to a call higher than that of the Mind unless that call defeats itself, as Religion usually does, by lowering its demand to conditions more intelligible to our obscure vital nature. All these forces the spiritual seeker grows

aware of in himself and finds all around him and has to struggle and combat incessantly to be rid of their grip and dislodge the long-entrenched mastery they have exercised over his own being as over the environing human existence. The difficulty is great; for their hold is so strong, so apparently invincible that it justifies the disdainful dictum which compares human nature to a dog's tail,—for, straighten it never so much by force of ethics, religion, reason or any other redemptive effort, it returns in the end always to the crooked curl of Nature. And so great is the vim, the clutch of that more agitated Life-Will, so immense the peril of its passions and errors, so subtly insistent or persistently invasive, so obstinate up to the very gates of Heaven the fury of its attack or the tedious obstruction of its obstacles that even the saint and the Yогin cannot be sure of their liberated purity or their trained self-mastery against its intrigue or its violence. All labour to straighten out this native crookedness strikes the struggling will as a futility; a flight, a withdrawal to happy Heaven or peaceful dissolution easily finds credit as the only wisdom and to find a way not to be born again gets established as the only remedy for the dull bondage or the poor shoddy delirium or the blinded and precarious happiness and achievement of earthly existence.

A remedy yet there should be and is, a way of redress and a chance of transformation for this troubled vital nature; but for that the cause of deviation must be found and remedied at the heart of Life itself and in its very principle, since Life too is a power of the Divine and not a creation of some malignant Chance or dark Titanic impulse, however obscure or perverted may be its actual appearance. In Life itself there is the seed of its own salvation, it is from the Life-Energy that we must get our leverage; for though there is a saving light in Knowledge, a redeeming and transforming force in Love, these cannot be effective here unless they secure the consent of Life and can use the instrumentation of some delivered energy at its centre for a sublimation of the erring human into a divine Life-Force. It is not possible to cut the difficulty by a splitting up of the works of sacrifice; we cannot escape it by deciding that we shall

do only the works of Love and Knowledge and leave aside the works of will and power, possession and acquisition, production and fruitful expense of capacity, battle and victory and mastery, striking away from us the larger part of life because it seems to be made of the very stuff of desire and ego and therefore doomed to be a field of disharmony and mere conflict and disorder. For the division cannot really be made; or, if attempted, it must fail in its essential purpose, since it would isolate us from the total energies of the World-Power and sterilise an important part of integral Nature, just the one force in it that is a necessary instrument in any world-creative purpose. The Life-Force is an indispensable intermediary, the effectuating element in Nature here; mind needs its alliance if the works of mind are not to remain shining inner formations without a body; the spirit needs it to give an outer force and form to its manifested possibilities and arrive at a complete self-expression incarnated in Matter. If Life refuses the aid of its intermediary energy to the spirit's other workings or is itself refused, they are likely to be reduced for all the effect they can have here to a static seclusion or a golden impotence; or if anything is done, it will be a partial irradiation of our action more subjective than objective, modifying existence perhaps, but without force to change it. Yet if Life brings its forces to the spirit but unregenerate, a worse result may follow since it is likely to reduce the spiritual action of Love or Knowledge to diminished and corrupted motions or make them accomplices of its own inferior or perverse workings. Life is indispensable to the completeness of the creative spiritual realisation, but life released, transformed, uplifted, not the ordinary mentalised human-animal life, nor the demoniac or Titanic, nor even the divine and the undivine mixed together. Whatever may be done by other world-shunning or heaven-seeking disciplines, this is the difficult but unavoidable task of the integral Yoga; it cannot afford to leave unsolved the problem of the outward works of Life, it must find in them their native Divinity and ally it firmly and for ever to the divinities of Love and Knowledge.

It is no solution either to postpone dealing with the works of Life till Love and Knowledge have been evolved to a point

at which they can sovereignly and with safety lay hold on the Life-Force to regenerate it; for we have seen that they have to rise to immense heights before they can be secure from the vital perversion which hampers or hamstrings their power to deliver. If once our consciousness could reach the heights of a supramental Nature, then indeed these disabilities would disappear. But here there is the dilemma that it is impossible to reach the supramental heights with the burden of an unregenerated Life-Force on our shoulders and equally impossible to regenerate radically the Will-in-Life without bringing down the infallible light and unconquerable power that belong to the spiritual and supramental levels. The Supramental Consciousness is not only a Knowledge, a Bliss, an intimate Love and Oneness, it is also a Will, a principle of Power and Force, and it cannot descend till the element of Will, of Power, of Force in this manifested Nature is sufficiently developed and sublimated to receive and bear it. But Will, Power, Force are the native substance of the Life-Energy, and herein lies the justification for the refusal of Life to acknowledge the supremacy of Knowledge and Love alone,—for its push towards the satisfaction of something far more unreflecting, headstrong and dangerous than can yet venture too in its own bold and ardent way towards the Divine and Absolute. Love and Wisdom are not the only aspects of the Divine, there is also its aspect of Power. As the mind gropes for Knowledge, as the heart feels out for Love, so the life-force, however fumblingly or trepidantly, stumbles in search of Power and the control given by Power. It is a mistake of the ethical or religious mind to condemn Power as in itself a thing not to be accepted or sought after because naturally corrupting and evil; in spite of its apparent justification by a majority of instances, this is at its core a blind and irrational prejudice. However corrupted and misused, as Love and Knowledge too are corrupted and misused, Power is divine and put here for a divine use. Shakti, Will, Power is the driver of the worlds and, whether it be Knowledge-Force or Love-Force or Life-Force or Action-Force or Body-Force, is always spiritual in its origin and divine in its native character. It is the use of it made in the Ignorance by brute, man or Titan

that has to be cast aside and replaced by its greater natural—even if to us supernormal—action led by the Light of an inner consciousness which is in tune with the Infinite and the Eternal. The integral Yoga cannot reject the works of Life and be satisfied with an inward experience only; it has to go inward in order to change the outward, making the Life-Force a part and a working of a Yoga-Energy which is in touch with the Divine and divine in its guidance.

All the difficulty in dealing spiritually with the works of Life arises because the Will-in-Life for its purposes in the Ignorance has created a false soul of desire and substituted it for that spark of the Divine which is the true psyche. All or most of the works of life are at present or seem to be actuated and vitiated by this soul of desire; even those that are ethical or religious, even those that wear the guise of altruism, philanthropy, self-sacrifice, self-denial, are shot through and through with the threads of its making. This soul of desire is a separative soul of ego and all its instincts are for a separative self-affirmation; it pushes always, openly or under more or less shining masks, for its own growth, for possession, for enjoyment, for conquest and empire. If the curse of disquiet and disharmony and perversion is to be lifted from Life, the true soul, the psychic being, must be given its leading place and there must be a dissolution of the false soul of desire and ego. But this does not mean that life itself must be coerced and denied its native line of fulfilment; for behind this outer life soul of desire there is in us an inner and true vital being which has not to be dissolved but brought out into prominence and released to its true working as a power of the Divine Nature. The prominence of this true vital being under the lead of the true inmost soul within us is the condition for the divine fulfilment of the objects of the Life-Force. Those objects will even remain the same in essence, but transformed in their inner motive and outer character. The Divine Life-Power too will be a will for growth, a force of self-affirmation, but affirmation of the Divine within us, not of the little temporary personality on the surface,—growth into the true divine Individual, the central being, the secret imperishable Person who can emerge only by

the subordination and disappearance of the ego. This is life's true object: growth, but a growth of the spirit in Nature, affirming and developing itself in mind, life and body; possession, but a possession by the Divine of the Divine in all things, and not of things for their own sake by the desire of the ego; enjoyment, but an enjoyment of the divine Ananda in the universe; battle and conquest and empire in the shape of a victorious conflict with the Powers of Darkness, an entire spiritual self-rule and mastery over inward and outward Nature, a conquest by Knowledge, Love and Divine Will over the domains of the Ignorance.

These are the conditions and these must be the aims of the divine effectuation of the works of Life and their progressive transformation which is the third element of the triple sacrifice. It is not a rationalisation but a supramentalisation, not a moralising but a spiritualising of life that is the object of the Yoga. It is not a handling of externals or superficial psychological motives that is its main purpose, but a refounding of life and its action on their hidden divine element; for only such a refounding of life can bring about its direct government by the secret Divine Power above us and its transfiguration into a manifest expression of the Divinity, not as now a disguise and a disfiguring mask of the eternal Actor. It is a spiritual essential change of consciousness, not the surface manipulation which is the method of Mind and Reason, that can alone make Life other than it now is and rescue it out of its present distressed and ambiguous figure.

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It is then by a transformation of life in its very principle, not by an external manipulation of its phenomena, that the integral Yoga proposes to change it from a troubled and ignorant into a luminous and harmonious movement of Nature. There are three conditions which are indispensable for the achievement of this central inner revolution and new formation; none of them is altogether sufficient in itself, but by their united threefold power the uplifting can be done, the conversion made and completely made. For, first, life as it is is a movement of desire and it has

built in us as its centre a desire-soul which refers to itself all the motions of life and puts in them its own troubled hue and pain of an ignorant, half-lit, baffled endeavour: for a divine living, desire must be abolished and replaced by a purer and firmer motive-power, the tormented soul of desire dissolved and in its stead there must emerge the calm, strength, happiness of a true vital being now concealed within us. Next, life as it is is driven or led partly by the impulse of the life-force, partly by a mind which is mostly a servant and abettor of the ignorant life-impulse, but in part also its uneasy and not too luminous or competent guide and mentor; for a divine life the mind and the life-impulse must cease to be anything but instruments and the inmost psychic being must take their place as the leader on the path and the indicator of a divine guidance. Last, life as it is is turned towards the satisfaction of the separative ego; ego must disappear and be replaced by the true spiritual person, the central being, and life itself must be turned towards the fulfilment of the Divine in terrestrial existence; it must feel a Divine Force awaking within it and become an obedient instrumentation of its purpose.

There is nothing that is not ancient and familiar in the first of these three transforming inner movements; for it has always been one of the principal objects of spiritual discipline. It has been best formulated in the already expressed doctrine of the Gita by which a complete renouncement of desire for the fruits as the motive of action, a complete annulment of desire itself, the complete achievement of a perfect equality are put forward as the normal status of a spiritual being. A perfect spiritual equality is the one true and infallible sign of the cessation of desire,— to be equal-souled to all things, unmoved by joy and sorrow, the pleasant and the unpleasant, success or failure, to look with an equal eye on high and low, friend and enemy, the virtuous and the sinner, to see in all beings the manifold manifestation of the One and in all things the multitudinous play or the slow masked evolution of the embodied Spirit. It is not a mental quiet, aloofness, indifference, not an inert vital quiescence, not a passivity of the physical consciousness consenting to no movement or to any movement that is the condition aimed at, though these

things are sometimes mistaken for this spiritual condition, but a wide comprehensive unmoved universality such as that of the Witness Spirit behind Nature. For all here seems to be a mobile half-ordered half-confused organisation of forces, but behind them one can feel a supporting peace, silence, wideness, not inert but calm, not impotent but potentially omnipotent with a concentrated, stable, immobile energy in it capable of bearing all the motions of the universe. This Presence behind is equal-souled to all things: the energy it holds in it can be unloosed for any action, but no action will be chosen by any desire in the Witness Spirit; a Truth acts which is beyond and greater than the action itself or its apparent forms and impulses, beyond and greater than mind or life-force or body, although it may take for the immediate purpose a mental, a vital or a physical appearance. It is when there is this death of desire and this calm equal wideness in the consciousness everywhere, that the true vital being within us comes out from the veil and reveals its own calm, intense and potent presence. For such is the true nature of the vital being, *prāṇamaya puruṣa*; it is a projection of the Divine Purusha into life,—tranquil, strong, luminous, many-energied, obedient to the Divine Will, egoless, yet or rather therefore capable of all action, achievement, highest or largest enterprise. The true Life-Force too reveals itself as no longer this troubled harassed divided striving surface energy, but a great and radiant Divine Power, full of peace and strength and bliss, a wide-wayed Angel of Life with its wings of Might enfolding the universe.

And yet this transformation into a large strength and equality is insufficient; for if it opens to us the instrumentation of a Divine Life, it does not provide its government and initiative. It is here that the presence of the released psychic being intervenes; it does not give the supreme government and direction,—for that is not its function,—but it supplies during the transition from ignorance to a divine Knowledge a progressive guidance for the inner and outer life and action; it indicates at each moment the method, the way, the steps that will lead to that fulfilled spiritual condition in which a supreme dynamic initiative will be always there directing the activities of a divinised Life-Force.

The light it sheds illuminates the other parts of the nature which, for want of any better guidance than their own confused and groping powers, have been wandering in the rounds of the Ignorance; it gives to mind the intrinsic feeling of the thoughts and perceptions, to life the infallible sense of the movements that are misled or misleading and those that are well-inspired; something like a quiet oracle from within discloses the causes of our stumblings, warns in time against their repetition, extracts from experience and intuition the law, not rigid but plastic, of a just direction for our acts, a right stepping, an accurate impulse. A will is created that becomes more in consonance with evolving Truth rather than with the circling and dilatory mazes of a seeking Error. A determined orientation towards the greater Light to be, a soul-instinct, a psychic tact and insight into the true substance, motion and intention of things, coming always nearer and nearer to a spiritual vision, to a knowledge by inner contact, inner sight and even identity, begin to replace the superficial keenness of mental judgment and the eager graspings of the life-force. The works of Life right themselves, escape from confusion, substitute for the artificial or legal order imposed by the intellect and for the arbitrary rule of desire the guidance of the soul's inner insight, enter into the profound paths of the Spirit. Above all, the psychic being imposes on life the law of the sacrifice of all its works as an offering to the Divine and the Eternal. Life becomes a call to that which is beyond Life; its every smallest act enlarges with the sense of the Infinite.

As an inner equality increases and with it the sense of the true vital being waiting for the greater direction it has to serve, as the psychic call too increases in all the members of our nature, That to which the call is addressed begins to reveal itself, descends to take possession of the life and its energies and fills them with the height, intimacy, vastness of its presence and its purpose. In many, if not most, it manifests something of itself even before the equality and the open psychic urge or guidance are there. A call of the veiled psychic element oppressed by the mass of the outer ignorance and crying for deliverance, a stress of eager meditation and seeking for knowledge, a longing of the

heart, a passionate will ignorant yet but sincere may break the lid that shuts off that Higher from this Lower Nature and open the floodgates. A little of the Divine Person may reveal itself or some Light, Power, Bliss, Love out of the Infinite. This may be a momentary revelation, a flash or a brief-lived gleam that soon withdraws and waits for the preparation of the nature; but also it may repeat itself, grow, endure. A long and large and comprehensive working will then have begun, sometimes luminous or intense, sometimes slow and obscure. A Divine Power comes in front at times and leads and compels or instructs and enlightens; at others it withdraws into the background and seems to leave the being to its own resources. All that is ignorant, obscure, perverted or simply imperfect and inferior in the being is raised up, perhaps brought to its acme, dealt with, corrected, exhausted, shown its own disastrous results, compelled to call for its own cessation or transformation or expelled as worthless or incorrigible from the nature. This cannot be a smooth and even process; alternations there are of day and night, illumination and darkness, calm and construction or battle and upheaval, the presence of the growing Divine Consciousness and its absence, heights of hope and abysses of despair, the clasp of the Beloved and the anguish of its absence, the overwhelming invasion, the compelling deceit, the fierce opposition, the disabling mockery of hostile Powers or the help and comfort and communion of the Gods and the Divine Messengers. A great and long revolution and churning of the ocean of Life with strong emergences of its nectar and its poison is enforced till all is ready and the increasing Descent finds a being, a nature prepared and conditioned for its complete rule and its all-encompassing presence. But if the equality and the psychic light and will are already there, then this process, though it cannot be dispensed with, can still be much lightened and facilitated: it will be rid of its worst dangers; an inner calm, happiness, confidence will support the steps through all the difficulties and trials of the transformation and the growing Force profiting by the full assent of the nature will rapidly diminish and eliminate the power of the opposing forces. A sure guidance and protection will be present throughout, sometimes

standing in front, sometimes working behind the veil, and the power of the end will be already there even in the beginning and in the long middle stages of the great endeavour. For at all times the seeker will be aware of the Divine Guide and Protector or the working of the supreme Mother-Force; he will know that all is done for the best, the progress assured, the victory inevitable. In either case the process is the same and unavoidable, a taking up of the whole nature, of the whole life, of the internal and of the external, to reveal and handle and transform its forces and their movements under the pressure of a diviner Life from above, until all here has been possessed by greater spiritual powers and made an instrumentation of a spiritual action and a divine purpose.

In this process and at an early stage of it it becomes evident that what we know of ourselves, our present conscious existence, is only a representative formation, a superficial activity, a changing external result of a vast mass of concealed existence. Our visible life and the actions of that life are no more than a series of significant expressions, but that which it tries to express is not on the surface; our existence is something much larger than this apparent frontal being which we suppose ourselves to be and which we offer to the world around us. This frontal and external being is a confused amalgam of mind-formations, life-movements, physical functionings of which even an exhaustive analysis into its component parts and machinery fails to reveal the whole secret. It is only when we go behind, below, above into the hidden stretches of our being that we can know it; the most thorough and acute surface scrutiny and manipulation cannot give us the true understanding or the completely effective control of our life, its purposes, its activities; that inability indeed is the cause of the failure of reason, morality and every other surface action to control and deliver and perfect the life of the human race. For below even our most obscure physical consciousness is a subconscious being in which as in a covering and supporting soil are all manner of hidden seeds that sprout up, unaccountably to us, on our surface and into which we are constantly throwing fresh seeds that prolong our past and will influence our future,— a subconscious being, obscure, small in its motions, capriciously

and almost fantastically subrational, but of an immense potency for the earth-life. Again behind our mind, our life, our conscious physical there is a larger subliminal consciousness,—there are inner mental, inner vital, inner more subtle physical reaches supported by an inmost psychic existence which is the animating soul of all the rest; and in these hidden reaches too lie a mass of numerous pre-existent personalities which supply the material, the motive-forces, the impulsions of our developing surface existence. For in each one of us here there may be one central person, but also a multitude of subordinate personalities created by the past history of its manifestation or by expressions of it on these inner planes which support its present play in this external material cosmos. And while on our surface we are cut off from all around us except through an exterior mind and sense contact which delivers but little of us to our world or of our world to us, in these inner reaches the barrier between us and the rest of existence is thin and easily broken; there we can feel at once —not merely infer from their results, but feel directly—the action of the secret world-forces, mind-forces, life-forces, subtle physical forces that constitute universal and individual existence; we shall even be able, if we will but train ourselves to it, to lay our hands on these world-forces that throw themselves on us or surround us and more and more to control or at least strongly modify their action on us and others, their formations, their very movements. Yet again, above our human mind are still greater reaches superconscious to it and from there secretly descend influences, powers, touches which are the original determinants of things here and, if they were called down in their fullness, could altogether alter the whole make and economy of life in the material universe. It is all this latent experience and knowledge that the Divine Force working upon us by our opening to it in the integral Yoga, progressively reveals to us, uses and works out the consequences as means and steps towards a transformation of our whole being and nature. Our life is thenceforth no longer a little rolling wave on the surface, but interpenetrant if not coincident with the cosmic life. Our spirit, our self rises not only into an inner identity with some wide cosmic Self but into

some contact with that which is beyond, though aware of and dominant over the action of the universe.

It is thus by an integralisation of our divided being that the Divine Shakti in the Yoga will proceed to its object; for liberation, perfection, mastery are dependent on this integralisation, since the little wave on the surface cannot control its own movement, much less have any true control over the vast life around it. The Shakti, the power of the Infinite and the Eternal descends within us, works, breaks up our present psychological formations, shatters every wall, widens, liberates, presents us with always newer and greater powers of vision, ideation, perception and newer and greater life-motives, enlarges and new-models increasingly the soul and its instruments, confronts us with every imperfection in order to convict and destroy it, opens to a greater perfection, does in a brief period the work of many lives or ages so that new births and new vistas open constantly within us. Expansive in her action, she frees the consciousness from confinement in the body; it can go out in trance or sleep or even waking and enter into worlds or other regions of this world and act there or carry back its experience. It spreads out, feeling the body only as a small part of itself, and begins to contain what before contained it; it achieves the cosmic consciousness and extends itself to be commensurate with the universe. It begins to know inwardly and directly and not merely by external observation and contact the forces at play in the world, feels their movement, distinguishes their functioning and can operate immediately upon them as the scientist operates upon physical forces, accept their action and results in our mind, life, body or reject them or modify, change, reshape, create immense new powers and movements in place of the old small functionings of the nature. We begin to perceive the working of the forces of universal Mind and to know how our thoughts are created by that working, separate from within the truth and falsehood of our perceptions, enlarge their field, extend and illumine their significance, become master of our own minds and active to shape the movements of Mind in the world around us. We begin to perceive the flow and surge of the universal life-forces,

detect the origin and law of our feelings, emotions, sensations, passions, are free to accept, reject, new-create, open to wider, rise to higher planes of Life-Power. We begin to perceive too the key to the enigma of Matter, follow the interplay of Mind and Life and Consciousness upon it, discover more and more its instrumental and resultant function and detect ultimately the last secret of Matter as a form not merely of Energy but of involved and arrested or unstably fixed and restricted consciousness and begin to see too the possibility of its liberation and plasticity of response to higher Powers, its possibilities for the conscious and no longer the more than half-inconscient incarnation and self-expression of the Spirit. All this and more becomes more and more possible as the working of the Divine Shakti increases in us and, against much resistance or labour to respond of our obscure consciousness, through much struggle and movement of progress and regression and renewed progress necessitated by the work of intensive transformation of a half-inconscient into a conscious substance, moves to a greater purity, truth, height, range. All depends on the psychic awakening in us, the completeness of our response to her and our growing surrender.

But all this can only constitute a greater inner life with a greater possibility of the outer action and is a transitional achievement; the full transformation can come only by the ascent of the sacrifice to its farthest heights and its action upon life with the power and light and beatitude of the divine supramental Gnosis. For then alone all the forces that are divided and express themselves imperfectly in life and its works are raised to their original unity, harmony, single truth, authentic absoluteness and entire significance. There Knowledge and Will are one, Love and Force a single movement; the opposites that afflict us here are resolved into their reconciled unity: good develops its absolute and evil divesting itself of its error returns to the good that was behind it; sin and virtue vanish in a divine purity and an infallible truth-movement; the dubious evanescence of pleasure disappears in a Bliss that is the play of an eternal and happy spiritual certitude, and pain in perishing discovers the touch of an Ananda which was betrayed by some dark perversion and

incapacity of the will of the Inconscient to receive it. These things, to the Mind an imagination or a mystery, become evident and capable of experience as the consciousness rises out of limited embodied Matter-mind to the freedom and fullness of the higher and higher ranges of the super-intelligence; but they can become entirely true and normal only when the supramental becomes the law of the nature.

It is therefore on the accomplishment of this ascent and on the possibility of a full dynamism from these highest levels descending into earth-consciousness that is dependent the justification of Life, its salvation, its transformation into a Divine Life in a transfigured terrestrial Nature.

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The nature of the integral Yoga so conceived, so conditioned, progressing by these spiritual means, turning upon this integral transformation of the nature, determines of itself its answer to the question of the ordinary activities of life and their place in the Yoga.

There is not and cannot be here any ascetic or contemplative or mystic abandonment of works and life altogether, any gospel of an absorbed meditation and inactivity, any cutting away or condemnation of the Life-Force and its activities, any rejection of the manifestation in the earth-nature. It may be necessary for the seeker at any period to withdraw into himself, to remain plunged in his inner being, to shut out from him the noise and turmoil of the life of the Ignorance until a certain inner change has been accomplished or something achieved without which a further effective action on life has become difficult or impossible. But this can only be a period or an episode, a temporary necessity or a preparatory spiritual manoeuvre; it cannot be the rule of his Yoga or its principle.

A splitting up of the activities of human existence on a religious or an ethical basis or both together, a restriction to the works of worship only or to the works of philanthropy and beneficence only would be contrary to the spirit of the integral

Yoga. Any merely mental rule or merely mental acceptance or repudiation is alien to the purpose and method of its discipline. All must be taken to a spiritual height and placed upon a spiritual basis; the presence of an inner spiritual change and an outer transformation must be enforced upon the whole of life and not merely on a part of life; all must be accepted that is helpful towards this change or admits it, all must be rejected that is incapable or inapt or refuses to submit itself to the transforming movement. There must be no attachment to any form of things or of life, any object, any activity; all must be renounced if need be, all must be admitted that the Divine chooses as its material for the divine life. But what accepts or rejects must be neither mind nor open or camouflaged vital will of desire nor ethical sense, but the insistence of the psychic being, the command of the Divine Guide of the Yoga, the vision of the higher Self or Spirit, the illumined guidance of the Master. The way of the spirit is not a mental way; a mental rule or mental consciousness cannot be its determinant or its leader.

Equally, a combination or a compromise between two orders of consciousness, the spiritual and the mental or the spiritual and the vital or a mere sublimation from within of Life outwardly unchanged cannot be the law or the aim of the Yoga. All life must be taken up but all life must be transformed; all must become a part, a form, an adequate expression of a spiritual being in the supramental nature. This is the height and crowning movement of a spiritual evolution in the material world, and as the change from the vital animal to mental man made life another thing altogether in basic consciousness, scope, significance, so this change from the materialised mental being to the spiritual and supramental being using but not dominated by matter must take up life and make it another thing altogether than the flawed, imperfect limited human, quite other in its basic consciousness, scope, significance. All forms of life activity that cannot bear the change must disappear, all that can bear it will survive and enter into the kingdom of the spirit. A divine Force is at work and will choose at each moment what has to be done or has not to be done, what has to be momentarily or permanently taken up,

momentarily or permanently abandoned. For provided we do not substitute for that our desire or our ego, and to that end the soul must be always awake, always on guard, alive to the divine guidance, resistant to the undivine misleading from within or without us, that Force is sufficient and alone competent and she will lead us to the fulfilment along ways and by means too large, too inward, too complex for the mind to follow, much less to dictate. It is an arduous and difficult and dangerous way, but there is none other.

Two rules alone there are that will diminish the difficulty and obviate the danger. One must reject all that comes from the ego, from vital desire, from the mere mind and its presumptuous reasoning incompetence, all that ministers to these agents of the Ignorance. One must learn to hear and follow the voice of the inmost soul, the direction of the Guru, the command of the Master, the working of the Divine Mother. Whoever clings to the desires and weaknesses of the flesh, the cravings and passions of the vital in its turbulent ignorance, the dictates of his personal mind unsilenced and unillumined by a greater knowledge, cannot find the true inner law and is heaping obstacles in the way of the divine fulfilment. Whoever is able to detect and renounce those obscuring agencies and to discern and follow the true Guide within and without will discover the spiritual law and reach the goal of the Yoga.

A radical and total change of consciousness is not only the whole meaning but, in an increasing force and by progressive stages, the whole method of the integral Yoga.

Chapter VII

Standards of Conduct and Spiritual Freedom

THE KNOWLEDGE on which the doer of works in Yoga has to found all his action and development has for the keystone of its structure a more and more concrete perception of unity, the living sense of an all-pervading oneness; he moves in the increasing consciousness of all existence as an indivisible whole: all work too is part of this divine indivisible whole. His personal action and its results can no longer be or seem a separate movement mainly or entirely determined by the egoistic “free” will of an individual, himself separate in the mass. Our works are part of an indivisible cosmic action; they are put or, more accurately, put themselves into their place in the whole out of which they arise and their outcome is determined by forces that overpass us. That world action in its vast totality and in every petty detail is the indivisible movement of the One who manifests himself progressively in the cosmos. Man too becomes progressively conscious of the truth of himself and the truth of things in proportion as he awakens to this One within him and outside him and to the occult, miraculous and significant process of its forces in the motion of Nature. This action, this movement, is not confined even in ourselves and those around us to the little fragmentary portion of the cosmic activities of which we in our superficial consciousness are aware; it is supported by an immense underlying environing existence subliminal to our minds or subconscious, and it is attracted by an immense transcending existence which is superconscious to our nature. Our action arises, as we ourselves have emerged, out of a universality of which we are not aware; we give it a shape by our personal temperament, personal mind and will of thought or force of impulse or desire; but the true

truth of things, the true law of action exceeds these personal and human formations. Every standpoint, every man-made rule of action which ignores the indivisible totality of the cosmic movement, whatever its utility in external practice, is to the eye of spiritual Truth an imperfect view and a law of the Ignorance.

Even when we have arrived at some glimpse of this idea or succeeded in fixing it in our consciousness as a knowledge of the mind and a consequent attitude of the soul, it is difficult for us in our outward parts and active nature to square accounts between this universal standpoint and the claims of our personal opinion, our personal will, our personal emotion and desire. We are forced still to go on dealing with this indivisible movement as if it were a mass of impersonal material out of which we, the ego, the person, have to carve something according to our own will and mental fantasy by a personal struggle and effort. This is man's normal attitude towards his environment, actually false because our ego and its will are creations and puppets of the cosmic forces and it is only when we withdraw from ego into the consciousness of the divine Knowledge-Will of the Eternal who acts in them that we can be by a sort of deputation from above their master. And yet is this personal position the right attitude for man so long as he cherishes his individuality and has not yet fully developed it; for without this view-point and motive-force he cannot grow in his ego, cannot sufficiently develop and differentiate himself out of the subconscious or half-conscious universal mass-existence.

But the hold of this ego-consciousness upon our whole habit of existence is difficult to shake off when we have no longer need of the separative, the individualistic and aggressive stage of development, when we would proceed forward from this necessity of littleness in the child-soul to unity and universality, to the cosmic consciousness and beyond, to our transcendent spirit-stature. It is indispensable to recognise clearly, not only in our mode of thought but in our way of feeling, sensing, doing, that this movement, this universal action is not a helpless impersonal wave of being which lends itself to the will of any ego according

to that ego's strength and insistence. It is the movement of a cosmic Being who is the Knower of his field, the steps of a Divinity who is the Master of his own progressive force of action. As the movement is one and indivisible, so he who is present in the movement is one, sole and indivisible. Not only all result is determined by him, but all initiation, action and process are dependent on the motion of his cosmic force and only belong secondarily and in their form to the creature.

But what then must be the spiritual position of the personal worker? What is his true relation in dynamic Nature to this one cosmic Being and this one total movement? He is a centre only—a centre of differentiation of the one personal consciousness, a centre of determination of the one total movement; his personality reflects in a wave of persistent individuality the one universal Person, the Transcendent, the Eternal. In the Ignorance it is always a broken and distorted reflection because the crest of the wave which is our conscious waking self throws back only an imperfect and falsified similitude of the divine Spirit. All our opinions, standards, formations, principles are only attempts to represent in this broken, reflecting and distorting mirror something of the universal and progressive total action and its many-sided movement towards some ultimate self-revelation of the Divine. Our mind represents it as best it can with a narrow approximation that becomes less and less inadequate in proportion as its thought grows in wideness and light and power; but it is always an approximation and not even a true partial figure. The Divine Will acts through the aeons to reveal progressively not only in the unity of the cosmos, not only in the collectivity of living and thinking creatures, but in the soul of each individual something of its divine Mystery and the hidden truth of the Infinite. Therefore there is in the cosmos, in the collectivity, in the individual, a rooted instinct or belief in its own perfectibility, a constant drive towards an ever increasing and more adequate and more harmonious self-development nearer to the secret truth of things. This effort is represented to the constructing mind of man by standards of knowledge, feeling, character, aesthetics and action,—rules, ideals, norms

and laws that he essays to turn into universal dharmas.

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If we are to be free in the spirit, if we are to be subject only to the supreme Truth, we must discard the idea that our mental or moral laws are binding on the Infinite or that there can be anything sacrosanct, absolute or eternal even in the highest of our existing standards of conduct. To form higher and higher temporary standards as long as they are needed is to serve the Divine in his world march; to erect rigidly an absolute standard is to attempt the erection of a barrier against the eternal waters in their onflow. Once the nature-bound soul realises this truth, it is delivered from the duality of good and evil. For good is all that helps the individual and the world towards their divine fullness, and evil is all that retards or breaks up that increasing perfection. But since the perfection is progressive, evolutive in Time, good and evil are also shifting quantities and change from time to time their meaning and value. This thing which is evil now and in its present shape must be abandoned was once helpful and necessary to the general and individual progress. That other thing which we now regard as evil may well become in another form and arrangement an element in some future perfection. And on the spiritual level we transcend even this distinction; for we discover the purpose and divine utility of all these things that we call good and evil. Then have we to reject the falsehood in them and all that is distorted, ignorant and obscure in that which is called good no less than in that which is called evil. For we have then to accept only the true and the divine, but to make no other distinction in the eternal processes.

To those who can act only on a rigid standard, to those who can feel only the human and not the divine values, this truth may seem to be a dangerous concession which is likely to destroy the very foundation of morality, confuse all conduct and establish only chaos. Certainly, if the choice must be between an eternal and unchanging ethics and no ethics at all, it would have that result for man in his ignorance. But even on the human level,

if we have light enough and flexibility enough to recognise that a standard of conduct may be temporary and yet necessary for its time and to observe it faithfully until it can be replaced by a better, then we suffer no such loss, but lose only the fanaticism of an imperfect and intolerant virtue. In its place we gain openness and a power of continual moral progression, charity, the capacity to enter into an understanding sympathy with all this world of struggling and stumbling creatures and by that charity a better right and a greater strength to help it upon its way. In the end where the human closes and the divine commences, where the mental disappears into the supramental consciousness and the finite precipitates itself into the infinite, all evil disappears into a transcendent divine Good which becomes universal on every plane of consciousness that it touches.

This, then, stands fixed for us that all standards by which we may seek to govern our conduct are only our temporary, imperfect and evolutive attempts to represent to ourselves our stumbling mental progress in the universal self-realisation towards which Nature moves. But the divine manifestation cannot be bound by our little rules and fragile sanctities; for the consciousness behind it is too vast for these things. Once we have grasped this fact, disconcerting enough to the absolutism of our reason, we shall better be able to put in their right place in regard to each other the successive standards that govern the different stages in the growth of the individual and the collective march of mankind. At the most general of them we may cast a passing glance. For we have to see how they stand in relation to that other standardless spiritual and supramental mode of working for which Yoga seeks and to which it moves by the surrender of the individual to the divine Will and, more effectively, through his ascent by this surrender to the greater consciousness in which a certain identity with the dynamic Eternal becomes possible.

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There are four main standards of human conduct that make an ascending scale. The first is personal need, preference and desire;

the second is the law and good of the collectivity; the third is an ideal ethic; the last is the highest divine law of the nature.

Man starts on the long career of his evolution with only the first two of these four to enlighten and lead him; for they constitute the law of his animal and vital existence and it is as the vital and physical animal man that he begins his progress. The true business of man upon earth is to express in the type of humanity a growing image of the Divine; whether knowingly or unknowingly, it is to this end that Nature is working in him under the thick veil of her inner and outer processes. But the material or animal man is ignorant of the inner aim of life; he knows only its needs and its desires and he has necessarily no other guide to what is required of him than his own perception of need and his own stirrings and pointings of desire. To satisfy his physical and vital demands and necessities before all things else and, in the next rank, whatever emotional or mental cravings or imaginations or dynamic notions rise in him must be the first natural rule of his conduct. The sole balancing or overpowering law that can modify or contradict this pressing natural claim is the demand put on him by the ideas, needs and desires of his family, community or tribe, the herd, the pack of which he is a member.

If man could live to himself,—and this he could only do if the development of the individual were the sole object of the Divine in the world,—this second law would not at all need to come into operation. But all existence proceeds by the mutual action and reaction of the whole and the parts, the need for each other of the constituents and the thing constituted, the interdependence of the group and the individuals of the group. In the language of Indian philosophy the Divine manifests himself always in the double form of the separative and the collective being, *vyasti*, *samasti*. Man, pressing after the growth of his separate individuality and its fullness and freedom, is unable to satisfy even his own personal needs and desires except in conjunction with other men; he is a whole in himself and yet incomplete without others. This obligation englobes his personal law of conduct in a group-law which arises from the formation of a lasting group-entity with a collective mind and life of its

own to which his own embodied mind and life are subordinated as a transitory unit. And yet is there something in him immortal and free, not bound to this group-body which outlasts his own embodied existence but cannot outlast or claim to chain by its law his eternal spirit.

In itself this seemingly larger and overriding law is no more than an extension of the vital and animal principle that governs the individual elementary man; it is the law of the pack or herd. The individual identifies partially his life with the life of a certain number of other individuals with whom he is associated by birth, choice or circumstance. And since the existence of the group is necessary for his own existence and satisfaction, in time, if not from the first, its preservation, the fulfilment of its needs and the satisfaction of its collective notions, desires, habits of living, without which it would not hold together, must come to take a primary place. The satisfaction of personal idea and feeling, need and desire, propensity and habit has to be constantly subordinated, by the necessity of the situation and not from any moral or altruistic motive, to the satisfaction of the ideas and feelings, needs and desires, propensities and habits, not of this or that other individual or number of individuals, but of the society as a whole. This social need is the obscure matrix of morality and of man's ethical impulse.

It is not actually known that in any primitive times man lived to himself or with only his mate as do some of the animals. All record of him shows him to us as a social animal, not an isolated body and spirit. The law of the pack has always overridden his individual law of self-development; he seems always to have been born, to have lived, to have been formed as a unit in a mass. But logically and naturally from the psychological viewpoint the law of personal need and desire is primary, the social law comes in as a secondary and usurping power. Man has in him two distinct master impulses, the individualistic and the communal, a personal life and a social life, a personal motive of conduct and a social motive of conduct. The possibility of their opposition and the attempt to find their equation lie at the very roots of human civilisation and persist in other figures when he

has passed beyond the vital animal into a highly individualised mental and spiritual progress.

The existence of a social law external to the individual is at different times a considerable advantage and a heavy disadvantage to the development of the divine in man. It is an advantage at first when man is crude and incapable of self-control and self-finding, because it erects a power other than that of his personal egoism through which that egoism may be induced or compelled to moderate its savage demands, to discipline its irrational and often violent movements and even to lose itself sometimes in a larger and less personal egoism. It is a disadvantage to the adult spirit ready to transcend the human formula because it is an external standard which seeks to impose itself on him from outside, and the condition of his perfection is that he shall grow from within and in an increasing freedom, not by the suppression but by the transcendence of his perfected individuality, not any longer by a law imposed on him that trains and disciplines his members but by the soul from within breaking through all previous forms to possess with its light and transmute his members.

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In the conflict of the claims of society with the claims of the individual two ideal and absolute solutions confront one another. There is the demand of the group that the individual should subordinate himself more or less completely or even lose his independent existence in the community,—the smaller must be immolated or self-offered to the larger unit. He must accept the need of the society as his own need, the desire of the society as his own desire; he must live not for himself but for the tribe, clan, commune or nation of which he is a member. The ideal and absolute solution from the individual's standpoint would be a society that existed not for itself, for its all-overriding collective purpose, but for the good of the individual and his fulfilment, for the greater and more perfect life of all its members. Representing as far as possible his best self and helping him to realise it, it would

respect the freedom of each of its members and maintain itself not by law and force but by the free and spontaneous consent of its constituent persons. An ideal society of either kind does not exist anywhere and would be most difficult to create, more difficult still to keep in precarious existence so long as individual man clings to his egoism as the primary motive of existence. A general but not complete domination of the society over the individual is the easier way and it is the system that Nature from the first instinctively adopts and keeps in equilibrium by rigorous law, compelling custom and a careful indoctrination of the still subservient and ill-developed intelligence of the human creature.

In primitive societies the individual life is submitted to rigid and immobile communal custom and rule; this is the ancient and would-be eternal law of the human pack that tries always to masquerade as the everlasting decree of the Imperishable, *esa dharmah sanātanah*. And the ideal is not dead in the human mind; the most recent trend of human progress is to establish an enlarged and sumptuous edition of this ancient turn of collective living towards the enslavement of the human spirit. There is here a serious danger to the integral development of a greater truth upon earth and a greater life. For the desires and free seekings of the individual, however egoistic, however false or perverted they may be in their immediate form, contain in their obscure shell the seed of a development necessary to the whole; his searchings and stumbling have behind them a force that has to be kept and transmuted into the image of the divine ideal. That force needs to be enlightened and trained but must not be suppressed or harnessed exclusively to society's heavy cart-wheels. Individualism is as necessary to the final perfection as the power behind the group-spirit; the stifling of the individual may well be the stifling of the god in man. And in the present balance of humanity there is seldom any real danger of exaggerated individualism breaking up the social integer. There is continually a danger that the exaggerated pressure of the social mass by its heavy unenlightened mechanical weight may suppress or unduly discourage the free development of the individual spirit. For man in the individual can be more easily enlightened, conscious,

open to clear influences; man in the mass is still obscure, half-conscious, ruled by universal forces that escape its mastery and its knowledge.

Against this danger of suppression and immobilisation Nature in the individual reacts. It may react by an isolated resistance ranging from the instinctive and brutal revolt of the criminal to the complete negation of the solitary and ascetic. It may react by the assertion of an individualistic trend in the social idea, may impose it on the mass consciousness and establish a compromise between the individual and the social demand. But a compromise is not a solution; it only salves over the difficulty and in the end increases the complexity of the problem and multiplies its issues. A new principle has to be called in other and higher than the two conflicting instincts and powerful at once to override and to reconcile them. Above the natural individual law which sets up as our one standard of conduct the satisfaction of our individual needs, preferences and desires and the natural communal law which sets up as a superior standard the satisfaction of the needs, preferences and desires of the community as a whole, there had to arise the notion of an ideal moral law which is not the satisfaction of need and desire, but controls and even coerces or annuls them in the interests of an ideal order that is not animal, not vital and physical, but mental, a creation of the mind's seeking for light and knowledge and right rule and right movement and true order. The moment this notion becomes powerful in man, he begins to escape from the engrossing vital and material into the mental life; he climbs from the first to the second degree of the threefold ascent of Nature. His needs and desires themselves are touched with a more elevated light of purpose and the mental need, the aesthetic, intellectual and emotional desire begin to predominate over the demand of the physical and vital nature.

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The natural law of conduct proceeds from a conflict to an equilibrium of forces, impulsions and desires; the higher ethical law

proceeds by the development of the mental and moral nature towards a fixed internal standard or else a self-formed ideal of absolute qualities,—justice, righteousness, love, right reason, right power, beauty, light. It is therefore essentially an individual standard; it is not a creation of the mass mind. The thinker is the individual; it is he who calls out and throws into forms that which would otherwise remain subconscious in the amorphous human whole. The moral striver is also the individual; self-discipline, not under the yoke of an outer law, but in obedience to an internal light, is essentially an individual effort. But by positing his personal standard as the translation of an absolute moral ideal the thinker imposes it, not on himself alone, but on all the individuals whom his thought can reach and penetrate. And as the mass of individuals come more and more to accept it in idea if only in an imperfect practice or no practice, society also is compelled to obey the new orientation. It absorbs the ideative influence and tries, not with any striking success, to mould its institutions into new forms touched by these higher ideals. But always its instinct is to translate them into binding law, into pattern forms, into mechanic custom, into an external social compulsion upon its living units.

For, long after the individual has become partially free, a moral organism capable of conscious growth, aware of an inward life, eager for spiritual progress, society continues to be external in its methods, a material and economic organism, mechanical, more intent upon status and self-preservation than on growth and self-perfection. The greatest present triumph of the thinking and progressive individual over the instinctive and static society has been the power he has acquired by his thought-will to compel it to think also, to open itself to the idea of social justice and righteousness, communal sympathy and mutual compassion, to feel after the rule of reason rather than blind custom as the test of its institutions and to look on the mental and moral assent of its individuals as at least one essential element in the validity of its laws. Ideally at least, to consider light rather than force as its sanction, moral development and not vengeance or restraint as the object even of its penal action, is becoming just

possible to the communal mind. The greatest future triumph of the thinker will come when he can persuade the individual integer and the collective whole to rest their life-relation and its union and stability upon a free and harmonious consent and self-adaptation, and shape and govern the external by the internal truth rather than to constrain the inner spirit by the tyranny of the external form and structure.

But even this success that he has gained is rather a thing in potentiality than in actual accomplishment. There is always a disharmony and a discord between the moral law in the individual and the law of his needs and desires, between the moral law proposed to society and the physical and vital needs, desires, customs, prejudices, interests and passions of the caste, the clan, the religious community, the society, the nation. The moralist erects in vain his absolute ethical standard and calls upon all to be faithful to it without regard to consequences. To him the needs and desires of the individual are invalid if they are in conflict with the moral law, and the social law has no claims upon him if it is opposed to his sense of right and denied by his conscience. This is his absolute solution for the individual that he shall cherish no desires and claims that are not consistent with love, truth and justice. He demands from the community or nation that it shall hold all things cheap, even its safety and its most pressing interests, in comparison with truth, justice, humanity and the highest good of the peoples.

No individual rises to these heights except in intense moments, no society yet created satisfies this ideal. And in the present state of morality and of human development none perhaps can or ought to satisfy it. Nature will not allow it, Nature knows that it should not be. The first reason is that our moral ideals are themselves for the most part ill-evolved, ignorant and arbitrary, mental constructions rather than transcriptions of the eternal truths of the spirit. Authoritative and dogmatic, they assert certain absolute standards in theory, but in practice every existing system of ethics proves either in application unworkable or is in fact a constant coming short of the absolute standard to which the ideal pretends. If our ethical system is a compromise

or a makeshift, it gives at once a principle of justification to the further sterilising compromises which society and the individual hasten to make with it. And if it insists on absolute love, justice, right with an uncompromising insistence, it soars above the head of human possibility and is professed with lip homage but ignored in practice. Even it is found that it ignores other elements in humanity which equally insist on survival but refuse to come within the moral formula. For just as the individual law of desire contains within it invaluable elements of the infinite whole which have to be protected against the tyranny of the absorbing social idea, the innate impulses too both of individual and of collective man contain in them invaluable elements which escape the limits of any ethical formula yet discovered and are yet necessary to the fullness and harmony of an eventual divine perfection.

Moreover, absolute love, absolute justice, absolute right reason in their present application by a bewildered and imperfect humanity come easily to be conflicting principles. Justice often demands what love abhors. Right reason dispassionately considering the facts of nature and human relations in search of a satisfying norm or rule is unable to admit without modification either any reign of absolute justice or any reign of absolute love. And in fact man's absolute justice easily turns out to be in practice a sovereign injustice; for his mind, one-sided and rigid in its constructions, puts forward a one-sided partial and rigorous scheme or figure and claims for it totality and absoluteness and an application that ignores the subtler truth of things and the plasticity of life. All our standards turned into action either waver on a flux of compromises or err by this partiality and unelastic structure. Humanity sways from one orientation to another; the race moves upon a zigzag path led by conflicting claims and, on the whole, works out instinctively what Nature intends, but with much waste and suffering, rather than either what it desires or what it holds to be right or what the highest light from above demands from the embodied spirit.



The fact is that when we have reached the cult of absolute ethical qualities and erected the categorical imperative of an ideal law, we have not come to the end of our search or touched the truth that delivers. There is, no doubt, something here that helps us to rise beyond limitation by the physical and vital man in us, an insistence that overpasses the individual and collective needs and desires of a humanity still bound to the living mud of Matter in which it took its roots, an aspiration that helps to develop the mental and moral being in us: this new sublimating element has been therefore an acquisition of great importance; its workings have marked a considerable step forward in the difficult evolution of terrestrial Nature. And behind the inadequacy of these ethical conceptions something too is concealed that does attach to a supreme Truth; there is here the glimmer of a light and power that are part of a yet unreached divine Nature. But the mental idea of these things is not that light and the moral formulation of them is not that power. These are only representative constructions of the mind that cannot embody the divine spirit which they vainly endeavour to imprison in their categorical formulas. Beyond the mental and moral being in us is a greater divine being that is spiritual and supramental; for it is only through a large spiritual plane where the mind's formulas dissolve in a white flame of direct inner experience that we can reach beyond mind and pass from its constructions to the vastness and freedom of the supramental realities. There alone can we touch the harmony of the divine powers that are poorly misrepresented to our mind or framed into a false figure by the conflicting or wavering elements of the moral law. There alone the unification of the transformed vital and physical and the illumined mental man becomes possible in that supramental Spirit which is at once the secret source and goal of our mind and life and body. There alone is there any possibility of an absolute justice, love and right — far other than that which we imagine — at one with each other in the light of a supreme divine knowledge. There alone can there be a reconciliation of the conflict between our members.

In other words there is, above society's external law and

man's moral law and beyond them, though feebly and ignorantly aimed at by something within them, a larger truth of a vast unbound consciousness, a law divine towards which both these blind and gross formulations are progressive faltering steps that try to escape from the natural law of the animal to a more exalted light or universal rule. That divine standard, since the godhead in us is our spirit moving towards its own concealed perfection, must be a supreme spiritual law and truth of our nature. Again, as we are embodied beings in the world with a common existence and nature and yet individual souls capable of direct touch with the Transcendent, this supreme truth of ourselves must have a double character. It must be a law and truth that discovers the perfect movement, harmony, rhythm of a great spiritualised collective life and determines perfectly our relations with each being and all beings in Nature's varied oneness. It must be at the same time a law and truth that discovers to us at each moment the rhythm and exact steps of the direct expression of the Divine in the soul, mind, life, body of the individual creature.¹ And we find in experience that this supreme light and force of action in its highest expression is at once an imperative law and an absolute freedom. It is an imperative law because it governs by immutable Truth our every inner and outer movement. And yet at each moment and in each movement the absolute freedom of the Supreme handles the perfect plasticity of our conscious and liberated nature.

The ethical idealist tries to discover this supreme law in his own moral data, in the inferior powers and factors that belong to the mental and ethical formula. And to sustain and organise them he selects a fundamental principle of conduct essentially unsound and constructed by the intellect—utility, hedonism, reason, intuitive conscience or any other generalised standard. All such efforts are foredoomed to failure. Our inner nature is the progressive expression of the eternal Spirit and too complex a power to be tied down by a single dominant mental or

¹ Therefore the Gita defines "dharma", an expression which means more than either religion or morality, as action controlled by our essential manner of self-being.

moral principle. Only the supramental consciousness can reveal to its differing and conflicting forces their spiritual truth and harmonise their divergences.

The later religions endeavour to fix the type of a supreme truth of conduct, erect a system and declare God's law through the mouth of Avatar or prophet. These systems, more powerful and dynamic than the dry ethical idea, are yet for the most part no more than idealistic glorifications of the moral principle sanctified by religious emotion and the label of a superhuman origin. Some, like the extreme Christian ethic, are rejected by Nature because they insist unworkably on an impracticable absolute rule. Others prove in the end to be evolutionary compromises and become obsolete in the march of Time. The true divine law, unlike these mental counterfeits, cannot be a system of rigid ethical determinations that press into their cast-iron moulds all our life-movements. The Law divine is truth of life and truth of the spirit and must take up with a free living plasticity and inspire with the direct touch of its eternal light each step of our action and all the complexity of our life issues. It must act not as a rule and formula but as an enveloping and penetrating conscious presence that determines all our thoughts, activities, feelings, impulsions of will by its infallible power and knowledge.

The older religions erected their rule of the wise, their dicta of Manu or Confucius, a complex Shastra in which they attempted to combine the social rule and moral law with the declaration of certain eternal principles of our highest nature in some kind of uniting amalgam. All three were treated on the same ground as equally the expression of everlasting verities, *sanātana dharma*. But two of these elements are evolutionary and valid for a time, mental constructions, human readings of the will of the Eternal; the third, attached and subdued to certain social and moral formulas, had to share the fortunes of its forms. Either the Shastra grows obsolete and has to be progressively changed or finally cast away or else it stands as a rigid barrier to the self-development of the individual and the race. The Shastra erects a collective and external standard; it ignores the inner nature of the individual, the indeterminable

elements of a secret spiritual force within him. But the nature of the individual will not be ignored; its demand is inexorable. The unrestrained indulgence of his outer impulses leads to anarchy and dissolution, but the suppression and coercion of his soul's freedom by a fixed and mechanical rule spells stagnation or an inner death. Not this coercion or determination from outside, but the free discovery of his highest spirit and the truth of an eternal movement is the supreme thing that he has to discover.

The higher ethical law is discovered by the individual in his mind and will and psychic sense and then extended to the race. The supreme law also must be discovered by the individual in his spirit. Then only, through a spiritual influence and not by the mental idea, can it be extended to others. A moral law can be imposed as a rule or an ideal on numbers of men who have not attained that level of consciousness or that fineness of mind and will and psychic sense in which it can become a reality to them and a living force. As an ideal it can be revered without any need of practice. As a rule it can be observed in its outsides even if the inner sense is missed altogether. The supramental and spiritual life cannot be mechanised in this way, it cannot be turned into a mental ideal or an external rule. It has its own great lines, but these must be made real, must be the workings of an active Power felt in the individual's consciousness and the transcriptions of an eternal Truth powerful to transform mind, life and body. And because it is thus real, effective, imperative, the generalisation of the supramental consciousness and the spiritual life is the sole force that can lead to individual and collective perfection in earth's highest creatures. Only by our coming into constant touch with the divine Consciousness and its absolute Truth can some form of the conscious Divine, the dynamic Absolute, take up our earth-existence and transform its strife, stumbling, sufferings and falsities into an image of the supreme Light, Power and Ananda.

The culmination of the soul's constant touch with the Supreme is that self-giving which we call surrender to the divine Will and emergence of the separated ego in the One who is all. A vast universality of soul and an intense unity with all is

the base and fixed condition of the supramental consciousness and spiritual life. In that universality and unity alone can we find the supreme law of the divine manifestation in the life of the embodied spirit; in that alone can we discover the supreme motion and right play of our individual nature. In that alone can all these lower discords resolve themselves into a victorious harmony of the true relations between manifested beings who are portions of the one Godhead and children of one universal Mother.

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All conduct and action are part of the movement of a Power, a Force infinite and divine in its origin and secret sense and will even though the forms of it we see seem inconscient or ignorant, material, vital, mental, finite, which is working to bring out progressively something of the Divine and Infinite in the obscurity of the individual and collective nature. This power is leading towards the Light, but still through the Ignorance. It leads man first through his needs and desires; it guides him next through enlarged needs and desires modified and enlightened by a mental and moral ideal. It is preparing to lead him to a spiritual realisation that overrides these things and yet fulfils and reconciles them in all that is divinely true in their spirit and purpose. It transforms the needs and desires into a divine Will and Ananda. It transforms the mental and moral aspiration into the powers of Truth and Perfection that are beyond them. It substitutes for the divided straining of the individual nature, for the passion and strife of the separate ego, the calm, profound, harmonious and happy law of the universalised person within us, the central being, the spirit that is a portion of the supreme Spirit. This true Person in us, because it is universal, does not seek its separate gratification but only asks in its outward expression in Nature its growth to its real stature, the expression of its inner divine self, that transcendent spiritual power and presence within it which is one with all and in sympathy with each thing and creature and with all the collective personalities and powers of the divine

existence, and yet it transcends them and is not bound by the egoism of any creature or collectivity or limited by the ignorant controls of their lower nature. This is the high realisation in front of all our seeking and striving, and it gives the sure promise of a perfect reconciliation and transmutation of all the elements of our nature. A pure, total and flawless action is possible only when that is effected and we have reached the height of this secret Godhead within us.

The perfect supramental action will not follow any single principle or limited rule. It is not likely to satisfy the standard either of the individual egoist or of any organised group-mind. It will conform to the demand neither of the positive practical man of the world nor of the formal moralist nor of the patriot nor of the sentimental philanthropist nor of the idealising philosopher. It will proceed by a spontaneous outflowing from the summits in the totality of an illumined and uplifted being, will and knowledge and not by the selected, calculated and standardised action which is all that the intellectual reason or ethical will can achieve. Its sole aim will be the expression of the divine in us and the keeping together of the world and its progress towards the Manifestation that is to be. This even will not be so much an aim and purpose as a spontaneous law of the being and an intuitive determination of the action by the Light of the divine Truth and its automatic influence. It will proceed like the action of Nature from a total will and knowledge behind her, but a will and knowledge enlightened in a conscious supreme Nature and no longer obscure in this ignorant Prakriti. It will be an action not bound by the dualities but full and large in the spirit's impartial joy of existence. The happy and inspired movement of a divine Power and Wisdom guiding and impelling us will replace the perplexities and stumblings of the suffering and ignorant ego.

If by some miracle of divine intervention all mankind at once could be raised to this level, we should have something on earth like the Golden Age of the traditions, Satya Yuga, the Age of Truth or true existence. For the sign of the Satya Yuga is that the Law is spontaneous and conscious in each creature and does

its own works in a perfect harmony and freedom. Unity and universality, not separative division, would be the foundation of the consciousness of the race; love would be absolute; equality would be consistent with hierarchy and perfect in difference; absolute justice would be secured by the spontaneous action of the being in harmony with the truth of things and the truth of himself and others and therefore sure of true and right result; right reason, no longer mental but supramental, would be satisfied not by the observation of artificial standards but by the free automatic perception of right relations and their inevitable execution in the act. The quarrel between the individual and society or disastrous struggle between one community and another could not exist: the cosmic consciousness imbedded in embodied beings would assure a harmonious diversity in oneness.

In the actual state of humanity, it is the individual who must climb to this height as a pioneer and precursor. His isolation will necessarily give a determination and a form to his outward activities that must be quite other than those of a consciously divine collective action. The inner state, the root of his acts, will be the same; but the acts themselves may well be very different from what they would be on an earth liberated from ignorance. Nevertheless his consciousness and the divine mechanism of his conduct, if such a word can be used of so free a thing, would be such as has been described, free from that subjection to vital impurity and desire and wrong impulse which we call sin, unbound by that rule of prescribed moral formulas which we call virtue, spontaneously sure and pure and perfect in a greater consciousness than the mind's, governed in all its steps by the light and truth of the Spirit. But if a collectivity or group could be formed of those who had reached the supramental perfection, there indeed some divine creation could take shape; a new earth could descend that would be a new heaven, a world of supramental light could be created here amidst the receding darkness of this terrestrial ignorance.

Chapter VIII

The Supreme Will

IN THE light of this progressive manifestation of the Spirit, first apparently bound in the Ignorance, then free in the power and wisdom of the Infinite, we can better understand the great and crowning injunction of the Gita to the Karma-yogin, "Abandoning all dharmas, all principles and laws and rules of conduct, take refuge in me alone." All standards and rules are temporary constructions founded upon the needs of the ego in its transition from Matter to Spirit. These makeshifts have a relative imperativeness so long as we rest satisfied in the stages of transition, content with the physical and vital life, attached to the mental movement, or even fixed in the ranges of the mental plane that are touched by the spiritual lustres. But beyond is the unwalled wideness of a supramental infinite consciousness and there all temporary structures cease. It is not possible to enter utterly into the spiritual truth of the Eternal and Infinite if we have not the faith and courage to trust ourselves into the hands of the Lord of all things and the Friend of all creatures and leave utterly behind us our mental limits and measures. At one moment we must plunge without hesitation, reserve, fear or scruple into the ocean of the free, the infinite, the Absolute. After the Law, Liberty; after the personal, after the general, after the universal standards there is something greater, the impersonal plasticity, the divine freedom, the transcendent force and the supernal impulse. After the strait path of the ascent the wide plateaus on the summit.

There are three stages of the ascent,—at the bottom the bodily life enslaved to the pressure of necessity and desire, in the middle the mental, higher emotional and psychic rule that feels after greater interests, aspirations, experiences, at the summits first a deeper psychic and spiritual state and then a supramental eternal consciousness in which all our aspirations and seekings

discover their own intimate significance. In the bodily life first desire and need and then the practical good of the individual and the society are the governing consideration, the dominant force. In the mental life ideas and ideals rule, ideas that are half-lights wearing the garb of Truth, ideals formed by the mind as a result of a growing but still imperfect intuition and experience. Whenever the mental life prevails and the bodily diminishes its brute insistence, man the mental being feels pushed by the urge of mental Nature to mould in the sense of the idea or the ideal the life of the individual, and in the end even the vaguer more complex life of the society is forced to undergo this subtle process. In the spiritual life, or when a higher power than Mind has manifested and taken possession of the nature, these limited motive-forces recede, dwindle, tend to disappear. The spiritual or supramental Self, the Divine Being, the supreme and immanent Reality, must be alone the Lord within us and shape freely our final development according to the highest, widest, most integral expression possible of the law of our nature. In the end that nature acts in the perfect Truth and its spontaneous freedom; for it obeys only the luminous power of the Eternal. The individual has nothing further to gain, no desire to fulfil; he has become a portion of the impersonality or the universal personality of the Eternal. No other object than the manifestation and play of the Divine Spirit in life and the maintenance and conduct of the world in its march towards the divine goal can move him to action. Mental ideas, opinions, constructions are his no more; for his mind has fallen into silence, it is only a channel for the Light and Truth of the divine knowledge. Ideals are too narrow for the vastness of his spirit; it is the ocean of the Infinite that flows through him and moves him for ever.

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Whoever sincerely enters the path of works, must leave behind him the stage in which need and desire are the first law of our acts. For whatever desires still trouble his being, he must, if he accepts the high aim of Yoga, put them away from him into the

hands of the Lord within us. The supreme Power will deal with them for the good of the sadhaka and for the good of all. In effect, we find that once this surrender is done,—always provided the rejection is sincere,—egoistic indulgence of desire may for some time recur under the continued impulse of past nature but only in order to exhaust its acquired momentum and to teach the embodied being in his most unteachable part, his nervous, vital, emotional nature, by the reactions of desire, by its grief and unrest bitterly contrasted with calm periods of the higher peace or marvellous movements of divine Ananda, that egoistic desire is not a law for the soul that seeks liberation or aspires to its own original god-nature. Afterwards the element of desire in those impulsions will be thrown away or persistently eliminated by a constant denying and transforming pressure. Only the pure force of action in them (*pravṛtti*) justified by an equal delight in all work and result that is inspired or imposed from above will be preserved in the happy harmony of a final perfection. To act, to enjoy is the normal law and right of the nervous being; but to choose by personal desire its action and enjoyment is only its ignorant will, not its right. Alone the supreme and universal Will must choose; action must change into a dynamic movement of that Will; enjoyment must be replaced by the play of a pure spiritual Ananda. All personal will is either a temporary delegation from on high or a usurpation by the ignorant Asura.

The social law, that second term of our progress, is a means to which the ego is subjected in order that it may learn discipline by subordination to a wider collective ego. This law may be quite empty of any moral content and may express only the needs or the practical good of the society as each society conceives it. Or it may express those needs and that good, but modified and coloured and supplemented by a higher moral or ideal law. It is binding on the developing but not yet perfectly developed individual in the shape of social duty, family obligation, communal or national demand, so long as it is not in conflict with his growing sense of the higher Right. But the sadhaka of the Karmayoga will abandon this also to the Lord of works. After he has made this surrender, his social impulses and judgments will,

like his desires, only be used for their exhaustion or, it may be, so far as they are still necessary for a time to enable him to identify his lower mental nature with mankind in general or with any grouping of mankind in its works and hopes and aspirations. But after that brief time is over, they will be withdrawn and a divine government will alone abide. He will be identified with the Divine and with others only through the divine consciousness and not through the mental nature.

For, even after he is free, the sadhaka will be in the world and to be in the world is to remain in works. But to remain in works without desire is to act for the good of the world in general or for the kind or the race or for some new creation to be evolved on the earth or some work imposed by the Divine Will within him. And this must be done either in the framework provided by the environment or the grouping in which he is born or placed or else in one which is chosen or created for him by a divine direction. Therefore in our perfection there must be nothing left in the mental being which conflicts with or prevents our sympathy and free self-identification with the kind, the group or whatever collective expression of the Divine he is meant to lead, help or serve. But in the end it must become a free self-identification through identity with the Divine and not a mental bond or moral tie of union or a vital association dominated by any kind of personal, social, national, communal or credal egoism. If any social law is obeyed, it will not be from physical necessity or from the sense of personal or general interest or for expediency or because of the pressure of the environment or from any sense of duty, but solely for the sake of the Lord of works and because it is felt or known to be the Divine Will that the social law or rule or relation as it stands can still be kept as a figure of the inner life and the minds of men must not be disturbed by its infringement. If, on the other hand, the social law, rule or relation is disregarded, that too will not be for the indulgence of desire, personal will or personal opinion, but because a greater rule is felt that expresses the law of the Spirit or because it is known that there must be in the march of the divine All-Will a movement towards the changing, exceeding or

abolition of existing laws and forms for the sake of a freer larger life necessary to the world's progress.

There is still left the moral law or the ideal and these, even to many who think themselves free, appear for ever sacred and intangible. But the sadhaka, his gaze turned always to the heights, will abandon them to Him whom all ideals seek imperfectly and fragmentarily to express; all moral qualities are only a poor and rigid travesty of his spontaneous and illimitable perfection. The bondage to sin and evil passes away with the passing of nervous desire; for it belongs to the quality of vital passion, impulsion or drive of propensity in us (*rajoguna*) and is extinguished with the transformation of that mode of Nature. But neither must the aspirant remain subject to the gilded or golden chain of a conventional or a habitual or a mentally ordered or even a high or clear sattvic virtue. That will be replaced by something profounder and more essential than the minor inadequate thing that men call virtue. The original sense of the word was manhood and this is a much larger and deeper thing than the moral mind and its structures. The culmination of Karmayoga is a yet higher and deeper state that may perhaps be called "soulhood",—for the soul is greater than the man; a free soulhood spontaneously welling out in works of a supreme Truth and Love will replace human virtue. But this supreme Truth cannot be forced to inhabit the petty edifices of the practical reason or even confined in the more dignified constructions of the larger ideative reason that imposes its representations as if they were pure truth on the limited human intelligence. This supreme Love will not necessarily be consistent, much less will it be synonymous, with the partial and feeble, ignorant and emotion-ridden movements of human attraction, sympathy and pity. The petty law cannot bind the vaster movement; the mind's partial attainment cannot dictate its terms to the soul's supreme fulfilment.

At first, the higher Love and Truth will fulfil its movement in the sadhaka according to the essential law or way of his own nature. For that is the special aspect of the divine Nature, the particular power of the supreme Shakti, out of which his soul has emerged into the Play, not limited indeed by the forms of this law

or way, for the soul is infinite. But still its stuff of nature bears that stamp, evolves fluently along those lines or turns around the spiral curves of that dominating influence. He will manifest the divine Truth-movement according to the temperament of the sage or the lion-like fighter or the lover and enjoyer or the worker and servant or in any combination of essential attributes (*gunas*) that may constitute the form given to his being by its own inner urge. It is this self-nature playing freely in his acts which men will see in him and not a conduct cut, chalked out, artificially regulated, by any lesser rule or by any law from outside.

But there is a yet higher attainment, there is an infinity (*ānanya*) in which even this last limitation is exceeded, because the nature is utterly fulfilled and its boundaries vanish. There the soul lives without any boundaries; for it uses all forms and moulds according to the divine Will in it, but it is not restrained, it is not tied down, it is not imprisoned in any power or form that it uses. This is the summit of the path of works and this the utter liberty of the soul in its actions. In reality, it has there no actions; for all its activities are a rhythm of the Supreme and sovereignly proceed from That alone like a spontaneous music out of the Infinite.

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The total surrender, then, of all our actions to a supreme and universal Will, an unconditioned and standardless surrender of all works to the government of something eternal within us which will replace the ordinary working of the ego-nature, is the way and end of Karmayoga. But what is this divine supreme Will and how can it be recognised by our deluded instruments and our blind prisoned intelligence?

Ordinarily, we conceive of ourselves as a separate "I" in the universe that governs a separate body and mental and moral nature, chooses in full liberty its own self-determined actions and is independent and therefore sole master of its works and responsible. It is not easy for the ordinary mind, the mind that has not thought nor looked deeply into its own constitution and

constituents, it is difficult even for minds that have thought but have no spiritual vision and experience, to imagine how there can be anything else in us truer, deeper and more powerful than this apparent "I" and its empire. But the very first step towards self-knowledge as towards the true knowledge of phenomena is to get behind the apparent truth of things and find the real but masked, essential and dynamic truth which their appearances cover.

This ego or "I" is not a lasting truth, much less our essential part; it is only a formation of Nature, a mental form of thought-centralisation in the perceiving and discriminating mind, a vital form of the centralisation of feeling and sensation in our parts of life, a form of physical conscious reception centralising substance and function of substance in our bodies. All that we internally are is not ego, but consciousness, soul or spirit. All that we externally and superficially are and do is not ego but Nature. An executive cosmic force shapes us and dictates through our temperament and environment and mentality so shaped, through our individualised formulation of the cosmic energies, our actions and their results. Truly, we do not think, will or act but thought occurs in us, will occurs in us, impulse and act occur in us; our ego-sense gathers around itself, refers to itself all this flow of natural activities. It is cosmic Force, it is Nature that forms the thought, imposes the will, imparts the impulse. Our body, mind and ego are a wave of that sea of force in action and do not govern it, but by it are governed and directed. The sadhaka in his progress towards truth and self-knowledge must come to a point where the soul opens its eyes of vision and recognises this truth of ego and this truth of works. He gives up the idea of a mental, vital, physical "I" that acts or governs action; he recognises that Prakriti, Force of cosmic nature following her fixed modes, is the one and only worker in him and in all things and creatures.

But what has fixed the modes of Nature? Or who has originated and governs the movements of Force? There is a Consciousness — or a Conscient — behind that is the lord, witness, knower, enjoyer, upholder and source of sanction for her works;

this consciousness is Soul or Purusha. Prakriti shapes the action in us; Purusha in her or behind her witnesses, assents, bears and upholds it. Prakriti forms the thought in our minds; Purusha in her or behind her knows the thought and the truth in it. Prakriti determines the result of the action; Purusha in her or behind her enjoys or suffers the consequence. Prakriti forms mind and body, labours over them, develops them; Purusha upholds the formation and evolution and sanctions each step of her works. Prakriti applies the Will-force which works in things and men; Purusha sets that Will-force to work by his vision of that which should be done. This Purusha is not the surface ego, but a silent Self, a source of Power, an originator and receiver of Knowledge behind the ego. Our mental "I" is only a false reflection of this Self, this Power, this Knowledge. This Purusha or supporting Consciousness is therefore the cause, recipient and support of all Nature's works, but he is not himself the doer. Prakriti, Nature-Force, in front and Shakti, Conscious-Force, Soul-Force behind her,—for these two are the inner and outer faces of the universal Mother,—account for all that is done in the universe. The universal Mother, Prakriti-Shakti, is the one and only worker.

Purusha-Prakriti, Consciousness-Force, Soul supporting Nature,—for the two even in their separation are one and inseparable,—are at once a universal and a transcendent Power. But there is something in the individual too which is not the mental ego, something that is one in essence with this greater reality: it is a pure reflection or portion of the one Purusha; it is the Soul Person or the embodied being, the individual self, Jivatman; it is the Self that seems to limit its power and knowledge so as to support an individual play of transcendent and universal Nature. In deepest reality the infinitely One is also infinitely multiple; we are not only a reflection or portion of That but we are That; our spiritual individuality — unlike our ego—does not preclude our universality and transcendence. But at present the soul or self in us intent on individualisation in Nature allows itself to be confused with the idea of the ego; it has to get rid of this ignorance, it has to know itself as a reflection or portion or being of the supreme and universal Self

and solely a centre of its consciousness in the world-action. But this Jiva Purusha too is not the doer of works any more than the ego or the supporting consciousness of the Witness and Knower. Again and always it is the transcendent and universal Shakti who is the sole doer. But behind her is the one Supreme who manifests through her as the dual power, Purusha-Prakriti, Ishwara-Shakti.¹ The Supreme becomes dynamic as the Shakti and is by her the sole originator and Master of works in the universe.

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If this is the truth of works, the first thing the sadhaka has to do is to recoil from the egoistic forms of activity and get rid of the sense of an "I" that acts. He has to see and feel that everything happens in him by the plastic conscious or subconscious or sometimes superconscious automatism of his mental and bodily instruments moved by the forces of spiritual, mental, vital and physical Nature. There is a personality on his surface that chooses and wills, submits and struggles, tries to make good in Nature or prevail over Nature, but this personality is itself a construction of Nature and so dominated, driven, determined by her that it cannot be free. It is a formation or expression of the Self in her,— it is a self of Nature rather than a self of Self, his natural and processive, not his spiritual and permanent being, a temporary constructed personality, not the

¹ Ishwara-Shakti is not quite the same as Purusha-Prakriti; for Purusha and Prakriti are separate powers, but Ishwara and Shakti contain each other. Ishwara is Purusha who contains Prakriti and rules by the power of the Shakti within him. Shakti is Prakriti ensouled by Purusha and acts by the will of the Ishwara which is her own will and whose presence in her movement she carries always with her. The Purusha-Prakriti realisation is of the first utility to the seeker on the Way of Works; for it is the separation of the conscient being and the Energy and the subjection of the being to the mechanism of the Energy that are the efficient cause of our ignorance and imperfection; by this realisation the being can liberate himself from the mechanical action of the nature and become free and arrive at a first spiritual control over the nature. Ishwara-Shakti stands behind the relation of Purusha-Prakriti and its ignorant action and turns it to an evolutionary purpose. The Ishwara-Shakti realisation can bring participation in a higher dynamism and a divine working and a total unity and harmony of the being in a spiritual nature.

true immortal Person. It is that Person that he must become. He must succeed in being inwardly quiescent, detach himself as the observer from the outer active personality and learn the play of the cosmic forces in him by standing back from all blinding absorption in its turns and movements. Thus calm, detached, a student of himself and a witness of his nature, he realises that he is the individual soul who observes the works of Nature, accepts tranquilly her results and sanctions or withholds his sanction from the impulse to her acts. At present this soul or Purusha is little more than an acquiescent spectator, influencing perhaps the action and development of the being by the pressure of its veiled consciousness, but for the most part delegating its powers or a fragment of them to the outer personality,—in fact to Nature, for this outer self is not lord but subject to her, *anīśā*; but, once unveiled, it can make its sanction or refusal effective, become the master of the action, dictate sovereignly a change of Nature. Even if for a long time, as the result of fixed association and past storage of energy, the habitual movement takes place independent of the Purusha's assent and even if the sanctioned movement is persistently refused by Nature for want of past habit, still he will discover that in the end his assent or refusal prevails,—slowly with much resistance or quickly with a rapid accommodation of her means and tendencies she modifies herself and her workings in the direction indicated by his inner sight or volition. Thus he learns in place of mental control or egoistic will an inner spiritual control which makes him master of the Nature-forces that work in him and not their unconscious instrument or mechanic slave. Above and around him is the Shakti, the universal Mother and from her he can get all his inmost soul needs and wills if only he has a true knowledge of her ways and a true surrender to the divine Will in her. Finally, he becomes aware of that highest dynamic Self within him and within Nature which is the source of all his seeing and knowing, the source of the sanction, the source of the acceptance, the source of the rejection. This is the Lord, the Supreme, the One-in-all, Ishwara-Shakti, of whom his soul is a portion, a being of that Being and a power of that Power. The

rest of our progress depends on our knowledge of the ways in which the Lord of works manifests his Will in the world and in us and executes them through the transcendent and universal Shakti.

The Lord sees in his omniscience the thing that has to be done. This seeing is his Will, it is a form of creative Power, and that which he sees the all-conscious Mother, one with him, takes into her dynamic self and embodies, and executive Nature-Force carries it out as the mechanism of their omnipotent omniscience. But this vision of what is to be and therefore of what is to be done arises out of the very being, pours directly out of the consciousness and delight of existence of the Lord, spontaneously, like light from the Sun. It is not our mortal attempt to see, our difficult arrival at truth of action and motive or just demand of Nature. When the individual soul is entirely at one in its being and knowledge with the Lord and directly in touch with the original Shakti, the transcendent Mother, the supreme Will can then arise in us too in the high divine manner as a thing that must be and is achieved by the spontaneous action of Nature. There is then no desire, no responsibility, no reaction; all takes place in the peace, calm, light, power of the supporting and enveloping and inhabiting Divine.

But even before that highest approach to identity is achieved, something of the supreme Will can manifest in us as an imperative impulsion, a God-driven action; we then act by a spontaneous self-determining Force but a fuller knowledge of meaning and aim arises only afterwards. Or the impulse to action may come as an inspiration or intuition, but rather in the heart and body than in the mind; here an effective sight enters in but the complete and exact knowledge is still deferred and comes, if at all, later. But the divine Will may descend too as a luminous single command or a total perception or a continuous current of perception of what is to be done into the will or into the thought or as a direction from above spontaneously fulfilled by the lower members. When the Yoga is imperfect, only some actions can be done in this way, or else a general action may so proceed but only during periods of exaltation and illumination. When the

Yoga is perfect, all action becomes of this character. We may indeed distinguish three stages of a growing progress by which, first, the personal will is occasionally or frequently enlightened or moved by a supreme Will or conscious Force beyond it, then constantly replaced and, last, identified and merged in that divine Power-action. The first is the stage when we are still governed by the intellect, heart and senses; these have to seek or wait for the divine inspiration and guidance and do not always find or receive it. The second is the stage when human intelligence is more and more replaced by a high illumined or intuitive spiritualised mind, the external human heart by the inner psychic heart, the senses by a purified and selfless vital force. The third is the stage when we rise even above spiritualised mind to the supramental levels.

In all three stages the fundamental character of the liberated action is the same, a spontaneous working of Prakriti no longer through or for the ego but at the will and for the enjoyment of the supreme Purusha. At a higher level this becomes the Truth of the absolute and universal Supreme expressed through the individual soul and worked out consciously through the nature, —no longer through a half-perception and a diminished or distorted effectuation by the stumbling, ignorant and all-deforming energy of lower nature in us but by the all-wise transcendent and universal Mother.

The Lord has veiled himself and his absolute wisdom and eternal consciousness in ignorant Nature-Force and suffers her to drive the individual being, with its complicity, as the ego; this lower action of Nature continues to prevail, often even in spite of man's half-lit imperfect efforts at a nobler motive and a purer self-knowledge. Our human effort at perfection fails, or progresses very incompletely, owing to the force of Nature's past actions in us, her past formations, her long-rooted associations; it turns towards a true and high-climbing success only when a greater Knowledge and Power than our own breaks through the lid of our ignorance and guides or takes up our personal will. For our human will is a misled and wandering ray that has parted from the supreme Puissance. The period of slow emergence out of this lower working into a higher light and

purer force is the valley of the shadow of death for the striver after perfection; it is a dreadful passage full of trials, sufferings, sorrows, obscurations, stumbling, errors, pitfalls. To abridge and alleviate this ordeal or to penetrate it with the divine delight faith is necessary, an increasing surrender of the mind to the knowledge that imposes itself from within and, above all, a true aspiration and a right and unfaltering and sincere practice. "Practise unfalteringly," says the Gita, "with a heart free from despondency," the Yoga; for even though in the earlier stage of the path we drink deep of the bitter poison of internal discord and suffering, the last taste of this cup is the sweetness of the nectar of immortality and the honey-wine of an eternal Ananda.

Chapter IX

Equality and the Annihilation of Ego

AN ENTIRE self-consecration, a complete equality, an unsparing effacement of the ego, a transforming deliverance of the nature from its ignorant modes of action are the steps by which the surrender of all the being and nature to the Divine Will can be prepared and achieved,—a self-giving true, total and without reserve. The first necessity is an entire spirit of self-consecration in our works; it must become first the constant will, then the ingrained need in all the being, finally its automatic but living and conscious habit, the self-existent turn to do all action as a sacrifice to the Supreme and to the veiled Power present in us and in all beings and in all the workings of the universe. Life is the altar of this sacrifice, works are our offering; a transcendent and universal Power and Presence as yet rather felt or glimpsed than known or seen by us is the Deity to whom they are offered. This sacrifice, this self-consecration has two sides to it; there is the work itself and there is the spirit in which it is done, the spirit of worship to the Master of Works in all that we see, think and experience.

The work itself is at first determined by the best light we can command in our ignorance. It is that which we conceive as the thing that should be done. And whether it be shaped by our sense of duty, by our feeling for our fellow-creatures, by our idea of what is for the good of others or the good of the world or by the direction of one whom we accept as a human Master, wiser than ourselves and for us the representative of that Lord of all works in whom we believe but whom we do not yet know, the principle is the same. The essential of the sacrifice of works must be there and the essential is the surrender of all desire for the fruit of our works, the renunciation of all attachment to the result for which yet we labour. For so long as we work with attachment to the result, the sacrifice is offered not to the Divine, but to our ego.

We may think otherwise, but we are deceiving ourselves; we are making our idea of the Divine, our sense of duty, our feeling for our fellow-creatures, our idea of what is good for the world or others, even our obedience to the Master a mask for our egoistic satisfactions and preferences and a specious shield against the demand made on us to root all desire out of our nature.

At this stage of the Yoga and even throughout the Yoga this form of desire, this figure of the ego is the enemy against whom we have to be always on our guard with an unsleeping vigilance. We need not be discouraged when we find him lurking within us and assuming all sorts of disguises, but we should be vigilant to detect him in all his masks and inexorable in expelling his influence. The illumining Word of this movement is the decisive line of the Gita, "To action thou hast a right but never under any circumstances to its fruit." The fruit belongs solely to the Lord of all works; our only business with it is to prepare success by a true and careful action and to offer it, if it comes, to the divine Master. Afterwards even as we have renounced attachment to the fruit, we must renounce attachment to the work also; at any moment we must be prepared to change one work, one course or one field of action for another or abandon all works if that is the clear command of the Master. Otherwise we do the act not for his sake but for our satisfaction and pleasure in the work, from the kinetic nature's need of action or for the fulfilment of our propensities; but these are all stations and refuges of the ego. However necessary for our ordinary motion of life, they have to be abandoned in the growth of the spiritual consciousness and replaced by divine counterparts: an Ananda, an impersonal and God-directed delight will cast out or supplant the unilluminated vital satisfaction and pleasure, a joyful driving of the Divine Energy the kinetic need; the fulfilment of the propensities will no longer be an object or a necessity, there will be instead the fulfilment of the Divine Will through the natural dynamic truth in action of a free soul and a luminous nature. In the end, as the attachment to the fruit of the work and to the work itself has been excised from the heart, so also the last clinging attachment to the idea and sense of ourselves as the doer has to be

relinquished; the Divine Shakti must be known and felt above and within us as the true and sole worker.

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The renunciation of attachment to the work and its fruit is the beginning of a wide movement towards an absolute equality in the mind and soul which must become all-enveloping if we are to be perfect in the spirit. For the worship of the Master of works demands a clear recognition and glad acknowledgment of him in ourselves, in all things and in all happenings. Equality is the sign of this adoration; it is the soul's ground on which true sacrifice and worship can be done. The Lord is there equally in all beings, we have to make no essential distinctions between ourselves and others, the wise and the ignorant, friend and enemy, man and animal, the saint and the sinner. We must hate none, despise none, be repelled by none; for in all we have to see the One disguised or manifested at his pleasure. He is a little revealed in one or more revealed in another or concealed and wholly distorted in others according to his will and his knowledge of what is best for that which he intends to become in form in them and to do in works in their nature. All is ourself, one self that has taken many shapes. Hatred and disliking and scorn and repulsion, clinging and attachment and preference are natural, necessary, inevitable at a certain stage: they attend upon or they help to make and maintain Nature's choice in us. But to the Karmayogin they are a survival, a stumbling-block, a process of the Ignorance and, as he progresses, they fall away from his nature. The child-soul needs them for its growth; but they drop from an adult in the divine culture. In the God-nature to which we have to rise there can be an adamantine, even a destructive severity but not hatred, a divine irony but not scorn, a calm, clear-seeing and forceful rejection but not repulsion and dislike. Even what we have to destroy, we must not abhor or fail to recognise as a disguised and temporary movement of the Eternal.

And since all things are the one Self in its manifestation, we

shall have equality of soul towards the ugly and the beautiful, the maimed and the perfect, the noble and the vulgar, the pleasant and the unpleasant, the good and the evil. Here also there will be no hatred, scorn and repulsion, but instead the equal eye that sees all things in their real character and their appointed place. For we shall know that all things express or disguise, develop or distort, as best they can or with whatever defect they must, under the circumstances intended for them, in the way possible to the immediate status or function or evolution of their nature, some truth or fact, some energy or potential of the Divine necessary by its presence in the progressive manifestation both to the whole of the present sum of things and for the perfection of the ultimate result. That truth is what we must seek and discover behind the transitory expression; undeterred by appearances, by the deficiencies or the disfigurements of the expression, we can then worship the Divine for ever unsullied, pure, beautiful and perfect behind his masks. All indeed has to be changed, not ugliness accepted but divine beauty, not imperfection taken as our resting-place but perfection striven after, the supreme good made the universal aim and not evil. But what we do has to be done with a spiritual understanding and knowledge, and it is a divine good, beauty, perfection, pleasure that has to be followed after, not the human standards of these things. If we have not equality, it is a sign that we are still pursued by the Ignorance, we shall truly understand nothing and it is more than likely that we shall destroy the old imperfection only to create another: for we are substituting the appreciations of our human mind and desire-soul for the divine values.

Equality does not mean a fresh ignorance or blindness; it does not call for and need not initiate a greyness of vision and a blotting out of all hues. Difference is there, variation of expression is there and this variation we shall appreciate, — far more justly than we could when the eye was clouded by a partial and erring love and hate, admiration and scorn, sympathy and antipathy, attraction and repulsion. But behind the variation we shall always see the Complete and Immutable who dwells within it and we shall feel, know or at least, if it is

hidden from us, trust in the wise purpose and divine necessity of the particular manifestation, whether it appear to our human standards harmonious and perfect or crude and unfinished or even false and evil.

And so too we shall have the same equality of mind and soul towards all happenings, painful or pleasurable, defeat and success, honour and disgrace, good repute and ill-repute, good fortune and evil fortune. For in all happenings we shall see the will of the Master of all works and results and a step in the evolving expression of the Divine. He manifests himself, to those who have the inner eye that sees, in forces and their play and results as well as in things and in creatures. All things move towards a divine event; each experience, suffering and want no less than joy and satisfaction, is a necessary link in the carrying out of a universal movement which it is our business to understand and second. To revolt, to condemn, to cry out is the impulse of our unchastened and ignorant instincts. Revolt like everything else has its uses in the play and is even necessary, helpful, decreed for the divine development in its own time and stage; but the movement of an ignorant rebellion belongs to the stage of the soul's childhood or to its raw adolescence. The ripened soul does not condemn but seeks to understand and master, does not cry out but accepts or toils to improve and perfect, does not revolt inwardly but labours to obey and fulfil and transfigure. Therefore we shall receive all things with an equal soul from the hands of the Master. Failure we shall admit as a passage as calmly as success until the hour of the divine victory arrives. Our souls and minds and bodies will remain unshaken by acutest sorrow and suffering and pain if in the divine dispensation they come to us, unoverpowered by intensest joy and pleasure. Thus supremely balanced we shall continue steadily on our way meeting all things with an equal calm until we are ready for a more exalted status and can enter into the supreme and universal Ananda.



This equality cannot come except by a protracted ordeal and patient self-discipline; so long as desire is strong, equality cannot come at all except in periods of quiescence and the fatigue of desire, and it is then more likely to be an inert indifference or desire's recoil from itself than the true calm and the positive spiritual oneness. Moreover, this discipline or this growth into equality of spirit has its necessary epochs and stages. Ordinarily we have to begin with a period of endurance; for we must learn to confront, to suffer and to assimilate all contacts. Each fibre in us must be taught not to wince away from that which pains and repels and not to run eagerly towards that which pleases and attracts, but rather to accept, to face, to bear and to conquer. All touches we must be strong to bear, not only those that are proper and personal to us but those born of our sympathy or our conflict with the worlds around, above or below us and with their peoples. We shall endure tranquilly the action and impact on us of men and things and forces, the pressure of the Gods and the assaults of Titans; we shall face and engulf in the unstirred seas of our spirit all that can possibly come to us down the ways of the soul's infinite experience. This is the stoical period of the preparation of equality, its most elementary and yet its heroic age. But this steadfast endurance of the flesh and heart and mind must be reinforced by a sustained sense of spiritual submission to a divine Will: this living clay must yield not only with a stern or courageous acquiescence, but with knowledge or with resignation, even in suffering, to the touch of the divine Hand that is preparing its perfection. A sage, a devout or even a tender stoicism of the God-lover is possible, and these are better than the merely pagan self-reliant endurance which may lend itself to a too great hardening of the vessel of God: for this kind prepares the strength that is capable of wisdom and of love; its tranquillity is a deeply moved calm that passes easily into bliss. The gain of this period of resignation and endurance is the soul's strength equal to all shocks and contacts.

There is next a period of high-seated impartiality and indifference in which the soul becomes free from exultation and depression and escapes from the snare of the eagerness of joy as

from the dark net of the pangs of grief and suffering. All things and persons and forces, all thoughts and feelings and sensations and actions, one's own no less than those of others, are regarded from above by a spirit that remains intact and immutable and is not disturbed by these things. This is the philosophic period of the preparation of equality, a wide and august movement. But indifference must not settle into an inert turning away from action and experience; it must not be an aversion born of weariness, disgust and distaste, a recoil of disappointed or satiated desire, the sullenness of a baffled and dissatisfied egoism forced back from its passionate aims. These recoils come inevitably in the unripe soul and may in some way help the progress by a discouragement of the eager desire-driven vital nature, but they are not the perfection towards which we labour. The indifference or the impartiality that we must seek after is a calm superiority of the high-seated soul above the contacts of things;¹ it regards and accepts or rejects them but is not moved in the rejection and is not subjected by the acceptance. It begins to feel itself near, kin to, one with a silent Self and Spirit self-existent and separate from the workings of Nature which it supports and makes possible, part of or merged in the motionless calm Reality that transcends the motion and action of the universe. The gain of this period of high transcendence is the soul's peace unrocked and unshaken by the pleasant ripples or by the tempestuous waves and billows of the world's movement.

If we can pass through these two stages of the inner change without being arrested or fixed in either, we are admitted to a greater divine equality which is capable of a spiritual ardour and tranquil passion of delight, a rapturous, all-understanding and all-possessing equality of the perfected soul, an intense and even wideness and fullness of its being embracing all things. This is the supreme period and the passage to it is through the joy of a total self-giving to the Divine and to the universal Mother. For strength is then crowned by a happy mastery, peace deepens into bliss, the possession of the divine calm is uplifted

¹ *udāśīna*.

and made the ground for the possession of the divine movement. But if this greater perfection is to arrive, the soul's impartial high-seatedness looking down from above on the flux of forms and personalities and movements and forces must be modified and change into a new sense of strong and calm submission and a powerful and intense surrender. This submission will be no longer a resigned acquiescence but a glad acceptance: for there will be no sense of suffering or of the bearing of a burden or cross; love and delight and the joy of self-giving will be its brilliant texture. And this surrender will be not only to a divine Will which we perceive and accept and obey, but to a divine Wisdom in the Will which we recognise and a divine Love in it which we feel and rapturously suffer, the wisdom and love of a supreme Spirit and Self of ourselves and all with which we can achieve a happy and perfect unity. A lonely power, peace and stillness is the last word of the philosophic equality of the sage; but the soul in its integral experience liberates itself from this self-created status and enters into the sea of a supreme and all-embracing ecstasy of the beginningless and endless beatitude of the Eternal. Then we are at last capable of receiving all contacts with a blissful equality, because we feel in them the touch of the imperishable Love and Delight, the happiness absolute that hides ever in the heart of things. The gain of this culmination in a universal and equal rapture is the soul's delight and the opening gates of the Bliss that is infinite, the Joy that surpasses all understanding.

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Before this labour for the annihilation of desire and the conquest of the soul's equality can come to its absolute perfection and fruition, that turn of the spiritual movement must have been completed which leads to the abolition of the sense of ego. But for the worker the renunciation of the egoism of action is the most important element in this change. For even when by giving up the fruits and the desire of the fruits to the Master of the Sacrifice we have parted with the egoism of rajasic desire, we

may still have kept the egoism of the worker. Still we are subject to the sense that we are ourselves the doer of the act, ourselves its source and ourselves the giver of the sanction. It is still the "I" that chooses and determines, it is still the "I" that undertakes the responsibility and feels the demerit or the merit.

An entire removal of this separative ego-sense is an essential aim of our Yoga. If any ego is to remain in us for a while, it is only a form of it which knows itself to be a form and is ready to disappear as soon as a true centre of consciousness is manifested or built in us. That true centre is a luminous formulation of the one Consciousness and a pure channel and instrument of the one Existence. A support for the individual manifestation and action of the universal Force, it gradually reveals behind it the true Person in us, the central eternal being, an everlasting being of the Supreme, a power and portion of the transcendent Shakti.²

Here too, in this movement by which the soul divests itself gradually of the obscure robe of the ego, there is a progress by marked stages. For not only the fruit of works belongs to the Lord alone, but our works also must be his; he is the true lord of our actions no less than of our results. This we must not see with the thinking mind only, it must become entirely true to our entire consciousness and will. The sadhaka has not only to think and know but to see and feel concretely and intensely even in the moment of the working and in its initiation and whole process that his works are not his at all, but are coming through him from the Supreme Existence. He must be always aware of a Force, a Presence, a Will that acts through his individual nature. But there is in taking this turn the danger that he may confuse his own disguised or sublimated ego or an inferior power with the Lord and substitute its demands for the supreme dictates. He may fall into a common ambush of this lower nature and distort his supposed surrender to a higher Power into an excuse for a magnified and uncontrolled indulgence of his own self-will and even of his desires and passions. A great sincerity is asked for and has to be imposed not only on the conscious mind but

² *amśah sanātanah, parā prakrtir jīvabhūtā.*

still more on the subliminal part of us which is full of hidden movements. For there is there, especially in our subliminal vital nature, an incorrigible charlatan and actor. The sadhaka must first have advanced far in the elimination of desire and in the firm equality of his soul towards all workings and all happenings before he can utterly lay down the burden of his works on the Divine. At every moment he must proceed with a vigilant eye upon the deceits of the ego and the ambushes of the misleading Powers of Darkness who ever represent themselves as the one Source of Light and Truth and take on them a simulacrum of divine forms in order to capture the soul of the seeker.

Immediately he must take the further step of relegating himself to the position of the Witness. Aloof from the Prakriti, impersonal and dispassionate, he must watch the executive Nature-Force at work within him and understand its action; he must learn by this separation to recognise the play of her universal forces, distinguish her interweaving of light and night, the divine and the undivine, and detect her formidable Powers and Beings that use the ignorant human creature. Nature works in us, says the Gita, through the triple quality of Prakriti, the quality of light and good, the quality of passion and desire and the quality of obscurity and inertia. The seeker must learn to distinguish, as an impartial and discerning witness of all that proceeds within this kingdom of his nature, the separate and the combined action of these qualities; he must pursue the workings of the cosmic forces in him through all the labyrinth of their subtle unseen processes and disguises and know every intricacy of the maze. As he proceeds in this knowledge, he will be able to become the giver of the sanction and no longer remain an ignorant tool of Nature. At first he must induce the Nature-Force in its action on his instruments to subdue the working of its two lower qualities and bring them into subjection to the quality of light and good and, afterwards, he must persuade that again to offer itself so that all three may be transformed by a higher Power into their divine equivalents, supreme repose and calm, divine illumination and bliss, the eternal divine dynamis, Tapas. The first part of this discipline and change can be firmly

done in principle by the will of the mental being in us; but its full execution and the subsequent transformation can be done only when the deeper psychic soul increases its hold on the nature and replaces the mental being as its ruler. When this happens, he will be ready to make, not only with an aspiration and intention and an initial and progressive self-abandonment but with the most intense actuality of dynamic self-giving, the complete renunciation of his works to the Supreme Will. By degrees his mind of an imperfect human intelligence will be replaced by a spiritual and illumined mind and that can in the end enter into the supramental Truth-Light; he will then no longer act from his nature of the Ignorance with its three modes of confused and imperfect activity, but from a diviner nature of spiritual calm, light, power and bliss. He will act not from an amalgam of an ignorant mind and will with the drive of a still more ignorant heart of emotion and the desire of the life-being and the urge and instinct of the flesh, but first from a spiritualised self and nature and, last, from a supramental Truth-consciousness and its divine force of supernature.

Thus are made possible the final steps when the veil of Nature is withdrawn and the seeker is face to face with the Master of all existence and his activities are merged in the action of a supreme Energy which is pure, true, perfect and blissful for ever. Thus can he utterly renounce to the supramental Shakti his works as well as the fruits of his works and act only as the conscious instrument of the eternal Worker. No longer giving the sanction, he will rather receive in his instruments and follow in her hands a divine mandate. No longer doing works, he will accept their execution through him by her unsleeping Force. No longer willing the fulfilment of his own mental constructions and the satisfaction of his own emotional desires, he will obey and participate in an omnipotent Will that is also an omniscient Knowledge and a mysterious, magical and unfathomable Love and a vast bottomless sea of the eternal Bliss of Existence.

Chapter X

The Three Modes of Nature

TO TRANSCEND the natural action of the lower Prakriti is indispensable to the soul, if it is to be free in its self and free in its works. Harmonious subjection to this actual universal Nature, a condition of good and perfect work for the natural instruments, is not an ideal for the soul, which should rather be subject to God and his Shakti, but master of its own nature. As agent or as channel of the Supreme Will it must determine by its vision and sanction or refusal the use that shall be made of the storage of energy, the conditions of environment, the rhythm of combined movement which are provided by Prakriti for the labour of the natural instruments, mind, life and body. But this inferior Nature can only be mastered if she is surmounted and used from above. And this can only be done by a transcendence of her forces, qualities and modes of action; otherwise we are subject to her conditions and helplessly dominated by her, not free in the spirit.

The idea of the three essential modes of Nature is a creation of the ancient Indian thinkers and its truth is not at once obvious, because it was the result of long psychological experiment and profound internal experience. Therefore without a long inner experience, without intimate self-observation and intuitive perception of the Nature-forces it is difficult to grasp accurately or firmly utilise. Still certain broad indications may help the seeker on the Way of Works to understand, analyse and control by his assent or refusal the combinations of his own nature. These modes are termed in the Indian books qualities, *gunas*, and are given the names *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*. Sattwa is the force of equilibrium and translates in quality as good and harmony and happiness and light; rajas is the force of kinesis and translates in quality as struggle and effort, passion and action; tamas is the force of inconscience and inertia and translates in quality

as obscurity and incapacity and inaction. Ordinarily used for psychological self-analysis, these distinctions are valid also in physical Nature. Each thing and every existence in the lower Prakriti contains them and its process and dynamic form are the result of the interaction of these qualitative powers.

Every form of things, whether animate or inanimate, is a constantly maintained poise of natural forces in motion and is subject to an unending stream of helpful, disturbing or disintegrating contacts from other combinations of forces that surround it. Our own nature of mind, life and body is nothing else than such a formative combination and poise. In the reception of the environing contacts and the reaction to them the three modes determine the temper of the recipient and the character of the response. Inert and inapt, he may suffer them without any responsive reaction, any motion of self-defence or any capacity of assimilation and adjustment; this is the mode of tamas, the way of inertia. The stigmata of tamas are blindness and unconsciousness and incapacity and unintelligence, sloth and indolence and inactivity and mechanical routine and the mind's torpor and the life's sleep and the soul's slumber. Its effect, if uncorrected by other elements, can be nothing but disintegration of the form or the poise of the nature without any new creation or new equilibrium or force of kinetic progress. At the heart of this inert impotence is the principle of ignorance and an inability or slothful unwillingness to comprehend, seize and manage the stimulating or assailing contact, the suggestion of enveloping forces and their urge towards fresh experience.

On the other hand, the recipient of Nature's contacts, touched and stimulated, solicited or assailed by her forces, may react to the pressure or against it. She allows, encourages, impels him to strive, to resist, to attempt, to dominate or engross his environment, to assert his will, to fight and create and conquer. This is the mode of rajas, the way of passion and action and the thirst of desire. Struggle and change and new creation, victory and defeat and joy and suffering and hope and disappointment are its children and build the many-coloured house of life in which it takes its pleasure. But its knowledge is an imperfect

or a false knowledge and brings with it ignorant effort, error, a constant misadjustment, pain of attachment, disappointed desire, grief of loss and failure. The gift of rajas is kinetic force, energy, activity, the power that creates and acts and can overcome; but it moves in the wrong lights or the half-lights of the Ignorance and it is perverted by the touch of the Asura, Rakshasa and Pishacha. The arrogant ignorance of the human mind and its self-satisfied perversions and presumptuous errors, the pride and vanity and ambition, the cruelty and tyranny and beast wrath and violence, the selfishness and baseness and hypocrisy and treachery and vile meanness, the lust and greed and rapacity, the jealousy, envy and bottomless ingratitude that disfigure the earth-nature are the natural children of this indispensable but strong and dangerous turn of Nature.

But the embodied being is not limited to these two modes of Prakriti; there is a better and more enlightened way in which he can deal with surrounding impacts and the stream of the world-forces. There is possible a reception and reaction with clear comprehension, poise and balance. This way of natural being has the power that, because it understands, sympathises; it fathoms and controls and develops Nature's urge and her ways: it has an intelligence that penetrates her processes and her significances and can assimilate and utilise; there is a lucid response that is not overpowered but adjusts, corrects, adapts, harmonises, elicits the best in all things. This is the mode of sattwa, the turn of Nature that is full of light and poise, directed to good, to knowledge, to delight and beauty, to happiness, right understanding, right equilibrium, right order: its temperament is the opulence of a bright clearness of knowledge and a lucent warmth of sympathy and closeness. A fineness and enlightenment, a governed energy, an accomplished harmony and poise of the whole being is the consummate achievement of the sattwic nature.

No existence is cast entirely in the single mould of any of these three modes of the cosmic Force; all three are present in everyone and everywhere. There is a constant combining and separation of their shifting relations and interpenetrating

influences, often a conflict, a wrestling of forces, a struggle to dominate each other. All have in great or in small extent or degree, even if sometimes in a hardly appreciable minimum, their sattvic states and clear tracts or inchoate tendencies of light, clarity and happiness, fine adaptation and sympathy with the environment, intelligence, poise, right mind, right will and feeling, right impulse, virtue, order. All have their rajasic moods and impulses and turbid parts of desire and passion and struggle, perversion and falsehood and error, unbalanced joy and sorrow, aggressive push to work and eager creation and strong or bold or fiery or fierce reactions to the pressure of the environment and to life's assaults and offers. All have their tamasic states and constant obscure parts, their moments or points of unconsciousness, their long habit or their temporary velleities of weak resignation or dull acceptance, their constitutional feebleesses or movements of fatigue, negligence and indolence and their lapses into ignorance and incapacity, depression and fear and cowardly recoil or submission to the environment and to the pressure of men and events and forces. Each one of us is sattvic in some directions of his energy of Nature or in some parts of his mind or character, in others rajasic, tamasic in others. According as one or other of the modes usually dominates his general temperament and type of mind and turn of action, it is said of him that he is the sattvic, the rajasic or the tamasic man; but few are always of one kind and none is entire in his kind. The wise are not always or wholly wise, the intelligent are intelligent only in patches; the saint suppresses in himself many unsaintly movements and the evil are not entirely evil: the dullest has his unexpressed or unused and undeveloped capacities, the most timorous his moments or his way of courage, the helpless and the weakling a latent part of strength in his nature. The dominant gunas are not the essential soul-type of the embodied being but only the index of the formation he has made for this life or during his present existence and at a given moment of his evolution in Time.



When the sadhaka has once stood back from the action of Prakriti within him or upon him and, not interfering, not amending or inhibiting, not choosing or deciding, allowed its play and analysed and watched the process, he soon discovers that her modes are self-dependent and work as a machine once put in action works by its own structure and propelling forces. The force and the propulsion come from Prakriti and not from the creature. Then he realises how mistaken was his impression that his mind was the doer of his works; his mind was only a small part of him and a creation and engine of Nature. Nature was acting all the while in her own modes moving the three general qualities about as a girl might play with her puppets. His ego was all along a tool and plaything; his character and intelligence, his moral qualities and mental powers, his creations and works and exploits, his anger and forbearance, his cruelty and mercy, his love and his hatred, his sin and his virtue, his light and his darkness, his passion of joy and his anguish of sorrow were the play of Nature to which the soul, attracted, won and subjected, lent its passive concurrence. And yet the determinism of Nature or Force is not all; the soul has a word to say in the matter,—but the secret soul, the Purusha, not the mind or the ego, since these are not independent entities, they are parts of Nature. For the soul's sanction is needed for the play and by an inner silent will as the lord and giver of the sanction it can determine the principle of the play and intervene in its combinations, although the execution in thought and will and act and impulse must still be Nature's part and privilege. The Purusha can dictate a harmony for Nature to execute, not by interfering in her functions but by a conscious regard on her which she transmutes at once or after much difficulty into translating idea and dynamic impetus and significant figure.

An escape from the action of the two inferior gunas is very evidently indispensable if we are to transmute our present nature into a power and form of the divine consciousness and an instrument of its forces. Tamas obscures and prevents the light of the divine knowledge from penetrating into the dark and dull corners of our nature. Tamas incapacitates and takes

away the power to respond to divine impulse and the energy to change and the will to progress and make ourselves plastic to a greater Shakti. Rajas perverts knowledge, makes our reason the accomplice of falsehood and the abettor of every wrong movement, disturbs and twists our life-force and its impulses, oversets the balance and health of the body. Rajas captures all high-born ideas and high-seated movements and turns them to a false and egoistic use; even divine Truth and divine influences, when they descend into the earthly plane, cannot escape this misuse and seizure. Tamas unenlightened and rajas unconverted, no divine change or divine life is possible.

An exclusive resort to sattwa would seem to be the way of escape: but there is this difficulty that no one of the qualities can prevail by itself against its two companions and rivals. If, envisaging the quality of desire and passion as the cause of disturbance, suffering, sin and sorrow, we strain and labour to quell and subdue it, rajas sinks but tamas rises. For, the principle of activity dulled, inertia takes its place. A quiet peace, happiness, knowledge, love, right sentiment can be founded by the principle of light, but, if rajas is absent or completely suppressed, the quiet in the soul tends to become a tranquillity of inaction, not the firm ground of a dynamic change. Ineffectively right-thinking, right-doing, good, mild and even, the nature may become in its dynamic parts sattwa-tamasic, neutral, pale-tinted, uncreative or emptied of power. Mental and moral obscurity may be absent, but so are the intense springs of action, and this is a hampering limitation and another kind of incompetence. For tamas is a double principle; it contradicts rajas by inertia, it contradicts sattwa by narrowness, obscurity and ignorance and, if either is depressed, it pours in to occupy its place.

If we call in rajas again to correct this error and bid it ally itself to sattwa and by their united agency endeavour to get rid of the dark principle, we find that we have elevated our action, but that there is again subjection to rajasic eagerness, passion, disappointment, suffering, anger. These movements may be more exalted in their scope and spirit and action than before, but they are not the peace, the freedom, the power, the self-mastery

at which we long to arrive. Wherever desire and ego harbour, passion and disturbance harbour with them and share their life. And if we seek a compromise between the three modes, sattwa leading, the others subordinate, still we have only arrived at a more temperate action of the play of Nature. A new poise has been reached, but a spiritual freedom and mastery are not in sight or else are still only a far-off prospect.

A radically different movement has to draw us back from the gunas and lift us above them. The error that accepts the action of the modes of Nature must cease; for as long as it is accepted, the soul is involved in their operations and subjected to their law. Sattwa must be transcended as well as rajas and tamas; the golden chain must be broken no less than the leaden fetters and the bond-ornaments of a mixed alloy. The Gita prescribes to this end a new method of self-discipline. It is to stand back in oneself from the action of the modes and observe this unsteady flux as the Witness seated above the surge of the forces of Nature. He is one who watches but is impartial and indifferent, aloof from them on their own level and in his native posture high above them. As they rise and fall in their waves, the Witness looks, observes, but neither accepts nor for the moment interferes with their course. First there must be the freedom of the impersonal Witness; afterwards there can be the control of the Master, the Ishwara.

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The initial advantage of this process of detachment is that one begins to understand one's own nature and all Nature. The detached Witness is able to see entirely without the least blinding by egoism the play of her modes of the Ignorance and to pursue it into all its ramifications, coverings and subtleties — for it is full of camouflage and disguise and snare and treachery and ruse. Instructed by long experience, conscious of all act and condition as their interaction, made wise of their processes, he cannot any longer be overcome by their assaults, surprised in their nets or deceived by their disguises. At the same time he perceives the ego

to be nothing better than a device and the sustaining knot of their interaction and, perceiving it, he is delivered from the illusion of the lower egoistic Nature. He escapes from the sattvic egoism of the altruist and the saint and the thinker; he shakes off from its control on his life-impulses the rajasic egoism of the self-seeker and ceases to be the laborious caterer of self-interest and the pampered prisoner or toiling galley-slave of passion and desire; he slays with the light of knowledge the tamasic egoism of the ignorant or passive being, dull, unintelligent, attached to the common round of human life. Thus convinced and conscious of the essential vice of the ego-sense in all our personal action, he seeks no longer to find a means of self-correction and self-liberation in the rajasic or sattvic ego but looks above, beyond the instruments and the working of Nature, to the Master of works alone and his supreme Shakti, the supreme Prakriti. There alone all the being is pure and free and the rule of a divine Truth possible.

In this progression the first step is a certain detached superiority to the three modes of Nature. The soul is inwardly separated and free from the lower Prakriti, not involved in its coils, indifferent and glad above it. Nature continues to act in the triple round of her ancient habits,—desire, grief and joy attack the heart, the instruments fall into inaction and obscurity and weariness, light and peace come back into the heart and mind and body; but the soul stands unchanged and untouched by these changes. Observing and unmoved by the grief and desire of the lower members, smiling at their joys and their strainings, regarding and unoverpowered by the failing and the darknesses of the thought and the wildness or the weaknesses of the heart and nerves, uncomelled and unattached to the mind's illuminations and its relief and sense of ease or of power in the return of light and gladness, it throws itself into none of these things, but waits unmoved for the intimations of a higher Will and the intuitions of a greater luminous knowledge. Thus doing always, it becomes eventually free even in its nature parts from the strife of the three modes and their insufficient values and imprisoning limits. For now this lower Prakriti feels progressively a compulsion from a higher Shakti. The old habits to which it

clung receive no further sanction and begin steadily to lose their frequency and force of recurrence. At last it understands that it is called to a higher action and a better state and, however slowly, however reluctantly, with whatever initial or prolonged ill-will and stumbling ignorance, it submits, turns and prepares itself for the change.

The static freedom of the soul, no longer witness only and knower, is crowned by a dynamic transformation of the nature. The constant mixture, the uneven operation of the three modes acting upon each other in our three instruments ceases from its normal confused, troubled and improper action and movement. Another action becomes possible, commences, grows, culminates, a working more truly right, more luminous, natural and normal to the deepest divine interplay of Purusha and Prakriti although supernatural and supernormal to our present imperfect nature. The body conditioning the physical mind insists no longer on its tamasic inertia that repeats always the same ignorant movement: it becomes a passive field and instrument of a greater force and light, it responds to every demand of the spirit's force, holds and supports every variety and intensity of new divine experience. Our kinetic and dynamic vital parts, our nervous and emotional and sensational and volitional being, expand in power and admit a tireless action and a blissful enjoyment of experience, but learn at the same time to stand on a foundation of wide self-possessed and self-poised calm, sublime in force, divine in rest, neither exulting and excited nor tortured by sorrow and pain, neither harried by desire and importunate impulses nor dulled by incapacity and indolence. The intelligence, the thinking, understanding and reflective mind, renounces its sattvic limitations and opens to an essential light and peace. An infinite knowledge offers to us its splendid ranges, a knowledge not made up of mental constructions, not bound by opinion and idea or dependent on a stumbling uncertain logic and the petty support of the senses, but self-sure, authentic, all-penetrating, all-comprehending; a boundless bliss and peace, not dependent on deliverance from the hampered strenuousness of creative energy and dynamic action, not constituted by a

few limited felicities but self-existent and all-including, pour into ever-enlarging fields and through ever-widening and always more numerous channels to possess the nature. A higher force, bliss and knowledge from a source beyond mind and life and body seize on them to remould in a diviner image.

Here the disharmonies of the triple mode of our inferior existence are overpassed and there begins a greater triple mode of a divine Nature. There is no obscurity of tamas or inertia. Tamas is replaced by a divine peace and tranquil eternal repose out of which is released from a supreme matrix of calm concentration the play of action and knowledge. There is no rajasic kinesis, no desire, no joyful and sorrowful striving of action, creation and possession, no fruitful chaos of troubled impulse. Rajas is replaced by a self-possessed power and illimitable act of force, that even in its most violent intensities does not shake the immovable poise of the soul or stain the vast and profound heavens and luminous abysses of its peace. There is no constructing light of mind casting about to seize and imprison the Truth, no insecure or inactive ease. Sattwa is replaced by an illumination and a spiritual bliss identical with the depth and infinite existence of the soul and instinct with a direct and authentic knowledge that springs straight from the veiled glories of the secret Omniscience.

This is the greater consciousness into which our inferior consciousness has to be transformed, this nature of the Ignorance with its unquiet unbalanced activity of the three modes changed into this greater luminous supernature. At first we become free from the three gunas, detached, untroubled, *nistraigunya*; but this is the recovery of the native state of the soul, the self, the spirit free and watching in its motionless calm the motion of Prakriti in her force of the Ignorance. If on this basis the nature, the motion of Prakriti, is also to become free, it must be by a quiescence of action in a luminous peace and silence in which all necessary movements are done without any conscious reaction or participation or initiation of action by the mind or by the life-being, without any ripple of thought or eddy of the vital parts: it must be done under the impulsion, by the initiation, by the

working of an impersonal cosmic or a transcendent Force. A cosmic Mind, Life, Substance must act, or a pure transcendent Self-Power and Bliss other than our own personal being or its building of Nature. This is a state of freedom which can come in the Yoga of works through renunciation of ego and desire and personal initiation and the surrender of the being to the cosmic Self or to the universal Shakti; it can come in the Yoga of knowledge by the cessation of thought, the silence of the mind, the opening of the whole being to the cosmic Consciousness, to the cosmic Self, the cosmic Dynamis or to the supreme Reality; it can come in the Yoga of devotion by the surrender of the heart and the whole nature into the hands of the All-Blissful as the adored Master of our existence. But the culminating change intervenes by a more positive and dynamic transcendence: there is a transference or transmutation into a superior spiritual status, *trigunātīta*, in which we participate in a greater spiritual dynamisation; for the three lower unequal modes pass into an equal triune mode of eternal calm, light and force, the repose, kinesis, illumination of the divine Nature.

This supreme harmony cannot come except by the cessation of egoistic will and choice and act and the quiescence of our limited intelligence. The individual ego must cease to strive, the mind fall silent, the desire-will learn not to initiate. Our personality must join its source and all thought and initiation come from above. The secret Master of our activities will be slowly unveiled to us and from the security of the supreme Will and Knowledge give the sanction to the Divine Shakti who will do all works in us with a purified and exalted nature for her instrument; the individual centre of personality will be only the upholder of her works here, their recipient and channel, the reflector of her power and luminous participator in her light, joy and force. Acting it will not act and no reaction of the lower Prakriti will touch it. The transcendence of the three modes of Nature is the first condition, their transformation the decisive step of this change by which the Way of Works climbs out of the pit of narrowness of our darkened human nature into the unwalled wideness of the Truth and Light above us.

Chapter XI

The Master of the Work

THE MASTER and Mover of our works is the One, the Universal and Supreme, the Eternal and Infinite. He is the transcendent unknown or unknowable Absolute, the unexpressed and unmanifested Ineffable above us; but he is also the Self of all beings, the Master of all worlds, transcending all worlds, the Light and the Guide, the All-Beautiful and All-Blissful, the Beloved and the Lover. He is the Cosmic Spirit and all-creating Energy around us; he is the Immanent within us. All that is is he, and he is the More than all that is, and we ourselves, though we know it not, are being of his being, force of his force, conscious with a consciousness derived from his; even our mortal existence is made out of his substance and there is an immortal within us that is a spark of the Light and Bliss that are for ever. No matter whether by knowledge, works, love or any other means, to become aware of this truth of our being, to realise it, to make it effective here or elsewhere is the object of all Yoga.

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But the passage is long and the labour arduous before we can look on him with eyes that see true, and still longer and more arduous must be our endeavour if we would rebuild ourselves in his true image. The Master of the work does not reveal himself at once to the seeker. Always it is his Power that acts behind the veil, but it is manifest only when we renounce the egoism of the worker, and its direct movement increases in proportion as that renunciation becomes more and more complete. Only when our surrender to his Divine Shakti is absolute, shall we have the right to live in his absolute presence. And only then can we see our work throw itself naturally, completely and simply into the mould of the Divine Will.

There must, therefore, be stages and gradations in our approach to this perfection, as there are in the progress towards all other perfection on any plane of Nature. The vision of the full glory may come to us before, suddenly or slowly, once or often, but until the foundation is complete, it is a summary and concentrated, not a durable and all-enveloping experience, not a lasting presence. The amplitudes, the infinite contents of the Divine Revelation come afterwards and unroll gradually their power and their significance. Or, even, the steady vision can be there on the summits of our nature, but the perfect response of the lower members comes only by degrees. In all Yoga the first requisites are faith and patience. The ardours of the heart and the violences of the eager will that seek to take the kingdom of heaven by storm can have miserable reactions if they disdain to support their vehemence on these humbler and quieter auxiliaries. And in the long and difficult integral Yoga there must be an integral faith and an unshakable patience.

It is difficult to acquire or to practise this faith and steadfastness on the rough and narrow path of Yoga because of the impatience of both heart and mind and the eager but soon faltering will of our rajasic nature. The vital nature of man hungers always for the fruit of its labour and, if the fruit appears to be denied or long delayed, he loses faith in the ideal and in the guidance. For his mind judges always by the appearance of things, since that is the first ingrained habit of the intellectual reason in which he so inordinately trusts. Nothing is easier for us than to accuse God in our hearts when we suffer long or stumble in the darkness or to abjure the ideal that we have set before us. For we say, "I have trusted to the Highest and I am betrayed into suffering and sin and error." Or else, "I have staked my whole life on an idea which the stern facts of experience contradict and discourage. It would have been better to be as other men are who accept their limitations and walk on the firm ground of normal experience." In such moments — and they are sometimes frequent and long — all the higher experience is forgotten and the heart concentrates itself in its own bitterness. It is in these dark passages that it is possible to fall for good or to turn back from the divine labour.

If one has walked long and steadily in the path, the faith of the heart will remain under the fiercest adverse pressure; even if it is concealed or apparently overborne, it will take the first opportunity to re-emerge. For something higher than either heart or intellect upholds it in spite of the worst stumblings and through the most prolonged failure. But even to the experienced sadhaka such falterings or overcloudings bring a retardation of his progress and they are exceedingly dangerous to the novice. It is therefore necessary from the beginning to understand and accept the arduous difficulty of the path and to feel the need of a faith which to the intellect may seem blind, but yet is wiser than our reasoning intelligence. For this faith is a support from above; it is the brilliant shadow thrown by a secret light that exceeds the intellect and its data; it is the heart of a hidden knowledge that is not at the mercy of immediate appearances. Our faith, persevering, will be justified in its works and will be lifted and transfigured at last into the self-revelation of a divine knowledge. Always we must adhere to the injunction of the Gita, "Yoga must be continually applied with a heart free from despondent sinking." Always we must repeat to the doubting intellect the promise of the Master, "I will surely deliver thee from all sin and evil; do not grieve." At the end, the flickerings of faith will cease; for we shall see his face and feel always the Divine Presence.

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The Master of our works respects our nature even when he is transforming it; he works always through the nature and not by any arbitrary caprice. This imperfect nature of ours contains the materials of our perfection, but inchoate, distorted, misplaced, thrown together in disorder or a poor imperfect order. All this material has to be patiently perfected, purified, reorganised, new-moulded and transformed, not hacked and hewn and slain or mutilated, not obliterated by simple coercion and denial. This world and we who live in it are his creation and manifestation, and he deals with it and us in a way our narrow

and ignorant mind cannot understand unless it falls silent and opens to a divine knowledge. In our errors is the substance of a truth which labours to reveal its meaning to our groping intelligence. The human intellect cuts out the error and the truth with it and replaces it by another half-truth half-error; but the Divine Wisdom suffers our mistakes to continue until we are able to arrive at the truth hidden and protected under every false cover. Our sins are the misdirected steps of a seeking Power that aims, not at sin, but at perfection, at something that we might call a divine virtue. Often they are the veils of a quality that has to be transformed and delivered out of this ugly disguise: otherwise, in the perfect providence of things, they would not have been suffered to exist or to continue. The Master of our works is neither a blunderer nor an indifferent witness nor a dallier with the luxury of unneeded evils. He is wiser than our reason and wiser than our virtue.

Our nature is not only mistaken in will and ignorant in knowledge but weak in power; but the Divine Force is there and will lead us if we trust in it and it will use our deficiencies and our powers for the divine purpose. If we fail in our immediate aim, it is because he has intended the failure; often our failure or ill-result is the right road to a truer issue than an immediate and complete success would have put in our reach. If we suffer, it is because something in us has to be prepared for a rarer possibility of delight. If we stumble, it is to learn in the end the secret of a more perfect walking. Let us not be in too furious a haste to acquire even peace, purity and perfection. Peace must be ours, but not the peace of an empty or devastated nature or of slain or mutilated capacities incapable of unrest because we have made them incapable of intensity and fire and force. Purity must be our aim, but not the purity of a void or of a bleak and rigid coldness. Perfection is demanded of us, but not the perfection that can exist only by confining its scope within narrow limits or putting an arbitrary full stop to the ever self-extending scroll of the Infinite. Our object is to change into the divine nature, but the divine nature is not a mental or moral but a spiritual condition, difficult to achieve, difficult even to conceive by our

intelligence. The Master of our work and our Yoga knows the thing to be done, and we must allow him to do it in us by his own means and in his own manner.

The movement of the Ignorance is egoistic at its core and nothing is more difficult for us than to get rid of egoism while yet we admit personality and adhere to action in the half-light and half-force of our unfinished nature. It is easier to starve the ego by renouncing the impulse to act or to kill it by cutting away from us all movement of personality. It is easier to exalt it into self-forgetfulness immersed in a trance of peace or an ecstasy of divine Love. But our more difficult problem is to liberate the true Person and attain to a divine manhood which shall be the pure vessel of a divine force and the perfect instrument of a divine action. Step after step has to be firmly taken; difficulty after difficulty has to be entirely experienced and entirely mastered. Only the Divine Wisdom and Power can do this for us and it will do all if we yield to it in an entire faith and follow and assent to its workings with a constant courage and patience.

The first step on this long path is to consecrate all our works as a sacrifice to the Divine in us and in the world; this is an attitude of the mind and heart, not too difficult to initiate, but very difficult to make absolutely sincere and all-pervasive. The second step is to renounce attachment to the fruit of our works; for the only true, inevitable and utterly desirable fruit of sacrifice—the one thing needful—is the Divine Presence and the Divine Consciousness and Power in us, and if that is gained, all else will be added. This is a transformation of the egoistic will in our vital being, our desire-soul and desire-nature, and it is far more difficult than the other. The third step is to get rid of the central egoism and even the ego-sense of the worker. That is the most difficult transformation of all and it cannot be perfectly done if the first two steps have not been taken; but these first steps too cannot be completed unless the third comes in to crown the movement and, by the extinction of egoism, eradicates the very origin of desire. Only when the small ego-sense is rooted out from the nature can the seeker know his true person that stands above as a portion and power of the Divine

and renounce all motive-force other than the will of the Divine Shakti.

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There are gradations in this last integralising movement; for it cannot be done at once or without long approaches that bring it progressively nearer and make it at last possible. The first attitude to be taken is to cease to regard ourselves as the worker and firmly to realise that we are only one instrument of the cosmic Force. At first it is not the one Force but many cosmic forces that seem to move us; but these may be turned into feeders of the ego and this vision liberates the mind but not the rest of the nature. Even when we become aware of all as the working of one cosmic Force and of the Divine behind it, that too need not liberate. If the egoism of the worker disappears, the egoism of the instrument may replace it or else prolong it in a disguise. The life of the world has been full of instances of egoism of this kind and it can be more engrossing and enormous than any other; there is the same danger in Yoga. A man becomes a leader of men or eminent in a large or lesser circle and feels himself full of a power that he knows to be beyond his own ego-force; he may be aware of a Fate acting through him or a Will mysterious and unfathomable or a Light within of great brilliance. There are extraordinary results of his thoughts, his actions or his creative genius. He effects some tremendous destruction that clears the path for humanity or some great construction that becomes its momentary resting-place. He is a scourge or he is a bringer of light and healing, a creator of beauty or a messenger of knowledge. Or, if his work and its effects are on a lesser scale and have a limited field, still they are attended by the strong sense that he is an instrument and chosen for his mission or his labour. Men who have this destiny and these powers come easily to believe and declare themselves to be mere instruments in the hand of God or of Fate: but even in the declaration we can see that there can intrude or take refuge an intenser and more exaggerated egoism than ordinary men have the courage to assert or the strength to

house within them. And often if men of this kind speak of God, it is to erect an image of him which is really nothing but a huge shadow of themselves or their own nature, a sustaining Deific Essence of their own type of will and thought and quality and force. This magnified image of their ego is the Master whom they serve. This happens only too often in Yoga to strong but crude vital natures or minds too easily exalted when they allow ambition, pride or the desire of greatness to enter into their spiritual seeking and vitiate its purity of motive; a magnified ego stands between them and their true being and grasps for its own personal purpose the strength from a greater unseen Power, divine or undivine, acting through them of which they become vaguely or intensely aware. An intellectual perception or vital sense of a Force greater than ours and of ourselves as moved by it is not sufficient to liberate from the ego.

This perception, this sense of a greater Power in us or above and moving us, is not a hallucination or a megalomania. Those who thus feel and see have a larger sight than ordinary men and have advanced a step beyond the limited physical intelligence, but theirs is not the plenary vision or the direct experience. For, because they are not clear in mind and aware in the soul, because their awakening is more in the vital parts than into the spiritual substance of Self, they cannot be the conscious instruments of the Divine or come face to face with the Master, but are used through their fallible and imperfect nature. The most they see of the Divinity is a Fate or a cosmic Force or else they give his name to a limited Godhead or, worse, to a Titanic or demoniac Power that veils him. Even certain religious founders have erected the image of the God of a sect or a national God or a Power of terror and punishment or a Numen of sattvic love and mercy and virtue and seem not to have seen the One and Eternal. The Divine accepts the image they make of him and does his work in them through that medium, but, since the one Force is felt and acts in their imperfect nature but more intensely than in others, the motive principle of egoism too can be more intense in them than in others. An exalted rajasic or sattvic ego still holds them and stands between them and the integral Truth. Even this is

something, a beginning, although far from the true and perfect experience. A much worse thing may befall those who break something of the human bonds but have not purity and have not the knowledge, for they may become instruments, but not of the Divine; too often, using his name, they serve unconsciously his Masks and black Contraries, the Powers of Darkness.

Our nature must house the cosmic Force but not in its lower aspect or in its rajasic or sattvic movement; it must serve the universal Will, but in the light of a greater liberating knowledge. There must be no egoism of any kind in the attitude of the instrument, even when we are fully conscious of the greatness of the Force within us. Every man is knowingly or unknowingly the instrument of a universal Power and, apart from the inner Presence, there is no such essential difference between one action and another, one kind of instrumentation and another as would warrant the folly of an egoistic pride. The difference between knowledge and ignorance is a grace of the Spirit; the breath of divine Power blows where it lists and fills today one and tomorrow another with the word or the puissance. If the potter shapes one pot more perfectly than another, the merit lies not in the vessel but the maker. The attitude of our mind must not be "This is my strength" or "Behold God's power in me", but rather "A Divine Power works in this mind and body and it is the same that works in all men and in the animal, in the plant and in the metal, in conscious and living things and in things apparently inconscient and inanimate." This large view of the One working in all and of the whole world as the equal instrument of a divine action and gradual self-expression, if it becomes our entire experience, will help to eliminate all rajasic egoism out of us and even the sattvic ego-sense will begin to pass away from our nature.

The elimination of this form of ego leads straight towards the true instrumental action which is the essence of a perfect Karmayoga. For while we cherish the instrumental ego, we may pretend to ourselves that we are conscious instruments of the Divine, but in reality we are trying to make of the Divine Shakti an instrument of our own desires or our egoistic purpose. And

even if the ego is subjected but not eliminated, we may indeed be engines of the Divine Work, but we shall be imperfect tools and deflect or impair the working by our mental errors, our vital distortions or the obstinate incapacities of our physical nature. If this ego disappears, then we can truly become, not only pure instruments consciously consenting to every turn of the divine Hand that moves us, but aware of our true nature, conscious portions of the one Eternal and Infinite put out in herself for her works by the supreme Shakti.

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There is another greater step to be taken after the surrender of our instrumental ego to the Divine Shakti. It is not enough to know her as the one Cosmic Force that moves us and all creatures on the planes of mind, life and matter; for this is the lower Nature and, although the Divine Knowledge, Light, Power are there concealed and at work in this Ignorance and can break partly its veil and manifest something of their true character or descend from above and uplift these inferior workings, yet, even if we realise the One in a spiritualised mind, a spiritualised life-movement, a spiritualised body-consciousness, an imperfection remains in the dynamic parts. There is a stumbling response to the Supreme Power, a veil over the face of the Divine, a constant mixture of the Ignorance. It is only when we open to the Divine Shakti in the truth of her Force which transcends this lower Prakriti that we can be perfect instruments of her power and knowledge.

Not only liberation but perfection must be the aim of the Karmayoga. The Divine works through our nature and according to our nature; if our nature is imperfect, the work also will be imperfect, mixed, inadequate. Even it may be marred by gross errors, falsehoods, moral weaknesses, diverting influences. The work of the Divine will be done in us even then, but according to our weakness, not according to the strength and purity of its source. If ours were not an integral Yoga, if we sought only the liberation of the self within us or the motionless existence

of Purusha separated from Prakriti, this dynamic imperfection might not matter. Calm, untroubled, not depressed, not elated, refusing to accept the perfection or imperfection, fault or merit, sin or virtue as ours, perceiving that it is the modes of Nature working in the field of her modes that make this mixture, we could withdraw into the silence of the spirit and, pure, untouched, witness only the workings of Prakriti. But in an integral realisation this can only be a step on the way, not our last resting-place. For we aim at the divine realisation not only in the immobility of the Spirit, but also in the movement of Nature. And this cannot be altogether until we can feel the presence and power of the Divine in every step, motion, figure of our activities, in every turn of our will, in every thought, feeling and impulse. No doubt, we can feel that in essence even in the nature of the Ignorance, but it is the divine Power and Presence in a disguise, a diminution, an inferior figure. Ours is a greater demand, that our nature shall be a power of the Divine in the Truth of the Divine, in the Light, in the force of the eternal self-conscious Will, in the wideness of the semiperternal Knowledge.

After the removal of the veil of ego, the removal of the veil of Nature and her inferior modes that govern our mind, life and body. As soon as the limits of the ego begin to fade, we see how that veil is constituted and detect the action of cosmic Nature in us, and in or behind cosmic Nature we sense the presence of the cosmic Self and the dynamis of the world-pervading Ishwara. The Master of the instrument stands behind all this working, and even within the working there is his touch and the drive of a great guiding or disposing Influence. It is no longer ego or ego-force that we serve; we obey the World-Master and his evolutionary impulse. At each step we can say in the language of the Sanskrit verse, "Even as I am appointed by Thee seated in my heart, so, O Lord, I act." But still this action may be of two very different kinds, one only illumined, the other transformed and uplifted into a greater supernature. For we may keep on in the way of action upheld and followed by our nature when by her and her illusion of egoism we were "turned as if mounted on a machine," but now with a perfect

understanding of the mechanism and its utilisation for his world purposes by the Master of works whom we feel behind it. This is indeed as far as even many great Yogis have reached on the levels of spiritualised mind; but it need not be so always, for there is a greater supramental possibility. It is possible to rise beyond spiritualised mind and to act spontaneously in the living presence of the original divine Truth-Force of the Supreme Mother. Our motion one with her motion and merged in it, our will one with her will, our energy absolved in her energy, we shall feel her working through us as the Divine manifest in a supreme Wisdom-Power, and we shall be aware of the transformed mind, life and body only as the channels of a supreme Light and Force beyond them, infallible in its steps because transcendent and total in its knowledge. Of this Light and Force we shall not only be the recipients, channels, instruments, but become a part of it in a supreme uplifted abiding experience.

Already, before we reach this last perfection, we can have the union with the Divine in works in its extreme wideness, if not yet on its most luminous heights; for we perceive no longer merely Nature or the modes of Nature, but become conscious, in our physical movements, in our nervous and vital reactions, in our mental workings, of a Force greater than body, mind and life which takes hold of our limited instruments and drives all their motion. There is no longer the sense of ourselves moving, thinking or feeling but of that moving, feeling and thinking in us. This force that we feel is the universal Force of the Divine, which, veiled or unveiled, acting directly or permitting the use of its powers by beings in the cosmos, is the one Energy that alone exists and alone makes universal or individual action possible. For this force is the Divine itself in the body of its power; all is that, power of act, power of thought and knowledge, power of mastery and enjoyment, power of love. Conscious always and in everything, in ourselves and in others, of the Master of Works possessing, inhabiting, enjoying through this Force that is himself, becoming through it all existences and all happenings, we shall have arrived at the divine union through works and achieved by that fulfilment in works all that others have gained

through absolute devotion or through pure knowledge. But there is still another step that calls us, an ascent out of this cosmic identity into the identity of the Divine Transcendence.

The Master of our works and our being is not merely a Godhead here within us, nor is he merely a cosmic Spirit or some kind of universal Power. The world and the Divine are not one and the same thing, as a certain kind of pantheistic thinking would like to believe. The world is an emanation; it depends upon something that manifests in it but is not limited by it: the Divine is not here alone; there is a Beyond, an eternal Transcendence. The individual being also in its spiritual part is not a formation in the cosmic existence — our ego, our mind, our life, our body are that; but the immutable spirit, the imperishable soul in us has come out of the Transcendence.

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A Transcendent who is beyond all world and all Nature and yet possesses the world and its nature, who has descended with something of himself into it and is shaping it into that which as yet it is not, is the Source of our being, the Source of our works and their Master. But the seat of the Transcendent Consciousness is above in an absoluteness of divine Existence — and there too is the absolute Power, Truth, Bliss of the Eternal — of which our mentality can form no conception and of which even our greatest spiritual experience is only a diminished reflection in the spiritualised mind and heart, a faint shadow, a thin derivate. Yet proceeding from it there is a sort of golden corona of Light, Power, Bliss and Truth — a divine Truth-Consciousness as the ancient mystics called it, a Supermind, a Gnosis, with which this world of a lesser consciousness proceeding by Ignorance is in secret relation and which alone maintains it and prevents it from falling into a disintegrated chaos. The powers we are now satisfied to call gnosis, intuition or illumination are only fainter lights of which that is the full and flaming source, and between the highest human intelligence and it there lie many levels of ascending consciousness, highest mental or overmental, which

we would have to conquer before we arrived there or could bring down its greatness and glory here. Yet, however difficult, that ascent, that victory is the destiny of the human spirit and that luminous descent or bringing down of the divine Truth is the inevitable term of the troubled evolution of the earth-nature; that intended consummation is its *raison d'être*, our culminating state and the explanation of our terrestrial existence. For though the transcendental Divine is already here as the Purushottama in the secret heart of our mystery, he is veiled by many coats and disguises of his magic world-wide Yoga-Maya; it is only by the ascent and victory of the Soul here in the body that the disguises can fall away and the dynamis of the supreme Truth replace this tangled weft of half-truth that becomes creative error, this emergent Knowledge that is converted by its plunge into the unconsciousness of Matter and its slow partial return towards itself into an effective Ignorance.

For here in the world, though the Gnosis is there secretly behind existence, what acts is not the Gnosis but a magic of Knowledge-Ignorance, an incalculable yet apparently mechanical Overmind Maya. The Divine appears to us here in one view as an equal, inactive and impersonal Witness Spirit, an immobile consenting Purusha not bound by quality or Space or Time, whose support or sanction is given impartially to the play of all action and energies which the transcendent Will has once permitted and authorised to fulfil themselves in the cosmos. This Witness Spirit, this immobile Self in things, seems to will nothing and determine nothing; yet we become aware that his very passivity, his silent presence compels all things to travel even in their ignorance towards a divine goal and attracts through division towards a yet unrealised oneness. Yet no supreme infallible Divine Will seems to be there, only a widely deployed Cosmic Energy or a mechanical executive Process, Prakriti. This is one side of the cosmic Self; the other presents itself as a universal Divine, one in being, multiple in personality and power, who conveys to us, when we enter into the consciousness of his universal forces, a sense of infinite quality and will and act and world-wide knowledge and a one yet innumerable delight; for through

him we become one with all existences not only in their essence but in their play of action, see ourself in all and all in ourself, perceive all knowledge and thought and feeling as motions of the one Mind and Heart, all energy and action as kinetics of the one Will in power, all Matter and form as particles of the one Body, all personalities as projections of the one Person, all egos as deformations of the one and sole real "I" in existence. In him we no longer stand separate, but lose our active ego in the universal movement, even as by the Witness who is without qualities and for ever unattached and unentangled, we lose our static ego in the universal peace.

And yet there remains a contradiction between these two terms, the aloof divine Silence and the all-embracing divine Action, which we may heal in ourselves in a certain manner, in a certain high degree which seems to us complete, yet is not complete because it cannot altogether transform and conquer. A universal Peace, Light, Power, Bliss is ours, but its effective expression is not that of the Truth-Consciousness, the divine Gnosis, but still, though wonderfully freed, uplifted and illumined, supports only the present self-expression of the Cosmic Spirit and does not transform, as would a transcendental Descent, the ambiguous symbols and veiled mysteries of a world of Ignorance. Ourselves are free, but the earth-consciousness remains in bondage; only a further transcendental ascent and descent can entirely heal the contradiction and transform and deliver.

For there is yet a third intensely close and personal aspect of the Master of Works which is a key to his sublimest hidden mystery and ecstasy; for he detaches from the secret of the hidden Transcendence and the ambiguous display of the cosmic Movement an individual Power of the Divine that can mediate between the two and bridge our passage from the one to the other. In this aspect the transcendent and universal person of the Divine conforms itself to our individualised personality and accepts a personal relation with us, at once identified with us as our supreme Self and yet close and different as our Master, Friend, Lover, Teacher, our Father and our Mother, our Playmate

in the great world-game who has disguised himself throughout as friend and enemy, helper and opponent and, in all relations and in all workings that affect us, has led our steps towards our perfection and our release. It is through this more personal manifestation that we are admitted to some possibility of the complete transcendental experience; for in him we meet the One not merely in a liberated calm and peace, not merely with a passive or active submission in our works or through the mystery of union with a universal Knowledge and Power filling and guiding us, but with an ecstasy of divine Love and divine Delight that shoots up beyond silent Witness and active World-Power to some positive divination of a greater beatific secret. For it is not so much knowledge leading to some ineffable Absolute, not so much works lifting us beyond world-process to the originating supreme Knower and Master, but rather this thing most intimate to us, yet at present most obscure, which keeps for us wrapped in its passionate veil the deep and rapturous secret of the transcendent Godhead and some absolute positiveness of its perfect Being, its all-concentrating Bliss, its mystic Ananda.

But the individual relation with the Divine does not always or from the beginning bring into force a widest enlargement or a highest self-exceeding. At first this Godhead close to our being or immanent within us can be felt fully only in the scope of our personal nature and experience, a Leader and Master, a Guide and Teacher, a Friend and Lover, or else a spirit, power or presence, constituting and uplifting our upward and enlarging movement by the force of his intimate reality inhabiting the heart or presiding over our nature from above even our highest intelligence. It is our personal evolution that is his preoccupation, a personal relation with him that is our joy and fulfilment, the building of our nature into his divine image that is our self-finding and perfection. The outside world seems to exist only as a field for this growth and a provider of materials or of helping and opposing forces for its successive stages. Our works done in that world are his works, but even when they serve some temporary universal end, their main purpose for us is to make outwardly dynamic or give inward power to our relations with

this immanent Divine. Many seekers ask for no more or see the continuation and fulfilment of this spiritual flowering only in heavens beyond; the union is consummated and made perpetual in an eternal dwelling-place of his perfection, joy and beauty. But this is not enough for the integral seeker; however intense and beautiful, a personal isolated achievement cannot be his sole aim or his entire experience. A time must come when the personal opens out into the universal; our very individuality, spiritual, mental, vital, physical even, becomes universalised: it is seen as a power of his universal force and cosmic spirit, or else it contains the universe in that ineffable wideness which comes to the individual consciousness when it breaks its bonds and flows upward towards the Transcendent and on every side into the Infinite.

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In a Yoga lived entirely on the spiritualised mental plane it is possible and even usual for these three fundamental aspects of the Divine — the Individual or Immanent, the Cosmic and the Transcendent — to stand out as separate realisations. Each by itself then appears sufficient to satisfy the yearning of the seeker. Alone with the personal Divine in the inner heart's illumined secret chamber, he can build his being into the Beloved's image and ascend out of fallen Nature to dwell with him in some heaven of the Spirit. Absolved in the cosmic wideness, released from ego, his personality reduced to a point of working of the universal Force, himself calm, liberated, deathless in universality, motionless in the Witness Self even while outspread without limit in unending Space and Time, he can enjoy in the world the freedom of the Timeless. One-pointed towards some ineffable Transcendence, casting away his personality, shedding from him the labour and trouble of the universal Dynamis, he can escape into an inexpressible Nirvana, annul all things in an intolerant exaltation of flight into the Incommunicable.

But none of these achievements is enough for one who seeks the wide completeness of an integral Yoga. An individual salvation is not enough for him; for he finds himself opening to

a cosmic consciousness which far exceeds by its breadth and vastness the narrower intensity of a limited individual fulfilment, and its call is imperative; driven by that immense compulsion, he must break through all separative boundaries, spread himself in world-Nature, contain the universe. Above too, there is urgent upon him a dynamic realisation pressing from the Supreme upon this world of beings, and only some encompassing and exceeding of the cosmic consciousness can release into manifestation here that yet unlavished splendour. But the cosmic consciousness too is not sufficient; for it is not all the Divine Reality, not integral. There is a divine secret behind personality that he must discover; there, waiting in it to be delivered here into Time, stands the mystery of the embodiment of the Transcendence. In the cosmic consciousness there remains at the end a hiatus, an unequal equation of a highest Knowledge that can liberate but not effectuate with a Power seeming to use a limited Knowledge or masking itself with a surface Ignorance that can create but creates imperfection or a perfection transient, limited and in fetters. On one side there is a free undynamic Witness and on the other side a bound Executrix of action who has not been given all the means of action. The reconciliation of these companions and opposites seems to be reserved, postponed, held back in an Unmanifest still beyond us. But, again, a mere escape into some absolute Transcendence leaves personality unfulfilled and the universal action inconclusive and cannot satisfy the integral seeker. He feels that the Truth that is for ever is a Power that creates as well as a stable Existence; it is not a Power solely of illusory or ignorant manifestation. The eternal Truth can manifest its truths in Time; it can create in Knowledge and not only in Inconscience and Ignorance. A divine Descent no less than an ascent to the Divine is possible; there is a prospect of the bringing down of a future perfection and a present deliverance. As his knowledge widens, it becomes for him more and more evident that it was this for which the Master of Works cast down the soul within him here as a spark of his fire into the darkness, that it might grow there into a centre of the Light that is for ever.

The Transcendent, the Universal, the Individual are three

powers overarching, underlying and penetrating the whole manifestation; this is the first of the Trinities. In the unfolding of consciousness also, these are the three fundamental terms and none of them can be neglected if we would have the experience of the whole Truth of existence. Out of the individual we wake into a vaster freer cosmic consciousness; but out of the universal too with its complex of forms and powers we must emerge by a still greater self-exceeding into a consciousness without limits that is founded on the Absolute. And yet in this ascension we do not really abolish but take up and transfigure what we seem to leave; for there is a height where the three live eternally in each other, on that height they are blissfully joined in a nodus of their harmonised oneness. But that summit is above the highest and largest spiritualised mentality, even if some reflection of it can be experienced there; mind, to attain to it, to live there, must exceed itself and be transformed into a supramental gnostic light, power and substance. In this lower diminished consciousness a harmony can indeed be attempted, but it must always remain imperfect; a coordination is possible, not a simultaneous fused fulfilment. An ascent out of the mind is, for any greater realisation, imperative. Or else, there must be, with the ascent or consequent to it, a dynamic descent of the self-existent Truth that exists always uplifted in its own light above Mind, eternal, prior to the manifestation of Life and Matter.

For Mind is Maya, *sat-asat*: there is a field of embrace of the true and the false, the existent and the non-existent, and it is in that ambiguous field that Mind seems to reign; but even in its own reign it is in truth a diminished consciousness, it is not part of the original and supremely originating power of the Eternal. Even if Mind is able to reflect some image of essential Truth in its substance, yet the dynamic force and action of Truth appears in it always broken and divided. All Mind can do is to piece together the fragments or deduce a unity; truth of Mind is only a half-truth or a portion of a puzzle. Mental knowledge is always relative, partial and inconclusive, and its outgoing action and creation come out still more confused in its steps or precise only in narrow limits and by imperfect piecings together. Even

in this diminished consciousness the Divine manifests as a Spirit in Mind, just as he moves as a Spirit in Life or dwells still more obscurely as a Spirit in Matter; but not here is his full dynamic revelation, not here the perfect identities of the Eternal. Only when we cross the border into a larger luminous consciousness and self-aware substance where divine Truth is a native and not a stranger, will there be revealed to us the Master of our existence in the imperishable integral truth of his being and his powers and his workings. Only there, too, will his works in us assume the flawless movement of his unfailing supramental purpose.

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But that is the end of a long and difficult journey, and the Master of works does not wait till then to meet the seeker on the path of Yoga and put his secret or half-shown Hand upon him and upon his life and actions. Already he was there in the world as the Originator and Receiver of works behind the dense veils of the Inconscient, disguised in force of Life, visible to the Mind through symbol godheads and figures. It may well be in these disguises that he first meets the soul destined to the way of the integral Yoga. Or even, wearing still vaguer masks, he may be conceived by us as an Ideal or mentalised as an abstract Power of Love, Good, Beauty or Knowledge; or, as we turn our feet towards the Way, he may come to us veiled as the call of Humanity or a Will in things that drives towards the deliverance of the world from the grasp of Darkness and Falsehood and Death and Suffering—the great quaternary of the Ignorance. Then, after we have entered the path, he envelops us with his wide and mighty liberating Impersonality or moves near to us with the face and form of a personal Godhead. In and around us we feel a Power that upholds and protects and cherishes; we hear a Voice that guides; a conscious Will greater than ourselves rules us; an imperative Force moves our thought and actions and our very body; an ever-widening Consciousness assimilates ours, a living Light of Knowledge lights all within, or a Beatitude invades us; a Mightiness presses from above, concrete, massive

and overpowering, and penetrates and pours itself into the very stuff of our nature; a Peace sits there, a Light, a Bliss, a Strength, a Greatness. Or there are relations, personal, intimate as life itself, sweet as love, encompassing like the sky, deep like deep waters. A Friend walks at our side; a Lover is with us in our heart's secrecy; a Master of the Work and the Ordeal points our way; a Creator of things uses us as his instrument; we are in the arms of the eternal Mother. All these more seizable aspects in which the Ineffable meets us are truths and not mere helpful symbols or useful imaginations; but as we progress, their first imperfect formulations in our experience yield to a larger vision of the one Truth that is behind them. At each step their mere mental masks are shed and they acquire a larger, a profounder, a more intimate significance. At last on the supramental borders all these Godheads combine their forces and, without at all ceasing to be, coalesce together. On this path the Divine Aspects are not revealed in order to be cast away; they are not temporary spiritual conveniences or compromises with an illusory Consciousness or dream-figures mysteriously cast upon us by the incommunicable superconscience of the Absolute; on the contrary, their power increases and their absoluteness reveals itself as they draw near to the Truth from which they issue.

For that now superconscious Transcendence is a Power as well as an Existence. The supramental Transcendence is not a vacant Wonder, but an Inexpressible which contains for ever all essential things that have issued from it; it holds them there in their supreme everlasting reality and their own characteristic absolutes. The diminution, division, degradation that create here the sense of an unsatisfactory puzzle, a mystery of Maya, themselves diminish and fall from us in our ascension, and the Divine Powers assume their real forms and appear more and more as the terms of a Truth in process of realisation here. A soul of the Divine is here slowly awaking out of its involution and concealment in the material Inconscience. The Master of our works is not a Master of illusions, but a supreme Reality who is working out his self-expressive realities delivered slowly from the cocoons of the Ignorance in which for the purposes

of an evolutionary manifestation they were allowed for a while to slumber. For the supramental Transcendence is not a thing absolutely apart and unconnected with our present existence. It is a greater Light out of which all this has come for the adventure of the Soul lapsing into the Inconscience and emerging out of it, and, while that adventure proceeds, it waits superconscious above our minds till it can become conscious in us. Hereafter it will unveil itself and by the unveiling reveal to us all the significance of our own being and our works; for it will disclose the Divine whose fuller manifestation in the world will release and accomplish that covert significance.

In that disclosure the Transcendent Divine will be more and more made known to us as the Supreme Existence and the Perfect Source of all that we are; but equally we shall see him as a Master of works and creation prepared to pour out more and more of himself into the field of his manifestation. The cosmic consciousness and its action will appear no longer as a huge regulated Chance, but as a field of the manifestation; there the Divine is seen as a presiding and pervading Cosmic Spirit who receives all out of the Transcendence and develops what descends into forms that are now an opaque disguise or a baffling half-disguise, but destined to be a transparent revelation. The individual consciousness will recover its true sense and action; for it is the form of a Soul sent out from the Supreme and, in spite of all appearances, a nucleus or nebula in which the Divine Mother-Force is at work for the victorious embodiment of the timeless and formless Divine in Time and Matter. This will reveal itself slowly to our vision and experience as the will of the Master of works and as their own ultimate significance, which alone gives to world-creation and to our own action in the world a light and a meaning. To recognise that and to strive towards its effectuation is the whole burden of the Way of Divine Works in the integral Yoga.

Chapter XII

The Divine Work

ONE QUESTION remains for the seeker upon the way of works, when his quest is or seems to have come to its natural end,—whether any work or what work is left for the soul after liberation and to what purpose? Equality has been seated in the nature or governs the whole nature; there has been achieved a radical deliverance from the ego-idea, from the pervading ego-sense, from all feelings and impulsions of the ego and its self-will and desires. The entire self-consecration has been made not only in thought and heart but in all the complexities of the being. A complete purity or transcendence of the three gunas has been harmoniously established. The soul has seen the Master of its works and lives in his presence or is consciously contained in his being or is unified with him or feels him in the heart or above and obeys his dictates. It has known its true being and cast away the veil of the Ignorance. What work then remains for the worker in man and with what motive, to what end, in what spirit will it be done?

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There is one answer with which we are very familiar in India; no work at all remains, for the rest is quiescence. When the soul can live in the eternal presence of the Supreme or when it is unified with the Absolute, the object of our existence in the world, if it can be said to have an object, at once ceases. Man, released from the curse of self-division and the curse of Ignorance, is released too from that other affliction, the curse of works. All action would then be a derogation from the supreme state and a return into the Ignorance. This attitude towards life is supported by an idea founded on the error of the vital nature to which action is dictated only by one or all of three inferior

motives, necessity, restless instinct and impulse or desire. The instinct or impulse quiescent, desire extinguished, what place is there for works? Some mechanical necessity might remain but no other, and even that would cease for ever with the fall of the body. But after all, even so, while life remains, action is unavoidable. Mere thinking or, in the absence of thought, mere living is itself an act and a cause of many effects. All existence in the world is work, force, potency, and has a dynamic effect in the whole by its mere presence, even the inertia of the clod, even the silence of the immobile Buddha on the verge of Nirvana. There is the question only of the manner of the action, the instruments that are used or that act of themselves, and the spirit and knowledge of the worker. For in reality, no man works, but Nature works through him for the self-expression of a Power within that proceeds from the Infinite. To know that and live in the presence and in the being of the Master of Nature, free from desire and the illusion of personal impulsion, is the one thing needful. That and not the bodily cessation of action is the true release; for the bondage of works at once ceases. A man might sit still and motionless for ever and yet be as much bound to the Ignorance as the animal or the insect. But if he can make this greater consciousness dynamic within him, then all the work of all the worlds could pass through him and yet he would remain at rest, absolute in calm and peace, free from all bondage. Action in the world is given us first as a means for our self-development and self-fulfilment; but even if we reached a last possible divine self-completeness, it would still remain as a means for the fulfilment of the divine intention in the world and of the larger universal self of which each being is a portion — a portion that has come down with it from the Transcendence.

In a certain sense, when his Yoga has reached a certain culmination, works cease for a man; for he has no further personal necessity of works, no sense of works being done by him; but there is no need to flee from action or to take refuge in a blissful inertia. For now he acts as the Divine Existence acts without any binding necessity and without any compelling ignorance. Even in doing works *he* does not work at all; he undertakes

no personal initiative. It is the Divine Shakti that works in him through his nature; his action develops through the spontaneity of a supreme Force by which his instruments are possessed, of which he is a part, with whose will his will is identical and his power is her power. The spirit within him contains, supports and watches this action; it presides over it in knowledge but is not glued or clamped to the work by attachment or need, is not bound by desire of its fruit, is not enslaved to any movement or impulse.

It is a common error to suppose that action is impossible or at least meaningless without desire. If desire ceases, we are told, action also must cease. But this, like other too simply comprehensive generalisations, is more attractive to the cutting and defining mind than true. The major part of the work done in the universe is accomplished without any interference of desire; it proceeds by the calm necessity and spontaneous law of Nature. Even man constantly does work of various kinds by a spontaneous impulse, intuition, instinct or acts in obedience to a natural necessity and law of forces without either mental planning or the urge of a conscious vital volition or emotional desire. Often enough his act is contrary to his intention or his desire; it proceeds out of him in subjection to a need or compulsion, in submission to an impulse, in obedience to a force in him that pushes for self-expression or in conscious pursuance of a higher principle. Desire is an additional lure to which Nature has given a great part in the life of animated beings in order to produce a certain kind of rajasic action necessary for her intermediate ends; but it is not her sole or even her chief engine. It has its great use while it endures: it helps us to rise out of inertia, it contradicts many tamasic forces which would otherwise inhibit action. But the seeker who has advanced far on the way of works has passed beyond this intermediate stage in which desire is a helpful engine. Its push is no longer indispensable for his action, but is rather a terrible hindrance and source of stumbling, inefficiency and failure. Others are obliged to obey a personal choice or motive, but he has to learn to act with an impersonal or a universal mind or as a part or an instrument of an infinite Person. A

calm indifference, a joyful impartiality or a blissful response to a divine Force, whatever its dictate, is the condition of his doing any effective work or undertaking any worth-while action. Not desire, not attachment must drive him, but a Will that stirs in a divine peace, a Knowledge that moves from the transcendent Light, a glad Impulse that is a force from the supreme Ananda.

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In an advanced stage of the Yoga it is indifferent to the seeker, in the sense of any personal preference, what action he shall do or not do; even whether he shall act or not, is not decided by his personal choice or pleasure. Always he is moved to do whatever is in consonance with the Truth or whatever the Divine demands through his nature. A false conclusion is sometimes drawn from this that the spiritual man, accepting the position in which Fate or God or his past Karma has placed him, content to work in the field and cadre of the family, clan, caste, nation, occupation which are his by birth and circumstance, will not and even perhaps ought not to make any movement to exceed them or to pursue any great mundane end. Since he has really no work to do, since he has only to use works, no matter what works, as long as he is in the body in order to arrive at liberation or, having arrived, only to obey the supreme Will and do whatever it dictates, the actual field given him is sufficient for the purpose. Once free, he has only to continue working in the sphere assigned to him by Fate and circumstances till the great hour arrives when he can at last disappear into the Infinite. To insist on any particular end or to work for some great mundane object is to fall into the illusion of works; it is to entertain the error that terrestrial life has an intelligible intention and contains objects worthy of pursuit. The great theory of Illusion, which is a practical denial of the Divine in the world, even when in idea it acknowledges the Presence, is once more before us. But the Divine is here in the world,—not only in status but in dynamis, not only as a spiritual self and presence but as power, force, energy,—and therefore a divine work in the world is possible.

There is no narrow principle, no field of cabined action that can be imposed on the Karmayogin as his rule or his province. This much is true that every kind of works, whether small to man's imagination or great, petty in scope or wide, can be equally used in the progress towards liberation or for self-discipline. This much is also true that after liberation a man may dwell in any sphere of life and in any kind of action and fulfil there his existence in the Divine. According as he is moved by the Spirit, he may remain in the sphere assigned to him by birth and circumstances or break that framework and go forth to an untrammelled action which shall be the fitting body of his greatness consciousness and higher knowledge. To the outward eyes of men the inner liberation may make no apparent difference in his outward acts; or, on the contrary, the freedom and infinity within may translate itself into an outward dynamic working so large and new that all regards are drawn by this novel force. If such be the intention of the Supreme within him, the liberated soul may be content with a subtle and limited action within the old human surroundings which will in no way seek to change their outward appearance. But it may too be called to a work which will not only alter the forms and sphere of its own external life but, leaving nothing around it unchanged or unaffected, create a new world or a new order.

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A prevalent idea would persuade us that the sole aim of liberation is to secure for the individual soul freedom from physical rebirth in the unstable life of the universe. If this freedom is once assured, there is no further work for it in life here or elsewhere or only that which the continued existence of the body demands or the unfulfilled effects of past lives necessitate. This little, rapidly exhausted or consumed by the fire of Yoga, will cease with the departure of the released soul from the body. The aim of escape from rebirth, now long fixed in the Indian mentality as the highest object of the soul, has replaced the enjoyment of a heaven beyond fixed in the mentality of the devout by many religions

as their divine lure. Indian religion also upheld that earlier and lower call when the gross external interpretation of the Vedic hymns was the dominant creed, and the dualists in later India also have kept that as part of their supreme spiritual motive. Undoubtedly a release from the limitations of the mind and body into an eternal peace, rest, silence of the Spirit, makes a higher appeal than the offer of a heaven of mental joys or eternised physical pleasures, but this too after all is a lure; its insistence on the mind's world-weariness, the life-being's shrinking from the adventure of birth, strikes a chord of weakness and cannot be the supreme motive. The desire of personal salvation, however high its form, is an outcome of ego; it rests on the idea of our own individuality and its desire for its personal good or welfare, its longing for a release from suffering or its cry for the extinction of the trouble of becoming and makes that the supreme aim of our existence. To rise beyond the desire of personal salvation is necessary for the complete rejection of this basis of ego. If we seek the Divine, it should be for the sake of the Divine and for nothing else, because that is the supreme call of our being, the deepest truth of the spirit. The pursuit of liberation, of the soul's freedom, of the realisation of our true and highest self, of union with the Divine, is justified only because it is the highest law of our nature, because it is the attraction of that which is lower in us to that which is highest, because it is the Divine Will in us. That is its sufficient justification and its one truest reason; all other motives are excrescences, minor or incidental truths or useful lures which the soul must abandon, the moment their utility has passed and the state of oneness with the Supreme and with all beings has become our normal consciousness and the bliss of that state our spiritual atmosphere.

Often, we see this desire of personal salvation overcome by another attraction which also belongs to the higher turn of our nature and which indicates the essential character of the action the liberated soul must pursue. It is that which is implied in the great legend of the Amitabha Buddha who turned away when his spirit was on the threshold of Nirvana and took the vow never to cross it while a single being remained in the sorrow

and the Ignorance. It is that which underlies the sublime verse of the Bhagavata Purana, "I desire not the supreme state with all its eight siddhis nor the cessation of rebirth; may I assume the sorrow of all creatures who suffer and enter into them so that they may be made free from grief." It is that which inspires a remarkable passage in a letter of Swami Vivekananda. "I have lost all wish for my salvation," wrote the great Vedantin, "may I be born again and again and suffer thousands of miseries so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum-total of all souls,— and above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species is the special object of my worship. He who is the high and low, the saint and the sinner, the god and the worm, Him worship, the visible, the knowable, the real, the omnipresent; break all other idols. In whom there is neither past life nor future birth, nor death nor going nor coming, in whom we always have been and always will be one, Him worship; break all other idols."

The last two sentences contain indeed the whole gist of the matter. The true salvation or the true freedom from the chain of rebirth is not the rejection of terrestrial life or the individual's escape by a spiritual self-annihilation, even as the true renunciation is not the mere physical abandonment of family and society; it is the inner identification with the Divine in whom there is no limitation of past life and future birth but instead the eternal existence of the unborn Soul. He who is free inwardly, even doing actions, does nothing at all, says the Gita; for it is Nature that works in him under the control of the Lord of Nature. Equally, even if he assumes a hundred times the body, he is free from any chain of birth or mechanical wheel of existence since he lives in the unborn and undying spirit and not in the life of the body. Therefore attachment to the escape from rebirth is one of the idols which, whoever keeps, the sadhaka of the integral Yoga must break and cast away from him. For his Yoga is not limited to the realisation of the Transcendent beyond all world by the individual soul; it embraces also the realisation of the Universal, "the sum-total of all souls", and cannot therefore be confined to the movement of a personal salvation and escape.

Even in his transcendence of cosmic limitations he is still one with all in God; a divine work remains for him in the universe.

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That work cannot be fixed by any mind-made rule or human standard; for his consciousness has moved away from human law and limits and passed into the divine liberty, away from government by the external and transient into the self-rule of the inner and eternal, away from the binding forms of the finite into the free self-determination of the Infinite. "Howsoever he lives and acts," says the Gita, "he lives and acts in Me." The rules which the intellect of men lays down cannot apply to the liberated soul,— by the external criteria and tests which their mental associations and prejudgments prescribe, such a one cannot be judged; he is outside the narrow jurisdiction of these fallible tribunals. It is immaterial whether he wears the garb of the ascetic or lives the full life of the householder; whether he spends his days in what men call holy works or in the many-sided activities of the world; whether he devotes himself to the direct leading of men to the Light like Buddha, Christ or Shankara or governs kingdoms like Janaka or stands before men like Sri Krishna as a politician or a leader of armies; what he eats or drinks; what are his habits or his pursuits; whether he fails or succeeds; whether his work be one of construction or of destruction; whether he supports or restores an old order or labours to replace it by a new; whether his associates are those whom men delight to honour or those whom their sense of superior righteousness outcastes and reprobates; whether his life and deeds are approved by his contemporaries or he is condemned as a misleader of men and a fomenter of religious, moral or social heresies. He is not governed by the judgments of men or the laws laid down by the ignorant; he obeys an inner voice and is moved by an unseen Power. His real life is within and this is its description that he lives, moves and acts in God, in the Divine, in the Infinite.

But if his action is governed by no external rule, one rule it will observe that is not external; it will be dictated by no personal

desire or aim, but will be a part of a conscious and eventually a well-ordered because self-ordered divine working in the world. The Gita declares that the action of the liberated man must be directed not by desire, but towards the keeping together of the world, its government, guidance, impulsion, maintenance in the path appointed to it. This injunction has been interpreted in the sense that the world being an illusion in which most men must be kept, since they are unfit for liberation, he must so act outwardly as to cherish in them an attachment to their customary works laid down for them by the social law. If so, it would be a poor and petty rule and every noble heart would reject it to follow rather the divine vow of Amitabha Buddha, the sublime prayer of the Bhagavata, the passionate aspiration of Vivekananda. But if we accept rather the view that the world is a divinely guided movement of Nature emerging in man towards God and that this is the work in which the Lord of the Gita declares that he is ever occupied although he himself has nothing ungained that he has yet to win, then a deep and true sense will appear for this great injunction. To participate in that divine work, to live for God in the world will be the rule of the Karmayogin; to live for God in the world and therefore so to act that the Divine may more and more manifest himself and the world go forward by whatever way of its obscure pilgrimage and move nearer to the divine ideal.

How he shall do this, in what particular way, can be decided by no general rule. It must develop or define itself from within; the decision lies between God and our self, the Supreme Self and the individual self that is the instrument of the work; even before liberation, it is from the inner self, as soon as we become conscious of it, that there rises the sanction, the spiritually determined choice. It is altogether from within that must come the knowledge of the work that has to be done. There is no particular work, no law or form or outwardly fixed or invariable way of works which can be said to be that of the liberated being. The phrase used in the Gita to express this work that has to be done has indeed been interpreted in the sense that we must do our duty without regard to the fruit. But this is a conception born of European culture which is ethical rather than spiritual and

external rather than inwardly profound in its concepts. No such general thing as duty exists; we have only duties, often in conflict with each other, and these are determined by our environment, our social relations, our external status in life. They are of great value in training the immature moral nature and setting up a standard which discourages the action of selfish desire. It has already been said that so long as the seeker has no inner light, he must govern himself by the best light he has, and duty, a principle, a cause are among the standards he may temporarily erect and observe. But for all that, duties are external things, not stuff of the soul and cannot be the ultimate standard of action in this path. It is the duty of the soldier to fight when called upon, even to fire upon his own kith and kin; but such a standard or any akin to it cannot be imposed on the liberated man. On the other hand, to love or have compassion, to obey the highest truth of our being, to follow the command of the Divine are not duties; these things are a law of the nature as it rises towards the Divine, an outflowing of action from a soul-state, a high reality of the spirit. The action of the liberated doer of works must be even such an outflowing from the soul; it must come to him or out of him as a natural result of his spiritual union with the Divine and not be formed by an edifying construction of the mental thought and will, the practical reason or the social sense. In the ordinary life a personal, social or traditional constructed rule, standard or ideal is the guide; once the spiritual journey has begun, this must be replaced by an inner and outer rule or way of living necessary for our self-discipline, liberation and perfection, a way of living proper to the path we follow or enjoined by the spiritual guide and master, the Guru, or else dictated by a Guide within us. But in the last state of the soul's infinity and freedom all outward standards are replaced or laid aside and there is left only a spontaneous and integral obedience to the Divine with whom we are in union and an action spontaneously fulfilling the integral spiritual truth of our being and nature.



It is this deeper sense in which we must accept the dictum of the Gita that action determined and governed by the nature must be our law of works. It is not, certainly, the superficial temperament or the character or habitual impulses that are meant, but in the literal sense of the Sanskrit word our “own being”, our essential nature, the divine stuff of our souls. Whatever springs from this root or flows from these sources is profound, essential, right; the rest — opinions, impulses, habits, desires — may be merely surface formations or casual vagaries of the being or impositions from outside. They shift and change, but this remains constant. It is not the executive forms taken by Nature in us that are ourselves or the abidingly constant and expressive shape of ourselves; it is the spiritual being in us — and this includes the soul-becoming of it — that persists through time in the universe.

We cannot, however, easily distinguish this true inner law of our being; it is kept screened from us so long as the heart and intellect remain unpurified from egoism: till then we follow superficial and impermanent ideas, impulses, desires, suggestions and impositions of all kinds from our environment or work out formations of our temporary mental, vital, physical personality — that passing experimental and structural self which has been made for us by an interaction between our being and the pressure of a lower cosmic Nature. In proportion as we are purified, the true being within declares itself more clearly; our will is less entangled in suggestions from outside or shut up in our own superficial mental constructions. Egoism renounced, the nature purified, action will come from the soul’s dictates, from the depths or the heights of the spirit, or it will be openly governed by the Lord who was all the time seated secretly within our hearts. The supreme and final word of the Gita for the Yогin is that he should leave all conventional formulas of belief and action, all fixed and external rules of conduct, all constructions of the outward or surface Nature, *dharma*s, and take refuge in the Divine alone. Free from desire and attachment, one with all beings, living in the infinite Truth and Purity and acting out of the profoundest deeps of his inner consciousness, governed by his immortal, divine and highest Self, all his works will be

directed by the Power within through that essential spirit and nature in us which, knowing, warring, working, loving, serving, is always divine, towards the fulfilment of God in the world, an expression of the Eternal in Time.

A divine action arising spontaneously, freely, infallibly from the light and force of our spiritual self in union with the Divine is the last state of this integral Yoga of Works. The truest reason why we must seek liberation is not to be delivered, individually, from the sorrow of the world, though that deliverance too will be given to us, but that we may be one with the Divine, the Supreme, the Eternal. The truest reason why we must seek perfection, a supreme status, purity, knowledge, strength, love, capacity, is not that personally we may enjoy the divine Nature or be even as the gods, though that enjoyment too will be ours, but because this liberation and perfection are the divine Will in us, the highest truth of our self in Nature, the always intended goal of a progressive manifestation in the universe. The divine Nature, free and perfect and blissful, must be manifested in the individual in order that it may manifest in the world. Even in the Ignorance the individual lives really in the universal and for the universal Purpose, for in the very act of pursuing the purposes and desires of his ego, he is forced by Nature to contribute by his egoistic action to her work and purpose in the worlds; but it is without conscious intention, imperfectly done, and his contribution is to her half-evolved and half-conscient, her imperfect and crude movement. To escape from ego and be united with the Divine is at once the liberation and the consummation of his individuality; so liberated, purified, perfected, the individual — the divine soul — lives consciously and entirely, as was from the first intended, in and for the cosmic and transcendent Divine and for his Will in the universe.

In the Way of Knowledge we may arrive at a point where we can leap out of personality and universe, escape from all thought and will and works and all way of Nature and, absorbed and taken up into Eternity, plunge into the Transcendence; that, though not obligatory on the God-knower, may be the soul's decision, the turn pursued by the self within us. In the Way of

Devotion we may reach through an intensity of adoration and joy union with the supreme All-Beloved and remain eternally in the ecstasy of his presence, absorbed in him alone, intimately in one world of bliss with him; that then may be our being's impulsion, its spiritual choice. But in the Way of Works another prospect opens; for travelling on that path, we can enter into liberation and perfection by becoming of one law and power of nature with the Eternal; we are identified with him in our will and dynamic self as much as in our spiritual status; a divine way of works is the natural outcome of this union, a divine living in a spiritual freedom the body of its self-expression. In the Integral Yoga these three lines of approach give up their exclusions, meet and coalesce or spring out of each other; liberated from the mind's veil over the self, we live in the Transcendence, enter by the adoration of the heart into the oneness of a supreme love and bliss, and all our forces of being uplifted into the one Force, our will and works surrendered into the one Will and Power, assume the dynamic perfection of the divine Nature.

Appendix to Part I

The following chapter was left unfinished. It was not included in the edition of *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Part I, that was published during Sri Aurobindo's lifetime.

Chapter XIII

The Supermind and the Yoga of Works

AN INTEGRAL Yoga includes as a vital and indispensable element in its total and ultimate aim the conversion of the whole being into a higher spiritual consciousness and a larger divine existence. Our parts of will and action, our parts of knowledge, our thinking being, our emotional being, our being of life, all our self and nature must seek the Divine, enter into the Infinite, unite with the Eternal. But man's present nature is limited, divided, unequal,—it is easiest for him to concentrate in the strongest part of his being and follow a definite line of progress proper to his nature: only rare individuals have the strength to take a large immediate plunge straight into the sea of the Divine Infinity. Some therefore must choose as a starting-point a concentration in thought or contemplation or the mind's one-pointedness to find the eternal reality of the Self in them; others can more easily withdraw into the heart to meet there the Divine, the Eternal: yet others are predominantly dynamic and active; for these it is best to centre themselves in the will and enlarge their being through works. United with the Self and source of all by their surrender of their will into its infinity, guided in their works by the secret Divinity within or surrendered to the Lord of the cosmic action as the master and mover of all their energies of thought, feeling, act, becoming by this enlargement of being selfless and universal, they can reach by works some first fullness of a spiritual status. But the path, whatever its point of starting, must debouch into a vaster dominion; it must proceed in the end through a totality of integrated knowledge, emotion, will of dynamic action, perfection of the being and the entire nature. In the supramental consciousness, on the level of the supramental existence this integration becomes consummate;

there knowledge, will, emotion, the perfection of the self and the dynamic nature rise each to its absolute of itself and all to their perfect harmony and fusion with each other, to a divine integrality, a divine perfection. For the supermind is a Truth-Consciousness in which the Divine Reality, fully manifested, no longer works with the instrumentation of the Ignorance; a truth of status of being which is absolute becomes dynamic in a truth of energy and activity of the being which is self-existent and perfect. Every movement there is a movement of the self-aware truth of Divine Being and every part is in entire harmony with the whole. Even the most limited and finite action is in the Truth-Consciousness a movement of the Eternal and Infinite and partakes of the inherent absoluteness and perfection of the Eternal and Infinite. An ascent into the supramental Truth not only raises our spiritual and essential consciousness to that height but brings about a descent of this Light and Truth into all our being and all our parts of nature. All then becomes part of the Divine Truth, an element and means of the supreme union and oneness; this ascent and descent must be therefore an ultimate aim of this Yoga.

A union with the Divine Reality of our being and all being is the one essential object of the Yoga. It is necessary to keep this in mind; we must remember that our Yoga is not undertaken for the sake of the acquisition of supermind itself but for the sake of the Divine; we seek the supermind not for its own joy and greatness but to make the union absolute and complete, to feel it, possess it, dynamise it in every possible way of our being, in its highest intensities and largest widenesses and in every range and turn and nook and recess of our nature. It is a mistake to think, as many are apt to think, that the object of a supramental Yoga is to arrive at a mighty magnificence of supermanhood, a divine power and greatness, the self-fulfilment of a magnified individual personality. This is a false and disastrous conception, — disastrous because it is likely to raise the pride, vanity and ambition of the rajasic vital mind in us and that, if not overpassed and overcome, must lead to spiritual downfall, false because it is an egoistic conception and the first condition of the supramental change is to get rid of ego. It is most dangerous for the active and

dynamic nature of the man of will and works which can easily be led away by the pursuit of power. Power comes inevitably by the supramental change, it is a necessary condition for a perfect action: but it is the Divine Shakti that comes and takes up the nature and the life, the power of the One acting through the spiritual individual; it is not an aggrandisement of the personal force, not the last crowning fulfilment of the separative mental and vital ego. Self-fulfilment is a result of the Yoga, but its aim is not the greatness of the individual. The sole aim is a spiritual perfection, a finding of the true self and a union with the Divine by putting on the divine consciousness and nature.¹ All the rest is constituent detail and attendant circumstance. Ego-centric impulses, ambition, desire of power and greatness, motives of self-assertion are foreign to this greater consciousness and would be an insuperable bar against any possibility of even a distant approach towards the supramental change. One must lose one's little lower self to find the greater self. Union with the Divine must be the master motive; even the discovery of the truth of one's own being and of all being, life in that truth and its greater consciousness, perfection of the nature are only the natural results of that movement. Indispensable conditions of its entire consummation, they are part of the central aim only because they are a necessary development and a major consequence.

It must also be kept in mind that the supramental change is difficult, distant, an ultimate stage; it must be regarded as the end of a far-off vista; it cannot be and must not be turned into a first aim, a constantly envisaged goal or an immediate objective. For it can only come into the view of possibility after much arduous self-conquest and self-exceeding, at the end of many long and trying stages of a difficult self-evolution of the nature. One must first acquire an inner Yogic consciousness and replace by it our ordinary view of things, natural movements, motives of life; one must revolutionise the whole present build of our being. Next, we have to go still deeper, discover our veiled psychic entity and

¹ *sādharmya mukti.*

in its light and under its government psychicise our inner and outer parts, turn mind-nature, life-nature, body-nature and all our mental, vital, physical action and states and movements into a conscious instrumentation of the soul. Afterwards or concurrently we have to spiritualise the being in its entirety by a descent of a divine Light, Force, Purity, Knowledge, freedom and wideness. It is necessary to break down the limits of the personal mind, life and physicality, dissolve the ego, enter into the cosmic consciousness, realise the self, acquire a spiritualised and universalised mind and heart, life-force, physical consciousness. Then only the passage into supramental consciousness begins to become possible, and even then there is a difficult ascent to make each stage of which is a separate arduous achievement. Yoga is a rapid and concentrated conscious evolution of the being, but however rapid, even though it may effect in a single life what in an unassisted Nature might take centuries and millenniums or many hundreds of lives, still all evolution must move by stages; even the greatest rapidity and concentration of the movement cannot swallow up all the stages or reverse natural process and bring the end near to the beginning. A hasty and ignorant mind, a too eager force easily forget this necessity; they rush forward to make the supermind an immediate aim and expect to pull it down with a pitchfork from its highest heights in the Infinite. This is not only an absurd expectation but full of danger. For the vital desire may very well bring in an action of dark or vehement vital powers which hold out before it a promise of immediate fulfilment of its impossible longing; the consequence is likely to be a plunge into many kinds of self-deception, a yielding to the falsehoods and temptations of the forces of darkness, a hunt for supernormal powers, a turning away from the Divine to the Asuric nature, a fatal self-inflation into an unnatural unhuman and undivine bigness of magnified ego. If the being is small, the nature weak and incapable, there is not this large-scale disaster; but a loss of balance, a mental unhinging and fall into unreason or a vital unhinging and consequent moral aberration or a deviation into some kind of morbid abnormality of the nature may be the untoward consequence. This is not a Yoga in which

abnormality of any kind, even if it be an exalted abnormality, can be admitted as a way to self-fulfilment or spiritual realisation. Even when one enters into supernormal and suprarational experience, there should be no disturbance of the poise which must be kept firm from the summit of the consciousness to its base; the experiencing consciousness must preserve a calm balance, an unfailing clarity and order in its observation, a sort of sublimated commonsense, an unfailing power of self-criticism, right discrimination, coordination and firm vision of things; a sane grasp on facts and a high spiritualised positivism must always be there. It is not by becoming irrational or infrarational that one can go beyond ordinary nature into supernature; it should be done by passing through reason to a greater light of superreason. This superreason descends into reason and takes it up into higher levels even while breaking its limitations; reason is not lost but changes and becomes its own true unlimited self, a coordinating power of the supernature.

Another error that has to be guarded against is also one to which our mentality is easily prone; it is to take some higher intermediate consciousness or even any kind of supernormal consciousness for the supermind. To reach supermind it is not enough to go above the ordinary movements of the human mind; it is not enough to receive a greater light, a greater power, a greater joy or to develop capacities of knowledge, sight, effective will that surpass the normal range of the human being. All light is not the light of the spirit, still less is all light the light of the supermind; the mind, the vital, the physical itself have lights of their own, as yet hidden, which can be very inspiring, exalting, informative, powerfully executive. A breaking out into the cosmic consciousness may also bring in an immense enlargement of the consciousness and power. An opening into the inner mind, inner vital, inner physical, any range of the subliminal consciousness, can liberate an activity of abnormal or supernormal powers of knowledge, action or experience which the uninstructed mind can easily mistake for spiritual revelations, inspirations, intuitions. An opening upward into the greater ranges of the higher mental being can bring down much light and force creating

an intense activity of the intuitivised mind and life-power or an ascent into these ranges can bring a true but still incomplete light easily exposed to mixture, a light which is spiritual in its source though it does not always remain spiritual in its active character when it comes down into the lower nature. But none of these things is the supramental light, the supramental power; that can only be seen and grasped when we have reached the summits of mental being, entered into overmind and stand on the borders of an upper, a greater hemisphere of spiritual existence. There the ignorance, the inconscience, the original blank Nescience slowly awaking towards a half-knowledge, which are the basis of material Nature and which surround, penetrate and powerfully limit all our powers of mind and life, cease altogether; for an unmixed and unmodified Truth-consciousness is there the substance of all the being, its pure spiritual texture. To imagine that we have reached such a condition when we are still moving in the dynamics of the Ignorance, though it may be an enlightened or illumined Ignorance, is to lay ourselves open either to a disastrous misleading or to an arrest of the evolution of the being. For if it is some inferior state that we thus mistake for the supermind, it lays us open to all the dangers we have seen to attend a presumptuous egoistic haste in our demand for achievement. If it is one of the higher states that we presume to be the highest, we may, though we achieve much, yet fall short of the greater, more perfect goal of our being; for we shall remain content with an approximation and the supreme transformation will escape us. Even the achievement of a complete inner liberation and a high spiritual consciousness is not that supreme transformation; for we may have that achievement, a status perfect in itself, in essence, and still our dynamic parts may in their instrumentation belong to an enlightened spiritualised mind and may be in consequence, like all mind, defective even in its greater power and knowledge, still subject to a partial or local obscuration or a limitation by the original circumscribing nescience.



Part II

The Yoga of Integral Knowledge

Chapter I

The Object of Knowledge

ALL SPIRITUAL seeking moves towards an object of Knowledge to which men ordinarily do not turn the eye of the mind, to someone or something Eternal, Infinite, Absolute that is not the temporal things or forces of which we are sensible, although he or it may be in them or behind them or their source or creator. It aims at a state of knowledge by which we can touch, enter or know by identity this Eternal, Infinite and Absolute, a consciousness other than our ordinary consciousness of ideas and forms and things, a Knowledge that is not what we call knowledge but something self-existent, everlasting, infinite. And although it may or even necessarily must, since man is a mental creature, start from our ordinary instruments of knowledge, yet it must as necessarily go beyond them and use supra-sensuous and supramental means and faculties, for it is in search of something that is itself supra-sensuous and supramental and beyond the grasp of the mind and senses, even if through mind and sense there can come a first glimpse of it or a reflected image.

The traditional systems, whatever their other differences, all proceed on the belief or the perception that the Eternal and Absolute can only be or at least can only inhabit a pure transcendent state of non-cosmic existence or else a non-existence. All cosmic existence or all that we call existence is a state of ignorance. Even the highest individual perfection, even the most blissful cosmic condition is no better than a supreme ignorance. All that is individual, all that is cosmic has to be austere renounced by the seeker of the absolute Truth. The supreme quiescent Self or else the absolute Nihil is the sole Truth, the only object of spiritual knowledge. The state of knowledge, the consciousness other than this temporal that we must attain is Nirvana, an extinction of ego, a cessation of all mental, vital

and physical activities, of all activities whatsoever, a supreme illuminated quiescence, the pure bliss of an impersonal tranquillity self-absorbed and ineffable. The means are meditation, a concentration excluding all things else, a total loss of the mind in its object. Action is permissible only in the first stages of the search in order to purify the seeker and make him morally and temperamentally a fit vessel for the knowledge. Even this action must either be confined to the performance of the rites of worship and the prescribed duties of life rigorously ordained by the Hindu Shastra or, as in the Buddhistic discipline, must be guided along the eightfold path to the supreme practice of the works of compassion which lead towards the practical annihilation of self in the good of others. In the end, in any severe and pure Jnanayoga, all works must be abandoned for an entire quiescence. Action may prepare salvation; it cannot give it. Any continued adherence to action is incompatible with the highest progress and may be an insuperable obstacle to the attainment of the spiritual goal. The supreme state of quiescence is the very opposite of action and cannot be attained by those who persist in works. And even devotion, love, worship are disciplines for the unripe soul, are at best the best methods of the Ignorance. For they are offered to something other, higher and greater than ourselves; but in the supreme knowledge there can be no such thing, since there is either only one self or no self at all and therefore either no one to do the worship and offer the love and devotion or no one to receive it. Even thought-activity must disappear in the sole consciousness of identity or of nothingness and by its own quiescence bring about the quiescence of the whole nature. The absolute Identical alone must remain or else the eternal Nihil.

This pure Jnanayoga comes by the intellect, although it ends in the transcendence of the intellect and its workings. The thinker in us separates himself from all the rest of what we phenomenally are, rejects the heart, draws back from the life and the senses, separates from the body that he may arrive at his own exclusive fulfilment in that which is beyond even himself and his function. There is a truth that underlies, as there is

Certainly, an abstract logic cannot always suffice, as the old systems availed, at an infinite number of negations or an infinite equally varied affirmations; for abstract it moves towards an absolute abstraction, and these are the only two abstractions that are absolutely absolute. But a concrete ~~logic~~ ^{experience} is needed acting on more and more series of infinitesimal experience, and not ~~abstract~~ ^{concrete} logic like a mirror and unreflecting human mind is liable to be the key to divine Superhuman knowledge. — [S]

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be justified— But the chances are that there is an aim less aimless, a truth of the world more large and complex than this simplistic and trenchant view of things allows us to envisage. If the thought, instead of following its own attractive tendency, turns to consider that the heart, life and even the body are also forms of the divine consciousness, then it may find that the object of the Supreme Will is a culmination in which the whole being is intended to receive its divine satisfaction. ^{the height of self-giving, the depth of the supreme Supreme} The whole question is whether we are to proceed to ^{the highest point of the spiritual Absolute} self-knowledge by a process of elimination, whether we are to reject successively the body, the life, the sensa, the heart, the thought in order to merge into the quiescent Self, or whether we are intended to arrive by whatever means at an integral self-fulfilment, the only thing eliminated being the ignorance itself, the falsity of the being which figures as the ego, the falsity of the life which figures as mere corporeal existence and vital slavery, the falsity of the sensations with their subjection to material laws and to dual sensations, the falsity of the heart with its desires and its dual emotions, the falsity of the thought with its exclusions of the Truth of things and its limited and exclusive concentrations. If an integral self-fulfilment is intended, then there must be some culmination for the experiences of the heart, which will justify its instinct of love, joy, devotion and worship; for the senses, which will justify their pursuit of divine beauty and good in the forms of things; for the life which will justify its pursuit of works, no less than for the thought, in its tendency towards abstract knowledge. There is something supreme in which all these transcend themselves and meet and find their own absolutes, not something utterly other than themselves from which they are all cast away ^{as the end of time things, as our nature,} but ^{whether supreme in} ^{and the fit place} ^{transcend themselves} ^{and find their own} ^{absolutes and realities} ^{for today, their} ^{selves beyond} ^{happiness.}

This, at least, is the standpoint we have taken, and it is the whole sense of what we have called the integral Yoga. In applying or adapting the Yoga of knowledge to this integral view and to a synthetic process, we must

c + Behind the traditional way of knowledge, justifying its thought-process of elimination and withdrawal, stands however an overwhelming spiritual experience of intense consciousness, common to all who have overstepped a certain limit of the active mind, but into boundless inner space, like the great experience of elevation, the consciousness of something within us that is behind and outside of the sensible and objects from, interests, love, events and happenings, calm, untouched, untroubled, immune free, the upshot to something above no conceivable and imaginable.

A page of the "The Yoga Integral Knowledge"
as revised by Sri Aurobindo during the 1930s

an experience that seems to justify this attitude. There is an Essence that is in its nature a quiescence, a supreme of Silence in the Being that is beyond its own developments and mutations, immutable and therefore superior to all activities of which it is at most a Witness. And in the hierarchy of our psychological functions the Thought is in a way nearest to this Self, nearest at least to its aspect of the all-conscious knower who regards all activities but can stand back from them all. The heart, will and other powers in us are fundamentally active, turn naturally towards action, find through it their fulfilment,—although they also may automatically arrive at a certain quiescence by fullness of satisfaction in their activities or else by a reverse process of exhaustion through perpetual disappointment and dissatisfaction. The thought too is an active power, but is more capable of arriving at quiescence by its own conscious choice and will. The thought is more easily content with the illumined intellectual perception of this silent Witness Self that is higher than all our activities and, that immobile Spirit once seen, is ready, deeming its mission of truth-finding accomplished, to fall at rest and become itself immobile. For in its most characteristic movement it is itself apt to be a disinterested witness, judge, observer of things more than an eager participant and passionate labourer in the work and can arrive very readily at a spiritual or philosophic calm and detached aloofness. And since men are mental beings, thought, if not truly their best and highest, is at least their most constant, normal and effective means for enlightening their ignorance. Armed with its functions of gathering and reflection, meditation, fixed contemplation, the absorbed dwelling of the mind on its object, *śravana, manana, nididhyāsana*, it stands at our tops as an indispensable aid to our realisation of that which we pursue, and it is not surprising that it should claim to be the leader of the journey and the only available guide or at least the direct and innermost door of the temple.

In reality, thought is only a scout and pioneer; it can guide but not command or effectuate. The leader of the journey, the captain of the march, the first and most ancient priest of our sacrifice is the Will. This Will is not the wish of the heart or

the demand or preference of the mind to which we often give the name. It is that inmost, dominant and often veiled conscious force of our being and of all being, Tapas, Shakti, Sraddha, that sovereignly determines our orientation and of which the intellect and the heart are more or less blind and automatic servants and instruments. The Self that is quiescent, at rest, vacant of things and happenings is a support and background to existence, a silent channel or a hypostasis of something Supreme: it is not itself the one entirely real existence, not itself the Supreme. The Eternal, the Supreme is the Lord and the all-originating Spirit. Superior to all activities and not bound by any of them, it is the source, sanction, material, efficient power, master of all activities. All activities proceed from this supreme Self and are determined by it; all are its operations, processes of its own conscious force and not of something alien to Self, some power other than the Spirit. In these activities is expressed the conscious Will or Shakti of the Spirit moved to manifest its being in infinite ways, a Will or Power not ignorant but at one with its own self-knowledge and its knowledge of all that it is put out to express. And of this Power a secret spiritual will and soul-faith in us, the dominant hidden force of our nature, is the individual instrument, more nearly in communication with the Supreme, a surer guide and enlightener, could we once get at it and hold it, because profounder and more intimately near to the Identical and Absolute than the surface activities of our thought powers. To know that will in ourselves and in the universe and follow it to its divine finalities, whatever these may be, must surely be the highest way and truest culmination for knowledge as for works, for the seeker in life and for the seeker in Yoga.

The thought, since it is not the highest or strongest part of Nature, not even the sole or deepest index to Truth, ought not to follow its own exclusive satisfaction or take that for the sign of its attainment to the supreme Knowledge. It is here as the guide, up to a certain point, of the heart, the life and the other members, but it cannot be a substitute for them; it has to see not only what is its own ultimate satisfaction but whether there is not an ultimate satisfaction intended also for these other

members. An exclusive path of abstract thought would be justified, only if the object of the Supreme Will in the universe has been nothing more than a descent into the activity of the ignorance operated by the mind as blinding instrument and jailor through false idea and sensation and an ascent into the quiescence of knowledge equally operated by the mind through correct thought as enlightening instrument and saviour. But the chances are that there is an aim in the world less absurd and aimless, an impulse towards the Absolute less dry and abstract, a truth of the world more large and complex, a more richly infinite height of the Infinite. Certainly, an abstract logic must always arrive, as the old systems arrived, at an infinite empty Negation or an infinite equally vacant Affirmation; for, abstract it moves towards an absolute abstraction and these are the only two abstractions that are absolutely absolute. But a concrete ever deepening wisdom waiting on more and more riches of infinite experience and not the confident abstract logic of the narrow and incompetent human mind is likely to be the key to a divine suprahuman knowledge. The heart, the will, the life and even the body, no less than the thought, are forms of a divine Conscious-Being and indices of great significance. These too have powers by which the soul can return to its complete self-awareness or means by which it can enjoy it. The object of the Supreme Will may well be a culmination in which the whole being is intended to receive its divine satisfaction, the heights enlightening the depths, the material Inconscient revealed to itself as the Divine by the touch of the supreme Superconscious.

The traditional Way of Knowledge proceeds by elimination and rejects successively the body, the life, the senses, the heart, the very thought in order to merge into the quiescent Self or supreme Nihil or indefinite Absolute. The way of integral knowledge supposes that we are intended to arrive at an integral self-fulfilment and the only thing that is to be eliminated is our own unconsciousness, the Ignorance and the results of the Ignorance. Eliminate the falsity of the being which figures as the ego; then our true being can manifest in us. Eliminate the falsity of the life which figures as mere vital craving and the mechanical

round of our corporeal existence; our true life in the power of the Godhead and the joy of the Infinite will appear. Eliminate the falsity of the senses with their subjection to material shows and to dual sensations; there is a greater sense in us that can open through these to the Divine in things and divinely reply to it. Eliminate the falsity of the heart with its turbid passions and desires and its dual emotions; a deeper heart in us can open with its divine love for all creatures and its infinite passion and yearning for the responses of the Infinite. Eliminate the falsity of the thought with its imperfect mental constructions, its arrogant assertions and denials, its limited and exclusive concentrations; a greater faculty of knowledge is behind that can open to the true Truth of God and the soul and Nature and the universe. An integral self-fulfilment,—an absolute, a culmination for the experiences of the heart, for its instinct of love, joy, devotion and worship; an absolute, a culmination for the senses, for their pursuit of divine beauty and good and delight in the forms of things; an absolute, a culmination for the life, for its pursuit of works, of divine power, mastery and perfection; an absolute, a culmination beyond its own limits for the thought, for its hunger after truth and light and divine wisdom and knowledge. Not something quite other than themselves from which they are all cast away is the end of these things in our nature, but something supreme in which they at once transcend themselves and find their own absolutes and infinitudes, their harmonies beyond measure.

Behind the traditional way of Knowledge, justifying its thought-process of elimination and withdrawal, stands an overmastering spiritual experience. Deep, intense, convincing, common to all who have overstepped a certain limit of the active mind-belt into horizonless inner space, this is the great experience of liberation, the consciousness of something within us that is behind and outside of the universe and all its forms, interests, aims, events and happenings, calm, untouched, unconcerned, illimitable, immobile, free, the uplook to something above us indescribable and unseizable into which by abolition of our personality we can enter, the presence of an omnipresent eternal

witness Purusha, the sense of an Infinity or a Timelessness that looks down on us from an august negation of all our existence and is alone the one thing Real. This experience is the highest sublimation of spiritualised mind looking resolutely beyond its own existence. No one who has not passed through this liberation can be entirely free from the mind and its meshes, but one is not compelled to linger in this experience for ever. Great as it is, it is only the Mind's overwhelming experience of what is beyond itself and all it can conceive. It is a supreme negative experience, but beyond it is all the tremendous light of an infinite Consciousness, an illimitable Knowledge, an affirmative absolute Presence.

The object of spiritual knowledge is the Supreme, the Divine, the Infinite and Absolute. This Supreme has its relations to our individual being and its relations to the universe and it transcends both the soul and the universe. Neither the universe nor the individual are what they seem to be, for the report of them which our mind and our senses give us is, so long as they are unenlightened by a faculty of higher supramental and suprasensuous knowledge, a false report, an imperfect construction, an attenuated and erroneous figure. And yet that which the universe and the individual seem to be is still a figure of what they really are, a figure that points beyond itself to the reality behind it. Truth proceeds by a correction of the values our mind and senses give us, and first by the action of a higher intelligence that enlightens and sets right as far as may be the conclusions of the ignorant sense-mind and limited physical intelligence; that is the method of all human knowledge and science. But beyond it there is a knowledge, a Truth-consciousness, that exceeds our intellect and brings us into the true light of which it is a refracted ray. There the abstract terms of the pure reason and the constructions of the mind disappear or are converted into concrete soul-vision and the tremendous actuality of spiritual experience. This knowledge can turn away to the absolute Eternal and lose vision of the soul and the universe; but it can too see this existence from that Eternal. When that is done, we find that the ignorance of the mind and the senses and all the apparent futilities of

human life were not a useless excursion of the conscious being, an otiose blunder. Here they were planned as a rough ground for the self-expression of the Soul that comes from the Infinite, a material foundation for its self-unfolding and self-possessing in the terms of the universe. It is true that in themselves they and all that is here have no significance and to build separate significances for them is to live in an illusion, Maya; but they have a supreme significance in the Supreme, an absolute Power in the Absolute and it is that that assigns to them and refers to that Truth their present relative values. This is the all-uniting experience that is the foundation of the deepest integral and most intimate self-knowledge and world-knowledge.

In relation to the individual the Supreme is our own true and highest self, that which ultimately we are in our essence, that of which we are in our manifested nature. A spiritual knowledge, moved to arrive at the true Self in us, must reject, as the traditional way of knowledge rejects, all misleading appearances. It must discover that the body is not our self, our foundation of existence; it is a sensible form of the Infinite. The experience of Matter as the world's sole foundation and the physical brain and nerves and cells and molecules as the one truth of all things in us, the ponderous inadequate basis of materialism, is a delusion, a half-view taken for the whole, the dark bottom or shadow of things misconceived as the luminous substance, the effective figure of zero for the Integer. The materialist idea mistakes a creation for the creative Power, a means of expression for That which is expressed and expresses. Matter and our physical brain and nerves and body are the field and foundation for one action of a vital force that serves to connect the Self with the form of its works and maintains them by its direct dynamis. The material movements are an exterior notation by which the soul represents its perceptions of certain truths of the Infinite and makes them effective in the terms of Substance. These things are a language, a notation, a hieroglyphic, a system of symbols, not themselves the deepest truest sense of the things they intimate.

Neither is the Life ourself, the vitality, the energy which plays in the brain, nerves and body; it is a power and not the

whole power of the Infinite. The experience of a life-force instrumentalising Matter as the foundation, source and true sum of all things, the vibrating unsteady basis of vitalism, is a delusion, a half-view taken for the whole, a tide on a near shore misconceived as all the ocean and its waters. The vitalist idea takes something powerful but outward for the essence. Life-force is the dynamisation of a consciousness which exceeds it. That consciousness is felt and acts but does not become valid to us in intelligence until we arrive at the higher term of Mind, our present summit. Mind is here apparently a creation of Life, but it is really the ulterior — not the ultimate — sense of Life itself and what is behind it and a more conscious formulation of its secret; Mind is an expression not of Life, but of that of which Life itself is a less luminous expression.

And yet Mind also, our mentality, our thinking, understanding part, is not our Self, is not That, not the end or the beginning; it is a half-light thrown from the Infinite. The experience of mind as the creator of forms and things and of these forms and things existing in the Mind only, the thin subtle basis of idealism, is also a delusion, a half-view taken for the whole, a pale refracted light idealised as the burning body of the Sun and its splendour. This idealist vision also does not arrive at the essence of being, does not even touch it but only an inferior mode of Nature. Mind is the dubious outer penumbra of a conscious existence which is not limited by mentality but exceeds it. The method of the traditional way of knowledge, eliminating all these things, arrives at the conception and realisation of a pure conscious existence, self-aware, self-blissful, unconditioned by mind and life and body and to its ultimate positive experience that is Atman, the Self, the original and essential nature of our existence. Here at last there is something centrally true, but in its haste to arrive at it this knowledge assumes that there is nothing between the thinking mind and the Highest, *buddheḥ paratas tu saḥ*, and, shutting its eyes in Samadhi, tries to rush through all that actually intervenes without even seeing these great and luminous kingdoms of the Spirit. Perhaps it arrives at its object, but only to fall asleep in the Infinite. Or, if it remains

awake, it is in the highest experience of the Supreme into which the self-annulling Mind can enter, but not in the supreme of the Supreme, Paratpara. The Mind can only be aware of the Self in a mentalised spiritual thinness, only of the mind-reflected Sach-chidananda. The highest truth, the integral self-knowledge is not to be gained by this self-blinded leap into the Absolute but by a patient transit beyond the mind into the Truth-consciousness where the Infinite can be known, felt, seen, experienced in all the fullness of its unending riches. And there we discover this Self that we are to be not only a static tenuous vacant Atman but a great dynamic Spirit individual, universal and transcendent. That Self and Spirit cannot be expressed by the mind's abstract generalisations; all the inspired descriptions of the seers and mystics cannot exhaust its contents and its splendours.

In relation to the universe the Supreme is Brahman, the one Reality which is not only the spiritual material and conscious substance of all the ideas and forces and forms of the universe, but their origin, support and possessor, the cosmic and supracosmic Spirit. All the last terms to which we can reduce the universe, Force and Matter, Name and Form, Purusha and Prakriti, are still not entirely that which the universe really is, either in itself or its nature. As all that we are is the play and form, the mental, psychic, vital and physical expression of a supreme Self unconditioned by mind and life and body, the universe too is the play and form and cosmic soul-expression and nature-expression of a supreme Existence which is unconditioned by force and matter, unconditioned by idea and name and form, unconditioned by the fundamental distinction of Purusha and Prakriti. Our supreme Self and the supreme Existence which has become the universe are one Spirit, one self and one existence. The individual is in nature one expression of the universal Being, in spirit an emanation of the Transcendence. For if he finds his self, he finds too that his own true self is not this natural personality, this created individuality, but is a universal being in its relations with others and with Nature and in its upward term a portion or the living front of a supreme transcendental Spirit.

This supreme Existence is not conditioned by the individual

or by the universe. A spiritual knowledge can therefore surpass or even eliminate these two powers of the Spirit and arrive at the conception of something utterly Transcendent, something that is unnameable and mentally unknowable, a sheer Absolute. The traditional way of knowledge eliminates individual and universe. The Absolute it seeks after is featureless, indefinable, relationless, not this, not that, *neti neti*. And yet we can say of it that it is One, that it is Infinite, that it is ineffable Bliss, Consciousness, Existence. Although unknowable to the mind, yet through our individual being and through the names and forms of the universe we can approach the realisation of the supreme Self that is Brahman, and by the realisation of the self we come to a certain realisation also of this utter Absolute of which our true self is the essential form in our consciousness (*svarūpa*). These are the devices the human mind is compelled to use if it is to form to itself any conception at all of a transcendent and unconditioned Absolute. The system of negation is indispensable to it in order to get rid of its own definitions and limited experience; it is obliged to escape through a vague Indefinite into the Infinite. For it lives in a closed prison of constructions and representations that are necessary for its action but are not the self-existent truth either of Matter or Life or Mind or Spirit. But if we can once cross beyond the Mind's frontier twilight into the vast plane of supramental Knowledge, these devices cease to be indispensable. Supermind has quite another, a positive and direct and living experience of the supreme Infinite. The Absolute is beyond personality and beyond impersonality, and yet it is both the Impersonal and the supreme Person and all persons. The Absolute is beyond the distinction of unity and multiplicity, and yet it is the One and the innumerable Many in all the universes. It is beyond all limitation by quality and yet it is not limited by a qualitiless void but is too all infinite qualities. It is the individual soul and all souls and none of them; it is the formless Brahman and the universe. It is the cosmic and the supracosmic Spirit, the supreme Lord, the supreme Self, the supreme Purusha and supreme Shakti, the Ever Unborn who is endlessly born, the Infinite who is innumerably finite, the multitudinous

One, the complex Simple, the many-sided Single, the Word of the Silence Ineffable, the impersonal omnipresent Person, the Mystery translucent in highest consciousness to its own spirit, but to a lesser consciousness veiled in its own exceeding light and impenetrable for ever. These things are to the dimensional mind irreconcilable opposites, but to the constant vision and experience of the supramental Truth-consciousness they are so simply and inevitably the intrinsic nature of each other that even to think of them as contraries is an unimaginable violence. The walls constructed by the measuring and separating Intellect have disappeared and the Truth in its simplicity and beauty appears and reduces all to terms of its harmony and unity and light. Dimensions and distinctions remain but as figures for use, not a separative prison for the self-forgetting Spirit.

The consciousness of the transcendent Absolute with its consequence in individual and universe is the last, the eternal knowledge. Our minds may deal with it on various lines, may build upon it conflicting philosophies, may limit, modify, overstress, understress sides of the knowledge, deduce from it truth or error; but our intellectual variations and imperfect statements make no difference to the ultimate fact that if we push thought and experience to their end, this is the knowledge in which they terminate. The object of a Yoga of spiritual knowledge can be nothing else than this eternal Reality, this Self, this Brahman, this Transcendent that dwells over all and in all and is manifest yet concealed in the individual, manifest yet disguised in the universe.

The culmination of the path of knowledge need not necessarily entail extinction of our world-existence. For the Supreme to whom we assimilate ourselves, the Absolute and Transcendent into whom we enter has always the complete and ultimate consciousness for which we are seeking and yet he supports by it his play in the world. Neither are we compelled to believe that our world-existence ends because by attaining to knowledge its object or consummation is fulfilled and therefore there is nothing more for us here afterwards. For what we gain at first with its release and immeasurable silence and quietude is only the eternal

self-realisation by the individual in the essence of his conscious being; there will still remain on that foundation, unannulled by the silence, one with the release and freedom, the infinitely proceeding self-fulfilment of Brahman, its dynamic divine manifestation in the individual and by his presence, example and action in others and in the universe at large,— the work which the Great Ones remain to do. Our dynamic self-fulfilment cannot be worked out so long as we remain in the egoistic consciousness, in the mind's candle-lit darkness, in the bondage. Our present limited consciousness can only be a field of preparation, it can consummate nothing; for all that it manifests is marred through and through by an ego-ridden ignorance and error. The true and divine self-fulfilment of Brahman in the manifestation is only possible on the foundation of the Brahman-consciousness and therefore through the acceptance of life by the liberated soul, the Jivanmukta.

This is the integral knowledge; for we know that everywhere and in all conditions all to the eye that sees is One, to a divine experience all is one block of the Divine. It is only the mind which for the temporary convenience of its own thought and aspiration seeks to cut an artificial line of rigid division, a fiction of perpetual incompatibility between one aspect and another of the eternal oneness. The liberated knower lives and acts in the world not less than the bound soul and ignorant mind but more, doing all actions, *sarvakṛt*, only with a true knowledge and a greater conscient power. And by so doing he does not forfeit the supreme unity nor fall from the supreme consciousness and the highest knowledge. For the Supreme, however hidden now to us, is here in the world no less than he could be in the most utter and ineffable self-extinction, the most intolerant Nirvana.

Chapter II

The Status of Knowledge

THE SELF, the Divine, the Supreme Reality, the All, the Transcendent,—the One in all these aspects is then the object of Yogic knowledge. Ordinary objects, the external appearances of life and matter, the psychology of our thoughts and actions, the perception of the forces of the apparent world can be part of this knowledge, but only in so far as it is part of the manifestation of the One. It becomes at once evident that the knowledge for which Yoga strives must be different from what men ordinarily understand by the word. For we mean ordinarily by knowledge an intellectual appreciation of the facts of life, mind and matter and the laws that govern them. This is a knowledge founded upon our sense-perception and upon reasoning from our sense-perceptions and it is undertaken partly for the pure satisfaction of the intellect, partly for practical efficiency and the added power which knowledge gives in managing our lives and the lives of others, in utilising for human ends the overt or secret forces of Nature and in helping or hurting, in saving and ennobling or in oppressing and destroying our fellow-men. Yoga, indeed, is commensurate with all life and can include all these subjects and objects. There is even a Yoga¹ which can be used for self-indulgence as well as for self-conquest, for hurting others as well as for their salvation. But “all life” includes not only, not even mainly life as humanity now leads it. It envisages rather and regards as its one true object a higher truly conscious existence which our half-conscious humanity does not yet possess and can only arrive at by a self-exceeding spiritual ascension. It is this greater consciousness and higher existence

¹ Yoga develops power, it develops it even when we do not desire or consciously aim at it; and power is always a double-edged weapon which can be used to hurt or destroy as well as to help and save. Be it also noted that all destruction is not evil.

which is the peculiar and appropriate object of Yogic discipline.

This greater consciousness, this higher existence are not an enlightened or illumined mentality supported by a greater dynamic energy or supporting a purer moral life and character. Their superiority to the ordinary human consciousness is not in degree but in kind and essence. There is a change not merely of the surface or instrumental manner of our being but of its very foundation and dynamic principle. Yogic knowledge seeks to enter into a secret consciousness beyond mind which is only occultly here, concealed at the basis of all existence. For it is that consciousness alone that truly knows and only by its possession can we possess God and rightly know the world and its real nature and secret forces. All this world visible or sensible to us and all too in it that is not visible is merely the phenomenal expression of something beyond the mind and the senses. The knowledge which the senses and intellectual reasoning from the data of the senses can bring us, is not true knowledge; it is a science of appearances. And even appearances cannot be properly known unless we know first the Reality of which they are images. This Reality is their self and there is one self of all; when that is seized, all other things can then be known in their truth and no longer as now only in their appearance.

It is evident that however much we may analyse the physical and sensible, we cannot by that means arrive at the knowledge of the Self or of ourselves or of that which we call God. The telescope, the microscope, the scalpel, the retort and alembic cannot go beyond the physical, although they may arrive at subtler and subtler truths about the physical. If then we confine ourselves to what the senses and their physical aids reveal to us and refuse from the beginning to admit any other reality or any other means of knowledge, we are obliged to conclude that nothing is real except the physical and that there is no Self in us or in the universe, no God within and without, no ourselves even except this aggregate of brain, nerves and body. But this we are only obliged to conclude because we have assumed it firmly from the beginning and therefore cannot but circle round to our original assumption.

If, then, there is a Self, a Reality not obvious to the senses, it must be by other means than those of physical Science that it is to be sought and known. The intellect is not that means. Undoubtedly there are a number of suprasensuous truths at which the intellect is able to arrive in its own manner and which it is able to perceive and state as intellectual conceptions. The very idea of Force for instance on which Science so much insists, is a conception, a truth at which the intellect alone can arrive by going beyond its data; for we do not sense this universal force but only its results, and the force itself we infer as a necessary cause of these results. So also the intellect by following a certain line of rigorous analysis can arrive at the intellectual conception and the intellectual conviction of the Self and this conviction can be very real, very luminous, very potent as the beginning of other and greater things. Still, in itself intellectual analysis can only lead to an arrangement of clear conceptions, perhaps to a right arrangement of true conceptions; but this is not the knowledge aimed at by Yoga. For it is not in itself an effective knowledge. A man may be perfect in it and yet be precisely what he was before except in the mere fact of the greater intellectual illumination. The change of our being at which Yoga aims, may not at all take place.

It is true that intellectual deliberation and right discrimination are an important part of the Yoga of knowledge; but their object is rather to remove a difficulty than to arrive at the final and positive result of this path. Our ordinary intellectual notions are a stumbling-block in the way of knowledge; for they are governed by the error of the senses and they found themselves on the notion that matter and body are the reality, that life and force are the reality, that passion and emotion, thought and sense are the reality; and with these things we identify ourselves, and because we identify ourselves with these things we cannot get back to the real self. Therefore, it is necessary for the seeker of knowledge to remove this stumbling-block and to get right notions about himself and the world; for how shall we pursue by knowledge the real self if we have no notion of what it is and are on the contrary burdened with ideas quite opposite to the truth?

Therefore right thought is a necessary preliminary, and once the habit of right thought is established, free from sense-error and desire and old association and intellectual pre-judgment, the understanding becomes purified and offers no serious obstacle to the farther process of knowledge. Still, right thought only becomes effective when in the purified understanding it is followed by other operations, by vision, by experience, by realisation.

What are these operations? They are not mere psychological self-analysis and self-observation. Such analysis, such observation are, like the process of right thought, of immense value and practically indispensable. They may even, if rightly pursued, lead to a right thought of considerable power and effectivity. Like intellectual discrimination by the process of meditative thought they will have an effect of purification; they will lead to self-knowledge of a certain kind and to the setting right of the disorders of the soul and the heart and even of the disorders of the understanding. Self-knowledge of all kinds is on the straight path to the knowledge of the real Self. The Upanishad tells us that the Self-existent has so set the doors of the soul that they turn outwards and most men look outward into the appearances of things; only the rare soul that is ripe for a calm thought and steady wisdom turns its eye inward, sees the Self and attains to immortality. To this turning of the eye inward psychological self-observation and analysis is a great and effective introduction. We can look into the inward of ourselves more easily than we can look into the inward of things external to us because there, in things outside us, we are in the first place embarrassed by the form and secondly we have no natural previous experience of that in them which is other than their physical substance. A purified or tranquillised mind may reflect or a powerful concentration may discover God in the world, the Self in Nature even before it is realised in ourselves, but this is rare and difficult.² And it is only in ourselves that we can observe and know the

² In one respect, however, it is easier, because in external things we are not so much hampered by the sense of the limited ego as in ourselves; one obstacle to the realisation of God is therefore removed.

process of the Self in its becoming and follow the process by which it draws back into self-being. Therefore the ancient counsel, know thyself, will always stand as the first word that directs us towards *the* knowledge. Still, psychological self-knowledge is only the experience of the modes of the Self, it is not the realisation of the Self in its pure being.

The status of knowledge, then, which Yoga envisages is not merely an intellectual conception or clear discrimination of the truth, nor is it an enlightened psychological experience of the modes of our being. It is a “realisation”, in the full sense of the word; it is the making real to ourselves and in ourselves of the Self, the transcendent and universal Divine, and it is the subsequent impossibility of viewing the modes of being except in the light of that Self and in their true aspect as its flux of becoming under the psychical and physical conditions of our world-existence. This realisation consists of three successive movements, internal vision, complete internal experience and identity.

This internal vision, *dṛṣṭi*, the power so highly valued by the ancient sages, the power which made a man a Rishi or Kavi and no longer a mere thinker, is a sort of light in the soul by which things unseen become as evident and real to it—to the soul and not merely to the intellect—as do things seen to the physical eye. In the physical world there are always two forms of knowledge, the direct and the indirect, *pratyakṣa*, of that which is present to the eyes, and *parokṣa*, of that which is remote from and beyond our vision. When the object is beyond our vision, we are necessarily obliged to arrive at an idea of it by inference, imagination, analogy, by hearing the descriptions of others who have seen it or by studying pictorial or other representations of it if these are available. By putting together all these aids we can indeed arrive at a more or less adequate idea or suggestive image of the object, but we do not realise the thing itself; it is not yet to us the grasped reality, but only our conceptual representation of a reality. But once we have seen it with the eyes,—for no other sense is adequate,—we possess, we realise; it is there secure in our satisfied being, part of ourselves in knowledge.

Precisely the same rule holds good of psychical things and of the Self. We may hear clear and luminous teachings about the Self from philosophers or teachers or from ancient writings; we may by thought, inference, imagination, analogy or by any other available means attempt to form a mental figure or conception of it; we may hold firmly that conception in our mind and fix it by an entire and exclusive concentration;³ but we have not yet realised it, we have not seen God. It is only when after long and persistent concentration or by other means the veil of the mind is rent or swept aside, only when a flood of light breaks over the awakened mentality, *jyotirmaya brahman*, and conception gives place to a knowledge-vision in which the Self is as present, real, concrete as a physical object to the physical eye, that we possess in knowledge; for we have seen. After that revelation, whatever fadings of the light, whatever periods of darkness may afflict the soul, it can never irretrievably lose what it has once held. The experience is inevitably renewed and must become more frequent till it is constant; when and how soon depends on the devotion and persistence with which we insist on the path and besiege by our will or our love the hidden Deity.

This inner vision is one form of psychological experience; but the inner experience is not confined to that seeing; vision only opens, it does not embrace. Just as the eye, though it is alone adequate to bring the first sense of realisation, has to call in the aid of experience by the touch and other organs of sense before there is an embracing knowledge, so the vision of the self ought to be completed by an experience of it in all our members. Our whole being ought to demand God and not only our illumined eye of knowledge. For since each principle in us is only a manifestation of the Self, each can get back to its reality and have the experience of it. We can have a mental experience of the Self and seize as concrete realities all those apparently abstract things that to the mind constitute existence—consciousness, force, delight and their manifold forms and workings: thus the

³ This is the idea of the triple operation of Jnanayoga, *śravana, manana, nididhyāsana*, hearing, thinking or mentalising and fixing in concentration.

mind is satisfied of God. We can have an emotional experience of the Self through Love and through emotional delight, love and delight of the Self in us, of the Self in the universal and of the Self in all with whom we have relations: thus the heart is satisfied of God. We can have an aesthetic experience of the Self in beauty, a delight-perception and taste of the absolute reality all-beautiful in everything whether created by ourselves or Nature in its appeal to the aesthetic mind and the senses; thus the sense is satisfied of God. We can have even the vital, nervous experience and practically the physical sense of the Self in all life and formation and in all workings of powers, forces, energies that operate through us or others or in the world: thus the life and the body are satisfied of God.

All this knowledge and experience are primary means of arriving at and of possessing identity. It is our self that we see and experience and therefore vision and experience are incomplete unless they culminate in identity, unless we are able to live in all our being the supreme Vedantic knowledge, He am I. We must not only see God and embrace Him, but become that Reality. We must become one with the Self in its transcendence of all form and manifestation by the resolution, the sublimation, the escape from itself of ego and all its belongings into That from which they proceed, as well as become the Self in all its manifested existences and becomings, one with it in the infinite existence, consciousness, peace, delight by which it reveals itself in us and one with it in the action, formation, play of self-conception with which it garbs itself in the world.

It is difficult for the modern mind to understand how we can do more than conceive intellectually of the Self or of God; but it may borrow some shadow of this vision, experience and becoming from that inner awakening to Nature which a great English poet has made a reality to the European imagination. If we read the poems in which Wordsworth expressed his realisation of Nature, we may acquire some distant idea of what realisation is. For, first, we see that he had the vision of something in the world which is the very Self of all things that it contains, a conscious force and presence other than its forms, yet cause of its forms

and manifested in them. We perceive that he had not only the vision of this and the joy and peace and universality which its presence brings, but the very sense of it, mental, aesthetic, vital, physical; not only this sense and vision of it in its own being but in the nearest flower and simplest man and the immobile rock; and, finally, that he even occasionally attained to that unity, that becoming the object of his meditation, one phase of which is powerfully and profoundly expressed in the poem "A slumber did my spirit seal," where he describes himself as become one in his being with earth, "rolled round in its diurnal course with rocks and stones and trees." Exalt this realisation to a profounder Self than physical Nature and we have the elements of the Yogic knowledge. But all this experience is only the vestibule to that suprasensuous, supramental realisation of the Transcendent who is beyond all His aspects, and the final summit of knowledge can only be attained by entering into the superconscious and there merging all other experience into a supernal unity with the Ineffable. That is the culmination of all divine knowing; that also is the source of all divine delight and divine living.

That status of knowledge is then the aim of this path and indeed of all paths when pursued to their end, to which intellectual discrimination and conception and all concentration and psychological self-knowledge and all seeking by the heart through love and by the senses through beauty and by the will through power and works and by the soul through peace and joy are only keys, avenues, first approaches and beginnings of the ascent which we have to use and to follow till the wide and infinite levels are attained and the divine doors swing open into the infinite Light.

Chapter III

The Purified Understanding

THE DESCRIPTION of the status of knowledge to which we aspire, determines the means of knowledge which we shall use. That status of knowledge may be summed up as a supramental realisation which is prepared by mental representations through various mental principles in us and once attained again reflects itself more perfectly in all the members of the being. It is a re-seeing and therefore a remoulding of our whole existence in the light of the Divine and One and Eternal free from subjection to the appearances of things and the externalities of our superficial being.

Such a passage from the human to the divine, from the divided and discordant to the One, from the phenomenon to the eternal Truth, such an entire rebirth or new birth of the soul must necessarily involve two stages, one of preparation in which the soul and its instruments must become fit and another of actual illumination and realisation in the prepared soul through its fit instruments. There is indeed no rigid line of demarcation in sequence of Time between these two stages; rather they are necessary to each other and continue simultaneously. For in proportion as the soul becomes fit it increases in illumination and rises to higher and higher, completer and completer realisations, and in proportion as these illuminations and these realisations increase, becomes fit and its instruments more adequate to their task: there are soul-seasons of unillumined preparation and soul-seasons of illumined growth and culminating soul-moments more or less prolonged of illumined possession, moments that are transient like the flash of the lightning, yet change the whole spiritual future, moments also that extend over many human hours, days, weeks in a constant light or blaze of the Sun of Truth. And through all these the soul once turned Godwards grows

towards the permanence and perfection of its new birth and real existence.

The first necessity of preparation is the purifying of all the members of our being; especially, for the path of knowledge, the purification of the understanding, the key that shall open the door of Truth; and a purified understanding is hardly possible without the purification of the other members. An unpurified heart, an unpurified sense, an unpurified life confuse the understanding, disturb its data, distort its conclusions, darken its seeing, misapply its knowledge; an unpurified physical system clogs or chokes up its action. There must be an integral purity. Here also there is an interdependence; for the purification of each member of our being profits by the clarifying of every other, the progressive tranquillisation of the emotional heart helping for instance the purification of the understanding while equally a purified understanding imposes calm and light on the turbid and darkened workings of the yet impure emotions. It may even be said that while each member of our being has its own proper principles of purification, yet it is the purified understanding that in man is the most potent cleanser of his turbid and disordered being and most sovereignly imposes their right working on his other members. Knowledge, says the Gita, is the sovereign purity; light is the source of all clearness and harmony even as the darkness of ignorance is the cause of all our stumblings. Love, for example, is the purifier of the heart and by reducing all our emotions into terms of divine love the heart is perfected and fulfilled; yet love itself needs to be clarified by divine knowledge. The heart's love of God may be blind, narrow and ignorant and lead to fanaticism and obscurantism; it may, even when otherwise pure, limit our perfection by refusing to see Him except in a limited personality and by recoiling from the true and infinite vision. The heart's love of man may equally lead to distortions and exaggerations in feeling, action and knowledge which have to be corrected and prevented by the purification of the understanding.

We must, however, consider deeply and clearly what we mean by the understanding and by its purification. We use the

word as the nearest equivalent we can get in the English tongue to the Sanskrit philosophical term *buddhi*; therefore we exclude from it the action of the sense mind which merely consists of the recording of perceptions of all kinds without distinction whether they be right or wrong, true or mere illusory phenomena, penetrating or superficial. We exclude that mass of confused conception which is merely a rendering of these perceptions and is equally void of the higher principle of judgment and discrimination. Nor can we include that constant leaping current of habitual thought which does duty for understanding in the mind of the average unthinking man, but is only a constant repetition of habitual associations, desires, prejudices, pre-judgments, received or inherited preferences, even though it may constantly enrich itself by a fresh stock of concepts streaming in from the environment and admitted without the challenge of the sovereign discriminating reason. Undoubtedly this is a sort of understanding which has been very useful in the development of man from the animal; but it is only one remove above the animal mind; it is a half-animal reason subservient to habit, to desire and the senses and is of no avail in the search whether for scientific or philosophical or spiritual knowledge. We have to go beyond it; its purification can only be effected either by dismissing or silencing it altogether or by transmuting it into the true understanding.

By the understanding we mean that which at once perceives, judges and discriminates, the true reason of the human being not subservient to the senses, to desire or to the blind force of habit, but working in its own right for mastery, for knowledge. Certainly, the reason of man as he is at present does not even at its best act entirely in this free and sovereign fashion; but so far as it fails, it fails because it is still mixed with the lower half-animal action, because it is impure and constantly hampered and pulled down from its characteristic action. In its purity it should not be involved in these lower movements, but stand back from the object, and observe disinterestedly, put it in its right place in the whole by force of comparison, contrast, analogy, reason from its rightly observed data by deduction, induction, inference and

holding all its gains in memory and supplementing them by a chastened and rightly-guided imagination view all in the light of a trained and disciplined judgment. Such is the pure intellectual understanding of which disinterested observation, judgment and reasoning are the law and characterising action.

But the term *buddhi* is also used in another and profounder sense. The intellectual understanding is only the lower *buddhi*; there is another and a higher *buddhi* which is not intelligence but vision, is not understanding but rather an over-standing¹ in knowledge, and does not seek knowledge and attain it in subjection to the data it observes but possesses already the truth and brings it out in the terms of a revelatory and intuitional thought. The nearest the human mind usually gets to this truth-conscious knowledge is that imperfect action of illumined finding which occurs when there is a great stress of thought and the intellect electrified by constant discharges from behind the veil and yielding to a higher enthusiasm admits a considerable instreaming from the intuitive and inspired faculty of knowledge. For there is an intuitive mind in man which serves as a recipient and channel for these instreamings from a supramental faculty. But the action of intuition and inspiration in us is imperfect in kind as well as intermittent in action; ordinarily, it comes in response to a claim from the labouring and struggling heart or intellect and, even before its givings enter the conscious mind, they are already affected by the thought or aspiration which went up to meet them, are no longer pure but altered to the needs of the heart or intellect; and after they enter the conscious mind, they are immediately seized upon by the intellectual understanding and dissipated or broken up so as to fit in with our imperfect intellectual knowledge, or by the heart and remoulded to suit our blind or half-blind emotional longings and preferences, or even by the lower cravings and distorted to the vehement uses of our hungers and passions.

If this higher *buddhi* could act pure of the interference of

¹ The Divine Being is described as the *adhyakṣa*, he who seated over all in the supreme ether over-sees things, views and controls them from above.

these lower members, it would give pure forms of the truth; observation would be dominated or replaced by a vision which could see without subservient dependence on the testimony of the sense-mind and senses; imagination would give place to the self-assured inspiration of the truth, reasoning to the spontaneous discernment of relations and conclusion from reasoning to an intuition containing in itself those relations and not building laboriously upon them, judgment to a thought-vision in whose light the truth would stand revealed without the mask which it now wears and which our intellectual judgment has to penetrate; while memory too would take upon itself that larger sense given to it in Greek thought and be no longer a paltry selection from the store gained by the individual in his present life, but rather the all-recording knowledge which secretly holds and constantly gives from itself everything that we now seem painfully to acquire but really in this sense remember, a knowledge which includes the future² no less than the past. Certainly, we are intended to grow in our receptivity to this higher faculty of truth-conscious knowledge, but its full and unveiled use is as yet the privilege of the gods and beyond our present human stature.

We see then what we mean precisely by the understanding and by that higher faculty which we may call for the sake of convenience the ideal faculty and which stands to the developed intellect much in the same relation as that intellect stands to the half-animal reason of the undeveloped man. It becomes evident also what is the nature of the purification which is necessary before the understanding can fulfil rightly its part in the attainment of right knowledge. All impurity is a confusion of working, a departure from the *dharma*, the just and inherently right action of things which in that right action are pure and helpful to our perfection and this departure is usually the result of an ignorant confusion³ of dharmas in which the function lends itself to the demand of other tendencies than those which are properly its own.

² In this sense the power of prophecy has been aptly called a memory of the future.

³ *sankara*.

The first cause of impurity in the understanding is the intermischence of desire in the thinking functions, and desire itself is an impurity of the Will involved in the vital and emotional parts of our being. When the vital and emotional desires interfere with the pure will-to-know, the thought-function becomes subservient to them, pursues ends other than those proper to itself and its perceptions are clogged and deranged. The understanding must lift itself beyond the siege of desire and emotion and, in order that it may have perfect immunity, it must get the vital parts and the emotions themselves purified. The will to enjoy is proper to the vital being but not the choice or the reaching after the enjoyment which must be determined and acquired by higher functions; therefore the vital being must be trained to accept whatever gain or enjoyment comes to it in the right functioning of the life in obedience to the working of the divine Will and to rid itself of craving and attachment. Similarly the heart must be freed from subjection to the cravings of the life-principle and the senses and thus rid itself of the false emotions of fear, wrath, hatred, lust, etc. which constitute the chief impurity of the heart. The will to love is proper to the heart, but here also the choice and reaching after love have to be foregone or tranquillised and the heart taught to love with depth and intensity indeed, but with a calm depth and a settled and equal, not a troubled and disordered intensity. The tranquillisation and mastery⁴ of these members is a first condition for the immunity of the understanding from error, ignorance and perversion. This purification spells an entire equality of the nervous being and the heart; equality, therefore, even as it was the first word of the path of works, so also is the first word of the path of knowledge.

The second cause of impurity in the understanding is the illusion of the senses and the intermischence of the sense-mind in the thinking functions. No knowledge can be true knowledge which subjects itself to the senses or uses them otherwise than as first indices whose data have constantly to be corrected and overpassed. The beginning of Science is the examination of the truths

⁴ *sama* and *dama*.

of the world-force that underlie its apparent workings such as our senses represent them to be; the beginning of philosophy is the examination of the principles of things which the senses mistranslate to us; the beginning of spiritual knowledge is the refusal to accept the limitations of the sense-life or to take the visible and sensible as anything more than phenomenon of the Reality.

Equally must the sense-mind be stilled and taught to leave the function of thought to the mind that judges and understands. When the understanding in us stands back from the action of the sense-mind and repels its intermischence, the latter detaches itself from the understanding and can be watched in its separate action. It then reveals itself as a constantly swirling and eddying undercurrent of habitual concepts, associations, perceptions, desires without any real sequence, order or principle of light. It is a constant repetition in a circle unintelligent and unfruitful. Ordinarily the human understanding accepts this undercurrent and tries to reduce it to a partial order and sequence; but by so doing it becomes itself subject to it and partakes of that disorder, restlessness, unintelligent subjection to habit and blind purposeless repetition which makes the ordinary human reason a misleading, limited and even frivolous and futile instrument. There is nothing to be done with this fickle, restless, violent and disturbing factor but to get rid of it whether by detaching it and then reducing it to stillness or by giving a concentration and singleness to the thought by which it will of itself reject this alien and confusing element.

A third cause of impurity has its source in the understanding itself and consists in an improper action of the will to know. That will is proper to the understanding, but here again choice and unequal reaching after knowledge clog and distort. They lead to a partiality and attachment which makes the intellect cling to certain ideas and opinions with a more or less obstinate will to ignore the truth in other ideas and opinions, cling to certain fragments of a truth and shy against the admission of other parts which are yet necessary to its fullness, cling to certain predilections of knowledge and repel all knowledge that does not

agree with the personal temperament of thought which has been acquired by the past of the thinker. The remedy lies in a perfect equality of the mind, in the cultivation of an entire intellectual rectitude and in the perfection of mental disinterestedness. The purified understanding as it will not lend itself to any desire or craving, so will not lend itself either to any predilection or distaste for any particular idea or truth, and will refuse to be attached even to those ideas of which it is the most certain or to lay on them such an undue stress as is likely to disturb the balance of truth and deprecate the values of other elements of a complete and perfect knowledge.

An understanding thus purified would be a perfectly flexible, entire and faultless instrument of intellectual thought and being free from the inferior sources of obstruction and distortion would be capable of as true and complete a perception of the truths of the Self and the universe as the intellect can attain. But for real knowledge something more is necessary, since real knowledge is by our very definition of it supra-intellectual. In order that the understanding may not interfere with our attainment to real knowledge, we have to reach to that something more and cultivate a power exceedingly difficult for the active intellectual thinker and distasteful to his proclivities, the power of intellectual passivity. The object served is double and therefore two different kinds of passivity have to be acquired.

In the first place we have seen that intellectual thought is in itself inadequate and is not the highest thinking; the highest is that which comes through the intuitive mind and from the supramental faculty. So long as we are dominated by the intellectual habit and by the lower workings, the intuitive mind can only send its messages to us subconsciously and subject to a distortion more or less entire before it reaches the conscious mind; or if it works consciously, then only with an inadequate rarity and a great imperfection in its functioning. In order to strengthen the higher knowledge-faculty in us we have to effect the same separation between the intuitive and intellectual elements of our thought as we have already effected between the understanding and the sense-mind; and this is no easy task, for

not only do our intuitions come to us incrusted in the intellectual action, but there are a great number of mental workings which masquerade and ape the appearances of the higher faculty. The remedy is to train first the intellect to recognise the true intuition, to distinguish it from the false and then to accustom it, when it arrives at an intellectual perception or conclusion, to attach no final value to it, but rather look upward, refer all to the divine principle and wait in as complete a silence as it can command for the light from above. In this way it is possible to transmute a great part of our intellectual thinking into the luminous truth-conscious vision,—the ideal would be a complete transition,—or at least to increase greatly the frequency, purity and conscious force of the ideal knowledge working behind the intellect. The latter must learn to be subject and passive to the ideal faculty.

But for the knowledge of the Self it is necessary to have the power of a complete intellectual passivity, the power of dismissing all thought, the power of the mind to think not at all which the Gita in one passage enjoins. This is a hard saying for the occidental mind to which thought is the highest thing and which will be apt to mistake the power of the mind not to think, its complete silence for the incapacity of thought. But this power of silence is a capacity and not an incapacity, a power and not a weakness. It is a profound and pregnant stillness. Only when the mind is thus entirely still, like clear, motionless and level water, in a perfect purity and peace of the whole being and the soul transcends thought, can the Self which exceeds and originates all activities and becomings, the Silence from which all words are born, the Absolute of which all relativities are partial reflections manifest itself in the pure essence of our being. In a complete silence only is the Silence heard; in a pure peace only is its Being revealed. Therefore to us the name of That is the Silence and the Peace.

Chapter IV

Concentration

ALONG with purity and as a help to bring it about, concentration. Purity and concentration are indeed two aspects, feminine and masculine, passive and active, of the same status of being; purity is the condition in which concentration becomes entire, rightly effective, omnipotent; by concentration purity does its works and without it would only lead to a state of peaceful quiescence and eternal repose. Their opposites are also closely connected; for we have seen that impurity is a confusion of dharmas, a lax, mixed and mutually entangled action of the different parts of the being; and this confusion proceeds from an absence of right concentration of its knowledge on its energies in the embodied Soul. The fault of our nature is first an inert subjection to the impacts of things¹ as they come in upon the mind pell-mell without order or control and then a haphazard imperfect concentration managed fitfully, irregularly with a more or less chance emphasis on this or on that object according as they happen to interest, not the higher soul or the judging and discerning intellect, but the restless, leaping, fickle, easily tired, easily distracted lower mind which is the chief enemy of our progress. In such a condition purity, the right working of the functions, the clear, unstained and luminous order of the being is an impossibility; the various workings, given over to the chances of the environment and external influences, must necessarily run into each other and clog, divert, distract, pervert. Equally, without purity the complete, equal, flexible concentration of the being in right thought, right will, right feeling or secure status of spiritual experience is not possible. Therefore the two must proceed together, each helping the victory of the other, until we arrive at that eternal calm from which may proceed some

¹ *bāhyasparsa.*

partial image in the human being of the eternal, omnipotent and omniscient activity.

But in the path of knowledge as it is practised in India concentration is used in a special and more limited sense. It means that removal of the thought from all distracting activities of the mind and that concentration of it on the idea of the One by which the soul rises out of the phenomenal into the one Reality. It is by the thought that we dissipate ourselves in the phenomenal; it is by the gathering back of the thought into itself that we must draw ourselves back into the real. Concentration has three powers by which this aim can be effected. By concentration on anything whatsoever we are able to know that thing, to make it deliver up its concealed secrets; we must use this power to know not things, but the one Thing-in-itself. By concentration again the whole will can be gathered up for the acquisition of that which is still ungrasped, still beyond us; this power, if it is sufficiently trained, sufficiently single-minded, sufficiently sincere, sure of itself, faithful to itself alone, absolute in faith, we can use for the acquisition of any object whatsoever; but we ought to use it not for the acquisition of the many objects which the world offers to us, but to grasp spiritually that one object worthy of pursuit which is also the one subject worthy of knowledge. By concentration of our whole being on one status of itself, we can become whatever we choose; we can become, for instance, even if we were before a mass of weaknesses and fears, a mass instead of strength and courage, or we can become all a great purity, holiness and peace or a single universal soul of Love; but we ought, it is said, to use this power to become not even these things, high as they may be in comparison with what we now are, but rather to become that which is above all things and free from all action and attributes, the pure and absolute Being. All else, all other concentration can only be valuable for preparation, for previous steps, for a gradual training of the dissolute and self-dissipating thought, will and being towards their grand and unique object.

This use of concentration implies like every other a previous purification; it implies also in the end a renunciation, a cessation

and lastly an ascent into the absolute and transcendent state of Samadhi from which if it culminates, if it endures, there is, except perhaps for one soul out of many thousands, no return. For by that we go to the “supreme state of the Eternal whence souls revert not” into the cyclic action of Nature;² and it is into this Samadhi that the Yогin who aims at release from the world seeks to pass away at the time of leaving his body. We see this succession in the discipline of the Rajayoga. For first the Rajayогin must arrive at a certain moral and spiritual purity; he must get rid of the lower or downward activities of his mind, but afterwards he must stop all its activities and concentrate himself in the one idea that leads from activity to the quiescence of status. The Rajayогic concentration has several stages, that in which the object is seized, that in which it is held, that in which the mind is lost in the status which the object represents or to which the concentration leads, and only the last is termed Samadhi in the Rajayoga although the word is capable, as in the Gita, of a much wider sense. But in the Rajayогic Samadhi there are different grades of status,—that in which the mind, though lost to outward objects, still muses, thinks, perceives in the world of thought, that in which the mind is still capable of primary thought-formations and that in which, all out-darting of the mind even within itself having ceased, the soul rises beyond thought into the silence of the Incommunicable and Ineffable. In all Yoga there are indeed many preparatory objects of thought-concentration, forms, verbal formulas of thought, significant names, all of which are supports³ to the mind in this movement, all of which have to be used and transcended; the highest support according to the Upanishads is the mystic syllable AUM, whose three letters represent the Brahman or Supreme Self in its three degrees of status, the Waking Soul, the Dream Soul and the Sleep Soul, and the whole potent sound rises towards that which is beyond status as beyond activity.⁴

² *yato naiva nivartante tad dhāma paramān mama.*

³ *avalambana.*

⁴ Mandukya Upanishad.

For of all Yoga of knowledge the final goal is the Transcendent.

We have, however, conceived as the aim of an integral Yoga something more complex and less exclusive—less exclusively positive of the highest condition of the soul, less exclusively negative of its divine radiations. We must aim indeed at the Highest, the Source of all, the Transcendent but not to the exclusion of that which it transcends, rather as the source of an established experience and supreme state of the soul which shall transform all other states and remould our consciousness of the world into the form of its secret Truth. We do not seek to excise from our being all consciousness of the universe, but to realise God, Truth and Self in the universe as well as transcendent of it. We shall seek therefore not only the Ineffable, but also His manifestation as infinite being, consciousness and bliss embracing the universe and at play in it. For that triune infinity is His supreme manifestation and that we shall aspire to know, to share in and to become; and since we seek to realise this Trinity not only in itself but in its cosmic play, we shall aspire also to knowledge of and participation in the universal divine Truth, Knowledge, Will, Love which are His secondary manifestation, His divine becoming. With this too we shall aspire to identify ourselves, towards this too we shall strive to rise and, when the period of effort is passed, allow it by our renunciation of all egoism to draw us up into itself in our being and to descend into us and embrace us in all our becoming. This not only as a means of approach and passage to His supreme transcendence, but as the condition, even when we possess and are possessed by the Transcendent, of a divine life in the manifestation of the cosmos.

In order that we may do this, the terms concentration and Samadhi must assume for us a richer and profound meaning. All our concentration is merely an image of the divine Tapas by which the Self dwells gathered in itself, by which it manifests within itself, by which it maintains and possesses its manifestation, by which it draws back from all manifestation into its supreme oneness. Being dwelling in consciousness upon itself for bliss, this is the divine Tapas; and a Knowledge-Will dwelling

in force of consciousness on itself and its manifestations is the essence of the divine concentration, the Yoga of the Lord of Yoga. Given the self-differentiation of the Divine in which we dwell, concentration is the means by which the individual soul identifies itself with and enters into any form, state or psychological self-manifestation (*bhāva*) of the Self. To use this means for unification with the Divine is the condition for the attainment of divine knowledge and the principle of all Yoga of knowledge.

This concentration proceeds by the Idea, using thought, form and name as keys which yield up to the concentrating mind the Truth that lies concealed behind all thought, form and name; for it is through the Idea that the mental being rises beyond all expression to that which is expressed, to that of which the Idea itself is only the instrument. By concentration upon the Idea the mental existence which at present we are breaks open the barrier of our mentality and arrives at the state of consciousness, the state of being, the state of power of conscious-being and bliss of conscious-being to which the Idea corresponds and of which it is the symbol, movement and rhythm. Concentration by the Idea is, then, only a means, a key to open to us the superconscious planes of our existence; a certain self-gathered state of our whole existence lifted into that superconscious truth, unity and infinity of self-aware, self-blissful existence is the aim and culmination; and that is the meaning we shall give to the term Samadhi. Not merely a state withdrawn from all consciousness of the outward, withdrawn even from all consciousness of the inward into that which exists beyond both whether as seed of both or transcendent even of their seed-state; but a settled existence in the One and Infinite, united and identified with it, and this status to remain whether we abide in the waking condition in which we are conscious of the forms of things or we withdraw into the inward activity which dwells in the play of the principles of things, the play of their names and typal forms or we soar to the condition of static inwardness where we arrive at the principles themselves and at the principle of all principles, the seed of name and form.⁵

⁵ The Waking, Dream and Sleep states of the soul.

For the soul that has arrived at the essential Samadhi and is settled in it (*samādhista*) in the sense the Gita attaches to the word, has that which is fundamental to all experience and cannot fall from it by any experience however distracting to one who has not yet ascended the summit. It can embrace all in the scope of its being without being bound by any or deluded or limited.

When we arrive at this state, all our being and consciousness being concentrated, the necessity of concentration in the Idea ceases. For there in that supramental state the whole position of things is reversed. The mind is a thing that dwells in diffusion, in succession; it can only concentrate on one thing at a time and when not concentrated runs from one thing to another very much at random. Therefore it has to concentrate on a single idea, a single subject of meditation, a single object of contemplation, a single object of will in order to possess or master it, and this it must do to at least the temporary exclusion of all others. But that which is beyond the mind and into which we seek to rise is superior to the running process of the thought, superior to the division of ideas. The Divine is centred in itself and when it throws out ideas and activities does not divide itself or imprison itself in them, but holds them and their movement in its infinity; undivided, its whole self is behind each Idea and each movement and at the same time behind all of them together. Held by it, each spontaneously works itself out, not through a separate act of will, but by the general force of consciousness behind it; if to us there seems to be a concentration of divine Will and Knowledge in each, it is a multiple and equal and not an exclusive concentration, and the reality of it is rather a free and spontaneous working in a self-gathered unity and infinity. The soul which has risen to the divine Samadhi participates in the measure of its attainment in this reversed condition of things,—the true condition, for that which is the reverse of our mentality is the truth. It is for this reason that, as is said in the ancient books, the man who has arrived at Self-possession attains spontaneously without the need of concentration in thought and effort the knowledge or the result which the Idea or the Will in him moves out to embrace.

To arrive then at this settled divine status must be the object of our concentration. The first step in concentration must be always to accustom the discursive mind to a settled unwavering pursuit of a single course of connected thought on a single subject and this it must do undistracted by all lures and alien calls on its attention. Such concentration is common enough in our ordinary life, but it becomes more difficult when we have to do it inwardly without any outward object or action on which to keep the mind; yet this inward concentration is what the seeker of knowledge must effect.⁶ Nor must it be merely the consecutive thought of the intellectual thinker, whose only object is to conceive and intellectually link together his conceptions. It is not, except perhaps at first, a process of reasoning that is wanted so much as a dwelling so far as possible on the fruitful essence of the idea which by the insistence of the soul's will upon it must yield up all the facets of its truth. Thus if it be the divine Love that is the subject of concentration, it is on the essence of the idea of God as Love that the mind should concentrate in such a way that the various manifestation of the divine Love should arise luminously, not only to the thought, but in the heart and being and vision of the sadhaka. The thought may come first and the experience afterwards, but equally the experience may come first and the knowledge arise out of the experience. Afterwards the thing attained has to be dwelt on and more and more held till it becomes a constant experience and finally the dharma or law of the being.

This is the process of concentrated meditation; but a more strenuous method is the fixing of the whole mind in concentration on the essence of the idea only, so as to reach not the thought-knowledge or the psychological experience of the subject, but the very essence of the thing behind the idea. In this process thought ceases and passes into the absorbed or ecstatic contemplation of the object or by a merging into it in an inner Samadhi. If this be the process followed, then subsequently the

⁶ In the elementary stages of internal debate and judgment, *vitarka* and *vicāra*, for the correction of false ideas and arrival at the intellectual truth.

state into which we rise must still be called down to take possession of the lower being, to shed its light, power and bliss on our ordinary consciousness. For otherwise we may possess it, as many do, in the elevated condition or in the inward Samadhi, but we shall lose our hold of it when we awake or descend into the contacts of the world; and this truncated possession is not the aim of an integral Yoga.

A third process is neither at first to concentrate in a strenuous meditation on the one subject nor in a strenuous contemplation of the one object of thought-vision, but first to still the mind altogether. This may be done by various ways; one is to stand back from the mental action altogether not participating in but simply watching it until, tired of its unsanctioned leaping and running, it falls into an increasing and finally an absolute quiet. Another is to reject the thought-suggestions, to cast them away from the mind whenever they come and firmly hold to the peace of the being which really and always exists behind the trouble and riot of the mind. When this secret peace is unveiled, a great calm settles on the being and there comes usually with it the perception and experience of the all-pervading silent Brahman, everything else at first seeming to be mere form and eidolon. On the basis of this calm everything else may be built up in the knowledge and experience no longer of the external phenomena of things but of the deeper truth of the divine manifestation.

Ordinarily, once this state is obtained, strenuous concentration will be found no longer necessary. A free concentration of will⁷ using thought merely for suggestion and the giving of light to the lower members will take its place. This Will will then insist on the physical being, the vital existence, the heart and the mind remoulding themselves in the forms of the Divine which reveal themselves out of the silent Brahman. By swifter or slower degrees according to the previous preparation and purification of the members, they will be obliged with more or less struggle to obey the law of the will and its thought-suggestion, so that

⁷ This subject will be dealt with more in detail when we come to the Yoga of self-perfection.

eventually the knowledge of the Divine takes possession of our consciousness on all its planes and the image of the Divine is formed in our human existence even as it was done by the old Vedic Sadhakas. For the integral Yoga this is the most direct and powerful discipline.

Chapter V

Renunciation

IF DISCIPLINE of all the members of our being by purification and concentration may be described as the right arm of the body of Yoga, renunciation is its left arm. By discipline or positive practice we confirm in ourselves the truth of things, truth of being, truth of knowledge, truth of love, truth of works and replace with these the falsehoods that have overgrown and perverted our nature; by renunciation we seize upon the falsehoods, pluck up their roots and cast them out of our way so that they shall no longer hamper by their persistence, their resistance or their recurrence the happy and harmonious growth of our divine living. Renunciation is an indispensable instrument of our perfection.

How far shall this renunciation go? what shall be its nature? and in what way shall it be applied? There is an established tradition long favoured by great religious teachings and by men of profound spiritual experience that renunciation must not only be complete as a discipline but definite and final as an end and that it shall fall nothing short of the renunciation of life itself and of our mundane existence. Many causes have contributed to the growth of this pure, lofty and august tradition. There is first the profounder cause of the radical opposition between the sullied and imperfect nature of life in the world as it now is in the present stage of our human evolution and the nature of spiritual living; and this opposition has led to the entire rejection of world-existence as a lie, an insanity of the soul, a troubled and unhappy dream or at best a flawed, specious and almost worthless good or to its characterisation as a kingdom of the world, the flesh and the devil, and therefore for the divinely led and divinely attracted soul only a place of ordeal and preparation or at best a play of the All-existence, a game of cross-purposes which He tires of and abandons. A second cause is the soul's

hunger for personal salvation, for escape into some farther or farthest height of unalloyed bliss and peace untroubled by the labour and the struggle; or else it is its unwillingness to return from the ecstasy of the divine embrace into the lower field of work and service. But there are other slighter causes incidental to spiritual experience,— strong feeling and practical proof of the great difficulty, which we willingly exaggerate into an impossibility, of combining the life of works and action with spiritual peace and the life of realisation; or else the joy which the mind comes to take in the mere act and state of renunciation,— as it comes indeed to take joy in anything that it has attained or to which it has inured itself,— and the sense of peace and deliverance which is gained by indifference to the world and to the objects of man's desire. Lowest causes of all are the weakness that shrinks from the struggle, the disgust and disappointment of the soul baffled by the great cosmic labour, the selfishness that cares not what becomes of those left behind us so long as we personally can be free from the monstrous ever-circling wheel of death and rebirth, the indifference to the cry that rises up from a labouring humanity.

For the sadhaka of an integral Yoga none of these reasons are valid. With weakness and selfishness, however spiritual in their guise or trend, he can have no dealings; a divine strength and courage and a divine compassion and helpfulness are the very stuff of that which he would be, they are that very nature of the Divine which he would take upon himself as a robe of spiritual light and beauty. The revoltings of the great wheel bring to him no sense of terror or giddiness; he rises above it in his soul and knows from above their divine law and their divine purpose. The difficulty of harmonising the divine life with human living, of being in God and yet living in man is the very difficulty that he is set here to solve and not to shun. He has learned that the joy, the peace and the deliverance are an imperfect crown and no real possession if they do not form a state secure in itself, inalienable to the soul, not dependent on aloofness and inaction but firm in the storm and the race and the battle, unsullied whether by the joy of the world or by its suffering. The ecstasy of the divine

embrace will not abandon him because he obeys the impulse of divine love for God in humanity; or if it seems to draw back from him for a while, he knows by experience that it is to try and test him still farther so that some imperfection in his own way of meeting it may fall away from him. Personal salvation he does not seek except as a necessity for the human fulfilment and because he who is himself in bonds cannot easily free others,—though to God nothing is impossible; for a heaven of personal joys he has no hankerings even as a hell of personal sufferings has for him no terrors. If there is an opposition between the spiritual life and that of the world, it is that gulf which he is here to bridge, that opposition which he is here to change into a harmony. If the world is ruled by the flesh and the devil, all the more reason that the children of Immortality should be here to conquer it for God and the Spirit. If life is an insanity, then there are so many million souls to whom there must be brought the light of divine reason; if a dream, yet is it real within itself to so many dreamers who must be brought either to dream nobler dreams or to awaken; or if a lie, then the truth has to be given to the deluded. Nor, if it be said that only by the luminous example of escape from the world can we help the world, shall we accept that dogma, since the contrary example of great Avatars is there to show that not only by rejecting the life of the world as it is can we help, but also and more by accepting and uplifting it. And if it is a play of the All-Existence, then we may well consent to play out our part in it with grace and courage, well take delight in the game along with our divine Playmate.

But, most of all, the view we have taken of the world forbids the renunciation of world-existence so long as we can be anything to God and man in their working-out of its purposes. We regard the world not as an invention of the devil or a self-delusion of the soul, but as a manifestation of the Divine, although as yet a partial because a progressive and evolutionary manifestation. Therefore for us renunciation of life cannot be the goal of life nor rejection of the world the object for which the world was created. We seek to realise our unity with God, but for us that realisation involves a complete and absolute recognition

of our unity with man and we cannot cut the two asunder. To use Christian language, the Son of God is also the Son of Man and both elements are necessary to the complete Christhood; or to use an Indian form of thought, the divine Narayana of whom the universe is only one ray is revealed and fulfilled in man; the complete man is Nara-Narayana and in that completeness he symbolises the supreme mystery of existence.

Therefore renunciation must be for us merely an instrument and not an object; nor can it be the only or the chief instrument since our object is the fulfilment of the Divine in the human being, a positive aim which cannot be reached by negative means. The negative means can only be for the removal of that which stands in the way of the positive fulfilment. It must be a renunciation, a complete renunciation of all that is other than and opposed to the divine self-fulfilment and a progressive renunciation of all that is a lesser or only a partial achievement. We shall have no attachment to our life in the world; if that attachment exists, we must renounce it and renounce utterly; but neither shall we have any attachment to the escape from the world, to salvation, to the great self-annihilation; if that attachment exists, that also we must renounce and renounce it utterly.

Again our renunciation must obviously be an inward renunciation; especially and above all, a renunciation of attachment and the craving of desire in the senses and the heart, of self-will in the thought and action and of egoism in the centre of the consciousness. For these things are the three knots by which we are bound to our lower nature and if we can renounce these utterly, there is nothing else that can bind us. Therefore attachment and desire must be utterly cast out; there is nothing in the world to which we must be attached, not wealth nor poverty, nor joy nor suffering, nor life nor death, nor greatness nor littleness, nor vice nor virtue, nor friend, nor wife, nor children, nor country, nor our work and mission, nor heaven nor earth, nor all that is within them or beyond them. And this does not mean that there is nothing at all that we shall love, nothing in which we shall take delight; for attachment is egoism in love and not love

itself, desire is limitation and insecurity in a hunger for pleasure and satisfaction and not the seeking after the divine delight in things. A universal love we must have, calm and yet eternally intense beyond the brief vehemence of the most violent passion; a delight in things rooted in a delight in God that does not adhere to their forms but to that which they conceal in themselves and that embraces the universe without being caught in its meshes.¹

Self-will in thought and action has, we have already seen, to be quite renounced if we would be perfect in the way of divine works; it has equally to be renounced if we are to be perfect in divine knowledge. This self-will means an egoism in the mind which attaches itself to its preferences, its habits, its past or present formations of thought and view and will because it regards them as itself or its own, weaves around them the delicate threads of “I-ness” and “my-ness” and lives in them like a spider in its web. It hates to be disturbed, as a spider hates attack on its web, and feels foreign and unhappy if transplanted to fresh view-points and formations as a spider feels foreign in another web than its own. This attachment must be entirely excised from the mind. Not only must we give up the ordinary attitude to the world and life to which the unawakened mind clings as its natural element; but we must not remain bound in any mental construction of our own or in any intellectual thought-system or arrangement of religious dogmas or logical conclusions; we must not only cut asunder the snare of the mind and the senses, but flee also beyond the snare of the thinker, the snare of the theologian and the church-builder, the meshes of the Word and the bondage of the Idea. All these are within us waiting to wall in the spirit with forms; but we must always go beyond, always renounce the lesser for the greater, the finite for the Infinite; we must be prepared to proceed from illumination to illumination, from experience to experience, from soul-state to soul-state so as to reach the utmost transcendence of the Divine and its utmost universality. Nor must we attach ourselves even

¹ *Nirlipta*. The divine Ananda in things is *niṣkāma* and *nirlipta*, free from desire and therefore not attached.

to the truths we hold most securely, for they are but forms and expressions of the Ineffable who refuses to limit himself to any form or expression; always we must keep ourselves open to the higher Word from above that does not confine itself to its own sense and the light of the Thought that carries in it its own opposites.

But the centre of all resistance is egoism and this we must pursue into every covert and disguise and drag it out and slay it; for its disguises are endless and it will cling to every shred of possible self-concealment. Altruism and indifference are often its most effective disguises; so draped, it will riot boldly in the very face of the divine spies who are missioned to hunt it out. Here the formula of the supreme knowledge comes to our help; we have nothing to do in our essential standpoint with these distinctions, for there is no I nor thou, but only one divine Self equal in all embodiments, equal in the individual and the group, and to realise that, to express that, to serve that, to fulfil that is all that matters. Self-satisfaction and altruism, enjoyment and indifference are not the essential thing. If the realisation, fulfilment, service of the one Self demands from us an action that seems to others self-service or self-assertion in the egoistic sense or seems egoistic enjoyment and self-indulgence, that action we must do; we must be governed by the guide within rather than by the opinions of men. The influence of the environment works often with great subtlety; we prefer and put on almost unconsciously the garb which will look best in the eye that regards us from outside and we allow a veil to drop over the eye within; we are impelled to drape ourselves in the vow of poverty, or in the garb of service, or in outward proofs of indifference and renunciation and a spotless sainthood because that is what tradition and opinion demand of us and so we can make best an impression on our environment. But all this is vanity and delusion. We may be called upon to assume these things, for that may be the uniform of our service; but equally it may not. The eye of man outside matters nothing; the eye within is all.

We see in the teaching of the Gita how subtle a thing is the freedom from egoism which is demanded. Arjuna is driven to

fight by the egoism of strength, the egoism of the Kshatriya; he is turned from the battle by the contrary egoism of weakness, the shrinking, the spirit of disgust, the false pity that overcomes the mind, the nervous being and the senses,—not that divine compassion which strengthens the arm and clarifies the knowledge. But this weakness comes garbed as renunciation, as virtue: “Better the life of the beggar than to taste these blood-stained enjoyments; I desire not the rule of all the earth, no, nor the kingdom of the gods.” How foolish of the Teacher, we might say, not to confirm this mood, to lose this sublime chance of adding one more great soul to the army of Sannyasins, one more shining example before the world of a holy renunciation. But the Guide sees otherwise, the Guide who is not to be deceived by words; “This is weakness and delusion and egoism that speak in thee. Behold the Self, open thy eyes to the knowledge, purify thy soul of egoism.” And afterwards? “Fight, conquer, enjoy a wealthy kingdom.” Or to take another example from ancient Indian tradition. It was egoism, it would seem, that drove Rama, the Avatara, to raise an army and destroy a nation in order to recover his wife from the King of Lanka. But would it have been a lesser egoism to drape himself in indifference and misusing the formal terms of the knowledge to say, “I have no wife, no enemy, no desire; these are illusions of the senses; let me cultivate the Brahman-knowledge and let Ravana do what he will with the daughter of Janaka”?

The criterion is within, as the Gita insists. It is to have the soul free from craving and attachment, but free from the attachment to inaction as well as from the egoistic impulse to action, free from attachment to the forms of virtue as well as from the attraction to sin. It is to be rid of “I-ness” and “my-ness” so as to live in the one Self and act in the one Self; to reject the egoism of refusing to work through the individual centre of the universal Being as well as the egoism of serving the individual mind and life and body to the exclusion of others. To live in the Self is not to dwell for oneself alone in the Infinite immersed and oblivious of all things in that ocean of impersonal self-delight; but it is to live as the Self and in the Self equal in this

embodiment and all embodiments and beyond all embodiments. This is the integral knowledge.

It will be seen that the scope we give to the idea of renunciation is different from the meaning currently attached to it. Currently its meaning is self-denial, inhibition of pleasure, rejection of the objects of pleasure. Self-denial is a necessary discipline for the soul of man, because his heart is ignorantly attached; inhibition of pleasure is necessary because his sense is caught and clogged in the mud-honey of sensuous satisfactions; rejection of the objects of pleasure is imposed because the mind fixes on the object and will not leave it to go beyond it and within itself. If the mind of man were not thus ignorant, attached, bound even in its restless inconstancy, deluded by the forms of things, renunciation would not have been needed; the soul could have travelled on the path of delight, from the lesser to the greater, from joy to diviner joy. At present that is not practicable. It must give up from within everything to which it is attached in order that it may gain that which they are in their reality. The external renunciation is not the essential, but even that is necessary for a time, indispensable in many things and sometimes useful in all; we may even say that a complete external renunciation is a stage through which the soul must pass at some period of its progress,—though always it should be without those self-willed violences and fierce self-torturings which are an offence to the Divine seated within us. But in the end this renunciation or self-denial is always an instrument and the period for its use passes. The rejection of the object ceases to be necessary when the object can no longer ensnare us because what the soul enjoys is no longer the object as an object but the Divine which it expresses; the inhibition of pleasure is no longer needed when the soul no longer seeks pleasure but possesses the delight of the Divine in all things equally without the need of a personal or physical possession of the thing itself; self-denial loses its field when the soul no longer claims anything, but obeys consciously the will of the one Self in all beings. It is then that we are freed from the Law and released into the liberty of the Spirit.

We must be prepared to leave behind on the path not only

that which we stigmatise as evil, but that which seems to us to be good, yet is not the one good. There are things which were beneficial, helpful, which seemed perhaps at one time the one thing desirable, and yet once their work is done, once they are attained, they become obstacles and even hostile forces when we are called to advance beyond them. There are desirable states of the soul which it is dangerous to rest in after they have been mastered, because then we do not march on to the wider kingdoms of God beyond. Even divine realisations must not be clung to, if they are not the divine realisation in its utter essentiality and completeness. We must rest at nothing less than the All, nothing short of the utter transcendence. And if we can thus be free in the spirit, we shall find out all the wonder of God's workings; we shall find that in inwardly renouncing everything we have lost nothing. "By all this abandoned thou shalt come to enjoy the All." For everything is kept for us and restored to us but with a wonderful change and transfiguration into the All-Good and the All-Beautiful, the All-Light and the All-Delight of Him who is for ever pure and infinite and the mystery and the miracle that ceases not through the ages.

Chapter VI

The Synthesis of the Disciplines of Knowledge

IN THE last chapter we have spoken of renunciation in its most general scope, even as we spoke of concentration in all its possibilities; what has been said, applies therefore equally to the path of Works and the path of Devotion as to the path of Knowledge; for on all three concentration and renunciation are needed, though the way and spirit in which they are applied may vary. But we must now turn more particularly to the actual steps of the Path of Knowledge on which the double force of concentration and renunciation must aid us to advance. Practically, this path is a reascent up the great ladder of being down which the soul has descended into the material existence.

The central aim of Knowledge is the recovery of the Self, of our true self-existence, and this aim presupposes the admission that our present mode of being is not our true self-existence. No doubt, we have rejected the trenchant solutions which cut the knot of the riddle of the universe; we recognise it neither as a fiction of material appearance created by Force, nor as an unreality set up by the Mind, nor as a bundle of sensations, ideas and results of idea and sensation with a great Void or a great blissful Zero behind it to strive towards as our true truth of eternal non-existence. We accept the Self as a reality and the universe as a reality of the Self, a reality of its consciousness and not of mere material force and formation, but none the less or rather all the more for that reason a reality. Still, though the universe is a fact and not a fiction, a fact of the divine and universal and not a fiction of the individual self, our state of existence here is a state of ignorance, not the true truth of our being. We conceive of ourselves falsely, we see ourselves as we are not; we live in a false relation with our environment, because we know neither

the universe nor ourselves for what they really are but with an imperfect view founded on a temporary fiction which the Soul and Nature have established between themselves for the convenience of the evolving ego. And this falsity is the root of a general perversion, confusion and suffering which besiege at every step both our internal life and our relations with our environment. Our personal life and our communal life, our commerce with ourselves and our commerce with our fellows are founded on a falsity and are therefore false in their recognised principles and methods, although through all this error a growing truth continually seeks to express itself. Hence the supreme importance to man of Knowledge, not what is called the practical knowledge of life, but of the profoundest knowledge of the Self and Nature¹ on which alone a true practice of life can be founded.

The error proceeds from a false identification. Nature has created within her material unity separate-seeming bodies which the Soul manifested in material Nature enfolds, inhabits, possesses, uses; the Soul forgetting itself experiences only this single knot in Matter and says "I am this body." It thinks of itself as the body, suffers with the body, enjoys with the body, is born with the body, is dissolved with the body; or so at least it views its self-existence. Again, Nature has created within her unity of universal life separate-seeming currents of life which form themselves into a whorl of vitality around and in each body, and the Soul manifested in vital Nature seizes on and is seized by that current, is imprisoned momentarily in that little whirling vortex of life. The Soul, still forgetting itself, says "I am this life"; it thinks of itself as the life, craves with its cravings or desires, wallows in its pleasures, bleeds with its wounds, rushes or stumbles with its movements. If it is still mainly governed by the body-sense, it identifies its own existence with that of the whorl and thinks "When this whorl is dissipated by the dissolution of the body round which it has formed itself, then I shall be no more." If it has been able to sense the current of life which has formed the vortex, it thinks of itself as that

¹ *ātmajñāna* and *tattvajñāna*.

current and says "I am this stream of life; I have entered upon the possession of this body, I shall leave it and enter upon the possession of other bodies: I am an immortal life revolving in a cycle of constant rebirth."

But again Nature has created within her mental unity, formed in the universal Mind separate-seeming dynamos as it were of mentality, constant centres for the generation, distribution and reabsorption of mental force and mental activities, stations as it were in a system of mental telegraphy where messages are conceived, written, sent, received, deciphered, and these messages and these activities are of many kinds, sensational, emotional, perceptual, conceptual, intuitional, all of which the Soul manifested in mental Nature accepts, uses for its outlook on the world and seems to itself to project and to receive their shocks, to suffer or to master their consequences. Nature installs the base of these dynamos in the material bodies she has formed, makes these bodies the ground for her stations and connects the mental with the material by a nerve-system full of the movement of vital currents through which the mind becomes conscious of the material world and, so far as it chooses, of the vital world of Nature. Otherwise the mind would be conscious of the mental world first and chiefly and would only indirectly glimpse the material. As it is, its attention is fixed on the body and the material world in which it has been installed and it is aware of the rest of existence only dimly, indirectly or subconsciously in that vast remainder of itself with regard to which superficially it has become irresponsive and oblivious.

The Soul identifies itself with this mental dynamo or station and says "I am this mind." And since the mind is absorbed in the bodily life, it thinks "I am a mind in a living body" or, still more commonly, "I am a body which lives and thinks." It identifies itself with the thoughts, emotions, sensations of the embodied mind and imagines that because when the body is dissolved all this will dissolve, itself also will cease to exist. Or if it becomes conscious of the current of persistence of mental personality, it thinks of itself as a mental soul occupying the body whether

once or repeatedly and returning from earthly living to mental worlds beyond; the persistence of this mental being mentally enjoying or suffering sometimes in the body, sometimes on the mental or vital plane of Nature it calls its immortal existence. Or else, because the mind is a principle of light and knowledge, however imperfect, and can have some notion of what is beyond it, it sees the possibility of a dissolution of the mental being into that which is beyond, some Void or some eternal Existence, and it says, "There I, the mental soul, cease to be." Such dissolution it dreads or desires, denies or affirms according to its measure of attachment to or repulsion from this present play of embodied mind and vitality.

Now, all this is a mixture of truth and falsehood. Mind, Life, Matter exist and mental, vital, physical individualisation exists as facts in Nature, but the identification of the soul with these things is a false identification. Mind, Life and Matter are ourselves only in this sense that they are principles of being which the true self has evolved by the meeting and interaction of Soul and Nature in order to express a form of its one existence as the Cosmos. Individual mind, life and body are a play of these principles which is set up in the commerce of Soul and Nature as a means for the expression of that multiplicity of itself of which the one Existence is eternally capable and which it holds eternally involved in its unity. Individual mind, life and body are forms of ourselves in so far as we are centres of the multiplicity of the One; universal Mind, Life and Body are also forms of our self, because we are that One in our being. But the self is more than universal or individual mind, life and body and when we limit ourselves by identification with these things, we found our knowledge on a falsehood, we falsify our determining view and our practical experience not only of our self-being but of our cosmic existence and of our individual activities.

The Self is an eternal utter Being and pure existence of which all these things are becomings. From this knowledge we have to proceed; this knowledge we have to realise and make it the foundation of the inner and the outer life of the individual. The Yoga of Knowledge, starting from this primary truth, has conceived

a negative and positive method of discipline by which we shall get rid of these false identifications and recoil back from them into true self-knowledge. The negative method is to say always "I am not the body" so as to contradict and root out the false idea "I am the body", to concentrate on this knowledge and by renunciation of the attachment of the soul to the physical get rid of the body-sense. We say again "I am not the life" and by concentration on this knowledge and renunciation of attachment to the vital movements and desires, get rid of the life-sense. We say, finally, "I am not the mind, the motion, the sense, the thought" and by concentration on this knowledge and renunciation of the mental activities, get rid of the mind-sense. When we thus constantly create a gulf between ourselves and the things with which we identified ourselves, their veils progressively fall away from us and the Self begins to be visible to our experience. Of that then we say "I am That, the pure, the eternal, the self-blissful" and by concentrating our thought and being upon it we become That and are able finally to renounce the individual existence and the Cosmos. Another positive method belonging rather to the Rajayoga is to concentrate on the thought of the Brahman and shut out from us all other ideas, so that this dynamo of mind shall cease to work upon our external or varied internal existence; by mental cessation the vital and physical play also shall fall to rest in an eternal samadhi, some inexpressible deepest trance of the being in which we shall pass into the absolute Existence.

This discipline is evidently a self-centred and exclusive inner movement which gets rid of the world by denying it in thought and shutting the eyes of the soul to it in vision. But the universe is there as a truth in God even though the individual soul may have shut its eyes to it and the Self is there in the universe really and not falsely, supporting all that we have rejected, truly immanent in all things, really embracing the individual in the universal as well as embracing the universe in that which exceeds and transcends it. What shall we do with this eternal Self in this persistent universe which we see encompassing us every time we come out of the trance of inner meditation? The ascetic Path of Knowledge has its solution and its discipline for the soul that

looks out on the universe. It is to regard the immanent and all-encompassing and all-constituting Self in the image of the ether in which all forms are, which is in all forms, of which all forms are made. In that ether cosmic Life and Mind move as the Breath of things, an atmospheric sea in the ethereal, and constitute from it all these forms; but what they constitute are merely name and form and not realities; the form of the pot we see is a form of earth only and goes back into the earth, earth a form resolvable into the cosmic Life, the cosmic Life a movement that falls to rest in that silent immutable Ether. Concentrating on this knowledge, rejecting all phenomenon and appearance, we come to see the whole as an illusion of name and form in the ether that is Brahman; it becomes unreal to us; and the universe becoming unreal the immanence becomes unreal and there is only the Self upon which our mind has falsely imposed the name and form of the universe. Thus are we justified in the withdrawal of the individual self into the Absolute.

Still, the Self goes on with its imperishable aspect of immanence, its immutable aspect of divine envelopment, its endless trick of becoming each thing and all things; our detection of the cheat and our withdrawal do not seem to affect one tittle either the Self or the universe. Must we not then know also what it is that thus persists superior to our acceptance and rejection and too great, too eternal to be affected by it? Here too there must be some invincible reality at work and the integrality of Knowledge demands that we shall see and realise it; otherwise it may prove that our own knowledge and not the Lord in the universe was the cheat and the illusion. Therefore we must concentrate again and see and realise also this which persists so sovereignly and must know the Self as no other than the Supreme Soul which is the Lord of Nature, the upholder of cosmic existence by whose sanction it proceeds, whose will compels its multitudinous actions and determines its perpetual cycles. And we must yet concentrate once again and see and realise and must know the Self as the one Existence who is both the Soul of all and the Nature of all, at once Purusha and Prakriti and so able both to express himself in all these forms of things and to be all these

formations. Otherwise we have excluded what the Self does not exclude and made a wilful choice in our knowledge.

The old ascetic Path of Knowledge admitted the unity of things and the concentration on all these aspects of the one Existence, but it made a distinction and a hierarchy. The Self that becomes all these forms of things is the Virat or universal Soul; the Self that creates all these forms is Hiranyagarbha, the luminous or creatively perceptive Soul; the Self that contains all these things involved in it is Prajna, the conscious Cause or originally determining Soul; beyond all these is the Absolute who permits all this unreality, but has no dealings with it. Into That we must withdraw and have no farther dealings with the universe, since Knowledge means the final Knowledge, and therefore these lesser realisations must fall away from us or be lost in That. But evidently from our point of view these are practical distinctions made by the mind which have a value for certain purposes, but no ultimate value. Our view of the world insists on unity; the universal Self is not different from the perceptive and creative, nor the perceptive from the causal, nor the causal from the Absolute, but it is one "Self-being which has become all becomings", and which is not any other than the Lord who manifests Himself as all these individual existences nor the Lord any other than the sole-existing Brahman who verily is all this that we can see, sense, live or mentalise. That Self, Lord, Brahman we would know that we may realise our unity with it and with all that it manifests and in that unity we would live. For we demand of knowledge that it shall unite; the knowledge that divides must always be a partial knowing good for certain practical purposes; the knowledge that unites is *the* knowledge.

Therefore our integral Yoga will take up these various disciplines and concentrations, but harmonise and if possible fuse them by a synthesis which removes their mutual exclusions. Not realising the Lord and the All only to reject them for silent Self or unknowable Absolute as would an exclusively transcendental, nor living for the Lord alone or in the All alone as would an exclusively theistic or an exclusively pantheistic Yoga, the seeker

of integral knowledge will limit himself neither in his thought nor in his practice nor in his realisation by any religious creed or philosophical dogma. He will seek the Truth of existence in its completeness. The ancient disciplines he will not reject, for they rest upon eternal truths, but he will give them an orientation in conformity with his aim.

We must recognise that our primary aim in knowledge must be to realise our own supreme Self more than that Self in others or as the Lord of Nature or as the All; for that is the pressing need of the individual, to arrive at the highest truth of his own being, to set right its disorders, confusions, false identifications, to arrive at its right concentration and purity and to know and mount to its source. But we do this not in order to disappear into its source, but so that our whole existence and all the members of this inner kingdom may find their right basis, may live in our highest self, live for our highest self only and obey no other law than that which proceeds from our highest self and is given to our purified being without any falsification in the transmitting mentality. And if we do this rightly we shall discover that in finding this supreme Self we have found the one Self in all, the one Lord of our nature and of all Nature, the All of ourselves who is the All of the universe. For this that we see in ourselves we must necessarily see everywhere, since that is the truth of His unity. By discovering and using rightly the Truth of our being the barrier between our individuality and the universe will necessarily be forced open and cast away and the Truth that we realise in our own being cannot fail to realise itself to us in the universality which will then be our self. Realising in ourselves the "I am He" of the Vedanta, we cannot but realise in looking upon all around us the identical knowledge on its other side, "Thou art That." We have only to see how practically the discipline must be conducted in order that we may arrive successfully at this great unification.

Chapter VII

The Release from Subjection to the Body

OUR FIRST step in this path of knowledge, having once determined in our intellect that what seems is not the Truth, that the self is not the body or life or mind, since these are only its forms, must be to set right our mind in its practical relation with the life and the body so that it may arrive at its own right relation with the Self. This it is easiest to do by a device with which we are already familiar, since it played a great part in our view of the Yoga of Works; it is to create a separation between the Prakriti and the Purusha. The Purusha, the soul that knows and commands has got himself involved in the workings of his executive conscious force, so that he mistakes this physical working of it which we call the body for himself; he forgets his own nature as the soul that knows and commands; he believes his mind and soul to be subject to the law and working of the body; he forgets that he is so much else besides that is greater than the physical form; he forgets that the mind is really greater than Matter and ought not to submit to its obscurations, reactions, habit of inertia, habit of incapacity; he forgets that he is more even than the mind, a Power which can raise the mental being above itself; that he is the Master, the Transcendent and it is not fit the Master should be enslaved to his own workings, the Transcendent imprisoned in a form which exists only as a trifle in its own being. All this forgetfulness has to be cured by the Purusha remembering his own true nature and first by his remembering that the body is only a working and only one working of Prakriti.

We say then to the mind "This is a working of Prakriti, this is neither thyself nor myself; stand back from it." We shall find, if we try, that the mind has this power of detachment and

can stand back from the body not only in idea, but in act and as it were physically or rather vitally. This detachment of the mind must be strengthened by a certain attitude of indifference to the things of the body; we must not care essentially about its sleep or its waking, its movement or its rest, its pain or its pleasure, its health or ill-health, its vigour or its fatigue, its comfort or its discomfort, or what it eats or drinks. This does not mean that we shall not keep the body in right order so far as we can; we have not to fall into violent asceticisms or a positive neglect of the physical frame. But we have not either to be affected in mind by hunger or thirst or discomfort or ill-health or attach the importance which the physical and vital man attaches to the things of the body, or indeed any but a quite subordinate and purely instrumental importance. Nor must this instrumental importance be allowed to assume the proportions of a necessity; we must not for instance imagine that the purity of the mind depends on the things we eat or drink, although during a certain stage restrictions in eating and drinking are useful to our inner progress; nor on the other hand must we continue to think that the dependence of the mind or even of the life on food and drink is anything more than a habit, a customary relation which Nature has set up between these principles. As a matter of fact the food we take can be reduced by contrary habit and new relation to a minimum without the mental or vital vigour being in any way reduced; even on the contrary with a judicious development they can be trained to a greater potentiality of vigour by learning to rely on the secret fountains of mental and vital energy with which they are connected more than upon the minor aid of physical aliments. This aspect of self-discipline is however more important in the Yoga of self-perfection than here; for our present purpose the important point is the renunciation by the mind of attachment to or dependence on the things of the body.

Thus disciplined the mind will gradually learn to take up towards the body the true attitude of the Purusha. First of all, it will know the mental Purusha as the upholder of the body and not in any way the body itself; for it is quite other than

the physical existence which it upholds by the mind through the agency of the vital force. This will come to be so much the normal attitude of the whole being to the physical frame that the latter will feel to us as if something external and detachable like the dress we wear or an instrument we happen to be carrying in our hand. We may even come to feel that the body is in a certain sense non-existent except as a sort of partial expression of our vital force and of our mentality. These experiences are signs that the mind is coming to a right poise regarding the body, that it is exchanging the false view-point of the mentality obsessed and captured by physical sensation for the view-point of the true truth of things.

Secondly, with regard to the movements and experiences of the body the mind will come to know the Purusha seated within it as, first, the witness or observer of the movements and, secondly, the knower or perceiver of the experiences. It will cease to consider in thought or feel in sensation these movements and experiences as its own but rather consider and feel them as not its own, as operations of Nature governed by the qualities of Nature and their interaction upon each other. This detachment can be made so normal and carried so far that there will be a kind of division between the mind and the body and the former will observe and experience the hunger, thirst, pain, fatigue, depression, etc. of the physical being as if they were experiences of some other person with whom it has so close a *rappo*rt as to be aware of all that is going on within him. This division is a great means, a great step towards mastery; for the mind comes to observe these things first without being overpowered and finally without being at all affected by them, dispassionately, with clear understanding but with perfect detachment. This is the initial liberation of the mental being from servitude to the body; for by right knowledge put steadily into practice liberation comes inevitably.

Finally, the mind will come to know the Purusha in the mind as the master of Nature whose sanction is necessary to her movements. It will find that as the giver of the sanction he can withdraw the original fiat from the previous habits of

Nature and that eventually the habit will cease or change in the direction indicated by the will of the Purusha; not at once, for the old sanction persists as an obstinate consequence of the past Karma of Nature until that is exhausted, and a good deal also depends on the force of the habit and the idea of fundamental necessity which the mind had previously attached to it; but if it is not one of the fundamental habits Nature has established for the relation of the mind, life and body and if the old sanction is not renewed by the mind or the habit willingly indulged, then eventually the change will come. Even the habit of hunger and thirst can be minimised, inhibited, put away; the habit of disease can be similarly minimised and gradually eliminated and in the meantime the power of the mind to set right the disorders of the body whether by conscious manipulation of vital force or by simple mental fiat will immensely increase. By a similar process the habit by which the bodily nature associates certain forms and degrees of activity with strain, fatigue, incapacity can be rectified and the power, freedom, swiftness, effectiveness of the work whether physical or mental which can be done with this bodily instrument marvellously increased, doubled, tripled, decupled.

This side of the method belongs properly to the Yoga of self-perfection; but it is as well to speak briefly of these things here both because we thereby lay a basis for what we shall have to say of self-perfection, which is a part of the integral Yoga, and because we have to correct the false notions popularised by materialistic Science. According to this Science the normal mental and physical states and the relations between mind and body actually established by our past evolution are the right, natural and healthy conditions and anything other, anything opposite to them is either morbid and wrong or a hallucination, self-deception and insanity. Needless to say, this conservative principle is entirely ignored by Science itself when it so diligently and successfully improves on the normal operations of physical Nature for the greater mastery of Nature by man. Suffice it to say here once for all that a change of mental and physical state and of relations between the mind and body which increases the

purity and freedom of the being, brings a clear joy and peace and multiplies the power of the mind over itself and over the physical functions, brings about in a word man's greater mastery of his own nature, is obviously not morbid and cannot be considered a hallucination or self-deception since its effects are patent and positive. In fact, it is simply a willed advance of Nature in her evolution of the individual, an evolution which she will carry out in any case but in which she chooses to utilise the human will as her chief agent, because her essential aim is to lead the Purusha to conscious mastery over herself.

This being said, we must add that in the movement of the path of knowledge perfection of the mind and body are no consideration at all or only secondary considerations. The one thing necessary is to rise out of Nature to the Self by either the most swift or the most thorough and effective method possible; and the method we are describing, though not the swiftest, is the most thorough-going in its effectivity. And here there arises the question of physical action or inaction. It is ordinarily considered that the Yогin should draw away from action as much as possible and especially that too much action is a hindrance because it draws off the energies outward. To a certain extent this is true; and we must note farther that when the mental Purusha takes up the attitude of mere witness and observer, a tendency to silence, solitude, physical calm and bodily inaction grows upon the being. So long as this is not associated with inertia, incapacity or unwillingness to act, in a word, with the growth of the tamasic quality, all this is to the good. The power to do nothing, which is quite different from indolence, incapacity or aversion to action and attachment to inaction, is a great power and a great mastery; the power to rest absolutely from action is as necessary for the Jnanayogin as the power to cease absolutely from thought, as the power to remain indefinitely in sheer solitude and silence and as the power of immovable calm. Whoever is not willing to embrace these states is not yet fit for the path that leads towards the highest knowledge; whoever is unable to draw towards them, is as yet unfit for its acquisition.

At the same time it must be added that the power is enough;

the abstention from all physical action is not indispensable, the aversion to action mental or corporeal is not desirable. The seeker of the integral state of knowledge must be free from attachment to action and equally free from attachment to inaction. Especially must any tendency to mere inertia of mind or vitality or body be surmounted, and if that habit is found growing on the nature, the will of the Purusha must be used to dismiss it. Eventually, a state arrives when the life and the body perform as mere instruments the will of the Purusha in the mind without any strain or attachment, without their putting themselves into the action with that inferior, eager and often feverish energy which is the nature of their ordinary working; they come to work as forces of Nature work without the fret and toil and reaction characteristic of life in the body when it is not yet master of the physical. When we attain to this perfection, then action and inaction become immaterial, since neither interferes with the freedom of the soul or draws it away from its urge towards the Self or its poise in the Self. But this state of perfection arrives later in the Yoga and till then the law of moderation laid down by the Gita is the best for us; too much mental or physical action then is not good since excess draws away too much energy and reacts unfavourably upon the spiritual condition; too little also is not good since defect leads to a habit of inaction and even to an incapacity which has afterwards to be surmounted with difficulty. Still, periods of absolute calm, solitude and cessation from works are highly desirable and should be secured as often as possible for that recession of the soul into itself which is indispensable to knowledge.

While dealing thus with the body we have necessarily to deal also with the Prana or life-energy. For practical purposes we have to make a distinction between the life-energy as it acts in the body, the physical Prana, and the life-energy as it acts in support of the mental activities, the psychical Prana. For we lead always a double life, mental and physical, and the same life-energy acts differently and assumes a different aspect according as it lends itself to one or the other. In the body it produces those reactions of hunger, thirst, fatigue, health, disease, physical

vigour, etc. which are the vital experiences of the physical frame. For the gross body of man is not like the stone or the earth; it is a combination of two sheaths, the vital and the "food" sheath and its life is a constant interaction of these two. Still the life-energy and the physical frame are two different things and in the withdrawal of the mind from the absorbing sense of the body we become increasingly sensible of the Prana and its action in the corporeal instrument and can observe and more and more control its operations. Practically, in drawing back from the body we draw back from the physical life-energy also, even while we distinguish the two and feel the latter nearer to us than the mere physical instrument. The entire conquest of the body comes in fact by the conquest of the physical life-energy.

Along with the attachment to the body and its works the attachment to life in the body is overcome. For when we feel the physical being to be not ourselves, but only a dress or an instrument, the repulsion to the death of the body which is so strong and vehement an instinct of the vital man must necessarily weaken and can be thrown away. Thrown away it must be and entirely. The fear of death and the aversion to bodily cessation are the stigma left by his animal origin on the human being. That brand must be utterly effaced.

Chapter VIII

The Release from the Heart and the Mind

BUT THE ascending soul has to separate itself not only from the life in the body but from the action of the life-energy in the mind; it has to make the mind say as the representative of the Purusha "I am not the Life; the Life is not the self of the Purusha, it is only a working and only one working of Prakriti." The characteristics of Life are action and movement, a reaching out to absorb and assimilate what is external to the individual and a principle of satisfaction or dissatisfaction in what it seizes upon or what comes to it, which is associated with the all-pervading phenomenon of attraction and repulsion. These three things are everywhere in Nature because Life is everywhere in Nature. But in us mental beings they are all given a mental value according to the mind which perceives and accepts them. They take the form of action, of desire and of liking and disliking, pleasure and pain. The Prana is everywhere in us supporting not only the action of our body, but of our sense-mind, our emotional mind, our thought-mind; and bringing its own law or dharma into all these, it confuses, it limits, it throws into discord their right action and creates that impurity of misplacement and that tangled confusion which is the whole evil of our psychological existence. In that confusion one law seems to reign, the law of desire. As the universal Divine Being, all-embracing and all-possessing, acts, moves, enjoys purely for the satisfaction of divine Delight, so the individual life acts, moves, enjoys and suffers predominantly for the satisfaction of desire. Therefore the psychic life-energy presents itself to our experience as a sort of desire-mind, which we have to conquer if we mean to get back to our true self.

Desire is at once the motive of our actions, our lever of

accomplishment and the bane of our existence. If our sense-mind, emotional mind, thought-mind could act free from the intrusions and importations of the life-energy, if that energy could be made to obey their right action instead of imposing its own yoke on our existence, all human problems would move harmoniously to their right solution. The proper function of the life-energy is to do what it is bidden by the divine principle in us, to reach to and enjoy what is given to it by that indwelling Divine and not to desire at all. The proper function of the sense-mind is to lie open passively, luminously to the contacts of Life and transmit their sensations and the *rasa* or right taste and principle of delight in them to the higher function; but interfered with by the attractions and repulsions, the acceptances and refusals, the satisfactions and dissatisfactions, the capacities and incapacities of the life-energy in the body it is, to begin with, limited in its scope and, secondly, forced in these limits to associate itself with all these discords of the life in Matter. It becomes an instrument for pleasure and pain instead of for delight of existence.

Similarly the emotional mind compelled to take note of all these discords and subject itself to their emotional reactions becomes a hurtling field of joy and grief, love and hatred, wrath, fear, struggle, aspiration, disgust, likes, dislikes, indifferences, content, discontent, hopes, disappointments, gratitude, revenge and all the stupendous play of passion which is the drama of life in the world. This chaos we call our soul. But the real soul, the real psychic entity which for the most part we see little of and only a small minority in mankind has developed, is an instrument of pure love, joy and the luminous reaching out to fusion and unity with God and our fellow-creatures. This psychic entity is covered up by the play of the mentalised Prana or desire-mind which we mistake for the soul; the emotional mind is unable to mirror the real soul in us, the Divine in our hearts, and is obliged instead to mirror the desire-mind.

So too the proper function of the thought-mind is to observe, understand, judge with a dispassionate delight in knowledge and open itself to messages and illuminations playing upon all that it observes and upon all that is yet hidden from it but must

progressively be revealed, messages and illuminations that secretly flash down to us from the divine Oracle concealed in light above our mentality whether they seem to descend through the intuitive mind or arise from the seeing heart. But this it cannot do rightly because it is pinned to the limitations of the life-energy in the senses, to the discords of sensation and emotion, and to its own limitations of intellectual preference, inertia, straining, self-will which are the form taken in it by the interference of this desire-mind, this psychic Prana. As is said in the Upanishads, our whole mind-consciousness is shot through with the threads and currents of this Prana, this Life-energy that strives and limits, grasps and misses, desires and suffers, and only by its purification can we know and possess our real and eternal self.

It is true that the root of all this evil is the ego-sense and that the seat of the conscious ego-sense is the mind itself; but in reality the conscious mind only reflects an ego already created in the subconscious mind in things, the dumb soul in the stone and the plant which is present in all body and life and only finally delivered into voicefulness and wakefulness but not originally created by the conscious mind. And in this upward procession it is the life-energy which has become the obstinate knot of the ego, it is the desire-mind which refuses to relax the knot even when the intellect and the heart have discovered the cause of their ills and would be glad enough to remove it; for the Prana in them is the Animal who revolts and who obscures and deceives their knowledge and coerces their will by his refusal.

Therefore the mental Purusha has to separate himself from association and self-identification with this desire-mind. He has to say "I am not this thing that struggles and suffers, grieves and rejoices, loves and hates, hopes and is baffled, is angry and afraid and cheerful and depressed, a thing of vital moods and emotional passions. All these are merely workings and habits of Prakriti in the sensational and emotional mind." The mind then draws back from its emotions and becomes with these, as with the bodily movements and experiences, the observer or witness. There is again an inner cleavage. There is this emotional mind in which these moods and passions continue to occur according to

the habit of the modes of Nature and there is the observing mind which sees them, studies and understands but is detached from them. It observes them as if in a sort of action and play on a mental stage of personages other than itself, at first with interest and a habit of relapse into identification, then with entire calm and detachment, and, finally, attaining not only to calm but to the pure delight of its own silent existence, with a smile at their unreality as at the imaginary joys and sorrows of a child who is playing and loses himself in the play. Secondly, it becomes aware of itself as master of the sanction who by his withdrawal of sanction can make this play to cease. When the sanction is withdrawn, another significant phenomenon takes place; the emotional mind becomes normally calm and pure and free from these reactions, and even when they come, they no longer rise from within but seem to fall on it as impressions from outside to which its fibres are still able to respond; but this habit of response dies away and the emotional mind is in time entirely liberated from the passions which it has renounced. Hope and fear, joy and grief, liking and disliking, attraction and repulsion, content and discontent, gladness and depression, horror and wrath and fear and disgust and shame and the passions of love and hatred fall away from the liberated psychic being.

What takes their place? It may be, if we will, an entire calm, silence and indifference. But although this is a stage through which the soul has usually to pass, it is not the final aim we have placed before us. Therefore the Purusha becomes also the master who wills and whose will it is to replace wrong by right enjoyment of the psychic existence. What he wills, Nature executes. What was fabric-stuff of desire and passion, is turned into reality of pure, equal and calmly intense love and joy and oneness. The real soul emerges and takes the place left vacant by the desire-mind. The cleansed and emptied cup is filled with the wine of divine love and delight and no longer with the sweet and bitter poison of passion. The passions, even the passion for good, misrepresent the divine nature. The passion of pity with its impure elements of physical repulsion and emotional inability to bear the suffering of others has to be rejected and replaced by

the higher divine compassion which sees, understands, accepts the burden of others and is strong to help and heal, not with self-will and revolt against the suffering in the world and with ignorant accusation of the law of things and their source, but with light and knowledge and as an instrument of the Divine in its emergence. So too the love that desires and grasps and is troubled with joy and shaken with grief must be rejected for the equal, all-embracing love that is free from these things and has no dependence upon circumstances and is not modified by response or absence of response. So we shall deal with all the movements of the soul; but of these things we shall speak farther when we consider the Yoga of self-perfection.

As with action and inaction, so it is with this dual possibility of indifference and calm on the one side and active joy and love on the other. Equality, not indifference is the basis. Equal endurance, impartial indifference, calm submission to the causes of joy and grief without any reaction of either grief or joy are the preparation and negative basis of equality; but equality is not fulfilled till it takes its positive form of love and delight. The sense-mind must find the equal *rasa* of the All-Beautiful, the heart the equal love and Ananda for all, the psychic Prana the enjoyment of this *rasa*, love and Ananda. This, however, is the positive perfection that comes by liberation; our first object on the path of knowledge is rather the liberation that comes by detachment from the desire-mind and by the renunciation of its passions.

The desire-mind must also be rejected from the instrument of thought and this is best done by the detachment of the Purusha from thought and opinion itself. Of this we have already had occasion to speak when we considered in what consists the integral purification of the being. For all this movement of knowledge which we are describing is a method of purification and liberation whereby entire and final self-knowledge becomes possible, a progressive self-knowledge being itself the instrument of the purification and liberation. The method with the thought-mind will be the same as with all the rest of the being. The Purusha, having used the thought-mind for release

from identification with the life and body and with the mind of desire and sensations and emotions, will turn round upon the thought-mind itself and will say "This too I am not; I am not the thought or the thinker; all these ideas, opinions, speculations, strivings of the intellect, its predilections, preferences, dogmas, doubts, self-corrections are not myself; all this is only a working of Prakriti which takes place in the thought-mind." Thus a division is created between the mind that thinks and wills and the mind that observes and the Purusha becomes the witness only; he sees, he understands the process and laws of his thought, but detaches himself from it. Then as the master of the sanction he withdraws his past sanction from the tangle of the mental undercurrent and the reasoning intellect and causes both to cease from their importunities. He becomes liberated from subjection to the thinking mind and capable of the utter silence.

For perfection there is necessary also the resumption by the Purusha of his position as the lord of his Nature and the will to replace the mere mental undercurrent and intellect by the truth-conscious thought that lightens from above. But the silence is necessary; in the silence and not in the thought we shall find the Self, we shall become aware of it, not merely conceive it, and we shall withdraw out of the mental Purusha into that which is the source of the mind. But for this withdrawal a final liberation is needed, the release from the ego-sense in the mind.

Chapter IX

The Release from the Ego

THE FORMATION of a mental and vital ego tied to the body-sense was the first great labour of the cosmic Life in its progressive evolution; for this was the means it found for creating out of matter a conscious individual. The dissolution of this limiting ego is the one condition, the necessary means for this very same Life to arrive at its divine fruition: for only so can the conscious individual find either his transcendent self or his true Person. This double movement is usually represented as a fall and a redemption or a creation and a destruction,—the kindling of a light and its extinction or the formation first of a smaller temporary and unreal self and a release from it into our true self's eternal largeness. For human thought falls apart towards two opposite extremes: one, mundane and pragmatic, regards the fulfilment and satisfaction of the mental, vital and physical ego-sense individual or collective as the object of life and looks no farther, while the other, spiritual, philosophic or religious, regards the conquest of the ego in the interests of the soul, spirit or whatever be the ultimate entity, as the one thing supremely worth doing. Even in the camp of the ego there are two divergent attitudes which divide the mundane or materialist theory of the universe. One tendency of this thought regards the mental ego as a creation of our mentality which will be dissolved with the dissolution of mind by the death of the body; the one abiding truth is eternal Nature working in the race—this or another—and her purpose should be followed, not ours,—the fulfilment of the race, the collective ego, and not that of the individual should be the rule of life. Another trend of thought, more vitalistic in its tendencies, fixes on the conscious ego as the supreme achievement of Nature, no matter how transitory, ennobles it into a human representative of the Will-to-be and holds up its greatness and satisfaction as the highest aim of our

existence. In the more numerous systems that take their stand on some kind of religious thought or spiritual discipline there is a corresponding divergence. The Buddhist denies the existence of a real self or ego, admits no universal or transcendent Being. The Adwaitin declares the apparently individual soul to be none other than the supreme Self and Brahman, its individuality an illusion; the putting off of individual existence is the only true release. Other systems assert, in flat contradiction of this view, the eternal persistence of the human soul; a basis of multiple consciousness in the One or else a dependent but still separate entity, it is constant, real, imperishable.

Amidst these various and conflicting opinions the seeker of the Truth has to decide for himself which shall be for him the Knowledge. But if our aim is a spiritual release or a spiritual fulfilment, then the exceeding of this little mould of ego is imperative. In human egoism and its satisfaction there can be no divine culmination and deliverance. A certain purification from egoism is the condition even of ethical progress and elevation, for social good and perfection; much more is it indispensable for inner peace, purity and joy. But a much more radical deliverance, not only from egoism but from ego-idea and ego-sense, is needed if our aim is to raise human into divine nature. Experience shows that, in proportion as we deliver ourselves from the limiting mental and vital ego, we command a wider life, a larger existence, a higher consciousness, a happier soul-state, even a greater knowledge, power and scope. Even the aim which the most mundane philosophy pursues, the fulfilment, perfection, satisfaction of the individual, is best assured not by satisfying the narrow ego but by finding freedom in a higher and larger self. There is no happiness in smallness of the being, says the Scripture, it is with the large being that happiness comes. The ego is by its nature a smallness of being; it brings contraction of the consciousness and with the contraction limitation of knowledge, disabling ignorance, — confinement and a diminution of power and by that diminution incapacity and weakness, — scission of oneness and by that scission disharmony and failure of sympathy and love and understanding, — inhibition or fragmentation of

delight of being and by that fragmentation pain and sorrow. To recover what is lost we must break out of the walls of ego. The ego must either disappear in impersonality or fuse into a larger I: it must fuse into the wider cosmic "I" which comprehends all these smaller selves or the transcendent of which even the cosmic self is a diminished image.

But this cosmic self is spiritual in essence and in experience; it must not be confused with the collective existence, with any group soul or the life and body of a human society or even of all mankind. The subordination of the ego to the progress and happiness of the human race is now a governing idea in the world's thought and ethics; but this is a mental and moral and not a spiritual ideal. For that progress is a series of constant mental, vital and physical vicissitudes, it has no firm spiritual content, and offers no sure standing-ground to the soul of man. The consciousness of collective humanity is only a larger comprehensive edition or a sum of individual egos. Made of the same substance, in the same mould of nature, it has not in it any greater light, any more eternal sense of itself, any purer source of peace, joy and deliverance. It is rather even more tortured, troubled and obscured, certainly more vague, confused and unprogressive. The individual is in this respect greater than the mass and cannot be called on to subordinate his more luminous possibilities to this darker entity. If light, peace, deliverance, a better state of existence are to come, they must descend into the soul from something wider than the individual, but also from something higher than the collective ego. Altruism, philanthropy, the service of mankind are in themselves mental or moral ideals, not laws of the spiritual life. If into the spiritual aim there enters the impulse to deny the personal self or to serve humanity or the world at large, it comes not from the ego nor from the collective sense of the race, but from something more occult and profound transcendent of both these things; for it is founded on a sense of the Divine in all and it works not for the sake of the ego or the race but for the sake of the Divine and its purpose in the person or group or collective. It is this transcendent Source which we must seek and serve, this vaster

being and consciousness to which the race and the individual are minor terms of its existence.

There is indeed a truth behind the pragmatic impulse which an exclusive one-sided spirituality is apt to ignore or deny or belittle. It is this that since the individual and the universal are terms of that higher and vaster Being, their fulfilment must have some real place in the supreme Existence. There must be behind them some high purpose in the supreme Wisdom and Knowledge, some eternal strain in the supreme Delight: they cannot have been, they were not created in vain. But the perfection and satisfaction of humanity like the perfection and satisfaction of the individual, can only be securely compassed and founded upon a more eternal yet unseized truth and right of things. Minor terms of some greater Existence, they can fulfil themselves only when that of which they are the terms is known and possessed. The greatest service to humanity, the surest foundation for its true progress, happiness and perfection is to prepare or find the way by which the individual and the collective man can transcend the ego and live in its true self, no longer bound to ignorance, incapacity, disharmony and sorrow. It is by the pursuit of the eternal and not by living bound in the slow collective evolution of Nature that we can best assure even that evolutionary, collective, altruistic aim our modern thought and idealism have set before us. But it is in itself a secondary aim; to find, know and possess the Divine existence, consciousness and nature and to live in it for the Divine is our true aim and the one perfection to which we must aspire.

It is then in the way of the spiritual philosophies and religions, not in that of any earth-bound materialistic doctrine, that the seeker of the highest knowledge has to walk, even if with enriched aims and a more comprehensive spiritual purpose. But how far has he to proceed in the elimination of the ego? In the ancient way of knowledge we arrive at the elimination of the ego-sense which attaches itself to the body, to the life, to the mind and says of all or any of them, "This is I". Not only do we, as in the way of works, get rid of the "I" of the worker and see the Lord alone as the true source of all works and sanction

of works and His executive Nature-power or else His supreme Shakti as the sole agent and worker,— but we get rid also of the ego-sense which mistakes the instruments or the expressions of our being for our true self and spirit. But even if all this has been done, something remains still; there remains a substratum of all these, a general sense of the separate I. This substratum ego is something vague, indefinable, elusive; it does not or need not attach itself to anything in particular as the self; it does not identify itself with anything collective; it is a sort of fundamental form or power of the mind which compels the mental being to feel himself as a perhaps indefinable but still a limited being which is not mind, life or body, but under which their activities proceed in Nature. The others were a qualified ego-idea and ego-sense supporting themselves on the play of the Prakriti; but this is the pure fundamental ego-power supporting itself on the consciousness of the mental Purusha. And because it seems to be above or behind the play and not in it, because it does not say "I am the mind, life or body," but "I am a being on whom the action of mind, life and body depends," many think themselves released and mistake this elusive Ego for the One, the Divine, the true Purusha or at the very least for the true Person within them,— mistaking the indefinable for the Infinite. But so long as this fundamental ego-sense remains, there is no absolute release. The egoistic life, even if diminished in force and intensity, can still continue well enough with this support. If there is the error in identification, the ego life may under that pretext get rather an exaggerated intensity and force. Even if there is no such error, the ego life may be wider, purer, more flexible and release may be now much easier to attain and nearer to accomplishment, but still there is as yet no definitive release. It is imperative to go farther, to get rid of this indefinable but fundamental ego-sense also and get back to the Purusha on whom it is supporting itself, of whom it is a shadow; the shadow has to disappear and by its disappearance reveal the spirit's unclouded substance.

That substance is the self of the man called in European thought the Monad, in Indian philosophy, Jiva or Jivatman, the living entity, the self of the living creature. This Jiva is not the

mental ego-sense constructed by the workings of Nature for her temporary purpose. It is not a thing bound, as the mental being, the vital, the physical are bound, by her habits, laws or processes. The Jiva is a spirit and self, superior to Nature. It is true that it consents to her acts, reflects her moods and upholds the triple medium of mind, life and body through which she casts them upon the soul's consciousness; but it is itself a living reflection or a soul-form or a self-creation of the Spirit universal and transcendent. The One Spirit who has mirrored some of His modes of being in the world and in the soul, is multiple in the Jiva. That Spirit is the very Self of our self, the One and the Highest, the Supreme we have to realise, the infinite existence into which we have to enter. And so far the teachers walk in company, all agreeing that this is the supreme object of knowledge, of works and of devotion, all agreeing that if it is to be attained, the Jiva must release himself from the ego-sense which belongs to the lower Nature or Maya. But here they part company and each goes his own way. The Monist fixes his feet on the path of an exclusive Knowledge and sets for us as sole ideal an entire return, loss, immersion or extinction of the Jiva in the Supreme. The Dualist or the partial Monist turns to the path of Devotion and directs us to shed indeed the lower ego and material life, but to see as the highest destiny of the spirit of man, not the self-annihilation of the Buddhist, not the self-immersion of the Adwaitin, not a swallowing up of the many by the One, but an eternal existence absorbed in the thought, love and enjoyment of the Supreme, the One, the All-Lover.

For the disciple of an integral Yoga there can be no hesitation; as a seeker of knowledge it is the integral knowledge and not anything either half-way and attractive or high-pinnacled and exclusive he must seek. He must soar to the utmost height, but also circle and spread to the most all-embracing wideness, not binding himself to any rigid structure of metaphysical thought, but free to admit and combine all the soul's highest and greatest and fullest and most numerous experiences. If the highest height of spiritual experience, the sheer summit of all realisation is the absolute union of the soul with the Transcendent

who exceeds the individual and the universe, the widest scope of that union is the discovery of that very Transcendent as the source, support, continent, informing and constituent spirit and substance of both these manifesting powers of the divine Essence and the divine Nature. Whatever the path, this must be for him the goal. The Yoga of Action also is not fulfilled, is not absolute, is not victoriously complete until the seeker has felt and lives in his essential and integral oneness with the Supreme. One he must be with the Divine both in his highest and inmost and in his widest being and consciousness, in his work, his will, his power of action, his mind, body, life. Otherwise he is only released from the illusion of individual works, but not released from the illusion of separate being and instrumentality. As the servant and instrument of the Divine he works, but the crown of his labour and its perfect base or motive is oneness with that which he serves and fulfils. The Yoga of devotion too is complete only when the lover and the Beloved are unified and difference is abolished in the ecstasy of a divine oneness; and yet in the mystery of this unification there is the sole existence of the Beloved but no extinction or absorption of the lover. It is the highest unity which is the express direction of the path of knowledge, the call to absolute oneness is its impulse, the experience of it its magnet, but it is this very highest unity which takes as its field of manifestation in him the largest possible cosmic wideness. Obeying the necessity to withdraw successively from the practical egoism of our triple nature and its fundamental ego-sense, we come to the realisation of the spirit, the self, lord of this individual human manifestation, but our knowledge is not integral if we do not make this self in the individual one with the cosmic spirit and find their greater reality above in an inexpressible but not unknowable Transcendence. The Jiva, possessed of himself, must give himself up into the being of the Divine. The self of the man must be made one with the Self of all; the self of the finite individual must pour itself into the boundless finite and that cosmic spirit too must be exceeded in the transcendent Infinite.

This cannot be done without an uncompromising abolition

of the ego-sense at its very basis and source. In the path of Knowledge one attempts this abolition, negatively by a denial of the reality of the ego, positively by a constant fixing of the thought upon the idea of the One and the Infinite in itself or the One and Infinite everywhere. This, if persistently done, changes in the end the mental outlook on oneself and the whole world and there is a kind of mental realisation; but afterwards by degrees or perhaps rapidly and imperatively and almost at the beginning the mental realisation deepens into spiritual experience — a realisation in the very substance of our being. More and more frequent conditions come of something indefinable and illimitable, a peace, a silence, a joy, a bliss beyond expression, a sense of absolute impersonal Power, a pure existence, a pure consciousness, an all-pervading Presence. The ego persists in itself or in its habitual movements, but the place of the one becomes more and more loosened, the others are broken, crushed, more and more rejected, becoming weak in their intensity, limp or mechanical in their action. In the end there is a constant giving up of the whole consciousness into the being of the Supreme. In the beginning when the restless confusion and obscuring impurity of our outward nature is active, when the mental, vital, physical ego-sense are still powerful, this new mental outlook, these experiences may be found difficult in the extreme: but once that triple egoism is discouraged or moribund and the instruments of the Spirit are set right and purified, in an entirely pure, silent, clarified, widened consciousness the purity, infinity, stillness of the One reflects itself like the sky in a limpid lake. A meeting or a taking in of the reflected Consciousness by that which reflects it becomes more and more pressing and possible; the bridging or abolition of the atmospheric gulf between that immutable ethereal impersonal vastness and this once mobile whirl or narrow stream of personal existence is no longer an arduous improbability and may be even a frequent experience, if not yet an entirely permanent state. For even before complete purification, if the strings of the egoistic heart and mind are already sufficiently frayed and loosened, the Jiva can by a sudden snapping of the main cords escape, ascending like a

bird freed into the spaces or widening like a liberated flood into the One and Infinite. There is first a sudden sense of a cosmic consciousness, a casting of oneself into the universal; from that universality one can aspire more easily to the Transcendent. There is a pushing back and rending or a rushing down of the walls that imprisoned our conscious being; there is a loss of all sense of individuality and personality, of all placement in Space or Time or action and law of Nature; there is no longer an ego, a person definite and definable, but only consciousness, only existence, only peace or bliss; one becomes immortality, becomes eternity, becomes infinity. All that is left of the personal soul is a hymn of peace and freedom and bliss vibrating somewhere in the Eternal.

When there is an insufficient purity in the mental being, the release appears at first to be partial and temporary; the Jiva seems to descend again into the egoistic life and the higher consciousness to be withdrawn from him. In reality, what happens is that a cloud or veil intervenes between the lower nature and the higher consciousness and the Prakriti resumes for a time its old habit of working under the pressure but not always with a knowledge or present memory of that high experience. What works in it then is a ghost of the old ego supporting a mechanical repetition of the old habits upon the remnants of confusion and impurity still left in the system. The cloud intervenes and disappears, the rhythm of ascent and descent renews itself until the impurity has been worked out. This period of alternations may easily be long in the integral Yoga; for there an entire perfection of the system is required; it must be capable at all times and in all conditions and all circumstances, whether of action or inaction, of admitting and then living in the consciousness of the supreme Truth. Nor is it enough for the sadhaka to have the utter realisation only in the trance of Samadhi or in a motionless quietude, but he must in trance or in waking, in passive reflection or energy of action be able to remain in the constant Samadhi of the firmly founded Brahmic consciousness.¹ But if

¹ Gita.

or when our conscious being has become sufficiently pure and clear, then there is a firm station in the higher consciousness. The impersonalised Jiva, one with the universal or possessed by the Transcendent, lives high-seated above² and looks down undisturbed at whatever remnants of the old working of Nature may revisit the system. He cannot be moved by the workings of the three modes of Prakriti in his lower being, nor can he be shaken from his station by the attacks even of grief and suffering. And finally, there being no veil between, the higher peace overpowers the lower disturbance and mobility. There is a settled silence in which the soul can take sovereign possession of itself above and below and altogether.

Such possession is not indeed the aim of the traditional Yoga of knowledge whose object is rather to get away from the above and the below and the all into the indefinable Absolute. But whatever the aim, the path of knowledge must lead to one first result, an absolute quietude; for unless the old action of Nature in us be entirely quieted, it is difficult if not impossible to find either any true soul-status or any divine activity. Our nature acts on a basis of confusion and restless compulsion to action, the Divine acts freely out of a fathomless calm. Into that abyss of tranquillity we must plunge and become that, if we are to annul the hold of this lower nature upon the soul. Therefore the universalised Jiva first ascends into the Silence; it becomes vast, tranquil, actionless. What action takes place, whether of body and these organs or any working whatever, the Jiva sees but does not take part in, authorise or in any way associate itself with it. There is action, but no personal actor, no bondage, no responsibility. If personal action is needed, then the Jiva has to keep or recover what has been called the form of the ego, a sort of mental image of an "I" that is the knower, devotee, servant or instrument, but an image only and not a reality. If even that is not there, still action can continue by the mere continued force of Prakriti, without any personal actor, without indeed there

² *Udāsīna*, the word for the spiritual "indifference", that is to say the unattached freedom of the soul touched by the supreme knowledge.

being any sense of an actor at all; for the Self into which the Jiva has cast its being is the actionless, the fathomlessly still. The path of works leads to the realisation of the Lord, but here even the Lord is not known; there is only the silent Self and Prakriti doing her works, even, as it seems at first, not with truly living entities but with names and forms existing in the Self but which the Self does not admit as real. The soul may go even beyond this realisation; it may either rise to the Brahman on the other side of all idea of Self as a Void of everything that is here, a Void of unnameable peace and extinction of all, even of the Sat, even of that Existent which is the impersonal basis of individual or universal personality; or else it may unite with it as an ineffable "That" of which nothing can be said; for the universe and all that is does not even exist in That, but appears to the mind as a dream more unsubstantial than any dream ever seen or imagined, so that even the word dream seems too positive a thing to express its entire unreality. These experiences are the foundation of that lofty Illusionism which takes such firm hold of the human mind in its highest overleapings of itself.

These ideas of dream and illusion are simply results in our still existent mentality of the new poise of the Jiva and its denial of the claim made upon it by its old mental associations and view of life and existence. In reality, the Prakriti does not act for itself or by its own motion, but with the Self as lord; for out of that Silence wells all this action, that apparent Void looses out as if into movement all these infinite riches of experience. To this realisation the sadhaka of the integral Yoga must arrive by the process that we shall hereafter describe. What then, when he so resumes his hold upon the universe and views no longer himself in the world but the cosmos in himself, will be the position of the Jiva or what will fill in his new consciousness the part of the ego-sense? There will be no ego-sense even if there is a sort of individualisation for the purposes of the play of universal consciousness in an individual mind and frame; and for this reason that all will be unforgettably the One and every Person or Purusha will be to him the One in many forms or rather in many aspects and poises, Brahman acting upon Brahman, one

Nara-Narayana³ everywhere. In that larger play of the Divine the joy of the relations of divine love also is possible without the lapse into the ego-sense,— just as the supreme state of human love likewise is described as the unity of one soul in two bodies. The ego-sense is not indispensable to the world-play in which it is so active and so falsifies the truth of things; the truth is always the One at work on itself, at play with itself, infinite in unity, infinite in multiplicity. When the individualised consciousness rises to and lives in that truth of the cosmic play, then even in full action, even in possession of the lower being the Jiva remains still one with the Lord, and there is no bondage and no delusion. He is in possession of Self and released from the ego.

³ The Divine, Narayana, making itself one with humanity even as the human, Nara becomes one with the Divine.

Chapter X

The Realisation of the Cosmic Self

OUR FIRST imperative aim when we draw back from mind, life, body and all else that is not our eternal being, is to get rid of the false idea of self by which we identify ourselves with the lower existence and can realise only our apparent being as perishable or mutable creatures in a perishable or ever mutable world. We have to know ourselves as the self, the spirit, the eternal; we have to exist consciously in our true being. Therefore this must be our primary, if not our first one and all-absorbing idea and effort in the path of knowledge. But when we have realised the eternal self that we are, when we have become that inalienably, we have still a secondary aim, to establish the true relation between this eternal self that we are and the mutable existence and mutable world which till now we had falsely taken for our real being and our sole possible status.

In order that there should be any real relation, it must be a relation between two realities. Formerly we had thought the eternal self to be a remote concept far from our mundane existence if not an illusion and an unreality, because in the nature of things we could not conceive of ourselves as anything except this mind, life, body, changing and moving in the succession of Time. When we have once got rid of our confinement to this lower status, we are apt to seize on the other side of the same erroneous relation between self and world; we tend to regard this eternity which we increasingly are or in which we live as the sole reality and begin to look down from it upon the world and man as a remote illusion and unreality, because that is a status quite opposite to our new foundation in which we no longer place our roots of consciousness, from which we have been lifted up and transfigured and with which we seem to have no longer any binding link. Especially is this likely to happen if we have made the finding of the eternal Self not only our primary, but our

one and absorbing objective in the withdrawal from the lower triplicity; for then we are likely to shoot at once from pure mind to pure spirit without treading the stairs between this middle and that summit and we tend to fix on our consciousness the profound sense of a gulf which we cannot bridge and can no longer cross over again except by a painful fall.

But the self and the world are in an eternal close relation and there is a connection between them, not a gulf that has to be overleaped. Spirit and material existence are highest and lowest rung of an orderly and progressive series. Therefore between the two there must be a real relation and principle of connection by which the eternal Brahman is able to be at once pure Spirit and Self and yet hold in himself the universe of himself; and it must be possible for the soul that is one with or in union with the Eternal to adopt the same poise of divine relation in place of our present ignorant immersion in the world. This principle of connection is the eternal unity between the Self and all existences; of that eternal unity the liberated soul must be capable, just as the ever free and unbound Divine is capable of it, and that we should realise equally with the pure self-existence at which we have first to aim. For integral self-possession we must be one not only with the Self, with God, but with all existences. We must take back in the right relation and in the poise of an eternal Truth the world of our manifested existence peopled by our fellow-beings from which we had drawn back because we were bound to them in a wrong relation and in the poise of a falsehood created in Time by the principle of divided consciousness with all its oppositions, discords and dualities. We have to take back all things and beings into our new consciousness but as one with all, not divided from them by an egoistic individuality.

In other words, besides the consciousness of the transcendent Self pure, self-existent, timeless, spaceless we have to accept and become the cosmic consciousness, we have to identify our being with the Infinite who makes himself the base and continent of the worlds and dwells in all existences. This is the realisation which the ancient Vedantins spoke of as seeing all existences in the self and the self in all existences; and in addition they speak

of the crowning realisation of the man in whom the original miracle of existence has been repeated, self-being has become all these existences that belong to the worlds of the becoming.¹ In these three terms is expressed, fundamentally, the whole of that real relation between the self and the world which we have to substitute for the false relation created by the limiting ego. This is the new vision and sense of infinite being which we have to acquire, this the foundation of that unity with all which we have to establish.

For our real self is not the individual mental being, that is only a figure, an appearance; our real self is cosmic, infinite, it is one with all existence and the inhabitant of all existences. The self behind our mind, life and body is the same as the self behind the mind, life and body of all our fellow-beings, and if we come to possess it, we shall naturally, when we turn to look out again upon them, tend to become one with them in the common basis of our consciousness. It is true that the mind opposes any such identification and if we allow it to persist in its old habits and activities, it will rather strive to bring again its veil of dissonances over our new realisation and possession of self than to shape and subject itself to this true and eternal vision of things. But in the first place, if we have proceeded rightly on the path of our Yoga, we shall have attained to Self through a purified mind and heart, and a purified mind is one that is necessarily passive and open to the knowledge. Secondly, even the mind in spite of its tendency to limit and divide can be taught to think in the rhythm of the unifying Truth instead of the broken terms of the limiting appearance. We must therefore accustom it by meditation and concentration to cease to think of things and beings as separately existent in themselves and rather to think always of the One everywhere and of all things as the One. Although we have spoken hitherto of the withdrawing motion of the Jiva as the first necessity of knowledge and as if it were to be pursued alone and by itself, yet in fact it is better for the sadhaka of the integral Yoga to unite the two movements. By

¹ Isha Upanishad.

one he will find the self within, by the other he will find that self in all that seems to us at present to be outside us. It is possible indeed to begin with the latter movement, to realise all things in this visible and sensible existence as God or Brahman or Virat Purusha and then to go beyond to all that is behind the Virat. But this has its inconveniences and it is better, if that be found possible, to combine the two movements.

This realisation of all things as God or Brahman has, as we have seen, three aspects of which we can conveniently make three successive stages of experience. First, there is the Self in whom all beings exist. The Spirit, the Divine has manifested itself as infinite self-extended being, self-existent, pure, not subject to Time and Space, but supporting Time and Space as figures of its consciousness. It is more than all things and contains them all within that self-extended being and consciousness, not bound by anything that it creates, holds or becomes, but free and infinite and all-blissful. It holds them, in the old image, as the infinite ether contains in itself all objects. This image of the ethereal (Akasha) Brahman may indeed be of great practical help to the sadhaka who finds a difficulty in meditating on what seems to him at first an abstract and unseizable idea. In the image of the ether, not physical but an encompassing ether of vast being, consciousness and bliss, he may seek to see with the mind and to feel in his mental being this supreme existence and to identify it in oneness with the self within him. By such meditation the mind may be brought to a favourable state of predisposition in which, by the rending or withdrawing of the veil, the supramental vision may flood the mentality and change entirely all our seeing. And upon that change of seeing, as it becomes more and more potent and insistent and occupies all our consciousness, there will supervene eventually a change of becoming so that what we see we become. We shall be in our self-consciousness not so much cosmic as ultra-cosmic, infinite. Mind and life and body will then be only movements in that infinity which we have become, and we shall see that what exists is not world at all but simply this infinity of spirit in which move the mighty cosmic harmonies of its own images of self-conscious becoming.

But what then of all these forms and existences that make up the harmony? Shall they be to us only images, empty name and form without any informing reality, poor worthless things in themselves and however grandiose, puissant or beautiful they once seemed to our mental vision, now to be rejected and held of no value? Not so; although that would be the first natural result of a very intense absorption in the infinity of the all-containing Self to the exclusion of the infinities that it contains. But these things are not empty, not mere unreal name and form imagined by a cosmic Mind; they are, as we have said, in their reality self-conscious becomings of the Self, that is to say, the Self dwells within all of them even as within us, conscious of them, governing their motion, blissful in his habitation as in his embrace of all that he becomes. As the ether both contains and is as it were contained in the jar, so this Self both contains and inhabits all existences, not in a physical but in a spiritual sense, and is their reality. This indwelling State of the Self we have to realise; we have to see and ourselves to become in our consciousness the Self in all existences. We have, putting aside all vain resistance of the intellect and the mental associations, to know that the Divine inhabits all these becomings and is their true Self and conscious Spirit, and not to know it only intellectually but to know by a self-experience that shall compel into its own diviner mould all the habits of the mental consciousness.

This Self that we are has finally to become to our self-consciousness entirely one with all existences in spite of its exceeding them. We have to see it not only as that which contains and inhabits all, but that which is all, not only as indwelling spirit, but also as the name and form, the movement and the master of the movement, the mind and life and body. It is by this final realisation that we shall resume entirely in the right poise and the vision of the Truth all that we drew back from in the first movement of recoil and withdrawal. The individual mind, life and body which we recoiled from as not our true being, we shall recover as a true becoming of the Self, but no longer in a purely individual narrowness. We shall take up the mind not as a separate mentality imprisoned in a petty motion, but

as a large movement of the universal mind, the life not as an egoistic activity of vitality and sensation and desire, but as a free movement of the universal life, the body not as a physical prison of the soul but as a subordinate instrument and detachable robe, realising that also as a movement of universal Matter, a cell of the cosmic Body. We shall come to feel all the consciousness of the physical world as one with our physical consciousness, feel all the energies of the cosmic life around as our own energies, feel all the heart-beats of the great cosmic impulse and seeking in our heart-beats set to the rhythm of the divine Ananda, feel all the action of the universal mind flowing into our mentality and our thought-action flowing out upon it as a wave into that wide sea. This unity embracing all mind, life and matter in the light of a supramental Truth and the pulse of a spiritual Bliss will be to us our internal fulfilment of the Divine in a complete cosmic consciousness.

But since we must embrace all this in the double term of the Being and the Becoming, the knowledge that we shall possess must be complete and integral. It must not stop with the realisation of the pure Self and Spirit, but include also all those modes of the Spirit by which it supports, develops and throws itself out into its cosmic manifestation. Self-knowledge and world-knowledge must be made one in the all-ensphering knowledge of the Brahman.

Chapter XI

The Modes of the Self

SINCE the Self which we come to realise by the path of knowledge is not only the reality which lies behind and supports the states and movements of our psychological being, but also that transcendent and universal Existence which has manifested itself in all the movements of the universal, the knowledge of the Self includes also the knowledge of the principles of Being, its fundamental modes and its relations with the principles of the phenomenal universe. This was what was meant by the Upanishad when it spoke of the Brahman as that which being known all is known.¹ It has to be realised first as the pure principle of Existence, afterwards, says the Upanishad, its essential modes become clear to the soul which realises it. We may indeed, before realisation, try to analyse by the metaphysical reason and even understand intellectually what Being is and what the world is, but such metaphysical understanding is not the Knowledge. Moreover, we may have the realisation in knowledge and vision, but this is incomplete without realisation in the entire soul-experience and the unity of all our being with that which we realise.² It is the science of Yoga to know and the art of Yoga to be unified with the Highest so that we may live in the Self and act from that supreme poise, becoming one not only in the conscious essence but in the conscious law of our being with the transcendent Divine whom all things and creatures, whether ignorantly or with partial knowledge and experience, seek to express through the lower law of their members. To know the highest Truth and to be in harmony with it is the condition of right being, to express it in

¹ *yasmin vijnāte sarvam vijnātam.*

² This is the distinction made in the Gita between Sankhya and Yoga; both are necessary to an integral knowledge.

all that we are, experience and do is the condition of right living.

But rightly to know and express the Highest is not easy for man the mental being because the highest Truth and therefore the highest modes of existence are supramental. They repose on the essential unity of what seem to the intellect and mind and are to our mental experience of the world opposite poles of existence and idea and therefore irreconcilable opposites and contradictions, but to the supramental experience are complementary aspects of the same Truth. We have seen this already in the necessity of realising the Self as at once one and many; for we have to realise each thing and being as That; we have to realise the unity of all as That, both in the unity of sum and in the oneness of essence; and we have to realise That as the Transcendent who is beyond all this unity and this multiplicity which we see everywhere as the two opposite, yet companion poles of all existence. For every individual being is the Self, the Divine in spite of the outward limitations of the mental and physical form through which it presents itself at the actual moment, in the actual field of space, in the actual succession of circumstances that make up the web of inner state and outward action and event through which we know the individual. So, equally, every collectivity small or great is each the Self, the Divine similarly expressing itself in the conditions of this manifestation. We cannot really know any individual or any collectivity if we know it only as it appears inwardly to itself or outwardly to us, but only if we know it as the Divine, the One, our own Self employing its various essential modes and its occasional circumstances of self-manifestation. Until we have transformed the habits of our mentality so that it shall live entirely in this knowledge reconciling all differences in the One, we do not live in the real Truth, because we do not live in the real Unity. The accomplished sense of Unity is not that in which all are regarded as parts of one whole, waves of one sea, but that in which each as well as the All is regarded wholly as the Divine, wholly as our Self in a supreme identity.

And yet, so complex is the Maya of the Infinite, there is a sense in which the view of all as parts of the whole, waves of the sea or even as in a sense separate entities becomes a

necessary part of the integral Truth and the integral Knowledge. For if the Self is always one in all, yet we see that for the purposes at least of the cyclic manifestation it expresses itself in perpetual soul-forms which preside over the movements of our personality through the worlds and the aeons. This persistent soul-existence is the real Individuality which stands behind the constant mutations of the thing we call our personality. It is not a limited ego but a thing in itself infinite; it is in truth the Infinite itself consenting from one plane of its being to reflect itself in a perpetual soul-experience. This is the truth which underlies the Sankhya theory of many Purushas, many essential, infinite, free and impersonal souls reflecting the movements of a single cosmic energy. It stands also, in a different way, behind the very different philosophy of qualified Monism which arose as a protest against the metaphysical excesses of Buddhistic Nihilism and illusionist Adwaita. The old semi-Buddhistic, semi-Sankhya theory which saw only the Quiescent and nothing else in the world except a constant combination of the five elements and the three modes of Inconscient Energy lighting up their false activity by the consciousness of the Quiescent in which it is reflected, is not the whole truth of the Brahman. We are not a mere mass of changing mind-stuff, life-stuff, body-stuff taking different forms of mind and life and body from birth to birth, so that at no time is there any real self or conscious reason of existence behind all the flux or none except that Quiescent who cares for none of these things. There is a real and stable power of our being behind the constant mutation of our mental, vital and physical personality, and this we have to know and preserve in order that the Infinite may manifest Himself through it according to His will in whatever range and for whatever purpose of His eternal cosmic activity.

And if we regard existence from the standpoint of the possible eternal and infinite relations of this One from whom all things proceed, these Many of whom the One is the essence and the origin and this Energy, Power, or Nature through which the relations of the One and the Many are maintained, we shall see a certain justification even for the dualist philosophies and

religions which seem to deny most energetically the unity of beings and to make an unbridgeable differentiation between the Lord and His creatures. If in their grosser forms these religions aim only at the ignorant joys of the lower heavens, yet there is a far higher and profounder sense in which we may appreciate the cry of the devotee poet when in a homely and vigorous metaphor he claimed the right of the soul to enjoy for ever the ecstasy of its embrace of the Supreme. "I do not want to become sugar," he wrote, "I want to eat sugar." However strongly we may find ourselves on the essential identity of the one Self in all, we need not regard that cry as the mere aspiration of a certain kind of spiritual sensuousness or the rejection by an attached and ignorant soul of the pure and high austerity of the supreme Truth. On the contrary, it aims in its positive part at a deep and mysterious truth of Being which no human language can utter, of which human reason can give no adequate account, to which the heart has the key and which no pride of the soul of knowledge insisting on its own pure austerity can abolish. But that belongs properly to the summit of the path of Devotion and there we shall have again to return to it.

The sadhaka of an integral Yoga will take an integral view of his goal and seek its integral realisation. The Divine has many essential modes of His eternal self-manifestation, possesses and finds Himself on many planes and through many poles of His being; to each mode its purpose, to each plane or pole its fulfilment both in the apex and the supreme scope of the eternal Unity. It is necessarily through the individual Self that we must arrive at the One, for that is the basis of all our experience. By Knowledge we arrive at identity with the One; for there is, in spite of the Dualist, an essential identity by which we can plunge into our Source and free ourselves from all bondage to individuality and even from all bondage to universality. Nor is the experience of that identity a gain for knowledge only or for the pure state of abstract being. The height of all our action also, we have seen, is the immersion of ourselves in the Lord through unity with the divine Will or Conscious-Power by the way of works; the height of love is the rapturous immersion of ourselves in unity

of ecstatic delight with the object of our love and adoration. But again for divine works in the world the individual Self converts itself into a centre of consciousness through which the divine Will, one with the divine Love and Light, pours itself out in the multiplicity of the universe. We arrive in the same way at our unity with all our fellow-beings through the identity of this self with the Supreme and with the self in all others. At the same time in the action of Nature we preserve by it as soul-form of the One a differentiation which enables us to preserve relations of difference in Oneness with other beings and with the Supreme Himself. The relations will necessarily be very different in essence and spirit from those which we had when we lived entirely in the Ignorance and Oneness was a mere name or a struggling aspiration of imperfect love, sympathy or yearning. Unity will be the law, difference will be simply for the various enjoyment of that unity. Neither descending again into that plane of division which clings to the separation of the ego-sense nor attached to an exclusive seeking for pure identity which cannot have to do with any play of difference, we shall embrace and reconcile the two poles of being where they meet in the infinity of the Highest.

The Self, even the individual self, is different from our personality as it is different from our mental ego-sense. Our personality is never the same; it is a constant mutation and various combination. It is not a basic consciousness, but a development of forms of consciousness,—not a power of being, but a various play of partial powers of being,—not the enjoyer of the self-delight of our existence, but a seeking after various notes and tones of experience which shall more or less render that delight in the mutability of relations. This also is Purusha and Brahman, but it is the mutable Purusha, the phenomenon of the Eternal, not its stable reality. The Gita makes a distinction between three Purushas who constitute the whole state and action of the divine Being, the Mutable, the Immutable and the Highest which is beyond and embraces the other two. That Highest is the Lord in whom we have to live, the supreme Self in us and in all. The Immutable is the silent, actionless, equal, unchanging self which

we reach when we draw back from activity to passivity, from the play of consciousness and force and the seeking of delight to the pure and constant basis of consciousness and force and delight through which the Highest, free, secure and unattached, possesses and enjoys the play. The Mutable is the substance and immediate motive of that changing flux of personality through which the relations of our cosmic life are made possible. The mental being fixed in the Mutable moves in its flux and has not possession of an eternal peace and power and self-delight; the soul fixed in the Immutable holds all these in itself but cannot act in the world; but the soul that can live in the Highest enjoys the eternal peace and power and delight and wideness of being, is not bound in its self-knowledge and self-power by character and personality or by forms of its force and habits of its consciousness and yet uses them all with a large freedom and power for the self-expression of the Divine in the world. Here again the change is not any alteration of the essential modes of the Self, but consists in our emergence into the freedom of the Highest and the right use of the divine law of our being.

Connected with this triple mode of the Self is that distinction which Indian philosophy has drawn between the Qualities and the Qualitiless Brahman and European thought has made between the Personal and the Impersonal God. The Upanishad indicates clearly enough the relative nature of this opposition, when it speaks of the Supreme as the "Qualities who is without qualities".³ We have again two essential modes, two fundamental aspects, two poles of eternal being, both of them exceeded in the transcendent divine Reality. They correspond practically to the Silent and the Active Brahman. For the whole action of the universe may be regarded from a certain point of view as the expression and shaping out in various ways of the numberless and infinite qualities of the Brahman. His being assumes by conscious Will all kinds of properties, shapings of the stuff of conscious being, habits as it were of cosmic character and power of dynamic self-consciousness, *gunas*, into which all the

³ *nirguna gunā*.

cosmic action can be resolved. But by none of these nor by all of them nor by their utmost infinite potentiality is He bound; He is above all His qualities and on a certain plane of being rests free from them. The Nirguna or Unqualitied is not incapable of qualities, rather it is this very Nirguna or No-Quality who manifests Himself as Saguna, as Ananta-guna, infinite quality, since He contains all in His absolute capacity of boundlessly varied self-revelation. He is free from them in the sense of exceeding them; and indeed if He were not free from them they could not be infinite; God would be subject to His qualities, bound by His nature, Prakriti would be supreme and Purusha its creation and plaything. The Eternal is bound neither by quality nor absence of quality, neither by Personality nor by Impersonality; He is Himself, beyond all our positive and all our negative definitions.

But if we cannot define the Eternal, we can unify ourselves with it. It has been said that we can become the Impersonal, but not the personal God, but this is only true in the sense that no one can become individually the Lord of all the universes; we *can* free ourselves into the existence of the active Brahman as well as that of the Silence; we can live in both, go back to our being in both, but each in its proper way, by becoming one with the Nirguna in our essence and one with the Saguna in the liberty of our active being, in our nature.⁴ The Supreme pours Himself out of an eternal peace, poise and silence into an eternal activity, free and infinite, freely fixing for itself its self-determinations, using infinite quality to shape out of it varied combination of quality. We have to go back to that peace, poise and silence and act out of it with the divine freedom from the bondage of qualities but still using qualities even the most opposite largely and flexibly for the divine work in the world. Only, while the Lord acts out of the centre of all things, we have to act by transmission of His will and power and self-knowledge through the individual centre, the soul-form of Him which we are. The Lord is subject to nothing; the individual soul-form is subject to its own highest

⁴ *sādharmya-mukti.*

Self and the greater and more absolute is that subjection, the greater becomes its sense of absolute force and freedom.

The distinction between the Personal and the Impersonal is substantially the same as the Indian distinction, but the associations of the English words carry within them a certain limitation which is foreign to Indian thought. The personal God of the European religions is a Person in the human sense of the word, limited by His qualities though otherwise possessed of omnipotence and omniscience; it answers to the Indian special conceptions of Shiva or Vishnu or Brahma or of the Divine Mother of all, Durga or Kali. Each religion really erects a different personal Deity according to its own heart and thought to adore and serve. The fierce and inexorable God of Calvin is a different being from the sweet and loving God of St. Francis, as the gracious Vishnu is different from the terrible though always loving and beneficent Kali who has pity even in her slaying and saves by her destructions. Shiva, the God of ascetic renunciation who destroys all things seems to be a different being from Vishnu and Brahma, who act by grace, love, preservation of the creature or for life and creation. It is obvious that such conceptions can be only in a very partial and relative sense true descriptions of the infinite and omnipresent Creator and Ruler of the universe. Nor does Indian religious thought affirm them as adequate descriptions. The Personal God is not limited by His qualities, He is Ananta-guna, capable of infinite qualities and beyond them and lord of them to use them as He will, and He manifests Himself in various names and forms of His infinite godhead to satisfy the desire and need of the individual soul according to its own nature and personality. It is for this reason that the normal European mind finds it so difficult to understand Indian religion as distinct from Vedantic or Sankhya philosophy, because it cannot easily conceive of a personal God with infinite qualities, a personal God who is not a Person, but the sole real Person and the source of all personality. Yet that is the only valid and complete truth of the divine Personality.

The place of the divine Personality in our synthesis will best be considered when we come to speak of the Yoga of devotion;

it is enough here to indicate that it has its place and keeps it in the integral Yoga even when liberation has been attained. There are practically three grades of the approach to the personal Deity; the first in which He is conceived with a particular form or particular qualities as the name and form of the Godhead which our nature and personality prefers;⁵ a second in which He is the one real Person, the All-Personality, the Ananta-guna; a third in which we get back to the ultimate source of all idea and fact of personality in that which the Upanishad indicates by the single word *He* without fixing any attributes. It is there that our realisations of the personal and the impersonal Divine meet and become one in the utter Godhead. For the impersonal Divine is not ultimately an abstraction or a mere principle or a mere state or power and degree of being any more than we ourselves are really such abstractions. The intellect first approaches it through such conceptions, but realisation ends by exceeding them. Through the realisation of higher and higher principles of being and states of conscious existence we arrive not at the annihilation of all in a sort of positive zero or even an inexpressible state of existence, but at the transcendent Existence itself which is also the Existent who transcends all definition by personality and yet is always that which is the essence of personality.

When in That we live and have our being, we can possess it in both its modes, the Impersonal in a supreme state of being and consciousness, in an infinite impersonality of self-possessing power and bliss, the Personal by the divine nature acting through the individual soul-form and by the relation between that and its transcendent and universal Self. We may keep even our relation with the personal Deity in His forms and names; if, for instance, our work is predominantly a work of Love it is as the Lord of Love that we can seek to serve and express Him, but we shall have at the same time an integral realisation of Him in all His names and forms and qualities and not mistake the front of Him which is prominent in our attitude to the world for all the infinite Godhead.

⁵ *ista-devatā*.

Chapter XII

The Realisation of Sachchidananda

THE MODES of the Self which we have dealt with in our last Chapter may seem at first to be of a highly metaphysical character, to be intellectual conceptions more fit for philosophical analysis than for practical realisation. But this is a false distinction made by the division of our faculties. It is at least a fundamental principle of the ancient wisdom, the wisdom of the East on which we are founding ourselves, that philosophy ought not to be merely a lofty intellectual pastime or a play of dialectical subtlety or even a pursuit of metaphysical truth for its own sake, but a discovery by all right means of the basic truths of all-existence which ought then to become the guiding principles of our own existence. Sankhya, the abstract and analytical realisation of truth, is one side of Knowledge. Yoga, the concrete and synthetic realisation of it in our experience, inner state, outer life is the other. Both are means by which man can escape out of falsehood and ignorance and live in and by the truth. And since it is always the highest he can know or be capable of that must be the aim of the thinking man, it is the highest truth which the soul must seek out by thought and by life accomplish.

Here lies the whole importance of the part of the Yoga of Knowledge which we are now considering, the knowledge¹ of those essential principles of Being, those essential modes of self-existence on which the absolute Divine has based its self-manifestation. If the truth of our being is an infinite unity in which alone there is perfect wideness, light, knowledge, power, bliss, and if all our subjection to darkness, ignorance, weakness, sorrow, limitation comes of our viewing existence as a clash of infinitely multiple separate existences, then obviously it is the

¹ *tattvajñāna*.

most practical and concrete and utilitarian as well as the most lofty and philosophical wisdom to find a means by which we can get away from the error and learn to live in the truth. So also, if that One is in its nature a freedom from bondage to this play of qualities which constitute our psychology and if from subjection to that play are born the struggle and discord in which we live, floundering eternally between the two poles of good and evil, virtue and sin, satisfaction and failure, joy and grief, pleasure and pain, then to get beyond the qualities and take our foundation in the settled peace of that which is always beyond them is the only practical wisdom. If attachment to mutable personality is the cause of our self-ignorance, of our discord and quarrel with ourself and with life and with others, and if there is an impersonal One in which no such discord and ignorance and vain and noisy effort exist because it is in eternal identity and harmony with itself, then to arrive in our souls at that impersonality and untroubled oneness of being is the one line and object of human effort to which our reason can consent to give the name of practicality.

There is such a unity, impersonality, freedom from the play of qualities which lifts us above the strife and surge of Nature in her eternal seeking through mind and body for the true key and secret of all her relations. And it is the ancient highest experience of mankind that only by arriving there, only by making oneself impersonal, one, still, self-gathered, superior to the mental and vital existence in that which is eternally superior to it, can a settled, because self-existent peace and internal freedom be acquired. Therefore this is the first, in a sense the characteristic and essential object of the Yoga of Knowledge. But, as we have insisted, this, if first, is not all; if the essential, it is not the complete object. Knowledge is not complete if it merely shows us how to get away from relations to that which is beyond relations, from personality to impersonality, from multiplicity to featureless unity. It must give us also that key, that secret of the whole play of relations, the whole variation of multiplicity, the whole clash and interaction of personalities for which cosmic existence is seeking. And knowledge is still incomplete if it gives

us only an idea and cannot verify it in experience; we seek the key, the secret in order that we may govern the phenomenon by the reality it represents, heal its discords by the hidden principle of concord and unification behind them and arrive from the converging and diverging effort of the world to the harmony of its fulfilment. Not merely peace, but fulfilment is what the heart of the world is seeking and what a perfect and effective self-knowledge must give to it; peace can only be the eternal support, the infinite condition, the natural atmosphere of self-fulfilment.

Moreover, the knowledge that finds the true secret of multiplicity, personality, quality, play of relations, must show us some real oneness in essence of being and intimate unity in power of being between the impersonal and the source of personality, the qualitiless and that which expresses itself in qualities, the unity of existence and its many-featured multiplicity. The knowledge that leaves a yawning gulf between the two, can be no ultimate knowledge, however logical it may seem to the analytical intellect or however satisfactory to a self-dividing experience. True knowledge must arrive at a oneness which embraces even though it exceeds the totality of things, not at a oneness which is incapable of it and rejects it. For there can be no such original unbridgeable chasm of duality either in the All-existence itself or between any transcendent Oneness and the All-existent. And as in knowledge, so in experience and self-fulfilment. The experience which finds at the summit of things such an original unbridgeable chasm between two contrary principles and can at most succeed in overleaping it so that it has to live in one or the other, but cannot embrace and unify, is not the ultimate experience. Whether we seek to know by thought or by the vision of knowledge which surpasses thought or by that perfect self-experience in our own being which is the crown and fulfilment of realisation by knowledge, we must be able to think out, see, experience and live the all-satisfying unity. This is what we find in the conception, vision and experience of the One whose oneness does not cease or disappear from view by self-expression in the Many, who is free from bondage to qualities but is yet infinite quality, who contains and combines all relations, yet is ever

absolute, who is no one person and yet all persons because He is all being and the one conscious Being. For the individual centre we call ourselves, to enter by its consciousness into this Divine and reproduce its nature in itself is the high and marvellous, yet perfectly rational and most supremely pragmatic and utilitarian goal before us. It is the fulfilment of our self-existence and at the same time the fulfilment of our cosmic existence, of the individual in himself and of the individual in his relation to the cosmic Many. Between these two terms there is no irreconcilable opposition: rather, our own self and the self of the cosmos having been discovered to be one, there must be between them an intimate unity.

In fact all these opposite terms are merely general conditions for the manifestation of conscious being in that Transcendent who is always one not only behind, but within all conditions however apparently opposite. And the original unifying spirit-stuff of them all and the one substantial mode of them all is that which has been described for the convenience of our thought as the trinity of Sachchidananda. Existence, Consciousness, Bliss, these are everywhere the three inseparable divine terms. None of them is really separate, though our mind and our mental experience can make not only the distinction, but the separation. Mind can say and think "I was, but unconscious" — for no being can say "I am, but unconscious" — and it can think and feel "I am, but miserable and without any pleasure in existence." In reality this is impossible. The existence we really are, the eternal "I am", of which it can never be true to say "It was", is nowhere and at no time unconscious. What we call unconsciousness is simply other-consciousness; it is the going in of this surface wave of our mental awareness of outer objects into our subliminal self-awareness and into our awareness too of other planes of existence. We are really no more unconscious when we are asleep or stunned or drugged or "dead" or in any other state, than when we are plunged in inner thought oblivious of our physical selves and our surroundings. For anyone who has advanced even a little way in Yoga, this is a most elementary proposition and one which offers no difficulty whatever to the thought because it is

proved at every point by experience. It is more difficult to realise that existence and undelight of existence cannot go together. What we call misery, grief, pain, absence of delight is again merely a surface wave of the delight of existence which takes on to our mental experience these apparently opposite tints because of a certain trick of false reception in our divided being — which is not our existence at all but only a fragmentary formulation or discoloured spray of conscious-force tossed up by the infinite sea of our self-existence. In order to realise this we have to get away from our absorption in these surface habits, these petty tricks of our mental being, — and when we do get behind and away from them it is surprising how superficial they are, what ridiculously weak and little-penetrating pin-pricks they prove to be, — and we have to realise true existence, and true consciousness, and true experience of existence and consciousness, Sat, Chit and Ananda.

Chit, the divine Consciousness, is not our mental self-awareness; that we shall find to be only a form, a lower and limited mode or movement. As we progress and awaken to the soul in us and things, we shall realise that there is a consciousness also in the plant, in the metal, in the atom, in electricity, in everything that belongs to physical nature; we shall find even that it is not really in all respects a lower or more limited mode than the mental, on the contrary it is in many “inanimate” forms more intense, rapid, poignant, though less evolved towards the surface. But this also, this consciousness of vital and physical Nature is, compared with Chit, a lower and therefore a limited form, mode and movement. These lower modes of consciousness are the conscious-stuff of inferior planes in one indivisible existence. In ourselves also there is in our subconscious being an action which is precisely that of the “inanimate” physical Nature whence has been constituted the basis of our physical being, another which is that of plant-life, and another which is that of the lower animal creation around us. All these are so much dominated and conditioned by the thinking and reasoning conscious-being in us that we have no real awareness of these lower planes; we are unable to

perceive in their own terms what these parts of us are doing, and receive it very imperfectly in the terms and values of the thinking and reasoning mind. Still we know well enough that there is an animal in us as well as that which is characteristically human,— something which is a creature of conscious instinct and impulse, not reflective or rational, as well as that which turns back in thought and will on its experience, meets it from above with the light and force of a higher plane and to some degree controls, uses and modifies it. But the animal in man is only the head of our subhuman being; below it there is much that is also sub-animal and merely vital, much that acts by an instinct and impulse of which the constituting consciousness is withdrawn behind the surface. Below this sub-animal being, there is at a further depth the subvital. When we advance in that ultra-normal self-knowledge and experience which Yoga brings with it, we become aware that the body too has a consciousness of its own; it has habits, impulses, instincts, an inert yet effective will which differs from that of the rest of our being and can resist it and condition its effectiveness. Much of the struggle in our being is due to this composite existence and the interaction of these varied and heterogeneous planes on each other. For man here is the result of an evolution and contains in himself the whole of that evolution up from the merely physical and subvital conscious being to the mental creature which at the top he is.

But this evolution is really a manifestation and just as we have in us these subnormal selves and subhuman planes, so are there in us above our mental being supernormal and superhuman planes. There Chit as the universal conscious-stuff of existence takes other poises, moves out in other modes, on other principles and by other faculties of action. There is above the mind, as the old Vedic sages discovered, a Truth-plane, a plane of self-luminous, self-effective Idea, which can be turned in light and force upon our mind, reason, sentiments, impulses, sensations and use and control them in the sense of the real Truth of things just as we turn our mental reason and will upon our sense-experience and animal nature to use and control them in the sense of our rational and moral perceptions. There

there is no seeking, but rather natural possession; no conflict or separation between will and reason, instinct and impulse, desire and experience, idea and reality, but all are in harmony, concomitant, mutually effective, unified in their origin, in their development and in their effectuation. But beyond this plane and attainable through it are others in which the very Chit itself becomes revealed, Chit the elemental origin and primal completeness of all this varied consciousness which is here used for various formation and experience. There will and knowledge and sensation and all the rest of our faculties, powers, modes of experience are not merely harmonious, concomitant, unified, but are one being of consciousness and power of consciousness. It is this Chit which modifies itself so as to become on the Truth-plane the supermind, on the mental plane the mental reason, will, emotion, sensation, on the lower planes the vital or physical instincts, impulses, habits of an obscure force not in superficially conscious possession of itself. All is Chit because all is Sat; all is various movement of the original Consciousness because all is various movement of the original Being.

When we find, see or know Chit, we find also that its essence is Ananda or delight of self-existence. To possess self is to possess self-bliss; not to possess self is to be in more or less obscure search of the delight of existence. Chit eternally possesses its self-bliss; and since Chit is the universal conscious-stuff of being, conscious universal being is also in possession of conscious self-bliss, master of the universal delight of existence. The Divine whether it manifests itself in All-Quality or in No-Quality, in Personality or Impersonality, in the One absorbing the Many or in the One manifesting its essential multiplicity, is always in possession of self-bliss and all-bliss because it is always Sachchidananda. For us also to know and possess our true Self in the essential and the universal is to discover the essential and the universal delight of existence, self-bliss and all-bliss. For the universal is only the pouring out of the essential existence, consciousness and delight; and wherever and in whatever form that manifests as existence, there the essential consciousness must be and therefore there must be an essential delight.

The individual soul does not possess this true nature of itself or realise this true nature of its experience, because it separates itself both from the essential and the universal and identifies itself with the separate accidents, with the unessential form and mode and with the separate aspect and vehicle. Thus it takes its mind, body, life-stream for its essential self. It tries to assert these for their own sake against the universal, against that of which the universal is the manifestation. It is right in trying to assert and fulfil itself in the universal for the sake of something greater and beyond, but wrong in attempting to do so against the universal and in obedience to a fragmentary aspect of the universal. This fragmentary aspect or rather collection of fragmentary experiences it combines around an artificial centre of mental experience, the mental ego, and calls that itself and it serves this ego and lives for its sake instead of living for the sake of that something greater and beyond of which all aspects, even the widest and most general are partial manifestations. This is the living in the false and not the true self; this is living for the sake of and in obedience to the ego and not for the sake of and in obedience to the Divine. The question how this fall has come about and for what purpose it has been done, belongs to the domain of Sankhya rather than of Yoga. We have to seize on the practical fact that to such self-division is due the self-limitation by which we have become unable to possess the true nature of being and experience and are therefore in our mind, life and body subject to ignorance, incapacity and suffering. Non-possession of unity is the root cause; to recover unity is the sovereign means, unity with the universal and with that which the universal is here to express. We have to realise the true self of ourselves and of all; and to realise the true self is to realise Sachchidananda.

Chapter XIII

The Difficulties of the Mental Being

WE HAVE come to this stage in our development of the path of Knowledge that we began by affirming the realisation of our pure self, pure existence above the terms of mind, life and body, as the first object of this Yoga, but we now affirm that this is not sufficient and that we must also realise the Self or Brahman in its essential modes and primarily in its triune reality as Sachchidananda. Not only pure existence, but pure consciousness and pure bliss of its being and consciousness are the reality of the Self and the essence of Brahman.

Further, there are two kinds of realisation of Self or Sachchidananda. One is that of the silent passive quietistic, self-absorbed, self-sufficient existence, consciousness and delight, one, impersonal, without play of qualities, turned away from the infinite phenomenon of the universe or viewing it with indifference and without participation. The other is that of the same existence, consciousness, delight sovereign, free, lord of things, acting out of an inalienable calm, pouring itself out in infinite action and quality out of an eternal self-concentration, the one supreme Person holding in himself all this play of personality in a vast equal impersonality, possessing the infinite phenomenon of the universe without attachment but without any inseparable aloofness, with a divine mastery and an innumerable radiation of his eternal luminous self-delight — as a manifestation which he holds, but by which he is not held, which he governs freely and by which therefore he is not bound. This is not the personal God of the religious or the qualified Brahman of the philosophers, but that in which personal and impersonal, quality and non-quality are reconciled. It is the Transcendent possessing them both in His being and employing them both as modes for His manifestation. This then is the object of realisation for the sadhaka of the integral Yoga.

We see at once that from this point of view the realisation of the pure quiescent self which we gain by withdrawing from mind, life and body, is for us only the acquisition of the necessary basis for this greater realisation. Therefore that process is not sufficient for our Yoga; something else is needed more embracingly positive. As we drew back from all that constitutes our apparent self and the phenomenon of the universe in which it dwells to the self-existent, self-conscious Brahman, so we must now repossess our mind, life and body with the all-embracing self-existence, self-consciousness and self-delight of the Brahman. We must not only have the possession of a pure self-existence independent of the world-play, but possess all existence as our own; not only know ourselves as an infinite unegoistic consciousness beyond all change in Time and Space, but become one with all the outpouring of consciousness and its creative force in Time and Space; not only be capable of a fathomless peace and quiescence, but also of a free and an infinite delight in universal things. For that and not only pure calm is Sachchidananda, is the Brahman.

If it were easily possible to elevate ourselves to the supramental plane and, dwelling securely there, realise world and being, consciousness and action, outgoing and incoming of conscious experience by the power and in the manner of the divine supramental faculties, this realisation would offer no essential difficulties. But man is a mental and not yet a supramental being. It is by the mind therefore that he has to aim at knowledge and realise his being, with whatever help he can get from the supramental planes. This character of our actually realised being and therefore of our Yoga imposes on us certain limitations and primary difficulties which can only be overcome by divine help or an arduous practice, and in reality only by the combination of both these aids. These difficulties in the way of the integral knowledge, the integral realisation, the integral becoming we have to state succinctly before we can proceed farther.

Realised mental being and realised spiritual being are really two different planes in the arrangement of our existence, the one superior and divine, the other inferior and human. To

the former belong infinite being, infinite consciousness and will, infinite bliss and the infinite comprehensive and self-effective knowledge of supermind, four divine principles; to the latter belong mental being, vital being, physical being, three human principles. In their apparent nature the two are opposed; each is the reverse of the other. The divine is infinite and immortal being; the human is life limited in time and scope and form, life that is death attempting to become life that is immortality. The divine is infinite consciousness transcending and embracing all that it manifests within it; the human is consciousness rescued from a sleep of unconsciousness, subjected to the means it uses, limited by body and ego and attempting to find its relation to other consciousnesses, bodies, egos positively by various means of uniting contact and sympathy, negatively by various means of hostile contact and antipathy. The divine is inalienable self-bliss and inviolable all-bliss; the human is sensation of mind and body seeking for delight, but finding only pleasure, indifference and pain. The divine is supramental knowledge comprehending all and supramental will effecting all; the human is ignorance reaching out to knowledge by the comprehension of things in parts and parcels which it has to join clumsily together, and it is incapacity attempting to acquire force and will through a gradual extension of power corresponding to its gradual extension of knowledge; and this extension it can only bring about by a partial and parcelled exercise of will corresponding to the partial and parcelled method of its knowledge. The divine finds itself upon unity and is master of the transcendences and totalities of things; the human finds itself on separated multiplicity and is the subject even when the master of their division and fragmentations and their difficult solderings and unifyings. Between the two there are for the human being a veil and a lid which prevent the human not only from attaining but even from knowing the divine.

When, therefore, the mental being seeks to know the divine, to realise it, to become it, it has first to lift this lid, to put by this veil. But when it succeeds in that difficult endeavour, it sees the divine as something superior to it, distant, high, conceptually,

vitally, even physically above it, to which it looks up from its own humble station and to which it has, if at all that be possible, to rise, or if it be not possible, to call that down to itself, to be subject to it and to adore. It sees the divine as a superior plane of being, and then it regards it as a supreme state of existence, a heaven or a Sat or a Nirvana according to the nature of its own conception or realisation. Or it sees it as a supreme Being other than itself or at least other than its own present self, and then it calls it God under one name or another, and views it as personal or impersonal, qualitied or without qualities, silent and indifferent Power or active Lord and Helper, again according to its own conception or realisation, its vision or understanding of some side or some aspect of that Being. Or it sees it as a supreme Reality of which its own imperfect being is a reflection or from which it has become detached, and then it calls it Self or Brahman and qualifies it variously, always according to its own conception or realisation, — Existence, Non-Existence, Tao, Nihil, Force, Unknowable.

If then we seek mentally to realise Sachchidananda, there is likely to be this first difficulty that we shall see it as something above, beyond, around even in a sense, but with a gulf between that being and our being, an unbridged or even an unbridgeable chasm. There is this infinite existence; but it is quite other than the mental being who becomes aware of it, and we cannot either raise ourselves to it and become it or bring it down to ourselves so that our own experience of our being and world-being shall be that of its blissful infinity. There is this great, boundless, unconditioned consciousness and force; but our consciousness and force stands apart from it, even if within it, limited, petty, discouraged, disgusted with itself and the world, but unable to participate in that higher thing which it has seen. There is this immeasurable and unstained bliss; but our own being remains the sport of a lower Nature of pleasure and pain and dull neutral sensation incapable of its divine delight. There is this perfect Knowledge and Will; but our own remains always the mental deformed knowledge and limping will incapable of sharing in or even being in tune with that nature of Godhead. Or else so long

as we live purely in an ecstatic contemplation of that vision, we are delivered from ourselves; but the moment we again turn our consciousness upon our own being, we fall away from it and it disappears or becomes remote and intangible. The Divinity leaves us; the Vision vanishes; we are back again in the pettiness of our mortal existence.

Somehow this chasm has to be bridged. And here there are two possibilities for the mental being. One possibility is for it to rise by a great, prolonged, concentrated, all-forgetting effort out of itself into the Supreme. But in this effort the mind has to leave its own consciousness, to disappear into another and temporarily or permanently lose itself, if not quite abolish. It has to go into the trance of Samadhi. For this reason the Raja and other systems of Yoga give a supreme importance to the state of Samadhi or Yogic trance in which the mind withdraws not only from its ordinary interests and preoccupations, but first from all consciousness of outward act and sense and being and then from all consciousness of inward mental activities. In this its inward-gathered state the mental being may have different kinds of realisation of the Supreme in itself or in various aspects or on various levels, but the ideal is to get rid of mind altogether and, going beyond mental realisation, to enter into the absolute trance in which all sign of mind or lower existence ceases. But this is a state of consciousness to which few can attain and from which not all can return.

It is obvious, since mind-consciousness is the sole waking state possessed by mental being, that it cannot ordinarily quite enter into another without leaving behind completely both all our waking existence and all our inward mind. This is the necessity of the Yogic trance. But one cannot continually remain in this trance; or, even if one could persist in it for an indefinitely long period, it is always likely to be broken in upon by any strong or persistent call on the bodily life. And when one returns to the mental consciousness, one is back again in the lower being. Therefore it has been said that complete liberation from the human birth, complete ascension from the life of the mental being is impossible until the body and the bodily life are

finally cast off. The ideal upheld before the Yogin who follows this method is to renounce all desire and every least velleity of the human life, of the mental existence, to detach himself utterly from the world and, entering more and more frequently and more and more deeply into the most concentrated state of Samadhi, finally to leave the body while in that utter in-gathering of the being so that it may depart into the supreme Existence. It is also by reason of this apparent incompatibility of mind and Spirit that so many religions and systems are led to condemn the world and look forward only to a heaven beyond or else a void Nirvana or supreme featureless self-existence in the Supreme.

But what under these circumstances is the human mind which seeks the divine to do with its waking moments? For if these are subject to all the disabilities of mortal mentality, if they are open to the attacks of grief, fear, anger, passion, hunger, greed, desire, it is irrational to suppose that by the mere concentration of the mental being in the Yogic trance at the moment of putting off the body, the soul can pass away without return into the supreme existence. For the man's normal consciousness is still subject to what the Buddhists call the chain or the stream of Karma; it is still creating energies which must continue and have their effect in a continued life of the mental being which is creating them. Or, to take another point of view, consciousness being the determining fact and not the bodily existence which is only a result, the man still belongs normally to the status of human, or at least mental activity and this cannot be abrogated by the fact of passing out of the physical body; to get rid of mortal body is not to get rid of mortal mind. Nor is it sufficient to have a dominant disgust of the world or an anti-vital indifference or aversion to the material existence; for this too belongs to the lower mental status and activity. The highest teaching is that even the desire for liberation with all its mental concomitants must be surpassed before the soul can be entirely free. Therefore not only must the mind be able to rise in abnormal states out of itself into a higher consciousness, but its waking mentality also must be entirely spiritualised.

This brings into the field the second possibility open to the

mental being; for if its first possibility is to rise out of itself into a divine supramental plane of being, the other is to call down the divine into itself so that its mentality shall be changed into an image of the divine, shall be divinised or spiritualised. This may be done and primarily must be done by the mind's power of reflecting that which it knows, relates to its own consciousness, contemplates. For the mind is really a reflector and a medium and none of its activities originate in themselves, none exist *per se*. Ordinarily, the mind reflects the status of mortal nature and the activities of the Force which works under the conditions of the material universe. But if it becomes clear, passive, pure by the renunciation of these activities and of the characteristic ideas and outlook of mental nature, then as in a clear mirror or like the sky in clear water which is without ripple and unruffled by winds, the divine is reflected. The mind still does not entirely possess the divine or become divine, but is possessed by it or by a luminous reflection of it so long as it remains in this pure passivity. If it becomes active, it falls back into the disturbance of the mortal nature and reflects that and no longer the divine. For this reason an absolute quietism and a cessation first of all outer action and then of all inner movement is the ideal ordinarily proposed; here too, for the follower of the path of knowledge, there must be a sort of waking Samadhi. Whatever action is unavoidable, must be a purely superficial working of the organs of perception and motor action in which the quiescent mind takes eventually no part and from which it seeks no result or profit.

But this is insufficient for the integral Yoga. There must be a positive transformation and not merely a negative quiescence of the waking mentality. The transformation is possible because, although the divine planes are above the mental consciousness and to enter actually into them we have ordinarily to lose the mental in Samadhi, yet there are in the mental being divine planes superior to our normal mentality which reproduce the conditions of the divine plane proper, although modified by the conditions, dominant here, of mentality. All that belongs to the experience of the divine plane can there be seized, but in the

mental way and in a mental form. To these planes of divine mentality it is possible for the developed human being to arise in the waking state; or it is possible for him to derive from them a stream of influences and experiences which shall eventually open to them and transform into their nature his whole waking existence. These higher mental states are the immediate sources, the large actual instruments, the inner stations¹ of his perfection.

But in arriving to these planes or deriving from them the limitations of our mentality pursue us. In the first place the mind is an inveterate divider of the indivisible and its whole nature is to dwell on one thing at a time to the exclusion of others or to stress it to the subordination of others. Thus in approaching Sachchidananda it will dwell on its aspect of the pure existence, Sat, and consciousness and bliss are compelled then to lose themselves or remain quiescent in the experience of pure, infinite being which leads to the realisation of the quietistic Monist. Or it will dwell on the aspect of consciousness, Chit, and existence and bliss become then dependent on the experience of an infinite transcendent Power and Conscious-Force, which leads to the realisation of the Tantric worshipper of Energy. Or it will dwell on the aspect of delight, Ananda, and existence and consciousness then seem to disappear into a bliss without basis of self-possessing awareness or constituent being, which leads to the realisation of the Buddhistic seeker of Nirvana. Or it will dwell on some aspect of Sachchidananda which comes to the mind from the supramental Knowledge, Will or Love, and then the infinite impersonal aspect of Sachchidananda is almost or quite lost in the experience of the Deity which leads to the realisations of the various religions and to the possession of some supernal world or divine status of the human soul in relation to God. And for those whose object is to depart anywhither from cosmic existence, this is enough, since they are able by the mind's immergence into or seizure upon any one of these principles or aspects to effect through status in the divine planes of their

¹ Called in the Veda variously seats, houses, placings or statuses, footings, earths, dwelling-places, *sadas*, *gr̥ha* or *kṣaya*, *dhāma*, *padam*, *bhūmi*, *kṣiti*.

mentality or the possession by them of their waking state this desired transit.

But the sadhaka of the integral Yoga has to harmonise all so that they may become a plenary and equal unity of the full realisation of Sachchidananda. Here the last difficulty of mind meets him, its inability to hold at once the unity and the multiplicity. It is not altogether difficult to arrive at and dwell in a pure infinite or even, at the same time, a perfect global experience of the Existence which is Consciousness which is Delight. The mind may even extend its experience of this Unity to the multiplicity so as to perceive it immanent in the universe and in each object, force, movement in the universe or at the same time to be aware of this Existence-Consciousness-Bliss containing the universe and enveloping all its objects and originating all its movements. It is difficult indeed for it to unite and harmonise rightly all these experiences; but still it can possess Sachchidananda at once in himself and immanent in all and the continent of all. But with this to unite the final experience of all this as Sachchidananda and possess objects, movements, forces, forms as no other than He, is the great difficulty for mind. Separately any of these things may be done; the mind may go from one to the other, rejecting one as it arrives at another and calling this the lower or that the higher existence. But to unify without losing, to integralise without rejecting is its supreme difficulty.

Chapter XIV

The Passive and the Active Brahman

THE DIFFICULTY which the mental being experiences in arriving at an integral realisation of true being and world-being may be met by following one or other of two different lines of his self-development. He may evolve himself from plane to plane of his own being and embrace on each successively his oneness with the world and with Sachchidananda realised as the Purusha and Prakriti, Conscious-Soul and Nature-Soul of that plane, taking into himself the action of the lower grades of being as he ascends. He may, that is to say, work out by a sort of inclusive process of self-enlargement and transformation the evolution of the material into the divine or spiritual man. This seems to have been the method of the most ancient sages of which we get some glimpse in the Rig Veda and some of the Upanishads.¹ He may, on the other hand, aim straight at the realisation of pure self-existence on the highest plane of mental being and from that secure basis realise spiritually under the conditions of his mentality the process by which the self-existent becomes all existences, but without that descent into the self-divided egoistic consciousness which is a circumstance of evolution in the Ignorance. Thus identified with Sachchidananda in the universal self-existence as the spiritualised mental being, he may then ascend beyond to the supramental plane of the pure spiritual existence. It is the latter method the stages of which we may now attempt to trace for the seeker by the path of knowledge.

When the sadhaka has followed the discipline of withdrawal from the various identifications of the self with the ego, the mind, the life, the body, he has arrived at realisation by knowledge of a pure, still, self-aware existence, one, undivided, peaceful,

¹ Notably, the Taittiriya Upanishad.

inactive, undisturbed by the action of the world. The only relation that this Self seems to have with the world is that of a disinterested Witness not at all involved in or affected or even touched by any of its activities. If this state of consciousness is pushed farther one becomes aware of a self even more remote from world-existence; all that is in the world is in a sense in that Self and yet at the same time extraneous to its consciousness, non-existent in its existence, existing only in a sort of unreal mind,—a dream therefore, an illusion. This aloof and transcendent Real Existence may be realised as an utter Self of one's own being; or the very idea of a self and of one's own being may be swallowed up in it, so that it is only for the mind an unknowable That, unknowable to the mental consciousness and without any possible kind of actual connection or commerce with world-existence. It can even be realised by the mental being as a Nihil, Non-Existence or Void, but a Void of all that is in the world, a Non-existence of all that is in the world and yet the only Reality. To proceed farther towards that Transcendence by concentration of one's own being upon it is to lose mental existence and world-existence altogether and cast oneself into the Unknowable.

The integral Yoga of knowledge demands instead a divine return upon world-existence and its first step must be to realise the Self as the All, *sarvam brahma*. First, concentrating on the Self-existent, we have to realise all of which the mind and senses are aware as a figure of things existing in this pure Self that we now are to our own consciousness. This vision of the pure self translates itself to the mind-sense and the mind-perception as an infinite Reality in which all exists merely as name and form, not precisely unreal, not a hallucination or a dream, but still only a creation of the consciousness, perceptual and subtly sensible rather than substantial. In this poise of the consciousness all seems to be, if not a dream, yet very much like a representation or puppet-show taking place in the calm, motionless, peaceful, indifferent Self. Our own phenomenal existence is part of this conceptual movement, a mechanical form of mind and body among other forms, ourselves a name of being

among other names, automatically mobile in this Self with its all-encompassing, still self-awareness. The active consciousness of the world is not present in this state to our realisation, because thought has been stilled in us and therefore our own consciousness is perfectly still and inactive, — whatever we do, seems to be purely mechanical, not attended with any conscious origination by our active will and knowledge. Or if thought occurs, that also happens mechanically like the rest, like the movement of our body, moved by the unseen springs of Nature as in the plant and element and not by any active will of our self-existence. For this Self is the immobile and does not originate or take part in the action which it allows. This Self is the All in the sense only of being the infinite One who is immutably and contains all names and forms.

The basis of this status of consciousness is the mind's exclusive realisation of pure self-existence in which consciousness is at rest, inactive, widely concentrated in pure self-awareness of being, not active and originative of any kind of becoming. Its aspect of knowledge is at rest in the awareness of undifferentiated identity; its aspect of force and will is at rest in the awareness of unmodifiable immutability. And yet it is aware of names and forms, it is aware of movement; but this movement does not seem to proceed from the Self, but to go on by some inherent power of its own and only to be reflected in the Self. In other words, the mental being has put away from himself by exclusive concentration the dynamic aspect of consciousness, has taken refuge in the static and built a wall of non-communication between the two; between the passive and the active Brahman a gulf has been created and they stand on either side of it, the one visible to the other but with no contact, no touch of sympathy, no sense of unity between them. Therefore to the passive Self all conscious being seems to be passive in its nature, all activity seems to be non-conscious in itself and mechanical (*jada*) in its movement. The realisation of this status is the basis of the ancient Sankhya philosophy which taught that the Purusha or Conscious-Soul is a passive, inactive, immutable entity, Prakriti or the Nature-Soul including even

the mind and the understanding active, mutable, mechanical, but reflected in the Purusha which identifies itself with what is reflected in it and lends to it its own light of consciousness. When the Purusha learns not to identify himself, then Prakriti begins to fall away from its impulse of movement and returns towards equilibrium and rest. The Vedantic view of the same status led to the philosophy of the inactive Self or Brahman as the one reality and of all the rest as name and form imposed on it by a false activity of mental illusion which has to be removed by right knowledge of the immutable Self and refusal of the imposition.² The two views really differ only in their language and their viewpoint; substantially, they are the same intellectual generalisation from the same spiritual experience.

If we rest here, there are only two possible attitudes towards the world. Either we must remain as mere inactive witnesses of the world-play or act in it mechanically without any participation of the conscious self and by mere play of the organs of sense and motor-action.³ In the former choice what we do is to approach as completely as possible to the inactivity of the passive and silent Brahman. We have stilled our mind and silenced the activity of the thought and the disturbances of the heart, we have arrived at an entire inner peace and indifference; we attempt now to still the mechanical action of the life and body, to reduce it to the most meagre minimum possible so that it may eventually cease entirely and for ever. This, the final aim of the ascetic Yoga which refuses life, is evidently not our aim. By the alternative choice we can have an activity perfect enough in outward appearance along with an entire inner passivity, peace, mental silence, indifference and cessation of the emotions, absence of choice in the will.

To the ordinary mind this does not seem possible. As, emotionally, it cannot conceive of activity without desire and emotional preference, so intellectually it cannot conceive of activity without thought-conception, conscious motive and energising of the will. But, as a matter of fact, we see that a large part of our

² *adhyāropa*.

³ *kevalair indriyair*. Gita.

own action as well as the whole activity of inanimate and merely animate life is done by a mechanical impulse and movement in which these elements are not, openly at least, at work. It may be said that this is only possible of the purely physical and vital activity and not of those movements which ordinarily depend upon the functioning of the conceptual and volitional mind, such as speech, writing and all the intelligent action of human life. But this again is not true, as we find when we are able to go behind the habitual and normal process of our mental nature. It has been found by recent psychological experiment that all these operations can be effected without any conscious origination in the thought and will of the apparent actor; his organs of sense and action, including the speech, become passive instruments for a thought and will other than his.

Certainly, behind all intelligent action there must be an intelligent will, but it need not be the intelligence or the will of the conscious mind in the actor. In the psychological phenomena of which I have spoken, it is obviously in some of them the will and intelligence of other human beings that uses the organs, in others it is doubtful whether it is an influence or actuation by other beings or the emergence of a subconscious, subliminal mind or a mixed combination of both these agencies. But in this Yogic status of action by the mere organs, *kevalair indriyair*, it is the universal intelligence and will of Nature itself working from centres superconscious and subconscious as it acts in the mechanically purposeful energies of plant-life or of the inanimate material form, but here with a living instrument who is the conscious witness of the action and instrumentation. It is a remarkable fact that the speech, writing and intelligent actions of such a state may convey a perfect force of thought, luminous, faultless, logical, inspired, perfectly adapting means to ends, far beyond what the man himself could have done in his old normal poise of mind and will and capacity, yet all the time he himself perceives but does not conceive the thought that comes to him, observes in its works but does not appropriate or use the will that acts through him, witnesses but does not claim as his own the powers which play upon the world through him as through

a passive channel. But this phenomenon is not really abnormal or contrary to the general law of things. For do we not see a perfect working of the secret universal Will and Intelligence in the apparently brute (*jada*) action of material Nature? And it is precisely this universal Will and Intelligence which thus acts through the calm, indifferent and inwardly silent Yогin who offers no obstacle of limited and ignorant personal will and intelligence to its operations. He dwells in the silent Self; he allows the active Brahman to work through his natural instruments, accepting impartially, without participation, the formations of its universal force and knowledge.

This status of an inner passivity and an outer action independent of each other is a state of entire spiritual freedom. The Yогin, as the Gita says, even in acting does no actions, for it is not he, but universal Nature directed by the Lord of Nature which is at work. He is not bound by his works, nor do they leave any after effects or consequences in his mind, nor cling to or leave any mark on his soul;⁴ they vanish and are dissolved⁵ by their very execution and leave the immutable self unaffected and the soul unmodified. Therefore this would seem to be the poise the uplifted soul ought to take, if it has still to preserve any relations with human action in the world-existence, an unalterable silence, tranquillity, passivity within, an action without regulated by the universal Will and Wisdom which works, as the Gita says, without being involved in, bound by or ignorantly attached to its works. And certainly this poise of a perfect activity founded upon a perfect inner passivity is that which the Yогin has to possess, as we have seen in the Yoga of Works. But here in this status of self-knowledge at which we have arrived, there is an evident absence of integrality; for there is still a gulf, an unrealised unity or a cleft of consciousness between the passive and the active Brahman. We have still to possess consciously the active Brahman without losing the possession of the silent Self. We have to preserve the inner silence, tranquillity,

⁴ *na karma lipyate nare.* Isha Upanishad. ⁵ *praviliyante karmāṇi.* Gita.

passivity as a foundation; but in place of an aloof indifference to the works of the active Brahman we have to arrive at an equal and impartial delight in them; in place of a refusal to participate lest our freedom and peace be lost we have to arrive at a conscious possession of the active Brahman whose joy of existence does not abrogate His peace, nor His lordship of all workings impair His calm freedom in the midst of His works.

The difficulty is created by the exclusive concentration of the mental being on its plane of pure existence in which consciousness is at rest in passivity and delight of existence at rest in peace of existence. It has to embrace also its plane of conscious force of existence in which consciousness is active as power and will and delight is active as joy of existence. Here the difficulty is that mind is likely to precipitate itself into the consciousness of Force instead of possessing it. The extreme mental state of precipitation into Nature is that of the ordinary man who takes his bodily and vital activity and the mind-movements dependent on them for his whole real existence and regards all passivity of the soul as a departure from existence and an approach towards nullity. He lives in the superficies of the active Brahman and while to the silent soul exclusively concentrated in the passive self all activities are mere name and form, to him they are the only reality and it is the Self that is merely a name. In one the passive Brahman stands aloof from the active and does not share in its consciousness; in the other the active Brahman stands aloof from the passive and does not share in its consciousness nor wholly possess its own. Each is to the other in these exclusivenesses an inertia of status or an inertia of mechanically active non-possession of self if not altogether an unreality. But the sadhaka who has once seen firmly the essence of things and tasted thoroughly the peace of the silent Self, is not likely to be content with any state which involves loss of self-knowledge or a sacrifice of the peace of the soul. He will not precipitate himself back into the mere individual movement of mind and life and body with all its ignorance and straining and disturbance. Whatever new status he may acquire, will only satisfy him if it is founded upon and includes that which he has already

found to be indispensable to real self-knowledge, self-delight and self-possession.

Still there is the likelihood of a partial, superficial and temporary relapse into the old mental movement when he attempts again to ally himself to the activity of the world. To prevent this relapse or to cure it when it arrives, he has to hold fast to the truth of Sachchidananda and extend his realisation of the infinite One into the movement of the infinite multiplicity. He has to concentrate on and realise the one Brahman in all things as conscious force of being as well as pure awareness of conscious being. The Self as the All, not only in the unique essence of things, but in the manifold form of things, not only as containing all in a transcendent consciousness, but as becoming all by a constituting consciousness, this is the next step towards his true possession of existence. In proportion as this realisation is accomplished, the status of consciousness as well as the mental view proper to it will change. Instead of an immutable Self containing name and form, containing without sharing in them the mutations of Nature, there will be the consciousness of the Self immutable in essence, unalterable in its fundamental poise but constituting and becoming in its experience all these existences which the mind distinguishes as name and form. All formations of mind and body will be not merely figures reflected in the Purusha, but real forms of which Brahman, Self, conscious Being is the substance and, as it were, the material of their formation. The name attaching to the form will be not a mere conception of the mind answering to no real existence bearing the name, but there will be behind it a true power of conscious being, a true self-experience of the Brahman answering to something that it contained potential but unmanifest in its silence. And yet in all its mutations it will be realised as one, free and above them. The realisation of a sole Reality suffering the imposition of names and forms will give place to that of eternal Being throwing itself out into infinite becoming. All existences will be to the consciousness of the Yогin soul-forms and not merely idea-forms of the Self, of himself, one with him, contained in his universal existence. All the soul-life, mental, vital, bodily existence of all

that exists will be to him one indivisible movement and activity of the Being who is the same forever. The Self will be realised as the all in its double aspect of immutable status and mutable activity and it is this that will be seen as the comprehensive truth of our existence.

Chapter XV

The Cosmic Consciousness

TO REALISE and unite oneself with the active Brahman is to exchange, perfectly or imperfectly according as the union is partial or complete, the individual for the cosmic consciousness. The ordinary existence of man is not only an individual but an egoistic consciousness; it is, that is to say, the individual soul or Jivatman identifying himself with the nodus of his mental, vital, physical experiences in the movement of universal Nature, that is to say, with his mind-created ego, and, less intimately, with the mind, life, body which receive the experiences. Less intimately, because of these he can say "my mind, life, body," he can regard them as himself, yet partly as not himself and something rather which he possesses and uses, but of the ego he says, "It is I." By detaching himself from all identification with mind, life and body, he can get back from his ego to the consciousness of the true Individual, the Jivatman, who is the real possessor of mind, life and body. Looking back from this Individual to that of which it is the representative and conscious figure, he can get back to the transcendent consciousness of pure Self, absolute Existence or absolute Non-being, three poises of the same eternal Reality. But between the movement of universal Nature and this transcendent Existence, possessor of the one and cosmic self of the other, is the cosmic consciousness, the universal Purusha of whom all Nature is the Prakriti or active conscious Force. We can arrive at that, become that whether by breaking the walls of the ego laterally, as it were, and identifying oneself with all existences in the One, or else from above by realising the pure Self or absolute Existence in its outgoing, immanent, all-embracing, all-constituting self-knowledge and self-creative power.

The immanent, silent Self in all is the foundation of this cosmic consciousness for the experience of the mental being. It

is the Witness pure and omnipresent who as the silent Conscious Soul of the cosmos regards all the activity of the universe; it is Sachchidananda for whose delight universal Nature displays the eternal procession of her works. We are aware of an unwounded Delight, a pure and perfect Presence, an infinite and self-contained Power present in ourselves and all things, not divided by their divisions, not affected by the stress and struggle of the cosmic manifestation; it is within it all, but it is superior to it all. Because of that all this exists, but that does not exist because of all this; it is too great to be limited by the movement in Time and Space which it inhabits and supports. This foundation enables us to possess in the security of the divine existence the whole universe within our own being. We are no longer limited and shut in by what we inhabit, but like the Divine contain in ourselves all that for the purpose of the movement of Nature we consent to inhabit. We are not mind or life or body, but the informing and sustaining Soul, silent, peaceful, eternal, which possesses them; and since we find this Soul everywhere sustaining and informing and possessing all lives and minds and bodies, we cease to regard it as a separate and individual being in our own. In it all this moves and acts; within all this it is stable and immutable. Having this, we possess our eternal self-existence at rest in its eternal consciousness and bliss.

Next we have to realise this silent Self as the Lord of all the action of universal Nature; we have to see that it is this same Self-existent who is displayed in the creative force of His eternal consciousness. All this action is only His power and knowledge and self-delight going abroad in His infinite being to do the works of His eternal wisdom and will. We shall realise the Divine, the eternal Self of all, first, as the source of all action and inaction, of all knowledge and ignorance, of all delight and suffering, of all good and evil, perfection and imperfection, of all force and form, of all the outgoing of Nature from the eternal divine Principle and of all the return of Nature towards the Divine. We shall realise it next as itself going abroad in its Power and Knowledge,—for the Power and Knowledge are itself,—not only the source of their works, but the creator and

doer of their works, one in all existences; for the many souls of the universal manifestation are only faces of the one Divine, the many minds, lives, bodies are only His masks and disguises. We perceive each being to be the universal Narayana presenting to us many faces; we lose ourselves in that universality and perceive our own mind, life and body as only one presentation of the Self, while all whom we formerly conceived of as others, are now to our consciousness our self in other minds, lives and bodies. All force and idea and event and figure of things in the universe are only manifest degrees of this Self, values of the Divine in His eternal self-figuration. Thus viewing things and beings we may see them first as if they were parts and parcels of His divided being;¹ but the realisation and the knowledge are not complete unless we go beyond this idea of quality and space and division by which there comes the experience of less and more, large and small, part and whole, and see the whole Infinite everywhere; we must see the universe and each thing in the universe as in its existence and secret consciousness and power and delight the indivisible Divine in its entirety, however much the figure it makes to our minds may appear only as a partial manifestation. When we possess thus the Divine as at once the silent and surpassing Witness and the active Lord and all-constituting Being without making any division between these aspects, we possess the whole cosmic Divine, embrace all of the universal Self and Reality, are awake to the cosmic consciousness.

What will be the relation of our individual existence to this cosmic consciousness to which we have attained? For since we have still a mind and body and human life, our individual existence persists even though our separate individual consciousness has been transcended. It is quite possible to realise the cosmic consciousness without becoming that; we can see it, that is to say, with the soul, feel it and dwell in it; we can even be united with it without becoming wholly one with it; in a word, we may preserve the individual consciousness of the Jivatman within the cosmic consciousness of the universal Self. We may preserve a

¹ The Gita speaks of the Jiva as a portion of the Lord.

yet greater distinctness between the two and enjoy the relations between them; we may remain, in a way, entirely the individual self while participating in the bliss and infinity of the universal Self. Or we may possess them both as a greater and lesser self, one we feel pouring itself out in the universal play of the divine consciousness and force, the other in the action of the same universal Being through our individual soul-centre or soul-form for the purposes of an individual play of mind, life and body. But the summit of this cosmic realisation by knowledge is always the power to dissolve the personality in universal being, to merge the individual in the cosmic consciousness, to liberate even the soul-form into the unity and universality of the Spirit. This is the *laya*, dissolution, or *mokṣa*, liberation, at which the Yoga of Knowledge aims. This may extend itself, as in the traditional Yoga, to the dissolution of mind, life and body itself into the silent Self or absolute Existence; but the essence of the liberation is the merging of the individual in the Infinite. When the Yогin no longer feels himself to be a consciousness situated in the body or limited by the mind, but has lost the sense of division in the boundlessness of an infinite consciousness, that which he set out to do is accomplished. Afterwards the retaining or non-retaining of the human life is a circumstance of no essential importance, for it is always the formless One who acts through its many forms of the mind and life and body and each soul is only one of the stations from which it chooses to watch and receive and actuate its own play.

That into which we merge ourselves in the cosmic consciousness is Sachchidananda. It is one eternal Existence that we then are, one eternal Consciousness which sees its own works in us and others, one eternal Will or Force of that Consciousness which displays itself in infinite workings, one eternal Delight which has the joy of itself and all its workings. It is itself stable, immutable, timeless, spaceless, supreme and it is still itself in the infinity of its workings, not changed by their variations, not broken up by their multiplicity, not increased or diminished by their ebbings and flowings in the seas of Time and Space, not confused by their apparent contrarities or limited by their divinely-willed

limitations. Sachchidananda is the unity of the many-sidedness of manifested things, Sachchidananda is the eternal harmony of all their variations and oppositions, Sachchidananda is the infinite perfection which justifies their limitations and is the goal of their imperfections.

So much for the essential relation; but we have to see also the practical results of this internal transformation. It is evident that by dwelling in this cosmic consciousness our whole experience and valuation of everything in the universe will be radically changed. As individual egos we dwell in the Ignorance and judge everything by a broken, partial and personal standard of knowledge; we experience everything according to the capacity of a limited consciousness and force and are therefore unable to give a divine response or set the true value upon any part of cosmic experience. We experience limitation, weakness, incapacity, grief, pain, struggle and its contradictory emotions and we accept these things and their opposites as opposites in an eternal duality and cannot reconcile them in the eternity of an absolute good and happiness. We live by fragments of experience and judge by our fragmentary values each thing and the whole. When we try to arrive at absolute values we only promote some partial view of things to do duty for a totality in the divine workings; we then make believe that our fractions are integers and try to thrust our one-sided view-points into the catholicity of the all-vision of the Divine.

But by entering into the cosmic consciousness we begin to participate in that all-vision and see everything in the values of the Infinite and the One. Limitation itself, ignorance itself change their meaning for us. Ignorance changes into a particularising action of divine knowledge; strength and weakness and incapacity change into a free putting forth and holding back various measures of divine Force; joy and grief, pleasure and pain change into a mastering and a suffering of divine delight; struggle, losing its discords, becomes a balancing of forces and values in the divine harmony. We do not then suffer by the limitations of our mind, life and body; for we no longer live in these, even when we record and accept them, but in the infinity of the Spirit, and

these we view in their right value and place and purpose in the manifestation, as degrees of the supreme being, conscious-force and delight of Sachchidananda veiling and manifesting Himself in the cosmos. We cease also to judge other men and things by their outward appearances and are delivered from hostile and contradictory ideas and emotions; for it is the soul that we see, the Divine that we seek and find in every thing and creature, and the rest has only a secondary value to us in a scheme of relations which exist now for us only as self-expressions of the Divine and not as having any absolute value in themselves. So too no event can disturb us, since the distinction of happy and unhappy, beneficent and maleficent happenings loses its force, and all is seen in its divine value and its divine purpose. Thus we arrive at a perfect liberation and an infinite equality. It is this consummation of which the Upanishad speaks when it says "He in whom the self has become all existences, how shall he have delusion, whence shall he have grief who knows entirely² and sees in all things oneness."

But this can be only when there is perfection in the cosmic consciousness, and that is difficult for the mental being. The mentality when it arrives at the idea or the realisation of the Spirit, the Divine, tends to break existence into two opposite halves, the lower and the higher existence. It sees on one side the Infinite, the Formless, the One, the Peace and Bliss, the Calm and Silence, the Absolute, the Vast and Pure; on the other it sees the finite, the world of forms, the jarring multiplicity, the strife and suffering and imperfect, unreal good, the tormented activity and futile success, the relative, the limited and vain and vile. To those who make this division and this opposition, complete liberation is only attainable in the peace of the One, in the featurelessness of the Infinite, in the non-becoming of the Absolute which is to them the only real being; to be free all values must be destroyed, all limitations not only transcended but abolished.

² *Vijñataḥ*. Vijnana is the knowledge of the One and the Many, by which the Many are seen in the terms of the One, in the infinite unifying Truth, Right, Vast of the divine existence.

They have the liberation of the divine rest, but not the liberty of the divine action; they enjoy the peace of the Transcendent, but not the cosmic bliss of the Transcendent. Their liberty depends upon abstention from the cosmic movement, it cannot dominate and possess cosmic existence itself. But it is also possible for them to realise and participate in the immanent as well as the transcendent peace. Still the division is not cured. The liberty they enjoy is that of the silent unacting Witness, not the liberty of the divine Master-consciousness which possesses all things, delights in all, casts itself into all forms of existence without fear of fall or loss or bondage or stain. All the rights of the Spirit are not yet possessed; there is still a denial, a limitation, a holding back from the entire oneness of all existence. The workings of Mind, Life, Body are viewed from the calm and peace of the spiritual planes of the mental being and are filled with that calm and peace; they are not possessed by and subjected to the law of the all-mastering Spirit.

All this is when the mental being takes its station in its own spiritual planes, in the mental planes of Sat, Chit, Ananda, and casts down their light and delight upon the lower existence. But there is possible the attempt at a kind of cosmic consciousness by dwelling on the lower planes themselves after breaking their limitations laterally, as we have said, and then calling down into them the light and largeness of the higher existence. Not only Spirit is one, but Mind, Life, Matter are one. There is one cosmic Mind, one cosmic Life, one cosmic Body. All the attempt of man to arrive at universal sympathy, universal love and the understanding and knowledge of the inner soul of other existences is an attempt to beat thin, breach and eventually break down by the power of the enlarging mind and heart the walls of the ego and arrive nearer to a cosmic oneness. And if we can by the mind and heart get at the touch of the Spirit, receive the powerful inrush of the Divine into this lower humanity and change our nature into a reflection of the divine nature by love, by universal joy, by oneness of mind with all Nature and all beings, we can break down the walls. Even our bodies are not really separate entities and therefore our very physical consciousness is capable

of oneness with the physical consciousness of others and of the cosmos. The Yогin is able to feel his body one with all bodies, to be aware of and even to participate in their affections; he can feel constantly the unity of all Matter and be aware of his physical being as only a movement in its movement.³ Still more is it possible for him to feel constantly and normally the whole sea of the infinite life as his true vital existence and his own life as only a wave of that boundless surge. And more easily yet is it possible for him to unite himself in mind and heart with all existences, be aware of their desires, struggles, joys, sorrows, thoughts, impulses, in a sense as if they were his own, at least as occurring in his larger self hardly less intimately or quite as intimately as the movements of his own heart and mind. This too is a realisation of cosmic consciousness.

It may even seem as if it were the greatest oneness, since it accepts all that we can be sensible of in the mind-created world as our own. Sometimes one sees it spoken of as the highest achievement. Certainly, it is a great realisation and the path to a greater. It is that which the Gita speaks of as the accepting of all existences as if oneself whether in grief or in joy; it is the way of sympathetic oneness and infinite compassion which helps the Buddhist to arrive at his Nirvana. Still there are gradations and degrees. In the first stage the soul is still subject to the reactions of the duality, still subject therefore to the lower Prakriti; it is depressed or hurt by the cosmic suffering, elated by the cosmic joy. We suffer the joys of others, suffer their griefs; and this oneness can be carried even into the body, as in the story of the Indian saint who, seeing a bullock tortured in the field by its cruel owner, cried out with the creature's pain and the weal of the lash was found reproduced on his own flesh. But there must be a oneness with Sachchidananda in his freedom as well as with the subjection of the lower being to the reactions of Prakriti. This is achieved when the soul is free and superior to the cosmic reactions which are then felt only in the life, mind and body and as an inferior movement; the soul understands, accepts the

³ *jagatyāṁ jagat*. Isha Upanishad.

experience, sympathises, but is not overpowered or affected, so that at last even the mind and body learn also to accept without being overpowered or even affected except on their surface. And the consummation of this movement is when the two spheres of existence are no longer divided and the mind, life and body obeying utterly the higher law grow into the spirit's freedom; free from the lower or ignorant response to the cosmic touches, their struggle and their subjection to the duality ceases. This does not mean insensibility to the subjection and struggles and sufferings of others, but it does mean a spiritual supremacy and freedom which enables one to understand perfectly, put the right values on things and heal from above instead of struggling from below. It does not inhibit the divine compassion and helpfulness, but it does inhibit the human and animal sorrow and suffering.

The link between the spiritual and the lower planes of the being is that which is called in the old Vedantic phraseology the *vijnāna* and which we may describe in our modern turn of language as the Truth-plane or the ideal mind or supermind. There the One and the Many meet and our being is freely open to the revealing light of the divine Truth and the inspiration of the divine Will and Knowledge. If we can break down the veil of the intellectual, emotional, sensational mind which our ordinary existence has built between us and the Divine, we can then take up through the Truth-mind all our mental, vital and physical experience and offer it up to the spiritual — this was the secret or mystic sense of the old Vedic "sacrifice" — to be converted into the terms of the infinite truth of Sachchidananda, and we can receive the powers and illuminations of the infinite Existence in forms of a divine knowledge, will and delight to be imposed on our mentality, vitality, physical existence till the lower members are transformed into the perfect vessel of the higher nature. This was the double Vedic movement of the descent and birth of the gods in the human creature and the ascent of the human powers that struggle towards the divine knowledge, power and delight and climb into the godheads, the result of which was the possession of the One, the infinite, the beatific existence, the union with God, the Immortality. By possession of this ideal plane we

break down entirely the opposition of the lower and the higher existence, the false gulf created by the Ignorance between the finite and the Infinite, God and Nature, the One and the Many, open the gates of the Divine, fulfil the individual in the complete harmony of the cosmic consciousness and realise in the cosmic being the epiphany of the transcendent Sachchidananda. And these results, which obtained on the supramental plane itself or beyond, would be the highest perfection of the human being, we can attain to partially, in a very modified way, in a sort of mental figure by awakening into activity on the corresponding plane of the mental nature. We can get a luminous shadow of that perfect harmony and light. But this belongs to another part of our subject; it is the knowledge on which we must found our Yoga of self-perfection.

Chapter XVI

Oneness

WHEN, then, by the withdrawal of the centre of consciousness from identification with the mind, life and body, one has discovered one's true self, discovered the oneness of that self with the pure, silent, immutable Brahman, discovered in the immutable, in the Akshara Brahman, that by which the individual being escapes from his own personality into the impersonal, the first movement of the Path of Knowledge has been completed. It is the sole that is absolutely necessary for the traditional aim of the Yoga of Knowledge, for immvergence, for escape from cosmic existence, for release into the absolute and ineffable Parabrahman who is beyond all cosmic being. The seeker of this ultimate release may take other realisations on his way, may realise the Lord of the universe, the Purusha who manifests Himself in all creatures, may arrive at the cosmic consciousness, may know and feel his unity with all beings; but these are only stages or circumstances of his journey, results of the unfolding of his soul as it approaches nearer the ineffable goal. To pass beyond them all is his supreme object. When on the other hand, having attained to the freedom and the silence and the peace, we resume possession by the cosmic consciousness of the active as well as the silent Brahman and can securely live in the divine freedom as well as rest in it, we have completed the second movement of the Path by which the integrality of self-knowledge becomes the station of the liberated soul.

The soul thus possesses itself in the unity of Sachchidananda upon all the manifest planes of its own being. This is the characteristic of the integral knowledge that it unifies all in Sachchidananda because not only is Being one in itself, but it is one everywhere, in all its poised and in every aspect, in its utmost appearance of multiplicity as in its utmost appearance of oneness. The traditional knowledge while it admits this truth in

theory, yet reasons practically as if the oneness were not equal everywhere or could not be equally realised in all. It finds it in the unmanifest Absolute, but not so much in the manifestation, finds it purer in the Impersonal than in the Personal, complete in the Nirguna, not so complete in the Saguna, satisfactorily present in the silent and inactive Brahman, not so satisfactorily present in the active. Therefore it places all these other terms of the Absolute below their opposites in the scale of ascent and urges their final rejection as if it were indispensable to the utter realisation. The integral knowledge makes no such division; it arrives at a different kind of absoluteness in its vision of the unity. It finds the same oneness in the Unmanifest and the Manifest, in the Impersonal and the Personal, in Nirguna and Saguna, in the infinite depths of the universal silence and the infinite largeness of the universal action. It finds the same absolute oneness in the Purusha and the Prakriti; in the divine Presence and the works of the divine Power and Knowledge; in the eternal manifestness of the one Purusha and the constant manifestation of the many Purushas; in the inalienable unity of Sachchidananda keeping constantly real to itself its own manifold oneness and in the apparent divisions of mind, life and body in which oneness is constantly, if secretly real and constantly seeks to be realised. All unity is to it an intense, pure and infinite realisation, all difference an abundant, rich and boundless realisation of the same divine and eternal Being.

The complete realisation of unity is therefore the essence of the integral knowledge and of the integral Yoga. To know Sachchidananda one in Himself and one in all His manifestation is the basis of knowledge; to make that vision of oneness real to the consciousness in its status and in its action and to become that by merging the sense of separate individuality in the sense of unity with the Being and with all beings is its effectuation in Yoga of knowledge; to live, think, feel, will and act in that sense of unity is its effectuation in the individual being and the individual life. This realisation of oneness and this practice of oneness in difference is the whole of the Yoga.

Sachchidananda is one in Himself in whatever status or

whatever plane of existence. We have therefore to make that the basis of all effectuation whether of consciousness or force or being, whether of knowledge or will or delight. We have, as we have seen, to live in the consciousness of the Absolute transcendent and of the Absolute manifested in all relations, impersonal and manifest as all personalities, beyond all qualities and rich in infinite quality, a silence out of which the eternal Word creates, a divine calm and peace possessing itself in infinite joy and activity. We have to find Him knowing all, sanctioning all, governing all, containing, upholding and informing all as the Purusha and at the same time executing all knowledge, will and formation as Prakriti. We have to see Him as one Existence, Being gathered in itself and Being displayed in all existences; as one Consciousness concentrated in the unity of its existence, extended in universal nature and many-centred in innumerable beings; one Force static in its repose of self-gathered consciousness and dynamic in its activity of extended consciousness; one Delight blissfully aware of its featureless infinity and blissfully aware of all feature and force and forms as itself; one creative knowledge and governing Will, supramental, originative and determinative of all minds, lives and bodies; one Mind containing all mental beings and constituting all their mental activities; one Life active in all living beings and generative of their vital activities; one substance constituting all forms and objects as the visible and sensible mould in which mind and life manifest and act just as one pure existence is that ether in which all Conscious-Force and Delight exist unified and find themselves variously. For these are the seven principles of the manifest being of Sachchidananda.

The integral Yoga of knowledge has to recognise the double nature of this manifestation,—for there is the higher nature of Sachchidananda in which He is found and the lower nature of mind, life and body in which He is veiled,—and to reconcile and unite the two in the oneness of the illumined realisation. We have not to leave them separate so that we live a sort of double life, spiritual within or above, mental and material in our active and earthly living; we have to re-view and remould the lower living in the light, force and joy of the higher reality. We have to

realise Matter as a sense-created mould of Spirit, a vehicle for all manifestation of the light, force and joy of Sachchidananda in the highest conditions of terrestrial being and activity. We have to see Life as a channel for the infinite Force divine and break the barrier of a sense-created and mind-created farness and division from it so that that divine Power may take possession of and direct and change all our life-activities until our vitality transfigured ceases in the end to be the limited life-force which now supports mind and body and becomes a figure of the all-blissful conscious-force of Sachchidananda. We have similarly to change our sensational and emotional mentality into a play of the divine Love and universal Delight; and we have to surcharge the intellect which seeks to know and will in us with the light of the divine Knowledge-Will until it is transformed into a figure of that higher and sublime activity.

This transformation cannot be complete or really executed without the awakening of the truth-mind which corresponds in the mental being to the Supermind and is capable of receiving mentally its illuminations. By the opposition of Spirit and Mind without the free opening of this intermediate power the two natures, higher and lower, stand divided, and though there may be communication and influence or the catching up of the lower into the higher in a sort of luminous or ecstatic trance, there cannot be a full and perfect transfiguration of the lower nature. We may feel imperfectly by the emotional mind, we may have a sense by the sense-mind or a conception and perception by the intelligent mind of the Spirit present in Matter and all its forms, the divine Delight present in all emotion and sensation, the divine Force behind all life-activities; but the lower will still keep its own nature and limit and divide in its action and modify in its character the influence from above. Even when that influence assumes its highest, widest, intensest power, it will be irregular and disorderly in activity and perfectly realised only in calm and stillness; we shall be subject to reactions and periods of obscuration when it is withdrawn from us; we shall be apt to forget it in the stress of ordinary life and its outward touches and the siege of its dualities and to be fully possessed of it only

when alone with ourselves and God or else only in moments or periods of a heightened exaltation and ecstasy. For our mentality, a restricted instrument moving in a limited field and seizing things by fragments and parcels, is necessarily shifting, restless and mutable; it can find steadiness only by limiting its field of action and fixity only by cessation and repose.

Our direct truth-perceptions on the other hand come from that Supermind,— a Will that knows and a Knowledge that effects,— which creates universal order out of infinity. Its awakening into action brings down, says the Veda, the unrestricted downpour of the rain of heaven,— the full flowing of the seven rivers from a superior sea of light and power and joy. It reveals Sachchidananda. It reveals the Truth behind the scattered and ill-combined suggestions of our mentality and makes each to fall into its place in the unity of the Truth behind; thus it can transform the half-light of our minds into a certain totality of light. It reveals the Will behind all the devious and imperfectly regulated strivings of our mental will and emotional wishes and vital effort and makes each to fall into its place in the unity of the luminous Will behind; thus it can transform the half-obscure struggle of our life and mind into a certain totality of ordered force. It reveals the delight for which each of our sensations and emotions is groping and from which they fall back in movements of partially grasped satisfaction or of dissatisfaction, pain, grief or indifference, and makes each take its place in the unity of the universal delight behind; thus it can transform the conflict of our dualised emotions and sensations into a certain totality of serene, yet profound and powerful love and delight. Moreover, revealing the universal action, it shows the truth of being out of which each of its movements arises and to which each progresses, the force of effectuation which each carries with it and the delight of being for which and from which each is born, and it relates all to the universal being, consciousness, force and delight of Sachchidananda. Thus it harmonises for us all the oppositions, divisions, contrarieties of existence and shows us in them the One and the Infinite. Uplifted into this supramental light, pain and pleasure and indifference begin to be converted into joy of

the one self-existent Delight; strength and weakness, success and failure turn into powers of the one self-effective Force and Will; truth and error, knowledge and ignorance change into light of the one infinite self-awareness and universal knowledge; increase of being and diminution of being, limitation and the overcoming of limitation are transfigured into waves of the one self-realising conscious existence. All our life as well as all our essential being is transformed into the possession of Sachchidananda.

By way of this integral knowledge we arrive at the unity of the aims set before themselves by the three paths of knowledge, works and devotion. Knowledge aims at the realisation of true self-existence; works are directed to the realisation of the divine Conscious-Will which secretly governs all works; devotion yearns for the realisation of the Bliss which enjoys as the Lover all beings and all existences,—Sat, Chit-Tapas and Ananda. Each therefore aims at possessing Sachchidananda through one or other aspect of his triune divine nature. By Knowledge we arrive always at our true, eternal, immutable being, the self-existent which every “I” in the universe obscurely represents, and we abrogate difference in the great realisation, So Aham, I am He, while we arrive also at our identity with all other beings.

But at the same time the integral knowledge gives us the awareness of that infinite existence as the conscious-force which creates and governs the worlds and manifests itself in their works; it reveals the Self-existent in his universal conscious-will as the Lord, the Ishwara. It enables us to unite our will with His, to realise His will in the energies of all existences and to perceive the fulfilment of these energies of others as part of our own universal self-fulfilment. Thus it removes the reality of strife and division and opposition and leaves only their appearances. By that knowledge therefore we arrive at the possibility of a divine action, a working which is personal to our nature, but impersonal to our being, since it proceeds from That which is beyond our ego and acts only by its universal sanction. We proceed in our works with equality, without bondage to works and their results, in unison with the Highest, in unison with

the universal, free from separate responsibility for our acts and therefore unaffected by their reactions. This which we have seen to be the fulfilment of the path of Works becomes thus an annexe and result of the path of Knowledge.

The integral knowledge again reveals to us the Self-existent as the All-blissful who, as Sachchidananda manifesting the world, manifesting all beings, accepts their adoration, even as He accepts their works of aspiration and their seekings of knowledge, leans down to them and drawing them to Himself takes all into the joy of His divine being. Knowing Him as our divine Self, we become one with Him, as the lover and beloved become one, in the ecstasy of that embrace. Knowing Him too in all beings, perceiving the glory and beauty and joy of the Beloved everywhere, we transform our souls into a passion of universal delight and a wideness and joy of universal love. All this which, as we shall find, is the summit of the path of Devotion, becomes also an annexe and result of the path of Knowledge.

Thus by the integral knowledge we unify all things in the One. We take up all the chords of the universal music, strains sweet or discordant, luminous in their suggestion or obscure, powerful or faint, heard or suppressed, and find them all changed and reconciled in the indivisible harmony of Sachchidananda. The Knowledge brings also the Power and the Joy. "How shall he be deluded, whence shall he have sorrow who sees everywhere the Oneness?"

Chapter XVII

The Soul and Nature

THIS IS the result of the integral knowledge taken in its mass; its work is to gather up the different strands of our being into the universal oneness. If we are to possess perfectly the world in our new divinised consciousness as the Divine himself possesses it, we have to know also each thing in its absoluteness, first by itself, secondly in its union with all that completes it; for so has the Divine imaged out and seen its being in the world. To see things as parts, as incomplete elements is a lower analytic knowledge. The Absolute is everywhere; it has to be seen and found everywhere. Every finite is an infinite and has to be known and sensed in its intrinsic infiniteness as well as in its surface finite appearance. But so to know the world, so to perceive and experience it, it is not enough to have an intellectual idea or imagination that so it is; a certain divine vision, divine sense, divine ecstasy is needed, an experience of union of ourselves with the objects of our consciousness. In that experience not only the Beyond but all here, not only the totality, the All in its mass, but each thing in the All becomes to us our self, God, the Absolute and Infinite, Sachchidananda. This is the secret of complete delight in God's world, complete satisfaction of the mind and heart and will, complete liberation of the consciousness. It is the supreme experience at which art and poetry and all the various efforts of subjective and objective knowledge and all desire and effort to possess and enjoy objects are trying more or less obscurely to arrive; their attempt to seize the forms and properties and qualities of things is only a first movement which cannot give the deepest satisfaction unless by seizing them perfectly and absolutely they get the sense of the infinite reality of which these are the outer symbols. To the rational mind and the ordinary sense-experience this may well seem only a poetic fancy or a mystic hallucination; but the absolute satisfaction

and sense of illumination which it gives and alone can give is really a proof of its greater validity; we get by that a ray from the higher consciousness and the diviner sense into which our subjective being is intended eventually, if we will only allow it, to be transfigured.

We have seen that this applies to the highest principles of the Divine Being. Ordinarily, the discriminating mind tells us that only what is beyond all manifestation is absolute, only the formless Spirit is infinite, only the timeless, spaceless, immutable, immobile Self in its repose is absolutely real; and if we follow and are governed in our endeavour by this conception, that is the subjective experience at which we shall arrive, all else seeming to us false or only relatively true. But if we start from the larger conception, a completer truth and a wider experience open to us. We perceive that the immutability of the timeless, spaceless existence is an absolute and an infinite, but that also the conscious-force and the active delight of the divine Being in its all-blissful possession of the outpouring of its powers, qualities, self-creations is an absolute and an infinite,—and indeed the same absolute and infinite, so much the same that we can enjoy simultaneously, equally the divine timeless calm and peace and the divine time-possessing joy of activity, freely, infinitely, without bondage or the lapse into unrest and suffering. So too we can have the same experience of all the principles of this activity which in the Immutable are self-contained and in a sense drawn in and concealed, in the cosmic are expressed and realise their infinite quality and capacity.

The first of these principles in importance is the duality—which resolves itself into a unity—of Purusha and Prakriti of which we have had occasion to speak in the Yoga of Works, but which is of equal importance for the Yoga of Knowledge. This division was made most clearly by the old Indian philosophies; but it bases itself upon the eternal fact of practical duality in unity upon which the world-manifestation is founded. It is given different names according to our view of the universe. The Vedantins spoke of the Self and Maya, meaning according to their predilections by the Self the Immutable and by Maya

the power the Self has of imposing on itself the cosmic illusion, or by the Self the Divine Being and by Maya the nature of conscious-being and the conscious-force by which the Divine embodies himself in soul-forms and forms of things. Others spoke of Ishwara and Shakti, the Lord and His force, His cosmic power. The analytic philosophy of the Sankhyas affirmed their eternal duality without any possibility of oneness, accepting only relations of union and separation by which the cosmic action of Prakriti begins, proceeds or ceases for the Purusha; for the Purusha is an inactive conscious existence,—it is the Soul the same in itself and immutable forever,—Prakriti the active force of Nature which by its motion creates and maintains and by its sinking into rest dissolves the phenomenon of the cosmos. Leaving aside these philosophical distinctions, we come to the original psychological experience from which all really take their start, that there are two elements in the existence of living beings, of human beings at least if not of all cosmos,—a dual being, Nature and the soul.

This duality is self-evident. Without any philosophy at all, by the mere force of experience it is what we can all perceive, although we may not take the trouble to define. Even the most thoroughgoing materialism which denies the soul or resolves it into a more or less illusory result of natural phenomena acting upon some ill-explained phenomenon of the physical brain which we call consciousness or the mind, but which is really no more than a sort of complexity of nervous spasms, cannot get rid of the practical fact of this duality. It does not matter at all how it came about; the fact is not only there, it determines our whole existence, it is the one fact which is really important to us as human beings with a will and an intelligence and a subjective existence which makes all our happiness and our suffering. The whole problem of life resolves itself into this one question,—“What are we to do with this soul and nature set face to face with each other,—we who have as one side of our existence this Nature, this personal and cosmic activity, which tries to impress itself upon the soul, to possess, control, determine it, and as the other side this soul which feels that in some mysterious way it has

a freedom, a control over itself, a responsibility for what it is and does, and tries therefore to turn upon Nature, its own and the world's, and to control, possess, enjoy, or even, it may be, reject and escape from her?" In order to answer that question we have to know,—to know what the soul can do, to know what it can do with itself, to know too what it can do with Nature and the world. The whole of human philosophy, religion, science is really nothing but an attempt to get at the right data upon which it will be possible to answer the question and solve, as satisfactorily as our knowledge will allow, the problem of our existence.

The hope of a complete escape from our present strife with and subjection to our lower and troubled nature and existence arises when we perceive what religion and philosophy affirm, but modern thought has tried to deny, that there are two poises of our soul-existence, a lower, troubled and subjected, a higher, supreme, untroubled and sovereign, one vibrant in Mind, the other tranquil in Spirit. The hope not only of an escape, but of a completely satisfying and victorious solution comes when we perceive what some religions and philosophies affirm, but others seem to deny, that there is also in the dual unity of soul and nature a lower, an ordinary human status and a higher, a divine; for it is in the divine alone that the conditions of the duality stand reversed; there the soul becomes that which now it only struggles and aspires to be, master of its nature, free and by union with the Divine possessor also of the world-nature. According to our idea of these possibilities will be the solution we shall attempt to realise.

Involved in mind, possessed by the ordinary phenomenon of mental thought, sensation, emotion, reception of the vital and physical impacts of the world and mechanical reaction to them, the soul is subject to Nature. Even its will and intelligence are determined by its mental nature, determined even more largely by the mental nature of its environment which acts upon, subtly as well as overtly, and overcomes the individual mentality. Thus its attempt to regulate, to control, to determine its own experience and action is pursued by an element of illusion, since when it thinks it is acting, it is really Nature that is acting and

determining all it thinks, wills and does. If there were not this constant knowledge in it that it is, that it exists in itself, is not the body or life but something other which at least receives and accepts the cosmic experience if it does not determine it, it would be compelled in the end to suppose that Nature is all and the soul an illusion. This is the conclusion modern Materialism affirms and to that nihilistic Buddhism arrived; the Sankhyas, perceiving the dilemma, solved it by saying that the soul in fact only mirrors Nature's determinations and itself determines nothing, is not the lord, but can by refusing to mirror them fall back into eternal immobility and peace. There are too the other solutions which arrive at the same practical conclusion, but from the other end, the spiritual; for they affirm either that Nature is an illusion or that both the soul and Nature are impermanent and they point us to a state beyond in which their duality has no existence; either they cease by the extinction of both in something permanent and ineffable or their discordances end by the exclusion of the active principle altogether. Though they do not satisfy humanity's larger hope and deep-seated impulse and aspiration, these are valid solutions so far as they go; for they arrive at an Absolute in itself or at the separate absolute of the soul, even if they reject the many rapturous infinities of the Absolute which the true possession of Nature by the soul in its divine existence offers to the eternal seeker in man.

Uplifted into the Spirit the soul is no longer subject to Nature; it is above this mental activity. It may be above it in detachment and aloofness, *udāśīna*, seated above and indifferent, or attracted by and lost in the absorbing peace or bliss of its undifferentiated, its concentrated spiritual experience of itself; we must then transcend by a complete renunciation of Nature and cosmic existence, not conquer by a divine and sovereign possession. But the Spirit, the Divine is not only above Nature; it is master of Nature and cosmos; the soul rising into its spiritual poise must at least be capable of the same mastery by its unity with the Divine. It must be capable of controlling its own nature not only in calm or by forcing it to repose, but with a sovereign control of its play and activity.

To arrive by an intense spirituality at the absolute of the soul is our possibility on one side of our dual existence; to enjoy the absolute of Nature and of everything in Nature is our possibility on the other side of this eternal duality. To unify these highest aspirations in a divine possession of God and ourselves and the world, should be our happy completeness. In the lower poise this is not possible because the soul acts through the mind and the mind can only act individually and fragmentarily in a contented obedience or a struggling subjection to that universal Nature through which the divine knowledge and the divine Will are worked out in the cosmos. But the Spirit is in possession of knowledge and will, of which it is the source and cause and not a subject; therefore in proportion as the soul assumes its divine or spiritual being, it assumes also control of the movements of its nature. It becomes, in the ancient language, Swarat, free and a self-ruler over the kingdom of its own life and being. But also it increases in control over its environment, its world.

This it can only do entirely by universalising itself; for it is the divine and universal will that it must express in its action upon the world. It must first extend its consciousness and see the universe in itself instead of being like the mind limited by the physical, vital, sensational, emotional, intellectual outlook of the little divided personality. It must accept the world-truths, the world-energies, the world-tendencies, the world-purposes as its own instead of clinging to its own intellectual ideas, desires and endeavours, preferences, objects, intentions, impulses; these, so far as they remain, must be harmonised with the universal. It must then submit its knowledge and will at their very source to the divine Knowledge and the divine Will and so arrive through submission at immergence, losing its personal light in the divine Light and its personal initiative in the divine initiative. To be first in tune with the Infinite, in harmony with the Divine, and then to be unified with the Infinite, taken into the Divine is its condition of perfect strength and mastery, and this is precisely the very nature of the spiritual life and the spiritual existence.

The distinction made in the Gita between the Purusha and the Prakriti gives us the clue to the various attitudes which the

soul can adopt towards Nature in its movement towards perfect freedom and rule. The Purusha is, says the Gita, witness, upholder, source of the sanction, knower, lord, enjoyer; Prakriti executes, it is the active principle and must have an operation corresponding to the attitude of the Purusha. The soul may assume, if it wishes, the poise of the pure witness, *sākṣī*; it may look on at the action of Nature as a thing from which it stands apart; it watches, but does not itself participate. We have seen the importance of this quietistic capacity; it is the basis of the movement of withdrawal by which we can say of everything,—body, life, mental action, thought, sensation, emotion,—“This is Prakriti working in the life, mind and body, it is not myself, it is not even mine,” and thus come to the soul’s separation from these things and to their quiescence. This may, therefore, be an attitude of renunciation or at least of non-participation, tamasic, with a resigned and inert endurance of the natural action so long as it lasts, rajasic, with a disgust, aversion and recoil from it, sattwic, with a luminous intelligence of the soul’s separateness and the peace and joy of aloofness and repose; but also it may be attended by an equal and impersonal delight as of a spectator at a show, joyous but unattached and ready to rise up at any moment and as joyfully depart. The attitude of the Witness at its highest is the absolute of unattachment and freedom from affection by the phenomena of the cosmic existence.

As the pure Witness, the soul refuses the function of upholder or sustainer of Nature. The upholder, *bhartā*, is another, God or Force or Maya, but not the soul, which only admits the reflection of the natural action upon its watching consciousness, but not any responsibility for maintaining or continuing it. It does not say “All this is in me and maintained by me, an activity of my being,” but at the most “This is imposed on me, but really external to myself.” Unless there is a clear and real duality in existence, this cannot be the whole truth of the matter; the soul is the upholder also, it supports in its being the energy which unrolls the spectacle of the cosmos and which conducts its energies. When the Purusha accepts this upholding, it may do it still passively and without attachment, feeling that

it contributes the energy, but not that it controls and determines it. The control is another, God or Force or the very nature of Maya; the soul only upholds indifferently so long as it must, so long perhaps as the force of its past sanction and interest in the energy continues and refuses to be exhausted. But if the attitude of the upholder is fully accepted, an important step forward has been taken towards identification with the active Brahman and his joy of cosmic being. For the Purusha has become the active giver of the sanction.

In the attitude of the Witness there is also a kind of sanction, but it is passive, inert and has no kind of absoluteness about it; but if he consents entirely to uphold, the sanction has become active, even though the soul may do no more than consent to reflect, support and thereby maintain in action all the energies of Prakriti. It may refuse to determine, to select, believing that it is God or Force itself or some Knowledge-Will that selects and determines, and the soul only a witness and upholder and thereby giver of the sanction, *anumantā*, but not the possessor and the director of the knowledge and the will, *jñātā iśvarah*. Then there is a general sanction in the form of an active upholding of whatever is determined by God or universal Will, but there is not an active determination. But if the soul habitually selects and rejects in what is offered to it, it determines; the relatively passive has become an entirely active sanction and is on the way to be an active control.

This it becomes when the soul accepts its complete function as the knower, lord and enjoyer of Nature. As the knower the soul possesses the knowledge of the force that acts and determines, it sees the values of being which are realising themselves in cosmos, it is in the secret of Fate. For the force that acts is itself determined by the knowledge which is its origin and the source and standardiser of its valuations and effectuations of values. Therefore in proportion as the soul becomes again the knower, it gets the capacity of becoming also the controller of the action whether by spiritual force alone or by that force figuring itself in mental and physical activities. There may be in our soul life a perfect spiritual knowledge and understanding

not only of all our internal activities but of all the unrolling of things, events, human, animal, natural activities around us, the world-vision of the Rishi. This may not be attended by an active putting forth of power upon the world, though that is seldom entirely absent; for the Rishi is not uninterested in the world or in his fellow-creatures, but one with them by sympathy or by accepting all creatures as his own self in many minds and bodies. The old forest-dwelling anchorites even are described continually as busily engaged in doing good to all creatures. This can only be done in the spiritual realisation, not by an effort, for effort is a diminution of freedom, but by a spiritual influence or by a spiritual mastery over the minds of men and the workings of Nature, which reflects the divine effective immanence and the divine effective mastery.

Nor can it do this without becoming the active enjoyer, *bhoktā*. In the lower being the enjoyment is of a twofold kind, positive and negative, which in the electricity of sensation translates itself into joy and suffering; but in the higher it is an actively equal enjoyment of the divine delight in self-manifestation. That enjoyment again may be limited to a silent spiritual delight or an integral divine joy possessing all things around us and all activities of all parts of our being.

There is no loss of freedom, no descent into an ignorant attachment. The man free in his soul is aware that the Divine is the lord of the action of Nature, that Maya is His Knowledge-Will determining and effecting all, that Force is the Will side of this double divine Power in which knowledge is always present and effectual. He is aware of himself also, even individually, as a centre of the divine existence,—a portion of the Lord, the Gita expresses it,—controlling so far the action of Nature which he views, upholds, sanctions, enjoys, knows and by the determinative power of knowledge controls. And when he universalises himself, his knowledge still reflects only the divine knowledge, his will effectuates only the divine will, he enjoys only the divine delight and not an ignorant personal satisfaction. Thus the Purusha preserves its freedom in its possession, renunciation of limited personality even in its representative enjoyment and

delight of cosmic being. It has taken up fully in the higher poise the true relations of the soul and Nature.

Purusha and Prakriti in their union and duality arise from the being of Sachchidananda. Self-conscious existence is the essential nature of the Being; that is Sat or Purusha. The Power of self-aware existence, whether drawn into itself or acting in the works of its consciousness and force, its knowledge and its will, Chit and Tapas, Chit and its Shakti,—that is Prakriti. Delight of being, Ananda, is the eternal truth of the union of this conscious being and its conscious force whether absorbed in itself or else deployed in the inseparable duality of its two aspects. It unrolls the worlds as Prakriti and views them as Purusha; acts in them and upholds the action; executes works and gives the sanction without which the force of Nature cannot act; executes and controls the knowledge and the will and knows and controls the determinations of the knowledge-force and will-force; ministers to the enjoyment and enjoys;—all is the Soul possessor, observer, knower, lord of Nature and Nature expressing the being, executing the will, satisfying the self-knowledge, ministering to the delight of being of the soul. There we have, founded on the very nature of being, the supreme and the universal relation of Prakriti with Purusha. The relation in its imperfect, perverted or reverse terms is the world as we see it; but the perfect relation brings the absolute joy of the soul in itself and, based upon that, the absolute joy of the soul in Nature which is the divine fulfilment of world-existence.

Chapter XVIII

The Soul and Its Liberation

WE HAVE now to pause and consider to what this acceptance of the relations of Purusha and Prakriti commits us; for it means that the Yoga which we are pursuing has for end none of the ordinary aims of humanity. It neither accepts our earthly existence as it is, nor can be satisfied with some kind of moral perfection or religious ecstasy, with a heaven beyond or with some dissolution of our being by which we get satisfactorily done with the trouble of existence. Our aim becomes quite other; it is to live in the Divine, the Infinite, in God and not in any mere egoism and temporality, but at the same time not apart from Nature, from our fellow-beings, from earth and the mundane existence, any more than the Divine lives aloof from us and the world. He exists also in relation to the world and Nature and all these beings, but with an absolute and inalienable power, freedom and self-knowledge. Our liberation and perfection is to transcend ignorance, bondage and weakness and live in Him in relation to the world and Nature with the divine power, freedom and self-knowledge. For the highest relation of the Soul to existence is the Purusha's possession of Prakriti, when he is no longer ignorant and subject to his nature, but knows, transcends, enjoys and controls his manifested being and determines largely and freely what shall be his self-expression.

A oneness finding itself out in the variations of its own duality is the whole play of the soul with Nature in its cosmic birth and becoming. One Sachchidananda everywhere, self-existent, illimitable, a unity indestructible by the utmost infinity of its own variations, is the original truth of being for which our knowledge seeks and to that our subjective existence eventually arrives. From that all other truths arise, upon that they are based, by that they are at every moment made possible and in that they in the end can know themselves and each other, are reconciled,

harmonised and justified. All relations in the world, even to its greatest and most shocking apparent discords, are relations of something eternal to itself in its own universal existence; they are not anywhere or at any time collisions of disconnected beings who meet fortuitously or by some mechanical necessity of cosmic existence. Therefore to get back to this eternal fact of oneness is our essential act of self-knowledge; to live in it must be the effective principle of our inner possession of our being and of our right and ideal relations with the world. That is why we have had to insist first and foremost on oneness as the aim and in a way the whole aim of our Yoga of knowledge.

But this unity works itself out everywhere and on every plane by an executive or practical truth of duality. The Eternal is the one infinite conscious Existence, Purusha, and not something inconscient and mechanical; it exists eternally in its delight of the force of its own conscious being founded in an equilibrium of unity; but it exists also in the no less eternal delight of its force of conscious being at play with various creative self-experience in the universe. Just as we ourselves are or can become aware of being always something timeless, nameless, perpetual which we call our self and which constitutes the unity of all that we are, and yet simultaneously we have the various experience of what we do, think, will, create, become, such too is the self-awareness of this Purusha in the world. Only we, being at present limited and ego-bound mental individuals, have usually this experience in the ignorance and do not live in the self, but only look back at it or draw back to it from time to time, while the Eternal has it in His infinite self-knowledge, is eternally this self and looks from the fullness of self-being at all this self-experience. He does not like us, bound prisoners of the mind, conceive of His being as either a sort of indefinite result and sum or else a high contradiction of self-experience. The old philosophical quarrel between Being and Becoming is not possible to the eternal self-knowledge.

An active force of conscious-being which realises itself in its powers of self-experience, its powers of knowledge, will, self-delight, self-formulation with all their marvellous variations, inversions, conservations and conversions of energy, even

perversions, is what we call Prakriti or Nature, in ourselves as in the cosmos. But behind this force of variation is the eternal equilibrium of the same force in an equal unity which supports impartially, governs even as it has originated the variations and directs them to whatever aim of its self-delight the Being, the Purusha, has conceived in its consciousness and determined by its will or power of consciousness. That is the divine Nature into unity with which we have to get back by our Yoga of self-knowledge. We have to become the Purusha, Sachchidananda, delighting in a divine individual possession of its Prakriti and no longer mental beings subject to our egoistic nature. For that is the real man, the supreme and integral self of the individual, and the ego is only a lower and partial manifestation of ourselves through which a certain limited and preparatory experience becomes possible and is for a time indulged. But this indulgence of the lower being is not our whole possibility; it is not the sole or crowning experience for which we exist as human beings even in this material world.

This individual being of ours is that by which ignorance is possible to self-conscious mind, but it is also that by which liberation into the spiritual being is possible and the enjoyment of divine immortality. It is not the Eternal in His transcendence or in His cosmic being who arrives at this immortality; it is the individual who rises into self-knowledge, in him it is possessed and by him it is made effective. All life, spiritual, mental or material, is the play of the soul with the possibilities of its nature; for without this play there can be no self-expression and no relative self-experience. Even, then, in our realisation of all as our larger self and in our oneness with God and other beings, this play can and must persist, unless we desire to cease from all self-expression and all but a tranced and absorbed self-experience. But then it is in the individual being that this trance or this liberated play is realised; the trance is this mental being's immersion in the sole experience of unity, the liberated play is the taking up of his mind into the spiritual being for the free realisation and delight of oneness. For the nature of the divine existence is to possess always its unity, but to possess it also in

an infinite experience, from many standpoints, on many planes, through many conscious powers or selves of itself, individualities — in our limited intellectual language — of the one conscious being. Each one of us is one of these individualities. To stand away from God in limited ego, limited mind is to stand away from ourselves, to be unpossessed of our true individuality, to be the apparent and not the real individual; it is our power of ignorance. To be taken up into the divine Being and be aware of our spiritual, infinite and universal consciousness as that in which we now live, is to possess our supreme and integral self, our true individuality; it is our power of self-knowledge.

By knowing the eternal unity of these three powers of the eternal manifestation, God, Nature and the individual self, and their intimate necessity to each other, we come to understand existence itself and all that in the appearances of the world now puzzles our ignorance. Our self-knowledge abolishes none of these things, it abolishes only our ignorance and those circumstances proper to the ignorance which made us bound and subject to the egoistic determinations of our nature. When we get back to our true being, the ego falls away from us; its place is taken by our supreme and integral self, the true individuality. As this supreme self it makes itself one with all beings and sees all world and Nature in its own infinity. What we mean by this is simply that our sense of separate existence disappears into a consciousness of illimitable, undivided, infinite being in which we no longer feel bound to the name and form and the particular mental and physical determinations of our present birth and becoming and are no longer separate from anything or anyone in the universe. This was what the ancient thinkers called the Non-birth or the destruction of birth or Nirvana. At the same time we continue to live and act through our individual birth and becoming, but with a different knowledge and quite another kind of experience; the world also continues, but we see it in our own being and not as something external to it and other than ourselves. To be able to live permanently in this new consciousness of our real, our integral being is to attain liberation and enjoy immortality.

Here there comes in the complication of the idea that immortality is only possible after death in other worlds, upon higher planes of existence or that liberation must destroy all possibility of mental or bodily living and annihilate the individual existence for ever in an impersonal infinity. These ideas derive their strength from a certain justification in experience and a sort of necessity or upward attraction felt by the soul when it shakes off the compelling ties of mind and matter. It is felt that these ties are inseparable from all earthly living or from all mental existence. Death is the king of the material world, for life seems to exist here only by submission to death, by a constant dying; immortality has to be conquered here with difficulty and seems to be in its nature a rejection of all death and therefore of all birth into the material world. The field of immortality must be in some immaterial plane, in some heavens where either the body does not exist or else is different and only a form of the soul or a secondary circumstance. On the other hand, it is felt by those who would go beyond immortality even, that all planes and heavens are circumstances of the finite existence and the infinite self is void of all these things. They are dominated by a necessity to disappear into the impersonal and infinite and an inability to equate in any way the bliss of impersonal being with the soul's delight in its becoming. Philosophies have been invented which justify to the intellect this need of immersion and disappearance; but what is really important and decisive is the call of the Beyond, the need of the soul, its delight — in this case — in a sort of impersonal existence or non-existence. For what decides is the determining delight of the Purusha, the relation which it wills to establish with its Prakriti, the experience at which it arrives as the result of the line it has followed in the development of its individual self-experience among all the various possibilities of its nature. Our intellectual justifications are only the account of that experience which we give to the reason and the devices by which we help the mind to assent to the direction in which the soul is moving.

The cause of our world-existence is not, as our present experience induces us to believe, the ego; for the ego is only a

result and a circumstance of our mode of world-existence. It is a relation which the many-souled Purusha has set up between individualised minds and bodies, a relation of self-defence and mutual exclusion and aggression in order to have among all the dependences of things in the world upon each other a possibility of independent mental and physical experience. But there can be no absolute independence upon these planes; impersonality which rejects all mental and physical becoming is therefore the only possible culmination of this exclusive movement: so only can an absolutely independent self-experience be achieved. The soul then seems to exist absolutely, independently in itself; it is free in the sense of the Indian word, *svādhīna*, dependent only on itself, not dependent upon God and other beings. Therefore in this experience God, personal self and other beings are all denied, cast away as distinctions of the ignorance. It is the ego recognising its own insufficiency and abolishing both itself and its contraries that its own essential instinct of independent self-experience may be accomplished; for it finds that its effort to achieve it by relations with God and others is afflicted throughout with a sentence of illusion, vanity and nullity. It ceases to admit them because by admitting them it becomes dependent on them; it ceases to admit its own persistence, because the persistence of ego means the admission of that which it tries to exclude as not-self, of the cosmos and other beings. The self-annihilation of the Buddhist is in its nature absolute exclusion of all that the mental being perceives; the self-immersion of the Adwaitin in his absolute being is the self-same aim differently conceived: both are a supreme self-assertion of the soul of its exclusive independence of Prakriti.

The experience which we first arrive at by the sort of short-cut to liberation which we have described as the movement of withdrawal, assists this tendency. For it is a breaking of the ego and a rejection of the habits of the mentality we now possess; for that is subject to matter and the physical senses and conceives of things only as forms, objects, external phenomena and as names which we attach to those forms. We are not aware directly of the subjective life of other beings except by analogy from our

own and by inference or derivative perception based upon their external signs of speech, action, etc., which our minds translate into the terms of our own subjectivity. When we break out from ego and physical mind into the infinity of the spirit, we still see the world and others as the mind has accustomed us to see them, as names and forms; only in our new experience of the direct and superior reality of spirit, they lose that direct objective reality and that indirect subjective reality of their own which they had to the mind. They seem to be quite the opposite of the truer reality we now experience; our mentality, stilled and indifferent, no longer strives to know and make real to itself those intermediate terms which exist in them as in us and the knowledge of which has for its utility to bridge over the gulf between the spiritual self and the objective phenomena of the world. We are satisfied with the blissful infinite impersonality of a pure spiritual existence; nothing else and nobody else any longer matters to us. What the physical senses show to us and what the mind perceives and conceives about them and so imperfectly and transiently delights in, seems now unreal and worthless; we are not and do not care to be in possession of the intermediate truths of being through which these things are enjoyed by the One and possess for Him that value of His being and delight which makes, as we might say, cosmic existence a thing beautiful to Him and worth manifesting. We can no longer share in God's delight in the world; on the contrary it looks to us as if the Eternal had degraded itself by admitting into the purity of its being the gross nature of Matter or had falsified the truth of its being by imagining vain names and unreal forms. Or else if we perceive at all that delight, it is with a far-off detachment which prevents us from participating in it with any sense of intimate possession, or it is with an attraction to the superior delight of an absorbed and exclusive self-experience which does not allow us to stay any longer in these lower terms than we are compelled to stay by the continuance of our physical life and body.

But if either in the course of our Yoga or as the result of a free return of our realised Self upon the world and a free repossession of its Prakriti by the Purusha in us, we become

conscious not only of the bodies and outward self-expression of others, but intimately of their inner being, their minds, their souls and that in them of which their own surface minds are not aware, then we see the real Being in them also and we see them as selves of our Self and not as mere names and forms. They become to us realities of the Eternal. Our minds are no longer subject to the delusion of trivial unworthiness or the illusion of unreality. The material life loses indeed for us its old absorbing value, but finds the greater value which it has for the divine Purusha; regarded no longer as the sole term of our becoming, but as merely having a subordinate value in relation to the higher terms of mind and spirit, it increases by that diminution instead of losing in value. We see that our material being, life, nature are only one poise of the Purusha in relation to its Prakriti and that their true purpose and importance can only be appreciated when they are seen not as a thing in itself, but as dependent on higher poises by which they are supported; from those superior relations they derive their meaning and, therefore, by conscious union with them they can fulfil all their valid tendencies and aims. Life then becomes justified to us and no longer stultified by the possession of liberated self-knowledge.

This larger integral knowledge and freedom liberates in the end and fulfils our whole existence. When we possess it, we see why our existence moves between these three terms of God, ourselves and the world; we no longer see them or any of them in opposition to each other, inconsistent, incompatible, nor do we on the other hand regard them as terms of our ignorance which all disappear at last into a pure impersonal unity. We perceive their necessity as terms rather of our self-fulfilment which preserve their value after liberation or rather find then only their real value. We have no longer the experience of our existence as exclusive of the other existences which make up by our relations with them our experience of the world; in this new consciousness they are all contained in ourselves and we in them. They and we are no longer so many mutually exclusive egos each seeking its own independent fulfilment or self-transcendence and ultimately aiming at nothing else; they are all the Eternal and the self in

each secretly embraces all in itself and seeks in various ways to make that higher truth of its unity apparent and effective in its terrestrial being. Not mutual exclusiveness, but mutual inclusiveness is the divine truth of our individuality, love the higher law and not an independent self-fulfilment.

The Purusha who is our real being is always independent and master of Prakriti and at this independence we are rightly seeking to arrive; that is the utility of the egoistic movement and its self-transcendence, but its right fulfilment is not in making absolute the ego's principle of independent existence, but in arriving at this other highest poise of the Purusha with regard to its Prakriti. There there is transcendence of Nature, but also possession of Nature, perfect fulfilment of our individuality, but also perfect fulfilment of our relations with the world and with others. Therefore an individual salvation in heavens beyond careless of the earth is not our highest objective; the liberation and self-fulfilment of others is as much our own concern,—we might almost say, our divine self-interest,—as our own liberation. Otherwise our unity with others would have no effective meaning. To conquer the lures of egoistic existence in this world is our first victory over ourselves; to conquer the lure of individual happiness in heavens beyond is our second victory; to conquer the highest lure of escape from life and a self-absorbed bliss in the impersonal infinity is the last and greatest victory. Then are we rid of all individual exclusiveness and possessed of our entire spiritual freedom.

The state of the liberated soul is that of the Purusha who is for ever free. Its consciousness is a transcendence and an all-comprehending unity. Its self-knowledge does not get rid of all the terms of self-knowledge, but unifies and harmonises all things in God and in the divine nature. The intense religious ecstasy which knows only God and ourselves and shuts out all else, is only to it an intimate experience which prepares it for sharing in the embrace of the divine Love and Delight around all creatures. A heavenly bliss which unites God and ourselves and the blest, but enables us to look with a remote indifference on the unblest and their sufferings is not possible to the perfect

soul; for these also are its selves; free individually from suffering and ignorance, it must naturally turn to draw them also towards its freedom. On the other hand any absorption in the relations between self and others and the world to the exclusion of God and the Beyond is still more impossible, and therefore it cannot be limited by the earth or even by the highest and most altruistic relations of man with man. Its activity or its culmination is not to efface and utterly deny itself for the sake of others, but to fulfil itself in God-possession, freedom and divine bliss that in and by its fulfilment others too may be fulfilled. For it is in God alone, by the possession of the Divine only that all the discords of life can be resolved, and therefore the raising of men towards the Divine is in the end the one effective way of helping mankind. All the other activities and realisations of our self-experience have their use and power, but in the end these crowded side-tracks or these lonely paths must circle round to converge into the wideness of the integral way by which the liberated soul transcends all, embraces all and becomes the promise and the power of the fulfilment of all in their manifested being of the Divine.

Chapter XIX

The Planes of Our Existence

IF THE Purusha in us has thus to become by union with its highest self, the Divine Purusha, the knower, lord, free enjoyer of its Prakriti, it cannot be done, evidently, by dwelling on the present plane of our being; for that is the material plane in which the reign of Prakriti is complete; there the divine Purusha is entirely hidden in the blinding surge of her activities, in the gross pomp of her workings, and the individual soul emerging from her involution of spirit in matter, subject in all its activities to its entangling in the material and vital instruments is unable to experience the divine freedom. What it calls its freedom and mastery, is only the subtle subjection of mind to Prakriti which is lighter indeed, nearer to the possibility of liberty and rule than the gross subjection of vital and material things like the animal, plant and metal, but is still not real freedom and mastery. Therefore we have had to speak of different planes of our consciousness and of the spiritual planes of the mental being; for if these did not exist, the liberation of the embodied being would have been impossible here on earth. He would have had to wait and at most to prepare himself for seeking it in other worlds and in a different kind of physical or spiritual embodiment less obstinately sealed in its shell of material experience.

In the ordinary Yoga of knowledge it is only necessary to recognise two planes of our consciousness, the spiritual and the materialised mental; the pure reason standing between these two views them both, cuts through the illusions of the phenomenal world, exceeds the materialised mental plane, sees the reality of the spiritual; and then the will of the individual Purusha unifying itself with this poise of knowledge rejects the lower and draws back to the supreme plane, dwells there, loses mind and body, sheds life from it and merges itself in the supreme Purusha, is delivered from individual existence. It knows that

this is not the whole truth of our existence, which is much more complex; it knows there are many planes, but it disregards them or pays little attention to them because they are not essential to this liberation. They indeed rather hamper it, because to live on them brings new attractive psychical experiences, psychical enjoyments, psychical powers, a new world of phenomenal knowledge the pursuit of which creates stumbling-blocks in the way of its one object, immittance in Brahman, and brings a succession of innumerable way-side snares on the road which leads to God. But since we accept world-existence, and for us all world-existence is Brahman and full of the presence of God, these things can have no terrors for us; whatever dangers of distraction there may be, we have to face and overcome them. If the world and our own existence are so complex, we must know and embrace their complexities in order that our self-knowledge and our knowledge of the dealings of Purusha with its Prakriti may be complete. If there are many planes, we have to possess them all for the Divine, even as we seek to possess spiritually and transform our ordinary poise of mind, life and body.

The ancient knowledge in all countries was full of the search after the hidden truths of our being and it created that large field of practice and inquiry which goes in Europe by the name of occultism,—we do not use any corresponding word in the East, because these things do not seem to us so remote, mysterious and abnormal as to the occidental mentality; they are nearer to us and the veil between our normal material life and this larger life is much thinner. In India,¹ Egypt, Chaldea, China, Greece, the Celtic countries they have formed part of various Yogic systems and disciplines which had once a great hold everywhere, but to the modern mind have seemed mere superstition and mysticism, although the facts and experiences on which they are founded are quite as real in their own field and as much governed by intelligible laws of their own as the facts and experiences of the material world. It is not our intention here to plunge into this

¹ For example, the Tantric in India.

vast and difficult field of psychical knowledge.² But it becomes necessary now to deal with certain broad facts and principles which form its framework, for without them our Yoga of knowledge cannot be complete. We find that in the various systems the facts dealt with are always the same, but there are considerable differences of theoretic and practical arrangement, as is natural and inevitable in dealing with a subject so large and difficult. Certain things are here omitted, there made all-important, here understressed, there over-emphasised; certain fields of experience which are in one system held to be merely subordinate provinces, are in others treated as separate kingdoms. But I shall follow here consistently the Vedic and Vedantic arrangement of which we find the great lines in the Upanishads, first because it seems to me at once the simplest and most philosophical and more especially because it was from the beginning envisaged from the point of view of the utility of these various planes to the supreme object of our liberation. It takes as its basis the three principles of our ordinary being, mind, life and matter, the triune spiritual principle of Sachchidananda and the link principle of *vijnāna*, supermind, the free or spiritual intelligence, and thus arranges all the large possible poises of our being in a tier of seven planes,— sometimes regarded as five only, because, only the lower five are wholly accessible to us,— through which the developing being can rise to its perfection.

But first we must understand what we mean by planes of consciousness, planes of existence. We mean a general settled poise or world of relations between Purusha and Prakriti, between the Soul and Nature. For anything that we can call world is and can be nothing else than the working out of a general relation which a universal existence has created or established between itself, or let us say its eternal fact or potentiality and the powers of its becoming. That existence in its relations with and its experience of the becoming is what we call soul or Purusha,

² We hope to deal with it hereafter; but our first concern in the *Arya* must be with spiritual and philosophical truths; it is only when these have been grasped that the approach to the psychical becomes safe and clear.

individual soul in the individual, universal soul in the cosmos; the principle and the powers of the becoming are what we call Nature or Prakriti. But since Being, conscious force and delight of being are always the three constituent terms of existence, the nature of a world is really determined by the way in which Prakriti is set to deal with these three primary things and the forms which it is allowed to give to them. For existence itself is and must always be the stuff of its own becoming; it must be shaped into the substance with which Force has to deal. Force again must be the power which works out that substance and works with it to whatever ends; Force is that which we ordinarily call Nature. Again the end, the object with which the worlds are created must be worked out by the consciousness inherent in all existence and all force and all their workings, and the object must be the possession of itself and of its delight of existence in the world. To that all the circumstances and aims of any world-existence must reduce themselves; it is existence developing its terms of being, its power of being, its conscious delight of being; if these are involved, their evolution; if they are veiled, their self-revelation.

Here the soul lives in a material universe; of that alone it is immediately conscious; the realisation of its potentialities in that is the problem with which it is concerned. But matter means the involution of the conscious delight of existence in self-oblivious force and in a self-dividing, infinitesimally disaggregated form of substance. Therefore the whole principle and effort of a material world must be the evolution of what is involved and the development of what is undeveloped. Here everything is shut up from the first in the violently working inconscient sleep of material force; therefore the whole aim of any material becoming must be the waking of consciousness out of the inconscient; the whole consummation of a material becoming must be the removal of the veil of matter and the luminous revelation of the entirely self-conscious Being to its own imprisoned soul in the becoming. Since Man is such an imprisoned soul, this luminous liberation and coming to self-knowledge must be his highest object and the condition of his perfection.

But the limitations of a material universe seem to be hostile to the proper accomplishment of this object which is yet so inevitably the highest aim of a mental being born into a physical body. First existence has formed itself here, fundamentally, as Matter; it has been objectivised, made sensible and concrete to its own self-experiencing conscious-force in the form of self-dividing material substance, and by the aggregation of this matter there has been built up for man a physical body separate, divided from others and subject to the fixed habits of process or, as we call them, the laws of inconscient material Nature. His force of being too is nature or Force working in matter, which has waked slowly out of inconscience to life and is always limited by form, always dependent on the body, always separated by it from the rest of Life and from other living beings, always hampered in its development, persistence, self-perfectioning by the laws of the Inconscience and the limitations of bodily living. Equally, his consciousness is a mentality emerging in a body and in a sharply individualised life; it is therefore limited in its workings and capacities and dependent on bodily organs of no great competence and on a very restricted vital force; it is separated from the rest of cosmic mind and shut out from the thoughts of other mental beings whose inner workings are a sealed book to man's physical mind except in so far as he can read them by the analogy of his own mentality and by their insufficient bodily signs and self-expressions. His consciousness is always falling back towards the inconscience in which a large part of it is always involved, his life towards death, his physical being towards disaggregation. His delight of being depends on the relations of this imperfect consciousness with its environment based upon physical sensations and the sense-mind, in other words on a limited mind trying to lay hold on a world external and foreign to it by means of a limited body, limited vital force, limited organs. Therefore its power for possession is limited, its force for delight is limited, and every touch of the world which exceeds its force, which that force cannot bear, cannot seize on, cannot assimilate and possess must turn to something else than delight, to pain, discomfort or grief. Or else it must

be met by non-reception, insensibility, or, if received, put away by indifference. Moreover such delight of being as it possesses, is not possessed naturally and eternally like the self-delight of Sachchidananda, but by experience and acquisition in Time, and can therefore only be maintained and prolonged by repetition of experience and is in its nature precarious and transient.

All this means that the natural relations of Purusha to Prakriti in the material universe are the complete absorption of conscious being in the force of its workings, therefore the complete self-oblivion and self-ignorance of the Purusha, the complete domination of Prakriti and subjection of the soul to Nature. The soul does not know itself, it only knows, if anything, the workings of Prakriti. The emergence of the individual self-conscious soul in Man does not of itself abrogate these primary relations of ignorance and subjection. For this soul is living on a material plane of existence, a poise of Prakriti in which matter is still the chief determinant of its relations to Nature, and its consciousness being limited by Matter cannot be an entirely self-possessing consciousness. Even the universal soul, if limited by the material formula, could not be in entire possession of itself; much less can the individual soul to which the rest of existence becomes by bodily, vital and mental limitation and separation something external to it on which it is yet dependent for its life and its delight and its knowledge. These limitations of his power, knowledge, life, delight of existence are the whole cause of man's dissatisfaction with himself and the universe. And if the material universe were all and the material plane the only plane of his being, then man the individual Purusha could never arrive at perfection and self-fulfilment or indeed to any other life than that of the animals. There must be either worlds in which he is liberated from these incomplete and unsatisfactory relations of Purusha with Prakriti, or planes of his own being by ascending to which he can transcend them, or at the very least planes, worlds and higher beings from which he can receive or be helped to knowledge, powers, joys, a growth of his being otherwise impossible. All these things, the ancient knowledge asserts, exist,—other worlds, higher planes, the possibility of

communication, of ascension, of growth by contact with and influence from that which is above him in the present scale of his realised being.

As there is a poise of the relations of Purusha with Prakriti in which Matter is the first determinant, a world of material existence, so there is another just above it in which Matter is not supreme, but rather Life-force takes its place as the first determinant. In this world forms do not determine the conditions of the life, but it is life which determines the form, and therefore forms are there much more free, fluid, largely and to our conceptions strangely variable than in the material world. This life-force is not inconscient material force, not even, except in its lowest movements, an elemental subconscious energy, but a conscious force of being which makes for formation, but much more essentially for enjoyment, possession, satisfaction of its own dynamic impulse. Desire and the satisfaction of impulse are therefore the first law of this world of sheer vital existence, this poise of relations between the soul and its nature in which the life-power plays with so much greater a freedom and capacity than in our physical living; it may be called the desire-world, for that is its principal characteristic. Moreover, it is not fixed in one hardly variable formula as physical life seems to be, but is capable of many variations of its poise, admits many sub-planes ranging from those which touch material existence and, as it were, melt into that, to those which touch at the height of the life-power the planes of pure mental and psychic existence and melt into them. For in Nature in the infinite scale of being there are no wide gulfs, no abrupt chasms to be overleaped, but a melting of one thing into another, a subtle continuity; out of that her power of distinctive experience creates the orderings, the definite ranges, the distinct gradations by which the soul variously knows and possesses its possibilities of world-existence. Again, enjoyment of one kind or another being the whole object of desire, that must be the trend of the desire-world; but since wherever the soul is not free,—and it cannot be free when subject to desire,—there must be the negative as well as the positive of all its experience, this world contains not only the possibility of large or intense

or continuous enjoyments almost inconceivable to the limited physical mind, but also the possibility of equally enormous sufferings. It is here therefore that there are situated the lowest heavens and all the hells with the tradition and imagination of which the human mind has lured and terrified itself since the earliest ages. All human imaginations indeed correspond to some reality or real possibility, though they may in themselves be a quite inaccurate representation or couched in too physical images and therefore inapt to express the truth of supraphysical realities.

Nature being a complex unity and not a collection of unrelated phenomena, there can be no unbridgeable gulf between the material existence and this vital or desire world. On the contrary, they may be said in a sense to exist in each other and are at least interdependent to a certain extent. In fact, the material world is really a sort of projection from the vital, a thing which it has thrown out and separated from itself in order to embody and fulfil some of its desires under conditions other than its own, which are yet the logical result of its own most material longings. Life on earth may be said to be the result of the pressure of this life-world on the material, unconscient existence of the physical universe. Our own manifest vital being is also only a surface result of a larger and profounder vital being which has its proper seat on the life-plane and through which we are connected with the life-world. Moreover, the life-world is constantly acting upon us and behind everything in material existence there stand appropriate powers of the life-world; even the most crude and elemental have behind them elemental life-powers, elemental beings by which or by whom they are supported. The influences of the life-world are always pouring out on the material existence and producing there their powers and results which return again upon the life-world to modify it. From that the life-part of us, the desire-part is being always touched and influenced; there too are beneficent and malefic powers of good desire and evil desire which concern themselves with us even when we are ignorant of and unconcerned with them. Nor are these powers merely tendencies, unconscient forces, nor, except on the verges

of Matter, subconscious, but conscious powers, beings, living influences. As we awaken to the higher planes of our existence, we become aware of them as friends or enemies, powers which seek to possess or which we can master, overcome, pass beyond and leave behind. It is this possible relation of the human being with the powers of the life-world which occupied to so large an extent European occultism, especially in the Middle Ages, as well as certain forms of Eastern magic and spiritualism. The "superstitions" of the past — much superstition there was, that is to say, much ignorant and distorted belief, false explanations and obscure and clumsy dealing with the laws of the beyond, — had yet behind them truths which a future Science, delivered from its sole preoccupation with the material world, may rediscover. For the supra-material is as much a reality as the existence of mental beings in the material universe.

But why then are we not normally aware of so much that is behind us and always pressing upon us? For the same reason that we are not aware of the inner life of our neighbour, although it exists as much as our own and is constantly exercising an occult influence upon us, — for a great part of our thoughts and feelings come into us from outside, from our fellow-men, both from individuals and from the collective mind of humanity; and for the same reason that we are not aware of the greater part of our own being which is subconscious or subliminal to our waking mind and is always influencing and in an occult manner determining our surface existence. It is because we use, normally, only our corporeal senses and live almost wholly in the body and the physical vitality and the physical mind, and it is not directly through these that the life-world enters into relations with us. That is done through other sheaths of our being, — so they are termed in the Upanishads, — other bodies, as they are called in a later terminology, the mental sheath or subtle body in which our true mental being lives and the life sheath or vital body which is more closely connected with the physical or food-sheath and forms with it the gross body of our complex existence. These possess powers, senses, capacities which are always secretly acting in us, are connected with and impinge upon our physical

organs and the plexuses of our physical life and mentality. By self-development we can become aware of them, possess our life in them, get through them into conscious relation with the life-world and other worlds and use them also for a more subtle experience and more intimate knowledge of the truths, facts and happenings of even the material world itself. We can by this self-development live more or less fully on planes of our existence other than the material which is now all in all to us.

What has been said of the life-world applies with the necessary differences to still higher planes of the cosmic existence. For beyond that is a mental plane, a world of mental existence in which neither life, nor matter, but mind is the first determinant. Mind there is not determined by material conditions or by the life-force, but itself determines and uses them for its own satisfaction. There mind, that is to say, the psychical and the intellectual being, is free in a certain sense, free at least to satisfy and fulfil itself in a way hardly conceivable to our body-bound and life-bound mentality; for the Purusha there is the pure mental being and his relations with Prakriti are determined by that purer mentality, Nature there is mental rather than vital and physical. Both the life-world and indirectly the material are a projection from that, the result of certain tendencies of the mental Being which have sought a field, conditions, an arrangement of harmonies proper to themselves; and the phenomena of mind in this world may be said to be a result of the pressure of that plane first on the life-world and then on life in the material existence. By its modification in the life-world it creates in us the desire-mind; in its own right it awakes in us the purer powers of our psychical and intellectual existence. But our surface mentality is only a secondary result of a larger subliminal mentality whose proper seat is the mental plane. This world of mental existence also is constantly acting upon us and our world, has its powers and its beings, is related to us through our mental body. There we find the psychical and mental heavens to which the Purusha can ascend when it drops this physical body and can there sojourn till the impulse to terrestrial existence again draws it downward. Here too are many planes, the lowest

converging upon and melting into the worlds below, the highest at the heights of the mind-power into the worlds of a more spiritual existence.

These highest worlds are therefore supramental; they belong to the principle of supermind, the free, spiritual or divine intelligence³ or gnosis and to the triple spiritual principle of Sachchidananda. From them the lower worlds derive by a sort of fall of the Purusha into certain specific or narrow conditions of the play of the soul with its nature. But these also are divided from us by no unbridgeable gulf; they affect us through what are called the knowledge-sheath and the bliss-sheath, through the causal or spiritual body, and less directly through the mental body, nor are their secret powers absent from the workings of the vital and material existence. Our conscious spiritual being and our intuitive mind awaken in us as a result of the pressure of these highest worlds on the mental being in life and body. But this causal body is, as we may say, little developed in the majority of men and to live in it or to ascend to the supramental planes, as distinguished from corresponding sub-planes in the mental being, or still more to dwell consciously upon them is the most difficult thing of all for the human being. It can be done in the trance of Samadhi, but otherwise only by a new evolution of the capacities of the individual Purusha of which few are even willing to conceive. Yet is that the condition of the perfect self-consciousness by which alone the Purusha can possess the full conscious control of Prakriti; for there not even the mind determines, but the Spirit freely uses the lower differentiating principles as minor terms of its existence governed by the higher and reaching by them their own perfect capacity. That alone would be the perfect evolution of the involved and development of the undeveloped for which the Purusha has sought in the material universe, as if in a wager with itself, the conditions of the greatest difficulty.

³ Called the *vijnāna* or *buddhi*, a word which may lead to some misunderstanding as it is also applied to the mental intelligence which is only a lower derivation from the divine gnosis.

Chapter XX

The Lower Triple Purusha

SUCH is the constituent principle of the various worlds of cosmic existence and the various planes of our being; they are as if a ladder plunging down into Matter and perhaps below it, rising up into the heights of the Spirit, even perhaps to the point at which existence escapes out of cosmic being into ranges of a supra-cosmic Absolute,—so at least it is averred in the world-system of the Buddhists. But to our ordinary materialised consciousness all this does not exist because it is hidden from us by our preoccupation with our existence in a little corner of the material universe and with the petty experiences of the little hour of time which is represented by our life in a single body upon this earth. To that consciousness the world is a mass of material things and forces thrown into some kind of shape and harmonised into a system of regulated movements by a number of fixed self-existent laws which we have to obey, by which we are governed and circumscribed and of which we have to get the best knowledge we can so as to make the most of this one brief existence which begins with birth, ends with death and has no second recurrence. Our own being is a sort of accident or at least a very small and minor circumstance in the universal life of Matter or the eternal continuity of the workings of material Force. Somehow or other a soul or mind has come to exist in a body and it stumbles about among things and forces which it does not very well understand, at first preoccupied with the difficulty of managing to live in a dangerous and largely hostile world and then with the effort to understand its laws and use them so as to make life as tolerable or as happy as possible so long as it lasts. If we were really nothing more than such a minor movement of individualised mind in Matter, existence would have nothing more to offer us; its best part would be at most this struggle of an ephemeral intellect and will with eternal

Matter and with the difficulties of Life supplemented and eased by a play of imagination and by the consoling fictions presented to us by religion and art and all the wonders dreamed of by the brooding mind and restless fancy of man.

But because he is a soul and not merely a living body, man can never for long remain satisfied that this first view of his existence, the sole view justified by the external and objective facts of life, is the real truth or the whole knowledge: his subjective being is full of hints and inklings of realities beyond, it is open to the sense of infinity and immortality, it is easily convinced of other worlds, higher possibilities of being, larger fields of experience for the soul. Science gives us the objective truth of existence and the superficial knowledge of our physical and vital being; but we feel that there are truths beyond which possibly through the cultivation of our subjective being and the enlargement of its powers may come to lie more and more open to us. When the knowledge of this world is ours, we are irresistibly impelled to seek for the knowledge of other states of existence beyond, and that is the reason why an age of strong materialism and scepticism is always followed by an age of occultism, of mystical creeds, of new religions and profounder seekings after the Infinite and the Divine. The knowledge of our superficial mentality and the laws of our bodily life is not enough; it brings us always to all that mysterious and hidden depth of subjective existence below and behind of which our surface consciousness is only a fringe or an outer court. We come to see that what is present to our physical senses is only the material shell of cosmic existence and what is obvious in our superficial mentality is only the margin of immense continents which lie behind unexplored. To explore them must be the work of another knowledge than that of physical science or of a superficial psychology.

Religion is the first attempt of man to get beyond himself and beyond the obvious and material facts of his existence. Its first essential work is to confirm and make real to him his subjective sense of an Infinite on which his material and mental being depends and the aspiration of his soul to come into its presence and live in contact with it. Its function is to assure

him too of that possibility of which he has always dreamed, but of which his ordinary life gives him no assurance, the possibility of transcending himself and growing out of bodily life and mortality into the joy of immortal life and spiritual existence. It also confirms in him the sense that there are worlds or planes of existence other than that in which his lot is now cast, worlds in which this mortality and this subjection to evil and suffering are not the natural state, but rather bliss of immortality is the eternal condition. Incidentally, it gives him a rule of mortal life by which he shall prepare himself for immortality. He is a soul and not a body and his earthly life is a means by which he determines the future conditions of his spiritual being. So much is common to all religions; beyond this we get from them no assured certainty. Their voices vary; some tell us that one life on earth is all we have in which to determine our future existence, deny the past immortality of the soul and assert only its future immortality, threaten it even with the incredible dogma of a future of eternal suffering for those who miss the right path, while others more large and rational affirm successive existences by which the soul grows into the knowledge of the Infinite with a complete assurance for all of ultimate arrival and perfection. Some present the Infinite to us as a Being other than ourselves with whom we can have personal relations, others as an impersonal existence into which our separate being has to merge; some therefore give us as our goal worlds beyond in which we dwell in the presence of the Divine, others a cessation of world-existence by immerge in the Infinite. Most invite us to bear or to abandon earthly life as a trial or a temporary affliction or a vanity and fix our hopes beyond; in some we find a vague hint of a future triumph of the Spirit, the Divine in the body, upon this earth, in the collective life of man, and so justify not only the separate hope and aspiration of the individual but the united and sympathetic hope and aspiration of the race. Religion in fact is not knowledge, but a faith and aspiration; it is justified indeed both by an imprecise intuitive knowledge of large spiritual truths and by the subjective experience of souls that have risen beyond the ordinary life, but in itself it only gives us the hope and faith by which we may be

induced to aspire to the intimate possession of the hidden tracts and larger realities of the Spirit. That we turn always the few distinct truths and the symbols or the particular discipline of a religion into hard and fast dogmas, is a sign that as yet we are only infants in the spiritual knowledge and are yet far from the science of the Infinite.

Yet behind every great religion, behind, that is to say, its exoteric side of faith, hope, symbols, scattered truths and limiting dogmas, there is an esoteric side of inner spiritual training and illumination by which the hidden truths may be known, worked out, possessed. Behind every exoteric religion there is an esoteric Yoga, an intuitive knowledge to which its faith is the first step, inexpressible realities of which its symbols are the figured expression, a deeper sense for its scattered truths, mysteries of the higher planes of existence of which even its dogmas and superstitions are crude hints and indications. What Science does for our knowledge of the material world, replacing first appearances and uses by the hidden truths and as yet occult powers of its great natural forces and in our own minds beliefs and opinions by verified experience and a profounder understanding, Yoga does for the higher planes and worlds and possibilities of our being which are aimed at by the religions. Therefore all this mass of graded experience existing behind closed doors to which the consciousness of man may find, if it wills, the key, falls within the province of a comprehensive Yoga of knowledge, which need not be confined to the seeking after the Absolute alone or the knowledge of the Divine in itself or of the Divine only in its isolated relations with the individual human soul. It is true that the consciousness of the Absolute is the highest reach of the Yoga of knowledge and that the possession of the Divine is its first, greatest and most ardent object and that to neglect it for an inferior knowledge is to afflict our Yoga with inferiority or even frivolity and to miss or fall away from its characteristic object; but, the Divine in itself being known, the Yoga of knowledge may well embrace also the knowledge of the Divine in its relations with ourselves and the world on the different planes of our existence. To rise to the pure Self being

steadfastly held to as the summit of our subjective self-uplifting, we may from that height possess our lower selves even to the physical and the workings of Nature which belong to them.

We may seek this knowledge on two sides separately, the side of Purusha, the side of Prakriti; and we may combine the two for the perfect possession of the various relations of Purusha and Prakriti in the light of the Divine. There is, says the Upanishad, a fivefold soul in man and the world, the microcosm and the macrocosm. The physical soul, self or being, — Purusha, Atman, — is that of which we are all at first conscious, a self which seems to have hardly any existence apart from the body and no action vital or even mental independent of it. This physical soul is present everywhere in material Nature; it pervades the body, actuates obscurely its movements and is the whole basis of its experiences; it informs all things even that are not mentally conscious. But in man this physical being has become vitalised and mentalised; it has received something of the law and capacities of the vital and mental being and nature. But its possession of them is derivative, superimposed, as it were, on its original nature and exercised under subjection to the law and action of the physical existence and its instruments. It is this dominance of our mental and vital parts by the body and the physical nature which seems at first sight to justify the theory of the materialists that mind and life are only circumstances and results of physical force and all their operations explicable by the activities of that force in the animal body. In fact entire subjection of the mind and the life to the body is the characteristic of an undeveloped humanity, as it is in an even greater degree of the infra-human animal. According to the theory of reincarnation those who do not get beyond this stage in the earthly life, cannot rise after death to the mental or higher vital worlds, but have to return from the confines of a series of physical planes to increase their development in the next earthly existence. For the undeveloped physical soul is entirely dominated by material nature and its impressions and has to work them out to a better advantage before it can rise in the scale of being.

A more developed humanity allows us to make a better and

freer use of all the capacities and experiences that we derive from the vital and mental planes of being, to lean more for support upon these hidden planes, be less absorbed by the physical and to govern and modify the original nature of the physical being by greater vital forces and powers from the desire-world and greater and subtler mental forces and powers from the psychical and intellectual planes. By this development we are able to rise to higher altitudes of the intermediary existence between death and rebirth and to make a better and more rapid use of rebirth itself for a yet higher mental and spiritual development. But even so, in the physical being which still determines the greater part of our waking self, we act without definite consciousness of the worlds or planes which are the sources of our action. We are aware indeed of the life-plane and mind-plane of the physical being, but not of the life-plane and mind-plane proper or of the superior and larger vital and mental being which we are behind the veil of our ordinary consciousness. It is only at a high stage of development that we become aware of them and even then, ordinarily, only at the back of the action of our mentalised physical nature; we do not actually live on those planes, for if we did we could very soon arrive at the conscious control of the body by the life-power and of both by the sovereign mind; we should then be able to determine our physical and mental life to a very large extent by our will and knowledge as masters of our being and with a direct action of the mind on the life and body. By Yoga this power of transcending the physical self and taking possession of the higher selves may to a greater or less degree be acquired through a heightened and widened self-consciousness and self-mastery.

This may be done, on the side of Purusha, by drawing back from the physical self and its preoccupation with physical nature and through concentration of thought and will raising oneself into the vital and then into the mental self. By doing so we can become the vital being and draw up the physical self into that new consciousness so that we are only aware of the body, its nature and its actions as secondary circumstances of the Life-soul which we now are, used by it for its relations with the

material world. A certain remoteness from physical being and then a superiority to it; a vivid sense of the body being a mere instrument or shell and easily detachable; an extraordinary effectiveness of our desires on our physical being and life-environment; a great sense of power and ease in manipulating and directing the vital energy of which we now become vividly conscious, for its action is felt by us concretely, subtly physical in relation to the body, sensible in a sort of subtle density as an energy used by the mind; an awareness of the life-plane in us above the physical and knowledge and contact with the beings of the desire-world; a coming into action of new powers,—what are usually called occult powers or siddhis; a close sense of and sympathy with the Life-soul in the world and a knowledge or sensation of the emotions, desires, vital impulses of others; these are some of the signs of this new consciousness gained by Yoga.

But all this belongs to the inferior grades of spiritual experience and indeed is hardly more spiritual than the physical existence. We have in the same way to go yet higher and raise ourselves into the mental self. By doing so we can become the mental self and draw up the physical and vital being into it, so that life and body and their operations become to us minor circumstances of our being used by the Mind-soul which we now are for the execution of its lower purposes that belong to the material existence. Here too we acquire at first a certain remoteness from the life and the body and our real life seems to be on quite another plane than material man's, in contact with a subtler existence, a greater light of knowledge than the terrestrial, a far rarer and yet more sovereign energy; we are in touch in fact with the mental plane, aware of the mental worlds, can be in communication with its beings and powers. From that plane we behold the desire-world and the material existence as if below us, things that we can cast away from us if we will and in fact easily reject when we relinquish the body, so as to dwell in the mental or psychical heavens. But we can also, instead of being thus remote and detached, become rather superior to the life and body and the vital and material planes and act upon them with mastery from our new height of being. Another sort

of dynamis than physical or vital energy, something that we may call pure mind-power and soul-force, which the developed human being uses indeed but derivatively and imperfectly, but which we can now use freely and with knowledge, becomes the ordinary process of our action, while desire-force and physical action fall into a secondary place and are only used with this new energy behind them and as its occasional channels. We are in touch and sympathy also with the Mind in cosmos, conscious of it, aware of the intentions, directions, thought-forces, struggle of subtle powers behind all happenings, which the ordinary man is ignorant of or can only obscurely infer from the physical happening, but which we can now see and feel directly before there is any physical sign or even vital intimation of their working. We acquire too the knowledge and sense of the mind-action of other beings whether on the physical plane or on those above it; and the higher capacities of the mental being,—occult powers or siddhis, but of a much rarer or subtler kind than those proper to the vital plane,—naturally awake in our consciousness.

All these however are circumstances of the lower triple world of our being, the *trailokya* of the ancient sages. Living on these we are, whatever the enlargement of our powers and our consciousness, still living within the limits of the cosmic gods and subject, though with a much subtler, easier and modified subjection, to the reign of Prakriti over Purusha. To achieve real freedom and mastery we have to ascend to a yet higher level of the many-plateaued mountain of our being.

Chapter XXI

The Ladder of Self-Transcendence

THE TRANSCENDENCE of this lower triple being and this lower triple world, to which ordinarily our consciousness and its powers and results are limited,—a transcendence described by the Vedic seers as an exceeding or breaking beyond the two firmaments of heaven and earth,—opens out a hierarchy of infinitudes to which the normal existence of man even in its highest and widest flights is still a stranger. Into that altitude, even to the lowest step of its hierarchy, it is difficult for him to rise. A separation, acute in practice though unreal in essence, divides the total being of man, the microcosm, as it divides also the world-being, the macrocosm. Both have a higher and a lower hemisphere, the *parārdha* and *aparārdha* of the ancient wisdom. The higher hemisphere is the perfect and eternal reign of the Spirit; for there it manifests without cessation or diminution its infinites, deploys the unconcealed glories of its illimitable existence, its illimitable consciousness and knowledge, its illimitable force and power, its illimitable beatitude. The lower hemisphere belongs equally to the Spirit; but here it is veiled, closely, thickly, by its inferior self-expression of limiting mind, confined life and dividing body. The Self in the lower hemisphere is shrouded in name and form; its consciousness is broken up by the division between the internal and external, the individual and universal; its vision and sense are turned outward; its force, limited by division of its consciousness, works in fetters; its knowledge, will, power, delight, divided by this division, limited by this limitation, are open to the experience of their contrary or perverse forms, to ignorance, weakness and suffering. We can indeed become aware of the true Self or Spirit in ourselves by turning our sense and vision inward; we can discover too the same Self or Spirit in the external world and its phenomena by plunging them there also inward through the veil of names

and forms to that which dwells in these or else stands behind them. Our normal consciousness through this inward look may become by reflection aware of the infinite being, consciousness and delight of the Self and share in its passive or static infinity of these things. But we can only to a very limited extent share in its active or dynamic manifestation of knowledge, power and joy. Even this static identity by reflection cannot, ordinarily, be effected without a long and difficult effort and as the result of many lives of progressive self-development; for very firmly is our normal consciousness bound to the law of its lower hemisphere of being. To understand the possibility of transcending it at all, we must restate in a practical formula the relations of the worlds which constitute the two hemispheres.

All is determined by the Spirit, for all from subtlest existence to grossest matter is manifestation of the Spirit. But the Spirit, Self or Being determines the world it lives in and the experiences of its consciousness, force and delight in that world by some poise — among many possible — of the relations of Purusha and Prakriti, Soul and Nature, — some basic poise in one or other of its own cosmic principles. Poised in the principle of Matter, it becomes the physical self of a physical universe in the reign of a physical Nature. Spirit is then absorbed in its experience of Matter; it is dominated by the ignorance and inertia of the tamaśīc Power proper to physical existence. In the individual it becomes a materialised soul, *annamaya puruṣa*, whose life and mind have developed out of the ignorance and inertia of the material principle and are subject to their fundamental limitations. For life in Matter works in dependence on the body; mind in Matter works in dependence on the body and on the vital or nervous being; spirit itself in Matter is limited and divided in its self-relation and its powers by the limitations and divisions of this matter-governed and life-driven mind. This materialised soul lives bound to the physical body and its narrow superficial external consciousness, and it takes normally the experiences of its physical organs, its senses, its matter-bound life and mind, with at most some limited spiritual glimpses, as the whole truth of existence.

Man is a spirit, but a spirit that lives as a mental being in physical Nature; he is to his own self-consciousness a mind in a physical body. But at first he is this mental being materialised and he takes the materialised soul, *annamaya puruṣa*, for his real self. He is obliged to accept, as the Upanishad expresses it, Matter for the Brahman because his vision here sees Matter as that from which all is born, by which all lives and to which all return in their passing. His natural highest concept of Spirit is an Infinite, preferably an inconscient Infinite, inhabiting or pervading the material universe (which alone it really knows), and manifesting by the power of its presence all these forms around him. His natural highest conception of himself is a vaguely conceived soul or spirit, a soul manifested only by the physical life's experiences, bound up with physical phenomena and forced on its dissolution to return by an automatic necessity to the vast indeterminateness of the Infinite. But because he has the power of self-development, he can rise beyond these natural conceptions of the materialised soul; he can supplement them with a certain derivative experience drawn from supraphysical planes and worlds. He can concentrate in mind and develop the mental part of his being, usually at the expense of the fullness of his vital and physical life and in the end the mind predominates and can open to the Beyond. He can concentrate this self-liberating mind on the Spirit. Here too usually in the process he turns away more and more from his full mental and physical life; he limits or discourages their possibilities as much as his material foundation in nature will allow him. In the end his spiritual life predominates, destroys his earthward tendency and breaks its ties and limitations. Spiritualised, he places his real existence beyond in other worlds, in the heavens of the vital or mental plane; he begins to regard life on earth as a painful or troublesome incident or passage in which he can never arrive at any full enjoyment of his inner ideal self, his spiritual essence. Moreover, his highest conception of the Self or Spirit is apt to be more or less quietistic; for, as we have seen, it is its static infinity alone that he can entirely experience, the still freedom of Purusha unlimited by Prakriti, the Soul standing back from Nature. There may come

indeed some divine dynamic manifestation in him, but it cannot rise entirely above the heavy limitations of physical Nature. The peace of the silent and passive Self is more easily attainable and he can more easily and fully hold it; too difficult for him is the bliss of an infinite activity, the dynamis of an immeasurable Power.

But the Spirit can be poised in the principle of Life, not in Matter. The Spirit so founded becomes the vital self of a vital world, the Life-soul of a Life-energy in the reign of a consciously dynamic Nature. Absorbed in the experiences of the power and play of a conscious Life, it is dominated by the desire, activity and passion of the rajasic principle proper to vital existence. In the individual this spirit becomes a vital soul, *prāṇamaya puruṣa*, in whose nature the life-energies tyrannise over the mental and physical principles. The physical element in a vital world readily shapes its activities and formations in response to desire and its imaginations, it serves and obeys the passion and power of life and their formations and does not thwart or limit them as it does here on earth where life is a precarious incident in inanimate Matter. The mental element too is moulded and limited by the life-power, obeys it and helps only to enrich and fulfil the urge of its desires and the energy of its impulses. This vital soul lives in a vital body composed of a substance much subtler than physical matter; it is a substance surcharged with conscious energy, capable of much more powerful perceptions, capacities, sense-activities than any that the gross atomic elements of earth-matter can offer. Man too has in himself behind his physical being, subliminal to it, unseen and unknown, but very close to it and forming with it the most naturally active part of his existence, this vital soul, this vital nature and this vital body; a whole vital plane connected with the life-world or desire-world is hidden in us, a secret consciousness in which life and desire find their untrammelled play and their easy self-expression and from there throw their influences and formations on our outer life.

In proportion as the power of this vital plane manifests itself in man and takes hold of his physical being, this son of

earth becomes a vehicle of the life energy, forceful in his desires, vehement in his passions and emotions, intensely dynamic in his action, more and more the rajasic man. It is possible now for him to awaken in his consciousness to the vital plane and to become the vital soul, *prāṇamaya puruṣa*, put on the vital nature and live in the secret vital as well as the visible physical body. If he achieves this change with some fullness or one-pointedness—usually it is under great and salutary limitations or attended by saving complexities—and without rising beyond these things, without climbing to a supra-vital height from which they can be used, purified, uplifted, he becomes the lower type of Asura or Titan, a Rakshasa in nature, a soul of sheer power and life-energy, magnified or racked by a force of unlimited desire and passion, hunted and driven by an active capacity and colossal rajasic ego, but in possession of far greater and more various powers than those of the physical man in the ordinary more inert earth-nature. Even if he develops mind greatly on the vital plane and uses its dynamic energy for self-control as well as for self-satisfaction, it will still be with an Asuric energism (*tapasyā*) although of a higher type and directed to a more governed satisfaction of the rajasic ego.

But for the vital plane also it is possible, even as on the physical, to rise to a certain spiritual greatness in its own kind. It is open to the vital man to lift himself beyond the conceptions and energies natural to the desire-soul and the desire-plane. He can develop a higher mentality and, within the conditions of the vital being, concentrate upon some realisation of the Spirit or Self behind or beyond its forms and powers. In this spiritual realisation there would be a less strong necessity of quietism; for there would be a greater possibility of an active effectuation of the bliss and power of the Eternal, mightier and more self-satisfied powers, a richer flowering of the dynamic Infinite. Nevertheless that effectuality could never come anywhere near to a true and integral perfection; for the conditions of the desire-world are like those of the physical improper to the development of the complete spiritual life. The vital being too must develop spirit to the detriment of his fullness, activity and force of life

in the lower hemisphere of our existence and turn in the end away from the vital formula, away from life either to the Silence or to an ineffable Power beyond him. If he does not withdraw from life, he must remain enchain'd by life, limited in his self-fulfilment by the downward pull of the desire-world and its dominant rajasic principle. On the vital plane also, in its own right alone, a perfect perfection is impossible; the soul that attains only so far would have to return to the physical life for a greater experience, a higher self-development, a more direct ascent to the Spirit.

Above matter and life stands the principle of mind, nearer to the secret Origin of things. The Spirit poised in mind becomes the mental self of a mental world and dwells there in the reign of its own pure and luminous mental Nature. There it acts in the intrinsic freedom of the cosmic Intelligence supported by the combined workings of a psycho-mental and a higher emotional mind-force, subtilised and enlightened by the clarity and happiness of the sattwic principle proper to the mental existence. In the individual the spirit so poised becomes a mental soul, *manomaya puruṣa*, in whose nature the clarity and luminous power of the mind acts in its own right independent of any limitation or oppression by the vital or corporeal instruments; it rather rules and determines entirely the forms of its body and the powers of its life. For mind in its own plane is not limited by life and obstructed by matter as it is here in the earth-process. This mental soul lives in a mental or subtle body which enjoys capacities of knowledge, perception, sympathy and interpenetration with other beings hardly imaginable by us and a free, delicate and extensive mentalised sense-faculty not limited by the grosser conditions of the life nature or the physical nature.

Man too has in himself, subliminal, unknown and unseen, concealed behind his waking consciousness and visible organism this mental soul, mental nature, mental body and a mental plane, not materialised, in which the principle of Mind is at home and not as here at strife with a world which is alien to it, obstructive to its freedom and corruptive of its purity and clearness. All the higher faculties of man, his intellectual and psycho-mental

being and powers, his higher emotional life awaken and increase in proportion as this mental plane in him presses upon him. For the more it manifests, the more it influences the physical parts, the more it enriches and elevates the corresponding mental plane of the embodied nature. At a certain pitch of its increasing sovereignty it can make man truly man and not merely a reasoning animal; for it gives then its characteristic force to that mental being within us which our humanity is in the inwardly governing but still too hampered essence of its psychological structure.

It is possible for man to awaken to this higher mental consciousness, to become this mental being,¹ put on this mental nature and live not only in the vital and physical sheaths, but in this mental body. If there were a sufficient completeness in this transformation he would become capable of a life and a being at least half divine. For he would enjoy powers and a vision and perceptions beyond the scope of this ordinary life and body; he would govern all by the clarities of pure knowledge; he would be united to other beings by a sympathy of love and happiness; his emotions would be lifted to the perfection of the psycho-mental plane, his sensations rescued from grossness, his intellect subtle, pure and flexible, delivered from the deviations of the impure pranic energy and the obstructions of matter. And he would develop too the reflection of a wisdom and bliss higher than any mental joy and knowledge; for he could receive more fully and without our incompetent mind's deforming and falsifying mixture the inspirations and intuitions that are the arrows of the supramental Light and form his perfected mental existence in the mould and power of that vaster splendour. He could then realise too the self or Spirit in a much larger and more luminous and

¹ I include here in mind, not only the highest range of mind ordinarily known to man, but yet higher ranges to which he has either no current faculty of admission or else only a partial and mixed reception of some faint portion of their powers,—the illumined mind, the intuition and finally the creative Overmind or Maya which stands far above and is the source of our present existence. If mind is to be understood only as Reason or human intelligence, then the free mental being and its state would be something much more limited and very inferior to the description given here.

more intimate intensity than is now possible and with a greater play of its active power and bliss in the satisfied harmony of his existence.

And to our ordinary notions this may well seem to be a consummate perfection, something to which man might aspire in his highest flights of idealism. No doubt, it would be a sufficient perfection for the pure mental being in its own character; but it would still fall far below the greater possibilities of the spiritual nature. For here too our spiritual realisation would be subject to the limitations of the mind which is in the nature of a reflected, diluted and diffused or a narrowly intensive light, not the vast and comprehensive self-existent luminosity and joy of the Spirit. That vaster light, that profounder bliss are beyond the mental reaches. Mind indeed can never be a perfect instrument of the Spirit; a supreme self-expression is not possible in its movements because to separate, divide, limit is its very character. Even if mind could be free from all positive falsehood and error, even if it could be all intuitive and infallibly intuitive, it could still present and organise only half-truths or separate truths and these too not in their own body but in luminous representative figures put together to make an accumulated total or a massed structure. Therefore the self-perfected mental being here must either depart into pure spirit by the shedding of its lower existence or return upon the physical life to develop in it a capacity not yet found in our mental and psychic nature. This is what the Upanishad expresses when it says that the heavens attained by the mind Purusha are those to which man is lifted by the rays of the sun, the diffused, separated, though intense beams of the supramental truth-consciousness, and from these it has to return to the earthly existence. But the illuminates who renouncing earth-life go beyond through the gateways of the sun, do not return hither. The mental being exceeding his sphere does not return because by that transition he enters a high range of existence peculiar to the superior hemisphere. He cannot bring down its greater spiritual nature into this lower triplexity; for here the mental being is the highest expression of the Self. Here the triple mental, vital and physical body provides almost the

whole range of our capacity and cannot suffice for that greater consciousness; the vessel has not been built to contain a greater godhead or to house the splendours of this supramental force and knowledge.

This limitation is true only so long as man remains closed within the boundaries of the mental Maya. If he rises into the knowledge-self beyond the highest mental stature, if he becomes the knowledge-soul, the Spirit poised in gnosis, *vijnānamaya puruṣa*, and puts on the nature of its infinite truth and power, if he lives in the knowledge-sheath, the causal body as well as in these subtle mental, interlinking vital and grosser physical sheaths or bodies, then, but then only he will be able to draw down entirely into his terrestrial existence the fullness of the infinite spiritual consciousness; only then will he avail to raise his total being and even his whole manifested, embodied expressive nature into the spiritual kingdom. But this is difficult in the extreme; for the causal body opens itself readily to the consciousness and capacities of the spiritual planes and belongs in its nature to the higher hemisphere of existence, but it is either not developed at all in man or only as yet crudely developed and organised and veiled behind many intervening portals of the subliminal in us. It draws its stuff from the plane of the truth-knowledge and the plane of the infinite bliss and these pertain altogether to a still inaccessible higher hemisphere. Shedding upon this lower existence their truth and light and joy they are the source of all that we call spirituality and all that we call perfection. But this infiltration comes from behind thick coverings through which they arrive so tempered and weakened that they are entirely obscured in the materiality of our physical perceptions, grossly distorted and perverted in our vital impulses, perverted too though a little less grossly in our ideative seekings, minimised even in the comparative purity and intensity of the highest intuitive ranges of our mental nature. The supramental principle is secretly lodged in all existence. It is there even in the grossest materiality, it preserves and governs the lower worlds by its hidden power and law; but that power veils itself and that law works unseen through the shackled limitations and limping

deformations of the lesser rule of our physical, vital, mental Nature. Yet its governing presence in the lowest forms assures us, because of the unity of all existence, that there is a possibility of their awakening, a possibility even of their perfect manifestation here in spite of every veil, in spite of all the mass of our apparent disabilities, in spite of the incapacity or unwillingness of our mind and life and body. And what is possible, must one day be, for that is the law of the omnipotent Spirit.

The character of these higher states of the soul and their greater worlds of spiritual Nature is necessarily difficult to seize. Even the Upanishads and the Veda only shadow them out by figures, hints and symbols. Yet it is necessary to attempt some account of their principles and practical effect so far as they can be grasped by the mind that stands on the border of the two hemispheres. The passage beyond that border would be the culmination, the completeness of the Yoga of self-transcendence by self-knowledge. The soul that aspires to perfection, draws back and upward, says the Upanishad, from the physical into the vital and from the vital into the mental Purusha, from the mental into the knowledge-soul and from that self of knowledge into the bliss Purusha. This self of bliss is the conscious foundation of perfect Sachchidananda and to pass into it completes the soul's ascension. The mind therefore must try to give to itself some account of this decisive transformation of the embodied consciousness, this radiant transfiguration and self-exceeding of our ever aspiring nature. The description mind can arrive at, can never be adequate to the thing itself, but it may point at least to some indicative shadow of it or perhaps some half-luminous image.

Chapter XXII

Vijnana or Gnosis

IN OUR perfect self-transcendence we pass out and up from the ignorance or half-enlightenment of our mental consciousness-being into a greater wisdom-self and truth-power above it, there to dwell in the unwalled light of a divine knowledge. The mental man that we are is changed into the gnostic soul, the truth-conscious godhead, the *vijñānamaya* Purusha. Seated on that level of the hill of our ascension we are in a quite different plane from this material, this vital, this mental poise of the universal spirit, and with this change changes too all our view and experience of our soul-life and of the world around us. We are born into a new soul-status and put on a new nature; for according to the status of the soul is the status of the Prakriti. At each transition of the world-ascent, from matter to life, from life to mind, from mind bound to free intelligence, as the latent, half-manifested or already manifest soul rises to a higher and higher level of being, the nature also is elevated into a superior working, a wider consciousness, a vaster force and an intenser or larger range and joy of existence. But the transition from the mind-self to the knowledge-self is the great and the decisive transition in the Yoga. It is the shaking off of the last hold on us of the cosmic ignorance and our firm foundation in the Truth of things, in a consciousness infinite and eternal and inviolable by obscurity, falsehood, suffering or error.

This is the first summit which enters into the divine perfection, *sādharmya*, *sādr̥ṣya*; for all the rest only look up to it or catch some rays of its significance. The highest heights of mind or of overmind come still within the belt of a mitigated ignorance; they can refract a divine Light but not pass it on in undiminished power to our lower members. For so long as we are within the triple stratum of mind, life and body, our active nature continues to work in the force of the ignorance even when the soul in Mind

possesses something of the knowledge. And even if the soul were to reflect or to represent all the largeness of the knowledge in its mental consciousness, it would be unable to mobilise it rightly in force of action. The truth in its action might greatly increase, but it would still be pursued by a limitation, still condemned to a divisibility which would prevent it from working integrally in the power of the infinite. The power of a divinely illumined mind may be immense compared with ordinary powers, but it will still be subject to incapacity and there can be no perfect correspondence between the force of the effective will and the light of the idea which inspires it. The infinite Presence may be there in status, but the dynamis of the operations of nature still belongs to the lower Prakriti, must follow its triple modes of working and cannot give any adequate form to the greatness within it. This is the tragedy of ineffectivity, of the hiatus between ideal and effective will, of our constant incapacity to work out in living form and action the truth we feel in our inner consciousness that pursues all the aspiration of mind and life towards the divinity behind them. But the *vijñāna* or gnosis is not only truth but truth power, it is the very working of the infinite and divine nature; it is the divine knowledge one with the divine will in the force and delight of a spontaneous and luminous and inevitable self-fulfilment. By the gnosis, then, we change our human into a divine nature.

What then is this gnosis and how can we describe it? Two opposite errors have to be avoided, two misconceptions that disfigure opposite sides of the truth of gnosis. One error of intellect-bounded thinkers takes *vijñāna* as synonymous with the other Indian term *buddhi* and *buddhi* as synonymous with the reason, the discerning intellect, the logical intelligence. The systems that accept this significance, pass at once from a plane of pure intellect to a plane of pure spirit. No intermediate power is recognised, no diviner action of knowledge than the pure reason is admitted; the limited human means for fixing truth is taken for the highest possible dynamics of consciousness, its topmost force and original movement. An opposite error, a misconception of the mystics identifies *vijñāna* with the consciousness of

the Infinite free from all ideation or else ideation packed into one essence of thought, lost to other dynamic action in the single and invariable idea of the One. This is the *caitanyaghana* of the Upanishad and is one movement or rather one thread of the many-aspected movement of the gnosis. The gnosis, the Vijnana, is not only this concentrated consciousness of the infinite Essence; it is also and at the same time an infinite knowledge of the myriad play of the Infinite. It contains all ideation (not mental but supramental), but it is not limited by ideation, for it far exceeds all ideative movement. Nor is the gnostic ideation in its character an intellectual thinking; it is not what we call the reason, not a concentrated intelligence. For the reason is mental in its methods, mental in its acquisitions, mental in its basis, but the ideative method of the gnosis is self-luminous, supramental, its yield of thought-light spontaneous, not proceeding by acquisition, its thought-basis a rendering of conscious identities, not a translation of the impressions born of indirect contacts. There is a relation and even a sort of broken identity between the two forms of thought; for one proceeds covertly from the other, mind is born from that which is beyond mind. But they act on different planes and reverse each other's process.

Even the purest reason, the most luminous rational intellectuality is not the gnosis. Reason or intellect is only the lower *buddhi*; it is dependent for its action on the percepts of the sense-mind and on the concepts of the mental intelligence. It is not like the gnosis, self-luminous, authentic, making the subject one with the object. There is, indeed, a higher form of the *buddhi* that can be called the intuitive mind or intuitive reason, and this by its intuitions, its inspirations, its swift revelatory vision, its luminous insight and discrimination can do the work of the reason with a higher power, a swifter action, a greater and spontaneous certitude. It acts in a self-light of the truth which does not depend upon the torch-flares of the sense-mind and its limited uncertain percepts; it proceeds not by intelligent but by visional concepts: it is a kind of truth-vision, truth-hearing, truth-memory, direct truth-discernment. This true and authentic intuition must be distinguished from a power of the ordinary

mental reason which is too easily confused with it, the power of involved reasoning that reaches its conclusion by a bound and does not need the ordinary steps of the logical mind. The logical reason proceeds pace after pace and tries the sureness of each step like a man who is walking over unsafe ground and has to test by the hesitating touch of his foot each span of soil that he perceives with his eye. But this other supralogical process of the reason is a motion of rapid insight or swift discernment; it proceeds by a stride or leap, like a man who springs from one sure spot to another point of sure footing,—or at least held by him to be sure. He sees the space he covers in one compact and flashing view, but he does not distinguish or measure either by eye or touch its successions, features and circumstances. This movement has something of the sense of power of the intuition, something of its velocity, some appearance of its light and certainty, and we always are apt to take it for the intuition. But our assumption is an error and, if we trust to it, may lead us into grievous blunders.

It is even thought by the intellectualists that the intuition itself is nothing more than this rapid process in which the whole action of the logical mind is swiftly done or perhaps half-consciously or subconsciously done, not deliberately worked out in its reasoned method. In its nature, however, this proceeding is quite different from the intuition and it is not necessarily a truth-movement. The power of its leap may end in a stumble, its swiftness may betray, its certainty is too often a confident error. The validity of its conclusions must always depend on a subsequent verification or support from the evidence of the sense-perceptions or a rational linking of intelligent conceptions must intervene to explain to it its own certitudes. This lower light may indeed receive very readily a mixture of actual intuition into it and then a pseudo-intuitive or half-intuitive mind is created, very misleading by its frequent luminous successes palliating a whirl of intensely self-assured false certitudes. The true intuition on the contrary carries in itself its own guarantee of truth; it is sure and infallible within its limits. And so long as it is pure intuition and does not admit into itself any mixture of sense-error or

intellectual ideation, it is never contradicted by experience: the intuition may be verified by the reason or the sense-perception afterwards, but its truth does not depend on that verification, it is assured by an automatic self-evidence. If the reason depending on its inferences contradicts the greater light, it will be found in the end on ampler knowledge that the intuitional conclusion was correct and that the more plausible rational and inferential conclusion was an error. For the true intuition proceeds from the self-existent truth of things and is secured by that self-existent truth and not by any indirect, derivatory or dependent method of arriving at knowledge.

But even the intuitive reason is not the gnosis; it is only an edge of light of the supermind finding its way by flashes of illumination into the mentality like lightnings in dim and cloudy places. Its inspirations, revelations, intuitions, self-luminous discernings are messages from a higher knowledge-plane that make their way opportunely into our lower level of consciousness. The very character of the intuitive mind sets a gulf of great difference between its action and the action of the self-contained gnosis. In the first place it acts by separate and limited illuminations and its truth is restricted to the often narrow reach or the one brief spot of knowledge lit up by that one lightning-flash with which its intervention begins and terminates. We see the action of the instinct in animals,—an automatic intuition in that vital or sense-mind which is the highest and surest instrument that the animal has to rely on, since it does not possess the human light of the reason, only a cruder and yet ill-formed intelligence. And we can observe at once that the marvellous truth of this instinct which seems so much surer than the reason, is limited in the bird, beast or insect to some particular and restricted utility it is admitted to serve. When the vital mind of the animal tries to act beyond that restricted limit, it blunders in a much blinder way than the reason of man and has to learn with difficulty by a succession of sense-experiences. The higher mental intuition of the human being is an inner visional, not a sense intuition; for it illumines the intelligence and not the sense-mind, it is self-conscious and luminous, not a half-subconscious blind light: it

is freely self-acting, not mechanically automatic. But still, even when it is not marred by the imitative pseudo-intuition, it is restricted in man like the instinct in the animal, restricted to a particular purpose of will or knowledge as is the instinct to a particular life utility or Nature purpose. And when the intelligence, as is its almost invariable habit, tries to make use of it, to apply it, to add to it, it builds round the intuitive nucleus in its own characteristic fashion a mass of mixed truth and error. More often than not, by foisting an element of sense-error and conceptual error into the very substance of the intuition or by coating it up in mental additions and deviations, it not merely deflects but deforms its truth and converts it into a falsehood. At the best therefore the intuition gives us only a limited, though an intense light; at the worst, through our misuse of it or false imitations of it, it may lead us into perplexities and confusions which the less ambitious intellectual reason avoids by remaining satisfied with its own safe and plodding method,—safe for the inferior purposes of the reason, though never a satisfying guide to the inner truth of things.

It is possible to cultivate and extend the use of the intuitive mind in proportion as we rely less predominantly upon the reasoning intelligence. We may train our mentality not to seize, as it does now, upon every separate flash of intuitive illumination for its own inferior purposes, not to precipitate our thought at once into a crystallising intellectual action around it; we can train it to think in a stream of successive and connected intuitions, to pour light upon light in a brilliant and triumphant series. We shall succeed in this difficult change in proportion as we purify the interfering intelligence,—if we can reduce in it the element of material thought enslaved to the external appearances of things, the element of vital thought enslaved to the wishes, desires, impulses of the lower nature, the element of intellectual thought enslaved to our preferred, already settled or congenial ideas, conceptions, opinions, fixed operations of intelligence, if, having reduced to a minimum those elements, we can replace them by an intuitive vision and sense of things, an intuitive insight into appearances, an intuitive will, an intuitive ideation. This is hard

enough for our consciousness naturally bound by the triple tie of mentality, vitality, corporeality to its own imperfection and ignorance, the upper, middle and lower cord in the Vedic parable of the soul's bondage, cords of the mixed truth and falsehood of appearances by which Shunahshepa was bound to the post of sacrifice.

But even if this difficult thing were perfectly accomplished, still the intuition would not be the gnosis; it would only be its thin prolongation into mind or its sharp edge of first entrance. The difference, not easy to define except by symbols, may be expressed if we take the Vedic image in which the Sun represents the gnosis and the sky, mid-air and earth the mentality, vitality, physicality of man and of the universe. Living on the earth, climbing into the mid-air or even winging in the sky, the mental being, the *manomaya* Purusha, would still live in the rays of the sun and not in its bodily light. And in those rays he would see things not as they are, but as reflected in his organ of vision, deformed by its faults or limited in their truth by its restrictions. But the *vijnānamaya* Purusha lives in the Sun itself, in the very body and blaze of the true light;¹ he knows this light to be his own self-luminous being and he sees besides all that dwells in the rays of the sun, sees the whole truth of the lower triplicity and each thing that is in it. He sees it not by reflection in a mental organ of vision, but with the Sun of gnosis itself as his eye,—for the Sun, says the Veda, is the eye of the gods. The mental being, even in the intuitive mind, can perceive the truth only by a brilliant reflection or limited communication and subject to the restrictions and the inferior capacity of the mental vision; but the supramental being sees it by the gnosis itself, from the very centre and outwelling fount of the truth, in its very form and by its own spontaneous and self-illuminating process. For the Vijnana is a direct and divine as opposed to an indirect and human knowledge.

The nature of the gnosis can only be indicated to the intellect by contrasting it with the nature of the intellect, and even then

¹ So the Sun is called in the Veda, *rtam jyotiḥ*.

the phrases we must use cannot illuminate unless aided by some amount of actual experience. For what language forged by the reason can express the suprarational? Fundamentally, this is the difference between these two powers that the mental reason proceeds with labour from ignorance to truth, but the gnosis has in itself the direct contact, the immediate vision, the easy and constant possession of the truth and has no need of seeking or any kind of procedure. The reason starts with appearances and labours, never or seldom losing at least a partial dependence on appearances, to arrive at the truth behind them; it shows the truth in the light of the appearances. The gnosis starts from the truth and shows the appearances in the light of the truth; it is itself the body of the truth and its spirit. The reason proceeds by inference, it concludes; but the gnosis proceeds by identity or vision,—it is, sees and knows. As directly as the physical vision sees and grasps the appearance of objects, so and far more directly the gnosis sees and grasps the truth of things. But where the physical sense gets into relation with objects by a veiled contact, the gnosis gets into identity with things by an unveiled oneness. Thus it is able to know all things as a man knows his own existence, simply, convincingly, directly. To the reason only what the senses give is direct knowledge, *pratyakṣa*, the rest of truth is arrived at indirectly; to the gnosis all its truth is direct knowledge, *pratyakṣa*. Therefore the truth gained by the intellect is an acquisition over which there hangs always a certain shadow of doubt, an incompleteness, a surrounding penumbra of night and ignorance or half-knowledge, a possibility of alteration or annihilation by farther knowledge. The truth of the gnosis is free from doubt, self-evident, self-existent, irrefragable, absolute.

The reason has as its first instrument observation general, analytical and synthetic; it aids itself by comparison, contrast and analogy,—proceeds from experience to indirect knowledge by logical processes of deduction, induction, all kinds of inference,—rests upon memory, reaches out beyond itself by imagination, secures itself by judgment: all is a process of groping and seeking. The gnosis does not seek, it possesses. Or if it has to enlighten, it does not even then seek; it reveals, it illumines. In

a consciousness transmuted from intelligence to gnosis, imagination would be replaced by truth-inspiration, mental judgment would give place to a self-luminous discerning. The slow and stumbling logical process from reasoning to conclusion would be pushed out by a swift intuitive proceeding; the conclusion or fact would be seen at once in its own right, by its own self-sufficient witness, and all the evidence by which we arrive at it would be seen too at once, along with it, in the same comprehensive figure, not as its evidence, but as its intimate conditions, connections and relations, its constituent parts or its wings of circumstance. Mental and sense observation would be changed into an inner vision using the instruments as channels, but not dependent on them as the mind in us is blind and deaf without the physical senses, and this vision would see not merely the thing, but all its truth, its forces, powers, the eternities within it. Our uncertain memory would fall away and there would come in its place a luminous possession of knowledge, the divine memory that is not a store of acquisition, but holds all things always contained in the consciousness, a memory at once of past, present and future.

For while the reason proceeds from moment to moment of time and loses and acquires and again loses and again acquires, the gnosis dominates time in a one view and perpetual power and links past, present and future in their indivisible connections, in a single continuous map of knowledge, side by side. The gnosis starts from the totality which it immediately possesses; it sees parts, groups and details only in relation to the totality and in one vision with it: the mental reason cannot really see the totality at all and does not know fully any whole except by starting from an analysis and synthesis of its parts, masses and details; otherwise its whole-view is always a vague apprehension or an imperfect comprehension or a confused summary of indistinct features. The reason deals with constituents and processes and properties; it tries in vain to form by them an idea of the thing in itself, its reality, its essence. But the gnosis sees the thing in itself first, penetrates to its original and eternal nature, adjoins its processes and properties only as a self-expression of its nature. The reason dwells in the diversity and is its prisoner: it deals

with things separately and treats each as a separate existence, as it deals with sections of Time and divisions of Space; it sees unity only in a sum or by elimination of diversity or as a general conception and a vacant figure. But the gnosis dwells in the unity and knows by it all the nature of the diversities; it starts from the unity and sees diversities only of a unity, not diversities constituting the one, but a unity constituting its own multitudes. The gnostic knowledge, the gnostic sense does not recognise any real division; it does not treat things separately as if they were independent of their true and original oneness. The reason deals with the finite and is helpless before the infinite: it can conceive of it as an indefinite extension in which the finite acts, but the infinite in itself it can with difficulty conceive and cannot at all grasp or penetrate. But the gnosis is, sees and lives in the infinite; it starts always from the infinite and knows finite things only in their relation to the infinite and in the sense of the infinite.

If we would describe the gnosis as it is in its own awareness, not thus imperfectly as it is to us in contrast with our own reason and intelligence, it is hardly possible to speak of it except in figures and symbols. And first we must remember that the gnostic level, Mahat, Vijnana, is not the supreme plane of our consciousness, but a middle or link plane. Interposed between the triune glory of the utter Spirit, the infinite existence, consciousness and bliss of the Eternal and our lower triple being and nature, it is as if it stood there as the mediating, formulated, organising and creative wisdom, power and joy of the Eternal. In the gnosis Sachchidananda gathers up the light of his unseizable existence and pours it out on the soul in the shape and power of a divine knowledge, a divine will and a divine bliss of existence. It is as if infinite light were gathered up into the compact orb of the sun and lavished on all that depends upon the sun in radiances that continue for ever. But the gnosis is not only light, it is force; it is creative knowledge, it is the self-effective truth of the divine Idea. This idea is not creative imagination, not something that constructs in a void, but light and power of eternal substance, truth-light full of truth-force; and it brings out what is latent in being, it does not create a fiction that never

was in being. The ideation of the gnosis is radiating light-stuff of the consciousness of the eternal Existence; each ray is a truth. The will in the gnosis is a conscious force of eternal knowledge; it throws the consciousness and substance of being into infallible forms of truth-power, forms that embody the idea and make it faultlessly effective, and it works out each truth-power and each truth-form spontaneously and rightly according to its nature. Because it carries this creative force of the divine Idea, the Sun, the lord and symbol of the gnosis, is described in the Veda as the Light which is the father of all things, Surya Savitri, the Wisdom-Luminous who is the bringer-out into manifest existence. This creation is inspired by the divine delight, the eternal Ananda; it is full of the joy of its own truth and power, it creates in bliss, creates out of bliss, creates that which is blissful. Therefore the world of the gnosis, the supramental world is the true and the happy creation, *ṛtam, bhadram*, since all in it shares in the perfect joy that made it. A divine radiance of undeviating knowledge, a divine power of unfaltering will and a divine ease of unstumbling bliss are the nature or Prakriti of the soul in supermind, in *vijnāna*.

The stuff of the gnostic or supramental plane is made of the perfect absolutes of all that is here imperfect and relative and its movement of the reconciled interlockings and happy fusions of all that here are opposites. For behind the appearance of these opposites are their truths and the truths of the Eternal are not in conflict with each other; our mind's and life's opposites transformed in the supermind into their own true spirit link together and are seen as tones and colourings of an eternal Reality and everlasting Ananda. Supermind or Gnosis is the supreme Truth, the supreme Thought, the supreme Word, the supreme Sight, the supreme Will-Idea; it is the inner and outer extension of the Infinite who is beyond Space, the unfettered Time of the Eternal who is timeless, the supernal harmony of all absolutes of the Absolute.

To the envisaging mind there are three powers of the Vijnana. Its supreme power knows and receives into it from above all the infinite existence, consciousness and bliss of the Ishwara;

it is in its highest height the absolute knowledge and force of eternal Sachchidananda. Its second power concentrates the Infinite into a dense luminous consciousness, *caitanyaghana* or *cidghana*, the seed-state of the divine consciousness in which are contained living and concrete all the immutable principles of the divine being and all the inviolable truths of the divine conscious-idea and nature. Its third power brings or loses out these things by the effective ideation, vision, authentic identities of the divine knowledge, movement of the divine will-force, vibration of the divine delight intensities into a universal harmony, an illimitable diversity, a manifold rhythm of their powers, forms and interplay of living consequences. The mental Purusha rising into the *vijnanamaya* must ascend into these three powers. It must turn by conversion of its movements into the movements of the gnosis its mental perception, ideation, will, pleasure into radiances of the divine knowledge, pulsations of the divine will-force, waves and floods of the divine delight-seas. It must convert its conscious stuff of mental nature into the *cidghana* or dense self-luminous consciousness. It must transform its conscious substance into a gnostic self or Truth-self of infinite Sachchidananda. These three movements are described in the Isha Upanishad, the first as *vyūha*, the marshalling of the rays of the Sun of gnosis in the order of the Truth-consciousness, the second as *samūha*, the gathering together of the rays into the body of the Sun of gnosis, the third as the vision of that Sun's fairest form of all in which the soul most intimately possesses its oneness with the infinite Purusha.² The Supreme above, in him, around, everywhere and the soul dwelling in the Supreme and one with it,—the infinite power and truth of the Divine concentrated in his own concentrated luminous soul nature,—

² *Surya raśmīn vyūha samūha tejo yat te kalyāṇatamarī rūpaṁ tat te paśyāmi yo 'śāv asau puruṣah so 'ham asmi.* The Veda describes the *vijñāna* plane as *ṛtam satyam bṛhat*, the Right, Truth, Vast, the same triple idea differently expressed. *Rtam* is the action of the divine knowledge, will and joy in the lines of the truth, the play of the truth-consciousness. *Satyam* is the truth of being which so acts, the dynamic essence of the truth-consciousness. *Bṛhat* is the infinity of Sachchidananda out of which the other two proceed and in which they are founded.

a radiant activity of the divine knowledge, will and joy perfect in the natural action of the Prakriti,—this is the fundamental experience of the mental being transformed and fulfilled and sublimated in the perfection of the gnosis.

Chapter XXIII

The Conditions of Attainment to the Gnosis

KNOWLEDGE is the first principle of the Vijnana, but knowledge is not its only power. The Truth-consciousness, like every other plane, founds itself upon that particular principle which is naturally the key of all its motions; but it is not limited by it, it contains all the other powers of existence. Only the character and working of these other powers is modified and moulded into conformity with its own original and dominant law; intelligence, life, body, will, consciousness, bliss are all luminous, awake, instinct with divine knowledge. This is indeed the process of Purusha-Prakriti everywhere; it is the key-movement of all the hierarchy and graded harmonies of manifested existence.

In the mental being mind-sense or intelligence is the original and dominant principle. The mental being in the mind-world where he is native is in his central and determining nature intelligence; he is a centre of intelligence, a massed movement of intelligence, a receptive and radiating action of intelligence. He has the intelligent sense of his own existence, the intelligent sense of other existence than his own, the intelligent sense of his own nature and activities and the activities of others, the intelligent sense of the nature of things and persons and their relations with himself and each other. That makes up his experience of existence. He has no other knowledge of existence, no knowledge of life and matter except as they make themselves sensible to him and capable of being seized by his mental intelligence; what he does not sense and conceive, is to him practically non-existent, or at least alien to his world and his nature.

Man is in his principle a mental being, but not one living in a mind world, but in a dominantly physical existence; his is

a mind cased in Matter and conditioned by Matter. Therefore he has to start with the action of the physical senses which are all channels of material contact; he does not start with the mind-sense. But even so he does not and cannot make free use of anything conveyed by these physical organs until and unless they are taken hold of by the mind-sense and turned into stuff and value of his intelligent being. What is in the lower subhuman submental world a pranic, a nervous, a dynamic action and reaction that proceeds very well without any need of translation into mind-terms or government by mind, has in him to be raised and offered to some kind of intelligence. In order to be characteristically human it has to become first a sense of force, sense of desire, sense of will, sense of intelligent will-action or mentally conscious sense of force-action. His lower delight of being translates itself into a sense of mental or mentalised vital or physical pleasure and its perversion pain, or into a mental or mentalised feeling-sensation of liking and disliking, or into an intelligence of delight and failure of delight,—all phenomena of the intelligent mind-sense. So too that which is above him and that which is around him and in which he lives,—God, the universal being, the cosmic Forces,—are non-existent and unreal to him until his mind awakes to them and gets, not yet their true truth, but some idea, observation, inference, imagination of things supersensuous, some mental sense of the Infinite, some intelligent interpreting consciousness of the forces of the superself above and around him.

All changes when we pass from mind to gnosis; for there a direct inherent knowledge is the central principle. The gnostic (*vijnānamaya*) being is in its character a truth-consciousness, a centre and circumference of the truth-vision of things, a massed movement or subtle body of gnosis. Its action is a self-fulfilling and radiating action of the truth-power of things according to the inner law of their deepest truest self and nature. This truth of things at which we must arrive before we can enter into the gnosis,—for in that all exists and from that all originates on the gnostic plane,—is, first of all, a truth of unity, of oneness, but of unity originating diversity, unity in multiplicity and still unity

always, an indefeasible oneness. State of gnosis, the condition of *vijnānamaya* being, is impossible without an ample and close self-identification of ourselves with all existence and with all existences, a universal pervasiveness, a universal comprehension or containing, a certain all-in-allness. The gnostic Purusha has normally the consciousness of itself as infinite, normally too the consciousness of containing the world in itself and exceeding it; it is not like the divided mental being normally bound to a consciousness that feels itself contained in the world and a part of it. It follows that a deliverance from the limiting and imprisoning ego is the first elementary step towards the being of the gnosis; for so long as we live in the ego, it is idle to hope for this higher reality, this vast self-consciousness, this true self-knowledge. The least reversion to ego-thought, ego-action, ego-will brings back the consciousness tumbling out of such gnostic Truth as it has attained into the falsehoods of the divided mind-nature. A secure universality of being is the very basis of this luminous higher consciousness. Abandoning all rigid separateness (but getting instead a certain transcendent overlook or independence) we have to feel ourselves one with all things and beings, to identify ourselves with them, to become aware of them as ourselves, to feel their being as our own, to admit their consciousness as part of ours, to contact their energy as intimate to our energy, to learn how to be one self with all. That oneness is not indeed all that is needed, but it is a first condition and without it there is no gnosis.

This universality is impossible to achieve in its completeness so long as we continue to feel ourselves, as we now feel, a consciousness lodged in an individual mind, life and body. There has to be a certain elevation of the Purusha out of the physical and even out of the mental into the *vijnānamaya* body. No longer can the brain nor its corresponding mental "lotus" remain the centre of our thinking, no longer the heart nor its corresponding "lotus" the originating centre of our emotional and sensational being. The conscious centre of our being, our thought, our will and action, even the original force of our sensations and emotions rise out of the body and mind and take a free station above them. No longer have we the sensation of living in the body, but

are above it as its lord, possessor or Ishwara and at the same time encompass it with a wider consciousness than that of the imprisoned physical sense. Now we come to realise with a very living force of reality, normal and continuous, what the sages meant when they spoke of the soul carrying the body or when they said that the soul is not in the body, but the body in the soul. It is from above the body and not from the brain that we shall ideate and will; the brain-action will become only a response and movement of the physical machinery to the shock of the thought-force and will-force from above. All will be originated from above; from above, all that corresponds in gnosis to our present mental activity takes place.¹

But this centre and this action are free, not bound, not dependent on the physical machine, not clamped to a narrow ego-sense. It is not involved in body; it is not shut up in a separated individuality feeling out for clumsy contacts with the world outside or groping inward for its own deeper spirit. For in this great transformation we begin to have a consciousness not shut up in a generating box, but diffused freely and extending self-existently everywhere; there is or may be a centre, but it is a convenience for individual action, not rigid, not constitutive or separative. The very nature of our conscious activities is henceforth universal; one with those of the universal being, it proceeds from universality to a supple and variable individualisation. It has become the awareness of an infinite being who acts always universally though with emphasis on an individual formation of its energies. But this emphasis is differential rather than separative, and this formation is no longer what we now understand by individuality; there is no longer a petty limited constructed person shut up in the formula of his own mechanism. This state of consciousness is so abnormal to our present mode of being that to the rational man who does not possess it it may seem impossible or even a state of alienation; but once

¹ Many, if not all, of these conditions of the gnostic change can and indeed have to be attained long before we reach the gnosis,—but imperfectly at first as if by a reflection,—in higher mind itself, and more completely in what we may call an overmind consciousness between mentality and gnosis.

possessed it vindicates itself even to the mental intelligence by its greater calm, freedom, light, power, effectivity of will, verifiable truth of ideation and feeling. For this condition begins already on the higher levels of liberated mind, and can therefore be partly sensed and understood by mind-intelligence, but it rises to perfect self-possession only when it leaves behind the mental levels, only in the supramental gnosis.

In this state of consciousness the infinite becomes to us the primal, the actual reality, the one thing immediately and sensibly true. It becomes impossible for us to think of or realise the finite apart from our fundamental sense of the infinite, in which alone the finite can live, can form itself, can have any reality or duration. So long as this finite mind and body are to our consciousness the first fact of our existence and the foundation of all our thinking, feeling and willing and so long as things finite are the normal reality from which we can rise occasionally, or even frequently, to an idea and sense of the infinite, we are still very far away from the gnosis. In the plane of the gnosis the infinite is at once our normal consciousness of being, its first fact, our sensible substance. It is very concretely to us there the foundation from which everything finite forms itself and its boundless incalculable forces are the origination of all our thought, will and delight. But this infinite is not only an infinite of pervasion or of extension in which everything forms and happens. Behind that immeasurable extension the gnostic consciousness is always aware of a spaceless inner infinite. It is through this double infinite that we shall arrive at the essential being of Sachchidananda, the highest self of our own being and the totality of our cosmic existence. There is opened to us an illimitable existence which we feel as if it were an infinity above us to which we attempt to rise and an infinity around us into which we strive to dissolve our separate existence. Afterwards we widen into it and rise into it; we break out of the ego into its largeness and are that for ever. If this liberation is achieved, its power can take, if so we will, increasing possession of our lower being also until even our lowest and perversest activities are refashioned into the truth of the Vijnana.

This is the basis, this sense of the infinite and possession by the infinite, and only when it is achieved, can we progress towards some normality of the supramental ideation, perception, sense, identity, awareness. For even this sense of the infinite is only a first foundation and much more has to be done before the consciousness can become dynamically gnostic. The supramental knowledge is the play of a supreme light; there are many other lights, other levels of knowledge higher than human mind which can open in us and receive or reflect something of that effulgence even before we rise into the gnosis. But to command or wholly possess it we must first enter into and become the being of the supreme light, our consciousness must be transformed into that consciousness, its principle and power of self-awareness and all-awareness by identity must be the very stuff of our existence. For our means and ways of knowledge and action must necessarily be according to the nature of our consciousness and it is the consciousness that must radically change if we are to command and not only be occasionally visited by that higher power of knowledge. But it is not confined to a higher thought or the action of a sort of divine reason. It takes up all our present means of knowledge immensely extended, active and effective where they are now debarred, blind, infructuous, and turns them into a high and intense perceptive activity of the Vijnana. Thus it takes up our sense action and illumines it even in its ordinary field so that we get a true sense of things. But also it enables the mind-sense to have a direct perception of the inner as well as the outer phenomenon, to feel and receive or perceive, for instance, the thoughts, feelings, sensations, the nervous reactions of the object on which it is turned.² It uses the subtle senses as well as the physical and saves them from their errors. It gives us the knowledge, the experience of planes of existence other than the material to which our ordinary mentality is ignorantly attached and it enlarges the world for us. It transforms similarly the

² This power, says Patanjali, comes by “*samyama*” on an object. That is for the mentality, in the gnosis there is no need of *samyama*. For this kind of perception is the natural action of the Vijnana.

sensations and gives them their full intensity as well as their full holding-power; for in our normal mentality the full intensity is impossible because the power to hold and sustain vibrations beyond a certain point is denied to it, mind and body would both break under the shock or the prolonged strain. It takes up too the element of knowledge in our feelings and emotions,—for our feelings too contain a power of knowledge and a power of effectuation which we do not recognise and do not properly develop,—and delivers them at the same time from their limitations and from their errors and perversions. For in all things the gnosis is the Truth, the Right, the highest Law, *devānām adabdhāni vratāni*.

Knowledge and Force or Will—for all conscious force is will—are the twin sides of the action of consciousness. In our mentality they are divided. The idea comes first, the will comes stumbling after it or rebels against it or is used as its imperfect tool with imperfect results; or else the will starts up first with a blind or half-seeing idea in it and works out something in confusion of which we get the right understanding afterwards. There is no oneness, no full understanding between these powers in us; or else there is no perfect correspondence of initiation with effectuation. Nor is the individual will in harmony with the universal; it tries to reach beyond it or falls short of it or deviates from and strives against it. It knows not the times and seasons of the Truth, nor its degrees and measures. The Vijnana takes up the will and puts it first into harmony and then into oneness with the truth of the supramental knowledge. In this knowledge the idea in the individual is one with the idea in the universal, because both are brought back to the truth of the supreme Knowledge and the transcendent Will. The gnosis takes up not only our intelligent will, but our wishes, desires, even what we call the lower desires, the instincts, the impulses, the reachings out of sense and sensation and it transforms them. They cease to be wishes and desires, because they cease first to be personal and then cease to be that struggling after the ungrasped which we mean by craving and desire. No longer blind or half-blind reachings out of the instinctive or intelligent mentality, they

are transformed into a various action of the Truth-will; and that will acts with an inherent knowledge of the right measures of its decreed action and therefore with an effectivity unknown to our mental willing. Therefore too in the action of the *vijnānamaya* will there is no place for sin; for all sin is an error of the will, a desire and act of the Ignorance.

When desire ceases entirely, grief and all inner suffering also cease. The Vijnana takes up not only our parts of knowledge and will, but our parts of affection and delight and changes them into action of the divine Ananda. For if knowledge and force are the twin sides or powers of the action of consciousness, delight, Ananda — which is something higher than what we call pleasure — is the very stuff of consciousness and the natural result of the interaction of knowledge and will, force and self-awareness. Both pleasure and pain, both joy and grief are deformations caused by the disturbance of harmony between our consciousness and the force it applies, between our knowledge and will, a breaking up of their oneness by a descent to a lower plane in which they are limited, divided in themselves, restrained from their full and proper action, at odds with other-force, other-consciousness, other-knowledge, other-will. The Vijnana sets this to rights by the power of its truth and a wholesale restoration to oneness and harmony, to the Right and the highest Law. It takes up all our emotions and turns them into various forms of love and delight, even our hatreds, repulsions, causes of suffering. It finds out or reveals the meaning they missed and by missing it became the perversions they are; it restores our whole nature to the eternal Good. It deals similarly with our perceptions and sensations and reveals all the delight that they seek, but in its truth, not in any perversion and wrong seeking and wrong reception; it teaches even our lower impulses to lay hold on the Divine and Infinite in the appearances after which they run. All this is done not in the values of the lower being, but by a lifting up of the mental, vital, material into the inalienable purity, the natural intensity, the continual ecstasy, one yet manifold, of the divine Ananda.

Thus the being of Vijnana is in all its activities a play of

perfected knowledge-power, will-power, delight-power, raised to a higher than the mental, vital and bodily level. All-pervasive, universalised, freed from egoistic personality and individuality, it is the play of a higher Self, a higher consciousness and therefore a higher force and higher delight of being. All that acts in the Vijnana in the purity, in the right, in the truth of the superior or divine Prakriti. Its powers may often seem to be what are called in ordinary Yogic parlance siddhis, by the Europeans occult powers, shunned and dreaded by devotees and by many Yogins as snares, stumbling-blocks, diversions from the true seeking after the Divine. But they have that character and are dangerous here because they are sought in the lower being, abnormally, by the ego for an egoistic satisfaction. In the Vijnana they are neither occult nor siddhis, but the open, unforced and normal play of its nature. The Vijnana is the Truth-power and Truth-action of the divine Being in its divine identities, and, when this acts through the individual lifted to the gnostic plane, it fulfils itself unperverted, without fault or egoistic reaction, without diversion from the possession of the Divine. There the individual is no longer the ego, but the free Jiva domiciled in the higher divine nature of which he is a portion, *parā prakṛtir jīvabhūtā*, the nature of the supreme and universal Self seen indeed in the play of multiple individuality but without the veil of ignorance, with self-knowledge, in its multiple oneness, in the truth of its divine Shakti.

In the Vijnana the right relation and action of Purusha and Prakriti are found, because there they become unified and the Divine is no longer veiled in Maya. All is his action. The Jiva no longer says "I think, I act, I desire, I feel"; he does not even say like the sadhaka striving after unity but before he has reached it, "As appointed by Thee seated in my heart, I act." For the heart, the centre of the mental consciousness is no longer the centre of origination but only a blissful channel. He is rather aware of the Divine seated above, lord of all, *adhisthita*, as well as acting within him. And seated himself in that higher being, *parārdhe, paramasyāṁ parāvati*, he can say truly and boldly, "God himself by his Prakriti knows, acts, loves, takes delight

through my individuality and its figures and fulfils there in its higher and divine measures the multiple *lilā* which the Infinite for ever plays in the universality which is himself for ever."

Chapter XXIV

Gnosis and Ananda

THE ASCENT to the gnosis, the possession of something of the gnostic consciousness must elevate the soul of man and sublimate his life in the world into a glory of light and power and bliss and infinity that can seem in comparison with the lame action and limited realisations of our present mental and physical existence the very status and dynamis of a perfection final and absolute. And it is a true perfection, such as nothing before it has yet been in the ascension of the spirit. For even the highest spiritual realisation on the plane of mentality has in it something top-heavy, one-sided and exclusive; even the widest mental spirituality is not wide enough and it is marred too by its imperfect power of self-expression in life. And yet in comparison with what is beyond it, this too, this first gnostic splendour is only a bright passage to a more perfect perfection. It is the secure and shining step from which we can happily mount still upwards into the absolute infinities which are the origin and the goal of the incarnating spirit. In this farther ascension the gnosis does not disappear, but reaches rather its own supreme Light out of which it has descended to mediate between mind and the supreme Infinite.

The Upanishad tells us that after the knowledge-self above the mental is possessed and all the lower selves have been drawn up into it, there is another and last step of all still left to us—though one might ask, is it eternally the last or only the last practically conceivable or at all necessary for us now?—to take up our gnostic existence into the Bliss-Self and there complete the spiritual self-discovery of the divine Infinite. Ananda, a supreme Bliss eternal, far other and higher in its character than the highest human joy or pleasure, is the essential and original nature of the spirit. In Ananda our spirit will find its true self, in Ananda its essential consciousness, in Ananda the absolute power of its

existence. The embodied soul's entry into this highest absolute, unlimited, unconditional bliss of the spirit is the infinite liberation and the infinite perfection. It is true that something of this bliss can be enjoyed by reflection, by a qualified descent even on the lower planes where the Purusha plays with his modified and qualified Nature. There can be the experience of a spiritual and boundless Ananda on the plane of matter, on the plane of life, on the plane of mind as well as on the gnostic truth-plane of knowledge and above it. And the Yогin who enters into these lesser realisations, may find them so complete and compelling that he will imagine there is nothing greater, nothing beyond it. For each of the divine principles contains in itself the whole potentiality of all the other six notes of our being; each plane of Nature can have its own perfection of these notes under its own conditions. But the integral perfection can come only by a mounting ascent of the lowest into the highest and an incessant descent of the highest into the lowest till all becomes one at once solid block and plastic sea-stuff of the Truth infinite and eternal.

The very physical consciousness in man, the *annamaya puruṣa*, can without this supreme ascent and integral descent yet reflect and enter into the self of Sachchidananda. It can do it either by a reflection of the Soul in physical Nature, its bliss, power and infinity secret but still present here, or by losing its separate sense of substance and existence in the Self within or without it. The result is a glorified sleep of the physical mind in which the physical being forgets itself in a kind of conscious Nirvana or else moves about like a thing inert in the hands of Nature, *jadavat*, like a leaf in the wind, or otherwise a state of pure happy and free irresponsibility of action, *bālavat*, a divine childhood. But this comes without the higher glories of knowledge and delight which belong to the same status upon a more exalted level. It is an inert realisation of Sachchidananda in which there is neither any mastery of the Prakriti by the Purusha nor any sublimation of Nature into her own supreme power, the infinite glories of the Para Shakti. Yet these two, this mastery and this sublimation, are the two gates of perfection, the splendid doors into the supreme Eternal.

The life soul and life consciousness in man, *prāṇamaya puruṣa*, can in the same way directly reflect and enter into the self of Sachchidananda by a large and splendid and blissful reflection of the Soul in universal Life or by losing its separate sense of life and existence in the vast Self within or without it. The result is either a profound state of sheer self-oblivion or else an action driven irresponsibly by the life nature, an exalted enthusiasm of self-abandonment to the great world-energy in its vitalistic dance. The outer being lives in a God-possessed frenzy careless of itself and the world, *unmattavat*, or with an entire disregard whether of the conventions and proprieties of fitting human action or of the harmony and rhythms of a greater Truth. It acts as the unbound vital being, *piśācavat*, the divine maniac or else the divine demoniac. Here too there is no mastery or supreme sublimation of nature. There is only a joyful static possession by the Self within us and an unregulated dynamic possession by the physical and the vital Nature without us.

The mind soul and mind consciousness in man, *manomaya puruṣa*, can in the same direct way reflect and enter into Sachchidananda by a reflection of the Soul as it mirrors itself in the nature of pure universal mind luminous, unwalled, happy, plastic, illimitable, or by absorption in the vast free unconditioned uncentred Self within it and without it. The result is either the immobile cessation of all mind and action or a desire-free unbound action watched by the unparticipating inner Witness. The mental being becomes the eremite soul alone in the world and careless of all human ties or the saint soul that lives in a rapturous God-nearness or felicitous identity and in joyful relations of pure love and ecstasy towards all creatures. The mental being may even realise the Self in all three planes together. Then he is all these things alternately, successively or at once. Or he may transform the lower forms into manifestations of the higher state; he may draw upward the childlikeness or the inert irresponsibility of the free physical mind or the free vital mind's divine madness and carelessness of all rules, proprieties, harmonies and colour or disguise with them the ecstasy of the saint or the solitary liberty of the wandering eremite. Here again there is no mastery, no

sublimation of the Nature by the soul in the world, but a double possession, by the freedom and delight of the mental-spiritual infinite within and without by the happy, natural and unregulated play of the mind-Nature. But since the mental being is capable of receiving the gnosis in a way in which the life soul and physical soul cannot receive it, since he can accept it with knowledge though only the limited knowledge of a mental response, he may to a certain extent govern by its light his outer action or, if not that, at least bathe and purify in it his will and his thinkings. But Mind can arrive only at a compromise between the infinite within and the finite nature without; it cannot pour the infinity of the inner being's knowledge and power and bliss with any sense of fullness into its external action which remains always inadequate. Still it is content and free because it is the Lord within who takes up the responsibility of the action adequate or inadequate, assumes its guidance and fixes its consequence.

But the gnostic soul, the *vijnānamaya puruṣa*, is the first to participate not only in the freedom, but in the power and sovereignty of the Eternal. For it receives the fullness, it has the sense of plenitude of the Godhead in its action; it shares the free, splendid and royal march of the Infinite, is a vessel of the original knowledge, the immaculate power, the inviolable bliss, transmutes all life into the eternal Light and the eternal Fire and the eternal Wine of the nectar. It possesses the infinite of the Self and it possesses the infinite of Nature. It does not so much lose as find its nature self in the self of the Infinite. On the other planes to which the mental being has easier access, man finds God in himself and himself in God; he becomes divine in essence rather than in person or nature. In the gnosis, even the mentalised gnosis, the Divine Eternal possesses, changes and stamps the human symbol, envelops and partly finds himself in the person and nature. The mental being at most receives or reflects that which is true, divine and eternal; the gnostic soul reaches a true identity, possesses the spirit and power of the truth-Nature. In the gnosis the dualism of Purusha and Prakriti, Soul and Nature, two separate powers complementary to each other, the great truth of the Sankhyas founded on the practical

truth of our present natural existence, disappears in their biune entity, the dynamic mystery of the occult Supreme. The Truth-being is the Hara-Gauri¹ of the Indian iconological symbol; it is the double Power masculine-feminine born from and supported by the supreme Shakti of the Supreme.

Therefore the truth-soul does not arrive at self-oblivion in the Infinite; it comes to an eternal self-possession in the Infinite. Its action is not irregular; it is a perfect control in an infinite freedom. In the lower planes the soul is naturally subject to Nature and the regulating principle is found in the lower nature; all regulation there depends on the acceptance of a strict subjection to the law of the finite. If the soul on these planes withdraws from that law into the liberty of the infinite, it loses its natural centre and becomes centreless in a cosmic infinitude; it forfeits the living harmonic principle by which its external being was till then regulated and it finds no other. The personal nature or what is left of it merely continues mechanically for a while its past movements, or it dances in the gusts and falls of the universal energy that acts on the individual system rather than in that system, or it strays in the wild steps of an irresponsible ecstasy, or it remains inert and abandoned by the breath of the Spirit that was within it. If on the other hand the soul moves in its impulse of freedom towards the discovery of another and divine centre of control through which the Infinite can consciously govern its own action in the individual, it is moving towards the gnosis where that centre pre-exists, the centre of an eternal harmony and order. It is when he ascends above mind and life to the gnosis that the Purusha becomes the master of his own nature because subject only to supreme Nature. For there force or will is the exact counterpart, the perfect dynamis of the divine knowledge. And that knowledge is not merely the eye of the Witness, it is the immanent and compelling gaze of the Ishwara. Its luminous governing power, a power not to be hedged in or denied, imposes its self-expressive force on all the

¹ The biune body of the Lord and his Spouse, Ishwara and Shakti, the right half male, the left half female.

action and makes true and radiant and authentic and inevitable every movement and impulse.

The gnosis does not reject the realisations of the lower planes; for it is not an annihilation or extinction, not a Nirvana but a sublime fulfilment of our manifested Nature. It possesses the first realisations under its own conditions after it has transformed them and made them elements of a divine order. The gnostic soul is the child, but the king-child;² here is the royal and eternal childhood whose toys are the worlds and all universal Nature is the miraculous garden of the play that tires never. The gnosis takes up the condition of divine inertia; but this is no longer the inertia of the subject soul driven by Nature like a fallen leaf in the breath of the Lord. It is the happy passivity bearing an unimaginable intensity of action and Ananda of the Nature-Soul at once driven by the bliss of the mastering Purusha and aware of herself as the supreme Shakti above and around him and mastering and carrying him blissfully on her bosom for ever. This biune being of Purusha-Prakriti is as if a flaming Sun and body of divine Light self-carried in its orbit by its own inner consciousness and power at one with the universal, at one with a supreme Transcendence. Its madness is a wise madness of Ananda, the incalculable ecstasy of a supreme consciousness and power vibrating with an infinite sense of freedom and intensity in its divine life-movements. Its action is supra-rational and therefore to the rational mind which has not the key it seems a colossal madness. And yet this that seems madness is a wisdom in action that only baffles the mind by the liberty and richness of its contents and the infinite complexity in fundamental simplicity of its motions, it is the very method of the Lord of the worlds, a thing no intellectual interpretation can fathom,—a dance this also, a whirl of mighty energies, but the Master of the dance holds the hands of His energies and keeps them to the rhythmic order, the self-traced harmonic circles of his Rasa-lila. The gnostic soul is not bound any more than the divine demoniac by the petty conventions and proprieties of the

² So Heraclitus, "The kingdom is of the child."

normal human life or the narrow rules through which it makes some shift to accommodate itself with the perplexing dualities of the lower nature and tries to guide its steps among the seeming contradictions of the world, to avoid its numberless stumbling-blocks and to foot with gingerly care around its dangers and pitfalls. The gnostic supramental life is abnormal to us because it is free to all the hardihoods and audacious delights of a soul dealing fearlessly and even violently with Nature, but yet is it the very normality of the infinite and all governed by the law of the Truth in its exact unerring process. It obeys the law of a self-possessed Knowledge, Love, Delight in an innumerable Oneness. It seems abnormal only because its rhythm is not measurable by the faltering beats of the mind, but yet it steps in a wonderful and transcendent measure.

And what then is the necessity of a still higher step and what difference is there between the soul in gnosis and the soul in the Bliss? There is no essential difference, but yet a difference, because there is a transfer to another consciousness and a certain reversal in position,—for at each step of the ascent from Matter to the highest Existence there is a reversal of consciousness. The soul no longer looks up to something beyond it, but is in it and from it looks down on all that it was before. On all planes indeed the Ananda can be discovered, because everywhere it exists and is the same. Even there is a repetition of the Ananda plane in each lower world of consciousness. But in the lower planes not only is it reached by a sort of dissolution into it of the pure mind or the life-sense or the physical awareness, but it is, as it were, itself diluted by the dissolved form of mind, life or matter, held in the dilution and turned into a poor thinness wonderful to the lower consciousness but not comparable to its true intensities. The gnosis has on the contrary a dense light of essential consciousness³ in which the intense fullness of the Ananda can be. And when the form of gnosis is dissolved into the Ananda, it is not annulled altogether, but undergoes a natural change by which the soul is carried up into its last and absolute

³ *cidghana*.

freedom; for it casts itself into the absolute existence of the spirit and is enlarged into its own entirely self-existent bliss infinitudes. The gnosis has the infinite and absolute as the conscious source, accompaniment, condition, standard, field and atmosphere of all its activities, it possesses it as its base, fount, constituent material, indwelling and inspiring Presence; but in its action it seems to stand out from it as its operation, as the rhythmical working of its activities, as a divine Maya⁴ or Wisdom-Formation of the Eternal. Gnosis is the divine Knowledge-Will of the divine Consciousness-Force; it is harmonic consciousness and action of Prakriti-Purusha full of the delight of the divine existence. In the Ananda the knowledge goes back from these willed harmonies into pure self-consciousness, the will dissolves into pure transcendent force and both are taken up into the pure delight of the Infinite. The basis of the gnostic existence is the self-stuff and self-form of the Ananda.

This in the ascension takes place because there is here completed the transition to the absolute unity of which the gnosis is the decisive step, but not the final resting-place. In the gnosis the soul is aware of its infinity and lives in it, yet it lives also in a working centre for the individual play of the Infinite. It realises its identity with all existences, but it keeps a distinction without difference by which it can have also the contact with them in a certain diverseness. This is that distinction for the joy of contact which in the mind becomes not only difference, but in its self-experience division from our other selves, in its spiritual being a sense of loss of self one with us in others and a reaching after the felicity it has forfeited, in life a compromise between egoistic self-absorption and a blind seeking out for the lost oneness. In its infinite consciousness, the gnostic soul creates a sort of voluntary limitation for its own wisdom-purposes; it has even its particular luminous aura of being in which it moves, although beyond that it enters into all things and identifies itself with all being and all existences. In the Ananda all is reversed,

⁴ Not in the sense of illusion, but in the original Vedic significance of the word Maya. All in the gnostic existence is real, spiritually concrete, eternally verifiable.

the centre disappears. In the bliss nature there is no centre, nor any voluntary or imposed circumference, but all is, all are one equal being, one identical spirit. The bliss soul finds and feels itself everywhere; it has no mansion, is *aniketa*, or has the all for its mansion, or, if it likes, it has all things for its many mansions open to each other for ever. All other selves are entirely its own selves, in action as well as in essence. The joy of contact in diverse oneness becomes altogether the joy of absolute identity in innumerable oneness. Existence is no longer formulated in the terms of the Knowledge, because the known and knowledge and the knower are wholly one self here and, since all possesses all in an intimate identity beyond the closest closeness, there is no need of what we call knowledge. All the consciousness is of the bliss of the Infinite, all power is power of the bliss of the Infinite, all forms and activities are forms and activities of the bliss of the Infinite. In this absolute truth of its being the eternal soul of Ananda lives, here deformed by contrary phenomena, there brought back and transfigured into their reality.

The soul lives: it is not abolished, it is not lost in a featureless Indefinite. For on every plane of our existence the same principle holds; the soul may fall asleep in a trance of self-absorption, dwell in an ineffable intensity of God-possession, live in the highest glory of its own plane,—the Anandaloka, Brahmaloka, Vaikuntha, Goloka of various Indian systems,—even turn upon the lower worlds to fill them with its own light and power and beatitude. In the eternal worlds and more and more in all worlds above Mind these states exist in each other. For they are not separate; they are coexistent, even coincident powers of the consciousness of the Absolute. The Divine on the Ananda plane is not incapable of a world-play or self-debarred from any expression of its glories. On the contrary, as the Upanishad insists, the Ananda is the true creative principle. For all takes birth from this divine Bliss;⁵ all is pre-existent in it as an absolute truth of existence which the Vijnana brings out and subjects to

⁵ Therefore the world of the Ananda is called the Janaloka, in the double sense of birth and delight.

voluntary limitation by the Idea and the law of the Idea. In the Ananda all law ceases and there is an absolute freedom without binding term or limit. It is superior to all principles and in one and the same motion the enjoyer of all principles; it is free from all gunas and the enjoyer of its own infinite gunas; it is above all forms and the builder and enjoyer of all its self-forms and figures. This unimaginable completeness is what the spirit is, the spirit transcendent and universal, and to be one in bliss with the transcendent and universal spirit is for the soul too to be that and nothing less. Necessarily, since there is on this plane the absolute and the play of absolutes, it is ineffable by any of the conceptions of our mind or by signs of the phenomenal or ideal realities of which mind-conceptions are the figures in our intelligence. These realities are themselves indeed only relative symbols of those ineffable absolutes. The symbol, the expressive reality, may give an idea, a perception, sense, vision, contact even of the thing itself to us, but at last we get beyond it to the thing it symbolises, transcend idea, vision, contact, pierce through the ideal and pass to the real realities, the identical, the supreme, the timeless and eternal, the infinitely infinite.

Our first absorbing impulse when we become inwardly aware of something entirely beyond what we now are and know and are powerfully attracted to it, is to get away from the present actuality and dwell in that higher reality altogether. The extreme form of this attraction when we are drawn to the supreme Existence and the infinite Ananda is the condemnation of the lower and the finite as an illusion and an aspiration to Nirvana in the beyond,—the passion for dissolution, immersion, extinction in the Spirit. But the real dissolution, the true *nirvāṇa* is the release of all that is bindingly characteristic of the lower into the larger being of the Higher, the conscious possession of the living symbol by the living Real. We discover in the end that not only is that higher Reality the cause of all the rest, not only it embraces and exists in all the rest, but as more and more we possess it, all this rest is transformed in our soul-experience into a superior value and becomes the means of a richer expression of the Real, a more many-sided

communion with the Infinite, a larger ascent to the Supreme. Finally, we get close to the absolute and its supreme values which are the absolutes of all things. We lose the passion for release, *mumukṣutva*, which till then actuated us, because we are now intimately near to that which is ever free, that which is neither attracted into attachment by what binds us now nor afraid of what to us seems to be bondage. It is only by the loss of the bound soul's exclusive passion for its freedom that there can come an absolute liberation of our nature. The Divine attracts the soul of man to him by various lures; all of them are born of its own relative and imperfect conceptions of bliss; all are its ways of seeking for the Ananda, but, if clung to till the end, miss the inexpressible truth of those surpassing felicities. First in order comes the lure of an earthly reward, a prize of material, intellectual, ethical or other joy in the terrestrial mind and body. A second remoter greater version of the same fruitful error is the hope of a heavenly bliss, far exceeding these earthly rewards; the conception of heaven rises in altitude and purity till it reaches the pure idea of the eternal presence of God or an unending union with the Eternal. And last we get the subtlest of all lures, an escape from these worldly or heavenly joys and from all pains and sorrows, effort and trouble and from all phenomenal things, a Nirvana, a self-dissolution in the Absolute, an Ananda of cessation and ineffable peace. In the end all these toys of the mind have to be transcended. The fear of birth and the desire of escape from birth must entirely fall away from us. For, to repeat the ancient language, the soul that has realised oneness has no sorrow or shrinking; the spirit that has entered into the bliss of the Spirit has nought to fear from anyone or anything whatsoever. Fear, desire and sorrow are diseases of the mind; born of its sense of division and limitation, they cease with the falsehood that begot them. The Ananda is free from these maladies; it is not the monopoly of the ascetic, it is not born from the disgust of existence.

The bliss soul is not bound to birth or to non-birth; it is not driven by desire of the Knowledge or harassed by fear of the Ignorance. The supreme bliss Soul has already the Knowledge

and transcends all need of knowledge. Not limited in consciousness by the form and the act, it can play with the manifestation without being imbued with the Ignorance. Already it is taking its part above in the mystery of an eternal manifestation and here, when the time comes, it will descend into birth without being the slave of Ignorance chained to the revolutions of the wheel of Nature. For it knows that the purpose and law of the birth-series is for the soul in the body to rise from plane to plane and substitute always the rule of the higher for the rule of the lower play even down to the material field. The bliss-soul neither disdains to help that ascent from above nor fears to descend down the stairs of God into the material birth and there contribute the power of its own bliss nature to the upward pull of the divine forces. The time for that marvellous hour of the evolving Time-Spirit is not yet come. Man, generally, cannot yet ascend to the bliss nature; he has first to secure himself on the higher mental altitudes, to ascend from them to the gnosis. Still less can he bring down all the Bliss-Power into this terrestrial Nature; he must first cease to be mental man and become superhuman. All he can do now is to receive something of its power into his soul in greater or less degree, by a diminishing transmission through an inferior consciousness; but even that gives him the sense of an ecstasy and an unsurpassable beatitude.

And what will be the bliss nature when it manifests in a new supramental race? The fully evolved soul will be one with all beings in the status and dynamic effects of experience of a bliss-consciousness intense and illimitable. And since love is the effective power and soul-symbol of bliss-oneness he will approach and enter into this oneness by the gate of universal love, a sublimation of human love at first, a divine love afterwards, at its summits a thing of beauty, sweetness and splendour now to us inconceivable. He will be one in bliss-consciousness with all the world-play and its powers and happenings and there will be banished for ever the sorrow and fear, the hunger and pain of our poor and darkened mental and vital and physical existence. He will get that power of the bliss-freedom in which all the conflicting principles of our being shall be unified in their

absolute values. All evil shall perforce change itself into good; the universal beauty of the All-beautiful will take possession of its fallen kingdoms; every darkness will be converted into a pregnant glory of light and the discords which the mind creates between Truth and Good and Beauty, Power and Love and Knowledge will disappear on the eternal summit, in the infinite extensions where they are always one.

The Purusha in mind, life and body is divided from Nature and in conflict with her. He labours to control and coerce what he can embody of her by his masculine force and is yet subject to her afflicting dualities and in fact her plaything from top to bottom, beginning to end. In the gnosis he is biune with her, finds as master of his own nature their reconciliation and harmony by their essential oneness even while he accepts an infinite blissful subjection, the condition of his mastery and his liberties, to the Supreme in his sovereign divine Nature. In the tops of the gnosis and in the Ananda he is one with the Prakriti and no longer solely biune with her. There is no longer the baffling play of Nature with the soul in the Ignorance; all is the conscious play of the soul with itself and all its selves and the Supreme and the divine Shakti in its own and the infinite bliss nature. This is the supreme mystery, the highest secret, simple to its own experience, however difficult and complex to our mental conceptions and the effort of our limited intelligence to understand what is beyond it. In the free infinity of the self-delight of Sachchidananda there is a play of the divine Child, a *rāsa līlā* of the infinite Lover and its mystic soul-symbols repeat themselves in characters of beauty and movements and harmonies of delight in a timeless forever.

Chapter XXV

The Higher and the Lower Knowledge

WE HAVE now completed our view of the path of Knowledge and seen to what it leads. First, the end of Yoga of Knowledge is God-possession, it is to possess God and be possessed by him through consciousness, through identification, through reflection of the divine Reality. But not merely in some abstraction away from our present existence, but here also; therefore to possess the Divine in himself, the Divine in the world, the Divine within, the Divine in all things and all beings. It is to possess oneness with God and through that to possess also oneness with the universal, with the cosmos and all existences; therefore to possess the infinite diversity also in the oneness, but on the basis of oneness and not on the basis of division. It is to possess God in his personality and his impersonality; in his purity free from qualities and in his infinite qualities; in time and beyond time; in his action and in his silence; in the finite and in the infinite. It is to possess him not only in pure self, but in all self; not only in self, but in Nature; not only in spirit, but in supermind, mind, life and body; to possess him with the spirit, with the mind, with the vital and the physical consciousness; and it is again for all these to be possessed by him, so that our whole being is one with him, full of him, governed and driven by him. It is, since God is oneness, for our physical consciousness to be one with the soul and the nature of the material universe; for our life, to be one with all life; for our mind, to be one with the universal mind; for our spirit, to be identified with the universal spirit. It is to merge in him in the absolute and find him in all relations.

Secondly, it is to put on the divine being and the divine nature. And since God is Sachchidananda, it is to raise our

being into the divine being, our consciousness into the divine consciousness, our energy into the divine energy, our delight of existence into the divine delight of being. And it is not only to lift ourselves into this higher consciousness, but to widen into it in all our being, because it is to be found on all the planes of our existence and in all our members, so that our mental, vital, physical existence shall become full of the divine nature. Our intelligent mentality is to become a play of the divine knowledge-will, our mental soul-life a play of the divine love and delight, our vitality a play of the divine life, our physical being a mould of the divine substance. This God-action in us is to be realised by an opening of ourselves to the divine gnosis and divine Ananda and, in its fullness, by an ascent into and a permanent dwelling in the gnosis and the Ananda. For though we live physically on the material plane and in normal outward-going life the mind and soul are preoccupied with material existence, this externality of our being is not a binding limitation. We can raise our internal consciousness from plane to plane of the relations of Purusha with Prakriti, and even become, instead of the mental being dominated by the physical soul and nature, the gnostic being or the bliss-self and assume the gnostic or the bliss nature. And by this raising of the inner life we can transform our whole outward-going existence; instead of a life dominated by matter we shall then have a life dominated by spirit with all its circumstances moulded and determined by the purity of being, the consciousness infinite even in the finite, the divine energy, the divine joy and bliss of the spirit.

This is the goal; we have seen also what are the essentials of the method. But here we have first to consider briefly one side of the question of method which we have hitherto left untouched. In the system of an integral Yoga the principle must be that all life is a part of the Yoga; but the knowledge which we have been describing seems to be not the knowledge of what is ordinarily understood as life, but of something behind life. There are two kinds of knowledge, that which seeks to understand the apparent phenomenon of existence externally, by an approach from outside, through the intellect, — this is the lower

knowledge, the knowledge of the apparent world; secondly, the knowledge which seeks to know the truth of existence from within, in its source and reality, by spiritual realisation. Ordinarily, a sharp distinction is drawn between the two, and it is supposed that when we get to the higher knowledge, the God-knowledge, then the rest, the world-knowledge, becomes of no concern to us: but in reality they are two sides of one seeking. All knowledge is ultimately the knowledge of God, through himself, through Nature, through her works. Mankind has first to seek this knowledge through the external life; for until its mentality is sufficiently developed, spiritual knowledge is not really possible, and in proportion as it is developed, the possibilities of spiritual knowledge become richer and fuller.

Science, art, philosophy, ethics, psychology, the knowledge of man and his past, action itself are means by which we arrive at the knowledge of the workings of God through Nature and through life. At first it is the workings of life and forms of Nature which occupy us, but as we go deeper and deeper and get a completer view and experience, each of these lines brings us face to face with God. Science at its limits, even physical Science, is compelled to perceive in the end the infinite, the universal, the spirit, the divine intelligence and will in the material universe. Still more easily must this be the end with the psychic sciences which deal with the operations of higher and subtler planes and powers of our being and come into contact with the beings and the phenomena of the worlds behind which are unseen, not sensible by our physical organs, but ascertainable by the subtle mind and senses. Art leads to the same end; the aesthetic human being intensely preoccupied with Nature through aesthetic emotion must in the end arrive at spiritual emotion and perceive not only the infinite life, but the infinite presence within her; preoccupied with beauty in the life of man he must in the end come to see the divine, the universal, the spiritual in humanity. Philosophy dealing with the principles of things must come to perceive the Principle of all these principles and investigate its nature, attributes and essential workings. So ethics must eventually perceive that the law of good which it seeks is the law of God

and depends on the being and nature of the Master of the law. Psychology leads from the study of mind and the soul in living beings to the perception of the one soul and one mind in all things and beings. The history and study of man like the history and study of Nature lead towards the perception of the eternal and universal Power and Being whose thought and will work out through the cosmic and human evolution. Action itself forces us into contact with the divine Power which works through, uses, overrules our actions. The intellect begins to perceive and understand, the emotions to feel and desire and revere, the will to turn itself to the service of the Divine without whom Nature and man cannot exist or move and by conscious knowledge of whom alone we can arrive at our highest possibilities.

It is here that Yoga steps in. It begins by using knowledge, emotion and action for the possession of the Divine. For Yoga is the conscious and perfect seeking of union with the Divine towards which all the rest was an ignorant and imperfect moving and seeking. At first, then, Yoga separates itself from the action and method of the lower knowledge. For while this lower knowledge approaches God indirectly from outside and never enters his secret dwelling-place, Yoga calls us within and approaches him directly; while that seeks him through the intellect and becomes conscious of him from behind a veil, Yoga seeks him through realisation, lifts the veil and gets the full vision; where that only feels the presence and the influence, Yoga enters into the presence and fills itself with the influence; where that is only aware of the workings and through them gets some glimpse of the Reality, Yoga identifies our inner being with the Reality and sees from that the workings. Therefore the methods of Yoga are different from the methods of the lower knowledge.

The method of Yoga in knowledge must always be a turning of the eye inward and, so far as it looks upon outer things, a penetrating of the surface appearances to get at the one eternal reality within them. The lower knowledge is preoccupied with the appearances and workings; it is the first necessity of the higher to get away from them to the Reality of which they are the appearances and the Being and Power of conscious existence

of which they are the workings. It does this by three movements each necessary to each other, by each of which the others become complete,—purification, concentration, identification. The object of purification is to make the whole mental being a clear mirror in which the divine reality can be reflected, a clear vessel and an unobstructing channel into which the divine presence and through which the divine influence can be poured, a subtilised stuff which the divine nature can take possession of, new-shape and use to divine issues. For the mental being at present reflects only the confusions created by the mental and physical view of the world, is a channel only for the disorders of the ignorant lower nature and full of obstructions and impurities which prevent the higher from acting; therefore the whole shape of our being is deformed and imperfect, indocile to the highest influences and turned in its action to ignorant and inferior utilities. It reflects even the world falsely; it is incapable of reflecting the Divine.

Concentration is necessary, first, to turn the whole will and mind from the discursive divagation natural to them, following a dispersed movement of the thoughts, running after many-branching desires, led away in the track of the senses and the outward mental response to phenomena: we have to fix the will and the thought on the eternal and real behind all, and this demands an immense effort, a one-pointed concentration. Secondly, it is necessary in order to break down the veil which is erected by our ordinary mentality between ourselves and the truth; for outer knowledge can be picked up by the way, by ordinary attention and reception, but the inner, hidden and higher truth can only be seized by an absolute concentration of the mind on its object, an absolute concentration of the will to attain it and, once attained, to hold it habitually and securely unite oneself with it. For identification is the condition of complete knowledge and possession; it is the intense result of a habitual purified reflecting of the reality and an entire concentration on it; and it is necessary in order to break down entirely that division and separation of ourselves from the divine being and the eternal reality which is the normal condition of our unregenerated ignorant mentality.

None of these things can be done by the methods of the lower knowledge. It is true that here also they have a preparing action, but up to a certain point and to a certain degree of intensity only, and it is where their action ceases that the action of Yoga takes up our growth into the Divine and finds the means to complete it. All pursuit of knowledge, if not vitiated by a too earthward tendency, tends to refine, to subtilise, to purify the being. In proportion as we become more mental, we attain to a subtler action of our whole nature which becomes more apt to reflect and receive higher thoughts, a purer will, a less physical truth, more inward influences. The power of ethical knowledge and the ethical habit of thought and will to purify is obvious. Philosophy not only purifies the reason and predisposes it to the contact of the universal and the infinite, but tends to stabilise the nature and create the tranquillity of the sage; and tranquillity is a sign of increasing self-mastery and purity. The preoccupation with universal beauty even in its aesthetic forms has an intense power for refining and subtilising the nature, and at its highest it is a great force for purification. Even the scientific habit of mind and the disinterested preoccupation with cosmic law and truth not only refine the reasoning and observing faculty, but have, when not counteracted by other tendencies, a steady, elevating and purifying influence on the mind and moral nature which has not been sufficiently noticed.

The concentration of the mind and the training of the will towards the reception of the truth and living in the truth is also an evident result, a perpetual necessity of these pursuits; and at the end or in their highest intensities they may and do lead first to an intellectual, then to a reflective perception of the divine Reality which may culminate in a sort of preliminary identification with it. But all this cannot go beyond a certain point. The systematic purification of the whole being for an integral reflection and taking in of the divine reality can only be done by the special methods of Yoga. Its absolute concentration has to take the place of the dispersed concentrations of the lower knowledge; the vague and ineffective identification which is all the lower knowledge can bring, has to be replaced by

the complete, intimate, imperative and living union which Yoga brings.

Nevertheless, Yoga does not either in its path or in its attainment exclude and throw away the forms of the lower knowledge, except when it takes the shape of an extreme asceticism or a mysticism altogether intolerant of this other divine mystery of the world-existence. It separates itself from them by the intensity, largeness and height of its objective and the specialisation of its methods to suit its aim; but it not only starts from them, but for a certain part of the way carries them with it and uses them as auxiliaries. Thus it is evident how largely ethical thought and practice,—not so much external as internal conduct,—enter into the preparatory method of Yoga, into its aim at purity. Again the whole method of Yoga is psychological; it might almost be termed the consummate practice of a perfect psychological knowledge. The data of philosophy are the supports from which it begins in the realisation of God through the principles of his being; only it carries the intelligent understanding which is all philosophy gives, into an intensity which carries it beyond thought into vision and beyond understanding into realisation and possession; what philosophy leaves abstract and remote, it brings into a living nearness and spiritual concreteness. The aesthetic and emotional mind and aesthetic forms are used by Yoga as a support for concentration even in the Yoga of knowledge and are, sublimated, the whole means of the Yoga of love and delight, as life and action, sublimated, are the whole means of the Yoga of works. Contemplation of God in Nature, contemplation and service of God in man and in the life of man and of the world in its past, present and future, are equally elements of which the Yoga of knowledge can make use to complete the realisation of God in all things. Only, all is directed to the one aim, directed towards God, filled with the idea of the divine, infinite, universal existence so that the outward-going, sensuous, pragmatical preoccupation of the lower knowledge with phenomena and forms is replaced by the one divine preoccupation. After attainment the same character remains. The Yогin continues to know and see God in the finite

and be a channel of God-consciousness and God-action in the world; therefore the knowledge of the world and the enlarging and uplifting of all that appertains to life comes within his scope. Only, in all he sees God, sees the supreme reality, and his motive of work is to help mankind towards the knowledge of God and the possession of the supreme reality. He sees God through the data of science, God through the conclusions of philosophy, God through the forms of Beauty and the forms of Good, God in all the activities of life, God in the past of the world and its effects, in the present and its tendencies, in the future and its great progression. Into any or all of these he can bring his illumined vision and his liberated power of the spirit. The lower knowledge has been the step from which he has risen to the higher; the higher illuminates for him the lower and makes it part of itself, even if only its lower fringe and most external radiation.

Chapter XXVI

Samadhi

INTIMATELY connected with the aim of the Yoga of Knowledge which must always be the growth, the ascent or the withdrawal into a higher or a divine consciousness not now normal to us, is the importance attached to the phenomenon of Yogic trance, to Samadhi. It is supposed that there are states of being which can only be gained in trance; that especially is to be desired in which all action of awareness is abolished and there is no consciousness at all except the pure supramental immersion in immobile, timeless and infinite being. By passing away in this trance the soul departs into the silence of the highest Nirvana without possibility of return into any illusory or inferior state of existence. Samadhi is not so all-important in the Yoga of devotion, but it still has its place there as the swoon of being into which the ecstasy of divine love casts the soul. To enter into it is the supreme step of the ladder of Yogic practice in Rajayoga and Hathayoga. What then is the nature of Samadhi or the utility of its trance in an integral Yoga? It is evident that where our objective includes the possession of the Divine in life, a state of cessation of life cannot be the last consummating step or the highest desirable condition: Yogic trance cannot be an aim, as in so many Yogic systems, but only a means, and a means not of escape from the waking existence, but to enlarge and raise the whole seeing, living and active consciousness.

The importance of Samadhi rests upon the truth which modern knowledge is rediscovering, but which has never been lost in Indian psychology, that only a small part whether of world-being or of our own being comes into our ken or into our action. The rest is hidden behind in subliminal reaches of being which descend into the profoundest depths of the subconscious and rise to highest peaks of superconscious, or which surround the little field of our waking self with a wide circumconscious existence

of which our mind and sense catch only a few indications. The old Indian psychology expressed this fact by dividing consciousness into three provinces, waking state, dream-state, sleep-state, *jāgrat*, *svapna*, *susupti*; and it supposed in the human being a waking self, a dream-self, a sleep-self, with the supreme or absolute self of being, the fourth or Turiya, beyond, of which all these are derivations for the enjoyment of relative experience in the world.

If we examine the phraseology of the old books, we shall find that the waking state is the consciousness of the material universe which we normally possess in this embodied existence dominated by the physical mind. The dream-state is a consciousness corresponding to the subtler life-plane and mind-plane behind, which to us, even when we get intimations of them, have not the same concrete reality as the things of the physical existence. The sleep-state is a consciousness corresponding to the supramental plane proper to the gnosis, which is beyond our experience because our causal body or envelope of gnosis is not developed in us, its faculties not active, and therefore we are in relation to that plane in a condition of dreamless sleep. The Turiya beyond is the consciousness of our pure self-existence or our absolute being with which we have no direct relations at all, whatever mental reflections we may receive in our dream or our waking or even, irrecoverably, in our sleep consciousness. This fourfold scale corresponds to the degrees of the ladder of being by which we climb back towards the absolute Divine. Normally therefore we cannot get back from the physical mind to the higher planes or degrees of consciousness without receding from the waking state, without going in and away from it and losing touch with the material world. Hence to those who desire to have the experience of these higher degrees, trance becomes a desirable thing, a means of escape from the limitations of the physical mind and nature.

Samadhi or Yogic trance retires to increasing depths according as it draws farther and farther away from the normal or waking state and enters into degrees of consciousness less and less communicable to the waking mind, less and less ready to

receive a summons from the waking world. Beyond a certain point the trance becomes complete and it is then almost or quite impossible to awaken or call back the soul that has receded into them; it can only come back by its own will or at most by a violent shock of physical appeal dangerous to the system owing to the abrupt upheaval of return. There are said to be supreme states of trance in which the soul persisting for too long a time cannot return; for it loses its hold on the cord which binds it to the consciousness of life, and the body is left, maintained indeed in its set position, not dead by dissolution, but incapable of recovering the ensouled life which had inhabited it. Finally, the Yогin acquires at a certain stage of development the power of abandoning his body definitively without the ordinary phenomena of death, by an act of will,¹ or by a process of withdrawing the pranic life-force through the gate of the upward life-current (*udāna*), opening for it a way through the mystic *brahmarandhra* in the head. By departure from life in the state of Samadhi he attains directly to that higher status of being to which he aspires.

In the dream-state itself there are an infinite series of depths; from the lighter recall is easy and the world of the physical senses is at the doors, though for the moment shut out; in the deeper it becomes remote and less able to break in upon the inner absorption, the mind has entered into secure depths of trance. There is a complete difference between Samadhi and normal sleep, between the dream-state of Yoga and the physical state of dream. The latter belongs to the physical mind; in the former the mind proper and subtle is at work liberated from the immixture of the physical mentality. The dreams of the physical mind are an incoherent jumble made up partly of responses to vague touches from the physical world round which the lower mind-faculties disconnected from the will and reason, the *buddhi*, weave a web of wandering phantasy, partly of disordered associations from the brain-memory, partly of reflections from the soul travelling on the mental plane, reflections which are, ordinarily, received

¹ *icchā-mṛtyu.*

without intelligence or coordination, wildly distorted in the reception and mixed up confusedly with the other dream elements, with brain-memories and fantastic responses to any sensory touch from the physical world. In the Yogic dream-state, on the other hand, the mind is in clear possession of itself, though not of the physical world, works coherently and is able to use either its ordinary will and intelligence with a concentrated power or else the higher will and intelligence of the more exalted planes of mind. It withdraws from experience of the outer world, it puts its seals upon the physical senses and their doors of communication with material things; but everything that is proper to itself, thought, reasoning, reflection, vision, it can continue to execute with an increased purity and power of sovereign concentration free from the distractions and unsteadiness of the waking mind. It can use too its will and produce upon itself or upon its environment mental, moral and even physical effects which may continue and have their after consequences on the waking state subsequent to the cessation of the trance.

To arrive at full possession of the powers of the dream-state, it is necessary first to exclude the attack of the sights, sounds etc. of the outer world upon the physical organs. It is quite possible indeed to be aware in the dream-trance of the outer physical world through the subtle senses which belong to the subtle body; one may be aware of them just so far as one chooses and on a much wider scale than in the waking condition: for the subtle senses have a far more powerful range than the gross physical organs, a range which may be made practically unlimited. But this awareness of the physical world through the subtle senses is something quite different from our normal awareness of it through the physical organs; the latter is incompatible with the settled state of trance, for the pressure of the physical senses breaks the Samadhi and calls back the mind to live in their normal field where alone they have power. But the subtle senses have power both upon their own planes and upon the physical world, though this is to them more remote than their own world of being. In Yoga various devices are used to seal up the doors of the physical sense, some of them physical devices; but the one all-

sufficient means is a force of concentration by which the mind is drawn inward to depths where the call of physical things can no longer easily attain to it. A second necessity is to get rid of the intervention of physical sleep. The ordinary habit of the mind when it goes away from contact with physical things is to fall into the torpor of sleep or its dreams, and therefore when called in for the purposes of Samadhi, it gives or tends to give, at the first chance, by sheer force of habit, not the response demanded, but its usual response of physical slumber. This habit of the mind has to be got rid of; the mind has to learn to be awake in the dream-state, in possession of itself, not with the outgoing, but with an ingathered wakefulness in which, though immersed in itself, it exercises all its powers.

The experiences of the dream-state are infinitely various. For not only has it sovereign possession of the usual mental powers, reasoning, discrimination, will, imagination, and can use them in whatever way, on whatever subject, for whatever purpose it pleases, but it is able to establish connection with all the worlds to which it has natural access or to which it chooses to acquire access, from the physical to the higher mental worlds. This it does by various means open to the subtlety, flexibility and comprehensive movement of this internalised mind liberated from the narrow limitations of the physical outward-going senses. It is able first to take cognizance of all things whether in the material world or upon other planes by aid of perceptible images, not only images of things visible, but of sounds, touch, smell, taste, movement, action, of all that makes itself sensible to the mind and its organs. For the mind in Samadhi has access to the inner space called sometimes the *cidākāśa*, to depths of more and more subtle ether which are heavily curtained from the physical sense by the grosser ether of the material universe, and all things sensible, whether in the material world or any other, create reconstituting vibrations, sensible echoes, reproductions, recurrent images of themselves which that subtler ether receives and retains.

It is this which explains many of the phenomena of clairvoyance, clairaudience, etc.; for these phenomena are only the exceptional admission of the waking mentality into a limited

sensitiveness to what might be called the image memory of the subtle ether, by which not only the signs of all things past and present, but even those of things future can be seized; for things future are already accomplished to knowledge and vision on higher planes of mind and their images can be reflected upon mind in the present. But these things which are exceptional to the waking mentality, difficult and to be perceived only by the possession of a special power or else after assiduous training, are natural to the dream-state of trance consciousness in which the subliminal mind is free. And that mind can also take cognizance of things on various planes not only by these sensible images, but by a species of thought perception or of thought reception and impression analogous to that phenomenon of consciousness which in modern psychical science has been given the name of telepathy. But the powers of the dream-state do not end here. It can by a sort of projection of ourselves, in a subtle form of the mental body, actually enter into other planes and worlds or into distant places and scenes of this world, move among them with a sort of bodily presence and bring back the direct experience of their scenes and truths and occurrences. It may even project actually the mental or vital body for the same purpose and travel in it, leaving the physical body in a profoundest trance without sign of life until its return.

The greatest value of the dream-state of Samadhi lies, however, not in these more outward things, but in its power to open up easily higher ranges and powers of thought, emotion, will by which the soul grows in height, range and self-mastery. Especially, withdrawing from the distraction of sensible things, it can, in a perfect power of concentrated self-seclusion, prepare itself by a free reasoning, thought, discrimination, or more intimately, more finally, by an ever deeper vision and identification, for access to the Divine, the supreme Self, the transcendent Truth, both in its principles and powers and manifestations and in its highest original Being. Or it can by an absorbed inner joy and emotion, as in a sealed and secluded chamber of the soul, prepare itself for the delight of union with the divine Beloved, the Master of all bliss, rapture and Ananda.

For the integral Yoga this method of Samadhi may seem to have the disadvantage that when it ceases, the thread is broken and the soul returns into the distraction and imperfection of the outward life, with only such an elevating effect upon that outer life as the general memory of these deeper experiences may produce. But this gulf, this break is not inevitable. In the first place, it is only in the untrained psychic being that the experiences of the trance are a blank to the waking mind; as it becomes the master of its Samadhi, it is able to pass without any gulf of oblivion from the inner to the outer waking. Secondly, when this has been once done, what is attained in the inner state, becomes easier to acquire by the waking consciousness and to turn into the normal experience, powers, mental status of the waking life. The subtle mind which is normally eclipsed by the insistence of the physical being, becomes powerful even in the waking state, until even there the enlarging man is able to live in his several subtle bodies as well as in his physical body, to be aware of them and in them, to use their senses, faculties, powers, to dwell in possession of supraphysical truth, consciousness and experience.

The sleep-state ascends to a higher power of being, beyond thought into pure consciousness, beyond emotion into pure bliss, beyond will into pure mastery; it is the gate of union with the supreme state of Sachchidananda out of which all the activities of the world are born. But here we must take care to avoid the pitfalls of symbolic language. The use of the words dream and sleep for these higher states is nothing but an image drawn from the experience of the normal physical mind with regard to planes in which it is not at home. It is not the truth that the Self in the third status called perfect sleep, *susupti*, is in a state of slumber. The sleep self is on the contrary described as Prajna, the Master of Wisdom and Knowledge, Self of the Gnosis, and as Ishwara, the Lord of being. To the physical mind a sleep, it is to our wider and subtler consciousness a greater waking. To the normal mind all that exceeds its normal experience but still comes into its scope, seems a dream; but at the point where it borders on things quite beyond its scope, it can no longer see truth even as

in a dream, but passes into the blank incomprehension and non-reception of slumber. This border-line varies with the power of the individual consciousness, with the degree and height of its enlightenment and awakening. The line may be pushed up higher and higher until it may pass even beyond the mind. Normally indeed the human mind cannot be awake, even with the inner waking of trance, on the supramental levels; but this disability can be overcome. Awake on these levels the soul becomes master of the ranges of gnostic thought, gnostic will, gnostic delight, and if it can do this in Samadhi, it may carry its memory of experience and its power of experience over into the waking state. Even on the yet higher level open to us, that of the Ananda, the awakened soul may become similarly possessed of the Bliss-Self both in its concentration and in its cosmic comprehension. But still there may be ranges above from which it can bring back no memory except that which says, "somehow, indescribably, I was in bliss," the bliss of an unconditioned existence beyond all potentiality of expression by thought or description by image or feature. Even the sense of being may disappear in an experience in which the word existence loses its sense and the Buddhistic symbol of Nirvana seems alone and sovereignly justified. However high the power of awakening goes, there seems to be a beyond in which the image of sleep, of *susupti*, will still find its application.

Such is the principle of the Yogic trance, Samadhi,—into its complex phenomena we need not now enter. It is sufficient to note its double utility in the integral Yoga. It is true that up to a point difficult to define or delimit almost all that Samadhi can give, can be acquired without recourse to Samadhi. But still there are certain heights of spiritual and psychic experience of which the direct as opposed to a reflecting experience can only be acquired deeply and in its fullness by means of the Yogic trance. And even for that which can be otherwise acquired, it offers a ready means, a facility which becomes more helpful, if not indispensable, the higher and more difficult of access become the planes on which the heightened spiritual experience is sought. Once attained there, it has to be brought as much as possible into the waking consciousness. For in a Yoga which embraces

all life completely and without reserve, the full use of Samadhi comes only when its gains can be made the normal possession and experience for an integral waking of the embodied soul in the human being.

Chapter XXVII

Hathayoga

THERE are almost as many ways of arriving at Samadhi as there are different paths of Yoga. Indeed so great is the importance attached to it, not only as a supreme means of arriving at the highest consciousness, but as the very condition and status of that highest consciousness itself, in which alone it can be completely possessed and enjoyed while we are in the body, that certain disciplines of Yoga look as if they were only ways of arriving at Samadhi. All Yoga is in its nature an attempt and an arriving at unity with the Supreme,—unity with the being of the Supreme, unity with the consciousness of the Supreme, unity with the bliss of the Supreme,—or, if we repudiate the idea of absolute unity, at least at some kind of union, even if it be only for the soul to live in one status and periphery of being with the Divine, *sālokya*, or in a sort of indivisible proximity, *sāmīpya*. This can only be gained by rising to a higher level and intensity of consciousness than our ordinary mentality possesses. Samadhi, as we have seen, offers itself as the natural status of such a higher level and greater intensity. It assumes naturally a great importance in the Yoga of knowledge, because there it is the very principle of its method and its object to raise the mental consciousness into a clarity and concentrated power by which it can become entirely aware of, lost in, identified with true being. But there are two great disciplines in which it becomes of an even greater importance. To these two systems, to Rajayoga and Hathayoga, we may as well now turn; for in spite of the wide difference of their methods from that of the path of knowledge, they have this same principle as their final justification. At the same time, it will not be necessary for us to do more than regard the spirit of their gradations in passing; for in a synthetic and integral Yoga they take a secondary importance; their aims have indeed to be included, but their methods can either altogether

be dispensed with or used only for a preliminary or else a casual assistance.

Hathayoga is a powerful, but difficult and onerous system whose whole principle of action is founded on an intimate connection between the body and the soul. The body is the key, the body the secret both of bondage and of release, of animal weakness and of divine power, of the obscuration of the mind and soul and of their illumination, of subjection to pain and limitation and of self-mastery, of death and of immortality. The body is not to the Hathayogin a mere mass of living matter, but a mystic bridge between the spiritual and the physical being; one has even seen an ingenious exegete of the Hathayogic discipline explain the Vedantic symbol OM as a figure of this mystic human body. Although, however, he speaks always of the physical body and makes that the basis of his practices, he does not view it with the eye of the anatomist or physiologist, but describes and explains it in language which always looks back to the subtle body behind the physical system. In fact the whole aim of the Hathayogin may be summarised from our point of view, though he would not himself put it in that language, as an attempt by fixed scientific processes to give to the soul in the physical body the power, the light, the purity, the freedom, the ascending scales of spiritual experience which would naturally be open to it, if it dwelt here in the subtle and the developed causal vehicle.

To speak of the processes of Hathayoga as scientific may seem strange to those who associate the idea of science only with the superficial phenomena of the physical universe apart from all that is behind them; but they are equally based on definite experience of laws and their workings and give, when rightly practised, their well-tested results. In fact, Hathayoga is, in its own way, a system of knowledge; but while the proper Yoga of knowledge is a philosophy of being put into spiritual practice, a psychological system, this is a science of being, a psycho-physical system. Both produce physical, psychic and spiritual results; but because they stand at different poles of the same truth, to one the psycho-physical results are of small importance, the pure psychic and spiritual alone matter, and even the pure psychic are only

accessories of the spiritual which absorb all the attention; in the other the physical is of immense importance, the psychical a considerable fruit, the spiritual the highest and consummating result, but it seems for a long time a thing postponed and remote, so great and absorbing is the attention which the body demands. It must not be forgotten, however, that both do arrive at the same end. Hathayoga, also, is a path, though by a long, difficult and meticulous movement, *duḥkham āptum*, to the Supreme.

All Yoga proceeds in its method by three principles of practice; first, purification, that is to say, the removal of all aberrations, disorders, obstructions brought about by the mixed and irregular action of the energy of being in our physical, moral and mental system; secondly, concentration, that is to say, the bringing to its full intensity and the mastered and self-directed employment of that energy of being in us for a definite end; thirdly, liberation, that is to say, the release of our being from the narrow and painful knots of the individualised energy in a false and limited play, which at present are the law of our nature. The enjoyment of our liberated being which brings us into unity or union with the Supreme, is the consummation; it is that for which Yoga is done. Three indispensable steps and the high, open and infinite levels to which they mount; and in all its practice Hathayoga keeps these in view.

The two main members of its physical discipline, to which the others are mere accessories, are *āsana*, the habituating of the body to certain attitudes of immobility, and *prāṇāyāma*, the regulated direction and arrestation by exercises of breathing of the vital currents of energy in the body. The physical being is the instrument; but the physical being is made up of two elements, the physical and the vital, the body which is the apparent instrument and the basis, and the life energy, *prāṇa*, which is the power and the real instrument. Both of these instruments are now our masters. We are subject to the body, we are subject to the life energy; it is only in a very limited degree that we can, though souls, though mental beings, at all pose as their masters. We are bound by a poor and limited physical nature, we are bound consequently by a poor and limited life-power which is all that

the body can bear or to which it can give scope. Moreover, the action of each and both in us is subject not only to the narrowest limitations, but to a constant impurity, which renews itself every time it is rectified, and to all sorts of disorders, some of which are normal, a violent order, part of our ordinary physical life, others abnormal, its maladies and disturbances. With all this Hathayoga has to deal; all this it has to overcome; and it does it mainly by these two methods, complex and cumbrous in action, but simple in principle and effective.

The Hathayogic system of Asana has at its basis two profound ideas which bring with them many effective implications. The first is that of control by physical immobility, the second is that of power by immobility. The power of physical immobility is as important in Hathayoga as the power of mental immobility in the Yoga of knowledge, and for parallel reasons. To the mind unaccustomed to the deeper truths of our being and nature they would both seem to be a seeking after the listless passivity of inertia. The direct contrary is the truth; for Yogic passivity, whether of mind or body, is a condition of the greatest increase, possession and continence of energy. The normal activity of our minds is for the most part a disordered restlessness, full of waste and rapidly tentative expenditure of energy in which only a little is selected for the workings of the self-mastering will,—waste, be it understood, from this point of view, not that of universal Nature in which what is to us waste, serves the purposes of her economy. The activity of our bodies is a similar restlessness.

It is the sign of a constant inability of the body to hold even the limited life energy that enters into or is generated in it, and consequently of a general dissipation of this Pranic force with a quite subordinate element of ordered and well-economised activity. Moreover in the consequent interchange and balancing between the movement and interaction of the vital energies normally at work in the body and their interchange with those which act upon it from outside, whether the energies of others or of the general Pranic force variously active in the environment, there is a constant precarious balancing and adjustment which may at any moment go wrong. Every obstruction, every defect, every

excess, every lesion creates impurities and disorders. Nature manages it all well enough for her own purposes, when left to herself; but the moment the blundering mind and will of the human being interfere with her habits and her vital instincts and intuitions, especially when they create false or artificial habits, a still more precarious order and frequent derangement become the rule of the being. Yet this interference is inevitable, since man lives not for the purposes of the vital Nature in him alone, but for higher purposes which she had not contemplated in her first balance and to which she has with difficulty to adjust her operations. Therefore the first necessity of a greater status or action is to get rid of this disordered restlessness, to still the activity and to regulate it. The Hathayogin has to bring about an abnormal poise of status and action of the body and the life energy, abnormal not in the direction of greater disorder, but of superiority and self-mastery.

The first object of the immobility of the Asana is to get rid of the restlessness imposed on the body and to force it to hold the Pranic energy instead of dissipating and squandering it. The experience in the practice of Asana is not that of a cessation and diminution of energy by inertia, but of a great increase, inpouring, circulation of force. The body, accustomed to work off superfluous energy by movement, is at first ill able to bear this increase and this retained inner action and betrays it by violent tremblings; afterwards it habituates itself and, when the Asana is conquered, then it finds as much ease in the posture, however originally difficult or unusual to it, as in its easiest attitudes sedentary or recumbent. It becomes increasingly capable of holding whatever amount of increased vital energy is brought to bear upon it without needing to spill it out in movement, and this increase is so enormous as to seem illimitable, so that the body of the perfected Hathayogin is capable of feats of endurance, force, unfatigued expenditure of energy of which the normal physical powers of man at their highest would be incapable. For it is not only able to hold and retain this energy, but to bear its possession of the physical system and its more complete movement through it. The life energy, thus occupying

and operating in a powerful, unified movement on the tranquil and passive body, freed from the restless balancing between the continent power and the contained, becomes a much greater and more effective force. In fact, it seems then rather to contain and possess and use the body than to be contained, possessed and used by it,— just as the restless active mind seems to seize on and use irregularly and imperfectly whatever spiritual force comes into it, but the tranquillised mind is held, possessed and used by the spiritual force.

The body, thus liberated from itself, purified from many of its disorders and irregularities, becomes, partly by Asana, completely by combined Asana and Pranayama, a perfected instrument. It is freed from its ready liability to fatigue; it acquires an immense power of health; its tendencies of decay, age and death are arrested. The Hathayogin even at an age advanced beyond the ordinary span maintains the unimpaired vigour, health and youth of the life in the body; even the appearance of physical youth is sustained for a longer time. He has a much greater power of longevity, and from his point of view, the body being the instrument, it is a matter of no small importance to preserve it long and to keep it for all that time free from impairing deficiencies. It is to be observed, also, that there are an enormous variety of Asanas in Hathayoga, running in their fullness beyond the number of eighty, some of them of the most complicated and difficult character. This variety serves partly to increase the results already noted, as well as to give a greater freedom and flexibility to the use of the body, but it serves also to alter the relation of the physical energy in the body to the earth energy with which it is related. The lightening of the heavy hold of the latter, of which the overcoming of fatigue is the first sign and the phenomenon of *utthāpana* or partial levitation the last, is one result. The gross body begins to acquire something of the nature of the subtle body and to possess something of its relations with the life-energy; that becomes a greater force more powerfully felt and yet capable of a lighter and freer and more resolvable physical action, powers which culminate in the Hathayogic *siddhis* or extraordinary powers of *garimā*, *mahimā*, *animā* and *laghimā*.

Moreover, the life ceases to be entirely dependent on the action of the physical organs and functionings, such as the heart-beats and the breathing. These can in the end be suspended without cessation of or lesion to the life.

All this, however, the result in its perfection of Asana and Pranayama, is only a basic physical power and freedom. The higher use of Hathayoga depends more intimately on Pranayama. Asana deals more directly with the more material part of the physical totality, though here too it needs the aid of the other; Pranayama, starting from the physical immobility and self-holding which is secured by Asana, deals more directly with the subtler vital parts, the nervous system. This is done by various regulations of the breathing, starting from equality of respiration and inspiration and extending to the most diverse rhythmic regulations of both with an interval of inholding of the breath. In the end the keeping in of the breath, which has first to be done with some effort, and even its cessation become as easy and seem as natural as the constant taking in and throwing out which is its normal action. But the first objects of the Pranayama are to purify the nervous system, to circulate the life-energy through all the nerves without obstruction, disorder or irregularity, and to acquire a complete control of its functionings, so that the mind and will of the soul inhabiting the body may be no longer subject to the body or life or their combined limitations. The power of these exercises of breathing to bring about a purified and unobstructed state of the nervous system is a known and well-established fact of our physiology. It helps also to clear the physical system, but is not entirely effective at first on all its canals and openings; therefore the Hathayogin uses supplementary physical methods for clearing them out regularly of all their accumulations. The combination of these with Asana, — particular Asanas have even an effect in destroying particular diseases, — and with Pranayama maintains perfectly the health of the body. But the principal gain is that by this purification the vital energy can be directed anywhere, to any part of the body and in any way or with any rhythm of its movement.

The mere function of breathing into and out of the lungs is

only the most sensible, outward and seizable movement of the Prana, the Breath of Life in our physical system. The Prana has according to Yogic science a fivefold movement pervading all the nervous system and the whole material body and determining all its functionings. The Hathayogin seizes on the outward movement of respiration as a sort of key which opens to him the control of all these five powers of the Prana. He becomes sensibly aware of their inner operations, mentally conscious of his whole physical life and action. He is able to direct the Prana through all the *nādīs* or nerve-channels of his system. He becomes aware of its action in the six *cakras* or ganglionic centres of the nervous system, and is able to open it up in each beyond its present limited, habitual and mechanical workings. He gets, in short, a perfect control of the life in the body in its most subtle nervous as well as in its grossest physical aspects, even over that in it which is at present involuntary and out of the reach of our observing consciousness and will. Thus a complete mastery of the body and the life and a free and effective use of them established upon a purification of their workings is founded as a basis for the higher aims of Hathayoga.

All this, however, is still a mere basis, the outward and inward physical conditions of the two instruments used by Hathayoga. There still remains the more important matter of the psychical and spiritual effects to which they can be turned. This depends on the connection between the body and the mind and spirit and between the gross and the subtle body on which the system of Hathayoga takes its stand. Here it comes into line with Rajayoga, and a point is reached at which a transition from the one to the other can be made.

Chapter XXVIII

Rajayoga

AS THE body and the Prana are the key of all the closed doors of the Yoga for the Hathayogin, so is the mind the key in Rajayoga. But since in both the dependence of the mind on the body and the Prana is admitted, in the Hathayoga totally, in the established system of Rajayoga partially, therefore in both systems the practice of Asana and Pranayama is included; but in the one they occupy the whole field, in the other each is limited only to one simple process and in their unison they are intended to serve only a limited and intermediate office. We can easily see how largely man, even though in his being an embodied soul, is in his earthly nature the physical and vital being and how, at first sight at least, his mental activities seem to depend almost entirely on his body and his nervous system. Modern Science and psychology have even held, for a time, this dependence to be in fact an identity; they have tried to establish that there is no such separate entity as mind or soul and that all mental operations are in reality physical functionings. Even otherwise, apart from this untenable hypothesis, the dependence is so exaggerated that it has been supposed to be an altogether binding condition, and any such thing as the control of the vital and bodily functionings by the mind or its power to detach itself from them has long been treated as an error, a morbid state of the mind or a hallucination. Therefore the dependence has remained absolute, and Science neither finds nor seeks for the real key of the dependence and therefore can discover for us no secret of release and mastery.

The psycho-physical science of Yoga does not make this mistake. It seeks for the key, finds it and is able to effect the release; for it takes account of the psychical or mental body behind of which the physical is a sort of reproduction in gross form, and is able to discover thereby secrets of the physical body

which do not appear to a purely physical enquiry. This mental or psychical body, which the soul keeps even after death, has also a subtle pranic force in it corresponding to its own subtle nature and substance,—for wherever there is life of any kind, there must be the pranic energy and a substance in which it can work,—and this force is directed through a system of numerous channels, called *nādī*,—the subtle nervous organisation of the psychic body,—which are gathered up into six (or really seven) centres called technically lotuses or circles, *cakra*, and which rise in an ascending scale to the summit where there is the thousand-petalled lotus from which all the mental and vital energy flows. Each of these lotuses is the centre and the storing-house of its own particular system of psychological powers, energies and operations,—each system corresponding to a plane of our psychological existence,—and these flow out and return in the stream of the pranic energies as they course through the *nādīs*.

This arrangement of the psychic body is reproduced in the physical with the spinal column as a rod and the ganglionic centres as the chakras which rise up from the bottom of the column, where the lowest is attached, to the brain and find their summit in the *brahmarandhra* at the top of the skull. These chakras or lotuses, however, are in physical man closed or only partly open, with the consequence that only such powers and only so much of them are active in him as are sufficient for his ordinary physical life, and so much mind and soul only is at play as will accord with its need. This is the real reason, looked at from the mechanical point of view, why the embodied soul seems so dependent on the bodily and nervous life,—though the dependence is neither so complete nor so real as it seems. The whole energy of the soul is not at play in the physical body and life, the secret powers of mind are not awake in it, the bodily and nervous energies predominate. But all the while the supreme energy is there, asleep; it is said to be coiled up and slumbering like a snake,—therefore it is called the *kundalinī śakti*,—in the lowest of the chakras, in the *mūlādhāra*. When by Pranayama the division between the upper and lower prana currents in the body is dissolved, this Kundalini is struck and

awakened, it uncoils itself and begins to rise upward like a fiery serpent breaking open each lotus as it ascends until the Shakti meets the Purusha in the *brahmarandhra* in a deep samadhi of union.

Put less symbolically, in more philosophical though perhaps less profound language, this means that the real energy of our being is lying asleep and inconscient in the depths of our vital system, and is awakened by the practice of Pranayama. In its expansion it opens up all the centres of our psychological being in which reside the powers and the consciousness of what would now be called perhaps our subliminal self; therefore as each centre of power and consciousness is opened up, we get access to successive psychological planes and are able to put ourselves in communication with the worlds or cosmic states of being which correspond to them; all the psychic powers abnormal to physical man, but natural to the soul develop in us. Finally, at the summit of the ascension, this arising and expanding energy meets with the superconscious self which sits concealed behind and above our physical and mental existence; this meeting leads to a profound samadhi of union in which our waking consciousness loses itself in the superconscious. Thus by the thorough and unremitting practice of Pranayama the Hathayogin attains in his own way the psychic and spiritual results which are pursued through more directly psychical and spiritual methods in other Yogas. The one mental aid which he conjoins with it, is the use of the mantra, sacred syllable, name or mystic formula which is of so much importance in the Indian systems of Yoga and common to them all. This secret of the power of the mantra, the six chakras and the Kundalini Shakti is one of the central truths of all that complex psycho-physical science and practice of which the Tantric philosophy claims to give us a rationale and the most complete compendium of methods. All religions and disciplines in India which use largely the psycho-physical method, depend more or less upon it for their practices.

Rajayoga also uses the Pranayama and for the same principal psychic purposes as the Hathayoga, but being in its whole principle a psychical system, it employs it only as one stage

in the series of its practices and to a very limited extent, for three or four large utilities. It does not start with Asana and Pranayama, but insists first on a moral purification of the mentality. This preliminary is of supreme importance; without it the course of the rest of the Rajayoga is likely to be troubled, marred and full of unexpected mental, moral and physical perils.¹ This moral purification is divided in the established system under two heads, five *yamas* and five *niyamas*. The first are rules of moral self-control in conduct such as truth-speaking, abstinence from injury or killing, from theft etc.; but in reality these must be regarded as merely certain main indications of the general need of moral self-control and purity. *Yama* is, more largely, any self-discipline by which the rajasic egoism and its passions and desires in the human being are conquered and quieted into perfect cessation. The object is to create a moral calm, a void of the passions, and so prepare for the death of egoism in the rajasic human being. The *niyamas* are equally a discipline of the mind by regular practices of which the highest is meditation on the divine Being, and their object is to create a sattwic calm, purity and preparation for concentration upon which the secure pursuance of the rest of the Yoga can be founded.

It is here, when this foundation has been secured, that the practice of Asana and Pranayama come in and can then bear their perfect fruits. By itself the control of the mind and moral being only puts our normal consciousness into the right preliminary condition; it cannot bring about that evolution or manifestation of the higher psychic being which is necessary for the greater aims of Yoga. In order to bring about this manifestation the present nodus of the vital and physical body with the mental being has to be loosened and the way made clear for the ascent through the greater psychic being to the union with the superconscious Purusha. This can be done by Pranayama.

¹ In modern India people attracted to Yoga, but picking up its processes from books or from persons only slightly acquainted with the matter, often plunge straight into Pranayama of Rajayoga, frequently with disastrous results. Only the very strong in spirit can afford to make mistakes in this path.

Asana is used by the Rajayoga only in its easiest and most natural position, that naturally taken by the body when seated and gathered together, but with the back and head strictly erect and in a straight line, so that there may be no deflection of the spinal cord. The object of the latter rule is obviously connected with the theory of the six chakras and the circulation of the vital energy between the *mūlādhāra* and the *brahmarandhra*. The Rajayogic Pranayama purifies and clears the nervous system; it enables us to circulate the vital energy equally through the body and direct it also where we will according to need, and thus maintain a perfect health and soundness of the body and the vital being; it gives us control of all the five habitual operations of the vital energy in the system and at the same time breaks down the habitual divisions by which only the ordinary mechanical processes of the vitality are possible to the normal life. It opens entirely the six centres of the psycho-physical system and brings into the waking consciousness the power of the awakened Shakti and the light of the unveiled Purusha on each of the ascending planes. Coupled with the use of the mantra it brings the divine energy into the body and prepares for and facilitates that concentration in Samadhi which is the crown of the Rajayogic method.

Rajayogic concentration is divided into four stages; it commences with the drawing both of the mind and senses from outward things, proceeds to the holding of the one object of concentration to the exclusion of all other ideas and mental activities, then to the prolonged absorption of the mind in this object, finally, to the complete ingoing of the consciousness by which it is lost to all outward mental activity in the oneness of Samadhi. The real object of this mental discipline is to draw away the mind from the outward and the mental world into union with the divine Being. Therefore in the first three stages use has to be made of some mental means or support by which the mind, accustomed to run about from object to object, shall fix on one alone, and that one must be something which represents the idea of the Divine. It is usually a name or a form or a mantra by which the thought can be fixed in the sole knowledge or adoration of the Lord. By this concentration on the idea the

mind enters from the idea into its reality, into which it sinks silent, absorbed, unified. This is the traditional method. There are, however, others which are equally of a Rajayogic character, since they use the mental and psychical being as key. Some of them are directed rather to the quiescence of the mind than to its immediate absorption, as the discipline by which the mind is simply watched and allowed to exhaust its habit of vagrant thought in a purposeless running from which it feels all sanction, purpose and interest withdrawn, and that, more strenuous and rapidly effective, by which all outward-going thought is excluded and the mind forced to sink into itself where in its absolute quietude it can only reflect the pure Being or pass away into its superconscious existence. The method differs, the object and the result are the same.

Here, it might be supposed, the whole action and aim of Rajayoga must end. For its action is the stilling of the waves of consciousness, its manifold activities, *cittavṛtti*, first, through a habitual replacing of the turbid rajasic activities by the quiet and luminous sattvic, then, by the stilling of all activities; and its object is to enter into silent communion of soul and unity with the Divine. As a matter of fact we find that the system of Rajayoga includes other objects,—such as the practice and use of occult powers,—some of which seem to be unconnected with and even inconsistent with its main purpose. These powers or siddhis are indeed frequently condemned as dangers and distractions which draw away the Yогin from his sole legitimate aim of divine union. On the way, therefore, it would naturally seem as if they ought to be avoided; and once the goal is reached, it would seem that they are then frivolous and superfluous. But Rajayoga is a psychic science and it includes the attainment of all the higher states of consciousness and their powers by which the mental being rises towards the superconscious as well as its ultimate and supreme possibility of union with the Highest. Moreover, the Yогin, while in the body, is not always mentally inactive and sunk in Samadhi, and an account of the powers and states which are possible to him on the higher planes of his being is necessary to the completeness of the science.

These powers and experiences belong, first, to the vital and mental planes above this physical in which we live, and are natural to the soul in the subtle body; as the dependence on the physical body decreases, these abnormal activities become possible and even manifest themselves without being sought for. They can be acquired and fixed by processes which the science gives, and their use then becomes subject to the will; or they can be allowed to develop of themselves and used only when they come, or when the Divine within moves us to use them; or else, even though thus naturally developing and acting, they may be rejected in a single-minded devotion to the one supreme goal of the Yoga. Secondly, there are fuller, greater powers belonging to the supramental planes which are the very powers of the Divine in his spiritual and supramentally ideative being. These cannot be acquired at all securely or integrally by personal effort, but can only come from above, or else can become natural to the man if and when he ascends beyond mind and lives in the spiritual being, power, consciousness and ideation. They then become, not abnormal and laboriously acquired siddhis, but simply the very nature and method of his action, if he still continues to be active in the world-existence.

On the whole, for an integral Yoga the special methods of Rajayoga and Hathayoga may be useful at times in certain stages of the progress, but are not indispensable. It is true that their principal aims must be included in the integrality of the Yoga; but they can be brought about by other means. For the methods of the integral Yoga must be mainly spiritual, and dependence on physical methods or fixed psychic or psycho-physical processes on a large scale would be the substitution of a lower for a higher action. We shall have occasion to touch upon this question later when we come to the final principle of synthesis in method to which our examination of the different Yogas is intended to lead.



Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry, c. 1915-1918

Part III

The Yoga of Divine Love

Chapter I

Love and the Triple Path

WILL, KNOWLEDGE and love are the three divine powers in human nature and the life of man, and they point to the three paths by which the human soul rises to the divine. The integrality of them, the union of man with God in all the three, must therefore, as we have seen, be the foundation of an integral Yoga.

Action is the first power of life. Nature begins with force and its works which, once conscious in man, become will and its achievements; therefore it is that by turning his action Godwards the life of man best and most surely begins to become divine. It is the door of first access, the starting-point of the initiation. When the will in him is made one with the divine will and the whole action of the being proceeds from the Divine and is directed towards the Divine, the union in works is perfectly accomplished. But works fulfil themselves in knowledge; all the totality of works, says the Gita, finds its rounded culmination in knowledge, *sarvam karmākhilari jñāne parisamāpyate*. By union in will and works we become one in the omnipresent conscious being from whom all our will and works have their rise and draw their power and in whom they fulfil the round of their energies. And the crown of this union is love; for love is the delight of conscious union with the Being in whom we live, act and move, by whom we exist, for whom alone we learn in the end to act and to be. That is the trinity of our powers, the union of all three in God to which we arrive when we start from works as our way of access and our line of contact.

Knowledge is the foundation of a constant living in the Divine. For consciousness is the foundation of all living and being, and knowledge is the action of the consciousness, the light by which it knows itself and its realities, the power by which, starting from action, we are able to hold the inner results

of thought and act in a firm growth of our conscious being until it accomplishes itself, by union, in the infinity of the divine being. The Divine meets us in many aspects and to each of them knowledge is the key, so that by knowledge we enter into and possess the infinite and divine in every way of his being, *sarvabhāvena*,¹ and receive him into us and are possessed by him in every way of ours.

Without knowledge we live blindly in him with the blindness of the power of Nature intent on its works, but forgetful of its source and possessor, undivinely therefore, deprived of the real, the full delight of our being. By knowledge arriving at conscious oneness with that which we know,—for by identity alone can complete and real knowledge exist,—the division is healed and the cause of all our limitation and discord and weakness and discontent is abolished. But knowledge is not complete without works; for the Will in being also is God and not the being or its self-aware silent existence alone, and if works find their culmination in knowledge, knowledge also finds its fulfilment in works. And, here too, love is the crown of knowledge; for love is the delight of union, and unity must be conscious of joy of union to find all the riches of its own delight. Perfect knowledge indeed leads to perfect love, integral knowledge to a rounded and multitudinous richness of love. “He who knows me” says the Gita “as the supreme Purusha,” — not only as the immutable oneness, but in the many-souled movement of the divine and as that, superior to both, in which both are divinely held,—“he, because he has the integral knowledge, seeks me by love in every way of his being.” This is the trinity of our powers, the union of all three in God to which we arrive when we start from knowledge.

Love is the crown of all being and its way of fulfilment, that by which it rises to all intensity and all fullness and the ecstasy of utter self-finding. For if the Being is in its very nature consciousness and by consciousness we become one with it, therefore by perfect knowledge of it fulfilled in identity, yet is delight the

¹ Gita.

nature of consciousness and of the acme of delight love is the key and the secret. And if will is the power of conscious being by which it fulfils itself and by union in will we become one with the Being in its characteristic infinite power, yet all the works of that power start from delight, live in the delight, have delight for their aim and end; love of the Being in itself and in all of itself that its power of consciousness manifests, is the way to the perfect wideness of the Ananda. Love is the power and passion of the divine self-delight and without love we may get the rapt peace of its infinity, the absorbed silence of the Ananda, but not its absolute depth of richness and fullness. Love leads us from the suffering of division into the bliss of perfect union, but without losing that joy of the act of union which is the soul's greatest discovery and for which the life of the cosmos is a long preparation. Therefore to approach God by love is to prepare oneself for the greatest possible spiritual fulfilment.

Love fulfilled does not exclude knowledge, but itself brings knowledge; and the completer the knowledge, the richer the possibility of love. "By Bhakti" says the Lord in the Gita "shall a man know Me in all my extent and greatness and as I am in the principles of my being, and when he has known Me in the principles of my being, then he enters into Me." Love without knowledge is a passionate and intense, but blind, crude, often dangerous thing, a great power, but also a stumbling-block; love, limited in knowledge, condemns itself in its fervour and often by its very fervour to narrowness; but love leading to perfect knowledge brings the infinite and absolute union. Such love is not inconsistent with, but rather throws itself with joy into divine works; for it loves God and is one with him in all his being, and therefore in all beings, and to work for the world is then to feel and fulfil multitudinously one's love for God. This is the trinity of our powers, the union of all three in God to which we arrive when we start on our journey by the path of devotion with Love for the Angel of the Way to find in the ecstasy of the divine delight of the All-Lover's being the fulfilment of ours, its secure home and blissful abiding-place and the centre of its universal radiation.

Since then in the union of these three powers lies our base of perfection, the seeker of an integral self-fulfilment in the Divine must avoid or throw away, if he has them at all, the misunderstanding and mutual depreciation which we often find existent between the followers of the three paths. Those who have the cult of knowledge seem often, if not to despise, yet to look downward from their dizzy eminence on the path of the devotee as if it were a thing inferior, ignorant, good only for souls that are not yet ready for the heights of the Truth. It is true that devotion without knowledge is often a thing raw, crude, blind and dangerous, as the errors, crimes, follies of the religious have too often shown. But this is because devotion in them has not found its own path, its own real principle, has not therefore really entered on the path, but is fumbling and feeling after it, is on one of the bypaths that lead to it; and knowledge too at this stage is as imperfect as devotion, dogmatic, schismatic, intolerant, bound up in the narrowness of some single and exclusive principle, even that being usually very imperfectly seized. When the devotee has grasped the power that shall raise him, has really laid hold on love, that in the end purifies and enlarges him as effectively as knowledge can; they are equal powers, though their methods of arriving at the same goal are different. The pride of the philosopher looking down on the passion of the devotee arises, as does all pride, from a certain deficiency of his nature; for the intellect too exclusively developed misses what the heart has to offer. The intellect is not in every way superior to the heart; if it opens more readily doors at which the heart is apt to fumble in vain, it is, itself, apt to miss truths which to the heart are very near and easy to hold. And if when the way of thought deepens into spiritual experience, it arrives readily at the etherial heights, pinnacles, skiey widenesses, it cannot without the aid of the heart fathom the intense and rich abysses and oceanic depths of the divine being and the divine Ananda.

The way of Bhakti is supposed often to be necessarily inferior because it proceeds by worship which belongs to that stage of spiritual experience where there is a difference, an insufficient

unity between the human soul and the Divine, because its very principle is love and love means always two, the lover and the beloved, a dualism therefore, while oneness is the highest spiritual experience, and because it seeks after the personal God while the Impersonal is the highest and the eternal truth, if not even the sole Reality. But worship is only the first step on the path of devotion. Where external worship changes into the inner adoration, real Bhakti begins; that deepens into the intensity of divine love; that love leads to the joy of closeness in our relations with the Divine; the joy of closeness passes into the bliss of union. Love too as well as knowledge brings us to a highest oneness and it gives to that oneness its greatest possible depth and intensity. It is true that love returns gladly upon a difference in oneness, by which the oneness itself becomes richer and sweeter. But here we may say that the heart is wiser than the thought, at least than that thought which fixes upon opposite ideas of the Divine and concentrates on one to the exclusion of the other which seems its contrary, but is really its complement and a means of its greatest fulfilment. This is the weakness of the mind that it limits itself by its thoughts, its positive and negative ideas, the aspects of the Divine Reality that it sees, and tends too much to pit one against the other.

Thought in the mind, *vicāra*, the philosophic trend by which mental knowledge approaches the Divine, is apt to lend a greater importance to the abstract over the concrete, to that which is high and remote over that which is intimate and near. It finds a greater truth in the delight of the One in itself, a lesser truth or even a falsehood in the delight of the One in the Many and of the Many in the One, a greater truth in the impersonal and the Nirguna, a lesser truth or a falsehood in the personal and the Saguna. But the Divine is beyond our oppositions of ideas, beyond the logical contradictions we make between his aspects. He is not, we have seen, bound and restricted by exclusive unity; his oneness realises itself in infinite variation and to the joy of that love has the completest key, without therefore missing the joy of the unity. The highest knowledge and highest spiritual experience by knowledge find his oneness as perfect in his

various relations with the Many as in his self-absorbed delight. If to thought the Impersonal seems the wider and higher truth, the Personal a narrower experience, the spirit finds both of them to be aspects of a Reality which figures itself in both, and if there is a knowledge of that Reality to which thought arrives by insistence on the infinite Impersonality, there is also a knowledge of it to which love arrives by insistence on the infinite Personality. The spiritual experience of each leads, if followed to the end, to the same ultimate Truth. By Bhakti as by knowledge, as the Gita tells us, we arrive at unity with the Purushottama, the Supreme who contains in himself the impersonal and numberless personalities, the qualitiless and infinite qualities, pure being, consciousness and delight and the endless play of their relations.

The devotee on the other hand tends to look down on the sawdust dryness of mere knowledge. And it is true that philosophy by itself without the rapture of spiritual experience is something as dry as it is clear and cannot give all the satisfaction we seek, that its spiritual experience even, when it has not left its supports of thought and shot up beyond the mind, lives too much in an abstract delight and that what it reaches, is not indeed the void it seems to the passion of the heart, but still has the limitations of the peaks. On the other hand, love itself is not complete without knowledge. The Gita distinguishes between three initial kinds of Bhakti, that which seeks refuge in the Divine from the sorrows of the world, *ārta*, that which, desiring, approaches the Divine as the giver of its good, *arthārthī*, and that which attracted by what it already loves, but does not yet know, yearns to know this divine Unknown, *jijñāsu*; but it gives the palm to the Bhakti that knows. Evidently the intensity of passion which says, "I do not understand, I love," and, loving, cares not to understand, is not love's last self-expression, but its first, nor is it its highest intensity. Rather as knowledge of the Divine grows, delight in the Divine and love of it must increase. Nor can mere rapture be secure without the foundation of knowledge; to live in what we love, gives that security, and to live in it means to be one with it in consciousness, and oneness of consciousness is the perfect condition of knowledge. Knowledge of the Divine

gives to love of the Divine its firmest security, opens to it its own widest joy of experience, raises it to its highest pinnacles of outlook.

If the mutual misunderstandings of these two powers are an ignorance, no less so is the tendency of both to look down on the way of works as inferior to their own loftier pitch of spiritual achievement. There is an intensity of love, as there is an intensity of knowledge, to which works seem something outward and distracting. But works are only thus outward and distracting when we have not found oneness of will and consciousness with the Supreme. When once that is found, works become the very power of knowledge and the very outpouring of love. If knowledge is the very state of oneness and love its bliss, divine works are the living power of its light and sweetness. There is a movement of love, as in the aspiration of human love, to separate the lover and the loved in the enjoyment of their exclusive oneness away from the world and from all others, shut up in the nuptial chambers of the heart. That is perhaps an inevitable movement of this path. But still the widest love fulfilled in knowledge sees the world not as something other and hostile to this joy, but as the being of the Beloved and all creatures as his being, and in that vision divine works find their joy and their justification.

This is the knowledge in which an integral Yoga must live. We have to start Godward from the powers of the mind, the intellect, the will, the heart, and in the mind all is limited. Limitations, exclusiveness there can hardly fail to be at the beginning and for a long time on the way. But an integral Yoga will wear these more loosely than more exclusive ways of seeking, and it will sooner emerge from the mental necessity. It may commence with the way of love, as with the way of knowledge or of works; but where they meet, is the beginning of its joy of fulfilment. Love it cannot miss, even if it does not start from it; for love is the crown of works and the flowering of knowledge.

Chapter II

The Motives of Devotion

ALL RELIGION begins with the conception of some Power or existence greater and higher than our limited and mortal selves, a thought and act of worship done to that Power, and an obedience offered to its will, its laws or its demands. But Religion, in its beginnings, sets an immeasurable gulf between the Power thus conceived, worshipped and obeyed and the worshipper. Yoga in its culmination abolishes the gulf; for Yoga is union. We arrive at union with it through knowledge; for as our first obscure conceptions of it clarify, enlarge, deepen, we come to recognise it as our own highest self, the origin and sustainer of our being and that towards which it tends. We arrive at union with it through works; for from simply obeying we come to identify our will with its Will, since only in proportion as it is identified with this Power that is its source and ideal, can our will become perfect and divine. We arrive at union with it also by worship; for the thought and act of a distant worship develops into the necessity of close adoration and this into the intimacy of love, and the consummation of love is union with the Beloved. It is from this development of worship that the Yoga of devotion starts and it is by this union with the Beloved that it finds its highest point and consummation.

All our instincts and the movements of our being begin by supporting themselves on the ordinary motives of our lower human nature,—mixed and egoistic motives at first, but afterwards they purify and elevate themselves, they become an intense and special need of our higher nature quite apart from the results our actions bring with them; finally they exalt themselves into a sort of categorical imperative of our being, and it is through our obedience to this that we arrive at that supreme something self-existent in us which was all the time drawing us towards it, first by the lures of our egoistic nature, then by something much

higher, larger, more universal, until we are able to feel its own direct attraction which is the strongest and most imperative of all. In the transformation of ordinary religious worship into the Yoga of pure Bhakti we see this development from the motived and interested worship of popular religion into a principle of motiveless and self-existent love. This last is in fact the touch-stone of the real Bhakti and shows whether we are really in the central way or are only upon one of the bypaths leading to it. We have to throw away the props of our weakness, the motives of the ego, the lures of our lower nature before we can deserve the divine union.

Faced with the sense of a Power or perhaps a number of Powers greater and higher than himself by whom his life in Nature is overshadowed, influenced, governed, man naturally applies to it or to them the first primitive feelings of the natural being among the difficulties, desires and dangers of that life,—fear and interest. The enormous part played by these motives in the evolution of the religious instinct, is undeniable, and in fact, man being what he is, it could hardly have been less; and even when religion has advanced fairly far on its road, we see these motives still surviving, active, playing a sufficiently large part, justified and appealed to by Religion herself in support of her claims on man. The fear of God, it is said,—or, it may be added for the sake of historical truth, the fear of the Gods,—is the beginning of religion, a half-truth upon which scientific research, trying to trace the evolution of religion, ordinarily in a critical and often a hostile rather than in a sympathetic spirit, has laid undue emphasis. But not the fear of God only, for man does not act, even most primitively, from fear alone, but from twin motives, fear and desire, fear of things unpleasant and maleficent and desire of things pleasant and beneficent,—therefore from fear and interest. Life to him is primarily and engrossingly,—until he learns to live more in his soul and only secondarily in the action and reaction of outward things,—a series of actions and results, things to be desired, pursued and gained by action and things to be dreaded and shunned, yet which may come upon him as a result of action. And it is not only by his own

action but by that also of others and of Nature around him that these things come to him. As soon, then, as he comes to sense a Power behind all this which can influence or determine action and result, he conceives of it as a dispenser of boons and sufferings, able and under certain conditions willing to help him or hurt, save and destroy.

In the most primitive parts of his being he conceives of it as a thing of natural egoistic impulses like himself, beneficent when pleased, maleficent when offended; worship is then a means of propitiation by gifts and a supplication by prayer. He gets God on his side by praying to him and flattering him. With a more advanced mentality, he conceives of the action of life as reposing on a certain principle of divine justice, which he reads always according to his own ideas and character, as a sort of enlarged copy of his human justice; he conceives the idea of moral good and evil and looks upon suffering and calamity and all things unpleasant as a punishment for his sins and upon happiness and good fortune and all things pleasant as a reward of his virtue. God appears to him as a king, judge, legislator, executor of justice. But still regarding him as a sort of magnified Man, he imagines that as his own justice can be deflected by prayers and propitiation, so the divine justice can also be deflected by the same means. Justice is to him reward and punishment, and the justice of punishment can be modified by mercy to the suppliant, while rewards can be supplemented by special favours and kindness such as Power when pleased can always bestow on its adherents and worshippers. Moreover God like ourselves is capable of wrath and revenge, and wrath and revenge can be turned by gifts and supplication and atonement; he is capable too of partiality, and his partiality can be attracted by gifts, by prayer and by praise. Therefore instead of relying solely on the observation of the moral law, worship as prayer and propitiation is still continued.

Along with these motives there arises another development of personal feeling, first of the awe which one naturally feels for something vast, powerful and incalculable beyond our nature by a certain inscrutability in the springs and extent of its action,

and of the veneration and adoration which one feels for that which is higher in its nature or its perfection than ourselves. For, even while preserving largely the idea of a God endowed with the qualities of human nature, there still grows up along with it, mixed up with it or superadded, the conception of an omniscience, an omnipotence and a mysterious perfection quite other than our nature. A confused mixture of all these motives, variously developed, often modified, subtilised or glossed over, is what constitutes nine tenths of popular religion; the other tenth is a suffusion of the rest by the percolation into it of nobler, more beautiful and profounder ideas of the Divine which minds of a greater spirituality have been able to bring into the more primitive religious concepts of mankind. The result is usually crude enough and a ready target for the shafts of scepticism and unbelief,—powers of the human mind which have their utility even for faith and religion, since they compel a religion to purify gradually what is crude or false in its conceptions. But what we have to see is how far in purifying and elevating the religious instinct of worship any of these earlier motives need to survive and enter into the Yoga of devotion which itself starts from worship. That depends on how far they correspond to any truth of the divine Being and its relations with the human soul; for we seek by Bhakti union with the Divine and true relation with it, with its truth and not with any mirage of our lower nature and of its egoistic impulses and ignorant conceptions.

The ground on which sceptical unbelief assails Religion, namely, that there is in fact no conscient Power or Being in the universe greater and higher than ourselves or in any way influencing or controlling our existence, is one which Yoga cannot accept, as that would contradict all spiritual experience and make Yoga itself impossible. Yoga is not a matter of theory or dogma, like philosophy or popular religion, but a matter of experience. Its experience is that of a conscient universal and supracosmic Being with whom it brings us into union, and this conscious experience of union with the Invisible, always renewable and verifiable, is as valid as our conscious experience of a physical world and of visible bodies with whose invisible minds

we daily communicate. Yoga proceeds by conscious union, the conscious being is its instrument, and a conscious union with the Inconscient cannot be. It is true that it goes beyond the human consciousness and in Samadhi becomes superconscious, but this is not an annihilation of our conscious being, it is only its self-exceeding, the going beyond its present level and normal limits.

So far, then, all Yogic experience is agreed. But Religion and the Yoga of Bhakti go farther; they attribute to this Being a Personality and human relations with the human being. In both the human being approaches the Divine by means of his humanity, with human emotions, as he would approach a fellow-being, but with more intense and exalted feelings; and not only so, but the Divine also responds in a manner answering to these emotions. In that possibility of response lies the whole question; for if the Divine is impersonal, featureless and relationless, no such response is possible and all human approach to it becomes an absurdity; we must rather dehumanise, depersonalise, annul ourselves in so far as we are human beings or any kind of beings; on no other conditions and by no other means can we approach it. Love, fear, prayer, praise, worship of an Impersonality which has no relation with us or with anything in the universe and no feature that our minds can lay hold of, are obviously an irrational foolishness. On such terms religion and devotion become out of the question. The Adwaitin in order to find a religious basis for his bare and sterile philosophy, has to admit the practical existence of God and the gods and to delude his mind with the language of Maya. Buddhism only became a popular religion when Buddha had taken the place of the supreme Deity as an object of worship.

Even if the Supreme be capable of relations with us but only of impersonal relations, religion is robbed of its human vitality and the Path of Devotion ceases to be effective or even possible. We may indeed apply our human emotions to it, but in a vague and imprecise fashion, with no hope of a human response: the only way in which it can respond to us, is by stilling our emotions and throwing upon us its own impersonal calm and immutable

equality; and this is what in fact happens when we approach the pure impersonality of the Godhead. We can obey it as a Law, lift our souls to it in aspiration towards its tranquil being, grow into it by shedding from us our emotional nature; the human being in us is not satisfied, but it is quieted, balanced, stilled. But the Yoga of devotion, agreeing in this with Religion, insists on a closer and warmer worship than this impersonal aspiration. It aims at a divine fulfilment of the humanity in us as well as of the impersonal part of our being; it aims at a divine satisfaction of the emotional being of man. It demands of the Supreme acceptance of our love and a response in kind; as we delight in Him and seek Him, so it believes that He too delights in us and seeks us. Nor can this demand be condemned as irrational, for if the supreme and universal Being did not take any delight in us, it is not easy to see how we could have come into being or could remain in being, and if He does not at all draw us towards him,—a divine seeking of us,—there would seem to be no reason in Nature why we should turn from the round of our normal existence to seek Him.

Therefore that there may be at all any possibility of a Yoga of devotion, we must assume first that the supreme Existence is not an abstraction or a state of existence, but a conscious Being; secondly, that he meets us in the universe and is in some way immanent in it as well as its source,—otherwise, we should have to go out of cosmic life to meet him; thirdly, that he is capable of personal relations with us and must therefore be not incapable of personality; finally, that when we approach him by our human emotions, we receive a response in kind. This does not mean that the nature of the Divine is precisely the same as our human nature though upon a larger scale, or that it is that nature pure of certain perversions and God a magnified or else an ideal Man. God is not and cannot be an ego limited by his qualities as we are in our normal consciousness. But on the other hand our human consciousness must certainly originate and have been derived from the Divine; though the forms which it takes in us may and must be other than the divine because we are limited by ego, not universal, not superior to our nature, not

greater than our qualities and their workings, as he is, still our human emotions and impulses must have behind them a Truth in him of which they are the limited and very often, therefore, the perverse or even the degraded forms. By approaching him through our emotional being we approach that Truth, it comes down to us to meet our emotions and lift them towards it; through it our emotional being is united with him.

Secondly, this supreme Being is also the universal Being and our relations with the universe are all means by which we are prepared for entering into relation with him. All the emotions with which we confront the action of the universal existence upon us, are really directed towards him, in ignorance at first, but it is by directing them in growing knowledge towards him that we enter into more intimate relations with him, and all that is false and ignorant in them will fall away as we draw nearer towards unity. To all of them he answers, taking us in the stage of progress in which we are; for if we met no kind of response or help to our imperfect approach, the more perfect relations could never be established. Even as men approach him, so he accepts them and responds too by the divine Love to their bhakti, *tathaiva bhajate*. Whatever form of being, whatever qualities they lend to him, through that form and those qualities he helps them to develop, encourages or governs their advance and in their straight way or their crooked draws them towards him. What they see of him is a truth, but a truth represented to them in the terms of their own being and consciousness, partially, distortedly, not in the terms of its own higher reality, not in the aspect which it assumes when we become aware of the complete Divinity. This is the justification of the cruder and more primitive elements of religion and also their sentence of transience and passing. They are justified because there is a truth of the Divine behind them and only so could that truth of the Divine be approached in that stage of the developing human consciousness and be helped forward; they are condemned, because to persist always in these crude conceptions and relations with the Divine is to miss that closer union towards which these crude beginnings are the first steps, however faltering.

All life, we have said, is a Yoga of Nature; here in this material world life is her reaching out from her first in-consciousness towards a return to union with the conscious Divine from whom she proceeded. In religion the mind of man, her accomplished instrument, becomes aware of her goal in him, responds to her aspiration. Even popular religion is a sort of ignorant Yoga of devotion. But it does not become what we specifically call Yoga until the motive becomes in a certain degree clairvoyant, until it sees that union is its object and that love is the principle of union, and until therefore it tries to realise love and lose its separative character in love. When that has been accomplished, then the Yoga has taken its decisive step and is sure of its fruition. Thus the motives of devotion have first to direct themselves engrossingly and predominantly towards the Divine, then to transform themselves so that they are rid of their more earthly elements and finally to take their stand in pure and perfect love. All those that cannot coexist with the perfect union of love, must eventually fall away, while only those that can form themselves into expressions of divine love and into means of enjoying divine love, can remain. For love is the one emotion in us which can be entirely motiveless and self-existent; love need have no other motive than love. For all our emotions arise either from the seeking after delight and the possession of it, or from the baffling of the search, or from the failure of the delight we have possessed or had thought to grasp; but love is that by which we can enter directly into possession of the self-existent delight of the divine Being. Divine love is indeed itself that possession and, as it were, the body of the Ananda.

These are the truths which condition our approach to this Yoga and our journey on this path. There are subsidiary questions which arise and trouble the intellect of man, but, though we may have yet to deal with them they are not essential. Yoga of Bhakti is a matter of the heart and not of the intellect. For even for the knowledge which comes on this way, we set out from the heart and not from the intelligence. The truth of the motives of the heart's devotion and their final arrival and in some sort their disappearance into the supreme and unique self-existent motive

of love, is therefore all that initially and essentially concerns us. Such difficult questions there are as whether the Divine has an original supraphysical form or power of form from which all forms proceed or is eternally formless; all we need at present say is that the Divine does at least accept the various forms which the devotee gives to him and through them meets him in love, while the mixing of our spirits with his spirit is essential to the fruition of Bhakti. So too, certain religions and religious philosophies seek to bind down devotion by a conception of an eternal difference between the human soul and the Divine, without which they say love and devotion cannot exist, while that philosophy which considers that One alone exists, consigns love and devotion to a movement in the ignorance, necessary perhaps or at the least useful as a preparatory movement while yet the ignorance lasts, but impossible when all difference is abolished and therefore to be transcended and discarded. We may hold, however, the truth of the one existence in this sense that all in Nature is the Divine even though God be more than all in Nature, and love becomes then a movement by which the Divine in Nature and man takes possession of and enjoys the delight of the universal and the supreme Divine. In any case, love has necessarily a twofold fulfilment by its very nature, that by which the lover and the beloved enjoy their union in difference and all too that enhances the joy of various union, and that by which they throw themselves into each other and become one Self. That truth is quite sufficient to start with, for it is the very nature of love, and since love is the essential motive of this Yoga, as is the whole nature of love, so will be too the crown and fulfilment of the movement of the Yoga.

Chapter III

The Godward Emotions

THE PRINCIPLE of Yoga is to turn Godward all or any of the powers of the human consciousness so that through that activity of the being there may be contact, relation, union. In the Yoga of Bhakti it is the emotional nature that is made the instrument. Its main principle is to adopt some human relation between man and the Divine Being by which through the ever intenser flowing of the heart's emotions towards him the human soul may at last be wedded to and grow one with him in a passion of divine Love. It is not ultimately the pure peace of oneness or the power and desireless will of oneness, but the ecstatic joy of union which the devotee seeks by his Yoga. Every feeling that can make the heart ready for this ecstasy the Yoga admits; everything that detracts from it must increasingly drop away as the strong union of love becomes closer and more perfect.

All the feelings with which religion approaches the worship, service and love of God, the Yoga admits, if not as its final accompaniments, yet as preparatory movements of the emotional nature. But there is one feeling with which the Yoga, at least as practised in India, has very little dealing. In certain religions, in most perhaps, the idea of the fear of God plays a very large part, sometimes the largest, and the Godfearing man is the typical worshipper of these religions. The sentiment of fear is indeed perfectly consistent with devotion of a certain kind and up to a certain point; at its highest it rises into a worship of the divine Power, the divine Justice, divine Law, divine Righteousness, and ethical obedience, an awed reverence for the almighty Creator and Judge. Its motive is therefore ethico-religious and it belongs not so strictly to the devotee, but to the man of works moved by a devotion to the divine ordainer and judge of his works. It regards God as the King and does not approach too near the

glory of his throne unless justified by righteousness or led there by a mediator who will turn away the divine wrath for sin. Even when it draws nearest, it keeps an awed distance between itself and the high object of its worship. It cannot embrace the Divine with all the fearless confidence of the child in his mother or of the lover in his beloved or with that intimate sense of oneness which perfect love brings with it.

The origin of this divine fear was crude enough in some of the primitive popular religions. It was the perception of powers in the world greater than man, obscure in their nature and workings, which seemed always ready to strike him down in his prosperity and to smite him for any actions which displeased them. Fear of the gods arose from man's ignorance of God and his ignorance of the laws that govern the world. It attributed to the higher powers caprice and human passion; it made them in the image of the great ones of the earth, capable of whim, tyranny, personal enmity, jealous of any greatness in man which might raise him above the littleness of terrestrial nature and bring him too near to the divine nature. With such notions no real devotion could arise, except that doubtful kind which the weaker may feel for the stronger whose protection he can buy by worship and gifts and propitiation and obedience to such laws as he may have laid upon those beneath him and may enforce by rewards and punishments, or else the submissive and prostrate reverence and adoration which one may feel for a greatness, glory, wisdom, sovereign power which is above the world and is the source or at any rate the regulator of all its laws and happenings.

A nearer approach to the beginnings of the way of devotion becomes possible when this element of divine Power disengages itself from these crudities and fixes on the idea of a divine ruler, creator of the world and master of the Law who governs the earth and heavens and is the guide and helper and saviour of his creatures. This larger and higher idea of the divine Being long kept many elements and still keeps some elements of the old crudity. The Jews who brought it forward most prominently and from whom it overspread a great part of the world, could

believe in a God of righteousness who was exclusive, arbitrary, wrathful, jealous, often cruel and even wantonly sanguinary. Even now it is possible for some to believe in a Creator who has made heaven and hell, an eternal hell, the two poles of his creation, and has even according to some religions predestined the souls he has created not only to sin and punishment, but to an eternal damnation. But even apart from these extravagances of a childish religious belief, the idea of the almighty Judge, Legislator, King, is a crude and imperfect idea of the Divine, when taken by itself, because it takes an inferior and an external truth for the main truth and it tends to prevent a higher approach to a more intimate reality. It exaggerates the importance of the sense of sin and thereby prolongs and increases the soul's fear and self-distrust and weakness. It attaches the pursuit of virtue and the shunning of sin to the idea of rewards and punishment, though given in an after life, and makes them dependent on the lower motives of fear and interest instead of the higher spirit which should govern the ethical being. It makes hell and heaven and not the Divine himself the object of the human soul in its religious living. These crudities have served their turn in the slow education of the human mind, but they are of no utility to the Yogan who knows that whatever truth they may represent belongs rather to the external relations of the developing human soul with the external law of the universe than any intimate truth of the inner relations of the human soul with the Divine; but it is these which are the proper field of Yoga.

Still out of this conception there arise certain developments which bring us nearer to the threshold of the Yoga of devotion. First, there can emerge the idea of the Divine as the source and law and aim of our ethical being and from this there can come the knowledge of him as the highest Self to which our active nature aspires, the Will to which we have to assimilate our will, the eternal Right and Purity and Truth and Wisdom into harmony with which our nature has to grow and towards whose being our being is attracted. By this way we arrive at the Yoga of works, and this Yoga has a place for personal devotion to the Divine, for the divine Will appears as the Master of our works

to whose voice we must listen, whose divine impulsion we must obey and whose work it is the sole business of our active life and will to do. Secondly, there emerges the idea of the divine Spirit, the father of all who extends his wings of benignant protection and love over all his creatures, and from that grows between the soul and the Divine the relation of father and child, a relation of love, and as a result the relation of brotherhood with our fellow-beings. These relations of the Divine into the calm pure light of whose nature we have to grow and the Master whom we approach through works and service, the Father who responds to the love of the soul that approaches him as the child, are admitted elements of the Yoga of devotion.

The moment we come well into these developments and their deeper spiritual meaning, the motive of the fear of God becomes otiose, superfluous and even impossible. It is of importance chiefly in the ethical field when the soul has not yet grown sufficiently to follow good for its own sake and needs an authority above it whose wrath or whose stern passionless judgment it can fear and found upon that fear its fidelity to virtue. When we grow into spirituality, this motive can no longer remain except by the lingering on of some confusion in the mind, some persistence of the old mentality. Moreover, the ethical aim in Yoga is different from that of the external idea of virtue. Ordinarily, ethics is regarded as a sort of machinery of right action, the act is everything and how to do the right act is the whole question and the whole trouble. But to the Yогин action is chiefly important not for its own sake, but rather as a means for the growth of the soul Godward. Therefore what Indian spiritual writings lay stress upon is not so much the quality of the action to be done as the quality of the soul from which the action flows, upon its truth, fearlessness, purity, love, compassion, benevolence, absence of the will to hurt, and upon the actions as their outflowings. The old western idea that human nature is intrinsically bad and virtue is a thing to be followed out in despite of our fallen nature to which it is contrary, is foreign to the Indian mentality trained from ancient times in the ideas of the Yogins. Our nature contains, as well as

its passionate rajasic and its downward-tending tamasic quality, a purer sattvic element and it is the encouragement of this, its highest part, which is the business of ethics. By it we increase the divine nature, *daivi prakṛti*, which is present in us and get rid of the Titanic and demoniac elements. Not therefore the Hebraic righteousness of the Godfearing man, but the purity, love, beneficence, truth, fearlessness, harmlessness of the saint and the God-lover are the goal of the ethical growth according to this notion. And, speaking more largely, to grow into the divine nature is the consummation of the ethical being. This can be done best by realising God as the higher Self, the guiding and uplifting Will or the Master whom we love and serve. Not fear of him, but love of him and aspiration to the freedom and eternal purity of his being must be the motive.

Certainly, fear enters into the relations of the master and the servant and even of the father and the child, but only when they are on the human level, when control and subjection and punishment figure predominantly in them and love is obliged to efface itself more or less behind the mask of authority. The Divine even as the Master does not punish anybody, does not threaten, does not force obedience. It is the human soul that has freely to come to the Divine and offer itself to his overpowering force that he may seize and uplift it towards his own divine levels, and give it that joy of mastery of the finite nature by the Infinite and of service to the Highest by which there comes freedom from the ego and the lower nature. Love is the key of this relation, and this service, *dāsyam*, is in Indian Yoga the happy service of the divine Friend or the passionate service to the divine Beloved. The Master of the worlds who in the Gita demands of his servant, the bhakta, to be nothing more in life than his instrument, makes this claim as the friend, the guide, the higher Self, and describes himself as the Lord of all the worlds who is the friend of all creatures, *sarvalokamahesvaram suhṛdarīm sarvabhūtānām*; the two relations in fact must go together and neither can be perfect without the other. So too it is not the fatherhood of God as the Creator who demands obedience because he is the maker of our being, but the fatherhood of love which leads us towards

the closer soul-union of Yoga. Love is the real key in both, and perfect love is inconsistent with the admission of the motive of fear. Closeness of the human soul to the Divine is the object, and fear sets always a barrier and a distance; even awe and reverence for the divine Power are a sign of distance and division and they disappear in the intimacy of the union of love. Moreover, fear belongs to the lower nature, to the lower self, and in approaching the higher Self must be put aside before we can enter into its presence.

This relation of the divine fatherhood and the closer relation with the Divine as the Mother-Soul of the universe have their springs in another early religious motive. One type of the Bhakta, says the Gita, is the devotee who comes to the Divine as the giver of his wants, the giver of his good, the satisfier of the needs of his inner and his outer being. "I bring to my bhakta" says the Lord "his getting and his having of good, *yogakṣemam vahāmyaham*." The life of man is a life of wants and needs and therefore of desires, not only in his physical and vital, but in his mental and spiritual being. When he becomes conscious of a greater Power governing the world, he approaches it through prayer for the fulfilment of his needs, for help in his rough journey, for protection and aid in his struggle. Whatever crudities there may be in the ordinary religious approach to God by prayer, and there are many, especially that attitude which imagines the Divine as if capable of being propitiated, bribed, flattered into acquiescence or indulgence by praise, entreaty and gifts and has often little regard to the spirit in which he is approached, still this way of turning to the Divine is an essential movement of our religious being and reposes on a universal truth.

The efficacy of prayer is often doubted and prayer itself supposed to be a thing irrational and necessarily superfluous and ineffective. It is true that the universal will executes always its aim and cannot be deflected by egoistic propitiation and entreaty, it is true of the Transcendent who expresses himself in the universal order that being omniscient his larger knowledge must foresee the thing to be done and it does not need direction or

stimulation by human thought and that the individual's desires are not and cannot be in any world-order the true determining factor. But neither is that order or the execution of the universal will altogether effected by mechanical Law, but by powers and forces of which for human life at least human will, aspiration and faith are not among the least important. Prayer is only a particular form given to that will, aspiration and faith. Its forms are very often crude and not only childlike, which is in itself no defect, but childish; but still it has a real power and significance. Its power and sense is to put the will, aspiration and faith of man into touch with the divine Will as that of a conscious Being with whom we can enter into conscious and living relations. For our will and aspiration can act either by our own strength and endeavour, which can no doubt be made a thing great and effective whether for lower or higher purposes,—and there are plenty of disciplines which put it forward as the one force to be used,—or it can act in dependence upon and with subordination to the divine or the universal Will. And this latter way again may either look upon that Will as responsive indeed to our aspiration, but almost mechanically, by a sort of law of energy, or at any rate quite impersonally, or else it may look upon it as responding consciously to the divine aspiration and faith of the human soul and consciously bringing to it the help, the guidance, the protection and fruition demanded, *yogakṣemam
vahāmyaham*.

Prayer helps to prepare this relation for us at first on the lower plane even while it is there consistent with much that is mere egoism and self-delusion; but afterwards we can draw towards the spiritual truth which is behind it. It is not then the giving of the thing asked for that matters, but the relation itself, the contact of man's life with God, the conscious interchange. In spiritual matters and in the seeking of spiritual gains, this conscious relation is a great power; it is a much greater power than our own entirely self-reliant struggle and effort and it brings a fuller spiritual growth and experience. Necessarily in the end prayer either ceases in the greater thing for which it prepared us,—in fact the form we call prayer is not itself essential so long

as the faith, the will, the aspiration are there,— or remains only for the joy of the relation. Also its objects, the *artha* or interest it seeks to realise, become higher and higher until we reach the highest motiveless devotion, which is that of divine love pure and simple without any other demand or longing.

The relations which arise out of this attitude towards the Divine, are that of the divine Father and the Mother with the child and that of the divine Friend. To the Divine as these things the human soul comes for help, for protection, for guidance, for fruition,— or if knowledge be the aim, to the Guide, Teacher, Giver of light, for the Divine is the Sun of knowledge,— or it comes in pain and suffering for relief and solace and deliverance, it may be deliverance either from the suffering itself or from the world-existence which is the habitat of the suffering or from all its inner and real causes.¹ In these things we find there is a certain gradation. For the relation of fatherhood is always less close, intense, passionate, intimate, and therefore it is less resorted to in the Yoga which seeks for the closest union. That of the divine Friend is a thing sweeter and more intimate, admits of an equality and intimacy even in inequality and the beginning of mutual self-giving; at its closest when all idea of other giving and taking disappears, when this relation becomes motiveless except for the one sole all-sufficing motive of love, it turns into the free and happy relation of the playmate in the Lila of existence. But closer and more intimate still is the relation of the Mother and the child, and that therefore plays a very large part wherever the religious impulse is most richly fervent and springs most warmly from the heart of man. The soul goes to the Mother-Soul in all its desires and troubles and the divine Mother wishes that it should be so, so that she may pour out her heart of love. It turns to her too because of the self-existent nature of this love and because that points us to the home towards which we turn from our wanderings in the world and to the bosom in which we find our rest.

¹ These are three of the four classes of devotee which are recognised by the Gita, *ārta*, *arthārthī*, *jijñāsu*, the distressed, the seeker of personal objects and the seeker of God-knowledge.

But the highest and the greatest relation is that which starts from none of the ordinary religious motives, but is rather of the very essence of Yoga, springs from the very nature of love itself; it is the passion of the Lover and the Beloved. Wherever there is the desire of the soul for its utter union with God, this form of the divine yearning makes its way even into religions which seem to do without it and give it no place in their ordinary system. Here the one thing asked for is love, the one thing feared is the loss of love, the one sorrow is the sorrow of separation of love; for all other things either do not exist for the lover or come in only as incidents or as results and not as objects or conditions of love. All love is indeed in its nature self-existent because it springs from a secret oneness in being and a sense of that oneness or desire of oneness in the heart between souls that are yet able to conceive of themselves as different from each other and divided. Therefore all these other relations too can arrive at their self-existent motiveless joy of being for the sake of love alone. But still they start from and to the end they to some extent find a satisfaction of their play in other motives. But here the beginning is love and the end is love and the whole aim is love. There is indeed the desire of possession, but even this is overcome in the fullness of the self-existent love and the final demand of the Bhakta is simply that his bhakti may never cease nor diminish. He does not ask for heaven or for liberation from birth or for any other object, but only that his love may be eternal and absolute.

Love is a passion and it seeks for two things, eternity and intensity, and in the relation of the Lover and Beloved the seeking for eternity and for intensity is instinctive and self-born. Love is a seeking for mutual possession, and it is here that the demand for mutual possession becomes absolute. Passing beyond desire of possession which means a difference, it is a seeking for oneness, and it is here that the idea of oneness, of two souls merging into each other and becoming one finds the acme of its longing and the utterness of its satisfaction. Love, too, is a yearning for beauty, and it is here that the yearning is eternally satisfied in the vision and the touch and the joy of the All-beautiful. Love

is a child and a seeker of Delight, and it is here that it finds the highest possible ecstasy both of the heart-consciousness and of every fibre of the being. Moreover, this relation is that which as between human being and human being demands the most and, even while reaching the greatest intensities, is still the least satisfied, because only in the Divine can it find its real and its utter satisfaction. Therefore it is here most that the turning of human emotion Godwards finds its full meaning and discovers all the truth of which love is the human symbol, all its essential instincts divinised, raised, satisfied in the bliss from which our life was born and towards which by oneness it returns in the Ananda of the divine existence where love is absolute, eternal and unalloyed.

Chapter IV

The Way of Devotion

BHAKTI in itself is as wide as the heart-yearning of the soul for the Divine and as simple and straightforward as love and desire going straight towards their object. It cannot therefore be fixed down to any systematic method, cannot find itself on a psychological science like the Rajayoga, or a psycho-physical like the Hathayoga, or start from a definite intellectual process like the ordinary method of the Jnanayoga. It may employ various means or supports, and man, having in him a tendency towards order, process and system, may try to methodise his resort to these auxiliaries: but to give an account of their variations one would have to review almost all man's numberless religions upon their side of inner approach to the Deity. Really, however, the more intimate yoga of Bhakti resolves itself simply into these four movements, the desire of the Soul when it turns towards God and the straining of its emotion towards him, the pain of love and the divine return of love, the delight of love possessed and the play of that delight, and the eternal enjoyment of the divine Lover which is the heart of celestial bliss. These are things that are at once too simple and too profound for methodising or for analysis. One can at best only say, here are these four successive elements, steps, if we may so call them, of the siddhi, and here are, largely, some of the means which it uses, and here again are some of the aspects and experiences of the sadhana of devotion. We need only trace broadly the general line they follow before we turn to consider how the way of devotion enters into a synthetic and integral Yoga, what place it takes there and how its principle affects the other principles of divine living.

All Yoga is a turning of the human mind and the human soul, not yet divine in realisation, but feeling the divine impulse and attraction in it, towards that by which it finds its greater

being. Emotionally, the first form which this turning takes must be that of adoration. In ordinary religion this adoration wears the form of external worship and that again develops a most external form of ceremonial worship. This element is ordinarily necessary because the mass of men live in their physical minds, cannot realise anything except by the force of a physical symbol and cannot feel that they are living anything except by the force of a physical action. We might apply here the Tantric gradation of *sādhana*, which makes the way of the *paśu*, the herd, the animal or physical being, the lowest stage of its discipline, and say that the purely or predominantly ceremonial adoration is the first step of this lowest part of the way. It is evident that even real religion,—and Yoga is something more than religion,—only begins when this quite outward worship corresponds to something really felt within the mind, some genuine submission, awe or spiritual aspiration, to which it becomes an aid, an outward expression and also a sort of periodical or constant reminder helping to draw back the mind to it from the preoccupations of ordinary life. But so long as it is only an idea of the Godhead to which one renders reverence or homage, we have not yet got to the beginning of Yoga. The aim of Yoga being union, its beginning must always be a seeking after the Divine, a longing after some kind of touch, closeness or possession. When this comes on us, the adoration becomes always primarily an inner worship; we begin to make ourselves a temple of the Divine, our thoughts and feelings a constant prayer of aspiration and seeking, our whole life an external service and worship. It is as this change, this new soul-tendency grows, that the religion of the devotee becomes a Yoga, a growing contact and union. It does not follow that the outward worship will necessarily be dispensed with, but it will increasingly become only a physical expression or outflowing of the inner devotion and adoration, the wave of the soul throwing itself out in speech and symbolic act.

Adoration, before it turns into an element of the deeper Yoga of devotion, a petal of the flower of love, its homage and self-uplifting to its sun, must bring with it, if it is profound, an increasing consecration of the being to the Divine who is adored.

And one element of this consecration must be a self-purifying so as to become fit for the divine contact, or for the entrance of the Divine into the temple of our inner being, or for his self-revelation in the shrine of the heart. This purifying may be ethical in its character, but it will not be merely the moralist's seeking for the right and blameless action or even, when once we reach the stage of Yoga, an obedience to the law of God as revealed in formal religion; but it will be a throwing away, *katharsis*, of all that conflicts whether with the idea of the Divine in himself or of the Divine in ourselves. In the former case it becomes in habit of feeling and outer act an imitation of the Divine, in the latter a growing into his likeness in our nature. What inner adoration is to ceremonial worship, this growing into the divine likeness is to the outward ethical life. It culminates in a sort of liberation by likeness to the Divine,¹ a liberation from our lower nature and a change into the divine nature.

Consecration becomes in its fullness a devoting of all our being to the Divine; therefore also of all our thoughts and our works. Here the Yoga takes into itself the essential elements of the Yoga of works and the Yoga of knowledge, but in its own manner and with its own peculiar spirit. It is a sacrifice of life and works to the Divine, but a sacrifice of love more than a tuning of the will to the divine Will. The bhakta offers up his life and all that he is and all that he has and all that he does to the Divine. This surrender may take the ascetic form, as when he leaves the ordinary life of men and devotes his days solely to prayer and praise and worship or to ecstatic meditation, gives up his personal possessions and becomes the monk or the mendicant whose one and only possession is the Divine, gives up all actions in life except those only which help or belong to the communion with the Divine and communion with other devotees, or at most keeps the doing from the secure fortress of the ascetic life of those services to men which seem peculiarly the outflowing of the divine nature of love, compassion and good. But there is the wider self-consecration, proper to any integral Yoga, which,

¹ *sādṛśya-mukti*.

accepting the fullness of life and the world in its entirety as the play of the Divine, offers up the whole being into his possession; it is a holding of all one is and has as belonging to him only and not to ourselves and a doing of all works as an offering to him. By this comes the complete active consecration of both the inner and the outer life, the unmutilated self-giving.

There is also the consecration of the thoughts to the Divine. In its inception this is the attempt to fix the mind on the object of adoration,—for naturally the restless human mind is occupied with other objects and, even when it is directed upwards, constantly drawn away by the world,—so that in the end it habitually thinks of him and all else is only secondary and thought of only in relation to him. This is done often with the aid of a physical image or, more intimately and characteristically, of a mantra or a divine name through which the divine being is realised. There are supposed by those who systematise to be three stages of the seeking through the devotion of the mind, first, the constant hearing of the divine name, qualities and all that has been attached to them, secondly, the constant thinking on them or on the divine being or personality, thirdly, the settling and fixing of the mind on the object; and by this comes the full realisation. And by these, too, there comes when the accompanying feeling or the concentration is very intense, the Samadhi, the ecstatic trance in which the consciousness passes away from outer objects. But all this is really incidental; the one thing essential is the intense devotion of the thought in the mind to the object of adoration. Although it seems akin to the contemplation of the way of knowledge, it differs from that in its spirit. It is in its real nature not a still, but an ecstatic contemplation; it seeks not to pass into the being of the Divine, but to bring the Divine into ourselves and to lose ourselves in the deep ecstasy of his presence or of his possession; and its bliss is not the peace of unity, but the ecstasy of union. Here, too, there may be the separative self-consecration which ends in the giving up of all other thought of life for the possession of this ecstasy, eternal afterwards in planes beyond, or the comprehensive consecration in which all the thoughts are full of the Divine and even in the occupations

of life every thought remembers him. As in the other Yogas, so in this, one comes to see the Divine everywhere and in all and to pour out the realisation of the Divine in all one's inner activities and outward actions. But all is supported here by the primary force of the emotional union: for it is by love that the entire self-consecration and the entire possession is accomplished, and thought and action become shapes and figures of the divine love which possesses the spirit and its members.

This is the ordinary movement by which what may be at first a vague adoration of some idea of the Divine takes on the hue and character and then, once entered into the path of Yoga, the inner reality and intense experience of divine love. But there is the more intimate Yoga which from the first consists in this love and attains only by the intensity of its longing without other process or method. All the rest comes, but it comes out of this, as leaf and flower out of the seed; other things are not the means of developing and fulfilling love, but the radiations of love already growing in the soul. This is the way that the soul follows when, while occupied perhaps with the normal human life, it has heard the flute of the Godhead behind the near screen of secret woodlands and no longer possesses itself, can have no satisfaction or rest till it has pursued and seized and possessed the divine fluteplayer. This is in essence the power of love itself in the heart and soul turning from earthly objects to the spiritual source of all beauty and delight. There live in this seeking all the sentiment and passion, all the moods and experiences of love concentrated on a supreme object of desire and intensified a hundredfold beyond the highest acme of intensity possible to a human love. There is the disturbance of the whole life, the illumination by an unseized vision, the unsatisfied yearning for a single object of the heart's desire, the intense impatience of all that distracts from the one preoccupation, the intense pain of the obstacles that stand in the way of possession, the perfect vision of all beauty and delight in a single form. And there are all the many moods of love, the joy of musing and absorption, the delight of the meeting and fulfilment and embrace, the pain of separation, the wrath of love, the tears of longing, the increased delight

of reunion. The heart is the scene of this supreme idyll of the inner consciousness, but a heart which undergoes increasingly an intense spiritual change and becomes the radiantly unfolding lotus of the spirit. And as the intensity of its seeking is beyond the highest power of the normal human emotions, so also the delight and the final ecstasy are beyond the reach of the imagination and beyond expression by speech. For this is the delight of the Godhead that passes human understanding.

Indian bhakti has given to this divine love powerful forms, poetic symbols which are not in reality so much symbols as intimate expressions of truth which can find no other expression. It uses human relations and sees a divine person, not as mere figures, but because there are divine relations of supreme Delight and Beauty with the human soul of which human relations are the imperfect but still the real type, and because that Delight and Beauty are not abstractions or qualities of a quite impalpable metaphysical entity, but the very body and form of the supreme Being. It is a living Soul to which the soul of the bhakta yearns; for the source of all life is not an idea or a conception or a state of existence, but a real Being. Therefore in the possession of the divine Beloved all the life of the soul is satisfied and all the relations by which it finds and in which it expresses itself, are wholly fulfilled; therefore, too, by any and all of them can the Beloved be sought, though those which admit the greatest intensity, are always those by which he can be most intensely pursued and possessed with the profoundest ecstasy. He is sought within in the heart and therefore apart from all by an inward-gathered concentration of the being in the soul itself; but he is also seen and loved everywhere where he manifests his being. All the beauty and joy of existence is seen as his joy and beauty; he is embraced by the spirit in all beings; the ecstasy of love enjoyed pours itself out in a universal love; all existence becomes a radiation of its delight and even in its very appearances is transformed into something other than its outward appearance. The world itself is experienced as a play of the divine Delight, a Lila, and that in which the world loses itself is the heaven of beatitude of the eternal union.

Chapter V

The Divine Personality

ONE QUESTION rises immediately in a synthetic Yoga which must not only comprise but unify knowledge and devotion, the difficult and troubling question of the divine Personality. All the trend of modern thought has been towards the belittling of personality; it has seen behind the complex facts of existence only a great impersonal force, an obscure becoming, and that too works itself out through impersonal forces and impersonal laws, while personality presents itself only as a subsequent, subordinate, partial, transient phenomenon upon the face of this impersonal movement. Granting even to this Force a consciousness, that seems to be impersonal, indeterminate, void in essence of all but abstract qualities or energies; for everything else is only a result, a minor phenomenon. Ancient Indian thought starting from quite the other end of the scale arrived on most of its lines at the same generalisation. It conceived of an impersonal existence as the original and eternal truth; personality is only an illusion or at best a phenomenon of the mind.

On the other hand, the way of devotion is impossible if the personality of the Divine cannot be taken as a reality, a real reality and not a hypostasis of the illusion. There can be no love without a lover and beloved. If our personality is an illusion and the Personality to whom our adoration rises only a primary aspect of the illusion, and if we believe that, then love and adoration must at once be killed, or can only survive in the illogical passion of the heart denying by its strong beats of life the clear and dry truths of the reason. To love and adore a shadow of our minds or a bright cosmic phenomenon which vanishes from the eye of Truth, may be possible, but the way of salvation cannot be built upon a foundation of wilful self-deception. The bhakta indeed does not allow these doubts of the intellect to

come in his way; he has the divinations of his heart, and these are to him sufficient. But the sadhaka of the integral Yoga has to know the eternal and ultimate Truth and not to persist to the end in the delight of a Shadow. If the impersonal is the sole enduring truth, then a firm synthesis is impossible. He can at most take the divine personality as a symbol, a powerful and effective fiction, but he will have in the end to overpass it and to abandon devotion for the sole pursuit of the ultimate knowledge. He will have to empty being of all its symbols, values, contents in order to arrive at the featureless Reality.

We have said, however, that personality and impersonality, as our minds understand them, are only aspects of the Divine and both are contained in his being; they are one thing which we see from two opposite sides and into which we enter by two gates. We have to see this more clearly in order to rid ourselves of any doubts with which the intellect may seek to afflict us as we follow the impulse of devotion and the intuition of love or to pursue us into the joy of the divine union. They fall away indeed from that joy, but if we are too heavily weighted with the philosophical mind, they may follow us almost up to its threshold. It is well therefore to discharge ourselves of them as early as may be by perceiving the limits of the intellect, the rational philosophic mind, in its peculiar way of approaching the truth and the limits even of the spiritual experience which sets out from the approach through the intellect, to see that it need not be the whole integrality of the highest and widest spiritual experience. Spiritual intuition is always a more luminous guide than the discriminating reason, and spiritual intuition addresses itself to us not only through the reason, but through the rest of our being as well, through the heart and the life also. The integral knowledge will then be that which takes account of all and unifies their diverse truths. The intellect itself will be more deeply satisfied if it does not confine itself to its own data, but accepts truth of the heart and the life also and gives to them their absolute spiritual value.

The nature of the philosophical intellect is to move among ideas and to give them a sort of abstract reality of their own

apart from all their concrete representations which affect our life and personal consciousness. Its bent is to reduce these representations to their barest and most general terms and to subtilise even these if possible into some final abstraction. The pure intellectual direction travels away from life. In judging things it tries to get back from their effects on our personality and to arrive at whatever general and impersonal truth may be behind them; it is inclined to treat that kind of truth as the only real truth of being or at least as the one superior and permanent power of reality. Therefore it is bound by its own nature to end in its extremes at an absolute impersonality and an absolute abstraction. This is where the ancient philosophies ended. They reduced everything to three abstractions, existence, consciousness and bliss of being, and they tended to get rid of the two of these three which seemed dependent on the first and most abstract, and to throw all back into a pure featureless existence from which everything else had been discharged, all representations, all values, except the one infinite and timeless fact of being. But the intellect had still one farther possible step to take and it took it in Buddhistic philosophy. It found that even this final fact of existence was only a representation; it abstracted that also and got to an infinite zero which might be either a void or an eternal inexpressible.

The heart and life, as we know, have an exactly opposite law. They cannot live with abstractions; they can find their satisfaction only in things that are concrete or can be made seizable; whether physically, mentally or spiritually, their object is not something which they seek to discriminate and arrive at by intellectual abstraction; a living becoming of it or a conscious possession and joy of their object is what they seek. Nor is it the satisfaction of an abstract mind or impersonal existence to which they respond, but the joy and the activity of a being, a conscious Person in us, whether finite or infinite, to whom the delights and powers of his existence are a reality. Therefore when the heart and life turn towards the Highest and the Infinite, they arrive not at an abstract existence or non-existence, a Sat or else a Nirvana, but at an existent, a Sat Purusha, not merely at a consciousness,

but at a conscious Being, a Chaitanya Purusha, not merely at a purely impersonal delight of the Is, but at an infinite I Am of bliss, an Anandamaya Purusha; nor can they immerge and lose his consciousness and bliss in featureless existence, but must insist on all three in one, for delight of existence is their highest power and without consciousness delight cannot be possessed. That is the sense of the supreme figure of the intensest Indian religion of love, Sri Krishna, the All-blissful and All-beautiful.

The intelligence can also follow this trend, but it ceases then to be the pure intellect; it calls in its power of imagination to its aid, it becomes the image-maker, the creator of symbols and values, a spiritual artist and poet. Therefore the severest intellectual philosophy admits the Saguna, the divine Person, only as the supreme cosmic symbol; go beyond it to reality and you will arrive, it says, at last to the Nirguna, the pure Impersonal. The rival philosophy asserts the superiority of the Saguna; that which is impersonal is, it will perhaps say, only the material, the stuff of his spiritual nature out of which he manifests the powers of his being, consciousness and bliss, all that expresses him; the impersonal is the apparent negative out of which he loses the temporal variations of his eternal positive of personality. There are evidently here two instincts, or, if we hesitate to apply that word to the intellect, two innate powers of our being which are dealing each in its own manner with the same Reality.

Both the ideas of the intellect, its discriminations, and the aspirations of the heart and life, their approximations, have behind them realities at which they are the means of arriving. Both are justified by spiritual experience; both arrive at the divine absolute of that which they are seeking. But still each tends, if too exclusively indulged, to be hampered by the limitations of its innate quality and its characteristic means. We see that in our earthly living, where the heart and life followed exclusively failed to lead to any luminous issue, while an exclusive intellectuality becomes either remote, abstract and impotent or a sterile critic or dry mechanist. Their sufficient harmony and just reconciliation is one of the great problems of our psychology and our action.

The reconciling power lies beyond in the intuition. But there is an intuition which serves the intellect and an intuition which serves the heart and the life, and if we follow either of these exclusively, we shall not get much farther than before; we shall only make more intimately real to us, but still separately, the things at which the other and less seeing powers are aiming. But the fact that it can lend itself impartially to all parts of our being,—for even the body has its intuitions,—shows that the intuition is not exclusive, but an integral truth-finder. We have to question the intuition of our whole being, not only separately in each part of it, nor in a sum of their findings, but beyond all these lower instruments, beyond even their first spiritual correspondents, by rising into the native home of the intuition which is the native home of the infinite and illimitable Truth, *rtasya sve dame*, where all existence discovers its unity. That is what the ancient Veda meant when it cried, “There is a firm truth hidden by truth (the eternal truth concealed by this other of which we have here these lower intuitions); there the ten hundred rays of light stand together; that is One.” *Rtena ṛtam apibitam dhruvam . . . daśa śatā saha tasthus, tad ekam.*

The spiritual intuition lays hold always upon the reality; it is the luminous harbinger of spiritual realisation or else its illuminative light; it sees that which the other powers of our being are labouring to explore; it gets at the firm truth of the abstract representations of the intellect and the phenomenal representations of the heart and life, a truth which is itself neither remotely abstract nor outwardly concrete, but something else for which these are only two sides of its psychological manifestation to us. What the intuition of our integral being perceives, when its members no longer dispute among themselves but are illumined from above, is that the whole of our being aims at the one reality. The impersonal is a truth, the personal too is a truth; they are the same truth seen from two sides of our psychological activity; neither by itself gives the total account of the Reality, and yet by either we can approach it.

Looked at from one side, it would seem as if an impersonal Thought were at work and created the fiction of the

thinker for the convenience of its action, an impersonal Power at work creating the fiction of the doer, an impersonal existence in operation which uses the fiction of a personal being who has a conscious personality and a personal delight. Looked at from the other side, it is the thinker who expresses himself in thoughts which without him could not exist and our general notion of thought symbolises simply the power of the nature of the thinker; the Ishwara expresses himself by will and power and force; the Existenter extends himself in all the forms integral and partial, direct, inverse and perverse of his existence, consciousness and bliss, and our abstract general notion of these things is only an intellectual representation of the triple power of his nature of being. All impersonality seems in its turn to become a fiction and existence in its every movement and its every particle nothing but the life, the consciousness, the power, the delight of the one and yet innumerable Personality, the infinite Godhead, the self-aware and self-unfolding Purusha. Both views are true, except that the idea of fiction, which is borrowed from our own intellectual processes, has to be exiled and each must be given its proper validity. The integral seeker has to see in this light that he can reach one and the same Reality on both lines, either successively or simultaneously, as if on two connected wheels travelling on parallel lines, but parallel lines which in defiance of intellectual logic but in obedience to their own inner truth of unity do meet in infinity.

We have to look at the divine Personality from this standpoint. When we speak of personality, we mean by it at first something limited, external and separative, and our idea of a personal God assumes the same imperfect character. Our personality is to us at first a separate creature, a limited mind, body, character which we conceive of as the person we are, a fixed quantity; for although in reality it is always changing, yet there is a sufficient element of stability to give a kind of practical justification to this notion of fixedness. We conceive of God as such a person, only without body, a separate person different from all others with a mind and character limited by certain qualities. At first in our primitive conceptions his deity is a thing

of much inconstancy, freak and caprice, an enlarged edition of our human character; but afterwards we conceive of the divine nature of personality as a quite fixed quantity and we attribute to it those qualities alone which we regard as divine and ideal, while all the others are eliminated. This limitation compels us to account for all the rest by attributing them to a Devil, or by lending to man an original creative capacity for all that we consider evil, or else, when we perceive that this will not quite do, by erecting a power which we call Nature and attributing to that all the lower quality and mass of action for which we do not wish to make the Divine responsible. At a higher pitch the attribution of mind and character to God becomes less anthropomorphic and we regard him as an infinite Spirit, but still a separate person, a spirit with certain fixed divine qualities as his attributes. So are conceived the ideas of the divine Personality, the personal God which vary so much in various religions.

All this may seem at first sight to be an original anthropomorphism terminating in an intellectual notion of the Deity which is very much at variance with the actualities of the world as we see it. It is not surprising that the philosophical and sceptical mind should have found little difficulty in destroying it all intellectually, whether in the direction of the denial of a personal God and the assertion of an impersonal Force or Becoming or in that of an impersonal Being or an ineffable denial of existence with all the rest as only symbols of Maya or phenomenal truths of the Time-consciousness. But these are only the personifications of monotheism. Polytheistic religions, less exalted perhaps, but wider and more sensitive in their response to cosmic life, have felt that all in the cosmos has a divine origin; therefore they conceived of the existence of many divine personalities with a vague sense of an indefinable Divine behind, whose relations with the personal gods were not very clearly conceived. And in their more exoteric forms these gods were crudely anthropomorphic; but where the inner sense of spiritual things became clearer, the various godheads assumed the appearance of personalities of the one Divine,—that is the declared point of view of the ancient Veda. This Divine might be a supreme

Being who manifests himself in various divine personalities or an impersonal existence which meets the human mind in these forms; or both views might be held simultaneously without any intellectual attempt to reconcile them, since both were felt to be true to spiritual experience.

If we subject these notions of the divine Personality to the discrimination of the intellect, we shall be inclined to reduce them, according to our bent, to fictions of the imagination or to psychological symbols, in any case, the response of our sensitive personality to something which is not this at all, but is purely impersonal. We may say that That is in reality the very opposite of our humanity and our personality and therefore in order to enter into relations with it we are impelled to set up these human fictions and these personal symbols so as to make it nearer to us. But we have to judge by spiritual experience, and in a total spiritual experience we shall find that these things are not fictions and symbols, but truths of divine being in their essence, however imperfect may have been our representations of them. Even our first idea of our own personality is not an absolute error, but only an incomplete and superficial view beset by many mental errors. Greater self-knowledge shows us that we are not fundamentally the particular formulation of form, powers, properties, qualities with a conscious I identifying itself with them, which we at first appear to be. That is only a temporary fact, though still a fact, of our partial being on the surface of our active consciousness. We find within an infinite being with the potentiality of all qualities, of infinite quality, *ananta-guṇa*, which can be combined in any number of possible ways, and each combination is a revelation of our being. For all this personality is the self-manifestation of a Person, that is to say of a being who is conscious of his manifestation.

But we see too that this being does not seem to be composed even of infinite quality, but has a status of his complex reality in which he seems to stand back from it and to become an indefinable conscious existence, *anirdeśyam*. Even consciousness seems to be drawn back and leave merely a timeless pure existence. And again even this pure self of our being seems at a certain

pitch to deny its own reality, or to be a projection from a self-less¹ baseless unknowable, which we may conceive of either as a nameless somewhat, or as a Nihil. It is when we would fix upon this exclusively and forget all that it has withdrawn into itself that we speak of pure impersonality or the void Nihil as the highest truth. But a more integral vision shows us that it is the Person and the personality and all that it had manifested which has thus cast itself upward into its own unexpressed absolute. And if we carry up our heart as well as our reasoning mind to the Highest, we shall find that we can reach it through the absolute Person as well as through an absolute impersonality. But all this self-knowledge is only the type within ourselves of the corresponding truth of the Divine in his universality. There too we meet him in various forms of divine personality; in formulations of quality which variously express him to us in his nature; in infinite quality, the Ananta-guna; in the divine Person who expresses himself through infinite quality; in absolute impersonality, an absolute existence or an absolute non-existence, which is yet all the time the unexpressed Absolute of this divine Person, this conscious Being who manifests himself through us and through the universe.

Even on the cosmic plane we are constantly approaching the Divine on either of these sides. We may think, feel and say that God is Truth, Justice, Righteousness, Power, Love, Delight, Beauty; we may see him as a universal force or as a universal consciousness. But this is only the abstract way of experience. As we ourselves are not merely a number of qualities or powers or a psychological quantity, but a being, a person who so expresses his nature, so is the Divine a Person, a conscious Being who thus expresses his nature to us. And we can adore him through different forms of this nature, a God of righteousness, a God of love and mercy, a God of peace and purity; but it is evident that there are other things in the divine nature which we have put outside the form of personality in which we are thus worshipping him. The courage of an unflinching spiritual vision and experience

¹ *anātmyam anilayanam*. Taittiriya Upanishad.

can meet him also in more severe or in terrible forms. None of these are all the Divinity; yet these forms of his personality are real truths of himself in which he meets us and seems to deal with us, as if the rest had been put away behind him. He is each separately and all altogether. He is Vishnu, Krishna, Kali; he reveals himself to us in humanity as the Christ personality or the Buddha personality. When we look beyond our first exclusively concentrated vision, we see behind Vishnu all the personality of Shiva and behind Shiva all the personality of Vishnu. He is the Ananta-guna, infinite quality and the infinite divine Personality which manifests itself through it. Again he seems to withdraw into a pure spiritual impersonality or beyond all idea even of impersonal Self and to justify a spiritualised atheism or agnosticism; he becomes to the mind of man an indefinable, *anirdeśyam*. But out of this unknowable the conscious Being, the divine Person, who has manifested himself here, still speaks, "This too is I; even here beyond the view of mind, I am He, the Purushottama."

For beyond the divisions and contradictions of the intellect there is another light and there the vision of a truth reveals itself which we may thus try to express to ourselves intellectually. There all is one truth of all these truths; for there each is present and justified in all the rest. In that light our spiritual experience becomes united and integralised; no least hair's breadth of real division is left, no shade of superiority and inferiority remains between the seeking of the Impersonal and the adoration of the divine Personality, between the way of knowledge and the way of devotion.

Chapter VI

The Delight of the Divine

THIS THEN is the way of devotion and this its justification to the highest and the widest, the most integral knowledge, and we can now perceive what form and place it will take in an integral Yoga. Yoga is in essence the union of the soul with the immortal being and consciousness and delight of the Divine, effected through the human nature with a result of development into the divine nature of being, whatever that may be, so far as we can conceive it in mind and realise it in spiritual activity. Whatever we see of this Divine and fix our concentrated effort upon it, that we can become or grow into some kind of unity with it or at the lowest into tune and harmony with it. The old Upanishad put it trenchantly in its highest terms, "Whoever envisages it as the Existence becomes that existence and whoever envisages it as the Non-existence, becomes that non-existence;" so too it is with all else that we see of the Divine,—that, we may say, is at once the essential and the pragmatic truth of the Godhead. It is something beyond us which is indeed already within us, but which we as yet are not or are only initially in our human existence; but whatever of it we see, we can create or reveal in our conscious nature and being and can grow into it, and so to create or reveal in ourselves individually the Godhead and grow into its universality and transcendence is our spiritual destiny. Or if this seem too high for the weakness of our nature, then at least to approach, reflect and be in secure communion with it is a near and possible consummation.

The aim of this synthetic or integral Yoga which we are considering, is union with the being, consciousness and delight of the Divine through every part of our human nature separately or simultaneously, but all in the long end harmonised and unified, so that the whole may be transformed into a divine nature of being. Nothing less than this can satisfy the integral seer, because

what he sees must be that which he strives to possess spiritually and, so far as may be, become. Not with the knower in him alone, nor with the will alone, nor with the heart alone, but with all these equally and also with the whole mental and vital being in him he aspires to the Godhead and labours to convert their nature into its divine equivalents. And since God meets us in many ways of his being and in all tempts us to him even while he seems to elude us,—and to see divine possibility and overcome its play of obstacles constitutes the whole mystery and greatness of human existence,—therefore in each of these ways at its highest or in the union of all, if we can find the key of their oneness, we shall aspire to track out and find and possess him. Since he withdraws into impersonality, we follow after his impersonal being and delight, but since he meets us also in our personality and through personal relations of the Divine with the human, that too we shall not deny ourselves; we shall admit both the play of the love and the delight and its ineffable union.

By knowledge we seek unity with the Divine in his conscious being: by works we seek also unity with the Divine in his conscious being, not statically, but dynamically, through conscious union with the divine Will; but by love we seek unity with him in all the delight of his being. For that reason the way of love, however narrow it may seem in some of its first movements, is in the end more imperatively all-embracing than any other motive of Yoga. The way of knowledge tends easily towards the impersonal and the absolute, may very soon become exclusive. It is true that it need not do so; since the conscious being of the Divine is universal and individual as well as transcendent and absolute, here too there may be and should be a tendency to integral realisation of unity and we can arrive by it at a spiritual oneness with God in man and God in the universe not less complete than any transcendent union. But still this is not quite imperative. For we may plead that there is a higher and a lower knowledge, a higher self-awareness and a lower self-awareness, and that here the apex of knowledge is to be pursued to the exclusion of the mass of knowledge, the way of exclusion preferred to the integral way. Or we may discover a theory of illusion to justify

our rejection of all connection with our fellow-men and with the cosmic action. The way of works leads us to the Transcendent whose power of being manifests itself as a will in the world one in us and all, by identity with which we come, owing to the conditions of that identity, into union with him as the one self in all and as the universal self and Lord in the cosmos. And this might seem to impose a certain comprehensiveness in our realisation of the unity. But still this too is not quite imperative. For this motive also may lean towards an entire impersonality and, even if it leads to a continued participation in the activities of the universal Godhead, may be entirely detached and passive in its principle. It is only when delight intervenes that the motive of integral union becomes quite imperative.

This delight which is so entirely imperative, is the delight in the Divine for his own sake and for nothing else, for no cause or gain whatever beyond itself. It does not seek God for anything that he can give us or for any particular quality in him, but simply and purely because he is our self and our whole being and our all. It embraces the delight of the transcendence, not for the sake of transcendence, but because he is the transcendent; the delight of the universal, not for the sake of universality, but because he is the universal; the delight of the individual not for the sake of individual satisfaction, but because he is the individual. It goes behind all distinctions and appearances and makes no calculations of more or less in his being, but embraces him wherever he is and therefore everywhere, embraces him utterly in the seeming less as in the seeming more, in the apparent limitation as in the revelation of the illimitable; it has the intuition and the experience of his oneness and completeness everywhere. To seek after him for the sake of his absolute being alone is really to drive at our own individual gain, the gain of absolute peace. To possess him absolutely indeed is necessarily the aim of this delight in his being, but this comes when we possess him utterly and are utterly possessed by him and need be limited to no particular status or condition. To seek after him in some heaven of bliss is to seek him not for himself, but for the bliss of heaven; when we have all the true delight of his being,

then heaven is within ourselves, and wherever he is and we are, there we have the joy of his kingdom. So too to seek him only in ourselves and for ourselves, is to limit both ourselves and our joy in him. The integral delight embraces him not only within our own individual being, but equally in all men and in all beings. And because in him we are one with all, it seeks him not only for ourselves, but for all our fellows. A perfect and complete delight in the Divine, perfect because pure and self-existent, complete because all-embracing as well as all-absorbing, is the meaning of the way of Bhakti for the seeker of the integral Yoga.

Once it is active in us, all other ways of Yoga convert themselves, as it were, to its law and find by it their own richest significance. This integral devotion of our being to God does not turn away from knowledge; the bhakta of this path is the God-lover who is also the God-knower, because by knowledge of his being comes the whole delight of his being; but it is in delight that knowledge fulfils itself, the knowledge of the transcendent in the delight of the Transcendent, the knowledge of the universal in the delight of the universal Godhead, the knowledge of the individual manifestation in the delight of God in the individual, the knowledge of the impersonal in the pure delight of his impersonal being, the knowledge of the personal in the full delight of his personality, the knowledge of his qualities and their play in the delight of the manifestation, the knowledge of the quality-less in the delight of his colourless existence and non-manifestation.

So too this God-lover will be the divine worker, not for the sake of works or for a self-regarding pleasure in action, but because in this way God expends the power of his being and in his powers and their signs we find him, because the divine Will in works is the outflowing of the Godhead in the delight of its power, of divine Being in the delight of divine Force. He will feel perfect joy in the works and acts of the Beloved, because in them too he finds the Beloved; he will himself do all works because through those works too the Lord of his being expresses his divine joy in him: when he works, he feels that he is expressing in act and power his oneness with that which he loves and adores;

he feels the rapture of the will which he obeys and with which all the force of his being is blissfully identified. So too, again, this God-lover will seek after perfection, because perfection is the nature of the Divine and the more he grows into perfection, the more he feels the Beloved manifest in his natural being. Or he will simply grow in perfection like the blossoming of a flower because the Divine is in him and the joy of the Divine, and as that joy expands in him, soul and mind and life too expand naturally into their godhead. At the same time, because he feels the Divine in all, perfect within every limiting appearance, he will not have the sorrow of his imperfection.

Nor will the seeking of the Divine through life and the meeting of him in all the activities of his being and of the universal being be absent from the scope of his worship. All Nature and all life will be to him at once a revelation and a fine trysting-place. Intellectual and aesthetic and dynamic activities, science and philosophy and life, thought and art and action will assume for him a diviner sanction and a greater meaning. He will seek them because of his clear sight of the Divine through them and because of the delight of the Divine in them. He will not be indeed attached to their appearances, for attachment is an obstacle to the Ananda; but because he possesses that pure, powerful and perfect Ananda which obtains everything but is dependent on nothing, and because he finds in them the ways and acts and signs, the becomings and the symbols and images of the Beloved, he draws from them a rapture which the normal mind that pursues them for themselves cannot attain or even dream. All this and more becomes part of the integral way and its consummation.

The general power of Delight is love and the special mould which the joy of love takes is the vision of beauty. The God-lover is the universal lover and he embraces the All-blissful and All-beautiful. When universal love has seized on his heart, it is the decisive sign that the Divine has taken possession of him; and when he has the vision of the All-beautiful everywhere and can feel at all times the bliss of his embrace, that is the decisive sign that he has taken possession of the Divine. Union is the

consummation of love, but it is this mutual possession that gives it at once the acme and the largest reach of its intensity. It is the foundation of oneness in ecstasy.

Chapter VII

The Ananda Brahman

THE WAY of devotion in the integral synthetic Yoga will take the form of a seeking after the Divine through love and delight and a seizing with joy on all the ways of his being. It will find its acme in a perfect union of love and a perfect enjoyment of all the ways of the soul's intimacy with God. It may start from knowledge or it may start from works, but it will then turn knowledge into a joy of luminous union with the being of the Beloved and turn works into a joy of the active union of our being with the will and the power of being of the Beloved. Or it may start directly from love and delight; it will then take both these other things into itself and will develop them as part of the complete joy of oneness.

The beginning of the heart's attraction to the Divine may be impersonal, the touch of an impersonal joy in something universal or transcendent that has revealed itself directly or indirectly to our emotional or our aesthetic being or to our capacity of spiritual felicity. That which we thus grow aware of is the Ananda Brahman, the bliss existence. There is an adoration of an impersonal Delight and Beauty, of a pure and an infinite perfection to which we can give no name or form, a moved attraction of the soul to some ideal and infinite Presence, Power, existence in the world or beyond it, which in some way becomes psychologically or spiritually sensible to us and then more and more intimate and real. That is the call, the touch of the bliss existence upon us. Then to have always the joy and nearness of its presence, to know what it is, so as to satisfy the intellect and the intuitional mind of its constant reality, to put our passive and, so far as we can manage it, our active, our inner immortal and even our outer mortal being into perfect harmony with it, grow into a necessity of our living. And to open ourselves to it is what we feel to be the one true happiness, to live into it the sole real perfection.

A transcendent Bliss, unimaginable and inexpressible by the mind and speech, is the nature of the Ineffable. That broods immanent and secret in the whole universe and in everything in the universe. Its presence is described as a secret ether of the bliss of being, of which the Scripture says that, if this were not, none could for a moment breathe or live. And this spiritual bliss is here also in our hearts. It is hidden in from the toil of the surface mind which catches only at weak and flawed translations of it into various mental, vital and physical forms of the joy of existence. But if the mind has once grown sufficiently subtle and pure in its receptions and not limited by the grosser nature of our outward responses to existence, we can take a reflection of it which will wear perhaps wholly or predominantly the hue of whatever is strongest in our nature. It may present itself first as a yearning for some universal Beauty which we feel in Nature and man and in all that is around us; or we may have the intuition of some transcendent Beauty of which all apparent beauty here is only a symbol. That is how it may come to those in whom the aesthetic being is developed and insistent and the instincts which, when they find form of expression, make the poet and artist, are predominant. Or it may be the sense of a divine spirit of love or else a helpful and compassionate infinite Presence in the universe or behind or beyond it which responds to us when we turn the need of our spirit towards it. So it may first show itself when the emotional being is intensely developed. It may come near to us in other ways, but always as a Power or Presence of delight, beauty, love or peace which touches the mind, but is beyond the forms these things take ordinarily in the mind.

For all joy, beauty, love, peace, delight are outflowings from the Ananda Brahman,—all delight of the spirit, the intellect, the imagination, aesthetic sense, ethical aspiration and satisfaction, action, life, the body. And through all ways of our being the Divine can touch us and make use of them to awaken and liberate the spirit. But to reach the Ananda Brahman in itself the mental reception of it must be subtilised, spiritualised, universalised, discharged of everything that is turbid and limiting. For when we draw quite near or enter into it, it is by an awakened

spiritual sense of a transcendent and a universal Delight which exists within and yet behind and beyond the contradictions of the world and to which we can unite ourselves through a growing universal and spiritual or a transcendental ecstasy.

Ordinarily, the mind is satisfied with reflecting this Infinity we perceive or with feeling the sense of it within and without us, as an experience which, however frequent, yet remains exceptional. It seems in itself so satisfying and wonderful when it comes and our ordinary mind and the active life which we have to lead may seem to us so incompatible with it, that we may think it excessive to expect anything more. But the very spirit of Yoga is this, to make the exceptional normal, and to turn that which is above us and greater than our normal selves into our own constant consciousness. Therefore we should not hesitate to open ourselves more steadily to whatever experience of the Infinite we have, to purify and intensify it, to make it our object of constant thought and contemplation, till it becomes the originating power that acts in us, the Godhead we adore and embrace, our whole being is put into tune with it and it is made the very self of our being.

Our experience of it has to be purified of any mental alloy in it, otherwise it departs, we cannot hold it. And part of this purification is that it shall cease to be dependent on any cause or exciting condition of mind; it must become its own cause and self-existent, source of all other delight, which will exist only by it, and not attached to any cosmic or other image or symbol through which we first came into contact with it. Our experience of it has to be constantly intensified and made more concentrated; otherwise we shall only reflect it in the mirror of the imperfect mind and not reach that point of uplifting and transfiguration by which we are carried beyond the mind into the ineffable bliss. Object of our constant thought and contemplation, it will turn all that is into itself, reveal itself as the universal Ananda Brahman and make all existence its outpouring. If we wait upon it for the inspiration of all our inner and our outer acts, it will become the joy of the Divine pouring itself through us in light and love and power on life and all that lives. Sought

by the adoration and love of the soul, it reveals itself as the Godhead, we see in it the face of God and know the bliss of our Lover. Tuning our whole being to it, we grow into a happy perfection of likeness to it, a human rendering of the divine nature. And when it becomes in every way the self of our self, we are fulfilled in being and we bear the plenitude.

Brahman always reveals himself to us in three ways, within ourselves, above our plane, around us in the universe. Within us, there are two centres of the Purusha, the inner Soul through which he touches us to our awakening; there is the Purusha in the lotus of the heart which opens upward all our powers and the Purusha in the thousand-petalled lotus whence descend through the thought and will, opening the third eye in us, the lightnings of vision and the fire of the divine energy. The bliss existence may come to us through either one of these centres. When the lotus of the heart breaks open, we feel a divine joy, love and peace expanding in us like a flower of light which irradiates the whole being. They can then unite themselves with their secret source, the Divine in our hearts, and adore him as in a temple; they can flow upwards to take possession of the thought and the will and break out upward towards the Transcendent; they stream out in thought and feeling and act towards all that is around us. But so long as our normal being offers any obstacle or is not wholly moulded into a response to this divine influence or an instrument of this divine possession, the experience will be intermittent and we may fall back constantly into our old mortal heart; but by repetition, *abhyāsa*, or by the force of our desire and adoration of the Divine, it will be progressively remoulded until this abnormal experience becomes our natural consciousness.

When the other upper lotus opens, the whole mind becomes full of a divine light, joy and power, behind which is the Divine, the Lord of our being on his throne with our soul beside him or drawn inward into his rays; all the thought and will become then a luminosity, power and ecstasy; in communication with the Transcendent, this can pour down towards our mortal members and flow by them outwards on the world. In this dawn too there

are, as the Vedic mystics knew, our alternations of its day and night, our exiles from the light; but as we grow in the power to hold this new existence, we become able to look long on the sun from which this irradiation proceeds and in our inner being we can grow one body with it. Sometimes the rapidity of this change depends on the strength of our longing for the Divine thus revealed, and on the intensity of our force of seeking; but at others it proceeds rather by a passive surrender to the rhythms of his all-wise working which acts always by its own at first inscrutable method. But the latter becomes the foundation when our love and trust are complete and our whole being lies in the clasp of a Power that is perfect love and wisdom.

The Divine reveals himself in the world around us when we look upon that with a spiritual desire of delight that seeks him in all things. There is often a sudden opening by which the veil of forms is itself turned into a revelation. A universal spiritual Presence, a universal peace, a universal infinite Delight has manifested, immanent, embracing, all-penetrating. This Presence by our love of it, our delight in it, our constant thought of it returns and grows upon us; it becomes the thing that we see and all else is only its habitation, form and symbol. Even all that is most outward, the body, the form, the sound, whatever our senses seize, are seen as this Presence; they cease to be physical and are changed into a substance of spirit. This transformation means a transformation of our own inner consciousness; we are taken by the surrounding Presence into itself and we become part of it. Our own mind, life, body become to us only its habitation and temple, a form of its working and an instrument of its self-expression. All is only soul and body of this delight.

This is the Divine seen around us and on our own physical plane. But he may reveal himself above. We see or feel him as a high-uplifted Presence, a great infinite of Ananda above us, — or in it, our Father in heaven, — and do not feel or see him in ourselves or around us. So long as we keep this vision, the mortality in us is quelled by that Immortality; it feels the light, power and joy and responds to it according to its capacity; or it feels the descent of the spirit and it is then for a time

transformed or else uplifted into some lustre of reflection of the light and power; it becomes a vessel of the Ananda. But at other times it lapses into the old mortality and exists or works dully or pettily in the ruck of its earthly habits. The complete redemption comes by the descent of the divine Power into the human mind and body and the remoulding of their inner life into the divine image,—what the Vedic seers called the birth of the Son by the sacrifice. It is in fact by a continual sacrifice or offering, a sacrifice of adoration and aspiration, of works, of thought and knowledge, of the mounting flame of the Godward will that we build ourselves into the being of this Infinite.

When we possess firmly this consciousness of the Ananda Brahman in all of these three manifestations, above, within, around, we have the full oneness of it and embrace all existences in its delight, peace, joy and love; then all the worlds become the body of this self. But we have not the richest knowledge of this Ananda if it is only an impersonal presence, largeness or immanence that we feel, if our adoration has not been intimate enough for this Being to reveal to us out of its wide-extended joy the face and body and make us feel the hands of the Friend and Lover. Its impersonality is the blissful greatness of the Brahman, but from that can look out upon us the sweetness and intimate control of the divine Personality. For Ananda is the presence of the Self and Master of our being and the stream of its outflowing can be the pure joy of his Lila.

Chapter VIII

The Mystery of Love

THE ADORATION of the impersonal Divine would not be strictly a Yoga of devotion according to the current interpretation; for in the current forms of Yoga it is supposed that the Impersonal can only be sought for a complete unity in which God and our own person disappear and there is none to adore or to be adored; only the delight of the experience of oneness and infinity remains. But in truth the miracles of spiritual consciousness are not to be subjected to so rigid a logic. When we first come to feel the presence of the infinite, as it is the finite personality in us which is touched by it, that may well answer to the touch and call with a sort of adoration. Secondly, we may regard the Infinite not so much as a spiritual status of oneness and bliss, or that only as its mould and medium of being, but rather as the presence of the ineffable Godhead to our consciousness, and then too love and adoration find their place. And even when our personality seems to disappear into unity with it, it may still be—and really is—the individual divine who is melting to the universal or the supreme by a union in which love and lover and loved are forgotten in a fusing experience of ecstasy, but are still there latent in the oneness and subconsciously persisting in it. All union of the self by love must necessarily be of this nature. We may even say, in a sense, that it is to have this joy of union as the ultimate crown of all the varied experiences of spiritual relation between the individual soul and God that the One became many in the universe.

Still, the more varied and most intimate experience of divine love cannot come by the pursuit of the impersonal Infinite alone; for that the Godhead we adore must become near and personal to us. It is possible for the Impersonal to reveal within itself all the riches of personality when we get into its heart, and one who sought only to enter into or to embrace the infinite Presence

alone, may discover in it things he had not dreamed of; the being of the Divine has surprises for us which confound the ideas of the limiting intellect. But ordinarily the way of devotion begins from the other end; it starts from and it rises and widens to its issue by adoration of the divine Personality. The Divine is a Being and not an abstract existence or a status of pure timeless infinity; the original and universal existence is He, but that existence is inseparable from consciousness and bliss of being, and an existence conscious of its own being and its own bliss is what we may well call a divine infinite Person,—Purusha. Moreover all consciousness implies power, Shakti; where there is infinite consciousness of being, there is infinite power of being, and by that power all exists in the universe. All beings exist by this Being; all things are the faces of God; all thought and action and feeling and love proceed from him and return to him, all their results have him for source and support and secret goal. It is to this Godhead, this Being that the Bhakti of an integral Yoga will be poured out and uplifted. Transcendent, it will seek him in the ecstasy of an absolute union; universal, it will seek him in infinite quality and every aspect and in all beings with a universal delight and love; individual, it will enter into all human relations with him that love creates between person and person.

It may not be possible to seize from the beginning on all the complete integrality of that which the heart is seeking; in fact, it is only possible if the intelligence, the temperament, the emotional mind have already been developed into largeness and fineness by the trend of our previous living. That is what the experience of the normal life is meant to lead to by its widening culture of the intellect, the aesthetic and emotional mind and of our parts too of will and active experience. It widens and refines the normal being so that it may open easily to all the truth of That which was preparing it for the temple of its self-manifestation. Ordinarily, man is limited in all these parts of his being and he can grasp at first only so much of the divine truth as has some large correspondence to his own nature and its past development and associations. Therefore God meets us

first in different limited affirmations of his divine qualities and nature; he presents himself to the seeker as an absolute of the things he can understand and to which his will and heart can respond; he discloses some name and aspect of his Godhead. This is what is called in Yoga the *iṣṭa-devatā*, the name and form elected by our nature for its worship. In order that the human being may embrace this Godhead with every part of himself, it is represented with a form that answers to its aspects and qualities and which becomes the living body of God to the adorer. These are those forms of Vishnu, Shiva, Krishna, Kali, Durga, Christ, Buddha, which the mind of man seizes on for adoration. Even the monotheist who worships a formless Godhead, yet gives to him some form of quality, some mental form or form of Nature by which he envisages and approaches him. But to be able to see a living form, a mental body, as it were, of the Divine gives to the approach a greater closeness and sweetness.

The way of the integral Yoga of bhakti will be to universalise this conception of the Deity, to personalise him intimately by a multiple and an all-embracing relation, to make him constantly present to all the being and to devote, give up, surrender the whole being to him, so that he shall dwell near to us and in us and we with him and in him. *Manana* and *darsana*, a constant thinking of him in all things and seeing of him always and everywhere is essential to this way of devotion. When we look on the things of physical Nature, in them we have to see the divine object of our love; when we look upon men and beings, we have to see him in them and in our relation with them to see that we are entering into relations with forms of him; when breaking beyond the limitation of the material world we know or have relations with the beings of other planes, still the same thought and vision has to be made real to our minds. The normal habit of our minds which are open only to the material and apparent form and the ordinary mutilated relation and ignore the secret Godhead within, has to yield by an unceasing habit of all-embracing love and delight to this deeper and ampler comprehension and this greater relation. In all godheads we have to see this one God whom we worship with our heart and all our

being; they are forms of his divinity. So enlarging our spiritual embrace we reach a point at which all is he and the delight of this consciousness becomes to us our normal uninterrupted way of looking at the world. That brings us the outward or objective universality of our union with him.

Inwardly, the image of the Beloved has to become visible to the eye within, dwelling in us as in his mansion, informing our hearts with the sweetness of his presence, presiding over all our activities of mind and life as the friend, master and lover from the summit of our being, uniting us from above with himself in the universe. A constant inner communion is the joy to be made close and permanent and unfailing. This communion is not to be confined to an exceptional nearness and adoration when we retire quite into ourselves away from our normal preoccupations, nor is it to be sought by a putting away of our human activities. All our thoughts, impulses, feelings, actions have to be referred to him for his sanction or disallowance, or if we cannot yet reach this point, to be offered to him in our sacrifice of aspiration, so that he may more and more descend into us and be present in them all and pervade them with all his will and power, his light and knowledge, his love and delight. In the end all our thoughts, feelings, impulses, actions will begin to proceed from him and change into some divine seed and form of themselves; in our whole inner living we shall have grown conscious of ourselves as a part of his being till between the existence of the Divine whom we adore and our own lives there is no longer any division. So too in all happenings we have to come to see the dealings with us of the divine Lover and take such pleasure in them that even grief and suffering and physical pain become his gifts and turn to delight and disappear finally into delight, slain by the sense of the divine contact, because the touch of his hands is the alchemist of a miraculous transformation. Some reject life because it is tainted with grief and pain, but to the God-lover grief and pain become means of meeting with him, imprints of his pressure and finally cease as soon as our union with his nature becomes too complete for these masks of the universal delight at all to conceal it. They change into the Ananda.

All the relations by which this union comes about, become on this path intensely and blissfully personal. That which in the end contains, takes up or unifies them all, is the relation of lover and beloved, because that is the most intense and blissful of all and carries up all the rest into its heights and yet exceeds them. He is the teacher and guide and leads us to knowledge; at every step of the developing inner light and vision, we feel his touch like that of the artist moulding our clay of mind, his voice revealing the truth and its word, the thought he gives us to which we respond, the flashing of his spears of lightning which chase the darkness of our ignorance. Especially, in proportion as the partial lights of the mind become transformed into lights of gnosis, in whatever slighter or greater degree that may happen, we feel it as a transformation of our mentality into his and more and more he becomes the thinker and seer in us. We cease to think and see for ourselves, but think only what he wills to think for us and see only what he sees for us. And then the teacher is fulfilled in the lover; he lays hands on all our mental being to embrace and possess, to enjoy and use it.

He is the Master; but in this way of approach all distance and separation, all awe and fear and mere obedience disappear, because we become too close and united with him for these things to endure and it is the lover of our being who takes it up and occupies and uses and does with it whatever he wills. Obedience is the sign of the servant, but that is the lowest stage of this relation, *dāsyā*. Afterwards we do not obey, but move to his will as the string replies to the finger of the musician. To be the instrument is this higher stage of self-surrender and submission. But this is the living and loving instrument and it ends in the whole nature of our being becoming the slave of God, rejoicing in his possession and its own blissful subjection to the divine grasp and mastery. With a passionate delight it does all he wills it to do without questioning and bears all he would have it bear, because what it bears is the burden of the beloved being.

He is the friend, the adviser, helper, saviour in trouble and distress, the defender from enemies, the hero who fights our

battles for us or under whose shield we fight, the charioteer, the pilot of our ways. And here we come at once to a closer intimacy; he is the comrade and eternal companion, the playmate of the game of living. But still there is so far a certain division, however pleasant, and friendship is too much limited by the appearance of beneficence. The lover can wound, abandon, be wroth with us, seem to betray, yet our love endures and even grows by these oppositions; they increase the joy of reunion and the joy of possession; through them the lover remains the friend, and all that he does we find in the end has been done by the lover and helper of our being for our soul's perfection as well as for his joy in us. These contradictions lead to a greater intimacy. He is the father and mother too of our being, its source and protector and its indulgent cherisher and giver of our desires. He is the child born to our desire whom we cherish and rear. All these things the lover takes up; his love in its intimacy and oneness keeps in it the paternal and maternal care and lends itself to our demands upon it. All is unified in that deepest many-sided relation.

From the beginning even it is possible to have this closest relation of the lover and beloved, but it will not be as exclusive for the integral Yogan as for certain purely ecstatic ways of Bhakti. It will from the beginning take into itself something of the hues of the other relations, since he follows too knowledge and works and has need of the Divine as teacher, friend and master. The growing of the love of God must carry with it in him an expansion of the knowledge of God and of the action of the divine Will in his nature and living. The divine Lover reveals himself; he takes possession of the life. But still the essential relation will be that of love from which all things flow, love passionate, complete, seeking a hundred ways of fulfilment, every means of mutual possession, a million facets of the joy of union. All the distinctions of the mind, all its barriers and "cannot be"s, all the cold analyses of the reason are mocked at by this love or they are only used as the tests and fields and gates of union. Love comes to us in many ways; it may come as an awakening to the beauty of the Lover, by the sight of an ideal face and image of him, by his mysterious hints to us of himself behind

the thousand faces of things in the world, by a slow or sudden need of the heart, by a vague thirst in the soul, by the sense of someone near us drawing us or pursuing us with love or of someone blissful and beautiful whom we must discover.

We may seek after him passionately and pursue the unseen beloved; but also the lover whom we think not of, may pursue us, may come upon us in the midst of the world and seize on us for his own whether at first we will or no. Even, he may come to us at first as an enemy, with the wrath of love, and our earliest relations with him may be those of battle and struggle. Where first there is love and attraction, the relations between the Divine and the soul may still for long be chequered with misunderstanding and offence, jealousy and wrath, strife and the quarrels of love, hope and despair and the pain of absence and separation. We throw up all the passions of the heart against him, till they are purified into a sole ecstasy of bliss and oneness. But that too is no monotony; it is not possible for the tongue of human speech to tell all the utter unity and all the eternal variety of the ananda of divine love. Our higher and our lower members are both flooded with it, the mind and life no less than the soul: even the physical body takes its share of the joy, feels the touch, is filled in all its limbs, veins, nerves with the flowing of the wine of the ecstasy, *amṛta*. Love and Ananda are the last word of being, the secret of secrets, the mystery of mysteries.

Thus universalised, personalised, raised to its intensities, made all-occupying, all-embracing, all-fulfilling, the way of love and delight gives the supreme liberation. Its highest crest is a supracosmic union. But for love complete union is *mukti*; liberation has to it no other sense; and it includes all kinds of *mukti* together, nor are they in the end, as some would have it, merely successive to each other and therefore mutually exclusive. We have the absolute union of the divine with the human spirit, *sāyujya*; in that reveals itself a content of all that depends here upon difference,—but there the difference is only a form of oneness,—ananda too of nearness and contact and mutual presence, *sāmīpya*, *sālokya*, ananda of mutual reflection, the thing that we call likeness, *sādr̥ṣya*, and other wonderful things

too for which language has as yet no name. There is nothing which is beyond the reach of the God-lover or denied to him; for he is the favourite of the divine Lover and the self of the Beloved.

Part IV

The Yoga of Self-Perfection

The Synthesis of Yoga

THE YOGA OF SELF-PERFECTION

CHAPTER XLIX

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE INTEGRAL YOGA

The principle of Yoga is the turning of one or of all powers of our human existence into a means of reaching divine Being. In an ordinary Yoga one main power of being or one group of its powers is made the means, vehicle, path. In a synthetic Yoga all powers will be combined and included in the transmuting instrumentation.

In Hathayoga the instrument is the body and life. All the power of the body is stilled, collected, purified, heightened, concentrated to its utmost limits or beyond any limits by Asana and other physical processes ; the power of the life too is similarly purified, heightened, concentrated by Asana and Pranayama. This concentration of powers is then directed towards that physical centre in which the divine consciousness sits concealed in the human body. The power of Life, Nature-power, coiled up with all its secret forces asleep in the lowest nervous plexus of the earth-being,—for only so much escapes into waking action in our normal operations as is sufficient for the limited uses of human life,—rises awakened through centre after centre and awakens, too, in its ascent and passage the forces of each successive nodus of our being, the nervous life, the

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Chapter I

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In Rajayoga the chosen instrument is the mind. Our ordinary mentality is first disciplined, purified and directed towards the divine Being, then by a summary process of Asana and Pranayama the physical force of our being is stilled and concentrated, the life-force released into a rhythmic movement capable of cessation and concentrated into a higher power of its upward action, the mind, supported and strengthened by this greater action and concentration of the body and life upon which it rests,

is itself purified of all its unrest and emotion and its habitual thought-waves, liberated from distraction and dispersion, given its highest force of concentration, gathered up into a trance of absorption. Two objects, the one temporal, the other eternal, are gained by this discipline. Mind-power develops in another concentrated action abnormal capacities of knowledge, effective will, deep light of reception, powerful light of thought-radiation which are altogether beyond the narrow range of our normal mentality; it arrives at the Yogic or occult powers around which there has been woven so much quite dispensable and yet perhaps salutary mystery. But the one final end and the one all-important gain is that the mind, stilled and cast into a concentrated trance, can lose itself in the divine consciousness and the soul be made free to unite with the divine Being.

The triple way takes for its chosen instruments the three main powers of the mental soul-life of the human being. Knowledge selects the reason and the mental vision and it makes them by purification, concentration and a certain discipline of a God-directed seeking its means for the greatest knowledge and the greatest vision of all, God-knowledge and God-vision. Its aim is to see, know and be the Divine. Works, action selects for its instrument the will of the doer of works; it makes life an offering of sacrifice to the Godhead and by purification, concentration and a certain discipline of subjection to the divine Will a means for contact and increasing unity of the soul of man with the divine Master of the universe. Devotion selects the emotional and aesthetic powers of the soul and by turning them all Godward in a perfect purity, intensity, infinite passion of seeking makes them a means of God-possession in one or many relations of unity with the Divine Being. All aim in their own way at a union or unity of the human soul with the supreme Spirit.

Each Yoga in its process has the character of the instrument it uses; thus the Hathayogic process is psycho-physical, the Raja-yogic mental and psychic, the way of knowledge is spiritual and cognitive, the way of devotion spiritual, emotional and aesthetic, the way of works spiritual and dynamic by action. Each is guided

in the ways of its own characteristic power. But all power is in the end one, all power is really soul-power. In the ordinary process of life, body and mind this truth is quite obscured by the dispersed, dividing and distributive action of Nature which is the normal condition of all our functionings, although even there it is in the end evident; for all material energy contains hidden the vital, mental, psychic, spiritual energy and in the end it must release these forms of the one Shakti, the vital energy conceals and liberates into action all the other forms, the mental supporting itself on the life and body and their powers and functionings contains undeveloped or only partially developed the psychic and the spiritual power of the being. But when by Yoga any of these powers is taken up from the dispersed and distributive action, raised to its highest degree, concentrated, it becomes manifest soul-power and reveals the essential unity. Therefore the Hathayogic process has too its pure psychic and spiritual result, the Rajayogic arrives by psychic means at a spiritual consummation. The triple way may appear to be altogether mental and spiritual in its way of seeking and its objectives, but it can be attended by results more characteristic of the other paths, which offer themselves in a spontaneous and involuntary flowering, and for the same reason, because soul-power is all-power and where it reaches its height in one direction its other possibilities also begin to show themselves in fact or in incipient potentiality. This unity at once suggests the possibility of a synthetic Yoga.

Tantric discipline is in its nature a synthesis. It has seized on the large universal truth that there are two poles of being whose essential unity is the secret of existence, Brahman and Shakti, Spirit and Nature, and that Nature is power of the spirit or rather is spirit as power. To raise nature in man into manifest power of spirit is its method and it is the whole nature that it gathers up for the spiritual conversion. It includes in its system of instrumentation the forceful Hathayogic process and especially the opening up of the nervous centres and the passage through them of the awakened Shakti on her way to her union with the Brahman, the subtler stress of the Rajayogic purification, meditation and concentration, the leverage of will-force, the motive

power of devotion, the key of knowledge. But it does not stop short with an effective assembling of the different powers of these specific Yogas. In two directions it enlarges by its synthetic turn the province of the Yogic method. First, it lays its hand firmly on many of the main springs of human quality, desire, action and it subjects them to an intensive discipline with the soul's mastery of its motives as a first aim and their elevation to a diviner spiritual level as its final utility. Again, it includes in its objects of Yoga not only liberation,¹ which is the one all-mastering preoccupation of the specific systems, but a cosmic enjoyment² of the power of the Spirit, which the others may take incidentally on the way, in part, casually, but avoid making a motive or object. It is a bolder and larger system.

In the method of synthesis which we have been following, another clue of principle has been pursued which is derived from another view of the possibilities of Yoga. This starts from the method of Vedanta to arrive at the aim of the Tantra. In the Tantric method Shakti is all-important, becomes the key to the finding of spirit; in this synthesis spirit, soul is all-important, becomes the secret of the taking up of Shakti. The Tantric method starts from the bottom and grades the ladder of ascent upwards to the summit; therefore its initial stress is upon the action of the awakened Shakti in the nervous system of the body and its centres; the opening of the six lotuses is the opening up of the ranges of the power of Spirit. Our synthesis takes man as a spirit in mind much more than a spirit in body and assumes in him the capacity to begin on that level, to spiritualise his being by the power of the soul in mind opening itself directly to a higher spiritual force and being and to perfect by that higher force so possessed and brought into action the whole of his nature. For that reason our initial stress has fallen upon the utilisation of the powers of soul in mind and the turning of the triple key of knowledge, works and love in the locks of the spirit; the Hathayogic methods can be dispensed with,—though there is no objection to their partial use,—the Rajayogic will only enter

¹ Mukti. ² Bhukti.

in as an informal element. To arrive by the shortest way at the largest development of spiritual power and being and divinise by it a liberated nature in the whole range of human living is our inspiring motive.

The principle in view is a self-surrender, a giving up of the human being into the being, consciousness, power, delight of the Divine, a union or communion at all the points of meeting in the soul of man, the mental being, by which the Divine himself, directly and without veil master and possessor of the instrument, shall by the light of his presence and guidance perfect the human being in all the forces of the Nature for a divine living. Here we arrive at a farther enlargement of the objects of the Yoga. The common initial purpose of all Yoga is the liberation of the soul of man from its present natural ignorance and limitation, its release into spiritual being, its union with the highest self and Divinity. But ordinarily this is made not only the initial but the whole and final object: enjoyment of spiritual being there is, but either in a dissolution of the human and individual into the silence of self-being or on a higher plane in another existence. The Tantric system makes liberation the final, but not the only aim; it takes on its way a full perfection and enjoyment of the spiritual power, light and joy in the human existence, and even it has a glimpse of a supreme experience in which liberation and cosmic action and enjoyment are unified in a final overcoming of all oppositions and dissonances. It is this wider view of our spiritual potentialities from which we begin, but we add another stress which brings in a completer significance. We regard the spirit in man not as solely an individual being travelling to a transcendent unity with the Divine, but as a universal being capable of oneness with the Divine in all souls and all Nature and we give this extended view its entire practical consequence. The human soul's individual liberation and enjoyment of union with the Divine in spiritual being, consciousness and delight must always be the first object of the Yoga; its free enjoyment of the cosmic unity of the Divine becomes a second object; but out of that a third appears, the effectuation of the meaning of the divine unity with all beings by a sympathy and participation in

the spiritual purpose of the Divine in humanity. The individual Yoga then turns from its separateness and becomes a part of the collective Yoga of the divine Nature in the human race. The liberated individual being, united with the Divine in self and spirit, becomes in his natural being a self-perfected instrument for the perfect outflowering of the Divine in humanity.

This outflowering has its two terms; first, comes the growth out of the separative human ego into the unity of the spirit, then the possession of the divine nature in its proper and its higher forms and no longer in the inferior forms of the mental being which are a mutilated translation and not the authentic text of the original script of divine Nature in the cosmic individual. In other words, a perfection has to be aimed at which amounts to the elevation of the mental into the full spiritual and supramental nature. Therefore this integral Yoga of knowledge, love and works has to be extended into a Yoga of spiritual and gnostic self-perfection. As gnostic knowledge, will and ananda are a direct instrumentation of spirit and can only be won by growing into the spirit, into divine being, this growth has to be the first aim of our Yoga. The mental being has to enlarge itself into the oneness of the Divine before the Divine will perfect in the soul of the individual its gnostic outflowering. That is the reason why the triple way of knowledge, works and love becomes the key-note of the whole Yoga, for that is the direct means for the soul in mind to rise to its highest intensities where it passes upward into the divine oneness. That too is the reason why the Yoga must be integral. For if immersing in the Infinite or some close union with the Divine were all our aim, an integral Yoga would be superfluous, except for such greater satisfaction of the being of man as we may get by a self-lifting of the whole of it towards its Source. But it would not be needed for the essential aim, since by any single power of the soul-nature we can meet with the Divine; each at its height rises up into the infinite and absolute, each therefore offers a sufficient way of arrival, for all the hundred separate paths meet in the Eternal. But the gnostic being is a complete enjoyment and possession of the whole divine and spiritual nature; and it is a complete

lifting of the whole nature of man into its power of a divine and spiritual existence. Integrality becomes then an essential condition of this Yoga.

At the same time we have seen that each of the three ways at its height, if it is pursued with a certain largeness, can take into itself the powers of the others and lead to their fulfilment. It is therefore sufficient to start by one of them and find the point at which it meets the other at first parallel lines of advance and melts into them by its own widenings. At the same time a more difficult, complex, wholly powerful process would be to start, as it were, on three lines together, on a triple wheel of soul-power. But the consideration of this possibility must be postponed till we have seen what are the conditions and means of the Yoga of self-perfection. For we shall see that this also need not be postponed entirely, but a certain preparation of it is part of and a certain initiation into it proceeds by the growth of the divine works, love and knowledge.

Chapter II

The Integral Perfection

ADIVINE perfection of the human being is our aim. We must know then first what are the essential elements that constitute man's total perfection; secondly, what we mean by a divine as distinguished from a human perfection of our being. That man as a being is capable of self-development and of some approach at least to an ideal standard of perfection which his mind is able to conceive, fix before it and pursue, is common ground to all thinking humanity, though it may be only the minority who concern themselves with this possibility as providing the one most important aim of life. But by some the ideal is conceived as a mundane change, by others as a religious conversion.

The mundane perfection is sometimes conceived of as something outward, social, a thing of action, a more rational dealing with our fellow-men and our environment, a better and more efficient citizenship and discharge of duties, a better, richer, kindlier and happier way of living, with a more just and more harmonious associated enjoyment of the opportunities of existence. By others again a more inner and subjective ideal is cherished, a clarifying and raising of the intelligence, will and reason, a heightening and ordering of power and capacity in the nature, a nobler ethical, a richer aesthetic, a finer emotional, a much healthier and better-governed vital and physical being. Sometimes one element is stressed, almost to the exclusion of the rest; sometimes, in wider and more well-balanced minds, the whole harmony is envisaged as a total perfection. A change of education and social institutions is the outward means adopted or an inner self-training and development is preferred as the true instrumentation. Or the two aims may be clearly united, the perfection of the inner individual, the perfection of the outer living.

But the mundane aim takes for its field the present life

and its opportunities; the religious aim on the contrary fixes before it the self-preparation for another existence after death, its commonest ideal is some kind of pure sainthood, its means a conversion of the imperfect or sinful human being by divine grace or through obedience to a law laid down by a scripture or else given by a religious founder. The aim of religion may include a social change, but it is then a change brought about by the acceptance of a common religious ideal and way of consecrated living, a brotherhood of the saints, a theocracy or kingdom of God reflecting on earth the kingdom of heaven.

The object of our synthetic Yoga must, in this respect too as in its other parts, be more integral and comprehensive, embrace all these elements or these tendencies of a larger impulse of self-perfection and harmonise them or rather unify, and in order to do that successfully it must seize on a truth which is wider than the ordinary religious and higher than the mundane principle. All life is a secret Yoga, an obscure growth of Nature towards the discovery and fulfilment of the divine principle hidden in her which becomes progressively less obscure, more self-conscious and luminous, more self-possessed in the human being by the opening of all his instruments of knowledge, will, action, life to the Spirit within him and in the world. Mind, life, body, all the forms of our nature are the means of this growth, but they find their last perfection only by opening out to something beyond them, first, because they are not the whole of what man is, secondly, because that other something which he is, is the key of his completeness and brings a light which discovers to him the whole high and large reality of his being.

Mind is fulfilled by a greater knowledge of which it is only a half-light, life discovers its meaning in a greater power and will of which it is the outward and as yet obscure functioning, body finds its last use as an instrument of a power of being of which it is a physical support and material starting-point. They have all themselves first to be developed and find out their ordinary possibilities; all our normal life is a trying of these possibilities and an opportunity for this preparatory and tentative self-training. But life cannot find its perfect self-fulfilment till it opens to

that greater reality of being of which by this development of a richer power and a more sensitive use and capacity it becomes a well-prepared field of working.

Intellectual, volitional, ethical, emotional, aesthetic and physical training and improvement are all so much to the good, but they are only in the end a constant movement in a circle without any last delivering and illuminating aim, unless they arrive at a point when they can open themselves to the power and presence of the Spirit and admit its direct workings. This direct working effects a conversion of the whole being which is the indispensable condition of our real perfection. To grow into the truth and power of the Spirit and by the direct action of that power to be made a fit channel of its self-expression,—a living of man in the Divine and a divine living of the Spirit in humanity,—will therefore be the principle and the whole object of an integral Yoga of self-perfection.

In the process of this change there must be by the very necessity of the effort two stages of its working. First, there will be the personal endeavour of the human being, as soon as he becomes aware by his soul, mind, heart of this divine possibility and turns towards it as the true object of life, to prepare himself for it and to get rid of all in him that belongs to a lower working, of all that stands in the way of his opening to the spiritual truth and its power, so as to possess by this liberation his spiritual being and turn all his natural movements into free means of its self-expression. It is by this turn that the self-conscious Yoga aware of its aim begins: there is a new awakening and an upward change of the life motive. So long as there is only an intellectual, ethical and other self-training for the now normal purposes of life which does not travel beyond the ordinary circle of working of mind, life and body, we are still only in the obscure and yet unilluminated preparatory Yoga of Nature; we are still in pursuit of only an ordinary human perfection. A spiritual desire of the Divine and of the divine perfection, of a unity with him in all our being and a spiritual perfection in all our nature, is the effective sign of this change, the precursory power of a great integral conversion of our being and living.

By personal effort a precursory change, a preliminary conversion can be effected; it amounts to a greater or less spiritualising of our mental motives, our character and temperament, and a mastery, stilling or changed action of the vital and physical life. This converted subjectivity can be made the base of some communion or unity of the soul in mind with the Divine and some partial reflection of the divine nature in the mentality of the human being. That is as far as man can go by his unaided or indirectly aided effort, because that is an effort of mind and mind cannot climb beyond itself permanently: at most it arises to a spiritualised and idealised mentality. If it shoots up beyond that border, it loses hold of itself, loses hold of life, and arrives either at a trance of absorption or a passivity. A greater perfection can only be arrived at by a higher power entering in and taking up the whole action of the being. The second stage of this Yoga will therefore be a persistent giving up of all the action of the nature into the hands of this greater Power, a substitution of its influence, possession and working for the personal effort, until the Divine to whom we aspire becomes the direct master of the Yoga and effects the entire spiritual and ideal conversion of the being.

This double character of our Yoga raises it beyond the mundane ideal of perfection, while at the same time it goes too beyond the loftier, intenser, but much narrower religious formula. The mundane ideal regards man always as a mental, vital and physical being and it aims at a human perfection well within these limits, a perfection of mind, life and body, an expansion and refinement of the intellect and knowledge, of the will and power, of ethical character, aim and conduct, of aesthetic sensibility and creativeness, of emotional balanced poise and enjoyment, of vital and physical soundness, regulated action and just efficiency. It is a wide and full aim, but yet not sufficiently full and wide, because it ignores that other greater element of our being which the mind vaguely conceives as the spiritual element and leaves it either undeveloped or insufficiently satisfied as merely some high occasional or added derivative experience, the result of the action of mind in its exceptional aspects or dependent upon mind for its presence and persistence. It can

become a high aim when it seeks to develop the loftier and the larger reaches of our mentality, but yet not sufficiently high, because it does not aspire beyond mind to that of which our purest reason, our brightest mental intuition, our deepest mental sense and feeling, strongest mental will and power or ideal aim and purpose are only pale radiations. Its aim besides is limited to a terrestrial perfection of the normal human life.

A Yoga of integral perfection regards man as a divine spiritual being involved in mind, life and body; it aims therefore at a liberation and a perfection of his divine nature. It seeks to make an inner living in the perfectly developed spiritual being his constant intrinsic living and the spiritualised action of mind, life and body only its outward human expression. In order that this spiritual being may not be something vague and indefinable or else but imperfectly realised and dependent on the mental support and the mental limitations, it seeks to go beyond mind to the supramental knowledge, will, sense, feeling, intuition, dynamic initiation of vital and physical action, all that makes the native working of the spiritual being. It accepts human life, but takes account of the large supraterrestrial action behind the earthly material living, and it joins itself to the divine Being from whom the supreme origination of all these partial and lower states proceeds so that the whole of life may become aware of its divine source and feel in each action of knowledge, of will, of feeling, sense and body the divine originating impulse. It rejects nothing that is essential in the mundane aim, but enlarges it, finds and lives in its greater and its truer meaning now hidden from it, transfigures it from a limited, earthly and mortal thing to a figure of infinite, divine and immortal values.

The integral Yoga meets the religious ideal at several points, but goes beyond it in the sense of a greater wideness. The religious ideal looks, not only beyond this earth, but away from it to a heaven or even beyond all heavens to some kind of Nirvana. Its ideal of perfection is limited to whatever kind of inner or outer mutation will eventually serve the turning away of the soul from the human life to the beyond. Its ordinary idea of perfection is a religio-ethical change, a drastic purification of the active and the

emotional being, often with an ascetic abrogation and rejection of the vital impulses as its completest reaching of excellence, and in any case a supraterrestrial motive and reward or result of a life of piety and right conduct. In so far as it admits a change of knowledge, will, aesthesis, it is in the sense of the turning of them to another object than the aims of human life and eventually brings a rejection of all earthly objects of aesthesis, will and knowledge. The method, whether it lays stress on personal effort or upon divine influence, on works and knowledge or upon grace, is not like the mundane a development, but rather a conversion; but in the end the aim is not a conversion of our mental and physical nature, but the putting on of a pure spiritual nature and being, and since that is not possible here on earth, it looks for its consummation by a transference to another world or a shuffling off of all cosmic existence.

But the integral Yoga finds itself on a conception of the spiritual being as an omnipresent existence, the fullness of which comes not essentially by a transference to other worlds or a cosmic self-extinction, but by a growth out of what we now are phenomenally into the consciousness of the omnipresent reality which we always are in the essence of our being. It substitutes for the form of religious piety its completer spiritual seeking of a divine union. It proceeds by a personal effort to a conversion through a divine influence and possession; but this divine grace, if we may so call it, is not simply a mysterious flow or touch coming from above, but the all-pervading act of a divine presence which we come to know within as the power of the highest Self and Master of our being entering into the soul and so possessing it that we not only feel it close to us and pressing upon our mortal nature, but live in its law, know that law, possess it as the whole power of our spiritualised nature. The conversion its action will effect is an integral conversion of our ethical being into the Truth and Right of the divine nature, of our intellectual into the illumination of divine knowledge, our emotional into the divine love and unity, our dynamic and volitional into a working of the divine power, our aesthetic into a plenary reception and a creative enjoyment of divine beauty, not excluding even in

the end a divine conversion of the vital and physical being. It regards all the previous life as an involuntary and unconscious or half-conscious preparatory growing towards this change and Yoga as the voluntary and conscious effort and realisation of the change, by which all the aim of human existence in all its parts is fulfilled, even while it is transfigured. Admitting the supracosmic truth and life in worlds beyond, it admits too the terrestrial as a continued term of the one existence and a change of individual and communal life on earth as a strain of its divine meaning.

To open oneself to the supracosmic Divine is an essential condition of this integral perfection; to unite oneself with the universal Divine is another essential condition. Here the Yoga of self-perfection coincides with the Yogas of knowledge, works and devotion; for it is impossible to change the human nature into the divine or to make it an instrument of the divine knowledge, will and joy of existence, unless there is a union with the supreme Being, Consciousness and Bliss and a unity with its universal Self in all things and beings. A wholly separative possession of the divine nature by the human individual, as distinct from a self-withdrawn absorption in it, is not possible. But this unity will not be an inmost spiritual oneness qualified, so long as the human life lasts, by a separative existence in mind, life and body; the full perfection is a possession, through this spiritual unity, of unity too with the universal Mind, the universal Life, the universal Form which are the other constant terms of cosmic being. Moreover, since human life is still accepted as a self-expression of the realised Divine in man, there must be an action of the entire divine nature in our life; and this brings in the need of the supramental conversion which substitutes the native action of spiritual being for the imperfect action of the superficial nature and spiritualises and transfigures its mental, vital and physical parts by the spiritual ideality. These three elements, a union with the supreme Divine, unity with the universal Self, and a supramental life action from this transcendent origin and through this universality, but still with the individual as the soul-channel and natural instrument, constitute the essence of the integral divine perfection of the human being.

Chapter III

The Psychology of Self-Perfection

ESSENTIALLY, then, this divine self-perfection is a conversion of the human into a likeness of and a fundamental oneness with the divine nature, a rapid shaping of the image of God in man and filling in of its ideal outlines. It is what is ordinarily termed *sādrśya-mukti*, a liberation into the divine resemblance out of the bondage of the human seeming, or, to use the expression of the Gita, *sādharmya-gati*, a coming to be one in law of being with the supreme, universal and indwelling Divine. To perceive and have a right view of our way to such a transformation we must form some sufficient working idea of the complex thing that this human nature at present is in the confused interminglings of its various principles, so that we may see the precise nature of the conversion each part of it must undergo and the most effective means for the conversion. How to disengage from this knot of thinking mortal matter the Immortal it contains, from this mentalised vital animal man the happy fullness of his submerged hints of Godhead, is the real problem of a human being and living. Life develops many first hints of the divinity without completely disengaging them; Yoga is the unravelling of the knot of Life's difficulty.

First of all we have to know the central secret of the psychological complexity which creates the problem and all its difficulties. But an ordinary psychology which only takes mind and its phenomena at their surface values, will be of no help to us; it will not give us the least guidance in this line of self-exploration and self-conversion. Still less can we find the clue in a scientific psychology with a materialistic basis which assumes that the body and the biological and physiological factors of our nature are not only the starting-point but the whole real foundation and regards human mind as only a subtle development from the life and the body. That may be the actual truth of the

animal side of human nature and of the human mind in so far as it is limited and conditioned by the physical part of our being. But the whole difference between man and the animal is that the animal mind, as we know it, cannot get for one moment away from its origins, cannot break out from the covering, the close chrysalis which the bodily life has spun round the soul, and become something greater than its present self, a more free, magnificent and noble being; but in man mind reveals itself as a greater energy escaping from the restrictions of the vital and physical formula of being. But even this is not all that man is or can be: he has in him the power to evolve and release a still greater ideal energy which in its turn escapes out of the restrictions of the mental formula of his nature and discloses the supramental form, the ideal power of a spiritual being. In Yoga we have to travel beyond the physical nature and the superficial man and to discover the workings of the whole nature of the real man. In other words we must arrive at and use a psycho-physical knowledge with a spiritual foundation.

Man is in his real nature,—however obscure now this truth may be to our present understanding and self-consciousness, we must for the purposes of Yoga have faith in it, and we shall then find that our faith is justified by an increasing experience and a greater self-knowledge,—a spirit using the mind, life and body for an individual and a communal experience and self-manifestation in the universe. This spirit is an infinite existence limiting itself in apparent being for individual experience. It is an infinite consciousness which defines itself in finite forms of consciousness for joy of various knowledge and various power of being. It is an infinite delight of being expanding and contracting itself and its powers, concealing and discovering, formulating many terms of its joy of existence, even to an apparent obscuration and denial of its own nature. In itself it is eternal Sachchidananda, but this complexity, this knotting up and unravelling of the infinite in the finite is the aspect we see it assume in universal and in individual nature. To discover the eternal Sachchidananda, this essential self of our being within us, and live in it is the stable basis, to make its true nature

evident and creative of a divine way of living in our instruments, supermind, mind, life and body, the active principle of a spiritual perfection.

Supermind, mind, life and body are the four instruments which the spirit uses for its manifestation in the workings of Nature. Supermind is spiritual consciousness acting as a self-luminous knowledge, will, sense, aesthesis, energy, self-creative and unveiling power of its own delight and being. Mind is the action of the same powers, but limited and only very indirectly and partially illumined. Supermind lives in unity though it plays with diversity; mind lives in a separative action of diversity, though it may open to unity. Mind is not only capable of ignorance, but, because it acts always partially and by limitation, it works characteristically as a power of ignorance: it may even and it does forget itself in a complete inconscience, or nescience, awaken from it to the ignorance of a partial knowledge and move from the ignorance towards a complete knowledge,—that is its natural action in the human being,—but it can never have by itself a complete knowledge. Supermind is incapable of real ignorance; even if it puts full knowledge behind it in the limitation of a particular working, yet all its working refers back to what it has put behind it and all is instinct with self-illumination; even if it involves itself in material nescience, it yet does there accurately the works of a perfect will and knowledge. Supermind lends itself to the action of the inferior instruments; it is always there indeed at the core as a secret support of their operations. In matter it is an automatic action and effectuation of the hidden idea in things; in life its most seizable form is instinct, an instinctive, subconscious or partly subconscious knowledge and operation; in mind it reveals itself as intuition, a swift, direct and self-effective illumination of intelligence, will, sense and aesthesis. But these are merely irradiations of the supermind which accommodate themselves to the limited functioning of the obscurer instruments: its own characteristic nature is a gnosis superconscient to mind, life and body. Supermind or gnosis is the characteristic, illumined, significant action of spirit in its own native reality.

Life is an energy of spirit subordinated to action of mind and body, which fulfils itself through mentality and physicality and acts as a link between them. It has its own characteristic operation but nowhere works independently of mind and body. All energy of the spirit in action works in the two terms of existence and consciousness, for the self-formation of existence and the play and self-realisation of consciousness, for the delight of existence and the delight of consciousness. In this inferior formulation of being in which we at present live, the spirit's energy of life works between the two terms of mind and matter, supporting and effecting the formulations of substance of matter and working as a material energy, supporting the formulations of consciousness of mind and the workings of mental energy, supporting the interaction of mind and body and working as a sensory and nervous energy. What we call vitality is for the purposes of our normal human existence power of conscious being emerging in matter, liberating from it and in it mind and the higher powers and supporting their limited action in the physical life,—just as what we call mentality is power of conscious being awaking in body to light of its own consciousness and to consciousness of all the rest of being immediately around it and working at first in the limited action set for it by life and body, but at certain points and at a certain height escaping from it to a partial action beyond this circle. But this is not the whole power whether of life or mentality; they have planes of conscious existence of their own kind, other than this material level, where they are freer in their characteristic action. Matter or body itself is a limiting form of substance of spirit in which life and mind and spirit are involved, self-hidden, self-forgetful by absorption in their own externalising action, but bound to emerge from it by a self-compelling evolution. But matter too is capable of refining to subtler forms of substance in which it becomes more apparently a formal density of life, of mind, of spirit. Man himself has, besides this gross material body, an encasing vital sheath, a mental body, a body of bliss and gnosis. But all matter, all body contains within it the secret powers of these higher principles; matter is a formation of life that has no

real existence apart from the informing universal spirit which gives it its energy and substance.

This is the nature of spirit and its instruments. But to understand its operations and to get at a knowledge which will give to us a power of leverage in uplifting them out of the established groove in which our life goes spinning, we have to perceive that the Spirit has based all its workings upon two twin aspects of its being, Soul and Nature, Purusha and Prakriti. We have to treat them as different and diverse in power,—for in practice of consciousness this difference is valid,—although they are only two sides of the same reality, pole and pole of the one conscious being. Purusha or soul is spirit cognizant of the workings of its nature, supporting them by its being, enjoying or rejecting enjoyment of them in its delight of being. Nature is power of the spirit, and she is too working and process of its power formulating name and form of being, developing action of consciousness and knowledge, throwing itself up in will and impulsion, force and energy, fulfilling itself in enjoyment. Nature is Prakriti, Maya, Shakti. If we look at her on her most external side where she seems the opposite of Purusha, she is Prakriti, an inert and mechanical self-driven operation, inconscient or conscient only by the light of Purusha, elevated by various degrees, vital, mental, supramental, of his soul-illumination of her workings. If we look at her on her other internal side where she moves nearer to unity with Purusha, she is Maya, will of being and becoming or of cessation from being and becoming with all their results, apparent to the consciousness, of involution and evolution, existing and non-existing, self-concealment of spirit and self-discovery of spirit. Both are sides of one and the same thing, Shakti, power of being of the spirit which operates, whether superconsciously or consciously or subconsciously in a seeming inconscience,—in fact all these motions coexist at the same time and in the same soul,—as the spirit's power of knowledge, power of will, power of process and action, *jñāna-sakti, icchā-sakti, kriyā-sakti*. By this power the spirit creates all things in itself, hides and discovers all itself in the form and behind the veil of its manifestation.

Purusha is able by this power of its nature to take whatever poise it may will and to follow the law and form of being proper to any self-formulation. It is eternal soul and spirit in its own power of self-existence superior to and governing its manifestations; it is universal soul and spirit developed in power of becoming of its existence, infinite in the finite; it is individual soul and spirit absorbed in development of some particular course of its becoming, in appearance mutably finite in the infinite. All these things it can be at once, eternal spirit universalised in cosmos, individualised in its beings; it can too found the consciousness rejecting, governing or responding to the action of Nature in any one of them, put the others behind it or away from it, know itself as pure eternity, self-supporting universality or exclusive individuality. Whatever the formulation of its nature, soul can seem to become that and view itself as that only in the frontal active part of its consciousness; but it is never only what it seems to be; it is too the so much else that it can be; secretly, it is the all of itself that is yet hidden. It is not irrevocably limited by any particular self-formulation in Time, but can break through and beyond it, break it up or develop it, select, reject, new-create, reveal out of itself a greater self-formulation. What it believes itself to be by the whole active will of its consciousness in its instruments, that it is or tends to become, *yo yacchraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ*: what it believes it can be and has full faith in becoming, that it changes to in nature, evolves or discovers.

This power of the soul over its nature is of the utmost importance in the Yoga of self-perfection; if it did not exist, we could never get by conscious endeavour and aspiration out of the fixed groove of our present imperfect human being; if any greater perfection were intended, we should have to wait for Nature to effect it in her own slow or swift process of evolution. In the lower forms of being the soul accepts this complete subjection to Nature, but as it rises higher in the scale, it awakes to a sense of something in itself which can command Nature; but it is only when it arrives at self-knowledge that this free will and control becomes a complete reality. The change effects itself through process of nature, not therefore by any capricious magic, but an

ordered development and intelligible process. When complete mastery is gained, then the process by its self-effective rapidity may seem a miracle to the intelligence, but it still proceeds by law of the truth of Spirit,—when the Divine within us by close union of our will and being with him takes up the Yoga and acts as the omnipotent master of the nature. For the Divine is our highest Self and the self of all Nature, the eternal and universal Purusha.

Purusha may establish himself in any plane of being, take any principle of being as the immediate head of his power and live in the working of its proper mode of conscious action. The soul may dwell in the principle of infinite unity of self-existence and be aware of all consciousness, energy, delight, knowledge, will, activity as conscious form of this essential truth, Sat or Satya. It may dwell in the principle of infinite conscious energy, Tapas, and be aware of it unrolling out of self-existence the works of knowledge, will and dynamic soul-action for the enjoyment of an infinite delight of the being. It may dwell in the principle of infinite self-existent delight and be aware of the divine Ananda creating out of its self-existence by its energy whatever harmony of being. In these three poises the consciousness of unity dominates; the soul lives in its awareness of eternity, universality, unity, and whatever diversity there is, is not separative, but only a multitudinous aspect of oneness. It may dwell too in the principle of supermind, in a luminous self-determining knowledge, will and action which develops some coordination of perfect delight of conscious being. In the higher gnosis unity is the basis, but it takes its joy in diversity; in lower fact of supermind diversity is the basis, but it refers back always to a conscious unity and it takes joy in unity. These ranges of consciousness are beyond our present level; they are superconscious to our normal mentality. That belongs to a lower hemisphere of being.

This lower being begins where a veil falls between soul and nature, between spirit in supermind and spirit in mind, life and body. Where this veil has not fallen, these instrumental powers are not what they are in us, but an enlightened part of the unified

action of supermind and spirit. Mind gets to an independent idea of its own action when it forgets to refer back to the light from which it derives and becomes absorbed in the possibilities of its own separative process and enjoyment. The soul when it dwells in the principle of mind, not yet subject to but user of life and body, knows itself as a mental being working out its mental life and forces and images, bodies of the subtle mental substance, according to its individual knowledge, will and dynamis modified by its relation to other similar beings and powers in the universal mind. When it dwells in the principle of life, it knows itself as a being of the universal life working out action and consciousness by its desires under similar modifying conditions proper to a universal life-soul whose action is through many individual life-beings. When it dwells in the principle of matter, it knows itself as a consciousness of matter acting under a similar law of the energy of material being. In proportion as it leans towards the side of knowledge, it is aware of itself more or less clearly as a soul of mind, a soul of life, a soul of body viewing and acting in or acted upon by its nature; but where it leans towards the side of ignorance, it knows itself as an ego identified with nature of mind, of life or of body, a creation of Nature. But the native tendency of material being leads towards an absorption of the soul's energy in the act of formation and material movement and a consequent self-oblivion of the conscious being. The material universe begins from an apparent unconsciousness.

The universal Purusha dwells in all these planes in a certain simultaneity and builds upon each of these principles a world or series of worlds with its beings who live in the nature of that principle. Man, the microcosm, has all these planes in his own being, ranged from his subconscient to his superconscient existence. By a developing power of Yoga he can become aware of these concealed worlds hidden from his physical, materialised mind and senses which know only the material world, and then he becomes aware that his material existence is not a thing apart and self-existent, as the material universe in which he lives is also not a thing apart and self-existent, but is in constant relation to the higher planes and acted on by their powers and beings. He

can open up and increase the action of these higher planes in himself and enjoy some sort of participation in the life of the other worlds,—which, for the rest, are or can be his dwelling-place, that is to say, the station of his awareness, *dhāma*, after death or between death and rebirth in a material body. But his most important capacity is that of developing the powers of the higher principles in himself, a greater power of life, a purer light of mind, the illumination of supermind, the infinite being, consciousness and delight of spirit. By an ascending movement he can develop his human imperfection towards that greater perfection.

But whatever his aim, however exalted his aspiration, he has to begin from the law of his present imperfection, to take full account of it and see how it can be converted to the law of a possible perfection. This present law of his being starts from the inconscience of the material universe, an involution of the soul in form and subjection to material nature; and, though in this matter life and mind have developed their own energies, yet they are limited and bound up in the action of the lower material, which is to the ignorance of his practical surface consciousness his original principle. Mind in him, though he is an embodied mental being, has to bear the control of the body and the physical life and can only by some more or less considerable effort of energy and concentration consciously control life and body. It is only by increasing that control that he can move towards perfection,—and it is only by developing soul-power that he can reach it. Nature-power in him has to become more and more completely a conscious act of soul, a conscious expression of all the will and knowledge of spirit. Prakriti has to reveal itself as shakti of the Purusha.

Chapter IV

The Perfection of the Mental Being

THE FUNDAMENTAL idea of a Yoga of self-perfection must be, under these conditions, a reversal of the present relations of the soul of man to his mental, vital and physical nature. Man is at present a partly self-conscious soul subject to and limited by mind, life and body, who has to become an entirely self-conscious soul master of his mind, life and body. Not limited by their claims and demands, a perfect self-conscious soul would be superior to and a free possessor of its instruments. This effort of man to be master of his own being has been the sense of a large part of his past spiritual, intellectual and moral strivings.

In order to be possessor of his being with any complete reality of freedom and mastery, man must find out his highest self, the real man or highest Purusha in him, which is free and master in its own inalienable power. He must cease to be the mental, vital, physical ego; for that is always the creation, instrument and subject of mental, vital, physical Nature. This ego is not his real self, but an instrumentation of Nature by which it has developed a sense of limited and separate individual being in mind, life and body. By this instrumentation he acts as if he were a separate existence in the material universe. Nature has evolved certain habitual limiting conditions under which that action takes place; self-identification of the soul with the ego is the means by which she induces the soul to consent to this action and accept these habitual limiting conditions. While the identification lasts, there is a self-imprisonment in this habitual round and narrow action, and, until it is transcended, there can be no free use by the soul of its individual living, much less a real self-exceeding. For this reason an essential movement of the Yoga is to draw back from the outward ego sense by which we are identified with the action of mind, life and body and live

inwardly in the soul. The liberation from an externalised ego sense is the first step towards the soul's freedom and mastery.

When we thus draw back into the soul, we find ourselves to be not the mind, but a mental being who stands behind the action of the embodied mind, not a mental and vital personality,— personality is a composition of Nature,— but a mental Person, *manomaya puruṣa*. We become aware of a being within who takes his stand upon mind for self-knowledge and world-knowledge and thinks of himself as an individual for self-experience and world-experience, for an inward action and an outward-going action, but is yet different from mind, life and body. This sense of difference from the vital actions and the physical being is very marked; for although the Purusha feels his mind to be involved in life and body, yet he is aware that even if the physical life and body were to cease or be dissolved, he would still go on existing in his mental being. But the sense of difference from the mind is more difficult and less firmly distinct. But still it is there; it is characterised by any or all of three intuitions in which this mental Purusha lives and becomes by them aware of his own greater existence.

First, he has the intuition of himself as someone observing the action of the mind; it is something which is going on in him and yet before him as an object of his regarding knowledge. This self-awareness is the intuitive sense of the witness Purusha, *sākṣī*. Witness Purusha is a pure consciousness who watches Nature and sees it as an action reflected upon the consciousness and enlightened by that consciousness, but in itself other than it. To mental Purusha Nature is only an action, a complex action of discriminating and combining thought, of will, of sense, of emotion, of temperament and character, of ego feeling, which works upon a foundation of vital impulses, needs and cravings in the conditions imposed by the physical body. But it is not limited by them, since it can not only give them new directions and much variation, refining and extension, but is able to act in thought and imagination and a mental world of much more subtle and flexible creations. But also there is an intuition in the mental Purusha of something larger and greater than this present

action in which he lives, a range of experience of which it is only a frontal scheme or a narrow superficial selection. By this intuition he stands upon the threshold of a subliminal self with a more extended possibility than this superficial mentality opens to his self-knowledge. A last and greatest intuition is an inner awareness of something which he more essentially is, something as high above mind as mind is above the physical life and body. This inner awareness is his intuition of his supramental and spiritual being.

The mental Purusha can at any time involve himself again in the superficial action from which he has drawn back, live for a while entirely identified with the mechanism of mind, life and body and absorbedly repeat its recurrent normal action. But once that separative movement has been made and lived in for some time, he can never be to himself quite what he was before. The involution in the outward action becomes now only a recurrent self-oblivion from which there is a tendency in him to draw back again to himself and to pure self-experience. It may be noted too that the Purusha by drawing back from the normal action of this outward consciousness which has created for him his present natural form of self-experience, is able to take two other poises. He can have an intuition of himself as a soul in body, which puts forth life as its activity and mind as the light of that activity. This soul in body is the physical conscious being, *annamaya puruṣa*, which uses life and mind characteristically for physical experience,— all else being regarded as a consequence of physical experience,— does not look beyond the life of the body and, so far as it feels anything beyond its physical individuality, is aware only of the physical universe and at most its oneness with the soul of physical Nature. But he can have too an intuition of himself as a soul of life, self-identified with a great movement of becoming in Time, which puts forth body as a form or basic sense-image and mind as a conscious activity of life-experience. This soul in life is the vital conscious being, *prāṇamaya puruṣa*, which is capable of looking beyond the duration and limits of the physical body, of feeling an eternity of life behind and in front, an identity with a universal Life-being, but does not look

beyond a constant vital becoming in Time. These three Purushas are soul-forms of the Spirit by which it identifies its conscious existence with and founds its action upon any of these three planes or principles of its universal being.

But man is characteristically a mental being. Moreover, mentality is his highest present status in which he is nearest to his real self, most easily and largely aware of spirit. His way to perfection is not to involve himself in the outward or superficial existence, nor is it to place himself in the soul of life or the soul of body, but to insist on the three mental intuitions by which he can lift himself eventually above the physical, vital and mental levels. This insistence may take two quite different forms, each with its own object and way of proceeding. It is quite possible for him to accentuate it in a direction away from existence in Nature, a detachment, a withdrawal from mind, life and body. He may try to live more and more as the witness Purusha, regarding the action of Nature, without interest in it, without sanction to it, detached, rejecting the whole action, withdrawing into pure conscious existence. This is the Sankhya liberation. He may go inward into that larger existence of which he has the intuition and away from the superficial mentality into a dream-state or sleep-state which admits him into wider or higher ranges of consciousness. By passing away into these ranges he may put away from him the terrestrial being. There is even, it was supposed in ancient times, a transition to supramental worlds from which a return to earthly consciousness was either not possible or not obligatory. But the definite and sure finality of this kind of liberation depends on the elevation of the mental being into that spiritual self of which he becomes aware when he looks away and upward from all mentality. That is given as the key to entire cessation from terrestrial existence whether by immersing in pure being or a participation in supracosmic being.

But if our aim is to be not only free by self-detachment from Nature, but perfected in mastery, this type of insistence can no longer suffice. We have to regard our mental, vital and physical action of Nature, find out the knots of its bondage and the loosing-points of liberation, discover the keys of its

imperfection and lay our finger on the key of perfection. When the regarding soul, the witness Purusha stands back from his action of nature and observes it, he sees that it proceeds of its own impulsion by the power of its mechanism, by force of continuity of movement, continuity of mentality, continuity of life impulse, continuity of an involuntary physical mechanism. At first the whole thing seems to be the recurrent action of an automatic machinery, although the sum of that action mounts constantly into a creation, development, evolution. He was as if seized in this wheel, attached to it by the ego sense, whirled round and onward in the circling of the machinery. A complete mechanical determinism or a stream of determinations of Nature to which he lent the light of his consciousness, is the natural aspect of his mental, vital and physical personality once it is regarded from this stable detached standpoint and no longer by a soul caught up in the movement and imagining itself to be a part of the action.

But on a farther view we find that this determinism is not so complete as it seemed; action of Nature continues and is what it is because of the sanction of the Purusha. The regarding Purusha sees that he supports and in some way fills and pervades the action with his conscious being. He discovers that without him it could not continue and that where he persistently withdraws this sanction, the habitual action becomes gradually enfeebled, flags and ceases. His whole active mentality can be thus brought to a complete stillness. There is yet a passive mentality which mechanically continues, but this too can be stilled by his withdrawal into himself out of the action. Even then the life action in its most mechanical parts continues; but that too can be stilled into cessation. It would appear then that he is not only the upholding (*bhartr*) Purusha, but in some way the master of his nature, Ishwara. It was the consciousness of this sanctioning control, this necessity of his consent, which made him in the ego-sense conceive of himself as a soul or mental being with a free will determining all his own becomings. Yet the free-will seems to be imperfect, almost illusory, since the actual will itself is a machinery of Nature and each separate willing determined by the stream of past action and the sum of conditions it created,

— although, because the result of the stream, the sum, is at each moment a new development, a new determination, it may seem to be a self-born willing, virginally creative at each moment. What he contributed all the while was a consent behind, a sanction to what Nature was doing. He does not seem able to rule her entirely, but only choose between certain well-defined possibilities: there is in her a power of resistance born of her past impetus and a still greater power of resistance born of the sum of fixed conditions she has created, which she presents to him as a set of permanent laws to be obeyed. He cannot radically alter her way of proceeding, cannot freely effect his will from within her present movement, nor, while standing in the mentality, get outside or above her in such a way as to exercise a really free control. There is a duality of dependence, her dependence on his consent, his dependence on her law and way and limits of action, determination denied by a sense of free-will, free-will nullified by the actuality of natural determination. He is sure that she is his power, but yet he seems to be subject to her. He is the sanctioning (*anumantr*) Purusha, but does not seem to be the absolute lord, Ishwara.

Nevertheless, there is somewhere an absolute control, a real Ishwara. He is aware of it and knows that if he can find it, he will enter into control, become not only the passive sanctioning witness and upholding soul of her will, but the free powerful user and determiner of her movements. But this control seems to belong to another poise than the mentality. Sometimes he finds himself using it, but as a channel or instrument; it comes to him from above. It is clear then that it is supramental, a power of the Spirit greater than mental being which he already knows himself to be at the summit and in the secret core of his conscious being. To enter into identity with that Spirit must then be his way to control and lordship. He can do it passively by a sort of reflection and receiving in his mental consciousness, but then he is only a mould, channel or instrument, not a possessor or participant in the power. He can arrive at identity by an absorption of his mentality in inner spiritual being, but then the conscious action ceases in a trance of identity. To be active master

of the nature he must evidently rise to some higher supramental poise where there is possible not only a passive, but an active identity with the controlling spirit. To find the way of rising to this greater poise and be self-ruler, Swarat, is a condition of his perfection.

The difficulty of the ascent is due to a natural ignorance. He is the Purusha, witness of mental and physical Nature, *sāksī*, but not a complete knower of self and Nature, *jñātr̄*. Knowledge in the mentality is enlightened by his consciousness; he is the mental knower; but he finds that this is not a real knowledge, but only a partial seeking and partial finding, a derivative uncertain reflection and narrow utilisation for action from a greater light beyond which is the real knowledge. This light is the self-awareness and all-awareness of Spirit. The essential self-awareness he can arrive at even on the mental plane of being, by reflection in the soul of mind or by its absorption in spirit, as indeed it can be arrived at by another kind of reflection or absorption in soul of life and soul of body. But for participation in an effective all-awareness with this essential self-awareness as the soul of its action he must rise to supermind. To be lord of his being, he must be knower of self and Nature, *jñātā īśvaraḥ*. Partially this may be done on a higher level of mind where it responds directly to supermind, but really and completely this perfection belongs not to the mental being, but to the ideal or knowledge Soul, *vijñānamaya puruṣa*. To draw up the mental into the greater knowledge being and that into the Bliss-Self of the spirit, *ānandamaya puruṣa*, is the uttermost way of this perfection.

But no perfection, much less this perfection can be attained without a very radical dealing with the present nature and the abrogation of much that seems to be the fixed law of its complex nexus of mental, vital and physical being. The law of this nexus has been created for a definite and limited end, the temporary maintenance, preservation, possession, aggrandisement, enjoyment, experience, need, action of the mental ego in the living body. Other resultant uses are served, but this is the immediate and fundamentally determining object and utility. To arrive at

a higher utility and freer instrumentation this nexus must be partly broken up, exceeded, transformed into a larger harmony of action. The Purusha sees that the law created is that of a partly stable, partly unstable selective determination of habitual, yet developing experiences out of a first confused consciousness of self and not-self, subjective being and external universe. This determination is managed by mind, life and body acting upon each other, in harmony and correspondence, but also in discord and divergence, mutual interference and limitation. There is a similar mixed harmony and discord between various activities of the mind in itself, as also between activities of the life in itself and of the physical being. The whole is a sort of disorderly order, an order evolved and contrived out of a constantly surrounding and invading confusion.

This is the first difficulty the Purusha has to deal with, a mixed and confused action of Nature,—an action without clear self-knowledge, distinct motive, firm instrumentation, only an attempt at these things and a general relative success of effectuality,—a surprising effect of adaptation in some directions, but also much distress of inadequacy. That mixed and confused action has to be mended; purification is an essential means towards self-perfection. All these impurities and inadequacies result in various kinds of limitation and bondage: but there are two or three primary knots of the bondage,—ego is the principal knot,—from which the others derive. These bonds must be got rid of; purification is not complete till it brings about liberation. Besides, after a certain purification and liberation has been effected, there is still the conversion of the purified instruments to the law of a higher object and utility, a large, real and perfect order of action. By the conversion man can arrive at a certain perfection of fullness of being, calm, power and knowledge, even a greater vital action and more perfect physical existence. One result of this perfection is a large and perfected delight of being, Ananda. Thus purification, liberation, perfection, delight of being are four constituent elements of the Yoga,—*suddhi, mukti, siddhi, bhukti*.

But this perfection cannot be attained or cannot be secure

and entire in its largeness if the Purusha lays stress on individuality. To abandon identification with the physical, vital and mental ego, is not enough; he must arrive in soul also at a true, universalised, not separative individuality. In the lower nature man is an ego making a clean cut in conception between himself and all other existence; the ego is to him self, but all the rest not self, external to his being. His whole action starts from and is founded upon this self-conception and world-conception. But the conception is in fact an error. However sharply he individualises himself in mental idea and mental or other action, he is inseparable from the universal being, his body from universal force and matter, his life from the universal life, his mind from universal mind, his soul and spirit from universal soul and spirit. The universal acts on him, invades him, overcomes him, shapes itself in him at every moment; he in his reaction acts on the universal, invades, tries to impose himself on it, shape it, overcome its attack, rule and use its instrumentation.

This conflict is a rendering of the underlying unity, which assumes the aspect of struggle by a necessity of the original separation; the two pieces into which mind has cut the oneness, rush upon each other to restore the oneness and each tries to seize on and take into itself the separated portion. Universe seems to be always trying to swallow up man, the infinite to resume this finite which stands on its self-defence and even replies by aggression. But in real fact the universal being through this apparent struggle is working out its purpose in man, though the key and truth of the purpose and working is lost to his superficial conscious mind, only held obscurely in an underlying subconscious and only known luminously in an overruling superconscious unity. Man also is impelled towards unity by a constant impulse of extension of his ego, which identifies itself as best it can with other egos and with such portions of the universe as he can physically, vitally, mentally get into his use and possession. As man aims at knowledge and mastery of his own being, so also he aims at knowledge and mastery of the environmental world of nature, its objects, its instrumentation, its beings. First he tries to effect this aim by egoistic possession, but, as he develops,

the element of sympathy born of the secret oneness grows in him and he arrives at the idea of a widening cooperation and oneness with other beings, a harmony with universal Nature and universal being.

The witness Purusha in the mind observes that the inadequacy of his effort, all the inadequacy in fact of man's life and nature arises from the separation and the consequent struggle, want of knowledge, want of harmony, want of oneness. It is essential for him to grow out of separative individuality, to universalise himself, to make himself one with the universe. This unification can be done only through the soul by making our soul of mind one with the universal Mind, our soul of life one with the universal Life-soul, our soul of body one with the universal soul of physical Nature. When this can be done, in proportion to the power, intensity, depth, completeness, permanence with which it can be done, great effects are produced upon the natural action. Especially there grows an immediate and profound sympathy and immixture of mind with mind, life with life, a lessening of the body's insistence on separateness, a power of direct mental and other intercommunication and effective mutual action which helps out now the inadequate indirect communication and action that was till now the greater part of the conscious means used by embodied mind. But still the Purusha sees that in mental, vital, physical nature, taken by itself, there is always a defect, inadequacy, confused action, due to the mechanically unequal interplay of the three modes or gunas of Nature. To transcend it he has in the universality too to rise to the supramental and spiritual, to be one with the supramental soul of cosmos, the universal spirit. He arrives at the larger light and order of a higher principle in himself and the universe which is the characteristic action of the divine Sachchidananda. Even, he is able to impose the influence of that light and order, not only on his own natural being, but, within the radius and to the extent of the Spirit's action in him, on the world he lives in, on that which is around him. He is *svarāt*, self-knower, self-ruler, but he begins to be also through this spiritual oneness and transcendence *samrāt*, a knower and master of his environing world of being.

In this self-development the soul finds that it has accomplished on this line the object of the whole integral Yoga, union with the Supreme in its self and in its universalised individuality. So long as he remains in the world-existence, this perfection must radiate out from him,— for that is the necessity of his oneness with the universe and its beings,— in an influence and action which help all around who are capable of it to rise to or advance towards the same perfection, and for the rest in an influence and action which help, as only the self-ruler and master man can help, in leading the human race forward spiritually towards this consummation and towards some image of a greater divine truth in their personal and communal existence. He becomes a light and power of the Truth to which he has climbed and a means for others' ascension.

Chapter V

The Instruments of the Spirit

IF THERE is to be an active perfection of our being, the first necessity is a purification of the working of the instruments which it now uses for a music of discords. The being itself, the spirit, the divine Reality in man stands in no need of purification; it is for ever pure, not affected by the faults of its instrumentation or the stumbling of mind and heart and body in their work, as the sun, says the Upanishad, is not touched or stained by the faults of the eye of vision. Mind, heart, the soul of vital desire, the life in the body are the seats of impurity; it is they that must be set right if the working of the spirit is to be a perfect working and not marked by its present greater or less concession to the devious pleasure of the lower nature. What is ordinarily called purity of the being, is either a negative whiteness, a freedom from sin gained by a constant inhibition of whatever action, feeling, idea or will we think to be wrong, or else, the highest negative or passive purity, the entire God-content, inaction, the complete stilling of the vibrant mind and the soul of desire, which in quietistic disciplines leads to a supreme peace; for then the spirit appears in all the eternal purity of its immaculate essence. That gained, there would be nothing farther to be enjoyed or done. But here we have the more difficult problem of a total, unabated, even an increased and more powerful action founded on perfect bliss of the being, the purity of the soul's instrumental as well as the spirit's essential nature. Mind, heart, life, body are to do the works of the Divine, all the works which they do now and yet more, but to do them divinely, as now they do not do them. This is the first appearance of the problem before him on which the seeker of perfection has to lay hold, that it is not a negative, prohibitory, passive or quietistic, but a positive, affirmative, active purity which is his object. A divine quietism discovers the immaculate eternity of the Spirit, a divine kinetism

adds to it the right pure undeviating action of the soul, mind and body.

Moreover, it is a total purification of all the complex instrumentality in all the parts of each instrument that is demanded of us by the integral perfection. It is not, ultimately, the narrower moral purification of the ethical nature. Ethics deals only with the desire-soul and the active outward dynamical part of our being; its field is confined to character and action. It prohibits and inhibits certain actions, certain desires, impulses, propensities,—it inculcates certain qualities in the act, such as truthfulness, love, charity, compassion, chastity. When it has got this done and assured a base of virtue, the possession of a purified will and blameless habit of action, its work is finished. But the Siddha of the integral perfection has to dwell in a larger plane of the Spirit's eternal purity beyond good and evil. By this phrase it is not meant, as the rash hastily concluding intellect would be prone to imagine, that he will do good and evil indifferently and declare that to the spirit there is no difference between them, which would be in the plane of individual action an obvious untruth and might serve to cover a reckless self-indulgence of the imperfect human nature. Neither is it meant that since good and evil are in this world inextricably entangled together, like pain and pleasure,—a proposition which, however true at the moment and plausible as a generalisation, need not be true of the human being's greater spiritual evolution,—the liberated man will live in the spirit and stand back from the mechanical continued workings of a necessarily imperfect nature. This, however possible as a stage towards a final cessation of all activity, is evidently not a counsel of active perfection. But it is meant that the Siddha of the active integral perfection will live dynamically in the working of the transcendent power of the divine Spirit as a universal will through the supermind individualised in him for action. His works will therefore be the works of an eternal Knowledge, an eternal Truth, an eternal Might, an eternal Love, an eternal Ananda; but the truth, knowledge, force, love, delight will be the whole essential spirit of whatever work he will do and will not depend on its form; they will determine his

action from the spirit within and the action will not determine the spirit or subject it to a fixed standard or rigid mould of working. He will have no dominant mere habit of character, but only a spiritual being and will with at the most a free and flexible temperamental mould for the action. His life will be a direct stream from the eternal fountains, not a form cut to some temporary human pattern. His perfection will not be a sattvic purity, but a thing uplifted beyond the gunas of Nature, a perfection of spiritual knowledge, spiritual power, spiritual delight, unity and harmony of unity; the outward perfection of his works will be freely shaped as the self-expression of this inner spiritual transcendence and universality. For this change he must make conscient in him that power of spirit and supermind which is now superconscient to our mentality. But that cannot work in him so long as his present mental, vital, physical being is not liberated from its actual inferior working. This purification is the first necessity.

In other words, purification must not be understood in any limited sense of a selection of certain outward kinetic movements, their regulation, the inhibition of other action or a liberation of certain forms of character or particular mental and moral capacities. These things are secondary signs of our derivative being, not essential powers and first forces. We have to take a wider psychological view of the primary forces of our nature. We have to distinguish the formed parts of our being, find out their basic defect of impurity or wrong action and correct that, sure that the rest will then come right naturally. We have not to doctor symptoms of impurity, or that only secondarily, as a minor help, — but to strike at its roots after a deeper diagnosis. We then find that there are two forms of impurity which are at the root of the whole confusion. One is a defect born of the nature of our past evolution, which has been a nature of separative ignorance; this defect is a radically wrong and ignorant form given to the proper action of each part of our instrumental being. The other impurity is born of the successive process of an evolution, where life emerges in and depends on body, mind emerges in and depends on life in the body, supermind emerges in and lends

itself to instead of governing mind, soul itself is apparent only as a circumstance of the bodily life of the mental being and veils up the spirit in the lower imperfections. This second defect of our nature is caused by this dependence of the higher on the lower parts; it is an immixture of functions by which the impure working of the lower instrument gets into the characteristic action of the higher function and gives to it an added imperfection of embarrassment, wrong direction and confusion.

Thus the proper function of the life, the vital force, is enjoyment and possession, both of them perfectly legitimate, because the Spirit created the world for Ananda, enjoyment and possession of the many by the One, of the One by the many and of the many too by the many; but, — this is an instance of the first kind of defect, — the separative ignorance gives to it the wrong form of desire and craving which vitiates the whole enjoyment and possession and imposes on it its opposites, want and suffering. Again, because mind is entangled in life from which it evolves, this desire and craving get into the action of the mental will and knowledge; that makes the will a will of craving, a force of desire instead of a rational will and a discerning force of intelligent effectuation, and it distorts the judgment and reason so that we judge and reason according to our desires and prepossessions and not with the disinterested impartiality of a pure judgment and the rectitude of a reason which seeks only to distinguish truth and understand rightly the objects of its workings. That is an example of immixture. These two kinds of defect, wrong form of action and illegitimate mixture of action, are not limited to these signal instances, but belong to each instrument and to each combination of their functionings. They pervade the whole economy of our nature. They are fundamental defects of our lower instrumental nature, and if we can set them right, we shall get our instrumental being into a state of purity, enjoy the clarity of a pure will, a pure heart of emotion, a pure enjoyment of our vitality, a pure body. That will be a preliminary, a human perfection, but it can be made the basis and open out in its effort of self-attainment into the greater, the divine perfection.

Mind, life and body are the three powers of our lower

nature. But they cannot be taken quite separately because the life acts as a link and gives its character to body and to a great extent to our mentality. Our body is a living body; the life-force mingles in and determines all its functionings. Our mind too is largely a mind of life, a mind of physical sensation; only in its higher functions is it normally capable of something more than the workings of a physical mentality subjected to life. We may put it in this ascending order. We have first a body supported by the physical life-force, the physical prana which courses through the whole nervous system and gives its stamp to our corporeal action, so that all is of the character of the action of a living and not an inert mechanical body. Prana and physicality together make the gross body, *sthūla śarīra*. This is only the outer instrument, the nervous force of life acting in the form of body with its gross physical organs. Then there is the inner instrument, *antahkarana*, the conscious mentality. This inner instrument is divided by the old system into four powers; *citta* or basic mental consciousness; *manas*, the sense mind; *buddhi*, the intelligence; *ahankāra*, the ego-idea. The classification may serve as a starting-point, though for a greater practicality we have to make certain farther distinctions. This mentality is pervaded by the life-force, which becomes here an instrument for psychic consciousness of life and psychic action on life. Every fibre of the sense mind and basic consciousness is shot through with the action of this psychic prana, it is a nervous or vital and physical mentality. Even the buddhi and ego are overpowered by it, although they have the capacity of raising the mind beyond subjection to this vital, nervous and physical psychology. This combination creates in us the sensational desire-soul which is the chief obstacle to a higher human as well as to the still greater divine perfection. Finally, above our present conscious mentality is a secret supermind which is the proper means and native seat of that perfection.

Chitta, the basic consciousness, is largely subconscious; it has, open and hidden, two kinds of action, one passive or receptive, the other active or reactive and formative. As a passive power it receives all impacts, even those of which the mind is

unaware or to which it is inattentive, and it stores them in an immense reserve of passive subconscious memory on which the mind as an active memory can draw. But ordinarily the mind draws only what it had observed and understood at the time,—more easily what it had observed well and understood carefully, less easily what it had observed carelessly or ill understood; at the same time there is a power in consciousness to send up to the active mind for use what that mind had not at all observed or attended to or even consciously experienced. This power only acts observably in abnormal conditions, when some part of the subconscious chitta comes as it were to the surface or when the subliminal being in us appears on the threshold and for a time plays some part in the outer chamber of mentality where the direct intercourse and commerce with the external world takes place and our inner dealings with ourselves develop on the surface. This action of memory is so fundamental to the entire mental action that it is sometimes said, memory is the man. Even in the submental action of the body and life, which is full of this subconscious chitta, though not under the control of the conscious mind, there is a vital and physical memory. The vital and physical habits are largely formed by this submental memory. For this reason they can be changed to an indefinite extent by a more powerful action of conscious mind and will, when that can be developed and can find means to communicate to the subconscious chitta the will of the spirit for a new law of vital and physical action. Even, the whole constitution of our life and body may be described as a bundle of habits formed by the past evolution in Nature and held together by the persistent memory of this secret consciousness. For chitta, the primary stuff of consciousness, is like prana and body universal in Nature, but is subconscious and mechanical in nature of Matter.

But in fact all action of the mind or inner instrument arises out of this chitta or basic consciousness, partly conscient, partly subconscious or subliminal to our active mentality. When it is struck by the world's impacts from outside or urged by the reflective powers of the subjective inner being, it throws up certain habitual activities, the mould of which has been determined by

our evolution. One of these forms of activity is the emotional mind,—the heart, as we may call it for the sake of a convenient brevity. Our emotions are the waves of reaction and response which rise up from the basic consciousness, *citta-vṛtti*. Their action too is largely regulated by habit and an emotive memory. They are not imperative, not laws of Necessity; there is no really binding law of our emotional being to which we must submit without remedy; we are not obliged to give responses of grief to certain impacts upon the mind, responses of anger to others, to yet others responses of hatred or dislike, to others responses of liking or love. All these things are only habits of our affective mentality; they can be changed by the conscious will of the spirit; they can be inhibited; we may even rise entirely above all subjection to grief, anger, hatred, the duality of liking and disliking. We are subject to these things only so long as we persist in subjection to the mechanical action of the chitta in the emotive mentality, a thing difficult to get rid of because of the power of past habit and especially the importunate insistence of the vital part of mentality, the nervous life-mind or psychic prana. This nature of the emotive mind as a reaction of chitta with a certain close dependence upon the nervous life sensations and the responses of the psychic prana is so characteristic that in some languages it is called chitta and prana, the heart, the life soul; it is indeed the most directly agitating and powerfully insistent action of the desire-soul which the immixture of vital desire and responsive consciousness has created in us. And yet the true emotive soul, the real psyche in us, is not a desire-soul, but a soul of pure love and delight; but that, like the rest of our true being, can only emerge when the deformation created by the life of desire is removed from the surface and is no longer the characteristic action of our being. To get that done is a necessary part of our purification, liberation, perfection.

The nervous action of the psychic prana is most obvious in our purely sensational mentality. This nervous mentality pursues indeed all the action of the inner instrument and seems often to form the greater part of things other than sensation. The emotions are especially assailed and have the pranic stamp; fear

is more even of a nervous sensation than an emotion, anger is largely or often a sensational response translated into terms of emotion. Other feelings are more of the heart, more inward, but they ally themselves to the nervous and physical longings or outward-going impulses of the psychic prana. Love is an emotion of the heart and may be a pure feeling,— all mentality, since we are embodied minds, must produce, even thought produces, some kind of life effect and some response in the stuff of body, but they need not for that reason be of a physical nature,— but the heart's love allies itself readily with a vital desire in the body. This physical element may be purified of that subjection to physical desire which is called lust, it may become love using the body for a physical as well as a mental and spiritual nearness; but love may, too, separate itself from all, even the most innocent physical element, or from all but a shadow of it, and be a pure movement to union of soul with soul, psyche with psyche. Still the proper action of the sensational mind is not emotion, but conscious nervous response and nervous feeling and affection, impulse of the use of physical sense and body for some action, conscious vital craving and desire. There is a side of receptive response, a side of dynamic reaction. These things get their proper normal use when the higher mind is not mechanically subject to them, but controls and regulates their action. But a still higher state is when they undergo a certain transformation by the conscious will of the spirit which gives its right and no longer its wrong or desire form of characteristic action to the psychic prana.

Manas, the sense mind, depends in our ordinary consciousness on the physical organs of receptive sense for knowledge and on the organs of the body for action directed towards the objects of sense. The superficial and outward action of the senses is physical and nervous in its character, and they may easily be thought to be merely results of nerve-action; they are sometimes called in the old books *prāṇas*, nervous or life activities. But still the essential thing in them is not the nervous excitation, but the consciousness, the action of the chitta, which makes use of the organ and of the nervous impact of which it is the

channel. Manas, sense-mind, is the activity, emerging from the basic consciousness, which makes up the whole essentiality of what we call sense. Sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch are really properties of the mind, not of the body; but the physical mind which we ordinarily use, limits itself to a translation into sense of so much of the outer impacts as it receives through the nervous system and the physical organs. But the inner Manas has also a subtle sight, hearing, power of contact of its own which is not dependent on the physical organs. And it has, moreover, a power not only of direct communication of mind with object—leading even at a high pitch of action to a sense of the contents of an object within or beyond the physical range,—but direct communication also of mind with mind. Mind is able too to alter, modify, inhibit the incidence, values, intensities of sense impacts. These powers of the mind we do not ordinarily use or develop; they remain subliminal and emerge sometimes in an irregular and fitful action, more readily in some minds than in others, or come to the surface in abnormal states of the being. They are the basis of clairvoyance, clairaudience, transference of thought and impulse, telepathy, most of the more ordinary kinds of occult powers,—so called, though these are better described less mystically as powers of the now subliminal action of the Manas. The phenomena of hypnotism and many others depend upon the action of this subliminal sense-mind; not that it alone constitutes all the elements of the phenomena, but it is the first supporting means of intercourse, communication and response, though much of the actual operation belongs to an inner Buddhi. Mind physical, mind supraphysical,—we have and can use this double sense mentality.

Buddhi is a construction of conscious being which quite exceeds its beginnings in the basic chitta; it is the intelligence with its power of knowledge and will. Buddhi takes up and deals with all the rest of the action of the mind and life and body. It is in its nature thought-power and will-power of the Spirit turned into the lower form of a mental activity. We may distinguish three successive gradations of the action of this intelligence. There is first an inferior perceptive understanding which simply takes

up, records, understands and responds to the communications of the sense-mind, memory, heart and sensational mentality. It creates by their means an elementary thinking mind which does not go beyond their data, but subjects itself to their mould and rings out their repetitions, runs round and round in the habitual circle of thought and will suggested by them or follows, with an obedient subservience of the reason to the suggestions of life, any fresh determinations which may be offered to its perception and conception. Beyond this elementary understanding, which we all use to an enormous extent, there is a power of arranging or selecting reason and will-force of the intelligence which has for its action and aim an attempt to arrive at a plausible, sufficient, settled ordering of knowledge and will for the use of an intellectual conception of life.

In spite of its more purely intellectual character this secondary or intermediate reason is really pragmatic in its intention. It creates a certain kind of intellectual structure, frame, rule into which it tries to cast the inner and outer life so as to use it with a certain mastery and government for the purposes of some kind of rational will. It is this reason which gives to our normal intellectual being our set aesthetic and ethical standards, our structures of opinion and our established norms of idea and purpose. It is highly developed and takes the primacy in all men of an at all developed understanding. But beyond it there is a reason, a highest action of the buddhi which concerns itself disinterestedly with a pursuit of pure truth and right knowledge; it seeks to discover the real Truth behind life and things and our apparent selves and to subject its will to the law of Truth. Few, if any of us, can use this highest reason with any purity, but the attempt to do it is the topmost capacity of the inner instrument, the *antahkarana*.

Buddhi is really an intermediary between a much higher Truth-mind not now in our active possession, which is the direct instrument of Spirit, and the physical life of the human mind evolved in body. Its powers of intelligence and will are drawn from this greater direct Truth-mind or supermind. Buddhi centres its mental action round the ego-idea, the idea that I am

this mind, life and body or am a mental being determined by their action. It serves this ego-idea whether limited by what we call egoism or extended by sympathy with the life around us. An ego-sense is created which reposes on the separative action of the body, of the individualised life, of the mind-responses, and the ego-idea in the buddhi centralises the whole action of this ego's thought, character, personality. The lower understanding and the intermediary reason are instruments of its desire of experience and self-enlargement. But when the highest reason and will develop, we can turn towards that which these outward things mean to the higher spiritual consciousness. The "I" can then be seen as a mental reflection of the Self, the Spirit, the Divine, the one existence transcendent, universal, individual in its multiplicity; the consciousness in which these things meet, become aspects of one being and assume their right relations, can then be unveiled out of all these physical and mental coverings. When the transition to supermind takes place, the powers of the Buddhi do not perish, but have all to be converted to their supramental values. But the consideration of the supermind and the conversion of the buddhi belongs to the question of the higher siddhi or divine perfection. At present we have to consider the purification of the normal being of man, preparatory to any such conversion, which leads to the liberation from the bonds of our lower nature.

Chapter VI

Purification — The Lower Mentality

WE HAVE to deal with the complex action of all these instruments and set about their purification. And the simplest way will be to fasten on the two kinds of radical defect in each, distinguish clearly in what they consist and set them right. But there is also the question where we are to begin. For the entanglement is great, the complete purification of one instrument depends on the complete purification too of all the others, and that is a great source of difficulty, disappointment and perplexity, — as when we think we have got the intelligence purified, only to find that it is still subject to attack and overclouding because the emotions of the heart and the will and sensational mind are still affected by the many impurities of the lower nature and they get back into the enlightened buddhi and prevent it from reflecting the pure truth for which we are seeking. But we have on the other hand this advantage that one important instrument sufficiently purified can be used as a means for the purification of the others, one step firmly taken makes easier all the others and gets rid of a host of difficulties. Which instrument then by its purification and perfection will bring about most easily and effectively or can aid with a most powerful rapidity the perfection of the rest?

Since we are the spirit enveloped in mind, a soul evolved here as a mental being in a living physical body, it must naturally be in the mind, the *antahkarana*, that we must look for this desideratum. And in the mind it is evidently by the buddhi, the intelligence and the will of the intelligence that the human being is intended to do whatever work is not done for him by the physical or nervous nature as in the plant and the animal. Pending the evolution of any higher supramental power the intelligent will must be our main force for effectuation and to purify it becomes a very primary necessity. Once our intelligence and will are well

purified of all that limits them and gives them a wrong action or wrong direction, they can easily be perfected, can be made to respond to the suggestions of Truth, understand themselves and the rest of the being, see clearly and with a fine and scrupulous accuracy what they are doing and follow out the right way to do it without any hesitating or eager error or stumbling deviation. Eventually their response can be opened up to the perfect discernings, intuitions, inspirations, revelations of the supermind and proceed by a more and more luminous and even infallible action. But this purification cannot be effected without a preliminary clearing of its natural obstacles in the other lower parts of the *antahkarana*, and the chief natural obstacle running through the whole action of the *antahkarana*, through the sense, the mental sensation, emotion, dynamic impulse, intelligence, will, is the intermiscence and the compelling claim of the psychic prana. This then must be dealt with, its dominating intermiscence ruled out, its claim denied, itself quieted and prepared for purification.

Each instrument has, it has been said, a proper and legitimate action and also a deformation or wrong principle of its proper action. The proper action of the psychic prana is pure possession and enjoyment, *bhoga*. To enjoy thought, will, action, dynamic impulse, result of action, emotion, sense, sensation, to enjoy too by their means objects, persons, life, the world, is the activity for which this prana gives us a psycho-physical basis. A really perfect enjoyment of existence can only come when what we enjoy is not the world in itself or for itself, but God in the world, when it is not things, but the Ananda of the spirit in things that forms the real, essential object of our enjoying and things only as form and symbol of the spirit, waves of the ocean of Ananda. But this Ananda can only come at all when we can get at and reflect in our members the hidden spiritual being, and its fullness can only be had when we climb to the supramental ranges. Meanwhile there is a just and permissible, a quite legitimate human enjoyment of these things, which is, to speak in the language of Indian psychology, predominantly sattvic in its nature. It is an enlightened enjoyment principally by the perceptive, aesthetic and emotive mind, secondarily only

by the sensational, nervous and physical being, but all subject to the clear government of the buddhi, to a right reason, a right will, a right reception of the life impacts, a right order, a right feeling of the truth, law, ideal sense, beauty, use of things. The mind gets the pure taste of enjoyment of them, *rasa*, and rejects whatever is perturbed, troubled and perverse. Into this acceptance of the clear and limpid *rasa*, the psychic prana has to bring in the full sense of life and the occupying enjoyment by the whole being, *bhoga*, without which the acceptance and possession by the mind, *rasa-grahana*, would not be concrete enough, would be too tenuous to satisfy altogether the embodied soul. This contribution is its proper function.

The deformation which enters in and prevents the purity, is a form of vital craving; the grand deformation which the psychic prana contributes to our being, is desire. The root of desire is the vital craving to seize upon that which we feel we have not, it is the limited life's instinct for possession and satisfaction. It creates the sense of want,—first the simpler vital craving of hunger, thirst, lust, then these psychical hungers, thirsts, lusts of the mind which are a much greater and more instant and pervading affliction of our being, the hunger which is infinite because it is the hunger of an infinite being, the thirst which is only temporarily lulled by satisfaction, but is in its nature insatiable. The psychic prana invades the sensational mind and brings into it the unquiet thirst of sensations, invades the dynamic mind with the lust of control, having, domination, success, fulfilment of every impulse, fills the emotional mind with the desire for the satisfaction of liking and disliking, for the wreaking of love and hate, brings the shrinkings and panics of fear and the strainings and disappointments of hope, imposes the tortures of grief and the brief fevers and excitements of joy, makes the intelligence and intelligent will the accomplices of all these things and turns them in their own kind into deformed and lame instruments, the will into a will of craving and the intelligence into a partial, a stumbling and an eager pursuer of limited, impatient, militant prejudgment and opinion. Desire is the root of all sorrow, disappointment, affliction, for though it has a feverish joy of

pursuit and satisfaction, yet because it is always a straining of the being, it carries into its pursuit and its getting a labour, hunger, struggle, a rapid subjection to fatigue, a sense of limitation, dissatisfaction and early disappointment with all its gains, a ceaseless morbid stimulation, trouble, disquiet, *asānti*. To get rid of desire is the one firm indispensable purification of the psychical prana,—for so we can replace the soul of desire with its pervading immiscence in all our instruments by a mental soul of calm delight and its clear and limpid possession of ourselves and world and Nature which is the crystal basis of the mental life and its perfection.

The psychical prana interferes in all the higher operations to deform them, but its defect is itself due to its being interfered with and deformed by the nature of the physical workings in the body which Life has evolved in its emergence from matter. It is that which has created the separation of the individual life in the body from the life of the universe and stamped on it the character of want, limitation, hunger, thirst, craving for what it has not, a long groping after enjoyment and a hampered and baffled need of possession. Easily regulated and limited in the purely physical order of things, it extends itself in the psychical prana immensely and becomes, as the mind grows, a thing with difficulty limited, insatiable, irregular, a busy creator of disorder and disease. Moreover, the psychical prana leans on the physical life, limits itself by the nervous force of the physical being, limits thereby the operations of the mind and becomes the link of its dependence on the body and its subjection to fatigue, incapacity, disease, disorder, insanity, the pettiness, the precariousness and even the possible dissolution of the workings of the physical mentality. Our mind instead of being a thing powerful in its own strength, a clear instrument of conscious spirit, free and able to control, use and perfect the life and body, appears in the result a mixed construction; it is a predominantly physical mentality limited by its physical organs and subject to the demands and to the obstructions of the life in the body. This can only be got rid of by a sort of practical, inward psychological operation of analysis by which we become aware of the mentality as a

separate power, isolate it for a free working, distinguish too the psychical and the physical prana and make them no longer a link for dependence, but a transmitting channel for the Idea and Will in the buddhi, obedient to its suggestions and commands; the prana then becomes a passive means of effectuation for the mind's direct control of the physical life. This control, however abnormal to our habitual poise of action, is not only possible,—it appears to some extent in the phenomena of hypnosis, though these are unhealthily abnormal, because there it is a foreign will which suggests and commands,—but must become the normal action when the higher Self within takes up the direct command of the whole being. This control can be exercised perfectly, however, only from the supramental level, for it is there that the true effective Idea and Will reside and the mental thought-mind, even spiritualised, is only a limited, though it may be made a very powerful deputy.

Desire, it is thought, is the real motive power of human living and to cast it out would be to stop the springs of life; satisfaction of desire is man's only enjoyment and to eliminate it would be to extinguish the impulse of life by a quietistic asceticism. But the real motive power of the life of the soul is Will; desire is only a deformation of will in the dominant bodily life and physical mind. The essential turn of the soul to possession and enjoyment of the world consists in a will to delight, and the enjoyment of the satisfaction of craving is only a vital and physical degradation of the will to delight. It is essential that we should distinguish between pure will and desire, between the inner will to delight and the outer lust and craving of the mind and body. If we are unable to make this distinction practically in the experience of our being, we can only make a choice between a life-killing asceticism and the gross will to live or else try to effect an awkward, uncertain and precarious compromise between them. This is in fact what the mass of men do; a small minority trample down the life instinct and strain after an ascetic perfection; most obey the gross will to live with such modifications and restraints as society imposes or the normal social man has been trained to impose on his own mind and actions;

others set up a balance between ethical austerity and temperate indulgence of the desiring mental and vital self and see in this balance the golden mean of a sane mind and healthy human living. But none of these ways gives the perfection which we are seeking, the divine government of the will in life. To tread down altogether the prana, the vital being, is to kill the force of life by which the large action of the embodied soul in the human being must be supported; to indulge the gross will to live is to remain satisfied with imperfection; to compromise between them is to stop half way and possess neither earth nor heaven. But if we can get at the pure will undeformed by desire,—which we shall find to be a much more free, tranquil, steady and effective force than the leaping, smoke-stifled, soon fatigued and baffled flame of desire,—and at the calm inner will of delight not afflicted or limited by any trouble of craving, we can then transform the prana from a tyrant, enemy, assailant of the mind into an obedient instrument. We may call these greater things, too, by the name of desire, if we choose, but then we must suppose that there is a divine desire other than the vital craving, a God-desire of which this other and lower phenomenon is an obscure shadow and into which it has to be transfigured. It is better to keep distinct names for things which are entirely different in their character and inner action.

To rid the prana of desire and incidentally to reverse the ordinary poise of our nature and turn the vital being from a troublesomely dominant power into the obedient instrument of a free and unattached mind, is then the first step in purification. As this deformation of the psychical prana is corrected, the purification of the rest of the intermediary parts of the *antahkarana* is facilitated, and when that correction is completed, their purification too can be easily made absolute. These intermediary parts are the emotional mind, the receptive sensational mind and the active sensational mind or mind of dynamic impulse. They all hang together in a strongly knotted interaction. The deformation of the emotional mind hinges upon the duality of liking and disliking, *rāga-dvesa*, emotional attraction and repulsion. All the complexity of our emotions and their tyranny

over the soul arise from the habitual responses of the soul of desire in the emotions and sensations to these attractions and repulsions. Love and hatred, hope and fear, grief and joy all have their founts in this one source. We like, love, welcome, hope for, joy in whatever our nature, the first habit of our being, or else a formed (often perverse) habit, the second nature of our being, presents to the mind as pleasant, *priyam*; we hate, dislike, fear, have repulsion from or grief of whatever it presents to us as unpleasant, *apriyam*. This habit of the emotional nature gets into the way of the intelligent will and makes it often a helpless slave of the emotional being or at least prevents it from exercising a free judgment and government of the nature. This deformation has to be corrected. By getting rid of desire in the psychic prana and its intermischence in the emotional mind, we facilitate the correction. For then attachment which is the strong bond of the heart, falls away from the heart-strings; the involuntary habit of *rāga-dveṣa* remains, but, not being made obstinate by attachment, it can be dealt with more easily by the will and the intelligence. The restless heart can be conquered and get rid of the habit of attraction and repulsion.

But then if this is done, it may be thought, as with regard to desire, that this will be the death of the emotional being. It will certainly be so, if the deformation is eliminated but not replaced by the right action of the emotional mind; the mind will then pass into a neutral condition of blank indifference or into a luminous state of peaceful impartiality with no stir or wave of emotion. The former state is in no way desirable; the latter may be the perfection of a quietistic discipline, but in the integral perfection which does not reject love or shun various movement of delight, it can be no more than a stage which has to be overpassed, a preliminary passivity admitted as a first basis for a right activity. Attraction and repulsion, liking and disliking are a necessary mechanism for the normal man, they form a first principle of natural instinctive selection among the thousand flattering and formidable, helpful and dangerous impacts of the world around him. The buddhi starts with this material to work on and tries to correct the natural and instinctive by a wiser

reasoned and willed selection; for obviously the pleasant is not always the right thing, the object to be preferred and selected, nor the unpleasant the wrong thing, the object to be shunned and rejected; the pleasant and the good, *preyas* and *śreyas*, have to be distinguished, and right reason has to choose and not the caprice of emotion. But this it can do much better when the emotional suggestion is withdrawn and the heart rests in a luminous passivity. Then too the right activity of the heart can be brought to the surface; for we find then that behind this emotion-ridden soul of desire there was waiting all the while a soul of love and lucid joy and delight, a pure psyche, which was clouded over by the deformations of anger, fear, hatred, repulsion and could not embrace the world with an impartial love and joy. But the purified heart is rid of anger, rid of fear, rid of hatred, rid of every shrinking and repulsion: it has a universal love, it can receive with an untroubled sweetness and clarity the various delight which God gives it in the world. But it is not the lax slave of love and delight; it does not desire, does not attempt to impose itself as the master of the actions. The selective process necessary to action is left principally to the buddhi and, when the buddhi has been overpassed, to the spirit in the supramental will, knowledge and Ananda.

The receptive sensational mind is the nervous mental basis of the affections; it receives mentally the impacts of things and gives to them the responses of mental pleasure and pain which are the starting-point of the duality of emotional liking and disliking. All the heart's emotions have a corresponding nervous-mental accompaniment, and we often find that when the heart is freed of any will to the dualities, there still survives a root of disturbance of nervous mind, or a memory in physical mind which falls more and more away to a quite physical character, the more it is repelled by the will in the buddhi. It becomes finally a mere suggestion from outside to which the nervous chords of the mind still occasionally respond until a complete purity liberates them into the same luminous universality of delight which the pure heart already possesses. The active dynamic mind of impulse is the lower organ or channel of responsive action; its deformation

is a subjection to the suggestions of the impure emotional and sensational mentality and the desire of the prana, to impulses to action dictated by grief, fear, hatred, desire, lust, craving, and the rest of the unquiet brood. Its right form of action is a pure dynamic force of strength, courage, temperamental power, not acting for itself or in obedience to the lower members, but as an impartial channel for the dictates of the pure intelligence and will or the supramental Purusha. When we have got rid of these deformations and cleared the mentality for these truer forms of action, the lower mentality is purified and ready for perfection. But that perfection depends on the possession of a purified and enlightened buddhi; for the buddhi is the chief power in the mental being and the chief mental instrument of the Purusha.

Chapter VII

Purification — Intelligence and Will

TO PURIFY the buddhi we must first understand its rather complex composition. And first we have to make clear the distinction, ignored in ordinary speech, between the *manas*, mind, and *buddhi*, the discerning intelligence and the enlightened will. Manas is the sense mind. Man's initial mentality is not at all a thing of reason and will; it is an animal, physical or sense mentality which constitutes its whole experience from the impressions made on it by the external world and by its own embodied consciousness which responds to the outward stimulus of this kind of experience. The buddhi only comes in as a secondary power which has in the evolution taken the first place, but is still dependent on the inferior instrument it uses; it depends for its workings on the sense mind and does what it can on its own higher range by a difficult, elaborate and rather stumbling extension of knowledge and action from the physical or sense basis. A half-enlightened physical or sense mentality is the ordinary type of the mind of man.

In fact the manas is a development from the external chitta; it is a first organising of the crude stuff of the consciousness excited and aroused by external contacts, *bāhya-sparśa*. What we are physically is a soul asleep in matter which has evolved to the partial wakefulness of a living body pervaded by a crude stuff of external consciousness more or less alive and attentive to the outward impacts of the external world in which we are developing our conscious being. In the animal this stuff of externalised consciousness organises itself into a well-regulated mental sense or organ of perceiving and acting mind. Sense is in fact the mental contact of the embodied consciousness with its surroundings. This contact is always essentially a mental phenomenon; but in fact it depends chiefly upon the development of certain physical organs of contact with objects and with their properties to whose

images it is able by habit to give their mental values. What we call the physical senses have a double element, the physical-nervous impression of the object and the mental-nervous value we give to it, and the two together make up our seeing, hearing, smell, taste, touch with all those varieties of sensation of which they, and the touch chiefly, are the starting-point or first transmitting agency. But the manas is able to receive sense impressions and draw results from them by a direct transmission not dependent on the physical organ. This is more distinct in the lower creation. Man, though he has really a greater capacity for this direct sense, the sixth sense in the mind, has let it fall into abeyance by an exclusive reliance on the physical senses supplemented by the activity of the buddhi.

The manas is therefore in the first place an organiser of sense experience; in addition it organises the natural reactions of the will in the embodied consciousness and uses the body as an instrument, uses, as it is ordinarily put, the organs of action. This natural action too has a double element, a physico-nervous impulse and behind it a mental-nervous power-value of instinctive will-impulse. That makes up the nexus of first perceptions and actions which is common to all developing animal life. But in addition there is in the manas or sense-mind a first resulting thought-element which accompanies the operations of animal life. Just as the living body has a certain pervading and possessing action of consciousness, *citta*, which forms into this sense-mind, so the sense-mind has in it a certain pervading and possessing power which mentally uses the sense data, turns them into perceptions and first ideas, associates experience with other experiences, and in some way or other thinks and feels and wills on the sense basis.

This sensational thought-mind which is based upon sense, memory, association, first ideas and resultant generalisations or secondary ideas, is common to all developed animal life and mentality. Man indeed has given it an immense development and range and complexity impossible to the animal, but still, if he stopped there, he would only be a more highly effective animal. He gets beyond the animal range and height because he

has been able to disengage and separate to a greater or less extent his thought action from the sense mentality, to draw back from the latter and observe its data and to act on it from above by a separated and partially freed intelligence. The intelligence and will of the animal are involved in the sense-mind and therefore altogether governed by it and carried on its stream of sensations, sense-perceptions, impulses; it is instinctive. Man is able to use a reason and will, a self-observing, thinking and all-observing, an intelligently willing mind which is no longer involved in the sense-mind, but acts from above and behind it in its own right, with a certain separateness and freedom. He is reflective, has a certain relative freedom of intelligent will. He has liberated in himself and has formed into a separate power the buddhi.

But what is this buddhi? From the point of view of Yogic knowledge we may say that it is that instrument of the soul, of the inner conscious being in nature, of the Purusha, by which it comes into some kind of conscious and ordered possession both of itself and its surroundings. Behind all the action of the chitta and manas there is this soul, this Purusha; but in the lower forms of life it is mostly subconscious, asleep or half-awake, absorbed in the mechanical action of Nature; but it becomes more and more awake and comes more and more forward as it rises in the scale of life. By the activity of the buddhi it begins the process of an entire awakening. In the lower actions of the mind the soul suffers Nature rather than possesses her; for it is there entirely a slave to the mechanism which has brought it into conscious embodied experience. But in the buddhi we get to something, still a natural instrumentation, by which yet Nature seems to be helping and arming the Purusha to understand, possess and master her.

Neither understanding, possession nor mastery is complete, either because the buddhi in us is itself still incomplete, only yet half developed and half formed, or because it is in its nature only an intermediary instrument and before we can get complete knowledge and mastery, we must rise to something greater than the buddhi. Still it is a movement by which we come to the knowledge that there is a power within us greater than the

animal life, a truth greater than the first truths or appearances perceived by the sense-mind, and can try to get at that truth and to labour towards a greater and more successful power of action and control, a more effective government both of our own nature and the nature of things around us, a higher knowledge, a higher power, a higher and larger enjoyment, a more exalted range of being. What then is the final object of this trend? Evidently, it must be for the Purusha to get to the highest and fullest truth of itself and of things, greatest truth of soul or self and greatest truth of Nature, and to an action and a status of being which shall be the result of or identical with that Truth, the power of this greatest knowledge and the enjoyment of that greatest being and consciousness to which it opens. This must be the final result of the evolution of the conscious being in Nature.

To arrive then at the whole truth of our self and Spirit and the knowledge, greatness, bliss of our free and complete being must be the object of the purification, liberation and perfection of the buddhi. But it is a common idea that this means not the full possession of Nature by the Purusha, but a rejection of Nature. We are to get at self by the removal of the action of Prakriti. As the buddhi, coming to the knowledge that the sense-mind only gives us appearances in which the soul is subject to Nature, discovers more real truths behind them, the soul must arrive at this knowledge that the buddhi too, when turned upon Nature, can give us only appearances and enlarge the subjection, and must discover behind them the pure truth of the Self. The Self is something quite other than Nature and the buddhi must purify itself of attachment to and preoccupation with natural things; so only can it discern and separate from them the pure Self and Spirit: the knowledge of the pure Self and Spirit is the only real knowledge, Ananda of the pure Self and Spirit is the only spiritual enjoyment, the consciousness and being of the pure Self and Spirit are the only real consciousness and being. Action and will must cease because all action is of the Nature; the will to be pure Self and Spirit means the cessation of all will to action.

But while the possession of the being, consciousness, delight, power of the Self is the condition of perfection,—for it is only

by knowing and possessing and living in the truth of itself that the soul can become free and perfect,—we hold that Nature is an eternal action and manifestation of the Spirit; Nature is not a devil's trap, a set of misleading appearances created by desire, sense, life and mental will and intelligence, but these phenomena are hints and indications and behind all of them is a truth of Spirit which exceeds and uses them. We hold that there must be an inherent spiritual gnosis and will by which the secret Spirit in all knows its own truth, wills, manifests and governs its own being in Nature; to arrive at that, at communion with it or participation in it, must be part of our perfection. The object of the purification of the buddhi will then be to arrive at the possession of our own truth of self-being, but also at the possession of the highest truth of our being in Nature. For that purpose we must first purify the buddhi of all that makes it subject to the sense-mind and, that once done, purify it from its own limitations and convert its inferior mental intelligence and will into the greater action of a spiritual will and knowledge.

The movement of the buddhi to exceed the limits of the sense-mind is an effort already half accomplished in the human evolution; it is part of the common operation of Nature in man. The original action of the thought-mind, the intelligence and will in man, is a subject action. It accepts the evidence of the senses, the commands of the life-cravings, instincts, desires, emotions, the impulses of the dynamic sense-mind and only tries to give them a more orderly direction and effective success. But the man whose reason and will are led and dominated by the lower mind, is an inferior type of human nature, and the part of our conscious being which consents to this domination is the lowest part of our manhood. The higher action of the buddhi is to exceed and control the lower mind, not indeed to get rid of it, but to raise all the action of which it is the first suggestion into the nobler plane of will and intelligence. The impressions of the sense-mind are used by a thought which exceeds them and which arrives at truths they do not give, ideative truths of thought, truths of philosophy and science; a thinking, discovering, philosophic mind overcomes, rectifies and dominates the first mind of

sense impressions. The impulsive reactive sensational mentality, the life-cravings and the mind of emotional desire are taken up by the intelligent will and are overcome, are rectified and dominated by a greater ethical mind which discovers and sets over them a law of right impulse, right desire, right emotion and right action. The receptive, crudely enjoying sensational mentality, the emotional mind and life mind are taken up by the intelligence and are overcome, rectified and dominated by a deeper, happier aesthetic mind which discovers and sets above them a law of true delight and beauty. All these new formations are used by a general Power of the intellectual, thinking and willing man in a soul of governing intellect, imagination, judgment, memory, volition, discerning reason and ideal feeling which uses them for knowledge, self-development, experience, discovery, creation, effectuation, aspires, strives, inwardly attains, endeavours to make a higher thing of the life of the soul in Nature. The primitive desire-soul no longer governs the being. It is still a desire-soul, but it is repressed and governed by a higher power, something which has manifested in itself the godheads of Truth, Will, Good, Beauty and tries to subject life to them. The crude desire-soul and mind is trying to convert itself into an ideal soul and mind, and the proportion in which some effect and harmony of this greater conscious being has been found and enthroned, is the measure of our increasing humanity.

But this is still a very incomplete movement. We find that it progresses towards a greater completeness in proportion as we arrive at two kinds of perfection; first, a greater and greater detachment from the control of the lower suggestions; secondly, an increasing discovery of a self-existent Being, Light, Power and Ananda which surpasses and transforms the normal humanity. The ethical mind becomes perfect in proportion as it detaches itself from desire, sense suggestion, impulse, customary dictated action and discovers a self of Right, Love, Strength and Purity in which it can live accomplished and make it the foundation of all its actions. The aesthetic mind is perfected in proportion as it detaches itself from all its cruder pleasures and from outward conventional canons of the aesthetic reason and discovers a self-

existent self and spirit of pure and infinite Beauty and Delight which gives its own light and joy to the material of the aesthetics. The mind of knowledge is perfected when it gets away from impression and dogma and opinion and discovers a light of self-knowledge and intuition which illumines all the workings of the sense and reason, all self-experience and world-experience. The will is perfected when it gets away from and behind its impulses and its customary ruts of effectuation and discovers an inner power of the Spirit which is the source of an intuitive and luminous action and an original harmonious creation. The movement of perfection is away from all domination by the lower nature and towards a pure and powerful reflection of the being, power, knowledge and delight of the Spirit and Self in the buddhi.

The Yoga of self-perfection is to make this double movement as absolute as possible. All immiscence of desire in the buddhi is an impurity. The intelligence coloured by desire is an impure intelligence and it distorts Truth; the will coloured by desire is an impure will and it puts a stamp of distortion, pain and imperfection upon the soul's activity. All immiscence of the emotions of the soul of desire is an impurity and similarly distorts both the knowledge and the action. All subjection of the buddhi to the sensations and impulses is an impurity. The thought and will have to stand back detached from desire, troubling emotion, distracting or mastering impulse and to act in their own right until they can discover a greater guide, a Will, Tapas or divine Shakti which will take the place of desire and mental will and impulse, an Ananda or pure delight of the spirit and an illuminated spiritual knowledge which will express themselves in the action of that Shakti. This complete detachment, impossible without an entire self-government, equality, calm, *sama*, *samatā*, *śānti*, is the surest step towards the purification of the buddhi. A calm, equal and detached mind can alone reflect the peace or base the action of the liberated spirit.

The buddhi itself is burdened with a mixed and impure action. When we reduce it to its own proper forms, we find that it has three stages or elevations of its functioning. First,

its lowest basis is a habitual, customary action which is a link between the higher reason and the sense-mind, a kind of current understanding. This understanding is in itself dependent on the witness of the senses and the rule of action which the reason deduces from the sense-mind's perception of and attitude to life. It is not capable of itself forming pure thought and will, but it takes the workings of the higher reason and turns them into coin of opinion and customary standard of thought or canon of action. When we perform a sort of practical analysis of the thinking mind, cut away this element and hold back the higher reason free, observing and silent, we find that this current understanding begins to run about in a futile circle, repeating all its formed opinions and responses to the impressions of things, but incapable of any strong adaptation and initiation. As it feels more and more the refusal of sanction from the higher reason, it begins to fail, to lose confidence in itself and its forms and habits, to distrust the intellectual action and to fall into weakness and silence. The stilling of this current, running, circling, repeating thought-mind is the principal part of that silencing of the thought which is one of the most effective disciplines of Yoga.

But the higher reason itself has a first stage of dynamic, pragmatic intellectuality in which creation, action and will are the real motive and thought and knowledge are employed to form basic constructions and suggestions which are used principally for effectuation. To this pragmatic reason truth is only a formation of the intellect effective for the action of the inner and the outer life. When we cut it away from the still higher reason which seeks impersonally to reflect Truth rather than to create personally effective truth, we find then that this pragmatic reason can originate, progress, enlarge the experience by dynamic knowledge, but it has to depend on the current understanding as a pedestal and base and put its whole weight on life and becoming. It is in itself therefore a mind of the Will to life and action, much more a mind of Will than a mind of knowledge: it does not live in any assured and constant and eternal Truth, but in progressing and changing aspects of Truth which serve the shifting forms of our life and becoming or, at the highest,

help life to grow and progress. By itself this pragmatic mind can give us no firm foundation and no fixed goal; it lives in the truth of the hour, not in any truth of eternity. But when purified of dependence on the customary understanding, it is a great creator and in association with the highest mental reason it becomes a strong channel and bold servant for the effectuation of Truth in life. The value of its work will depend on the value and the power of the highest truth-seeking reason. But by itself it is a sport of Time and a bondslave of Life. The seeker of the Silence has to cast it away from him; the seeker of the integral Divinity has to pass beyond it, to replace and transform this thinking mind intent on Life by a greater effectuating spiritual Will, the Truth-Will of the spirit.

The third and noblest stage of the intellectual will and reason is an intelligence which seeks for some universal reality or for a still higher self-existent Truth for its own sake and tries to live in that Truth. This is primarily a mind of knowledge and only secondarily a mind of Will. In its excess of tendency it often becomes incapable of Will except the one will to know; for action it is dependent on the aid of the pragmatic mind and therefore man tends in action to fall away from the purity of the Truth his highest knowledge holds into a mixed, inferior, inconstant and impure effectuation. The disparity, even when it is not an opposition, between knowledge and will is one of the principal defects of the human buddhi. But there are other inherent limitations of all human thinking. This highest Buddhi does not work in man in its own purity; it is assailed by the defects of the lower mentality, continually clouded by it, distorted, veiled, and prevented or lamed in its own proper action. Purified as much as may be from that habit of mental degradation, the human buddhi is still a power that searches for the Truth, but is never in full or direct possession of it; it can only reflect truth of the spirit and try to make it its own by giving it a limited mental value and a distinct mental body. Nor does it reflect integrally, but seizes either an uncertain totality or else a sum of limited particulars. First it seizes on this or that partial reflection and by subjection to the habit of customary mind turns it into a fixed

imprisoning opinion; all new truth it judges from the standpoint it has thus formed and therefore puts on it the colour of a limiting pre-judgment. Release it as much as possible from this habit of limiting opinion, still it is subject to another affliction, the demand of the pragmatic mind for immediate effectuation, which gives it no time to proceed to larger truth, but fixes it by the power of effective realisation in whatever it has already judged, known and lived. Freed from all these chains, the buddhi can become a pure and flexible reflector of Truth, adding light to light, proceeding from realisation to realisation. It is then limited only by its own inherent limitations.

These limitations are mainly of two kinds. First, its realisations are only mental realisations; to get to the Truth itself we have to go beyond the mental buddhi. Again, the nature of the mind prevents it from making an effective unification of the truths it seizes. It can only put them side by side and see oppositions or effect some kind of partial, executive and practical combination. But it finds finally that the aspects of the Truth are infinite and that none of its intellectual forms are quite valid, because the spirit is infinite and in the spirit all is true, but nothing in the mind can give the whole truth of the spirit. Either then the buddhi becomes a pure mirror of many reflections, reflecting all truth that falls on it, but ineffective and when turned to action either incapable of decision or chaotic, or it has to make a selection and act as if that partiality were the whole truth, though it knows otherwise. It acts in a helpless limitation of Ignorance, though it may hold a Truth far greater than its action. On the other hand, it may turn away from life and thought and seek to exceed itself and pass into the Truth beyond it. This it may do by seizing on some aspect, some principle, some symbol or suggestion of reality and pushing that to its absolute, all-absorbing, all-excluding term of realisation or by seizing on and realising some idea of indeterminate Being or Non-Being from which all thought and life fall away into cessation. The buddhi casts itself into a luminous sleep and the soul passes away into some ineffable height of spiritual being.

Therefore in dealing with the buddhi, we must either take

one of these choices or else try the rarer adventure of lifting the soul from the mental being into the spiritual gnosis to see what we can find in the very core of that supernal light and power. This gnosis contains the sun of the divine Knowledge-Will burning in the heavens of the supreme conscious Being, to which the mental intelligence and will are only a focus of diffused and deflected rays and reflections. That possesses the divine unity and yet or rather therefore can govern the multiplicity and diversity: whatever selection, self-limitation, combination it makes is not imposed on it by Ignorance, but is self-developed by a power of self-possessing divine Knowledge. When the gnosis is gained, it can then be turned on the whole nature to divinise the human being. It is impossible to rise into it at once; if that could be done, it would mean a sudden and violent overshooting, a breaking or slipping through the gates of the Sun, *sūryasya dvārā*, without near possibility of return. We have to form as a link or bridge an intuitive or illuminated mind, which is not the direct gnosis, but in which a first derivative body of the gnosis can form. This illumined mind will first be a mixed power which we shall have to purify of all its mental dependence and mental forms so as to convert all willing and thinking into thought-sight and truth-seeing will by an illumined discrimination, intuition, inspiration, revelation. That will be the final purification of the intelligence and the preparation for the siddhi of the gnosis.

Chapter VIII

The Liberation of the Spirit

THE PURIFICATION of the mental being and the psychic prana — we will leave aside for the time the question of the physical purification, that of the body and physical prana, though that too is necessary to an integral perfection, — prepares the ground for a spiritual liberation. *Suddhi* is the condition for *mukti*. All purification is a release, a delivery; for it is a throwing away of limiting, binding, obscuring imperfections and confusions: purification from desire brings the freedom of the psychic prana, purification from wrong emotions and troubling reactions the freedom of the heart, purification from the obscuring limited thought of the sense mind the freedom of the intelligence, purification from mere intellectuality the freedom of the gnosis. But all this is an instrumental liberation. The freedom of the soul, *mukti*, is of a larger and more essential character; it is an opening out of mortal limitation into the illimitable immortality of the Spirit.

For certain ways of thinking liberation is a throwing off of all nature, a silent state of pure being, a nirvana or extinction, a dissolution of the natural existence into some indefinable Absolute, *mokṣa*. But an absorbed and immersed bliss, a wideness of actionless peace, a release of self-extinction or a self-drowning in the Absolute is not our aim. We shall give to the idea of liberation, *mukti*, only the connotation of that inner change which is common to all experience of this kind, essential to perfection and indispensable to spiritual freedom. We shall find that it then implies always two things, a rejection and an assumption, a negative and a positive side; the negative movement of freedom is a liberation from the principal bonds, the master-knots of the lower soul-nature, the positive side an opening or growth into the higher spiritual existence. But what are these master-knots — other and deeper twistings than the instrumental knots of

the mind, heart, psychic life-force? We find them pointed out for us and insisted on with great force and a constant emphatic repetition in the Gita; they are four, desire, ego, the dualities and the three gunas of Nature; for to be desireless, ego-less, equal of mind and soul and spirit and *nistraigunya*, is in the idea of the Gita to be free, *mukta*. We may accept this description; for everything essential is covered by its amplitude. On the other hand, the positive sense of freedom is to be universal in soul, transcendently one in spirit with God, possessed of the highest divine nature,—as we may say, like to God, or one with him in the law of our being. This is the whole and full sense of liberation and this is the integral freedom of the spirit.

We have already had to speak of purification from the psychic desire of which the craving of the prana is the evolutionary or, as we may put it, the practical basis. But this is in the mental and psychic nature; spiritual desirelessness has a wider and more essential meaning: for desire has a double knot, a lower knot in the prana, which is a craving in the instruments, and a very subtle knot in the soul itself with the buddhi as its first support or *pratiṣṭhā*, which is the inmost origin of this mesh of our bondage. When we look from below, desire presents itself to us as a craving of the life force which subtilises in the emotions into a craving of the heart and is farther subtilised in the intelligence into a craving, preference, passion of the aesthetic, ethical, dynamic or rational turn of the buddhi. This desire is essential to the ordinary man; he cannot live or act as an individual without knotting up all his action into the service of some kind of lower or higher craving, preference or passion. But when we are able to look at desire from above, we see that what supports this instrumental desire is a will of the spirit. There is a will, *tapas*, *sakti*, by which the secret spirit imposes on its outer members all their action and draws from it an active delight of its being, an *ananda*, in which they very obscurely and imperfectly, if at all consciously, partake. This tapas is the will of the transcendent spirit who creates the universal movement, of the universal spirit who supports and informs it, of the free individual spirit who is the soul centre of its multiplicities. It is one will, free in all these

at once, comprehensive, harmonious, unified; we find it, when we live and act in the spirit, to be an effortless and desireless, a spontaneous and illumined, a self-fulfilling and self-possessing, a satisfied and blissful will of the spiritual delight of being.

But the moment the individual soul leans away from the universal and transcendent truth of its being, leans towards ego, tries to make this will a thing of its own, a separate personal energy, that will changes its character: it becomes an effort, a straining, a heat of force which may have its fiery joys of effectuation and of possession, but has also its afflicting recoils and pain of labour. It is this that turns in each instrument into an intellectual, emotional, dynamic, sensational or vital will of desire, wish, craving. Even when the instruments *per se* are purified of their own apparent initiative and particular kind of desire, this imperfect tapas may still remain, and so long as it conceals the source or deforms the type of the inner action, the soul has not the bliss of liberty, or can only have it by refraining from all action; even, if allowed to persist, it will rekindle the pranic or other desires or at least throw a reminiscent shadow of them on the being. This spiritual seed or beginning of desire too must be expelled, renounced, cast away: the sadhaka must either choose an active peace and complete inner silence or lose individual initiation, *sāṅkalpārambha*, in a unity with the universal will, the tapas of the divine Shakti. The passive way is to be inwardly immobile, without effort, wish, expectation or any turn to action, *niśceṣṭa*, *anīha*, *nirapekṣa*, *nivṛtta*; the active way is to be thus immobile and impersonal in the mind, but to allow the supreme Will in its spiritual purity to act through the purified instruments. Then, if the soul abides on the level of the spiritualised mentality, it becomes an instrument only, but is itself without initiative or action, *niśkriya*, *sarvārambha-parityāgī*. But if it rises to the gnosis, it is at once an instrument and a participant in the bliss of the divine action and the bliss of the divine Ananda; it unifies in itself the *prakṛti* and the *puruṣa*.

The ego turn, the separative turn of the being, is the fulcrum of the whole embarrassed labour of the ignorance and the bondage. So long as one is not free from the ego sense, there

can be no real freedom. The seat of the ego is said to be in the buddhi; it is an ignorance of the discriminating mind and reason which discriminate wrongly and take the individuation of mind, life and body for a truth of separative existence and are turned away from the greater reconciling truth of the oneness of all existence. At any rate in man it is the ego idea which chiefly supports the falsehood of a separative existence; to get rid of this idea, to dwell on the opposite idea of unity, of the one self, the one spirit, the one being of nature is therefore an effective remedy; but it is not by itself absolutely effective. For the ego, though it supports itself by this ego idea, *aham-buddhi*, finds its most powerful means for a certain obstinacy or passion of persistence in the normal action of the sense-mind, the prana and the body. To cast out of us the ego idea is not entirely possible or not entirely effective until these instruments have undergone purification; for, their action being persistently egoistic and separative, the buddhi is carried away by them,—as a boat by winds on the sea, says the Gita,—the knowledge in the intelligence is being constantly obscured or lost temporarily and has to be restored again, a very labour of Sisyphus. But if the lower instruments have been purified of egoistic desire, wish, will, egoistic passion, egoistic emotion and the buddhi itself of egoistic idea and preference, then the knowledge of the spiritual truth of oneness can find a firm foundation. Till then, the ego takes all sorts of subtle forms and we imagine ourselves to be free from it, when we are really acting as its instruments and all we have attained is a certain intellectual poise which is not the true spiritual liberation. Moreover, to throw away the active sense of ego is not enough; that may merely bring an inactive state of the mentality, a certain passive inert quietude of separate being may take the place of the kinetic egoism, which is also not the true liberation. The ego sense must be replaced by a oneness with the transcendental Divine and with universal being.

This necessity arises from the fact that the buddhi is only a *pratisthā* or chief support of the ego-sense in its manifold play, *ahankāra*; but in its source it is a degradation or deformation of a truth of our spiritual being. The truth of being is that there is

a transcendent existence, supreme self or spirit, a timeless soul of existence, an eternal, a Divine, or even we may speak of it in relation to current mental ideas of the Godhead as a supra-Divine, which is here immanent, all-embracing, all-initiating and all-governing, a great universal Spirit; and the individual is a conscious power of being of the Eternal, capable eternally of relations with him, but one with him too in the very core of reality of its own eternal existence. This is a truth which the intelligence can apprehend, can, when once purified, reflect, transmit, hold in a derivative fashion, but it can only be entirely realised, lived and made effective in the spirit. When we live in the spirit, then we not only know, but are this truth of our being. The individual then enjoys in the spirit, in the bliss of the spirit, his oneness with the universal existence, his oneness with the timeless Divine and his oneness with all other beings and that is the essential sense of a spiritual liberation from the ego. But the moment the soul leans towards the mental limitation, there is a certain sense of spiritual separateness which has its joys, but may at any moment lapse into the entire ego-sense, ignorance, oblivion of oneness. To get rid of this separateness an attempt is made to absorb oneself in the idea and realisation of the Divine, and this takes in certain forms of spiritual askesis the turn of a strain towards the abolition of all individual being and a casting away, in the trance of immersion, of all individual or universal relations with the Divine, in others it becomes an absorbed dwelling in him and not in this world or a continual absorbed or intent living in his presence, *sāyujya*, *sālokya*, *sāmīpya mukti*. The way proposed for the integral Yoga is a lifting up and surrender of the whole being to him, by which not only do we become one with him in our spiritual existence, but dwell too in him and he in us, so that the whole nature is full of his presence and changed into the divine nature; we become one spirit and consciousness and life and substance with the Divine and at the same time we live and move in and have a various joy of that oneness. This integral liberation from the ego into the divine spirit and nature can only be relatively complete on our present level, but it begins to become absolute as we open

to and mount into the gnosis. This is the liberated perfection.

The liberation from ego, the liberation from desire together found the central spiritual freedom. The sense, the idea, the experience that I am a separately self-existent being in the universe, and the forming of consciousness and force of being into the mould of that experience are the root of all suffering, ignorance and evil. And it is so because that falsifies both in practice and in cognition the whole real truth of things; it limits the being, limits the consciousness, limits the power of our being, limits the bliss of being; this limitation again produces a wrong way of existence, wrong way of consciousness, wrong way of using the power of our being and consciousness, and wrong, perverse and contrary forms of the delight of existence. The soul limited in being and self-isolated in its environment feels itself no longer in unity and harmony with its Self, with God, with the universe, with all around it; but rather it finds itself at odds with the universe, in conflict and discord with other beings who are its other selves, but whom it treats as not-self; and so long as this discord and disagreement last, it cannot possess its world and it cannot enjoy the universal life, but is full of unease, fear, afflictions of all kinds, in a painful struggle to preserve and increase itself and possess its surroundings,—for to possess its world is the nature of infinite spirit and the necessary urge in all being. The satisfactions it gets from this labour and effort are of a stinted, perverse and unsatisfying kind: for the one real satisfaction it has is that of growth, of an increasing return towards itself, of some realisation of accord and harmony, of successful self-creation and self-realisation, but the little of these things that it can achieve on the basis of ego-consciousness is always limited, insecure, imperfect, transitory. It is at war too with its own self,—first because, since it is no longer in possession of the central harmonising truth of its own being, it cannot properly control its natural members or accord their tendencies, powers and demands; it has not the secret of harmony, because it has not the secret of its own unity and self-possession; and, secondly, not being in possession of its highest self, it has to struggle towards that, is not allowed to be at peace till it is in possession of its own

true highest being. All this means that it is not at one with God; for to be at one with God is to be at one with oneself, at one with the universe and at one with all beings. This oneness is the secret of a right and a divine existence. But the ego cannot have it, because it is in its very nature separative and because even with regard to ourselves, to our own psychological existence it is a false centre of unity; for it tries to find the unity of our being in an identification with a shifting mental, vital, physical personality, not with the eternal self of our total existence. Only in the spiritual self can we possess the true unity; for there the individual enlarges to his own total being and finds himself one with universal existence and with the transcending Divinity.

All the trouble and suffering of the soul proceeds from this wrong egoistic and separative way of existence. The soul not in possession of its free self-existence, *anātmavān*, because it is limited in its consciousness, is limited in knowledge; and this limited knowledge takes the form of a falsifying knowledge. The struggle to return to a true knowing is imposed upon it, but the ego in the separative mind is satisfied with shows and fragments of knowledge which it pieces together into some false or some imperfect total or governing notion, and this knowledge fails it and has to be abandoned for a fresh pursuit of the one thing to be known. That one thing is the Divine, the Self, the Spirit in whom universal and individual being find at last their right foundation and their right harmonies. Again, because it is limited in force, the ego-prisoned soul is full of many incapacities; wrong knowledge is accompanied by wrong will, wrong tendencies and impulses of the being, and the acute sense of this wrongness is the root of the human consciousness of sin. This deficiency of its nature it tries to set right by standards of conduct which will help it to remove the egoistic consciousness and satisfactions of sin by the egoistic consciousness and self-satisfaction of virtue, the rajasic by the sattvic egoism. But the original sin has to be cured, the separation of its being and will from the divine Being and the divine Will; when it returns to unity with the divine Will and Being, it rises beyond sin and virtue to the infinite self-existent purity and the security of its own divine nature.

Its incapacities it tries to set right by organising its imperfect knowledge and disciplining its half-enlightened will and force and directing them by some systematic effort of the reason; but the result must always be a limited, uncertain, mutable and stumbling way and standard of capacity in action. Only when it returns again to the large unity of the free spirit, *bhūmā*, can the action of its nature move perfectly as the instrument of the infinite Spirit and in the steps of the Right and Truth and Power which belong to the free soul acting from the supreme centre of its existence. Again, because it is limited in the delight of being, it is unable to lay hold on the secure, self-existent perfect bliss of the spirit or the delight, the Ananda of the universe which keeps the world in motion, but is only able to move in a mixed and shifting succession of pleasures and pains, joys and sorrows, or must take refuge in some conscient conscience or neutral indifference. The ego mind cannot do otherwise, and the soul which has externalised itself in ego, is subjected to this unsatisfactory, secondary, imperfect, often perverse, troubled or annulled enjoyment of existence; yet all the time the spiritual and universal Ananda is within, in the self, in the spirit, in its secret unity with God and existence. To cast away the chain of ego and go back to free self, immortal spiritual being is the soul's return to its own eternal divinity.

The will to the imperfect separative being, that wrong Tapas which makes the soul in Nature attempt to individualise itself, to individualise its being, consciousness, force of being, delight of existence in a separative sense, to have these things as its own, in its own right, and not in the right of God and of the universal oneness, is that which brings about this wrong turn and creates the ego. To turn from this original desire is therefore essential, to get back to the will without desire whose whole enjoyment of being and whole will in being is that of a free universal and unifying Ananda. These two things are one, liberation from the will that is of the nature of desire and liberation from the ego, and the oneness which is brought about by the happy loss of the will of desire and the ego, is the essence of Mukti.

Chapter IX

The Liberation of the Nature

THE TWO sides of our being, conscious experiencing soul and executive Nature continuously and variously offering to the soul her experiences, determine in their meeting all the affections of our inner status and its responses. Nature contributes the character of the happenings and the forms of the instruments of experience, the soul meets it by an assent to the natural determinations of the response to these happenings or by a will to other determination which it imposes upon the nature. The acceptance of the instrumental ego consciousness and the will to desire are the initial consent of the self to the lapse into the lower ranges of experience in which it forgets its divine nature of being; the rejection of these things, the return to free self and the will of the divine delight in being is the liberation of the spirit. But on the other side stand the contributions of Nature herself to the mixed tangle, which she imposes on the soul's experience of her doings and makings when once that first initial consent has been given and made the law of the whole outward transaction. Nature's essential contributions are two, the gunas and the dualities. This inferior action of Nature in which we live has certain essential qualitative modes which constitute the whole basis of its inferiority. The constant effect of these modes on the soul in its natural powers of mind, life and body is a discordant and divided experience, a strife of opposites, *dvandva*, a motion in all its experience and an oscillation between or a mixture of constant pairs of contraries, of combining positives and negatives, dualities. A complete liberation from the ego and the will of desire must bring with it a superiority to the qualitative modes of the inferior Nature, *traigunyātītya*, a release from this mixed and discordant experience, a cessation or solution of the dual action of Nature. But on this side too there are two kinds of freedom. A liberation from Nature in a quiescent bliss

of the spirit is the first form of release. A farther liberation of the Nature into a divine quality and spiritual power of world-experience fills the supreme calm with the supreme kinetic bliss of knowledge, power, joy and mastery. A divine unity of supreme spirit and its supreme nature is the integral liberation.

Nature, because she is a power of spirit, is essentially qualitative in her action. One may almost say that Nature is only the power in being and the development in action of the infinite qualities of the spirit, *anantaguṇa*. All else belongs to her outward and more mechanical aspects; but this play of quality is the essential thing, of which the rest is the result and mechanical combination. Once we have set right the working of the essential power and quality, all the rest becomes subject to the control of the experiencing Purusha. But in the inferior nature of things the play of infinite quality is subject to a limited measure, a divided and conflicting working, a system of opposites and discords between which some practical mobile system of concords has to be found and to be kept in action; this play of concorded discords, conflicting qualities, disparate powers and ways of experience compelled to some just manageable, partial, mostly precarious agreement, an unstable mutable equilibrium, is managed by a fundamental working in three qualitative modes which conflict and combine together in all her creations. These three modes have been given in the Sankhya system, which is generally adopted for this purpose by all the schools of philosophic thought and of Yoga in India, the three names, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.¹ Tamas is the principle and power of inertia; rajas is the principle of kinesis, passion, endeavour, struggle, initiation (*ārambha*); sattva the principle of assimilation, equilibrium and harmony. The metaphysical bearing of this classification does not concern us; but in its psychological and spiritual bearing it is of immense practical importance, because these three principles enter into all things, combine to give them their turn of active nature, result, effectuation, and their unequal working in the

¹ This subject has been treated in the Yoga of Works. It is restated here from the point of view of the general type of nature and the complete liberation of the being.

soul-experience is the constituent force of our active personality, our temperament, type of nature and cast of psychological response to experience. All character of action and experience in us is determined by the predominance and by the proportional interaction of these three qualities or modes of Nature. The soul in its personality is obliged, as it were, to run into their moulds; mostly, too, it is controlled by them rather than has any free control of them. The soul can only be free by rising above and rejecting the tormented strife of their unequal action and their insufficient concords and combinations and precarious harmonies, whether in the sense of a complete quiescence from the half-regulated chaos of their action or in the sense of a superiority to this lower turn of nature and a higher control or transformation of their working. There must be either an emptiness of the gunas or a superiority to the gunas.

The gunas affect every part of our natural being. They have indeed their strongest relative hold in the three different members of it, mind, life and body. Tamas, the principle of inertia, is strongest in material nature and in our physical being. The action of this principle is of two kinds, inertia of force and inertia of knowledge. Whatever is predominantly governed by Tamas, tends in its force to a sluggish inaction and immobility or else to a mechanical action which it does not possess, but is possessed by obscure forces which drive it in a mechanical round of energy; equally in its consciousness it turns to an unconsciousness or enveloped subconsciousness or to a reluctant, sluggish or in some way mechanical conscious action which does not possess the idea of its own energy, but is guided by an idea which seems external to it or at least concealed from its active awareness. Thus the principle of our body is in its nature inert, subconscious, incapable of anything but a mechanical and habitual self-guidance and action: though it has like everything else a principle of kinesis and a principle of equilibrium of its state and action, an inherent principle of response and a secret consciousness, the greatest portion of its rajasic motions are contributed by the life-power and all the overt consciousness by the mental being. The principle of rajas has its strongest hold on the vital nature. It is

the Life within us that is the strongest kinetic motor power, but the life-power in earthly beings is possessed by the force of desire, therefore rajas turns always to action and desire; desire is the strongest human and animal initiator of most kinesis and action, predominant to such an extent that many consider it the father of all action and even the originator of our being. Moreover, rajas finding itself in a world of matter which starts from the principle of inconscience and a mechanical driven inertia, has to work against an immense contrary force; therefore its whole action takes on the nature of an effort, a struggle, a besieged and an impeded conflict for possession which is distressed in its every step by a limiting incapacity, disappointment and suffering; even its gains are precarious and limited and marred by the reaction of the effort and an aftertaste of insufficiency and transience. The principle of sattwa has its strongest hold in the mind; not so much in the lower parts of the mind which are dominated by the rajasic life-power, but mostly in the intelligence and the will of the reason. Intelligence, reason, rational will are moved by the nature of their predominant principle towards a constant effort of assimilation, assimilation by knowledge, assimilation by a power of understanding will, a constant effort towards equilibrium, some stability, rule, harmony of the conflicting elements of natural happening and experience. This satisfaction it gets in various ways and in various degrees of acquisition. The attainment of assimilation, equilibrium and harmony brings with it always a relative but more or less intense and satisfying sense of ease, happiness, mastery, security, which is other than the troubled and vehement pleasures insecurely bestowed by the satisfaction of rajasic desire and passion. Light and happiness are the characteristics of the sattwic guna. The whole nature of the embodied living mental being is determined by these three gunas.

But these are only predominant powers in each part of our complex system. The three qualities mingle, combine and strive in every fibre and in every member of our intricate psychology. The mental character is made by them, the character of our reason, the character of our will, the character of our moral,

aesthetic, emotional, dynamic, sensational being. Tamas brings in all the ignorance, inertia, weakness, incapacity which afflicts our nature, a clouded reason, nescience, unintelligence, a clinging to habitual notions and mechanical ideas, the refusal to think and know, the small mind, the closed avenues, the trotting round of mental habit, the dark and the twilit places. Tamas brings in the impotent will, want of faith and self-confidence and initiative, the disinclination to act, the shrinking from endeavour and aspiration, the poor and little spirit, and in our moral and dynamic being the inertia, the cowardice, baseness, sloth, lax subjection to small and ignoble motives, the weak yielding to our lower nature. Tamas brings into our emotional nature insensibility, indifference, want of sympathy and openness, the shut soul, the callous heart, the soon spent affection and languor of the feelings, into our aesthetic and sensational nature the dull aesthesis, the limited range of response, the insensibility to beauty, all that makes in man the coarse, heavy and vulgar spirit. Rajas contributes our normal active nature with all its good and evil; when unchastened by a sufficient element of sattwa, it turns to egoism, self-will and violence, the perverse, obstinate or exaggerating action of the reason, prejudice, attachment to opinion, clinging to error, the subservience of the intelligence to our desires and preferences and not to the truth, the fanatic or the sectarian mind, self-will, pride, arrogance, selfishness, ambition, lust, greed, cruelty, hatred, jealousy, the egoisms of love, all the vices and passions, the exaggerations of the aesthesis, the morbidities and perversions of the sensational and vital being. Tamas in its own right produces the coarse, dull and ignorant type of human nature, rajas the vivid, restless, kinetic man, driven by the breath of action, passion and desire. Sattwa produces a higher type. The gifts of sattwa are the mind of reason and balance, clarity of the disinterested truth-seeking open intelligence, a will subordinated to the reason or guided by the ethical spirit, self-control, equality, calm, love, sympathy, refinement, measure, fineness of the aesthetic and emotional mind, in the sensational being delicacy, just acceptivity, moderation and poise, a vitality subdued and governed by the mastering intelligence. The

accomplished types of the sattwic man are the philosopher, saint and sage, of the rajasic man the statesman, warrior, forceful man of action. But in all men there is in greater or less proportions a mingling of the gunas, a multiple personality and in most a good deal of shifting and alternation from the predominance of one to the prevalence of another guna; even in the governing form of their nature most human beings are of a mixed type. All the colour and variety of life is made of the intricate pattern of the weaving of the gunas.

But richness of life, even a sattwic harmony of mind and nature does not constitute spiritual perfection. There is a relative possible perfection, but it is a perfection of incompleteness, some partial height, force, beauty, some measure of nobility and greatness, some imposed and precariously sustained balance. There is a relative mastery, but it is a mastery of the body by life or of the life by mind, not a free possession of the instruments by the liberated and self-possessing spirit. The gunas have to be transcended if we would arrive at spiritual perfection. Tamas evidently has to be overcome, inertia and ignorance and incapacity cannot be elements of a true perfection; but it can only be overcome in Nature by the force of rajas aided by an increasing force of sattwa. Rajas has to be overcome, egoism, personal desire and self-seeking passion are not elements of the true perfection; but it can only be overcome by force of sattwa enlightening the being and force of tamas limiting the action. Sattwa itself does not give the highest or the integral perfection; sattwa is always a quality of the limited nature; sattwic knowledge is the light of a limited mentality; sattwic will is the government of a limited intelligent force. Moreover, sattwa cannot act by itself in Nature, but has to rely for all action on the aid of rajas, so that even sattwic action is always liable to the imperfections of rajas; egoism, perplexity, inconsistency, a one-sided turn, a limited and exaggerated will, exaggerating itself in the intensity of its limitations, pursue the mind and action even of the saint, philosopher and sage. There is a sattwic as well as a rajasic or tamasic egoism, at the highest an egoism of knowledge or virtue; but the mind's egoism of whatever type is incompatible with

liberation. All the three gunas have to be transcended. Sattwa may bring us near to the Light, but its limited clarity falls away from us when we enter into the luminous body of the divine Nature.

This transcendence is usually sought by a withdrawal from the action of the lower nature. That withdrawal brings with it a stressing of the tendency to inaction. Sattwa when it wishes to intensify itself, seeks to get rid of rajas and calls in the aid of the tamasic principle of inaction; that is the reason why a certain type of highly sattwic men live intensely in the inward being, but hardly at all in the outward life of action, or else are there incompetent and ineffective. The seeker of liberation goes farther in this direction, strives by imposing an enlightened tamas on his natural being, a tamas which by this saving enlightenment is more of a quiescence than an incapacity, to give the sattwic guna freedom to lose itself in the light of the spirit. A quietude and stillness is imposed on the body, on the active life-soul of desire and ego, on the external mind, while the sattwic nature by stress of meditation, by an exclusive concentration of adoration, by a will turned inward to the Supreme, strives to merge itself in the spirit. But if this is sufficient for a quietistic release, it is not sufficient for the freedom of an integral perfection. This liberation depends upon inaction and is not entirely self-existent and absolute; the moment the soul turns to action, it finds that the activity of the nature is still the old imperfect motion. There is a liberation of the soul from the nature which is gained by inaction, but not a liberation of the soul in nature perfect and self-existent whether in action or in inaction. The question then arises whether such a liberation and perfection are possible and what may be the condition of this perfect freedom.

The ordinary idea is that it is not possible because all action is of the lower gunas, necessarily defective, *sadoṣam*, caused by the motion, inequality, want of balance, unstable strife of the gunas; but when these unequal gunas fall into perfect equilibrium, all action of Nature ceases and the soul rests in its quietude. The divine Being, we may say, may either exist in his silence or act in Nature through her instrumentation, but in that case must

put on the appearance of her strife and imperfection. That may be true of the ordinary deputed action of the Divine in the human spirit with its present relations of soul to nature in an embodied imperfect mental being, but it is not true of the divine nature of perfection. The strife of the gunas is only a representation in the imperfection of the lower nature; what the three gunas stand for are three essential powers of the Divine which are not merely existent in a perfect equilibrium of quietude, but unified in a perfect consensus of divine action. Tamas in the spiritual being becomes a divine calm, which is not an inertia and incapacity of action, but a perfect power, *śakti*, holding in itself all its capacity and capable of controlling and subjecting to the law of calm even the most stupendous and enormous activity: rajas becomes a self-effecting initiating sheer Will of the spirit, which is not desire, endeavour, striving passion, but the same perfect power of being, *śakti*, capable of an infinite, imperturbable and blissful action. Sattwa becomes not the modified mental light, *prakāśa*, but the self-existent light of the divine being, *jyotiḥ*, which is the soul of the perfect power of being and illumines in their unity the divine quietude and the divine will of action. The ordinary liberation gets the still divine light in the divine quietude, but the integral perfection will aim at this greater triune unity.

When this liberation of the nature comes, there is a liberation also of all the spiritual sense of the dualities of Nature. In the lower nature the dualities are the inevitable effect of the play of the gunas on the soul affected by the formations of the sattwic, rajasic and tamasic ego. The knot of this duality is an ignorance which is unable to seize on the spiritual truth of things and concentrates on the imperfect appearances, but meets them not with a mastery of their inner truth, but with a strife and a shifting balance of attraction and repulsion, capacity and incapacity, liking and disliking, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, acceptance and repugnance; all life is represented to us as a tangle of these things, of the pleasant and the unpleasant, the beautiful and the unbeautiful, truth and falsehood, fortune and misfortune, success and failure, good and evil, the inextricable double web of Nature. Attachment to its likings and repugnances

keeps the soul bound in this web of good and evil, joys and sorrows. The seeker of liberation gets rid of attachment, throws away from his soul the dualities, but as the dualities appear to be the whole act, stuff and frame of life, this release would seem to be most easily compassed by a withdrawal from life, whether a physical withdrawal, so far as that is possible while in the body, or an inner retirement, a refusal of sanction, a liberating distaste, *vairāgya*, for the whole action of Nature. There is a separation of the soul from Nature. Then the soul watches seated above and unmoved, *udāsīna*, the strife of the gunas in the natural being and regards as an impassive witness the pleasure and pain of the mind and body. Or it is able to impose its indifference even on the outer mind and watches with the impartial calm or the impartial joy of the detached spectator the universal action in which it has no longer an active inner participation. The end of this movement is the rejection of birth and a departure into the silent self, *mokṣa*.

But this rejection is not the last possible word of liberation. The integral liberation comes when this passion for release, *mumukṣutva*, founded on distaste or *vairāgya*, is itself transcended; the soul is then liberated both from attachment to the lower action of nature and from all repugnance to the cosmic action of the Divine. This liberation gets its completeness when the spiritual gnosis can act with a supramental knowledge and reception of the action of Nature and a supramental luminous will in initiation. The gnosis discovers the spiritual sense in Nature, God in things, the soul of good in all things that have the contrary appearance; that soul is delivered in them and out of them, the perversions of the imperfect or contrary forms fall away or are transformed into their higher divine truth, — even as the gunas go back to their divine principles, — and the spirit lives in a universal, infinite and absolute Truth, Good, Beauty, Bliss which is the supramental or ideal divine Nature. The liberation of the Nature becomes one with the liberation of the spirit, and there is founded in the integral freedom the integral perfection.

Chapter X

The Elements of Perfection

WHEN the self is purified of the wrong and confused action of the instrumental Nature and liberated into its self-existent being, consciousness, power and bliss and the Nature itself liberated from the tangle of this lower action of the struggling gunas and the dualities into the high truth of the divine calm and the divine action, then spiritual perfection becomes possible. Purification and freedom are the indispensable antecedents of perfection. A spiritual self-perfection can only mean a growing into oneness with the nature of divine being, and therefore according to our conception of divine being will be the aim, effort and method of our seeking after this perfection. To the Mayavadin the highest or rather the only real truth of being is the impassive, impersonal, self-aware Absolute and therefore to grow into an impassive calm, impersonality and pure self-awareness of spirit is his idea of perfection and a rejection of cosmic and individual being and a settling into silent self-knowledge is his way. To the Buddhist for whom the highest truth is a negation of being, a recognition of the impermanence and sorrow of being and the disastrous nullity of desire and a dissolution of egoism, of the upholding associations of the Idea and the successions of Karma are the perfect way. Other ideas of the Highest are less negative; each according to its own idea leads towards some likeness to the Divine, *sādṛṣya*, and each finds its own way, such as the love and worship of the Bhakta and the growing into the likeness of the Divine by love. But for the integral Yoga perfection will mean a divine spirit and a divine nature which will admit of a divine relation and action in the world; it will mean also in its entirety a divinising of the whole nature, a rejection of all its wrong knots of being and action, but no rejection of any part of our being or of any field of our action. The approach to perfection must be therefore a

large and complex movement and its results and workings will have an infinite and varied scope. We must fix in order to find a clue and method on certain essential and fundamental elements and requisites of perfection, *siddhi*; for if these are secured, all the rest will be found to be only their natural development or particular working. We may cast these elements into six divisions, interdependent on each other to a great extent but still in a certain way naturally successive in their order of attainment. The movement will start from a basic equality of the soul and mount to an ideal action of the Divine through our perfected being in the largeness of the Brahmic unity.

The first necessity is some fundamental poise of the soul both in its essential and its natural being regarding and meeting the things, impacts and workings of Nature. This poise we shall arrive at by growing into a perfect equality, *samatā*. The self, spirit or Brahman is one in all and therefore one to all; it is, as is said in the Gita which has developed fully this idea of equality and indicated its experience on at least one side of equality, the equal Brahman, *samatām brahma*; the Gita even goes so far in one passage as to identify equality and yoga, *samatvam yoga ucyate*. That is to say, equality is the sign of unity with the Brahman, of becoming Brahman, of growing into an undisturbed spiritual poise of being in the Infinite. Its importance can hardly be exaggerated; for it is the sign of our having passed beyond the egoistic determinations of our nature, of our having conquered our enslaved response to the dualities, of our having transcended the shifting turmoil of the gunas, of our having entered into the calm and peace of liberation. Equality is a term of consciousness which brings into the whole of our being and nature the eternal tranquillity of the Infinite. Moreover, it is the condition of a securely and perfectly divine action; the security and largeness of the cosmic action of the Infinite is based upon and never breaks down or forfeits its eternal tranquillity. That too must be the character of the perfect spiritual action; to be equal and one to all things in spirit, understanding, mind, heart and natural consciousness,—even in the most physical consciousness,—and to make all their workings, whatever their outward adaptation to

the thing to be done, always and imminuably full of the divine equality and calm must be its inmost principle. That may be said to be the passive or basic, the fundamental and receptive side of equality, but there is also an active and possessive side, an equal bliss which can only come when the peace of equality is founded and which is the beatific flower of its fullness.

The next necessity of perfection is to raise all the active parts of the human nature to that highest condition and working pitch of their power and capacity, *śakti*, at which they become capable of being divinised into true instruments of the free, perfect, spiritual and divine action. For practical purposes we may take the understanding, the heart, the prana and the body as the four members of our nature which have thus to be prepared, and we have to find the constituent terms of their perfection. Also there is the dynamical force in us (*vīrya*) of the temperament, character and soul nature, *svabhāva*, which makes the power of our members effective in action and gives them their type and direction; this has to be freed from its limitations, enlarged, rounded so that the whole manhood in us may become the basis of a divine manhood, when the Purusha, the real Man in us, the divine Soul, shall act fully in this human instrument and shine fully through this human vessel. To divinise the perfected nature we have to call in the divine Power or Shakti to replace our limited human energy so that this may be shaped into the image of and filled with the force of a greater infinite energy, *daivī prakṛti, bhāgavatī śakti*. This perfection will grow in the measure in which we can surrender ourselves, first, to the guidance and then to the direct action of that Power and of the Master of our being and our works to whom it belongs, and for this purpose faith is the essential, faith is the great motor-power of our being in our aspirations to perfection,—here, a faith in God and the Shakti which shall begin in the heart and understanding, but shall take possession of all our nature, all its consciousness, all its dynamic motive-force. These four things are the essentials of this second element of perfection, the full powers of the members of the instrumental nature, the perfected dynamis of the soul nature, the assumption of them into the action of the divine

Power, and a perfect faith in all our members to call and support that assumption, *śakti, vīrya, daivī prakṛti, śraddhā*.

But so long as this development takes place only on the highest level of our normal nature, we may have a reflected and limited image of perfection translated into the lower terms of the soul in mind, life and body, but not the possession of the divine perfection in the highest terms possible to us of the divine Idea and its Power. That is to be found beyond these lower principles in the supramental gnosis; therefore the next step of perfection will be the evolution of the mental into the gnostic being. This evolution is effected by a breaking beyond the mental limitation, a stride upward into the next higher plane or region of our being hidden from us at present by the shining lid of the mental reflections and a conversion of all that we are into the terms of this greater consciousness. In the gnosis itself, *vijñāna*, there are several gradations which open at their highest into the full and infinite Ananda. The gnosis once effectively called into action will progressively take up all the terms of intelligence, will, sense-mind, heart, the vital and sensational being and translate them by a luminous and harmonising conversion into a unity of the truth, power and delight of a divine existence. It will lift into that light and force and convert into their own highest sense our whole intellectual, volitional, dynamic, ethical, aesthetic, sensational, vital and physical being. It has the power also of overcoming physical limitations and developing a more perfect and divinely instrumental body. Its light opens up the fields of the superconscious and darts its rays and pours its luminous flood into the subconscious and enlightens its obscure hints and withheld secrets. It admits us to a greater light of the Infinite than is reflected in the paler luminosity even of the highest mentality. While it perfects the individual soul and nature in the sense of a diviner existence and makes a full harmony of the diversities of our being, it finds all its action upon the Unity from which it proceeds and takes up everything into that Unity. Personality and impersonality, the two eternal aspects of existence, are made one by its action in the spiritual being and Nature body of the Purushottama.

The gnostic perfection, spiritual in its nature, is to be accomplished here in the body and takes life in the physical world as one of its fields, even though the gnosis opens to us possession of planes and worlds beyond the material universe. The physical body is therefore a basis of action, *pratisthā*, which cannot be despised, neglected or excluded from the spiritual evolution: a perfection of the body as the outer instrument of a complete divine living on earth will be necessarily a part of the gnostic conversion. The change will be effected by bringing in the law of the gnostic Purusha, *vijñānamaya puruṣa*, and of that into which it opens, the Anandamaya, into the physical consciousness and its members. Pushed to its highest conclusion this movement brings in a spiritualising and illumination of the whole physical consciousness and a divinising of the law of the body. For behind the gross physical sheath of this materially visible and sensible frame there is subliminally supporting it and discoverable by a finer subtle consciousness a subtle body of the mental being and a spiritual or causal body of the gnostic and bliss soul in which all the perfection of a spiritual embodiment is to be found, a yet unmanifested divine law of the body. Most of the physical siddhis acquired by certain Yogins are brought about by some opening up of the law of the subtle or a calling down of something of the law of the spiritual body. The ordinary method is the opening up of the *cakras* by the physical processes of Hathayoga (of which something is also included in the Rajayoga) or by the methods of the Tantric discipline. But while these may be optionally used at certain stages by the integral Yoga, they are not indispensable; for here the reliance is on the power of the higher being to change the lower existence, a working is chosen mainly from above downward and not the opposite way, and therefore the development of the superior power of the gnosis will be awaited as the instrumental change in this part of the Yoga.

There will remain, because it will then only be entirely possible, the perfect action and enjoyment of being on the gnostic basis. The Purusha enters into cosmic manifestation for the variations of his infinite existence, for knowledge, action and

enjoyment; the gnosis brings the fullness of spiritual knowledge and it will found on that the divine action and cast the enjoyment of world and being into the law of the truth, the freedom and the perfection of the spirit. But neither action nor enjoyment will be the lower action of the gunas and consequent egoistic enjoyment mostly of the satisfaction of rajasic desire which is our present way of living. Whatever desire will remain, if that name be given, will be the divine desire, the will to delight of the Purusha enjoying in his freedom and perfection the action of the perfected Prakriti and all her members. The Prakriti will take up the whole nature into the law of her higher divine truth and act in that law offering up the universal enjoyment of her action and being to the Anandamaya Ishwara, the Lord of existence and works and Spirit of bliss, who presides over and governs her workings. The individual soul will be the channel of this action and offering, and it will enjoy at once its oneness with the Ishwara and its oneness with the Prakriti and will enjoy all relations with Infinite and finite, with God and the universe and beings in the universe in the highest terms of the union of the universal Purusha and Prakriti.

All the gnostic evolution opens up into the divine principle of Ananda, which is the foundation of the fullness of spiritual being, consciousness and bliss of Sachchidananda or eternal Brahman. Possessed at first by reflection in the mental experience, it will be possessed afterwards with a greater fullness and directness in the massed and luminous consciousness, *cidghana*, which comes by the gnosis. The Siddha or perfected soul will live in union with the Purushottama in this Brahmic consciousness, he will be conscious in the Brahman that is the All, *sarvam brahma*, in the Brahman infinite in being and infinite in quality, *anantam brahma*, in Brahman as self-existent consciousness and universal knowledge, *jñānam brahma*, in Brahman as the self-existent bliss and its universal delight of being, *ānandam brahma*. He will experience all the universe as the manifestation of the One, all quality and action as the play of his universal and infinite energy, all knowledge and conscious experience as the outflowing of that consciousness, and all in the terms of that

one Ananda. His physical being will be one with all material Nature, his vital being with the life of the universe, his mind with the cosmic mind, his spiritual knowledge and will with the divine knowledge and will both in itself and as it pours itself through these channels, his spirit with the one spirit in all beings. All the variety of cosmic existence will be changed to him in that unity and revealed in the secret of its spiritual significance. For in this spiritual bliss and being he will be one with That which is the origin and continent and inhabitant and spirit and constituting power of all existence. This will be the highest reach of self-perfection.

Chapter XI

The Perfection of Equality

THE VERY first necessity for spiritual perfection is a perfect equality. Perfection in the sense in which we use it in Yoga, means a growth out of a lower undivine into a higher divine nature. In terms of knowledge it is a putting on the being of the higher self and a casting away of the darker broken lower self or a transforming of our imperfect state into the rounded luminous fullness of our real and spiritual personality. In terms of devotion and adoration it is a growing into a likeness of the nature or the law of the being of the Divine, to be united with whom we aspire,—for if there is not this likeness, this oneness of the law of the being, unity between that transcending and universal and this individual spirit is not possible. The supreme divine nature is founded on equality. This affirmation is true of it whether we look on the Supreme Being as a pure silent Self and Spirit or as the divine Master of cosmic existence. The pure Self is equal, unmoved, the witness in an impartial peace of all the happenings and relations of cosmic existence. While it is not averse to them,—aversion is not equality, nor, if that were the attitude of the Self to cosmic existence, could the universe come at all into being or proceed upon its cycles,—a detachment, the calm of an equal regard, a superiority to the reactions which trouble and are the disabling weakness of the soul involved in outward nature, are the very substance of the silent Infinite's purity and the condition of its impartial assent and support to the many-sided movement of the universe. But in that power too of the Supreme which governs and develops these motions, the same equality is a basic condition.

The Master of things cannot be affected or troubled by the reactions of things; if he were, he would be subject to them, not master, not free to develop them according to his sovereign will and wisdom and according to the inner truth and necessity of

what is behind their relations, but obliged rather to act according to the claim of temporary accident and phenomenon. The truth of all things is in the calm of their depths, not in the shifting inconstant wave form on the surface. The supreme conscious Being in his divine knowledge and will and love governs their evolution — to our ignorance so often a cruel confusion and distraction — from these depths and is not troubled by the clamour of the surface. The divine nature does not share in our gropings and our passions; when we speak of the divine wrath or favour or of God suffering in man, we are using a human language which mistranslates the inner significance of the movement we characterise. We see something of the real truth of them when we rise out of the phenomenal mind into the heights of the spiritual being. For then we perceive that whether in the silence of self or in its action in the cosmos, the Divine is always Sachchidananda, an infinite existence, an infinite consciousness and self-founded power of conscious being, an infinite bliss in all his existence. We ourselves begin to dwell in an equal light, strength, joy — the psychological rendering of the divine knowledge, will and delight in self and things which are the active universal outpourings from those infinite sources. In the strength of that light, power and joy a secret self and spirit within us accepts and transforms always into food of its perfect experience the dual letters of the mind's transcript of life, and if there were not the hidden greater existence even now within us, we could not bear the pressure of the universal force or subsist in this great and dangerous world. A perfect equality of our spirit and nature is a means by which we can move back from the troubled and ignorant outer consciousness into this inner kingdom of heaven and possess the spirit's eternal kingdoms, *rājyam samṛddham*, of greatness, joy and peace. That self-elevation to the divine nature is the complete fruit and the whole occasion of the discipline of equality demanded from us by the self-perfected aim in Yoga.

A perfect equality and peace of the soul is indispensable to change the whole substance of our being into substance of the self out of its present stuff of troubled mentality. It is equally indispensable if we aspire to replace our present confused and

ignorant action by the self-possessed and luminous works of a free spirit governing its nature and in tune with universal being. A divine action or even a perfect human action is impossible if we have not equality of spirit and an equality in the motive-forces of our nature. The Divine is equal to all, an impartial sustainer of his universe, who views all with equal eyes, assents to the law of developing being which he has brought out of the depths of his existence, tolerates what has to be tolerated, depresses what has to be depressed, raises what has to be raised, creates, sustains and destroys with a perfect and equal understanding of all causes and results and working out of the spiritual and pragmatic meaning of all phenomena. God does not create in obedience to any troubled passion of desire or maintain and preserve through an attachment of partial preference or destroy in a fury of wrath, disgust or aversion. The Divine deals with great and small, just and unjust, ignorant and wise as the Self of all who, deeply intimate and one with the being, leads all according to their nature and need with a perfect understanding, power and justness of proportion. But through it all he moves things according to his large aim in the cycles and draws the soul upward in the evolution through its apparent progress and retrogression towards the higher and ever higher development which is the sense of the cosmic urge. The self-perfected individual who seeks to be one in will with the Divine and make his nature an instrument of the divine purpose, must enlarge himself out of the egoistic and partial views and motives of the human ignorance and mould himself into an image of this supreme equality.

This equal poise in action is especially necessary for the sadhaka of the integral Yoga. First, he must acquire that equal assent and understanding which will respond to the law of the divine action without trying to impose on it a partial will and the violent claim of a personal aspiration. A wise impersonality, a quiescent equality, a universality which sees all things as the manifestations of the Divine, the one Existence, is not angry, troubled, impatient with the way of things or on the other hand excited, over-eager and precipitate, but sees that the law must be

obeyed and the pace of time respected, observes and understands with sympathy the actuality of things and beings, but looks also behind the present appearance to their inner significances and forward to the unrolling of their divine possibilities, is the first thing demanded of those who would do works as the perfect instruments of the Divine. But this impersonal acquiescence is only the basis. Man is the instrument of an evolution which wears at first the mask of a struggle, but grows more and more into its truer and deeper sense of a constant wise adjustment and must take on in a rising scale the deepest truth and significance — now only underlying the adjustment and struggle — of a universal harmony. The perfected human soul must always be an instrument for the hastening of the ways of this evolution. For that a divine power acting with the royalty of the divine will in it must be in whatever degree present in the nature. But to be accomplished and permanent, steadfast in action, truly divine, it has to proceed on the basis of a spiritual equality, a calm, impersonal and equal self-identification with all beings, an understanding of all energies. The Divine acts with a mighty power in the myriad workings of the universe, but with the supporting light and force of an imperturbable oneness, freedom and peace. That must be the type of the perfected soul's divine works. And equality is the condition of the being which makes possible this changed spirit in the action.

But even a human perfection cannot dispense with equality as one of its chief elements and even its essential atmosphere. The aim of a human perfection must include, if it is to deserve the name, two things, self-mastery and a mastery of the surroundings; it must seek for them in the greatest degree of these powers which is at all attainable by our human nature. Man's urge of self-perfection is to be, in the ancient language, *svarāt* and *samrāt*, self-ruler and king. But to be self-ruler is not possible for him if he is subject to the attack of the lower nature, to the turbulence of grief and joy, to the violent touches of pleasure and pain, to the tumult of his emotions and passions, to the bondage of his personal likings and dislikings, to the strong chains of desire and attachment, to the narrowness of a personal

and emotionally preferential judgment and opinion, to all the hundred touches of his egoism and its pursuing stamp on his thought, feeling and action. All these things are the slavery to the lower self which the greater "I" in man must put under his feet if he is to be king of his own nature. To surmount them is the condition of self-rule; but of that surmounting again equality is the condition and the essence of the movement. To be quite free from all these things,—if possible, or at least to be master of and superior to them,—is equality. Farther, one who is not self-ruler, cannot be master of his surroundings. The knowledge, the will, the harmony which is necessary for this outward mastery, can come only as a crown of the inward conquest. It belongs to the self-possessing soul and mind which follows with a disinterested equality the Truth, the Right, the universal Largeness to which alone this mastery is possible,—following always the great ideal they present to our imperfection while it understands and makes a full allowance too for all that seems to conflict with them and stand in the way of their manifestation. This rule is true even on the levels of our actual human mentality, where we can only get a limited perfection. But the ideal of Yoga takes up this aim of Swarajya and Samrajya and puts it on the larger spiritual basis. There it gets its full power, opens to the diviner degrees of the spirit; for it is by oneness with the Infinite, by a spiritual power acting upon finite things, that some highest integral perfection of our being and nature finds its own native foundation.

A perfect equality not only of the self, but in the nature is a condition of the Yoga of self-perfection. The first obvious step to it will be the conquest of our emotional and vital being, for here are the sources of greatest trouble, the most rampant forces of inequality and subjection, the most insistent claim of our imperfection. The equality of these parts of our nature comes by purification and freedom. We might say that equality is the very sign of liberation. To be free from the domination of the urge of vital desire and the stormy mastery of the soul by the passions is to have a calm and equal heart and a life-principle governed by the large and even view of a universal spirit. Desire is the impurity of the Prana, the life-principle, and its chain

of bondage. A free Prana means a content and satisfied life-soul which fronts the contact of outward things without desire and receives them with an equal response; delivered, uplifted above the servile duality of liking and disliking, indifferent to the urgings of pleasure and pain, not excited by the pleasant, not troubled and overpowered by the unpleasant, not clinging with attachment to the touches it prefers or violently repelling those for which it has an aversion, it will be opened to a greater system of values of experience. All that comes to it from the world with menace or with solicitation, it will refer to the higher principles, to a reason and heart in touch with or changed by the light and calm joy of the spirit. Thus quieted, mastered by the spirit and no longer trying to impose its own mastery on the deeper and finer soul in us, this life-soul will be itself spiritualised and work as a clear and noble instrument of the diviner dealings of the spirit with things. There is no question here of an ascetic killing of the life-impulse and its native utilities and functions; not its killing is demanded, but its transformation. The function of the Prana is enjoyment, but the real enjoyment of existence is an inward spiritual Ananda, not partial and troubled like that of our vital, emotional or mental pleasure, degraded as they are now by the predominance of the physical mind, but universal, profound, a massed concentration of spiritual bliss possessed in a calm ecstasy of self and all existence. Possession is its function, by possession comes the soul's enjoyment of things, but this is the real possession, a thing large and inward, not dependent on the outward seizing which makes us subject to what we seize. All outward possession and enjoyment will be only an occasion of a satisfied and equal play of the spiritual Ananda with the forms and phenomena of its own world-being. The egoistic possession, the making things our own in the sense of the ego's claim on God and beings and the world, *parigraha*, must be renounced in order that this greater thing, this large, universal and perfect life, may come. *Tyaktena bhuñjithāḥ*, by renouncing the egoistic sense of desire and possession, the soul enjoys divinely its self and the universe.

A free heart is similarly a heart delivered from the gusts and

storms of the affections and the passions; the assailing touch of grief, wrath, hatred, fear, inequality of love, trouble of joy, pain of sorrow fall away from the equal heart, and leave it a thing large, calm, equal, luminous, divine. These things are not incumbent on the essential nature of our being, but the creations of the present make of our outward active mental and vital nature and its transactions with its surroundings. The ego-sense which induces us to act as separate beings who make their isolated claim and experience the test of the values of the universe, is responsible for these aberrations. When we live in unity with the Divine in ourselves and the spirit of the universe, these imperfections fall away from us and disappear in the calm and equal strength and delight of the inner spiritual existence. Always that is within us and transforms the outward touches before they reach it by a passage through a subliminal psychic soul in us which is the hidden instrument of its delight of being. By equality of the heart we get away from the troubled desire-soul on the surface, open the gates of this profounder being, bring out its responses and impose their true divine values on all that solicits our emotional being. A free, happy, equal and all-embracing heart of spiritual feeling is the outcome of this perfection.

In this perfection too there is no question of a severe ascetic insensibility, an aloof spiritual indifference or a strained rugged austerity of self-suppression. This is not a killing of the emotional nature but a transformation. All that presents itself here in our outward nature in perverse or imperfect forms has a significance and utility which come out when we get back to the greater truth of divine being. Love will be not destroyed, but perfected, enlarged to its widest capacity, deepened to its spiritual rapture, the love of God, the love of man, the love of all things as ourselves and as beings and powers of the Divine; a large, universal love, not at all incapable of various relation, will replace the clamant, egoistic, self-regarding love of little joys and griefs and insistent demands afflicted with all the chequered pattern of angers and jealousies and satisfactions, rushings to unity and movements of fatigue, divorce and separation on

which we now place so high a value. Grief will cease to exist, but a universal, an equal love and sympathy will take its place, not a suffering sympathy, but a power which, itself delivered, is strong to sustain, to help, to liberate. To the free spirit wrath and hatred are impossible, but not the strong Rudra energy of the Divine which can battle without hatred and destroy without wrath because all the time aware of the things it destroys as parts of itself, its own manifestations and unaltered therefore in its sympathy and understanding of those in whom are embodied these manifestations. All our emotional nature will undergo this high liberating transformation; but in order that it may do so, a perfect equality is the effective condition.

The same equality must be brought into the rest of our being. Our whole dynamic being is acting under the influence of unequal impulses, the manifestations of the lower ignorant nature. These urgings we obey or partially control or place on them the changing and modifying influence of our reason, our refining aesthetic sense and mind and regulating ethical notions. A tangled strain of right and wrong, of useful and harmful, harmonious or disordered activity is the mixed result of our endeavour, a shifting standard of human reason and unreason, virtue and vice, honour and dishonour, the noble and the ignoble, things approved and things disapproved of men, much trouble of self-approbation and disapprobation or of self-righteousness and disgust, remorse, shame and moral depression. These things are no doubt very necessary at present for our spiritual evolution. But the seeker of a greater perfection will draw back from all these dualities, regard them with an equal eye and arrive through equality at an impartial and universal action of the dynamic Tapas, spiritual force, in which his own force and will are turned into pure and just instruments of a greater calm secret of divine working. The ordinary mental standards will be exceeded on the basis of this dynamic equality. The eye of his will must look beyond to a purity of divine being, a motive of divine will-power guided by divine knowledge of which his perfected nature will be the engine, *yantra*. That must remain impossible in entirety as long as the dynamic ego with its subservience to the emotional

and vital impulses and the preferences of the personal judgment interferes in his action. A perfect equality of the will is the power which dissolves these knots of the lower impulsion to works. This equality will not respond to the lower impulses, but watch for a greater seeing impulsion from the Light above the mind, and will not judge and govern with the intellectual judgment, but wait for enlightenment and direction from a superior plane of vision. As it mounts upward to the supramental being and widens inward to the spiritual largeness, the dynamic nature will be transformed, spiritualised like the emotional and pranic, and grow into a power of the divine nature. There will be plenty of stumblings and errors and imperfections of adjustment of the instruments to their new working, but the increasingly equal soul will not be troubled overmuch or grieve at these things, since, delivered to the guidance of the Light and Power within self and above mind, it will proceed on its way with a firm assurance and await with growing calm the vicissitudes and completion of the process of transformation. The promise of the Divine Being in the Gita will be the anchor of its resolution, "Abandon all dharmas and take refuge in Me alone; I will deliver thee from all sin and evil; do not grieve."

The equality of the thinking mind will be a part and a very important part of the perfection of the instruments in the nature. Our present attractive self-justifying attachment to our intellectual preferences, our judgments, opinions, imaginations, limiting associations of the memory which makes the basis of our mentality, to the current repetitions of our habitual mind, to the insistences of our pragmatic mind, to the limitations even of our intellectual truth-mind, must go the way of other attachments and yield to the impartiality of an equal vision. The equal thought-mind will look on knowledge and ignorance and on truth and error, those dualities created by our limited nature of consciousness and the partiality of our intellect and its little stock of reasonings and intuitions, accept them both without being bound to either twine of the skein and await a luminous transcendence. In ignorance it will see a knowledge which is imprisoned and seeks or waits for delivery, in error a

truth at work which has lost itself or got thrown by the groping mind into misleading forms. On the other side it will not hold itself bound and limited by its knowledge or forbidden by it to proceed to fresh illumination, nor lay too fierce a grasp on truth, even when using it to the full, or tyrannously chain it to its present formulations. This perfect equality of the thinking mind is indispensable because the objective of this progress is the greater light which belongs to a higher plane of spiritual cognizance. This equality is the most delicate and difficult of all, the least practised by the human mind; its perfection is impossible so long as the supramental light does not fall fully on the upward looking mentality. But an increasing will to equality in the intelligence is needed, before that light can work freely upon the mental substance. This too is not an abnegation of the seekings and cosmic purposes of the intelligence, not an indifference or impartial scepticism, nor yet a stilling of all thought in the silence of the Ineffable. A stilling of the mental thought may be part of the discipline, when the object is to free the mind from its own partial workings, in order that it may become an equal channel of a higher light and knowledge; but there must also be a transformation of the mental substance; otherwise the higher light cannot assume full possession and a compelling shape for the ordered works of the divine consciousness in the human being. The silence of the Ineffable is a truth of divine being, but the Word which proceeds from that silence is also a truth, and it is this Word which has to be given a body in the conscious form of the nature.

But, finally, all this equalisation of the nature is a preparation for the highest spiritual equality to take possession of the whole being and make a pervading atmosphere in which the light, power and joy of the Divine can manifest itself in man amid an increasing fullness. That equality is the eternal equality of Sachchidananda. It is an equality of the infinite being which is self-existent, an equality of the eternal spirit, but it will mould into its own mould the mind, heart, will, life, physical being. It is an equality of the infinite spiritual consciousness which will contain and base the blissful flowing and satisfied waves of a

divine knowledge. It is an equality of the divine Tapas which will initiate a luminous action of the divine will in all the nature. It is an equality of the divine Ananda which will found the play of a divine universal delight, universal love and an illimitable aesthesis of universal beauty. The ideal equal peace and calm of the Infinite will be the wide ether of our perfected being, but the ideal, equal and perfect action of the Infinite through the nature working on the relations of the universe will be the untroubled outpouring of its power in our being. This is the meaning of equality in the terms of the integral Yoga.

Chapter XII

The Way of Equality

IT WILL appear from the description of the complete and perfect equality that this equality has two sides. It must therefore be arrived at by two successive movements. One will liberate us from the action of the lower nature and admit us to the calm peace of the divine being; the other will liberate us into the full being and power of the higher nature and admit us to the equal poise and universality of a divine and infinite knowledge, will of action, Ananda. The first may be described as a passive or negative equality, an equality of reception which fronts impassively the impacts and phenomena of existence and negates the dualities of the appearances and reactions which they impose on us. The second is an active, a positive equality which accepts the phenomena of existence, but only as the manifestation of the one divine being and with an equal response to them which comes from the divine nature in us and transforms them into its hidden values. The first lives in the peace of the one Brahman and puts away from it the nature of the active Ignorance. The second lives in that peace, but also in the Ananda of the Divine and imposes on the life of the soul in nature the signs of the divine knowledge, power and bliss of being. It is this double orientation united by the common principle which will determine the movement of equality in the integral Yoga.

The effort towards a passive or purely receptive equality may start from three different principles or attitudes which all lead to the same result and ultimate consequence,—endurance, indifference and submission. The principle of endurance relies on the strength of the spirit within us to bear all the contacts, impacts, suggestions of this phenomenal Nature that besieges us on every side without being overborne by them and compelled to bear their emotional, sensational, dynamic, intellectual reactions. The outer mind in the lower nature has not this

strength. Its strength is that of a limited force of consciousness which has to do the best it can with all that comes in upon it or besieges it from the greater whirl of consciousness and energy which environs it on this plane of existence. That it can maintain itself at all and affirm its individual being in the universe, is due indeed to the strength of the spirit within it, but it cannot bring forward the whole of that strength or the infinity of that force to meet the attacks of life; if it could, it would be at once the equal and master of its world. In fact, it has to manage as it can. It meets certain impacts and is able to assimilate, equate or master them partially or completely, for a time or wholly, and then it has in that degree the emotional and sensational reactions of joy, pleasure, satisfaction, liking, love, etc., or the intellectual and mental reactions of acceptance, approval, understanding, knowledge, preference, and on these its will seizes with attraction, desire, the attempt to prolong, to repeat, to create, to possess, to make them the pleasurable habit of its life. Other impacts it meets, but finds them too strong for it or too dissimilar and discordant or too weak to give it satisfaction; these are things which it cannot bear or cannot equate with itself or cannot assimilate, and it is obliged to give to them reactions of grief, pain, discomfort, dissatisfaction, disliking, disapproval, rejection, inability to understand or know, refusal of admission. Against them it seeks to protect itself, to escape from them, to avoid or minimise their recurrence; it has with regard to them movements of fear, anger, shrinking, horror, aversion, disgust, shame, would gladly be delivered from them, but it cannot get away from them, for it is bound to and even invites their causes and therefore the results; for these impacts are part of life, tangled up with the things we desire, and the inability to deal with them is part of the imperfection of our nature. Other impacts again the normal mind succeeds in holding at bay or neutralising and to these it has a natural reaction of indifference, insensibility or tolerance which is neither positive acceptance and enjoyment nor rejection or suffering. To things, persons, happenings, ideas, workings, whatever presents itself to the mind, there are always these three kinds of reaction. At the same time, in spite of their

generality, there is nothing absolute about them; they form a scheme for a habitual scale which is not precisely the same for all or even for the same mind at different times or in different conditions. The same impact may arouse in it at one time and another the pleasurable or positive, the adverse or negative or the indifferent or neutral reactions.

The soul which seeks mastery may begin by turning upon these reactions the encountering and opposing force of a strong and equal endurance. Instead of seeking to protect itself from or to shun and escape the unpleasant impacts it may confront them and teach itself to suffer and to bear them with perseverance, with fortitude, an increasing equanimity or an austere or calm acceptance. This attitude, this discipline brings out three results, three powers of the soul in relation to things. First, it is found that what was before unbearable, becomes easy to endure; the scale of the power that meets the impact rises in degree; it needs a greater and greater force of it or of its protracted incidence to cause trouble, pain, grief, aversion or any other of the notes in the gamut of the unpleasant reactions. Secondly, it is found that the conscious nature divides itself into two parts, one of the normal mental and emotional nature in which the customary reactions continue to take place, another of the higher will and reason which observes and is not troubled or affected by the passion of this lower nature, does not accept it as its own, does not approve, sanction or participate. Then the lower nature begins to lose the force and power of its reactions, to submit to the suggestions of calm and strength from the higher reason and will, and gradually that calm and strength take possession of the mental and emotional, even of the sensational, vital and physical being. This brings the third power and result, the power by this endurance and mastery, this separation and rejection of the lower nature, to get rid of the normal reactions and even, if we will, to remould all our modes of experience by the strength of the spirit. This method is applied not only to the unpleasant, but also to the pleasant reactions; the soul refuses to give itself up to or be carried away by them; it endures with calm the impacts which bring joy and pleasure; refuses to be excited by

them and replaces the joy and eager seeking of the mind after pleasant things by the calm of the spirit. It can be applied too to the thought-mind in a calm reception of knowledge and of limitation of knowledge which refuses to be carried away by the fascination of this attractive or repelled by dislike for that unaccustomed or unpalatable thought-suggestion and waits on the Truth with a detached observation which allows it to grow on the strong, disinterested, mastering will and reason. Thus the soul becomes gradually equal to all things, master of itself, adequate to meet the world with a strong front in the mind and an undisturbed serenity of the spirit.

The second way is an attitude of impartial indifference. Its method is to reject at once the attraction or the repulsion of things, to cultivate for them a luminous impassivity, an inhibiting rejection, a habit of dissociation and desuetude. This attitude reposes less on the will, though will is always necessary, than on the knowledge. It is an attitude which regards these passions of the mind as things born of the illusion of the outward mentality or inferior movements unworthy of the calm truth of the single and equal spirit or a vital and emotional disturbance to be rejected by the tranquil observing will and dispassionate intelligence of the sage. It puts away desire from the mind, discards the ego which attributes these dual values to things, and replaces desire by an impartial and indifferent peace and ego by the pure self which is not troubled, excited or unhinged by the impacts of the world. And not only is the emotional mind quieted, but the intellectual being also rejects the thoughts of the ignorance and rises beyond the interests of an inferior knowledge to the one truth that is eternal and without change. This way too develops three results or powers by which it ascends to peace.

First, it is found that the mind is voluntarily bound by the petty joys and troubles of life and that in reality these can have no inner hold on it, if the soul simply chooses to cast off its habit of helpless determination by external and transient things. Secondly, it is found that here too a division can be made, a psychological partition between the lower or outward mind still subservient to the old habitual touches and the higher reason and

will which stand back to live in the indifferent calm of the spirit. There grows on us, in other words, an inner separate calm which watches the commotion of the lower members without taking part in it or giving it any sanction. At first the higher reason and will may be often clouded, invaded, the mind carried away by the incitation of the lower members, but eventually this calm becomes inexpugnable, permanent, not to be shaken by the most violent touches, *na duḥkhena gurुṇāpi vicālyate*. This inner soul of calm regards the trouble of the outer mind with a detached superiority or a passing uninvolved indulgence such as might be given to the trivial joys and griefs of a child, it does not regard them as its own or as reposing on any permanent reality. And, finally, the outer mind too accepts by degrees this calm and indifferent serenity; it ceases to be attracted by the things that attracted it or troubled by the griefs and pains to which it had the habit of attaching an unreal importance. Thus the third power comes, an all-pervading power of wide tranquillity and peace, a bliss of release from the siege of our imposed fantastic self-torturing nature, the deep undisturbed exceeding happiness of the touch of the eternal and infinite replacing by its permanence the strife and turmoil of impermanent things, *brahmaśamprāśam atyantām sukham aśnute*. The soul is fixed in the delight of the self, *ātmaratiḥ*, in the single and infinite Ananda of the spirit and hunts no more after outward touches and their griefs and pleasures. It observes the world only as the spectator of a play or action in which it is no longer compelled to participate.

The third way is that of submission, which may be the Christian resignation founded on submission to the will of God, or an unegoistic acceptance of things and happenings as a manifestation of the universal Will in time, or a complete surrender of the person to the Divine, to the supreme Purusha. As the first was a way of the will and the second a way of knowledge, of the understanding reason, so this is a way of the temperament and heart and very intimately connected with the principle of Bhakti. If it is pushed to the end, it arrives at the same result of a perfect equality. For the knot of the ego is loosened and the personal

claim begins to disappear, we find that we are no longer bound to joy in things pleasant or sorrow over the unpleasant; we bear them without either eager acceptance or troubled rejection, refer them to the Master of our being, concern ourselves less and less with their personal result to us and hold only one thing of importance, to approach God, or to be in touch and tune with the universal and infinite Existence, or to be united with the Divine, his channel, instrument, servant, lover, rejoicing in him and in our relation with him and having no other object or cause of joy or sorrow. Here too there may be for some time a division between the lower mind of habitual emotions and the higher psychical mind of love and self-giving, but eventually the former yields, changes, transforms itself, is swallowed up in the love, joy, delight of the Divine and has no other interests or attractions. Then all within is the equal peace and bliss of that union, the one silent bliss that passes understanding, the peace that abides untouched by the solicitation of lower things in the depths of our spiritual existence.

These three ways coincide in spite of their separate starting-points, first, by their inhibition of the normal reactions of the mind to the touches of outward things, *bāhya-sparśān*, secondly, by their separation of the self or spirit from the outward action of Nature. But it is evident that our perfection will be greater and more embracingly complete, if we can have a more active equality which will enable us not only to draw back from or confront the world in a detached and separated calm, but to return upon it and possess it in the power of the calm and equal Spirit. This is possible because the world, Nature, action are not in fact a quite separate thing, but a manifestation of the Self, the All-Soul, the Divine. The reactions of the normal mind are a degradation of the divine values which would but for this degradation make this truth evident to us,—a falsification, an ignorance which alters their workings, an ignorance which starts from the involution of the Self in a blind material nescience. Once we return to the full consciousness of Self, of God, we can then put a true divine value on things and receive and act on them with the calm, joy, knowledge, seeing will of the Spirit. When

we begin to do that, then the soul begins to have an equal joy in the universe, an equal will dealing with all energies, an equal knowledge which takes possession of the spiritual truth behind all the phenomena of this divine manifestation. It possesses the world as the Divine possesses it, in a fullness of the infinite light, power and Ananda.

All this existence can therefore be approached by a Yoga of positive and active in place of the negative and passive equality. This requires, first, a new knowledge which is the knowledge of unity,—to see all things as oneself and to see all things in God and God in all things. There is then a will of equal acceptance of all phenomena, all events, all happenings, all persons and forces as masks of the Self, movements of the one energy, results of the one power in action, ruled by the one divine wisdom; and on the foundation of this will of greater knowledge there grows a strength to meet everything with an untroubled soul and mind. There must be an identification of myself with the self of the universe, a vision and a feeling of oneness with all creatures, a perception of all forces and energies and results as the movement of this energy of my self and therefore intimately my own; not, obviously, of my ego-self which must be silenced, eliminated, cast away,—otherwise this perfection cannot come,—but of a greater impersonal or universal self with which I am now one. For my personality is now only one centre of action of that universal self, but a centre intimately in relation and unison with all other personalities and also with all those other things which are to us only impersonal objects and forces: but in fact they also are powers of the one impersonal Person (Purusha), God, Self and Spirit. My individuality is his and is no longer a thing incompatible with or separated from universal being; it is itself universalised, a knower of the universal Ananda and one with and a lover of all that it knows, acts on and enjoys. For to the equal knowledge of the universe and equal will of acceptance of the universe will be added an equal delight in all the cosmic manifestation of the Divine.

Here too we may describe three results or powers of the method. First, we develop this power of equal acceptance in

the spirit and in the higher reason and will which respond to the spiritual knowledge. But also we find that though the nature can be induced to take this general attitude, there is yet a struggle between that higher reason and will and the lower mental being which clings to the old egoistic way of seeing the world and reacting to its impacts. Then we find that these two, though at first confused, mingled together, alternating, acting on each other, striving for possession, can be divided, the higher spiritual disengaged from the lower mental nature. But in this stage, while the mind is still subject to reactions of grief, trouble, an inferior joy and pleasure, there is an increased difficulty which does not act to the same extent in a more sharply individualised Yoga. For not only does the mind feel its own troubles and difficulties, but it shares in the joys and griefs of others, vibrates to them in a poignant sympathy, feels their impacts with a subtle sensitiveness, makes them its own; not only so, but the difficulties of others are added to our own and the forces which oppose the perfection act with a greater persistence, because they feel this movement to be an attack upon and an attempt to conquer their universal kingdom and not merely the escape of an isolated soul from their empire. But finally, we find too that there comes a power to surmount these difficulties; the higher reason and will impose themselves on the lower mind, which sensibly changes into the vast types of the spiritual nature; it takes even a delight in feeling, meeting and surmounting all troubles, obstacles and difficulties until they are eliminated by its own transformation. Then the whole being lives in a final power, the universal calm and joy, the seeing delight and will of the Spirit in itself and its manifestation.

To see how this positive method works, we may note very briefly its principle in the three great powers of knowledge, will and feeling. All emotion, feeling, sensation is a way of the soul meeting and putting effective values on the manifestations of the Self in nature. But what the self feels is a universal delight, Ananda. The soul in the lower mind on the contrary gives it, as we have seen, three varying values of pain, pleasure and neutral indifference, which tone by gradations of less and more into each

other, and this gradation depends on the power of the individualised consciousness to meet, sense, assimilate, equate, master all that comes in on it from all of the greater self which it has by separative individualisation put outside of it and made as if not-self to its experience. But all the time, because of the greater Self within us, there is a secret soul which takes delight in all these things and draws strength from and grows by all that touches it, profits as much by adverse as by favourable experience. This can make itself felt by the outer desire soul, and that in fact is why we have a delight in existing and can even take a certain kind of pleasure in struggle, suffering and the harsher colours of existence. But to get the universal Ananda all our instruments must learn to take not any partial or perverse, but the essential joy of all things. In all things there is a principle of Ananda, which the understanding can seize on and the aesthesis feel as the taste of delight in them, their *rasa*; but ordinarily they put upon them instead arbitrary, unequal and contrary values: they have to be led to perceive things in the light of the spirit and to transform these provisional values into the real, the equal and essential, the spiritual *rasa*. The life-principle is there to give this seizing of the principle of delight, *rasa-grahaṇa*, the form of a strong possessing enjoyment, *bhoga*, which makes the whole life-being vibrate with it and accept and rejoice in it; but ordinarily it is not, owing to desire, equal to its task, but turns it into the three lower forms,— pain and pleasure, *sukha-bhoga duḥkha-bhoga*, and that rejection of both which we call insensibility or indifference. The prana or vital being has to be liberated from desire and its inequalities and to accept and turn into pure enjoyment the *rasa* which the understanding and aesthesis perceive. Then there is no farther obstacle in the instruments to the third step by which all is changed into the full and pure ecstasy of the spiritual Ananda.

In the matter of knowledge, there are again three reactions of the mind to things, ignorance, error and true knowledge. The positive equality will accept all three of them to start with as movements of a self-manifestation which evolves out of ignorance through the partial or distorted knowledge which

is the cause of error to true knowledge. It will deal with the ignorance of the mind, as what it is psychologically, a clouded, veiled or wrapped-up state of the substance of consciousness in which the knowledge of the all-knowing Self is hidden as if in a dark sheath; it will dwell on it by the mind and by the aid of related truths already known, by the intelligence or by an intuitive concentration deliver the knowledge out of the veil of the ignorance. It will not attach itself only to the known or try to force all into its little frame, but will dwell on the known and the unknown with an equal mind open to all possibility. So too it will deal with error; it will accept the tangled skein of truth and error, but attach itself to no opinion, rather seeking for the element of truth behind all opinions, the knowledge concealed within the error,—for all error is a disfiguration of some misunderstood fragments of truth and draws its vitality from that and not from its misapprehension; it will accept, but not limit itself even by ascertained truths, but will always be ready for new knowledge and seek for a more and more integral, a more and more extended, reconciling, unifying wisdom. This can only come in its fullness by rising to the ideal supermind, and therefore the equal seeker of truth will not be attached to the intellect and its workings or think that all ends there, but be prepared to rise beyond, accepting each stage of ascent and the contributions of each power of his being, but only to lift them into a higher truth. He must accept everything, but cling to nothing, be repelled by nothing however imperfect or however subversive of fixed notions, but also allow nothing to lay hold on him to the detriment of the free working of the Truth-Spirit. This equality of the intelligence is an essential condition for rising to the higher supramental and spiritual knowledge.

The will in us, because it is the most generally forceful power of our being,—there is a will of knowledge, a will of life, a will of emotion, a will acting in every part of our nature,—takes many forms and returns various reactions to things, such as incapacity, limitation of power, mastery, or right will, wrong or perverted will, neutral volition,—in the ethical mind virtue, sin and non-ethical volition,—and others of the kind.

These too the positive equality accepts as a tangle of provisional values from which it must start, but which it must transform into universal mastery, into the will of the Truth and universal Right, into the freedom of the divine Will in action. The equal will need not feel remorse, sorrow or discouragement over its stumblings; if these reactions occur in the habitual mentality, it will only see how far they indicate an imperfection and the thing to be corrected,—for they are not always just indicators,—and so get beyond them to a calm and equal guidance. It will see that these stumblings themselves are necessary to experience and in the end steps towards the goal. Behind and within all that occurs in ourselves and in the world, it will look for the divine meaning and the divine guidance; it will look beyond imposed limitations to the voluntary self-limitation of the universal Power by which it regulates its steps and gradations,—imposed on our ignorance, self-imposed in the divine knowledge,—and go beyond to unity with the illimitable power of the Divine. All energies and actions it will see as forces proceeding from the one Existence and their perversions as imperfections, inevitable in the developing movement, of powers that were needed for that movement; it will therefore have charity for all imperfections, even while pressing steadily towards a universal perfection. This equality will open the nature to the guidance of the divine and universal Will and make it ready for that supramental action in which the power of the soul in us is luminously full of and one with the power of the supreme Spirit.

The integral Yoga will make use of both the passive and the active methods according to the need of the nature and the guidance of the inner spirit, the Antaryamin. It will not limit itself by the passive way, for that would lead only to some individual quietistic salvation or negation of an active and universal spiritual being which would be inconsistent with the totality of its aim. It will use the method of endurance, but not stop short with a detached strength and serenity, but move rather to a positive strength and mastery, in which endurance will no longer be needed, since the self will then be in a calm and powerful spontaneous possession of the universal energy and capable

of determining easily and happily all its reactions in the oneness and the Ananda. It will use the method of impartial indifference, but not end in an aloof indifference to all things, but rather move towards a high-seated impartial acceptance of life strong to transform all experience into the greater values of the equal spirit. It will use too temporarily resignation and submission, but by the full surrender of its personal being to the Divine it will attain to the all-possessing Ananda in which there is no need of resignation, to the perfect harmony with the universal which is not merely an acquiescence, but an embracing oneness, to the perfect instrumentality and subjection of the natural self to the Divine by which the Divine also is possessed by the individual spirit. It will use fully the positive method, but will go beyond any individual acceptance of things which would have the effect of turning existence into a field only of the perfected individual knowledge, power and Ananda. That it will have, but also it will have the oneness by which it can live in the existence of others for their sake and not only for its own and for their assistance and as one of their means, an associated and helping force in the movement towards the same perfection. It will live for the Divine, not shunning world-existence, not attached to the earth or the heavens, not attached either to a supracosmic liberation, but equally one with the Divine in all his planes and able to live in him equally in the Self and in the manifestation.

Chapter XIII

The Action of Equality

THE DISTINCTIONS that have already been made, will have shown in sufficiency what is meant by the status of equality. It is not mere quiescence and indifference, not a withdrawal from experience, but a superiority to the present reactions of the mind and life. It is the spiritual way of replying to life or rather of embracing it and compelling it to become a perfect form of action of the self and spirit. It is the first secret of the soul's mastery of existence. When we have it in perfection, we are admitted to the very ground of the divine spiritual nature. The mental being in the body tries to compel and conquer life, but is at every turn compelled by it, because it submits to the desire reactions of the vital self. To be equal, not to be overborne by any stress of desire, is the first condition of real mastery, self-empire is its basis. But a mere mental equality, however great it may be, is hampered by the tendency of quiescence. It has to preserve itself from desire by self-limitation in the will and action. It is only the spirit which is capable of sublime undisturbed rapidities of will as well as an illimitable patience, equally just in a slow and deliberate or a swift and violent, equally secure in a safely lined and limited or a vast and enormous action. It can accept the smallest work in the narrowest circle of cosmos, but it can work too upon the whirl of chaos with an understanding and creative force; and these things it can do because by its detached and yet intimate acceptance it carries into both an infinite calm, knowledge, will and power. It has that detachment because it is above all the happenings, forms, ideas and movements it embraces in its scope; and it has that intimate acceptance because it is yet one with all things. If we have not this free unity, *ekatvam anupaśyataḥ*, we have not the full equality of the spirit.

The first business of the sadhaka is to see whether he has

the perfect equality, how far he has gone in this direction or elsewhere is the flaw, and to exercise steadily his will on his nature or invite the will of the Purusha to get rid of the defect and its causes. There are four things that he must have; first, equality in the most concrete practical sense of the word, *samatā*, freedom from mental, vital, physical preferences, an even acceptance of all God's workings within and around him; secondly, a firm peace and absence of all disturbance and trouble, *sānti*; thirdly, a positive inner spiritual happiness and spiritual ease of the natural being which nothing can lessen, *sukham*; fourthly, a clear joy and laughter of the soul embracing life and existence. To be equal is to be infinite and universal, not to limit oneself, not to bind oneself down to this or that form of the mind and life and its partial preferences and desires. But since man in his present normal nature lives by his mental and vital formations, not in the freedom of his spirit, attachment to them and the desires and preferences they involve is also his normal condition. To accept them is at first inevitable, to get beyond them exceedingly difficult and not, perhaps, altogether possible so long as we are compelled to use the mind as the chief instrument of our action. The first necessity therefore is to take at least the sting out of them, to deprive them, even when they persist, of their greater insistence, their present egoism, their more violent claim on our nature.

The test that we have done this is the presence of an undisturbed calm in the mind and spirit. The sadhaka must be on the watch as the witnessing and willing Purusha behind or, better, as soon as he can manage it, above the mind, and repel even the least indices or incidence of trouble, anxiety, grief, revolt, disturbance in his mind. If these things come, he must at once detect their source, the defect which they indicate, the fault of egoistic claim, vital desire, emotion or idea from which they start and this he must discourage by his will, his spiritualised intelligence, his soul unity with the Master of his being. On no account must he admit any excuse for them, however natural, righteous in seeming or plausible, or any inner or outer justification. If it is the prana which is troubled and clamorous, he

must separate himself from the troubled prana, keep seated his higher nature in the buddhi and by the buddhi school and reject the claim of the desire-soul in him; and so too if it is the heart of emotion that makes the clamour and the disturbance. If on the other hand it is the will and intelligence itself that is at fault, then the trouble is more difficult to command, because then his chief aid and instrument becomes an accomplice of the revolt against the divine Will and the old sins of the lower members take advantage of this sanction to raise their diminished heads. Therefore there must be a constant insistence on one main idea, the self-surrender to the Master of our being, God within us and in the world, the supreme Self, the universal Spirit. The buddhi dwelling always in this master idea must discourage all its own lesser insistences and preferences and teach the whole being that the ego whether it puts forth its claim through the reason, the personal will, the heart or the desire-soul in the prana, has no just claim of any kind and all grief, revolt, impatience, trouble is a violence against the Master of the being.

This complete self-surrender must be the chief mainstay of the sadhaka because it is the only way, apart from complete quiescence and indifference to all action,—and that has to be avoided,—by which the absolute calm and peace can come. The persistence of trouble, *asānti*, the length of time taken for this purification and perfection, itself must not be allowed to become a reason for discouragement and impatience. It comes because there is still something in the nature which responds to it, and the recurrence of trouble serves to bring out the presence of the defect, put the sadhaka upon his guard and bring about a more enlightened and consistent action of the will to get rid of it. When the trouble is too strong to be kept out, it must be allowed to pass and its return discouraged by a greater vigilance and insistence of the spiritualised buddhi. Thus persisting, it will be found that these things lose their force more and more, become more and more external and brief in their recurrence, until finally calm becomes the law of the being. This rule persists so long as the mental buddhi is the chief instrument; but when the supramental light takes possession of mind and heart, then

there can be no trouble, grief or disturbance; for that brings with it a spiritual nature of illumined strength in which these things can have no place. There the only vibrations and emotions are those which belong to the *ānandamaya* nature of divine unity.

The calm established in the whole being must remain the same whatever happens, in health and disease, in pleasure and in pain, even in the strongest physical pain, in good fortune and misfortune, our own or that of those we love, in success and failure, honour and insult, praise and blame, justice done to us or injustice, everything that ordinarily affects the mind. If we see unity everywhere, if we recognise that all comes by the divine will, see God in all, in our enemies or rather our opponents in the game of life as well as our friends, in the powers that oppose and resist us as well as the powers that favour and assist, in all energies and forces and happenings, and if besides we can feel that all is undivided from our self, all the world one with us within our universal being, then this attitude becomes much easier to the heart and mind. But even before we can attain or are firmly seated in that universal vision, we have by all the means in our power to insist on this receptive and active equality and calm. Even something of it, *alpam api asya dharmasya*, is a great step towards perfection; a first firmness in it is the beginning of liberated perfection; its completeness is the perfect assurance of a rapid progress in all the other members of perfection. For without it we can have no solid basis; and by the pronounced lack of it we shall be constantly falling back to the lower status of desire, ego, duality, ignorance.

This calm once attained, vital and mental preference has lost its disturbing force; it only remains as a formal habit of the mind. Vital acceptance or rejection, the greater readiness to welcome this rather than that happening, the mental acceptance or rejection, the preference of this more congenial to that other less congenial idea or truth, the dwelling upon the will to this rather than to that other result, become a formal mechanism still necessary as an index of the direction in which the Shakti is meant to turn or for the present is made to incline by the Master of our being. But it loses its disturbing aspect of strong egoistic will,

intolerant desire, obstinate liking. These appearances may remain for a while in a diminished form, but as the calm of equality increases, deepens, becomes more essential and compact, *ghana*, they disappear, cease to colour the mental and vital substance or occur only as touches on the most external physical mind, are unable to penetrate within, and at last even that recurrence, that appearance at the outer gates of mind ceases. Then there can come the living reality of the perception that all in us is done and directed by the Master of our being, *yathā prayukto 'smi, tathā karomi*, which was before only a strong idea and faith with occasional and derivative glimpses of the divine action behind the becomings of our personal nature. Now every movement is seen to be the form given by the Shakti, the divine power in us, to the indications of the Purusha, still no doubt personalised, still belittled in the inferior mental form, but not primarily egoistic, an imperfect form, not a positive deformation. We have then to get beyond this stage even. For the perfect action and experience is not to be determined by any kind of mental or vital preference, but by the revealing and inspiring spiritual will which is the Shakti in her direct and real initiation. When I say that as I am appointed, I work, I still bring in a limiting personal element and mental reaction. But it is the Master who will do his own work through myself as his instrument, and there must be no mental or other preference in me to limit, to interfere, to be a source of imperfect working. The mind must become a silent luminous channel for the revelations of the supramental Truth and of the Will involved in its seeing. Then shall the action be the action of that highest Being and Truth and not a qualified translation or mistranslation in the mind. Whatever limitation, selection, relation is imposed, will be self-imposed by the Divine on himself in the individual at the moment for his own purpose, not binding, not final, not an ignorant determination of the mind. The thought and will become then an action from a luminous Infinite, a formulation not excluding other formulations, but rather putting them into their just place in relation to itself, englobing or transforming them even and proceeding to larger formations of the divine knowledge and action.

The first calm that comes is of the nature of peace, the absence of all unquiet, grief and disturbance. As the equality becomes more intense, it takes on a fuller substance of positive happiness and spiritual ease. This is the joy of the spirit in itself, dependent on nothing external for its absolute existence, *nirāśraya*, as the Gita describes it, *antaḥ-sukho antarārāmaḥ*, an exceeding inner happiness, *brahmaśāṁsparśam atyantam sukham aśnute*. Nothing can disturb it, and it extends itself to the soul's view of outward things, imposes on them too the law of this quiet spiritual joy. For the base of it is still calm, it is an even and tranquil neutral joy, *ahaituka*. And as the supramental light grows, a greater Ananda comes, the base of the abundant ecstasy of the spirit in all it is, becomes, sees, experiences and of the laughter of the Shakti doing luminously the work of the Divine and taking his Ananda in all the worlds.

The perfected action of equality transforms all the values of things on the basis of the divine *ānandamaya* power. The outward action may remain what it was or may change, that must be as the Spirit directs and according to the need of the work to be done for the world,—but the whole inner action is of another kind. The Shakti in its different powers of knowledge, action, enjoyment, creation, formulation, will direct itself to the different aims of existence, but in another spirit; they will be the aims, the fruits, the lines of working laid down by the Divine from his light above, not anything claimed by the ego for its own separate sake. The mind, the heart, the vital being, the body itself will be satisfied with whatever comes to them from the dispensation of the Master of the being and in that find a subtlest and yet fullest spiritualised satisfaction and delight; but the divine knowledge and will above will work forward towards its farther ends. Here both success and failure lose their present meanings. There can be no failure; for whatever happens is the intention of the Master of the worlds, not final, but a step on his way, and if it appears as an opposition, a defeat, a denial, even for the moment a total denial of the aim set before the instrumental being, it is so only in appearance and afterwards it will appear in its right place in the economy of his action,—a

fuller supramental vision may even see at once or beforehand its necessity and its true relation to the eventual result to which it seems so contrary and even perhaps its definite prohibition. Or, if—while the light is deficient—there has been a misinterpretation whether with regard to the aim or the course of the action and the steps of the result, the failure comes as a rectification and is calmly accepted without bringing discouragement or a fluctuation of the will. In the end it is found that there is no such thing as failure and the soul takes an equal passive or active delight in all happenings as the steps and formulations of the divine Will. The same evolution takes place with regard to good fortune and ill fortune, the pleasant and the unpleasant in every form, *maṅgala amāṅgala, priya apriya*.

And as with happenings, so with persons, equality brings an entire change of the view and the attitude. The first result of the equal mind and spirit is to bring about an increasing charity and inner toleration of all persons, ideas, views, actions, because it is seen that God is in all beings and each acts according to his nature, his *svabhāva*, and its present formulations. When there is the positive equal Ananda, this deepens to a sympathetic understanding and in the end an equal universal love. None of these things need prevent various relations or different formulations of the inner attitude according to the need of life as determined by the spiritual will, or firm furtherings of this idea, view, action against that other for the same need and purpose by the same determination, or a strong outward or inward resistance, opposition and action against the forces that are impelled to stand in the way of the decreed movement. And there may be even the rush of the Rudra energy forcefully working upon or shattering the human or other obstacle, because that is necessary both for him and for the world purpose. But the essence of the equal inmost attitude is not altered or diminished by these more superficial formulations. The spirit, the fundamental soul remain the same, even while the Shakti of knowledge, will, action, love does its work and assumes the various forms needed for its work. And in the end all becomes a form of a luminous spiritual unity with all persons, energies, things in the being of God and

in the luminous, spiritual, one and universal force, in which one's own action becomes an inseparable part of the action of all, is not divided from it, but feels perfectly every relation as a relation with God in all in the complex terms of his universal oneness. That is a plenitude which can hardly be described in the language of the dividing mental reason for it uses all its oppositions, yet escapes from them, nor can it be put in the terms of our limited mental psychology. It belongs to another domain of consciousness, another plane of our being.

Chapter XIV

The Power of the Instruments

THE SECOND member of the Yoga of self-perfection is the heightened, enlarged and rectified power of the instruments of our normal Nature. The cultivation of this second perfection need not wait for the security of the equal mind and spirit, but it is only in that security that it can become complete and act in the safety of the divine leading. The object of this cultivation is to make the nature a fit instrument for divine works. All work is done by power, by Shakti, and since the integral Yoga does not contemplate abandonment of works, but rather a doing of all works from the divine consciousness and with the supreme guidance, the characteristic powers of the instruments, mind, life and body, must not only be purified of defects, but raised to a capacity for this greater action. In the end they must undergo a spiritual and supramental transfiguration.

There are four members of this second part of the sadhana or discipline of self-perfection and the first of them is right shakti, the right condition of the powers of the intelligence, heart, vital mind and body. It will only be possible at present to suggest a preliminary perfection of the last of these four, for the full siddhi will have to be dealt with after I have spoken of the supermind and its influence on the rest of the being. The body is not only the necessary outer instrument of the physical part of action, but for the purposes of this life a base or pedestal also for all inner action. All working of mind or spirit has its vibration in the physical consciousness, records itself there in a kind of subordinate corporeal notation and communicates itself to the material world partly at least through the physical machine. But the body of man has natural limitations in this capacity which it imposes on the play of the higher parts of his being. And, secondly, it has a subconscious consciousness of its own in which it keeps with an obstinate fidelity the past habits and past nature of the mental

and vital being and which automatically opposes and obstructs any very great upward change or at least prevents it from becoming a radical transformation of the whole nature. It is evident that if we are to have a free divine or spiritual and supramental action conducted by the force and fulfilling the character of a diviner energy, some fairly complete transformation must be effected in this outward character of the bodily nature. The physical being of man has always been felt by the seekers of perfection to be a great impediment and it has been the habit to turn from it with contempt, denial or aversion and a desire to suppress altogether or as far as may be the body and the physical life. But this cannot be the right method for the integral Yoga. The body is given us as one instrument necessary to the totality of our works and it is to be used, not neglected, hurt, suppressed or abolished. If it is imperfect, recalcitrant, obstinate, so are also the other members, the vital being, heart and mind and reason. It has like them to be changed and perfected and to undergo a transformation. As we must get ourselves a new life, new heart, new mind, so we have in a certain sense to build for ourselves a new body.

The first thing the will has to do with the body is to impose on it progressively a new habit of all its being, consciousness, force and outward and inward action. It must be taught an entire passivity in the hands first of the higher instruments, but eventually in the hands of the spirit and its controlling and informing Shakti. It must be accustomed not to impose its own limits on the nobler members, but to shape its action and its response to their demands, to develop, one might say, a higher notation, a higher scale of responses. At present the notation of the body and the physical consciousness has a very large determining power on the music made by this human harp of God; the notes we get from the spirit, from the psychic soul, from the greater life behind our physical life cannot come in freely, cannot develop their high, powerful and proper strain. This condition must be reversed; the body and the physical consciousness must develop the habit of admitting and shaping themselves to these higher strains and not they, but the nobler parts of the nature must determine the music of our life and being.

The control of the body and life by the mind and its thought and will is the first step towards this change. All Yoga implies the carrying of that control to a very high pitch. But afterwards the mind must itself give place to the spirit, to the spiritual force, the supermind and the supramental force. And finally the body must develop a perfect power to hold whatever force is brought into it by the spirit and to contain its action without spilling and wasting it or itself getting cracked. It must be capable of being filled and powerfully used by whatever intensity of spiritual or higher mind or life force without any part of the mechanical instrument being agitated, upset, broken or damaged by the inrush or pressure,—as the brain, vital health or moral nature are often injured in those who unwisely attempt Yogic practice without preparation or by undue means or rashly invite a power they are intellectually, vitally, morally unfit to bear,—and, thus filled, it must have the capacity to work normally, automatically, rightly according to the will of that spiritual or other now unusual agent without distorting, diminishing or mistranslating its intention and stress. This faculty of holding, *dhārana-sakti*, in the physical consciousness, energy and machinery is the most important siddhi or perfection of the body.

The result of these changes will be to make the body a perfect instrument of the spirit. The spiritual force will be able to do what it wills and as it wills in and through the body. It will be able to conduct an unlimited action of the mind or at a higher stage of the supermind without the body betraying the action by fatigue, incapacity, inaptitude or falsification. It will be able too to pour a full tide of the life-force into the body and conduct a large action and joy of the perfected vital being without that quarrel and disparity which is the relation of the normal life-instincts and life-impulses to the insufficient physical instrument they are obliged to use. And it will also be able to conduct a full action of the spiritualised psychic being not falsified, degraded or in any way marred by the lower instincts of the body and to use physical action and expression as a free notation of the higher psychical life. And in the body itself there will be a presence of a greatness of sustaining force, an abounding strength, energy and

puissance of outgoing and managing force, a lightness, swiftness and adaptability of the nervous and physical being, a holding and responsive power in the whole physical machine and its driving springs¹ of which it is now even at its strongest and best incapable.

This energy will not be in its essence an outward, physical or muscular strength, but will be of the nature, first, of an unbounded life-power or pranic force, secondly, sustaining and using this pranic energy, a superior or supreme will-power acting in the body. The play of the pranic shakti in the body or form is the condition of all action, even of the most apparently inanimate physical action. It is the universal Prana, as the ancients knew, which in various forms sustains or drives material energy in all physical things from the electron and atom and gas up through the metal, plant, animal, physical man. To get this pranic shakti to act more freely and forcibly in the body is knowingly or unknowingly the attempt of all who strive for a greater perfection of or in the body. The ordinary man tries to command it mechanically by physical exercises and other corporeal means, the Hathayogin more greatly and flexibly, but still mechanically by Asana and Pranayama; but for our purpose it can be commanded by more subtle, essential and pliable means; first, by a will in the mind widely opening itself to and potently calling in the universal pranic shakti on which we draw and fixing its stronger presence and more powerful working in the body; secondly, by the will in the mind opening itself rather to the spirit and its power and calling in a higher pranic energy from above, a supramental pranic force; thirdly, the last step, by the highest supramental will of the spirit entering and taking up directly the task of the perfection of the body. In fact, it is always really a will within which drives and makes effective the pranic instrument even when it uses what seem to be purely physical means; but at first it is dependent on the inferior action. When we go higher, the relation is gradually reversed; it is then able to act in its own power or handle the rest only as a subordinate instrumentation.

¹ *mahattva, bala, lagbutā, dhāraṇa-sāmarthyā.*

Most men are not conscious of this pranic force in the body or cannot distinguish it from the more physical form of energy which it informs and uses for its vehicle. But as the consciousness becomes more subtle by practice of Yoga, we can come to be aware of the sea of pranic shakti around us, feel it with the mental consciousness, concretely with a mental sense, see its courses and movements, and direct and act upon it immediately by the will. But until we thus become aware of it, we have to possess a working or at least an experimental faith in its presence and in the power of the will to develop a greater command and use of this prana force. There is necessary a faith, *śraddhā*, in the power of the mind to lay its will on the state and action of the body, such as those have who heal disease by faith, will or mental action; but we must seek this control not only for this or any other limited use, but generally as a legitimate power of the inner and greater over the outer and lesser instrument. This faith is combated by our past habits of mind, by our actual normal experience of its comparative helplessness in our present imperfect system and by an opposing belief in the body and physical consciousness. For they too have a limiting *śraddhā* of their own which opposes the idea in the mind when it seeks to impose on the system the law of a higher yet unattained perfection. But as we persist and find this power giving evidence of itself to our experience, the faith in the mind will be able to found itself more firmly and grow in vigour and the opposing faith in the body will change, admit what it first denied and not only accept in its habits the new yoke but itself call for this higher action. Finally we shall realise the truth that this being we are is or can become whatever it has the faith and will to be, — for faith is only a will aiming at greater truth, — and cease to set limits to our possibility or deny the potential omnipotence of the Self in us, the divine Power working through the human instrument. That however, at least as a practical force, comes in at a later stage of high perfection.

The Prana is not only a force for the action of physical and vital energy, but supports also the mental and spiritual action. Therefore the full and free working of the pranic shakti

is required not only for the lower but still necessary use, but also for the free and full operation of mind and supermind and spirit in the instrumentality of our complex human nature. That is the main sense of the use of exercises of Pranayama for control of the vital force and its motions which is so important and indispensable a part of certain systems of Yoga. The same mastery must be got by the seeker of the integral Yoga; but he may arrive at it by other means and in any case he must not be dependent on any physical or breathing exercise for its possession and maintenance, for that will at once bring in a limitation and subjection to Prakriti. Her instrumentation has to be used flexibly by the Purusha, but not to be a fixed control on the Purusha. The necessity of the pranic force, however, remains and will be evident to our self-study and experience. It is in the Vedic image the steed and conveyance of the embodied mind and will, *vāhana*. If it is full of strength and swiftness and a plenitude of all its powers, then the mind can go on the courses of its action with a plenary and unhampered movement. But if it is lame or soon tired or sluggish or weak, then an incapacity is laid on the effectuation of the will and activity of the mind. The same rule holds good of the supermind when it first comes into action. There are indeed states and activities in which the mind takes up the pranic shakti into itself and this dependence is not felt at all; but even then the force is there, though involved in the pure mental energy. The supermind, when it gets into full strength, can do pretty well what it likes with the pranic shakti, and we find that in the end this life power is transformed into the type of a supramentalised prana which is simply one motor power of that greater consciousness. But this belongs to a later stage of the siddhi of the Yoga.

Then again there is the psychic prana, pranic mind or desire soul; this too calls for its own perfection. Here too the first necessity is a fullness of the vital capacity in the mind, its power to do its full work, to take possession of all the impulsions and energies given to our inner psychic life for fulfilment in this existence, to hold them and to be a means for carrying them out with strength, freedom, perfection. Many of the things we

need for our perfection, courage, will-power effective in life, all the elements of what we now call force of character and force of personality, depend very largely for their completest strength and spring of energetic action on the fullness of the psychic prana. But along with this fullness there must be an established gladness, clearness and purity in the psychic life-being. This dynamis must not be a troubled, perfervid, stormy, fitfully or crudely passionate strength; energy there must be, rapture of its action it must have, but a clear and glad and pure energy, a seated and firmly supported pure rapture. And as a third condition of its perfection it must be poised in a complete equality. The desire-soul must get rid of the clamour, insistence or inequality of its desires in order that its desires may be satisfied with justice and balance and in the right way and eventually must rid them of the character of desire altogether and change them into impulsions of the divine Ananda. To that end it must make no demands nor seek to impose itself on heart, mind or spirit, but accept with a strong passive and active equality whatever impulsion and command come into it from the spirit through the channel of a still mind and a pure heart. And it must accept too whatever result of the impulse, whatever enjoyment more or less, full or nil, is given to it by the Master of our being. At the same time, possession and enjoyment are its law, function, use, swadharma. It is not intended to be a slain or mortified thing, dull in its receptive power, dreary, suppressed, maimed, inert or null. It must have a full power of possession, a glad power of enjoyment, an exultant power of pure and divine passion and rapture. The enjoyment it will have will be in the essence a spiritual bliss, but one which takes up into itself and transforms the mental, emotional, dynamic, vital and physical joy; it must have therefore an integral capacity for these things and must not by incapacity or fatigue or inability to bear great intensities fail the spirit, mind, heart, will and body. Fullness, clear purity and gladness, equality, capacity for possession and enjoyment are the fourfold perfection of the psychic prana.²

² *pūrṇatā, prasannatā, samatā, bhoga-sāmarthyā.*

The next instrument which needs perfection is the *citta*, and within the complete meaning of this expression we may include the emotional and the pure psychical being. This heart and psychic being of man shot through with the threads of the life instincts is a thing of mixed inconstant colours of emotion and soul vibrations, bad and good, happy and unhappy, satisfied and unsatisfied, troubled and calm, intense and dull. Thus agitated and invaded it is unacquainted with any real peace, incapable of a steady perfection of all its powers. By purification, by equality, by the light of knowledge, by a harmonising of the will it can be brought to a tranquil intensity and perfection. The first two elements of this perfection are on one side a high and large sweetness, openness, gentleness, calm, clarity, on the other side a strong and ardent force and intensity. In the divine no less than in ordinary human character and action there are always two strands, sweetness and strength, mildness and force, *saumya* and *raudra*, the force that bears and harmonises, the force that imposes itself and compels, Vishnu and Ishana, Shiva and Rudra. The two are equally necessary to a perfect world-action. The perversions of the Rudra power in the heart are stormy passion, wrath and fierceness and harshness, hardness, brutality, cruelty, egoistic ambition and love of violence and domination. These and other human perversions have to be got rid of by the flowering of a calm, clear and sweet psychical being.

But on the other hand incapacity of force is also an imperfection. Laxity and weakness, self-indulgence, a certain flabbiness and limpness or inert passivity of the psychical being are the last result of an emotional and psychic life in which energy and power of assertion have been quelled, discouraged or killed. Nor is it a total perfection to have only the strength that endures or to cultivate only a heart of love, charity, tolerance, mildness, meekness and forbearance. The other side of perfection is a self-contained and calm and unegoistic Rudra-power armed with psychic force, the energy of the strong heart which is capable of supporting without shrinking an insistent, an outwardly austere or even, where need is, a violent action. An unlimited light of energy, force, puissance harmonised with sweetness of heart and

clarity, capable of being one with it in action, the lightning of Indra starting from the orb of the nectarous moon-rays of Soma is the double perfection. And these two things *saumyatva, tejas*, must base their presence and action on a firm equality of the temperament and of the psychical soul delivered from all crudity and all excess or defect of the heart's light or the heart's power.

Another necessary element is a faith in the heart, a belief in and will to the universal good, an openness to the universal Ananda. The pure psychic being is of the essence of Ananda, it comes from the delight-soul in the universe; but the superficial heart of emotion is overborne by the conflicting appearances of the world and suffers many reactions of grief, fear, depression, passion, short-lived and partial joy. An equal heart is needed for perfection, but not only a passive equality; there must be the sense of a divine power making for good behind all experiences, a faith and will which can turn the poisons of the world to nectar, see the happier spiritual intention behind adversity, the mystery of love behind suffering, the flower of divine strength and joy in the seed of pain. This faith, *kalyāṇa-śraddhā*, is needed in order that the heart and the whole overt psychic being may respond to the secret divine Ananda and change itself into this true original essence. This faith and will must be accompanied by and open into an illimitable widest and intensest capacity for love. For the main business of the heart, its true function is love. It is our destined instrument of complete union and oneness; for to see oneness in the world by the understanding is not enough unless we also feel it with the heart and in the psychic being, and this means a delight in the One and in all existences in the world in him, a love of God and all beings. The heart's faith and will in good are founded on a perception of the one Divine immanent in all things and leading the world. The universal love has to be founded on the heart's sight and psychical and emotional sense of the one Divine, the one Self in all existence. All four elements will then form a unity and even the Rudra power to do battle for the right and the good proceed on the basis of a power of universal love. This is the highest and the most characteristic perfection of the heart, *prema-sāmarthyā*.

The last perfection is that of the intelligence and thinking mind, *buddhi*. The first need is the clarity and the purity of the intelligence. It must be freed from the claims of the vital being which seeks to impose the desire of the mind in place of the truth, from the claims of the troubled emotional being which strives to colour, distort, limit and falsify the truth with the hue and shape of the emotions. It must be free too from its own defect, inertia of the thought-power, obstructive narrowness and unwillingness to open to knowledge, intellectual unscrupulousness in thinking, prepossession and preference, self-will in the reason and false determination of the will to knowledge. Its sole will must be to make itself an unsullied mirror of the truth, its essence and its forms and measures and relations, a clear mirror, a just measure, a fine and subtle instrument of harmony, an integral intelligence. This clear and pure intelligence can then become a serene thing of light, a pure and strong radiance emanating from the sun of Truth. But, again, it must become not merely a thing of concentrated dry or white light, but capable of all variety of understanding, supple, rich, flexible, brilliant with all the flame and various with all the colours of the manifestation of the Truth, open to all its forms. And so equipped it will get rid of limitations, not be shut up in this or that faculty or form or working of knowledge, but an instrument ready and capable for whatever work is demanded from it by the Purusha. Purity, clear radiance, rich and flexible variety, integral capacity are the fourfold perfection of the thinking intelligence, *viśuddhi*, *prakāśa*, *vicitra-bodha*, *sarva-jñāna-sāmarthyā*.

The normal instruments thus perfected will act each in its own kind without undue interference from each other and serve the unobstructed will of the Purusha in a harmonised totality of our natural being. This perfection must rise constantly in its capacity for action, the energy and force of its working and a certain greatness of the scope of the total nature. They will then be ready for the transformation into their own supramental action in which they will find a more absolute, unified and luminous spiritual truth of the whole perfected nature. The means of this perfection of the instruments we shall have to

consider later on; but at present it will be enough to say that the principal conditions are will, self-watching and self-knowledge and a constant practice, *abhyāsa*, of self-modification and transformation. The Purusha has that capacity; for the spirit within can always change and perfect the working of its nature. But the mental being must open the way by a clear and a watchful introspection, an opening of itself to a searching and subtle self-knowledge which will give it the understanding and to an increasing extent the mastery of its natural instruments, a vigilant and insistent will of self-modification and self-transformation — for to that will the Prakriti must with whatever difficulty and whatever initial or prolonged resistance eventually respond, — and an unfailing practice which will constantly reject all defect and perversion and replace it by right state and a right and enhanced working. Askesis, tapasya, patience and faithfulness and rectitude of knowledge and will are the things required until a greater Power than our mental selves directly intervenes to effect a more easy and rapid transformation.

Chapter XV

Soul-Force and the Fourfold Personality

THE PERFECTING of the normal mind, heart, prana and body gives us only the perfection of the psycho-physical machine we have to use and creates certain right instrumental conditions for a divine life and works lived and done with a purer, greater, clearer power and knowledge. The next question is that of the Force which is poured into the instruments, *karana*, and the One who works it for his universal ends. The force at work in us must be the manifest divine Shakti, the supreme or the universal Force unveiled in the liberated individual being, *parā prakṛtir jīvabhūtā*, who will be the doer of all the action and the power of this divine life, *kartā*. The One behind this force will be the Ishwara, the Master of all being, with whom all our existence will be in our perfection a Yoga at once of oneness in being and of union in various relations of the soul and its nature with the Godhead who is seated within us and in whom too we live, move and have our being. It is this Shakti with the Ishwara in her or behind her whose divine presence and way we have to call into all our being and life. For without this divine presence and this greater working there can be no siddhi of the power of the nature.

All the action of man in life is a nexus of the presence of the soul and the workings of Nature, Purusha and Prakriti. The presence and influence of the Purusha represents itself in nature as a certain power of our being which we may call for our immediate purpose soul-force; and it is always this soul-force which supports all the workings of the powers of the reason, the mind, life and body and determines the cast of our conscious being and the type of our nature. The normal ordinarily developed man possesses it in a subdued, a modified, a mechanised, submerged

form as temperament and character; but that is only its most outward mould in which Purusha, the conscious soul or being, seems to be limited, conditioned and given some shape by the mechanical Prakriti. The soul flows into whatever moulds of intellectual, ethical, aesthetic, dynamic, vital and physical mind and type the developing nature takes and can act only in the way this formed Prakriti lays on it and move in its narrow groove or relatively wider circle. The man is then sattvic, rajasic or tamasic or a mixture of these qualities and his temperament is only a sort of subtler soul-colour which has been given to the major prominent operation of these fixed modes of his nature. Men of a stronger force get more of the soul-power to the surface and develop what we call a strong or great personality, they have in them something of the Vibhuti as described by the Gita, *vibhūtimat sattvaiḥ śrīmad ūrjitam eva vā*, a higher power of being often touched with or sometimes full of some divine afflatus or more than ordinary manifestation of the Godhead which is indeed present in all, even in the weakest or most clouded living being, but here some special force of it begins to come out from behind the veil of the average humanity, and there is something beautiful, attractive, splendid or powerful in these exceptional persons which shines out in their personality, character, life and work. These men too work in the type of their nature-force according to its gunas, but there is something evident in them and yet not easily analysable which is in reality a direct power of the Self and spirit using to strong purpose the mould and direction of the nature. The nature itself thereby rises to or towards a higher grade of its being. Much in the working of the Force may seem egoistic or even perverse, but it is still the touch of the Godhead behind, whatever Daivic, Asuric or even Rakshasic form it may take, which drives the Prakriti and uses it for its own greater purpose. A still more developed power of the being will bring out the real character of this spiritual presence and it will then be seen as something impersonal and self-existent and self-empowered, a sheer soul-force which is other than the mind-force, life-force, force of intelligence, but drives them and, even while following to a certain extent their

mould of working, guna, type of nature, yet puts its stamp of an initial transcendence, impersonality, pure fire of spirit, a something beyond the gunas of our normal nature. When the spirit in us is free, then what was behind this soul-force comes out in all its light, beauty and greatness, the Spirit, the Godhead who makes the nature and soul of man his foundation and living representative in cosmic being and mind, action and life.

The Godhead, the spirit manifested in Nature appears in a sea of infinite quality, Ananta-guna. But the executive or mechanical Prakriti is of the threefold guna, sattwa, rajas, tamas, and the Ananta-guna, the spiritual play of infinite quality, modifies itself in this mechanical nature into the type of these three gunas. And in the soul-force in man this Godhead in Nature represents itself as a fourfold effective Power, *catur-vyūha*, a Power for knowledge, a Power for strength, a Power for mutuality and active and productive relation and interchange, a Power for works and labour and service, and its presence casts all human life into a nexus and inner and outer operation of these four things. The ancient thought of India conscious of this fourfold type of active human personality and nature built out of it the four types of the Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra, each with its spiritual turn, ethical ideal, suitable upbringing, fixed function in society and place in the evolutionary scale of the spirit. As always tends to be the case when we too much externalise and mechanise the more subtle truths of our nature, this became a hard and fast system inconsistent with the freedom and variability and complexity of the finer developing spirit in man. Nevertheless the truth behind it exists and is one of some considerable importance in the perfection of our power of nature; but we have to take it in its inner aspects, first, personality, character, temperament, soul-type, then the soul-force which lies behind them and wears these forms, and lastly the play of the free spiritual Shakti in which they find their culmination and unity beyond all modes. For the crude external idea that a man is born as a Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya or Shudra and that alone, is not a psychological truth of our being. The psychological fact is that there are these four active powers

and tendencies of the Spirit and its executive Shakti within us and the predominance of one or the other in the more well-formed part of our personality gives us our main tendencies, dominant qualities and capacities, effective turn in action and life. But they are more or less present in all men, here manifest, there latent, here developed, there subdued and depressed or subordinate, and in the perfect man will be raised up to a fullness and harmony which in the spiritual freedom will burst out into the free play of the infinite quality of the spirit in the inner and outer life and in the self-enjoying creative play of the Purusha with his and the world's Nature-Power.

The most outward psychological form of these things is the mould or trend of the nature towards certain dominant tendencies, capacities, characteristics, form of active power, quality of the mind and inner life, cultural personality or type. The turn is often towards the predominance of the intellectual element and the capacities which make for the seeking and finding of knowledge and an intellectual creation or formattiveness and a preoccupation with ideas and the study of ideas or of life and the information and development of the reflective intelligence. According to the grade of the development there is produced successively the make and character of the man of active, open, inquiring intelligence, then the intellectual and, last, the thinker, sage, great mind of knowledge. The soul-powers which make their appearance by a considerable development of this temperament, personality, soul-type, are a mind of light more and more open to all ideas and knowledge and incomings of Truth; a hunger and passion for knowledge, for its growth in ourselves, for its communication to others, for its reign in the world, the reign of reason and right and truth and justice and, on a higher level of the harmony of our greater being, the reign of the spirit and its universal unity and light and love; a power of this light in the mind and will which makes all the life subject to reason and its right and truth or to the spirit and spiritual right and truth and subdues the lower members to their greater law; a poise in the temperament turned from the first to patience, steady musing and calm, to reflection, to meditation, which dominates

and quiets the turmoil of the will and passions and makes for high thinking and pure living, finds the self-governed sattvic mind, grows into a more and more mild, lofty, impersonalised and universalised personality. This is the ideal character and soul-power of the Brahmana, the priest of knowledge. If it is not there in all its sides, we have the imperfections or perversions of the type, a mere intellectuality or curiosity for ideas without ethical or other elevation, a narrow concentration on some kind of intellectual activity without the greater needed openness of mind, soul and spirit, or the arrogance and exclusiveness of the intellectual shut up in his intellectuality, or an ineffective idealism without any hold on life, or any other of the characteristic incompletenesses and limitations of the intellectual, religious, scientific or philosophic mind. These are stoppings short on the way or temporary exclusive concentrations, but a fullness of the divine soul and power of truth and knowledge in man is the perfection of this Dharma or Swabhava, the accomplished Brahminhood of the complete Brahmana.

On the other hand the turn of the nature may be to the predominance of the will-force and the capacities which make for strength, energy, courage, leadership, protection, rule, victory in every kind of battle, a creative and formative action, the will-power which lays its hold on the material of life and on the wills of other men and compels the environment into the shapes which the Shakti within us seeks to impose on life or acts powerfully according to the work to be done to maintain what is in being or to destroy it and make clear the paths of the world or to bring out into definite shape what is to be. This may be there in lesser or greater power or form and according to its grade and force we have successively the mere fighter or man of action, the man of self-imposing active will and personality and the ruler, conqueror, leader of a cause, creator, founder in whatever field of the active formation of life. The various imperfections of the soul and mind produce many imperfections and perversities of this type,—the man of mere brute force of will, the worshipper of power without any other ideal or higher purpose, the selfish, dominant personality, the aggressive violent rajasic man,

the grandiose egoist, the Titan, Asura, Rakshasa. But the soul-powers to which this type of nature opens on its higher grades are as necessary as those of the Brahmana to the perfection of our human nature. The high fearlessness which no danger or difficulty can daunt and which feels its power equal to meet and face and bear whatever assault of man or fortune or adverse gods, the dynamic audacity and daring which shrinks from no adventure or enterprise as beyond the powers of a human soul free from disabling weakness and fear, the love of honour which would scale the heights of the highest nobility of man and stoop to nothing little, base, vulgar or weak, but maintains untainted the ideal of high courage, chivalry, truth, straightforwardness, sacrifice of the lower to the higher self, helpfulness to men, unflinching resistance to injustice and oppression, self-control and mastery, noble leading, warriorhood and captainship of the journey and the battle, the high self-confidence of power, capacity, character and courage indispensable to the man of action,—these are the things that build the make of the Kshatriya. To carry these things to their highest degree and give them a certain divine fullness, purity and grandeur is the perfection of those who have this Swabhava and follow this Dharma.

A third turn is one that brings out into relief the practical arranging intelligence and the instinct of life to produce, exchange, possess, enjoy, contrive, put things in order and balance, spend itself and get and give and take, work out to the best advantage the active relations of existence. In its outward action it is this power that appears as the skilful devising intelligence, the legal, professional, commercial, industrial, economical, practical and scientific, mechanical, technical and utilitarian mind. This nature is accompanied at the normal level of its fullness by a general temperament which is at once grasping and generous, prone to amass and treasure, to enjoy, show and use, bent upon efficient exploitation of the world or its surroundings, but well capable too of practical philanthropy, humanity, ordered benevolence, orderly and ethical by rule but without any high distinction of the finer ethical spirit, a mind of the middle levels, not straining towards the heights, not great to break and create noble moulds

of life, but marked by capacity, adaptation and measure. The powers, limitations and perversions of this type are familiar to us on a large scale, because this is the very spirit which has made our modern commercial and industrial civilisation. But if we look at the greater inner capacities and soul-values, we shall find that here also there are things that enter into the completeness of human perfection. The Power that thus outwardly expresses itself on our present lower levels is one that can throw itself out in the great utilities of life and at its freest and widest makes, not for oneness and identity which is the highest reach of knowledge or the mastery and spiritual kingship which is the highest reach of strength, but still for something which is also essential to the wholeness of existence, equal mutuality and the exchange of soul with soul and life with life. Its powers are, first, a skill, *kauśala*, which fashions and obeys law, recognises the uses and limits of relations, adapts itself to settled and developing movements, produces and perfects the outer technique of creation and action and life, assures possession and proceeds from possession to growth, is watchful over order and careful in progress and makes the most of the material of existence and its means and ends; then a power of self-spending skilful in lavishness and skilful in economy, which recognises the great law of interchange and amasses in order to throw out in a large return, increasing the currents of interchange and the fruitfulness of existence; a power of giving and ample creative liberality, mutual helpfulness and utility to others which becomes the source in an open soul of just beneficence, humanitarianism, altruism of a practical kind; finally, a power of enjoyment, a productive, possessive, active opulence luxurious of the prolific Ananda of existence. A largeness of mutuality, a generous fullness of the relations of life, a lavish self-spending and return and ample interchange between existence and existence, a full enjoyment and use of the rhythm and balance of fruitful and productive life are the perfection of those who have this Swabhava and follow this Dharma.

The other turn is towards work and service. This was in the old order the dharma or soul-type of the Shudra and the Shudra in that order was considered as not one of the twice-born, but

an inferior type. A more recent consideration of the values of existence lays stress on the dignity of labour and sees in its toil the bed-rock of the relations between man and man. There is a truth in both attitudes. For this force in the material world is at once in its necessity the foundation of material existence or rather that on which it moves, the feet of the creator Brahma in the old parable, and in its primal state not uplifted by knowledge, mutuality or strength a thing which reposes on instinct, desire and inertia. The well-developed Shudra soul-type has the instinct of toil and the capacity of labour and service; but toil as opposed to easy or natural action is a thing imposed on the natural man which he bears because without it he cannot assure his existence or get his desires and he has to force himself or be forced by others or circumstances to spend himself in work. The natural Shudra works not from a sense of the dignity of labour or from the enthusiasm of service,—though that comes by the cultivation of his dharma,—not as the man of knowledge for the joy or gain of knowledge, not from a sense of honour, nor as the born craftsman or artist for love of his work or ardour for the beauty of its technique, nor from an ordered sense of mutuality or large utility, but for the maintenance of his existence and gratification of his primal wants, and when these are satisfied, he indulges, if left to himself, his natural indolence, the indolence which is normal to the tamasic quality in all of us, but comes out most clearly in the uncompeled primitive man, the savage. The unregenerated Shudra is born therefore for service rather than for free labour and his temperament is prone to an inert ignorance, a gross unthinking self-indulgence of the instincts, a servility, an unreflective obedience and mechanical discharge of duty varied by indolence, evasion, spasmodic revolt, an instinctive and uninformed life. The ancients held that all men are born in their lower nature as Shudras and only regenerated by ethical and spiritual culture, but in their highest inner self are Brahmanas capable of the full spirit and godhead, a theory which is not far perhaps from the psychological truth of our nature.

And yet when the soul develops, it is in this Swabhava and

Dharma of work and service that there are found some of the most necessary and beautiful elements of our greatest perfection and the key to much of the secret of the highest spiritual evolution. For the soul powers that belong to the full development of this force in us are of the greatest importance,—the power of service to others, the will to make our life a thing of work and use to God and man, to obey and follow and accept whatever great influence and needful discipline, the love which consecrates service, a love which asks for no return, but spends itself for the satisfaction of that which we love, the power to bring down this love and service into the physical field and the desire to give our body and life as well as our soul and mind and will and capacity to God and man, and, as a result, the power of complete self-surrender, *ātma-samarpana*, which transferred to the spiritual life becomes one of the greatest most revealing keys to freedom and perfection. In these things lies the perfection of this Dharma and the nobility of this Swabhava. Man could not be perfect and complete if he had not this element of nature in him to raise to its divine power.

None of these four types of personality can be complete even in its own field if it does not bring into it something of the other qualities. The man of knowledge cannot serve Truth with freedom and perfection, if he has not intellectual and moral courage, will, audacity, the strength to open and conquer new kingdoms, otherwise he becomes a slave of the limited intellect or a servant or at most a ritual priest of only an established knowledge,¹—cannot use his knowledge to the best advantage unless he has the adaptive skill to work out its truths for the practice of life, otherwise he lives only in the idea,—cannot make the entire consecration of his knowledge unless he has the spirit of service to humanity, to the Godhead in man and the Master of his being. The man of power must illumine and uplift and govern his force and strength by knowledge, light of reason or religion or the spirit, otherwise he becomes the mere forceful

¹ That perhaps is why it was the Kshatriya bringing his courage, audacity, spirit of conquest into the fields of intuitive knowledge and spiritual experience who first discovered the great truths of Vedanta.

Asura,— must have the skill which will help him best to use and administer and regulate his strength and make it creative and fruitful and adapted to his relations with others, otherwise it becomes a mere drive of force across the field of life, a storm that passes and devastates more than it constructs,— must be capable too of obedience and make the use of his strength a service to God and the world, otherwise he becomes a selfish dominator, tyrant, brutal compeller of men's souls and bodies. The man of productive mind and work must have an open inquiring mind and ideas and knowledge, otherwise he moves in the routine of his functions without expansive growth, must have courage and enterprise, must bring a spirit of service into his getting and production, in order that he may not only get but give, not only amass and enjoy his own life, but consciously help the fruitfulness and fullness of the surrounding life by which he profits. The man of labour and service becomes a helpless drudge and slave of society if he does not bring knowledge and honour and aspiration and skill into his work, since only so can he rise by an opening mind and will and understanding usefulness to the higher dharmas. But the greater perfection of man comes when he enlarges himself to include all these powers, even though one of them may lead the others, and opens his nature more and more into the rounded fullness and universal capacity of the fourfold spirit. Man is not cut out into an exclusive type of one of these dharmas, but all these powers are in him at work at first in an ill-formed confusion, but he gives shape to one or another in birth after birth, progresses from one to the other even in the same life and goes on towards the total development of his inner existence. Our life itself is at once an inquiry after truth and knowledge, a struggle and battle of our will with ourselves and surrounding forces, a constant production, adaptation, application of skill to the material of life and a sacrifice and service.

These things are the ordinary aspects of the soul while it is working out its force in nature, but when we get nearer to our inner selves, then we get too a glimpse and experience of something which was involved in these forms and can disengage itself and stand behind and drive them, as if a general Presence

or Power brought to bear on the particular working of this living and thinking machine. This is the force of the soul itself presiding over and filling the powers of its nature. The difference is that the first way is personal in its stamp, limited and determined in its action and mould, dependent on the instrumentation, but here there emerges something impersonal in the personal form, independent and self-sufficient even in the use of the instrumentation, indeterminable though determining both itself and things, something which acts with a much greater power upon the world and uses particular power only as one means of communication and impact on man and circumstance. The Yoga of self-perfection brings out this soul-force and gives it its largest scope, takes up all the fourfold powers and throws them into the free circle of an integral and harmonious spiritual dynamis. The godhead, the soul-power of knowledge rises to the highest degree of which the individual nature can be the supporting basis. A free mind of light develops which is open to every kind of revelation, inspiration, intuition, idea, discrimination, thinking synthesis; an enlightened life of the mind grasps at all knowledge with a delight of finding and reception and holding, a spiritual enthusiasm, passion, or ecstasy; a power of light full of spiritual force, illumination and purity of working manifests its empire, *brahma-tejas, brahma-varcas*; a bottomless steadiness and illimitable calm upholds all the illumination, movement, action as on some rock of ages, equal, unperturbed, unmoved, *acyuta*.

The godhead, the soul-power of will and strength rises to a like largeness and altitude. An absolute calm fearlessness of the free spirit, an infinite dynamic courage which no peril, limitation of possibility, wall of opposing force can deter from pursuing the work or aspiration imposed by the spirit, a high nobility of soul and will untouched by any littleness or baseness and moving with a certain greatness of step to spiritual victory or the success of the God-given work through whatever temporary defeat or obstacle, a spirit never depressed or cast down from faith and confidence in the power that works in the being, are the signs of this perfection. There comes too to fulfilment a large godhead,

a soul-power of mutuality, a free self-spending and spending of gift and possession in the work to be done, lavished for the production, the creation, the achievement, the possession, gain, utilisable return, a skill that observes the law and adapts the relation and keeps the measure, a great taking into oneself from all beings and a free giving out of oneself to all, a divine commerce, a large enjoyment of the mutual delight of life. And finally there comes to perfection the godhead, the soul-power of service, the universal love that lavishes itself without demand of return, the embrace that takes to itself the body of God in man and works for help and service, the abnegation that is ready to bear the yoke of the Master and make the life a free servitude to Him and under his direction to the claim and need of his creatures, the self-surrender of the whole being to the Master of our being and his work in the world. These things unite, assist and enter into each other, become one. The full consummation comes in the greatest souls most capable of perfection, but some large manifestation of this fourfold soul-power must be sought and can be attained by all who practise the integral Yoga.

These are the signs, but behind is the soul which thus expresses itself in a consummation of nature. And this soul is an outcoming of the free self of the liberated man. That self is of no character, being infinite, but bears and upholds the play of all character, supports a kind of infinite, one, yet multiple personality, *nirguna gunī*, is in its manifestation capable of infinite quality, *anantaguna*. The force that it uses is the supreme and universal, the divine and infinite Shakti pouring herself into the individual being and freely determining action for the divine purpose.

Chapter XVI

The Divine Shakti

THE RELATION between the Purusha and Prakriti which emerges as one advances in the Yoga of self-perfection is the next thing that we have to understand carefully in this part of the Yoga. In the spiritual truth of our being the power which we call Nature is the power of being, consciousness and will and therefore the power of self-expression and self-creation of the self, soul or Purusha. But to our ordinary mind in the ignorance and to its experience of things the force of Prakriti has a different appearance. When we look at it in its universal action outside ourselves, we see it first as a mechanical energy in the cosmos which acts upon matter or in its own created forms of matter. In matter it evolves powers and processes of life and in living matter powers and processes of mind. Throughout its operations it acts by fixed laws and in each kind of created thing displays varying properties of energy and laws of process which give its character to the genus or species and again in the individual develops without infringing the law of the kind minor characteristics and variations of a considerable consequence. It is this mechanical appearance of Prakriti which has preoccupied the modern scientific mind and made for it its whole view of Nature, and so much so that science still hopes and labours with a very small amount of success to explain all phenomena of life by laws of matter and all phenomena of mind by laws of living matter. Here soul or spirit has no place and nature cannot be regarded as power of spirit. Since the whole of our existence is mechanical, physical and bounded by the biological phenomenon of a brief living consciousness and man is a creature and instrument of material energy, the spiritual self-evolution of Yoga can be only a delusion, hallucination, abnormal state of mind or self-hypnosis. In any case it cannot be what it represents itself to be, a discovery of the eternal truth

of our being and a passing above the limited truth of the mental, vital and physical to the full truth of our spiritual nature.

But when we look, not at external mechanical Nature to the exclusion of our personality, but at the inner subjective experience of man the mental being, our nature takes to us a quite different appearance. We may believe intellectually in a purely mechanical view even of our subjective existence, but we cannot act upon it or make it quite real to our self-experience. For we are conscious of an I which does not seem identical with our nature, but capable of a standing back from it, of a detached observation and criticism and creative use of it, and of a will which we naturally think of as a free will; and even if this be a delusion, we are still obliged in practice to act as if we were responsible mental beings capable of a free choice of our actions, able to use or misuse and to turn to higher or lower ends our nature. And even we seem to be struggling both with our environmental and with our own present nature and striving to get mastery over a world which imposes itself on and masters us and at the same time to become something more than we now are. But the difficulty is that we are only in command, if at all, over a small part of ourselves, the rest is subconscious or subliminal and beyond our control, our will acts only in a small selection of our activities; the most is a process of mechanism and habit and we must strive constantly with ourselves and surrounding circumstances to make the least advance or self-amelioration. There seems to be a dual being in us; Soul and Nature, Purusha and Prakriti, seem to be half in agreement, half at odds, Nature laying its mechanical control on the soul, the soul attempting to change and master nature. And the question is what is the fundamental character of this duality and what the issue.

The Sankhya explanation is that our present existence is governed by a dual principle. Prakriti is inert without the contact of Purusha, acts only by a junction with it and then too by the fixed mechanism of her instruments and qualities; Purusha, passive and free apart from Prakriti, becomes by contact with her and sanction to her works subject to this mechanism, lives

in her limitation of ego-sense and must get free by withdrawing the sanction and returning to its own proper principle. Another explanation that tallies with a certain part of our experience is that there is a dual being in us, the animal and material, or more widely the lower nature-bound, and the soul or spiritual being entangled by mind in the material existence or in world-nature, and freedom comes by escape from the entanglement, the soul returning to its native planes or the self or spirit to its pure existence. The perfection of the soul then is to be found not at all in, but beyond Nature.

But in a higher than our present mental consciousness we find that this duality is only a phenomenal appearance. The highest and real truth of existence is the one Spirit, the supreme Soul, Purushottama, and it is the power of being of this Spirit which manifests itself in all that we experience as universe. This universal Nature is not a lifeless, inert or unconscious mechanism, but informed in all its movements by the universal Spirit. The mechanism of its process is only an outward appearance and the reality is the Spirit creating or manifesting its own being by its own power of being in all that is in Nature. Soul and Nature in us too are only a dual appearance of the one existence. The universal energy acts in us, but the soul limits itself by the ego-sense, lives in a partial and separate experience of her workings, uses only a modicum and a fixed action of her energy for its self-expression. It seems rather to be mastered and used by this energy than to use it, because it identifies itself with the ego-sense which is part of the natural instrumentation and lives in the ego experience. The ego is in fact driven by the mechanism of Nature of which it is a part and the ego-will is not and cannot be a free will. To arrive at freedom, mastery and perfection we have to get back to the real self and soul within and arrive too thereby at our true relations with our own and with universal nature.

In our active being this translates itself into a replacement of our egoistic, our personal, our separatively individual will and energy by a universal and a divine will and energy which determines our action in harmony with the universal action and

reveals itself as the direct will and the all-guiding power of the Purushottama. We replace the inferior action of the limited, ignorant and imperfect personal will and energy in us by the action of the divine Shakti. To open ourselves to the universal energy is always possible to us, because that is all around us and always flowing into us, it is that which supports and supplies all our inner and outer action and in fact we have no power of our own in any separately individual sense, but only a personal formulation of the one Shakti. And on the other hand this universal Shakti is within ourselves, concentrated in us, for the whole power of it is present in each individual as in the universe, and there are means and processes by which we can awaken its greater and potentially infinite force and liberate it to its larger workings.

We can become aware of the existence and presence of the universal Shakti in the various forms of her power. At present we are conscious only of the power as formulated in our physical mind, nervous being and corporeal case sustaining our various activities. But if we can once get beyond this first formation by some liberation of the hidden, recondite, subliminal parts of our existence by Yoga, we become aware of a greater life force, a pranic Shakti, which supports and fills the body and supplies all the physical and vital activities,—for the physical energy is only a modified form of this force,—and supplies and sustains too from below all our mental action. This force we feel in ourselves also, but we can feel it too around us and above, one with the same energy in us, and can draw it in and down to aggrandise our normal action or call upon and get it to pour into us. It is an illimitable ocean of Shakti and will pour as much of itself as we can hold into our being. This pranic force we can use for any of the activities of life, body or mind with a far greater and effective power than any that we command in our present operations, limited as they are by the physical formula. The use of this pranic power liberates us from that limitation to the extent of our ability to use it in place of the body-bound energy. It can be used so to direct the prana as to manage more powerfully or to rectify any bodily

state or action, as to heal illness or to get rid of fatigue, and to liberate an enormous amount of mental exertion and play of will or knowledge. The exercises of Pranayama are the familiar mechanical means of freeing and getting control of the pranic energy. They heighten too and set free the psychic, mental and spiritual energies which ordinarily depend for their opportunity of action on the pranic force. But the same thing can be done by mental will and practice or by an increasing opening of ourselves to a higher spiritual power of the Shakti. The pranic Shakti can be directed not only upon ourselves, but effectively towards others or on things or happenings for whatever purposes the will dictates. Its effectivity is immense, in itself illimitable, and limited only by defect of the power, purity and universality of the spiritual or other will which is brought to bear upon it; but still, however great and powerful, it is a lower formulation, a link between the mind and body, an instrumental force. There is a consciousness in it, a presence of the spirit, of which we are aware, but it is encased, involved in and preoccupied with the urge to action. It is not to this action of the Shakti that we can leave the whole burden of our activities; we have either to use its lendings by our own enlightened personal will or else call in a higher guidance; for of itself it will act with greater force, but still according to our imperfect nature and mainly by the drive and direction of the life-power in us and not according to the law of the highest spiritual existence.

The ordinary power by which we govern the pranic energy is that of the embodied mind. But when we get clear above the physical mind, we can get too above the pranic force to the consciousness of a pure mental energy which is a higher formulation of the Shakti. There we are aware of a universal mind consciousness closely associated with this energy in, around and above us,—above, that is to say, the level of our ordinary mind status,—giving all the substance and shaping all the forms of our will and knowledge and of the psychic element in our impulses and emotions. This mind force can be made to act upon the pranic energy and can impose upon it the influence, colour, shape, character, direction of our ideas, our knowledge,

our more enlightened volition and thus more effectively bring our life and vital being into harmony with our higher powers of being, ideals and spiritual aspirations. In our ordinary state these two, the mental and the pranic being and energies, are very much mixed up and run into each other, and we are not able clearly to distinguish them or get a full hold of the one on the other and so control effectively the lower by the higher and more understanding principle. But when we take our station above the physical mind, we are able then to separate clearly the two forms of energy, the two levels of our being, disentangle their action and act with a clearer and more potent self-knowledge and an enlightened and a purer will-power. Nevertheless the control is not complete, spontaneous, sovereign so long as we work with the mind as our chief guiding and controlling force. The mental energy we find to be itself derivative, a lower and limiting power of the conscious spirit which acts only by isolated and combined seeings, imperfect and incomplete half-lights which we take for full and adequate light, and with a disparity between the idea and knowledge and the effective will-power. And we are aware soon of a far higher power of the Spirit and its Shakti concealed or above, superconscious to mind or partially acting through the mind, of which all this is an inferior derivation.

The Purusha and Prakriti are on the mental level as in the rest of our being closely joined and much involved in each other and we are not able to distinguish clearly soul and nature. But in the purer substance of mind we can more easily discern the dual strain. The mental Purusha is naturally able in its own native principle of mind to detach itself, as we have seen, from the workings of its Prakriti and there is then a division of our being between a consciousness that observes and can reserve its will-power and an energy full of the substance of consciousness that takes the forms of knowledge, will and feeling. This detachment gives at its highest a certain freedom from the compulsion of the soul by its mental nature. For ordinarily we are driven and carried along in the stream of our own and the universal active energy partly floundering in its waves, partly maintaining and seeming to guide or at least propel ourselves by a collected

thought and an effort of the mental will muscle; but now there is a part of ourselves, nearest to the pure essence of self, which is free from the stream, can quietly observe and to a certain extent decide its immediate movement and course and to a greater extent its ultimate direction. The Purusha can at last act upon the Prakriti from half apart, from behind or from above her as a presiding person or presence, *adhyakṣa*, by the power of sanction and control inherent in the spirit.

What we shall do with this relative freedom depends on our aspiration, our idea of the relation we must have with our highest self, with God and Nature. It is possible for the Purusha to use it on the mental plane itself for a constant self-observation, self-development, self-modification, to sanction, reject, alter, bring out new formulations of the nature and establish a calm and disinterested action, a high and pure sattwic balance and rhythm of its energy, a personality perfected in the sattwic principle. This may amount only to a highly mentalised perfection of our present intelligence and the ethical and the psychic being or else, aware of the greater self in us, it may impersonalise, universalise, spiritualise its self-conscious existence and the action of its nature and arrive either at a large quietude or a large perfection of the spiritualised mental energy of its being. It is possible again for the Purusha to stand back entirely and by a refusal of sanction allow the whole normal action of the mind to exhaust itself, run down, spend its remaining impetus of habitual action and fall into silence. Or else this silence may be imposed on the mental energy by rejection of its action and a constant command to quietude. The soul may through the confirmation of this quietude and mental silence pass into some ineffable tranquillity of the spirit and vast cessation of the activities of Nature. But it is also possible to make this silence of the mind and ability to suspend the habits of the lower nature a first step towards the discovery of a superior formulation, a higher grade of the status and energy of our being and pass by an ascent and transformation into the supramental power of the spirit. And this may even, though with more difficulty, be done without resorting to the complete state of quietude of the normal mind

by a persistent and progressive transformation of all the mental into their greater corresponding supramental powers and activities. For everything in the mind derives from and is a limited, inferior, groping, partial or perverse translation into mentality of something in the supermind. But neither of these movements can be successfully executed by the sole individual unaided power of the mental Purusha in us, but needs the help, intervention and guidance of the divine Self, the Ishwara, the Purushottama. For the supermind is the divine mind and it is on the supramental plane that the individual arrives at his right, integral, luminous and perfect relation with the supreme and universal Purusha and the supreme and universal Para Prakriti.

As the mind progresses in purity, capacity of stillness or freedom from absorption in its own limited action, it becomes aware of and is able to reflect, bring into itself or enter into the conscious presence of the Self, the supreme and universal Spirit, and it becomes aware too of grades and powers of the spirit higher than its own highest ranges. It becomes aware of an infinite of the consciousness of being, an infinite ocean of all the power and energy of illimitable consciousness, an infinite ocean of Ananda, of the self-moved delight of existence. It may be aware of one or other only of these things, for the mind can separate and feel exclusively as distinct original principles what in a higher experience are inseparable powers of the One, or it may feel them in a trinity or fusion which reveals or arrives at their oneness. It may become aware of it on the side of Purusha or on the side of Prakriti. On the side of Purusha it reveals itself as Self or Spirit, as Being or as the one sole existent Being, the divine Purushottama, and the individual Jiva soul can enter into entire oneness with it in its timeless self or in its universality, or enjoy nearness, immanence, difference without any gulf of separation and enjoy too inseparably and at one and the same time oneness of being and delight-giving difference of relation in active experiencing nature. On the side of Prakriti the power and Ananda of the Spirit come into the front to manifest this Infinite in the beings and personalities and ideas and forms and forces of the universe and there is then present to us the divine

Mahashakti, original Power, supreme Nature, holding in herself infinite existence and creating the wonders of the cosmos. The mind grows conscious of this illimitable ocean of Shakti or else of her presence high above the mind and pouring something of herself into us to constitute all that we are and think and will and do and feel and experience, or it is conscious of her all around us and our personality a wave of the ocean of power of spirit, or of her presence in us and of her action there based on our present form of natural existence but originated from above and raising us towards the higher spiritual status. The mind too can rise towards and touch her infinity or merge itself in it in trance of samadhi or can lose itself in her universality, and then our individuality disappears, our centre of action is then no longer in us, but either outside our bodied selves or nowhere; our mental activities are then no longer our own, but come into this frame of mind, life and body from the universal, work themselves out and pass leaving no impression on us, and this frame of ourselves too is only an insignificant circumstance in her cosmic vastness. But the perfection sought in the integral Yoga is not only to be one with her in her highest spiritual power and one with her in her universal action, but to realise and possess the fullness of this Shakti in our individual being and nature. For the supreme Spirit is one as Purusha or as Prakriti, conscious being or power of conscious being, and as the Jiva in essence of self and spirit is one with the supreme Purusha, so on the side of Nature, in power of self and spirit it is one with Shakti, *parā prakrtir jīvabhūtā*. To realise this double oneness is the condition of the integral self-perfection. The Jiva is then the meeting-place of the play of oneness of the supreme Soul and Nature.

To reach this perfection we have to become aware of the divine Shakti, draw her to us and call her in to fill the whole system and take up the charge of all our activities. There will then be no separate personal will or individual energy trying to conduct our actions, no sense of a little personal self as the doer, nor will it be the lower energy of the three gunas, the mental, vital and physical nature. The divine Shakti will fill

us and preside over and take up all our inner activities, our outer life, our Yoga. She will take up the mental energy, her own lower formation, and raise it to its highest and purest and fullest powers of intelligence and will and psychic action. She will change the mechanical energies of the mind, life and body which now govern us into delight-filled manifestations of her own living and conscious power and presence. She will manifest in us and relate to each other all the various spiritual experiences of which the mind is capable. And as the crown of this process she will bring down the supramental light into the mental levels, change the stuff of mind into the stuff of supermind, transform all the lower energies into energies of her supramental nature and raise us into our being of gnosis. The Shakti will reveal herself as the power of the Purushottama, and it is the Ishwara who will manifest himself in his force of supermind and spirit and be the master of our being, action, life and Yoga.

Chapter XVII

The Action of the Divine Shakti

THIS IS the nature of the divine Shakti that it is the timeless power of the Divine which manifests itself in time as a universal force creating, constituting, maintaining and directing all the movements and workings of the universe. This universal Power is apparent to us first on the lower levels of existence as a mental, vital and material cosmic energy of which all our mental, vital and physical activities are the operations. It is necessary for our sadhana that we should thoroughly realise this truth in order to escape from the pressure of the limiting ego view and universalise ourselves even on these lower levels where ordinarily the ego reigns in full force. To see that we are not the originators of action but that it is rather this Power that acts in ourselves and in all others, not I and others the doers, but the one Prakriti, which is the rule of the Karmayoga, is also the right rule here. The ego sense serves to limit, separate and sharply differentiate, to make the most of the individual form and it is there because it is indispensable to the evolution of the lower life. But when we would rise above to a higher divine life we must loosen the force of the ego and eventually get rid of it—as for the lower life the development of ego, so for the higher life this reverse movement of elimination of the ego is indispensable. To see our actions as not our own but those of the divine Shakti working in the form of the lower Prakriti on the inferior levels of the conscious being, helps powerfully towards this change. And if we can do this, then the separation of our mental, vital and physical consciousness from that of other beings thins and lessens; the limitations of its workings remain indeed, but they are broadened and taken up into a large sense and vision of the universal working; the specialising and individualising differentiations of Nature abide for their own proper purpose, but are no longer a prison. The individual feels

his mind, life and physical existence to be one with that of others amid all differences and one with the total power of the spirit in Nature.

This however is a stage and not the whole perfection. The existence, however comparatively large and free, is still subject to the inferior nature. The sattwic, rajasic and tamasic ego is diminished but not eliminated; or if it seems to disappear, it has only sunk in our parts of action into the universal operation of the gunas, remains involved in them and is still working in a covert, subconscious fashion and may force itself to the front at any time. The sadhaka has therefore first to keep the idea and get the realisation of a one self or spirit in all behind all these workings. He must be aware behind Prakriti of the one supreme and universal Purusha. He must see and feel not only that all is the self-shaping of the one Force, Prakriti or Nature, but that all her actions are those of the Divine in all, the one Godhead in all, however veiled, altered and as it were perverted—for perversion comes by a conversion into lower forms—by transmission through the ego and the gunas. This will farther diminish the open or covert insistence of the ego and, if thoroughly realised, it will make it difficult or impossible for it to assert itself in such a way as to disturb or hamper the farther progress. The ego-sense will become, so far as it interferes at all, a foreign intrusive element and only a fringe of the mist of the old ignorance hanging on to the outskirts of the consciousness and its action. And, secondly, the universal Shakti must be realised, must be seen and felt and borne in the potent purity of its higher action, its supramental and spiritual workings. This greater vision of the Shakti will enable us to escape from the control of the gunas, to convert them into their divine equivalents and dwell in a consciousness in which the Purusha and Prakriti are one and not separated or hidden in or behind each other. There the Shakti will be in its every movement evident to us and naturally, spontaneously, irresistibly felt as nothing else but the active presence of the Divine, the shape of power of the supreme Self and Spirit.

The Shakti in this higher status reveals itself as the presence

or potentiality of the infinite existence, consciousness, will, delight, and when it is so seen and felt, the being turns towards it in whatever way, with its adoration or its will of aspiration or some kind of attraction of the lesser to the greater, to know it, to be full of and possessed by it, to be one with it in the sense and action of the whole nature. But at first while we still live in the mind, there is a gulf of division or else a double action. The mental, vital and physical energy in us and the universe is felt to be a derivation from the supreme Shakti, but at the same time an inferior, separated and in some sense another working. The real spiritual force may send down its messages or the light and power of its presence above us to the lower levels or may descend occasionally and even for a time possess, but it is then mixed with the inferior workings and partially transforms and spiritualises them, but is itself diminished and altered in the process. There is an intermittent higher action or a dual working of the nature. Or we find that the Shakti for a time raises the being to a higher spiritual plane and then lowers it back into the inferior levels. These alternations must be regarded as the natural vicissitudes of a process of transformation from the normal to the spiritual being. The transformation, the perfection cannot for the integral Yoga be complete until the link between the mental and the spiritual action is formed and a higher knowledge applied to all the activities of our existence. That link is the supramental or gnostic energy in which the incalculable infinite power of the supreme being, consciousness, delight formulates itself as an ordering divine will and wisdom, a light and power in the being which shapes all the thought, will, feeling, action and replaces the corresponding individual movements.

This supramental Shakti may form itself as a spiritualised intuitive light and power in the mind itself, and that is a great but still a mentally limited spiritual action. Or it may transform altogether the mind and raise the whole being to the supramental level. In any case this is the first necessity of this part of the Yoga, to lose the ego of the doer, the ego idea and the sense of one's own power of action and initiation of action and control of the result of action and merge it in the sense and vision of

the universal Shakti originating, shaping, turning to its ends the action of ourselves and others and of all the persons and forces of the world. And this realisation can become absolute and complete in all the parts of our being only if we can have that sense and vision of it in all its forms, on all the levels of our being and the world being, as the material, vital, mental and supramental energy of the Divine, but all these, all the powers of all the planes must be seen and known as self-formulations of the one spiritual Shakti, infinite in being, consciousness and Ananda. It is not the invariable rule that this power should first manifest itself on the lower levels in the lower forms of energy and then reveal its higher spiritual nature. And if it does so come, first in its mental, vital or physical universalism, we must be careful not to rest content there. It may come instead at once in its higher reality, in the might of the spiritual splendour. The difficulty then will be to bear and hold the Power until it has laid powerful hands on and transformed the energies of the lower levels of the being. The difficulty will be less in proportion as we have been able to attain to a large quiet and equality, *samatā*, and either to realise, feel and live in the one tranquil immutable self in all or else to make a genuine and complete surrender of ourselves to the divine Master of the Yoga.

It is necessary here to keep always in mind the three powers of the Divine which are present and have to be taken account of in all living existences. In our ordinary consciousness we see these three as ourselves, the Jiva in the form of the ego, God—whatever conception we may have of God, and Nature. In the spiritual experience we see God as the supreme Self or Spirit, or as the Being from whom we come and in whom we live and move. We see Nature as his Power or God as Power, Spirit in Power acting in ourselves and the world. The Jiva is then himself this Self, Spirit, Divine, *so 'ham*, because he is one with him in essence of his being and consciousness, but as the individual he is only a portion of the Divine, a self of the Spirit, and in his natural being a form of the Shakti, a power of God in movement and action, *parā prakrtir jīvabhūtā*. At first, when we become conscious of God or of the Shakti, the difficulties of our relation

with them arise from the ego consciousness which we bring into the spiritual relation. The ego in us makes claims on the Divine other than the spiritual claim, and these claims are in a sense legitimate, but so long as and in proportion as they take the egoistic form, they are open to much grossness and great perversions, burdened with an element of falsehood, undesirable reaction and consequent evil, and the relation can only be wholly right, happy and perfect when these claims become part of the spiritual claim and lose their egoistic character. And in fact the claim of our being upon the Divine is fulfilled absolutely only then when it ceases at all to be a claim and is instead a fulfilment of the Divine through the individual, when we are satisfied with that alone, when we are content with the delight of oneness in being, content to leave the supreme Self and Master of existence to do whatever is the will of his absolute wisdom and knowledge through our more and more perfected Nature. This is the sense of the self-surrender of the individual self to the Divine, *ātma-samarpana*. It does not exclude a will for the delight of oneness, for participation in the divine consciousness, wisdom, knowledge, light, power, perfection, for the satisfaction of the divine fulfilment in us, but the will, the aspiration is ours because it is his will in us. At first, while there is still insistence on our own personality, it only reflects that, but becomes more and more indistinguishable from it, less personal and eventually it loses all shade of separateness, because the will in us has grown identical with the divine Tapas, the action of the divine Shakti.

And equally when we first become aware of the infinite Shakti above us or around or in us, the impulse of the egoistic sense in us is to lay hold on it and use this increased might for our egoistic purpose. This is a most dangerous thing, for it brings with it a sense and some increased reality of a great, sometimes a titanic power, and the rajasic ego, delighting in this sense of new enormous strength, may instead of waiting for it to be purified and transformed throw itself out in a violent and impure action and even turn us for a time or partially into the selfish and arrogant Asura using the strength given him for his own and not for the divine purpose: but on that way lies, in the

end, if it is persisted in, spiritual perdition and material ruin. And even to regard oneself as the instrument of the Divine is not a perfect remedy; for when a strong ego meddles in the matter, it falsifies the spiritual relation and under cover of making itself an instrument of the Divine is really bent on making instead God its instrument. The one remedy is to still the egoistic claim of whatever kind, to lessen persistently the personal effort and individual straining which even the sattwic ego cannot avoid and instead of laying hold on the Shakti and using it for its purpose rather to let the Shakti lay hold on us and use us for the divine purpose. This cannot be done perfectly at once — nor can it be done safely if it is only the lower form of the universal energy of which we are aware, for then, as has already been said, there must be some other control, either of the mental Purusha or from above, — but still it is the aim which we must have before us and which can be wholly carried out when we become insistently aware of the highest spiritual presence and form of the divine Shakti. This surrender too of the whole action of the individual self to the Shakti is in fact a form of real self-surrender to the Divine.

It has been seen that a most effective way of purification is for the mental Purusha to draw back, to stand as the passive witness and observe and know himself and the workings of Nature in the lower, the normal being; but this must be combined, for perfection, with a will to raise the purified nature into the higher spiritual being. When that is done, the Purusha is no longer only a witness, but also the master of his prakriti, *īsvara*. At first it may not be apparent how this ideal of active self-mastery can be reconciled with the apparently opposite ideal of self-surrender and of becoming the assenting instrument of the divine Shakti. But in fact on the spiritual plane there is no difficulty. The Jiva cannot really become master except in proportion as he arrives at oneness with the Divine who is his supreme Self. And in that oneness and in his unity with the universe he is one too in the universal self with the will that directs all the operations of Nature. But more directly, less transcendently, in his individual action too, he is a portion of the Divine and participates in the

mastery over his nature of that to which he has surrendered himself. Even as instrument, he is not a mechanical but a conscious instrument. On the Purusha side of him he is one with the Divine and participates in the divine mastery of the Ishwara. On the nature side of him he is in his universality one with the power of the Divine, while in his individual natural being he is an instrument of the universal divine Shakti, because the individualised power is there to fulfil the purpose of the universal Power. The Jiva, as has been seen, is the meeting-place of the play of the dual aspect of the Divine, Prakriti and Purusha, and in the higher spiritual consciousness he becomes simultaneously one with both these aspects, and there he takes up and combines all the divine relations created by their interaction. This it is that makes possible the dual attitude.

There is however a possibility of arriving at this result without the passage through the passivity of the mental Purusha, by a more persistently and predominantly kinetic Yoga. Or there may be a combination of both the methods, alternations between them and an ultimate fusion. And here the problem of spiritual action assumes a more simple form. In this kinetic movement there are three stages. In the first the Jiva is aware of the supreme Shakti, receives the power into himself and uses it under her direction, with a certain sense of being the subordinate doer, a sense of minor responsibility in the action,—even at first, it may be, a responsibility for the result; but that disappears, for the result is seen to be determined by the higher Power, and only the action is felt to be partly his own. The sadhaka then feels that it is he who is thinking, willing, doing, but feels too the divine Shakti or Prakriti behind driving and shaping all his thought, will, feeling and action: the individual energy belongs in a way to him, but is still only a form and an instrument of the universal divine Energy. The Master of the Power may be hidden from him for a time by the action of the Shakti, or he may be aware of the Ishwara sometimes or continually manifest to him. In the latter case there are three things present to his consciousness, himself as the servant of the Ishwara, the Shakti behind as a great Power supplying the energy, shaping the action, formulating the results,

the Ishwara above determining by his will the whole action.

In the second stage the individual doer disappears, but there is not necessarily any quietistic passivity; there may be a full kinetic action, only all is done by the Shakti. It is her power of knowledge which takes shape as thought in the mind; the sadhaka has no sense of himself thinking, but of the Shakti thinking in him. The will and the feelings and action are also in the same way nothing but a formation, operation, activity of the Shakti in her immediate presence and full possession of all the system. The sadhaka does not think, will, act, feel, but thought, will, feeling, action happen in his system. The individual on the side of action has disappeared into oneness with universal Prakriti, has become an individualised form and action of the divine Shakti. He is still aware of his personal existence, but it is as the Purusha supporting and observing the whole action, conscious of it in his self-knowledge and enabling by his participation the divine Shakti to do in him the works and the will of the Ishwara. The Master of the power is then sometimes hidden by the action of the power, sometimes appears governing it and compelling its workings. Here too there are three things present to the consciousness, the Shakti carrying on all the knowledge, thought, will, feeling, action for the Ishwara in an instrumental human form, the Ishwara, the Master of existence governing and compelling all her action, and ourself as the soul, the Purusha of her individual action enjoying all the relations with him which are created by her workings. There is another form of this realisation in which the Jiva disappears into and becomes one with the Shakti and there is then only the play of the Shakti with the Ishwara, Mahadeva and Kali, Krishna and Radha, the Deva and the Devi. This is the intensest possible form of the Jiva's realisation of himself as a manifestation of Nature, a power of the being of the Divine, *parā prakṛtir jīva-bhūtā*.

A third stage comes by the increasing manifestation of the Divine, the Ishwara in all our being and action. This is when we are constantly and uninterruptedly aware of him. He is felt in us as the possessor of our being and above us as the ruler of all its workings and they become to us nothing but a manifestation

of him in the existence of the Jiva. All our consciousness is his consciousness, all our knowledge is his knowledge, all our thought is his thought, all our will is his will, all our feeling is his Ananda and form of his delight in being, all our action is his action. The distinction between the Shakti and the Ishwara begins to disappear; there is only the conscious activity in us of the Divine with the great self of the Divine behind and around and possessing it; all the world and Nature is seen to be only that, but here it has become fully conscious, the Maya of the ego removed, and the Jiva is there only as an eternal portion of his being, *amśa sanātana*, put forth to support a divine individualisation and living now fulfilled in the complete presence and power of the Divine, the complete joy of the Spirit manifested in the being. This is the highest realisation of the perfection and delight of the active oneness; for beyond it there could be only the consciousness of the Avatar, the Ishwara himself assuming a human name and form for action in the Lila.

Chapter XVIII

Faith and Shakti

THE THREE parts of the perfection of our instrumental nature of which we have till now been reviewing the general features, the perfection of the intelligence, heart, vital consciousness and body, the perfection of the fundamental soul powers, the perfection of the surrender of our instruments and action to the divine Shakti, depend at every moment of their progression on a fourth power that is covertly and overtly the pivot of all endeavour and action, faith, *śraddhā*. The perfect faith is an assent of the whole being to the truth seen by it or offered to its acceptance, and its central working is a faith of the soul in its own will to be and attain and become and its idea of self and things and its knowledge, of which the belief of the intellect, the heart's consent and the desire of the life mind to possess and realise are the outward figures. This soul faith, in some form of itself, is indispensable to the action of the being and without it man cannot move a single pace in life, much less take any step forward to a yet unrealised perfection. It is so central and essential a thing that the Gita can justly say of it that whatever is a man's *śraddhā*, that he is, *yo yacchraddhah sa eva saḥ*, and, it may be added, whatever he has the faith to see as possible in himself and strive for, that he can create and become. There is one kind of faith demanded as indispensable by the integral Yoga and that may be described as faith in God and the Shakti, faith in the presence and power of the Divine in us and the world, a faith that all in the world is the working of one divine Shakti, that all the steps of the Yoga, its strivings and sufferings and failures as well as its successes and satisfactions and victories are utilities and necessities of her workings and that by a firm and strong dependence on and a total self-surrender to the Divine and to his Shakti in us we can attain to oneness and freedom and victory and perfection.

The enemy of faith is doubt, and yet doubt too is a utility and necessity, because man in his ignorance and in his progressive labour towards knowledge needs to be visited by doubt, otherwise he would remain obstinate in an ignorant belief and limited knowledge and unable to escape from his errors. This utility and necessity of doubt does not altogether disappear when we enter on the path of Yoga. The integral Yoga aims at a knowledge not merely of some fundamental principle, but a knowing, a gnosis which will apply itself to and cover all life and the world action, and in this search for knowledge we enter on the way and are accompanied for many miles upon it by the mind's unregenerated activities before these are purified and transformed by a greater light: we carry with us a number of intellectual beliefs and ideas which are by no means all of them correct and perfect and a host of new ideas and suggestions meet us afterwards demanding our credence which it would be fatal to seize on and always cling to in the shape in which they come without regard to their possible error, limitation or imperfection. And indeed at one stage in the Yoga it becomes necessary to refuse to accept as definite and final any kind of intellectual idea or opinion whatever in its intellectual form and to hold it in a questioning suspension until it is given its right place and luminous shape of truth in a spiritual experience enlightened by supramental knowledge. And much more must this be the case with the desires or impulsions of the life mind, which have often to be provisionally accepted as immediate indices of a temporarily necessary action before we have the full guidance, but not always clung to with the soul's complete assent, for eventually all these desires and impulsions have to be rejected or else transformed into and replaced by impulsions of the divine will taking up the life movements. The heart's faith, emotional beliefs, assents are also needed upon the way, but cannot be always sure guides until they too are taken up, purified, transformed and are eventually replaced by the luminous assents of a divine Ananda which is at one with the divine will and knowledge. In nothing in the lower nature from the reason to the vital will can the seeker of the Yoga put a complete and permanent faith, but only at last in the spiritual

truth, power, Ananda which become in the spiritual reason his sole guides and luminaries and masters of action.

And yet faith is necessary throughout and at every step because it is a needed assent of the soul and without this assent there can be no progress. Our faith must first be abiding in the essential truth and principles of the Yoga, and even if this is clouded in the intellect, despondent in the heart, outworn and exhausted by constant denial and failure in the desire of the vital mind, there must be something in the innermost soul which clings and returns to it, otherwise we may fall on the path or abandon it from weakness and inability to bear temporary defeat, disappointment, difficulty and peril. In the Yoga as in life it is the man who persists unwearied to the last in the face of every defeat and disillusionment and of all confronting, hostile and contradicting events and powers who conquers in the end and finds his faith justified because to the soul and Shakti in man nothing is impossible. And even a blind and ignorant faith is a better possession than the sceptical doubt which turns its back on our spiritual possibilities or the constant carping of the narrow pettily critical uncreative intellect, *asūyā*, which pursues our endeavour with a paralysing incertitude. The seeker of the integral Yoga must however conquer both these imperfections. The thing to which he has given his assent and set his mind and heart and will to achieve, the divine perfection of the whole human being, is apparently an impossibility to the normal intelligence, since it is opposed to the actual facts of life and will for long be contradicted by immediate experience, as happens with all far-off and difficult ends, and it is denied too by many who have spiritual experience but believe that our present nature is the sole possible nature of man in the body and that it is only by throwing off the earthly life or even all individual existence that we can arrive at either a heavenly perfection or the release of extinction. In the pursuit of such an aim there will for long be plenty of ground for the objections, the carpings, *asūyā*, of that ignorant but persistent criticising reason which finds itself plausibly on the appearances of the moment, the stock of ascertained fact and experience, refuses to go beyond and questions the validity of all

indices and illuminations that point forward; and if he yields to these narrow suggestions, he will either not arrive or be seriously hampered and long delayed in his journey. On the other hand ignorance and blindness in the faith are obstacles to a large success, invite much disappointment and disillusionment, fasten on false finalities and prevent advance to greater formulations of truth and perfection. The Shakti in her workings will strike ruthlessly at all forms of ignorance and blindness and all even that trusts wrongly and superstitiously in her, and we must be prepared to abandon a too persistent attachment to forms of faith and cling to the saving reality alone. A great and wide spiritual and intelligent faith, intelligent with the intelligence of that larger reason which assents to high possibilities, is the character of the *śraddhā* needed for the integral Yoga.

This *śraddhā* — the English word faith is inadequate to express it — is in reality an influence from the supreme Spirit and its light a message from our supramental being which is calling the lower nature to rise out of its petty present to a great self-becoming and self-exceeding. And that which receives the influence and answers to the call is not so much the intellect, the heart or the life mind, but the inner soul which better knows the truth of its own destiny and mission. The circumstances that provoke our first entry into the path are not the real index of the thing that is at work in us. There the intellect, the heart, or the desires of the life mind may take a prominent place, or even more fortuitous accidents and outward incentives; but if these are all, then there can be no surety of our fidelity to the call and our enduring perseverance in the Yoga. The intellect may abandon the idea that attracted it, the heart weary or fail us, the desire of the life mind turn to other objectives. But outward circumstances are only a cover for the real workings of the spirit, and if it is the spirit that has been touched, the inward soul that has received the call, the *śraddhā* will remain firm and resist all attempts to defeat or slay it. It is not that the doubts of the intellect may not assail, the heart waver, the disappointed desire of the life mind sink down exhausted on the wayside. That is almost inevitable at times, perhaps often, especially with us, sons of an

age of intellectuality and scepticism and a materialistic denial of spiritual truth which has not yet lifted its painted clouds from the face of the sun of a greater reality and is still opposed to the light of spiritual intuition and inmost experience. There will very possibly be many of those trying obscurations of which even the Vedic Rishis so often complained, "long exiles from the light", and these may be so thick, the night on the soul may be so black that faith may seem utterly to have left us. But through it all the spirit within will be keeping its unseen hold and the soul will return with a new strength to its assurance which was only eclipsed and not extinguished, because extinguished it cannot be when once the inner self has known and made its resolution.¹ The Divine holds our hand through all and if he seems to let us fall, it is only to raise us higher. This saving return we shall experience so often that the denials of doubt will become eventually impossible and, when once the foundation of equality is firmly established and still more when the sun of the gnosis has risen, doubt itself will pass away because its cause and utility have ended.

Moreover not only a faith in the fundamental principle, ideas, way of the Yoga is needed, but a day to day working faith in the power in us to achieve, in the steps we have taken on the way, in the spiritual experiences that come to us, in the intuitions, the guiding movements of will and impulsion, the moved intensities of the heart and aspirations and fulfilments of the life that are the aids, the circumstances and the stages of the enlarging of the nature and the stimuli or the steps of the soul's evolution. At the same time it has always to be remembered that we are moving from imperfection and ignorance towards light and perfection, and the faith in us must be free from attachment to the forms of our endeavour and the successive stages of our realisation. There is not only much that will be strongly raised in us in order to be cast out and rejected, a battle between the powers of ignorance and the lower nature and the higher powers that have to replace them, but experiences, states of thought

¹ *sāṅkalpa, vyavasāya.*

and feeling, forms of realisation that are helpful and have to be accepted on the way and may seem to us for the time to be spiritual finalities, are found afterwards to be steps of transition, have to be exceeded and the working faith that supported them withdrawn in favour of other and greater things or of more full and comprehensive realisations and experiences, which replace them or into which they are taken up in a completing transformation. There can be for the seeker of the integral Yoga no clinging to resting-places on the road or to half-way houses; he cannot be satisfied till he has laid down all the great enduring bases of his perfection and broken out into its large and free infinities, and even there he has to be constantly filling himself with more experiences of the Infinite. His progress is an ascent from level to level and each new height brings in other vistas and revelations of the much that has still to be done, *bhūri kartvam*, till the divine Shakti has at last taken up all his endeavour and he has only to assent and participate gladly by a consenting oneness in her luminous workings. That which will support him through these changes, struggles, transformations which might otherwise dishearten and baffle,—for the intellect and life and emotion always grasp too much at things, fasten on premature certitudes and are apt to be afflicted and unwilling when forced to abandon that on which they rested,—is a firm faith in the Shakti that is at work and reliance on the guidance of the Master of the Yoga whose wisdom is not in haste and whose steps through all the perplexities of the mind are assured and just and sound, because they are founded on a perfectly comprehending transaction with the necessities of our nature.

The progress of the Yoga is a procession from the mental ignorance through imperfect formations to a perfect foundation and increasing of knowledge and in its more satisfactorily positive parts a movement from light to greater light, and it cannot cease till we have the greatest light of the supramental knowledge. The motions of the mind in its progress must necessarily be mixed with a greater or lesser proportion of error, and we should not allow our faith to be disconcerted by the discovery of its errors or imagine that because the beliefs of the intellect which aided

us were too hasty and positive, therefore the fundamental faith in the soul was invalid. The human intellect is too much afraid of error precisely because it is too much attached to a premature sense of certitude and a too hasty eagerness for positive finality in what it seems to seize of knowledge. As our self-experience increases, we shall find that our errors even were necessary movements, brought with them and left their element or suggestion of truth and helped towards discovery or supported a necessary effort and that the certitudes we have now to abandon had yet their temporary validity in the progress of our knowledge. The intellect cannot be a sufficient guide in the search for spiritual truth and realisation and yet it has to be utilised in the integral movement of our nature. And while, therefore, we have to reject paralysing doubt or mere intellectual scepticism, the seeking intelligence has to be trained to admit a certain large questioning, an intellectual rectitude not satisfied with half-truths, mixtures of error or approximations and, most positive and helpful, a perfect readiness always to move forward from truths already held and accepted to the greater corrective, completing or transcending truths which at first it was unable or, it may be, disinclined to envisage. A working faith of the intellect is indispensable, not a superstitious, dogmatic or limiting credence attached to every temporary support or formula, but a large assent to the successive suggestions and steps of the Shakti, a faith fixed on realities, moving from the lesser to the completer realities and ready to throw down all scaffolding and keep only the large and growing structure.

A constant *śraddhā*, faith, assent of the heart and the life too are indispensable. But while we are in the lower nature the heart's assent is coloured by mental emotion and the life movements are accompanied by their trail of perturbing or straining desires, and mental emotion and desire tend to trouble, alter more or less grossly or subtly or distort the truth, and they always bring some limitation and imperfection into its realisation by the heart and life. The heart too when it is troubled in its attachments and its certitudes, perplexed by throw-backs and failures and convictions of error or involved in the wrestlings

which attend a call to move forward from its assured positions, has its draggings, wearinesses, sorrowings, revolts, reluctances which hamper the progress. It must learn a larger and surer faith giving in the place of the mental reactions a calm or a moved spiritual acceptance to the ways and the steps of the Shakti which is in its nature the assent of a deepening Ananda to all necessary movements and a readiness to leave old moorings and move always forward towards the delight of a greater perfection. The life mind must give its assent to the successive motives, impulsions, activities of the life imposed on it by the guiding power as aids or fields of the development of the nature and to the successions also of the inner Yoga, but it must not be attached or call a halt anywhere, but must always be prepared to abandon old urgency and accept with the same completeness of assent new higher movements and activities, and it must learn to replace desire by a wide and bright Ananda in all experience and action. The faith of the heart and the life mind, like that of the intelligence, must be capable of a constant correction, enlarging and transformation.

This faith is essentially the secret *śraddhā* of the soul, and it is brought more and more to the surface and there satisfied, sustained and increased by an increasing assurance and certainty of spiritual experience. Here too the faith in us must be unattached, a faith that waits upon Truth and is prepared to change and enlarge its understanding of spiritual experiences, to correct mistaken or half-true ideas about them and receive more enlightening interpretations, to replace insufficient by more sufficient intuitions, and to merge experiences that seemed at the time to be final and satisfying in more satisfying combinations with new experience and greater largenesses and transcendences. And especially in the psychical and other middle domains there is a very large room for the possibility of misleading and often captivating error, and here even a certain amount of positive scepticism has its use and at all events a great caution and scrupulous intellectual rectitude, but not the scepticism of the ordinary mind which amounts to a disabling denial. In the integral Yoga psychical experience, especially of the kind associated with what

is often called occultism and savours of the miraculous, should be altogether subordinated to spiritual truth and wait upon that for its own interpretation, illumination and sanction. But even in the purely spiritual domain, there are experiences which are partial and, however attractive, only receive their full validity, significance or right application when we can advance to a fuller experience. And there are others which are in themselves quite valid and full and absolute, but if we confine ourselves to them, will prevent other sides of the spiritual truth from manifestation and mutilate the integrality of the Yoga. Thus the profound and absorbing quietude of impersonal peace which comes by the stilling of the mind is a thing in itself complete and absolute, but if we rest in that alone, it will exclude the companion absolute, not less great and needed and true, of the bliss of the divine action. Here too our faith must be an assent that receives all spiritual experience, but with a wide openness and readiness for always more light and truth, an absence of limiting attachment and no such clinging to forms as would interfere with the forward movement of the Shakti towards the integrality of the spiritual being, consciousness, knowledge, power, action and the wholeness of the one and the multiple Ananda.

The faith demanded of us both in its general principle and its constant particular application amounts to a large and ever increasing and a constantly purer, fuller and stronger assent of the whole being and all its parts to the presence and guidance of God and the Shakti. The faith in the Shakti, as long as we are not aware of and filled with her presence, must necessarily be preceded or at least accompanied by a firm and virile faith in our own spiritual will and energy and our power to move successfully towards unity and freedom and perfection. Man is given faith in himself, his ideas and his powers that he may work and create and rise to greater things and in the end bring his strength as a worthy offering to the altar of the Spirit. This spirit, says the Scripture, is not to be won by the weak, *nāyam ātmā balahīnena labhyah*. All paralysing self-distrust has to be discouraged, all doubt of our strength to accomplish, for that is a false assent to impotence, an imagination of weakness and

a denial of the omnipotence of the spirit. A present incapacity, however heavy may seem its pressure, is only a trial of faith and a temporary difficulty and to yield to the sense of inability is for the seeker of the integral Yoga a non-sense, for his object is a development of a perfection that is there already, latent in the being, because man carries the seed of the divine life in himself, in his own spirit, the possibility of success is involved and implied in the effort and victory is assured because behind is the call and guidance of an omnipotent power. At the same time this faith in oneself must be purified from all touch of rajasic egoism and spiritual pride. The sadhaka should keep as much as possible in his mind the idea that his strength is not his own in the egoistic sense but that of the divine universal Shakti and whatever is egoistic in his use of it must be a cause of limitation and in the end an obstacle. The power of the divine universal Shakti which is behind our aspiration is illimitable, and when it is rightly called upon it cannot fail to pour itself into us and to remove whatever incapacity and obstacle, now or later; for the times and durations of our struggle while they depend at first, instrumentally and in part, on the strength of our faith and our endeavour, are yet eventually in the hands of the wisely determining secret Spirit, alone the Master of the Yoga, the Ishwara.

The faith in the divine Shakti must be always at the back of our strength and when she becomes manifest, it must be or grow implicit and complete. There is nothing that is impossible to her who is the conscious Power and universal Goddess all-creative from eternity and armed with the Spirit's omnipotence. All knowledge, all strengths, all triumph and victory, all skill and works are in her hands and they are full of the treasures of the Spirit and of all perfections and siddhis. She is Maheshwari, goddess of the supreme knowledge, and brings to us her vision for all kinds and widenesses of truth, her rectitude of the spiritual will, the calm and passion of her supramental largeness, her felicity of illumination: she is Mahakali, goddess of the supreme strength, and with her are all mights and spiritual force and severest austerity of tapas and swiftness to the battle and the victory and

the laughter, the *attahāsyā*, that makes light of defeat and death and the powers of the ignorance: she is Mahalakshmi, the goddess of the supreme love and delight, and her gifts are the spirit's grace and the charm and beauty of the Ananda and protection and every divine and human blessing: she is Mahasaraswati, the goddess of divine skill and of the works of the Spirit, and hers is the Yoga that is skill in works, *yogaḥ karmasu kaśalam*, and the utilities of divine knowledge and the self-application of the spirit to life and the happiness of its harmonies. And in all her powers and forms she carries with her the supreme sense of the masteries of the eternal Ishwari, a rapid and divine capacity for all kinds of action that may be demanded from the instrument, oneness, a participating sympathy, a free identity, with all energies in all beings and therefore a spontaneous and fruitful harmony with all the divine will in the universe. The intimate feeling of her presence and her powers and the satisfied assent of all our being to her workings in and around it is the last perfection of faith in the Shakti.

And behind her is the Ishwara and faith in him is the most central thing in the *śraddhā* of the integral Yoga. This faith we must have and develop to perfection that all things are the workings under the universal conditions of a supreme self-knowledge and wisdom, that nothing done in us or around us is in vain or without its appointed place and just significance, that all things are possible when the Ishwara as our supreme Self and Spirit takes up the action and that all that has been done before and all that he will do hereafter was and will be part of his infallible and foreseeing guidance and intended towards the fruition of our Yoga and our perfection and our life work. This faith will be more and more justified as the higher knowledge opens, we shall begin to see the great and small significances that escaped our limited mentality and faith will pass into knowledge. Then we shall see beyond the possibility of doubt that all happens within the working of the one Will and that that will was also wisdom because it develops always the true workings in life of the self and nature. The highest state of the assent, the *śraddhā* of the being will be when we feel the presence of the Ishwara

and feel all our existence and consciousness and thought and will and action in his hand and consent in all things and with every part of our self and nature to the direct and immanent and occupying will of the Spirit. And that highest perfection of the *śraddhā* will also be the opportunity and perfect foundation of a divine strength: it will base, when complete, the development and manifestation and the works of the luminous supramental Shakti.

Chapter XIX

The Nature of the Supermind

THE OBJECT of Yoga is to raise the human being from the consciousness of the ordinary mind subject to the control of vital and material Nature and limited wholly by birth and death and Time and the needs and desires of the mind, life and body to the consciousness of the spirit free in its self and using the circumstances of mind, life and body as admitted or self-chosen and self-figuring determinations of the spirit, using them in a free self-knowledge, a free will and power of being, a free delight of being. This is the essential difference between the ordinary mortal mind in which we live and the spiritual consciousness of our divine and immortal being which is the highest result of Yoga. It is a radical conversion as great as and greater than the change which we suppose evolutionary Nature to have made in its transition from the vital animal to the fully mentalised human consciousness. The animal has the conscious vital mind, but whatever beginnings there are in it of anything higher are only a primary glimpse, a crude hint of the intelligence which in man becomes the splendour of the mental understanding, will, emotion, aesthesia and reason. Man elevated in the heights and deepened by the intensities of the mind becomes aware of something great and divine in himself towards which all this tends, something he is in possibility but which he has not yet become, and he turns the powers of his mind, his power of knowledge, his power of will, his power of emotion and aesthesia to seek out this, to seize and comprehend all that it may be, to become it and to exist wholly in its greater consciousness, delight, being and power of highest becoming. But what he gets of this higher state in his normal mind is only an intimation, a primary glimpse, a crude hint of the splendour, the light, the glory and divinity of the spirit within him. A complete conversion of all the parts of his being into moulds and

instruments of the spiritual consciousness is demanded of him before he can make quite real, constant, present to himself this greater thing that he can be and entirely live in what is now to him at the best a luminous aspiration. He must seek to develop and grow altogether into a greater divine consciousness by an integral Yoga.

The Yoga of perfection necessary to this change has, so far as we have been considering it, consisted in a preparatory purification of the mental, vital and physical nature, a liberation from the knots of the lower Prakriti, a consequent replacement of the egoistic state always subject to the ignorant and troubled action of the desire soul by a large and luminous static equality which quiets the reason, the emotional mind, the life mind and the physical nature and brings into us the peace and freedom of the spirit, and a dynamical substitution of the action of the supreme and universal divine Shakti under the control of the Ishwara for that of the lower Prakriti,—an action whose complete operation must be preceded by the perfection of the natural instruments. And all these things together, though not as yet the whole Yoga, constitute already a much greater than the present normal consciousness, spiritual in its basis and moved by a greater light, power and bliss, and it might be easy to rest satisfied with so much accomplished and think that all has been done that was needed for the divine conversion.

A momentous question however arises as light grows, the question through what medium is the divine Shakti to act in the human being? Is it to be always through the mind only and on the mind plane or in some greater supramental formulation which is more proper to a divine action and which will take up and replace the mental functions? If the mind is to be always the instrument, then although we shall be conscious of a diviner Power initiating and conducting all our inner and outer human action, yet it will have to formulate its knowledge, will, Ananda and all things else in the mental figure, and that means to translate them into an inferior kind of functioning other than the supreme workings native to the divine consciousness and its Shakti. The mind spiritualised, purified, liberated, perfected

within its own limits may come as near as possible to a faithful mental translation, but we shall find that this is after all a relative fidelity and an imperfect perfection. The mind by its very nature cannot render with an entirely right rightness or act in the unified completeness of the divine knowledge, will and Ananda because it is an instrument for dealing with the divisions of the finite on the basis of division, a secondary instrument therefore and a sort of delegate for the lower movement in which we live. The mind can reflect the Infinite, it can dissolve itself into it, it can live in it by a large passivity, it can take its suggestions and act them out in its own way, a way always fragmentary, derivative and subject to a greater or less deformation, but it cannot be itself the direct and perfect instrument of the infinite Spirit acting in its own knowledge. The divine Will and Wisdom organising the action of the infinite consciousness and determining all things according to the truth of the spirit and the law of its manifestation is not mental but supramental and even in its formulation nearest to mind as much above the mental consciousness in its light and power as the mental consciousness of man above the vital mind of the lower creation. The question is how far the perfected human being can raise himself above mind, enter into some kind of fusing union with the supramental and build up in himself a level of supermind, a developed gnosis by the form and power of which the divine Shakti can directly act, not through a mental translation, but organically in her supramental nature.

It is here necessary in a matter so remote from the ordinary lines of our thought and experience to state first what is the universal gnosis or divine supermind, how it is represented in the actual movement of the universe and what are its relations to the present psychology of the human being. It will then be evident that though the supermind is suprarational to our intelligence and its workings occult to our apprehension, it is nothing irrationally mystic, but rather its existence and emergence is a logical necessity of the nature of existence, always provided we grant that not matter or mind alone but spirit is the fundamental reality and everywhere a universal presence. All things are a manifestation of the infinite spirit out of its own being, out of

its own consciousness and by the self-realising, self-determining, self-fulfilling power of that consciousness. The Infinite, we may say, organises by the power of its self-knowledge the law of its own manifestation of being in the universe, not only the material universe present to our senses, but whatever lies behind it on whatever planes of existence. All is organised by it not under any inconscient compulsion, not according to a mental fantasy or caprice, but in its own infinite spiritual freedom according to the self-truth of its being, its infinite potentialities and its will of self-creation out of those potentialities, and the law of this self-truth is the necessity that compels created things to act and evolve each according to its own nature. The Intelligence — to give it an inadequate name — the Logos that thus organises its own manifestation is evidently something infinitely greater, more extended in knowledge, compelling in self-power, large both in the delight of its self-existence and the delight of its active being and works than the mental intelligence which is to us the highest realised degree and expression of consciousness. It is to this intelligence infinite in itself but freely organising and self-determiningly organic in its self-creation and its works that we may give for our present purpose the name of the divine supermind or gnosis.

The fundamental nature of this supermind is that all its knowledge is originally a knowledge by identity and oneness and even when it makes numberless apparent divisions and discriminating modifications in itself, still all the knowledge that operates in its workings, even in these divisions, is founded upon and sustained and lit and guided by this perfect knowledge by identity and oneness. The Spirit is one everywhere and it knows all things as itself and in itself, so sees them always and therefore knows them intimately, completely, in their reality as well as their appearance, in their truth, their law, the entire spirit and sense and figure of their nature and their workings. When it sees anything as an object of knowledge, it yet sees it as itself and in itself, and not as a thing other than or divided from it about which therefore it would at first be ignorant of the nature, constitution and workings and have to learn about them, as the

mind is at first ignorant of its object and has to learn about it because the mind is separated from its object and regards and senses and meets it as something other than itself and external to its own being. The mental awareness we have of our own subjective existence and its movements, though it may point to, is not the same thing as this identity and self-knowledge, because what it sees are mental figures of our being and not the inmost or the whole and it is only a partial, derivative and superficial action of our self that appears to us while the largest and most secretly determining parts of our own existence are occult to our mentality. The supramental Spirit has, unlike the mental being, the real because the inmost and total knowledge of itself and of all its universe and of all things that are its creations and self-figurings in the universe.

This is the second character of the supreme Supermind that its knowledge is a real because a total knowledge. It has in the first place a transcendental vision and sees the universe not only in the universal terms, but in its right relation to the supreme and eternal reality from which it proceeds and of which it is an expression. It knows the spirit and truth and whole sense of the universal expression because it knows all the essentiality and all the infinite reality and all the consequent constant potentiality of that which in part it expresses. It knows rightly the relative because it knows the Absolute and all its absolutes to which the relatives refer back and of which they are the partial or modified or suppressed figures. It is in the second place universal and sees all that is individual in the terms of the universal as well as in its own individual terms and holds all these individual figures in their right and complete relation to the universe. It is in the third place, separately with regard to individual things, total in its view because it knows each in its inmost essence of which all else is the resultant, in its totality which is its complete figure and in its parts and their connections and dependences,—as well as in its connections with and its dependences upon other things and its nexus with the total implications and the explicits of the universe.

The mind on the contrary is limited and incapable in all these

directions. Mind cannot arrive at identity with the Absolute even when by a stretch of the intellect it conceives the idea, but can only disappear into it in a swoon or extinction: it can only have a kind of sense or an intimation of certain absolutes which it puts by the mental idea into a relative figure. It cannot grasp the universal, but only arrives at some idea of it through an extension of the individual or a combination of apparently separate things and so sees it either as a vague infinite or indeterminate or a half-determined largeness or else only in an external scheme or constructed figure. The indivisible being and action of the universal, which is its real truth, escapes the apprehension of the mind, because the mind thinks it out analytically by taking its own divisions for units and synthetically by combinations of these units, but cannot seize on and think entirely in the terms, though it may get at the idea and certain secondary results, of the essential oneness. It cannot, either, know truly and thoroughly even the individual and apparently separate thing, because it proceeds in the same way, by an analysis of parts and constituents and properties and a combination by which it erects a scheme of it which is only its external figure. It can get an intimation of the essential inmost truth of its object, but cannot live constantly and luminously in that essential knowledge and work out on the rest from within outward so that the outward circumstances appear in their intimate reality and meaning as inevitable result and expression and form and action of the spiritual something which is the reality of the object. And all this which is impossible for the mind to do, but possible only to strive towards and figure, is inherent and natural to the supramental knowledge.

The third characteristic of the supermind arising from this difference, which brings us to the practical distinction between the two kinds of knowledge, is that it is directly truth-conscious, a divine power of immediate, inherent and spontaneous knowledge, an Idea holding luminously all realities and not depending on indications and logical or other steps from the known to the unknown like the mind which is a power of the Ignorance. The supermind contains all its knowledge in itself, is in its highest divine wisdom in eternal possession of all truth and even in its

lower, limited or individualised forms has only to bring the latent truth out of itself,—the perception which the old thinkers tried to express when they said that all knowing was in its real origin and nature only a memory of inwardly existing knowledge. The supermind is eternally and on all levels truth-conscious and exists secretly even in mental and material being, surveys and knows the things, even obscurest, of the mental ignorance and understands and is behind and governs its processes, because everything in the mind derives from the supermind—and must do so because everything derives from the spirit. All that is mental is but a partial, a modified, a suppressed or half-suppressed figure of the supramental truth, a deformation or a derived and imperfect figure of its greater knowledge. The mind begins with ignorance and proceeds towards knowledge. As an actual fact, in the material universe, it appears out of an initial and universal unconsciousness which is really an involution of the all-conscious spirit in its own absorbed self-oblivious force of action; and it appears therefore as part of an evolutionary process, first a vital feeling towards overt sensation, then an emergence of a vital mind capable of sensation and, evolving out of it, a mind of emotion and desire, a conscious will, a growing intelligence. And each stage is an emergence of a greater suppressed power of the secret supermind and spirit.

The mind of man, capable of reflection and a coordinated investigation and understanding of itself and its basis and surroundings, arrives at truth but against a background of original ignorance, a truth distressed by a constant surrounding mist of incertitude and error. Its certitudes are relative and for the most part precarious certainties or else are the assured fragmentary certitudes only of an imperfect, incomplete and not an essential experience. It makes discovery after discovery, gets idea after idea, adds experience to experience and experiment to experiment,—but losing and rejecting and forgetting and having to recover much as it proceeds,—and it tries to establish a relation between all that it knows by setting up logical and other sequences, a series of principles and their dependences, generalisations and their application, and makes out of its devices a

structure in which mentally it can live, move and act and enjoy and labour. This mental knowledge is always limited in extent: not only so, but in addition the mind even sets up other willed barriers, admitting by the mental device of opinion certain parts and sides of truth and excluding all the rest, because if it gave free admission and play to all ideas, if it suffered truth's infinities, it would lose itself in an unreconciled variety, an undetermined immensity and would be unable to act and proceed to practical consequences and an effective creation. And even when it is widest and most complete, mental knowing is still an indirect knowledge, a knowledge not of the thing in itself but of its figures, a system of representations, a scheme of indices,—except indeed when in certain movements it goes beyond itself, beyond the mental idea to spiritual identity, but it finds it extremely difficult to go here beyond a few isolated and intense spiritual realisations or to draw or work out or organise the right practical consequences of these rare identities of knowledge. A greater power than the reason is needed for the spiritual comprehension and effectuation of this deepest knowledge.

This is what the supermind, intimate with the Infinite, alone can do. The supermind sees directly the spirit and essence, the face and body, the result and action, the principles and dependences of the truth as one indivisible whole and therefore can work out the circumstantial results in the power of the essential knowledge, the variations of the spirit in the light of its identities, its apparent divisions in the truth of its oneness. The supermind is a knower and creator of its own truth, the mind of man only a knower and creator in the half light and half darkness of a mingled truth and error, and creator too of a thing which it derives altered, translated, lessened from something greater than and beyond it. Man lives in a mental consciousness between a vast subconscious which is to his seeing a dark unconsciousness and a vaster superconscious which he is apt to take for another but a luminous unconsciousness, because his idea of consciousness is confined to his own middle term of mental sensation and intelligence. It is in that luminous superconscious that there lie the ranges of the supermind and the spirit.

The supermind is again, because it acts and creates as well as knows, not only a direct truth-consciousness, but an illumined, direct and spontaneous truth-will. There is not and cannot be in the will of the self-knowing spirit any contradiction, division or difference between its will and its knowledge. The spiritual will is the Tapas or enlightened force of the conscious being of the spirit effecting infallibly what is there within it, and it is this infallible operation of things acting according to their own nature, of energy producing result and event according to the force within it, of action bearing the fruit and event involved in its own character and intention which we call variously in its different aspects law of Nature, Karma, Necessity and Fate. These things are to mind the workings of a power outside or above it in which it is involved and intervenes only with a contributory personal effort which partly arrives and succeeds, partly fails and stumbles and which even in succeeding is largely overruled for issues different from or at any rate greater and more far-reaching than its own intention. The will of man works in the ignorance by a partial light or more often flickerings of light which mislead as much as they illuminate. His mind is an ignorance striving to erect standards of knowledge, his will an ignorance striving to erect standards of right, and his whole mentality as a result very much a house divided against itself, idea in conflict with idea, the will often in conflict with the ideal of right or the intellectual knowledge. The will itself takes different shapes, the will of the intelligence, the wishes of the emotional mind, the desires and the passion of the vital being, the impulsions and blind or half-blind compulsions of the nervous and the subconscious nature, and all these make by no means a harmony, but at best a precarious concord among discords. The will of the mind and life is a stumbling about in search of right force, right Tapas which can wholly be attained in its true and complete light and direction only by oneness with the spiritual and supramental being.

The supramental nature on the contrary is just, harmonious and one, will and knowledge there only light of the spirit and power of the spirit, the power effecting the light, the light

illumining the power. In the highest supramentality they are intimately fused together and do not even wait upon each other but are one movement, will illumining itself, knowledge fulfilling itself, both together a single jet of the being. The mind knows only the present and lives in an isolated movement of it though it tries to remember and retain the past and forecast and compel the future. The supermind has the vision of the three times, *trikāladṛṣṭi*; it sees them as an indivisible movement and sees too each containing the others. It is aware of all tendencies, energies and forces as the diverse play of unity and knows their relation to each other in the single movement of the one spirit. The supramental will and action are therefore a will and action of the spontaneous self-fulfilling truth of the spirit, the right and at the highest the infallible movement of a direct and total knowledge.

The supreme and universal Supermind is the active Light and Tapas of the supreme and universal Self as the Lord and Creator, that which we come to know in Yoga as the divine Wisdom and Power, the eternal knowledge and will of the Ishwara. On the highest planes of Being where all is known and all manifests as existences of the one existence, consciousnesses of the one consciousness, delight's self-creations of the one Ananda, many truths and powers of the one Truth, there is the intact and integral display of its spiritual and supramental knowledge. And in the corresponding planes of our own being the Jiva shares in the spiritual and supramental nature and lives in its light and power and bliss. As we descend nearer to what we are in this world, the presence and action of this self-knowledge narrows but retains always the essence and character when not the fullness of the supramental nature and its way of knowing and willing and acting, because it still lives in the essence and body of the spirit. The mind, when we trace the descent of the self towards matter, we see as a derivation which travels away from the fullness of self, the fullness of its light and being and which lives in a division and diversion, not in the body of the sun, but first in its nearer and then in its far-off rays. There is a highest intuitive mind which receives more nearly the

supramental truth, but even this is a formation which conceals the direct and greater real knowledge. There is an intellectual mind which is a luminous half-opaque lid which intercepts and reflects in a radiantly distorting and suppressively modifying atmosphere the truth known to the supermind. There is a still lower mind built on the foundation of the senses between which and the sun of knowledge there is a thick cloud, an emotional and a sensational mist and vapour with here and there lightnings and illuminations. There is a vital mind which is shut away even from the light of intellectual truth, and lower still in submental life and matter the spirit involves itself entirely as if in a sleep and a night, a sleep plunged in a dim and yet poignant nervous dream, the night of a mechanical somnambulist energy. It is a re-evolution of the spirit out of this lowest state in which we find ourselves at a height above the lower creation having taken it up all in us and reaching so far in our ascent only the light of the well-developed mental reason. The full powers of self-knowledge and the illumined will of the spirit are still beyond us above the mind and reason in supramental Nature.

If the spirit is everywhere, even in matter — in fact matter itself is only an obscure form of the spirit — and if the supermind is the universal power of the spirit's omnipresent self-knowledge organising all the manifestation of the being, then in matter and everywhere there must be present a supramental action and, however concealed it may be by another, lower and obscurer kind of operation, yet when we look close we shall find that it is really the supermind which organises matter, life, mind and reason. And this actually is the knowledge towards which we are now moving. There is even a quite visible intimate action of the consciousness, persistent in life, matter and mind, which is clearly a supramental action subdued to the character and need of the lower medium and to which we now give the name of intuition from its most evident characteristics of direct vision and self-acting knowledge, really a vision born of some secret identity with the object of the knowledge. What we call the intuition is however only a partial indication of the presence of the supermind, and if we take this presence and power in its widest

character, we shall see that it is a concealed supramental force with a self-conscious knowledge in it which informs the whole action of material energy. It is that which determines what we call law of nature, maintains the action of each thing according to its own nature and harmonises and evolves the whole, which would otherwise be a fortuitous creation apt at any moment to collapse into chaos. All the law of nature is a thing precise in its necessities of process, but is yet in the cause of that necessity and of its constancy of rule, measure, combination, adaptation, result a thing inexplicable, meeting us at every step with a mystery and a miracle, and this must be either because it is irrational and accidental even in its regularities or because it is suprarational, because the truth of it belongs to a principle greater than that of our intelligence. That principle is the supramental; that is to say, the hidden secret of Nature is the organisation of something out of the infinite potentialities of the self-existent truth of the spirit the nature of which is wholly evident only to an original knowledge born of and proceeding by a fundamental identity, the spirit's constant self-perception. All the action of life too is of this character and all the action of mind and reason,— reason which is the first to perceive everywhere the action of a greater reason and law of being and try to render it by its own conceptional structures, though it does not always perceive that it is something other than a mental Intelligence which is at work, other than an intellectual Logos. All these processes are actually spiritual and supramental in their secret government, but mental, vital and physical in their overt process.

The outward matter, life, mind do not possess this occult action of the supermind, even while possessed and compelled by the necessity it imposes on their workings. There is what we are sometimes moved to call an intelligence and will operating in the material force and the atom (although the words ring false because it is not actually the same thing as our own will and intelligence), — let us say, a covert intuition of self-existence at work,— but the atom and force are not aware of it and are only the obscure body of matter and of power created by its first effort of self-manifestation. The presence of such an intuition becomes

more evident to us in all the action of life because that is nearer to our own scale. And as life develops overt sense and mind, as in the animal creation, we can speak more confidently of a vital intuition which is behind its operations and which emerges in the animal mind in the clear form of instinct,—instinct, an automatic knowledge implanted in the animal, sure, direct, self-existent, self-guided, which implies somewhere in its being an accurate knowing of purpose, relation and the thing or object. It acts in the life force and mind, but yet the surface life and mind do not possess it and cannot give an account of what it does or control or extend the power at its will and pleasure. Here we observe two things, first, that the overt intuition acts only for a limited necessity and purpose, and that in the rest of the operations of the nature there is a double action, one uncertain and ignorant of the surface consciousness and the other subliminal implying a secret subconscious direction. The surface consciousness is full of a groping and seeking which increases rather than diminishes as life rises in its scale and widens in the scope of its conscious powers; but the secret self within assures in spite of the groping of the vital mind the action of the nature and the result needed for the necessity, the purpose and the destiny of the being. This continues on a higher and higher scale up to the human reason and intelligence.

The being of man also is full of physical, vital, emotional, psychical and dynamic instincts and intuitions, but he does not rely on them as the animal does,—though they are capable in him of a far larger scope and greater action than in the animal and lower creation by reason of his greater actual evolutionary development and his yet greater potentiality of development of the being. He has suppressed them, discontinued their full and overt action by atrophy,—not that these capacities are destroyed but rather held back or cast back into the subliminal consciousness,—and consequently this lower part of his being is much less sure of itself, much less confident of the directions of his nature, much more groping, errant and fallible in its larger scope than that of the animal in his lesser limits. This happens because man's real dharma and law of being is to seek for a

greater self-aware existence, a self-manifestation no longer obscure and governed by an ununderstood necessity, but illumined, conscious of that which is expressing itself and able to give it a fuller and more perfect expression. And finally his culmination must be to identify himself with his greatest and real self and act or rather let it act (his natural existence being an instrumental form of the expression of the spirit) in its spontaneous perfect will and knowledge. His first instrument for this transition is the reason and the will of the rational intelligence and he is moved to depend upon that to the extent of its development for his knowledge and guidance and give it the control of the rest of his being. And if the reason were the highest thing and the greatest all-sufficient means of the self and spirit, he could by it know perfectly and guide perfectly all the movements of his nature. This he cannot do entirely because his self is a larger thing than his reason and if he limits himself by the rational will and intelligence, he imposes an arbitrary restriction both in extent and in kind on his self-development, self-expression, knowledge, action, Ananda. The other parts of his being demand too a complete expression in the largeness and perfection of the self and cannot have it if their expression is changed in kind and carved, cut down and arbitrarily shaped and mechanised in action by the inflexible machinery of the rational intelligence. The godhead of the reason, the intellectual Logos, is only a partial representative and substitute for the greater supramental Logos, and its function is to impose a preliminary partial knowledge and order upon the life of the creature, but the real, final and integral order can only be founded by the spiritual supermind in its emergence.

The supermind in the lower nature is present most strongly as intuition and it is therefore by a development of an intuitive mind that we can make the first step towards the self-existent spontaneous and direct supramental knowledge. All the physical, vital, emotional, psychic, dynamic nature of man is a surface seizing of suggestions which rise out of a subliminal intuitive self-being of these parts, and an attempt usually groping and often circuitous to work them out in the action of a superficial

embodiment and power of the nature which is not overtly enlightened by the inner power and knowledge. An increasingly intuitive mind has the best chance of discovering what they are seeking for and leading them to the desired perfection of their self-expression. The reason itself is only a special kind of application, made by a surface regulating intelligence, of suggestions which actually come from a concealed, but sometimes partially overt and active power of the intuitive spirit. In all its action there is at the covered or half-covered point of origination something which is not the creation of the reason, but given to it either directly by the intuition or indirectly through some other part of the mind for it to shape into intellectual form and process. The rational judgment in its decisions and the mechanical process of the logical intelligence, whether in its more summary or in its more developed operations, conceals while it develops the true origin and native substance of our will and thinking. The greatest minds are those in which this veil wears thin and there is the largest part of intuitive thinking, which often no doubt but not always brings with it a great accompanying display of intellectual action. The intuitive intelligence is however never quite pure and complete in the present mind of man, because it works in the medium of mind and is at once seized on and coated over with a mixed stuff of mentality. It is as yet not brought out, not developed and perfected so as to be sufficient for all the operations now performed by the other mental instruments, not trained to take them up and change them into or replace them by its own fullest, most direct, assured and sufficient workings. This can indeed only be done if we make the intuitive mind a transitional means for bringing out the secret supermind itself of which it is a mental figure and forming in our frontal consciousness a body and instrument of supermind which will make it possible for the self and spirit to display itself in its own largeness and splendour.

It must be remembered that there is always a difference between the supreme Supermind of the omniscient and omnipotent Ishwara and that which can be attained by the Jiva. The human being is climbing out of the ignorance and when he ascends into

the supramental nature, he will find in it grades of its ascension, and he must first form the lower grades and limited steps before he rises to higher summits. He will enjoy there the full essential light, power, Ananda of the infinite self by oneness with the Spirit, but in the dynamical expression it must determine and individualise itself according to the nature of the self-expression which the transcendent and universal Spirit seeks in the Jiva. It is God-realisation and God-expression which is the object of our Yoga and more especially of its dynamic side, it is a divine self-expression in us of the Ishwara, but under the conditions of humanity and through the divinised human nature.

Chapter XX

The Intuitive Mind

THE ORIGINAL nature of supermind is the self-consciousness and all-consciousness of the Infinite, of the universal Spirit and Self in things, organising on the foundation and according to the character of a direct self-knowledge its own wisdom and effective omnipotence for the unfolding and the regulated action of the universe and of all things in the universe. It is, we might say, the gnosis of the Spirit master of its own cosmos, *ātmā jñātā īśvarah*. As it knows itself, so too it knows all things — for all are only becomings of itself — directly, totally and from within outward, spontaneously in detail and arrangement, each thing in the truth of itself and its nature and in its relation to all other things. And it knows similarly all action of its energy in antecedent or cause and occasion of manifestation and effect or consequence, all things in infinite and in limited potentiality and in selection of actuality and in their succession of past, present and future. The organising supermind of a divine being in the universe would be a delegation of this omnipotence and omniscience for the purpose and within the scope of his own action and nature and of all that comes into its province. The supermind in an individual would be a similar delegation on whatever scale and within whatever province. But while in the god this would be a direct and an immediate delegation of a power illimitable in itself and limited only in action, but otherwise unaltered in operation, natural to the being and full and free always, in man any emergence of the supermind must be a gradual and at first an imperfect creation and to his customary mind the activity of an exceptional and supernormal will and knowledge.

In the first place it will not be for him a native power always enjoyed without interruption, but a secret potentiality which has to be discovered and one for which there are no organs in his

present physical or mental system: he has either to evolve a new organ for it or else to adopt or transform existing ones and make them utilisable for the purpose. He has not merely to uncover the hidden sun of the supermind in the subliminal cavern of his secret being or remove the cloud of his mental ignorance from its face in the spiritual skies so that it shall at once shine out in all its glory. His task is much more complex and difficult because he is an evolutionary being and by the evolution of Nature of which he is a part he has been constituted with an inferior kind of knowledge, and this inferior, this mental power of knowledge forms by its persistent customary action an obstacle to a new formation greater than its own nature. A limited mental intelligence enlightening a limited mind of sense and the capacity not always well used of a considerable extension of it by the use of the reason are the powers by which he is at present distinguished from all other terrestrial creatures. This sense mind, this intelligence, this reason, however inadequate, are the instruments in which he has learned to put his trust and he has erected by their means certain foundations which he is not over willing to disturb and has traced limits outside of which he feels all to be confusion, uncertainty and a perilous adventure. Moreover the transition to the higher principle means not only a difficult conversion of his whole mind and reason and intelligence, but in a certain sense a reversal of all their methods. The soul climbing above a certain critical line of change sees all its former operations as an inferior and ignorant action and has to effect another kind of working which sets out from a different starting-point and has quite another kind of initiation of the energy of the being. If an animal mind were called upon to leave consciently the safe ground of sense impulse, sense understanding and instinct for the perilous adventure of a reasoning intelligence, it might well turn back alarmed and unwilling from the effort. The human mind would here be called upon to make a still greater change and, although self-conscious and adventurous in the circle of its possibility, might well hold this to be beyond the circle and reject the adventure. In fact the change is only possible if there is first a spiritual development on our present level of consciousness and

it can only be undertaken securely when the mind has become aware of the greater self within, enamoured of the Infinite and confident of the presence and guidance of the Divine and his Shakti.

The problem of this conversion resolves itself at first into a passage through a mediary status and by the help of the one power already at work in the human mind which we can recognise as something supramental in its nature or at least in its origin, the faculty of intuition, a power of which we can feel the presence and the workings and are impressed, when it acts, by its superior efficiency, light, direct inspiration and force, but cannot understand or analyse it as we understand or analyse the workings of our reason. The reason understands itself, but not what is beyond it,—of that it can only make a general figure or representation; the supermind alone can discern the method of its own workings. The power of intuition acts in us at present for the most part in a covert manner secret and involved in or mostly veiled by the action of the reason and the normal intelligence; so far as it emerges into a clear separate action, it is still occasional, partial, fragmentary and of an intermittent character. It casts a sudden light, it makes a luminous suggestion or it throws out a solitary brilliant clue or scatters a small number of isolated or related intuitions, lustrous discriminations, inspirations or revelations, and it leaves the reason, will, mental sense or intelligence to do what each can or pleases with this seed of succour that has come to them from the depths or the heights of our being. The mental powers immediately proceed to lay hold on these things and to manipulate and utilise them for our mental or vital purposes, to adapt them to the forms of the inferior knowledge, to coat them up in or infiltrate them with the mental stuff and suggestion, often altering their truth in the process and always limiting their potential force of enlightenment by these accretions and by this subdual to the exigencies of the inferior agent, and almost always they make at once too little and too much of them, too little by not allowing them time to settle and extend their full power for illumination, too much by insisting on them or rather on the form into which the mentality casts

them to the exclusion of the larger truth that the more consistent use of the intuitive faculty might have given. Thus the intuition intervening in the ordinary mental operations acts in lightning flashes that make lustrous a space of truth, but is not a steady sunlight illuminating securely the whole reach and kingdom of our thought and will and feeling and action.

It appears at once that there are two necessary lines of progress which we must follow, and the first is to extend the action of the intuition and make it more constant, more persistent and regular and all-embracing until it is so intimate and normal to our being that it can take up all the action now done by the ordinary mind and assume its place in the whole system. This cannot wholly be done so long as the ordinary mind continues to assert its power of independent action and intervention or its habit of seizing on the light of the intuition and manipulating it for its own purposes. The higher mentality cannot be complete or secure so long as the inferior intelligence is able to deform it or even to bring in any of its own intermixture. And either then we must silence altogether the intellect and the intellectual will and the other inferior activities and leave room only for the intuitive action or we must lay hold on and transform the lower action by the constant pressure of the intuition. Or else there must be an alternation and combination of the two methods if that be the most natural way or at all possible. The actual process and experience of Yoga manifests the possibility of several methods or movements none of which by itself produces the entire result in practice, however it may seem at first sight that logically each should or might be adequate. And when we learn to insist on no particular method as exclusively the right one and leave the whole movement to a greater guidance, we find that the divine Lord of the Yoga commissions his Shakti to use one or the other at different times and all in combination according to the need and turn of the being and the nature.

At first it might seem the straight and right way to silence the mind altogether, to silence the intellect, the mental and personal will, the desire mind and the mind of emotion and sensation, and to allow in that perfect silence the Self, the Spirit, the Divine

to disclose himself and leave him to illuminate the being by the supramental light and power and Ananda. And this is indeed a great and powerful discipline. It is the calm and still mind much more readily and with a much greater purity than the mind in agitation and action that opens to the Infinite, reflects the Spirit, becomes full of the Self and awaits like a consecrated and purified temple the unveiling of the Lord of all our being and nature. It is true also that the freedom of this silence gives a possibility of a larger play of the intuitive being and admits with less obstruction and turmoil of mental groping and seizing the great intuitions, inspirations, revelations which emerge from within or descend from above. It is therefore an immense gain if we can acquire the capacity of always being able at will to command an absolute tranquillity and silence of the mind free from any necessity of mental thought or movement and disturbance and, based in that silence, allow thought and will and feeling to happen in us only when the Shakti wills it and when it is needful for the divine purpose. It becomes easier then to change the manner and character of the thought and will and feeling. Nevertheless it is not the fact that by this method the supramental light will immediately replace the lower mind and reflective reason. When the inner action proceeds after the silence, even if it be then a more predominatingly intuitive thought and movement, the old powers will yet interfere, if not from within, then by a hundred suggestions from without, and an inferior mentality will mix in, will question or obstruct or will try to lay hold on the greater movement and to lower or darken or distort or minimise it in the process. Therefore the necessity of a process of elimination or transformation of the inferior mentality remains always imperative,—or perhaps both at once, an elimination of all that is native to the lower being, its disfiguring accidents, its depreciations of value, its distortions of substance and all else that the greater truth cannot harbour, and a transformation of the essential things our mind derives from the supermind and spirit but represents in the manner of the mental ignorance.

A second movement is one which comes naturally to those who commence the Yoga with the initiative that is proper to

the way of Bhakti. It is natural to them to reject the intellect and its action and to listen for the voice, wait for the impulsion or the command, the *ādeśa*, obey only the idea and will and power of the Lord within them, the divine Self and Purusha in the heart of the creature, *iśvarah sarvabhūtānām hṛddese*. This is a movement which must tend more and more to intuitivise the whole nature, for the ideas, the will, the impulsions, the feelings which come from the secret Purusha in the heart are of the direct intuitive character. This method is consonant with a certain truth of our nature. The secret Self within us is an intuitive self and this intuitive self is seated in every centre of our being, the physical, the nervous, the emotional, the volitional, the conceptual or cognitive and the higher more directly spiritual centres. And in each part of our being it exercises a secret intuitive initiation of our activities which is received and represented imperfectly by our outer mind and converted into the movements of the ignorance in the external action of these parts of our nature. The heart or emotional centre of the thinking desire mind is the strongest in the ordinary man, gathers up or at least affects the presentation of things to the consciousness and is the capital of the system. It is from there that the Lord seated in the heart of all creatures turns them mounted on the machine of Nature by the Maya of the mental ignorance. It is possible then by referring back all the initiation of our action to this secret intuitive Self and Spirit, the ever-present Godhead within us, and replacing by its influences the initiations of our personal and mental nature to get back from the inferior external thought and action to another, internal and intuitive, of a highly spiritualised character. Nevertheless the result of this movement cannot be complete, because the heart is not the highest centre of our being, is not supramental nor directly moved from the supramental sources. An intuitive thought and action directed from it may be very luminous and intense but is likely to be limited, even narrow in its intensity, mixed with a lower emotional action and at the best excited and troubled, rendered unbalanced or exaggerated by a miraculous or abnormal character in its action or at least in many of its accompaniments which is injurious to the harmonised perfection

of the being. The aim of our effort at perfection must be to make the spiritual and supramental action no longer a miracle, even if a frequent or constant miracle, or only a luminous intervention of a greater than our natural power, but normal to the being and the very nature and law of all its process.

The highest organised centre of our embodied being and of its action in the body is the supreme mental centre figured by the yogic symbol of the thousand-petalled lotus, *sahasradala*, and it is at its top and summit that there is the direct communication with the supramental levels. It is then possible to adopt a different and a more direct method, not to refer all our thought and action to the Lord secret in the heart-lotus but to the veiled truth of the Divinity above the mind and to receive all by a sort of descent from above, a descent of which we become not only spiritually but physically conscious. The siddhi or full accomplishment of this movement can only come when we are able to lift the centre of thought and conscious action above the physical brain and feel it going on in the subtle body. If we can feel ourselves thinking no longer with the brain but from above and outside the head in the subtle body, that is a sure physical sign of a release from the limitations of the physical mind, and though this will not be complete at once nor of itself bring the supramental action, for the subtle body is mental and not supramental, still it is a subtle and pure mentality and makes an easier communication with the supramental centres. The lower movements must still come, but it is then found easier to arrive at a swift and subtle discrimination telling us at once the difference, distinguishing the intuitionial thought from the lower intellectual mixture, separating it from its mental coatings, rejecting the mere rapidities of the mind which imitate the form of the intuition without being of its true substance. It will be easier to discern rapidly the higher planes of the true supramental being and call down their power to effect the desired transformation and to refer all the lower action to the superior power and light that it may reject and eliminate, purify and transform and select among them its right material for the Truth that has to be organised within us. This opening up of a higher level and of

higher and higher planes of it and the consequent re-formation of our whole consciousness and its action into their mould and into the substance of their power and luminous capacity is found in practice to be the greater part of the natural method used by the divine Shakti.

A fourth method is one which suggests itself naturally to the developed intelligence and suits the thinking man. This is to develop our intellect instead of eliminating it, but with the will not to cherish its limitations, but to heighten its capacity, light, intensity, degree and force of activity until it borders on the thing that transcends it and can easily be taken up and transformed into that higher conscious action. This movement also is founded on the truth of our nature and enters into the course and movement of the complete Yoga of self-perfection. That course, as I have described it, included a heightening and greatening of the action of our natural instruments and powers till they constitute in their purity and essential completeness a preparatory perfection of the present normal movement of the Shakti that acts in us. The reason and intelligent will, the buddhi, is the greatest of these powers and instruments, the natural leader of the rest in the developed human being, the most capable of aiding the development of the others. The ordinary activities of our nature are all of them of use for the greater perfection we seek, are meant to be turned into material for them, and the greater their development, the richer the preparation for the supramental action.

The intellectual being too has to be taken up by the Shakti in the Yoga and raised to its fullest and its most heightened powers. The subsequent transformation of the intellect is possible because all the action of the intellect derives secretly from the supermind, each thought and will contains some truth of it however limited and altered by the inferior action of the intelligence. The transformation can be brought about by the removal of the limitation and the elimination of the distorting or perverting element. This however cannot be done by the heightening and greatening of the intellectual activity alone; for that must always be limited by the original inherent defects of the

mental intelligence. An intervention of the supramental energy is needed that can light up and get rid of its deficiencies of thought and will and feeling. This intervention too cannot be completely effective unless the supramental plane is manifested and acts above the mind no longer from behind a lid or veil, however thin the veil may have grown, but more constantly in an open and luminous action till there is seen the full sun of Truth with no cloud to moderate its splendour. It is not necessary, either, to develop the intellect fully in its separateness before calling down this intervention or opening up by it the supramental levels. The intervention may come in earlier and at once develop the intellectual action and turn it, as it develops, into the higher intuitive form and substance.

The widest natural action of the Shakti combines all these methods. It creates, sometimes at first, sometimes at some later, perhaps latest stage, the freedom of the spiritual silence. It opens the secret intuitive being within the mind itself and accustoms us to refer all our thought and our feeling and will and action to the initiation of the Divine, the Splendour and Power who is now concealed in the heart of its recesses. It raises, when we are ready, the centre of its operations to the mental summit and opens up the supramental levels and proceeds doubly by an action from above downward filling and transforming the lower nature and an action from below upwards raising all the energies to that which is above them till the transcendence is completed and the change of the whole system integrally effected. It takes and develops the intelligence and will and other natural powers, but brings in constantly the intuitive mind and afterwards the true supramental energy to change and enlarge their action. These things it does in no fixed and mechanically invariable order, such as the rigidity of the logical intellect might demand, but freely and flexibly according to the needs of its work and the demand of the nature.

The first result will not be the creation of the true supermind, but the organisation of a predominantly or even a completely intuitive mentality sufficiently developed to take the place of the ordinary mentality and of the logical reasoning intellect of the

developed human being. The most prominent change will be the transmutation of the thought heightened and filled by that substance of concentrated light, concentrated power, concentrated joy of the light and the power and that direct accuracy which are the marks of a true intuitive thinking. It is not only primary suggestions or rapid conclusions that this mind will give, but it will conduct too with the same light, power, joy of sureness and direct spontaneous seeing of the truth the connecting and developing operations now conducted by the intellectual reason. The will also will be changed into this intuitive character, proceed directly with light and power to the thing to be done, *kartavyam karma*, and dispose with a rapid sight of possibilities and actualities the combinations necessary to its action and its purpose. The feelings also will be intuitive, seizing upon right relations, acting with a new light and power and a glad sureness, retaining only right and spontaneous desires and emotions, so long as these things endure, and, when they pass away, replacing them by a luminous and spontaneous love and an Ananda that knows and seizes at once on the right *rasa* of its objects. All the other mental movements will be similarly enlightened and even too the pranic and sense movements and the consciousness of the body. And usually there will be some development also of the psychic faculties, powers and perceptions of the inner mind and its senses not dependent on the outer sense and the reason. The intuitive mentality will be not only a stronger and a more luminous thing, but usually capable of a much more extensive operation than the ordinary mind of the same man before this development of the Yoga.

This intuitive mentality, if it could be made perfect in its nature, unmixed with any inferior element and yet unconscious of its own limitations and of the greatness of the thing beyond it, might form another definite status and halting place like the instinctive mind of the animal or the reasoning mind of man. But the intuitive mentality cannot be made abidingly perfect and self-sufficient except by the opening power of the supermind above it and that at once reveals its limitations and makes of it a secondary action transitional between the intellectual mind

and the true supramental nature. The intuitive mentality is still mind and not gnosis. It is indeed a light from the supermind, but modified and diminished by the stuff of mind in which it works, and stuff of mind means always a basis of ignorance. The intuitive mind is not yet the wide sunlight of truth, but a constant play of flashes of it keeping lighted up a basic state of ignorance or of half-knowledge and indirect knowledge. As long as it is imperfect, it is invaded by a mixture of ignorant mentality which crosses its truth with a strain of error. After it has acquired a larger native action more free from this intermixture, even then so long as the stuff of mind in which it works is capable of the old intellectual or lower mental habit, it is subject to accretion of error, to clouding, to many kinds of relapse. Moreover the individual mind does not live alone and to itself but in the general mind and all that it has rejected is discharged into the general mind atmosphere around it and tends to return upon and invade it with the old suggestions and many promptings of the old mental character. The intuitive mind, growing or grown, has therefore to be constantly on guard against invasion and accretion, on the watch to reject and eliminate immixtures, busy intuitivising more and still more the whole stuff of mind, and this can only end by itself being enlightened, transformed, lifted up into the full light of the supramental being.

Moreover, this new mentality is in each man a development of the present power of his being and, however new and remarkable its developments, its organisation is within a certain range of capacity. Adventuring beyond that border—it may indeed limit itself to the work in hand and its present range of realised capacity, but the nature of a mind opened to the infinite is to progress and change and enlarge—it there becomes liable to a return, however modified by the new intuitive habit, of the old intellectual seeking in the ignorance,—unless and until it is constantly overtapped and led by the manifested action of a fuller supramental luminous energy. This is indeed its nature that it is a link and transition between present mind and the supermind and, so long as the transition is not complete, there is sometimes a gravitation downward, sometimes a tendency

upward, an oscillation, an invasion and attraction from below, an invasion and attraction from above, and at best an uncertain and limited status between the two poles. As the higher intelligence of man is situated between his animal and customary human mind below and his evolving spiritual mind above, so this first spiritual mind is situated between the intellectualised human mentality and the greater supramental knowledge.

The nature of mind is that it lives between half-lights and darkness, amid probabilities and possibilities, amid partly grasped aspects, amid incertitudes and half certitudes: it is an ignorance grasping at knowledge, striving to enlarge itself and pressing against the concealed body of true gnosis. The supermind lives in the light of spiritual certitudes: it is to man knowledge opening the actual body of its own native effulgence. The intuitive mind appears at first a lightening up of the mind's half-lights, its probabilities and possibilities, its aspects, its uncertain certitudes, its representations, and a revealing of the truth concealed or half concealed and half manifested by these things, and in its higher action it is a first bringing of the supramental truth by a nearer directness of seeing, a luminous indication or memory of the spirit's knowledge, an intuition or looking in through the gates of the being's secret universal self-vision and knowledge. It is a first imperfect organisation of that greater light and power, imperfect because done in the mind, not based on its own native substance of consciousness, a constant communication, but not a quite immediate and constant presence. The perfect perfection lies beyond on the supramental levels and must be based on a more decisive and complete transformation of the mentality and of our whole nature.

Chapter XXI

The Gradations of the Supermind

THE INTUITIVE mind is an immediate translation of truth into mental terms half transformed by a radiant supramental substance, a translation of some infinite self-knowledge that acts above mind in the superconscious spirit. That spirit becomes conscious to us as a greater self at once above and in and around us of which our present self, our mental, vital and physical personality and nature, is an imperfect portion or a partial derivation or an inferior and inadequate symbol, and as the intuitive mind grows in us, as our whole being grows more moulded to an intuitive substance, we feel a sort of half transformation of our members into the nature of this greater self and spirit. All our thought, will, impulse, feeling, even in the end our more outward vital and physical sensations become more and more direct transmissions from the spirit and are of another and a more and more pure, untroubled, powerful and luminous nature. This is one side of the change: the other is that whatever belongs still to the lower being, whatever still seems to us to come from outside or as a survival of the action of our old inferior personality, feels the pressure of the change and increasingly tends to modify and transform itself to the new substance and nature. The higher comes down and largely takes the place of the lower, but also the lower changes, transforms itself into material of the action and becomes part of the substance of the higher being.

The greater spirit above the mind appears at first as a presence, a light, a power, a source, an infinite, but all that is knowable to us in it is at first an infinite identity of being, consciousness, power of consciousness, Ananda. The rest comes from it, but takes no determinate shape of thought, will or feeling above us, but only in the intuitive mind and on its level. Or we feel and are manifoldly aware of a great and infinite Purusha who

is the eternally living truth of that being and presence, a great and infinite knowledge which is the potency of that light and consciousness, a great and infinite will which is the potency of that power of consciousness, a great and infinite love which is the potency of that Ananda. But all these potencies are only known to us in any definite manner, apart from the strong reality and effect of their essential presence, in so far as they are translated to our intuitive mental being and on its level and within its limits. As however we progress or as we grow into a more luminous and dynamic union with that spirit or Purusha, a greater action of knowledge and will and spiritual feeling manifests and seems to organise itself above the mind and this we recognise as the true supermind and the real native play of the infinite knowledge, will and Ananda. The intuitive mentality then becomes a secondary and inferior movement waiting upon this higher power, responding and assenting to all its illuminations and dictates, transmitting them to the lower members, and, when they do not arrive or are not in immediate evidence, often attempting to supply its place, imitate its action and do as best it can the works of the supramental nature. It takes in fact the same place and relation with regard to it as was taken with regard to itself by the ordinary intelligence at an earlier stage of the Yoga.

This double action on the two planes of our being at first strengthens the intuitive mentality as a secondary operation and assists it to expel or transform more completely the survivals or invasions or accretions of the ignorance. And more and more it intensifies the intuitive mentality itself in its light of knowledge and eventually transforms it into the image of the supermind itself, but at first, ordinarily, in the more limited action of the gnosis when it takes the form of what we might call a luminous supramental or divine reason. It is as this divine reason that the supermind itself at the beginning may manifest its action and then, when it has changed the mind into its own image, it descends and takes the place of the ordinary intelligence and reason. Meanwhile a higher supramental power of a much greater character has been revealing itself above which takes the supreme lead of the divine action in the being. The divine

reason is of a more limited character because, although not of the mental stamp and although an operation of the direct truth and knowledge, it is a delegated power for a range of purposes greater in light, but still to a certain extent analogous to those of the ordinary human will and reason; it is in the yet greater supermind that there comes the direct, altogether revealed and immediate action of the Ishwara in the human being. These distinctions between the intuitive mind, the divine reason and the greater supermind, and others within these gradations themselves, have to be made because eventually they become of great importance. At first the mind takes all that comes from beyond it without distinction as the sufficient spiritual illumination and accepts even initial states and first enlightenments as a finality, but afterwards it finds that to rest here would be to rest in a partial realisation and that one has to go on heightening and enlarging till at least there is reached a certain completeness of divine breadth and stature.

It is difficult for the intellect to grasp at all what is meant by these supramental distinctions: the mental terms in which they can be rendered are lacking or inadequate and they can only be understood after a certain sight or certain approximations in experience. A number of indications are all that at present it can be useful to give. And first it will be enough to take certain clues from the thinking mind; for it is there that some of the nearest keys to the supramental action are discoverable. The thought of the intuitive mind proceeds wholly by four powers that shape the form of the truth, an intuition that suggests its idea, an intuition that discriminates, an inspiration that brings in its word and something of its greater substance and a revelation that shapes to the sight its very face and body of reality. These things are not the same as certain movements of the ordinary mental intelligence that look analogous and are easily mistaken for the true intuition in our first inexperience. The suggestive intuition is not the same thing as the intellectual insight of a quick intelligence or the intuitive discrimination as the rapid judgment of the reasoning intellect; the intuitive inspiration is not the same as the inspired action of the imaginative intelligence, nor

the intuitive revelation as the strong light of a purely mental close seizing and experience.

It would perhaps be accurate to say that these latter activities are mental representations of the higher movements, attempts of the ordinary mind to do the same things or the best possible imitations the intellect can offer of the functionings of the higher nature. The true intuitions differ from these effective but insufficient counterfeits in their substance of light, their operation, their method of knowledge. The intellectual rapidities are dependent on awakenings of the basic mental ignorance to mental figures and representations of truth that may be quite valid in their own field and for their own purpose but are not necessarily and by their very nature reliable. They are dependent for their emergence on the suggestions given by mental and sense data or on the accumulation of past mental knowledge. They search for the truth as a thing outside, an object to be found and looked at and stored as an acquisition and, when found, scrutinise its surfaces, suggestions or aspects. This scrutiny can never give a quite complete and adequate truth idea. However positive they may seem at the time, they may at any moment have to be passed over, rejected and found inconsistent with fresh knowledge.

The intuitive knowledge on the contrary, however limited it may be in its field or application, is within that scope sure with an immediate, a durable and especially a self-existent certitude. It may take for starting-point or rather for a thing to light up and disclose in its true sense the data of mind and sense or else fire a train of past thought and knowledge to new meanings and issues, but it is dependent on nothing but itself and may leap out of its own field of lustres, independent of previous suggestion or data, and this kind of action becomes progressively more common and adds itself to the other to initiate new depths and ranges of knowledge. In either case there is always an element of self-existent truth and a sense of absoluteness of origination suggestive of its proceeding from the spirit's knowledge by identity. It is the disclosing of a knowledge that is secret but already existent in the being: it is not an acquisition, but something that was always there and revealable. It sees the truth from

within and illumines with that inner vision the outsides and it harmonises, too, readily—provided we keep intuitively awake—with whatever fresh truth has yet to arrive. These characteristics become more pronounced and intense in the higher, the proper supramental ranges: in the intuitive mind they may not be always recognisable in their purity and completeness, because of the mixture of mental stuff and its accretion, but in the divine reason and greater supramental action they become free and absolute.

The suggestive intuition acting on the mental level suggests a direct and illuminating inner idea of the truth, an idea that is its true image and index, not as yet the entirely present and whole sight, but rather of the nature of a bright memory of some truth, a recognition of a secret of the self's knowledge. It is a representation, but a living representation, not an ideative symbol, a reflection, but a reflection that is lit up with something of the truth's real substance. The intuitive discrimination is a secondary action setting this idea of the truth in its right place and its relation to other ideas. And so long as there is the habit of mental interference and accretion it works also to separate the mental from the higher seeing, to discrete the inferior mental stuff that embarrasses with its alloy the pure truth substance, and labours to unravel the mingled skein of ignorance and knowledge, falsehood and error. As the intuition is of the nature of a memory, a luminous remembering of the self-existent truth, so the inspiration is of the nature of truth hearing: it is an immediate reception of the very voice of the truth, it readily brings the word that perfectly embodies it and it carries something more than the light of its idea; there is seized some stream of its inner reality and vivid arriving movement of its substance. The revelation is of the nature of direct sight, *pratyakṣa-dṛṣṭi*, and makes evident to a present vision the thing in itself of which the idea is the representation. It brings out the very spirit and being and reality of the truth and makes it part of the consciousness and the experience.

In the actual process of the development of the supramental nature, supposing it to follow a regular gradation, it may be seen

that the two lower powers come out first, though not necessarily void of all action of the two higher powers, and as they increase and become a normal action, they make a sort of lower intuitive gnosis. The combination of the two together is necessary for its completeness. If the intuitive discrimination works by itself, it creates a sort of critical illumination that acts on the ideas and perceptions of the intellect and turns them on themselves in such a way that the mind can separate their truth from their error. It creates in the end in place of the intellectual judgment a luminous intuitive judgment, a sort of critical gnosis: but it is likely to be deficient in fresh illuminative knowledge or to create only so much extension of truth as is the natural consequence of the separation of error. On the other hand, if the suggestive intuition works by itself without this discrimination, there is indeed a constant accession of new truths and new lights, but they are easily surrounded and embarrassed by the mental accretions and their connections and relation or harmonious development out of each other are clouded and broken by the interference. A normalised power of active intuitive perception is created, but not any complete and coherent mind of intuitive gnosis. The two together supply the deficiencies of each other's single action and build up a mind of intuitive perception and discrimination which can do the work and more than the work of the stumbling mental intelligence and do it with the greater light, surety and power of a more direct and unfaltering ideation.

The two higher powers in the same way make a higher intuitive gnosis. Acting as separate powers in the mentality they too are not in themselves sufficient without the companion activities. The revelation may indeed present the reality, the identities of the thing in itself and add something of great power to the experience of the conscious being, but it may lack the embodying word, the out-bringing idea, the connected pursuit of its relations and consequences and may remain a possession in the self but not a thing communicated to and through the members. There may be the presence of the truth but not its full manifestation. The inspiration may give the word of the truth and the stir of its dynamis and movement, but this is not a complete thing and sure

in its effect without the full revelation of all that it bears in itself and luminously indicates and the ordering of it in its relations. The inspired intuitive mind is a mind of lightnings lighting up many things that were dark, but the light needs to be canalised and fixed into a stream of steady lustres that will be a constant power for lucidly ordered knowledge. The higher gnosis by itself in its two sole powers would be a mind of spiritual splendours living too much in its own separate domain, producing perhaps invisibly its effect on the outside world, but lacking the link of a more close and ordinary communication with its more normal movements that is provided by the lower ideative action. It is the united or else the fused and unified action of the four powers that makes the complete and fully armed and equipped intuitive gnosis.

A regular development would at first, allowing for some simultaneous manifestation of the four powers, yet create on a sufficiently extensive scale the lower suggestive and critical intuitive mind and then develop above it the inspired and the revelatory intuitive mentality. Next it would take up the two lower powers into the power and field of the inspiration and make all act as one harmony doing simultaneously the united — or, at a higher intensity, indistinguishably as one light the unified — action of the three. And last it would execute a similar movement of taking up into and fusion with the revelatory power of the intuitive gnosis. As a matter of fact in the human mind the clear process of the development is likely always to be more or less disturbed, confused and rendered irregular in its course, subjected to relapses, incomplete advances, returns upon things unaccomplished or imperfectly accomplished owing to the constant mixture and intervention of the existing movements of the mental half-knowledge and the obstruction of the stuff of the mental ignorance. In the end however a time can come when the process, so far as it is possible in the mind itself, is complete and a clear formation of a modified supramental light is possible composed of all these powers, the highest leading or absorbing into its own body the others. It is at this point, when the intuitive mind has been fully formed in the mental being and

is strong enough to dominate if not yet wholly to occupy the various mental activities, that a farther step becomes possible, the lifting of the centre and level of action above the mind and the predominance of the supramental reason.

The first character of this change is a complete reversal, a turning over, one might almost say, upside down of the whole activity. At present we live in the mind and mostly in the physical mind, but still not entirely involved like the animal in the physical, vital and sensational workings. On the contrary we have attained to a certain mental elevation from which we can look down on the action of the life, sense and body, turn the higher mental light on them, reflect, judge, use our will to modify the action of the inferior nature. On the other hand we look up too from that elevation more or less consciously to something above and receive from it either directly or through our subconscious or subliminal being some secret superconscious impulsion of our thought and will and other activities. The process of this communication is veiled and obscure and men are not ordinarily aware of it except in certain highly developed natures: but when we advance in self-knowledge, we find that all our thought and will originate from above though formed in the mind and there first overtly active. If we release the knots of the physical mind which binds us to the brain instrument and identifies us with the bodily consciousness and can move in the pure mentality, this becomes constantly clear to the perception.

The development of the intuitive mentality makes this communication direct, no longer subconscious and obscure; but we are still in the mind and the mind still looks upward and receives the supramental communication and passes it on to the other members. In doing so it no longer wholly creates its own form for the thought and will that come down to it, but still it modifies and qualifies and limits them and imposes something of its own method. It is still the receiver and the transmitter of the thought and will, — though not formative of them now except by a subtle influence, because it provides them or at least surrounds them with a mental stuff or a mental setting and framework and atmosphere. When however the supramental reason develops,

the Purusha rises above the mental elevation and now looks down on the whole action of mind, life, sense, body from quite another light and atmosphere, sees and knows it with quite a different vision and, because he is no longer involved in the mind, with a free and true knowledge. Man is at present only partly liberated from the animal involution,—for his mind is partially lifted above, partially immerged and controlled by the life, sense and body,—and he is not at all liberated from the mental forms and limits. But after he rises to the supramental elevation, he is delivered from the nether control and governor of his whole nature—essentially and initially only at first and in his highest consciousness, for the rest remains still to be transformed,—but when or in proportion as that is done, he becomes a free being and master of his mind, sense, life and body.

The second character of the change is that the formation of the thought and will can take place now wholly on the supramental level and therefore there is initiated an entirely luminous and effective will and knowledge. The light and the power are not indeed complete at the beginning because the supramental reason is only an elementary formulation of the supermind and because the mind and other members have yet to be changed into the mould of the supramental nature. The mind, it is true, no longer acts as the apparent originator, formulator or judge of the thought and will or anything else, but it still acts as the transmitting channel and therefore in that degree as a recipient and to a certain extent an obstructor and qualifier in transmission of the power and light that comes from above. There is a disparateness between the supramental consciousness in which the Purusha now stands, thinks and wills and the mental, vital and physical consciousness through which he has to effectuate its light and knowledge. He lives and sees with an ideal consciousness, but he has yet in his lower self to make it entirely practical and effective. Otherwise he can only act with a greater or less spiritual effectiveness through an internal communication with others on the spiritual level and on the higher mental level that is most easily affected by it, but the effect is diminished and is retarded by the inferiority or lack of

the integral play of the being. This can only be remedied by the supermind taking hold of and supramentalising the mental, the vital and the physical consciousness,—transforming them, that is to say, into moulds of the supramental nature. This is much more easily done if there has been that Yogic preparation of the instruments of the lower nature of which I have already spoken; otherwise there is much difficulty in getting rid of the discord or disparateness between the ideal supramentality and the mental transmitting instruments, the mind channel, the heart, the sense, the nervous and the physical being. The supramental reason can do the first and a fairly ample, though not the entire work of this transformation.

The supramental reason is of the nature of a spiritual, direct, self-luminous, self-acting will and intelligence, not mental, *mānasa buddhi*, but supramental, *vijñāna buddhi*. It acts by the same four powers as the intuitive mind, but these powers are here active in an initial fullness of body not modified by the mental stuff of the intelligence, not concerned mainly with an illuminating of the mind, but at work in their own proper manner and for their own native purpose. And of these four the discrimination here is hardly recognisable as a separate power, but is constantly inherent in the three others and is their own determination of the scope and relations of their knowledge. There are three elevations in this reason, one in which the action of what we may call a supramental intuition gives the form and the predominant character, one in which a rapid supramental inspiration and one in which a large supramental revelation leads and imparts the general character, and each of these raises us to a more concentrated substance and a higher light, sufficiency and scope of the truth will and the truth knowledge.

The work of the supramental reason covers and goes beyond all that is done by the mental reason, but it starts from the other end and has a corresponding operation. The essential truths of self and the spirit and the principle of things are not to the spiritual reason abstract ideas or subtle unsubstantial experiences to which it arrives by a sort of overleaping of limits, but a constant reality and the natural background of all its ideation

and experience. It does not like the mind arrive at, but discloses directly both the general and total and the particular truths of being and consciousness, of spiritual and other sensation and Ananda and of force and action,—reality and phenomenon and symbol, actuality and possibility and eventuality, that which is determined and that which determines, and all with a self-luminous evidence. It formulates and arranges the relations of thought and thought, of force and force, of action and action and of all these with each other and throws them into a convincing and luminous harmony. It includes the data of sense, but gives to them another meaning in the light of what is behind them, and treats them only as outermost indications: the inner truth is known to a greater sense which it already possesses. And it is not dependent on them alone even in their own field of objects or limited by their range. It has a spiritual sense and sensation of its own and it takes and relates to that the data too of a sixth sense, the inner mind sense. And it takes also the illuminations and the living symbols and images familiar to the psychic experience and relates these too to the truths of the self and spirit.

The spiritual reason takes also the emotions and psychic sensations, relates them to their spiritual equivalents and imparts to them the values of the higher consciousness and Ananda from which they derive and are its modifications in an inferior nature and it corrects their deformations. It takes similarly the movements of the vital being and consciousness and relates them to the movements and imparts to them the significances of the spiritual life of the self and its power of Tapas. It takes the physical consciousness, delivers it from its darkness and tamas of inertia and makes it a responsive recipient and a sensitive instrument of the supramental light and power and Ananda. It deals with life and action and knowledge like the mental will and reason, but not starting from matter, life and sense and their data and relating to them through the idea the truth of higher things, but it starts on the contrary from truth of self and spirit and relates to that through a direct spiritual experience assuming all other experience as its forms and instruments the things of mind and soul and life and sense and matter. It commands a far vaster

range than the ordinary embodied mind shut up in the prison of the physical senses and vaster too than the pure mentality, even when that is free in its own ranges and operates with the aid of the psychical mind and inner senses. And it has that power which the mental will and reason do not possess, because they are not truly self-determined and originally determinative of things, the power of transforming the whole being in all its parts into a harmonious instrument and manifestation of the spirit.

At the same time the spiritual reason acts mainly by the representative idea and will in the spirit, though it has a greater and more essential truth as its constant source and supporter and reference. It is, then, a power of light of the Ishwara, but not the very self-power of his immediate presence in the being; it is his *surya-sakti*, not his whole *ātma-sakti* or *parā svā prakṛti*, that works in the spiritual reason. The immediate self-power begins its direct operation in the greater supermind, and that takes up all that has hitherto been realised in body, life and mind and in the intuitive being and by the spiritual reason and shapes all that has been created, all that has been gathered, turned into stuff of experience and made part of the consciousness, personality and nature by the mental being, into a highest harmony with the high infinite and universal life of the spirit. The mind can have the touch of the infinite and the universal and can reflect and even lose itself in them, but the supermind alone can enable the individual to be completely one in action with the universal and transcendent spirit.

Here the one thing that is always and constantly present, that which one has grown to and in which one lives always, is infinite being and all that is seen, felt, known, existed in as only substance of the one being; it is infinite consciousness and all that is conscious and acts and moves is seen, felt, received, known, lived in as self-experience and energy of the one being; it is infinite Ananda and all that feels and is felt is seen and felt and known, received and lived in as forms of the one Ananda. Everything else is only manifestation and circumstance of this one truth of our existence. This is no longer merely the seeing or knowing, but the very condition of the self in all and all in the

self, God in all and all in God and all seen as God, and that condition is now not a thing offered to the reflecting spiritualised mind but held and lived by an integral, always present, always active realisation in the supramental nature. There is thought here and will and sensation and everything that belongs to our nature, but it is transfigured and elevated into a higher consciousness. All thought is here seen and experienced as a luminous body of substance, a luminous movement of force, a luminous wave of Ananda of the being; it is not an idea in the void air of mind, but experienced in the reality and as the light of a reality of the infinite being. The will and impulsions are similarly experienced as a real power and substance of the Sat, the Chit, the Ananda of the Ishwara. All the spiritualised sensation and emotion are experienced as pure moulds of the consciousness and Ananda. The physical being itself is experienced as a conscious form and the vital being as an outpouring of the power and possession of the life of the spirit.

The action of the supermind in the development is to manifest and organise this highest consciousness so as to exist and act no longer only in the infinite above with some limited or veiled or lower and deformed manifestations in the individual being and nature, but largely and totally in the individual as a conscious and self-knowing spiritual being and a living and acting power of the infinite and universal spirit. The character of this action, so far as it can be expressed, may be spoken of more fitly afterwards when we come to speak of the Brahmic consciousness and vision. In the succeeding chapters we shall only deal with so much of it as concerns the thought, will and psychic and other experience in the individual nature. At present all that is necessary to note is that here too there is in the field of the thought and the will a triple action. The spiritual reason is lifted and broadened into a greater representative action that formulates to us mainly the actualities of the existence of the self in and around us. There is then a higher interpretative action of the supramental knowledge, a greater scale less insistent on actualities, that opens out yet greater potentialities in time and space and beyond. And lastly there is a highest knowledge by

identity that is a gate of entrance to the essential self-awareness and the omniscience and omnipotence of the Ishwara.

It must not however be supposed that these superimposed stages are shut off in experience from each other. I have placed them in what might be a regular order of ascending development for the better possibility of understanding in an intellectual statement. But the infinite even in the normal mind breaks through its own veils and across its own dividing lines of descent and ascension and gives often intimations of itself in one manner or another. And while we are still in the intuitive mentality, the things above open and come to us in irregular visitations, then form as we grow a more frequent and regularised action above it. These anticipations are still more large and frequent the moment we enter on the supramental level. The universal and infinite consciousness can always seize on and surround the mind and it is when it does so with a certain continuity, frequency or persistence that the mind can most easily transform itself into the intuitive mentality and that again into the supramental movement. Only as we rise we grow more intimately and integrally into the infinite consciousness and it becomes more fully our own self and nature. And also, on the other, the lower side of existence which it might seem would then be not only beneath but quite alien to us, even when we live in the supramental being and even when the whole nature has been formed into its mould, that need not cut us off from the knowledge and feeling of others who live in the ordinary nature. The lower or more limited may have a difficulty in understanding and feeling the higher, but the higher and less limited can always, if it will, understand and identify itself with the lower nature. The supreme Ishwara too is not aloof from us; he knows, lives in, identifies himself with all and yet is not subjugated by the reactions or limited in his knowledge, power and Ananda by the limitations of the mind and life and physical being in the universe.

Chapter XXII

The Supramental Thought and Knowledge

THE TRANSITION from mind to supermind is not only the substitution of a greater instrument of thought and knowledge, but a change and conversion of the whole consciousness. There is evolved not only a supramental thought, but a supramental will, sense, feeling, a supramental substitute for all the activities that are now accomplished by the mind. All these higher activities are first manifested in the mind itself as descents, irruptions, messages or revelations of a superior power. Mostly they are mixed up with the more ordinary action of the mind and not easily distinguishable from them in our first inexperience except by their superior light and force and joy, the more so as the mind greatened or excited by their frequent coming quickens its own action and imitates the external characteristics of the supramental activity: its own operation is made more swift, luminous, strong and positive and it arrives even at a kind of imitative and often false intuition that strives to be but is not really the luminous, direct and self-existent truth. The next step is the formation of a luminous mind of intuitive experience, thought, will, feeling, sense from which the intermixture of the lesser mind and the imitative intuition are progressively eliminated: this is a process of purification, *suddhi*, necessary to the new formation and perfection, *siddhi*. At the same time there is the disclosure above the mind of the source of the intuitive action and a more and more organised functioning of a true supramental consciousness acting not in the mind but on its own higher plane. This draws up into itself in the end the intuitive mentality it has created as its representative and assumes the charge of the whole activity of the consciousness. The process is progressive and for a long time chequered by admixture and

the necessity of a return upon the lower movements in order to correct and transform them. The higher and the lower power act sometimes alternately,—the consciousness descending back from the heights it had attained to its former level but always with some change,—but sometimes together and with a sort of mutual reference. The mind eventually becomes wholly intuitivised and exists only as a passive channel for the supramental action; but this condition too is not ideal and presents, besides, still a certain obstacle, because the higher action has still to pass through a retarding and diminishing conscious substance,—that of the physical consciousness. The final stage of the change will come when the supermind occupies and supramentalises the whole being and turns even the vital and physical sheaths into moulds of itself, responsive, subtle and instinct with its powers. Man then becomes wholly the superman. This is at least the natural and integral process.

It would be to go altogether outside present limits to attempt anything like an adequate presentation of the whole character of the supermind; and it would not be possible to give a complete presentation, since the supermind carries in it the unity, but also the largeness and multiplicities of the infinite. All that need now be done is to present some salient characters from the point of view of the actual process of the conversion in the Yoga, the relation to the action of mind and the principle of some of the phenomena of the change. This is the fundamental relation that all the action of the mind is a derivation from the secret supermind, although we do not know this until we come to know our higher self, and draws from that source all it has of truth and value. All our thoughts, willings, feelings, sense representations have in them or at their roots an element of truth, which originates and sustains their existence, however in the actuality they may be perverted or false, and behind them a greater ungrasped truth, which if they could grasp it, would make them soon unified, harmonious and at least relatively complete. Actually, however, such truth as they have is diminished in scope, degraded into a lower movement, divided and falsified by fragmentation, afflicted with incompleteness, marred by

perversion. Mental knowledge is not an integral but always a partial knowledge. It adds constantly detail to detail, but has a difficulty in relating them aright; its wholes too are not real but incomplete wholes which it tends to substitute for the more real and integral knowledge. And even if it arrived at a kind of integral knowledge, it would still be by a sort of putting together, a mental and intellectual arrangement, an artificial unity and not an essential and real oneness. If that were all, the mind might conceivably arrive at some kind of half reflection half translation of an integral knowledge, but the radical malady would still be that it would not be the real thing, but only at best an intellectual representation. That the mental truth must always be, an intellectual, emotional and sensational representation, not the direct truth, not truth itself in its body and essence.

The supermind can do all that the mind does, present and combine details and what might be called aspects or subordinate wholes, but it does it in a different way and on another basis. It does not like the mind bring in the element of deviation, false extension and imposed error, but even when it gives a partial knowledge, gives it in a firm and exact light, and always there is behind implied or opened to the consciousness the essential truth on which the details and subordinate wholes or aspects depend. The supermind has also a power of representation, but its representations are not of the intellectual kind, they are filled with the body and substance of light of the truth in its essence, they are its vehicles and not substituted figures. There is such an infinite power of representation of the supermind and that is the divine power of which the mental action is a sort of fallen representative. This representative supermind has a lower action in what I have called the supramental reason, nearest to the mental and into which the mental can most easily be taken up, and a higher action in the integral supermind that sees all things in the unity and infinity of the divine consciousness and self-existence. But on whatever level, it is a different thing from the corresponding mental action, direct, luminous, secure. The whole inferiority of the mind comes from its being the action of the soul after it has fallen into the nescience and the ignorance

and is trying to get back to self-knowledge but doing it still on the basis of the nescience and the ignorance. The mind is the ignorance attempting to know or it is the ignorance receiving a derivative knowledge: it is the action of Avidya. The supermind is always the disclosure of an inherent and self-existent knowledge; it is the action of Vidya.

A second difference that we experience is a greater and a spontaneous harmony and unity. All consciousness is one, but in action it takes on many movements and each of these fundamental movements has many forms and processes. The forms and processes of the mind consciousness are marked by a disturbing and perplexing division and separateness of the mental energies and movements in which the original unity of the conscious mind does not at all or only distractedly appears. Constantly we find in our mentality a conflict or else a confusion and want of combination between different thoughts or a patched up combination and the same phenomenon applies to the various movements of our will and desire and to our emotions and feelings. Again our thought and our will and our feeling are not in a state of natural harmony and unison with each other, but act in their separate power even when they have to act together and are frequently in conflict or to some degree at variance. There is too an unequal development of one at the expense of another. The mind is a thing of discords in which some kind of practical arrangement rather than a satisfying concord is established for the purposes of life. The reason tries to arrive at a better arrangement, aims at a better control, a rational or an ideal harmony, and in this attempt it is a delegate or substitute of the supermind and is trying to do what only the supermind can do in its own right: but actually it is not able wholly to control the rest of the being and there is usually a considerable difference between the rational or ideal harmony we create in our thoughts and the movement of the life. Even at the best the arrangement made by the reason has always in it something of artificiality and imposition, for in the end there are only two spontaneous harmonic movements, that of the life, inconscient or largely subconscious, the harmony that we find in the animal creation and in lower Nature, and that of

the spirit. The human condition is a stage of transition, effort and imperfection between the one and the other, between the natural and the ideal or spiritual life and it is full of uncertain seeking and disorder. It is not that the mental being cannot find or rather construct some kind of relative harmony of its own, but that it cannot render it stable because it is under the urge of the spirit. Man is obliged by a Power within him to be the labourer of a more or less conscious self-evolution that shall lead him to self-mastery and self-knowledge.

The supermind in its action is on the contrary a thing of unity and harmony and inherent order. At first when the pressure from above falls on the mentality, this is not realised and even a contrary phenomenon may for a time appear. That is due to several causes. First, there may be a disturbance, even a derangement created by impact of the greater hardly measurable power on an inferior consciousness which is not capable of responding to it organically or even perhaps of bearing the pressure. The very fact of the simultaneous and yet uncoordinated activity of two quite different forces, especially if the mind insists on its own way, if it tries obstinately or violently to profit by the supermind instead of giving itself up to it and its purpose, if it is not sufficiently passive and obedient to the higher guidance, may lead to a great excitation of power but also an increased disorder. It is for this reason that a previous preparation and long purification, the more complete the better, and a tranquillising and ordinarily a passivity of the mind calmly and strongly open to the spirit are necessities of the Yoga.

Again the mind, accustomed to act in limits, may try to supramentalise itself on the line of any one of its energies. It may develop a considerable power of intuitive half-supramentalised thought and knowledge, but the will may remain untransformed and out of harmony with this partial half-supramental development of the thinking mind, and the rest of the being too, emotional and nervous, may continue to be equally or more unregenerate. Or there may be a very great development of intuitive or strongly inspired will, but no corresponding uplifting of the thought mind or the emotional and psychic being, or only

at most so much as is specially needed in order not wholly to obstruct the will action. The emotional or psychic mind may try to intuitivise and supramentalise itself and to a great extent succeed, and yet the thinking mind remain ordinary, poor in stuff and obscure in its light. There may be a development of intuitivity in the ethical or aesthetic being, but the rest may remain very much as it was. This is the reason of the frequent disorder or one-sidedness which we mark in the man of genius, poet, artist, thinker, saint or mystic. A partially intuitivised mentality may present an appearance of much less harmony and order outside its special activity than the largely developed intellectual mind. An integral development is needed, a wholesale conversion of the mind; otherwise the action is that of the mind using the supramental influx for its own profit and in its own mould, and that is allowed for the immediate purpose of the Divine in the being and may even be considered as a stage sufficient for the individual in this one life: but it is a state of imperfection and not the complete and successful evolution of the being. If however there is an integral development of the intuitive mind, it will be found that a great harmony has begun to lay its own foundations. This harmony will be other than that created by the intellectual mind and indeed may not be easily perceptible or, if it is felt, yet not intelligible to the logical man, because not arrived at or analysable by his mental process. It will be a harmony of the spontaneous expression of the spirit.

As soon as we arise above mind to the supermind, this initial harmony will be replaced by a greater and a more integral unity. The thoughts of the supramental reason meet together and understand each other and fall into a natural arrangement even when they have started from quite opposite quarters. The movements of will that are in conflict in the mind, come in the supermind to their right place and relation to each other. The supramental feelings also discover their own affinities and fall into a natural agreement and harmony. At a higher stage this harmony intensifies towards unity. The knowledge, will, feeling and all else become a single movement. This unity reaches its greatest completeness in the highest supermind. The harmony, the unity

are inevitable because the base in the supermind is knowledge and characteristically self-knowledge, the knowledge of the self in all its aspects. The supramental will is the dynamic expression of this self-knowledge, the supramental feeling the expression of the luminous joy of the self and all else in supermind a part of this one movement. At its highest range it becomes something greater than what we call knowledge; there it is the essential and integral self-awareness of the Divine in us, his being, consciousness, Tapas, Ananda, and all is the harmonious, unified, luminous movement of that one existence.

This supramental knowledge is not primarily or essentially a thought knowledge. The intellect does not consider that it knows a thing until it has reduced its awareness of it to the terms of thought, not, that is to say, until it has put it into a system of representative mental concepts, and this kind of knowledge gets its most decisive completeness when it can be put into clear, precise and defining speech. It is true that the mind gets its knowledge primarily by various kinds of impression beginning from the vital and the sense impressions and rising to the intuitive, but these are taken by the developed intelligence only as data and seem to it uncertain and vague in themselves until they have been forced to yield up all their content to the thought and have taken their place in some intellectual relation or in an ordered thought sequence. It is true again that there is a thought and a speech which are rather suggestive than definitive and have in their own way a greater potency and richness of content, and this kind already verges on the intuitive: but still there is a demand in the intellect to bring out in clear sequence and relation the exact intellectual content of these suggestions and until that is done it does not feel satisfied that its knowledge is complete. The thought labouring in the logical intellect is that which normally seems best to organise the mental action and gives to the mind a sense of sure definiteness, security and completeness in its knowledge and its use of knowledge. Nothing of this is at all true of the supramental knowledge.

The supermind knows most completely and securely not by thought but by identity, by a pure awareness of the self-truth

of things in the self and by the self, *ātmani ātmānam ātmanā*. I get the supramental knowledge best by becoming one with the truth, one with the object of knowledge; the supramental satisfaction and integral light is most there when there is no further division between the knower, knowledge and the known, *jñātā, jñānam, jñeyam*. I see the thing known not as an object outside myself, but as myself or a part of my universal self contained in my most direct consciousness. This leads to the highest and completest knowledge; thought and speech being representations and not this direct possession in the consciousness are to the supermind a lesser form and, if not filled with the spiritual awareness, thought becomes in fact a diminution of knowledge. For it would be, supposing it to be a supramental thought, only a partial manifestation of a greater knowledge existing in the self but not at the time present to the immediately active consciousness. In the highest ranges of the infinite there need be no thought at all because all would be experienced spiritually, in continuity, in eternal possession and with an absolute directness and completeness. Thought is only one means of partially manifesting and presenting what is hidden in this greater self-existent knowledge. This supreme kind of knowing will not indeed be possible to us in its full extent and degree until we can rise through many grades of the supermind to that infinite. But still as the supramental power emerges and enlarges its action, something of this highest way of knowledge appears and grows and even the members of the mental being, as they are intuitivised and supramentalised, develop more and more a corresponding action upon their own level. There is an increasing power of a luminous vital, psychic, emotional, dynamic and other identification with all the things and beings that are the objects of our consciousness and these transcendings of the separative consciousness bring with them many forms and means of a direct knowledge.

The supramental knowledge or experience by identity carries in it as a result or as a secondary part of itself a supramental vision that needs the support of no image, can concretise what is to the mind abstract and has the character of sight though its

object may be the invisible truth of that which has form or the truth of the formless. This vision can come before there is any identity, as a sort of previous emanation of light from it, or may act detached from it as a separate power. The truth or the thing known is then not altogether or not yet one with myself, but an object of my knowledge: but still it is an object subjectively seen in the self or at least, even if it is still farther separated and objectivised to the knower, by the self, not through any intermediate process, but by a direct inner seizing or a penetrating and enveloping luminous contact of the spiritual consciousness with its object. It is this luminous seizing and contact that is the spiritual vision, *dr̥sti*, — “*paśyati*”, says the Upanishad continually of the spiritual knowledge, “he sees”; and of the Self conceiving the idea of creation, where we should expect “he thought”, it says instead “he saw”. It is to the spirit what the eyes are to the physical mind and one has the sense of having passed through a subtly analogous process. As the physical sight can present to us the actual body of things of which the thought had only possessed an indication or mental description and they become to us at once real and evident, *pratyakṣa*, so the spiritual sight surpasses the indications or representations of thought and can make the self and truth of all things present to us and directly evident, *pratyakṣa*.

The sense can only give us the superficial image of things and it needs the aid of thought to fill and inform the image; but the spiritual sight is capable of presenting to us the thing in itself and all truth about it. The seer does not need the aid of thought in its process as a means of knowledge, but only as a means of representation and expression,—thought is to him a lesser power and used for a secondary purpose. If a further extension of knowledge is required, he can come at it by new seeing without the slower thought processes that are the staff of support of the mental search and its feeling out for truth,—even as we scrutinise with the eye to find what escaped our first observation. This experience and knowledge by spiritual vision is the second in directness and greatness of the supramental powers. It is something much more near, profound and comprehensive

than mental vision, because it derives direct from the knowledge by identity, and it has this virtue that we can proceed at once from the vision to the identity, as from the identity to the vision. Thus when the spiritual vision has seen God, Self or Brahman, the soul can next enter into and become one with the Self, God or Brahman.

This can only be done integrally on or above the supramental level, but at the same time the spiritual vision can take on mental forms of itself that can help towards this identification each in its own way. A mental intuitive vision or a spiritualised mental sight, a psychic vision, an emotional vision of the heart, a vision in the sense mind are parts of the Yogic experience. If these seeings are purely mental, then they may but need not be true, for the mind is capable of both truth and error, both of a true and of a false representation. But as the mind becomes intuitivised and supramentalised, these powers are purified and corrected by the more luminous action of the supermind and become themselves forms of a supramental and a true seeing. The supramental vision, it may be noted, brings with it a supplementary and completing experience that might be called a spiritual hearing and touch of the truth,—of its essence and through that of its significance,—that is to say, there is a seizing of its movement, vibration, rhythm and a seizing of its close presence and contact and substance. All these powers prepare us to become one with that which has thus grown near to us through knowledge.

The supramental thought is a form of the knowledge by identity and a development, in the idea, of the truth presented to the supramental vision. The identity and the vision give the truth in its essence, its body and its parts in a single view: the thought translates this direct consciousness and immediate power of the truth into idea-knowledge and will. It adds or need add otherwise nothing new, but reproduces, articulates, moves round the body of the knowledge. Where, however, the identity and the vision are still incomplete, the supramental thought has a larger office and reveals, interprets or recalls as it were to the soul's memory what they are not yet ready to give. And where these

greater states and powers are still veiled, the thought comes in front and prepares and to a certain extent effects a partial rending or helps actively in the removal of the veil. Therefore in the development out of the mental ignorance into the supramental knowledge this illumined thought comes to us often though not always first, to open the way to the vision or else to give first supports to the growing consciousness of identity and its greater knowledge. This thought is also an effective means of communication and expression and helps to an impression or fixation of the truth whether on one's own lower mind and being or on that of others. The supramental thought differs from the intellectual not only because it is the direct truth idea and not a representation of truth to the ignorance,—it is the truth consciousness of the spirit always presenting to itself its own right forms, the *satyam* and *rtam* of the Veda,—but because of its strong reality, body of light and substance.

The intellectual thought refines and sublimates to a rarefied abstractness; the supramental thought as it rises in its height increases to a greater spiritual concreteness. The thought of the intellect presents itself to us as an abstraction from something seized by the mind sense and is as if supported in a void and subtle air of mind by an intangible force of the intelligence. It has to resort to a use of the mind's power of image if it wishes to make itself more concretely felt and seen by the soul sense and soul vision. The supramental thought on the contrary presents always the idea as a luminous substance of being, luminous stuff of consciousness taking significative thought form and it therefore creates no such sense of a gulf between the idea and the real as we are liable to feel in the mind, but is itself a reality, it is real-idea and the body of a reality. It has as a result, associated with it when it acts according to its own nature, a phenomenon of spiritual light other than the intellectual clarity, a great realising force and a luminous ecstasy. It is an intensely sensible vibration of being, consciousness and Ananda.

The supramental thought, as has already been indicated, has three elevations of its intensity, one of direct thought vision, another of interpretative vision pointing to and preparing the

greater revelatory idea-sight, a third of representative vision recalling as it were to the spirit's knowledge the truth that is called out more directly by the higher powers. In the mind these things take the form of the three ordinary powers of the intuitive mentality,—the suggestive and discriminating intuition, the inspiration and the thought that is of the nature of revelation. Above they correspond to three elevations of the supramental being and consciousness and, as we ascend, the lower first calls down into itself and is then taken up into the higher, so that on each level all the three elevations are reproduced, but always there predominates in the thought essence the character that belongs to that level's proper form of consciousness and spiritual substance. It is necessary to bear this in mind; for otherwise the mentality, looking up to the ranges of the supermind as they reveal themselves, may think it has got the vision of the highest heights when it is only the highest range of the lower ascent that is being presented to its experience. At each height, *sānoḥ sānum āruhat*, the powers of the supermind increase in intensity, range and completeness.

There is also a speech, a supramental word, in which the higher knowledge, vision or thought can clothe itself within us for expression. At first this may come down as a word, a message or an inspiration that descends to us from above or it may even seem a voice of the Self or of the Ishwara, *vāṇī, ādeśa*. Afterwards it loses that separate character and becomes the normal form of the thought when it expresses itself in the form of an inward speech. The thought may express itself without the aid of any suggestive or developing word and only—but still quite completely, explicitly and with its full contents—in a luminous substance of supramental perception. It may aid itself when it is not so explicit by a suggestive inward speech that attends it to bring out its whole significance. Or the thought may come not as silent perception but as speech self-born out of the truth and complete in its own right and carrying in itself its own vision and knowledge. Then it is the word revelatory, inspired or intuitive or of a yet greater kind capable of bearing the infinite intention or suggestion of the higher supermind and spirit. It may frame

itself in the language now employed to express the ideas and perceptions and impulses of the intellect and the sense mind, but it uses it in a different way and with an intense bringing out of the intuitive or revelatory significances of which speech is capable. The supramental word manifests inwardly with a light, a power, a rhythm of thought and a rhythm of inner sound that make it the natural and living body of the supramental thought and vision and it pours into the language, even though the same as that of mental speech, another than the limited intellectual, emotional or sensational significance. It is formed and heard in the intuitive mind or supermind and need not at first except in certain highly gifted souls come out easily into speech and writing, but that too can be freely done when the physical consciousness and its organs have been made ready, and this is a part of the needed fullness and power of the integral perfection.

The range of knowledge covered by the supramental thought, experience and vision will be commensurate with all that is open to the human consciousness, not only on the earthly but on all planes. It will however act increasingly in an inverse sense to that of the mental thinking and experience. The centre of mental thinking is the ego, the person of the individual thinker. The supramental man on the contrary will think more with the universal mind or even may rise above it, and his individuality will rather be a vessel of radiation and communication to which the universal thought and knowledge of the Spirit will converge than a centre. The mental man thinks and acts in a radius determined by the smallness or largeness of his mentality and of its experience. The range of the supramental man will be all the earth and all that lies behind it on other planes of existence. And finally the mental man thinks and sees on the level of the present life, though it may be with an upward aspiration, and his view is obstructed on every side. His main basis of knowledge and action is the present with a glimpse into the past and ill-grasped influence from its pressure and a blind look towards the future. He bases himself on the actualities of the earthly existence, first on the facts of the outward world,—

to which he is ordinarily in the habit of relating nine tenths if not the whole of his inner thinking and experience,—then on the changing actualities of the more superficial part of his inner being. As he increases in mind, he goes more freely beyond these to potentialities which arise out of them and pass beyond them; his mind deals with a larger field of possibilities: but these for the most part get to him a full reality only in proportion as they are related to the actual and can be made actual here, now or hereafter. The essence of things he tends to see, if at all, only as a result of his actualities, in a relation to and dependence on them, and therefore he sees them constantly in a false light or in a limited measure. In all these respects the supramental man must proceed from the opposite principle of truth vision.

The supramental being sees things from above in large spaces and at the highest from the spaces of the infinite. His view is not limited to the standpoint of the present but can see in the continuities of time or from above time in the indivisibilities of the Spirit. He sees truth in its proper order first in the essence, secondly in the potentialities that derive from it and only last in the actualities. The essential truths are to his sight self-existent, self-seen, not dependent for their proof on this or that actuality; the potential truths are truths of the power of being in itself and in things, truths of the infinity of force and real apart from their past or present realisation in this or that actuality or the habitual surface forms that we take for the whole of Nature; the actualities are only a selection from the potential truths he sees, dependent on them, limited and mutable. The tyranny of the present, of the actual, of the immediate range of facts, of the immediate urge and demand of action has no power over his thought and his will and he is therefore able to have a larger will-power founded on a larger knowledge. He sees things not as one on the levels surrounded by the jungle of present facts and phenomena but from above, not from outside and judged by their surfaces, but from within and viewed from the truth of their centre; therefore he is nearer the divine omniscience. He wills and acts from a dominating height and with a longer movement in time and a larger range of potencies, therefore

he is nearer to the divine omnipotence. His being is not shut into the succession of the moments, but has the full power of the past and ranges seemingly through the future: not shut in the limiting ego and personal mind, but lives in the freedom of the universal, in God and in all beings and all things; not in the dull density of the physical mind, but in the light of the self and the infinity of the spirit. He sees soul and mind only as a power and a movement and matter only as a resultant form of the spirit. All his thought will be of a kind that proceeds from knowledge. He perceives and enacts the things of the phenomenal life in the light of the reality of the spiritual being and the power of the dynamic spiritual essence.

At first, at the beginning of the conversion into this greater status, the thought will continue to move for a shorter or a longer time to a greater or a less extent on the lines of the mind but with a greater light and increasing flights and spaces and movements of freedom and transcendence. Afterwards the freedom and transcendence will begin to predominate; the inversion of the thought view and the conversion of the thought method will take place in different movements of the thought mind one after the other, subject to whatever difficulties and relapses, until it has gained on the whole and effected a complete transformation. Ordinarily the supramental knowledge will be organised first and with the most ease in the processes of pure thought and knowledge, *jñāna*, because here the human mind has already the upward tendency and is the most free. Next and with less ease it will be organised in the processes of applied thought and knowledge because there the mind of man is at once most active and most bound and wedded to its inferior methods. The last and most difficult conquest, because this is now to his mind a field of conjecture or a blank, will be the knowledge of the three times, *trikāladṛṣṭi*. In all these there will be the same character of a spirit seeing and willing directly above and around and not only in the body it possesses and there will be the same action of the supramental knowledge by identity, the supramental vision, the supramental thought and supramental word, separately or in a united movement.

This then will be the general character of the supramental thought and knowledge and these its main powers and action. It remains to consider its particular instrumentation, the change that the supermind will make in the different elements of the present human mentality and the special activities that give to the thought its constituents, motives and data.

Chapter XXIII

The Supramental Instruments — Thought-Process

THE SUPERMIND, the divine gnosis, is not something entirely alien to our present consciousness: it is a superior instrumentation of the spirit and all the operations of our normal consciousness are limited and inferior derivations from the supramental, because these are tentatives and constructions, that the true and perfect, the spontaneous and harmonious nature and action of the spirit. Accordingly when we rise from mind to supermind, the new power of consciousness does not reject, but uplifts, enlarges and transfigures the operations of our soul and mind and life. It exalts and gives to them an ever greater reality of their power and performance. It does not limit itself either to the transformation of the superficial powers and action of the mind and psychic parts and the life, but it manifests and transforms also those rarer powers and that larger force and knowledge proper to our subliminal self that appear now to us as things occult, curiously psychic, abnormal. These things become in the supramental nature not at all abnormal but perfectly natural and normal, not separately psychic but spiritual, not occult and strange, but a direct, simple, inherent and spontaneous action. The spirit is not limited like the waking material consciousness, and the supermind when it takes possession of the waking consciousness, dematerialises it, delivers it from its limits, converts the material and the psychic into the nature of the spiritual being.

The mental activity that can be most readily organised is, as has been already indicated, that of pure ideative knowledge. This is transformed on the higher level to the true *jñāna*, supramental thought, supramental vision, the supramental knowledge by identity. The essential action of this supramental knowledge has

been described in the preceding chapter. It is necessary however to see also how this knowledge works in outward application and how it deals with the data of existence. It differs from the action of the mind first in this respect that it works naturally with those operations that are to the mind the highest and the most difficult, acting in them or on them from above downward and not with the hampered straining upward of the mind or with its restriction to its own and the inferior levels. The higher operations are not dependent on the lower assistance, but rather the lower operations depend on the higher not only for their guidance but for their existence. The lower mental operations are therefore not only changed in character by the transformation, but are made entirely subordinate. And the higher mental operations too change their character, because, supramentalised, they begin to derive their light directly from the highest, the self-knowledge or infinite knowledge.

The normal thought-action of the mind may for this purpose be viewed as constituted of a triple motion. First and lowest and most necessary to the mental being in the body is the habitual thought mind that finds its ideas upon the data given by the senses and by the surface experiences of the nervous and emotional being and on the customary notions formed by the education and the outward life and environment. This habitual mind has two movements, one a kind of constant undercurrent of mechanically recurrent thought always repeating itself in the same round of physical, vital, emotional, practical and summarily intellectual notion and experience, the other more actively working upon all new experience that the mind is obliged to admit and reducing it to formulas of habitual thinking. The mentality of the average man is limited by this habitual mind and moves very imperfectly outside its circle.

A second grade of the thinking activity is the pragmatic idea mind that lifts itself above life and acts creatively as a mediator between the idea and the life-power, between truth of life and truth of the idea not yet manifested in life. It draws material from life and builds out of it and upon it creative ideas that become dynamic for farther life development: on the other side it receives

new thought and mental experience from the mental plane or more fundamentally from the idea power of the Infinite and immediately turns it into mental idea force and a power for actual being and living. The whole turn of this pragmatic idea mind is towards action and experience, inward as well as outward, the inward casting itself outward for the sake of a completer satisfaction of reality, the outward taken into the inward and returning upon it assimilated and changed for fresh formations. The thought is only or mainly interesting to the soul on this mental level as a means for a large range of action and experience.

A third gradation of thinking opens in us the pure ideative mind which lives disinterestedly in truth of the idea apart from any necessary dependence on its value for action and experience. It views the data of the senses and the superficial inner experience, but only to find the idea, the truth to which they bear witness and to reduce them into terms of knowledge. It observes the creative action of mind in life in the same way and for the same purpose. Its preoccupation is with knowledge, its whole object is to have the delight of ideation, the search for truth, the effort to know itself and the world and all that may lie behind its own action and the world action. This ideative mind is the highest reach of the intellect acting for itself, characteristically, in its own power and for its own purpose.

It is difficult for the human mind to combine rightly and harmonise these three movements of the intelligence. The ordinary man lives mainly in the habitual, has a comparatively feeble action of the creative and pragmatic and experiences a great difficulty in using at all or entering into the movement of the pure ideative mentality. The creative pragmatic mind is commonly too much occupied with its own motion to move freely and disinterestedly in the atmosphere of pure ideative order and on the other hand has often an insufficient grasp on the actualities imposed by the habitual mentality and the obstacles it imposes as also on other movements of pragmatic thought and action than that which it is itself interested in building. The pure ideative mentality tends to construct abstract and arbitrary systems of truth, intellectual sections and ideative edifices, and

either misses the pragmatic movement necessary to life and lives only or mainly in ideas, or cannot act with sufficient power and directness in the life field and is in danger of being divorced from or weak in the world of the practical and habitual mentality. An accommodation of some kind is made, but the tyranny of the predominant tendency interferes with the wholeness and unity of the thinking being. Mind fails to be assured master even of its own totality, because the secret of that totality lies beyond it in the free unity of the self, free and therefore capable of an infinite multiplicity and diversity, and in the supramental power that can alone bring out in a natural perfection the organic multiple movement of the self's unity.

The supermind in its completeness reverses the whole order of the mind's thinking. It lives not in the phenomenal, but in the essential, in the self, and sees all as being of the self and its power and form and movement, and all the thought and the process of the thought in the supermind must also be of that character. All its fundamental ideation is a rendering of the spiritual knowledge that acts by identity with all being and of the supramental vision. It moves therefore primarily among the eternal, the essential and the universal truths of self and being and consciousness and infinite power and delight of being (not excluding all that seems to our present consciousness non-being), and all its particular thinking originates from and depends upon the power of these eternal verities; but in the second place it is at home too with infinite aspects and applications, sequences and harmonies of the truths of being of the Eternal. It lives therefore at its heights in all that which the action of the pure ideative mind is an effort to reach and discover, and even on its lower ranges these things are to its luminous receptivity present, near or easily grasped and available.

But while the highest truths or the pure ideas are to the ideative mind abstractions, because mind lives partly in the phenomenal and partly in intellectual constructions and has to use the method of abstraction to arrive at the higher realities, the supermind lives in the spirit and therefore in the very substance of what these ideas and truths represent or rather fundamentally

are and truly realises them, not only thinks but in the act of thinking feels and identifies itself with their substance, and to it they are among the most substantial things that can be. Truths of consciousness and of essential being are to the supermind the very stuff of reality, more intimately and, as one might almost say, densely real than outward movement and form of being, although these too are to it movement and form of the reality and not, as they are to a certain action of the spiritualised mind, an illusion. The idea too is to it real-idea, stuff of the reality of conscious being, full of power for the substantial rendering of the truth and therefore for creation.

And again, while the pure ideative mind tends to build up arbitrary systems which are mental and partial constructions of the truth, the supermind is not bound by any representation or system, though it is perfectly able to represent and to arrange and construct in the living substance of the truth for the pragmatic purposes of the Infinite. The mind when it gets free from its exclusivenesses, systematising, attachment to its own constructions, is at a loss in the infiniteness of the infinite, feels it as a chaos, even if a luminous chaos, is unable any longer to formulate and therefore to think and act decisively because all, even the most diverse or contradictory things, point at some truth in this infinity and yet nothing it can think is entirely true and all its formulations break down under the test of new suggestions from the infinite. It begins to look on the world as a phantasmagory and thought as a chaos of scintillations out of the luminous indefinite. The mind assailed by the vastness and freedom of the supramental loses itself and finds no firm footing in the vastness. The supermind on the contrary can in its freedom construct harmonies of its thought and expression of being on the firm ground of reality while still holding its infinite liberty and rejoicing in its self of infinite vastness. All that it thinks, as all that it is and does and lives, belongs to the truth, the right, the vast, *satyam, rtam, brhat*.

The result of this wholeness is that there is no division or incompatibility between the free essential ideation of the supermind corresponding to the mind's pure ideation, free,

disinterested, illimitable, and its creative, pragmatic ideation purposeful and determinative. The infinity of being results naturally in a freedom of the harmonies of becoming. The supermind perceives always action as a manifestation and expression of the Self and creation as a revelation of the Infinite. All its creative and pragmatic thought is an instrument of the self's becoming, a power of illumination for that purpose, an intermediary between the eternal identity and infinite novelty and variety of illimitable Being and its self-expression in the worlds and life. It is this that the supermind constantly sees and embodies and while its ideative vision and thought interpret to it the illimitable unity and variety of the Infinite, which it is by a perpetual identity and in which it lives in all its power of being and becoming, there is constantly too a special creative thought, associated with an action of the infinite will, Tapas, power of being, which determines what it shall present, manifest or create out of the infinite in the course of Time, what it shall make — here and now or in any range of Time or world — of the perpetual becoming of the self in the universe.

The supermind is not limited by this pragmatic movement and does not take the partial motion or the entire stream of what it so becomes and creates in its thought and life for the whole truth of its self or of the Infinite. It does not live only in what it is and thinks and does selectively in the present or on one plane only of being; it does not feed its existence only on the present or the continual succession of moments to whose beats we give that name. It does not see itself only as a movement of Time or of the consciousness in time or as a creature of the perpetual becoming. It is aware of a timeless being beyond manifestation and of which all is a manifestation, it is aware of what is eternal even in Time, it is aware of many planes of existence; it is aware of past truth of manifestation and of much truth of being yet to be manifested in the future, but already existing in the self-view of the Eternal. It does not mistake the pragmatic reality which is the truth of action and mutation for the sole truth, but sees it as a constant realisation of that which is eternally real. It knows that creation whether on the plane of matter or of life

or of mind or of supermind is and can be only a self-determined presentation of eternal truth, a revelation of the Eternal, and it is intimately aware of the pre-existence of the truth of all things in the Eternal. This seeing conditions all its pragmatic thought and its resultant action. The maker in it is a selective power of the seer and thinker, the self-builder a power of the self-seer, the self-expressing soul a power of the infinite spirit. It creates freely, and all the more surely and decisively for that freedom, out of the infinite self and spirit.

It is therefore not prisoned in its special becoming or shut up in its round or its course of action. It is open, in a way and a degree to which the mind cannot attain, to the truth of other harmonies of creative becoming even while in its own it puts forth a decisive will and thought and action. When it is engaged in action that is of the nature of a struggle, the replacing of past or other thought and form and becoming by that which it is appointed to manifest, it knows the truth of what it displaces and fulfils even in displacing as well as the truth of what it substitutes. It is not bound by its manifesting, selecting, pragmatic conscious action, but it has at the same time all the joy of a specially creative thought and selective precision of action, the Ananda of the truth of the forms and movements equally of its own and of others' becoming. All its thought and will of life and action and creation, rich, manifold, focussing the truth of many planes, is liberated and illumined with the illimitable truth of the Eternal.

This creative or pragmatic movement of the supramental thought and consciousness brings with it an action which corresponds to that of the habitual or mechanical mentality but is yet of a very different character. The thing that is created is the self-determination of a harmony and all harmony proceeds upon seen or given lines and carries with it a constant pulsation and rhythmic recurrence. The supramental thought, organising the harmony of manifested existence of the supramental being, finds it on eternal principles, casts it upon the right lines of the truth that is to be manifested, keeps sounding as characteristic notes the recurrence of the constant elements in the experience

and the action which are necessary to constitute the harmony. There is an order of the thought, a cycle of the will, a stability in the motion. At the same time its freedom prevents it from being shut up by the recurrence into a groove of habitual action turning always mechanically round a limited stock of thinking. It does not like the habitual mind refer and assimilate all new thought and experience to a fixed customary mould of thinking, taking that for its basis. Its basis, that to which all is referred, is above, *upari budhne*, in the largeness of the self, in the supreme foundation of the supramental truth, *budhne rtasya*. Its order of thought, its cycle of will, its stable movement of action does not crystallise into a mechanism or convention, but is always alive with the spirit, does not live by exclusiveness or hostility to other coexistent or possible order and cycle, but absorbs sustenance from all that it contacts and assimilates it to its own principle. The spiritual assimilation is practicable because all is referred to the largeness of the self and its free vision above. The order of the supramental thought and will is constantly receiving new light and power from above and has no difficulty in accepting it into its movement; it is, as is proper to an order of the Infinite, even in its stability of motion indescribably supple and plastic, capable of perceiving and rendering the relation of all things to each other in the One, capable of expressing always more and more of the Infinite, at its fullest of expressing in its own way all that is actually expressible of the Infinite.

Thus there is no discord, disparity or difficulty of adjustment in the complex motion of the supramental *jñāna*, but a simplicity in the complexity, an assured ease in a many-sided abundance that comes from the spontaneous sureness and totality of the self-knowledge of the spirit. Obstacle, inner struggle, disparity, difficulty, discord of parts and movements continues in the transformation of mind to supermind only so long as the action, influence or pressure of the mind insisting on its own methods of construction continues or its process of building knowledge or thought and will of action on the foundation of a primal ignorance resists the opposite process of supermind organising all as a luminous manifestation out of the self and its inherent

and eternal self-knowledge. It is thus that the supermind acting as a representative, interpretative, revealingly imperative power of the spirit's knowledge by identity, turning the light of the infinite consciousness freely and illimitably into substance and form of real-idea, creating out of power of conscious being and power of real-idea, stabilising a movement which obeys its own law but is still a supple and plastic movement of the infinite, uses its thought and knowledge and a will identical in substance and light with the knowledge to organise in each supramental being his own right manifestation of the one self and spirit.

The action of the supramental *jñāna* so constituted evidently surpasses the action of the mental reason and we have to see what replaces the reason in the supramental transformation. The thinking mind of man finds its most clear and characteristic satisfaction and its most precise and effective principle of organisation in the reasoning and logical intelligence. It is true that man is not and cannot be wholly governed either in his thought or his action by the reason alone. His mentality is inextricably subjected to a joint, mixed and intricate action of the reasoning intelligence with two other powers, an intuition, actually only half luminous in the human mentality, operating behind the more visible action of the reason or veiled and altered in the action of the normal intelligence, and the life-mind of sensation, instinct, impulse, which is in its own nature a sort of obscure involved intuition and which supplies the intelligence from below with its first materials and data. And each of these other powers is in its own kind an intimate action of the spirit operating in mind and life and has a more direct and spontaneous character and immediate power for perception and action than the reasoning intelligence. But yet neither of these powers is capable of organising for man his mental existence.

His life-mind — its instincts, its impulses, — is not and cannot be self-sufficient and predominant as it is in the lower creation. It has been seized upon by the intelligence and profoundly altered by it even where the development of the intelligence is imperfect and itself most insistent in its prominence. It has lost most of its intuitive character, is indeed now infinitely richer as

a supplier of materials and data, but no longer quite itself or at ease in its action because half rationalised, dependent at least on some infused element however vague of reasoning or intelligent activity and incapable of acting to good purpose without the aid of the intelligence. Its roots and place of perfection are in the subconscious from which it emerges and man's business is to increase in the sense of a more and more conscient knowledge and action. Man reverting to a governance of his being by the life mind would become either irrational and erratic or dull and imbecile and would lose the essential character of manhood.

The intuition on the other hand has its roots and its place of perfection in the supramental which is now to us the superconscious, and in mind it has no pure and no organised action, but is immediately mixed with the action of the reasoning intelligence, is not quite itself, but limited, fragmentary, diluted and impure, and depends for the ordered use and organisation of its suggestions on the aid of the logical reason. The human mind is never quite sure of its intuitions until they have been viewed and confirmed by the judgment of the rational intelligence: it is there that it feels most well founded and secure. Man surmounting reason to organise his thought and life by the intuitive mind would be already surpassing his characteristic humanity and on the way to the development of supermanhood. This can only be done above: for to attempt it below is only to achieve another kind of imperfection: there the mental reason is a necessary factor.

The reasoning intelligence is an intermediate agent between the life mind and the yet undeveloped supramental intuition. Its business is that of an intermediary, on the one side to enlighten the life mind, to make it conscient and govern and regulate as much as may be its action until Nature is ready to evolve the supramental energy which will take hold of life and illumine and perfect all its movements by converting its obscurely intuitive motions of desire, emotion, sensation and action into a spiritually and luminously spontaneous life manifestation of the self and spirit. On the other higher side its mission is to take the rays of light which come from above and translate them into terms of intelligent mentality and to accept, examine, develop,

intellectually utilise the intuitions that escape the barrier and descend into mind from the superconscious. It does this until man, becoming more and more intelligently conscient of himself and his environment and his being, becomes also aware that he cannot really know these things by his reason, but can only make a mental representation of them to his intelligence.

The reason, however, tends in the intellectual man to ignore the limitations of its power and function and attempts to be not an instrument and agent but a substitute for the self and spirit. Made confident by success and predominance, by the comparative greatness of its own light, it regards itself as a thing primary and absolute, assures itself of its own entire truth and sufficiency and endeavours to become the absolute ruler of mind and life. This it cannot do successfully, because it depends on the lower life intuition and on the covert supermind and its intuitive messages for its own real substance and existence. It can only appear to itself to succeed because it reduces all its experience to rational formulas and blinds itself to half the real nature of the thought and action that is behind it and to the infinite deal that breaks out of its formulas. The excess of the reason only makes life artificial and rationally mechanical, deprives it of its spontaneity and vitality and prevents the freedom and expansion of the spirit. The limited and limiting mental reason must make itself plastic and flexible, open itself to its source, receive the light from above, exceed itself and pass by an euthanasia of transformation into the body of the supramental reason. Meanwhile it is given power and leading for an organisation of thought and action on the characteristically human scale intermediate between the subconscious power of the spirit organising the life of the animal and the superconscious power of the spirit which becoming conscient can organise the existence and life of a spiritual supermanhood.

The characteristic power of the reason in its fullness is a logical movement assuring itself first of all available materials and data by observation and arrangement, then acting upon them for a resultant knowledge gained, assured and enlarged by a first use of the reflective powers, and lastly assuring itself

of the correctness of its results by a more careful and formal action, more vigilant, deliberate, severely logical which tests, rejects or confirms them according to certain secure standards and processes developed by reflection and experience. The first business of the logical reason is therefore a right, careful and complete observation of its available material and data. The first and easiest field of data open to our knowledge is the world of Nature, of the physical objects made external to it by the separative action of mind, things not ourself and therefore only indirectly knowable by an interpreting of our sense perceptions, by observation, accumulated experience, inference and reflective thinking. Another field is our own internal being and its movements which one knows naturally by an internally acting mental sense, by intuitive perception and constant experience and by reflective thought on the evidences of our nature. The reason with regard even to these inner movements acts best and knows them most correctly by detaching itself and regarding them quite impersonally and objectively, a movement which in the Yoga of knowledge ends in viewing our own active being too as not self, a mechanism of Nature like the rest of the world-existence. The knowledge of other thinking and conscious beings stands between these two fields, but is gained, too, indirectly by observation, by experience, by various means of communication and, acting on these, by reflection and inference largely founded on analogy from our knowledge of our own nature. Another field of data which the reason has to observe is its own action and the action of the whole human intelligence, for without that study it cannot be assured of the correctness of its knowledge or of right method and process. Finally, there are other fields of knowledge for which the data are not so easily available and which need the development of abnormal faculties,—the discovery of things and ranges of existence behind the appearances of the physical world and the discovery of the secret self or principle of being of man and of Nature. The first the logical reason can attempt to deal with, accepting subject to its scrutiny whatever data become available, in the same way as it deals with the physical world, but ordinarily it is little disposed to deal with them, finding it

more easy to question and deny, and its action here is seldom assured or effective. The second it usually attempts to discover by a constructive metaphysical logic founded on its analytic and synthetic observation of the phenomena of life, mind and matter.

The operation of the logical reason is the same in all these fields of its data. At first the intelligence amasses a store of observations, associations, percepts, receipts, concepts, makes a more or less obvious arrangement and classification of relations and of things according to their likenesses and differences, and works upon them by an accumulating store and a constant addition of ideas, memories, imaginations, judgments; these make up primarily the nature of activity of our knowledge. There is a kind of natural enlargement of this intelligent activity of the mind progressing by its own momentum, an evolution aided more and more by a deliberate culture, the increase of faculties gained by the culture becoming in its turn a part of the nature as they settle into a more spontaneous action,—the result a progression not of the character and essential power of the intelligence, but of its degree of power, flexibility, variety of capacity, fineness. There is a correction of errors, an accumulating of assured ideas and judgments, a reception or formation of fresh knowledge. At the same time a necessity arises for a more precise and assured action of the intelligence which will get rid of the superficiality of this ordinary method of the intelligence, test every step, scrutinise severely every conclusion and reduce the mind's action to a well-founded system and order.

This movement develops the complete logical mind and raises to its acme the acuteness and power of the intelligence. The rougher and more superficial observation is replaced or supplemented by a scrutinising analysis of all the process, properties, constituents, energies making up or related to the object and a synthetic construction of it as a whole which is added to or in great part substituted for the mind's natural conception of it. The object is more precisely distinguished from all others and at the same time there is a completer discovery of its relations with others. There is a fixing of sameness or likeness and kinship and also of divergences and differences resulting on one side in

the perception of the fundamental unity of being and Nature and the similarity and continuity of their processes, on the other in a clear precision and classification of different energies and kinds of beings and objects. The amassing and ordering of the materials and data of knowledge are carried to perfection as far as is possible to the logical intelligence.

Memory is the indispensable aid of the mind to preserve its past observations, the memory of the individual but also of the race, whether in the artificial form of accumulated records or the general race memory preserving its gains with a sort of constant repetition and renewal and, an element not sufficiently appreciated, a latent memory that can under the pressure of various kinds of stimulation repeat under new conditions past movements of knowledge for judgment by the increased information and intelligence. The developed logical mind puts into order the action and resources of the human memory and trains it to make the utmost use of its materials. The human judgment naturally works on these materials in two ways, by a more or less rapid and summary combination of observation, inference, creative or critical conclusion, insight, immediate idea — this is largely an attempt of the mind to work in a spontaneous manner with the directness that can only be securely achieved by the higher faculty of the intuition, for in the mind it produces much false confidence and unreliable certitude, — and a slower but in the end intellectually surer seeking, considering and testing judgment that develops into the careful logical action.

The memory and judgment are both aided by the imagination which, as a function of knowledge, suggests possibilities not actually presented or justified by the other powers and opens the doors to fresh vistas. The developed logical intelligence uses the imagination for suggesting new discovery and hypothesis, but is careful to test its suggestions fully by observation and a sceptical or scrupulous judgment. It insists too on testing, as far as may be, all the action of the judgment itself, rejects hasty inference in favour of an ordered system of deduction and induction and makes sure of all its steps and of the justice, continuity, compatibility, cohesion of its conclusions. A too formalised logical mind

discourages, but a free use of the whole action of the logical intelligence may rather heighten a certain action of immediate insight, the mind's nearest approach to the higher intuition, but it does not place on it an unqualified reliance. The endeavour of the logical reason is always by a detached, disinterested and carefully founded method to get rid of error, of pre-judgment, of the mind's false confidence and arrive at reliable certitudes.

And if this elaborated method of the mind were really sufficient for truth, there would be no need of any higher step in the evolution of knowledge. In fact, it increases the mind's hold on itself and on the world around it and serves great and undeniable utilities: but it can never be sure whether its data supply it with the frame of a real knowledge or only a frame useful and necessary for the human mind and will in its own present form of action. It is more and more perceived that the knowledge of phenomena increases, but the knowledge of reality escapes this laborious process. A time must come, is already coming when the mind perceives the necessity of calling to its aid and developing fully the intuition and all the great range of powers that lie concealed behind our vague use of the word and uncertain perception of its significance. In the end it must discover that these powers can not only aid and complete but even replace its own proper action. That will be the beginning of the discovery of the supramental energy of the spirit.

The supermind, as we have seen, lifts up the action of the mental consciousness towards and into the intuition, creates an intermediate intuitive mentality insufficient in itself but greater in power than the logical intelligence, and then lifts up and transforms that too into the true supramental action. The first well-organised action of the supermind in the ascending order is the supramental reason, not a higher logical intellect, but a directly luminous organisation of intimately subjective and intimately objective knowledge, the higher *buddhi*, the logical or rather the logos *Vijnana*. The supramental reason does all the work of the reasoning intelligence and does much more, but with a greater power and in a different fashion. It is then itself taken up into a higher range of the power of knowledge and in

that too nothing is lost, but all farther heightened, enlarged in scope, transformed in power of action.

The ordinary language of the intellect is not sufficient to describe this action, for the same words have to be used, indicating a certain correspondence, but actually to connote inadequately a different thing. Thus the supermind uses a certain sense action, employing but not limited by the physical organs, a thing which is in its nature a form consciousness and a contact consciousness, but the mental idea and experience of sense can give no conception of the essential and characteristic action of this supramentalised sense consciousness. Thought too in the supramental action is a different thing from the thought of the mental intelligence. The supramental thinking is felt at its basis as a conscious contact or union or identity of the substance of being of the knower with the substance of being of the thing known and its figure of thought as the power of awareness of the self revealing through the meeting or the oneness, because carrying in itself, a certain knowledge form of the object's content, action, significance. Therefore observation, memory, judgment too mean each a different thing in the supermind from what it is in the process of the mental intelligence.

The supramental reason observes all that the intelligence observes—and much more; it makes, that is to say, the thing to be known the field of a perceptual action, in a certain way objective, that causes to emerge its nature, character, quality, action. But this is not that artificial objectivity by which the reason in its observation tries to extrude the element of personal or subjective error. The supermind sees everything in the self and its observation must therefore be subjectively objective and much nearer to, though not the same as the observation of our own internal movements regarded as an object of knowledge. It is not in the separatively personal self or by its power that it sees and therefore it has not to be on guard against the element of personal error: that interferes only while a mental substratum or environing atmosphere yet remains and can still throw in its influence or while the supermind is still acting by descent into the mind to change it. And the supramental method with error

is to eliminate it, not by any other device, but by an increasing spontaneity of the supramental discrimination and a constant heightening of its own energy. The consciousness of supermind is a cosmic consciousness and it is in this self of universal consciousness, in which the individual knower lives and with which he is more or less closely united, that it holds before him the object of knowledge.

The knower is in his observation a witness and this relation would seem to imply an otherness and difference, but the point is that it is not an entirely separative difference and does not bring an excluding idea of the thing observed as completely not self, as in the mental seeing of an external object. There is always a basic feeling of oneness with the thing known, for without this oneness there can be no supramental knowledge. The knower carrying the object in his universalised self of consciousness as a thing held before his station of witness vision includes it in his own wider being. The supramental observation is of things with which we are one in the being and consciousness and are capable of knowing them even as we know ourselves by the force of that oneness: the act of observation is a movement towards bringing out the latent knowledge.

There is, then, first a fundamental unity of consciousness that is greater or less in its power, more or less completely and immediately revelatory of its contents of knowledge according to our progress and elevation and intensity of living, feeling and seeing in the supramental ranges. There is set up between the knower and the object of knowledge, as a result of this fundamental unity, a stream or bridge of conscious connection — one is obliged to use images, however inadequate — and as a consequence a contact or active union enabling one to see, feel, sense supramentally what is to be known in the object or about it. Sometimes this stream or bridge of connection is not sensibly felt at the moment, only the results of the contact are noted, but it is always really there and an after memory can always make us aware that it was really all the time present: as we grow in supramentality, it becomes an abiding factor. The necessity of this stream or this bridge of connection ceases when

the fundamental oneness becomes a complete active oneness. This process is the basis of what Patanjali calls *samnyama*, a concentration, directing or dwelling of the consciousness, by which, he says, one can become aware of all that is in the object. But the necessity of concentration becomes slight or nil when the active oneness grows; the luminous consciousness of the object and its contents becomes more spontaneous, normal, facile.

There are three possible movements of this kind of supramental observation. First, the knower may project himself in consciousness on the object, feel his cognition in contact or enveloping or penetrating it and there, as it were in the object itself, become aware of what he has to know. Or he may by the contact become aware of that which is in it or belongs to it, as for example the thought or feeling of another, coming from it and entering into himself where he stands in his station of the witness. Or he may simply know in himself by a sort of supramental cognition in his own witness station without any such projection or entrance. The starting-point and apparent basis of the observation may be the presence of the object to the physical or other senses, but to the supermind this is not indispensable. It may be instead an inner image or simply the idea of the object. The simple will to know may bring to the supramental consciousness the needed knowledge — or, it may be, the will to be known or communicate itself of the object of knowledge.

The elaborate process of analytical observation and synthetical construction adopted by the logical intelligence is not the method of the supermind and yet there is a corresponding action. The supermind distinguishes by a direct seeing and without any mental process of taking to pieces the particularities of the thing, form, energy, action, quality, mind, soul that it has in view, and it sees too with an equal directness and without any process of construction the significant totality of which these particularities are the incidents. It sees also the essentiality, the Swabhava, of the thing in itself of which the totality and the particularities are the manifestation. And again it sees, whether apart from or through the essentiality or swabhava, the one self, the one existence, consciousness, power, force of which it is the basic expression.

It may be observing at the time only the particularities, but the whole is implied, and *vice versa*,—as for an example, the total state of mind out of which a thought or a feeling arises,—and the cognition may start from one or the other and proceed at once by immediate suggestion to the implied knowledge. The essentiality is similarly implied in the whole and in each or all of the particulars and there may be the same rapid or immediate alternative or alternate process. The logic of the supermind is different from that of the mind: it sees always the self as what is, the essentiality of the thing as a fundamental expression of the being and power of the self, and the whole and particulars as a consequent manifestation of this power and its active expression. In the fullness of the supramental consciousness and cognition this is the constant order. All perception of unity, similarity, difference, kind, uniqueness arrived at by the supramental reason is consonant with and depends on this order.

This observing action of supermind applies to all things. Its view of physical objects is not and cannot be only a surface or outward view, even when concentrated on the externals. It sees the form, action, properties, but it is aware at the same time of the qualities or energies, *guna, sakti*, of which the form is a translation, and it sees them not as an inference or deduction from the form or action, but feels and sees them directly in the being of the object and quite as vividly,—one might say, with a subtle concreteness and fine substantiality,—as the form or sensible action. It is aware too of the consciousness that manifests itself in quality, energy, form. It can feel, know, observe, see forces, tendencies, impulsions, things abstract to us quite as directly and vividly as the things we now call visible and sensible. It observes in just the same way persons and beings. It can take as its starting-point or first indication the speech, action, outward signs, but it is not limited by or dependent on them. It can know and feel and observe the very self and consciousness of another, can either proceed to that directly through the sign or can in its more powerful action begin with it and at once, instead of seeking to know the inner being through the evidence of the outer expression, understand rather

all the outer expression in the light of the inner being. Even so, completely, the supramental being knows his own inner being and nature. The supermind can too act with equal power and observe with direct experience what is hidden behind the physical order; it can move in other planes than the material universe. It knows the self and reality of things by identity, by experience of oneness or contact of oneness and a vision, a seeing and realising ideation and knowledge dependent on or derived from these things, and its thought presentation of the truths of the spirit is an expression of this kind of sight and experience.

The supramental memory is different from the mental, not a storing up of past knowledge and experience, but an abiding presence of knowledge that can be brought forward or, more characteristically, offers itself, when it is needed: it is not dependent on attention or on conscious reception, for the things of the past not known actually or not observed can be called up from latency by an action which is yet essentially a remembrance. Especially on a certain level all knowledge presents itself as a remembering, because all is latent or inherent in the self of supermind. The future like the past presents itself to knowledge in the supermind as a memory of the preknown. The imagination transformed in the supermind acts on one side as a power of true image and symbol, always an image or index of some value or significance or other truth of being, on the other as an inspiration or interpretative seeing of possibilities and potentialities not less true than actual or realised things. These are put in their place either by an attendant intuitive or interpretative judgment or by one inherent in the vision of the image, symbol or potentiality, or by a supereminent revelation of that which is behind the image or symbol or which determines the potential and the actual and their relations and, it may be, overrides and overpasses them, imposing ultimate truths and supreme certitudes.

The supramental judgment acts inseparably from the supramental observation or memory, inherent in it as a direct seeing or cognition of values, significances, antecedents, consequences, relations, etc.; or it supervenes on the observation as a luminous disclosing idea or suggestion; or it may go before, independent

of any observation, and then the object called up and observed confirms visibly the truth of the idea. But in each case it is sufficient in itself for its own purpose, is its own evidence and does not really depend for its truth on any aid or confirmation. There is a logic of the supramental reason, but its function is not to test or scrutinise, to support and prove or to detect and eliminate error. Its function is simply to link knowledge with knowledge, to discover and utilise harmonies and arrangement and relations, to organise the movement of the supramental knowledge. This it does not by any formal rule or construction of inferences but by a direct, living and immediate seeing and placing of connection and relation. All thought in the supermind is in the nature of intuition, inspiration or revelation and all deficiency of knowledge is to be supplied by a farther action of these powers; error is prevented by the action of a spontaneous and luminous discrimination; the movement is always from knowledge to knowledge. It is not rational in our sense but suprarational,—it does sovereignly what is sought to be done stumblingly and imperfectly by the mental reason.

The ranges of knowledge above the supramental reason, taking it up and exceeding it, cannot well be described, nor is it necessary here to make the endeavour. It is sufficient to say that the process here is more sufficient, intense and large in light, imperative, instantaneous, the scope of the active knowledge larger, the way nearer to the knowledge by identity, the thought more packed with the luminous substance of self-awareness and all-vision and more evidently independent of any other inferior support or assistance.

These characteristics, it must be remembered, do not fully apply even to the strongest action of the intuitive mentality, but are there seen only in their first glimpses. Nor can they be entirely or unmixedly evident so long as supramentality is only forming with an undercurrent, a mixture or an environment of mental action. It is only when mentality is overpassed and drops away into a passive silence that there can be the full disclosure and the sovereign and integral action of the supramental gnosis.

Chapter XXIV

The Supramental Sense

ALL THE instruments, all the activities of the mind have their corresponding powers in the action of the supramental energy and are there exalted and transfigured, but have there a reverse order of priority and necessary importance. As there is a supramental thought and essential consciousness, so too there is a supramental sense. Sense is fundamentally not the action of certain physical organs, but the contact of consciousness with its objects, *samjnāna*.

When the consciousness of the being is withdrawn wholly into itself, it is aware only of itself, of its own being, its own consciousness, its own delight of existence, its own concentrated force of being, and of these things not in their forms but in their essence. When it comes out of this self-immersion, it becomes aware of or it releases or develops out of its self-immersion its activities and forms of being, of consciousness, of delight and force. Then too, on the supramental plane, its primary awareness still remains of a kind native to and entirely characteristic of the self-awareness of the spirit, the self-knowledge of the one and infinite; it is a knowledge that knows all its objects, forms and activities comprehensively by being aware of them in its own infinite self, intimately by being aware in them as their self, absolutely by being aware of them as one in self with its own being. All its other ways of knowledge are projected from this knowledge by identity, are parts or movements of it, or at the lowest depend on it for their truth and light, are touched and supported by it even in their own separate way of action and refer back to it overtly or implicitly as their authority and origin.

The activity which is nearest to this essential knowledge by identity is the large embracing consciousness, especially characteristic of the supramental energy, which takes into itself all truth and idea and object of knowledge and sees them at once in their

essence, totality and parts or aspects, — *vijñāna*. Its movement is a total seeing and seizing; it is a comprehension and possession in the self of knowledge; and it holds the object of consciousness as a part of the self or one with it, the unity being spontaneously and directly realised in the act of knowledge. Another supramental activity puts the knowledge by identity more into the background and stresses more the objectivity of the thing known. Its characteristic movement, descending into the mind, becomes the source of the peculiar nature of our mental knowledge, intelligence, *prajñāna*. In the mind the action of intelligence involves, at the outset, separation and otherness between the knower, knowledge and the known; but in the supermind its movement still takes place in the infinite identity or at least in the cosmic oneness. Only, the self of knowledge indulges the delight of putting the object of consciousness away from the more immediate nearness of the original and eternal unity, but always in itself, and of knowing it again in another way so as to establish with it a variety of relations of interaction which are so many minor chords in the harmony of the play of the consciousness. The movement of this supramental intelligence, *prajñāna*, becomes a subordinate, a tertiary action of the supramental for the fullness of which thought and word are needed. The primary action, because it is of the nature of knowledge by identity or of a comprehensive seizing in the consciousness, is complete in itself and has no need of these means of formulation. The supramental intelligence is of the nature of a truth seeing, truth hearing and truth remembering and, though capable of being sufficient to itself in a certain way, still feels itself more richly fulfilled by the thought and word that give it a body of expression.

Finally, a fourth action of the supramental consciousness completes the various possibilities of the supramental knowledge. This still farther accentuates the objectivity of the thing known, puts it away from the station of experiencing consciousness and again brings it to nearness by a uniting contact effected either in a direct nearness, touch, union or less closely across the bridge or through the connecting stream of consciousness

of which there has already been mention. It is a contacting of existence, presences, things, forms, forces, activities, but a contacting of them in the stuff of the supramental being and energy, not in the divisions of matter and through the physical instruments, that creates the supramental sense, *samjnāna*.

It is a little difficult to make the nature of the supramental sense understood to a mentality not yet familiar with it by enlarged experience, because our idea of sense action is governed by the limiting experience of the physical mind and we suppose that the fundamental thing in it is the impression made by an external object on the physical organ of sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste, and that the business of the mind, the present central organ of our consciousness, is only to receive the physical impression and its nervous translation and so become intelligently conscious of the object. In order to understand the supramental change we have to realise first that the mind is the only real sense even in the physical process: its dependence on the physical impressions is the result of the conditions of the material evolution, but not a thing fundamental and indispensable. Mind is capable of a sight that is independent of the physical eye, a hearing that is independent of the physical ear, and so with the action of all the other senses. It is capable too of an awareness, operating by what appears to us as mental impressions, of things not conveyed or even suggested by the agency of the physical organs,—an opening to relations, happenings, forms even and the action of forces to which the physical organs could not have borne evidence. Then, becoming aware of these rarer powers, we speak of the mind as a sixth sense; but in fact it is the only true sense organ and the rest are no more than its outer conveniences and secondary instruments, although by its dependence on them they have become its limitations and its too imperative and exclusive conveyors. Again we have to realise — and this is more difficult to admit for our normal ideas in the matter — that the mind itself is only the characteristic instrument of sense, but the thing itself, sense in its purity, *samjnāna*, exists behind and beyond the mind it uses and is a movement of the self, a direct and original activity of the infinite power of its consciousness.

The pure action of sense is a spiritual action and pure sense is itself a power of the spirit.

The spiritual sense is capable of knowing in its own characteristic way, which is other than that of supramental thought or of the intelligence or spiritual comprehension, *vijñāna*, or knowledge by identity, all things whatsoever, things material and what is to us immaterial, all forms and that which is formless. For all is spiritual substance of being, substance of consciousness and force, substance of delight; and the spiritual sense, pure *samjnāna*, is the conscious being's contactual, substantial awareness of its own extended substance of self and in it of all that is of the infinite or universal substance. It is possible for us not only to know by conscious identity, by a spiritual comprehension of self, of principles and aspects, force, play and action, by a direct spiritual, supramental and intuitive thought knowledge, by the heart's spiritually and suprmentally illumined feeling, love, delight, but also to have in a very literal significance the sense—sense-knowledge or sensation—of the spirit, the self, the Divine, the Infinite. The state described by the Upanishad in which one sees, hears, feels, touches, senses in every way the Brahman and the Brahman only, for all things have become to the consciousness only that and have no other, separate or independent existence, is not a mere figure of speech, but the exact description of the fundamental action of the pure sense, the spiritual object of the pure *samjnāna*. And in this original action,—to our experience a transfigured, glorified, infinitely blissful action of the sense, a direct feeling out inward, around, everywhere of the self to embrace and touch and be sensible of all that is in its universal being,—we can become aware in a most moving and delightful way of the Infinite and of all that is in it, cognizant, by intimate contact of our being with all being, of whatever is in the universe.

The action of the supramental sense is founded on this true truth of sense; it is an organisation of this pure, spiritual, infinite, absolute *samjnāna*. The supermind acting through sense feels all as God and in God, all as the manifest touch, sight, hearing, taste, perfume, all as the felt, seen, directly experienced substance

and power and energy and movement, play, penetration, vibration, form, nearness, pressure, substantial interchange of the Infinite. Nothing exists independently to its sense, but all is felt as one being and movement and each thing as indivisible from the rest and as having in it all the Infinite, all the Divine. This supramental sense has the direct feeling and experience, not only of forms, but of forces and of the energy and the quality in things and of a divine substance and presence which is within them and round them and into which they open and expand themselves in their secret subtle self and elements, extending themselves in oneness into the illimitable. Nothing to the supramental sense is really finite: it is founded on a feeling of all in each and of each in all: its sense definition, although more precise and complete than the mental, creates no walls of limitation; it is an oceanic and ethereal sense in which all particular sense knowledge and sensation is a wave or movement or spray or drop that is yet a concentration of the whole ocean and inseparable from the ocean. Its action is a result of the extension and vibration of being and consciousness in a supra-ethereal ether of light, ether of power, ether of bliss, the Ananda Akasha of the Upanishads, which is the matrix and continent of the universal expression of the Self,—here in body and mind experienced only in limited extensions and vibrations,—and the medium of its true experience. This sense even at its lowest power is luminous with a revealing light that carries in it the secret of the thing it experiences and can therefore be a starting-point and basis of all the rest of the supramental knowledge,—the supramental thought, spiritual intelligence and comprehension, conscious identity,—and on its highest plane or at its fullest intensity of action it opens into or contains and at once liberates these things. It is strong with a luminous power that carries in it the force of self-realisation and an intense or infinite effectiveness, and this sense-experience can therefore be the starting-point of impulsion for a creative or fulfilling action of the spiritual and supramental will and knowledge. It is rapturous with a powerful and luminous delight that makes of it, makes of all sense and sensation a key to or a vessel of the divine and infinite Ananda.

The supramental sense can act in its own power and is independent of the body and the physical life and outer mind and it is above too the inner mind and its experiences. It can be aware of all things in whatever world, on whatever plane, in whatever formation of universal consciousness. It can be aware of the things of the material universe even in the trance of samadhi, aware of them as they are or appear to the physical sense, even as it is of other states of experience, of the pure vital, the mental, the psychical, the supramental presentation of things. It can in the waking state of the physical consciousness present to us the things concealed from the limited receptivity or beyond the range of the physical organs, distant forms, scenes and happenings, things that have passed out of physical existence or that are not yet in physical existence, scenes, forms, happenings, symbols of the vital, psychical, mental, supramental, spiritual worlds and all these in their real or significant truth as well as their appearance. It can use all the other states of sense consciousness and their appropriate senses and organs adding to them what they have not, setting right their errors and supplying their deficiencies: for it is the source of the others and they are only inferior derivations from this higher sense, this true and illimitable *samjnāna*.

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The lifting of the level of consciousness from the mind to the supermind and the consequent transformation of the being from the state of the mental to that of the supramental Purusha must bring with it to be complete a transformation of all the parts of the nature and all its activities. The whole mind is not merely made into a passive channel of the supramental activities, a channel of their downflow into the life and body and of their outflow or communication with the outward world, the material existence,—that is only the first stage of the process,—but is itself supramentalised along with all its instruments. There is accordingly a change, a profound transformation in the physical sense, a supramentalising of the physical sight, hearing, touch, etc., that creates or reveals to us a quite different view, not merely

of life and its meaning, but even of the material world and all its forms and aspects. The supermind uses the physical organs and confirms their way of action, but it develops behind them the inner and deeper senses which see what are hidden from the physical organs and farther transforms the new sight, hearing, etc. thus created by casting it into its own mould and way of sensing. The change is one that takes nothing from the physical truth of the object, but adds to it its supraphysical truth and takes away by the removal of the physical limitation the element of falsehood in the material way of experience.

The supramentalising of the physical sense brings with it a result similar in this field to that which we experience in the transmutation of the thought and consciousness. As soon as the sight, for example, becomes altered under the influence of the supramental seeing, the eye gets a new and transfigured vision of things and of the world around us. Its sight acquires an extraordinary totality and an immediate and embracing precision in which the whole and every detail stand out at once in the complete harmony and vividness of the significance meant by Nature in the object and its realisation of the idea in form, executed in a triumph of substantial being. It is as if the eye of the poet and artist had replaced the vague or trivial unseeing normal vision, but singularly spiritualised and glorified,—as if indeed it were the sight of the supreme divine Poet and Artist in which we were participating and there were given to us the full seeing of his truth and intention in his design of the universe and of each thing in the universe. There is an unlimited intensity which makes all that is seen a revelation of the glory of quality and idea and form and colour. The physical eye seems then to carry in itself a spirit and a consciousness which sees not only the physical aspect of the object but the soul of quality in it, the vibration of energy, the light and force and spiritual substance of which it is made. Thus there comes through the physical sense to the total sense consciousness within and behind the vision a revelation of the soul of the thing seen and of the universal spirit that is expressing itself in this objective form of its own conscious being.

There is at the same time a subtle change which makes the sight see in a sort of fourth dimension, the character of which is a certain internality, the seeing not only of the superficies and the outward form but of that which informs it and subtly extends around it. The material object becomes to this sight something different from what we now see, not a separate object on the background or in the environment of the rest of Nature, but an indivisible part and even in a subtle way an expression of the unity of all that we see. And this unity that we see becomes not only to the subtler consciousness but to the mere sense, to the illumined physical sight itself, that of the identity of the Eternal, the unity of the Brahman. For to the supramentalised seeing the material world and space and material objects cease to be material in the sense in which we now on the strength of the sole evidence of our limited physical organs and of the physical consciousness that looks through them receive as our gross perception and understand as our conception of matter. It and they appear and are seen as spirit itself in a form of itself and a conscious extension. The whole is a unity—the oneness unaffected by any multitudinousness of objects and details—held in and by the consciousness in a spiritual space and all substance there is conscious substance. This change and this totality of the way of seeing comes from the exceeding of the limitations of our present physical sense, because the power of the subtle or psychical eye has been infused into the physical and there has again been infused into this psycho-physical power of vision the spiritual sight, the pure sense, the supramental *samjnāna*.

All the other senses undergo a similar transformation. All that the ear listens to, reveals the totality of its sound body and sound significance and all the tones of its vibration and reveals also to the single and complete hearing the quality, the rhythmic energy, the soul of the sound and its expression of the one universal spirit. There is the same internality, the going of the sense into the depths of the sound and the finding there of that which informs it and extends it into unity with the harmony of all sound and no less with the harmony of all silence, so that the ear is always listening to the infinite in its heard expression

and the voice of its silence. All sounds become to the supramentalised ear the voice of the Divine, himself born into sound, and a rhythm of the concord of the universal symphony. And there is too the same completeness, vividness, intensity, the revelation of the self of the thing heard and the spiritual satisfaction of the self in hearing. The supramentalised touch also contacts or receives the touch of the Divine in all things and knows all things as the Divine through the conscious self in the contact: and there is too the same totality, intensity, revelation of all that is in and behind the touch to the experiencing consciousness. There comes a similar transformation of the other senses.

There is at the same time an opening of new powers in all the senses, an extension of range, a stretching out of the physical consciousness to an undreamed capacity. The supramental transformation extends too the physical consciousness far beyond the limits of the body and enables it to receive with a perfect concreteness the physical contact of things at a distance. And the physical organs become capable of serving as channels for the psychic and other senses so that we can see with the physical waking eye what is ordinarily revealed only in the abnormal states and to the psychical vision, hearing or other sense knowledge. It is the spirit or the inner soul that sees and senses, but the body and its powers are themselves spiritualised and share directly in the experience. The entire material sensation is supramentalised and it becomes aware, directly and with a physical participation and, finally, a unity with the subtler instrumentation, of forces and movements and the physical, vital, emotional, mental vibrations of things and beings and feels them all not only spiritually or mentally but physically in the self and as movements of the one self in these many bodies. The wall that the limitations of the body and its senses have built around us is abolished even in the body and the senses and there is in its place the free communication of the eternal oneness. All sense and sensation becomes full of the divine light, the divine power and intensity of experience, a divine joy, the delight of the Brahman. And even that which is now to us discordant and jars on the senses takes its place in the universal concord of the universal

movement, reveals its *rasa*, meaning, design and, by delight in its intention in the divine consciousness and its manifestation of its law and dharma, its harmony with the total self, its place in the manifestation of the divine being, becomes beautiful and happy to the soul experience. All sensation becomes Ananda.

The embodied mind in us is ordinarily aware only through the physical organs and only of their objects and of subjective experiences which seem to start from the physical experience and to take them alone, however remotely, for their foundation and mould of construction. All the rest, all that is not consistent with or part of or verified by the physical data, seems to it rather imagination than reality and it is only in abnormal states that it opens to other kinds of conscious experience. But in fact there are immense ranges behind of which we could be aware if we opened the doors of our inner being. These ranges are there already in action and known to a subliminal self in us, and much even of our surface consciousness is directly projected from them and without our knowing it influences our subjective experience of things. There is a range of independent vital or pranic experiences behind, subliminal to and other than the surface action of the vitalised physical consciousness. And when this opens itself or acts in any way, there are made manifest to the waking mind the phenomena of a vital consciousness, a vital intuition, a vital sense not dependent on the body and its instruments, although it may use them as a secondary medium and a recorder. It is possible to open completely this range and, when we do so, we find that its operation is that of the conscious life force individualised in us contacting the universal life force and its operations in things, happenings and persons. The mind becomes aware of the life consciousness in all things, responds to it through our life consciousness with an immediate directness not limited by the ordinary communication through the body and its organs, records its intuitions, becomes capable of experiencing existence as a translation of the universal Life or Prana. The field of which the vital consciousness and the vital sense are primarily aware is not that of forms but, directly, that of forces: its world is a world of the play of energies, and form and event are sensed

only secondarily as a result and embodiment of the energies. The mind working through the physical senses can only construct a view and knowledge of this nature as an idea in the intelligence, but it cannot go beyond the physical translation of the energies, and it has therefore no real or direct experience of the true nature of life, no actual realisation of the life force and the life spirit. It is by opening this other level or depth of experience within and by admission to the vital consciousness and vital sense that the mind can get the true and direct experience. Still, even then, so long as it is on the mental level, the experience is limited by the vital terms and their mental renderings and there is an obscurity even in this greatened sense and knowledge. The supramental transformation supravitalises the vital, reveals it as a dynamics of the spirit, makes a complete opening and a true revelation of all the spiritual reality behind and within the life force and the life spirit and of all its spiritual as well as its mental and purely vital truth and significance.

The supermind in its descent into the physical being awakens, if not already wakened by previous yogic sadhana, the consciousness — veiled or obscure in most of us — which supports and forms there the vital sheath, the *prāṇa kosa*. When this is awakened, we no longer live in the physical body alone, but also in a vital body which penetrates and envelops the physical and is sensitive to impacts of another kind, to the play of the vital forces around us and coming in on us from the universe or from particular persons or group lives or from things or else from the vital planes and worlds which are behind the material universe. These impacts we feel even now in their result and in certain touches and affectations, but not at all or very little in their source and their coming. An awakened consciousness in the pranic body immediately feels them, is aware of a pervading vital force other than the physical energy, and can draw upon it to increase the vital strength and support the physical energies, can deal directly with the phenomena and causes of health and disease by means of this vital influx or by directing pranic currents, can be aware of the vital and the vital-emotional atmosphere of others and deal with its interchanges, along with

a host of other phenomena which are unfelt by or obscure to our outward consciousness but here become conscient and sensible. It is acutely aware of the life soul and life body in ourself and others. The supermind takes up this vital consciousness and vital sense, puts it on its right foundation and transforms it by revealing the life-force here as the very power of the spirit dynamised for a near and direct operation on and through subtle and gross matter and for formation and action in the material universe.

The first result is that the limitations of our individual life being break down and we live no longer with a personal life force, or not with that ordinarily, but in and by the universal life energy. It is all the universal Prana that comes consciously streaming into and through us, keeps up there a dynamic constant eddy, an unseparated centre of its power, a vibrant station of storage and communication, constantly fills it with its forces and pours them out in activity upon the world around us. This life energy, again, is felt by us not merely as a vital ocean and its streams, but as the vital way and form and body and outpouring of a conscious universal Shakti, and that conscient Shakti reveals itself as the Chit Shakti of the Divine, the Energy of the transcendent and universal Self and Purusha of which—or rather of whom—our universalised individuality becomes an instrument and channel. As a result we feel ourselves one in life with all others and one with the life of all Nature and of all things in the universe. There is a free and conscious communication of the vital energy working in us with the same energy working in others. We are aware of their life as of our own or, at the least, of the touch and pressure and communicated movements of our life being on them and theirs upon us. The vital sense in us becomes powerful, intense, capable of bearing all the small or large, minute or immense vibrations of this life world on all its planes physical and supraphysical, vital and supravital, thrills with all its movement and Ananda and is aware of and open to all forces. The supermind takes possession of all this great range of experience, and makes it all luminous, harmonious, experienced not obscurely and fragmentarily and subject to the limitations

and errors of its handling by the mental ignorance, but revealed, it and each movement of it, in its truth and totality of power and delight, and directs the great and now hardly limitable powers and capacities of the life dynamis on all its ranges according to the simple and yet complex, the sheer and spontaneous and yet unfalteringly intricate will of the Divine in our life. It makes the vital sense a perfect means of the knowledge of the life forces around us, as the physical of the forms and sensations of the physical universe, and a perfect channel too of the reactions of the active life force through us working as an instrument of self-manifestation.

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The phenomena of this vital consciousness and sense, this direct sensation and perception of and response to the play of subtler forces than the physical, are often included without distinction under the head of psychical phenomena. In a certain sense it is an awakening of the psyche, the inner soul now hidden, clogged wholly or partially covered up by the superficial activity of the physical mind and senses that brings to the surface the submerged or subliminal inner vital consciousness and also an inner or subliminal mental consciousness and sense capable of perceiving and experiencing directly, not only the life forces and their play and results and phenomena, but the mental and psychical worlds and all they contain and the mental activities, vibrations, phenomena, forms, images of this world also and of establishing a direct communication between mind and mind without the aid of the physical organs and the limitations they impose on our consciousness. There are however two different kinds of action of these inner ranges of the consciousness. The first is a more outer and confused activity of the awakening subliminal mind and life which is clogged with and subject to the grosser desires and illusions of the mind and vital being and vitiated in spite of its wider range of experience and powers and capacities by an enormous mass of error and deformations of the will and knowledge, full of false suggestions and images, false and distorted

intuitions and inspirations and impulses, the latter often even depraved and perverse, and vitiated too by the interference of the physical mind and its obscurities. This is an inferior activity to which clairvoyants, psychists, spiritists, occultists, seekers of powers and siddhis are very liable and to which all the warnings against the dangers and errors of this kind of seeking are more especially applicable. The seeker of spiritual perfection has to pass as quickly as possible, if he cannot altogether avoid, this zone of danger, and the safe rule here is to be attached to none of these things, but to make spiritual progress one's sole real objective and to put no sure confidence in other things until the mind and life soul are purified and the light of the spirit and supermind or at least of the spiritually illumined mind and soul are shed on these inner ranges of experience. For when the mind is tranquillised and purified and the pure psyche liberated from the insistence of the desire soul, these experiences are free from any serious danger,—except indeed that of limitation and a certain element of error which cannot be entirely eliminated so long as the soul experiences and acts on the mental level. For there is then a pure action of the true psychical consciousness and its powers, a reception of psychical experience pure in itself of the worse deformations, although subject to the limitations of the representing mind, and capable of a high spiritualisation and light. The complete power and truth, however, can only come by the opening of the supermind and the supramentalising of the mental and psychical experience.

The range of the psychic consciousness and its experiences is almost illimitable and the variety and complexity of its phenomena almost infinite. Only some of the broad lines and main features can be noted here. The first and most prominent is the activity of the psychic senses of which the sight is the most developed ordinarily and the first to manifest itself with any largeness when the veil of the absorption in the surface consciousness which prevents the inner vision is broken. But all the physical senses have their corresponding powers in the psychical being, there is a psychical hearing, touch, smell, taste: indeed the physical senses are themselves in reality only a projection of

the inner sense into a limited and externalised operation in and through and upon the phenomena of gross matter. The psychical sight receives characteristically the images that are formed in the subtle matter of the mental or psychical ether, *cittākāśa*. These may be transcriptions there or impresses of physical things, persons, scenes, happenings, whatever is, was or will be or may be in the physical universe. These images are very variously seen and under all kinds of conditions; in samadhi or in the waking state, and in the latter with the bodily eyes closed or open, projected on or into a physical object or medium or seen as if materialised in the physical atmosphere or only in a psychical ether revealing itself through this grosser physical atmosphere; seen through the physical eyes themselves as a secondary instrument and as if under the conditions of the physical vision or by the psychical vision alone and independently of the relations of our ordinary sight to space. The real agent is always the psychical sight and the power indicates that the consciousness is more or less awake, intermittently or normally and more or less perfectly, in the psychical body. It is possible to see in this way the transcriptions or impressions of things at any distance beyond the range of the physical vision or the images of the past or the future.

Besides these transcriptions or impresses the psychical vision receives thought images and other forms created by constant activity of consciousness in ourselves or in other human beings, and these may be according to the character of the activity images of truth or falsehood or else mixed things, partly true, partly false, and may be too either mere shells and representations or images inspired with a temporary life and consciousness and, it may be, carrying in them in one way or another some kind of beneficent or maleficent action or some willed or unwilled effectiveness on our minds or vital being or through them even on the body. These transcriptions, impresses, thought images, life images, projections of the consciousness may also be representations or creations not of the physical world, but of vital, psychic or mental worlds beyond us, seen in our own minds or projected from other than human beings. And as there is this psychical vision of which some of the more external and

ordinary manifestations are well enough known by the name of clairvoyance, so there is a psychical hearing and psychical touch, taste, smell — clairaudience, clairsentience are the more external manifestations, — with precisely the same range each in its own kind, the same fields and manner and conditions and varieties of their phenomena.

These and other phenomena create an indirect, a representative range of psychical experience; but the psychical sense has also the power of putting us in a more direct communication with earthly or supraterrestrial beings through their psychical selves or their psychical bodies or even with things, for things also have a psychical reality and souls or presences supporting them which can communicate with our psychical consciousness. The most notable of these more powerful but rarer phenomena are those which attend the power of exteriorisation of our consciousness for various kinds of action otherwise and elsewhere than in the physical body, communication in the psychical body or some emanation or reproduction of it, oftenest, though by no means necessarily, during sleep or trance and the setting up of relations or communication by various means with the denizens of another plane of existence.

For there is a continuous scale of the planes of consciousness, beginning with the psychical and other belts attached to and dependent on the earth plane and proceeding through the true independent vital and psychical worlds to the worlds of the gods and the highest supramental and spiritual planes of existence. And these are in fact always acting upon our subliminal selves unknown to our waking mind and with considerable effect on our life and nature. The physical mind is only a little part of us and there is a much more considerable range of our being in which the presence, influence and powers of the other planes are active upon us and help to shape our external being and its activities. The awakening of the psychical consciousness enables us to become aware of these powers, presences and influences in and around us; and while in the impure or yet ignorant and imperfect mind this unveiled contact has its dangers, it enables us too, if rightly used and directed, to be no longer their subject but their

master and to come into conscious and self-controlled possession of the inner secrets of our nature. The psychical consciousness reveals this interaction between the inner and the outer planes, this world and others, partly by an awareness, which may be very constant, vast and vivid, of their impacts, suggestions, communications to our inner thought and conscious being and a capacity of reaction upon them there, partly also through many kinds of symbolic, transcriptive or representative images presented to the different psychical senses. But also there is the possibility of a more direct, concretely sensible, almost material, sometimes actively material communication — a complete though temporary physical materialisation seems to be possible — with the powers, forces and beings of other worlds and planes. There may even be a complete breaking of the limits of the physical consciousness and the material existence.

The awakening of the psychical consciousness liberates in us the direct use of the mind as a sixth sense, and this power may be made constant and normal. The physical consciousness can only communicate with the minds of others or know the happenings of the world around us through external means and signs and indications, and it has beyond this limited action only a vague and haphazard use of the mind's more direct capacities, a poor range of occasional presentiments, intuitions and messages. Our minds are indeed constantly acting and acted upon by the minds of others through hidden currents of which we are not aware, but we have no knowledge or control of these agencies. The psychical consciousness, as it develops, makes us aware of the great mass of thoughts, feelings, suggestions, will impacts, influences of all kinds that we are receiving from others or sending to others or imbibing from and throwing into the general mind atmosphere around us. As it evolves in power, precision and clearness, we are able to trace these to their source or feel immediately their origin and transit to us and direct consciously and with an intelligent will our own messages. It becomes possible to be aware, more or less accurately and discerningly, of the activities of minds whether near to us physically or at a distance, to understand, feel or identify ourselves with their temperament,

character, thoughts, feelings, reactions, whether by a psychic sense or a direct mental perception or by a very sensible and often intensely concrete reception of them into our mind or on its recording surface. At the same time we can consciously make at least the inner selves and, if they are sufficiently sensitive, the surface minds of others aware of our own inner mental or psychic self and plastic to its thoughts, suggestions, influences or even cast it or its active image in influence into their subjective, even into their vital and physical being to work there as a helping or moulding or dominating power and presence.

All these powers of the psychic consciousness need have and often have no more than a mental utility and significance, but it can also be used with a spiritual sense and light and intention in it and for a spiritual purpose. This can be done by a spiritual meaning and use in our psychical interchange with others, and it is largely by a psycho-spiritual interchange of this kind that a master in Yoga helps his disciple. The knowledge of our inner subliminal and psychic nature, of the powers and presences and influences there and the capacity of communication with other planes and their powers and beings can also be used for a higher than any mental or mundane object, for the possession and mastering of our whole nature and the overpassing of the intermediate planes on the way to the supreme spiritual heights of being. But the most direct spiritual use of the psychic consciousness is to make it an instrument of contact, communication and union with the Divine. A world of psycho-spiritual symbols is readily opened up, illuminating and potent and living forms and instruments, which can be made a revelation of spiritual significances, a support for our spiritual growth and the evolution of spiritual capacity and experience, a means towards spiritual power, knowledge or Ananda. The mantra is one of these psycho-spiritual means, at once a symbol, an instrument and a sound body for the divine manifestation, and of the same kind are the images of the Godhead and of its personalities or powers used in meditation or for adoration in Yoga. The great forms or bodies of the Divine are revealed through which he manifests his living presence to us and we can more easily

by their means intimately know, adore and give ourselves to him and enter into the different lokas, worlds of his habitation and presence, where we can live in the light of his being. His word, command, Adesha, presence, touch, guidance can come to us through our spiritualised psychic consciousness and, as a subtly concrete means of transmission from the spirit, it can give us a close communication and nearness to him through all our psychic senses. These and many more are the spiritual uses of the psychic consciousness and sense and, although capable of limitation and deformation,—for all secondary instruments can be also by our mental capacity of exclusive self-limitation means of a partial but at the same time hindrances to a more integral realisation,—they are of the greatest utility on the road to the spiritual perfection and afterwards, liberated from the limitation of our minds, transformed and supramentalised, an element of rich detail in the spiritual Ananda.

As the physical and vital, the psychical consciousness and sense also are capable of a supramental transformation and receive by it their own integral fullness and significance. The supermind lays hold on the psychical being, descends into it, changes it into the mould of its own nature and uplifts it to be a part of the supramental action and state, the supra-psychic being of the Vijnana Purusha. The first result of this change is to base the phenomena of the psychical consciousness on their true foundation by bringing into it the permanent sense, the complete realisation, the secure possession of the oneness of our mind and soul with the minds and souls of others and the mind and soul of universal Nature. For always the effect of the supramental growth is to universalise the individual consciousness. As it makes us live, even in our individual vital movement and its relations with all around us, with the universal life, so it makes us think and feel and sense, although through an individual centre or instrument, with the universal mind and psychical being. This has two results of great importance.

First, the phenomena of the psychical sense and mind lose the fragmentariness and incoherence or else difficult regulation and often quite artificial order which pursues them even more

than it pursues our more normal mental activities of the surface, and they become the harmonious play of the universal inner mind and soul in us, assume their true law and right forms and relations and reveal their just significances. Even on the mental plane one can get by the spiritualising of the mind at some realisation of soul oneness, but it is never really complete, at least in its application, and does not acquire this real and entire law, form, relation, complete and unfailing truth and accuracy of its significances. And, secondly, the activity of the psychical consciousness loses all character of abnormality, of an exceptional, irregular and even a perilously supernormal action, often bringing a loss of hold upon life and a disturbance or an injury to other parts of the being. It not only acquires its own right order within itself but its right relation with the physical life on one side and with the spiritual truth of being on the other and the whole becomes a harmonious manifestation of the embodied spirit. It is always the originating supermind that contains within itself the true values, significances and relations of the other parts of our being and its unfolding is the condition of the integral possession of our self and nature.

The complete transformation comes on us by a certain change, not merely of the poise or level of our regarding conscious self or even of its law and character, but also of the whole substance of our conscious being. Till that is done, the supramental consciousness manifests above the mental and psychical atmosphere of being — in which the physical has already become a subordinate and to a large extent a dependent method of our self's expression, — and it sends down its power, light, and influence into it to illumine it and transfigure. But only when the substance of the lower consciousness has been changed, filled potently, wonderfully transformed, swallowed up as it were into the greater energy and sense of being, *mahān*, *bṛhat*, of which it is a derivation and projection, do we have the perfected, entire and constant supramental consciousness. The substance, the conscious ether of being in which the mental or psychic consciousness and sense live and see and feel and experience is something subtler, freer, more plastic than that of the physical

mind and sense. As long as we are dominated by the latter, psychical phenomena may seem to us less real, hallucinatory even, but the more we acclimatise ourselves to the psychical and to the ether of being which it inhabits, the more we begin to see the greater truth and to sense the more spiritually concrete substance of all to which its larger and freer mode of experience bears witness. Even, the physical may come to seem to itself unreal and hallucinatory—but this is an exaggeration and new misleading exclusiveness due to a shifting of the centre and a change of action of the mind and sense—or else may seem at any rate less powerfully real. When, however, the psychical and physical experiences are well combined in their true balance, we live at once in two complementary worlds of our being each with its own reality, but the psychical revealing all that is behind the physical, the soul view and experience taking precedence and enlightening and explaining the physical view and experience. The supramental transformation again changes the whole substance of our consciousness; it brings in an ether of greater being, consciousness, sense, life, which convicts the psychical also of insufficiency and makes it appear by itself an incomplete reality and only a partial truth of all that we are and become and witness.

All the experiences of the psychical are accepted and held up indeed in the supramental consciousness and its energy, but they are filled with the light of a greater truth, the substance of a greater spirit. The psychical consciousness is first supported and enlightened, then filled and occupied with the supramental light and power and the revealing intensity of its vibrations. Whatever exaggeration, whatever error born of isolated incidence, insufficiently illumined impression, personal suggestion, misleading influence and intention or other cause of limitation or deformation interferes in the truth of the mental and psychical experience and knowledge, is revealed and cured or vanishes, failing to stand in the light of the self-truth—*satyam, rtam*—of things, persons, happenings, indications, representations proper to this greater largeness. All the psychical communications, transcriptions, impresses, symbols, images receive their true value,

take their right place, are put into their proper relations. The psychical intelligence and sensation are lit up with the supramental sense and knowledge, their phenomena, intermediate between the spiritual and material worlds, begin to reveal automatically their own truth and meaning and also the limitations of their truth and significance. The images presented to the inner sight, hearing, sensation of all kinds are occupied by or held in a larger and more luminous mass of vibrations, a greater substance of light and intensity which brings into them the same change as in the things of the physical sense, a greater totality, precision, revealing force of sense knowledge carried in the image. And finally all is lifted up and taken into the supermind and made a part of the infinitely luminous consciousness, knowledge and experience of the supramental being, the Vijnana Purusha.

The state of the being after this supramental transformation will be in all its parts of consciousness and knowledge that of an infinite and cosmic consciousness acting through the universalised individual Purusha. The fundamental power will be an awareness of identity, a knowledge by identity,—an identity of being, of consciousness, of force of being and consciousness, of delight of being, an identity with the Infinite, the Divine, and with all that is in the Infinite, all that is the expression and manifestation of the Divine. This awareness and knowledge will use as its means and instruments a spiritual vision of all that the knowledge by identity can find, a supramental real idea and thought of the nature of direct thought vision, thought hearing, thought memory that reveals, interprets or represents to the awareness the truth of all things, and an inner truth speech that expresses it, and finally a supramental sense that provides a relation of contact in substance of being with all things and persons and powers and forces in all the planes of existence.

The supramental will not depend on the instrumentation, for example, of the sense, as the physical mind is dependent on the evidence of our senses, although it will be capable of making them a starting-point for the higher forms of knowledge, as it will also be capable of proceeding directly through these higher forms and making the sense only a means of formation

and objective expression. The supramental being will transform at the same time and take up into itself the present thinking of the mind transfigured into an immensely larger knowledge by identity, knowledge by total comprehension, knowledge by intimate perception of detail and relation, all direct, immediate, spontaneous, all the expression of the self's already existent eternal knowledge. It will take up, transform, supramentalise the physical sense, the sixth sense capacities of the mind and the psychic consciousness and senses and use them as the means of an extreme inner objectivisation of experience. Nothing will be really external to it, for it will experience all in the unity of the cosmic consciousness which will be its own, the unity of being of the infinite which will be its own being. It will experience matter, not only gross matter but the subtle and the most subtle, as substance and form of the spirit, experience life and all kinds of energy as the dynamics of the spirit, supramentalised mind as a means or channel of knowledge of the spirit, supermind as the infinite self of knowledge and power of knowledge and Ananda of knowledge of the spirit.

Chapter XXV

Towards the Supramental Time Vision

ALL BEING, consciousness, knowledge moves, secretly for our present surface awareness, openly when we rise beyond it to the spiritual and supramental ranges, between two states and powers of existence, that of the timeless Infinite and that of the Infinite deploying in itself and organising all things in time. These two states are opposed to and incompatible with each other only for our mental logic with its constant embarrassed stumbling around a false conception of contradictions and a confronting of eternal opposites. In reality, as we find when we see things with a knowledge founded on the supramental identity and vision and think with the great, profound and flexible logic proper to that knowledge, the two are only coexistent and concurrent status and movement of the same truth of the Infinite. The timeless Infinite holds in itself, in its eternal truth of being, beyond this manifestation, all that it manifests in Time. Its time consciousness too is itself infinite and maintains in itself at once in a vision of totalities and of particularities, of mobile succession or moment sight and of total stabilising vision or abiding whole sight what appears to us as the past of things, their present and their future.

The consciousness of the timeless Infinite can be brought home to us in various ways, but is most ordinarily imposed on our mentality by a reflection of it and a powerful impression or else made present to us as something above the mind, something of which it is aware, towards which it lifts, but into which it cannot enter because itself lives only in the time sense and in the succession of the moments. If our present mind untransformed by the supramental influence tries to enter into the timeless, it must either disappear and be lost in the trance of Samadhi or

else, remaining awake, it feels itself diffused in an Infinite where there is perhaps a sense of supra-physical space, a vastness, a boundless extension of consciousness, but no time self, time movement or time order. And if then the mental being is still mechanically aware of things in time, it is yet unable to deal with them in its own manner, unable to establish a truth relation between the timeless and things in time and unable to act and will out of its indefinite Infinite. The action that then remains possible to the mental Purusha is the mechanical action of the instruments of the Prakriti continuing by force of old impulsion and habit or continued initiation of past energy, *prārabdha*, or else an action chaotic, unregulated, uncoordinated, a confused precipitate from an energy which has no longer a conscious centre.

The supramental consciousness on the other hand is founded upon the supreme consciousness of the timeless Infinite, but has too the secret of the deployment of the infinite Energy in time. It can either take its station in the time consciousness and keep the timeless infinite as its background of supreme and original being from which it receives all its organising knowledge, will and action, or it can, centred in its essential being, live in the timeless but live too in a manifestation in time which it feels and sees as infinite and as the same Infinite, and can bring out, sustain and develop in the one what it holds supernally in the other. Its time consciousness therefore will be different from that of the mental being, not swept helplessly on the stream of the moments and clutching at each moment as a stay and a swiftly disappearing standpoint, but founded first on its eternal identity beyond the changes of time, secondly on a simultaneous eternity of Time in which past, present and future exist together for ever in the self-knowledge and self-power of the Eternal, thirdly, in a total view of the three times as one movement singly and indivisibly seen even in their succession of stages, periods, cycles, last — and that only in the instrumental consciousness — in the step by step evolution of the moments. It will therefore have the knowledge of the three times, *trikāladṛṣṭi*, — held of old to be a supreme sign of the seer and the Rishi, — not as an

abnormal power, but as its normal way of time knowledge.

This unified and infinite time consciousness and this vision and knowledge are the possession of the supramental being in its own supreme region of light and are complete only on the highest levels of the supramental nature. But in the ascent of the human consciousness through the uplifting and transmuting evolutionary — that is to say, self-unveiling, self-developing, progressively self-perfecting — process of Yoga, we have to take account of three successive conditions all of which have to be overpassed before we are able to move on the highest levels. The first condition of our consciousness, that in which we now move, is this mind of ignorance that has arisen out of the inconscience and nescience of material Nature, — ignorant but capable of seeking for knowledge and finding it at least in a series of mental representations which may be made clues to the true truth and, more and more refined and illuminated and rendered transparent by the influence, the infiltration and the descent of the light from above, prepare the intelligence for opening to the capacity of true knowledge. All truth is to this mind a thing it originally had not and has had to acquire or has still to acquire, a thing external to it and to be gathered by experience or by following certain ascertained methods and rules of enquiry, calculation, application of discovered law, interpretation of signs and indices. Its very knowledge implies an antecedent nescience; it is the instrument of Avidya.

The second condition of consciousness is potential only to the human being and gained by an inner enlightening and transformation of the mind of ignorance; it is that in which the mind seeks for its source of knowledge rather within than without and becomes to its own feeling and self-experience, by whatever means, a mind, not of original ignorance, but of self-forgetful knowledge. This mind is conscious that the knowledge of all things is hidden within it or at least somewhere in the being, but as if veiled and forgotten, and the knowledge comes to it not as a thing acquired from outside, but always secretly there and now remembered and known at once to be true, — each thing in its own place, degree, manner and measure. This is

its attitude to knowledge even when the occasion of knowing is some external experience, sign or indication, because that is to it only the occasion and its reliance for the truth of the knowledge is not on the external indication or evidence but on the inner confirming witness. The true mind is the universal within us and the individual is only a projection on the surface, and therefore this second state of consciousness we have either when the individual mind goes more and more inward and is always consciously or subconsciously near and sensitive to the touches of the universal mentality in which all is contained, received, capable of being made manifest, or, still more powerfully, when we live in the consciousness of universal mind with the personal mentality only as a projection, a marking board or a communicating switch on the surface.

The third state of consciousness is that of the mind of knowledge in which all things and all truths are perceived and experienced as already present and known and immediately available by merely turning the inner light upon it, as when one turns the eye upon things in a room already known and familiar,—though not always present to the vision because that is not attentive,—and notes them as objects of a pre-existent knowledge. The difference from the second self-forgetful state of consciousness is that there is here no effort or seeking needed but simply a turning or opening of the inner light on whatever field of knowledge, and therefore it is not a recalling of things forgotten and self-hidden from the mind, but a luminous presentation of things already present, ready and available. This last condition is only possible by a partial supramentalising of the intuitive mentality and its full openness to any and every communication from the supramental ranges. This mind of knowledge is in its essentiality a power of potential omnipotence, but in its actual working on the level of mind it is limited in its range and province. The character of limitation applies to the supermind itself when it descends into the mental level and works in the lesser substance of mentality, though in its own manner and body of power and light, and it persists even in the action of the supramental reason. It is only the higher supramental Shakti

acting on its own ranges whose will and knowledge work always in a boundless light or with a free capacity of illimitable extension of knowledge subject only to such limitations as are self-imposed for its own purposes and at its own will by the spirit.

The human mind developing into supermind has to pass through all these stages and in its ascent and expansion it may experience many changes and various dispositions of the powers and possibilities of its time consciousness and time knowledge. At first man in the mind of ignorance can neither live in the infinite time consciousness nor command any direct and real power of the triple time knowledge. The mind of ignorance lives, not in the indivisible continuity of time, but successively in each moment. It has a vague sense of the continuity of self and of an essential continuity of experience, a sense of which the source is the deeper self within us, but as it does not live in that self, also it does not live in a true time continuity, but only uses this vague but still insistent awareness as a background, support and assurance in what would otherwise be to it a constant baseless flux of its being. In its practical action its only support other than its station in the present is the line left behind by the past and preserved in memory, the mass of impressions deposited by previous experience and, for the future, an assurance of the regularity of experience and a power of uncertain forecast founded partly upon repeated experience and well-founded inference and partly on imaginative construction and conjecture. The mind of ignorance relies on a certain foundation or element of relative or moral certainties, but for the rest a dealing with probabilities and possibilities is its chief resource.

This is because the mind in the Ignorance lives in the moment and moves from hour to hour like a traveller who sees only what is near and visible around his immediate standpoint and remembers imperfectly what he has passed through before, but all in front beyond his immediate view is the unseen and unknown of which he has yet to have experience. Therefore man in his self-ignorance moving in time exists, as the Buddhists saw, only in the succession of thoughts and sensations and of

the external forms present to his thought and sense. His present momentary self is alone real to him, his past self is dead or vanishing or only preserved in memory, result and impression, his future self is entirely non-existent or only in process of creation or preparation of birth. And the world around him is subject to the same rule of perception. Only its actual form and sum of happenings and phenomena is present and quite real to him, its past is no longer in existence or abides only in memory and record and in so much of it as has left its dead monuments or still survives into the present, the future is not yet at all in existence.

It must be noted however that if our knowledge of the present were not limited by our dependence on the physical mind and sense, this result would not be altogether inevitable. If we could be aware of all the present, all the action of physical, vital, mental energies at work in the moment, it is conceivable that we would be able to see their past too involved in them and their latent future or at least to proceed from present to past and future knowledge. And under certain conditions this might create a sense of real and ever present time continuity, a living in the behind and the front as well as the immediate, and a step farther might carry us into an ever present sense of our existence in infinite time and in our timeless self, and its manifestation in eternal time might then become real to us and also we might feel the timeless Self behind the worlds and the reality of his eternal world manifestation. In any case the possibility of another kind of time consciousness than we have at present and of a triple time knowledge rests upon the possibility of developing another consciousness than that proper to the physical mind and sense and breaking our imprisonment in the moment and in the mind of ignorance with its limitation to sensation, memory, inference and conjecture.

Actually man is not content solely with living in the present, though it is that he does with the most pressing vividness and insistence: he is moved to look before and after, to know as much as he can of the past and try to penetrate as far as he can, however obscurely, into the future. And he has certain aids towards this endeavour of which some depend on his surface

mind, while others open to intimations from another subliminal or superconscious self which has a greater, subtler and more certain knowledge. His first aid is that of the reason proceeding forward from cause to effect and backward from effect to cause, discovering the law of energies and their assured mechanic process, assuming the perpetual sameness of the movements of Nature, fixing her time measures and thus calculating on the basis of a science of general lines and assured results the past and the future. A certain measure of limited but sufficiently striking success has been gained by this method in the province of physical Nature and it might seem that the same process might eventually be applied to the movements of mind and life and that at any rate this alone is man's one reliable means in any field of looking with precision back and forwards. But as a matter of fact the happenings of vital and still more of mental nature escape to a very great degree the means of inference and calculation from assured law that apply in the field of physical knowledge: it can apply there only to a limited range of regularised happenings and phenomena and for the rest leaves us where we were amid a mixed mass of relative certainties, uncertain probabilities and incalculable possibilities.

This is because mind and life bring in a great subtlety and intricacy of movement, each realised movement carries in it a complex of forces, and even if we could disengage all these, all, that is to say, that are simply actualised and on or near the surface, we should still be baffled by all the rest that is obscure or latent,—concealed and yet potent contributory causes, hidden motion and motive force, undeployed possibilities, uncalculated and incalculable chances of variation. It ceases to be practicable here for our limited intelligence to calculate accurately and with certitude as in the physical field from precise cause to precise effect, that is to say, from a given apparent set of existing conditions to an inevitable resultant of subsequent or a necessary precedence of antecedent conditions. It is for this reason that the predictions and previsions of the human intelligence are constantly baffled and contradicted by the event, even when largest in their view of the data and most careful in their survey

of possible consequence. Life and mind are a constant flux of possibles intervening between spirit and matter and at each step bring in, if not an infinite, at least an indefinite of possibles, and this would be enough to make all logical calculation uncertain and relative. But in addition there reigns behind them a supreme factor incalculable by human mind, the will of the soul and secret spirit, the first indefinitely variable, fluid and elusive, the second infinite and inscrutably imperative, bound, if at all, only by itself and the Will in the Infinite. It is therefore only by going back from the surface physical mind to the psychic and spiritual consciousness that a vision and knowledge of the triple time, a transcendence of our limitation to the standpoint and view range of the moment, can be wholly possible.

Meanwhile there are certain doors opening from the inner on to the outer consciousness which make an occasional but insufficient power of direct retro-vision of the past, circumvision of the present, prevision of the future even in the physical mind at least potentially feasible. First, there are certain movements of the mind sense and the vital consciousness that are of this character — of which one kind, that which has most struck our perceptions, has been called presentiment. These movements are instinctive perceptions, obscure intuitions of the sense mind and the vital being, and like all that is instinctive in man have been suppressed, rendered rare or discredited as unreliable by the engrossing activity of the mental intelligence. If allowed a free scope, these could develop and supply data not available to the ordinary reason and the senses. But still they would not be of themselves perfectly useful or reliable indices unless their obscurity were enlightened by an interpretation and guidance which the ordinary intelligence cannot give, but a higher intuition could provide. Intuition, then, is the second and more important possible means available to us, and actually intuition can and does sometimes give us in this difficult field an occasional light and guidance. But acting in our present mentality it is subject to the disadvantage that it is uncertain in operation, imperfect in its functioning, obscured by false imitative movements of the imagination and fallible mental judgment and continually seized

on and alloyed and distorted by the normal action of mind with its constant liability to error. The formation of an organised intuitive mentality purified from these deficiencies would be needed to enlarge and assure this possibility of the functioning of a higher luminous intelligence.

Man, confronted by this incapacity of the intelligence and yet avid of the knowledge of the future, has fallen back on other and external means, omens, sortileges, dreams, astrology and many other alleged data for a past and future knowledge that have been in less sceptical times formulated as veridical sciences. Challenged and discredited by the sceptical reason these still persist in attracting our minds and hold their own, supported by desire and credulity and superstition, but also by the frequent though imperfect evidence we get of a certain measure of truth in their pretensions. A higher psychical knowledge shows us that in fact the world is full of many systems of correspondences and indices and that these things, however much misused by the human intelligence, can in their place and under right conditions give us real data of a supraphysical knowledge. It is evident, however, that it is only an intuitive knowledge that can discover and formulate them,—as it was in fact the psychical and intuitive mind that originally formulated these ways of veridical knowledge,—and it will be found in practice that only an intuitive knowledge, not the mere use either of a traditional or a haphazard interpretation or of mechanical rule and formula, can ensure a right employment of these indices. Otherwise, handled by the surface intelligence, they are liable to be converted into a thick jungle of error.

The true and direct knowledge or vision of past, present and future begins with the opening of the psychical consciousness and the psychical faculties. The psychical consciousness is that of what is now often called the subliminal self, the subtle or dream self of Indian psychology, and its range of potential knowledge, almost infinite as has been pointed out in the last chapter, includes a very large power and many forms of insight into both the possibilities and the definite actualities of past, present and future. Its first faculty, that which most readily

attracts attention, is its power of seeing by the psychical sense images of all things in time and space. As exercised by clairvoyants, mediums and others this is often, and indeed usually, a specialised faculty limited though often precise and accurate in action, and implies no development of the inner soul or the spiritual being or the higher intelligence. It is a door opened by chance or by an innate gift or by some kind of pressure between the waking and the subliminal mind and admitting only to the surface or the outskirts of the latter. All things in a certain power and action of the secret universal mind are represented by images — not only visual but, if one may use the phrase, auditory and other images, — and a certain development of the subtle or psychical senses makes it possible, — if there is no interference of the constructing mind and its imaginations, if, that is to say, artificial or falsifying mental images do not intervene, if the psychical sense is free, sincere and passive, — to receive these representations or transcriptions with a perfect accuracy and not so much predict as see in its correct images the present beyond the range of the physical sense, the past and the future. The accuracy of this kind of seeing depends on its being confined to a statement of the thing seen and the attempt to infer, interpret or otherwise go beyond the visual knowledge may lead to much error unless there is at the same time a strong psychical intuition fine, subtle and pure or a high development of the luminous intuitive intelligence.

A completer opening of the psychical consciousness leads us far beyond this faculty of vision by images and admits us not indeed to a new time consciousness, but to many ways of the triple time knowledge. The subliminal or psychic self can bring back or project itself into past states of consciousness and experience and anticipate or even, though this is less common, strongly project itself into future states of consciousness and experience. It does this by a temporary entering into or identification of its being or its power of experiencing knowledge with either permanences or representations of the past and the future that are maintained in an eternal time consciousness behind our mentality or thrown up by the eternity of supermind into

an indivisible continuity of time vision. Or it may receive the impress of these things and construct a transcriptive experience of them in the subtle ether of psychical being. Or it may call up the past from the subconscious memory where it is always latent and give it in itself a living form and a kind of renewed memorative existence, and equally it may call up from the depths of latency, where it is already shaped in the being, and similarly form to itself and experience the future. It may by a kind of psychical thought vision or soul intuition—not the same thing as the subtler and less concrete thought vision of the luminous intuitive intelligence—foresee or foreknow the future or flash this soul intuition into the past that has gone behind the veil and recover it for present knowledge. It can develop a symbolic seeing which conveys the past and the future through a vision of the powers and significances that belong to supraphysical planes but are powerful for creation in the material universe. It can feel the intention of the Divine, the mind of the gods, all things and their signs and indices that descend upon the soul and determine the complex movement of forces. It can feel too the movement of forces that represent or respond to the pressure—as it can perceive the presence and the action—of the beings of the mental, vital and other worlds who concern themselves with our lives. It can gather on all hands all kinds of indications of happenings in past, present and future time. It can receive before its sight the etheric writing, *ākāśa lipi*, that keeps the record of all things past, transcribes all that is in process in the present, writes out the future.

All these and a multitude of other powers are concealed in our subliminal being and with the waking of the psychical consciousness can be brought to the surface. The knowledge of our past lives,—whether of past soul states or personalities or scenes, occurrences, relations with others,—of the past lives of others, of the past of the world, of the future, of present things that are beyond the range of our physical senses or the reach of any means of knowledge open to the surface intelligence, the intuition and impressions not only of physical things, but of the working of a past and present and future mind and life and soul

in ourselves and others, the knowledge not only of this world but of other worlds or planes of consciousness and their manifestations in time and of their intervention and workings and effects on the earth and its embodied souls and their destinies, lies open to our psychical being, because it is close to the intimations of the universal, not engrossed only or mainly with the immediate and not shut up into the narrow circle of the purely personal and physical experience.

At the same time these powers are subject to this disadvantage that they are not by any means free from liability to confusion and error, and especially the lower ranges and more outer workings of the psychical consciousness are subject to dangerous influences, strong illusions, misleading, perverting and distorting suggestions and images. A purified mind and heart and a strong and fine psychical intuition may do much to protect from perversion and error, but even the most highly developed psychical consciousness cannot be absolutely safe unless the psychical is illumined and uplifted by a higher force than itself and touched and strengthened by the luminous intuitive mind and that again raised towards the supramental energy of the spirit. The psychical consciousness does not derive its time knowledge from a direct living in the indivisible continuity of the spirit and it has not to guide it a perfect intuitive discrimination or the absolute light of the higher truth consciousness. It receives its time perceptions, like the mind, only in part and detail, is open to all kinds of suggestions, and as its consequent range of truth is wider, more manifold too are its sources of error. And it is not only that which was but that which might have been or tried and failed to be that comes to it out of the past, not only that which is but that which may be or wishes to be that crowds on it from the present and not only things to be but suggestions, intuitions, visions and images of many kinds of possibility that visit it from the future. And always too there is the possibility of mental constructions and mental images interfering with the true truth of things in the presentations of the psychical experience.

The coming of the intimations of the subliminal self to the surface and the activity of the psychical consciousness tend to

turn the mind of ignorance, with which we begin, increasingly though not perfectly into a mind of self-forgetful knowledge constantly illuminated with intimations and upsurgings from the inner being, *antarātman*, rays from the still concealed awareness of its whole self and infinite contents and from the awareness — representing itself here as a sort of memory, a recalling or a bringing out — of an inherent and permanent but hidden knowledge of past, present and future that is always carried within itself by the eternal spirit. But embodied as we are and founded on the physical consciousness, the mind of ignorance still persists as a conditioning environment, an intervening power and limiting habitual force obstructing and mixing with the new formation or, even in moments of large illumination, at once a boundary wall and a strong substratum, and it imposes its incapacities and errors. And to remedy this persistence the first necessity would seem to be the development of the power of a luminous intuitive intelligence seeing the truth of time and its happenings as well as all other truth by intuitive thought and sense and vision and detecting and extruding by its native light of discernment the intrusions of misprision and error.

All intuitive knowledge comes more or less directly from the light of the self-aware spirit entering into the mind, the spirit concealed behind mind and conscious of all in itself and in all its selves, omniscient and capable of illuminating the ignorant or the self-forgetful mind whether by rare or constant flashes or by a steady instreaming light, out of its omniscience. This all includes all that was, is or will be in time and this omniscience is not limited, impeded or baffled by our mental division of the three times and the idea and experience of a dead and no longer existent and ill-remembered or forgotten past and a not yet existent and therefore unknowable future which is so imperative for the mind in the ignorance. Accordingly the growth of the intuitive mind can bring with it the capacity of a time knowledge which comes to it not from outside indices, but from within the universal soul of things, its eternal memory of the past, its unlimited holding of things present and its prevision or, as it has been paradoxically but suggestively called, its memory

of the future. But this capacity works at first sporadically and uncertainly and not in an organised manner. As the force of intuitive knowledge grows, it becomes more possible to command the use of the capacity and to regularise to a certain degree its functioning and various movements. An acquired power can be established of commanding the materials and the main or the detailed knowledge of things in the triple time, but this usually forms itself as a special or abnormal power and the normal action of the mentality or a large part of it remains still that of the mind of ignorance. This is obviously an imperfection and limitation and it is only when the power takes its place as a normal and natural action of the wholly intuitivised mind that there can be said to be a perfection of the capacity of the triple time knowledge so far as that is possible in the mental being.

It is by the progressive extrusion of the ordinary action of the intelligence, the acquiring of a complete and total reliance on the intuitive self and a consequent intuitivising of all the parts of the mental being that the mind of ignorance can be, more successfully, if not as yet wholly, replaced by the mind of self-contained knowledge. But,—and especially for this kind of knowledge,—what is needed is the cessation of mental constructions built on the foundation of the mind of ignorance. The difference between the ordinary mind and the intuitive is that the former, seeking in the darkness or at most by its own unsteady torchlight, first, sees things only as they are presented in that light and, secondly, where it does not know, constructs by imagination, by uncertain inference, by others of its aids and makeshifts things which it readily takes for truth, shadow projections, cloud edifices, unreal prolongations, deceptive anticipations, possibilities and probabilities which do duty for certitudes. The intuitive mind constructs nothing in this artificial fashion, but makes itself a receiver of the light and allows the truth to manifest in it and organise its own constructions. But so long as there is a mixed action and the mental constructions and imaginations are allowed to operate, this passivity of the intuitive mind to the higher light, the truth light, cannot be complete or securely dominate and there cannot therefore be a firm organisation of the triple

time knowledge. It is because of this obstruction and mixture that that power of time vision, of back-sight and around-sight and foresight, which sometimes marks the illuminated mind, is not only an abnormal power among others rather than part of the very texture of the mental action, but also occasional, very partial and marred often by an undetected intermixture or a self-substituting intervention of error.

The mental constructions that interfere are mainly of two kinds, and the first and most powerfully distorting are those which proceed from the stresses of the will claiming to see and determine, interfering with knowledge and not allowing the intuition to be passive to the truth light and its impartial and pure channel. The personal will, whether taking the shape of the emotions and the heart's wishes or of vital desires or of strong dynamic volitions or the wilful preferences of the intelligence, is an evident source of distortion when these try, as they usually do try with success, to impose themselves on the knowledge and make us take what we desire or will for the thing that was, is or must be. For either they prevent the true knowledge from acting or if it at all presents itself, they seize upon it, twist it out of shape and make the resultant deformation a justifying basis for a mass of will-created falsehood. The personal will must either be put aside or else its suggestions must be kept in their place until a supreme reference has been made to the higher impersonal light and then must be sanctioned or rejected according to the truth that comes from deeper within than the mind or from higher above. But even if the personal will is held in abeyance and the mind passive for reception, it may be assailed and imposed on by suggestions from all sorts of forces and possibilities that strive in the world for realisation and come representing the things cast up by them on the stream of their will-to-be as the truth of past, present or future. And if the mind lends itself to these impostor suggestions, accepts their self-valuations, does not either put them aside or refer them to the truth light, the same result of prevention or distortion of the truth is inevitable. There is a possibility of the will element being entirely excluded and the mind being made a silent and passive register of a higher

luminous knowledge, and in that case a much more accurate reception of time intuitions becomes possible. The integrality of the being demands however a will action and not only an inactive knowing, and therefore the larger and more perfect remedy is to replace progressively the personal by a universalised will which insists on nothing that is not securely felt by it to be an intuition, inspiration or revelation of what must be from that higher light in which will is one with knowledge.

The second kind of mental construction belongs to the very nature of our mind and intelligence and its dealing with things in time. All is seen here by mind as a sum of realised actualities with their antecedents and natural consequences, an indeterminate of possibilities and, conceivably, although of this it is not certain, a determining something behind, a will, fate or Power, which rejects some and sanctions or compels others out of many possibles. Its constructions therefore are made partly of inferences from the actual, both past and present, partly of a volitional or an imaginative and conjectural selection and combining of possibilities and partly of a decisive reasoning or preferential judgment or insistent creative will-intelligence that tries to fix among the mass of actuals and possibles the definitive truth it is labouring to discover or determine. All this which is indispensable to our thought and action in mind, has to be excluded or transformed before the intuitive knowledge can have a chance of organising itself on a sound basis. A transformation is possible because the intuitive mind has to do the same work and cover the same field, but with a different handling of the materials and another light upon their significance. An exclusion is possible because all is really contained in the truth consciousness above and a silencing of the mind of ignorance and a pregnant receptivity is not beyond our compass in which the intuitions descending from the truth consciousness can be received with a subtle or strong exactitude and all the materials of the knowledge seen in their right place and true proportion. As a matter of practice it will be found that both methods are used alternatively or together to effect the transition from the one kind of mentality to the other.

The intuitive mind dealing with the triple time movement

has to see rightly in thought sense and vision three things, actualities, possibles and imperatives. There is first a primary intuitive action developed which sees principally the stream of successive actualities in time, even as the ordinary mind, but with an immediate directness of truth and spontaneous accuracy of which the ordinary mind is not capable. It sees them first by a perception, a thought action, a thought sense, a thought vision, which at once detects the forces at work on persons and things, the thoughts, intentions, impulsions, energies, influences in and around them, those already formulated in them and those in process of formation, those too that are coming or about to come into or upon them from the environment or from secret sources invisible to the normal mind, distinguishes by a rapid intuitive analysis free from seeking or labour or by a synthetic total view the complex of these forces, discerns the effective from the ineffective or partly effective and sees too the result that is to emerge. This is the integral process of the intuitive vision of actualities, but there are others that are less complete in their character. For there may be developed a power of seeing the result without any previous or simultaneous perception of the forces at work or the latter may be seen only afterwards and the result alone leap at once and first into the knowledge. On the other hand there may be a partial or complete perception of the complex of forces, but an incertitude of the definitive result or only a slowly arriving or relative certitude. These are stages in the development of the capacity for a total and unified vision of actualities.

This kind of intuitive knowledge is not an entirely perfect instrument of time knowledge. It moves normally in the stream of the present and sees rightly from moment to moment only the present, the immediate past and the immediate future. It may, it is true, project itself backward and reconstruct correctly by the same power and process a past action or project itself forward and reconstruct correctly something in the more distant future. But this is for the normal power of the thought vision a more rare and difficult effort and usually it needs for a freer use of this self-projection the aid and support of the psychical seeing.

Moreover it can see only what will arrive in the undisturbed process of the actualities and its vision no longer applies if some unforeseen rush of forces or intervening power comes down from regions of a larger potentiality altering the complex of conditions, and this is a thing that constantly happens in the action of forces in the time movement. It may help itself by the reception of inspirations that illumine to it these potentialities and of imperative revelations that indicate what is decisive in them and its sequences and by these two powers correct the limitations of the intuitive mind of actuality. But the capacity of this first intuitive action to deal with these greater sources of vision is never quite perfect, as must always be the case with an inferior power in its treatment of the materials given to it from a greater consciousness. A considerable limitation of vision by its stress on the stream of immediate actualities must be always its character.

It is possible however to develop a mind of luminous inspiration which will be more at home among the greater potentialities of the time movement, see more easily distant things and at the same time take up into itself, into its more brilliant, wide and powerful light, the intuitive knowledge of actualities. This inspired mind will see things in the light of the world's larger potentialities and note the stream of actuality as a selection and result from the mass of forceful possibles. It will be liable, however, if it is not attended with a sufficient revelatory knowledge of imperatives, to a hesitation or suspension of determining view as between various potential lines of the movement or even to a movement away from the line of eventual actuality and following another not yet applicable sequence. The aid of imperative revelations from above will help to diminish this limitation, but here again there will be the difficulty of an inferior power dealing with the materials given to it from the treasury of a higher light and force. But it is possible to develop too a mind of luminous revelation which taking into itself the two inferior movements sees what is determined behind the play of potentialities and actualities and observes these latter as its means of deploying its imperative decisions. An intuitive mind thus constituted and

aided by an active psychic consciousness may be in command of a very remarkable power of time knowledge.

At the same time it will be found that it is still a limited instrument. In the first place it will represent a superior knowledge working in the stuff of mind, cast into mental forms and still subject to mental conditions and limitations. It will always lean chiefly on the succession of present moments as a foundation for its steps and successions of knowledge, however far it may range backward or forward,—it will move in the stream of Time even in its higher revelatory action and not see the movement from above or in the stabilities of eternal time with their large ranges of vision, and therefore it will always be bound to a secondary and limited action and to a certain dilution, qualification and relativity in its activities. Moreover, its knowing will be not a possession in itself but a reception of knowledge. It will at most create in place of the mind of ignorance a mind of self-forgetful knowledge constantly reminded and illumined from a latent self-awareness and all-awareness. The range, the extent, the normal lines of action of the knowledge will vary according to the development, but it can never be free from very strong limitations. And this limitation will give a tendency to the still environing or subconsciously subsisting mind of ignorance to reassert itself, to rush in or up, acting where the intuitive knowledge refuses or is unable to act and bringing in with it again its confusion and mixture and error. The only security will be a refusal to attempt to know or at least a suspension of the effort of knowledge until or unless the higher light descends and extends its action. This self-restraint is difficult to mind and, too contentedly exercised, may limit the growth of the seeker. If on the other hand the mind of ignorance is allowed again to emerge and seek in its own stumbling imperfect force, there may be a constant oscillation between the two states or a mixed action of the two powers in place of a definite though relative perfection.

The issue out of this dilemma is to a greater perfection towards which the formation of the intuitive, inspired and revelatory mind is only a preparatory stage, and that comes by a constant instreaming and descent of more and more of the

supramental light and energy into the whole mental being and a constant raising of the intuition and its powers towards their source in the open glories of the supramental nature. There is then a double action of the intuitive mind aware of, open to and referring its knowledge constantly to the light above it for support and confirmation and of that light itself creating a highest mind of knowledge,—really the supramental action itself in a more and more transformed stuff of mind and a less and less insistent subjection to mental conditions. There is thus formed a lesser supramental action, a mind of knowledge tending always to change into the true supermind of knowledge. The mind of ignorance is more and more definitely excluded, its place taken by the mind of self-forgetful knowledge illumined by the intuition, and the intuition itself more perfectly organised becomes capable of answering to a larger and larger call upon it. The increasing mind of knowledge acts as an intermediary power and, as it forms itself, it works upon the other, transforms or replaces it and compels the farther change which effects the transition from mind to supermind. It is here that a change begins to take place in the time consciousness and time knowledge which finds its base and complete reality and significance only on the supramental levels. It is therefore in relation to the truth of supermind that its workings can be more effectively elucidated: for the mind of knowledge is only a projection and a last step in the ascent towards the supramental nature.

Appendix to Part IV

Sri Aurobindo began another chapter of “The Yoga of Self-Perfection” before deciding to discontinue the publication of the *Arya*. He wrote two versions of the opening of this chapter, which are reproduced here from his typescript.

Chapter XXVI

The Supramental Time Consciousness

[Version A]

The supermind in its supreme status is the truth-consciousness of the Infinite, the inherent light and power of self-knowledge and all-knowledge of the Supreme who is the self of all, the living eternal truth of all that is and of whom all objects and beings, all the universe and motion of things and happenings in time is a partial continually proceeding manifestation. The Supreme organises through the power of self-realisation and self-manifestation that resides in this self-knowledge and all-knowledge all truth of his being that he has the will and delight to put forth in his universal existence,— to create, as we say from our standpoint. But this creation is not a making or bringing into being of that which was non-existent, neither is it a construction of illusory phenomena in a self of dream, but a revelation in condition of being, substance of consciousness, movement of force, name, form, idea, significance, of the truths of being of the Eternal. All that manifests itself in time, is the coming into play, effective disclosure, result, form, power, evolution, movement of some truth of being, a truth of Sat, of the eternal existence of the Supreme and Eternal.

The power that brings it into play is the infinite consciousness of the Supreme aware of itself and all that is itself, not a limited mental consciousness like ours but supramental and illimitable, not bound by this or that condition, but determining out of an infinite truth of self-existence its own conditions, nor by this or that relation or step and sequence, but capable of all possible relations and steps and sequences. It is a power or force inherent in that consciousness which spontaneously, sovereignly

and imperatively compels into manifestation the truth it sees and dwells on and evolves its play, combinations, sequences, not a limited mental will and power like ours, but a conscious force supramental and illimitable, Tapas, Chit-shakti, not bound to this or that movement and result of energy, but ordering out of the infinite truth of self-existence the movement and result of all possible energies. And it is finally an Ananda of the being that deploys itself, that ranges at will among the infinities of consciousness and of its power of manifestation, not a limited mental joy or pleasure like our chequered delight of being and action and feeling, but supramental and illimitable, not subject to a given set of reactions, but embracing and taking a free and sovereign and compelling delight of all that is possible in the truth of the infinite consciousness and existence.

[Version B]

It is necessary in order to understand the phenomena of the supramental time consciousness to realise very firmly certain truths which are strange to our ordinary mentality or presented to it only as constructions of the metaphysical intellect, intelligible but unsubstantial abstractions as all mere philosophical statements must be, but to the supermind are realised experience and the normal and natural truth of the consciousness in which it lives, moves, acts and manifests its being. It is only in their light that we can grasp the truth and reality and the manifestation of things in time, otherwise only an illusion or else a flux of transient, inexplicable and incalculable actualities, and the law, source and order of their manifestation, otherwise only a process of inscrutable Law or else a play of chance and probabilities and possibilities. The truths that reveal the inner meaning and way of the universe are of a spiritual and supramental order. It is difficult however to express them at all in a language adapted to the mental intellect and one can at most try to indicate.

The first of the truths that thus becomes real to the consciousness is the truth of infinite being, a thing abstract to

our present sense and intelligence to which only phenomena are concrete and real, but to the supramental being always and absolutely and intimately present and real. This indeed is that which to its knowledge, sense, vision, idea, feeling is most concretely real and the phenomena which are now so close and all-important to us, are to it less concrete, not self-existent at all but dependent on the support of the infinite consciousness and its force of presentation: there is thus a complete reversal of the order in the conception of realities. It is not that the phenomena in their turn become abstract, unreal, unsubstantial creations of consciousness,—that is only the result of a certain exclusive realisation, when there is an identification with the essence of absolute being to the exclusion of its power,—but that they are felt as existing here only in a certain movement of the infinite, real only because they are made, as it were, out of the substance of infinite being. That which determines them, the truth of their essence and nature, *svarūpa*, *svabhāva*, that which gives them the power to be, is not originally here, but above in the supreme being and consciousness of the infinite. All their true truth, all their real reality is there in that supreme consciousness and here only hidden in the inmost heart of their existence, *guhāyām*, but not fully expressed in their overt outward phenomena. Therefore to know them only through the externals or through superficial inner movements which is all that our mind now does, is to miss their true truth and reality and to know them only with a partial and mistaken knowledge subject to the limitations, errors, incapacities of the mental ignorance. All that determines their manifestation in our time and space is also beyond and here only in the hidden secrecy within them, and therefore the mind following their line of manifestation misses that which determines them and can only see a part of the actually present outward executive play of forces that help to give them their immediate character and direction. It is only the consciousness that reigns above, that of the supreme Ishwara, and is present in their secret heart, *hṛddeśe tiṣṭhati*, that knows and determines all their true truth and their manifestation in eternal time.

This supreme of infinite being is supreme in the sense of being above the manifestation in time, its eternal origin, support, control, itself beyond time and space. It is this of which the supermind, itself a luminous power of this supreme of infinite being, is always and fundamentally conscious.

Note on the Text

Note on the Text

THE SYNTHESIS OF YOGA first appeared in seventy-seven monthly instalments in the philosophical review *Arya*, beginning with its first issue, August 1914, and continuing until its last, January 1921. The *Arya* text of the *Synthesis* consisted of five introductory chapters numbered I–V and seventy-two other chapters numbered I–II and IV–LXXIII (the number III was inadvertently omitted). Each of the instalments was written immediately before its publication.

In the *Arya* the division of the main series of chapters into four parts, corresponding to the yogas of Works, Knowledge, Devotion and Self-Perfection, was not marked explicitly until the fifth year, when the heading “The Yoga of Self-Perfection” began to be added above the chapter numbers.

The Synthesis of Yoga was left incomplete when the *Arya* ceased publication in January 1921. Before abandoning the work, Sri Aurobindo wrote part of a chapter entitled “The Supramental Time Consciousness”, which was meant to follow the last published chapter of “The Yoga of Self-Perfection”. He never completed this chapter and never published the portion that he had written.

A letter that Sri Aurobindo wrote in 1936 gives some idea of his purpose in writing *The Synthesis of Yoga* and his overall plan for the work:

The Synthesis of Yoga was not meant to give a method for all to follow. Each side of the Yoga was dealt with separately with all its possibilities, and an indication [was given] as to how they meet so that one starting from knowledge could realise Karma and Bhakti also and so with each path. It was intended when the Self-Perfection was finished, to suggest a way in which all could be combined, but this was never written.

One can gauge how much of *The Synthesis of Yoga* remained to be written by comparing the actually completed chapters of “The Yoga

of Self-Perfection” with the outline of this part found in chapter X of Part IV. The “elements and requisites of perfection, *siddhi*” which are set forth discursively in that chapter are listed more explicitly in *Sapta Chatusthaya*, a text of 1913 published along with *Record of Yoga* in volume 10 of THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO. The system of seven (*sapta*) sets of four elements (*catusṭaya*) evidently underlies the structure of Part IV of *The Synthesis of Yoga*. The last and most general *catusṭaya*, the *siddhi catusṭaya*, is taken up first, in chapters I to IX. Chapters XI to XVIII correspond to the *śānti* and *samatā catusṭayas*, the first two of the seven. Chapters XIX to XXV, and the incomplete chapter “The Supramental Time Consciousness”, correspond to the first two elements of the third or *vijnāna catusṭaya*. By breaking off at this point, Sri Aurobindo left untreated the rest of the third and all of the fourth *catusṭayas*. He had covered the fifth and sixth *catusṭayas* to some degree in the rest of the *Synthesis*, but undoubtedly intended to deal with them in more depth before concluding.

When Sri Aurobindo turned his attention to *The Synthesis of Yoga* during the 1930s after a gap of more than a decade, he made no effort to complete “The Yoga of Self-Perfection”. Instead he applied himself to the revision of already existing chapters.

THE REVISION OF *The Synthesis of Yoga*

Sri Aurobindo revised the text of *The Synthesis of Yoga* during three distinct periods, referred to below as Period 1, Period 2, and Period 3.

Period 1. At various times after the printed text of the *Arya* began to appear, perhaps up to the end of the 1920s, Sri Aurobindo made corrections to certain chapters of *The Synthesis of Yoga* while reading over his own copies of the journal. Most of these chapters received only sporadic and minor revision; two chapters of Part II, however, were substantially altered.

Period 2. During 1932, and possibly somewhat before and after, Sri Aurobindo undertook a full-scale revision of *The Synthesis of Yoga* with a view to publishing it as a book. At this time he revised all the chapters of what became Part I, “The Yoga of Divine Works”, and nine chapters of what became Part II, “The Yoga of Integral Knowledge”

(the addition of part-titles was part of the revision). He began this work by marking up pages torn from the *Arya* and then continued on copies handwritten or typed by disciples.

Period 3. During the early 1940s, Sri Aurobindo did further work on the later chapters of Part I, using typed copies of the pages from the *Arya* revised during Period 2. At the same time he began to write two new chapters, which he apparently intended to add to this part, but which he abandoned before completion.

During the later part of the 1940s, Sri Aurobindo lightly revised the entire first part of the *Synthesis* while preparing it for publication.

What follows is a brief part-by-part description of the revision.

Introduction: The Conditions of the Synthesis

Sri Aurobindo made sporadic minor changes to these five chapters during Period 1 and possibly also Period 2 of the revision. His alterations and additions, marked in issues of the *Arya* and a set of pages torn from the journal, were not discovered until the 1970s, and appear as part of the text for the first time in the present edition.

Part I: The Yoga of Divine Works

The twelve chapters of this part correspond to eleven *Arya* chapters: I–II and IV–XII. (There was no chapter numbered III in the *Arya*; the present chapters V and VI correspond to *Arya* chapter VI.) Sri Aurobindo revised each of these chapters during Period 2. The work done ranges from the light retouching of some pages to the rewriting or new-writing of long passages. During Period 3 he continued the work of revision begun in Period 2, concentrating on the last six chapters, and prepared the entire part for publication.

Chapter I. Moderately revised during Period 2.

Chapters II–IV. Heavily revised during Period 2. Sri Aurobindo added the entire second half of chapter IV at this time. He also made stylistic changes and added new material to all three chapters, but did not fundamentally alter their structure.

Chapters V and VI. Completely rewritten during Period 2 on the basis of *Arya* chapter VI, little of which remains in the final text.

Chapters VII–XII. Extensively revised during Periods 2 and 3. The typed sheets containing the later stages of the Period 2 revision of chapters VII and VIII were misplaced before the start of Period 3, obliging Sri Aurobindo to work on transcripts of the *Arya* pages containing only the earlier stages of the revision. The unused versions from Period 2 have since been found, and are reproduced in the reference volume (volume 35).

Appendix: Chapter XIII. During Period 3, Sri Aurobindo wrote this draft of a chapter meant to follow the last complete chapter of Part I, but did not prepare it for publication in the 1948 edition of the *Synthesis*. Found among his papers after his passing, it was published for the first time in the 1955 edition of the book.

Around the same time that Sri Aurobindo worked on the chapter published as “Appendix: Chapter XIII”, he produced several drafts of a chapter entitled “The Yogic Consciousness and Works”, which he also intended to place at the end of Part I. None of these drafts are sufficiently well worked out to be published as part of the text of *The Synthesis of Yoga*. The most important of them are reproduced in the reference volume (volume 35).

Part II: The Yoga of Integral Knowledge

These twenty-eight chapters correspond to *Arya* chapters XIII–XL. Sri Aurobindo revised eleven of these chapters during Periods 1 and 2, but did not prepare any of them for publication. The Period 2 revision was incorporated into the text of the 1955 edition; the Period 1 revision was not discovered until the 1970s and appears in print for the first time in the present edition.

Chapter I. Extensively revised during Period 2.

Chapter II. First four paragraphs revised significantly during Period 2.

Chapters III–VIII. Never revised.

Chapter IX. Extensively revised during Period 2.

Chapters X–XIV. Never revised.

Chapter XV. Moderately revised during Period 1.

Chapter XVI. One page lightly revised during Period 1.

Chapter XVII. Some of the later paragraphs revised significantly during

Period 1; the first paragraph separately revised during Period 2. The present text includes both sets of revision, which do not overlap.

Chapters XVIII–XX. Never revised.

Chapters XXI–XXIV. Extensively revised during Period 2.

Chapter XXV. Never revised.

Chapter XXVI. Lightly revised during Period 2.

Chapters XXVII and XXVIII. Never revised.

Part III: The Yoga of Divine Love

No chapter in this part was ever revised by Sri Aurobindo. The texts of these eight chapters are identical to those of *Arya* chapters XLI–XLVIII. They were renumbered I–VIII and the part-title was added by the editors of the 1955 edition.

Part IV: The Yoga of Self-Perfection

No chapter in this part was ever revised by Sri Aurobindo. The texts of these twenty-five chapters are identical to those of *Arya* chapters XLIX–LXXIII. They were renumbered I–XXV by the editors of the 1955 edition. The Appendix consists of two incomplete versions of a chapter Sri Aurobindo began to write in 1920 or 1921, just before he discontinued the *Arya*.

PUBLISHING HISTORY

The revised versions of chapters VII–XII of Part I of *The Synthesis of Yoga* were published in the quarterly review *Advent* between August 1946 and April 1948. The entire first part was published by the Sri Aurobindo Library, Madras, in October 1948. In 1950, and again in 1953, the same text was brought out by the Sri Aurobindo Library, New York. In each of these editions, the title of the book was given as *The Synthesis of Yoga*. A half-title specified that the contents consisted only of Part I (“Book One” in the American edition) of the complete work. Separate publication of the other parts had been planned, but this plan was never carried out.

In 1955, the *Arya* text of the Introduction, the 1948 text of Part I, a text of Part II incorporating Sri Aurobindo's revisions from Period 2, and the *Arya* texts of the chapters comprising Part III and Part IV, were published by the Sri Aurobindo International University Centre as *On Yoga I: The Synthesis of Yoga*. (*On Yoga II*, published in 1958, consisted of a selection of Sri Aurobindo's letters on yoga.) The incomplete chapter "The Supermind and the Yoga of Works" appeared in this edition for the first time as chapter XIII of Part I. The SAIUC edition was reprinted, with corrections, in 1957. The same publisher (under the new name Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education) issued a new edition of the same text in 1965.

In 1970 *The Synthesis of Yoga* was published as volumes 20 and 21 of the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library. This edition was reprinted many times.

The present edition has been thoroughly checked against all related manuscripts and printed texts. Many typographical and other errors have been corrected. The edition includes for the first time Sri Aurobindo's scattered revisions in the Introduction and substantial revision of chapters XV–XVII of Part II. It is the first edition of the book to include the text of "The Supramental Time Consciousness", the incomplete chapter Sri Aurobindo wrote for Part IV before setting aside "The Yoga of Self-Perfection".